

PAST FORWARD

Produced by Wigan Heritage Service

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April - July 2012

Celebrate
our
Sporting
Heritage

£1



WIGAN HERITAGE SERVICES
discover
YOUR HERITAGE

W I G A N
LEISURE & CULTURE
T R U S T

museum
of **WiganLife** 

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FRONT COVER

YHAT's Bex Ford handles a sporting trophy that will be on display in the 'From the Word Go!' Exhibition.

Letter from the Editorial Team

As the Queen celebrates her diamond jubilee, PAST FORWARD also marks an important milestone... our 60th issue!

Our centre-fold includes images of past local jubilee celebrations, including those of Queen Victoria and King George. You can also turn to Collections Corner on page 34 to discover how Leigh folk commemorated the last (and only other) royal diamond jubilee in history.

Our 2011 local history writing competition was a great success and encouraged many new contributors to write articles for **PAST FORWARD**. The prize winning entries were published in issue 59. However, the standard of entries was very high and we are pleased to publish more of the articles submitted in this edition. With the support of the Wigan Borough Environment and Heritage Network we are pleased to announce the launch of the Second Annual Local History Writing Competition. For details of how to enter please turn to page 12.

We often receive letters from readers living in the Borough and further afield, who tell us how much they love reading **PAST FORWARD**. We hope you enjoy **PAST FORWARD'S** Diamond Jubilee issue.

Information for Contributors

We always welcome articles and letters for publication from both new and existing contributors.

If you would like to submit an article for **PAST FORWARD**, please note that:

- Publication is at discretion of Editorial Team
- The Editorial Team may edit your submission
- Submissions will remain on file until published
- Published and rejected submissions will be disposed of, unless you request for them to be returned

- Submissions may be held on file for publication in a future edition
- Articles must be received by the copy date if inclusion in the next issue is desired

Submission Guidelines

- Electronic submissions are preferred, although handwritten ones will be accepted
- We prefer articles to have a maximum length of 1,000 words
- Include photographs or images where possible – these can be returned if requested
- Include your name and address – we will not pass on your details to anyone unless you have given us permission to do so

We aim to acknowledge receipt of all submissions.

CONTACT DETAILS: pastforward@wlct.org or The Editor at **PAST FORWARD**, Museum of Wigan Life, Library Street, Wigan WN1 1NU.

On your marks, get set... **exhibit!**

After a year's hard work, the Museum of Wigan Life's YHAT is now in 'a race to the finish line'.

Over the last 12 months the Youth Heritage Action Team (YHAT), which includes local young people aged 15-23, have been working on a new exhibition called *From the Word Go!* YHAT was formed as part of the national Our Sporting Life project. As part of this initiative the young people worked on a small touring exhibition which explored local and national sporting stories. It went on show in Wigan at Robin Park Sports Centre last year.

Following the Robin Park exhibition, YHAT turned to the challenge of creating a sporting exhibition to go on display at the Museum of Wigan Life (MOWL) during the Olympic year. The team came up with a range of possible themes for the exhibition. After much debate, the firm favourites were the personal stories of the Borough's sporting heroes, the changing face of sport in the Borough and community sport. Ruth Darling, Exhibition and Display Officer at MOWL says "The group were especially keen to focus on the variety and breadth of sporting achievement – not just medals and winners but the role of sport in community life now and in the past."

Along the way the young people have teamed up with staff from the Heritage and Archives Service. They have talked 'tactics' with experts from various fields including archives, local studies, collection care and exhibition design. The team are now in the 'home straight' – writing the text for exhibition panels and selecting objects and photographs.

With the 'finishing post' in sight, the team have also been developing ideas for events to run alongside the exhibition. There will be fun summer holiday activities and a big family event, 'Winner Takes All' in Mesnes Park on Wednesday 25 July.

With YHAT's help, *From the Word Go!* promises to be a fun and interactive look at sport in the Borough. The exhibition opens at the Museum of Wigan Life on Friday 18 May, come along and have a look!

COPY DEADLINE FOR ISSUE 61

Contributors please note the deadline for the receipt of material for publication is Friday 29 June 2012.

PAST FORWARD Subscription Form

Past Forward Subscription

Subscription is £5 for three issues. Payment by cheque (payable to Wigan Leisure & Culture Trust), postal order or credit/debit card (telephone 01942 828128).

Please state which issue you wish your membership to begin

I am a registered blind person and would like the CD version

Name

Address

Postcode

Telephone No.

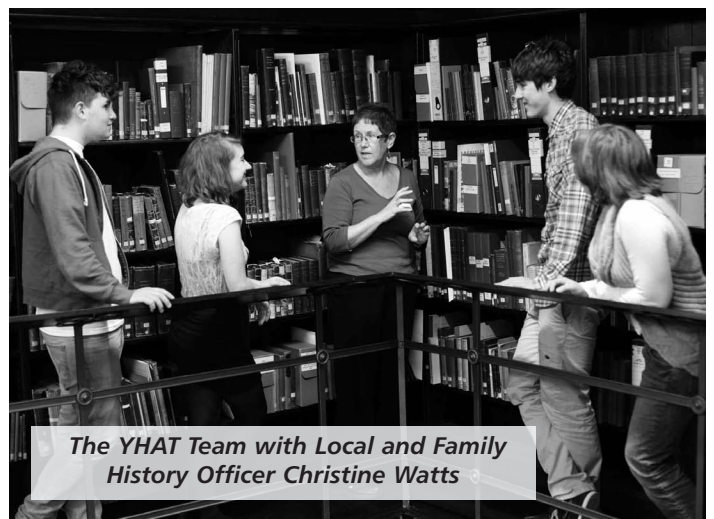
Email

Signed

Date

Please tick here if you would like to receive information regarding Wigan Leisure & Culture activities and events. We do not pass your details to other organisations.

Return to: The Museum of Wigan Life, Past Forward Subscription, Library Street, Wigan WN1 1NU



The YHAT Team with Local and Family History Officer Christine Watts

Your museum needs you! We are always looking for new YHAT members. Are you aged 15-23? Would you like to join the YHAT group or do you know someone who would like to? Contact the museum on 01942 828128.

First steps in Family History

Marriage records

The recording of marriages in churches was first ordered by Thomas Cromwell, Vicar General to Henry VIII in 1538. Prior to this date the church had a limited role in marrying couples, who would have performed a simple ceremony themselves, usually to exchange vows publically in the presence of witnesses. A legal marriage therefore required only mutual consent of a man and a woman. Complications arose where wealth was involved and the joining together of important families. Marriage settlements were made not only to ensure the transfer of wealth to later generations but also to ensure daughters were treated fairly and given a measure of financial security. Poorer families could not afford these niceties.

The Church constantly urged that marriage be sanctified by the Church. The King would have had to follow the Church's direction. Henry VIII's marriage difficulties and his tussle with the Pope over divorce led to the separation from the Church of Rome and the founding of an independent Anglican Church. As head of this new Church, new rules and regulations were made. Hence the decree to record baptisms, marriages and deaths.

The details recorded in these marriage registers are very brief, usually abbreviated and often in Latin:

*Wigan All Saints 1600
Roger Wood & Elizabeth Lithgoe both
of this pish June 29*

*Standish St Wilfrid 1558
Robertus Churnocke et Johanna Giller
10 Augusti*

By the 1630s English is coming into use but again details are few:

*Wigan All Saints (1634)
May 1 James Pembton &
Alice Ricroft*

More drastic change was to occur with the Civil War in the 1640s. Puritan opposition often led to the vandalisation of churches and the destruction of some marriage registers.

The rule of Cromwell and his Commonwealth brought a reduction in the involvement by the Church and in effect set up the first civil registration of marriages. An Act of Parliament of 1650 named those who could not marry and attempted to ensure the suppression of 'the abominable and crying sins of adultery and fornication, wherewith this land is much defiled'. Until this time it was assumed there were no impediments to a marriage. The punishment for close relatives who married, or those committing bigamy, was death. To reinforce the new rules further Acts were published requiring names, addresses, and parents of the bride and groom to be given in writing 21 days before the intended date of marriage, to the locally elected Parish Register (Registrar). This was to allow for three successive publications of the banns in the church or market place between 11am and 2pm. Later acts ensured a Justice of the Peace conducted the ceremony in the presence of two witnesses. The minimum ages of consent of the bride and groom were also stated in these acts as 16 for males and 14 for females. Anyone under the age of 21 needed parental consent to marry.

How the actual ceremony was to be conducted and recorded was also stipulated by Act of Parliament and a fee of one shilling was payable (births and deaths were four pence). The poor were exempt. Locally, at this time there were few marriages recorded but the details given for the marriages are useful:

*Wigan All Saints
1655*

*Jun 4 Gerrard Forth, pewterer of
Wigan and Elizabeth Parr of Prescott
this day...(in Markett)..married 7 Jully
following 1655 by the maior of
Liverpoole.*

Obviously a well to do person.

*Feb 8 James Whalley, taylor and
Elizabeth Mitton.*

Not well to do persons!

With the Restoration of the Monarchy in 1660, the Church took over again and in some cases continued the registers formerly used. Sometimes the

entries for the 1650s were added as if nothing had happened in the intervening years. However the Acts of 1644-53 were not repealed and some believed they still had not had a proper marriage because a magistrate had married them. In some parishes there are no marriages entered 1653-1660.

From 1694 a series of Stamp Duty Acts were issued initially for the Monarch to raise finance to conduct wars. This taxed paper and vellum upon which a marriage licence or certificate would be printed at five shillings. Strict punishment ensured these records were made but not enough money was raised so further taxes were imposed for registrations of birth and burial as well as marriage. Again, paupers were exempt. These acts had some effect on subsequent parish registers. There was a rise in the number of paupers noted and a fall in the number of entries in registers; possibly, some marriages were not being entered. But very many marriages took place elsewhere, notably where it was believed they could escape the taxes.

Certainly there were more marriages taking place in 'Peculiar' or non-parochial chapels since these were not governed by the normal church authorities. These 'Peculiar' believed they were exempt from the Stamp Acts and conducted scores of duty free marriages. The Fleet Prison in London was one such place and Scotland also attracted many of these marriages, notably over the anvil at Gretna Green. Once away from the bride or groom's usual residence, it meant that the marriage could be hidden or take place quickly without banns or licence.

This situation was changed by the introduction of Lord Hardwicke's Marriage Act in March 1754. This stated that for a valid marriage, banns were to be read for three successive Sundays prior to the marriage itself in the church or chapel where each person resided. If the couple were from different parishes the banns were to be read in each parish. The parson needed to have seven days notice of the intended marriage with the couples details including how long they each had resided in the parish. Parental consent was needed if persons were under 21, unless they were a widow or widower. Should the marriage go

ahead without parental consent then the parson would be punished and the marriage pronounced null and void. A licence would only be granted by the bishop or his representative if at least one party was resident in the parish for at least four weeks prior to the request.

The Act required registers for banns and marriages to be kept. Two witnesses or more were necessary and the details were to be entered immediately after the ceremony, stating whether by banns or licence. The licence was to show ages where either party was under 21 years. Groom, bride and witnesses were all to sign their names alongside the parson's name. The forging of an entry could be punished by death. The entire lengthy Act was read out in churches for two years following the Act, leading to some couples who could afford it fleeing to Scotland, Ireland and elsewhere. The Act created many problems, offended many and in the main the information gathered was inconsistent. It was largely hated and attempts were even made to repeal it; nevertheless the Act stayed in place into the nineteenth century.

Local registers show these changes and some churches were no longer licensed to hold marriages such as St Thomas in Ashton.

Marriage by licence

Information on licences can be illuminating at a time when the actual registers give minimal detail:

Wigan All Saints June 1762 (Register detail)

James Ascroft & Catherine Thompson both of Holland were Married in this Church by Lycence this 7th day of June by me Thos Edge this marriage was solemnized between us in the prescence of Geo Bancks Wm Jenkinson. Signed.....

The licence itself would be issued when certain documents were signed. These were the bond and allegation. The licence itself would be handed to the vicar of the church where the marriage took place; these rarely survive to the present day but the bond and allegation very often do.

Marriage bonds and allegations

These are commonly but mistakenly referred to as the licence. The allegation is a statement of the intent to marry and remained in the Diocesan registry. With it would be the bond or an assurance by a bondsman who was often a relative or friend, that the marriage would take place where specified. These documents may now usually be seen in county records offices. Those for the Wigan area are lodged with Cheshire Archives Service. These are useful especially where the actual marriage has not been found or a parents name is required. By using these sources for the marriage quoted above, a first marriage is revealed and the age of the bride:

*The 7th Day of June in the year....1762.. On which day appeared personally James Ascroft of Holland in Wigan Parish in the county.....and Diocese of Chester, husbandman and being sworn ...alledged and made Oath as follows, That he is of the Age **twenty one Years** and upwards, and a bachelor and intends to marry Catherine Thompson of Holland aforesaid **aged twenty one Years** and upwards, and a widow*

The marriage licence bond and allegation for the first marriage were therefore found, dated 9 June 1756, and showing that Catherine's name was actually Richardson, was aged **almost twenty one years** and married with consent. Further detailed notes reveal that Catherine's father's name was John and that he was unable to attend due to sickness. His brother Jonathan attended instead.

Such detail as the above would not be noted in marriage certificates until the start of Civil registration in 1837. From July 1 of that year a father's name and occupation, and ages of the bride and groom, their addresses and the names of the witnesses would have to be given as a legal requirement.

Next issue: Marriage and wedding customs

Books added to the reference stock of the local studies library at the Museum of Wigan Life

Genealogy

Sacred Heart RC Church, Baptism indexes 1903-33 (ongoing)
Baptisms January 1962-8 July 1974 (unindexed)

General history

Catholic Record Society, volume 83: Little Malvern letters
1482-1737

Trinity Methodist Church Platt bridge, Golden Jubilee
1902-1952 287.142736

Imperial War Graves Commission
The register of those who fell and are buried in cemeteries in the Southport and Wigan area and Isle of Man
355.16

National Education League, Report of a meeting at Wigan, 23 April 1872 370

Rocket 150: 150th anniversary of the Liverpool and Manchester Railway
1830-1980 385.09427

Marsh, John - The History of Reed transport (SCA Packaging)
388.41322

Clarke, Pam - 344 victims of Pretoria Pit 622.8

Lythgoe, David - Wigan bred and other poems 821 LYT

Oxford Names Companion: the definitive guide to surnames, first names, and place names in the British Isles 929.4

Ward, MA - Coccium way: a brief guide to the Roman road 936.273604

Dagnall, Ron - The history of Muncaster Hall, Rainford 942.73

Crompton, DG - Industrialisation, population change and patterns of disease and mortality in Wigan 1800-50: a thesis 942.736

Friends of Wigan Arts and Heritage Services

Wigan Arts and Heritage Service looks after the arts and heritage of the townships of Wigan Borough, including:

- Wigan Archives Service
- Leigh Local Studies
- Museum of Wigan Life
- Trencherfield Mill Steam Engine
- Turnpike Gallery

The newly reconstituted Friends group is looking for new members to help support and work jointly with the permanent members of staff of the Service to help fund, develop and run events and projects.

So if you are passionate and enthusiastic about the arts and the local history of your community then why not consider joining us? We would particularly welcome anyone who has organisational, accounting, engineering, secretarial or environmental skills to help us in making this a successful enterprise.

You can make friends, be part of an enthusiastic and committed team, learn something new and know that you will be contributing to preserving the history of your community for future generations.

If you decide to become a Friend you will be asked to pay an annual subscription of £10. This brings with it a range of benefits including free entry to talks, a 10% discount on goods from the heritage shop at the Museum of Wigan Life, free copies of Past Forward and VIP viewings of exhibitions and sites.

Why not take advantage of these incentives to join us, learn something new, have fun and see what the Arts and Heritage Services can provide? This is your chance to learn more about what we are doing and help us to spread the word.

