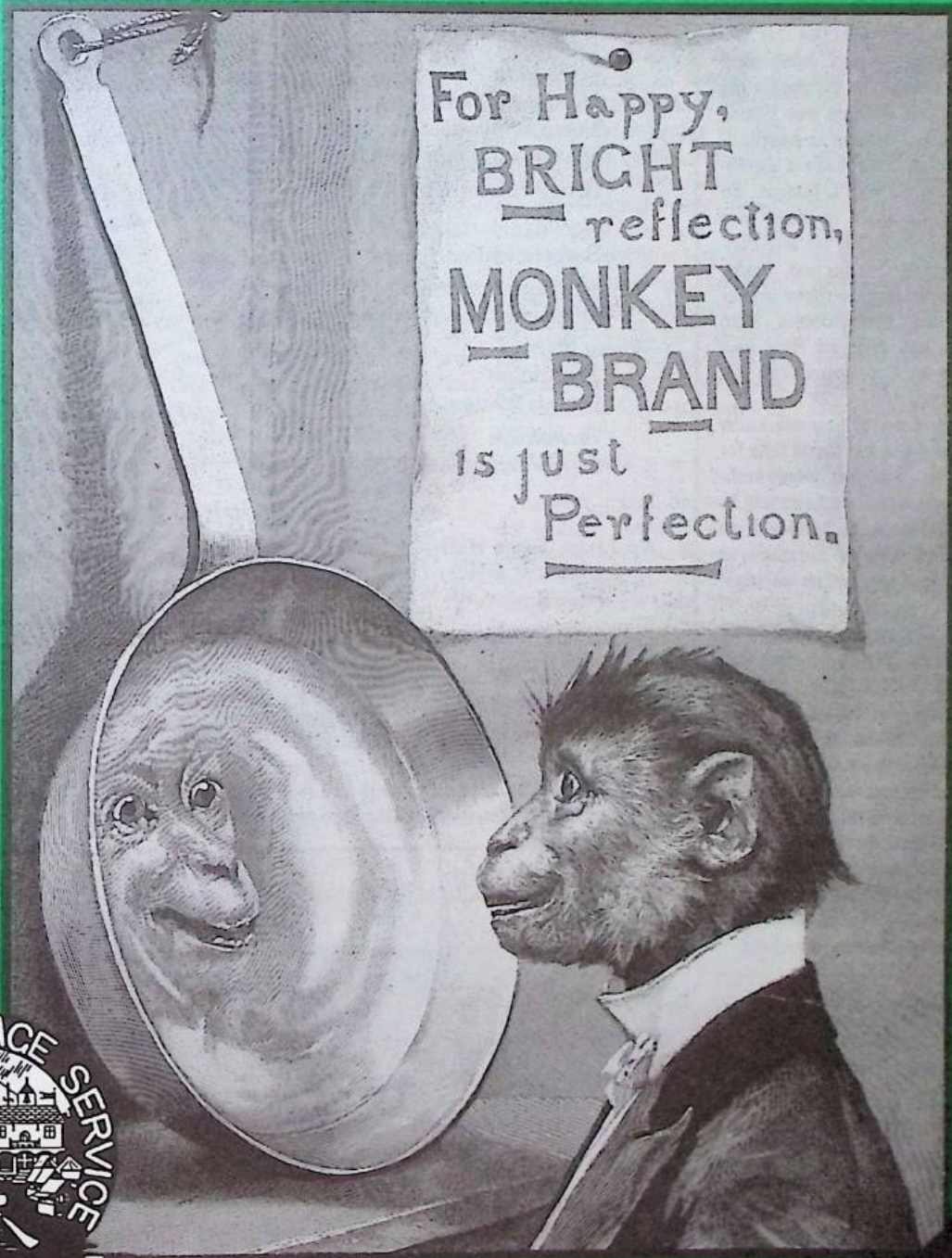


PAST FORWARD

ISSUE NUMBER FOUR

SPRING 1993



The Newsletter of
Wigan Heritage Service

FREE

From the Editor

WELCOME to the fourth issue of *Past Forward*, the newsletter designed to promote 'heritage' in and around Metropolitan Wigan.

As before, virtually all copies of the previous issue have gone, and our mailing list has continued to grow—to over 400. I am pleased to say that many of you who have asked to be put on the list have supported us with a donation, which we have been able to offset against costs. A very warm thank you to all these who have contributed in this way.

After this issue, I hope there will be three *Past Forwards* annually, in October, February and June. But this will depend on funding—I am determined not to make a charge for the magazine, but the production of three free issues each year, which I believe is appropriate for the market, does make a significant dent in the Service's budget. So can I appeal once again to those who have not already done so for any contributions towards production costs. This applies particularly to those on our mailing list, but contributions from everyone who has enjoyed *Past Forward* would be very welcome. You will find a coupon on p.15.

As I'm sure many of you will know by now, this has been a difficult time for Wigan MBC, as with all local authorities. Cuts and sacrifices have had to be made, and the Heritage Service is no exception. There will be pressure in years to come to make further savings, and to raise more income.

So support the Heritage Service by using its facilities, buying its merchandise and of course contributing towards *Past Forward*.

Written contributions too will be appreciated—I have been pleased to receive so many articles for inclusion in *Past Forward*, but I still need more. (*Past Forward* 5 will be published in October; copy deadline end of August.) My thanks to those who have contributed in this way, and my apologies to those whose articles I have not had space to include.

All comments and correspondence should be addressed to:
Heritage Services Manager,
Editor,
'Past Forward',
Leisure Services Dept.,
Trencherfield Mill,
Wigan.
WN3 4EF

FOR those readers who have not seen a previous issue of *Past Forward*, or have mislaid it, here once again is a list of those behind the Heritage Service, and where we are all based.

At Wigan:

Leisure Services Department, Trencherfield Mill—

Heritage Services Manager (and editor of Past Forward)

Alastair Gillies (0942) 828560

History Shop—

Visitor Services Manager

Philip Butler (0942) 828124

Education and Outreach Manager (and Local History, West)

Bob Blakeman (0942) 828020

Collections Development Manager

Yvonne Webb (0942) 828123

Heritage Officer (Industrial History)

Mike Haddon (0942) 828121

Heritage Officer (Social History)

Dawn Whitwham (0942) 828124

Heritage Assistant

Hilary Fairclough (0942) 828122

Heritage Assistant

Barbara Miller (0942) 828122

Heritage Assistant

Stephanie Tsang (0942) 828122

Wigan Pier—

Technician

Denise Whitter (0942) 323666

Technician

Roy Wareing (0942) 323666

At Leigh:

Archives, Town Hall—

Heritage Officer (Archives)

Nicholas Webb (0942) 672421 ext. 266

Senior Technician

Len Hudson (0942) 672421 ext. 265

Leigh Library—

Heritage Officer (Local History)

Tony Ashcroft (0942) 604131

If you have an enquiry, and are not sure who the most appropriate person is to contact, please ring the History Shop (0942 828128).

THE HISTORY SHOP

Rodney Street, Wigan. WN1 1DG
Tel: 0942 828128
Monday 10.00 - 7.00
Tues-Fri. 10.00-5.00
Sat. 10.00-1.00

WIGAN PIER

Wallgate, Wigan.
Tel: 0942 323666
Mon-Thurs. 10.00-5.00
Sat-Sun. 11.00-5.00

ARCHIVES

Town Hall, Leigh. WN7 2DY
Tel: 0942 672421 ext. 266
Mon, Tues, Thurs, Fri. - 10.00-1.00, 2.00-4.30
(by appointment)

ARCHIVES EDUCATION SERVICE

Schools Centre, Wigan Pier.
Tel: 0942 323666

LEIGH LOCAL HISTORY

Turnpike Centre, Leigh. WN7 1EB
Tel: 0942 604131
Mon, Tues. 10.00-7.00
Wed. 10.00-5.00
Thurs, Fri. 10.00-7.00
Sat. 10.00-3.30

HINDLEY MUSEUM

Hindley Library, Market Street, Hindley.
Tel: 0942 55287
Mon-Wed. 9.30-7.00
Fri. 9.30-5.30
Sat. 9.30-12.30

ASTLEY GREEN COLLIERY

Higher Lane, Astley, Nr. Manchester.
Tues, Thurs. 1.00-5.00
Sun. 11.00-5.00
(School and party visits by arrangement)

Cover: This splendid advertisement appeared in the Illustrated London News in 1900. It is one of a number used on the wall outside the new Palace of Varieties at Wigan Pier. Details about this exciting new venture on p14.

News from the Archives

RECENT accessions to the Archives illustrate the range of original source material available to local researchers. Firstly, a very welcome addition to our holdings of local Co-operative Society records has been made in the form of a book of declarations of the Leigh Society between 1859 and 1868. This contains the names of over 2,000 members, and gives their occupation and place of residence. The Leigh Friendly Co-operative Society had been established in 1857 (just 13 years after the foundation of the modern Co-operative movement by the Rochdale Pioneers) during a period of depression in the local silk industry.

