

Wigan Archives & Local Studies

Royal Visits to Wigan, 1873-2005

The following index provides an account of the visits made to the Wigan area by members of the Royal Family, 1873-2005. The accompanying spreadsheet gives further detailed information on dates and sources, together with details of press reports of the visits made.

This index was gratefully produced by Vic Rawlinson, Wigan Local Studies volunteer, from original sources held by Wigan Archives and Local Studies.

Wednesday 4th June 1873

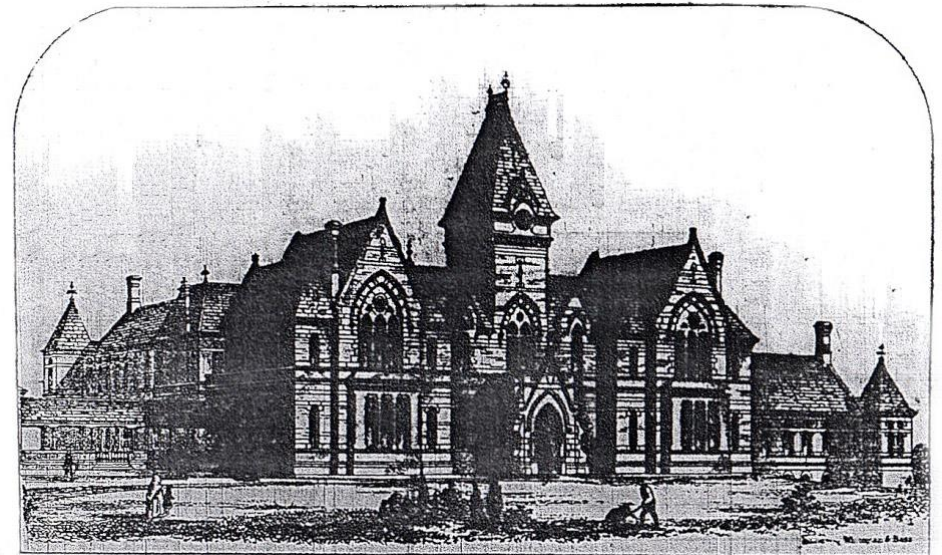
The Prince and Princess of Wales

In January 1873 enquiries were made regarding the possibility of a royal visit to Wigan for the occasion of the official opening of the new Wigan Infirmary. Advice was received that unfortunately Her Majesty Queen Victoria would not be able to attend as had been hoped, but this was promptly followed by confirmation that the Prince of Wales had accepted the invitation. The arrangements were that the Prince and the Princess would be staying at Haigh Hall as the guests of the Earl & Countess of Crawford and Balcarres, whilst they were in the locality, they would be combining the visit to Wigan with the opening of a new Town Hall in Bolton and also to the unveiling of a statue in Southport dedicated to a Dr. Chadwick who had been a benefactor to that town.

The Royal couple arrived at North Western Station by rail on Tuesday 3rd. June and proceeded to Haigh Hall where a formal reception was held.

The following day the official party made their way to the Infirmary, leaving Haigh Hall via the Whelly gates. The procession arrived at their destination at approximately 2.45 pm where they performed the official opening ceremony for the Infirmary and also for the Bazaar and Exhibition which had been organised as part of the festivities for the occasion.

The group made a tour of the Bazaar and exhibition before returning to Haigh Hall.



18th May 1898

The Prince of Wales

The Prince of Wales had originally arranged an informal visit to Lancashire during which time he would be staying as the guest of his friend Lord Gerard at his home Garswood Hall and during which time he would be travelling to Southport where he would visit the Lancashire Hussars, (a regiment with which Lord Gerard held the rank of Colonel).

The news of his visit became known however, following which he agreed to the formal receptions which would be made during his visit.

The prince arrived at Newton Bridge railway station on Tuesday 17th. May from where he travelled to Garswood Park, here he spent the night with Lord Gerard's other guests. The following day he travelled from Bryn station to Southport to carry out his arranged regimental inspection. The return journey to Garswood was via Wigan Wallgate station where a formal greeting had been arranged.

The royal party and guests spent a further night at Garswood Hall departing on Thursday 19th. May, for Newton station and from there, his return to London.



10th July 1913

His Majesty King George V. & Queen Mary

This visit to Wigan by King George V and Queen Mary was part of an extended and intensive tour of towns in Lancashire which took place between 7th. & 14th. July 1913 during which time the Royal couple were based at Knowsley Hall as the guests of Lord Derby.

The evening of their arrival at Knowsley, a dinner and house party took place at which one of the entertainers was comedian George Formby snr. (a press report of the event considered that his second song titled “Standing by a lamp post at the corner of the street” was not really an appropriate choice for this particular occasion).

The visit to Wigan took place on the fourth day of the tour, Thursday 10th. July. The party had travelled from Knowsley Hall to Huyton station and disembarked at Earlstown from where they were driven by motor, the route took them via Ashton, Platt Bridge, Hindley, and Higher Ince, to the Wigan presentation ceremony where a purpose built platform had been erected for the occasion in Market Place.

After leaving Wigan the royal party continued their arranged tour travelling on to Chorley, Blackburn, Darwen and Bolton before returning to Knowsley Hall for the night.



26th to 29th January 1921

Princess Marie Louise

Marie Louise and her older sister Helena Victoria were granddaughters of Queen Victoria; their mother was Princess Helena who had married the German prince Christian of Schleswig – Holstein.

(In July 1917 King George V, had decided to change the name of the British Royal Family to Windsor this effectively severed the previous connections with German royalty the consequence being that whilst she continued to be referred to as “Princess” Marie Louise she was not an official princess of the United Kingdom.)

Following the annulment of her marriage in 1900 she involved herself in patronage of the arts and the support of charitable organisations.

The reason for the princess’s trip to Lancashire was to make visits to YMCA centres in Preston, Blackpool, St Annes, Manchester, Orrell, Oldham, Werneth Park, and Whalley. (Evidently, Marie Louise was deputising for her sister Princess Helena Victoria, for whom this visit had been originally arranged, but who was unable to fulfil due to ill health)

The princess’s base for the duration of the visit was Winstanley Hall where she stayed as the guest of Mr. & Mrs. Bankes, her visit to the Orrell Institute took place on the afternoon of the 27th of January.



