

RYHOPE I.M. CHURCH

My Early Years.

Ryhope was a good place to be growing up in the late forties and early fifties. The war had ended successfully, thanks to a concerted effort throughout the nation - including the Home Guards, of which Ryhope had a section! There were five Sunday Schools: the Primitive Methodists, who met in Ryhope Street on the site of the Methodist Church; the United Methodists, who met on a site behind Larkhill, Hollycarside; the Pentecostals, who met in the Gospel Hall, the Village Green; the Salvation Army, who were located in Burdon Road and the Independent Methodists, who met in Ryhope Street- opposite Ernest Gray Hairdresser and 'the rhubarb field'. Five Sunday Schools, plus St. Patrick's R.C. Church and St. Paul's C. of E. Church - wow!! - yet there were probably five times more public houses in Ryhope - stretching from the Colliery Inn, Ryhope Street South, to the Albion Inn, The Village / The Toll Bar.

I was a member of the I.M.s Sunday School and, although my parents weren't connected to the Church, I was encouraged to go along with neighbour's children, one of whom was Norman Barnes, who lived next door to us in Tunstall Street, which was behind Ryhope Street, down Brick Row. I hadn't been going too long before my friends told me that they were leaving and going to the P.M.s "because they were starting a football team." Well, I had a word with my mother. It was the start of the football season. She told me to wait until the end of the year - and, if I wanted to change Sunday Schools, that was the time to do so. By the end of the year, I had made friends with Willie Wright, Anty High, George MacLaughlan, Harry Shaw, Lees Cansfield and others and so I was very happy to stay where I was. In any case, the others who had gone to the P.M.s had left for some particular reason. Among the older boys were Eddie Holgate, whose mother was a prominent member of the Sisterhood and, indeed, President, Jack Barkel, who came with his younger brother, Sid, and Jim Smith. Other lads who joined us were Alan Ridley, Arthur Stokoe, Derek Sleep, Robert Matters, John Meikle with brothers Thomas and Alan, Jimmy Swansbury, Harry Pollard and Stan Jobling.

In those days the Sunday Schools used to meet up on Good Friday morning for a March of Witness and a joint Service, a practice which still continues today, but without the March.

Our Sunday School had good numbers. We did reach the one hundred mark, but couldn't really sustain it. Teachers included Jim Cansfield and Dolly Cansfield, both of whom, I'm sure, served as Sunday School Superintendents, Ruth Lilley (Armstrong), Maggie Lilley, Bobby Britton, Nancy Anderson (Foreman), who was Secretary of the Sunday School for a time, and Bill Brown. Included in the Special Services which were held each year was a Sunday School Anniversary, which was always held on the first two Sundays in June. When I was young I managed to "keep away" on these two days, yet, surprisingly, in my teens, I joined in, perhaps due, in no small measure, to the encouragement of the Superintendent at the time, Tom Jobling, who also acted as Choir Leader. Mrs E. Ward was Organist (and my Teacher in the 'top' class) and her daughter, Winifred was Secretary. Our reward was a Sunday School Outing, usually on the first Saturday in July. At first we went to Saltwell Park, Gateshead. Once we went to Seaton Carew, but it must have rained and not been so good, so it was back to good old Saltwell Park. In later years we went to Albert Park, Middlesbrough, Preston Park, Stockton and then to South Park, Darlington, which is the oldest public park in the North East - and today, like Saltwell Park and Preston Park, is well worth a visit.

Among the other special occasions was a Temperance Sunday and also a Harvest Festival. On one occasion, I was given two 'pieces' - holding them in my hand whilst I recited:

*The Cabbage may be humble fare,
But even cabbages need care
And one must hoe and weed with zest
If one would grow them at their best.*

This proved quite an inspiration for me in later years at my Allotment (and I have taken great pleasure to recite this to other gardeners!!) The second 'piece' was about an Onion:

*You may think I'm a funny one,
To bring the common onion
But we have found they precious are
Especially when there is a war.*

Painted in gold lettering on the wall behind the Pulpit were the words

"GOD IS LOVE" and "PRAISE YE THE LORD."

