

PAST FORWARD

Produced by Wigan Archives & Museums

Issue No. 83

December 2019 - March 2020

HUGHES'S
GREAT MAMMOTH
AND GRAND ORIENTAL
EQUESTRIAN ESTABLISHMENT
(Of the Theatres, National, Paris, and Royal City & London) will perform in the Royal Arena, to be erected
In Leigh, on Saturday, October 10th,

Doors open at half-past One o'clock, and Performance to commence at Two, for the accommodation of the Nobility, Gentry, and Parties residing in the Country, who cannot conveniently attend the Evening's Entertainment, which takes place at Seven o'clock, Doors open at half-past Six.

Mr. E. HUGHES, the Proprietor, begs to inform the Public, that his Company imbibes the first Continental Talent, including
ITALIAN, FRENCH, GERMAN, AMERICAN, AND BRITISH MALE & FEMALE ARTISTES!
 THIS IMMENSE CORPS WILL FORM

A GRAND PROCESSION

At half-past Eleven o'clock, which will be signalled by hoisting the British Standard at the Pavilion, when the Public will have an opportunity of witnessing

The Most Magnificent Cavalcade ever Witnessed in Europe!!

The gorgeous and sublime pomp of the Eastern World in all its glory, (the theme of ancient Poets and Historians) could not in any way compete with this costly Pageant, civilization having wrought such prodigious improvements in all that appertains to Magnificence. This marvellous Spectacle includes

THE SACRED EGYPTIAN
DRAGON CHARIOT

£2

Wigan and Leigh's local history magazine

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FRONT COVER
 Advertising poster for the arrival in Leigh of 'Hughes' Grand Procession and Dragon Chariot', 1846

Letter from the Editorial Team

Welcome to PAST Forward Issue 83.

We are delighted to be able to reveal the winners of the 2019 Past Forward Essay Writing Competition, kindly sponsored by Mr and Mrs O'Neill.

The entries were all of a high calibre. The judges remarked on the depth of research into the subjects chosen, as well as the 'story-telling' abilities of the authors in creating such fully formed narratives within the constraints of the work limit available. This edition features the winning three articles and we will publish the runners-up in future editions.

1st Place – Anthony Pilgrim, Suffer Little Children

2nd Place – Glenys McClellan, Welsh in Ashton-in-Makerfield

3rd Place – Julie McKiernan, Playing with the Past

1st Runner-up – Brian Joyce, 'These Disgraceful Exhibitions'

2nd Runner-up – Alison Armfield, Tyldesley Memories

3rd Runner-up – Jean Brandwood, Hercules Dowie 1780-1851

Next year we are looking to pilot a historical writing competition for school children. If you are a local teacher or connected to a school within the Borough and would like to find out more, please contact us at pastforward@wigan.gov.uk.

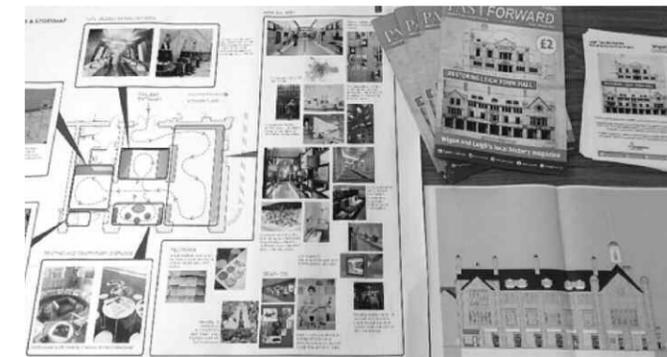
Revealing Wigan and Leigh Archives



Following strip-out on site, work has commenced on the internal structure and fittings to the new Archives facility at Leigh Town Hall, with concrete being poured to create our new secure strongrooms for collections and flooring being laid to the new exhibition space.

We've new windows being installed to our conservation studio and we're consulting with our volunteers on the all-important decision of choosing the right chairs for the searchroom.

The Archives and Museum teams will be holding monthly drop-in sessions for anyone interested in finding out more about the project and our latest plans. We will be in the entrance to Leigh Library on the first Monday of every month (apart from January), between 11.00am and 1.00pm. Please come and have a chat to see how work is progressing.



Museum of Wigan Life

Our museum team are currently developing a new protest themed exhibition due to open in May 2020 and would love to hear your experiences and stories. Have you ever been part of a protest or campaigned for change? Were you or your family affected by the miner's strike? Do you have banners, posters, placards or other objects that you would like to see on display? If so, we would love to hear from you. For more information, please see page 34.

Wishing all our readers a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year from all the team at the Archives & Museum.

PAST FORWARD Subscription Form

Copy Deadline for Issue 84

Contributors please note the deadline for the receipt of material for publication is Friday, 14th February 2020.

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For worldwide subscription prices and information, please contact us.

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Return to: The Museum of Wigan Life, Past Forward Subscription, Library Street, Wigan WN1 1NU or email us at archives@wigan.gov.uk

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Signed _____ Date _____

SUFFER LITTLE CHILDREN

BY ANTHONY PILGRIM

On 13 August 1842 the Manchester Times reported the death of, 'a lad about eight years of age, named Crooks, son of William Crooks, collier'. The boy 'was ascending the eye of Hawkleigh Colliery, in Pemberton, [when] he fell out of the basket and was killed on the spot'. An inquest returned a verdict of accidental death, 'with a deodand of 2s 6d on the machinery'.

By coincidence, less than a week later, Parliament outlawed the underground employment of boys under ten. The legislators were guided by the reports of a Commission appointed in 1840, 'for inquiring into the employment and condition of children in mines and manufactories', which had brought to public attention the hazards and hardships faced by child labourers in and about the mines.

'But this is no easy ride, for a child cries 'Find me!''

Information about mining fatalities was not collected systematically before 1850. However, a record of the death of a ten year old boy in the third quarter of 1842 seemed to be a likely match, and the death certificate, identifying the subject as John, 'son of William Crooks, Collier', confirmed this: the cause of death, as notified by the coroner, was 'falling down a Coal pit'. A corresponding entry in the register of St Thomas' Church, Upholland, showed that John was buried there on 7 August.

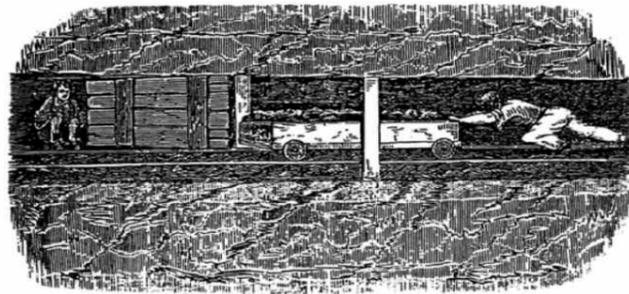
Additional evidence of John's short life is hard to find. An entry in the baptismal register of All Saints, Wigan, showing a John Crook born to William and Margaret Crook at Pemberton on 28 November 1833, may refer to him, but the only record in the 1841 census that could relate has a twelve year-old John Crooks at Wigan Lane, Pemberton, with adults William and Sarah Crooks and three girls. The 1851 census has a William and Ruth Crooks at Warrington Road, Pemberton; it may be more than coincidence that this Ruth was also buried at Upholland, in 1857.

The reports of the commission charged with investigating child labour in the mines allow for some further speculation.

J L Kennedy, the sub-commissioner for Lancashire, found that most children started work between the ages of eight and nine. The owners of Hawkleigh Colliery failed to supply data, but figures presented by Richard Almond in respect of his Shevington pits indicate that children under thirteen comprised just over 14% of the workforce. Nationally, the hours of work were 'rarely less than 11; more often they

are 12; in some districts they are 13; and in one district they are generally 14 and upwards'.

A boy usually began as a 'tenter' or 'trapper', opening and closing as necessary the doors fitted to restrict air-flow underground. From this he might progress via pony-driving to acting as a 'drawer', 'thrutcher' or 'waggoner', tasked with conveying the coal from the face to the intersection with the main road or to the shaft bottom. By the time of his death John Crooks was probably drawing for his father; an arrangement which would have ensured that the whole of William's earnings stayed with the family.



'The sole business of the air-door tender is to open the doors to make way for the waggons. Were it not for [this] it would be equal to solitary confinement of the worst order.'

Life outside the mines was equally hard. Reverend Joshua Paley, the first vicar of St John's Church, Pemberton, informed the sub-commissioner that:

'Large numbers of colliers and their children belong to my congregation. Generally speaking poverty prevails, often the effect of intemperance. Young people of both sexes, having such temptations and being so frequently encouraged to or not discouraged from attending public houses and beer shops, become early habituated to scenes of drunkenness and obscenity. It is a very common thing for families to sleep in one room. There is no delicacy observed in this, which of course has had a bad effect upon the morals. At present children are taken into coal pits, or employed at nail making, as soon as they have any strength, from 8 years or younger, upwards, and we have no hold upon them but in the Sunday schools.'

On the other hand, says Mr Kennedy:

'It must not be supposed that the children and young persons have the same air of sadness and lethargy which

is observable in adult colliers. They appear generally to enjoy themselves, and jokes and laughter are to be heard in the pits wherever they are. The children, during the winter, play at football; and I have heard of their having a game of it in the pit, in that part of the works where the coals have been taken away but where the roof has not yet fallen in, called in some places the 'gobwaste'. This I need scarcely say is rather dangerous: in the case I was told of the boys left it one evening, the next morning the strata had crushed down and destroyed their playground'.

Whilst underground roof-falls and gas explosions caused most fatalities, death from falling whilst descending or ascending the mine-shaft was by no means uncommon. Typically this was due to the basket coming into contact with some obstacle, although worn ropes, falling debris and the inattention of the operator were also frequent causes. From the Latin 'deo dandum' – 'to be given to God' – the penalty imposed in the Crooks' case had originally involved that any possession found to have caused another's death was to be surrendered to the Crown and then sold to benefit some worthy cause such as poor relief. By the nineteenth century it was usually administered in the form of a fine. The implication here is that John's death was caused by faulty equipment rather than his own carelessness or the negligence of a human operative.

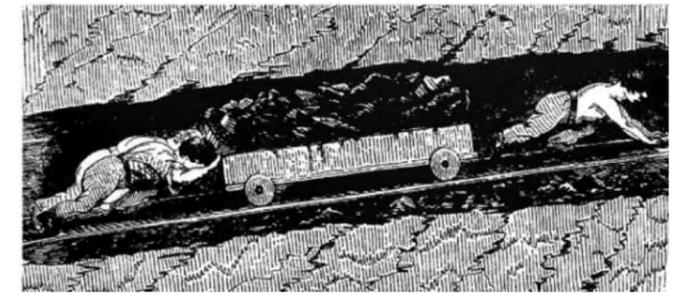
Having reviewed such evidence as I could find, I visited John's final resting place at Upholland. His grave there is unmarked, but several members of the Crooks family are also buried in the churchyard – indicating, perhaps, that this had been their place of worship before the consecration of St John's in 1832.

Note on Sources

I found the Manchester Times report of John Crooks' death whilst researching the history of the Hawkleigh Hall estate some years ago and was struck by the fact that it failed even to give the victim's first name. The title of my essay was inspired by that of The Smiths' song on their eponymous first album; although on a very different theme, the 'find me!' refrain kept going through my

Name	Abode	When buried	Age	By whom the Ceremony was performed
John Crooks No. 3705	Pemberton	Aug 7 th	10	The Vicar
William Yates No. 3706	Hindley	Aug 8 th	19	Mr. Birn
Isaac Lowe No. 3707	Wigan	Aug 15 th	52	Ed. Jomb off. Min.

J Crooks burial record



'I am informed that these boys, by constantly pushing against the waggons, occasionally rub off the hair from the crowns of their heads so much as to make them almost bald.'

mind and led me to attempt to remedy the newspaper's omission.

The reports of the Children's Employment Commission are in the 'Parliamentary Papers' series for 1842, volumes 15-17. Evidence collected by J L Kennedy in respect of the Lancashire collieries can be found in volume 17. His contribution was edited and re-published as 'Children in The Mines' by Picks in 1995. Most of the illustrations, for which Kennedy expresses his indebtedness 'to my friend Mr Horner', are now thought to have been the work of professional artist Margaret Gillies (1803-1887).

The Upholland burial registers are at Lancashire Archives, reference PR 2907.

There is a biographical note on Rev Paley in J A Venn's 'Alumni Cantabrigenses' (Part II Vol V, Cambridge UP 1953). For an account of his work in Pemberton, see Michael A Mason's 'Portrait of a Parish: St John the Divine, Pemberton, 1832-1982' (self-published, 1982).

The photograph of the Winstanley No. 5 headgear is from J Bankes' 'A Nineteenth-Century Colliery Railway' (Historic Society of Lancashire & Cheshire, Vol 114/1962). Printed alongside is the warning given by a government inspector more than a decade earlier: 'You will be getting someone thrown out or killed and I cannot see what there is to save you from manslaughter, especially when the place will warrant you putting in boxes and proper cages and slides. The cost will be trifling but what is that to the saving of life?'



Basket-winding at Bankes' Winstanley No. 5 Pit c. 1880. Several local collieries were slow to adopt the safer alternative -available even in John Crooks' time- of transporting workers in enclosed cages guided by metal rods.

The Welsh in Ashton-in-Makerfield

By Glenys McClellan

As a child in the 1950s I often spent Sunday evenings after Church service at Stubshaw Cross Independent Methodist Church, visiting relatives and friends of my parents in the area of Ashton-in-Makerfield known as 'Little Wales'. They lived around the junction of Bryn Road and Bolton Road where many Welsh families had settled at the end of the nineteenth century.

I knew that my great grandparents, Thomas and Mary HUGHES and John and Jane BLYTHYN had travelled from Flintshire in North Wales when the coalmines had opened and I often wondered how they had actually travelled. Sadly few of the relatives and children of friends are left but when I asked some of them, I was given a copy of some original notes written about 1909.

The author's name is not given but it is probably an entry for a competition at the annual Eisteddfod at Carmel Chapel, Ashton. It is entitled, 'How two colliers founded a Mission'. It records that in about 1871-1873, Mr Fred Crippin opened his colliery at Bryn Gates and as there were few local men, he offered an inducement to the coalminers of North Wales, Shropshire and Staffordshire. of free transport to Lancashire for their families and furniture. To meet their housing needs he acquired land and built houses in the area known as 'The Lump'.



Children of the Band of Hope Concert Party, Carmel Welsh Chapel, Ashton-in-Makerfield, 1927

Some of these houses are still there near to the Bryn Gates Public House, further along Bolton Road towards the Ashton-Platt Bridge boundary. The term 'The Lump' was applied as the miners were paid fortnightly in 'a lump'. The notes report that, 'the Lump became a byword for violence and loose living', as many of the miners would spend their lump at the Public House. The following Saturday became known as 'Blank Saturday', when they had no money left. On one of the Blank Saturdays, a skilful harpist, John Griffiths, revived old memories and suggested that they should hold a Sunday School on the following day. They did have the Sunday School that day but the following week, John Griffiths was absent having spent his wages in the Public House the previous night!

