

## Short pieces written up for Hope Parish magazine, about life in Hope School

1868

Vote, Vote, Vote for Lord Henry Cavendish!

The school logbook gives us interesting glimpses of life in Hope. The 'master' as he calls himself, is naturally concerned about attendance which is affected by the weather, local events and agricultural patterns. On March 30<sup>th</sup> 'Many children absent today, assisting the parents to sow, owing to the fine weather.' 6<sup>th</sup> April: 'Many of the Elder children absent assisting their parents in the field.' But on April 16<sup>th</sup> many children were absent 'on account of the inclemency of the weather.' July 20<sup>th</sup> he noted there was a very small school 'owing to the farmers being busy with the harvest.' On August 3<sup>rd</sup>, though, the weather was so hot the 'meagre' group of scholars had lessons outside in the playground. August 7<sup>th</sup>: their visitor, 'Master of Taxal N. S.... surprised to see so small a school. Children busy in the corn fields.'

September 7<sup>th</sup>: 'Very small school today owing chiefly to the Lower school having measles and partly owing to Castleton Feast.' On September 30<sup>th</sup> there was a holiday on account of the 'Agricultural Show' and on October 22<sup>nd</sup> owing to the consecration of Bradwell New Church.

The most interesting time-off came on November 2<sup>nd</sup> when 'School did not assemble till 2 o'clock in afternoon. The two Liberal candidates for North Derbyshire were addressing their



Constituents.'

There were no other public rooms in 1868 in Hope, unless a room was hired in a public house. The political meeting was exciting because the general election was the first to be held after the Reform Act 1867 which enfranchised many male householders and increased considerably the number of men who could vote. Of course, even then not all the men could vote and no women. The successful candidates who became M.Ps were Lord Henry Cavendish (Liberal) shown in the photograph above and Augustus Peter Arkwright (Conservative).

The Government was Liberal and the Prime Minister was Mr Gladstone. One of the reforms brought in was the 1870 Act introducing compulsory education. Although not every child in Hope attended school in 1868, a fair proportion did, unlike the children in the coal-mining areas in Derbyshire who were not so lucky educationally as the children here.

### **1869: at last the English Parliament gets serious about Education!**

As we can see from the report of the annual inspection, most children attending school were young boys and hardly any were what we would consider 'secondary' pupils. So the education, though acceptable for its time, was hardly universal.

May 22. Hope C. of England School. Mixed.

J.J.Blandford. H.M.I. of Schools

The number of Children present today was 60 – 18 Girls 42 Boys. 15 in Standard I. 12 in Standard II. 9 in Standard III. 8 in Standard IV. 4 in Standard V. 2 in Standard VI. 1 in Standard VII. 7 Infants and 4 not attended 200 times.

“The order and discipline are very fair. Several in the first Standard failed in Arithmetic but allowance must be made on account of sickness which has been prevalent amongst the children. The school is in a fairly efficient state.”

Mr Turner, the master, comments frequently on the number of absences, often due to the weather or the requirements of the farming year: January 5<sup>th</sup> 'inclemency of the weather', September 20<sup>th</sup> 'exceeding rough boisterous weather.' On July 26<sup>th</sup> 'very small attendance on account of the farmers being very busy in the hay, and also on account of the bilberry season.' The bilberries are still blamed for absences on August 17<sup>th</sup>- it must have been a good year for them despite the weather.

Village events also encouraged lower attendance. Hope Fair occurred 13 May and the children had a day off for that, and attendance was down on 12<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> also. Perhaps this was the Hiring Fair when labourers offered themselves for work. Church holy days meant poor attendance, for example on Ascension Day May 6<sup>th</sup>, and the children had the day off when a number were confirmed on September 7<sup>th</sup>.

Hope Feast, probably the times of the Wakes as being near St Peter's Day on 29<sup>th</sup> June, is mentioned as causing absences 'several absent assisting their mothers in cleaning for Hope Feast.' And on September 29<sup>th</sup> Hope Valley Agricultural Show occurred. November 5<sup>th</sup> was a holiday also, though no reason was given. Were they all making bonfires?

