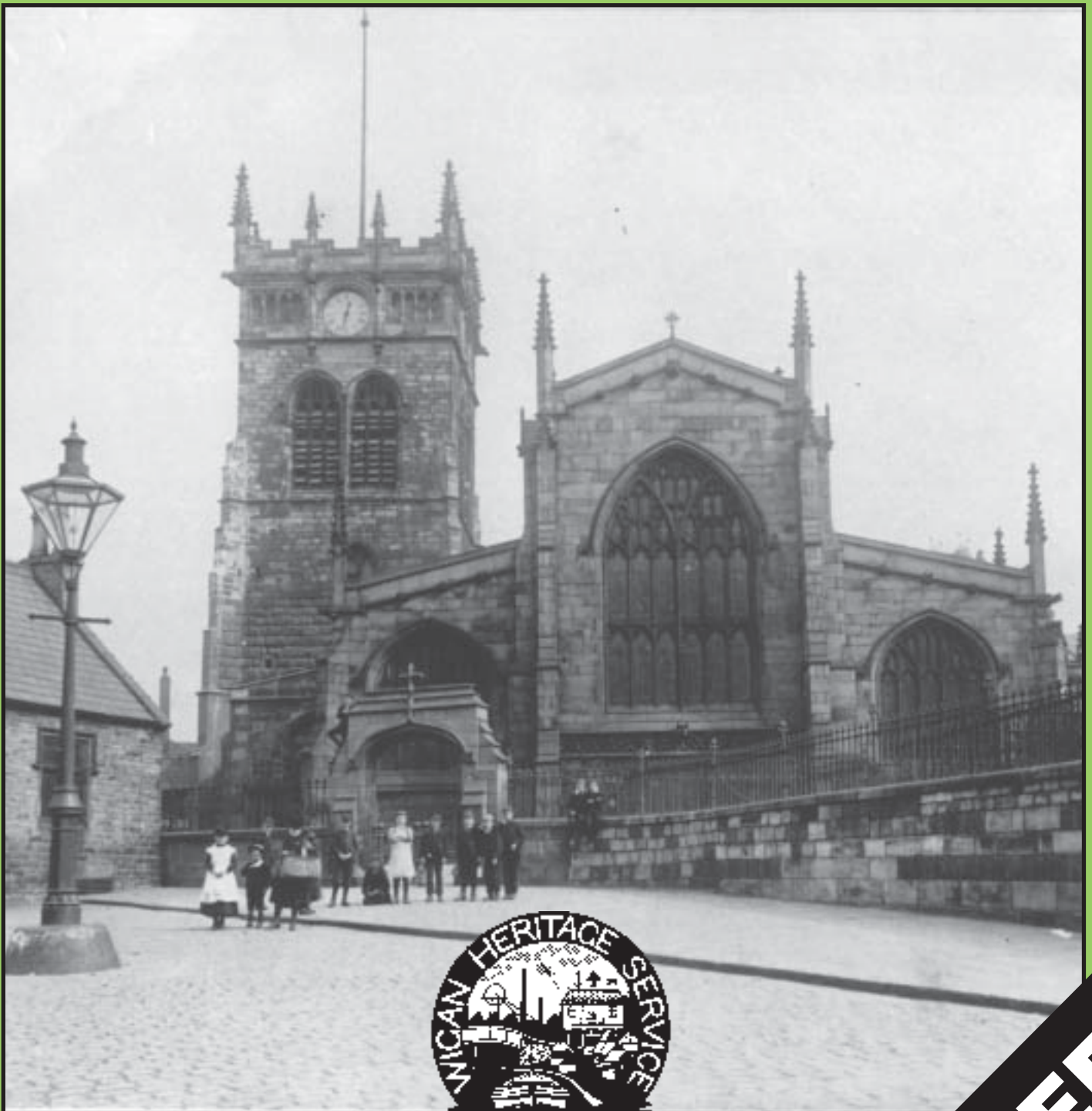


PAST FORWARD

ISSUE No. 21

SPRING 1999



The Newsletter of Wigan Heritage Service

FREE

From the Editor

Past Forward has come of age! This is the 21st issue of the newsletter. It has come a very long way since its birth back in 1991, as the worldwide mailing list, the huge number of contributions (both written and financial) and numerous comments (fortunately virtually all favourable!) clearly demonstrate. As ever, I could easily produce three or four issues from the material to hand. My apologies to all those who have contributed articles which have as yet not appeared in print - please be patient.

Another highly satisfying aspect of *Past Forward* is its success in putting people in contact with each other. On many occasions, readers have asked to be put in touch with a contributor of an article, or have sometimes contacted the person direct, and a new friendship has begun. I have also often been told how someone looked at a photograph in *Past Forward*, and there was an ancestor from many years ago looking back at them. There are further examples of this spin-off service in this issue.

Thanks to all those readers who have expressed their views on the projected *Friends of Wigan Heritage Service* - plans are progressing, and full details appear on p15. Do remember that this is being set up on a worldwide basis - regardless of where you live in the world, please do become a *Friend*.

All comments and correspondence should be addressed to:

**Editor, 'Past Forward',
Wigan Heritage Service,
Market Suite,
The Galleries,
Wigan WN1 1PX**

Cover: Wigan Parish Church, from the corner of Bishopgate and Crawford street, 1892.

News from the Archives

ANSWER to letter from Eileen Jolly in *Past Forward* 19 re Almond's Brewery and the number of houses it owned:

Dear Mrs. Jolly,

In the Archives we have a volume of rate assessments for all licensed premises within the Wigan Poor Law Union area, compiled between 1914 and 1931. This lists all pubs under each brewery or other owner.

J.B. Almond owned the following houses in Standish:

Black Bull, Market Street
Black Horse, Church Street
Horse Shoe, Wigan Road
Boars Head Inn, Wigan Road
Original Seven Stars, Preston Road
[New] Seven Stars, Preston Road
Wheatsheaf Hotel, Preston Road
White Duck, High Street.

All the above had full licences except the Horse Shoe and the White Duck which were beer houses.

Almond's had many other houses in the district: in Ashton, 7 pubs and 4 off licences; in Billinge, the Forester's Arms; in Dalton, the Ashurst Beacon Inn; 3 pubs each in Hindley, Ince and Orrell; the Bowling Green Inn at Digmaor; the Scarisbrick Arms in Wrightington; and no less than 10 pubs and 3 off licences in Wigan, including the Cherry Gardens and Buck i'th' Vine.

Regarding your grandmother Jane Blundell, she is certainly listed in the Wigan Directory (1925/26) as licensee of the 'New' Seven Stars, the address of which was 225 Preston Road. In the 1932 Standish rate book (here at Archives), the occupier of New Seven Stars is shown as Edward Blundell up to 7 February 1932. To find out precisely when Jane held the licence you would have to look at the licensing registers. Although we have the Wigan licensing records, Standish at that time came under Leyland Petty Sessional Court, and the licensing registers for that court are available at Lancashire Record Office, Bow Lane, Preston.

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If you have an enquiry, and are not sure who the most appropriate person is to contact, please ring the History Shop, Library Street, Wigan, WN1 1NU (01942) 828128. You can also send an email: heritage@wiganmbc.gov.uk

News From the Archives

Recent Accessions

AMONGST notable additions to our holdings are the following:

Ac. 3148: photograph of Leigh Corporation bus decorated for Silver Jubilee of George V, 1935.

Acc. 3149: letter from James Eckersely & Sons re wage rates for cotton spinners, 1854.

Acc. 3151: planning registers for Ince 1895-1974 and Standish 1957-74.

Acc. 3152: photograph of Gidlow Athletic F.C. 1911/12.

Acc. 3154: sale catalogue for Brook Villa, Golborne, 1897 (kindly deposited by Mr. Mitchell of Arizona).

Acc. 3156: papers re entertainments staged by Tyldesley Home Guard. (See illustration below).

Acc. 3157: photograph of group at Whelley Hospital, 1938.

Acc. 3158: printed schedules of licensed premises and convictions, Leigh Petty Sessional Division, 1880.

N.B. This last document is particularly valuable. It was published to coincide with the establishment of Leigh as a Petty Sessional Division, separate from Warrington. The new Division included Leigh, Astley, Atherton, Culcheth, Kenyon, Lowton and Tyldesley. The court registers (available at the Archives) date from 1880, but the licensing registers only from 1903, so this comprehensive list adds to our knowledge of Victorian pubs. For each house the name of the licensee and the date he or she commenced at the pub are given, as well as the type of licence and value of the house. Some of those listed began their occupation as early as the 1850's; Richard Greenough had been at the Rope & Anchor in Leigh since 1834. Convictions during 1879 and 1880 are also recorded in the list. For example William Bennett at the King's Arms in Lowton was fined 20s. for selling gin that was 50% under proof. The list gives a dramatic picture of the importance of pubs in Victorian times: there were 85 fully licensed houses and no fewer than 150 beer houses (a few of which were licensed for billiards and bagatelle), besides 82 beer off licences! The

summary at the end of the list records that no less than 374 people were summoned for drunkenness in 1879-80, more than one per day! It was this problem of drunkenness that led to the reform of the licensing laws and the decline of the beer house in the early 1900's.

Important document conserved

A document of great value to the students of local railways, as well as family historians, has been repaired and is now available for study. Entered on the official forms for 'Particulars of Staff Return', it is a list of employees at Springs Branch station, Lower Ince, of the London & North Western Railway Company. Kindly donated by Mr. A. Taylor of Wigan, the paper was so fragile due to water damage that any attempt to turn the pages caused it to crumble to dust.

Compiled in the mid-1890's, the document lists about 400 men, some of whom had been engaged as far back as the 1850's. For example Thomas Heaton, born 2 March 1835 and engaged in 1851, was still at

Springs Branch nearly 50 years later; James Leigh, an engine man at the rate of 7s. [per day], had originally been engaged in 1863 at the age of 15. Each entry records date of birth, occupation (e.g. engine man, fireman, cleaner), date of engagement, wage rate, and other 'remarks' such as death or transfer. It is unlikely that the information will be recorded elsewhere, the Company archives at the P.R.O. for instance. Occasional dismissals are recorded, for instance John Leach, a turner dismissed in 1898 for neglect of duty.

The conservation work was carried out by R-Craft of Wakefield.

More inscriptions published

In *Past Forward* 17 we described Graham Normansell's project to record memorial inscriptions at Emmanuel Church, Wargrave. He has now completed similar volumes for other churches in the area, and has donated copies to the Archives: St. Peter's, Newton-le-Willows (burials from 1737; earliest stone 1741);

Congregational Church, Newton-le-Willows (burials from 1842) Hollinfare chapelry, Warrington (oldest stone 1714); St. Werbergh old church, Warburton, Cheshire (oldest stone 1683).

Recent research topics

The type of research carried out by people at the Archives varies greatly. Readers may be students, academics, family historians, council officers, commercial interests, and individuals pursuing private research or legal matters.

Recent research includes: nailmakers' cottages and workshops at Atherton (English Heritage); Westleigh - detailed study of population, land-holding, family reconstitution and topography; land use in Dalton; health in Wigan; rights of way; civil war; Astley Hospital site; war memorials; South Lancs. Tramways; Douglas Navigation; St. John's Hindley Green centenary; hedgerows; adoptions; house histories; Wigan vehicle licences.

N.W.

THEATRE ROYAL, TYLDESLEY.

Kindly loaned free by the Director.

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 18, 1945.

"E." Coy. Home Guard Entertainments Committee presents:

"STILL ON PARADE"

(By permission of Major S. D. Sheat, M.M.)

Proceeds in aid of the Tyldesley War Comforts Fund.

PROGRAMME

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. (a) Home Guard Parade.
Words and music by Alec Flitercroft. | 8. Melody Boys. Maurice, Albert, and Fred. |
| (b) American Patrol. | 9. Three of a kind. Featuring Bill Garner, Frank Richardsen, Trevor Jones. |
| (c) Cavalry Patrol.
Arrangements by Jack Dawson. | 10. Ernest France singing "My Wish." |
| 2. The Interrupter Frank Hodson.
The Interrupted Jack Eckersley. | 11. Sacked again. |
| 3. Miss Mona Warburton our charming soprano singing "My Hero." | 12. Once again we welcome our guest artistes. |
| 4. Three Black-outs.
(a) What's yours?
(b) Colour blind.
(c) Unnecessary remarks. | 13. "Bert the early Briton."
Is it A, B, or C?
Words, script, and music by Alec Flitercroft. |
| 5. Guest Artistes
Tyldesley's own B.B.C. and E.N.S.A. Stars
Norah German & John Grey
Romance in song. | 14. John Hanbury with some popular numbers
Come on folks, now it's your turn. |
| 6. John Hanbury and his accordion. | Finale.
"Laughter on parade."
The entire company wish you all good-night. |
| 7. Plantation Scene.
Don't worry they're not as black as they're painted.
Interlude. | THE KING.
Commere Rene Tyldesley.
Accompanist John T. Parry.
Musical Director Jack Dawson.
Produced by Frank Hodson. |
- The Orchestra under the direction of Jack Dawson.

JOHN Fairclough JP was the eldest son of William Fairclough of Leigh. Born at Stone House on 19 July 1854, he was baptised at St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Church by Father Middlehurst just two days later.

His education took place at Leigh Grammar School during the period of Ralph Passe's headship. After leaving school he became a partner in the firm of Fairclough Brothers, builders merchants, which had been established by his grandfather John Fairclough some 70 years earlier.

On 21 October 1879 he married Maggie Unsworth (daughter of William Unsworth, Bond Street, Leigh). The marriage was solemnized at St. Joseph's by Rev. Father Fanning.

The ceremony was then followed by High Mass before the couple departed for their honeymoon on the Isle of Wight. Although nothing extraordinary occurred at the wedding at which Father Fanning was assisted by Fathers Kavanagh, Wright and Hopkins, the event inspired Gerard Manley Hopkins to pen his poem 'At the Wedding March':

At the Wedding March

*God with honour hang your head,
Groom, and grace you, bride, your bed
With lisson scions, sweet scions,
Out of hallowed bodies bred.*

*Each be other's comfort kind:
Deep, deeper than divined,
Divine charity, dear charity,
Fast you ever, fast bind.*

*Then let the march tread our ears:
I to him turn with tears
Who to wedlock, his wonder wedlock,
Deals triumphant and immortal years.*

First Mayor of Leigh

In May 1888 John Fairclough became first associated with Leigh Local Board when he was elected in place of Thomas Norbury. He represented Pennington Ward until 1984 when the Leigh Urban District Council was formed. He continued a member for the Central Ward until 1989 when the Borough was incorporated. After this he was elected member for Lilford Ward until 9 November 1899 when he was unanimously appointed the first Mayor of the Borough.

The first Mayor's Sunday occurred on 12 November 1899 when John Fairclough attended a service at St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Church. The procession started from Leigh Technical School at 10.30 am. It was headed by St. Joseph's Brass Band, following on came about 40 members of the

JOHN FAIRCLOUGH (1854-1923)



John Fairclough

police force under Superintendent Higginbotham. The Fire Brigade was next in the procession in their new uniforms, under the command of Superintendent Stainton. Behind them came all the Corporation officials. They walked to the church by way of Railway Road, Bradshawgate, Queen Street and Chapel Street.

