

PAST FORWARD

Produced by Wigan Heritage Service

Issue No. 45

April - July 2007

700th Anniversary St Thomas Upholland



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

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FRONT COVER PICTURE
The Priory Church and Village of Upholland by Charles Towne 1763-1840

Letter from the Editorial Team

Welcome to the new look **PAST FORWARD**. We have worked with our designers to produce a more attractive, easily readable magazine. We have also printed our publishing schedule, so that you can make sure your articles arrive on time.

This issue includes important information on the new opening hours for the History Shop, Leigh Local History and Leigh Archives (see page 14), so please be sure you read this.

We are working on new features to be introduced in forthcoming issues. Ideas so far include a special page for our younger readers, spotlight on collections (where we would highlight a particular object or collection each issue) and a new photographic feature. We would welcome your ideas on how you see the magazine developing, so please write to us.

We do hope that you enjoy your new look **PAST FORWARD** and wish you all a peaceful Easter.

Past Forward 2007 Publishing Schedule

Contributors, please note the deadline dates for receipt of material for publication.

Issue 46
21st May 2007

Issue 47
17th September 2007

The future

In issue 44 we outlined our plans for the future development of Past Forward, including the idea of a £1.00 charge per issue. We asked for your opinion on this, and can now report back that so far, well over 90% of respondents have wholeheartedly supported the introduction of the charge. We are very pleased that you value the magazine so highly. The consultation is ongoing, but it seems we have your approval, and the charge will probably be introduced for issue 46 (due out at the end of July). The money

EXHIBITIONS AT THE HISTORY SHOP



Top: King Street Baptist Brownies c.1938.

Bottom: 12th Leigh, 2nd Bedford (St Joseph's) Guides in the late 1920s.

**The History of
Girl Guiding in
Wigan Borough
April 16 – August 11
2007**



Girlguiding
Lancashire South

April 1 2007 is the 20th anniversary of the formation of the Guide County of Lancashire South, which includes all of the present metropolitan borough of Wigan, and a small area around Billinge This celebratory exhibition will trace the history of Guiding locally, from its introduction in Wigan towards the end of the First World War, to its current position as part of the UK's leading organisation for girls and young women today. There have been many changes along the way and these will be reflected in the photographs, badges, uniforms and flags which will be on display.

The exhibition will be officially opened on Thursday 19th April when, from 6pm – 9pm, members of 4th Wigan (St Mary's and St John's) Rainbows, Brownies and Guides will demonstrate guiding in action today. You are welcome to attend but numbers are limited so please contact Mrs Susan Heyes, Girlguiding Lancashire South archivist. Tel: 01942 245412 or Email Susanheyes@aol.com for more information.

of Past Forward

we raise will offset the costs of production and allow us to make improvements.

If Past Forward 46 does go on sale, you will be able to buy it at the History Shop, Leigh Local History Desk, Archive Office, any one of the borough's Libraries, Haigh Hall and the Tourist Information Centre. For those of you who only use the mobile library or the Housebound Service (where staff cannot

collect money) you will have the option of becoming a Friend of the Heritage Service (on annual payment of £5.00) and receive your copies through the post.

From some of your replies, there appears to be a little confusion around the £5.00 subscription to the Friends, which includes three free issues of Past Forward mailed to member's homes. This will still continue, and for the moment, the price remains the

same. However, we are looking at a 'tiered' approach to membership of the Friends, encompassing different types of subscription, from those that want to become involved in the service eg fundraising or working on specific projects, to those who just want to receive Past Forward through the post. We have not yet developed the idea, and as always, we will consult our readership and Friends before changes are made.

CAN YOU HELP?

Dear Editor

Thomas Cain was my gt gt grandfather, and whilst I have been able to trace the early years of his life and that of his family, I have been unable to trace beyond 1901 (when he is in Manchester as a visitor with his second wife Mary.)



Thomas Cain, c.1915.

Thomas was born in 1870 at Percy's Row, Bell Green Lane Ince to Hance and Margaret, he was the youngest of 8 children. He married in 1892 and had a daughter in 1893 (my gt grandma Kate). A son was born in February 1896 and died 13 days later, his wife Margaret died five days after the birth.

The family story is that Thomas married again (a lady called Mary) and that he went on to have another four children whilst living in Bolton (50 Union Street off Folds Road). His first child (Kate) was brought up by her maternal grandparents and an aunt, first

in Ince and then in Rotherham. I have been unable to confirm this marriage or any further children at present, and I am hoping that your readers or possibly any descendants of Thomas still in the Wigan area can help. I have already received help from Max Finney and Neil Cain, for which I am extremely grateful).

Mrs Kym Evans,
51 Teign Bank Road
Hinckley
Leicestershire LE10 0ED
kymtim@ntlworld



Thomas' granddaughters, Ivy (my grandmother) and Maggie.

Dear Editor

Thirty years ago my husband bought a large quantity of stone from Standishgate Methodist Church when it was being demolished. This stone has been used to build walls around the garden, and the massive window sills have created two large garden seats. On New Year's Eve my husband found part of a marble memorial stone with the name Jabez Boggis whilst sorting out the remaining pile.

It was easy to research this very unusual name. Jabez was born in Essex in 1850 to John and Jane Boggis. He was an apprentice grocer working in Osett, Essex. In 1880 he married Sarah Anne Bowser who came from Warrington. They had two sons Edward and Frank. In the 1891 Census they lived at 8 Ashland Avenue with their sons and had a servant, Elizabeth Tury. In 1901 they

had moved to 5 Kenyon Road and Jabez was now running his own wholesale grocery business. His sons, Edward was a clerk in the business, and Frank was a dentist's apprentice. Since we have not found the rest of the memorial we would like to complete the picture. When did he die and what good works did he do for Standishgate Methodist Church?

Mrs D Hart,
35 Preston Road
Coppull



'Wiggin' SPEAK

By T.K Clitheroe

As I slowly claw my way to the nonagenarian state with my 85 years, all of which have been spent in Wigan (apart from a six year period in the 1940's when I was otherwise engaged) I am becoming increasingly concerned to see our much-loved 'Wiggin speak' apparently fading into obscurity, due to lack of use. Many of these words and phrases have very close connections with our once thriving coal and cotton industries, and should surely be recognised as a much valued part of our heritage.

Fortunately, one is still able to occasionally hear it spoken, more often than not in the tap rooms of local pubs. However, unless a real effort is made to rejuvenate it, it will almost certainly disappear, never to be heard again.

Perhaps in some small measure, the following will at least bring a smile and a chuckle at the special humour and wonderful imagery with which our dialect is so liberally spiced. I have listed a few examples in an attempt to whet the appetite and stir the memory. I have also supplied a translation of each saying to help 'foreigners' and lapsed locals.

Editor's note: You will find the translation on page 13 along with a scoring system (also supplied by Mr Clitheroe) which will enable you to calculate whether you are (in Mr Clitheroe's eyes at least) a real

'Wigginer' or not!

- 1 Wot's getten fer thi baggin'?
- 2 'Oose yon lass mee-mawin'at?
- 3 'Ers uz foo' uz a butcher's dog
- 4 Dun't ee' favver iz fayther
- 5 Why dussent tek thi face rattin'
- 6 Yon lass 'ull eight shop bread
- 7 'Iz cap 'ull 'owd a bilin' o' peighs
- 8 'Um uz slavvers iz nor allus gormless
- 9 It favvers it's gooin't clod it deawn
- 10 Therz mooer meight on a ragmon's trumpet
- 11 Worrart 'avin' aife ov?
- 12 'Ees geet 'iz tap stopped
- 13 'Awm gooin' wom morn neet
- 14 'Ers neawt a peawnd
- 15 Aw con allus eight a piece 'o moggy meight
- 16 'Ees geet a face uz long uz a lampleeter's pow
- 17 'Ees gon t'back wi' eez deggin' can
- 18 Get thissell womm fer thi tay
- 19 Awl gi' thi' o' taste o' clog pie
- 20 If 'eed oni mooer meawth 'eed a no face fot wash

Heritage education has been **All Go!**

It has been enjoyable meeting so many different groups and individuals and working with them. I thrive on providing opportunities for so many people to learn new things and rekindle distant memories.

Social Services have been attending workshops to learn more about local history. We looked at the Legend of Mabs Cross in the days when knights were bold, damsels were in distress and people got their wires crossed! We took Wigan's legend into likelihood by examining early primary source material and made a decision that 'truth wise' the legend had a lot going for it. The groups love the challenge of the follow up work when they can explore the theme in depth. This meant trips to see the cross and visits to All Saints Church Parish Church. It is always a really good day when my special friends visit because there is always a positive atmosphere generated with lots of laughter. Barry and Cathy put me to shame because they are on a health kick which

includes the gym visits and both of them losing several stone in weight. They have such energy and determination to get fit and are certainly role models for the campaign of 'Getting Wigan Active'.

St Patrick's School invited me to present my workshop entitled People in Places and I spent a worthwhile and enjoyable morning working with a class, looking at the trials and tribulations of 'Victorian Wiggins'. The children were vivacious and very enthusiastic about local history, soaking up the information that generated a positive question session to close the workshop. During midmorning break I was invited to share with the children in a French 'elevenses' of hot chocolate, crepes and croissants to conclude their recent exploration of another culture. The children were marvellous but my French was a bit ropey! As an educator I marvel at the positive learning environment at St Pat's and the school

memories those children will have to relate back to their grandchildren. The Sunflower Project which is nearly at the finishing post with all the contributions to the book being ready for press. So many women sharing their memories, experiences and life stories that encapsulate a community. As a 'spin off' I facilitated a creative writing class for the ladies at St Barnabas Church who showed some amazing talent for writing. The more I go out into the community the more I see such splendid camaraderie from the organisers and members of these social groups. Pensioner's Link at Leigh is another channel for social inclusion and one could argue it is like a giant 'Pensioner's Playgroup', tenderly made possible by the commendable work of Heather Meakin. I am so fortunate to meet so many good people out and about in the borough and facilitate workshops that help people share fellowship by sharing their experiences.

Christmas activities were amazing with families coming along to find out why Father Christmas originally wore green. It must be my age because I

get quite emotional these days, especially when asking the children what Christmas meant to them. The children answered without any prompting. They knew it was an important date because it was the birth of Jesus and Christmas to them was spending time with their families and thinking of others who had less than themselves. They also mentioned that Christmas should be a time to show love and they all hoped that the world would have peace. Out of the mouths of babes!

What Next?

We have lots planned for 2007. In half term I am facilitating two workshops entitled Who Am I?. These are based on family history and I hope young children will enjoy being family history detectives. Looking for clues with the help of other members from their family. During the Easter holidays there will be some informal

family learning workshops to celebrate the joys of Spring. Throughout the year I hope to do a series of daytime talks on towns within the borough, starting with Hindley with the pilot session for a group known as the Ladies Circle. I will be out and about in the community and at the History Shop so please support us if there is anything on offer that takes your fancy.

Dianne Teskey
Community Outreach & Education Officer.

Easter Fun at the History Shop

Come and join us in our Easter workshops which are on Wednesdays at 10.30am and 2.00pm.

Wednesday 4th April 2007

What is a pace egg and why do people roll them down hills? Find out about the origins of Easter traditions and make a cosy egg cover for your Easter hard boiled egg.

Wednesday 11th April 2007

Enjoy a little animal magic and join in the Easter activities. Make a bouncing bunny to take home.

