

PAST FORWARD

ISSUE NUMBER FIVE

AUTUMN 1993



The Newsletter of Wigan Heritage Service

FREE

From the Editor

'PAST FORWARD' continues to expand. The mailing list has increased considerably since the last issue, and I am pleased to say that many of those who have asked to be put on the list have also sent a donation to help us offset production costs. Many thanks for all contributions received, and a request to all those who have not already done so — if you have enjoyed reading this issue, please do support us by making a contribution, especially if you are on our mailing list. You will find a coupon on p.15.

I have received a very good response to my request for written contributions — you will find a number of articles in this issue have been written by readers. Please do send me your written contributions, and I will do my best to include them.

This issue focuses particularly on family history (pp.8-11). This is an ever-growing hobby, and the Heritage Service is proud of its facilities in Wigan and Leigh for the genealogist. If you are a beginner in this field, make sure you read about the Family History workshops in the History Shop on p.8.

Finally, as Christmas rapidly approaches, remember to visit the shop in the History Shop for a present with a difference. And don't forget our splendid photographic service. See pp.15-16 for further details.

All comments and correspondence should be addressed to:

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The Galleries,
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WN1 1PX.

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.

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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.
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Schools Centre, Wigan Pier.
Tel: 0942 323666

LEIGH LOCAL HISTORY

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Tel: 0942 604131
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Wed. 10.00 - 5.00
Thurs, Fri. 10.00 - 7.00
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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
(Schools and party visits by arrangement)

The next issue of *Past Forward* will include an article on 'The Yorkshire Horse' — no, not some equestrian tale (or tail!) from over the Pennines, but the story of Lancashire's first steam locomotive. It was built at Haigh Foundry in 1812, for use at Clarke's Orrell Colliery, at the instigation of colliery manager Robert Dalglish, himself a former foundry engineer. The design closely followed one introduced on a colliery line in Leeds a few years earlier, hence its name. The full story will come to us courtesy of Mr. Richard Dalglish, a direct descendant of Robert.

Cover: Portrait of Sir Thomas Tyldesley, killed at the battle of Wigan Lane, 25 August 1651. Sir Thomas figures prominently in Wigan Heritage Service publication no. 5, 'The English Civil War Around Wigan and Leigh', and will be the subject of our February lecture (see p.12).

I remember when . . .

A MOTORIST didn't drive on to a petrol forecourt to refill petrol tanks simply because petrol stations were a rarity in the Twenties.

Rather would he have to drive to a one man garage, where a single pump would stand alongside the garage door, but on occasion it would be at the entrance to a builder's yard or even an undertaker's yard. One pump I remember was on the outside wall of a bicycle shop, with the service pipe being fed into an overhead swing pipe that folded back to the wall when not in use. Refuelling of vehicles took place at the kerbside, whilst pedestrians on the pavement would walk under the pipe whilst it was being used, and even mothers with push chairs would nonchalantly pass underneath.

The pump itself was a manually operated device that had to be set at 1/2, 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 gallons when the server (often the housewife) would wind a handle until the plunger control reached the pre-determined setting, and if more than five gallons were required the handle would be wound back and another setting selected. An interesting point perhaps is that one could repeat the five gallons setting four times (20 gallons) and it would still not cost £1. Cheap petrol was 1s. 1/2d per gallon whilst the dearest was 1s. 3 1/2d (under 5p and 8p respectively).

Stranded

Even so some people did not, or could not pay. One garage owner of my acquaintance once showed me his desk drawer with several drivers' licences that had been deposited as surety for two gallons of petrol when a caller was stranded. A licence cost 5s. in those days and on the face value was more than the cost of five gallons of petrol. It was only when he discussed it with a third party who really enjoyed "taking the mickey" out of him, that it was pointed out to him that a "lost" licence could be replaced at a cost of one shilling (5p)!

From then on, he insisted on wrist watches or something of similar value. Perhaps in mitigation it ought to be pointed out here that many of the "stranded" motorists had been to visit the Blackpool Illuminations; crawling along the promenade at 5 mph, they had underestimated how



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much petrol was necessary, and could not pay as all their money had been spent on the trip and amusements.

Caught out

One couldn't help but wonder how anyone could get "caught out" so often as this trader had, but those were the days when all motorists and motor traders helped each other; even if a trader had no pump he bought, stored and sold petrol in two gallons cans charging 3/- deposit on the screwed top can and 2/- for the petrol it contained. Petrol companies had purpose built lorries with racks to carry the cans, before tankers became so commonplace, and provided there was outside storage and the buyer had a permit to store more than four gallons, anyone could buy and sell petrol. Most motorists, though, carried one or two full cans strapped to the running boards of the car.

Those were the days when credit cards had not yet been introduced, nor even envisaged, as very few people had bank accounts; those who had any spare cash chose to save it in either Building Societies or Post Office Savings accounts.

As a motorist, on dark nights you didn't drive on dipped headlights because your vehicle didn't have any electric lights. It had paraffin oil lamps, one on each side of the front windscreen and one at the back showing a red light to the rear, also illuminating the number plate through a plain glass.

If a driver was on a strange road he would drive to the next cross-roads and, unscrewing one of his front lamps by releasing a thumb screw holding it on its bracket, using the lamp as a torch, would read the finger post directions.

Extinguished

He had then to read off all the four signs and roughly deduce from the mileage shown where he was. If he wasn't sure he would knock on the door of the nearest cottage where a light was showing, and ask for directions.

A box of matches was an absolute necessity. On a very windy night one or other of the lights would be extinguished by a gust of wind, and at each stop the first thing the driver would do would be to walk round to the back of his car to check if his rear light was still illuminated.

In fact if any lamp had been extinguished on a gusty night it

wasn't usually a booking the driver got, but rather the beat bobby stopping to tell him his light(s) were out, then indulging in a friendly conversation for a few minutes on general topics.

Later, paraffin oil lamps were replaced by acetylene lamps which gave a brighter light and weren't so easily blown out by the wind, although the preparation was just as messy as refilling the older oil lamps with paraffin. A container, usually strapped on the outside running board, held carbide of calcium, a lumpy grey substance, whilst the top half was a water container with a turn button controller on top. This controlled a water drip valve which, when opened, allowed water to drip on the carbide thus creating a gas.

Bunsen burner

A rubber tube conveyed this to the individual lamps on the front and rear of the vehicle. A bunsen burner in each lamp gave off a bright flame but had to be lit by matches or a cigarette lighter.

The lamps, although giving greater illumination than the oil lamps they had replaced, had three faults:-

1. they still blew out in gusty winds;
2. they exhausted the gas-giving qualities of the carbide at inconvenient times;
3. they ran out of water if not checked before each journey.

Of course, they were never intended to light up the road so much as to warn pedestrians a motor vehicle was approaching, or to act as a width gauge if one should meet another motorist approaching. When this happened, invariably they would each stop and hold a general conversation on motoring topics. There was at that time no fear of holding traffic up, unless it was a horse-drawn cart in which case, more than likely, the carter would stop and join in the conversation, often criticising — good naturedly — "fools who bought mechanically propelled vehicles that invariably go wrong, when for a bucket of feed and an armful of hay a day a horse would keep going all day."

© Ernie Taberner. More from Ernie in the next issue. Ernie's book, 'A Lancashire Uprising', is reviewed on p.5).

News from the Archives

• Recent accessions have included:

2846: Papers of Mr. F.R. Horrocks of Leigh: natural history records, articles, reports and photographs, 1930's - 1980's, including records of Firs Lea Naturalists' Association.

2845: Published proclamation for the arrest of William Standish, 1694.

2843: Christmas draw card, 'for the benefit of the Saw Mill Reading Room, Haigh', 1883.

This unusual item lists some handy prizes, mainly comestibles e.g. half-pack of flour, 6 lbs. roast beef, leg of mutton, couple of ducks, quarts of rum, gin and whiskey, couple of rabbits, 'Tommy Thumper beer', 1 lb. tobacco, a hare, a cow tongue; non-food prizes included such useful items as a briar pipe, a billycock hat (to fit), and a pair of boots (to fit).