On 14 August 1900 Alderman Greenough CC, Deputy Mayor, presented Mr. Fairclough with a badge and medallion (from an anonymous donor) which formed the nucleus of a mayoral chain. The badge consisted of "a large gold medallion bearing the borough coat of arms and enamelled pictures of Leigh Parish Church, Market Place and Technical School. In the upper part is the Mayor's monogram 'JF' surmounted by a gold crown. A mace and sword jut out from the main portion of the medallion and at the foot are the words 'Incorporated 1899'. Medallion encircled by blue ribbon. The makers being the Goldsmiths and Silversmiths Co, 112 Regent Street, London."

Freeman of the Borough

For his commitment to a long public service career in which he served on most of all the important committees Alderman Fairclough was conferred a Freeman of the

Borough in January 1919. For many years he had been organist at St. Joseph's Church, a Grand Knight of the Knights of Columba, the first President of Leigh Catholic Club and a member of the Council of the St. Vincent de Paul Society. By 1903 Alderman Fairclough had become one of the first Borough Magistrates and in 1912 was elected to the County Bench. In the following year during the Royal Tour of Lancashire he had the honour of being presented to the King and Queen.

John Fairclough finally died at his home (55 Church Street, Leigh) in July 1923 after a heart attack.

T.A.

Gerard Manley Hopkins

HOPKINS had been born at Stratford, Essex, on 28 July 1844 to Anglican parents. He eventually converted to Roman Catholicism during his undergraduate days at Balliol College, Oxford, when the second wave of conversions to Roman Catholicism, inspired by John Henry Newman and the Oxford Movement, took hold. He was eventually received into the Catholic Church by Cardinal Newman himself on 21 October 1866. By May 1868 he had entered the Society of Jesus. Although up to this date he had been a prolific poet, Hopkins ceremoniously burned his poems to renounce his career as a poet and it was not until December 1875 that he began writing poetry again with 'The Wreck of the Deutschland', to commemorate the loss of life of 99 crew and 113 passengers (including five Franciscan nuns) in a storm.

Following his ordination in September 1877, Hopkins became somewhat a peripatetic priest, eventually moving to St. Joseph's at Bedford for three months between October and December 1879, before transferring to St. Xavier's at Liverpool. His final move was to Dublin where he was appointed Fellow in Classics at the Royal University of Ireland and Professor at University College, St. Stephen's Green. He contracted typhoid fever and died on 8 June 1889. Although virtually unknown poetically in his lifetime it was through his correspondence with Robert Bridges and Bridges' edited version of Hopkins' poems, which first appeared in January 1919, that the public became aware of this unique poetic voice.

The illustrious 'Little' Steve

IN 1868 a policeman patrolling along Chapel Street, Liverpool, saw a small boy near St. Nicholas's Church trying to shelter from the bitter January weather. He was poorly clad and when asked where he lived said that he did not know. The policeman took him in charge, carrying him on his shoulders, "... meanwhile", the boy was to write later, "chatting to me so merrily that I forgot my troubles and enjoyed the ride." The officer could hardly have been expected to know that he was carrying a future cabinet minister on his shoulders!

Stephen was first taken to the workhouse. The register gives his number as 9747. He was admitted to the Kirkdale Industrial School on 31 January 1868, his age being given as eight, his father dead and his being deserted by his mother "... who was not resident in a workhouse". He was happy there, and wrote later, "I was well cared for and, without straining imagination too far, I think I may say that I became a politician. The teachers used to be kind enough to lend me illustrated papers and I vividly remember being fascinated by a portrait of Mr. Gladstone. From that time on Mr. Gladstone was my hero and I followed his career with absorbed interest. In later years I forsook Liberalism but Mr. Gladstone was certainly one of the most potent influences on my early life."

Born with great gifts

Such was his progress at the school that he wished to stay on to become a teacher but the principal considered him to be too small to control the children. The Kirkdale Committee minutes of 10 December 1873 contain the following: "an application has been received from John Walsh of Downall Green, Ashton-in-Makerfield, for his brother Stephen". It is not known how John Walsh reached Downall Green from Liverpool and at 19 years of age would not be considered. However Stephen was discharged on 7 January 1874 "to friends". The 1881 census shows Stephen Walsh living at 43 Downall Green with Matthew Picton, a coal miner and his wife Anne, both aged 40. Stephen went to work in the pits, earning 1d an hour for a 60 hour week, "... less than a £1 a month to keep body and soul together". He had been born with great gifts and found that his education, elementary



King George V and Queen Mary with Mr. Stephen Walsh, Secretary of State for War in the first Socialist Government, 1924.

though it was, gave him a great advantage over his fellow miners, most of whom were illiterate.

From the age of 14 he passed through all the grades underground from haulage hand to coal-face worker. When he first became connected with mining trade unionism there was no county federation, only a number of local unions. In time he was elected check-weighman at Garswood Hall Collieries and when Sam Wood became the Member of Parliament for Ince in 1892, Walsh was his trusted lieutenant. In 1885 he married Annie Adamson, a "pit-brow lassie", at the colliery where he worked and they were to have ten children. In 1901 he became the miners' agent for Wigan, which meant leaving Downall Green and living in Swinley Road, Wigan, a condition of the appointment being that the successful candidate must reside in the area.

Caused a sensation in the House

In 1906, as a Labour Representation Committee candidate he won the Ince Division from Colonel Blundell, a local colliery owner, by a large majority. In all he was to win seven elections before retiring in 1929 and today,

over 90 years later, the seat - now the Makerfield Division - is the safest of the Labour strongholds. His maiden speech, delivered only days after taking his place in Parliament, was received with great approval on both sides of the House. In 1908, a private member's bill introduced by Walsh won for the miners, for the first time ever, an eight-hour day. In 1912 during a miners' strike for a minimum wage, Mr. Asquith, the Prime Minister, brought in a bill establishing the principle. Walsh fought hard to have amounts inserted but when his amendments failed he urged his colleagues to support the bill. He caused a sensation in the House saying, "I am a citizen before I am a trade unionist and if the national interests were in danger I would support the State".

During the 1914-18 war he campaigned vigorously on behalf of the war effort and served in the wartime coalition, first as Parliamentary Secretary of National Service from 1917-19 as Secretary to the Local Government Board. It was a bitter blow to the Walsh family when, in April 1917, Captain Arthur Walsh, M.C. their eldest son, was killed in France. When the Labour Government took office for the

first time in 1924, Mr. Walsh became Secretary of State for War with a seat in the Cabinet. There was something incongruous about this Minister, who was only five feet tall, giving orders to stiff, beribboned generals. However, his intelligence and personality quickly won over the Army chiefs. Although small in stature, mentally he was a giant. As a miners' agent it was said that if Stephen Walsh could not get a concession from the coal-owners there was no concession to be had. He was a Shakespearean scholar and could pick up any quotation given him and carry on until asked to stop.

Apt quotations and literary allusions

In the House of Commons, his speeches always contained apt quotations and literary allusions. It was said that Arthur (afterwards Lord) Balfour, the Tory Leader, listened intently to this man who was born in the slums of Liverpool, untrained in the Parliamentary arts, addressing the greatest assembly in the world in a manner equal and sometimes superior to many of those around him. His speeches may have been flavoured with classical allusions and quotations, but always the substance was the condition of the people and the urgent necessity for improvement.

Walsh died in March 1929. Telegrams were received from the King and Queen, the War Office, Lloyd George and countless others. When the cortege left Swinley Road, Wigan on its five-mile, one-and-a-half hours journey to Downall Green, long ranks of bare-headed miners who had left the coal face early to pay their last respects, lined the street. In an inspiring graveside address, Canon Raven, who represented the Bishop of Liverpool, said "living under conditions which existed in parts of this neighbourhood, with its wastage of human life, its tragedies, poverty, suffering and endurance and knowing how enormously complex were the causes of those evils, it was difficult not to despair. There were those who claimed that they could not turn poor stock into good and that nothing could be got out of a slum but a slum mind. Thank God Stephen Walsh stands as a witness that both of those statements are untrue."

© James Fairhurst

1999 commemorates 150 years since the death of Miss Weeton, Governess, of Upholland. After his introduction to Miss Weeton in Past Forward 20, Alan Roby continues with the story of Miss Weeton's parentage and her early life at Lancaster and why, along with her mother and brother, she came to settle at Upholland, near Wigan:

ELLEN WEETON

(1776-1849)

GOVERNESS

From Lancaster to Upholland

A BRIEF entry of baptism in the registers of St. John's Parish Church, Lancaster, states: "Nelly, daughter of Captain Weeton, 29 January, 1777". Ellen Weeton (christened Nelly) was born on Christmas Day 1776. Thomas Weeton, her father, was born at Scale Hall, near Lancaster in 1748 and had married in 1770(?) Mary Rawlinson of Preston.

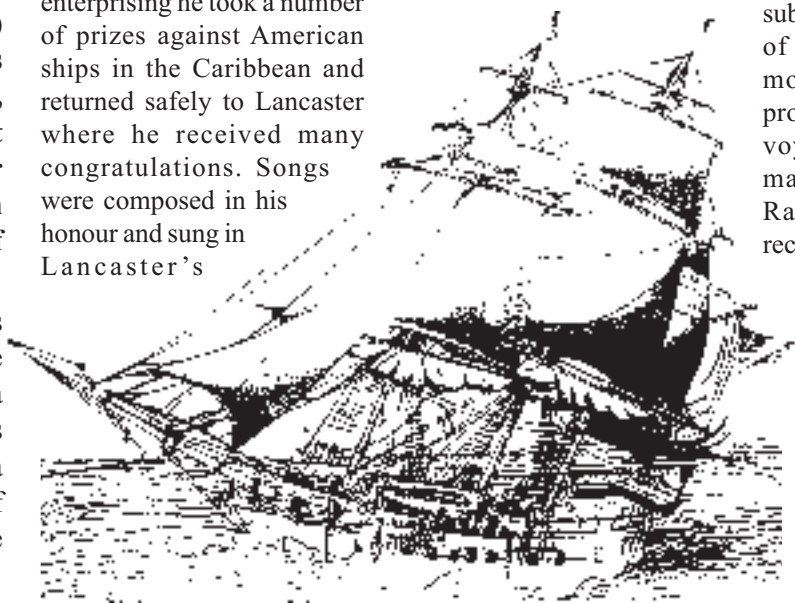
At the time of Ellen's birth Thomas was in the employ of the Rawlinsons (a very distant relation to his wife's family), who were a Lancaster family of shipowners and of no little importance in the city.

Before the American War of Independence, Thomas Weeton was captain of a merchantman employed in the African slave trade. At the outbreak of war in 1776 he was commissioned to command a privateer (a privately equipped war ship), with permission to engage the enemy. His ship's name was the *Nelly*.

Brave and enterprising

Captain Weeton clearly excelled in his captaincy,

which carried a Letter of Marque. This meant that in any successful engagements with the enemy there was the prospect of a share of prize money for himself. Brave and enterprising he took a number of prizes against American ships in the Caribbean and returned safely to Lancaster where he received many congratulations. Songs were composed in his honour and sung in Lancaster's



A Privateer. Armed merchantmen carrying at least 18 guns and 40 men were licensed to attack and capture ships of enemy countries. The above sketch is of the Lancaster-built 22 gun privateer, the 'Thetis', based on a model in Lancaster Maritime Museum. The 'Nelly' commanded by Thomas Weeton in 1776 would have been very similar.

streets; the songsters on occasions stopping outside his home at the top of Church Street to proclaim repeated cheers.

During this period his wife bore him four children: Edward was the first born who died aged three, next was

Nelly. The name was chosen by Mrs Weeton because her husband was en voyage in the *Nelly* at the time of her birth. Their third child was Margaret who lived but a fortnight and fourth was Thomas who was born in January 1781.

Captain Weeton's successes at sea had, by the year 1782, accumulated for himself the colossal sum of £12,000. He then decided to give up his seafaring activities but the idea was over-ruled by his employers. They promised him that if he would go to sea

strength, Captain Weeton was hit by a "chain shot" which "ripped off the side of his face whilst he was shouting orders through a trumpet to his men in the shrouds." Soon afterwards the American ship made off in a sinking state but the *Nelly* somehow remained afloat. The crew took him to nearby Jamaica where he lived for a few days. He was buried there on 11 September, 1782.

Defrauded

Mary Weeton's great loss was compounded by subsequently being defrauded of all her husband's prize money, as well as other property gained through his voyages. Though making many applications to the Rawlinsons, she never received a single pound, nor any information regarding the manner in which his property was disposed of. Suffering a deep depression of spirits and her health impaired through an accumulation of losses - in a period of six months she had lost her husband, her own mother and a fortune of at least £12,000. She then decided to plan a new life for herself and her two remaining children.

Now it so happened that Mrs. Weeton had, through her mother, a connection with the ancient village of Upholland, near Wigan. Mrs. Weeton's mother was a sister to an Upholland brewer by the name of Randal Smith. She had married a Preston butcher by the name of Richard



Rawlinson with whom she had three daughters: Elizabeth who married Mr. T. Ditchfield of Preston, Mary who married Mr. T. Weeton of Lancaster and Margaret who married Mr. T. Wigan of Wigan.

Last days in Upholland

Prior to her death, old Mrs. Rawlinson (Mrs. Weeton's mother), had expressed a desire to spend her last days in Upholland, the place of her birth. Shortly beforehand Mrs. Weeton had promised that she would go to Upholland with her, but now alone she decided to continue with this plan. She was somewhat encouraged in this by her sister, Margaret, then living in Upholland who told her that "both rents and coals were much lower than in Lancaster."

Mrs. Weeton, with Ellen aged seven and Thomas aged three, came to begin their new life in Upholland in May 1784 and rented a little cottage in Church Street.

Mary Weeton and her two sisters, Elizabeth and Margaret had, considering the time in which they lived, received a good education. Mary in particular had been fortunate enough to have had a good grounding in the social graces. In an effort to improve her mind and manners she had read much and became a lady's maid to a Miss Hoghton, sister to Sir Henry Hoghton of Walton Hall, near Preston. For 12 months she and Lady Hoghton had travelled together to various southern counties of England.

Pretty cottage garden

Now drawing on her past experience, Mary Weeton soon became acquainted with the principal families of Upholland and neighbourhood. In her pretty cottage garden, which was on a steep incline at the rear of the property, on "many occasions she entertained Mr. Braithwaite, a clergyman and

his wife; Mr. J. Clayton, likewise a clergyman and his wife (a sister of Mrs. Braithwaite); the Rev. R. Braithwaite and Captain Taylor and his wife."

The views from the cottage and garden "were extensive, romantic and beautiful", so wrote Ellen Weeton in her *Retrospect* in 1809. Both Ellen and Thomas were very happy but Mrs. Weeton was increasingly unhappy. Her little income, which had been via a very small estate at Sunderland, near Heysham, Lancashire, even with the strictest economy,

was found inadequate to support the three of them.

Thomas had been sent to Mr. Braithwaite's nearby "most excellent" school for boys at. He was a day scholar there until his education was complete. Ellen herself did not attend a school but was an avid reader and was also taught by her mother. In addition an usher from Mr. Braithwaite's school regularly attended Mrs. Weeton's home to teach writing, grammar, arithmetic and a little geography. Ellen

Continued on page 8.

