



*Malton Adult School source: Yorkshire Gazette 30 December 1905*

## Malton Adult School

### Introduction

The Malton Adult School was established in 1875 by the Society of Friends, with an objective “to give assistance in the way of elementary education to those adults who in their youth had not the scholastic opportunities of the more favoured ones.”

By September of that year they had a cricket team, some of the members of which were: T. Stonehouse, J. Macdonald, A. Hudson, J. Shepherdson, R.B. Hopkins, J. Mosey, W. Shepherdson, G. Salton, T. Peacock, T. Middleton,

and W.A. Coates. York Herald, 4 September 1875 It is probable that all these men attended or were in some way connected to the school. Mr Hopkins was secretary in 1878 (Yorkshire Post and Leeds Intelligencer, 21 March 1878) A ‘Drum and Fife Band’ had been formed at the school by December 1875 (York Herald, 27 December 1875)

The following two transcriptions from the local newspapers provide more detail about the early years of the Malton Adult School

### OPENING OF A NEW ADULT SCHOOL AND MISSION HALL AT MALTON (FROM THE “MALTON GAZETTE,” SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 25 1882)

A fine new block of buildings has just been erected on the site of the old Friends’ Meeting House in Spittle-street, their purpose being to serve as a mission hall and school for certain gentlemen connected with the Society of Friends in Malton who for years past have interested themselves in the education of the adults of the town. For nearly seven years an institution known as the Adult School has been in existence in our midst, and has done a good work in the quiet, unobtrusive manner so characteristic of the Society of Friends, by whom, hitherto, it has been principally supported. We hope now, however, that the association have taken upon themselves greater responsibilities they will have the kindly assistance of all Christians, for their work is

peculiarly one in which all who wish to further the interests of their fellow-men can lend a helping hand. The object of the Friends in Malton who first began the movement here is to give assistance in the way of elementary education to those adults who in their youth had not the scholastic opportunities of the more favoured ones of earth, and for this purpose classes are conducted for mental improvement and social converse and recreation. There are schools for both men and women, and we are told that there are many in our town who are indebted to the Malton Adult School for great improvement not only in their mental but also in their moral condition. This of course is the prime object aimed at, and whilst one portion of the tuition in the Schools is intended to benefit the minds of those, alas! too long neglected, the whole tone of the teaching points to the greater and more important improvement for the future. May the good work long prosper!

As a proof that our sincere wishes are being realised we may point to the important step taken by the committee in erecting new schools to meet the manifold wants of their scholars. For six years they have met in the building known as the old Friends' Meeting-house, and this having proved too small for their increasing classes, it was resolved to erect the handsome new schools and mission-hall which on Monday night last were publicly dedicated to the purposes already named.

The old building was itself possessed of some historic interest. In pulling down an old wall which had formed the end of the house a stone was found bearing the inscription "Anno Domini 1677," and there was also found amongst the foundations a portion of a tombstone bearing date 1691; so that it is reasonable to conclude the old building was one of the oldest Friends' Meeting Houses in the country. It is equally reasonable to conclude that the renowned George Fox, the founder of the Society of Friends, had preached within its venerable walls, for in his evangelising tours, as appears from his Journals, he frequently came to Malton. Thus in 1651 George writes "Then I turned to Malton again, and very great meetings they were, to which more people would have come but durst not for fear of their relations, for it was thought a strange thing to preach in houses and not in the church, as they called it." Singular, no doubt, had been the scenes witnessed in the old meeting-house; and its mutations, to our own personal knowledge, have been varied. Like many other old landmarks is equally really Like many other old landmarks, however, the venerable structure has gone!

The fine buildings reared on its site include – on the ground floor a day school for Mr F Rawling, a school for the Adults, and a library and classroom adjoining for the use of the latter. Each of the school rooms is about 24 feet by 20 feet, and 13 feet in height; and the principal entrance to the buildings is from Spittle Street. The Mission Hall is a spacious room on the first floor, the dimensions being about 50 feet by 24 feet and 16 feet high. Entrance to this room is from the south side of the building by direct staircase enclosed by a glazed panelled lobby. A large raised platform is provided at the east end of this room, to which is attached an ornamental front and reading-desk. Access is obtained to the platform by staircase from the Class-room. Sound boarding is inserted in the Mission Hall floor in order that the different rooms may be occupied at one time without any annoyance to the occupants. Capital provision is made for tea meetings, by means of a lift, &c., which will dispense with the transferring of the necessaries from the ground floor by hand. The rooms are heated by open fireplaces, and ventilation is effected by means of extract flues and combination of Tobin and Ellison's ventilators; also ventilators in the ceiling. The acoustic properties of the room are good; so are the means of egress in case of fire. Each room has a jointed wooden dado fixed all round, about 3ft. 6in. high. The whole of the interior is sustained and varnished. The building is built of brick and stone, the style of architecture being that of Queen Anne, though the exact arrangements are not carried out, the desire being to study convenience more than detail. The bottom lights of the windows are glazed with Hartley's rough plate. The out-buildings are constructed on the new sanitary principles, and the sanitary arrangements throughout are excellent. The ground at the front of the building is to be laid out as a shrubbery.