### **Dirty children in the Old School 1870?**

Wouldn't you think that when universal education was made compulsory in 1870 that MORE if not ALL children would attend school? It doesn't seem to have been the case in Hope. Fewer not more went to school. Some children, though probably not many, decamped to Bamford School as the fees apparently were not so high there. Many families had to find money for fees which was not always easy in cash-strapped homes. The teacher, George

Turner, repeatedly gave different and well-worn reasons for the 'slender', 'meagre' and 'thin' attendance. Excuses included the attractions of the local Fairs not only in Hope but also those in Castleton and Edale, the weather was 'inclement' and the children were needed for farming, or they went on the Wesleyan Sunday School Treat. However, after the midsummer break when the school opened in August only 25 children were present when four years earlier there were 86 pupils. Perhaps one sign of the widening of education occurred December 15<sup>th</sup>: Isaac France was sent home 'for coming to school dirty having been repeatedly warned about it'. The children now coming to school were not 'selected' by church, chapel or schoolmaster and were bound to include some previously deemed 'unsuitable' pupils. In the census of 1871 of course all children of elementary school age were defined as 'scholars'.

*Cambridge History: The full significance of the Education Act of 1870 lies in the fact that the English state then definitely assumed direct responsibility for public education, whose provision became a state service like that of defence or the administration of justice; it was no longer a matter of private charity conducted by the well-to-do for the benefit of the poor.*

### **1871: First full year of Compulsory, Universal Education**

In January only 18 pupils turned up for school from the whole of Hope and surrounding district. David Hobson was sent home for coming without his 'school money'. By 16<sup>th</sup> the teacher was noting absences 'on account of new scale of fees'. An 'Institution Service' was led by the Bishop of Lichfield, presumably recognizing it was now a 'new' school.

In March Government Papers arrived about an Evening School presumably for the semi-literate villagers. Three children were readmitted in March and attendance improved. After March 17<sup>th</sup> only weekly summaries appear in Logbook.

'The Government Year' began Monday May 1 when Rev J J Bland HMI examined school with 53 present. After this, the school received a 'Committee of Council' grant of £36.4.0, £2.16.8 of this for the Evening School.

May 24 New master appointed. Mary Bradwell 'admitted with hesitation and must improve' as Pupil Teacher.

Hope Fair May 13<sup>th</sup> and Edale Wakes June 9<sup>th</sup> 'impeded good attendance'.

The village school continued to be used to monitor 'crime'. August: 3 boys punished for stealing fruit from Mr Hadfield's garden. 18<sup>th</sup> 'many children idling about the village who ought to be attending school' ... 24<sup>th</sup> 'notices are sent out this week to the parents informing them that unless their children attend school next week their names will be taken off the Register unless a proper cause is assigned for their absence —'

Attendance gradually improved during September and in October 'Commenced fines this week. A few children absent... potatoe(sic) getting.' They must have spent considerable time learning songs: the "Lark", the "Robin", the "Violet" and "I thank the goodness and the grace". On Dec 6<sup>th</sup> he mentions: 'A slight improvement in the singing, although many of

their voices are still very harsh and gruff – ‘ He persuaded someone to give or buy a harmonium.

The teacher fell foul of a local family: Monday Nov. 13. This morning George Bradwell was punished with a stripe on each hand for twice ringing the school bell one morning last week, not being present at school. His sister Elizabeth Bradwell (2<sup>nd</sup> .Class) and Owen Bradwell (3<sup>rd</sup>. Class) were also present, as well as his elder sister Mary Bradwell, who was engaged as a Candidate for Pupil Teacher, having passed the Candidates’ examination in May last. The punishing of George Bradwell appears to have given great offence to his parents, as the whole of the children mentioned above were withdrawn from the school in the afternoon as well as the other sister Mary Bradwell.

We don’t know if the Bradwells ever went back.

### ‘A rough lot’ in 1872

After 18 months with an interim teacher, the new master arrived in March: ‘ Found a rough lot of Children to contend with – Kept several for rude behaviour and late attendance. One boy took his cap & went home although I told him not. The following day Thursday I sent him home & told him not to come again unless he brought his mother. This action on my part gave offence and led to the withdrawal of the boy’s brother & sister. Names of the Absenting parties are Frank Walker the offender & Emily & Joseph Walker.’

The new schoolmaster was not perfect, he had problems with spelling and the HMI Report in June commented: “*He has not kept the Registers neatly*” .

