

## Christmas at the Mason's Arms, Eastby, 1876.

Annie Parker Greenwood grew up at the Mason's Arms in Eastby. Her father died in 1871 when she was 15 and from that time she and her mother Elizabeth ran the inn. Annie kept comprehensive diaries for the years 1875 to 1878 beginning when she was nineteen.

The diaries are in the possession of Elizabeth Greenwood's great-great granddaughter, Elizabeth Dawes, who kindly allowed me to transcribe them.



*Illustration: The Mason's Arms, Eastby, as it was before recent conversion into a private residence*

These extracts for Christmas 1876, when Annie was 21, coincide with the construction of Upper Barden Reservoir when the Masons' Arms was often frequented by engineers, contractors and navvies.

*20<sup>th</sup> December 1876 Wednesday – I had a Xmas Card this Morning from Richard Wilkinson, he evidently remembers my existence. [a former admirer]*

*23<sup>rd</sup> Saturday – I kissed Mr Hallam under some Mistletoe so he said he owed me a pair of gloves. \* [Bolland Hallam was a baker who lived on Main Street, Emsay]*

*24<sup>th</sup> Sunday – All covered with snow. I attended Divine Service at Emsay Church, the Church was splendidly decorated in very good style, our worthy Vicar [Revd Charles Hardman] was not very well.*

*25<sup>th</sup> Monday – Christmas Day – Snow covered all, rather frosty. Early this Morning came Mr Boardman and the Eastby Chapel Singers and they sung beautifully, and then any amount of little girls and boys. Later on Jack Preston, Henry Redfern Mason Phillip and Tom Harragan sung very well indeed. Taproom was filled with Navvies, some very decent they had their Xmas Box and went on their way rejoicing. A few Skiptonians in the Afternoon.*

*Peter Raich [a civil engineer on the reservoir] & Mar Cameron [John Cameron, Manager at the Reservoir Works] down in the Evening. My word they were up to the mark in their Scotch attire and did look well. We had quite a Concert in the Bar at night with some first class singing. Mason Phillip and James, Dave & Tom Harragan, John Rothwell, Jack Preston, etc., sung In good style, and little Tom [her 8 year old brother] sung the "Soldiers Tear", and the "Orphan Boy", bless him with his childish voice. Should not we all rejoice, for Jesus Christ is born today: "Christians awake, salute the happy Morn. Wherein the Saviour of Mankind was born."*

*26<sup>th</sup> Tuesday – Frosty, and snow covered all. The Embsay Brass band came and played for a few tunes, we gave them five shillings, the blooming old nannies did heel and toe it. Mamma sang "I cut my sticks and cleaned my brogs, etc." it suited them famously. Then the company in the Bar sung a few Glee's. We had a nice Afternoon.*

*30<sup>th</sup> Saturday – Early in the Morning came down the whole of the workmen of the Barden Moor, numbered about two hundred. The house was crammed as they all came in and entirely ruined the passage wallpaper. We were filled all day with navvies.*



*31<sup>st</sup> Sunday – This Morning I attended Divine Service at Embsay Church, heard an excellent sermon from our worthy vicar, our little Church was decorated with true artistic taste and skill; I walked on with the Newall family [they lived at Bower House, Eastby]. Then Bella Newall & me went up to Mr Heys [Thomas Hey, Manager of Eastby Mill, who later married Isabella Newall] and sat a good bit with him in his Bachelor Establishment, had a glass of Port with him and heard the New Years Eve Singers out. Then Bella and I walked with Mr Hey for our escort.*

*1<sup>st</sup> January 1877 Monday – This Morning came in very wet but sleet & snow in the Afternoon. Alf Clark brought in the New Year. Mr Cameron came down and wished me a happy new year. I hope it will be so, In the Evening Dave Harragan played the Concertina and Mason Phillip sung, so we had a jolly night. Well we are beginning another Year. I hope it will please our Heavenly Father to make it bot prosperous & happy for us.*

*\* At Christmas 1875 Annie also records: "I kissed Mr. Mattock [the Grocer] under the Mistletoe, of of course won a pair of Gloves." We know little about this curious Christmas custom and would be grateful for any information about it.*

*David Turner, Embsay-with-Eastby Historical Research Group (2019)*