Princess Marie Louise in the 1910s

6th and 8th July 1921

Prince of Wales (later King Edward VIII)

The Prince of Wales visit to Lancashire in 1921 commenced with his arrival by train from London at Huyton station at 9.30 pm on Monday 4th. July where he was met by the Earl of Derby who would be accompanying the prince for the duration of his tour and with whom the prince would be staying at Knowsley Hall.

The prince spent time in the Wigan Borough on two of the four days he was in Lancashire.

On Wednesday the 6th. July after visits to Ashton-under-Lyne, Bury and Bolton the return leg of his journey brought him to Hindley, Abram and Ashton-in-Makerfield.

On Friday 8th. July, his route included Fleetwood, Blackpool, Preston, Euxton, Leyland and Chorley before arriving at Wigan at Boars Head. He eventually concluded his tour of the county and departed by train to London from Wigan North Western station.

THE PRINCE OF WALES.



5th December 1922

Princess Helena Victoria

Helena Victoria and her younger sister Marie Louise were granddaughters of Queen Victoria; their mother was Princess Helena who had married the German prince Christian of Schleswig – Holstein.

(In July 1917 King George V, had decided to change the name of the British Royal Family to Windsor this effectively severed the previous connections with German royalty the consequence being that whilst she continued to be referred to as “Princess” Helena Victoria she was not an official princess of the United Kingdom.)

Helena Victoria never married, she devoted a lot of effort into her work for charitable organisations and in particular the Young Men’s Christian Association (YMCA) and YOUNG Women’s Christian Association (YWCA)

The reason for the princess’s visit to Lancashire was to make visits to YMCA centres. Her journey from London had been via Liverpool where she had attended several functions the day prior to travelling by train to Wigan, in order to perform the official opening ceremony for the new YMCA centre in King Street West, following which she travelled on by motor to attend a further function in Oldham.



Princess Helena Victoria, in 1920

7th and 13th September 1928

Princess Victoria

Princess Victoria was fourth child of King Edward VII and Queen Alexandra and a younger sister of King George V. Her visits to Wigan were of a purely personal nature, the background to this being that she had developed a relationship with a Wigan born nurse, Annie Fletcher who had over the years, attended King Edward VII and other members of the Royal Household.

Nurse Fletcher had retired to live in St Anne's. Princess Victoria was a frequent visitor to her home and this was just such an occasion, during which time trips were made to meet other people within their social circle.

On Friday 7th September a trip was made to Hindley and Bryn visiting sisters and friends of Nurse Fletcher

On 13th September the Princess together with Nurse Fletcher and a friend Mrs. Newall, made a visit of about two hours duration where they met Mr. N. A. Selkirk (the brother of Mrs. Newall) and other members of the family at Mr. Selkirk's home, 86 Swinley Lane Wigan.



NURSE ANNIE FLETCHER.



Princess Victoria



86 Swinley Lane, Wigan

23rd November 1932

Prince of Wales (later King Edward VIII)

This visit to Wigan was part of a two day tour of West Lancashire made by the prince as a gesture of support for people suffering as a consequence of unemployment. This involved visits to social, recreational and occupational clubs in Wigan, Liverpool, Bolton, St. Helens, Warrington and Widnes.

The prince during the tour avoided as far as possible any ceremonials, preferring to “rub shoulders” with unemployed people and discuss the problems which they were facing.

Whilst in Wigan the prince’s made the first of his three visits to the Men’s Club in Brown’s Yard, Wallgate before moving on to the Women’s Service Club in Entwistle House, Hallgate and then onwards to Central Park football ground where he saw a rugby league game between two specially selected schoolboy teams.

After leaving Central Park the prince was to proceed on to Liverpool by car, not however before it had been embellished with a small Union Jack by 13year old Wigan schoolgirl Edna Dawber

The Prince of Wales in Wigan.



The Prince at Central Park



Edna Dawber puts a flag on the royal car

18th. January 1934

The Duke of Gloucester

Prince Henry the Duke of Gloucester was the third son of King George V and Queen Mary. His visit to Wigan was part of a three day tour of Lancashire during which he would be visiting Boys Clubs

His tour began on 16th January in Manchester, followed by Liverpool, Norris Green and Lancaster before arriving in Wigan in the morning of the 18th January via Boars Head, Wigan Lane and Standishgate to the Town Hall to be greeted by the Mayor and civic dignitaries, from here he moved on to Wigan's Junior Instruction Centre based in the Old Presbyterian Hall in Harrogate Street.

After leaving the Junior Instruction Centre his route took him via Darlington Street on through Ince, Hindley, Hindley Green, Atherton and on to the Mines Rescue Station in Boothstown.

Duke of Gloucester at Wigan.



The Duke's visit to Wigan Junior Instruction Centre

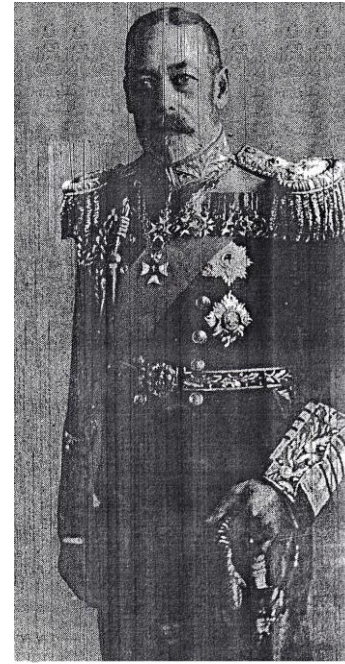
18th. July 1934

King George V and Queen Mary

The royal couple spent the night of 17th / 18th July on the Royal Train which had been parked at the E M S Railway Junction close to Lowton Station, this during a visit to Lancashire during which the royal couple were to perform several official opening ceremonies in Manchester, Liverpool and Birkenhead. These included the new Mersey Tunnel and the East Lancashire Road a portion of which passes through the Wigan Borough at Haydock, Ashton in Makerfield and Lowton.

The royal party are reported to have experienced a violent thunderstorm during their overnight stay which was fortunately replaced by brilliant sunshine in the morning as they commenced their formal arrangements for the day by alighting the Royal Train which had pulled in to Lowton Station. Whilst making their way through the station their majesties showed an interest in the decorations at the station and also in the nearby garden of Mr. J.D. Robinson a local coal agent, as the couple proceeded up the carpeted incline from the station the Queen drew the King's specific attention to the garden, an action which appeared to delight the onlookers.