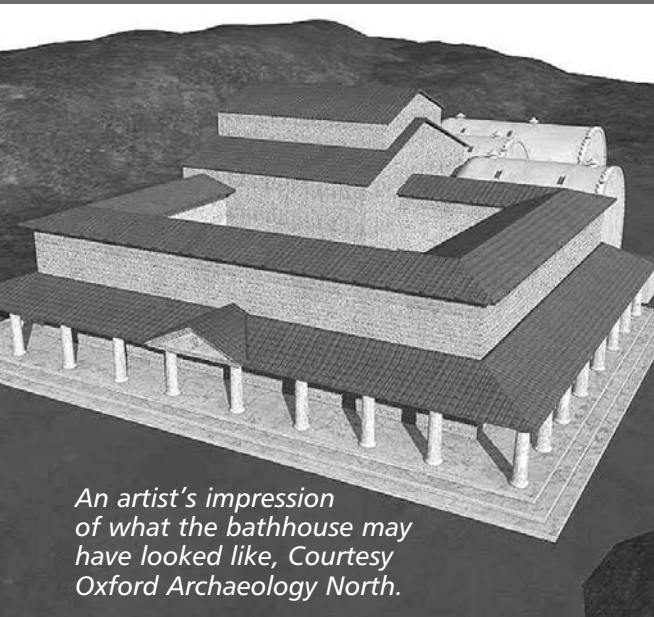
Sessions are suitable for families with children aged 4 to 10 years and cost £1 to help towards the cost of craft materials. Places are limited so booking is essential. Book early to avoid disappointment by telephoning the History Shop on 01942 828128.



Wigan's Bathhouse Excavations

By Bill Aldridge

– A view from Wigan Archaeology Society



An artist's impression of what the bathhouse may have looked like, Courtesy Oxford Archaeology North.

"2005 was a special year for Wigan. Almost over night we saw it go from the lower division to the dizzy heights of the Premiership, and this was not just in the world of the football."

These were the words used by Ian Miller of Oxford Archaeology North to describe Wigan's sudden rise to fame in the world of Roman archaeology. Bathhouses are not that common in Britain, but to find one of such good quality, and from such an early date, in this part of the North West, is quite remarkable. It puts Wigan amongst some of the more important sites in the early days of the Roman conquest of Northern Britain.

Roman Wigan

It has always been assumed that there was a Roman station at Wigan. Even as early as the beginning of the 19th century, the Rev Edmund Sibson suggested it was Coccium, the Roman fort which appears in early Roman literature, and was able to trace three Roman roads leading into Wigan from Warrington, Manchester and Preston. Added to this, many Roman finds have turned up over the years including funerary vessels from the area of the Gas Works, a Roman altar stone in the Parish Church and many coins and potsherds from around the town centre. However, it was only in the early 1980's, with excavations in the Wiend, that the true

nature of Wigan's Roman heritage began to emerge. Two seasons of excavations, by a team from Manchester University, revealed for the first time that Wigan was indeed settled by the Romans and was being used for some kind of industrial activity. Evidence of metal-working and military-style wooden buildings from the late 1st to the early 2nd century fitted with other well known sites in the region such as Wildespool and Walton-le-Dale, but significantly, no indications of a fort.

Development

Since the advent of planning guidance legislation in the mid 1990's, developers have been obliged to contribute towards

archaeological investigations prior to any new development in historically sensitive areas. When planning permission was granted to Modus to develop a large area in the centre of Wigan, it was obvious to our society that a great opportunity would present itself for further discoveries in an area which may well have survived the ravages of Victorian development. Much of the area in question had been covered in the late 19th century by a huge earthen embankment built for the Central Railway Station, which was the terminus for the Great Central Railway (Wigan Junction Branch). Even the River Douglas had to be diverted to accommodate the

bank and the viaduct which took the railway over the Douglas Valley eastwards towards Manchester. The area is also very close to the earlier discoveries in the Wiend. A desk-top survey arranged by Greater Manchester Archaeology Unit, was followed by field evaluation work carried out by Oxford Archaeology North (who are based in Lancaster). Our suspicions were soon confirmed when the team began digging in Ship Yard behind the Ship Hotel (latterly called Yates Wine Lodge, but more recently, Sam's Bar) in the town centre end of Millgate.

Early Indications

Both Roman and Medieval activity were detected in the evaluation trenches, prompting full excavation work, which began late in November 2004 and carried on through the winter months, sometimes in atrocious conditions. Despite the bad weather, evidence soon began to emerge of extensive Roman occupation dating to the early 2nd century AD. This included high-quality Samian-ware¹ and even wood from two 'V'-shaped ditches which look typically military in design. These were intermingled with evidence of Medieval activity in the form of pits and ditches outlining the burgess plots² which would have backed onto the houses and shops along the Millgate of Medieval Wigan. Significantly the Roman ditches ran in a perpendicular direction to the main road suggesting Millgate may have originated in the Roman period.



Hypocaust, Roman bathhouse, Millgate. Courtesy Oxford Archaeology North.

Failure

These findings gave great hope for further discoveries in the rest of the development area. However, when trenches were opened on the north side of the Civic Centre, opposite the area in the Wiend where previous discoveries had been made, the archaeologists drew a blank. Early photographs of the construction of the Civic Centre, however, gave a good clue as to the reason for this, with larger areas being excavated out for its foundations. Trenches were also opened in the area around the bottom of Watkin Street. This was to establish if any archaeology survived relating to the mill which once stood on the banks of the Douglas in that area. This also drew a blank, but it demonstrated that the spoil deposited in the late 19th

century was much deeper than first thought and the conclusion was that the development would not disturb any archaeology at that depth. Our only hope lay in the area on the other side of Pennington's furniture shop further down Millgate opposite the present Town Hall.

Success

Evaluation trenching in this area soon turned up a Roman hearth. Plans were therefore put forward for a larger scale excavation to be carried out over the next few weeks. When Tom Glover (our chairman) and I visited the site a week or so later, cellared buildings and an early 19th century bread oven had been uncovered on the west side of the site adjacent to the road on Millgate. I was particularly intrigued by a

cobbled road complete with pavements, curbing and drains, which had not seen the light of day for over 100 years.

However, what Mark Bagwell, the site director, was getting particularly excited about came as a complete surprise to us; square brick tiles piled on top of each other in a fashion which could only mean one thing, a Roman hypocaust³. At this point in time only a few tiles protruded through the mud but there was enough to convince the experts that they had possibly hit on the remains of a Roman bathhouse. There were also indications of a large stone wall in another area of the site which had been robbed out to leave a large foundation trench. These findings changed the whole complexity of the site and fresh negotiations were held with the archaeologists, Wigan Council and Modus, who generously gave an extra six weeks to excavate the whole of the area between the multi-storey car park and

Penningtons furniture shop.

Impressive Remains

The next time we saw the site was an evening tour, specially arranged for our society by the excavation project manager, Ian Miller. We started with the obligatory safety procedures and preliminary talk on the site's overall development. This included a mention of the old Ritz Cinema (reputedly once the largest in Europe) which, being considered of no particular architectural merit, was in the throes of being demolished. Ian then led us onto the site to show us just what they had uncovered. Our collective jaws dropped in amazement when he presented us with, not just one hypocaust room but three, together with other rooms including a possible plunge pool. Two of the hypocaust rooms had well defined stoke-holes and the third had smaller rooms off to the west and east. The large stone wall, as indicated by the robbed-out trench, seemed to be aligned

with the west wall of one of the hypocaust rooms and proceeded north for another 12 metres before turning east for another 11 metres. It eventually disappeared under Victorian development, which had truncated the site on the east side. This represented a huge enclosure but had little or no indication of any internal structure. There was however a room cornered between the enclosure wall and one of the hypocaust rooms. This showed evidence for beam slots which indicated an internal wooden structure or a series of partition walls. Only a small amount of stone survived in the enclosure wall trench but, the little that did, indicated a high quality of construction and, with a general width of 90cm (3 feet), demonstrated a very substantial structure.

Colonnade

Lying outside the enclosure wall and running parallel to it was another foundation trench, not quite as big but, once again, robbed of its stonework. At the point where it turned the corner, Ian pointed out a huge rectangular block of stone which he initially thought was Victorian because of its fine surface finish. But after further investigations this turned out to be firmly associated with the Roman levels. Its isolated position suggested it was probably a base plinth for a large stone column. Further evidence of similar blocks (one to the south and another to the east) added weight to this interpretation and would probably have represented a portico or maybe colonnaded



An artist's impression of what the bathhouse may have looked like, Courtesy Oxford Archaeology North.

entrance. The base of a column, found in the one of the hypocaust rooms, may have originated from this feature.

Hypocausts

Of the three hypocaust rooms found, the best preserved was the one located to the north and offset to the west of the other two. It had a well defined stoke-hole on its west side which was full of construction debris and burnt material. In the hypocaust room, columns of tiles (or pilae) reached almost one metre high and covered more than 50% of the floor space. The rest of the floor area had been completely cleared by later post-Medieval industrial activity (possibly a bell casting pit). The south wall of this room had been breached by some other industrial activity which had occurred at a later date in the Roman period, probably after the building had gone out of use as a hypocaust. Ian described this as possibly squatter activity, taking advantage of the structural remains.

Bathhouse

A deep trench running away from the main site on the west side, but parallel to it, produced a large piece of amphora⁴. Amphora represented a large proportion of the pottery assemblage from the site in general but there was little in the way of domestic material. This suggests the site was a public building rather than a domestic residence or town house, which sometimes had heated rooms. The slight fall in



An artist's impression of what the inside of the bathhouse may have looked like. Courtesy Oxford Archaeology North.

the deep trench suggests that it was probably the water supply to the main building. Added to this, on the north side of the site and dating slightly early, Ian pointed out an area of post holes and hearths, where some industrial activity had been carried out. Scrap pieces of lead indicate that this was probably the workshops where the Romans were producing the lead used for lining pools or tanks for holding the water. Assessing all this evidence, Ian and his team are convinced that this site was indeed a bathhouse. In Britain as a whole, bathhouses are very often associated with forts but, without positive evidence for one in the Wigan area (although this has not been ruled out), the suggestion is that it was probably attached to a mansio⁵.

High status

Ian explained that the whole site was evidently of a high

status and seemed to be built generally in one phase. The width and depth of the hypocaust foundation trenches alone were testament to the importance of the structure. Trenches had been cut into the bedrock of the sloping hillside of Millgate to provide a level surface to build on, indicating a large investment in time and manpower. Most of the stonework had been removed from the foundation trenches but, where it had survived, the quality of construction was of a high standard. Quite unusually though, the excavations revealed that this walling had been almost totally robbed out in antiquity (in fact in the Roman period) suggesting that it had been deliberately dismantled and may have been taken elsewhere. Ian also commented on how even more remarkable was the age of its construction. Pottery evidence puts the date of occupation between the late

1st century and early 2nd; a date which has since been confirmed with evidence from archaeo-magnetic analysis for the last firing of the stokehole. This came in at 137 AD, a date which coincides with a general push by the Romans into Scotland - a period of advance which eventually resulted in the formation of the Antonine Wall stretching from the Clyde to the Forth.

