

# PAST FORWARD

ISSUE NUMBER TWELVE

SPRING 1996



**The Newsletter of Wigan Heritage Service**

**FREE**



## From the Editor

The news of our Lottery success came just as *Past Forward Eleven* was going to press. This was a real coup, not just for the Heritage Service, but for the people of Wigan. See opposite for further details.

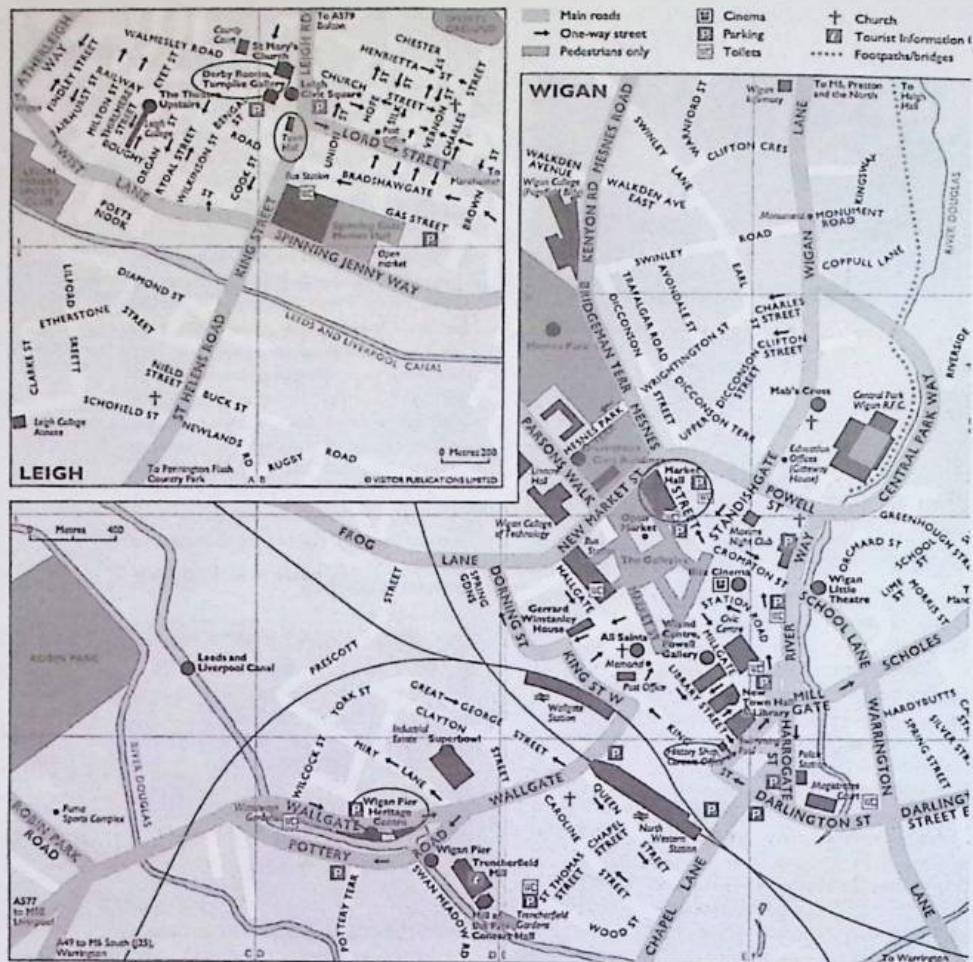
As well as seeing the completion of phase 2 of the History Shop, 1996 also marks the 750th anniversary of the granting of Wigan's first royal charter. A number of celebratory events have been planned, and the Heritage Service is particularly closely involved. Most events will take place in the second half of the year, with the focus around the August Bank Holiday weekend (the 1246 charter was actually signed on 26 August - Bank Holiday Monday). Celebratory events include the Charter Exhibition in the History Shop (see opposite), a medieval banquet and gala, a service of thanksgiving, a souvenir history of Wigan, the Charter play, and a series of educational workshops. For further details of events, see the next *Past Forward* (due out in June), which will be a bumper Charter commemorative issue.

Many thanks to all those readers of *Past Forward* who sent in completed questionnaires. We have been delighted with the response (see also p 9).

Finally, my thanks for all the support, whether financial or by way of written contribution, and for the kind comments which I continue to receive. It makes the whole project so worthwhile.

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

For those readers who are unsure about the exact location of our various services, this map shows the main Heritage Service outlets in Wigan and Leigh.



### At Wigan:

<b>Market Suite, The Galleries—</b>	
Heritage Services Manager (and Editor of <i>Past Forward</i> )	
<i>Alastair Gillies</i> .....	(01942) 827375
	Fax: (01942) 827371
<b>History Shop—</b>	
Visitor Services Manager <i>Philip Butler</i> .....	
	(01942) 827594
Education and Outreach Manager (and Local	
History, West) <i>Bob Blakeman</i> .....	
	(01942) 828020
Collections Development Manager <i>Yvonne Webb</i> .....	
	(01942) 828123
Heritage Officer (Industrial History) <i>Mike Haddon</i> .....	
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Heritage Officer (Social History) <i>Dawn Wadsworth</i> .....	
	(01942) 828124
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<b>Wigan Pier—</b>	
Technician <i>Denise Glassbrook-Whitter</i> .....	
	(01942) 828564
Technician <i>Roy Wareing</i> .....	
	(01942) 323666

### At Leigh:

<b>Archives, Town Hall—</b>	
Heritage Officer (Archives) <i>Nicholas Webb</i> .....	
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Senior Technician <i>Len Hudson</i> .....	
	(01942) 404432
<b>Turnpike Centre, Leigh Library —</b>	
Heritage Officer (Local History) <i>Tony Ashcroft</i> .....	
	(01942) 404559
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: This superb quality photograph from an old glass negative was taken in September 1902 to mark the first trial run of trams in Leigh. Between then and 1933 they operated with great success. Open-topped tram No. 27 is pictured travelling along King Street, and is just one of many fine photographs in the newly published book *'Around Leigh'* (see back cover).



# We've won the Lottery!

Photograph courtesy of Lancashire Evening Post



*Heritage Services Manager Alastair Gillies celebrates the Lottery win with staff, from left to right, Barbara Miller, Philip Butler, Hilary Fairclough and Yvonne Webb.*

**THE History Shop** has been awarded a grant of £201,000 from the Heritage Lottery Fund. This makes it the first recipient of a National Lottery grant in Wigan, and the first local authority museum in the North West to achieve this success!

Along with a legacy left to Wigan Heritage Service by Doctor Monica Wickham, last surviving daughter of Victorian Wigan vicar, Rev. William Wickham, this will fund the History Shop phase 2 development, which will open on 27 August 1996.

As many readers will know, the History Shop is presently restricted to the first floor of the

former Wigan Library. Under phase 2, the ground floor (formerly the lending library) will be converted into a large exhibition area and art gallery.

The exhibition area will be flexible, to accommodate exhibitions of various types and sizes. It will open with the Charter 96 exhibition, which will feature all the surviving Wigan charters – on display for the first time for many years – and tell the story of 750 years of local history in an entertaining and innovative way. This exhibition will also be very relevant to the National Curriculum – teachers please take note. It is hoped to offer a package combining a class visit to the History Shop with a tour

of the Town Hall across the road. (further details from Bob Blakeman, Education and Outreach Manager, tel: 01942 828020).

Under the History Shop phase 2, Wigan will at long last have a traditional art gallery. Although not large, it will nevertheless provide an area for the display of some of the most significant paintings from the Heritage Service's fine art collection, most of which will be on public view for the first time.

The new development will have full disabled access, including a small ground floor research area. There will truly be something for everyone.



# News from the Archives

NEW microfilms of church registers, rate books and other documents held at the Archives have been made for general use at the History Shop, where full details are available. All the records will be of considerable value for family and local history research across the borough area. A brief list follows:

**Parish Registers:** Ashton (Holy Trinity), Aspull, Billinge, Earlestown, Golborne, Haigh, Hindley Green, Lowton (St. Luke, St. Mary), Newton (St. Peter), Wigan (St. Anne, St. James, St. Michael, St. Stephen, St. Thomas). These are mainly recent registers not previously filmed.

**Nonconformist Registers:**  
**Congregational:** Hindley, Orrell, Tyldesley, Wigan (St. Paul);  
**Wesleyan Methodist:** Appley Bridge, Bedford, Bispham, Goose Green, Ince, Leigh (King St.), Newtown, Platt Bridge, Tyldesley, Westleigh, Wigan (Circuit); **Primitive Methodist:**

## MORE RECORDS AT THE HISTORY SHOP

Almond Brook, Atherton, Gidlow, Glazebury, Golborne, Hindley (Castle Hill), Ince (Higher & Lower), Lamberhead Green, Leigh, Mosley Common, Platt Bridge, Standish, Tyldesley, Whelley, Wigan (Station Road); **United Methodist:** Goose Green, Hindley Green, Lamberhead Green, Leigh (Plank Lane), Wigan (King St.); **Independent Methodist:** Atherton, Bryn;  
**Other Churches:** Church of Christ (Wigan), Atherton Free Church. These are all post-1837 registers not previously filmed.  
**Rate Books:** Abram (1837, 1846, 1856, 1866), Ashton (1752 and lists of militiamen 1760-88), Aspull (1838, 1844-45, 1856, 1866, 1876, 1886),

Astley (1856, 1866, 1876, 1886), Bedford (1843, 1856, 1867, 1875, 1886), Pennington (1846, 1856, 1865, 1875), Westleigh (1858, 1868, 1884), Wigan (c.1805, 1830, 1847, 1855, 1865). This is an initial selection from the extensive series of general and poor rate books in the Archives, concentrating on records prior to the first census (1841), and as far as possible at the mid-point between censuses. It is hoped to microfilm further selections in the future. Rating records list all rated properties, usually naming both the owner and occupier and stating the rateable value and amount collected for each property. The many rate books not yet filmed will still be available

for study at the Archives Service in Leigh Town Hall.

**Other Documents:** Wigan census c.1811: this is an unusual MS. list of householders, occupations and household size for about half of the town (Market St., Wiend, Hallgate, Birch's Croft, Frog Lane, Wallgate, Millgate, Scholes, Warrington Lane, Hawarden's Square, Castle Yard, Club Row).

Wigan Window Tax assessment 1768: this is one of only two window tax assessments to have survived locally, and lists for each assessed householder the number of 'lights' (windows) and the rate at which they were assessed.

