

Bosley News

The improvements to the church are almost completed, we just need to get a cooker and a fridge. The floor is in and the septic tank, the boiler and two sinks and lots of lovely cupboards waiting to be filled. Just need to get Covid over and we shall be back singing hymns and having services and welcoming all. For those who ordered pews they can now be collected. Please let Tom Collis know when you want to come so he can open up the church.

Tandjcollis@btinternet.com or 01260 291483

The fire and explosion at Wood Treatment, known as the Mill Disaster, which took place nearly five years ago when four members of the staff were killed, is back in the news as the trial is now taking place at the Nightingale Court at Chester Town Hall. It seems to be that improvements recommended by the insurance company were not implemented, lip service seemed to have been paid to it and work practices continued as before. Mill owner safety director, George Boden, is charged with four counts of gross negligence and manslaughter, and three others are charged with health and safety offences. The trial is expected to take twelve weeks.

People News

Ann Slack, who with her husband John, farmed at Ravensclough has caught Covid 19. She is at home isolating herself. We wish her a rapid recovery.

Nicola Ratcliffe, granddaughter of Alison Tottle, has a conditional place at Glasgow University for her Masters degree in Environmental Science. A

Alf Gibson of Bennetts Lane has died in hospital after a short illness. Condolences to his family and friends.

St. Mary's School

It gives me great pleasure to introduce myself as the new Headteacher of Bosley St. Mary's CE Primary School. It is an absolute privilege to have been asked to lead the school into the next phase of its improvement and growth.

I have been a teacher and senior leader in schools across Stockport and Cheshire East over the past 17 years. My most favourite memories as an educator are those when I was working as Associate Head of Schools in a smaller Church School which is what led me to apply for the role at Bosley St. Mary's.

As Headteacher, I endeavour to offer the community at Bosley, a continued, happy future with the possibilities of new and exciting opportunities...some of which have already begun, in the strangest of times.

I must admit, my start as headteacher is not one I expected. By now, I would have liked to have met with all the families and got to have known each and every pupil in the school; however, we see ourselves in yet another lockdown where over 70% of my pupils are learning from home.

The children, I might add, are certainly impressing me daily, with their enthusiasm and commitment to learning through our remote learning provision and live lesson opportunities. This leads me onto to praising the staff too...I certainly have been blessed with such a hardworking, dedicated and passionate team.

All that said, school closure has not stopped us from trying our best to continue with normality as much as possible. The children have been enjoying weekly Dance classes via zoom with an experienced dancer (her claim to fame is dancing on stage with Robbie Williams as well as a number of other famous singers!) and we have also had a virtual visit by Nick Jones, a local Congleton children's author. Nick read his book 'One Night in Beartown' a book written to commemorate the 10th anniversary of Bearmania to the children as well as answering many of their thoughtful questions. The children are currently taking part in a writing competition which Nick will judge, a story we hope to publish in the next edition of Link.

Keep a close eye out as we look to develop and enhance our already extraordinary school over the coming weeks, we have many wonderful plans we can't wait to share with our community.

Take care, stay safe and look after each other.

Vic Rippon

Gravestone

Behind every headstone in a grave yard are many stories, most are forgotten and beyond recall. There is a headstone in Bosley Church yard, it is near to the path as you walk from the Church to the gate. "**Asleep in Jesus M H Brassington Wesleyan Minister Queensland died 10th March 1894 in his 26th year**". I have often wondered what his story was? None of the local Methodist families, who go back several generations seemed to know anything about him. I presumed he was a bachelor with a local connection who had died in his prime.

A few weeks ago we had a surprise email from his great grandson Mark who was researching his ancestors. M H Brassington certainly had a story! This is an abridged version of the story that Mark has sent.

Harry Brassington was the youngest of John and Betty Brassington's 11 children. They lived at No 40 Bosley Works. John worked for Frank Thompstone, when the "The Works" was a corn mill. The family were committed Wesleyan Methodists and regular worshipers at the Chapel at Bosley Works. [The Chapel pre 1885 was across the road from the Dane, below the main mill] In the 1870s John Brassington took on the mill at Rushton, so was now a miller on his own account. Harry found his mission at Rushton chapel where Thomas, his elder brother and young Harry became enthusiastic preachers. In 1882 Thomas emigrated to Australia to become a minister and help spread the word in the new colony.

In the late 1880s Harry, aged just 20 decided to follow his brother to Australia, a decision that cannot have been taken lightly. It shows his deeply held faith and his determination to become a minister even if this takes him to the opposite end of the world.

When Harry arrived in Australia, Thomas, now aged 32, has been a Minister at Gympie, a miming "Gold rush town" in Queensland for six years, he had a reputation in the church as a passionate, evangelical preacher. Harry followed him to Gympie! History books tell us a gold rush town, was not a place for the faint hearted to preach the Gospel of Jesus! For a young man of 20 from Rushton to be posted to a rough gold mining town was a challenge! Queensland Methodists were yet to set up formal training for ministers, so Harry was thrown in at the deep end with little knowledge of his role, his congregation or the environment.

But he must have risen to the task for the "Gympie Times" in the summer of 1891 records -- The Rev. M. H. Brassington delivered his farewell sermons on Sunday, in the morning at the Wesleyan Church "Surface Hill" and at the "Two-Mile" in the evening, the churches being well filled on both occasions. Mr. Brassington leaves Gympie on Saturday for his new sphere of labour, Charters Towers.