The whole of the work has been executed in an efficient manner by the following contractors:- Brick and stone, Messrs. H. and W. Oldfield, of Castle Howard; joiners' work and internal fittings, Mr G. Hill, Malton; plastering, Mr. W. Lonsdale, Malton; plumbing, glazing, and gas fitting, Mrs. Smiddy, Malton; painting, &c., Mr Walker Wilson, Malton; ironwork, Mr. J. Keenan, Malton. The architect was Mr. J.L. Webster, of Malton, who very kindly gave his services.

The total cost of the buildings has been about £500, and prior to the opening ceremony this had been raised with the exception of about £20. The Adult School has evidently had good friends throughout, and the liberality of one gentleman is particularly noticeable in connection with the affair. From a list of subscriptions towards the new buildings placed in our hands we noticed nearly £200 has been given by Friends in Malton, the chief contributors being £50 from Mr. H. Pickering, £25 each from Mr. H. Hartley and Mr. H. Taylor, £10 pounds each from Mr. Alfred H. Taylor, Mr. R. Rowntree, Mr Thos. Hopkins, Mr. John Hopkins, and Miss Hall, and £5 each from Mr. J. Coning, Mr. R.B. Hopkins, the late Mrs. M. Jackson, Miss Smith, and Mr. C.R. Witham, whilst there are several contributors under £5. Many Friends in distant places have also contributed sums varying from £20 downwards, and their liberality is very refreshing to witness.

#### THE OPENING CEREMONY

Began officially on Monday night, when the building was formally dedicated. A meeting was held in B. Classroom at 7:30, when several friends interested in the mission attended, and addresses were delivered. On Wednesday afternoon the proceedings were resumed, when a tea was held in the Mission-hall and in the school-room below. There were three sittings down, and over 600 partook of the very liberal repast, the arrangements for which were made by Mrs. Hy. Pickering, Mrs. H. Taylor, Mrs. T. Hopkins, and Mrs. Witham. The trays were presided over by the Misses Hopkins (the Mount), bracket, Miss L.R. Taylor (the Mount), Miss Jackson (the Browse), Miss Richards, the Misses Clegg, Miss Clough, the Misses Hartley (Market-place), Miss Rowntree (Scarbro'), and Miss Cressey. The proceedings were of a very hearty character, and all seemed to enjoy the tempting eatables which were provided for the inner man. The room was adorned with flowers and plants in pots, and presented a very gay appearance.

In the evening a meeting was held in the Mission Hall and presided over by Mr. J.S. Rowntree, of York. The place was crowded to excess, and the meeting commenced with singing and prayer followed by an address from the chairman, who in an excellent speech referred to the perfect freedom of the Adult School. There was nothing to keep anybody out of its doors, which were as open as the gates of Heaven. There was something of that English freedom which English people was so fond of, and its foundation was of a thoroughly Democratic nature. The direct object of such an institution was the practical benefit of its members, who had a voice in the management of all matters connected with the school. He was pleased to observe that the friends and members of their new school have retained the old stone of the year 1677, and it reminded him of a very remarkable man, dressed in plain attire, who passed through Malton in that year on his way to Scarbro' Castle to suffer imprisonment for his religion, and that was none other than George Fox, who exerted a great influence in his time towards the founding of the Society of Friends, and that influence had extended over the whole of the Christian Church. One of the memorable remarks of that worthy man was "We are nothing, Christ is all." They would do well to remember those words in the work of the school, and ever keep Christ pre-eminent as their Redeemer, Saviour, and Sacrifice. He believed the object of the promoters of the Adult School was to fit men for both worlds, by teaching them habits of industry and thrift, and by seeking to enlighten them in the fundamental truths of religion.

