

PAST FORWARD

Produced by Wigan Archives & Museums

Issue No. 91

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**Season of
Celebrations**

£2

Wigan and Leigh's local history magazine

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FRONT COVER

Workers celebrate the coronation of George VI in 1937, at Coop and Co Ltd clothing factory, Wigan

Letter from the Editorial Team

Welcome to PAST Forward Issue 91.

What an uplifting summer we have had with the wonderful Platinum Jubilee celebrations in June and the UEFA Women's EUROs in July, and not forgetting the first anniversary of our Borough archives re-opening in Leigh. We still have lots to look forward to with hosting the Rugby League World Cup in November too!

In preparation for our summer of sport why not learn more about the history of the game as Alf Ridyard delves into the beginnings of women's football (page 18) and Wigan Warriors historian Keith Sutch begins his history into the club (page 26).

Continuing with the celebrations, we were delighted to be announced winners of the 2022 Archive Volunteering Award given by the Archives & Records Association, the leading professional body for the record-keeping sector! This prestigious national award celebrates the contribution of volunteers within the archive sector, and we would like to thank all our volunteers for their amazing work and dedication.

In April we said farewell to Alex Miller who had done a sterling job as the Borough's archivist, and editor of Past Forward for the past 15 years. We are lucky to have welcomed some fabulous new members to the team, and in this edition you will learn a little bit more about some of the faces you may see around (opposite).

We hope you enjoy this new edition of Past Forward in which we are excited to announce the introduction of two new categories to the Barbara O'Neill Local History Writing Competition for 2023. Sponsored by John O'Neill in memory of his wife Barbara, we are going to be including categories for young people and children. Read more about this on page 4 and do encourage any budding young historians, writers and storytellers to join in and get involved.

Schools' Culture Workshops at the Museum of Wigan Life, Archives: Wigan & Leigh, and the Turnpike
FREE* workshop sessions for SCHOOLS
Time-limited offer until Easter 2024



Explore the depths of the Archives, Museum, and the Turnpike with your class at one of our workshops designed to support the national curriculum for history and beyond.

Number of free sessions limited per school *free if you engage in feedback with us!

Why not combine a visit to the Archives and Turnpike in Leigh to create an extra special experience? Or a trip to the museum in Wigan with a session in the library.



Email us at: archives@wigan.gov.uk
wiganmuseum@wigan.gov.uk
theturnpikegallery@wigan.gov.uk

Hello to the newest members of our Culture team

Carmen

What are your local history or cultural interests?

Well, I have always had a passion for the arts. I love contemporary performance, digital arts, and documentary filmmaking. Art sparked my interest in history. I love artwork that tells real stories. I am particularly interested in the intersection between arts and heritage, and the contribution that the different art forms can make in the safeguarding of our cultural heritage, in particular the intangible.

Why did you choose to work in this sector?

This is a dynamic and exciting sector. Arts and culture bring people together, helping you connect with others deeply. I enjoy helping people and sharing special moments with others.

Debi

What are your local history or cultural interests?

My background is Fine Art and Education. I'm interested in Art and Cultural History, but also in Ancient History, particularly the history relating to the Celts and Pagans.

Why did you choose to work in this sector?

I've previously worked in museums and galleries, and have come to work at the museum in Wigan after having been impressed and inspired by 'The Fire Within' and the current Cultural Manifesto.

Marie

What are your local history or cultural interests?

My background is in primary education where, until recently, history has been taught as an overview of the large dramatic events. I am looking forward to zooming in and finding out how these events impacted on my hometown and my ancestors. This cultural heritage has shaped who I am and to think of the traditions that have been passed down through generations, along with the stories that have yet to be uncovered, is fascinating.

Why did you choose to work in this sector?

The culture and heritage sector celebrates our region (I'm 'born n bred' in Atherton) and I think it is fantastic to be part of a team who help preserve, uncover and explore the things that make us unique, linking us to people and places both past, present and future.

Nico

What are your local history or cultural interests?

I have always been interested in history, especially Ancient History, which I did for my degree. I love looking at the physical side of history, from Palaeolithic to Iron Age, and seeing how this reflects culture. We learn so much from history, so I am always eager to find out more facts.

Why did you choose to work in this sector?

I did an internship at the Archives last year and everyone working and volunteering there were so lovely, making me want to come back! I'm in university for a Curating masters course so wanted to find a job that I could balance with my studies whilst also helping me learn more about the heritage sector.



Pictured left to right Debi, Nico, Carmen and Marie

Copy Deadline for Issue 92 – Contributors please note the deadline for the receipt of material for publication is Friday 15 October 2022.

Barbara O'Neill Local History Writing Competition for Children, Young People and Adults 2023

Do you have a passion for local history? Is there a local history topic that you would love to see featured in Past Forward? Then why not take part in the Barbara O'Neill Local History Writing Competition?

Local History Writing Competition - Adults

- Write 1000 words - Win £100!
- 1st Prize £100
- 2nd Prize £75
- 3rd Prize £50
- Five Runners-Up Prizes of £25

New for 2023 - Local History Writing Competition - Young People

We are pleased to announce we are adding two new age categories to the competition for 2023, 11-16 year olds and 11 years and under. Are you, or do you know, a young person with a passion for writing? This can be about any person, place or thing in our local area! To get your research started visit Past Forward Essay Competition 2022 (wigan.gov.uk) to access some helpful material.

Enter our competition – win a gift voucher

- Prizes for each category:
- 1st Prize £20 gift vouchers
 - 2nd Prize £15 gift vouchers
 - 3rd Prize £10 gift vouchers

All essay competitions are kindly sponsored by Mr J O'Neill.



Winners from the Past Forward Essay Competition 2022



A winner from the Past Forward Essay Writing Competition 2021

Criteria

- Articles:
 - Adults – a maximum of 1000 words.
 - 11-16 year olds - 500 words or fewer.
 - 11 and under - 200 words or fewer.
- Articles must focus on a local history topic within the geographical boundaries of Wigan Borough.
- By entering the competition you agree to your work being published in Past Forward.
- The winning article will be published in Past Forward and other submissions may also be published.

If selected for publication the Past Forward Editorial Team may edit your submission.

How to enter

- Articles must be received by e-mail or post by **Monday 16 January 2023**.
- Electronic submissions are preferred although handwritten ones will be accepted.
- You must state clearly that your article is an entry into the Local History Writing Competition.
- You must include your name, address, telephone number and e-mail address

(if applicable). We will not pass your details on to anyone.

- It will not be possible for articles to be returned.
- You are welcome to include photographs or images however they cannot be returned.

Submit to

pastforward@wigan.gov.uk

OR

Local History Writing Competition,
Past Forward, Leigh Town Hall,
Market Street, Leigh WN7 1DY

Digging in the Archives: THE STORY OF KATE MALLON

BY ROBERT GRIFFITHS

My name is Robert Griffiths and I am a volunteer at Archives: Wigan & Leigh.

I first became aware of Kate (Catherine Frances Mallon) in May 2022 when I was transcribing the Guardians' minute books for the Leigh Workhouse in 1903.

The story begins in a meeting of the committee where a motion was debated about the forced emigration of orphan children to Canada. At the conclusion of the meeting, a vote was taken and the result was eight in favour and eight against, which meant that the Chairman had the casting vote. The Chairman voted against, causing the vote to be lost.

This should have been the end of the matter but two weeks later at another meeting it came to pass that the 17-year-old Kate had volunteered to go to Canada and applied to go. Permission was granted and arrangements were made.

A couple of weeks later, Kate was all packed up and taken to Liverpool for her trans-Atlantic crossing to Canada.

A week or so further on Kate arrived in Montreal to start her new life. After disembarking she was taken through the immigration process. During this process she was given an interview and a medical. In the course of the medical it came to light that as a child she had contracted consumption, known today



Atherleigh Hospital, 1990, formerly known as Leigh Union Workhouse (PC2015.18054)

as tuberculosis (TB). Following this disclosure the doctor decided to reject her application and she was deported, put back on a ship and sent back to Liverpool.

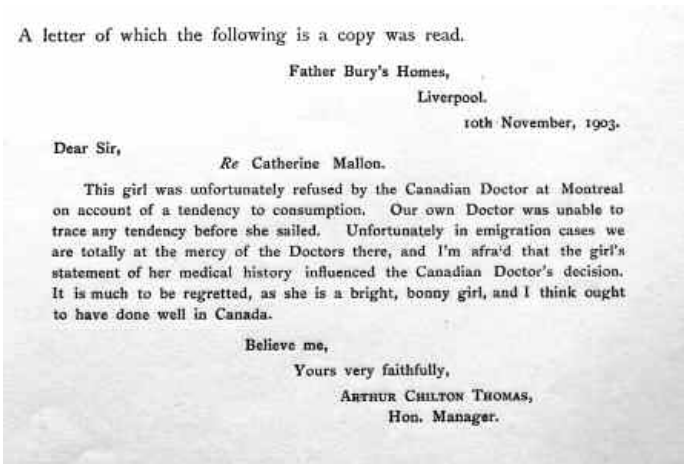
The next we hear of Kate is in a letter from some nuns in Liverpool writing to the Guardians asking if she could be returned to Leigh. She must have returned to Leigh as in April 1904 it is noted in the minute books that Kate has been removed to the Catholic Girls' Home, 15 Bow Lane, Preston. However, in May she has been removed from the Home as she had apparently committed several offenses in the Home which made it impossible to keep her there. I wonder what she had done.

This, I'm afraid, is the last piece of information I have found about Kate to date, unless someone knows better? She must have been born around 1886. I have found this story somewhat upsetting and I would love to know more about her life. I have personally looked for her on ancestry and googled her name, but to no avail. Perhaps one of her descendants is now reading this and can tell me how her life panned out?

Thanks for reading.

Source:

Leigh Union Minutes October 1903 – January 1905



Letter to the Leigh Guardians from the manager of Father Bury's Homes

VICTIMS OF FORGETFULNESS

BY BRIAN JOYCE



Fulwell House (PC2015.6897)

On Friday 6 July 1827, 16-year-old George Hayes was late for work at Thomas Kearsley's Resolution Mill, not far from his parents' home in Shuttle Street, Tyldesley. His shift should have started at 5.30am but he was 30 minutes late. Suddenly, he was stopped in his tracks by a gigantic explosion, followed by the rushing sound of a collapsing brick building. As he approached the mill, he was shocked to see a recently built extension lying in ruins. His distraught co-workers were tearing at the rubble with their bare hands, frantically trying to rescue female colleagues trapped under tons of fallen masonry.

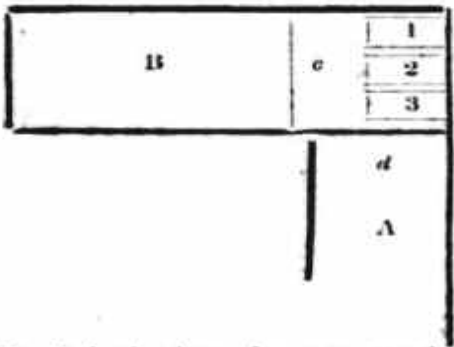
George Hayes lived until he was nearly 90, working in mills in Bedford and becoming one of Leigh's leading radicals and Catholics. However, the memory of those events of 1827 stayed with him, and provided a story he related on countless occasions.

Thomas Kearsley, the owner of Resolution Mill, was born in 1788, the son of a cotton cloth manufacturer of New Brook House in Over Hulton. After inheriting money from his father in 1816, Kearsley went into business on his own account, opening Resolution Mill in the expanding town of Tyldesley in 1823. His factory lay between Shuttle and Ellesmere Streets, just east of Union Street. He imported raw American cotton from Savannah, Georgia through the port of Liverpool.

Kearsley also farmed at the 58 acre Shakerley Hall and held several properties in Tyldesley itself. He

was one of the town's leading citizens, living at Fulwell House in what was then Squires Lane (now Lower Elliott Street) and in 1825 played host to the Bishop of Chester when he was in Tyldesley for the consecration of St George's Church, the town's first Anglican place of worship.

As originally built, Resolution Mill consisted of a single building 150 feet in length on several floors. Its machinery was powered by two steam boilers



The letter A, in the above plan represents the principal factory of Mr. Kearsley, which being of considerable length, a part only is introduced into the plan. B is a new factory covered in, but having only the beams and joists of the floors laid. On the ground floor of the end which adjoins the other factory, is the boiler house c, having in it three boilers, which had been used only to drive a 30-horse engine at d, in the factory A, but were intended also to furnish steam for another engine which was to be erected in the new factory, near the boiler-house. As the new factory was in an unfinished state, there was, of course, no machinery in it, and the only persons usually employed within its walls were the engineer, who attended to the fires; a single mechanic in the first floor over the boilers; and 18 reellers (all females) who worked also exactly over the boilers, in the fifth and highest story from the ground, where a small temporary floor had been laid for them.

Kearsley Mill plan (Manchester Mercury Newspaper)

housed in an adjoining room. The installation of this relatively new technology appeared to have paid off. Such was the success of Kearsley's undertaking that a 90-foot extension was added in 1826, making the mill 'L' shaped, with the two wings separated by the boiler house between them.