Post-Roman

Although the main structure was built in one phase there was some later activity on the site in the Roman period, but this amounted to very little. As well as the previously mentioned hearth inserted in the hypocaust room, a deep trench was cut in the area around the plunge pool. This was offset from the pool by about a metre or so to the north and west side, but the function of this trench remains unclear. The archaeologists found no evidence of further occupation until the Medieval period when a number of pits were dug on the periphery of the site. Two of these pits were quite large and yielded a fair assemblage of pottery dating mainly from the 12th to 14th centuries. This has increased the total number of Medieval potsherds from the excavations to over 300. It is difficult to underestimate the importance of this material in our understanding of Medieval Wigan. To put it into context, the total amount of sherds discovered previously in the whole of Wigan is only about one tenth of the pottery discovered here at this

one site.

Post-Excavation

Ian Miller and his team are now feverishly working on post-excavation work to conserve and evaluate all the finds. This will eventually culminate in a special publication, funded by the developers, Modus, which will tell the full story based on the project's discoveries. Further information has already emerged, such as the previously mentioned last firing of the stoke holes and lately, the identification of flue tiles amongst the quantities of building materials. These hollow tiles, designed to channel the hot gases from the under-floor heating up through the walls, would have been embedded in the inside walls of the hypocaust rooms making sure the whole structure was kept warm. More significantly, fragments of 'voussior' have been also identified. These were special box flues which were shaped into arch sections such that, when put together, would form the barrel-vaulted roofs so typical of Roman bathhouses. They were light and hollow enabling the hot gasses to continue from the walls, through the vaulted roof and out at the top through small chimneys. Finally, arrangements are currently being planned for a reconstruction of the hypocaust to be displayed in the Grand Arcade development using as much of the original material as possible – a fine tribute to Wigan's Roman heritage.

- 1. Samian-ware was high quality table-ware imported from the continent and usually decorated with animal hunting scenes.*
- 2. Burgess or burgage plots were parcels of land belonging to the freeman or more wealthy residence of the Medieval borough. Typically they were long and narrow with the short end facing onto the street.*
- 3. A hypocaust was the Roman equivalent of under-floor central heating. It consisted of a concrete floor suspended on brick or stone pillars. Hot air from an adjacent furnace room (or stokehole) was forced under the floor between the pillars and up through box flues built into the walls.*
- 4. Amphora were large pottery vessels usually associated with the transportation of wine, oil or fish paste.*
- 5. A mansio was the Roman equivalent of a hotel or travelodge where important dignitaries could stay on their travels. Many had attached facilities such as bathhouses or gymnasiums (similar to a leisure centre).*

Editor's Note:

A detailed post excavation assessment by Oxford Archaeology North will be available shortly in History Shop. The report (kindly authorised for public access by Project Manager Ian Miller) is not the last word. Ian hopes to publish a definitive report containing all the expert pottery analysis early in 2008.

'Wiggin' SPEAK

Are You a Real 'Wiginner'?

- 1 Wot's gotten fer thi baggin'?
What has your wife packed for lunch
- 2 'Oose yon lass mee-mawin'at?
Who is the young lady trying to attract your attention?
- 3 'Ers uz foo' uz a butcher's dog
She is a very attractive young lady
- 4 Dun't ee' favver iz fayther?
He bears a striking resemblance to his father
- 5 Why dussent tek thi face rattin'?
You are a really ugly person
- 6 Yon lass 'ull eight shop bread
She is certainly not a very discriminating lady
- 7 'Iz cap 'ull 'owd a bilin' o' peighs
He has a very big head
- 8 'Um uz slavvers iz nor allus gormless
Don't always judge from appearance
- 9 It favvers it's goin't clod it deawn
It looks as if it's going to rain heavily
- 10 Therz moorer meight on a ragmon's trumpet
He certainly is very thin
- 11 Worrart 'avin' aife ov?
What would you like to drink?
- 12 'Ees geet 'iz tap stopped
The landlord won't serve him any more drinks
- 13 'Awm gooin' wom morn neet
I've decided to go home tomorrow night
- 14 'Ers newt a peawnd
She's a worthless person
- 15 Aw con allus eight a piece 'o moggy meight
I really fancy a piece of cheese
- 16 Ees geet a face uz long uz a lampleeter's pow
He's got a miserable face
- 17 'Ees gon t'back wi' eez deggin' can
He's gone into the garden with the watering can
- 18 Get thissell womm fer thi tay
You get on home for your tea
- 19 Awl gi' thi' o' taste o' clog pie
I'll give you a good kicking
- 20 If 'eed oni moorer meawth 'eed a no face fot wash
He's got a really big mouth

How Did You Score?

- 20/20 Weel dun tha' a real Wigginer
- 15/20 Tha' noan dooin so bad, keep gooin' wi't yed deawn
- 10/20 Tha' needs a bit moorer practice,owd corron
- 5/20 Norr a great deal of hope, fur thi', marrer
- 0/20 Tha' met uz weel get thissell womm deawn seawth. Tha's noan geet nowt fot draw up 'ere

New Opening Hours for Heritage Services

Many of you will have seen previous press releases, and taken part in our consultation process to enable us to finalise our development and improvement plans for the future of the Heritage Service. The work has now been completed, and we will be introducing new opening hours and other related changes at the History Shop, Leigh Local History and Leigh Archives from Monday 19th February.

The change in opening times (which will be reviewed in December 2007) follows extensive consultation with customers, staff and main user groups. A statistical analysis of visiting patterns from a comparable period last year has also been carried out to support this research. The changes have been implemented to allow us to deliver essential areas of the new vision for Wigan's Heritage Services which includes:

- widening the delivery of school curriculum activities to around 2,700 schoolchildren per year;
- creating heritage based learning activities for families and adults with special needs;
- supporting Townships to develop local activities in their local environment;
- establishing a 'Curating in the Community' programme;
- assessing the heritage collection of the Trust (which holds 25,000 items);

- ensuring the collection can be utilised through display and loans to local groups and schools;
- up to £800,000 of improvements at the History Shop, increasing access, exhibition and interpretation material, if an application to Heritage Lottery Fund is successful.

Jacqui Boardman, Chair of Wigan Leisure and Culture Trust, said, "I would like to thank everyone who took part in the consultation process. It was essential for us to know the view of our customers in order to make the appropriate decisions to move the service forward. The sample of people we spoke to or who filled in questionnaires ran to over 100 customers and we had over 300 nominations of days and times to consider.

We have listened to everybody who has come and talked to us and we are confident that the new hours will allow us to provide an excellent service. We have made appropriate changes to the original proposals where there has been strong demand from our customers. This has been a testing time for Heritage Services and difficult decisions have had to be made but we believe they are for the long-term benefit of all those who wish to discover heritage in Wigan Borough."

The changes are as follows.

History Shop

- from 19th February

Following consultation, the History Shop will open for five days per week instead of the proposed three days. The local family history service has been strengthened by recruiting additional help at the Local History Desk and a programme to train additional cover is underway. In response to demand, a more streamlined system allowing customers to make their own microfilm copies has been introduced. Capacity will be increased in the near future through the introduction of an additional reading machine. Saturday morning openings will also be retained within the new opening hours.

OPENING TIMES:

Monday	10.30am - 3.00pm
Tuesday	10.30am - 3.00pm
Wednesday	Closed
Thursday	10.30am - 3.00pm
Friday	10.30am - 3.00pm
Saturday	10.00am - 1.00pm

For general History Shop enquiries call 01942 828128. For bookings call 01942 828020.

Leigh Local History

- from 26th February

Access to the local history resources in Leigh will continue to be available in its normal section within Leigh Library during library opening hours. This includes access to the microfilms, even on days when the Local History Officer is not present. The Local History Officer will be available one evening and alternate Saturday's in addition to the one day per week originally proposed. Booking is required.

Local History Officer On Site:

Thursday	9.00am - 7.00pm
Saturday (Alternate)	9.30am - 4.00pm

For general enquiries call 01942 404459.
For bookings call 01942 828020.

Archives at Leigh

- from 19th February

Consultation has suggested that customers would like the service to be available for more than one day per week as originally proposed. We have decided to open the Archive search room to appointments on **two days per week**.

In addition, the Trust has introduced extra staff assistance during at least one of these days to allow the Archivist greater flexibility to carry out his duties whilst keeping the public search room supervised. **Booking is required.**

OPENING TIMES:

Wednesday	10.00am - 4.30pm
Thursday	10.00am - 4.30pm

For Heritage Archives (Leigh Town Hall) enquiries and bookings call 01942 404431 or 01942 828020.



Guided Historical Tours



Formerly home to the Earl of Crawford & Balcarres, Haigh Hall is a Grade II listed building dating back to 1840.

Join our Guided Historical Tour of the Hall, the Stables and beautiful surroundings. Take a step back in time as you wander through 3 floors of magnificent rooms and learn interesting facts about our social history.

Tours available throughout the year.

For forthcoming tours please contact the Information Centre on: 01942 832895

Booking Essential, price £3 per person. (Discounts for groups 15+)

What does heritage mean to you in your community?

This is the question being asked by the newly formed Wigan Heritage Network, and it is set to generate some very interesting answers.

The Wigan Heritage Network was set up last year in response to another question set by the Heritage Service to our stakeholders, 'what is heritage'? In May 2006 a group of representatives from local societies, groups and communities got together in the History Shop for the inaugural meeting. The group immediately saw a role for itself as an advocacy tool to lobby the Trust, the Council and other groups and societies and as a self help and support network for local heritage groups of whatever sort throughout the Borough. This meeting was facilitated by the Community Empowerment Unit of the Council and the group is benefiting from their continued support.

As the Heritage Service however, we wanted more out of such a powerful group. An input into the Local Strategic Partnership, in the case of Heritage, the Cultural Partnership, that helps to shape Council policy in this

area. Happily, late in 2006 the Chair of the Heritage Network was also able to take a seat at the Partnership.

The group are now going from strength to strength and would like to offer two specific invitations to you, the readers of Past Forward.

Firstly, the open invitation to get in touch and come along to a meeting of the group. The Chairman, Joe Taylor from the Billinge Historical Society, said

“We need as many local groups represented as possible, all are eligible within our constitution and all will be welcome”.

The next two meetings are on Friday 16th March and Friday 15th June both at 11am at the History Shop, Library Street, Wigan.

The second invitation is for you to do some thinking about your own area. The Heritage Network is embarking on an ambitious programme to try and record all places of heritage interest in each community. Being realistic, this will take some time, and so the Network has allowed at least a year to collect this information. However, without your help the project will never be completed in such a timescale. As the people who know and live in these communities, you are in the best position to say what is important in your area. The plan is to compile a detailed data base, and also lodge the information with the Council's Conservation officer, so that more informed decisions can be made when considering future plans or planning applications.

If you or your group are interested in recording the important places in your area get in touch with Joe Taylor at joe41@blueyonder.co.uk, or go to the Wigan Heritage Network website at www.wiganheritage.com for more information.

Family History Workshops at the History Shop

Have you ever wondered what your family roots are? Done some research in the past but come to a dead end and need advice to get started again?

The Friends of Wigan Heritage Service run family history workshops for beginners at the History Shop every second

Wednesday 1.30pm and 3.00pm. If you have Wigan roots then the collections at the History Shop will be available to get you started on your own research, if your ancestors hailed from further a field, the Friends will be on hand to give you advice as to where to go next for your story.

If you are interested the workshops are very popular so please book well in advance at the History Shop or by telephoning 01942 828128,

the price is £3.50 which includes your research pack and an hour and a half with one of our experienced researchers.

Workshops run up to the end of June 2007 with more to be scheduled in the autumn.

If you are interested in joining the Friends then please contact us or our current chair Mr David Lythgoe through the History Shop, Library Street, Wigan.



