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heritage & arts

PAST FORWARD

Produced by Wigan Museums & Archives

Issue No. 65

December 2013-March 2014

New Rugby League Exhibition:



**Tries,
Teams
and Trophies
in Wigan Borough**

£2

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FRONT COVER

Baines Rugby League Cards, with thanks to The National Football Museum, Manchester.

Letter from the **Editorial Team**



Welcome to **PAST Forward** Issue 65. This issue brings readers the usual mix of family and local history articles, as ever written by local researchers with an interest in the Borough's history.

We are delighted to be able to announce the winners of the Wigan Borough Environment and Heritage Network 2013 Local History Essay Writing Competition. We received many brilliant essays and articles, showing a great depth of knowledge of the local area and some fascinating research. The panel of judges would like to thank all those who entered the competition and give special congratulations to the three winners, who were presented with their prizes on 4 December at the Museum of Wigan Life.

The winners were:

- 1st Denise Colbert: The Sins of the Father
- 2nd Alan Roby: 'No Truck' at Far Moor
- 3rd Tommy Heyes: Wigan's Undefeated Champion of the World

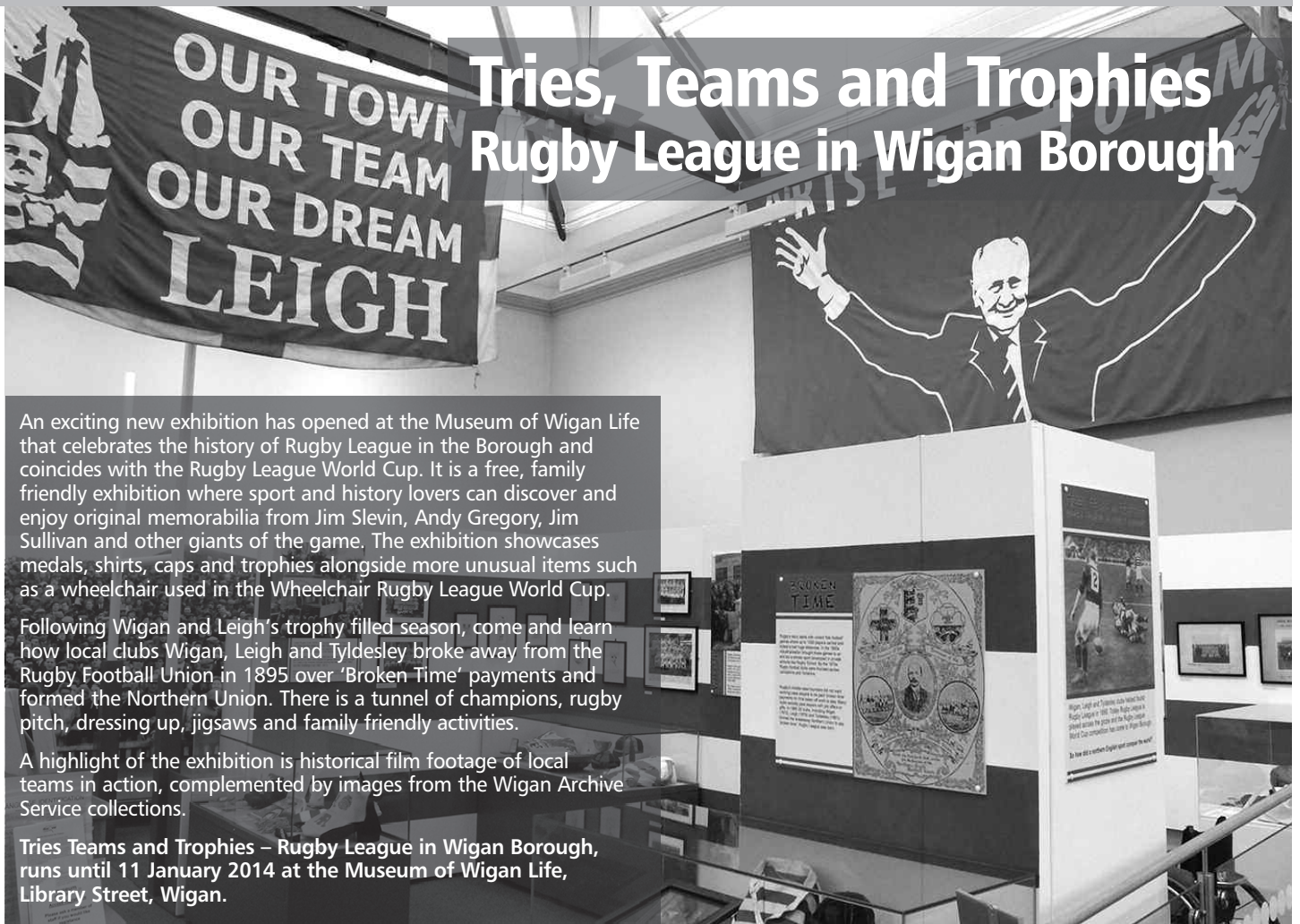
The first and second place articles are featured in this issue of Past Forward, and the third place article will appear in Issue 66. Pictures from the awards presentation will be printed in the next issue.

We continue to offer a new digital subscription to the magazine, perfect for a Christmas present for Wiganers scattered overseas! The cost of this new subscription is £6 per year with none of the postage costs of the paper version and will be emailed straight to your inbox three times a year.

Special Commemorative Issue, Past Forward 67

The summer/autumn edition of Past Forward next year will commemorate the start of the First World War in 1914. We would welcome the submission of any articles on the subject of the conflict, from life on the home front or the stories of local men and women in service. See page 12 for a few research ideas. Please contact us at pastforward@wlct.org.

Information for contributors, please see page 33



Tries, Teams and Trophies Rugby League in Wigan Borough

An exciting new exhibition has opened at the Museum of Wigan Life that celebrates the history of Rugby League in the Borough and coincides with the Rugby League World Cup. It is a free, family friendly exhibition where sport and history lovers can discover and enjoy original memorabilia from Jim Slevin, Andy Gregory, Jim Sullivan and other giants of the game. The exhibition showcases medals, shirts, caps and trophies alongside more unusual items such as a wheelchair used in the Wheelchair Rugby League World Cup.

Following Wigan and Leigh's trophy filled season, come and learn how local clubs Wigan, Leigh and Tyldesley broke away from the Rugby Football Union in 1895 over 'Broken Time' payments and formed the Northern Union. There is a tunnel of champions, rugby pitch, dressing up, jigsaws and family friendly activities.

A highlight of the exhibition is historical film footage of local teams in action, complemented by images from the Wigan Archive Service collections.

Tries Teams and Trophies – Rugby League in Wigan Borough, runs until 11 January 2014 at the Museum of Wigan Life, Library Street, Wigan.

PAST FORWARD Subscription Form

Copy Deadline for Issue 66

Contributors please note the deadline for the receipt of material for publication is 1st March 2014.

Past Forward Subscription

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The Sins of the Father: Parishioners and the Vicar of Leigh

BY DENISE COLBERT



James Irvine, Vicar of Leigh.

In 1852 Lord Lilford presented a petition to the House of Lords. 181 feet long and holding 6211 signatures, it was the largest petition ever sent from Leigh. Signed by members of all classes and headed by all the churchwardens, sidesmen and magistrates, the petition protested against the ministry of the parish vicar, Reverend James Irvine.

As a result of his persistent refusal to administer the rites and sacraments of the church to a portion of his parishioners, the signatories wanted changes made to the costly and difficult process of bringing legal charges against their vicar. He refused to baptise and bury

pauper children, turned away people who wanted to marry and was impeding the rights of the churchwardens to ring the bells. Echoing the sentiments of his adversaries in many articles, the Leigh Chronicle presented an image of Reverend Irvine that is incongruent with our expectations of a 'man of God'. Was Irvine the tyrant they made him out to be, or was there more to the 'dour Scot'?

James Irvine was a stickler for rules. His respect for discipline would have been honed during his time spent fighting in the Crimea, and he held the absolute authority of the church in high esteem. Irvine's views were in alignment with the aims of the Oxford Movement, which arose in a time of rapid industrial progress and an increasingly wealthy and materialistic society. The spiritual needs of the masses were being overlooked and there was a perception that as the influence of the state was increasing, the church was gradually losing its loyal flock. A Tractarian and High Churchman, Reverend James Irvine was unbending in his adherence to the rubrics and laws of the church.

On Christmas Eve 1839, Reverend Irvine arrived at St. Mary's parish church. He quickly

saw that there was work to be done; there was insufficient provision for the people of Leigh to attend church and a severe lack of educational opportunities for the young parishioners. His priority was to have the new church at Bedford up and running as quickly as possible; when this was done he set about raising funds to enable him to realise his own goals. The vicar also wanted to reorganise St. Mary's church, as the only seating available for the more impoverished churchgoers who couldn't rent a pew was in an awkward corner, behind a column where it was difficult to both see and hear the service. In the meantime, Irvine asked the wealthier parishioners whose pews were not filled to extend the use of their spare seats to the needy. He also expected the families with means – including the Lilfords – to dig deep and give generously to the increasingly frequent collections.

By 1843 he was beginning to rile the churchwardens with his strict obedience to the rubrics. There were disagreements over minutiae which suggest that the wardens felt that the vicar was 'semi-Romish', as he was occasionally described. Reverend Irvine expected deference to authority; it was not their place to question anything belonging to his office, just as he would

never speak against his superiors in the Church. Relations deteriorated into a state of bellicosity, with Irvine eventually accusing the churchwardens of 'failing in their duty to present for excommunication the fornicators, drunkards, profane persons and those who are of age, yet non-communicants'.

This statement gives us an insight into the hard-line attitude he had towards parishioners he viewed as having turned away from the church. Non-communicants would not be married in St. Mary's, they would have to go elsewhere. He would refuse to baptise any child whose parents could not present satisfactory sponsors – that is regular churchgoers and communicants – and then deny the right of a Christian burial to the unbaptised. This was obviously very distressing to the families involved, but the vicar was unmoved. They knew the rules and the consequences; all they had to do to be granted the rites was to attend church and bring up their children under its wing. Somewhat understandably by today's standards, Irvine was amazed that people who generally paid no mind to the church would show such concern for its rites and ceremonies at certain times in their lives. The vicar would refuse anybody who did not meet his standards and he did not discriminate in the application of his tenets; in 1856 he refused the right of burial to Mrs. Pownall, wife of the wealthy silk manufacturer James Pownall. However it was the poor who suffered most from his rigidity in this area, and many were interred with no ceremony from cradle to grave.

The previous Vicar of Leigh, Jonathon Topping, had shot himself and the one before him,

Joseph Hodgkinson, had died in an asylum. It is likely that the wealthy parishioners were unused to their parish vicar making demands on their consciences and their pockets. Also worth noting is that Reverend Irvine, apparently motivated by a deep pastoral concern, advocated the reduction of working hours in factories with the Factory Movement, which surely vexed the owners. Irvine's adversaries tried to thwart his plans for widening religious and educational provision. Attempting to deny him the finances for his ventures was proving unsuccessful, as was seeking to bring him under ecclesiastical censure. The petition to the House of Lords was integral to their dealing with him through legal channels, but at the same time they were working to build a new church at Pennington which would not be bound by his absolutist influence. Lord Lilford laid the foundation stone of Christ Church a year after he presented the petition which, it

seems, was never addressed. Incidentally the leader of the secession was Mr. James Pownall, husband of the spurned Mrs. Pownall.

Uncompromising in his principles, James Irvine's intolerance towards his antagonists crystallised their attitude and drove their opposition. His incumbency has been described as one of the most unsuccessful, but to have lasted over 30 years in the face of such hostility is surely a triumph. He clearly felt himself justified in enforcing a strict code of practice, bringing to mind Psalm 119:106, 'I have taken an oath and confirmed it, that I will follow your righteous laws.'

Sources:
'A Disciple of Discipline',
by D.C. Gray
Lunn's History of Leigh
Leigh Chronicle archives
(all sources are accessible at
Leigh Local Studies,
Leigh Library)

Leigh Parish Church.



'NO TRUCK'

at Far Moor

by Alan Roby



A group of Far Moor smithymen in 1898. Standing from left to right: Not known; 'Little Willie' Cadman; John Dickinson; William Dickinson junior; William Dickinson; not known; Samuel Cadman; two men unknown.

The dreadful circumstances of some 300 nailmakers and their families living in the villages of Far Moor, Tontine, Billinge and Upholland, was revealed in the *Wigan Examiner*, dated 15 December 1865. Headed 'The Nailmakers' Grievances', it explained that nailmakers had held a meeting at the Withington Brook¹, on 11 December 1865, and had 'resolved to form at once an association which should be called The Nailmakers' Friendly Trade Society'.

As a direct result of that meeting a deputation of nailmakers implored the editor

of the paper to urgently use its columns to 'lay before the public' information to justify their step to form a trade union. The ensuing article went on to explain that such a step was needed because, 'For the last 30 years the nailmakers have been kept under the most shameful and tyrannical despotism and bondage that is possible to conceive'.

Unfortunately for those local nailmakers their 'Grievances' reflected a far bigger picture than a local dispute about serious unfairness in their workplace. The 'shameful and tyrannical despotism and

bondage' accurately referred to the continued violation of the 1831 Truck Act. It was designed to prohibit a history of many employers paying wages by way of the 'truck shop' or 'tommy shop'. The system consisted of wages being paid in 'tokens' or 'tommy tickets' in lieu of money; these tokens could be redeemed only from their employer's shop. All the necessities of life at such shops were usually of the poorest quality and at exorbitant prices.

