

PAST FORWARD

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SUMMER 1997



William (Billy) Riley

The Newsletter of Wigan Heritage Service

FREE

From the Editor

ONCE again, I must thank all those readers - throughout the world! - who have submitted contributions for publication in *Past Forward*. As ever, the pile of material which has had to be held over far outweighs that which has gone to make up this latest issue. From my point of view, of course, this is a highly satisfactory state of affairs - so please keep sending me your contributions. I will do my best to include them.

As will be seen once again from this issue, Mrs Marjorie Bryden's recollections of her days in Hindley and particularly at Hindley and Abram Grammar School, have struck a nostalgic chord with many readers. I am delighted to announce that her memories of primary school days in Hindley Green will appear in the next issue of *Past Forward*.

As always, my sincere thanks to all those readers who have taken the trouble to write and express their views - I'm delighted to say 99% complimentary - on *Past Forward*. Incidentally, the newsletter was short-listed for the Library Association T C Farries Public Relations and Publicity Awards. The results were announced at a very impressive ceremony at the House of Commons, and although we did not actually win one of the coveted awards, there's always next year..... My thanks to everyone who has contributed in any way to the success of this venture.

All comments and correspondence should be addressed to:

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A TRIBUTE TO LEN MARSDEN

JUST as this edition went to press we received news of the untimely death of Len Marsden on Sunday 6 July. I first met Len shortly after moving to Wigan 11 years ago, and was impressed by his energetic and systematic approach to family history research, from which he soon put together a beautifully documented pedigree of the Marsdens. He was at the same time establishing Wigan Family History Society, which has since grown to be an active and friendly group, having close links with the Archives Service and the History Shop.

Cover: Wigan has long been an important place in the world of wrestling. Perhaps the origins of wrestling in the town lay in the practice of "purring", a kind of fighting in which the chief methods were throttling and kicking. At races, fairs and other public occasions 'purring contests' were witnessed by large crowds, until they were banned by the authorities.

One of the last purring contests took place at the rear of the Millstone Inn in Wigan Lane in 1912. However, by that time big money wrestling matches were drawing the crowds in Wigan.

Among the local wrestlers was Jim Foster, the Pemberton middleweight who worked as a collier. One of Jim Foster's most memorable matches took place at Central Park in 1906 before a crowd of 2,500. Foster and his opponent Joe Carroll wrestled for no less than 75 minutes without either being able to throw the other, and the match was declared a draw.

Wigan's most famous wrestler was, perhaps, Billy Riley (see cover). He began his wrestling career at 14, and four years later fought a draw with Jackie Burns, the bantamweight Champion of England. In 1914 Riley became middleweight champion of England, and in the same year went to America where he won the world title.

More recently Wigan wrestlers have trained at the late Billy Riley's gym in Whelley and Ted Betley's gym at Winwick. Wrestlers such as Neil Maxwell who, in 1988, had the distinction of being the youngest wrestler selected for the British senior team that visited Belgium, and Shane Rigby who was recently British Champion at 74 kilos, continue the tradition.

Despite poor health Len gave much of his time to others, both in the family history field (see page 13 for mention of his transcription project), and voluntary work in the wider community, including personal counselling. My abiding impression of him will be his large presence at a study table, making notes or transcripts in his neat italic hand, smiling and quietly giving help to others.

Our sympathy goes to his widow, Dorothy, family and many friends.

N.W.

Tony Blair - a Wigan connection

TONY BLAIR'S grandmother, Augusta Mary Bridson of Besford Court, Worcestershire, had a great aunt, Emily Susan Bridson, who married, in 1863, Henry Woodcock of Wigan. The Woodcocks were an influential Wigan family in the 19th century. Thomas Woodcock founded the Wigan Bank in 1792, and Henry Woodcock was Mayor of Wigan in 1858. His residence was Bank House, which stood near the site of the present Trinity United Reformed church in Wigan Lane. (Thanks to Geoff Halliwell for bringing this marriage to our attention).

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Wigan's World Champions

MANY readers will not be aware that, at the turn of the century, Wigan was one of the main centres of world class wrestling.

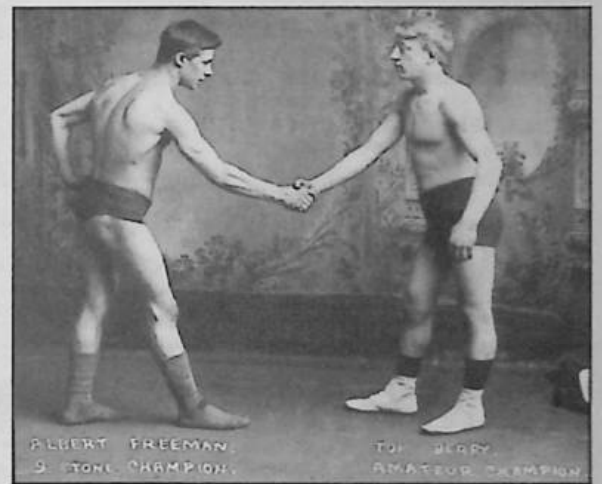
These splendid pictures are from some recently printed plates in the Heritage Service's extensive photographic collection. Thought to be from the studios of 'Cooper of Wigan', these photographs of local heroes were taken to be made into postcards for sale to fans.



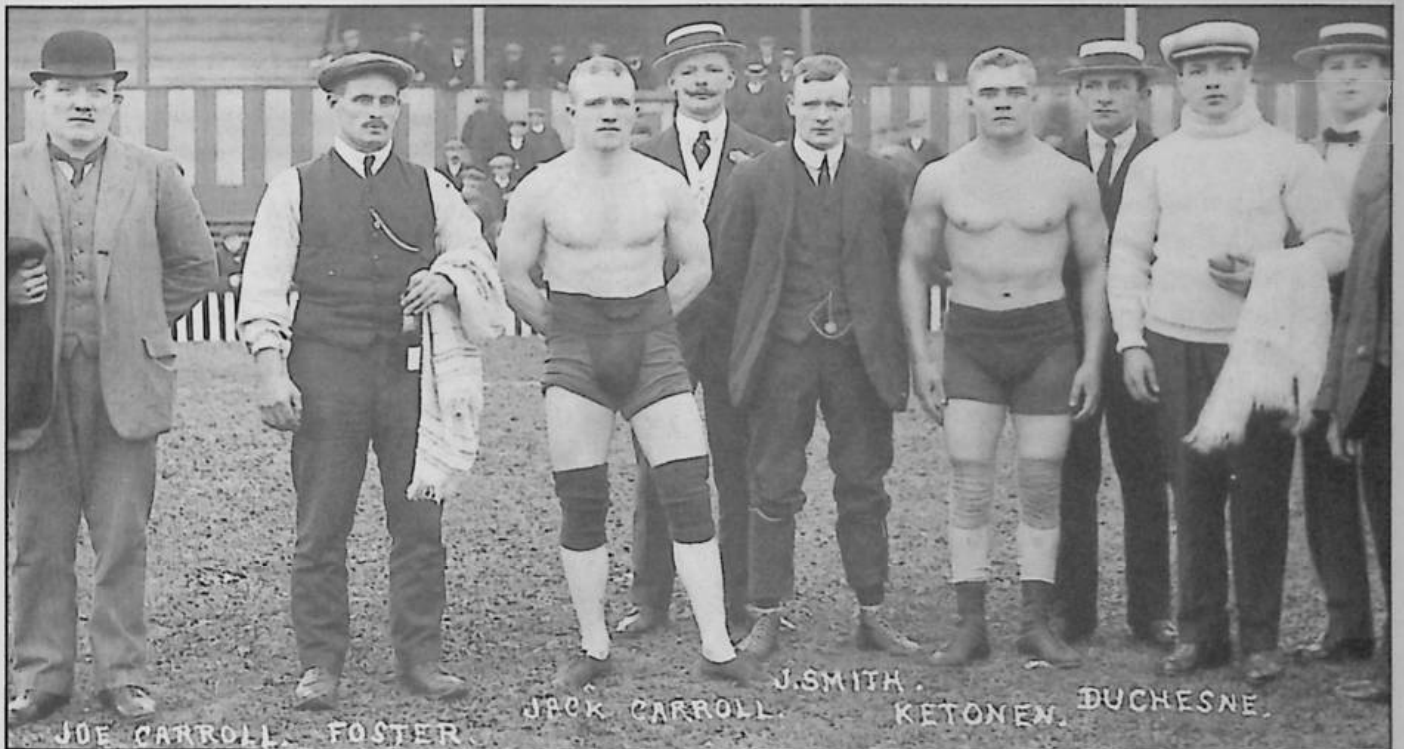
BOB BERRY
HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION OF THE WORLD



JACK BROWN, WIGAN.
UNDEFEATED 9 STONE CHAMPION
WRESTLER OF THE WORLD.



ALBERT FREEMAN, 9 STONE CHAMPION.
TOM BERRY, AMATEUR CHAMPION



JOE CARROLL, FOSTER, JACK CARROLL, J. SMITH, KETONEN, DUCHESNE



LANGTON
Argent three chevrons gules.

The de Hindleys and de Culcheths



CULCHETH of Culcheth. Argent
an eagle sable preying on an
infant swaddled gules banded or

The fascinating story of two ancient manorial families

THE lives of the de Hindleys whose manorial lands lay just outside Wigan were linked closely with those of the de Culcheth family of Warrington for more than 500 years. In addition, in the feudal era the territory at Aspull belonged in part to both families, and over time was owned completely by one or the other.

As well as their shared interest in land and timber-framed property, the two families were united when the four sons of Hugh de Hindley were married to the four daughters of Gilbert de Culcheth in a single ceremony.

The de Hindley's ancient land entitlement was given under the feudal system, when the Crown bestowed large tracts to noblemen, who in turn divided their portions between chosen knights in exchange for military service in times of war. The following passage was documented early in the 13th century:

"Swein, son of Leofwin, held the Burnhull share, and gave it to a certain Gospatric in free marriage; in 1212 Roger the son of Gospatric held this portion. Two oxgangs were at the same time held by Adam de Hindley "of ancient feoffment" . . . another half ploughland was held by Robert de Hindley, son of Robert."

(Victoria History of Lancashire p. 106)

The lands of the de Hindleys and the de Culcheths, with their manors about eight miles apart, were originally within the boundaries of the royal demesne of Newton, later transferred to Makerfield. The shire of Lancaster was divided into Hundreds in medieval times, there being six Hundreds between the rivers Ribble and Mersey, including that of Makerfield. This word was adopted because 100 fighting men were expected to enlist when necessary from such an area, while 10 men were required from a tithing. Lancaster was

governed then by a sheriff, a name which evolved from the words "shire reeve".

"Hindley was one of the 15 berewicks of the royal manor of Newton before the Conquest . . . and continued to form part of the fee of Makerfield."

(Victoria History of Lancashire p. 106)

The church of St. Oswald at Winwick, in Makerfield, the church of the de Hindleys, ministered to, and also loosely governed, a dozen nearby medieval communities in the north-west of England in the Celtic tradition, though the feudal and parish boundaries did not always coincide. King Oswald himself was educated at the Columban community of Iona, and was said to have ruled wisely his province of Northumbria, which before the Norman Conquest included Lancashire.