However, at the time of the explosion the extension was unfinished internally. Temporary flooring had been laid on the second storey where the mill's mechanic was based, and on the fifth floor which housed the reeling department. Eighteen young women worked in the latter. Both these 'working' floors had connecting doors to the original building. The extension's other storeys were not yet floored and simply consisted of exposed beams and joists. This part of the extension was immediately above the boiler room.

A third boiler had been fitted to provide power for the extension's soon to be installed spinning apparatus. However, it was already being used to drive existing machines. The steam emitted was released into a large pipe running from the boiler room to the machinery in the original building. Each of the boilers was fitted with a valve to isolate it when not in use.

It was later ascertained that on the morning of the explosion William Guest, the mill's engineer, had fired up the new boiler but had apparently forgotten to open its valve to allow the steam to escape. The power generated had nowhere to go and pressure inside the boiler increased dramatically.

William Guest's assistant, John Lever, heard strange noises coming from the boiler room at about 5.45am. He went to fetch Guest, who started to examine the third boiler shortly before 6am. Simultaneously a massive explosion, reportedly heard six miles away in Irlam, shattered the boiler and brought down the new floors above. Miraculously, John Lever survived, but the mangled remains of William Guest were later recovered from the ruins.

Fortunately for the workers in the older building, its gable wall was strong enough to survive the shock of the explosion, and the structure emerged with nothing more than broken windows.

Many of the panic-stricken workers apparently assumed that there had been an earthquake and ran out of the building in what one newspaper called 'the utmost alarm and disorder'.

Meanwhile, local families, many of whom had loved ones in Resolution Mill, rushed to the spot and joined workers in frenziedly clawing at the rubble. John Stanfield, the mill's manager was also

on site identifying the dead and helping the injured, but once he had done what he could, he and John Lever examined the wrecked boiler. It did not take them long to conclude that William Guest had not opened its valve to release the steam and that it was this oversight that had caused the disaster. As the Morning Chronicle observed, Guest 'had fallen prey to his own forgetfulness'.

However, the greatest tragedy that morning was neither the blow to Kearsley's business nor even the death of William Guest.

The 18 women on the fifth floor were half an hour into their shift, reeling thread onto bobbins in preparation for the weaving process. When the boiler below them burst, the effects of the explosion were exacerbated by the fact that there was only one floor laid below them to absorb the shock.

One fortunate woman had just left the reeling room to enter the older building. The remaining 17 plummeted to the ground along with tons of iron and masonry. Seven died instantly, and their crushed remains were pulled from the rubble by horrified rescuers. Six more were very badly injured, and some of these died later.

Miraculously, the remaining four had suffered comparatively minor injuries. The Manchester Mercury reported that two of them were able to stumble away from the scene more or less unaided.

A few days later, the victims were buried in graveyards scattered around the Tyldesley district, including St George's and Lady Huntingdon's Chapels in the town itself; Atherton Chapel; Chowbent Chapel; St Stephen's, Astley; and Peel Chapel in Little Hulton.

Pomfret, George	66	Atherton	Nailler	—5	—5
Caldwell, Jane	69	D ^o		—16	—16
Edge, Thomas	46	D ^o	Nailler	—23	—23
Balter, Robert	68	D ^o		July 1	July 1
Scholefield, Ellen	13	Tyldesley	Widow in a	—8	—8
Lewis, William	14	D ^o		—19	—19
Gregory, Ann	86	Atherton		—23	—23
Harrison, Rob ^t	14	Tyldesley		—29	—29
Green, Bath ^e	1	Atherton		Aug ¹ 8	Aug ¹ 8

Burial details for Ellen Scholefield, 1827. Chowbent Chapel burial register.

As far as can be ascertained from the Manchester and London newspapers the victims were:

Sarah Cunliffe, Betty Davies, Grace Hampson, Margaret Hilton, Mary Kay, Alice Marsh, Sarah Morris, Mary Moscrop, Ellen Scholefield and Jane Seddon. It is possible that there were

By Mr. JAMES FROST, (unless previously disposed of by Private Contract, of which due notice will be given, at the Star Hotel, in Manchester, on Wednesday the 8th day of June next, at five o'clock in the afternoon, in one lot or otherwise, as may be agreed upon at the time of sale, and subject to such conditions as will be then produced:

ALL those THREE COTTON MILLS, adjoining and communicating with each other, situate in Tyldesley, in the county of Lancaster, with the steam-engines and machinery therein, lately under the management of Mr. Thomas Kearsley. The mills are in excellent repair. The machinery is worked by two steam-engines, one of forty horses' power, built by Messrs. Rothwell and Hick, of Bolton; and the other of thirty horses' power, built by Mr. Hick. The weekly production has averaged about 8,000 lbs. weight of 16's to 18's. The land on which the mills stand, and a considerable quantity unbuilt upon, comprise altogether 22,583 square yards, or thereabouts, and are subject to low chief rents, amounting to £72 6s. 1d. per annum. The supply of water for the engines is abundant and regular; coals are exceedingly cheap, and hands plentiful. Any person desirous of embarking in the business of cotton spinning will find this an eligible opportunity, as the machinery is in good condition, and the mills may be started without delay. The new mill is capable of holding a large additional quantity of machinery, and the requisite mill-gearing is already set up for driving the same. A considerable portion of the purchase money may remain on security of the mills.

For further particulars apply to Messrs. Grimshaw and Palmer, Solicitors, Preston; Messrs. KAY, BARLOW, and ASTON, Solicitors, Manchester; Messrs. Broome and Phillips, Accountants, St. James's-square, Manchester; Mr. A. L. Haworth, Solicitor, Bolton; and to Mr. E. Kearsley, jun., at the Mills, who will shew the property.

Kearsley Mill sale 1842 (Manchester Courier 1842)

other victims who died of their injuries after the newspapers lost interest in this story.

The press provided their readers with details of individual tragedies. At just 13 years of age, Ellen Scholefield was the youngest victim, and 46-year-old Mary Moscrop the oldest. Betty Davies was a 42-year-old widow leaving five orphans, although perhaps some were old enough to look after their younger siblings. Jane Seddon, a 20-year-old, was only recently married and had started work at Resolution Mill at the beginning of that week.

To enable the grieving families of William Guest and the dead women to bury their loved ones, the inquest was held on Sunday 8 July, just two days after the tragedy. Ironically, its venue was at the Star and Garter Inn in Tyldesley Square, another of Thomas Kearsley's premises.

The inquest jury examined the deaths of all the victims together. The Manchester Guardian considered that the proceedings 'were extremely brief and meagre'. It seems that the jury only heard testimony from the mill's manager, John Stanfield, and its mechanic, John Lever. The latter described William Guest, his deceased superior, as 'sober, skilful and steady'. However, he continued, as reported in the press: 'He had since examined that part of the boiler which remained uninjured and ascertained that the fatal catastrophe was occasioned by the deceased (William Guest) having omitted to open the valve'. The jury passed a verdict in line with this.

Reporting on the inquest, the Manchester Courier recommended that in future mill managers should periodically inspect their boiler rooms to ensure all was well. It only took one mistake to cause a tragedy such as the one at Thomas Kearsley's Resolution Mill.

Despite the effects of this disaster on his business, Kearsley's factory appears to have recovered and flourished through the 1830s. However, the industrialist's fortunes deteriorated in the early 1840s, and in 1842 he filed for bankruptcy. He relinquished Shakerley Hall Farm and the adjacent Common Fold Farm, which were advertised to let in February. In May, Resolution Mill itself was put up for auction. It appears that no buyer could be found, and it stood empty for a few years before being readvertised and sold to the firm of Jackson, Bayley and Knott.

Fortunately for Thomas Kearsley, he was able to emerge from his financial difficulties relatively quickly. His brother, John Hodson Kearsley, died in October 1842. The older Kearsley had been three times Mayor of Wigan and the town's member of parliament in the 1830s. When the widowed and childless former MP died, he left £500 to his bankrupt brother.

Thomas Kearsley left Fulwell House for Ainsworth, between Bolton and Bury. For the next 25 years or so, the former cotton spinner lived the life of a country gentleman at Ainsworth Lodge, where he farmed 46 acres. He died, aged 83, in January 1871, more than 40 years after the disaster at Resolution Mill.

Cotton Mills at Tyldesley.

By Messrs. LOMAX and SONS, (by order of the mortgagees under a power of sale,) at the Swan Hotel, in Bolton-le-Moors, on Wednesday the 19th day of June, 1844, at four o'clock in the afternoon, (unless previously disposed of by private contract, of which due notice will be given,) subject to such conditions as will be then and there produced:

ALL those Three COTTON MILLS, adjoining and communicating with each other, situate in Tyldesley, in the county of Lancaster, and lately under the management of Mr. Thomas Kearsley, with the two steam-engines of 40 and 30 horses' power, and the millgearing and vacant land belonging thereto, containing, with the site of the buildings and reservoir, 15,016 superficial square yards or thereabouts. The premises are held for the remainder of the several terms of 99 and 940 years, subject to three ground rents amounting to £32 ls. The mills are capable of holding about 45,000 spindles. The supply of water for the engines is abundant, and coals are plentiful in the neighbourhood. Early possession may be had, and a considerable portion of the purchase money may remain on mortgage.

The property may be viewed on application to John Openshaw, of Tyldesley; and for further particulars apply to Messrs. Grimshaw and Palmer, solicitors, Preston; Mr. Dawes, solicitor, Bolton; or to Mr. A. L. HAWORTH, solicitor, Bolton.

Kearsley Mill sale 1844 (Manchester Courier 1844)

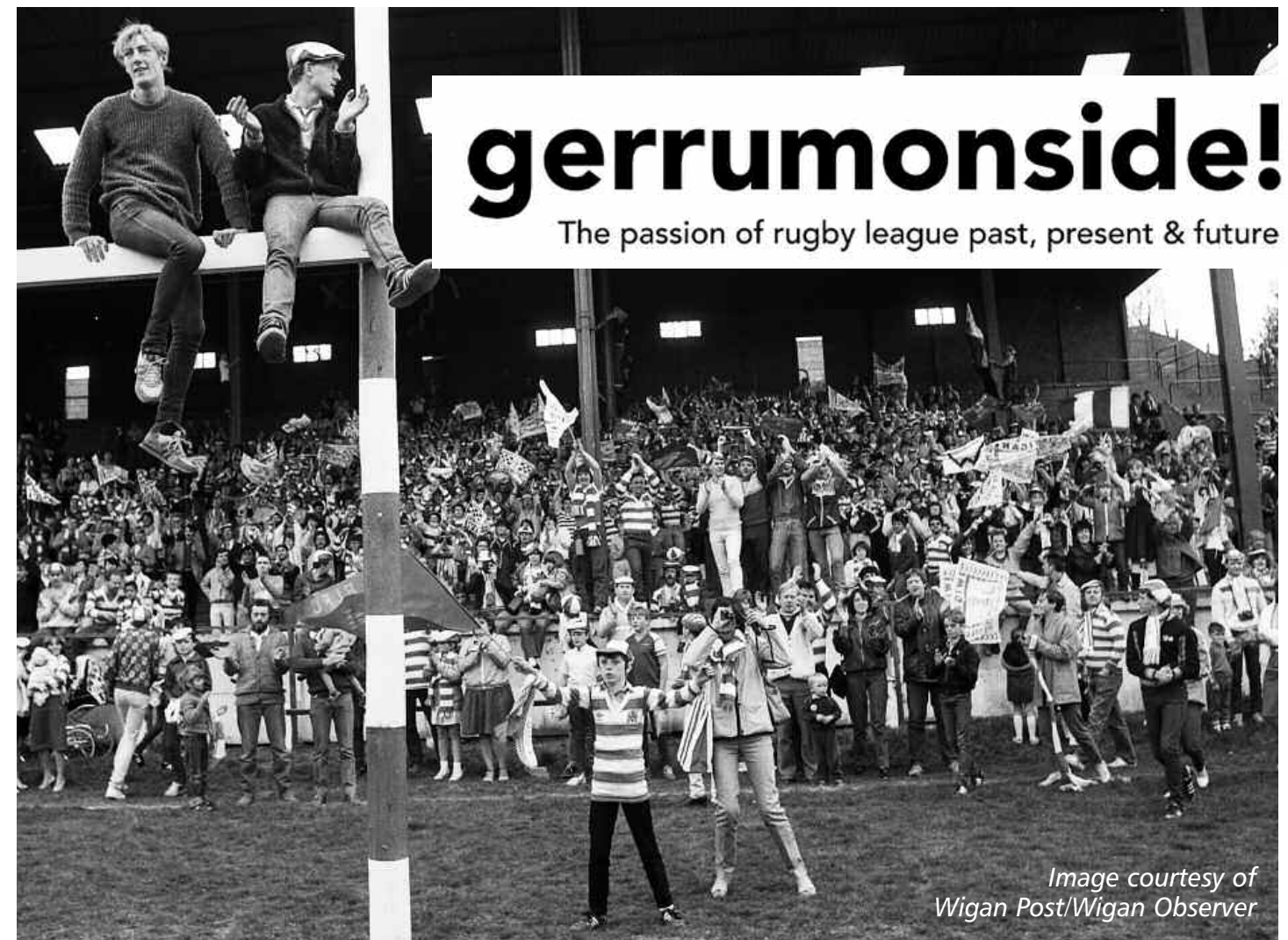


Image courtesy of Wigan Post/Wigan Observer

An exciting FREE exhibition that celebrates the history of rugby league is open at The Museum of Wigan Life. A completely redesigned new-look gallery features dynamic displays that follow our local teams' trophy-filled histories, and tells the story of how Wigan, Leigh and Tyldesley left the Rugby Football Union in 1895 to form the breakaway Northern Rugby Football Union.