If you would like to join us please call Museum of Wigan Life on 01942 828128.

VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT EVENING

Are you interested in becoming a volunteer at Wigan Arts and Heritage Services? If the answer is "Yes" please come along to the Museum of Wigan Life on

Thursday, 19 April between 5.30pm and 7.30pm.

You can volunteer in the following areas:

- Trencherfield Mill
- Archives Service, based at Leigh
- Local Studies at Wigan or Leigh
- Turnpike Gallery
- Museum of Wigan Life
- Learning and Outreach across the Borough

Come along and meet the staff and volunteers, have a glass of wine and some nibbles and learn about the opportunities in the service.

We look forward to seeing you!

Please contact Lynne Marsh 01942 828128 for further information.



Object handling volunteers at the What the Dickens! Super Saturday event in February.

United Reformed Church

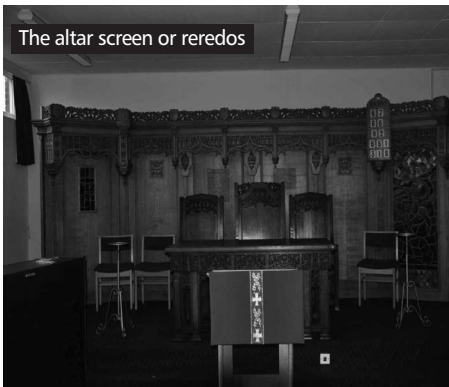
Union Street, Leigh *By Glenys McClellan*



The exterior of Leigh United Reformed Church

Sadly I have to report that another Church in Leigh has had to close due to rising maintenance and repair costs. As Secretary of Leigh and District Family History Society I was invited to attend the United Reformed Church at Union Street, Leigh, to record the details on the war memorial panel and altar screen before the Church's imminent sale.

The altar screen or reredos and war memorial were originally in the previous building and were transferred to the present building in 1989.



The altar screen or reredos

The details on the reredos explain about the establishment of the Church and its development, and incorporate the memorial window from the previous building.

Text on the first panel on the altar screen or reredos (on left of middle chair):

Congregationalism was established in Leigh in 1805, the Rev William Roby conducting services in a cottage in King Street. In 1811 a Church was formed consisting of ten members of

whom the Reverend William Alexander became the Church Minister. The Church in Newton Street was built in 1813-14, and in 1876 the erection of the present building was commenced. During 1925-26 the Church was further extended and alterations were made which included the provision of a new screen, reredos and east memorial window.

Text on the second panel of the altar screen or reredos (on right of middle chair):

Thomas Robert Dootson of Parkfield, Leigh, whose family has maintained its connection with the Congregational Church since its establishment in Leigh in 1805, gave the land for the extension of this building and for the erection of a Church Parlour. On November 10th 1926 the Church was re-opened after extension by Helen Dootson, his wife.

The War Memorial has five panels but, unfortunately, does not give the dates of the Wars. The centre panel is headed 'These made the Supreme Sacrifice' so presumably those are the names of members of the congregation who died in active service. They are as follows:

W. ALTY	C. BALSHAW
B. BLAKELOCK	T. BLINKHORN
J. GIBSON	A. G. GREGORY
G. B. GREGORY	J. PEAKE
P. ROBINSON	A. SHARROCKS
R. WATKIN	H. WATSON

The other four panels are probably the names of members of the congregation who served in the wars.

J. ALLAN	L. ALTY
W. BALSHAW	J. BLINKHORN
P. BLYTHYN	P. BOWDEN
W. BOWDEN	R. BOYES
J. BREESE	J. A. CALDWELL
J. CASSIDY	J.A. CLEMENTS
T. CUNLIFFE	B. DARLINGTON
A. DARLINGTON	W.A. DEAN
J. E. DUNLOP	A. EGAN
P. EVANS	L. S. EWEN
H. FAIRCLOUGH	

G. GILL	J. GILL
H. GORE	J. GORE
H. GRIMSHAW	N. GRUNDY
W. GRUNDY SNR.	W. GRUNDY JUNR.

E. HAMPSON	F. HAMPSON
A. HAMPSON	H. HAMPSON
P. HAMPSON	S. HANDLEY
F. HILTON	J. HILTON
E. HITCHEN	W. HUMPREYS
F. HUNSWORTH	F. HURDUS
W. INCE	

F. KNOWLES	L. LOMAS
J. LUNT	W. MADSLY
F. MORRIS	E. PARRY
G. PEMBERTON	J. H. PLATT
T. RIGBY	H. RITCHIE
H. ROBINSON	J. A. ROBINSON
S. ROBINSON	A. ROUGHLEY
G. ROUGHLEY	H. ROUGHLEY
W. ROUGHLEY	J. SANKEY
T. SANKEY	H. SHARROCKS

J. SIZER	A. SMITH
F. SMITH	N. H. SMITH
R. SMITH	T. SMITH
F. STEPHEN	E. TURNER
H. TURNER	A. VAUGHAN
A. VAUGHAN	B. VAUGHAN
F. C. VAUGHAN	H. VAUGHAN
T. VICKERS	A. WATSON
E. WATSON	C. D. WORRALL

The names have been recorded and copies of the War Memorial will be sent to the War Memorial Trust.

The War Memorial has now been transferred to the Parish Church of St Mary, Leigh and was re-dedicated at the service on 11 November 2011. The church archives have been deposited with the Wigan Archives Service.

The reredos and other church furniture have been bought by a Church Restoration company.

The present congregation is now worshipping with the members of Kingsleigh Methodist Church.



The war memorial

Your Archives

Over the winter months, much quiet activity has been underway at the Archives Service, both behind the scenes, and in the services we provide for researchers.

Our building work has finished in the Archives strongrooms. We now have both a new storage area and a workroom for staff and volunteers to carry out essential cataloguing and conservation work on collections. If you would like to see the stores and get a better idea of how in practice we preserve the Borough's history, keep a look-out for upcoming Archive Tours in the Arts and Heritage Events Guide.

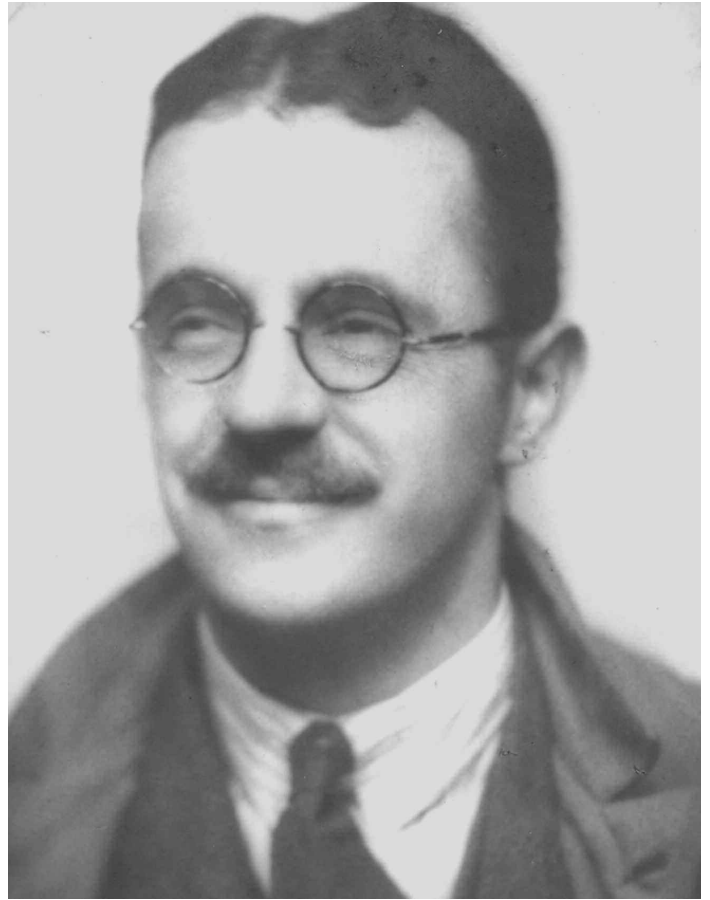
On the Archive Collections webpages you can now find several new lists and transcriptions, produced by staff and volunteers. These include transcripts from the Wigan Canal Boat Registers and the Wigan Workhouse Vaccination Register, catalogues for Aspull High School records and Coop & Company, and a full list of new accessions received into the Archives during 2011. In the next few months we will also finish and publish a list of children in the care of the Leigh Union and Workhouse (1899-1914) and a record of Wigan men taken as prisoners by the German Army in the First World War. These are great sources for both family and local historians.

Recent Acquisitions

New listings continue as usual thanks to the work of Archive staff and volunteers. Collections accepted or listed in the last few months include:

- Registers of cases attended by Nancy Hallett, midwife, 1917-1952 (D/DZA/269)
- Plan of the tower of St. Mark's Church, Newtown, 1926 (DP/22/5/1/1)
- Records of Leigh United Reformed Church (D/NUR/1)
- Rockwood Holiday Home (Wigan MBC), Colwyn Bay (WMBC/G1)
- Day book, Leigh business (unidentified), 1799-1801 (D/DY/UN/1)
- Mayor's Parlour Visitors' Book, Mayor George Macdonald, 1975-1976 (WMBC/E3/1/1)
- Records of Edward Maloney, Alderman, Wigan Borough Council, 1941-1983 (D/DZA/271)
- History of the Bethel United Methodist Church, Hindley Green, 1915 (D/NML/5/D1)
- Hindley Township Records, 1740-1824 (TR/Hi/A/1/3-8)
- Records of Leigh Liberal Club, 1876-2002 (D/DS/113)

Details of the collections listed above are available from the Archives Service, as is further information on other recent acquisitions.



Edward Hall, circa 1932

Collections Corner: The Edward Hall Diary Collection

Of all the collections we hold at the Archives, the Edward Hall Diary Collection is a personal favourite. The collection is comprised of over 250 diaries, journals and letter books collected by Hall throughout his life and donated to the borough.

Hall was born in 1898 in Barnsley, the son of Emma and George Hall. The family business was heavy engineering, through Qualter Hall, who remain in operation to this day. Edward however, struggled to find a trade or profession that suited his talents and had a variety of jobs throughout his life. He worked for the family firm, as a motorbike courier, and took orders for printing with an early document duplicating machine he purchased.

The enduring passion of his life came to be the collecting and documenting of diaries. His interest began when he discovered in a junk shop in Wigan the original manuscript journals and letter-books of Ellen Weeton of Upholland; Wigan was the home town of Hall's wife, Emily Littler. Miss Weeton's story has been

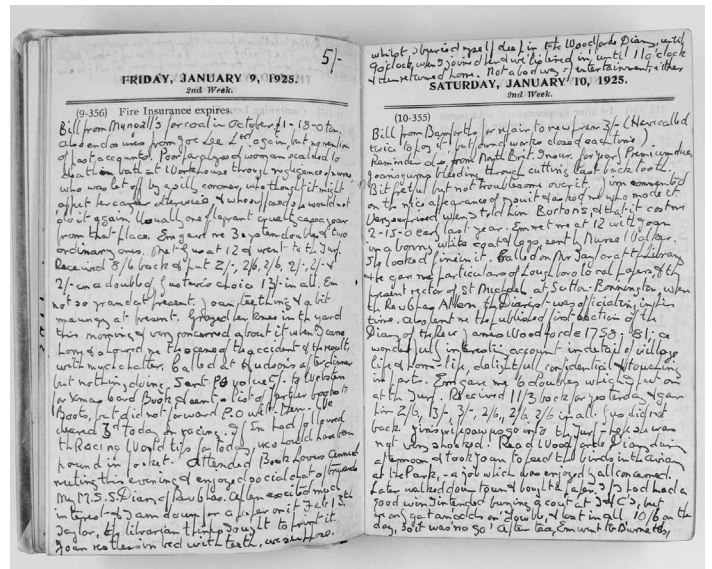
told in several past editions of Past Forward, but Hall was so interested in these documents as historic records that he started to collect further.

He found diaries in second-hand book shops, auction houses, contacts in the book trade, and over many years donated them to Wigan Public Library and then the Archives Service after 1974. The collection is astonishing in the variety of diaries brought together, from women's diaries, to society diaries, war diaries and travel journals. Just a few of the highlights include the Biggles-esque record of Captain Walker of the Royal Flying Corps (1915), the travel journal of Diana Ramsden in Queensland (1899), the diaries of the irrepressible society lady, Mrs Anna Walker (1798) and the love-poems of the sailor Littleton Powis (1789).

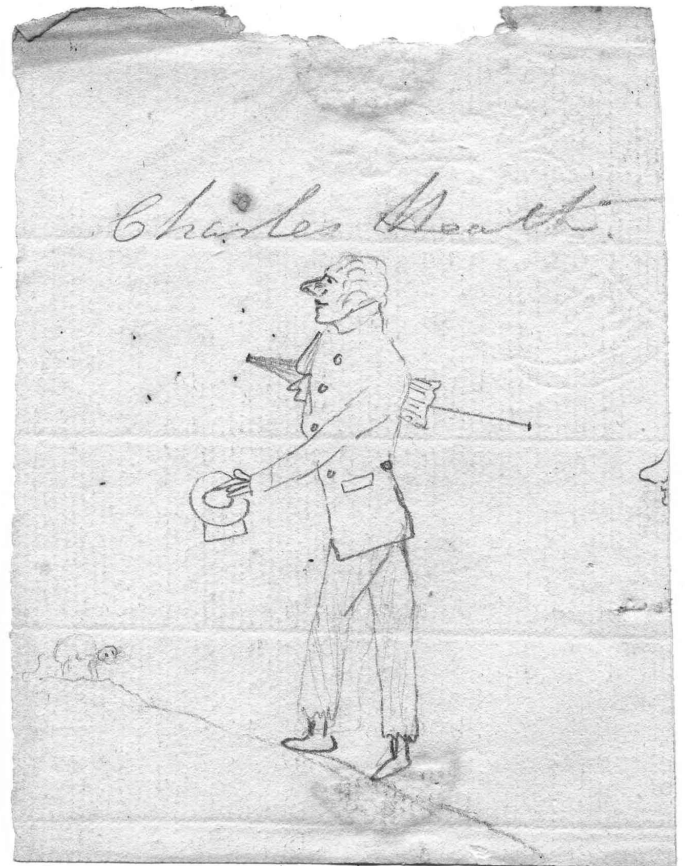
These diaries give researchers invaluable insights into lives that might have no record elsewhere in more formal or legal sources. The diaries help us understand the 'hidden histories' of people marginalised by the historical record; in the case of the Hall Collection, we have many diaries written by women, which give fascinating details of the lives of the authors. So as a plea for the future, never throw away (or burn) an old diary; donate it to the Archives and help us record the histories of normal people. If need be we'll put a closure period on it until long after you're gone!

Many of Hall's diaries have now been transcribed and are available on our website, along with the full catalogue of the collection.

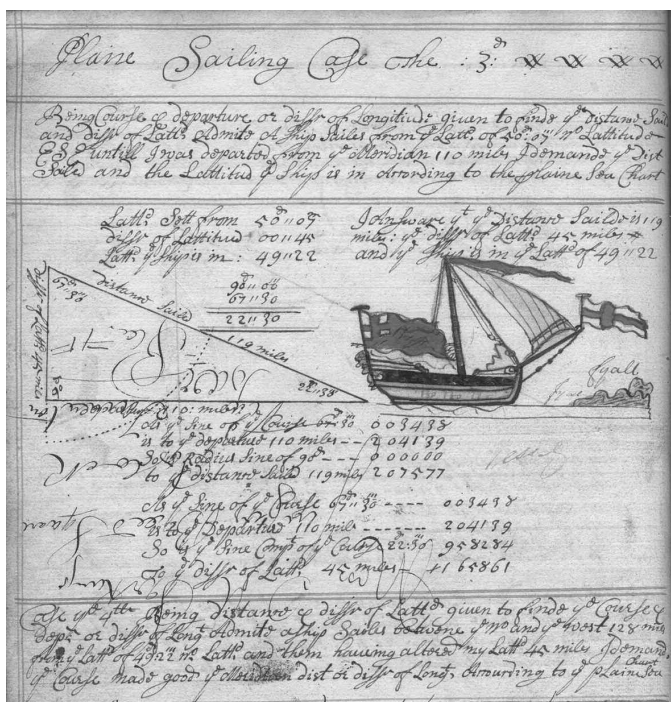
If you'd like to find out more, look out for our event on Travel Diaries, as part of the Wigan Words Festival, on Thursday 12 April 2012 or call 01942 404430 for further information.



