

Remembering Revival: Lowestoft 1921

by Matthew Pickhaver

The Lowestoft Revival was a powerful movement of God's Spirit that spread throughout East Anglia and North East Scotland in the 1920s, bringing thousands to faith in Jesus Christ.

Duration: 57:56

Scripture: 2 Chronicles 7:14, Matthew 6:33, John 14:12

Topics: "Revival History"

Description

In the sermon transcript, Douglas Brown preached about the story of Jesus healing the lame man at the pool of Bethesda from John chapter 5. He invited anyone who wanted to give their lives to Jesus to come and see him in the vestry. Many people responded and went up to the vestry for help in seeking salvation. Around 60 to 70 people, mostly aged between 15 and 20, repented of their sins and put their trust in Jesus Christ. This event marked the beginning of a revival.

Transcript

Thank you very much, and can I add to the welcome that has been given to you already, we are delighted to see so many here today. Let's just have a show of hands, who's here from Lowestoft and its suburbs? And, that's good, well done, and who's here from Burgherfield, foreign parts? Oh, it's about half and half, a little bit outnumbered I think. Well, I don't know how much you all know about this town of Lowestoft, but it's famous for very many things.

It did, of course, grow up around its once flourishing herring fishing industry. We have award-winning sandy beaches, and in the 18th century we had a factory that produced more fine porcelain than any other in Europe. We were also one of the first ports to have an official lifeboat, that was in 1801.

And then if we come more up to date, of course, we have a spectacular air show every year, and, I don't know what you think about it, but we do have the tallest wind turbine, the tallest onshore wind turbine in the whole of the United Kingdom. And we mustn't forget that we are the most easterly point of the British Isles as well. But what I want to suggest today is that this town should be remembered for something else, for something far more important than those things, interesting though they may be.

And that, of course, is the revival. And I want us to be clear what we mean when we use this word revival. The word itself, of course, means coming back to life again.

But when we as Bible-believing evangelical Christians, when we use this word, we are talking about something that God does. We are really, to put it simply, talking about a time when God makes his people more alive, so that they pray more, and trust him more, and read his word more, and tell others about Jesus more. And as a result of that, many more people then come to know him too.

The great preacher Martin Lloyd-Jones said, Revival is an enlivening, and quickening, and awakening of lethargic sleeping church members. Suddenly the power of the Spirit comes upon them. They are humbled, they are convicted of sin, they come to see the great salvation of God in all its glory, and to feel its power.

As a result, they begin to pray. New power comes into the preaching, and large numbers of people outside the church are converted and brought in. Now, much has been written about other revivals over the last couple of centuries in our land.

For example, you can find many books on the 1859 revival in Ireland, and the 1904 revival in Wales, and the most recent revival of this kind, and on this scale, in the Hebrides, at the end of the 1940s and the beginning of the 1950s. But England's last revival, which began in this town, was very nearly completely forgotten. And as Kyle has already mentioned, we are today indebted under God to our dear late brother Stanley Griffith.

I know that many people here knew him well, and he was of course one of the founding members of the Beresford Rhody Evangelical Church. And it was his 20 years of patient research that led to what is the only book dedicated to this story, first published in 1992, the aptly named *A Forgotten Revival*. And as Kyle has already said, we are delighted today to welcome Mrs Joy Griffin, and we do thank her again for lending to us some of the resources and the material that Stanley collected over the years in his research, which form the basis of some of the things on display today.

But without his work, none of us would really know anything about this story, and so we give thanks to God for his work. As we remember this revival, we must remember we have a very good scriptural reason for doing so. The psalmist says, I will remember the works of the Lord.

Surely I will remember thy wonders of old. I will meditate also of all thy work, and talk of thy doings. And that's exactly what we're going to do this afternoon.

And I want to tell this story under three simple headings, the first of which is the places. Now you may be interested to know that in 1921, nationally, we had a liberal-conservative coalition government under David Lloyd George, and they were facing drastic financial cuts, in fact, and so that's not unfamiliar to us. But Lowestoft was at the time a very busy fishing port.

It was said of course at this time that you could walk from one side of the harbour to the other by stepping on the fishing boats, without getting your feet wet, the steam drifters as they were. This was just eight years after the peak in the industry, when in 1913 535 million herring were landed in a single season. But the town was also recovering from the effects of World War I. Just three years earlier that had ended, and of course we'd suffered bombardment from the German Navy in that First World War as well, and because of the armed services personnel going back into civilian life, there was massive unemployment and there was much social unrest in the town.

And on the 7th of March 1921, a visitor stepped off a train at the railway station from London, and his name was the Reverend Arthur Douglas Brown. He was a Baptist minister from South London. Now he'd been in bed with the flu for eleven days prior to his arrival in Lowestoft.

In fact he had brought a friend with him, the Reverend John Edwards from Brixton, because he didn't think he would get through the week. Because you see, he'd been invited to come and preach for five days at the London Road Baptist Church. That church then of course stood on London Road North, and that building was demonised later, and that's where it stood, where Boots is now, in the shopping centre of Lowestoft.

