HAIGH HALL

PRICE — SIXPENCE

HISTORY OF HAIGH HALL

Haigh in Anglo-Saxon Times.

The name Haigh comes from an old English word meaning enclosure. Imagine Haigh in Anglo-Saxon times, just a clearing in the forest where people lived and grazed their cattle. The grain which was grown was chiefly needed for human consumption. The people bought or sold wheat at harvest time, trading with their neighbours and storing enough to last until the next harvest. Often grain was wasted or used improvidently at this season, which led to famine at other times of the year. In 1044, according to the Anglo-Saxon chronicle, there was very great hunger all over England and corn was more expensive than anyone could remember. Trees were valued according to the amount of shelter they afforded to the cattle. Animals, such as horses, which needed hay and corn for their existence were expensive, costing £1 5s. 2d., while those animals which could forage for themselves and exist on wild herbage, acorns and beech nuts were much cheaper, a sheep costing 1s. 2d., and a pig 1s. 10½d. Pigs were extensively bred, while cows were also a favourite stock in Lancashire, but sheep for some reason were not popular, although they proved profitable, on account of the their wool, in other parts of the country.

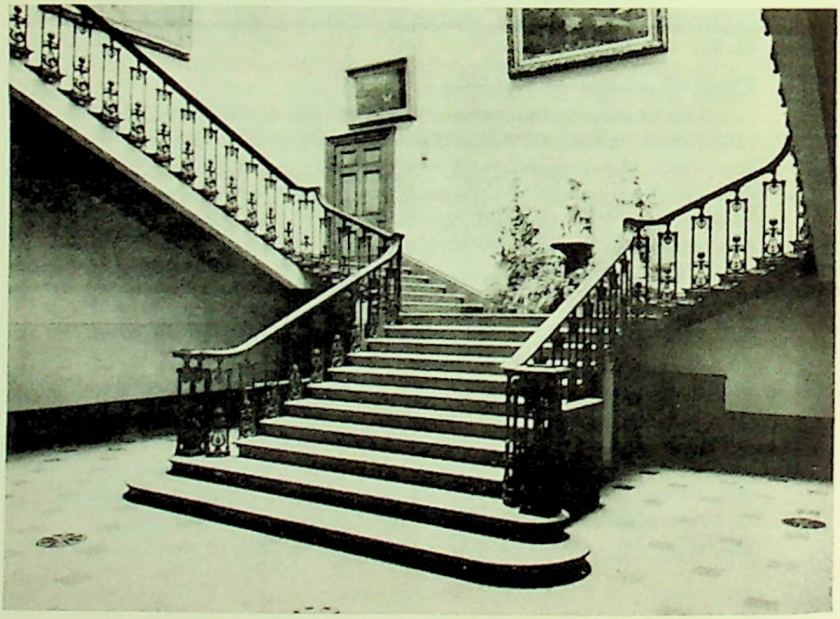
As early as 1185 an act was passed fixing the maximum prices to be charged for bread and other commodities. The maximum price of a hen was fixed at ½d., a pig 1/-, and a cow 4s. 6d.

Early Owners of Haigh.

The history of the owners of Haigh can be traced back to 1188, when it was in the possession of Hugh Le Norreys. It came into the possession of his grandson, another Hugh Le Norreys, and by about 1295 was the property of his daughter Mabel, who had married Sir William de Bradshaigh. The Bradshaighs were probably of Anglo-Saxon origin.

It was not a comfortable time in the history of England in which to live. The country was in a very troubled state, and Lancashire was particularly badly affected. The whole area was in a state of guerilla warfare. There was enmity between neighbours. The stealing of horses and other livestock was rife. The administration of justice was corrupt. Armed bands of men roamed around and terrorized the people. The Scots raided the land with little hindrance. The cost of living was rising. In 1314 the maximum prices of certain items had to be re-adjusted. A cow now cost 12/-, a hen 1½d., a chicken ½d., while eggs cost 5d. a 100. There was no idea of comfort in

Haigh Hall today



The Main Staircase

the home. The floors were strewn with rushes, which were seldom changed, and quickly mingled with mud from people's boots, animal droppings, scraps from the table, and any other rubbish which was thrown down. Tables were on trestles so that they could be easily taken down or extended for visitors, and benches were convertible into beds. The lord of the manor might have a chair, but it was a mark of rank and not of comfort. Life must have been hard in those days.

The Legend of Mab's Cross.

The popular version of the legend of Mab's Cross says that while Sir William Bradshaigh was away on a crusade, being a great traveller and soldier, his wife had reason to believe him dead, so she married a Welsh knight. Sir William returned in palmer's dress among the poor to Haigh, and Dame Mabel thought how much he resembled her dead husband and was very distressed. The knight was angry. Sir William made himself known to his tenants and the knight fled, but Sir William overtook him and killed him at Newton-le-Willows, at a spot still known as the Bloody Stone, half a mile south of Newton Station. Dame Mabel was instructed by her Confessor to walk barefoot once a week from Haigh to the cross in Standishgate. The tomb of Sir William and Dame Mabel still lies in Wigan Parish Church, and the Cross, known as Mab's Cross, still stands within the railings of the Wigan Girls' High School, where it was moved from the highway in 1921 in the interests of road safety.

Apart from a few minor details the legend seems to be substantially true. Sir William was undoubtedly absent from Haigh from 1315 until 1322. The reason for his absence was that the Earl of Lancaster's favourite, Sir Robert de Holland, rose to wealth and favour and acted as the Earl's representative in the county granting pardons or condemning to death as he pleased, while his relatives and friends became overbearing. This aroused the jealousy and hatred of the local gentry. Some of these, including Sir William de Bradshaigh, banded together under the leadership of Sir Adam Banastre and staged a revolt, in the early stages of which Sir Henry de Bury, with whom Sir William had probably had some previous dispute, was killed. An enquiry was made into the manner of his death, and some of the offenders were hanged, while Sir William was outlawed for not appearing at the court. Sir Adam and his friends then collected a force of 800 men and went round the county raiding and pillaging until the sheriff sent a force against them. Some of the leaders were killed, Sir Adam fled but was betrayed shortly afterwards, while Sir William made a successful escape.