Extract from Edward Hall's personal diary, January 1925



Line drawing of a Charles Heath, a Monmouth printer, from the travel journal of Sarah Haslam, 1802

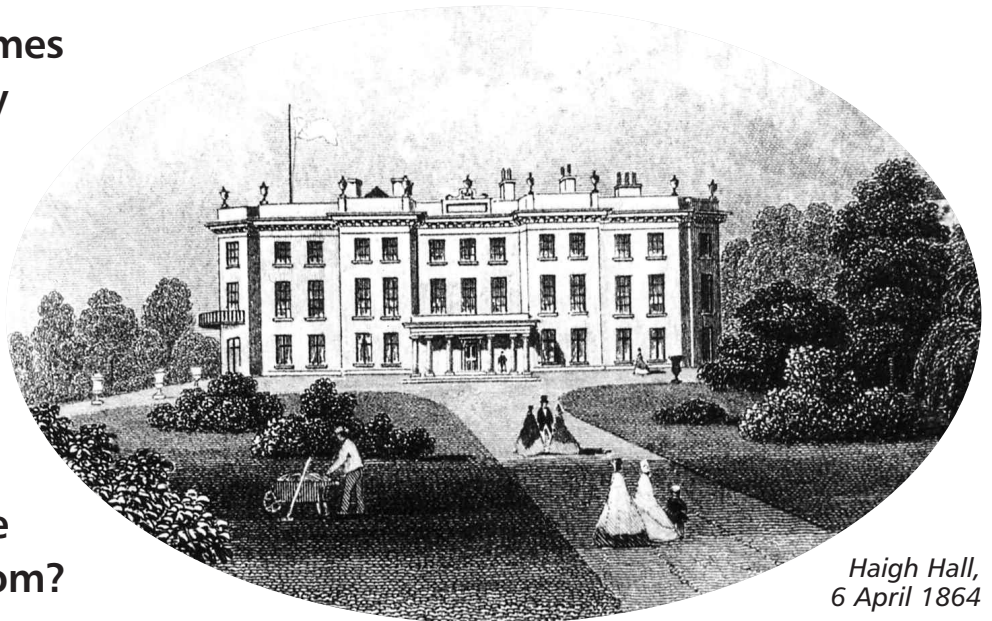


Ship's log book and nautical calculations of James Hole, 1698

Wigan's Own Downton Abbey

by Bill Melling

When I watch programmes such as *Downton Abbey* or visit stately homes, I often wonder how these great estates actually functioned. How many people lived there, how were they organised, what did it all cost and where did the money come from?



*Haigh Hall,
6 April 1864*

The Wigan Borough Archives at Leigh Town Hall contain a large collection of papers from Lord Crawford's Haigh estate and over the last two or three years, thanks to the efforts of a team of dedicated volunteers who have sorted and catalogued them, they are all now listed on the internet at www.wlct.org/heritage-services/archive-collections.htm

Using information from this collection, along with census data, it is possible to build up a snapshot of life at Haigh Hall and its estate in the 1870s. On the night of the 2 April 1871, the date of the census, 49 people slept in Haigh Hall, 15 'above stairs' looked after by 34 'below stairs'. The 'upstairs' were all members of the Lindsay family, Alexander, the Earl of Crawford, his wife, eldest son Ludovic and his wife and baby daughter. Also in residence were the Earl's five daughters (with ages ranging

from eight to 22), a spinster cousin and his sister-in-law and her three children. One of her children was Violet, the future Duchess of Rutland (who was the subject of the 'All things bright and beautiful' article in Past Forward issue 59). 'Downstairs' there was a house steward, housekeeper, butler, valet, five footmen, seven lady's maids, five housemaids, plus a governess and four nursery maids to look after the children. There was also a steward's room 'boy' (aged 20), four laundry maids and three kitchen maids. The cook, a Frenchman, had his own cottage in the Park.

The census data reveals some interesting facts about the thirty four live-in servants. Only three of them were over 40 years of age, they were all unmarried and they were all born outside Lancashire; in fact two of the lady's maids were born in France and a third in

Germany. In addition to the staff living in at the Hall, there were two coachmen, three grooms and seven stablemen living above the stables, and five gardeners living in a communal dormitory or bothy at the gardens. Here again, they were all young, unmarried and far from home. Given the number of unattached females at the Hall it seems safe to speculate that quite a few wild oats would have been sown below stairs.

This employment of non-local labour close to the family was possibly a deliberate policy to prevent what went on at the hall becoming common knowledge and subject to gossip in the local community. Another possibility was the fact that Lord Crawford also owned houses in Scotland, London, and a villa in Italy. This meant that most of the personal servants would have had to be prepared to up sticks and follow the family wherever they chose to

take up residence, something not conducive to a settled family life.

The Haigh estate was made up of large areas of land, farms and property in Haigh, Blackrod, Aspull, Adlington and Wigan, with Haigh Hall and its park at its heart. Also in the park, within easy reach of the hall, were stables, a walled garden, home farm, dairy, laundry and workshops. The day-to-day administration of the estate was in the hands of Lord Crawford's Agent who was responsible for all financial matters such as wages, rent collection and for ensuring that the various departments functioned smoothly and efficiently.

One of the documents in the archives is a set of financial accounts, drawn up by the Agent, which records how every penny was spent in the last eight months of 1878. From it, it is possible to get a very good idea as to how the estate operated. Just like a modern business the estate was divided into departments, each with its own manager, who reported to the Agent. For example, the house was managed by the steward, the stables by the head coachman, the gardens by the head gardener and the home farm by the bailiff. Each manager had to keep detailed records of hours worked, wages paid, any expenditure incurred and a note of any goods or services provided to other departments. This latter point was particularly relevant to the home farm which

provided meat and dairy produce to the house, hay, oats, straw and grazing to the stables and manure to the gardens. Some of the notebooks kept by the managers have survived and are in the archives; they make fascinating reading. Interesting snippets include what it cost to send a horse to London by rail, a claim by the head coachman for the cost of a penny postage stamp he provided to Lady Crawford and in 1901 the cost of driving lessons to retrain a coachman as a chauffeur.

As well as the hall and its immediate surroundings the Agent was also responsible for the administration of the farms, wood, roads and property that made up the wider Haigh Estate. Lord Crawford was in effect the local squire and as such made generous contributions to local schools, churches, alms houses and a wide variety of other good causes.

The expenditure for the main sections of the Haigh Estate for the period 1 May to 31 December 1878 came to:

<i>Household at the Hall</i>	£2,539
<i>Gardens</i>	£1,552
<i>Stables</i>	£659
<i>Contributions and donations to local organisations</i>	£1,768
<i>Repairs and improvements to Estate buildings and roads etc</i>	£4,255

Drawing Room, Haigh Hall, no date



In addition there were dozens of smaller payments amounting to £2,742 for such things as insurance, doctors and vets bills and security, all roads to the hall and park had gated lodges and there was a night watchman at the hall.

So, in total, for the period from May to December 1878, it cost £13,515 to run the Haigh Estate. Nearly a third of this (£4187), was met from the rent on land, farms and property on the estate and the balance of nearly £10,000 came from Lord Crawford's personal funds. At this time he was Chairman of the Wigan Coal and Iron Company, one of the biggest firms of its kind in the country, and which was some 75% owned by the Lindsay family. It was very profitable and its dividends, along with the income from mineral rights in other areas, made the Earls of Crawford extremely rich. When the 25th Earl died in 1881 his estate was valued for probate at £300,000. To put this sum in perspective it is necessary to express it in present day money values. This is not an exact science since there are a number of different indices that can be used depending on the particular context being considered. In the case of wealth and investment the recommended index is the GDP (Gross Domestic Product). On this basis, in very round numbers, £1 in the 1870s would be worth £1,000 today which puts the nineteenth century Earls of Crawford on a par with today's multi-millionaires.

Despite their wealth they were far from the stereotypical image of the British aristocrat. They were essentially scholarly types, deeply

Ludovic Crawford in the study at Haigh Hall, no date





immersed in the arts and sciences and with no interest in field sports. The 25th Earl, Alexander, who succeeded to the title in 1869, was an avid collector of books and paintings. Along with his eldest son, Ludovic, who succeeded him in 1880, Alexander built up the library at Haigh Hall to be one of the finest private collections in the country. Ludovic was also a keen astronomer and interested in scientific matters, particularly the commercial exploitation of electricity. He was a trustee of the British Museum and used his private yacht, the Valhalla (a three masted, steam driven vessel with a crew of 65), to make a number of worldwide voyages to collect scientific and natural history specimens for the museum.

The Earls of Crawford were acutely aware of the source of their wealth and where their best interests lay. The 27th Earl, passing on the advice he had received from his father, told his son:

"Colliers we are, and colliers we must ever remain, we rank among the big coal merchants of Europe. Pay all the attention you can to the peddling of coal. You will live through difficult times. Legislation may well assume a punitive character, specially directed against those who are rich and as such liable to prejudice and rancour. The discreet and dignified employment of wealth goes far to provide its own defence against such attacks. We do well to maintain the most friendly relations with our tenancy and with the big staff of the Wigan Coal And Iron Company - to look upon Haigh woods as the pleasure resort of a town with which we are intimately associated. We should share our artistic patrimony with all who can benefit from our possessions."

Prophetic words, the Earls of Crawford have departed, along with the mines and iron works, but their house and park remain for the pleasure and recreation of the people of the Borough.

You can find out more about the Earls of Crawford from the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography www.oxforddnb.com Access is free if you use the number on your library card.

WRITE 1000 WORDS WIN £100!



The winners of the 2011 competition with John O'Neill, Chairman of the Borough Network

Do you have a passion for local history? Is there a local history topic that you would love to see featured in Past Forward? Then why not take part in Wigan Borough Environment and Heritage Network's Local History Writing Competition?

We have announced the launch of the competition earlier than in 2011 as we know that it can be difficult to find the time to research and write a piece. We also intend to run a competition for school children and are currently liaising with teachers to find the best format for this competition. Details of the schools competition will be announced in issue 61.

Local History Writing Competition

Details for entrants

1st Prize - £100 • 2nd Prize - £75 • 3rd Prize - £50

Criteria

- Articles must be a maximum of 1000 words.
- Articles must focus on a local history topic within the geographical boundaries of Wigan Borough.
- By entering the competition you agree to your work being published in Past Forward. The winning article will be published in Past Forward Issue 62. Other submissions may also be published in Issue 62 or held on file for publication in a future edition. If selected for publication the Past Forward Editorial Team may edit your submission.

How to enter

- Articles must be received by e-mail or post by Friday 12 October 2012.
- Electronic submissions are preferred although handwritten ones will be accepted.
- You must state clearly that your article is an entry into the Local History Writing Competition.
- You must include your name, address, telephone number and e-mail address (if applicable). We will not pass your details on to anyone.
- It will not be possible for articles to be returned.
- You are welcome to include photographs or images however they cannot be returned.

Submit to

pastforward@wlct.org OR Local History Writing Competition, Past Forward, Museum of Wigan Life, Library Street, Wigan WN1 1NU

Zeppelins Ow'er Our House

By Mrs Patricia Mary Rigg

"Eh up" said our Mam
"What's that whirry noise going overhead?
I got such a freet, I jumped reet out of bed"
I was laid up in me bed with our Sam
He's hard asleep and don't care a damn
Two seconds later there's a terrible crash
Me Mam and Dad in their nighties, out of bed made a dash
"What the heck is it" said our Dad, in some freet
Two seconds later a great light lit in the neet
There's pandemonium outside as an explosive rips the air
There's crying and shouting and lots of despair
I geet out of bed and had a long stare
The row of houses are gone up into thin air
There's now't left but rubble and smoke, fire and stuff
My best mate Jamie's house opposite, has gone up in a puff
Mam says he was lucky and managed to scramble out
I was glad to see him and gave a great shout
"I'm glad your alive, if sooty and black
I'd have no one to play with, if you hadn't come back"
Mam and Dad have gone out to help, if they can
There's lots of helpers and a big van
Dad says "Lad, t'was a Zeppelin, a great jerry airship
to boot
Those bloody Germans are 'Cocking a snoot"
They was trying for Kirkless Steel works, which was a fair do
But they must have got lost and hit Cecil Street on their
way through
The bobby said Harper Street was very bad
Mum started to cry, and I said "why you're so sad"
Mr and Mrs Tomlinson were blown reet out of their beds
There's a lot of chaos and when found were quite dead
Well what an exciting neet, with people all ow't street
Some in their night cloths with now't on their feet
Dad said if those Germans had come back with the Zeppelin
There'd have been lots more damage and more folks
to teck in
Well I have never seen a Zeppelin but one flew over our roof
I wish I had seen it and gathered some proof
At school next day the whole school was excited
Asking lots of questions and asked was I frightened
I said "No" but I was really 'cause, it could have been
our house
And I might have been dead and quiet as a mouse
I hope they don't come back dropping some more
Were all going to air raid shelters, keeping safe that's for sure
But I must admit, t'was a most exciting neet
It gave Mam and Dad a horrible freet

So now I kneel down each night and say a nice prayer
And say 'Thank you' to god. 'Cause me families still there
Some families weren't so lucky and are gone now forever
I bet those darned Germans think they are so clever
But I heard that our army took exception to that
And went and attacked Messines, its now just quite flat
So don't mess with our country, leave us well alone
Or we'll come and get you; we've our King on the throne
Those Jerry's won't win cause we'll knock them for six
And those bloody Germans will get a good kick
We've got the best navy and soldiers and army
We've got to win or my Dad will go balmy
He says Lord Kitchener will sort out those Hun
And back to Germany, the Jerry's will run
He's our local hero, and a leader of men,
My Dad says he gives him ten out of ten
He's got it sorted and we really must win
He'll defend England and we'll take it on't chin!
So hurrah for Lord Kitchener we'll win if we try
So mop up your tears Mam, there's no need to cry!

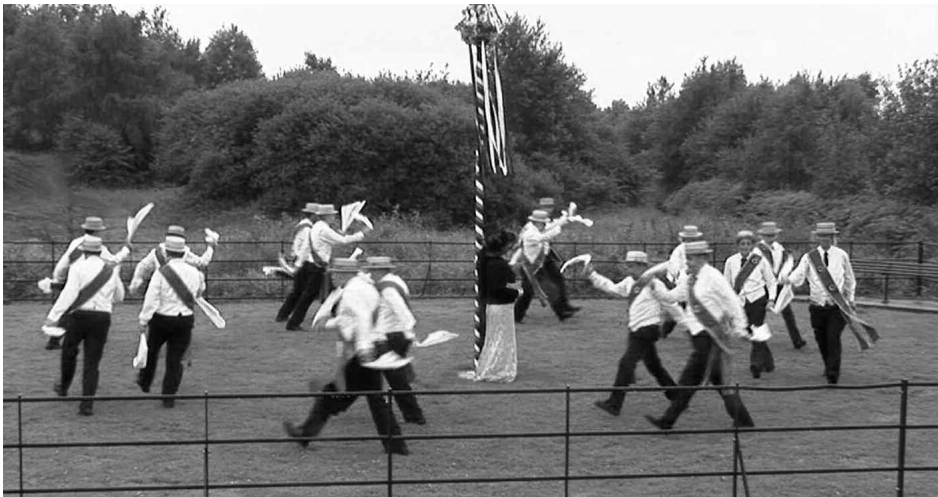
*Cecil Street, Wigan after a First World War Zeppelin raid.
The raid happened on 12 March 1918 at 11pm. Seven people
died as bombs were dropped on Wigan, Ince and Aspull.
Wigan Council sent a letter to the Secretary of State
complaining about the lack of warning and defence systems.
This image shows local children standing and playing
amongst the rubble and the hole created by the bomb.*



PRESERVING OUR HERITAGE

BY PETER GOODWIN

Abram Morris Dancers



Abram Morris Dancers' Ground

"A plot of land in Park Lane, 20 yards long by 16 wide, is fenced round and known as the Morris Dancers' ground. The enclosure was originally taken from the waste, and the generally received opinion in the neighbourhood is that if Morris Dancing be not celebrated once in twenty years, the right to the land lapses."

