



Richard Newsham, Benefactor and the Foundation Stone

With thanks to Vicki Dixon for research on family history (first cousin five time removed from Richard Newsham) and sending

THE LANCASTER GAZETTE. SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 21, 1874.

SCOTFORTH CHURCH.

PRESENTATION TO R. NEWSHAM, ESQ.

On Friday (yesterday) afternoon, a very interesting presentation took place at the Town Hall. It will be remembered that in August, Mr. Newsham, who has been a most active promoter and generous supporter of the movement for the erection of a church for Scotforth, laid the foundation stone of the new church now in course of erection and fast approaching completion. The ceremonial was conducted very quietly and without any public demonstration, but the committee afterwards came to the conclusion to mark the event by presenting Mr. Newsham with a silver trowel as a memorial, and as a token of their appreciation of his kindness. Mr. Newsham met the committee yesterday, by invitation, and there were also present—Mr. Sharpe (chairman), Mr. Williamson (Parkfield), Mr. T. Storey, Mr. R. Coupland, Mr. J. C. Moon, Mr. James Williamson, junr., Mr. J. Parrington (Liverpool), Mr. T. Swainson, Mr. Lowther, Mr. E. Sharpe, junr., and Mr. Campbell.

The CHAIRMAN made the presentation on behalf of the committee. He said they had selected that little trowel in the hope that Mr. Newsham would accept it as a memorial of his great kindness in laying the foundation stone of their little church. The ceremony was performed in a very unostentatious manner. They had not called the town and neighbourhood to witness what they were doing. They thought they had better complete it before they asked any of their friends to look at it; nevertheless, they felt that they were not relieved from the obligation they were under to Mr. Newsham for his kindness in coming over from Preston to do them the honour of laying the stone, and for doing it in the way he did. He (Mr. Sharpe) was sure that every one of their friends who were present on that day would appreciate the fitting terms in which Mr. Newsham addressed them after the ceremony; his words were the words of a true Christian and a consistent member of our noble ecclesiastical establishment; they were words that would be remembered by all who heard them as long as they lived. (Hear, hear.) He hoped to be able to commemorate the matter in some way in the church itself, so that Mr. Newsham's kindness might not only be recognised through the trowel they were about to give him, but by those interested in the building in future times. He thought it most unfortunate that our modern churches had not some mark upon them which would enable posterity to fix the time when they were built; for, aiming as they did at all styles of architecture it would be impossible in a few hundred years to say when a church, erected during the present century, had been constructed. They had arrived at such a knowledge of the style of architecture that they could tell pretty nearly within five years, and certainly within ten years, the date when a church had been built 700 or 800 years ago; but he was afraid, unless some mark was put upon their modern churches, it would be difficult to tell within 200 years when they were really constructed. If the committee approved of the idea, he would put some mark upon St. Paul's Church, showing the date of its erection, and the name of the person who was one of its chief promoters, and who did them the honor of laying the first stone, and who did himself the honor of commencing a church in which they hoped the pure principles of their English Church would be taught in all future time. (Applause.—Mr. Sharpe then handed the trowel to Mr. Newsham, saying he had very great

future time. (Applause.—Mr. Sharpe then handed the trowel to Mr. Newsham, saying he had very great pleasure in presenting the piece of plate, which upon the face of it explained the object of the presentation —“St. Paul's Church, Scotforth. Presented to Richard Newsham, Esq., of Preston, by whom the foundation stone of this church was laid on Tuesday, August 11, 1874.”

Mr. NEWSHAM, in acknowledging the consideration of the committee, thanked them cordially for the beautiful testimonial, and Mr. Sharpe for the kind words in which he had conveyed it to him. He also took the opportunity of expressing the obligation he felt personally for the great interest Mr. Sharpe had taken in the erection of the church. He received the trowel as a lasting memorial of an undertaking he had taken great pleasure in promoting, which he trusted would become a great benefit to the neighbourhood, and he also received it as a token of the kindness and courtesy of those gentlemen with whom he had been associated in the work. He rejoiced to see the work progressing, but it was a grief to him that his coadjutor (the late Mr. Brockbank) had not been spared to see the same progress. It would have been a source of gratification to him (Mr. Newsham) if his friend had been spared to take the part he took at the laying of the stone. For himself he felt that it was doing a great public service to attempt to raise a temple to Almighty God, and he trusted and believed that the general results of their work would be to advance the cause of true religion. They had great reason to thank Mr. Sharpe with regard to the endowment fund. They must all feel that they now stood upon a higher basis than any of them could reasonably have expected, and he hoped eventually they would be in a position to make it worth the while of a pains-taking hard-working man to come and reside amongst them. (Applause.) He was rejoiced to think there was a prospect of the Church having for a portion the best form of endowment—a parsonage, and he thought, as they were assembled together that day, that it was desirable that they should consider whether they should attempt to go on with that part of their undertaking at once. His experience in such matters led him to the conclusion that the higher they aimed the greater success they might effect. He was in favour of going on

with their work till it was completed, because he felt that they were constantly losing their friends, and he thought there was much lost by delay. If the meeting adopted his view, he hoped he would be ready to commence with another subscription for a parsonage. (Applause.) He was in favour of the old parochial system, of a vicarage near the church, and he thought it operated particularly well in new districts. (Hear, hear.) In conclusion, Mr. Newsham again thanked the committee for their courtesy, and referring to a discussion which had taken place at a meeting of the Diocesan Church Building Society, when he and Mr. Sharpe were present, he said he was opposed himself to building too large parsonage houses.