He was pardoned in 1318, but either the news did not reach him or he preferred to keep away from Haigh while his old enemies were so powerful, and was consequently presumed dead. He may or may not have been abroad during these years. History cannot prove that he returned in palmer's dress, neither has it proved that Dame Mabel married again, but undoubtedly life was very difficult for a woman in her position, and she may have made her lot a little more comfortable with any of several people.

Sir William did return, however, in 1322 when the Earl of Lancaster had been executed and Sir Robert de Holland imprisoned and deprived of his possessions. It is unlikely that he killed anyone at this time because the King, Edward II, came to Wigan in 1322 to enquire into the troubled condition of the county, and Sir William was brought before the court, but such a murder was not among his offences mentioned at the trial. He undoubtedly needed to be on his guard night and day to defend himself against the Holland supporters, who were still to be reckoned with even though Sir Robert was absent, and his men were known to have killed one man and probably others in defence of his home when a party of raiders came to burn it down. He was released upon payment of a fine.

His reputation as a traveller and soldier was not unfounded. He was a Member of Parliament both before and after his absence, and anyone who travelled to London and back in those days was regarded as a traveller. Some of the roads were little better than tracks and in winter soon became impassable. Indeed, in one Session of Parliament a few years later so few Members were able to reach Westminster on account of the bad weather and road conditions that the Session had to be postponed until they did arrive. We read of Royal journeys being delayed by floods, fallen trees, and stretches of boggy mud. There was always the danger of armed robbers lurking among trees near the roadside. Sir William was often engaged in the many civil disturbances of the time which would give him the reputation of a soldier. He was killed in one of these fights by the relatives of Sir Henry de Bury, in 1333 at Newton-le-Willows, at the spot where the legend says he killed his adversary.

Dame Mabel was known to be alive until 1348. The story of her penance is probably true. History can prove the cross was in Standishgate before her lifetime, which rules out the possibility that she built it and gave it her name. It was called Mabcrosse in a deed of 1403, about 55 years after her death.

Crosses were regarded in those days as a symbol of expressing sorrow for sin. The route she took from Haigh to the cross can only be a matter for conjecture, but she probably chose the most private path, which would be along the banks of the River Douglas until level with the cross, and not down Wigan Lane.

On the death of Dame Mabel, Haigh passed to a nephew of Sir William. Her ghost was said to haunt a gallery, known as Mab's gallery, in the old Hall.

Sir Walter Scott, who was told the legend by Lady Balcarres, mentioned it in "Waverley," and again in his preface to "The Betrothed," as it partly suggested the plot of the latter novel to him.

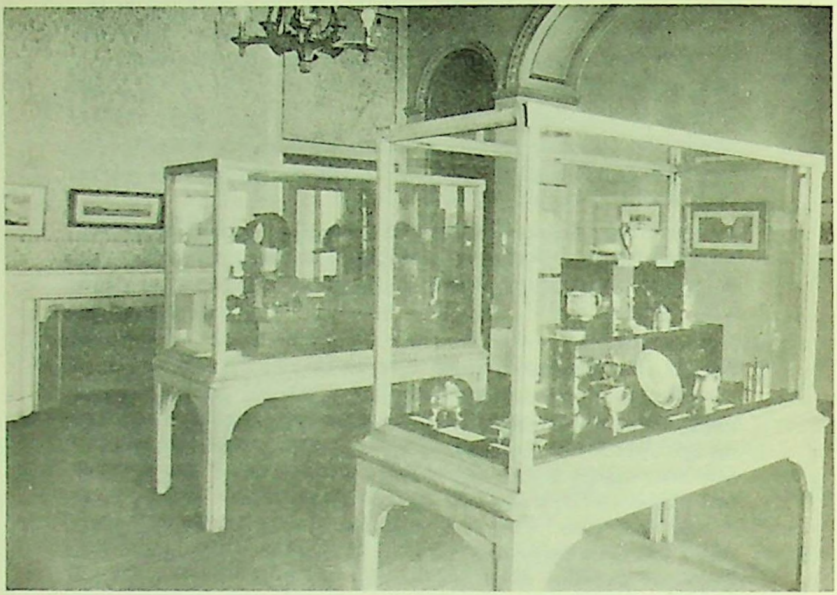
Haigh in Tudor Times.

During the 16th century the Bradshaighs were seriously engaged on the production of cannel. John Leland, when on his famous tour of England, visited Haigh in 1538, and said that Mr. Bradshaigh had a place called Haigh near Wigan, and had found much cannel like sea coal, which was proving very profitable to him. Cannel is valuable as a gas producing fuel, and it has been suggested, for want of a better explanation, that it derives its name from candle, due to the fact that it can be lighted and burns like a candle.

