

PAST FORWARD

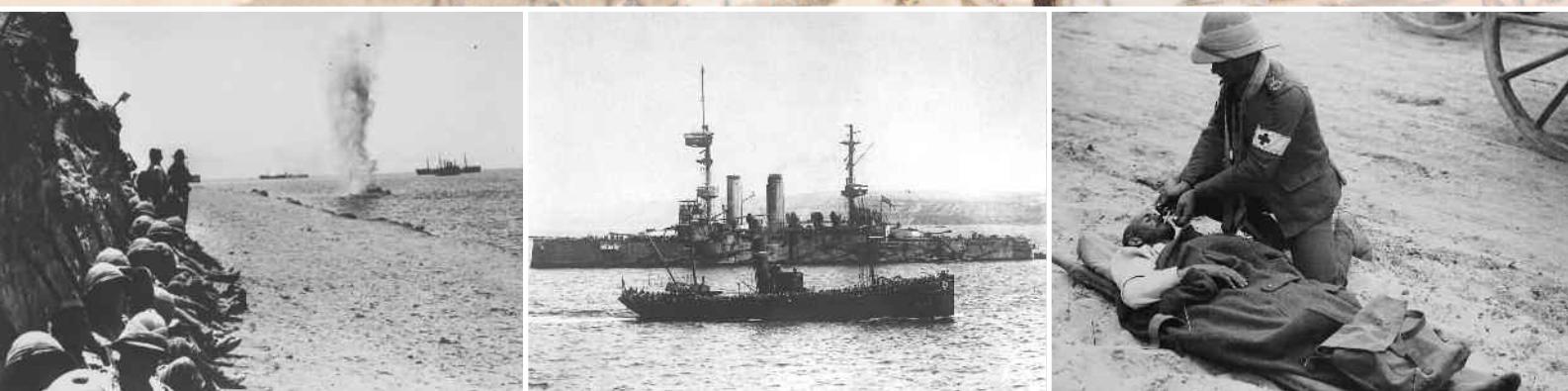
Produced by Wigan Museums & Archives

Issue No. 69

April-July 2015

REMEMBERING GALLIPOLI

£2



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FRONT COVER

Images from the sketchbooks of Lieutenant Commander Sidney Howard Fish of the Hood Battalion and the Wigan Military Chronicle.

Letter from the Editorial Team

Welcome to PAST Forward Issue 69.

You will find in this edition the joint second placed articles – by Thomas McGrath and Alf Ridyard – from the Past Forward Essay Competition, kindly sponsored by Mr and Mrs John O'Neill and the Wigan Borough Environment and Heritage Network. The 2015 Competition is now open (see opposite page for information), so please get in touch if you would like more details or to submit an entry.

Elsewhere in the magazine you will find the concluding part of a history of Gullick Dobson in Wigan, a look through the family tree of highwayman, George Lyon and our commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the Gallipoli landings in 1915.

We're pleased to announce that audio versions of Past Forward will again be available by subscription. Working with Wigan Talking News we hope to launch this service in the coming months. Please contact us for more details.

There is much to look forward to at the Museums and Archives in the coming months, including two new temporary exhibitions at the Museum – A Potter's Tale and our Ancient Egypt Exhibition – the re-launch of our online photographic gallery with new First World War resources and a major new cataloguing project at the Archives funded by the Wellcome Trust.

As ever, if you have any ideas about our services, would like to get involved, or have been spring cleaning the loft and found a box of priceless Wigan Borough records and artefacts... we will always be pleased to hear from you.

Special Past Forward Women's History Edition

We are also looking for contributions – for the December issue this year – to mark International Women's Day 2016. Issue 71 of Past Forward will be a special edition themed around women's history. Articles should as usual concern individuals, groups or topics specific to the Wigan Borough, but might take as a theme the growth of women's rights in the Borough, prominent historical figures, women's employment or the effect that events in the past have had on women locally.

If you would like more details about the edition or would like to write an article but are uncertain what to write about or where to start your research, please get in touch at pastforward@wigan.gov.uk and we will be happy to offer advice.

Information for contributors, please see page 17

Write 1000 words - Win £100!

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?

Local History Writing Competition

1st Prize - £100

2nd Prize - £75

3rd Prize - £50

Five Runners-Up Prizes of £25

The Essay Writing Competition is kindly sponsored by Mr and Mrs J. O'Neill.



Winners of the 2014 Wigan Borough Environment & Heritage Network, Essay Competition, pictured with the Prize Committee.

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 and other submissions may also be published.

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 Thursday 1 October 2015.
- 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@wigan.gov.uk

OR

Local History Writing Competition,
Past Forward, Museum of Wigan Life,
Library Street, Wigan WN1 1NU

PAST FORWARD Subscription Form

Copy Deadline for Issue 70

Contributors please note the deadline for the receipt of material for publication is Wednesday, 1 July 2015.

Past Forward Subscription

Magazine subscription is £9 for three issues (incl. UK delivery).

Payment by cheque (payable to Wigan Council), postal order or credit/debit card (telephone 01942 828128).

For worldwide subscription prices and information, please contact us.

Digital subscription (delivered by email, worldwide) is £6 per year. Payment options as above.

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Please tick here if you would like to receive information regarding Wigan Museums & Archives 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

'LOVE LAUGHS AT LOCKSMITHS'

The extraordinary story of forbidden romance in a small Lancashire village that took the nation by storm

BY THOMAS McGRATH

Damhouse, or Astley Hall, as it was known during the nineteenth century, has been a focal point in the village of Astley for generations. The lives of the various families who have resided there have always proved to be of interest to the people of the township and sometimes a source of gossip or scandal.

In the 1840s, Captain John Adam Durie, his wife Sarah Froggatt – a descendent of the Mort family who built Damhouse – and their children lived there. Later, history well remembers Katherine, whose bankrupt family were forced to sell the estate in the 1880s. However the scandal shrouding her sister, Elizabeth seems to have been forgotten; this is her story.

In the mid-1840s, Dr Joseph Seed obtained a licence to open his residence, Burgh Hall, outside of Chorley, as a private mental asylum. The first and only patient to be committed was Elizabeth Durie. In 1847, two of the country's leading officials had declared her of unsound mind and unable to look after her own property, falsely reported in the press at the time as worth £3000 a year. Elizabeth was in her early twenties and her life previously had been typical of the aristocracy.

She was born in Bandrum House near Slaine, Fifeshire on 23 March 1824 and had been privately educated in Chester.

Her time at the asylum passed without incident until November 1848, when Elizabeth escaped with her secret love, Ellis Norris. Ellis worked as a groom for S. Potter of Bickacre who was a frequent visitor to Burgh Hall. After being rejected by Dr Seed's cook, Ellis transferred his affections to Elizabeth and for around a year prior to their escape he would climb up to her window on a ladder which he would later hide down a disused coal pit.

The couple escaped on the night of Friday 17 November, Elizabeth throwing her bonnet out of the window before climbing down to Ellis who was waiting for her with a cloak and shawl. They walked to Yarrow Bridge together; Elizabeth was said to have asked whether Ellis, 'intended to make a fool of me, or to marry me?' He replied, 'to marry you, most certainly, as I would play the fool to no lady'. He had already secured a licence for marriage six weeks before the planned escape. He offered her his arm, which she refused saying, 'no, you shall not run away with me, but I will run away with you'.

The eloping couple secured transport thanks to a friend of Ellis'. They travelled to the Boar's Head near Wigan but decided to walk through the toll gate to avoid detection. On reaching Wigan they loaned a chaise and horse from the Victoria Hotel, under the pretence their vehicle had broken down. They then travelled to Warrington and onto Chester. They married on Sunday at St. Oswald's Church, the couple both claiming their residence as Liverpool.

Their time together was limited. On the next day, Monday morning, Sergeant Heatherington arrested them at their lodgings. The couple were taken back to Chorley, Elizabeth being sent back to the asylum. Ellis was released to find crowds of people cheering him. He gallantly vowed to get his wife back and his brother claimed he would rather part with every cow in his possession than see Ellis fail.

Ellis Norris was involved in a costly court case against Dr Seed over the custody of Elizabeth, eventually being imprisoned in Lancaster Castle in 1849 for four months due to debt. The taboo nature of the couple's romance along with their different positions in society and Elizabeth's supposed mental illness caused a

sensation on a national scale. The story of their escape and elopement can be found reported in newspapers across the country from the Glasgow Herald to the Berkshire Chronicle which reported, 'Love laughs at locksmiths', the press sympathising with the couple.

The seemingly doomed romance does not end there. In October 1849, Elizabeth made it into the national press again, when she re-escaped from Burgh Hall! Whilst the Seed family attended church one Sunday evening, Elizabeth was able to remove part of the window frame and also the iron bars erected outside her window to prevent her leaving the asylum. She then dropped some sixteen feet to the ground and without bonnet or shoes escaped detection and fled to Yorkshire.

The police immediately searched every house in the neighbourhood, including Ellis Norris' rooms. He knew nothing of his wife's escape having believed she drowned. A reward of £10 was issued, and police branches in Manchester and

Liverpool were contacted by telegraph but to no avail. It is not known how Elizabeth managed to escape or who her accomplice was. However on 29 October 1849 at Pennistone, Yorkshire, Elizabeth and Ellis married for a second time.

The Ecclesiastical Court at York could not deny the second marriage, despite Elizabeth's mother declaring the marriage void based on her daughter's insanity. The court discovered that a stranger, not a family member, signed Elizabeth's entrance papers at Burgh Hall Asylum. Furthermore as she had not been appointed a guardian in her father's will or by the Court of Chancery and as she was over the age of 21, her marriage to Ellis Norris was accepted and Elizabeth finally escaped the imprisonment of the asylum where she clearly did not belong.

The 1851 census reveals they and their baby son living in Coppull as lodgers in the house of a wheelwright, poor but seemingly happy. Unfortunately their first child died in infancy but they went

on to have three more children. Sadly Elizabeth died shortly after the birth of her last child in January 1857 aged 32 years. Her obituary was published across the country; it noted she had fulfilled her duties as a wife and mother, 'in an exemplary manner'. Ellis died later in 1872, leaving their younger children to be raised by their paternal grandparents in Coppull. Elizabeth and Ellis were a couple who were clearly very much in love with each other, defying almost every social convention at the time to enjoy their short few years together.

Sources:

- Berkshire Chronicle* – 2.12.1848
(page unknown)
Glasgow Herald – 4.12.1848
(page unknown)
Preston Chronicle – 5.4.1849
(page 7)
Preston Chronicle – 6.10.1849
(page 5)
Morning Post – 9.10.1849
(page 7)
Morning Post – 15.11.1849
(page unknown)
Liverpool Daily Post – 11.2.1857
(page 3)
Census information & biographical dates – www.ancestry.co.uk

Damhouse today (author's own image)



Leigh Shamrocks R.F.C. 1889

BY ALF RIDYARD

As we all know, Leigh is well associated with Rugby League, as is Wigan and the surrounding areas. The Leigh senior club was one of the teams to break away from the Rugby Union in 1895. They, along with the other break away teams, became more prominent in the local Press. However, the town had two other teams playing the same game but without receiving 'the broken time payments'; Westleigh was one and the other was Leigh Shamrocks. At the time there was very little difference in the standards of play and for a year or so fixtures were still arranged by the clubs themselves.

We go back to 1889 and the formation of Leigh Shamrocks when the club took over the Bucks Farm Ground vacated by the Leigh club. The club were based at the Bridge Inn public house, on the downward slope of the Leigh Canal Bridge where the landlady, Mrs Tobin, was the team sponsor and provider of after match refreshments. As the name would imply the team was made up mainly of Irishmen who had fled Ireland due to the potato famine. The catchment area for players would also support this theory – Navigation Street, affectionately known as flying poker street, Dukinfield Street, near the Leigh railway station and

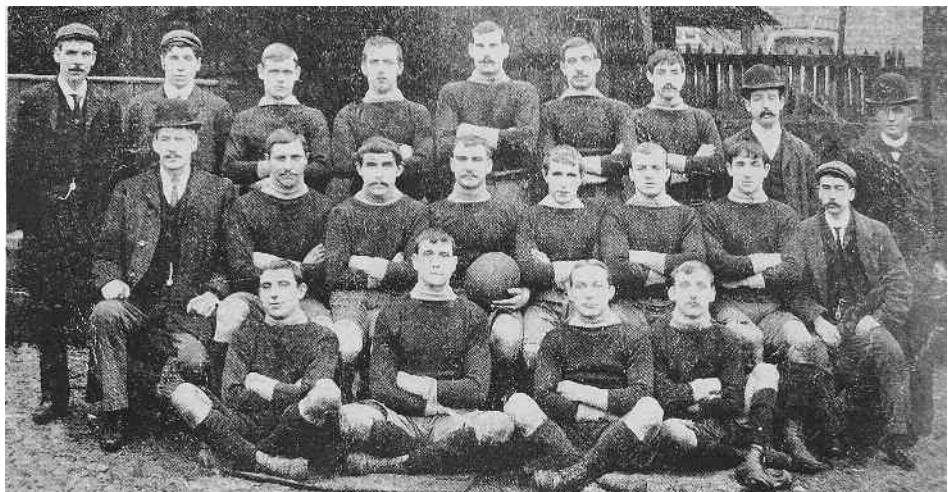
St Helens Road, around the bottom of Leigh Bridge, all had large Irish communities.

