

Whit Walks

Whit Walks were originally held on Whit Friday, but was later changed to Whit Saturday because of the change in Bolton Holidays – meaning that many people were away.

The procession was led by the village band.

After the procession the children had coffee and buns, followed by games and races on the field

*Extract from Ken's book page 199*



Whit Friday Procession

Alice Rayson, Mrs Greenhalgh, Mrs Horrocks, Mrs Lauria

## Rev. Wood describes the 1928 sermons

July 16, 1928 - Yesterday was our “Sermons” at Ainsworth. Sermons Sunday is one of the outstanding events on the moor.

For the last few weeks graves have been receiving attention. Stones have been scrubbed, grass and weeds have been cleared and the Churchyard made tidy.

There are few neglected graves at Ainsworth Church at Sermon’s time. Those who no longer live on the moor try to have the graves attended to. Flowers are placed on graves.

I estimate that quite 500 wreaths and bouquets adorn our Churchyard on Sermon’s day. This year we were favoured with golden weather.

The day began with Holy Communion at 8am. at which a score or so were present.

At 9:30 we assemble at the schools, then there is the procession thro the village.

The little singers in white lead – followed by our Boy Scouts in their Scout uniform.

Vicar and Church officers are in front of the Brass Band which plays hymn tunes.

Scholars past and present walk - noticeable amongst them is the goodly band of 30 or 40 young men who form our Men’s class.

Returning to the Church we gather about the gate in the road and led by the band we sing “the Church’s one foundation” and “Jesus shall reign”.

The Church is filled morning, afternoon and evening. Indeed, in the evening there are many in the Churchyard who could not get into the Church. For these an overflow service is arranged. Hymns known to all are sung.

The little singers sing their children’s hymns. One verse from each hymn generally being sung by some child’s voice alone.

The choir, of course, have their part – there are anthems afternoon and evening.

Practising for the Sermons engages choir and children for some weeks before the great day.

Sermons is a very happy time of re-union. Those who do not attend the ordinary services of the Church will try to be present on this day.

And old friends and scholars turn up and renew old ties.

It is a wonderful demonstration of the affection felt for the old place – their old school – their old Church.

Much interest is shown in the amount collected during the day.

If the collections are “poor” there is some depression – but if they are up there is much joy and pride.

Yesterday there was much elation. The collections totalled just over £100 – this is indeed a notable collection.

The Sermons come just after the end of the Radcliffe holiday. The village mill had been closed for a week. Trade has been very bad. Money is scarce. But we have a scheme of school extension in hand.

The collections, after providing for the Day School charges, would go to the new fund.

Generally the whole of the Sermons are collected on the day.

This year the Women’s Class and the Young Men’s Class each contributed £5. And an anonymous donor gave £10 because he understood that we needed extra money.

1931





1935



# And Hilda (Lord) recalled...

I remember especially Sermon's Sunday which was in July and later in May.

The week before was very busy, the church yard was a scene of great activity. Family members came to scrub their gravestones and to put flowers on them. It was something of a social occasion.

My mother, who lived back to back with the churchyard, was kept busy providing buckets of hot water to clean the gravestones and making cups of tea for all the people she knew who had come, sometimes from some distance, to tend family graves.

I can still picture it in my mind, with all the lovely flowers, pink carnations, blue scabious and gypsophila.

We had a procession before one of the services, ending up at the church gates, where we always sang "The Church's one foundation is Jesus Christ our Lord".

The church was packed at every service, friends travelling to Cockey Moor sermons. We sometimes had an overflow service outside in the churchyard in the evening. What a happy occasion it was.

The church choir was augmented at the sermons, by friends of the organist. We always had a full house, as my mother provided tea for these guest choristers and their families who came along with them.

We also had a children's choir of which I was a member in my younger days,



First rose queen event - in garden of Davenport Fold Farm, Arthur Lane



Mrs Birtwistle crowning queen – Dorothy Buntin



1949/50 Rose Queen - the Recreation Ground.

On the field where Devon Drive was built, showing the back of the stone cottages & one of the semis lower down the slope. The mill chimney is visible through the tree.





Early 1950's Rose Queen - taken on Bradley Fold Rd. near the junction with Church St



The Methodists used to walk at Whitsun

“sermons” were one of the main event of the year

The services on Sermons Sunday were particularly popular and frequently chairs and forms had to be brought in as the pews were full.

On one particular Sunday the chapel was so full that men had to sit in the pulpit with the minister, the communion rail area was full of chairs, as was the entrance and the two vestries and six young people had to sit outside on the chapel steps!!

People used to come early to the Sermons services and there was so much chattering – people not having met for a year – that it was thought that it would be more seemly to have community hymn singing

but the result of this was that people came even earlier for the singing!!



Circa 1971





