

January 2016

## Volunteer Meeting

Thank you to everyone who attended the volunteer meeting held at the Leigh Town Hall on the 9 October 2015.

Nic Rayner, Archives & Conservation Officer from Archives+ gave a fascinating talk on handling documents.

There is a scheme to make the borough dementia friendly. Denise Colbert came and delivered a talk on the ways we can all be more dementia friendly in the community.

## Volunteer Trip

This year's winter volunteer trip was to Damhouse. Elaine Hurst gave a tour of the house and grounds, as well as an amazing presentation about the passion and hard work that has gone into Damhouse.

### Save the date

Friday 15<sup>th</sup> April, 2016 we are arranging a visit for volunteers to the People's History Museum in Salford. This will include a tour of the galleries and an introduction and behind the scenes tour of their archive. If you are interested please email or phone Rita [r.musa@wigan.gov.uk](mailto:r.musa@wigan.gov.uk) tele 01942 828020 <http://www.phm.org.uk/>



Damhouse



## Wigan Borough Archives

### Archives Accreditation

I'm delighted to be able to celebrate that the Archives are now officially recognised as an Accredited Archives Service. Keith Sweetmore - Engagement Manager for the North West - visited us from The National Archives in early December to present the award to the Mayor of Wigan Borough, Cllr Susan Loudon, who accepted the certificate on behalf of the Archives & Local Studies.



Archives Accreditation Award

The award recognises all the hard work of staff and volunteers at the Archives in both managing and conserving the collections, as well as providing access to them - whether online, in person or at events and activities. We are among the first small local authority archives services to be awarded the accreditation, only the second archive in Manchester (after Archives+) and one of fewer than 40 archives in the country to have been recognised in this way - to give an idea of scale, there are over 2000 bodies registered in England as repositories for archives.

At the presentation, both the Mayor and Keith praised all the work done by volunteers at the Archives & Local Studies, including reading a section from the citation provided by the accreditation panel, which reads: "The application demonstrates a hugely impressive range of community engagement and digitisation activity considering the size of the service, and the Panel offered congratulations on the achievements in this area."

I would like to add - in this newsletter especially - that we would not have succeeded in achieving accreditation without the efforts of every volunteer working with us at the Archives & Local Studies. Recent sector statistics showed that we receive more volunteer hours in Wigan than any other metropolitan council archive in the country - an amazing statistic given the size of our services. I cannot easily list the dozens of different projects volunteers have worked on this year - whether with maps, photographs, digitisation, indexing, the First World War, Past Forward, cleaning and conservation, and many more.

So thank you to all our wonderful volunteers and we hope to come back to you with more good news in the spring, when we find out about our First Round bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund for new facilities at the Archives in Leigh. We're hoping 2016 will be an exciting one for the Archives!

### Counting the Cost

The 'Counting the Cost' project, which focuses on the Lancashire and Cheshire Miners archives, is looking for volunteers to help transcribe and digitise this amazing collection. Please contact Stephen Knott on 01942 404430 or email [archives@wigan.gov.uk](mailto:archives@wigan.gov.uk) to find out how to volunteer.



## Leigh Local Studies

### New Online Collections

More First World War documents have been added to Wigan and Leigh Archives online. Records of Inquests from 1917 to 1919 are currently being added. These records include the victims of the 1918 zeppelin air-raid on Wigan. You can view these collections here <http://wiganarchives.past-view.com/archive/court-records/coroners-court>

The Leigh Mutual Society pamphlet is now online. Published in 1794, the pamphlet lists the articles and orders to be observed by members of the Leigh Mutual Society as well as the names of the members allowed and confirmed at the Wigan Quarter Sessions on the 20 January 1794

The mutual society raised and supported a 'Stock or Fund of Money, for relieving and assisting each other on just and proper Occasions, and promoting Peace, Love and Unity amongst themselves'.