Mr H PICKERING, in a fitting speech, then presented the trust deed of the new building to Mr H Taylor, who, with Mr. R.B. Hopkins, gave explanatory speeches on the same. – After an address by Mr. C. Witham on mission work, a report on the raising of the present buildings was read by Mr. A.H. Taylor, as follows:-

#### GENERAL STATEMENT

The concluding paragraph of last year's report referred to the hope that next year there would be no necessity for hiring a hall in which to hold our meetings. The favourable fulfilments of the hope is now around us, and it may interest our friends to hear a short account of how so gratifying a result has been brought about. There are amongst us a few who can remember that time some seven years ago when we met by kind sufferance in Mr. Rawling's school-room. About seven attended the first meeting, to hear a lesson by Joshua Rowntree, of Scarbro'. From that meeting interest gradually grew, and numbers increased so much, that when a vacancy occurred in the tenancy of an adjoining cottage (part of the old Friends' meeting house), we were glad to get hold of it and convert it into small class rooms. These in time became too small, and our landlord at considerable cost, enlarged the cottage for our benefit. The upstairs room was used as a general meeting room and the downstairs rooms as class-rooms, on Sundays, and reading rooms on weeknights. One evening, near the close of 1879, two of our teachers were walking home from a crowded meeting, when one of them exclaimed "I would give £10 if we could only get a fine new school and mission hall combined, on the site of that old building." Other ten was promised on the spot by his companion, but the project seemed vague and shadowy until our friend Henry Pickering gave a good start by offering the site (subject to life rental) and a subscription of £50. Our treasurer, Henry Taylor, gave £25, and Henry Hurlley a like amount. Others also came forward, until £200 was subscribed by our Malton friends. From friends all over the country, who sympathised with our work, about £250 more has been received. J. Lawton Webster, of Malton, has given his valuable services as architect; others have contributed in various ways, and thus the building has been raised almost free from debt. There are still some subscriptions which we hope to receive, and these, with the amount realised at this opening ceremony, will help to obliterate the debt remaining on the building. Towards this object we need hardly add any donation, however small, will be acceptable. As to the future, we feel that with these premises additional responsibility has been placed upon us, and the teachers and others interested have earnestly desired and prayed that this house which we have builded maybe continually used in the service and for the glory of our God, that's so the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ may be promoted and we ourselves started or helped on in the heavenly road. We wish very hard to thank all the numerous contributors of money or of kind who have so generously helped us to achieve this success, and we further trust that we may retain their sympathy and that our work and ourselves maybe frequently remembered by then when they approach our Father in heaven.

For the trustees and for the school committee,  
Alf. H. Taylor, Secretary.

The meeting was likewise addressed by Messrs. Creaser, Rd. Tindall, of Scarbro', and C.W. Lund, of the A Class, Malton, he gave a very good original poem.

Mr. J.T. Sewell, of Whitby, moved a vote of thanks at the close to the ladies, donors, deputation, and Chairman, which was carried unanimously and amidst much applause. – A collection was made towards removing the debt of £20 pounds remaining on the building.

Several very good speeches were delivered during the evening and proceedings were most enthusiastic

throughout. We are sorry that for want of room we have been compelled to curtail our report of the evening's proceedings.

The following is transcribed from the Yorkshire Gazette, 30 December 1905

## MALTON ADULT SCHOOL

### A RECORD OF THIRTY YEARS' WORK; THE PRACTICAL SIDE OF CHRISTIANITY

It is almost a truism to say that the Adult School is the most progressive movement that Malton possesses. After briefly renewing the thirty years' history of the local school, we are not surprised at the success which it has attained. It certainly deserved to succeed, and those who have taken a prominent part in bringing the school to its present state of useful prosperity have cause to feel gratified that their efforts, arduous though they may have been, should be so amply rewarded.

The Adult School is essentially a democratic movement, and, not being bounded by sectarian walls, it can claim – and has received – hearty and brotherly support from Christians of all denominations. Mr. George Cadbury, who in the Midland Counties has done so much for the movement, recently pointed out that its strength was due to the fact that the schools brought Christ's ethical teaching to bear upon national questions. This is largely responsible for the success of the schools; they can be summed up in two words – applied Christianity. Their root idea is the practical utility of faith as a solvent of all the problems that appeal to thinking people. When it is realized that included among the Adult School members are men who, under ordinary circumstances, would not attend any place of worship, it is obvious that the teaching of such a grand truth must result in incalculable benefit. It was recently said that, when Christianity becomes a touch-stone by which the attitude of the nation towards other nations and manners of the home are alike infallibly estimated, it is revitalized. This is what the Adult School aims at, and a nobler moral object could hardly be conceived.

#### A Membership of Six

The Malton School was established in April of 1875, with a membership of about half a dozen. The work was commenced by the Society of Friends, who carried on the school for seven years in a very unassuming and quiet way. The object of the promoters of the local movement was – we are told in the "Gazette" of 25 February 1882 – "to give assistance in the way of elementary education to those adults who in their youth had not the scholastic opportunities of the more favoured ones and for this purpose classes are conducted for mental improvement and social converse and recreation. While, however, one portion of the tuition in the schools is intended to benefit the minds of those too long neglected, the whole tone of the teaching points to the greater and more important improvement for the future."