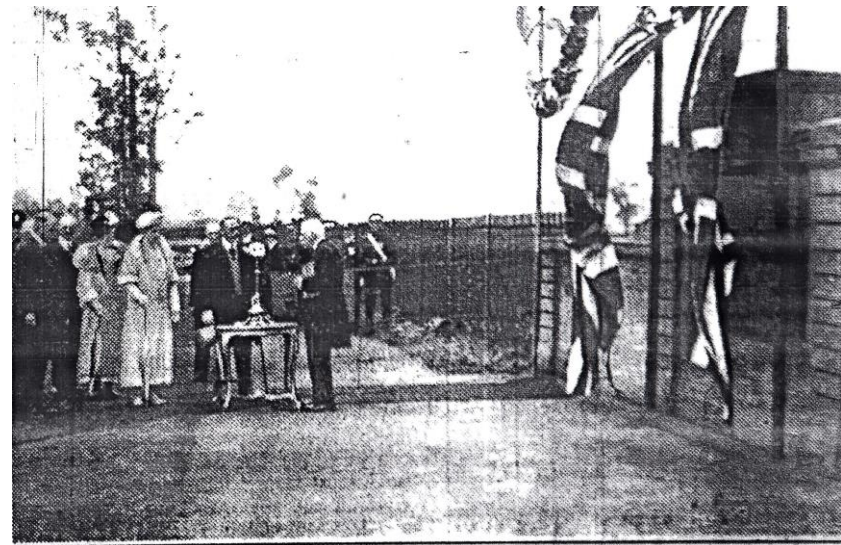
Having made their exit from the station the royal couple made their way towards Liverpool accompanied by Lord Derby.



KING GEORGE V



QUEEN MARY



NEW ROAD OPENED.—The King and Queen at the County Boundary, where a tablet was unveiled in commemoration of the opening of the new Liverpool-East Lancashire Road.

9th. July 1935

Duchess of York

The Duchess arrived at Wigan LNW Station at 3.30 pm where she was greeted by the Mayor and Mayoress.

The purpose of her trip to Wigan was to visit Parbold Hall and also Lawns Farm in Upholland, where the Wigan and District Subsistence Society had set up self help schemes for the unemployed. She was driven by car to Parbold Hall via Standish and Wrightington. Upon her arrival at Parbold Hall she was presented with a bouquet of flowers before visiting the pig sties, observing some men haymaking and on to the cowshed to see the milking. After this she was then taken on to Lawns Farm, Upholland and a tour of outbuildings and workshops where about forty men were making and repairing boots, she also visited another room where tailors and seamstresses were at work

On completion of her visit to Lawns Farm, she left to fulfil a series of engagements in the Manchester area.

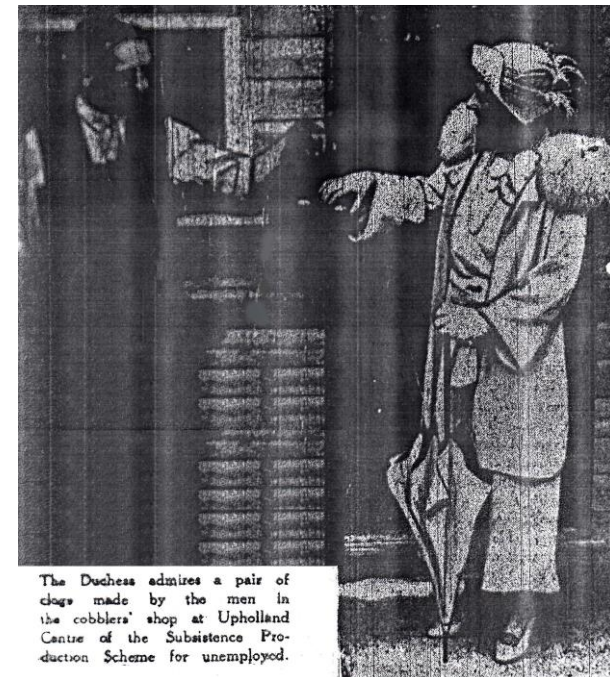


The Duchess of York is greeted by the Mayor of Wigan



"NEWS CHRONICLE" PHOTOGRAPHS.

At Parbold Hall the duchess receives a bouquet of flowers



The Duchess admires a pair of shoes made by the men in the cobblers' shop at Upholland Centre of the Subsistence Production Scheme for unemployed.

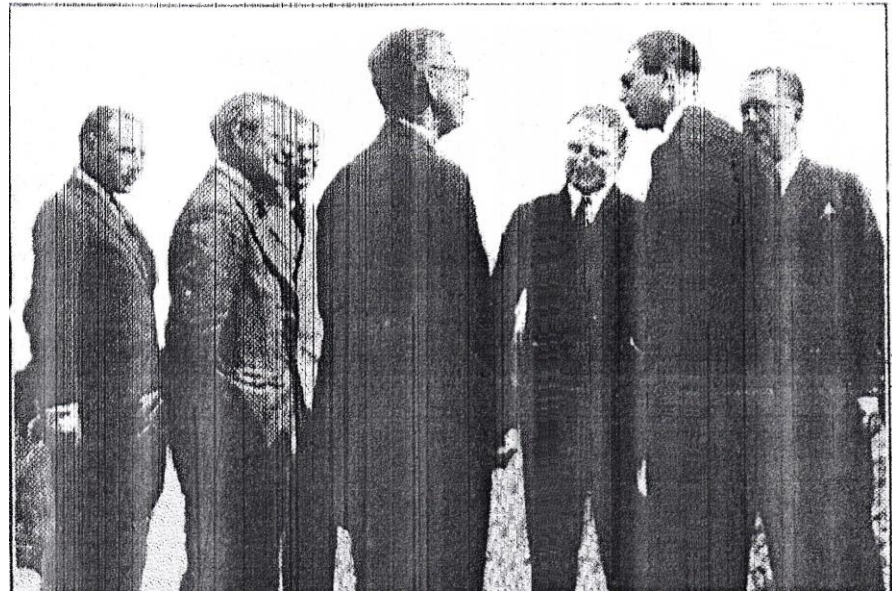
7th. July 1936

Duke of Kent

Prince George, the Duke of Kent was in the area on an arranged four day tour of social service centres located in south east Lancashire and north east Cheshire. He was accompanied throughout the tour by the Earl of Derby with whom he was staying as a guest at Knowsley Hall.

