

Anstice Memorial Hall No.6

The Anstice Memorial Institute and Workmens Club was erected in 1868 in memory of John Anstice of Madeley Wood, who had died in 1866. The Institute is a red brick building in a mixture of Norman and Gothic styles constructed to designs by Mr. John Johnson of London at a cost of £3,000.

The original building comprised a reading room and library of about 2,000 volumes, a smoking room and offices, and a large hall, capable of seating 600 persons. A management committee was appointed by the members and it was supported by voluntary contributions and subscriptions and an endowment fund.

The building has been much modernised, and extended, and now contains a bar and dance hall which can also accommodate other events. It is a private members club, and as such is not open to the general public.



The Anstices were very important coal and iron-masters throughout the 19th century. They lived at Madeley Wood Hall and owned the Madeley Wood Company which had extensive interests in local mines and ironworks. William Anstice was the nephew of

William Reynolds and the Anstices had inherited the Madeley Wood ironworks and several mining enterprises from Reynolds. In 1832, the ironworks were moved from the Bedlam Furnaces at Madeley Wood to Blists Hill, beside the Shropshire Canal. This helped to make the Company more profitable and it made a slow but successful recovery from the depression of the years after the Napoleonic Wars.

The Anstices were also leading figures in the community, being Justices of the Peace, Officers in the local Regiment and general benefactors. John Anstice, after whom the institute was named had the reputation of being an amiable and generous man. He was on good terms with his workmen and kept them employed throughout difficult times. He paid much attention to safety in his works and when accidents did occur he would weep with the bereaved. He was equally liberal with his means and time and would always give counsel to those who sought it.



Anstice himself was not a strong man and was rarely free from painful illness. After his death in 1866 it was widely felt that something should be done to honour his name, and it was decided to build the Institute. William Orme Foster, another iron-master presided at the inauguration of the building in 1868, saying that it was a privilege to dedicate the building to his memory and to hand down to posterity his name in association with it.

In the 1960s when the central area of Madeley was being redesigned to form the centre of one of the districts of the new town, the Anstice Memorial was left as the centre piece of the new development. Many old shops and houses in the surrounding area had to be demolished but the Anstice Memorial was retained as a link with the historic past of Madeley, and as a reminder of one of the great industrial families of the area.