(THE MEMORIALS OF ABRAM
BY JOHN LEYLAND 1882)

Fast forward a hundred years and the Morris Dancers' Ground in Abram is in a sorry state. An open patch of land next to slag heaps from the former Maypole Colliery; a muddy scrubland scarred by tracks from off-road motorbikes.

Geoff Hughes, a nationally-renowned clog dancer and Morris Dancer, had recently moved to the area and decided to revive the tradition. He placed an advert in the local paper and the Abram Morris Dancers were reborn, performing on the historic Ground again in 1984, after a gap of 83 years.

Geoff then turned his attention to restoring the Morris Dancers' Ground

itself. Monies were successfully raised from the Shell Better Britain fund, Wigan Council and individual contributions from Morris Dancers around the world. The original Abram Morris Dance had been 'collected' and published in the Journal of the English Folk Dance and Song Society. It was then copied and performed around the world by folk dance enthusiasts, whilst in Abram it faded from popular memory.

Today the Morris Dancers Ground has been restored and the Abram Morris Dancers continue to perform every year on the last Saturday of June. Anyone can come and watch as they make their way around Abram, Bickershaw, Hindley and Platt Bridge, performing the dance in around 20 different locations – following the route of the original Morris Dancers as recorded by John Leyland in the Nineteenth Century.

Geoff Hughes says, "It's gone on for centuries and while there's people like me and all the other lads who are willing to keep it going, long may it continue. This is a great part of Abram, that's why it's on the road signs. It's Abram's history."

www.abram-morris-dancers.org.uk

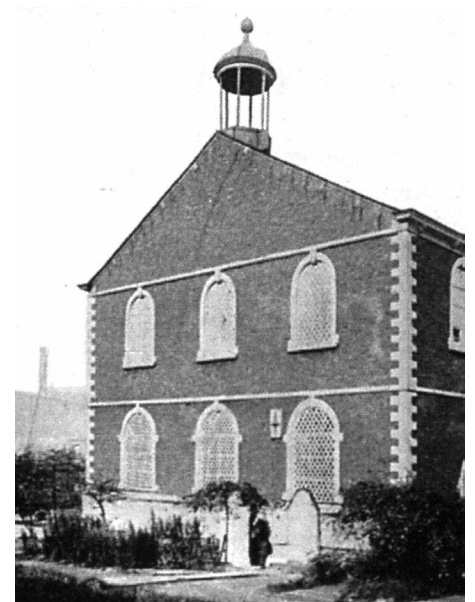
Chowbent Chapel

Sunday morning on Bolton Old Road, the ancient thoroughfare across Atherton, and a single bell tolls from a tower, calling the faithful to prayer, as it has done for nearly 300 years. Chowbent Chapel is a two-storey building constructed of handmade bricks and local English Oak, from Lord Hulton's estate, a mile or so away in the direction of Bolton.

Chowbent is the original placename of the settlement which we now call Atherton. The original Chowbent Chapel, 'a low brick edifice', was built in 1645 in the midst of the English Civil War. It was built by religious dissenters, on land owned by the Lord of the Manor of Atherton, located roughly where the current Parish Church of Atherton stands.

The original Chapel's minister in the early 1700s, James Wood, was a loyal supporter of George I. In 1715, Catholic rebel Jacobites marched an army down from Scotland in an attempt to overthrow King George,

Chowbent Chapel



and install James Stuart, 'the Old Pretender', on the throne. In response the minister marched a large number of the men of his congregation to Walton, near Preston, to join the King's army. Armed with basic weapons such as farm implements, this makeshift army of 'Chowbenters' successfully prevented the rebel Jacobites from crossing the River Ribble, an important action in the decisive Battle of Preston. For his courageous action, the minister was awarded the honorary title of 'General' to add to that of Reverend.

However, the then Lord of the Manor, Richard Atherton, was a Jacobite sympathiser and when he reached the age of 21, he evicted the congregation and closed the chapel that stood on his land. Undaunted, Reverend General Wood and his congregation set about building the current Chowbent Chapel in 1721.

Today the Chapel has a Unitarian congregation and minister, and Sunday worship continues as it always has. The building requires continual maintenance, overseen by the Chapel Trustees. As the Chair of the Trustees, David Shallcross, explains, "the Chapel provided the town's first school and first library, and has contributed so much to Atherton over the years."

As well as Sunday Service and Sunday School, Chowbent Chapel is open to the public during the National Heritage Open Days in September, and for pre-arranged group visits.

www.chowbent-unitarian-chapel.org.uk

Astley Green Colliery

Driving along the East Lancashire Road near Astley, the distinctive outline of a pit wheel and headgear is one of the few remaining vestiges of the industry which once dominated both the economy and environment of the local area. Astley Green Colliery, in Higher Lane, was one of the later pits to be developed in the Wigan coalfield. It opened in 1912 as a deep mine, the main shaft descending over half a mile down to initially work seams that lay beneath the soft ground of Chat Moss.

In 1970 the Colliery was deemed to be uneconomic by the National Coal Board and closed. Demolition work began soon afterwards, but the intervention of mining heritage enthusiasts from the Red Rose Steam Society, along with Lancashire County Council, managed to prevent the dismantling of the main pit headgear, the pit engine in its engine house, and two outbuildings.

Eventually the Red Rose Steam Society took over the site in 1983 after negotiations with Wigan Council who had inherited the land. The volunteers then set to work to tidy up the site, restore the buildings and open an authentic coal mining museum.

Geoff Jones of the Red Rose Steam Society explains, "people have worked here from dawn to dusk. We've gone out in search of exhibits.

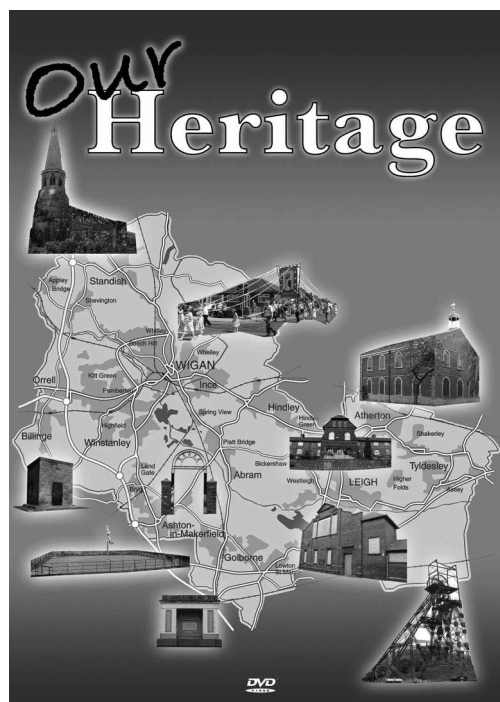


Geoff Jones talks about Astley Green Colliery Museum

"We've gone out to Yorkshire, we've gone all over England and even Scotland in certain instances, to get what we've got. It's absolutely imperative in my mind that we preserve the past and let people see just what Coalopolis, which is what Wigan used to be called, is all about."

Nowadays Astley Green Colliery Museum is open to the public on Tuesday, Thursday and Sunday afternoons, as well as hosting many school and group visits. Visitors see a detailed exhibition within the former manager's office block, a demonstration of mine trains, and inspect the headgear and tiled engine house. The pit engine has been restored and the Museum is hoping to display it in full operation this year, the centenary of the colliery's official opening.

www.agcm.org.uk



Our Heritage DVD

The Abram Morris Dancers, Chowbent Chapel and Astley Green Colliery Museum are just three of the stories covered in detail in the new DVD 'Our Heritage', produced by Tradition Films with the Wigan Borough Environment and Heritage Network. Other stories include St. Wilfrid's Church in Standish, the Marsh Gymnasium in Leigh, Howe Bridge village, Billinge manor houses, Stubshaw Cross Heritage Garden, Lowton memories and the Walking Day in Poolstock.

The film runs for 88 minutes and has subtitles for people with hearing impairments.

The DVD is available to buy for £10 from the Museum of Wigan Life, Leigh Local History (in Leigh Library) and online at www.traditionfilms.co.uk

ACCUSED OF MURDER: Thomas Rothwell of Haigh

By Brian James Rothwell

During my genealogical research into the Haigh branch of my ancestors, I found the first reference to this murder case in Quarterly Sessions Reports in Lancashire Archives.

- QSP/832/30 1699 – Petition Ormskirk Midsummer 1699 Thomas Rothwell Husbandman of Haigh suspected of murder of Francis Brocke

- QSP/836/37 1699 – Petition Wigan Michaelmas 1699 – Reimbursement of John Lowe Constable of Haigh for taking Thomas Rothwell to gaol

John Lowe, Constable of Haigh in 1698/99 had initially petitioned the Quarter Sessions at Ormskirk for the reimbursement of the costs he had incurred in taking Thomas Rothwell to Lancaster Prison. He was to await trial at Lancaster Assizes, suspected of the murder of Francis Brocke. The court was also petitioned to decide who should bear these costs, Thomas Rothwell or the Township of Haigh. At the second Quarter Sessions in Wigan it was decided that John Lowe should be reimbursed three pounds nine shillings and four pence and the cost be borne by the township of Haigh. This was obviously an intriguing story, worthwhile trying to find out more about what had happened. What had Thomas done in the first place? Was he found guilty and hanged? This was after all the Bloody Code Period (1660 – 1815), when it appears people could be hanged for almost anything. Or, since Haigh had to bear the trial costs, had Thomas been found not guilty and released?



Market Place, Wigan, at the corner Wallgate around 1700. Wigan Parish Church, to which Francis Brocke and Ralph Winstanley were heading, can be seen on the right. From the Supplement to Platt's Household Almanac, 1888

The first step was to consult the related QS Order 1699 in the Lancashire Archives at Preston. Unfortunately these archives are not in a very good condition, many parts illegible and no further details could be found referring to Thomas Rothwell's case. No reference to Thomas Rothwell could be found either in the QGL (Lancaster prisoners), QGR (Gaol Reports) and QJC (Calendars of Prisoners) records.

The next step was to consult the Lancaster Assizes records held at the National Archives. Although the Lancaster Assizes were part of the Northern Circuit, Lancashire being a County Palatine was treated judicially separately and records held separately (under PL 25 – 28).

The initial Quarterly Sessions Report from Midsummer 1699 referred to

the fact that the Assizes had already been held. Lancaster Assizes were held biannually, in Winter (usually March) and Summer (usually June/July). Thomas' trial must have taken place either in Summer 1698 or Winter 1699. It was therefore necessary to search both years of the Assize records. After a number of setbacks and disappointments the truth of the whole story was finally uncovered.

PL 25 – 'Palatinate of Lancaster. Crown Court. Assizes Rolls' for 1698 (10 William III) and 1699 (11 William III) no longer exist.

PL 26 – 'The Indictment Files' (PL 26/28/2 relating to 1698 and PL 26/29/1 relating to 1699). The records in the boxes were extremely muddled, probably only representing a fraction of what once existed. There was no obvious

structure to the pieces, although some of the surviving membranes often related to the same cases. Thomas Rothwell's trial records could not be found.

PL 27/2 – 'Depositions', consisting of two boxes, were much neater, comprising lots of small folded papers tied into bundles, but most of the bundles were completely muddled, with totally unrelated items from various dates being grouped together. The material dated from 1690 to 1740. Most of the cases involved theft of livestock, counterfeit coinage (a major problem in Lancashire towards the end of the seventeenth century), and a few which related to the deaths of individuals.

Here details were finally found of the coroner's inquest concerning Francis Brocke. Three depositions of Ralph Winstanley, Daniell Rowbotham and William Bayley gave details of the incident, a brawl with Thomas Rothwell, which led to Francis' death. These depositions, possibly together with others, would have originally been appended to the coroner's inquest. Unfortunately the original coroner's inquest report has not survived.

The inquest was held 29 December 1698 in front of Hugh Standish, one of the county coroners. Based on the evidence given by Ralph Winstanley, Daniell Rowbotham and William Bayley, recorded in the depositions, we are able to reconstruct the incident which led to Francis Brocke's death.

It was Sunday 21 August 1698, about nine o'clock in the morning. Francis Brocke, a joiner of Haigh, had been picked up by Ralph Winstanley, and they were making their way on foot together to Wigan Parish Church. In Haigh Lane they were overtaken by Thomas Rothwell of Haigh, a bachelor and husbandman, who had apparently been in hiding waiting for them. From the evidence given there had

been a long standing dispute between Francis Brocke and Thomas Rothwell which on this morning reignited, leading to a brutal fight between the two of them. It became so brutal, that Ralph Winstanley thought they were going to kill each other. He went for help requesting Daniell Rowbotham to come and help him break up the fight.

When they returned Francis Brocke was lying on the ground, Thomas Rothwell on top of him. Ralph Winstanley shouted at Thomas Rothwell, demanding him to stop fighting. This he did and stood up. Francis Brocke was covered in blood and severely wounded with both his eyes heavily bruised. He had two deep wounds in his head, one about three inches long, one about two inches long. He had difficulty speaking.

Francis Brocke was taken home by Daniel Rowbotham, probably together with Ralph Winstanley. His bloody clothes were removed by his wife, clean clothes put on and he was put into bed. He was examined the same day by the surgeon, William Bayley of Aspull, who found Francis Brocke in a poor state of health and vomiting frequently.

On his way home Daniel Rowbottom met Thomas Rothwell again, who was standing with a tuck or rapier (a straight sword with a narrow blade and two edges) in his hand, the blade of which was three quarters long. Thomas claimed it belonged to Francis Brocke.

After the incident Francis Brocke had to stay at home recovering for a considerable time before he was able to go out again. But he never really recovered and died early December 1698. He was buried on 18 December 1698 at Wigan Parish Church.

Resulting from the coroner's inquiry John Lowe, being

Constable of Haigh, was ordered by a Justice of Peace to take Thomas Rothwell to Lancaster Prison to await trial for murder at the next Lancaster assizes.

Further research in PL 28/1 for 1699 'Crown Minute Book' Page 104, gave details of the trial and verdict. Thomas Rothwell was tried before the Justices Sir Edward Ward and Sir Littleton Powys on Monday 29 March 1699. The depositions of Ralph Winstanley, Daniell Rowbotham and William Bayley were presented as evidence during the trial. From the records it is not possible to ascertain whether the three of them attended the trial as witnesses or not, to give their evidence, or if the written evidence was sufficient. Based on this evidence Thomas Rothwell was found not guilty of murder and released.

Following on from the trial the Haigh Constable, John Lowe, had petitioned the Ormskirk Midsummer Quarter Session to have his costs reimbursed, where our story started, but ending on the happy note that we have no murderers hidden in the family tree!

And who was this Thomas Rothwell? From all the information available he was most probably the son of Thomas Rothwell, the sister of Elline (Eleanore) Rothwell. She had brought fame and fortune to the family by marrying Francis Willoughby circa 1668. Francis' father was Thomas Willoughby of Old Lords, Horwich, 11th Lord Willoughby of Parham. Francis' first surviving son, Edward, succeeded his Uncle Hugh as 13th Lord Willoughby of Parham. Edward was succeeded by his brother Charles, who became 14th Lord Willoughby of Parham. The Rothwell family lived at Willoughby Farm in Haigh, which still exists to this day, the farm's name deriving from the link to the Willoughby family.