The family-friendly displays feature original memorabilia from Jim Slevin, Andy Gregory, Jim Sullivan, Phil Clarke, Shaun Wane, Billy Boston, John Woods, Des Drummond, Jimmy Ledgard, and other giants of the game. The exhibition also showcases the

rise of women in the sport, grass roots rugby, and includes medals, shirts, caps and trophies, alongside more unusual items such as a wheelchair from the 2008 Wheelchair World Cup when England lifted the trophy as world champions, an original turnstile from Central Park, and the ball from the famous Prescott match.

Come and walk through the tunnel of champions. You can sit, reminisce, and share memories about past games in the mini-stadium area, while watching original historic match footage of local teams in action. In addition, there is a programme of events and family-friendly activities to

explore and enjoy. We would also love to hear your rugby league memories and stories from recent games, so come and tell us about them when you visit and add them to our fan wall, or share them on the museum Facebook and Twitter using the hashtag #gerrumonside!

'gerrumonside! – the passion of rugby league past, present and future' is open until 19 November 2022.

Museum opening times are Tuesday-Saturday, 10am-4pm.

Museum of Wigan Life, Library Street, Wigan WN1 1NU

E: wiganmuseum@wigan.gov.uk

T: 01942 828128

W: www.wigan.gov.uk/museum

They paved Paradise and put up a Parking Lot

By Alison Armfield

'Wigan Council to turn old school land into new car park for Tyldesley residents'. (The Leigh Journal 24 February 2016.) Within this article the Vice Chair of Wigan Planning Committee was reported to have said that the school had reached the end of its useful life. The school in question was Tyldesley Primary School, formerly known as Tyldesley Chapel British School. The school was on Upper George Street and is still remembered locally as 'the British School'. It began its useful life on 1 April 1902. I myself attended the school in the late 1950s, early 60s, and can remember asking myself, 'Why British?'

According to Aldrich (1998, 2013), The British and Foreign School Society was founded in 1814 and was based on the work of Joseph Lancaster who advocated formal training of teachers, education for children of all 'creeds and backgrounds', and the use of praise not blame, reward not punishment. Lancaster's approach to education is seen as the foundation of today's system.

The person given the task of introducing this innovative approach to teaching and learning in Tyldesley was Mr George Beddow who, according to the school's log book, was 'trained and certificated'. He had 18 years teaching experience, including time at the Wesleyan School in Boothstown where he served as Headmaster before taking up the post of Headmaster at the new British School. On the face of it a highly skilled and appropriate choice.

However, one can't help but wonder at the challenges this new post would have presented. After all, Lancaster's principles, despite being adopted within The Education Act 1870, were still viewed by many as being too progressive. George Beddow himself may have struggled with the reward not punishment approach when one considers his school log entries as Headmaster at Boothstown:



George Beddow, 1926, first Headmaster of Tyldesley Chapel British School (PC2015.6750)

- Leaving school at playtime - 2 strokes of the cane
- Impudence to teacher - 2 strokes
- Laziness - 1 stroke
- Using bad language - 2 strokes
- Lateness - 1 stroke
- Stubbornness - 2 strokes
- General carelessness - 2 strokes
- Talking - 1-2 strokes

An obvious case of spare the rod and spoil the child. I thank my lucky stars that these rules didn't exist during my time at school as I fear I would have faced a daily caning!

George Beddow was also a prominent member of Tyldesley Chapel, preaching and conducting services there. One of Lancaster's proposals was that religious teaching should be non-denominational. Perhaps this too presented the Headmaster with a dilemma. He must have learned to bite his tongue as he ended his career with a record 42 years' service in the same district, retiring in April 1926.

In his time the country faced epidemics of measles, scarlet fever, typhoid fever, whooping cough and influenza. Many of the pupils from the British School were isolated in Astley Sanatorium. The graves of some of these children can still be found in Tyldesley Cemetery as the school log book gives a meticulous account of deaths and burials.

Mr Beddow's headship also covered the First World War with its consequent deprivations. A personal tragedy for the Headmaster was the death of his own son, Captain John Frederick Heber Beddow, who was killed in action in November 1917.

George Beddow's retirement was reported in The Leigh Journal (30 April 1926) where he was described as being 'progressive' and 'an outstanding teacher of great ability and personality', an indication that despite personal challenges he had embraced Joseph Lancaster's ideas. Lancaster was brought up as a Quaker, believing in the principles of integrity and equality. These concepts can be seen reflected in George Beddow's retirement speech where he talked of the foundation of character being the proudest work of a school master.

When I look back at my own time as a pupil at Tyldesley British School I wonder whether those Lancastrian principles have had an influence on my own character. I can see that my love of reading had its beginnings there. I recollect that as a senior pupil I was asked to be a reading monitor, assisting younger and less able pupils with their reading. Lancaster believed that the use of such monitors meant that larger numbers of children could be taught to read. Perhaps this was also the source of my belief that we all deserve equal opportunities to reach our potential.

I also think that my love of nature and concern for the environment began with our regular pond dipping excursions. Our Headmaster at the time would march our class of 17 pupils, two by two, shoulders back, chests out, stomachs in, down Well Street to the fields in order to pond dip and examine the local flora and fauna. As a result I think I may be solely responsible for the near extinction of the Greater Crested Newt. I would continue my pond dipping activities after school hours and take my catches home to be 'looked after' in the dolly tub down in our cellar. To my disbelief and dismay, they all died!

Joseph Lancaster died 24 October 1838 aged 59, and George Beddow died in 1944 aged 87. The

death knell of the school itself was tolled in 2016 when Wigan Council decided to give permission for the school to be demolished, and the land to be developed as a Park and Ride facility for the new Guided Busway. It was reported at the time that residents 'were delighted with the plans'. I can't help but question who those 'residents' were.

I personally have fond memories of the old building with its separate entrances and playgrounds for boys and girls, its outside toilet block, and its well-worn stone steps that spiralled up from the basement where we hung our coats, to the ground floor that housed the nursery and primary school, past the staff room and up another flight to where the juniors were schooled. How will the new parking facility and the Guided Busway create such fond memories and contribute to the character of our future generations? Hmm, I wonder what Messrs Lancaster and Beddow would think.

References

Aldrich, R (2013) *The British and Foreign School Society, Past and Present History of Education Research* 9

Aldrich, R (1998) *Joseph Lancaster and Improvements in Education (Invited lecture)*

References to Leigh Journal are from the paper's archives, authors unknown

Specific information on the Wesleyan and British schools is taken from the respective unpublished school log books

The title of the piece refers to the song 'Big Yellow Taxi' by Joni Mitchell, 1970



Tyldesley Primary School prior to demolition

FIRST VISIT TO CENTRAL PARK 1978, Age 7

BY DAVID ANTHONY YEATES

One day Dad asked if I would like to go and watch a Rugby League match with himself and Grandad Yeates. Immediately I jumped at the chance, as the only professional sport I had ever seen had always been on TV.

The match took place on a dark bitterly cold November evening at Central Park, the home of Wigan Rugby League. As I walked towards the ground holding Dad's hand, excitement fizzed through my seven-year-old veins. People descended from every angle wearing cherry and white bob caps, scarves and rosettes, all shuffling to form queues in front of each of the turnstiles. As we moved closer, I tuned in to passing conversations and heard men analyse previous performances, complain about players, and predict the evening's score.

Once inside, we made our way to the bottom steps of a concrete terrace and stood behind a bricked wall that ran round each side of the pitch. Dad lifted me up and sat me facing the pitch with both legs dangling between the wall and some wooden advertising boards. This was the place where Dad and Grandad always stood, behind the sticks at the scoreboard end. I sat and gazed around Central Park for the first time and watched thousands of people finding their own favourite viewing spots, their breathing forming shapes in the cold floodlit air.

Dad handed me a copy of the match programme and read out the players and numbers that he thought I should 'look out for.' He then handed me a pen and suggested I could tick the players who scored tries and converted goals. As I sat waiting for kick off, I wriggled each limb and attempted to blow hot



My grandad, Stan Yeates; my dad Stan Yeates, 1978

air through each of my woollen gloves to keep warm. Suddenly, I felt a tap on my shoulder and turned to find Grandad holding a steaming hot cup of Bovril, freshly poured from his tartan flask. "Here love, that'll warm you up!" he said, placing a plastic cup into my hands.

Suddenly the public address system burst into life and circus-like music began to play from the weather-beaten speakers. Finally, both teams emerged from the tunnel and ran onto the pitch, causing the crowd to suddenly roar with delight. Some of these men almost looked like giants as each of them took up their positions on the field, their arrival causing a smell of Wintergreen oil to travel in the cool Lancastrian air.

Finally, the referee blew his whistle and commenced the game and for the next 80 minutes I watched in amazement as both teams knocked the living hell out of each other, threw balls with precision, and sprinted around the glistening pitch. Several times during the game players steamrolled their way over the try line and slid on their stomachs to score tries only a few feet away from my dangling legs.

The action on the field was made even more enjoyable by the constant comedic commentary emitting all around me. I grinned and chuckled to myself as fans complained and moaned, most of their vitriol aimed at just one person, the referee. One such fan was Grandad who aired his disapproval by barking out the phrase "ON SIDE REFEREE!!!" several times throughout the night.

At the final whistle, Dad helped me climb over the wall and I ran onto the pitch with other children eager to meet their heroes. Children patted players on the back and pestered for autographs as each player trudged towards the tunnel, steam rising from their bear-like frames. Some children also asked players for their 'tie

ups' which were extra laces used to hold up their socks.

I was just happy to be stood on the pitch, soaking up the atmosphere, and right there and then fell in love with the game of Rugby League.

Every Sunday during autumn and winter, Rugby League became a regular fixture, with me, Dad and Grandad regularly attending matches, home and away. Many an arctic afternoon was spent travelling eastbound into the county of Yorkshire, driving along the oxygen sapping M62, the highest motorway in England. Temperatures dropped and ears popped with each passing mile, as I gazed at reservoirs, deep valleys, grey skies, and the gloomy barren wasteland of Saddleworth moor. Some towns and cities in Yorkshire made Wigan's climate feel almost tropical in comparison, making grounds like Craven Park in Hull a real challenge. I would try and maintain circulation by dancing on the spot or quickly moving from side to side. However, once my cherry and white heroes ran out onto the pitch, my focus of attention switched to the match and I quickly forgot about the ice and wind.



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KEEPING THE PEACE:

Miners, Magistrates and Military in the Wigan District during the 1881 Colliers' Strike

BY YVONNE ECKERSLEY

Although it is usual to consider this dispute a strike of unionised miners, this is misleading. Firstly, as employers took the lead and locked their employees out of their pits it was not strictly a strike. Secondly, not all the locked out workers were miners or union members. They included the non-unionised tradesmen and labourers who worked to maintain the pits' infrastructure below ground and at the pit head, and miners who chose not to join the miners' unions. Finally, there is the perception that all the people involved in the dispute were male.



The 'Battle of Howebridge'

The catalyst for the lock-out was the passing of the Employers Liability Act. This Act made employers liable to pay compensation to workers and/or their families who were injured or killed because of defective equipment or machinery; any negligence by people given authority over the worker by the employer; and the evasion of safety regulations by men acting on the instructions of their employer.

This legislation was to address the appallingly high death and injury rates at collieries. Its premise was that if mine owners were made financially responsible it would be in their interests to improve the working conditions in their mines. It was particularly pertinent in Wigan. During 1881, two thirds of patients in the Infirmary were mine workers.

Understandably, this Act was not well received among the district's colliery owners. On 30 December 1880, in an effort to evade the financial consequences of implementing the Act, many owners, led by the largest companies, gave their employees an ultimatum. They were to opt out of the Act and remain members of the unpopular employer-led Lancashire and Cheshire Miners Permanent Relief Society, which afforded mine workers no protection from employers' negligence, or lose their jobs. Many refused and were locked out of the pits. Once pits were closed, they were joined by pit workers who wanted the reinstatement of earlier wage reductions, and those who wanted weekly rather than fortnightly wages.

The numbers involved

For seven weeks, beginning on 1 January 1881, Wigan and the surrounding district was in turmoil. The dispute involved pit workers from most mining towns in the south western section of the Lancashire coal field. At the Manchester Miners' Conference on 12 January, union delegates from Wigan, St Helens, Pemberton, Park Lane, Ashton, Over Hulton, Tyldesley, Worsley and Little Lever alone represented 60,000 of the 80,000 union members locked in what was a titanic struggle. As an indication of the size of the

dispute these numbers are conservative. If you add the members of miners' unions in towns that did not send delegates to the conference; miners who were not union members; and the pit workers who were not actual miners, then a more realistic picture emerges. From the outset the pit workers' dispute was exceptionally well organised, visible, and district wide. On 1 January delegates representing workers from district pits met near the Four Footed Cross at Bryn and agreed to work cooperatively. A week later, at a stormy meeting in Wigan's Public Hall, the aim of the dispute was debated and their *modus operandi* decided on.