<http://wiganarchives.past-view.com/search?q=Leigh+mutual+society&action=search>



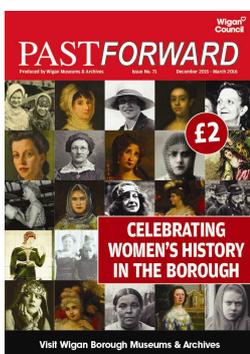
## Wigan Local Studies

### Mayoral Project

We are working in partnership with Democratic Services who have asked for our assistance in

helping research and write up brief biographies of the former Mayors of Wigan and Leigh and also the Chairmen of the former Urban District Councils that now make up the Borough. The aim is to upload the biography along with a photograph of the subject on Wigan & Leigh Archives Online

This is a fantastic opportunity to learn how to use the various resources available at Wigan Local Studies, Leigh Local Studies and Archives. If you are interested or would like more information or, know of someone you think would like to be involved please contact Rita Musa 01942 828020 [r.musa@wigan.gov.uk](mailto:r.musa@wigan.gov.uk) or Hannah Turner [h.turner@wigan.gov.uk](mailto:h.turner@wigan.gov.uk) 01942 404559



## Past Forward

Past Forward Issue 71 is now available to buy. This special edition looks at the history of women in the borough. We have had some fantastic contributions including the story of Mary O'Shaughnessy, a Leigh lady who survived Hitler's concentration camps; the legend of Lady Mabel; and women's football during the First World War. The next edition will be out in April 2016. For anyone who wants to contribute an article please note the deadline is Friday 19 April 2016.

## Museum of Wigan Life



Lynda, Carrie and Joan with their award

### Museum Wins National Award

By Lynda Jackson

The Museum team were delighted to win a national award for excellence in collections management at the Collections Trust's Annual Conference 2015 on 22 September. The Museum of Wigan Life won the *Collections on a Budget Award* and its £500 prize, for its project "Moving History - Life After a Major Stores Move". The museum's application strongly emphasised how important volunteers are behind the scenes in collections work and highlighted the work by Sandy and Shelia Davidson, John Johnson, Hazel McGuinness, Rachael Griffith, Annie Brook Lang, Hannah White, Bexx Ford, Bernard White and Marlene Littler.



The judges said the museum was 'a really proactive example, maximising the value of volunteers and a local society to improve collections management and collections information'. The museum was also shortlisted for the Participatory Practice Award for

the Egyptian project whilst Collections Officer Carrie Gough was shortlisted for the Collections Manager of the Year Award.

Thanks again to all our volunteers – the work you do really does make a huge difference in preserving and helping everyone access the Borough's wonderful heritage.

### **New gallery displays**

The museum team are really pleased to have some industrial history now on display. Objects telling the story of the borough's clock making, Pewter, textiles coal mining and engineering industries are now on display in the main gallery. The displays of sport and music have also been refreshed with new objects and previously unseen posters and artwork. The museum team are working hard to get more of the collections out for the public across the Borough.

This is the first time we have curated an area dedicated to the industrial history of the borough and working lives of local people from the 1600s – 1900s.

The earliest surviving Charter dating from 1314 is now on display on loan from Wigan Archives & Local Studies, it gave the town royal permission to hold markets and control trade. Other objects include a pit brow lasses cap and a pick axe relating to the Pretoria Pit disaster in which 344 people died. We are really pleased to have the 18<sup>th</sup> century Coates clock on display after it was restored by expert volunteer Bernard White.

Objects in the sports section include a Jim Slevin portrait, Wigan Athletic memorabilia and LB Todd and James Leytham caricatures from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century; whilst the music display celebrates everything from George Formby to Wigan Casino and includes items such as the Bickershaw Colliery Band cap and blazer badges, a Victorian Dance card from 1867 and the Leigh Parish Church Glee Club music manuscripts dating from the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Hope you have a chance to pop in and view

it in 2016! Remember we are working to update all the displays on a budget and get more of the Borough's fantastic collections out for everyone to enjoy!

## And finally...



Thanks for all your help throughout 2015 and all best wishes for 2016. From everyone at Museums and Archives & Local Studies.