Jubilee Joy!

June 2012 marks the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth II. Only one other monarch has ever reached their Diamond Jubilee, that was Queen Victoria.

1935

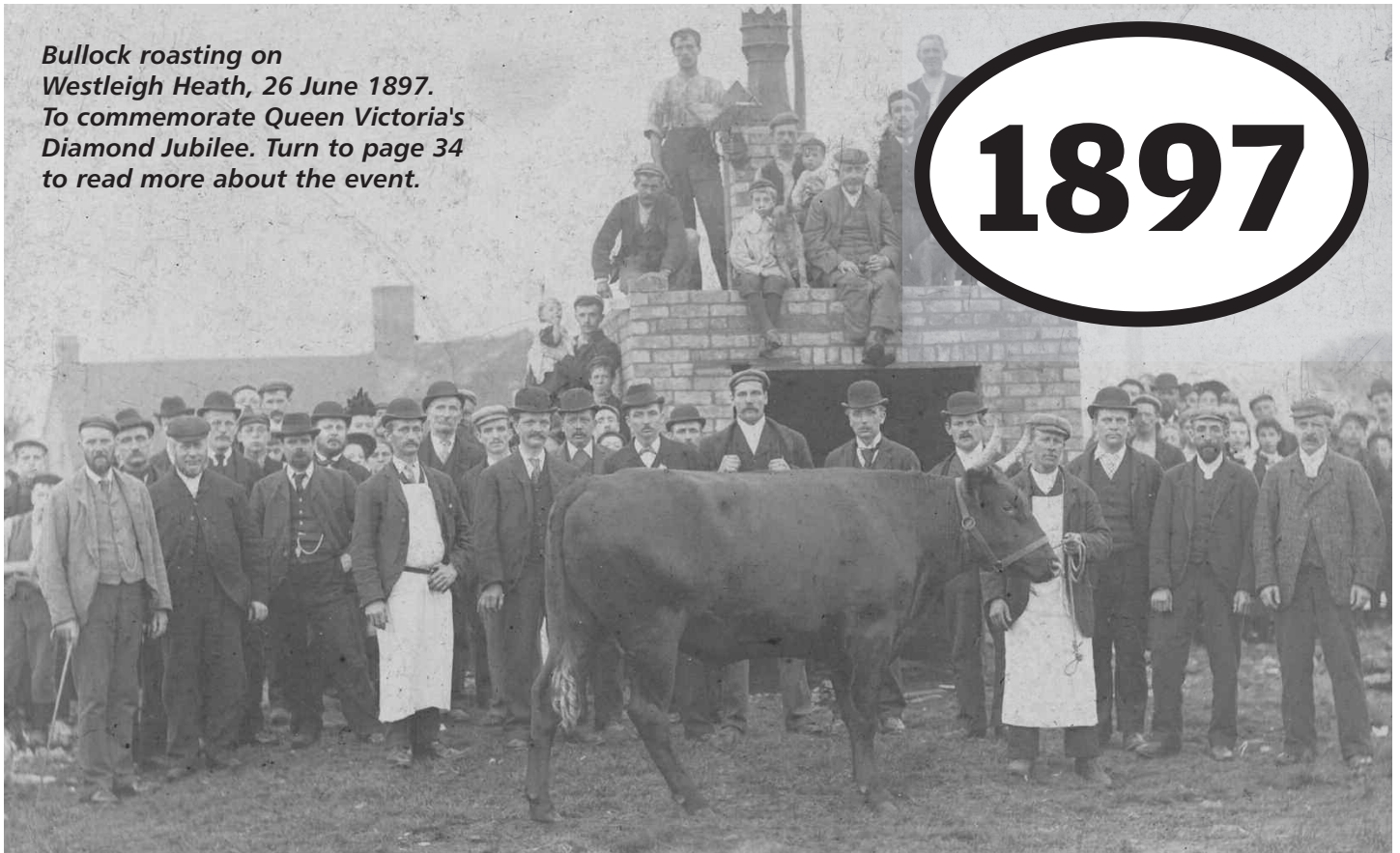
In this issue we have a selection of images showing local Jubilee celebrations through the ages. The Archives are keen to collect more recent Jubilee images. If you have any photographs showing how your family and friends commemorated the 1977 Silver Jubilee, 2002 Golden Jubilee or this year's Diamond Jubilee please contact the Archives on 01942 404430.



Local people in front of a bonfire to celebrate the Silver Jubilee of King George V in Upholland, 6 May 1935.

Bullock roasting on Westleigh Heath, 26 June 1897. To commemorate Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee. Turn to page 34 to read more about the event.

1897





Crowds gather to see Queen Elizabeth II visiting Leigh, during her Silver Jubilee year.

A Family's Story

by Amanda Hughes
(née Ratcliffe - Great, great niece
of Richard Harold Stott)

Richard Harold Stott was born on 3 September 1895 at 114 Bolton Road, Ashton-in-Makerfield. He was the youngest son of Richard Thomas Stott and Jane Stott (née Cottam). Richard Harold's father had sadly died, on 19 March 1895 before Richard was born; he was a coal miner and the cause of death was Phthisis (TB). Jane was left to raise six children on her own. They were Charlie, Ethel, John Thomas, Herbert, Beatrice and Richard Harold.

The 1901 census shows the family living at 114 Bolton Road. To help pay the rent and feed the children Jane had taken in lodgers, Patrick Kelly (19) a coal miner, John Stephens (20) a brick setter and Patrick Stephens (22) a farm labourer; all three originated from Ireland. Her son Charlie had died on 31 January 1900 at the age of 18. He had been a labourer in the coal mine and the cause of death was Acute Phthisis. Richard Thomas and Charlie were buried together in St Thomas Lower Ground, Heath Road, Ashton (their headstone still remains). Records of Ashton's population show that from 1851 the number of residents had increased from 5,000 to 5,679 purely from the influx of Irish and Welsh immigrants who had come to work in the mines of which there were many. With so

many employed in the mines, many lost their lives in accidents. This brought much sorrow but the influx of Welsh to the community brought a new side of life mainly to the Bolton Road/Stubshaw Cross area. They built their own chapels and brought with them their 'Eisteddfodds' (Welsh festivals of music, dance and poetry), which many of the local Ashtonians took part in. With so many places of worship in a small area, the majority built by the Welsh, the area soon became known as 'Little Wales'.

The 1911 census shows that the family had moved to 164 Bolton Road, Ashton. Jane (49) had remarried, her husband was Edward Boulton (51) a hewer in the coal mine, and they had two children Gladys Boulton (4) and Fredrick Boulton (2). Her children from her first marriage also lived at this address; Ethel (23) a winder in the cotton mill, Herbert (21) a drawer in the coal mine, Beatrice (18) a reeler in a cotton mill and Richard Harold (16) a colliery surface labourer. John Thomas had married Jessie Ford (18 May 1907) and they were living a stone's throw away at 437 Bryn Road, Ashton.

The outbreak of World War I saw many young men join the army, Richard Harold Stott being one of them. He answered Field Marshall Earl Kitchener's call to arms and joined the 8th East Lancashire Regiment. The regiment did not achieve popular fame in the way that some units did but never the less was involved in fighting throughout the war and its exploits have been left largely unsung and unknown. They were known as the Galloping 8th and the majority of the recruits came from the Lancashire coal fields. They were sent to

Bournemouth for final training before being deployed to France in July 1915.

Richard was billeted in Pokestown, Dorset. The town was home to many soldiers and officers prior to being sent to the front line and this is where he met Gladys Dorothy Beatrice Bodger. They were married on 27 June 1915 in St James Church, Bournemouth. Shortly after Richard left for France.

Gladys gave birth to a daughter Doris Phyllis Muriel Stott on 25 December 1915. Not knowing if Richard would return Gladys was left to bring up Doris alone. As luck would have it Richard came through the war with barely a scratch. In 1920 Richard, Gladys and Doris returned to Ashton and as in family tradition they set up home at 144 Bolton Road Ashton. Richard went back to work down the mine at Garswood Hall Colliery. Life in Ashton could not have been called easy in the 1920s but people managed, pulled together, looked out for one another.

Sadly illness struck in 1928, Doris (aged 12) contracted bronco-pneumonia and died on the 4 January 1928. On the 30 October 1928 Gladys gave birth to a son Leonard; whilst still saddened by the loss of Doris things looked well, if only for a short while.

Tragedy struck yet again. On the Friday 12 April 1929 Doris received a visit to tell her Richard had been hurt at the mine and had been taken to Wigan Infirmary. A fall of stone from the roof of the mine had struck Richard on the back of the head knocking his face into a coal tub. He received severe injuries to the head and face. Richard died of his injuries on Monday 15 April 1929. In the inquest into Richard's death the witness statement had stated that Richard and his drawer James Dalton of Edge Green Lane, Golborne had been preparing to leave the number 7 pit, Wigan 6 foot mine. They had filled their last tub at around 2.10pm and James Dalton asked Richard if he was ready to go; Richard confirmed he was. James bent down on the left hand side of the tub to pull the 'scotch' out of the wheel, Richard was on the right hand side of the tub when without any warning a stone fell from the roof striking Richard at the back of the head. The verdict was accidental death.

Had Gladys been a religious person she no doubt asked why was this happening to her. No one knows why death takes certain people and not others. Richard's family helped in any way they could during the next few months only to be confronted by death again. Baby Leonard fell foul to acute lobar pneumonia and pneumococcal meningitis on the 13 October 1929 at the age of 11 months. Heartbroken Gladys left Ashton after Leonard's funeral and returned to her family in Bournemouth. Richard Harold, Doris and Leonard are buried together in St Thomas Lower Ground. The headstone is gone, but thanks to the help of the late Mr Ibbotson, of St Thomas Church, Ashton, in locating their grave, they will not be forgotten. Over the next few months I hope to find out what happen to Gladys by visiting Pokestown, her family home, and locating family members who will, I hope, help me find an uplifting end to a very tragic story.



Richard Harold Stott, his wife Gladys and their daughter Doris in 1917

Wigan's

By Don Rayner

Forgotten Knights

Not too long ago a local weekly newspaper published a list of Wigan people who went on to be famous in one way or another. At the time I noticed two quite glaring omissions. They were two individuals who both came from working class backgrounds and were to gain knighthoods! Coincidentally both were members of the Electrical Trades Union (ETU) and both were to attain the highest offices in that union.

One of them was a champion of the extreme left and a communist; the other one, Sir Ken Jackson was much more to the right of the Labour Party. Ken was born in Wigan in 1937 and joined the RAF as an electrician. He continued to work as an electrician in civilian life and rose through the ranks of the ETU, from Branch Secretary to Executive Council, finally becoming President in 1995. During his terms of office, he was closely associated with the then Prime Minister and was indeed often referred to as Tony Blair's favourite trade unionist. Ken Jackson was knighted in 1999 for services to industrial relations.

My second subject, Sir Les Cannon was born just a stone's throw from Wigan Pier into a typical working class family of the 1920s. His father Jim Cannon was a Marxist. The house had an outside lavatory and the floors were scrubbed and whitened with 'rubbing stones', which were obtained from the rag-and-bone man in exchange for old rags. Les Cannon became an apprentice electrician to the local authority and gained a National Certificate at Wigan Tech. In 1936 he joined the union he was many years

later to lead and in 1939 he joined the Communist Party. So now we have him as a fervent left winger slowly rising through the ranks of a union which in later years was always referred to by most of the daily papers as, 'The Communist Dominated Electrical Trades Union'.

Sadly as I shall try to show this description was all too true! In 1942 he was working at a Royal Ordnance factory, was a shop steward and a part-time District Secretary for the ETU (a lifetime of troublesome ear infections barred him from the Forces). Sadly due to lack of space, much of his rise through the hierarchy of the ETU must be by-passed. However, due to his allegiance to the Communist Party plus his own natural ability he was on the ladder to the top. In 1945 he was elected to be the youngest member of The National Executive of what was then one of the most powerful unions in the UK. Union and Communist Party activities led to much foreign travel, mainly in Eastern Bloc countries and inevitably, despite his deep seated belief in the communist way of life, his eyes were to be opened to the faults of the regimes in the countries he visited. The Russian invasion of Czechoslovakia and the Hungarian uprising also increased the doubts in his mind about the reality of his communist dreams.

During his travels in the Eastern Bloc he became friendly with a young Czech lady named Olga, who acted as an interpreter. Les courted Olga and they later married. With his hopes of improving the lot of his fellow working men via communism ruined, he came to a far reaching decision. In 1956 he resigned from the party in

which he has been a member since 1939. At that time he held the position of Lecturer at the ETU College in Esher. The college was abruptly closed, he was out of a job and shunned by his former colleagues. In his union, run by a clique, he was now very much an outsider. Around the time of his resignation the ETU was led by a total of 33 Community Party members with most of the rest fellow travellers. History was later to show that the high proportion of communists in senior positions in the union was entirely due to ballot rigging. A typical example was a ballot to elect a General Secretary, in Blackpool. Haxell, the party nominee polled 695 votes, his opponent only five votes. This gave a total of 700 votes cast when the branch had only 559 members eligible to vote at that time. Cannon's mission was now to rid his union of fraudulent practices.

A campaign to elect Les to the Executive Council began and against all the odds it seemed he had won. But his rival, the communist supported candidate was declared the winner. Again this was due to fraudulent voting. Branches which had overwhelmingly voted for Cannon found their ballots were disallowed for petty reasons. The hierarchy now found reasons to ban Cannon from holding office for five years, a harsh punishment for seeking the truth and fair elections.

In 1960 the General Secretary, Frank Haxell was 're-elected'. Haxell gained 19,611 votes, his anti-Communist Catholic opponent Jock Byrne gained 18,577. As before many branches which had supported Jock Byrne found their votes had disappeared. Support was found to start off a High Court action to challenge Frank Haxell's election as General Secretary.


The action which lasted for 42 days and with nearly 1.4 million words recorded was held before Mr Justice Winn. Gerald Gardiner QC was for Byrne and Neil Lawson QC was for the union. Prior to the trial the Lord Chief Justice had to warn Haxell and others for contempt of court with the threat of imprisonment but this would have delayed the trial. With an action lasting so long much must be left out of this story, but suffice it to say Judge Winn decided in favour of Jock Byrne.

The new General Secretary was now surrounded by a communist executive and a majority of other officials. A turbulent time lay ahead waiting for the elections which would be held under stricter rules. As time went on the communist candidates began to lose their power, votes were sent to and counted by The Electoral Reform Society and Wigan's Les Cannon was elected to hold the post of the Union's General President in 1963. After five years he was again elected to serve for another five. Sadly he was now suffering from cancer and died only two years into his term of office on the 9 December 1970. His title was announced in the New Year's Honours list a few weeks later.

I have found much of the above information by reading the excellent biography 'The Road From Wigan Pier' written by Olga Cannon and JRL Anderson which is obtainable from Wigan Libraries.

The ETU has evolved through many titles to become 'Unite'.

Museum Shop

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01942 828128
www.wlct.org/heritage




Elections 1831

By Bob Evans

Second Parliament of William IV. Assembled June 14th, 1831 ; dissolved December 3rd, 1832.

John Hodson Kearsley (Tory)

Ralph Thicknesse (Whig)

State of Poll—Thicknesse, 30 ; Kearsley, 24 ; Hon. R. B. Wilbraham (Tory), 15 ; Potter (Whig), 4.