Given the potential for conflict, magistrates of the Wigan Borough and Lancashire County also met in Wigan. They organised for the worst. They were powerless to ban miners agitating *en masse*. In 1868 the Home Office had made it clear to Wigan magistrates that it was illegal to prohibit large protest meetings and processions simply because they might lead to a breach of the peace.

Consequently magistrates concentrated on providing sufficient forces to protect their communities. They enhanced local police forces. An extra 102 policemen were stationed in Haydock; 40 in Leigh, 60 in Hindley; 80 in Pemberton; 50 in Coppull; 20 in Standish; and 100 in Westhoughton; also making arrangements with Preston, Manchester and Ashton-under-Lyne for more if required. These were augmented by the 4th Lancashire Rifle Volunteers (Wigan Detachment), who served as armed police.

They were reinforced with the battle trained and highly mobile 18th (Queen Mary's Own) Hussars and the 5th troop of the Dragoon Guards. Arrangements were made to supplement these with armed forces from Preston Barracks should they be needed. Interestingly, there was one instance of a 'private army'. Magistrate Meyrick Banks mustered 250 of his farm workers to guard Mountain Pit on 31 January.

Rapid movement of troops, police and magistrates

Magistrates faced particular problems, not least the size of the area to be policed. Numerically they were at a disadvantage. Given the numbers involved, and the frequency, immediacy, and possibility of violence, they needed to use their forces judiciously. To that effect they organised a system of reconnaissance. Information from pits, local authorities, police officers, and military scouts monitoring workers at their meetings and as they

moved about the area, was telegraphed to the private telegraph office of Alfred Hewlett, managing director of the Wigan Coal and Iron Company. The telegrams were immediately taken by messengers to magistrates in nearby Rodney Street. Magistrates, thus informed, could move magistrates, police and troops on foot, on horseback, or in coaches pulled by the two trains kept permanently in steam at the Lancashire and Yorkshire, and London and North Western railway stations in Wigan, directly to potential trouble spots.

Mass Meetings

Railways in South Central Lancashire c1900



One characteristic of the dispute was the willingness of thousands of pit workers to walk for hours, during a bitterly cold winter, in order to protest, demonstrate, and maintain their solidarity. Miners from St Helens walked for four hours to join a meeting of 6,000 in January on Amberswood Common; likewise in February between 12,000 and 13,000 people walked there. On 31 January between 8,000 and 10,000 people attending the mass meeting on Newton Common marched from Wigan, Pemberton, Skelmersdale, Downall Green, Ashton, Platt Bridge, Bamfurlong, Stubshaw Cross, Newton, Leigh, Prescott, Atherton, and Tyldesley. During the dispute 7,000 marched to Ashton Heath; 2,000-3,000 to St Helens; thousands marched a number of times to Wigan town centre, particularly to Market Place and Market Square; 2,000 marched to Aspull Common near Leigh; one march of 2,000, and another of 10,000 to Leigh town centre; Edge Green Common at Golborne and many more.

Women’s Activism

Like female radicals in 1819/20, and Chartists in the 1840s, women were an integral element of the 1881 dispute. And, like their forebears, their activism has been under-recorded and/or their capabilities downplayed.

On 16 February an all-day meeting of between 12,000-13,000 people, watched by a large body of police and military, was held on Amberswood Common to support and motivate strikers.

The morning session was run by women, and the afternoon by men. Both were hours long, pre-planned, highly organised, with effective chairmen/women selected, platforms constructed, and a succession of chosen people organised to speak. The Wigan Observer reported on both sessions. However, the tone of the reports differed significantly. The reporter suggested that the women's contribution to the day was a spur of the moment event organised on an ad hoc basis, and something the men ‘allowed’ to happen. He named male speakers, adding their status, but depersonalised female speakers. All of the 15 women speakers were anonymous. He preferred to present the women to his readers as ‘the chair’, ‘an old female’, ‘another female’, and ‘several other women’.

Similarly, the Observer reported on the 1,500 strong women’s meeting in Pendlebury. Although the reporter named the chairwoman, he felt it necessary to categorise her as ‘an old lady named Clayton’. Another speaker was simply ‘Broadhurst’. Other speakers were depersonalised thus: a ‘woman carrying a baby’, a ‘good looking woman’, or grouped together ‘several women’ and ‘eight more women’. Furthermore, this reporter, ignoring the reality of the planning involved in organising and running the meeting, and the procession of ‘considerable length’ where the women, singing Rule Britannia, walked through Pendlebury to Swinton, implied it was an impulsive event stimulated by the local bell man’s ‘joke’ announcement of a meeting the previous evening.

In the same vein it reported on the meeting of 1,000 ‘Collier's wives’ held on the market ground at Farnworth. The Chairwoman was Nan Morris, a washerwoman, a platform ‘acquired’, and ‘several women’ spoke. After which about 100 ‘decided’ to march to Walkden and speak to Mr Clifford Smith, manager for the Bridgewater Estates.

Maintaining the Peace

Throughout the dispute, pit workers’ leaders were fully aware that whilst their main strength was in

numbers, the sight and sounds of thousands of highly organised determined colliery workers, often marching in military style up to eight abreast behind bands with banners, coupled with the sounds of their clogs on cobbled streets as they passed through towns and villages, had the potential to alarm authorities.

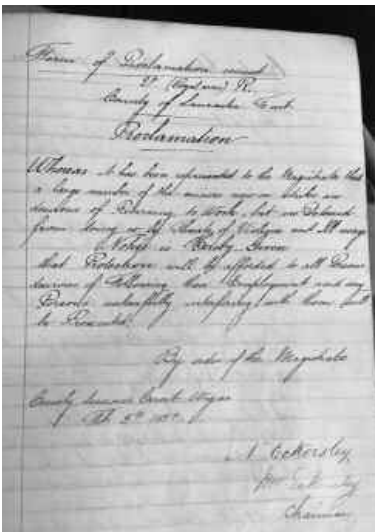
Consequently, mass meetings had a strong element of order with organisers and speakers frequently stressing the need to be, and be seen by police, troops, and magistrates, as non-threatening and peaceful.

There were instances where the cooperation between the two averted a crisis. An important example was on 31 January 1881. As upwards of 10,000 workers assembled on Newton Common magistrates were deliberating whether to prevent the gathering. To avoid an immense clash between troops and attendees, John Cross of St Helens immediately contacted the magistrates present on the spot. He stressed that should magistrates decide the meeting was illegal, delegates would not speak and would disperse the crowd. Magistrates, being fully aware through experience that the meeting was likely to be peaceful, agreed that as long as the meeting was orderly they would not interfere. The meeting passed without incident.

Three days before, Nathaniel Eckersley had drafted a proposed proclamation to ban mass meetings per se. But legally magistrates couldn’t. Therefore magistrates amended this proclamation, keeping their right to suppress meetings that led to acts of violence; prosecute people obstructing public streets and highways; and banning any meetings and processions that included bands of music.

Not all colliery owners appreciated they were not above the law. Mr Hulton of Hulton Collieries wrote to express his opinion that magistrates ought not to respect what the Home Office wrote. Magistrates replied that any intention to suppress ‘all further meetings’ would inflame miners.

The magistrates’ decision was influenced by the recognition that, despite elaborate preparations and shows of force, they may not have been able to



control the situation should it get out of hand. They had prepared, though. On the day of the Newton meeting they began with a display of power. The 5th Troop of Dragoons on horseback, wearing gold braided red tunics, tall helmets and armed with cutlasses, paraded on Wigan’s Market Square for an hour before setting off for Newton at 9am. Then, in the same ‘soldierly’ manner and following the same route as many of the demonstrating workers, they passed through Ashton, along Warrington Road, to Richard Evans’ pit at Haydock at a ‘smart trot’. At the same time over 200 police officers, wearing padded uniforms, marched en masse from Hindley through Platt Bridge and Bamfurlong, and on to Earlestown leaving a large number of their force at Bamfurlong’s Crosse Tetley Pits.



Part of the miners’ route to Ashton to the meeting on Newton Common (photo 1910)

Pit Head Meetings

It was not so easy for miners’ leaders and magistrates alike to regulate and control the excesses of some workers as they travelled to pits with the objective of preventing pits from operating.

At Abram, police were needed when miners, coming from a meeting in Leigh, overturned full railway wagons to prevent owners moving coal, broke windows in the pits’ buildings and checked there were no workmen down the mine. Similar incidents were reported at Skelmersdale, Downall Green and many other pits.

The 4 February saw the most serious incident at Howe Bridge, after which magistrates issued the Proclamation of the 5th, promising protection for miners returning to work.

Magistrates had become concerned that meetings in Leigh would become violent. On 2 February a meeting of 2,000 people motivated magistrates to send Dragoons and magistrate Horace Mayhew from Hindley to Leigh. The Dragoons arrived at 11am, stabled their horses in sheds behind the police station, and marched to the meeting. This lasted from 2pm to 4pm without incident and the crowd left quietly.

Then on 4 February 10,000 met on Leigh’s Market Square. They were reported as being aggressive. After the meeting they marched to Chowbent and Tyldesley. By the time they had reached Howe Bridge they had, in the Leigh Chronicle’s opinion, become ‘quiet, listless and apparently harmless’. However, their intention was to prevent, violently if necessary, miners returning to work in the Atherton area. To disperse them the magistrate read the Riot Act and Hussars charged. For hours they and demonstrators held a running battle during which 30 ‘knobsticks’ [strike-breakers] were stoned as they left Crombrooke Pit.

The End of the Dispute

There was no definitive conclusion to the strike. From February, entries in the Magistrates’ Minute book shows that, increasingly, pits were reopening, workers were gradually returning to work and the area was peaceful. By 26 February magistrates considered the strike over. They dispensed with the military and extra police and, as there was no need to move troops around the area, the two railway trains were stood down.

There was some disagreement as to who was financially responsible for the cost of keeping the military in Wigan and Hindley. Eventually Lancashire County Treasurer, after accusing Wigan’s publicans of overcharging for billeting the troops, agreed to pay three quarters of the accounts presented.

References
From Wigan and Leigh Archives at Leigh Town Hall;
Wigan Borough and County Magistrates Minute Book
Wigan Observer 1881
And - Raymond Challinor - The Lancashire and Cheshire Miners
Various websites.

The Birth of Ladies' Football

By Alf Ridyard

We can attribute the start of ladies' football, as we know it, to a game at Crouch End in London in 1894, when North London Ladies played South London Ladies. There is evidence from church records in Scotland that although 'games of football' were taking place in 1628, much to the displeasure of the church elders, it is unlikely they were of an organised match as we know it today.

The game in 1894 was, seemingly, at the time more about politics than sport, as the organiser credited is Nettie Honeyball, a well known women's suffrage activist. In fact, the effect was for more women to take up the challenge of emancipation. Nettie became the focal point for developing what was known as the British Ladies Club. Rather than play in a league it became something of a travelling circus with games played nationwide.

In 1894/95 we can see that there were 166 games recorded as being played by this group of ladies. There is no doubt that many more were played and not reported, as the stigma attached to women's football was still rearing its head and some provincial newspapers would seemingly not carry reports.

The British Ladies Club teams were known as just Reds and Blues, not town/club team names and the players changed frequently. As well as England, the British Ladies played teams in Ireland, Scotland and Wales. Locally, we find the British Ladies playing a



First ladies' football match
(Wikimedia Commons)

game in Wigan on 4 December 1895. The venue was a field at the Green Man public house in Coppull Lane. The Reds beat the Blues 2-1.



Dick, Kerr Ladies Team (Wikimedia Commons)

According to reports in the Wigan Observer, the weather was appalling and spectators were debating whether to pay the entrance fee almost until the advertised kick off time. The game, as the report says, went ahead with a healthy number of spectators but goes on to say, 'the players were not portraying a very elegant appearance', casting doubt as to the women's game becoming a regulated sport.

The game in Wigan was part of a nationwide tour, other northern venues being, Padiham, Dewsbury, St Helens, West Manchester, and Rock Ferry.

The British ladies were still playing games in 1905, but it seems by this date the novelty had worn away. However, we see evidence of the churches looking more favourably on ladies' teams, as the churches had with men's football. Leigh had 54 men's church teams in three divisions after the First World War.

Evidence for the ladies is less but we do have a picture of a ladies' team in Wigan, Spring View Ladies, at Hope Street Methodist Chapel in 1910.

As previously written, during the First World War there was an explosion of ladies' teams, no pun intended, as the munitions factories nationwide developed their own teams. We have to bear in mind that every town or city that were involved with munitions work would have had a ladies' team, so the numbers of teams would have been in the hundreds. The North East was a hotbed of ladies' teams, forming its own league known as the Munitionettes. Over 900,000 women worked in heavy industry, many in the munitions factories, and it is generally accepted that, but for the Munitionettes, the ladies' game would be decades away.

In 1921, the Football Association banned women's football in any of its stadiums. The medical profession also came down against the ladies, saying the game was most unsuitable for women physically. Mr Eustace Miles of the Football Association quoted, "I consider football is quite an inappropriate game for women."

Naturally the girls were devastated, and thought the decision to bar them was made as some ladies' games were drawing bigger crowds than the men's games. And to suggest football could affect fertility and women were too delicate to play was nothing less than insulting, bearing in mind it was perfectly acceptable for women to perform heavy manual work during the years of the First World War at the munitions, mines and engineering works.



