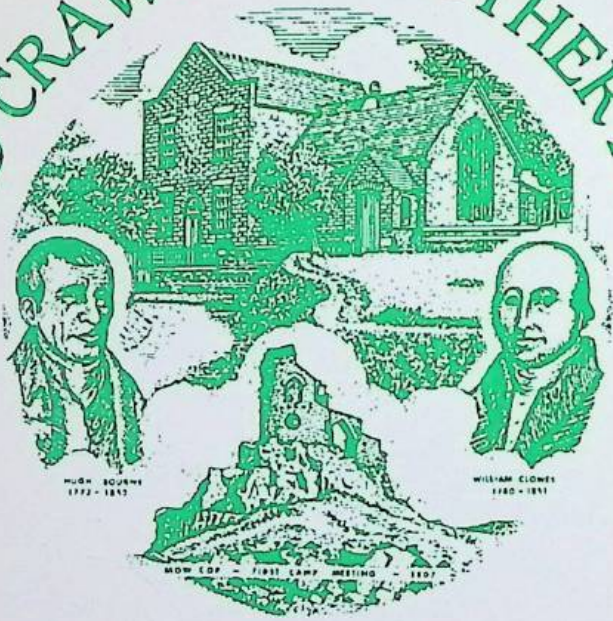
LORD CRAWFORD'S OTHER ACRE



F. HUGHES NAYLOR

LORD CRAWFORD'S OTHER ACRE

LORD CRAWFORD'S OTHER ACRE

(Mining and Methodism in A Lancashire Village)

F Hughes Naylor

Seymour Publishing 1992

DEDICATION

My first grandson, James Naylor the third, to whom these letters are addressed, will reach my present age in the year 2052, God willing. I trust he is able to celebrate the bicentenary of the village and chapel of his ancestors to which this little book is dedicated.

A donation from the sale of each book will be made to the little chapel in the village where the events occurred.

THANKS

I would like to express my sincere thanks to all those people and organisations without whose help these letters could not have been written, and in particular to the following:

Mr Robert Blakeman, Wigan Local History Library
Gladys Bryan
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Others who are recognised in the text
and many more.

Cover Picture, by kind permission of Etchurch Pottery of Stone, Staffs, commemorates the founding fathers of Primitive Methodism

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FOREWORD

Life brings many privileges. Some we take for granted and seldom acknowledge; others leave their mark upon us and are a source of wonder and amazement all our days.

To be 'Called of God' into His Service as a Christian Minister and Pastor and to fulfill that privilege within the Methodist Church in general and the Queen's Hall, Wigan Mission in particular is something very special for which one must be for ever grateful.

This has meant meeting, knowing, and walking with some of the most remarkable people ever to walk the dusty ways of human life. Such a person was Annie Naylor. She was a radiant Christian whose life was honed and polished amid all the triumphs and tragedies of a tough life.

Annie was one of the first people to greet me when I began my twenty year's Ministry at The Queen's Hall in September 1968. She met me with a broad smile illuminating her face, a firm handshake and a word of welcome. She was a 'Welcome Steward' par excellence. She met everybody alike and no one could feel unnoticed.

I am so glad her son Fred has gone to such great lengths to compile this fascinating story and present it in such an unusual way. It combines the unique rural and industrial history of a village which, because of its very nature, has produced such remarkable characters with their strong hold on life's essentials. None more so than Annie Naylor whose memory, I among many, will for ever cherish.

Reverend R S Charlton, Minister,
Queen's Hall, Methodist Mission 1968-88.

A NOTE ON REFERENCES IN THE TEXT

References from outside sources are numbered (1) (2) (3) etc. Sources are given at the end of the respective letters.

BIRTH OF A VILLAGE

Wigan
Lancashire
1992

Dear James,

Half a dozen miles away from the busy, traffic-filled streets of Wigan, on a flat stretch of open country, exposed to the wet, westerly winds of the Irish Sea, a tiny village-community stands as it stood a hundred years ago, yet remarkably few Wiganers know of its existence. A few dozen cottages which have defied the elements have recently been restored and refurbished to prepare them for the twenty-first century.

This unique village, which in all probability, is the only one-street, coal-mining village left in Lancashire and possibly in England remains as a tangible reminder of an aspect of Lancashire life as it was lived a hundred years ago. In 1840 the only evidence of life was in one or two scattered farms and a few isolated cottages. The second half of that century saw an amazing transformation of the scene. By the year 1870 the area had become a lively, bustling, industrious community peopled by families that had travelled long distances to share in the opportunities for regular employment.

Our forebears, James, were amongst those migrants. My parents were first-generation members of the village. They were born in adjacent cottages in the month of

August of the same year when the nation was celebrating the Diamond Jubilee of the reign of Queen Victoria -60 years on the throne - 1837-1897.

The reason for the increase in the population in this rural corner of Lancashire was, of course, the discovery of 'black diamonds' (coal) in plenty throughout the Wigan area. Mining in this village eventually ceased on 25th October 1940, over fifty years ago, and it was inevitable that the village would go into decline. Fortunately, however, its character has been retained, albeit precariously, thanks to the gritty determination of the villagers and an imaginative and astute planning department of the local authority. To its credit, The West Lancashire District Council in the 1980's declared this to be a Housing Action Area. This status attracted generous government grants.

It is unlikely that you, James, would find this historic spot without a guide but *the developers*, those expert orienteers, had no such difficulty. At each end of the village there now exist luxury dwellings. Further development is restricted by 'Green Belt' policy and, no doubt, the villagers hope that the restriction will remain. In a report submitted to his local authority in 1986, the Director of Environmental Health made the following observations: "Small mining communities such as Crawford was, were a product of the industrial revolution. Unfortunately, few such communities have survived to the present day in their original form. Crawford, however, is perhaps one of the exceptions as it has remained relatively free from major intrusions and it would seem wrong not to try and retain the village if at all possible. This view is shared by Council Members, some of whom have expressed this opinion at recent meetings held in the village." (1)

THREE CHEERS FOR THE DIRECTOR AND HIS TEAM!

Well, James, the secret is out, Crawford Village was the birthplace of your paternal precursers. It is a mere eight miles from Wigan. It borders on Skelmersdale New Town, that erstwhile idyllic village between Wigan and Southport, which is now an amorphous, amalgam of fast roads, industrial estates, grass verges and bricks and mortar.

I first heard of Crawford when I was very young in the 1930's. Before we had a wireless (our first one was a Cossor which Dad bought for Christmas 1937) and when television was still a dream of the future, we were entertained by stories of my mother's idyllic childhood spent in this enchanting village. While Dad was working late shift on the buses and it was pitch-black outside, Mother would turn out the gaslight to save pennies. As she prodded and poked the coal fire in the enormous Yorkshire Range fireplace, the room became suffused with a warm and eerie light, shadows bounced and bobbled on the walls in unison with the flickering flames from the rich cannel coal. Mother's voice, like a magic melody lulled us to sleep with tales of a bygone age: life as a little Methodist in Crawford Village. One by one, as we dozed off, we were gently placed into a cosy bed, previously warmed by a brick from the oven beside the fire.

My recent research has revealed some intriguing facts about Crawford and its Methodist community, I hope that you find them interesting. In the year 1900 Crawford was a bustling, mining village with most of its social life centered around the little Primitive Methodist Chapel. Today, as we approach the close of the twentieth century, the village still stands, time has almost passed it by.

The street, chapel, pub and houses look much the same, from the outside, as they must have done to your great-grandparents, but the frenetic life of a hundred years ago is no more. (2)

The rows of terraced cottages were constructed around the year 1860 to accommodate the families of the men and women employed at the local coal mines which belonged to the Earl of Crawford. The Baronet lived a few miles away at Haigh Hall which is now, as you know, part of a country park, open to the public and administered by the Wigan Metropolitan Council.

In those far-off days when the village was thriving, almost every family living in the terraced properties within the village had some connection with the mining industry. The exceptions were the farmers and farm labourers, the teacher and policeman. Some business and professional people had relatives at the mines. There was an interesting exception to this: Mrs Mary Ann Stephens, a widow aged fifty-five, Who was Licencee at the Crawford Inn, had five sons and three daughters, none of whom was employed at the mine. The Census Returns for 1881 record that Mrs Stephens's sons, who ranged from the age of twelve to twenty-nine, and her daughters aged fourteen, nineteen and twenty-one, were all unmarried. Their occupations were given as follows: of the sons, two were joiners, one was a baker and one a pupil-teacher, the twelve-year-old was a 'scholar'. The two younger daughters were engaged in 'house duties' and the older one was a tailor-finisher.

Prior to 1850, although there were a few houses here and there along the road known as Pimbo Lane West, there was no such place as Crawford Village. Coal had been collected in various ways for a couple of centuries from the land around Holland Moss which lies slightly to the west of Crawford. The seventeenth century registers of nearby Upholland name many 'coalers' and 'delf men', there were also '**nailers**', linen weavers, 'glovers', watchmakers and other craftsmen whose names are found in the township.

The local authority housing report which I mentioned earlier, states that one group of terraced properties was formerly known as Holland Colliery Cottages. Donald Anderson, a well-known local mining historian, told me of a further row named 'Albert Colliery Cottages' which was named after Queen Victoria's husband, the Prince Consort. According to Mr Anderson these dwellings were erected to accommodate the original engineers, surveyors and miners. The first shafts were sunk around 1845 and the cottages were built later. (3)

The Ordinance Survey Map for 1849 shows that there were two working mine shafts in this area, they were named Holland No.1 and Holland No.6 pits. (4) No.1 pit was situated in fields on the eastern side of the road which later became the village. A section of the Lancs and Yorks Railway which ran from Liverpool to Bury ran parallel to the main street about five hundred yards away. A branch line ran from No.1 pit to No.6 pit and the latter eventually became the main producer. By the year 1863 Holland Colliery was producing 120,000 tons of coal annually, making it the eighth in productivity out of forty-eight pits listed in the Wigan area. (5)

So you can see, James, that, whereas in the first half of the nineteenth century this area was rural and mostly farmland, with the sinking of the coal shafts it underwent a dramatic transformation in a few short years. As both the land and the pits were owned by the Earl of Crawford, it was inevitable that the village which emerged should take the name of Crawford Village.

Your ancestors were not all Lancastrian, some had travelled considerable distances to find work in the mines. The Hughes's hailed from North Wales but the Naylor side of my family seem to have deep roots in Lancashire. My Grandfather Naylor, who was named James like yourself, was

born in Upholland on the 1st December 1862, over one hundred and twenty five years before you was born. It is possible, I suppose, that he descended from some of the '**nailers**' to which I have already referred. As the main purpose of these letters is to acquaint you with the life and times of the village of Crawford at the commencement of the twentieth century, I hope you will forgive a certain vagueness concerning your family-tree beyond the mid nineteenth century.

LETTER ONE REFERENCES

(1) "Crawford Village - Past, Present and Future"
J Heaton, Director of Environmental Health,
West Lancashire District Council, July 1986.

(2) Ironically, the threat of heavy vehicles, in the 1990's, using the old colliery site as a tip for industrial waste seems likely to shatter the peace which has reigned for many years. An Action Committee supported by the local M.P. has been formed to oppose the plan. March 1992.

