

PAST FORWARD

Produced by Wigan Heritage Service

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£1

WIGAN HERITAGE SERVICES
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YOUR HERITAGE

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

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FRONT COVER PICTURE
Collar and Jewel showing
the Lindsay Coat of Arms
(see article on page 3)

Letter from the Editorial Team

By the time you read this issue, Easter will have come and gone, but the editorial team hopes that all our readers had a peaceful holiday.

We would like to make an appeal for more contributions, whether they be articles, photographs, poems, notes, queries or letters. Of course, publication is not guaranteed, but the more choice we editors have, the more varied the magazine. We have had a few comments from readers, who feel that certain areas of the borough are neglected. So, if you feel that your part of the borough could do with more exposure in **PAST FORWARD**, we would be delighted to hear from you.

Sadly, Wigan Pier – The Way We Were, is now closed, but we look forward to the new heritage developments at Trencherfield Mill, and of course the mill engine continues to operate.

Recently two volunteers, Paul Turner and Amanda Redmond have been helping with the editing and administration of the magazine, so a big thank you to them both.

Deadline for Issue 49

Contributors please note that the deadline for receipt of material for publication is 30 May.

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March 2008

EXHIBITIONS AT THE HISTORY SHOP



Collar and Jewel belonging to Lindsay Lodge showing the Lindsay Coat of Arms and the motto Astra Castra Numen Lumen which translates to The stars my camp; The deity my light. Made of silver in Birmingham in 1874. It is the only one of its kind.

Freemasonry – it's no secret!

May 6 – 19 July 2008

What do you think when you see the word Freemason? A male preserve? Secret society? Think again.

This exhibition focuses on the unique and long-standing history of Freemasonry in Wigan. You will discover why the Wigan Freemasons formed a breakaway Grand Lodge, unique in the history of Freemasonry, and what this act of protest meant for the society. The exhibition also examines the principles of Freemasonry, and reveals present-day charitable and social activities.

2008 also marks the 100th anniversary of the foundation of women Freemasons, and many items illustrating their history and activities in Wigan will be on display.

Costume, regalia, banners, photographs and books reveal this fascinating story. We hope to see you there.

The exhibition has been written and presented by the Wigan & District Association for Masonic Research.

New Staff for the Heritage Service

The Heritage Service welcomes new member of staff Sue Maiden, who joins us as Learning Officer.

Sue says "My role will be to facilitate learning through the collections and resources held here for groups either in the community or in formal education.

Previously I was a Learning Officer at Wigan Pier and following the closure of the museum I will be working to bring together the best of the old learning services with the new Heritage Vision for the future."

Sue will be involved in the development and delivery of learning activities for all ages at the History Shop, Trencherfield Mill engine and out in our communities and schools.

ARCHIVES SERVICE

Welcome to the Archives Service and to a column I hope will be a regular addition to these pages. In coming editions I will keep you updated about events and activities at the archives, notify you of recent acquisitions and explore some of the less well know but nonetheless fascinating items from our collections.

A Spring Clean

The archives search room and staff offices are now newly decorated and the layout of the rooms improved for researchers, volunteers and staff, including a dedicated area for the consultation of maps and large building plans.

Recent Acquisitions

We have two new collections to mention to researchers:

- A new deposit of parish records from the church of St John, Hindley Green, including early twentieth century registers of services, marriages and banns
- The final records of the Wigan & District Field Club, a local naturalist and field walking society that recently disbanded. The records document the observation of local wildlife and the countryside around the borough from the nineteenth century onwards.

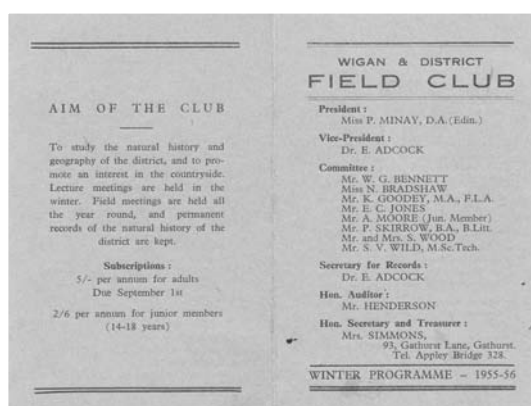
As part of an ongoing project to improve access to our collections, archive staff and volunteers are carrying out a full record survey to make certain all items are well catalogued. In doing so we have (re)discovered a wonderful collection of Second World War civil defence personnel cards for those enrolling to assist the war effort in Leigh. This is potentially a

fabulous resource for local and family historians and we will be collaborating with our archive volunteers to index the collection and make the information available.

If you would like to consult any of the records mentioned, or wish to get involved volunteering at the archives, please do not hesitate to contact me at the archives (contacts details on the back page).

Archives for All

I would like to thanks all recent depositors for entrusting their records to our permanent care. We are always keen to receive historic records from individuals and organisations within the borough and help preserve the historic written record of our communities. If you know of local businesses, community organisations or societies, churches or individuals wishing to deposit the records of their activities, please ask them to get in touch with the Heritage Service and we will be happy to examine their records.



LEARNING & OUTREACH

Adult Learners' Week 2008

From the 17th-24th May Wigan Libraries and Heritage Services will be putting on a series of activities and tasters sessions to celebrate Adult Learners' Week.

What is Adult Learners' Week?

It's a week long event taking place every May to encourage and inspire us to take up learning, whether to catch up, or brush up, to learn for work or for fun!

Adult Learners' Week is the biggest learning campaign in the country, with events taking place throughout the UK. Libraries and Heritage Services are proud to be a part of it, and hope you will join them in what promises to be an enjoyable week.

This year Libraries have chosen the theme 'Good for the Soul', with a range of art and holistic therapy taster sessions on offer. Heritage have also picked a leisure theme and are encouraging visitors to take a step back in time- 'Remembering Holidays'. All events are Free to attend. For further information or to book a place please use the contact details listed in the table below.

Saturday 17th May 2008 Aromatherapy	Orrell Library	10.30am-12.00 noon	01942 705060
Monday 19th May 2008 Drawing Water Colour Painting Aromatherapy Water Colour Painting Beauty Therapy	Wigan Library Beech Hill Library Hindley Library Standish Library Hope Library	10.00am-12.00 noon 1.45pm-3.15pm 3.00pm-4.30pm 4.00pm-5.30pm 1.00pm-3.00pm	01942 827619 01942 747750 01942 255287 01257 400496 01942 777545
Tuesday 20th May 2008 Water Colour Painting Water Colour Painting Aromatherapy Reiki	Hope Library Shevington Library Ince Library Aspull Library	10.00am-12.00 noon 1.45pm-3.15pm 3.00pm-4.15pm 5.15pm-6.15pm	01942 777545 01257 252618 01942 324423 01942 831303
Thursday 22nd May 2008 Water Colour Painting Remembering Holidays... Come and join us as we reminisce about steam trains, candyfloss, Punch & Judy, merry-go-rounds & boarding houses!	Aspull Library The History Shop	2.00pm-3.30pm 1.30pm-3.00pm	01942 831303 01942 828128 Booking essential
Friday 23 May 2008 Aromatherapy Reiki Aromatherapy Beauty Therapy	Marsh Green Library Tyldesley Library Leigh Library Atherton Library	10.00am-11.30am 1.00pm-2.30pm 3.30pm-5.00pm 10.30am-12.30pm	01942 760041 01942 404738 01942 404557 01942 404817
Saturday 24th May 2008 Aromatherapy	Golborne Library	10.30am-12.00 noon	01942 777800

FAMILY HISTORY

Recent additions to the Reference Collections at the History Shop

Donations

Aspull St Elizabeth C. E. Graveyard plan.

Billinge St Aidan C.E. Baptism index 29 Sep 1696 to 27 Dec 1812.

Billinge St Aidan C.E. Baptism index 10 Jan 1813 to 11 May 1980.

Laycock, Samuel Collected writings.

Wigan Cemetery (Lower Ince) Index 30 Aug 1901 to May 30 1908.

Wigan Cemetery (Lower Ince) Index 14 Feb 1923 to 27 Apr 1932 Revised edition.

Wigan Cemetery (Lower Ince) Full earth burials and burial of ashes 4 Apr 1988 to 30 Nov 2007. Transcript only.

Wigan Cemetery (Lower Ince) Index 4 Apr 1988 to 30 Nov 2007. CD (unfilmed burials only).

Wigan St Catherine C.E. Burial index 15 June 1841 to 3 Apr 1908.

Wigan St Catherine C.E. Marriage index 12 March 1854 to 24 March 1956.

Wiles, Ray An exercise in local historical demography.

Genealogy

St Helens Townships F.H.S. St Helens area marriage index 1538-1940. CD ROM.

Lancashire Parish Register Society Vol 165: The registers of St Luke's Heywood (Vol 2) 1813-1837.

Lancashire Parish Register Society Vol 166: The registers of Ulverston St Mary 1813-1837 and Holy Trinity 1832-1837.

General

364.1523 Fletcher, M Foul deeds and suspicious deaths around Wigan.

388.460941 Gladwin, D History of the British steam tram vols 1-3.

625.261 Heaviside, T Lancashire & Cumberland's last days of Colliery steam.

628.445 AGMA Planning for waste: joint waste development plan.

779 Londei, John Shutting up shop: the decline of the traditional small shop.

796.334 Ross, A The road from Wigan Pier (Wigan AFC)

942 Victoria History of the counties of England - Northampton Vol VI and Stafford Vol X.

942.7 Record Society of Lancashire and Cheshire Vol 131: Stockport probate records 1620-1650

942.7 Record Society of Lancashire and Cheshire Vols 132 and 133: The diary of

Henry Prescott, Deputy Registrar of Chester Diocese (Vols 2 and 3).

942.7 Record Society of Lancashire and Cheshire Vol 134: The papers of Sir Richard Grosvenor 1585-1645.

942.7 Record Society of Lancashire and Cheshire Vol 137: Prescot Churchwardens' accounts 1635-1663.

942.7 Record Society of Lancashire and Cheshire Vol 138: Accounts of the Manor and Hundred of Macclesfield...1361-1362.

942.7 Record Society of Lancashire and Cheshire Vol 140: The extent of the Lordship of Longdendale 1360.

942.7 Record Society of Lancashire and Cheshire Vol 141: Churchwardens' accounts of Walton on the Hill 1627-67.

Microfilm

Ashton in Makerfield St Oswald & St Edmund RC Baptisms 1822-1940, Marriages 1856-1940, Burials 1854-1867, 1873-1896, Grave register index and burial book 1873-1944.

Aspull New Springs Holy Family RC Baptisms 1898-1941, Marriages 1909-1940, Confirmations 1898-1936.

Aspull Our Lady's RC Baptisms 1854-1941, Marriages 1861-1970, Burials 1880-1940. (Some register entries also for Our Lady of Lourdes Farnworth (Bolton) and St Mary Blackrod.)

Atherton St Richard RC
Baptisms 1894-1941,
Marriages 1900-1940.
Bedford (Leigh) St Joseph RC
Baptisms 1778-1940, Marriages
1808-1828, 1837-1841,
1843-1941, Burials 1808-1831,
1837-1849, 1856-1902,
Confirmations 1813-1825.

Hindley St Benedict RC
Baptisms 1758-1941, Marriages
1776-1787, 1792, 1839-1853,
1858-1941, Burials 1836-1900,
Confirmations
1774,1826,1831,1838,1848.

Leigh Our Lady of the Rosary
RC Baptisms 1880-1940,
Marriages 1885-1940.

Orrell St James RC Baptisms
1774-1778, 1790-1935,
Marriages 1847-Oct 1848,
1856-1929, Burials 1856-1918,
Confirmations 1813,1821.
Communicants 1802-04,
1810-1825, 1842-43.

Croft St Lewis RC Baptisms
1795-1856, 1885-1941
Marriages: 1857-1941.

Westleigh Twelve Apostles RC
Baptisms 1879-1941, Marriages
1886-1941, Burials 1890-1903.
Wigan St Mary RC Baptisms
1819-1941, Marriages 1837-
1941, Burials 1849-1899,
Confirmations 1860-1900.

