

Websters' Whittington Moor Endowed School
Sheffield Road and School Lane, Whittington Moor
1876-1967/1984

(See Webster's Endowed Schools)

Webster's Whittington Moor Endowed School/Whittington Moor Council School/Peter
Webster's School (to 1967)/Bell's School (to 1984)

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Peter Webster's School. Photograph by Elizabeth Pemberton



With growing demand for places at Old Whittington School the Websters' Trustees chose to have a new school erected at Whittington Moor to accommodate pupils from that area. The builder was Mr Fiddler, from Eckington.

Known as the Webster's Whittington Moor Endowed School, it opened in June 1876 as a mixed age school [2] with a master's residence. The Building News of 30/6/1876 reported that it had accommodation for 375 pupils.

Comparison of examination results between the Board Schools in Chesterfield and the Webster's Endowed Schools prompted one "observer" to write to the editor of the Derbyshire Courier (letter published on the 24/6/1882) regarding the Whittington Schools, in which he states that "their schools are second to none".

On 7/12/1889 the Derbyshire Times reported that Enoch Bell, a teacher who was to make a significant contribution to education in Whittington Moor and Chesterfield in general, was appointed headmaster.

In 1893 the school was enlarged to accommodate 400 children [1]. The Derbyshire Times of 23/8/1893 announced that scholarships had been awarded to nine pupils at the school, enabling them to further their education at local Grammar and High Schools.

Enoch Bell left the area in 1902 to open the Staveley Company's school at Warsop Vale. It was in this year that a new Education Act abolished School Boards and introduced Local Education Authorities. With an increasing demand for school places it was becoming clear that the endowment was insufficient to meet the requirements of the Board of Education.

In 1905 the Trustees agreed to lease the school to Chesterfield Council, and in 1906 it was transferred to the Local Education Authority, with the Trust continuing to provide additional help for pupils in the parish. Webster's Whittington Moor Endowed School was re-named the Whittington Moor Council School.



Bell's School. Photograph by Elizabeth Pemberton.

In 1911 the Whittington Moor infants moved to a separate building, to accommodate 430 children and known locally as Bell's School. This is on School Lane, adjacent to the senior school.[1].

By 1918 separate boys and girls accommodation was provided at the senior school.

On 19th March 1921 a school reunion was held at Whittington Moor, where former pupils reminisced about their old headmaster,

Enoch Bell. The Derbyshire Courier of 26/3/1921 carries a report of the event, detailing the "inestimable value" of his tuition, his "untiring devotion and admirable example". They clearly thought of him with great affection and respect.

In 1923 Enoch retired from his position as headmaster of Shirebrook Model Village Boy's School, which was marked by a presentation at that school on 23/2/1924. This was reported in the Derbyshire Times of 1/3/1924, with a glowing eulogy (and a photograph).

In 1928 the senior girls transferred from the Whittington Moor Council School to the Violet Markham School on Highfield Lane, Newbold. The boys school was renamed the Peter Webster Secondary Modern School for Boys [2].

Enoch Bell was still serving on the Board of Governors at Chesterfield Boys' Grammar School until 1936, when he resigned. (Derbyshire Times 31/7/1936). He died in June 1937 and was buried at Boythorpe Cemetery

On 22/12/1939 the Derbyshire Times reported that the senior boys had given a pantomime performance of "Robinson Crusoe". It was said that all the boys gave good performances, the whole show being given for the Whittington Moor Infants School on Monday and Tuesday mornings, for children only on Monday evening (attended by 330) and two performances for adults on Tuesday and Wednesday evenings.

.Peter Webster's senior school closed down in 1967, and the building was used as an annexe to Newbold Green and Violet Markham Schools, and for adult education classes. On 11/11/1976 the (Sheffield) Star reported that the building would probably soon no longer be needed by the schools and discussions were under way to use it as a community and adult education centre.

In 1983 the decision was made to close Whittington Moor Infants School, after much opposition from parents. Falling pupil numbers meant that it was not viable to operate two infants schools in the area, and in 1984 "Bell's" school closed its doors for the last time, the pupils transferring to the Gilbert Heathcote Infants' school on Scarsdale Road at Whittington Moor.

Newspapers are available at the British Newspaper Archives or Find My Past websites (both subscription sites)

Some records are held at The National Archives ED 21

Derbyshire Record Office : Senior School (inc. admission registers 1899-1966) D2997
Infant School (admission registers 1888-1984)(log books
1876-1984) D3615

Admission Registers and Log Books are on Find My Past

[1] <https://www.genuki.org.uk/big/eng/DBY/Whittington#Schools>

[2] <https://calmview.derbyshire.gov.uk/calmview/Record.aspx?src=CalmView.Catalog&id=D2997>