(3) Phone conversation, 12/6/91 with D Anderson, Author of
"The Orrell Coalfield Lancashire 1760-1850"
"Life and Times at Haigh Hall" et al.

(4) Thanks to Steve Hewitt, Geology Dept,
Wigan and Leigh College, Wigan Campus.

(5) "Some Historical Notes on the Wigan Coalfield" by H E Clegg. Presidential Address to the Manchester Geological and Mining Society. 'The Mining Engineer', Vol.117, August 1958."

Primitive Methodist Chapel, Crawford Village
Rebuilt 1909 - Photos June 1991

A STRAIGHT FURROW

Dear James,

The population of Crawford Village had increased four-fold in the ten years from 1861-1871 because of the thriving coal mines. An indication of the desperation felt by many working people in those days can be ascertained by a perusal of the official documents of the day. Whole families were uprooted, sometimes several times during a few short years, and travelled long distances in the search for employment. Conditions for miners and their families are even worse a hundred years on. Soon there will be no more pits to move on to.

Emigration to the United States, South Africa, Australia and New Zealand was very common, members of the Hughes family were amongst them. The stories of their particular trials and tribulations have, fortunately, been carefully documented by relatives of ours. (1) I will tell you about those pioneers at a later date.

Several large families in Crawford Village had children born to them in different parts of the country. It was often necessary for the husband to leave his family behind and send for them when employment was secured. This constant search for work is reflected in the Census returns of the time. Miners working the Crawford pits had moved to the area from a number of different locations, near and far; for example: Aberdare, Holywell, Mold and Buckley in Wales

(some of our own maternal forebears were amongst these): Audley in Staffordshire, Shrewsbury, Cheshire - remember, these were long distances in the nineteenth century, though the advent of railways had improved mobility. There were those from further afield: Ireland, Wiltshire, Middlesex, Devon and Cornwall and even from Bethnal Green. Nearer home were those from Yorkshire and other parts of Lancashire.

As many of these incomers were of the Methodist persuasion, it was inevitable that a chapel should be built. The little Methodist Chapel was first registered "to be used as a Place of Meeting for Religious Worship by a Congregation or assembly of persons calling themselves Primitive Methodists" on 27th February 1875 and the document was signed by Ambrose Kirkland, Minister, of 65, Argyle Street, St. Helens. The chapel was originally on the St. Helens Primitive Methodist Circuit. (2)

The Primitives detached themselves from Wesleyan Methodism. They were proud of their basic beliefs, they spurned ritualistic practices and gave priority to simple hymn-singing and the spoken word as enunciated and interpreted by the Minister and the Lay Preachers, many of whom were miners. Psalms set to music and the Prayer Book were not used, emphasis, instead, being placed on the spontaneous, extempore prayers and sermons of the man in the pulpit. The pulpit was the focal point in the chapel.

The chapel at Crawford was designed for multi-purpose use. Roll-up walls made it adaptable as one large room or a number of smaller rooms. At one time or another almost the whole population of the village used the chapel, if not for religious worship, then for secular activities such as concerts, socials and tea parties of which there were many, but which always began and ended with *a word of prayer.*

This dual use of the premises instilled into my parents a sort of loving respect for the building. So many happy hours

were spent within the chapel that it was not regarded with the awe sometimes associated with more sombre churches, but rather as an extension of the home. This feeling of loving regard for the building was inherited by me from my parents so that as a child, and into adulthood, my own attendance at Douglas Bank Chapel in Wigan was an enjoyable experience. Your Grandma, my wife, who also was raised as a Methodist, has wonderful memories of involvement in chapel activities, you should ask her about them.

During childhood your great-grandparents, James Walter Naylor and Annie Hughes, spent most of their time either at home, at school, at Sunday School or at chapel. Home chores were many in those large families. One legitimate form of escape, however, was in attending week-night meetings in the chapel. The various societies within Methodism, such as Christian Endeavor and Band of Hope, catered for young people. These activities were a source of genuine enjoyment to my parents even though they were structured for learning rather than leisure. At least, whilst there, they were in the company of their own age-group. A little more leisure was available during the long summer days but, even then, free time was limited because the local farms were often in need of juvenile help and such meagre earnings were a welcome contribution to the family budget.

Somehow or other, my grandfather, James Naylor, managed to acquire a horse and cart and when he wasn't down the mine, he could be found travelling around the local villages selling groceries and hardware. He would do a regular sixteen mile round-trip to Wigan to obtain his weekly supplies from the wholesalers. some of the proceeds of his industry were invested in property. He was friendly with another important member of the chapel. Charlie Green, his friend, also worked at the pit but his was a more elevated

position than a hewer of coal, he was a checkweighman. With their hard-earned savings they invested in the building of a fine pair of semi-detached houses on the fringe of the village: No.'s 2 and 4 Crawford Village. The cost of those two houses at that time was around £150 they were eventually sold by Grandad Naylor and Charlie Green to Mr Richard Rigby in September 1925 for £250 As an indication of how inflation has gripped the latter half of this present century, the 1991 price asked for *one* of these semis was £59,000, an increase of more than one thousand fold!

Young Walter, my father, helped with the family business. He would fill bags, feed and groom the horse and tour the surrounding areas of Rainford, Crank and Digmoor with his father. Walter retained a lifelong love of horses, though, apart from army experience, he never worked with them again. He was a keen sportsman, especially for cricket. He grew into a useful fast, left-arm bowler. Primitive Methodists were keen cricketers, they had some good teams in the local leagues and Walter, along with the Hughes boys, was a team member from an early age. He continued as a cricketer for chapel and later for the Wigan Corporation Transport Cricket Club until an attack of angina forced him to retire at the age of forty two.

Your other great-great-grandad, John Hughes, the preacher, was almost a self-educated man. His education was acquired in three ways: the first was through the Primitive Methodist Sunday School where to read, mark, learn and inwardly digest the bible, especially the Gospels, was excellent literacy training; self confidence, also, developed with the many activities and projects in which 'scholars' were involved; secondly, church life in which he was a keen participant, holding office and as a local preacher, all of which fostered articulation, communication and skills in

human relationships; and thirdly in the work-a-day world of life amongst coal miners, where a man had to be a man, at least during working hours. This man had no formal training yet he was acknowledged to be a convincing, articulate exponent of the Gospels. John Hughes was an unsophisticated man with a simple message; he made the Bible understandable through the everyday experiences of common folk. At least, my mother was convinced of this, albeit from a prejudiced perspective; she would glow with pleasure on recollection of his sermons and the interesting illustrations or anecdotes he would relate to reinforce the pulpit message.

Crawford Village was a coal-mining island in a rural sea. One day Annie was out walking with her father in the surrounding countryside; together they watched the farmer ploughing his field in preparation for planting. They gazed awhile as the horse-drawn plough made its way from end to end of the field. Annie's father drew her attention to the amazing symmetry of the ploughed furrows.

"How can the farmer get the furrows so straight, Father" asked little Annie, "when he has nothing to measure straight with."

"'The secret", her father replied, "is because the farmer never looks back, he looks at a distant marker and never takes his eyes away".

He went on to quote the last verse of Chapter 9 of St. Luke's gospel: "'And Jesus said unto him, "No man, having put his hand to the plough and looking back, is fit for the Kingdom of God"'. That verse was his text for the following Sunday and he told how Annie's question had prompted the sermon.

When Annie was still a girl, she was a help to her father with his English. She helped in the construction of his sermons and prayers and knew how to put thoughts into

effective words. She was a bright girl: by the age of eleven, she had absorbed all the knowledge that the village school was equipped to offer. She spent most of her final year in school virtually acting as an unofficial, unpaid, pupilteacher and she loved it. The happy schoolgirl had a great affection for the schoolmaster who exuded kindness and patience. "Mester Falcon", the schoolmaster, wanted Annie to become a grammar school student and train for teaching because he knew that she would have excelled in the profession. Such ideas, of course, could remain merely dreams for a girl who was the middle child of ten in a coal miner's family. She used to tell me that she wept bitterly when, after being successful in the grammar school entrance examination, her father had to explain that she could not continue her education.

Annie's unusual literacy skills never atrophied. She was an excellent speller and writer. These same skills re-emerged when she eventually had a family of her own and they were the reason that the subject of English was a favourite lesson in the home. More than thirty years after her father died, Annie was again involved in sermon preparation when a son of her own was taking up lay preaching. Her skills were surely evident, to the discerning, in the sermons the young man preached and the examinations he passed. All through her long life, except for the final few years, she was a prolific and articulate letter writer.

Such was the insularity of the village, when Annie was leaving with her family in the move to nearby Wigan,her bosom friend, Emily, urged her to be sure and write in English.

The coincidence of birth for my parents: being born next door to each other, was followed by a further coincidence when the two families left Crawford together on the same day in 1911 and moved into the same street in Wigan where the

friendship was continued. The Hughes-Naylor coincidences took a tragic turn that same year but details of that event must await a later letter.

LETTER TWO REFERENCES

(1) R Bryan Hughes - Unpublished Family History. Charles M Stebner - "Letters To Dear Dan" (Biography of his mother who emigrated from Crawford Village to Wyoming, U.S.A. in 1905) .

(2) I viewed the relevant documents at Trinity Methodist Church, Lamberhead Green, Wigan on 26th June 1991 in the presence of Rev. A Taplin, Circuit Minister.

Crawford Village School, attended by Annie and Walter 1901-09.

Fine pair of semis - Built 1912-13 by James Naylor and Charlie Green. (Letter two)

A MINER'S MALADY

Dear James,

I am relieved to learn that you was not too upset to find that you do not originate from thoroughbred Lancastrian stock. I have nothing illustrious to relate about your forebears. Nevertheless, you do come from good, honest, hard-working, coal-mining precursors. I mentioned my Grandfather Naylor in the last letter; he died in 1927, the year before I was born, aged sixty-four. John Hughes, my other grandfather, died at the early age of forty-six in 1913 as a result of injuries suffered earlier in the mine.

My father, James Walter Naylor, began work in the mine when he was aged thirteen; he served in the 1914-18 war from the age of seventeen, having falsified his age, and received a shrapnel wound in the head at the Battle of The Somme. He recovered and was returned to the trenches. After the war he had no alternative but to return to the coal mine. With a wife and two young children, he endured the abominable 1926 strike, which lasted for seven months. (Mother also told interesting stories about that!).

Finally, in 1928, just before I was born, James Walter escaped from the mine into public service transport thanks to a relative who knew the General Manager. I well remember, as a young boy, hearing my father's bitter

complaints about the promises made to the men in the trenches, that they would return to a *'land fit for heroes to live in'*.

Your Grandma's father was named Thomas Pennington. Yes, you have guessed correctly, he also was a miner. His story is indeed a tragic one and, although it has no connection with Crawford, I feel you should know about it.

Thomas Pennington was a fine, well-built, athletic man of over six feet tall and a keen amateur rugby-league player. While still only a young man, and with a wife and young daughter, he contracted nystagmus, a dreaded mining disease. After several years of suffering unbearable headaches and sickness, he was driven to distraction and in desperation he finally put an end to his suffering.

