

PAST FORWARD

ISSUE NUMBER TEN

SUMMER 1995

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

President and Chairman : THE MAYORESS - Mrs. E. DOWLING

Demonstration & Pageant

RITZ CINEMA, SUNDAY, MARCH 5TH, 1944
AT 7 P.M.



SPEAKERS :

Mrs. BECKMAN (CZECHESLOVAKIA)

Miss CONSTANCE HOLT, EDITOR OF WOMEN'S OWN

WIGAN BOROUGH PRIZE BAND - Guest Conductor : Jack Eckersley

ADMISSION FREE, PROGRAMME 3d.

I have great pleasure in supporting the International Womens' Day Celebration in Wigan for the year 1944.

March 8th again finds women at their posts of danger and trust in factory, home and barracks. In tortured Occupied Europe and throughout the Free World they are demonstrating their undying resolve to win through to Victory and Peace.

I pray and believe that the efforts which women are making to-day will have their reward in a peaceful and happier world.

Mrs. E. DOWLING.



The Newsletter of Wigan Heritage Service

FREE

From the Editor

1995 is a year of commemoration, 50 years after the end of World War II. The Heritage Service has played its part, with a highly successful exhibition, 'Wigan at War', commemorating 'Victory in Europe', 1945, and with two further displays opening at the end of July (for further details see p.17). This edition of Past Forward also has a strong World War II flavour, with readers' war-time recollections of life in Ashton-in-Makerfield and Aspull.

1996 will be an important year for the History Shop. Plans are currently being made for a new development on the ground floor of the building, coinciding with the opening of the Charter 96 display at Easter - 1996 marks the 750th anniversary of Wigan's first royal charter, making it one of the four oldest boroughs in Lancashire. Plans have yet to be finalised - much depends on the availability of funding, especially from the National Lottery. Further information in 'Past Forward 11' due out in November.

This issue sees the magazine hit double figures. It has certainly come a very long way since the first issue - only 8 pp - four years ago. It now has an extensive mailing list, with readers throughout the world. My sincere thanks to all those readers who have supported the venture, whether by contributing articles, correspondence or donations. With this level of support, 'Past Forward' can continue to go from strength to strength.

**All comments and correspondence should be addressed to:
Editor, 'Past Forward',
Wigan Heritage Service,
Market Suite, The Galleries,
Wigan. WN1 1PX**

ELLEN WEETON - a postscript

IN Past Forward 8 (pp.4,5), newly discovered biographical information about the Wigan diarist Ellen Weeton was presented. Since then Mr. Leslie Stock of Liverpool has sent us two more documents. Her death certificate confirms her date of death as 12 June 1849, her age 72. The cause of death is stated as typhoid fever,

whereas the burial register records simply 'decay', a term that might otherwise be interpreted as old age. The informant is given as William Newell of 71 Bedford Street, Toxteth Park who, says Mr. Stock, was Ellen's son-in-law. It is likely, then, that Ellen spent her last days with her daughter's family. Ellen's baptism entry

has also been found in the registers of St. John's parish church, Lancaster: 'Nelly, daughter of Captain Weeton...29 January 1777'. This confirms Ellen's own statement that she had been christened Nelly rather than Ellen. She had been born on Christmas Day 1776. Thomas, her mariner father, died *en voyage* in 1783.

AN EVENING OUT

IN the pre-war years, lacking the things that the youth of today deem to be necessary to life such as Youth Clubs, Amusement Arcades, Gymnasia and such like, how did we spend our after-work time? One activity in which we took part was "Kebbing" - dredging the canal bottom for coal which fell off the barges.

All that was needed for this was an old bucket filled with holes, a good length of strong rope, and a 1 cwt. sugar sack. Off we would go to the "tippler" where coal-wagons were emptied into canal barges, the overspill from this operation lying on the canal bed from where it could be recovered by dredging.

The bucket was tied to the rope and then thrown into the water and allowed to sink to the bottom; then it was slowly drawn along and back to the surface filled, if you were lucky, with nicely washed "slack", which would be tipped onto the bank to allow any water to drain off.

On a good day if there had been a lot of loading going on a sack could be filled in a couple of hours or so but sometimes when coal was not quite as plentiful then it took longer; but it was not very often that one came home empty-handed.

A weather eye had to be kept out for the local "bobby" who could turn up at the most inconvenient moments, and to be caught meant a "booking" and perhaps a Court appearance which would result in a fine, plus the loss of your coal.

Another "enemy" was the colliery watchman, a retired police officer who, if he caught you would give you the option of either "being reported" or tipping your coal back into the canal - either way you were the loser. It was no use running away as we were all known by sight, so you just had to stay and

face the music if you were unlucky.

Once your sack was filled then you had to get it home, not too difficult if you had a bike to carry it on, but if you hadn't then it had to be carried on your back which was somewhat uncomfortable as the contents were still wet. Fortunately, however, it was not too long a journey, just under half a mile; but whichever of the three available routes you took there was always the chance of being caught by the "bobby", as he only had to stand at the end of the lane where the three routes met and he had you. It was rarely that anyone was

caught, but the risk was always there and we accepted it as part of the enterprise - it added a bit of spice to the proceedings!

Although the coal was only small "slack" and not of much financial value it made a good fire and certainly helped eke out the coal supply, and was worth the effort of getting it. Wet, cold and risky as this enterprise was, we still enjoyed doing it as it kept us occupied and gave us some reward at the end.

How many of today's youth would tackle something like that after a day's work?...I wonder.

Anon.

A letter from the author appears on p.18

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:

Market Suite, The Galleries—

Heritage Services Manager (and Editor of Past Forward)

Alastair Gillies.....(01942) 827375
Fax: (01942) 827371

History Shop—

Visitor Services Manager Philip Butler.....(01942) 828124

Education and Outreach Manager (and Local

History, West) Bob Blakeman.....(01942) 828020

Collections Development Manager Yvonne Webb.....(01942) 828123

Heritage Officer (Industrial History) Mike Haddon.....(01942) 828121

Heritage Officer (Social History) Dawn Wadsworth.....(01942) 828124

Heritage Assistant Hilary Farclough.....(01942) 828122

Heritage Assistant Barbara Miller.....(01942) 828122

Heritage Assistant Stephanie Tsang.....(01942) 828122

Wigan Pier—

Technician Denise Bryce.....(01942) 828564

Technician Roy Wareing.....(01942) 323666

At Leigh:

Archives, Town Hall—

Heritage Officer (Archives) Nicholas Webb.....(01942) 404430

Senior Technician Len Hudson.....(01942) 404432

Leigh Library—

Heritage Officer (Local History) Tony Ashcroft.....(01942) 404559

Please note the new Leigh telephone numbers.

If you have an enquiry, and are not sure who the most appropriate person is to contact, please ring the History Shop (01942 828128).

Cover: Programme for a Pageant held at the Ritz Cinema, Wigan on International Woman's Day, 5 March, 1944.

ERNIE TABERNER continues his 'I Remember When' series. This time he tells us about life in the Gidlow, Beech Hill and Springfield Area of Wigan.

I REMEMBER WHEN...

THE Gidlow, Beech Hill and Springfield area of Wigan was a community of homesteaders, and anyone walking in this area nowadays, would have great difficulty in reconciling the fact that there were once so many small farmers in the area producing wheat, root crops of potatoes, carrots and beet and kale, with a few dairy farmers and beef cattle producers on the fringe. There was Bob Dunn's farm at the northernmost tip of the area with Alf Gill's farm next to it at Giant's Hall farm. A little lower down towards Standish Lower Ground was Arthur Bentham's farm, which was from memory more of a poultry farm situated at the top of Beech Hill Lane, whilst almost adjacent at Martland Mill was Johnson's farm.

Walking from Arthur Bentham's along Beech Hill Lane, one would arrive at 'Home Farm', belonging to Mr. Cleaton, who farmed originally the land alongside Beech Hill Avenue on its north side up to Springfield Road, later adding the south side of Beech Hill Avenue to his "domain".

Spinster daughters

Any octogenarian readers of 'Past Forward' would recall being taught their 3Rs by Mr. Cleaton's two spinster daughters, (teachers in those days had to give up their jobs on marrying) at Beech Hill School in Netherby Road. Mr. Cleaton acquired his south side farm after the demolition of Daylight Farm which stood on the site at the corner of Beech Hill Avenue and Beech Hill Lane, now occupied by eleven houses built by the Corporation about 1930 – five in Beech Hill Avenue and six in Beech Hill Lane.

Proceeding down Beech Hill Lane to Woodhouse Lane another "farmstead" stood at the junction, farmed by, I think, another

Mr. Bentham. Behind the Greyhound Stadium was yet another farmed by a Mr. Simmonds alongside the old running track, later to become part of the old Wigan Borough Football Club's ground (now Wigan Athletic's Springfield Park).

Arm amputated

Alongside the east side of this ground up to its Gidlow Lane boundary was still another farm owned by Mr. Stringfellow on land which is now Gidlow School. Mr. Stringfellow himself had part of one of his arms amputated at the elbow, and when he was using his horse drawn implements he used ropes as harness reins and tied one of them to his arm stump to steer his horses. We kids never knew if his incapacity was an accident of birth or a result of a casualty of the 1914/18 war but since at that time (1920's) lots of war casualties could be seen daily, minus an arm or a leg, we always presumed it was as a result of his war service.

From his house a path ran through his land to Beech

Hill Avenue, opposite what was Wellfield Road. So on one side of the path he farmed to Springfield Road whilst the other side was farmed to Gidlow Lane right up to the back of Beech Hill Social Club. Mr. Stringfellow could be seen walking this path on summer evenings, protecting his crops of growing corn with a double-barrelled shot gun, and if any kids trampled his crops, or worse if any courting couples did even worse damage by bedding down, he would fire a warning shot above their heads!

Hip flask

No memory of this path would be complete without recalling that every morning Father Greenhouse could be seen strolling with his open Bible preparing his sermons. Some unkind onlookers, not members of his Church of Sacred Heart, always maintained he was selecting his horses for the afternoon's races! I cannot confirm that, but I can confirm, with the evidence of my own eyes, that he always carried a hip flask, and every few minutes he would take a reviving sip, to "keep out the cold" no doubt!

Foot and Mouth Disease

To complete this particular memory, I would have to record that yet another farmstead was higher up Gidlow Lane, between Mr.