He'd been invited to come by the minister of that church, the Reverend Hugh Ferguson. He was a Scotsman in fact, and he led a church that was full of young people. And for many weeks, months even, every Wednesday evening, around 90 people on average of all ages had met to pray for God to show his power in this town.

Inside the building there were seats for around 750, that's the front of the main auditorium there, and there were stairs at the front leading up to a small vestry. All those seats were taken for the first meeting on the Monday evening, and the next day they also held a prayer meeting in the morning, and a Bible study in the afternoon, as well as a second evening meeting. And so it went on.

On the third evening meeting, on the Wednesday night, Douglas Brown preached from John chapter 5, and he spoke about the Lord Jesus healing the lame man at the Pool of Bethesda. And at the end he asked anyone there who wanted to give their lives over to the Lord Jesus, because of what he had done for them, to come and see him in the vestry. As the congregation sang the hymn, I hear thy welcome voice that calls me now to thee, for cleansing in the precious blood that flowed on Calvary, people began to get out of their seats and go up those little steps to the vestry for help in seeking salvation.

Well it soon became clear there were so many going up the steps that the room wasn't big enough, and they had to open another room, and then they had to ask Christians who were present to come and to help those who were inquiring. And that night, 60 to 70 people or so, mostly aged between 15 and 20 years old, repented of their sin personally, and put their trust in Jesus Christ. That was the beginning of the revival.

The fourth evening meeting was held at the Sailor and Fisherman's Vessel. Again, this is a building we know well, it's on Battery Green Road. This time, Brown spoke about Peter's words in Matthew chapter 14.

There we read of the Lord Jesus walking on water through the storm to the disciples, and Peter says there, If it be thou, bid me come to thee on the water. And Douglas Brown said that night, stepping on the water for Peter was just like you stepping on God's word. In other words, believing his promises and coming to Jesus.

And when he had finished, so many people again tried to come out to the front, many of whom were crying, what must I do to be saved, that nobody could move in the building, it was packed out. And Douglas Brown stood in the pulpit and shouted, you will just have to come to Christ where you are. Well, when the organisers of these meetings saw what was happening, and the organisers included, as well as Ferguson, the Reverend John Hayes of Christ Church, the Reverend William Hardy of St John's, and Peter Greasley of the Vessel, the leader of the Vessel and the Port Missioner, they decided that they would ask Douglas Brown to come back for another week, although he did return to his own church in

London at the weekend.

At this point, M.J. Mickelright also arrived in Lowestoft. He was a former member of Brown's church and a lay preacher himself, and he came to see what was happening and to write reports on the revival for The Christian. There was a newspaper called The Christian.

Some of those reports are on display today for you to see. In that second week, the meetings moved to Christ Church, the afternoon Bible study certainly anyway, which stood then, of course, on the edge of the beach village. These meetings were also packed out and continued for three weeks until Easter, when Brown spoke much about the second coming of Jesus.

There were so many at these meetings that Christians were asked to leave the meetings and to go over to the parish rooms on the left of that picture and to pray simply for those who were remaining in the meetings, the unsaved. There were also so many that young men were asked to come and to sit on the floor at the front to make room for more people on the seats at the back. And many more people trusted the Lord Jesus as their own and personal saviour this week, including, it is noted, many young people and children.

And then for the last week in March, the meetings moved to St John's. This building could seat 1,100 people. Again, this building was demolished later and it stood where Levington Court stands now.

That church filled to overflowing during these meetings and it would fill, a bit like it did today, an hour before the meetings began. People were sitting on the windowsills there. They were sitting round the front and on the pulpit steps and sitting down the aisle.

And on the last night of those meetings, they sang, What a Friend We Have in Jesus, that's the interior of St John's, and voices could be heard outside the building, joining in with the singing. There were so many who couldn't get in but were singing anyway, along with the congregation. Well, on Saturday, 2nd April, Douglas Brown was seen back to London by crowds on the platform at the station and they were singing, God be with you till we meet again.

But that still wasn't the end because Douglas Brown was again to return for what became known as a village week. And this time he stayed at the house of the vicar of St Michael's in Oulton, that was the Reverend Henry Martin. A remarkable thing happened while he was staying at his house.

One night Douglas Brown was woken up in the middle of the night thinking of the words of the text, John chapter 14 verse 12, where Jesus said, He that believeth on me greater works than these shall he do. So he felt he should pray and he went down to the living room, only to find that the Reverend Henry Martin was already there and already on his knees and already praying because he too had been woken in the night thinking of the words of the same text. And the next day Brown preached in that church in St Michael's.

He preached about King David and he ended his message by saying that he felt that he and other ministers and Christian workers should rededicate themselves to God in thanksgiving for what they have seen. So they all knelt at the front and then were followed by three quarters of the congregation who came out to the front as well crying tears of joy and praying. At summer latin that week an open air meeting was held on the green and that was followed in a little chapel there by a prayer meeting and another service specifically for the rededication of Christians of all ages.

