



Cover illustration: Stockport Union Workhouse

Photographic records taken in the 1890s suggests the specific institutional purpose intended for much of the furniture supplied to the Stockport Union Workhouse. Furniture included Windsor chairs, various types of settles with downswept arms and unusually narrow tables with integral end drawers. Photographs of the children's wing (fig. 1) of the building display a diversity of turned furniture and artefacts which are reminiscent of the photograph of the Silsden Methodist Sunday School circa 1900 (C. Gilbert, RF Vol. IX p. 7).

The Stockport Union of 1837 was set up to provide poor relief for the townships making up the extensive Parish of Stockport, as required by the 1834 Poor Law Amendment Act. Building of the Workhouse commenced on Shaw Heath in 1841 and although the role of the Unions was eventually transferred to the Local Authorities in 1929, the building still stands today as an integral part of St. Thomas' Hospital. With the closure of the building imminent, it may be possible to trace some of the former workhouse furniture and perhaps identify the furniture originally introduced in the 1840s.

Simon Feingold has started to make preliminary inquiries and would welcome any local knowledge and further assistance in this search. Tel 0161 740 1063



Fig 1. The Children's wing of the workhouse

Workhouse photographs courtesy of the Heritage Library, Stockport.
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A useful reference....

A recent publication with interesting pictorial references to conditions in the workhouses is by Trevor May, 'The Victorian Workhouse', 1997, Shire Publications Ltd., Shire Album No. 334