Stringfellow's farm and Bob Dunn's farm on the Hodges Street side of Gidlow Lane; this, however, was demolished following an outbreak of foot and mouth disease in the early 1920's. (I understand it was on the site which later became a butcher's shop owned by Mr. Horace Clayton). I remember the local gossip about all the stock having to be put down by humane killer, prior to all the carcasses being burned on what then was a patch of land between Hodges Street and the land which later became in the 1939/45 war a munitions factory. I have tried several times to recall both the names of the farmer and the farm where this tragedy occurred but without success. Perhaps someone older than I might remind me in due course.

I am particularly proud to recall this little bit of local history just to prove that Wigan was not always coal pits and cotton mills in the early part of this century. All the farms mentioned were within a two miles perimeter of Wigan Parish Church!!

© Ernie Taberner

Ernie is a welcome and regular contributor to 'Past Forward'. His memory features are written entirely from memory – no mean feat for someone soon to become an octogenarian! A letter from Ernie appears on p18.

His book, 'A Lancashire Upbringing', is available from the History Shop. Ed.

News from the Archives

A MOST welcome recent accession to the archives is the records of the Christian Meeting House (Church of Christ), Rodney Street, Wigan. This church, adjoining the History Shop building (until 1990 Wigan Library), closed for worship as recently as 1989. Since then it has seen various uses but is still largely unaltered externally, with the original relief inscription 'Christian Meeting House 1858' clearly legible from the street.



Christian Meeting House, Rodney Street, in its last years.

The Church of Christ was established in America by Alexander Campbell, a Scottish emigrant, in the early 1800's. Its members are often referred to as Campbellites. The Wigan congregation was begun independently by Timothy Coop (1817-1887) who founded the Coops clothing business that later became one of Wigan's leading employers until its closure in 1990. Coop had been brought up as a Wesleyan, and was a class leader, Sunday school teacher and temperance worker. After attending lectures on New Testament fundamentalism he formed a small prayer group and was given a 'Believer's Baptism' in the River Douglas on 4 August 1841. Soon after this Coop affiliated his group

to the English Campbellites.

Impassioned gospel appeal

The Church was formed on evangelical lines, proclaiming repentance by scriptural study and remission of sins by adult baptism. Coop was fervent in his attempts to win converts, using his business contacts to do so: 'it was not unusual for him to be accosted in the street by enquirers, even with the request for baptism, and forthwith to resort to a neighbouring river and administer the sacrament. Upon one such occasion a large number of people was attracted to the scene, and on coming out of the water with clothes wet and dripping, he stood

upon a nearby fence and delivered to the crowd an impassioned Gospel appeal.'

Baptism by immersion

At first the congregation met at Commercial Hall, but quickly prospering they were able to build their new church in Rodney Street in 1858. A full-time Evangelist was appointed – one William McDougall – and during his time cottage meetings were held in many parts of Wigan. Church membership was based on districts under pastors and deacons, and women were encouraged to take part in the ministry, deaconesses being appointed, even a nurse for sisterhood work.

Members addressed one another as brother or sister, and the early success of the Church was partly due to the attention paid to the physical welfare of members, care being taken of the sick and distressed by a local doctor paid for by church funds. Spiritually, the church elders placed the greatest emphasis on the Lord's Supper as the central part of Sunday worship, and on baptism by immersion. The 'Matters Believed and Practised' by the brethren were inserted in the Trust deed, a printed version of which dated 1860 is preserved with the records.

Staunch Liberal

After Coop moved to Southport in the 1860's, his son-in-law James Marsden took over as the Church's prime mover. Marsden (1841-1927) also worked for Coops – he was Timothy's first apprentice – and became head of the firm in succession to his father-in-law. Coop and Marsden also worked together as proprietors of the Alliance Colliery off Crompton Street near Wigan town centre. Like many nonconformists Marsden was a staunch liberal, and counted Lloyd George amongst his friends. The first Campbellite churches had been founded at Nottingham (1836) and Criccieth (1841), both

originating as secessions from Scotch Baptist congregations. Others were established elsewhere in England and Wales, where the last Liberal prime minister was himself a member. Churches were opened locally at St. Helens (1847), Southport (1863), Hindley (1874), Newtown (1878), Platt Bridge (1882), Earlestown (1894), Leigh (1904), and in Wigan itself at Scholes (1882), Beech Hill (1885) and Mitchell Street (1916). In time foreign missions were also established in various parts of the Empire.

22 Active members

Like all denominations, especially those lacking the resources of the Established Church, the Churches of Christ experienced problems after the First World War, although the membership held up fairly well until the last years of the congregation. When the United Reformed Church was established in 1972 by the union of the Presbyterian and Congregational Churches, discussion also took place with the Churches of Christ which finally joined the U.R.C. in 1981. Rodney Street chapel closed eight years later, at which time

continued on p.5 ➤

'Sir Bob'

ONE of Wigan Metro's oldest public servants has written to us recently to remind us of his career. Sir Robert Thomas, now living in Manchester, tells us that he was born in 1901 at Lower Ince, and moved to Leigh the following year when his father was working at Plank Lane colliery. He recalls how the 'Liberal councillor Joseph Ashworth was Mayor of Leigh at the outbreak of the 1914-18 War and was allowed to continue as mayor for the duration. Leigh was at that time the largest municipal borough in Lancashire... my political memory goes back to a childhood memory of an election in the Ince constituency when the candidates were Steve Walsh [later a Labour cabinet minister] and Greaves-Lord, and we were taught to sing a song

"For we'll buy Steve Walsh a silver watch chain, Greaves-Lord a dummy teat!" Sir Robert says that 'if anyone, possibly of my generation, would like to chat with me about old times in Leigh I would be glad to oblige. Although I am now 93 I am still *compos mentis* and reasonably fit physically.'

Assimilated

Robert's grandfather, Jesse Thomas, was one of many coalminers who migrated from Wales to work in the Lancashire coalfields in the 19th century. He came from Brymbo near Wrexham around 1878, and Robert recalls that in his childhood 'it seemed that wherever one went...there were Welsh chapels with a notice board painted black and the name

and service details in gold lettering in the Welsh language.' Robert's father, also Jesse, married Ann Ensall around 1890. By this time, he writes, the Welsh migrants had become assimilated in the local population, and that his generation were completely English. The family lived at Cotton Street and then Strange Street in Pennington. The youngest of five children, Robert (whose mother died in 1904) was brought up by his elder siblings, until Jesse first of all tried unsuccessfully to get his children taken into Leigh workhouse, and then broke up the family and went to lodge in nearby Mitchell Street with the two younger sons. Another move followed to an old court of cottages off Welch Hill Street, where living conditions were very poor.

'Half-timer'

Educated at Plank Lane Methodist school, Robert became a half-timer at the age of 12 and worked first in the mills and then down the pit at

Bickershaw Colliery. After the war he joined the army and on returning to Leigh in 1921 found work with the South Lanes Tramway Co. at the Atherton garage. It was here that his future career as a trade unionist and local politician began, when he joined the Transport Workers' Union. Sir Robert's later career was based in Manchester, and culminated in his election as Lord Mayor of the city in 1962 and a knighthood in 1967. He was the first Leader of the short-lived Greater Manchester County Council in 1974, and was still active in public service well into retirement.

Autobiography

In 1984, aged 83, he published his autobiography entitled 'Sir Bob', copies of which are available locally. The early chapters contain much material of interest concerning living and working conditions in the Leigh area during the first three decades of this century.

N.W.

Christian Meeting House

continued from p.4

there were 22 active members.

The extant records of Rodney Street chapel constitute one of the best nonconformist archives that we have locally. The earliest volume is entitled 'A Register of the Names of the Congregation of Disciples who Statedly Assemble in the Commercial Hall, Wigan...1848'. This contains minutes from the date of the first formal meeting in November 1848, and the first of the lists of church members that run

continuously from 1841. For each member there is recorded the date of 'immersion' (and for a brief period the member's age at baptism), and such remarks as removal to another town.

Various faults

The first member immersed after Coop himself, for instance – Samuel Lucas – removed to Hull, and two other early members – Jane and Elijah Dainty – removed to Leigh. Others are recorded as having emigrated to America. Deaths are also recorded: we learn that Joseph Mercer (immersed in 1843), 'fell asleep in Jesus' in 1850. Other members

were 'cast into outer darkness' for various faults: 'fallen in sin', 'no longer in fellowship – a rebel', 'cut off for swindling and lying', 'cut off for disorderly conduct', 'left – having imbibed the error of infant baptism', 'excluded for neglect of his family', 'fallen into the vilest iniquity', 'gone back into the world'. Erring members were visited at home: 'Alice Chisnall; it having been reported that this sister had fallen into sin, two sisters had been requested to visit her and it appeared that the report was confirmed....'

The minutes document in some detail the history of the congregation. By the time the Rodney Street Meeting

House was opened in 1858 there were 68 members, and 135 children were attending the Sunday School. Within a couple of years the membership was over 100, and by the time the chapel celebrated its golden jubilee in 1908 there were some 256 members. This was the zenith of the movement. In 1945 Rodney Street was licensed to solemnise marriages under the 1898 Act; some 61 marriages were held in the chapel by the time of the last wedding in 1980. The registers have been deposited with the archives. Along with the written records of the chapel are three recordings of morning services conducted in 1971, which will be copied onto archival tape so

that future researchers will have an idea of the form of the service.

Controversies

Apart from the records themselves much useful information can be got from the centenary pamphlet published in 1941, and from the obituaries of Coop, Marsden and other church elders in the local newspapers. W.T. Moore's detailed biography of Coop (1889) contains a full account of the early progress and controversies of the movement.

The Archivist is very grateful to Mr. Derek Horrocks of Wigan Family History Society for tracking down the records and bringing them to our attention.

N.W.

STONE-AGE SITE DISCOVERED IN UPHOLLAND

LOCAL historian Mr. Jim Sharratt wrote that Roman soldiers passed through Upholland, even though they did not stay. A relic probably of Roman origin of Victory was discovered by a farmer on his land in the 19th century.

An Upholland record mentions three 'pingots' which indicate early Celtic or Welsh settlements in this area. Most place-name experts agree that 'pingot' is an English form of pen-goyt or gwuid, a Celtic/Welsh word meaning "the head of a stream" or "rush of water" which probably dates from the 7th century.