The situation facing those nailmakers was caused primarily because of the increasing division of labour as a result of eighteenth century industrial developments, combined latterly with human greed in spotting an opportunity to exploit those who were weak. New developments in producing rods of wrought iron that could be easily obtained, made it possible for increasing numbers of men to enter the nailmaking industry, who knew little or nothing about the craft. It was quite easy to rent a 'standing' or 'stall' in the corner of a smithy. Alternatively they could have their own smithy adjacent to their homes. The scattered locations of nailers also made it impossible for the craft guilds to control production.

Inevitably the time came when supply exceeded demand,

exacerbated by the dispute with America that culminated in the War of Independence (1775-83).

Automated production of nail rods brought about the introduction of middlemen – the nailmasters, some of whom were owners of iron rolling and slitting mills. Others became merchants who sold only finished nails. Nailmasters stocked rods in bulk and put work out to individual nailers. As a result nailers became increasingly dependent on nailmasters for regular work.

As the demand for hand-made hot wrought iron nails gradually declined, other less reputable nailmasters began to emerge known as 'foggers'. Whenever established nailmasters' warehouses became full because of a declining trade, nailmakers became desperate for work. Poverty forced them into trading with foggers. Foggers were notorious for handing out work

William Dickinson junior, in his prime c. 1920



on their own terms and that meant very likely giving out shortweight nail rods, using rigged scales when the nails were returned and for not allowing for wastage which was quite normal. However, their most insidious practice was to pay wages in either 'tokens' or 'tickets' to be exchanged for provisions at inflated prices at a shop controlled by the fogger.

The ruinous picture highlighted locally through 'The Nailmakers' Grievances', was no doubt because desperate families had been forced into the hands of the fogger. Sadly for those nailmakers and their families, release from poverty was far from imminent. The scene was already set for the demise of hot wrought iron nailmaking, not because of the exploitative actions of foggers and their 'truck shops', but because experiments to cut nails from sheets of cold wrought iron by machine had been taking place since the 1840s. By the 1890s Rylands of Warrington were producing nails from steel wire at up to 200 a minute.

But those far-reaching developments in nailmaking production did not put an end to smithy work in Far Moor. Diversification would become the watchword and guarantor for employment at the smithy fires for the next 50 years. By the early 1890s, the exploitative foggers and their truck shops had been consigned into history. Hot wrought iron nailmaking in Far Moor had by then been superseded by bolt making, large spike making and horse shoe nailmaking. These were products that could not be made easily by machine. In 1907 the 'Wide World Magazine' published an article entitled 'A Village of Smiths',

written by S. S. Swithaine. The article graphically describes the manufacturing process of nails in the smithies of Far Moor. It was written in the vein of romantic rusticity with an historical perspective. Drawing heavily on the memories of two septuagenarian nailers, telling of working life and conditions in Far Moor some 50 or 60 years earlier.

Of the many nailmaking families working in Far Moor smithies, two family names stand out: The Dickinson and Cadman families. Both families had been connected to the village since the early years of the nineteenth century. William Dickinson (1828-1909), was one of the two septuagenarian nailers whose memories of nailmaking in the 1830s and 1840s were featured in, 'A Village of Smiths'. But it was through his son, William (1870-1957), that smithywork in Far Moor further diversified and excelled. His reputation for the very best craftsmanship in wrought iron became legendary near and far. In his own words, 'After at the smithy fire for 63 years', William Dickinson retired at the age of 75 in 1945.

The smithy hammers of Far Moor finally ceased to ring out with the retirement of Samuel Cadman in 1954. He died in his 84th year in 1962, thus ending the link with the ancient craft of nailmaking which began in the Wigan area in the fourteenth century.

¹ *The 'Withington Brook Inn' was demolished to make way for the reservoirs, now Orrell Water Park.*

References and sources available from the Editor on request.

BY STEWART TURNER

AN OUTBREAK OF SMALLPOX IN WIGAN, 1798

Some time towards the end of June 1798, 2½ year old Betty Worthington, of Hallgate, Wigan, felt shivery and out of sorts. She soon deteriorated, became feverish and her hands and face started to swell. The symptoms lasted three or four days and a rash appeared on her tongue, mouth and throat. Her parents, Betty, and weaver, John Worthington, would surely have recognised that their daughter had contracted smallpox, a disease that was endemic in Britain at this time and was certainly well known in the area. The average death rate at that time from the disease was around one per month and many of the victims were children. It is almost certain that she had a severe form of the disease known as malign smallpox, which was invariably fatal to children.¹ On 2 July, Betty was buried at All Saints Church of England Parish Church.

What was curious about Betty's case was that she was the seventh child of John and Betty and four of her sisters were under nine years of age, the youngest, Fanny being a mere four weeks old. So why was Betty the only sibling to die from a disease that is transmitted primarily through prolonged face-to-face contact, usually within a distance of six feet, but also spread through direct contact with infected bodily fluids or contaminated objects such as bedding or clothing? Surely, in a family this large, and with an incubation period of twelve days before symptoms appear, it would have been virtually impossible to avoid such contact?

What the people of Wigan weren't to know was that Betty's death was just the start of one of the worst outbreaks in the area for many years.² Over the next seven months, 203 children, the vast majority under the age of five, would die from the disease. One can only assume that this was a particularly virulent strain. Given that the total deaths recorded in the parish for all ages, during this period was 338, smallpox therefore accounted for sixty percent of this total. Out of a population that in 1801 was recorded as 10,989, this was a relatively significant loss of life. The number contracting the disease would have been much higher and across the age range in the under developed

immune systems of toddlers and babies, it is no surprise that the average age of deaths from the disease was just under two.

This would have been lower if it wasn't for another anomaly, the death of Margaret, wife of weaver Peter Wood of Ince on 9 January 1799, aged twenty years. One can't help thinking here that there must have been complications that caused this death. The saddest case was probably poor Betty Hodkinson, a single mother who, on 6 December 1798, buried twins Joseph and Richard, aged four, and on 15 February 1799, she buried son, Thomas, who had died of convulsions a mere two days old.

Practically all of the children stricken were from poor or working class families. Out of the 203, only three were described as children of Linen/Fustian Manufacturers, and therefore employers and comparatively rich members of society.

Looking at Figure 1, we can see that as the summer progressed the number of deaths increased, hitting a peak in October. On 3 October there were four burials and three the following day at All Saints. Funeral processions with a small coffin must have been a familiar site in the town by this time. As the weather got colder, the death rate would slowly decline until February 1799 when the disease finally seemed to have run its course as; there were only four deaths from smallpox in the following twelve months.

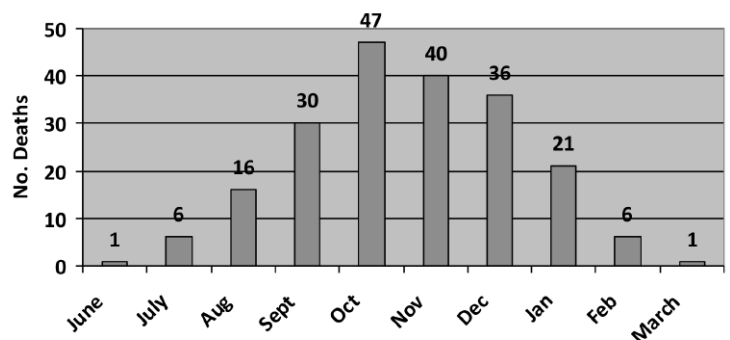


Fig 1 - Smallpox deaths All Saints Wigan 1798-99

The disease spread quite slowly at first. In the month of July, only Standishgate and Hallgate in the centre of the town were affected. Into September, the spread accelerated, with Scholes bearing the brunt of the deaths. The residents of this district were to feel the greatest share of the pain (see Figure 2). The virus didn't spread outside the confines of the town until a resident of Pemberton was struck down shortly before 10 September; two villages that had a relatively high rate after the epidemic had reached its peak were Aspull and Hindley.

Abode	No.	First Death
Hallgate	19	July 2 1798
Standishgate	19	July 3
Scholes	41	August 7
Poolstock	3	August 21
Market Street	3	August 29
Millgate	8	September 1
Pemberton	7	September 10
Wigan Lane	7	September 15
Hardibut	3	September 23
Haigh	4	October 1
Market Street	3	October 2
Frog Lane	4	October 2
Chapel Lane	10	October 3
Ince	12	October 3
Queen Street	3	October 13
Whirley	3	October 20
Wient(d)	2	October 28
Wallgate	14	October 29
Orrell	1	November 11
Princess Street	1	November 11
Aspull	13	November 17
Hindley	8	November 23
Horwich	1	December 2
Woodhouses	3	December 7
Euxton	1	December 27
King Street	1	February 3 1799
Upholland	1	February 22

Wigan wasn't unique. Other towns and villages in Lancashire suffered the same fate. The difference in Wigan was that the Rector (or curate)³, in cooperation with the local medical officer⁴, had the foresight to record the cause of death on the burial record. This did not appear to occur to any other parish in the county, not even to the other Wigan church carrying out burials at this time, St Paul's Independent on Standishgate. The significance of this omission is that the death toll from smallpox in the town was certainly more than the 203 recorded by All Saints.

The question remains, however, could these deaths have been prevented by a programme of inoculation? Inoculation to create immunity was first suggested in 1721, to the Royal Society, by Doctor Timoni, a Greek living in Constantinople who stated that, 'engraftment of the Small pox virus into humans' (inoculation) had been practiced in Turkey for at least forty years with much success. London, at this time, had been through a long epidemic which had fluctuated in severity for over

twenty years. This is unsurprising given that the capital was a port with a large population, often living in slum conditions. In 1719 there had been 3229 deaths from the disease out of a total death rate of 28,347. The novelty of inoculation became almost fashionable with the rich after Caroline the Princess of Wales (wife of the future George II) had two daughters Amelia and Caroline inoculated. The practice soon waned, however, with only 897 inoculations over the next seven years.

Sporadically, in the latter stages of the eighteenth century attempts at inoculation programs were revived in places as diverse as Liverpool (1781), Leeds (1786-7), and Gloucestershire (1797). Unfortunately, these general inoculations were carried out in such a haphazard manner as to make them valueless for a scientific as well as a practical purpose. A Doctor Haygarth, writing in 1785, commented that the common people of Chester still followed the earlier practice of 'inviting the small pox in a natural way', just as in more recent years parents held 'chicken pox or measles parties' so that their children would be immune thereafter.

Ironically, a real breakthrough in controlling the disease came in 1798 when Edward Jenner, after experimenting with swine pox as an inoculant, investigated apocryphal stories much derided by other scientists of the immunity of milk maids and herdsmen from the disease because they had contracted the relatively harmless cow pox. In 1801, he was granted £10,000 for, 'Promulgating the discovery of the Vaccine Inoculation, by which that dreadful malady of Smallpox was prevented', by the House of Commons. The fight to eradicate smallpox was beginning in earnest, at last. But not before the disease had killed an estimated 400,000 Europeans annually during the closing years of the eighteenth century, and unfortunately just too late for the poor children of Wigan.

Postscript

After vaccination campaigns throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, the WHO finally certified the eradication of smallpox in 1979.

¹ The Rector at this time was George Bridgeman (1790-1832; The Curates were John Fawel (1780-1798); Thomas Meyrick B.A. (1798-1803 and, John Gibson (1782-1807)

² Extant records of Medical Officers around this time are limited but recording the cause of death started in 1779, therefore, the only suitable candidate from those we know about is John Cropper, Surgeon and Apothecary, Wigan – 1781.

³ The Rector at this time was George Bridgeman (1790-1832; The Curates were John Fawel (1780-1798); Thomas Meyrick B.A. (1798-1803 and, John Gibson (1782-1807)

⁴ Extant records of Medical Officers around this time are limited but recording the cause of death started in 1779, therefore, the only suitable candidate from those we know about is John Cropper, Surgeon and Apothecary, Wigan – 1781.

The Leigh District Nursing Association

THE FIRST 25 YEARS

BY YVONNE ECKERSLEY

The Leigh District Nursing Association (LDNA) was an independent voluntary body sustained by charitable efforts, established in 1893. Its stated aim was to provide nursing care for the sick poor. These were people drawn from a section of society where income was insufficient to afford medical care in times of sickness. The totally destitute were cared for in this period by the Board of Guardians.

Significantly, the surviving LDNA records reveal that Leigh's 'poor' were not passive recipients of charity. Philanthropy was not the preserve of the wealthy few. They show how the ethos of self-help and compassion manifested itself as pragmatic action across Leigh's social classes.

The idea of the LDNA was first mooted by Leigh Literary Society early in 1893, and coincided with the highly visible distress resulting from the mill workers' five month lockout. This distress was compounded a few months later by an equally long dispute between mine owners and their workers. As these industries were the town's largest employers and families would often count miners and cotton workers amongst their number, the distress was catastrophic. As a response to the reality of starving miners' families, a Central Relief Fund was established in the summer of 1893 and raised £1,364. Their soup kitchens fed 5,500 people daily. The residue of this Fund was donated to the LDNA in December of that year.

The Association

Initially organisers took a cautious approach, attempting to provide funds themselves. Despite making no general appeal for funds, donations began to arrive from institutions such as the Operative Spinners Association, Cook Street Chapel and private individuals. From its outset the Association was a de facto community partnership. Its strength lay in the intricate organisation within which all classes played important roles, from people skilled in drafting the bureaucratic framework to the collector of workmen's pennies.

However, the LDNA was hierarchical. This is evident in their published Rules. These were restricted to outlining the Committees' responsibilities, with no reference to other sections of the Association workers' roles. The Rules also reflect a gender specific hierarchy. The main (male) Committee, appropriated the authority to produce the scheme and allocate roles whilst retaining positions of power for themselves.