And the last meeting of that week was held at St Michael's Institute on Hall Road where again people gathered for the meeting an hour before it began and crowds were outside the building trying to listen to the message inside. Well, similar scenes to these were repeated as the year went on across East Anglia as Douglas Brown took week-long missions in Ipswich at the end of May and Great Yarmouth in June and Norwich at the end of June and then Cambridge in July. In September he was back in Lowestock to speak at the annual convention and as one reporter put it, all East Anglia was on fire for God.

Now that could be at the end of the story in terms of the places that were visited in this revival but you see that would be forgetting about the silver darlings or the herring and the way in which God used even them. Because every year, some of you will know this, fishing boats from the east coast of England and Scotland would follow the herring through the North Sea as they migrated. They would begin their year in the Hebrides and migrate from there to the Shetland Isles between April and June and then they would come down past the ports of Wick and Milford and Fraserburgh and Peterhead from June to September and finally they would arrive, the fishing fleets would arrive in Yarmouth and Lowestock in the autumn.

I can tell you in fact that in 1921 the first Scottish boat to arrive in Lowestock arrived on Wednesday the 14th of September. But there were others that travelled, here are the steam drifters arriving at Great Yarmouth but then there were those who worked alongside the fishermen in this great industry. There were the fisher girls for example who very famously could gut the herring at a rate of one per second and there were also the barrels that were needed to store and to pack the herring in and so because of the great increase in the demand for barrels in the home fishing as it was called then coopers too would travel or barrel makers on land.

So by train these workers would come to support the industry as the fishing boats also followed the migrating herring. Now one cooper who arrived in Great Yarmouth in the autumn of 1921 was this man Jock Troop and he was from Wick and he also happened to be a gospel preacher. Scottish crews by tradition didn't fish on Sundays and so the last catch would be gutted and packed on Saturday morning and then many fishermen and others involved in the work would while away the afternoon and the evening at Great Yarmouth marketplace.

At 9pm on the third Saturday in October Jock Troop decided he would preach in the open air in that marketplace. He preached on words from Isaiah 63 Who is this that cometh from Eden with dyed garments from Bosra this that is glorious in his apparel travelling in the greatness of his strength I that speak in righteousness mighty to save perhaps we might think a strange choice of text for an open air service but of course these words of the prophet are speaking of the promised saviour the Lord Jesus and suddenly at that meeting big strong fishermen fell to the ground crying for God to forgive their sin. One who saw it said it was like a battlefield there were so many literally slain under conviction of sin as we would say slain by the power of God.

Conversions to Christ like this continued in the next few weeks with whole fishing crews Scottish and local being affected. Douglas Brown then returned to Great Yarmouth again in November and joined Jock Troop as they preached together at evening meetings in the Deanside Methodist Church that stood where British Home Store stands now in Great Yarmouth. They also preached at St George's which I believe is now used as a theatre.

This continued for a number of weeks and the same revival fire that was seen in Lowestoft was now seen in Great Yarmouth. And then one day Jock Troop had a vision he saw a man in Fraysborough praying that

God would send to them the man who was preaching at Yarmouth and if you know the story of Philip leaving the revival at Samaria in Acts chapter 8 then it was a bit like that because he was called away from the revival in Yarmouth he gave up his job once and for all as a barrel maker and travelled to Fraysborough as a full time preacher and on arriving in that town he went to the marketplace again and he held an open air service and again God's power fell. Soon he found a Baptist church there and he found that that church had met to pray and having prayed they had decided to send a message to get Jock Troop to come to them but he was already there and meetings were arranged and so the revival spread to North East Scotland under him as he travelled from town to town.

Meanwhile the meetings were continuing in Great Yarmouth with Douglas Brown and other preachers and morning prayer meetings were held here at the Congregational Church and afternoon Bible studies again at the Deanside Methodist. It could seat 700 the Deanside and those people would walk to the meetings through snowy blizzards such was the weather in Yarmouth that autumn, never mind a wet weekend in Yarmouth there were snowy blizzards and the evening preaching continued at St George's and at the Regent Road Primitive Methodist as well. In fact there it could seat about 1,500 people and again as in St John's in Lowestoft people were standing in the aisles and sitting on the windowsill.

They would pray and they would sing an hour before the services began and they would also then stay late into the night. Just to give you some idea of a typical timetable during this revival time on Friday 5th November there was a meeting of prayer and testimonies held from 6pm until 11pm then the next day there was a four hour prayer meeting from 7pm until 11pm which was followed by an open air service until midnight in pouring rain and wind and at that open air service another 22 men, mostly fishermen, knelt down on the wet streets to pray for salvation and as Brown walked to his hotel that night he recalled hearing voices singing across the town, Hallelujah for the cross.

