

## Introduction

In the late 1600s a number of Baslow residents gave in their wills money to the Poor, the Curate and the School (the charity school at Stanton Ford founded in the early 1600s). These donations were recorded in the vestry minutes at the time and publicised in 1720 on two boards erected at the rear of the north aisle of the Church. These boards, listing eleven donations made before 1700, are still in place. There is a third board with later entries. A visitor to the church today (with a good torch) can see that

*GEORGE WHITE of Bubnell gave by his will 3 Pound a year in land lying in Pilsley, the rent thereof to be paid viz: 10 Shil to the curate 10 Shil to the schoolmaster and 10 Shil to the poor of Baslow and Bubnell at White-Suntide and 10 Shil to the Curat 10 Shil to the Schoolmaster and 10 Shil to the said poor on the 5 of November for ever.*

The donations were often given in land, an indestructible asset, which has allowed some of them to survive. Rents were collected and payments made by the church vestry for two centuries. When the school at Stanton Ford closed in 1889, the Charities Commissioners stepped in and created The Baslow Charities

The governing document of The Baslow Charities is a Scheme dated 1889, updated 1898, with rules for the charities. The main headings are the administration the assets and the way the income is to be used.

## The Administration

There are eight trustees (from 1898), the Vicar ex officio who has always been appointed chairman, representative trustees two from Baslow and one each from Curbar Calver and Froggatt appointed by the Parish Council or equivalent, and 2 co-optative trustees.

*Note, when the when the school was founded and the donations were made, the Chapelry of Baslow included Curbar and Froggatt. Bubnell is included with Baslow*

The first meeting was on March 26<sup>th</sup> 1890. It was agreed to purchase a minute book and ledger, two handsome leather bound volumes: these and a tin box for documents are still in the possession of the Charities. A clerk was also appointed, a post held by the schoolmaster for many years and more recently by myself. Since 1990 there has been an unbroken series of trustees, minutes and accounts, with at least an annual meeting.

## The Assets

The assets of the Baslow Charities in 1889 were three parcels of land in Pilsley, Wheston and Hartington, and the freehold of the Stanton Ford property. There were also a few "New Consuls", proceeds of the sale of earlier shares in a Turnpike Trust dating from the 1800s. The Pilsley lands were sold in 1904 and the others 1930. The proceeds were invested by the Charity Commission in Consuls (2½% and 3½% government bonds). The Charities also received rent from Stanton Ford which was allocated entirely to the schools. The (freehold of) the property was sold in 1958 and the money invested in Treasury Bonds.

There were two other 19<sup>th</sup> century charities in Baslow, the Branson and Milne Charities with proceeds allocated to the poor of Baslow. They were administered by the Church until the 1920s when they transferred to the Baslow Charities trustees.

By the 1990s there were six sources of income, some charities in their own right, from which the income had to be divided so the recipients got the correct share as specified in the original donation. In 1993 the Charity Commission "de-invested", selling the bonds. Baslow chose to put the proceeds into the Charities Official Investment Fund (COIF). Subsequently the component charities were merged and then divided up, still in the correct proportions, into two separate named charities,

- the Educational Foundation with a share of the assets listed in 1889 and all the shares from the sale of the Stanton Ford property. The income is allocated equally to Baslow and Curbar Schools.
- the Charity for the Vicar and the Poor, with its share of the 1889 assets and the Branson & Milne Charities. Fifteen percent goes to the Vicar, and the rest to the Baslow Poor.

Initially the funds provided a significant income. Unfortunately inflation took its toll so the buying power today is only a fraction of what it was in 1889. However details can be traced through the ages and the old money is still allocated to the correct recipients as specified when the original gift was made. New money from the sale of Stanton Ford gives the schools a more reasonable annual cheque.

## The Distribution

The Scheme specifies that income for the schools be used for “the advancement of education of the children”. For many years it went to pupils with the good attendance records. In the year 1900 the best attenders got seven shillings each a large sum in those days and an real incentive for the children to go to school come what may. In due course a smaller sum was given to more children and the payments were finally phased out at the end of the 1900s. In its place the money was given to the schools for purchase of an item or items to be used in the education of the children.

From the start the trustees gave coal tickets worth about 6 shillings to 20 to 30 poor residents of Baslow. This continued until after the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War when cash was given instead. Each year the list was reviewed, with a slow change in names recorded in the minutes. The amount also increased a little so by the 1980s about 15 “poor” received £2 to £3 each. It was then decided to stop the regular payments, and give a larger sum as and when a situation arose.

The Rev Francis Gisbourne, the Vicar of Staveley left money in the 1820s to a large number of parishes for “the purchase of Flannel and Coarse Yorkshire Woollen Cloth for distribution amongst the poor”. Baslow’s share was £12.75 annually. The money is still paid and now amounts to about £35. It is not part of The Baslow Charities but is included in the payment to the poor.

Humphrey Chapman’s donation (Charity Boards) included 10 shillings to the poor of Calver Corbar and Froggott. This was duly paid but the amount was so small that it was augmented by the trustees to £1. It was known as The Curbar Bread money. In later years it was given given, with embarrassment, by the Curbar trustee to a suitable poor person of his choice. It was quietly dropped in the 1990s.

The Vicar has always received his share, all of it derived from the donations listed on the Charity Boards in the church. Originally it would have been an important addition to the curate’s income. Today the amount is small: sometimes he has to be persuaded to accept the cheque. Over half comes from the bequest made by George White (see above).

## Today

The trustees continue meet annually under the chairmanship of the Rector. This year it will be by email, the first year ever that there has not been a real meeting. As usual there will be a review of trustees, the acceptance of the accounts, and a decision about payments. Last year Baslow and Curbar schools each received £225, and the rector £7.34 There will be the usual discussion about how to spend the £40 it has received for the poor of Baslow. An unusual item this year is the investment of new money. The Charities have recently received £1350 cash back on changing bank accounts, the only new money received by the Baslow Charities since 1889. It is a going concern!

## Comment

Baslow is fortunate in having this piece of living history. There will be few villages where an active institution can be traced back nearly 350 years. Long may it continue.

NB I am also Clerk to the Trustees of the Baslow Charities

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