St. Oswald's Church is mentioned in the Domesday Book, but it is not known how many years before 1086 it had existed. The entry which follows, from William the Conqueror's comprehensive survey, mentions the land measurement "carucate" - the area a team of oxen could plough in a season:



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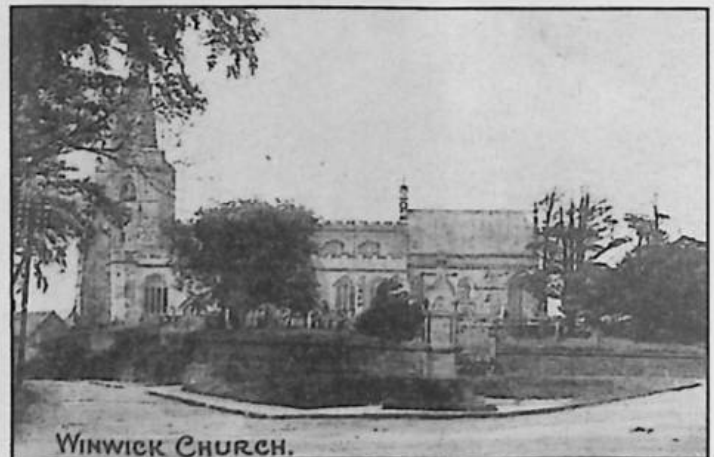


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WINWICK CHURCH.

St. Oswald's, Winwick, near Warrington, c.1910.

"In Neweton . . . there were five hides, and one of these was in the demesne. The church of the same manor had one carucate of land, and Saint Oswald of the same vill had two carucates of land free of everything."

(Domesday book, 1086 A.D.)

The 19th century historian, T.G. Rylands was of the view that King Oswald himself established the Winwick church in the 7th century before he was killed in battle, and Sir Peter Leycester, William Beaumont and William Baines also subscribed to that view. However, the people of Oswestry contend that the king was killed in Shropshire. Writing less than a century after Oswald's death, Bede declared:

"Oswald was slain in the field in a cruel battle by the same Paynim king of the Marchmen by whom his predecessor King Edwin had been killed, in a place which, in the tongue of the English, is called Maserfelth, in the 38th year of his age.

Note: Identified with Oswestry, but Oswestry is an unlikely place for a battle between Northumbrians and Mercians."

(Historical Works Vol. 1, p. 369, Ven. Bede)

By the reign of Henry I at the beginning of the 12th century the Normans had reached the north of England, and had inter-married with the indigenous communities. Many of these were Celts, as Anglo Saxon control came late in the old Newton Hundred, where many Celtic names such as Makerfield survive. By the time another 100 years had passed, most of the north-west not covered by forest or mossland had been divided and bestowed upon a number of influential knights.

The de Hindley's and the de Culcheth's land entitlements were both secured through this feudal chain of power. Whereas the de Hindley's overlord was Roger de Gospatric, the de Culcheths were subject to William de Boteler. Like the de Hindley record, given above, the entry regarding Hugh de Culcheth mentions the year 1212, which may indicate that there had been a census in that year:

"In 1212 Hugh, son of Gilbert, held the manor by knight's service of Baron de Boteler as four ploughlands, paying four marks a year."

(Victoria History of Lancs, p. 156)

This Hugh called his son after his paternal grandfather. The young Gilbert was "killed in 1246 by unknown malefactors" only four years after he had

inherited Culcheth manor, leaving his wife and four small daughters. As married women then were not permitted to own property, the manorial lands were held in trust for the little girls - Margery, Elizabeth, Ellen and Joan, who became wards of court in the care of Baron Boteler.

A few years later, de Boteler gave Hugh de Hindley the right to arrange the girls' marriages. In the feudal era women from landed families were treated with customary gallantry in an attempt to mask the injustice of curtailed freedom. Very conveniently, Hugh was able to produce four stalwart suitors in the shape of his four sons! In due course, therefore, the de Hindley young men requested the hands in marriage of the girls, and were accepted. It would have been possible to avoid an arranged union by the payment of a substantial fine, but no dissenting voices were raised, so it would appear that the eight were happy with the partners Hugh had chosen for them.

The witnesses "to the granting to Hugh de Hindley of the marriages of the heirs of Gilbert de Culcheth", were recorded as: Lord Radulf, Henry de Tyldesley, Roger de Sankey, Thurston de Holland and Robert de Lawton.

So Richard de Hindley married Margery, Adam was united with Elizabeth, Robert with Ellen and Thomas with Joan. Hugh de Hindley remained overlord of his manor near Wigan, while the Culcheth territory was divided into four, and the four young men legally acquired the newly-bounded lands of Culcheth, Peasfurlong, Risley and Holcroft, and built new manor houses on the last three.

After the multiple ceremony had been celebrated, records show that over the years property frequently passed between the linked families. In 1298 another Gilbert de Culcheth (there were several of the same name) granted another Hugh de Hindley all his manor for life, with one half to his wife Beatrice for life should she survive him. Unmarried women and widows could inherit property. Then, in 1338, another Gilbert granted to Gilbert his son his corn mills in Hindley, "and all his part in the water of Glazebrook and Bailisdene in Hindley."

The following is taken from a legal document dated 1345:

"No. 23 - a grant by Gilbert the father to his son Gilbert and Joan of the manor of Hindley, with remainders to the children,

Cecily, John and William Eight years later a similar surrender of the manor of Hindley was made by the son, and Gilbert the father agreed to find his son a house, horse, and attendant, fitting his rank."

(Victoria History of Lancashire, p. 157)

Nearly a century later, in 1448, Thomas and Alice Culcheth leased to their son George the manor house of Hindley for a rent of £4 13s. 4d, allowing sufficient timber to repair the house and the mill. The houses of affluent families were mainly constructed of wood until the 16th century, while artisans used timber in their houses for a longer time.

Hindley Manor would seem then to have passed to a family called Langton, through marriage, because in 1528 the son of Gilbert Langton insisted in court that he was the sole lord of the manor of Hindley and had built some cottages on account of the multiplying of the people, and had left sufficient pasture for the other tenants. Robert Langton inherited the manor at the age of 26, and in 1628 his grandson Abraham was fined because he was a recusant. The Parliament of 1652 sold his estate on the grounds of treason.

Abraham's son, Philip, was

tried in 1694 for participation in the Lancashire Plot, perhaps not surprisingly, as harsh or intolerant treatment tends to create rebels and more intolerance. The de Culcheths also remained attached to the old religion after the Reformation, and suffered the sequestration of their estate. However, their fortunes improved after the Restoration.

The last Langdon died without children in 1733, leaving Hindley Manor to nephews called Pugh, after which it was acquired by the Duke of Bridgewater. The Culcheth moiety descended to Thomas Culcheth, who died 14 years later at his manor house. The descendants of the other three Hindley sons and their families also continued to live in their manor houses until the 18th century. Some members of the Holcroft branch were courtiers in Tudor times and Parliamentary heroes during the Civil War; the Risleys were philanthropists and academic dissenters; and the Peasfurlong family reverted to the name of de Hindley, and finally through marriage merged with the influential Radcliffes, Earls of Sussex.

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● Rosemary Keery is also the author of 'Historic Culcheth', available from the History Shop at £6.50.

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Silk Weaving in Lowton, 1827 to 1910

SILK weaving was introduced into the Leigh and Lowton area by 1827. This was brought about by a strike of the weavers working for the Manchester firm of J. Occlerton, in protest against a reduction in their wages. The firm sent blackleg labour to the area to teach those who were already engaged in the cottage industry of fustian weaving, the art of silk weaving, a more delicate operation, which they soon mastered.

Work was set at a rate of pay 1/2d below the rate previously paid in Manchester, but to the weavers of Lowton this was a great advance on the amount they had been accustomed to receive. A report at the time states:-

"Notwithstanding that it was introduced here at reduced prices it was soon observed that many hundreds of the inhabitants of Leigh and district appeared to derive a good deal of benefit from the silk weaving, for in a short period of time a material change, both as regards their personal appearance in dress, and the obtaining of the necessities of life was visible to all the people in the

neighbourhood."

As the improved standard of living among the silk weavers became known more and more fustian weavers turned to silk. The census returns for 1841, 1851 and 1861 show that the cottage industry of silk weaving was predominant in Lowton. In 1841 out of a total population of 1,487, 550 were working on silk.

Eventually there were a sufficient number of silk weavers on the market for unscrupulous employers to begin cutting wages. The system of making deductions from the weavers wage for poor workmanship was widely abused, and "unjust abate-

ments" were made on the most frivolous of pretexts, even for returning work late, when the weaver in the first place had been forced to wait for the supply of weft.

In the early 1840's the average earnings of the weavers were miserably low, being no more than 10s. a week, out of which they paid a bobbin winder 20% - 25%, leaving their net earning little more than 7s. per week. A little meat and white bread at weekends was a luxury which only a few could afford - no wonder that some of the weavers became embittered revolutionaries, attributing the cause of their plight to the introduction of machinery. Some of them joined the Chartist Movement, a section of which went about the district demanding the stoppage of mills which were taking their work, sometimes threatening to draw the safety plugs from the steam boilers.

For taking part in this extreme measure, one of the Lowton weavers, George Bellamy, was arrested and sent to prison for 12 months. At this time the unrest in

the village was considered by the authorities to be so threatening that a curfew was introduced, warning people to be home and all lights out by 8 p.m.

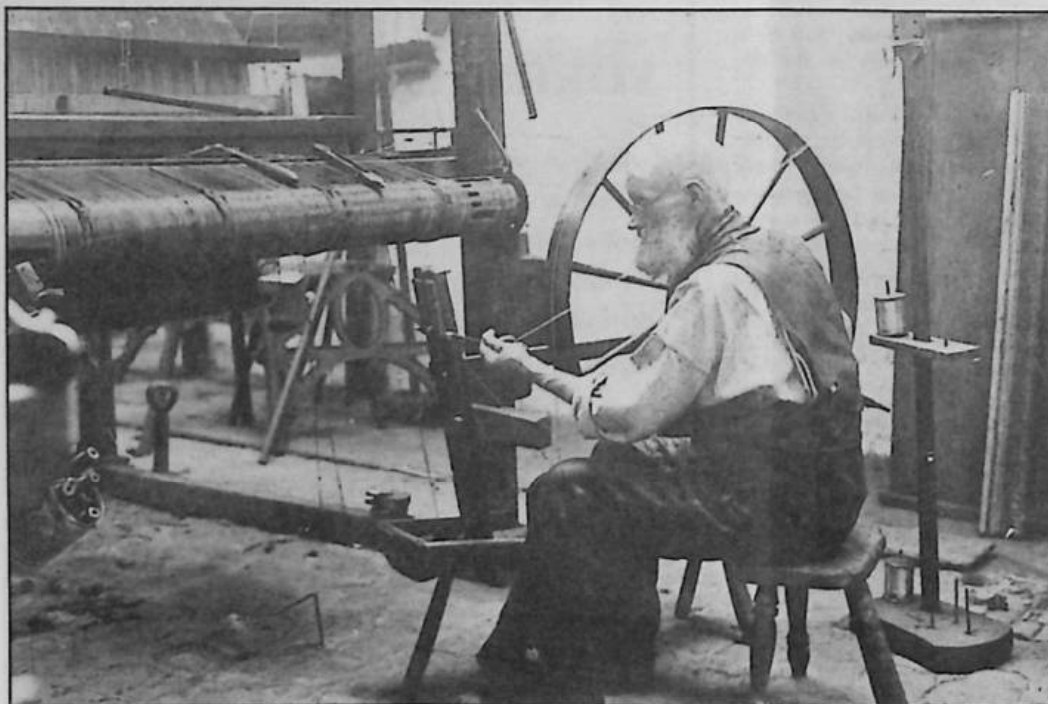
Most of the villagers who were fighting for better wages were very poor, few were able to read and many subscribed 1/2d. each, weekly, to purchase a newspaper, which at the time cost 8d. During the week subscribers congregated in one or other of the cottages to hear the news read aloud by a reader; the subject matter would then be discussed, and no doubt a decision taken on further action. It is thought that the Round House on Newton Road was one of the cottages used for these weekly readings; a local farmer named Adamson was reputed to be the reader.