Just like in Acts chapter 2 when God moved, when people were gathered from many places so that the gospel and the message would spread, it was a bit like that because now when the Scottish boats left Yarmouth and Lowestoft after in fact what was a disastrous herring fishing season in terms of the number of fish caught the converted crews and their workers took their new found faith in Jesus back to their home ports and in many cases telegrams had gone before them telling their families that they'd been saved many of whom had been prayed for for years and so again in that way the revival spread to North East Scotland although it's true that God had begun to work there independently of it as well and things that had been happening among praying believers in the North East of Scotland now many more came to be saved in ports like Wyke and Eyemouth and Peterhead Hopeman and Birkhead, Gardenstown, Inverlochie, Camber and Portsoy just some of the ports that were affected at this time and you know for many years every time the Scottish boats returned to Yarmouth and Lowestoft it was like a mini revival all over again as people met up remembering what had happened and as it continued and so when we see or hear any of these places there's the places of worship in our town but if we think of any of these places we've mentioned they in themselves serve as a reminder that God Almighty has not just shown his power in Bible times has not just shown his power in the distant past but in our town and 90 years ago and in those other places mentioned now as well as the places I want us to think about the creatures this afternoon what sort of men did God use in this revival and so let's think first of all about the life of the Reverend Arthur Douglas Brown he was the son of Archibald Brown who was a contemporary with C.H.

Spurgeon a minister of East London Tabernacle his older sister Nellie who became a missionary to China helped to lead him to faith in the Lord Jesus when he was just a young boy and his father inspired him to become a preacher in fact when he was young the family holidayed in Kessingland so he was familiar with

this area at the age of 10 on Friday nights he recalled how he would take off his boots and tiptoe along from the room where he should have been doing his homework to the door of his father's study and he did that because he wanted to hear his father praying he said those prayers had more impact on him than his father's sermons he heard a big strong man telling Jesus that he was nothing that Jesus was everything and they gripped him and he felt the effect of that for the rest of

his life he suffered from neuritis, he had weakness that gave him an excess of energy but he seemed to exhaust himself very quickly as well and that affected what he could do but he did join the Merchant Navy briefly in his youth and then in the 1890s he became the pastor of a church, a Baptist church in Herne Bay but that was followed by another short pastorate in Cardiff and then another in Bristol and each of these he gave up because of his illness and so he went to sea again with the White Star Line of Titanic fame of course In 1907 though, he settled into the ministry at the Ramsden Road Baptist Church in Ballam which is now known as Ballam Baptist Church the building on the left there is the one that Douglas Brown would have known and in 18 months, under, as some put it, his

powerful preaching and magnetic personality the membership grew from 500 to 800 members he had a ship's wheel put on the landing of the Mance such was his love for the sea and for 15 years hardly a Sunday went by without someone being converted through his preaching and then one evening in 1920, about the same time that he'd been invited to come to Lowestoft the following spring by Hugh Ferguson he left his pulpit heartbroken in spite of what seemed like success he threw himself on the rug in his study and he prayed and he felt that God was saying to him, you haven't given yourself all to me you're avoiding something I want you to do and this lasted for four months until one night in February he stayed up all night praying his black Labrador, Mike, licked his face as he kneeled to pray

thinking that he was ill and suddenly at 2am he said he felt himself held by Jesus power and joy rolled over him like waves and he prayed, Lord I know what you want you want me to go into mission work well I love you more than I dislike that and on the following Sunday evening in his church 96 people trusted Jesus as saviour and that was the day before he arrived in Lowestoft and the rest we know now in the next three months he preached 370 times around East Anglia he only went back to his own church on the first Sunday of the month but they supported this mission work and they prayed for him continually in 18 months he had preached around 1700 times now if you can do the maths that's between three and four times a day on average and in 1922 he went up to Keswick to the famous Christian

convention there and he described what had been happening in the revival and showed how he longed for it to become nationwide he said I feel the day is drawing swiftly near when men will think their differences and come together to a place called Calvary and there repent of their foolishness and looking up into the face of God's anointed shall say thy kingdom come by 1923 his church had 1005 members and he became Vice President of the Baptist Union in 1929 but we should mention that at this time he once told a gathering of ministers brethren pray for me, I have lost my power and that's a reminder that he was ordinary and it was God not he that was responsible for what had happened in 1934 he moved to a smaller church in Frinton-on-Sea where he would be seen cycling about helping with

holiday clubs for children and where he played croquet to relax and he died in 1940 in his weakness he was powerful his sermons were described as bombshells rather than bible readings but he was very good with children too we mentioned the holiday clubs and I'm very pleased to have just met a few moments ago Mrs June Hudson who's here and has brought to show us this photograph this photograph was taken of her mother who passed away last summer at the age of 99 her mother was 11 years old in this

photograph and Douglas Brown stayed with her and her family, her parents and this photo was taken at his request for Douglas Brown and he kept it on his piano for many years and Zanita, the name of June's mother spoke much in her life of the encouragement that Douglas Brown had been to her on many