Now in 1994 farmer Mr. Harry Bostock of Jollies i'th

Dean Farm, Lafford Lane has unearthed what may be considered an early Stone-age dwelling or Celtic grave. He has found, buried in untouched glacial sand, a stone-age flint possibly used as an animal skinning knife, a granite-stone work-bench and two grinding stones. A later discovery was a small sandstone "luck stone". The grinding stones measure four inches long by four inches wide and still carry the scent of nuts, berries and grain ground centuries ago. The "saddle-stone" or work bench is cut from granite and weighs about 24 stones. This boulder stands 22 inches high and is 25 inches long.

The leading expert at the Greater Manchester Archeological Unit, Robina McNeil, personally visited the site last August. She was unable to confirm that it was an ancient settlement, but showed keen interest in Mr. Bostock's collection of pottery, bottles and clay pipes dug up from the medieval period of the farm's history.

However, virtually nothing is known of the men of the Mesolithic period c.8000-3000 B.C. Some sites have been excavated but there are no known structural remains. All we have found are some flints and bone implements.

Francis B. Rylance

*On 5 July 1995 Mr. Bostock said that he had been given the go-ahead to excavate the stone-age site by experts from the Sites and Monuments Records, Lancaster University.

Whilst sifting through tons of glacial sand taken from the 'site' he found a rounded stone of light brown texture. It measured 90mm. in length and 22mm. in width top to bottom, and 20mm. deep tapering to 10mm.

He, and others, concluded that it was used as a 'nail file'. At the tapered end is a slight hollow which is worn away. Is this the oldest 'nail file' in the world?

BOB DOBSON

Publisher and Book Dealer

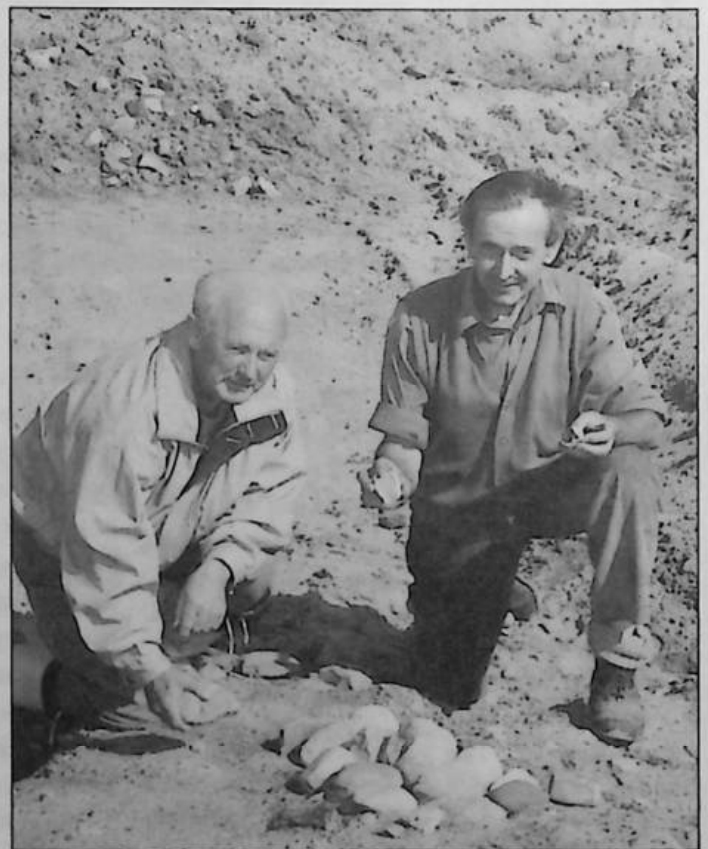
LANCASHIRE
YORKSHIRE & CHESHIRE

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. (01253) 886103



Farmer Harry Bostock (right) of Upholland with historian friend Francis Rylance of Orrell. Photo courtesy Lancashire Evening Post.

THE ATHERTON MILL DISASTER

On 21 September 1911 there was an explosion following the bursting of a cast iron steam pipe in the Leigh Spinning Company's Dan Lane Mill. The result of this accident was the death of six women employees in Leigh Infirmary, who had been scalded by the steam.

The six victims were:-

1. Alice Ann Landers (30) 866, Dussy Bank, Hindley Green. Cop Winder. Single. Died from severe scalds to arms, face and neck.
2. Beatrice Kay (18) 101, Bolton Old Road, Atherton. Single. Died from scalds to face and neck.
3. Margaret Tickle (18) 264, Leigh Road, Hindley Green. Bobbin Carrier. Single. Death due to acute bronchitis from inhalation of steam.
4. Emily Ann Boardman (26) 5, Mossdrop Street, off Brown Street, Leigh. Cop Winder. Married to Ernest Boardman (dataller). Died from shock.
5. Hannah McCool (27) 3, Martin Street, Atherton. Cop Winder. Married to Ernest McCool (carter at the Albion laundry). Died from acute bronchitis and shock.
6. Elizabeth Spiers (47) 12, Factory Street, Atherton. Cop Winder. Married to John Spiers (Gas Stoker). Scalded on face, neck and arms but died from bronchitis and shock.

Splashing out

Emily Hodson, 50 Hamilton Street, Atherton, a single woman who was a cop winder at the mill said that she had gone weighing out cops when the accident occurred at about 1.45p.m. She could not tell the size of



the room. She thought about 12 women worked in the place. The room where they worked was called no.17. She was in the room called no.14. The scales were against the wall of the rope race. The steam pipe was above her head. All at once the pipe suddenly burst over her head and the steam and hot water came splashing out. She did not get scalded at all. The steam went in the direction of no.17 room. She found her way out to the back of the boiler near to the other winding room. She did not see the other women again until she saw them in the watch-house. No warning whatever was given of the pipe bursting. During the two years that she had worked at the mill she had never heard any noise from the pipes.

Assistance

Barnett Clark, 77 Hamilton Street, Atherton was a cop winding overlooker at the mill. He said that the diameter of the pipe that burst was about 7" and that the height above the floor was 16 or 17 foot. During the five or six years he had been at the mill no knocking of the pipes had taken place. The pipe ran from the boiler to the engine and was held up by iron stays fixed to the wall. When

the burst took place he was standing at the door of the adjoining room and he rendered all the assistance he could. There was a block, through the women in their rush to get out, falling on top of one another in the doorway. Someone gave warning and the steam was turned off at once by Walter Melvin. Doctors and others applied oil and bandages.

Running normally

Thomas Carr Johnson, the mill engineer said the indicating pencil in the engine house showed that the engine stopped 17 minutes from being restarted after the dinner hour and therefore the explosion could not have been due to what is known as water hammer, which sometimes occurred when the engine was restarted.

The indicator showed that the engine was running normally. He had never any cause to doubt the safety of the pipes. He was at home close to the mill when the accident happened. He rushed to the mill at once and was just in time to assist with the shutting off of the steam. The pipe was blown out and was found lying on the floor in three large pieces and the rest in fairly small pieces. The inside of the pipe showed a very

weak place near the centre.

Claude Herbert Blair JP, secretary of the Leigh Spinning Company said that the pressure in the pipe that burst would be about 135.

Mr. Pringle the factory inspector said that the inside diameter of the burst pipe was 7³/₄" and the external diameter slightly over 9".

On further questioning by the coroner Mr. Blair said that in the casting there was a flaw caused probably by the moving of the cone when it was being moulded. The pipe on one side is very thin and at the other side very thick. The length of the broken pipe is nine or ten feet and the burst took place in the thin part about the centre, the pipe being split all along.

The inquest had lasted nearly two hours. The jury returned a verdict of 'Accidental Death'.

On 15 and 16 October 1912 the Board of Trade held a formal investigation which found that no one was to blame because the defective pipe had been put in under circumstances beyond the knowledge of those in charge at the time of the explosion.

For further information contact Tony Aschroft, Local History Officer at Leigh Library (01942 404559).

PLOUGH *and* FURROW

IN the middle of the last century in my grandfather's day the plough consisted only of a coulter, share and a mouldboard bolted to a wooden beam, controlled by two long wooden handles known locally as stilts, but very soon the plough was made completely of iron.

Considerable skill was needed as the depth and width of the furrow had to be judged, and of course the straightness of the furrow which is the ploughman's pride. The furrow quality was very important, especially for sowing cereals. The usual width was seven inches and as each furrow was laid side by side a succession of small drills was left, formed by the cut of the coulter and the share; when

A LIFETIME'S MEMORY OF FOLLOWING THE PLOUGH by Herbert Worsley of Lowton, Nr. Leigh

inverted the clean cut corner of the furrow was uppermost. When the seed was sown it was only necessary to harrow the drills level to cover the seed, no other cultivation was needed. The land was ploughed in butts usually 20 or 30 yards wide, but on heavy land could be as narrow as four yards as was the case on the old pasture at Lowton House Farm where the ridges and reans still show after a century or more. The ridges were formed when starting the butt by ploughing two furrows toward each other,

working round and round until the required width was reached; where the butts met a rean* was left. Each successive year the ridges were set in the reans to keep the land level.

In the early days a boy would be employed to drive the oxen or horses in single file so the ploughman could concentrate on his work. Later horses were worked abreast, one horse walking down the furrow and the other on the unploughed land. This early plough was called a swing plough, the only maintenance needed being a visit to the blacksmith to lay and temper the coulter and share.

An acre a day

By the time I started ploughing in the 1920's a cross beam had been added on which a depth wheel and a furrow wheel were adjustable, ensuring a better control of the furrow. All other parts of these new iron ploughs were available so the blacksmith was no longer needed—you just stocked the spare parts. The style of ploughing had also changed — better implements for cultivating and the introduction of the corn drill meant the narrow seed furrow was no longer needed, and the ploughing could be wider and flatter. In those days with two horses and a single furrow plough I was expected to plough an acre a day; working a nine inch furrow I would have to travel a distance of 12 miles, plus the turning and traversing the headlands. Sometimes

after a day's work I would think of Thomas Grey's lines, "The ploughman homeward plods his weary way and leaves the world to darkness and to me".

For me the best ploughing days of all came when a balance plough was bought. This strong construction, sometimes called a one way plough, had two ploughs built on a heavy frame, one throwing a furrow to the right and one to the left. The heavy beam was so made that one plough was carried vertically while the other worked; at the end of the furrow the implement was so balanced that it could easily be turned over ready to plough back down the same furrow, cutting out the need for ridges and reans and leaving a level field.