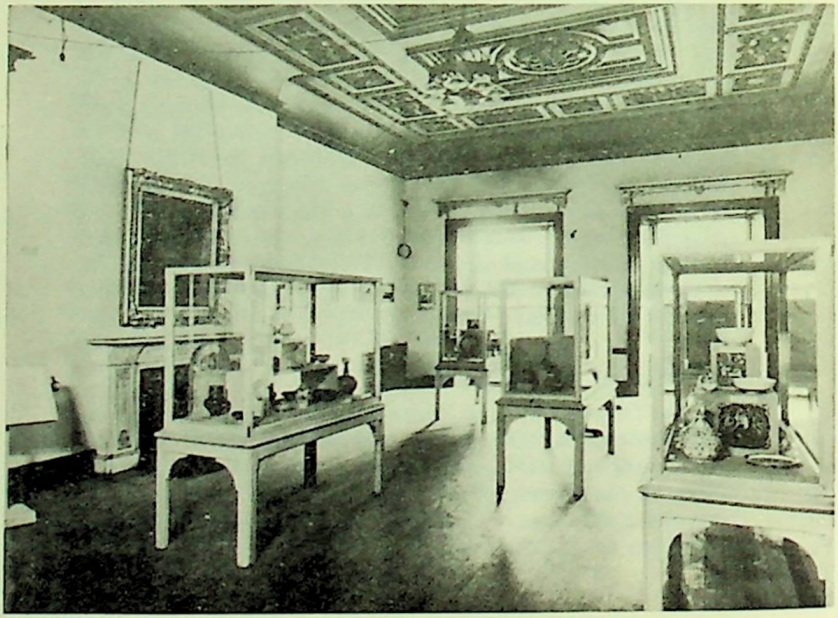
During this period the cost of living rose rapidly. In 1500 100 eggs could be bought for 7d., while by 1597 they cost 3s. 6d., and the cost of a chicken had risen from 1d. to 8d. There was a new appreciation of comfort which found expression in the decoration and furnishing of new houses and the improving and re-stocking of the old. The Bradshaighs followed the trend of the times and made considerable additions to Haigh Hall. Among other things an Elizabethan façade and elaborately carved door were added to improve the entrance, and were claimed to be the work of Inigo Jones. He could not have possibly superintended all the work attributed to him, but he, or his pupils under his supervision, may very probably have supplied the designs.

The Battle of Wigan Lane.

The famous Battle of Wigan Lane took place on the edge of the Haigh estates in August, 1651, and the site of the battle on the banks of the River Douglas is still shown on maps of Wigan as the Bloody Mountains. Sir Roger Bradshaigh was born about 1628, and his father having died in 1631, he inherited the estates on the death of his grandfather in 1641. He was,



Two Exhibition Rooms



therefore, too young to join in the early struggles of the Civil War. In 1650 Charles II landed in Scotland, and several suspected Royalists, including Sir Roger, were arrested. He was allowed his freedom on the undertaking not to assist the Royalists in any way. The Earl of Derby attempted to raise Lancashire for the King. His forces were intercepted by those of Parliament, and the battle ensued. Lord Derby was defeated. Sir Roger went to the scene of the battle after the fighting and was able to rescue Sir William Throgmorton, who had been left for dead, and brought him to Haigh until he recovered.

Sir Thomas Tyldesley of Leigh, a well-known local knight was killed in the battle, and the monument in Wigan Lane erected in his honour. It is interesting to note that his son, Sir Edward Tyldesley, built a house known as " Fox Hall " on a lonely part of the Lancashire coast about this time as a summer residence, but which was thought to be a Royalist hiding place. Priests and others who found it convenient to retire there came back with stories of its health-giving air, lovely sunsets, vast stretches of golden sands, and high tides, and so the story of Blackpool began.

The Earl of Derby was captured after the Battle of Worcester in 1651, and beheaded at Bolton the same year. His body rested at Haigh overnight during the return to Ormskirk for burial.

At the Restoration, Wigan's loyalty to the Royalist cause was acknowledged by Charles II, who granted a new Borough Charter and sword of honour to the town. The Mayor of Wigan named in the Charter was Sir Roger Bradshaigh.

The Great Sough.

Sir Roger settled down to develop his cannel mines in earnest. They had probably fired his imagination in his youth. In those days the problem of drainage when coal was found at different levels was often the cause of disputes between neighbours. The water was drained by means of open channels. Sir Roger had the idea of an underground tunnel draining his mines into Yellow Brook almost at the point where it joins the Douglas. The project was commenced in 1652, finished in 1670, and was called the Great Sough. It was 6 feet wide, 4 feet high, about ¾ of a mile in length, and was ventilated by means of air shafts. It has been described as the outstanding engineering feat of the time, particularly as there were no surface maps, and no detailed geological knowledge. The channel was examined six times a year to keep it clear, and inspection was carried out until 1923 when subsidence caused the water to roof in places.

making it impossible for men to travel right through the passage, but it is still open and acts as natural drainage for the old mines and surface water which would otherwise seep into present workings.

English Porcelain.

Sir Roger may also take a certain amount of credit for assisting the English porcelain industry. In every country porcelain has been a new invention depending upon the discovery of the right kind of clay. John Dwight, who was secretary to the Bishops of Chester, who were also the Rectors of Wigan, lived in Millgate from 1663 to 1687. He was interested in pottery and experimented with various clays turned out from the cannel pits at Haigh, and as a result took out patents for porcelain in 1671 and 1684, and claimed to be the first maker of it in England.

Cannel Ornaments.

Sir Roger Bradshaigh had invested all his money in his mines and their improvement, and consequently his death in 1684, and that of his son, two years later in 1686, left the family in straitened circumstances.

Perhaps the strangest property of cannel is that it is perfectly clean to touch, resembling black polished marble. In the 17th century a summer house was built of it, and was still in existence when Sir Walter Scott visited Haigh early in the 19th century. There was also a considerable curio trade carried out during the 18th century, as it could be fashioned into portrait busts, ornaments and trinkets of all kinds, one of the best known craftsmen in this art being Robert Town, father of the famous Wigan born artist known as "Charles Towne of Liverpool." Even household items such as teapots and sugar basins were made from it, and sold both in the local shops and in various parts of the country.

Roger Bradshaigh.