Wigan Borough Burgess Lists 1725-1804: these are lists of names of property owners admitted as burgesses of the borough. Only the burgesses could participate in the political life of the town, so admission was a considerable privilege.

A. I. N.

PARISH of *Aspull*

No. of Assessment.	Name of Occupier.	No. of Votes.	Name of Owner.	No. of Votes.	Description of Property rated, namely, whether Land, House, Tithe, Impropriety, appropriation of Tithes, Coal-Mine, saleable Underwood.	Name or Situation of Property.
27	<i>Rigby James</i>	1	<i>John Robt. Mearns</i>	1	<i>Land &amp; Building</i>	<i>Pennington Green</i>
28	<i>Higham Richard</i>	1	<i>Do</i>	1	<i>Cottage</i>	<i>Do</i>
29	<i>Kennedy Nathan</i>	1	<i>Do</i>	1	<i>Do</i>	<i>Do</i>
30	<i>Orrell John</i>	1	<i>Do</i>	1	<i>Do</i>	<i>Do</i>
31	<i>Marks Paul</i>	1	<i>Do</i>	1	<i>Do</i>	<i>Do</i>
32	<i>Marks Adam</i>	1	<i>Do</i>	1	<i>Do</i>	<i>Do</i>
33	<i>Milton Henry</i>	1	<i>Do</i>	5	<i>Do</i>	<i>Do</i>
34	<i>Clinscroph Mary</i>	1	<i>Mary Clinscroph</i>	1	<i>Land &amp; Building</i>	<i>Gullet</i>
35	<i>Dodd John</i>	1	<i>Colt Chelstone</i>	1	<i>Do</i>	<i>Do</i>
36	<i>Corrall John</i>	1	<i>Evan of Mr Rogers</i>	1	<i>Corn Mill &amp;c</i>	<i>Dickinson Mill</i>
37	<i>Kramer Jas.</i>		<i>Do</i>	5	<i>Cotton Factory</i>	<i>Do</i>
38	<i>Do</i>		<i>John Kramer</i>	6	<i>Do</i>	<i>Do</i>
39	<i>Do</i>		<i>Mr Bay Gaskell</i>	1	<i>Land</i>	<i>Do</i>

General Rate Book, Aspull township, 1838: cottages at Pennington Green, Gullet (Bolton Road), and the corn mill and cotton factory at Dickinson Mill. Note that the right to vote was tied to property ownership and occupancy.



ERNIE TABERNER continues his 'I Remember When' series with more motoring memories from the '20s and '30s

# I REMEMBER WHEN...

IT wasn't necessary to pass a driving test to obtain a driver's licence, whether for a motor cycle, car, or commercial vehicle or even heavy goods or passenger carrying vehicle. Although these latter classes required the applicant to be 21 years old or over, you simply filled in an application form and presented it along with the fee of five shillings (25p) at any main Post Office and it was handed to you over the counter. If it was an application to replace a lost licence, then the fee was reduced to one shilling (5p).

Neither was it necessary to produce an M.O.T. Test Certificate as tests had not yet been introduced, nor was insurance compulsory, although some owners would voluntarily insure their vehicle as matter of prudence against third party claims. There were no approved driving schools, and new drivers received their initial lessons instructed by a friend or relative on a quiet stretch of road.

There was no element of danger then as now because all the hazards the modern motorist has to deal with simply were non-existent during the 1920's and early 30's. The main ones were suddenly being confronted by a herd of cattle being driven by the drover just out of sight around the next bend, or a horse-drawn cart around the bend slewed half across the road whilst the horse munched contentedly at a neighbour's hedge during the driver's absence.

## No Road Sense

In built-up areas, where tram car tracks traversed the centre of the highway, a vehicle driver following the tram had to be aware when passing on the nearside (which was allowed) that the track ahead didn't veer to

the left, thus "pinching" his own vehicle between the tram and the kerb, whilst the driver in town had to be constantly aware of pedestrians who had absolutely no road sense whatsoever. Not really surprising since they had been accustomed only to horse-drawn traffic hitherto. They didn't even bother to look right before stepping off the pavement. There was no need because if a horse approached at walking speed it would just walk around the "obstacle" (should anyone step out), whilst if trotting, (or galloping) it would give its own warning of approach with the sound of its hooves on the cobbled road surface. Even were it one of the early cars it would usually make so much noise that heads would automatically turn. As children, if we heard a motor vehicle approaching, we used to stand and stare until it had passed or run indoors to tell our mothers that one had gone past. In much the same way as one would nowadays if a veteran "old crock" passed us (it could conceivably be the same one we kids ran indoors and reported 75 years ago!)

Because motor vehicles were few and far between, pedestrians tended to cross

"the horse road" haphazardly, but in due course they learned to respect the fact that drivers were unable to stop at will in those early days as brakes operated on the rear wheels only, and stopping distances were gauged in yards rather than feet as now.

## Adventure

True enough, every drive was an adventure compared with modern experiences and older drivers (although they didn't know it at the time) "never had it so good". My sympathy is with modern learner drivers who dread the day of their test in case they fail.

We never had to contend with "one way streets", "keep left" or "keep right" signs — there were none. Nor were there any traffic lights, whilst road marker cones were years away from being invented or necessary. There were no police patrol cars or traffic wardens, and it was possible to park a vehicle anywhere on the King's highway for a week if necessary without incurring a penalty. There was, however, an unwritten law that no-one obstructed the entrance to the Fire Station which also duplicated as the Ambulance garage. That same "law" applied to hospitals and school entrances. Additional benefits in those days were that there was no "tail gaiting" or "road rage", and it was always understood that uphill traffic had right of way above that approaching downhill, and that the lighter vehicle

should always give priority to a heavier vehicle, even to the extreme of remaining stationary at the summit of a hill to permit the heavy vehicle approaching uphill to continue unhindered.

## Assistance

Another "blessing" in those days worth noting was that should you break down no vehicle would pass in either direction without the driver offering assistance; nor would any cyclist or pedestrian pass without volunteering to even fetch the local mechanic out to you. In the event that you had "to abandon ship" it wasn't necessary to lock your car — you couldn't if you wanted to, because there weren't any locks on the doors in those days. And should you come back even a week later it would still be there, with your luggage still strapped to the rear luggage grid and your two gallons of spare petrol still in its container strapped to the step of the car. What a sad reflection on present day society that this mutual trust no longer applies, especially since poverty abounded and therefore there must have been much more pressure to pilfer then than now.

Little wonder we older drivers refer to the "Good Old Days".

© E. Taberner

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



# New Jersey tombstone leads to link with Wigan windmill

MRS. Joan Faiello of Hackettstown, New Jersey, U.S.A. together with her husband Sam, and a cousin John McHale, have been researching her family history. One of Joan's great grandmothers was Mary Ann Lamb, born in 1864, one of eight children of Daniel Lamb (1835-1909), a farmer of Gloucester County, New Jersey. Daniel's grandfather, also Daniel Lamb (1791-1867) was the founder of their family and had been a prominent corn miller, farmer, manufacturer and merchant in the South Western part of New Jersey. Diligent searching of old records in the state capital Trenton and elsewhere showed that Daniel had been an immigrant, born in England, and that his age in 1850 was 59.

His 1867 death certificate showed that he died in

Blackwood, New Jersey, and further searching revealed his grave in the churchyard of the Blackwood Presbyterian Church, together with the graves of several other members of the Lamb family. Daniel's gravestone was badly weathered and the inscription was barely legible; but by applying chalk it was eventually partially deciphered and not only confirmed Daniel's date of birth as August 1791 but also recorded that his place of birth was Wigan, Lancashire, England. The family then employed a genealogist in England to follow up this finding. They found that Daniel Lamb was indeed baptised at Wigan Parish Church in 1791, that his parents were James Lamb, miller, and Mary Clitheroe and that a Daniel Lamb had married Catherine Wallace at Deane near Bolton in 1809, although it was

not certain at that time that this was the same Daniel Lamb.

## Remarkable Coincidence

In June 1994 a remarkable coincidence occurred. Joan and Sam Faiello were holidaying in England and had been visiting relatives of Sam's in West Kirby. They then visited Wigan to see some of Joan's ancestral locations and called in at the History Shop where they picked up a number of leaflets including a few issues of *Past Forward*. On the way home Joan was looking through *Past Forward* No. 6, which had only recently been published, when she suddenly saw my article on the Scholes Windmill and realised that her ancestor Daniel Lamb was a member of the family which owned the windmill. As recorded in *Past Forward* No. 6 Daniel in fact sold his share in the windmill to his elder brother William in 1817, for £130. Until recently nothing more was known of the activities of Daniel after that date, but it now seems clear that he used the £130 to emigrate with his family to the United States.

## Emigrated in 1818

American records show that indeed Daniel emigrated in 1818 and initially settled in Somerset County, New Jersey. One of his first enterprises was to rebuild a windmill on a 220 acre farm which he bought in Gloucester City near the Delaware River. In an advertisement in a local newspaper in 1823 he announced that he was ready to receive grain for grinding "for market or family use". He also referred to his "long experience in windmills". In 1828 (the year in which he was granted United States citizenship) he sold his windmill and bought a water mill on Almonesson Creek, some distance to the South of Gloucester City. Later he converted the mill to a cotton factory. He was clearly a vigorous and enterprising man; he prospered steadily and built homes for his employees, becoming one of the county's largest landowners. The community in fact became known as "Lambstown" and included shops, a dye-house, a

shoe factory, blacksmith's shop etc. By mid-century, however, Lambstown became generally known as Almonesson, reverting to the original Indian name for the area.

## Farming

Later in the 1840's Daniel's factory was destroyed in a flood after which he confined his activities to farming. His sons and grandsons also mostly became farmers in nearby townships. In fact Daniel and Catherine and their sons James and John (also born in Lancashire) left a considerable tree of descendants throughout Gloucester and Camden counties in New Jersey. Daniel also served several terms of office on his local Township committee. His wife Catherine died at Blackwood in 1871 aged 83. Much of the information on the family's activities is recorded in local history publications at the Gloucester County Historical Library in Woodbury, New Jersey.

Thus the deciphering of the inscription on a weathered gravestone in Blackwood, New Jersey, followed by the fortunate finding in the Wigan History Shop not only filled in a hitherto puzzling gap in the Lamb family history in Wigan, but opened up a whole new area of family history in the United States.