Mr. WILLIAMSON, after expressing his gratification at seeing Mr. Newsham present that day, said he cordially approved of the suggestion to proceed with the erection of the parsonage house as soon as they could obtain funds, and Mr. Newsham had been kind enough to open a way to find them a nucleus for that purpose. He had no doubt that their friend Mr. Sharpe would prepare them plans and specifications, and that he would do everything in his power to promote the work as he had done up to the present time. For himself he could only say that he should be happy to contribute his quota towards the fund to be raised for the erection of a parsonage house, and to assist in every way in his power to enable them to carry out Mr. Newsham's suggestion. (Applause.)

Mr. COUPLAND quite concurred, and said so far as he was concerned he should be glad to give his quota to carrying out the scheme.

Mr. T. STOREY said he was an outsider, but he quite concurred with Mr. Newsham's suggestion. He thought it was quite right to take the bull by the horns. His experience taught him that if they delayed there was some degree of interest lost, whereas if they went straight on to the end they were sooner able to accomplish the object they had in view.

Mr. PARRINGTON said he also concurred with the suggestion, but thought it would perhaps be better to prepare plans and have another meeting before they decided what should be done. At the same time he thought it was well that the thing should be in progress.

The CHAIRMAN said there seemed to be only one opinion, that it was desirable, if they were able to accomplish it, that it should be put forth as the opinion of the committee that a parsonage house would be attached to their new Church. They had already purchased a site, and it was well that it should be understood that it was the intention of the Committee to build a parsonage. He thought they should lose no time, but prepare plans and estimates as had been suggested by Mr. Parrington, so that they might be able to count the cost before they took any other steps, and knew what they would have to ask the public for to complete the work. They had not done badly so far, and he was quite sure, when they did set to work, that they would have no difficulty in raising the funds required. They were in this position. The amount of subscriptions received were about sufficient, or nearly so, to complete the church up to the point they had contracted for, that was up to the point in the tower where the present contract ended, and leaving them only the upper part of the tower to build. The committee passed a resolution on the day the foundation stone was laid, when they were so hospitably entertained by Mr. Williamson, that the tower should be proceeded with and completed. The plans were in readiness, and he hoped in the course of a few days that he should know what it would cost to complete the whole of the work with the exception of the fittings. He thought they would be able to complete the whole work for about £600 or £700, and a parsonage house would cost from £1,000 to £12,000. While on this subject he would make one remark with reference to parsonage houses. At the meeting to which Mr. Newsham had referred the question was fully discussed, and he would venture to point out one of the aspects of this question, and the advantage of having a good parsonage house. It was a fact that it was much easier at the present time to obtain an incumbent at £150 per year than it was to obtain a

curate. The situation of a gentleman occupying the position of an incumbent was superior to that of a curate. He had the control of the district himself, and a different class of persons were willing to accept incumbencies than those applying for curacies. They were gentlemen with means of their own, who were not content to take the subordinate position of curate. The Vicar of the Parish Church of Lancaster found it exceedingly difficult to meet with curates at all, and he had to pay a high rate for them, and he (Mr. Sharpe) believed that it would be much less difficult to obtain an incumbent for St. Paul's Church, Scotforth. It was desirable that they should take these facts into consideration, and build such a parsonage as would be an inducement to a good man to accept the incumbency. The Chairman then referred to the endowment fund, and said they had been promised £2,000 by two individuals as a benefaction—one of them being Mrs. Peacock, on condition that the Ecclesiastical Commissioners contributed £50 a year, and they had been appealed to, and he had hopes that the Commissioners would augment the living by that amount. He hoped from these sources, and what they would be able to add to the endowment fund, they would have at least £165 a year for the incumbent, independent of pew rents, which they might put down at £50 per annum; and independent, too, of any contribution they might receive from the Parish Church. (Hear, hear.) The Chairman, in conclusion, referred to the late Mr. Brockbank, and his efforts to promote the scheme for the erection of the church, and said there would be in the chancel of the church an arcade consisting of nine compartments, and he proposed to occupy these compartments with memorial brasses, as he thought them much more fitting than placing marble monuments upon the walls. If the committee approved of his proposal he would suggest that the first brass should be in memory of their dear friend Mr. Brockbank, who was the primitive promoter of their undertaking.

The CHAIRMAN then took the sense of the meeting on the desirability of erecting a parsonage house, and the meeting was unanimously in favour of the proposal.

On the motion of Mr. WILLIAMSON, seconded by Mr. PARRINGTON, a cordial vote of thanks was passed to the Chairman for presiding.