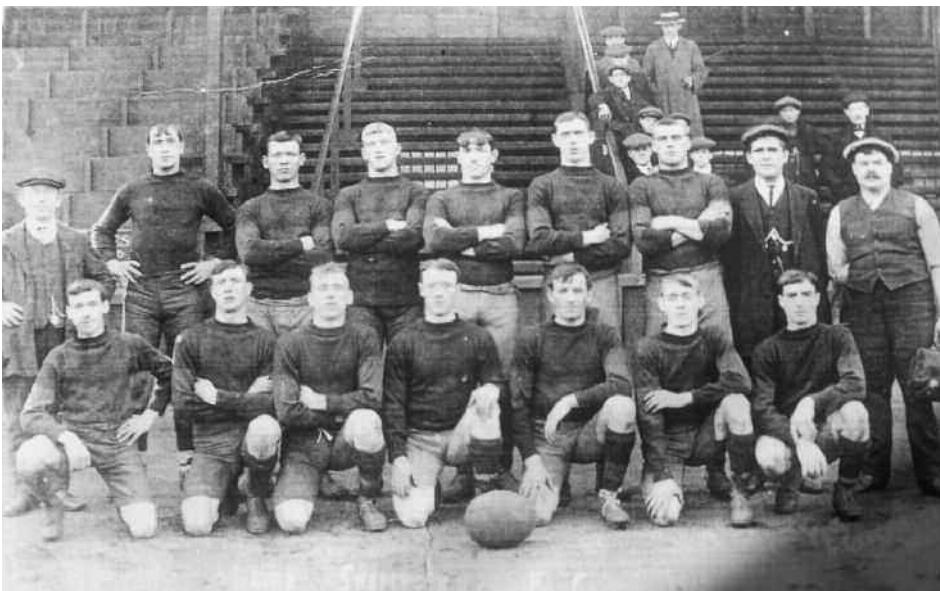
For several seasons the team drifted round the local area arranging fixtures with teams of a similar ability as no league structure was in evidence at this time. The game was of course still Rugby Union; even after the break away in 1895 the game did not change much until 1905-1906 when two players were dropped from the original 15-man side. The Rocks, or the Irishmen, as they were affectionately known, did not embrace the Northern Union until 1897, a strange decision at the time as they had just secured runners-up spot in the league, beating Flixton 3-0 and were due to play in the semi final of the Lancashire R.U. Junior Cup.

This of course would not now take place. After flirting with the Wigan League in 1906, with teams such as Highfield, Silverwell, Ince, Upholland and Platt Bridge, along with Leigh Rangers, Plank Lane and Westleigh, The Rocks moved to the Manchester League. One reason for this was the disbandment of Westleigh whose ground was in the Barracks area of Westleigh, behind the Boston public house. The land was up for development and Boston Grove now stands on this site. Another reason was the Leigh Rangers team going in the same league; again it brought little success in the likes of silverware but they were still a competitive side with aspirations of better things.

The season 1907-1908 saw them step up to the Lancashire

Leigh Shamrocks R.F.C., 1908-1909





Leigh Shamrocks R.F.C., 1911

Combination (A-team League). Once again the team started badly but improved as the season went on. The same could be said for the next two seasons. 1908-1909 would be considered Rocks most successful season when they finished fourth, behind the A-teams of Warrington, Wigan and Oldham. A crowd of 5000 watched the Wigan game at Central Park and 4000 attended the Warrington game at Wilderspool; no evidence of crowds larger than 1000 at Bridgewater Street can be found. The Rocks had now moved from the old Bucks Farm to a site bordered by St Helens Road and Bridgewater Street which in later times became the BICC bowling green and works canteen.

The decline of the team was now beginning to show. Several players had moved on to the Leigh Senior Club, one to Warrington and two to Wigan. Results were poor and the team finished bottom in the two following seasons. By 17 July 1914 the Journal reported that the, 'Leigh Shamrocks team had disbanded'. That is just a brief history of a club who at the outset aimed to challenge the

town's senior club for supremacy but failed to do so.

Can we now just add a few little facts that bring the team alive – more than just statistics. Most away games were reached by train and it wasn't uncommon for the team to start with players missing due to work commitments as Saturday morning was part of the working week. For the first game in 1889 – away at Warrington (Dallam Brewery) – the Rocks kicked off with twelve players, the others following on a later train. Many games had odd kick-off times and teams agreed shorter playing times to accommodate the travelling team's railway connections for the journey home.

We can also look at some of the players who graced the Rocks team. Confirming the Irishness of the side, a typical team around the early 1900s contained two O'Neils, two Ganleys, Riley, Tobin, two McHughs, Griney, Mullery and Paddy Murphy. The Ganley dynasty is among the more notable, with Bert being a member of the all conquering Huddersfield side of 1913 and returning to Leigh to be part of

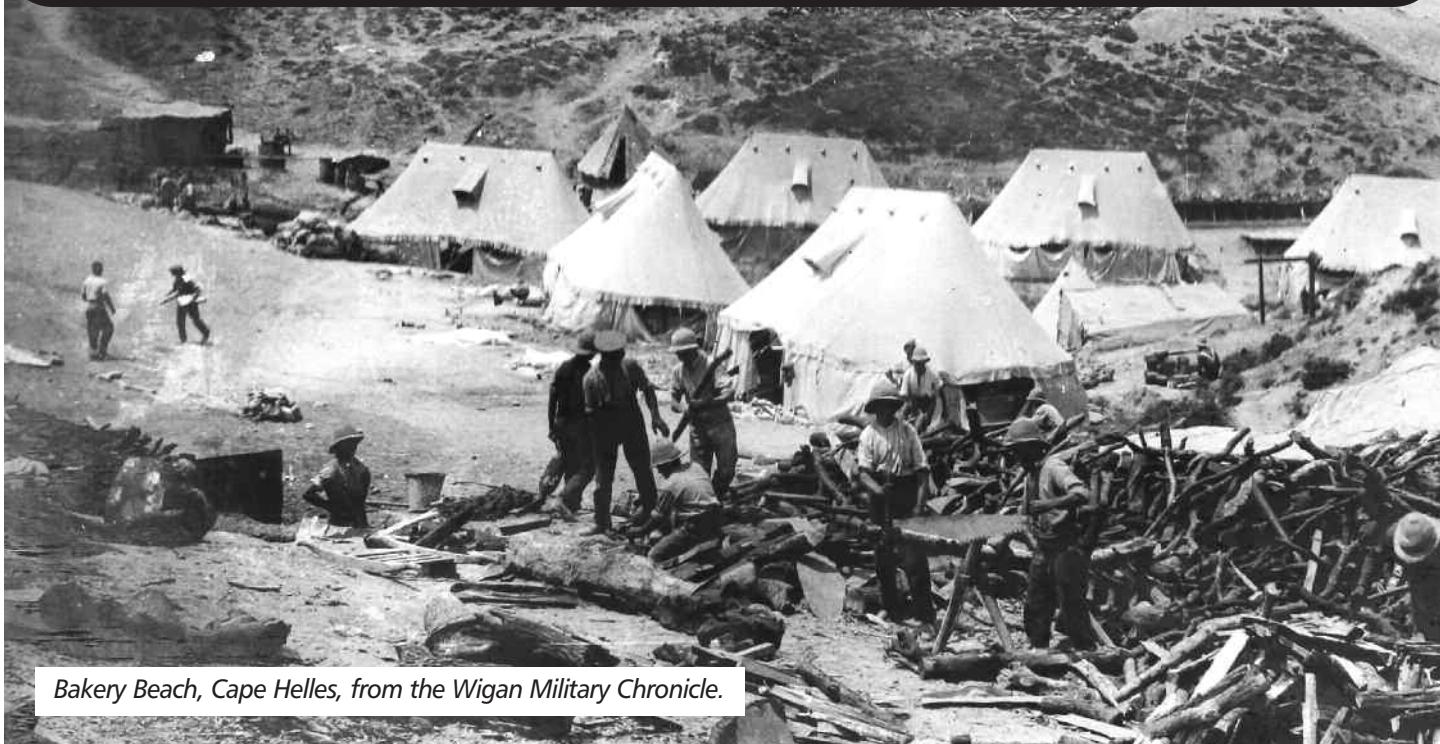
the 1921 cup winning side along with Paddy O'Neil.

Oliver Stirrup was the grandfather of Frank Stirrup, the Oldham hall of fame player and Bernard Ganley is the son of Bert. The O'Neil family tree reaches down and we find Stan Gittins (Batley & Swinton) and brother Tommy (Leigh & Warrington) in the branches. Griney and Riley are names synonymous with the Leigh club but no connection has been made as yet. In all 31 players from the Rocks signed for Leigh, two for Wigan, one for Warrington and one for St Helens. Sam Devereux returned from Saints and after completing the 1909 season back at the Rocks, he emigrated to New Zealand and later became a referee, a career which peaked when he refereed the 1928 test in Dunedin when Great Britain beat New Zealand 15-3. The last of the notables is Joe Cartwright (Leigh, 348 games between 1911 and 1926) who became the only Rocks developed Great Britain tourist in 1920.

The Rocks had many men who served their adopted country over the years. Murray, Lynch, Collins, Coyne, Donnell and Murphy all served in the Boer War. None were killed in this conflict but the First World War was a different story. Two Tobins, Thomas and Patrick were killed, James Tobin wounded and taken prisoner; Bartholomew and Frank Ganley, Ben Lloyd, Joe Peake and Fred Mole were also killed. Three more were wounded, Jas Goulden, John and Peter McHugh. Due to lack of space these notes can only scratch the surface of the Leigh Shamrocks but I hope provide a little insight to the early days of Rugby League in Leigh.

BY HANNAH TURNER

Remembering Local Men at Gallipoli, 1915



Bakery Beach, Cape Helles, from the *Wigan Military Chronicle*.

The Gallipoli campaign in 1915 claimed thousands of Commonwealth and Turkish lives; over 400 of these lives were local men. The campaign lasted for six months and ultimately achieved nothing.

The Campaign

Gallipoli, a peninsula in North Western Turkey, between the Dardanelles and the Gulf of Saros, was positioned at a strategic point. By capturing the peninsula the War Council hoped to shorten the war, divide the Turkish army, bring Constantinople under British control, open trade with Russia and open a passage to the Danube.

Gallipoli Landings

In January 1915, the War Council authorised a naval attack on the Gallipoli Peninsula. However, there was increasing concern that a naval operation should be assisted by troops and on the 25 April troops landed on the peninsula. Many of the landings succeeded in their aims but the Lancashire Fusiliers' landing was violent and bloody. Eight motor launches rode towards W beach but things turned violent as they got close to the shore. Sergeant Barber from Ince said, 'All went well until the boats were 150 yards from land. Then the Turks opened-up a terrific rifle and machine gun fire

and the casualties began to get pretty heavy'. The fusiliers engaged in heavy fighting and by the end of it they had lost nearly 200 men. The regiment was awarded eleven medals including the, 'six V.C.s before breakfast'. Two of these were from the Borough: Corporal John Grimshaw from Abram and Private William Kenealy from Stubshaw Cross.

5th Battalion, The Manchester Regiment

Losses were heavy and reinforcements were in desperate need and so the 5th Battalion of the Manchester Regiment were shipped to Gallipoli in early May.

Previously, the Battalion had been stationed in Egypt. Many of these men had never been abroad before and Bugler Hilton from Atherton recorded his amazement in his diary:

'In Alexandria there are a great many opium smokers and what I call gambling dens. When I saw them on cinematography I could hardly believe there were such places but when seen with the own eyes it makes a man think what there is in the world.'

On the 28 April their departure to Gallipoli was ordered. By the 3 May the regiment was on its way on

board the 'Derflinger'. On embarking the men saw the reality of the horror of Gallipoli.

'The 'Derflinger' had just landed 550 casualties a few hours before she was boarded by the Manchesters, and the gory clothing and stretchers which littered her decks were sufficient evidence to the young and untried troops that the expedition upon which they were about to start was not to be a picnic.'

The men were not made aware of their destination. In a letter to his parents in Tyldesley, Sergeant Jagger wrote: 'I am at present aboard a boat bound for an unknown destination. Of course, we all have our ideas about that, but we are not permitted to disclose them. I am glad, in fact, we all are that our chance has come, at last and probably by the time you receive this I shall have seen something which I have never dreamt of [18] months ago.'

Sergeant Jagger was to be proved right as within a month the Manchesters went over the top for the first time and were met with 'devastating rifle and machine-gun fire'. The fighting went on for most of the day and there were heavy casualties. Private James Aldred, was the first Atherton territorial to lose his life. Private Thomas Wilkinson of Hindsford was wounded during the fighting; he wrote home to his wife telling her the news:

'I daresay you will have seen in the papers what a glorious charge our boys have made. We had to charge the Turks' trenches and take them at all costs, and we responded to the call. We took them with the bayonet and scattered them all over the place.'

The fighting continued until 8 June 1915. Not only had the battalion sustained heavy casualties but they now had no transport as their horses and mules had all been killed.

Summer on the peninsula arrived and the heat was intense. There was no shade and little water. With the heat the men also had to endure the stench of the dead and 'corpse flies' covering their food. With these squalid conditions came sickness and misery. Dysentery took over the regiments and 'men died whilst trying to crawl to the latrines'. It was said that, 'men went into action holding their rifles in one hand and holding up their trousers with the other.'

The only bit of respite seems to have been swimming and 'every day large numbers of naked figures would be seen jumping about in the sea'.

August saw a new offensive carried out on various fronts on the Gallipoli Peninsula. An attack on Helles resulted in yet more casualties and the medical team were confronted with wounded men 'in great long streams'. The British ship the Royal Edward, made its way to the Dardanelles with new troops on board but it was sunk by an enemy submarine in the Aegean Sea. Private Tom Penrose from Leigh who was on board the



*East Lancashire stretcher bearer with a wounded soldier,
Wigan Military Chronicle.*

ship when it was sunk, was in the water for five hours before being picked up with other survivors.

By October 1915, a new hell had taken over the peninsula. Storms wreaked havoc by turning dust into mud. November brought even worst weather; on the 26 November torrential rain poured on the men for twenty-four hours. Soaked to the skin the men were then greeted with blizzards, snow and frost. Some of the men drowned in the downpour whilst others like seventeen year old Moses Yates from Tyldesley died of exposure.

It soon became clear that the campaign was a failure and a lost cause. On the 29 December the Manchesters left Gallipoli.

'The procession was a sorry one; men marched as they had never marched before; not a word from one to another, the laughter and chatter of enthusiastic young men was buried with the remains of their comrades above the Lancashire Landing.'

Of the original battalion only 152 were serving at the time of the evacuation; 151 men had been killed, 57 had been listed as missing and 479 had been wounded.