We used to sing Choruses such as "GOD IS LOVE", "JOY, JOY, MY HEART IS FULL OF JOY", "I'VE GOT THE JOY, JOY, JOY, DOWN IN MY HEART", "I HAVE A PILOT TO GUIDE ME" and, perhaps, for quite a few, the favourite would have been "WE'RE ON THE HOMEWARD TRAIL"!!!

In my early years, the Church had no Minister. Special Services, such as Baptisms, Weddings and Funerals, were conducted by the Church President, George Lilley, and the former President, Jack Brown, father of Jack and Bill Brown. We were fortunate, however, when Reg Lee, an accredited Preacher from the Methodist Church married Rene Jobling, sister of Tom, and came to join us. Subsequently, Anty High and Brian Baldwin also became Ministers. Brian Baldwin had married Iris Davison, daughter of Church Members Ned and Ella Davison. Olga Robinson also took the Ministerial Course of Study.

Church Secretary at that time was William Clark, who was married to Mary (Polly), the father and mother of Mary Wilson. Mrs Clark was Church Caretaker and many times, as young lads, we were scolded by her for leaving our sweet papers on the floor. This, perhaps, encouraged some to do it all the more - including leaving chewing gum under the pews. Even today, I can only smile when I feel under some pews and touch some chewing gum stuck rock solid - so it did happen in other Churches!!!

Church Treasurer was Jim Matters, who was married to Kitty. They were a wonderful couple and very encouraging for the young people and, indeed, to all at the Church. I can remember the first occasion on which I went Carol Singing with the Church Members, possibly December 1951 or 1952. Ryhope was a very big place to cover on foot - the Colliery, the Village and Over the Hill. We ended up at Jim and Kitty's home 'Over the Hill', where we had a lovely early morning Christmas Breakfast!!!

Photograph taken by Reg Lee outside the Church on Sunday, 17th February 1952. Tom Jobling (S.S. Superintendent), at the rear, with Lees Cansfield and Harry Shaw, Robert Matters and Derek Sleep, Bob Britton (Teacher), Willie Wright, Alan Ridley. Jimmy Swansbury, Joe Hibbert and Anty High.



Yes - let's have a football team!!! THE originals!!! Back Row: Bobby Dormand, Willie Wright, Jim Smith, Derek Sleep, Joe Hibbert, Eddie Wilton;
Front Row: Arthur Stokoe, Alan Ridley, Harry Shaw, Jimmy Swansbury, Anty High.

Photograph taken whilst on a break during a cycle trip up Burdon Road.
 Back Row: Jenny Liddle, Ethel Brown, Hazel Williams, Lillian Brown, Front Row: Alan Ridley, Elsie Brown, Matty Summerside. (P.S. I don't know where Matty's wet gear had been placed!!!)



The text on the Notice Board says: 'A friend loveth at all times' (Proverbs Chapter 17 verse 17). Jenny Liddle at the entrance of the Church - no doubt on her way to tea with a young Tom Sharratt!!! Photograph taken by Reg Lee

The "swingers" at the Youth Club which was held in the I.O.G.T. Hall, Tommy Wright and Catherine Gillibrand.



Christmas Parties were usually held in the Miners Hall, Ryhope Street, near the current Newsagents. Harry Beaney simply revelled in being Santa Claus!! As the Church Building, which was located on the site of the Bungalows at the lower end of Western Hill, was, to say the least (!) very limited in its facilities - it had gas lighting (even in the sixties!!) and outside toilets - fund raising activities took place on a regular basis. One of these activities was the sale of Christmas Cards - and a visit to the home of Mrs Hutchinson, mother of Margaret (Thompson), in Esdale was a special occasion - she was so dedicated to this cause. Jack and Lizzie Brown encouraged us to form an Intermediate Christian Endeavour Society. Jack, among other things, showed us how to make wicker work trays.

