

WHITEHILL AND THE ROOKERY IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

In 1611, John Speed, the mapmaker, published his maps of Great Britain. He was the originator of the term Great Britain, and, incidentally, is a distant ancestor. His map of Staffordshire⁽¹⁾ shows Mow Cop, and Newchapel, but there is no reference to Whitehill, which either comes under the area of Newchapel, in which area it still is for marriage registration purposes, or under Wolstanton.

But we do hear of a John Caulton of Whitehill in Wolstanton Parish Registers. John Ward's, "The Borough of Stoke-on-Trent" refers to a John Oaulton (presumably a misprint) of Whitehill who became a Constable for Tunstall Court in 1631, an office held for a year⁽²⁾. This meant that he was an officer of the Lord of the Manor, which was a role administering civil and criminal justice. John had a son, Thomas, baptized in 1639⁽³⁾. He, himself, was a Churchwarden from 1643⁽⁴⁾, and overseer of the poor in 1670-71⁽⁵⁾, and we hear of the burial of Robert, son of John Caulton, on July 21st 1671⁽⁶⁾. He would have been an important local figure, is described as John Caulton senior, and had a son called John, whose daughter or possibly granddaughter, Margaret, was baptized in 1687⁽⁷⁾. All this might suggest that Whitehill was a locally known area, which had few inhabitants. It would seem to be an agricultural place, though there was a road from Great Chell to Newchapel in 1664⁽⁸⁾.

The Parish Registers record the burial of Thomas Oaks of Whitehill on January 20th, 1713⁽⁹⁾ would tend to suggest that Whitehill was a small but recognizable area within a wider community. The gradual development of roads, though they were even worse than they are today, would probably have encouraged an increase in population, but it would be fair to say that Whitehill was an agricultural community. Norman Roche writes of Whitehill in 1809, "Whitehill, until the sinking of Kinnersley's pits, had remained almost undisturbed in its wildness. It was a rough high country with several deep valleys abounding in ferns, heather and long coarse vegetation stretching within a short distance of Mow. A few lone houses lay between Kidsgrove and Mow, a track leading over the hill to connect one village with another, if indeed the huts that existed could be called villages"⁽¹⁰⁾.

Things were beginning to change. The tollbooth or gate or turnpike so encouraged by Josiah Wedgwood to improve the roads, and the growth of canals begun by James Brindley, which was also supported by Wedgwood to assist the transport of his pottery, would assist in the development of industry. This would include the coal industry that would grow in the Whitehill area. There was a link from Birchenwood Colliery, Kidsgrove, to the canal. The 1841 census, which was the first to record people by name, gives us a clearer picture. It describes people's jobs as well as their names. Out of sixty-six workers, thirty-five are colliers, one, a coal miner's agent, and two are engineers. Two are furnace men, one is an iron miner, one, a watchman, and there are four bricklayers. There are two carpenters, two blacksmiths, two farmers and eleven agricultural labourers. We also have one dressmaker, and two people of independent means. Whitehill in 1841 appears to centre around six roads, Whitshole, Brewhouse Bank, Galley's Bank, Red Row, Bull's Bank and Trubshaw. The total community is two hundred and thirty-two people. These roads are considered by the census as part of the areas of Brieryhurst, and Thursfield, but Whitehill, itself, is not described as an area. The gradual development of the coal industry and its suppliers into the countryside meant that it was difficult to know where one village began and another ended, and this is true of Whitehill.

Do we recognize any of their names in the 1841 census? Richard, a collier, and Sarah Ball (?) live at Brewhouse Bank, and have eight children. Samuel and Martha Ball (?), who lived next door had five. Samuel is a collier. Joseph Gidman of Whitshole is a collier, who has six children. James Lees, again a collier, of Brewhouse Bank has five children. John and Ann Sutton, of Whithole (John is a collier) also have five children. This meant that, unlike today, very few wives went out to work. They would have to look after the family when young, and saw it as their role to look after their home.

Why would they have such large families? The early years would be difficult but a larger family meant more income to keep the family out of poverty. One hundred and six people out of this total community of two hundred and thirty-two people came from a family of seven or more people. Sometimes, the families would be large because, in an age of inadequate medical care, it was expected that some of the children would die. As late as 1872, over a quarter of children between nought and four years of age would die, chiefly from infectious diseases (11).

