



BOWDON

JUBILEE
OF THE
URBAN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL

1894

—

1944.

Price 1/-

THE JUBILEE OF
THE
BOWDON
URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL.



1894 — 1944

FIFTY YEARS OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT.

FOREWORD.

In presenting this Brochure in compliment to the Jubilee of the Bowdon Urban District Council, thanks are due to the Rev. G. Armstrong Bannister, of Bowdon, for the interesting notes on Bowdon of the past which he has been so good as to write specially for it. Also to Mr. W. Jackson, Deputy Clerk of the Bowdon Urban District Council who provides data that cannot fail to be of interest as indicating in some measure the activities of the Council during the 50 years of its existence and it is to be hoped that the work of both will meet with the appreciation of readers.

PERCY BROOKSHAW,
Chairman.

CHAIRMEN of the BOWDON URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL.

Year.	Name.
1894 - 1906	Henry Theodore Gaddum
1906 - 1908	Joseph Watson Sidebotham
1908 - 1910	R. A. Warburton
1910 - 1912	T. Hopkin
1912 - 1914	Dr. E. J. Sidebotham
1914 - 1915	J. H. Whitworth
1915 - 1917	William Hampson
1917 - 1919	Joseph Kenworthy
1919 - 1921	E. H. Roylance
1921 - 1923	H. A. Reed
1923 - 1924	K. Barker
1924 - 1925	Dr. E. J. Sidebotham
1925 - 1927	E. H. Longson
1927 - 1928	P. Higson
1928 - 1930	G. Preston Rhodes
1930 - 1932	George Clarke
1932 - 1934	J. T. Chester
1934 - 1936	F. B. Dunkerley
1936 - 1938	George Clarke Bailey
1938 - 1940	John Fallows
1940 - 1942	William Watson Dawson
1942 - 1944	J. H. Ashworth
1944	Percy Brookshaw.

COUNCILLORS and OFFICIALS of the BOWDON
URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL, 1944.

NORTH WARD

Edward Morris Falk
Thomas Gray Hill
William Godfrey Harrison

SOUTH WARD

George Clarke Bailey
John William Cherry
James Kay

EAST WARD

William Watson Dawson
Joseph Henry Ashworth
John Fallows

WEST WARD

Thomas Henry Ormson
Hugh Colley Irvine
Percy Brookshaw

CLERK and SOLICITOR of the COUNCIL

Willis Paterson

DEPUTY CLERK and CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER
RATING and VALUATION OFFICER

William Jackson

MEDICAL OFFICER of HEALTH

Dr. W. N. W. Kennedy

SURVEYOR and SANITARY INSPECTOR

A. E. Shimmings.

BOWDON.

To the casual observer Bowdon is just one of the numerous residential districts on the southerly outskirts of the great city of Manchester. The lover of Cheshire antiquities might as readily declare that of two ancient places linked together by the Roman road known as North Watling Street, Manchester has outgrown its Cheshire neighbour beyond all recognition, but Bowdon has played its part in the growth of the modern world by providing fresh air and sylvan quiet for many busy men who have been active in the development of Cottonopolis. The great oaks of Manchester had begun to disappear before the Christian era, but the downland of Bowdon, though once described as "waste," is noteworthy for its fine trees, and in spring-time its quiet roads and rural lanes compose a picture of leafy beauty which charms the eye. There are nooks and quaint corners in Bowdon which, though in such close proximity to the large industrial districts of the North-west, still suggest to the observant eye that the romance of the past has not yet been completely vanquished by modern development. Bowdon is more than a rural district converted into a dormitory suburb. It is an ancient township with a history of its own.

The late Mr. T. A. Coward, a distinguished naturalist and local historian, himself a resident of Bowdon, remarks in one of his books on Cheshire that "the story of Cheshire is a conglomeration of truth and fiction, history and tradition. Dogmatically to affirm that any incident is historical, or that it is mere tradition, is dangerous. We must not overlook, however, the undoubted fact that most tradition has some historical foundation." Bowdon has had part and place in some of the many episodes that make up the story of the famous and often turbulent men of Cheshire, "stout, bold, and hardy, of stature tall and mighty, impatient of wrong, ready to resist the enemy or stranger, as Thomas Fuller says in his *Book of Worthies*.

Situated near the border of Lancashire, Bowdon escaped most of the bitter fighting and destruction which fell upon those parts of the County Palatine lying nearer to the invading Welsh and Danes, but there is a tradition, slender but authentic, that in 1644 the "Scottish Armie in Cheshire" met the Roundheads in a battle on "Bowdon Hill." In the same year Prince Rupert

marched his army from Bowdon Downs along the sandy lane running from the old church, now called the Firs, on their way to Cheadle, where they dispersed the forces of the Parliament.