Patents

Henry Atherton and Robert
Smith of Hindley 1905

Richard O. Burland of Wigan
1911

Harry Coverdale of Wigan
1908

Henry Houghton of
Skelmersdale 1905

Thomas L. Lace & R. Lace of
Wigan 1911

Richard Lace of Atlas Forge
1925

William H. Mason of Wigan
1909

John W. Melling of Wigan
1909 & 1910

James Pennington of Wigan &
H.Smith 1909

James White of Pemberton &
Harry Pierpoint of Southport
1905

Richard H. Simmons of Wigan
1910

Walker Brothers (2 patents)
1909

Project News

As usual our volunteers and Friends have completed sterling work indexing a variety of sources. The cemetery indexes for Wigan are now complete with the last sections for 1901-1908 now made available by Carol Lowton and Barbara Davies and revised editions of earlier sections by Freda Chorlton. Freda has also been instrumental in the gaining of access to registers that have as yet not been filmed and which remain with Cemeteries Office. She has been allowed to photograph and index the last register covering 1977-1988 and has passed to us a printout of cremation interments 1988-2007 kindly donated by Wigan Cemeteries Office.

All are of course available at The History Shop for reference. Work as yet on adding grave numbers to some earlier burial registers is still to be completed. The above indexes will of course be made available on www.wiganworld.co.uk as soon as possible.

We do of course have many other volunteers who do a variety of tasks whether it is here at The History Shop, Leigh Local studies or the Archive in Leigh Town Hall. A great many index biographical and local cuttings books but others work on our extensive book collection, replacing once adequate storage with more modern, acid free boxes and envelopes. A few also assist with filing, cataloguing, and copying. We have several dedicated volunteers who assist with family history workshops and with desk cover and enquiries. They perform necessary tasks cheerfully and conscientiously. If you would like to join this band of wonderful people please contact Christine Watts on 01942 827404, or if you are interested in joining the education and outreach team of volunteers ring Rachel Orme on 01942 828121.

Meanwhile, thanks for all your hard work volunteers!

FAMILY HISTORY

Leigh & District Family History Society

Have you ever wondered how to go about tracing your family history? Help is now available each Monday afternoon at the Local History Section of Leigh Library between 1.30 p.m. and 3.30 p.m. Members of the Leigh & District Family History Society have volunteered to run a Help Desk. The members of group who have spent time researching their own family's history are now helping others to get started with their research.

With the interest generated by television programmes and dedicated family history websites, more and more people are keen to trace their family's roots.

Early in 2007 when the Wigan Leisure Trust was re-organising the opening hours for the Heritage sites, members of the Leigh Group met with the Trust to discuss the possibility of extending the proposed arrangements. As a result the hours were revised and the Group is now represented on the Heritage Network. As the Local History Officer is not always available at the Leigh Library, the Group offered to provide volunteers to be available for two hours each week. Since last September several enquirers have been set on the way to finding their ancestors including some who travelled from as far away as Shropshire. The Group's Secretary also tries to answer any queries passed to her from the Local History Officer.

The service is provided free and no appointment is necessary. Before attending with any query it is advisable to have as much information as possible of ancestors, set out in some kind of order. Many people arrive with



Family History Help Desk – Leigh Library

information on several small pieces of paper and get confused which side of the family they are referring to. It is best to research just one line of the family tree at a time at first. Those who have never used a computer before are encouraged to use the library's edition of Ancestry to check Census Returns. The Local History Section's microfilm and microfiche library is also used. A list of useful websites is also provided. In the future, it is hoped to produce a 'Starter Pack' for those just starting to trace the family lines. Enquirers are encouraged to leave details in a book which is then taken to the monthly meeting of the Society in case any other member is already researching the same family.

The Leigh Group holds their monthly meetings on the third Tuesday of each month (except June and July) in the Derby Room of Leigh Library at 7.30 p.m. Some months are treated as workshop evenings while others have speakers giving talks on various family history or local history related projects.

The Group is one of six groups of the Liverpool & SW Lancs. FHS at Liverpool, Southport, Upholland & Skelmersdale, Warrington and Widnes. Other groups also have Help Desks at Liverpool and Formby libraries and occasionally in Warrington. Members of the Society can attend monthly

meetings of each group as they wish. A conference is held each year at different venues throughout the area. This year's conference will be at Liverpool's Anglican Cathedral as part of the European City of Culture celebrations. Members also receive a quarterly journal with articles submitted by members, lists of new members together with the names they are researching, publication lists and details of meetings and conferences. As new members submit the names for publication, any other members already researching the same name are able to get in touch and may be able to match their family lines. The Society has a worldwide membership and website at www.liverpool-genealogy.org.uk gives details of all meetings and provides a forum, where enquiries from all over the world are received.

Many of the Groups have produced several projects. The most recent project of the Leigh Group is the transcription of the monumental inscriptions at St. John the Evangelist Church, Abram. The Group is also preparing a transcription of the monumental inscriptions of Leigh Cemetery and the St. Thomas's Churchyard in Heath Road, Ashton-In-Makerfield. All the Society's publications are available online from the Publications Officer.

Cromwell's Ditch

By Bob Blakeman



During the Civil War, Wigan was the headquarters of the royalist forces in the north-west. The town has sometimes been described as a royalist stronghold, although the fact that it was taken by parliamentary forces several times would indicate that 'stronghold' is too weighty a word.

However, as the centre of royalist military activity in the region, one would expect Wigan to have had some fortifications, however hastily constructed. Former Wigan Borough Librarian, A. J. Hawkes F.S.A, in a paper written in the 1930's ⁽¹⁾, quotes an order of 14 January 1642/3 appointing a Mr William Pilkington of Wigan "Overseere of work now in hand for the fortifyinge of the towne." Hawkes goes on to state, "Strong entrenchments were thrown up around the town, and gates were erected at the principal entrances". These "strong entrenchments" were probably the earthen ramparts and ditches which the Rev. Sibson described in the 1820's as being "very visible" and extending along what is now New Market Street, and along King Street ⁽²⁾ and Rodney Street. (Sibson believed them to be Roman).

Hawkes then writes, "Camps were pitched in the parson's meadow, and on the banks of the Douglas in the

area now known as Poolstock. Here remains of the entrenchments can still be traced, and are marked on the Ordnance Maps as 'Cromwell's Ditch'.

Cromwell's Ditch appeared on Ordnance Survey maps from 1849 until about 1950, by which time it had virtually disappeared, buried under industrial waste and removed by landscaping activity. The words "Cromwell's Ditch" were printed on the maps in the gothic lettering used to indicate historic monuments constructed after 1066 C.E. It originally extended from a point to the south of St Nathaniel's Church, Poolstock, to a point near the present Saddle Junction; but later another ditch near the present Robin Park Arena was also included. The whole followed a route roughly parallel to the River Douglas.

A.J. Hawkes seems to have believed that the Ditch was a royalist defensive earthwork, but this would have placed the defenders of the town with their backs to the River Douglas. Popular opinion seems to have regarded it as a parliamentary earthwork, but there are problems with this interpretation also. The Ditch ran along the bottom of a broad valley, making any forces occupying it vulnerable to fire from the higher land on which the town stands. Local field names such as Harrison's Meadow, Parson's Meadow, and Swan Meadow suggest that centuries ago the land would have been liable to flooding. The area in which the ditch is found is a most unlikely situation for a military trench.

A noticeable feature is that the township / borough boundary between Pemberton and Wigan follows the Ditch, yet this boundary would have been fixed centuries before the Civil War. Also the Ditch

meanders around, seeming to change its direction without rhyme or (military) reason.

It is worth pointing out that the historical information supplied on nineteenth century O.S. maps is, by today's standards, surprisingly unreliable. The Ordnance Survey did not employ a full-time archaeological officer until 1920. Before that date it often relied upon information from local amateur archaeologists and antiquaries whose sources were often folk tradition as well as observation and analysis.

I believe Cromwell's Ditch to have been the abandoned bed of a former stream, perhaps an earlier course of Poolstock Brook, which at some time in the past changed direction due to unknown geographical factors.

How, then, did this former watercourse get a name connecting it with the Civil War? There may well have been a genuine Civil War fortification nearby. Edward Baines, writing in 1836, and describing the defences of Wigan during the Civil War mentions a "zig-zag mound" that was still visible in that area at that time.⁽³⁾ If correctly identified by local antiquaries, this would have been the remains of a small fortification typical of the period, made of rammed earth and with angled bastions. Unfortunately this does not appear on the first edition of the Ordnance Survey's six-inch series, surveyed 1845-6, so it has not been possible to pinpoint its location.

Notes:

1: Hawkes, AJ (1930-31) *Wigan's part in the Civil War Trans, Lancs and Ches. Antiquarian Society* 47, 84-138

2: Although laid out in the late eighteenth century, King Street was not completely built up until much later.

3: Baines, Edward (1836) *History of County Palatine and Dutchy of Lancaster. Vol 3* p544

My Family and Music

By Joyce Stubbs

It all started when I moved to North Wales and joined a history class. I started researching my family history and encountered many brick walls. The biggest and hardest was my Grandfather's half sister. I didn't know Mary Ann Nicholson at the time but when I received the birth certificate it became clear she hadn't the same father as the other children.

No father was given and my grandfather's father had died in June 1870 at the age of 42 years. Mary Ann was born in May 1872 so couldn't have been his child. I followed Mary Ann's life through the censuses and she lived with her mother and my grandfather at one time but in 1901 she had moved to Gloucestershire and was living with a lady who was a Salvationist. I knew that Mary had joined the Salvation Army. I also knew I had the right Mary because the census stated that she was born in Tontine, Upholland

I had found an old black and white photo taken in 1951 by my late husband. It was a photo of the cottage where Mary Ann had lived and died. My father had taken us to see it in Carn Brea, Redruth. I decided to try to find out more about Mary Ann's life. I sent an e-mail to the vicar of Illogan church and attached a copy of the photo. He e-mailed me back a day or two later with a colour photo of the cottage as it is today. I then e-mailed the Archivist at Redruth and she found a Mary Ann Maddern living in Carn Brea in 1930 - I knew Mary died about 1931.

Members of The Cornwall genealogy group were very good and Maurice, a very helpful member of the group, promised to go to the Library to look for Mary Ann Maddern. He looked up several leads before we decided it must be Mary Ann Maddern. He found her obituary for the year 1931 in the local paper and, who should be on the list of mourners, but my father, Ernest Nicholson and grandfather, James Nicholson.

I also found my Aunt Hettie Thompson and Aunt Annie Nicholson. We had solved the mystery of Mary Ann.

Mary Ann bequeathed a miniature harmonium to the family and it was given to Uncle Arthur, my father's brother, as he was the most musical in the family. I have since received a letter from Ephraim Hodkinson one of Uncle Arthur's pupils, and in it he gives a glowing account of Arthur.

My memories of Uncle Arthur Nicholson started after we moved to Downall Green Road when I was about four years old in 1934. We lived at 243, Auntie Hettie Thompson lived at 237, Arthur and Pa (my grandfather) at 235 and Auntie Jinnie Gorner at 233. Uncle Arthur was well known locally and taught many children to play the piano. Roy and I had lessons but Roy had played tunes since he was two years old sitting on Arthur's knee. Frank and Leonard Gorner were also taught music by Uncle Arthur but they preferred boogie-woogie or whatever



it was called. I suppose you would say they were Jazz fans.