The notes go on to describe how another man from Denbighshire with deep religious convictions continued the Sunday School and they acquired one of the houses to use for regular worship. The little collections at these services eventually provided the money to build the first Chapel in 1889 at a cost of £450. It was later extended and was known as 'Hermon'. It still stands at the corner of Golborne Road/Bolton Road as a carpet warehouse.



Members of the Ashton-in-Makerfield Welsh community on a trip to Caernarvon

Two further chapels were built, Carmel, where my father, Alfred Hughes, worshipped (now a sofa warehouse) and Bethel that was later demolished.

Further notes were added in 1971. These notes have the initials A J. I believe this was Arthur Jones who was the organist at Carmel Chapel and one of my father's closest friends. He even played the organ at my parents' wedding. He explained that Hermon's heyday was immediately prior to and during the First World War when the membership rose to 200. A manse was bought first in Osborne Road and then in Alexandra Road.

Gradually membership of these chapels declined as older members died and fewer families were speaking in the Welsh language as their children attended the local schools. Other coalminers moved to new coalfields especially in Yorkshire. Hermon closed and some of the members transferred to Carmel Chapel.

A J continued to mention the cultural tradition of the Welsh people. Carmel Chapel held an annual Eisteddfod and judges were brought from North Wales to adjudicate. My father acted as secretary and I remember being told that my brother competed as a young boy in the late 1940s. The Eisteddfod was run exactly like those which still take place in Wales, with various competitions for soloists, groups and choirs singing, instrumental music as well as essay or poetry writing and recitation.

Chapel life was not just Sunday Services. The young people would attend Band of Hope meetings and there would be choir practices to get ready to compete at the annual competitions.



Carmel Chapel, choir members



Carmel Chapel, walking day banners

A J also reported that there were trips made to Billinge Hill using lorries with forms being fastened to them. I have a photograph of my grandparents with a huge crowd on a day out at Caernarvon Castle, probably in the 1930s.

Although I never learned Welsh, I did accompany my parents to the annual hymn singing festival. This was held at a different chapel in the St. Helens and Ashton areas each year. My father would have had the congregation practicing the selected hymns on the previous Sunday evenings after the service.

Another tradition of the Welsh chapel was to ask a young child to recite a text from the bible at the end of the service. As a shy child I dreaded being asked to do this even though by Dad had taught me the passage. Years later I helped by acting in one of the plays that was part of the Men's Weekend at the Chapel. This weekend started with tea in the vestry and then a concert and play followed by Chapel services on the Sunday. In order to include the local people, this was the only occasion activities were conducted in English and continued into the 1970s.

Sadly as most of the Welsh-speaking members of Carmel Chapel died it was no longer viable to keep it open and it closed in the late 1970s.

As most of these memories were taken from a probable entry for an Eisteddfod, my father would be pleased that I am continuing the writing tradition and that my grand-daughter regularly enters the recitation section at her local arts festival.

Playing with the Past

By Julie McKiernan

As a scriptwriter, specialising in plays about local history, it is often my job to make a lot out of very little, particularly when writing about the lives and achievements of women which are rarely recorded in as much detail as men's. In *How to be WomanLEIGH*¹, about the WSPU² coming to Leigh in 1909,³ I wanted the audience to witness events through the eyes of three different women: an older, fictional housewife; the suffragette, Florence Clarkson; and suffragist and local school teacher, Florence Hindshaw. But the facts about Hindshaw were limited so I had to flesh them out with my imagination to create a convincing character, and give her authentic sounding dialogue, extracts from which you will find throughout in italics.

In 1881⁴, Florence's widowed schoolmaster father, William⁵ and his second wife, Elizabeth⁶, were living in Ordsal with two of William's five children, and their young daughter, Florence Pye (b.02.08.1879). Elizabeth was a schoolmistress and still teaching despite being a wife and mother/stepmother with the help of a servant and nursery nurse. But she was clearly used to hard work as in 1871⁷ she was the Head of the household and supporting her widowed mother despite an older brother living with them in Salford.

'Women who would take jobs alongside men. Who would prove that they are just as intelligent, resourceful, brave, industrious - and responsible.'

In 1888 Florence's father died. As a Head Master he'd received a pension of £20⁸ which is possibly why, in 1891⁹ Elizabeth is described as 'living on her own means' though she also had a pupil teacher lodger. Florence was a pupil at Pendleton Grammar School receiving a 'sound commercial education' with English and some tuition in French.¹⁰ But from 1892 she attended Pendleton High School for Girls at four guineas per term, and was entered for the Cambridge Local Junior and Higher, and the Oxford Junior, examinations.

Florence can't fail to have been inspired and influenced by her parents' professions so it is hardly surprising that she attended the Salford Pupils Teachers' Centre where she passed the 1st class Queen's Scholarship examinations. This was worth £25 per year and enabled her to attend Owens College, Manchester University¹¹ where she took an Ordinary BA degree and achieved her Government teaching certificate. Christabel Pankhurst

was also a student at Owens College at this time and their paths may have crossed. But we do know that Florence definitely met another suffragette in the making because in 1901¹² Dora Marsden¹³ was a lodger with the Hindshaws in Moss Side. After graduating from Owens College, Dora was appointed Headmistress of the Altrincham Pupil-Teacher centre but resigned after only a year to become a full-time member of the WSPU.

'It is not enough to feel strongly - you must also act wisely.'

Florence's teaching record¹⁴ reveals that in 1903, after only one year at a mixed elementary school in Salford, she took the position of Assistant Mistress at Victoria Grammar School in Ulverston. Florence was clearly

Surname <i>Hindshaw</i> Christian Names <i>Florence Pye</i> Style <i>Miss</i>		25	
1. Date of Birth.	2. Date of appointment on probation.	3. Date of definitive appointment.	4. Date of leaving.
<i>Aug 2nd 1879</i>	—	<i>Sept 9th 1908</i>	<i>July, 1912.</i>
5. Schools and Colleges at which educated, with dates. State names and types of institutions.		6. Particulars of Public and University Examinations taken, and certificates and degrees obtained, with dates.	
<i>Pendleton Grammar School 1892-96 Pendleton High School for Girls 1892-96 Salford Pupil Teachers Centre 1896-99 The Omsal College - 1899-1902. (Manchester University)</i>		<i>1st Class Queen's Scholarship Examⁿ 1898. Ordinary B.A. degree Manchester University 1902.</i>	
7. List of teaching posts held, with dates.		8. Particulars of training in teaching, if any, and certificates or diplomas obtained, with dates.	
<i>Rowkes St Mixed Elementary School Salford 1902-1903 Victoria Grammar School Ulverston 1903-1908</i>		<i>Manchester Day Training Dept 1902-03 Government Teachers Certificate 1904</i>	
9. State external teaching or official work undertaken, if any, in addition to duties in the School.		10. Special subject or subjects.	
—		<i>English History</i>	
11. State principal duties assigned, and subjects taken. (Any subsequent changes and their dates to be indicated in red ink.)		12. Total annual emoluments.	
<i>General supervision of the girls - Responsible for their discipline & games Sep. 1910. Subjects: History in seven forms some English & French</i>		<i>Salary, with note, if any, £160 being by £10 a year to £220 according to the Lancashire County Council Constitution Plan. Head</i>	
13. Particulars of retiring allowances, if any.		14. Post, if any, taken up after leaving the School.	
—		<i>English Mistress, Wigan Girls' High School.</i>	
15. Estimated value of board and lodging if given as part of emoluments.		—	

Florence Hindshaw's employment record from Leigh Grammar School

ambitious as it seems unlikely she would have exchanged the fresh air of the Lake District for the sooty smogs of Leigh had she not been offered the post of Senior Mistress at Leigh Grammar School in 1908. The school was based in the Technical College¹⁵ with a mixed intake of boys and girls taught in separate classes and Florence was appointed to teach History, some English and some French. She was also responsible for the general supervision of the girls and their discipline and was paid the Lancashire County Council scale salary of £160 which enabled her to buy 34, The Avenue¹⁶, an impressive address for a young, single woman.

The Grammar School Headmaster was Mr WH Leek¹⁷ who, along with his wife, daughter and Florence attended a meeting to form the Leigh Suffrage Society in 1910¹⁸. Perhaps Florence was motivated to attend after witnessing the suffragettes' protest in Leigh in 1909 or, more likely, by a meeting of The North of England Women's Suffrage Society in the Market Place earlier that year. Either way she became the first secretary of the Leigh Suffrage Society, a post that she held until 1913, probably resigning because she had recently become a Senior Mistress at Wigan Girls' High School teaching English and Latin.

'Of course, ultimately, we want votes for all women but not all women are ready for that responsibility yet - and nor are all men. That is why education is so important.'

In 1914 a Florence Hindshaw volunteered with the Red Cross¹⁹ as a VAD^c and although we can't yet prove it was 'our' Florence, given her upbringing and her clear sense of duty, it seems very likely. Her mother, Elizabeth who had been her closest companion and, probably, her biggest influence, died in Wigan in 1922 aged 84. Perhaps it was this loss that prompted Florence to leave teaching and get married.

'(Be) sensible in the choices that you make. Take your time, be attentive, weigh up the situation and look beneath the surface. Do not let your heart rule your head.'

Her husband, Frederick Butler Kirk (b.1882) was a yarn agents clerk from Salford so they may have been old friends. When they married at Manchester Cathedral in 1926 Florence was 47 so children were always going to be unlikely which is a pity as if women don't feature in public records we can sometimes rely on private family documents or memories. In 1939²¹, the Kirks lived in Bredbury which is where Frederick died in 1959. But Florence moved to a residential care home²² in Cheshire and died, perhaps at the house of a friend or relative, on the 8 December 1963 in Altrincham. She was the same age as her mother and must surely have had the same positive influence over generations of young women.

'Girls, it is only recently that women have been given access to higher education... Do not let them close those doors on you.'

I hope I did her proud.



Photograph from the production of 'How To Be WomanLEIGH' featuring Colette Davies-Kerwin as Florence Hindshaw

Notes

- 1 A collection of three monologues premiered at Leigh Parish Church on Saturday 6 July 2019 performed by Jo Dakin, Maria Lowe and Colette Davies-Kerwin with an original song by Virginia Kettle performed by Erica Park-Warburton
- 2 The Woman's Social and Political Union
- 3 On 15 July 1909 Annie Kenney, Charlotte Marsh, Jennie Baines, Mabel Capper and Florence Clarkson came to Leigh to disrupt the speech of the Right Honourable Lewis Harcourt MP at the Co-operative Hall. Florence Clarkson was arrested and sentenced to two weeks in Strangeways Gaol.
- 4 1881 census
- 5 'Born about 1818, Edinburgh, Midlothian, Scotland. William was probably christened at St Cuthbert's, Edinburgh, like many generations of Hindshaws had been christened and married since 1614. He married Elizabeth Hudson, Jun 9 1846, Parish of Bedworth, Warwick. Elizabeth, daughter of George Hudson, was born 1819, Rugeley, Staffordshire. William was a headmaster in Salford, and sometime editor of the Salford Gazette. He also was a pioneer of the wet-plate collodion process, and took many photos of the grand houses of Cheshire.' <http://www.rawbw.com/~hinshaw/cgi-bin/id?19905>
- 6 Pye, born in Lancashire 1838 1871 census
- 7 1871 census
- 8 'William Hindshaw, late Head Master of the Egerton Schools, Salford, having retired from his profession after 51 years' service, has been awarded the pension of £20, earned by teachers certificated in the first class of merit before 1856.' Manchester Courier and Lancashire General Advertiser 11 December 1886
- 9 1891 census
- 10 I.R. Cowan (1972) Higher elementary, secondary and pupil-teachers' education in Salford, 1870-1903: Part II, The Vocational Aspect of Education, 24:57, 37-42, DOI: 10.1080/03057877280000071
- 11 from 1899 to 1902 https://archive.org/stream/victoriauniversi00univrich/victoriauniversi00univrich_djvu.txt
- 12 1901 census
- 13 1882-1960 she was born in Marsden near Huddersfield and attended Owens College. Her most famous action as a member of the WSPU was to successfully interrupt Winston Churchill's speech in Support in 1909. <https://spartacus-educational.com/WmarsdenD.htm>
- 14 Leigh Grammar School staff records
- 15 Leigh Public Library & Technical School opened in 18984
- 16 1911 census
- 17 William Henry Leek Headmaster at Leigh Grammar School 1895-1927 taught French/English/Latin
- 18 Leigh Journal 7 Oct. 1910.
- 19 At the 1st Woodlands Hospital in Wigan British Army, British Red Cross Society Volunteers 1914-1918 www.findmypast.co.uk
- 20 The Voluntary Aid Detachment (VAD), a voluntary unit of civilians providing nursing care for military personnel
- 21 1939 register www.findmypast.co.uk
- 22 Bickham House, Green Walk, Bowdon. Death register www.findmypast.co.uk

Observation Post, Relay Station, Rallying Point and Country Park:

Ashurst Beacon - Icon of the Douglas Valley

By Dr Stephen Craig Smith

On its circuitous course from source to sea, the River Douglas passes through a ridge of rolling sandstone hills north west of Wigan. Through these hills the river flows along a most distinctive valley, flanked on its north eastern side by Parbold and Harrock hills and on its south western side by Ashurst Hill. Ashurst Hill, lying between Upholland and Dalton, is well marked on Yates Map of Lancashire surveyed in 1786.

Standing astride Ashurst Hill is a small stone-built tower surmounted by a square spire, its prominence out of all proportion to its size. The tower is known as Ashurst Beacon and is an iconic feature of the Douglas Valley landscape.

Ashurst Hill takes its name from the Ashurst Family who lived in Ashurst Hall, a castellated house (now reduced to a farmhouse) with an ancient gateway built in 1649 situated just below the hill summit. The Ashurst family were once very prominent; Thomas Ashurst was High Sheriff of Lancaster in 1694 and Sir William Ashurst became an eminent judge.

Because of its prominent location Ashurst Hill, like Billinge Hill to its south, has been used as a signalling station since at least the time of the Spanish Armada. Following the French Revolution, the greatest threat of invasion came with the Napoleonic Wars between 1793 and 1815. The Prime Minister of the time said people should



Part of Yates Map of Lancashire 1786

expect a French Invasion not in months or weeks but in days and hours.

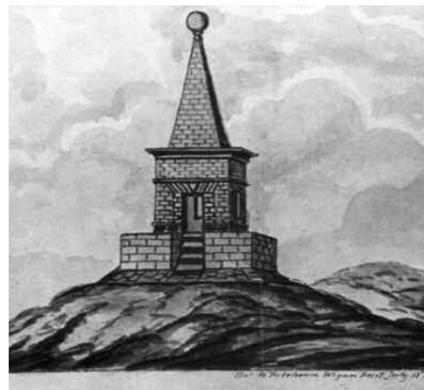
It was here that Sir William Ashurst made a speech during the time of the French Revolution when he said, '...no nation could hold a more perfect system of government than ours'. His words were later printed on leaflets and distributed to the masses in an attempt to avert a possible revolt in England. How seriously the masses took his word is unknown but there was certainly no revolution here.

The beacon we see today was a watch tower built to observe any anticipated French invasion and was erected in 1798 by Lord Skelmersdale on top of Ashurst Hill at 570 feet above sea-level. According to Dr Alan Miller this building replaced an earlier beacon of stone and wood erected on the same spot in 1701.