They appointed a Ladies Committee and proscribed their duties. Ladies were to, 'take in hand the superintendence of the work and the administration of the funds' and, 'scrutinize the work of the nurse, devise and draft rules for their guidance'. They were to be provided with the funds to pay the nurse's salary, but not to be involved with the, 'question of the nurse's salary or their appointments or removals', and to, 'assist in carrying out the objects of the Association'. They were to also, 'administer and dispense such help in kind' to patients.

Giving and administering this 'help in kind' also had hierarchical facets. Whilst the Ladies Committee was to 'administer and dispense' help, they allocated the distribution process to the nurses. Public recognition of individual gifting had a status and/or wealth driven dimension. The first Annual Report was careful to acknowledge the generosity of Mr and Mrs George Shaw of Pennington Hall. Mrs Shaw's gift of one pint of beef tea per week was singled out for special praise. Where actual tea was not gifted, money was substituted and amounts recorded as, 'Special Money Gifts for Beef Tea'. Whilst there is a correlation between the status of donors and the amounts given, compilers of the list of donors were careful to ensure all contributions were equally credited.

Contributing

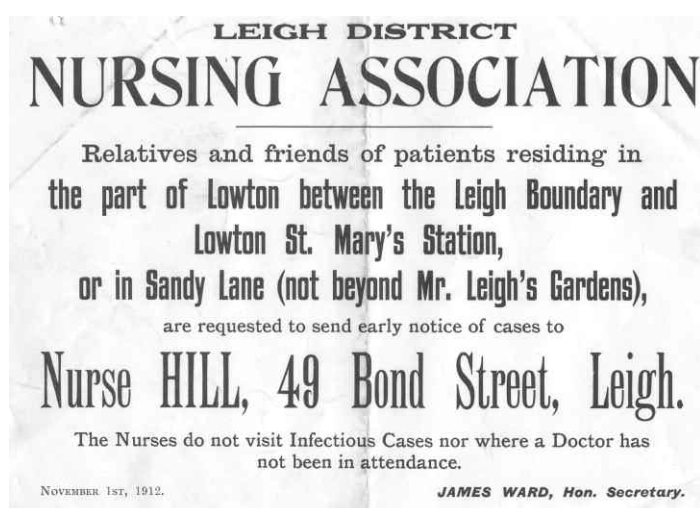
Self-help was not a new concept for Leigh's working people. Sickness and Burial Societies had long provided a safety net for those who could afford the premiums. Unfortunately, the regular payments they

required demanded constant employment with a level of disposable income many of the working people of Leigh simply did not have. For them, the opportunity to give as much, or little, and whenever their economic situation allowed, was their only option. It was on this premise that the organising committee developed their funding strategy.

Annual balance sheets confirm its success. Collections among colliers and textile workers – the main beneficiaries – were the highest. Details can be found in the Annual Reports listed under, ‘Donations by Workpeople in the Employ of the Under-mentioned Firms’. Likewise, another flexible way of giving was to subscribe or donate when one could afford it. The majority of ‘Subscriptions and Donations’ to the Association were of 10 shillings and less, amounts under one shilling (the ‘small sums’), were not individually acknowledged. Casual giving was encouraged. Spectators and participants contributed to fund raising events, concerts, football and bowling matches. Some churches donated collections. People gave one-off donations in response to special appeals. Some Trade Unions subscribed and the Association was the beneficiary of wills. The Committee invested these legacies and used the interest accordingly.

Nurses

After short periods of time in Wilkinson Street, then Ellesmere Street, the District Nurses settled at 49 Bond Street. There, referrals were made and patients were allocated treatment under the direction of a doctor. Nurses did not attend infectious cases. Furnishings for the Nurses Home



Notice from Leigh District Nursing Association.



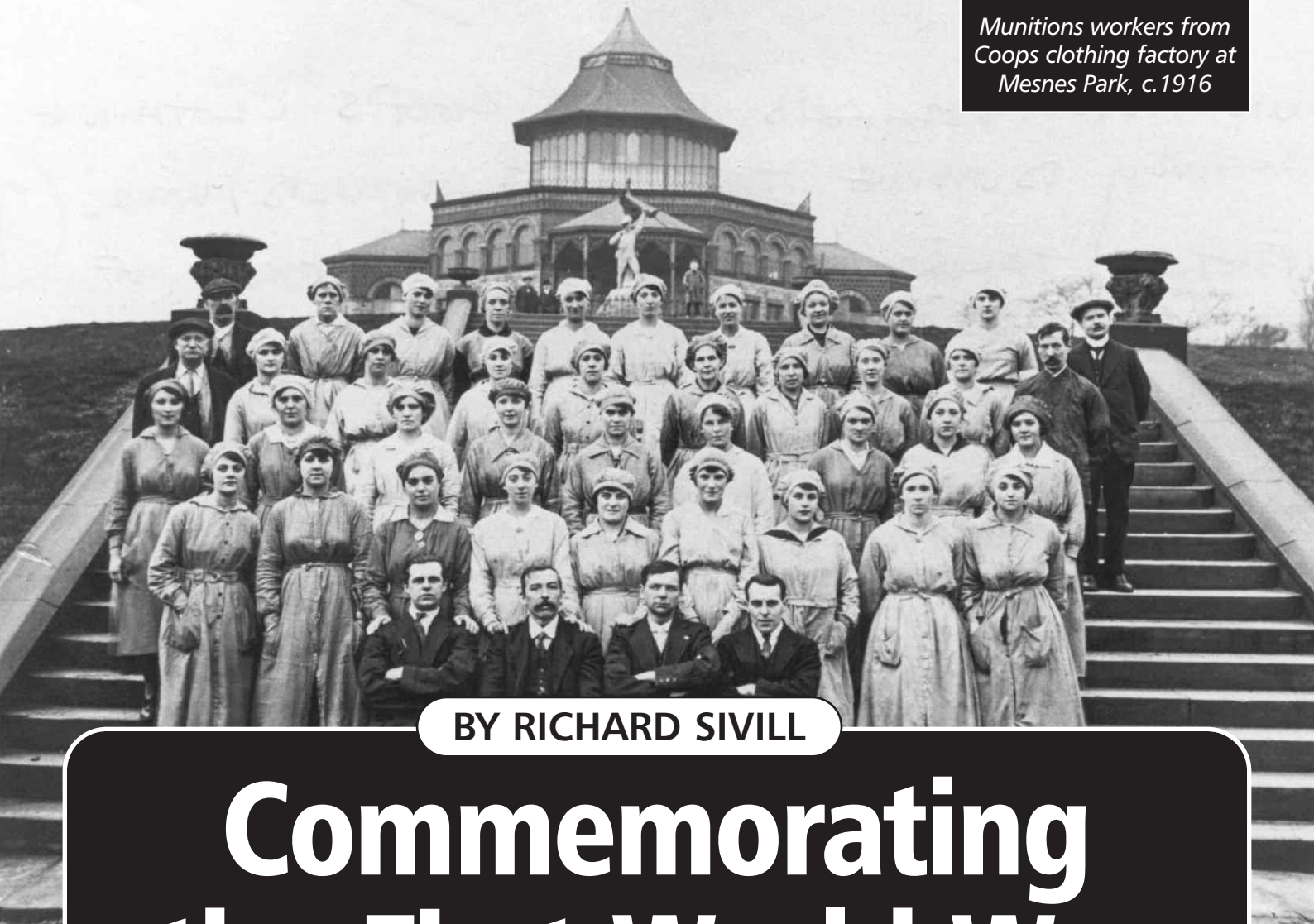
Bond Street, Leigh.

were by donation. In the list of donations, alongside the more expensive items, a Mrs Turner donated a lowly riddle. The nurses were looked after by a paid housekeeper. They wore uniforms and materials for these came from familiar companies such as Bon Marche, whilst they travelled to cases by cab and trams (with discounted fares). The first reference to nurses' bicycles was in 1921. In 1893 the nurses' district lay within one mile from Leigh Market Place; it extended to Westleigh and Lowton St Mary's in 1912. Thanks to the interest from Miss Winckle's legacy, nurses' homes were established at 17 Fairhurst Street and 269 Wigan Road. The nurses' caseload increased, from 90 patients in its first year to 265 at the end of the first 25 year period.

The Association was not insular. Local and Governmental initiatives impacted on them. After Leigh Infirmary opened, the Association's Cash Book records payments for nurses assisting during emergencies and operations. Money was received for nurses' help during School Medical Inspections. Initially not listed, obstetric cases soon took a prime position in the Table of Diseases, presumably as a response to nationwide concerns for the health and well-being of mothers and babies and during the First World War, soldiers and munitions workers were nursed.

Beginning in the nineteenth century, the Association's work continued throughout the twentieth and finally ceased to operate early in the twenty-first. Amazingly, at its close there was still money in its coffers.

*Munitions workers from
Coops clothing factory at
Mesnes Park, c.1916*



BY RICHARD SIVILL

Commemorating the First World War

It was a war to end all wars. It began at 11.15 on 28 June 1914 in Sarajevo; Britain declared war on 4 August. It would end officially almost five years later. Unofficially, it has never ended and many scars we carry today were made during the conflict.

More than nine million soldiers, sailors and airmen were killed. A further five million civilians are estimated to have perished under occupation, bombardment, hunger and disease. The mass murder of Armenians in 1915 would lead to the call and eventual establishment of the state of Israel. The flight of the Serbs from Serbia at the end of 1915 was another cruel episode in which civilians perished in large

numbers; so too was the Allied naval blockade of Germany, as a result of which more than three-quarters of a million German civilians died.

Two different wars were fought between 1914 and 1918. The first was a war of soldiers, sailors and airmen, of merchant seamen and civilian populations under occupation, where individual suffering and distress were on a massive scale, particularly in the front-line trenches. The second was a war of War Cabinets and sovereigns, of propagandists and idealists, replete with political and territorial ambitions and ideals, determining the future of Empires, nations and people as sharply as on the battlefield. There

were times in 1917 and 1918, when the war of armies and the war of ideologies combined leading to revolution and capitulation, and to the emergence of new national and political forces. The war changed the map and destiny of the world.

All wars end up being reduced to statistics, strategies, debates about their origins and results. These debates about war are important, but not more important than the human story of those who were involved in them.

The purpose of this article is to encourage all members and organisations to commemorate those from the Wigan Borough who were involved.

Here are some thoughts, suggestions and areas of exploration.

War Memorials

Information about memorials can be obtained from various sources; a useful web site being www.ukniwm.org.uk Are your relatives listed and what is their story?

Wigan in Bloom has already encouraged the community to enhance their appearances, please support this initiative.

Honour Boards

A considerable number of companies, shops and schools had these boards and they listed all those who took part in the war. Some are still in their original positions, some are now in churches and libraries, and some have been lost. All have their own stories; maybe you have one in your possession or an old photograph?

A good example is the Fletcher-Burrows mining company in Atherton where 918 went on active service, about a third of the workforce; 116 lost their lives, two were awarded the Military Cross, three the Distinguished Conduct Medal (DCM) and Military Medal (MM), three DCM, three MM and Bar, 13 MM, three Croix de Guerre and one Czar of Russia Silver Medal.

Five Victoria Crosses were awarded across the Borough and their stories have appeared in past editions of Past Forward but what about the other awards like those listed above?

The 'Wigan' Regiments

The stories of the 5th Manchester Regiments have appeared in Past Forward but what about the others associated with the area?

Industry

The decades before the war were profitable years for the local industries of mining, cotton and engineering. During the war they had to adapt to shortages of material, skilled labour and many engineering workshops took on the task of making munitions. In many situations women had to take over the trades previously held by men. Have you a story about these factory lasses?

Medical

Nurses: very little is known about the women who volunteered for nursing duties. Do you have a story from a family member to tell?

The influenza pandemic started in France in 1917 and killed more American troops than the conflict

itself. It was estimated that more than 50 million people throughout the world died of the disease and 250,000 in the United Kingdom. Were your family affected? How did the local facilities and families cope with those returning sick, blind and disabled?

In conclusion, I believe it is important we record these stories about this period for the present and future generations. If you need any help, guidance or advice then contact the Museum of Wigan Life or Archives & Local Studies at heritage@wlct.org or the team of volunteers who run the Wigan Borough Environment and Heritage Network.

Richard can be contacted at: 01942 884836 or on r.sivill8391@btinternet.com

WE WILL REMEMBER THEM

As part of the First World War project in Lowton, Ann Glacki provides us with the story of another local soldier who died in the conflict.

Harry Miller was born around 1890 and lived at 316 Newton Road in Lowton with his parents and two brothers and two sisters. He enlisted on 8 September 1914 when he was just 16 and became a private in the Machine Gun Corps.

He was killed in action on 3 November 1916. The gun team were standing, expecting an attack when, during a heavy bombardment, a shell exploded in the trench killing Private Miller, the sergeant and another soldier. Sergeant Meakins said that Harry was a 'cheerful fellow, always having a smile and a word for anyone'. In a letter to the family, Lieutenant Potts said that the, 'brave lad was buried practically where he fell', and added that, 'Miller was a good lad and did his duty well at all times. He is much missed by the officers and men of the Company'. He is buried at Longueval in Picardy.

If you have any further information on Harry Miller, please get in touch with the Editor.



The Chowbent Line

by Bob Evans

Historical records sometimes include intriguing references to events which at the time generated much interest and debate but of which little if anything now seems to be known. Such is the case concerning a sequence of references in the minutes of the Atherton Local Board involving applications made in the latter half of the nineteenth century for a rail link to Atherton.