This awful tragedy happened on a bitterly cold day in early December 1936: your great-grandfather, who was known to be a strong swimmer, drowned himself in the Leeds and Liverpool Canal at AppleyBridge. In order to ensure his own destruction, he had secured his wrists together with a strong cord. The terrible event was witnessed by a nine-year-old schoolboy and the distressing details were related in the Wigan Observer of the following Tuesday. Here it is in full:

WIGAN OBSERVER AND DISTRICT ADVERTISER
Tuesday December 8th, 1936

Death Leap Into Canal At Appley Bridge - Collier was victim of Nystagmus. Nine year old schoolboy as witness.

"A remarkable story of how a nine years old boy saw a man meet his death by jumping into the Leeds and Liverpool Canal at AppleyBridge was told to Col. H. Parker, the District Coroner, at an inquest at Standish on Monday, on Thomas Pennington (38) a collier of 16, Baldwin Street, Off Park Rd, Orrell whose body was recovered from the canal the previous Friday. Mr. S. Blackledge (Miners' Agent) represented the relatives and Mr. G.E.Allen the colliery company.

"Sarah Pennington, widow, said she last saw her husband alive the previous Wednesday afternoon when he told her he was going to her mother's house for a walk. He was a little depressed on account of having suffered for nearly two years from miners' nystagmus which caused him to have severe pains in the head and had affected his nerves. Her husband was formerly employed at Maypole Colliery. "Cyril Spencer (9) of 11, Appley Lock, Appley Bridge, said at 4.40pm the previous Wednesday, he was walking home from school and when he got on the towing path of the canal in Appley Lane he stopped and watched a number of boys who were playing with marbles. He then saw a man walking along the towing path in the direction of Liverpool and witness followed behind him. 'The man kept turning round and looking at me', added witness 'but after we had gone some distance the man ran towards the canal and dived in. I ran to the place where he went in and just saw his legs. I was frightened and went and told my mother.' The boy added that the man was wearing a light coat, brown trousers, a cap and spectacles. He was a big man and there was no one else about at the time.

"Police Constable Farrow said he conducted dragging operations on Thursday with the assistance of the man's relatives. They resumed work again on Friday morning and at 1.15 in the afternoon recovered the body about twenty yards from where the deceased was seen to dive in. The deceased's wrists were tied together with a piece of cord.

The Coroner said he was satisfied that Pennington had suffered from Nystagmus. He returned a verdict of suicide whilst of unsound mind. The latter being brought on by the deceased's illness."

Thomas Pennington's only child, your Grandma, was not quite six years old at the time. A very melancholy Christmas must have followed that tragic event!

I am sorry to end the letter on such a sombre note but life can be sad sometimes.

Thomas Pennington and James's grandma (my wife), four years before "The Tragedy". Letter three.

Dabbling in early radio.

DEATH IN WYOMING

Dear James,

When your great-grandparents, Annie and Walter were ten years old in 1907, a new enthusiasm gripped the membership of the Crawford chapel: the building was to be improved and extended. For over twenty years the premises had been inadequate for the demands placed upon them. A Building Fund was established and many events were organised to raise the much needed cash. Foundation stones were donated by those who could afford and the name and title of the donors were chiselled into the stone. They can still be read easily on the front wall of the chapel. Amongst the names is one which carries the inscription: The Hon. **Arthur** Stanley M.P. I was interested to learn that a Member of Parliament had been associated with the chapel. The records name **Albert** Stanley M.P. as the Labour M.P. for North West Staffs from 1907. Mr Stanley had been Agent of Cannock Chase, Midland Miners' Federation since 1884 when he was aged twenty one. He was born in 1863 and was thus a contemporary of my two grandads. The Honorable Mr Stanley was married with four sons and two daughters. It is recorded that he first worked in a coal pit and afterwards in the colliery offices. In 1898, he became Secretary of the same Midland Miners' Federation. He was also a member of Staffordshire County Council. This M.P.

becomes more relevant to us, James, when we read: EDUCATION: Primitive Methodist Sunday School. Albert Stanley M.P. died 17th December 1915 aged 52. (1)

As I was unable to find a record of **Arthur** Stanley M.P., I can only assume that this is one and the same man and the Christian name wrongly copied, a mistake which was not uncommon in the past nor is it uncommon today.

As a contribution to the Building Fund, single bricks were bought for half-a-crown by parents (a small fortune in those days); the initials of children were moulded into these bricks. Annie and Walter are represented amongst them as A.H. and J.N. (Annie Hughes and James Naylor). The improvements and extensions to the chapel could only go ahead if a new group of trustees was sworn in. Trustees were responsible for the building and any debts incurred because of it. On the 4th January 1910 the new building lease was drawn up and the Trustees listed, together with their occupations. The following relations of ours were included:

Reuben Bryan - Coal Miner. (Uncle to Annie)
James Naylor - Greengrocer. (As you already know, my Grandad Naylor had a part-time greengrocery business, hence this occupational designation. On his death certificate, however, the occupation given is that of Coal Hewer).
John Hughes - Coal Miner. (My maternal grandfather)
Benjamin Whitley Bryan - Coal Miner.) Sons of
) Reuben and
John Bryan - Coal Miner) cousins to Annie

My grandad, John Hughes, married Emma Bryan, sister of Reuben Bryan.

The Reverend J Bradley was Minister of Crawford Chapel when this new lease was taken out for 999 years from 12th November 1909. Ground Rent was fixed at £3.13.6 and the solicitors were Woodcock, Stobart & Co. Wigan. (2)

The registers and minute books of the chapel covering the first decade of the twentieth century contain many references to various members of our families. The Bryans were in greater number in the village than both the Hugheses and the Naylors. The Hughes family was represented by Grandfather John and his brother, William. The rest of the Hughes family had settled in Ashton-in-Makerfield and were active in Methodism and brass-banding there. William was a Sunday School Teacher at Crawford and he maintained an almost 100% attendance for the first four and a half years of the century. In 1905 his attendance was no longer recorded, there is a frame around his name as if he had died. He hadn't died, the facts are as follows:

In 1889, William had emigrated, along with his brother, Job Hughes, to America. "They began work at a mine in Whatt Cheer, Iowa, but after a few weeks of working, Job was killed in tragic circumstances. The two brothers were firing home-made shots, (which was the custom in those days). One shot didn't go off so after a few hours grace, Job went to investigate, as he approached the spot, the charge went off, Job sustained a fractured skull and died two days later, he was buried at Whatt Cheer, Iowa. U.S.A.

"William decided to bring Job's widow and two children, Job the third and Elizabeth, back to the U.K." ....."In 1905, William, and his brother Charles, set off once again for America, along with their families, relatives and friends. The brothers obtained work in the Union Pacific Mines at Hannah, Wyoming. In March 1908 an explosion occurred which was to be one of the worst in the history of mining in America." (3)

The above account, which was thoroughly researched by my late cousin, Reuben Bryan Hughes, both in this country and in the States, explains William's absence from

the Sunday School register. His brother Charles was killed in the Hannah explosion but William survived what was his third explosion. He continued in mining and eventually became a mine manager.

The evidence suggests that the Naylors were not as enthusiastic about the chapel as were the Hughes family. Your great-great-grandad, James Naylor, is recorded in the registers as a Sunday School Teacher, but long periods of non-attendance are noticeable. At a meeting of the Sunday School Staff, which was held on November 4th 1906, a resolution was passed that, "Bros. R Bryan and Lewis Glover go and see Bro. Naylor why he does not attend school and report." The visit seems to have had some effect because by the following June he was attending regularly. The record, however, does continue to show lapses in his attendance. No doubt his traveling shop took up much of his spare time.

LETTER FOUR REFERENCES

(1) "Who Was Who? 1897-1915" - A & C Black (Publishers) Ltd.

(2) Original viewed and copied by kind permission of Circuit Minister.

(3) R Bryan Hughes, Unpublished Family History.

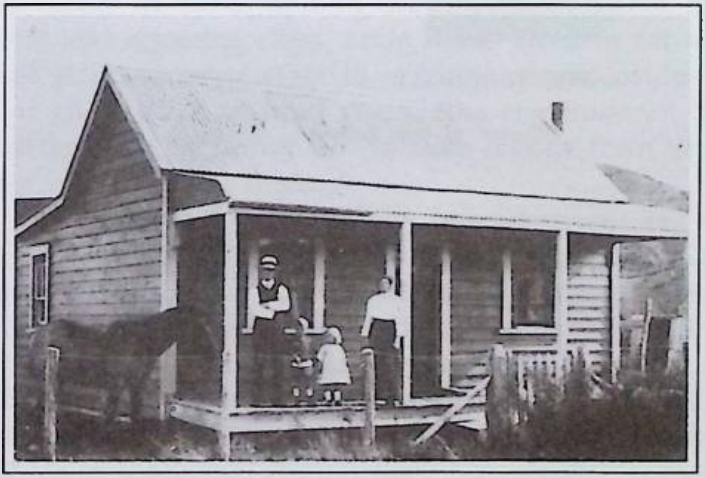
"He would do a regular Sixteen mile round-trip to Wigan to obtain his weekly supplies from the Wholesalers" p.10

James Naylor (the First), 1862-1927

John Hughes (Preacher), 1867-1913

"John Hughes had some skill in clog-making. In his little, dimly-lit shed he spent hours making and repairing clogs." p.27

James's Great-Great-Grandma Jane Ann Naylor (hands on Maggie's shoulders) with sisters, Lizzie and Maggie (seated)



William Hughes with Wife, Alice, and children outside their first home in Hannah, Wyoming, U.S.A. (Letter Four)

A Bazaar! Why?

DEAR FRIENDS,

Our Church has laboured many years for the social, moral, and spiritual well-being of the village, and with gratitude we record considerable success.

The Enlargement of our Church in 1909 cost £638, and to all who have assisted us in reducing our debt to the present amount, £100, we offer heartiest thanks.

We are, however, most anxious to clear off this remaining debt, and also to secure funds for the Re-Seating of the Church and Renovation of the Premises.

We hope by this effort to raise sufficient for these purposes, and appeal with confidence for your most generous sympathy and support.

ABIJAH HEATON,
Minister.

Officers of the Bazaar.

Treasurer	Mrs. L. GLOVER
Secretary	Mrs. B. W. BRYAN
General Secretaries	Messrs. J. BRYAN and WM. MARSH
Advertisement Secretary	Mr. CHARLES GREEN
Competition Secretary	Mr. B. W. BRYAN
Church Stewards	Messrs. L. GLOVER and R. BRYAN
,, Treasurer	Mr. J. BIGGIT

Bazzar, Crawford Chapel - March 1914
Souvenir Handbook - Price Twopence

PROVIDENCE

Dear James,

Annie felt that John Hughes, her father, was much too kind and sentimental ever to be a businessman like your namesake, James Naylor; he was also too deeply engaged in chapel affairs. Nevertheless, he was, like James, very hard-working. The fruits of *his* spare-time labours, however, seem to have remained financially unrewarded.