Bibliography

Bugler J Hilton's Diary, thanks to Kathleen Pendlebury;
Leigh Journal; 'Just Like Hell – Local Men at Gallipoli, 1915'; Fred Holcroft; 'Moses Yates', You Tube interview by Michael Yates; 'Great Gable to Gallipoli: The Diary of Lieutenant Claude S Worthington DSO'; The Wigan Military Chronicle; 'Gallipoli, the end of the myth', Robin Prior.

Please see page 34 for details of our commemorative talk on Gallipoli.

NEWS FROM THE ARCHIVES & LOCAL STUDIES

It has been a busy few months at the Archives & Local Studies, with several new projects and developments within the services – and lots of ways for researchers to get involved with what we do.

Wellcome Trust – Records of the Lancashire & Cheshire Miners' Permanent Relief Society (LCMPS)

We're delighted to announce that we have successfully applied for funding from the international medical sciences and medical humanities charity, the Wellcome Trust, to catalogue the records of the Lancashire & Cheshire Miners' Permanent Relief Society (LCMPS).

The grant of over £35,000 will allow us to professionally catalogue for the first time the records of this hugely important regional organisation and fully document the role it played in local communities. From the 1870s, it provided financial relief for miners and their families in the event of accident, injury or illness. Crucially for researchers now interested in the history of industrial disease, health and mining communities, the records contain thousands of medical case files, studies of individual families, as well as applications to the fund – perhaps most notably following the Maypole and Pretoria Pit Disasters.



We would like to get volunteers involved in the project too, so if you are potentially interested in either some of the detailed indexing work or digitisation of key items, please get in touch with the Archives for more details.

National Manuscript Conservation Trust (NMCT)

We're also in the final stages of a project funded by the National Manuscript Conservation Trust, to conserve key items from the Edward Hall Diary Collection. The NMCT awarded the Archives a little over £4000 to allow for the professional conservation of Nurse Scholes' First World War diary, the journals of Ellen Weeton of Upholland and the diaries of Corporal Todd, written during the Seven Years War. This is vital work that the Archives would not usually be able to fund so the grant will make an enormous difference to our ability to repair and conserve these vital records. As you can see from the image of Archives+ Conservator, Nic Rayner, in his studio at Manchester, this is delicate work!

Leigh Prisoner of War Camp Consultation

January 2015 marked the centenary of the first group of German Prisoners to arrive at the Leigh POW Camp. The camp, originally built for the Lilford Weaving Company Limited, was close to both Etherstone and Lilford Street. It caused great interest in Leigh and crowds of local people lined the streets to witness the arrival of the POWs.

To commemorate the camp, POWs and the guards and staff who worked there, it is proposed that a memorial is erected on or close to the site of the camp. One proposal for the memorial is that a piece of art is created by a local artist and Leigh schoolchildren so that younger generations engage with their heritage and create a legacy for the future.

We're keen to gather feedback from local people about why they believe the camp to be historically important and how it should be remembered. If you have any ideas or would like to get involved in the project, please contact Hannah Turner at Leigh Local Studies.

Borough Photographic Collection

...and finally. Anyone familiar with the Borough Photographic Collection held by the Archives – the green folders in Local Studies, or the photograph drawers at the Archives – will know that thanks to the generosity of hundreds of local people in donating or lending images to us, and the hard work of former Archive Conservator, Len Hudson, we hold a huge number of photographs of the Borough. At our last estimate, the total stands at well 150,000 images, in a variety of formats – from glass plate negatives to smart-phone jpegs.

The volunteers at the Archives & Local Studies have decided to take on the challenge of the photographic collection as their next big project. They will over the course of the next few months be starting to catalogue, index and digitise every image in the photographic collection – once digitised they will all be loaded up to the Archive image website. As there are only so many volunteering hours in the day though, we'd be delighted to hear from anyone new who is interested in taking part in the project.

Recent Acquisitions & Accessions

Wigan Archives

- Tyldesley and District Historical Society, records (Acc. 2015/1)
- Wigan and District Music Festival Society, records (Acc. 2015/13)
- Tyldesley Pentecostal Church, marriage registers, 1984-1998 (Acc. 2015/17)
- Alan Roby Collection, records concerning Orrell, Upholland and Wigan (Acc. 2015/10)
- Sketch books of Lieutenant Commander Sidney Howard Fish, The Hood Battalion, 1908-1917 (Acc. 2015/9)
- Personal papers of Ellis Knowles, including Knowles family correspondence during the Second World War/RAF, 1920-1960 (D/DZA/427)
- Golborne Congregational Chapel, registers of marriages, 1910-1955 (Acc. 2014/87)
- South Lancashire Transport and Lancashire United Transport, additional records (D/DY/LUT)

Wigan Local Studies

Local Studies Volunteer, Vic Rawlinson, has compiled two very useful indexes of newspaper reports, books, magazine articles and photographs from our various catalogues; they cover two of our most frequently asked for subjects:

- Empress Hall – Wigan Casino Includes everything from the first entry from April 1915 – a newspaper report concerning the proposed Empress Hall – to the fire at the Casino in 1982. Shelf Mark 942.736.
- Billinge Hospital – The diverse range of subjects includes: February 1901, the Wigan Observer reported that a new Workhouse was to be built; other articles of interest cover Billinge being used as a Military Hospital during the First World War; the trial of a private maternity scheme, 1931; the opening of the nurses' home, 1933; the opening of the psychiatric unit; through to the approval for demolition in 2006. Shelf Mark 362.11.

New resources on our website include a database of First and Second World War casualties (including civilians) buried or with memorials at Hindley, Ince and Wigan Cemeteries. This has been collated by Local Studies Volunteer, Sue Boon.

For the Wolf Hall fans...
Cardinal Wolsey as drawn by
S. H. Fish, 1908.



By Gerald Marsden

Genealogical Experience



The marriage of James Henry Marsden and Sarah Ellen Waterworth, at Wigan St. Thomas, 30 July 1898.

About twenty years ago my cousin, Len Marsden, a founder member of Wigan Family History Society, gave me a copy of our Marsden Family Tree and said it was incomplete. This got me interested in genealogy and I started to visit Wigan Local Studies at the Museum of Wigan Life.

At first I looked for the records of four families and started having restless nights. This made me decide to concentrate on one surname at a time and go back through the years until it wasn't possible to go any further. For anyone new to family history research, I advise searching one surname at a time.

At this time research had to be done using microfilm and microfiche readers even if some of them had been transcribed. It is always better to check the original records as errors can occur

in transcribing. I met with other researchers at the Local Studies and joined the Friends Group. Having researched the families of my wife and myself without branching out I started as a volunteer, which I am still doing today. This involves helping with Family History Workshops for people just starting or having problems with their research.

A Few Tips

Volunteering at Local Studies twice a week, I see people sitting at computers accepting information they find, never bothering to check the original records, which can involve travelling to Archives in other parts of the UK. The danger of not checking original records is that mistakes can be made and perpetuated.

I recommend noting ages, addresses and occupations including the siblings in a family.

Remember that children were often born and died between census dates.

A few examples from my research:

My son-in-law asked me to try to find out the link between his mother and a public house overlooking the River Dee, near Holywell in North Wales. The starting point given to me was his mother's maiden name, his great-grandfather's name and a story that the family went on holidays to the pub. The pub's name was the 'Glan-yr-Afon'.



Glan-yr-Afon Inn, Holywell

Starting with the mother's family it was found that she lived in a pub in Little Lane, Pemberton, and her mother's maiden name was Hughes. This was the surname of great-grandfather Charles from Holywell. We visited Flintshire Record Office three times to check original records, even though the information was available on the internet. Records for the 'Glen-yr-Afon' confirmed that the wife of Charles was the niece of the publican. This is how the link was proved.

One child of Charles was 'Owd Tom' who had a cycle shop in Wallgate and was the founder of the, 'Autumn Tints' cycling club in Wigan.

A second example comes in searching my mother's family. It was found that her great uncle lived in Ashton-in-Makerfield and was married at Winwick, St. Oswald to a woman named Mary. However, it wasn't possible to

determine her maiden name as two men with the same name each married a Mary in the same year. All was not lost. When the 1841 census was studied it was found that the family had moved to Wallgate and showed four children. The baptisms for three of the children were found at Wigan Parish Church, but not for the eldest. So it was back to Winwick where a baptism was found for a child that matched the Christian name recorded in the census and also had the same surname of one of the Marys. The date of birth given for this child is shown as being before the date of the marriage so it enabled the correct marriage to be identified.

A final example comes from someone searching details of a relationship between one family with two names - Winstanley and Wilkinson. The following details were found.

Timothy Winstanley married Mary Lowe in 1860 at St. Catherine's Church.

In the 1861 census, Timothy and Mary were living with Mary's father, a widower, still using the name Winstanley.

The 1871 census records Timothy, Mary and their children used the surname Wilkinson and Mary's father was living with them.

The 1881 and 1891 census record shows the family still using the Wilkinson surname. In the 1901 census Timothy is not shown and Mary is living with her married daughter Ellen and her husband but is shown as using the name Winstanley. Ellen Wilkinson married James Norman 1889 at St. Marys, Ince.

So the Winstanley family changed to Wilkinson and then back to Winstanley!

I hope to have shown that family history research is not always straightforward. It can be time consuming and need a lot of thought to find a solution, but it is always fascinating to see what you find and definitely worthwhile!

Half-Timers: Children caught between two worlds

By Yvonne Eckersley

The 1844 Factory Act, by stipulating that children working in textile factories were to attend school half time, created a new category of worker, the Half-Timer.

Traditionally, children of poor and middling families had always worked to contribute to their family's income. Children supplied practical, supportive labour on farms, in workshops, mills, collieries and in their homes – where skill levels were relatively low. These mainly uneducated children provided a vital service in the labour intensive, economic structures of the day. However, by the mid-nineteenth century the unsatisfactory nature of children's unregulated labour and the need for a more literate workforce motivated governments to introduce increasing, and more prescriptive, control over children's lives.

The 1876 and 1880 Education Acts were pivotal; they made school attendance compulsory, though not free, for all children between the ages of five and ten. Importantly, these Acts required local authorities to draft byelaws and construct a bureaucratic framework to enforce them. For the majority of children this was immediately beneficial. It ensured they had a basic education and delayed their entry into the world of work. For a sizable minority, however, their lives became more difficult.

Legal Requirements

To be eligible for work, all children needed a Labour Certificate, issued by Factory Inspectors appointed under the Factory and Workshop Acts. To acquire

a certificate, age had to be proved by a Registrar's certificate, school attendance verified by School-held Child Record Books and educational standards authenticated by frequently held, centrally located, multi-school examinations, labelled 'Labour Examinations', supervised by HM Inspectors of Education. For children destined to be half-timers, 'partial exemption certificates' were issued.

To qualify for a Partial Exemption Certificate potential half-timers needed to have reached educational Standard 2 (as against Standard 4/5 and above for full time pupils). Standard 2 was not high; it required children to be able to 'Read one of the narratives, next in order after monosyllables, in an elementary reading book used in schools', to be able to 'Copy, in manuscript character, a line of print' and to solve 'A sum in simple addition or subtraction and the multiplication tables'. They had to have had 350 attendances per year from age 5 and were expected to work towards achieving higher standards by attending school 150 times per year once working. Finally, they needed to have attained the required minimum age.

School

For half-timers the quality of teaching and learning was hit and miss. The School curriculum was based on pupils attending full time, despite half-timers often forming a third to a half of school certificate classes. Class sizes hovered around 50; most lessons were taught to the whole class and much teaching was done by pupil teachers of a similar age

and whose own education left a lot to be desired. Half-timers attended on a rota system – mornings or afternoons – on alternate weeks. To fill in the gaps, 'Home Lessons', for which specific books were bought from schools, were set and children punished if the work was not satisfactorily done. These were no substitute for face-to-face teaching and consequently half-timers fell behind their full time peers. This reduced the quality of teaching further. Nineteenth century Log Books of Bedford Church of England and Howe Bridge Schools attest to the disruptive nature of the presence and poor behaviour of disaffected half-timers.

Work

.....Although legally the maximum hours a half timer could work was 27½, with the earliest official starting time 6am and the latest finishing time 6pm, children's working days could be extended. Some mill managers insisted that, as a condition of employment half timers attended the school nearest to their mill. Leigh's Pennington and Lancashire Mills were guilty of this. This was fine if children lived close to the mill. For some the distance to walk (or run), between mill, home and school would simply be too far to go home for lunch. Considering that children were allowed just half an hour once per shift to eat breakfast or tea one wonders how many spent their days in hunger.

It was also the norm for children to work out of school hours. The Employment of Children Act of 1903 reduced Sunday working to 2 hours. This Act reduced the age to 12 years for



Mill workers at Butts Mill, Leigh, in the spinning room, c. 1920.

children working as street traders and restricted the working hours of children earning money by singing, playing, performing or 'being exhibited for profit'. It is possible that half-timers also worked extra hours running errands, selling newspapers, as domestic help and baby minders where the framework for monitoring their conditions was either non-existent or looser. Children could also work during school holidays; they could be exempted from school for short periods during harvest time or as mothers' helps in times of need.

Change

The task of changing the attitudes and practices of parents and employers was a difficult one. Despite the publication of byelaws in local newspapers, posters being pinned to church doors and leaflets sent to employers in response to each Act, many employers – Diggles Pit, Whitley and Ackers Colliery, Abram Coal, Wigan Iron and Coal, Jones Brothers at Bedford New Mills, the Post Office, various farmers and Leigh Chronicle – needed repeated warnings against employing half-time children full time. It is important to note here that none of these companies could have illegally employed children without the collusion of parents.

Changing parental attitudes was difficult. Parents employing girls with partial exemption in order to help at home – The Fabian Society's, 'pitiful little drudges' – continually sidestepped bye-laws and simply did not send their daughters to school once partially exempted.

The 1918 Education Act removed partial exemption by raising the school leaving age for all children to 14. Implementation was delayed until 1921 as a result of agitation by powerful Lancashire and Yorkshire textile industrialists whose main argument was their need for cheap child labour to remain competitive. At the same time some textile unions and parents of half-timers objected for fear of losing income.

Interestingly, the number of half-timers in an almost constant population had more than doubled from 1911 to 1921.