*Extract from the
Leigh Chronicle.*

The town already had freight and passenger services through the London and North Western Railway (LNWR) on the 1828 Bolton-Kenyon line and on the 1864 Manchester-Wigan line.

In November 1883, while the members of the Atherton Local

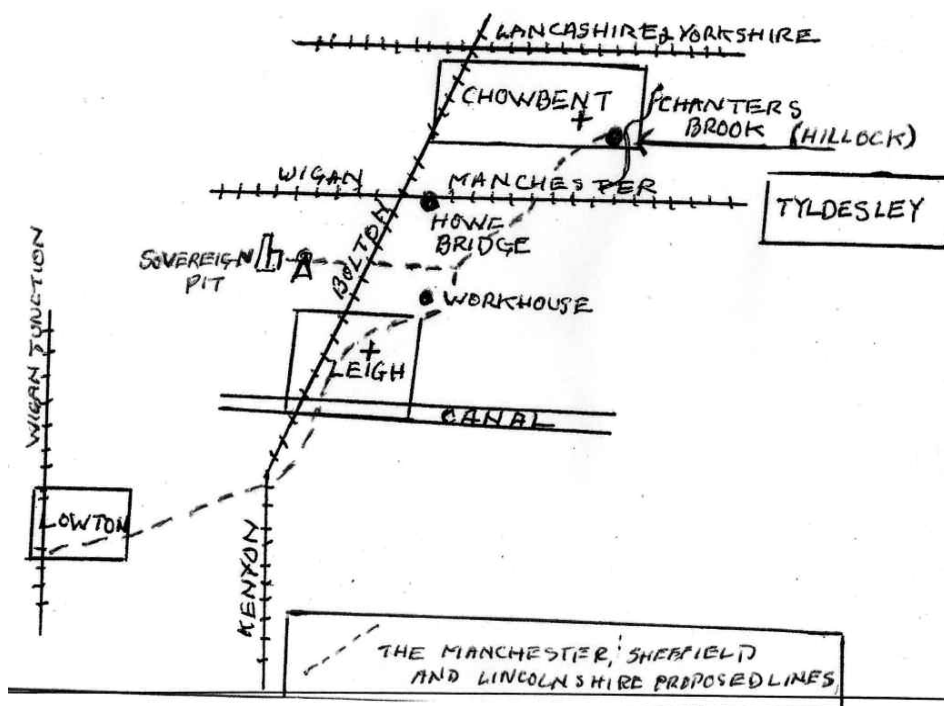
Board were still in discussions with the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway (LYR) about that company's plan for another railway from Manchester to Wigan, they were informed that the Manchester, Sheffield and Lincolnshire Railway (MSLR), was also seeking Parliamentary approval for a line through Leigh into their township. As there are no detailed plans in the archives, one must rely on incomplete extracts from the Parliamentary applications, extracts from the Atherton Local Board minute books and reports in the Leigh press to provide an indication of the Company's intentions and the local reaction.

According to the Board minutes the line entered Atherton from Westleigh across Leigh Road at Houghton Street, near Kirkhall Lane, and went north-east across Orchard Lane to the east of the workhouse before again crossing the highway near the mineral line from Howe Bridge Colliery to the canal in Bedford. Both Leigh newspapers describe the route of the line from Lowton on what – until taken over by the MSLR – had been known as the Wigan Junction line. It crossed the Bolton-Kenyon railway, the Bridgewater Canal, the new Railway Road and Church Fields near to Kirkhall Lane before passing into Atherton. It then re-crossed the Bolton-Kenyon line to terminate at the Sovereign Pits in Westleigh.

Local reactions were mixed. The Board referred the plans to a sub-committee. One concern was that

the span of the railway bridges was less than the existing width of the road; they insisted that they, 'would require the roadways to be left the full width'. They noted that an additional bridge would have to be provided over Orchard Lane. The Chronicle was rather negative about any improvements that the railway would bring, 'There are lines everywhere – except in the direction most needed'. The Journal was much more supportive, claiming that it would increase competition with the LNWR, exploit local coal resources and offer a wider range of passenger services, 'it is to be hoped that Local Boards, colliery proprietors, mill owners and all employers of labour will give the new company all the assistance in their power.'

The available records do not appear to provide any evidence of work undertaken to implement this plan. In May 1884, the plan was withdrawn with the intention of submitting an alternative. The minutes in November provide ample evidence that this was to include a line into Chowbent terminating just to the south of the township. A letter sent from the Board to the Company referred specifically to the, 'proposed Westleigh and Atherton branch' and included a request to provide a bridge in an unspecified location and that there should be 'no interference with the proposed levels to be made in case the Board should hereafter decide to make the high-level road over Chanters hollow'.



The proposed line to Chowbent.

This is a clear indication that the planned termination of the railway was to be near the narrow valley of the Chanters Brook. The Board's concern was that this should not obstruct any future plans to provide a level road to Tyldesley. At a meeting in March 1885, ratepayers voted to oppose any parts of the bill which, 'the local Board may deem necessary for the protection of the interests of their District and of the Ratepayers', but agreed that negotiations could be undertaken to obtain changes which the Board 'in their discretion may think fit or be advised are necessary for the requirements of the said district'.

One of these requirements concerned the transfer of freight from the railway goods depots, thought to be too far from businesses in the centre of Chowbent. One minute of the discussions held with the LYR Company reads, 'The Clerk suggested that an effort might be made to induce the LYR Company to fix their intended Goods Station nearer the town', suggesting a site nearer the Gas Works. In 1877, when the LNWR was upgrading the line across Bag Lane, the plea for a line to take coal directly to the gas works was similarly rejected. This

may be why during the course of negotiations in 1885 one of the Board's principle requirements was that the MSLR Company should, 'provide a Station in some position so that it be within a radius of half-a-mile from the Obelisk in the Market Place, Atherton'. At the end of March the Journal reported that the Board believed that after further negotiations, 'it had got all the points it wished to obtain', including the desired location for a station which would be on the Hillock, the meeting point of the old road to Tyldesley and Millers Lane.

In May, the Board were informed that further modifications were to be submitted to Parliament but a

December 1887 minute records they appeared satisfied that any changes retained the Company's agreement, 'for the construction of a branch railway terminating at the Hillock'. Each year until 1892, the Board's December minutes refer to the 1885 and 1888 Acts giving 'assent' to the Company's application for 'an extension to the time allowed for the construction of the railway in Atherton'. However, no railway or station came to the Hillock and the local records do not appear to offer any explanation for the company's failure to carry through its plans. It may be that after the Company had renamed itself the Great Central Railway it decided that a more profitable return on its money was to extend lines to London rather than investing in areas already well served by other companies

Sources and Acknowledgements

The account is based on extracts from the minute books of the Atherton Local Board and from Parliamentary applications indexed as WAS 51 and 54 both in the Wigan Archives, together with reports printed in the Leigh Chronicle and Journal available in Leigh Library. Thanks are due to Archives and Local Studies staff for identifying sources and making the records available. The Archives would appreciate information about any other sources regarding both the details of the Company's plans and why they were abandoned.



Tyldesley Road.

Your Archives & Local Studies

Archives & Local Studies would like to welcome a new member of staff to the team based in Leigh, Stephen Knott, who started work in September as a Heritage Assistant. Stephen has previously worked in the charity sector at the British Red Cross and in several local archives, including as a volunteer at John Rylands in Manchester and at Wigan Archives. He has a keen interest in local history and particular expertise in military and railway history research.

The Archives & Local Studies webpages have recently been reorganised and we hope improved. We are still working on the content of the pages but would welcome any feedback on what you would like to see on the site and we will be adding new content – indexes, transcriptions, catalogues – over the coming months.

You can view the site at:
<http://www.wlct.org/wigan/museums-archives/wals/>

Picture the Past Competition

The winners of the 'Picture the Past' competition are Lois Hardman for her picture of the Queen visiting Leigh in 1977, and Finnley Morris for the collage of John Dwight; first of the English potters, producers of stoneware who lived in Wigan during the seventeenth century. Congratulations to both Lois and Finnley.

Thanks also to artist Emma Brown and Stephen Ruffley, Leigh Neighbours Project, for their collaboration and partnership for the 'Make a Celebration of Leigh' workshops. Residents from the Leigh Neighbours Project joined Leigh Local Studies and Emma in researching and creating a collage of Leigh's local history.

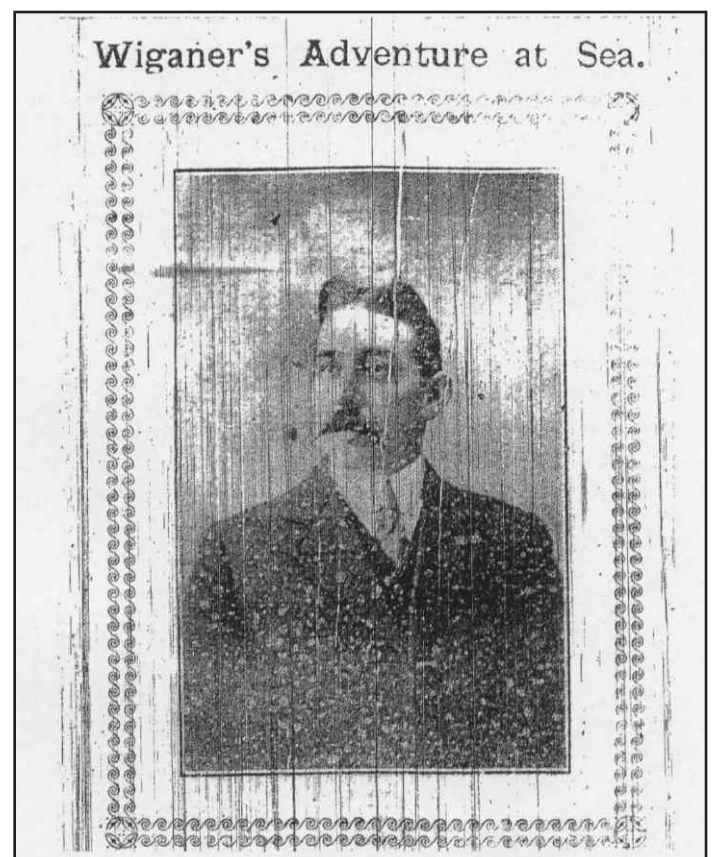
GM 1914 The First World War in Greater Manchester

Ann Wilson is one of the volunteers on the GM1914 project at Wigan Local Studies. She has been looking at local newspaper reports published during the First World War. Her blog involves a man from Poolstock, Wigan, and a dramatic event at sea within days of war being declared. To find out more read on below or go to:
<http://gm1914.wordpress.com/2013/10/24/headline-news-from-the-wigan-observer/>

William Johnston

At the start of the war information about the war was not headline news. Most of the early newspaper accounts are given over to one page or less. However, advertisers made full use of patriotism to both sell goods and enlist volunteers into the forces.

A Wigan man, William Johnston of Poolstock Lane, experienced one of the first skirmishes of



the war first hand. His account of the sinking of the S.S. Hyades, was printed in the Wigan Observer on 26 September 1914.

He was First Officer on board the ship which was taking a cargo of maize from Buenos Aires to Rotterdam. On 8 August 1914 the Hyades received a signal from H.M.S. Glasgow telling them war had broken out between Great Britain and Germany.

Days later they were ordered to head for Las Palmas. On 15 August the Hyades was intercepted by the German cruiser Dresden. The captain, not convinced that the cargo was not bound for Britain, ordered that the Hyades was to be sunk. The crew and their belongings were transferred to the Dresden and the Hyades was then scuttled. On board the Dresden the crew were shown true hospitality and were treated better than their captors.

On 20 August the Dresden arrived in Rio de Janeiro and the crew of the Hyades were put aboard the R.M.S. Oriana bound for home. The crew had nothing but praise for the treatment they received from their German captors who, they said, were truly friendly.

Recent Acquisitions

New listings continue thanks to the work of Archives & Local Studies staff and volunteers. Collections accepted or listed in the last few months include:

Archives

- Plan of the Leyland Free Library and Museum, Hindley (Acc. 2013/51)
- Hindley & Abram Grammar School/Park High School, honours book (Acc. 2013/53)
- Wigan Town Centre Redevelopment, photographic collection, 2002-2005 (Acc. 2013/55)

- John Taylor Collection, Leigh Rugby League Football Club papers (Acc. 2013/56)
- Joyce Dennis Collection, local records and photographs (Acc. 2013/71)
- Daniel Hartley Papers, Wigan Rugby League Player (Acc. 2013/79)

Leigh Local Studies

Leigh Local Studies has received several donations in the past few months including:

- 'A Journey into France' by Andrew Bevington
- 'There's no sun: an insight into Atherleigh'
- Leigh Jubilee programme
- Leigh Harriers programme
- NCB Safety Manual North-Western Division (Wigan)
- Classic cinema ephemera.

