

## Tickhill's Schools in 1865

Enormous changes took place in the provision of schools in the century after the 1764 Visitation described in last winter's Newsletter. A starting point for this contrast can be found in the returns of another Visitation, this time arranged under the auspices of Archbishop William Thomson in 1865. The Revd James Marshall Bury in his return noted that Tickhill now had a Boys' School with 120 pupils, a Girls' School with 80 pupils and an Infants' School with 140 on roll. Funding came from voluntary contributions and also from Government aid. This is not the whole picture, however, as the Visitation returns did not cover, for example, schools run by denominations other than Anglicans. In Tickhill the Methodists opened their own school in 1845. All the parishes in our area, unlike in 1764, had schools too except for Edlington. Eight children from there went to the National School at Conisbrough, but, not surprisingly given the distance they had to travel, their attendance was irregular.

The 1865 Visitation did not require clergymen to give details about the schools' buildings, curriculum, teaching staff or whether the schools clothed their pupils. Other sources of information can be found on the Society's website in the Schools/Youth section. For example, in 1865 Tickhill had raised almost enough money from local donations to build new schools for boys and girls - on St Mary's Road. The building was completed by 1866. Other documents on the website relate to the opening of the Methodists' school.

Two new features in the 1865 Visitation returns were requests for information about the existence of other types of schools: Sunday Schools and Adult or Evening Schools. Sunday Schools began in the second half of the 18th Century; one of their major exponents was Robert Raikes, a newspaper proprietor who lived in Gloucester, but whose grandfather was the Revd Timothy Raikes, Vicar of Tickhill from 1674-1689. Robert Raikes used his newspaper to publicise the opening of Gloucester's first Sunday School in 1780. The idea of providing children who worked, for example, in factories for six days a week with opportunities to learn to read and attend church or chapel on a Sunday spread rapidly. An estimated 250,000 children were involved nationally by 1787. Even when day schools became much more widely available in the first half of the 19th Century, Sunday Schools were still very popular: an estimated two-thirds of working class children aged 5-15 attended Sunday Schools by the middle of the 19th Century.

In Tickhill, as in many other parishes in the 19th Century, Anglicans held their Sunday School in the day school premises. In Edlington's case the Sunday School for 12 children was held in the Rectory kitchen. As with day schools, the return did not mention the Sunday School run by the Methodists and held in their Schoolroom.

Questions about Adult or Evening schools were designed to see if there was any provision for continuing teaching about Christianity rather than to focus on educational opportunities in general. For many parishes adult education was clearly a challenge. At Tickhill the Revd Bury wrote 'Adult night school. Variable success.' The Revd Luard at Wadworth wrote 'Tried an Evening School last year but failed completely'. At Conisbrough the Revd Wright noted 'I tried it a few years ago, and it failed. I am trying to keep them together now by Choir practice'. Bucking this trend was the Revd Thomas at Warmsworth who noted that he had 15 in general attendance at the Evening School. Evening Schools in Doncaster for men and boys had some success in 1861 but had declined subsequently with mainly 25-40 boys attending.

The Visitation returns included answers to a question about what impeded the clergy's work, which might explain local people's response to adult education. In Tickhill the stumbling block was 'the excessive number of public houses and beer houses', in Wadworth there was no proper accommodation for the poor in the Church and in Conisbrough 'the want of any kind of Godliness among the small farmers, who never attend any place of worship and care not about their servants' morals'. The length of the working day in the 19th Century and resulting physical exhaustion might also have deterred some from attending evening classes, apart from any personal preferences.

Details of the 1865 visitation come from Royle, E., and Larsen, R., *Archbishop Thomson's Visitation Returns for the Diocese of York, 1865*, Borthwick Institute for Archives, 2006