2839: Report dated 1762 of proceedings since 1733 in a lawsuit before the Chancery Court of Lancashire, con-

cerning the will of William Taylor. Taylor's estate, valued at £847. 0s. 4d., comprised three houses in Hindley called 'Rotten Row House', 'New House' and 'the Poor House', with two closes of land recently enclosed from Hindley Common. Rotten Row was still used in the 19th century as a place name, and referred to the houses along the south side of Atherton Road east of the parsonage. Hindley Common had been enclosed by agreement in the 1720's.

2838: Lease for three lives of a cottage with garden and croft in Tyldesley, formerly in the occupation of Sarah Withington, 1732. The lessors were Samuel Clowes of Manchester, merchant, Edward Green of Westleigh, gentleman and Ann his wife (daughter of Peter Parr of Westleigh); the lessees were the executors of the will of William Withington, a Tyldesley yeoman. The rent was 12d. p.a., the purchase of the lease cost £24. This stray deed was deposited by the National Trust through the British Records Association.

PROGRAMME

WEEK COMMENCING MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 22nd, 1941.

OVERTURE—The Hippodrome Orchestra under the direction of H. Stone.

EILEEN WINTERTON TRIO—Dancers Definitely Different.

AGAR AND YOUNG—Acrobatic Duo in a New Style of Comedy.

GLADYS CHURCH—The Whistling Songstress.

NICOL AND MARTIN—The Famous Cycling Comedians—
"Pooling for You."

EILEEN WINTERTON TRIO.

HENRY HILTON—The Dexterbus Deceiver.

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MELODY RHYTHM—CLASSIC AND SWING
SONGSTERS—SOLOISTS
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EVERYTHING.

The Band under the direction of Bandmaster A. G. MANTZ, Mus.Doc.Lond.

THE KING.

2835: Hippodrome Theatre programmes, Wigan 1939-1944. The wartime Variety and Revue programmes were surprisingly varied. The Company also owned the Pavilion and Court Cinemas, as well as the Palace Cinema at Hindley. Each offered a different film, and these were also advertised in the same brochure. The Variety acts at the Palace included two comedians of national repute — Rob Wilton ('The Day War Broke Out') and Norman Evans ('Over the Garden Wall').

2828: Photograph of Swan Meadow Football Team, 1926.

2821: Instruction booklet for miners using the new pit-head baths at Parsonage Colliery, Leigh, 1930, issued by Wigan Coal & Iron Company.

2819: Papers of Mr. E. Cheetham of Shevington concerning his researches into family history.

2818: Surveyor's notebook concerning excavations for and construction of the new swimming baths, Wigan, 1965-1966, with site photographs including views of ancient mine workings between Millgate and Library Street.

• Two of the recent accessions are reproduced here:

Left: Christmas draw card, 1883. Has anyone any information as to the establishment of this Reading Room? Was it, for example, provided by Lord Crawford?

Above: Hippodrome Theatre, Wigan programme, 1941 (one of a number, 1939-1944).

63

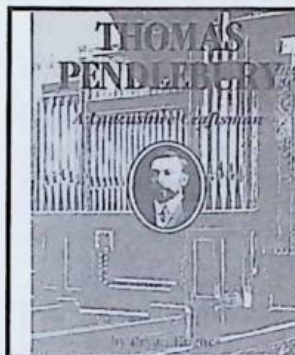
A Grand Christmas Draw,

For the benefit of the Saw Mill Reading Room, Haigh,
ON SATURDAY, DECEMBER 22nd, 1883.

1 Half-Pack Flour	26 Tommy Thumper Beer
2 Two Pairs Blankets	27 One lb. of Tobacco
3 Turkey	28 Goose
4 Goose	29 Duck
5 Roast of Beef, 6 lbs.	30 Hare
6 Quarter Barrel Beer	31 Cow Tongue
7 Ham	32 One lb. Tea
8 Leg of Mutton	33 Hen
9 Couple of Ducks	34 Couple of Chickens
10 Goose	35 Time Piece
11 Loin of Pork, 6 lbs.	36 Time Piece, Alarm
12 Copper Kettle	37 One lb. Tea
13 Bottle of Brandy	38 Briar Pipe
14 Quart of Whiskey	39 Metal Tea Pot
15 Quart of Rum	40 Walking Stick
16 Quart of Gin	41 Billiard Cue
17 Bottle of Port	42 Six lbs. Bacon
18 Bottle of Sherry	43 Cow Tongue
19 Box of Cigars	44 Billycock Hat (to fit)
20 Couple of Rabbits	45 Pencil Case
21 Half-Pack Flour	46 Pair of Boots (to fit)
22 Goose	47 Writing Case
23 Roast of Beef, 6 lbs.	48 Ladies Work Box
24 Leg of Mutton	49 Umbrella
25 Couple of Chickens	50 Half-Box of Cigars

500 Members, at One Shilling each.
Non-Winners of Prizes allowed 2d. each in Refreshments.

Book Reviews



THOMAS PENDLEBURY *A Lancashire Craftsman* by Bryan Hughes

THOMAS PENDLEBURY was a famous Lancashire organ-builder, and this is his story. Immediately, this would suggest that the appeal of this book is limited to the small number who can actually play the instrument – and even many, of those, like the reviewer, may be able to play after a fashion, but would very soon be baffled by some of the specifications and detail which the writer provides.

But do not be put off! This is a story for everyone. Bryan Hughes has, in fact, produced a very human and highly readable biography of a remarkable son of Leigh and his family. There is much of interest to do with the town of Pendlebury's birth, and Westleigh in particular, complemented by some fine photographs.

And Thomas Pendlebury himself was a fascinating character. We read how, "possessed with a natural gift and an inbuilt sensitivity", he struggled from a typically humble 19th century background to achieve fame as an organ-builder, not just in his native Leigh, but throughout the north of England, and even as far afield as the USA.

Thomas Pendlebury was born in 1867 near St Paul's Church, Westleigh. At the age of eleven, he was working down the mine at Eatock Pit, Hindley; but it was at this time that his parents discovered that he might possibly have a 'musical ear'. Indeed, he was later found to possess 'perfect pitch'. It is said that he would cry out as if in pain at sounds which were discordant.

Gradually, Thomas pursued his musical interests by making organ pipes and pieces of organ mechanisms in a barn on his father's smallholding. In 1899, he built an organ, at a cost of £140, for Brunswick Methodist Chapel, Hindley Green. Orders soon followed from other local churches, which he completed in his terraced houses, 143-145 Glebe Street, Leigh. Soon, larger



Thomas Pendlebury 1867 - 1933

premises had to be acquired, in Bedford Square, Chapel Street, Leigh. In the next 20 years, Pendlebury was to be responsible for building organs in Leigh, Wigan, Hindley, Atherton, as well as Keswick, Blackpool, Southport and Radio City, U.S.A.

But the inventiveness of the man extended beyond his craft as an organ-builder. He designed and patented improved safety guards for wood-working machinery. In 1923, before the advent of the Driving Test, he invented and patented a dual control system for the motor-car, whereby a learner driver could be taken on the highway with an added degree of safety.

On Thomas's death in 1933, the business passed to his son James and in turn to his grandson Stanley, on whose death in 1988 the Pendlebury dynasty of Lancashire organ-builders came to a close.

This is a fine book, well-written and well-researched, and brought to life all the more by a splendid selection of photographs, most of which are taken from the Heritage Service's own collection. In all, it is a fascinating testament to a remarkable man of Leigh, and Lancashire.

A.G.

● *Thomas Pendlebury - A Lancashire Craftsman* is published by Owl Books of Wigan at £9.95 (ISBN 1 873888 55 4). Available from The History Shop.

A LANCASHIRE UPBRINGING

by Ernie Taberner

A LANCASHIRE
UPBRINGING



THIS book has less than 100 pages, but 30 chapters! Immediately that will tell you the nature of the book. It is not so much one to read in one go, as one to constantly dip into.

And well worth doing so. Ernie Taberner has produced a series of fascinating reminiscences of the first 20 years of his life spent around the Wigan Pier area (he has lived in Coventry (!) for the last 50 years). As such, he is the first person who has experienced working class Wigan in the 1920's and 30's to have actually recorded it.

Ernie writes, "it was in the streets such as those off Chapel Lane where one would have to have lived during the depression years, to fully appreciate the abominably low standard of living of working class Lancashire folk. It is about these people, customs, habits and philosophy that the writer wants to record for present readers whilst he is able, because had he not himself experienced first hand, he too would be inclined to believe the stories at least exaggerated, if at all true."