Another Prince may be said to have had some connection with Bowdon, though indirectly. A party of troopers of the army of Bonnie Prince Charlie reached Altrincham on Sunday, December 1, 1745. Although they got no further it is said that their intention was to visit Bowdon and Dunham Hall.

A link with the past is afforded by the history of the mail coach service from London to Manchester, which in 1750 ran regular coaches along the Chester Road through Bowdon. Such notable visitors as Emerson, Oliver Wendell Holmes, and Washington Irving are mentioned as passengers. The knowing eye may still pick out some of the old post houses and turnpike cottages; others were demolished when the Chester road was widened a few years ago.

The most conspicuous feature of the ridge on which the greater part of Bowdon stands is the Parish Church of St. Mary the Virgin. It is described by Mr. Arthur Mee in his "Cheshire," in the King's England Series of guidebooks. He speaks of it as "one of the noblest churches for miles around. Great and imposing it stands, the exterior impressive with a splendid tower and many pinnacles, the interior beautiful with fine woodwork, a lovely canopied pulpit, a handsome font, and vivid windows. The church was rebuilt last century [1860], and its oldest possessions are collected in the north transept. Among Saxon fragments is a stone with an elaborate cross . . . among Norman stones is one thought to be from a chancel arch. There is a worn font 500 years old . . . very interesting is a knightly figure thought to be William Baguley of about 1300, who lies in chain armour . . . nearly as old is a broken monument of a man grasping a short sword . . . there is a huge old chest with four locks. A rich monument in the Carrington chapel has sculptures of William Brereton and his wife in 17th century costume, and there is a beautiful marble by Westmacott [the Assheton monument]. In the Dunham chapel lie three generations of remarkable men, the Booths of the 17th and 18th centuries, coming into the peerage first as Delameres and then as Earls of Warrington."

A brief history of the Parish Church of Bowdon, together with a full account of the antiquities found during the demolition of the old church in 1858, may be found in the handsome booklet published by Mr. Frank Falkner in 1926 to record the lecture given by Mr. J. J. Phelps, M.A., to the members of the Lancashire and Cheshire Antiquarian Society at Bowdon in 1925. It is believed that a tall ornamented cross once stood on the high ground near the little Saxon church of "Bogedone," which was replaced by a Norman church. Mr. Phelps gave it as his opinion that the Norman church existed before the time of that knight whose effigy lies in the present church. The antiquity of the parish is evident from the record in Domesday Book. The entry

states that at "Bogedone" there was a priest and a church with "half a hide of land," approximately one hundred acres. The proverb "Every man is not born to be Vicar of Bowdon" shows that the living was regarded as a desirable one. Mr. Phelps suggested that the foundations of the original pre-Conquest church may still lie below the present floor level. There are similar foundations at Overborough, which also stands on North Watling Street.

In the churchyard at Bowdon, close to the east end of the church, there is a massive and venerable yew tree, a reminder of the fame of the bowmen of Cheshire, who were honoured by being recruited for a Royal Bodyguard, with special rates of pay and other privileges. It is more than probable that many a clothyard arrow has sped across the field of battle to transfix the enemies of the King, hurled on its fell mission by the spring of the Bowdon yews and the stout arms of the men of the parish. The part played by Bowdon men in the present conflict suggests that softer times have not weakened the stock.

At a later date the inhabitants of Bowdon were fond of flat-racing and at the Wakes races were held in a field near the Firs, then called Burying Lane, doubtless because a funeral cortege would pass this way to the churchyard. Both sexes competed in the races and the prizes for female winners were smocks or "shifts." There was a rule for women competitors which stated that they were not to "strip any further than the shift before starting," which suggests that they took the sport somewhat seriously. A popular side-show was bull-baiting, a large tree standing before the Griffin Inn being used as a grandstand. This cruel sport was eventually abolished, at the instance, it is believed, of a popular Vicar of Bowdon.

There is a hint of Bowdon's situation within the estate of the Earl of Stamford and Warrington in the modern name of one of its chief thoroughfares, Stamford Road, and in the names of Enville and Winton Roads. The present Dunham Massey Hall is certainly the fourth building in the succession, and there were probably others. The original house is supposed to have been the fortified home of one Eluard, a Saxon freeman, who was dispossessed by the Norman Hamo de Masci. Mr. Coward tells us that the house or castle of the de Mascis was successfully held in a siege by Henry II. The modern Massey is derived from the Norman family name. The present building was erected in the 1730's and was greatly improved at the beginning of the present century. The Hall, with its well-kept grounds and fine park, is noteworthy for art treasures, books and manuscripts. Mention must be made of the "Crucifixion" carved in lime-wood. Mr. J. Swarbrick ("Dunham Massey Hall") believes this to be the actual work which the London Diarist John Evelyn saw Grinling Gibbons carving in 1671.

