

PAST FORWARD

Produced by Wigan Museums & Archives

Issue No. 70

August-November 2015

ANCIENT EGYPT IN WIGAN BOROUGH



£2

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FRONT COVER

Ancient Egypt Rediscovered, please see page 7 for further descriptions of the objects.

Letter from the Editorial Team

Welcome to PAST Forward Issue 70.

Working at the Museum and Archives is a pleasure for many reasons: working with enthusiastic volunteers, caring for unique artefacts, records and photographs, and always having something new to get involved with.

This summer is no exception, with our new online Archive now live, exciting proposals in development for Archives & Local Studies in Leigh and the unveiling of our new Museum exhibition, Ancient Egypt Rediscovered.

In this edition of Past Forward, you will find more details about the Archive developments, a four page feature on the Egyptology Collection, further stories of local men and women in the First World War, and an examination of Wigan's role in the eighteenth century slave trade.

Our audio version of Past Forward is now available, in partnership with Wigan Talking News. You can listen both to condensed articles from Past Forward through Talking News' regular subscription service, or can receive full audio editions by subscription from us. For more details, please contact us at pastforward@wigan.gov.uk.

We're also stepping into local history publishing, with two new titles coming out over the summer, a transcript of the diary of the First World War, Royal Flying Corp pilot, Captain Walker, and a new illustrated history of Harrison, McGregor & Guest, by Tony Ashcroft, formerly Local Studies Officer at Leigh Local Studies. Both are now available for sale from the Museum and from the Archives.

If you are interested in contributing to Past Forward, but have never done so before – or have more local histories to tell – you may like to enter our Essay Competition, which celebrates local history in all its many forms. For more details, please see the opposite page.

We hope you enjoy this edition of the magazine and continue to support it as both readers and contributors; so set aside the summer's sport on the television and settle down in the garden to a little local history instead!

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

PAST FORWARD Subscription Form

Copy Deadline for Issue 71

Contributors please note the deadline for the receipt of material for publication is Sunday, 1 November 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.

Please state which issue you wish your subscription to begin at:

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

Name

Address

Postcode

Telephone No.

Email

Signed Date

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

By Lynda Jackson

Ancient Egypt Rediscovered

The Museum of Wigan Life is delighted to showcase Wigan Borough's entire Egyptian collection on display from 18 July 2015 until 18 June 2016. The museum team have been working with Professor Joann Fletcher, Dr Stephen Buckley, Manchester Museum, MMU Special Collections and Horus Egyptology Society to research and conserve the collection for display.

Most of the objects in this fantastic collection were gifted to the museum – then Wigan Library – back in 1924, by Sir Leslie Scott. They had been collected by his father, Sir John Scott, who was born on Standishgate in Wigan and went on to a stellar career in law during the British Empire.

Scott worked in France, India and Egypt. He reformed the Egyptian legal system, removing the system of indentured labour that had been in existence since the time of the Pharaohs. In 1893, Scott received the Freedom of Wigan and the following year became Sir John Scott.

In celebration of this amazing collection we are offering a special summer and autumn programme of events at the Museum of Wigan Life, with something for historians of all ages. These will include a chance to make your own mummy, learn to read hieroglyphs and special talks on Ancient Egypt.

Booking is required for all events so remember to book your place soon! See Page 35 for full details.

Caring for the Big Man

.....
*By Lynda Jackson, Community History Manager,
Museum of Wigan Life and Alison Draper, MMU
Special Collections*

In November 2014, the Museum of Wigan Life worked with Horus Egyptology Society to run a special Ancient Egypt Study Day at the DW Stadium to raise money for, and awareness of, Wigan's amazing Ancient Egyptian collection. Experts Professor Joann Fletcher and Dr Stephen Buckley generously gave their time free of charge to speak about the collection, along with museum staff and Horus members.

Professor Joann Fletcher, Honorary Visiting Professor at the University of York, is author of numerous books and television series' including BBC2's, 'Ancient Egypt: Life and Death in the Valley of the Kings' and, 'Egypt's Lost Queens'.



*Alison Draper at work in her studio at
MMU Special Collections.*



Before conservation, March 2014.

Dr Stephen Buckley, Research Fellow at the University of York, uses science to reveal new insights into ancient history. Stephen and Jo's work includes the BAFTA-winning, 'Mummifying Alan: Egypt's Last Secret'.

The Study Day was a huge success and the museum received a generous donation from Horus Society members to help conserve the collection.

Eight months on and that generosity has enabled the museum to conserve the huge 25th Dynasty (750-600 BC) outer coffin piece, affectionately known as 'Big Man' to museum staff, for display.



After conservation, June 2015.

Big Man was conserved by Alison Draper, MMU Special Collections in Manchester. During the four month conservation project she made a number of discoveries about the object's construction. She found the head is made from pieces of wood held together with wooden dowels and a resinous substance similar to pitch. The dry climate meant trees were scarce in Ancient Egypt and coffins were often made of smaller pieces of wood fixed together in this way.

The Egyptians also used bitumen (a tar-like substance) to anoint coffins. The face and wig are separately carved pieces. The finished coffin consists of a number of different layers: base wood covered with a layer of gesso (either Plaster of Paris or gypsum bound with animal glue), then a woven linen textile layer, another layer of gesso and finally the painted layer created with natural earth pigments. Loss and damage to the object has now revealed these different layers.

Before conservation, damage to the head made it too vulnerable to display. The most serious problem was the separation of the outer painted layers from the underlying wood. Other problems included: loss of upper layers; cracks; distortion; brittleness; and dirt. The large areas of white paint were part of an unfinished restoration undertaken at some point in the past. Although posing no threat, these were highly disfiguring and made the interpretation of the head difficult.

Alison stabilised the damage to the head to make it possible to display it without further deterioration. The surface was cleaned, the fragile pigment layer consolidated to prevent further loss, and the detached linen layer adhered onto the wood.

Conservation grade materials were used throughout, which are stable and can be reversed in the future if required. Removal of the white paint was too damaging to the underlying wood and so it was disguised as much as possible by overpainting with a more sympathetic colour.

As conservation techniques change, there are challenges for the conservator and museum staff to decide what the best way of conserving such an important object might be. It was decided that the large areas of loss were not to be reinstated but should be left to show the true state of the object. Any restoration would have been primarily aesthetic and would have involved a great deal of supposition in the absence of any evidence of exactly what has been lost.

We hope you agree that 'Big Man' looks better cared for and will pop in to see him on display at the museum over the next year.

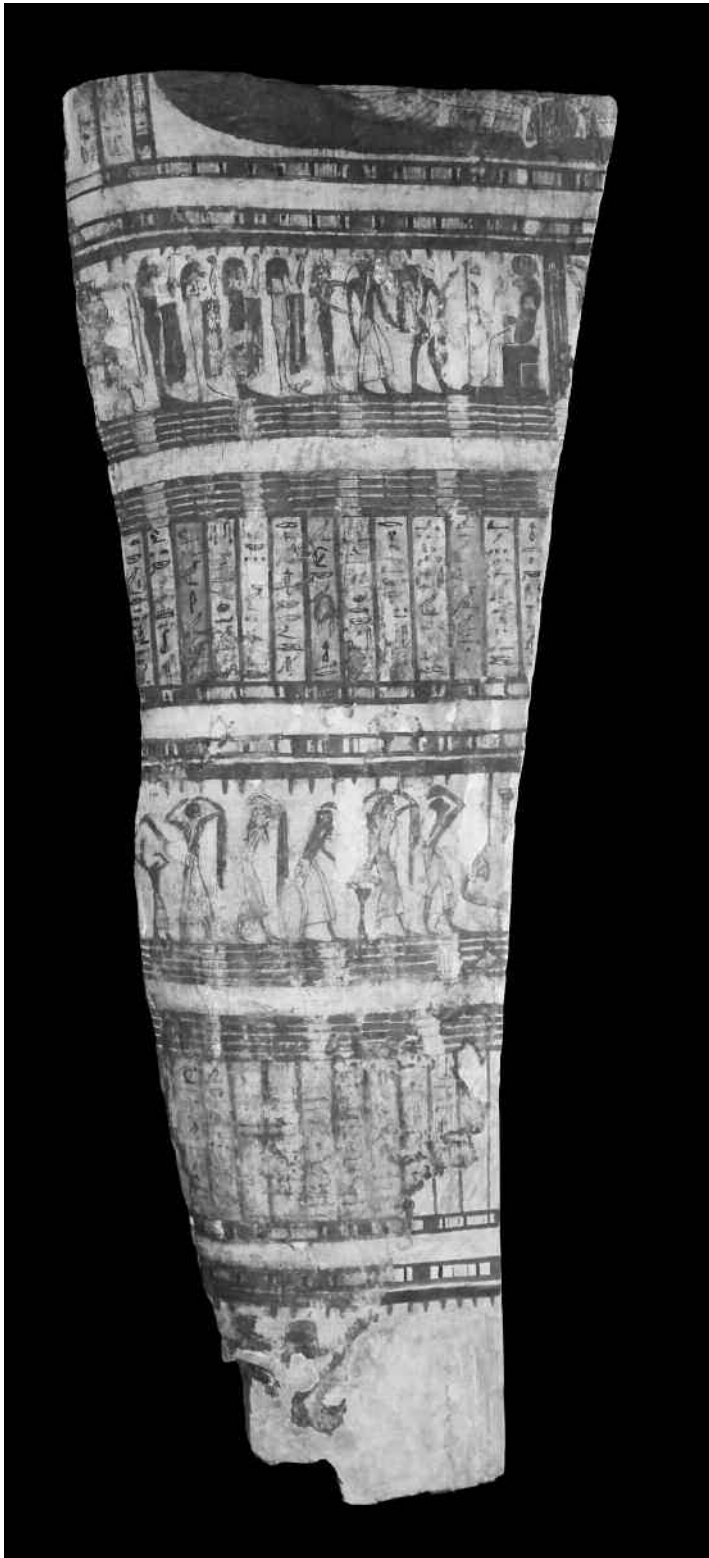
Postscript: News from Egypt...

Dr Stephen Buckley, at the University of York, has produced a series of forensic tests which now link Big Man to other funerary items in the museum collection. Watch this space in Past Forward for updates on future research!

By Carrie Gough

Exploring Egyptology

Lower Coffin Panel, 25th-26th Dynasty (c.700BC)



Coffin Panel from Western Thebes.

The work carried out to prepare the Egyptology collections for exhibition has given us and interested academics a chance to study the objects up close and in detail for the first time. Here, Museum of Wigan Life Collections Officer, Carrie Gough, explains what we have learnt about one of our most treasured objects, the 25th-26th Dynasty coffin panel.

This lower coffin panel is one of the key pieces of Wigan's Egyptology collection. It has been viewed by various experts who have confirmed that the funerary designs featured on the piece are completely unique for its era. There are no other known examples of this decoration in the World! We're very excited to have something so special in our Museum collection and can't wait to see it on display in our exhibition. To our knowledge it has never been on public display before.

Volunteers from Horus Egyptology Society have studied the piece and despite the majority of the hieroglyphs being no longer clear enough to translate – which probably contained passages from the Book of the Dead – they have managed to uncover some remarkable aspects of the design. In particular, the lower image section, which features a funerary procession of six figures heading towards a funeral barque (boat).



Detail from the Coffin Panel.

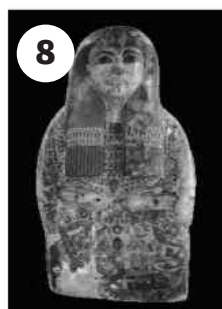
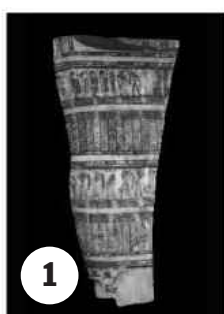
This procession features a reed hovering between each figure which to a non-specialist may not seem very remarkable but in fact represents a very unusual depiction of a vocal lament. The misplaced reed gives voice to the grief of the mourners. In the Egyptian language the reed, followed by a figure with arm raised, spells 'O' (a lament), so the images depict the mourners' grief stricken voices. This style of vocal imagery has never been seen in Egyptian funerary art of this age before.

By Carrie Gough, with original research by Hazel McGuinness and Rachel Griffiths, kindly reproduced.