In 1855 the *Leigh Chronicle* had reported that 'the staple trade of the neighbourhood (the manufacture of silk) still continues in a very unsatisfactory state. Many hundreds of operatives are unemployed altogether, and still greater numbers are only partially employed.' The silk industry had been established in the Leigh area in the 1820's to alleviate distress amongst the cotton weavers, but was now itself ailing. By 1857 it was reported that 'the silk trade continues in a most depressed condition. As a consequence of the inactivity of the staple manufacture of the district, a large

portion of the population are unemployed, and many are in a state of semi-starvation. Weavers, in many instances, have been entirely without work, for two or three months; and those who have secured half-employment, have been looked upon as highly favoured and fortunate people.'

The first members of the Leigh Society subscribed 6d. until sufficient funds were available to purchase tea and coffee from the Rochdale Society, and this was then sold from a garret in Newton Street (behind the present Town Hall). Gradually the sales increased and the range of goods expanded until the society was able to rent a shop in Bradshawgate. These premises were purchased in 1859, when the surviving register of members begins. Larger subscriptions were committed by the better off weavers and so the society was able to accumulate capital. The Leigh Society expanded very rapidly during the period covered by the members' register. From 280 at the beginning of 1859 the membership increased to over 2,200 by 1868, and the share capital from £2,847 to £29,658. The main benefits of Co-operation, selling goods at cost price and dividing profits in the form of dividends to members, were augmented by the Society's educational activities which had originated in the mutual improvement classes of its early members.

The members' declaration

book will be of great value to both local and family history researchers. A cursory study reveals that although a great variety of occupations is represented, the textile workers certainly dominated the membership in these early years. Many of them were listed as weavers, but some were overlookers. A few members in the earliest period were colliers and labourers. By the mid-1860's, however, the more affluent sections of the working population were beginning to outnumber the weavers. A sample of occupations from the last pages in 1868 includes boat builder, law clerk, milliner, book binder, tailor, clogger, shoe maker, bolt maker, farmer, accountant and a local policeman, constable Levi Nuttall of Croft View, Leigh. Although most of the members came from Leigh itself, many, particularly in the earliest period, lived in Astley and Lowton, where Co-op branches had been established in 1859.

* * * *

Another recent deposit with the Archives Service is the first minute book of the Wigan Field Naturalists' Society, forerunner of the present Field Club. The preliminary meeting of the Society was held on 20 March 1862. In the chair was Thomas Byrom, a local coal owner and grocer who was also a Wigan magistrate and alderman. The stimulus for setting up the society was the success of others in Manchester and Liverpool, and this was indeed

the golden age of natural history and scientific societies being established in provincial towns. The Wigan Society's stated purpose was 'the cultivation of a study of natural history in the field . . . to examine and contemplate the beauties of nature in those places where they are most strikingly exhibited, and in such a manner as to unite the pleasures of social intercourse with the unalloyed gratification of the intellect in a pure, healthful and ennobling pursuit.' On 28 May the Society's inaugural soiree was held at the recently opened Public Hall, King Street, where exhibitions of 'freshwater and marine aquaria, herbaria, fossils, shells and other interesting objects of natural history' were mounted. The entertainment was provided at the piano by Mr. Graham, professor of music.

The volume contains fascinating accounts of the Society's activities during its first five years. Local beauty spots such as Dean Wood (Upholland), Rivington Pike and Bryn Moss were visited, but also trips further abroad were attempted. In August 1862, for example, the members went to Southport. The development of railways was enabling people to make such trips for pleasure, and from Southport station they walked to explore the Birkdale sand hills. Many of the plants found in the dunes and slacks are still to be found there today. The following year the members went to Appley Bridge station, walking thence to Coppull via Wrightington. The botanical specimens were 'luxuriant and abundant', and although three species of St. John's wort were found the adder's tongue fern, 'reputed to grow in that locality', proved elusive. Like many such societies at that period, the members took a wide interest in their environment, looking at historical monuments and buildings as well as the natural scene.

Two questions spring to mind from this volume. Firstly, what was the background of the leading lights of the Society, and secondly, how many of the species identified during the excursions may still be found at the same locations today?

N. W.



Leigh Road Branch Co-operative Society, c.1906.

STANDISH HALL WATER CORN MILL

IN April 1990 Elnup Wood became Wigan's first community woodland. It is administered by Wigan Groundwork Trust and the 'Friends of Elnup Wood', a group of local volunteers. Known locally as 'Mill-Dam Wood', Elnup lies between Shevington and Standish and consists of 17.5 hectares of semi-managed, mainly deciduous trees. It is designated as an ancient woodland.

The name 'Elnup' is probably from the Saxon 'Elrenhope', meaning 'The Enclosed Valley of the Alders'. The local name 'Mill-Dam Wood' comes from the presence of a large dam which blocked the stream, creating a reservoir of water which was used to power a corn mill. The recent change in status of the wood has resulted in an interest in the history of 'Standish Hall Water Corn Mill'.

The conversion of grain into flour has probably been facilitated by water power since early Christian times. An estimate, based on the Domesday Book, suggests that one mill served about 50 households. This gives an indication of the ubiquitousness and importance of these valuable properties.

Although there are several possible mentions in 14th century deeds it is not until 1721 that 'Standish Hall Mill' is mentioned by name. Ralph Rainford was the miller at this time. The manorial map of 1763 gives a pictorial representation of the mill. It shows two wings projecting at right-angles from the main building with sloping roofs capping the structure. One of the wings was a kiln which was used to dry the



Mill-Dam Wood Cottage, c. 1900

grain prior to the milling operations. The miller was now James Rainford who probably lived in 'Mill-Dam Wood Cottage', which is still in existence.

The Standish and Shevington tithe apportionment maps, of 1842 and 1843 respectively, show a structure similar to that of 1763 but with the addition of what appears to have been a cottage. The miller, Stephen Richardson, lived in Broad i'th Lane, Shevington. The mill was almost certainly a brick-built building, three storeys tall, standing near the dam. It seems likely that water was led from the reservoir through a sluice gate, along a launder (a wooden chute), on to a high breast-shot or over-shot wheel housed within the building. The water rejoined the stream through an underground tunnel. A second sluice gate, when opened, allowed the water to by-pass when the mill was not in use.

There is evidence to suggest that the mill closed between 1865 and 1871.

The last miller was Thomas Richardson, son of Stephen. By 1871 he had become the miller at the Finch Mill in Appley Bridge. The 1892 Ordnance Survey map shows that the mill had been demolished leaving only a cottage which was probably the one indicated on the earlier tithe maps. This cottage, known as 'Mill-Dam Cottage', stood until recent times.

I would be grateful to anyone who could provide me with information regarding the mill or Mill-Dam Wood. Old photographs and personal reminiscences would be particularly useful. Photographs would be immediately copied and returned to their owners.

Adrian Morris
(0257 422732)

This article is based upon the Standish estate records and other sources held by the Archives Service, Leigh.

Greyhound Coursing at Westwood

YOUR editorial note on page 11 of Past Forward issue 3 prompts me to advise you that I watched greyhound racing at Woodhouse Lane Stadium from my bedroom window as a boy, before Poolstock was opened, but I wonder how many of your older readers recollect that even before Woodhouse Lane was a greyhound

track there was greyhound coursing at Westwood.

As a young boy we would walk over the swing bridge at Westwood Road and although not allowed inside the gates at the 'stadium' we used to sneak in, where we would see the two wheeled pony-drawn cart laden with hampers containing live hares.

Two contesting greyhounds,

held by slipper leads by their handlers, would be held straining at their leads whilst an 'attendant' would reach into the hamper and lift out one of the hares and throw it on the park. After a few minutes the dogs' leads would be slipped and the hounds were off in pursuit.

Twisting and turning the poor animal would be pursued until exhausted, when one of the dogs would grab it and despatch it by furiously shaking it. Bets had been laid and the first dog to capture the hare was the winner.

Occasionally the hare would

find a hole in the outer perimeter fence and would bolt to freedom. I used to wonder how they lived afterwards.

The then landlord of the Fox Tavern in Chapel Lane, Mr John Thomas Sharples, was, I think, one of the organisers and sadly he was killed when one of the course gates fell on him. That would be about 1924/5.

Ernest Taberner,
62 Westwood Road,
Earlsdon,
Coventry.
CV5 6GE

INDUSTRY IN VICTORIAN WIGAN

AS far as economic activity was concerned, specialisation rather than variety was a characteristic of industrial towns in Victorian Britain. In the case of Wigan, a good majority of the inhabitants were engaged in the coal, iron and cotton industries. All of these had roots in the town's distant past.

Excavations in the Wiend a few years ago unearthed evidence of Roman iron workings. Documentary evidence exists of coal extraction in 14th-century Shevington. Textile processing, in the form of wool fulling, occupied several watermills on the River Douglas in the Middle Ages, and by the end of the 16th century the district had a linen industry of some importance.

Coal outcrops in the town centre, and in the early days of the industry householders would hire colliers to dig for coal in their gardens. But commercial production required capital, which in the first instance was provided by landowners such as the Bradshaighs of Haigh, and later by Liverpool merchants who bought land to exploit the coal seams, such as the Blundells with their collieries at Highfield.