According to J Sharrett (1982) its predecessor was erected in 1701 at a cost of £30-8s-10d, the greatest part of this cost at £10-8s-10d going towards carpenter and stone mason labour. The timber cost £4-10s-0d, the lead £7-0s-0d, glass and lattices £1-10s-0d, stone for the walls at 2d per load amounting to £1-5s-0d, leading the stones £2-15s-6d and transporting the lead from Wigan a modest 5 shillings. The picture below painted in July 1780 would suggest that the original beacon was little different from its later replacement of 1798.

The present beacon lies approximately five miles north west of Wigan town centre and comprises a square base on which stands a square tower surmounted by a pyramidal spire. There are closed-off windows on three sides of the tower and a closed-off door on the fourth side. It was granted Grade II Listed Building status on 22 April 1967.

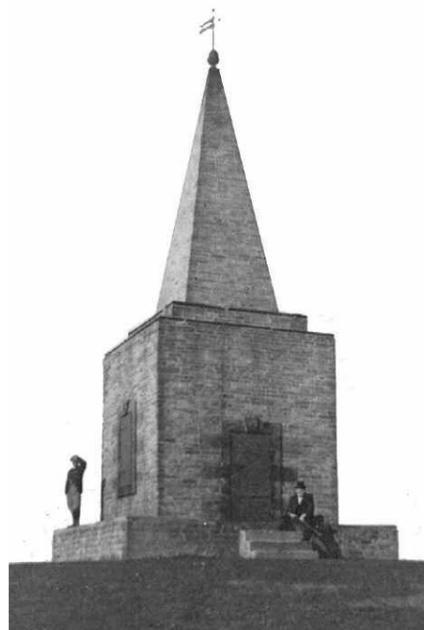
The above photograph shows the beacon as it appeared around 1900



Original Beacon painted in 1780

with a door on one side (facing the photographer) and windows on the other three sides.

As with the threat of a Spanish invasion in the late sixteenth century, a French threat of invasion at the turn of the nineteenth century did not come to pass, but the hilltop and its beacon continue to have a function. Thanks to



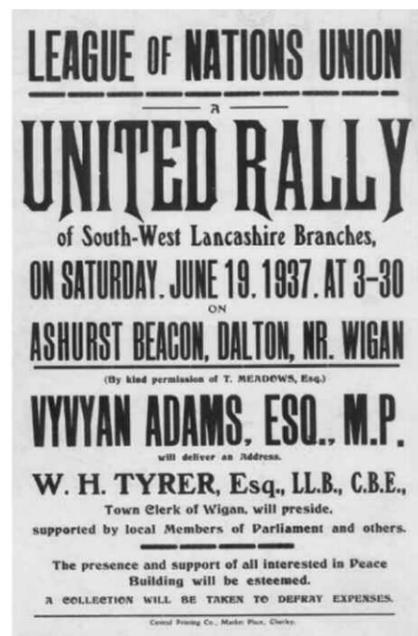
Ashurst Beacon c. 1900

its prominent hilltop position it has been used on numerous national ceremonial occasions.

Just three of many ceremonial occasions include a large bonfire lit on the night of 21 June 1887 to honour Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee, a bonfire lit to celebrate King George V's Silver Jubilee in May 1935 and a major bonfire was ignited on 19 July 1988 to mark the 400th Anniversary of the attempted invasion by the Spanish Armada.

At the 1988 event over 5000 people took part in the celebrations, entertained by jugglers, fire eaters, side shows, barbecues, and displays of dancing to give the celebrations a truly Elizabethan theme. On this occasion the event was so well supported the police closed all roads leading to the beacon for more than three hours.

The views from the beacon are such that Ashurst Beacon was a magnet for local people on 29 June 1927 to view a total eclipse of the sun. Around 2000 people streamed to the beacon on foot, bicycle or car by 5.30am to view the event. For a short while the sky became dark and dismal and the whole crowd fell silent – a short while later the eclipse was over, and the sky brightened.



League of Nations Rally at Ashurst Beacon in 1937

During the 1930s, riders and hounds of the Holcombe Hunt would sometimes meet at the beacon; the rallying point for a day's hunt. A rallying call of a different kind took place at the beacon on Saturday 19 June 1937 when the League of Nations Union organised a United

Rally at 3.30 in the afternoon.

It will be noticed on the above poster that the rally was sanctioned by a Mr Meadows. Mr Meadows owned the land upon which the beacon stood. He was the editor of the Wigan Observer for 24 years and had purchased 60 acres of Ashurst Hill in the 1920s. Being an active member of the Council for the Protection of Rural England (CPRE) and a keen supporter of historic buildings, he paid over £100 of his own money to repair the beacon twice during the 1930s.

In 1939 the Lancashire Electric Power Company proposed to erect overhead power lines to serve the parish of Dalton and there was a serious risk of overhead electricity lines disfiguring the famous views from the beacon. After lobbying by the local branch of the CPRE a compromise was reached whereby Dalton got its power supply and the beacon retained its dignity.

A double threat was avoided in 1962 when there was a possibility of coal mining on Ashurst Hill and plans for a new town at Skelmersdale which might have encroached onto its western slope. Fortunately, the coal mining never eventuated, and the new town plans avoided development near the beacon.

Owner and trusted guardian of the beacon for many years, Mr Meadows died in 1956 in his 85th year leaving his land and the beacon to his wife. He also added a wish that she might give seventeen acres of Ashurst land including the beacon, on her death, to Wigan Corporation 'so that it should remain for ever a beauty spot for the enjoyment of the people of Wigan'.

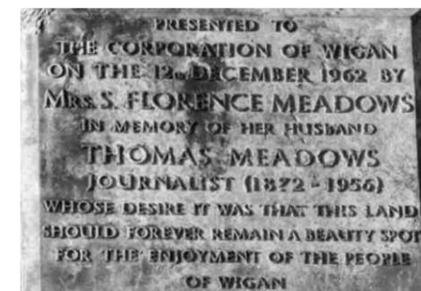
Rather than wait until her own death, Mrs Meadows gifted the land and the beacon to Wigan Corporation in 1962. The Council gratefully accepted the gift and made a public statement to



Ashurst Beacon 2019

the effect that the land and beacon would for ever remain open to the general public.

Following the death of Mrs. Meadows in 1966, a formal ceremony took place on 24 March on a wind-swept Ashurst Beacon with the unveiling of a plaque above the former doorway of the beacon by the Meadows' daughter, Mrs Hartley of Wigan, and son, Dr Meadows. Also at the ceremony were the Mayor of Wigan, the Town Clerk, the Borough Treasurer, and Parks and Cemeteries Superintendent along with representatives of Dalton Parish Council and Wigan Rural District Council.



Ashurst Beacon Plaque

The plaque, still in good condition today, states the following, 'Presented to the Corporation of Wigan on 12th December 1962, by Mrs. Sophia Florence Meadows in memory of her husband, Thomas Meadows journalist (1877-1956), whose desire it was that this land should remain for ever a beauty spot for the enjoyment of the people of Wigan.'

On a fine summer's evening drive to the top of Ashurst Hill, park in the adjacent car park and walk the short distance to the beacon itself. On a clear day it is possible to see the Irish Sea coast, Liverpool and the Mersey estuary to the west, the Ribble estuary, Preston, Blackpool and the Furness Fells to the north, Wigan and the Pennines to the east and the mountains of North Wales to the south west. Better still call in on the local hostelry and have an evening meal to cap off a great evening experience.

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Wigan Observer, 20 May 1939
The Examiner, 13 January 1962
Wigan Observer, 1 April 1966
J Sharrett, 'Upholland Fragments' (1982)
Dr Allan Miller, 'Upholland in Old Picture Postcards' (1998))

Acknowledgment

Kathryn Pass and Alex Miller of Wigan Archives and Local Studies for considerable help and encouragement in writing this article.

Julia Walkden, Wigan Weavers Association and early 20th Century Trade Union Activism

BY YVONNE ECKERSLEY

Julia Walkden was born Julia Feeley in 1881 in Ditton near Widnes. She was given a rudimentary education by French Jesuits at St Michael's in Ditton. She started working at the tender age of ten as a domestic, graduating to become a housemaid/wardress at twelve. She was a lady's maid at sixteen, travelling on the continent for two years. At the age of eighteen she was a housekeeper for a family in Liverpool.

In 1908, she married James Walkden, a Bryn dataller. The 1911 census reveals she was living in Worsley Mesnes, Wigan and had an illegitimate eight year old daughter. Eleanor Feeley is listed as James' stepdaughter. Given Julia's recorded age was 26, the child may have been born whilst Julia was a housekeeper in Liverpool. Another child, Treaso [sic] Feeley, born in Ashton-in-Makerfield in 1909, is listed as James' daughter. As James and Julia were married the child's surname seems odd.

According to her 1919 election profile Julia worked at Eckersley's Mill for fifteen years as a 'fancy warper'. She left in 1916 which may have coincided with the pregnancy and birth of a daughter, Eileen. On the 1939 Government Register the family was living at Poolstock. Eileen Walkden, born in 1916 is listed. An Eleanor Walkden born in 1909 is listed and may have been James and Julia's niece. James was still a dataller in a coal mine, Julia a beamer, Eleanor a winder and Eileen a Warper.

Julia was a very active Committee member of the Wigan Weavers Association and remained so throughout her life. She was first elected onto the Committee in 1914, became Vice President in 1919, President in 1934 and was still an official in 1954 aged 73.

One of Julia's strengths lay in the field of financial organisation. Minute books show she helped simplify the process of collecting weekly dues, acted as a trouble shooter and investigator of irregularities and

collected dues herself. Rises in the cost of living, unemployment, loss of income caused by wage reductions and strikes to force mill owners to raise wages meant many could not afford to be members. Minute books record the constant battle to keep the union solvent. Benefits were periodically reduced or suspended, subscriptions lowered and Julia spent a considerable amount of time recruiting new members and organising visits to lapsed subscribers.

Throughout her career she represented her union at the Northern Counties Weavers Amalgamation, Wigan Trades Council, Labour Representation Committee, Labour party meetings and conferences. Notably, during the 1940s and 1950s she had a particularly high attendance rate at Wigan Trades Council meetings. Trades Council records show she worked with women councillors Martha Hogg, fellow Weavers Committee member Elizabeth Hart, and Lily Hodson. The union was unique; apart from an occasional male president and its secretary, all its democratically elected officials, presidents, committee members and collectors were female. These women ran the union, negotiated for weavers in local industrial disputes, worked to raise piece work rates and had political relevance locally and nationally.

The Wigan Weavers Association was, and remains, historically significant in the fight for women's suffrage. In 1904 they and their President Helen Silcock, joined with the Lancashire and Cheshire Textile and Other Workers Representation Committee to select and then run the campaign of Hubert Sweeney, the Women's Suffrage candidate for Wigan. However, just before the 1906 General Election, Sweeney resigned. A Wigan Councillor and Treasurer of the Wigan Trades and Labour Council took his place. Though the Trades Council, of which the Weavers were members, had promised to support the women's candidate, at the eleventh hour this was withdrawn. The women ran the campaign of Britain's first Women's Suffrage candidate



Window at premises of Wigan and District Weavers, Winders, Reelers and Beamers' Association

independently. Thorley Smith wasn't elected, but he came a respectable second, beating the Liberal candidate into third place (see Past Forward Issue 71).

By 1914 with Julia an active Committee member, the union was an established member of Wigan's Trade and Labour Council, affiliated to the Labour Representation Committee and was committed to the growth of Labour politics in Wigan. She was on the Weavers' Committee which instructed delegates to the Trades and Labour Council to support its fusion with Wigan's Labour Representation Committee and was present when the Wigan Labour Party was founded. Harry Twist became their MP in January 1910 but lost his seat in December. During the war years she was not only the union's representative, but an Executive member of the Labour Representation Committee as Twist was consistently re-elected as Labour candidate.

Wigan's political women

Because the 1918 Representation of the People Act gave only a minority of women a parliamentary vote, women still had insufficient political power to effectively influence government policies. This encouraged women to look elsewhere to orchestrate change. Fortunately, the 1914 Municipal Reform Act, which removed the restrictive property qualification, became fully operational in 1919. Consequently it became more common for women to be elected onto local councils, something the Women's Section of the Labour Party exploited.

Wigan had a Women's Labour League Branch from 1908. In 1910 when representatives of the League, two of whom were on the Weaver's Committee, met with the union to state their intention to promote the League in Wigan, the Committee gave them their unconditional support. In 1911 the union and the Women's Labour League held a joint Conference in

Scholes Labour Club with the help of the Wigan Independent Labour Party, within which Helen Silcock was active. Nine Weavers Unions sent resolutions and delegates and Margaret Bondfield was chair. Following this Mrs Hart of the union and Mrs Annot Robinson organised two branches in Wigan.

In 1918 the Women's Labour League had morphed into the Women's Section of the Labour Party. Wigan's Women's Section worked for and among Wigan's women. They held dances, tea parties, participated in Wigan's Women's Weeks and helped take 6000 children on a day out to Garstang. Members of Wigan's Women's Labour Section had close physical and political connections with members of the Weavers union. Their weekly meetings and programmes of lectures were held in the Weaver's Darlington Street Rooms. In 1919, they had the confidence to ask the union for financial help to fight the November Municipal Elections, where Julia Walkden, along with Martha Hogg, another Women's Section Committee member, were to stand. As the union donated two guineas and agreed to support Julia she was, in effect, a Labour and Weavers' candidate. It was not Julia's first attempt to be elected. She had stood unsuccessfully at a by-election in October, making her the first woman candidate to stand for Wigan Council. However, Julia was never to be elected as a councillor.

The War Years

Politically active women of the Weavers Association were anti-conscription. Julia, speaking to the union as an Executive of the Wigan Women's Labour League in July 1915, stated her belief that the State had no right to demand compulsory military service. The union concurred. In 1916, the union sent delegates to the National Conference to consider the Compulsory Military Service Bill. This resulted in a strongly worded

Cotton Control Book, Rylands and Sons for Gidlow Works



Julia Walkden

resolution being sent to the Prime Minister, Wigan's MP and local press.

The resolution stated they, 'protest against the attempt now being made in this country to pressurise the British Workers, believing that Compulsory Military Service has always, and now will be used by the employing classes against the interests of the mass of the workers and expresses its firm belief that the Bill now before Parliament for Compulsory Military Service for the duration of the war, is only the thin end of the Wedge towards not only Military but industrial Conscription'.

The union also supported unpopular and controversial Labour Party initiatives. Minute books record, from August 1917, they sent supportive delegates to the Manchester Conference of the Workers and Soldiers Council and the Labour Party Conference and mass meeting in London called to consider whether to send delegates to the International Peace Conference at Stockholm. They were undeterred by adjournments and sent delegates to the adjourned conferences in London, Nottingham and Southport.

During the war the Shipping Controller limited imports to goods necessary to conduct the campaign. Cotton wasn't one. This starved the industry of raw materials. Some factory owners had accumulated a surplus of raw cotton and could operate practically as normal, but others struggled and workers were laid off. In June 1917 the Board of Trade regulated the situation,

restricting cotton supply to allow each mill to run a set number of looms. Should any mills run more, they paid a levy. This money was used to compensate workers laid off because of cotton shortages. A rota system for the supply of cotton to mills was introduced and trades unions were recruited to administer it. Its establishment was not helped by complaints and disputes between weavers, employers and the union. At almost every Committee meeting the secretary or Julia reported on the situation.