Through the autumn and winter the ploughing went on — in days of sunshine, wind, and rain, fog and frost, and in midwinter starting in the twilight and finishing in the dark. They were good days each with a different pleasure; in my memory I can still smell the freshly turned soil and the faint odour of my three horse team, I can hear the rip of the share and the wearing sound of the soil on the mould board and the screeching of the seagulls as they dive inches from my head in their eagerness to take the rich harvest of worms from the newly turned ground. With the coming of dusk they would glide away leaving only the lapwing with its plaintive cry, diving and tumbling to gently land and partake of its late supper.

Wonderful sounds

In the spring there was the chatter of the starling

* a small gutter;
pronounced re-an.

FAMILY HISTORY RESEARCHING

Telephone 01942 494705
(24 hr. Answering Machine)



Births/Marriages/Deaths 1837-1980
£25 per Item Researched Includes Certificate

Ancestor Trees Made Up From Above Information
Presented in Personalised Binder
£15 per Binder

Kinship Reports & Calendar of Birthdays
Can Be Included In Presentation Binder

Pre 1837 & 1980 + Baptisms/Marriages/Burials
&
Other Information Can Possibly Be Researched
Prices on Application

feeding its brood, the caw of the wary rook, a burst of song from the skylark and the occasional chirp of the busy wagtail or of the robin cheekily landing for a brief second on the plough. Beside all these wonderful sounds which will remain forever in my memory are the pictures of hundreds of seagulls in the furrow obscuring it so much that I could barely see if I was keeping a straight furrow. Suddenly, as if by some magic signal, they would take off and wheel round in one big cloud to alight again in the furrow behind me to renew their everlasting squabble. Pictures also of early winter with stubble shining in the pale sun, of the gleaming furrow newly turned or of a ploughman in a field far away and beyond him the distant hills of Wales silhouetted in the western sky.

There were days of mist and fog when very little could be seen behind my steaming team — perhaps the colours of small birds venturing too close, or the bobbing tail of a startled rabbit or the hedgerow in its winter drabness which my team hurriedly nibbled as we turned on the headland. On clearer days as darkness fell I would see the lights of the village appear, first one, then two, and soon they were twinkling all around giving me a comfortable feeling and calling me home. The ploughman is never lonely — alone, yes, but not lonely. He is in his element in a wonderful world of sights and sounds.

Brought the 'baggin'

Thinking of the last sentence reminds me of the days when I had company of a different kind when my young son only four or five years old many times brought the "baggin". I would sit under the

hedgerow while Peter sat on my outstretched leg enjoying our little snack. Soon we were on our way again with Peter riding one of the horses, or standing on the beam of the plough pretending that it was his ship, then leaving me to explore a pond or climb a tree, or run to the railway fence to watch a train go by. There were other young friends who liked to walk with me, particularly Alec who had spent many of his childhood days playing and working on the farm. He joined the airforce just before the war to make it his career but each time he was on leave he would accompany me for hours discussing everything under the sun. I think he was with me on the sad occasion when Manchester was blitzed. The morning after the bombing was misty and still and as we plodded along we became aware that ash and burned pieces of paper were falling from the sky. Many were billheads with addresses of firms in Manchester. How high they must have been driven by the heat to come down here some 18 miles away.

There were many others I encountered less often — Dick Davies the signalman walking his dog every day, varying his time according to his shifts, Joe Lion and David Bate, also on shift work, and Jim Cook my mother's cousin with his hearty laugh, booming his greeting from 50 yards away. These and many others using the various footpaths would stop for a brief chat, to comment on the weather or the work in hand. The gangers on the railway would climb out of the cutting as I turned by the fence sometimes delaying me longer than I wanted to.

continued. on p.12



A single furrow plough 'drawing the rean'.



A 'swing' plough.



A three-horse team pulling a 'balance' plough, used up to c. 1950.



Tractor towing plough.

Part 2 of an excellent article by Mrs. Fleming of Ashton-in-Makerfield

Observations of life as a child in Ashton-in-Makerfield during World War II

SCHOOL LIFE

LIKE most small children I used to play "school". I desperately wanted to go to school yet, like all children, once I realised that it was a question of going every day it no longer looked so attractive. The older children on the farm were all at school. I was not lonely, however, as we had so many animals. My favourites were the cats which went everywhere with me, so much so that the front of my little navy blue play coat was plucked by their claws.

There was no such thing as school dinners, so at midday it was either a case of a packed lunch, a visit to a chip shop or a journey home. Sometimes Joe, James and Mary came home. One day, I remember, I screamed to go to school with them in the afternoon and Mary was persuaded to take me with her. According to my mother I wanted all my own way and a bag to put it in. She was right of course. Quite what the teacher thought of it all I have no idea. I thoroughly enjoyed my afternoon in the nursery class playing with dolls and riding in a kind of boat with iron rockers. Mary refused to take me again so I had to content myself with pretending to go to school.

Two years or so went by and then it was 1942 and time to start school for real. It was wartime and so gas masks and identity cards had to go with us. My gas mask was that designed for small children and intended to be less fright-

ening than the adult variety. It was made of dull red rubber with a flap at the front which was supposed to be Mickey Mouse's nose. It looked nothing like Mickey Mouse. Every day at school we had to practice putting them on. This terrified me as I always felt unable to breathe. My gas mask was carried over my shoulder in a black patent leather case. Most had to make do with the original cardboard box. To make me more willing to take it to school with me the family made up a little song:-

"Off to school you know

Josephine's got to go,

With her little gas mask

Trudging through the snow".

Pinned to my vest was a metal disc with my name and identity card number. (These became our national health numbers after the war). My dad had made this disc in metal so that I would have more chance of being recognised if the school received a direct hit from a bomb. What a gruesome thought!

There were two buildings in Liverpool Road both made of red sandstone. Old School Place now stands on the spot. The building nearest to the town-centre was the infants' school. The teacher who took the nursery class was called Mrs. Crook. She always wore a hat and a floral smock. In my class was a boy named Derek Bond. On my first day at school he made a bee-line for me, stayed with me all day and suggested that he should take me home that night. So off I toddled with Derek who knew that I had to catch a bus but not which one. He was no gentleman as when we

reached the Fleece Hotel by the bus stop for Haydock (the opposite direction to mine) he abandoned me saying he had to go home for his tea. Four years old and I was lost! Mary and James arrived home without me. My mother and Auntie Nellie were frantic. There was a hue and cry all over Ashton for me. In the meantime some of Mary's friends had found me and I was at last re-united with my family. The next day I felt the wrath of the headmistress, Sister Enda. "And where did you get to, young lady?" she said. "Please, Sister, a lad said he would take me home", I replied. The nun's eyes were raised heavenwards for the first time but not the last on account of my "lads".

The teacher in my next class was Miss Leech. The windows in her classroom, as all the windows in the school, had net glued to them. This was to prevent us being cut by flying glass should they shatter due to bomb blast. We also had a brick-built air-raid shelter in the yard but it was never used.

Living at the farm meant that I had quite a long way to go to school. We caught the trolley bus which ran from Atherton to St. Helens. The fare was one old half-penny. On misty, frosty winter mornings the trolley wires sparked and crackled as the poles travelled along them. We got off the bus at Ashton town centre and then walked down to the school. There were many favourite places where we stopped along the way. Where Kwiksave is now was the Congregational Church, the carpet shop next door was

Heywood's record shop where those with wind-up gramophones bought 78's records. Abel Ogden's barber's shop stood where Collingwood's is now. But the best of all was Tommy's Arcade. Many a bus fare or chip money was spent there on the slot machines. I never got beyond the window where there was a monkey who sat among the sawdust on the window bottom eating fruit — a far cry from Diana Simpson's dress shop as it now is.

When we got into Miss McDonagh's class we were auditioned for the percussion band. Sister Enda's pride and joy was the band. She had a most arbitrary method of selection. If you could sing you were in, if not you were out. I was out. That caused some tears when I got home so my mother went down to school to plead my case. "Alright, I'll put her in the triangles", said Sister. That was not good enough for me. I wanted to be in the tambourines. I must have had a very persuasive mother because I started my career in the band playing a tambourine. However, the prestigious instrument was the dulcimer. The three star performers had one of the big dulcimers each. Naturally I would love to have been chosen to play one but instead they went to Rita Goulding, Helen Boardman and Patricia Curley. Still, a small dulcimer was acceptable.

The Big Event

We seemed to do nothing but rehearse for the big event of the year — Ashton-in-Makerfield Music Festival.

Every school entered either a choir or an ensemble of some sort. It was a much bigger event than the festival of the 1970's and 1980's. The competitions and the big evening concert took place in the Baths Hall which stood in Morden Avenue. This concert was very well attended.

St. Oswald's had its own distinctive uniform for the festival. The girls were kitted out in red cotton gymslips and white blouses provided by the school. The boys wore dark shorts and white shirts. Both boys and girls had to wear white socks and shoes. It was wartime and the shoes proved a problem. We scoured the shops to no avail. As a last resort my dad asked his brother, who had three daughters, to search the cupboards for an old pair. To our relief there was one pair of shoes of the right size. They were spruced up with new pearl buckles sewn on the front. My two friends, Pat and Maureen were not so lucky. In the end their mothers painted a pair of brown sandals with white gloss. These were stiff and sticky and children, being children, made fun of them. The two girls swore the sandals were like that when they got them from the shop.

School parties were still held but, as food rationing had been introduced, we all had to take our own food. Father Christmas came to give presents. One year Father Christmas was played by the young curate from St. Oswald's, Father Casey (now Canon Casey from the Metropolitan Cathedral in Liverpool). One party stands out in my memory. Not only did we have to take our own food but our own cups, saucers and plates as well. That year I was considered old enough to take crockery from a beautiful bone china set which had pansies painted on it. I suppose that it had belonged to my maternal grandmother and so I felt very proud to have been entrusted with it. The party went well but not the journey home. It was dark by this time, the black-out being in full swing. This meant that there were no

street lights. The darkness was made worse by the fact that not a chink of light was allowed to escape from the windows. Before the lights were switched on not only were the curtains drawn but extra material had to be hung at the windows to ensure that no light shone through. At the farm we had an extra set of black curtains specially made by my Auntie Nellie.

country road (Riding Lane estate was not yet built), a long farm drive and a pitch black farmyard. It took me hours to recover from my fright.

WARTIME RATIONING

Shopping in wartime Britain was ruled by the ration book. Each person had a weekly allowance of food whether it

sneaked out of a glass bowl which was on the sideboard. The other children wanted to see what I had behind my back. I insisted it was a golf ball and so they challenged me to bounce it, so I did. Egg yolk splattered everywhere. As children will, they took a perverse delight in rushing off to tell my mother. She came out of the farm kitchen and rattled my legs. I was then sent off to bed for the rest of the day.