These were days when women were old in their fifties, when many children did not reach their fifth birthday. Most property was back to back houses, with two rooms up and two down, often shared by two families. There would be a communal toilet in the yard, shared by four families. A morning ritual for all the families was a visit to the toilet with the slop bucket into which had been emptied all the chamber pots used during the night. Many families had teenage children but only one bedroom, with a dividing curtain between parents and children, and a subdividing screen between boys and girls over fourteen years old, all younger children sleeping in one bed irrespective of gender.

This book is the very stuff of memories, not just for those who lived in that part of Wigan, but for all those who lived in a working class Lancashire town in these difficult inter-war years. Remember the first wirelesses,

clogs and shawls, the pawnshop, char-a-bancs, music hall and theatre (especially Wigan Hippodrome) and evening dances? The characters sadly no longer with us – the knocker-up, the lamplighter, the cockle man, the fish woman? And the games played by young and old – pitch a penny, knock up, piggy, tops and whips, cocky rusty? I could go on.

These were hard days, but also happy ones. Ernie's reminiscences, complemented by some contemporary photographs and illustrations from the Heritage Service's collections, will certainly help you relive them. At only £5, this is a real bargain.

A.G.

● *'A Lancashire Upbringing'* is a Landy Publication (ISBN 1 827895 17 4). Available from The History Shop. Ernie's motoring memories appear on p.3.

STOP PRESS

An additional reference book just added to the stock of Leigh Local History Library is 'The Textile Industry in Leigh 1760-1860'. The publication is a bound volume of a dissertation researched by local teacher and amateur historian Tony Rydings for his M.Phil at Manchester.

The main contents refer to the cotton and silk industries in Leigh during the period 1760-1860 and finally the transition to spinning, with particular reference to the families of Hayes and Thorp.

If anyone is interested in referring to this area of research please contact Leigh Local History Officer Tony Ashcroft (0942 604131).

THE ENGLISH CIVIL WAR

Around Wigan and Leigh



'THE CIVIL WAR AROUND WIGAN AND LEIGH' is the fifth in the Heritage Service's publications programme. The author, local historian and former history teacher Fred Holcroft, describes the events leading up to the outbreak of hostilities: how the autocratic and unpopular policies of King Charles I caused even a town such as Wigan, which was usually Royalist in its sympathies, to send an MP to Parliament who was opposed to the King. His name

Local Civil War Hostilities Recorded in New Book

was Alexander Rigby and he was destined to become a colonel in the Parliamentary army.

However, most of the support for Parliament lay elsewhere. The inhabitants of Atherton and places to the east were for Parliament, whereas places to the west were mainly Royalist in sympathies. At the outbreak of the war, the Royalist Commander in the north-west, the Earl of Derby, made Wigan his headquarters. The proximity of Royalist Wigan to the Parliamentary stronghold of Bolton meant that much fighting took place in the area. Another factor was the strategic situation of Wigan on the main north-south highway, which meant that every invading army that was passing

through Lancashire had to occupy the town.

The author describes the early skirmishes at Leigh and Westhoughton, the attacks on Bolton by the Wigan garrison, and the attacks on Wigan by Parliamentary forces from Bolton, Prince Rupert's advance into Lancashire, his capture of Bolton, and the civic banquet given to him at Wigan; the siege of Lathom House; the invasion by the Scottish Royalist the Duke of Hamilton and his pursuit through Wigan and Winwick by Oliver Cromwell; King Charles II's passage through Wigan, and the final Royalist defeat at the battle of Wigan Lane.

Wigan Heritage Service's Archives, held in Leigh Town Hall, contain an invaluable

collection of documents from the period, and these have enabled the author to describe in detail less well-known aspects of the war, such as complaints by the inhabitants of Wigan about the billeting of soldiers, rates of pay for soldiers, the method of exchanging prisoners, and the primitive espionage system.

Apart from military matters, the author writes of agitation by workers for the right to vote, an outbreak of plague, and King Charles II's reward to the town of Wigan for its loyal support throughout the war.

The book is illustrated with photographs and maps, and is available for only £3.95 (plus 50p postage and packing) from the History Shop and selected outlets.

IMPERIAL WAR MUSEUM ACKNOWLEDGES LESLIE'S WORK

SINCE his retirement in 1975 Leslie Smith of Leigh has been a constant visitor to the Archives Searchroom and the Local History Service in the Library. Firstly he carried out exhaustive research into the internment of German Prisoners of War in Leigh during World War I, which culminated in the publication of his book, 'The German Prisoner of War Camp at Leigh 1914 to 1919'. As no complete records existed beyond this research a copy of the book was gratefully acknowledged by the Imperial War Museum.

Following this he made extensive researches locally and at Post Office Archives in London into all aspects of the Postal Services relating to Leigh. A complete record of the Postal History, Pillar and Wall Boxes, Postmarks, and Sub-Post Offices is now kept in the Archives. Copies have been accepted and bound in book form by the Post Office Archives. A full set was also accepted by Rylands Library in Manchester and a copy of work on Post Boxes was accepted by The Letter Box Study Group.

He is still short of some post-marks of Leigh and would be glad to hear from anyone in possession of such items. (c/o Archives Service, Leigh Town Hall). At present he is working on the 'Smith' family history.

ONLY CONNECT

'HOWARD'S END' has been very much in the news recently, with the award-winning film of the novel by E.M. Forster. The epigraph for the novel is 'Only Connect', which suggested to me that we can frequently find connections with the Metropolitan Wigan area in the most obscure of places if we keep our eyes open.

This epigraph is particularly appropriate as I have come across two, albeit somewhat tenuous, connections between Forster and the Metropolitan Wigan area.

Connection 1

In 'A Room With a View' (Penguin 1978, edited by Oliver Stallybrass) there is a sequence of events recorded in chapter six where a group of English tourists are driven to Fiesole, near Florence, by some native Italians. On their journey they pass nearby a villa with a thick hedge. It was at this villa that Boccaccio is reputed to have written his famous work 'The Decameron'. In the note section on page 245, Stallybrass informs the reader that the villa referred to

was called Palmieri, the property of the Earl of Crawford. The person referred to was indeed Alexander William, 25th Earl of Crawford, who owned Haigh Hall, near Wigan. If anyone is interested in reading further on the subject, I suggest that they read Donald Anderson's recent book 'Life and Times of Haigh Hall', especially pp. 79-81.

Connection 2

The Edward Hall Collection, held by Wigan Archives Service, includes the diaries and letters of Henry Thornton (1760-1815). Thornton was a banker and philanthropist, famous for his involvement with the 'Clapham Sect' which included such people as William Wilberforce, Zachary Macaulay and John Venn. The abolition of slavery was one cause particularly taken up by the sect. The private diaries in the collection relate to the period 1795-1814 and refer to his personal life. Part of the manuscript has been typed out. In it one can find correspondence with the famous evangelical, educational

pioneer and social reformer Hannah More.

What has this to do with Forster? The connection is that Henry Thornton, who married Marianne Sykes (1765-1815), was in fact Forster's great grandfather.

Should anyone be interested in reading about Thornton and the Clapham Sect, then they could refer to:

Howse, Ernest Marshall, *Saints in Politics: the Clapham Sect and the Growth of Freedom* (Allen & Unwin, 1953 (1971 repr.) ISBN 0049420887.

Better still, why not make an appointment at the Archives to read the type-written copy of Henry Thornton's letters and diaries?

If you know of any connections with a bearing on the Metropolitan Wigan area, please do contact me.

For those of a literary 'bent' I will write about Leigh's connection with W.B. Yeats in the next issue of Past Forward.

Tony Ashcroft
Local History Officer
(0942 604131)

STANDISH—Eight Hundred Years of History

THE latest Heritage Service publication is entitled 'Standish—Eight Hundred Years of History'. Issued to coincide with the seventh Standish Festival, the book was planned to record in a more permanent form an exhibition about the history of Standish which has been on display during recent Festivals, and which has been shown again at Standish Library this year. The book consists of a brief outline history of the village and is generously illustrated with photographs and documents, many of which are published here for the first time.