Volunteering with the Heritage Service

If you love your local history and heritage and are interested in finding out more, why not consider volunteering with the Heritage Service?

If you have a few hours, or a few days, to spare each week then there may be a role for you. The Heritage Service runs an organised volunteer programme working with the extensive local collections and of course the public at all our venues. If you enjoy face to face contact we need volunteers to help researchers and amateur genealogists, or if 'backroom' work is more to your liking, generating lists, files and indexes for the collection are ongoing projects both in Wigan and Leigh.

For more information on how to get involved contact Christine Watts at The History Shop in Wigan on 01942 828020.

Letters from America

By Mr R Evans



Amongst the many requests for help received by Henry Shepherd, the Atherton Overseer of the Poor, are two letters sent in 1831 and 1832 by Thomas Radcliffe Clewes from Philadelphia. In these letters, each written without any concern for punctuation or spelling, he explains his reasons for emigrating, makes pleas for assistance to help his family follow him, and also provides information about conditions in the new country. On the 5th of May 1831 he wrote:

*"To the Overseers of Atherton Township
Gentlemen*

*I Make bold to write to you
this letter to see if you are willing to send my
wife and Children to come to me into Merica
my circumstances will not permit to send for*

*them it will take me 3 years Before I can send
for them myself but if you please to send them
I will Except of them and if not I shall be very
likely to change my state of life in this country
if I had stop in England I should onely have
been burdensome to the town the expence of
sending them will be about 8 or 10 pounds
that will be all, I shall stop for answer a few
Months if you will not I shall Marry and go to
Pittsburg 3 Hundred Miles from Philadelphia
weaving is better here than in England but
other Trade is little better provisions is about
Half price but single men has to pay so much
Boarding and washing"*

He continues on the reverse side:

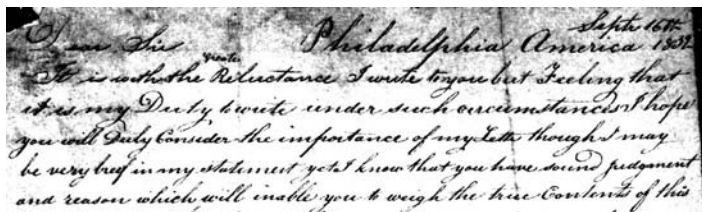
*"The Captain of this vessel named John Wells
will Bring them vey cheap I know I have had no
answer from England this year Neither will I
write if she cannot come*

*I Ham your
well wisher
Thomas Radcliffe Clewes
to be left at Globe Mill
Tavern North Street
Germanstown Road
Philadelphia
America"*

Why were these letters sent to the Atherton overseer? At this time, no matter where a person was living, the responsibility for providing relief in times of need lay with the township in which they had gained what was termed a "settlement: in simplified terms the

place were they had been born. The fact that Thomas Radcliffe Clewes addressed his pleas for help to the Atherton overseer indicates that he regarded Atherton as his place of "settlement", though evidence from his letters, and also the content of other items of correspondence, indicates that he had moved to Bolton before crossing the Atlantic.

His next letter, written in the following year, shows that he did not carry out his threat to abandon his family and leave Philadelphia. He still retained hopes that he could be reunited with his wife and children.

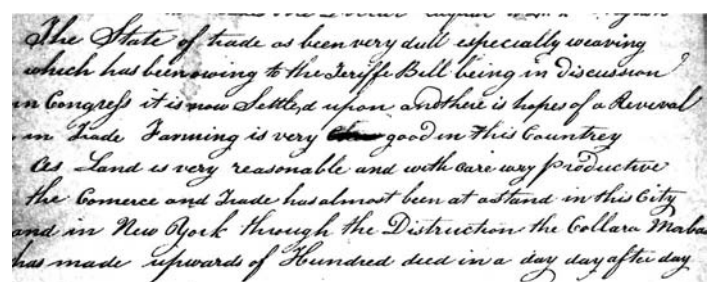


He continues:

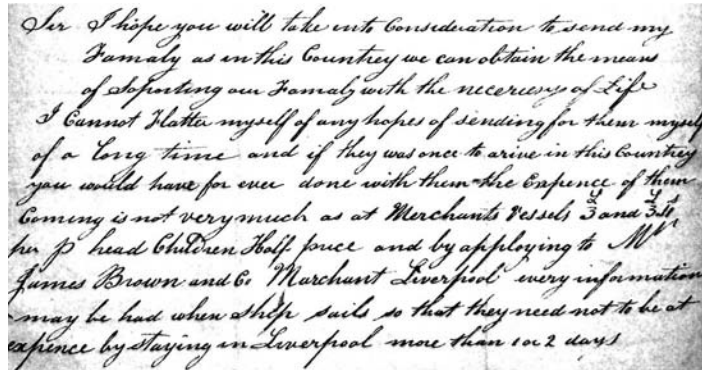
"When First I landed in the Country it was but under Indifferent Circumstances as a part of my passage money was Paid down by Wm Nutall from Bolton Moor who Emigrated at the same time to this Country after my arrival I had this Money to Pay Back which I did as soon as I had earned it by Industry and thus I maintained a steady and Industrious Sourse in my employ and endeavouring to a Cunulate something for the means of my Famaly Comeing over When a las my fair hopes where Blasted by a long spell of Sickness and Dureing that sickness I had 9 shillings per week to pay English money for my Boarding and a Dockters Bill Then not only the Little money that I had was gone but I was Involved in Debt and this this Summer I have been Labouring under Servare actact of bilious Feavour so that my Circumstances dose not inable me to send money for my famalys Passage I have made a determination never to Return to England knowing that any Industrious man may provide for his Famaly better here

than in England What would have been the Result had I continued in England I saw no other Prospect than me and my Famaly being Burdonsome on the Parish and there Posterity after them It is the duty of a parent if Possible to Settle his Children in a land where they and there Children may by industry get Sufficient Bread this then is the country where a man may Purchase Wood Land at 6 shillings per Acre a little Cultivation as the Land is good will Produce sufficient of everything for family use thus Provided with eaconimy and Industry a man need not to want Bread nor his Famaly in this Country though I Confess that various person have gone Back to England some because they were so attached to the Land in wich they First drue there Breath others because they have Ruind there constitution by Drinking ardent Spirits then give the Country a bad name but First let the Poor Labouring man reason on the privaladges he here injouys from 3s to 4s per day and though he dose pay 9s and 10s per week for his Boarding he Better than the Poor man in England But if he has a Famaly this may be the greater part of there Soport so that it Cost Little more to mentain a family than pay Boarding and washing for himself as the Later is is very dear Tobacco is 6d p pound Liquors is very Cheap 1s..6d per Galland Wholesale Butter 6d per pound Coffee 6s..7d per pound that is 12 and 14 Cents of our Mony here as 100 Cents makes one Dollar equal to 4s..2d English"

He makes some general comments about conditions in America.

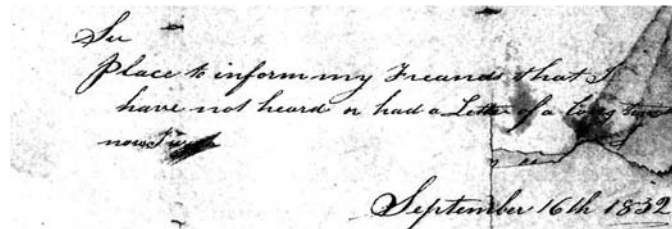


The letter concludes with another plea for the overseer to assist his family to join him.



Sir I hope you will take into Consideration to send my Family as in this Country we can obtain the means of supporting our Family with the necessary of Life I cannot flatter myself of any hopes of sending for them myself of a long time and if they was once to arrive in this Country you would have for ever done with them the Expence of their Coming is not very much as at Merchants Vessels 3 and 5⁰ per p head Children Half price and by applying to Mr James Brown and Co. Merchant Liverpool every information may be had when a ship sails so that they need not to be at Expence by staying in Liverpool more than 10 or 2 days

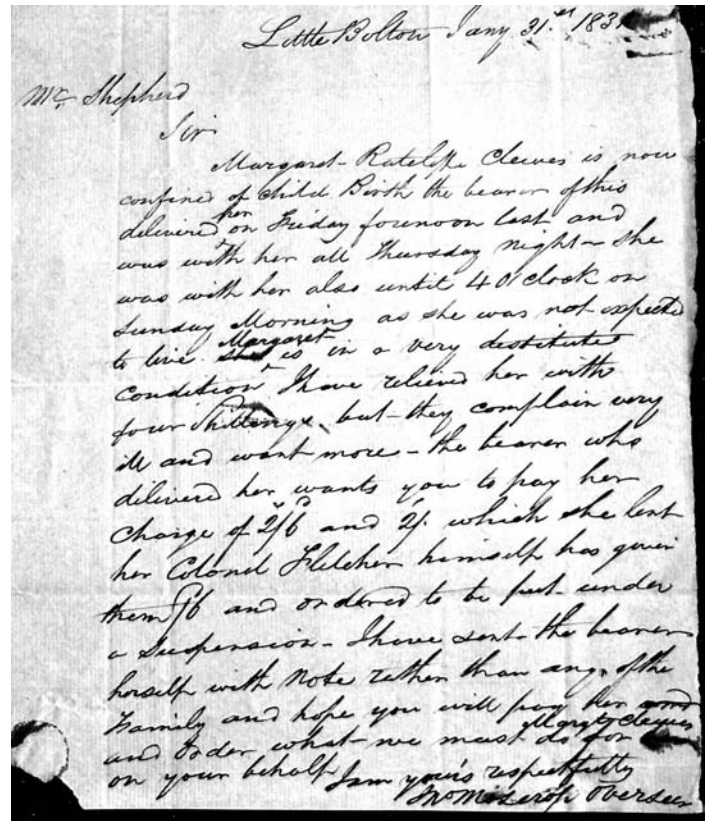
There is a postscript asking that he be remembered to people he had left behind.



Sir
Please to inform my Friends that I have not heard or had a Letter of a long time now
September 16th 1832

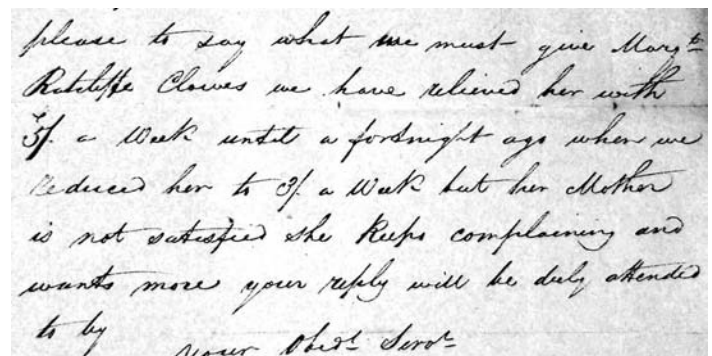
How were his wife and children faring while he was attempting to establish himself in the New World? 'Radcliffe Clewes' is a not a common surname in the records of the period. Thomas's second letter includes the information that part of the cost of his transatlantic passage was paid by William Nutall of Bolton. It is therefore reasonable to conclude that two other letters received by Henry Shepherd during the same period, expressing concern about the situation of an Elizabeth Radcliffe Clowes, are referring to this same family. Following her marriage a woman, no matter where she had originally come from, assumed the settlement rights of her husband. Though Elizabeth was then living in Bolton, the responsibility to provide relief was Atherton's. The first letter concerns a Margaret Ratcliffe Clewes who was destitute, had just given birth, and was not expected to live. In these circumstances the magistrates could issue a removal order to return her to the township responsible for her relief. This could be suspended until she was fit enough to be

moved. In the meantime some relief could be provided on the understanding that it would be re-paid by the township responsible for her settlement.