The war years' figures are readily understandable. What is not immediately obvious is why the proportion of children working as half-timers rose to 20% in 1921. One can rule out the creation of new jobs; whilst there were a number of new mills built at that time, not all half-timers worked in the mills.

Similarly one can rule out an increased number of children of the right age as by 1911 Leigh's birth rate was falling. A simple explanation could be that as children under-14 already employed in 1921 would be allowed to continue to work, more children were put forward for partial exemption and employers hired them.

Sources:

*School Attendance Officers,
Minute Books
Leigh Council, Minute Books*

Year	1911	1912	1913	1914	1915	1916	1921
Number Employed	272	282	312	488	581	540	716
Population (Leigh)	44,103	44,600	45,000 (est.)	45,000 (est.)	46,200	44,014	45,535

COLLECTIONS CORNER

A Potter's Tale

by Lynda Jackson

'It's really mind blowing, 'cos it's such a great experience to be this young and doing this', said Bob. The young people involved in developing a special exhibition at the

Museum of Wigan Life

have enjoyed getting a real taste of the practical skills needed in Museum work.

The project has also been great fun and a learning curve for Museum staff who have worked with the group of teenagers, including some with special educational needs. Over the last 6 months, children aged eleven to fourteen years old from Wigan Youth Zone have been working with Museum staff to learn about historic local crafts such as pewter-ware, clock making, bell founding, silk manufacture and cannel coal sculpture. These sessions culminate in the 'Potter's Tale' exhibition at the Museum (2 April - 4 July 2015) where a huge selection of previously unseen Museum objects will be on display for the first time.

In after hours sessions at the Museum the teenagers have been able to carefully handle original objects, from 2000 year old Roman pottery to seventeenth century pewter plates. They have worked with exhibition designer, Kev Lloyd, to see how exhibition graphics are created. A special visit to the Museum of Lancashire and the Harris Gallery in Preston also encouraged everyone to think about exhibition design and how to tell a story through objects.

On these trips I and other museum staff were amazed how much some of the teenagers knew about British history, from the Stone Age through to the twentieth century.

All these experiences were used as inspiration for a series of pots made and decorated by the young people under the guidance of local ceramist, Lizzy Griffiths. Lizzy also led conversations about what the teenagers were most proud of in their Borough, everything from their school, local swimming pool and friends to Rugby League, football and even... pies. These pots will be displayed alongside the Museum's objects when the exhibition opens in April.



We hope that visitors of all ages - like Bob - have a great time too.

The exhibition and project are funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund.

Supported by
 **The National Lottery®**
through the Heritage Lottery Fund



Coming Soon: Look out for our summer 'Ancient Egypt' exhibition opening in July where the famous gold mask and lots more will be on display for the first time in over 40 years.

The Natural World

Lauren Field, Museum Documentation Assistant

The Museum of Wigan Life is home to a relatively small but remarkable Natural History Collection that includes local botanical specimens, entomology, a large collection of moths and butterflies, amphibians, teeth and tusks from elephants and hippos, the bones of a baboon and mounted birds – just to name a few! Specimens of marine wildlife include a turtle, various puffer fish and porcupine fish, and the jaws of a shark – bringing the oceans to Wigan!



Butterflies, including various species of the Papilionidae family

Natural History displays are always popular with museum visitors as they provide an insight into the natural world all around us. Natural History in museums is not just looking at animals behind glass; collections can often be the holders of hidden information. With the threat of extinction for some animals, the preservation of species is becoming urgent. Original objects can allow researchers to access DNA and reveal new insights into the natural world and animal behaviour. In palaeontology, looking at trace fossils showing footprints can suggest the behaviour of dinosaurs. For example, quadruped herbivores often moved in herds; small footprints found on the inside of herd trace fossils suggest that

the adults would surround their young as they moved to protect them from predators. This information could not be derived from a single dinosaur fossil.

Historic ecosystems can also be investigated using museum collections. The Museum of Wigan Life currently houses an estimated 450 to 500 marine fossils, including shells. Oxygen-18 can be found in the calcitic material of these fossils, helping to indicate past temperatures. Higher levels of Oxygen-18 indicate a warmer temperature; lower levels indicate lower temperatures. This information allows researchers to accurately chart Ice Age activity.

Similar case studies can be found in other fields of natural science. Environmental health issues can be explored by looking at chemical levels within feathers on bird skins and identifying human influence on populations or urbanisation on migration patterns. Similar research can be conducted through the use of pesticides in botanical specimens and geological specimens in forensic science.

Natural History Collections can be beneficial to contemporary science but only if understood and interpreted in a way that then allows them to be engaging and accessible to the public. The Museum of Wigan Life team are currently working to improve access to this fabulous collection.



Tawny Owl stuffed by H. Wood, Wigan.

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
- 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:

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The Editor at **PAST FORWARD**,
Museum of Wigan Life, Library Street,
Wigan WN1 1NU.

BY KEN TAYLOR

The Lancashire Collier Girl

PART ONE

The 'Lancashire Collier Girl, A True Story', published in 1795, was one of over a hundred, 'Cheap Repository Tracts' issued between 1795 and 1798 under the guidance of Hannah More. They were part of a 'Plan to promote good morals among the Poor.' They were in small pamphlet format, printed locally with crude woodprint illustrations and sold for 1d or 1/2d with discounts to employers buying large numbers to give away to employees expected to read them to their families. 'The Lancashire Collier Girl' is particularly well known, being one of very few accounts showing colliers not to be wild, godless and drunken savages.

The story is taken (though unacknowledged) from an article under the same title also published in 1795 in 'The Gentleman's Magazine', by 'the Rambler'. Visiting 'Benevolus of Hospitality Hall', he was told about one of the servants, met her and felt her story worthy of a wider audience. He later identified her as Betty Hodson of Upholland and Benevolus as William Bankes of Winstanley Hall. The 'Rambler' was Joseph Budworth, well known as one of the first to recommend walking in the Lake District.

His account centres on Betty, one of six children (Hannah More names her Mary) who was eleven when her father was killed in a mining accident. Her mother becomes deranged and is taken into the Workhouse with the two youngest children. The two older boys are apprenticed by the parish. Her elder sister, Jane, who had, 'helped in the

home and with a few cows and spinning in her spare time', marries. Old enough to earn a shilling a day as a drawer in a mine Betty is capable of looking after herself. First earning 1/- a day, when at 'full strength' she earned 2/-. Budworth comments that the mining community, 'a rough but invaluable race of men...[known]...for their honesty, bravery and hardyhood -- lent a hand to lessen her fatigue.' After five years, aged sixteen and often working double shifts (some sixteen hours) she had saved enough money to bring her mother out of the Workhouse. She then brought home a brother so that he could die there and did the same for another brother the same year. Hannah More adds, 'without ever applying to the Parish for one farthing.'

When her mother died 'without knowing the child that nurtured her', Betty was twenty one. 'Sick and worn down', she was no longer employable in the mine. Applying for a job as an under-servant it was initially considered 'not proper to admit her into a private family.' However she caught the attention of Benevolus (William Bankes of Winstanley Hall), who 'having taken enquiries about her character', employed her as an 'under Kook'.

Budworth's account would have been read by only a few, Hannah More's by thousands, but Budworth was unhappy at some of the changes. 'Over-tinctured with too much religion', he commented in a version which he published himself in 1797. He was impressed by Betty

herself and did not want her to be simply a figure in a moral tale. In December 1798 he wrote a follow-up article in 'The Gentleman's'.

Attempting her Wigan accent he describes Betty persuading her only surviving brother to help to fight Napoleon as his duty, and (with a more realistic note) because, 'tha know, lad, work's neaw a das is skearse'. And she was clearly prepared to do battle herself: 'When th'French doa cum, if weemen ma feight, I'll feight as ard as I con'. He added a postscript: Betty had been promoted to cook!

The Parish Registers of Upholland confirm the details of the burials of the father, John, in 1777, the two boys in 1782, and in 1788 of 'Esther Hodson, Up Holland, widow, pauper'. In December 1760 at Wigan is the marriage: John Hodson, Upholland, & Esther Meakinson, Pemberton. Their eldest child, Jane, was baptised at Upholland in 1761 and in 1764 Betty was baptised at Wigan. Other baptisms were at Upholland. In 1781 at Wigan, a Jane Hodson married James Pennington, both of Upholland (and we know that a Thomas Pennington was later given power of administering the estate of his aunt, Betty Hodson).

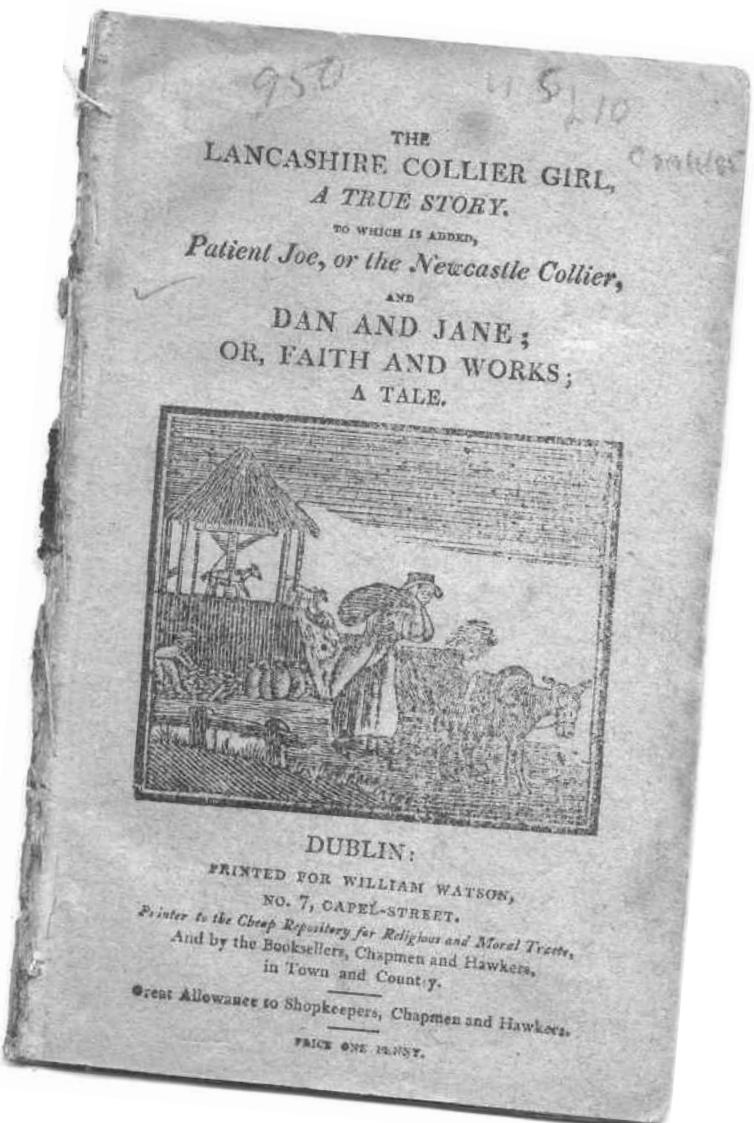
Records at Winstanley Hall show a Betty Hodson employed in 1788 as an 'Under-Kook' at 4 guineas a year and in 1798 promoted to full cook, receiving 12 guineas a year. In 1800 she received £50 from William Bankes's will, as did several of the other servants.

Inevitably, perhaps, there are some puzzling issues. Budworth describes their 'little farm' which suggests a settled residence yet the father is described sometimes as of Orrell, of Pemberton as well as of Upholland. And what happened to Betty? The Winstanley Hall, 'Servants' Wages' ledgers cease in 1800 and we lose sight of her. Hodson is a common name and she is not the only Betty! One entry stands out: All Saints, Wigan, Burials, October 2, 1807, 'Betty Hodson, Up Holland, spinster'. As mentioned earlier a Thomas Pennington was granted letters of administration for his aunt, Betty Hodson. Betty's older sister, Jane, had married a Pennington.

I feel certain that Thomas Pennington's aunt was our Betty Hodson and that Betty died in 1807. She would have been 46. I wonder if she knew of her 'fame'. I hope someone tracing their family history can make a link. I would be delighted to know.

We have here a rare account of what must have been far from a rare situation in Upholland: mother and a daughter looking after the home, their smallholding, the babies and toddlers and in their spare time spinning, probably for a neighbouring weaver; the father, a collier, helped by two of his children; the catastrophic impact of his death, the breakdown of his wife, her inability to cope and the consequent dispersal of the children. Yet through this we see resilience, the attempts at help from colleagues and neighbours and a stroke of fortune, at least for a while.