Charters Towers is another gold rush town, further north in Queensland where the colonialists were fewer and the temperatures are higher. It is here that the new Methodist Minister, no doubt nervous, meets the intimidating head teacher of the Girls School, Martha Hustwick. But an unlikely close relationship forms. Martha came to Australia with her consumptive sister Emily, hoping that the climate might cure her TB, but unfortunately Emily died and instead of returning to Durham, Martha finds work as a teacher and quickly rises to become Headteacher. Martha couldn't have failed to notice

that Harry is also showing the dread symptoms of TB. The Methodist newspaper reported: The Rev. M. H. Brassington, of Charters' Towers, is seriously ill with an affection of the lungs. Yet in May 1893 Martha marries Harry. That they decide to marry is an extraordinary decision. Harry is ten years younger, no money, and suffering from TB. Martha will be well aware of the likely outcome of Harry's illness, that her marriage will be short and that she will be left a widow.

She also knows the education department specifically forbids married women from teaching, so marrying Harry will also end her career. But they marry anyway, their feelings for each other must run deep.

Just two months after their wedding, in July 1893 Harry and Mattie board ship to come back home. Martha writes to her sister from on board the ship, telling her that she is pregnant, and of her hopes that a cure for TB might be found in England, and how glad she would be to get to London so that a Dr's advice could be obtained. However, any hopes of a cure are dashed and the couple make their way to Rushton. In the four years while Harry has been away his father John has died, so Harry and Martha go to Fir Tree Farm, Rushton. Harry's sister Elizabeth lives there with her husband John Bailey and a young family. Martha writes to her sister again: This fine country air and farmhouse life are doing him good. We have been here just a week & he seems a good deal better and says he feels stronger. I am enjoying the change too, you cannot imagine the positive pleasure it is to look out on a beautiful English landscape, & to walk in fields and lanes. I went to Chapel on Sunday afternoon & the walk there and back did me more good than any sermon I ever heard. However, a few weeks later Martha writes: Harry keeps much about the same, keeping his bed until afternoon & then getting up for a few hours' change. Yesterday he was very bad all day with nervousness & exhaustion. . . He likes the blouse you made me, thinks it suits me & then says that "a good looking woman looks well in anything" — gross flattery is it not!

In February 1894 Harry's daughter Hilda May is born. The celebrations that baby and mother survive the rigours of childbirth will be tempered by the fact that Harry must be very ill by now. Martha will be torn between nursing her baby daughter and nursing her dying husband. The inevitable conclusion to Harry's long illness finally arrives on 10 March 1894 at Fir Tree Farm, Rushton. Less than a year after he married Martha and a month after his daughter Hilda is born, Harry dies aged just 25. Martha buries him in Bosley

churchyard in the village where he was born and she returns to Durham where her family still live.

Harry has managed to pack a great amount of work into his brief life. He became a Methodist preacher in his teens, travelled across the world to an unknown continent, became a Methodist Minister in a "Gold Rush" town to spread the "Good news of the Gospel" in the John Wesley spirit. As a young, idealistic, earnest minister he worked to bring a moral and spiritual life to mining communities in Australia, surely one of the toughest audiences in the world.

Article from Isobel Worthington

My Faith Connections

Loose Connections "You will still visit us won't you?" That was the parting words to me as I left my last service at Bosley chapel, before marriage and a move to pastures new. I cannot remember my answer, but the truth was, I never did return for 41 years, apart from the odd funeral. This stage in my life was over. But the memories I would take with me, Good Friday concerts, the Easter Service choir singing "All on an April Evening" and rousing harvest hymns at the Harvest Festival would remain. Good bye also to Hollin Lane chapel and its monthly service to which we could walk to over the hills and dales. Good bye to Sutton church where dad was on the warder's rota to 'take the collection', and the C.o.E. school which I attended which stood at the foot of its drive. I remember distinctly Sutton vicar giving our head teacher a ticking off in front of his class of 10 and 11 year olds. Without the vicar's permission he had walked us up to the church, to climb ladders and along planks in the belfry, to have a lesson on the bells, on a level with them. After my marriage in Sutton church my loose connections with all three places of Christian worship came to an end.

Firm Connections After a few years of marriage, I became involved with Prestbury chapel. Our children attended Prestbury C.o.E. school, and the chapel was just across the road. It was here that I became a full member of the Methodist church. Here that I met, worshipped, worked, and journeyed with amazing Christian people that I have kept connections with ever since. Also of course there was the connection with Prestbury church and many friends who attended there.

Renewed Connections With retirement to Bosley, my life turned full circle. I returned to worship once more at the chapel, the place where I was baptised as a baby, and am now senior church steward. I will be ever grateful to the loyal congregation that have continued to worship there and keep the faith. Bosley church also is still there, again with a loyal congregation, what a debt we owe to stall wart congregations all over our country.

Disconnected Connections March 2020, Covid 19 lockdown restrictions put a stop to all regular church services, and our church doors were locked for worship and pretty much anything else. Not in our time has this been known.

Connected Connections. _ At this period in time February 2021, to join in a communal act of worship we have to get connected - electronically. Our chapel Circuits and church Benefices have each week organised services which we can connect to on any of our devises. It is not the same.

We miss the social connection and support of our fellow Christians. But it is the best that we can have in the circumstances, and we thank the Ministers for the work that they do. Someday soon we hope to return to normality.

To conclude, I will quote the verse of a popular funeral hymn, in fact I think I would like it at mine

“O love that wilt not let me go,
I rest my weary soul in thee:
I give thee back the life I owe,
That in thine ocean depths its flow
May richer, fuller be.”

Isobel Worthington