Church Street, Upholland c.1913. *Mrs Weeton, together with her daughter, Ellen and son Thomas came to live in what Ellen later described as "A pretty cottage, elevated from the road by a flight of steps to the front door, and a kind of gallery across the front of the house guarded on the open side by a row of white rails. At one end of the house was a little gate which opened into a pretty little garden on the side of a hill . . ."*

Edward Hall, editor of Miss Weeton: Journal of a Governess suggests that 'the cottage' pictured right (now demolished) with the white front, answers the description. It was sited immediately opposite the garden of 'The Priory', home of Rev and Mrs J Braithwaite.

The three-storey building in the foreground is thought to have been taken at some stage by Mrs Weeton who started her dame school after four years in the village shortly before its demolition earlier this century it was known as 'the ghost house'. The site is now the car park to the White Lion inn.



ELLEN WEETON
(1776-1849)
GOVERNESS
From Lancaster to Upholland

Continued from page 7

showed a natural ability for reading and scribbling rhymes.

The family had been resident in Upholland for four years when Mrs. Weeton was forced to increase her income. She decided to start a dame school. From then on mother and daughter began a life of "virtual slavery".

● The next issue of *Past Forward* will detail Miss Weeton's life in Upholland and her temporary removal from 1808-1809 to Liverpool. In addition will be a profile on Miss Weeton the great walker; also two of Miss Weeton's loyal Upholland friends, the good, but worldly Rev. and Mrs. J. Braithwaite, of 'The Priory'.

MARGARET BARTON (1752-1813)

MARGARET Barton was one of Miss Weeton's two aunts on her mother's side of the family. She was the youngest of three sisters born to Mr and Mrs Richard Rawlinson of Preston. Margaret married firstly Mr T Wigan, a solicitor, of Wigan, who predeceased her. There was no offspring. She married secondly Mr T Barton, a saddler by trade, of Wigan, who, upon retirement, decided to settle at Upholland. Again there was no offspring.

It is clear from Miss Weeton's letters that her Aunt Barton was financially very comfortably off and loved money for its own sake. The fact that she had no children of her own meant that her "concerns were but small". At a time of personal crisis for Miss Weeton, through no fault of her own, and in need of moral and financial support, her Aunt was not very helpful. After the death of her mother, Miss Weeton had been playing with some little children, at which time she received a violent bruise to her ankle. After a few days the wound began to "gather". Her Aunt went to see her niece and said: "Why do you not get a poultice?" Miss Weeton blushed and confessed that she had no money. At this

her Aunt loaned her a penny. Unfortunately the wound became badly infected and caused her to be confined for four months with thoughts that she might have to lose her leg. During this period her Aunt only very occasionally called to see her and never once suggested that she should receive medical assistance. That would, of course, have meant her providing the money for doctor's fees.

Miss Weeton ultimately benefited in her Aunt's will by receiving the sum of £5. Margaret Barton died at the age of 61 in 1813 and was buried alongside Mrs Weeton, her sister. Her gravestone removed from its original position, is now one of many old gravestones relaid as flagstones to form a paved area at the foot of the main entrance steps of Upholland churchyard. (See photograph below).

Thomas Barton outlived his wife by 17 years. He died on 21 October 1820, aged 78. Thomas had been more charitable towards his niece than was his wife. Miss Weeton benefited in his will by the sum of £60 (less legacy duty). The whole amount was immediately forfeited to her then husband, Aaron Stock.

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A POOLSTOCK CHILDHOOD

I WAS born in 1919 on the 'island' of Poolstock with a sister two years older than I. We lived in a rented, Victorian house which had three bedrooms, bathroom, front room, middle room, kitchen and scullery.

In the kitchen there was a large black range (which needed black leading) with a steel fender and large fireguard. There was a large scrub topped dresser, a similar table and a corner cupboard. Most of the cooking was done on the fire and in the oven of the range but we did have a gas ring in the scullery where there was also a large sink, a slop stone, copper boiler and a mangle for washing clothes.

From the scullery door four steps led down to the back yard where there was an out-house in which a cockerel and hens were kept. I was terrified of the cockerel who seemed to strut about menacingly and always appeared to have his beady eye on me.

In front of the house there was a long garden with a path from the gate to the front door running along one side. To the left of this path my father attempted to grow a lawn, and a family story goes that, on coming home from work one day, he found my sister leading me by the hand and walking all over his newly planted grass seed. On being admonished she replied that she had only been showing me where I had not to go!

Next door but one to us was a brewery, and every so often water would be discharged from the building and with it came dozens of rubber bands which we collected - though what for remains a mystery!

There was a corner shop which sold nearly everything. My mother would send us with old newspapers which were used to wrap vegetables, and the shopkeeper would give us a twist of paper containing sweets - usually dolly mixtures or sometimes aniseed balls which I preferred because they lasted longer.

Across the road lived the headmistress of St. James' Infants School; her

c.1920

along the tow path dangling a jam jar on a piece of string into the water and she fell in. Fortunately there was a canal boat in the area and the owner fished her out. I think that this was probably why my mother was determined that her daughters should learn to swim. Firstly she taught herself and then she taught us.

and election address pinned to our frocks singing -

Vote, vote, vote for Sidney Wild.

He is the best man for the job,

and if you don't get him in,

we will kick your door in,

and you won't see your mother any more

(We didn't mean it!)

We attended church

and on each desk there was a small sponge. When it was time to erase our workings the teacher would come along with a large sponge and a bowl of water and squeeze a little water onto each pupil's slate.

Mother always baked the bread - 6 lbs of flour, 2 oz. of yeast - which she would knead on the rug in front of the fire. She seemed to bake every other day and we were allowed to have the scrapings from the bowl which we would mould into something recognisable - but by the time we had finished the dough was grey in colour.

When I was four years old I contracted typhoid fever and was admitted to Whelley Sanatorium. As the ambulance took me away my mother wondered whether she would see me again. I can recall some instances of my time in the hospital - seeing my parents looking at me through a window and having to stand to attention by my cot when the Medical Officer, Dr. Whitehead, did his rounds. When I was getting better I was allowed to walk to Matron's house in the grounds to take the post. At Christmas I helped the sister to string up autumn leaves which had been collected and dried. They made a colourful decoration.

In 1925 our parents told us that we were moving to a brand new house. This was near the 'New Road' as Mesnes Road was called at that time. We would go to a new school and have new friends, so we had to get used to a fresh environment. It was exciting but that is another story!

**Pauline Walker
Aspull
Wigan**



daughter taught dancing in the front room and she would arrange concerts at the school. I remember being taught the "Sailor's Hornpipe". When I was two years old I was taught a simple dance at the end of which I was told to "bow to Margaret". On the night of the concert Margaret was in the wings at the back of the stage - so, of course, I turned my back on the audience and bowed to her!

Behind the houses opposite was the canal. One day my sister and some friends were attempting to catch 'cockies' by running

There was quite a gang of boys and girls who lived in the area, not much traffic and very little crime - one could leave the door 'on the latch'.

I haven't mentioned my father yet. He was working long hours in order that we might have a reasonable life. I remember his taking us to collect eggs from the hens and for walks along the canal. He was persuaded to stand for election to the Town Council and four of us children walked arm in arm along the road on election day with his photograph

and Sunday School. There was a great community spirit surrounding the church. I vaguely remember a fancy dress party in which I was dressed as a bride, together with Leslie Duckworth who was my 'bridegroom'. I think his hat only stayed on his head courtesy of his ears. My sister won a leather music case dressed as a crinoline lady. (See photographs above).

At day school, which I attended at five years old, we learned multiplication tables parrot fashion - I can still say them all to this day. We had slates and chalk to write with

In the third extract from the Memories from the life of James Albert Davies, the author recalls his experiences as a young teacher during the 1930's.

Memories from the life of James Albert Davies

IN the October of 1932, on the Saturday before the Harvest Sunday at the Chapel, I had taken Mary Taylor out for the first time; I had known her for years at the Chapel, but had steadfastly refused earlier involvement because of home circumstances and having little to look forward to in way of a future. As soon as I knew that I was 'on my way', and that I could and would succeed in becoming a teacher, we joined forces, and never looked back!

I had a major problem posed by the final year of my course at the Tech; a full-time year, which would include an essential six months teaching practice before sitting, was the usual procedure, but I could afford neither the time away from home nor the expense. Instead, I elected to take a correspondence course and arranged to do the six months teaching practice in a nearby school (unpaid) in Babylon Lane in Adlington, which enabled me to cope with household matters pre-9.00 am and during the lunch period, and be home in time after close of school to have everything ready for the workers' return.

I was summoned to attend on the Director of Education at County Hall, Preston, who wanted me to wait until they could find me a paid post in which to fulfil the six months teaching practice requirement, but this would have meant a year's delay to which I was totally opposed, and in the end I carried out my original

arrangements (with his agreement, as I couldn't otherwise enter school premises).

Very demanding

The correspondence course proved very demanding of time, and I soon found myself behind schedule; rules were strict re returning Instruction and Question papers on time, otherwise no further dispatches, and on more than one occasion I had to get Marjorie to copy them for me to deal with later (and to return the originals on time!). There was little time for pleasure, and Mary suffered, but we survived. Lack of time due to studying meant that I couldn't get out to make the money for my Final fees (ten guineas), so I had to borrow the money and repay it from my first month's pay as a teacher.

It was during this period that I bought my first bicycle, as it was obvious that travelling was about to increase - I entered into a hire-purchase arrangement with the local dealer, and from then on life became a bit easier.

When I visited County Hall to discuss my future, I had become one of their statistics, and a few weeks before my final exam I was approached by the County Organiser with a request to take over the teaching of Workshop Practice at Worsley Tech, near Manchester, for the duration of the Summer Term (Easter to July). I leapt at the chance, providing I was released for my Final exam dates. It meant a longer day away from home (I cycled there of course, but it wasn't just across the fields), but I was determined to look to my own affairs a bit more; Marjorie was well into her teens and able to fend for herself a lot more, and I was still around in the evenings and weekends to help out.

* * * * *

Once I was through my exams and so a qualified teacher of Workshop Practice, I promptly started looking for a position. For a time I was in limbo, but soon was kept busy 'filling-in' for absent teachers, arranged by the County Organiser. One such job covered a joint appointment at Abbey Village/Shevington, where the teacher had been 'played off' with a nervous breakdown. When I arrived at Abbey Village on the Monday morning to take over (20 February 1936) I found that the school had been burnt down on Saturday night/Sunday morning, and quite literally I entered the place on my backside. I had cycled over from home in Coppull, and met no problems on the roads, even though it was

winter, but water from the fire-engines had frozen and turned the area into a huge skating rink which I didn't notice quickly enough on turning into the entrance, and my bike went one way and I went another!

The workshop was in a part of the school which wasn't touched by the fire, and most of my time there was spent on dividing the chapel for use as a school, with portable screens as the chapel was needed for Sunday worship (it was a Methodist Church and day school). The lads learned a lot, but not perhaps the normal tuition provided in a school workshop.

The 'other half' of that job in Shevington had its problems also; I was supposed to teach bee-keeping as well as woodwork - hives in an area out in the school grounds - but as I knew nothing of bees, and didn't want to know anything, we played a lot of football that month. The workshop doubled up as a domestic science room on the alternate days, and I remember going into the storeroom for my bike at the end of the day and finding a young woman (the Domestic Science teacher) changing into riding habit - she came to school on a horse!

* * * * *

The following school year was bleak in regard to teaching work, but I wasn't idle; Marjorie was at home, leaving me free to go about and earn enough as a



journeyman to keep us in what we really needed. Father thought that holidays and anything which wasn't essential were a complete waste of money, but Marjorie needed more than basics and got some of the pleasures through my help. Like me she'd little to thank father for during this still difficult period of our lives, but between us we kept things ticking over fairly well.

Sunday School and Chapel were involving us to a greater extent; I had undertaken the secretarial work, and Mary was the School pianist. The social life was much stronger then than it is now, with few free weekends and many midweek activities - the time passed quickly. I had a workshop at home where I started to think about future needs, in between working to pay the bills.

Much of our leisure was spent on our bikes. Mary hadn't much after a full week in the mill and again it was a case of making the most of what we had and striving for a better future.

Towards the end of the summer of 1937 the County offered me a three-day per week teaching job (permanent) at Haslingden Grammar School, and though it wasn't really what I wanted, after due consideration I accepted the post pending a more suitable position transpiring. Workshop Practice wasn't taken seriously in grammar schools at that time, being more or less regarded as light relief from the more important academic subjects, but there were signs of change and expressed intentions of it becoming as important as most other subjects. Originally the local joiner was brought in to supervise this light relief - uncertificated, and thus not on the official payscale but paid by the hour. By now most of them had been replaced by certificated Workshop

Practice teachers, either through retirement (enforced) or death. Haslingden had such a teacher, who had died suddenly during the Summer holidays, hence the urgent appeal to me!

Wasn't happy

I made it perfectly clear to them that I wasn't happy with the situation, but as they had helped me in the past, I would take the job on the understanding that I was free to leave it if and when what I really wanted appeared - no ties. The Director assured me that they also were dissatisfied with the three-day post, and that they were looking for two days elsewhere to make it the regular full-time appointment, on the Burnham Scale. After another week's holiday in Old Colwyn, I took up the position of Woodwork teacher at Haslingden Grammar at the beginning of the 1937/8 school year, for 'as long as I wanted it'. The hourly rate of pay was far in excess of the scale rate for teachers, almost twice as much for three days as the rate was for five days. No pay for days off or holidays, sickness, etc, so though it seemed an attractive situation it obviously didn't have any future and the sooner I was out of it and in a regular situation, the better.

The Head made it clear to me that he wanted Workshop Practice putting on a professional footing and prepared for external exams like all other subjects, thinking that it would be of benefit to his less academic pupils. I worked hard there to get rid of the play-room image, and enjoyed the work even though it meant almost a 12 hour day. Haslingden was a difficult place to get to from Coppull (three buses, sometimes four); the long and expensive journey soon began to pall!

Early in 1938 I received word from Wakefield that there was a vacancy arising in

the West Riding, and true to their promise they were offering me the job if I was still interested and available. I immediately informed the Head and told him that I was going over there the following day to see what was on offer; he was none too pleased, pointing out that teachers usually stayed on a job for three years. Naturally I pointed out that my situation wasn't a usual one, and that I wasn't bound to the job in any way. Later in the morning a message came through to the workshop to say that I was wanted on the phone - an irate Director of Education from County Hall demanding that I be in attendance there the following morning at 9.00 am.

I agreed to see him, but had already made up my mind that I was going on to Wakefield after the interview; he was angry about me even thinking of going over to the West Riding, and wanted to know why - he had promised to regularise my post but I hadn't given him enough time, and there were 'things in the pipeline'. I pointed out that there were other difficulties, such as a long, tedious and expensive journey and that I couldn't move up there on a three-day basis, that the long days meant costly eating out, and on top of all the hassle there wasn't enough of my pay left to make the job worthwhile - and that I had taken the job on pending something better, and Wakefield was offering me just that.

Listened quietly

To all this he listened quietly, and before I knew what was happening a clerk had been sent for to take notes - that I was to be paid all travelling expenses, also a generous meals allowance, and that in a matter of weeks he would find me another two days in another school to regularise my position as a certificated teacher, assuring

me that the Lancashire Education Authority could do more for me than the West Riding. As he had surprisingly agreed to remedy some of the unsatisfactory conditions (the ones over which he had control) I couldn't refuse the new promises and agreed to wait a little while longer. Within weeks I was notified that I was to take over the workshop at Hindley & Abram Grammar School on the two days per week, which would put me on the Burnham Scale. I later learned that the joiner/teacher at Hindley had been sacked by the Head and I often wondered whether my interview with the Director had any bearing on the decision.