The first of his visits was at the Leigh Leisure Club, where after signing the visitor's book and being presented with the gift of a pair of clogs he mingled and had discussions with the members, who included thirty two members of the Wigan Men's Occupational Centre which was regarded as being one of the most progressive centres in Lancashire. The Wigan men took part in some physical training displays during the visit.

**DUKE MEETS WIGAN SOCIAL
SERVICE WORKERS**



30th. July 1937

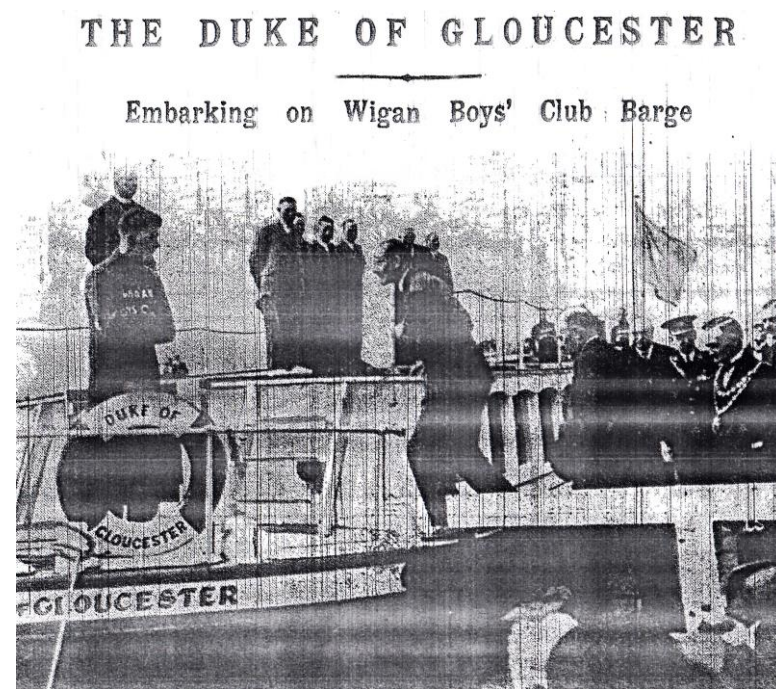
Duke of Gloucester

The Duke in his capacity of president of the National Association of Boy's Clubs was once again in the area touring Boy's Clubs in Lancashire and Cheshire, which included a visit to the Wigan Boy's Club in Clayton Street and the ceremonial naming of the Wigan Boy's Club canal barge. (to be named The Duke of Gloucester).

The Duke travelled from a prior engagement in Lancaster and was greeted at the Victoria Hotel where lunch was served. Afterwards the party moved on to the canal close to the Pagefield Ironworks where the Boy's Club Barge was moored, after boarding the barge set off for a cruise along the canal to Wigan Pier where the party disembarked and made their way to Clayton Street to carry out the arranged visit to the Wigan Boy's Club after which the Duke continued with his scheduled itinerary moving on to St. Helens, Howe Bridge, Bolton and Blackpool.



The Duke walking through the Pagefield Works



Arrival of the Duke of Gloucester at Wigan Pier

20th. May 1938

King George VI and Queen Elizabeth

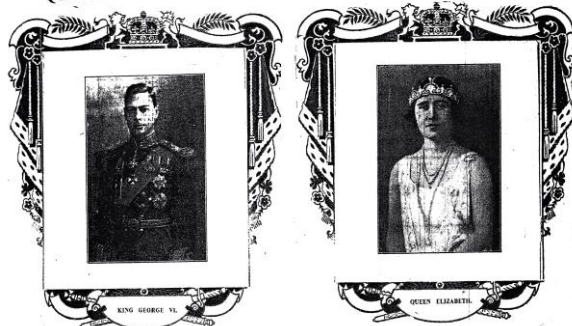
This visit to Wigan by the King and Queen took place on the last day of a comprehensive four-day tour of Lancashire. The royal couple were based at Knowsley Park as the guests of Lord Derby who accompanied them throughout the various stages of the tour.

The King had made it known in advance that he wished the public authorities to keep any costs associated with the visit to a minimum by avoiding any expenditure on decoration of the streets, advising that any such decoration should be at the discretion of private individuals or organisations.

This fourth day began with an early start, the party left Knowsley Park and took a route which took them along the East Lancashire Road through Windle, and Carr Mill then past Garswood Park through Ashton in Makerfield and Bryn arriving in the town via Warrington Road, Wallgate and Library Street to the Town Hall and on to a public reception and presentation ceremony in Market Place after this they continued with their scheduled journey through the borough via Darlington Street towards Higher Ince, Hindley, Westhoughton, then onwards to Bolton, Farnworth, Radcliffe, Bury, Heyward, Rochdale, Oldham and finally Ashton under Lyme from where they boarded the royal train for their return to London.



THIS WEEK'S ROYAL VISIT TO WIGAN.
Queen's Visit When Duchess of York Recalled.



31st. March 1939

King George VI

This was not a visit to a Wigan location but to the Royal Ordnance Factory at Euxton, which was under construction at the time. The King and his companions had travelled from London by special train the previous evening this had stopped for the night in sidings at Lowton Junction and then onwards to the Royal Ordnance Factory Halt the next morning.

(The local newspapers Wigan Observer and Wigan Examiner were both aware of the proposed visit for some time in advance and published brief details; they also afterwards published a report of the visit, including details of two Wigan men who were presented to the King.)

On completion of his tour of the extensive facilities being developed at Euxton, the King and his party returned to the train for their onward journey to Newton Heath, from where they went onwards by car visiting the two Avro factories at Failsworth and Newton Heath, also the Fairey Aviation factory at Heaton Chapel, after which the group drove to meet the royal train at Stockport for its return journey to London.



The King arriving at the Royal Ordnance Factory Halt, Chorley.

2nd. May 1940

King George VI and Queen Elizabeth

The reports of this two day wartime tour of South Lancashire made by King George VI and Queen Elizabeth, are brief and for obvious security reasons somewhat vague. The tour is reported to have begun at Lancaster on Wednesday 1st. May, there the royal couple visited a barracks where 700 male soldiers and 300 ATS girls attended the parade ground they also visited docks and an aircraft factory where they saw large numbers of R.A.F. machines being constructed before travelling on to a large armaments works to see the manufacture of guns for the Royal Navy.