The topics covered include the fortunes of the Standish family which emerged around 1200 and held the manor and the Standish Hall estate until 1921. The family survived and prospered despite remaining Roman



Catholic after the Reformation, supporting the Crown during the Civil War and helping the Jacobite cause after 1688. William Standish escaped arrest after the disclosure of the Standish Plot in 1694, and his son Ralph was pardoned after being sentenced to death for his part in the rising of 1715.

Other sections of the book deal with the now

demolished Standish Hall itself, the history of Standish's churches and schools, and the coming of industry to the village. Most of the original source material for the book is drawn from the Heritage Service's collections at the Archives Office in Leigh and the History Shop in Wigan. These are freely available for public use.

• 'Standish—Eight Hundred Years of History' by the Heritage Service's Archivist Nicholas Webb, is available for only £3.95 (plus 50p postage and packing) from the History Shop, Standish Library and other selected outlets.

TO DEFY A KING

RELIGION has always played a part in the minds and souls of the hard working northerners, but in the 17th century, under the rule of Charles II, laws were passed enforcing public worship according to the revised Prayer Book. Anyone not adhering to that rule and wishing to pray in their own right was labelled Nonconformist and hunted down and punished.

One such group in the Wigan area in addition to the Presbyterian followers were the Quakers of Standish. Quakerism was founded by George Fox, a Leicester man who started to preach in Lancashire in 1652; from then interest developed in the north. In 1660 a meeting was held in the village of Coppull. A leader was hastily sought and a linen weaver, Heskin Fell, volunteered his services, becoming the earliest Quaker in the district. He and two brothers, John and Roger Haydock of Coppull, became the founder members of the movement in Standish.

The Society of Friends (the correct name of the Quaker movement) soon became established in Coppull — documents show that in 1669 ... "there is a monthly meeting of Quakers at

the house of Fell, their numbers being 40 or 50." These unlawful meetings led to Fell being imprisoned and fined. Even upon release he travelled the country preaching his belief in the Quaker doctrine until he died on 29 Feb. 1720, aged eighty.

The Haydock family, who did not allow wealth to interfere with faith, acquired Langtree Hall near Standish from the Langtree family who had suddenly been made poor owing to their being on the losing side in the Civil War. Perbum Hall, or Bogburn Hall as it later became known, less than a mile away, was bought by this Quaker family but whether it was used for illegal meetings is not clear. It is recorded that Bogburn Hall was searched for arms in 1683 as it was feared that dissenters in the area were plotting against Catholic James II.

As soon as the Toleration Act of 1689 allowed freedom of worship to Nonconformists, Heskin Fell and John Haydock registered their houses as being places for public worship at Wigan Quarter Sessions on 16 January 1693. Also registered at the time was a piece of land in Langtree as a Quaker burial ground.

The first Quaker Meeting House to be built at Standish was built on the burial ground



Two photographs taken from the book: High Street looking North, early 1900's and the Finch family at Robin Hall Farm 1900's.

site in 1771. This meeting house was used until 1803 when a new building was erected in the centre of Standish on part of the School Croft, the lease being allowed by the trustees of the Grammar School.

As the Quaker following in Standish faded the Meeting House was let, the lower floor to the Wesleyan Methodists and the upper one as a house. Later it was converted into cottages. Although demolished, however,

that particular area is still known as Quakers Yard.

The Quaker burial ground still exists and is preserved as a garden with seats for the public. Further proof of this band of believers who chose to defy the laws of a king can be found in tablets in St. Wilfred's Church, Standish and St. John's Church, Coppull.

Ernest Ford is the author of the Dalesman Publication 'Lancashire Tales of Mirth' and 'Owdo', a Coveropen Publication, Wigan.

FOCUS ON FAMILY HISTORY...

BETTER ACCESS TO WIGAN PARISH REGISTERS

Researchers at both the Archives Office in Leigh and the History Shop in Wigan will now enjoy better access to the early years of Wigan parish registers, thanks to a project undertaken by Mr. Len Marsden of Wigan Family History Society. Over the past two years or so, he has transcribed the remaining portion of the first volume, covering the period 1626 to 1663.

The earlier portion, from 1580 to 1625, was published by the Lancashire Parish Register Society in 1899. The fruit of this painstaking task is now available for reference as a typescript, and it is hoped that a full index will also be available shortly. Perhaps one day it may be possible to publish the transcript in book form. Mr. Marsden has recently commenced the even more daunting task of transcribing the second manuscript register, which contains baptisms, marriages and burials from 1663 to 1721.

The ancient sprawling parish of All Saints included the townships and chapelries of Abram, Aspull, Billinge (Chapel End and Higher End), Dalton, Haigh, Hindley, Ince, Orrell, Pemberton, Upholland, Winstanley



Here is a family historian's delight! This splendid photograph is of the Bell family, Wigan painters and decorators, c. 1910. Standing are William, Martha, Fred, Jack, Minnie, Roger and Mary Jane. Seated are Harry, Maria, Grandma Bell, Granddad Bell and Emily. Thanks to Miss Bell for allowing us to use this photograph of her ancestors.

as well as Wigan itself. Of these, Billinge (from 1696), Hindley (from 1641) and Upholland (from 1600) had their own registers.

Difficult to read

It is often not realised that many pre-1837 registers are in fact accessible in the form of accurate transcripts. The advantages are obvious, since the manuscripts of the early period are very often difficult to read in their crabbed secretary or italic hands, and many researchers experience increasing problems the further back in time they progress. Of course, it

will always be wise to check any transcribed entry against the original where possible. In the case of the Wigan registers, the first two volumes contain many pages that today are very difficult indeed to decipher, due mainly to damage and wear and tear to the parchment leaves. This, incidentally, is the main reason why all the earlier registers have been microfilmed and are now shown in this format. The first Wigan register, from 1580 to 1663, was in fact lost for many years, and was rediscovered by Canon Bridgeman (rector 1864-1896) amongst documents at Weston-under-Lizard in Staffordshire, probably having been removed thither by one of Bridgeman's predecessors and ancestors, Roger Bridgeman (rector 1741-1750).

Other local registers available as transcripts include:

Ashton-in-Makerfield	(1698-1755)
Billinge	(1696-1812)
Blackrod	(1606-1701)

Deane	(1604-1812)
Eccles	(1564-1632)
Eccleston	(1603-1694)
Leigh	(1558-1700)
Newchurch-in-Culcheth	(1599-1841)
St. Helens	(1713-1812)
Standish	(1560-1837)
Upholland	(1600-1735)
Warrington	(1591-1706)
Winwick	(1563-1841)

Most of these have been published over the years by Lancashire Parish Register Society, which was founded in 1897 with the object of producing transcripts of registers of Lancashire parishes prior to the commencement of civil registration in 1837, and publishing as many of these as possible. To date some 132 volumes have appeared.

Besides the continuing project to transcribe the Wigan registers, a similar project has now been commenced by Mr. Ken Taylor of St. Helens, with the registers of All Saints, Hindley. It is hoped that this will eventually be published by the L.P.R.S. (see article opposite).

N.W.

FAMILY HISTORY WORKSHOPS

IN response to popular demand Wigan Heritage Service will be repeating the successful series of family history workshops held earlier this year. Experienced genealogists from the Wigan Family History Society will be on hand to show you how to begin tracing your ancestors or to help you with problems you may have encountered in your research. The workshops will be held at the History Shop, Rodney Street, Wigan, on the following Mondays: 10, 24, 31 January and 7 February, between 2 p.m. and 7 p.m. Telephone the History Shop on 0942 828128 for your personal consultation, stating day and time preferred. There is no charge for this service.

FOCUS ON FAMILY HISTORY...

KEN'S PERSEVERANCE PROVES FRUITFUL

THE early church registers of Hindley All Saints are particularly valuable to both family and local historians. From 1779, much earlier than in most church registers, information not normally included is given. For burials, for instance, the age and cause of death is recorded, while for christenings the mother's parents are mentioned; the father's job, too, is normally given. Although the basic information of baptisms and marriages has been recorded by the IGI this extra detail has not and it may be of enormous help to those tracing their family roots.

'Alien' Ken Taylor is aiming to make the registers up to 1837 more accessible. Coming from St. Helens he admits to having some concern when he signs the visitors' book at the History Shop in Wigan or the Archives Office in Leigh, but after some years of regular visits he can now order a simple meal, especially at Leigh St. Mary's toast & coffee shop! He still has not found his way from Wigan to Hindley, however — at least not by a straightforward route.