Unfortunately, for the parents, the youngsters would leave home and have families of their own. Their father would get older, not be able to do as much as he used to, especially in manual work, and so earn less money. Without the aid of an old age pension he, often, gradually sank into poverty. Sometimes the Chell (Burslem and Wolstanton Union) or some other Workhouse would be the only alternative to starvation. There were occasions when an older man lived with his son or daughter. Was this what happened to Matthew Leese, aged sixty-five, who was living with Matthew and Sarah (Basmilk?) in Galley's Bank? Working conditions were hard. In 1842 John Vickers aged seventeen worked from six a.m. to six p.m. down the mines for eleven shillings a week (12).

Samuel Grundy was a bricklayer aged twenty. He lived in Galley's Bank. In 1881 we hear of Samuel again. He is still a bricklayer. He still lives in Galley's Bank. His name is spelt Grundey this time and he is described as aged sixty-four, but there is a James Grundey aged thirty-five, who was not born in the 1841 census. He lives in The Rookery and, is, also, a bricklayer. Sometimes the person giving the information could give the wrong age. There would be variations in spelling, especially as the 1841 census was written in pencil, and so some names are hard to read. A census enumerator could, also, easily get someone's age wrong. If it happens these days with computers, how much more likely would it be with pencil and pen or do I mean that the other way round? Would this and the fact that the Balls or the Bulls lived next door to each other suggest that there were very close contacts between families?

William Stubbs is aged thirty from Whitholes. He is a collier. Is he the same William Stubbs from the Rookery, who is found on a Tunstall Wesleyan Methodist Circuit Plan of 1865?

Most of the people in Whitehill in 1841 were born in the county of Staffordshire, and since only a few could afford whatever transport there was most would probably have been born in the locality. Some may have come looking for work in the mines from the country, but it seems not from a vast distance.

As a period of forty years will give a sense of any changes that have taken place in Whitehill, we move on in time to the 1881 census. Bulls Bank, and Trubshaw do not seem to appear as separate entries, and The Rookery, and Alderley Lane (now

Alderhay Lane, which, then, included part of High Street, Rookery), are added. The Rookery first appears on the 1851 Census, and may be a renaming of Trubshaw. Whitholes appears to have become Whitehill. Whitehill appears as an area of Brieryhurst. Pennyfields, Trubshaw Edge, and Trubshaw Shop, which rightly or wrongly I have included as part of Whitehill today, are part of Thursfield. Whitehill does appear as a separate place on the 1865 Tunstall Wesleyan Methodist Circuit Plan. Assuming that Whitehill consists of these roads in 1881, and I could be wrong, (some of these roads might be thought of as Mow Cop, not Whitehill) Whitehill's community has grown from two hundred and thirty-two people in 1841 to one thousand and twenty in 1881.

Four hundred and forty-eight people live in The Rookery as distinct from forty-nine people in Trubshaw in 1841. One Primitive (Ball's Bank) and One Wesleyan Methodist Church, (known as Bottom Chapel), now exist on the Ordnance Survey Map of 1880, but the stress on temperance has not prevented two beer sellers and one licensed victualler living in the community. Brewhouse Bank, on which Ball's Bank Church is sited, may not have had the name for nothing. Three hundred and thirty-one people are in work. Nineteen people are described as unemployed or with no occupation. There may be one or two more for the 1880s were a time of economic hardship, and, the enumerator may have simply not recorded one or two instances of a person being without work. Using the term 'unemployed' may imply that officials were slowly realizing that there would not always be jobs for all who needed them. This did not mean that the State would provide welfare.

At least one hundred and fifty-eight people work in the mining industry. A Mr. John (?) Boulton of the Rookery is a Coal Proprietor. Samuel and Joseph Taylor, father and son, of Alderley Lane are described similarly. It might seem that they are keeping watchful eyes over their workers. Joseph Arkwright of Cromford lived originally in a house where his workers lived. There are three fustian cutters, and three bricklayers. One person works in the silk industry.

About sixty-five people work in the iron trade; there are thirty labourers, eighteen domestic servants, and five housekeepers. In 1881 there were two hundred and eighteen female domestic servants per thousand families in England and Wales but this figure fell to one hundred and seventy by 1911⁽¹³⁾. There are five dressmakers, a pick sharpener, and a railway guard. A mercantile clerk, a commercial clerk, two colliery clerks, one teacher, Alfred Rowley, aged only seventeen, and three pupil teachers, who are about the same age as Alfred, represent professional classes. Five grocers meet some of the community's shopping needs. These were the days of 'Open All Hours', and hours stretched from early morning to late evening.