Through the generosity of the Earls of Stamford the parks have been a resort for holiday makers from the surrounding

districts for many years, though probably few of the many visitors have observed the barrow or burial mound to be seen from one of the main walks. An interesting account of the Whitsuntide visits to "Dunham Woods" by canal boat from Knot-mill may be found in the collected works of Mrs. Gaskell ("Libbie Marsh's Three Eras.").

About a mile from the parish church, in Railway Street, Altrincham, Bowdon Station was opened for traffic on July 20th, 1849. The first train carried sixty-five passengers and made the journey to Oxford Road Station, Manchester, in an hour. Henceforward, Bowdon was on the map of modern communications. It is interesting to notice that the Manchester, South Junction, and Altrincham Railway caused the extinction of the most rapid means of transit between the district and the city then existing. When the two main line companies who were concerned with the raising of the necessary capital for the new line bought the Earl of Ellesmere's interest in it, it was agreed that the Earl should close down his passenger boat service on the Bridgewater Canal. Thereafter a "sail on the water" was the almost exclusive privilege of Sunday School scholars on the occasion of their annual outings.

War, which has played so notable a part in the story of Cheshire, soon joined with the railway to develop Bowdon. The Franco-Prussian War of 1870 brought considerable prosperity to Manchester and before long city merchants and manufacturers were building large and imposing residences in Bowdon. Mr. Dugald Macfadyen, in his "Life and Letters of Alex. Mackennal," remarks that "the cotton magnates of Manchester had built themselves large houses, beautiful for situation, each standing in a garden which elsewhere might have served for a park."

The district as we know it to-day was coming to the birth, and soon the downland was covered with houses and gardens.

In the meantime a society was formed in Altrincham which has done more than any other to spread the knowledge of Bowdon far and wide. In the year 1861 the Altrincham Agricultural Society was formed. This Society subsequently organised the largest one-day agricultural show in the country. We are indebted to Mr. Tom Johnson, O.B.E., of West Road, Bowdon, for the following note on the Society. Mr. Johnson has been connected with it for many years and is well known as the pioneer of nature-study and gardening in the elementary schools. He writes "I am told that the first Show was held in a meadow behind the Swan Inn at Bollington, on the left bank of the Bollin. For some years afterwards the Show was held in a field on Dunham Road, where Groby Road is now. Then, I think, it moved to Devisdale. There was dancing in the evening after these early shows to music by the Altrincham Borough Band, under Mr. Charles Ashley, and by the Band of the 3rd Cheshire Rifle Volunteers, Bandmaster Mr. Duncan C. Moody."

Three Nonconformist denominations are represented in Bowdon,

Congregational, Methodist, and Presbyterian. The congregations have interesting histories, and have attracted to themselves persons of talent and reputation, but this note is confined to the existing ecclesiastical buildings.

The Bowdon Downs Congregational Church was opened in 1848. It was intended to build again, but the problem of securing another site proved insoluble and so the present building is an enlargement of the earlier one, the work being undertaken in 1868. The exterior is in the early Perpendicular style and the interior is spacious, with nave and transepts. A feature of the interior is a series of mural marbles behind the pulpit. The organ is a very fine instrument. There is a lecture hall adjoining the church. The British Schools in Oxford Road, Altrincham, are the property of the congregation. The Mackennal Institute, which forms a part of these buildings, is a memorial to the Rev. Alex. Mackennal, a former minister of the church and in his day a leading figure in his denomination.

Although Altrincham was visited several times by John Wesley and is mentioned in his "Journal," there is no record of a visit to Bowdon, though doubtless he passed through it on his way to Booth Bank, a hamlet he visited several times, holding services under a tree, the site of which is still to be seen. Bowdon Methodism sprang from the Wesleyan Chapel in Bank Street, Altrincham. Its first home was a chapel in West Road, off Stamford Road, on the "Bell Clapper Field," afterwards called "Bell Field." This chapel was opened in 1857 and has since been demolished to make way for the three houses standing on its site. The present handsome structure in Enville Road was opened in June, 1880, after considerable delay in its construction, due to a subsidence of two of the piers carrying the lantern. It is a fine example of Gothic of the 13th century and is crowned by a noble dome standing on an octagonal lantern, which is a landmark for miles around. Indeed the skyline of Bowdon in summer, viewed from the lower ground on the East and the South, is an exceptionally fine one, with the towers and spires of the various churches rising above the trees, the dome of the Methodist church lending a feature somewhat unusual to an English urban prospect. The church possesses an excellent organ and a fine window at the east end, over a beautiful marble reredos illuminated in gilt work. The roomy site includes a large hall of two stories, a manse, and a chapel-keeper's house. The Bowdon Vale Methodist Chapel is in Priory Street.