Spring View Ladies A.F.C. Ladies' football team, c. 1910,
Hope Street Methodist Church

The ladies now had to continue on park pitches and, in other cases, Rugby League fields in Lancashire and Yorkshire. This decision almost sounded the death knell for ladies' football, as this decision was not rescinded until 1975.

Dick, Kerrs, the First World War Preston munitions factory, confounded the decision by continuing until 1926, and then changing their name to Preston Ladies, playing on until 1965, having played 833 games by then.

Grace Sibbert was the most influential lady in the forming of the Dick, Kerr's team. The team's first game was played on Christmas Day 1917, when 10,000 watched at Deepdale, Preston North End's ground, and raised £400 for the wounded soldiers charity.

Lily Parr became the greatest symbol of ladies' football, changing allegiance from St Helens Ladies at 14 years old to Dick, Kerrs, and who played over 700 games for the team until 1951. Lily became the first woman to be inducted in the

Football Association's Hall of Fame in 2002. Further acknowledgement of her status in the progress of women's football was a statue unveiled in 2019 at the National Football Museum in Manchester.



Lily Parr Statue (courtesy of the
National Football Museum)

Many women will have played a part over the years at the forefront of the development of the ladies' game, but Lily Parr will surely be a worthy trailblazer and icon of the ladies games development.

The ladies' game is now a major part of world sports irrespective of gender, and this piece is just a small insight into the hurdles faced in its growth.

UNUSUAL ART FIND IN WIGAN

An old curiosity shop attached to an oyster saloon was the site of an interesting art find over 115 years ago.

The finding was first reported in the Wigan Observer, 23 March 1907. A local gentleman, Mr J F Morris of Upholland, had visited the establishment for the seafood but after finishing up his meal, his attention was caught by a painting. The 13.5 x 10.5 inch canvas was without a frame, but Morris was intrigued by the item and enquired about the price. The shop owner, Mr Patterson, said that five shillings would buy it and Morris responded, "Then it's mine."

After inspecting the painting more closely, Morris discovered an inscription on the back of the top crosspiece of the canvas. It was covered in dust and dirt, but the words could be seen: 'An Unfinished Portrait of Godfrey Kneller, by Himself'. Morris did have some knowledge of art history and recognised the name after having previously visited Hampton Court and seeing it accompanying many pieces on display. To check his suspicions, he consulted a dictionary of painting as well as a local art dealer who further confirmed his belief that he had made a genuine art discovery.

Sir Godfrey Kneller (1646-1723) was arguably the most in demand portraitist of his time. He was court painter from Charles II to George I and completed a series of 10 reigning European monarchs which included Louis XIV of France and Peter the Great of Russia. He also completed a series of eight portraits of ladies from the court of William III known as the 'Hampton Court Beauties' – these are what Morris would have viewed, and from where he picked up the name Kneller! Outside of the court, Kneller's subjects included Isaac Newton, Alexander Pope, and John Locke.

Kneller also worked with a more locally known subject, having completed a painting of Lady



Self-portrait by Sir Godfrey Kneller, c 1685
(Lord Derby, Creative Commons License File:Self-portrait by Godfrey Kneller II.jpg - Wikimedia Commons)

Rachel Bradshaigh, wife of Sir Roger Bradshaigh. The painting was once displayed at a Wigan Mechanics' Institution Exhibition & Bazaar in 1860. It was reported in the Wigan Observer on Saturday 21 January of that year, that the painting was 'well drawn, well painted, and very expressive' but that 'the position of the right arm is rather too angular for so fair a lady'. Kneller had an infamously large ego and considered his talents to be bestowed upon him by God, that I wonder what he would have made of such a criticism?

Due to Kneller's high profile, it's no surprise then that the unexpected find generated some interest, with the story being reported across the country from the Portsmouth Evening News to

the Dundee Courier. It was originally suggested that it might be more valuable since it was a portrait of the painter himself. However, a later report in the Wigan Observer, 2 April 1907, suggested that some experts thought that the painting may not be worth that much since Kneller's work was not as valuable as it once was. This doesn't seem to have stopped various potential buyers making quite lucrative offers to Morris, and encouraging him to send it for auction at Christie's in London. Despite this, it was reported that Morris had already turned down a hefty sum and that he was happy with his find, displaying it in a new frame in his home.

Before it caught Morris' eye, the painting had sat in Patterson's shop for around two years. Mr Patterson said he had purchased it amongst several other items for 'less than the price of an old song', from a man in Southport. The only previous interest around the item had come when it was still in its frame, about a year before Morris purchased it. Patterson said that a customer had asked for the price of the item which he gave as five shillings. However, it seemed the customer wasn't interested in the painting, he only wanted the gilt frame. Patterson said the customer could have the

frame alone for half the price and so the stranger left with the frame, leaving the real treasure behind.

Mr Patterson deposited the now frameless painting into an old oak chest, piling various books and items on top of it. It remained there for around 12 months until he went into the chest for something else and pulled out the old painting, wanting to give it another shot at being sold. Due to it the way it was stored for so long, Patterson remarked 'the wonder is that it has not been scratched and torn all to pieces'. Perhaps he would have been a little gentler with it if he had known what he had in his possession.

We cannot know for sure whether Morris' find was the genuine article and there seems to be no further trace of it beyond the initial purchase and discussion of it in the newspapers in 1907. It still makes for quite the story and perhaps fills us with hopes of making our own great find one day!

Wigan Observer, 21 January 1860, p.3
Wigan Observer, 23 March 1907, p.12
Wigan Observer, 26 March 1907, p.2
Wigan Observer, 2 April 1907, p.3

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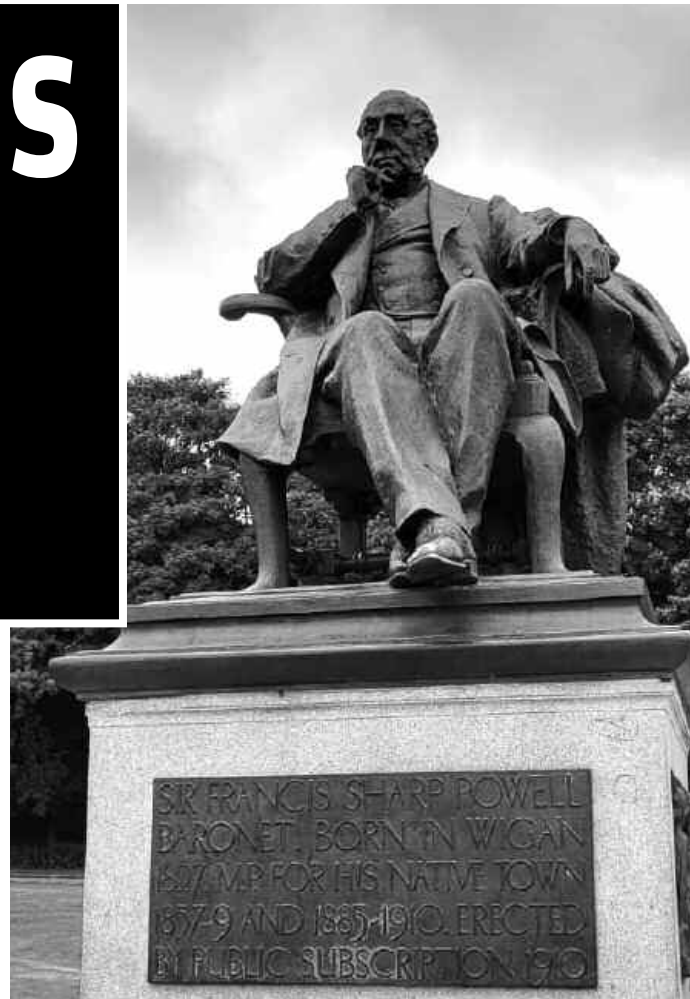
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SIR FRANCIS SHARP POWELL

By Frank Atherton



Many Wiganers will have fond memories of visiting Mesnes Park and rubbing the boot of the statue of Sir Francis Sharp Powell for good luck or to make a wish. Perhaps few will be familiar with the life story and the career of Sir Francis.

He was born in Wigan on 29 June 1827, the son of Reverend Benjamin Powell, the incumbent of St George's Church, and of Anne Wade. They lived at Bellingham Lodge, opposite the land which later became the site of Wigan Infirmary. Francis attended Wigan Grammar School and then boarded at Uppingham School in Rutland. He then went to Sedburgh Grammar School before going on to St John's College, Cambridge. In 1853, he was called to the bar at Inner Temple and practised for a short time on the Northern Circuit. He was a Justice of the Peace and a magistrate for Lancashire and for the West Riding of Yorkshire. At the age of 17, Francis inherited the manor of Horton near Bradford through his maternal Sharp family. He also inherited property in Wigan. With his wife, Annie, he bought 1 Cambridge Square, Hyde Park and they also owned and occupied Horton Old Hall for the next 51 years of their married life.

Francis Sharp Powell was a wealthy man but he dedicated his life to the service of others. He fought no fewer than 19 contested borough and county elections. He was defeated eight times and was also unseated on petition. He had a greater variety of election experiences than any other person did, but also he had a lengthy and dedicated career, speaking on many subjects and serving on 72 committees.

Francis stood as a Conservative candidate and he first represented Wigan from 1857 to 1859. From 1863 to 1868 he was M.P. for Cambridge. In February 1871 he contested the seat of Stalybridge and Dukinfield at a by-election. 'This election was of a most uproarious

nature', and the Liberal candidate won after a second poll had been demanded. From 1872 to 1874 Mr Powell sat for the Northern Division of West Riding, Yorkshire, following a bye-election. It was the first time in the history of the constituency that the Liberals had been defeated, but Francis experienced defeats at Wigan, Cambridge and the West Riding.

On 1 February 1876 Francis published his election address as Conservative candidate for the City of Manchester. The election campaign became a very bitter battle.

Chetham's Library holds a group of rare political cartoons. They were to be pasted on the city walls and displayed at political meetings. The result of the poll on 17 February was, however, another disappointment.

In 1880 Mr Powell lost again in a West Riding election. Then, in 1881, Alexander, the 25th Earl of Crawford, died and James Ludovic, his son, the sitting member for Wigan, succeeded to the title, leading to a bye-election. Francis Sharp Powell was chosen as the Conservative candidate. In December 1880 a very disastrous strike took place which led to some extreme destitution. The day of the election, 18 January 1881, was the most bitterly cold day that had been known for many years and yet a very high proportion of the electorate voted.



Powell Children's Library (PC2010.2201)

'The polling came off on the 18th January, the result being declared as: Powell, 3005; Lancaster, 2536. The election took place when the whole of the colliers in the district were on strike and it was freely stated that other than legitimate measures had been taken to secure the return of the successful candidate. The Liberal party decided that if evidence were forthcoming, the return of Mr. Powell should be petitioned against.' Mr Lancaster had received more than 3,000 promises, giving a majority of more than half of the constituency.

On Lancaster's behalf a petition was placed alleging bribery, treating and undue influence. Bribery and treating included sums between one shilling and 10 shillings and free drink, and food and drink. 288 cases of bribery were cited. Thirty two public and private houses were named as giving free food and drink to voters and others. A trial lasting nine days was held at the New Borough Court, Wigan, and many witnesses gave evidence of 'breakfasts', 'canvassing', and 'working' for the agents. Forty men breakfasted and drank and marched down Scholes and then voted, before 'fetching' others to vote.

On 1 April 1881 Judge Grove and Judge Bowen 'determined that the said Francis Sharp Powell was not duly elected and his Election and Return are wholly null and void on the ground of bribery by the Agents, Thomas Scott and Edwin McLoughland. No corrupt practice was proved to have been committed by or with the knowledge or consent of any Candidate at such Election'.

Notwithstanding the court case, in 1885 Francis Sharp Powell was elected as the Member for Wigan and he successfully served for 25 years until he retired at the age of 82 in January, 1910.

In 1892 Francis was knighted and became Sir Francis Sharp Powell, 1st Baronet of Horton Old Hall. He was granted the freedom of the city of Bradford on 24 October, 1902.

'Sir Francis conscientiously fulfilled all his obligations as a property owner and Member of Parliament for Wigan. All recognised in him a wholehearted supporter of religious and denominational education'. He built two Conservative clubs in Wigan and also a 'Boys Reading Room'. This later became known as the 'Powell Children's Library and Museum' on Station Road. When this was declared open on 17 April 1895 Sir Francis was presented with the freedom of the Borough.

In 1907 it was agreed to erect a statue to commemorate his services to the town and his boot is kept shining by the constant rubbing and wishes of local children.

Due to increasing and incurable deafness Sir Francis resigned his seat in 1910 and he passed away peacefully at Horton Old Hall on Christmas Eve, 1911.

Acknowledgements:

Dr H.L.P.Hulbert : 'Sir Francis Sharp Powell, Baronet and Member of Parliament. A Memoir' *Political Science Quarterly*, Volume XXX *Wigan Observer*, 1881 *Wigan World* *Chetham's Library*

LEIGH FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY

The Leigh & District Family History Society Help Desk is now operating Tuesday to Friday 10am to 1pm in the searchroom of Archives: Wigan & Leigh, Leigh Town Hall. No drop-in enquiries at the moment; enquirers are asked to complete a form available online at Family history (wigan.gov.uk), or from the help desk at Archives: Wigan & Leigh. The volunteers will then research the query and the staff will return a reply in due course.