The union paid the allowance to individual weavers and the Cotton Control Board reimbursed them. Their secretary and Julia administered this from a specifically established office. With 3000 members to keep in work or calling in to collect out of work allowances, keeping a record of these transactions their workload would have been enormous.

The Government regarded Cotton Control as a short-term response to a crisis and foresaw its end. In June 1918 a worried union called a public meeting to protest against the abolition of the rota system's paying of allowances under the Cotton Control Board and to organise a petition to the Shipping Controller to release more shipping for importing cotton. After the war these controls ended, but the Board continued as the Cotton Reconstruction Board.

Julia was a member of the Board of Trade's Wigan Profiteering Committee. Though ostensibly not gendered, many of the categories centred round the home and domesticity; as such her work revolved around protecting women's interests. She served on the Emergency Committee and the Food Economy Committee.

The union fought for and won compensation for Edith Robinson, a munitions worker. They wrote a letter of protest to Wigan Infirmary concerning the Infirmary's circular letter to employers asking them to deduct a fixed weekly contribution from workers' wages.

There are a number of instances where these women joined the nation-wide sisterhood and attacked oppressive practices. They wrote to the Government objecting to the 1918 Defence of the Realm Act's Regulation 40D. This legislation would enable policemen to arrest any woman talking to a serviceman, on the assumption that she was soliciting, and have her examined for venereal diseases, a reinstatement of the nineteenth century Contagious Diseases Acts in all but name.

Not all the activism was reactionary. Julia, perhaps influenced by Martha Hogg, worked to provide Maternal and Child Welfare in Wigan. She worked

closely with Elizabeth Hart as she tried to improve living conditions for miners' wives. In 1917 the Weaver's Committee noted Julia's appointment to the Committee of the Blind Association and approved her role in governing their workshops. In 1918 the union leafleted members asking them to take part in a Trades Union Demonstration in aid of the local blind. They appointed a subcommittee, which of course included Julia, to organise their involvement. Weavers were to walk behind the union's banner. The Weaver's banner headed the weaver's contingents at the huge Wigan and Ashton Labour demonstrations each summer. The union was represented at the conference in London that discussed the Education Bill in 1918. In 1927 they had a representative on the Sub-Committee of the Lancashire Education Committee.

Post War Unemployment

The union's committee worked to alleviate women's experience of post-war unemployment. In 1918 they sent a representative to the Labour Emergency Committee in London and to the Conference of the Joint Committee on Labour Problems after the war. Later that year they were represented at the Wigan Advisory Meeting on the Demobilisation of Women Workers.

In 1919, Julia was appointed to Wigan's Court of Referees where she heard appeals by claimants whose unemployment benefit had been refused. In 1921 the Union strongly protested to the Minister of Labour and the Chief Divisional Officer of Wigan Labour Exchange against unemployed women having to accept domestic service.

In the 1920s the Committee complained about the difficulties experienced by weavers applying for unemployment benefit, particularly the harsh and rigid regulations imposed. Protesting that women in nearby Coppull were obliged to travel to a distant Chorley Labour Exchange up to four times a week, a Women's Sub-Committee of Wigan's Labour Exchange was formed and Committee member Mrs Bibby was appointed.

The union had become an Approved Society for the administration of the National Insurance Scheme of 1911. From 1920 they were an Approved body under the Unemployment Insurance Act of 1920 and advertised their role as agents for paying out state unemployment benefits, urging workers to collect their 'Lloyd George' from them. As with the Cotton Control payments the union paid members and was then reimbursed by the Board of Trade.

In her election address of 1919, Julia recounted she had worked to organise the Pit Brow Women during their dispute with the Miners. As Helen Silcock, members of the Women's Trade Union League, the Federation of Women Workers, the Lancashire and Cheshire Women's Textile and Other Workers Representation Committee, the National Professional and Industrial Society and the Manchester and Salford Women's Trade and Labour Council were working to that end at the same time, Julia may have worked with some or all these organisations.

I have written about Julia Walkden before and what I discovered was published in Past Forward Issue 72. This article tells a fuller story but it is not the definitive story. There is more.

Sources

Accessed at Wigan Archives & Local Studies:

Wigan and District Weavers Association, minute books; Wigan Trades and Labour Council records; Wigan Observer.

Accessed at the People's History Museum, Manchester: Labour Party Archives

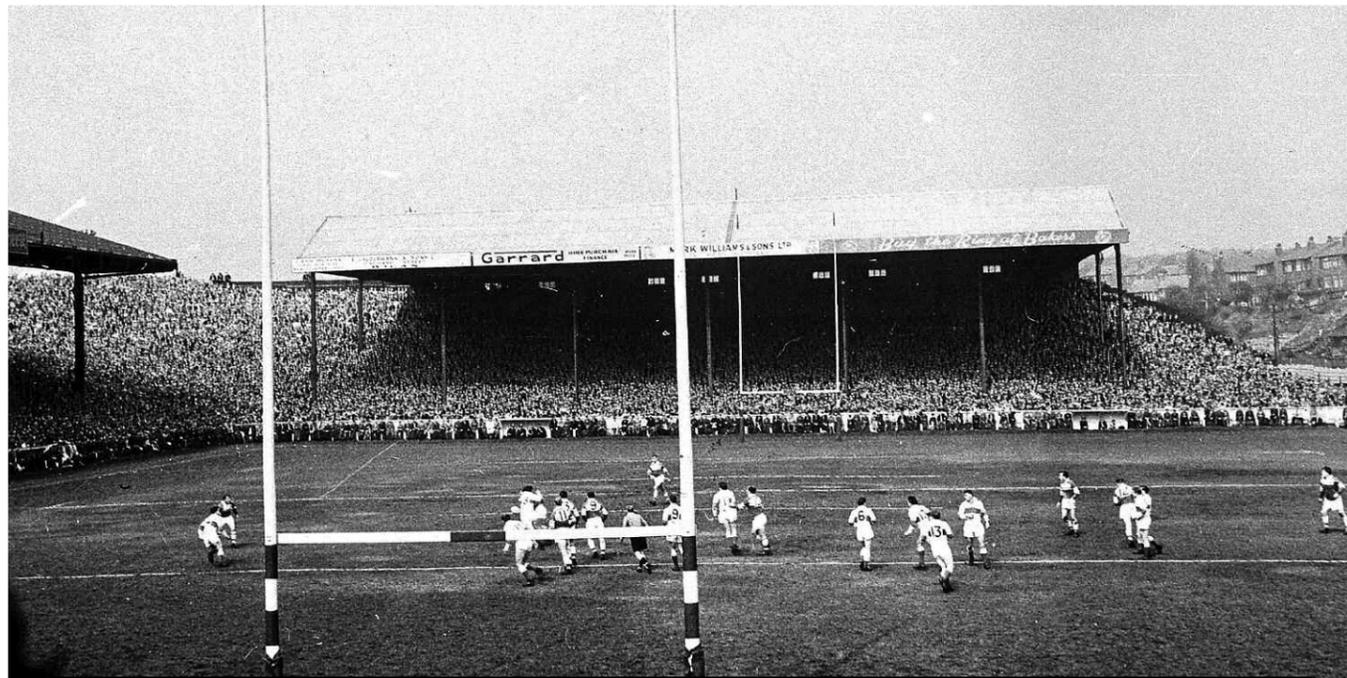
WIGAN BOROUGH ENVIRONMENT AND HERITAGE NETWORK

Wigan Borough Environment & Heritage Network is the representative body for all local societies, groups and individuals interested in protecting and promoting the Borough's Heritage and Natural Environment.

The network provides advice, speakers, site visits and partnership working with Wigan Council, Inspiring Healthy Lifestyles, Greenheart and other relevant bodies.

All are welcome to our meetings, held every six weeks at the Museum of Wigan Life.

For further details please contact the Secretary on 01942 700060, joe41@blueyonder.co.uk or visit www.wiganheritage.com



GOOD FRIDAY 1959

WHEN A RECORD CROWD OF 47,747 PACKED INTO CENTRAL PARK

BY TREVOR DELANEY

On Good Friday, 27 March 1959, 47,747 spectators were shoehorned into Central Park to witness Wigan's thrilling defeat of league leaders St Helens. Sixty years on and this is still a record crowd for a regular season game of rugby league in this country.

As the season reached its climax, most of the part-time players faced the task of playing three games over the Easter period – Good Friday to Easter Tuesday. That season Christmas Day fell on a Thursday, so some players had not only played on Christmas Day and Boxing Day but the Saturday as well. Yet in those days it was unthinkable to suggest that the Christmas or Easter programmes should ever be curtailed due to concerns over the players' welfare. The rugby league economy was given too much of a boost by the holiday games for such an issue to be raised.

For example, on Good Friday 1959, five of the scheduled nine games were traditional local derbies, all of which it turned out had some bearing on the race for the crucial top-four play-off positions – their average attendance was an impressive 24,469.

After the classic on Christmas Day, when Saints beat Wigan 13-9 in front of a near capacity 29,465 at

Knowsley Road, the return fixture at Central Park – the 163rd meeting between the two sides – lived up to all expectations.

Following Saints' stunning defeat to Featherstone Rovers in the third round of the Challenge Cup, the visitors made several unexpected changes. Saints experimented with Alex Murphy at stand-off with Wilf



The Wigan team for the Good Friday match, 27 March 1959 (Thomas Gerrard Collection)

Smith at scrum-half and crucially, their regular goal-kicker, Peter Fearis, was demoted and reserve prop Derek Brown handed the job.

The teams on that historic day were:

WIGAN – Griffiths; Boston, Ashton, Holden, Sullivan; Bolton, Thomas; Bretherton, Sayer, McTigue, Cherrington, Platt, and Evans.

ST. HELENS – Moses; Vollenhoven, Greenhall, Howard, Prinsloo; Murphy, Smith; Brown, Bowden, Briggs, Karalius (D), Huddart, and Karalius (V).

The referee, 'Sergeant Major' Eric Clay, had his hands full and lectured players on a number of occasions because of rough play. Shortly after the kick-off Alex Murphy was laid out on the popular side by a head-high tackle. The mercurial 19-year-old recovered sufficiently to spearhead a late Saints rally. Tries from Wigan's loose-forward Roy Evans, and stand-off Dave Bolton on 55 minutes, looked to have put the game beyond doubt at 14-0. However, Saints pulled back to within six points, through tries from Murphy and Smith and a goal from Brown, until Wigan's captain Eric Ashton, showed his class in going over for a try near the posts.

Wigan's South African full-back Fred 'Punchy' Griffiths' five goals, including two 45-yarders, proved to be the difference in this spine-tingling match, which ended 19-14.

After all the drama it was reported that Saints centre and captain, Duggie Greenall, a late try scorer along with Jan Prinsloo, had badly damaged an arm. Eric Ashton was also a casualty with a knee injury and Billy Boston took over the Wigan captaincy for the rest of the Easter games.

On the final night of the regular league campaign (Monday 27 April), Wigan avenged their only home league defeat of the season by beating Widnes 10-5 at Naughton Park, before a crowd of 17,389 – the Chemics' highest of the season. On the same night, Oldham qualified for the fourth play-off spot by beating league leaders St Helens 15-14 and thereby denied Saints the Lancashire League title, which went to Wigan.

The final table saw Saints finish top on 63 points, Wigan second on 58 points, and Hunslet finish above Oldham on points-scoring difference, both on 57 points.

In the championship play-offs, Saints thrashed a make-shift Oldham 42-4 and Hunslet ended Wigan's 15-match unbeaten run by a shock 22-11 win at Central Park. Few could deny Hunslet the right to contest the final from third place. But Saints 44-22 triumph, as clear leaders, helped briefly restore some integrity to the top-four system, after Hull had won the title from fourth position in both 1956 and 1958.

According to the Rugby Football League official archive at Huddersfield University, during the 1958-

1959 regular league season, home and away, Wigan were seen by over 600,000 paying spectators at an average 15,809 a game. Including the record 47,747 on Good Friday, their nineteen league games at Central Park yielded an aggregate 361,688 for an average of 19,036. This was a fairly modest figure compared to their immediate post-war crowds yet a high-water mark once the game entered the 1960s.

All in all, however, it is obvious that from the date of its opening on 6 September 1902 (Wigan 14 – Batley 8) to its closure on 5 September 1999 (Wigan 28 – St Helens 20) literally millions of people converged on Central Park, down Hilton Street and the other approaches, in order to watch both club and international rugby league.

Poignantly, the site of the ground is now commemorated by a sculpture by Joanne Risley in the form of a huge laced-up leather rugby ball, which is inscribed with action portraits and signatures of Wigan legends Tom Bradshaw, Billy Boston, Joe Egan, and Jim Sullivan. Alas, all that now remains structurally of Central Park, and its once iconic pavilion, is a W T Ellison and Co Rush Preventative Turnstile (Patent 3225), which is now a well-preserved museum piece. Painted a bright red, this cast-iron contraption must have registered some numbers in its time. It certainly would have been kept busy on Good Friday 1959.

This is an abridged version of an illustrated article, which covers the full Easter programme of games in 1959, which first appeared in the Autumn 2019 Issue (No 68) of Rugby League Journal. Yearly subscriptions (4 issues) are available for just £22, inclusive of postage and packing, direct from the Publisher, Harry Edgar, Rugby League Journal, P.O. Box 22, Egremont, Cumbria, CA23 3WA.



Central Park Turnstile, Museum of Wigan Life

All's Well That Ends Well! Part 3

The story of Standish Well and the arrival of piped water in the Township

Republished with permission from John O'Neill's history of Standish Well and Market House, and account of how piped water replaced the unreliable and polluted supplies obtained for centuries from local wells and pumps, including that from the town well in Market Place.

No living soul can recall the last pail of drinking water scooped from the step-down well in Standish as it closed for that purpose 106 years ago on the arrival, amidst great public excitement, of sparklingly fresh piped water from the hills to the east on 8 October 1892.

However, there are many Standishers alive today who can recall the redundant site surrounded by its decorated iron railings set in a low stone kerbing.

With the outbreak of the Second World War the well was again restored to honourable service but this time as an emergency water supply for the National Fire Service to assist in the dousing of any fires caused by enemy action.

Ironically, it was Britain's allies who brought about its rapid and inglorious demise when in 1943 a

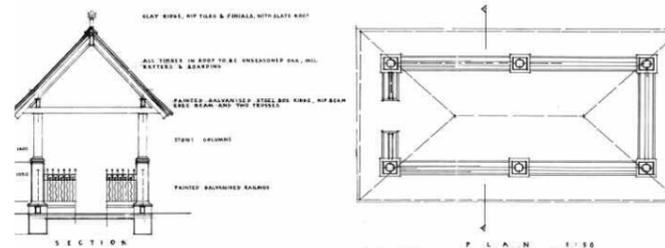
United States military vehicle attached to a convoy passing through the village backed accidentally into the structure bringing down the canopy which had occupied the site for thirteen years – incidentally, one of the stocks' supports was also damaged and later replaced and in the early twenty-first century its wooden section was vandalised and placed for safe keeping in a room over the Peace-Gate.