David Lamb  
Windermere, Cumbria



Grave of Daniel Lamb (1791-1867) in Blackwood Cemetery, New Jersey

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THIS was the entry for 14 May 1869 in the log-book of a school in Lamberhead Green, situated about three miles west of Wigan. The school was named the 'Atherton Wesleyan Methodist School' after William Atherton, a local benefactor. It was part of what is now known as the Trinity Methodist Church buildings in Queen Street. School log-books from the Victorian era present a fascinating and valuable insight, not only of the everyday running of the schools at the time, but of wider local and even national events and issues. Education was not compulsory so many children remained illiterate. Others worked in the mornings in the local mines or mills and attended lessons only in the afternoons. Poorer, working class areas were often served by schools founded by churches or other local benefactors.

William Lord, who was born in Bacup, was appointed 'master' at the school in January 1865 when he was only 23 years old. His log-book entries show him to be a humane and humorous young man who empathised strongly with the people of this tough village, inhabited in the main by families of miners and mill workers who struggled to come to terms with their harsh existence. Mr. Lord was the sole teacher of up to two hundred children. He employed pupil teachers — paid 2s. (10p) daily — who arrived at school early in the morning to learn lessons which were then imparted to the children later in the day. Lessons included: reading, writing, arithmetic, scripture, gymnasium, singing (especially temperance songs), sewing and 'gallery' lessons on a variety of subjects, such as, in 1866, 'the peacock'. This represented a surprisingly varied curriculum.

A sewing mistress was

*"I amused the children this dinnertime by parading on the velocipede"*

employed in the afternoons. Mr. Lord objected to the large amount of time the girls devoted to sewing, stating in 1865:

*"Some of the parents are dissatisfied with the "small" amount of time devoted to sewing. We take every afternoon in the week... this makes the girls very backward in other subjects"*

This is an unexpectedly liberal statement. Male, Victorian schoolmasters were not usually associated with the cause of gender equality in education. The salary of £2. 10s. (£2.50) per quarter does not appear to have promoted any feelings of loyalty or sense of vocation among the sewing mistresses, as there seems to have been a succession of incumbents, all

of whom were inclined to frequent absences and a general lack of professional enthusiasm. The situation was remedied in 1870 when he appointed his newly wedded wife to the position.

The tedium of daily school life was lightened in various ways. A swing was erected in the playground for the girls to use during their breaks. The boys played cricket and marbles, sometimes with the teacher participating. On one occasion he was so involved in the game he forgot the time, prompting this comment:

*"Played with boys at marbles, and unconsciously took too much time in play-time"*

A magic lantern show raised £1 in 1870. 'All Fools

Day' was celebrated and enjoyed by teacher and pupils.

We gain some insight to William Lord's personal life and sense of humour in the following entries:

*"13 April 1870: Arranged for an assistant to take school tomorrow as I purpose being away on business, perhaps rather important"*

*"14 April 1870: My wedding day"*

These entries were duly followed nine months later by:

*"13 January 1871: My son was born. No sewing"*

(Did he really expect his wife, the recently appointed sewing mistress, to work on the day she gave birth? I am sure he did not). Mary Jane Lord was born in Orrell. They named their son William Thorburn.

The log-book gives some indication of the harsh life endured by the inhabitants of Lamberhead Green. There are frequent mentions of strikes in the local mines but only in the context of their affecting attendance at the school. Many mining accidents are also chronicled; for example:

*"21 December 1868: Dreadful colliery explosion, some of the children have lost their fathers"*

Such explosions were spectacular and received much publicity. Most mining deaths, however were occasioned by rock falls which caused single fatalities — less dramatic but no less devastating for the families concerned. Surely there can be few more poignant comments on the subject than the following:

*"16 February 1870: The father of one of our little boys — Daniel Houghton — was killed today. He is now in the class and knows nothing of it"*

Outbreaks of contagious diseases such as scarlet fever

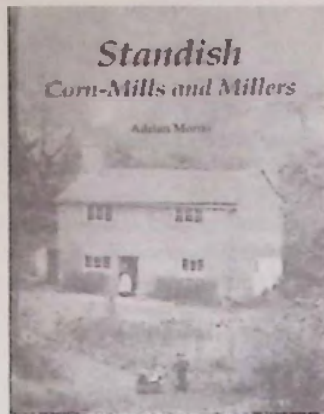


Trinity Methodist buildings, Queen Street, Orrell, near Wigan. Formerly the Lamberhead Green Atherton Wesleyan Methodist School.

continued on page 8



# Book Reviews



**Standish Corn-mills and Millers** by Adrian Morris. Landy Publishing. 1995 (52 pages) ISBN 1 872895 27 1. Price £6.00.

THIS little work is a history of two watermills in Standish, namely, Standish Hall Mill on Mill Brook in Einup Wood, and Jolly Mill on the Douglas near the Boar's Head Inn.

The general reader who is interested in local history might be tempted to pass over this book as being too specialised for him or her. This would be a mistake, partly because of the general historical background information contained in

the work, but mainly because any mental picture of society before the industrial revolution would be incomplete without details of the important role played by watermills in the economy.

Watermills were numerous. The Domesday Book, for example, lists one mill for approximately every fifty households; and Yates map of Lancashire (published in 1786) shows one about every quarter of a mile on the upper reaches of the Douglas. They were not only used for grinding corn; any kind of operation involving machinery would probably be done in a mill, because moving water was the main source of power. There were mills for cleaning and thickening woollen cloth, mills for grinding logs and flint and mills for driving forge hammers and working industrial bellows. There are even some rare examples of watermills pulling cages up mineshafts. We may have one of these locally in the Arley Mill on the Douglas at Blackrod, which probably worked the cages of the adjacent Arley Hall Colliery.

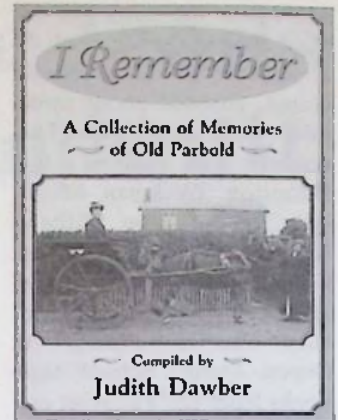
The earliest surviving written mention of a watermill in the

Standish area appears in a deed of 1230 AD, which refers to a mill at Duxbury, at that time in Standish parish. The Rector of Wigan's charter of freedom to the burgesses of that town, granted in 1246, allowed them to grind twenty measure of corn without payment at his mill, which was probably situated at the bottom of Millgate. Of the two mills whose histories are recorded in this book, permission to build the Jolly Mill was granted in 1347/8, and the Standish Hall Mill was in existence by 1394.

A description of the mechanics of watermills is given, but it is not too technical, and can be appreciated by the general reader. The various parts of the mill buildings are also described, together with the different types of waterwheels. There is information on the status of the miller in the community, his relationship with his customers and the lord of the manor, and his sometimes unenviable reputation.

The histories of the two commills are made more interesting by the fact that the names and family details of the millers are known from contemporary documents from the early eighteenth century until the mills stopped grinding corn, about 1870 in the case of the Standish Hall Mill, and about 1920 in the case of the Jolly Mill.

The book is illustrated with photographs and plans, and is on sale at the History Shop. B.B.



**I Remember: A Collection of Memories of Old Parbold.** Compiled by Judith Dawber. Published by the author. ISBN 0952 7201 08 (124 pages) £5.95.

IN her introduction the editor describes this book as "a collection of reminiscences about Parbold during the first sixty years of the twentieth century...The chapters are arranged in loose chronological order, irrespective of social class, and some cross references are provided to show how people were linked together". The contributions are of varying length. The advantage of such a compilation is that it enables the reader to see the village from different angles. The disadvantage is that sometimes it can appear disjointed and bitty.

*continued on page 9*

*"I amused the children this dinnertime by parading on the velocipede"*

*continued from page 7*

were common. These two entries on consecutive days give an indication of the severity of the illnesses:

"20 November 1867: I find that many children are ill. One at school last Thursday now dead".

"21 November 1867: Another boy died suddenly".

Communications in the second half of the 19th century were steadily improving. The inhabitants of Lamberhead Green must have been well aware of national political events. The 1868 General Election caused some distraction as many pupils appear to have been more interested in Gladstone's campaign than in their school work.

"23 October 1868: Half holiday as many were going to town to hear Mr. Gladstone".

"19 November 1868: Obligated to give up night school on account of Liberal demonstration and meeting".

The important Forster Education Act of 1870,

responsible for the widening of educational opportunities, is dismissed with only one entry:

"28 November 1870: We are to fill up the returns relating to the Elementary Education Act 1870 before the first day of December".

We know from inspection reports that William Lord was a good teacher, who raised the educational standards of the school as well as the number of attending pupils. His last entry in the log-book, on 21 December 1871, sums up this confident, successful young teacher:

"This day concludes my career as teacher for the present. This is my first

*school which I have taught for seven years. I feel very grateful for the success which I have had here. If my successor — my fellow pupil teacher — and friend Mr. John Hoyle can improve on what I have done he will have little cause to regret coming to Lamberhead Green".*

Adrian Morris  
91 Longbrook  
Shevington  
Wigan

The 'Atherton Wesley Methodist School' log-book is located in the Archives at Leigh Town Hall. For a review of Adrian's book, 'Standish Corn-Mills and Millers', see above. Ed.



**I Remember:  
A Collection of  
Memories of  
Old Parbold**

continued from page 8

This is not a conventional village history. Anyone who is looking for such a history of Parbold should read J.M. Virgoe's excellent *History of Parbold*, published by Carnegie Press in 1994. **I Remember** is a collection of human anecdotes and vignettes that are of interest to the general reader as well as the amateur historian. Here are the husband and wife who both overcame physical handicaps to play a leading part in village life; the milkman who, in the course of his round, did voluntary jobs for his customers such as helping with the washing-up, or turning an invalid over in bed, and the businessman who insisted that the ladies of his household sewed the pages of his newspaper together down the centre before he read it.

Reminiscences such as these can provide details of daily life in the past which cannot be obtained elsewhere. For example, on old maps isolated cottages can often be seen, situated in the middle of fields or at the end of lonely tracks. How did the inhabitants manage to find their way home after dark? One of the contributors to this book explains how the difficulties might be overcome.