A Youth Club was formed and we used the International Order of Good Templars Building, which was located on the site of the current Doctors Surgery, adjacent to the Welfare Hall. The Leaders were Tom Jobling and Olive Allard (nee Fowler). We used to play football, cricket and other games on the old bowling green, which was next to the Church, the Bowlers having been relocated to their now majestic site at Welfare Park, Brick Row. Thanks to the encouragement of the Durham County Council (Ryhope was part of County Durham at this time) Youth Service, the Youth Club was relocated to the Junior School in Nelson Street, where we could use of the School Yard and Hall. During this time, we formed a football team and entered the Sunderland Amateur League, which was for players under 21 years of age. At the time, we were all about 18 years of age, so not surprisingly, we found it hard going in our first year and finished at the bottom of the League. We played on the Store Field. For a home game, Saturday morning meant a visit to R.G.Finlay Ltd., Builders, in the yard near the Forge Garage, at the Village for a bag of sawdust, then back to mark out the pitch. After dinner, we had to turn up early and go to the Blue Bell public house to pick up the goal posts, which were owned by Toll Bar United, managed by Douggie Smith, who also used the Store Field. The Landlord of the Blue Bell, Jack Smith, was very accomodating and most helpful. With the goal posts safely (? today's 'Elf'n Safety would have had a 'field day'!!) in place, we would make our way to the Racing Pigeon Club Building, which was located at the rear of the Workingmen's Club to get changed.

Although we had no toilet facilities, we did have a cold water tap! We then made our way to the Store Field, no wonder we were worn out before we had started to play!! We each paid 6d to play, which meant 5/6d per week. As the referee was paid 10/- (fifty pence in modern money) from the combined two sides, we made a 'profit' of 6d per game.

We played in this League for three seasons - not winning many matches, but making many friends. There were three or four teams in this League from South Shields, so, when we played those teams, we usually hired a bus from Wilfie Williams, from New Silksworth, and many of the Youth Club members, friends and family would come with us.

The first game which we played took place on Saturday, 7th September 1957 at Simonside, South Shields against South Shields'A' and we were beaten 10-0. Our team was Colin Mitchell-Hall, Charlie Thirkettle, Brian Curry, Matty Summerside, Willie Wright, Jim Harrison, Bobby Dormand, Tom Barnes, Stan Jobling, Joe Hibbert and Neil Summers.

In those days we didn't have a Physio or a Coach, but we did have Harry Beaney. Harry had a case, which included such things as bandages, sticking plasters and smelling salts. (Perhaps another 'Elf'n Safety fiasco!!). He was very keen and extremely supportive of the whole team members. Harry may not have been au fait with first aid procedures, but if any of our players did receive a knock and saw Harry bounding towards them—they were soon on their feet!!

Other players who took part included George Cox, Bill Walker, Alan Lee, D. Rodgers, George Gillibrand, George Jackson, Aaron Elves, Kenny Nelson, Eddie Oliver, Derek Sleep, George Carlyon, Barry Slee, Anty High, Alan Ridley, Harry Pollard, Norman Richardson, Billy Gibson, George Maclaughlan, Alan Fenwick, Ronnie Bewick, John Ferry, John Stoker, Ronnie Orton, Angus Dawin, William Moore, John Burgess, Ron Watson, Alan Lee, Charlie Thirkettle, John Harrison, Bobby Dormand, John Baird, Derek Lowden and M. Maddison.

Our last game of the first season was on Friday 2nd May 1958 against Roker Meths. I'm sure that their best players must have been away for the F.A. Cup Final (always held on the first Saturday in May) because we won 5-1, with two goals from Matty Summerside, two from Harry Pollard and one from Tom Barnes.

For the second season, we were fortunate to have people who would serve on a Committee - Tom Jobling was Chairman, Mr. Pollard was Treasurer, Willie Wright was Club Captain and Joe Hibbert was Secretary. Tom Lilley, Jim Matters, Jim Ineson and Harry Beaney gave valuable support. We also had great encouragement from Bob Britton and Eddie Pearson.