Roy, myself and Uncle Arthur would play together and I would play the left hand because it was easier. Uncle Arthur played on one piano and Roy and myself on the other. I loved those days when we did things like that. I have since received a letter from Ephraim Hodkinson one of Uncle Arthur's star pupils and in it he gives a glowing account of Arthur who was his idol. The following is his tribute to Arthur:-

"I think of Arthur every week. He was my mentor I used to come home from church with him, sit next to him, watch him. I had lessons for nine years with him, he was a wonderful musician. Brilliant at sightreading he could accompany singers without rehearsal. His touch on the keys was different. He just got that extra out of classics, popular songs of the day he

was just brilliant. He and Arthur Unsworth(violin) were in great demand in people's homes and at functions, including playing for Lord Crawford at Haigh Hall. They could entertain for hours from memory. Arthur had two pianos - A Bechstein Model 8 and a Bluthner. I don't think I have exaggerated his ability. I have two degrees thanks to Arthur A.L.C.M and LLCM. Arthur also had both. Arthur has a daughter Janet who is following in his footsteps and has gained LTCL for Clarinet and now teaches Clarinet and Piano" Janet now teaches Clarinet, saxophone, flute and piano. Janet is married to Stephen Hoare and their daughter Bryony plays the flute and has won several ice dancing competitions

My father had lessons at the same time as Arthur. Friends and family thought he was the better of the two when they started, but Dad didn't take any exams just enjoyed playing

the organ and piano at home for the family and friends. My daughter Catherine plays the violin and in 1972 was playing with the Merseyside Youth Orchestra when Simon Rattle was percussionist. They went to Switzerland to play with Orchestra's from all over the world, and also played at the Empire Theatre when the Queen visited to see the talent of Merseyside. Arthur was Organist at Bryn Independent Church for 60 years. When he died in 1975, Ephraim took over. Ephraim and Alice Hodkinson regularly attend The Church.

If anyone has any memories of my family please get in touch I would love to hear from you. I have a photograph including Bert Hardacre and Tony Bell where are you now? Visit Joyce Stubbs (Nicholson) Rhos-on-sea
www.joyceandgeorge.co.uk
or e-mail
joyce.Riddick@btinternet.com

My Teenage Years

By George
Victor
Wadeson

The final saga of 88 years of life in Ince and Wigan

Leaving School at the age of 14, which everyone did from the early 1920's until after the Second World War, you were expected to go out to earn your living since most families could not afford even one in the family not bringing in a wage. Youth's wages were, of course, tiny compared to an adult wage - not that their wage was very big.

I left Rose Bridge Secondary Modern School at the age of 14 without any merits. This put me in the 'any job will do' class. Usually you went for a job where you expected to spend a life time; railways apprentice or engineering apprentice were popular but these were at a premium. After several months with no job, I was taken on at Wigan Wagon Works. There I was put with a man who had been in the job for years and obviously resented training another small boy (because I was small at that time).

Moving away from the 'what and wherefore' of the Wagon Works - we were supposed to be repairing wooden railway wagons; some so old they hardly held together. The strange thing was that some of the newly repaired ones were being brought back and scrapped and new 'all metal' wagons being built in their place.

When a wagon came in for repair, usually the headstock

would be damaged at one end or the other, and the draw bar that the couplings were fastened to had a huge nut. To take the coupling bar out, this had to have the big nut split; to remove this nut a chisel was held fastened to a metal rod against the nut and a sledgehammer used to hit the chisel. The sledgehammers used were 7lb, 14lb and 28lb. I could manage the 7lb but was not very good on the 14lb and not at all on the 28lb, and if I mis-aimed then the one holding the metal rod holding the chisel, got his hand stung.

This usually ended with me getting a clout behind the head, at least with this chap. Just picking myself up after a particular bad thump, another very big chap jumped into the wagon and knocked my trainer out with a blow and said to me, in broad Wigan accent, 'Go und get thi jactit lad - this mon ul kill thi when he comes to'. This ended my work on railway wagons; I wasn't strong enough for the job. From there I went to a job as an errand boy for Melia's Grocers who had a shop at the Standishgate end of the Royal Arcade, where Wildings photographic shop is now. By then, I would be 16 and the year 1935.

The streets of Wigan centre were probably a bit more crowded than now - that was because everyone lived within

walking distance from town. No-one had cars, but they all stayed in town until quite late in the evening - some to go to the cinema. I know this because my job was to wash the tiled shop floor after the shop was shut. When the shop shut the Manager, Bert Naylor, walked out into Standishgate and made sure there were no late shoppers about; this was usually around 8pm. There was no early closing then. There were always a few people who waited to the last minute to get something that was cheap. For instance if you needed to put something into cold store (that would be Ashton's) it might be cheaper to sell the item a long way below the regular price than pay the high price of cold storage. Although it was a grocer and provisions store, we always, towards weekend, had a hind quarter of beef on the end slab near the door. Late at night, steak at knock down prices was sold and I have had big lumps of steak in part payment of wages (by agreement of course).

Although we had an ice-box in the back room of the shop, this was ruled by the weather. If the weather was hot, I had to go and get a block of ice from Ashton's just round the corner facing the old Market Hall. This was carried on the sack truck and my job, besides cleaning the ice-box to XL standards, was to break up the ice into small but not too small pieces. These were

packed down the sides of the ice box then a layer of salt to start to lower the temperature, then again and again until the 1cwt block of ice was used up.

At weekend I had to put a row of trays by the shop window down the side of the arcade and on those I sold perishable items that were not selling in the shop. Something I hated was selling frozen Australian rabbits where my job was to skin them; towards closing time I was to offer a 6 penny cake free with a 3 penny rabbit. I have to say the wind howled through that Arcade; I'm sure I was near to frostbite sometimes.

Being a Liverpool firm with grocers shops all over Lancashire - having one in Wigan town centre, one in Scholes and one in Hindley - the head office had an overseer. His job was going round frightening the living daylight out of staff. Remembering that jobs were few and far between, if someone said Edmonson was coming then blind panic set in. I had to go through my jobs and do them quickly and not let him see me doing anything other than my normal job or he would have me 'picking up the match sticks in Standishgate'.

One of my jobs in the early morning was to go up to the other shops in town booking down the prices in their windows (Meadow Dairy, Maypole and Latimer's are just a few of these). Then Bert Naylor would spend time getting permission from head office to alter his shop prices. Coming back one day with the list, Edmonson was waiting and I was shaking with fear. He wanted to know where I had been, so telling him and saying in the same breath that it was

no good me getting their prices because their errand boys had checked ours, "Good" he said, "then we just go with our own prices". I got my leg pulled for a long time as "Edmonson's blue-eyed boy". Although I was just errand boy, and Burt Naylor Manager, there also was a woman, Melna Bowe who looked after the groceries counter and butter, a lad on Provisions (cooked meat, cheese etc) whose name I don't remember and Tommy Kemp who was the van driver for places too far for me, as errand boy, to get to.

Other shops in the Royal Arcade, were a clothes shop called by the owners name, Julius, a very friendly Jewish chap, and further up a clothes and repair shop. Working in that was a young woman about four or five years older than me. She was something special - very pretty, and I realised she was one of the older girls I played with when I was very young in Higher Ince. Now in her early 20's, she was a real eye opener; people stopped to look at her walking down Standishgate - a Marilyn Monroe of her day. She was the daughter of Albert Longworth who owned Gidlow House at Higher Ince, where I lived. I am ashamed to say the passing of time has made me forget her name. But I carried a picture in my mind of who I would eventually marry, and I was proved right; my wife came from a shop in Standishgate - Woolworths - 15 years or more later and she was a very pretty girl also.

The town would always get crowded at weekends, but on the Saturdays that Wigan Rugby played at home, was a mad scramble to get through the crowds. They came by train,

there being very few cars about, and the trains were crowded to their doors. Coming up Wallgate through the Wigan Market place and down Standishgate to the turn off at Greenhough Street, was a solid mass of people, and the same (only more so) going back to catch their train.

My carrier bike was the sort with a small front wheel and a very big basket. These are very ungainly bikes and I have fallen off that one several times. It was so bad that the order to the Foundry House down Leyland Mill Lane had to be walked down and back, but in those days of tips, the tip at Foundry House was one to be coveted - three pence. A penny here and a penny there would mount up - a good seat in the Cinema was sixpence and five Woodbine Cigarettes were only fourpence. A pocket full of copper and you were quite rich especially compared to today's valueless money.

One of the things to make errand boys' jobs seem a bit better, was that they would gather in certain places - usually at the top of a hill - somewhere like Green Hill on Wigan Lane - and then go down in a big bunch shouting and singing as they went. A good bit of camaraderie came from that. I had a life-long friend, Cyril Aspinall, who was errand boy for Kings who were butchers in the Market Hall - we met often on those mad rides.

Sadly the shop must have either needed to make more money or the lease was up for renewal and too high, but they closed. By then, I would be 18 years old and starting a job with Leyland & Birmingham Rubber Company in Leyland. There I stayed until going to war, when I reached 20 years old.

READER'S PHOTOGRAPH



All Saint's School in about 1935/6 at a Fancy Dress Party, photograph from Eric Turner

Back, Miss Walls (Infants Head), Rev' Hope Johnson, Mr Richardson (Head), Mr Beard (Curate).

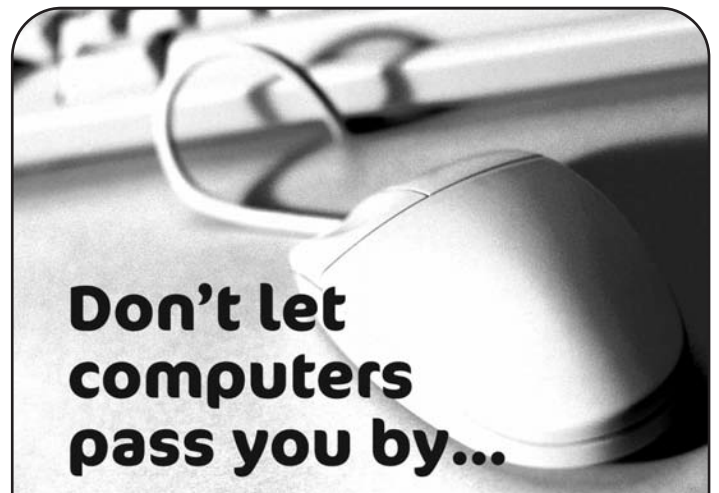
I only remember five of the children by name (flat cap is Elmer Twist, still a great character today). I am sat centre holding the small boy.

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St John's Ambulance Brigade at Wigan Cricket Club (date unknown)

Sent in by Mrs M. J. Vizard of Wigan. The lady on the front row, 5th from right, is Winifred Fleetwood, Mrs Vizard's mother.



Building thought to be Norley Hall c.1950.



A local street scene, thought to be Poolstock.

Can any reader help identify these pictures sent in by Mrs M. McGrath of Bolton?

STICKABILITY ON A FIDDLE –

the wartime adventures of a violin

by Austin Lyons

One of the earliest recollections of my childhood, was being taken by my father to the local music hall – the Wigan Hippodrome. On my arrival there, I always hurried down to the orchestra pit, because I could just see the scroll-head of the huge base fiddle, but not the player, just above the surrounding velvet curtain.

This must have seemed like a child-like fascination to my parents, who on my seventh birthday presented me with a half-sized violin – at least this was something I could see and hold! After a spell of sawing away at scales to which I was understandably sent to the back bedroom to practice, my teacher introduced me a tutor book of “easy melodies”

I have good reason to remember one of these ‘Bluebells of Scotland, with variations’. One summer’s evening, whilst returning from my violin lesson, I was ‘confronted’ by two tall young men, one of whom I recognised as Ted Hurst, son of a near neighbour of ours – they asked if I would play for them. Nodding my approval, they took me to the rear of some old cottages on Chapel Green and asked me to ‘give them a tune’. I opened my violin case – took out the fiddle and kindly asking them to hold the music – gave them an open-air performance of ‘Blue Bells of Scotland’.

I can still see this piece of music, as the variations with their numerous

groupings of quavers, blackened the second half of the sheet. They seemed to appreciate my little effort, thanked me and off I went home. I didn’t think much about the incident until some time later, I saw Ted Hurst’s mate, carrying a violin case along Chapel Green – I wondered, if my childish playing, had given him the inspiration to ‘have a go’ himself. I continued my study of the violin for several more years, until the problems of work and family matters became the priority. In the meantime, I used to give the occasional violin solo at events in the parish hall in aid of church funds.