A number of local gentlemen took up the weavers' cause and some cases were tried in the magistrates court under the Arbitration Act which allowed the magistrates to fix a minimum wage to be paid, but this only led to the victimisation of the weavers concerned, who were then put out of work altogether.

For the next 20 years the cottage industry carried on in much the same way and a few factories were built, but the silk trade was very susceptible to the ebb and flow of the market trends, so that when the French Treaty of 1860 lifted the duty on imported French silk some had to close down. It is surprising that, in these conditions, the hand loom weaving of silk persisted until the end of the century.

The following interesting article appeared in the Leigh Chronicle on 8 November 1907.

"Many years ago Lowton had a great reputation for handloom silk weaving, the Lowton weavers being considered to have no superiors in the country. Almost every cottage was without a back door, the back kitchen being occupied by the loom and spinning wheel. Times have greatly changed since then, and instead of there being between 300 and 400 handloom



At work on the bobbin winder - loom in background





"The Pink Cottage", 167 Newton Road, Lowton, was the home of Mrs. Marsh. She wove the last piece of silk cloth to be woven in Lowton in 1910. Her loom and accessories were placed in Pennington Hall Museum but their whereabouts are now unknown. The house was demolished in 1951.

Weavers in the village there are now only about four, of which two are at present working. In a shady bye-lane not far from Lowton St. Mary's railway bridge, lives Mrs. Smith, one of the few survivors who follow the old industry. She is still hale and hearty although verging on her 73rd birthday, and has been winding or weaving for upwards of 65 years. Her invalid daughter, who is an expert handloom weaver when her strength permits, lives with her. The loom, which is well over 100 years old, for it belonged to Mrs. Smith's grandfather, is still in use, and along with the old spinning wheel takes up a good part of the kitchen. Mrs. Smith, who has a retentive memory, speaks with enthusiasm about the good old days when the hum and whirr of the loom was heard in almost every cottage, and when work was done for such then noted Leigh firms as Walkers, Taylors, and Le Maros. Mr. Joseph Gregory is the only one who lets out and takes in handloom weaving nowadays, and the material woven are usually serges, which he sends out to the neighbourhood of London. It appears that there are now only seven handloom weavers within a radius of ten miles, and last August these were all photographed together, along with Mr. Gregory. Many people interested in the old industry occasionally call at Mrs. Smith's house to see the loom."

A census of the handloom weavers in Lowton in 1865 states,

Pop. in	1801	1811	1821	1831	1841	1851	1861	1871	1881	1891
Lowton	1402	1647	1965	2374	2150	2140	2384	2144	2357	2657
Golborne	962	1111	1310	1532	1657	1910	2776	3688	4502	5601
Pop. in	1901	1911	1921	1931	1941	1951	1961			
Lowton	2964	3429	3742	3857		3377	4076			
Golborne	6789	6931	7183	7321		7829	8963			

Today the populations of both are much larger but none of the industries mentioned above have survived.

out of a population of 2,384, 487 were still working; significantly it says 52 had recently left the business, and by the end of the century very few remained. The last piece of silk to be woven in Lowton was by Mrs. Marsh of "The Pink" Cottage, 167, Newton Road, Lowton. The year was 1910. Her loom was given to the town of Leigh and for many years was on show at Pennington Hall; sadly today no one knows its whereabouts.

It is very interesting to compare the populations of Lowton and Golborne during the 19th century when the cottage industry of fustian weaving, (fustian is a mixture of cotton or wool and flax woven together to make a hard wearing cloth) was giving way to silk weaving, which also declined as the industrial revolution of the country progressed. During that period only one small cotton mill was built in Lowton, about 1850, whereas in Golborne there were at least two cotton mills and a paper mill. The Golborne Colliery was opened in 1880 and several pit shafts had been sunk at Edge Green years before, but there is no evidence that a shaft was ever sunk in Lowton. In later years an Iron Foundry and Chocolate Factory were in business in Golborne. The table below shows the obvious effect on the population of the two townships.

© H. Worsley



Mrs. Rachel Smith is bobbin weaving. She lived in Hesketh Meadow Lane, Lowton.



Mrs. Margaret Taylor (1929) of 156 Newton Road, Lowton. Her cottage had a one loom shop. She finished weaving in 1900 and samples of her work still remain.



'WOOLIES' ARTICLE TRIGGERED OFF PERSONAL MEMORIES

Dear Sir,

A FEW days ago I received Issue No. 13 of your *Past Forward* magazine and have thoroughly massaged my nostalgia system ever since.

Ernie Taberner's article about Woolies triggered off a whole pot pourri of personal memories as that section of Wigan town holds for me, after many of the happiest moments of my life at my beloved Central Park, my most vivid connections with Wigan itself, all collected within a very short time in my early teens.

Down that one side of Standishgate there was Woolies. Marks & Spencer and the Rendezvous restaurant. Lower down there was a high class confectioner by the name of, I think, Mittelbergers, and beyond that, a butchers shop, rather large, by the name of Williams.

In 1932, at the age of 14, these names became household for me. Woolies was somewhere to go out of the rain, and even at the ceiling price of 6d. (2½p) my budget limited the tour of the store to nothing further than a wide-eyed surveillance of the displays.

Marks and Sparks was a little 'up-market', with the added attraction of one stall assistant, quite a bit older than I but with a sort of Grecian beauty which, on hindsight, might have oozed the first sign of sap in my adolescent bole. I doubt if I would ever have had the courage to speak to her, even if I had possessed the money with which to make a purchase. She

went and married one of my old boyhood friends and last time I heard from them they owned a jewellers shop in Burnley.

Mittelbergers came a little later, when I had learned to discern between good and excellent confectionery.

I group the Rendezvous restaurant and Williams the butchers by virtue of a somewhat tenuous link. My father was Assistant Manager over the whole area of Park Lane Friendly Cooperative Society's Stores, and had warned me on numerous occasions to keep out.... or else. But one afternoon in 1932, I thought I would have a go at the cleaning of the Berkel bacon slicer in the local Co-op shop in Garswood, opposite where I lived at the time, just as I had seen Bill Bentham, the manager, perform with a boning knife. It was soon patently obvious that I was totally ignorant of the essential rules - after only half a turn of the operating wheel, I had been denuded of three, nearly four, fingers! Via a most circuitous route, I arrived at Wigan Infirmary where a repair job was done and consequently my weekly attendances as an outpatient arranged. During my very first week as an O.P. I was acquainted with a young lad who had met a similar fate though not, I would hasten to add, in quite so clinical a route. He had lost three fingers in a sausage machine at Williams butchers. I seem to remember that his name was Topping.

These weekly visits to Wigan Infirmary were marathon events, seemingly for everyone concerned, many hours being consumed in the interests of a five minute consultation. For many weeks, for me, it would mean leaving Garswood on the 8.30 a.m. train and returning at 6.05 p.m. After a few weeks, my mother, who had been accompanying me at the cost of forsaking a household of 11 members, thought that I could be trusted to venture into the great wide expanses of Wigan and thus, I was provided with the where-

From a Leigh Fourth, Third and Second Projectionist

Dear Sir

FURTHER to the article on the Regal Cinema, Leigh, in *Past Forward* 15, I'm afraid I can only identify one person in the photo of May 1954 - which you correctly name as Ken Brown (back row, right), whom I knew well from my early days at the cinema.

I left school at Christmas 1942, starting my first job as Fourth Projectionist (the 'Gofor' lad) early in January 1943. In those days the Projectionists were classified as: 1st or Chief Projectionist - in this case Mr. Cecil Wilson, 2nd Projectionist Mr. Frank Williams of Astley, 3rd Projectionist Mr. Raymond Reeves of Westleigh, then myself, whose job it was to rewind each reel of film as it came off the projector, play the old 78 R.P.M. records on what was then known as the 'Non-Sync' (a double record player as

it would be known today). I would occasionally operate the dual slide projector, and operate the house and proscenium lights. During the mornings, work would consist of preparing programmes, cleaning machines, switchrooms etc. - except on Thursday mornings when it was my pleasant duty to take the records back to Birchalls shop on Bradshawgate, and choose six new records for the coming week.

In those days (10 a.m. to 10 p.m., and later), our Manager was Mr. Fred Tatton - always immaculate during evening performances in his dress suit. He was a gentleman, but was strict when the occasion demanded it. I remember one evening about 9 p.m., when he caught me walking through the foyer with a cardboard box containing our supper of fish and chips from the chippy across the road for the lads in the projection

room. He didn't half chew me off a strip for stinking out the foyer, and then proceeded to telephone the Chief Operator and bend his ear somewhat. From then on, the foyer was a no-go area for the likes of me - but it didn't prevent us sneaking our chips in by another devious route!

For a young lad of 14, however, the real highlights were the regular war-time Sunday evening stage shows in aid of the War Report. Most of the top stars of stage and screen performed there, sometimes for a second or even third time, plus big name bands such as Joe Loss, Mantovani, the Squadronaires etc. One of the most popularly requested was the huge band of the Manchester Regiment - always playing to a full house. The atmosphere on these occasions was really something - similar, I would imagine, to a London first night performance. The public really appreciated these shows, and we, who were responsible for stage and spot-lighting, enjoyed the 'Showbiz' atmosphere tremendously - although the extra (unpaid) work involved another full day getting things ready.

My wage at that time was 27s.6d. per week - given over on Fridays to mother, who then gave me back the odd 7s.6d. for bus fares and lunches during the week. Once a week we would splash out on a meal in the British Restaurant at the back of the Palace Cinema which could cost as much as 1s.6d., including sweet, (7½p. I think).

But at the end of 1943, I left the Regal and started work as Third Projectionist at what was to become my second home - the Bedford Picturedrome in Chapel Street at the huge wage of

withal - TWO whole shillings (10p).

With hindsight, she probably had in mind a sum comprising train fare at 4d. return, bus (or was it tram) up to Wigan Infirmary, 1½/2d (twice), something to eat - perhaps a meat and potato pie in Dicky Lee's, plus a cup of tea - grand total 6d. Possible change, 11d. (4½p).

Nothing of the kind! Young Smith was consumed with the idea of eating in a restaurant with the added possibility of being seen either entering or leaving the Rendezvous by someone he knew (or perhaps her from Marks and Sparks!) and so the seal was set - at least until the heat was applied later at the accountant's meeting. Ever the matriarch, mother, though not by any means articulate, was extremely adept at explaining right from

wrong - a smile meant that you had got away with something, a "scutch", as she preferred to call it, most definitely and painfully impressed upon the miscreant that all was not right. Facial contact with a dolly-tub pickled hand in full flight is not to be recommended, especially if accompanied by a falsetto scream. "ONE AND THREEPENCE (6p) IN A CAFE - JUST WAIT TILL YOUR DAD COMES IN, MI LAD."

One of my several elder sisters didn't help. She was grammar school you know, sticking her motty in - again, "An it isn't Rendez-vus, it's Rawndi-vo."