Two grammar schools, 40 miles apart, was hardly an ideal situation, but as I lived in between and the journey to Hindley was easy, the hassle wasn't much worse than what I was already suffering. I immediately claimed the extra allowance for keeping two sets of equipment in order, and coupled with the travelling and meals allowances, was better off financially at least - and was still free to look around for something more convenient.

I was very soon 'in trouble' at Hindley; the Head tried to insist that I wore a hat to school - he'd seen me arrive without, and it was a strict rule that they be worn! I replied politely that I never wore a hat, and couldn't see how I could possibly be subjected to such a rule - I was a member of staff, not a pupil, and was immediately threatened with a Governors' Meeting. I couldn't believe what I was hearing, and asked him to call an immediate meeting and settle the issue. After a bit of blustering on his part he climbed down and admitted that he couldn't have me dismissed for such a reason (I knew full well that he couldn't) but he would have

Continued on page 12

*Memories from the
life of
James Albert
Davies*

Continued from page 11

seen to it that I wouldn't have been appointed if he'd known I wasn't going to wear a hat!

First round to me, but it was only the first of many. I made it clear in the beginning that the workshop was a class room, like any other, and not a repair shop for the school. There were many favours to the school which I would undertake as long as they served some purpose in the teaching of boys, but the regular routine work (until now) of repairing smashed desks, doors, etc, was 'out' from now on. I was employed as a teacher, not a journeyman, and firms in the town would undertake such work.

Tyrannical fads

Another of the Head's tyrannical fads was insisting on open windows, even in winter, something else I wouldn't accept. I pointed out that I was responsible for safety in the workshop and was not having boys handling razor-sharp tools in a 'fridge' - and I won that one, and many more as they cropped up during the course of normal school practice. When the others learned of the 'war' I was fighting they gave me a week before the 'chop', pointing out that he'd sacked my predecessor; but I assured them that there was no danger of the same fate befalling me as I was a certificated teacher, not a journeyman in the direct employ of the Head, and that he couldn't sack me, and that I would never give him the chance of reporting me to the higher authorities for misdemeanour or defaulting

in my work as a teacher - the work for which I was employed.

It was a good school, staffed by teachers who had been there a long time and who knew how to get good exam results, and I was soon conformed to their routine (mostly) and traditions, including the post-lunch 'wander' up the road to the park - every male member (except the Head) with a courtesy apology to the Senior Master if you missed it for some reason! With experience I learned that the Head's bark was worse than his bite; he enjoyed quarrelling with staff!

* * * * *

Life began to take on a bit more shape; we were heavily involved in Church activity and able to get around more on pleasure. All the hard work and sacrifices were bringing their rewards and we started to make amends for all that we had to forgo during the years of struggling. It hadn't been easy for Mary during that period, living as she was with guardians, and working in the mill which she disliked intensely.

In the July of 1938 we had made coach and accommodation reservations again for a holiday in Old Colwyn, but on the Tuesday before we were due to leave I purchased a tandem bicycle (snap decision) and after one trial run we decided to go down to Old Colwyn on it and abandon the coach booking - a 'mad decision' apparently (her guardians certainly thought so and did their best to dissuade us, to no avail!). We had a wonderful holiday, after taking all day to get there, stopping at every place of interest (thought I would never get her past Chester at one stage) and many wayside tea-and-cake roadside cottages. We ran into rain beyond Chester and got soaked - we were riding in shorts and

shirts - but on reaching Rhyl the weather was glorious and we lay in the sun and dried out. We finally arrived at Colwyn about 10 pm, but knew our accommodation was safe, and spent all week roaming the ranges, free as the wind, whereas previously we had always been tied to coach and mealtimes and the 'tourist' ways.

A long weekend in Llangollen was a further venture by tandem, but when we arrived we weren't very impressed with the area and decided to go on to Old Colwyn, only another 50 miles - but we'd overlooked the notorious Horse Shoe Pass en route. We had to 'walk' a long way to the summit, and again arrived very late in Colwyn where we luckily found our usual accommodation was open to us even without a booking.

'Four-in-hand' driver

A further long weekend venture was a visit to Penmaenmawr, during which we rode the Sychnant pass; the climb up from Conway wasn't as bad as other 'mounts' we'd made, but the ride down into Penmaenmawr was a nightmare - much too steep and winding for a tandem, which is faster and more difficult to control round bends than a solo machine. Luckily for us we met nothing on the road down - we needed all of it, not just our own half, and were travelling much too fast for comfort when we passed through a little hamlet at the bottom, again without mishap as the road was clear, and we arrived back at our digs in one piece. Our host there was a 'four-in-hand' driver in his younger days, and took a lot of convincing that we really had 'ridden the pass'. He believed it to be impossible and told us that coaches often went off the road at the worst bends and

finished up smashed in the valley below, often with fatalities.

Another memorable event was a weekend in Morecambe, when we decided to go by the scenic route via the Trough of Bowland, and again it was a much harder ride than we'd anticipated - we were faced with a very strong head-wind all the way through and the climbs were steep. At the time there were gates across the road at intervals (sheep control) and we were on and off like grasshoppers to open them for progress and close them behind us to keep sheep flocks separated, with sheep all over the road on either side of them. The scenery was magnificent, but we couldn't give it our individual attention.

We had another mad caper when once again we were en route for Wales; I taught Wednesday and Thursday at Hindley Grammar and being free of my Friday commitment at Haslingden, we decided to get off straight after school from Hindley and head for Colwyn on a long weekend. I went to school on the tandem on Thursday morning and arranged to meet Mary on Wigan Station to catch a train to Warrington as we were making a late start. We changed into riding gear in the guard's van and packed the panniers when we suddenly realised that we were stopped at Warrington and needed to exit quickly (with the tandem) or be taken on to Crewe. The risky exit won the vote, and with the help of a porter who saw what was happening we got away with it - jumping a moving train, with a tandem in tow, wasn't easy but at least Mary wouldn't have been injured - she was out first! The venture gave us a good long weekend, and as usual we enjoyed every minute of it. She loved that bike (except when it was windy) and the freedom it gave us - we had been tied down for too long!

This is the story of an unassuming, talented man who produced a manuscript - a magical manuscript - which wasted away at the back of a wardrobe for over half a century.

Henry Josiah Atty's Wonderful Book

by Jen Darling

THE story started near Wigan, then moved to nearby Warrington. Henry Josiah Atty was born on 17 November, 1874 in Crow Lane, Newton-le-Willows, the eldest son of George (a printer's compositor) and Elizabeth (nee Malbrow). George Atty had several brothers, one of whom was Richard Hughes Atty, inventor of Atty's Mint Balls - precursor of the world famous Wigan manufactured Uncle Joe's Mint Balls.

Henry had a younger brother, Lawrence, but after their mother died, George married Alice and they had a son, Colin. There is a mystery here as the first time Colin knew of his half-brothers was when Henry turned up at their father's funeral. Colin's son, Michael, who still lives in Wigan, provided this information and has a painting by Henry Atty of Wigan Parish Church and Cenotaph.

We wonder whether Henry did not get on with his step-mother, for the next we hear he is in Warrington, penniless. Befriended by Jack Leech (Pop), he worked opposite him as a compositor at the printing works of the Co-op Wholesale Society (CWS), in Barbauld Street, Warrington. Eventually, however, Henry started his own business at 28 White Street, Warrington, trading as a 'General and Commercial Printer and Stationer'. He produced business cards, posters and scrolls for special occasions, always exquisitely designed with beautiful lettering.

On 7 November 1900 Henry married Margaret Eccleston (Maggie) at St. Paul's Church, Marston, near Northwich, and by 1908 Henry and Margaret were living at 64 Legh Street, Warrington, where they remained for the rest of their lives.

The Booth family, their next-door neighbours for over 40 years, remember them as a kindly couple. They describe Henry as a quietly spoken gentleman, who wore a long overcoat, scarf and trilby in winter and, on spring and summer weekends, would go out, often on his bicycle, with sketchpad and pencils in a roll. Of an evening he would pull out his easel from a corner of the living room in order to paint, sometimes by gaslight. The couple were so poor that he often used cardboard boxes as a canvas.

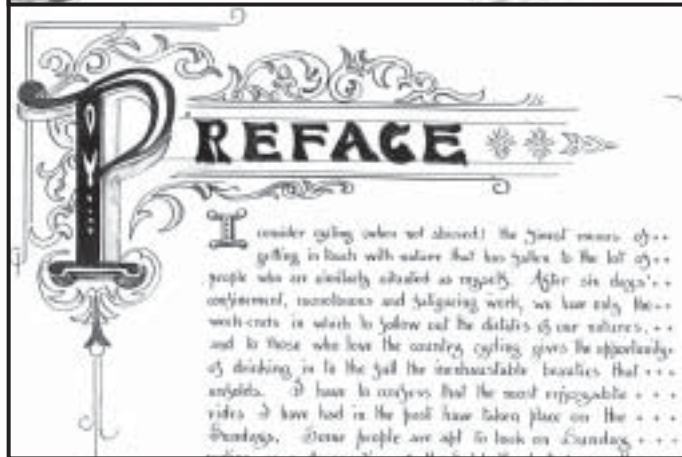
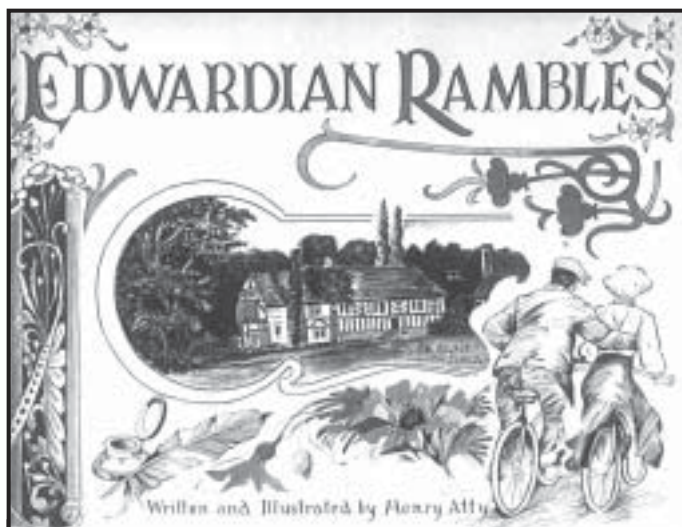


Henry Josiah Atty in the 1940's.

Painting was Henry Atty's relaxation. As far as we know he never sold his work but gave his pictures away as presents and local paintings as wedding presents.

Henry also used to paint and inscribe individual Christmas cards for his friends. One of the ancient Barley Mow pub in Warrington has come to light, which bears the words:

*A healthy and happy
Christmas and New Year
Friends
For these this prayer of
thankfulness I raise,
For Friends whose presence
cheers the passing days;
Whose kindness helps me on
my Pilgrim way;
Whose courage strengthens,
more than words can say.
I cannot pay this debt in
gold or gem,*



Cover and jacket of Edwardian Rambles and Preface page showing the author's skilful artistry and calligraphy.

*So make me ever worthy
Lord, of them!*

*From M. & H. Atty, 64 Legh
Street, Warrington*

In his later years Henry was known affectionately as 'Old Atty'. He died at home on 12 April 1961, at the ripe old age of 86.

I first heard about Henry Atty when a friend told me about this wonderful book with copperplate handwriting and water colours of local scenes, owned by a neighbour. **Edwardian Rambles** had lain at the back of Jeanette Morgan's wardrobe since the 1950's. Henry Atty had given the manuscript to her grand-father, Jack Leech, as a present and, as a little girl,

Jeanette can remember getting it out to look at the pictures.

You too can enjoy this craftsman's superb work with paintbrush and pencil, his knowledgeable asides about the historical and literary connections of the area, his visual and written descriptions of the flora and fauna, churches, public houses, and so much more along the way.

Each page is designed, individually illustrated and handwritten by Henry Atty, who would almost certainly be astonished and, we hope delighted, to see his work available now for all to enjoy.

• *Edwardian Rambles* is available from all booksshops at £14.95. Otherwise contact Jen Darling of Alfresco Books at 7 Pineways, Appleton, Warrington, WA4 5EJ (Tel/Fax 01925 267503).

EXHIBITIONS IN THE HISTORY SHOP

THE TAYLOR GALLERY

14 December - 27 February - The People's Music

8 March - 10 April - The Parish Map

19 April - 22 May - The North West Sound Archive

THE WICKHAM GALLERY

- Charter '96 - A Celebration of 750 Years of Local Government in Wigan.
- Reverend William Wickham - A Victorian Photographer

THE DERBY ROOM, LEIGH

8 March - 16 April - The People's Music

17 May - 25 June - Old Halls

The People's Music, our very own exhibition on brass bands, tracing the development of the music, the instruments, the personalities and the local bands went very well. Visually the exhibition was set off

by some stunning early brass instruments from our own collection. Donated in the 1920's by eminent local bandsman William Rimmer the five instruments on show illustrated a bygone age of banding. The *serpent*, *hand horn*, *comopean* and *slide trumpet* are all strange to us now. Even the *keyed bugle* on display looked old-fashioned when compared to the modern instruments set out in the adjoining bay. These were kindly loaned to us for the exhibition by the Wigan Instrument Teaching Provision, based at the Park Centre Hindley, and were set out on chairs as if left during a break in rehearsals or a concert. Other fascinating objects and photographs were lent to us by local people with a passion for banding and many tales to tell. A special thanks to four bands; Leigh, Trinity Girls, Pemberton Old Wigan and Tyldesley for their help in providing information.

The new exhibition in the Taylor Gallery is **The Parish Map**. An exhibition organized in conjunction with the Wigan Soroptomists, the display will showcase the exciting Parish Map Project. Finished pieces from around the borough will be the main focal point, but these will be supplemented by an overall look at the project and what the map will look like. Information panels, unfinished pieces, materials and possibly even a projects table will be on display to explain about this exciting celebration of the Millennium.

In April the gallery will show a small travelling exhibition from the **North West Sound Archive** based at Clitheroe Castle. Hopefully this show will be added to with some interesting themes from our own collection, either on oral history recording or an altogether older form of recording the past, the written word. (See panel this page).

Following the success of showing one of our exhibitions (**A Good Send Off**) over at the Derby Rooms in Leigh last year, we are hoping to repeat the exercise. In fact we have three slots booked for our exhibitions this year, so those of you living on that side of the Borough will not miss out. Firstly in March and April the panels from **The People's Music** will be on display - although the venue unfortunately does not at present allow us to put any of the objects on show. Then in the summer, the exhibition on **Old Halls** project will be on show. Look out in the next *Past Forward* for an announcement about another exhibition in the autumn.

NORTH WEST SOUND ARCHIVE

Preserving the Past for the Future

SOUND recordings often compliment the printed word, written word and other traditional sources of information but there are still many gaps in the written testimony that can be filled with the use of oral history. The introduction of reel-to-reel tape recorders meant that, for the first time, there was an easy and practical way to record memories and reminiscences. The arrival of the cassette recorder in the early 1970's made recording even easier leading to many organisations and individuals building up collections of oral history material.

In the late 1970's the North West Sound Archive was established to **record, collect and preserve sound recordings the life, character, history and traditions of the north west of England**.