Deepest Shaft

Until the mid-19th century most collieries were very small. This was because the primitive technology did not allow shafts to be sunk to any considerable depth, or coal to be extracted from a wide area to a single colliery. Nevertheless some local collieries were at the forefront of modern developments. In the 1870's Rose Bridge Colliery, Higher Ince, had the deepest shaft in the country. But the general pattern was that of a large number of small collieries, often close to the main centres of population. In 1890 there were seven working collieries within the boundaries of the old Wigan Borough. In the countryside beyond Wigan, collieries could be found in an area extending from Upholland to Blackrod, and from Coppull to Haydock. Places we now think of as rural retreats were hives of small-scale industry. By the middle of the 19th century the Earl of Crawford was complaining that if the process of industrialisation continued, it would soon be impossible for a gentleman to live in the district. The Earls, of course, stayed—they had too much of a direct financial interest in local industry—but others, such



Rev. Wickham took many photographs of Wigan industry in the early 1890's, including the one reproduced here showing mill girls with their 'snap' baskets and cans. Many girls enjoyed the friendly atmosphere and camaraderie of the mill; yet when a local doctor contrasted pit-brow lasses and mill girls, he concluded that he would rather marry one of the former because, despite the harsher demands of the job, they did not have to work in the warm, damp, noisy atmosphere of the cotton mill.

as the Walmsleys of Westwood House, demolished or let out their ancestral seats, and left

Iron Smelting

The origins of the local iron industry lay at Haigh, where iron smelting was carried on in a very small way in the 18th century, using ironstone found on the Haigh estate. Later, hematite ore, containing a high percentage of iron, was brought to Wigan from Cumbria. It was smelted in the blast furnaces of the Wigan Coal and Iron Company at Kirkless. The works opened in 1858, and were owned by one of the largest firms in the country. There were many other ironworks in the district, albeit of much smaller size. The works at Kirkless have been demolished, and not a trace of them remains. But near the spot where they once stood, beside the canal, is a ruined tower of the Albion Ironworks, a small reminder of a once thriving industry.

Cotton Spinning

Of Wigan's third great industry, cotton spinning, more evidence remains. There are still a few cotton mills in the town, and one of them, Trencherfield Mill, with its magnificent working engine, has been incorporated into the Wigan Pier heritage attraction.

The industry grew out of domestic spinning and weaving. The first cotton factories in Wigan were built on the River Douglas in Chapel Lane, and were driven by water power. When steam power came into general use, there were fewer restrictions on siting, and they tended to be built on the open spaces to the south of the town, in Lower Wallgate, leaving the pleasant wooded valley of the Douglas to the north of the town for upper-class housing. The cotton industry employed mainly women, whereas the coal and iron industries employed mainly men.

Other Industries

In spite of this specialisation other industries existed in a smaller way. The most important of these was the manufacture of mining machinery and equipment, ranging from Naylor's miners' safety lamps made in a small workshop in the Wiend, to the huge ventilating fans made by Walker Bros at their Pagefield Iron Works. Other industries included brass founding (at Pepper Mill), quarrying of millstone grit (at Parbold) and sandstone (at Ince), chemical works (at Newtown and Ince), the construction of railway rolling stock (again at Ince), brick-making (at Billinge and Wigan) and basket making.

All these products needed to be transported. At the beginning of the 19th century canals were the most important form of transportation, but the amount of goods they carried was soon to be overtaken by those carried on the railways. Nevertheless, the carrying of coal on the canals continued until 1972. Wigan was remarkable for the extremely dense network of railways in and around the town, created partly to accommodate local heavy industry, but also caused by the fact that the town had a strategic position which made it a crossing point for main north-south and east-west lines.

New Market Hall

For short-haul journeys, however, horses were still the rule. The sale of horses, as well as cattle, pigs and other farm animals still had an important place in the town's economy. There was, however, a need for a proper cattle market, because the hundreds of beasts that were sold in the streets on market days caused a considerable obstruction to traffic. A new market hall and square for stalls was opened in 1877 to replace the inadequate old Market Place. Permanent retail shops began to play a more important role in the domestic economy of the inhabitants. Most of these were small, privately-owned retail outlets whose main rival was the Co-operative movement, which had been founded to provide the working class with cheap, unadulterated food. Chain stores were, however, beginning to appear, such as Rushton and Co., whose warehouse building still stands in New Market Street. They were the shape of things to come.

B.B.

Book Reviews

LORD CRAWFORD'S OTHER ACRE

by
F. Hughes Naylor



MOST readers will be familiar with the name Crawford, as in Lord Crawford of Haigh, but many will not be aware of the existence of a village of the same name, only eight miles from Wigan. The village of Crawford was largely built between 1850 and 1870, and remains today as almost certainly the only one-street coal-mining village left in Lancashire, and possibly even in England—a mixture of terraced and modern executive houses, a Methodist chapel, school and an excellent pub (which the reviewer can heartily recommend!) and not a lot else.

Frank Hughes Naylor has produced a short, often poignant history of this unique village. He explains how a rural area was transformed in the 1850's with the sinking of coal shafts—and how, as both the land and the pits were owned by the Earl of Crawford, the emergent village took the name of Crawford. And he rightly stresses the importance of the little Primitive Methodist chapel within the

community; the writer's parents, James Walter Naylor and Annie Hughes, were brought up in the Methodist tradition. Here is the romance of the book—the couple were born next door to each other, in the same month and year, left the village with their families on the same day in 1911, and even moved into the same street in Wigan! But that year was also a poignant year—Annie's brother John and Walter's brother Ezra were to die within six months of the move in a tragic drowning accident.

This is a very human document, well-researched and well-written—albeit in an unusual format, whereby each chapter is written as a letter to the author's grandson.

This short book is well worth a read—not just by those with a knowledge of the village, but also by Wiganers, in view of the prominence of Douglas Bank, where Annie and Walter moved in 1911. It costs only £2.95 (which includes a donation to the little chapel which still survives). Copies are available from the History Shop (for details of mail order see p.15)

A.G.

COTTON MILLS IN GREATER MANCHESTER

by Mike Williams with D. A. Farnie



RECENT books on the Mills of Oldham and Bolton have now been augmented by the above title, covering a considerably larger area. Its publication is most welcome as, despite the magnitude the cotton industry once achieved, there is remarkably little literature on the subject other than technical text books and trade journals.

The book results from an extensive survey and research programme undertaken by the Greater Manchester Archaeological Unit. Author Mike Williams was the survey officer for the project.

The territory covered by this book, although somewhat arbitrary in that it conforms to a modern administrative county, is nevertheless an important 'chunk' of old Lancashire, plus some of northern Cheshire which in earlier years saw intensive cotton spinning and weaving developments.

The introductory chapter includes a section on the spinning and weaving processes together with illustrations of the type of machines involved. In chapter 2, Dr. Farnie looks at the cotton towns of Greater Manchester, including an area by area examination of how the industry developed differently in the various towns. Throughout the period Oldham was by far the greatest spinning centre—in 1926, at the peak of production, over 17 million spindles were at work there. Leigh (including Atherton and Tyldesley) was in fifth place with nearly 3 million spindles, and Wigan twelfth with just over 1 million. By 1962 Leigh had risen to fourth place, but with only 548,000 spindles working, while Wigan had moved up to fifth with 352,000 spindles.

The remaining four chapters follow the chronological development of mill building, from the late 18th century and the

introduction of the first steam-powered multi-storeyed spinning mills up to 1926.

There follows an Inventory which takes a detailed look at a representative selection of individual mills, although as the recently closed Barnfield Mills of Caleb Wright & Co. of Tyldesley is the only Metropolitan Wigan example, our area is somewhat under-represented here.

The book is completed by a Gazetteer of all mill buildings in Greater Manchester still extant in the mid 1980's, arranged under nine metropolitan boroughs (Trafford is not included). Although an important reference source, its usefulness could have been greatly improved by some additional information. My main criticism is that the location within a borough is only indicated by its O.S. grid reference, so that within Metropolitan Wigan, for example, there is no quick way of determining how many mills survive in, say, the Leigh area. This failing is well illustrated by the two Victoria Mills entries, with no immediate means to show that one is in Wigan and one in Leigh. Also, mills which had two or more names are repeated under each name, with no cross-references.

This reservation apart, this is an excellent book, which explains the origin and development of our local mill-scapes.

M. H.

Cotton Mills in Greater Manchester is published by Carnegie Publishing Ltd., in two formats—

Soft-back ISBN 0-948789-89-1
£14.95

Hard-back ISBN 0-948789-69-7
£19.95

It is available in soft-back from the History Shop.

(for details of mail order see p.15)

ORGANISATIONS AND INDIVIDUALS!

Have your Report, Magazine, Booklet or Book produced economically via high-resolution desktop publishing.

Coveropen's IBM compatible 800 d.p.i. system will accept disks—3¹/₂" or 5¹/₄"—from most P.C.s.