Trinity Presbyterian Church, in Delarrere Road, was completed in 1872, during the pastorate of the first minister. The site was once known as the "Radish Field," which indicates the nature of the local industry, for this land, sloping down to Railway Street, Altrincham, was once covered with fertile market gardens. The exterior of the building is in a pure style of Gothic, with a spire of 120 feet. The church stands on a raised foundation with sloping lawns, which lends considerable height to the building. The interior is in the Basilican manner, with walls of

decorated brickwork and handsome pitch-pine furnishings and roof. There is a triple apse window of very good design, representing the Christian virtues, in Memory of Mr. Charles Macdonald of Alder Bank. The organ is at the west end. The spacious lecture hall and classrooms are a part of the building. The Mission Hall in Stamford Street, Altrincham, belongs to the congregation. It was built when the old Victoria Street Mission was abandoned.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT.

It is a principle of the British Constitution that all persons and communities shall be allowed to manage their own affairs, so long as they do so regularly and according to law. Those whose comfort and welfare are to be considered, who will be the first and chief sufferers through bad or neglectful government, are much more likely to know what ought to be done than strangers, however well intentioned. The powers of local governments are fixed by the common law, by charter from the Crown, and by Act of Parliament.

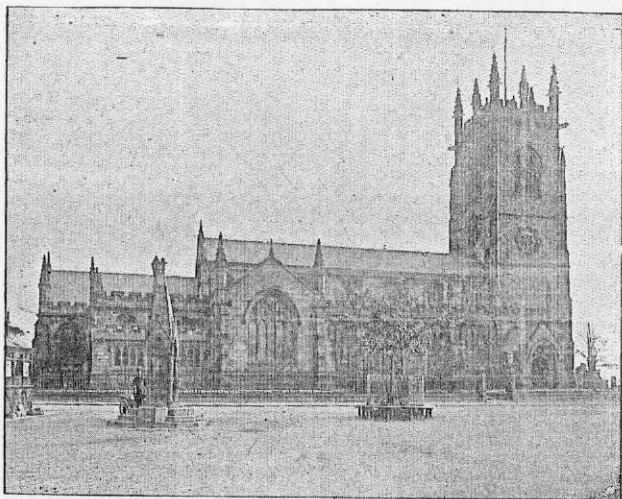
From Tudor Times until the Victorian era Local Government was under the jurisdiction of a multitude of bodies ranging from the simple Parish Vestry to the Court of Quarter Sessions. Every department of public responsibility was managed by a different board, the members of which were elected at different times, possessed various qualifications, and held differing views about the execution of their duties. No serious attempt was made to remedy this state of affairs until 1871, when an Act was passed constituting the Local Government Board. The supervision of the laws relating to the public health, the relief of the poor, and local government were thus concentrated in one department of the central government. The country was divided for the purpose of local government into counties, which were in turn divided into parishes and districts. The larger counties were later subdivided into divisions, which are separately represented in Parliament. Three of the counties, Chester, Durham, and Lancaster, are called counties Palatine, their owners having ancient and extensive powers of government.

Several parishes were sometimes joined together to form one district, while on the other hand a large parish was frequently divided into a number of districts. Bowdon is an excellent example of the latter practice.

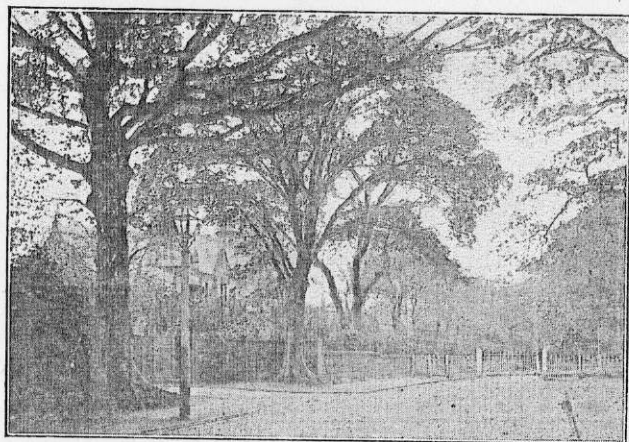
In 1875 the Public Health Act was passed, for consolidating and amending existing law, and England was divided for the purpose of the Act into