Although the tape-recording of oral history is still a principal objective, it soon became evident that there were many other sound recordings worthy of permanent retention including dialect, music, local radio programmes and the sounds of the region (textile machinery, railway engines etc.).

Preserved, amongst others, are the memories of cotton mill workers, engineers, canal workers, railway workers, colliers, even conversations with prisoners at Strangeways. Important collections include the Survey of English Dialects, Folk Music, Jodrell Bank Radio Astronomy Collection, Manchester Jewish Museum Oral History Collection, Children's Playsongs, Manchester Ship Canal Memories, Bolton Oral History Survey, Birdsong and an extensive collection of 78rpm shellac gramophone records.

Most of the recordings are available to the public either for research purposes or general interest and can be listened to at the Archive [by appointment] or on a loan basis.

CAN YOU HELP?

The Sound Archive is currently looking to record people who worked in the health industry prior to the formation of the National Health Service in 1948.

We are always interested to hear about any person who you may feel would make a suitable interviewee for the Archive - whatever walk of life - including farming, politics, World War 2 (especially the Home Front) etc. We are always looking for additions to our database of children's playsongs and playground chants - if you can remember any that you used to sing/chant please let us know. We are also continually adding to our collection of dialect/technical terms. If you do know of any such words common to your locality, once again please contact us.

**North West Sound Archive,
Old Steward's Office, Clitheroe Castle,
Clitheroe, Lancs. BB7 1AZ
Telephone/Fax: 01200 427897**

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

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PUBLIC LECTURES IN THE HISTORY SHOP

14 April

**Cavalier of Contrasts - A Portrait of
Prince Rupert**

Irene Jones

12 May

A Civil War Soldier

Neil Howlett

9 June

**The Bayeux Tapestry and the Invasion
of England**

Fred Holcroft

All lectures begin at 7.30 pm
Admission £1 (numbers limited)

RECENT ADDITIONS TO THE LOCAL STUDIES COLLECTION AT THE HISTORY SHOP

942.76 Crosby, Alan, *A History of Lancashire*, Chichester: Phillimore & Co. Ltd. 1998. 144pp. ISBN 1 86077 070 3 [A concise history which replaces J.J. Bagley's classic work of the same title].

942.736 Blakeman, Bob. *Around Hindley and Abram*. Stroud: Tempus Publishing Ltd. 1998. 128pp. ISBN 0 7524 11950. [A collection of old photographs with informative captions. Written by members of the Wigan Heritage Services staff].

942.736 Winstanley, Ray. *Winstanley and Highfield: further history*. Charnock Richard. The Author. 1998. 206pp [A collection of articles and extracts from earlier works about these two communities].

796.3520942763 Winstanley, Jack. *The Wigan Century*. Standish. The Author. 1998. 186pp. [A comprehensive history of Wigan Golf Club].

942.736 Miller, Dr. Allan. *Upholland in Old Picture Postcards*. Zaltbommel, The Netherlands. European Library. Vol.1. 1996 78pp ISBN 90 28862269; Vol.2. 1998 79pp ISBN 90 288 0954 6 [Two collections of old photographs with informative captions].

929.1 Grenham, John. *Tracing your Irish ancestors*. Dublin. Gill and MacMillan. 1992 281pp ISBN 0 7171 1898 3 [A comprehensive reference work covering most aspects of this difficult subject].

929.1 Cole, Jean, and John Titford. *Tracing your family Tree*. 2nd edn. Rev. Newbury. Countryside Books. 1998 256pp. ISBN 1 85306 448 3 [written by two regular contributors to *Family Tree Magazine*, this is both a guide for beginners, and a reference work for experienced researchers].

FRIENDS OF THE HERITAGE SERVICE

THE Friends officially came into being at the start of the year and already the idea has proved a great success. Over 100 of you have already expressed an interest, many having signed up and paid your subs. To add to this great start we are planning to have an official launch to the initiative and our first full meeting of Friends during May.

Remember, by becoming a Friend you are entitled to a copy of *Past Forward* sent to your home three times a year and invitations to attend Friends meetings, activities, private viewings at the History Shop and other events on a priority basis. All for just £5 per year. Please fill in the registration form below and send it along with a cheque made payable to Wigan MBC Heritage Service at The History Shop, Library Street, Wigan. WN1 1NU.

If you do not live near enough to attend any meetings in person we would still like to welcome you as a Friend. With a regular issue of *Past Forward*, Friends updates and possibly a website for information exchange, we are sure it will be popular, if nothing else we do want to recognize our Friends no matter how far away they live, and we want them to feel close to the area they love.

Back at The History Shop we are busily going through the process of setting up a new Friends database and mailing list. This is unfortunately taking longer than expected with the added complication of transferring people off the old mailing list. So that there is no confusion about this the old mailing list will remain in operation throughout 1999. So those of you who have given us your name and address and made a donation towards costs will continue to receive *Past Forward* up until the Autumn 1999 edition. After that all names will be converted to the Friends mailing list, subs being due on the first of January each year.

STOP PRESS

Wigan Heritage Service's *Guide to Genealogical Sources* has been an invaluable aid to our many users who are tracing their family tree. A new and enlarged edition is now available from the History Shop and other Heritage Service outlets @ only £2.50, plus 50p postage and packing. A must for all genealogists.

FRIENDS OF WIGAN HERITAGE SERVICE

Register of Interest



Name Title

Address

..... Tel

Interests

.....

.....

Area of Specialist Knowledge

.....

.....

RECORD BREAKING CHAPEL

IF you asked churchgoers in Wigan how many bricks were needed to build their church or chapel, I don't think many could give you an answer. At Jireh Baptist Chapel, Chapel Street, Orrell, we know exactly how many were used, because the original receipts for the materials used in the building of the chapel in 1864 have survived. These receipts provide an interesting window into trade in Wigan in the mid 19th century.

Although the chapel was built in 1864, the church has its origins over 10 years previously, when we read in the original church book, "Several persons who attended the Church of England became dissatisfied (sic) with the preaching they were accustomed (sic) to hear and for truths sake alone we hope they felt constrained to come out from that Body of professing Christians". At first they met in a house and then

by Pam Thomas & Christine Berry

rented a room from March 1849. The National Religious Census of Sunday March 30 1851 has an entry for Pemberton, "Ebenezer School Room, Particular Baptist. Total seats 120. Morning attendance 40, afternoon 60, evening 30." This appears to be the earliest record of the church which later became Jireh Baptist Church. It is interesting to note that right from the earliest days the church had decided where it stood theologically.

By 1851 five of those attending wanted to be baptised as believers and Mr. Vaughn of Liverpool, a well known minister, baptised them on 31 March 1851, but it is not known where. These 5 people formed the first and only Baptist Church in Orrell on Sunday 6 April 1851. The 5 original members were: James Winward, Samuel Grimshaw, George Clough, Henry Pennington and Margaret Pennington. Over the years

several other members were added either by baptism or by transferring from other Baptist Churches.

Praying about the matter

By 1862 it was felt that the hired room was no longer suitable as numbers had increased and because, as the church minutes record, the room was "small, close and badly ventilated, under which there were a brew house and a stable, pigs asses, horses, bad smells, noises and beside we were at the mercy of a publican every three months." The idea of building a chapel had been thought of before but it was not until a church meeting on 6 July 1864 that the church decided to approach Jane Farrimond, the sister of Henry, one of the members, to see if she would give some land for the chapel. The minutes record that Henry Farrimond after praying about the matter went with his brother George to see James Howarth, another member. "He (Henry) says

well James (with quite a pleasant smile on his face and without a doubt on his heart also) we will give the land for the chapel and for a school also as much is required and £30 with it." Immediately they went to measure and look at two other chapels. "We determined to proceed with it at once, got the ground staked out, ordered brick and got a brick setter, William Derbyshire of New Town near Wigan, joiner Aaron Winstanley of Wigan, plumber and glazier Joseph Dean, Pemberton, committee of management Henry Farrimond, William Marsden, William Derbyshire, James Hartley and James Howarth. We went to work like men of business determined to finish in about 9 weeks after staking out the ground the chapel was opened, Trust Deed signed every mite of the money promised paid and we found when we came to balance up at the last that the total cost of the chapel was £302. 11s. 9d. furniture included". A small debt of £68. 19s. 5d. remained.

Project was impressive

The speed of the project was impressive. On 12 August they went to the solicitor Thomas T. Taylor to start drawing up the Title Deeds; the legal work cost £24. 8s. 0d. On 16 August the first load of sand arrived from Thomas Gaskell of Billinge. He delivered regular loads up to 9 September at a total cost of £1. 17s. 6d. Thomas seems to have been illiterate as his bill has his X mark on it. He also gave a donation to the chapel, as did several other suppliers. The next day, 17 August, the first load of lime arrived from Wigan Lime Works, John Stephen and Son. On the bill of £5-15s.-6d, discount was



Jireh Baptist Chapel c.1940.



allowed. On 22 August stone arrived from Old Hey Delph, a quarry in the Upholland area. The manager, John Harrison, is listed in the 1869 trade directory as Quarry Master. The exact whereabouts of this quarry is not known and it may have been short lived. Other local firms supplied timber, nails, drain pipes, sewerage pipes, tiles, furniture etc. As shown on the table below:

The chapel was opened on Sunday 23 October by Mr. John Forster of Witham, Essex. The time taken from the first visit to the solicitors to the opening day was ten weeks and two days, no mean feat! As the chapel was being used by a denomination other than the Church of England it had to be registered for worship. This was done nearly a year later on 1 September 1865, and the

new chapel on 13 December 1865. The church book states: "On Lord's Day 10 December Henry Farrimond stated to the church that his Brother George wished to join the church and at close of the afternoon service he came before the church and gave in his experience to their satisfaction when it was agreed that he should be received in among us: and on Wednesday evening

the 13th Mr. Freeman, then of Liverpool baptised him in the presence of a good congregation. [This was the first time that ever the ordinance of Believer's Baptism was administered in this village.] On Lord's Day 7 January 1866 he was received into the church by Mr. T. Clough, then of Leeds, giving the right hand of fellowship on behalf of the church."

Relatively well off

It has been possible to find out some further details of the Farrimond family but there are still gaps which readers may be able to fill. The Farrimonds seem to have been relatively well off and appear in the 1841 Census as farming land near to the bottom of the present City Road, at Baiting Houses, Kitt Green. This is now the site of the Heinz Factory. In 1851 they were farming 20 acres on the same site. The head of the family in 1841 was Ellen a widow of about 55 years of age. There were two daughters listed, Jane aged 30 and Alice 25, also two sons, Henry and

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Firm	Address	Supplies	Present Site
Leyland & Roper	62 Market Place	Air Bricks	Halifax Bank
George Rick & Co.		Window Sills	
Joseph Dean	Lamberhead Green	Painted & glazed	
Painter & Glazier			
John Fairclough	121 Wallgate	Timber	Part of Office World
Timber Merchant			
Matthew Barton	4 Millgate	Guttering, down spouts, tiles	Old Salvation Army Citadel
Iron Monger			
James Topping		Bricks	
Samuel Liptrot		Roof Tiles	
Patrick Denn(?)	132 Wallgate	All plastering work	M & S Ford(?)
Plasterer			
Wigan Gas Co.	Chapel Lane	Installed gas lights	
A & H Barlow	58/59 Wallgate	Chair, carpet, table	Entrance to Station car park
Cabinet Makers & Upholsterers			
A.A. Winstanley	Wallgate	Chimney pot, sewerage pipes, joinery work	
Joiner Builder			
Wm. Heaton	Upholland	Timber, pine, spruce screws, bolts, hinges	
Woodmerchant			
John Lea & Son	Chapel Lane & Rodney Street	2 barrels of cement	
S.G. Bucknell	2 Standishgate	Cards & posters for opening of chapel	National Westminster Bank
Stationer, Printer	Wigan Subscription Library		

The bricks were invoiced for 1 October and there were 41,000 at 21s. per thousand.

The total bill was:

41,000 bricks @ 21s.	£43-1-0
received on account	£20-0-0
subscription to chapel	£ 2-1-0
	£21-0-0

Spittoon!

Amongst the necessities for a chapel in the mid 19th century were two ornamental umbrella stands, two door scrapers, a set of fire irons for the stove and a spittoon! The chapel was lit by the latest gas lighting and even had toilets. The pulpit was brought from Rawtenstall by the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway, which is now the Southport and Manchester line through Wallgate Station. The building would have been very plain inside, and the seating was 9 forms 9ft. 6 ins. long and 11 forms 6ft. 6 ins. long. There was also one form at 4ft. 3 ins. long.

original document still exists. It was signed by Henry Farrimond who described himself as a Trustee and his occupation as a tanner.

The Farrimond family was intimately involved in the chapel for about a century. The land the chapel is built on was provided free by Jane Farrimond and it is because of this it is called Jireh which means Provider. Henry Farrimond became a member on 4 October 1852 by baptism and later a deacon and pastor of the church, although still working at a secular job. Their brother George was the first person to be baptised in the



Some of the present members of the chapel.

This contribution by Ernie Taberner describes the difficulties of life, and especially for ex-Servicemen, in the years soon after World War I.

I remember when . . .

IN the early part of this century now approaching the Millennium, most adult males were ex-Servicemen. Grandads (having fought in the Boer War) constantly regaled us with tales of how they (with the help of their mates of course) had relieved sieges of Ladysmith or Mafeking. Older brothers, fathers and uncles relived past experiences of the latest war against Germany 1914/18 when names like Ypres, Mons and Passchendale became quite familiar in daily conversation. The early volunteers never failed to remind others of their membership of "The Old Contemptibles". (That "contemptible little army" was so christened by the Kaiser Wilhelm himself,

Dear Alastair,

With the approach of the Millennium I thought it fitting to recall the earlier part of the century, prior to the 1939-45 war which is well documented elsewhere.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank "Past Forward", yourself and all your capable assistants for

helping me maintain my links with "Ye Ancient and Loyal Borough."

Best wishes to all
Sincerely

**Ernie Taberner
62 Westwood Road
Earlsdon, Coventry
CV5 6GE
Phone: 01203 678142**

when he was advised that a British contingent was being sent to Belgium to help her to stem the German invasion).

It was 1921 when mass demobilisation took place and most ex-Servicemen had a gratuity of a few hundred pound with which to resume normal life. As most Wigan ex-servicemen were former miners, the initial euphoria of being reunited with families after long weary years of uncertainty soon

wore thin, when they returned to a coal strike in the local coalfields. All school-children knew of the 1926 General Strike in which all organised workers in transport, engineering, and railways participated and was well documented, but surprisingly the 1921 coal strike was less well known, except locally.

Jam butties

One of my earliest recollections was going with

the local schoolchildren to school yards where trestle tables had been set up and local ladies were slicing up loaves of bread, donated by local bakers, whilst others were spreading jam, donated by Deakins of Princess Street to make jam butties for the children. Then on returning home to collect jugs and cans we would join the queue at improvised soup-kitchens for allocations of pea soup.

Ours was part of Jack Lowe's Temperance Bar in Chapel Lane, and after our lunch of jam butties and pea soup we children would curl up on the warm pavements and sleep it off. Thus became the daily pattern until the end of the strike when the horrible truth had to be faced that there were more ex-miners in the local coalfields than there were jobs for them.