Meat Ration

Farmers were not allowed to slaughter cattle for their own consumption. Every cow, sheep, pig which was slaughtered had to be reported and whatever was kept for the household was deducted from the meat ration. There was many a sheep butchered up on the moors and not a word said to the authorities.

To eke out the egg ration there was a substance called powdered egg. This was fried up in a pan and was somewhat like eating an omelette. We also had egg preservative. This was a crystal type substance into which fresh eggs were placed so that they could be kept for a longer time.

I do not remember having many oranges and certainly never a banana.

At the back of the ration book was a sheet of personal coupons. These were to buy sweets. Yes, even sweets were rationed. And as for chocolate Easter eggs I only ever had one in the first seven years of my life. The store where we shopped put the name of every family into a hat and the lucky ones whose names were drawn out got an Easter egg. The year that our name came out we children were very excited. The precious egg in its silver and jewelled paper sat on the sideboard. I was barely able to wait for Easter Sunday morning. My grandad said that if I got up early I would see the sun dance for joy as it always did on the day of Christ's resurrection. I got up early but too late to see the sun dance. Still, there was the chocolate egg. As the youngest I was allowed to eat the egg and the other children had the sweets which were inside.

The system of drawing lots

continued. on p.12



World War II poster issued by the Ministry of Food.

Trolley Bus

At night ARP wardens patrolled to make sure that no one broke the rules. As you can imagine journeys at night were difficult. On my way home from the party by trolley bus I completely lost track of where I was. Suddenly I realised that I was passing my stop. I leapt up hoping that the conductress would ring the bell and I could get off the bus but in vain. She did not even get the bus to stop at the next stop. I panicked and jumped off as the bus was rounding a bend in the road just beyond Riding Lane. My best crockery was smashed and that alone was enough to terrify me but worse still was the fact that I had to get back home along a

was tea, sugar, butter, eggs or meat. Some of the quantities stick in my mind — one egg per week, two ounces of tea per week. I particularly remember being in disgrace and all because of an egg. The other children on the farm had gone off to the golf links which was situated on the site of the Three Sisters. To one side of the links stood the three colliery slag heaps which gave the present site its name. The children often went there to collect lost golf balls. This particular day they had quite a collection. I was not allowed to play with them and so became quite jealous. So as not to lose face I pretended that I had a golf ball. In reality it was a precious egg that I had

Observations of life as a child in Ashton-in-Makerfield during World War II
continued. from p.11

was not confined to Easter. Christmas puddings were allocated in the same way.

Black Market

Rationing or no rationing, goods could always be bought on the black market, with severe penalties if caught. My Auntie Lily had a good friend who kept a shop in Ashton. Every week she would go off with a basket which her friend filled with goodies from under the counter. Auntie Lily never caught the bus home in case anyone questioned the contents of her basket.

Towards the end of the war the Canadians, feeling sorry for the deprived children of

Britain, sent us food parcels. Some of these reached Ashton-in-Makerfield. As always it was left to the schools to deal with them. We children were asked to bring an empty jam jar to school. This was to be filled with drinking chocolate powder. My friend Pat declared that she would take a two-pound jam jar because that way she would get more. By the time we got home there was very little left as we scooped up handfuls and ate it on the way home. As British children had few treats in the way of sweets the Canadians also sent us candies which were like crystallised ginger. We had been promised sweets so that was a big disappointment.

Clothes, too, were rationed. Fashions were skimpy to economise on materials. To buy clothes one had to produce clothing coupons. Young ladies

used to go bare-legged but would draw a line down the backs of their legs in eyebrow pencil to simulate the seam of a stocking. American soldiers were very popular with the girls because they seemed to have endless supplies of nylons, unheard of in Britain. Ashton was a popular town with the "Yanks". Their favourite pub was the Gerard Arms, now converted to Greensway supermarket. Some of the older girls used to go to the airbase at Burtonwood. However, any girl who went there was thought to be of a dubious reputation. One time the weekly magazine, Picture Post, did a feature on Burtonwood with photographs of Ashton girls. They spent the next few weeks unsuccessfully trying to deny that they had ever been near the place.

'Utility' label

The teachers used to measure our feet from time to time and

if you had big feet you got extra coupons for shoes.

Cheaper and therefore more affordable products were manufactured under what was known as the "utility" label introduced in 1941. Many of my clothes were hand-me-downs from a girl called Marjorie who lived up the road. She was rather better off than the rest of us so her clothes were really beautiful. From her I remember a lovely cream wool coat and a tweed suit of matching bonnet, coat and leggings.

I suppose our parent found the shortages rather irksome. It was said that if a queue formed outside a shop it was customary to join it without knowing what one was queuing for! Mostly the children never felt deprived.

To be concluded in Past Forward II.

Plough and Furrow
continued. from p.9

Many times I was glad of these interludes, a short wind for the horses and something fresh to ponder on. Ploughing is a great occupation for allowing one to think. I am sure many a problem has been solved, many a sermon thought out, and many a song learned and sung while following the plough.

Mechanised

It is so easy to get nostalgic about it — after we became mechanised my late wife used to sigh and say how she missed the jingle of the chains and the clop of the hooves as I returned to the stable at night — that I will describe the more mundane things, like a typical day in the life of the ploughman.

Rising before 6 a.m. he goes straight into the stable, perhaps first passing through the pantry to pilfer a piece of pie or cake, water and feed the horses, put up the bedding and clean out, run the barrow load of manure up the midden plank, (it has

been known for him to slip on a frosty morning and finish face down on his steaming load), groom his team until 7 a.m., half an hour for breakfast then yoke up to begin the day's work. There is a break for "baggin'" at 9.30 then on again till noon. Then it's back to the stable for the midday meal; horses are slow eaters and should be allowed one and a half hours to feed but on most small farms they were out again at 1.00, with "baggin'" once again at 3.00.

Contented sound

Finishing time was 5.30 or 6 o'clock, but in midwinter darkness ended the day. After unyoking, watering and feeding, the bedding was rolled out again and fresh straw added. The horses were tethered in the stalls by a neck strap or halter, the fastening chain passing through a ring in the manger and weighted to take up the slack so that it did not become entangled round the horses' forelegs. The hay racks had to be filled and the provender for the following morning prepared. If the horses were likely to have any idle days

it was wise to reduce their intake of oats. The feed was usually a mixture of crushed oats, bran and chaff or chopped hay; sometimes molasses were added and occasionally boiled linseed. Most farmers took a last look at the horses before bedtime; it was a contented sound that usually greeted him, a little whinney of friendship and a munching of hay, an occasional stamp of an itching leg, a satisfied sigh from the farmer and the day was over.

Advent of the tractor

With the advent of the tractor things rapidly changed. It could tow a plough taking two or three or more furrows, and for a time ploughmen went back to the ridge and rean method. Soon, however, a turnover plough was designed which was attached directly to the tractor and hydraulically operated. These have become bigger and bigger, enabling a ploughman to plough 15 or even 20 acres a day instead of the one ploughed by horses.

The early tractors were open to the weather and winter ploughing could be

very unpleasant. I was almost always cold and many times wet, and wished for the days when I was reasonably warm walking behind my team. Now everything seems luxury with airconditioned cabs, hydraulics, power steering and radio. Sadly no longer can we smell the soil, or hear the birds, or chat to our horses; we just sit in our little padded cells listening to the rest of the world on the radio.

The plough has been the basic implement in agriculture for thousands of years; but its use and design have changed dramatically during the last 150 years and there are now signs that it may be used less and less because already some are direct-drilling cereals, and cultivations are being done by different methods.

"Are we soon to see the end of the ploughman's skill?"

Mr. Herbert Worsley is author of two books on Lowton's past, 'Family Furrows' and 'The Dwindling Furrows of Lowton'. Both are on sale in the History Shop.

This article is reproduced with kind permission of the Royal Bank of Scotland



1894-1994 100 Years of Banking in Standish

The Standish branch of Williams Deacon and Manchester and Salford Bank opened on Wednesday 28 November 1894, as a sub-office to the bank's branch in Wigan. Standish was predominantly a colliery village, with a station on the London and North Western Railway's Wigan to Preston line. Coal and cannel was mined in a number of pits, and the village also had its own brewery. In 1891 the township of which Standish was a part had a population of 5,400, of whom probably over a half lived in the village itself.

Williams Deacon and Manchester and Salford Bank had been formed in 1890 by the amalgamation of Williams, Deacon & Co, a London private bank founded in 1771, with Manchester and Salford Bank, which had been established as a joint stock bank in Manchester in 1836. During the 1860s Manchester and Salford Bank had begun a policy of branch expansion, and by the beginning of 1894 the bank had 43 branches. In many areas the bank was the first joint-stock company to be represented locally, and such was the case at Standish. A Wigan newspaper applauded the bank's policy, noting that 'its enterprise commands success'.

The Standish office opened in a shop and cottage on its present site at 2 High Street. Formerly used as a furniture shop, the premises were rented from Elizabeth Hatton for thirteen pounds a year. The office was managed by J S Thomson of the Wigan branch, which provided the necessary staff, and was open on Mondays, Wednesdays and Saturdays. By the end of 1894 the branch had seven accounts on its books.

In 1901 the bank's cumbersome title was shortened to Williams Deacon's Bank Ltd, reflecting the growth of the bank's business beyond Manchester and Salford. Four years later, following delays in the purchase of land for road-widening, the Wigan tramway system was extended out to Standish, the most rural section of the system's network, and the first electric tram ran on 5 July 1905. At the outbreak of the First World War the branch had 126 accounts, but the war years were characterised by a falling off in trade, low money market rates and staff shortages. At Standish this led to the reduction in business hours to Mondays and Fridays only from December 1915.

In March 1920 the bank paid £1,400 for an assignment of the lease of their premises and the adjacent property at 4 High Street, which still had over eighty years to run, and it subsequently purchased the freehold. By this time Standish was home to insurance agents, physicians, a photographer and a music teacher in addition to the usual range of shops and services. The expansion of the village was



Standish Branch in the 1930's

reflected in the growing business of the local tramway service, which in 1921, it's peak year, carried over two million passengers on the line between Standish and Wigan.

