PASTFORWARD

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£2

Wigan and Leigh's local history magazine

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FRONT COVER

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Letter from the Editorial Team

Welcome to PAST **Forward** Issue 93.

We've had some great entries to the Barbara O'Neill writing competition, and we're delighted to share the top three picks with you in this issue. Julie McKiernan shares tales of heroism among the borough's working men, and Arthur Martland sketches out the beginnings of a history of LGBT+ people in Wigan. Alison Armfield and Barbara Roberts reminisce about the wonderful Wakes Week, fondly remembered by my parents' generation but sadly absent from mine. At least the Silcock's Fair still comes to Ashton market each year! Keep an eye out for the brilliant runner-up essays in issues to follow.

For the first time, Past Forward centres the voices of the borough's young people in a special colour section. Thanks to Sacred Heart and Britannia Bridge pupils and staff for engaging with this opportunity. I love Amy's piece on the hidden history of the Stork Inn in Billinge. Next time you pass that way at night, look out for the ghost of the Civil War soldier, and the rabid hell hound…

Enjoy!

BARBARA O'NEILL LOCAL HISTORY WRITING COMPETITION, 2023

We are delighted to announce the winners of the 2023 competition, sponsored by John O'Neill in memory of his wife Barbara. The judges would like to thank everyone who entered the competition and commend all the authors on the quality of research and writing in all the essays.

Our 2023 winners are:

1st Place: Julie McKiernan – History is Full of Surprises
2nd Place: Arthur Martland – Towards a Queer History of Wigan
3rd Place: Alison Armfield and Barbara Roberts – Roll Up! Roll Up! Wakes Week Starts Here!
Runner-Up: John Unsworth – The Police Sergeant and the Irishman: a Death in Custody
Runner-Up: Michael Caine – Lion's Bridge: Leigh's Bridge of Myths and Mythstakes
Runner-Up: Richard de Grijs – John and Walter F. MacKenzie, Acclaimed Wiganite Brothers Half a World Away
Runner-Up: Sue Gerrard – The Unsung Heroines of Wigan
Runner-Up: Alison Armfield – And the Band Plays On! Charlie Taylor, Brass Bandsman Extraordinaire

We will be publishing the prize-winning essays in the next couple of editions – look out for the first, second and third placed articles by Julie McKiernan, Arthur Martland, and Alison Armfield and Barbara Roberts in this issue.

We'd like to extend a warm welcome to the newest members of our Culture team.

Cameron



What are your local history and cultural interests?

There's not much I'm not interested in from the past! My biggest passion is Jacobitism in the local area, the Standish family left some remarkable documents for us! I also have a real love for social history – seeing how people lived, and the meaning everyday objects had to them over the ages, and how this changed over time really puts what I do into perspective. Culture wise, I am a lover of music: northern soul, rock and folk are my favourites!

Why did you want to work in this sector?

I've always loved museums and heritage and in fact volunteered in Wigan Local Studies during my A-Levels, mostly on First World War commemoration projects. I have since completed internships at the Harris Museum and helped to give local tours of Lancaster. There's something about bringing the past to life that always brings me back to working in the sector but especially in the Northwest where our local history is so vibrant and unique!

Fiona



What are your local history and cultural interests?

I studied sociology and media at university and have a keen interest in the topics of class and gender. I enjoy researching the lives of ordinary local folk and thinking about what social factors have shaped their life experiences. I especially like to work with newspapers to see the changes in how we viewed social life and how it was talked about – it can be quite shocking to see what we used to report upon and what was deemed appropriate!

Why did you choose to work in this sector?

I have always had a keen interest in history and analysing our past. Via my role I can continue doing this and I also get to help others do the same – it is very rewarding to help people unravel the past, especially when it comes to family history as it can mean so much to people. I like this sector and chose to work in it as those who engage with archives are passionate about what they do, and this makes it a very fun work environment.

Andrea



What are your local history and cultural interests?

My interest in the past developed from childhood, listening to reminiscences and memories of older relatives and family friends. I later studied for a degree in history with social policy before moving on to teach history in the secondary school sector. I'm particularly interested in social and working-class history, the lives of ordinary people, their experiences and periods of unrest.

Why did you choose to work in this sector?