In true Standish tradition one ancient resident visiting the restored site in September 1998, and who of course wished to remain anonymous, stated that the accident had occurred at 12:30pm when he was playing football on the green adjacent to Market Place and Church Street and that the vehicle's driver had indeed spent some time in the pub.

Whatever the cause, with wartime priorities uppermost in the Urban District Council's mind, the debris was unceremoniously carted off to the Council's yard in Grove Lane never to be seen again and the site itself covered.

After the war the site was tarmaced, its rectangular area marked with stone setts and an inscribed plaque fixed in the centre which read, 'The area within the stone surround forms the site of the Ancient Well which served the township of Standish'.

Some thought was given to possible restoration by the Urban District Council and later, by Wigan Metropolitan Borough Council and local residents,



Anthony Grimshaw's Well Section and Plan Drawings

in particular Mr Joe Fairhurst, St Wilfrid's Church Warden and Mr Bill Mason who as a Council foreman had arranged for the removal of the damaged well in 1943. However, insufficient funds could be raised to meet the costs. Several approaches to the American Embassy in London for wartime damage compensation also met with no success.

There the well lay fading from the memory and totally unknown to those who had since settled in the village. In 1991 a more determined effort was made to ensure that the well would eventually reclaim its rightful place in the history of Standish led by Councillor John O'Neill who co-ordinated the work of various experts over several years.

Fortunately, the appearance of a benefactor who had wished to remain anonymous but now known to be a local businessman, Tom Nicholson, made the daunting task an easier one, together with the support of Wigan Civic Trust whose members willingly accepted the project as part of their programme of work within the Borough together with a contribution from the Ainscough family.

The Trust's secretary and architect by profession, Mr Tony Grimshaw, produced the necessary

drawings, the Local Authority gave planning approval and the Borough's Conservation Officer and Archivist provided advice and assistance.

Mr Tom Price, Chairman of the Trust, then set his firm Camba to the task of manufacturing the pillars, railings, roof supports and its roof and a local firm, Laurel Ltd, was engaged to complete the foundations.

On Saturday 19 September 1998 the work eventually began bringing the project to its completion over a two month period.

Once the structural work has been completed, exposure of the old well area was then undertaken by Wigan Archaeological Society via Manchester Archaeology Unit, under the Direction of Bill Aldridge, the Society's Secretary, who completed their excellent work over a very brief period in time for the official opening ceremony on Lancashire Day, Friday 27 November 1998, by Mrs Dorothy Pendlebury.

WELL I NEVER – AS VILLAGE CHEERS ...

By GEOFFREY SHRYHANE

HISTORY was made in Standish village centre when the ancient well was declared open.

And despite the drizzle, hundreds of locals turned up to to celebrate the occasion.

Some even remembered when the well structure was demolished by an American lorry in 1943.

Under a sea of umbrellas, Coun John O'Neill spoke of the 50-year campaign to have the well re-opened and he admitted it had been a long haul.

Wigan Metro liked the idea but couldn't provide cash.

Local businessman Tom Nicholson and the well-known Ainscough family put up the cash and plans were drawn up by local architect and Civic Trust official Tony Grimshaw.

Victim of Yankee truck is re-opened

Chairman of the trust Tom Price then set his firm CAMBA the task of making the steel columns, railings and roof structure and a local firm, Laurel Ltd completed the foundations.

Empty

Well-known Standish resident Mrs Dorothy Pendlebury, whose family have been associated with Standish Parish Church for over 100 years, said she was delighted to see the well finally back on the scene.

But because the water table has decreased over the years, the well will remain empty.

Coun O'Neill said the American army vehicle hit the well in 1943 and one local man said it happened after the dr-

we had popped into the Black Bull pub.

He said: "Some folks thought the damage wasn't all that bad."

"But as it was war, Standish Council decided to remove the structure to the council yard. Over the years, the original pieces disappeared."

Said Tony Grimshaw: "It's very satisfying that thanks to a number of efforts, the ancient well is finally back on the scene."

Mayor of Standish, the Rev Paul Warren said: "This is a wonderful day for Standish. And I'm so grateful that so many people knew the fact that the well is back."



CUTTING THE TAPE: Well known Standish resident Mrs Dorothy Pendlebury cuts the tape declaring the well open. Coun John O'Neill looks on

Opening ceremony – Wigan Evening Post, 30 Nov 1998



Joe Fairhurst and Bill Mason - Wigan Evening Post 4th August, 1986

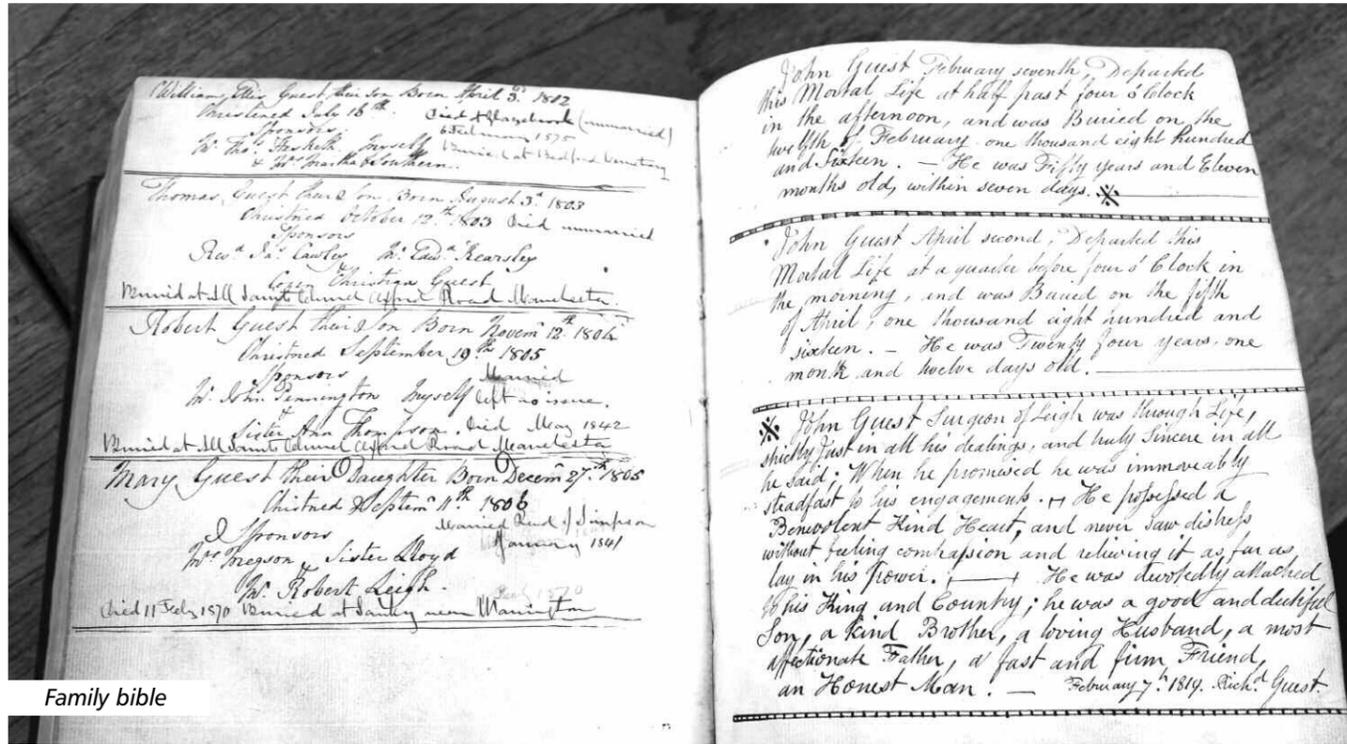


Well Sections made and installed by Tom Price's 'Camba' Works



The dug-out well – Wigan Archaeological Society

Did Handel visit Leigh?



Family bible



Karen and Robin holding the silver tobacco pipe stopper

The archives were fortunate enough to welcome father and daughter Robin and Karen, descendants of the Guest family, a few weeks ago. The Guest family have well-known links to Leigh such as Bedford Brewery and Bedford House. One of the most intriguing stories surrounding the family concerns the composer George Friderick Handel. Legend has it that Handel visited the Guests at Bedford House, performed a few songs on the house organ, and visited St Mary's Parish Church, Leigh. He is also said to have composed 'The Hark', a Christmas carol, during his visit but this and his visit to Bedford House is thought to be untrue.

The family do have a connection to the composer though, a silver tobacco pipe stopper in the shape of a leg, has a handwritten note accompanying it which states that the pipe stopper was given to

Richard Guest by Handel. Handel had been operated upon for cataract and Richard, then a medical student, dressed his eyes daily. The note is signed by the great grandson of Richard Guest who shares the same name and is dated the 5 March 1891.

The tobacco pipe stopper is still a part of the Guest family and Robin and Karen very generously brought the stopper into the archives along with a family bible. They came into the archives to trace their family history and very kindly brought the family heirlooms.



Silver tobacco pipe stopper gifted to Richard Guest by Handel according to the accompanying note



New exhibition at The Fire Within

Following on from the huge success of The Fire Within festival that launched the borough's five-year Cultural Manifesto, the 2nd November saw the re-opening of four spaces featuring a brand-new exhibition Love is a Rebellious Bird. Since opening, the new cultural space in The Galleries Shopping Centre has engaged local audiences and visitors from far afield, and attracted attention nationally for its dynamic vision, high quality presentation and innovative use of shop units that otherwise would still be standing empty.

In a world of rapid change and perpetual protest the new exhibition celebrates The Fire Within everyone. Artists, poets and activists explore themes such as climate change and the quest for equality, sharing stimulating new perspectives and emotional events, experiences and dreams to encourage and create a better world. Love is a Rebellious Bird takes the visitor on a journey from the moment we are born through the circle of life.

The exhibition draws on items from the Council's museum collection, new work by local artists, loaned artwork and contributions from the curators Al and Al themselves and presents them in an unexpected, exciting and stimulating context. The display of Theodore Major works in the Icons exhibition has also been refreshed with three new skeleton paintings drawing in and exciting visitors.

Ghislaine Howard's intimate paintings feature heavily throughout Love is a Rebellious Bird providing us a glimpse into the beautiful and intense journey of her own family's experiences. She also captures the intense moments of arrival through her four-month residency at Saint Mary's Maternity Unit. Artist Jane Fairhurst also records the moment of expectancy with her exquisite pen and ink drawings of her pregnant daughter. Other works



include historic photography portraits of breastfeeding redefined by Wigan performance artist Claire Doyle; and flooding the room with her powerful message visitors can hear climate change activist Greta Thunberg.

In the next exhibition space the Extinction Rebellion message is further explored, and the beautiful Hokusai-inspired paintings by Wigan's artist and activist Jane Fairhurst feature. The environmental message continues with work by Liz Chapman, who increasingly aware of all the packaging and plastic she is consuming has transformed her despair of waste into a series of birds' nests. Other works include Mary Griffith's drawings of colliery pigeons; a sound installation by Anne Louise Kershaw questioning the progress women have made for equality; a fashion silhouette by Wigan's young non-binary designer Callum Clint; photographs by Leigh-based photographer Livia Lazar; and protest paintings by Ghislaine Howard.

The room dedicated to love launches the premier of a sensational sci-fi prose

by Wigan's poet Louise Fazackerley which explores a teenage girl's journey growing up in a world shaped by #MeToo. The installation sees the taxidermy lioness from the Museum's collection in an exciting and very special new context.

The fourth new exhibition space explores the moment of death and the hope a new birth can bring, to make the world a better place. Ghislaine Howard's emotional paintings study the final steps of her mother juxtaposed alongside the birth of her new grandchild. It features an amazing recreation of the Ba bird from Mrs Goodison's Egyptology Collection at the Atkinson Museum created by local photogrammetrist Lee McStein. The exhibition concludes with Interstellar Stella, a film by Al and Al created in Wigan featuring their young niece and her grandmother, exploring generational dreams and ambitions

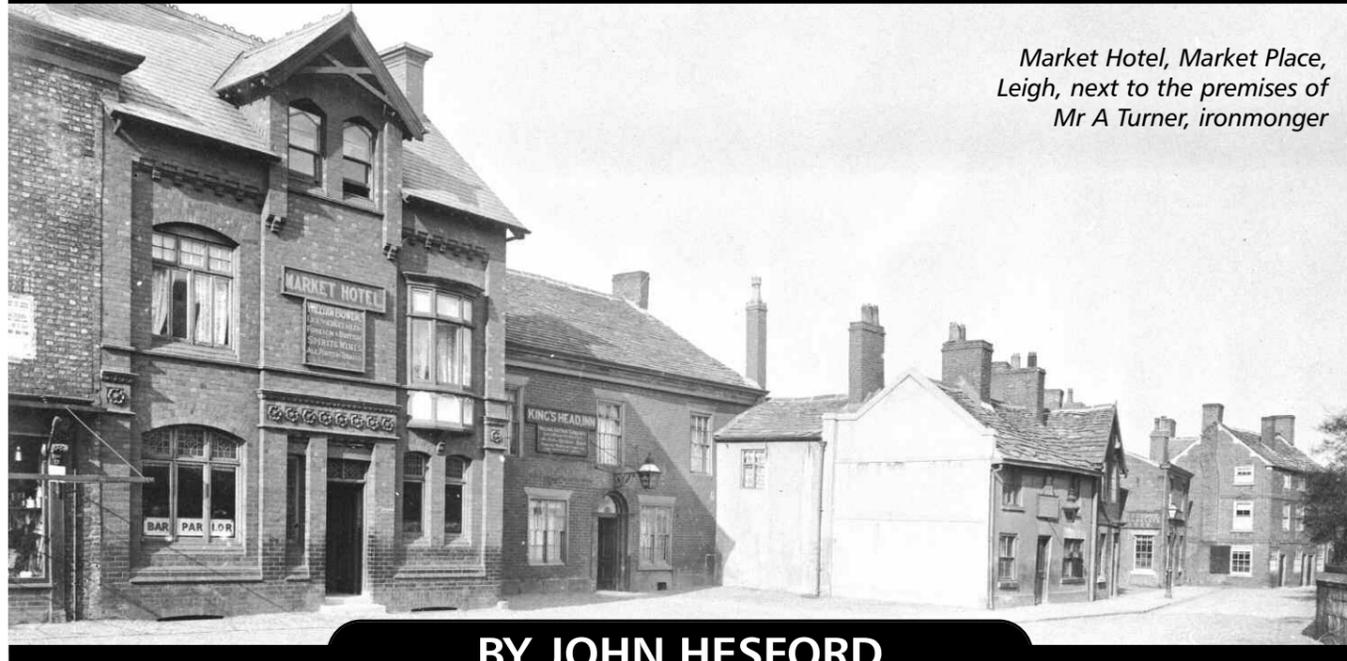
The work in the new exhibition shares emotional events and experiences which drive the artists passions and desires to shape and make a better world for each other. The popular Icons exhibition which rediscovers five icons from Wigan's magnificent heritage has remained open throughout the exhibition change-over and the fabulous ancient Egyptian mask from the museum still takes centre stage in the specially built glass pyramid.

Love is a Rebellious Bird and the Icons exhibition are open Monday-Saturday 11am-3pm. They are free of charge. The room with the giant emoji stage is also open where a number of events take place, including the popular free family Disney-film showing by Leigh Film Society on the first Saturday of every month.