Ancient Egypt Rediscovered

- 1. Wooden Coffin Panel from Western Thebes, 25-26th Dynasty, 750-600 BC**
Spot the mourners throwing their arms up in grief. Between them a reed hovers in the air spelling 'O!'. This lament gives the mourners a voice and is unique to funerary art of this period. The coffin probably belongs to the outer coffin piece with head.
- 2. Basalt Pot, Pre Dynastic, 3500 BC**
Made before the Pharaohs ruled a united Egypt, this pot was already ancient when the pyramids were built. It probably took a year to carve using a copper-headed drill.
- 3. Glass Bottle, Roman period, After 30 AD**
These Roman Egyptian bottles probably contained perfume. Exotic ingredients were imported into Alexandria and the finished perfume was exported out.
- 4. Inner Coffin Mask, 25th dynasty, 750-600 BC**
Recent tests by Dr Stephen Buckley, University of York have linked this mask to the large outer coffin piece (see 'Big Man' article). The long ears are typical of Northern Egypt at this time.
- 5. Alabaster Cosmetic Jar and Seeds, 1600-1560 BC**
The seeds are probably barley or wheat but the pot also contains a carved wooden nut, used to represent food for the afterlife.
- 6. Gilded Coffin Face 18th Dynasty Egyptian, 1550-1292 BC**
- 7. Painted Plaster Coffin Mask, Roman Egypt, 2nd Century AD**
The artistic style shows how classical cultures, especially Greek and Egyptian, influenced each other. Though idealized, the face looks more realistic than other typically Egyptian masks. The inlaid eye is made from obsidian (volcanic glass).
- 8. Women's "Yellow Coffin", 21st Dynasty, 900 BC**
Women were depicted with yellow skin from working at home while men were shown with red skin tanned from working in the fields. Trees were scarce in Egypt and this coffin was made of pieces of wood joined together, plaster, paint and varnish.
- 9. Ptah Sokar Osiris figure, Early Ptolemaic, 300 BC**
This painted wooden figure with gold leaf face is an amalgamation of three funerary gods.
- 10. Limestone Shabti figure, 1200 BC**
This servant figure with duplex (double) wig and hoe is inscribed for the 'Elder of the Portal, Tuia', with the first part of Chapter 6 of the Book of the Dead, the shabti spell. Translation by Glenn Janes.

Get a closer look at the Egyptology objects in the comfort of your own home, by visiting Wigan & Leigh Archives Online and viewing our Ancient Egypt album, <http://archives.wigan.gov.uk/>



Front Cover Images

We can't remember such a busy four months at the Archives & Local Studies, with so many projects finishing or getting under way. So here is a brief digest of the work we've been involved with.

New Archives & Local Studies Proposals

The Archives (at Leigh Town Hall) and Leigh Local Studies are launching a major public consultation process to shape proposals for the development of the Archives. We have now held two public consultation meetings – one in Wigan and one in Leigh (pictured) – attended by over 90 people, who shared their ideas on our proposals.

Keeping the Archives based in Leigh Town Hall, we aim to do three things:

- Create a new, large, modern public searchroom on the ground floor of the main Town Hall building;
- Create a new Museum and Archive exhibition space in the vacant shop units on the Market Street side of the building, with a learning/community room;

- Convert the shop basements to new archive storage and renovate existing strongrooms to increase capacity for new accessions.

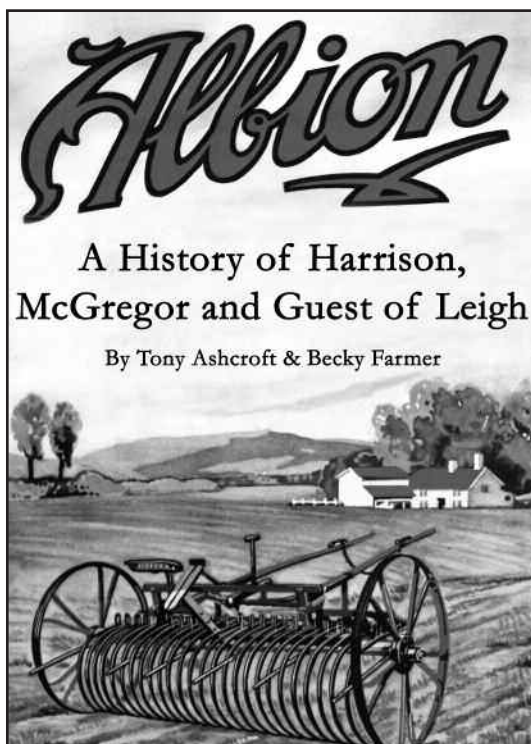
These are exciting proposals for the Archives, for Leigh and for the entire Borough, so please watch this space for more details and a consultation survey we will be launching soon.

If you'd like to find out more, the proposals are on display at the Archives, are on our website and staff would be happy to discuss these with you or come out to speak to groups interested in the plans.

National Manuscript Conservation Trust (NMCT): Edward Hall Collection Grant

We are pleased to report that the diaries submitted for professional conservation at Manchester Archives+, funded by the NMCT, are now safely back in Wigan. Nic Rayner, the Conservator there, has done a great job with the volumes, which are now once again fully accessible to researchers and will be on display soon at Wigan Local Studies and at Leigh Local Studies.





Harrison, McGregor & Guest, by Tony Ashcroft

Becky Farmer, our Digital Archives Trainee, has now finished work on Tony Ashcroft's new local history publication, on the history of the Leigh agricultural engineering firm, Harrison, McGregor & Guest. The volume includes reproductions of dozens of images and documents from the company archive and new research by Tony into the story of the firm. The publication will be available to buy from the start of August – at the Museum and the Archives – priced at £9.00. If you would like to order a copy, please get in touch with us.

Avoiding Archie: The Flying Corps Diary of Captain Walker

Also available now from the Archives is a new transcription of one of the best diaries from the Edward Hall Collection, that of Captain EGS Walker of the Royal Flying Corps. The diary is a thrilling account of one year in 1915 – before Walker was shot down and taken prisoner – and includes details of dog-fights, constant engine trouble and life in the Flying Corps. As

part of subsequent research, we even found out that before the war, Walker was Lord Baden-Powell's (of the Scouting movement) personal secretary before the war, and his post-war adventures included owning a certain famous hotel in Kenya named Treetops... Please contact us to purchase a copy.

Archives Service Accreditation from The National Archives

And finally...we are delighted to announce that the Archives have received news of the award of Accredited Archives Service status from The National Archives. The Archives Service Accreditation is a new scheme, designed to introduce a UK wide standard for services, covering all types of archives, across the country. We are proud to be one of the first to achieve the new standard. Of particular interest, the assessors noted the enormous contribution of Archive Volunteers and said:

'The application demonstrates a hugely impressive range of community engagement and digitisation activity considering the size of the service, and the Panel offered congratulations on the achievements in this area...'

Recent Acquisitions & Accessions

Wigan Archives

- Church of Christ, Wigan Area, various church records (Acc. 2015/20)
- Publication entitled, 'The Lancashire Collier Girl, A True Story' (Acc. 2015/21)
- Leigh Townswomen's Guild, records, 1960s-2000s (Acc. 2015/22)
- Letter of proposal, William Mason to Ada Glover, 1919 (Acc. 2015/25)
- Emmanuele School, Ashton-in-Makerfield, log books, 1870s-1970s (Acc. 2015/31)
- Records concerning the life and work of James Hilton, author (Acc. 2015/36)
- Chief Inspector William Arthur Jones Collection (Acc. 2015/35)
- Records of Leigh Soroptimist International

My Family and the First World War

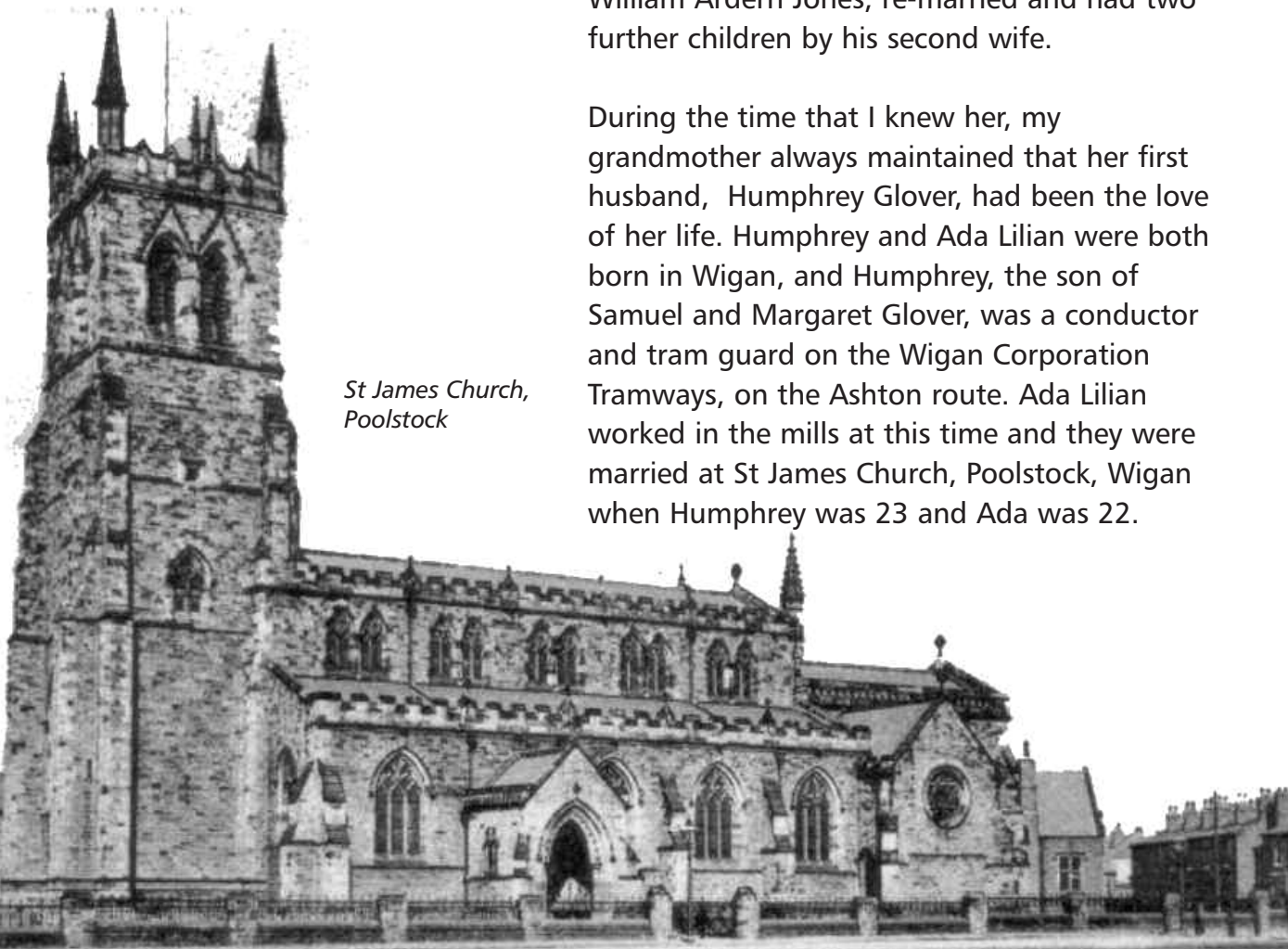
Looking back at my roots.

BY MICHAEL ARDERN MASON

The commemorations for the outbreak of the First World War reminded me of my own wartime pedigree. My grandmother, Ada Lilian Jones, married my grandfather, William Mason, after her first husband had been tragically killed in the First World War, leaving her with a young baby. Here is their story.

My grandmother never knew her own mother, because she had died in childbirth on 20 March 1891. Consequently, my grandmother Ada Lilian was brought up with her cousins, and whenever she cried for her mother as a young girl, the cousins delighted in reminding her that she had no mummy and that her mummy was dead! Meanwhile, Ada Lilian's father, William Ardern Jones, re-married and had two further children by his second wife.

During the time that I knew her, my grandmother always maintained that her first husband, Humphrey Glover, had been the love of her life. Humphrey and Ada Lilian were both born in Wigan, and Humphrey, the son of Samuel and Margaret Glover, was a conductor and tram guard on the Wigan Corporation Tramways, on the Ashton route. Ada Lilian worked in the mills at this time and they were married at St James Church, Poolstock, Wigan when Humphrey was 23 and Ada was 22.



*St James Church,
Poolstock*

On their marriage certificate Ada is shown as residing at Meadows Road and her father, William Ardern Jones, was a Cotton Warper.

When Ada and Humphrey were married, they lived at 38 Pool Street, Poolstock, Wigan, and Humphrey continued to work on the Ashton-in-Makerfield route of the Wigan Corporation tramways. They had a son, who was also named Humphrey, after his father, and on 6 January 1915, Humphrey senior enlisted at Wigan to join the King's Royal Rifle Corps of the Army. Following some important work at various Southern ports, Signaller Glover was sent to France.

He was wounded on 9 September 1916 and after recovering he returned to the front in March 1917. While on active duty he was struck by a piece of shell on Tuesday 4 December 1917 and died at the dressing station. He was 27 years old and he was buried in the Oxford Road Cemetery, Belgium, grave V.E.4.