Wigan Local Studies

- David W. Atherton, St Joseph's College, Upholland, 'One of the glories of Catholicism in England'. Its rise and fall. Shelf Mark 282.427
- In Memoriam, Upholland Grammar School, 1914-1919 & 1939-1945. A record of pupils whose names were inscribed on the war memorials displayed within the school. Self Mark 940.467
- Private Lord Crawford's Great War Diaries, from Medical Orderly to Cabinet Minister, edited by Christopher Arnander. Shelf Mark 940.547541
- Lancashire Parish Register Society Volume 175. Registers of All Saints, Wigan 1711-1740
- The Chetham Society 3rd Series Volume 51. The Diary of Edward Watkin, by David Hodgkins. Describes his life in Manchester in the 1840s when he was campaigning for the Anti Corn Law League.
- Transcripts of parish registers:
Newtown St. Edward's R.C.
Baptisms, March 1949 - May 2012
Burials, July 1969 - June 2012
Marriages, July 1969 - June 2013

Pemberton St. Cuthbert's R.C.
Baptisms, November 1948 - September 2012

Book Review

By Rita Musa, Wigan Local Studies

Private Lord Crawford's Great War Diaries: From Medical Orderly to Cabinet Minister

Edited by Christopher Arnander

ISBN 1781593671

Class No. 940.547541

This extraordinary diary is written by the 27th Earl of Crawford and Balcarres, formerly MP for Chorley for 18 years, who inherited the title on his father's death in 1913. One of his homes was Haigh Hall, Wigan.

With support from his wife, he voluntarily joined the Royal Army Medical Corp in 1915, serving as a medical orderly on the Western Front for fourteen months. This book covers that period and includes letters home and accounts of life on the front.

I was particularly interested to discover what motivated him to enlist, being over age and with his privileged status in civilian life. It appears to have come from a sense of patriotic duty and his commitment to public service, something he demonstrated after university by spending nine months doing social work at Oxford House, Bethnal Green, for those less fortunate than himself.

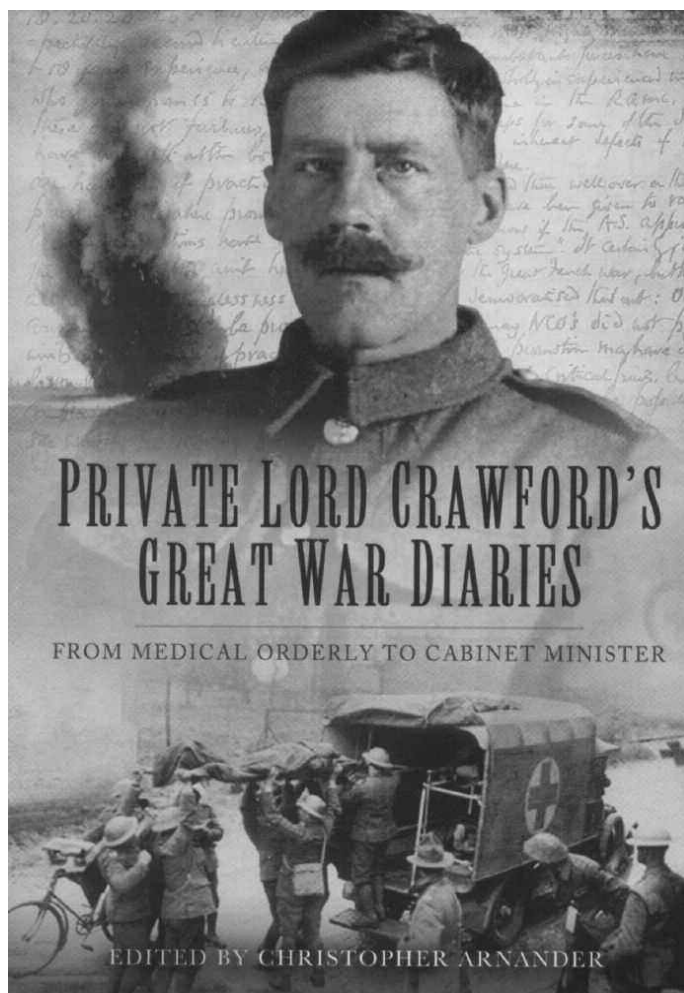
The disaster at Neuve Chapelle, where British forces suffered 13,000 casualties, depressed him greatly. His personality comes through strongly throughout the diary and he clearly prided himself as being someone able to deal equally with people from all walks of life.

To set the context, a brief history of Crawford's family background is given. The editor includes explanatory notes for the

general reader and non-historian. There are many photographs and illustrations; one of the most interesting is the Mobile X-Ray Unit along with a photograph of a radiographer wearing full protective clothing; the accompanying diary entry for Thursday 16 September 1915 records Lord Crawford's amusing experience when a patient needed his foot x-raying.

News from home includes correspondence between Crawford and his wife telling him about daily life and events including the birth of his eighth child.

This diary will appeal to a wide readership including local historians, as Crawford's main source of income was from Wigan Coal & Iron Company – the largest employer in Wigan – and with the 2014 centenary of the start of First World War nearly upon us, there could not have been a more suitable time to release this important historical volume.



New Museum Stores

This year WLCT successfully completed the mammoth task of relocating the entire Museum collection from five separate storage facilities into one new museum store.

For several years the Trust had been looking to find a new storage location for the collection in order to vacate the no longer suitable sites. The move has been a long time coming and involved a great deal of planning, searching, organising and eventually moving the 30,000 objects. The success of the move means that access to Wigan Borough's fantastic museum collection is now immeasurably improved and the collection will be used and out on public display much more as a result.

Previous stores were spread out across the borough and often very cramped, with no office facilities and ever-deteriorating environmental conditions. This made using the collection to its full potential very difficult and cataloguing and documentation work became very complicated.

At Tyldesley Picture Store, as a result of leaks, dry rot and a collapsed roof in one of the



View of new store from above the mezzanine section.

rooms, all objects had to be fitted into one room instead of two. This resulted in objects having to be kept off the floor by any means possible. The store became over crowded and very difficult to maintain.

The new store has space for all of the collection to be safely stored, 24 hour security, an office and workshop space, purpose built brand new art racking, space for the large industrial collections and is environmentally monitored. There is also room to expand the collection in the future.

There is still a lot of work to be done on the collection, particularly cleaning and documentation improvements, but this is now possible because of the new facility. We are already able to locate and access objects that have not been available for several years. The improvement is huge!

**Carrie Gough, Collections Officer,
Museum of Wigan Life**



Artefacts from the Atherton coalfields

by Jim Hunt



A little story from the Atherton coal fields. I have been metal detecting for a few years near to the old Howe Bridge and Lovers Lane coal pits. The majority of finds I have recovered were miners' badges, which could have been worn as medallions.

I have detected in Yorkshire and have found silver Roman coins from 107 BC; I have also found part of a medieval coin hoard in Scotland. However, being Atherton born and bred, my best ever finds were the following items, which are unique to Atherton and Tyldesley.

I found a couple of the badges shown opposite, the first of which is a badge of the Lancashire and Cheshire Miners' Federation, Atherton Branch, 1900.



This medallion (below) made from pewter was given out to the miners in 1897. It commemorates Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee and has a great picture of the Parish Church in Atherton, St. John the Baptist.



The next medallion commemorates the opening of Tyldesley Technical School in September 1904. It shows a picture of the school, which still stands today. It also has the coat of arms of Tyldesley and around the edge is written, 'Tyldesley With Shackerley Urban District Council'. This school was very important for the training of fire rescuers for the local coal mines. The training area is still today in fine order underneath the school.





A late 19th early 20th century lead-alloy 'penny toy' whistle in the form of a steam locomotive.



A die-formed three-piece South Lancashire Tramways Company uniform button with separate fitted wire shank, circular, hollow, convex front, concave back, crimped joint, SLT monogram, around which the inscription, SOUTH LANCASHIRE TRAMWAYS COMPANY.

The South Lancashire Tramways Company began operation in 1900, but the original company failed five years later. In 1929 the service was re-named South Lancashire Transport; in 1933 all tram services ended and the trams were replaced by trolleybuses. Atherton became the centre of the system and the tram sheds, power station and offices were built on the north side of Leigh Road at Howe Bridge.

A refreshment token, with a value of one penny, that was issued by the Manchester Coffee Tavern Company. Tokens of this type originated in the Temperance Movement of the late nineteenth century. The movement launched a scheme to encourage working men to take non-alcoholic refreshment as an alternative to drinking in pubs.



I found the following cap badge at the site where the Battle of Howe Bridge took place in 1881, I also found a few musket balls and a drummer boy's badge at the same location. It is a military badge, of the 40th (2nd Somersetshire) Regiment of Foot. It features a laurel-wreath surmounted by the Sphinx superscribed EGYPT. Within this a strap inscribed SECOND SOMERSETSHIRE. In the centre the numerals 40. In 1881, the regiment amalgamated with the 82nd Regiment of Foot (Prince of Wales's Volunteers) to form The Prince of Wales's Volunteers (South Lancashire). This item was found folded up and discarded and in the location where the Battle took place. This particular badge was used between 1874 and 1881 and it is highly likely that the 40th regiment was at the battle. A full description of the Battle can be found in Past Forward Issue 38.



Editor's Note

The author of the article would like to stress that he always obtains permission before using a metal detector on any land and is always looking for new land to detect on. Please contact Jim Hunt by email at: bananabeak10@yahoo.co.uk

The Walking Horse and Clarke's Railway

By Derek Winstanley

2013 is an important milestone in railway history. It is the bicentennial of the start of operation of the third commercially successful steam locomotive in the world. Richard Daglish and Donald Anderson have documented that Robert Daglish built a steam locomotive for John Clarke at Haigh Foundry; Clarke was a Liverpool banker and owner of Winstanley and Orrell colliery and railway. That locomotive was known as 'The Yorkshire Horse', or 'The Walking Horse'. Although it is most commonly known as 'The Yorkshire Horse', I prefer to call it 'The Walking Horse', for reasons that I will explain.

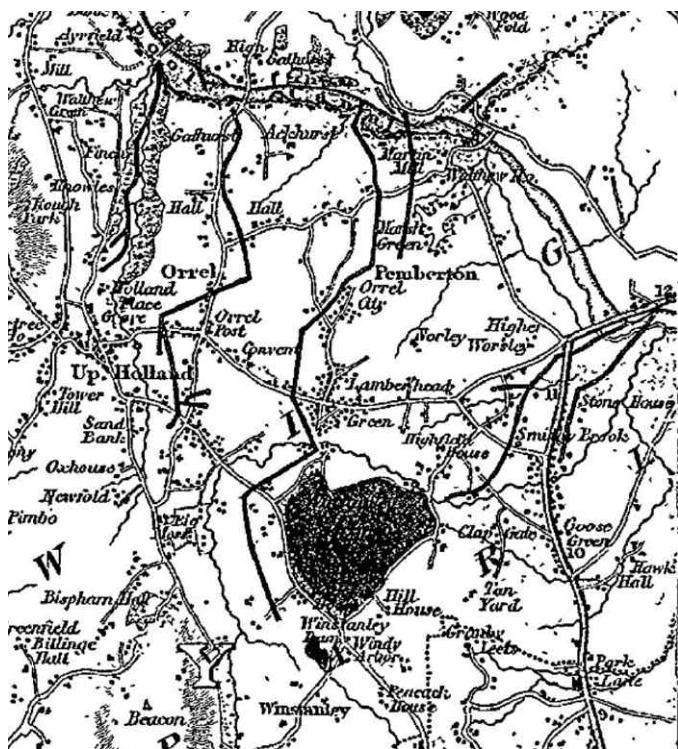
Richard Daglish has provided details of the steam locomotive, wagons and track. Anderson documents the development of the steam locomotive and the railroad in the context of the development of the Winstanley and Orrell Coalfield. Robert Daglish himself documented that 'The Walking Horse' was the first commercially successful

steam locomotive in Lancashire, but nobody has documented the role of 'The Walking Horse' and Clarke's railway in the railway history of the world. This is what I will attempt to do.

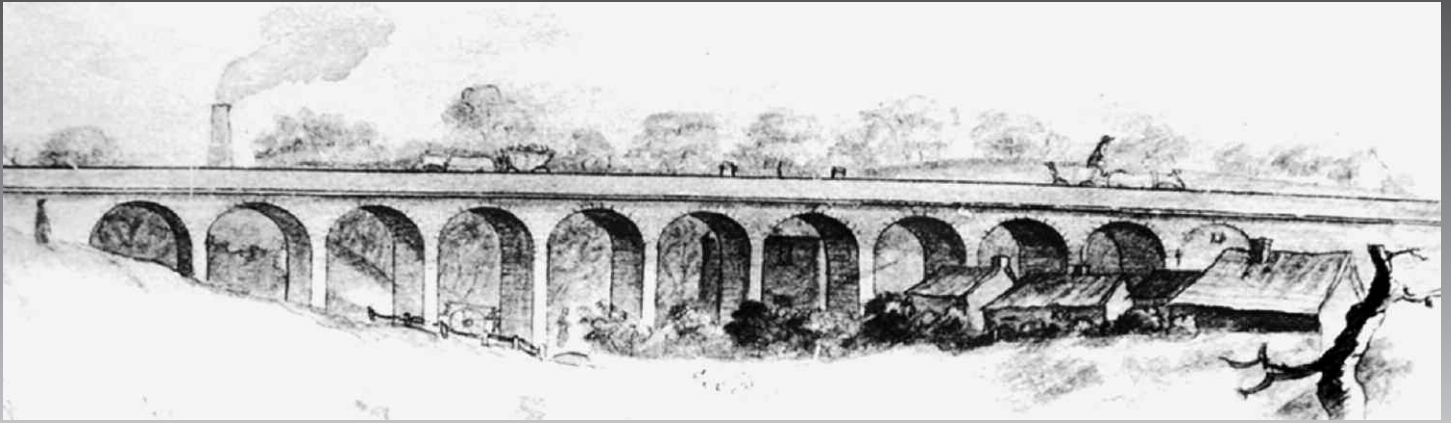
In the Wigan area, wooden wagonways transported loaded wagons of coal from the Orrell coalfield in controlled descents, first to the Douglas Navigation in the 1770s and starting in 1784, to the Leeds and Liverpool Canal. Haulage of loaded wagons uphill was to be avoided.