Surprised

Having retired two years ago he first put his energy into his own family background. As a Mancunian by birth and upbringing and a St. Helenian by accident, he was very surprised to find that all his ancestors down to the 17th century were all from the Wigan-Winwick areas. Just about every old church, including Hindley All Saints, has yielded some information. The very first baptisms recorded in the first 'official' register of 1698, John & Alice of Chad-dock, are his. An earlier register still survives, one of the

Unitarian church registers deposited in the Public Record Office. The records go back to 1642 and the foundation of the church, which quickly passed into the hands of Presbyterians and remained there until the Anglicans regained it in 1698. These records will be included in Ken's transcripts — if and when he can read them! Handwriting in the mid-17th century is very different from that of later periods. Despite many years of teaching and marking thousands of examination papers, Ken admits that these registers are something of a battle.

Amongst the many problems he is encountering is the pattern of marriages. Until about 1796 there are rarely more than 10 to 15 marriages a year; then suddenly the numbers double and double again until about 1801 there are over 80 a year, followed by a sudden collapse. Why is a mystery, especially as most couples were from Wigan, with just a few from Hindley, Abram, Aspull and Ince. Several couples came from Orrell & Pemberton — some journey to Hindley, especially as they had to walk past All Saints, Wigan! Why not marry there? Any ideas?

Fustian Weavers

From the information gleaned from the registers it is clear that Hindley was a township of fustian weavers in the early 18th century. As that century ends the registers are showing a scattering of other jobs — colliers, shopkeepers, several innkeepers, a toll-gate keeper, even a glassmaker. A factory, presumably for spinning, had been established — some men are recorded as being killed by the machinery. Being used to St. Helens and its marvellous history by

Barker and Harris, Ken is very much in need of a good account of Hindley's past. Any offers?

Disappointment

Another disappointment is the missing banns register, 1802-1807. Until then the banns were kept in the same register as the marriages. As there were more banns called than marriages performed, the part allocated to banns was filled first. By 1802, the banns had to be kept either on pieces of paper or in a separate register. If anyone knows where they are please contact the Archivist at Leigh.

After nearly a year transcribing the registers up to 1814, Ken is now on the first of many checks of his entries

to make sure they are as accurate as he can make them. His next job will be to acquire a computer so that he can more easily correct the errors. This will, he is told, save him many, many hours of work, especially when the job of indexing all the names looms up. He believes that the Lancashire Parish Register Society has a computer programme that should cut the time normally taken from a year to a matter of minutes! First, though, he will have to learn to use a computer!

And who said retirement is a time to relax? "I used to nod off during the 6.00 p.m. news when I was working. Now I've retired I fall asleep before it starts!"

Where There's a Welcome

IF you are interested in family history, even if you are a complete beginner, why not join your local Family History Society? You would be made very welcome. There are two in our area:

WIGAN FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY

Wigan Family History Society was formed in 1986 with just five members; it now has 70 members and is still growing as interest increases. Meetings are twice monthly (July and August excepted) on the first and third Monday evenings at 7.30 p.m. in the Seven Stars Hotel, Wallgate, Wigan.

The first Monday is an informal evening, when we discuss each other's problems and (hopefully) give help and advice to members which will enable them to advance their researches. Forthcoming speakers include

Mr Bob Blakeman, Miss Diana Winterbotham MBE, Mr. Fred Holcroft, Mrs. Carol Littler, Mr. Tony Ashcroft and Mr. Alan Miller. There will also be the usual Buffet Supper in December.

The transcription of Wigan's second parish register, of baptisms marriages and burials, is now well under way and will be available for researchers next year.

For further details contact the Society's Secretary Mr. Len Marsden (0942 217764).

LEIGH & DISTRICT FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY

The Society meets in the Turnpike Centre's Derby Room on the third Tuesday of each month.

On 16 November Mr. N. Webb will speak on 'The Crawfords of Haigh'. For further details, contact the Secretary, Mrs. G. McClellan (0942 729559).

In the last Past Forward, a fascinating letter from Mrs. Gladys Carson appeared, in which she traced the background of her late husband's grandmother, a photograph of whom she saw by chance during a visit to the History Shop. Mrs. Carson has since sent me an excellent article, part 1 of which now follows, entitled...

Migration from the Land

INTRODUCTION

SEVERAL of my late husband's ancestors were destined to reach industrial Lancashire in the mid 1800's from the scattered agricultural communities of Northern Ireland, Gloucestershire/Wiltshire, Cheshire and the fell country of northern Lancashire. Wigan in 1851 had a population of a little over 31,000, with numerous mines, iron-works and cotton mills within its environs; and it was to this rapidly

expanding market town that many members of the families that I now write about came to settle.

I trust the following will convey to the reader not only a sense of family history but also give an insight into life from a bygone age. Research into our ancestry has been our preoccupation since retirement, several years ago; our discoveries have given us much pleasure and quite often, unexpected surprises.

The family sketches that I now set down have been compiled from my husband's notes and records. Although he left Wigan in 1938 there have been several short periods since the last war when we have resided in the town. I, as a Londoner, have appreciated the warmth and friendliness of the Wigan people, and with my husband have always felt "a sense of belonging".

The Carson family left Portadown, Ulster, about 1876. Earlier details of the family cannot unfortunately be traced as all Protestant church records were concentrated in The Four Courts in Dublin; these offices, together with most of the records housed therein, were destroyed in the siege of 1922. The name Carson is of Scottish origin and from the little we do know it would appear that, quite probably, earlier ancestors came from the Dumfries/Galloway area; without documentation, however, this cannot be authenticated.

However, an entry in the baptismal register of Portadown Church does confirm that Samuel Carson, my husband's paternal grandfather, was born on 25 September 1864, the son of John Carson and his wife, Martha (nee Jameson). On reaching Wigan Samuel commenced work as a coal miner, and in 1889 married Harriet Nurdin.

The Gloucestershire/Wiltshire Connection

Detailed information concerning the Nurdin family has been easier to obtain. Harriet's great grandfather Edward Nurdin(g) was born

at Rendcomb, in the county of Gloucestershire in 1785. In 1809 he married Elizabeth Pinchin of North Cerney, a village a few miles south of Rendcomb. One daughter and three sons were born to them by which time the family was living at Down Cottage, attached to Down Farm, Cherrington, a village close to the Wiltshire borders; Edward was then working as a shepherd.

Little is known about the three sons, but their daughter, Keziah, had two children, Charles, born at Down Cottage in 1835, and Elizabeth, born in 1840. Keziah had become the wife of Thomas Davis, who was also a shepherd. Their son Charles became an agricultural labourer and in 1859 married Maria Jones at All Saint's Church, Kemble, Wiltshire. When their first child, Harriet, was born they were living in the village of Ewen, a 'tithing' one mile east of Kemble. Kemble is shown in the Domesday Book as owned by the Abbey of Malmesbury; its population in 1861 is given as 466. Within the parish is the source of the River Thames, and indeed Ewen in old English means 'source of river'.

One feels it must have been with some reluctance that Charles and Maria left this most pleasant rural landscape, with their children, to face unknown prospects amidst the industrial environment that was Wigan in the late 1800's.

At the time of the 1881 census the family was living at 82 Woodhouse Lane, Wigan. Charles had obtained work as a carter at an iron-works, and Harriet had started work in a cotton mill. Her two eldest brothers George and Thomas were working at Douglas Bank Colliery; at the time of his retirement in 1922 George was Under-Manager at the colliery. From the Wigan Observer for 23 May 1931 the following is noted: "DEATH OF FORMER COLLIERY UNDER-MANAGER. We regret to record the death of Mr. George Nurdin of 192 Woodhouse Lane, Wigan, which occurred suddenly on Friday last week, at the age of 66 years; he had been ill for only a few days. Mr. Nurdin who belonged to a Gloucestershire family of farmers came to Wigan at an early age. He eventually became Under-Manager at the Rose Bridge and Douglas Bank

Colliery. At the closing down of Douglas Bank Colliery about ten years ago Mr. Nurdin retired. He was interested in bowling and was very highly respected amongst a wide circle of friends."