When World War II, broke out and I was eventually called up. I packed my fiddle along with all my other items, in the middle of my kitbag and off I went. I played the violin in several camp bands and orchestras at various RAF stations – the most far-flung being at Stornaway in the outer Hebrides. A concert we gave there was well received and merited an excellent report in the local newspaper.

Eventually I was posted to the Far East and once again, I took the violin with me. Boarding the troop ship Queen of Bermuda, which was to convey RAF personnel only, we were stunned by the depressing news from the entertainments’ officer, that there wasn’t a sheet of popular music, aboard ship. After much discussion, we were left with no alternative but to search out our musical memories and experiment with our own improvisations.

Our efforts proved so successful, that on this 28 day trip to India we were able to present a spectacular revue on five successive nights in order to entertain the many hundreds which comprised the ship’s company – this also forming part of our Christmas festivities. Our music for all this, consisted of bits of paper, usually cigarette packets, on which we scribbled, the key signatures of the various tunes we played.

Finally arriving at Bombay after our month-long sea voyage, we now had to face the gruelling long tram journey across the whole of the Indian continent to Bengal. Here we had to transfer all our kit from the train onto a banana boat. Due to a mishap for which I was partly responsible, my kit bag fell into the water and had to be retrieved by one of the lads. I dragged the soaking bag onto the boat and eventually managed to get it down to the lower deck where an old Indian was cooking some chipaties – he smiled approvingly as I moved to place my wet bag on a cooking spit above his primitive wood-burning fire, I spent some time there turning it, as if I were roasting a pig! Eventually, when it looked reasonably dried out, I placed it with the rest of the kit on the deck above. There, I found all the lads asleep – after making a rough drawing of this scene in my sketch-book – I joined them.

When in due course, we arrived in Burma, it was sometime before I made an examination of the

contents of my kit bag – most of the items had survived the deluge, except my violin which was in two parts – the water had somehow dissolved the glue attaching the neck and finger board to the rest of the instrument. I set about trying to repair it, but couldn't find a suitable adhesive – because of the tropical heat, none of the traditional – type glues would set. One day after chewing some gum – instead of disposing of it – I stuck it in the neck of the violin, to ensure it fitted neatly into the shaped segments of the case and then forgot all about it.

Several months later, found us on the move again, this time partaking in the Liberation of Malaya. After the surrender of the Japanese, and a temporary governing body established here in Kuala Lumpur, our RAF Unit was invited to present a Forces Show on Radio Mayala. It was then that I thought about my violin – was it still in pieces in it's case. I hurried to the billet and carefully removed it. For a moment I was stunned – it felt like a complete instrument. I grabbed the bow and quickly played a few chords – then some more – I couldn't believe my luck. The chewing gum had hardened successfully in spite of the tropical heat.

The following morning I became one of five volunteers that formed a dance-band – a couple of us doubling as vocalists for some of the numbers. On the night of the broadcast, I was making my way in the pouring rain, to the Radio Station, when I fell down one of the massive monsoon-style drain-holes right up to my neck – still clutching my violin. Fortunately, no harm was done, and somehow scrambled up the drain and hurried off to meet the other lads. Our broadcast proved highly successful to the point that many thought we were more than just a five-piece band and requested our attendance at other functions but these had to be refused because of normal duties.

When at long last, it was all over and I found myself back in civvy street, I set about trying to repair my violin. What proved most difficult was the solid lump of chewing gum – I had to almost chisel it away – how's that for stickability – on the fiddle?

Austin Lyons "on his fiddle" aged eight.





Do you Remember?

MR DAKIN SHARES MEMORIES OF HIS YOUTH WITH US (EDITOR).

By Mr E Dakin

Do you remember Wakes Weeks?

For the first two weeks of every July, the noise and bustle of Wigan's cotton mills fell silent. Other industries too, either closed their doors or kept going with a reduced workforce. Even a few shops put up their shutters.

And where did these hard-working folk go on holiday? Blackpool, Southport, Rhyl, Llandudno, and various other destinations, were invaded by, hopeful, sun-seeking, fun loving, thirsty and hungry holiday-makers, that were the town's working classes. They travelled by train, bus or charabanc. If you stayed at home the town was deserted, so, to break the monotony, you booked a day trip by charabanc.

The coach firms of Smiths, Barnes, and other companies did a roaring trade. Those well-upholstered, but cramped colourful single-deckers, took a route that included a stop at some tiny rural café - there were no motorways in those days - then off again to the seaside resorts in Wales, and not forgetting, Scarborough, Morecambe, and of course, Blackpool, the favourite. There was one thing for sure, whichever resort you visited, you were certain to bump into someone you knew; workmates, neighbours, distant relatives, even your boss.

"How do, Joe, where et stoppin'?"
"Nay, Sammy, how long art 'ere fer?"
"Hello, Molly, luv, ha thowt thee an' Billy were gooin' to New Brighton."

All good friends, out to have a good time best way they could, and even these familiar, well-known faces, wasn't going to stop them. Then the hunt for a good fish and chip shop or café, followed by a visit to the nearest crowded bar for a couple o' gills. And just to cool things down, a paddle in the sea before tea..

Do you remember coping with illness?

I remember as a lad, and I don't know why, but it always seemed to be dark, a cold winter's night when a bowler-hatted Mr. Harmer, doctor Berry's man, came calling every Friday about

6 o'clock to collect 6 pence (2p in today's money) to cover the whole family for minor medical problems. There wasn't any NHS in those days.

And I also remember Dad and me during the hot Summer months, walking down the canal bank to gather a variety of herbs. Plants like, dandelion and burdock and nettle, and from which Dad made dandelion and burdock pop. When it was bottled it had the appearance of today's lager beer; and believe me, it was nectar in a bottle.

And everybody knows the cure for nettle stings; rub a dock leaf on the affected part, and hey presto! The sting disappears. Isn't it strange, the dock plant is always found relatively close to stinging nettle. Back in olden times country folk reckoned that the dock leaf was only effective if the following spell was said simultaneously "Nettle out, dock in - dock remove the nettle sting".

True or not, it gives the whole idea of herbs and folklore a certain charm and quaintness. We also gathered comfrey, which has several common names - the most popular one being, knitbone.

Dad would hang the leaves and allow them to dry, and when anyone suffered a strain, bruise or swelling, he would put the leaves in a pan of water and simmer them for about 20 minutes, then the victim would bathe the injured part until relief was obtained.

But in those those days, even if you didn't know your herbs, there was always a herbalist shop within easy walking distance, where you could buy, for a few coppers, any herb for any complaint under the sun; all nature's remedies, which, with a bit of knowledge, could be gathered personally from local fields and meadows.

And do you remember too, friendly neighbours nipping next door to make cinder tea for a new born baby with the gripes? When money was short, which was often, they couldn't afford gripe water, so they made cinder tea. And this is how it was done.



Take a red hot cinder out o't fire, put it in a cup of cold water, let it stand for a few seconds, put in some sugar, let it stand some more, sieve it into another cup, cool it again, then pour it into the babies feeding bottle. That got the wind up, I'll tell you!

So, if you fancy reviving an age-old remedy for gripes, why not have a go?. And if you can do this with a modern gas fire, write it down, get it published, and you'll make a fortune.

Now the humble potato, as everybody knows, is not a herb, but a vegetable. But it was once thought that a stolen potato was a useful charm against rheumatism, and would be carried in a pocket or around the neck.

And warts rubbed with a potato would disappear as the vegetable rotted. Personally, I like my spuds on a plate, chipped, boiled or mashed, or made into a belly-filling hash.

Do you remember what family life was like?

Do you remember when you were growing up? How can you forget? Especially if like me, you were brought up in the depression years; when the dole queues were long and money was scarce. I honestly think that when life is hard it leaves you with an indelible memory of the times endured. Not that you resented those times and conditions. How could you? You didn't know any different.

Take the example of our house where me, my two brothers, and sister were born and raised. Ours, like many more, had one cold water tap and a shallow brown slop-stone. Until we could afford a geyser, our only means of obtaining hot water was by boiling the kettle.

Oh, we had a boiler, a copper one inside a brick surround, with room for a small coal fire underneath. It was situated in a corner, in the back kitchen, and on washdays Mam would make the fire, pile in the dirty clothes and boil them, using a stick to stir the clothes around.

Afterwards, the clothes were scrubbed and squeezed through a mangle. That was one of my first jobs after school, turning the mangle for Mam. When Dad was out of work, Mam took in washing to make an extra shilling or two. It wasn't a nice job not in those days, anyway.

And what about the toilet situation? Our lavvy was a good 50 yards up the backyard, we even had to turn a corner to get there. That meant at night we had to use a chamber pot. Everybody had a po under the bed in those days. And those bedrooms in winter were colder than

any butcher's fridge. It didn't make things any better having to hop across the cold linoleum, and down the uncarpeted stairs, either.

Coal was kept under the stairs, and as well as heating the copper boiler it was our only means of heating the living-room. And that is where Mam did her baking, on a black-leaded, fire range.

On some winter's nights I actually looked forward to spending some time in front of a blazing fire, pegging a rug made from sacking and coloured pieces of old, unwanted clothing, like jackets and trousers.

That same fire heated the solid plate oven shelves, which, on a cold winter's night, were wrapped in a blanket and used to warm our beds. An unforgettable luxury! We never had much money, but Dad worked hard – when he was in work and Mam, scraped, saved, baked and slaved, to give us the best of what was going. She never seemed to sit down, and when she did, she was usually knitting or sewing or darning.

Do you remember when there were real characters?

There are no real characters today, not in our kind of world, anyroad. I remember our local rat catcher who, with his battle-scarred mongrel dog, spent most of his time at the rat-infested bone works.

We had some likely characters in our neighbourhood, too. Jack Dash the bookie's runner, built like a whippet, and as fast as one. One Sunday teatime, we had just sat down to a tinned salmon salad, when our front door was flung open, and in ran Dash and two of his gambling mates; with breathless apologies, they ran straight through into the back kitchen, out into the yard, and over a wall.

Jack Pegleg, who would eat anything and never had a stomach problem, and who used to tar his front door every time he tarred his wooden leg.

Father Rimmer, our Parish priest, who, every Sunday afternoon, without fail, would come knocking on the doors of his Catholic congregation, collecting money for the waifs and strays; and if he didn't get an answer, he'd go down the entry, walk in the back door and catch us all hiding under stairs and table.

What a life, eh. It was a continual struggle just to keep going, but when the priest came calling, he wanted money from an almost empty purse, and if he caught up with you, you gave it to him. There was always somebody worse off than yourself. Those were the days, unforgettable.

The Atherton Local Board

– A FORGOTTEN HERITAGE?

By R. Evans

During the latter half of the C19th the expansion of mining and industry resulted in a rapid rise in the population of the townships in the Borough of Wigan. The 1858 Local Government Act allowed townships to form local boards to be responsible for local government.

Unlike under the previous parish administration members of these boards were able to appoint full-time professional, salaried officers to develop and manage services to meet growing economic and social demands. Money for this was available from long-term central government loans repaid from small annual additions to the local rates. Much of the present physical character of the central areas of these townships was created in this period. The first provision of what are now regarded as essential basic services such as water supply and sewage disposal is due to decisions taken by these boards.

The minute books of the Atherton Local Board provide a record of tasks undertaken in one township between

1864 and 1894. An article such as this can only provide the briefest of introductions to some of the achievements and deliberate emphasis has been given to stages in the provision of present day services that perhaps over 100 years later are not too well remembered.

Water supply

Prior to the formation of the Board, brooks and wells provided water for industrial and domestic uses. There was an urgent need to increase the supply and consideration was first given to the possibility of increasing the amount that could be obtained locally. Lord Lilford's land agent was asked if existing reservoirs could be enlarged. At one point it was resolved: (Vol. 1, P.33 April 1864) *"It was moved by Mr Lewis and seconded by Mr Warburton*

That the land required for a reservoir in the field in which the present reservoir is situated be Leased from Lord Lilford on a lease for 999 years, at an annual rent of one halfpenny per square yard. The Minerals and the present water rights being reserved."