of his visits to Lowestoft he stayed at the Royal Hotel and there the staff put a sign up in their quarters he stayed in room 59 and they put this sign up remember room 59 and if anybody was ever going to swear or to gossip or to say something they shouldn't then they pointed to the sign because Douglas Brown was there that was the effect he had on people many who heard him preach said I felt he was speaking to me personally those who knew him described him as loyal, affectionate, sympathetic sensitive and above all fully surrendered to God so that's Douglas Brown and then let's just look also at Jock Troop the other main character in this revival story he came from Whip which at the time was Scotland's busiest fishing port after school he trained as a cooper or a barrel maker and he was

an extremely rebellious young man he got into a lot of trouble he once fell off a railway bridge and twice was rescued from drowning because of his antics with his mates he would throw stones at the Salvation Army band trying to hit the big drum and then when World War 1 broke out he had a physical weakness too he had trouble with his feet and his ankles and that saved him from the trenches but he joined the Royal Navy Patrol Service aboard a converted steam drifter like this one used for minesweeping and so on and that took him to Kingston Harbour near Dublin every Sunday evening there was a gospel meeting in a YMCA hall nearby and he went along one night joking and saying I think I'll get converted but after hearing the message it was no joke and he was utterly miserable for a week

during the next patrol he said I was like a hunted man my sin before me every moment he went back for help, many prayed for him and someone showed him in the scriptures what Christ had done on his behalf so that he could be forgiven still he went back to sea feeling lost and then one day out at sea he stepped into the wheelhouse and knelt down and cried to God to save him for Jesus sake so relieved he rushed into the crew's quarters to tell them that he was saved well of course they laughed they said it wouldn't last but it did after the war he went back to barrel making but he also joined the Salvation Army and he began to preach and it was in 1920 at a mission to fishermen in Aberdeen he's pictured here with a young man who became quite famous as a gospel singer later on but at that

mission to fishermen in Aberdeen he described feeling like never before filled with God's spirit for his service and it was the following year that he arrived in Great Yarmouth the Yarmouth and Galston Times reported he is an excellent advert for Christianity his amens and hallelujahs tell people he has something worth having some people call me mad he said there'll be many more mad in Yarmouth before the week is over he would work his 12 hour shift making barrels and then he would go out preaching after that each day in the open air and he would target theatre and cinema and pub queues on that journey to Fraysborough that we've already mentioned it's said that he led everyone in his train carriage to Christ in 1922 he went to Glasgow Bible Training Institute to get some formal

qualifications but he wasn't an easy student because he held prayer meetings late into the night praying so loud that others were kept awake he also missed most of his lectures because he went out preaching so much he made a lifelong friend there at the Bible Training Institute that was an Irish evangelist who had a similar background to him Peter Connolly we're very pleased in this church in the 90s Peter Connolly's son Ken who was also passed to be with the Lord now preached for us many times but he said of Jock True I have seen him weep so long for lost souls that his eyes were like balls of fire as he went into the pulpit he would sing loudly and play a banjo to draw a crowd in the streets before then preaching to them

his voice one said was like machine gun fire then with tears he

could equally gently plead for sinners to trust Christ he had huge hands it was said of him he could pick up an inflated football in one he had 16 inch biceps and a neck like a prize bull he was addicted to chocolate and he often joked when offered one that the Lord had delivered him from the addiction only to say when he was offered one again by that person that he'd been given a special dispensation but his faith in God was unshakable he married Katie in 1928 they had three children and settling down a bit in 1932 he became the superintendent of the Tent Hall in Glasgow there he led a great work for servicemen during World War II hosting dinners and writing a gospel bulletin that was sent to armed services personnel all over the world for their encouragement and on retiring from the

Tent Hall in 1945 he continued preaching right up until 1954 when he was invited to take a week's mission in Washington in the USA and on the first night he got up and he announced his text he said I'm going to preach tonight on the words of Jesus you must be born again he said I'll say it again you must be born again and he dropped dead in the pulpit he was a rugged gospel preacher died with his boots on nothing but death could silence him so these two men, very different a cultured well spoken Baptist minister and a rough herring cooper but they were united in love for God and in love for the lost they were equal in their zeal and their passion for preaching the gospel of Jesus in Great Yarmouth once they held on to each other in a pulpit and simply wept while people were coming out to

the front to be saved they had their weaknesses and they had their failings but truth said not from the riches in the churches but from among the lowly and humble God has chosen his instruments to guide his people to the light back to the simple truth which is in Christ and there of course he's echoing those words we find in 1 Corinthians 1.27 God has chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise and God has chosen the weak things to confound the things that are mighty so the places and the preachers and then finally thirdly I want us to think about the people what actually happened to ordinary people in these revival days and why was the revival such a good thing why is it something we desperately need again well the first thing to say is that people prayed we've mentioned

already the prayer meetings that were going on before the revival broke in London Road Baptist Church prayer meetings 90 strong every week for God to work Douglas Brown said pray earnestly you cannot make a revival but no multitude of people ever got down on its knees before Calvary but that revival came see to it that you pray, pray in the Holy Spirit and God will answer with miracles of grace but then prayer also continued through the revival M.J.