After the short post-war boom, the local coal pits suffered a rapid decline, and Standish was not immune from the collapse of the Lancashire cotton industry, as Bradley Manufacturing Company had set up cotton spinning and weaving sheds there in the early years of the century. Although the number of accounts at Williams Deacon's branch in Standish continued to grow, reaching 250 by 1930, profits collapsed at the parent branch in Wigan during the late 1920s. The bank as a whole, with its business concentrated in Lancashire, was severely affected by the depression, and by the end of the 1920s urgently needed support from a large partner. In 1929, through the offices of the Bank of England, The Royal Bank of Scotland made an offer for the company's entire share capital, which was finally agreed the following year. The English branch network continued to trade separately under the Williams Deacon's name.

In 1937 the bank decided to purchase the corner shop and house on the opposite side of Market Street 'as a protection measure', presumably to prevent another bank opening on the site. The premises were let for twenty years and subsequently sold. In 1939 The Royal Bank of Scotland also acquired the old established bank of Glyn, Mills & Co in Lombard Street, London, but both of the English banks continued to trade as separate entities under the title of The Three Banks Group.

During the post-war years Standish gradually changed from an industrial community into a

primarily residential area. The last coal mine, Robin Hill, closed in 1963, though the village retained a small industrial sector. While the bank saw a reduction in the number of accounts held at Standish in the 1950s, business picked up again in the following decade as new residents, travelling to work in Wigan and beyond, arrived in the village. In 1970 The Royal Bank of Scotland's English constituents were merged to form Williams & Glyn's Bank Ltd, and Standish branch was renamed accordingly.

In 1978 the bank obtained planning permission to extend the bank into the shop premises at 4 High Street, providing additional office space for the staff, and in 1985 Williams & Glyn's Bank and The Royal Bank of Scotland finally merged fully, trading together throughout Britain as a single bank, The Royal Bank of Scotland plc. A Cashline machine was installed at the branch in 1992, adding to the wide range of services provided for the local community. The branch is now a part of the bank's Wigan grouping of offices, and has a staff of nine.



**The Royal Bank
of Scotland**

The Royal Bank of Scotland plc
2 High Street
Standish Nr Wigan
Lancashire WN6 0HL
Telephone: 01257 472626

Mr. C. Alker continues his series with his recollections of the War Years (The Way We Were in the 1930's appeared in Past Forward 8).

THE WAY WE WERE IN ASPULL

Sunday, September 3rd 1939, 11 a.m. and Prime Minister Mr. Neville Chamberlain making his announcement on the wireless that our country was now at war with Germany.

THE council workmen were very busy digging out at the rear of each house and erecting our Anderson air raid shelters. These were sheets of reinforced steel and when complete looked like an eskimo's igloo. My dad lined the floor with bricks and then cemented it to keep the floor as dry as possible.

We were all issued with a gas mask which you were supposed to carry at all times. The air raid sirens were tested, and it seemed strange to hear the banshee wail of the 'alert — take cover' until the siren sounded its level note signifying 'all clear'.

Heavy curtains were put up at all the windows and had to be drawn at dusk to conform with the blackout regulations. Of course our beloved gas lamps were now extinguished for the duration of the war.

We were now coming to the end of our school days, as we left on our 14th birthday. Our clogs had now given way to shoes, and I never wore clogs again from this time.

Mill Club

Our recreations had now taken a more adult form and we spent most evenings at the Mill Club. This was a club owned by the Mill authorities, and was a nice big room equipped with two excellent billiard tables. Snooker was generally our game, and most of us became quite decent at the game. For our subscription of 2d. per week, this was excellent value. Most of the wireless sets we owned at that

time were battery operated, and I remember the caretaker, Mr. Calland (a lovely gentleman), had a small room there where he recharged the batteries for about 2d.

On Saturdays we now went to the Palace Cinema in Hindley. Always the long walk through Borsdane Wood and a call at the small shop just after the end of the wood. This was a small house-cum-shop, where we spent a few coppers on gipsy creams and a bottle of pop before continuing our journey to Hindley.

Aspull Marras

We were always called the Aspull Marras because that was the general greeting — "Neawh aert gooin on marra", around Aspull. The films we saw we thought were great, and I particularly remember watching 'Frankenstein' and being terrified on the walk back through the wood in the dark!

At the end of September, I started my first job as office boy at W.H.S. Taylor & Co. Ltd, wholesale grocers, on Market Street, Wigan. The warehouse was opposite the Market Hall, and was quite a big building, having four

floors and a big cellar in the basement. The cellar was stocked with cheese, butter, lard etc., and when the siren sounded the alert, all the staff went down to the cellar until the 'all clear' sounded.

One of my tasks as office boy was to polish the brass name plate at the front of the office until it shone, and like Sir Joseph Porter in the Gilbert & Sullivan opera 'HMS Pinafore' 'I polished up the handle of the big front door'.

During the next few months, I got to know Wigan of 1940 very well. I remember Pooles Cafe just up Market Street, and the old lady manageress who always wore black Victorian clothes with the skirt covering her ankles.

At the junction of Market Street, Library Street, and Wallgate, traffic was then controlled by a policeman on point duty. All the roads carried two way traffic, one way systems being a long way off.

Night bombing

After the Battle of Britain the Germans turned to night bombing, and the blitz on London became a nightly occurrence to the end of 1940. Our large cities were also targeted, and Manchester was heavily bombed at the end of the year. From our high position in Aspull we could see the red glow in the sky and hear the sound of the bombs pounding the city. Liverpool

was also targeted by the bombers and many children were evacuated. My mother took in two young girls of about 12 years old, and they stayed with us for some time until it was safe for them to return home.

The threat of invasion had now passed, but the German U boats were still a great menace in the war at sea. Consequently food was scarce, and the rationing etc., became more and more severe.

At about this time, I joined the Air Training Corps, and remained a member until I volunteered for the R.A.F. in 1944. As part of our training we went to Woodvale aerodrome near Ainsdale for flying training, navigation, morse code etc. I particularly remember being allowed to sit in a Spitfire and fire the guns whilst it was jacked up for calibration check at the firing butts. A great thrill!

Life in Aspull at this time carried on as normal with the odd night or two spent in the air raid shelter when the alert sounded. We could hear the sound of many aircrafts passing over, but no bombs were dropped near us. The older lads of 18 or so were gradually called up into the forces and were very proud of their uniforms when they came on leave.

Hilarious

We now went to Wigan on Saturdays, and had a good choice of cinemas, i.e. the Ritz, County, Court Cinema, Princes, Empire etc. We also enjoyed the live shows at the Hippodrome on King Street, and I'll always remember the hilarious sketch of Norman

Evans in 'Over the garden wall'. Frank Randle was also a favourite and guaranteed a full house.

By 1942 the American Air Force was arriving in numbers, and their 8th Air Force had started their daylight bombing campaign. One incident I vividly remember at this time. A few of us were sitting on the bank at Borsdane Wood, when an American Liberator approached flying very low. As it passed over us, it was almost brushing the trees, and was obviously coming down. We ran through the fields for about half a mile, and the aircraft had made an excellent belly-landing in the field just short of Hall Lane. The plane was more or less intact, and the crew got away with it.

The tides of war were now going the way of the Allies with General Montgomery and his eighth army defeating Rommel and his Afrika Corps from El Alamein to Tunis and eventually forcing the Axis forces out of North Africa. Next followed the invasion of Sicily, and then the mainland of Italy.

Other Measures

With the Russians advancing rapidly to the west, it was now clear that the vaunted 1000 year Reich was now in danger of defeat.

In Aspull we were now looking for other pleasures, and started to go dancing at the old Empress dance hall opposite the Ritz cinema. On Sunday nights we went to Wigan and joined the 'parade' along Wigan Lane to the Cherry Gardens pub, calling for the odd refreshment at the Temperance Bar on Wigan Lane.

I had now reached the age of 17, and early in 1944 volunteered to join the R.A.F. I was called up early in the year and went off to do my bit.

**Mr. C. Alker,
5 St. Marys Road
Aspull
Wigan.**

WIGAN MURDER MYSTERY IN 1894

RICHARD Blaylock and Ann Marsden were married at Wigan Parish Church on 18 October 1864, and by 1871 they were running the Crofters Arms pub at 17 Hallgate. Richard had been born in the Cumbrian border parish of Kirkandrews on Esk in 1833, but he had left there by 1851 and seems to have come south to look for work. His wife had been born Ann Marsden, a farmer's daughter from Aspull Moor. She was already widowed when she married Richard.

My father first aroused my interest in Richard years ago when I asked about his family's past. "My grandpa Blaylock was hit on the head with a brick one night in the street," he told me, adding that his grandfather died soon after from his injuries. This was confirmed by the death certificate I bought, cause of death being described as a mortal wound inflicted by an unknown person, and summed up as wilful murder.

The search for an inquest was disappointing; like most from this period it had not survived, but the Wigan Observer came to the rescue. Within 48 hours they replied to my hopeful letter with a copy of a detailed report from the first day of the inquest, published in the newspaper of 10 March 1894.

The assault had taken place on 26 February 1894, shortly after 11 p.m., in Powell Street. Richard had set out from Hallgate with an acquaintance, Thomas Latham, and walked part way to Thomas's home in Hilton Street. It was on his way home after leaving Thomas that Richard was attacked.

He later told police that "he was struck on the head from behind, with a brick or stone, the blow partially dazing him. He at once turned round and saw a man whom he did not know running away in the direction of Scholes". Richard managed to walk to the 'Police Office' to report the assault, but he had obviously not seen his attacker clearly in the dark street and could only describe him as a tall man with light trousers, and did not think he would be able to identify him.

A doctor dressed the head wound, but after a few days Richard's condition deteriorated, and in spite of the ministrations of a Dr. Jones from



*Richard Blaylock
(1833-1894)*



*Ann Marsden (later Aspinall,
then Blaylock) (1828-1883)*

Manchester, Richard became unconscious and died at home at 7 a.m. on Thursday 8 March 1894. My father, child of Richard's third daughter, Ann, was not quite two years old.

The inquest was opened on the afternoon of 9 March by Mr. Milligan, the deputy borough coroner. Amos Jacques was the foreman of the jury, and Captain Bell represented the police. The primary cause of death was given as the blow to the back of the head with a blunt instrument on the night of 26 February by an unknown person. Evidence of Richard's identity was given by John Green, butcher, who was married to Richard's second daughter, Margaret. Finally Captain Bell asked for the police to be given as much time as possible to investigate the murder.