The royal party spent the night in the Lake District before travelling by rail to a "small South Lancashire mining town" and although the arrangements were "secret", a large crowd had however collected on the roadway beneath the railway bridge on which part of the royal train had stood whilst the party disembarked. From here they continued their journey by car through miles of industrial streets and some open country to Worsley, where they visited a large electrical engineering works, afterwards they drove onwards to Manchester's Victoria Station for their return journey to London, arriving 8.15pm at Euston station.

(Whilst the Wigan press were obviously aware of the event and privy to some of the events there appears to be no confirmation of Wigan featuring in any of the locations or travel arrangements other than the possibility that the town where they disembarked the royal train for the final leg of their tour, which is described in one newspaper report as a "small " South Lancashire town" and in a different newspaper as "a small mining town" may have been Wigan, or somewhere within the Wigan Borough? The Mcr. Guardian report's description of the disembarkation and the relative positions of the train ,bridge and crowds would certainly fit Wigan North Western Station with its bridge spanning Wallgate?)



The Queen inspecting members of the A.T.S.



The Queen greeting a leader of the Women's Voluntary Services at the station just before leaving Lancashire.

24th. April 1941

The Duchess of Kent

The Duchess of Kent at this time was Princess Marina of Greece and Denmark. Her husband the Duke was the fourth son of the late King George V and Queen Mary. Her visit to Wigan was a brief 50 minute tour of Eckersley's Swan Meadow Mills.

Reports of the event in the in the Wigan newspapers reflect the brevity of the visit and provide no information regarding other locations she may have visited prior to Wigan or any that she may have travelled onwards to after leaving the town.



7th. March 1945

King George VI and Queen Elizabeth

This visit to Wigan by the King and Queen was part of a 2 day tour of Lancashire which began in Liverpool in the morning travelling onwards via Ormskirk and Preston and from there towards Wigan by road, driving through Standish and into the town along Wigan Lane, Mesnes Road, Bridgeman Terrace and Frog Lane to the Pagefield Iron Works of Walker Bros. Ltd. Here they toured the factory where they met and spoke to members of the staff. After which the royal party moved onwards to Wigan Rectory, which was at this time being used as a war time nursery for the use of people employed at the Pagefield Works. The King and Queen visited several of the rooms before leaving by car and travelling onwards via Ashton in Makerfield to their next point of call, a rehabilitation unit at Winwick EMS Hospital.



by Courtesy of the "Liverpool Daily Post.

**The King and Queen being greeted by the Mayor and Mayoress
Councillor and Mrs. J. Holland at the Pagefield Ironworks.**

20th. March 1950

Princess Margaret

This was Princess Margaret's only visit to Wigan and was the last of the locations on the itinerary of her tour of industrial towns in Lancashire prior to her return to London from Wigan North Western station.

Her tour had included St. Helens and Warrington and onwards to Leigh and Hindley and onwards towards Wigan Town Hall via Ince, Darlington Street and Scholes.

She was greeted upon her arrival at the Wigan Town Hall by the Mayor and Mayoress Alderman J.E. Riley and Mrs. Riley prior to moving on into the council chamber and then into a reception room where a lavish tea had been prepared, the Princess ate little food but chatted to the Mayor. The visit was brief, lasting less than an hour, before she was taken by car to Wigan North Western station and from there her return to London.



Princess Margaret with the Mayor and Mayoress (Alderman and Mrs. J.E. Riley)
and the Town Clerk (Mr. Allan Royle)



21st. October 1954

Queen Elizabeth and Duke of Edinburgh

This was a short duration visit in order for her Majesty to perform the official opening ceremony of the John McCurdy Hall for further education at Wigan Mining and Technical College located in Parson's Walk.

The visit slotted into the royal couple's busy two day tour of South Lancashire, the schedule being their arrival at Wigan North Western station at 10.00 a.m. and on to Parson's Walk for the ceremony commencing 10.10a.m. and their departure by car at 10.30 a.m. travelling through Ashton in Makerfield to the East Lancashire Road and onwards to Windle, St. Helens and Knowsley Hall. The afternoon visits were to Bootle and Liverpool and the following day to Bolton, Bury, Salford, Manchester, Oldham, Shaw and Rochdale.



24th. June 1959

Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother

This was the fourth official visit Her Majesty the Queen Mother had made to Wigan, the first being as Duchess of York in 1935, the second and third being whilst accompanying her husband King George VI in 1938 and 1945.

On this occasion the visit was part of an extended tour during which she had on the days preceding her arrival in Wigan, been involved in the launch of the liner Windsor Castle at Cammell Laird & Co. Ltd. Birkenhead and had also attended a variety show at the Palace Theatre in Manchester. She arrived at Wallgate Station, from where she was taken by car to Wigan Town Hall here several presentations were made, prior to her returning to her car to travel onwards via King Street, Wallgate, and Ormskirk Road to the new Heinz factory at Kitt Green which had opened on 21st. May. There she was greeted by Mr. Jack Heinz (Chairman of H. J. Heinz Co. Ltd.) before moving on to meet eight other Directors of the company and their wives, this was followed by a forty five minute guided tour of the factory after which she departed to travel onwards to other engagements in Scotland



17th. May 1968

Queen Elizabeth II

This short visit to the Three Sisters reclamation site at Bryn, was part of a two day tour of Lancashire and Cheshire by Her Majesty giving support to the “Operation Spring Clean” initiative, a scheme which had in November of 1967 been sponsored by the North West Economic Planning Council, the Civic Trust for the North West and the Confederation of British Industry. It was a call to communities and volunteers to show what could be done to clean up dirt and squalor from the North West scene.

The Queen arrived at Bryn station at 2.15pm. and made the short trip to the Three Sisters site by car, there she some time before returning to her car for her onward journey to Warrington.



3rd. March 1977

Duchess of Gloucester

The Duchess was invited to Wigan to perform the official opening Ceremony of the Howe Bridge Sports Centre. After an engagement in Bolton earlier in the day she was transported by car to Wigan Town Hall and arrived at 12.40pm. Here she spent fifteen minutes with the Mayor, Mayoress and council members before moving on to Wigan College of Technology where she was provided with lunch which had been prepared and served by students of Leigh College. The Duchess and her party departed for their journey to Howe Bridge at 2.10pm. After arriving at the Sports Centre, where she unveiled a commemorative plaque, she toured the sports hall and viewed a variety of sporting activities in progress. On completion of the tour she travelled to Manchester Airport where a royal aircraft was waiting.