While mining jobs have increased the percentage of Whitehill employees who work in the mines has declined. The iron industry has grown. British iron and steel provided sixty point five per cent of world trade in 1880 but this had dropped to thirty-five point six per cent in 1913. About two hundred and fifty people work in manufacturing out of the three hundred and thirty one in the work force. Nationally, there was a rise in trade and commercial work, government employment and the professions⁽¹⁴⁾. In Whitehill, industry still ruled.

Two thirds of the population of England in 1871 lived in towns, but, when we talk of the drift to the towns in the nineteenth century, Whitehill reminds us that people

moved not only to the towns but also to the villages around the towns. It seems that it was only with the drift from the countryside that Whitehill was officially recognized as a village. The flight from the countryside produced not only greater towns but industrial villages, of which Whitehill was one. It may be that there was so much concern about conditions in the towns that there was insufficient attention paid to the opportunities and problems of a village such as Whitehill. There was concern about rural conditions, too, but did Whitehill fall between two stools, since it was neither totally urban nor completely rural?

Life has changed at Whitehill. Out of this once rural community, now there are only eight farmers, often, small farmers, ten agricultural labourers and one dairymaid. Unless agricultural workers from outside the area served the farmers, this suggests that the farms were small, and that agriculture is still important but provides less jobs overall. These were years of agricultural depression. There are four blacksmiths, and one who works for a blacksmith, three horse and one pony drivers, two waggoners, one of whom worked at the pit, one errand boy, and one shoemaker. There is a boat builder, and a timber sawyer. The expansion of Whitehall reflected that, however harsh the conditions, industrial jobs paid more than agricultural ones. They might mean that they were the only opportunities available.

Where were the miners and ironworkers employed? Goldendale Ironworks had opened in 1848. Robert Heath, who now owned Ravensdale Ironworks, had in 1877 bought the Birchenwood coal and iron works. He exploited the iron stone and coal in the area. The Trubshaw Colliery was the site of one of the present day housing estates in The Rookery. If some miners lived within touching distance of work, others would be seen (and heard in their clogs, sometimes) making their way to one of these places of work. If preachers on Sundays walked to their appointments, it would be because they did the same when they went to work. It was their normal way of getting around.

Edward Leese from Brewhouse Bank is a coal miner aged forty who lives with his father, James. James was born in Biddulph, Edward in Brewhouse Bank, and so James, aged seventy, must have moved there at some stage, probably looking for mining work. James was a trustee of the Primitive Methodist Chapel in 1869 and so Edward is part of a Church family and probably has the Church in his blood. Edward Leese is remembered for his devoted service to the Primitive Methodists⁽¹⁵⁾. He died in 1917. He was a member for fifty-five years. By this time, Edward would have received an Old Age Pension, in 1908, of five shillings a week, or seven shillings and sixpence if he were married, and the money he left to the Church both enabled the debt on the new Whitehill Primitive Methodist Church to be cleared, and contributed to the building of an organ⁽¹⁶⁾. In 1881, the family, which included James's granddaughter, Rebecca Leighton, aged eight, had a housekeeper, Elizabeth Green, aged fifty-five. This may not mean that they were comfortably off. Elizabeth may have been a companion or family friend. Out of an income, which would only allow for a few luxuries, Edward had left money to the Church. Out of the giving of people such as this, Whitehill (Primitive) Methodist Church was built.

Edward lived just behind the Primitive Methodist Church. The nearness of Trubshaw mine and the large number of miners in the area suggests that many lived near their workplace. Such people may have wanted a Church close by, especially as walking was their only means of transport. Those who had to walk to work, unless they were

preachers, would hardly want to walk to Church, as well. They may have felt that they had no energy to do so, and, possibly, appreciated having a Church round the corner. A tradition grew of attachment to a small geographical community, which is still with us to this day.

Nationally, in the Religious Census of 1851, the Victorians had been shocked to discover that only fifty-eight point eight per cent of the population attended any kind of Church⁽¹⁷⁾. They believed that the answer was to provide enough seating space for people where they lived. This encouraged the development of local Churches. The growth of local Churches might also express a growing sense of village identity. Those who lived in Whitehill regarded it as their village, and, if they were going to worship anywhere, it would be in Whitehill.