1. Urban Sanitary Districts ; 2. Rural Sanitary Districts.

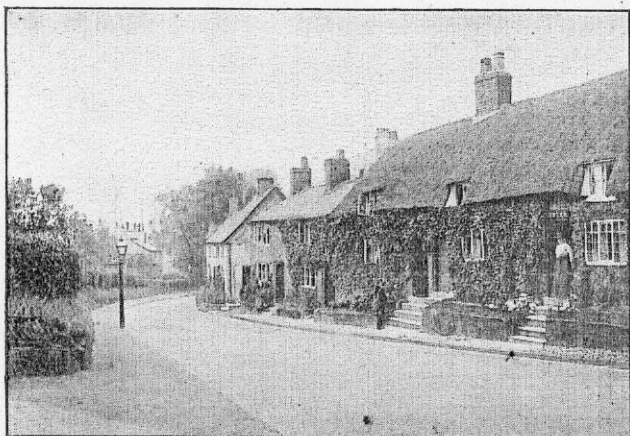
These districts were made subject to the local authority such as the Town Council, the Local Board, or the Board of Guardians, who were invested with power to administer the provisions of the Act. Under this Act Bowdon became an Urban Sanitary Authority.



Bowdon Parish Church



Green Walk, Bowdon.



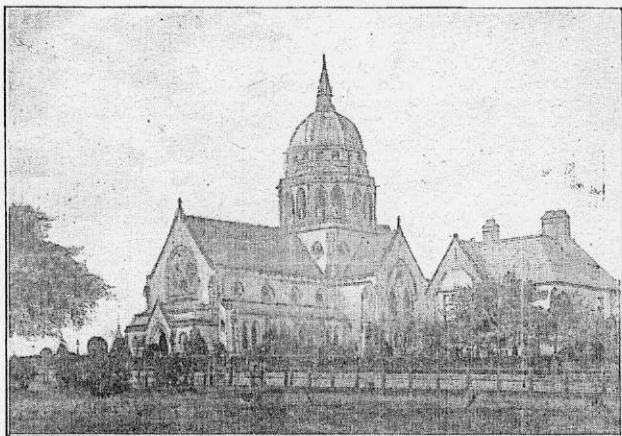
Old Cottages, Bowdon.



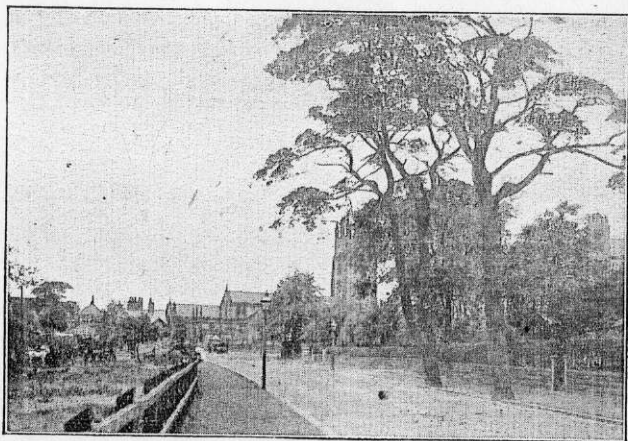
The Bollin Valley.



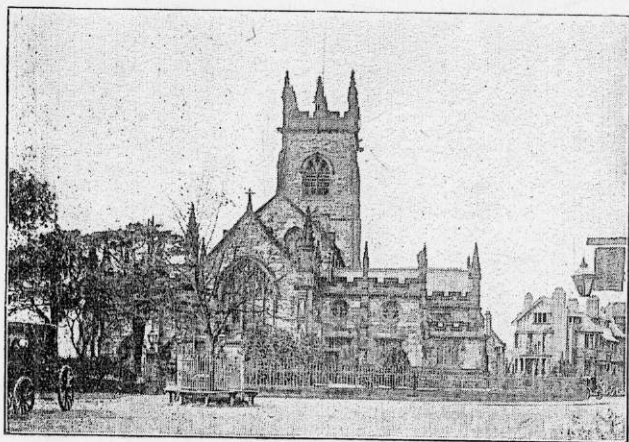
Langham Road, Bowdon.



Bowdon Methodist Church



The Firs, Bowdon.



Bowdon Parish Church.

The principal objects of local government are the preservation of the peace and good order ; the education of the people ; the relief of the poor ; the erection and maintenance of public buildings, lunatic asylums, halls and libraries ; the making, paving, and lighting of roads and streets ; the repairing of bridges ; the regulation of markets, hackney coaches and public carriages ; the laying down of rules for preserving the public health and convenience, etc., etc. The money required for these purposes is raised by levying rates. Every person is rated according to the value of the premises he occupies. The sum required from the rate is estimated and each person liable is called upon to pay his portion.