The last Sir Roger died in 1770. It is interesting to note that from 1549 until 1770 the lord of Haigh was named Roger Bradshaigh, although the estate did not always pass direct from father to eldest son on account of many deaths in the family. The custom of giving children more than one Christian name did not become general until the 19th century; perhaps the large number of children in most families and the small range of names in common usage accounts for this. Every family seemed to have its favourite names, and we read for instance of

a family of four boys, two of whom were named John and two named William; while a man named Edward, who was determined to pass his estates to an Edward, named all his sons Edward. In the Bradshaigh family tree we find more than one example of two brothers both named Roger, although probably one died before the other was born.

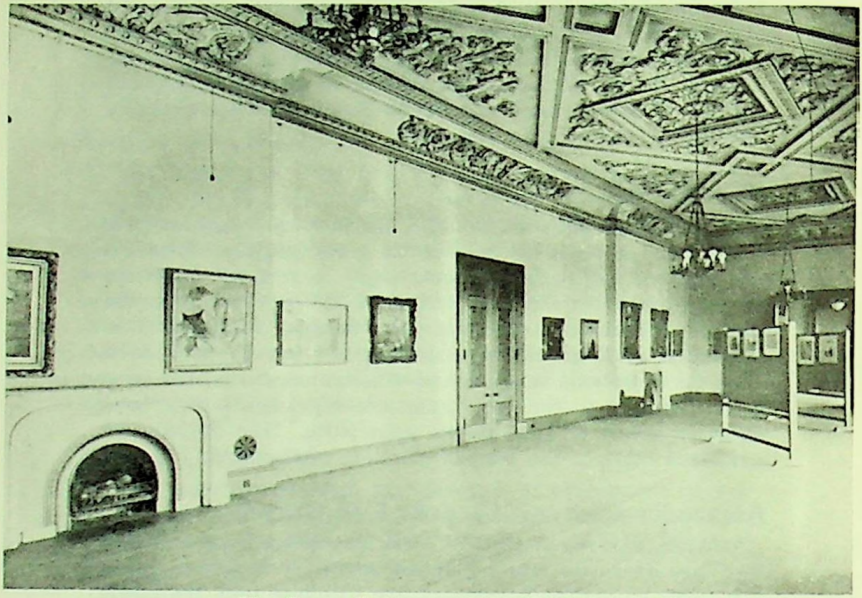
The Lindsay Family.

On the death of the last Sir Roger Bradshaigh in 1770, Haigh was inherited by his sister's granddaughter, Elizabeth Dalrymple, a child of ten years of age. At the age of 20 she married Alexander Lindsay, 23rd Earl of Crawford, who was then an officer in the army. The Lindsay family was in possession of large territories in England and Scotland soon after the Norman Conquest, and different members of it have been conspicuous for the distinction with which they have occupied offices of great public importance. The Earldom of Crawford ranks as the Premier Earldom of Scotland.

Alexander Lindsay, 23rd Earl of Crawford.

When Earl Alexander took over the management of Haigh he found the house, which had not been lived in for ten years, was badly shaken by subsidence, the furniture sold, the mines derelict, the farm buildings and fences in a state of dilapidation, and the income very poor, so that Haigh was something of a liability instead of an asset. He, himself, had succeeded to the family estate at Balcarres at the age of 14 to find it heavily mortgaged, and nine brothers and sisters to provide for. He concentrated his attention upon Haigh, except for the years when he was Governor of Jamaica, and sold Balcarres to his brother who had made a fortune in India. His brother offered to sell it back later when his own fortunes had improved, but he refused, knowing his brother did not really want to part with Balcarres, and feeling he had enough responsibilities at Haigh.

He endeavoured to arrest the damage caused by subsidence to the Hall, and erected buttresses. He knew nothing about coal, and there was little in the way of books to help him, so he set to work to make a study of the subject, conducting experiments in his bedroom grate. He sought to improve mining methods; he studied the markets, seeking new ones, and in the seeking studied transport. The Bridgewater Canal had proved the cheapness of canal transport over pack horses so he interested himself in the project of the Leeds-Liverpool Canal, which was opened in 1816 and ran through his grounds, and purchased thirty-three boats and barges.



The Long Gallery on the first floor

The Lily Pond and Greenhouses

He was exempt from further army service after his return from Jamaica in 1801, on account of an accident which left him lame, but when England was threatened with invasion by Napoleon, Wiganers rushed to join the Wigan Loyal Volunteers under his leadership.

When machine breakers were at work wrecking looms in 1818, fearing machinery would result in widespread unemployment, a fear not confined to the present day, Mr. William Woods, who first introduced machine looms into Wigan, borrowed two cannons from the Earl and placed them at the entrance of his mill in Wallgate, and thus saved his machines.

The Haigh Foundry.

Earl Alexander also considered that metal was inseparable from coal. He found that his workshops at Haigh were not large enough to cope with the manufacture of colliery machinery, and all the other engineering work on his estate, so he started the Haigh Ironworks in 1790. The works began to supply other pits, one of the most notable achievements being the construction, under the supervision of Mr. Robert Daglish, of the first locomotive used in Lancashire, which was built in 1812 to convey coal at Orrell colliery, and was capable of dragging 20 waggons each containing a ton of coal. It was known locally as Daglish's Walking Horse.

The venture, however, did not prove very satisfactory, probably because it was underfinanced, and James, 24th Earl of Crawford, decided in 1835 he could no longer carry on his ironworks, so he leased them for 21 years, the name becoming the Haigh Foundry Company. Three water wheels used to turn the foundry machines, famous for the manufacture of huge castings. One of the difficulties was the high cost of haulage from the foundry to the railway station at Wigan. Thirty horses yoked in pairs used to drag these castings up Leyland Mill Lane, and once on the level twelve were needed to drag the load to Wigan. In 1856 the locomotive branch was closed down, and in 1884 the whole works were closed. The Haigh Foundry had been the training ground for Wigan engineers, many of whom launched out into business on their own account.

The Laxey Wheel.