Little Bolton Jan^y 31st 1832
Mr Shepherd
Sir
Margaret Ratcliffe Clewes is now confined of Child Birth the bearer of this delivers for Friday forenoon last and was with her all Thursday night she was with her also until 4 o'clock on Sunday Morning as she was not expected to live Margaret is a very destitute Condition I have relieved her with four shillings but they complain very ill and want more - the bearer who delivered her wants you to pay her Charge of 2/6 and 2/6 which she lent her Colonel Felcher himself has given them 2/6 and ordered to be paid under a Suspension - I have sent the bearer herewith with Note rather than any of the Family and hope you will pay her and order what we must do for her on your behalf I am yours respectfully
W. Nuttall Overseer

In a second letter, written three months later, the Little Bolton Overseer, under some pressure from Margaret's mother, is asking Mr Shepherd to confirm what level of relief should be provided.



please to say what we must give Mary Ratcliffe Clewes we have relieved her with 2/6 a Week until a fortnight ago when we reduced her to 2/6 a Week but her Mother is not satisfied she keeps complaining and wants more your reply will be duly attended to by
Wm Nuttall Overseer

The township documents do not provide a conclusion regarding the fate of Thomas or his wife. As is the case with the many hundreds of



similar items of correspondence now in the archives we are presented with brief episodes in the lives of Atherton people, who for various reasons, sought help from the Parish, but seldom any information of the eventual outcome.

Acknowledgement
The documents relating to Thomas and Margaret Radcliffe Clowes are amongst items of correspondence received by Atherton Overseers of the Poor during the 18th and early 19 centuries in folders TR Ath

C/7/61/ 10 and /11 of the Atherton Township records in the archives in Leigh Town Hall. The writer acknowledges the assistance of the archivist (Alan Davies) in making these documents available, and for guidance to related sources of information.

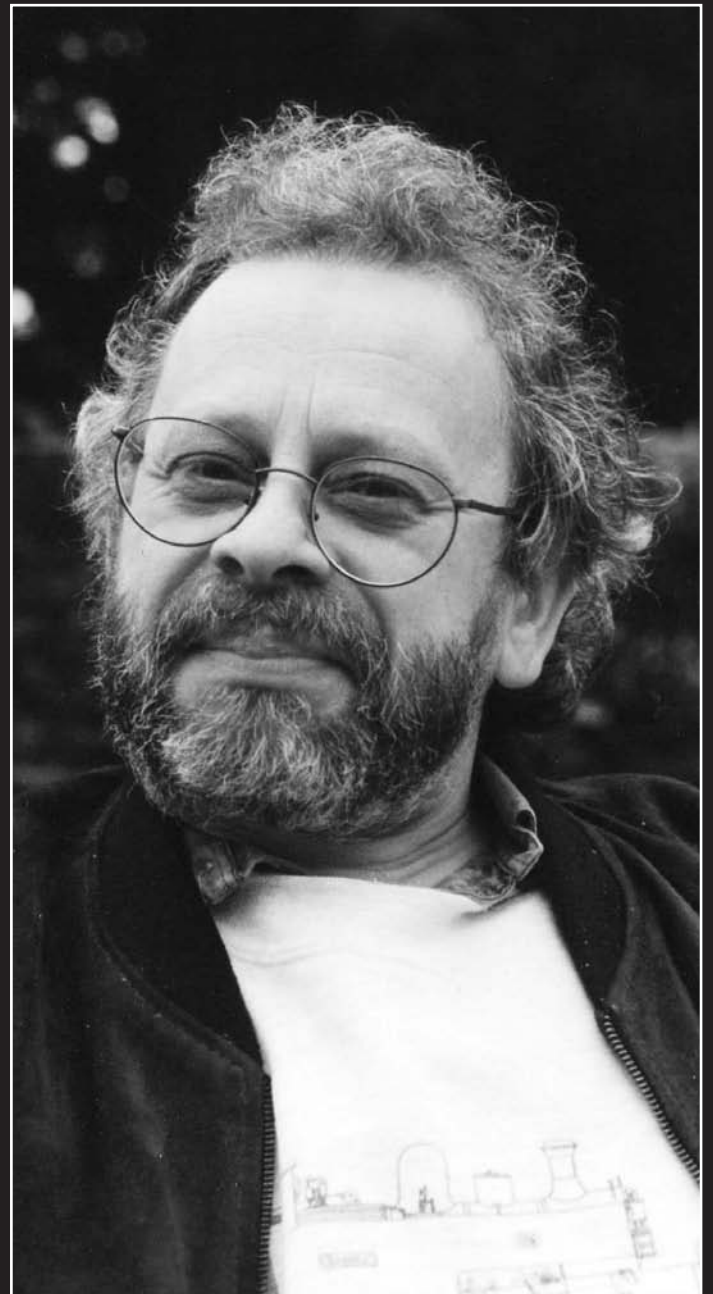
Death of Mr Philip Loudon

Many readers will have read in the local press, of the death, on the 26 December 2006, of Mr Philip Loudon. He was a mental health worker at Leigh Psychiatric Unit and married to Councillor Susan Loudon.

He had a particular interest in local history, and was a key contributor to the borough's Blue Plaque nomination scheme, which recognises historically important local people. His work, producing the 'Local Heroes' calendar, was recently featured in issue 44 of Past Forward. The calendar was sold to raise money for the Mayor's Charity, the proceeds being divided between the Domestic Violence Unit's drop in centre and the Victim Support and Witness Service. The Mayor of Wigan, Councillor Smethurst, said that the calendar would be a "tribute and testament" to him.

The Leigh MP, Andy Burnham and the Leader of the Council, Lord Smith, also paid tribute, describing him as "a life and soul type of guy" and a "truly delightful man", to whom "Wigan owes an incredible debt".

Editor



Editor's note:

We are receiving very little information from the historical societies in the borough. Please could you send in your lecture/activity programmes, and articles about the work of your society. We have had queries about Society News, asking why we did not publish a full page in issue 44. The reason is simple, you are not contributing any material, we cannot publish what we do not receive!

Wigan Archaeological Society

We meet on the first Wednesday of the month at the District Scout HQ (Baden Powell Centre) at the bottom of Greenough Street, starting at 7.30pm. We usually have a speaker on the night and trips in the Summer. The entrance fee is £2 for members and £3 for guests. If you need more information contact the secretary, Bill Aldridge on 01257 402342 or E-mail us on Wiganarchsoc@blueyonder.co.uk or visit our website www.Wiganarchsoc.co.uk.

Hindley History Society

We meet in the Museum at Hindley Library at 7.00 pm on the second Monday of the month. The Museum is open three times a month on either a Wednesday, Friday or Saturday morning. For details please ring Mrs Joan Topping on 01942 257361 or Mrs Norma Brannagan on 01942 258668.

On 14th May we have talk by Sid Robinson - 'Blackpool' starting at 7.00 pm in the Museum. All members and non-members welcome.

Atherton Heritage Society

Meetings held in St Richards Parish Centre, Mayfield St. Atherton, 2nd Tuesday of the month at 7.30pm. Admission £1.00 members, £1.50 non-members. Annual subscription - £3.00.

April 10th. "A Tale of Two Cities"- Manchester and Salford. Speaker - Margaret Curry.

May 8th "Antiques and Collector's Fair". Speaker - Betty Hayhurst..

June 12th " Mum's War" - Speaker - Dorothy Hindle.

No meeting in July.
Contact No. 01942 884893- Margaret Hodge

the fourth annual Leigh & Wigan
Words Together
LITERARY FESTIVAL '07

Words

Monday 9th - Saturday 21st April 2007

Tel: 01942 404404

Events booked to date are listed on the guide.
Full programme will be available in February from your local library.

WIGAN LEISURE & CULTURE TRUST
CITY OF WIGAN

For a FAMILY DAY OUT with a difference

Step Back in Time!



Situated on the banks of the Leeds-Liverpool Canal, Wigan Pier is one of the North West's favourite visitor attractions.

Brought to life by performances from the Wigan Pier Theatre Company, must see attractions include:

- 'The Way We Were', an authentic recreation of life in the 1900s from schooldays through to work and play.
- The Trencherfield Mill Engine - the world's largest original steam engine.

Throughout the year Wigan Pier hosts a number of family-friendly events and activities. Look out for:



A Victorian Easter

Discover how the Victorians celebrated Easter. There will be a variety of activities to take part in including a canal boat trip, craft session and special performance by our resident theatre company. This is an egg-citing opportunity not to be missed!



Booking essential. Please bring a packed lunch.

Dates: 5th, 6th & 9th April

Time: 11.30am-3.00pm

Price: £6.95 Children £3.95 Adult

Wigan Residents

£5.95 Children £3.50 Adult

Suitable for children aged 4 - 11 years.

LIFE ON THE HOME FRONT

May Half Term

Families can come and learn more about life on the Home Front during World War Two.

You will have the chance to handle genuine wartime objects, listen to wartime memories and stories and make your own gas mask to take home. We will finish with a wartime sing song!

Dates: 29th & 31st May

Times: 11.00am & 2.00pm

Duration: 1 hour

Suitable for children aged 4 - 11 years.

Cost: FREE for Museum ticket holders or £2.50 per child.

Booking essential.



Booking essential contact: 01942 323666

Wallgate, Wigan, WN3 4EU
www.wiganpier.net wiganpier@wlct.org

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

FAMILY HISTORY

Additions to the Local and Family History Collection (for reference)

Donations

Dienstag, Eleanor In good company : 125 years at the Heinz table 338.7664

Haslett, J. Morris dancers & Rose Queens 394.250222

Heyes, Malcolm Secondary education and the working class: Wigan 1920-1970.

Pemberton St John Baptism registers 5 Aug 1832-1909 (2 vols)

Pemberton St John Burials 15 June 1929-7 Jan 2007

Skelmersdale St Richard RC Baptism register 2 July 1865-1 July 1951

Skelmersdale St Richard RC Burials and cremations 10 Jan 1866-18 Jan 2005

Skelmersdale St Richard RC marriage index 2 Dec 1876-15 Sept 1990

Upholland St Thomas Baptisms 6 June 1607-28 Dec 1735

Upholland St Thomas Burials 5 Jan 1736-12 Aug 1825

Genealogy

Fowler, Simon Tracing your Second World War ancestors

Lancashire Parish Register Society All Hallows Mitton 1610-1719 (Fiche)

Lancashire Parish Register Society Vol 159 All Saints Newton Heath

Lancashire Parish Register Society Vol 160 Blackrod St Katherine 1701-1837

Lancashire Parish Register Society Vol 161 St Luke Heywood 1733-1812

Lancashire Parish Register Society Vol 162 Whalley 1653-1753

Lancashire Parish Register Society Vol 163 Prescot 1766-1795

Lancashire Parish Register Society Vol 164 Whalley 1754-1812

St Michael CE Hawkshead Marriages 1754-1837 (Fiche)

General

Phillips, Peter The diaries of Bishop William Poynter 1815-24 CRS vol 79

Sainsbury, Howard An informal history of St Aidan's Billinge 283.42757

North West Labour History Group Journal No. 31 On the verge of revolution 320.531

Fortescue, JW A history of the British Army vols IX & X (maps) 355.00941

Marshall, Brian Lancashire's medieval monasteries 726.7

Norris, Robert The Wigan Co-op gala 942.736

Riley, Peter Haigh Hall and the Bradshaigh family 942.736

Victoria history of the County of Oxford vol XV 942.57

Microfilms

St Thomas CE Upholland Baptisms, marriages, burials 1735-1901 (replacement reels)

Douglas in Parbold Christchurch CE Baptisms 1809-1961, marriages 1862-1990, Burials 1875-1971. Bishop's Transcripts 1719-1781, 1813-1855.