OTHER SERVICES INCLUDE:

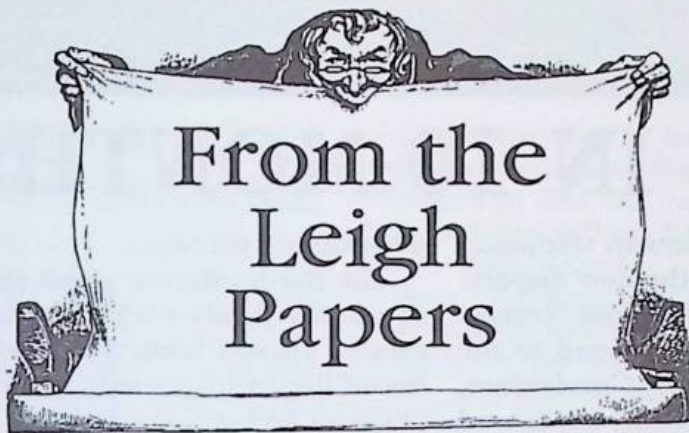
- Design •
- Artwork •
- Process Camera work •
(Bromides and Half Tones)
- Typesetting •
- Two-colour Photocopying •
- All Printing Processes •

Free unbiased print production advice
to suit all budgets

Coveropen Ltd.,
5 Bridgeman Terrace,
Wigan WN1 1SX

Tel: (0942) 821831 Fax: (0942) 821819

(0942) 30893 - 24 hours



From the Leigh Chronicle 5 August, 1876

DEATH OF THE OLDEST LEIGH TRADESMAN

WE have to announce the death of Mr. John Ashton, which occurred on Monday last, at his residence, the old cottage, adjoining Mr. Richard Greenough's vaults, Bradshawgate. Mr. Ashton was born at Lowton just at the close of the last century, being at the time of his death seventy-eight years of age. He was brought to Leigh by his parents when about three years old, and had, therefore, resided in this town for upwards of seventy-six years—since the commencement of the present century. Mr. Ashton served his time—after his marriage—to an umbrella maker formerly carrying on business at the shop now occupied by Mr. Amos Kniverton, boot and shoe maker, Market-street, and afterwards went into business as a hair-dresser at the house in which he died, and which he occupied for the long period of nearly fifty-four years. He was the recognised shaver for the gentlemen in the district, upon whom he used to wait daily at their residence by contract. In the old house in Bradshawgate eleven out of his twelve children were born. As might be expected the "Barber's Shop" was the headquarters of news, and Mr. Ashton was the village factotum when Leigh was only a small town. Next door to his shop was also another gossip house—the old smithy—and it is a telling evidence of the quiet days experienced in Leigh half a century ago that every one in the town was personally known by Mr. Ashton, and

with not a little of their history and business he was also acquainted. Mr. Ashton was one who assisted to lift from off its hinges the toll-bar gate which, in those days stretched across the end of Bradshawgate. He was an old constable and ward of the town, and was one of the best known Leigh men. Mr. Ashton lived for many years retired, enjoying his pipe and the company of his children and old cronies. His death was as peaceful and uneventful as the last few years of his life. A few minutes before he died he asked for his son John, who had just time to go into the bedroom and take his father's hand, when our old friend quietly dozed off into the sleep of death. Mr. Ashton leaves four sons and two daughters. The interment took place on Thursday.

From the Leigh Chronicle 10 April, 1869.

"STEEPLE JACK" AT LEIGH

THIS celebrated individual has been engaged by the Leigh District Gas Company to point their chimney, and place an iron band round the top, secured with clips. Yesterday Miss Pendlebury, of the Eagle and Child, King Street, Leigh, having expressed her wish to ascend the chimney, she was fastened in a seat, secured by a rope, and craned up the dizzy eminence, in the presence of a large number of spectators. A photograph of the scene was taken by Mr. Thomas Battersby, of Back King Street, Leigh.

Unfortunately, this photograph has not survived—unless any reader happens to have it!
Ed.

Many of you enjoyed the 'Life Before the N.H.S.' page in issue No.2; so here is another item, showing what could be done well over a century before the N.H.S!

A SURGEON'S BILL.

Taking off your right arm, and repairing and setting the same below your left shoulder,....	£1	12	0
Three new fingers to your left hand,.....	0	15	0
A new foot to your left leg,.....	1	13	0
Taking out three of your old ribs, and putting in three new ones, and new fleshing the side,	6	13	0
Taking out your guts, washing and turning them, and putting them in again,.....	4	14	4
Filling your old bones with hog's marrow,....	3	13	6
Filling your veins with goats' blood,.....	3	12	0
Mending your skull, putting in some asses' brains, altering your face, and repairing your nose,.....	5	13	7
A new tongue, new laying the roof of your mouth, and washing the same, being in bad repair,.....	2	4	6
A new eye, and brightening the other,.....	4	1	7
Cleaning the foul parts of your heart,.....	1	9	10
Rubbing up your bad memory, and sundry repairs done to your person,.....	1	17	2
A new cheek, and mending your windpipe,....	3	14	6
A complete set of new lungs, placing them, and sundry repairs done to your person,.....	5	3	0
	£	46	16 0

(A True Copy)

DANGEROUS CORNER?

HAVE you ever wondered about the origins of the name 'Dangerous Corner'? There are at least two in our area—one in Westleigh and one in Appley Bridge.

In the *Leigh Chronicle*, 1877, the following explanation appears:

Dangerous Corner (Westleigh)—Tradition has it that a certain man, whose wife was supposed to be dead, was proceeding to bury her, when the bearers of the corpse, in passing this corner, knocked the coffin against the wall. This caused the wife, who was only in a

trance, to awake and exhibit unmistakable signs of life. It is said she lived for some time to trouble and perplex her husband, and that when she did ultimately die, and the bearers were conveying her in her coffin, he warned them to beware of again coming in contact with that 'dangerous corner'. The poor husband had no desire for a second 'resurrection'.

Sidney Smith tells me that exactly the same story is told of the other Dangerous Corner, at Appley Bridge! Ed.

9,000 VISITORS IN 10 MONTHS

AMAZINGLY, the History Shop will soon be one year old—the doors opened on 11 May 1992. Since then, a great deal has happened. In the first ten months, over 9,000 visitors have made use of the facilities. At that rate, we should be welcoming our 10,000th visitor well before our first birthday. These figures are well in excess of expectations.

'Founded on Coal', the History shop's permanent exhibition, has filled a gap left by the demolition of the old Powell Museum in 1985, and comments in the visi-

tors' book are eloquent testimony to the quality of the new display. The exhibition includes certain sections which correspond to the History National Curriculum, and these have already been used by school classes.

The temporary displays have all proved popular, and our programme for the rest of 1993 is an attractive one.

The research facilities in the History Shop have certainly been well used, by local and family historians alike, both local and from very much further afield. In particular, the brand-new family history workshops have been an

outstanding success.

The Shop offers a small range of quality goods with a heritage-related theme, including a number of lines with specific appeal to children and school parties.

But this is only just the beginning—there is a huge potential still waiting to be fulfilled. Many people have yet to visit the History Shop—some have not even heard of the Heritage Service. Only a limited number of schools have used the History Shop to date—yet it has so much to offer. So teachers, if you have not already done so, please contact *Bob Blakeman* (0942 828020) for further details.

Four Titles Now Available

FOUR titles are currently available in the Heritage Service publications programme

'The Two Athertons'

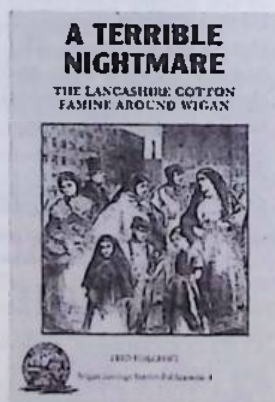
'Murder Terror and Revenge in Medieval Lancashire—The Legend of Mab's Cross'

'The Devil's Hill—Local Men at the Battle of Spion Kop, 1900'

'A Terrible Nightmare—The Lancashire Cotton Famine around Wigan'

The first three were reviewed in Past Forward 3. 'A Terrible Nightmare' was published just before Christmas. It covers a dreadful period in Lancashire's history when the outbreak of the American Civil War in 1861 spelt disaster for the

cotton industry. By the mid-19th century cotton was a boom industry in Lancashire. Many hundreds of thousands of workers were dependent upon it for their livelihoods. But much of the raw cotton came from the United States, and with the blockade upon the supply of cotton to the Lancashire mills brought about by the war, the operatives were thrown out of work and forced to depend on the inadequate Poor Law. Wigan was particularly badly hit—by 1863, 85% of its cotton mill workers were destitute. Supported by illustrations from the Illustrated London News, the book tells the story of this black period in Wigan's past—a truly terrible nightmare.



'The Two Athertons', written by Heritage Service Staff Nicholas Webb and Tony Ashcroft, costs £2.99. The other three books, written by former Archives Education Officer and teacher Fred Holcroft, cost £3.95 each. Copies are available from the History Shop (for details of mail order see p15) and from usual outlets.

STOP PRESS

HERITAGE Service publication No. 5, 'The Civil War in South Lancashire', will be available by June. Also written by Fred Holcroft, it deals with a fascinating period in our local history, when Wigan was staunchly royalist and Leigh and Bolton supported the parliamentary cause, and when Wigan was invaded by Bolton!

Excellent value at only £3.95

Dwell in the past and you'll lose an eye, forget the

EXHIBITION PROGRAMME

THE very successful Rev. William Wickham exhibition finished on 3 April. It has been replaced by 'Underground', an exhibition of illustrations of Bickershaw and Parkside collieries by local photographer James Bartholomew, and supplemented by some of his local views. This exhibition runs from 19 April until 5 June.