Among other items made at the Haigh Foundry was the cast iron tubing and arches for the first railway Mersey tunnel, and the famous Laxey Wheel in the Isle of Man. The purpose of the wheel was to pump water from the lead mines at Laxey. These lead mines were 1,800 feet deep, and at one time fortunes

were made from them. The wheel was claimed to be the largest in existence, being 226 feet in circumference and six feet thick. It was drawn up the steep road from the foundry by horse power, all the neighbouring farmers lending their draught horses and tradition has it that 100 were needed. It was erected by Mr. R. Casement, the young superintendent engineer of the Great Laxey Mines Company, under the supervision of Mr. Tom Sharrock, who went from the Haigh Foundry to superintend the erection. The wheel was set in motion by Lady Isabella Hope, wife of the Governor of the Island, in 1854, and named Lady Isabella. It was damaged by floods in 1930. The mines are now derelict, but the wheel has been reconditioned and visitors can climb to the top and enjoy the panorama spread beneath them.

The Last of Cannel.

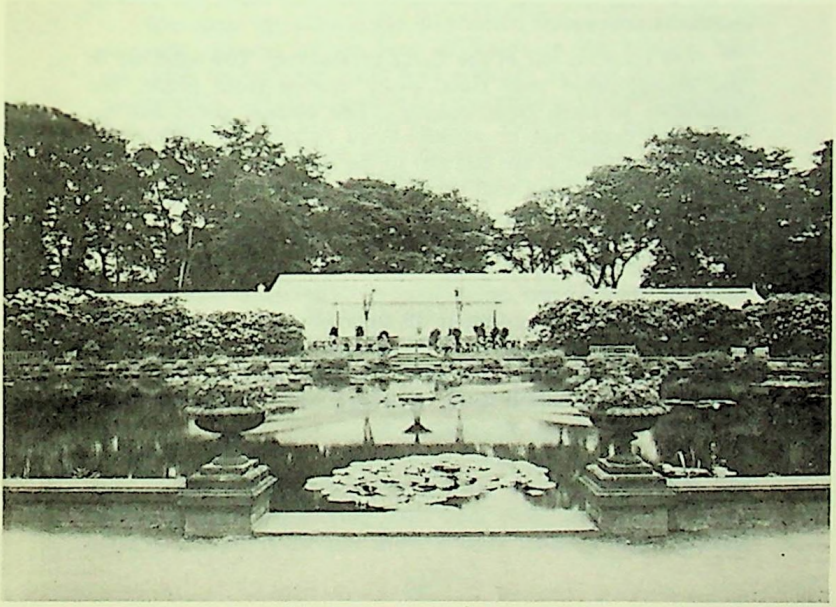
Earl Alexander had worked out a scheme whereby the cannel output would last until 1900, but in the 1860's there was a scare that coal supplies in England were running out fast, and there would be nothing to work machinery. Earl James, Alexander's son, seized the opportunity and sold his cannel while the market was good. A great deal of it was sent to South America for the manufacture of gas, and there was considerable trade at Christmas during the '60's and '70's with the cities of the U.S.A who were willing to pay highly for cannel as a substitute for the Yule Log.

The Present Hall.

James, who became 24th Earl of Crawford in 1825, and was created Baron Wigan of Haigh Hall, was the builder of the present building. The old hall, a relic of Norman times, had been considerably enlarged in Elizabethan times, had been allowed to fall into a state of dilapidation after the death of the last Sir Roger, and had been reinforced by Earl Alexander. Earl James, who had inherited the engineering and practical abilities of the Bradshaighs as well as the business ability of his father, undertook the task of rebuilding.

The work was started about 1830 and completed about 1849. It was built on the site of the old hall, and the Earl lived in Park Cottages, then comparatively modern, while the work was being carried out, and, as it was the age of nicknames, earned himself the nickname of Jimmy in the Trees. He drew his own plans, directed the workmen himself, and used his own materials. It is an imposing and solid square block, typical of the period, built round a small courtyard. The stone of which it is built

The Long Gallery with the Herbert Powell collection of watercolours



The Lily Pond and Fountain

is a hard sandstone, which was quarried in the Parbold area, brought to Haigh by canal, and dressed on the spot by John Haig, a Scots apprentice, with steam-driven saws specially designed for the purpose. The supply of building stone of that quality ran out, so the top part of the Hall was not completed in the way originally intended. The walls now have a slight tendency to lean outward owing to mining carried out all round, although not actually underneath the Hall, which stands on a plateau, and is quite safe. The iron work used came from the Haigh Foundry. Some of the doors attract one's attention. They are of fumed oak from the estate, a lost craft today on account of the time taken to complete the process, while the doorways and surrounds are made of wood brought from the Earl's Jamaican plantations. The marble fireplaces and plaster ceilings are worthy of notice and were brought from Paris, the only materials which did not come from his own estates.

Certain ideas and materials were incorporated from the old hall. A narrow twisting staircase guards one approach to the Earl's bedroom, perpetuating the idea of a knight being in a good position to defend himself and his lady. In the reign of Queen Anne, Tim Runnigar, a Wigan woodcarver, supplied a staircase, gallery, and three-arched arcade for the sum of £50, half of which was paid on delivery of the materials, and his work is of high quality. The staircase was used in one part of the present building, while the arcade is in one of the present refreshment rooms.

The house is full of the Earl's inventions. The windows fit into draughtproof steel slots, easily opened from inside, but impossible to open from outside. The outside doors had no locks and could not be opened from outside, something that had to be rectified in the last war in the interests of civil defence. Inside doors are fitted with patent hinges allowing them to swing back through a complete half circle, and by a twist of the handle automatically bolt themselves open. The staircases are keyed, the bottom stair holding the weight, but to an observer they appear most unsafe. The main staircase was strengthened by the addition of steel girders in 1951, as the Earl's staircase was made to stand the ordinary weight of a private residence, and not that of a public building. The roof is made of lead, which being so heavy would collapse were it not fitted with springs underneath it.