It appears very probable that the reservoir is the one shown on the 1849 map lying between the Bolton Old and New Roads and the aim was to extend it in the area of Carr Bank fed by streams flowing from Hulton Park to the north. (Vol.1, P80 Sept 1864) *"A letter was read from the Agent of Mr William Hulton enclosing the terms and Conditions upon which Mr Hulton was willing to sell the land required for water works."*

The initial proposals were rejected but the possibility of obtaining water from Hulton Park continued to be considered. In 1865 the minutes make many references to what was described as the "Westhoughton Scheme":

(Vol.2, P.76 Aug 1865)

"The Clerk reported that he had met with Mr Arnold who advised that Mr Hunter and Mr Mackenzie should again visit the site of the proposed waterworks at Westhoughton and make a full report to the Board taking into consideration that probably by some modifications the scheme might be reduced to suit the site and the requirements of the District"

The minutes do not make clear why these schemes were abandoned though it is now obvious that local supplies would never have been sufficient to meet an ever-increasing demand. In 1866 an approach was made to the Tyldesley Board to co-operate in obtaining a supply from Manchester.

(Vol 2, P. 131 Feb. 1866)

After much discussion and public pressure the Board resolved: (Vol. 2, P. 339 Jan 1868) *"that the clerk be and he is hereby instructed to make application to the Poor Law Board for authority to borrow from the Public Works Loan Commissioners the sum of £7414 -11s -5d for the execution of the proposed works for supplying with water the district of Atherton Local Board from the Prestwich Reservoir of the*

Manchester Corporation by being connected with the mains of the Tyldesley with Shackerley Local Board at Hindsford Bridge in Atherton"

Agreement was finalised in the July following which a waterworks superintendent was appointed, tenders issued for water mains and over the succeeding years piped water made available throughout the township.

The Stock Platt Ditch

Now totally built over this, ran eastwards across The Avenue from a bridge crossed by the Atherton to Leigh road. It collected all the industrial and domestic waste from the bordering townships of Leigh and Atherton. Comments about it in the Board's minutes include:

(Vol.2, P. 420 Aug 1867)

"That there exists on the Southerly border of this district a foul and offensive ditch, known as Stock Platt ditch" and: (Vol.2, P.194 Aug 1867) "that such nuisance commencing at the Bridge on Turnpike Road is for the most part caused by the sewage of a portion of Westleigh and Pennington emptying into the same"

Frequent requests were made to Pennington and Westleigh to co-operate to ameliorate the hazard. In late 1868 a Joint Committee was formed to seek a solution and with the aid of outside arbitrators a scheme for drainage was agreed which included the area of each township that would benefit and the allocation of costs.

(Vol.3 P.90 April 1869)

"Resolved – that the previous selection of the Vicarage Route.....be confirmed... Resolved – That the sewer from Stock Platt ditch to Twist lane be 21 inches of...Socketed Stoneware pipes."

Atherton Sewage Farms

Similarly over the whole of the townships surface the only means of disposing rain-water and any liquid waste was either to allow it to soak into the ground or find its way into the nearest brook. Not surprisingly these watercourses became polluted and a source of infection. A typical complaint received by the Board was from. Messrs James Burton and Sons, millowners, at Hindsford Bridge: (Vol. 3 P126 July 1868)

As the built up area expanded with new terraces built alongside roads made of impermeable setts the need for surface drainage became even more necessary. The initial response was to lay intercepting sewers to discharge the waste downstream away from populated areas. During the 1870's engineers were appointed to construct a comprehensive sewage scheme for the whole of the township and to include methods of treatment. This became more essential as the installation of water closets, first recommended in 1878, slowly replaced the privies, previously the sole toilet facilities, from which the "night soil" was removed by the night soil workers. There is an early reference to this in 1876:

(Vol. 6 P.65 Dec. 1876)

"When the new sewer in the Valley is laid, this petty and ashpit to be replaced by a Water Closet"

There is now no evidence of the existence of the two sewage treatment sites constructed to serve the needs of Atherton in Hindsford and at Glasshouse.

In 1894 a decision was taken to locate treatment away from populated areas and, after first considering an independent site at Hawkshead Farm south of Bedford, it was agreed to form a Joint Sewage Board with Leigh and expand what are the present treatment works at Hope Carr. By 1898 the Urban District Council, which by this date had replaced the Local Board, decided that the old works were redundant:

(Vol. 18 P 197 Sept. 1898)

"That Mr Greenough be engaged to catalogue and sell by auction all the machinery and ironwork at the Glasshouse and Hindsford Sewage Works"

A contract was signed to clear the Glasshouse site

(Vol.18, P300 Feb 1899)

"Mr Thomas Platt for levelling and soiling the land Glasshouse Old Sewage Works"

The land and buildings at Hindsford were sold and some of the land offered for allotments:

(Vol. 18 P 365 May 1899)

"It was ordered that notice be given that the Council will

consider applications for the occupation of part of the Hindsford Sewage land as garden allotments"

In the days of horse transport the steep-sided valley of the Chanter's Brook must have proved difficult for the movement of heavy loads. Earlier in the century a high level road had been constructed to by-pass the old road to Bolton across the "Valley". From the 1880s onwards there were discussions about the need for a similar high-level route to avoid the steep inclines on the road to Tyldesley. Requests were made to Lord Lilford's agent for land and hopes were raised that the cost could be shared when a company proposed building a tramway through the district. (Vol. 9, P.161 Nov. 1882)

"The promoter of the Tramways (Mr Speight) attended with his engineers and the details of the scheme here discussed when it appeared that Mr Speight was depending upon the Chanters new road being made and that he could only proceed with the tramways on that understanding. The Board offered to carry out the work if Mr Speight would contribute £2000 (about half the estimate) towards the cost"

Mr Speight could not provide that amount and it was not until 1896 when, with financial help from the County Council and Lord Lilford's agreement to

provide land, that work began. (Vol.17, P57 May 1896)

"Resolved, That this Committee recommends the Council to adopt the scheme No. 2, viz for a new road through the Botanical Gardens of 14 yards wide of which the estimated cost is £3844 and that agreements to be entered into with Lord Lilford and Messers Fletcher Burrows Co limited for that purpose, subject to the sanction of the Local Government Board being obtained to the borrowing of the money required..... Resolved, That application be made to the County Council for assistance towards the carrying out of the scheme"

Two years later the work was complete. (Vol.18, P.93.April 1898)

"The committee recommend that the whole of the road from the Market Place to Hindsford Bridge (including the new part at Chanters) be named Tyldesley Road, and the present road, from Hillock to Mason Lane, Tyldesley Old Road"

Sources and Acknowledgements

The Board minutes are contained in 16 thick volumes with numbered pages (TD Ath A/1/1 to A1/18) in the Wigan Archives in Leigh Town Hall. Further references are from the minutes of the Urban District Council which replaced the Board in 1894. The source of each extract is identified by the (volume number, page and date.) The writer wishes to record his thanks to the Archivist and other Heritage staff who have made the records available for study and have always been ready to offer advice.

Free Sundays has Wigan's Great Engine in a Spin

Visitors to Wigan Pier Quarter will be able to see the magnificent Trencherfield Mill Engine for free every Sunday from April. Situated in its original setting, visitors can also hear talks from the engineers, and enjoy an exciting audio-visual show; all at no cost.

The engine is one of the largest and finest working examples of its type. Built 100 years ago, this mammoth metal powerhouse was regarded as a feat of industrial engineering. Churning out a massive 2,500 horse power to feed the ever hungry machinery of Trencherfield Mill, it played an instrumental role in Wigan's industrial development. In 2004 with the help of a successful Heritage Lottery Fund bid and restoration project, the engine was finally restored to its former glory. Visitors are now once again able to marvel at this giant's immense size and power, but more importantly, experience it working as it did all those years ago - full steam ahead! Viewing slots, available every Sunday are: 11.00am to 11.45am, and 1.00pm to 1.45pm. No booking is required.

Wigan Leisure and Culture Trust Heritage Services Manager Carole Tyldesley said: "We really hope that local people and steam enthusiasts will take advantage of this free opportunity and come along and experience for themselves this incredible piece of machinery. It is a fine working example of industrial engineering, situated right here on your doorstep. The AV show, which accompanies the tour, provides a fascinating insight into the engine's life from 1910 to the present day and a taster of what life was like working in the Victorian mills. Visitors can also enjoy cotton spinning demonstrations and put any questions they might have to our engineers."

Admission to the engine is free during the designated times, but there may be a small

charge for special events and activities. For example, visitors during the May half term can enjoy 'Hard Times - How We Used to Work'. Here they can see the engine in action, enjoy a cotton spinning demonstration, and take part in a fun craft activity. These sessions are suitable for children aged five to eleven years old, who must be accompanied by an adult. This event, priced at £3.50 per person or £10.50 for a family of four, runs from 10.00am to 11.30am from Wednesday 28th to Friday 30th May. For further information and to book a place contact 01942 323666.

Group and education visits to the engine are also available during the week but must be pre-booked. For further information please contact Wigan Heritage Services learning team on 01942 828128.

SEE THE MIGHTY TRENCHERFIELD MILL STEAM ENGINE!

Take a step back in time this May Half Term and join us for:

Hard Times

See the engine, enjoy an exciting audio-visual show and cotton spinning demonstration. Take part in a fun craft activity.

Dates: 28th-30th May

Times: 10am-11.30pm

Cost: £3.50 per person,
£10.50 Family
ticket (4 persons)

Booking essential contact:

01942 323666



*Excludes activities and events. Sunday viewing times 11.00am-11.45am and 1.00pm-1.45pm.

WIGAN HERITAGE SERVICES
discover
YOUR HERITAGE

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

www.wlct.org/heritage

HERITAGE EVENTS

MAY HALF TERM

'Hard Times'- How We Used to Work

See the mighty Trencherfield Mill steam Engine; enjoy an exciting audio visual show and cotton spinning demonstration. Take part in a fun craft activity. Fun for all the family. Suitable for children aged 5-11years old, accompanied by an adult. Booking essential contact: 01942 323666.

Date: 28th May-30th May

Time: 10.00am-11.30am

Price: £3.50 per person,
£10.50 family ticket (4 persons)

Venue: Trencherfield Mill

Victorian Holidays

Take a step back in time and discover how the Victorians spent their summer holidays. Find out how they spent their leisure time, places they visited and how holidays have changed. Take part in a fun craft activity. Booking essential contact: 01942 828128.

Date: 28th May

Time: 2.00pm-3.00pm

Price: £2 per person

Venue: The History Shop,
Library Street, Wigan

How We Used to Live

Take a step back in time to Victorian Wigan and discover what it was like to live in a typical working class home. Handle Victorian objects and take part in a fun craft activity. Booking essential contact: 01942 828128.

Date: 29th May

Time: 2.00pm-3.00pm

Price: £2 per person

Venue: The History Shop,
Library Street, Wigan

The Legend Of Mabs Cross

Follow the footsteps of Lady Mabel in a short walk around Wigan followed by a craft activity. Fun for all the family. Booking essential contact: 01942 828128.

Date: 30th May

Time: 1.30pm-3.00pm

Price: £3.50 per person,
£10.50 family ticket (4 persons)

Venue: The History Shop,
Library Street, Wigan

SUMMER ACTIVITIES

Every Tuesday from 29th July-19th August

'Cotton Mill & Canal Thrill'

Fun for all the family - See the mighty engine in steam and enjoy a cotton spinning demonstration. Take part in craft activities and a special canal boat ride!

Booking essential contact: 01942 323666.

Time: 1.00pm-4.00pm

Price: £5 children, £3 adults or
family ticket (4 persons) - £14

Venue: Trencherfield Mill

Every Wednesday from 30th July-20th August

Your Past, Your Present, Your Future

Take a step back in time and discover Wigan's heritage through a series of fun workshops. Covering a variety of topics, take part in learning activities and crafts, handle objects, and explore what The History Shop has to offer. Booking essential contact: 01942 828128.