Micklerite who reported on the revival for the Christian he collected prayer requests Douglas Brown gave him that job and every day he would collect up to 300 prayer requests mainly for friends or family members to be saved these were divided into three lots for the start of each daily meeting and they were often very short prayers Christians simply sobbed and there was one old man who used to stand in the aisle just crying Oh Lord save and it wasn't just in churches either prayer meetings were held all over the place sometimes after the services once in a wood when two men who'd been at the meetings met on a country lane, one saved the other not and one led the other to the Lord and they got some people together and they had a prayer meeting there and then Brown met a man praying on the

street one day he went to speak to him, he said don't disturb me preacher I'm praying for my three boys who are in there right now asking how to be saved people prayed and God's word was preached above all perhaps at the heart of this revival was the simple message of the gospel Hugh Ferguson said of Douglas

Brown's preaching he preaches the truth with no uncertain sound ruined by the fall redemption by the atoning blood regeneration and renewal by the Holy Spirit anointing by the Holy Spirit for service, godly living old bible doctrines and apostolic results and you know people saw not the preachers but the and they loved the bible Lois Doft had trams then of course and famously they were filled with people carrying bibles, you'd be odd one out if you were on those trams without a bible

in your hand which is probably the opposite today and linked to that people wanted to hear these messages and they wanted to be in church they wanted to be at these meetings no matter what no matter what the weather was if it was warm and sunny and it might have been tempting to go on the beach they were at the church and at the meetings in Cambridge that year when Douglas Brown was there there was tropical temperatures tropical heat and yet the churches were packed as they were here or if they had to walk to the services in pouring rain, wind or blizzards as we've already mentioned as in Great Yarmouth, they wanted to be there and in those days work was harder and hours were longer but even so after many hours of hard work some of these meetings went on until 3 o'clock in the morning

going back to the trams for a minute instead of calling out the place like get off here for Old Nelson Street the conductors called out get off here for Christchurch because so many people were on the trams because they were heading to the meetings people walked in from places like Kessingland to be at the London Road Baptist Church one Sunday afternoon the Reverend Henry Martin went to his church St Michael's in Alton again and he was expecting a small group of people for an afternoon Bible class when he got there in the churchyard there was a huge crowd of young people teenagers and when he approached them they said we want to get near Jesus and the whole afternoon was spent in prayer and in praise in a packed out church one man waited hours for Douglas Brown outside the Royal Hotel and

when he came out Douglas Brown began the conversation he said it's a glorious day and the man said and you have a glorious Saviour lead me to him even when he left from the station to go back to London a woman was waiting for him on the platform under conviction of sin and he led her to the Saviour before the train left perhaps one of the most remarkable examples of someone desperately needing to get to these meetings is the story of a man from John O'Groats or near John O'Groats and he read a report in a newspaper about the revival going on in East Anglia and he felt that he was a sinner and he needed the Saviour and he couldn't get any rest for six weeks and even his doctor said I can't help you, you'll have to go and see this preacher, this Douglas Brown and so he travelled to Yarmouth

and in the Deanside Wesleyan Methodist Church that night he was the first one to respond to the preaching and he shouted I'm saved, I'm saved and he said to Douglas Brown I need to go back tomorrow to make up for the work that I've missed and to lead both my sons to Christ which he did and that leads us to the fourth thing that people were saved and I should just mention also that many Christians gave their lives back to God there was a man in Yarmouth who was 78 years old and he'd been a Christian and a Christian worker in his thirties he'd abandoned his faith but he came back to the Lord, there were many such cases but people were saved and some may have thought that they were Christians already, Robert Brown for example had been going to the London Road Baptist Church Bible class for

ages, walking in regularly from Old Broad since he was a young boy but he was one of those who got saved on that first night that we spoke about, he said I first knew what it was to have true faith in Christ I knew little but I knew I had trusted Christ as Saviour, often whole families were saved together one mother who was converted in the first week prayed for her son who was about to leave home to go to Canada her daughter was saved and then the son who told all his friends, one of his friends tried to get out of a

meeting but by the end of it he was on his knees too in it which seven adults in one family and another family of nine were converted in one night the fishing boats at this time were steam drifters if you've never seen one then you should go to Great Yarmouth and visit the

Lydia Eva and have a tour around her, she was built in 1930 and is the last remaining steam drifter and these drifters had a crew of ten men all with a different role to play in the work of fishing and whole steam drifter crews were converted, no end of times on one boat called the Mizpath they hoisted the Salvation Army flag on their masthead because the whole crew had trusted Christ literally thousands of men and women boys and girls were saved and many times without even being near a church building or a meeting problems were solved what I mean by that is that different types of people were united together in Christ and many times in the Revival their problems were solved husbands and wives who were about to split up were united there was a couple in Lowestoft who were saved

independently of each other and both were worried about telling the other one only to find that they were both at the same meeting, just in different rooms the same thing as that happened to at least four other couples in Norwich, each pair independently converted a woman who had lost her loved ones went to throw herself in the harbour at Lowestoft one night, but she heard the singing coming from the Baptist church and she slipped into the meeting at the back she said at the end she'd never come back but in fact she did the next night and was saved.

