

5. St Matthew's Schools

Children have been educated at St Matthew's since the first Chapel was built in 1363. Recalling the description in the pageant above - *'There is a tiny porch with stone wall-benches upon which the children of wealthier families are schooled in the basics of Latin and logic.'*

The schooling of young people in the first Chapel had ended around 1550 when the first Chapel fell into disrepair and the local people had to travel to Elland to worship. Instead of spending their Sunday afternoons in church the children were engaging in 'unlawful games'. However, in 1605, after the rebuilding of the Chapel, the Manorial Rolls of Halifax refer to the enclosure of a few acres of land on the waste and commons of Rastrick for which a rent would be paid to the King of 4 pence per acre, and in return the land would be converted for the use and benefit of those who should celebrate divine service and keep a school in the said Chapel. See Appendix A 'Manorial Rolls J. Horsfall Tuner' and also Section 2.2 above.

A school was held from the church from around 1621, which subsequently became Rastrick Grammar School. John Hanson of Woodhouse, in his will of 1621, left an annual sum of 20 shillings to Rastrick Church for the maintenance of Divine Service in the Chapel of Rastrick and for the teaching of a school there.¹

The Mary Law Charity²

John Hanson's great-granddaughter, Mary Law, by her will, dated February 4th 1701, devised her real estates at Lower Woodhouse, and in Rastrick, to Thomas Hanson, his heirs and assigns, and to the minister of Rastrick, and his successors, in trust, as to a messuage and tenement at Lower Woodhouse, to the maintenance of four poor widows, to be chosen within the town and township of Rastrick, at the discretion of the said Thomas Hanson and his heirs, and the minister of Rastrick and his successors; and as to all the testatrix's messuages lands and tenements in Rastrick, to the use of a school at Rastrick, for the teaching 20 poor children to read and write, to be chosen within the town of Rastrick and Brighouse, at the discretion of the trustees above mentioned.

The Charity also owned the properties on the north side of Ogden Lane from the Grammar School at the top to the Smithy at the bottom. The Charity was administered by the governors of the Grammar School. Clifford Riley tells of some of the consequences arising from the ownership of the properties in his book 'A Village Blacksmith', in a chapter called 'Rastrick Illuminations'.³

The Archbishop of York appointed Joshua Holroyd schoolmaster of the English Charity School in Rastrick in 1777, which eventually became Rastrick Grammar School.⁴

According to the Grand Bazaar Handbook, of 1895, *"It is many years since a Sunday School in connection with the Church was established in Rastrick. Some 60 or 70*

¹ Malcolm Bull's Calderdale Companion

² Mary Law Charity - "Report on the Endowed Charities of the Parish" of Halifax 1984-95

³ Clifford Riley - 'A Village Blacksmith'

⁴ Rastrick Local History Group paper of 2019 'Map Notes'

years ago (i.e. approx 1830) a limited number of scholars assembled every Sunday in the old Endowed School for instruction in reading and writing."

In 1865 the **St Matthew's Sunday School** was built opposite the church in Church Street, at a cost of £750.⁵ In 1867 the St Matthew's Church School (a National School Society Day School) was opened in the same building, as an Infants' school. In 1871 it was decided to admit girls and the average attendance increased until the St John's schools were opened in October 1874.⁶

In 1879 the teachers and scholars of the Sunday School presented the Church with a leather-bound copy of the King James' Bible (including the Apocrypha) in two volumes. (see above).

In 1895 The St Matthew's Church Grand Bazaar (See 1.4 Present Church Building above) raised money amongst other things:

To render liberal aid to the funds of the Church Day Schools, whereby the existing Debt may be liquidated, and the efficiency of the schools maintained. and the requirements of the Education Department fully satisfied.

The scheme included for the Re-flooring of the School, the Building of a new cloakroom and other necessary alterations.

The Bazaar Handbook contains Historical Notes relating to the **Day Schools** and the **Sunday School** from 1862 to 1895. (Copy of the Official Handbook included in Appendix N)



St Matthew's Church Hall and School c.1900 (Charles Squire Collection)

In 1902 (or thereabouts) the teachers and scholars of the Sunday School dedicated a stained-glass window in the church in memory of Mary Jane McGhie (see above).

⁵ History of Brighthouse and its Co-operative Society

⁶ Official Handbook of the 1895 Bazaar.



Inside Rastrick Church Day School 1905 - 1910 (Charles Squire Collection)



Inside Rastrick Church Day School 1905 – 1910 (Charles Squire Collection)



Rastrick Church School 1900 (Charles Squire Collection)



Rastrick Church School 1905 (Charles Squire Collection)



Rastrick Church School 1907 (Charles Squire Collection)



Rastrick Church School c.1910 (Charles Squire Collection)

These two schools continued with the financial support of the very progressive Rastrick Local Schools Board, until, after failing to persuade the two church authorities to attend to serious dilapidations, it withdrew its support and, in 1916 built its own school at Carr Green. The St. Matthew's school closed in 1912.

During the Second World War in October 1940, when the Revd H. Gordon Davies was vicar, St Matthew's Church School building was requisitioned by the War Department and occupied by the Military Authorities. Compensation of £55 per annum was agreed.

The building was demolished around 1969 and replaced by the present Parish Centre.

Carr Green School celebrated their Centenary in July 2013 with a special Centenary service at St Matthew's Church, when pupils read news headlines from all the decades between 1920 and 2010 between the singing of hymns and the Carr Green Anthem, composed and lead by the group 'Hope and Social'. Musical accompaniment and an organ solo were provided on the organ by an old boy of Carr Green School, J. William Kay B. Mus. (Hons), A.R.C.O., who had flown over from Norway specially for the event.