Whoever read the logbook continued to circle ‘wheather’ as the master continued to write it.

Attendance improved but Mr Brearley’s public relations were still poor:

he kept prizes back from two children until they ‘improved’.

‘One family took umbrage at the matter and during the absence of myself & wife at Noon fetched all the things out of School belonging to their children & sent a message by the elder daughter to say that “It would be the last time that M<sup>r</sup> Brearley would have the chance of keeping either their May or anything belonging her.” ‘

By August, the reader (a governor? Vicar?) had got fed up with ‘wheather’ and not only circled the word but put a large cross in the margin:

X children being required in the hay fields, as it has been very indifferent hay  
wheather of late owing to want of sun coupled with rain’

In November he mentions that there are 3 leper children on the sick list.\*

By December he feels sufficiently at ease to take a trip out: ‘On the 18<sup>th</sup> Inst left the School in the Hands of Mrs Brearley at 3 pm to go to Chatsworth & display a little loyalty at the presence of the Prince of Wales there.’

\*Note from John Talbot: Leprosy certainly might have occurred in children here if they had been in contact with someone who had visited or lived in a country such as India and had caught it there.

A second version of 1872:

1872

Hope School had a bumpy road after the great Reform Act when education became universal and compulsory. Mr Turner left, an interim teacher came for 1 year 6 months and in March 72 a new master arrived, Mr Brearley.

‘Commenced duties as Master of the Hope School on the 11<sup>th</sup>. Found a rough lot of Children to contend with – Kept several for rude behaviour and late attendance. One boy took his cap & went home although I told him not. The following day Thursday I sent him home & told him not to come again unless he brought his mother. This action on my part gave offence and led to the withdrawal of the boy’s brother & sister. Names of the Absenting parties are Frank Walker the offender & Emily & Joseph Walker.’

Spelling was not his strong point. He continued to write ‘wheather’ and obviously someone (the Vicar? A Governor?) put a ring round the word. March 28 ‘Wheather & a fair on Wednesday morning thinned the School very much.’ He also misspelt the vicar’s name, hardly tactful.

Teachers always find signs of improvement with regard to their own teaching: by April 26 ‘Standard 1 shewing (sic) visible signs of improvement in Arithmetic.’

The Inspector’s Report was received in June: *The First and Second Standards passed a fair Examination— The Upper ones are deficient in Spelling and Arithmetic – The present Master has only been two months in charge – He has not kept the Registers neatly” –*

*A great improvement will be expected in the Arithmetic or Article 32 (b) will be enforced – The Registers must be better kept for the future— M<sup>r</sup>. Brearley’s Certificate of Merit should be sent to this Department that the result of his Examination at Christmas may be entered on it –*

Attendance improved but Mr Brearley’s public relations were still poor:

‘A distribution of prizes took place in the School on the 4<sup>th</sup> inst and two books kept back from a couple of Children for irregular conduct and disobedience, to be given if a better state of matters prevail at the breaking up for Midsummer vacation – One family took umbrage at the matter and during the absence of myself & wife at Noon fetched all the things out of School belonging to their children & sent a message by the elder daughter to say that “It would be the last time that M<sup>r</sup> Brearley would have the chance of keeping either their May or anything belonging her.” ‘

A fortnight later he seems more tolerant:

June 21<sup>st</sup> Very fair attendance and marked improvement in the appearance & neatness of the children during the week, all coming with hair neatly combed clean hands faces & shoes with two or three exceptions & these were the parties having long distances to come through wet grass & thus it was impossible to come with blacked boots

By August 9<sup>th</sup> whoever is reading the logbook has got tired of the continuing misspellings and there is a large cross in the margin.

‘School fairly attended for the season, rather thin this date owing to many

X children being required in the hay fields, as it has been very indifferent hay (wheather) of late owing to want of sun coupled with rain’

On September 27 he is feeling annoyed again: ‘School in an unsatisfactory state as to numbers, the children being kept away for any frivolous pretence.’ They are still truanting in October but

by November, ‘School making improvement now a more regular attendance is kept up Learned a round during the week which they can just manage to get through by themselves when started’. three of the leper children on the sick list— Learned during the week a new song called the Pleasure trip

Note from John Talbot concerning lepers at that time: ‘ It is surprising but not impossible. I looked after a patient with leprosy in the 1970s in Portsmouth and of course it's still common in many parts of the world. Cases do crop up still here in the UK but acquired of course overseas. I suppose the question is whether the disease was still being picked up in the UK in the 1870s as if there were children affected they presumably got it here. This was of course a time when we were in the thick of it in India and the disease probably came back to this country with parents who'd been posted abroad. By and large, leprosy is hard to catch and is usually transmitted within close knit groups such as families.