She not only trusted Christ and became a member but she was the church caretaker for many years a builder who drank and beat his wife and his children was converted one night alongside his wife he never went to a pub again instead he went to the prayer meetings regularly a man who threatened his wife with a razor was converted and completely changed. A big tough fisherman was converted one night and the next night he saw a posh young woman richly dressed, wanting to go out to the front but not with anyone with no one to lead her and he took her down and back, she was saved a criminal who'd been imprisoned one night went to the front and said I want God and he knelt down next to a 13 year old girl who also gave her life to do that. That criminal brought two friends who were also saved and he became a full time open air.

The first strong fisherman who fell at the Yarmouth Marketplace open air also became a preacher there were three fisher girls in their lodgings in Great Yarmouth and they were so distressed, they were under conviction of sin, they knew they needed saving and they needed forgiveness and they stayed in their lodgings and they wouldn't go to work the next morning because of their distress. And so the foreman their boss he went to get Jock True I don't know if he was even a believer himself, but he knew that if he could get the preacher to lead them to Christ they would come back to work and that's exactly what happened. Jock True came and he led them to Jesus, he showed them in the scriptures how they could have assurance of salvation and they went back, they found that peace with God and they went back to work happy and working harder Many were saved out on the fishing grounds, on the steam drifters for example in the fishing grounds off of Hayesbrook that were known as Smith's Knoll.

The place was marked by a light ship basically a lighthouse on a ship and one telegram that was sent by a fisherman back to his family read like this. Saved 10 miles from Knoll light ship last to ring in on this ship Three fishermen were on a trawler at Great Yarmouth, three members of the same family, a father and his two sons. The young son insulted his father so the elder brother wanted to teach him a lesson and beat him up a bit Feeling sorry for himself the younger son threw himself into the water into the harbour They fished him out and they put him in his bunk Back on land they went their separate ways.

But the next day the singing of Scottish psalms reminded the young boy of home and led him into St George's church He was converted and when he looked up from his prayers he saw that in the gallery there was his father and his brother who also had been convicted and converted They were united in prize and the skipper of their drifter requested prayers for the rest of the crew who were all converted by the end of that week One of the ways that we know that people we can sometimes see the fruits of salvation is that people are joyful This often took the form in the revival of singing and rejoicing like that which we've spoken of which often drew people into the meetings and some of the hymns that were sung were O Tender and Sweet was the master's call Where Jesus is, tis heaven there Since Jesus came into my heart and the hymn that we sang today which became known as the hymn of the revival, Blessed be the fountain of blood People sang as they worked The often vulgar songs of fishermen were replaced by gospel hymns They would sing as the nets came in In Eyemouth Harbour When the fishing boats returned the ones loved ones who were waiting for them at the harbour could hear the words of the hymn, Love Lifted Me drifting over the water as they came back. But it wasn't just singing of course, so many spoke publicly of the joy and the peace that trusting Jesus had brought to their lives. One said I gave my heart to Jesus and my soul is full of laughter Another way in which we know sometimes if someone is converted, it's not just the joy of the Lord, it's also that they tell others about Jesus and of what he has done.

Douglas Brown and Hugh Ferguson met a man one day leaning over the harbour bridge in Lowestoft and he was crying I'm too bad to be saved Of course he wasn't, for God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and he was the first to tell it at the next meeting when he found that peace with God At Yarmouth there were meetings where one got up one after the other giving a simple one line testimony One said I gave myself to God in the fish market last week, it's been the best week I ever had At Ipswich a 16 year old girl wanted to go out to the front to tell others that she trusted Jesus but she was afraid because there were two of her unsaved friends watching That night she couldn't sleep so she returned the next night and asked Douglas Brown if she could testify In front of 1,100 people

she said friends I love Jesus Christ I have given my heart to him and within minutes hundreds more came out to the front for salvation Brown was walking along the Lowestoft seafront one day and was asked to preach at an open air Salvation Army meeting There was a girl on the beach who was converted she went home, she told her family they laughed at her but her elder sister did agree to come with her to a meeting at the Citadel and she was converted There was one man who was thought to have brought 50 other people to the meetings within 3 months and often it was youngsters who led their parents to faith and not always just the other way round We can also be sure that behaviour improved In Norwich four men came into a meeting to disrupt it they came for a laugh we might say and all of them

were converted I read in the Lowestoft Journal of 1921 how warnings were given out to the Scottish fishermen not to behave in drunken and disorderly ways as was the reputation of some but in the revival heavy drinkers became hymn singers One pub owner and his wife who were saved at Summer Layton tipped all of their beer never mind the money they'd spent on it, they tipped all their beer on the Summer Layton marshes close down their pub In Wick cinemas and pubs lost their trade and come the next new year the usual drunken revelry was replaced with chorus singing At Inverlochrie and Camber gambling disappeared, gambling of course which did so much to rob families of their precious resources it disappeared and tobacco and pipes and cigarettes were burned on public bonfires The Glasgow Herald

reported in December, the revival is emptying pubs and filling churches This is a picture of Jock Troop's friend who we mentioned earlier, Peter Connolly before he was converted and there he is again with Jock Troop This man is called Jimmy Byers before and after his conversion and these illustrate that sometimes

the change that's wrought in a man can actually be seen although we must remember that God looks on the heart and a wonderful thing in the revival is that so many were found in these meetings in the simple garb of their calling as it was put, whether a shawl or a jersey and cap as well as those who may have been well dressed.