May 4th 1831 was election day in Wigan. It was the Mayor's duty to record the votes of the small number of the town's social elite who had the privilege of choosing two members to represent the Borough in Parliament. The principal issue dividing the Whig and Tory parties was the former party's desire to reform what they regarded as a discredited electoral system. The Tories were considered to represent the interests of the landowning aristocracy, while the Whigs wished to remove many of the abuses in the existing system and give votes to more of their self-made, middle class business supporters. The events of that day and what followed on 23 May are provided by a summary of the lengthy prosecution case presented at trials of townspeople held at the Kirkdale Sessions and the Lancaster Assizes during the following year. The prosecution was seeking to prove that what happened was unjustifiable and undisciplined mob violence and accompanying theft. However, there are brief references suggesting the presence of agitators encouraging working people to believe they also had a right to become involved in the political system. One can well understand how deep resentment on the part of the working population to the wealth and attitude of the minority with power could have contributed to the events which followed.

The courts were told there had been no reason to anticipate any problems on election day: *'not the slightest notice to the special constables to attend... had been given by the magistrates. Not a single constable or police man was in attendance, none having been required by the magistrates who had not*

taken any measures whatsoever to maintain the public peace'. But even on the evening prior to the election large numbers *'of the lowest and most disorderly part of the people were parading the streets with drums, fifes and flags'* and describing themselves as *'King Williams National Guard'*. James Hilton, a printer, was distributing a paper of an *'inflammatory and improper description'* and from early morning onwards electors were being intimidated to declare how they intended to vote. Crowds surrounded their homes and they *'were compelled to rise out of bed and go with the mob and vote as the mob dictate'*. Three electors were waylaid and prevented from leaving Wigan by coach. The mob was described as *'the worst possible description great numbers of the lowest and most brutal Irish being amongst them. They hissed, growled barked like dogs made hideous and terrifying noises and appeared maddened by fury groaned.'*

At this time votes were cast in public and electors could begin to record their choice of candidate from ten o'clock in the morning and voting could continue until all electors had been given the opportunity to vote. When the Mayor with the candidates and electors attempted to enter the Hall of Election he found it surrounded by 1500 people and they were forced to seek refuge in an inn. It was clear that many electors *'dared not proceed to the hall to give their votes.'* It was agreed to proceed with the election despite the chaotic conditions in which *'the mob not only being undisputed master of the town but also completely master of the Town Hall. The lowest Irish had audaciously placed themselves on the bench close to the magistrates. The electors were terrified*

and many voted not according to their choice and judgement but according to their fear of the brutal and ruffianly mob. When one elector voted according to the wish of the mob he was greeted with deafening cheers. If an elector voted for the unpopular candidates he was derided and cursed, a mark set upon him and as soon as he left the Hall the mob outside assailed him with bludgeons and beat him dreadfully.' The Town Hall itself was ransacked resulting in the destruction of 'the benches, tables and fixtures therein and the glass and woodwork of the windows.'

The crowd's anger was directed principally at the Tory candidate, Mr Kearsley. He, together with his two brothers, James and Edward were 'brutally kicked and abused' while walking in the street and had to seek refuge in nearby inns and shops. Mr Kearsley's house was attacked, the front door being demolished and the front windows shattered while he and his brother remained hidden at the Eagle and Child Inn. There they remained for the next 36 hours before finally escaping in a post chaise when those watching the inn were drawn away by the attraction of 'ale given to them at a neighbouring alehouse.'

Others of high social status were similarly attacked. Sir Robert Holt Leigh and his brother remained in the Town Hall hoping that the fury would subside. In this they were mistaken and the former was only rescued when 'his faithful servant and coachman threw themselves upon him to protect him from the deadly blows.' Looters broke into the shop of Rice and Smalley, the latter being one of the electors who had intended to vote for Mr Kearsley. His shop contents of groceries, tea, candles, soap, brushes, were thrown into the street and carried away by bystanders. The premises were then set on fire. It was not until late evening that troops from Ashton and Haydock finally arrived to disperse the crowds.

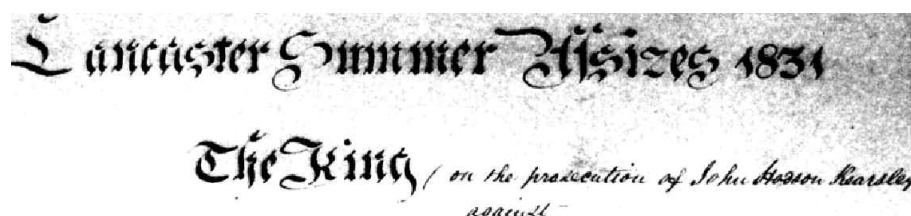
On the 23 May Ralph Woodcock, the Constable of Upholland received information that James Clayton had been selling a brush and two balls of twine from

Rice and Smalley's shop. Clayton was arrested and taken to the bridewell, the local prison, and held to await the arrival of the Liverpool coach to take him for trial at Kirkdale. Despite rumours circulating in the town that there would be retaliation if any action was taken against those involved in the election day disturbances no preparations were made to prevent renewed trouble. As crowds 'chiefly weavers and spinners and many of the lowest Irish' assembled in the Scholes district the Mayor, who had left for his country residence, was urged to send an appeal for help to the commander of troops at Ashton. Before they arrived the doors of the bridewell were burst open, Clayton released and carried in triumph through the streets. Once again Rice and Smalley's premises were attacked before the mob moved on to Mr Kearsley's house to break in, begin looting the contents, and eventually starting fires. The courts were given a detailed description of the damage inflicted by the intruders. They 'broke or threw out of the windows all the valuable furniture, stole or tore to pieces the wearing apparel of the family,..... defaced valuable books,....cut to pieces title deeds, stole a considerable sum in bank notes, gold and silver and destroyed valuable silver plate.' In total the damage amounted to several thousand pounds. After some delay the Mayor, who was 'an extensive spinner and mill owner' and was afraid that his property might also be attacked, arrived with an escort of cavalry to direct the troops, calm the situation and allow the fire brigade to extinguish fires.

Such was the tension in the town that it was several days before the Magistrates were sufficiently confident to engage large numbers of special constables who, supported by troops, were able to arrest those of the rioters who had not taken advantage of the delay to make their escape from the district.

80 people were apprehended and of them 39 committed for trial at the Lancaster 1831 Summer

Assizes. The evidence presented against the accused includes statements that James Conway was arrested in Liverpool in possession of two of Mrs Kearsley's silk gowns. Henry Duffy was caught in Bolton attempting to pawn silver plate



J.B 46 RICHARD MEADOWS, 17, *70 - Death recorded*
 Committed by Henry Bullock, Esq. 25th June, 1831, charged with having unlawfully, riotously and tumultuously assembled, together with divers other persons, at Wigan, and with having begun to destroy, demolish and pull down the shop, warehouse, counting-house, offices and other buildings belonging to George Rice and Luke Smalley.

bearing the Mr Kearsley's crest and initials. He claimed to have been given it by James McGarry. The names of these appear in a printed booklet listing prisoners held at Lancaster in August 1831 with additional notes of the sentences they received. Some such as Ellen Wilson and John Jenkins, aged 13, were acquitted. The nineteenth century legal system however was severe on offences which threatened the social order. Both James Conway and Henry Duffy received sentences of two years in prison. Several, including James McGarry, were transported for seven years. Written against the names of both Richard Meadows and James Jenkins, aged 16, is 'death recorded.' James Clayton was not prosecuted as he gave evidence for the prosecution against those involved in the attack on the bridewell.

SOURCES AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Three Boxes, D/Dx/Ap/G2, contain Riot Paper documents, as yet not fully indexed, left by Thomas Grimshaw, Wigan Town Clerk. There are several complete accounts of the prosecution case together with many supporting witness statements. Other documents detail the recruitment of special constables following the disturbances. The election details are taken from Page 231 in Volume 1 of the 1882 History of Wigan by David Sinclair. Thanks are due to the Wigan Borough Archivist for initially suggesting that the contents of these boxes could be of interest and to the archive staff for making copies of the most useful documents.

Get into Heritage this spring!

There are lots of heritage events for you and your family to enjoy this spring...

You can see the mighty Trencherfield Mill engine in steam every Sunday, take a leisurely canal boat cruise or find out about brave and infamous local residents on a cemetery walk. There are also evening talks, family history workshops and local history courses to get your teeth into.

Are you are looking for things to do with your children, grandchildren, nieces or nephews? We have monthly Super Saturday events and a host of fun school holiday activities.

For further details or to book call **01942 828128**. Our complete Events and Exhibitions Guide can also be found on our website www.wlct.org/heritage-services/events-and-exhibitions.htm

Exhibitions

Date • Time • Venue/Cost

Until 5 May • Check website for opening times
MOWL/Free

FACE – The Changing Face of a Working Community

From 18 May • Check website for opening times
MOWL/Free

From the Word GO!

Regular Events

Date • Time • Venue/Cost

Mon-Tues, Thurs-Sat • Various • MOWL/£5
Family History Workshop

1st Mon of month • 2.00-3.30pm • MOWL/Free
Palaeography Practice

Sun • 11.00-11.45am/1.00-1.45pm • TF Mill/Free
Trencherfield Mill Engine

Events for Families

Date • Time • Venue/Cost
Tues 3 April • 1.00-2.30pm • MOWL/£2.50 Bonnets and Bunnies
Thur 5 April • 1.00-2.30pm • MOWL/£2.50 Bonnets and Bunnies
Tues 10 April • 1.00-2.30pm • MOWL/£2.50 Bonnets and Bunnies
Thur 12 April • 1.00-2.30pm • MOWL/£2.50 Bonnets and Bunnies
Sat 21 April • 11.00am-2.30pm • MOWL/Free Heroes and Villains
Sat 28 April • 11.00am-2.30pm • Tp Cent/Free Playtime Super Saturday
Sat 19 May • 7.00-9.00pm • MOWL/Free Festival Fun Super Saturday
Sat 26 May • 11.00am-2.30pm • Tp Cent/Free A Right Royal Knees-Up Super Saturday
Thurs 7 June • 1.00-2.30pm • MOWL/£2.50 Our Queen!
Sat 16 June • 11.00am-2.30pm • MOWL/Free Super Saturday: Traveller's Tales and gypsy journeys
Sat 30 June • 11.00am-2.30pm • Tp Cent/Free Super Saturday: Beastly Machines
Thurs 19 July • 6.30pm -7.15pm • MOWL/Free Introduction to Roman Pottery
Sat 21 July • 11.00am-2.30pm • MOWL/Free Super Saturday: Going for Gold
Wed 25 July • 10.30am-2.30pm • Mesnes Park/Free Winner Takes All Event
Sat 28 July • 11am-2.30pm • Tp Cent/Free Super Saturday: Olympic Glory
Mon 30 July • 1.00pm-2.00pm • MOWL/Free Super Summer: Tell Us A Story
Tues 31 July • 1.00 pm-2.30 pm • MOWL/£2.50 Super Summer: Olympic Mania

Events for Adults

Date • Time • Venue/Cost
Tues 3 April • 10.00-11.00am • Cem/£2 Carved in Stone Walk: Leigh
Wed 4 April • 1.00-3.00pm • MOWL/£20 for 6 wks Local History Course: Victorian Wigan
Wed 4 April • 2.00-4.00pm • TF Mill/£6 Cotton, Canal and Cream Cake Boat Trip
Wed 11 April • 1.00-3.00pm MOWL/£20 Local History Course: Victorian Wigan
Mon 16 April • 1.00-2.00pm • LLH/£5 Family History Workshop
Wed 18 April • 1.00-3.00pm • MOWL/£20 for 6 wks Local History Course: Victorian Wigan
Fri 20 April • 10.00am-11.00am • Cem/£2 Carved in Stone Walk: Hindley
Tues 24 April • 10.00am-12.00pm • Cem/£3 Carved in Stone Walk: Ince and Wigan
Wed 25 April • 1.00-3.00pm • MOWL/£20 for 6 wks Local History Course: Victorian Wigan

Thurs 26 April • 6.30-7.45pm • MOWL/£2.50 Talk: Wigan Pewterers and their Wares
Thurs 26 April • 6.00-7.30pm • MOWL/£2 Family History for Beginners
Tues 1 May • 10.00-11.00am • Cem/£2 Carved in Stone Walk: Atherton
Wed 2 May • 1.00-3.00pm • MOWL/£20 for six wks Local History Course: Victorian Wigan
Fri 4 May • 2.00-3.00pm • Drby Rm/Free Talk: An audience with Alan Crussell
Wed 9 May • 1.00-3.00pm • MOWL/£20 for six wks Local History Course: Victorian Wigan
Wed 9 May • 2.00-4.00pm • TF Mill/£6 Cotton, Canal and Cream Cake Boat Trip
Mon 14 May • 12.00-1.00pm • Tp Cent/£2 Around the Square Walk
Thur 17 May • 6.00-7.30pm • MOWL/£2 Family History for Beginners
Fri 18 May • 10.00am-11.00am • Cem/£2 Carved in Stone Walk: Hindley
Tues 22 May • 10.00am-12.00pm • Cem/£3 Carved in Stone Walk: Ince and Wigan
Sat 26 May • 11.00am onwards • Wigan/Free Wigan English Civil War Re-enactment
Thurs 31 May • 6.30-7.45pm • MOWL/£2.50 Talk: The George Formby Story
Fri 1 June • 1.45-2.00pm • MOWL/Free Talk: Royal Souvenirs
Wed 6 June • 2.00-4.00pm • TF Mill/£6 Cotton, Canal and Cream Cake Boat Trip
Thurs 7 June • 6.00-7.30pm • MOWL/£2 Family History for Beginners
Fri 15 June • 10.00am-11.00am • Cem/£2 Carved in Stone Walk: Hindley
Tues 26 June • 10.00am-12.00pm • Cem/£3 Carved in Stone Walk: Ince and Wigan
Thurs 28 June • 6.30-7.45pm • MOWL/£2.50 Talk: The history of Lancashire Tea
Thurs 28 June • 6.00-7.30pm • MOWL/£2 Family History for Beginners
Tues 3 July • 10.00am-11.30am • TP Cent/£2 Canal Walk
Wed 4 July • 2.00pm-4pm • TF Mill/£6 Cotton, Canal and Cream Cake
Mon 9 July • 1.00pm-2.00pm • LLH/£5 Family History Workshop
Thurs 19 July • 6.30pm-7.15pm • MOWL/Free Introduction to Roman Pottery
Fri 20 July • 10.00-11.00am • Cem/£2 Carved in Stone Walk: Hindley
Tues 24 July • 10.00am-12.00pm • Cem/£3 Carved in Stone Walk: Ince and Wigan

KEY:

MOWL = Museum of Wigan Life

TF Mill = Trencherfield Mill

Tp Cent = Turnpike Centre

Leigh LLH = Leigh Local History, Turnpike Centre, Leigh

Cem = Various cemeteries (call for details)

Drby Rm = Derby Room, Turnpike Centre, Leigh

My early childhood memories

1927-1937

By W J Critchley

I was born in Sarginson Street, Newtown, Wigan in 1927. My first memory was starting nursery school at Scot Lane. I was four years old and every afternoon we would be put into a camp bed outside to have a nap.

As I got older, I remember the great characters in the streets. Mrs Barker, who was the main source of information and old fashioned remedies, would assist at child births and funerals. Dick Dawson was another character, any do-it-yourself he would fix it, a sort of Len Fairclough from Coronation Street.

Mrs Berry lived in Douglas Street. Two or three times a week she would make potato pie in very large dishes, all cooked in the open fire oven. The pies would have a thick pastry crust. When they were ready she would stand at the door and ring a hand held bell, you would then get a small basin from your mother and get in the queue. Depending how lucky you were – one penny worth or two pennies worth.

My favourite character was Harry Baybutt in Sarginson Street. He was a funny little man and could not speak very much. Everyone called him Harry Tottie. However, he was the best cobbler in Wigan. He could make the miners a pair of clogs in record time and he also repaired harnesses for the horses.

Turner's Clog Shop was located at the top of Sarginson Street. Harry would help out there. He could be seen sitting on his stool, mouth full of nails and working away.

