

## Schools



It seems fitting that schools should be dealt with in this section as it was only recently that they were separated from religions and charities. In fact Talke's first school was charity-funded English free school established by the Unwyn family, possibly of Clough Hall, in 1760 or 1761, and also paid for by local subscription. Gifts of money, such as the 100 livres (old pounds) given by Mr. John Bourne of Newcastle and Mr. Richard Edensor of Congelton, or gifts of land such as the six-acre Longmore Fields in Audley, were then invested or rented, so that the interest and rent money could pay for a schoolmaster. Most of this money was spent or invested in seven-acres of school land, which was let on a yearly basis to William Colclough for 15 livres rent a year. Perhaps this was safer and easier than putting the money in a bank and funding the school off the interest. Also in 1760, a schoolhouse was built on land given by Mr. Tollet of Betley.

This trust was headed by its clerk John Fernyhough. The other members were Robert Henbury, William and Elizabeth Alcock, Thomas Broom, John Simpson and Thomas Shelly.

The teacher, a schoolmistress called Miss Ray, who was married to a chapel clerk, taught 25 of the poorest children to read, of which 14~15 were free scholars. However, although we cannot prove that Sir John Edensor Heathcote was a trustee, he often visited the school and paid for any children on top of the 14 that could be taught free. Although their books were provided, if they wanted to write they had to pay extra for tuition.

Education was often a problem for Talke families as time spent at school would take food off the table as that child was not working down the mine, so most children's education would be fairly short. After children were banned underground, some parents even tried to fake their children's ages to get them a job. Education was often more the concern of the local gentry and charities. Talke School had its own charity in the 1890s beneath the Audley Endowed School Charity. Scholarships were given out until the end of the Second World War, clearly showing that education wasn't free. The famous author of the Forsyth saga, John Galsworth, often visited and helped Talke because of his connection with Talke workers education association.

Talke now has three schools. St. Saviours School is built on the site of St. Saviours church and was opened in 1895. Hill Top, aptly named in the centre of the original village, opened in 1908, but unfortunately this is soon to close. Springhead, carrying on the memory of the lost spring, opened in 1961. Most of these now also have their own pre-school groups, meaning that less nurseries are needed, but a private one still exists on the site of the original Primitive Methodist chapel.