During our time in the League, we had only one player sent off -and that was in dubious circumstances. We played against Cleadon St. Cuthbert's B.C. at Temple Park, South Shields on Saturday, 8th November 1958. The official referee, Mr. T.W. Noble, had refused to accept the game owing to the bad marking of the field. The home side then presented an alleged Jarrow Y.O.C. league referee, Mr. S. Nichols. as a result of this and the club having had £3/10/- travelling expenses (Wilfie Williams' Bus) we agreed to play. During the game, our Right Half, Billie Gibson and one of their forwards were ordered off for alleged fighting, we considered this decision to be harsh as neither player had, in our opinion, been fighting. A strongly worded protest was made to the League Management Committee and no action was taken. On the whole, our disciplinary record for the three seasons in the Sunderland and District League was very good.

If I was to single out one special game, it would have to be against North East Metal Fabrications, who were top of the League at the time. We had been defeated 8-2 on the Store Field on 27th December 1958 and the return game was played at Hylton Road, Sunderland on 14th February 1959. Mr. Hodgson was referee. Our team on that occasion was George Cox, Eddie Oliver, Matty Summerside, Stan Jobling, John Ferry, Billie Gibson, John Burgess, Harry Pollard, Barry Slee, Willie Wright, Joe Hibbert. Two of our players were simply superb on the day - George Cox in Goal, who saved everything that came his way, and John Ferry, Centre Half, who had a stormer - and even managed to head home a corner from John Burgess for our winner. At the end of the match, their Secretary came up to me and said that if this game had cost them the League title he would 'have my guts for garters' - only in a friendly, light-hearted way of course!! A few years later, my father was very pleased to tell me that he had a visit from George Cox, who had emigrated to Canada and was on vacation. Apparently he had joined the Mounted Police. Let's hope that he had as much success stopping the wrongdoers as he had in stopping N.E. Met Fabs on 14th February!!!

The start of the second season, 23rd August 1958 v. Tudor B.C. at Store Field. Won 2-1, goals from Joe Hibbert and Barry Slee.

Back Row: Eddie Oliver, Stan Jobling, Matty Summerside, Willie Wright, Norman Richardson, Barry Slee;

Front Row: Anty High, Harry Pollard, Alan Ridley, Joe Hibbert, Ronnie Bewick.



Action from the game v. Tudor B.C. Norman Richardson goes for a header, with Anty High and Harry Pollard waiting to pounce.

Action from the game v. Tudor B.C.

I.M.s (white shirts) Left to right: Harry Pollard, Anty High, Joe Hibbert. Was this another miss - or was it the goal??!!!



Tom Jobling

Sunday School Superintendent,
Youth Club Leader, Church Organist,
Chairman of the Football Club



Fund raising effort .

On one occasion, the Sunderland Rural District Council informed us that the rent for the hire of the Store Field was to be increased - in fact doubled - from £1.5s.0d to £2.10s.0d (from £1.25p to £2.50p in new money). We were not too pleased, so we requested the R.D.C. to reconsider the matter. The following report from the Sunderland Echo shows the result.

R.D.C. Lets Pitch To Club At Half Price

SUNDERLAND R.D.C. Finance Committee last night agreed to cut by half the fees paid by a church football club for hire of a pitch.

Mr J. W. Hibbert, secretary of Ryhope Independent Methodist Church Football Club, had asked the Committee to consider a reduction from £2 10s—the hire charge of an R.D.C. ground.

"All our members are young men under 21," said Mr Hibbert, and, because we are a church organization, we are not allowed to hold lotteries or other schemes to support the club. As well as paying for the hire of the ground—used for only 15 home games per season—the club has to meet referees' charges, provide goal-posts, and mark the pitch."

Mr W. Mullaney thought the Club members should be paid 50s for their courage in playing on the field. "Some time ago the Council had spent £1,000 on the ground, but it was £1,000 wasted. It is covered with hills and hollows," he added.