Following a long career in education, I'm now looking forward to revisiting my passion for local history and the arts. Joining the Archives and Turnpike teams offers a fantastic opportunity to explore the lives and events which shaped the area where I live. I'm looking forward to learning more about the preservation of documents and artefacts from around the region and facilitating access to the many cultural and heritage opportunities on offer throughout the borough.

Farewell to Sally...



In March, the Culture Team said a sad goodbye to Sally Smith, who has been Business Partner for Culture, Arts and Heritage since May 2019. Sally has been a major contributor to the delivery of the Fire Within manifesto, Wigan's partnership with its twin town, Angers, and the Revealing Wigan Archives project, as well as being a hugely supportive manager to many members of the Culture Team. She's heading off to be Manager of Towneley Hall, Lancashire, and we wish her every success. Sally, your warmth, humour and expertise will be sorely missed.

And a welcome back to Jane...



I am pleased to re-join the team after a stint working in libraries. As I was at one time employed by 'The Society of Genealogists' I'm particularly interested in social history and helping our visitors trace their family trees.

Copy deadline for Issue 94 – Contributors please note the deadline for the receipt of material for publication is Friday 16 June 2023.

History is full of surprises

By Julie McKiernan

History is full of surprises. And so is research! It's amazing what you can discover when sifting through old newspaper articles.

As part of *The Mine Is Yours* project at the Lancashire Mining Museum, I was researching information for local mining trails in the Archives at Leigh Town Hall. In one of several boxes, I came across a small article about a local man, John Alfred Hughes, receiving the Order of Industrial Heroism Medal. This award, nicknamed 'the Workers' VC', was created by the socialist *Daily Herald* newspaper in 1923 to recognise 'Deeds of Valour' by ordinary workers 'who had saved their fellow workers from danger of death'.[1] The newspaper introduced the award in response to public outrage at the paltry £17 reward shared by four dockworkers who had extinguished a major fire at Liverpool docks.[2]

The fine bronze medal with a red ribbon was designed by the sculptor, Eric Gill, and featured an image of St Christopher bearing the Christ Child.[3] It was also accompanied by a decorated certificate. Four hundred and forty awards were made until 1963 when the *Daily Herald* ceased publication and was replaced by *The Sun*. One hundred and twenty-eight of the awards were made to miners, hardly surprising given the dangerous nature of their job. Sadly, many were awarded posthumously but John Alfred Hughes had been alive to receive his and, as I discovered through further research, he wasn't the only local man to receive one.

The twenty-first medal was awarded to Samuel Jones in May 1925 at a meeting of the Leigh Trades and Labour Council at Leigh Labour Club.[4] It was presented by Joseph Tinker M.P., who had himself started work in the mines at the age of ten.[5]

Jones, a married man, of 38 Westleigh Lane, Westleigh, worked at Priestners Pit as an employee of the Wigan Coal and Iron Company. On 25 June



A Daily Herald Order of Industrial Heroism awarded to Samuel Jones, a miner from Westleigh

1924, he had just left the coal face to empty his tub when fellow miner Zakaria Hurst of Hindley Green was suddenly buried by a roof fall. Jones heard the cry of alarm and rushed back only to find his horrified work mates bemoaning that there was no hope for Hurst. Ignoring them, Jones 'pushed between the pack and the stacks, squeezed himself over the debris, and released Hurst from his dangerous position, bringing him after a time to safety. There was great danger to both men, as all the time the place was filling up owing to the pressure of the roof.'[6] Hurst was laid up for ten months as a result of his injuries but did return to work.

Tinker described Jones' deed as 'one of the greatest acts of heroism he had ever known in his life. It would require the greatest act of moral

courage to go into the place.'[7] Unfortunately, I have been unable to trace any of Jones' descendants. But his medal became part of the W.H. Fevyer Collection[8] which came up for auction in 1985, along with a photograph of Jones and some newspaper cuttings.[9] It would be nice to think that they had been cherished by members of his family for many years after his death.