It will be followed by a

display of paintings of local scenes by Wigan artist Harry Walder, who died last year. This exhibition will run from 21 June until 7 August.

From 17 August until 26 October, there will be an opportunity to see the North West Museums Service travelling exhibition 'Leading Lights'. This exhibition focuses on decorative windows, 1880-1930, looking at the materials, methods and techniques of how the windows were constructed and how and where they were used.

Mr. Hampson will also refer to the daring (and highly illegal) 'whisky spinners' of the remoter Moorlands of Lancashire leading in due course to the production of Red Rose Lancashire Whisky as it is today.



On 9 June, the lecture season will finish with a talk by Philip Powell on 'The Wigan Townscape'. Philip is Wigan MBC's Conservation Officer, and an expert on local buildings and architecture.

These promise to be two stimulating talks with which to finish the 1992/93 season. The new season will begin on 13 October with a talk by Lucy Pyle entitled 'The History and Excavation of the Mary Rose'. Lucy was a diver on the Mary Rose, and her fascinating account of her experiences will certainly get the new season off to a good start.

Family History Workshops in the History Shop

NOWADAYS more and more people are taking up family history as a hobby. It is an inexpensive spare-time interest that is intellectually stimulating, and creates an end-product that is of permanent interest to family and friends.

Recently, Heritage Service staff have noticed an increasing number of enquiries from members of the public, either wanting instruction on how to begin tracing their ancestors or from people who had been conducting research into their family history for some time, but had now reached an impasse, and needed the advice of an experienced genealogist.

Accordingly, the Wigan Family History Society was contacted with a view to fulfilling this need. Three members of the Society—Carol Littler, Derek Horrocks and

Secretary Len Marsden—kindly agreed to offer their services to the public free of charge, with the Heritage Service providing the necessary research materials and the venue. The result was a series of Family History Workshops held in the History Shop on Monday afternoons and evenings. Each member of the public received a half hour's individual attention from a genealogist. We believe that this guarantee of individual attention is a new development, and has ensured the success of the project. Virtually all the available time was booked, and requests have already been made by satisfied customers for another series of workshops in the future.

If you are interested in this second series, please ring 0942 828128 for further details.

HERITAGE WALKS

ANOTHER new venture for the Heritage Service will be leading heritage walks.

In May and June, Bob Blake-man (Education and Outreach Manger) will lead two Sunday morning walks, between 10.00 and 12.00, in the Wigan area. For

further details, ring Bob (0942 828020).

And on 13 May, Local History Officer Tony Ashcroft will lead a heritage walk in Atherton, also between 10.00 and 12.00, as part of the Atherton Festival (this walk is also offered on 11 May at 6.30 p.m.). For further details of this walk, or on the Atherton Festival itself, ring Atherton Library (0942 878369).

THE HISTORY SHOP'S MEETING ROOM IS AVAILABLE FOR HIRE BY LOCAL GROUPS AND SOCIETIES, AT VERY REASONABLE COST:
£4.40 PER MORNING OR AFTERNOON SESSION
£6.60 PER EVENING SESSION
IF YOU ARE INTERESTED, PLEASE CONTACT PHILIP BUTLER (0942 828124).

past and you'll lose both eyes. (a Russian proverb)

'OWD' TOM HUGHES &

LAST year saw the publication of 'Owd Tom—A Cycling Legend' by Albert Winstanley. Albert has since written the following article for *Past Forward*, which not only explains a little about this Wigan character but also tells how a certain 'mystery' was solved after the book was published.

When the scriptures-allotted life span of 'three score years and ten' has arrived, what should one do?

If you are on the threshold of 70, thrills and excitement can lie ahead. Those rainy and dark days you saved for need not be gloomy at all but tinged with silvered clouds that can give way to your years of sunshine.

I suggest you immediately spend some of that 'nest egg' and buy yourself a new bicycle just as 'Owd' Tom Hughes, the cycling 'old-timer' from Wigan did on his 70th birthday, on 21st July, 1936. His 70th birthday was an important milestone in his long cycling life and his new bicycle was to become a treasured possession. Naturally he had to test its qualities.

On that very day, with companion, he pedaled from Wigan to Standish, and on to Wrightington where they turned into the lovely lanes that abound in the area. Together they cycled along Tunley Lane, Wrightington, and coasted by old South Tunley Hall to stop for a spell by the bridge over Tunley brook. 'Owd' Tom was as pleased as the proverbial Punch with the performance of his new bicycle, and wishing to preserve the memory of that morning, he requested a photograph by the bridge.

This important milestone of his long cycling life had also turned the pages to another chapter. At 70, he had attained 'Senior' status in the ranks of the Autumn Tints Cycling Comrades, and from then onwards he would always be known as 'Owd' Tom Hughes.

Three Days Schooling

Thomas Hughes was born on 21st July, 1866 and began cycling in 1887—'Queen Victoria's Jubilee Year' as he so often quoted. His first ma-

chine was a 52" high 'Ordinary', or the 'Penny Farthing' as it was better known. He became a miner at the age of 11, and worked 54 years down the mines. Over his lifetime he cycled some 400,000 miles, often averaging 10,000 miles per year—but he also worked his full quota of shifts in the pits! He only had three days schooling in his life, and when he was 22, it took his future wife three months to teach him how to write his name, so he could sign the marriage register.

He toured extensively to all parts of the British Isles, France, Switzerland, Italy, and also visited the Passion Play at Oberammergau, always with his heavy plate camera over his back to record his travels. He became an expert photographer, with a most impish sense of humour, often depicting himself as 'twins'—wheeling himself in a barrow, playing himself at draughts, twin heads poking out of a jersey and twin faces lighting the same cigarette.

Realising the great bond of fellowship and friendship that prevailed in 'veteran' cycling circles, he founded the Autumn Tints Cycling Comrades on 12th July 1924. To become a member a cyclist would have to be 50 years of age and on reaching the age of 70, 'Senior' status would automatically be bestowed on him or her. [The Author is a Senior member.]

The club flourished beyond all expectations, and was widely acclaimed in the national and cycling press, radio, and once on the cinema news screen.

* * * *

One of 'Owd' Tom's photographs came into my possession some time ago; it was obviously a favourite for on it was scratched a message enabling Tom to produce sev-



eral copies for sending to friends in place of the more traditional Christmas card.

The message read:

"Merry Xmas 1936. Tom Hughes 21.7.36 70 today at 'Th'owd Wash' (a Cromwellian house built 1622). 6 miles from Wigan Pier."

Cromwellian House

At the time I did not connect the photograph with Tunley Lane. On a sun-splashed autumn morning a few weeks ago, however, I found myself savouring the delights of cycling there. I stopped at Tunley brook, where close-by stood old Tunley Hall, looking so peaceful and tranquil, and could not resist taking a photograph. As I focused on the garden archway dated 1671 and then on the front-elevation of the Hall itself dated 1622 Eureka! I suddenly knew that I had at last discovered the exact location of the photograph in my possession taken 56 years before. This was the very same 'Cromwellian House' which 'Owd' Tom had mentioned in his Christmas message for 1936.

I took a photograph on the exact spot of Tom's scene which has now been changed both by nature and man but not irrevocably so. Small saplings in the 1936 photograph had now grown into mature trees obscuring the Hall. The Hall itself has been altered extensively, but the delightful old Tunley Bridge had not altered one wit.

South Tunley Hall was built by Thomas Wilson in 1622—and amazingly there are still Wilsons in the area. It was Thomas Wilson who on an August morning in 1648 had said 'farewell' to Oliver Cromwell, who had received

continued on p11

SOUTH TUNLEY HALL



'Owd' Tom Hughes on his 70th birthday, 21 July, 1936, at South Tunley Hall.

hospitality at the Hall. Cromwell then departed on his horse to link up with his troops riding towards Warrington after the flush of his victory at the Battle of Preston.

Troubled Times

It was also in those troubled times of religious persecution that the Rev. Jonathan Schofield, who had previously been a chaplain in the Parliamentary army, was 'ejected' from his curacy of Douglas Chapel at nearby Parbold for his Puritan beliefs. He was then offered 'sanctuary' at South Tunley Hall, which served as his 'church' at a time when it was forbidden to hold services.

This had continued for some years after Schofield's death in 1667 until happier times, when in 1691 Tunley Chapel (now Tunley United Reformed Church) was built in the fields not far away.

Time had passed all so quickly and homeward bound, I rode my bicycle down Tunley Lane in the direction of Standish, quietly delighted with myself at solving the mystery of a photograph of yesterday.

Although South Tunley Hall and Tunley Chapel are just outside the Metropolitan Wigan border, they have long had close associations with Wigan. The Presbyterian con-

gregation was established here in 1662, when Charles II's Act of Uniformity effectively excluded Puritans from the Church of England. By this exclusion, some 80 ministers were ejected from their livings in Lancashire alone. Only in 1689, however, was the Toleration Act passed, enabling Dissenters to establish places of worship legally. As the Five Mile act of 1665, however, was still in force, these places of worship had to be built at least five miles from the nearest corporate town.