In spite of the reform brought about by the passing of the Acts of 1871 and 1875 there was still serious overlapping in the administration of local government. The wasteful duplication of effort attracted criticism from all sides. The electorate demanded further reform and centralisation, and statesmen applied themselves urgently to the task of providing acceptable schemes of consolidation.

On 13th August, 1888, Queen Victoria affixed her royal signature to "An Act to amend the laws relating to Local Government in England and Wales, and for other purposes connected therewith." The Queen thereby ratified the most progressive and beneficial work of legislation which the English people had accomplished for five hundred years. This Act created County Councils. Under this Act very wide powers were transferred to the county councils, who could in turn delegate any of their powers to the Local Boards or Urban Sanitary Authorities, with certain exceptions so far as the raising of money was concerned. An Act to make further provision for Local Government in England and Wales, known as the Local Government Act, 1894, became Law on the 5th March, 1894, and under this Act, to quote section 21, "As from the appointed day, Urban Sanitary Authorities shall be called Urban District Councils, and their districts shall be called Urban Districts." The Chairman of a district council is, by virtue of his office, a justice of the peace for the county in which the district is situated.

The first election of Urban District Councillors was held in Bowdon on 15th December, 1894, when the following gentlemen were elected :—

Joseph Alderley.	Samuel Walkey Gillett.
John Ferguson.	James Hall.
Henry Theodore Gaddum.	Arthur Adlington Haworth.
David Senior.	Richard Arthur Warburton.
Edward John Sidebotham.	Frederic George Whittall.
Roberts Wright Trenbath.	

Officials : H. W. Evason, Clerk of the Council ; James Pownall, Surveyor and Inspector of Nuisances.

The Local Board held its last meeting on Friday, 28th December, 1894, Mr. H. T. Gaddum in the Chair. The first

meeting of the Bowdon Urban District Council was summoned by the Clerk as Returning Officer to meet on Monday, 31st December, 1894. At this meeting Mr. H. T. Gaddum was unanimously elected to the Chair of the newly formed Council. The first Resolution adopted by the meeting included the clause "That the fine for non-acceptance or resignation of office by a Councillor be fixed at One Guinea." It was intimated that the Clerk was in receipt of a salary of £40 a year and, as Collector, of a further sum of Five per Cent. on the amount of the General District Rate collected, which usually amounted to £90. It was decided that members of the Council should hold office for the full term of three years and that the whole of the members should retire tri-ennially.

The official Seal of the Council is unique in as much as it bears the date 1864; it is presumed that in preparing the Seal the makers reversed the figure "9." It is evident that the Council, conscious of the antiquity of Bowdon, were as contemptuous of an error of a mere thirty years as our Prime Minister's father was of the famous "dots" which figured in official statistics.

ACTIVITIES OF THE COUNCIL.

Sewerage and Sewage Disposal. Sewerage and Sewage Disposal have always been one of the major problems of a local authority. In 1880 the Bowdon Local Board of Health instructed the late Mr. Chas. E. Newton, Civil Engineer, to prepare plans for the construction of a Sewage Disposal Works on land adjacent to Bow Lane. In 1904 the Council purchased some 22 acres of this land and constructed the existing Sewage Disposal Works at a cost of £9,317.

Highways and Street Lighting. The Council is responsible for the repair and maintenance of some 11 miles of roads, and although there are still a number of unadopted roads the residents of Bowdon have every reason to be proud of the Highways of the District. The use of "setts" and paving stones has always been rejected, and in spite of modern means of transport Bowdon still retains that rural charm which attracted the early residents to the district. The first public seats were erected round the trees near the church in November, 1899. This service has been extended and to-day there are few roads in Bowdon without a public seat.

PUBLIC HEALTH AND ASSOCIATED SERVICES.

The Public Health service is probably the service best known to the general public; the scavenging of the roads and the removal and disposal of household refuse, the treatment of infectious diseases (including smallpox) are all functions of the Council. The Council is a constituent member of the North Cheshire Joint Hospital Board, and through the activities of this Board a scheme for the provision of adequate hospital accommodation for the treatment of infectious diseases is in preparation.

Bowdon participates in the Cheshire County Maternity and Child Welfare Scheme, established in 1916 in accordance with the Notification of Births Acts, 1907 and 1915, and children under five are visited in the home by County Health Visitors and there is a Welfare Centre at the Methodist Schools, Priory Street. Complete facilities for ante-natal examinations, the provision of consultant specialists, hospital, nursing home, and dental treatment for mothers and babies, ultra violet ray treatment, tonsil and adenoid operations, and the supply of free milk are provided under the County Scheme (there is a Clinic at Sale). The County Council also provides for the examination and special treatment of definite and suspected cases of tuberculosis, for which there is a dispensary at the General Hospital, Altrincham. Amongst other services administered by the Public Health Department, the Council act as agents for the County Council in the carrying out of the Rats and Mice Destruction Act 1919.