A number of those on the census were the original Trustees of the Primitive Methodist chapel⁽¹⁸⁾. George Longshaw was fifteen in the 1841 census, when he lived at Brewhouse Bank, and fifty-six in the 1881 census when he is a coal miner, now living at White Hill. His brother, Charles was thirteen in 1841, and lived with him and the family at Brewhouse Bank. George is one of the original 1869 Trustees, the Chapel was founded in 1870, and Charles may have been a Trustee in 1895. Mark Longshaw, who is an engine tender in 1881, aged eighteen, George's son, living with his father at White Hill, is a Trustee in 1895. Enoch Longshaw, a twenty-six year old coal miner in 1881, is a Trustee in 1895, and lives at Brewhouse Bank. Were there family dynasties of Trustees? James Leese is also on both the 1841 and 1881 censuses. His name has lost the final 'e' in 1841 but on both censuses he is a collier or coal miner. He is aged thirty in 1841 and seventy in 1881 and so the ages fit. He was not only an original Trustee but, it appears, unless there were another James Leese, that he was still a Trustee in 1895. Again, on both censuses, he lives at Brewhouse Bank. Is Brewhouse Bank, roughly where the Primitive Methodist Church was sited, where those who run the Church mainly live? Stephen Leese lives next door to James, in Brewhouse Bank and is a Trustee in 1895. Mark Dale was a coal miner who was thirty-four at the time of the 1881 census. He was an original Trustee of 1869. It will be no surprise that he lived in Brewhouse Bank. Jabez Dale, his son, aged five, in 1881 is a Trustee in 1895. David Rogers is an iron worker aged thirty-nine in 1881. He is a trustee in 1895. He lives, also, at Brewhouse Bank. Enoch Owen, a general labourer, aged fifty-six, who is a Trustee in both 1869 and 1895, lives, also, in Brewhouse Bank. William Owen, his son, aged twenty-eight in 1881 and a general labourer is a coal miner in 1881 and a Trustee in 1895. He lived with his father in Brewhouse Bank in 1881. Jacob Oakes, a twenty-two year old coal miner of Brewhouse Bank in 1881 is, also, a trustee in 1895. Stephen Foden, a twenty-six year old coal miner in 1881, of Brewhouse Bank is a Trustee in 1895. James Edward Rowley is a coal miner aged twenty-one in 1881 of Brewhouse Bank. Is he the Edward Rowley who was a Trustee in 1869? Was he called Edward not to be confused with another Trustee, also called James Rowley? Hezekiah Smith a gypsy who lived in a caravan, and so, because he was not technically a householder, may not have appeared on the 1881 Census, at Brewhouse Bank, was a Trustee in 1869 and 1895.

Was the Church initially run by a few families in Brewhouse Bank, who believed that, together, they were the Church? I have traced seven out of the ten original Trustees in 1869, and six of these lived in Brewhouse Bank. Out of the twenty-three of the thirty-one Trustees traced for 1869 and 1895, thirteen live or have lived in Brewhouse Bank, Would no-one else do the jobs or would no-one else volunteer to do the jobs

because they thought that only these families had the power or ability to do so? Except for The Rookery, which already had a Wesleyan Methodist Church, Brewhouse Bank was the largest street in Whitehill. Two hundred and thirty-two people lived on it as distinct from eighty-nine in Whitehill and sixty-four on Galley's Bank. This, in itself, may partly explain the large number of Trustees from Brewhouse Bank. Perhaps, we should see the Trustees of the Primitive Methodist Chapel as being largely founded by a group of people from Brewhouse Bank, and, possibly, recruiting slightly more widely later.

The Church was founded and run by coal miners and labourers, though James Rowley, a fifty-four year old mining engineer in 1881, is a Trustee in both 1869 and 1895. He lives at White Hill. William Hollinshead, twenty-four, and a coal miner in 1881, is a Trustee in 1895 when he lives in Galley's Bank, as does a fellow 1895 Trustee, Frederick (Fred.) Douglas who, in 1881 is a fifty year old general labourer. Trustees looked after the property of the Church.

