
Hellifield's early school days

Hellifield's first school was the building we now know as the Institute or village hall, this building also served as the church before the building of St Aidan's. The school was founded in 1864 by Mrs Frances Stansfield of Coniston Cold (Frances was a member of the Hamerton family of Hellifield Peel). Mrs Stansfield also paid the stipend (salary) of the curate in charge of the village. The first headmaster of the school was Mr H.W. Strainge who lived in the attached school house with his wife and two children.



The building is shown on a commercially produced post card of the time. The two group photos show school classes outside the Institute; I would hazard a guess at the dates to be around the mid 1880s to the early 1900s. The 1901 census lists a Miss Annie Ash of Midland Terrace, giving her occupation as a pupil teacher at the church of England school, could she possibly be the young

lady with the hat on the second photo? My great-grandmother, Susannah Parker, was the caretaker of the school and church, she is shown in the photo with her daughter Jane (my grandmother, born 1895). Susannah never got over the loss of her eldest son, Walker Parker, during the first world war in 1918 and sadly her health deteriorated and she passed away in 1919.





With the increase in Hellifield's population following the opening of the railway junction in 1880 the School was no longer able to cope with the larger numbers of pupils so a new council school was proposed (the present day primary school) and this was opened for use on the 7th April 1915, it is shown shortly after opening on a postcard of the time. The school's first headmaster was Mr Thomas

Cunliffe Sharples. The new school had a capacity for 260 pupils, the register on the opening day showed 180 pupils present. The school still serves the youngsters of Hellifield today, 107 years after its opening.

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