Rifleman H. Glover

Humphrey Glover's close friend was my grandfather, William Mason. They had both worked at Wigan Corporation Tramways and it had always been understood between them that if Humphrey was killed in the war, then his best friend William would marry Ada Lilian.

Consequently, after the death of Humphrey, William Mason wrote to Ada offering his hand in marriage. As mentioned earlier, Ada had a young baby at the time, also named Humphrey Glover, and she married William Mason and had two further sons: my father, William Ardern Mason, born on 3 October 1920 and his brother John.

I have recently deposited with the Archives Service, William Mason's original, very touching four page letter of proposal to Ada prior to his discharge from the armed forces. The letter, in beautiful handwriting, was written from France on 28 February 1919 and here is a transcript of the original.

Dear Ada,

Landed here after an uneventful journey about 11.30am 27th Inst. So you see we had quite a quick passage considering, we only left Calais at 10 am on the 26th. I found the Battalion had not moved and of course I am back in the same billet. You will be surprised to know that I shall be on my way in a couple of days, back again to Blighty, for good this time. It was rather a surprise to myself to know I was to be demobilised so early. The 1914 and 1915 men are all coming home and the remainder proceeding to Germany this week end. Now I cannot tell you when I shall arrive, but will do so later, as I have to see about my teeth etc. and may be detained at some hospital, or if landing in London. There will be no need for you to answer this letter, but I wanted to write to you so that it would give you time to consider the contents.

You see I am uncertain as to what you really think of me, but I know you have a fairly good opinion, shall I say, as a friend, but whether you could care for me as a husband remains to be seen. Anyhow I promise you would never regret the plan you had taken. Now I hope you will understand why I have written and not been wishing to give you any wrong idea, you see Ada I dream of being

your husband and there is no one more than myself, and of course, more able to make you happy and comfortable. That is how I want to see you; with a home for yourself and the little chap. I expect this will come, perhaps as a shock to you, but you know how matters stand with me, and I think you will understand my writing; you see my Aunt has already a position and no doubt she will be able to carry on, whilst I get a few pence together for myself and home.

It was my intention on Sunday when I visited your house to ask you to come and meet me in the evening somewhere where we could have a talk on this subject, but of course I hadn't counted on Ethel being home, and that made me cancel it. I would rather have asked you personally than written, but you see my aunt will think I should make preparations for getting a house etc., she being anxious that we fix up her home again.

Now Ada I do hope you will consider this, I am sure we could get along comfortably together, given ordinary health and strength. I might add that there is no other woman I would be so happy with, and I am certain none other would I ask. If it so happens that you have someone else in view, and I doubt it, then I shall keep on as at present and be a very much disappointed bachelor. I shall lose no time in coming to see you when I get over, because it means everything to me; meanwhile I shall be counting the days until I get your verdict, which I earnestly hope will be favourable.

Since I have been home I have been thinking quite a lot about the future, yours as well as my own. I don't know if you have given any thought or no, to marrying again; maybe you have, and I might as well say now, that I would like to be the next one, unless you have someone more worthy in mind, or maybe someone in a better position, only nonetheless I can adopt, to let my aunt know that I cannot go into partnership with her any longer seeing that I am taking the plunge. The answer I want from you will be your giving me permission to keep you company until we fix things between us, having plenty of time to assess our suitability.

Myself I am perfectly sure as to the position you are in before considering.

I am absolutely in earnest.

So Au-revoir for the present and Best love.

Yours already

Bulgy

Ada and William were married at the Independent Methodist Church, Greenough Street, Wigan, on 7 July 1919, when William was 31 and Ada Lilian was 28. They lived together comfortably, but my grandmother always said that she had really given her heart to Humphrey and would never love William in the same way.

William and Ada Lilian developed a successful grocery stores – Mason's Stores – at Union Bridge, Ormskirk Road, Newtown, Wigan. The business provided initial employment for Humphrey, William Ardern and John, and my own father went on to develop his own grocery and confectionery business at 40 Victoria Street, Newtown, where I was born.



Ada with her second husband, my grandfather, William Mason.

Fair's Fair-Trade Stores, 215A Ormskirk Road, Newtown, which later became Mason's Stores, run by William & Ada Lilian Mason. The boys on the photo are my uncle Humphrey Glover, son of Rifleman Humphrey Glover, and my father William Ardern Mason, son of William Mason (Ada Lilian's second husband).



The family shop at Ormskirk Road

Counting the Cost:

The Lancashire and Cheshire Miners' Permanent Relief Society Collection

BY STEPHEN KNOTT, PROJECT ARCHIVIST

We are pleased to announce that Wigan Archives & Local Studies has been awarded funding by the Wellcome Trust to undertake a project to promote and develop the archives of the Lancashire and Cheshire Miners' Permanent Relief Society (LCMPRS).

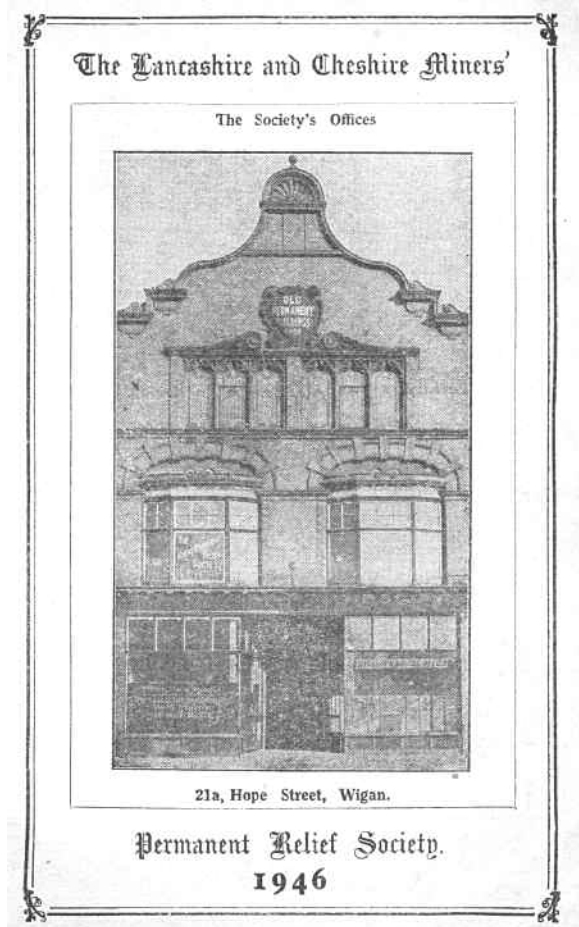
The Society was formed in 1872 to provide financial relief to injured or ill miners and the families of those who were killed. The records generated by the Society provide an invaluable insight into the working conditions endured by miners and the impact this had on their health and the on wellbeing of their families and the communities in which they lived. With its head offices in Wigan, the Society continued to give financial assistance to mining families until the 1980s.

The collection not only records the management and administration of the Society, but also includes a large number of individual claims files, containing medical records and depositions. There are also several series of case files of claimants with specific industrial diseases, such as silicosis and pneumoconiosis. Records relating to the Maypole and Hulton (Pretoria) pit disasters weigh heavily in the collection.

The 'Counting the Cost' project will unlock this important collection of records for the study of industrial injury and disease in the Lancashire and Cheshire coalfields. The collection will be fully indexed and catalogued to international standards and these will be made accessible online. Selected records will also be digitised and again made available online through the new Wigan & Leigh Archives Online website.

Though not the largest of Britain's coalfields, the collieries of Lancashire and Cheshire were amongst the most dangerous to work. Once completed the project will enable new areas of study into the social, economic and medical histories of the mining communities of Lancashire and Cheshire. It will also allow for a greater understanding of the injuries and illnesses suffered by local miners and how these impacted on their lives and the lives of their families.

Volunteers will play an important role in the project. Tasks will include cleaning and re-boxing records, the production of name indexes and the digitisation of many of the most important documents. Full training will be given. This is an exciting opportunity for anyone interested in local history. If you would like to volunteer or would like more information then please contact Stephen Knott, the Project Archivist, on 01942 404430 or by emailing archives@wigan.gov.uk



BY LARRY McCARTHY

A LIFE WELL LIVED

Thomas McCarthy, Champion Wrestler, War Hero and Trainer of Wigan Rugby League Club

It would be difficult to fully describe in just one article, a life as varied and fascinating as that of Thomas McCarthy, champion wrestler, war hero and trainer of Wigan Rugby League Football Club (RLFC). Nevertheless, an attempt will be made to do justice to the career of this remarkable man.

Thomas McCarthy, who often spelt his name McCarty, was born in the small seaside mining town of Ryhope in County Durham in 1883. His parents hailed from Cork in Southern Ireland and had emigrated to England due to the economic pressures of the time and the great Irish famine of 1845. Although Thomas' father, Edward, was a miner, they were in spirit an artistic and nomadic family and they soon moved to Wigan where they joined Thomas' uncle, William Power, who in the late nineteenth century was reputed to be one of the best known clowns in Wigan Borough.

In fact, his parents opened the old theatre over the Shakespeare Hotel in Wigan. His mother was also a champion dancer in the Lancashire and Irish styles and she was influential upon a young Thomas, teaching him clog dancing. However, it was his impressively built uncle who took him under his wing. This eventually led to Thomas working as a gymnast in travelling circuses which were very common at the time. Bizarrely he also had a stint as a professional ghost. Will Power and his nephew also performed as minstrels in a number of shows throughout the North East. Amongst other things Thomas was also later credited to have been the first person in Wigan to operate a cinema reel.

Throughout his life, Thomas extolled the virtues of physical fitness and incredibly, at the young age of 16, had become a physical training instructor in the Royal Navy. However, being needed at home, his parents purchased his discharge and he returned to Wigan. The lure of military life was never far away and sometime later he joined the Royal Field



Caricature of Thomas McCarthy, in Rugby League days.

Artillery and was stationed at the Curragh army camp in Ireland. After serving his term of enlistment, he again returned to Wigan and went to work as a miner in one of the many coal pits which provided a living to many local men. It was during this time that he put his physical attributes to good use and came to prominence as a weightlifter and above all a wrestler in the Lancashire Catch as Catch Can style.

This regional style of wrestling, which could at times be brutal, often took place in open fields for side stakes and wagers. Most matches were decided by either two falls or a submission. Despite its notoriety

as a tough and violent sport, which appealed to its working class followers, it did often follow a set of rules prescribed by the now defunct Manchester Sporting Chronicle.

Between 1900 and the outbreak of the First World War, wrestling was considered to have experienced a golden age and was at the time one of the most popular spectator sports in Britain, Europe and North America. World champions like George Hackenschmidt, the Russian Lion, were household names. Lancashire and Wigan in particular were considered hot beds of the sport and produced an astonishing number of champions in relation to the rest of the population. It was in this environment that Thomas eventually succeeded in becoming 9st 7lb, Catch as Catch Can Wrestling Champion of England and was recognised as one of the best featherweights of his era. He was also a very early exponent of the Japanese martial art of Jiu Jitsu.

Arguably his greatest victory in the sport came on the 13 June 1914, a few months before the outbreak of the First World War. Whilst on exercises as a territorial soldier in North Wales with the 5th Battalion of the Manchester Regiment, he was chosen to take on W Pritchard, the 12st 6lbs wrestling champion of Wales. This match was organised by Sir Charles Assheton-Smith, Lord of Carnarvon and at stake was a silver cup of the value of £15 for the winner. A number of officers from the battalion were in attendance, as well as several thousand labourers and quarrymen invited by the Lord.

Although Pritchard, dubbed 'the Welsh Hackenschmidt', was almost three stone heavier than Thomas and by all accounts an impressive physical specimen, he was unable to deal with the Wiganer's speed and technique and after seven and half minutes of wrestling was defeated by two falls to none. The silver cup was renamed the 'McCarty Rose Bowl' and was kept on display in the Officer's mess of the 5th Manchester Regiment at the Drill Hall in Wigan.

Like many local men, Thomas had volunteered to serve as a territorial soldier in the 5th Battalion, Manchester Regiment, which was primarily made up of men from Wigan, Leigh and Patricroft. Due to his previous military experience with the RFA, he was appointed as a Lance Sergeant, with B Company. By the time war broke out and his battalion landed in Egypt – on the 25 September – he was already a full Sergeant.



Wrestling match at Abbassia, from the Wigan Military Chronicle.

It was whilst stationed in Abbassia barracks near Cairo, in February 1915, that he issued a wrestling challenge in the Egyptian Mail to any man of his weight category, for a sum to be agreed by both parties or the best purse offered. Such was the reputation of Wigan wrestlers at that time that even the ANZACS were reluctant to take the challenge, but eventually the Australian Hitchcox stepped up only to be defeated by Thomas. Thereafter, he was referred to as the wrestling 'Champion of Egypt' and subsequently refereed the 5th Battalion wrestling competition between Private Walsh and Private Cassidy, the former being victorious.