Time: 2.00pm- 3.00pm

Price: £2

Venue: The History Shop,
Library Street, Wigan

**ALL EVENTS SUITABLE FOR CHILDREN AGED 5-11 YEARS ACCOMPANIED BY AN ADULT.
PLACES ARE LIMITED, SO BOOKING WITH PRE-PAYMENT IS ESSENTIAL.**

Silver Screen Dreams



Classic-Cannon Cinema, Screen 1, Leigh.



New Empire Cinema, Bradshawgate, Leigh.



Regal Cinema foyer, Leigh.

Leigh, like many towns and cities in the United Kingdom, at one time had an abundance of cinemas. There were the Sems and the Palace on Railway Road; the Bedford Picturedrome in Chapel Street; the Grand Theatre and Hippodrome on Leigh Road (later to become the Odeon, then the Classic and finally the Cannon) the Grand Cinema at the corner of Leigh Road and Windemere Road; the Regal situated at the corner of King Street and Spinning Jenny Way and finally the Empire at the top of Bradshawgate (now Iceland). Other places such as the Co-operative Hall and the Theatre Royal showed films occasionally.

For many people, a visit to the picture palace was not so much a treat, but more a way of life. Gone are the days of having to stand up in long queues, waiting to see a hit musical such as *The Sound of Music* or the latest James Bond film, before being ushered into the foyer to buy tickets. Once inside there were the usherettes with torches to guide you to a vacant seat.

The intervals during which ice creams, ice lollies and pop-corn could be purchased from a girl with a tray of such goodies. Then there were the trailers advertising forthcoming attractions, the inimitable Pearl & Dean adverts and finally the back rows generally occupied by courting couples.

Leigh has had a rich cinematic history, ending the silver screen dream on 5th October 1989 when Cannon, the last of the cinemas, finally closed its doors.

However, all is not lost, as the phoenix may be arising from the ashes with the introduction of a new cinema club in the Derby Room at the Turnpike Centre, where from May, regular film screenings will be shown.

Friday 16th May, sees '*Control*' a film depicting the story of Joy Division and Ian Curtis, followed by a family favourite '*Wallace & Gromit - The Curse of The Were-Rabbit*'. Friday 13th June.

Both films will be screened 7.00pm-9.00pm with doors opening at 6.30pm. Booking essential, tickets are priced at £3.00 adults and £1.50 children, available from Leigh Library (01942 404404).

Tydyin' Up is Harder than a Month in t'Pit!

A short story by T H Ascroft (1908-1982)

Jack Bale knew that he had a full morning's work in front of him if he was going to make the place anything like. He was expecting Jessie home in the ambulance at three. The two children would not be back until after four because they were having dinner at school.

The miner clenched his teeth and drew in a breath as he viewed the untidy room. He'd never seen it like this before. It astounded him that a room could change in such a way just because one little woman had been absent from it for three weeks.

Jack was one of the best men at the pit where he worked, and the demands of a shift deep under were nothing to him. Even at home, he was a handy man with a hammer and saw, and was a real treasure to his wife for doing odd jobs such as mending a spout or putting up shelves. But when it came to dusting and cleaning up a house, he always developed the feeling of a lost soul in a sandy wilderness. He just had no readiness for coping with chores of this nature.

Shadowed corner

Anyway he knew he would have to make a start so, to drug himself for the tasks ahead, he lit a cigarette. With the same match, he lit a ring on the gas-stove and put a kettleful of water upon it. He pondered on which job to start first. What about the window? Nay, if he did that it would steam up when he did the pots. He'd wash up first. Then he could do the hearth with the same water, when he had finished.

But what could he do while the water was coming to the boil? He could go round and do something about the dust. Jack went to the cupboard in a shadowed corner and had to go through several drawers before he could find a length of rag with the proper feel for him.

By the time, however, he had rooted out this object, he noticed the lid of the kettle lifting so he dropped his duster on to a chair and turned off the gas. He poured the water into a plastic bowl, added a great shake of soap powder, and began to wash up.

After a long, weary time, having laboured each pot with horny hands, he suddenly found he had done. He decided to let the pots drain while he did the hearth. They'd be easier to dry with the wet off them. He carried the bowl towards the hearth; but, on his uncertain way, he spilt some of the water on the carpet.

Jack had to mop up the little footling pool. But, at last, this agony was over and the hearth, too, came clean and shining under his hand. Then he took up the duster again and went round the room, flicking off the dust wherever he could see it. He went over the carpet next with the sweeper. He seemed to be making progress.

Lighting another cigarette, Jack Bale now dried his pots and cleaned the window. By this time, he was tired out, but, seeing the fire had burned low, he staggered out into the back, where his budgies were twittering, and brought in a shovelful of coal. He threw the coal on the fire and left the shovel in the hearth. Feeling he could do no more, he drew up an armchair, sank into it and went fast asleep.

A shocking dream

It was a shocking dream. He was back down the pit. Suddenly, before and behind, the roof caved in silently. There was dust in his ears, in his eyes, in his nose; he felt this with a marked reality. He was borne down and then he tried to struggle upwards.

When he awoke he was actually on his feet and saw that the room was full of floating black particles. The fire was almost out for a black mass of something lay upon it. The hearth, too, was covered by the same substance. Jack saw there had been a fall of soot. The shovel he had set down was completely filled and a neat ridge of soot lay along the handle.

It took another hour to clean up the mess and get the fire going again. Finished for the second time, he made himself a pint pot of tea and added slowly several spoonfuls of sugar. The whiteness gave him his first pleasure.

Jack Bale had just come to the black leaves, when he heard a smart toot on a motor horn. Opening the front door, he saw Jessie between two ambulance men. The body of the ambulance was white behind them. Jessie was walking slowly towards him. A number of neighbours, smiling and waving, were at their front doors. Jack's wife was smiling too.

"We've brought her home," said one of the men.
"Aye," said Jack. "Give her to me."

"Nice and tidy"

With the door closed behind them, Jack led Jessie tenderly to the armchair before the fire. The fire was burning much more brightly now after the fall. "Well," said Jessie, looking around, "you've kept the place nice and tidy, Jack. Have yo' done in t' corners?"

"If corners want doin'," said Jack, "they'll have to come into t' middle o' t' floar! Ah've worked hard."

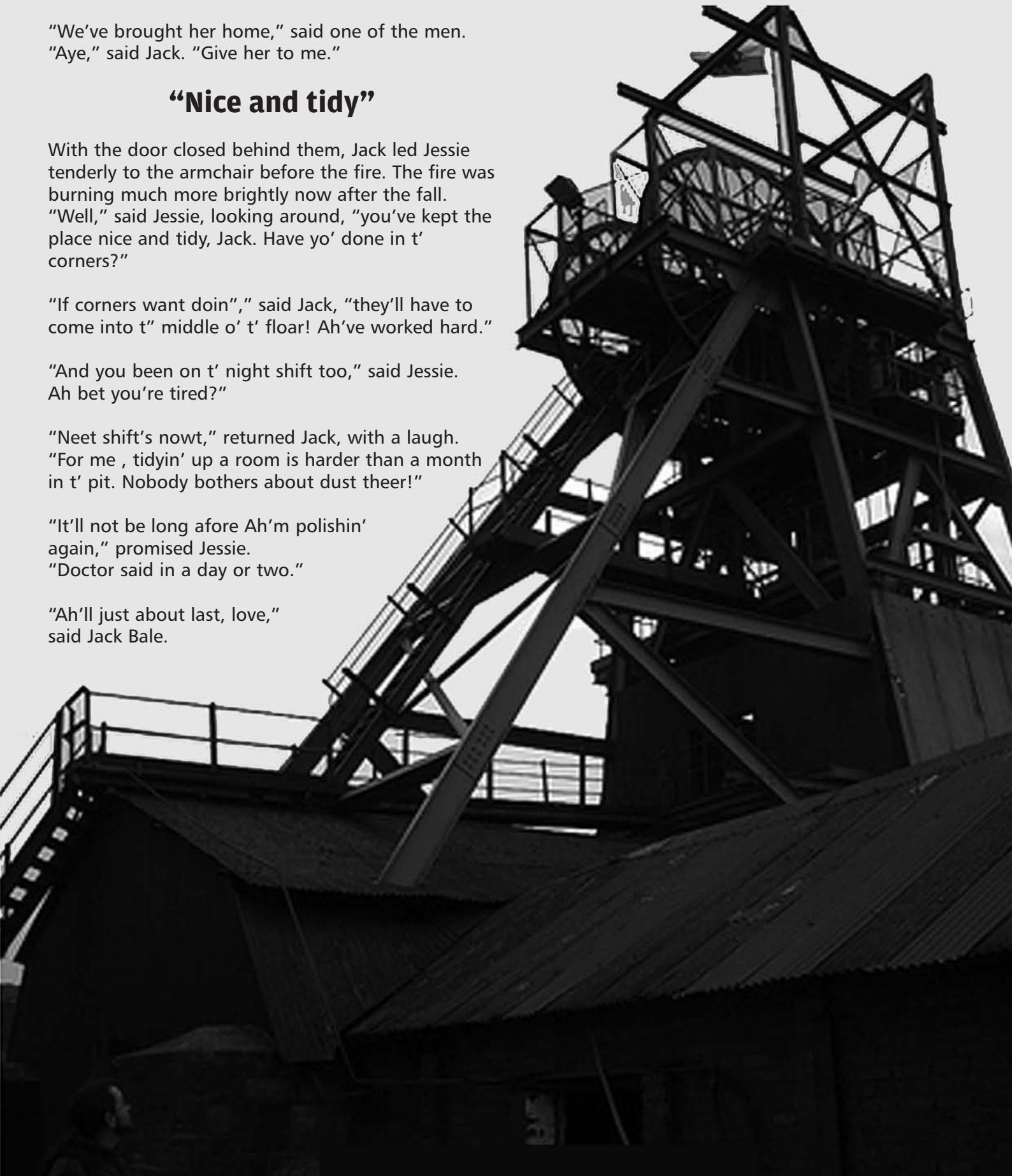
"And you been on t' night shift too," said Jessie. Ah bet you're tired?"

"Neet shift's nowt," returned Jack, with a laugh. "For me, tidyin' up a room is harder than a month in t' pit. Nobody bothers about dust theer!"

"It'll not be long afore Ah'm polishin' again," promised Jessie.
"Doctor said in a day or two."

"Ah'll just about last, love," said Jack Bale.

Editor's note. Thomas Ascroft was a Wiganer who taught for twenty four years at St Thomas' School, Beech Hill. During the 1950's and 1960's, he wrote almost 300 short stories, many originally published in the Bolton Evening News and Lancashire Life. These have recently been passed to the Heritage Service by his nephew John Davies, and we hope to publish more in future editions.



YOUR LETTERS

Blackrod Tapestry

Dear Editor

We started making the Tapestry in 2000, having seen it done in other places (including the Wigan Millennium Tapestry) we thought we would have a go at our own! We didn't think it would take us so long, but we finally got it all finished in November and our 'unveiling' ceremony was performed by Ruth Kelly, MP for Bolton West at Blackrod Council Chamber.



As a small group with varied experience and levels of ability, we are very proud of our achievement. We have learned a lot about Blackrod in the process and as Ruth Kelly said "every community needs to be aware of its roots in order to go forward". Our Tapestry tells the story of Blackrod from the Romans to present day, and includes the part played by Lady Mabel of Haigh Hall in establishing the first chapel in Blackrod, and links to the Norris, Bradshaw, and Chisenhale families.

The Tapestry moved to its permanent home in St Katharine's Church at the end of February.

Mary Pryle,

Hindley Green

Dear Editor

I would like to endorse Mrs O'Connell's sentiments in issue No.47 concerning the lack of articles on Hindley Green. It is ironic that in the same issue we have an article on the Hindley Green Springs Disaster in 1868. (Coincidence?)

Last year I submitted two photographs of Hindley Green Station (1950's) with the track under water. One photograph had a steam engine on it and the other included the porter Jimmy Carter. Both photographs were considered unsuitable but I have seen photographs of a poorer quality in earlier editions. So you see Mrs O'Connell some of us do try. At least the Romans did not forget the place for they built a road to Wigan alongside Atherton Road. Now that could make a fine article. The former Hindley UDC did not forget it either when they created a refuse tip behind the row of terraced houses on Leigh Road from the Station to No. 97 Leigh Road.