Society had only begun to wake up to harsh working conditions, faced by some of these people. None of the local mines faced anything like the 1866 the Talke mining disaster caused the deaths of forty-three men and injured thirteen more but there were individual fatal accidents. Philip Leese, in "Mow Cop – A Working Village", records a tombstone in of 1879 in Newchapel churchyard, which read, "In Earth by day. In Earth by night. In Earth I took my whole delight. In Earth I worked and lost by breath. In Earth my God sent sudden death"⁽¹⁹⁾.

These years saw a decline in trade, nationally. This may have led the census operators tacitly to acknowledge that not everyone would have a job by the use of the term 'unemployed' on the census form. The word did not attribute blame. Twenty-one out of the three hundred and thirty-one people available for work are described as unemployed or without an occupation. This is just over six per cent of the work force. In 1879, nationally, unemployment was eleven point four per cent and in 1886, ten point two per cent⁽²⁰⁾. Victorians were coming to understand that unemployment was sometimes caused, not by idleness, or lack of moral standards, but because there were no jobs available. Thrift, helping yourself, saving and being helped by others was not enough to take workers through long periods of unemployment. Workers did not earn enough to make this possible. Charles Booth, in his survey of the East End of London, in the 1880s, discovered that nearly thirty-five per cent of residents were poor⁽²¹⁾. His poverty line was an income of between eighteen to twenty one shillings a week for a 'moderate' family to live on. He concluded that eighty-five percent of this poverty was caused by low pay, or lack of work, or a large family and sickness. In the 1881 Census, in Whitehill, there seem to have been less very large families, than in 1841, and this might mean that overall that conditions were slightly better than in previous years. People complained that there were insufficient jobs for children to do, and this, more than the understanding that large families meant poverty, might have been the reason for less children. If Charles Booth had performed a survey of Whitehill, he might have found less poor people than in the East End of London, but might he have suggested that one in four of all Whitehill families was poor? We know that, in 1843, miners in the area would expect to earn thirteen pence a day and if they worked six days a week, this would mean they received seventy-eight pence a week⁽²²⁾. Stoppages, and being on short time, would decrease this. Dave Wood suggests 'Kidsgrove in 1871' that miners would receive almost a pound a week, engineers, one pound twenty pence, and teachers one pound sixty pence⁽²³⁾. In 1881, we were in a

time of depression to which employers would respond by cutting wages and putting people out of work. Even assuming that the East End of London might be more expensive than Whitehill, at a time when a new militant Trade Unionism had felt it necessary to stand up for workers' rights, how many of them would have reached Charles Booth's poverty line of eighteen to twenty-one shillings a week? The decline in agricultural work suggests that farm workers, and, presumably, other labourers received less. A number took in lodgers, but some, also, had to look after their parents. Only a few people would be always out of what Charles Booth defined as poverty. At some stage, most people in Whitehill would have lived on or beneath the poverty line. When a number of the family were earning, they may be able to rise above it fairly comfortably, if they did not have elderly parents to support, but when these youngsters left home, they would sink beneath it again.

Despite all this, real wages nationally rose by eighty percent between 1850 and 1900, partly because wages had gone up and partly because prices because of foreign competition or cheaper means of production had gone down⁽²⁴⁾. Coal production, nationally, mainly through exports, increased rapidly from one hundred and twenty-seven million tons in 1874 to one hundred and sixty million tons in 1886⁽²⁵⁾. Coal owners still complained about low prices and profits. Mining jobs would probably have been safeguarded, and, while they had health and strength, most miners should have escaped poverty. The 1882 Royal Commission Report stated that the drop in food prices had even raised the value of rural wages⁽²⁶⁾, but life was still hard for those whose employment was uncertain. A Cabinet paper in 1906, though standards of living and expectations had increased, stated that eighteen point three per cent of the population over sixty-five were said to be in poverty⁽²⁷⁾. In 1911, local surveys taken throughout the country suggested that twenty-three shillings and eight pence was necessary to look after a family of two adults and three children, but in that year, the social researcher, Seebohm Rowntree, stated that almost one-third of all adult men were earning less than twenty-five shillings a week, even when in full employment⁽²⁸⁾.

If the retirement age is being increased today, it seems that in 1881 it seems that there was no official concept of retirement at all. George Hughes was a farmer, who lived on Galley's Bank. His father, Joseph, and mother, Ann, lived with them. Both were eighty-two years of age, and both were described as unemployed. They are the oldest people recorded in the 1881 census. Thomas Durbar, similarly described as unemployed and living with William in The Rookery, is seventy-seven.