His battalion took part in the Gallipoli campaign, landing on the peninsula at Cape Helles on the 6 May 1915 and eventually they became part of the 127th Brigade of the 42nd East Lancashire Division.



Company Sergeant-Major T. McCarthy, from the Wigan Observer.

It was whilst serving there that he was awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal for gallantry. The DCM was a second level gallantry award for NCOs and other ranks and ranked second only to the Victoria Cross. A recipient was entitled to carry the initials DCM after their name and also earned an extra pension. All awards were accompanied by a citation in the Government's official paper, the London Gazette.

The announcement of Thomas' award was included in King George V's Birthday Honours on the 3 June 1916 and the Citation appeared soon after on the 21 June 1916. It read 'For consistent gallantry and good work under heavy fire'. Compared to many other citations, his was brief. By that stage of the war many details, specifically dates and locations, were deliberately omitted due to reasons of national security. The King's Birthday Honours were generally considered to honour acts of gallantry over a sustained period of time, rather than one single event. He was also mentioned in despatches on the 13 July 1916. This despatch, submitted by Sir Charles Monro to the Secretary of State for War, covered the end of the Gallipoli campaign, from 28 November 1915 to the evacuation of the peninsula on the 9 January 1916.

Unfortunately, Thomas' First World War service records did not survive the Second World War, when all but a third of all soldiers' service records were destroyed in a German bombing raid which scored a direct hit on the War Office during the Blitz. Nevertheless, battalion histories do specifically refer to a splendid act of gallantry on the 6 August 1915, during the Battle of Krithia Vineyard in Cape Helles. After an assault on Turkish trenches and with their Lieutenant killed, Sergeant McCarty, under heavy and accurate rifle fire, extracted and saved a trapped party of wounded territorials from a Turkish trench. This action alone would have warranted an award for gallantry.

After Gallipoli, his battalion returned to Egypt and by that stage he had been promoted in the field to Company Sergeant Major, a rank he would maintain until the end of the conflict. Around April 1916, whilst stationed near the Suez Canal, he organised a number of rugby matches at regimental level and the team he trained was reputed to have been undefeated, a prelude to the distinguished career he would have with Wigan RLFC.

In January 1917, Thomas, by now a war hero, was granted leave and returned home for the only time during the war, where he remarried, having being left a widower with two young children in early 1914. In February, he returned to his battalion who were now stationed on the Western Front in northern France and remained on active service until he was demobilised in January 1919.

It appears that the sport of wrestling did not recover its former status after the war and sadly many local wrestlers were amongst the endless lists of casualties. However, Thomas maintained an interest, albeit not as a competitor, and some years later in 1930 was elected Chairman of the Wigan Boxing and Wrestling Association. He was instrumental in organising a number of well attended local events in an attempt to revive the sport. Well-known local wrestlers such as World Champion Billy Riley and Thomas' son, Thomas McCarthy Junior, performed at these shows. Thomas Junior inherited some of his father's ability and eventually became Lightweight Wrestling Champion of the North in the 1930s.

It was back in August 1919 that Thomas' career would really take off, being offered the role of Wigan RLFC trainer, a role he would fill for the next twenty years until the outbreak of another global conflict. Up until the legendary Jim Sullivan's appointment as player manager in 1932, the trainer was responsible for team affairs and Thomas was in charge of the 'Cherry and Whites' on the first two occasions they won the Rugby League Challenge Cup.

The first success was in 1924 at Rochdale, when Wigan defeated Oldham 21-4 and the second was in 1929 when Wigan defeated Dewsbury 13-2. The 1929 final was the first to be held at Wembley Stadium. Even after Jim Sullivan's appointment, Thomas retained his role as trainer and was often referred to as 'Carty' by the players.



Wigan RLFC, Challenge Cup Winners, 1923-1924

After the Second World War, Thomas remained active and for a few years was Chairman of the Ince Royal British Legion. As a pensioner, he reignited his boyhood passion for marionettes and laid on well received Punch and Judy shows for local children.

Thomas passed away on 27 September 1954, aged 71, and was laid to rest in Gidlow Cemetery in Wigan, but not after having built up an astonishing curriculum vitae and having lived his life to the full.

Heritage Open Weekend at Abram Parish Church

Abram Parish Church is pleased to announce that once again it will be hosting events for the national **Heritage Open Weekend**.

On **12 September 2015** the Abram Church Heritage Open Day will take place, between 10.00am and 4.00pm. The Church will be open for prayer, tours, refreshments, family history and churchyard enquiries.

Abram Parish Church Jazz Band



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.

Wigan & Leigh Archives Online



We are pleased to be able to announce that our new online archive is now available to researchers.

After several months of upgrading, our old image website has now been relaunched as Wigan & Leigh Archives Online (W&LAO).

The new website contains all the same historic images as the old site, in addition to thousands more historic photographs, documents and images of objects from the Museum collection, including the recently restored Egyptology artefacts.



W&LAO also hosts our new Wigan Borough Online War Memorial. This database includes details on every person recorded on the Wigan Council managed, First World War war memorials around the Borough, plus digitised local newspaper extracts from the duration of the war. The project was completed thanks to the hard work and dedication of Archives & Local Studies staff and volunteers and following a grant from the Wigan Council First World War Commemorative Fund.

New functionality on W&LAO will also allow you to download images or documents directly from the site for personal use. Rather than wait for copies or scans on CD, for £3 per image you can now get your hands on images at the click of a button!

We will be adding new content to the site over time and would welcome contributions from readers and researchers.

You can visit the site at: <http://archives.wigan.gov.uk/>

Coming soon to W&LAO: Leigh Military Tribunal Records, First World War Coroner records and Leigh Postcard Collection...

BY KEN TAYLOR

The Lancashire Collier Girl Part Two

Ken Taylor continues his examination of the Lancashire morality tale.

In Part One, I looked at the Up Holland background to 'The Lancashire Collier Girl', one of Hannah More's 'Cheap Repository Tracts', published at the end of the nineteenth century. In this part I want to look at her use of the story as well as at some co-incidental links.

Hannah More was a dramatist, a devout Evangelist, a leading figure in developing Sunday Schools and a major figure in the fight to abolish slavery. Like many of her contemporary philanthropists she was well meaning, sensitive and tireless but her tracts were aimed more to help the underprivileged to accept their lot, rather than to find ways to improve it. This, though, was not the emphasis of Joseph Budworth. 'Over-tinctured with too much religion', he commented in a version which he published himself in 1797. He had described Betty's sister singing a good ditty as she span. More changes it to, 'a cheerful hymn or a good moral song which her parents had taken care to teach her'.

When the father is killed More considered it, 'an affliction appointed by Providence to be the means of calling some extraordinary virtue into existence.' Betty (More names her Mary) is praised for not seeking unnecessary help from the Parish and for her determination to maintain herself. When she reached 'full strength' she could do this with only five days work but she wanted more: 'not to lay out money in vanity of dress', but to release the Parish from the burthen of maintaining her mother.'

Even as a little girl Betty had cheerfully gone with her father, 'burying herself in the bowels of the earth... in submission to the command of God which enjoins parental obedience.' When explaining that Betty worked among, 'a race of men, rough indeed', she added that her 'virtue was safe.' When totally worn out with, 'bad food and great bodily fatigue joined with excessive grief', God provided her with kind friends. To More the tale would, 'teach the poor that they can seldom be in condition of life so low as to prevent their raising to some degree of independence if they chuse [sic] to exert themselves', and encourage them to, 'do their duty in that state of life into which it hath pleased God to call them'.

As explained in Part One, this was not Budworth's emphasis. Overtly sycophantic at times, his tone had been more of the kindness of William Bankes but he was also clearly impressed by Betty herself. He wanted her story to be about her. In 1797, he published his own version adding details of her name, her residence and those of William Bankes of Winstanley Hall. In

1798, he wrote another article in 'The Gentleman's Magazine', adding details of her loyalty to her country and her promotion!

There are, too, some interesting, if co-incidental, local connections. The person who rewrote the story for Hannah More was Henry Thornton, an MP and eminent banker famous for his influential, 'Enquiry into the nature and effects of the use of paper credit in Great Britain'. Copies of his letters and journals were collected by a local book dealer, Edward Hall, and are now in the Wigan Archives. One entry recounts that it was he who rewrote the story at Hannah More's request: 'I thought it so good a subject that it well deserved all the pains I gave it.' Co-incidentally, too, Thornton's daughter, Marianne, was the subject of a biography by her great-nephew, E. M. Forster (A Passage to India), extensively using what he refers to as, 'the Wigan Volume'.

We tend to think now of the do-gooders, the Hannah Mores, as patronising and over religious. But the story clearly moved her; she cared. William Bankes may have checked to make sure Betty deserved help but then he did help. Edward Thornton wasn't only trying to keep down the rates. All put in considerable time, effort, thought and their own money. The Up Holland mining community's concern for Betty really impressed Budworth and he cared enough that he wanted her properly named, not simply a figure in a moral tale. For those wishing to investigate the story and the issues more deeply, a print of Hannah More's 'The Lancashire Collier Girl', together with two other poems, is available at Wigan Archives. Joseph Budworth's articles are in 'The Gentleman's Magazine', for March 1795 and December 1798. In 1797, when he published his original story together with another pamphlet, A View of the Village of Hampton, it was under the name Joseph Palmer. A modern print of this is also available. A detailed comparison of the two versions is discussed by PEH Hair, published in the 'Transactions of the Lancashire and Cheshire Historical Society', Volume 20 (1969). He looks at various related aspects and in an appendix discusses problems tracing the Hodsons in parish registers. In, 'Hannah More, First Victorian', Anne Stott discusses the 'Cheap Repository Tracts'. The registers of St Thomas the Martyr, 'Upholland from 1736 - 1812', have recently been published by the Lancashire Parish Register Society. The registers 'All Saints, Wigan from 1741 to 1784' have also been published by the LPRS. Later ones are awaiting publication. The papers of the Bankes of Winstanley Hall are held in the Lancashire Record Office. The Thornton papers are in the Wigan Archives.

Not to be Tainted with Pauperism: The First World War's Wounded Soldiers at Leigh

by Yvonne Eckersley

In the course of the First World War, the War Office ran out of hospital space for wounded soldiers. Such was the stigma surrounding Poor Law Institutions, that when they announced their intention of expanding capacity by utilising Poor Law facilities, the general public was incensed.

As a result of popular indignation, the War Office was required to deflect the perception that wounded soldiers treated in Workhouses and Asylums would be tainted with pauperism. Consequently, they were required to create specific and separate War and Auxiliary Hospitals within Poor Law buildings under the auspices of the War Office.

At the forefront of this process was the identification, then allocation of military-specific names for such hospitals. Hence, the County Lunatic Asylum at Winwick, became The Lord Derby War Hospital, Winwick for soldiers of other ranks. As one of Winwick's auxiliary hospitals, Leigh Union's Women's Pavilion became The Military Hospital, Leigh Road.

The annexing of Leigh to Winwick formalised an existing supportive relationship between the Lord Derby War Hospital and Leigh's community. The Journal reported that fifty of Winwick's soldier-patients were entertained in Leigh's Co-operative Hall in February 1916.

The first convoy of wounded arrived in Leigh on the 24 May 1917. The Journal records that by November 1917, 260 soldiers had passed through; by January 1918 the number was 320. By May 1918, in direct correlation with the Western Front's huge Spring battles, the number reached 565. I have no actual number up to and beyond the Armistice and the Hospital's closure in April/May 1919. My assumption however, is that given the situation in France, it would have been significantly higher.

One Colonel Coates of the War Office and the administrators of the Lord Derby War Hospital – not Leigh Union Guardians – were ultimately responsible for Leigh Military Hospital's establishment. This is not to say the Guardians were completely sidelined. Leigh Union had a specific Committee whose role was to

interact with the military authorities. The Union Minute books record communications surrounding the acquisition of the necessary bedsteads, mattresses, linen and crockery, the difficulty of the provision of adequate cooking arrangements and, tellingly, the type of food for patients. Whereas porridge and no jam was perfectly acceptable for pauper patients, Lord Derby War Hospital's clerk insisted the use of their dietary table, with soldiers offered bacon or eggs five days a week for breakfast, and jam with their tea.

The War Office's priority was to provide a system of recuperative care to facilitate the return of wounded soldiers to the front line, and Leigh's Military Hospital provided the last stage in soldiers' progress. Besides immediate and specific medical care, provided by Dr. Hall, the Matron and

Wounded soldiers visiting Howe Bridge Mills.



a team of nursing and ancillary workers, soldiers needed a range of activities to help them regain their strength, skills and morale.