No one was charged with the murder, and the matter seems to have become just another unsolved mystery - until one day in the 1930's. My parents, then recently married, were entertaining Elizabeth Blaylock, better known in the family as Auntie Betty. She was the youngest of Richard's four daughters and the only one remaining unmarried, so that she alone from the family still carried the name Blaylock. On that day in the 1930's a letter was forwarded to Elizabeth at my parents' home. It had originally come from Australia, and seems to have been addressed to the descendants of Richard Blaylock in Wigan, Lancashire, England. Exactly whose hands it passed through on its way I

don't know, but my father thought it was Auntie Betty's solicitor who finally directed it to her.

The letter was written by two elderly ladies who, with their brother, had lived the last 40 years of their lives in Australia, having emigrated from Wigan in 1894. The writers went on to say that their brother had recently died and they felt that now was the time when they must write to members of Richard Blaylock's family and make their peace. It was their brother who had struck the blow that killed Richard and, realising that the charge would be murder, the sisters and brother had sailed at the earliest possible date for Australia.

I do not know whether any indication was given as to motive for the attack, and we can only wonder now whether it was an attempt at robbery, or perhaps a grudge: had the Crofters Arms landlord offended a customer or competitor?

The letter seems not to have survived, nor a record of the name of the man who emigrated with his sisters. He remains a shadowy figure from the past, and I have just these verbal recollections that were passed on by my father. But perhaps, 100 years after the event, that is the best way.

(Thanks to the Wigan Observer for the information relating to the inquest.)

*Sybil Cant,
Baldock,
Herts.*

*(great grand-daughter of
Richard & Ann Blaylock)*

ASTLEY GREEN COLLIERY

ON 22 April, the Mayor of Wigan opened and dedicated the new entrance gates to the Colliery. The original gates had been removed after the closure of the Colliery, exactly 25 years ago. The new gates — replicas of the originals — were generously sponsored by the late Ken Thornborough, Hodgsons of Leigh, Tremco Paints and Wigan MBC, and dedicated to the memory of former GMC Councillor Harry Davies, Councillor Gordon

Photo courtesy of Leigh Reporter

Thomas and Mr. Ken Thornborough, all of whom were enthusiastic supporters of the museum.

With the added attractions of a vintage transport parade and the Tyldesley Silver Band, the event was well attended. Great credit is due to Harry Potts, Chairman, and all the

hard-working volunteers from Red Rose Steam Society, who ensured the event was such a success.

The photograph shows the Mayor, Councillor Stan Simmons, Harry Potts, Gary Titley MEP and Mayoress Mrs. Bessie Simmons.



FAMILY HISTORY SESSIONS

EARLIER this year Wigan Heritage Service and the Wigan Family History Society held a series of family history sessions in the History shop. This was the third such series to be held, and was aimed at both beginners and researchers who have begun finding out about their ancestors. The sessions continue to be popular, with genealogists Derek Horrocks and Carole Littler giving advice to 47 enquirers, many of whom will become regular users of the genealogical collections in the History Shop, and members of the Wigan Family History Society. Many thanks to Derek and Carole for their time and effort.

B.B.

Woodland memories recorded in verse

I became aware of the attractions of the Gathurst district in the late 1930's when I began to make infrequent visits to see Jack Stringfellow who was an old friend of my father. Jack and his wife — she was the sister of the then Member for Wigan — lived at Dene Hollow between the River Douglas and the canal, just downstream from the inn. On one visit, c. 1942, I was introduced to Arthur Hodson, who would then be in his fifties, and who was a great lover of the countryside and had lived for some years, if I remember correctly, in a hut in Dean Wood, Upholland. Arthur was, among other things, a poet and had compiled a long narrative poem on his woodland memories. Over a thousand lines of verse of this and lesser poems were handwritten in a couple of exercise books and these he insisted that I borrowed for comment — not that I am in the least bit qualified in such a field! Vaguely, I hoped, at least, to get the MSS copied somehow in a more permanent form but my incessant movements during the war years prevented this and I was glad to be able to return the manuscripts before they were lost or damaged. I cannot recall the full nature of the poems after over 50 years but perhaps a relative of Arthur Hodson still has them. If so, then I feel sure that the editor of Past Forward would like to see them with a view to their greater and wider appreciation.

Anon.

ENGLISH AS IT IS SPOKEN

I often feel that local historians in Lancashire have a problem in recapturing the full flavour of the accounts of long ago from old interviewees as most of us were instructed, even when very young, to "talk properly". We were expected to use the language of the speakers on the wireless even if we could not emulate their cultured tones — not that we would want to.

Protruberance

After a civilian spell during the last war well away from Leigh, in a more or less dialect-free part of England, I arrived in Wigan by train on one starlit clear evening and made my way to Hindley Green, there to await a bus to my part of Westleigh.

As I lounged by the pub in the blackout, the door to the jug and bottle department opened and, not observing me, an elderly lady issued forth and trundled across the road, a frontal protruberance below her shawl clearly indicating a receptacle replete with refreshment. At this point, the front door of the terraced house next to the pub, immediately on my

other side, opened with due regard for the blackout and a voice called out, "Eh! Mary Ellen, cum 'ere. Ah wantt thi." Without faltering, Mary Ellen continued on her way and back came the reply, "Eh! now, Nellie, Ah cawn't stop, Ah've gotten summat in th'oo'en".

"Reet nice"

I thought of the values that this short dialogue revealed — directness, candour, honesty and absence of sophistry and I was glad to be back again. The bus came and, as I clambered aboard, the conductor, seeing my travelling case, said, "'ast' bin away?" "Aye", I replied, "but it's reet nice to cum wom again." I hadn't noticed two women who lived not far from me but I soon heard their "stage" whispers.

"Eh, did y'ear that? I didn't know he spoke like that!"

"Now", replied the other, "I didn't know he could speak like that".

Anon

Both of these letters are from the same source. Ed.

EXHIBITIONS IN THE HISTORY SHOP

There is still an opportunity to see 'Bringing the House Down' — the Heritage Services highly successful exhibition telling the history of local theatre. It will be on tour as follows:

July Tyldesley Library; **August** Atherton Library; **September** Hindley Library; **November** Wigan Library.

The History Shop's exhibition programme for the coming months includes two further displays to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the cessation of hostilities in 1945. A Commemoration of 'Victory in Japan, 1945' has been prepared with the kind co-operation of the Burma Star, for which we are very grateful. The exhibition will once again feature the much appreciated audio-visual display which accompanied the 'Wigan at War' exhibition earlier in the year.

'Europe Today: The Ugly Face of Nationalism' is an exhibition developed by the Anne Frank House and seen by over 300,000 visitors during its display in Amsterdam. It will be accompanied by the video, 'Dear Kitty'.

As a complete contrast, the History Shop will be the venue for a specially commissioned exhibition of paintings by local artist Gerald Rickards, entitled 'Wigan Streets'.

31 July - 25 August

'Europe Today: The Ugly Face of Nationalism' — An Anne Frank House exhibition.

31 July - 16 September

A Commemoration of 'Victory in Japan, 1945'.

2 October - 25 November

'Wigan Streets' — An Exhibition of New Works by local artist Gerald Rickards.

LECTURES IN THE HISTORY SHOP

The 1994-95 lecture season has proved a great success, with many full houses. Lectures are held on the second Wednesday of the month at 7.30 p.m. Tickets are only £1, including coffee, and can be obtained in advance from the History Shop (01942 828128).

The opening lectures in the 1995-96 season are as follows:

11 October

'Wigan Streets' — the artist Gerald Rickards talks about the works in his new exhibition

8 November

'Oscar Wilde' — marking the centenary of the birth of the famous wit and playwright

James Fairhurst

13 December

'The Early Days of Wigan Rugby League'

Nigel Winnard

SOCIETY NEWS

Aspull & Haigh Historical Society
Meetings are held in the Village Centre, Bolton Road, Aspull, on the second Thursday of the month at 8.00 p.m. Further details from the Secretary, Mrs. Dorothy Dootson, 5 Stancliffe Grove, Aspull (01942 831204).

Atherton Heritage Society

All meetings are held in Atherton Library on the second Monday of the month at 7.30 p.m. Further details from the Secretary, Mrs. P. Madden, 22 Butterfield Road, Over Hulton, Bolton BL5 1DU. (01204 651478).

Golborne & Lowton Local History Society

Founded in 1984, the society now has an average monthly attendance of over 20. Meetings are held at Golborne Library on the second Tuesday of the month at 7.00 p.m. Non-members welcome. Further details from Ron Marsh, P.R. Officer (01942 726027).

Leigh & District Civic Trust

For details contact the Chairman, Betty Isherwood, 7 Pennington Mews, St. Helens Road, Leigh. (01942 672058).

Leigh & District Family History Society

For details contact the Secretary Olive Hughes (01942 606156).

Leigh Local History Society

27 September
The Jacobites in Lancashire
Mr. Fred Holcroft

For further details contact the Secretary, Mrs. Norma Ackers (01942 865488).

Tyldesley & District Historical Society

Meetings are held at Tyldesley Pensions Club, Milk Street, Tyldesley on the third Thursday of the month at 7.30 p.m. Entrance is FREE.

Wigan Archeological Society

The Society meets in the History Shop on the first Wednesday of the month at 7.30 p.m. New members always welcome. For further details contact Bill Aldridge, 5 The Beacons, Appley Bridge, Wigan WN6 8DU. (01257 252529 or 01772 34051).

Wigan Civic Trust

For information, contact Anthony Grimshaw, Secretary (01942 45777).

Wigan Family History Society

Meetings are held twice monthly at the Seven Stars Hotel, Wallgate, Wigan. For details contact Len Marsden, Secretary (01942 217764).

The Society cordially invites all those interested in tracing their family tree to an open day in the History Shop on Wednesday 1 November, between 10.00 a.m. and 5.00 p.m. Members of the society will be available for consultation, and examples of their work will be on show. Admission is free and refreshments will be available.

WHAT IS A TACKLER?

What is a Tackler?

*Don't tell me I'll guess,
From morn until night
He's in a hell of a mess.
He comes in a morning,
A grin on his face,
Within thirty seconds
Its just like a race.*

*Up come the weavers
In one's, two's and three's,
In less than a minute
He's down on his knees.
But brave as a lion,
Courageous and SMART
He runs round the section
Like a man in a dream.
The weavers they roar,
They yell and they scream.*

*But he's never perturbed,
He's always polite,
The weavers they adore him,
He's ever so bright.
Without them the foreman
Is hopelessly lost,
The Manager loves him
Never counting the cost.*

*They know he's reliable
Straight forward and true,
His problems are many,
His pleasures are few.*

Mr. R. Mercer of Bury found this poem amongst the papers of his late father, a Wigan 'tackler'. The poet's identity is unknown. Ed.