Looking forward to the next issue of *Past Forward*.
J. H. Smith,
108 Worcester Lane,
Sutton Coldfield,
West Midlands.
B75 5NJ



continued from page 8

29s.6d. per week. This was a modest increase, but at least it was going in the right direction. Incidentally, I really learned to do the job properly here, from a first class Chief Projectionist, Mr. Vincent Hindley, who lived in Hurst Street. Film breakdowns were practically unknown, and the sound system was superb. Even here at this little 750 seat cinema, we held Sunday evening live concerts in aid of the war effort - not with such famous stars as entertained at the Regal, but nevertheless, well known local orchestras, bands and artists, who also attracted full houses. The quality of projection was so good that, in 1946, the cinema owner, Mr. Tod Kelly, was approached to see if he would allow his cinema to be used for morning film trade shows - at that time only carried out by top Manchester City Centre cinemas. He declined as he felt the extra work load on his staff would have been too much (we were already running three changes of show per week, plus Saturday Children's Matinee). Still, we all felt it was a great honour to have been selected.

Called up for National Service in February 1947 (and by this time Second Projectionist), and after serving in Germany with my regiment, I took over a job showing training films during the day and entertainment films in the evening at a R.E. training school of agriculture for officers and other ranks who were due to be demobbed. On my own demob in March 1949, I took up my old job again at the Bedford Cinema, until marriage and relatively low wages made a move out of the industry a must. But I still feel that those days working in the cinema trade, although with very un-sociable hours, were the 'good old days' - people then took the trouble to wash, change into decent clothes, and actually go through the door for their 'evening of magic'.

Continued success to a great publication.

Wilf Waterworth,
235 Leigh Road,
Leigh.
WN7 1SH

INTERESTING LETTER FROM A 'DOWN UNDER' 89 YEAR OLD

Dear Sir
I AM sure you will be interested in a copy of the letter I received from a reader of Past Forward living in Australia!

Les is now 89 years old and I remember him as a G.P.O. "Messenger Boy" (delivering telegrams!) and his father as a full blown postman. I am now 81, and so remember many of the characters that Les refers to in his letter.

Following this letter he phoned me last month from his home address to enquire whether he could have Past Forward sent direct by Air Mail to Australia, and he would pay all such postage for this quarterly in advance. I did mention that it would be expensive, but he felt that to send it by boat would take too long - such is the enthusiasm of one of your readers!

Friends in Wigan recently sent me Past Forward No. 13 Summer '96, also photos of Wigan Pier and a tin of Uncle Joe's Mint Balls (Santus).

I was born in 1908 in Charles Street, Golborne. I went to Church School and Tommy Southern was Head Master.

In 1913 or 1914, the Blacking Mill in Barn Lane burned down. The Fire Brigade galloped from Wigan. Yes galloped... as it was horse drawn then! Later it was rebuilt and used by Billy Wilcock of Harvey Lane for fixing second hand cars.

Not much happened that I remember in World War I, except going to the Pavilion Cinema in Tanners Lane. Charles Wheelan was Manager. It was known as "The Bug Opera" ... 1d. Rush Silents of course. My sister Amy played the piano there. Then in 1918 when the Armistice was signed, the whistles at Browns Cotton Mill, (later Harbens) and Golborne Pit told us the news. Then in June 1919, peace was signed. We had a procession through the street and finished up in Tom Tully's field in Barn Lane. The Golborne Urban District Council gave school children a Peace Cup ... I've still got mine.

I started work at Golborne Post Office (Mr. & Mrs. Beazley) in March 1922. I was then 13 1/2 years old.

We got electricity in Golborne in the mid 1920's because it was needed by Harbens to make Viscose Silk. Golborne Council Offices were then in Worsley Street and the Library was behind Golborne Printing Company on the corner of Worsley and Heath Streets.

When I started work, the Postmen were Cobbler Bob, Percy Marsh, Billy Dunphy, Teddy Westhead and Billy Hill, my father. Dad delivered Edge Green Lane, Ashton Road, Wigan Road to Swellbrow and Lightshaw Hall Farm - quite a long walk. Billy Dunphy and his wife Agnes and 10 children migrated to Australia - a few at a time - in the 1950's. I met them all as they arrived.

With Jim Greenhaugh, Mr. Bailey and myself, we ran the Scout Troup, but I had to give it up when I joined the RAF. I wonder if any of the ex-scouts remember us taking them on a Scout Camp in Portrush, Northern Ireland in 1935. I was in the RAF early 1940 to Christmas 1945, then back to Postman in Golborne until April 1949 when we sailed from Liverpool for Melbourne on the "Georgie".

I have met ex-Golborners here. Kenneth Hill, son of the painter, 93 High Street and Bert Pilling, the Butcher's across from Hill Painters. Bert came and had a couple of weeks here with us. I heard recently that he had died. In the 1920's Tom Hunt had a Shoe Shop on the corner of High Street and Police Street. He emigrated to New Zealand and then sent for Alice Walmesley of 75 Heath Street. They married in New Zealand and sent for her sister, Lois. I was over in New Zealand and having their addresses in Wellington, I looked them up. All the conversation was about Golborne. We get a Christmas Card each year from them - Alice is about 93 years old by now. I forgot to tell you that in the 1920's there weren't many cars - the only petrol was at Starkey's Cycle Shop next to Mat Spidys Pub, then Bob Barrow in Lowton Road Started selling R.O.P. Russian Oil Products 1s.11d. per gallon.

Do any of you older Golborners remember these characters - Hesketh the Chemist, Thurston Fernes the Newsagent, Maggie Southern Cake Shop, Dr. Dubb, Harold Platt the Shopkeeper, Platt's Ointment and Footpaste and Dick Hurst, the Organist.

I will probably think of more later. I am fortunate to have a good memory.

Les Hill
107 Broadwater Avenue,
Maroochydore 4558
Queensland,
Australia

P.S. The Rector at Golborne Parish Church was Reverend Richardson, with Reverend Phillips and Sister Jordan. The Catholic Church was in Church Street opposite the Pub "Signs in the Cellar". Father Kelly was the priest.

P.P.S. Another Golborner we had for a neighbour in Victoria, Australia, was Stan Jones, who had lived in Bank Street. He was the smartest lad in Golborne. When he came home on leave, he was an Engineer in the Merchant Navy.

Rothwell Bros. had a chocolate factory in Harvey Lane, producing "Welco Cocoa" - save the coupons for Butterfly Chocolates. When I got back in 1945, Littlewoods' Mail Order was in that building.

Does anybody remember going down Golborne Hollows at the bottom of the dip, turning right to an old building. On the lintel over the door was carved the following - "John Stirrup built this School House upon his own cost and charges and left the sum of 50 pounds for ever" (June 1668). I'm not sure of the date. I wonder if it is still there.

Then up the hill to a house with B.Y.H. in outstanding bricks. We said B.Y.H. stood for "Bait Your Horse".

Harold Marsh was a hairdresser at 59 High Street. His wife Maud had a place at the rear for ladies - they had one son, Ronnie, an excellent pianist. Most mothers had their babies at home with Mrs. Harrington, Midwife, looking after them. When she was too old, her daughter, Nurse Branch, had the job."

Harold and Maud Marsh referred to were my mother and father - and the Ronnie. "an excellent pianist" - myself!

Leaving Ashton Grammar School I started my hairdressing career in Father's "Barber Shop", finishing aged 65 as Manager for 30 years of "G. H. Lees" Liverpool Ladies Hairdressing Dept. (John Lewis Partnership).

To earn spending money every Saturday night as a 16 / 17 year old, I played the piano (Piano and Drums Band) at Madam Moss's Dancing Academy, overlooking the old market square (Tom Moss, now at Wigan Pier Dances was the son). This was where this Les Hill must have been a patron!

Ron Marsh,
154 Harvey Lane,
Golborne,
Warrington.
WA3 3QL

Exhibitions in the History Shop

Taylor Gallery

7 July - 2 August

Wigan Arts Festival Exhibition

9 - 23 August

Wigan Photographic Society Annual Exhibition

1 September - 25 October

To be announced

3 November - January 1998

Exhibition on the Library Building - The History Shop.

Wickham Gallery

July - January 1998

Charter '96

This major exhibition will continue throughout 1997.

Permanent

Rev. William Wickham

- A Victorian Photographer

In April the *Demon Drink* gave way to the altogether more sober pursuit of photography at the History Shop. This theme is featured in both galleries with the Wickham exhibition appropriately in the Wickham Gallery, and *Painting with Light* and then the Wigan Photographic Society exhibition in the Taylor Gallery.

Rev. William Wickham - A Victorian Photographer is our tribute to a remarkable

local vicar who left us an invaluable record of daily life in Wigan in the late 19th century through his hobby. As you enter the building you are now faced with some of Wigan's more colourful characters like the chimney sweep, the miner and the pit-brow lassies.

Painting with Light, an excellent exhibition on the science of photography written some time ago by Wigan Heritage Service, has graced the gallery through to the end of June.

The Wigan Photographic Society Annual Exhibition was held here last year and proved to be a great success. An opportunity to compare current amateur photography with the great man perhaps? This will once again be opened by the Mayor on a special club night at the History Shop on Friday 8 August.

Between these two shows will be an exhibition of work by the Standish and Ashton Art Groups as part of the Wigan Arts Festival. This event is going on in venues up and down the Borough, so look out for notices about other exhibitions. It is intended to have a special Festival weekend, 19 - 20 July.

Looking ahead we are hoping to mount an exhibition devoted to the subject of our marvellous History Shop building in November. Built in 1877 as Wigan's library its history makes fascinating reading, and will also be the subject of our November lecture, to tie in with National Library week, which runs from the 3rd to the 9th of the month.



Lectures in the History Shop

8 October

'From Pits to Parliament' - the life of Stephen Walsh, MP for Ince 1906-29. James Fairhurst

4 November

'The Early Days of Wigan Library', with a look at some antiquarian books. Bob Blakeman



One of Rev. Wickham's many splendid photographs, showing anxious but resolute faces in St. Andrew's Soup Kitchen queue during the miners' strike of 1893.

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:

£6.00

PER MORNING OR AFTERNOON SESSION

£9.00

PER EVENING SESSION

COMMERCIAL RATE ON APPLICATION

REFRESHMENTS ARE ALSO AVAILABLE

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

Stop Press!

THE History Shop has a brand new attraction! Now showing in the audio-visual theatre (along with the highly acclaimed 'Wigan Story') is a 16 minute video show, using some early footage which many readers will not have seen before.

Visitors can now re-live the royal visits of 1938 and 1954, the opening of the Private Patients Christopher Home, The Wigan Carnival of 1929 and a day at Wigan Grammar School in 1948. There is also some early footage of local coal mining, the old Central Park and Wigan Boys' Club on the canal at Wigan Pier.

But without question the highlight of this new Heritage Service production is some hitherto virtually unknown footage of the demolition of Wigan Pier in 1929. Photographs of this momentous event are well known (see opposite), but this film has only recently come to light, having been languishing in the archives of British Pathe in London. It may be short, but I guarantee you'll find it fascinating!

Contact the History Shop (01942 828128) for details of showings of this superb new video.

A walk with a difference



Photo courtesy of Lancashire Evening Post

ON 14 May 1997, as part of the annual Atherton Festival, Wigan Heritage Service's Tony Ashcroft took a group of interested visitors around Atherton Cemetery. Although this was the fourth year that this particular local history event had taken place, interest was still high and the tour, which included a reporter from G.M. Talk Radio, was a sell out. Initially Tony briefed the group about the history of the cemetery, which had been consecrated by the Lord Bishop of Manchester on 31 January 1857. References were also made to the whole social ethos appertaining to mourning, death and burial. Topics such as Friendly

and Burial Societies, mourning dress, funeral customs and trades were mentioned. Tony Bassett, Leigh Services Cemetery Officer, was also on the tour and provided additional information about his service.