Mary Banks aged seventy-nine was a stocking knitter. She was living with Absalom and Mary Ball and possibly was not expected to earn her own living. The enumerator describes Joseph Horn of Whitehill, however, aged seventy-seven, as a retired miner and there does not appear to any official way of describing anyone over sixty-five. It is unclear why Joseph Horn could be described as retired and Joseph and Ann Hughes as unemployed. William Owen, aged seventy, living with Arthur at The Rookery, is a labourer. James Leese, who was living with his son, Stephen, was still going down the coalmines at seventy years old. Most of the above people probably felt that they must go on and on until they dropped and so would have no sense of retirement. Dave Wood's comments on Kidsgrove in 1871 state that nationally life expectancy was forty years of age⁽²⁹⁾. This reflects the high infant mortality of the time, and those who survived infancy could expect to live longer but comparatively few lived beyond the age of sixty-five. People did not expect to and were not expected to become old. Old Age Pensions were only introduced in 1909, the elderly had either to look after themselves as best they could or rely on their families to help them.

Sometimes, neither was possible and the Workhouse beckoned its forbidding finger. What was going to happen to a couple in their sixties without any children or whose children had fled the nest? Perhaps, they might still be in the village, but would they always be able to help? It seems that a number of elderly parents lived with their families. This seemed to be expected, but the establishment of a welfare state would recognize that this would not be the case for everyone.

There seems to have been greater mobility than in 1841. Whereas in 1841 most people were born in Staffordshire, we hear of Ellis Lester Hunter an eighteen year old colliery clerk, his pupil teacher, sister, Elizabeth, (sixteen) and brother John (fourteen), and sister, Mary, (twelve), and Barbara (nine) migrating from Nairn, Scotland, and living in their own place in The Rookery. Mrs. Betty Cooper has told me that Ellis, at least, was involved with St. Saviour's, Church, The Rookery. Alexander Baxter, a forge labourer, lodged with the Hughes' family in Whitehill, and came from Dundee. Thomas Kelly was a Coke Burner. He was born in Dublin. His wife, Mary, was born in Roscommon. We sense how they travelled, probably from Liverpool, looking for work. Thomas, the first son, twenty-five, was born in Chester, their second son, Thomas, (nineteen) was born in Congleton, and only James was born in the Rookery, seventeen years previously. Finally, they settled.

Charles Sugden, thirty-five, of The Rookery, the licensed victualler, was born in Wakefield and married Mary from Philadelphia. In 1861 a number left Kidsgrove to look for mining work in Durham so there could be movement outside the area as well as in. Nevertheless, the vast majority of residents outside The Rookery were born in the North Staffordshire or South Cheshire area. People were seeking work in the North Staffordshire coalfield.

Philip Leese writes of Mow Cop's section of the 1881 census, "Most heads of household lived, even in the 1880s when transport was easier, in the parish of their birth". Pg 49 'Mow Cop A Working Village'. In Whitehill and The Rookery, though, the places of birth of residents suggest that many came from South Cheshire, or other parts of North Staffordshire to find work. The end of Whitehill and the beginning of Brewhouse Bank is full of families, whose main breadwinner was born in one of Kidsgrove, The Rookery, or Whitehill. Could this have been where the established Whitehill families lived? Further down the road live a number of families, whose main breadwinner was born in Wolstanton. Was this where the newcomers lived? Yet further down Brewhouse Bank, is another area where most wage earners were born in the local area. There were places in The Rookery where those who appeared to be newcomers and those who seem to be older residents lived in the same row of houses but also places, which were more full of one than the other. As we go towards Mow Cop, on Alderley Lane, most of the main wage earners were born in the local area. Was there a sense of 'old' versus 'new' Whitehill, in some areas? This is possible but the census does not give us evidence on which to decide.

Sometimes members of the same family appear to have lived next door to each other. Henry Gidman, a forge man aged thirty-five and Thomas Gidman, aged forty-one were next-door neighbours. George and John Turner live next door to each other in The Rookery. Other times families of the same name may live next door but one to each other. Brothers often did the same job as each other, often as a coal miner or a labourer, or, as in the case of John and Joseph Durber, iron moulders. This need not be for the same employer, but, in some cases it was probably expected that, when

school days were over, you would get a job at the main employer's. This made for a close community, which would, also, attract people from the outside, but not necessarily accept them. It might mean that they would rely on and listen to those whom they knew. Were there tensions sometimes between established families and those who had come from outside?