All doors leading to the back staircase, which runs from the top of the house to the kitchen quarters, were fitted with green baize. All the corridors look alike, particularly when furnished and carpeted, so that when a workman was called in to do a

job he was told to look for a green baize door when he had finished. Heating was by means of a hot air system combined with open fires. The system was most effective for keeping the corridors and large rooms at an even temperature, but seven boilers were needed and used a lot of fuel. The open fires gave additional warmth and cheer when sitting in the drawing-room, or having a meal. The last parts to be built were an extension on the roof, called the Noah's Ark, where the Earl's sons slept. and the portico, the large flagstones being specially noticeable. The material for these last portions came from the delph near the Alms-houses in Leyland Mill Lane.

All the formal ornamental gardens and terraces were removed and replaced by the present parkland. The sundial on the terrace was another production of his mathematical mind, and was designed to show the time in the principal cities of the world simultaneously. The observatory replaced a seventeenth century structure. The remains of an old building which can be seen are those of the old manorial court where offenders were tried in the Middle Ages, while the remains of the stocks, where they were sometimes consigned for punishment, can still be seen on the right of the entrance from Haigh village. When approaching the Hall from this direction the windmill in a field off Copperas Lane attracts one's attention. It was built sometime in the middle of the last century by John Sumner for the purpose of supplying the brewery in the village with water.

The maze of paths in the plantations makes one conjure up romantic pictures of the lord of Haigh in the Middle Ages galloping through the trees with a trusty servant throwing off his pursuers, and leaving them to ride round in circles completely lost, while he reached home safely. But this is not so. The paths, 40 miles of them, were made to give employment during the Lancashire cotton famine of 1861-3, when unemployment was rife.

Earl James was a popular figure. He had ability. He made money. He gave generously. When the Chartists were expected large numbers of his miners spent the night on guard outside his house, probably fortified against the cold with small stocky casks, known as Tommy Thumpers, from the local brewery. He died in 1869, and was succeeded by his son Alexander, 25th Earl of Crawford.

A Royal Visit.

In June 1873, King Edward VII and Queen Alexandra, then Prince and Princess of Wales, came to Wigan to open the Royal Albert Edward Infirmary, and stayed at Haigh Hall. Imagine

the Hall at that time, filled with beautiful things, pictures, antique furniture, china, books and manuscripts. The entire Hall was re-decorated, re-carpeted and curtained for the visit, and the work was carried out by a London firm in a month, according to the designs and instructions of Lady Crawford, at a cost of £80,000. The curtains were chiefly of Italian manufacture. The main staircase and corridors were covered with crimson and black Indian carpets. In the entrance hall were placed quaint and curious Spanish chairs upholstered in leather and gold. Exotic plants provided the floral decoration. The morning-room furniture was upholstered in velvet and silk. The long library, which is the large room on the ground floor overlooking the canal, became the banqueting hall. The sideboard was covered with gold plate. The dining chairs were crimson and green, except those used by the Royal personages, which were of silk and gold. Exotic plants again completed the decorations. At the top of the grand staircase stood a maplewood cabinet with its Worcester tea service decorated in Oriental style, its Wedgwood dinner service, its Minton porcelain dessert service complete with ten candelabra, its green and gilt Sèvres cups and saucers, and its Dresden painted and gilt cups. Three rooms on the first-floor enjoy the view across the estate to Wigan : an ante-room, the drawing-room, and the boudoir. The boudoir was specially decorated for the Princess in white and gold. The floor was covered with Persian carpets, the amber curtains were of Italian silk, the furniture was upholstered in velvet, while an ebony grand piano completed the arrangements for the Princess's private comfort. The drawing-room was, perhaps, the master-piece of this artistic interior decoration, with its Persian and Turkey carpets, curtains specially woven from France, its grand piano, elegant chairs, marqueterie tables and cabinets, graced with at least 30 vases of flowers, and 80 paintings by Old Masters, including Botticelli, van Dyck, and Sir Joshua Reynolds. The Royal bedstead was of walnut marqueterie, exquisitely carved, and said to have been a present to the Earl from a member of the Italian Royal Family. The curtains and coverlet were of crimson silk trimmed with white, while the wardrobe was of satinwood inlaid with tulipwood of particularly fine workmanship.

The drive was decorated with banners specially sent from Florence, erected on poles 20 yards high, and 24 yards apart, which could be seen from the entire stretch of the road between the two lodges in Wigan Lane. The complete stretch of the two mile drive through the plantations looked like a floral arcade. There was a triumphal arch decorated with evergreens and banners at the canal bridge, and another at the terrace 35 feet

The Ballroom

The Foyer

in height of Gothic design, constructed of rhododendron leaves, spruce and fir, surmounted on either side by a Prince of Wales plume. 2,000 schoolchildren lined the route near the terrace. Unfortunately the weather was not good, and just as the porch was reached the threatened thunderstorm broke and sent the spectators scurrying for shelter. The 30 stalls in the stables were occupied, and 12 horses had to be accommodated elsewhere. 150 servants and 50 members of the Lancashire County Constabulary slept in out-buildings and specially erected tents. The Royal apartments were thrown open to the public for three days after the Royal visitors had left, upon payment of 6d., and the proceeds were given to the Infirmary funds.

Domestic Life.