The group then saw the graves of a number of local celebrities, such as Edward Ormerod (d. 1894), an Atherton mining engineer who had patented the butterfly safety device, Dr. George Parker (d. 1943), organist and musician, Charles Pooley (d. 1914), an Atherton man who had fought in the American Civil War and Lois Hartley (nee Heath) (d. 1994), a former Cotton Queen of Great Britain.

☉ Tony will be leading a tour of Leigh Cemetery on Wednesday 3 September. Tickets are available from Leigh Library at £1 each. The tour begins at the cemetery gates, Manchester Road at 2.00 p.m. Numbers are limited to 25 persons.

Tony will also be leading a Leigh Town Trail on Monday 11 August at 6.30 p.m. and Friday 5 September at 10.00 a.m. Again, tickets are available from Leigh Library at £1 each. Town trails leave from Leigh Library foyer. Numbers are limited to 20 persons.

News From the Archives

MARJORIE Bryden's reminiscences of her schooldays at Hindley & Abram Grammar (*Past Forward* 14) and the response from other old pupils and those connected with the school (*Past Forward* 15) are a good reminder that the history of a local institution can be discovered by combining these personal memoirs and other 'unofficial' records such as newspaper reports, with the surviving official archives. On these pages we reproduce a tiny selection of the documents that may be found for many schools amongst the holdings of Wigan Archives Service. These can be used by students of educational history, local historians and of course genealogists in the course of their research. Most of them are listed in our Guide to the Archives. The standard types of records that may survive include log books, admissions registers, accounts, inspectors' reports, administrative files and occasionally punishment books, as well as programmes for school events, photographs, plans and prospectuses. Several local grammar schools had official histories written about them. For HAGS there is a well researched essay by John Lowe of Hindley on the early development of the school up to Victorian times.

Preserved

All the items shown opposite are from the archives of Hindley & Abram. When it became as comprehensive as Park High Community School in 1977 many of the older records were carefully preserved in situ, and when in turn Park High closed in 1991 the Archivist made a careful selection of the records for permanent preservation. A similar procedure was adopted when other local schools closed during the 80's and '90's e.g. Mesnes High (Wigan Boys' Grammar), Whitley High (Girls' High), Whelley

Middle (Secondary Modern) and Cardinal Newman. Many elementary (primary) schools are also represented amongst our holdings. Special care was taken to ensure that very recent documents were selected (where available) as well as older material, since although there is a standard closure of 30 years on school records, in time these too will become freely available for research.

By way of an example of how an Inspector's Report can throw light on a school's problems and achievements over the years, here are extracts from the Report on HAGS during Mrs. Bryden's time there:

Leaving Age

"The average leaving age of pupils who left after reaching their fourteenth birthday has fallen during the last three years by ten months for boys and by two months for girls. A parallel change is evident in the time spent by pupils at the School after reaching 11 years of age; for boys this time has fallen from 6 years 2 months to 5 years 3 months and for girls from 5 years 6 months to 5 years 4 months. The average leaving age and the average school life are still higher than the corresponding figures for Lancashire and for the country as a whole, but the fall for boys is so great that some alarm must be felt lest it continue and the School cease to hold its distinguished position in this respect. Moreover, the Sixth Form has been almost halved during the last four years and during the same time the number of children

HAGS - SCHOOL RECORDS

who have left between the ages of 14 and 16 years has been trebled. It would be unfortunate if the need of pupils to take the first post which was offered should reduce the number of children from this district who complete the full Secondary course."

The occupations of 52 girls and 60 boys who left the Sixth Form during the last four years are shown in the following table (see foot of page).

Of the 39 girls and 14 boys who entered Training Colleges 18 girls and 8 boys have already obtained posts in schools. From an education point of view, it is unfortunate that these posts have all been in the immediate neighbourhood. A broader experience might have been to the interest both of the schools and the teachers. It is believed that four of the trained girls are unemployed; the increasing difficulty experienced by girls in obtaining entry to Training Colleges is one of the causes of the reduction in size of the Sixth Form.

Mathematics and Physics are the subjects most usually taken by those who proceed to the University."

Scholarships

Just over 83 per cent. of the pupils in the School hold Special Places awarded by the Lancashire County Council and on the County Scale 76 per cent. of the

	Girls	Boys
At University	1	22
Entered Training Colleges	39	14
Entered Domestic Science Colleges	4	0
Civil Service and Local Government Clerkships	4	5
In Chemical and Engineering Works	0	6
Other Clerical Occupations	2	10
Pharmaceutical Chemist	0	1
Shop Assistant	1	0
Nursing	1	0
Unemployed	0	2

pupils are allowed total remission of fees. Maintenance grants are paid on the same scale and may include free dinners; at present dinners are provided for five pupils by the County and for seven more by the United Services Fund. The Head Master reports that during the Spring Term 1936 more children were away ill than ever before and he is of the opinion that in this district the effects of the industrial depression are just becoming visible in the Secondary School population.

Staff

The Head Master has been at the School for thirty-two years and for eighteen he has held his present position. He is an able administrator, energetic and forceful yet kindly, he has complete control of the School and deserves the loyalty which is evident in the staff and pupils. He is assisted by a full-time secretary and devotes nine periods to teaching

Mathematics to the Fifth and Sixth Forms.

The assistant staff is hard working and numerically adequate. Of the sixteen graduate Masters and Mistresses all are competent and an unusually high proportion are teachers of distinction. The influence of the Mathematicians and Scientists is stronger than that of other sides of the School and with a generally strong staff a higher standard might be expected in the Humanities. Music, Woodwork, Domestic Science and Physical Training are taken by a visiting staff of five, which includes experienced and competent teachers. Staff changes since the last Full Inspection have resulted in the replacement of four Mistresses and one Master by six Mistresses and two Masters. The Senior Mistress interviews the parents of girls and is responsible for the school luncheon arrangements.

Hindley & Abram Grammar School Magazine

No. 2

DECEMBER, 1922.

Editor:

MISS L. NICHOLAS

Sub-Editors:

ANN KIRKMAN.

FISHEWICK.

Committee:

MISS G. K. MACARA.

MR. L. HEELEY.

A. SIMPSON.

SMITH.

H. HIGSON.

FRANCE.

Editorial.

For the second time we are publishing our School Magazine. The first issue was so successful that we have been able to continue our projected ideas, and to carry forward the magazine. The contributions to the second issue have been quite numerous and far exceed last term's efforts. Moreover, the majority have been of a very high standard especially those from the Junior School, whose contributions were both numerous and good. Those whose efforts have not succeeded need not be discouraged; we hope they will not desist to contribute, but will strive to win approval next time. We are very sorry and painfully surprised, at the small number of contributions in the Senior School. No senior can yet plead examination work. We hope their lack of zeal will be fully made good in our next issue, for it is not seemly that the juniors should represent the whole School. Anyone wishing to criticize this, our second issue, is quite at liberty to do so in the columns of our next issue, for we are not afraid of criticism. However, we should be much more obliged if the critics would add example to precept in order that future magazines may be even more successful than their predecessors.

A. KIRKMAN.
FISHEWICK.

School Notes.

TENNIS TOURNAMENT.

During the Summer Term of the last School Year, a girls' tennis tournament was held for the juniors and seniors. The entry fee was threepence and everyone was eligible for entry. The first rounds were played off on the School field and at the Park after four o'clock, during the dinner hour, and in the games period on Wednesdays, under weather conditions which were far from favourable. The finals were played on the School field, during a 'game-hall' on a Thursday, when many members of the School were enjoying themselves in the examination room. In the seniors, Esther Dean was successful in the Singles Championship, and Ella Puddy and Mary Anderson in the Doubles. In the juniors, Phyllis Leyland won the Singles Championship, and with Marion Filcott carried off the prize for the Doubles.


Earliest surviving edition of the school magazine, 1922. If anyone has a spare of the first number, or any others to fill the gaps in the official set, we would like to hear from them.



Hockey Team c.1910.



Staff 1951.

STAFF.		STAFF.	
		<hr/>	
Headmaster: - - W. S. FAIRBROTHER, M.Sc.		Headmaster: - - W. S. FAIRBROTHER, M.Sc.	
Senior Assistant Master: J. Taylor, B.Sc.	Senior Assistant Mistress: Miss R. Y. CRAIG, M.A.	Senior Assistant Master: J. TAYLOR, B.Sc.	Senior Assistant Mistress: Miss R. Y. CRAIG, M.A.
Assistant Masters:	Assistant Mistresses:	Assistant Masters:	Assistant Mistresses:
L. Heeley, B.A., L.C.P.	Miss L. Nicholas, M.A.	L. HEeley, B.A., L.C.P.	Miss L. NICHOLAS, M.A.
L. W. Topham, M.Sc., B.A.	Miss T. Barnsley, B.A.	L. W. TOPHAM, M.Sc., B.A.	Miss E. M. NAISH, B.Sc.
L. Fielden, B.Sc.	Miss E. Ogden, B.A.	L. FIELDEN, B.Sc.	Miss M. A. THOMAS, B.A.
C. R. Cockcroft, B.A.	Miss E. M. Naish, B.Sc.	C. R. COCKCROFT, B.A.	Miss H. UNSWORTH, Art. Diploma
J. R. Griffith, B.Sc.	Miss M. A. Thomas, B.A.	J. R. GRIFFITH, B.Sc.	Miss STATHAM, B.A.
W. Atherton, B.Sc., A.I.C.		W. ATHERTON, B.Sc., A.I.C.	
H. J. Barker, M.A.		H. J. BARKER, M.A.	
Visiting Staff:		Visiting Staff:	
W. Robertson (Physical Exercises)	Miss N. Booth (Physical Exercises)	R. EVERSON (Physical Exercises)	Miss M. K. BARTLETT (Physical Exercises)
J. Davis (Woodwork)	Miss N. C. Cobban (Cookery)	J. A. DAVIES (Woodwork)	Miss R. HOODY (Cookery and Nursing)
J. Oakes, A.C.T.C.		E. FRANCE, Prof. Dip., I.S.M.	
E. France, Prof. Dip., I.S.M.			
Headmaster's Clerk: - - Miss M. E. Caldwell		Headmaster's Clerk: - - Miss M. E. CALDWELL	

Left: Staff List 1930. Right: Staff List 1938 (see Letters in Past Forward 15).

Church Register Transcripts and Inscriptions

Several items have been added to the open shelves at both the History Shop and the Archives Office in recent months. Firstly, Wigan Family History Society's transcript of the remaining portion of the first Wigan parish register, covering the period 1625 to 1663. This has been a labour of love by Len Marsden over several years. The register for 1580-1625 was published as long ago as 1899 by Lancashire Parish Register Society. Now, a complete typescript with index is available at the Archives Office in Leigh, whilst a limited edition microfiche of this has been made and is available at the History Shop. The original register is of course preserved in the archives and a microfilm of this is always available.

Len has for some time been working on a similar transcript of the second register which covers the period 1663 to 1721, and this is already well advanced. Further news of this in future editions of *Past Forward*. It is hoped to interest the LPRS in publishing these transcripts in due course. At present they are preparing an edition of the Ashton registers.