John Hughes had some skill in clog-making. In his little, dimly lit shed, behind the house, he spent hours making and repairing clogs. Little Annie loved to act as his errand girl, returning clogs to neighbours who couldn't go out or go to work without them. She remembered being instructed by her father not to take money from certain people and to give the message:

"Mi father sez yer mun pay him when yer see him" Which, of course, meant there was no charge. Grandfather Hughes, the clogmaker, knew all about poverty and pride.

John's wife, Emma, likewise had an urge to help others. She would wrap freshly baked bread in a clean towel and, placing it carefully into Annie's upturned palm, would say, "Just nip to Mrs _ _ _ _ and tell her I've done too much bread for us today, can she use this?"

Annie understood the adult code and these *'errands of mercy'* gave her an awareness of others which she never

forgot. She would often repeat to us children:

"It is more blessed to give than to receive"

She had, early in life, experienced the truth of that saying: she never owned a bank book; she prayed that she would have a shilling when she needed one and her prayers seemed to have been given a sympathetic hearing for, as a child, I never knew want. Your great-grandmother, James, was a frail woman who suffered from anemia for most of her middle life but somehow she managed to give birth, at home, to five children, all of whom survived into adulthood. I have little or no recollection of her complaining when I was a child.

"Count your blessings, name them one by one,
And it will surprise you what the Lord has done"

Mother sang this cheerful refrain as she went about her household chores. When difficulties arose she assured us that:

"God moves in a mysterious way
His wonders to perform.
He plants His footsteps in the sea,
And rides upon the storm"

Annie's lifelong favourite hymn, and the one which we sang at her funeral in her beloved Queen's Hall Mission in December 1984, was Number 450 in the Methodist Hymn Book:

"Now let us see Thy beauty Lord"

and the verse she liked best in this hymn earned half-a-crown ($12^1/_2$p) for me in 1937. I was eight years old at the time and absent from school during the summer holidays. In order to dispel my boredom on a wet day, Mother suggested that I enter a 'favourite verse' competition in a womens' magazine. Writers of published verses would receive half-a-crown. In my child's hand I wrote out the third verse of the above hymn:

"Our every feverish mood is cooled,
And gone is every load,
When we can lose the love of self,
And find the love of God"

I wrote that it was my mother's favourite - what a delightful shock I received when the postal order arrived! I suspect that the combination of a child's handwriting and the soothing sentiments evoked by the verse, was too much for the Letters Editor to ignore. The two shillings and sixpence was all my own to spend two weeks later when I received an even greater surprise: my '*rich*' uncle, Fred Hughes, after whom I had been named, the same person who had pressed a half crown into a baby palm at my Christening, took me to Morecambe for my first-ever holiday. A more sophisticated generation would regard the half-crown and the holiday as a happy coincidence, but Mother didn't talk about coincidence; she didn't believe in luck either, good or bad. The word she used was '**Providence**' and she defined it thus: "Provided by the Lord for a genuine need".

As a child Annie had absorbed, like a sponge, the practical Methodist philosophy. She was too happy and secure in her childhood ever to doubt it. When she became an adult the roots were too deep to be disturbed. Dad, also born in the village, had similar roots but the different experiences of the coal mine and the army had fostered a more earthy, humanistic attitude which, during the long married partnership, modified Annie's more simplistic philosophies.

In her dad's clog shed, it was Annie's job to apply the shine before the clogs were returned to their owners; she also cleaned all the family footwear. She derived considerable satisfaction and pleasure from cleaning shoes. Clean shoes were so important to my mother that she tended to judge a man's character or his marriage by the condition of his shoes: a single man of means with untidy shoes had,

according to Mother, a flaw in his make-up, and a married man minus a shine on his shoes had made a bad choice of wife. It was an obviously flawed philosophy but, with an occasional exception, Mother was convinced of its infallibility.

All her life Annie loved children. While still a child herself she was a regular guardian of her mentally handicapped cousin, Sarah Jane, who was four years her junior. She told us amusing anecdotes of Sarah Jane's antics. Because of Sarah Jane's misfortune she was allowed a lot of licence. A blind eye was turned to her misdemeanors and neighbours would talk lovingly of her mischievous manners. The young Annie, however, was charged with her cousin's good behaviour and well-being and she took the task seriously. She escorted her to school and chapel. We can only guess, James, at the chaos that was sometimes caused within the little school where Sarah Jane was a reluctant pupil. Her vocabulary was limited but she had a few oft-repeated phrases which were delivered parrot-fashion and usually at full volume. In school, when she had had enough for that day, she would chant, "*Five to four - five to four - five to four!*" which was the time to clear desks and put on coats. No doubt she brought light relief to the scholars while at the same time testing to breaking point the patience of the Schoolmaster and Miss, though, Mother couldn't remember her ever being punished for the outbursts.

Sarah Jane's father was the Sunday School Superintendent and, at prayer time, she would blurt out, "*Amen now Father!*" several times and, to the delight of the children, the prayers would be curtailed. There were rumours that she was occasionally prompted.

Doors were seldom locked and during the summertime, as housewives chatted at the front door, Sarah Jane would find her way into a house from the rear, make a bee-line for the kitchen and busily set about mixing any ingredients she could lay hands on. After adding liquids and mixing well, she

would depart for another house. Such antics were generally met with a resigned shrug and acceptant comments such as: "Sarah Jane's been". On such occasions, Annie would be taken to task for neglecting her duty. Inevitably, eventually, Sarah Jane was placed into the care of an institution at Lancaster.

I remember visiting her at Lancaster when I was very young. She was, by then, around forty years old. We gave her half an orange which she promptly swallowed whole, pips an' all. It wasn't long before she began to repeat, "*Five to four! Five to four!* " A cry for help? Maybe! We were unable to respond.

Properly brought-up young Methodists were very familiar with the collecting box or card. Sarah Jane's institution was high on the list of our charities. Each year a collecting card arrived from Lancaster for me. On one side of this card were a hundred and twenty squares, each square was pricked with a pin on receipt of one penny. When all the squares had been pricked, I had collected ten shillings (240 pence = £1) . Facing the squares were lines and £-s-d columns. People willing to contribute more than one penny, who wanted recognition of their gift, would write name and amount on that side. It was possible and indeed expected that several pounds would be collected in this way. *£2-10-0 in the 1930's was equal to a week's wages for my dad.*

Rather reluctantly, morally pressured, and enthusiastically encouraged by Mother, I approached local trades-people. After more than fifty years, I can still remember the little speech I was taught to say, "Can you please spare a copper for the feeble-minded?" and as I write those words, I can feel the thrill of success at a positive response. There were setbacks, however, like the reply I received on one occasion, "*There's enough feeble-minded people working here, we can't help anybody elses!*" Needless to say, when I reported this '*slander*' to Mother, a lifelong

boycott was placed on that particular establishment. My sense of humour wasn't too well-developed in those days so it was with strong feelings of resentment that I passed by that store for a long time afterwards.

Back to Crawford Village where Annie had many opportunities to learn the art of child-rearing. With four brothers and a sister, all younger than herself, her time was fully occupied. She worked hard at teaching them to talk but she fell foul of one of her older brothers when she encouraged the little ones to walk. "*Stop that Nan!*" he would grumble, "*Don't you know that as soon as he can walk, there'll be another one here*"

She loved her six brothers but Benjamin and John were a bit special. Ben was mild-mannered and gentle-spoken and he was of a more delicate physique than the others. As a young child he suffered from a serious lung complaint which involved regular draining of fluid from the lungs. This operation was done by Dr Prosser, the family doctor, who travelled by pony and trap from nearby Rainford. The operation was performed in the home. Annie must have seen this happening on one occasion because she described how the doctor inserted a tube into Ben's back below the shoulder blade and drained off the fluid into a jar.

There was a doctor practising in the village but, for some reason, my grandparents preferred the doctor from Rainford. On one memorable occasion, when Annie's mother appeared to be in labour, one of the brothers, Reuben, was dispatched to run at speed to Rainford to fetch the doctor. The doctor left immediately in pony and trap leaving poor Reuben to walk home. By the time he arrived home, a new baby had been born. In a state of shock, as the doctor was leaving, Reuben exclaimed, "*I wouldn't have fetched **you** if I'd known what you was bringing!*"

Annie's father and mother: John Hughes (the preacher) and Wife, Emma, 1912.

THE FAMILY THAT CREATED CRAWFORD

Dear James,

Unlike us, the family that owned the land and mines where our forebears lived and toiled can boast some truly historic associations which stretch back for almost a thousand years to the time of William The Conqueror; Lord Crawford's ancestors were Scottish noblemen of no small repute.

The current incumbent of the Earldom is the 29th Earl of Crawford and 12th Earl of Balcarres, he is also a Premier Earl on the Union Roll of Scotland. He is Robert Alexander Lindsay; he was born on the 5th March, 1927 and succeeded to Baron Wigan in 1975; he was educated at Eton and Trinity College, Cambridge. (1) In 1949 Robert Alexander Lindsay married Ruth Beatrice, daughter of Leo Meyer-Bechtler of 49, Keltenstrasse, Zurich, Switzerland. This Earl was created a Privy Counsellor in 1972 and became a Life-Baron, '*Balneil of Pitcorthie*' in the Scottish County of Fife in 1974. The '*seat*' of the Earl of Crawford and Balcarres is Colinsburgh, Fife, which is situated south of St. Andrews.

Five Earls earlier (pardon the pun) the 24th Earl of Crawford was created Baron Wigan of Haigh Hall on July 5th 1826 and the Earldom of Crawford and Lordship of Lindsay were confirmed to him in 1848.

This lad's mother had married Alexander Lindsay, the 6th Earl of Balcarres in the 1780's. She was the last of the famous Bradshaws of Haigh.

This illustrious line began way back in the year 1113 with Walter de Lindsay. A grandson of his, named William, succeeded as the third Lord of Ereildum, a magnate of Scotland from 1161-1200. He was a hostage for King William The Lion at the Court of Henry II, afterwards he became High Judiciary of the Lothian. The Lordship of Crawford in Clydesdale was acquired by him before the year 1200.

Are you paying attention, James? No doubt you are finding the story as tedious as your own ancestry.

In 1255, the 9th Earl was made a Regent of Scotland, he was, in fact, a companion of the great King Robert The Bruce. The Court of Arms of this noble family includes the Scottish lions rampant, and the motto: "*Endure-Fort*', means '*Suffer Bravely*'.

And thus, finally, and no doubt, mercifully for you James, I arrive at the relevant Earl, James Ludovic Lindsay, 26th Earl. The 26th Earl of Crawford is the one whose history coincides with the Crawford Village story. From 1874 to 1880, whilst his coal mines at Crawford and at Haigh were flourishing, the contemporary Baron Wigan, who was born in 1847, served as Member of Parliament for Wigan. In 1869 he had married Emily Florence Wilbraham, the granddaughter of Edward, the first Baron Skelmersdale.