The second part of Ken Taylor's examination of 'The Lancashire Collier Girl' will be published in the next edition of Past Forward



Gullick Dobson

A major Wigan Enterprise buffeted by the decline of the British Coal industry.

by Alan Kaye

Alan Kaye continues his exploration of the history of one of the most important mining businesses in the Wigan area

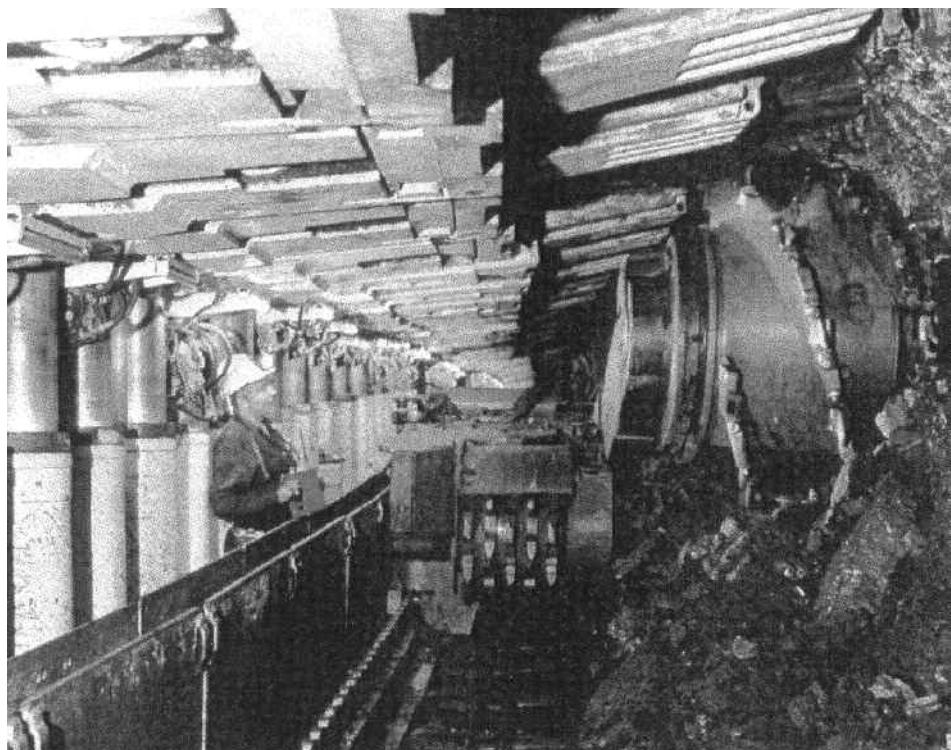
The Changing Climate of the 1960s

By the end of the 1960s the NCB programme of face mechanisation was well advanced but a more ominous threat had appeared on the horizon – that of cheap and plentiful oil from the Middle East. UK coal as a fuel became more expensive and was beginning to be regarded as environmentally unfriendly. With the forecast reduction of demand for coal the period of frenetic expansion for Gullick eased and a period of uncertainty took its place. Lord Robens was chairman of the NCB at the time and he launched a major colliery closure programme, rivalling in scale that which Margaret Thatcher induced many years later. He inherited almost 700 collieries but when he left the NCB in 1971 only 292 remained open. By then there was significant overcapacity in the equipment supply industry too and this was to have an impact on Gullick. At the behest of the NCB, the Industrial Reorganisation

Corporation – a government body – was charged with investigating the size and structure of the coal equipment supply industry and one of its major recommendations was that Gullick should be merged with its second largest competitor, W. E. F. Dobson of Nottingham. Dobson was a subsidiary company of a larger engineering group Dobson Hardwick Ltd., just in the same way that Gullick was a subsidiary of William Park Forgemasters Ltd.

So the two parent companies themselves were persuaded to merge in 1969 to form Dobson Park Industries, whilst their respective mining equipment businesses were integrated and given the name Gullick Dobson Ltd. Although forged in a time of some difficulty the outcome was wholly favourable to Wigan because the decision was made to focus all mining equipment manufacture on the Wigan site and the Dobson Park parent group later established its

Gullick roof supports at West Cliff Colliery, New South Wales, installed in 1980, with a yield capacity of 900 tons

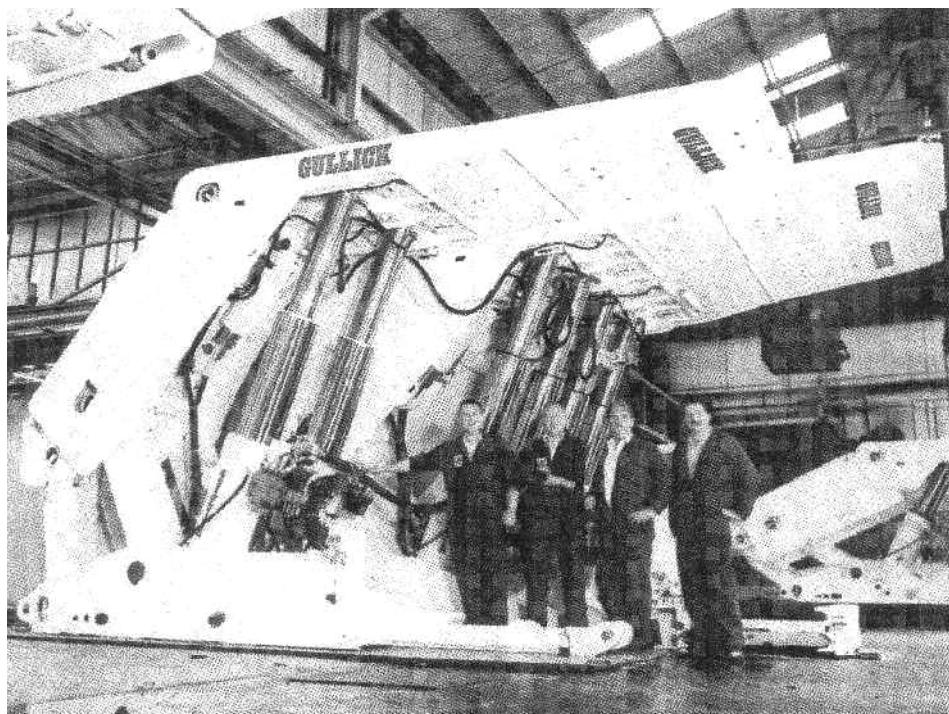


headquarters at Manchester Road, Ince, from where all future matters of policy controlling the destiny of Gullick would be made.

Re-invigoration

Then the wheel turned again. The additional work from the merger buffered the downturn in NCB demand but the world oil crisis emerged and put Britain's coal industry in the pound seats again. The Government adopted 'The Plan for Coal' in the early 1970s and coal once again became king. To meet the unexpectedly higher levels of coal production, massive investment in the industry was required. This time it came in the form of more modern, robust equipment capable of higher levels of output with an increasing trend towards full automation of coal face operations. Another period of great prosperity followed and lasted for more than ten years.

Gullick Dobson and its parent company had always been very conscious of the company's excessive dependence on the NCB and its requirement for roof supports. So during this period of improved trading significant steps were taken to broaden its product range and to develop its overseas markets. Gullick already owned a 50% share in Becorit, a roof support supplier to the German coalfields, but additional subsidiary selling companies were established in the USA, Australia and South Africa. A new 'special products' group was launched in Wigan to widen the product offering to its mining customers from which



Gullick's 2 leg 770 ton shield supports, at the Seaman Works, 1989

emerged a rock breaking machine (impact ripper), face-end packing machines, track ballasters and several other developments, the most notable of which was a system of mechanisation for the gold mines of South Africa. Two foreign subsidiaries were acquired, one in West Germany (Schopf) which manufactured load haul dump machines and one in West Virginia, USA (Marathon), with a chain of warehouses for the provision of after-sales service support to Gullick installed equipment in the States.

All this augured well for the future of the company and in 1983 the Dobson Park Group felt confident enough in the future to purchase the business of FSW Ltd. of Wakefield, a well known manufacturer of belt conveyors, pumps and other face equipment for the world-wide coal mining industry. So the company now was far better placed to meet the future

than ever before. However, external events were to intervene once more.

The NUM Strike and its Aftermath

Oil prices had once again started to put pressure on the UK industry with mine closures once more emerging on the horizon. This eventually culminated in the NUM strike of 1984, a calamitous time for all involved in the industry, with Gullick Dobson being no exception. The company struggled through this year-long dispute and survived it in a reasonably strong financial position but with major concerns about the political influences bearing down on the future of the UK coal industry. Despite these worrying omens, Gullick and its parent company Dobson Park remained confident that even with only a small but important continuing UK market, an attractive future lay ahead with worldwide customers increasingly adopting

Longwall coal mining techniques. So it resolved to widen its product base even further and in 1988 acquired the mechanised face conveyor business of MS International of Doncaster, a leader in its field with a prospering US subsidiary. As the UK market continued to decline the manufacturing activities of both FSW and MS progressively were transferred to Wigan alongside the traditional roof support work and a multi product factory evolved with exports playing a much more significant role than ever before.

The Merger with Dowty

At the beginning of the 1990s no one had foreseen the extent and speed at which the UK coal industry was further to decline. In the autumn of 1992, British Coal (the successor to the NCB) announced the closure of a further 30 collieries, a move that would leave just nineteen pits in operation. In fact, by 1994 only fifteen remained. This left the company in a perilous state with only one possible outcome for

survival. And that was the merger with its life-long competitor and adversary the Dowty Mining Equipment Company, now trading as Meco International following a management buy-out. After long negotiations a successful conclusion was reached and the two companies formed a 50/50 joint venture, trading under the name of Longwall International Ltd. Apart from the coal face shearer manufacturers, all the former face equipment suppliers to the UK coal industry had in practical terms devolved into this new joint venture and the good news for Wigan was that roof support manufacture was to continue at Seaman works. The worldwide potential of this new company with its combined product and skills still seemed an attractive prospect for Dobson Park so in January 1995 they bought out the old Dowty shareholding and Longwall International became a 100% subsidiary of Dobson Park. In effect, Wigan, once at the centre of the old Lancashire coalfield had now also become the centre of the residual UK mining equipment manufacturers.

Gullick Dobson's Seaman Works, c. 1980, with roof supports awaiting shipment in the foreground



Joy Global

All now seemed again well set for the future with a new overseas orientated company ready to show its capabilities. Its product range and depth of technology though, had not gone unnoticed elsewhere in the world and only nine months later Dobson Park were to receive an offer to buy the company from Joy, the giant US coal mining equipment manufacturer. Dobson Park were unwilling to sell what they considered to be their most valuable asset and the ensuing disagreement quickly led to Joy's parent company making a stock exchange bid for 100% control of the Dobson Park Group itself.

Towards the end of 1995 this bid was successful and the whole British group passed into American ownership. It is ironic that Gullick had appointed Joy as its sales agent for the USA as early as 1963; an arrangement that was revoked some fifteen years later.

So ended the illustrious record of Gullick's activities in Wigan. During its 75 years of existence (1920-1995) it had provided employment for thousands, won two Queens Awards for technical excellence and two of its sales directors had each been awarded the MBE for their services to export. The modern roof support of today is barely recognisable from the one first designed by Tom Seaman, but his invention is as relevant today as it ever was.

A POPPY FOR HARRY

By Margaret Bell



Margaret Bell's Poppy for Harry

The Tower of London is a popular attraction for visitors at all times of the year. Recently, the moat was filled with ceramic poppies in a display named, 'Blood Swept Lands and Seas of Red' and it was an amazing sight. We were told this title comes from a line in the will made in the trenches by an unnamed soldier.

The poppies are ceramic and hand-made in a Derby pottery and almost filled the sixteen acre site encircling the Tower moat. The work was completed by 11 November 2014. I was there in August and again in early October, watching the volunteers putting the poppies together and placing them in the ground.

Each evening the Last Post was sounded and a number of names of the fallen read out. There were 888,246 flowers, each in memory of a fallen British soldier of the First World War.

I bought a poppy for my great uncle, Harry Bilsbury, of the Grenadier Guards, a soldier recorded as missing in action at the Battle of the Somme on the night of the 15-16 September 1916.

Three years ago I went on a Western Front Remembrance Tour with my grand-daughter,

Connie. We travelled with the British Legion and our guide, a retired colonel of the Gloucester Regiment, had plotted where Harry was in battle on the night he went missing.

We first visited the Guards Cross on the Ginchy-Lesboeufs Road, where we placed a small poppy cross, then went into the field where the battle had taken place. This was the first time that tanks had been used we were told. The battlefield was difficult to imagine as it was a bright, warm, summer day, with wild flowers growing in the surrounding fields, peaceful, with only the sound of birds.

Across the road from the Guards Cross was a small cemetery. Here was the grave of William Harvey, also Grenadier Guards, the pal Harry had joined up with and who had been killed a few days earlier. I placed a poppy on his grave.

Harry is commemorated on the Leigh War Memorial and the Thiepval Memorial and it was here that we placed our final poppy.

In January, the ceramic poppy from the moat was posted to me as a keepsake, a treasured addition to my family history.

PTE HARRY BILSBURY REPORTED KILLED.

News has reached Mrs. Bilsbury, who resides at Doctor's Nook, Leigh, through the medium of a letter sent by a Westleigh soldier who wrote that her son, Pte. Harry Bilsbury, of the Grenadier Guards, has been killed at the front.
Pte. Bilsbury, 21, joined the Army about November 1914, along with his friend, Pte. W. Harvey, who is also amongst the lost this week. And again in Wrexham about a month. He was well known in this district as a wrestler, boxer and footballer. He played for some time with the Leyland Northern Football team. He was 22 years of age and the brother of 3 children. Before joining the Colour he was employed at the Alton Boundary. His brother Tom was discharged from the Army, being disabled through suffering from rheumatism in the feet.

*Leigh Journal,
Harry Bilsbury,
September 1916*

The Enigma that was — George Lyon

To commemorate the
200th anniversary of his execution

By Derek Horrocks

To mark the 200th anniversary of the execution of the highwayman George Lyon, Derek Horrocks explores the possible traces left by Lyon in the historical record.

I first set out to look for George Lyon in the registers of Upholland, St. Thomas the Martyr, 1755-1765, but there was no mention of a George Lyon. I had a look at the Lancashire Online Parish Clerk between the same dates. There were quite a few George Lyons; all except one were either too old, too young or in the wrong area. This was the person I found: George, son of Benjamin Lyon, born 13 December 1760, baptised at St. Thomas, Ashton-in-Makerfield. This date is spot on with his age at burial, 54.

After quite a search, I found George's marriage at St. Oswald at Winwick, which is of course the mother church of St. Thomas, Ashton. The details are these:

George Lyon married Elizabeth Atherton of Wigan by licence on 21 March 1782. George was of the Parish. I have not found the baptism of their daughter, Nanny, and we know she was buried at St. Thomas the Martyr, on 17 April 1804, aged 20. She must have been born late 1783 or early 1784. I also found a second child: Mary, daughter of George and Elizabeth Lyon of Winstanley, baptised in St. Aidan's, Billinge, on 16 May 1785. She died two years later and was buried on 20 March 1787.

The previous year, March 1786, George committed his first offence. He was tried at Lancashire Assizes and convicted of robbery with violence against Robert Smith at Winstanley. He was sentenced to death, but later reprieved and transported for seven years. He was not at home for the death of his second daughter, Mary, or his father, Benjamin, on 17 November, 1787. No records survive to suggest where he saw out his sentence overseas; perhaps he never left the hulk.