Eccleston St Mary CE Baptisms 1782-1923, Marriages 1817-1938, Burials 1813-1932; Bishop's Transcripts 1616-1850.

St Joseph RC Wigan Baptisms 1871-1940, Marriages 1872-1940.

Project News

A Happy New Year to all genealogists and especially to all our volunteers, Friends and visitors. Last year was a very productive year in the way of projects. In particular the Wigan Cemetery indexes online at www.wiganworld.co.uk have proved exceedingly popular both locally and overseas. The History Shop staff have been kept busy looking up grave references and other additional information from the registers. Moves are afoot to add the grave locations of the earlier indexed entries to the database. Meanwhile the gap between 1901-1908 is being tackled by Barbara Davies. Knowing how hard Barbara works, it shouldn't be long before the gap is plugged.

Barbara has also been assisting the Pimbo Group, headed by Gerry and Shirley Rigby to speed up the completion of St John Pemberton indexes. They have now completed the final section and it is possible to search via the excellent indexes, baptisms from 1832-2006 and burials up to January 2007. At the same time the group has produced indexes to the registers of St Richard RC Church at Skelmersdale. They have now moved onto the registers of St Luke, Orrell. Since these registers have not yet been microfilmed and are in fact still at the church, this development is most welcome.

We would particularly like to thank all our volunteers who work so hard producing indexes and other material for public use. Without them, many researchers, especially those who cannot get to the History Shop, would not find it so easy to access information. They provide an invaluable service.

Finally, you may have noticed the listing of new microfilmed resources. We have had many requests for films of the registers of Parbold Chapel, Wigan St Joseph RC and Eccleston St Mary. At last we have managed to purchase these. During the coming year, I am also hoping that we will be able to add further coverage of Roman Catholic registers for events after 1900.

Books Received

Haslett, John Morris Dancers and Rose Queens : an anthology of reported carnivals and galas in West Lancashire to 1900. Fairhaven Press £35

An impressive work by Mr Haslett which aims to provide a reference source to Morris dancers and galas in the Victorian era in West Lancashire and to help further the understanding of the Morris Dance. Compiled largely from local newspapers, there is a substantial amount of information on the Wigan and Leigh areas with some illustrations and an excellent index to the sources. Galas of particular interest to local people will be the Wigan Infirmary Gala and May Queen festivals, notably at Worsley Mesnes, Lowton, Wigan Lifeboat Saturday, Golborne May Queen and numerous other events chronicled in this lovely book. A fascinating read for the serious researcher and the casual browser.

By
Austin Lyons

The Mid Thirties Depression and the Cotton Queen

The depression of the mid-1930's, or the 'Slump', as it was often called, produced something unique here in Lancashire. In an effort to combat the doom and gloom affecting the economy of the country, the Lancashire cotton industry, in conjunction with the allied newspapers' 'Daily

Dispatch', launched an ambitious scheme to find their own 'Cotton Queen'.

All the 'cotton' towns were invited to select suitable candidates for the contest from their female employees. They set about this by organising contests at local dances and galas. The successful applicant at these events would become 'queen' of that town. Later this regal group would be gathered in

Blackpool for the Grand Final. The winner would become the 'Cotton queen of Great Britain'

Overnight, this lucky mill-worker became a changed personality. Being granted a year's leave by her employers, she received the required training and grooming for this starring role. This was to include being chauffeured around to her various engagements in a rather large limousine, accompanied by a chaperone, usually the wife of one of the executives of the Cotton Industry or Allied Newspapers. A journalist from the 'Daily Dispatch' also accompanied the party.

From the outset, the scheme proved outstandingly successful. Invitations quickly poured into the Allied Newspapers office in Manchester, as the presence of the Cotton Queen at a local function ensured its' immediate success. The larger events in Manchester and Salford were covered by the 'Daily Dispatch' staff photographer, but the smaller, parochial functions further a field were left to the local freelances. That is where I came into the picture, so to speak.



The Rose Queen of Sacred Heart Church, Hindley Green presents a bouquet to the Cotton Queen when she arrives at a gala dance held in the parish hall.

The authorities became so inundated with requests for the Cotton Queen's attendance, that it was not unusual for her to attend two functions in one evening. I remember being in one of these 'dual events'. The first was at Upholland at 8pm, and then I had to catch two buses to get to the second at Abram for around 9.30pm. On arrival here at the Parish School Hall, I met as usual with the secretary, and after discussing my photographic requirements, he asked me with a smile "Do you play the piano?" I replied that I did, and then out of the blue he continued, "Could you play 'She's a lassie from Lancashire' when the Cotton Queen arrives?" I agreed, and said I would do my best. I set up my camera equipment, placed them in a corner, and sat down at the piano. I must have been chuckling away inside at the hilarious position I had now found myself in. I hadn't long to wait, when the door opened and the Cotton Queen entered, the place erupted with much clapping and cheering. I belted out 'She's a lassie, etc.' and everyone joined heartily in the singing. I then suddenly realised that I was positioned alongside the 'processional route'. As the Cotton Queen approached, and saw me playing away, she couldn't contain herself and with a cheeky grin as she passed said: "No, not you again!" and I moved on to the stage for the official reception and later, my usual photographs.

Another occasion was memorable for quite different reasons. Once again, I found myself far out on the outskirts of Wigan, this time, I believe, it was the Orrell district. The Cotton Queen was to visit here



The official group of the Cotton Queen with guests of honour and clergy at the gala dance, Sacred Heart Church Hall, Hindley Green.

Seated l to r - Mrs Nesbit, Father Andrew, the Cotton Queen, Father Gregory.

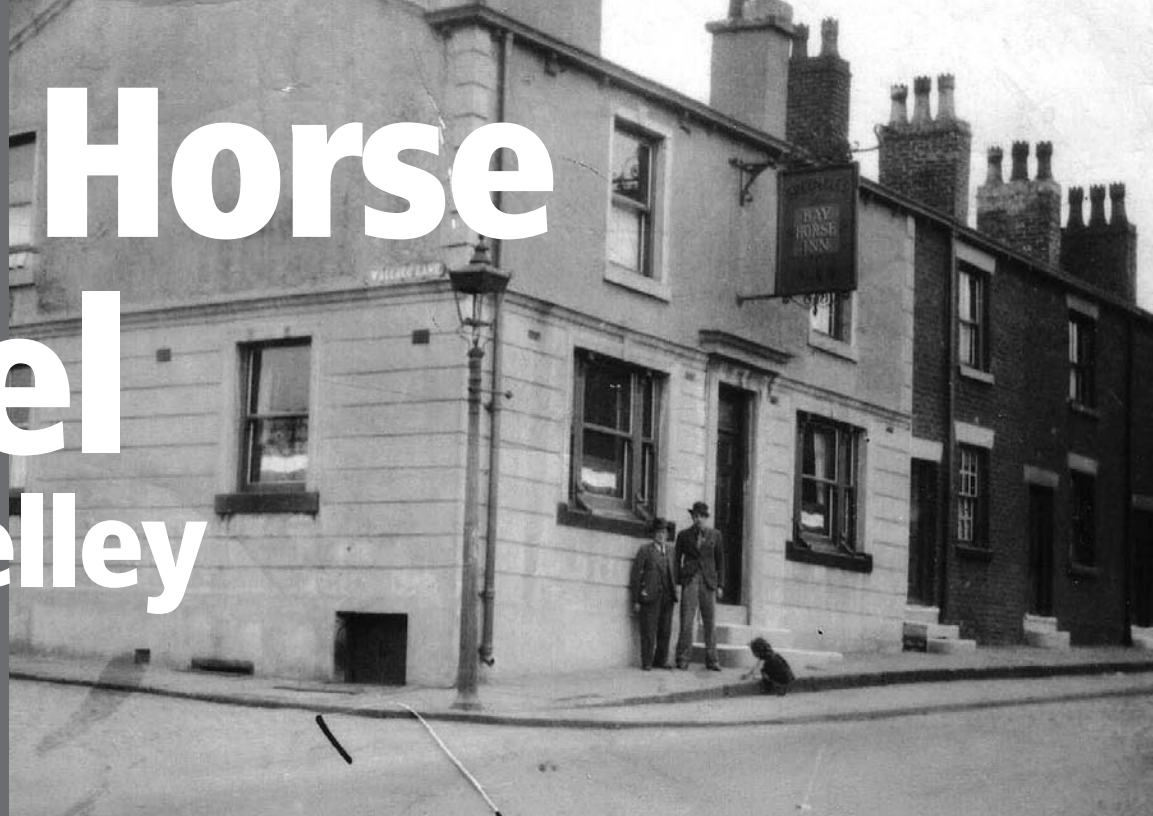
Standing l to r - Miss C Baron (headmistress), chaperon to the Cotton Queen, Miss Nesbit, Dr Nesbit, Father Huxtable. The children are the Rose Queen and the ex Rose Queen.

rather late in the evening. Unfortunately, due to some hold up, she arrived well behind the scheduled time. This gave me concern as to whether I could afford to wait and still catch my two buses home. The 'Daily Dispatch' reporter soon became aware of my predicament, and I was on the point of leaving when he said "If you want to hang on and take your photographs, we'll give you a lift home as we go through Hindley". With this kind of assurance I relaxed and in due course took my usual photographs, eventually joining the Cotton Queen and her party for the return trip. All went well until just outside Wigan we encountered a dense wall of fog, visibility down to a few feet. We managed to crawl through the town centre, and were approaching Darlington Street railway bridge, when there was a terrific crash. We were all badly shaken, but thankfully, no-one was injured.

After a few minutes I managed to peer into the gloom and locate our position. The car had in fact, mounted the pavement and crashed just under the bridge. After a short spell our driver successfully extricated the car and managed to get on the road again, this time with the 'Daily Dispatch' reporter walking a few feet ahead, waving his handkerchief to indicate the edge of the kerb. After a mile or so, at the Ince boundary, I took over from the reporter and performed the same task for the remaining two miles to Hindley.

Arriving in Market Street, I took leave of the Cotton Queen and her party, jokingly thanking them for the 'lift' home, and disappeared into the mist. The following morning, the 'Daily Dispatch' carried the story - "Cotton Queen in Fog Crash at Wigan".

Bay Horse Hotel at Whelley



Thank you to all who contacted me about the Bay Horse Hotel at Whelley, in particular Mr Cyril Brindle whose uncle, Walter Valentine Brindle, was landlord until 1946. Uncle Walter became the proprietor in 1931, following licensee George Highfield

On visiting Cyril. I took some notes about his memories of the public house, he remembered the layout very well. The Bay Horse was situated at 112 Whelley on the corner of Wallace Lane. The main entrance was on Whelley, and from the road there were three steps up into a vestibule entrance. The inner vestibule door opened onto a corridor which ran the full length of the pub, with rooms on either side, and a set of stairs at the bottom. The landlord's downstairs living accommodation was sited at the left-hand side, at the back of the building.

