

Firth's School
Station Lane, New Whittington
1861-1875

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The first free schoolroom in New Whittington was established by the company of Thomas Firth and Sons, steelmakers from Sheffield. They were the main employers in the village between the establishment of their extensive works, which covered 22 acres of land, in about 1850 and their closure in 1887. Thomas had died in 1848 and his son, Mark, became head of the company. Mark accrued a substantial fortune, but was generous in his contributions to many charitable causes, including a donation towards the establishment of a Methodist New Connection Training College, and the building and equipping of Firth College in 1879 (now part of the University of Sheffield) [1,2]. More can be learned about Mark Firth here:-

<https://steelcitystandard.wordpress.com/2020/11/28/the-life-and-times-of-mark-firth/>

Built on Station Lane in 1860, the school opened in 1861 [4], to provide an education for the children of Firth's employees.

When the Websters' Endowed School opened at New Whittington in 1876 (See New Whittington School) offering education for all of the children in the village, the Firth's school closed.

Steel production ceased at the site about 1889-90 and the works were put up for sale. On the 28th February 1907 the company gave the schoolroom to the Rector of Whittington and five Trustees for use as a Mission Church and later a church hall [3].

When the Church had no further use for the building it was put up for sale and purchased about 1983 by Robert "Bob" Beer, who used it as a workshop where he made scientific glassware. The building has since been demolished, but apparently two doors had Boys and Girls above them, so it would seem there were two classrooms.

Bob Beer removed the schoolhouse bell and used it as a garden ornament when he left the village to live in Norfolk. However his son returned it to the village when Bob died. It has been renovated and given to the London Street School [4].

[1]

https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Dictionary_of_National_Biography_1885-1900/Firth,_Mark

[2] <https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/about/history>

[3] https://stbartholomew.co.uk/?page_id=1284

[4] Trevor Nurse "History of New Whittington - The Schools"

Trevor Nurse "History of Whittington Schools, Churches and Chapels"