In concluding the Nurdin story reference should be made once again to the marriage of Harriet and Samuel Carson. This took place at St. Andrew's Church, Woodhouse Lane, Wigan on 5 January 1889, the Reverend William A. Wickham officiating. Both the Carson and Nurdin families were associated with St. Andrew's Church from its consecration on 1 August 1882. The Parish Magazines of the first Vicar, the Reverend Wickham, incumbent from 1878 to 1916, contain many references to members of both families.

The first number of the magazine in January 1882 reports on a Missionary Meeting on 5 December 1881 which was attended by Harriet, then aged 20 years. This meeting would have been held in the school-cum-church then at Martland Mill. Harriet became a founder member of the Mother's Meeting, her brother George

Continued from p.10

was on the Bible Class Committee while her father Samuel helped to organise both the Men's Club and the Boy's Club; later he became a member of the Church Committee.

Harriet and Samuel had two sons. Their first born, John Charles, died when only six years of age, while their second son, Samuel (my husband's father) was born 11 September 1892 at 198 Woodhouse Lane, Wigan. He attended St. Andrew's School and later worked at Douglas Bank Colliery before moving to other mines in the Wigan area, including Maypole, Victoria and Bickershaw. When he was 16 years of age he was seriously injured while working underground, and was left rather disabled.

A year before his 16th birthday, Samuel jnr. was awarded a certificate from the Royal Humane Society for saving the life of one William Hammond, of Newtown. The boy, aged 11 years, had been bathing in the canal; he was unable to swim and had got into difficulties. Samuel, on a walk along the canal bank after Sunday School went to William's aid; stripping of his jacket and waistcoat he dived into the water (he had learnt to swim at Wigan baths) and brought the bather to safety.

This act of heroism did not go unnoticed as by now there were several people on the tow-path and when the news reached the Reverend Wickham he took it upon himself to write to the Royal Humane Society. Consequently, on 31 October 1907, the following appeared in the Wigan Observer. "GALLANTRY AT WIGAN — Amongst the awards made to Lancashire men by the Royal Humane Society was a Testimonial to Ralph Sutcliffe, lock-keeper on the canal at Ince, for saving a youth who was swept



Map showing Wigan — and five other rural areas from which my ancestors came.

into the canal there on 1 October, by the tow rope from a barge. Also a Testimonial to 15 year old Samuel Carson, pit boy, of Woodhouse Lane, Wigan for saving another boy from the canal at Wigan, on 22 September." This incident was also written up in the Parish Magazine.

Samuel jnr. married Amy Morris on 31 July, 1915 at St. Andrew's Church, Woodhouse Lane; both were 22 years of age. Amy is shown on the marriage certificate as a mill hand, then living at 8 Pagefield Street, Wigan; the ceremony was conducted by the Reverend Wickham.

The Morris's — An Established Wigan Family

Amy Morris was the daughter of John Morris and his wife Sarah Annie (nee Cawley). The Morris family is shown living in Wigan and Ince from the early 1800's; no records prior to that date have been found.

"Wigan is another pretty town of stone and brick". So said Celia Fiennes, the traveller and explorer when she journeyed through Lancashire in 1698. This would have hardly been the scene some 200 years later when there

were known to be some 1,200 pit shafts within five miles of the town centre and some 26 spinning and weaving mills employing 11,000 people. In addition to coal and cotton, metalworking had been carried on in the area long before the Industrial Revolution. The railway had reached Wigan in 1832 with the opening of the Wigan branch from Parkside (near Newton-le-Willows on the Liverpool-Manchester line). By 1848 part of the London to Carlisle and Glasgow main line reached the town. The Leeds and Liverpool Canal was opened to Wigan in 1777, conveying not only coal but raw cotton from the docks at Liverpool.

This industrial scene would have been one with which the Morris family was very familiar when John Morris, born in Wigan in 1811, married Ellen Beardman, also of Wigan, c.1830. At the time of the first detailed census in 1841 they were shown as living with their two sons at Ince-in-Makerfield. John was then working as a cotton weaver.

Their eldest son Thomas was born c.1834 and started work in the coal mines on leaving school. Thomas married Alice Baron at St. John's Roman Catholic Chapel,

Wigan on 8 January 1854. Alice, her parents and three sisters were all engaged in cotton weaving. Thomas and Alice moved from Ince to Schofield Lane, Scholes, where their son John was born in January 1867. By 1881 the family had moved once again, this time to Great George Street, and Thomas had started work at a brewery.

On 24 January 1891 John Morris married Sarah Annie Cawley, the second daughter of William Cawley, cab driver and his wife Elizabeth (nee Casson) at St. Thomas's Church. Amy was born to them on 19 May 1893, by which time the family was living at 51 Prescott Street; her father was then a grocer with his own business. Amy was educated at St. Thomas's Church School, after which she started work in a cotton mill. As previously mentioned Amy married Samuel Carson on 31 July 1915; my husband Eric was born to them on 11 April 1918.

To be concluded in the next issue of Past Forward.

SOURCES AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Portadown Church,
Northern Ireland
General Register Office,
London
Census Office, London
County of Gloucestershire Record Office
Wigan Central Library
St. Andrew's Church,
Wigan, for Parish
Magazines
Wigan Observer
County Record Office,
Chester
County Record Office,
Barrow-in-Furness
Extracts from the Crawford Archives and
Haigh Estate Papers
(John Rylands Library,
Manchester University)
County Record Office,
Durham.

'93 - '94 LECTURE PROGRAMME

Last year the Heritage Service held its first programme of lectures, which proved a great success. The programme for 1993/4 is now complete - as before, lectures will be held in the History Shop on the second Wednesday of each month, at 7.30 p.m.

- 13 Oct. 'The History, Excavation and Recovery of the Mary Rose.'
Lucy Pile
- 10 Nov. 'Were the Miners Betrayed? The General Strike of 1926 in Wigan'.
James Fairhurst
- 8 Dec. 'The Geology of the Wigan District'.
Steve Hewitt
- 8 Jan. 'An Evening of Lancashire Dialect Verse'.
Edith Coleman and Joan Szymanowski
- 9 Feb. 'The Life of Sir Thomas Tyldesley, Cavalier'.
Ireen Joyn
- 9 March 'Postcards from the Western front, 1914-18'.
Carol Littler
- 13 April 'The History of Walker Bros., Engineers of Wigan'.
Mike Haddon
- 11 May 'The George Formby Story', told and sung by **Stan Evans**.
- 8 June 'The Reformation and Today - Two Crises in Catholic Lancashire'.
Tony Hilton

EXHIBITIONS IN THE HISTORY SHOP

The History Shop will be maintaining a programme of varied temporary exhibitions to complement the excellent 'Founded on Coal'. For the first two weeks of November, for example, a travelling exhibition from the National Museum of Labour History will be in place, providing an insight into its work in Manchester. Then during the build-up to Christmas the History Shop is planning a Christmas exhibition, based around the Heritage Service's collection of old Christmas cards, which will include all the traditional decorations. Children will love this one, so do bring them along in the Christmas holidays.

Between January and April, the History Shop is hoping to mount two further exhibitions generated by the Heritage Service - 'Dear Diary' and 'Standish As It Was'.

An even more ambitious programme follows later in 1994, the Year of Drama. We will be marking the event with a George Formby exhibition and a 'Celebration of Theatre'. Visitors

will also have the opportunity to enjoy the Crawford collection of Napoleonic political cartoons during the summer.

The success of our temporary exhibition programme depends on your help and support. So do visit the History Shop regularly, and don't forget to write your comments about each exhibition in the visitors' book.

29 Oct - 27 Nov '93

Exhibition by the National Museum of Labour History, Manchester (to 12 Nov. only)

'Church and Chapel in Wigan'

6 Dec '93 - 14 Jan '94

Christmas at the History Shop.

24 Jan - 26 Feb '94

'Dear Diary'

14 March - 16 April '94

'Standish As It Was' - 800 Years of History.

29 April - 4 June '94

'George Formby'

24 June - 27 Aug '94

An Exhibition featuring the Crawford Collection of Napoleonic political cartoons.

Sept - Oct '94

A Celebration of Theatre



Bob is seen here with pupils from Woodfield Primary School on the Wigan town centre walk.