In 1792, John Clarke and his Liverpool partners leased land from Squire William Bankes of Winstanley Hall and started to mine coal in Winstanley, to the south of Smithy Brook. The only pathway to transport coal from Winstanley down to the canal at Crooke was to cross Smithy Brook, go uphill to Oldham's Fold on Orrell Road, and then descend through Kitt Green to Crooke. Clarke built a stone viaduct across Smithy Brook, known as The Arches and built a horse-powered wagonway from Winstanley to connect with Berry's earlier wagonway near Oldham's Fold, which he had already purchased. It took about 14 horses to pull loaded wagons of coal from the Arches Viaduct up to Oldham's Fold, a distance of about 600 yards. Due to the Napoleonic Wars, the cost of horses and horse feed was high.

In about 1804, Lord Balcarres of Haigh hired Robert Daglish as engineer at Haigh Foundry and Daglish built stationary steam engines to pump water from increasingly deep coal mines. Steam locomotives began to be developed in the early 1800s and in 1812 two steam locomotives were operated successfully – on the level – at Middleton Colliery in Leeds. About 1810, Clarke planned to expand his coal mining operations in Winstanley and needed to extend his railway to near Longshaw. At this time, he hired Robert Daglish as his colliery manager and Daglish built 'The Walking Horse', installed fish-belly rails on stone sleepers, and fitted a toothed driving wheel on the left side of the engine to engage with cogged rails. The age of steam locomotives had arrived in Winstanley and Orrell.



1829 Hennet map. Clarke's railway is the long line from Winstanley to the canal at Crooke



Etching of The Arches Viaduct across Smithy Brook Valley c. 1790

Unfortunately, Anderson and others erroneously describe the locomotive as a Blenkinsop locomotive. John Blenkinsop was the manager at Middleton Colliery and he patented the rack system that provided traction for the Middleton locomotives and Daglish's locomotive. Blenkinsop did not, however, design or build the Middleton locomotives; these were built by the Leeds engine-makers and millwrights, Fenton, Murray & Wood. The main reason for calling Daglish's locomotive 'The Yorkshire Horse' appears to have been the erroneous assumption by many that Daglish simply copied the Middleton locomotives. This assertion also seems to have led many chroniclers to ignore Daglish's locomotive and perhaps explains why 'The Walking Horse' and the Winstanley-Orrell railway have not been accorded their due places in railway history.

From a careful comparison of the Middleton and Daglish locomotives and railways, I have determined the position of 'The Walking Horse' and Clarke's railway in early railway history.

The Arches Viaduct was the first masonry railway viaduct (1790s) in the world and the first viaduct in the world to carry a steam locomotive (January 1813). Risca Viaduct opened in 1805 and Laigh Milton Viaduct in 1811. The previous earliest date I can find for a steam locomotive possibly crossing a viaduct is 1816-17, when 'The Duke' was set on the rails of the Kilmarnock and Troon Railway, part of which crossed the masonry Laigh Milton Viaduct.

'The Walking Horse' was the:

- **first steam locomotive to be built and operate in Lancashire;**
- **first steam locomotive in the world to cross a viaduct;**
- **first steam locomotive in the world to haul loaded wagons up a four percent incline;**

- **first commercially successful steam locomotive in the world to have a wrought-iron boiler and chimney and a feed pump;**
- **third commercially successful steam locomotive in the world and it was two tons heavier and had more horsepower (8hp) than the first two Middleton Colliery locomotives, and the tracks had stronger rails (4ft, fish belly), pedestals and sleepers with chairs fixed by through bolts.**

Haigh Foundry was also the first foundry and Robert Daglish the first engineer and colliery manager in the world to construct a steam locomotive that operated successfully for four decades. Haigh was the second foundry in the world to construct a commercially successful steam locomotive.

'The Walking Horse' and Clarke's railway demonstrated significant improvements in power, reliability, stability and stamina over the Middleton locomotives and railway. These and subsequent improvements in early railways led to the development of mainline railways by 1830. Robert Daglish and John Clarke deserve due recognition for their pioneering developments.

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By Bill Melling



Wigan's Food Chain

A link with the past

Children looking over fields at Haigh Windmill, c.1930.

Recently, a national newspaper ran an article listing 50 things that classified a person as an 'Oldie', one of which was a tendency to say to the younger generation, 'that would never have happened when I was your age'.

This brought to mind an incident a few weeks earlier when I had used these exact words about a stick of celery I had bought from a local greengrocer. It was beautifully trimmed, washed and sealed in a plastic package labeled 'Produce of California', a fact that led me to pronounce to one and all 'in my day celery came wrapped in newspaper, with its leaves intact and with a sprinkling of mossy soil still clinging to it'.

This incident set me thinking of how things had changed since the days of my childhood in the late 1930s. Then there were dozens of small farms, smallholdings and market gardens within a ten mile radius of Wigan which provided much of the town's food.

We lived near one such farm, situated a mile and a half from the town centre and farmed by two

brothers who rented it from the Haigh estate. It was a source of endless fascination to us children, first as onlookers but later as helpers with a variety of jobs such as potato picking, haymaking and helping to feed the animals. The main source of income for the farm was a herd of twenty-five cows. These were milked twice a day and the milk sold locally each morning from a horse drawn milk-float. The milk was unpasteurised and there were no bottles – you left a jug with a saucer on top, on your doorstep and milk was measured into it from large churns on the cart. Any surplus was sold to Grimshaw & Culshaw's dairy at the end of Mesnes Street.

Other animals on the farm were a bull, pigs and a flock of hens and ducks which ranged freely near the farmhouse. Motive power was provided by three Shire horses, Dinah, Daisy and Boxer, along with Billy, a slightly smaller and faster horse for the milk float. The first tractor did not appear until 1942. Last but not least were Bruce and Floss, a pair of border collies, whose job it was to guard the farmyard and during the summer months to herd the cows up to the pasture.

During the winter the cows were kept indoors, tethered in the shippens and bedded down with straw. Once a day they were allowed out into the farmyard whilst their quarters were mucked out, a process which by the end of the winter had produced a large heap of steaming, stinking manure in the midden at the centre of the yard. In the spring this was forked into carts and taken to the fields where it was spread as fertilizer for crops.

As well as the paddock adjacent to the farmhouse, there were nine other fields of about eighty-five acres. One of these was kept as a permanent pasture for summer grazing by the cows whilst the remainder were cultivated in rotation, for oats, hay and turnips to feed the animals, and potatoes and wheat to sell on. All the produce from the farm, and all the other farms and agricultural holdings around Wigan, were sold locally, either to wholesalers, such as Conroy Brothers or at the local weekly market.

Each Friday dozens of producers converged on the market square with every sort of vegetable and dairy products, which they sold to the general public, small shopkeepers or wholesalers. This weekly market was extremely popular because it allowed people to see and feel the quality and freshness of what they were buying, an important factor in the days before refrigeration. The perishable nature of much of the produce meant that there were bargains to be had at the end of the day as traders were anxious to get rid of their stock and many people, particularly the poorer ones, did their shopping on a Friday night in search of these bargains.

In addition there were stalls selling a variety of household necessities, everything from buttons to blankets, not to mention patent medicines and remedies to cure every ailment known to man. The one commodity not sold at the Friday market was large livestock which were traditionally sold by auction every Monday. In 1938 Messrs John Trickett & Sons, auctioneers, opened a new Cattle Market in Prescott Street. Reporting on the opening the Wigan Examiner said, 'The site is 14,000 square yards as against the 9,000 in the Millgate Market. There is a well appointed covered sales ring, and at the rear a cattle shed accommodating 166 cattle. In addition there are pens for 200 calves and 1000 pigs and sheep. Offices, weigh-bridge and ear-punching pen are all provided and extensive parking accommodation. The site also has the great advantage of a railway siding'.

Although most of the livestock passing through the auction came from local farms the railway siding meant that beasts could be imported from further afield. Most of the butchers in Wigan in the 1930s had their own slaughter-houses and each Monday they would attend the auction to buy enough animals to meet their requirements for the week. When they were butchered, every part of the animal was utilized – for such delicacies as oxtail, cow heel, tongue, brawn, tripe and of course sausages, black puddings and pies. Nothing was wasted, even the bones went to a factory at Appley Bridge to be rendered down to make glue.

In the 1930s, by no means all of Wigan's food was produced locally, but it was a much larger proportion than it is today. It is tempting, with hindsight, to look back on this as some kind of 'golden age' when food was tastier, purer and free from additives and preservatives but in reality the picture was much less rosy. In the absence of refrigerators the short shelf life of most products meant that it was necessary to shop frequently and buy smaller quantities. Milk rarely lasted more than a day before going sour, meat products and fish rapidly deteriorated, especially in hot weather, and with the lower standards of hygiene there was the ever present risk of disease, especially tuberculosis from unpasteurised milk

On reflection I am not at all sure that I would like to return to my youth as far as food is concerned but of one thing I am sure – there is nothing in the world to beat a stick of freshly picked Lancashire celery.



Wigan Market Square, c.1930.

James Dean

Survivor of the Royal Charter Shipwreck

By Mildred Fleming (nee Dean), Deborah Lucas and Jim Gaskell

Through my hobby of scuba diving I have dived the shipwreck of 'The Royal Charter', off the coast of Anglesey and was interested to learn that one of few survivors was a passenger from Wigan called James Dean. I decided to find out more about James and whether his descendants still lived in the area. Fortunately, through an entry on Wigan World, I was contacted by James' great-great-granddaughter, Deborah Lucas, who informed me that her late mother, Mildred Fleming (nee Dean) had undertaken a great deal of research into both James and the shipwreck.

Mildred, whose own father was also called James Dean, was born in 1927 and lived in

Wigan all her life, spending a number of years in the late 1940s as a primary school teacher at St Andrew's Primary School. She married a local solicitor, Norman Fleming, in 1950. Sadly Mildred died in June 2013 at the age of 86. I am indebted to Deborah for providing me with the transcript of her mother's research which forms much of the following story.

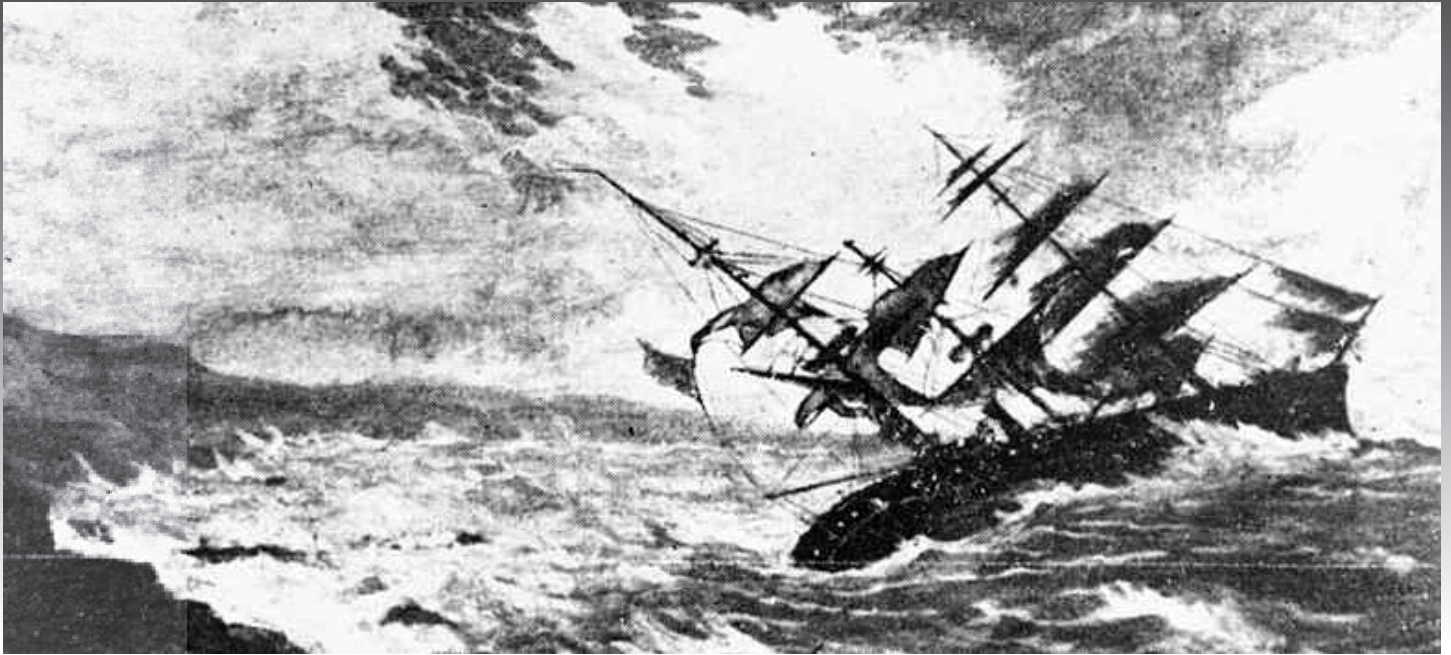
James Dean was born in 1829 in Pemberton, the son of a local carpenter, and worked as a blacksmith – a job to which he must have been well suited as he was described as a tall, muscular, athletic man. In 1854 James married Lydia Heyes, a farmer's daughter from Marsh Green, and in early 1856 Lydia gave birth to a daughter, Mary Ann.