The family of John Alfred Hughes (Alf) do still have his medal, which was the 321st to be awarded. Hughes, of 16 Oak Street, Tyldesley, was a pit deputy at Astley Green Colliery in February 1956 when George Brian Walker, a thirty-year-old electrician, was repairing a mechanical coal cutting and conveying machine. When Walker was accidentally caught by the chain of the conveyor belt and fell 'Hughes dived and threw his arms around Walker, just as the machine began to draw the man under. By bracing his feet against a pit prop, Hughes was able to keep a hold on Walker, while someone ran to stop the machine. In less than a minute, the cutter had torn off one of Walker's boots and dragged him with Hughes after, under the cutting machine up to his chest. But for Hughes' presence of mind and instant action, Walker would have been torn to pieces.'[10]

Hughes received his award in June 1956 at Astley & Tyldesley Miners' Welfare Institute (Gin Pit Club). The award was presented by the Chairman of Tyldesley Council, Cllr. M. Devlin JP, who was also the president of the local branch of the National Association of Colliery Overmen, Deputies and Shotfirers. Afterwards, 'Veteran pitmen in the welfare club shouted: "Speak up, lad." And, so, the modest, quiet spoken "lad" raised his voice just enough for them to hear him say: "This is the night of my life and the finest award I can have is that he is sitting by my side." "He" was George Brian Walker.'[11]

Besides the award, Hughes also received a *Daily Herald* cheque and gifts from the Tyldesley branch of the NUM and the Colliery Overmen, Deputies and Shotfirers' Association, including a gold watch, a shaving kit, and a silver pen. It is believed that Walker left the area soon afterwards, but Hughes named his youngest son George Brian after him, and he now has his father's medal.

I had never heard of the Order of Industrial Heroism Medal and nor had any of the ex-miners that I spoke to during my research. Sadly, the



Alfred Hughes holding his Order of Industrial Heroism certificate, 1956

volunteers at the Lancashire Mining Museum had not heard of Hughes' act of bravery either so it seemed fitting to remember it in a dramatic performance at *The Mine is Yours* festival in October 2022. I wrote a monologue for Walker in which he searches for Hughes to buy him a pint:

'The whole world should know who Alf Hughes is! I'd say he's my hero but that word ain't big enough. I mean what do you call a man who saved your life? Heroes are what you see at the pictures aren't they? Like Charlton Heston in "The Ten Commandments". Not some softly spoken bloke who enjoys a pint down the Legion and talks about his kids.' [12]

Here's to the memory of two local heroes!

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12. *'Have You See Alf?' By Julie McKiernan*

TOWARDS A QUEER HISTORY OF WIGAN

BY ARTHUR MARTLAND

Wigan has a long queer history, as do most other places in the UK. But where is it? And why is it not more widely known? At present all that has been identified would seem to be a few stray events, which are all in need of much further research. Not only is the paucity of historical records a problem, but also the fact that what has often been recorded has been penned by those who despise their queer brethren. Moreover, that which has been recorded is predominantly concerning queer men. Where is the history of queer women, or of those who identify otherwise?

With regard to earlier records, there is a preponderance of criminal trials, usually accompanied by moralising cant and disparaging language. Few records produced by queer people themselves in Wigan have come to light so far, but, fingers crossed, there are some awaiting discovery.

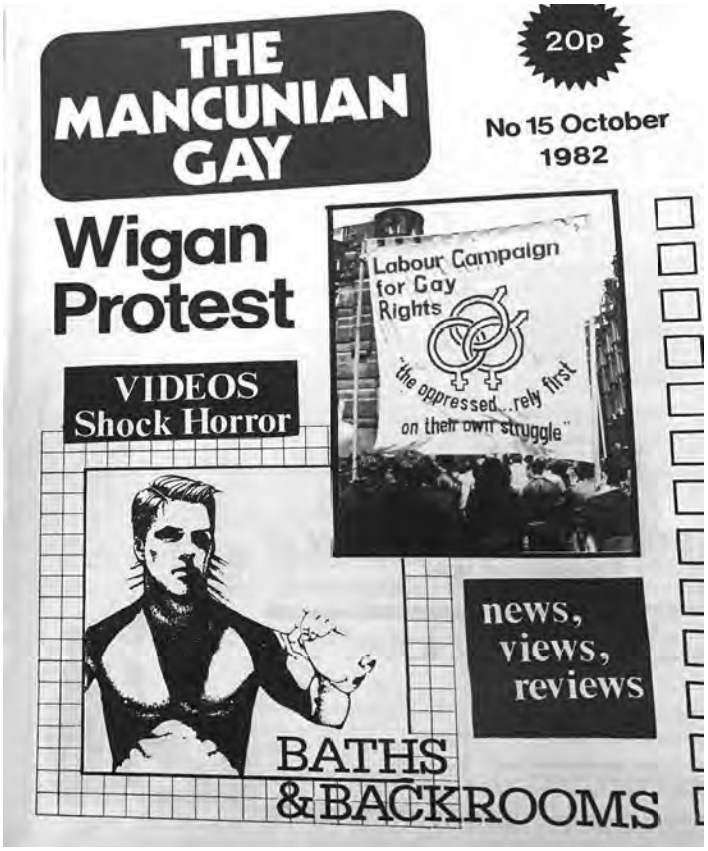
The purpose of this article is to set out what little I have gleaned to date, which I hope I and others are able to expand upon through further research and discoveries that will deliver a more comprehensive queer history of our borough than is currently available.