The first door on the right led to the Vault. There was originally sawdust on the floor

and spittoons, but Mrs Brindle, the landlord's wife, put a stop to this practice, which must have been a nightmare for the cleaner. The next room along was known as 'The Snug', which women would use. Facing the Vault was the 'best' room. Cyril referred to this as the Parlour, although some may have called it the Lounge. Next door was the 'Singing Room', which had a piano. In the passageway, next to the Singing Room, were the cellar steps and doorway. The cellar ran under the Vault and Parlour, and the drayman's trapdoor was in the pavement on Wallace Street. The staircase at the bottom of the passageway led up to the function rooms (Cyril thinks there may have been two) and the women's toilets. The men's toilets were in a substantial, paved yard at the back of the pub. Private living accommodation for the licensee and family was split

between the ground and upper floors. Downstairs there was a sitting/dining room, kitchen come pantry, and a laundry room. Upstairs there were possibly four bedrooms, and a bathroom, although Cyril had little occasion to go into this part of the building. The family also had a female servant.

As with many public houses in those days, various people would use the function rooms for 'hatch, match and despatch'. However, it is known that the Antediluvian Order of Buffaloes or 'Buffs' met at the Bay Horse, with two lodges meeting on different nights. George Highfield had been heavily involved in the George Lodge, and Walter Brindle may also have allowed the Balcarres Lodge to meet there. Cyril said that Walter's wife, Elizabeth Alice, stopped the 'Buffs' using the Bay Horse for meetings because they were

caught bringing their own drink in, and spending nothing at the bar!

Cyril also remembered many of the 'goings on'. There was a very large picture hanging over the fireplace in the vault, and his Uncle Walter used to dip a half a crown in beer and place this on the glass in the centre of the picture. The customers would then add to this with loose change, usually pennies, from beer purchases. Once the picture was full, the money would be removed, and the process started all

over again. There was method in this seeming madness! All the money collected paid for the annual Picnic Club outing, which was a good day out for many who could probably never have afforded to join in.

Another memory involved the Storey family, who lived close by. Here, it is interesting to note, that according to electoral records an Alice, Thomas, Albert and Doris Storey lived at number 222 Whelley. Like many women in those days, Mrs Storey would purchase off licence sales. She

would enter the pub via the back entrance and the yard. Under her shawl she carried a jug, which was filled with beer from the off licence serving hatch, at the bottom of the corridor. The jug would then be covered by a cloth and placed back under her shawl and presumably the lady would carry it back for her husband. We will never know if she even had a 'tipple' herself!

Dianne Teskey, Community Outreach and Education Officer.

Ince Church Lads Brigade **Reunion**

My name is Ken Rutter, I used to be the Officer in charge of the Church Lads Brigade at Ince Parish and later became Captain of the 1st Wigan Boys Brigade (Ince Parish). I am organising a reunion on the 15th of June this year to be held at Rose Bridge Rugby Club off Manchester Road Ince (behind Vartys) for anybody who was involved in any Church Lads Brigade or Boys Brigade in Wigan and District. I have been in contact with various members through Friends Reunited and Wigan World and in fact Fred Rosbottom contacted me from Australia to say that he was coming over in June and would love to come to the Reunion. Come along for 8.00 p.m. you can bring the Mrs and the photographs but don't bring the bugles PLEASE. Lets have a good old nostalgic night talking about the old times (don't forget the hankies!!!).

I can be contacted via
www.wiganworld.co.uk or
ken.morutter@btinternet.com
or the good old fashioned way by
telephone 01257 792394.

St Joseph's Players, Leigh

The St Joseph's Players meet and perform at the parish hall of St Joseph's RC Church in Leigh, and have been performing a traditional pantomime since 1947. These pictures show them in a 1953 performance of 'Old King Cole' and this year's 'Sinbad the Sailor'. However, they claim to be one of the oldest drama societies in Britain, tracing their history back to the 1840's. We will be publishing a history of the society, written by their members in the next issue (46) of Past Forward, which promises to be of great interest to our theatre buff readers.



Happy 700th Birthday

The Church of **St. Thomas**

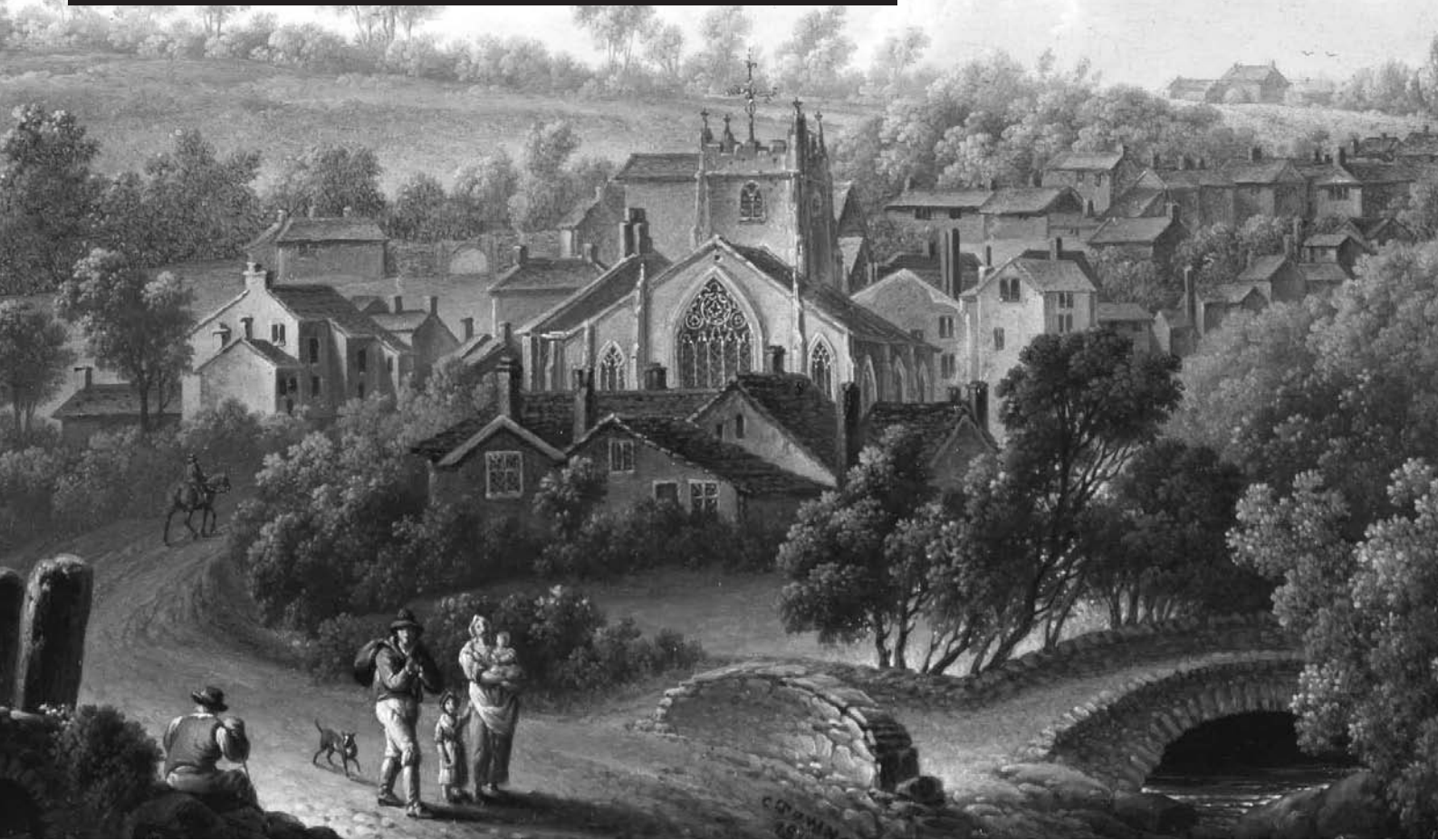
By Alan Miller

In 2007, St. Thomas the Martyr, Upholland, celebrates the 700th anniversary of its original foundation. The declared aim of the Venerable Peter Bradley, Rector of Upholland, was to mark the special year with "the biggest birthday party Upholland has ever seen." Years of planning by Canon Bradley and Associate Vicar, Reverend Judith Ball, and a team of dedicated parishioners have resulted in a plethora of religious events and social activities throughout the year.

In addition to the usual church services, a number of special religious services have been arranged. These special services will be led by visiting clergy, including the Archbishop of York, the Bishop of Liverpool, the Bishop of Warrington, and a host of former incumbents who will be recalling their memories of their time at Upholland Parish Church. The church services will culminate on 29 December 2007, with the St. Thomas the Martyr Service, Thomas Becket being the patron saint of Upholland church. (Archbishop Becket was murdered in Canterbury Cathedral, 29 December, 1170.)

Social and community events include suppers, dinners and lunches, theatre productions, a Pageant and Festival, a Medieval Fayre, a Victorian Fayre, a Flower Festival, and a Pilgrimage Walk from London to Canterbury. Music of all types will feature in the celebrations, with organ recitals, brass band concerts and a family disco all arranged. The work of local artists will be on show, and there will be an exhibition of Upholland through the ages, featuring old photographs. The highlight of the exhibition is likely to be the painting of the village and church by Wigan artist, Charles Towne, in 1815, which is kindly being loaned by Wigan Leisure and Culture Trust Heritage Services.

To set the scene for the special year, I have written a book, entitled Upholland Church: 1307-2007 published by the European Library. In 1307 the local landowner, Robert Holland, established a chantry in Upholland, and when this failed, he founded a Collegiate College of 13 Canons in 1310. This also failed, partly because of the remoteness and wildness of Upholland in the Middle Ages, and partly because of lack of money. Eventually, in 1319, Robert Holland obtained approval of the Bishop of Lichfield to endow a Benedictine monastery in Upholland. Until the monks were displaced at the Dissolution of the Monasteries in 1536, Upholland Priory played a prominent role in Upholland's religious and economic life. Amongst the prized possessions were bones of Thomas Becket, and pilgrims were attracted to Upholland by these holy relics. However, it remained Lancashire's 'poorest monastery'. (These two centuries are commemorated each July by a Benedictine Week in Upholland.)



After the Dissolution of the Monasteries, Upholland was allowed to keep its church, mainly because it was too far and too difficult for locals to get to Wigan Parish Church. It continued to be poor, but schoolmaster Adam Martindale was attracted to Upholland by its 'pretty church tower'. In 1643, Parliament agreed to 'divide the Church of Holland.....from the rest of the parish of Wigan, and make it a distinct Church and Parish itself'. The Civil War prevented royal signature being applied to this ordinance, and Upholland remained a chapel of ease of Wigan Parish Church.

Despite its own relative poverty, parishioners of Upholland were willing philanthropists. They contributed to special collections for others less fortunate because of fires, wars, disasters or the plague. They were also great supporters of education. After the Civil War, Upholland Church was instrumental in the foundation and governance of Upholland Grammar School, which is now Winstanley College. It also recognised the importance of elementary education. During the 19th and early 20th

century, there were six church schools in Upholland. Three remain in the village, at Roby Mill, and Digmoor.

The fortunes of Upholland Church fluctuated violently during the 18th and 19th centuries, partly reflecting the quality, or lack of commitment, of the various incumbents, such as 'the galloping parson'. The fortunes descended to a nadir in the mid 19th century, when Upholland Church was practically derelict. Fortunately, in 1881, a saviour appeared by the name of Frederic Daustini Cramer. In less than a decade, Rev Cramer transformed the building, by the addition of a new chancel, and revitalised the congregation and parish. A series of vicars built on these foundations, and the magnificent ancient church is there to be admired in 2007.