"Entering Bradshaw Lane was quite an adventure. It was, to put it mildly, a spooky sort of place; mist, fog, no lights and rough ground. Steel-tired carts made grooves at the sides, the middle being raised. It was quite simple to keep one's bearing by walking with one foot in the cart track and one foot on the raised centre of the road. Douglas Dale gates were across the end of the lane, in line with the gate into the field, so it was essential to choose the right gate. We sometimes had to rescue walkers by going out with oil lanterns. We could hear their shouts for help when they had accidentally walked into the field. When I was expected home, I was guided by an oil lamp which my family hung outside the house: a welcome sight after my journey!"

Apart from being of interest to the general reader, there is much of interest for the local historian. For example the book contains what is probably the only published descrip-

tion of work in local quarries.

Parbold was not a typical village in this period. Apart from agriculture, other forms of economic activity included basket manufacture, quarrying, flour milling and boatbuilding. Wigan business families such as the Mellings of Ince Forge, the Ainscoughs of Pendlebury's department store, and the Carringtons of Carrington Forge were beginning to make their homes there. The families of boat people from the Leeds and Liverpool Canal lived there, either temporarily or permanently. And then there were the tourists. The chief attraction for them was the Delph Tea Gardens which contained woodland walks, a boating lake, sports fields; and a motor cycle race track. Sometimes two hundred people at a time would be having tea in the cafe at the gardens.

But in spite of all this activity, restricted markets, the seasonal nature of some employment and the distance from specialists and professionals, meant that many of the inhabitants had more than one occupation. For example, there was Jim Halton who made baskets and hampers, repaired bicycles and cut hair; and Fred Berry who ran an auctioneers business and also acted as the local dentist.

As might be expected, some of the contributions are more interesting than others. One of the more absorbing accounts is that of Joan Wilson (nee Murphy) which contains the following passage:

"I was about eight years old when, on a cold day in November, the School Board Man made his weekly visit to the school. Sometimes he came to chase the truants, sometimes to "look you over". He was a round man with a very red face and dribbling jowels. He was reminiscent of Dickens' Mr. Bumble, and we called him "Slaver-chops". He came into school before dinner, and before puffing and blowing he made his ever-remembered announcement, "The Murphys can go home a bit early today: their father's dead!"

Obviously the book will be of special interest to those who live or have lived in Parbold. It increases one's interest if one knows where Fairhurst Hall is, or can picture "the first (cottage) in the row after the Stocks Tavern in Mill Lane", but having no first-hand knowledge of Parbold will not prevent any reader from enjoying this book.

**I Remember** is on sale at the History Shop. B.B.

# THANK YOU!

A big thank-you to all of you who took the trouble to fill in a form and send it back. And there were plenty of you, nearly 150 replies to date from all over the world, a fantastic response. Each and every sheet will be read and all your comments and suggestions considered. This long process is by no means complete, and forms are still coming in. In our next issue there will be a full report on the survey.

Meanwhile those of you who visit the History Shop will notice another questionnaire available. This is a detailed visitor survey for our main venue. I'm sorry that it is yet another form to fill in, but these surveys are our only real way of finding out how we are doing, and which areas we need to improve upon.

If you do visit the History Shop in the next month could you please help us by taking a few minutes to fill in this form.

As a small inducement there will be a draw at the end of the survey period and prizes of luxury boxes of biscuits have been supplied by the local NORMID store before it closed in January.

## Really LANCASHIRE

*A Magazine for the Red Rose County*

A new quarterly magazine with the emphasis on LANCASHIRE ..... history, dialect, humour, families, books, sport, music, people, pride. The editor and publisher is Bob Dobson, who also buys, sells and searches for secondhand LANCASHIRE books, organises Secondhand Book Fairs throughout LANCASHIRE and publishes new LANCASHIRE - interest history & dialect books.

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Blackpool FY3 0BU  
Tel/Fax 01253 895678

*Bob Dobson*

P.S. Wigan Secondhand Book Fair  
is on Sunday 2nd June 1996,  
10am to 4.30pm at t'Mill at t'pier.





Extracts from the autobiography of William Evans (born 1900) published in *Past Forward II* have stimulated a lot of interest from older Wiganers, and several people have telephoned to thank us for printing such a vivid account of life in Scholes in the early years of

the century, as well as the evocative aerial photograph showing the Water Heyes neighbourhood where the Evans family lived (see letter p18). We therefore continue William's story in this issue, concentrating mainly on his school days.

# Hard times in Edwardian Wigan

At five my older brother Walter and sister Laura, took me to school [St George's C.E. School] and put me into the babies class. It wasn't long before I realised how small I was in comparison with the other kids. This seemed to be a signal for the others to pick on me, and call me names, and I got plenty of thumps and kicks too. It seemed they just hated anybody who was small and thin, since I had not the heart or strength to fight back, the only thing I could do was to try to keep away from the others as much as possible. I particularly dreaded playtime coming, when I did have to mix with the others, nobody was on my side, and they were all too rough for me. If anyone gave me a shove, which they often did, I just fell over. I used to go into a corner, there I would have two walls for a shield, and since I could barely stand up, they offered some support, plus keeping me out of the draught.

## Back Number

As regards school, I was a back number, in fact I knew nothing. Not having had any blocks, beads or toys of any description, I could not count or anything. This was not surprising, since neither mother nor father had much in the way of education, and not very helpful types, even if they had been. Strangely all the others seemed to be very clever, if the teacher asked them something, they always seemed to know it. I was always terrified in case she asked me something, for I knew only too well that I would not have the answer, always very relieved if she didn't ask me. Needless to say I did not want to go to school, and my older brother and sister would run off and leave me to go by myself. I would go crying my heart out all the way. When mother got to know of this, she made them take me, so they had to drag me behind, evidently on the way to school, some children who had started out with a sandwich to eat on the way, had flung most of it away. So the two of them had been picking it up and sharing it between them. I

wondered why they were more eager to go to school than I was. Both of them knew what they would be in for, if our mother found out. They were both very afraid of my telling our mother, and that was why they left me. Now they had to let me in on their secret, and slowly the tears dried away, and there were the three of us. The bread that was thrown away was shared between us, and little as it was I did feel much brighter, but it takes quite a lot to satisfy a child who has been almost starved over a long period of time.

## Beatings

We were now scouring all the streets, as the children go along to school. This was at that time considered to be the depths of degradation, and it was inevitable that mother would get to know sooner or later. When she heard the rumour, she left us in no doubt what would happen next time, if she heard anymore about it. They were only telling her, so she would do something about it, but she would have none of it, and said we were just greedy, and the beatings were an everyday occurrence. She never forgot the beatings and you had no trousers for protection either. Then again, you may as well tell a cat to stop looking for mice.

As we grew a bit older, and were a little more filled with what we could find, we became more arful, and knew who was in the habit of

throwing bread out to the birds, so we used to wait, and then as soon as the door closed, we would pounce. They didn't have a chance, I'd really like to know what the birds thought?

By now another one was ready for school, and most probably another one for the cradle. So we had to split into two groups, I had to take the new recruit. Then it was a case of who could get out first in the morning. But sometimes it was better being late, since the later kids hadn't as much time to eat it, and we did much better. The little extra this provided, didn't help my structure much, but managed to keep me within certain limits, and I improved in school, and became a little more attentive and brighter, and progressed somewhat. Eventually another one was starting school, I'd forgotten to tell you who my new recruit was — Alice, and now the latest one was a boy — Arthur. So the last three kept together somewhat. Since the amount of bread being thrown away was limited, we had to find other ways.

Some of the other kids used to bring a slice of bread for a playtime snack, and we spotted him with his lunch in a piece of paper. We waited until he unwrapped it, and was just about to eat it, then one of us gave his elbow a jolt, and the other one caught it before it hit the ground. Sometimes, we just took it

out of his hand and went off in opposite directions. He didn't know who to go after and by then it didn't matter. It most probably had been eaten anyway.

We didn't always go unscathed, but evidently we thought it was worth it.

## Threadbare

We hadn't the brains to know we were being watched by everybody, since anyone could see with half an eye what was wrong, and many people used to give us a slice of bread, which was a Godsend. We still had nothing to play with, so at playtime we had no football-cards, no marbles, the most we got were buttons, to play flit button, and a few cigarette cards if we were lucky. We could only watch the others play marbles at 50 for half a penny, but to us that was an undreamed amount of wealth. Our clothes were a disgrace to anybody's way of thinking, as most were given to us by neighbours, when they had done with them, usually worn out and threadbare, only fit for the rag-cart and none of them fit anyway. Mother just cut them down and left the raw edge, which didn't alter the width. Most were for adults, since children wore them out completely. Most would wrap around you at least four times.

Braces or suspenders was a thing we did not possess, we had string or some old webbing, off some old chair seat, to hold up what we called pants. When there were no more old clothes forthcoming we had to depend on a few bought from the jumble sale, which were usually threadbare.