Continued on page 20

became a deacon in 1860. After the opening of the chapel he formally welcomed into membership the first two new members. Jane Darbyshire and Mary Ellen Eastham on 16 November 1864, they had previously been baptised elsewhere. He continued to welcome most new members, until his death. By 10 April 1870 he was preaching and the church minutes record "the church warmly sanctions Henry Farrimond's way and manner of speaking from the word of God desiring that he would enter the pulpit." Another entry in February 1872 states "It was agreed by the church to ask Brother Henry Farrimond to go into the pulpit to speak there instead of standing before the table believing that his services

are really acceptable." This would appear to be the beginning of his pastorate, although there is no mention of a special service or any other official recognition of his duties. In 1873 the church tried to give him a gift of 15 sovereigns for his labours, but he declined. In 1874 he baptised Alice Mather and from then on regularly baptised all new members.

Seldom left his people

On his death the church book records "Henry Farrimond died having preached the gospel faithfully in this place for 16 years." His memory is also recorded in the Gospel Standard Magazine in Memories of Ministers. "During the time of

his ministry, which was about 14 years, it pleased the Lord to make his labours very useful in gathering in many to His Christ. He was a humble, plain man, of very retiring habits and his life was in accordance with his profession. He seldom left his people. He was an experimental preacher: and his gifts having become known, he was invited to London; but this he refused preferring to remain with his own people and amongst the little circle of friends at Pemberton. His heart was much with the people at Southport and so desirous was he to serve them that he preached there his last sermon on the first Lord's Day in July last year, although at the time he was suffering much and his speech was affected. His text at

the time was Nahum 1 v.7: "The Lord is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble: and He knoweth them that trust in Him."

It must have been a sore trial for a preacher to have cancer of the jaw and not be able to speak properly. Henry was obviously much loved and greatly missed. The story of the founding of Jireh Baptist Church cannot be told without acknowledging his contribution of time, effort, enthusiasm and financial support. I am sure he would be pleased to know that the church he played such a large part in and in which he worked so hard to serve the Lord he loved, is still going strong over a hundred years after his death.

I remember when...

Continued from page 19

This economic fact of life caused many of them to consider how best to use their capital to “buy themselves out of the pits for all time”. Many of them took the gamble of becoming businessmen by opening shops, buying ex-service vehicles and becoming hauliers, buying ponies and cars for light hauling, becoming greengrocers or coal dealers, buying, bagging and selling coal in 1 cwt. bags. The more adventurous, having had experience of driving trucks and buses in war time, became pioneers of long distance passenger transport, eg. James Smith of Standishgate, and Webster Bros. of Darlington Street readily come to mind among the bigger ones, whilst Wilf Garvin of Frog Lane and Harold Fairhurst of Jolly Mill were two of the smaller ones.

Time of doom and gloom

The early '20's, although causing a trade revival, was for many Wiganers a time of doom and gloom, and many sought an outlet by a visit to the old Hippodrome in King Street. Here the variety produced was for the most part uplifting although I remember (even though only a boy) one artist with his own version of the aftermath of war presenting his own creation of “hitting back” by his own song which went as follows:-

*We won the war, we won
the war
You can ask Lloyd
George or Bonar Law*

*We fought the German,
the Austrian, and the
Turk
That's why we're all
walking 'round and out of
work
But what is it for?
We won the war!*

* * * * *

It was becoming popular in the Twenties to produce as entertainment anything anti-German and another ditty I can recall was:-

*On the day those
Germans pay
On the day those
Germans pay
Hair will grow on
wooden legs
Elephants will be laying
eggs
And your children's
children's children
Will be all old and grey
And the Shakespeare
Hotel will be packed like
h—
On the day those
German's pay!*

Here I would apologise for the digression but whilst many old Hippodrome customers would easily recall Florrie Ford or George Formby (old) and young George (of 'Leaning on a Lamp' fame) I suspect very few will remember the ditties produced here.

(The Shakespeare Hotel was next door to the old Hippodrome and was popular with the artists appearing there).

* * * * *

I commenced this resume of the early part of this century to remind older readers of *Past Forward* of their trials and tribulations of the period, and to reassure younger readers also that their parents and grandparents were in fact

being truthful when they related their tales of hardship.

Doorstep callers

However to many it became a blessing in disguise, since the decision to get out of the pits and create a job for themselves “on top”, especially since they now for the first time in their lives had capital, was made for them. So former miners, now ex-Servicemen, became businessmen in a variety of ways. Milkmen, butchers, grocery vendors, hardware dealers, odd job men, became regular doorstep callers whilst others would rent premises to sell their skills in many diverse ways.

Disabled ex-Servicemen aided by the British Legion became boot and shoe repairers and cloggers. There were travelling coopers who would make a steel hoop and fit it on the dolly tubs. The owner of the small grocery shop would call and take the housewife's order during the morning, and deliver it the same afternoon.

If a plumber was needed it only needed a knock on his door and he would be around in the hour or as soon as he had finished the job he was already doing. So it was the beginning of a service era where the customer was always right and the customer was the beneficiary. Unlike nowadays when a tradesman will keep a housewife waiting all day indoors then still not turn up nor even apologise for a missed appointment!

Money was a very rare commodity indeed in the early part of the century. So no-one would miss out from choice on making a shilling or two (5p or 10p) if the opportunity presented itself, and would work all day and into the night if necessary to give customer satisfaction!

In an earlier *Past Forward* contribution I wrote of one man who was one of the homesteaders in my feature - Mr. Simmonds who farmed at Springfield behind the old running track. (See issue 10) I knew Mr. Simmonds but I didn't know his background until a *Past Forward* reader advised me that as a teenager he had walked from Cornwall to Yorkshire then to Crawford Village on his way to Wigan to work as first a miner then a farmsteader. (For this information I am grateful to an ex-Wiganer from Springfield Mr. Frank Brown now of Droitwich, Worcs. Another one of us!)

The customer was always right

I include this story for present *Past Forward* readers to illustrate the lengths their grandfathers were prepared to encounter to get their hands on a few shillings, and to illustrate why, when they did set up in business themselves, “the customer was always right”.

To conclude this feature and since I have mentioned Springfield I was an old Wigan Borough supporter (sorry you rugby supporters, although I did know of Jim Sullivan and Bert Jenkins and Morley on the wing), and the Boro team in my day were Preedy, Moran and Dennis Humpish Wilson and Robb, Welsby, Welch, Smith, Harris and Hughes. I also vividly remember seeing the incident when Frank Barson was sent off for a foul and never played again as his case was adjourned “sine die” by the adjudicators. Ah well, perhaps I should now say

I REMEMBER WELL!

© E. Taberner, 1999

SECOND WORLD WAR MEMORIALS IN METROPOLITAN WIGAN

by Dr. Eric McPherson

MOST of the population of the United Kingdom clearly wishes to see our war dead honoured and their names cherished for all time. The reinstatement of the national silence on Armistice Day and the increased interest in the condition of our war memorials are therefore both to be welcomed. The Imperial War Museum is conducting a national survey, and the urgency of the matter is indicated by the recent establishment of Friends of War Memorials which reports that memorials from redundant buildings have been scrapped, sold as curios and even exported.

In this area there have been losses. Several memorials have not survived the demolition of the buildings in which they were installed, and at least three now only exist in the form of photographs. One had eroded so badly that it was not transferred to the new church, and the Ashton-in-Makerfield Grammar School plaque and memorial book have been 'lost'. With the changing industrial scene some sited in closed works, offices and collieries will have gone forever, but happily the Lord & Sharman Ltd. Memorial is now in St. Matthew's Churchyard, Highfield, and

the one at Anchor Works is still in place.

In spite of particular sorrows, the situation is very satisfactory. In the course of research into deaths in the Second World War, I have managed to locate 71 memorials within the area which makes up Metropolitan Wigan. There are considerable variations in both form and content. In that reflective period just after the war, there were many plans and suggestions as to how the sacrifice of local servicemen and women should be recognised by grateful communities. New casualty departments, swimming baths,

homes for disabled veterans, peals of bells and memorial gardens were just some of the proposals, but eventually lack of drive (or more probably lack of funds) resulted in civic memorials taking the familiar form.

The range is from simple framed lists, books of remembrance and lecterns through to elaborate enamelled brass or cast bronze panels mounted on impressive monuments. Some are painted on wood, while others are carved in stone, oak or marble. Many have been added to existing First World War commemorations or

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Wigan War Memorial: Unweiling Ceremony and Dedication, 17 October 1925.

**SECOND
WORLD WAR
MEMORIALS IN
METROPOLITAN
WIGAN**

Continued from page 21

matched sympathetically to earlier ones. Although a number are to be found in churchyards or gardens, most are to be found inside church buildings with 39 out of the total of 71 in Church of England premises, with another 14 in churches and chapels of other denominations. Civic memorials exist in eleven townships, but even some of these are located on or near churches.

Some names appear on several memorials, but the majority of those who fell in the Second World War belonging to Abram, Platt Bridge, Billinge, Haigh, Bickershaw, Hindley, Hindley Green, Orrell, Poolstock and Pemberton are commemorated in the locality solely in the Parish Church. One from a closed Royal British Legion building is now housed in Bamfurlong Methodist Church, and in addition there are memorials in works, sports clubs and local authority premises along with a number of works and civic ones (especially Platt Bridge and Hindley) without names.

As part of its responsibilities, the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) keeps registers of graves and memorials of the armed services war dead if death of the individual occurred before 31 December 1947. Some local memorials contain the names of men who died of war-related illness or injuries but were no longer in the services, or men who had been discharged shortly before their death. These circumstances can lead to confusion because these men are not rated as 'official' war dead even if relatives and communities rightly regard them as casualties of war.

The number of names commemorated locally varies

from a single name in Orrell's United Reformed Church to 480 on the Wigan Cenotaph. In all some 1800 men and women have been identified as having close ties with the area and thus qualify for commemoration, but this number generally does not include those who were born in the area but moved away before the war. On the 71 memorials there are, however, over 2300 names, the difference being accounted for by the fact that some people are named on more than one local memorial - in many cases on four and in one case five. Sadly, over 300 are not to be found on even one, and if these individually were to have been shown on their local memorials the number of names commemorated would have approached 3000.

One memorial (Hindsford St. Anne's) gives rank, name, regiment and place of death - but this is extremely unusual, and in the main they comprise simply initials and name, with a few giving rank and/or branch of the services. Some include Home Guard, NFS and ARP personnel, and at least one (Platt Bridge St. Nathaniel's) is known to commemorate a civilian who was killed.

Two foreign nationals

serving in the British services are listed. Both were Belgians and both are on memorials in Leigh. One was a Royal Air Force pilot who came here as a refugee in 1940 and was killed in action in 1944. He was obviously well integrated into Leigh for he is commemorated on no fewer than three memorials. The other, a merchant seaman, died as a result of injuries and was a member of the small Belgian community which had existed in the town since the First World War. In addition there are several servicemen commemorated who had emigrated from England before the War and were killed while serving with Commonwealth or U.K. forces and who still had relatives in this area.

There is considerable confusion as to how the names were gathered. There was no central register or (as one regimental archivist insists on believing) no lists provided to local authorities by the War Department either during or after the War. The names were obtained from relatives, friends, congregations and associations, as well as from the general public by means of advertisements placed in local newspapers. But intriguing questions arise.

Why, for example have S. Anderton and A. Johnson been omitted from Golborne's Legh Street memorial - the only difference between the content of that and the one in St. Thomas's Church, Upholland are replicated on the civic memorial except for James Fyles. Why? Why is only one of two brothers commemorated? Some relatives have been successful in getting names added which were omitted at the time - although in one case this has been added to the wrong memorial.

Inevitably other mistakes have occurred. Misspelling of names and incorrect initials are not uncommon. Family first names may vary from official ones (e.g. Frank for Francis and Harry for Henry) and, because of the confusion of wartime and the needs of the armed services, men were moved from one regiment to another at short notice. This has resulted in men being shown as having died as a member of the 'wrong' regiment, and in at least one case a soldier is shown twice on one cenotaph in two different regiments at the time he was killed. Some who were prisoners of war have appeared as deaths and some names have been amended subsequently by relatives to accommodate later family changes.

It is a sad fact that over 300 men who fulfilled every qualification and reason to be commemorated are not to be found on any local memorial. It is intriguing to speculate why. In some cases this may be by the choice of relatives, but many, of course, had no living relatives or they had moved away during the War. Some who died had married during the War to people living in other parts of the country and some therefore will be on memorials in distant towns and cities. Tragically it is likely that most are missing because at the time of the collection of details of deaths there was no-one living locally able to provide the information. Just one more visible effect of the turmoil to which families are subjected by war.

Sir,

I am researching the Servicemen and women from this area who died in the Second World War. I have completed the work on over 1700 individuals, but have been unable to make positive identification of around 50 more - some of whom I have listed below in two broad geographical groupings. I would be grateful for any information on these. Any fact (rank, service, place of death etc.) would be welcomed, as it is often just one such detail which provided the confirmatory evidence needed.

Leigh area: William P. Baxter; Eric Boardman; Peter Dempsey; Joseph Dunn; W. Fazackerley; J.R. Hardle; A. Johnson; Harry

Johnson; Joseph McDowell; J.J. O'Hagan; Arthur Smith; W.J. Ward; F.A. Whittle; John Wilman. **Wigan area:** John Cassidy; John Close; Arthur Cunliffe; Richard F. Davidson; Sydney Davidson; John Dean; Jerry Haddock; K. Harrison; Robert Hughes; B. Johnson; Richard Johnson; Edward James; James Kelly; Gordon Lawrence; Eric Lee; T.J. Logh; John Massey; Walter Meadows; Harry Rigby; Harold Roberts; John T. Roberts; Harold Singleton; John Speak; Richard Sutton; Harold Twiss.

Dr. Eric McPherson
99 Walton Road
Sale
Cheshire M33 4DW
Tel: 0161 962 3039

ASHTON-IN-MAKERFIELD DURING THE 1930's

The Market and Street Traders

During my childhood many different hawkers came round the streets peddling their wares or offering services. Some vendors came on a regular basis calling on customers who would have placed a standing order for goods or services. These would include the milkman, the paper boy, the postman, the baker with bread, cakes and pies, the butcher, the coal man, the window cleaner, the grocer's boy, the paraffin man and the 'pop' man.

Others, though coming round on a regular basis, offered optional goods or services. There were ice cream vendors, rag and bone men, fruit and vegetable vendors, fishmongers, salt vendors with their large blocks of white salt from which they would cut, with a saw, the amount required. Lamp lighters with their long poles came round to turn the gas lamps on when darkness fell, dustmen came weekly to empty the bins - a dirty, dusty business in the days of almost universal coal fires and open dustcarts. Although a declining service because of cheap alarm clocks, knockers-up still plied their trade in some areas.

The paraffin man who came round where I lived had a motor lorry with a large tank of paraffin on the back. Mr Billingham, as he was called, had an ironmongers shop in Bryn Street, Ashton and, from his lorry, in addition to the paraffin, he sold a selection of hardware goods such as brushes, soaps, polishes, mops and buckets etc. People would bring out their containers, usually a metal drum, which Mr. Billingham, using a large funnel would fill from a brass tap on the side of the paraffin tank. The sale of paraffin was a most essential service in the days when some houses didn't even have gas laid on let alone electricity, and all

lighting in the house was by paraffin lamp or candles.

The 'pop' man

The 'pop' man came round in a motor lorry with large glass bottles of lemonade, Tizer, American Cream Soda, Dandelion and Burdock etc. He

Dear Mr. Gillies,

I write to say how greatly obliged I am to your colleague, Nicholas Webb, for the information he has given about Ashton Baths in Issue No. 20 of *Past Forward*. Mr. Webb has filled in many gaps in my knowledge of the circumstances relating to the "rise and fall" of the Baths.