The next question is whether leprosy can occur in children and I'm afraid it does. It's such a slow burning disease that it might be thought that it wouldn't manifest itself until adulthood. However a 2011 study in Delhi has shown that 10% of all their cases of leprosy were in children, mostly over the age of 11....’

Mr Brearley was not above enjoying a trip out: ‘On the 18<sup>th</sup> Inst left the School in the Hands of Mrs Brearley at 3 pm to go to Chatsworth & display a little loyalty at the presence of the Prince of Wales there.’

### **Winter in 1879-80**

From the Logbook of that year the winter seemed particularly harsh, though the new teacher maintained attendance much better than the previous one had done. But just imagine 100

children at once in the Old School! Some children had permission to leave early if they lived at a distance; we should be sympathetic, no streetlamps or only a few and pupils would have to walk home in the dark. However, bureaucracy decided that leaving early cancelled out attendance so the teacher couldn't afford to allow the practice to continue.

Nov. 17<sup>th</sup> Nearly a hundred children were present last week. One child left ~~un~~ on Friday to stay at home until Winter has passed.

“ 18 A Remarkably large attendance this afternoon 96 children being present.

“ 21 Very small attendance to-day in consequence of the very inclement weather. The greatest number of children-at-all during any week is shown by the registers this week; the number being 99.

“ 27 Sewing has been omitted this week on account of illness of the Sewing Mistress. An unusual number of attendances are cancelled just now; the children who live at long distances having to leave early to get home before dark.

Dec. 8 The children who live at long distances are allowed to leave early on account of the early nightfall. Owing to the very severe frost & deep snow last week, its average is very small. All attendances of those who leave early are cancelled in the required form. A boy had to be punished for requesting early leave without the consent of parents. Of course his request was refused.

January 23 A large number of children are still withdrawn by their parents, at 3.30 thus causing their marks for attendance to be cancelled. I shall consider it my duty to disallow the practice as soon as the evenings are sufficiently long to admit of the children reaching home before dark.

### **The winter of 1880 - 1881**

Life as a school child could be tough. Names of the 'miscreants' booked by 'the master' are still common around this area so no doubt their descendents are still here and we trust their educational experiences have been much more enjoyable. The school master's discipline seemed to be particularly harsh that winter, perhaps the weather had something to do with it. Imagine having to thaw out the ink!

Nov. 15 John Littlewood, John Tym, Albert Wilson, Benjamin Hallam, Joseph Proctor, Arthur Tym, Walter Howe, Mary Dickinson, John Kirk, John Elliott, Isaac Ashton were each caned for not knowing their lessons this morning, and again

this afternoon for not learning them this dinner hour. Their names are written for reference on future Mondays. Monday's lesson is systematically neglected by some of the above, hence this special course is taken.

1881

Jan<sup>y</sup> 5<sup>th</sup> Pupil Teacher still away. Illness must be the cause of absence.

Benj. Hallam (Stand II age 8) took money from a dinner bag belonging to another pupil, during the dinner hour. In the face of undoubted evidence from several sources, he persistently denied the theft & only acknowledged it on being severely beaten. Some time was spent in turning the occasion into a moral lesson. Hopes are entertained that no future cases of theft will occur

“ 17 Thin attendance owing to the unusual severity of the weather. Pupil teacher has returned today. Singing taken this afternoon instead of tomorrow, and sewing not taken because only 8 girls have work here.

“ 19 A very severe gale has prevented the children from coming to-day. The snow drifts prevent whom the wind might not prevent – only 27 are present.

January 25 The weather continues exceptionally severe & in consequence the attendance suffers – In consequence of the ink being frozen, copybook writing was impossible without wasting a considerable amount of time in thawing the ink.

February 8<sup>th</sup> Only 33 children present this morning - a strong wind and heavy rain combining to make the attendance so unusually low. Time table Classification not adhered to.

Moira Monteith