I also remember mixed bathing at the old Wigan Baths every Sunday morning 6am to 9am. Walking through Wallgate in the early morning with towel under arm. Some of the lads would try to smoke; they had a knack how to hit the machine and get a free Woodbine. Bobby Harrison, who would have been on night shift, would hide in a shop doorway. If he caught you, he would just beckon you with his finger and you had to go. Then he would take his gloves out of his lapel and swipe you across the ears. You never tried to smoke again.

Is there anyone still around who remembers funerals with a horse drawn hearse? I think they were Belgium Blacks. If it was a child's funeral they used small white ponies. I think the undertakers were 'Belshaws'. During the summer, miners washing in the canal. Sunday morning sports competitions, arranged on Saturday nights in the pubs. Bets would be wagered on running and swimming. At the time, I was recognised as a pretty good sprinter. I would be chosen to run against another lad from outside Wigan. The track was down by the side of Peak's at the bottom of Soho Street, it was really just a cinder path. If I won, I got a sixpence, if I lost, nothing. Another sporting challenge was the old 'Scot Lane Run' from Old Cantern's pub, to

the 'Jawbone', in under five minutes. My brother Joe became a very well known wrestler, Romeo Joe Critchley. He was also very good at swimming under water. The word got around he could stay under water for four minutes and bets would be taken. Sunday morning, at the Seven Stars Bridge, Joe would climb onto the rail and do his showbiz act, dive in the dirty water and reappear four minutes later. It is still a secret how he did it.

Turning to Uncle Joe's Mint Balls, it is stated that Ellen Santus made her first batch of Uncle Joe's Mint Balls in 1898, and that may be so. However, my Grandma Critchley lived in Wallgate and made mint balls in her terraced house. She would sell them for a half penny twist, several in a piece of twisted paper. She sold the recipe for a sovereign in a Wallgate Pub in the year 1897, information welcomed.

My Grandpa Winstanley from James Square, Standish made Crown Green Bowls. He would measure the miner's hands, make a set of two bowls and one jack, they were in a pine carrying box marked 'Winstanley Bowls'. As a ten year old, I would help to polish them. He had a wooden tube 4ft long, me and my cousin would insert the bowl, hold each end and roll the bowl up and down for hours on end.

Is there anyone still around who remembers Winstanley Bowls?

YOUR LETTERS - CAN YOU HELP

Dear Editor

Leigh Past and Present

There have been lots of changes to Leigh over the years, and I have decided to state the ones that are important to me.

A recent change was the closure of F W Woolworth's in the centre of town which had been in operation for about 90 years or thereabouts. I was devastated at this prospect. Woolworth's had been part of my life for as long as I can remember, being in my 60s at the time of writing this. We now have a pound shop in the building but it will always be Woolworth's to me. I still refer to it as Woolworth's pound shop.

Another change to Leigh on a personal level was the closer of the nightclub in Silk Street which started out as the Theatre Royal, then the Casino, and then Reuben's night club. This particular venue holds lots of memories for me as I held my hen night there in the late 60s, and then met the love of my life a few months after my marriage ended in divorce some 20 years later. The building was flattened to make way for a monstrosity of an structure called Reuben's Court. There was such an outcry over the closure of Reuben's that the large stone above the club naming the building as the Theatre Royal was kept and still holds a position at the side of the structure now standing.

I also remember the company which occupied the site on Guest Street, now houses and apartments. The business covered a large area and must have been owned by Mr Sutcliff and Mr Speakman as that was the company name Sutcliffe and Speakman.

On a happier note and one I am thrilled about is the completion of the refurbishment of the pub over Butts Bridge formally The Wheatsheaf now the Canal Turn. The pub holds special affection for me and to see it transformed and doing well is great. The pub has a beer garden, and is very spacious and the best of luck to the new landlords.

Pauline Ann Green



Writing on the back of the photograph says Left to right back row: Erny, John, Jimmy, Tom, Billy. Front row: Philomena, Mam, myself (John Riley), Frank. This photo was taken in Spring of 1950.

Dear Editor

We are looking for details of the Doyle and McGeever families. My maternal grandparents were Michael and Mary Doyle. Michael Doyle was born in Carracastle, County Mayo, Ireland and came to Wigan around 1900. He was married to Mary McGeever of Wigan, and they lived on Cambridge Street. My mother, Catherine and her brothers, Patrick, Thomas and John, were all born in Wigan in the first decade of the 1900s.

I believe Mary McGeever's siblings included my mother's aunt, Ellen McGeever, who married John Edward Riley, later to become Alderman and then Mayor of Wigan. Attached is a photo of John Riley and family dated 1950. We have lost contact with relatives we met in 1978 when we last visited Wigan, and are looking for any information regarding relatives - past or present - that may be available. In particular, I am interested in learning more about the people shown in the photo (shown above), as well as any information on McGeever or Doyle relatives in the Wigan area.

Joe Mercer
Ohio, USA
MGgarage@columbus.rr.com

Dear Editor

I work as a volunteer in the British Red Cross shop in Leigh and am interested in researching the history of this organisation in the Wigan Borough. I would be grateful if anyone could supply me with any information about this Society and its predecessor the National Society for Aid to the Sick and Wounded in War.

The Manchester District operated a hospital at the Woodlands in Wigan which was opened on 6 October 1914 and a hospital at Worsley Hall. There was also the Woodlands at Atherton, the home of Miles F Burrows coming under the jurisdiction of the St John Ambulance Brigade

If anyone has any reminiscences or photographs I would be most grateful if you could contact me - tonyjohnnashcroft@btinternet.com

Tony Ashcroft

Dear Editor

I have been given an old family bible that I would like to return to a descendant of the family, if at all possible. Some of the names in the bible, that I have cross-referenced to the census are:

James Hale, Elizabeth Hale, William and Mary J Hale (1871 census), living at 6 Market Street, Standish

Elizabeth Hale, William, Mary J, Samuel, Eleanor and James Hale (1891), living at 18 Market Place, Standish, and the same family at 19 Market Place, Standish in 1901.

If any readers of Past Forward know of any descendants of this family, please can you get in touch with me by leaving a message with the Archives Service 01942 404430 / a.miller@wlct.org

Peter Spencer
(Archives Volunteer)

YOUR LETTERS - CAN YOU HELP

Dear Editor

I am sending this email from New Jersey, USA, where I now live. I receive copies of Past Forward from a friend in Wigan who subscribes to it for me. I enjoy it so much as I was born in Higher Ince, Wigan in 1932 and so lots of the articles bring back such dear memories.

My family moved to Atherton in approximately 1939 and we lived in Mayfield Street which is just a short distance from the South Bank house on Hamilton Street (featured in Past Forward issue 59). I remember that it had a high brick wall around the property.

Dr John Gallagher was our doctor and I have fond memories of him being such a kind and tall man. In the article it says he had his consulting rooms at South Bank, but I never remember that. My only memories of Dr Gallagher's consulting rooms were in a small house in a row of houses on Bolton Road, Atherton, near the Library. My sister (who lives in Liverpool) says she always remembers the small front room with a gas fire where all the patients waited and Dr Gallagher was in a back room (also with a small gas fire) and a small kitchen, which I think he used as his dispensary.

One fond memory I also have of Dr Gallagher is that when my sister was born in 1943 he actually came to our house that same day (a Saturday morning) to let my Dad know that he had another daughter (no such luxury as a telephone in our house). I don't think that one would get that personal service today, although I suppose nowadays new fathers are actually in the room when their child is born - that was unheard of in those days!

The article says that he moved to South Bank in 1938 and we moved to Atherton in 1939. I think he was our first and only doctor in the area so I would think that the Bolton

Road address was the actual consulting room. I stand to be corrected of course, but I thought I would just write and give you my memories of Dr Gallagher.

I was in Wigan in 2001 and I congratulate everyone on such a lovely town. Keep up the good work with Past Forward, I read every word of it!

Best wishes

Hilda E Georgiadis
Eatontown, New Jersey, USA

Dear Editor

Your article in Past Forward Issue 59 by Richard Jackson was of interest to me. It states that a synagogue was located at 26 Foy Street, Wigan. I and my sister and brother were all born at this address. We all thought that the house had previously been a shop as it had a large shop window.

Your faithfully

Mrs Patricia Smith

Dear Editor

I have in my possession a letter written in 1951 from Korea during the Korean War. It is addressed to my father, Bill Burton, and is sent by someone named 'Norman'. I think this letter may be of interest to his family as there is interesting detail about his days out there at that time (he states he is organiser of 411 Korean branch of the BRMA).

I realise the name 'Norman' is not a great deal to go on and, failing a response, perhaps there are people interested in the Korean War who may be interested in this letter. I think it would be a great pity to simply dispose of it!

I am wondering also whether there is anyone out there who knows anything about the Wigan Rolling Mills (situated in Canal Street).

They were managed early in the 20th century by my great grandfather, also William Burton, of Maxwell House, Gidlow Lane and later by Charles Burton. I have a cousin who is delving into this history but is struggling to discover any information about the Rolling Mills.

If you have any information please contact me via the Past Forward team.

Mrs Sydney Durrant

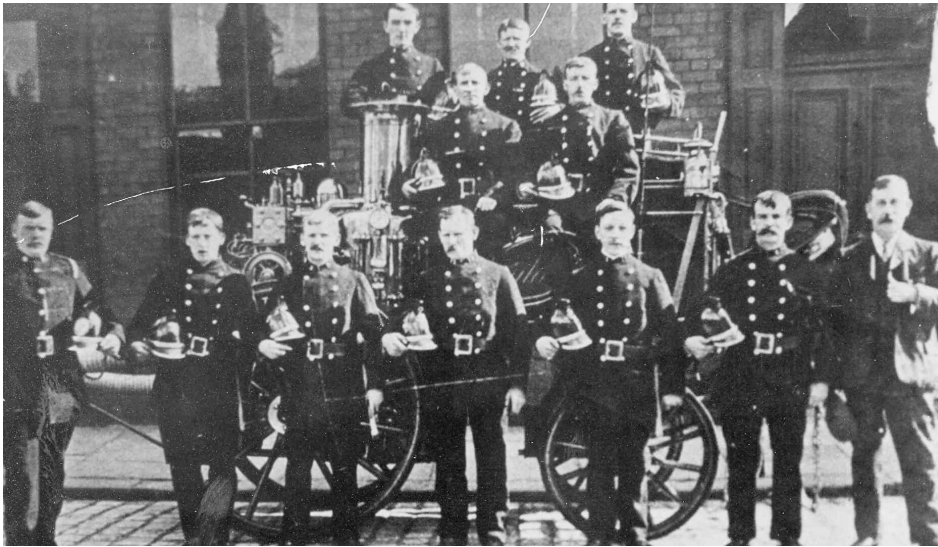
Editor's note: *Please contact Mrs Sydney Durrant via the Past Forward team. Due to space restrictions we have been unable to publish the transcript of the letter. If you would like to see a copy please contact pastforward@wlct.org / 01942 828128.*

Dear Editor

I refer to the barber shop photo on page 35 in Issue 58 [Probing Pictures]. There was a barber shop below ground (that I used to go to in the 1950s) in the short passageway leading from the top end of Market Street, Wigan (where the bobby stood), and the Parish Church. I was in Wigan last year and noticed that the door to the old barber shop is no longer there. I do remember there was a long mirror and three chairs as in the photo.

Mike Leigh, Queensland, Australia





Dear Editor

Please find enclosed a photograph of Tyldesley Fire Brigade circa 1920s. The guy on the extreme left is my grandfather, John Byrne. The man fourth from the left is his brother, name unknown. I don't know anything else about this fine body of men. If anyone can shed any light I can be contacted on 01942 889286.

Thank you

Bernard Byrne

Dear Editor

I want to share my memories of growing up in the thirties. I am now in my 80s and I was from Bryn. I attended Park Lane Unitarian School until I was 11 and then I went to Ashton Central which is now Cansfield High School. We always played outside in the fresh air. We played pavement games such as top and whip, and hopscotch. We never stayed indoors except when it was rainy or foggy.

When I look back we were poor but happy, clean and well fed. We had no luxuries but my mum baked her own bread, cakes and pies. My dad had a garden and grew all his own vegetables, potatoes and fruit of all kinds. So my mother lived off the allotments. My dad could not work because he had to come out of the mines with a chest complaint. But we were happy. I only wish I could write down everything about growing up in the thirties. I love to reminisce about

the old days and I always read Past Forward and enjoy it.

Thank you for taking the time to listen.

Mrs Alice Pilling

Dear Editor

We were very interested to read Susan Rigby's article on the Lowton Blacksmiths in the Past Forward issue 59, particularly the reference to Amos Henshaw. Our interest stems mainly from the close connection between the Henshaw family and the Dewhursts. Jonathan Dewhurst was my great, great-uncle and a leading actor in the Victorian era. Our article about Jonathan and his family appeared in Past Forward issue 29, followed by a review of our biography, *Jonathan Dewhurst – The Lancashire Tragedian*, in issue 30.

The connection with the Henshaws was through Jonathan's mother Mary. Her grandfather was Henry Henshaw (junior) who was born in 1744. He had taken over the Smithy from his father, also Henry. Henry (junior) married Rebecca Bann in 1770 and their daughter Ann married Thomas Brotherton, a surgeon, in 1794. One of their children, Mary, married John Dewhurst and their marriage produced five children including Jonathan, the actor, and my great-grandmother Rebecca. Rebecca married Joseph Taylor, a master clogger from Lowton.

Jonathan Dewhurst was an eminent and very popular actor. He toured with

some of the great actors and actresses of the time and, after a successful spell on the London stage, spent two years performing in the theatres of Australia and India. Returning to Lancashire he formed his own touring company, following which he managed the Theatre Royal in his home town of Leigh for eighteen years.

During his career Dewhurst shared the stage with such luminaries as Henry Irving, Wilson Barrett, Charles Calvert and Adelaide Neilson, but over the following years he, like many in the theatre, was lost in history.

When our first book was published not one living descendant had been traced, and there were many unanswered questions. Now, after nine more years of research, a considerable amount of new information has been unearthed, descendants found and questions answered. But the answers were not always what might have been expected – there were many surprising twists to the story.

This inevitably led to a sequel, *Jonathan Dewhurst – The Curtain Falls*, which has taken us through the ups and downs of proving and disproving assumptions, and in one case resurrecting the dead. Whereas our earlier book was a theatrical biography concerned primarily with the theatre, our sequel reflects much more the family history of those who were related to Jonathan Dewhurst, although much of this family history is itself connected with the theatre. It should ideally be read in conjunction with our first book as one very much complements the other.

Philip and Susan Taylor

Editor's note: Copies of *Jonathan Dewhurst – The Curtain Falls* are available from the authors for £10 (plus £2.50 UK p&p). Cheques payable to 'P Taylor' should be sent with mailing details c/o Philip & Susan Taylor, 2 The Driftway, Shipston-on-Stour, Warwickshire CV36 4QH. Purchasers of *Jonathan Dewhurst – The Curtain Falls* can also buy a copy of *Jonathan Dewhurst – The Lancashire Tragedian* for £3, with UK p&p for both books of £4.50

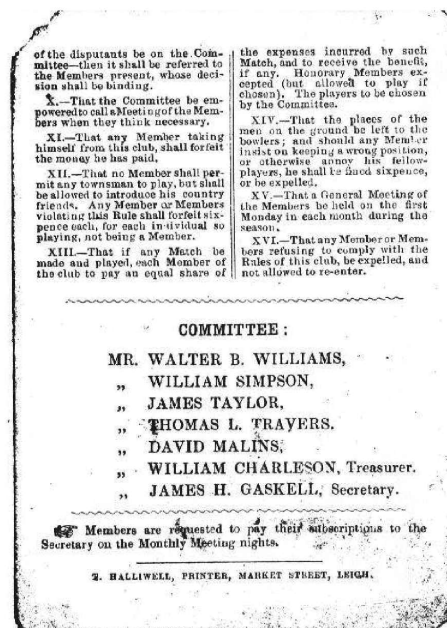
A Brief History of the Development of Leigh Cricket Club

By John Gregory

Leigh Cricket Club came into existence in 1854 and, after changing its name to Leigh Cricket, Tennis and Bowling Club in 2002, is still going strong. It is the town's longest established sporting organisation and has a proud and fascinating history.