ATTENTION ALL TEACHERS

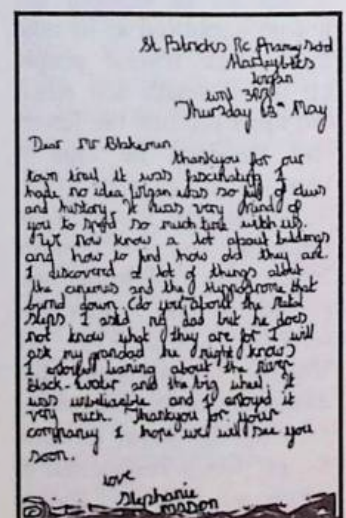
Did you know that the Heritage Service offers a Wigan town centre guided local history walk for schools? The walk, led by Education and Outreach Manager Bob Blake, usually lasts just over an hour, although it can be lengthened or shortened to meet teachers' requirements. The walk is especially useful for those taking the Local History option in the National Curriculum.

Bob can also organise a class visit to the History Shop. Two options are available:

- 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.

For further details, please contact Bob Blakeman on 0942 828020.



A letter from a satisfied customer.

Aspull & 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. (One member who never misses a meeting comes all the way from Halifax).

11 November

'Wigan Charters'

Mr. N. Webb

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

One interesting story from Mrs. Dootson — she recently heard from a gentleman in Chester who was interested in the Haigh Nature Trail. Details were supplied by Bob Blake-man and duly sent off to Chester. The gentleman in question has now walked the trail — at the grand old age of 88!

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:

8 November

Subject to be confirmed

Mr. A. Rydings

13 December

'Pretoria Pit Disaster'

Dr. Dunne

For further information contact Atherton Library (0942 878369)

SOCIETY NEWS

Leigh Civic Trust

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

Tyldesley and District Historical Society

18 Nov

'Leigh Literary Society'. An illustrated talk on a local organisation founded in 1878.

Mr. Ashcroft

16 Dec

'The Victorian Magic Lantern'. The speaker will bring and demonstrate an authentic lantern.

Mr. Keith

20 Jan

'Richard Hodgkinson and the 1822 Astley Chapel Riot'. Talk by the author of 'A Lancashire Gentleman'.

Mrs. Wood

17 Feb

'The History of Wigan Pier from 1765 to the present'. Illustrated talk by one of the Leisure Services staff.

Mr. Bergman

17 March

'George Ormerod, Cheshire Historian'. A talk on the nephew of Thomas Johnson, founder of Tyldesley.

Mr. Hess

21 April

'Tripe, A Most Excellent Dish'. A fascinating talk on a Lancashire delicacy.

Mrs. Houlihan

19 May

'Museum of Transport, Manchester'. A visit to one of the largest collections of historical vehicles in the country representing 100 years of local road history. Besides vehicles (over 70 in all) the museum contains much else of interest. Guided tour. Cost £1.60 each.

ALL WELCOME Meetings are held at Tyldesley Pensioners Club, Milk Street, Tyldesley. Meetings start at 7.30 p.m. Entrance is FREE

For further details contact the Secretary on 0942 893241.

Wigan Archaeological Society

For information, contact Sharon Varley (0257 52986)

Wigan Civic Trust

For information, contact Anthony Grimshaw, Secretary (0942 45777)

ASTLEY GREEN COLLIERY

There have been a number of changes at the Colliery in recent months. A Liaison Panel has now been set up, comprising representatives of Wigan MBC and Red Rose Steam Society, to administer the site.

The sad news, however, is that Harry Davies, appointed Chairman at the first meeting, has died. Harry was a very popular person, who was deeply committed to the development, and he will be sorely missed. His successor is Councillor Jimmy Jones.

It is also sad to report that Harry Potts has had to resign as Chairman of Red Rose, for personal reasons. Harry devoted much of his time since retirement to the Society, and he too will be greatly missed. Our very best wishes to his successor, Reg Lawes.

22-23 April

Red Rose Steam Society Crank-Up — a vintage engine rally.

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

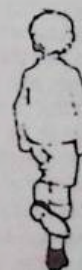
"Acorns"

3 STAINING RISE,

STAINING,

BLACKPOOL FY3 0BU.

TeL. (0253) 886103



IT'S NEW AT WIGAN PIER

HAVE you visited Wigan Pier's new Palace of Varieties yet? There is a Music Hall most afternoons and at the weekend, and a brand-new lantern slide show throughout the day.

Children will love the Wigan Pier Actors Company production of 'The Adventures of Smarty Pants' — a musical fantasy adventure, beginning in early December. And grown-ups will be able to enjoy a contemporary comedy production from the end of January.

For further details, ring 0942 323666.



I HAVE recently received two letters relating to windmills — all the more welcome as only one windmill survives in our area. This is at Haigh.

I have also received a letter from the North West Mills Group, asking for any further information, photographs or illustrations of any of the following windmills: Aspull, Ellenbrook, Haigh, Leigh, Scholes, Wallgate

Aspull - Windmill Brow: Ca 1849

No windmill is marked here on Yates in 1786. The mill is marked, (SD602068), at Windmill Brow, New Springs, Aspull on the OS Lancashire sheet 93 of 1849. By 1930 replaced by 'Old Cola Pit Shaft' in 'Windmill Yard.' Situated south of junction of Ash Lane/Cale Lane the site was later cleared and is now covered by a housing estate around Ashbourne Avenue. No other information known about the mill but it was probably a tower mill.

Ellenbrook Windmill: 1750 - 1874

The Ellenbrook windmill was strictly sited in Boothstow, some half a mile SW of Ellenbrook Chapel (SD723011). Ellenbrook was a village, part of which was in Worsley and the other part in Tyldesley. A reference to the mill occurs in 1878 when the author writes "About the year 1750 Mr. Thomas Smith, native of Tyldesley, erected a very large windmill in the east part of the township [of Tyldesley] and carried on business as a miller a very long time and to some profit but it appears that he had a miller who would 'steal the flour and forswear the sack'. For this and other offences he was sentenced to be tied to a cart and flogged on the King's highway which was carried out with a vengeance. This took place in 1804. This property now belongs to Mr. T. Stobcock (a well known corn dealer in the area) who pulled down the mill in 1874). The mill is marked on the OS maps of 1843 & 1870. The mill was reputedly built on a mound of stones, but nothing of this mound now remains (1978). Nearby there is still a Mill Street.

Haigh Pumping Windmill: Ca1845 - Date

The site of this windmill south of Copperas Lane on a hillside at SD605089 is not known in 1786 but is on OS 6-inch sheet 85/6?? surveyed in 1844, published in 1849 and the 1827 revision.

The mill, projected about 1838, was finally built about 1845 when Lord Crawford wrote "It will be 27 feet to the top in height, 13 feet at the bottom and 9 feet at the top" to lift water 36 feet difference in height between two ponds nearby and the Brewery tank.

Subject of several photographs and postcards it is unusual for the north west. The tower is of brick with sandstone block lintels etc. about 9 feet diameter. The doors and windows are all bricked up. It originally had four Hoopers Roller reeling Patent sails controlled by air poles and tall domed cap were winded by a fantail. The mill was repaired in the early 1960s when the sails were replaced by dummy replicas. onto the original cast iron cross and windshaft. The brake wheel and cap frame were also cast iron, and the original pumping gear was probably sealed up inside when it was sealed from vandals. A temporary plastic cap was later fitted as a holding measure in 1982.

Leigh: Ca1849

Leigh 'Windmill' and nearby 'Windmill Row' are marked on the OS 6-inch sheet 102 of 1849 but is not on Yates in 1786, or the OS revision of 1930. The windmill was erected by the miller after a dispute with the squire of Pennington Hall over Pennington water mill. The mill was some 200 yards nearer

From 'The Friends of Haigh Windmill'

Past Haigh Windmill has been part of our local heritage since 1845. It was built to pump water from the Crawford Estate for John Sumner's brewery, which formerly stood next to the Balcarres Arms. For a time, Haigh Hall and some of the cottages on the estate were also supplied with water from this source. The windmill continued in working order until the early 1930's.

The original mill had a balcony staging, and its sails were turned to face the wind by a fantail on the cap. The fantail was invented by Edmund Lec, of Wigan. In addition to its local link, Haigh Windmill has an important place in windmill history, because it is the only example to have survived in England

that was fitted with Hooper's roller reefing sails.

In 1931, Sumners was taken over by Greenhall Whitley. The brewery was demolished, and the windmill began to fall into disrepair. Work was done to make the

have suffered damage. If nothing is done, this process of damage and decay will continue.

Future?