Community Support

From the outset of the war, Leigh people, either individually, as employers, clubs and/or associations, provided a diverse range of activities, giving their time, money and effort willingly. After 1917, the Guardian's Comforts Committee tapped into this and helped organise the gifting. Soldiers received games, books, newspapers, tobacco and cigarettes; small groups were entertained to tea by Leigh's Ladies; Leigh Liberal Club donated two Billiard tables; JH Hayes offered the use of tennis courts to be used as a Bowling Green and the Anchor Cable Works (BICC) organised bowling matches.

For large groups of men attending events there was the expense and logistics of transportation. When Leigh Golf Club at Kenyon offered soldiers use of their links on Wednesdays, they agreed to pay soldiers' rail fare from Pennington to Kenyon Stations. Similarly in 1918, when the women workers at the Anchor Cable Works provided tea and entertainment for 140 soldiers, the South Lancashire Tramways Company footed the bill. Interestingly, in May 1918, a concert was given for the wounded soldiers by Thomas Burke, the Lancashire Caruso, at the Hippodrome.

Not all offers were deemed acceptable. In 1916, Leigh Infirmary's Board rejected Firs Lane Conservative Club's invitation to a Hotpot stating it was against Army Regulations. They did however, give soldiers a tea, whist drive and concert to celebrate the Matron's birthday.



AC Burrows, Matron at Leigh Infirmary.

The Military Hospital was not the only provider of hospital care in Leigh. In September 1914, the fledgling Leigh Infirmary offered the War Office 12 beds in its female ward for Lancashire soldiers. However, perhaps because it was so small, organisational problems arose with military authorities. As early as December 1914, its Board was complaining of too few patients and as remuneration was dependent on patients, a half empty ward was not cost effective. Not that the War Office were forthcoming. By 1916, the subject of non-payment was becoming an issue. In October 1917, their receipt of wounded soldiers was suspended until eleven soldiers arrived in September 1918.

Conflict

However much the War Office proclaimed that the wounded would be treated without recourse to the Poor Law, Leigh Guardians found to their cost the limitations of this rhetoric. With War Office funding not covering the expense of maintaining Leigh's Military Hospital, the Guardians found

themselves in the unfortunate position of having to supplement soldiers' care from the Poor Rates.

The Guardians made a conscious decision not to add to the burden on local rate-payers. When in April 1918, the War office required further provision, the Guardians insisted that they would not allow their officers – including ancillary staff – to assist in nursing unless they were properly paid. The War Office agreed to the Guardians' terms and sixty beds were commissioned in the female wing.

This independence of thought was not new. Throughout the War the Guardians refused to accept actual or financial responsibility for mentally unstable soldiers who were resident in the Leigh Union. They consistently resisted demands, including legal threats, from the War Office and its local representatives at the Lord Derby War Hospital. Their rationale was to prevent soldiers, mentally scarred as a consequence of military service, from acquiring the life-long stigma of being labelled as 'pauper lunatics' rather than men who were war-disabled.

Official recognition of War as the source of their 'insanity' meant soldiers, like John Alty of Railway Road, would be granted a Service Pension which was designed to lift them above 'pauper lunatic' status within Asylums. If they died in a County Asylum, they would, like John Alty, be awarded a military style burial in their home town, not an anonymous internment in a pauper grave. In this they were supported by Leigh's Liberal MP, PW Raffan, Leigh people, local press and the Lancashire County Asylum Board.

By its closure the Guardians' Minute books record just three deaths of wounded soldiers in the Military Hospital. Tragically these deaths, in February 1919, were not of wounds, but from the Spanish Flu.

BY TOM WALSH

Frederick Joseph Jervis, DFM: Pathfinder, 156 Squadron, Group 8



The wedding of Fred and Rosaline, 2 August 1943.

On the morning of 6 June 1920, there was great excitement in Silver Street, Wigan. Fred and Annie Jervis were delivered of a son, who was to be named after his father and his mother's brother, Joseph Molloy, who was killed in the First World War. Little could they have imagined on that summer morning that a journey had begun that would eventually lead Annie to Buckingham Palace and a meeting with King George VI in heart-breaking circumstances.

Frederick Joseph Patrick Jervis had an idyllic childhood, brought up with loving parents and his Aunty Lizzie who lived with them. Fourteen years later the family was made complete when a sister Elizabeth arrived, named after their beloved Aunty. Fred doted on Betty, as she was always known. Betty still lives in the house they moved to when Fred was thirteen and is as proud of his memory as he was of his baby sister. In one of his war-time letters home he worries about her safety on a bicycle that he bought for her; what a tribute to his humanity that whilst facing the enemy he worries about the people at home.

Fred Jervis was born two years after the Great War had ended, 'the war to end all wars'. Had that proved to be the

case this typewriter would be silent and years of heartbreak would have been avoided for the Jervis Family. Betty still feels a great sense of loss, 71 years after that tragic day. She regularly visits Fred's grave in Wigan Cemetery; this too could have been very different if fate had played a different hand. In a strange way his family were grateful that they were able to visit his resting place – he was not to be like Joseph Molloy, a young man buried in a 'foreign field', something that his sisters fretted about for the rest of their lives.

After St. Patrick's School, Fred secured a job at Santus Toffee Works, 'Uncles Joe's'. Later he joined Pendlebury's Department Store, then the Royal Air Force and ultimately Squadron 156, the Pathfinders. They were the bravest of the brave, all volunteers who put their lives on the line night after night to lead bombers over well defended enemy territory. This was the most dangerous of tasks, so much so that the crews were limited as to how many sorties they could take part in. At the inception of the group in 1942, the limit was 60; such was the loss of life that this was reduced to 45 to encourage volunteers. Fred took part in 47, flying over 300 hours. He was posted to Upwood Air Base, Lincoln, to train new volunteers as Pathfinders and it was there that he lost his life

in a training accident. All ten men aboard died, nine immediately and the other one the following day from horrendous burns.

The citation for F. J. P. Jervis, DFM, reads:

'L/G 18/1/1944. Sorties 47, Flying hours 302.

Flight Engineer. Air2/9153.

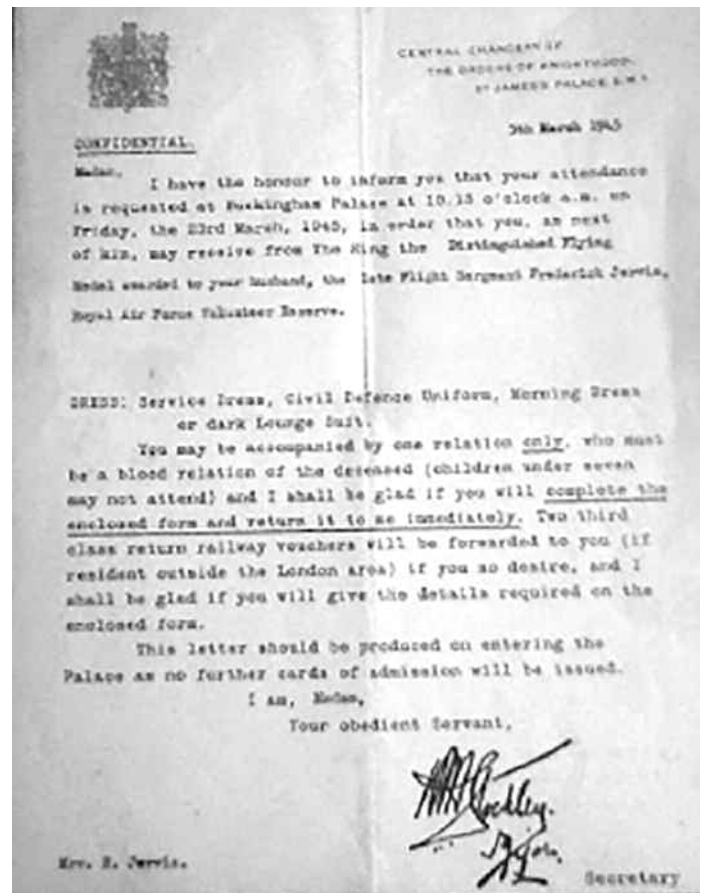
As a Flight Engineer, Flight Sergeant Jervis had carried out a continuous tour of 47 operations against the majority of heavily defended targets in Germany and enemy occupied territory. His unfailing reliability and coolness have been of the highest order. Throughout he has shown commendable knowledge and skill, always setting a very high example to the rest of the Flight Engineers of the squadron. His outstanding devotion to duty as a member of an exceptional Pathfinder Force crew makes him a very worthy recipient of the award of the Distinguished Flying Medal. 21st November 1943.'

The Pathfinder Force was founded in August 1942. It began operations within a few hours of its formation and continued its work leading the main force against the enemy until the bombers offensive ceased shortly before VE Day. The gallantry of the group is legendary and its contribution to the war effort immense. Number 8 Pathfinder Group was the only officially recognised elite unit of Royal Air Force Bomber Command during the Second World War. They lost at least 3729 men on operations.

Fred's sister Betty has helped me so much in preparing this article, giving me unfettered access to all her photographs and documents. Now eighty years old and as sharp as ever she was obviously still saddened by the loss of her big brother at such a young age. She describes it, 'as a hurt that never fully heals', but there is no bitterness or self pity. There is, however, a great sense of pride, and mementos are on display in her home including his medals.

One of her special treasures is the letter of invitation to the Palace; another is a copy of the book, 'Never a Dull War, Memoirs of a Pilot', by Squadron Leader W. G. Manifold, DFC. Fred is mentioned several times; his image is also on the front cover, taken from an original photograph. Betty was also delighted to receive news that a tree dedicated to her brother's memory was planted on 21 March 1999 at The National Arboretum; 'and instead of the briar shall come up the myrtle tree'.

Fred Jervis married his sweetheart Rosaline on the 2 August 1943. After a brief honeymoon Fred went back to duty. Shortly before his death Fred had been informed that he was to receive the Distinguished Flying Medal (DFM). He also received news from Wigan that he was to become a father. I've had sight of his last letter; in it he says he is looking forward to marking the good news with a celebratory drink with his family, and looking forward to meeting the King. In a cruel twist it was his wife and mother who would take his place at Buckingham Palace. Rosaline lost the baby a short



Invitation to Buckingham Palace, received by the Jervis family.

time after receiving the devastating news that after facing the enemy night after night he lost his life in a training accident. His family have always believed that the shock of the loss of Fred was at the very least a contributory factor in the loss of the baby.

The part that sadden me whilst doing research on Fred Jervis is how this class ridden society treated different social groups. For instance, if Fred had been an officer he would have been awarded a Distinguished Flying Cross (DFC) as opposed to the Medal, whilst the travel warrant sent for the visit to London for his wife and mother, would have been first class not third. Valour knows no difference between rich and poor, between officer and rank and file; bravery is bravery whether you use napkins or not.

Forgive the ludicrous analogy, but it does seem to sum up the ridiculousness of treating heroes differently based on which side of the tracks they were born! After a review in 1993 this anomaly was rectified and the DFC became available to all ranks, and the DFM discontinued not a moment to soon!

I'm sure that Annie and Fred Jervis Sr. would be pleased that his bravery and dedication have not been forgotten, and his contribution remembered to the defeat of the Nazi ideology which would have undoubtedly spread its tentacles throughout the world without the likes of their brave son and thousands like him. Thank God for their courage and steadfastness.

Wigan and Slavery

By Derek Winstanley

From the mid-eighteenth, through to the mid-nineteenth, centuries Wigan and surrounding townships grew rapidly. The population of the area mushroomed on the back of coal, cotton and iron industries, fuelled by private wealth and entrepreneurship. The construction of the Leeds-Liverpool canal opened up large-scale coal production in the Wigan area in the 1770s.

In 1774 Jonathan Blundell started to mine coal in Orrell and in the 1800s the Blundell family mined coal in Ince, Wigan, Blackrod, Chorley, Winstanley and Pemberton. Coal production at Blundell's Pemberton Collieries rocketed to a peak of 738,000 tons in 1913, when it was the largest colliery in Lancashire. Over one hundred steam locomotives were built at Haigh Foundry, owned by the Earl of Balcarres, including The Walking Horse in 1812 and two more steam locomotives by 1816.

The Walking Horse, operating on John Clarke's Winstanley and Orrell colliery railway, was the third commercially successful steam locomotive in the world and the first to cross a viaduct. The Earl's collieries, together with the Kirkless Hall Coal and Iron Co. Ltd., and two smaller concerns,

formed the nucleus of the vast Wigan Coal and Iron Company, established in 1865 as the largest joint-stock company in the country, excluding railways.