The club was formed by a group of local sportsmen and played friendly fixtures against other local sides. Matches were played on Brindle's Field at Downcroft, a ground adjacent to what is now the car park of BJ's bingo hall. Downcroft was originally a farm, the fields of which were rapidly dominated by heavy industries after the construction of the canal. Access to the ground was along a lane which became Albion Street, part of which still exists adjoining Bradshawgate.

The club was established on 21 March 1854 and opened to the public on Monday 3 April at 4.30pm. Prospective members were requested to apply to the club secretary J H Gaskell at Leigh Post Office. The entrance fee for members was two shillings and sixpence, and threepence a week for six months, with honorary members paying ten shillings and sixpence. These were not inconsiderable amounts in those days and obviously there was no shortage of money among the early members. Allied to the fact that games were often played in mid-week, it would appear that the club was unattractive to the ordinary



working man at that time. The first recorded home match in the Leigh Chronicle was in September 1854 when Leigh entertained Bickershaw Cricket Club, having already played their inaugural game away against Wigan and Ince Cricket Club on Thursday 4 August.

In 1862, the club was calling itself Leigh Albion and had 85 members who paid subscriptions totalling £31 5s 1d. The ground rent of £12 was paid to William Johnson and John Whitaker who ran the Albion Foundry and were also club members. The club was evidently highly regarded as it attracted strong opposition from other local clubs and reverted to being called Leigh Cricket Club in 1865.

A major influence which helped to shape the development of the Leigh club and many other

similar cricket clubs had undoubtedly been the development of the railway network in the mid-nineteenth century. As it spread it enabled clubs to extend and, thereby, improve their fixtures. The team also travelled to away games in a horse-drawn wagonette driven by 'Masher' Thompson, but arriving on time was not always straightforward for these cricketing pioneers. The Leigh Chronicle reported that, when playing at Haigh in 1890, 'the team was very late owing to stoppages on the road caused by a horse that had been pushed into service for the first time as a roadster, its previous career having been on the towpath of a canal, and much merriment was the outcome of its eccentricities'.

The Leigh club were evidently fortunate to have dedicated members of the correct social

standing to establish a good reputation and attract a strong fixture list. The ability to employ professional cricketers during the early years suggests that finance was readily made available to enhance the club's fortunes. This would no doubt have influenced the county club's decision to send a star-studded side to take on eighteen of Leigh and District in the famous match at Downcroft in 1884.

In 1895, the club moved to its present headquarters amongst more rural surroundings alongside what was then a beautiful tree-lined bridal path called Beech Walk. The ground still has an impressive setting despite the urban development in the vicinity over the intervening years. The setting of the new ground must have been infinitely more attractive than at the old Downcroft ground which was in close proximity to the Albion Iron Foundry and Leigh Gas Works. It would have obviously given the club the opportunity to attract the 'right' type of member and equally, a better standard of opposition. Although it must have taken a great deal of time and effort to locate and construct the club's new headquarters, the move would undoubtedly have been a major factor influencing its future progress.



Opening of Leigh Cricket Club, Beech Walk

The big events in those days were the derby matches against Tyldesley which created great interest and attracted large crowds to see the local rivals attempting to outdo each other. The Tyldesley club had sufficient resources to employ top-class professionals such as the Lancashire and England fast bowler Walter Brearley, but they unfortunately failed to survive the First World War.

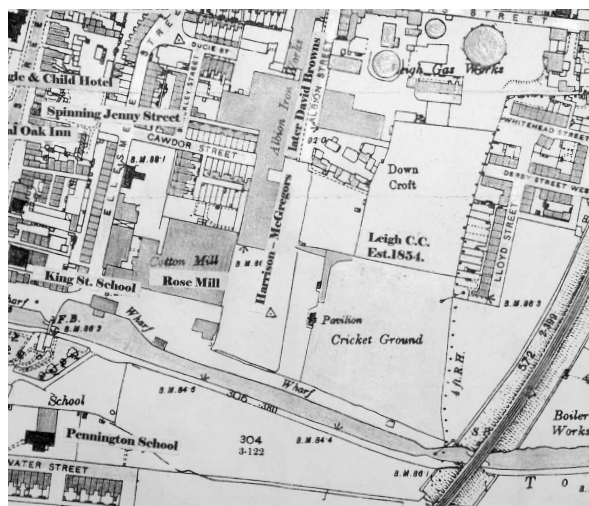
In 1907, the thorny problem of getting the team to away games on time again arose for the match at Haigh. It was decided that a wagonette was too slow so the team travelled by tram to Howe Bridge station and by train to Wigan. A tram was taken through the 'slum district' of Scholes to New Springs and the team then walked up an old lane through waste land surrounded by spoil heaps to reach the attractive Haigh ground.

In 1919, the momentous decision to join the Manchester and District Cricket Association was made. Bill Higenbottam, who was a towering

presence in the club's affairs and was Mayor of Leigh in 1930-31, led his all-conquering side to the championship in 1923 and the club was awarded with the Stockton Trophy. The championship side contained Peter Eckersley who went on to play for Lancashire from 1923 to 1935, the last seven years as captain, and his side were county champions twice during his period of captaincy.

Until World War II, Leigh's strong side were regularly a major force in the Manchester Association and they continued as members of that league until they won the Stockton Trophy for the second time in 1995, when they decided to join the Liverpool and District Cricket Competition. This decision has never been regretted because it has provided entertaining cricket of a high quality against talented amateur and professional cricketers in what has become one of the best leagues in the country.

This article has been adapted from a book recently produced by the author entitled 'A History of Leigh Cricket Club'. A copy of the book is now available at Leigh Local History in Leigh Library.



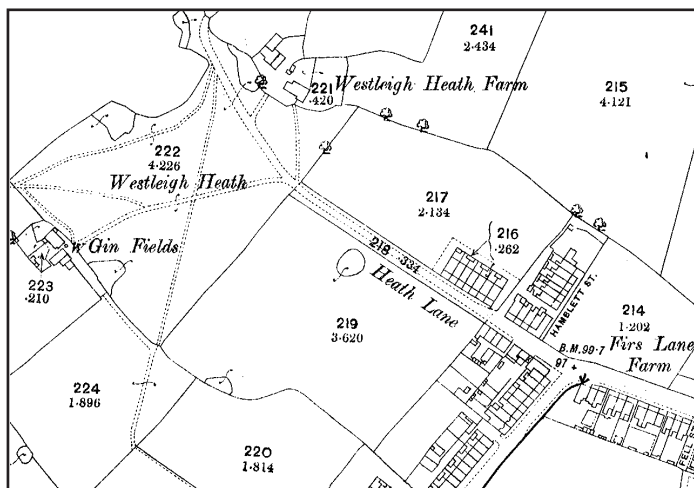
An OS map showing the old Downcroft ground

Diamond Jubilee Bullock Roasting Plate

'On Friday evening about nine o'clock the carcass of the bull was brought on a lorry to Westleigh Heath but it took about an hour before the huge unwieldy mass was placed into position for roasting...The ceremony was witnessed by a large crowd. The fires were kept up all night and about eleven o'clock on Saturday morning when it was wheeled out of the oven it looked very juicy and appetising and was apparently well cooked.' – Leigh Chronicle, 2 July 1897

In late June 1897, the inhabitants of the western part of Leigh celebrated Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee by roasting a whole bullock at West Leigh Heath. The bullock was killed on the Wednesday evening prior to the event at Mr J Ramsdale's slaughter-house off Firs Lane by three butchers, Messrs T Ward, J Evans and F Williams. Earlier that day the live bullock and the organising committee were photographed next to the specially constructed brick oven in which it was to be roasted (see image on page 18).

The Leigh Chronicle reported that the committee 'had decided to give a treat to all the children residing in the district bounded by the Lowton end of Plank-lane on the south, Findlay Street, off Railway Road, on the east, Shuttle Hillock and Heath Lane on the west and Wigan Road as far as the Royal Oak in the north.' This treat consisted of 'tea, bread, butter, and slices of the bullock'. The newspaper reported that prior to the event the, 'committee diligently canvassed every house so that no child between the age of 3 and 14 should be omitted from the list, and altogether about 2,100 tickets were issued to the children between these ages.'



West Leigh Heath as shown on a map of 1893



The bread and beef were not served on a paper plates, as might happen today, but on commemorative earthenware plates. The plates have a central image of an ox and the inscription 'IN COMMEMORATION OF QUEEN'S DIAMOND JUBILEE / 1837 – 1897 / BULLOCK ROASTED ON WEST LEIGH HEATH'. The plates are white with a thick blue edging and a thin inset blue border.

During the course of the day many activities took place on the heath. These included a greasy pole climbing competition, a gymnastic display by members of Bedford Church gymnasium and performances by the Plank Lane Maypole and Morris Dancers. Professor R Horrocks also gave ventriloquial performances and manipulated paper into fans and flower-pots. It was noted that, 'The officials deserved complimenting upon the admirable manner in which they carried out the various arrangements, everything going off practically without a hitch.'

Many of these plates have survived to this day. In fact we have three in the museum collection. We have recently been informed by Historic Royal Palaces that one such plate will be on display this year at Kensington Palace. The plate will be displayed at the Palace as part of the 'Jubilee: View from the Crowd' exhibition, which opens on 26 March.

You can also see the plate on display at the Museum of Wigan Life. The plate will feature in a free 'Royal Souvenirs' talk at the Museum of Wigan Life on Friday 1 June 1.45-2.00pm.

Sources

Leigh Journal and Leigh Chronicle, July 1897

Aspull and Haigh Historical Society

Meetings are held on the second Thursday of the month at Our Lady's RC Church Hall, Haigh Road, Aspull at 7.30pm. All are welcome, contact Barbara Rhodes for further details on 01942 222769.

Atherton Heritage Society

Meetings held on the second Tuesday of the month at 7.30pm in St Richard's Community Centre, Mayfield Street, Atherton. Members £1, non members £2. Contact Margaret Hodge for further information on 01942 884893

10 April *Lostock to Lahore*
Speaker - Mr David Kaye
(Wingates Brass Band).

8 May *The Burning of Westhoughton Mill 100th Anniversary*
Speaker - Pam Clarke.

12 June *The National Cotton Queens*
Speaker - Mrs Maureen Gilbertson

10 July *John Bastiste Bellzone*
Speaker - Mr John Johnson

Billinge History and Heritage Society

Meetings are held on the second Tuesday of the month at Billinge Chapel End Labour Club at 7.30pm. There is a door charge of £2.

Committee includes - Mr Geoffrey Crank (Chairman), Dr Charles Mather (Vice Chairman), Mrs Jennifer Budd (Secretary) and Mrs Susan Mather (Treasurer).
Contact us on 01695 624411 or 01744 892430

Hindley & District Family History Society

Meetings are held on the second Monday of the month at 7.00pm at Tudor House, Liverpool Road, Hindley. Please contact Mrs Joan Topping on 01942 257361 for details.

Leigh & District Family History Society

Monthly meetings held in the Derby Room, Leigh Library at 7.30pm on the third Tuesday of each month, except June and July.

17 April - Help Evening and Members Talks

15 May *Who Do You Think I Am?*
Speaker - Steve Williams

A weekly Help Desk is run by members of the Society each Monday from 1.30pm-3.30pm in the Local History Section of Leigh Library.

For more information contact Mrs M Harrop (Chairman) 01942 743428, Mrs G McClellan (Secretary) 01942 729559 or email: leighfhs@blueyonder.co.uk

Local History Federation Lancashire

The Federation holds several meetings each year, with a varied and interesting programme. For details visit www.lancashirehistory.org or call 01204-707885.

Skelmersdale & Upholland Family History Society

Meetings held at 7.30pm on the fourth Tuesday each month at Hall Green Community Centre, UpHolland. There are no meetings in

July or August. For more information contact Sue Hesketh (Secretary) 01942 212940 or Suehesketh@blueyonder.co.uk or visit www.liverpool-genealogy.org.uk/SkemGrp/Skem

Wigan Civic Trust

If you have an interest in the standard of planning and architecture, and the conservation of buildings and structures in our historic town, come along and meet us. Meetings are held on the second Monday of the month at 7.30pm. The venue is St George's Church, Water Street, Wigan WN1 1XD. Contact Mr A Grimshaw on 01942 245777 for further information.

Wigan Family & Local History Society

Meetings are held at the Bowling Green, 108 Wigan Lane, Wigan on the third Monday of each month (7.30 for 8.00pm). No meetings are held in July and August. Please note we do have a small charge for each meeting of £2 for both members and visitors. For further information call (01942) 727875 or visit www.wiganworld.co.uk/familyhistory

Wigan Archaeological Society

We meet on the first Wednesday of the month, at 7.30, at the Upper Morris Street Working Men's Club in Wigan, for lectures and discussions on topics of historical or archaeological interest. Admission is £2 for members and £3 for guests. For more information call Bill Aldridge on 01257 402342. You can also visit the website www.wiganarchsoc.co.uk

How to Find Us



Museum of Wigan Life

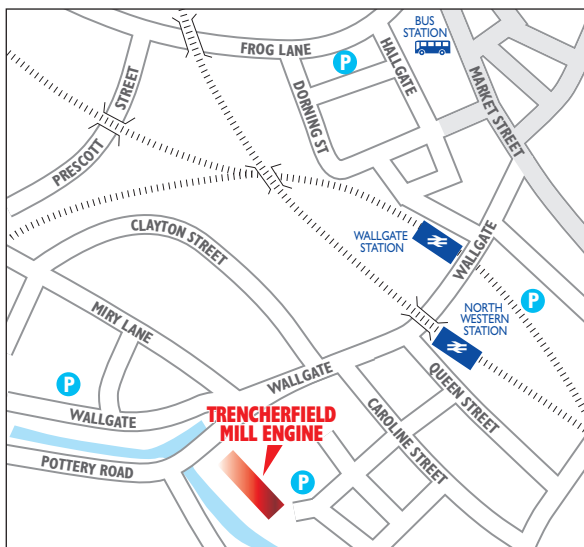
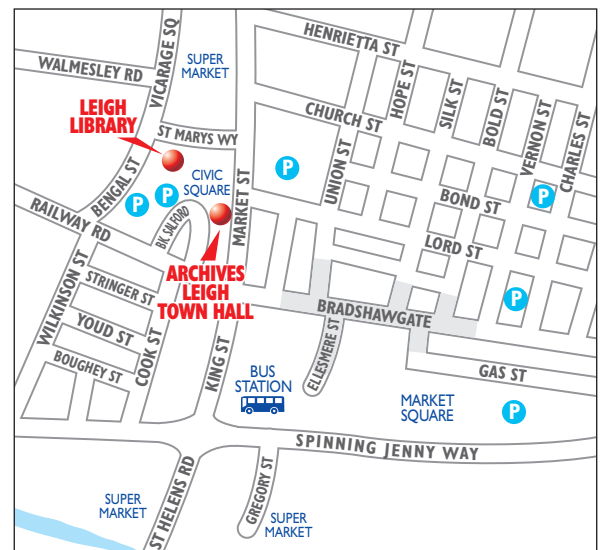
Library Street,
Wigan WN1 1NU
Telephone 01942 828128
heritage@wlct.org

Leigh Local History

Leigh Library, Turnpike Centre,
Civic Square, Leigh WN7 1EB
Telephone 01942 404559
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Archives

Leigh Town Hall, Leigh WN7 1DY
Telephone 01942 404430
a.miller@wlct.org



Trencherfield Mill Engine

Wigan Pier Quarter, Heritage Way,
Wigan WN3 4EF
Telephone 01942 828128
b.rowley@wlct.org