Monthly meetings are held at the Derby Room of Leigh Library at 7.30pm on the third Tuesday of each month (except July, August & December).

20 September:

'Let her die, make her die if you can' - The scandalous case of Mrs Oldfield by Thomas McGrath

18 October:

'Grave Disclosures' by Peter Watson

15 November:

'The Conical Five' - Victims of Jack the Ripper by Kath Graham

CONTACT - MRS G MCCLELLAN (01942 729559)

Memories of an Ashton Lad (Part Two)

Leaving Ashton to go into the Big Wide World

.....
Aged 18, on 2 January 1945 Alan reported for duty, and his adventures abroad started when he was put on a train with another lad from Bryn and headed for Carlisle. Once at Carlisle Station Alan said he never saw the lad from Bryn again and often wonders what happened to him. From Carlisle Station a wagon took them to Carlisle Castle where he was assigned to the Royal Army Service Corps (RASC) as a driver. His army number was 14902628, which he still rhymes off by heart, even now.

From Carlisle the troops caught a train to Stranraer in Scotland, where they waited a day or so before sailing to Larne in Northern Ireland. Alan remembers that they had to wait as the weather was too bad for sailing. Even so, once the trip by sea did commence, he remembers how rough the seas were and that many of the men were seasick. Thankfully, Alan was unaffected by the rough boat trip.

Once in Northern Ireland, he caught a train to Ballykinlar (a big army base where he received his basic army training). Here, Alan underwent six weeks of training including marching, running with full kit, and weaponry training. Even though Alan had enlisted as a driver, knowing how to handle weapons was still required.

After this, Alan sailed back to the UK and in Bakewell, Derbyshire, had six weeks training relating to driving. Alan remembers the map reading course as they were split into teams and dropped at various locations in the middle of nowhere. They had to find their way back to base using a map. Alan said this was all well and good but the route home contained temptations and detours, namely via public houses, and 'team Alan' arrived back last, and 'very merry'.

After his training, Alan went to Littlehampton, where he spent five months working for the RASC as a driver. Alan was allowed leave and came home to Ashton for two weeks. Following this he had to report to Southend-on-Sea. From here, Alan sailed to France and travelled by train



Alan in Toulon September 1945

from the north of France to Toulon, in the south of France. Smoking was a way of life then, and cigarettes were even given to soldiers as part of their rations. Alan remembers the train journey in France, and crossing a section of rail under repair on a previously blown up bridge. Below the bridge, German prisoners of war were being put to work on repairs. Alan said it was like snow falling as the British Service men on the train all threw out cigarettes to the Germans below. Alan said there was no animosity towards the Germans, and they were seen as just like the British Service men, 'only doing their duty'.

Alan and his companions thought they were going to East India, or Burma, as this was occupied by the British at the time. However, instead they travelled from Toulon, in France, to Port Said, in Egypt, on a boat for two weeks. The conditions on board the ship were rough to say the least. After this they stayed in a holding camp along the Suez Canal in Egypt, where Alan and his colleagues were taught how to drive on the right. Ironically, it was then decided that they were going to Jerusalem in Palestine instead – where they drive on the left.

Life in Jerusalem

.....
Then aged 19, Alan worked for the 470 division of the Royal Army Service Corps, where he remembers life in Jerusalem being tough, as he witnessed some horrible sights. He saw two terrorists shot dead in the street. The workshop (garage) where he was placed overlooked St David's Tower and Jaffa Gate.

Alan requested a transfer from being a driver to being a painter instead. However, his first duties at his new location in Jerusalem were as a cook for a team of around 50 men. On his first attempt at



Alan in Jerusalem 1947

breakfast he remembers burning all the sausages. He was soon put to work as a painter. At the workshop in Bethlehem Road he was taught how to 'sign write' by a local Jewish civilian called Moses. There was also a dog named Iffa, rescued as a puppy, which Alan fondly remembers. Iffa became a team mascot of sorts.

From Bethlehem Road Alan was moved to a garage in Sarafand al-Amar in Palestine where, as well as sign writing, Alan was required for guard duties every other night. On more than one occasion naturally he fell asleep while on duty, and remembers being shouted at by the Scottish captain in charge. He was indeed lucky that he was only shouted at. Alan remembers the sound of gunfire constantly going off around the camp. Even though they were not the targets of the bullets Alan said "it still had an effect on your nerves".

Although conditions were harsh Alan made the best of it, but he remembers some of the lads fighting amongst themselves. At barely five feet (and even less so now), Alan is hardly a physical force to be reckoned with, though it was often he who split up the fights using humour and common sense. One of his favourite Lancashire sayings is, 'Thee don't tha me thee, thee tha them us thars thee'. This translates as 'don't you call me names, call the people that calls you'. Thankfully, Alan's light-heartedness saw him



Alan and Dot married in St Peter's Church, Bryn in May 1954

through his time and although he did not partake in any active fighting during the war, Alan said, "I held a gun every day". He jokingly hastens to add he meant a 'paint gun'.

He arrived home safe and sound and settled down with a family in Ashton. The rest, as they say, is 'History'. Having recently celebrated his 95th birthday, Alan says he is looking forward to his letter from the Queen.



Alan on a day out at Morecambe last summer

BY KEITH SUTCH - PART ONE

Wigan Warriors – 150 years of history



Wigan Football Club 1908-1909 Players and Committee

Wigan Warriors Rugby League Football Club is one of the most famous and successful Rugby League clubs in the world and 2022 sees the club celebrate its 150th anniversary.

The name Wigan Warriors is celebrated throughout Rugby League possibly due to their achievements, magnitude, and successes on the field. In recent times, their accomplishments in world club championships have seen the club grow from humble beginnings into one of the giants of British sport.

The club's illustrious history can be traced back to 1872, when the first Wigan rugby club was founded following a meeting on 21 November 1872 held at the Royal Hotel, Wigan by a group of members of the town's Cricket Club.

With the club officially established under

amateur status, the first of a series of trial games took place on 30 November 1872 at Folly Field, Upper Dicconson Street, Wigan, against local towns such as Bolton, Southport, Ormskirk, and Warrington.

Wigan's first official match took place on 18 January 1873 with an away fixture against Warrington. The game ended in a draw with the teams consisting of 15 players each, playing under rugby union rules.

Wigan continued to establish themselves over the next few years, but the 1875-76 season saw interest fade and, owing to unavoidable circumstances, the club suffered a succession of setbacks. Financial problems, and an inability to recruit quality players, led to a merger with Up Holland FC. This amalgamation ended up saving the day and allowed the team to carry

on playing with the creation of a new club, known as Wigan District Football Club.

The new committee approached Wigan Cricket Club for the necessary permission to play upon their Prescott Street ground off Frog Lane, and due to the fact the Cricket Club needed funds for their new Pavilion, a continual stream of income throughout the winter seemed an obvious solution. An agreement was made and the club moved to their second home on Prescott Street, a major improvement from the Folly Field site.

In the 1877-78 season, the club found themselves struggling to field a full team week in week out due to injuries and the fact that many players were still associated with the Cricket Club, i.e. brothers H and W Wall were high scoring opening batsmen.

This unfortunately meant the joint venture with the Cricket Club was unsuccessful and led to the unavoidable position of the club folding once again.

In 1879, a new club called Wigan Wasps was formed following a meeting in the Dicconson Arms. This new rugby club evolved into the current Wigan Warriors Rugby League Club we now know today. The Club initially played in blue and white hooped jerseys before changing in 1886 to the now-famous 'Cherry and White' hoops that are synonymous with the Club today.

In 1886, Wigan spectators witnessed another ground move when Wigan Cricket Club took up residence at Bull Hey, off Parsons Walk, which is still their home today. Wigan Rugby Football Club took over the vacated site at Prescott Street once again and on 18 September 1886 hosted Wakefield Trinity in front of an estimated crowd of 5,000.

During the late 1880s and early 1890s, professionalism was becoming more apparent in sport especially in association football. The status of rugby players was also under scrutiny, with questions being asked by the amateur rugby union hierarchy.

In 1894 Wigan was suspended by the Rugby Football Union for breaking the strict amateur

code, despite its argument that broken-time payments were necessary to avoid undue hardship for its working-class players. The allegations related to Salford Captain Frank Miles who was accused of being offered 30 shillings a week to play for Wigan. Miles refused to give any evidence to the Lancashire Committee investigating the claims and was consequently banned from the game for professionalism.

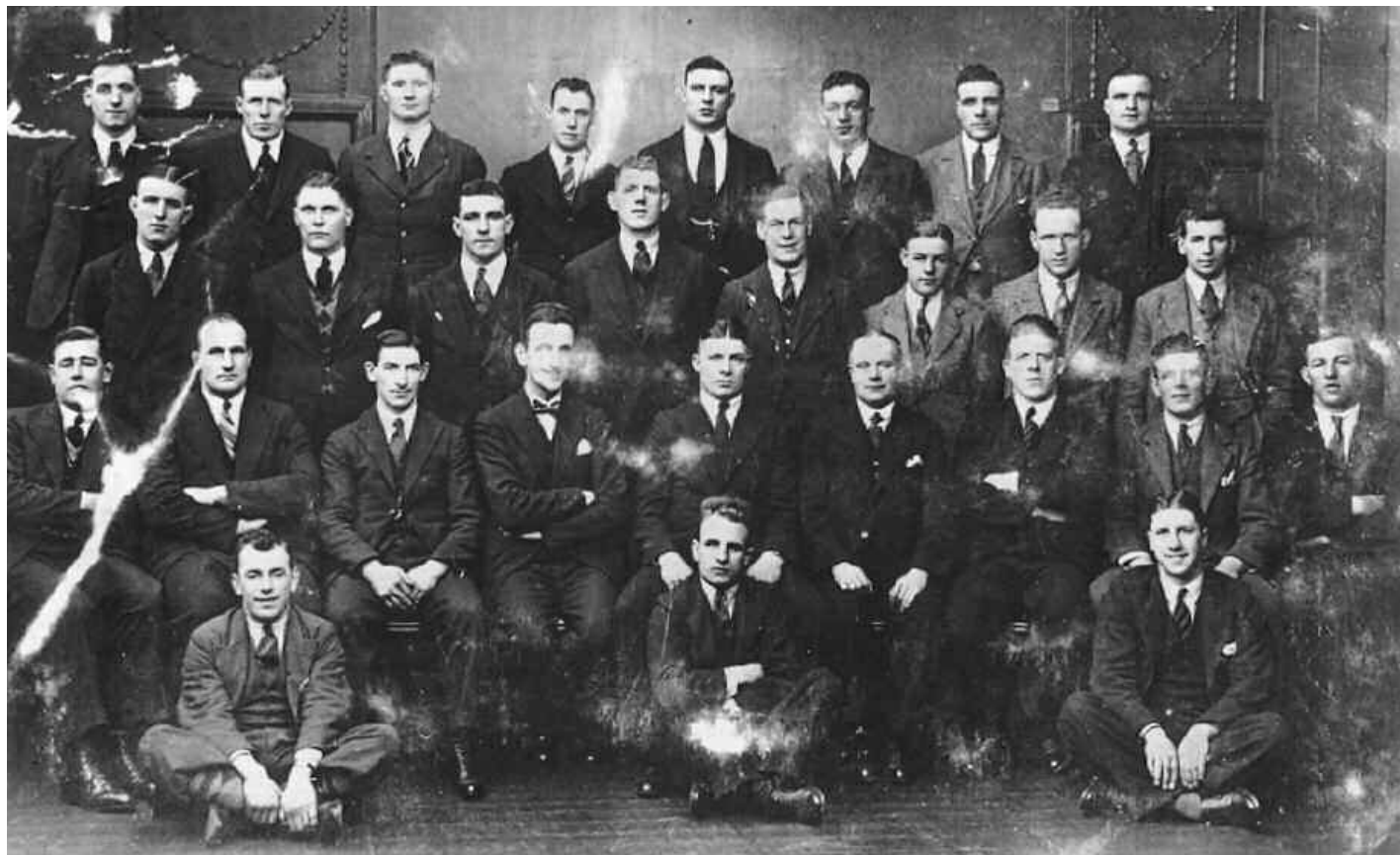
By the end of July 1895, several teams from both Lancashire and Yorkshire announced their resignation from the Rugby Football Union (RFU) and formed the Northern Rugby Football Union (NRFU). It was also agreed to hold a joint meeting of Yorkshire and Lancashire clubs at the George Hotel, Huddersfield on Thursday 29 August 1895, when the formation of the NRFU could be officially announced.

In 1895, Wigan became one of the 22 teams to form the Northern Rugby Football Union, also known as the Northern Union, along with Batley, Bradford, Brighouse, Broughton Rangers, Halifax, Huddersfield, Hull F.C., Hunslet, Leeds, Leigh, Liversedge, Manningham, Oldham, Rochdale Hornets, Runcorn, St Helens, Stockport, Tyldesley, Wakefield Trinity, Warrington, and Widnes.

The formation of the Northern Union ultimately led to the sport of Rugby League and the 'Wasps' tag was dropped. The club became known as Wigan and they appointed Jack Hesketh as their coach/trainer for the first game on 7 September 1895.

The first season in the Northern Union saw Wigan attracting large crowds, but the performance on the field only merited a league position of 10th. For the next six seasons, Wigan continued to achieve mediocrity in regard to their league position, managing their best place in 1897-98, finishing sixth.

