



Arkengarthdale Church of England School

PRESS RELEASE

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Tributes paid to 360 years of education at Arkengarthdale School



Clark Stones (pictured 2nd from right) the oldest resident ex-student of Arkengarthdale School. Also featured in the photograph (left to right) are Clark's son Philip Stones, grandchildren Jack and Olivia Stones and son Robert Stones.

Blue skies, wall-to-wall sunshine, inspiring displays, tasty strawberry teas, plus over two-hundred visitors with memories to share were the perfect ingredients to create a day to remember in the history of Arkengarthdale School.

With the unique Arkengarthdale landscape providing a stunning backdrop for the event, crowds flocked to see the exhibition which tracked the schools quite extraordinary history. To add to this truly memorable event, visitors enjoyed delicious strawberry teas on the school playing field, where there was a great atmosphere, with a real buzz and warmth, as everyone shared their stories and caught up with old friends.

The rich heritage of the school was celebrated with visitors from across the country, reaching out to those who were evacuated to the school during the war. It was wonderful to welcome such a large alumni which included Clarice Grimshaw (nee Hird) who, at 88, was the oldest ex-student at the event. Clarice was joined by



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Bill Martin, his sister Eileen, and Norman Patterson who were evacuated from Gateshead and London during the war.



Bill and Eileen Martin

It was an extra-special day for Clark Stones, the oldest ex-student resident in Arkengarthdale, as the celebration coincided with his 85th birthday. Clark was delighted to attend the event and together with his sons Robert and Philip, and grandchildren Jack and Olivia, represented three generations of his family educated at the school. Clark said: "It is a great honour to have been a student at Arkengarthdale School which has served the dale so well for 360 years. As a pupil, I remember the surge of children and staff as the evacuees joined us, many of whom returned to live here in later years, such is the draw of Arkengarthdale. Throughout the school's history one thing has been constant and that is the marvellous support from staff, children, families and friends. This has ensured our students have always received an excellent education and the very best start in life, going on to do great things."

As well as the Stones family, there were a number of other families present who had attended the school for many generations. This included the Atkinsons from Faggergill, with three generations of ex-students at the celebration.



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Left to Right: Mary, Laurence, Richard, Michael and Ellen Atkinson from Fagnergill

Charles Cody, Chair of governors, concluded: "The event was a fitting tribute to a school which has touched the lives and holds a special place in the hearts of so many people. The afternoon could not have been better and was made possible by an incredible team of volunteers who stepped forward to offer their help and support. It is perhaps this wonderful community spirit that will leave a lasting legacy. It certainly made the day even more special and demonstrates, despite the closure of the school, the underlying and enduring strength of our community."

Photographs from the celebratory event can be viewed on the facebook page called 'Arkengarthdale C of E School - celebrating 360 years'. Please visit <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1186417878185158/> for further details.