In the year 1900, when your great-grandmother was three years old, this Earl's son was M.P. for the Chorley Division of Lancashire. It was said of him "*he was amongst the best-liked men in English Society*" and on Thursday 18th January 1900, "*he led to the altar one of the fairest of British beauties*". The event was reported as follows in the **Wigan Observer of Saturday January 27th**:

OUR LONDON LETTER

London Society's Good Wishes To Lord Balcarres - London Thursday

Lord Balcarres, M.P., has long been regarded as one of the fortunate young men in society and in politics. What young man would not be so regarded who is the heir to an historic earldom, is the private secretary of one of the more prominent statesmen of the day, and is himself among the best-liked men in English society? Today he is more fortunate than ever. But an hour or two since he led to the altar one of the fairest of British beauties - a lady who, as she passed me radiant in her fresh girlhood and her winsome, wistful gladness, inspired me to a conscious recollection of Tom Moore's famous apostrophe to the sex:

'Ye are stars of the night, ye are gems of the morn,
Ye are dewdrops whose lustre illumines the thorn,
And rayless that night is, that morning unblest,
Where no beam in your eye lights up peace in the breast'.

The very congregation which thronged St. Margaret's, Westminster, was a dream of fair women: but fairest of all was this tall, graceful girl, glancing half-timorously here and there among her friends, and then gliding with rhythmic movement to the altar. "Women", saith the ancient philosopher, "hath more strength in their looks than we have in our laws." Then will Lady Balcarres become greatly powerful. She is one of the beautiful women of London society."

The wedding was a truly auspicious occasion and the constituency party wished to demonstrate the loyalty and affection of the electorate with a suitable gift. The fund-raising committee, however, seem to have run into some difficulties. The following report appeared in the same newspaper on Saturday February 10th, 1900:

THE BALCARRES WEDDING PRESENT

The committee appointed on behalf of the constituents of the Chorley Division to present Lord Balcarres M.P. with a suitable token on the occasion of his Lordship's marriage, met in the Town Hall Chamber, Chorley on Wednesday last, when the honorary secretary (the Town Clerk) submitted his report showing the amount subscribed to be £158. It was pointed out that although the response to the Hon. Sec's circular letter had been most favourable, no doubt very many who would like to subscribe had not been communicated with. The committee, therefore, decided to keep the list open until the end of the month" (The Lord had been married for over a month by that time) "so as to give everyone in the division wishful to contribute, an opportunity of doing so. The Town Clerk will be very glad to receive any subscriptions, large or small, towards the fund before the 28th inst."

Sir Walter Scott tells an interesting tale about a Scottish Earl who may well have been a member of this distinguished family: "In 1452 the Earl who was called Earl Beardie, and was sometimes, from the ferocity of his temper, called the Tiger Earl, who had great power in the counties of Angus, Perth and Kincardine, joined in league with the Earls of

Douglas and Ross in opposition to James II, King of Scotland." To the Earl's credit, however, he was one of the first to desert this disloyal alliance. He "applied to the King for forgiveness and restoration to favour. He appeared before James in the most humble guise, in poor apparel, bareheaded and barefooted, like a condemned criminal; and throwing himself at the King's feet, he confessed his treason, and entreated the royal mercy, on account of the loyalty of his ancestors, and the sincerity of his repentance". As a result he was granted a full pardon. (2)

LETTER SIX REFERENCES

(1) All details concerning the lineage of Lord Crawford's family from "Debrett's Peerage 1990" by kind permission of Debrett's Peerage Limited.

(2) "Tales of A Grandfather" Walter Scott, pp. 166-170, Published: Adam & Charles Black, Edinburgh, 1872.

THE CHILDREN'S DAY

Dear James,

It may be difficult for you to understand the degree of importance and influence of the Chapel in Crawford Village. Attendance at Sunday School was a priority for the children. A 100% attendance and punctuality was the aim. Only those scholars who achieved that standard could be awarded a first class book prize. Winners were immensely proud of their prizes, even years afterwards, when they reached adulthood. There were prizes for infants as young as three. In many ways these children were quite precocious; they learned to perform for adults when they were barely out of nappies.

The annual Sunday School Anniversary was the highlight of the year. Many hours were spent in learning the hymns and anthems for that day. A lot of effort was put into the task. The children went to 'practise' on one or two week nights and also were expected to stay for an extra hour after Sunday School. As the important day approached, the activity became feverish and several week nights could be spent 'practising'. This was *'The Children's Day'*, they were on display dressed in their *Sunday best*, which was usually new for the occasion.

The *'special' day* began with a *'Procession of Witness'*; scholars and adults met outside the chapel at 9.00am. The whole congregation: men, women and children, accompanied

by a number of stragglers, left the chapel and proceeded '*walking day*' fashion to all the farms in the area. When the company arrived in a farmyard, the farmer, his family and the labourers stood around respectfully whilst the hymns were sung. The only accompaniment being the whining of the farm dogs. Testimonies to the '*The Saving Grace of The Lord*' were given and the obligatory '*word of prayer*' said . Listeners were urged to repent and attend the services at the chapel on that important day.

After visiting all the friendly farms (one or two were known to be hostile to the '*Methodies*' and therefore were not visited), the walkers made their way to the railway station at Upholland. This was situated about a mile away in Pimbo Lane. Once there, a service was conducted .

After '*witnessing*' at the railway station, the procession returned to Crawford having covered a distance of several miles. On the return journey, men carried weary infants. Arriving back at the chapel, the group was dismissed with a prayer. In less than two hours they were back for the afternoon, indoor performance of the '*scholars*' and choir . This celebration day, which was familiarly known as '*The Sermons*', continued with an evening service at which the spoken word of the Minister took priority, though not to the exclusion of hymns and anthems. There can be no doubt that this was the most important day in the Chapel calendar.

The training of children was a serious business at Crawford Chapel. A considerable proportion of the time in the Chapel programme was devoted to it. The precepts taught were beyond question and the children felt safe and secure. In the experience of your great grandparents, James, and indeed in my own, a religious upbringing didn't equate with unpleasantness. There was much to be enjoyed. Several annual chapel events were memorable.

Without doubt, the highlight of the summer for my parents was the '*Field Treat*' which was sometimes organised for the day before '*The sermons*'. On that pleasurable occasion, games and competitions were organised and healthy appetites were indulged. There was opportunity enough for every child to enjoy the day. The sack race was very popular, you stood in a sack, held it up around the waist and jumped furiously for the finishing line. The three-legged race was for two children to form a partnership and race with one leg tied to the partner's leg. A popular race, at least with the boys, was the wheelbarrow race: one partner was the barrow and had to run on his hands whilst the other boy held up his legs and gripped his ankles as if they were the handles.

The girls and mums enjoyed the egg and spoon race and the fathers joined the boys in throwing the cricket ball. Also all the usual races of varying distances were held. And, James, no expense was incurred for all that fun.

The Minutes of a Sunday School Teachers' meeting which was held on July 1st 1907, will give you an idea of how important the '*Field Treat*' was considered:

Special Teacher Meeting - Held July 1st 1907 (1)

1. That Bro. Diggle be Chairman.
2. That the Field Treat be the 13th inst and the refreshments be as last year and the provisions come from Bro. Diggle's.
   (Bro. Diggle had a shop in the village. No doubt the 'provisions' were purchased at cost price with mutual benefits)
3. That the Teachers have lunch with the children.
   (ensuring good manners and polite behaviour?)

4. That Bro. Thos Glover sees Mr Hartley about a field for the children.
5. That Bro. Thos Glover gets 56lb of nuts for the children.
6. That Bros. L Glover, J Hoy, W H Simmons, W Marsh and B W Bryan look after the children.
7. That Bro. Diggle see to the tent.
8. That all teachers give a hand to the tent.
9. That we parade the streets and sing in the Centre of the Village before going to the field.
10. That Bros. T Glover, L Glover and J Hoy look after the procession on Sunday. (The Walking Day)

John Diggle, Chairman. Thos Glover, Secy.

Christmas at Crawford was a religious festival, the only concession to frivolity was the home visits made by Father Christmas when the lucky ones might receive an orange, an apple, nuts, a sugar pig and new socks or handkerchiefs.

The *New Year Party* was the time for fun. The chapel was filled with food and laughter. The party began with a meal or, as Mother called it, a '*knife and fork tea*'. It was a cold meal because there were no cooking facilities but the home-cooked ham and tongue, potted salmon and home-made cakes compensated for the lack of cooking. Such fare was a rare luxury reserved for special occasions and seldom eaten in the home except, perhaps, when the visiting preacher came to tea (2). After tea when the tables were cleared and folded away, the fun began. Everyone and anyone did their party piece, from childlike recitations and adult monologues to songs, choral pieces, instrumental contributions by the village band, sketches and comedy.

It was all home-produced entertainment, much of it repeated year in, year out, but all the more popular because of its familiarity which rendered it public property and

enabled the audience to participate actively. The concert ended and oranges and nuts were distributed. Finally the Sunday School prizes for the year's attendance were presented and the party was over for another year.

LETTER SEVEN REFERENCES

(1) Crawford Chapel Minute Books, 1888-1963, Leigh Records Office.

(2) The same excellent, high standards of hospitality are still available at the Crawford chapel. I have sampled them on several enjoyable occasions during the preparation of this book.

James's Great-Great-Grandad, John Hughes with younger sons, Benjamin and Harry - 1908.

Annie (second from right, front row) with her brothers and sisters - 1912.

MEMORIAL SOUVENIR OF QUEEN VICTORIA'S FUNERAL
From the Bryan Family Bible

ADVERT FOR 'THE RECHABITES'
From Souvenir Programme, Crawford Chapel, March 1914
(Letter 9)

ILLEGITIMACY,CRIME, AND HAPPY FAMILIES

Dear James,

We know that the early part of the twentieth century was not free from poverty or crime no matter what your great-grandmother believed. Her personal recollections, however, include few references to the twin evils, this was simply because she had no experience of them. Annie had a fortunate childhood, cocooned as she was in this small Methodist, mining community where work was available for all who were fit and able. Once the children had left school at twelve years of age they were able to contribute to the family budget. Some daughters were employed at the pit, some on the farms and others '*in service*' to the better-off. The girls who were not employed were little housemaids in the family home, making life less of a drudgery for a mother whose energy and enthusiasm had, in many cases, been drained by regular child bearing. Poverty visited those families which had become '*one-parent*' by the untimely death of the bread-winner through mine accident or sickness.

Sexual promiscuity, then as now, was a fact of life but children born outside of marriage were more likely to be the result of ignorance than choice as is often the case nowadays. Attempts were made to keep illegitimacy secret, as far as possible, within the family, though the neighbours

usually knew. Grandparents brought up children born in such circumstances as if they were their own. Many's the child that grew up believing his mother to be his older sister. Sometimes, of course, the state of pregnancy was a deliberate ploy to escape the unpaid, unappreciated drudgery of the home. Sons were not always free agents either. They were likely to be discouraged from marrying by their parents because, so long as they were employed, they were a useful, family financial asset. It's no wonder that conspiracies to become pregnant were sometimes entered into as a way out for both parties. Unfortunately, it often meant a return-ticket to the family of origin for housing accommodation, and in some cases they became a family divided: mother and child with her mother, and father living with his parents and thus obliged to support both families. Of course, in these days of re-possession of property where mortgages connot be found, some of today's families are having similar experiences. My Grandma Naylor had a baby before marriage, then she met and married Grandad Naylor who had children from a previous marriage. Eventually they had children of their own and my father, James Walter, was one of them.