After the Committee decided to halve the annual charge,

members were told that the Club was two years in arrears. They owed £5, which was being paid by instalments. To assist the club, the Committee decided that this year's fee should be paid off at the new, reduced rate.

There is good news for NALGO members employed by the R.D.C., who applied for a change in the system of salary payments. At a recent ballot, 16 voted for weekly instead of monthly payments, although 20 favoured the latter.

PAID WEEKLY

Mr Mullaney proposed that those who wanted their salary weekly should be paid that way. For lower-paid employees, it could be a strain putting up with the present system, he said. Mrs E. Beaney, who seconded, said: "I know I would prefer my pay every week."

Eight voted in favour of the proposal, and none opposed it.

Although the Council will soon be paying more to Houghton U.D.C. for sewage treated and disposed at the Sedgeleth works, the Council would still be getting value for money, Sunderland R.D.C. Health Committee was told.

The Sedgeleth sewage disposal works belong to Houghton U.D.C. and for some time sewage from Herrington has been disposed of there. Now, Chester-le-Street Urban Council is to send sewage to Sedgeleth and this will necessitate an extension at the works, and a consequent increase in the price Sunderland R.D.C. and the other councils would have to pay.

Members of the Committee were told that the increased costs had been carefully apportioned among the three authorities concerned, that there was provision for future increase in the population at Herrington, and that the Council was still getting rid of Herrington sewage "at a bargain price."

Mind you, I can't understand why we were two years in arrears - I'm sure they must not have sent us a bill!!!



The above match was played at Bents Park, South Shields on Saturday, 8th February 1958. Stan Jobling (3) is in the foreground, with Willie Wright and Norman Richardson in the background. The team on this occasion was: Bill Walker, Aaron Elves, Stan Jobling, Norman Richardson, Barry Slee, Willie Wright, Bobby Dormand, Harry Pollard, Billy Gibson, Matty Summerside and Joe Hibbert. Unfortunately, our lightweight men couldn't handle the Corinthians on this occasion. At Half Time it was a respectable 2-0, but 8-0 at Full Time, well.....!!!!!! We had hired a W. Williams bus at a cost of £3 and the Referee's fee was 5/-. However, owing to the very bad adverse weather conditions, we didn't have a full bus - and the collection on this occasion only raised £2/6/-, which resulted in a deficit of 19/- - **Ninety five pence in new money!!!!!!**



One from three possibilities - the same team played on the Store Field against:-

(a) Doxford Apprentices, 29th November 1958

Won 3-1, Goals from Willie Wright (2) and Barry Slee,

(b) Cleadon St. Cuthbert's B.C., 13th December 1958

Won 5-1, Goals from Harry Pollard (4) and John Burgess.

(c) North East Metal Fabrications, 27th December 1958

Lost 8-2, Goals from Harry Pollard and Joe Hibbert.

Back Row: Harry Beaney (Trainer), Willie Wright, John Ferry, Billy Gibson, Matty Summerside, Jim Ineson (Supporter), Eddie Oliver, Barry Slee, Eddie Pearson (Supporter);

Front Row: John Burgess, Harry Pollard, Colin Mitchell-Hall, Stan Jobling, Joe Hibbert.



Unfortunately, records fail on this occasion!! We were playing in Red and White Stripes (Wow!!) given to us by Jack Errington, Secretary of the Colliery Welfare, as they had obtained a new set.

The nine players on this occasion (perhaps we were awaiting the arrival of the other two from the Pigeon Club!!) were: Back Row: Matty Summerside, Harry Beaney (Trainer), Joe Hibbert, a young supporter, Kenny Nelson; Front Row: John Stoker, John Burgess, Eddie Oliver, Willie Wright, Alan Ridley, (? ? Derek Lowden/M. Maddison??).

We used to have Youth Club Trips to various places and this photograph was taken on a visit to the Scottish Borders, possibly Galashiels. NO it is NOT Ryhope's version of the Bowery Boys!!



