

England never seems to have given high priority to the education of its children, compared with many other European nations, nor with Wales and Scotland. Universal education did not come about until 1870 and until that date children in Derbyshire often came to school for only a few years, and girls came notably less often than their brothers.

This is the career story of Thomas Henry Mousley who was the schoolteacher who began the logbook in Hope School, 1863. He is described as 'Probationary Teacher' at the front of the Logbook and shortly after he began his entries he heard that he had passed his exams. He had been born in 1840 at Camden Town (St Pancras) Middlesex. Maybe we will discover at some later date why he came to Hope, perhaps the churchwardens advertised the post or perhaps he knew someone in the district. At the end of 1863 the governors of the school decided that his salary would be £33 a year plus the 'school pence'. Some children would have 'free' places and some would pay. In some schools payment was graded according to parents' income. We don't know how much Mr Mousley received from the school pence, but it is clear that he was very concerned about pupils' attendance. On the strength of this agreement he was married in the Christmas holidays and returned to Hope with his wife. The vicar and schoolchildren gave them a tea set as a wedding present. Mrs Martha Mousley took over the school for several days in 1864 while her husband was 'indisposed'. According to the Trade Directories (researched by Ann Price) the couple became sub postmaster and mistress in 1864 in addition to the teaching. They had a daughter, Mary, who was born in Hope in 1865.

Their income was probably not deemed sufficient for a growing family, so by the time of the 1871 census Thomas Mousley had become a teacher in Cranley, Surrey, where two children Amy and Edward were born. In addition they had two boarders who were also scholars, Henry Woods 8 years old and John, his brother, aged 6. These would be private pupils who paid fees for their tuition. Also living in the house was their servant, Emily Haines, aged 12 and described as a Nurse Girl. She would have been the same age as some of his pupils, no doubt. Their address was 'Cranley Village'.

By 1881 Thomas described himself as Government Certificated Schoolmaster, living at Hoo, Kent and their address was The Board School. An Assistant School Mistress, Emily Lawrence, was also living with them. They had five more children, Ethel, Ada, Herbert, Hugh and Thomas.

In 1891 they were still at Hoo though only 4 children were still at home. Thomas was now described as 'Certificated Schoolmaster, Organist and Choirmaster'. His two sons are clerks at Cement Works. There are at least 2 other elementary schoolteachers in the area, presumably at the same school.

By 1901 there are 4 children still at home, two sons working as clerks in the Cement Works and another as an Engine Fitter. They have moved to Strood St Mary, Frindsbury, Kent near Rochester. As the sons are still in the Cement Works it is presumably not far from their previous residence. The father is 61 and still a Certificated Schoolmaster though there is no mention of organ playing or choirs. Instead he combines teaching with being 'Alliance Assurance Co. Agent', presumably selling insurance.

He has worked all his life as a teacher and still can't rely on his salary for total financial support. In the next year, 1902, the new reforming Liberal Government would change the education situation yet again.

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Extra research by Ann Price:

I have been checking the Trade Directories for Hope for schoolmasters also being sub-postmasters. Thomas Henry Mousley combined the functions of receiver of mail and master of the Free School according to Harrison and Harrod's Directory of Derbyshire in 1860, White's Directory of 1861 and Kelly's directory of 1864. In Harrison and Harrods Directory for 1870 George Turner is listed as master of the National School and also as sub-postmaster. "Letters arrive at 8am, and are dispatched at 5.30" Perhaps he was too busy delivering the mail to be in time to take the registers in the morning! By 1876, according to Kelly's Directory, David Brearley is master of the National School and James Proctor is the receiver of the mail.