Crime, so far as your great-grandma, Annie, was concerned, was limited to the older boys of the village - her own brothers amongst them - misbehaving, stealing apples, playing practical jokes and making fun of the Village Policeman. The Village bobby's name was Paddy Coady and it will come as no surprise to you, James, to learn that he was a sturdy Irishman from Tipperary. Mrs Coady, also from Tipperary, gave birth to six children at various locations: Spotland, Rochdale; Ribchester; Burnley and Tipperary. The births would seem to reflect P.C.Coady's service in Lancashire. His postings had brought no promotion, unless the easy beat in Crawford Village could be considered as such. Annie told how the boys would play practical jokes on this guardian of law and order. He regularly left his cloak

hanging on a fence and just as regularly the village boys would hide it; they would call names after him and mimic his Irish accent. Then, as the constable began another losing chase, he would call out, 'Yus don't need to run, I knows all yus names!'.

A'*crime*' which occurred weekly, without fail,upset Annie. A neighbour's husband got drunk on Saturday night, returned home late, put his wife and children in the street followed by every stick of furniture, except the bed. Regular as clockwork, every Sunday morning, as Annie went to Chapel, she would see him carrying back all the furniture and blaming his wife for the disturbance. Annie never forgot the gossip caused on such occasions. She also remembered the outrage felt by the Chapel folk at the man who was expelled from the Methodist Society in Crawford for repeated drunkenness. Sometimes in the winter, scary things happened. Annie told of one occasion when her father was granted an escort of two older scholars to accompany him to a preaching appointment at Billinge because of the risk of attack along the way.

The Lancashire and Wigan Records of the time include many cases of drunkenness and drunken violence. Many licencees of inns were prosecuted for selling alcohol out of hours and for permitting drunkenness on the premises. Punishment for such offences could vary quite dramatically, perhaps from a £1 fine to £10 plus costs and endorsement of the licence. The punishment was supposed to reflect the severity of the offence. At the Lancaster Quarter Sessions of 1900, one licencee was fined £1 with eleven shillings costs, "and if he couldn't or didn't pay the fine immediately, his goods are to to be sold until he is caused distress". If that didn't suffice, he was to serve fourteen days Hard Labour. The licencee appealed against the conviction and, no doubt to his great relief, the conviction was quashed. How long the appeal took is not reported.

Crimes recorded from the Quarter Sessions of the time often use the term '*felon*'. The Concise Oxford Dictionary defines '*felony*' as "grave crime, usually involving violence" so, by those standards, there was a lot of violence about. Violent crime was punished by terms of Hard Labour for varying lengths of time. Type of crime is not indicated in the public records unless individual cases are researched.

An interesting case occurred at those same Lancaster Quarter Sessions when "Annie Elizabeth Gibson having at this session been adjudged to be an Incorrigible Rogue. This Court doth remand him (sic) in safe custody and to Hard Labour for the term of twelve calendar months." - A con man/woman of 1900? A female impersonator? An error in transcription is more likely. Thomas McGough and Thomas Horne were convicted of assault with intent to commit a rape. McGough was sentenced to 18 months Hard Labour and Horne to 9 months Hard Labour.

Little innocent Annie knew nothing of this sordid world of crime. It is certain that had she read the Wigan Observer she would have been shaken to the core, especially at the report of the hanging of '*The 'Dalton Murderess*'. The case was reported as follows in the Wigan Observer of January 10th 1900:

EXECUTION OF THE DALTON MURDERESS

She Confessed To Her Guilt

(Special Telegram)

Louise Masait (36), French governess, was executed at Newgate yesterday (Tuesday) morning for the murder of her illegitimate child, Louis Masait, aged $3^1/_2$. The crime was of a peculiarly cold-blooded nature; the mother taking the boy from the custody of its foster parents, ostensibly to send him to France, by request of the father, a Frenchman, but strangling him in the ladies lavatory at Dalton Station. The motive for the

crime was supposed to be the fact that the culprit was courting a young Englishman. "Billington was the executioner, and the condemned woman, looking careworn and haggard, submitted to the pinioning process without the slightest resistance. To the relief of all she confessed to the crime, her last words being: 'What I am about to suffer is just and now my conscience is clear'. She walked to the scaffold without assistance, and death appeared to be instantaneous. Outside the prison between 2,000 and 3,000 persons had assembled, and the appearance of the black flag was greeted with loud cheers".

While Annie was basking in the love, affection and security of her Primitive Methodist home, Wigan - a mere eight miles away - was apparently overrun with homeless children. On Saturday January 6th, 1900, a Wigan Observer announcement told of the New Year Party which had been given by the Council for 300 local *waifs and strays.*

James, I hope you will always value the family unit of two parents with children in a loving relationship which, is your heritage, from your mother and father going back several generations. Never be mislead into that brand of extreme individuality which can lead to divorce and broken families together with misery, distress and insecurity for innocent children. I greatly value my long and happy marriage to your Grandma which, I believe, is partly as a result of my own happy childhood, made possible by the love and sacrifice of my parents.

"He served in the 1914-18 war from the age of seventeen having falsified his age, and received a shrapnel wound in the head at the Battle of The Somme" p16

James Walter Naylor - 1914, James's Great-Grandfather. (Letter Three)

F Hughes Naylor, aged seven, 1935.

"Mother's voice, like a magic melody lulled us to sleep with tales of a bygone age." p.3

MINNIE GLOVER b.11-11-1895
OLDEST LIVING RESIDENT OF CRAWFORD VILLAGE
CONTEMPORARY OF ANNIE.
(Photograph taken, 21st August 1992)

THE RECHABITES

Dear James,

As I told you in a previous letter, there were societies within the Chapel such as the Christian Endeavour, The Band of Hope and the Rechabites. It seems that my parents and their brothers and sisters were involved in all of them. The Independent Order of Rechabites (the 'ch' is pronounced as a 'k') is a Friendly Society which offers insurance for people who are '*total abstainers*' from all forms of alcoholic drink. To your great grandparents, James, Methodism and membership of the Rechabites was synonomous. They were devoted to the cause of teetotalism and any new members of the family were soon enrolled. Mother remembered some babies were baptised and enrolled at the same time. The evidence which I found, however, indicated enrolment at around the age of four. (1)

When I was growing up in the 1930's, our family Rechabite Certificate was framed and displayed in a prominent position. It proudly proclaimed to all visitors that ours was a Rechabite household and that we belonged to '*The Independent Order of Rechabites - Perseverance Tent - Salford Unity*'. The emblem of the Order, which each certificate carried, was a very intriguing design composed of twenty individual elements. As a boy I was fascinated and somewhat in awe of this picture, the focal point of which was

the watching eye of God. This was a very ingenious motif which comprehensively covered every aspect of the temperance movement.

A whole 'Textbook of Temperance Knowledge' was based upon this emblem. (2) Each chapter of the book analysed and explained the various components of the emblem and urged the student to take up a life of total abstinence from strong drink. For example: THE BEEHIVE which adorned the top of the emblem was a reminder of the industry of the bee. THE SERPENT and THE DOVE urged members to be wise as serpents but gentle as doves; THE LIFEBOAT signified the importance of The Order in rescuing people from the power of alcohol. NOAH'S ARK depicted safety and security: just as Noah and his family were safe from the dangers of the flood because they were in the Ark, so members of the Order could feel secure within this Friendly Society. THE TWISTED CORD symbolised the unity of people joined together in a common cause. In various ways, the twenty components of the emblem were used to teach the temperance message. The complete emblem highlighted the following virtues: justice, security, wisdom, national and international strength of the Order, and peace and plenty: the reward of temperance. Over all was the watching eye of God, reminding members of the need to 'Be faithful'. Chapter 8 of the textbook entitled 'The Eye', concluded with the following sentence: "As Rechabites, we must set a good example, for God is also watching us and we must never let Him down". This was followed by a verse which my mother often sang:

Dare to be a Daniel,
Dare to stand alone.
Dare to have a purpose firm
And Dare to make it known.

That was the textbook used by my parents for the Temperance Knowledge Examinations and your great-grandmother still quoted huge chunks from it when she was in her seventies.

The Rechabite's annual trip to Southport in a waggonette was an exciting affair. This event was still in vogue in my own childhood. As we walked around the Pleasure Beach wearing our badges, the stallholders and joyride attendants would yell unceasingly, "Half price for all the little Rech-abites. I can't be sure whether the mispronunciation was due to lack of education or to a certain irony on their part. Perhaps, to them, we did resemble unfortunate little *wretches* but we certainly didn't feel like them.

The Independent Order of Rechabites, which grew to worldwide stature, began as a Lancashire initiative. This is not the place for a comprehensive history of the movement, though it makes interesting reading. The Order still exists and claims to be meeting the latest challenges of the late twentieth century. I am indebted to the High Secretary at the Manchester Headquarters of the Society for the Temperance Textbook and for the following information:

> The Independent Order of Rechabites took its name from an Old Testament tribe of nomads who lived in tents. They neither drank alcohol nor had regard for unnecessary possessions. The Society was started in 1835 in Salford, Lancashire. The fundamental aim was to provide much needed sickness benefit and health insurance for factory workers. In those days, even before Queen Victoria came to the throne, members were asked to become abstainers. The money thus saved being put towards improving living standards. At the same time, new members were encouraged to adopt a more moral attitude to life.

"Today we do not live in the poverty and degredation of the industrial worker of 150 years ago, but we still argue the need for an affordable range of financial services. We feel there is a growing need for a more natural lifestyle. Our point of view says it is more sensible to make the one work to the advantage of the other - harmonising the abstainer's philosophy with financial responsibility."

The Rechabites currently (1991) administer funds in excess of £11,000,000.

'DEMON DRINK'

The 1939-45 war brought some changes in our home. Ironically, the Rechabite certificate was replaced with a large photo of the uniformed and smiling Soviet Leader, Joseph Stalin, of the now defunct U.S.S.R. He was your great-grandfather's wartime hero. My Dear Dad, Walter, died prematurely in 1961. Recent events in Eastern Europe would have been difficult for Dad to understand. 'The Rechabites' was satisfying a desperate need for some security in the precarious lives of miners and their families. Accidents and disasters happened frequently in the mines. Several local authors have poignantly documented the tragic details of these disasters. (3) Whole villages were devastated as the wage-earners were killed leaving widows, sometimes with large families of young children. Often sons were killed alongside their fathers. There was little or no insurance for the hapless survivors until the Friendly Societies, such as the Rechabites, and burial societies were formed. The many pit disasters exposed the plight of the deceaseds' dependants and the need for some form of insurance. The Rechabites was unique in being *the first temperance friendly society*. Signing *the 'pledge'* of total abstinence from any kind of alcoholic drink was an important condition of membership.

Our own family had known something of the *'Demon Drink'*. The founder member of our branch of the Hughes clan, Job Hughes the First, was remembered by his grandaughter as a heavy drinking chauvinist. Charles M.Stebner, an American descendant of the Hughes family, writing to his grandson, Dan, records some of his mother's childhood recollections. Her maiden name was Mary Hughes and Job was her grandfather.