For more information about the exhibition and events please see www.TheFireWithin.org.uk

www.TheFireWithin.org.uk
#TheFireWithin

The Earl Of Derby's Dungeon



Market Hotel, Market Place, Leigh, next to the premises of Mr A Turner, ironmonger

BY JOHN HESFORD

The opening of the new Technical School and Library on the 26 September 1894 was an auspicious occasion for the people of Leigh. It was further enhanced by the Earl of Derby consenting to perform the opening ceremony. The secretary Mr W E Marsh, in thanking the Earl for his presence mentioned his ancient family connection to the town, of which the Earl was blissfully unaware. After being told that his illustrious ancestor had spent his last night before his execution at the Kings Arms, the Earl's interest was stimulated, and he wished to see the place where he had been incarcerated.

Mr Marsh then made arrangements for the Earl to visit the premises of Mr A Turner, ironmonger, of 16 Market Place, next door to the Market Hotel, where he could observe a stone tablet set into the wall, which bore the inscription, 'At this house formerly occupying this site, and known as the Kings Arms, James, seventh Earl of Derby, passed the

night before his execution at Bolton on Tuesday, the 15 day of October, 1651'.

Mr Turner explained that the hostelry had been demolished many years ago and shops and other buildings had been built on the site. He told the Earl that his ancestor had escaped from Chester Castle after his trial, but had been quickly re-captured. He was then escorted to Bolton, remaining at Leigh for the night. Turner then offered to show the Earl where the prisoner had spent his last night in the dungeons, which few people knew existed, and which were still well preserved under his house.

Passing through the shop they entered a passage out of which opened several doors. One of them was the pantry and here Mr. Turner stooped down, inserted his hand into a ring and pulled up a trap door revealing a dark hole. Peering down by the glimmering light of the candle was a steep flight of steps, leading apparently

to some subterranean regions. The Earl felt his way cautiously following Mr Turner and found himself in a vaulted passage and by the light of the candle and the rays of light streaming through two grids above, he noticed several chambers with groined and ribbed roofs, and archways.

Turning to the left they passed through a low narrow doorway and found themselves in a dark and dismal, but dry and clean dungeon, about six feet by five, with a small grating in the wall through which the goaler at one time would observe his prisoner. Just outside the door and inside the passage was an old rusty ring set into the floor, which it was impossible to remove. Mr Turner informed the Earl that up to a few years ago there used to be a stock in one of the dungeons, and some time since an old sword bearing the initials of the Earl of Derby was found. The finder not knowing its value is said to have sold it for a shilling, and Mr Turner was under the

impression that it was in the museum at St. Helens.

Leaving the Earl's dungeon they turned into the other chambers and found the walls to be two feet thick and even more in some places. There was another dungeon a little smaller than the Earl's, with which it communicated by means of a very narrow grating. To get to this they passed through a door, which was very strong, and was thickly studded with nails and iron, and then they passed through a large chamber, with arches springing through a common base in the centre of the roof, and bearing a wonderful resemblance to the crypt of a cathedral. On returning to the surface, the Earl was very moved and said it was not possible, but he would have very much liked to have spent the night in the same house which had so much historical association with his family.

It was explained that on the following morning the condemned Earl begged permission to visit the grave of his old friend Sir Thomas Tyldesley, who fought with him and died at the battle of Wigan Lane. This was refused; he was a high-profile prisoner and it was feared a rescue attempt would be made. He was then escorted to Bolton on a donkey, by two troops of Colonel Jones regiment commanded by Captain Sankey. It was also mentioned that there used to be a tradition in Leigh, that when any members of the Earl of Derby's family passed through the town, they would draw the blinds of their carriages out of respect to the memory of their distinguished ancestor, who paid the penalty of serving his King faithfully and nobly by getting his head struck off at Bolton.

The Earl then asked if he could visit the church, and was escorted



The monument erected in memory of Sir Thomas Tyldesley on Wigan Lane, Wigan

the short distance to St. Mary's, and to the resting place of Sir Thomas. It was explained that Sir Thomas was first interred in the north side of the church which was formerly the chapel of the Tyldesley family, but in 1872 the church was excavated and rebuilt.

Ralph Pass, former master of Leigh Grammar School stood by the workmen with a copy of Thomas Bains' history of Lancashire, and from that volume directed them to dig at a spot four yards from the north wall. The coffin was found in that exact spot and together with another coffin was exhumed. The first a large oak coffin, six feet, two and a half inches long and one and a half feet wide and four to five inches thick, containing the skeleton of some tall and well formed person, positioned as if to have been holding a sword.

A similar coffin five feet, eleven inches long and some fifteen inches wide was also found near the other, but there was no plate or inscription on either of them. The bodies were re-interred at a

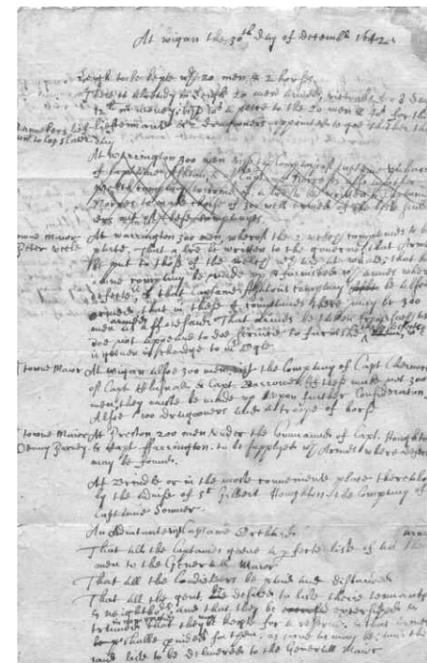
lower level than before, and now lie beneath the middle of the vestry. He was also shown a brass tablet let into the north wall a few yards from the organ. It bears the coat of arms of the Tyldesley family and the following inscription: 'At the east end of the north isle formerly the Tyldesley chantry of St. Nicholas within the ancient parish church, resteth the body of Sir Thomas Tyldesley, of Tyldesley, Morleys and Myerscough in the said county, knight and major general in His Majesties army and governor of Litchfield, who was slain fighting gallantly for his Royal master, under James seventh Earl of Derby in the battle of Wigan Lane near this place on the 25 day of August 1651'. The party then retired for a late lunch with the Earl more appreciative of his connection to the town of Leigh.

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Charlson and Clayton: A Tale of Two Families



Barn at Kinknall

The story of the Charlson and Clayton families begins with the will of John Clayton, a Yeoman of Kinknall in Culcheth, Winwick, which was proved in April 1832. In this will he states that, 'I give unto my daughter, Jane, the sum of twenty pounds and no more, she having greatly displeased me in many instances and more especially so by her present husband. I consider it to be a disgrace to have any part of my family connected with so vile a character'.

John Clayton, aged 79, a local landowner, was a local living at Kinknall, Hob Hey, Culcheth when he died in 1832. His father, George, a cotton manufacturer, was also living at Kinknall, when he died in 1803. George must have been a man of some standing in the community as he mentions more than one property in his will and makes provision for all his children. The Clayton's were an old Lancashire family and were possibly descended from a marriage of Ralph de Clayton of Thelwall and Beatrix, daughter of Adam de Kinkenhall [of Kinknall Hall, near Kenyon]. They had a son Hugh, whose son John de Clayton was born in 1354. There is little information about Hugh but a cast of his armorial seal can be found in Warrington Museum.

The Manor of Culcheth was split into four areas in the medieval period with Kinknall being a moated house in the area known as Perstfurlong. The house is long gone but one of the barns remains, identified as being a combined barn for cattle, hay and horses, built in the late eighteenth century. John Clayton, a wealthy and influential within the local area, would have been familiar with this barn and the surrounding fields.

The disaffection between John Clayton and his daughter Jane resulted from her marriage to a man whose background was very different from her own. The Charlson's were handloom weavers from Chowbent, with little money, few resources and nothing in common with the Claytons. This was a life struggling to provide for themselves. Despite the terms of his will, John Clayton doesn't appear to be an unforgiving man, as he takes Jane's two illegitimate children into his home and treats them with great generosity when Jane died in 1831. She was aged only 36 and had been married to Edward Charleson for two years. Her daughter Susannah had been born in 1813 and her son Richard in 1816. Neither of the children were baptised as infants so we know nothing about

where Jane was living at the time or the identity of the children's fathers. Richard never married but Susannah married Henry Southern, widower of her Aunt Margaret, their mother's sister. The couple were living with John and his wife Anne when he died in 1832, Henry being both an executor and beneficiary of the will proved that year. Susannah was only to live another six years after producing three sons, her widower remarrying in 1848. This couple, with his three sons, remained in the area until 1862 when Henry died.

John Clayton had concerns for his daughter's welfare following her marriage into the Charlson family, indicating that any money she might receive on his death would be appropriated by her husband's family. His concerns proved correct as after his death, John Charlson, Edward's father, produced a forged will benefiting his son Edward to the amount of £500. The question of the validity of this will is outlined in a newspaper report in the Lancaster Gazette & General Advertiser in March 1834. In Court a will of John Clayton dated 8 August 1830 was produced from the Archive of the Bishop of Chester and then the will, said to be the forged one, dated 30 December 1831, was also produced. The first will had been proven at Chester on 10 April 1832 and Letters of Administration were granted to Henry Southern and William Walpole as the executors. Both these men were well known to John Clayton, the Testator, and trusted by him.

The will produced by Charlson contained a number of irregularities. John Charlson had instructed Mr Matthews, solicitor of Leigh, to draw up the will according to Charlson's own instructions, without any reference to John Clayton himself. The will was then taken away to be signed before being returned to Mr



The mill at Atherton © Morag Burton

Matthews for safekeeping. When produced in court it was proved that the Testator's signature was in fact in John Charlson's own handwriting and that he had also signed as a witness.

Charlson's information was so garbled that the jury didn't wait for instruction from the judge, but immediately found him guilty of forging the will. A petition by Charlson's wife, Rebecca, had been received by the courts suing for mercy on the grounds that she had borne 22 children, five now surviving, to whom John Charlson had been a tender father and to her a kind husband. This was something of an exaggeration as only nine children appear to have been baptised to this couple. It isn't clear whether this petition had any effect of the outcome of the sentence but despite forgery being a capital offence, the judge, after passing sentence of death, commuted the sentence to transportation for life.

Charlson spent a short time in Lancaster Castle before boarding the prison hulk 'Justitia' moored at Woolwich, where he awaited transportation. This was a very old ship, launched in 1777 and was the first ship to be used as a prison hulk in England, so by 1835 it would have been in a semi-derelict state. Conditions on board were harsh and Charlson would be expected to work in the dockyards or on the banks of the river. Those on the Thames were put to work improving the navigability of the river by removing gravel and soil from its shores. The work was backbreaking and exhausting. The rations were inadequate for the men to perform such tasks. This was done on purpose – the parliamentary act authorising the use of hulks stipulated that convicts were to be fed little other than bread, 'any coarse or inferior food', water and small beer. Lack of food, together with crowded conditions and poor sanitation provided ideal conditions for the spread of diseases such as cholera, dysentery and typhoid.

By the time John Charlson was removed to the convict ship 'Susan' on 6 October 1835 he would have been in very poor condition. The ship's surgeon made this very clear, noting that he was, 'An emaciated miserable creature much older in constitution than his years; has been on hospital diet from the time of his embarkation: has scarcely a tooth, is not able to masticate', and in this emaciated state Charlson succumbed to an outbreak of diarrhea on board ship. He was kept in the sick bay for most of the voyage eventually dying at ten o'clock in the morning on 29 January 1836. He was one of six people to die on the voyage.

The Bicentenary of Wigan's Heavenly Twins

BY J. A. HILTON

So why did John Clayton not trust the family of Edward Charlson? It would appear that John Clayton's initial antagonism towards the Charlson family was the conviction of James Charlson, John's father, for forgery at Lancaster Assizes in 1808. He was found guilty of 'uttering a forged one pound bank note, with intent to defraud James Ormrod of Warrington', and was sentenced to fourteen years transportation. He first spent 10 months on the prison hulk 'Captivity' before boarding the 'Ann' for the voyage to New South Wales. He was luckier than his son and arrived safely on the 27 February 1810. He received a conditional pardon on the 25 May 1816 and never returned to England, leaving his family to continue their lives without him.

However, the forged will wasn't the first time John had been in trouble with the authorities. In 1812 he had been involved in the burning of a mill in Westhoughton. The mill, one of the first to have a steam engine to power the looms, was destroyed and several arrests were made, a Special Assizes being set up in Lancaster to try them. John Charlson was one of those charged, along with Abram Charlson, also from Chowbent and probably a relative. John was fortunate; he was acquitted, but Abram was not so lucky. He was one of four men hanged outside Lancaster Castle on 13 June 1812.

This was not an isolated case. The winter of 1811-1812 was one of severe privations for the labouring

classes generally and hand loom weavers in particular. The rioters became known as Luddites and the movement quickly spread to Yorkshire, Leicestershire, Derbyshire and Lancashire with secret meetings and factories being attacked. The authorities came down hard on the rioters, reading the Riot Act, calling on the military to enforce compliance and making an example of those caught taking part.

Gradually cotton came back into Lancashire, including Westhoughton and several new mills were established in the area. For the Luddites, this was not the end of the matter and the sense of anger and injustice rumbled on for another seven years until the rally at St Peter's Fields in Manchester in 1819. Intended as a peaceful rally, addressed by Henry Hunt, the situation quickly got out of hand with the Manchester Yeomanry attempting to break up the meeting, injuring many and killing between 10 and 20 protestors. It is certain that many of the former Luddites were amongst the crowd. We don't know if John Charlson was there, but many local people were, evidenced in, 'Whispers of Wingates – The Peterloo Massacre' which recorded that 'several Wingates men walked to Peter's Fields'.

Against this background of social unrest John Clayton & John Charlson were two men with very different values and social mores. By marrying Edward Charlson, Clayton's daughter Jane had unintentionally bridged two very different worlds and by doing so had caused a rift within her own family which ultimately led to her father-in-law's death at sea.

NOTE: WITH THANKS TO BRIAN JOYCE.

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Plaque at Factory Nook, Westhoughton

(Reprinted with the permissions of the Magazine of St Mary & St John)

This year is the bicentenary of the building of St John's and St Mary's, two Catholic churches that stand almost side by side in Standishgate and form a combination unique in Protestant England. Their joint existence is the result of the growth of the local Catholic congregation and the development of the English Catholic community in the years up to 1819. Each building is an architectural gem but together they form a matched pair in contrasting styles, a composition of national importance.

Despite the Protestant Reformation a Catholic congregation survived in Wigan, and the accession of the Catholic King James II in 1685 allowed the Jesuit Fr James Cannell to build a chapel in Standishgate in what is now St John's churchyard. Although this chapel was destroyed in the Orange Revolution of 1688, the Jesuit mission continued. In 1740, Fr James Brockholes opened a chapel in a house next to the town house of the Catholic Dicconsors of Wrightington on a site now under Northway and close to the Whitesmiths' Arms. In 1785, a growing congregation and increasing tolerance caused Fr Marmaduke Langdale to erect a new chapel across the road on the site of the one demolished in 1688¹.