There was a resident staff consisting of a cook, kitchen maids, housemaids, footmen, and an odd job man; and when the family were in residence they brought their travelling staff of personal attendants, maids and secretaries. When other members of the family came, such as at Christmas time, they brought their own servants, so that sometimes 40 servants sat down to breakfast in the kitchen quarters. Cooking was done by coal in those days. One man spent quite a large part of the day coaling all the fires for cooking and heating, a large number of oil lamps had to be attended to daily, while attending to the vases of flowers took up quite a lot of time. When the carpets needed cleaning twelve people were needed to carry them out of doors and beat and drag them backwards and forwards over the lawn. The estate had its own carpenter and plumber, and there were twelve grooms and coachmen to attend to the twenty horses and cope with the family's transport needs. The estate was self-supporting, and produced everything necessary in the way of dairy produce, vegetables, flowers, poultry and meat. There were forty farms on the estate; they belonged to the Earl and were managed by a bailiff, but gradually they were all let to tenant farmers, with the exception of the Home Farm which continued to supply the needs of the family. In one case a farm passed from father to son and the rent was not increased in 100 years.

The Library.

Earl Alexander was a very accomplished person. He was a scholar, author, traveller and booklover. He wrote much philosophy, history and art criticism, and translated ancient manuscripts. It was he who formed the famous library, thought to be the best private library in the country. He endeavoured

to make it representative of the literature of all nations, and tried to procure the first editions and the best editions of a work. The Oriental and ancient European manuscripts numbered over 5,000, dating from the 6th century, and were written on the bark of trees, papyrus, vellum, and other substances. The collection was particularly rich in illuminated missals and fine bindings. It numbered many thousands of volumes, and the library shelves, corridors, furniture, and finally the floors were covered with books. Earl Alexander died in Florence in 1880, and his son Ludovic became the 26th Earl of Crawford.

The Close of the Century.

There came a time, after 1880, when there was a general trade slump, coal mining in particular being badly affected, and the prosperity of the Earls of Crawford once more began to fade somewhat. Earl Ludovic sold some of his valuable possessions; while in 1886 Balcarres became his, acquired from an uncle, his mother's brother, for his mother was also a Lindsay, being a granddaughter of Robert Lindsay who originally bought it from his brother. Ludovic believed that nobody should lead an idle useless life, and trained his sons accordingly. He, himself, was a keen astronomer, with a deep knowledge of his subject, and was the author of several astronomical works. He was a keen yachtsman, and used to take long voyages to out of the way places, accompanied by men of high scientific attainments, for scientific objectives. In 1888 he presented all his telescopes, instruments and equipment from the family residence at Dunecht, Scotland, which he sold soon afterwards, for the purpose of establishing an improved observatory at Edinburgh. He died in 1913, and was succeeded by his son David, 27th Earl of Crawford, who died in 1940.

Electricity comes to the Hall.

At the close of the last century gas replaced coal for cooking purposes, and an electricity generating plant was installed, with 124 storage batteries, a larger number than Wigan Corporation possessed at that time. There were 371 lights and 452 plugs installed. The batteries lasted 20 years, until 1918, without reconditioning; the next time they lasted only 15 years and were then only promised to last seven years without attention, so an agreement was entered into with Lancashire Electric Power Company to supply the Hall with electricity for a stipulated number of years at a flat rate of 5d. a unit, the agreement to be reviewed at the end of that time, but actually the Hall was sold and electricity nationalized before the agreement expired.

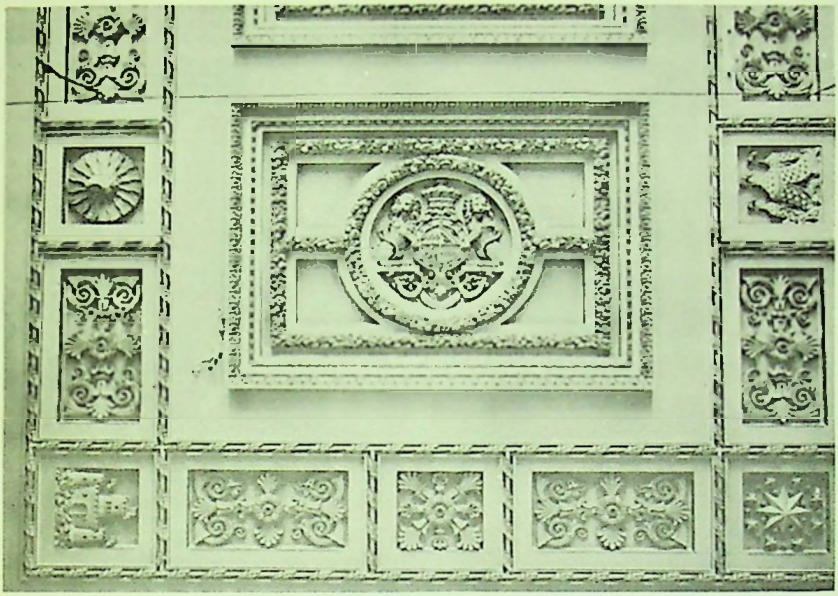
Haigh Hall during two World Wars.

During the first world war the Hall was used as a military hospital and housed casualties from the beginning, the first contingent being Belgians, followed later by English soldiers. During the second world war the Hall was equipped to house any overflow from the Wigan Infirmary in the event of air raids. Bombs did actually fall in the grounds, probably jettisoned there by an escaping aircraft.