## Photograph Taken

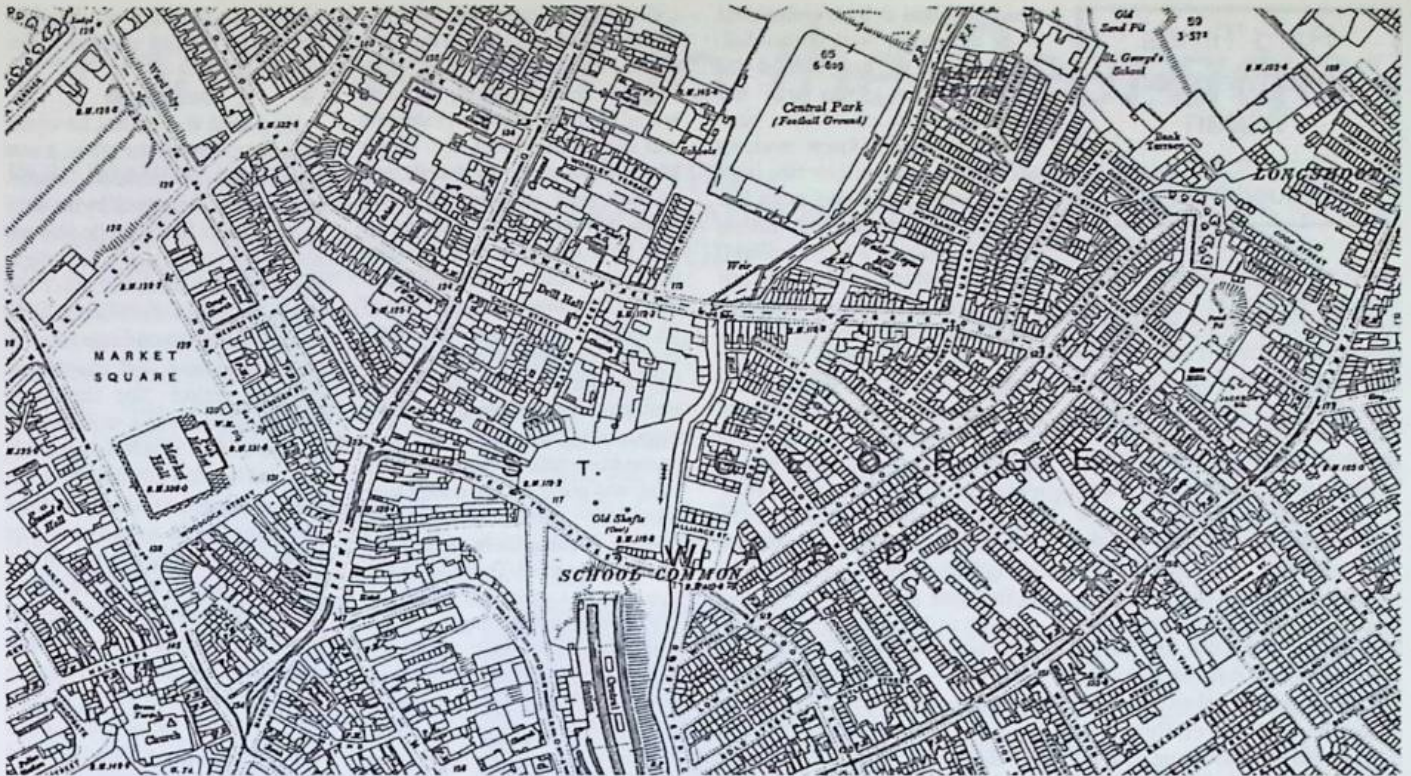
When we had our photograph taken, in the backyard, dad was a bit of an amateur photographer in his spare time. We all had decent clothes on, and were too bewildered to be able to keep our minds on the camera. We were too busy staring at ourselves, and trying to sort out what was the matter. Our enjoyment was short lived. As soon as the picture was taken, we had to



*The Evans family c.1917: back row - Alice, William (author), Walter, Arthur (James), Herbert (Bert); front row - Laura, Mr. Evans (father), Frederick, Mrs. Evans (mother), Rose, George.*

*continued on page 11*





St. George's Ward, Wigan, 1908

get back into the rags once again, and we never saw the clothes again. Where they came from is anybody's guess.

Life had its funny side, and one thing we learned was to appreciate the full value of every little thing we had. Many times the neighbours, seeing how thin we all were, brought things to mother for the children, but I'm afraid we saw precious little of any of it. The shops used to sell us bread when it was three days old, at a penny a loaf, these were the only loaves we bought; little wonder that the bread we found thrown in the street, was better than we got at home. Margarine was 4 pence a pound, and we had to go a long way for it. Since the Maypole [Maypole Dairy Co., which had shops at 147 and 153 Scholes] was the only place you could get it at that price. When ever we had jam, once in a long while for a change, we always had the cheapest, mixed fruit it was called, for want of a better name. At that time it was a two pound jar for 6 pence, and if you took the stones and pits out of it, you would be left with only one third jar. If we had chips for dinner, it was always half a pennyworth between two of us, and then we only got half a slice of bread. Nobody, but nobody had heard of a half a pennyworth of chips between two for dinner, but then we were the exception.

#### Peelings

When mother got a spare time job, of washing for somebody once every two weeks, it meant she was away at dinner time, if you could call it that. Then dad was left in charge, and he made a mistake of letting us have a whole pennyworth of chips each! Something was wrong with his arithmetic, but we thought he had suddenly become a philanthropist, so we did not say a thing. We were looking forward to the next time mother was away again. Sad to say we were once again, back to half portions, the same old way. Sometimes we had mashed potatoes, carrots and turnips, all together, it wasn't too bad, but there never was enough. On these occasions they all had to be peeled of course, so when we got the chance, we used to try to get the peelings, and put them on the bar in front of the fire to roast, like you would with chestnuts at Christmas. However if we were caught, dad would knock them all into the fire, and give us all a wallop besides. When that happened he thought that was the end, but we just kept on eating them raw.

#### Spoiled For Choice

As I said, we did not get any spending money, not even a penny or anything. Most other kids did, and if by any chance, we did get a halfpenny, for going an errand for somebody, it was taken off us. The

excuse was to buy bread, we soon learned that the best policy was to keep it to ourselves. If you don't tell anyone, then they don't know or take it off you. By this method I managed to get a penny one day, and did not tell mother, this was the height of deception, had mother known, I would have been skinned alive. It was a Saturday, and I knew a shop that sold many things for a ha'penny. The shop happened to be only 200 yards away, so much the better, there was a football match on at the time, and people going to it from all directions. I just went along in the swim of things. The shop was on a corner, and all the football crowd had to go past it. People were continuously going in and out for cigarettes, tobacco or matches. There were people also selling things on the corner, and they were shouting their wares, and I was kind of fascinated by the whole scene, so I stood there for a while watching the comings and goings. After I had been there a while, I just pushed off into the shop, they had lengths of spanish toffee, humbugs, mint balls and sweet cigarettes, also lemonade crystals, aniseed balls and a whole host of other things. I was spoiled for choice, I just could not make up my mind. I had my foot on the doorstep, then I changed my mind. I thought it would be easy, but it wasn't. I went along to watch the

chap who was selling something for a while, then I made my mind up, and went back to the shop again, only to have the same dilemma again.

I just couldn't decide, so backward and forward I went, during one of these excursions, I happened to be watching this chap and my hand was aching from clutching my coin too tight, so I opened my hand to ease it and it just slipped out. There was a grate and down it went, faster than I am telling you. Well the bottom of my world just fell out. I was heart-broken to say the least, then the tears started to flow, and I couldn't seem to stop. All I could do was go home and try to dry my eyes. I couldn't tell mother, so that was double punishment.

#### The Sweet Shop

Most of the families in the street were fairly large, and most if not all did get a Saturday penny or half-penny or even some got two pennies. On this particular Saturday, there would be about six of us playing together. Most of the kids had already spent theirs. Some even on the night before, but one lad had two pence. So we hung on to him, to try to persuade him to spend it on sweets, so that way we may get one. You could get so many for halfpenny. Eventually he dashed off with us all in hot pursuit to the

*continued on page 12*



## Hard Times in Edwardian Wigan

continued from p11

sweet shop. After a lot of hesitation, he decided to buy a 'lucky turnover'. They were horseshoe in shape, and made of a kind of pink spongy stuff, about an inch deep and the top is made of a very hard icing sugar, which acts as a lid. The inside is hollow, and some small object is inside wrapped in paper. It was these small objects that were the real fascination for him, not the sweets at all.

After he bought it, he made a mad dash to his own front door, stepped up to open it, and we all followed inside, then he separated the lid from the other part and found the small object. He was so happy with this little thing, that he did not care who got the rest of it. How we split it up between us, I can't remember, but I know we ate it up between us somehow, and I don't remember us fighting over it or anything. Soon after he dashed off again, with us on his heels, he then bought another one, and dashed back home again. We had to go across a main street, both ways, had the traffic been what it is today, we would have been killed for sure. We never even bothered to look. Then the same thing happened to the second one, then a third, then a fourth and that was that. All his money was gone. He had kept all the little toys, and we had eaten all the sweets.

### Always At The Pub

I'd be about eight years old now, and although the structure had made little progress if any, the brain was fast catching up on the other kids. Mother had seemed to get past the idea of having the house nice and clean, the way it was when I was a baby, so far as I can remember. How could she? As soon as one came out of the cradle, there was another one in it. Dad seemed to be always at the pub. He only came home when he was hungry, or they had called time, this only made matters worse, and we knew that another mouth to feed was not very helpful.

....

About this time in school, we were all moved up into a higher

class, so I was at least considered to be of average. Well not so dull, as to need to stay behind for another year. I was still the smallest in the class, by a very long way. This I knew nothing about until I saw one or two boys in the class, who had been left behind. I felt awful, just thinking about it, should I have suffered that misfortune. They did not seem too bothered, and were not in the least concerned.

### Conscience

When we at last were settled down the desks were in pairs, two to a desk. I was thrown with one of the boys, kept back from the last class. We were kind of buddies, although he was a year older, and a whole lot bigger than me. We got along fairly well, as we both lived in the same street. This new class seemed to be child's play to me, and proved that not only had I caught up with the rest, but I was fast passing them by. When we had sums, we had six, and allowed five minutes for each one, that was half an hour for them all. Well I did not get them all right for a start, but I always had about five minutes to spare, and this gave me time to run over them again, to see if I had made any mistakes. Later I could get six right out of six, and still have five minutes left at the end. Since I was the only one getting all six right, all the time, my buddy gleaned that all he needed to do, was just copy what I had done. I resented this as it was cheating, but then he gave me his lunch, that oiled the wheels of my conscience somewhat. Now there were two of us, getting all six sums right, all the time. I think the teacher wondered how it happened, since he had been kept back for being dull, and now had suddenly become so clever all at once. If she did, she did not say anything to us, and let it go at that.

No doubt she didn't want to keep him back another year, and he was really pleased with his progress, and so was his mother. It wasn't too long before someone was copying off him, and he had to explain that he couldn't do it until I'd worked it out, so then everybody was copying off every one else.

### Slice Of Bread

By this route, I was getting three or four slices of bread every time we had sums, and nothing when we didn't. They would just eat it themselves. Any way I did have two or three regulars, who brought me

a slice of bread most days, whether we had sums or not. Up to this time we had two boys in the class, who seemed a bit better off, than the rest of us. They were better dressed and had better shoes etc. These two boys sat at the same desk, and as they were carrying all before them, they were made monitors. At that time it was a very enviable position to the children, since it made them superior to the rest of us, and it appeared that they couldn't possibly be caught up by us. Now by all the copying, half of the class were getting all the sums right, and left them standing, being in the front desk, they couldn't see what was going on. No matter how hard they tried, and with the teacher chaffing them, they could not catch up to us. The teacher was at a loss to know who was smart and who was dull, but she knew that the two monitors hadn't suddenly become dull all at once. I used to eat these sandwiches while I was doing my lessons, and became a master at chewing bread without anybody being aware of it. Not once did I get caught.