Back Row: Norman Garroway, Harry Beaney, Anty High, Willie Weight, Front Row: Stan Jobling and Malcolm Lee.

I never had any problem with members of the Church regarding the football team and, indeed, they seemed quite pleased at the publicity which this had generated. However, on one occasion, a member came up to me and said "Do you realise that you have an R.C. playing for you?" My reply was that I was not aware of it and didn't really care - as long as he wanted to play for us - and enjoy being with us - he was very welcome to do so. We did have two or three really good players and I could never quite understand why they stayed with us and not join a better side. Years later, I met one of them and asked him why he had stayed with us - "Because I enjoyed it" was his response.

In 1959 we were encouraged by Bill Morley, Youth Services Officer, Durham County Council, to take part in a Youth Exchange Scheme with young people from Homberg NeiderRhine, Germany. These young people had visited us in July and, in August, we left Old Elvet, Durham City, on a Saturday morning at 9.00 a.m. by coach. We arrived at Calais for an overnight crossing to Ostend, Begium. Travelling to Aacon on the border of Germany, we finally arrived at Homberg at 3.00p.m. on the Sunday!! We had a marvellous time in Germany - our hosts were fantastic and we visted various places of interest - including a visit **down a coal mine**!!! Now I had been born at 3 Tunstall Street, which was just a few hundred yards away from Ryhope Colliery - yet there I was - in Germany - and the folks took me down the coal mine - what an experience!!!

Eva Jobling, who had married our Leader, Tom Jobling, accompanied us on our visit. She stayed with Ulrich Gluck. Others in the party included:

		German host
Doreen Eltringham	-	Erika Bunke
Anne Rowntree	-	Ursula Wullenweber
Ann Jobling	-	Frederick Wilhelm Wiemen
George Malt	-	Heinz H. Gestmann
Catherine Gillibrand (Wright)	-	Barbara Almstedt
Cathy Henderson	-	Volber Scherges
Norma Britton (Carlyon)	-	Werner Elaapen
William Wright	-	Friedhelm Rutten
George Carlyon	-	Friedrich Wollitn
Malcolm Lee	-	Rolf Lixfield
Liliam Roberts	-	Jochen Jonkmanns
Joe Hibbert	-	Werner Van Holt

From Blackhall :

Maureen Richardson	-	Ingrid Wingers
Elsie Beaney	-	Renate Kalwa
Frank Minto	-	Hans Glapdars
Barry Spencer	-	Jurgen Hess

We had a tour of the Rhine Valley, travelling by Coach on one side and returning by boat, visiting such places as Duisberg, Dusseldorf, Cologne, Koblenz and Kogniswinter.

There was also a visit to an Athletics Meeting and to a Steel Works in Essen. All in all it was a very good holiday with friends who had visited us and toured the North East of England some three weeks previously.



Just lazing around:

Back Row: Ann Rowntree and Doreen Eltringham;

Front Row: Malcolm Lee, (?) Rolf Lixfield, Catherine Gillibrand (later Wright), Ann Jobling, Eva Jobling, Norma Britton (later Carlyon) and Cathy Henderson.

Judging by the lovely clean faces, this must have been before we went down the pit!!!

Left to Right: ???, ???, George Carlyon, Joe Hibbert, ??? Willie Wright.



Being part of Durham County Council Youth Services, we were encouraged to take part in their Sports Day, when other youth clubs from the area took part. We managed to have at least two winners, which were in the 880 yards and the mile. These winners went forward to the County Final, which was held on Houghton Modern School Athletic Ground on Saturday, 12th September 1959. Although not sharing in the honours, they were not disgraced!



Willie Wright and Catherine Gillibrand at the pit.

With humble apologies to anyone whose name has been omitted inadvertently.

Acknowledgements

Photographs: Grateful thanks is expressed to
Bill Brown and Reg Lee,
South Shields Football Gazette,
Sunderland Echo,
William and Catherine Wright.

Joe Hibbert, November 2008.