Soon after the formation of the school the meeting-place was transferred to the old Friends' Meeting House on the site of which the Adult School building now stand. This old meeting-house was of ancient date, and it is probable that George Fox, the first Quaker, preached within its walls. In his journal, George Fox mentions several visits he paid to Malton. In 1651 he was twice in Malton "where he had great meetings." On the occasion of the second visit during the year named, Fix was invited by a local clergyman to preach in his

“steeple house,” and on Fox complying with the invitation, there was an angry scene in the church because the Quaker would not go into the pulpit, but persisted in addressing the people from “a high seat.”

When the first anniversary of the commencement of the school came round, the membership had grown from six to nearly 100. In connection with the school had been started a savings fund, a library, and a cricket club, while a night school was held throughout the winter months. A drum and fife band and singing classes were also formed. The membership continued to increase, and before another year had passed a reading-room was opened and a temperance society formed in connection with the school. Owing to the success of the reading-room, it was afterwards found necessary to utilize two rooms for this purpose. The fourth annual report showed a further increase in membership, with an average attendance of 48. In 1880 a women’s class was established, and in a year the membership had reached 85, while a savings bank and temperance society were formed in connection with the women’s branch.

In 1882 the present Adult School was built, and the membership was augmented by 59. In successive years till 1887 there were small fluctuations in the numbers of members in consequence of deaths and removals, but at the annual meeting in 1888 the committee were able to report an increase both in the men’s and women’s classes. The number admitted since the commencement of the school was then said to be 828. In 1888 a meeting was held in favour of international arbitration, and at this meeting Mr. Cremer, M.P., gave an address. In 1890 the Industrial Exhibition was first spoken of, and in the autumn of that year the first exhibition took place. Eventually the exhibition was taken over by another society, and it is not yet decided whether it shall be continued, in some consequence of the deficit on the last exhibition.

#### The Great Unwashed

In the report for 1891 a somewhat curious paragraph appeared. “The great unwashed question has lately agitated us, and some members, remembering the old adage that cleanliness is next to godliness, have discussed the possibility of erecting a couple of baths, but we are sorry to have to report that the question still remains in abeyance, the necessary funds not being forthcoming.”

In 1896 the school celebrated its “coming of age” by holding special meetings, which were well attended. Among those who took part in these meetings were Messrs. A.H. Taylor, D. Crisp, and the Misses Clough, two talented young ladies who could perform on almost every musical instrument. This year saw an increase in membership and a successful session of the Social Society, which has since been such a useful and important branch of the local school.

The autumnal show was first held in 1900, and was continued till the present year (1905) when the show of flowers and vegetables was superseded by a successful picture postcard competition.

On “Peace Sunday,” 23 December, 1900, extracts from John Bright’s speeches were read; and during this year’s session of the Social Society we notice that the subjects dealt with ranged from spring cleaning to electricity. The next year, 1901, saw schools started at Kirbymoorside and Pickering, largely through the efforts of Malton friends.

At the last annual meeting the number of members was 119, making a total of 1,422 admitted since the formation of the school. Since April a social club has been established, and schools have been opened in Norton and Bulmer. The club has been an unqualified success, and it has been found necessary to make additions to the present building to accommodate the large number of members. Mr. C.H. Shannon,

architect, has prepared plans for the new premises, and, as the plans have been approved by the Council, it is expected that the work will soon be put in hand. Of course, all the various subsidiary branches of the school centre is the Sunday morning class, and it is hoped that the attendances will be increased as a result of the social club and the other efforts connected with the establishment. If only considered from an educational point of view, the Sunday classes are of considerable benefit.

#### Of Immense Benefit

As Macauley says:- "The education of the people conducted on those principles of morality, which are common to all the forms of Christianity, is highly valuable," and in this respect the Adult School movement has been of immense benefit to the nation in creating a desire for betterment in the minds of those whom the usual agencies of religion do not always reach.

Adam Smith strongly advocated education for the people because, he said, "the more they are instructed the less liable they are to the illusions of enthusiasm and superstition which, among ignorant nations frequently occasion the most dreadful disorders." "An intelligent and instructed people," he says again, "are more disposed to examine and more capable of seeing through the interested complaints of faction and sedition; and they are, upon that account, less apt to be misled into unnecessary opposition to the measures of government. In free countries, where the safety of government depends very much upon the favourable judgment, which the people may form of its conduct, it must surely be of the highest importance that they should not be disposed to judge rashly or capriciously concerning it."

The Adult School is deserving of support from the fact that it helps to make its members citizens who are capable of forming an intelligent opinion on important questions. If, as a consequence of this hurriedly-written survey of the local movement, an extended interest should be shown in the school, we are sure it would be most gratifying to the local ladies and gentlemen who are prominently connected with the movement.