And so, when Tunley chapel was built in 1691, the site lay just beyond the required distance from Wigan. In later years, when Wigan had its own chapel, this was to prove a great inconvenience for the minister of the Presbyterian chapel in Chapel Lane, who often had to ride out to Tunley

after the morning service to preach there in the afternoon.

Tunley Chapel is the oldest Presbyterian (now United Reformed) chapel in the country where worship has been carried out continuously to this day. The building as it stands today retains much of its original appearance, apart from the schoolroom added in 1880 and the porch in 1971. The interior is suitably plain, and most of the original fittings were replaced in the 1890's. Tunley Chapel is well worth visiting for its peaceful atmosphere and to read the 'history tablets' on the west wall, which chronicle the many important events in the life of the congregation. Ed.

'Owd Tom—A Cycling Legend' is available from the History Shop at £6.99 (for details of mail order see p.15).

BOB DOBSON

Publisher and Book Dealer

LANCASHIRE YORKSHIRE & CHESHIRE

I deal in secondhand books relating to these counties: I appreciate quotations: I search for books: I issue lists. I buy quantities of other books: I organise Secondhand Book Fairs throughout the North West — Send for details. I want to publish Lancashire-interest books.

BOB DOBSON
"Acorns"
3 STAINING RISE,
STAINING,
BLACKPOOL FY3 0BU.
Tel. (0253) 886103



'Owd' Tom was well-known for his humorous (and sometimes 'caustic') quips to suit the occasion. Three of them appear on these two photographs taken in the 1940's.



"OWD JOE AMBROSE'S WENCH"

MY mother's most vivid recollection of visiting her paternal grandparents in Standish is, that while she was playing on the old stocks in the Market Place as a young girl around five or six years old, two old gentlemen approached her saying, "Is thy owd Joe Ambrose's wench?". To which my mother shook her head, she was definitely not 'owd Joe Ambrose's wench'. Then the gentlemen said, "Where's tha grandfather live?" She pointed across the square towards the shop and house on the corner of Bradley Lane and Rectory Lane. "Aye" they said, "thas owd Joe Ambrose's wench alright."

Upon hearing this, and already convinced that she was adopted, her brothers being a lot older than herself, she ran to her grandparents' home sobbing and crying. On telling her story they all laughed, and told her the old men had meant her grandfather. My mother was not convinced, because she knew her grandfather's name was Pilkington, the same as hers. And so the mystery remains, who was owd Joe Ambrose?

A chink of light was shone on the subject recently, while tracing my family tree, for a few of my great grandfather's children had second names which could have been family names, e.g. Annie Simm, Thomas Litigo, John Ambrose, etc.... The rest of the mystery has yet to unfold.

My great grandparents, Joseph and Mary Ellen Pilkington, lived and worked in the shop on Bradley/Rectory Lane for many years, until their deaths in July 1943, Joseph aged 79, Mary Ellen aged 73. Mary Ellen was also a cleaner in Stand-

ish Church while Joseph was a contractor at local collieries, and could have been a very rich man (had he not been soft in the head as Mary Ellen said) but for the fact that when he set himself up to be a money lender of sorts, and went into the local hostleries where people would go to him to borrow money, he never wrote anything down, and was plied with ale by the borrowers; subsequently, more often than not, he would forget who he had loaned his money to, and many being poor or dishonest would never pay anything back.

Mary Ellen was a child born on the wrong side of the blankets, her mother's maiden name being Simm and her married name Mason. Could Joseph's mother's maiden name have been AMBROSE?

Somewhere along the line there were twins Thomas & Richard Mason, who were clog makers. Also an Amos Allen, whom my grandfather Joseph William Pilkington called Uncle Amos, and who we think lived or worked in or near Bradley, for all that can be remembered were his ten minute visits to Rectory Lane, where he would prop up the fireplace and say "Well I'll be away to Bradley". Where do they fit into my family tree? Were there more children from the wrong side of the blanket? Only time and patience will tell, unless someone out there can shine a light on the subject.

Mrs. Linda Peterson,
Westview Cottage,
West End,
Stainforth,
Doncaster.
DN7 5SA

FACE TO FACE WITH A PICTURE FROM THE PAST

I HAVE recently been staying with my niece in Coppull, but had occasion to go into Wigan on Tuesday last. I made my way to what I remembered as the old reference library and so discovered the excellent exhibition in the History Shop. I would like to congratulate you on a very fine display.

As I progressed down the hall I eventually reached the photographic exhibition produced from the Reverend William Wickham's plates; I was quite overwhelmed to come face to face with the picture of my late husband's grandmother Harriet Carson. I feel a little of her back-

the St. Andrew's Church Mothers' Union, standing on her left in the picture is her mother Maria Nurdin (nee Jones). Later the family moved to 152 Woodhouse Lane, which we believe is the house just shown on the left of the picture featuring the 'Rag-and-Bone-Man'.

Harriet's father, Charles, was employed as a carter at an ironworks. Harriet herself commenced work in a cotton mill; her two eldest brothers, George and Thomas, worked at the Douglas Bank Colliery, George becoming an under-manager.

We have the two books "The World of William Wickham" by Kenneth Ward and, of course, "Wigan through

was shown as £143.6d. When transporting the Earl on various journeys, i.e. to London etc., the coachman's expenses varied from £3 to £6. After several years with the Earl, Thomas became ostler at the Eagle and Child and Royal Hotel in Standishgate; he continued to receive payment from the estate for attendance to the Earl's horses. Later Thomas moved to the Royal Oak Hotel at Chorley and it was here that Elizabeth met William Cawley, then employed as a servant at the hotel. The couple were married at All Saints, Wigan in March 1863 and moved into Rowbottom Square. William is shown on the marriage licence as a



The Wickham photograph of the St. Andrew's Mothers' Meeting, 1891, to which Mrs. Carson refers.

ground may be of interest to you.

Harriet Carson (nee Nurdin) was born 25th January 1861 at Ewen, a 'tithing' one mile east of Keble, Wiltshire, the daughter of Charles and Maria Nurdin. The family reached Wigan about 1875; also at this time her future husband Samuel Carson came with his family to Wigan from Portadown, Ulster. Harriet and Samuel were married by the Rev. William Wickham on 5th January, 1889, Samuel then being 24 years of age and Harriet 27 years. Their firstborn son John Charles (shown in the picture) was born 1890, but died when just six years of age. Their second son, Samuel, my late husband's father, was born September 1892 at 198 Woodhouse Lane. Harriet was a founder member of

"Wickham's Window" by A.D. Gillies.

My husband's other ancestors include the Cawley family from Worlaston, Cheshire, who arrived in Wigan in the late 1800's. Also the Casson family of Hawes, Lancashire; they have proved of great interest as great, great grandfather Thomas Casson, born Hawes 1821, became coachman to the Earl of Crawford and Balcarres around 1836. Thomas married the housekeeper at Haigh, Sarah Richardson, born 1816 at Bishop Auckland, Co. Durham. It was at Haigh that their daughter Elizabeth was born in 1843.

A few years ago we were given permission to see some of the Haigh estate papers. These were most interesting—we discovered, for example, that Thomas's half yearly salary as coachman

coachman. Their daughter Sarah Annie, born 1865, married John Morris in 1891; they in turn had a daughter, Amy, destined to marry my husband's father, Samuel Carson, the second son of Harriet Carson. So the story comes full circle.

I must apologise for this rather lengthy letter, but I am afraid when it comes to genealogy I get rather carried away! I trust the foregoing has been of some interest.

Gladys M. Carson (Mrs.)
18 Shaftesbury Court,
Lord Warden Avenue,
Walmer,
Deal,
Kent. CT14 7JY

I have asked Mrs. Carson to follow up this fascinating letter with an article on the Carson story for Past Forward 5. Ed.

A Child's Scrap Book—from 1911

WHY is it that when children grow up, they remember the important small things rather than those planned with such care by their elders? I suppose the vividness of the experience determines its reflection into adult life.

What agonies were in the mind of a three year old when she discovered that her beloved umbrella with a cock's head handle had been left behind after a holiday in Allithwaite near Grange.

As the pony and trap gathered speed on its way to the station the distance between the owner and that cherished possession became a yawning gulf. That same holiday holds a picture of being held up to look over a high wall (in actual fact quite low) to see a black man playing croquet, and to partake of juicy slices of melon, up to then an unknown taste.

How many times did the large stones—no, not stones but huge slabs left on some spare ground near our home in Trafalgar Road, Wigan, as if in imitation of some lesser Stonehenge—serve as counters or tables as imaginations willed. Nature had seen to it that even in that desolation children had been provided with clay to make cups and saucers and all the necessary impedimenta of an imaginary household. By the flick of a finger wild rhubarb leaves could become looking glasses fit for a princess, groundsel become magic apples and the criss-crossed well worn paths become jungle trails.

Pungent Smell

My father each evening brought his horse and bread cart to stand outside the house whilst he partook of a late meal which

my mother had probably cooked hours before. One winter's night the horse, no doubt bored with its urban outlook, decided to look for those Elysian fields where grass is greener. It was found disconsolate in a neighbouring street. Always afterwards we children had to take our turns to sit in the van, keeping our eyes and ears open for further misdemeanours from the horse.