The 1901-02 season saw yet another ground move forced upon the club when the land at Prescott Street was utilised for railway premises. Wigan continued their travels and moved into Springfield Park, the then home of



Rugby League Touring Team 1932

Wigan United Amateur Football Club, who were in existence from around 1896.

The first game at Springfield Park was played on 14 September 1901 against Morecambe. Wigan won 12 points to nil following on from their opening fixture, an away win at St Helens. During their solitary season at Springfield Park, Wigan managed to win all their home league fixtures and won 21 matches from 24 during the season to win the Lancashire League, the club's first major honour in the professional game.

The committee had investigated the possibility of a new site and it was disclosed that the Great Central Railway Company had offered the club land off Powell Street on a long-term lease with favourable terms. By September 1902, thanks to several local investors, the ground was ready for use and, with lease agreements signed, Central Park became the new home of the Wigan Rugby League Club.

On 6 September 1902 Wigan played their first game at Central Park, entertaining Batley in front of an estimated 10,000 spectators who witnessed a 14-8 victory. Wigan's first season at

their new home was not the success expected and at the end of the season the club finished the campaign in 16th position, just above St Helens and Brighouse Rovers who were relegated from the newly formed First Division.

In the 1908-09 season, Wigan won the Lancashire Cup along with the Lancashire League and Championship Play-off trophy with a back three-quarter line that is still the talk of spectators to this day: Jenkins, Miller, Leytham, and Todd.

By the end of the 1914-15 season, Wigan had again won the Lancashire League for the third consecutive year. Due to the outbreak of the First World War, the Northern Union Annual General Meeting on 9 June 1915 passed the following resolution by a large majority – 'That except for schoolboys and intermediates under eighteen years of age, competitive football under Northern Union rules be suspended for the duration of the war'.

However, the Northern Union did continue to run a watered-down competition during the conflict, the Emergency War League, of which Wigan played a part.

Many Rugby League players did turn out in the competition while they were on leave, and many players guested for other clubs during the war period. It is understood that Wigan had approximately 10 players that served their country in the First World War, with one sadly losing his life during the conflict.

The world of sport, and rugby in particular, was allowed to resume with an interim season running from January to May 1919. Wigan played their first game of the shortened campaign on 25 January where they recorded a home win by 13-9 against Warrington at Central Park.

By the end of the 1920-21 season, 12 May 1921 to be exact, Wigan became a limited company with a share capital of £16,000, with Harry Lowe becoming the first-ever Chairman. The first team also experienced a new coach, or trainer as they were known then, in Tommy McCarthy who replaced Jack Hesketh who had held the position for approximately 25 years.

McCarthy's success with the first team was limited until the arrival of James Sullivan for the 1921-22 season. By the end of that season, silverware was again in the trophy cabinet after winning the Championship play-off against Oldham at Broughton by 13-2.

Wigan Rugby League was now experiencing a period of transition which saw the arrival of many quality players, none more significant



Mr Harry Sunderland, the new Secretary-Manager of Wigan Rugby League Club, giving hints to the players at Wigan ground

than Johnny Ring who followed Jim Sullivan from the Welsh Valleys prior to the start of the 1922-23 season. Both would have a major influence, not just for Wigan but in the game of Rugby League, dominating the try and goal-scoring charts respectively for many years.

Despite failing to win a single honour in the 1924-25 season, Wigan did manage to set a club record score that still stands to this day when they beat amateurs Flimby and Fothergill by 116-0 in the Challenge Cup first round. Jim Sullivan kicked 22 goals, which is not just a club record but a world record. Johnny Ring scored 7 tries, which again stood as a club record for many years.

The 1925-26 season brought a 10th Lancashire League and a Championship success. These two trophies would be Wigan's last pieces of silverware until 1928-29 when, following a narrow 5-4 Lancashire Cup victory over Widnes, the club experienced what was, at the time, their finest hour when they beat Dewsbury 13-2 in the first-ever Wembley Challenge Cup Final on 4 May 1929.

Wigan underwent a bleak period on the trophy front following the Challenge Cup win and this led to a change in first team coach. Jim Sullivan was assigned as player/coach on 3 October 1932, the first time Wigan had made such an appointment.

Wigan's name in Rugby League was developing so much that on 23 November 1932 the Prince of Wales (later to be King Edward VIII) attended Central Park in his capacity as Patron for the National Council of Social Services, making him the first royal to watch a rugby league match. The match was between two teams of unemployed youths, with Jim Sullivan as referee.

The outbreak of the Second World War caused disruption for the Rugby Football League Championship and the sport of rugby league in general. However, Wigan's fortunes progressed during and after the conflict, as they continued to play in the Lancashire War League and the Emergency War League.

CARRY ON CLEANING

By Isabel Pattison

Historical records lie all around us – something we may not ever realise. My short internship at the Wigan and Leigh Archives has taught me the relevance of the everyday: fragments from old folktale collections; roughly drawn street plans – probably never used for professional, architectural reference; twenty photographs of the same spoil tip. All in their time, likely not expected to be collected, catalogued, recorded, and rerecorded in 100 years' time. It makes me wonder what mundane remains of our time will stir the curiosities of future historians and archivists. However, one thing is for certain, which is that the process should never end.

There were several short projects which I undertook over January and February 2022, including the cleaning of old books, the digitisation (from microfilm) of architectural plans from across the Wigan area in the late nineteenth century, and the organisation of photographic indexes which, through frequent use – a testament to their importance – had become jumbled and disorganised. Each drew me to their own unique qualities. An antiquated folk tale might make you laugh at its outdated novelty, or curious as to its moral prejudices. The repetition of a certain name, commanding rows after rows of dwellings to be built, may intrigue

you into the power of the land barons and the powerlessness of their inhabitants. Smiling faces of weary, coal-blackened miners and children on VE Day still resonate and warm the heart a century later.

However, one task felt as though its importance could not be understated, which was the digitisation of military tribunals – the appeals by employers and/or attested men during the conscription era of

*The Employer (Messrs J. & H. ...
Carriers, they are the proprietors
of these men's cars & ...
Before the War 17 regular
& 14 men have been taken on
during temporary breakdown ...
main occupation is that of ...
the carrying of food stuffs
made upon them owing to ...
employing the Employer's ...
other munitions, Sutcliffe Sp ...
nitious, Anchor Cable ...
they also carry for the Co ...
oods from Manchester ...
Drivers, and if the Attach ...
Employers are at pres*

WWI. Each document is deeply personal. Handwriting in such elaborate, italicised cursive, which appears beautiful on page, but renders the content almost impossible to read (to my untrained eye at least). It might be scrawling between lines, filled with spelling mistakes, or occasionally written up with a typewriter – each unique to the individual's life, situation, and experience.

This is only the beginning of the emotional attachment one feels towards the papers in front of you. The real empathy lies in the stories, the families, and the life-or-death decisions made completely out of their control.

There were the lucky ones. Men working in certified occupations, contributing to the war effort, and who could not be replaced by women if the jobs were too heavy and dangerous. They could be exempt on

the condition they remain in their occupation. Others suffering with medical conditions slipped through the system, were called up, yet unfit to fight. Though perhaps not 'lucky', they were allowed to stay home.

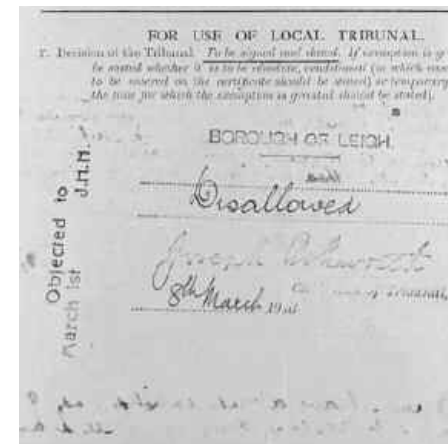
A few were occupied in highly specialised work. One interesting case was of a young apprentice to his father's pharmaceutical business. His appeal was disallowed, despite the fact the father suffered from rheumatism, and could not perform all the work necessary himself. It was only after a re-appeal, re-iterating the necessity of chemists for national importance, that he was allowed to remain.

Some decisions are confusing to justify. For example, an electrician suffering from tuberculosis and a man working in a slaughterhouse – required to lift heavy loads for which female replacement could not be found – both had their appeals dismissed. From my perspective, all this means is the certain death of a man (or spread of disease) and the closure of an important business.

Then of course there is grief. Men who were the sole providers and/or carers of the family. For example, a man with an invalid mother and a blind father who writes: 'you know what it means if I have to go away'. A father who expresses that it is: 'not because he is unpatriotic' that he begs for a son to be allowed to stay, but that his other four sons are all out fighting and he: 'implores you do leave me one'. A farmer who tells the jury: 'it means absolute ruin to us' if he leaves as his elderly parents cannot run the business. The one which struck me the most was from a young man, just 20, who asks because of his ageing mother who cannot work: 'what is to become of her if I leave?'

Nationally, most of these tribunal papers do not survive. Due to the

sensitive content, the decisions made surrounding conscription needed to be hidden by the British Government, to prevent worsening of the tensions between them and society, following catastrophic losses during the war. This act alone demonstrates the heartlessness of many jurisdictions.



The documents I digitised are therefore of national importance. I felt proud to be a part of this

recording process, both for future reference in times of crisis, and for my own personal curiosities. They had me thinking: if this were to happen today who would be considered 'dispensable'? What occupations would remain vital to 'national interest'? Who, or what, could be replaced in the technological era?

A cashier had his appeal sent by his employer, making the application on the grounds that to be a cashier clerk (in 1916) was a complicated trade, that it would take months to train another person, and that he had years of trust in his employee. In 2022, a computer could take this role. This man was allowed to remain in Wigan. His life was spared simply because of the technological lack of his era. As it tells us in the Archive exhibition: 'Records help us understand where we've come from and where we're going... tell our story and shape our future'. In an era

*I have signed right
the money ...
will note that
the time ...
we are at last
you think ...
until a lat*

of such uncertainty, people need these records to look back upon, to understand where things went wrong, and to ensure the most heartless aspects of history are never forgotten.

All uncited images used are from photographs I took of the Tribunal Documents. I have taken every attempt to render the individuals anonymous.

Jubilee Babies: An unusual way to mark the celebrations

BY THOMAS MCGRATH

When we think of historic celebrations to mark the Jubilee, we conjure up images of royal visits, street parties, and commemorative china and tableware. Recently at Archives: Wigan & Leigh, we've come across a more unusual way to acknowledge the festivities – by giving the name to a baby!

The trend seems to have started locally in 1887 to coincide with the Golden Jubilee celebrations of Queen Victoria, and it continued with her Diamond Jubilee in 1897. Before this there had only been one other national jubilee celebration, for George III in 1809, so Victoria's Golden Jubilee really was an event to commemorate. The name 'Jubilee' was apparently interchangeable for both sons and daughters. For the most part it was used as a middle name (see below) but one little girl born in Wigan in 1887 was named Jubilee Ann Betts.

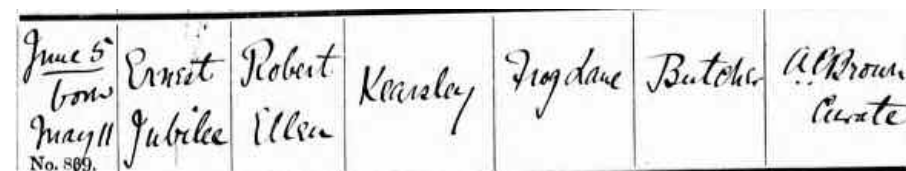
The naming of babies after the Jubilee appears to have been popular up and down the country, though it seems to have died out by the time of George V's Silver Jubilee in 1935. I wonder if there will be any new Jubilee babies from 2022?

1887

Jubilee Ann Betts (Ince)
Richard Jubilee Fairhurst (Shevington)
Ernest Jubilee Kearsley (Frog Lane, Wigan)
Harriet Jubilee Myers (Standish)
Ernest Jubilee Simm (Standish)

1897

Paul Jubilee Tomlinson (Hindley)
Albert Jubilee Wolstenholme (Leigh)



The baptism record for Ernest Jubilee Kearsley, 5 June 1887, All Saints Church, Wigan



Pinfold and The Pingot

Two Leigh Place Names from the Past

By Michael Caine



Bedford's Pinfold

As with most villages founded in Saxon times, Bedford, on the east side of Leigh, had a pinfold, and its position is remembered today by a plaque on a terraced house at the start of Manchester Road, by Butts Bridge. (See pictures 1 and 2)

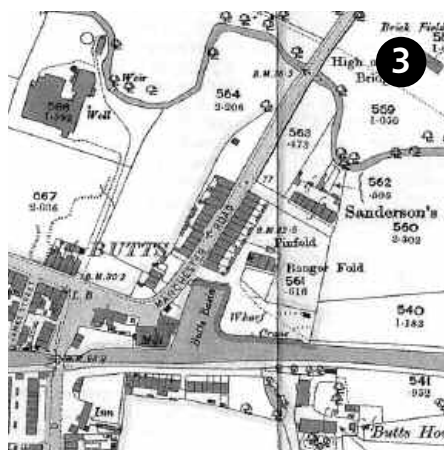
A pinfold was a pound where stray animals, found on someone else's land, would be impounded by a local Manor Court official called a Pinder. This was a paid position and a responsible one. In the days of the open field system, every freeman in a village had hereditary rights to land, and would own plots in each of the three open fields, i.e. without hedges or fences, but marked by a particular stone, marker or tree. Everyone knew these 'boundary markers' by heart, generation by generation. Keeping one's animals to their own grazing and away from others' crops, was therefore an important responsibility. In the north and east of England, which came under the Danelaw, these were called 'pinfolds', in the south, 'pounds'.