At some stage James had heard of the discovery of gold at Ballarat, in the outback of Melbourne, and decided to go and make his fortune. So in September 1856, taking Lydia's fob watch as a keepsake, he left Liverpool for Australia on the sailing ship Saldanha, leaving Lydia and Mary behind. After working as a blacksmith in Melbourne James purchased a claim and started work as a gold digger. He must have been quite successful as he soon began sending money to Lydia, along with letters persuading her to join him. As she refused to do this James decided to return home and in late August 1859 set sail for Liverpool on board the luxury auxiliary ship, The Royal Charter.

The Royal Charter was an iron built clipper of 2,720 tons, a sailing ship with an auxiliary



*James Dean's fob watch.
The etching inside read, 'Lydia Dean'.*



The Royal Charter, from the State Library of Queensland.

steam engine which could accommodate some 400 passengers and a crew of 112. She was one of the fastest ships of the day, completing the journey to and from Australia in under sixty days. Complete with seven watertight and fireproof compartments she was considered to be virtually unsinkable. She left Melbourne harbour on 26 August 1859 carrying a cargo of boxes of gold amounting to a total of £100 million at today's rate. However, the total amount was unknown as most of the passengers were carrying large amounts of gold nuggets and coins hidden within their clothing to avoid paying Australian taxes. James had preferred to cash in his gold and was carrying a cheque drawn on an English bank in a waterproof belt around his waist.

The Shipwreck, 26 October 1859

After nearly two months of sailing, the coast of North Wales was sighted and the passengers knew they were within a few hours of Liverpool, the home port. But the Royal Charter was never to reach Liverpool again as she took the full force of the 'Hurricane of the Century' with winds gusting to over 100 miles an hour (Force 12) and she was wrecked on the rocky headland of the village of Moelfre, Anglesey.

This is the story of the wreck in James Dean's own words:

"I was on deck till 1am – it was a 'nasty night'.

Then I returned to my berth with James Potts of Chester and Le Pre – a Frenchman. Potts wakened me at 3am and said 'Well Jim get up I think we're lost.' The three of us prayed together and then I went on deck. When dawn broke we could see the shore. A Maltese sailor, named Joseph Rodgers swam ashore with a line to fix up a bosun's chair. Preparations were being made to evacuate everyone by these means when the ship broke in the centre 'like the snapping of a tobacco stump'.

She first broke near the engines and then one of the halves parted again at the bows. The greater part of the third class passengers who were on deck fell into the chasm. The scene on board was heart rending, women and children screaming – their screams heard above the roaring of the wind. I stood on deck and to describe the horror is impossible. I noticed that many people were now jumping into the sea and gripping pieces of floating wood to help them reach shore but many were rolled over and over on the rocky shore till life was extinct. Those who trusted to smaller pieces of wood reached the shore safely.

I noted all these things carefully and lowered myself by a rope down the side of the shattered ship, and though totally unable to swim, jumped into the water and seized a passenger's



James Dean's eldest son, Robert (1863-1948) at work as a master clogger in Wigan

box with a cord round it. Immediately a head appeared under my arm and another claimant appeared.

I left the box 'to give the man a chance' and managed to catch hold of another piece of wood. Finally, after five minutes in the water, I was thrown feet first on to a rocky ledge, but the waves carried me back, head first into the water and I found myself entangled in the wreckage. Drowning I have been told is easy work but I can assure you, it is awful hard.

A second time I was thrown ashore and a rope thrown to me and I was hauled ashore. I was exhausted but not much bruised. I was taken to the house of a Welsh seaman and his wife – put to bed with warm flat irons applied to my feet and my clothes dried whilst I slept. I can never repay such kindness.

I reached Liverpool on Thursday evening in a steamer sent by the owners, Messrs Gibbs and Co. Most of the passengers were destitute possessing only the clothes on their backs. We were abandoned on the landing stage but a wealthy farmer who survived offered to pay for

a lodgings for a night. We stayed the night in the Sailors Home and I arrived in Wigan Friday at noon – my wife Lydia had not heard of the wreck although she had sent a messenger to Wigan for a 'Liverpool Mercury' to see if the ship had arrived.

I believe I was the last person to leave the ship to reach the shore in safety. I had put on a heavy top coat before I entered the water and this was torn to shreds but probably saved me from injury. The cheque in a waterproof belt round my waist was safe. I lost only my spare clothes and a small sum of money."

Unlike James many of the passengers would not be parted from their gold and carried it with them to a watery grave. That night 454 men, women and children lost their lives with only 39 survivors escaping the violent seas and jagged rocks. Many of the bodies were never recovered. The ones that were had been battered beyond recognition.

After the shipwreck, unable to persuade Lydia to return with him to Australia, James settled back to life in Wigan as a blacksmith. James and Lydia went on to have four more children, Ann (1861), Robert (1863), James Edwin (1872) and Jesse (1873), all born in Wigan. James was drawn back to Anglesey, making an annual pilgrimage to the wreck site and would tell each of his children the story of 'The Royal Charter'. James returned to Australia in 1873 on the SS Great Britain, probably to sell his claim. It is thought he may have returned again but no records of this journey can be found.

James and Lydia separated sometime after 1881 as the 1891 census has Lydia living at 88 Ormskirk Road, Upholland, whilst James is registered in George Street, Hindley. Because of failing health James moved to Blackpool to live with his son-in-law in order to benefit from the cleaner sea air. James died there in 1895 aged 66, the cause of death being cancer of the oesophagus and bronchitis. There are direct descendants of James and Lydia living in the Wigan and Greater Manchester areas and his fob watch is still a treasured family possession.



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Ancient and Loyal

by Joe Fairhurst

Thy myriad streets and twisting ways
Thy gates and alleys, yards, a maze
The which is memory of former days.

Smoke blackened mills, cracked,
crumbling slate
And sightless windows once agate
With vibrant workers, by whose toil
Wealth came to some, but not to all.

Within thy bounds o'er years long gone
A countless host has laboured on,
Through grime and poverty, night and morn
To slake the thirst of commerce, never done.
And yet of thee thy loyal sons are proud,
For high above the restless crowd

Written by Joe Fairhurst, ex Wigan Grammar School pupil, late 1940s, who moved down to East Chinnock in Somerset in the 1970s.

Still a very dear friend of Gordon Rigby and Derek Horrocks who were also Wigan Grammar School pupils of the same vintage.

Inspired by thee they rise supreme,
Achievements theirs, not cheap, not mean.

In the old town pure bonds of faith and
love are found
E'en through the scarring spoils of former
times abound,
And in thy cultured facets are deployed
Such virtues which good folk have
long employed.

To Wigan then my grateful thanks I raise,
For youthful nurture's gifts I give thee praise,
And tho' to distant lands in life I'm come,
I'll ne'er forget that 'Civis Cocci semper sum'.

Purring Sport of the People

Artist Anna FC Smith is uncovering the lost sport of Purring or Clog Fighting for a new exhibition which opens at The Museum of Wigan Life in January 2014. This art project is uncovering the truth about this largely undocumented pastime, which seems to have disappeared from Wigan and Leigh in the 1950s. Smith is combining archive research with interviews and material requested from the public. She is using this information to re-imagine the activity through drawings based on eighteenth century sketches of bare knuckle fights, putting film alongside sounds, recorded interviews and objects from the museum's collection to bring the sport back to life. 'I aim to rescue Purring from the dark forgotten corners of Wigan's industrial history and reconsider it, not just as a brutal part of our heritage but as something which belonged to the people, our recent ancestors, highlighting its links with camaraderie, honour and pride, joviality and freedom from commercial or official culture.'

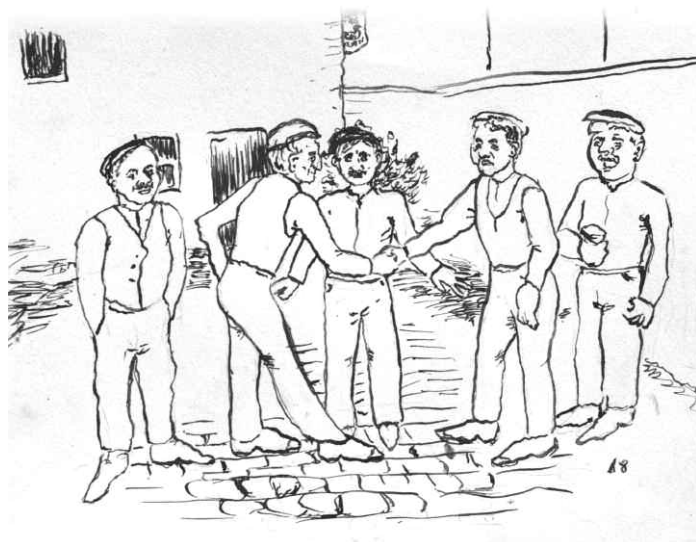
Purring was illegal, unregulated, and performed as both a score-settling activity and as gambling entertainment for the working classes of Wigan and nearby towns (including Bolton and Leigh). It was performed mainly by colliers at the backs of pubs or in secret locations such as on the moors. There seems to have been many variations in the rules of engagement in the sport, but most required the two participants to hold onto each other's shoulders and to kick at the shins only. The loser would be the first to cry submission or to fall.

There are apparently no known visual records and there has been no systematic collation of other evidence, although 'magpie' collections may exist. The artist is seeking to involve the public in this project by

gathering untapped sources of oral history, 'piecing the history together through collective remembrance'. If you know of any relatives or friends who were involved in the sport, or have heard any information at all about it, Anna is looking to hear from you. Any information is important as it helps to confirm the truth, or expand it. Names or pictures of fighters, bookies and landlords involved give the past a face and a voice. You can contact the artist on 07936464820 or via email at thehonanna@aol.com

The exhibition will also include: writing workshops by local poet Louise Fazackerley, who will be working with participants to formulate tales; a sound editing workshop with DJ and Sound artist Scrubber Fox looking at creating new works from sound recordings; and an art workshop with Anna FC Smith.

The exhibition opens on Saturday 18 January 2014 and runs until April 2014. To find out more about the workshops, please contact 01942 828128 or email museumofwiganlifebookings@wlct.org



New venue, new plans and the same Wigan family history group

'Wigan Family and Local History Society has a new home and is now going places', says the new chairman Mavis Fairhurst. Supported by the long-standing secretary, Peter Spencer, and the treasurer Sharon Weir, Mavis says that the committee, elected in June, has plans to re-launch the Society. This is the chairman's view of what the group is all about.

For the last couple of years the group has been wandering from venue to venue. They decided on meeting in the Discover Room at the Museum of Life in Library Street and then cuts forced the Society on the road again. Now they are well settled at St. Andrew's Parish Centre, Woodhouse Lane, meeting on the second Wednesday of the month from 7.15-9.00pm. Currently there are no meetings in June and July or in December. From January, however, the Society will also meet on the last Tuesday of the month (28 January 2014) in the Discover Room at the Museum of Wigan Life from 2.00-4.00pm.

Our aim is to reach all those in Wigan who are interested in researching family history. Many people tell us that they cannot, or prefer not to, attend evening meetings, so the first afternoon meeting will find out the particular needs of that group and then we can plan a programme including speakers, help with research, support for beginners or those coming upon the notorious brick wall.

Since our foundation in 1984 many local people have shared their expertise with members, sought advice on where to begin, and stepped in to help keep the society going when we have hit hard times. With this in mind the Society is liaising with Lynda Jackson and Alex Miller (at the Museum and Archives) to set up a regular Help Desk at Wigan



Local Studies. Members of the Society, after training on using the resources and finding the relevant material, will man the desk, a move which should both benefit the Society and the service as the aim is to make a researcher's visit a more rewarding and productive experience.

The Society is a member of the Federation of Family History Societies and has linked its website at www.wiganworld.co.uk/familyhistory to the Federation's site. We are also on Facebook. We own a number of books and resources including a selection of microfiche and a reader. Local members can borrow many of the items, on request. All members also receive a copy of each edition of Past Forward which is included as part of the annual subscription. We also plan to reintroduce our twice yearly newsletter and an annual magazine.

We are all for making ourselves more visible and this year we took a stall at the Heritage Day at Leigh in September. There are plans to put on our own exhibition so that the work our members do can reach a wider audience, and we are also working on a book of Wigan characters culled from our own family researches.

We welcome new members whether beginners or experienced researchers and we are always happy to meet previous members, so we would like to invite you to come along in January, either to the afternoon or evening meeting and meet the team.

Aspull and Haigh Historical Society

Meetings are held on the second Thursday of the month at Our Lady's RC Church Hall, Haigh Road, Aspull at 7.30pm. All are welcome, contact Barbara Rhodes for further details on 01942 222769.

Atherton Heritage Society

Monthly meetings held second Tuesday of each month in St. Richards Parish Centre, Mayfield St. Atherton at 7.30pm
Admission - Members - £1.00
Non Members - £2.00, including refreshments.

Contact No. 01942 884893,
Margaret Hodge

Billinge History and Heritage Society

Meetings are held on the second Tuesday of the month at Billinge Chapel End Labour Club at 7.30pm. There is a door charge of £2.

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

Hindley & District Family History Society

Meetings are held on the second Monday of the month at 7.00pm at Tudor House, Liverpool Road, Hindley. Please contact Mrs Joan Topping on 01942 257361 for details.

Leigh & District Antiques and Collectables Society

The new session of the society starts on Monday 16 September 2013 at 7.30pm in our new location at Leigh RUFC, Beech Walk, Leigh. New members are always welcome and further details available from Mr C Gaskell on 01942 673521.