It was no part of my make-up to want to be at the head of the class, a few slices of bread was far more important to me. I wanted to be clever, but not conspicuous, anybody could have the laurels. I didn't care.

We had at times to go to a different classroom, for other lessons, of a specific nature, such as painting or grammar, and one day when we changed classes, instead of there being just two of us at a desk, they were long desks, to seat about six. These long desks had a shelf underneath for your lunch or whatever you had, to keep it out of the way. I was seated next to a boy who lived quite a long way from the school, so he had to bring his lunch with him. Some boys brought me a lunch and we put it on the shelf, if I could not feel anything close by me, my hand would go farther afield, until it hit something. It proved to be a school bag, the type with a flap over, and a short leather strap to fasten with a buckle. There was a smaller compartment on the outside, so getting into this bag, would be quite difficult. All I had was my left hand, since I had to use my right hand to do the work lessons. The first step was to make sure the bag was facing me, that would make it a lot easier and less noticeable. At that moment he had knocked something on the floor, and had to

bend down to pick it up, and then he noticed the bag was facing me, instead of him.

### The Banana

He pulled it over, but he could have saved himself the effort, it was right back in position, almost before he he was back in his seat. To eat a lad's lunch while you are sitting next to him, is a bit rough, but it did not seem to bother me much. It did not seem like stealing at all. It seemed as though I had to be fed somehow, and which way did not matter. The time was running short, and it will soon be noontime, and he will just grab his bag, and be off. I did manage to get the bag open, and feel around, he had some bread wrapped up, an apple and a banana. I pushed the apple and banana to one side to try to get hold of the bread. It seemed to be wedged tight in the bag, and it wouldn't unwrap. Then I tried to break the paper, but that would not give either. It must have been wrapped in cloth, so I had to leave that and try something a little easier. The apple was out of the question, since I had to get it out, that only left the banana. The banana proved a bit of a struggle, with only one hand, and the left one at that. Eventually I got it under way, and gradually bit by bit, I managed to keep taking pieces off the banana. After I had eaten it all, I managed to put the bag flap back and buckle it up again. What he said when he saw the banana skin, could be anybody's guess, perhaps he did not like bananas?

At this time, I would be about 10 years old, and things had changed very little at home. I had made fairly good progress in school, here I should say I would be at the top of the class, if I had been given a fair chance. Nobody could pass me in Arithmetic or English, with English I don't think we got any marks for it. In fact I was so fast at this, that I could give the teacher the answer, before she could finish writing it on the board. She even told me to stop it, as my hand shot up first at every word.

We still had three years to go, and I was fast getting ahead from others. The brain was travelling much faster, and when all the class moved higher, I'd still only have the same competitors to beat. Naturally all being well, by the time I was ready to leave school at 13, I would be well ahead of the other students.

End of Part 2



# From the pit to the Peerage:

IN the July 1945 General Election, the Labour Party swept into power with 393 seats to the Conservatives 213. One of Prime Minister Attlee's first appointments was that of Gordon Macdonald to be the 63rd Governor of Newfoundland and the Dependancies, and it was accompanied by a K.M.C.G. which carried the dignity of a knighthood.

Gordon Macdonald was born on 27 May 1888 in Gwaenysgor, a hamlet near Prestatyn in North Wales, the son of Thomas and Mary Macdonald. During the latter part of the 19th century there was an influx of mining families into Lancashire looking for the chance to earn a living and when Gordon was a child the family lived in North Street, Stubshaw Cross, Ashton-in-Makerfield. With his two brothers, Gordon attended St. Luke's Elementary School, leaving as the custom was then at the age of 13 to work in the coal mines. He began work at Bryn Hall Colliery in Bamfurlong, earning 10s. (50p) for a six-day, 54 hour week. When his father died in 1903 the family was so poor that his mother had to apply to the Guardians of the Poor for assistance.

Early in life Gordon became interested in union activities and the Labour movement and was selected for further education at the Central Labour College, Ruskin Hall, Oxford University. In 1913, he married Mary Lewis of Blaenau Festiniog, the union producing four children. After serving on the County Wages Board and on the National Executive of the Mining Federation of Great Britain during the 1921 strike, he was appointed miners' agent for Skelmersdale and St. Helens, which necessitated the family moving to Orrell. When Stephen Walsh resigned as M.P. for Ince in 1929 because of ill-health, Gordon Macdonald was an automatic choice as Labour candidate, and in June of the same year he was returned with a

## THE GORDON MACDONALD STORY

majority of 16,831. He made an immediate impact on the House of Commons and his maiden speech drew compliments from the opposition for its sincerity and shrewdness.

In 1942, Mr. Macdonald was offered and accepted the post of Regional Controller for Lancashire, Cheshire and North Wales, vacating his



*Gordon and Mary Macdonald in the early years of marriage, c. 1914*

Parliamentary seat by taking the Chiltern Hundreds.

The news was not well received in his constituency, the belief being that he was acting out of self-interest. However, the Manchester Guardian reported on 11 July 1942. "It is a good thing for the Government's coal plans but it is a bad thing for the House of Commons. Here is a Lancashire man who is also one of the outstanding figures in the Labour Party He will be greatly missed at Westminster... He has accepted his new post as I happen to know only because he believes he owes it to the miners from whom he sprung".

He took up the post of Governor of Newfoundland in March 1946,

accompanied by his wife and youngest daughter Glenys. His terms of reference were to persuade the Newfoundland politicians to join with Canada. When this was accomplished in 1949, Sir Gordon returned to England where he was appointed Postmaster General and raised to the peerage. After the fall of the Attlee government in 1951, Lord Macdonald became the National Governor of the BBC for Wales. The choice was a popular one for Lord Macdonald had a perfect command of the Welsh language and an unrivalled knowledge of Welsh history and traditions.

As a leading Congregationalist, Lord Macdonald was well-known as a preacher, and as a teetotaller and non-smoker he was a past president of the Band of Hope Union; he was also president of the North-West Society of the Blind. Whilst living in Orrell he enjoyed football and supported Wigan Rugby club, but his greatest hobby was books. Wherever he lived he always had an extensive library.

Lord Macdonald died on 20 January 1966. Of the many tributes, none were more sincere than those paid at the Ashton-in-Makerfield Council meeting where the chairman, Mr. R.H. Jones referred to him as a great gentleman and one of Ashton's most eminent sons.

*I drove down to Gwaenysgor in 1988, the centenary of his birth, and spoke to people who still remembered him. He had returned several times to the village of his birth. I had hoped to find his grave but his remains had been cremated and his ashes scattered on the hills overlooking the village — the well-remembered hills.*

**James Fairhurst,  
36 Tatton Drive  
Ashton-in-Makerfield.**



Following on from Mrs. Marjorie Bryden's interesting 'Memories of Hindley' (Past Forward Nine), here are some more memories:

# More memories of Hindley

I WONDER how many of you remember the shops round the Bird i' th Hand? On three corners there was St. Peter's School, St. Peter's Church and cenotaph and the Bird i' th Hand pub, but on the fourth corner from Wigan Road to Market Street, we had, in the 1920's and 1930's, Nixon's fish & chip shop where most people bought a 1d. worth of chips and a 2d. fish — or if you were particularly "flush" (had an extra 1d. to spare) a 3d. fish! They also sold "smacks", which were kind of round chips, made by just slicing the potato one way; the next shop was rather non-descript, then we had Hodgekiss the butcher's, Albert Hurst the clogger & shoe-maker, Stopforth's the chemist, a baby-linen shop, Hodgekinson's the pawn-broker & clothes-shop, Chisnall's for furniture & carpets and Causey's for sweets & chocolates.

If the weather was cold it was a joy to go into Hursts the clogger. The shop was at the front, but there was a room at the back where the cloggers and shoe-makers worked. You could sit on a bench and wait for your shoes to be repaired. There was always a roaring fire in the grate and plenty of conversation — all very sociable. There was the Hurst father and the Hurst son; I'm not quite sure which was Albert, but when I left Hindley I asked the son to make me the smallest pair of clogs that were made. I have them to this day — baby's first clogs made of red leather with brass studs, and real irons on the soles and heels. In later years, they had to replace the "irons" with rubbers of the same shape because when schools became more floor-conscious it was considered that the irons,

which were nailed on, scratched the floors and scuffed the surface. Orthopaedic surgeons from Wigan Infirmary sometimes sent outpatients to the Hursts to have special clogs made — the stability was considered very beneficial for some complaints. My mother would only let me wear shoes. This was a great bone of contention. I rather fancied the clatter-clatter of clogs and when it snowed — oh! bliss! The snow used to become compacted on the base of the clog and could even raise the wearer about 6 ins., so that one was balancing precariously on ever-increasing

*"... it was a joy to go into Hursts the clogger..."*

height. When it became impossible to walk, one went to a wall and gave the clog (with one's foot still in it) a sharp knock against the wall and the snow would drop off in one piece, then the process began again. Unfortunately, I was always denied such pleasures.

There was one shop, however, which I shall never forget. I suppose that I should draw a veil over the entire episode,

but here goes! It was the shop of one William Rigby and it was about 50 yards along Wigan Road, walking on the left towards Wigan. It

can just be seen in the photograph in my first article, with a cart in front of it. William Rigby was a kind of tinker; he was incredibly clever at mending pots and pans, with bits of wire, bits of tin, anything that he could lay his hands on. He could mend things when anyone else would consider them useless. He also sold oil of every description — petrol, paraffin, meths. etc. etc. You mention it, he had it.

Perhaps because of this, and the fact that it was never cleaned, there was always a distinct smell in his shop. Unfortunately, this also extended to his person. He always wore an old black waistcoat and cap (no coat) which shone like silver, due to the amount of oil deposited on them in the course of years. He seemed to exhibit a total disregard for cleanliness in any shape or form. Because of this, he was known as Billy Stink! Unfortunately, being rather a naive, little girl, I thought that that was his real name....

One day, my mother sent me to get a quart of paraffin for the Valour stove. Off I went. I'd always been told to be polite and to give people their proper title, so I breezed into the shop and asked for "A quart of paraffin, Mr. Stink please!" I thought that he looked at me in a rather queer way, so I thought I'd be a bit chatty. It was Mr. Stink this, Mr. Stink that, yes, Mr. Stink, no Mr. Stink, how's your father Mr. Stink? But he never said a word to me. When I got home, I reported to my mother that Mr. Stink wouldn't talk to me. She said "You didn't call him, Mr. Stink, did you?"