So, where did the Blundells, Clarke and the Earl of Balcarres get their money? Through the early nineteenth century, landowners, merchants, bankers, ministers, lawyers and manufacturers supplied capital to finance relatively small-scale mining and quarrying operations. However, as John Langton concludes, large infusions of capital were needed to sustain and expand the coal production industry and many of these people were incapable of making the necessary investments.

In his book, *The Orrell Coalfield*, Donald Anderson mentions that Liverpool's corporation engaged extensively in the slave trade. He reports that Bryan Blundell engaged in the slave trade, founded Liverpool's first charity school, the Bluecoat School, and was instrumental in founding Liverpool Infirmary, Warrington Academy and 36 almshouses in Liverpool. His son, Jonathan, became treasurer of the school and Colonel Henry Blundell owned Pemberton Collieries and built St. Matthew's Church and

schools in Highfield, where I was baptized and educated.

Anderson also mentions that a list of the 'Company of Merchants trading to Africa' included Henry Blundell and his friends, and that Henry Blundell was much concerned about William Roscoe and other abolitionists trying to end the slave trade.

Let us look a bit deeper into the Liverpool slave trade. From 1695 to 1807, 5,300 voyages from Liverpool transported almost one and a half million slaves to the New World. By 1787, thirty seven of the forty one members of Liverpool Council were involved in slavery. All of Liverpool's twenty Mayors between 1787 and 1807 were involved. Liverpool's net proceeds from the African trade in 1783-1793 are said to have been £12,294,116.

There is much evidence to document deep and lucrative involvement in the slave trade by the Blundells and their partners, Thomas Leyland, William Earle, Samuel Warren and Edward Chaffers. Records show that from 1722 to 1784, slave ships owned by the Blundells conducted 113 voyages with 31,341 slaves embarking in West Africa and 25,313 disembarking in the Caribbean.

I am not sure if John Clarke, owner of the Winstanley and Orrell collieries, and the Walking Horse, was directly involved in the slave trade, but there is no doubt that as a major Liverpool banker he benefited greatly from the slave trade. His father established the first bank in Liverpool in 1774.

I have found no evidence that the Bankes family of Winstanley was directly involved in the slavetrade, but there is no doubt they and other land owners benefited greatly from leasing land and mineral rights to Liverpool entrepreneurs. In the nineteenth century, Bankes developed their own colliery and railway, landscaped Winstanley Estate and bought an 80,000 acre estate in Scotland.

Robert Daghish built the Walking Horse and two more early steam locomotives at Haigh Foundry, so it is also important to identify sources of capital for the foundry. There is strong evidence that much of the capital to renovate Haigh Estate and expand the foundry came from the slave trade. When Alexander Lindsay, 6th Earl of Balcarres, took over Haigh Hall it carried a debt of £6,000 and was in terrible condition.

The Earl's salvation came when King George III appointed him Lieutenant Governor of Jamaica, where he served from 1794 to 1801. There were more than a quarter of a million slaves on the island of Jamaica, where he purchased plantations and employed hundreds of slaves. It is reasonable to assume that he also profited from the sale of sugar and other products from his plantations. Further, he contracted slave-labour for the army and the civil government

in Jamaica. On completing his term as Governor, he received about £65,000.

On returning to Haigh, the Earl is reported to have established an, 'Aggrandising Fund', for the purpose of accumulating wealth for his family and in 1804 he appointed Robert Daghish as engineer at Haigh Foundry. The Slave Trade Act of 1807 abolished the slave trade in the British Empire, but not slavery itself. It was not until 26 years later that slavery was abolished. With the Abolition of Slavery Act of 1833, James Lindsay, the 7th Earl of Balcarres and Baron of Wigan, was paid £14,473.15s.6d compensation for 895 slaves in Jamaica. The Earl built Haigh Hall between 1827 and 1840 on the site of the ancient manor house.



James Lindsay, 24th Earl of Crawford and 7th Earl of Balcarres (1783-1869), who owned 895 slaves in Jamaica.

Landed gentry, London businessmen and local entrepreneurs had accumulated sufficient wealth to capitalize increasingly large collieries and early railways through the early nineteenth century. Around Wigan, local entrepreneurs had sufficient capital to get the ball rolling, but insufficient resources to capitalize large collieries and

railways. This is where Liverpool merchants and bankers, who had become wealthy from the slave trade, stepped in.

Wigan Dissenters sent several petitions to the 1830 Parliament for the abolition of slavery and James Cropper (1773-1840), a Quaker born in Winstanley, played a prominent role in the abolition of slavery. His mother was Rebecca Winstanley. Cropper served as Chairman of the Liverpool Anti-Slavery Society and his female relatives played central roles. William Roscoe, a partner of John Clarke, Thomas Leyland and the Earles, was also a strong advocate for the abolition of slavery.

In the mills and coal mines worked what many called 'white slaves', including women and children. The Factory Act was passed the same year as the Abolition of Slavery Act in 1833. This Act made it illegal to employ children under nine years of age. In 1842, the Mines and Collieries Act removed women from the coal face, but still permitted boys over the age of ten to work underground.

Only in 1870, with the passage of the Education Act, did it become mandatory for all under the age 14 to attend school full time. Social morals have changed over time, but black and white slaves are woven into the history and development of Wigan and other towns and cities. Many human beings were exploited and suffered, while others benefited.

For references, please visit: <http://independent.academia.edu/DerekWinstanley> where you can find other local history articles by Derek Winstanley.

Local Government Victorian Style

By Bill Melling

The recent Scottish referendum has reawakened interest in devolving government down to a more local level – once again, an example of history repeating itself.

From Victorian times up to the Second World War, 'local government' really was local. The town councils of boroughs like Wigan & Leigh took direct responsibility for such matters as law and order, public health, education, the supply of gas, water and electricity, and the provision of public transport.

Each council function was the responsibility of a sub-committee of the town council who in turn appointed professional managers to run the various enterprises. At the head of these professionals was the town clerk, usually a lawyer, whose job it was to co-ordinate the activities of the various enterprises and to advise - but not dictate to - the mayor and corporation on matters of policy and finance.

For the past eighteen months or so, a group of volunteers have been busy at the Borough Archives, cataloguing documents from a group of boxes thought to have come from the Wigan Town Clerk's office. There are dozens of these boxes which had lain unopened since they were transferred from Wigan to the Archives at Leigh town hall when the present Metropolitan Borough was created in the early 1970s. They were thought to contain contract documents of little historic interest and it was only when volunteer effort became available that they could be catalogued.

The hundreds of documents contained in the collection have been found to date from mid-Victorian times to the 1920s. Although many of them deal with contractual matters, the majority cover a wide variety of other topics relating to local government. They include prosecutions for selling rotten fish, to the Borough Treasurer absconding with £10,000 from the town's funds.

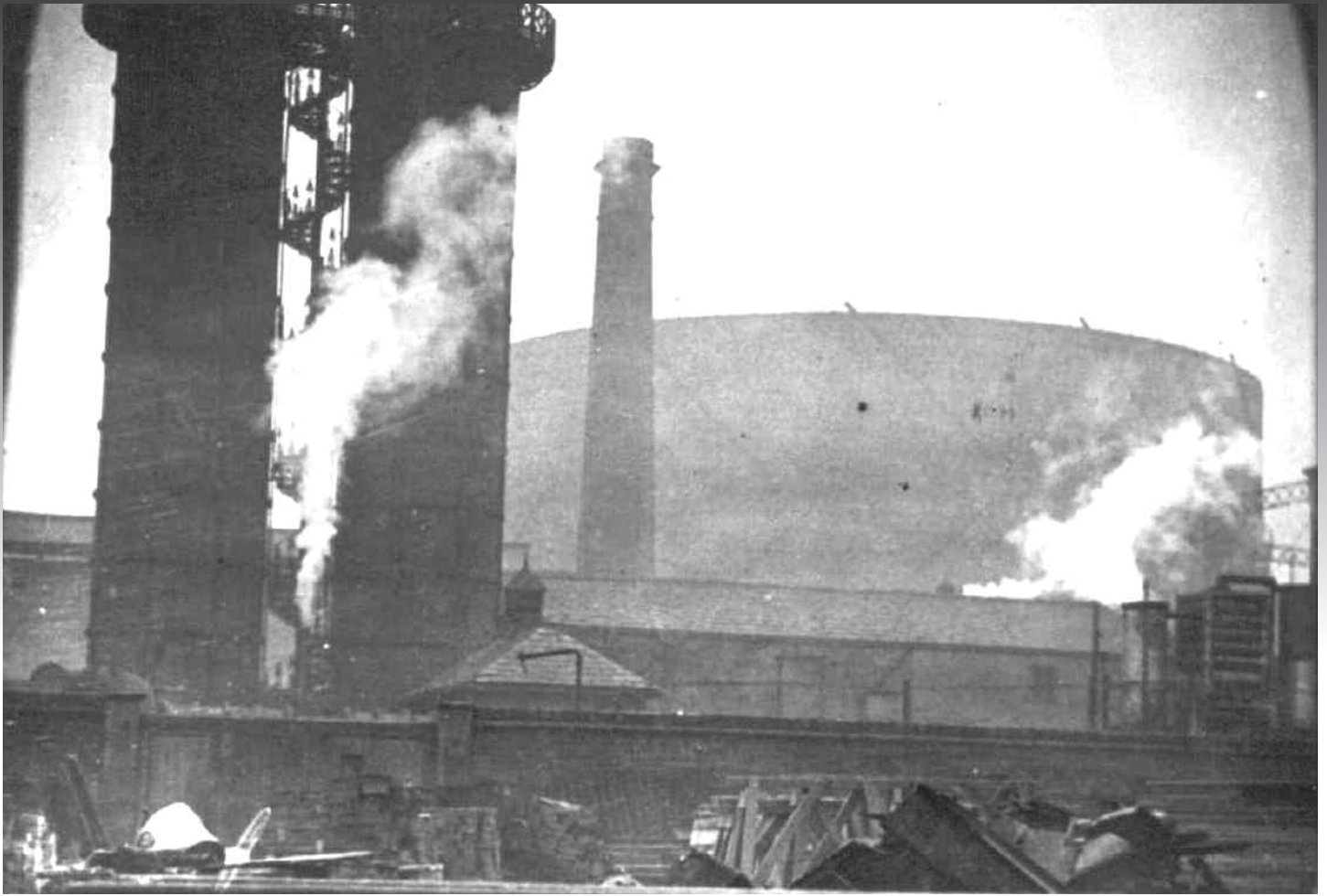
Some of the issues described are remarkably similar to present day problems. There were worries over security when the Prince of Wales came to open Wigan Infirmary. Drunkenness was a constant problem and there were even accusations of councillors fiddling their travel expenses to get free trips to Southport.

Just why these particular documents were retained is something of a mystery. They are not filed in any particular way except that they are numbered and are roughly in date order. One possibility is that they relate to problems or controversial matters that were 'passed up the line' for the attention of the Town Clerk. Whatever their purpose they give a unique insight into the day to day administration of a prosperous town at the height of the industrial revolution.

One example of the subjects under discussion was a letter from the Gas Committee to the Town Clerk informing him that during a cold, dark winter in the late 1870s, stocks of coal gas - the main source of lighting - were within three hours of running out. The problem has a curiously modern ring about it. In the dark winter months the demand for gas for lighting mills, works and homes during the evening hours exceeded the rate at which gas could be produced at the gas works. How this problem was overcome provides a good example of



Alderman Hopwood, with JG Hawkins, Wigan Gas Manager, at the 1883, Crystal Palace Gas and Electrical Exhibition.



Wigan Gas Works.

Victorian local government in action. The account which follows was compiled from the minutes of the Gas Committee and from the local newspapers.

There had been a privately run gas works in Wigan since 1822. By the 1870s it could no longer be relied upon to meet the demands of a rapidly growing town. The Town Council decided that the only way to ensure a reliable supply was for the Corporation to take over the running of the gas works. They promoted a Parliamentary Bill, the Wigan Improvement Act, 1874, authorizing them to borrow the necessary capital. By 1875, the supply of gas was the responsibility of the Corporation. A sub-committee of the Town Council was set up to run the undertaking and they appointed a professional engineer, Mr Hawkins, as Gas Manager.