The earliest record that has come to light is an indictment from 1760, wherein Ralph Harrison was accused of 'that most detestable horrid and Sodomitical crime called buggery' at Wigan. At that time, a guilty verdict meant a death sentence would be imposed; to date, however, Harrison's fate remains unknown.



The Vere Street at the Pillory in 1810

In 1806 Isaac Hitchin's house at Great Sankey was raided by the authorities on suspicion of it being a 'molly house' (a term used at that time, and much earlier, to denote a house where queer men could meet others like them). A group of men were arrested, but many also escaped capture. Of those who did escape, records suggest that one was the scion of a local Wigan area landowning family. Of those arrested, all from lower class backgrounds, five were subsequently convicted at



The Mancunian Gay Magazine, 1982

the Lancaster Assizes and hanged. The two magistrates, whose evangelical zeal had fired their drive to root out Sodomites in Great Sankey, wanted to continue their inquiries into several well-placed 'gentlemen' who lived locally, however local nobility lobbied the Home Office and the magistrates' enquiries were swiftly curtailed.

At the Lancaster Assizes the following year, 1807, a man was convicted of attempting to 'commit an unnatural crime' at Wigan. He was sentenced to two years imprisonment and to stand on the pillory. For details regarding what cruelty pillorying entailed, I would refer the reader to research the punishment meted out to the queer men who met in Vere Street in London in 1810.

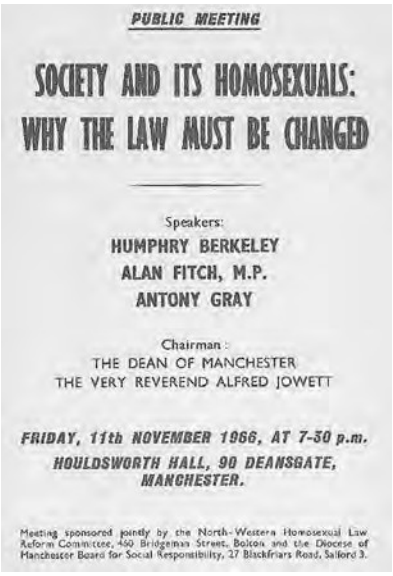
The persecution of those suspected of being queer in the Wigan area continued throughout the nineteenth century, with specific cases being identified in 1813, 1821 and 1847 (two cases).

In addition to the prosecution of queer men in the nineteenth century, there were people in the Wigan area who came to the

notice of the authorities as they chose to live, at least part, if not all, of their adult lives as members of the opposite sex. In 1860 the press reported a 'Singular Case of concealment of Sex' in its reporting of the life of John Murphy, who, whilst living his life as a man, was said to have been born a female by the name of Betty Lavin. And whilst the sensationally reported cases of Boulton and Park in London received daily national coverage when it was revealed that the two men had dressed as women and had paraded themselves across the capital, allegedly inviting other men to 'conspire to commit sodomy', similar cases of men attired as women for the suspected purpose of soliciting sexual contacts from other men were also reported in Tyldesley (1871) and in Wigan (1872).

In addition to the specific laws against buggery and sodomy in the Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1886, a new offence of 'gross indecency' was formulated that criminalised virtually any sexual contacts between men whether in private or otherwise. This law was used to prosecute queer men in Wigan right up to the 1960s. One particular case however, in 1929, was against a local rugby player, who had played for both Leigh and Wigan clubs, and who had even represented England in the English International Rugby Team of 1910. His prosecution was widely reported and destroyed his career and reputation. On conviction he was sent to prison for eight months with hard labour and he seems never to have recovered from the trauma.