He goes home at night

*A physical wreck,
His tongue's hanging out,
His shirt's round his neck.
Work worn and weary,
No pleasure in life,
For when he goes home
He starts helping the wife.*

*He washes the dishes,
Darns all the socks,
Makes up the beds,
And winds up the clocks.
Looks after the kiddies,
And puts them to bed,
Then he starts to wonder
Why the hell he got wed.*

*But still he's undaunted,
Though its a terrible wrench,
You'll find him next morning
Stood at his bench.*

*Weak kneed and wackery,
He can't raise a laugh,
His one chance of salvation,
Is to get on the staff.*

*So what is a Tackler?
You heard what I said
He's the weavers gold angel,
The slave of the shed.*

— A — VICTORIAN CHRISTMAS — AT — HAIGH HALL

15 DECEMBER 1995
7.00 p.m. for 7.30 p.m.

Carriages 12.30 a.m.
Five Course Dinner • Entertainment
Childrens Choir

Miss Suzanne Mather — Leodian String Quartet

Dancing to the Toll Bar Band

Victorian Costume to be worn

Tickets 25 Guineas (£26.25) available from Haigh Hall
(01942 832895) or TIC (01942 825677)

Credit Cards Accepted

Further details from Alastair Gillies, Wigan Heritage
Service (01942 827375)



This letter was written to Edmund and Martha Cheetham of Shevington, who have kindly passed it on for inclusion in 'Past Forward'. Ed.

"Right ticket" for Fred

Dear Edmund & Martha,

Today being Sunday and business has somewhat slowed down I thought I could at least let you know that I did receive Issue 8 of Past Forward and have enjoyed reading and re-reading it. I often times in the evening pull out the newspapers "As We Were" and the Past Forwards and look at the pictures and relate to many of the articles that were submitted by the local Wiganers. In fact many times I get a good laugh out of the descriptions of things in the various articles. I can relate to lots of the things written about, because they are describing things I did and what I did know.

I enjoy Ernie Taberner articles because they are of my time. Some of the writers were born just a little time before I left and some after 1926. An article in Issue 8 by a Mr. C. Alker of Aspull, was just the right ticket. I could follow him through his entire article word by word and I was delighted to read about "Clogs", "Clog-irons", "Mee Mawers", "Piggy" and "Gorner's Cafe". I did a little of the fancy skating on clog-iron down on 'Rotten Row', that was around Soho Street, also made many slides on the street flags after a snow. Clog-irons worked really good on the slide, at least they did until somebody's mother came out and put ashes on the slide, which of course put a stop to our sliding. On one other issue it talked about old "Nanny Green Teeth". Well I remember that my mother used to scare me to death about old Nanny Green Teeth getting you if you went too close to the pond.

Well even that in those days no one had much money, but I can tell you everybody was clean, well mannered and very happy people and we cared for each other and our neighbours, and our morals were of high standing, which I am afraid in this day and age has been lost.

Fred Sims
Casper
Wyoming, USA.

Dear Alastair,

As you know, since Mrs. Prescott of Ontario, Canada first wrote to you in Spring 1994, we have become regular correspondents (I am by the way the Ernie Taberner she knew in the 1930's) and I repeat for you here an excerpt from her letter only this week. I am sure she won't mind my telling you since it is due to 'Past Forward' and your help. She says "I thank God

FIRM FRIENDS THROUGH PAST FORWARD

every day that my brother Fred sent to me 'Past Forward Spring 1994' from which I asked him to despatch a copy of "A Lancashire Upbringing".

The rest you know, which is that she wrote to you, I wrote back and not only have Mr. & Mrs. Prescott become our firm friends but also her brother and his wife (still Wigan residents) who have also written me this week. So I too have to thank you.

Ernie

The latest in Ernie's series 'I Remember When' appears on p.3. Ed.

PUBLIC(AN) INFORMATION

I would like to comment on the article on p.19 of 'Past Forward' 9 re the interest shown by Mr. Grimshaw of Blackrod, in the provenance of Rushton's Brewery.

As stated, there does appear to be only one Rushton's Brewery which was situated in the Birmingham area. However, the only details I possess is that during 1923 Rushton's Brewery was absorbed by Ansell of Birmingham. Regrettably I cannot help with identification of the pub in the background.

In passing, the photograph of the 'Bird i'th Hand at Hindley on p.9 of the same issue, displays Unsworth's Balmoral Ales. Unsworth's Brewery, Hindley was acquired by Matthew Brown in 1924.

Incidentally, I receive 'Past Forward' from a relative still living in Leigh and look forward to each issue which is devoured cover to cover.

Ron Hurdus,
Denmark,
W. Australia.

An appreciation from a fellow "Kebber"

Dear Mr. Gillies,

Firstly my thanks for the last issues of 'Past Forward', one of which was sent to an old school friend in Platt Bridge and two which were given to members of our local Railway Museum who are ex-Wiganers, all of whom greatly appreciated them.

The article on "Kebbing" (see p.2) is factual, as I did it quite often as a means of filling in an otherwise idle hour in the evening after work; two ladies who lived in Abram, very near neighbours, went almost every night, and they built up for themselves a nice little stock over a period.

A couple of weeks ago my wife and I paid a visit to the Astley Green Mining Museum, and had a most enjoyable afternoon there. The staff could not have been more

helpful, and the exhibits proved to be most interesting, especially the enormous winding-engine, but what took my eye most of all were the small engines the likes of which I drove when I first went into pit work in 1937; some of them are in need of restoration, and it is a great pity that funds are not available for this work to be carried out.

A further visit is envisaged for this coming Sunday, as there is a rally of traction engines, in which I also have a great interest, remembering when they used to come to the farms to do the threshing - I spent many happy hours watching this activity when I was a schoolboy.

Once again many thanks for the magazines. Looking forward to the next issue.

Anon.

Descendants wanted

Dear Sir,

I am looking for descendants of Ellen Morris born c. 1830 Ireland and Edward Bullock born c. 1830 Barnsley, Yorks.

Their children were all born in Wigan:

- 1) Mary Ann b.1851 m.1873 Matthew Horrocks. Their children: Hannah b.1871, Margaret b.1874, Ellen b.1881, Mary b.1883, Elizabeth b.1887 and Thomas b.1890
- 2) Margaret b.1854 m.1881 William Corless.

Their children: Ann b.1879, James b.1884, Joseph b.1886 and Hugh b.1889.

- 3) Hugh b.1862. Came to Canada in 1904.
- 4) Joseph b.1864 5) Elizabeth b.1869

Could any reader with information please contact me:

Margaret Rowley
R R" 2, Clive
Alberta, Canada
TOC OYO

Magnificent Response

Dear Mr. Gillies

Many thanks for your letter enclosing the letter from Mrs. Greenhalgh. This is the fourth lady to have responded since the article appeared in 'Past Forward' 9 - one in St. Helens, one in Platt Bridge, one in Colwyn Bay and one in Bradford. They are all related in one way or another to Sarah Crank and to Susannah Crank, the object of my original research, and so to me. They were able to give me the names of Susannah's parents (my 3 x great grandparents John Adamson and Ursula Anyon from Halton in Cheshire) and her grandparents (my 4 x great grandparents Joseph Anyon and Ursula ????, of Halton and Runcorn).

This is a magnificent response, well worth the effort of writing and editing the article, and it indicates the value of the Heritage Service and the widespread and enthusiastic readership of 'Past Forward'.

Brian J. Haimes
Guildford, Surrey.

FOOTBALL CLUB INFO WANTED

Dear Sir,

Please find enclosed the pictures of the St. Elizabeth football teams of the years indicated. I trust that you will find them of interest. There are certain people I have so far been unable to identify, the two persons on the extreme right in the third and second row of the 1921/22 picture and the man on the extreme right back row and the first three men on the extreme left in the second row, of the 1929/30 team. If you or any of your readers can help I would really appreciate it. The original picture for the 1921/22 team was in the possession of J. Naylor (who was the last surviving member of the team and died about three years ago); at the time of his passing he was resident at Wingates. The other picture is in the possession of my cousin Sydney Prescott from Hindley.

I have found the 'Past Forward' issues most interesting and trust you will keep up the good work.

Mr. H. Heyes
125, Locust St.
Salisbury
Mass: 01952
USA



SEASON 1921 - 1922.

Back Row L - R: T. Webber, E. Naylor, W. Hope, D. Webber, H. Fiddler, T. Bramhall, E. Farrimond. **Centre Row:** T. Valentine, W. Simm, H. Ainscough, T. Simm, E. Heyes (Bond), J. Naylor, E. Crompton. **Front Row:** C. Campbell, P. Seddon, J. Webber, J. Baron, J. Bearsley.



SEASON 1929 - 1930. BROUGHTON CUP WINNERS.

Back row L - R: J. Hart, W. Calland, R. Brooks, J. Wharton. **Centre Row:** W. Prescott, J. Twist, J. Crompton, T. Brooks, W.H. Horn, T. Bramhall, D. Webber. **Front Row:** L. Wilding, J. Hardman, C. Campbell, J. Gregory, F. Lord, J. Hardman.

Published by Wigan Heritage Service, Leisure Services Department, Market Suite, Market Hall, The Galleries, Wigan WN1 1PX.

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 liability for any matter in this publication.

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



© Wigan Metropolitan Borough Council.
July 1995

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

NAME.....

ADDRESS.....

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

Who, Where and When?

There was an overwhelming response to the large mystery photograph in 'Past Forward 9' - it is without question the A49, between Wigan and Ashton, just past the Cranberry Lodge Hotel. The two rows of houses, and Willow Street

and Ash Street, are no more; but the protruding building just behind the large van, Derbyshire House, still survives.

The other three photographs were obviously much more difficult. The top one, however, has been positively identified as the induction of Rev. H.D. Rosenthal as Vicar of Atherton, May 1948. The one underneath may be the old St. John's Presbytery, Wigan. No suggestions at all for the location of the commemorative archway.

Just two photographs this time. The larger picture came to light during a recent house clearance in Wigan - although this does not guarantee, of course, that it is actually local. Either way, it is an intriguing picture. The other picture clearly shows a brass band accompanying a church walking day but which band and where. Any suggestions?



If you can identify the photographs shown here, please contact Len Mudson in Leigh Town Hall (01942) 404432