Please do not be sorry for those children, they loved it! Oh for the smell of newly baked bread, the taste of crumbs fresh from the loaf and the more delightful taste of the corners nibbled from the loaves lying in serried ranks waiting for unexpected customers. And the pungent smell of horse cloth over ones knees and the fitful light of the oil lamp.

Parties—and what parties! The cares and duties of a household with five children did not prevent mother from further work for our pleasure. Truffles, chocolate logs, cakes and biscuits of all sizes and shapes. Magic lanterns, shadowgraphy, Christmas trees and Father Christmas. All these at the appropriate times.

On 5 November, we rarely had more than a few Catherine Wheels, sparklers and coloured matches—they were safer and cost less! But what a bonfire in Dick's Field. Fingers were blackened and burnt in recovering the revolting looking potatoes, for which a liberal coating of salt from a screw of paper was added. Next came gingerbread

parkin, treacle and caramel toffee—again homemade. Was there any left? Not a crumb! Friends helped to demolish the eats and many times there were faces strangely new.

Fierce Cock

From dark wintry nights to summer time and holidays. Memories of 1914-15 spent in a wooden bungalow in Cheshire.* The fierce cock that attacked Mollie and was punished by the clan from the safety of a damson tree. Ammunition? Why, damsons of course! Blackberrying, when we ate, thought, bottled and otherwise attempted to dispose of our wares. The morning when we awoke to find a horse in the living room. One dark shadow made a deep impression on us children, although we had not the remotest idea what it would eventually mean. To the clippety-clop of their horses' hooves went a Cheshire regiment. How many of those bright-faced young men came back to the peace and quiet of the Cheshire countryside?

Wigan Waters

A train is ambling its way to the East Coast. In it complete with everything but the kitchen stove are four young members of the Bamford family with parents and a friend. We were on our way to Ulrome, an isolated village on the coast. All went unbelievably well until the next day, when it was very hot. Like all perverse children it was decided that cricket should be played. Not M.C.C. cricket but a special brand reserved for quite a few families on holiday. The rules consist of seeing how many times the players can disagree with each other. At least one

batsman throws his bat at the stumps, or the stumper if he happens to be in the way. As a pleasant little interlude Bill returns to the house, emerging in due course with an expression "I've done you one", and informs the assembled company that he had had a swig of Wigan water. Mamma suddenly springs to life with a positively Wagnerian "Where from?" Meekly Bill replies "From the bottle we brought with us". Imagine Vesuvius in eruption and you have a picture of that moment. The Wigan water was a concentrated bottle of medicine to last the friend a fortnight! How completely careless to do such a thing on one of the six days the doctor was not in the village. After the assembled company had scoured the countryside, a nurse was found. Spare your tears, little Willie did not die. He did not seem to suffer any special tortures, or perhaps he had the courage of a hero and did not let us see.

One could tell of Saturday walks with Auntie Sara when we explored the outer fringes of Wigan. Trees and flowers became friends with names. Of longer walks to Anglesark, Belmont, Ashurst Beacon and other beauty spots.

What treasured memories. How much of the past makes the present, I wonder. The present always seems so uncertain, the past so secure. But only looking back does this seem so, for young life has its forebodings, its terrors and uncertainties. Generally these are hidden, unspoken and have to be borne alone. These along with the delightful experiences go to make up the intricate pattern of life.

Miss Joan Bamford MBE,
LRAM.LTCC,
4 Golden Ways, Wigan.

* This bungalow was on Coward's Farm. The family are still butchers in Wigan Market Hall.

BATTLE OF WIGAN LANE

Dear Mr. Blakeman,

Thank you very much for showing us around the History Shop as it was very interesting to learn about the Battle of Wigan Lane and I really enjoyed looking at all the clips of the people who were involved in the Battle. I also enjoyed looking at all the books and things upstairs. It was very good of you to let Carl Jones try the armour on so we knew

what it was like then.

Yours sincerely,

Elaine Davies.
Mornington High School,
Mornington Road,
Hindley,
Wigan. WN2 4LG

Teachers please note: the History Shop can provide:
- a lesson on the Civil War, using the Battle of Wigan Lane as an example, together with a

brief tour of the History Shop.
- a lesson on learning history from primary sources, which involves a detailed look at items in the History Shop.

Both lessons are suitable for upper primary and lower secondary school pupils.

Any interested teachers should contact Bob Blake-man (Education and Outreach Manager) on 0942 828020.

Letters should be addressed to:
The Heritage Services Manager,
Editor,
Past Forward,
Leisure Services Dept.,
Trencherfield Mill,
Wigan WN3 4EF

MAJOR NEW ATTRACTION FOR WIGAN PIER

WIGAN Pier is open once again on Saturdays. Unfortunately, due to the need to make savings (see From the Editor, p.2) it will remain closed on Fridays, for the time being at least. Please note the later opening time on Saturdays and Sundays (see p.2).

The new season has a major new attraction—the Palace of Varieties, which has gone ahead despite the cuts. Situated on the top floor of the Heritage Centre, the emphasis will be on Victorian Music Hall; however, there will be other themes as well, including Assembly Rooms, Victorian Chapel, Magic Lantern and Victorian Melodrama, as well as audio-visual presentations on the story of Wigan Pier.

The Pier's ever-popular acting company will be very much in evidence in the Palace of Varieties, as well as in other new scenarios and, of course, the famous Victorian Schoolroom. There will be a lot more to see and do at Wigan Pier this summer. Don't miss it!

CLOGS AT THE PIER Sunday 23 May 10.30 - 4.30

Traditional Morris Dancing
by
The Rumworth Morris of
Bolton
The Rivington Morris

Demonstration by Hatty Cowgill
(Lancashire Champion Clog Dancer)

Demonstration of Jig Dolls

Postcards for sale

Demonstration of Clog Making
Clog Dancing Competition

At various venues in
the Wigan Pier complex

Aspull and Haigh Historical Society

The Society meets in the Village Centre, Bolton Road, Aspull, on the second Thursday of the month, at 8.00 p.m. The programme for the rest of 1993 is as follows:

8 April

'Funny Side of the Law'
Miss F. Miller

13 May

'The Archives of the Lancashire
Record Office'
Miss B. Sharp

10 June

'Coins Part 2'
Mr. V. Prescott

9 September

'The Pauper's Palace'
Mrs. E. Connor

14 October

'The Two Halsall Cavaliers'
Mr. J. Halsall

11 November

'Wigan Charters'
Mr. N. Webb

For further details contact Mrs. Dorothy Dootson, 5 Stancliffe Grove, Aspull (0942 831204)

Atherton Heritage Society

Meetings are held in Atherton Library on the second Monday of each month at 7.30 p.m. The programme for the rest of 1993 is as follows:

19 April

'The Ormerod Family'
Mr. J.P. Hess

May

Atherton Festival and trip.

14 June

'Stars of the Music Hall'

SOCIETY NEWS

Mr. J. Keith

9 August

'The Mappa Mundi'
Mrs. M. Gilbertson

13 September

'The Pauper's Palace'
Mrs. E. Connor

11 October

'The History of Leigh Literary
Society' (and A.G.M.)
Mr. A. Ashcroft

8 November

Subject to be confirmed
Mr. A. Rydings

13 December

'Pretoria Pit Disaster'
Dr. Dunne

For further information, contact
Atherton Library (0942 878369)

Leigh Civic Trust

For information, contact Roy
Thomas Secretary (0942
606723/492457)

Leigh and District Family History Society

This Society meets in the
Turnpike Centre's Derby Room on
the third Tuesday of each month.
The 1993 programme is as follows:

20 April

Project Evening—1881 census

18 May

'Scottish Parish Registers'
(and A.G.M.)

15 June

Project Evening—The Good, The
Bad and The Ugly'
Jack Cooper

20 July

Visit to Chester Record Office

17 August

Visit to Salford Mining
Museum.

21 September

'Use of the Society's I.G.I.'
Mrs. E. Finch

19 October

'My Ancestor was in the British
Army'
Dr. M.J. Watts

16 November

'The Crawfords of Haigh'
Mr. N. Webb

For further details contact the
Society's Secretary Mrs. G.
McClellan (0942 729559)

Wigan Archaeological Society

For information, contact Sha-
ron Varley (0257 52986)

Wigan Civic Trust

For information, contact An-
thony Grimshaw Secretary (0942
45777)

Wigan Family History Society

The Society meets to further
the interest and skills of all those in-
terested in tracing their family line
back into the mists of time. Meetings
are held twice monthly at the Seven
Stars Hotel, Wallgate, Wigan. Some
members of the Society have re-
cently co-operated with the Heritage
Service in running some highly suc-
cessful Family History Workshops
in the History Shop (see p.9).

For further details contact Len
Marsden Secretary (0942 217764)

Astley Green Colliery

OVER the past few months equip-
ment has been transferred from the
closed pits at Bickershaw and Par-
sonage. Some of the more notable
items are Peggy's Pump (a steam
pumping engine from 60 yards
down No. 1 shaft, thought to be
over 100 years old), an under-
ground diesel locomotive and a
quantity of lamp room equipment.
There is also a small capstan en-
gine made by John Wood & Sons
Ltd. These items and many others
will be preserved due to the efforts
of men at both collieries.