At the end of his sentence in 1793, George returned to England and settled in his hometown of Ashton-in-Makerfield. He was a weaver by trade. Being a robust young man of 33 and after an absence from his wife for seven years, one would have expected additions to the

family – but there were none. This suggests to me that he was not living with his wife and child; I uncovered the following quotation which gave me food for thought, 'If any spouse left home and was not heard of for seven years, he or she was presumed dead and the other spouse could re-marry...church courts in practice rarely prosecuted for bigamy after a seven year absence'.

The sort of life George was about to lead was hardly the life of a young married man. His wife, Elizabeth, could well have left him, with the assurance that some other family would look after Nanny. This was not unknown at the time. Families like the Bennetts, the Houghtons, the Bradshaws, George's sister Ann or his nephew John Davies might have been willing to help out and take on the responsibility.

On 15 February, 1797, Ann Twiss, a single woman of the township of Lowton in the Parish of Winwick, appeared before two Justices of the Peace. The Overseers of that parish declared that twelve weeks ago she had delivered a female bastard child by the name of Alice and that George Lyon, weaver, of Ashton-in-Makerfield, was the true and only father of the child. He had notice to appear before them to answer the charge but no evidence was presented to doubt the declaration of Ann. George was charged to pay £2/13s to the Overseers for Ann Twiss' lying-in and 18d weekly for the upkeep and maintenance of the child and Ann Twiss. A certain Thomas Lyon signed the paper in large bold handwriting. He could well have been a relative of George. There is no evidence to suggest that George paid up.

By the very early 1800s, George was living in Upholland. There is one event which surprises me. A certain George Lyon and Mary Mason, both of Dalton, married at All Saints, Wigan, on 27 October 1800. Is this our George or someone else?

In 1804, George was dealt a devastating blow when his beloved daughter, Nanny, died. He continued with the weaving trade. He even took on an apprentice in 1806, but he was finding it difficult to make ends meet. He was turning more and more to a life of crime and debauchery.

Miss Ellen Weeton, an intelligent and forthright school teacher, living in Upholland at the same time as George Lyon, wrote in one of her diaries a letter dated 23 May 1808:

'In two houses near together in Upholland, there have been in each a mother and daughter lying-in, nearly at the same time and one man (the notorious George Lyon) reputed to be the father of all four'.

I perused the baptismal registers of St. Thomas the Martyr and found the following:

Betty, daughter of Mary Almond, b[a]pt[ised] 2 June, 1807

Peter, son of Alice Almond, b[a]pt[ised] 2 August, 1807
Charlotte, daughter of Betty Nicholson, b[a]pt[ised] 16 October, 1807

Henry, son of Anne Nicholson, b[a]pt[ised] 10 January, 1808

Whether Mary and Alice Almond and Betty and Anne Nicholson were mother and daughter or vice versa remains to be proven but there is a strong possibility of some relationship.

On 22 July 1809, Jane Rotheram, of the township of Lathom in the Parish of Ormskirk, was delivered of a male bastard child and declared that George Lyon, weaver of Upholland, was the true father of the child. He had notice to appear before the township to answer the charge but did not do so. Lyon was charged to pay £10/6s, plus sixteen shillings for drawing up the order and five shillings weekly for sustenance and maintenance of the child. Jane Rotheram was also to contribute five shillings for the same. The order was signed by the overseers of the poor of the Parish of Ormskirk, dated 3 April 1811. Did he pay up?

George Lyon became notorious for his life of crime. For his acts of burglary and robbery with his gang of Bennett and Houghton. His fame spread around the Wigan area between 1800 and 1814. They were mostly successful but George boasted about it. Five of his victims were quite wealthy businessmen. They were Peter Robinson, Henry Gaskell, Robert Yates, John Fogg and Charles Walmesley. John Fogg was a check manufacturer. There was another one in Wigan by the name of Jeremiah Lyon. The last victim was Charles Walmesley of Ince in 1814. The gang's luck ran out and events turned against them. They were caught and committed for trial at Lancaster. There were several indictments against George, but he was tried on only two counts – robbing Fox and Walmesley. He was found guilty and sentenced to death by hanging along with his collaborators. This was carried out on 23 April 1815.

When in Lancaster prison, George's letters were always addressed to 'Dear Wife'; most frustratingly he gave no names!

On 23 November 1824, a lady called Elizabeth Lyon was buried at St. Thomas the Martyr. Who was she? Where did she come from? She seemed to appear from nowhere. Could it possibly have been Elizabeth, neé Atherton, George's first wife and Nanny's mother? Was this a tale of forgiveness? Perhaps not. She was recorded as 80 years old. She would have been 16 years old when George was born. However, it is possible that she was a stranger to Upholland and her real age was not known. After all, it was not uncommon for a female to be 6 years older than her husband in those days.

Thus ends the story of George Lyon. This is simply what I have found in the records and I stand to be corrected on any issue if anyone has evidence to the contrary.

Wigan Borough Environment & Heritage Network 'Our Local Environmental and Heritage Matters'

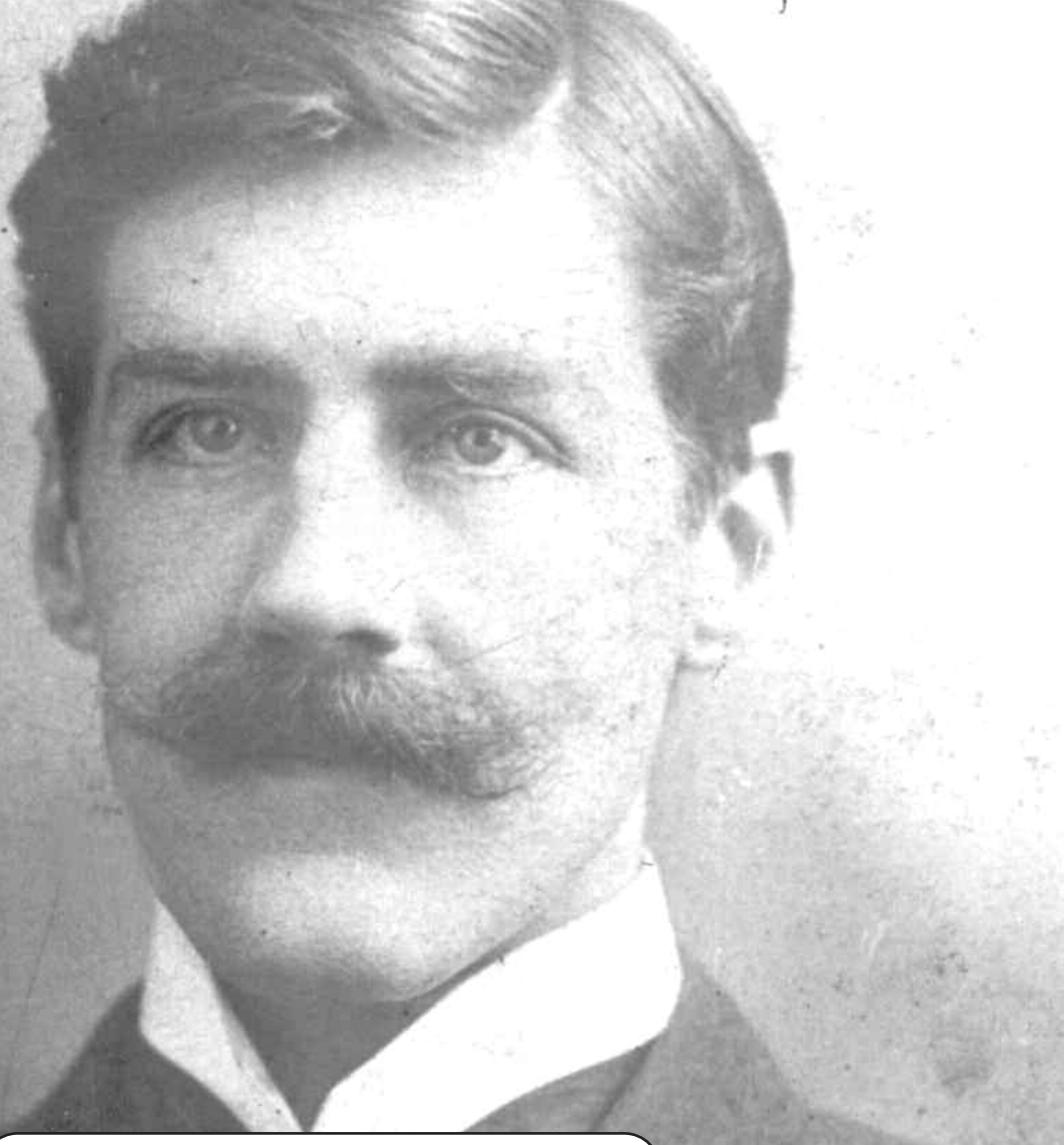


If you agree, groups and individuals are warmly invited to join our Network. The Network provides:

- Regular Meetings
- Advice and Information
- Site Visits
- Speakers
- Partnership working with Wigan Council, WLCT and other bodies in the Borough

Please contact joe41@blueyonder.co.uk or visit www.wiganheritage.com for more information.

'Bal' – David Lindsay, 27th Earl of Crawford, c. 1914



BY BILL MELLING

David Lindsay, 27th Earl of Crawford (1871-1940): 'A Man For All Seasons'

After reading 'Private Lord Crawford's Great War Diaries' (reviewed in PF 65), I was curious to know more about their author, a 43 year old peer of the realm who falsified his age, marital status and membership of the peerage in order to volunteer to serve as a lowly private in the Royal Army Medical Corp at a Field Hospital in France. A visit to his entry in the 'Dictionary of National Biography', revealed that throughout his life he had kept a diary, an edited version of which was published as, 'The Crawford Papers', in 1984.

David Lindsay was born in 1871 and as the eldest son of the Earl of Crawford held the title of the Earl of Balcarres, which earned him the nickname 'Bal', by which he was known throughout his life. The Lindsays were an ancient Scottish family who had moved to lands around Wigan acquired by marriage, and had made Haigh Hall their family seat since the 1790s. Their considerable wealth came from the family firm, the Wigan Coal and Iron Company, who provided employment for thousands of Wiganers in its mines and ironworks.

The family took a keen interest in the affairs of the town and seem to have been well regarded, judging by the numbers who took part in 'Bal's' coming-of-age celebrations. Bal was educated at Eton and Oxford. At university he was active in the Oxford Union debating society, becoming President of the Union. This brought him into contact with the prominent figures who came to speak in the debates. After Oxford, he spent a year at the Oxford House Settlement at Bethnal Green, ministering to the needs of the poor and destitute of the East End of London. In 1895, he was

elected as the Conservative M. P. for Chorley, the constituency in which Haigh Hall was at that time situated and for the next eighteen years he immersed himself in politics. In 1900, he married Constance Pelly with whom he had eight children.

For the first ten years of his career as an M. P. the Conservatives were in power and he made steady progress up the political ladder, being appointed a Junior Lord of the Treasury in 1903. When the Party went into opposition in 1905 he became a Party Whip, then Chief Whip in 1911. At this time the country was in a state of political turmoil over such matters as Irish independence, votes for women and Lloyd George's, 'Peoples Budget' and it was in this atmosphere that 'Bal' honed his skills in the art of political administration and negotiation. Throughout his time as an M. P. he took an active interest in the administration of the Arts, introducing an 'Ancient Monuments Protection Act' in 1900. He was chairman of the 'National Art Collection Fund', as well as sitting on a number of committees relating to galleries and museums.

In January 1913 his career as an M. P. came to an abrupt end with the death of his father, Ludovic, resulting in Bal's elevation to the House of Lords. As well as inheriting the title, he inherited a crisis in the family finances. Ludovic had lived the life of a Victorian plutocrat, sailing the world in his yacht and adding to his collection of books, manuscripts and stamps. He had made no provision for the vast increase in death duties, introduced in Lloyd George's 1911 budget and 'Bal' was left with duties of £107,000 out of a total estate of £324,000.

This included the Bibliotheaca Lindesiana, reputed to be the finest private library in Britain. It was held at Haigh Hall where six librarians were employed to look after the books, manuscripts and stamp collections. For the next two years

'Bal' largely dropped out of public life and devoted his time to rationalising the collections to satisfy the demand for death duties. He dismissed the librarians, sold off the stamp collections and although he was reputed to have sent 53 tons of books to antiquarian book dealers he managed to keep the core of the library intact, concentrating on quality rather than quantity.

Another drain on his time was the chairmanship of Wigan Coal & Iron at a time when the industry was in recession and profits were declining. With the outbreak of war in 1914 he became increasingly frustrated at his inability to use his talents to make a contribution to the war effort and in early 1915, in a state of deep depression after seeing the casualties coming back from France, he joined the Royal Army Medical Corp as a private and was soon in France at a Field Hospital.

He was soon promoted to lance corporal and put in charge of the operating theatre. 'Lord Crawford's Great War Diaries', are a fascinating account of life in a Field Hospital, dealing with up to a thousand casualties a day. He was highly critical of the 'Officer Class' but his main complaint was the behaviour of the aristocratic and titled ladies acting as nurses who, Bal believed, 'chattering like magpies and buzzing like bees', upset the smooth running of his operating theatre and generally made the lives of the R.A.M.C. orderlies a misery.

During his time in France things were not going well for the Liberal government. The spring offensive on the western front had failed, there was a shortage of artillery shells and the Gallipoli expedition had been a disaster. There were increasing calls for the formation of a coalition government and Bal, with his long political experience, was approached several times with offers of a place in it. Initially, he turned these down but eventually, after pressure from the leader of the Conservative party (and

possibly the King), he relented and in July 1916 made the leap from lance corporal to Minister of Agriculture in the coalition government. He remained in government for the next six years in various other posts – Lord Privy Seal, Chancellor of the Dutchy of Lancaster, Commissioner of Works and Minister of Transport. He was also a Privy Councillor and Deputy Leader of the House of Lords.

When the coalition government fell in 1922 he retired from politics and turned to the world of art where he made a second career. He soon collected a number of unpaid positions – Chancellor of Manchester University, Trustee of the British Museum, Chairman of the Royal Fine Arts Commission – which led him to be known as, 'The uncrowned King of British Art'. He had no interest in the usual outdoor aristocratic pursuits and preferred to further cultural causes. In 1925, at the request of the government, he chaired a committee on the future of radio broadcasting. The subsequent report, known as the 'Crawford Report', resulted in the creation of the BBC. As well as his interest in the arts he continued as chairman of Wigan Coal and Iron at a time when the depression of the 1930s led to closures and amalgamations in order to save the company from bankruptcy. He took an active interest in Wigan's affairs and institutions, chairing the Public Library Committee and helping the Librarian, A. J. Hawkes, to make Wigan one of the best municipal libraries in the country.