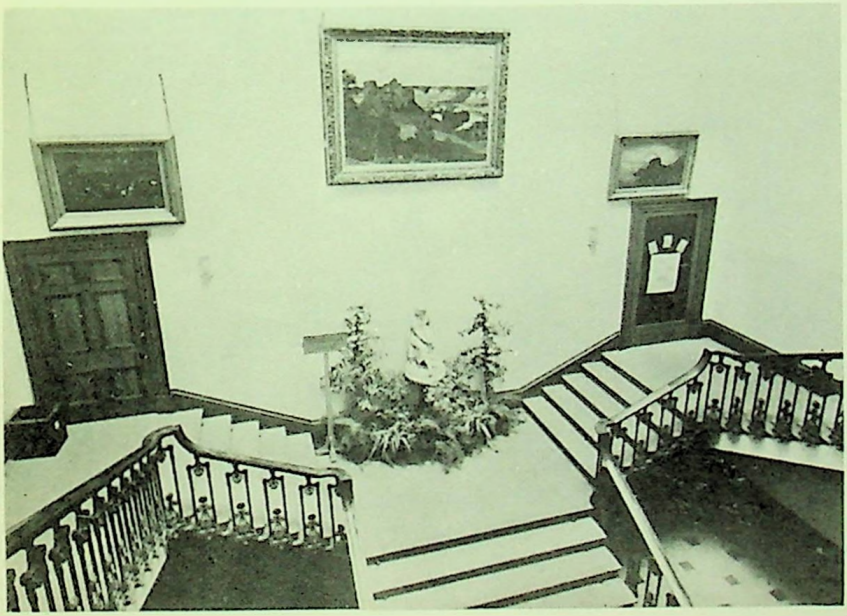
Haigh Hall purchased by Wigan Corporation.

The park surrounding Haigh Hall and stretching as far as the canal consists of 122 acres, and the lower plantations of 103 acres, only 21½ acres of which are actually situated within the Wigan County Borough boundary. The lower plantations have been open for generations for the public to enjoy at will, except for one day a year to preserve the ownership rights. In 1947 the Hall and grounds were purchased by Wigan Corporation. And so this centre of learning, culture and enterprise, with its beautiful woodlands, open parkland and fine view, so closely associated with the life and history of Wigan for so many centuries came into the possession of the town.

During the past four years the Hall has been open daily to the public from Easter to October. A wide range of art, history and science exhibitions have been displayed and a small local history museum has been built up. A tractor trailer passenger transport service runs from the Wigan Lane entrance through the plantations to the Hall, while during busy periods a bus service connects Haigh Village with Stocks Gate within 200 yards of the Hall. The Hall contains a modern cafe and snack bar.



The ceiling of the West Library



Looking down the Main Staircase

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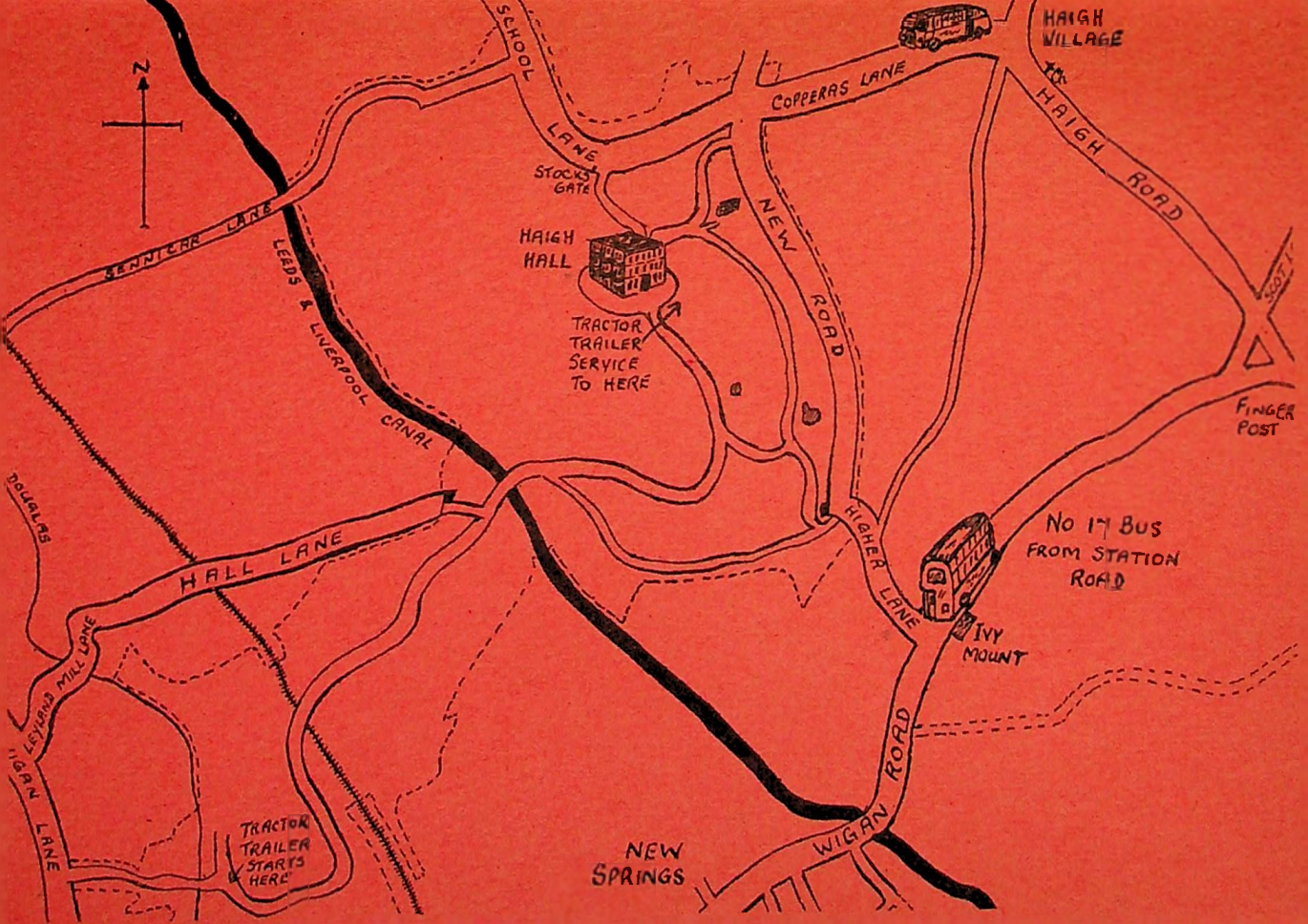
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