Leigh Family History Society

21 January

AGM followed by P.O.W. - Hannah Turner

18 February

New Accessions – Alex Miller

18 March

Church Yards, Gravestones and their hidden meanings – Louise Wade

15 April

Abandon Hope – Life in the Workhouse – Peter Watson

20 May

Catholic Ancestry – Allan Mitchinson

June & July

No meeting

19 August

Getting Started

Local History Federation Lancashire

The Federation holds several meetings each year, with a varied and interesting programme. For details visit www.lancashirehistory.org or call 01204 707885.

Skelmersdale & Upholland Family History Society

Meetings held at 7.30pm on the fourth Tuesday each month at Hall Green Community Centre, Upholland. There are no meetings in July or August. For more information contact Sue Hesketh (Secretary) 01942 212940 or Suehesketh@blueyonder.co.uk or visit www.liverpoolgenealogy.org.uk/SkemGrp/Skem

Wigan Civic Trust

If you have an interest in the standard of planning and architecture, and the conservation of buildings and structures in our historic town, come along and meet us. Meetings are held on the second Monday of the month at 7.30pm. The venue is St George's Church, Water Street, Wigan WN1 1XD. Contact Mr A Grimshaw on 01942 245777 for further information.

Wigan Archaeological Society

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

YOUR LETTERS - CAN YOU HELP

Dear Editor

Since writing the article on Pennington Flash which appears in Issue Number 64 of Past Forward, I have been reliably informed that bee orchids are to be found on land between the Parsonage Retail Park and the Marsh Playing Fields. Unfortunately the information came too late for me to see them myself and orchids are very inconspicuous when not in bloom. However I shall be there next June!

Yours faithfully,

Tony Bond

Dear Editor

Leigh Local Studies is looking for anyone who has information about the Hindles at Howe Bridge which was once home to the Fletcher family. Anyone with any information on the history of the house should contact Hannah Turner at: H.Turner@wlct.org or on 01942 404559.

Leigh Local Studies

Dear Editor

Can you help?

I have been researching my family for more than fifty years and have made several trips to Wigan Local Studies where everyone is always so helpful.

Hettie Ascroft, daughter of William Ascroft and Alice Brindle was born at the Step or Stone Houses at 147 Park Lane, Ashton-in-Makerfield in 1879. They were situated on the Wigan side of Park Lane Chapel and the Cranberry Hotel. I can remember seeing the row of cottages with several steps going up to each front door, when I was a little girl at Park Lane School. They were pulled down many years ago. Now I would dearly like a photo of the Step Houses, as would another person whose grandmother was born there.

Please contact the Editor if you are able to help.

Yours faithfully,

Mrs Margaret Humphreys (Australia)

Information for Contributors

We always welcome articles and letters for publication from both new and existing contributors.

If you would like to submit an article for **PAST FORWARD**, please note that:

- Publication is at discretion of Editorial Team
- The Editorial Team may edit your submission
- Published and rejected submissions will be disposed of, unless you request for them to be returned
- Submissions may be held on file for publication in a future edition
- Articles must be received by the copy date if inclusion in the next issue is desired

Submission Guidelines

- Electronic submissions are preferred, although handwritten ones will be accepted
- We prefer articles to have a maximum length of 1,000 words
- Include photographs or images where possible – these can be returned if requested
- Include your name and address – we will not pass on your details to anyone unless you have given us permission to do so

We aim to acknowledge receipt of all submissions.

CONTACT DETAILS:

pastforward@wlct.org or
The Editor at **PAST FORWARD**,
Museum of Wigan Life, Library Street,
Wigan WN1 1NU.

MUSEUMS, ARCHIVES & LOCAL STUDIES EVENTS

What's On at the Museum of Wigan Life

Please note that booking is essential for all events unless otherwise stated. Places are limited so book early to avoid disappointment by calling 01942 828128 or email museumofwiganlifebookings@wlct.org. Remember we are always adding more events so please visit <http://www.wlct.org/wigan/museums-archives/> for further details.

TRIES, TEAMS AND TROPHIES – RUGBY LEAGUE IN WIGAN BOROUGH EXHIBITION

Saturday 11 January
Last chance to see our Rugby League exhibition.
No booking required.

CLOG FIGHTING – SPORT OF THE PEOPLE EXHIBITION

Saturday 18 January
Be the first to see our new exhibition about the mysterious local sport of clog fighting or Purring. View artist Anna FC Smith's specially commissioned drawings and films revealing the rules, fighters and locations behind this hidden 'sport of the people'.

The museum is hosting a range of special creative events as part of the exhibition programme. Why not try something different and get those creative juices flowing? No previous experience required!

TELLING TALES

Friday 24 and Friday 31 January
1pm-2.30pm
Museum of Wigan Life
£2.50 including tea/coffee
Join local poet Louise Fazackerley for a creative writing workshop to write tales inspired by clog fighting and other working people's sports. There is an opportunity for reviewing works created at the second workshop. Suitable for beginners and improvers. All welcome. To celebrate Clog Fighting – Sport of the People exhibition.

CARRY ON CLEANING @ WIGAN ARCHIVES

Wednesday 29 January;
26 February; 26 March
10.00am-3.00pm
Wigan Archives Service,
Leigh Town Hall
Free

If you've ever wondered how we preserve historic records, come along to Wigan Archives to join in with our ongoing project to clean and document the records of Wigan's Victorian courts. Join our team of volunteers in revealing the stories of crime and punishment in Wigan and learn how to help preserve the Borough's history.
01942 404430

PALAEOGRAPHY PRACTICE

Monday 3 February;
Monday 3 March
2.00pm-3.30pm
Museum of Wigan Life
Free
Medieval to Modern
Handwriting for Experts
Informal drop-in sessions for those with a basic understanding of palaeography styles over the ages, transcribing original documents from the archives in a group.
01942 828128

LOVE IN THE OLD FASHIONED WAY – COURTING COUPLES IN THE EARLY 20TH CENTURY

Valentines Day, Friday 14 February
12 noon-1.15pm
Museum of Wigan Life
£2.50 including tea/coffee

Celebrate Valentine's Day with a special talk from author and historian Elizabeth Roberts. How did your parents or great-grandparents find love? How did they find time for romance? Find out more about their experiences, based on original recorded interviews.

HISTORY ON LOOP

Monday 17 February 2014
1pm-3pm
Museum of Wigan Life
£1 per person
Sound artist and DJ, Scrubber Fox will be working with participants to create a new track using old records, oral history recordings and other sound samples. Learn how to DJ and make loops and beats with found material, recycling history to make a collaborative sound track for the exhibition. To celebrate Clog Fighting – Sport of the People exhibition.

COFFEE, CAKE & CULTURE - THE WAY WE ATE

Tuesday 25 February
10.30am-12 noon
Museum Of Wigan Life
£3 per person
Come and explore some new themes for our Coffee, Cake & Culture Workshops. Reminisce and have a chat, enjoy a drink and piece of cake! What did you take to work in your Snap tin? Tripe, Uncle Joes and pies - is this really us?

MY MEMORY BOOK

Tuesday 18 and Thursday

20 February

1pm-2.30pm

Museum of Wigan Life

£2.50 per child

Join us this February Half Term to create your own special book all about you! Use pictures and prints and be inspired by our collections. Craft activities and creative writing for children of all ages.

GROWING UP GIRLS - OUR GRANDMOTHERS AND MOTHERS IN THE EARLY 20TH CENTURY

Tuesday 4 March

12 noon-1.15pm

Museum of Wigan Life

£2.50 including tea/coffee

As part of Women's History Month, join author and historian Elizabeth Roberts to talk about the expectations and experiences of girls growing up in Lancashire 100 years ago. How were they given the facts of life? What was their knowledge of sex and relationships? Find out more, based on original oral history interviews.

FOOD & DRINK FESTIVAL

Thursday 6 March

10.30am-12 noon

Museum of Wigan Life

£3 including tea/coffee and cake

As part of the Food & Drink in the Community programme, TV food historian Dr Annie Hall will be giving a fascinating insight into Georgian food. This will be followed by a complementary talk and authentic food tasting at Wigan Library in the afternoon. In addition, Ian Gregg, founder of Greggs the Bakers, will be coming to Wigan Library to talk about his memoir Bread: the Story of Greggs.

Please see

www.wlct.org/wigan/libraries to find out more.

COFFEE CAKE & CULTURE - HER MAJESTY, GOD BLESS HER

Thursday 13 March

10.30am-12noon

Museum Of Wigan Life

£3 per person

As part of Manchester Histories Festival, come and reminisce and have a chat, enjoy a drink and piece of cake! Did you wave your flag when a member of the royal family visited the borough? Come and find out about the ancient and loyal town of Wigan and its very special visitors.

ART MASTERCLASS

Thursday 3 April

1pm-3pm

Museum of Wigan Life

£2.50 including tea/coffee

A chance to meet the artist and curator behind our new exhibition. Anna FC Smith will be leading a special workshop discussing her findings which have made this show, and demonstrating how she created her ink drawings on display.

This is a hands on workshop so be prepared to get involved!

To celebrate Clog Fighting – Sport of the People exhibition

BUNNIES AND BONNETS

Tuesday 8, Thursday 10,

Tuesday 15 and Thursday 17 April

1pm-2.30pm

Museum of Wigan Life

£2.50 per child

Come along for some egg-cellent Easter fun at the museum.

Make a bonnet or bunny ears and create your own springtime masterpiece to take home.

COFFEE CAKE & CULTURE - GOING OUT

Friday 11 April

10.30am – 12 noon

Museum of Wigan Life

£3 per person

Have you danced at the Empress Ballroom in Wigan or did you go to the County Playhouse to catch a film? How did we entertain ourselves?

COFFEE, CAKE & CULTURE - SPARE THE ROD EXPERIENCE

Tuesday 20 May

10.30am – 12 noon

Museum of Wigan Life

£3 per person

Love it or hate it, we all went to school. Did you enjoy your school days and is it true children were seen and not heard? An interactive workshop not for the faint hearted!

MAKING A RACKET!

Tuesday 27 and Thursday 29 May

1pm-2.30pm

Museum of Wigan Life

£2.50 per child

Come down and make some noise with our half term activities inspired by George Formby. Music and craft for children of all ages.

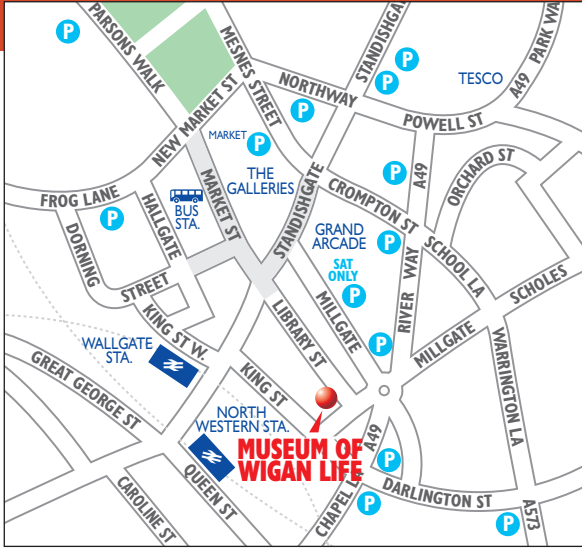
COMING SOON IN MAY

Watch out for Words Festival events and Museums at Night event in May. Further details available on request.

SUMMER HOLIDAYS

Look out for a summer of exploring with the Romans and Ancient Egyptians. Try your hand at some real archaeology and see what evidence you can uncover from the past. Further information available on request.

How to Find Us



Museum of Wigan Life

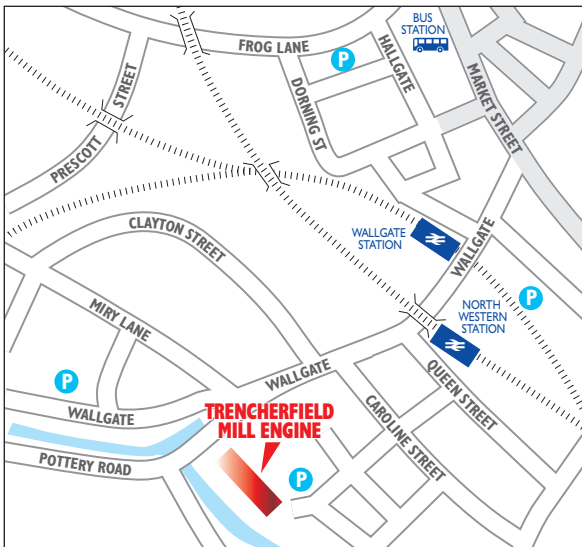
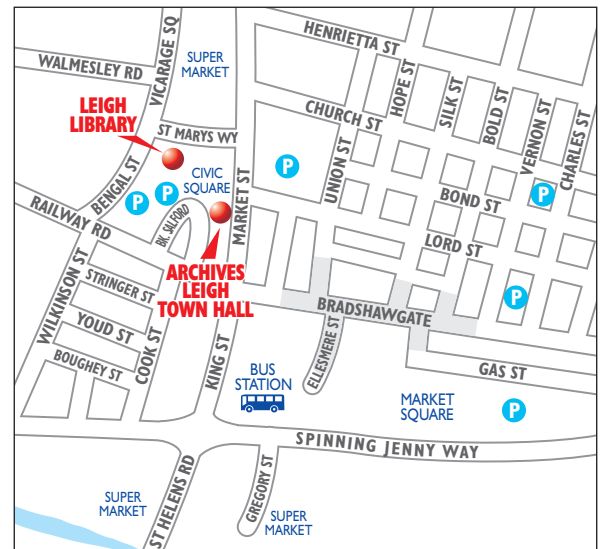
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Leigh Local History

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Archives

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Trencherfield Mill Engine

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