

Stoney Stanton Schools before the 20th century

Stoney Stanton is a large village located around ten miles from Leicester and approximately 5 miles east of the nearest market town of Hinckley. The name of the village, 'Stoney Stanton' is derived from its rich supply of stone, which was extensively quarried in the late 19th century. This provided jobs for those residing within the village; additionally, many people were employed in the stocking frame industry. In 1801, the population was recorded at 355; by 1901 it had increased to 1,515.

There are no records of any schools in Stoney Stanton until 1712, when 'a Charity Schole maintain'd by a private person, in which all the poor Children of the parish are taught to Read & write, & carefully instructed in the principles of Religion' was recorded¹. By 1818 there were five schools for poorer families, in which 50 to 60 children were taught. However, comment was made that 'The poorer families are desirous of possessing more sufficient means of education'.²

By 1831, the population had grown to 549.³ A Church of England Sunday School was built in 1832, which was also used as a day school 'during the week for younger children'; the older children were 'put to the stocking frame work'. This schoolroom, which could accommodate 110 children, cost £115 to build and was on land held under a 99-year lease,⁴ granted by Edward Frewen.⁵ The following year the number of schools recorded in the village had decreased to three, perhaps as a direct result of the opening of the larger Church school, and a total of 36 boys and 24 girls were being educated at the expense of their parents,⁶ no more than in 1818 despite a population increase. By 1847, there were two schools connected with the Anglican Church. One educated 8 boys and 22 girls, and the other had 5 boys and 10 girls; both had a School Mistress.⁷

In 1874, Edward Frewen presented the land on which the National School had been built to the rector and churchwardens, together with a piece of land adjoining. The school was enlarged in the same year by the addition of a classroom, at a cost of £230, financed by a Government grant of £40, subscriptions and a voluntary rate.⁸ The building work was disruptive and made it 'difficult to go on with [school] work'.⁹

On February 20th 1877, a government inspection was held and the inspector commented that 'The late teacher has left the school in a poor state as regards attainments'. Pupil numbers were increasing, and he also commented that 'if the recent increase of attendance prove permanent, the staff will be insufficient ... some efficient addition to the staff must be at once provided'.¹⁰

The population continued to grow and building began on a new infant school in 1879 in order to accommodate more children. The new site for this school was donated by Edward Frewen, and

¹ J. Broad (Ed.) *Bishop Wake's Summary of Visitation Returns From the Diocese of Lincoln 1706-1715, Part 2 Outside Lincoln* (Oxford, 2012), p. 865

² *Education of the Poor Digest*, Parl. Papers 1819 (224), p. 463

³ *Education Enquiry*, Parl. Papers 1835 (62), p. 497

⁴ CERC, School file Stoney Stanton, uncatalogued, Application, 1832

⁵ W. White *History, Gazetteer & Directory of Leicestershire & Rutland* (1877), p. 608

⁶ *Education Enquiry*, Parl. Papers 1835 (62), p. 497

⁷ National Society for Promoting the Education of the Poor in the Principles of the Established Church, *Result of the Returns to the General Inquiry made by the National Society, into the state and progress of schools for the education of the poor ... during the years 1846-7, throughout England and Wales* (London, 1849), pp. 12-13

⁸ W. White *History, Gazetteer & Directory of Leicestershire & Rutland* (1877), p. 608

⁹ ROLLR E/LB/310/13 p. 37

¹⁰ ROLLR E/LB/310/13 p. 90

building materials were given by George Marston, the Mountsorrel Granite Company Limited and the builder, Mr S. Norton. In addition to this, many people contributed to a subscription and a voluntary rate was also agreed.¹¹ The original intention appears to have been that the infants would use the new building, while the older children would remain in the original school. However, a letter by the Rector dated 31 December 1879 advised local people that although the new 'building is now completed, the old school will shortly become untenable owing to the opening of a new quarry in an adjoining piece of ground. The site of the old school is valuable because of the stone which underlies it. The rector and churchwardens are to hand over the old school to the owner of the adjacent site on condition that he enlarges the new school to satisfy their requirement.'¹²

It appears that the site was not fully handed over, and an appeal was made to landowners and ratepayers for donations to extend the new infants' school to accommodate all the village children. By June 1884 the rector noted that while one of the granite companies had assisted, many parishioners were 'anxious for a school board in order that [the other quarry owners] may be forced to contribute their share'.¹³ A replacement National School was erected in 1884 for 330 children. The average attendance was 145 students and 95 infants.¹⁴ An inspector who visited in March of that year, before the completion of the new school, recorded that 'I am very glad the present room is going to be pulled down, and a more convenient one erected close to the infant school'.¹⁵ The new school opened on 2 January 1885.¹⁶ (This building is now the Community Hall)

Sunday schools

There was no recorded Sunday School in Stoney Stanton in 1818.¹⁷ A schoolroom was built in the churchyard¹⁸ in 1832, as noted above. In 1833 this Anglican Sunday School was attended by 64 boys and 54 girls. It was endowed with £20 annually from the Thomas Frank's Charity,¹⁹ and also supported by the collection after an annual sermon.²⁰ The children who attended paid 1d each week towards the coal; the teaching was entirely gratuitous.²¹ It was open to all the children of the parish.²²

There remained one Sunday School in Stoney Stanton in 1847 which educated 63 boys and 73 girls. It had been granted £40 by the National Society.²³ On 30 March 1851, 118 Sunday Scholars attended in the morning and 121 in the afternoon. The Rector made a comment that the numbers were usually considerably higher than this.²⁴

¹¹ CERC, School file Stoney Stanton, uncatalogued, account 31th January 1880

¹² CERC, School file Stoney Stanton, uncatalogued, 31 Dec 1879

¹³ CERC, School file Stoney Stanton, uncatalogued, Letter from rector, 19 June 1884

¹⁴ *Kelly's Directory of Leicestershire & Rutland* (1881), p.344

¹⁵ ROLLR E/LB/310/3 p.209

¹⁶ ROLLR E/LB/310/3 p.219

¹⁷ *Education of the Poor Digest*, Parl. Papers 1819 (224), p.463

¹⁸ ROLLR 245/50/6 p.227

¹⁹ 1839 [163] 32--Part V. *Report of the charity commissioners*, p. 214

²⁰ *Education Enquiry*, Parl. Papers 1835 (62), p.497

²¹ CERC, School file Stoney Stanton, uncatalogued, Application, 1832

²² 1839 [163] 32--Part V. *Report of the charity commissioners*, p. 214

²³ National Society, *General Inquiry*, pp. 12-13

²⁴ TNA, HO 129/412/3

Reading Room

By 1881, there was a village reading room.²⁵ By 1887, it stood opposite the church, perched on the edge of the quarry, and was possibly the original school room (although this was still the school in 1881). By 1903, that land had been subsumed by the quarry.²⁶

Alice Butt, August 2013

²⁵ *Kelly's Directory of Leicestershire & Rutland* (1881), p. 714

²⁶ Ordnance Survey, 1:10,560, 1887 and 1903.