20th. June 1977

Queen Elizabeth and Duke of Edinburgh

During this the year that the nation was celebrating the Queen's Silver Jubilee, a royal tour of the North West had been arranged which included a visit to the Borough in order to view an arts and crafts exhibition being held at the Turnpike Gallery in Leigh. The original arrangements being based upon Her Majesty leaving the royal train at Lowton Sidings, this later revised on the basis that Wigan North West Station would be a more suitable disembarkation point. Here the Queen was greeted by the Lord Lieutenant of Lancashire, the Mayor of Wigan, the High Sheriff and local Members of Parliament.

A military guard of honour was provided by the Duke of Lancaster's Own Yeomanry and a military band played the National Anthem.

After the brief ceremony in Wigan, the royal party departed Wallgate travelling via Standishgate, and through Higher Ince, Hindley, and Hindley Green to Leigh Town Hall Square and from there to their tour of the Turnpike Gallery.



The Queen in Leigh

7th. December 1977

The Duke of Kent

This was described as a “flying visit” to the Gullick Dobson factory in Ince, it being part of a “whistle stop” tour of North West factories undertaken by the Duke in his role as Vice Chairman of the British Overseas Trade Board. The duration of the visit was just 35 minutes during which time he was accompanied by the Wigan born Chief Constable of Greater Manchester, Mr. James Anderton he also had discussions with Gullick’s Company Chairman and four trades union officials.



2nd. May 1979

The Duke of Edinburgh

This visit was part of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme it was an opportunity for him to meet some participants of the scheme from both the Wigan and Bolton areas, to award Bronze, Silver and Gold medals to successful participants and to see for himself some of the projects with which they were involved.

The Duke flew into Wigan by helicopter, landing on the playing field at St. Edwards RC Primary School at 11.32am. from where he went to St. Thomas Moore RC High School, this being the venue for the display of projects and for award ceremony. The Duke took a close interest in the projects undertaken by 31 participating groups from the Wigan area and by a further 31 groups who had come from the Bolton area. The extent to which the Duke demonstrated this interest was such that the scheduled departure for his next appointment in Oldham was delayed by at least half an hour.



The Duke steps down from the helicopter at the start of the tour.



The Duke with the Mayor and Mayoress of Wigan



The Duke chats with some members of the Heath Road Day Centre from Ashton during his tour of St. Thomas More School.

19th. March 1986

Princess Anne

Princess Anne was to be the first of the five members of the royal family who would visit the borough within the space of one month. She had a busy five hour schedule which included visits to three different locations, she was greeted on her arrival at the first of these, the Fourways Assessment Centre in Tyldesley by the Lord Lieutenant and the Mayor and Mayoress of Wigan. After a tour of the Centre and a brief lunch she moved on to Atherton and the second of her visits at Osborne Court, a housing association project with links to the Fourways Centre. The third and final call was to the new Stuart Edgar factory at Bryn, manufacturers of domestic paper products, deodorants and skin creams. Here she toured the factory and chatted to personnel before performing an official opening ceremony.

Prior to her departure from the Stuart Edgar factory, she in her role as president of the Save The Children Fund was pleased to be presented with a cheque for £5000, this being a donation towards the Fund from the company.



Princess Anne meets Leigh MP Lawrence Cunliffe, Wigan's Chief Executive, Mr. Philip Johnson, and the Mayor and Mayoress.



Princess Anne stops to talk to quality control operator Marleen Reynolds.



Princess Anne unveils a plaque to commemorate the opening of the Stuart Edgar factory at Bryn applauded by joint Managing Director, Mr. David Wesley.

21st. March 1986

Queen Elizabeth and Duke of Edinburgh

After months of speculation confirmation was given that the Queen and Duke of Edinburgh would come to Wigan to perform the official opening ceremony for the "Way We Were" heritage complex at the recently refurbished Wigan Pier.

The Royal Party arrived at Wigan North West Station where they were greeted by the Mayor and Mayoress before being taken by car to the Mill at the Pier where they visited the working steam engine, after this they boarded the waterbus "Emma" (named after the Mayoress) for the short trip to the Heritage Centre courtyard where they disembarked for their visit to the "Way We Were" exhibition. The Queen was given a guided tour through a mine and heard about a mine disaster, after which she met an actress who played the role of a widow of a miner killed in the disaster. The Duke meanwhile had the pleasure of attending a Victorian schoolroom for a lesson.

The duration of the visit was approximately one hour, after which the royal couple returned by car to Wigan North West Station where they boarded the royal train for their onward journey to another engagement in Manchester for the official opening of the Central Station Exhibition Centre.



23rd. April 1986

Prince Charles and Princess Diana

The Prince and Princess arrived at Wigan North Western Station and spent just six minutes here whilst on route to an appointment in Skelmersdale for the opening of the "West Lancashire Means Business" exhibition being held at the Skelmersdale Sports Centre. They were greeted at the station by Wigan's Mayor and Mayoress, Councillor George Lockett his wife Emma, and other local officials. After the brief reception the party continued their journey by car, the route taken by the royal couple to Skelmersdale took them through Pemberton, Orrell and Upholland.



1st. December 1989

Princess Anne

The employees at the Heinz factory at Kitt Green, had managed to raise the sum of £60,000.00 and a decision had been made that half of the sum raised would be donated to each of two charities, one of which was the Wigan Hospice, the second being the Save the Children Fund.

Princess in her role as President of the Save the Children Fund had been invited to the factory in order to formally receive a cheque for the £30,000.00 being donated to that charity.

The Princess arrived at the factory by helicopter from an earlier engagement at Wymott Prison near Leyland. She was given a guided tour of the factory where she met and had discussions with several employees, this was followed by the cheque presentation formalities which were conducted by the chairman of the Heinz charity appeal fund committee Mr. Derek Dollman. The Princess thanked Mr. Dollman and accepted the cheque graciously on behalf of her charity. After the ceremony the Princess returned to her helicopter for the onward flight to her next engagement which was the official opening of the new Oldham hospital.

(A sad postscript to the Heinz visit was that the excitement of the event is thought to have proved to be too much for 39 year old Mr. Dolland, who had performed the cheque presentation ceremony as he collapsed shortly afterwards and was taken by ambulance to Wigan Infirmary, he failed to recover however and died later that day.)