The continued growth of the congregation led Fathers John and Thomas Tate to build a new church in 1818. Since the suppression of the Jesuit order in 1773 the congregation had been served by ex-Jesuits responsible to a committee of lay trustees. The restoration of the



St. John's Church

Jesuits in 1814 and the decision to build, determined the Bishop of the Northern District to secure control of the new church. The trustees and the Jesuits resisted, whilst part of the congregation rallied to the bishop. With the mediation of John Milner, Bishop of the Midland District, it was decided to proceed with two churches: the Jesuits' St John's behind the old church and St Mary's nearby with the secular priest Charles Middlehurst as its rector. Both churches therefore went up together in 1819².

They were designed in appropriately different styles. Built by Robert Haulbrook, a local mason, St John's is in the Jesuits' Classical Roman style with a simple Ionic portico and impressive Corinthian columns and pilasters inside. Its dramatic altar setting was added in 1834-5 by J J Scholes. The architect of St Mary's is unknown but Milner's influence may account for this very early example of the Gothic Revival in the English Perpendicular style; the decoration of its sanctuary in 1906-1920 is by Thomas Mewburn Crook³.

These complementary twins, the product of the fruitful tensions of English Catholic history, are part of the proud heritage of the local community, and a precious trust we hold for the nation.

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St. Mary's Church

Person or Persons Unknown

The Murder of George Green

BY BRIAN JOYCE AND MARLENE NOLAN

Unless offenders were caught in the act, observed by eyewitnesses, informed upon or confessed to their crimes, it was relatively easy to avoid conviction in the mid-nineteenth century. Professional police forces were newly-formed and there were no detective departments. Forensic methods, including fingerprinting, were a long way off. The police may have suspected an individual of a crime but having sufficient evidence to prove guilt in court was another matter. Such were the difficulties facing the Lancashire Constabulary in 1851, following the brutal murder of George Green.

The victim was born in 1801 in his parents' cottage in Bury Lane, Culcheth. Green did not venture far from the lane, which linked Leigh with Warrington. He was baptised, married and buried in Newchurch. He was living at Lately Common on the Bedford end of Bury Lane at the time of his death. Green was widowed twice and in September 1850 he married for the third time. His wife Catherine was a soldier's daughter born in the West Indies. She gave birth to their only child just a few months before George's death.

Green was described as tall and slim, but probably thanks to the nature of his work he was fit and strong. After his death, his friends and relatives testified to his good



Canal Bridge

character. The Manchester Guardian reverently summed up the shared memory of George Green, 'All who knew him agree in stating that a more uniformly peaceable and harmless man could not be met with'.

Like many labouring men, George supported his family with income from a variety of sources. The 1851 census, taken a few weeks before he died, describes George Green as an agricultural labourer. This catch-all phrase obscures the reality of his situation. He often worked as an indoor servant for various farmers in the area as well as on the land itself. The nature of his outdoor work doubtlessly varied according to the season.

According to the Manchester Guardian, Green also earned extra pennies by dabbling in herbal medicine, and the reporter was told of several examples of the amateur herbalist successfully curing his neighbours' illnesses.

For some time, George had augmented his income by travelling to Manchester once or twice a week to buy and sell goods and produce on behalf of his neighbours, taking a small commission for himself. He had also begun to buy calves from farmers in the Bury Lane area, slaughtering them and selling the meat to local butchers.

Shortly before his death, Green had started to take live calves to sell at Salford Cattle Market in Cross Lane. It was on the return journey of the second of these trips that George Green was murdered.

Early on the morning of Wednesday 14 May 1851, he prepared to take five calves to Salford. Helping him was John Massey, a 73 year-old neighbour at Lately Common, who was described in the census taken a few weeks before as a 'carter of coal'. Having shoved the calves into Massey's waggon, the pair set off for the market. According to Massey, George Green sold the calves for between 24 and 25 shillings. They began the return journey to Lately Common at about 4.00pm. It took the pair five hours to get as far as Marsland Green, about two and a half miles from George Green's cottage.

Jacob Thomason, his son-in-law, lived at Marsland Green, and George disembarked there. Thomason had married Martha Green six years before, but she had recently died, leaving Thomason alone with George's grandson. No doubt the widower would welcome a little conversation over a pipe and a glass of ale. George invited John Massey to join them, but it had been a long day and the 73 year-

Superintendent Registrar's District <i>Leigh</i>									
Registrar's District <i>Culcheth</i>									
1851. DEATHS in the District of <i>Culcheth</i> in the County of <i>Lancaster</i>									
No.	When Died.	Name and Surname.	Sex.	Age.	Rank or Profession.	Cause of Death.	Signature, Description, and Residence of Informant.	When Registered.	Signature of Registrar.
<i>28</i>	<i>Fourteenth May 1851</i>	<i>George Green</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>50 years</i>	<i>Labourer</i>	<i>Violently murdered by Blow on the Head with a large stick</i>	<i>Wm. S. Rutter Coroner Manchester</i>	<i>Twenty third May 1851</i>	<i>J. Mappin Registrar</i>

Registration of the death of George Green

old declined. As the waggon started to rumble its way back to Lately Common, Green shouted to Massey that he would catch him up.

Despite this promise, Green stayed about an hour with his son-in-law, not leaving until about 10.00pm. He had drunk a few half pints on the way back from Salford before taking more with Jacob Thomason, who later observed that George was 'merry and fresh but not drunk'. As usual, he intended to make his way home via a short cut across some fields rather than following the canal path.

Despite the late hour, two other men were to see and talk to George Green before he left the road. One of them, Thomas Collier, later stated that, 'George seemed to be drunk and was holding his head down'. The other man was John Green (no relation to George), the landlord of a beerhouse lying adjacent to the bridge taking Marsland Lane across the Bridgewater Canal. After some conversation, Collier went on his way, and the landlord and George Green sauntered towards the beerhouse. En route, John veered off to collect some firewood from a nearby yard. George continued to the beerhouse and knocked at the closed door, wishing to fortify himself before his two mile walk to Lately Common.

However, he was soon disappointed. It was 10.15pm, fifteen minutes beyond the closing time prescribed by law. Margaret Green, John's wife refused to serve him, saying, 'I durst not do it at this hour'. George accepted this with good grace, 'Well, I'll not ax thee then'. He rejoined John Green, who walked him to the bridge. After a brief conversation, the two parted, and George began his fateful journey across the moonlit fields.

When she woke the next day to discover that her husband had not returned home, Catherine Green visited neighbours and George's usual haunts. Catherine and concerned friends also scoured the Lately Common area, but to no avail. On the Friday a distraught Catherine knocked on the door of Police Constable, Samuel Massey (no relation to the waggoner), a little further up Bury Lane.

The officer thought the best course of action would be to organise a search party, go to the canal bridge at

Marsland Green and from there retrace George's probable route home. Over the years, pits had been dug in the fields between Marsland Green and Lately Common to extract clay and lime ('marl') for fertiliser. Constable Massey's main concern was that George Green, drunk and disorientated in the darkness could have stumbled into one of these water-filled holes and drowned. Searching them was therefore a priority.

The largest marl pit was about half a mile from the beerhouse, on the twelve-acre Grange Farm worked by Jeremiah Williamson. The path George Green would have taken was slightly elevated above the water and was overlooked by willow trees and a hedge. It was a particularly lonely spot. As PC Massey's party peered into the weed-filled water, one of them spotted a white, wide brimmed straw hat lying four feet down at the bottom. They fished it out with a grappling hook.

The searchers immediately recognised it as George Green's. Someone had pulled the brim down and tied it together. When the brim was undone, the inside of the hat was seen to contain clods of clay. Someone had weighed it down so that it would not float to the surface. As PC Massey was examining the hat, someone yelled, 'Here's the body!'

There, lying in four feet of water was George Green. His body was dragged out onto firm ground with the grappling hook. To their horror, the shocked search party saw that, in the words of the Observer newspaper, 'The front and other portions of the head were almost battered to pieces'. There were also lacerations on George's hands, suggesting that he had vainly tried to defend himself. His pockets were turned inside out and his money had gone. It was obvious to everyone present that George Green had been robbed and murdered.

The search party conveyed George's remains to an outhouse in the Greyhound public house at the top of Bury Lane to await an inquest. Meanwhile PC Massey hurried to Leigh Police Station to report what he had found. A message was sent to William Rutter, the County Coroner. Massey then returned to the scene of the crime with Sergeant Bonner.

As they examined the marl pit and the land surrounding it, the officers found bloodstains on the grass at the water's shallow side. They also discovered separate staining on the other side where Green's body had been found in the deeper water, but none in between. There were no signs that a body had been dragged from one side to the other, suggesting that it had been carried. From this, the policemen deduced that more than one person had been involved and that they were local men who knew on which side to dump the body.

On re-examining the marl pit itself, they discovered a thick willow stick about eighteen inches long with V-shaped indentations at one end, suggesting it had been recently cut with a billhook. The surrounding willow trees had recently been pruned, and there were many such sticks lying around. The murderers had probably selected their weapon from the pile. The officers noted that there were bloodstains and grey human hair on the thicker end of the stick.

The inquest opened at the Greyhound on Saturday 17 May. John Massey the carter, Jacob Thomason, George Green's son-in-law, Thomas Collier, whom the deceased had spoken to outside the beerhouse at Marsland Green, PC Massey and others all gave their accounts of the fateful night.

Dr James Brideoake of Leigh who had conducted a post-mortem, gave a detailed account of George Green's appalling injuries. Many of the wounds to his head displayed V shaped indentations corresponding to those on the willow stick found at the scene. This was indeed the murder weapon. Dr Brideoake concluded that Green had probably been confronted by an attacker from the front who struck him around the temple. He had fallen to the ground, and then received a merciless beating across the back of his head.

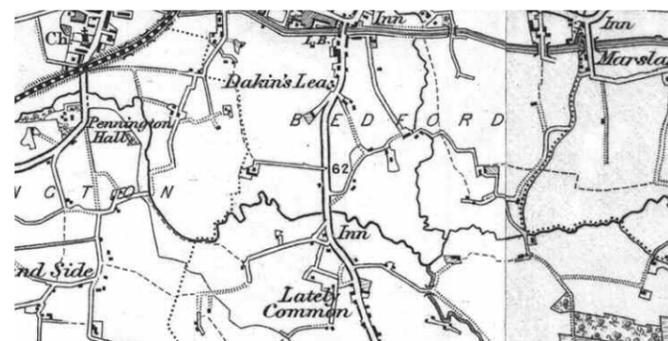
The proceedings were complicated by the incapacity of one of the witnesses, John Green, the beerhouse keeper from Marsland Green. The last man to whom George supposedly bid farewell before he set off across the fields was present at the inquest but was too drunk to testify. In the words of the Observer newspaper he was in, 'a state of beastly intoxication'. There was some press speculation as to why he got himself in this condition, and at least one paper, the Liverpool Mail, named him as a suspect.

Because the inquest required the testimony of this key witness it was adjourned until the following Friday, 21 May. This time, the publican was sober enough to testify, and after being admonished by the Coroner for his condition the previous week, gave his testimony.

The Coroner conferred with the jury as to whether the inquest should be further adjourned, but it was decided that they had heard enough to return a verdict, 'Wilful murder against some person or persons unknown'.

Meanwhile, PC Massey was still on the case. A few days before, he had arrested Thomas Hilton on suspicion of George Green's murder. Hilton, a 32 year-old father of four lived at Buck Fold, Landside in Pennington, which was about two miles from the scene of the crime. Hilton was a silk weaver, although he may have also had a less respectable occupation, the Bolton Chronicle observing that, 'he is said to be a notorious poacher'. The Manchester Times added to this unfavourable impression, claiming that, 'he bears a bad character'.

Reporters had descended on Pennington and returned to their desks with notebooks full of this kind of innuendo and circumstantial evidence. Examples of this included the rumour that he was involved in a robbery not long ago. He had recently had more money than usual, and had redeemed a coat he had pawned three



Marsland Green and Lately Common

months before. The Bolton Chronicle wrote that, 'It is stated that the accounts given by himself and his wife as to his whereabouts on the night of the murder are very contradictory'. Another newspaper claimed that Hilton had instructed an unnamed informant to tell the police he was at home on the night of the murder. Tiny pieces of silk thread were said to have been found on the handle of the bludgeon that had killed George Green. Could they have come from the sleeve of the weaver Thomas Hilton?

The prisoner was remanded in custody several times while the police searched for firm evidence to prove his guilt. In his various court appearances the weaver adamantly protested his innocence. In fact, despite the circumstantial evidence and gossip reported in the press, the police could not make a strong enough case against Thomas Hilton.

A disappointed journalist from the Wigan Times wrote grudgingly in early June, 'There are some very dark features in the evidence adduced against the prisoner, but nothing sufficiently conclusive to connect him with a participation in the murder'.

The magistrates even obtained Home Office permission to offer a £100 reward for information leading to a conviction, but to no avail. George Green's murder remained unsolved, and gradually both the crime and Thomas Hilton faded from the press.

There was a brief flurry of interest in mid-June, when an anonymous note was pushed under the door of the Greyhound public house at Bedford, where the inquest had been held. According to the Bolton Chronicle, 'the writer states that he knows all about the late murder, and also states that it was John Green, the keeper of a beerhouse at Marsland Green who committed the deed'. However, the anonymous writer offered no evidence for their claim, and the police could not act upon this probable mischief making. John Green and his wife were still running their beerhouse at the time of the 1861 census ten years later.

Meanwhile the inhabitants of the scattered settlements in and around Marsland Green and Lately Common continued to live their lives knowing that there was probably a killer in their midst.

Information for Contributors

We always welcome articles and letters for publication from both new and existing contributors.

If you would like to submit an article for **PAST FORWARD**, please note that:

- Publication is at discretion of Editorial Team
- The Editorial Team may edit your submission
- Published and rejected submissions will be disposed of, unless you request for them to be returned
- Submissions may be held on file for publication in a future edition
- Articles must be received by the copy date if inclusion in the next issue is desired

Submission Guidelines

- Electronic submissions are preferred, although handwritten ones will be accepted
- We prefer articles to have a maximum length of 1,000 words
- Include photographs or images where possible – these can be returned if requested
- Include your name and address – we will not pass on your details to anyone unless you have given us permission to do so

We aim to acknowledge receipt of all submissions.

CONTACT DETAILS:

pastforward@wigan.gov.uk or
The Editor at **PAST FORWARD**,
Museum of Wigan Life,
Library Street, Wigan WN1 1NU.



The Greyhound Inn, Warrington Road

Turkish Beaded Snake

Recently, whilst re-boxing some of the First World War collections, I came across this fascinating green and black beaded snake. Decorated with a zig-zag pattern this was made in a Prisoner of War (POW) camp and bears the inscription 'Turkish Prisoners 1918'.

This was given to Leigh soldier, Harold Crank, during the First World War and donated to the museum by his grandson a few years ago. Born in Culcheth in 1895, Harold signed up to the Machine Gun Corps in 1916 and was stationed in Palestine. He survived the war, marrying Margaret Green on 17 January 1920. Harold remained in Leigh all his life and rarely spoke of his wartime experiences. He died in 1983 at the age of 88.