A larger Woods engine, the emer-
gency winder formerly at Agecroft
colliery, is now being rebuilt on its
new foundations under the headgear
at Astley Green. After the completion
of refurbishment of the engine-house
crane, restoration work on the huge
winding engine has recommenced. By
using the crane in the capacity of a
winch the drum has been turned indi-
cating that the major components are

free. One side of the engine is now
showing the results of the hard work
carried out by the members.

Photographic societies, motor ve-
hicle displays and caravan rallies
have all used Astley Green. Red Rose
Steam Society are refurbishing a tea
room and are at present building
toilets for the disabled.

Events planned for 1993 include:

3-4 April

North West Stationary Engines So-
ciety Engine Rally

24-25 April

Red Rose Steam Society Crank
Up.

7-8 August

Historic Commercial Vehicle So-
ciety—Trans-Pennine Run

15 August

Astley Village Fayre and Horti-
cultural Show

Astley Green Colliery is well
worth a visit—it is open Tuesdays and
Thursdays, 1.00-5.00, and Sundays
11.00-5.00. Schools and colleges are
always welcome (please ring 061 790
7805 to make arrangements).

over 30,000 books

SECOND HAND BOOK FAIR

T'Mill at T'Pier



SUNDAY 23 MAY '93

same day as

'Clogs at the Pier'

10 a.m.-5 p.m.

details from BOB DOBSON

Tel: (0253) 886103



HISTORY SHOP RETAIL AREA

INCORPORATED into the History Shop is a small retail area which stocks a range of heritage related books and gifts. Please browse round next time you visit. We have on offer a range of History Shop souvenirs: mugs, bookmarks, pencils etc. We also stock greetings cards, postcards, stamps and unusual gifts. Our book selection includes publications relating to Lancashire, publications useful to the genealogist and a range specific to Wigan, including our own Heritage Service publications: 'The Devil's Hill—local men at the Battle of Spion Kop, 1900', 'Murder, Terror and Revenge—the legend of Mab's Cross', 'A Terrible Nightmare—the Lancashire Cotton Famine around Wigan' and 'The Two Athertons'. We can supply books by post; examples of prices and postage opposite.

PAYMENT FROM OUTSIDE THE U.K.—We regret that, due to the high cost of currency exchange, no money orders/cheques can be accepted from outside the U.K., with the exception of Eurocheques. These must be made payable to Wigan MBC, in sterling, with the Eurocheque card number on the back.

Payment can also be made by Visa/Mastercard, in sterling, quoting the card number and expiry date.

If you require further details of any of our stock, please ring (0942) 828128 for information.

	Price	UK	Europe	Outside Europe	
				Air Mail	Surface
Murder, Terror and Revenge	£3.95	50p	£1.50	£3.00	£1.25
The Devil's Hill	£3.95	50p	£1.50	£3.00	£1.25
The Two Athertons	£2.99	50p	£1.50	£3.00	£1.25
Wigan a Century Ago	£3.60	50p	£1.50	£3.00	£1.25
Those Dark Satanic Mills	£2.50	£1.00	£3.00	£10.00	£2.00
Wigan Through Wickham's Window	£9.95	£1.50	£3.50	£10.50	£2.50*
John Wesley and Wigan	£2.50	50p	£1.50	£3.00	£1.25
Wigan and Wiganers	£3.95	50p	£1.50	£3.00	£1.25
Life & Times at Haigh Hall	£12.95	£2.50	£5.00	£17.00	£3.75*
New Book Stock, Spring 1993					
Cotton Mills In Gtr. Manchester	£14.95	£3.00	£7.00	£10.50	£3.75*
A Terrible Nightmare (Cotton Famine)	£3.95	50p	£1.50	£3.00	£1.25
The Unfortunate Colliery (High Brooks)	£4.99	50p	£1.50	£3.00	£1.25
Lord Crawford's Other Acre	£2.95	50p	£1.50	£3.00	£1.25
Historic Culcheth	£5.95	75p	£2.00	£3.50	£1.35
The Industrial Railways of the Wigan Coalfield					
Part 1 West & South West	£20.00	£3.00	£7.00	£10.50	£3.75*
Part 2 North & East Wigan	£19.95	£3.00	£7.00	£10.50	£3.75*
Owd Tom—A Cycling Legend	£6.99	50p	£1.50	£3.00	£1.25
Also available: white T-shirt with Heritage Service logo, sizes from:					
26" chest	£5.80)	50p	£1.50	£3.00	£1.25
30" chest	£5.80)				
Small	£7.30)				
Medium	£7.30)				
Large	£7.60)				
Extra Large	£8.00)				

*except Australia - air mail only.

MAILING LIST COUPON

If you would like to receive future editions of 'Past Forward' through the post, please complete the coupon (unless you have already sent one previously) and post to:
The Heritage Services Manager, Editor, 'Past Forward', Leisure Services Dept., Trencherfield Mill, Wigan WN3 4EF.

NAME
ADDRESS

I enclose a contribution of £
towards production costs.
(Please make all cheques payable to 'WIGAN MBC')

Please would Mr. Keane and Mr. Brian Summers, (who kindly donated sums towards the production of Past Forward), please contact the History Shop (0942 828128) so that they can be added to our mailing list for future editions of the magazine.

ORDER FORM

I wish to order the following:

	cost	p&p
.....		
.....		
.....		
total		_____

For orders from the U.K.

I enclose a cheque, no.
(Please make all cheques payable to 'WIGAN MBC')

For orders outside the U.K.

I wish to pay by Eurocheque, no.

I wish to pay by Visa/Mastercard

no. exp. date ...

signature

NAME

ADDRESS

Please post to the History Shop, Rodney Street, Wigan WN1 1DG.

Published by Wigan Heritage Service, Leisure Services Dept., Trencherfield Mill, Wallgate, Wigan, WN3 4EF

Designed & produced by Park Design & Print, Wigan. Tel: 0942 821831.

The views expressed in this issue are not necessarily supported by Wigan Metropolitan Borough Council, or by its Recreation and Amenities Committee. Nothing printed may be construed as policy or an official announcement unless so stated. Neither Wigan Council, nor the editor, accept any liability for any matter in this publication.

Contributions are welcomed but no responsibility can be taken for loss or damage to contributors' material.



**METROPOLITAN
WIGAN**

© Wigan Metropolitan Borough Council April 1993

JUST LOOKING!



If you can identify these photographs, please contact Len Hudson in Leigh Town Hall (0942 672421 ext. 265).

The above photographs are part of the huge Heritage Service Collection of over 60,000 photographs—one of the finest of its kind in the country. Copies of most of these photographs, covering a period of over a century throughout the Metropolitan Wigan area, are available from as little as £4.60. Photographs can be supplied framed or unframed. For further details, contact Len Hudson.

I WAS overwhelmed by the response to the Leigh Riddle in *Past Forward* 3—not one entry, let alone a correct answer. So we won't be able to give away these three free holidays after all! Admittedly, it was difficult—so difficult that I still don't understand it even with the answer! Any explanations, anybody?

LEIGH MATHEMATICAL RIDDLE

The following question was proposed in the 'Diarian Repository' for 1740, by Mr. John Hampson, of Leigh: At Bedford Mill, near old Leigh town is found, In form triangular, a piece of ground, Whose sides and area none can yet explain, Tho' these subsequent hints may then obtain. One angle makes degrees just seventy-nine Which being as three to ten, cut by a line, Of chains eleven, drawn to its sides opposed, The area is the least can be enclosed The miller thus "who best explains the truth, Wins for reward our buxom daughter Ruth."

Answer: The area of the piece of land was 6a. 2r. 36p.

Unlike the 'Leigh Riddle', the photographic 'Where and When' in the last issue produced a good response. Nothing, I'm afraid, for the two views of the generator house, nor for the cottage, but a huge response to the other three

photographs on p.15, including positive identifications.

From top to bottom:

- St. Pauls C. of E. Church, Goose Green, c.1920.
 - St. Patricks R.C. Church, Scholes, 1950's.
- This photograph was taken during the 'Quarant Ore', whereby continuous worship took place for 40 hours, and the sanctuary was traditionally decorated with flowers and candles.
- County Police Station, County Police Street, Ince.

This building has now been converted into flats.

Interestingly, although the cottage has not yet been identified, one suggestion as to its location, although it proved incorrect, led to a contact being made with the owner of a splendid collection of old photographs which as a result have now been added to the Service's photographic collection!

The two views of an electricity generating station produced no response, although their inclusion has proved worthwhile for two readers.

Mrs. Helen King of Beech Hill, Wigan, a keen genealogist, had been told that she had some relatives by the name of Culshaw, but had not been able to trace them. On seeing that the two 'Where and When' photographs were donated by a Mr. David Culshaw of Hindley, she contacted him; the ensuing correspondence confirmed that the fathers of Helen and David were in fact cousins!

There are two more church photographs this time, and two of hundred-stones (a hundred was a sub-division of a shire—the present Metropolitan Wigan area fell largely within West Derby, and also Leyland and Salford hundreds).