'Bal' always regarded Haigh Hall as the family home and it was there that he died in March 1940. Six past and future Prime Ministers sent long hand written letters of condolence to the family. The King sent a telegram and the Archbishop of Canterbury preached at his funeral. They all agreed that David Lindsay, 27th Earl of Crawford, was a man of distinction.

'The whole of South Lancashire was in mourning'

'On all sides there were bleeding hearts and broken homes'

BY PETER WALKER



Baptistery at St. David's Church, Haigh

These words were spoken by Dr Chavasse, Lord Bishop of Liverpool, in September 1916, at the dedication of the Baptistry in St David's Church, Haigh. The Wigan Observer reported that the Bishop praised the 'great citizen army' that had responded to Lord Kitchener's call for a million men.

'From their universities, old and new; from their public, secondary and elementary schools; from their cricket, football and running clubs; from their churches, choirs, Bible Class, Sunday Schools and congregations; from the offices in great cities, from the mines and docks, from their Colonies, and from every country where Englishmen were living they hastened to the call of their country to defend her in her hour of need. And amongst them the three gallant sons of their vicar, to whom that beautiful memorial had been dedicated that day'.

The day before this service the Wigan Observer reported that the Vicar's only remaining son, Henry, was missing in action.ⁱ

Reverend James came to Haigh around 1876 as curate and in 1882 married Emily, sister of Sir Edward Donner. In 1886 he became Vicar of Haigh where he served for forty years until 1918, becoming Rector of Epperstone, Nottinghamshire. Retiring in 1933 he moved to Southwell where he died in 1938 at the age of 91 years.

'To the last Mr. James's heart was in Haigh and Wigan. Nothing gave him more pleasure than that his friends from Lancashire should call upon him... He was especially interested in education, and for many years he was chairman of the Local Area Committee in Wigan. He spent a great deal of time in organising the Church Lads' Brigade, the Haigh Company being very successful during his period. He went to many annual camps, and on several occasions was Camp Chaplain'.ⁱⁱ

Set on the edge of the Haigh Estate, Haigh Vicarage must have seemed an idyllic location compared to the grime and smoke of industrial Wigan. In 1883, Emily gave birth to their first daughter, Madeleine, and a year later Charles Edward, the first of their four sons, followed by Francis Arthur, Henry, Phyllis and finally George Sidney in 1893. The Edwardian era saw each of the sons leaving home to start careers, until August 1914 when they were quick to respond to their country's call to arms. These four young men were each to be killed serving their country in the war.

Corporal Charles Edward James

He was in a business house in Paris followed by time with the Credit Layonnaise in Valencia, Spain. Later he joined the Manchester shipping firm of Chamberlain, Donner & Co., becoming their representative in Brazil. Arriving back in England in September 1914 he enlisted in the 13th Middlesex

Regiment, declining a commission as he had no military experience. Fluent in French, Spanish, Portuguese and some German he went with the Brigade Intelligence Department to France arriving on 1 September 1915, where he was killed on 28 September; he was 31.ⁱⁱⁱ

Lieutenant George Sydney James

He joined Wigan Coal and Iron Company in 1908 as an apprentice mining engineer, joining the mine management department at their Haigh and Aspull Pits in January 1914. He took an active interest in Haigh Church Lads' brigade, becoming their commanding officer. In 1911 he joined the 5th Manchester Territorials as a 2nd Lieutenant, later promoted to Lieutenant. In September 1914 he went with the Battalion to Egypt and later to the Dardanelles. In March 1915 he wrote to his mother:^{iv}

'The Turks fight hard but seem short of artillery, unless they are bluffing... Our chief trouble is with the snipers, who work their way right through our lines, and then amuse themselves with potting officers in the back. The brutes... dig themselves in to the neck, and paint their faces green, so we can not find them.'

Despite the horror of war Lt. James also wrote that: '*This country is exceptionally pretty and in some ways very like being close to the Yorkshire moors.*'

He was killed on 4 June 1915, aged 22.

Captain Francis Arthur James

He travelled to India where he was vice-principle of Colvin Talugdar's School in Lucknow. He was home on sick leave when war was declared and immediately volunteered for the 1st/5th Manchesters with a commission of 2nd Lieutenant, later gaining Lieutenant. With his brother, Sidney, he saw service in Egypt and then the Dardanelles where he was wounded in the right leg in July 1915^v. He was evacuated to hospital in Alexandria, Egypt, and whilst there was promoted to Captain. He died of his wounds on 18 September, aged 29.

Lance-Sergeant Henry James

Trained to be a solicitor he was working in Dover in 1911,^{vi} but by 1914 had become assistant solicitor to the Halifax Corporation. On 1 September 1914 he enlisted at Halifax into the Middlesex Regiment. He is described as, '5ft 7&1/5 inches tall, weight 133 pounds, fresh complexion with brown eyes and hair'. Slightly wounded in July 1916 he was soon back with his regiment and shortly after was reported missing, believed killed.^{vii} It would be June

1917 before confirmation was received that, 'for official purposes he should be regarded as having died on or since 18 August 1916', and in December 1917 that his grave had been found.^{viii} He was aged 28.

We can not imagine how it felt during that summer and autumn of 1915, as one telegram boy after another wheeled his bicycle down Copperas Lane. First one son killed, another wounded then died, a third missing then killed. When the people gathered in St David's Church, on that Wednesday evening in September 1916, to dedicate the new Baptistry in memory of three sons the fourth was already lying dead. A second memorial tablet, bearing Henry's name was added to the Baptistry in 1918.

i Wigan Observer 12 September 1916

ii Newspaper obituary circa 1938 source unknown

iii Wigan Examiner 2 November 1915 p3

iv Wigan Observer 19 June 1915 p8, extracts from letter first published in Haigh Church Magazine June 1915

v Wigan Examiner 21 August 1915, Wigan Observer 21 August 1915 p8, Wigan Observer 25 September 1915 p5

vi 1911 Census RG14PN4595 RG78PN193 RD65 SD2 ED5 SN381 FindMyPast.com © National Archives

vii Wigan Observer July 1916, 12 September 1916, 21 October 1916

viii BritishArmyWWIServiceRecords1914-1920 on Ancestry.com © National Archives

Bibliography and sources

Ancestry.com web site <http://home.ancestry.com/> available free at the Museum of Wigan Life.

Commonwealth War Graves Commission web site <http://www.cwgc.org/> (Free access online)

De Ruyigny's Roll of Honour 1914-1918 (available on Find My Past UK website by subscription)

Find My Past UK web site <http://www.findmypast.co.uk/> (Available by subscription)

Wigan Observer and Wigan Examiner extracts in World War One newspaper index at Museum of Wigan Life.

Memorial to Reverend James and his sons at St David's Church, Haigh



Memories of Atherton

BY JOE GRIMSHAW

I am now 83 years of age. I was born in 1931. In 1939, at the start of the Second World War, I was eight years of age and I remember thinking, 'This will be really exciting'; and so it turned out to be.

In 1939 I was a pupil at St. George's Infants School in Derby Street, Atherton. We soon learned how to react when the air raid sirens started. Early in the war there were no shelters so we had to sit under our desks until the all clear. When the underground shelters were dug and the first one was ready, this only held half of the pupils so we were on shifts for a short time: mornings one week, afternoons the next. Eventually when both were ready, if the sirens went off we went down and stayed down until one hour after the all clear.

When I turned eleven years of age, I went to Hesketh Fletcher School on Market Street in Atherton and stayed there until I left at fourteen to start full-time employment. Across from the school on Market Street was our local butcher's shop and when the butcher boy at that time turned eighteen he was called up. Mr Graham, the butcher, asked my mother if I would be the new butcher's boy. 'Of course I would', my mother said.

I used to take the orders round the town on a very heavy pedal-bike with a basket on the front. For this I received ten shillings a week, plus tips. I did this job until I turned fourteen. On Saturdays I had to deliver and collect all the payments. The Saturday rounds were far apart. First over

the canal in Leigh and as far as Branker Street in Chequerbent. I was issued with a book to tell me how much each order was. This was in pounds (£), shillings (s) and pence (d). Some of the orders were for 1s 11½d and the customer would give me 2 bob, or a 2s 6d - half a crown. I soon got used to reckoning up.

I lived in Wigan Road in Atherton, very near to Gibfield Pit and this pit had their own Home Guard – what you might remember as 'Dad's Army' – and as the war went on they got to be very professional. Across Wigan Road were two massive clay pits where they used to have target practice. Myself and a few other local lads used to collect the bullets when they had finished shooting. These were our trophies, along with pieces of shrapnel we found from exploded bombs after air-raids in the area. I was devastated when my mother put them in the dustbin.

When the sirens went at night to signal an air-raid we had to go into local shelters. Once though we just stayed in bed and one bomb landed nearby in Car Bank Street, blowing out the windows of our house on Wigan Road.

In September 1945, I turned fourteen and left school. I started work with a construction engineer in Atherton. I was required to work 44 hours per week, five and a half days per week – we worked until noon on a Saturday. My wage for the first twelve months was 14s 7d – yes, about 73 pence for over forty hours work each week and it was heavy work as well.

About twenty of the men and boys used to watch Bolton Wanderers regularly and Bolton had an F.A. Cup quarter-final match scheduled one Saturday against Stoke City. We would not be able to get there in time for kick-off so the site manager had the open top works lorry take us to the match straight from work. This was the match that would later be known as the Burnden Park disaster when 33 lives were lost.

I got interested in family history about 22 years ago, and it was very rewarding. I traced my uncle, by the name of John Grimshaw, who served in the First World War at Gallipoli, only to be killed in France in 1917, serving with the 5th Manchester Regiment. I traced my father's side of the family back to 1771 and mother's side to 1660, and I am in contact with maternal relatives in Nova Scotia, Canada.

Gibfield Colliery, Home Guard.

Courtesy of the Atherton Photographic Society – The Roy Boardman Archive.



Around WIGAN

with Bob Heavyside

In the first of a new feature, regular Wigan Local Studies Volunteer, Bob Heavyside, picks out some interesting images and stories from his work on the Wigan newspaper cuttings books.

Lowe's Department Store

I'm sure many readers will remember Lowe's, Wigan's, 'Walk-Through' Shop, as described here. This is a lovely advert for the business from the Wigan Examiner in 1930.

WIGAN'S "WALK-THROUGH" SHOP.



GET IT AT LOWE'S.

SPECIAL DISPLAYS IN ALL DEPARTMENTS.

Fashions for June!

TAKE THE LIFT TO THE TOP FLOOR,
WALK DOWN THROUGH ALL DEPARTMENTS YOU WILL NOT BE ASKED TO BUY.

VISIT THE BARGAIN BASEMENT.
FRESH BARGAINS EVERY WEEK.

LOWE'S,
VICTORIA HOUSE, MARKET PLACE.

Wigan Market Place

This one says it all in the headline...
Wigan Observer, November 1930.



Wigan Lane

With winter on the way out and spring round the corner, here is a nice photograph of Wiganers enjoying a snowy day on the Boulevard in Wigan Lane – Wigan Observer, January 1932.



Brockmill Lane

But it wasn't just adults out and about in the snow that winter; children were out on their toboggans at Brockmill Lane too; do any readers recognise any of the children in the photograph? Please let us know if you do.



The Waterloo Monument at Bispham Hall, Billinge

BY J. A. HILTON

The Waterloo Monument stands in the grounds - owned and occupied by the Scout Association - of Bispham Hall, off Crank Lane in Billinge. It was built in 1816 to commemorate the Battle of Waterloo.

Waterloo marked the end of twenty years of war against the French, the last of a series of wars that had been raging for over a hundred years. It ended the threat of French world domination and began fifty years of peace, called the Pax Britannica (the British Peace), in imitation of the ancient Pax Romana. This victory not only gave peace to Europe, but also gave Britain naval supremacy and allowed the expansion of the British Empire.



*The Waterloo Monument.
Image, John Harris.*

The French Emperor, Napoleon, had been completely defeated by his Russian and German enemies in 1814. He had abdicated and had been given the small Mediterranean island of Elba to rule. Yet he returned to France and with the support of the army made himself Emperor again. He marched his army into Belgium, intent on securing the River Rhine as a natural frontier for France.

He was faced by two Allied armies: British – these included a few men from the Wigan area, such as John Hitchen of Pemberton (*Past Forward* 29), Benjamin Baddeley of Leigh (*Past Forward* 30) – together with Belgian, Dutch and German troops, all commanded by the Duke of Wellington; and the Prussians commanded by Field-Marshal von Blucher. Napoleon organised his army into two wings, the left under Ney and the right under Grouchy, and a reserve under his own immediate command. On 16 June 1815, Grouchy and Napoleon defeated the Prussians at Ligny and Ney drove back the British at Quatre-Bras. Napoleon then left Grouchy to drive the Prussians back beyond the Rhine, while he and Ney advanced to attack Wellington's army at Waterloo on 18 June. Wellington's army held the French, while the Prussians advanced to take the French flank. It was a complete victory and Napoleon surrendered to the British, who packed him off to

the safety of the island of St Helena in the South Atlantic.

The Monument was erected by the owners of Bispham Hall, John and Robert Holt. It is a square stone obelisk, surmounted by an orb, and resting on a plinth. In its sylvan setting, rather than a public square in a town centre, it is unusual, if not unique, as a war memorial. The Monument is inscribed:

England confesses to the Most Noble illustrious Arthur, Duke of Wellington and the brave heroes of Britain and the Continent who under his auspicious genius and command so gloriously accomplished the downfall of tyranny and the restoration of liberty to Europe on the plains of Waterloo, June 18, A.D. 1815.