In 1939 there were 250 self-controlled street lamps, all of which were illuminated from sunset to mid-night, and a skeleton lighting system was maintained throughout the hours of darkness. Since the Black-out restrictions were enforced, Bowdon's street lamps have been identified by a band of luminous paint.

Parks and

Allotments In 1896, as a result of a petition, the Council rented a plot of land off Vicarage Lane for use as allotments. From time to time the area under cultivation has been increased, and to-day there are eighty-four allotments. The present site was purchased by the Council in 1910 for £264.

In 1896 a Recreation Ground was opened at the bottom of Vale Road, which provides facilities for football and similar games; there are children's swings, plank swing, climbing tower, etc., and a sand pit for young children. The Recreation Ground has been the venue for many happy field days, sports and gala.

Denzell House and Gardens were presented to the Council in 1938 by Mr. C. J. Lamb and Miss S. Lamb in memory of their parents, and in order that the grounds might always be opened to the public. The gardens, some 10 acres in extent, provide facilities for Tennis and Bowls and are well known throughout the north for the beauty of the many flowering shrubs and trees. A prominent horticulturist, in a report to the Council, said that Denzell Gardens contain the finest collection of Maples in the north of England.

The Council has adopted the Government's "Grow more Food" policy and since 1939 a large portion of the gardens has been turned over to vegetable production, the produce being sold direct to the public at retail prices.

Tradition records that some £30,000 were spent on the house alone, and that a party of Italian artists was brought over to

decorate the drawing room ceiling, and that they took three months over the work. On the outbreak of war, Denzell House was taken over by the Ministry of Health as a Hostel in connection with the Government Evacuation Scheme and since 1939 some 757 mothers and 25 young children have been housed in Denzell. Apart from the ordinary work as a hostel, Denzell House has on two occasions been used as an emergency Rest Centre, when mothers and young children from Bootle during the Merseyside "Blitz", and London during the recent attacks by P-planes, have rested there prior to proceeding to their billets.

Fire and Ambulance

Brigade. In 1925 the Hale and Bowdon Joint Fire Brigade and Ambulance Committee was formed for the purpose of providing adequate Fire protection and Ambulance service for the Urban Districts of Hale and Bowdon. A Fire and Ambulance Station was established in Cecil Road, Hale. On the outbreak of war the Fire Brigade was merged with the National Fire Service, but the Ambulance Service is still maintained by the Joint Committee and the use of the Ambulance is available free of charge to all residents of the Urban District.

British Restaurant. In 1941 in response to a request by the Minister of Food to all local authorities, the Bowdon Urban District Council opened a British Restaurant at the Bowdon Vale Men's Club, Vicarage Lane, and it is interesting to note that Bowdon was amongst the first nine Local Authorities in Great Britain to establish a British Restaurant. The initial plans catered for 100 mid-day meals per day and the staff was provided by the Women's Voluntary Service, but it was found that these arrangements were totally inadequate to meet the demand. Extensions to the Kitchen and Dining Room were made and a regular supervisor and kitchen staff were engaged and at the present time over 400 meals per day are being served. Since the Restaurant was opened 181,167 meals have been served, and it is Bowdon's proud boast that after meeting all charges including amortisation of capital the Bowdon British Restaurant has shown a profit since its inception.

Civil Defence. On the coming into operation of the Air Raid Precautions Act, 1937, the Council associated themselves with the Hale Urban District Council in the formation of a Joint Air Raid Precautions Committee, (Civil Defence); this Committee is responsible as agent of the County Council (the Planning Authority) for the carrying out of all Orders, Rules and Regulations in connection with Civil Defence, including Rescue, Demolition, Road Repair, Decontamination etc., etc. The Wardens and Fire Guard organisation is an entirely voluntary one and has a personnel of over 450.

Government Evacuation

Scheme. Since the outbreak of the War Bowdon has received over 1000 mothers and young children and unaccompanied school children and these have been billeted without

compulsion. In addition to private Billets, hostels have been provided for relief of Householders and two for Waifs and Strays; the Council was also actively associated with the Cheshire County Council in the establishment of a Maternity Home for evacuated expectant mothers at Southfield, Richmond Road, and over 750 babies have been born there since 1939.

Coal Distribution

Order. The Council is responsible for the carrying out of the Coal Distribution Order, 1943, and a Local Fuel Overseer has been appointed, and equitable distribution of fuel has been maintained.