After a little research I found a variety of similar beaded snakes in museum collections both here in the UK and Australia. Using traditional folk-art techniques, these objects were made by soldiers incarcerated in British POW camps near military bases in the Middle East. Although these tended to be Turkish men there are other examples of beadwork created by soldiers from around the Ottoman Empire in Kurdish, Arab, Greek and Eastern European styles.

Items include bags, bookmarks, belts, jewellery and animal souvenirs, such as snakes and lizards. Snakes in particular were popular, perhaps due to their fairly easy shape but also possibly owing to the snake being a symbol of good luck in many parts of South East Europe.

Materials were provided for this work by the prison guards in order to occupy the men. These were made as gifts for family members back home or sold to the guards, soldiers billeted nearby and to local shops in order to earn money for food, clothing and cigarettes to supplement their rations.



Beaded Snake (C16.224, Wigan Museum Collection)

Within the first six months of the First World War more than 1.3 million prisoners were held in Europe. Exact figures of soldiers from the Ottoman Empire taken by Allied forces do not exist but it varies between 150,000 and 250,000. Many were captured after the British launched major campaigns to preserve their pre-war trade routes to Russia through the Dardanelles and to India through the Suez Canal.

When war was first declared there was no system in place, on either side, for dealing with these soldiers and camps were hastily set up. Some were purpose built but many were accommodated in existing buildings. For example, in Leigh, the Liford Weaving Company mill at the bottom of Etherstone Street was converted into a camp opening in February 1915. This housed 2,000 German and Austrian prisoners and closed four years later.

Even though inspectors from neutral countries were called upon to check the camps, allegations of inadequate conditions and harsh treatment were common, on both sides. However, German propaganda did report widely on the brutality of Allied camps in order to encourage their soldiers to fight to the death as a preference to being captured.

Other objects made by POW soldiers in our collection include a decorative carved wooden plaque made by Albert Biedermann and a wooden box made by German POW, August Tilinski, in Leigh in 1916.



Last group of German POWs leaving Leigh, 1919. (PC2010.2437, Wigan and Leigh Archives Online)

Dear Past Forward Readers

We are looking for information concerning a reference to Lowton people in 1886.

In a newspaper article from the Leigh Journal on 7 July 1886, entitled, 'A Leigh Survivor of Peterloo', people from Lowton are referred to as 'sikhs'.

The context to the reference was a comment made on the walk back from Liverpool after Henry Battersby secured the release of James Cooke from prison.

The text reads:

'The prisoners from Leigh were in their bed, but they soon appeared with their clothes in their arms. "Neaw father," I said, and he said "John is that thee?"

That was an exciting time...

Next day we walked back to Leigh. The Lowton people in those days were called 'sikhs'. They put my father in an armchair and carried him all the way through Lowton.'

I would be most grateful if anyone can help shed any light on this reference.

Many thanks,

Yvonne Eckersley

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If you need Christmas present ideas for anyone interested in local history, biographies or historic diaries look no further...NOW ON SALE, the story of the compelling Lancashire diarist, Nelly Weeton.

Written in solitude, Miss Nelly Weeton's letters, journal entries and other autobiographical writings transport the reader through Georgian Lancashire and beyond.

Edited by local historian Alan Roby and published by the Archives, the volume brings new research into Miss Weeton's life to print for the first time, updating the works of the diary collector, Edward Hall.

We are extremely proud of the new volume and it is a testament to Alan's meticulous research – as well as his career in the printing industry, in producing such a high quality volume. It includes several wonderful colour reproductions and biographies of the key individuals in Miss Weeton's story. Crucially, we hear Nelly Weeton's life recorded in her own voice, giving us a near unique insight into Wigan and the North West (thanks to her extensive travels) in the Georgian period.

In Alan's words: 'Miss Weeton was an ordinary woman who was highly gifted. She learned the complete alphabet in three hours at little more than the age of two and her favourite toys were chalk, slate and quill. She was a voracious reader who seemed to have access to a bottomless pit of appropriate adjectives to describe people and events. Every word she used meant just what she wanted it to mean, nothing more and nothing less.'

We could not recommend it highly enough – a perfect Christmas gift for anyone interested in history!

The book, 'Miss Weeton: Governess & Traveller' is priced at £20 and is available from the Museum of Wigan Life and the Archives. For more information visit <http://missweetonbook.wordpress.com/> On sale at the Museum of Wigan Life, Wigan Waterstones, online through the blog or by cheque for the sum of £20 plus £2.80 p&p, made payable to Wigan Council at Museum of Wigan Life, Library Street, Wigan. WN1 1NU.

Dear Past Forward Readers

When I was young, I failed to make adequate enquiries to get more information from my Father, James Waring.

Unfortunately, he died when I was only 19 in 1963. James Gaskell Waring was born in Abram on 29 June 1906, then living at 136 Warrington Road.

He married Jennie Davies, who was a telephonist in Wigan, at St Michael all Angels on 21 August 1937.

The only information he gave to me was that at the age of 13 he was working in a coal mine. I remember that he had scars from work in the mines on his knees and body.

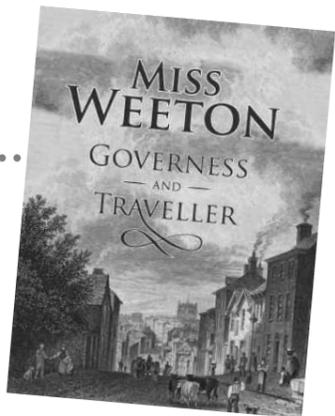
He told me that he went to night school after work and eventually qualified and entered the Ministry becoming Vicar in North Yorkshire, where I was born in 1944.

I wonder whether any of your readers or researchers know of any registers or information about mining and names around the time of 1919 and above.

If anyone can assist or point me in the right direction, I will be grateful.

John Waring

johnwaring44@gmail.com



Can you Help?

We have been sent the picture below taken in Leigh and asked to identify the event. Any information can be forwarded to the archives at 01942 404430 or at archives@wigan.gov.uk



Leigh Film Society at The Spinners Mill present... Leigh On Film

An evening of heritage footage of Leigh narrated by North West Film Archives

- Date: Friday 10 January 2020, Doors Open at 6:30pm; Starts at 7:30pm
- Location: Leigh Film Society at The Spinners Mill, Leigh, WN7 2LB
- Ticket price: £5.00

<https://www.ticketsource.co.uk/whats-on/leigh/leigh-film-society-at-the-spinners-mill/leigh-on-film/2020-01-10/19:30/t-mkyzmo>



Can you Help?

William Thomas Miller was born in 1880 in Lamberhead Green and was elected President of the General Federation of Firemen, Examiners and Deputies Associations of Great Britain in 1926. He was greatly concerned with mining safety throughout his life.

His Grandson was sent the photo below in the 1990s and would very much like to know if anyone has any information about the medal that William Thomas Miller is wearing and when he could have been presented with it.

Any information can be sent to Mr Jeremy Douglas Armstrong – his grandson – via the Archives & Local Studies at archives@wigan.gov.uk or on 01942 404 430.



Aspull and Haigh Historical Society

Meetings are held on the second Thursday of the month at Our Lady's RC Church Hall, Haigh Road, Aspull from 2pm to 4pm. All are welcome, contact Barbara Rhodes for further details on 01942 222769.

Atherton Heritage Society

Please note – From 2019 the meetings will be held on the second Wednesday of the month. Meetings begin at 7.30pm. in St. Richards Parish Centre, Mayfield St. Atherton. Visitors Welcome – Admission £2, including refreshments. Contact Margaret Hodge on 01942 884893. 8 January, 'Tales from the Crypt', Frances Raftly; 12 February, 'Fish and Chips (Little Ships, North Sea Spray)', Gordon Bentley; 11 March, 'Atherton to Ahmedabad (Part 2)', David Kaye; 8 April, 'Revealing Wigan Archives Project', Alex Miller.

Billinge History and Heritage Society

Meetings are held on the second Tuesday of the month at Billinge Chapel End Labour Club at 7.30pm. There is a door charge of £2. Please contact Geoff Crank for more information on 01695 624411 or at Gcrank_2000@yahoo.co.uk

Culcheth Local History Group

The Village Centre, Jackson Avenue. Second Thursday of each month. Doors open 7.15pm for 7.30pm start. Members £1 Visitors £2 Enquiries: Zoe Chaddock – 01925 752276 (Chair)

Hindley & District History Society

Meetings are held on the second Monday of the month at 7.00pm at Tudor House, Liverpool Road, Hindley. Please contact Mrs Joan Topping on 01942 257361 for information.

Leigh & District Antiques and Collectables Society

The society meets at Leigh RUFC, Beech Walk, Leigh. New members are always welcome and further details available from Mr C Gaskell on 01942 673521.

Leigh & District History

www.leighanddistricthistory.com
An exciting new, free, local history website, covering Leigh and the surrounding districts. Still in its infancy, it already boasts a list of births, marriages and deaths, 1852-1856, including cemetery internments, nineteenth century letters from soldiers serving abroad, a scrapbook of interesting articles, local railway accidents and an embryonic photograph gallery. There are also links to other sites covering historic and genealogical interest.

Leigh Family History Society

The Leigh & District Family History Help Desk is available every Monday afternoon (except Bank Holidays) from 12.30pm to 2.30pm, at Leigh Library. There is no need to book an appointment for this Help Desk. Monthly meetings held in the Derby Room, Leigh Library at 7.30pm on the third Tuesday of each month (except July, August and December), contact Mrs G McClellan (01942 729559). 21 January, 'The Secret History of the Victorian Lodging House', Joe O'Neill; 18 February, 'Rags to Riches', Barbara Joyce; 17 March, 'Wigan 19th Century Station Master', Marianne Howell; 21 April, 'Everyone Remembers their Co-op Number', Stephen Caunce.

Lancashire Local History Federation

The Federation holds several meetings each year, with a varied and interesting programme. For details visit www.lancashirehistory.org or call 01204 707885.

Skelmersdale & Upholland Family History Society

The group meets at Upholland Library Community Room, Hall Green, Upholland,

WN8 0PB, at 7.00pm for 7.30pm start on the first Tuesday of each month; no meeting in July, August and January. December is a meal out at The Plough at Lathom. For more information please contact Bill Fairclough, Chairman on 07712766288 or Caroline Fairclough, Secretary, at carolinefairclough@hotmail.com

Wigan Civic Trust

If you have an interest in the standard of planning and architecture, and the conservation of buildings and structures in our historic town, come along and meet us. Meetings are held on the second Monday of the month at 7.30pm. The venue is St George's Church, Water Street, Wigan WN1 1XD. Contact Mr A Grimshaw on 01942 245777 for further information.

Wigan Archaeological Society

We meet on the first Wednesday of the month, at 7.30pm at the Bellingham Hotel, Wigan on the first Wednesday of the month (except January and August). There is a car park adjacent on the left. Admission is £2 for members and £3 for guests. For more information call Bill Aldridge on 01257 402342. You can also visit the website at www.wiganarchsoc.co.uk

Wigan Family and Local History Society

We meet on the second Wednesday at 6.45pm, at St Andrews Parish Centre. Please contact wigan.fhs@gmail.com to find out more information. Attendance fees are £2.50 per meeting for both members and visitors. Our aim is to provide support, help, ideas and advice for members and non-members alike. For more information please visit, www.wiganworld.co.uk/familyhistory/ or see us at our weekly Monday helpdesks at the Museum of Wigan Life. Wigan Local History & Heritage Society We meet on the first Monday of each month at Beech Hill Book Cycle at 6.30pm. Admission to the meeting is £2.50 For more information please contact Sheila Ramsdale at sheila.ramsdale@blueyonder.co.uk

EXCITING NEW EXHIBITION AT THE MUSEUM OF WIGAN LIFE – CAN YOU HELP?



Our museum team are currently developing a new protest themed exhibition due to open in May 2020 and would love to hear your experiences and stories. Have you ever been part of a protest or campaigned for change? Were you or your family affected by the miner's strike? Do you have banners, posters, placards or other objects that you would like to see on display? If so, we would love to hear from you!

We are also looking to record video and oral histories as part of the exhibition and will be holding sessions in the new year. Please keep an eye out for dates on Twitter: [@wiganmuseum](https://twitter.com/wiganmuseum) and on the Museum of Wigan Life Facebook page.

For an informal chat or further information please contact j.livesey@wigan.gov.uk or ring 01942 828123.

How to Find Us



Museum of Wigan Life & Wigan Local Studies

Library Street, Wigan WN1 1NU

Telephone 01942 828128

heritage@wigan.gov.uk

Mon-Wed 9am-2pm Thursday-Friday 12pm-5pm

Saturday 9am-2pm

Archives & Leigh Local Studies

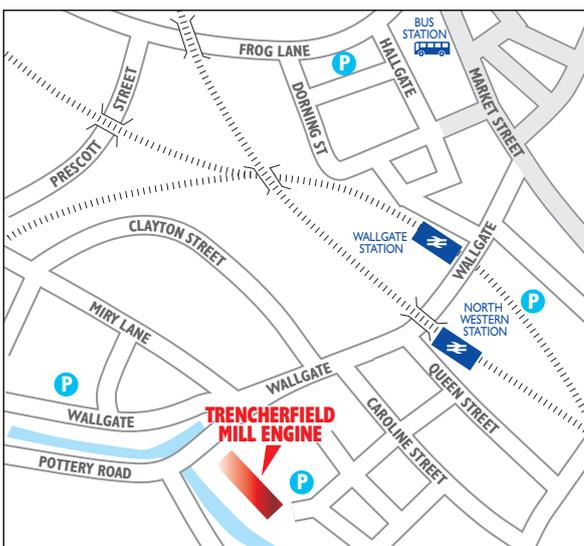
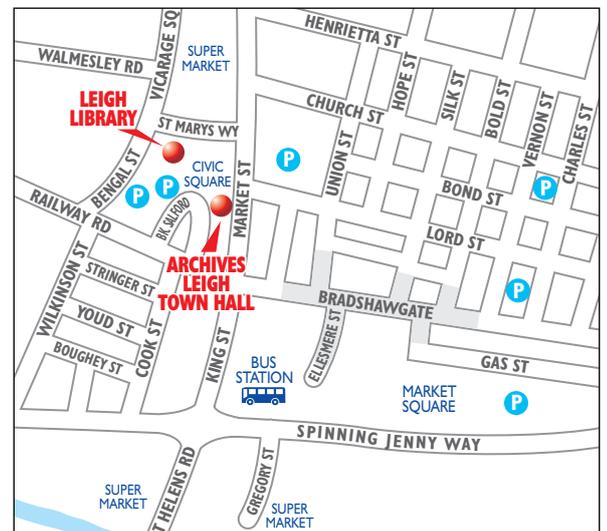
(temporary location until 2020)

Leigh Library, Leigh WN7 1EB

Telephone 01942 404430

archives@wigan.gov.uk

Mon-Wed 9am-2pm Thursday-Friday 12pm-5pm



Trencherfield Mill Engine

Wigan Pier Quarter,

Heritage Way,

Wigan WN3 4EF

Please see website for details

YOUR LOCAL MUSEUM

Bolton Bury
Oldham Rochdale
Salford Stockport
Tameside Wigan

Take a closer look www.gmmg.org.uk



GREATER MANCHESTER MUSEUMS GROUP



@WiganArchives Service

@MuseumofWiganLife



@WiganMuseum



@wiganandleigharchives