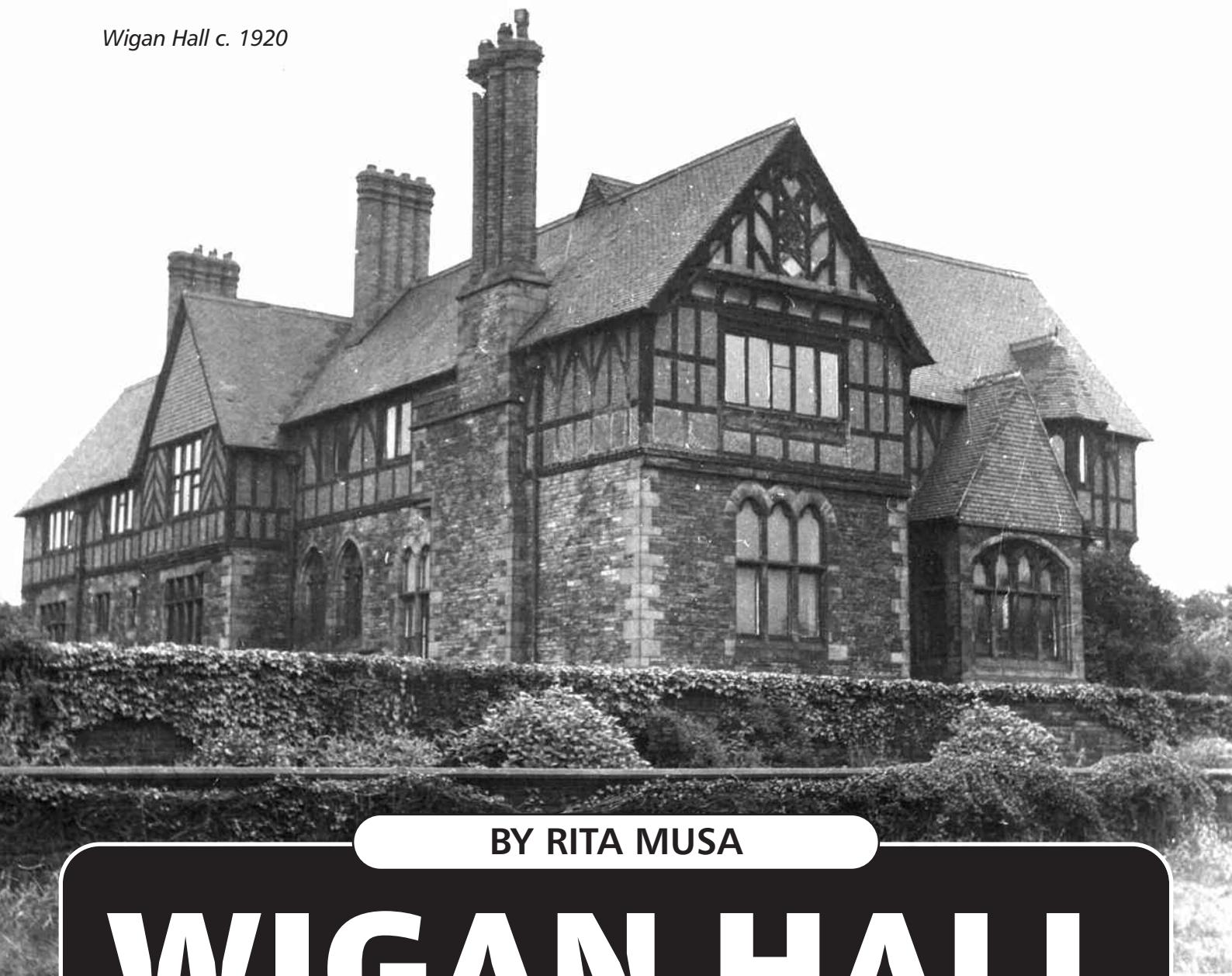
New, high capacity gas mains were laid throughout the district but this led to an increasing demand for gas and it soon became apparent that the existing gas production plant was inadequate. The Gas Manager prepared a scheme to overcome the problem. It was approved by the Gas Committee and passed to the Town Clerk to obtain the £25,000 needed to implement it. Under the terms of the 1874 Act any capital expenditure had to be approved by the Local Government Board, a supervisory body overseeing local administration in England and Wales. In response to the Town Clerk's application the Board sent an inspector to

the town to hold a public enquiry into the scheme. This was held at the Borough Courts in August 1877 where Mr Hawkins explained that £17,000 of the requested £25,000 was for a large gas holder that would effectively treble the storage capacity to the equivalent of one and a half days of mid-winter usage.

The balance of the money was for improvements to the gas production plant. The public inquiry was an opportunity for objectors to have their say but in this case there was no public opposition for the Inspector to report. After due consideration the Local Government Board gave their approval to borrow the money required and the necessary work was carried out. Two resolutions approved by the Gas Committee a few months later suggest the improvements must have been successful - one was to announce a reduction in the price of gas and the other was to increase the yearly salary of Mr Hawkins from £300 to £400.

The supply of gas to the town remained under the control of Wigan Council until nationalization on 1 May 1950, when it became part of the North Western Gas Board.

This account has been just one example from the documents the Archive Volunteers have been working on. It is the intention of the Archives to put the catalogue online where it can be accessed by researchers and anyone interested in local history.



BY RITA MUSA

WIGAN HALL

For many years I have been curious to find out what was actually hidden from view behind the walls of Wigan Hall, also known as the Rectory. Having only seen photographs in books and newspapers, it was a great surprise when I saw the building for the first time after the demolition of the boundary wall and the clearance of trees and shrubbery.

The Hall has recently been sold by the Diocese of Liverpool to the Sports Office, for redevelopment as offices. According to All Saints Parish

Magazine from December 1911, the previous Hall, 'was taken down nearly forty years ago when the sinking of the ground, caused by the working of the coal under the glebe, necessitated the re-building of the house from its foundations'. Like many houses in Wigan's mining areas, subsidence caused serious problems with structures not engineered to tolerate movement in the ground.

Wigan Hall, dating from 1875, is a Grade 2 listed structure, by architect George Edmund Street, who also designed the Royal

Courts of Justice in London. He was one of the finest Gothic Revival architects of his day. It was recorded that the Hall contained remnants of the pre-1875 building, for example a panel of Swiss coloured glass dating from 1540-1550 and a late medieval German altar piece now known as the Lubeck Altar Panels. They have been fully restored and are on display in the Walmesley Chapel, Wigan Parish Church. The panels were previously in the Green Room and the Rector's private chapel within the Hall. You can see from the photographs the



Wigan Hall



Work on the Hall underway, taken from the Gatehouse

Hall's pointed gables, Tudor chimneys and arched windows. There was also constructed a gatehouse, with a lower section of stone and the upper part half timbered.

The current Hall sits at the bottom of Hallgate, the road linking it to the Parish Church. The first Rector to live there was Orlando Bridgeman – Rector from 1864 to 1895. The last Rector to occupy the Hall

was Malcolm Forrest, who left in 2003.

In a 1935 newspaper report the Hall was described by Reverend Charles Thicknesse as, 'a white elephant'. He thought the Hall was far too big, taking in seventeen bedrooms, a dining room that could accommodate thirty diners and reception rooms with sufficient space for 300 people. Central heating was installed in 1958 along with the

planting of 400 beech and sycamore trees in its five acres.

The Rectors of Wigan were also Lords of the Manor, as a result of which the Rectory was also known as the Hall. In 1861, they sold their manorial rights to Wigan Corporation, passing many of the manorial rights into the hands of the Corporation and extending the ability of the Corporation to govern the Borough.

Wigan Borough's School Registers Now Online with **findmypast**

We are delighted to let you know that Wigan Borough's school registers are now available online through Find My Past.

All of the records – from the Borough Archive Collections – are now accessible and easily searchable through Find My Past and visitors to Wigan Local Studies can get free access to these collections.

You can now trace your ancestors who went to school in Wigan and Leigh between 1870 and 1915, explore their school records to find their birth date, admission year and the school they attended. You may also be able to discover their parents' names, father's occupation, exam results and any illnesses that led to absence from school.

Roger Abberley's entry reveals that his father was a publican at the Pagefield Hotel, Gidlow Lane, Wigan. He was born on 30 December 1893, admitted to the school on 12 September 1907 and left on 5 November 1910. Roger's occupation after leaving school is given as an Auctioneers' Clerk. Prior to attending Wigan Grammar School he attended the National Blue Court Elementary.

One of the benefits of digitised and indexed Archives & Local Studies records is that it enables researchers to easily

carry out complex searches into their ancestors' lives. For example, we have discovered that Harold A. Hilton, as well as being in the Find My Past School Admission Registers as attending St Michael's School, Wigan, is also included in our Wigan Borough Online War Memorial, under the heading, 'In The Grammar School Old Boys' Company'.

The Wigan School Admission Registers are only available free of charge online at Wigan Local Studies. For more information or to find out which schools are included please contact Wigan Local Studies 01942 828020 or archives@wigan.gov.uk



Digitised newspaper article from Wigan & Leigh Archives Online

Entry for Roger Abberley, Wigan Grammar School



John Wainwright

A Wigan man's rise through the ranks during the First World War

BY ALEX HODGE

With the anniversary this year of the Gallipoli campaign, my thoughts have turned again to the part played in the First World War by my Great Grandfather, John Wainwright, CBE, JP. My Great Grandfather had a relatively good war, not withstanding all the carnage that he must have endured, alongside the privations of fighting and living in the 'war to end all wars'.

John was born in October 1894 in Orrell Gardens, where Orrell book

cycle is now situated (formerly the library). He was the second son of Arthur and Lucy (nee Turner) and the brother of Fred, Annie, and Polly. Coming from a background that unfortunately could not give him the opportunity of continuing formal education he left school when he was 12. Following a brief period as an office clerk he started work as a miner at Worsley Mesnes Colliery when he was 14. His father also worked at the same colliery as a colliery weigh clerk. Being a bright lad and with ambitions to

make as best a life for himself as he could he attended evening classes and took the colliery managers' course at the Wigan Mining and Technical College.

John joined the Territorial Army (TA), in the 5th Battalion of the Manchester Regiment, on 11 February 1913. Alongside others in the 5th Battalion he was trained as a Signaller, and this included undertaking semaphore training on the Haigh Hall estate.

John was on holiday with the Scouts in Wales when war was declared in 1914. As he was in the TA he immediately had to report to the drill hall in Wigan. He was then provided with a bicycle to cycle from Wigan to a camp at Littleborough near Rochdale. At the camp he agreed to volunteer overseas, and those who volunteered were given £5. He left Britain in September 1914 on the HMS Caledonia. Before departure he was given a pocket bible by a lady in Bristol and he carried this for the whole time he served in the army. He hated this voyage, especially having to sleep in hammocks and being given stew for breakfast! He arrived in Alexandria, Egypt, on 24 September 1914, and was soon promoted to the rank of Corporal. The role of the 5th Battalion was to relieve the regular army, which was to leave for the western front. On Christmas Day 1914, he and the other non-commissioned officers waited on the other troops.



John Wainwright, pictured soon after receiving his commission as an officer.

However, all the food had gone when they eventually went to get their own Christmas dinner!

In May 1915 John went with the rest of the 5th Battalion to Gallipoli in Turkey. There were huge problems with flies because of the number of dead bodies that had accumulated on the battle field. Whilst in Gallipoli he was issued with daily rum and lime rations and this even evolved into making rum punch! His role at this time involved digging a new trench nearer to the Turkish line prior to attack on 4 June 1915. Additionally, he took telephone lines to an advanced trench and found himself at one point in 'no mans land' without a rifle. He got severely reprimanded for that. Following the attack he advanced with the second wave to the old Turkish front line and subsequently established and maintained a telephone link with the battalion headquarters.

In June 1915 John was promoted to Platoon Sergeant. As a new party of private soldiers had been very badly trained prior to arriving at Gallipoli he had to take them to a gully to show them how to fire a rifle! In August 1915 he was again promoted, to Company Quarter Master Sergeant. This role included administrative duties and he was in charge of food, ammunition, stores and uniforms.

Unfortunately, due to the terrible conditions of living and fighting in this campaign he was evacuated home with dysentery and jaundice in November 1915. His weight had radically dropped from 10 stone to 7 stone. As he was travelling back to Britain he briefly met General Kitchener. He initially convalesced at a convalescence home in Essex before going back to Wigan in January 1916.

From January to April 1916 John was given a new role of escorting new recruits by train from Wigan Recruiting Office to Ashton-under-Lyne Barracks. In April 1916 he was posted to the 5th (Reserve) Battalion in Southport. Unfortunately he was



The wedding of John Wainwright and Gwyneth Mary, nee Ritson, on 29 December 1923, at St Mark's, Newtown

not happy as he was treated as a recruit again and had to take orders from a Lance Corporal. When he complained he was told that he had to make the best of it!

Whilst in Southport he saw a poster advertising the Machine Gun Corps. He and a number of other colleagues decided to apply. He was successful in his application and left to join the Machine Gun Corps at Belton Park Camp, Grantham in November 1916. He became again Company Quarter Master Sergeant, this time for the newly formed 203 Machine Gun Company. He was at Belton Park and then Clipstone Camp from November 1916 until February 1917.