Transcripts of the registers of the Roman Catholic chapel at Standish Hall from their commencement in 1742 to 1799 have been made by Phil Fairclough of Wakefield. Copies are available at both Wigan and Leigh. The chapel was central to Catholic life in the area, and of course the Standishes were loyal to the old faith after the Reformation. Mr. Fairclough's transcript includes a list of the priests associated with the Hall.

Ted Cheetham of Shevington has also been very busy transcribing, in his case the Roman Catholic registers and inscriptions for St. Joseph's at Wrightington. He has copied the baptisms for 1893-1905 and the burials from 1893 to 1995, and all the surviving memorial inscriptions in the burial ground. Again copies are available at Wigan and Leigh.

Finally, another document held at Leigh has been copied for use at the History Shop. This is from the records of Tyldesley Wesleyan Methodist chapel, and contains a register of graves, put together in 1909 by John Gerrard, listing the burials in each plot and showing the location of plots on sketch plans of the burial ground. The earliest burial is dated 1816, the latest 1903. Interestingly there was a separate children's section in the graveyard, and all these burials are listed between 1837 and 1879. Few Methodist churches had their own burial grounds, but the old chapel on Elliott Street was an exception. The book also contains a membership list for 1851-1865, with some biographical details about each member.

More on HAGS on pages 14 and 15



OF all the articles which have appeared in *Past Forward*, few have produced such a response as Mrs. Marjorie Bryden's recollections of Hindley and Abram Grammar School in issues 14 and 15. Here are three further responses. See also News from the Archives. (p12).

Many readers will be pleased to note that Mrs. Bryden has sent me her recollections of her PRE-HAGS days at Sacred Heart School, Hindley Green. These will appear in *Past Forward* 17.

Dear Sir,

No. 8 Wigan Road, Hindley

A friend kindly sent me Mrs. Bryden's Memories of Hindley which you printed in your *Past Forward* magazine. I was particularly interested in the one she wrote about the shops at the Bird (*Past Forward* 9). However my family and I were disappointed that she didn't mention the Temperance Bar and Herbalist at Number 8, as this had been kept by the Gore family for many years. It was situated between the pet shop and the butchers, and as far as I know was the only shop to have the owner and family living on the premises.

The first member of the family to run the shop was my great grandfather Thomas Gore. He was born in Chapel Green, Hindley in 1863. Another Thomas Gore who was my great, great, great grandfather lived in Hindley in the late 18th century - there may have been Gores before that but as yet I haven't traced them. The Gores have lived and died in Hindley over a period of at least 200 years.

Thomas Gore (my great grandfather) went to work in the pit at the age of eleven - he married Rachel

Catterall, also a native of Hindley who worked in the mill, and they lived for a time in Back Bridge Street. How Thomas acquired the Temperance Bar I do not know, nor do I know if he owned or rented the business. He was there in 1929 when I was born in Hindley Green - perhaps someone can tell me more.

My aunt Minnie Gore was considered too delicate to work in the mill and she used to help Thomas in the shop. My grandfather William Gore took over after Thomas died and was there until he died in 1946.

There must be many people in Hindley who remember him. He was a lovely man - gentle and kind. My earliest recollections of the shop are when he lived there. He, too, had been a miner but had to leave as a result of injuries received at work.

The shop sold its own herbal beer brewed in the back outhouse. It was then pumped into two barrels in the shop and dispensed just as it is in pubs by pump handles, whilst other drinks were made up and stored in smaller ceramic barrels lined up on a shelf. Above them were rows of wooden drawers which contained the herbs sold in the shop. I recall a pair of brass scales with the weights lined up - all gleaming. There were some ceramic name plates for some of the herb drawers as well. There were sweets in large jars, including Uncle Joe's Mint Balls; Carter's Little Liver Pills were sold as well. The kettle would be singing on the hob in the winter for those who wanted hot Vimto or Peppermint drinks. Oxo too.

After William Gore died my mother Maggie Gore took over the business until she and my father, Bill Hutchinson, moved to Ladies Lane sometime in the 50's when my uncle, another William Gore, took over. I am unsure when the business finally closed as I had long gone from Hindley, though I did teach for two years at Britannia Bridge Infants School in Ince. During that time I lived at the shop and my sisters and I slept in the room above it. It could be disconcerting to draw back the curtains in the morning and find the whole top deck of a bus, halted at the traffic lights, with the people gazing back at one - so close too.

This type of business must have been unique to the north of the country - certainly I've not come across another in my travels. Perhaps there is someone who knows a lot more than I do about them and would let us know about the business or the family.

Margaret Hutchinson,
46 Kings Gardens,
Kerslakes Court,
Honiton,
Devon.
EX14 8FL

Dear Sir,

Who was the 'Baron'?

In the H.A.G.S. wartime news bulletin of 1940 - which along with the School Magazine may have been the last of its kind - the Gryphons (via the courtesy of Mrs. Bryden, who herself was Triton) alluded to the coming engagement of the Baron & Nick. Clearly the last-named was Miss Nicholas, but who, pray, was the Baron?

At that time there was only one 'Baron' attached to the H.A.G.S. and that was the playing fields groundsman - always to be found down Park Road and across from Leyland Park, in his pavilion complete with boiler and fire. His name was Mr. Hitchen, but to the boys he was always known as 'Baron', the origin of which never came to light; but sometimes he was afforded the full title of Baron Hitchen von Scratchin'. Some short time later Baron was found dead of a heart attack in his pavilion 'office' where regularly on preceding and happier occasions he entertained certain miscreants of the Senior School for the function of their smoking-parties, mainly during the lunch-time breaks.

Yet, what of the versatile but lethal dose from the female academy who hailed from London to rule the world as she saw it - but always with deference to the juggernaut which was the Headmaster, W. S. Fairbrother - which was Miss E. M. Naish. Emma at the time would probably have been in her thirties, and around 5½ feet in height. She seemed always to wear comfortable soft-soled flattish leather shoes which permitted her to move in comparative

silence whilst clad in her belted brown smock. Her small-appearing eyes were veiled behind thickish glass lenses held in thin metallic frames, and her small head was made to appear from a tight and well-groomed tonsure of the square pattern with a parting locked with a cross-secured fringe. Her gait was heavy-legged and deliberate as might suit the Teuton, and overall, she wasn't the pretty sight sufficient to inspire the higher motives from many of the opposite sex. Emma was short-tempered bordering on the vicious, and is on record as having once told the writer that she could 'knock your head off!'

In 1937 that which was room 2 - later to become room 1 - was located directly beneath the Physics Laboratory, where likewise the tutorial positions were on above the other. There had been an occasion when in the lower room 2 a large patch of ceiling plaster had fallen on the tutorial desk from the concrete under-ceiling. This had been precipitated by the incessant stamping of the instructional feet of the Laboratory Tutor, so induced by the total stupidity of the Physics class as seen by the tutor, who in turn was Emma.

Within the later 12 months a rather rummy instance occurred when a female Gryphon Prefect whom we shall call Lilian changed her hair-style to a School avant-garde fashion, which risked the censure of the School Head and his lady-equivalent. Yet Lilian's choice prevailed. She was a tall well-made girl, sallow-complexioned, and with all the necessary curves showing in the right places as emphasised by her gym-slip. Formerly Lilian kept her hair, which was off-blonde, in set-back locks behind the ears to help in a kind of provoking appearance. On the particular morning she carried her hair with a forehead roll, which was swept back along with a ribbon to clear her ears and fall on her shoulders in what might have been termed an under-roll. If not provoking, then the style was certainly revolutionary within the School.

In addition to meeting with the unspoken assent of the School's young males, whether Lilian ever alerted the perceptions of the male Tutorial Staff was never

known, but her clear challenge to the establishment passed without mention, save for one; that of Miss Naish. At least this Mistress was quick to indicate to the girls of our junior class that the reprehensible new-look of one of the senior girls was basically illicit and an affront to the School. No names were mentioned. The matter did not end here, however, and for a period Lilian kept up her new-style appearance.

Within two or three days of this latest wonder - and why ever choosing the morning assembly in the School hall to display her own revelation will never be known - Emma, in her normal neat and tidy attire beneath the brown smock walked crimson-faced, yet boldly, into the assembly with her one-time starched-pattern tonsure released from its main securing hair-pin to float in a wispy, wind-blown fashion about her crown and ears. Her own response to Lilian's challenge evidenced some withdrawal of her earlier censure, and indeed had gone to show her decision in the event of being unable to beat them, to instead join them. Though not a word was uttered, nor the flicker of a smile released, the fast-forming atmosphere within the hall became thicker than pea-soup; leaving Emma to bolster-up her standing alone and unheralded. Her reversion to the original habitual coiffure was only days away - two or three actually.

In 1937/38 Miss Naish supervised our Lower School class for its biology lessons which were held in the sub-room 7 (later 9) of the Chemistry Laboratory. Progressively the pupils were introduced to the Amoeba, Hydra, Plant-life and the Mammals. She was customarily thorough as she ploughed through the reproduction processes of the various species; such was until she came to the section of mammals where the females carried their incubated young until the eventual birth. At this point it became necessary to explain just how the young got to be within the mother. Emma, whilst trying to hold her class under her controlling eye was once more adopting her crimson-countenance whilst seeming to experience difficulty with her words. "The parent



Ernie Taberner stays with 'smells more terrible' around Wigan Pier *I remember when . . .*

OCCUPYING the centre of the yard was a brick building with a slate roof, one half of which was a communal lavatory, but the other half back to back was the midden or ash pit. There were no ash bins, all the rubbish was simply thrown into the midden and the door closed. On clearance days, the ashpit men would call with a metal bin and a couple of spades and fill the bin with the contents of the midden and carry the bin up the entry to be unloaded into the ash cart waiting in the street. This would be repeated as often as necessary until the midden was cleared.

The other half of the building was the closet or petty, as it was called, and was a white wash lavatory with a stone flagged floor and a door that would close, but had no interior locks or bolts, so had to be held shut by the occupant's foot. The bolts had been removed so that the younger generation could not lock themselves inside!

On a low brick about 20 inches or so from the floor was a scrubbed board the full width of the compartment, with two holes cut into it to make two lavatory seats. It was quite

usual for both seats to be occupied at the same time, even by members of different families. Obviously adult males would not occupy the closet if it was already occupied by a female of another family, but didn't object if the occupant was another male. In fact, two males or two females would sit there for 15 or 20 minutes discussing the main topics of the day!

The lavatory was swilled out every Saturday and the board scrubbed by each family in turn, when newspapers would be cut up into squares and hung by a piece of string on a nail behind the door. (The writer never saw toilet paper except in public toilets up the town, and in the school toilets, and was quite sure that only places owned by the Corporation had this luxury!).

If the arrangement so far described seems primitive, the cleansing and disposal were even more so, and is only described here for the record. There was no flushing cistern, the waste simply dropping into metal tubs one under each hole. These were collected by corporation workmen calling themselves "The Night Soil Department", once weekly,

usually the day after the ashpit men called. They had a special cart that had several enclosed compartments along each side, each compartment having clean tub with a spring loaded lid on it. The clean tub would be carried from the cart in the street by two men, down the entry, and dragging out the used tub from under the board via the midden door, would transfer the lid from the clean tub to the soiled one to prevent spilling, and carry this back to the cart. When the cart was full of soiled tubs, the load would be transported to the Miry Lane department for disposal and the tubs disinfected ready for the next batch of calls.