Names familiar to the area give a further sense of a close community. Another George Turner was a pit engine worker aged fifty-two. Ralph Turner was a sixty-three year old coal miner. There is a Thomas Turner, as well. Thirty-two year old James Gidman was a coalminer. We have already met Henry and Thomas Gidman, and Daniel Gidman was a fifty-seven year old coal miner. Matthew Leese was a thirty-year-old furnace man. Hugh Wooliscroft was a forty-nine year old coal miner from Alderley Lane.

Henry Bailey was a twenty-nine year old collier from Whitehill. George Bailey lived at Galley's Bank. He and Mary had seven children.

Absalom Ball was an ironstone miner from Brewhouse Bank, and Charles did the same job. William Ball from Galley's Bank was a Coal Miner. We meet Luke and Enoch Ball in the Rookery. Richard Ball is a thirty-nine year old Coal Miner who lives in the same area as he was born, The Rookery. Thomas Sutton is a forty-year-old puddler. We meet Charles Potts a forty-nine year old coal miner born in Kidsgrove, who married Hannah, forty-eight, who was born in Buxton. Names such as Lawton, Longshaw, and Owen become familiar.

In 1841, we hear of John Sutton and Joseph Gidman.

Wives still remained at home, looking after the family, and would have developed a sense of community, one with another. This was slowly beginning to change with the greater educational opportunities for girls and women. Two seventeen year old girls are pupil teachers, but the opportunities would take time to develop in places such as Whitehill. There were, however, two women out of three on the staffs of the National School in Kidsgrove in 1872⁽³⁰⁾, and at St. James, Newchapel, School, Sarah Ann Jack shared the teaching with her husband, James Jack, in 1869. He was the Master. She was the Mistress. Miss Hannah Holdcroft was the mistress in 1884, when Miss Lizzie White was the mistress at the Board School in Newchapel⁽³¹⁾. These ladies always appeared to be junior to the Master or Headmaster. Only a little more than half of all elementary teachers at the turn of the century were qualified, and the rest were assistants or pupil teachers. They often seemed to be recruited from the children in the school. The teaching may have been unimaginative, but, as early as 1883, one Birmingham employer commented how more than one thousand boys had shown themselves to be 'more orderly, more amenable to discipline, and much more intelligent'⁽³²⁾ than the previous groups. Education had been a change for the better. There could be women preachers in the Primitive Methodist tradition but a Church that allowed women preachers had no women on Whitehill's Primitive Methodist Church Trust. In Methodist circles while there are men to fill the offices, the Trust and the property life of the Church has traditionally been thought of as a male preserve.

Children and Young People are beginning to be described in a new way. The 1880 Education Act made education up to the age of ten compulsory, and so children of ten and under are now described as scholars. This is not to say that youngsters of that age were always in school. The Education Acts encouraged people to look at childhood as a specific stage in life where children have their own ways of thinking rather than to

look at them as little adults. Some families resisted compulsory education as an indulgence that they could not afford, and there would be family and social occasions when the schoolmaster was resigned to a low attendance at school. Good attendance medals were offered by schools nationally but were not enough when parents wanted or needed a child's income from paid employment for the family. Local School Boards had the power to allow a child to work part-time. In 1878, nationally, twenty-nine thousand boys and thirty-three thousand girls were working half-time in cotton factories⁽³³⁾. They could also allow a child to leave school early before they were thirteen. School attendance officers became familiar in working-class districts. The general Kidsgrove area did better educationally than might be expected in such a gritty, down to earth community. An inspector wrote, of a Night School for boys aged fourteen and fifteen, in 1863, "It is proof of the influence of education in Kidsgrove that this class of lads, who are generally averse to learning, and who have to work all night every other week, attend school as well as they do"⁽³⁴⁾.