I would add further "losses" to the poem. The Cow and Calves Pub on the site just before Pauline Street (1930's) the old Smithy, Leigh Road/Clayhole (Farmer Street), later a garage and the Bethel Methodist Church and Sunday School on Leigh

Road/Atherton Road junction. I think the former Farmyard Pub, 45 Leigh Road is now just a building and the renaming of Colwyn Street, Leigh Road, Hindley Green to Colwyn Drive to the "new" housing development.

Robert Chadwick
Hindley Green.

I would be delighted to receive contributions regarding Hindley Green.
Editor

St John, Canada

Dear Editor

I've just received several back copies of the Past-Forward magazine including the latest Issue No. 47. As always, it is full of interesting articles and letters from people all over the world who have memories of happy times spent in the Wigan area. I left in 1959 at 17 to pursue an early career in engineering and am now just about wrapping up a second career as a geophysicist in Canada.

I'm writing to comment on an error on the Family History section, page 8, Issue 47. To quote one of two references to St John, Canada - "The (ship) Ann Hall sailed from Liverpool and arrived in St John, Canada in July 1848." This quotation is ambiguous and may cause some problems to researchers probing family histories abroad. There is no city with that name in Canada; however, there are two cities, deep water ports actually, with similar names in Eastern Canada, St. John's in Newfoundland, the most

eastern province and Saint John in New Brunswick a maritime province on the mainland.

Just a little history. The Dominion of Canada was formed by the agreement of four eastern mainland provinces - Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Quebec and Ontario under the British North America Act of 1867. Other mainland provinces joined later. Newfoundland is entirely different. It is a large island that, in 1583, became the first colony of England to be established. In 1707 it became a colony of the United Kingdom. It remained as such until 1907 when it was made an independent country - the Dominion of Newfoundland within the British Empire. In 1949 after two acrimonious referenda, Newfoundland joined the Dominion of Canada that eventually became known as Canada. There are strong links in Newfoundland with England, especially the west country and Ireland. Newfoundland soldiers, sailors and airmen fought with the British forces in both world wars whereas the Canadian armed personnel formed a separate fighting force.

Confusing the two St. John's is a common mistake even by Canadians. Several years ago a soccer team from Latin America arrived in Saint John, New Brunswick, (YSJ) for a tournament only to find out that it was to take place in St. John's, Newfoundland (YYT) - 1700 km distant by road with an 8 or 18 hour ferry ride to add. Keep up the good work.

Peter G Simpkin,
Nova Scotia, Canada
1279, Old Sackville Road,
Middle Sackville, Nova Scotia,
Canada, B4E 3A6

Ida Norcliffe

Dear Editor

Anne Naylor's letter in the December-March issue of Past Forward quite excited me. Not, I hasten to add, because I'm particularly kinky about corsets, but because Ida was my sort-of-great-aunt and figures in my book 'A Wigan Memoir' which will be released in October 2008 by Carnegie Publishing of Lancaster.

My great grandfather, Albert Norcliffe, born in Halifax in 1865, married a Welsh girl called Caroline Sarah Corfield and my grandmother Beatrice Adelaide Norcliffe was the youngest of their children. By 1901 Albert and Caroline had separated and he was living with Mary Ann (Polly) Kirton. Ida, Polly's daughter from an earlier relationship, eventually became Ida Norcliffe the Scholes corsetière. She married William Bennett but the business continued in the Norcliffe name.

Albert moved his various business interests to Lancashire before the First World War. My future grandmother Beatrice married John Sydney Hart, a brass-finisher who was still serving with the Royal Field Artillery. His father John Shaw Hart, also a brass finisher at the Peppermill Foundry, was a serjeant* (correct spelling for that time) with the Wigan

Volunteers, a crack shot and a well-known Darlington Street character. Beatrice died of puerperal fever at the age of 21 on 23 July 1919, the day after giving birth to my mother, Beatrice Adelaide Hart, who grew up to be a star of the Wigan Swimming Club. One of my American cousins has posted Beatrice's photograph on the Wigan World website.

Albert and Polly had one son together, my grandmother's half-brother Benjamin who was born in 1901 and died at only sixteen in 1917. They had to wait until Caroline's death in 1919 before they could finally marry. It was a short marriage because Albert died in 1921. Polly survived him until 1937 and they are buried together with Benjamin in Wigan Cemetery under a black marble cross with the inscription 'Until we meet again'.

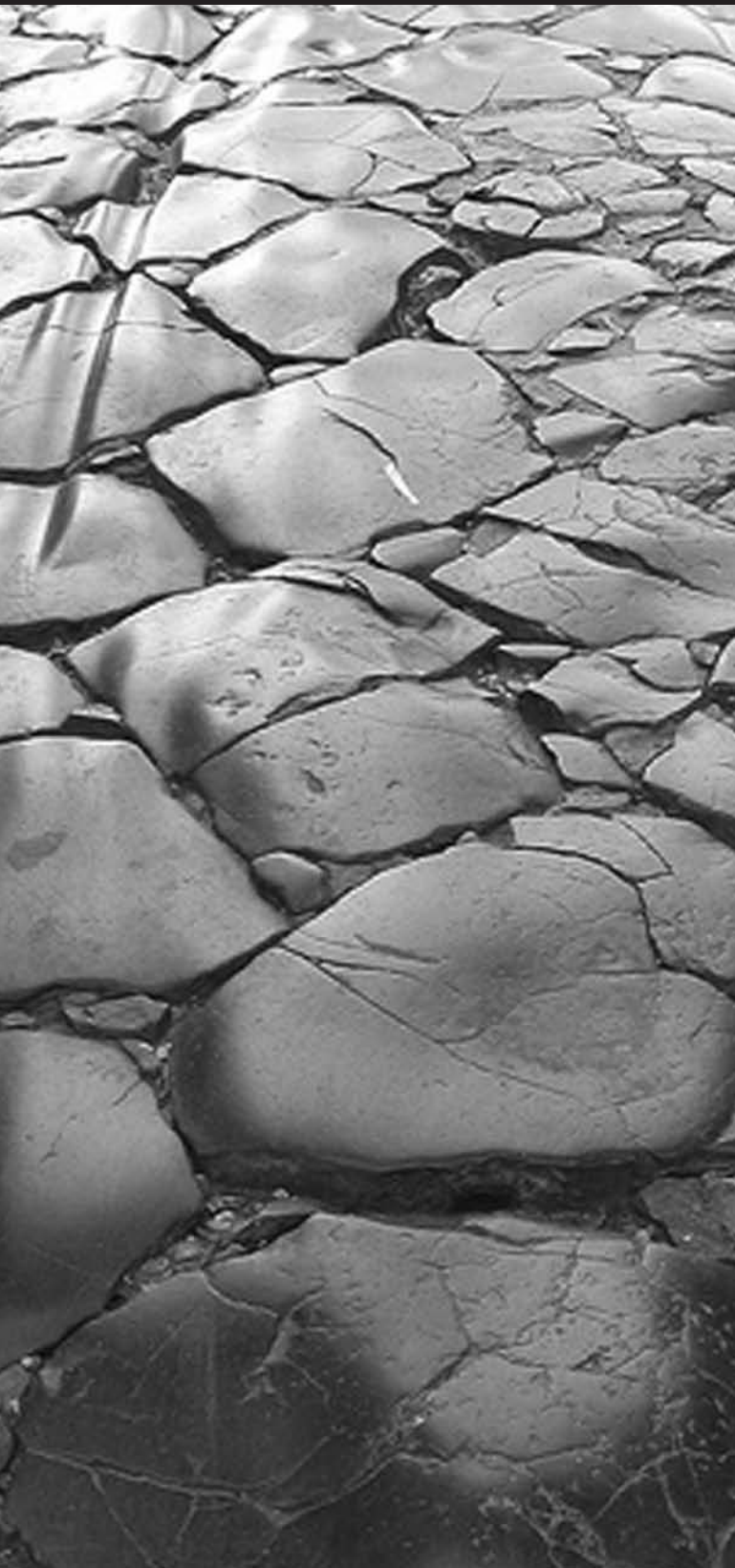
I have clear memories of visiting Aunty Ida and Uncle Bill in the Scholes shop in the 1950s. The name is not a common one and I know I am related to both Blackpool and Chorlton Norcliffes. I haven't yet gone very far into researching those connections and would be very pleased to hear from anyone who knows anything about them or the Harts. My email address is heddlenash@gmail.com

Saludos from Spain,

John S Taylor
Malaga, Spain

THE SEARCH FOR A ROMAN ROAD IN HIGHER INCE

By Wigan Archaeological Society



The purpose of the archaeological project that covers the area around St William's Primary School in Higher Ince, is to uncover the remains of the Roman road that was constructed between Manchester and Wigan in the first few centuries A.D.

The Reverend Edmund Sibson of Ashton-in-Makerfield researched and surveyed the road in the early 19th century, and described the appearance and direction of the route. Subsequently, the supposed route was shown on the 1849 Ordnance Survey Map, 1st Edition, as two lines running across Amberswood Common close to the Ince-Hindley boundary. Another historian, W. Thompson Watkin, verified Sibson's work later in the 19th century. However, the precise location and alignment of the road needs to be confirmed by direct archaeological evidence, so that the road can be placed on both historical and present-day maps. The presence of a road would support Sibson's theory that Wigan is the Roman settlement of Coccium, other antiquarians have postulated places such as Blackrod, Standish and Edgeworth, due to an ambiguity in the supposed Roman distances to the forts at Manchester and Ribchester. Proving the road route from Manchester to Wigan is important as, along with the road from Wilderspool entering the town from the south, and the northerly road leaving towards Preston; it could then be stated beyond reasonable doubt that Wigan was a strategic station at the confluence of at least three roads in the Roman North West. In addition, archaeology from the route of the Manchester to Wigan Road, particularly as it approaches the town centre, may further enhance our knowledge of how, when and where the Romans occupied Wigan and the extent of their activities and increase our understanding of the significance of Roman Wigan, as both a military and commercial base.

On the presumption that most Roman roads follow a direct route from their origin to destinations, it was logical to project the supposed route, as shown on the 1849 OS Map, from Amberswood Common towards Wigan. Sibson's narrative stated that the line of the Road was 'very visible' at the north end of the Common, now occupied by Walmesley Park in Higher Ince. Therefore, during the summer of 2003, an excavation was undertaken in the park as part of the Channel 4 'Time Team' TV programme. The results of the dig seemed to indicate a Roman road, without possessing all the classical features that you would expect to find. We hope to re-visit the site in the very near future to search for more compelling archaeological evidence.

Further along the supposed route, the alignment of the road appeared to intersect St William's Primary School field, which lies just off Ince Green Lane. After desk-top studies, a resistivity survey was conducted, which seemed to indicate the presence of the road in the field. The funding to continue the project was

generously provided by the Heritage Trust and it was envisaged that the wider community could benefit from the archaeological investigation through the involvement of local schools and community groups. Also, there was a conservation element in the scheme, such that, if the road was found, it would be preserved and the site would be deemed of historical interest.

Excavations commenced in earnest during January 2008, when a series of test pits were excavated parallel to the original primary school boundary wall, with the intention of appraising the features visible on the resistivity survey. The archaeology indicated that the features were the result of industrial activities, rather than the much earlier intervention. An area was prepared for the pupils of local schools to explore, with Society members providing assistance with such techniques as digging, identification and washing of finds. Some pieces of 17th century pottery were soon found by the pupils, who thoroughly enjoyed the extracurricular activities. Unfortunately, due to poor weather, several schools were denied the opportunity to dig, however they will be accommodated later in the project. Members of the public also visited the site, and the event was reported in the 'Wigan Evening Post'. Undaunted, further work is planned for Ince C. E. Junior School field (where a resistivity survey last December conducted with the kind help of pupils) revealed a 2-3 metre wide ditch, which may be of medieval or earlier origin, perhaps a Roman hollow way cut into a nearby mound.