A few months ago, William Robinson from Abram was kind enough to write to me with some information, which had been passed to him about his Uncle Frank. His Uncle Frank had been swimming in the Baths during the First World War, probably shortly before the closure. Mr. Robinson also knew of the Baths Hall being used during the 1926 General Strike for the provision of dinners (presumably free) for local schoolchildren. My own recollection is the Baths Hall also being used, during the 1930's, for the provision of free dinners for the children of men who were unemployed.

Whilst it was, undoubtedly, a very great loss to Ashton that there was no place where local people could swim in safety, the Council did their very best to maximise the Public Hall use of the building, and weekly dances to the music of Ronnie Hall and his Band, and Bert Webb and his Hawaiian Serenaders (yes, really!) were very popular, particularly during the war years.

would collect your empties and leave your regular order of, perhaps, three or four bottles. Fishmongers had horse-drawn carts and small motor lorries or vans; the fish was kept fresh on blocks of ice or on heaps of crushed ice. In the days before general ownership of domestic refrigerators the fishmonger could be relied on to sell a fresh product for lunch or tea on the day he came round.

Coal men, for the most part, used motor lorries with flat bodies on which one or two layers of 1 cwt. sacks of coal were stacked upright with a pronounced forward lean so that the forward motion of the lorry didn't cause them to fall off. The sacks of coal were open at the top and the coal man would stand with his back to the lorry and,

reaching back over his shoulders, would pull a sack forward onto his back on which he wore a large piece of thick stiff leather reinforced with metal studs to protect his back against the jagged edges of the coal.

One unique trader who came round the area in the mid to late evening was the mobile fish and chip cart, known to everyone as 'Chip Billy'. The cart, or van, was horse drawn on four wooden, iron-shod wheels. Inside was a solid fuel fire which heated the fat boiler for frying the fish and chips. In fact, the inside of the van was virtually a scaled-down fish and chip shop. Billy would arrive in our street at about 9 p.m. - not every night - and announce his presence by ringing a large hand bell. He would serve you from a counter built into the side of the van and he would normally stay in our street for about 10 minutes, or longer if demand so warranted. I don't suppose Chip Billy would even get a licence to trade these days. He would probably contravene every regulation in the book!

"Knives to grind"

At much less frequent intervals, though still on a regular basis, we had the visits of the knife and scissor grinders. They had a type of bicycle or hand cart which was equipped with a large grindstone operated by a treadle arrangement. They would make their presence known by shouting in the middle of the street, very loudly, such appropriate calls as 'knives to grind!' or 'scissors to grind!' Word would quickly pass around the streets that the knife grinder was here and people would bring out their kitchen knives and scissors to be sharpened for a copper or two. The knife grinder's visits were very popular with us kids because he used to put on a bit of a show for us by sending up showers of

Harold Knowles
30 Drayfields
Droylsden
Manchester
M43 7ET

ASHTON-IN- MAKERFIELD DURING THE 1930's

Continued from page 23

sparks from the grindstone. It was good business practice too because we would pester our mums to bring out knives and scissors to be sharpened so that we could see more sparks.

Another irregular 'regular' was the pot-man. As with the knife sharpener his mode of transport would be hand cart or tricycle. He was another of the vendors who solicited trade by shouting in the middle of the street, in his case, 'Pots to mend!' as loudly as he could. We kids didn't bother much about the pot-man - he didn't strike sparks!

The ice cream vendors came with a variety of forms of transport. The most basic was a type of two-wheeled hand cart, the wheels being wooden with iron 'tyres' about two feet in diameter. This hand cart would be pushed around the streets, trade being drummed up by means of a hand bell. The ice cream was in a container which sat on a bed of dry ice and was of the soft variety. I spent a few days of one summer holiday helping an older lad I knew to push his hand cart around but the novelty soon faded. There were also tricycle ice cream carts, very similar to the hand carts but with three wheels and pedals. The top of the range was the motorised van but we didn't see many of those.

Gimcrack shoddy goods

There were also the door to door salesmen. Some of these were regular and, indeed, often welcome having been calling for years. Mostly they sold brushes, cotton, needles etc. from suitcases which they carried from door to door. There were other callers who were rather less welcome, selling gimcrack shoddy goods by means of a glib tongue and slick patter. There were the con-men - the 'We'll give you a good price for your

old gold and silver' merchants who then doled out a few shillings to bemused old ladies for quite valuable family heirlooms. Posh looking chaps in a smart suit and collar and tie would sell you spectacles whether or not you needed them. Enough patent medicine was sold by door to door salesmen to float the QE II - much of it was sugar and water with a bit of colouring and flavouring but they swore it would cure everything from pneumonia to arthritis!

In the early 1930's full employment was a dream rather than a reality and many men were unable to find work. This social problem was reflected on the streets in the number of beggars, street singers and buskers to be found in most towns. Men would stand on street corners, literally cap in hand, singing popular ballads of the day. The most popular were the hugely sentimental favourites such as 'Danny Boy', 'My Ain Folk' and other music hall songs. Mouth organs were very common but those with any pretence to musical skill went a step further with the trumpet, concertina, and, very popular, the piano accordion. Solo singers were more likely to be found in the residential streets where they might be given food instead of, or as well as, money. Sometimes, on market days and in the town centre where large numbers of people might be found, a group of buskers would put on a bit of a show with music, singing, and perhaps a display of clog dancing which was always very popular.

The 1930's was, in many ways, a great time to be a young boy. In those days children of seven or eight years old could roam and play in the streets without a great deal of danger. There was always something to see, some entertainment to watch or listen to and, as kids, we weren't expected to pay - it was all free.

The Market

The open market in Ashton was held every Saturday; in the 1930's it consisted of a number of permanent enclosed stalls which could be locked during the week, the remainder being open stalls which were erected and

dismantled the same day. There would be the usual type of market goods ranging from clothes, food of all types, fruit and vegetables, second-hand goods, floor coverings, toys and novelty goods to books, magazines and newspapers. One stall was devoted entirely to the sale of tripe of all kinds. There was black and white tripe plus cow heels, pig's trotters, brawn or 'pigs head', elder, savoury 'ducks' and black puddings. Just before the market closed, kids would go to the tripe stall for a 'haporth' of tripe bits. These were the off-cut pieces which had been cut from tripe as it was being weighed during the day and for a halfpenny you could get quite a lot of tripe bits wrapped in greaseproof paper. With lashings of vinegar and salt and pepper they were very tasty.

In the winter when it went dark the stalls of the traders would be illuminated by naphtha lamps which gave a strange and evocative, almost surreal, glow. The evening was in some ways the busiest time on the market and large crowds would gather around the china and crockery stalls and the linoleum sellers. The latter used to operate from the back of a large van and they would sell rolls of linoleum by the 'Dutch Auction' method. This is where the price is called by the auctioneer and is progressively reduced until someone in the crowd shouts out to pay the last price called. The linoleum sellers would stand in the open tailboard of their van and, holding one end of a roll of linoleum, they would throw the rolled end off the tailboard letting it unroll in front of the crowd. With each price reduction the auctioneer would give the flat linoleum a loud slap purposely to heighten the tension so that someone in the crowd might bid at a higher price so as not to lose the lino to another bidder. It was of course, the first bidder (or person who shouted acceptance of the latest price), who got the lino. The trick was to try to hold ones nerve until the price came down really low, taking a chance that no one else would jump in first, and of course the auctioneer had a repertoire of jokes and patter to

jolly the crowd along and keep them in a good mood. The atmosphere with the crowd, the auctioneer slapping the lino and cracking his jokes, the tension and the naphtha lamps, combined to create a picture which even so long afterwards, I can see clearly as I write.

Knick knacks galore

The same was true of the china and crockery merchants. They worked from large stalls where they would set up a display of the goods they were selling. They had tea sets and dinner services, both china and earthenware, fruit sets of glass and china, tea pots fancy and plain, ornaments and knick-knacks galore together with packing cases packed to the brim with mundane items of crockery such as pudding basins and plain white earthenware cups, saucers and plates. The china sellers operated on the same basis as the linoleum chaps i.e. by 'Dutch Auction' but they had more scope for entertaining the crowds because of the more diverse range of their goods. They would hold a full tea set in their hands and half juggle with it, throwing it up in the air and catching it again with no breakages. For us kids it was great entertainment although the show was sometimes so fascinating we didn't leave and would catch it in the neck for getting home late.

Finally

I have just proof-read my article and I'm astonished at how much I've remembered. I'm even more astonished at how much I've left out! But I think I've included the important stuff and, hopefully, managed to capture the essence of growing up in a Lancashire town in the 1930's.

When I began this article I intended it to be an account of my years at Ashton Grammar School but it grew into more, much more. It is fitting that I acknowledge here the debt I owe to the school. I have enjoyed a successful career as a Chartered Civil Engineer. The first steps towards that career were taken at Ashton Grammar School.

Aspull & Haigh Historical Society

Meetings are held in the Village Centre, Bolton Road, Aspull, on the second Thursday of the month at 8.00 p.m. Further details from the Secretary, Mrs. Rosalie Naylor, 3 Pennington Close, Aspull, Wigan (01942 256145)

Death of Mr. J. Sherriff and Mrs. D. Dootson

I have had a letter from Mrs. Rosalie Naylor, Secretary of the Aspull & Haigh Historical Society, stating that two of their founder members had died - both on the same day in early January.

Mrs. Dorothy Dootson was founder Secretary of the Society. She held the office until she resigned three years ago due to ill-health. Mrs. Naylor writes that she was a "staunch supporter of *Past Forward*, and she delighted in distributing it around Aspull and Haigh."

Mr. Joe Sherriff was founder Chairman of the Society. He was well known in Aspull, both for his work on behalf of the Society, and of the Catholic church there. He was a very good friend of Wigan Heritage Service. *Ed.*

Atherton Heritage Society

Monthly meetings with talks on local history held at St. Richard's Jubilee Hall, Crabtree Lane, Atherton, on Tuesdays at 7.30 p.m. Non-members £1.50, including refreshments. Everyone welcome. Visits throughout the year to places of historical interest. Information from Hon. Sec. (01204 651478).

13 April

'*Women in the Mines*' by M. Stirrup

Atherton was known for its Pit Brow lassies, but our speaker will tell the whole story of women in the coal industry.

11 May

'*Literary Lakeland*' by Miss M. Curry

Margaret's talks have become an annual event - they are so good. Tonight she will tell us all about the connections between the Lake District and writers.

8 June

'*The History of The Co-op*' by Mr. N. Hindley

The idea of having a share in a company appealed to hard-working Lancashire folk and checks were carefully collected to be cashed on divi-day. The success story is told tonight.

SOCIETY NEWS

July

No Meeting, HOLIDAYS.

10 August

'*Livington*' by Mr. D. Smith

One of our favourite local walking places. Mr. Smith will tell us all we need to know of its long history and brings along his book on the subject.

Golborne & Lowton Local History Society

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

13 April Tuesday

A.G.M.

Leigh & District Family History Society

Meetings are held on the 3rd Tuesday of every month in the Derby Room of Leigh Library. For further details contact the Secretary, Mrs. O. Hughes (01942 741594).

20 April

'*Wills for the Family Historians*' by David Lambert.

18 May

'*Publishing your Family History*' by Dan Muir.

15 June

Visit to Wigan Record Office, Leigh.

20 July

Visit to Leigh Library.

17 August

Getting started and Question time.

Leigh Literary Society

Meetings are held in The Derby Room, Leigh Library on Mondays at 7.30 p.m. Subscription £10. Visitors £1. Secretary: Mrs. H. Gaskell (01942 801743).

Leigh Local History Society

Meetings are held in The Derby Room, Leigh Library, on the last Wednesday of the month.

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

Tyldesley & District Historical Society

Meetings are held at Tyldesley Pensioners Club, Milk Street, Tyldesley, on the third Thursday of the month at 7.30 p.m. Entrance is FREE. Further details from the Secretary (01942 514271).

15 April

'*The Good Old Days?*' by Tony Rydings.

Part 2 of a talk given last year will take the history of medicine from the Renaissance to the 19th century.

20 May

Annual visit. To be arranged.

Wigan Archaeological Society

The Society meets in the History Shop on the first Wednesday of the month at 7.30 p.m. New members are always welcome.

Wigan Civic Trust

The Trust meets at 7.30 p.m. on the second Monday of the month at Drumcroom Arts Centre, Parsons Walk, Wigan. For further information contact Anthony Grimshaw, Secretary (01942 245777). New members are always welcome.

12 April

'*The History of Standish Well*' by Cllr. John O'Neill.

10 May

Visit to Rawtenstall Civic Trust.

14 June

'*A History of Haigh Hall*' by Mrs. Carole Banks.

Wigan Family History Society

Meetings are now held on the first and third Tuesday of the month, at the Springfield Hotel, Springfield Road, Wigan, at 7.30 p.m. For further information contact Mrs. Lynne Kearns, 28 Wareing Street, Tyldesley, Manchester, M29 8HS (01942 878549).

20 April

Manchester Record Office - Sources Available to the Family and Local Historian.

18 May

'*Deportation of a Relative*' by Russell Young

15 June

'*Postcards: An Edwardian Story*' by Ron Severs.



Anyone remember Jimmy Cain's cake shop?

Dear Mr. Gillies,

Past Forward issue 19 arrived today, always a source of pleasure to receive each issue, but two letters in the latest publication have spurred me into writing, in the hope you can find space to print what is ultimately a plea for help.

The letter from J. Harold Smith in Sutton Coalfield mentions "a chap residing in Leicester" who sent him

his first copy of *Past Forward*. I think he must mean me. My recollections are that we first made contact regarding the former Wigan, England and Great Britain rugby league player Johnnie Lawrenson. My late father Jack Cain grew up with Johnnie in the streets below the old Kirkless Iron and Steel Works at the top end of Belle Green Lane, Ince. My grandfather, Jimmy Cain, kept the cake shop at 10 Belle Green Lane, near Manchester Road, in the 1930's and 40's. Would any readers remember him, or the shop, later kept by Edna Ashurst, now demolished and replaced by the new building near Smithy Green, Ince, which I believe is a clinic? I would be overjoyed to hear from anyone who might remember my family in Ince. As an aside, I have been searching unsuccessfully for a photograph of the area at the top of Belle Green Lane, specifically Francis Street, where the new houses now stand. I would pay the costs incurred

by anyone who could loan me a photograph of the area for the purposes of copying it.

Reading the articles and letters in the current issue it struck me how you can trace similarities in the lives of families and I cite two examples.

The article by Mr. James Davies related how his father took on a grocery business as mining declined. My aforementioned grandfather Jimmy Cain, took on the confectionery business as the Kirkless site shut down.

That must have been quite common where families had 'put something by' and could try their hand at something different. My second example may spur correspondence to your office from people descended from ancestors that came to Wigan in the last century from Shropshire and Staffordshire.