Every year, when May came round, most of the

*continued on p15*



children, in most of the streets, would decide to have a May Queen. One girl would be chosen to be queen and she would try to beg, borrow or steal a long dress from her mother or older sister and a piece of old curtain for her veil and train. Other girls would try to dress as attendants or fairies to accompany the queen, often just using coloured paper and tinsel and the boys would black their faces to be chimney-sweeps (what a good excuse!) or give their version of a pirate or barrow-boy. The little procession would walk around the streets collecting pennies, then adjourn to somebody's back yard and drink "lemonade" made with "lemonade power" and tiny biscuits.

My mother had worked in the Inland Revenue office before she was married, but on marriage, ladies had to give up their positions, so, as my father was away at the 1914/1918 war, she opened a small cooked-meat shop next door to the Palace Cinema in Market Street. That went on until the early 1920's, before I was born, and she cooked her own hams, made lamb's and ox tongue, stuffing and "elder" — whatever that

was. The shop was open until about 10 p.m. each night. She said that often women would come and buy 2 ozs. boiled ham to make into sandwiches for their husbands for the next day, then they would go into the pictures, only to nibble and nibble at the ham and have to buy a further 2 ozs. when they came out of the cinema.

Middleton & Wood, the undertaker's, had their Hindley Office in Liverpool Road, only a few yards from the Bird. Whenever there was a funeral, magnificent black horses with plumes used to be assembled with the hearse and carriages in Holt Street — the first street on the right in Liverpool Road, coming away from the Bird. I remember one very cold, winter's day, one of the horses, drawing the

hearse slipped on the ice and fell. What a to-do! Would the horse have broken a leg? Was there time to get another horse before the funeral? Fortunately, there was Byron's Builder's Yard at the end of Holt Street. They rushed there and got planks, so that the horse could get a footing. They managed to get it up, it appeared none the worse and the funeral proceeded.

*"... a quart of paraffin Mr. Stink please ..."*

The History Shop has a Meeting Room, with a capacity for 36. This is available for hire by local groups and societies at a very reasonable cost:

**£5.00 PER MORNING OR AFTERNOON SESSION**

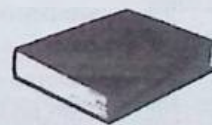
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REFRESHMENTS ARE ALSO AVAILABLE

*If you are interested, contact Philip Butler (01942) 827594*

## FAMILY HISTORY RESEARCHING

Telephone 01942 494705  
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WE have now completed three seasons of excavations on the Standish Hall Corn Mill in Elnup Wood in Shevington. When we first started in 1993, the site, which is between the path and the mill dam, was completely overgrown and very boggy. Water from a small spring, which constantly ran onto the site, has now been channelled away and the area has become quite dry. With the aid of the small excavator on loan from Groundwork we have managed to uncover about 50% of the archaeological remains. Stopping further progress at the moment is a large crack willow — although we now have permission to remove this, unfortunately we do not have the funds necessary for the operation.

The first thing we discovered in 1993 was the foundations of the cottage. This building had survived until just after the 2nd World War, when it was demolished (apparently illegally). The rest of the remains lie approximately one to two meters below the present surface, buried under a thick layer of rubble. This is sealed by a layer of stick clay, put down when the owner of the cottage built a large fish pond where the mill had been. On top of this is a thick layer of rich top soil which has been washed down off the adjacent fields.

#### Best Feature

The best feature uncovered so far is the corn drying kiln, which consists of brick terracing about one meter high built against three sides of a large stone building.

# Standish Hall Corn Mill

terracing, onto which perforated kiln tiles would have sat. The corn was spread over the tiles allowing the heat from the fire underneath to percolate through, and thus dry the corn.



*The recently uncovered corn drying kiln of Standish Hall Corn Mill*

We have found many of these tiles on the site, mostly well-made moulded types with five or nine hole cluster patterns dating from the late 18th and early 19th century. Many, however, are of a more crudely made variety with only a one or three hole pattern and are obviously much older in date. One in particular has been dated by Bolton Museum to the 16th century. This is quite unique as kilns have not been previously associated with corn mills till the 17th century.

We have uncovered four distinct phases of building on the site. The earliest construction is to the east,

which we think must be part of the actual mill. The kiln was the next to be built, and then came the annexe which was constructed in brick, in the corner between the mill and the kiln. Finally came

the cottage, using the west wall of the annexe as its gable end and part of the kiln. When the mill buildings were demolished toward the end of the last century, the cottage was left with parts of the mill and kiln in its construction.

#### Cobbled Floor

In the annexe building last year, we discovered part of a cobbled floor, beneath which we expected to find earlier remains, as it did not appear to be cellared. However, a trail trench to one side has failed to show anything significant. Another feature uncovered last

year was the hearth for the kiln, complete with iron bars where the fire would have been. The vent hole for the fire must go down another meter below this. When the kiln was in operation there would have been a large iron plate suspended under the iron floor just above the fire to prevent scorching the grain.

A good working example of a mill of this type is at the Heron Mill near Carnforth. The kiln is still intact and you can still see sloping terracing, which is on three sides similar to ours. On the fourth is a large wooden board which slopes toward the fire. At the front of this are large wooden hoppers where the grain is pushed after drying, to be loaded into sacks ready for milling.

#### One More Season

We still have at least another meter to go before we reach the bottom of the kiln, and the rest of the site is also a long way off completion. We have yet to find the wheel pit and the grinding wheels. The launder, where the water came onto the mill from the mill dam, is also proving to be illusive. We do intend having at least one more season here; how far we get, however, will depend on whether the tree can be removed and the availability of the small excavator. We would like to thank Groundwork Wigan and the Friends of Elnup for their continuing support, and the volunteers who have contributed over the years. None of it would have been possible without them.

Bill Aldridge  
Wigan Archaeology  
Society



## LECTURES IN THE HISTORY SHOP

Lectures are held in the History Shop on the second Wednesday of every month, at 7.30 p.m. Tickets are only £1, including coffee, and can be obtained in advance (01942 828128).

The programme for the coming months is as follows:

**10 April** 'Was the Spinning Jenny invented in Leigh?' Norma Ackers

**8 May** 'Local Cinemas and Theatres' Tony Ashcroft

**12 June** T.B.A.

## Exhibitions held at the History Shop

ANOTHER exciting period with two excellent temporary exhibitions. Firstly "A Woman's Place?" exploring the role of women in local society both at home and at work. The highlight was a period 1950's room set which was highly praised. To tie this in with the season the set was even decorated with period Christmas decorations including

shopping at the Co-op. This North West Museum Service travelling exhibition proved so popular that it was extended until the end of March. This exhibition did rather swamp our available space, even to the extent of one showcase with cast iron mangle being displayed at the foot of the main staircase. However this simply created a



*This 1950's room set proved to be the highlight of the exhibition "A Woman's Place", which explored the role of women in local society*

tree, cards and garlands. Well done to our Social History Officer for coming up with that idea!

On the down side, however, a small cigarette lighter was stolen from the open display. It is very disappointing when this sort of thing happens, but will not deter us from attempting innovative displays in the future.

Secondly "A Happier World of Better Stuff" — a celebration of

busy feel to the gallery and was in keeping with the early clutter of Co-op shops. This feel was enhanced by the excellent loan of Co-op material by Mr. P. Morris of Swinley. Thanks to him we were able to give our centre cases a true local theme. This additional material will not be accompanying the exhibition on its future travels, although I'm sure the organisers wish it were!

P.B.

## 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. The new secretary is Mrs. R. Naylor, Pennington Green, Hall Lane, Aspull, Wigan (01942 256145). The Society has just published a book of tales of Aspull, priced £2.50. Anyone interested in purchasing a copy should contact Mrs. Dootson (01942 831204).

### Atherton Heritage Society

Meetings are now held in the Methodist Church Hall opposite Atherton Library usually 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).  
**15 April** 'Local Music Halls and Cinemas - 100 Years of Cinema'  
 Tony Ashcroft  
**13 May** 'Music Hall Memories'  
 Mr. Prescott  
**17 June** 'Local Men at Gallipoli'  
 Fred Holcroft.

### 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

New members are always welcome. For details contact the Vice Chairman, Betty Isherwood, 7 Pennington Mews, St. Helens Road, Leigh (01942 672058).

### Leigh & District Family History Society

Meetings are held on the third Tuesday of every month in the Derby Room, Leigh Library. The programme for the coming months is as below:  
**16 April** 'Occupations' — a talk with slides by Mrs. Joyce Culling.  
**21 May** A.G.M. - Preserving Documents.  
**18 June** Visit to St. Oswald's, Ashton-in-Makerfield.  
 For further details contact the Secretary Olive Hughes (01942 741594).

### Leigh Local History Society

24 April A.G.M. & historical video.  
**29 May** Evening out (to be arranged)  
**6 July** Day out to Biddulph Grange & Stafford.  
 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. Entrance is FREE. Further details from the Secretary (01942 893242).

### Wigan Archaeological Society

The society meets in the History Shop on the first Wednesday of the month at 7.30 p.m. New members are always welcome. The meetings in the 1996 season are as follows:  
**May** A.G.M. (deferred from February).  
**June** 'For King and Parliament'  
 Neil Howlett  
**July** 'Egypt'  
 John Johnson  
**August** Trip TBA.  
**September** 'Roman Bath Houses'  
 Vita Hall.  
 For further details contact Bill Aldridge, 5 The Beacons Apley Bridge, Wigan. WN6 8DU. (01257 402342 or 01772 34051).

### Wigan Civic Trust

The Trust meets at 7.30 p.m., on the second Monday of the month, at the Drumcrown Arts Centre, Parsons Walk, Wigan. The current programme is as follows:

**15 April** 'Ornithology and the R.S.P.B.'

A. Rimmer  
**13 May** 'Wigan's Lost Buildings'

A.J. Grimshaw  
**10 June**

'Wigan's Mineral Railways'  
 M.R. Atty

**July and August** will be 'outside visits' — details to be announced.

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

### Wigan Family History Society

Meetings are held on the first and third Monday of each month at 7.30 p.m. at the Seven Stars Hotel, Wallgate, Wigan.  
 Forthcoming speakers:  
**15 April** 'Slides of Highfield and Winstanley'  
 Ray Winstanley  
**20 May** 'Child Labour in Victorian England'  
 Fred Holcroft.