John moved to France in March 1917. He needed to practice his 'schoolboy' French to assist him in organising billets for troops. Whilst in France he witnessed the infamous 'Field Punishment Number One'. This was given to a soldier who had drunk the whole of the rum ration

that was supposed to have been issued to the rest of the troops. This punishment consisted of the soldier being restrained and attached to the wheel of a gun carriage for up to two hours per day. During the early part of the First World War, the punishment was often applied with the arms stretched out and the legs tied together, giving rise to the nickname 'crucifixion'. This was applied for up to three days out of four, up to 21 days total.

John was recommended for commission as an Officer to the Tank Corps during the move to Ypres in October 1917, in preparation for the 3rd battle of Ypres (known as 'Passchendaele'). He went to back to Britain in October 1917 for officer training and had a preliminary tank course at Wareham and Bovington from November to December 1917. Whilst in a tank he had to wear a chain mail mask that fitted over the eyes; the idea was to protect the face from any bullets and shrapnel

that might have hit the tank. In the 1950s he frightened my mother, as a small girl, when he put this on. From January to May 1918 he continued with the officer training at Hazeley Down. He was commissioned as a 2nd Lieutenant into the 8th Battalion Tank Corps in May 1918 and posted back to France.

From May to October 1918 his role was a Mark IV Tank Commander and this involved occasional raids in support of the infantry. In October 1918 he went on a course to become a tank instructor and was there when the armistice was declared. The course finished immediately and he went back to the 8th Battalion. In December 1918 he was posted to the 13th Battalion Tank Corps in the Cologne area of Germany, as part of the Army of Occupation of the Rhine. He subsequently became a demobilisation officer; and was promoted to Lieutenant in November 1919.

In November 1919, John finally left the army and returned back to

Britain. He initially thought about an alternative career but decided he wanted to return home to Wigan. He went back to work as a miner prior to securing a government backed place, as a former officer, on a mining engineering course at the Wigan Mining and Technical College. Once he qualified he became a junior official at Worsley Mesnes Colliery in 1923. He then became colliery manager at Leyland Green Colliery, from 1923 to 1927. Leyland Green closed in 1927 and then with his father-in-law, Joseph Ritson, and other men, opened a small Colliery in Billinge – Billinge Lane Colliery. This mine closed in the early 1950s due to problems with open cast mining. After this he became colliery manager and mining consultant at Windy Arbour Colliery until this too closed in the early 1980s.

John led a very active life, in addition to his day job. This included the roles of the Chairman and Secretary of the Federation of Small Mines of Great Britain from 1946. He finally retired as Secretary of the Federation in 1985, aged 91!

He was additionally, amongst other things, Air Raid Warden, Chairman of Billinge and Winstanley Urban District Council, Magistrate, and Chairman of the Governors of Upholland Grammar School. He became a Commander of the British Empire (CBE) in 1964 for services to local government. I'm not sure how he found the time to carry out all his activities, as well as being a husband, father, and later grandfather and great grandfather.

The First World War affected John's health as he had continuous problems with his stomach. He hated apricot jam because of the memories of eating it in Gallipoli, always fly covered! His uniform – that he subsequently wore at his marriage to my Great Grandmother, Gwyneth, in 1923 – was worn for gardening. The trousers consequently fell to pieces in the 1950s! He also used to wear his army issue shorts in the summer. He never talked about any of his wartime experiences until much later in life, when he was in his late 80s and 90s.

John died in April 1990, aged 96, the day after attending the ANZAC day commemoration in London and meeting HM Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother. He is buried in St Aidan's Churchyard, Billinge.

I and the rest of the family are very proud of my great grandfather's actions during the First World War. He made the best of what was a horrific war and with his intellect, stoicism, and excellent administrative skills, rose through the ranks. Many of his papers and army artefacts have been deposited to a number of organisations, namely Wigan Archives Service, Tameside Local Studies and Archives, the National Army Museum, and the Tank Museum. I like to think that we have spread his memory, and the part that he played in the First World War, across the country.



John and Gwyneth Mary Wainwright, on receiving the CBE in 1964 for services to local government.

Dear Editor

I am a subscriber to Past Forward and wondered if you could place an appeal in the next issue? I am trying to obtain photographs of the First World War Memorial that was in St Stephen's Church, Astley, before it was destroyed by fire.

If any readers know of any photographs, please can they contact me at: lucertola@btinternet.com

Thank you,

Dr Anthony McIntosh

Dear Editor

I have (belatedly) been catching up on Past Forward, Issue 69 and I was particularly interested in the article, 'Remembering Local Men at Gallipoli, 1915', by Hannah Turner.

Following my research into the old boys from Leigh Grammar School who died in the First World War, I have information about two young local men who died at Gallipoli.

Remembering the Sacrifice of Two Old Boys from Leigh Grammar School at Gallipoli:

Fred Simkin Prescott and William Smith were both born in 1896. Fred was born in Leigh and William in Tyldesley. Fred's father was a Master Builder and William's father was a Coal Miner. Both boys were educated at Leigh Boys Grammar School between 1908 and 1912. They both enlisted in the 1st/5th Battalion, Manchester Regiment and were deployed to Gallipoli, Turkey in early May 1915. Both boys died in the early fighting on the 4 June 1915 (at the young age of 18) at Cape Helles and are commemorated on the Helles Memorial, Gallipoli, Turkey.

Yours sincerely,

John Medling

LEIGH FOR ALL: HERITAGE OPEN WEEKEND

Saturday 12 September 2015

Get the date in your diary – Leigh's annual heritage open day is back and bigger than ever, on Saturday 12 September 2015.

We've free events and activities planned for the whole family, including:

- Local & Family History Fair
- Fred Longworth High School Brass Band Performance
- Leigh Town Hall Tours
- Leigh Parish Church Tours
- Vestry Café Refreshments
- Vintage Car Rally
- Organ Recitals and Choral Performances
- Vintage Bus Tour with Leigh's WWI history
- Cadet Drill Display

We'll also be joining up with the Leigh Canal Festival with even more going on in the town centre.

For more information, please contact us on 01942 404 430 or at archives@wigan.gov.uk

Artwork by Emma Brown, commissioned for LFA 2014.



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 July 2015

A Peck of Dirt – Peter Watson

11 August 2015

Who Do You Think I Am? – Steve Williams

8 September 2015

The Other Black Beauty – Jack Morris

13 October 2015

AGM & The Two Cathedrals of Liverpool
– Malcolm Tranter (NB – 7.00pm start)

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).

18 August 2015

Getting Started

15 September 2015

Family History Books – Jean Brandwood

13 October 2015

The History and Records of the Lancashire Infantry – Dominic Butler

17 November 2015

Wingates Band & The History of the Brass Band Movement – David Kaye

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 (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.

9th September 2015

The Lancashire Hussars (part two)

Speaker: David Fearnley
Following on from his first visit to us David is continuing his talk on The Lancashire Hussars

14th October 2015

The On-Line Parish Clerks

Speaker: Lynne Ayton

11th November 2015

Churchyards, Graveyards and their hidden meanings

Speaker: Louise Wade

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.

EGYPT EVENTS & ACTIVITIES

Summer Family Fun

Explore Egypt

Tuesday 21 and 28 July
4, 11 and 18 August
1.00pm – 2.30pm
£2.50 per child

Travel back in time to the age of pyramids, hieroglyphs and mummies with our fantastic family activities. Make your own mummy and take home your crafty masterpiece.

Land of the Pharaohs

Thursday 23 and 30 July
6, 13 and 20 August
1.00pm – 2.30pm
£2.50 per child

Ancient Egypt was a rich civilisation and its pharaoh rulers were worshipped as gods. Find out more about the wealth, power and burial rituals of Ancient Egypt and create your own fabulous work of ancient art to take home.

Digital Comic Book Creations

Friday 7 August
10.30am – 12.00pm
FREE, Children aged 7+

Learn how to create your own digital comic book with a special iPad workshop based around the Ancient Egyptians. iPads can be supplied for free with free use of the Comic Life 3 app or you can bring your own. Please note: If you wish to use your own iPad, the Comic Life 3 app is £3.99 and only available from the Apple App Store. Wigan Council are not responsible for the purchase of this app on a customer-owned iPad.

Autumn Adults

Hieroglyphs: An Introduction

By John Johnson, Horus Egyptology Society
Saturday 26 September 1.00pm – 2pm
£2.50, including tea/coffee

The hieroglyphs of ancient Egypt are one of the world's oldest writing and were used for over 3,000 years. Take a journey through this fascinating language and learn some basic hieroglyphs in this friendly talk. You can discover how this mysterious text holds the secrets to ancient Egyptian religion, language and even poetry.

Ancient Egypt in Wigan Borough

Tuesday 20 October 12.00pm – 1.15pm
£2.50, including tea/coffee

A special introduction to Wigan borough's amazing Egyptian collection. Discover why the collection is so important, and how these stunning items came to be in Wigan. This talk will explore the gold mask, coffin pieces, shabti (servant figure) and lots more on display in the exhibition.

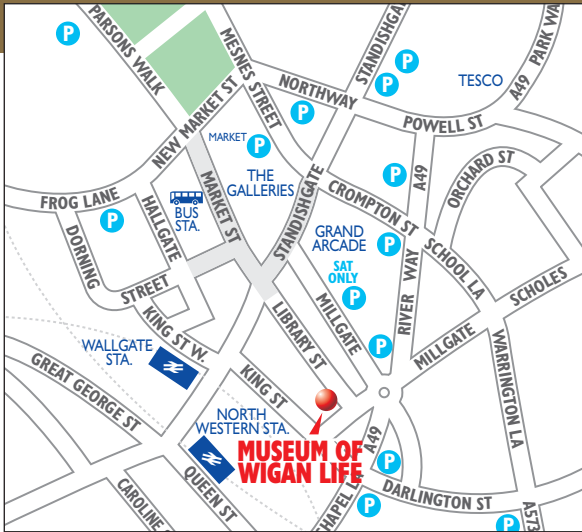
The Mummies Unmasked

By Dr Campbell Price
Thursday 26 November • 12.00pm – 1.15pm
£2.50, including tea/coffee

A special look beneath the bandages of Manchester Museum's Egyptian mummies with Dr Campbell Price, Curator of Egypt and Sudan, interpreting CT scans. The unique collection of Egyptian mummies in Manchester Museum has undergone investigation using CT scanning and this is an amazing opportunity to hear firsthand about the findings. What do the scans reveal about mummification? Who were the mummies? How were the mummies made? Find out more at this special event.

Booking required for all events so remember to book your place soon! Please call 01942 828128 or email wiganmuseum@wigan.gov.uk

How to Find Us



Museum of Wigan Life & Wigan Local Studies

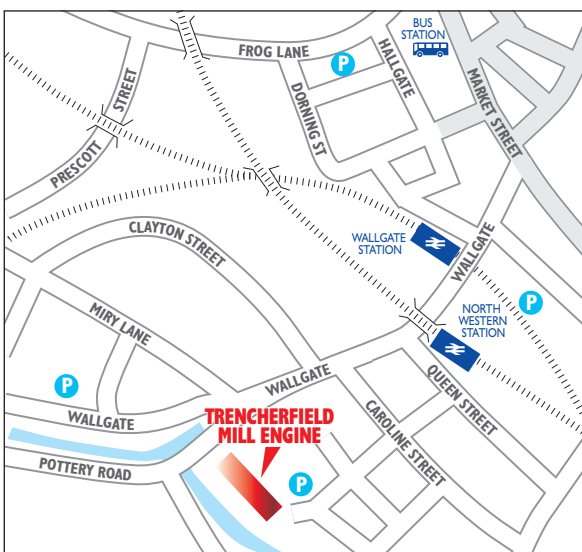
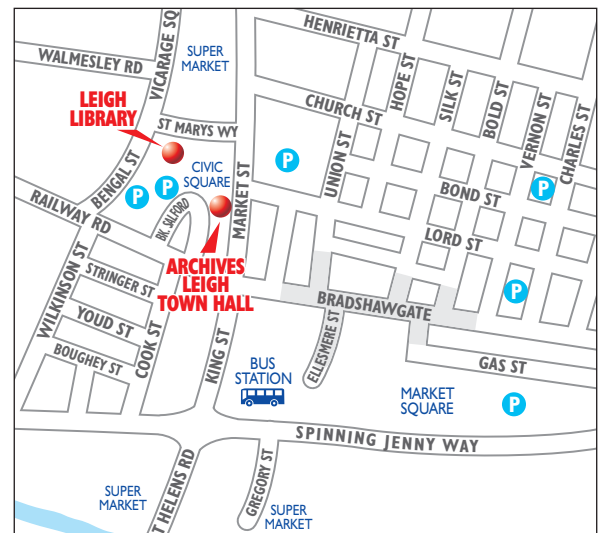
Library Street,
Wigan WN1 1NU
Telephone 01942 828128
heritage@wigan.gov.uk

Leigh Local History

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

Archives

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