It lists the British and Allied generals including von Blucher. It is also inscribed with a Latin quotation from Virgil's *Aeneid*: 'Parcere subjectis et debellare superbos' [Spare the defeated and overthrow the proud], thus applying the mission-statement of the Roman Empire to the British Empire. Another inscription – 'On that day each man did his duty' – adapts Nelson's order to the British fleet at Trafalgar to the Battle of Waterloo. There is also a verse which runs:

*To those who fell
The immortal heroes in whose
latest breath*



*The Waterloo Monument,
Bispham Hall, 1942.*

*Glowed the patriot feeling
strong in death
But that moment was in all
the past
Save my County, Heaven, was
your last.*

Finally, there is another Latin quotation, this time from the *Odes of Horace*: 'Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori' [It is sweet and right to die for your country].

Now, after nearly two hundred years, the Waterloo Monument is in need of a little tender loving care. The inscriptions have been weathered. Worse still, the iron rod holding the stones together is rusting, threatening the Monument with collapse. The Waterloo Monument Group, under the chairmanship of Mr John O'Neill, has been formed to secure grants to carry out the necessary restoration work, which, it is hoped, will be completed in time for the bicentenary of the erection of the Monument.

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

Monthly meetings held on second Tuesday of each month in St Richard's Parish Centre, Mayfield Street, Atherton at 7.30pm. Admission – Members, £1, Non Members, £2, including refreshments.

Contact Details: Margaret Hodge, 01942 884893.

14 April 2015	Diaries in the Archives – Alex Miller
12 May 2015	Leigh Bridge – Castlefield Canals – Mr. & Mrs. Lucas
9 June 2015	Women Pirates – Brian Halliwell
14 July 2015	A Peck of Dirt – Peter Watson

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. Please contact Geoff Crank for more information on 01695 624411 or at Gcrank_2000@yahoo.co.uk

Hindley & District 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 information.

Leigh & District Antiques and Collectables Society

The society meets at Leigh RUFC, Beech Walk, Leigh. New members are always welcome and further details available from Mr C Gaskell on 01942 673521.

Leigh & District History

www.leighanddistricthistory.com

January saw the launch of an exciting new, free, local history website, covering Leigh and the surrounding districts. Still in its infancy, it already boasts a list of births, marriages and deaths, 1852-1856, including cemetery internments, nineteenth century letters from soldiers serving abroad, a scrapbook of interesting articles, local railway accidents and an embryonic photograph gallery. There are also links to other sites covering historic and genealogical interest.

Leigh 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). A weekly helpdesk is run by members each Monday afternoon at Leigh Local Studies, Leigh Library. Contact Mrs G. McClellan (01942 729559).

21 April 2015	Lathom War Horses – Nigel Neil
19 May 2015	Recent Research – Hannah Turner
June – July 2015	No meeting held
August 2015	Getting Started

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.liverpoolgenealogy.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 Archaeological Society

We meet on the first Wednesday of the month, at 7.30pm, in the Standish Suite at the Brocket Arms on Mesnes Road – on the first Wednesday of the month (except January and August). There is a car park adjacent on the left. Admission is £2 for members and £3 for guests. For more information call Bill Aldridge on 01257 402342.

You can also visit the website at www.wiganarchsoc.co.uk

Wigan Family and Local History Society

We meet on the second Wednesday of each month at St Andrews Parish Centre, 120 Woodhouse Lane, Springfield, Wigan at 7.15pm.

Attendance fees are £2.50 per meeting for both members and visitors. Our aim is to provide support, help, ideas and advice for members and non members alike. For more information please visit, <http://www.wiganworld.co.uk/familyhistory/> or see us at our weekly Monday afternoon helpdesks at the Museum of Wigan Life.

EVENTS CALENDAR

1215 And All That...

Current to 1 June 2015, Museum of Wigan Life, Free
Wigan Local Studies (at the Museum of Wigan Life) is
hosting a small display of medieval records from the Wigan
Archives Service, to mark the 800th birthday of the oldest
record in the Archive collection and in Wigan Borough.
A collection of medieval records from the Archives will be on
display until 1 June 2015.

A Potter's Tale

2 April – 4 July, Museum of Wigan Life, Free
Join us for a journey through time with this fun and fresh
new exhibition exploring craft traditions in Wigan Borough
over 2000 years. Our Borough has always been a place of
industry and trade, from Roman pottery to clock making.
See this incredible story through the eyes of young people
as they interpret our history through a series of new pottery
artworks and the latest technology. The interactive
exhibition features previously unseen objects from the
museum's collections alongside 21st century pottery.
A collaborative exhibition produced with Wigan Youth Zone
and local artist Lizzie Griffiths.

*Supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund, Young Roots
programme*

WWI Centenary Cemetery Walks, Tyldesley Cemetery,

4 April 2015, 10.00am–11.00am
£3.00 per person, booking is essential, meet at the entrance
of the cemetery.
For more info please phone 01942 404559 or email
archives@wigan.gov.uk
To commemorate the anniversary of the First World War
these walks will look at local stories of those affected.

Volunteer Meeting

8 April 2015, 11.00am-1.00pm
If you are interested in volunteering with Museums &
Archives and would like to find out more about what we
do, please come along to the meeting.
Museum of Wigan Life, book on 01942 828128 or
wiganmuseum@wigan.gov.uk

Easter Eggstravaganza!

7, 9, 14,16 April, 1.00pm-2.30pm
Museum of Wigan Life, £2.50
Booking essential please call 01942 828128 or email
wiganmuseum@wigan.gov.uk
Join us for some egg-cellent family fun with creative craft

and terrific trails at the Museum of Wigan Life.
Make bunny ears and create your own springtime
masterpiece to take home.

Standish Library, Online Family History Workshop

17 April 2015, 2.30pm-4.30pm
We will be using Ancestry – free to use in all Libraries,
Archives & Local Studies – along with other family history
websites. To book call 01257 400496.

Trace your WW1 Ancestors, Ashton Library

24 April 2015, 2.00pm-3.00pm
Free, Booking is essential
For more info please phone 01942 404559 or email
archives@wigan.gov.uk
This workshop will help you trace your First World War
ancestors by using archives and local studies collections.
The workshop will also explain the different online resources
to help you trace your ancestor.

Battle for Gallipoli

30 April 2015, 12.00pm-1.15pm
Museum of Wigan Life, £2.50 including tea and coffee,
Booking essential
A special talk to mark the 100th anniversary of the Gallipoli
landings during the First World War. Find out more about
the action in which local men Private William Kenealy from
Ashton and Lieutenant-Colonel John Elisha Grimshaw from
Abram were awarded the Victoria Cross.

WWI Centenary Cemetery Walks, Atherton Cemetery

2 May 2015
10.00am–11.00am, £3.00 per person
Booking is essential, Meet at the entrance of the cemetery.
For more info please phone 01942 404559 or email
archives@wigan.gov.uk
To commemorate the anniversary of the First World War
these walks will look at local stories of those affected.

Heritage Day 2015

4 May 2015, 11.00am-5.00pm
Trencherfield Mill, Heritage Way. There will be a small charge
for some activities, but car parking at Wigan Investment
Centre (WN3 5BA) will be free.

Come and celebrate our shared past with us at Trencherfield Mill as part of Heritage Day 2015 on the May Day Bank Holiday. At the heart of the celebration the Trencherfield Mill Steam Engine will be in full steam throughout the day, with a range of other activities taking place across the site. This year, we'll also be commemorating World War I.

Palaeography Practice

11 May and 1 June 2015, 2:00pm-3:30pm,
Museum of Wigan Life, Free
Medieval to Modern Handwriting for Experts: Informal drop-in sessions for those with a basic understanding of palaeography styles over the ages, transcribing original documents from the archives in a group.

Keep Calm and Carry on Cooking - Wartime Cookery Demonstration

12 May 2015, 12.00pm-1.15pm, Museum of Wigan Life
£2.50 including tea and coffee, Booking essential
Step back in time for a delicious taste of the past as we find out more about rationing during the Second World War.
Expert enthusiast Angela Brown will show you original food samples and explore how our parents and grandparents made the most of food and other household rations in the war. To mark the 70th anniversary of Victory in Europe Day during the Second World War.

Hindley Cemetery First World War Walk

13 May 2015, 2.00pm-3.30pm
The walk will look at the stories behind the memorials.
Meet at the entrance.
£3.00, to book call 01942 828128 or
wiganmuseum@wigan.gov.uk

Carry On Cleaning @ Wigan Archives

29 April, 27 May and 24 June 2015, 10.00am-3.00pm,
Wigan Archives Service, Leigh Town Hall, Free
If you've ever wondered how we preserve historic records, come along to Wigan Archives to join in with our ongoing project to clean and document the records of Wigan's Victorian courts. Join our team of volunteers in revealing the stories of crime and punishment in Wigan and learn how to help preserve the Borough's history.

WWI Centenary Cemetery Walks, Leigh Cemetery

6 June 2015, 10.00am-11.00am
£3.00 per person, booking is essential, meet at the entrance of the cemetery.

For more info please phone 01942 404559 or email archives@wigan.gov.uk
To commemorate the anniversary of the First World War these walks will look at local stories of those affected.

The Pit in Pictures: a photographic record of coalmining in Lancashire by Alan Davies

2 June, 12.00pm-1.15pm, Museum of Wigan Life, £2.50 including tea/coffee. Booking essential.
A fascinating talk revealing the story of mining photography and illustration in the area, from Victorian England's London Illustrated News to early picture postcards and professional photography.

Ince Cemetery Walk

10 June 2015, 2.00pm-3.30pm
The walk will look at the stories behind the memorials. Meet at the entrance, Warrington Rd., WN3 4NH, £3.00, to book call 01942 828128 or wiganmuseum@wigan.gov.uk

Ancient Egypt Exhibition

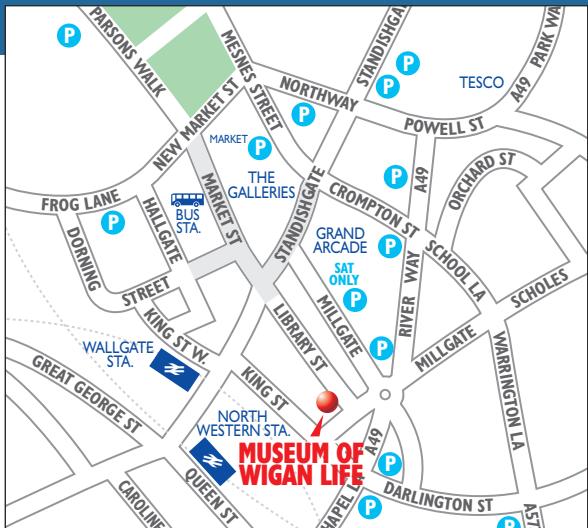
18 July – 31 October, Museum of Wigan Life, Free
The land of the pharaohs comes to the Museum of Wigan Life with a fabulous new exhibition about the Ancient Egyptians. This exhibition will explore the famous death customs and mystical religious beliefs of the Egyptians, alongside their everyday lives. Wigan Borough's spectacular gold mask will be on display for the first time in over 40 years.

A Note from the Editor

Some time ago we were contacted by one of our readers, asking if anyone had copies of the textbooks, 'Mechanics and Applied Heat' and 'Heat Engines', by S. H. Moorfield and H. H. Winstanley – both of whom were lecturers at Wigan Technical College. We have recently been contacted by another reader to say that they have come across both these books when rummaging through the attic. Can the original enquirer please contact us again so we can put you both in touch!

How to Find Us

Wigan  Council



Museum of Wigan Life & Wigan Local Studies

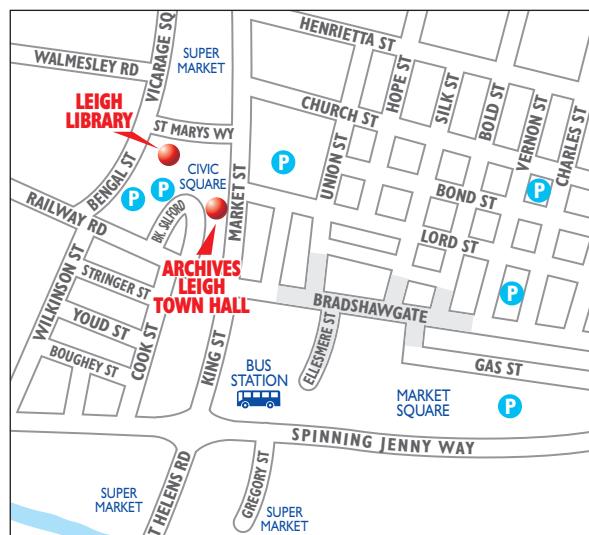
Library Street,
Wigan WN1 1NU
Telephone 01942 828128
heritage@wigan.gov.uk

Leigh Local History

Leigh Library, Turnpike Centre,
Civic Square, Leigh WN7 1EB
Telephone 01942 404559
archives@wigan.gov.uk

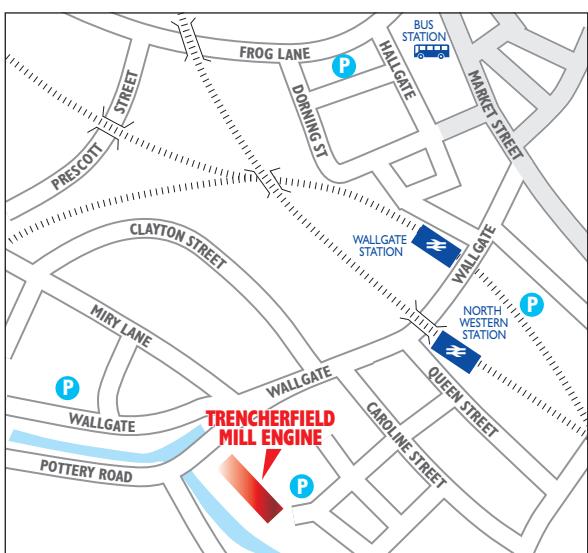
Archives

Leigh Town Hall, Leigh WN7 1DY
Telephone 01942 404430
archives@wigan.gov.uk



Trencherfield Mill Engine

Wigan Pier Quarter, Heritage Way,
Wigan WN3 4EF
Telephone 01942 828128
b.rowley@wigan.gov.uk



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www.gmmg.org.uk

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