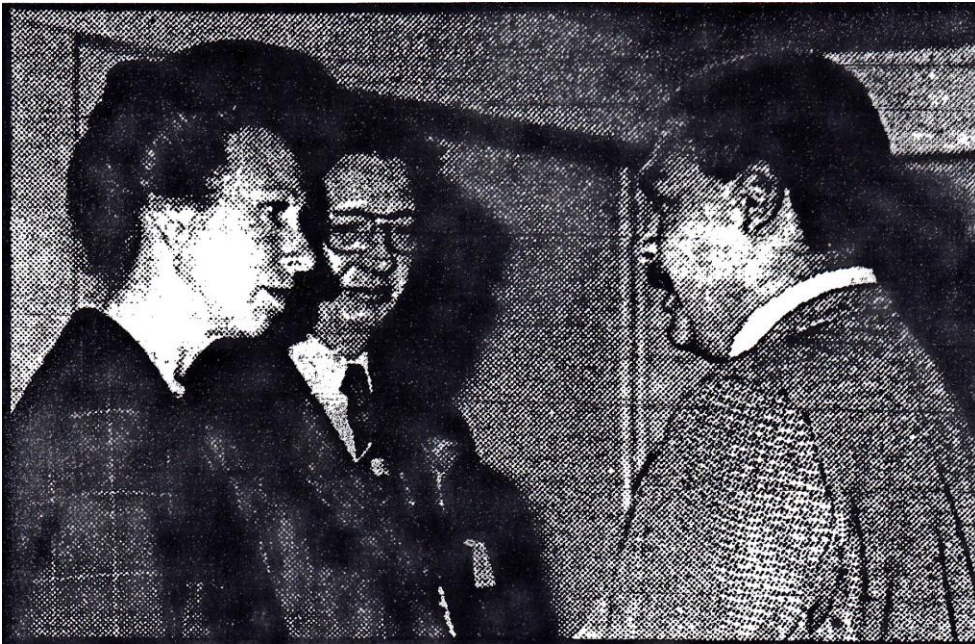
Derek Dollman presents the cheque to Princess Anne shortly before his collapse.

17th. May 1990

Princess Anne

Princess Anne had come to Haydock Park Racecourse as it was the venue for the Contractor's Mechanical Plant Engineers annual exhibition, an event of which she had agreed to perform the opening ceremony. After doing so she met several people from the local companies who were represented at the exhibition.

Afterwards she travelled onwards, firstly to Vulcan Village in Newton le Willows where a recent Housing Association refurbishment project had been carried out in order to provide improved standard accommodation for the benefit of people on lower income. Following this she proceeded to another scheduled engagement in Didsbury.



Princess Anne has discussions whilst at the exhibition at Haydock Park

12th. September 1990

Duchess of Gloucester

This was the second visit to Wigan by the Duchess, some thirteen years after the first. Her engagement on this occasion was to perform the official opening ceremony for the recently opened specialist Elderly Care facility at Whelley Hospital.

The duration of the visit was approximately one hour during which time she made a tour of the in-patient wards and rehabilitation facilities, chatting to residents and members of staff. This was followed by the unveiling of a commemorative plaque by the Duchess who also made a short speech.



The Duchess of Gloucester at the opening



The mayor, Coun Ron McAllister, greets the Duchess

28th. September 1990

Princess Anne

This was the third visit which the princess would make to the area within a year, on this occasion she had been invited to the recently extended Ingersoll Rand factory at Swan Road, Hindley Green, to carry out an official opening ceremony for the new facility. In addition to this, the Ingersoll Rand employees had raised £6,000.00 for charity and wished to use the event to present this sum as a donation to the Princess, in her capacity as President of the Save the Children Fund.

On her arrival, the Princess was welcomed by the Lord Lieutenant of Greater Manchester Colonel John Timmins, who presented the Mayor and Mayoress of Wigan Ron McAllister and his wife Mary. The Princess was then given a guided tour around the factory by the Managing Director Mr. John Firth, during which time she took the opportunity to speak with various employees. On having completed her tour the Princess travelled onwards to Rochdale and her next engagement at the Birtle Riding Centre.



2nd. November 1990

Princess Anne

Princess Anne was to make this occasion the fourth of her visits to the Wigan area within one year, this time she had two engagements, the first of which was at Shearings new engineering facility located at Bryn which was capable of stabling and servicing 200 of the company's fleet of 500 vehicles. The second engagement was a visit to Wigan Hospice where she toured the premises and spoke to a number of people including volunteers.



Princess Anne accompanied by Lord Lieutenant Col. John Timmings is greeted by Mayor of Wigan Ron McAllister.



Managing Director of Shearings, Ian Longworth, presents the Princess with a book on the history of the firm. 7 M0.



Princess Anne speaks to volunteers at Wigan Hospice

25th. November 1991

Princess Diana

In October 1991, a Council spokesman released the news that Buckingham Palace had responded to a recent request for a “royal visit” and advised that Princess Diana would fulfil the engagement. The news that the charismatic and popular princess would be coming to Wigan was received with delight.

Princess Diana came to the town to participate in the official opening ceremonies of three buildings; these being the new Town Hall, the new Magistrates Courts and the Galleries and Market Hall shopping development, her route into the town was via Chapel Lane and King Street, she arrived at the Town Hall at 12.50pm. Here she unveiled a commemorative plaque met various people and had lunch in the Mayor’s chambers. Her second visit was at the new Magistrates Courts, this was followed by a short drive to the Standishgate entrance of the Galleries development and another commemorative plaque unveiling, prior to a tour through the precinct towards the Square and Market Hall. After a short tour of the Market Hall she proceeded to Mesnes Street and a walkabout where she spoke to various members of the public and received numerous bouquets of flowers.



ALL SMILES: Princess Diana enjoys a joke with councillor John Horrocks.