The Rev. Frederick Wade's National (Church of England Voluntary School) School in Kidsgrove was to the forefront of North Staffordshire Education. In 1865, it was the first out of nineteen competing schools in North Staffordshire. Until 1870, parents paid for their children to go to the National School in Liverpool Road and the Avenue or to the smaller Wesleyan School in School Lane. Until the Fee Grant Act of 1891, allowing ten shillings a year to be spent on each child who showed average attendance, parents would have to pay three pence a week for their children to be educated, though some school boards waived this when the family were very poor⁽³⁵⁾. Some children might have gone to the National School at St. James's, Newchapel, or, if they had the ability and were fortunate in 1869-70 go to the Grammar School on Colclough Lane, where the Rev. John Sutcliffe was Headmaster⁽³⁶⁾. John Ward, "The Borough of Stoke-on-Trent", in 1843 places a free Grammar School in Newchapel, which was subsidized to the tune of one hundred pounds a year. This closed in 1877, according to The Staffordshire Village Book, though interest from the bequest appears still to have been used, but the brightest of working-class children had a few more opportunities to climb the educational ladder. The children of the 1870 Education Act might as parents hope for a better future for their own youngsters of the 1880s. Four or five out of a thousand bright working-class children in late Victorian England could expect to move on through Grammar School to University⁽³⁷⁾. Very few working-class children would have the privilege of continuing at school beyond the age of thirteen, when childhood was generally understood to have ended.

In the 1881 census, some young people up to the age of fifteen are described as scholars. Some would have gone to the Grammar School. Does this show that some families both valued and could afford education beyond the age of ten (or that a youngster was sponsored by someone else)? Would the census enumerator in certain situations prefer to describe a youngster like this than put him down as unemployed? Though it may be true that a census enumerator who would describe an eighty-two year old couple as being unemployed would hardly show more consideration to a fifteen-year-old lad, it is still possible that the enumerator did not always fill in the entries in exactly the same way.

Another effect of compulsory education even only to the age of ten would mean that there had to be a recruitment drive for teachers. It is not surprising that our teacher and the two pupil teachers were in their teens.

What picture do we get of Whitehill? It is an industrial village, and reminds us that the nineteenth century saw the growth of industrial villages as well as that of towns. It is an expanding working man's community, which would be affected by the decline and increase in trade. Anglican Churches and Methodist Chapels in both Whitehill and The Rookery, there were two Methodist Churches in Whitehill, show a considerable sense of identity to a small geographical community. There was no concept of retirement, and little concept of childhood as stages of life. There was work and there was family. Families would have to support each other, and elderly parents would be dependent on the goodwill and the resources of their grown up children for their welfare. It would probably depend on mutual support, and people may well have relied on and listened to those whom they knew. Though many of the community were living in the same vicinity in which they had been born, outsiders were admitted, if not accepted. Members of what we might call the professional middle-class were appearing slowly, but more slowly than the national average. Medical aid would be patchy and have to be paid for when people were struggling to pay for the basics. Working conditions were often difficult and sometimes dingy. We may be grateful that, even in this time of austerity, that our society has made our lives more secure than theirs were then. While, slowly, women were beginning to have more job opportunities, in Whitehill, the overwhelming majority looked after the family. Many of Whitehill's attitudes were conservative.

Out of all this, the Whitehill we know today grew and changed. One thing remains true. Though it now has a community of over two thousand, Whitehill is still an area known to the locality but not to a wider field. If it is mentioned at all, Whitehill is seen as a part either of Kidsgrove or Newchapel. It is finally mentioned as a separate area in the Ordnance Survey Map for The Potteries in 1895.

Has Whitehill today been influenced by the Whitehill of the past? Whitehill has always been a close community but, at the same time, has attracted newcomers. It may be that this has sometimes made the community more responsive to different ideas and methods. It may also be at the same time that its position off the beaten track has meant that it has been able to cling in other ways to traditional habits. Older residents have a considerable attachment to its small area, though the car and newer families mean that this is disappearing. It may be that modern communications has led to a tension between old ways and the new. Some may think that Whitehill's position of being neither town nor country has meant that its needs have been forgotten. What other ways has Whitehill's past affected its present? Who we are now as a community is affected by what we have been. What are our lives like now, compared to the lives of people in Whitehill, then? What conclusions do you draw?

NOTES

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33. Ibid. Pg 284
34. Philip Leese, The Best of Kidsgrove Times, vol.2, Pg 29 1996
35. Donald Read, England 1868-1914, Pg 100
36. Keates Directory of Newchapel, 1869-70
37. Donald Read, England 1868-1914, Pg 285