The men would make a noise as they dropped the clean tubs outside the midden, purposely to warn any lavatory occupants that they were about to open the midden door. If no call came back such as "Hang on a bit", one of them would gingerly push open the door with his foot calling "Anybody in there?" before opening the access door at the back.

In fact, the writer can recall one particularly mischievous prank, when he and several small friends decided an elderly neighbour

had already been in occupation for too long. Opening the midden door and using a rolled up newspaper as a tickling stick, she was quickly persuaded to vacate the place, cursing us and declaring that "she didn't know what was going to become of the young ones today." She never found out who it was, although no doubt she had a good idea.

In closing this part of the recollections, it should be noted that no one ever used the building on a rainy night because it rained through the missing slates and there was no light. The following morning, however, there was a procession of neighbours emptying buckets that had served as night commodes. One of these neighbours had only the front door to the street, as the back part of the house was occupied by a different family, so the bucket had to be carried into the street, down the entry into the yard, emptied into the tub and the process repeated when the bucket was filled with clean water to be swilled round.

Still, as rents were 2s. 10d. per week (under 15p), what else could be expected, one wonders!



continued from page 14

mammals," she struggled to explain in some hesitation, "fuse together." In that then-silent room where even the dropping of a rubber eraser might have been as an explosion, amongst the pupils were those whose hands were straying to conceal the mirth which was showing on their mouths.

Then the Mistress emitted a roar, with her hands beating some deafening tattoo on the hardwood bench-top beneath a face contorted with the wrath of a super-devil. "Stop it, stop it, stop it! I

know what is going on in your dirty, evil minds! Take your hands away from your mouths immediately and remove those lewd, stupid grins! You're all alike; the lot of you!" In near exhaustion the outburst ended, as hands were lowered and fading grins in some stunned fashion subsided. The drumming having ceased, Emma took up her reprimand in a harsh yet quieting tone at which the pupils stared aghast. The average age would have been around 11½ years. What could they say? We were never to know, for mercifully the corridor bells rang to indicate the change of lessons. Emma withdrew and breezed from the room like some wicked witch from the North, leaving the scholars to renew their humour before spilling into the corridors with their latest hot-potato report to pour into the ears of others.

© Harry Entwistle,
Kritthia,
3, Queensway,
Ince-in-Makerfield.
WN2 2HL

Dear Mr. Gillies,

A pupil 1948 - 1953

On a recent, though long over-due visit to my family in Hindley, I had the pleasure of calling in at your excellent History Shop. How I wish I had allowed myself more time to browse around the marvellous displays and information service on offer. What a wonderful service it is to Wigan and the surrounding area. Fortunately, I was able to purchase the current, and several back numbers of

Past Forward, several of which contained articles about the old Hindley and Abram Grammar School, where I was a pupil from 1948-1953 when many of the members of staff mentioned were still there, which indicates that many of them were at the school for over 20 years.

To my great surprise on buying a booklet of pictures of Hindley and Hindley Green No. 2, I found myself on the back cover as an eight year old amongst the group in Ward Street in 1945. I imagine the producer of this booklet was Jack Lowe who was History master at Hindley Grammar School, and later Headmaster of Argyle Street Secondary Modern School and then Mornington Road. Another picture of particular interest is that of

Castle Hill School which I attended 1941-1948. How well I remember my years there under the headship of Miss Mona Aspinall and her long-serving staff Misses Downham, Wilcocks, Unsworth, Wall, and Mrs. McCormick.

Through the medium of the various publications and my visit to the History Shop, I have had a thoroughly enjoyable stroll down Memory Lane, and would be delighted to receive further copies of *Past Forward* as they are published.

Les Johnson,
"Oakley",
63, Heath Road,
Ipswich,
Suffolk.
IP4 5RY

This account of a funeral was found in an old notebook of Alfred Lamb's which he used mainly to record quotations from the Bible or from other serious books but which also contained occasional personal diary items such as a funeral. It has been kindly contributed by his descendent, David Lamb, of Windermere, Cumbria.

A Family Funeral

CHARLOTTE WATSON (Polly) died on August 25th 1888, aged 30 years. A letter from Sophia Watson, August 27th, informed us of same.

August 28th. (Tuesday) went to Birmingham to attend funeral. Found Uncle Milligan and Harry in same train, on same errand. [Thomas Millidan, Colliery Agent, of 11, Upper Dicconson St. Wigan who had married Alfred Lamb's aunt Mary in 1846, and his son Harry (born 1861) who became a solicitor practising in Wallgate]

Met at Birmingham station by Uncle Ruddick [Christopher Ruddick, one of five brothers, all travelling drapers, who mainly lived in Queen Street or Caroline Street, Wigan. Christopher had married Polly's mother, Alfred Lamb's aunt Alice who had previously been married to Thomas Watson] and George Watson (Polly's husband). Went to the house in Pershore Road in a cab.

Stranger Among Strangers

Our cousin had been married about 12 months previously. Her husband was unknown to me personally although he belonged to the same family into which Polly's Mother had married but I did not know her husband nor any of her husband's family and thus I went forth a stranger among strangers, but desiring to do what little honour I could on behalf of our family to the remains of one of my Father's Sister's children.

She was an only child, strong and active and seemed likely to live as long as any of us.

I did not see Uncle Milligan and Harry until we arrived at Crewe where we had to change. Uncle said "Were you asked to come to the funeral?" I replied "No! - Sophia Watson had written to us concerning the death, but had not mentioned anything about the Funeral, and I should not have known anything about it had Harry not told me the day before". Uncle smiled and said he did not think he would have gone then had he been me.

by Alfred H. Lamb of
Bellingham Lodge, Wigan
— August 1888 —

But I went all the same. Uncle Ruddick seemed to think it quite natural that I should be there and grasped me firmly by the hand. He then walked in front with Uncle Milligan, Harry, George Watson and I came on together behind.

I whispered to Harry "You had better introduce me to George". Harry replied "Oh I thought you knew each other". (The fact was however that we had not met before) and turning to George he said "My cousin Alfred - George Watson". George then firmly grasped me by the hand and thanked me for coming.

Exercised Control

Now Polly was Uncle Ruddick's stepdaughter and only child. He had given up his business in Wigan to come and live with her and her husband in Birmingham. At the station, and while going to the cab I thought that Uncle Ruddick seemed to feel his loss more than George did. Uncle never smiled, his frame trembled and he had to exercise control to bear up.

George smiled several times in a half-hearted sort of way - but then I tried to keep his mind fixed on other things than the funeral. He admitted he did not realise his loss at all yet.

After half-an-hour's drive we reached our destination.

The house is situated in a nice quiet part of Edgbaston, is comfortable and well furnished without any undue pretensions. The neighbours showed their respect to the dead and living by having their blinds drawn right along the road.

At the house I met George's Father, Uncle, two of his Sisters, two of his Brothers (Charles and Alfred), Alfred's wife, Charle's affianced and Aunt Halliwell [Alfred Lamb's aunt Charlotte who had married William Halliwell,

landlord of the Ship Inn, Millgate, in 1865]. I found them all very nice people without particularizing individuals, and at once felt I had done right in coming and that all were pleased.

Having taken off our water-proofs (for it was very wet), put by our umbrellas and hats, George took Harry and me upstairs for a wash. Since our arrival George appeared to feel his position much more keenly - we both noticed this and so when we went to see the coffin, persuaded him not to come with us.

A Very Nice Coffin

The Coffin was a very nice one in every sense of the word; and a lovely wreath rested on it - presumably that of the husband. Downstairs there were something like 15 or 20 lovely wreaths sent by friends.

We now came downstairs, were introduced all round, had something to eat and then the Clergyman came.

Sharp-Pointed Nose

He was a slim, moderately tall young man about 28 years of age, very fair, a large prominent sharp-pointed nose slightly of the Roman Order, and a little chin; a good brow but weak jaw - a combination and a study. He greeted us all in a general, quiet manner and then advanced to George who sat next to me and who by this time had broken down and was sobbing. Drawing a seat close beside him he placed his arm in his and in a quiet sober voice did his best to cheer him up.

Among other things he alluded to the value of sympathy. He pointed out the beautiful wreaths, he mentioned the fact of so many coming all the way from Wigan, and then he spoke of the good that often was the fruit of sorrow such as his and added "If you will this day

resolve to be a good Christian your wife will not have died in vain and before very long you will meet her again in a far happier home. We mourn not as those without hope". With suchlike words did he try to console poor George (but 12 months a husband). Then rising he said "Before leaving this house I should like us all to offer up prayer to our Heavenly Father". We all then knelt down and he offered up a solemn prayer (extempore). The Coffin was then borne downstairs to the hearse, the wreaths being piled up on the top.

We drove in Carriages to the Cemetery where we arrived in about half-an-hour. The girls came also in a cab behind and joined us at the grave side.

Earth to Earth...

The usual Ceremony in the Chapel took place and was followed by the Funeral procession. The rain was coming down in torrents, but thanks to a good Waterproof Cape I was all right. I did not notice the order of the procession but Alfred Watson and I came on behind last - arm in arm - he had left his umbrella behind. The Grave was reached. The Coffin was lowered - "Earth to earth, dust to dust, ashes to ashes".....Every eye was dim. Uncle shook like a leaf driven with the wind, George sobbed, one of the girls screamed. But at last all was over, we had one last look at the Coffin and then turned away.

We had done our duty - though a sad one.

We returned as we came but more quickly - had a quiet little chat altogether; then tea and it was already time to start for the train home again. Having said farewell we came out to the tram which went pass the house.

Having forgotten my bag, I had to return to the house for it and you may judge my surprise and pleasure when Uncle Ruddick, above all others, said they would be very pleased to find me a bed if I did not go home that night. I did not stay but thanked him and all the others all the same and then turned my steps toward the station.

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. Rosalie Naylor, 3 Pennington Close, Aspull, Wigan (01942 256145).

11 September *Medieval Wigan and its Charters*

Bob Blakeman.

9 October A Dramatisation
by Irene Lizzie Jones.

13 November *The American Civil War*
Fred Holcroft.

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. Members £1, Non-members £1.50. Everyone welcome. 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).

9 September *The Sankey Canal*
Rev. David Long

14 October *The Civil War in Lancashire*
Fred Holcroft

11 November *'Ey-up' - Lancashire Dialect*
Roy Gaskell

SOCIETY NEWS

Leigh & District Family History Society

Meetings are held on the 3rd Tuesday of every month in the Derby Room of Leigh Library.

19 August *Project Evening*

16 September Members evening - *Getting Started, Fiche and Family History Books*

21 October *Computers in Family History*

18 November *Irish Family History*

Jo McCann

16 December *Christmas Festivities*

Lizzie Jones

For further details contact the Secretary, Mrs. O. Hughes (01942 741594).

Leigh Local History Society

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.

Wigan Civic Trust

The Trust meets at 7.30 p.m., on the second Monday of the month, at the Drumcroon Arts Centre, Parsons Walk, Wigan.

For further information contact Anthony Grimshaw, Secretary (01942 245777).

14 July - Coops Building, Hallgate, Wigan, 7.30 p.m.

Tour of the Coops Foyer Building.

A complex redevelopment which involves the refurbishment of one of Wigan's finest Victorian buildings.

11 August - Wigan Observer, Martland Mill, 7.30 p.m.

Tour of the facilities.

8 September - Drumcroon, 7.30 p.m.

The River Douglas since the Ice Age
Mike Atty

Wigan Family History Society

Meetings are now held on the first and third Tuesday of the month, at the Springfield Hotel, Springfield Road, Wigan. (N.B. change of date and venue).