Would you like to help save this important local landmark for future generations?

A group of local residents have formed the FRIENDS OF HAIGH WINDMILL, with the aim of raising funds to replace the damaged sails. If you would like to help, and be kept informed about other fund raising events, you are invited to join us.

The annual subscription fee is just £2.00

Please send to B. NICHOLS ESQ., Treasurer, Friends of Haigh Windmill, One, Culraven House, Haigh Road, Haigh, Wigan, WN2 1LD.

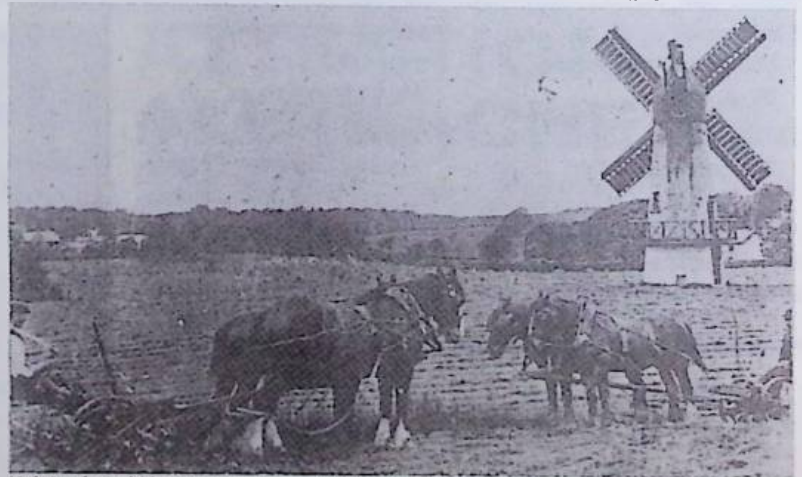
(If you require a receipt, please enclose a stamped addressed envelope).



tower weatherproof, and a new cap and sails were fitted some years ago.

Present

Today, once again, the weather is taking its toll. The mill sails



Haigh windmill in the early years of this century

to Leigh but the owner became insolvent and the mill pulled down. Windmill Row was reputedly built from bricks derived from the demolition of the windmill, and has now itself been demolished, prior to 1978.

Wigan, Scholes: Ca1849

Not recorded by Yates in 1786 the windmill appears on OS 6-inch Lancashire sheet 93 of 1849, (SD588058) and had gone by the time of the 1930 revision when the site was still re-

corded by 'Windmill Street'. The remains of this street are now called 'Windmill Close' (1978). A "Windmill Tavern" existed in Scholes Street in 1844 and 1847.

A William Lamb & Son were corn millers and coal merchants in Scholes Street in 1838; William Caldwell in 1844; William Lamb in 1847; William Caldwell and Jonathan Lamb in 1848. James Spencer jnr., was a corn miller at 119-123 Scholes from at least 1869-76. A steam corn mill certainly existed in

Scholes but dates of operation are not yet known.

Wigan, Wallgate: Ca1786

Windmill sited on Yates 1786 at the head of the Douglas Navigation. The site (SD572053) on the OS maps is between the banks of the River Douglas and Leeds Liverpool Canal on the Warrington Road (A49) towards Newton. Probably a post mill. There was a firm of Nuttall & Kilshaw (millers) at Wallgate in 1816.

Your Letters (continued)

The Days of Calm Before the Storm



I am sending you a newspaper clipping hoping you might use it for the next issue of Past Forward. It was published in the Wigan Observer on 19 October 1984. Mrs. Clara Edge who sent in the photograph is my auntie; she is now into her seventies and lives in a rest home at Southport. The lady in the middle row seated is my great-grandmother Eliza Ellen Latchford. She was born in 1875 and died in Hindley about 1928.

On the left is my grandmother Eliza Latchford who was born in 1892, married my grandfather Albert Jackson on 18 May 1912 and died in 1932 at 25 Cinnamon Avenue, Hindley Green.

The curly-haired baby on her knee is my father Joseph Jackson, born in 1918 and died on 9 March 1963 due to the atrocities he suffered during his capture by the Japanese. His brother Thomas on the right, dressed in

white, died of malaria during his capture. Both my father and uncle Tom worked on the Burma Railway of Death. On the left is my uncle Samuel who still lives in Hindley Green.

The lady sitting on the right holding the tiny baby plus the younger girls are all the rest of my great-grandmother's children. The lady on the right, sitting, is Elizabeth Ellen Halton (from a previous marriage). She married Thomas Evans and on her knee is baby Thomas. The rest of the children on the back row from left to right are: Emily Halton who married a William Wike, Ethel Cain (from a marriage to a Tom Cain who died during the war), Sarah Anne, and Annie Halton who married a William Atherton.

I hope you can use this information.

Mr. T. Jackson
51 Leigh Road
Atherton

"Moving" Letters Bring Fascinating Results

My interest in Ralph Standish (1705-1755) of Standish Hall started as a result of looking through the Calendar of Standish Deeds at Wigan Record Office, whilst waiting for documents from the strong room. I found letters to Ralph, and his wife Lady Phillipa, from their daughters, who were nuns in France. I obtained photocopies of these letters, as I thought a friend who is the Archivist of Stanbrook Abbey, might be interested in them. However I found the letters very moving, and determined to find out more about Sister Marie Philippe de Standish, and Sister Maria Standish de St Agathe. The trail led me to Ralph Standish's Memorandum and Account Book, which fascinated me so much that I decided to

transcribe it. I found out that the two nuns had been educated in various monasteries in France — at St Germain, with the Dominicans in Brussels, and at Gravelines with the Poor Clares. Phillipa had had a dangerous voyage from France to Newcastle, when she returned after her Father's arrest in 1715.

The detective work in finding the names of the monasteries, and the identity of the people mentioned in the letters, has been most interesting. The trail continues for, in a list of pictures made in 1756, are listed portraits of Ralph, his wife, and the two nuns. I have hopes of tracing these portraits which, if found, would put the gilt on the gingerbread!

E.S.

Christmas Gifts from the History Shop

As Past Forward No. 5 goes to press Christmas is once again rapidly creeping upon us, so if you are looking for that present with a difference why not visit the History Shop retail area. To complement our existing range of heritage related gifts, we are introducing for Christmas '93 a range of quality wooden toys, including miniature rocking horses, pecking hens, educational trains and Christmas tree decorations. These are now available, along with a selection of reproduction Victorian Christmas cards.

Our wide range of local history publications has also been extended with the addition of Heritage Service Publication number 6, 'Standish: Eight Hundred Years of History'. For further details of our book stock please send a stamped addressed envelope to The History Shop and we will be happy to send you a current local history book list, all of which can be ordered by post.

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).

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', Wigan Heritage Service, Market Suite, The Galleries, Wigan WN1 1PX.

NAME.....

ADDRESS.....

I enclose a contribution of £.....towards production costs.

(Please make all cheques payable to 'Wigan MBC')

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METROPOLITAN
WIGAN

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Looking for a Christmas Present with a Difference?

Many people are still not aware of our splendid photographic service. Some, I know, have paid well over the odds for a reproduction of an old photograph, while others have even bought an artistic impression, not realising that we can supply the real thing at a very competitive price.

The photographs below are taken from the Heritage Service's extensive collection, which now contains in excess of 80,000 images, some going back to the 1860's covering the Metropolitan Wigan area — so there's plenty for you to choose from. Copies of most of these photographs can be supplied, framed or

unframed, in sizes from 10" x 8" to 24" x 20". Prices start from as little as £4.60. For further details, contact Len Hudson or the History Shop.

Remember, a quality photographic reproduction makes an excellent Christmas present — but do place your order quickly!

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



- I have actually received a response to the Leigh Riddle! (*Past Forward* 4). Mr. J.A. Green, of Glenpark, Leigh, writes: "Knowing the answer, I can now understand the question!" He then proceeds, using all sorts of formulae and quotations, to give two pages of explanation, concluding, "how could a miller solve this in the 18th century with no calculator, no size and tangent tables?" Presumably the miller's buxom daughter Ruth — the original prize for solving the riddle — was fairly safe! Mr. Green wins a framed photograph of his choice.
- As regards the four photographs, top left was taken near the bleach works at Worthington, bottom right has been identified as the Church of Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception, Aspull. Nothing so far for the other two photographs.