Arresting queer men for alleged acts of gross indecency, intensified after the Second World War, most notably during the 1950s thanks to the encouragement of a particularly homophobic Conservative Home Secretary, Sir David Maxwell Fyfe, and the widespread use of police entrapment. Incidentally, whilst Fyfe appointed the Wolfenden Committee, he did so in the belief that the committee would support the continued criminalisation of queer people. Thankfully, the committee, after considering the laws against male homosexual activity, recommended that acts between consenting adults be decriminalised. Some politicians from both the Labour and Conservative Parties did not accept the committee's proposals and continued to oppose reform. However, support for change was given by the, then, MP for Wigan, Alan Fitch.


PUBLIC MEETING

SOCIETY AND ITS HOMOSEXUALS: WHY THE LAW MUST BE CHANGED

Speakers:
HUMPHRY BERKELEY
ALAN FITCH, M.P.
ANTONY GRAY

Chairman:
THE DEAN OF MANCHESTER
THE VERY REVEREND ALFRED JOWETT

FRIDAY, 11th NOVEMBER 1966, AT 7-30 p.m.
HOULDSWORTH HALL, 90 DEANSGATE, MANCHESTER.

Meeting sponsored jointly by the North-Western Homosexual Law Reform Committee, 460 Bridgeman Street, Bolton and the Diocese of Manchester Board for Social Responsibility, 27 Blackfriars Road, Salford 3.

Pamphlet created by the North Western Homosexual Law Reform Committee (People's History Museum)

In 1958, local Atherton gay rights hero, Alan Horsfall, helped to set up the Homosexual Law Reform Society, which subsequently became the Campaign for Homosexual Equality (CHE) and in 1974, at a meeting in Pemberton, the Wigan CHE local group was founded.

As highlighted earlier, up to the 1950s, the most widely available historical records concerning queer Wiganers have come from police and court records; this presents obvious difficulties for the historian having to rely often only on the

Death certificate for John Murphy


CERTIFIED COPY OF AN ENTRY OF DEATH

Given at the GENERAL REGISTER OFFICE

Application Number 9335899-1

REGISTRATION DISTRICT Wigan

1860 DEATH in the Sub-district of Wigan in the County of Lancaster

No.	When and where died	Name and surname	Sex	Age	Occupation	Cause of Death	Signature, description and residence of informant	When registered	Signature of Registrar
205	Twenty sixth December 1860 34 Nicholas Nook off Scholes Street	John Murphy	Male	57 years	Hand loom Cotton Weaver	Natural decay Certified	James Thompson In attendance 34 Nicholas Nook off Scholes Street Wigan	Twenty seventh December 1860	Robert Halliwell Registrar

No. 205 Column 2 for "John Murphy" substitute "Betty Lavin" and in Column 3 for "Male" substitute "Female" Corrected on the Ninth January 1861 by me Robert Halliwell Registrar in the presence of James Thompson X The mark of John Bamber

CERTIFIED to be a true copy of an entry in the certified copy of a Register of Deaths in the District above mentioned.

Given at the GENERAL REGISTER OFFICE, under the Seal of the said Office, the Twelfth day of July 2016

DAZ 096056

CAUTION: THERE ARE OFFENCES RELATING TO FALSIFYING OR ALTERING A CERTIFICATE AND USING OR POSSESSING A FALSE CERTIFICATE. © CROWN COPYRIGHT

WARNING: A CERTIFICATE IS NOT EVIDENCE OF IDENTITY

records kept by those who abhorred and detested queer people. Actual records from queer Wiganers are virtually unknown until recent times, but some self-written records have come to light. In 1986 Kenneth Barrow set up the National Lesbian and Gay Survey to collect autobiographical reports from the community, and the anonymous survey correspondent no 532, was a born Wiganer who reported their experience of growing up gay in the Wigan of the 1950s and 1960s. The current 'Legacy of '67 Project' run by Mancunian artist, Jez Dolan and his partner, David Martin, is collecting oral histories of queer people and has included at least one recording from Wigan; hopefully more will follow.