A royal wave from Di as she leaves the town hall



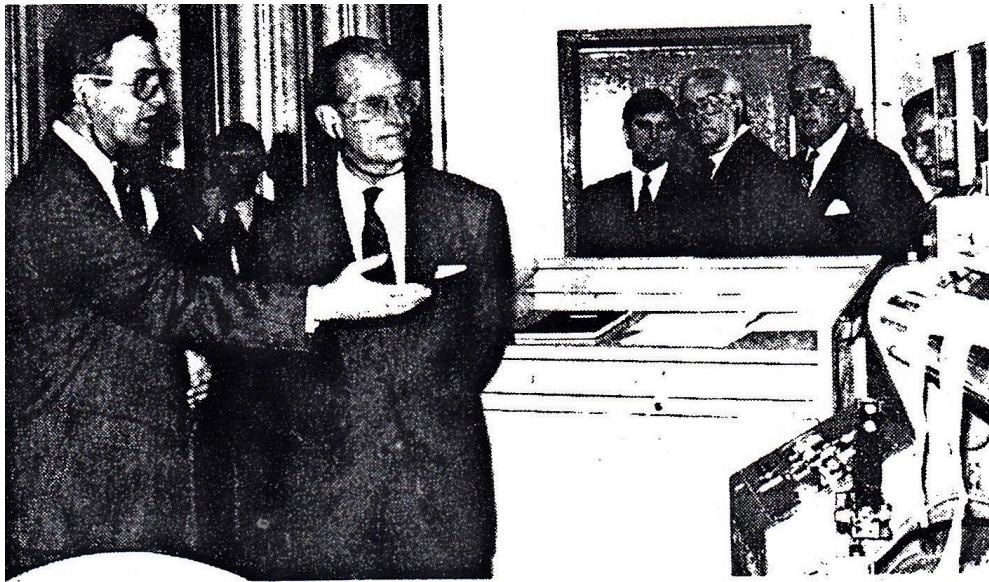
Snap happy Wiganers get one for the album as Di says hello.

31st. July 1992

Duke of Edinburgh

HRH Prince Philip came to Wigan to visit the PPG Glass Fibre factory in Hindley Green and perform its official opening, this after the £60m. redevelopment of the former asbestos plant by the American company.

The Duke was given a guided tour of the factory by the PPG managing director Dr. Ian Mayer who explained the various stages of the production process and advised that the glass fibres manufactured here, were supplied to manufacturers for use in the construction of mini buses and caravans also for sports cars and luxury limousines,.



Prince Philip is shown round the plant by PPG managing director Dr. Ian Mayer.

17th. September 1995

Prince Andrew the Duke of York

This informal visit to Wigan by Prince Andrew arose due to his interest in playing golf and as a consequence of his chance meeting with John Wilde a member of Wigan Golf Club.

Some months earlier, both of the above had attended an event at a golf club in Edinburgh where John Wilde had occasion to make a speech during which he light heartedly "extolled the virtues" of his home club of Wigan. John must have been very convincing, for after the event he was approached by the Prince Andrew who asked about Wigan Golf Club and the possibility of him playing a game of golf there? Although somewhat surprised by the Duke's interest, John followed this up by writing to the Duke's secretary with a formal invitation to visit the Arley course. The invitation was accepted and a date duly arranged with a request that visit be kept on a purely informal basis.

A match took place in which the Duke played with John and other members of the Wigan club and stayed for some lunch. He was later offered and accepted honorary membership of Wigan Golf Club.

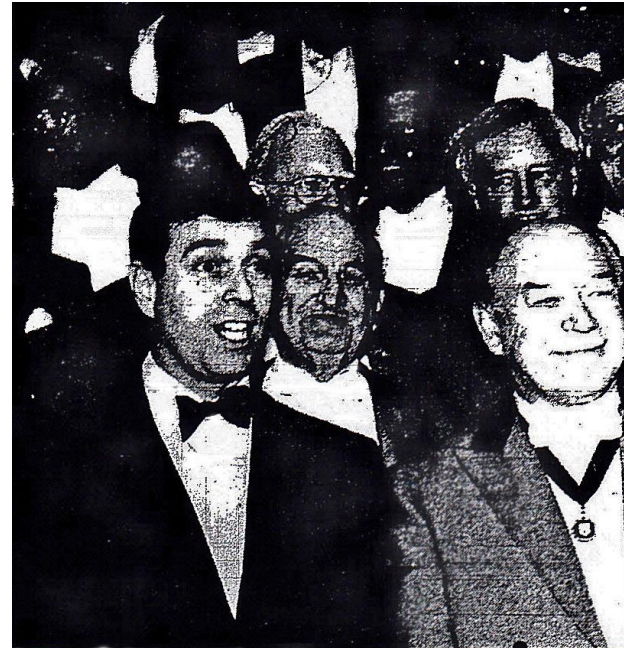


A REGAL foursome - John Wilde, Ted Walmesley, The Duke of York, and Mike Williams.

30th. January 1998

Prince Andrew the Duke of York

The Prince, who had become an honorary member of Wigan Golf Club after a previous visit in 1995, was invited to attend the club's Centennial Celebration Dinner which was being held at Haigh Hall. He was greeted on his arrival by the Mayor of Wigan Councillor Ken Pye and Club Captain Ted Walmsley.



6th. December 2005

Duke of Gloucester

The Duke fulfilled two engagements on his visit to Wigan, the first of which was at Wigan Infirmary where he performed the official opening ceremony for the recently completed accident and emergency unit, maternity centre and x-ray department. The second official opening to be carried out was for the charity Age Concern premises at Pennyhurst Mill, near to Wigan Pier where they have offices, a furniture warehouse and shop. The visit also marked the 10th. anniversary and an art exhibition was taking place in the warehouse at which local school children were able to display some of their paintings. Children present during the duke's visit were pupils at St. Aiden's primary school, Winstanley and St. James primary school, Orrell.



The Duke of Gloucester.

Other Visits.....? Date?.....

Prince Charles

Extract from article in Wigan Observer dated 4th. June 2002 page 8 .

There were low key visits as well

IT was a day drifting towards the end of autumn. A dull Friday. And Prince Charles was coming to the see wetlands on the east side of Wigan.

It was to be a low key visit. In fact, there wouldn't be a lot to report.

And so there were just five reporters and photographs waiting at the side of the field when the Prince's helicopter appeared as a red dot in the sky.

As the big bird landed, the force of the blades flattened the long grass and little twigs snapped from the trees.

As the rotor blades wound to a halt, an eerie silence fell on the land. Even the birds stopped singing.

When royals arrive, cheers go up. Flags flap. But not on this royal visit.

The Prince stepped out of the helicopter, holding his familiar crook, and smiled and greeted the handful of people.

His detectives were there, but no-one stepped in as we walked with the Prince to see some particular bog or other.

I was near enough to study his three feathers ring as he balanced his hands on the crook.

The visit lasted 20 minutes and then he was away in the big red bird.

That day, Prince Charles had brought a touch of relaxed royal magic to Wigan.

It was, in its way, unforgettable.