The Manor Court imposed fines on the owners of these stray geese, pigs, sheep, cattle, or any



livestock. The Pinder had to round up the animals, impound, keep, feed and water them until the fine was paid. To do this a pinfold was built, close enough to water the stock, on the outskirts of a village. It could be circular or rectangular, with strong, stone built walls, and a locked gate. In the course of time, villages extended, and pinfolds would gradually get encircled by dwellings.

Bedford's pinfold was close to Bedford Brook, and is commemorated by an 1878 plaque on the terraced house which it was behind, adjacent to the rear of Bangor Fold, marked on the 1893 OS Map. (See picture 3). This was conveniently close to the ancient main route into and



out of Bedford. The original old cottages of Bangor Fold were replaced with more modern ones some years back, and I've not been able to find a trace of the pinfold.

The coming of the Enclosure Acts, from 1604 to 1914, ended the open field system, and took the land off the ordinary villagers, placing it into the hands of the richest local people. It was effectively a privatisation of public assets, and our modern farmscape came into being, marking the end of the pinfolds. The Medieval memory lives on in the Pinder's descendants bearing that name, or Pindar or Pinner. It also remains for those who pass along Manchester Road, Bedford, Leigh and care to look up at the plaque placed there by a thoughtful builder 144 years ago.

It has now been registered with the National Register of Pinfolds at: www.poundsandpinfolds.co.uk/register. It's just off the A572 at WN7 2AZ.

Westleigh's Pingot

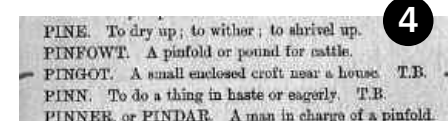
On the west side of Leigh was another Saxon village, this one being Westleigh. Along with Bedford and Pennington it combined to create the Leigh Local Board in 1875. And here, just off Firs Lane, leading to Westleigh Cricket Club's ground is The Pingot.

It's the name given to the track leading to and past the ground to the Leeds-Liverpool Canal branch of 1819. The Cricket Club have

also named their ground, sadly one of only two left in town, The Pingot. But what is, or was, a pingot?

It sounds like pinfold, but it is different, although similar. Whereas pinfolds and pounds are to be found all over England, pingots appear restricted to south Lancashire.

A few years' back, Megan Massey, the daughter of famous Leigh clogger Jack Ashcroft, gave me a book, published in 1901: 'The Folk Speech of South Lancashire, A Glossary of Words', by Francis Edward Taylor, published by John Heywood of Manchester and London. Here the glossary (see picture 4) defines 'pingot' as a 'small enclosed croft near a house. T.B.'. The initials refer to its use by Tim Bobbin, the Lancashire dialect poet in 1746. His real name was John Collier.



It isn't the only pingot in the region and south of Lamberhead Green, Wigan, can be found 'Pingot Valley', with Pingot Cottage and Pingot Well, an old industrial site currently being investigated by the Wigan Archaeological Society. Other pingots feature in Irlam, Billinge and elsewhere.

It is more than likely that the cricket ground, created in the 1950s, was the original pingot. It is bordered on the east by Westleigh Brook, and on the west by the track itself. North, its boundary was to the rear of the Sportsman Inn (now demolished) on the old roadway of Firs Lane, and to the south by the canal of 1819. Historically, from the 1820s at least, the leat from Westleigh Cotton Mill flowed under the road and emerged on the south side of the road, running through the plot of land, before rejoining Westleigh Brook. The 1907 OS Map shows this clearly. The mill ceased in 1891, and was demolished, with

houses being built c 1900 (see picture 5).



With the cotton mill being steam driven from the 1820s, coal as well as cotton could have come up The Pingot; the cotton bales direct from Liverpool, and coal from a number of local collieries, as well as by cart.

The Pingot's entrance can be seen in picture 6, and picture 7 shows the modern context.

Westleigh's pingot, dating from the eighteenth century at least, now survives, I believe, as a cricket ground and indeed, knowing some of the personnel involved, the pithy, earthy south Lancashire dialect words still resound there, interspersed with the smack of ball

on bat and the dreaded death rattle of the bails. An historic ground indeed, and the name fittingly, is....Not out!

Michael Caine. June 2022.

Sources: As quoted.



EXCITING NEW EXHIBITION!

at the Museum of Wigan Life
– can you help?

Our museum team is currently developing a new entertainment themed exhibition, due to open in early 2023, and would love to hear your experiences and stories. Did you go to Wigan Casino, or remember going to watch an amazing band? Is there a venue that holds a precious memory for you? Do you have a special object, poster, ticket, or programme you would like to see on display? If so, we would love to hear from you!

We are also looking to record video and oral histories as part of the exhibition so please keep an eye out for updates on Twitter @wiganmuseum and on the Museum of Wigan Life Facebook page.

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

Museum of Wigan Life

Events coming up at the Museum of Wigan Life. For details of any of these events and to book, please call 01942 828128 or email wiganmuseum@wigan.gov.uk

Summer of Egypt

This summer we are hosting a variety of talks and events on all things Ancient Egypt, contact the museum for more information!

The Sports of Ancient Egypt
by Professor Joann Fletcher

All ages welcome (not suitable for under 11s)
Saturday 6 August, 1.30pm-2.30pm with time for Q&A at the end
£5pp, includes refreshments

The Golden Faces of Tutankhamen’s Dynasty
by Professor Joann Fletcher

Saturday 6 August, 4pm-5pm
£10pp, includes glass of wine or juice

The Pharaoh’s Tunic and the Bishop’s Underpants
by Ian Trumble

Thursday 11 August, 12pm-1pm
£2.50, includes tea or coffee

Gilded Flesh: The Use of Gold in Egyptian
Funerary Art by Dr Campbell Price

Monday 15 August, 3pm-4pm
Online lecture via Zoom
Free

Summer of Egypt family activities

Grab your magical passport and travel with us to the mysterious land of Egypt! Join us each week to have your exclusive Summer of Egypt museum passport stamped, learn all about the Ancient Egyptians and have amazing fun along the way. No need to book. All activities free.

Information for
Contributors

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

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

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

First stop - The Book of the Dead

Friday 12 August, 10am-2pm

Second stop - Ancient Egyptian Pharaohs

Friday 19 August, 10am-2pm

Final destination– Wigan’s Gold Mask,
Hieroglyphics and more!

Friday 26 August, 10am-2pm

Lunchtime exhibition and building tours –
gerrumonside!

Wednesday 3 August, 5 October, 12-12.45pm
(gerrumonside exhibition)
Wednesday 7 September, 2 November, 12-12.45pm
(building and permanent exhibition)

Fancy something exciting to do during your lunch break? Then look no further! Join us at the museum for our new bi-monthly tours which cover either our Rugby League exhibition or our amazing building and permanent displays. Free.

Placard and badge making workshops

Wednesday 31 August 2022, 1pm-4pm and Saturday 3 September 2022, 10am-3pm (with the Redfolio artists)

Hope is power! Have your voice heard! Come and join us to make a hopeful protest placard to form part of the Diggers parade through Wigan on 10 September 2022. Children under 10 years to be accompanied by an adult. Adults are also welcome to get involved and join the fun. It’s free and there’s no need to book.

Cotton Town Chronicles by Peter and Barbara Snape

Thursday 22 September, 12-1pm
£2.50, includes tea or coffee

Cotton Town Chronicles is a folk song based presentation showcasing working life during the age when cotton and coal were king. It is a journey in which key moments of social history provide the context for the song to take centre stage. Each song tells a story: grease and grime, mills, mines and machinery, poverty, struggle, love, humanity and the ability to look on the bright side of life.

Submission Guidelines

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

We aim to acknowledge receipt of all submissions.

CONTACT DETAILS:

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

A Grave Affair by Charlie Guy

Tuesday 4 October, 12-1pm
£2.50, includes tea or coffee

From booby-trapped coffins and body-snatchers to post-mortem photography and funeral souvenirs, the nineteenth century’s obsession with death spawned an era of now-forgotten death-etiquette, creepy funerary practices, traditions, and superstitions. Join us to explore the fascinating world of the Victorian dead, the superstitions that buried them, and the anatomists who brought them back up.

Roy Francis and George Bennett: Wigan’s Black
Rugby Pioneers by Tony Collins

Friday 21 October, 7pm, £5pp, includes wine or juice

Tony Collins uncovers the hidden history of rugby’s black pioneers of the 1930s by examining the lives and careers of Roy Francis and George Bennett. He looks at their experiences growing up in South Wales and explores the reasons why they chose to ‘Go North’ to play Rugby League. Their stories bring to life the history of Britain’s black community in the decades before the Windrush Generation, and illustrate how Rugby League opened its doors to black athletes at a time when other sports refused to do so.

Meet the Rugby League Photographer
with Frank Orrell

Saturday 12 November, 12-1pm
£2.50, includes tea or coffee

In celebration of the Rugby League World Cup, join Frank Orrell, former photographer for the Wigan Evening Post, Wigan Observer, the Reporter group, and Rugby League newspaper for this fascinating illustrated event as he talks about images and time spent photographing Rugby League.

Archives: Wigan & Leigh

Events coming up at Archives: Wigan & Leigh.
Please book by calling 01942 404430,
email archives@wigan.gov.uk or search for ‘Archives:
Wigan & Leigh on Eventbrite’

A Game of Two Halves

Friday 8 July- Friday 30 September (Tues-Sat), 10am-1pm
& 1.30-4pm

Leigh will play host to the UEFA Women’s Euros 2022. To celebrate Archives: Wigan & Leigh will be showcasing stories and objects to celebrate women’s football and Euros past.

Playful Saturdays

Every Saturday, 10am-1pm & 1.30-4pm

Bring your little explorers along to Playful Saturdays at Leigh Town Hall and discover some of the secrets of the Archives! Have a go at building your own wacky invention inspired by the amazing inventors of Leigh, or maybe have a go at adding some colour to Archive photographs. It’s free and there’s no need to book!

Relaxed Saturdays & Sensory Storytelling

Last Saturday of the month: 27 August, 24 September,
29 October, 26 November, 10am-1pm

Come explore the history of Leigh and borough of Wigan in a relaxed and welcoming setting! There will be a sensory storytelling session with local a storyteller at 10.30am.

Town Hall Tours

Last Wednesday of the month: 31 August, 28 September,
27 October, 30 November, 11am (tours last approx. 1 hour)

Join a member of the Archives: Wigan & Leigh team for a behind the scenes tour of the historic Town Hall building.

Family Fun at Archives: Wigan & Leigh

Tuesday-Saturday, 10am-1pm & 1.30pm-4pm

Pop along to our exhibition space during the summer holidays for fun activities for all the family, including arts, crafts, Lego and more! It’s free and there’s no need to book.

A Very Fine Regiment: The 47th Foot in the 1770s

Saturday 6 August, 11am-12

The 47th Regiment of Foot (later The Lancashire Regiment) served throughout the whole of the American War of Independence. Who were the 47th Foot? How well did they overcome the challenges they faced? What became of them? Where they unthinking automatons lead by an officer class incapable of adapting to the reality of warfare in North America?

Heritage Open Days - Leigh Town Hall Tours

10 September, 17 September 2022, 11-11.30am, 12.30-1pm,
2.30-3pm

The annual Heritage Open Days will be returning in September. Leigh Town Hall will be opening its doors to the public and inviting you to Archives: Wigan & Leigh for a behind the scenes tour of the historic town hall building.

The Turnpike

Events coming up at The Turnpike Gallery.
Please book by calling 01942 404469, or email
theturnpikegallery@wigan.gov.uk

Turnpike Tots

Weekly on Wednesdays (Term-Time only)

Turnpike Tots is our creative play session for little artists aged 0-5 years and their grownup! Visit trybooking.co.uk/BOMV to book

Turnpike Community Garden Club

1st and 3rd Monday of the month, 1.30-3.30pm

Hands on gardening sessions for Leigh’s green-fingered locals to meet and develop their gardening skills in a relaxed and friendly setting. No gardening experience needed. Free

Art Tea

Year-round

Art Tea is a weekly creative wellbeing group for adults aged 50+

Beyond the Garden

Year-round

A year-round programme of workshops and activities taking inspiration from the seasons and local green spaces. Free

Open Eye Hub Assemblies

16 September, 12-2pm and 27 September, 6-8pm

A new space for photography, community and culture will be opening its doors in the centre for Leigh this autumn! Come and join our assembly meetings where you can have your say and help us shape how this space will be used. Food and refreshments will be provided. Free. No need to book.

Family-friendly local history exhibition open



**FREE
to visit**

**Tuesday-Saturday,
10am-1pm & 1.30pm-4pm**

✉ archives@wigan.gov.uk
📱 @ArchiveWigLeigh
📘 /ArchivesWiganLeigh
🌐 www.wigan.gov.uk/archives