## Research excellence complimented

Dear Mr Blakeman,  
I am writing to thank you for the excellent introduction to research processes you gave to myself, my colleagues and student groups recently.

Introduction to research is a vital component of modern teaching and learning programmes and, as such, is increasingly being assessed by examination boards.

I and my colleagues are delighted that such a magnificent resource as the History Shop is available and the

expertise and enthusiasm of its staff ensure that it will be frequently used in future.

My sincere thanks to you and the History Shop for all your help.

**Michael Lambourne,**  
Lecturer in Social Policy &  
Administration  
Wigan & Leigh College

*\*Any interested lecturers or teachers should contact Bob Blakeman (01942 828020). Ed.*

## Marsh Green info wanted

Dear Mr. Gillies,

I enclose a donation towards your excellent magazine.

I would be extremely grateful if your readers could help me on a matter concerning my family tree. I have exhausted every possibility, including using a professional researcher, in an effort to solve a problem concerning my ancestors from Marsh Green, Pemberton.

Does anybody know anything about the following? Any detail, no matter how small, may help. Also any information about

Marsh Green in the 1880's.

Mary Gaskell b.1873, Marsh Green, Pemberton, Wigan.

Mary married in 1895 in Gateshead, Co. Durham under the name Mary Birkett.

Her mother Ann Gaskell b. unknown, Ann died approximately aged 38 to 40 (possibly before 1895). She was unmarried on Mary's birth and never married her father - Thomas Farrimond. Mary later re-united with her father in Gateshead, Co. Durham, after her mother died.

A Mr. Birkett (Christian name unknown) was very kind to Ann and her daughter.

I am told Ann Gaskell married Mr. Birkett but no trace has been found of a marriage between 1872 and 1895. Mr. Birkett had two daughters (birth dates unknown) called MEG and SUSAN, (not sure if the girls were born to Ann, or from a previous marriage of Mr. Birkett's).

**Lynn Rowland**  
(Miss)  
54 Wimpole Street  
St. Stephens View  
Oldham,  
Lancs.

## Ran "Hell for Leather"

Sir,  
I was very interested to read in the Autumn *Past Forward* about Wellfield Villa in Beech Hill (re letter from Henrietta Boriskowski (nee Sawbridge). I don't remember who lived there before they did, but I remember the old house very well. My friends and I used to run "Hell for leather" past it at night, as we believed it to be haunted. We

always felt safe, however, if the local "Bobby" was in the call box at the front of the fence. I also remember Henrietta and Roma, as they attended Gidlow School, when I did. Also, I remember some of the boys in the class at Beech Hill School, although they were a little older than I was. Mr. Glover was a very good Headmaster, strict, but fair.

May I take the opportunity of congratulating you on the production of your magazine. I always look forward to every issue.

**Mrs. G. Guest**  
(nee Ashworth)

*Could Mrs. Guest please let me have her address, which she omitted in her letter! Ed.*

## FASCINATED BY AERIAL VIEW OF WIGAN

Dear Sirs,

I have been trying to get some more detail from a section of the photograph on pp 10 and 11 of issue number 11, *Past Forward*.

Although I enjoyed reading the article *Hard Times in Edwardian Wigan*, it was the photograph accompanying it which captured most of my attention. As you will see from the enclosed, it is the houses immediately behind Calderbanks scrapyard which are of particular interest to me. They are on the corner of Greenough Street and Turner Street, where the Post Office used to be. I was born in No. 59 Greenough Street, and my bedroom window can be seen.

Not quite so clear, however, because of the dark shadows, is the rear of 2a Turner Street — I think perhaps that is the back door just emerging from the shadow of the houses on Greenough Street. It was there that I first kissed Lily Rathburn and why, four years later when we had bought the house, I carried her over the same steps as my bride rather than use the front door. That was on Easter Monday 1956 and so this year is our Ruby Anniversary.

It would mean a lot to us therefore if you could let us have a copy of the original photograph.

**Leo Brooks**  
30 Orange Hill Road  
Prestwich  
Manchester M25 1LS

## STAINED GLASS WINDOW IN HIS MEMORY

Dear Sir,

This is the first time I have heard or read of *Past Forward*, and I was most interested in the reading. *Past Forward*, Autumn 1995, brought memories back to me when I read the letter by Alec Hughes, who wrote about the organ pumper at Lowton, and also Peter Eckersley the pilot.

In Atherton Chowbent Unitarian Chapel there is a stained glass

window donated by Peter's family in his memory. It shows St. George and the Dragon, but in one corner of the window there is an aeroplane. I was in chapel three weeks before he was killed, when he attended with his wife and children. It is a beautiful window, I thought your readers might be interested.

**Nancy Stroud**  
169 Lovers Lane  
Atherton, Manchester.



## Descendants of Charles Edwards wanted

I am seeking descendants of Charles Edwards b.1855, Bromsgrove Worcestershire, died 1923, Ince, Wigan (Colliery Worker) and Eliza Davies b.1856, Brierley Hill, Staffordshire, died 1911, Ince, Wigan, Lancashire.

The children were Harriet b.1877, Brierley Hill, Staffordshire; Charles b.1878, Wigan; Alice b.1884, Wigan; Eli b.1886, Wigan; Nehemia b.1889, Wigan; Joseph b.1892, Wigan (died 1948, India); Frederick b.1896, Wigan; Ernest A. b.1899, Wigan.

The dates of birth are based on information extracted from the 1891 and 1901 census returns. All were resident at 333 Warrington Road, Ince-in-Makerfield, Hindley, Wigan, Lancashire.

If there are any descendants still living in the area or any reader with information, please contact me.

**Esther Acton  
(Joseph's daughter)  
2185 Arrow Court  
Burlington, Ont.  
Canada L7P 3P2**

Dear Folks,

Early last year I joined the M & L FHS in an attempt to further my research in the general area. Although my 'interests' have yet to be published by them, others have appeared which prompted me to write to those folks. One family researching 'Atherton' in the Wigan area kindly took up my cause. The Scotts of Altrincham have been doing extensive Atherton research at the History Shop, and have forwarded to me any information they find which is directly pertinent to my research. As yet, no link between their family and mine has been uncovered, but the possibility exists. Some of the verified information contained herein came from them.

Additionally, since my research started in Wales, specifically in Bistree, near Mold, I had a researcher hired in that area for the past two years, and he paid at least one visit to the History Shop. Because of the additional costs to have him research in

## ROBERTS FAMILY RESEARCHER FOCUSES ON WIGAN

the Wigan area, we are shifting our focus closer to Wigan, and very shortly will be searching for more information on my Roberts there.

My researcher was able to get back to a 1724 marriage in Wales, but there the door closed. Based on family memory and knowledge, "a Roberts (forename unknown at the time) and his wife Margaret Lloyd moved from Bistree, Wales, to Ince, near Wigan, in 1853, to work in a coal pit called the 'Welsh Pit', at or near Wigan. Research shows they had four children with them. We have discovered that he was Elias Roberts, and the fourth child at the time, Davis, is my direct ancestor. We have partial information on Margaret Lloyd's parents and grandparents as well.

We have yet to check the Wigan/Ince Census for 1861 and 1871, so there is a bit of a gap in

our information. The 1881 and 1891 Census have been researched, and thus we have their

places of residence at that time. It does not appear they moved far, if at all.

Meanwhile, research was begun on the Atherton and Prior connection with amazing results on Atherton. Since Mary Jane Prior was born Dodworth, Barnsley, Yorks., and research in that area will be done at a later time.

As the story goes, Robert Atherton liked his 'pint', and whenever he had had a few, would get the family dressed and march them to a photographers. Thank heaven for the 'pint'! What the Roberts' did under similar circumstances is conjecture, since no pictures exist here. It is hoped to ultimately establish contact with living relatives in the Wigan area, and hopefully there are some photos.

**Jim Roberts  
228 Ogden Drive,  
Riverview, N.B.,  
E1B 2S4**

## Prestwich-Parker of Atherton

Mrs. S. Gregory of Suffolk has a family interest in Prestwich-Parker and is hoping to put together a small booklet on the company. She is particularly interested in any plans of the building that may exist but would like to hear from anyone with memories of/information on the firm.

Mrs. Gregory can be contacted at 102 Bury Road, Brandon, Suffolk IP27 0BT.

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**METROPOLITAN**

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March 1996

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The Heritage Services Manager, Editor, 'Past Forward', The Heritage Service, Market Suite, Market Hall, The Galleries, Wigan WN1 1PX.

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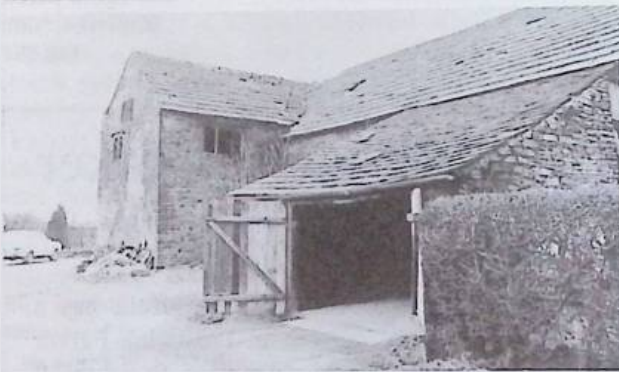
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I enclose a contribution of £.....towards production costs.  
(Please make all cheques payable in Sterling to 'Wigan MBC')



# Where?

If you can help identify the location of any of these buildings, please contact Len Hudson in Leigh Town Hall (01942) 404432



## STOP PRESS!

By the time that *Past Forward* hits the streets, the first two publications under the Charter 96 publications programme will be on sale.

'Around Leigh' is a high quality photographic history of the Leigh area, featuring many hitherto unpublished photographs from the Heritage Service's collection. Compiled by Local History officer Tony Ashcroft and Archivist Nicholas Webb, it gives a fascinating insight into Leigh as it used to be. It is available from the Archives Services in Leigh Town Hall, Leigh Local History Library, the History Shop and local bookshops, at only £8.99. Archivist Nicholas Webb has also been extremely busy in the production of the second Heritage Service publication of 1996 — a 'Guide to the Archives'. With painstaking attention to detail, Nicholas has compiled a comprehensive index to the holdings of Wigan Archive Service — an invaluable tool for all local and family historians and students using the Heritage Service's splendid Archives collection. A 'Guide to the Archives' is excellent value at only £2.95, and will be available shortly from all Heritage Service outlets.