The details of Upholland Church's long and eventful history are chronicled in my book, which contains 76 photographs, and costs £10. I am donating profits to Upholland Church. Copies may be obtained from Dr. Allan Miller, 8, Holgate Drive, Orrell, Wigan, WN5 8SL.

YOUR LETTERS

Dear Editor

Reading Bob Blakeman's account of the industrial activity at the Brock Mill Forge in the middle of the 18th century was absolutely fascinating. I was particularly intrigued by the account of the secret screw cutting machine invented by 'Merlin'. As an engineer myself, I know that the development of automatic screw cutting has a long history.

In fact, when I looked into it, I found that the first patent was recorded by the brothers Joss and William Wyatt in 1760, but it was ten years later before Jesse Ramsden built the first satisfactory screw cutting machine. The machine at Brock Mill was obviously a very successful device, enough at least to attract the attentions of a foreign spy. The fact that this was at least five years before the Wyatt patent, and a good 15 years before Jesse Ramsden's machine, suggests that maybe we need to re-write the history books with regard to screw cutting technology and put industrial Wigan at its heart (yet another first for the town).

Bill Aldridge,
Wigan

Dear Editor

Further to the letters by Tony Berry and Frank Winnard (issues 44 and 43) I felt I would like to write to you with my memories of the threshing machine on which my father, Joe Anderton, worked with Bill Berry for many years.

I used to follow the threshing machine when I was a lad, and have fond memories of being able to chase the rabbits, rats and mice when the hay was being cut. The time I liked best was lunch time or 'baggin' as it was known then. The farmers wife would bring the 'baggin' (a large amount of sandwiches in a cane basket and a large container full of tea). I have thought many times in this day and age Mr Berry and my dad would have had to wear ear plugs for the noise, goggles to protect their eyes and a face mask to protect them from the chaff created when the threshing machine was working.

I would like to hear from any of the two men Tony Berry or Frank Winnard.

Bill Anderton,
Wigan

Editor's note: If either of the above gentlemen wish to contact Mr Anderton, please telephone the History Shop and I will pass on his address.

Dear Editor

Almost every page of Issue 44 of Past Forward evokes a memory of 'Old Wigan'. I am ashamed to admit that I had not visited the History Shop, until 2006, when members of The Over 50's Forum escorted a group from Angers (Wigan's twin town in France) who were paying us a reciprocal visit. I remember The History Shop as part of the old library, where a friend of mine worked in reading room. She expended a lot of energy trying to enforce a rule about how a long a person could stay in the nice, warm, sleep-inducing room. Her name was Phyllis Alker, and we both lived in Worsley Mesnes, where we attended St. James's Cof E School. The authorities decided to close St. James' School, and decreed that pupils go to Scot Lane School. My mother decided that it was too far for her three daughters to walk, and instigated a strike. We got a bus! I wonder if that was the first free school bus? It is over 70 years ago!

We moved from Worsley Mesnes to Ormskirk Road, Pemberton, where my mother took over a shop, previously known as 'The Dairy'. My mother and I used to go very early to the Farmers Wholesale Market, to buy produce for the shop, some of which we carried back on the bus. One of the farmers dropped off the really heavy things on his way

home. Our home was next door to the shop, and my sister and her husband used the warehouse attached to the back of the shop, as a place to store and to sell shoes. Now as I drive along Ormskirk Road, it seems that in every row there is a house where a relative has lived at some time. I have a vague memory of caravans parked where B&Q and Asda now stand.

Florence Broomfield.
Ashton-in-Makerfield.

Editor's note: Florence Broomfield has written a book of poems, The Spirit of Wigan, inspired by the sculpture of the same name at the Landgate roundabout. It is due out at the end of February.

Dear Editor

I was interested to read Austin Lyon's account of Archbishop Downey's laying the foundation stone of St Thomas More's R.C. School in Wigan, in the December issue (44) of Past Forward.

Although I left Hindley, when I married in the early 1940's, I remember Austin well. He sang in the choir of St Benedict's Church, Hindley, where my father was the organist. Also they were both interested in photography.

I have another anecdote to tell of Archbishop Downey. In the 1930's, the Catholic Young

Men's Society was very strong in the Wigan area. It was decided that one Sunday there would be a big rally of C.Y.M.S. members from all the churches in the area. There would be a procession round Wigan Market Square and a dais would be erected, from which Archbishop Downey would address them, followed by Benediction.

This was to be followed in the evening, by an assembly in one of the Wigan theatres, where the Archbishop would again address them. The men were to occupy the seats in the stalls, circle, upper circle and gallery. There were a small number of seats in "the gods" for any women who wished to attend.

The scene was set, everyone in place, and the Archbishop walked up the middle aisle, to the strains of "Faith of our Fathers". He ascended the stage, he was introduced and he stepped forward to give his address. He gave as his text "Man is a little lower than the angels". He paused, his gaze went up slowly through all the tiers of men, and it alighted on the few women who were seated, almost touching the roof. A broad smile spread over his face, everybody clapped and then he proceeded to speak.

Mrs Marjorie Bryden
(nee Lowe)
Eastbourne.

Dear Editor

Until a few days ago, I had never heard of Past Forward, but an old lady was throwing one away, when my wife said I think my husband will read that. I have now read it and really enjoyed it, especially the letter about J H Naylor's Brass Foundry in Stairgate. I served my apprenticeship from 1958-1964 there, and left in 1965 for Hawker Siddeley. The funny thing was that I wasn't given any indentures to prove that I had served my time. So I had to ask the manager to write me a letter to say I had served my apprenticeship, because I would need it in the future. The same Manager once got on the roof, when it was raining hard in his suit trying to clear the gutters. Mr Atty mentions going for coke, when I was there it was put in the cobbled yard between the machine shop and the foundry. I used to fill a tea chest with the coke then wheel it to the top of the cellar in the machine shop next to the geyser then drag it down to the furnace sometimes the steps were slippery with people throwing their remnants of their brew cans down. Me and old Joe who used to pack the tea chest with valves, used to go to Laycock's in Greenough Street for shavings to put in the tea chest with the valves for transporting. I used to look forward to this, to get out of the factory, and walk down the River Douglas.

YOUR LETTERS

Another job we had to do, was clean the toilets, not one I looked forward to. In winter one of the lads nicknamed 'Firebobby' would leave paper and wood plus a match so the first one in could start the fire. I used to work on a centre lathe upstairs, belt driven with a shaft across the length of the shop. When the belt broke we would mend our own. I had the ladder propped up against the shaft, when the ladder moved, and I fell on top of a pile of valves on the floor and hurt my back. No paramedics in those days I had to walk downstairs and wait for a bloke in the office to take me home and then go to the doctors at night. I could go on a lot more but I think I'll leave it for another time.

The place was run by the Smiths who we had to call Mr Edwin and his son Mr Harry (Flash) who had an E type jaguar.

Mr R J Pugh,
Wigan

Dear Editor

I live in Vancouver on the west coast of Canada. My cousin, Sheila Dewhurst sends me copies of Past Forward. The article by Elsie Alker brought back lots of memories.

My Granddad built " The Bungalows " in Holt Street, where I lived for 25 years. I also went to Rosebridge

Primary when Mr. Seddon was headmaster, and I remember Miss Platt, Miss Evans and Mr Lancaster. Mr Lancaster would have been my first male teacher, and I was disappointed when he was called into the air force and his place was taken by Miss Evans. However, Miss Evans was a fine teacher. I also attended Ince Secondary Modern, and remember Mr Steveley very well, in fact, I still have his letter of introduction to a future employer, written in November 1945. He also wrote to me again in August 1951, asking what courses I had taken, as he liked to publish news of 'old boys' successes in the annual governors report. My last teacher there was Mr Hockleshaw, "Little 'Ocky" to his pupils. He was a very fine man, with a sense of humour, and taught me a lot more about life than just the curriculum. Elsie mentioned

Norman Turner the butcher, who I remember well. Another character that comes to mind is "Jack tomorrow" the chemist on Manchester Road near Clarington Forge. He got that name because he never had any prescription ready when he said that it would be, and you were always told to come back tomorrow.

Keep up the good work, and remember that there are lots of people living away from Ince, but Ince will always be home. The photograph that I have sent is circa 1950, Alf has the ball between his feet, I am on his left, and Colin Garlington is on my left. On the back row in the suit is Ken Hodgekiss. Roy Appleton is on the back row, extreme right. The names of the other players, I cannot remember.

Granville Johnson
Vancouver,
Canada





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Visit our gift shop and see the wide range of heritage related publications together with unusual gifts for all ages. New titles include: 'Coccium Way', - a brief guide to the Roman road, it's route and remains through Hindley Green, Atherton and Tyldesley. This fully illustrated book written by M.A.Ward is priced at just £7.50 (plus £1 P&P).

For those interested in finding out more about the local area a selection of reproduction Ordinance Survey maps are also available. Priced at £2.20 each (plus 50p P&P) they are a mine of information for local Historians and Genealogists alike.

VENUE: HISTORY SHOP, LIBRARY ST, WIGAN.

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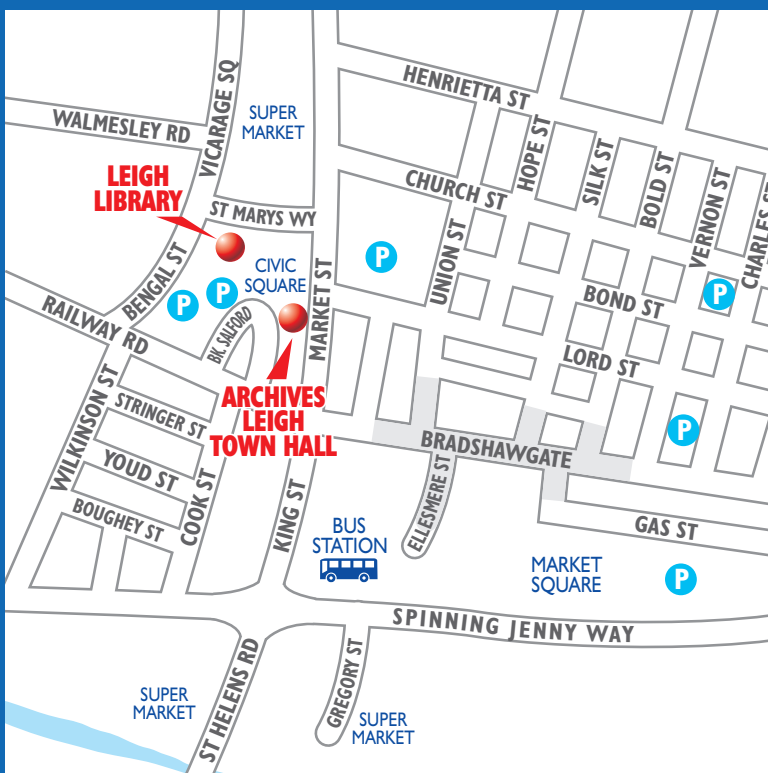


How to Find Us



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Telephone 01942 828128
heritage@wlct.org



Leigh Local History

Leigh Library,
Turnpike Centre,
Civic Square,
Leigh WN7 1EB
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Archives

Leigh Town Hall,
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a.davies@wlct.org