> In England we know that Little Mary had her hands full with her ill mother and hard-working father and her little brother John. That would have been enough but she still had a problem with her grandfather, Job. He lived next door. He was the original leader of the Hughes clan. Even with his hard life of drinking and working it allowed him to live beyond the age of seventy two, and it was done in reasonable comfort, while his six sons worked and even died in the mines. Old Job seems to have retired rather early and demanded much attention. Most of his sons and families were devout Methodists and they gave their musical talents to their communities and church. Apparently old Job did not share their dedication.
> Mother once told me this story: 'I had a difficult chore every day for Grandpa. He insisted that I go to the saloon and fetch him his daily bucket of beer. With the old lunch pail that he used to carry into the mine, and a small coin in it, he sent me on my way."'
> .....and later:
> "Little Mary might be considered an early feminist! She resisted the demands of her grandfather, for in her Methodist Sunday School she was enlisted in a group (I believe it was called 'Jacobeans') which was apparently a temperance organisation. They, with other groups, would parade through the mining area on Sundays with

drums and other band instruments. (In fact, when your grandmother and I were in England, we observed just such a meager parade.) No doubt the Jacobeans encouraged little Mary to avoid the saloon. Old Job ranted and swore about the Jacobeans until he died because Mary would no longer fetch him his daily beer." (4)

You will notice, James, that Charles Stebner was also writing letters to his grandson. A failing of old age, I'm afraid, is a fervent wish to be remembered with affection. Incidentally, James, I was rather amused at my American cousin's apparent confusion of the Rechabites with the Jacobites or Jacobeans, as he calls them. If you are still interested, you will find full details of the original tribe of Rechab in the Old Testament: Jeremiah,Chapter 35.

LETTER NINE REFERENCES

(1) Rechabite Members' Certificates of two uncles dated 1904.
(See page 59)

(2) Kindly made available by the High Secretary of The Independent Order of Rechabites, Head Office, 1 North Parade, Deansgate, Manchester.

(3) See, for instance, "Weep Mothers Weep", by Ian G.Winstanley, which tells the tragic story of the Wood Pit explosion at Haydock in 1878.

(4) "Letters to Dear Dan" by Dr. Charles M. Stebner, Wyoming, U.S.A.

Rechabite Certificate - 1904

BY THE BANKS OF THE DOUGLAS

Dear James,

All good things must needs come to an end and pits eventually become unprofitable (these days they are closed by 'rationalisation'). Year by year, fewer miners were required at the Crawford pits and so it became necessary for the menfolk to travel to other collieries. Yet again, it was 'Hobson's Choice': move or starve. At that time there were many active pits in Wigan and, as the distance from Crawford was minimal, it was an obvious choice. Thus it was that in January of 1911, the Hughes and Naylor families uprooted themselves and, with Grandad Naylor's greengrocery cart converted to furniture removal, the pathetic band trekked to Wigan. Mother laughed until tears ran down her cheeks as she described the journey - the cart loaded to overflowing and mother and children walking alongside - the older brothers made their own way to Wigan. (who could blame them?) It was a cold winter's day but the excitement and the walking kept them warm.

Friends had previously found accommodation for them in two adjacent, terraced houses in the same street. That was the second important coincidence that happened in my parents' lives (the first was being born next door to each other in the same month and year).

After a sheltered childhood in Crawford Village, the move to the frenetically active, smoke-filled Wigan was a

bitter blow to Annie, especially as a catalogue of unhappy events soon followed.

Fortunately, the new home was suitably sited for Douglas Bank Colliery where the men had obtained work. It was also within walking distance of the Douglas Bank Primitive Methodist Chapel. Because other families had moved to Wigan from Crawford, there was an influx of new members to this chapel. It was possible, therefore, for the families to continue many of the activities and associations which they had enjoyed at Crawford. Annie was thirteen years old, when the move took place, and still very naive.

The little Methodist chapel, not far from the banks of the River Douglas, from which its name derived, was an important contact with the way of life to which Annie and Walter were accustomed. Naturally, I suppose, our great grandparents saw the chapel in the same way that immigrant Moslems view the Mosque today - a refuge from an alien culture. Realistically, however, it was no more possible for the Methodists to avoid integration with the indigenous population in 1911 than it is for Asians in the 1990's and so a gradual change occurred.

Grandad Naylor's little business was no longer viable so back he went down the mine and thirteen-year-old Walter joined him. Now that they were in the big town with a more expensive way of life, Annie lost her role as helper in the home and, to her absolute horror, she joined the ranks of the Wigan weavers. The gigantic 'Rylands Mill' on the edge of Mesnes Park, which you now know as an annexe of the Wigan College, was the place where the timid girl from the country began her paid employment. The whole, ghastly experience was a nightmare to her. Rising at 5.30 in midwinter, walking through the gas-lit streets behind the raucus milll girls, passing timidly through the pitch black Mesnes Park, the gates of which were opened early to provide access for the dozens of female workers at the mill. Inside the

mill, it was a constant struggle to keep two looms going without mishap in the noisy, nightmare conditions of a crowded weaving shed. "Only those who have worked in the mill can understand," Mother declared, "it was a survival of the fittest and the weak had no chance".

Not surprisingly, Annie felt that her perfect world had suddenly disintegrated. She considered the women uncouth and the men overlookers as tyrants, it wasn't long before she was afraid to go to work. After one particularly harrowing day, when she returned home brokenhearted, her soft-hearted father came to the rescue, asserted himself and vowed that she never would go back in the mill, and she never did.

To her utter relief, she once again became a helper in the home which, under the supervision of her sister, who was nine years her senior and an enthusiastic disciplinarian, was not the kind of life that many maidens would have desired, but to Annie it was an answer to her fervent prayers. So, once again she settled down to the familiar pattern of life within the home and chapel. The young girl from Crawford saw Wigan as a throbbing metropolis. There seemed to be houses everywhere and one or two buildings in the locality, such as the Pagefield and Springfield Hotels, which had only recently been built, were enormous to her village eyes. The Queens Hall, Methodist Mission, which was also relatively new and, topped as it was with a huge dome, was like the cathedrals she had seen in books. Tramcars clattered and clanged ceaselessly past the end of the street on the Martland Mill Bridge route. As we soon learn, however, it is possible, given time, to adjust to the inevitable and, at least, Annie still had the security of home and family and the friendship of Walter. She was kept busy enough with chores to keep her mind occupied and she devoted a lot of time to her younger brothers. Of these, John was just twelve months younger

than she and a firm friendship existed between them; they shared secrets and he helped with the chores.

As Spring approached, Wigan took on a more pleasing aspect and the foliage and colour of Mesnes Park could at last be appreciated. The 'mansions' of Park Road and Parsons Walk were occupied by important towns-people and businessmen (the Chief Constable of Wigan, Mr Pey, occupied one of the more prominent ones when I was a boy). Clean, conforming, willing girls like Annie were in demand as helpers at the big houses, so eventually she found herself '*in service*' on a part-time basis. The family that she served were kind and cultured and they understood her love of education. She learned quickly and gradually lost some of her inhibitions. The ability to understand language and its uses developed into a way with words with which she served Methodism all her life as a member, class-leader, Sunday School worker and speaker.

After Douglas Bank Chapel closed for the last time in the 1950's, Annie became an industrious member of Queens Hall Methodist Mission. A number of past ministers had reason to appreciate her enthusiasm; amongst them could be numbered Dick Keen, Sydney Bampton, Ron Charlton and the popular Deaconess, Gladys Barron. The last position which your great-grandma filled, James, before extreme old age took its toll, was that of 'Welcome Steward'. She would greet members of the congregation with a smile and a handshake and she loved the job. Naturally, I will say that she was a remarkable person, but she did possess an unusual ability to make friends. She could change her speech effectively from a broad Lancashire dialect to plain English as the situation required. She was at ease in either idiom. The experience that she gained whilst '*in service*' accelerated the process of integration into town life.

Easter came late in 1911 and Whitsuntide fell at the beginning of June. The weather was glorious and as Annie

made her way to *'the big house'* she delighted in the sweet-smelling lilac and laburnum which lined the road into town. She had heard of the fabled Whit Walking Day from *'the folks at the house'* and she eagerly awaited the great day and the opportunity to see the Market Square filled to overflowing with a galaxy of youth and colour.

The weekend began well and the prospects for *'The Walk'* were good. Annie couldn't contain her excitement. Fate, however, decreed that neither Annie nor any other member of her family should see that long-awaited Whit Walk. The third and major coincidence in the Hughes-Naylor story was about to take place - this time with tragic consequences.

A mere five minutes' walk away from the family homes flowed, what was at that time, the evil-smelling and polluted river of Wigan, the Douglas. Running parallel to it is that masterpiece of 18th century transportation, the Leeds and Liverpool Canal. Unknown to the parents and to Annie, the younger boys from Crawford had discovered the two waterways which, in the hot weather, acted like a powerful magnet to those adventurous boys.

Shortly after the midday meal on Whit Saturday, Annie's twelve year-old brother, John, together with his best pal, eleven-year-old Ezra Naylor, Walter's brother, slipped off to the waterways taking John's little brothers, Benjamin and Harry along with them. I have heard the story of what happened on that fateful, June day in 1911, many, many times but never, did it have the same devastating effect upon me as when I read for myself the newspaper account and the report of the inquest, whilst preparing to write this letter. I have decided to include the full details with this letter.

WIGAN OBSERVER AND DISTRICT ADVERTISER - TUESDAY JUNE 6th 1911

DOUBLE DROWNING TRAGEDY - BOYS' SAD END

Fatal Attempt To Rescue Companion

The sad story of a double drowning fatality involving two boys, and how one of the boys perished in an attempt to save the other, was related by The Deputy Borough Coroner, Mr Coffey, at the Wigan Borough Courts on Tuesday. The unfortunate lads were, John Hughes, aged 12 of 39, Diggle St, Wigan, and George Ezra Naylor, 11 of 19, Diggle St.

In company with Hughes' two little brothers, Benjamin aged 7, and Henry aged 6, they left home at about half past twelve on Saturday morning and went to play in a culvert that runs into the River Douglas near Walker's Foundry. John Hughes was standing on a stone near the Douglas when he slipped into the water.

Seeing his companion's plight, Naylor made an attempt to rescue him but he also fell into the water which, at that spot is about 6ft 9ins deep. A man named James Hornby of 39, Sarginson St, was walking along the side of the canal bank at that time and he heard the noise of someone in the culvert. The younger boys emerged and one shouted "John".

Hornby asked him where John was and the child answered, "In there" pointing to the Douglas, and added that there were two in the water.

Hornby shouted to draw the attention of a lock-keeper who was about 120 yards away, and then divesting himself of his clothing, went into the water and brought out Hughes, he was still living.

He went in again but it took him five minutes to locate Naylor, whom he also brought out. By this time several other men had come upon the scene and artificial respiration was tried on the lads for about fifty minutes.

Doctor France was called by Naylor's father and he pronounced life extinct. The bodies of the luckless lads were then removed to their homes.

After hearing the evidence, the jury returned a verdict of "Accidental Death" by drowning.