Holidays

at Home In response to the Government's appeal to restrict travel the Council initiated Holidays at Home, and since 1942 attractive programmes have been arranged during the last week in July, which is the local holiday week.

Bowling Competitions, Cricket Festivals, Children's organised picnics, entertainments, sports and allotment shows have been arranged and the residents of Bowdon have been privileged to hear some of the finest Military and Brass Bands in the Country, as well as Orchestral Concerts.

In connection with the Holidays at Home weeks various War Charities have benefited largely from collections taken.

Finance and Statistics. Before giving any financial or statistical particulars, it may be convenient to remind readers that the Committee which controls the finance of the Urban District Council is the Finance Committee; and it is laid down by statute that, except for certain provisions which the Council is bound to make, no expenditure of the Council can be incurred except upon a resolution of the Council passed on an estimate submitted by the Finance Committee. For this reason, all other Committees of the Council must submit their annual estimates for each forthcoming year, and any revision of such estimates, for the consideration of the Finance Committee. In addition to the control of finance, the general functions of the Finance Committee are :—

- (a) to advise the Council on the financial aspects of all proposals submitted.
- (b) to advise the Council as to loans and methods of borrowing, and on the financing of capital expenditure by loans or otherwise.
- (c) to advise the Council on the amount to be raised by rate.

The Council, after consideration of the Budget of Estimates each year, in which credit is given for all income estimated to be received from Government Grants and from all other sources

other than rates, decides (after considering the Finance Committee's recommendation) the poundage necessary to meet the rate requirement of the various Services, this poundage is added to poundage precepted by the County Council, and a rate for the full amount required is made. On the back of the Rate Demand Note will be found a statement giving particulars of

- (a) the poundages called for, the Services administered by the Urban District Council
- (b) the Services administered by the County Council
- (c) the Credits (deducted from the above) received by the County Council and the Urban District Council.

In a booklet written to mark the fiftieth year of the existence of the Urban District Council it might be thought that the record would include financial comparisons between the present time and fifty years ago. But such comparisons would, for the most part, serve no useful purpose and might be misleading, as the Services required and maintained by the Council to-day bear little or no comparison with the services of 1894.

The financial policy of the Bowdon Urban District Council has always been service with economy, to keep the rate poundage as steady as possible from year to year, and to avoid violent fluctuations in the rates.

General Statistics.

1.	Population :- (estimated) 1944	2991
2.	Rateable Value 1894	£27444 5 0
	" " 1944	£40430 0 0

Rate Poundages

		General	Rate	Only
1894 - 5	1. 9			
1895 - 9	1. 10	"	"	"
1899 - 1904	2. 0	"	"	"
1904 - 16	2. 4	"	"	"
1916 - 17	1. 11	"	"	"
1917 - 18	1. 8	"	"	"
1918 - 19	1. 10	"	"	"
1919 - 20	2. 9	"	"	"
1920 - 21	4. 0	"	"	"
1921 - 24	4. 4	"	"	"
1924 - 25	5. 0	"	"	"
1925 - 26	4. 2	"	"	"
1926 - 27	4. 0	"	"	"
× 1927 - 28	8. 8			
1928 - 29	8. 10			
1929 - 30	9. 2			
1930 - 31	10. 2			
1931 - 32	8. 6			
1932 - 35	8. 4			
1935 - 37	8. 6			
1937 - 38	8. 9			
1938 - 39	9. 0			
1939 - 40	9. 7			
1940 - 41	9. 11			
1941 - 42	9. 10			
1942 - 45	9. 7			

× from 1st April 1927 the Poor and District Rates were combined and in 1930, when, under the Local Government Act, 1929, Boards of Guardians were abolished, the County Council became the responsible authority for Public Assistance.

3. Rateable value per head of population in 1944
£13 10 4
4. Rates payable per head of population in 1944
£6 9 6½
5. Product of a Penny Rate in 1944 £164 15 9
6. Percentage allowance to Owners under section 11 (1) of the Rating and Valuation Act, 1925, where rateable value does not exceed £12 - 10%
7. Total Gross Revenue Expenditure on all Accounts for the year 1943-44 £7401 14 6
8. General Rate Fund Balance at 31/3/44
£1767 9 7

It is worthy of note that the Council closed its Financial Year on the 31st March 1944, with a 100% collection of Rates.

The foregoing pages deal briefly with the major activities of the Bowdon Urban District Council. There are many other functions of a minor character, not referred to herein, which call for action from time to time, but within the limits of the space available, it has not been found possible to recount the steps taken to exercise these numerous minor functions.

SAMUEL BUTLER.

Printer,

105, George Street, Altrincham.