The latter end of the twentieth century saw great improvements in the legal and social position of queer people, but the struggle for basic rights was by no means easy, with many setbacks, especially following the introduction of Section 28 by the Conservative Government in 1988 (the notorious Section 28 stated that a local authority 'shall not intentionally promote homosexuality or publish material with the intention of promoting homosexuality' nor 'promote the teaching in any maintained school of the acceptability of homosexuality as a pretended family relationship'). This Section remained in place in England until 2003. Whilst the Section revealed to some the true nature of the 'nasty party', Labour politicians too were split on their support for gay rights, as could be shown earlier when, in 1982, Wigan councillors voted to prevent information about gay support services from being distributed in their area. Thankfully times and minds did change and now we have full council support for both the Leigh and Wigan Pride events.

Hopefully you can see that there are some important starting points emerging for a queer history of the borough, which, with further research, will give a fuller picture of our shared lives.

Footnote

The word 'queer', which in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries was widely used as a derogatory term for a gay man, has in recent decades begun to be reclaimed from its former pejorative use to become a positive self-identifier by LGBTQI people. 'Queer' is widely employed by artists and academics as an umbrella term to refer to all things non-heteronormative. Thus, 'queer' is often used to describe any sexual orientation or gender identity that is not heterosexual nor cisgender. For example, people who are lesbian, gay, asexual, or transgender may identify as queer.

Roll Up! Roll Up!
Wakes Week Starts Here!



BY ALISON ARMFIELD AND BARBARA ROBERTS

'It's here! The Wakes! It's here!' As a teenage girl living in a small market/mill town in the north of England in the 1960s, these words heralded the arrival of Silcock's Travelling Fair bringing excitement, fun, loud music, and the smell of hot dogs and onions to our town for a whole week. The Waltzer, the Big Wheel, the Whiplash and most exciting of all, the Speedway where the more daring amongst us defied all rules and regulations by standing up as the ride gathered speed, threatening to eject us into the onlooking crowd at any moment! Such an atmosphere, busy, noisy, colourful. Even the rain and the mud didn't put us off. Then there were 'Black Peas' - pigeon peas boiled until they went mushy resembling grey slutch, which were then enthusiastically eaten with vinegar. Oh, all the fun of the fair!

Silcock's fair started in the 1880s. One of its earliest endeavours was to pitch fairground games outside the coal mines in Wigan to entertain miners as they left work. During the Second World War the fair was a feature of Warrington Potato Market, part of the government initiative 'Holiday at Home!', which encouraged people to stay at home. Priority travel needed to be given to military personnel. Following the war, travelling fairs were seen as special celebrations. Certainly as a teenager in the sixties the annual Wakes Week was just that. It wasn't until some years later that I realised that the phrase 'Wakes Week' didn't exclusively refer to the funfair.

In England in the Middle Ages a wake was a parish festival in commemoration of the patron saint of the local church. It was the custom to hold a yearly night vigil in the church on the eve of the festival. Over the years in the north of England, especially in Lancashire with its proliferation of factories and mills, Wakes Week was the name given to specific weeks in the year when all the factories and mills were shut down for necessary maintenance work. These annual closures became a festive tradition which was later extended to the retail trade resulting in a wave of 'ghost towns' spreading across the county from July through to September each year.

Travelling fairs became fixed features of each town's Wakes Week. Historically a popular local venue for Silcock's Travelling Fair was Leigh Church Fields, a large open green space surrounding and owned by the Parish Church of St Mary the Virgin. It was available to the local community for public events. Leigh Agricultural Association held its annual competition there and it was also used for cricket matches and

treat days out for local schools. Much of the original area known as Church Fields has been sold off. Silcock's fair however continues the tradition of Wakes Week by travelling around the Northwest. When visiting Leigh, it can be found on Leigh Road between Kwik Fit and the petrol station, which is land within the boundaries of the old Church Fields. This land is now owned by Silcock's.



Silcock's Travelling Fair

From the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries fairgrounds such as Silcock's became so popular that permanent fairgrounds began to appear along the Fylde Coast, the most famous being Blackpool Pleasure Beach. The founders stated their intention as 'creating a place where adults can feel like children again'. This was an astute business plan. The factory and mill workers toiled hard all year. Wakes Week became something that was eagerly looked forward to. Folk saved all year round in order to make the most of the annual break from the drudgery of everyday life. Various schemes came on the back of this such as savings opportunities in pubs, community clubs, 'Going Off' clubs, and the introduction of paid holidays.