Excavations proceeded during February and March heading northwards into St William's Church Presbytery garden, where a suspected 16th century drain was found. This is currently undergoing appraisal and work is continuing in this location to uncover the extent of the feature, determine its intended function and to establish if it was connected to some local industry, or is of a domestic purpose. (Figs.1 and 2).



Fig 1. Clay-lined drain found in St William's Presbytery Garden. The bricks shown were capped by stone slabs and may be of 16th century origin.



Fig 2. View showing part of the capped and un-capped suspected drain.

There is a curious flow of field boundaries apparent on the 1849 Map (Fig. 3). These appear to curve around the low-lying terrain of the former Ince Moss (starting near to Common Nook, adjacent to Walmesley Park in Higher Ince) and then converge onto Sibson's original alignment of the road, shortly after the Leeds and Liverpool Canal. Since no indications of the road have been found on the anticipated alignment, the hypothesis is that the Romans saved considerable time and effort, and skirted the edge of the waterlogged area. This seems plausible, as it follows their traditional method of road surveying by sighting to the high ground, prior to construction. Consequently, the George Street area and Ince C.E. School field were both incorporated into the original project plan to enable sufficient scope to explore this eventuality. To date, two test pits recently excavated within the cobbled section of George Street have shown no obvious signs of road materials, and it may be that intense mining activities during the 19th century have completely eliminated all traces of the road.



Fig 3. Projection of Roman Road as seen on 1849 OS map extract with 1908 overlay.

Work is proceeding and the project should be completed before the end of April 2008. The conservation approach in this particular scheme, is to construct a modern-day representation of the road (if and when it is found) using the cobbles from former urban streets. In the future, it may be possible to build an unbroken stretch of road as more land becomes available. It is envisaged the route would be known as 'Coccium Way'.

Wigan Heritage Network

By Thomas Price,
Acting Chair

The Wigan Borough has a long and fascinating history, with the town of Wigan, more important in its earlier years than many of our major towns today. Events that have occurred in Wigan and the old townships and former Urban District Councils, now constitute the heritage of the Borough as a whole. Heritage is difficult to define; it is made up of many different aspects of life. The way we speak, each of us in our own dialect, the buildings throughout the ages and the landscape continually altered by each generation, are important aspects of our heritage.

Over the decades, much of our past has been eroded away and lost, especially before records began. In order to preserve and safeguard our history, an organisation of "passionate heritage investors" needed to be set up. The most appropriate way to encompass this objective was to invite interested people and organisations to come together under the title of Wigan Borough Heritage Network. The Network was started in 2006 by Mr. Joe Taylor, a Billinge Historical Society Official, who encouraged groups across the Wigan Borough to come together and discuss their different views, future aspirations and historical facts concerning the heritage of the Borough. As our organisation involves the whole of the Borough, it dissolves the age-old stigma that existed between the independent and fiercely proud former Townships.

The Network aims to provide a forum where persons and community based organisations, concerned with archaeology, history and heritage matters throughout the Wigan Borough, are able to meet on a regular basis, to exchange news views and aspirations. To achieve our aims, the Network will;

- promote interest in and maintain appreciation of all aspects of our heritage, culture and natural environment with whatever means that are within our capabilities,
- support individual members and member organisations to achieve our aims.

- support, promote and resource members and member organisations in achieving the aims of the Wigan Borough Heritage Network.
- work in partnership with relevant Wigan Council Departments and Wigan Leisure & culture Trust
- identify and map all points of heritage significance throughout the Wigan Borough and to devise strategies to preserve them for future generations.

For future information:
<http://wiganheritage.com>

THE WIGAN INTERNATIONAL JAZZ FESTIVAL

Wigan International Jazz Festival 2008 presents
Sunday June 15th 12.00 Noon - 5.00pm

The Courtyard, The Orwell Public House, Wigan Pier Quarter

'MADE IN WIGAN'

A celebration of Wigan - it's culture, character and heritage.

Featuring:

- ▶ Andy Prior
- ▶ Wigan Youth Jazz Orchestra -
Directed by Ian Darrington MBE
- ▶ Wigan Jazz Club Big Band
- ▶ Wigan Pier Theatre Company
- ▶ Wigan Pier Youth Theatre

Come along on the day and get involved!
Visit Trencherfield Mill Steam Engine and
take part in heritage family activities!

THE WIGAN PIER QUARTER

WIGAN LEISURE & CULTURE TRUST

Atherton Heritage Society Meetings

Meetings are held on second Tuesday of the month at 7.30pm in St. Richards Parish Centre, Mayfield Street, Atherton. Admission £1.00 members, £1.50 non-members. Annual membership £3.00

Tuesday April 8th 2008
Leeds and Liverpool Canal
Speaker: John Shaw

Tuesday May 13th 2008
Medicine and Magic
Speaker: Peter Watson

Tuesday June 10th 2008
Manchester (Part 2)
Speaker: Margaret Curry

There is no meeting in July.

Contact Number:
01942 884893

Wigan Family History and Local History Society

Meetings are held at The Lady Bowes Lyon, Gidlow Lane, Wigan on the third Tuesday of each month (7.30pm for 8.00pm). No meetings are held in July and August. Attendance fees are £1.00 for members and £1.50 for non-members. Our aim is to provide support, help, ideas and advice.

20th May Cotton Queens of Lancashire speaker Maureen Gilbertson.

Hindley & District History Society

Meetings are held in the Museum at Hindley Library on the second Monday in the month.

Admission £1.00 for members and £1.50 for non-members.

The Museum is open to the public at the following times. Admission is free. Please contact Mrs Joan Topping on 01942 257361, Mrs Norma Brannagan on 01942 258668 or Hindley Library staff.

The museum is open to the public 10.00am to 12 noon on the following days:

Friday - 11th April
Wednesday - 16th April
Saturday - 26th April

Friday - 9th May
Wednesday - 14th May
Saturday - 24th May

Friday - 6th June
Wednesday - 18th June
Saturday - 28th June

Leigh & District Family History Society

Chairman: Tel 01942 743428
Secretary: Tel 01942 729559
Monthly meetings held in the Derby Room of Leigh Library at 7.30pm on the third Tuesday of each month.

Weekly Help Desk run by members of the Society each Monday from 1.30pm to 3.30pm in the Local History Section of Leigh Library.

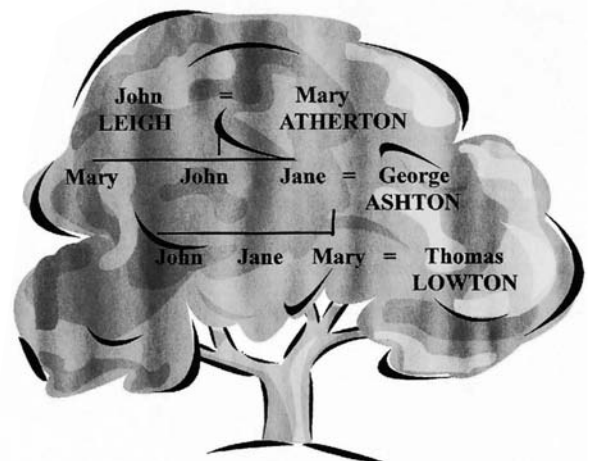
April 15th
The Story Behind a Grave in Prescot Church – Neville King

May 20th
Members Help Evening

June 17th
No meeting at the Derby Room

July 15th
No meeting at the Derby Room

Leigh & District



Family History Society

FROM OUR PHOTOGRAPHIC ARCHIVE



Threshing Machine, Wigan



Boy and Hot Potato Cart

Images from the Wickham Collection, a marvellous collection of late 19th photographs depicting ordinary Wigan life. The photographer was the Rev William Wickham, vicar of St Andrew's Church, Springfield from 1878 - 1916.

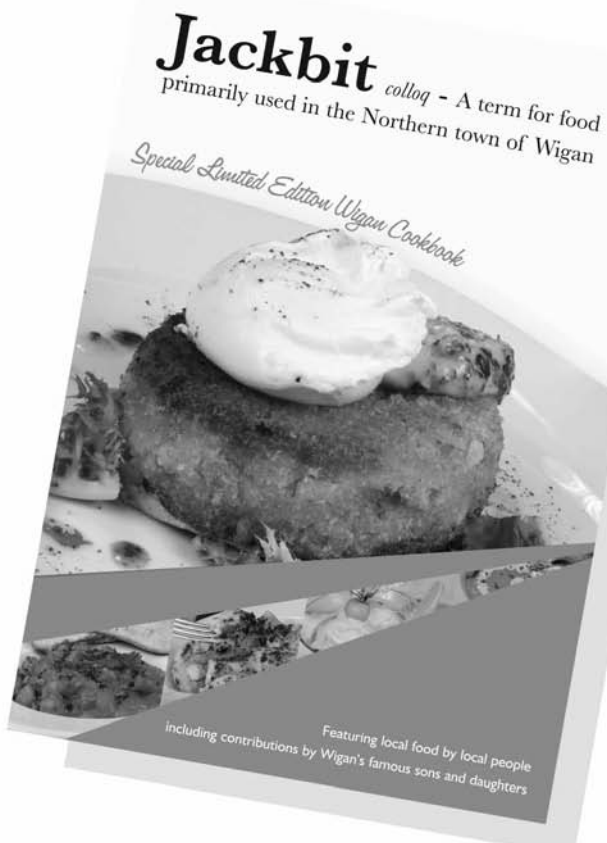


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Joan Francis (nee Coupe)

Rod Nuth of Burton on Trent is trying to contact Joan Francis (nee Coupe) the author of 'What Auntie Said' published in Issue 30, having been given a brass plaque from an item made by her ancestors, R J & E Coupe. He wants to know what piece of machinery the plaque was attached to?

Mrs Francis, or anyone else who can help, can contact him at rod@nuth.me.uk. Those of you who do have not access to email, can contact the editor on (01942) 828123.



Have you a family or local history query you think our readers can help you with? Please write to the editor. If there are no contact details with individual letters, please send information to the Editor, and it will be forwarded.

Editor

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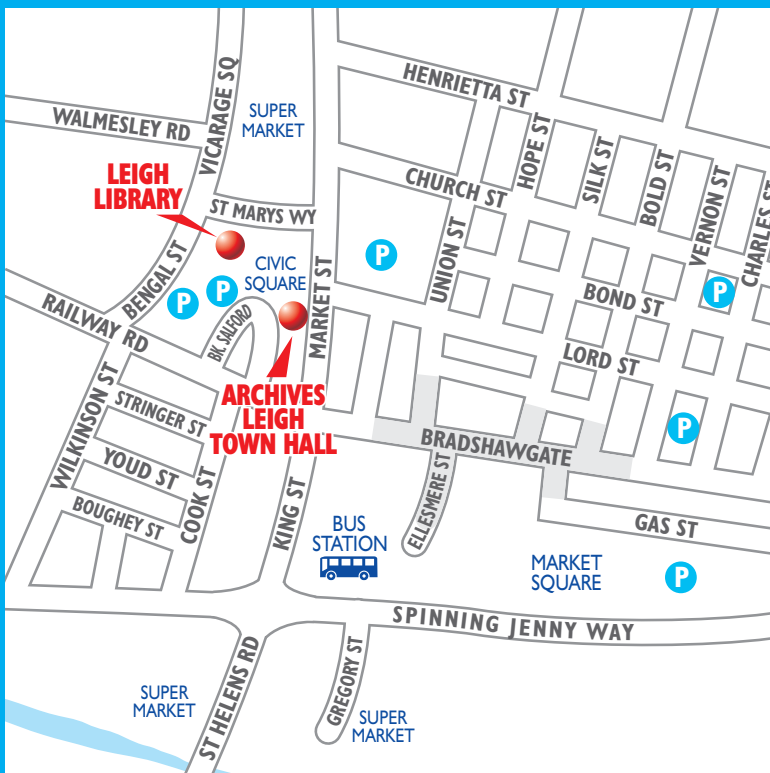
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