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WIGAN
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MINE HOST: G. GROVE

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Free to sit and free to think,
Free to pay for what you drink,
Free to stop an hour or so,
When uneasy, free to go.

In God we trust; all others cash.

Our beer is good, our measure just,
Forgive us please, we cannot trust;
We have trusted many to our sorrow,
So pay to-day and owe to-morrow.

Our clock ticks, but we don't.

2 pints make - - - - 1 quart
4 quarts make - - - - 1 gallon
1 argument makes - - - - 1 quarrel
1 quarrel makes - - - - 1 fight
1 fight makes - - - - 2 policemen
1 magistrate - - - - 20/- or 14 days

Rothschild could write a few words and make
it worth £1,000,000. That's Capital.

A navy can move tons of earth per day and
earn several shillings. That's Labour.

Some tradesmen do not study their customers.
That's a Mistake.

A man can run a business and not advertise.
That's Foolishness.

Solomon had six hundred wives and slept with
his father. That's Wisdom.

When you swear, swear by your county.
When you steal, steal away from bad company.
When you DRINK, drink with

GEORGE and JENNY,
OLD HALL HOTEL,
LOWER INCE.

Call frequently.
Drink moderately.
Pay honourably.
Be good company.
Part friendly.
Go home quietly.

We have been pleasing and displeasing the
public ever since we started.

We have also been cussed and discussed,
robbed, lied to, held up, hung up and
knocked up. The only reason we are
staying in business is to see what the hell
will happen next.

Life is just one damned thing after another.

From an advertising leaflet for the Old Hall Hotel, Lower Ince, Wigan.



A Southport Shrimp?

Dear Sir,

Family tradition had it that my great-grandfather, George Heaton Daglish (1839 - 1913) described himself as a Southport Shrimp, which was taken to mean that he had been born there. In my research into family history I can find no evidence of this story; in fact his birth certificate gives Standishgate, Wigan as the place of birth. This is where his father lived and practised as a surgeon. George's baptism was at Wigan Parish Church (All Saints) in the following year.

I later found in the 1871 census records for Ormskirk Road in the township of Orrell

that a group of houses there were described by the enumerator as "Little Southport". As George's grandfather (Robert Daglish, whose "Yorkshire Horse" locomotive was described in *Past Forward* 6) lived at Orrell Lodge in Ormskirk Road, could this be the origin of what might have been a private joke?

Your readers seem to be able to answer many of the queries which appear in your pages. Can anyone throw any light on the reason for this area being known as "Little Southport"? Does the name live on?

Many thanks for another issue of *Past Forward*, full of interest as always.

J. R. A. Daglish,
8 Cooper Avenue
North,
Liverpool.
L18 4PG.

Face was peering back

Dear Sir,

Flicking through the pages of *Past Forward* No 15, I suddenly stopped at a glimpse of a familiar face. Amazingly, the face was peering back at me over a period of 64 years. Here was my Auntie Annie who was in the photograph of Standard Three at Ince C. of E. Central Schools taken in 1932; she is the second girl from the left in the front row.

Annie Ormesher, as she then was, lived close to Ince Parish Church just off Ince Green Lane. She hasn't travelled far, crossing the border to live now in the Mesnes Road district of Wigan. She was instantly recognisable from the photograph

Annie and her husband Tom Green, for many years ran a successful butcher's shop in Manchester Road, Higher Ince, not far from the school.

I have never really considered it before, but your correspondent from Ince-in-Makerfield made me realise what a responsibility these ladies carried during the war years and what unrecognised sacrifices they must have made. Annie worked in munitions at the armaments factory at Bradley, Standish, while her husband Tom was doing his bit in the army in the Italian campaign. Younger sister Florence served in the Land Army and she married Rennie

PHILIP LARKIN AND LEIGH

Dear Sir,

'Philip Larkin - the Leigh Connection' (*Past Forward* No. 15) was a valuable contribution by Tony Ashcroft to Larkin research. Currently, I am investigating Larkin's topographical connections and wanderings in Lancashire and was therefore particularly delighted by Tony's work. Subsequently, I visited Leigh Library and saw the impressive local literary / historical files available for research use, where I was able to gather some fascinating Larkin-related nuggets.

Admittedly, there is no direct conclusive evidence to show, at the moment, that Philip Larkin ever visited Leigh. However, I suggest that there is strong circumstantial evidence that he knew the town and came to see his maternal grandparents who lived at 13 the Avenue. There is a vast collection of material in the Hull

University Archives and elsewhere awaiting detailed study; this contains literally thousands of personal family letters which will include, most likely, all kinds of incidental details such as visits he made etc. Also, despite his well-publicised views on family life, he was, in fact, close to his parents and is known to have visited his paternal grandparents grave at Lichfield, Staffordshire, and therefore likely to have been to Leigh Cemetery to visit the 'Day' family grave with his mother.

After searching in Leigh Cemetery, I found the plot with its rather neglected headstone which I cleaned to make the inscription more easily readable. (Emily Day died March 1934 aged 70 years; William James Day died 16 March 1942 aged 82 years).

Can any readers help with more details about the Day family during their time in Leigh of over 45 years, from 1897

to 1942? Philip Larkin's grandfather, William Day, was evidently a pillar of the local establishment, being Customs and Pensions Officer for Leigh for some 24 years until his retirement in 1921; he was also a member of the local Conservative Club, which on his death in 1942 flew the Union Jack at half-mast. Emily Day had connections with Leigh Parish Church, where her daughter Eva Day (Philip's mother) was married to Sydney Larkin in 1911. Eva Day went to Leigh Grammar School, then studied French at Leigh College before taking up a teaching post until her marriage. Any information that readers may discover will add to the topographical jigsaw and perhaps allow for a Larkin Connection Trail to be compiled for Leigh.

Donald W. Lee,
51, East Park Close,
Ardwick,
Manchester.
M13 9SD

who took part in the invasion of Europe and was later taken prisoner by the Germans in Normandy.

Annie's brother Thomas escaped from France in the dreadful evacuation of Dunkirk and later crossed the Channel again to join the fight to free Europe. If all that wasn't enough, Thomas was recalled as a reservist to fight in the Korean war, where he was taken prisoner and suffered a harrowing time in a Chinese prisoner-of-war camp. His wife Anita also, I believe, worked in munitions.

Elder sister Gertrude also saw her husband go off to war, serving in the Green Howards, whilst May, the eldest of the family and my mother, stayed at home to raise me and my little brother

Derek. But she didn't just look after the two of us; she also took on three evacuees from London, two boys and a girl, ages ranging from six to eleven. Before this she had looked after a little boy called Geoffrey Tostevin, who was a refugee from Guernsey in the Channel Islands and for a short while also gave refuge to a couple of expatriate Wiganers during the Blitz on Coventry. All this, of course, she did single-handed, as my father Dyson Heaton was busy fighting his war in the Far East. The youngest member of the Ormesher family, Cyril, was just old enough to become one of the last holders of the Burma Star.

I am sure that every one of the little girls in

your picture could tell a similar story. They never enjoyed the glory, I shouldn't imagine that many of them were awarded medals, but we certainly owe them a lot.

Can I say how much I look forward to receiving each edition of *Past Forward*. I believe that your contribution to local history is priceless. On my occasional visits to Wigan, mainly to watch the rugby, of course, I am amazed at how much the place has changed in my lifetime. You are doing a vital job in helping to preserve what might otherwise be lost forever.

Tom Heaton,
21 Sycamore Close,
Wellington,
Telford,
Shropshire.
TF1 3NH



WARTIME CRIME IN WIGAN AND LEIGH

Dear Sir,

Could any of your readers help me with the following enquiry. I am about to commence some very specific local history research into criminal activity and behaviour in the Wigan and Leigh areas during World War II. Of particular importance will be evidence of its effects on social attitudes and responses to crime during this period.

I would like to know, therefore, if anyone 'out there' has any information at all regarding any forms of 'Wartime Crime 1939 - 45'. It could consist of anything from previously written books, notes, or essays about wartime crime in the area; to old newspaper clippings, or personal reminiscences.

Any material that is provided will of course be kept carefully, and subsequently returned to its owner. Such material will be assessed and interpreted with regard to inclusion in a Ph.D.

thesis; however, complete discretion and anonymity regarding the provision of any sources can be assured.

Anyone with anything they think might be useful, can contact me at the address below or ring (01942) 867588.

M. F. Ridding,
B.A. (Hons) M.A.,
41, Kingsdown Road,
Abram,
Wigan.
WN2 5RN

Nonconformist reaction to the 1902 Education Act

Dear Sir,

A full-time M.A. History of Education student at the University of London's Institute of Education, I am currently researching Non-conformist reaction to the English Education Act of 1902 - arguably the most controversial education-related statute ever to secure passage.

Since embarking on my investigation in late 1996, however, I have encountered considerable difficulty in acquiring photographic/pictorial evidence depicting the marches, public meetings and protests detailed in contemporary copies of newspaper, journals and periodicals of the north. It would be of consider-

able help, therefore, if any readers able to help with either photographs or illustrations could contact me.

Many thanks in advance for any kind responses that may be forthcoming.

John Hesketh,
9, Bethersden Road,
Greenhill,
Wigan.
WN1 2RI.

HELP WANTED TO HASTEN SEARCH

Dear Sir,

My mother was orphaned when quite young. Tracing her family is proving difficult.

Her father, Albert Riley, married Ellen Barker of the Hardybutts area of Wigan c.1904. Their marriage does not appear to have been registered in Wigan.

Ellen (1862-1908) - daughter of Peter and Sarah (nee Philips) - and Albert had two children - Albert born 1904 and Clara (my mother) born 1906.

Baptised first in St. Catherine's C.E., Wigan, they were re-baptised in St. Patrick's R.C., Wigan in 1913. (My mother was a choir-member of the latter).

Clara and Albert were fostered by relatives and friends - including an uncle and aunt, Samuel and Jane Barker (nee McHugh) who kept a sweet shop. Kate Costello, of Union Street, is also understood to have assisted

in their upbringing.

My grandfather, Albert Riley, probably came from the Chorlton, Chorlton-cum-Hardy or Cheadle Hulme area. The place and date of his death is unknown.

Albert Jnr. went to London, aged about 20, and was never heard of again.

My mother left the Wigan area when she was about 17.

Other Barker relatives are thought to include Corrigans, Stephenson and Clarks.

Could any reader please hasten my search?

M. Aldred (Mrs),
Flat 3, Haymarket Lodge,
28 Park Road,
Southport,
Merseyside.
PR9 9LA

Speedway in Wigan?

Dear Sir,

I would like to know if any of your readers can help me.

I am after information on the motor cycle sport of Speedway, which I believe was raced in Wigan in the 1930's, 1947-48 and in the 1950's. Also, did they have badges for each year they raced and if so what did they look like?

Any help would be most welcome.

Michael Cooke,
25 Tyldesley Old Road,
Atherton,
Manchester.
M46 9EH

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

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

I do / do not require a receipt

Where?

LAST issue's mystery photographs were obviously a lot more difficult to identify than usual. Suggestions / hunches point to the following approximate locations - (top to bottom) Leigh, Crooke, Beech Hill x 2 and Scholes. There has only been one positive identification, however - the photograph second from the bottom shows Thicknesse Avenue, Beech Hill.

Thanks to those readers who have contacted us. I expect a lot more will respond to this wide-ranging selection of buildings. **If you can help identify them, please contact Len Hudson in Leigh Town Hall on (01942) 404432.**