INQUEST
NOTHING BUT A DEATH TRAP

John Hughes (collier), father of the deceased lad, Hughes, gave evidence of identification and said that when he was called to the place about two o'clock his son, to all appearances, was dead.

Benjamin Whitley Hughes, a little boy who was not sworn, said he was playing with the other lads on Saturday near to Walker's Foundry when his brother John, who was standing on a stone, slipped and fell into the water. George Naylor went after him.

The Deputy Coroner: I don't know whether the jury know this culvert or not.

The foreman said they all saw it on Monday. Continuing, the child said he went into the culvert and came out again and saw his brother in the water.

The Deputy Coroner: What was he doing?

Witness: Swimming. - And was George Naylor swimming? - Yes.

James Hornby, miner of 39,Sarginson Street, Newtown, said he was walking near Walker's Foundry at about one o'clock on Saturday

and he saw two lads 'wrangling' under the culvert. He stayed until they came from under. They stood on the side a few moments and then one of them shouted "John! John!". Witness asked where John was and one of the boys answered pointing to the water, "He's in there" and the other little child added that there were two in.

Witness "screamed" to the lock-keeper some distance away at the same time taking off his clothing. Going in the water he slipped and went overhead touching the bodies of the boys at the same time. He then dived down and got one of them out.

The Deputy Coroner: Were they both underneath?

Witness: Yes - Continuing, he said he lifted the boy on the side and as the lock-keeper had not arrived, he "screamed" again and was heard, both from the Rolling Mills and Walker's Foundry, for a man came from each place. Witness went in again to look for the other boy and in the meantime several people had arrived. It took him five minutes to find the second lad because he had moved from the spot in which witness felt him at first.

The Deputy Coroner: Is it still water or flowing? Witness said it was moving water and it swirled a bit underneath. Artificial Respiration was tried for some time but without result.

The Deputy Coroner: Were they both dead then?

Witness: The first was living when I fetched him out. How long did he keep alive? - I could not say.

James Naylor, a miner and father of the lad Naylor, also tendered evidence of identification, and said his boy was dead when he reached the place.

The Deputy Coroner said it was an exceptionally sad case. First one of the lads fell in and the other tried to save him and also lost his life. He thought there should be a word of praise to Hornby for the way in which he recovered the bodies, it was only a pity his efforts were not rewarded with better results. The jury returned a verdict of "Accidental death by drowning" in both cases.

The foreman said the jury wished to express the opinion that the place where the lads met their end was nothing but a death-trap. He described the place and added that he was sure the owners or the people who had charge of the place could remedy the danger by removing a big stone there was there and filling the hole up. The jury considered the place should be railed off as it was most dangerous. Looking down at it was like looking down a pit.

The Deputy Coroner said that perhaps the Press would make a note of the jury's recommendation and the owners be prompted by it to do something. The foreman said a path ran by it, and it was bad for passers by. He did not know to whom it belonged.

The Deputy Coroner: I agree. The jury also expressed their deep sympathy with the relatives of the two deceased lads.

The Rev. J A. Alderson said on behalf of the two families that had been so sorely stricken he would like to make a brief statement. He was there as their pastor. The two families came to Wigan some few months ago fresh from the country and they took up their residence in Diggle Street amongst strangers and since this sad

calamity had come to their homes they had been almost overwhelmed with the sympathy of the people in that neighbourhood and added to that was the jury's expression of their deepest sympathy. The families wished him to say how much they appreciated that token of sympathy, and on their behalf he thanked the Coroner and jury and also that heroic brother, Mr.Hornby, who at great risk did his best to save the lives of those two boys.

****

After young John's death, Annie was inconsolable. She thought she knew all about him - If only! - If only she had known of his plans for that beautiful June day. The distraught girl could not understand why John had not confided in her and yet he must have realised that, had she known, she would have counselled against it. She was full of guilt, she had thought only of the Whit Walk, she had shown no interest in John's activities.

As the days and weeks dragged wearily on, Annie learned to live with her sorrow, as indeed did all the family; the Chapel was important in this process, but the deaths left a deep scar inside her. Walter also suffered because he felt some responsibility for his younger brother, Ezra, and, although he was of a more reticent and introvert nature than Annie, he too never forgot that Whit Weekend of 1911.

You will not be surprised, James, to learn that outdoor swimming was prohibited in our family. Neither Annie nor Walter could swim and, so far as I know, never wished to. They were, however, very keen to give their children every opportunity to learn to swim in the safe, supervised environment of the public swimming baths. Though never a strong swimmer myself, I learned when quite young and

enjoyed the recreation enough to help my own sons to become proficient swimmers. Yet, in spite of the taboo against outdoor swimming during my childhood, and despite the grave warnings of my parents, I disobeyed. At an age when I was actually younger than both John and Ezra I went with other boys and bathed very near to the actual spot where the lads drowned!

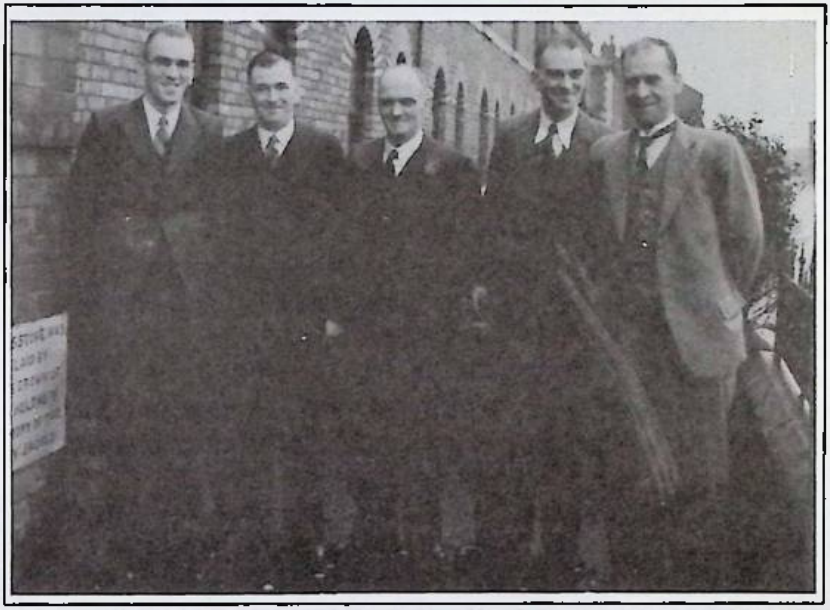
I am utterly unable to account for, or to understand, the wilful defiance and recklessness to which children, especially boys, are sometimes driven. The *Spirit of Adventure* will never be extinguished but, occasionally, it exacts an uncompromising toll.

Two years after John's drowning, while Annie was still only fifteen, the father whom she adored, died prematurely, aged forty six. The memory of those two loved ones was deeply imprinted on her soul. In her final years their ghosts entered her life. When, regrettably, she became a victim of Altzheimer's disease in her eighties and was admitted to a nursing home, a male resident took on her brother John's persona. Sitting next to him, she would inform family and visitors, "This is my brother John, we are waiting for my father".

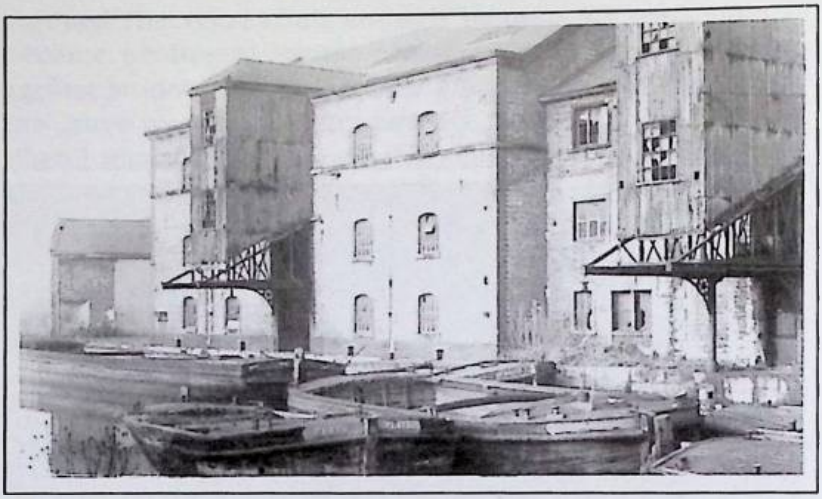
Thankfully, she didn't have too long to wait.

Drop Thy still dews of quietness,
Till all our strivings cease;
Take from our souls the strain and stress,
And let our ordered lives confess
The beauty of Thy peace.

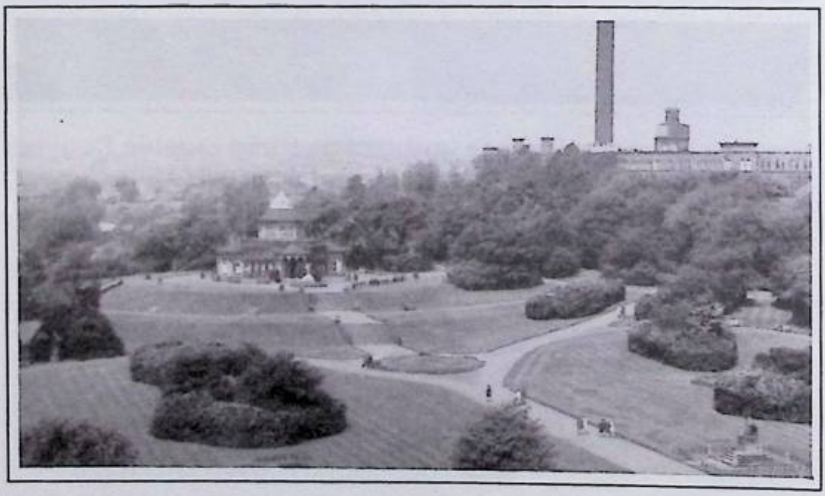
John Greenleaf Whittier, 1807-92.



The five surviving Hughes brothers pictured outside Douglas Bank Chapel in the early 1940's.
L to R: Benjamin - Albert - Frederick - Harry - Reuben



Wigan Pier - Before Facelift
Photograph by courtesy of Arnold Pennington Photography



Mesnes Park Wigan - Rylands Mill with chimney (Letter 10)
Photograph by courtesy of Arnold Pennington Photography

Annie 1975, aged 78

Annie and Walter at Rhyl,
Circa 1952 aged 55.

POSTSCRIPT

Well James, so much for Annie's childhood. After her marriage to Walter at the end of 1922, the partnership begun in childhood grew and developed. The effect that it had upon each individual member of their family and indeed the effect it is having upon your own life, is an inexhaustible source of material for my future letters to you. So, avoid the postman at all costs!

Your loving Grandad,

Fred.

Fred.

P.S. A great-grandad on your mother's side was also named Walter: Walter Hugh Wood!

The village where this true story took place remains virtually unaltered from a hundred years ago. It is a unique Lancashire rural location almost unknown to the townspeople a few miles away.

The story tells of the thriving Methodist, coal-mining community which existed in the early part of the twentieth century and in particular of how the life of one little girl was profoundly affected and influenced.

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