

1849 – 1850 & 1863

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| <p>1849</p> | <p>Local cholera outbreaks kills hundreds leaving many destitute orphans</p> <p>In the autumn of 1849, a terrible outbreak of cholera resulted in 730 deaths in Bilston, 720 deaths in Wolverhampton, 310 in Willenhall, and 55 in Wednesfield. As a result, many children lost their parents and their home.</p> |
| <p>1850</p> | <p>John Lees steps in and creates a small orphanage in Wolverhampton.</p> <div data-bbox="336 533 691 1010" data-label="Image"> </div> <p>John Lees, a successful lock and key manufacturer, and later a hardware merchant, who lived in Telford Place, North Road, Wolverhampton, decided that something had to be done.</p> <p>After unsuccessfully trying to persuade the Bluecoat School to move to bigger place, and include an orphanage funded by him, he then decided to use the ex-dispensary building in Queen Street and paid three years rent in advance before spending around £2,000 (equivalent to over £300,000 at current rates) to make the necessary modifications to the building.</p> <p>The original Royal School known as The Orphan asylum, which opened on 1st April 1850, in what is now 46 Queen St, Wolverhampton. The building had previously been the Old Dispensary, which was Wolverhampton's first hospital.</p> <div data-bbox="909 1010 1398 1384" data-label="Image"> <p>ORIGINAL ADVERT FROM THE WOLVERHAMPTON CHRONICLE</p> </div> <div data-bbox="336 1312 778 1644" data-label="Image"> </div> <p>Initially housing 13 boys, aged between 7 and 10, this number soon expanded resulting in the need for larger premises.</p> |
| <p>1863</p> | <p>John Lees passed away on 4th February 1863, at the age of 59.</p> <p>At this time the Orphanage accommodated 70 boys and girls. However, plans were needed for additional wings as demand for places was high. Pupil numbers reached 100 by 1866.</p> <p>His family led the orphanage for many years until in In1907 William Lees resigned as Chairman having been a Governor for 42 years and Chairman for 15 years.</p> |