Yvonne Morris's letter concerning her Perkins ancestor's arrival in Wigan, or rather Ince, in the 1880's from Shrewsbury

mirrored my own family's travels. Jimmy Cain married Mary Elizabeth Stone who was born in Lower Ince in 1884, the first child to be born in Ince to Richard and Ann Stone. Her elder brothers and sisters were born in Wolverhampton and father Richard was born in Ironbridge, Shropshire in 1854 to parent from Shrewsbury. Richard was a 'puddler' and came to work in the iron industry in Ince, from the fact that Mary was born in Lower Ince I conjecture that it was at the Moss Side Ironworks. Richard lost his wife in 1898 at the age of 42 having given birth to 13 children! They now lie in Ince Cemetery. Richard, a reputedly hard man like James Davies' father, later lived in Belle Green Lane at the King Street junction, then near to Jackson Street or Manchester Road where he would let the pigs loose to run amok on the highway forcing his daughters Sarah and Mary to round them up in the dark. As the Reverend Hibbert's letter in issue 19 says "A

way of life has completely disappeared from our midst, times change". How many of us are descended from ancestors that had a common furrow?

Later this year I hope to start on a project analysing the 1891 Census for Ince. Breaking down the population by county of origin. Should anyone wish me to keep a lookout for their forebears they are welcome to contact me.

Please accept my best wishes for the continued health of *Past Forward* - it brings many people a lot of pleasure.

Neil Cain
26 Sheridan Terrace
Whitton Avenue West
Northolt
Middlesex
UB5 4JS



An inspirational wonderful evening

Dear Sir,

On Friday 2 October 1998 I was privileged to attend a wonderful reunion organised by Mrs. Jean McNamara (nee Haddock) and her brother Frank. It was a reunion of people who lived in Ingram Street and Moorfield Street before the old terraced houses were demolished in 1963.

I have been away from Wigan for some 34 years and it is over 40 years since I had met some of my old friends and neighbours. Despite common sense dictating otherwise my picture was one of 16 to 20 year old

teenagers. It was something of a pleasant learning experience trying to identify some of the elegant matrons as those young ladies for whom I may have had romantic yearnings in the past. Or some of the respectable mature gentlemen as the hooligans and rip snorters with whom I ran amok. It would be nice to list the people included in over 200 people who attended. Some still young and mere slips of things, others octogenarians. There were also one or two crafty sneaker-ins from Woodhouse Lane and Holt Street. Some were hardly changed and easily recognisable, others with some difficulty.

There were discussions about the air raids, Johnny Wood's coal wagon ripping down washing by accident on the Monday wash day. Adventures on the taggy near King's Wood, at Walthew House Lane, interspersed with details of the latest hip or knee replacement. The bookies runner being allowed access into houses to avoid Bobby Blinker the cycling

policeman.

The walls of the Latics club were covered in old photographs. Was that really T—S— and J— H— in satin breeches on Coronation Day? It was a great night and one that everyone enjoyed very much. What a pity for those who couldn't or didn't manage to get there. They were remembered with affection in many conversations.

Again, I would like through your pages, to thank those who had the inspiration to do it and to make it such a successful evening. In particular Jean and Frank and the ladies who ensured that despite all the reminiscing we still had something to eat during the evening.

**H. Haddock, B.A. QFSM
FiFireE**

**8 Repton Court
The Arbours
Northampton
NN3 3RQ**

Tel: 01604 404338

**E-mail:-
refire@mail.globalnet.co.uk.**

Father recognised

Dear Sir,

Regarding the photograph on Page 10 of issue 20 of *Past Forward* Autumn/Winter.

The person on the second row 3rd from right is my father Joseph Latham who worked in the Menswear Department at the Co-op in Standishgate. He died in 1985.

The team played on Wednesdays because that was a half day off for most shops in those days.

**Mrs Mollie Ryding
16 Cartmel Avenue
Danesway
Wigan
WN1 2HD**

Richard Forshaw, bellringers and boatyards

Dear Sir,

I have a copy of an article for the funeral of my great grandfather Richard Forshaw. It was published in the *Wigan Examiner* 17 July 1926. In the article it says that he worked for the Leeds & Liverpool Canal Co. for 51 years (he was 83 when he died) and he served his apprenticeship in the Parbold Boat Yard. It seems he had only been

retired for two years and was the Company's foreman boat builder; he was living in Cygnet Street. It also mentions amongst the floral tributes, one from the Bellringers, St. James Church, Poolstock.

I would like to know if anyone has any connection to Richard and his family and if anyone knows if there are any records held which refer to the St. James' Church Bellringers. Also the local boat yards both at Parbold and Wigan.

**Margaret Hegan
61 Chester Lane
Stevenage
Herts.
SG1 4JY
Tel: 01438 233687**

Thank you Mr. Blakeman

Dear Mr. Blakeman

Thank you for showing us around the History Shop on Tuesday 2 February 1999 telling us about Wigan and its surrounding villages. It was very interesting and we enjoyed looking around and learning about Wigan of old. We liked looking at slides and the old maps and pictures of Standish and Upholland.

We hope to visit them soon.

**Class 11
Montrose School
Montrose Avenue
Pemberton
Wigan
WN5 9XN**

Ashcroft, Grady and Taylor families

I am trying to locate relatives of my father, Francis Joseph Ashcroft, who was born on 6 January 1911, at 66 Darlington Street East, the son of Joseph and Margaret (nee Grady) Ashcroft.

Dad's father Joseph was the son of Joseph and Esther (nee Taylor) Ashcroft, and was born on 6 January 1889. Joseph and Esther had several other children, including Jane, who was born about 1890; Robert about 1893, and another son, whose name may have been William.

When Esther (Taylor) Ashcroft died in 1905 her husband Joseph remarried in 1911, to Margaret Ferguson, who died in 1916. Esther had two sisters; Elizabeth Ann married James Moore in 1909. Jane Moore was still living in the 1920's.

Dad's mother Margaret was born in 1879 in Wigan,

the daughter of Martin, who worked as a gas stoker and died in 1902, and Ann (Carroll/Hinchley) O'Grady, Irish immigrants who came to Wigan from County Clare in about 1876. Margaret's brother Michael, who was born in Ireland, married Hannah Taylor in 1903. When, in 1911, my grandparents emigrated to the United States, it appears that all of the surviving Grady family, with the exception of Michael, also left for America.

I would very much like to hear from anyone in any of these families, and who might have information. It would be wonderful to add **living** relatives to our family tree!

**Mary Ann Ashcroft
1229 Vista del Lago
San Luis Obispo,
California 93405
U.S.A.**

'Marriage at Atherton' article stirred memories

Dear Sir,

I was particularly interested in the article in *Past Forward* 19 'Interesting Marriage at Atherton'. The Rev. W. Nuttall who officiated was father of my late husband's uncle by marriage. Cyril B. Nuttall was, I think, the eldest son of the Rev. W. Nuttall and he was married to my husband's Aunt Elizabeth Irlam at Flixton Parish Church., They are both buried in Flixton Churchyard. When the Atherton Church was vandalised a few years ago, an article in, I think, the Leigh Journal [I have a copy somewhere] told about the three vicars who had held the living at Atherton; the Rev. Nuttall was the one who had held it the longest.

A daughter of Mr. Nuttall married a Mr. Edwards, Managing Director of Lancashire United Transport; later she died quite young and another daughter Lucy kept house for her brother-in-law and family. Nora Edwards married one of the Gardner's

from the engine works at Patricroft and up to two years ago she was still alive and living in Worsley. It was strange I should marry someone with even a distant connection with the Edwards/ Nuttall family as my first job was in the Partington Lane Swinton Depot office of L.U.T. I moved to live in Astley/Tyldesley in 1986, and when the Depot at Atherton closed and the Leigh Journal asked for any memories of working for L.U.T., a friend persuaded me to send in my memory.

Thanks for *Past Forward* which eventually goes to an 83 year old Leigh born and bred friend who now lives near his family in Sussex, and sometimes on to his brother on the Moray Firth.

Keep up the good work. Thanks again.

**Mrs May Platt
12 Brindlehurst Drive
Astley
Tyldesley
M29 7NG**



Memories of war years in Leigh

Dear Sir,

I enclose a letter of memories of Leigh. I enjoyed reading your *Past Forward* magazine while on holiday in Finland.

I wish you success in this magazine.

ELLEN SCOTSON
(Nellie Collinge)
b. 6 Feb. 1916

I lived in Brideoake Street, Bedford, Leigh. As a girl I attended St.

Thomas's Church and Day School. In my young days Bedford Cinema was very popular in the same street where I lived. We also used to enjoy the church dances in Leigh. The most popular Saturday evening dances were those of Leigh Parish Church Institute and in St. Joseph's Dance Hall. I met my late husband, Robert Scotson, at a St. Peter's Church dance. As a boy he lived in Byrom Hall, Lowton. (He also had a brother, Abraham, who was a well-known local figure as the shop manager at Leigh Meadow Dairy, and after the War as the owner of a grocer's shop on the Wigan Road. He was president of the Leigh & District Grocers Association, 1961-2).

My occupation on leaving school at 14 years old, was at Ogden's Sweet Factory in West Leigh. I left this work a year later to learn a trade in weaving at

the Leigh Manufacturing Co. Unfortunately their two mills closed down at the beginning of the slump in the cotton trade, and I moved to Stanley Mill in Duke Street where I worked only for three weeks, following which I went to Welch Hill Factory in Twist Lane. After two happy years there, my father, Wilfred Collinge, suggested I go to Courtaulds Brook Mill as a silk weaver, an improvement from my previous work. A new weaving shed was opened at Bedford Square where we weavers were each given 10 to 14 looms to operate on shift work, and five years I was employed weaving parachute material during wartime. My husband and I were separated by the War after one month of marriage - Robert Scotson enlisted for the Army Airborne Division (later Parachute

Regt.) in which he served for five years.

The war years were long but we were able to find entertainment in the cinemas of Leigh: 'The Regal' in Spinning Jenny Street, 'The Empire' in Bradshawgate, 'The Palace' and 'Sems' in Railway Road. I still remember the first talking pictures at a cinema on Leigh Road, and across the way was Leigh Hippodrome with the live shows. The 'Theatre Royal' in Lord Street had all kinds of variety - I wonder what this building is now? I also belonged to an amateur dramatic group at St. Thomas's Church in Bedford. Harry Heap was the producer of Gilbert & Sullivan operettas.

In 1946 we came to live in Coventry. My husband had worked in Stanley Mill, Leigh but due to the slump there, he found work in silk spinning

at Courtaulds, Coventry where he worked for 34 years and eventually became a supervisor. I have been a pianist for the Coventry Keep Fit Association for over 30 years, and still play the piano for a local ladies choir, for elderly people's homes and clubs, and for Salvation Army Senior citizens. My daughter also teaches the piano in Coventry to school children.

My son, Allan, works as a Free Evangelical Church minister in Finland and he introduced me to *Past Forward* during my recent visit in his home. Now having read the past five editions I wanted to express my appreciation for many happy memories they gave me. I thank God for all these.

Ellen Scotson
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H.A.G.S. - 1946 intake recollections

Dear Sir,

I have recently had the loan of several copies of *Past Forward*, primarily so that I could read the letters and articles on Hindley & Abram Grammar School. I was at H.A.G.S., in the 1946 intake, and you may be interested in several recollections which no-one else seems to have mentioned.

The first is Miss Nicholas's car. Very few people had cars in 1946, but Nick had one - a large, much pre-war model, of the square box on wire wheels variety which, shortly before nine o'clock each morning, made its stately progress into the school yard and disgorged Miss Nicholas, Miss Craig, Miss Moody and Miss Unsworth. As I remember, it, this machine was dark blue with black trim and curious yellow-

tinted windows.

My form did not do cookery but for the first two years we had the benefit of Miss Moody's needlework classes. The first term we made a traycloth, but next came a more ambitious project - a pair of wincyette pyjamas each. Miss Moody informed us that the Headmaster would certainly wish to see us model the finished garments. They took so long to make that we'd grown out of them before they were finished, but thankfully Mr. Britten showed no interest.

A friend suggested we should volunteer to make the cricket tea for the Saturday afternoon match. It was supposed to be good fun but we only did it once. In a back room in the pavilion was an enormous mound of sliced bread, a small tin of salmon, half a pound or so of butter and a big old tea urn. We were supposed to feed two cricket teams! Mind you, I think food was rationed at the time.

No-one seems to have

mentioned Mr. Marsden, known as Moses. He was the Divinity teacher and also did third form Geography. An absolutely darling man, he was a Congregational minister who apparently had served for many years in the China mission. If you could get him talking about his time in China there was no formal lesson that day. He was also reputed to have a 'plastic ear' to replace one which had been cut off by unspecified 'natives'.

Then there was 'Stinks' Beaumont. He taught Chemistry and was also the Scout Master. He had magic reflective glasses which enabled him to see what was going on behind his back when he was writing on the board. He wore a hefty leather belt with a large buckle bearing the Scout motto 'Be Prepared'. As he was also wearing braces this was a source of great amusement to the coarser ones amongst us.

I first saw the school when I was taken out for a walk by my grandad. I was

about three years old at the time, but the place captured my imagination and my ambition from that day was to go to the 'granny' school. From a present-day standpoint it is difficult to envisage all those kids, mostly from poor households, being privileged to attend such a superb school with excellent teachers and facilities. Many of the teachers were admittedly a little eccentric in some ways but so much the better for it. The gym was state-of-the-art, the hall and library were a dream -

all now spoiled. Most of us were the first in our families to have such a splendid opportunity, with all doors open to the able and willing. Sadly the school as such, like many similar schools, is no more. One wonders what we have thrown away in the name of progress.

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METROPOLITAN
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Who? Where?

There was a good response to last issue's **Who? Where?** particularly with regard to the middle two photographs. Osbourne House is still standing, on Billinge Road, Highfield, Wigan. One suggestion for the photograph of the bridge and houses was Platt Bridge, but there was an overwhelming identification as Union Bridge, Newtown, Wigan. Mr Frederick Sim, writing from Wyoming, USA, provided such detail that extracts from his letter are reproduced below:

Gentlemen,

I have just received the *Past Forward*, issue 20. As usual your magazine is excellent, interesting and a great reviver of wonderful memories.

The photos on the last page (photo No. 4) is of Union Bridge, Newtown, Pemberton and was used to carry coal from Norley Pit. The shop with the awning down was a toffee shop and was owned or operated by a family by the name of Sedwick (I hope I have spelt the name correct). Looking through the bridge opening there are (left side) several light standards; about the second one would be where Mr. Ashurst had his photographic studio. However, the studio where he actually took pictures was a little further up towards Spring Bank. Also not shown in the picture are Mitchell and Manor Streets and Dr. Benson's dental office. As a youngster we boys used to joke about the sign in front of his office - "Painless Dentistry", we used to say, sure doesn't hurt the dentist. Another point about the picture - at the end of the row, going towards Wigan, was McLeod's bakery.

Thanks for your fine publication, as a great many of your articles are things-and-times I can look back on, and Ernie Taberner's articles are as always right on the dot, very accurate.

Frederick Sims

Referring back to issue no 19, details of the mystery funeral have been found in the Leigh Chronicle. The deceased was Ernest Henry Holding, a Sergeant in the Boer War who became a driver with South Lancashire Tramways. This, of course, accounts for the flag draped over the coffin and the tramcars in the procession. Ernest Holding died in May 1912 of double pneumonia, aged only 32.

This time, the photographs for identification, apart from one of a mystery house, all have a religious theme. One is of the interior of a church c. 1906; the other two are more recent, and feature Archbishops Downey and Heenan of Liverpool. Any suggestions? If so please contact Len Hudson in Leigh Town Hall (01942 404432)