These were changes of the heart that sometimes are seen No wonder the Bible says in 2nd Corinthians if any man be in Christ he is a new creature, old things are passed away, all things are become new In Lowestoft in particular a stand was made for God's day and Sunday cinema was not allowed again until World War II and when it was allowed the churches who'd been affected by the revival made their voices to the cinema Now these revival times came to an end, God chooses how he works and God chooses when he works and yet we can say finally the effects lasted and that was especially true in Lowestoft. You see this was not mere emotion, although emotion does play a part W.G. Scroggins said the converts in this revival think clearly act soundly and rest on an intelligent understanding of the gospel.

In fact Douglas Brown himself said we don't want excitement and noise but the simple methods of Jesus Christ where we've prayed, believing and preached God's holy word depending on the Holy Spirit there has been nothing but victory The London Road Baptist Church Sunday School rose to 450 children attending in the years following the revival with 600 on the register Many converts from Lowestoft itself became open air or lay preachers with some going abroad as missionaries to Bolivia, India China and the Rangoon They're just the ones that we know about Douglas Brown said when God comes, pride, jealousy gossip and wilderness wither and die A town councillor John Rushmere said ugly things were about to happen in the town because of the temper of some of the people All is now quite different and the revival is the cause Lowestoft in particular had the reputation of a quiet town for years afterwards especially on Sundays with people dealing more kindly and more honestly with each other So we have the places and we have the preachers and we have the people Some people may say well, people generally and society was more religious back then but when I was going through the Lowestoft journal for 1921, particularly before the revival broke I was struck by how similar things were in those days. There was the same crime in the town, there was the same immorality there was the same problems with broken families and social unrest and uncertainty abounding and yet the revival changed everything for so many and only the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ can change things like that. That's why we read in Romans 1 that it is the power of God unto salvation.

I'm not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, says Paul, but it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believes it The answer to today's problems as then is not to be found in politics or policing it's not to be found in economics or education it's not in some social program or in philosophy or even in man's religion itself The answer is God There were the same controversies then too we talk a lot now don't we about the marginalisation of Christianity Well, just before the revival broke there was a controversy in the town and in the Lowestoft Journal over whether or not council meetings should begin with prayer and in response to that controversy Hugh Ferguson preached a sermon and in it he said All the trouble and confusion in public work today is due to the fact that men and women are trying to manage in the world without God.

Nations and communities who forget God are in a veritable hell of misery suffering and confusion The great need of the hour is a truer deeper and more widespread recognition of God in individual, municipal and national life and you know that recognition of God and experience of God is possible because God has revealed himself to us in the person of Jesus Christ and in his word and true Bible based Christianity is the ultimate force for good where it goes, where it's preached where it's believed, things change for the

better and the Gospel message in the Word of God, in the Bible is the same as it was 90 years ago that the heart of man's problem is the problem of man's heart that's what needs to be dealt with that our sin separates us from a holy God the one who made us and yet the one who loved us enough to send the Lord Jesus Christ into the world the God-man to shed his blood on the cross to deal with our sin to deal with your sin to deal with my sin and he rose again to conquer death for us and he's coming back for all who he calls to believe God's word because he loved us we can know forgiveness for sin, we can know friendship with our maker, we can have a future safe in heaven and all I urge you today, not just to consider the historic details of this revival, but also to consider the claims of Christ and the life changing message of his Gospel finding peace with God through Christ today you could be first in the next revival and of course if we know him already and if we can remember personally already what he's done in saving us all his work is none of ours then we must not only remember the revival, but we must pray that God will do it again in our town and in our nation Brown said in a sermon in Great Yarmouth Park Baptist, June 1921 we have been apologising for the religion of Christ though it should sway everything in this country, nothing is going to save this dear old land but a revival, the nation has turned its back upon God oh that God will bring the church to another Pentecost, till she loses all fear, looking upon this poor, tired, dislocated, suffering world I can see no other solution than the coming of Christ you can only get to heaven by the merits of Christ, it would be a terrible thing if I did not warn men against the wrath to come we have been ashamed of Jesus too long but he is going to break through and I leave you with the words of 2nd Chronicles chapter 7 and verse 14 this is the promise of God he says, if my people which are called by my name shall humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land it can be so may it be so for Jesus sake Amen

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