Blackpool, with its theatres and end of pier summer shows, became the place to head for. It was said that George Formby, the well-known variety performer who was born in Wigan, loved Blackpool and paid tribute to the town with his song 'With Me Little Stick of Blackpool Rock'. Contributory factors to Blackpool's popularity were the expansion of the rail network and the long held belief amongst the working classes of northern England of the health benefits of bathing in the sea. Indeed, my own parents tested out the 'physic in the sea' theory when, at the age of three weeks I contracted whooping cough. The three of us regularly travelled to Blackpool to follow the tide out, the hope being that it would take my cough with it!

Entire towns took to the coast by train or charabanc, whether for a day or a week. Blackpool boasted hundreds of 'digs' offering multiple bedrooms, a communal dining area, and shared bathroom and toilet facilities. A far cry from the holiday accommodation standards we all take for granted today. However, grocery chains of the time could be seen as the forerunners of today's supermarket home delivery services. In the 1920s landladies cooked guests' own food which they brought with them, treating themselves to luxuries such as tinned salmon, tinned pears and Carnation Cream. The James Duckworth grocery chain encouraged them to place food orders at their local store. This would be phoned through to the Blackpool branch and the food would be delivered to the holiday address in time for the guests' arrival.

A lot has changed over the last hundred years or so. The decline of mills, factories and collieries has had an impact on Wakes Week. The holiday aspect has disappeared as continental travel has become the norm and the advent of twenty-four hour supermarket shopping means the independent local high street retailers are redundant. As such Wakes Week is an unknown phenomenon to our youngsters but one feature survives – the fun fair! Locally 'the Wakes' now refers exclusively to the twice yearly visits of Silcock's fun fair and the rallying cry of 'It's here! The Wakes! It's here' can still be heard across the Borough.

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Douglas Chapel

Over Six Hundred Years of Service

DR STEPHEN CRAIG SMITH

Douglas Chapel served the needs of the Douglas Valley community within the vicinity of Parbold, Hill Dale, High Moor, Wrightington, and Appley Bridge for over six hundred years. It stood on a plot of land 150 yards north of the riverbank, about half a mile east of Parbold village and two miles west of Appley Bridge. Exactly when the chapel was founded is uncertain. The earliest known reference to the chapel relates to one 'John, Priest of Douglas' dated 1240, (Price 1895) so the chapel was founded sometime prior to that. Its official name before the Reformation was 'Chapel of our Blessed Lady, Parbold' and was a chapel-of-ease to Eccleston Parish Church located some five and a half miles to the north.

As seen on the adjacent map, the ancient Parish of Eccleston was large, incorporating the townships of Eccleston, Heskin, Wrightington, and Parbold. It extended almost six miles from north to south, and between two and three miles east to west. Large parishes incorporating more than one township were a common feature of early Lancashire because when the county came into being in 1182 it had a very small and thinly scattered population, estimated by historian J. J. Bagley (1982) to be in the order of just 10,000.

Lancashire was initially divided into just seventy-five church parishes whereas counties of comparable size in the more populous Midlands and southern England were each divided into anything between 300 and 400 parishes! Large parishes were inconvenient when church attendance for Sunday services, baptisms, marriages, and funeral services required lengthy return journeys, usually on foot, and this was certainly a significant problem for those living in the south of the parish near the River Douglas.

Folklore gives two possible origins for this chapel. One is



that the chapel was built to commemorate a victory of the Saxons over the marauding Danes following a Danish incursion up the River Douglas, and the other is that the chapel was founded by the Knights of St John who held land nearby for the use of their tenants. Unfortunately, there is no convincing evidence to support either suggestion (Virgo 1994). The most likely and logical reason why the chapel was founded was for the convenience of inhabitants living on the southern periphery of Eccleston parish.

The chapel was most likely founded by the Latham family who became significant landowners in this part of Lancashire following the Norman Conquest of 1066. For many centuries, the Latham family was closely associated with both Parbold and the Douglas Chapel. Records show that one Sir Thomas de Latham gave the Manor of Parbold to his son Edward in 1364 and a later descendant, also called Edward, styled himself Edward Latham of Parbold who asserted that he and his Latham ancestors had been *'with-out tyme of mynde founders and patrons of the said chapel.'* Almost nothing would be known of this 'now lost chapel' but for the good



The chapel shortly before demolition

fortune that William Price, son of William Price Snr., undertook some extensive research into the history of the chapel in the early 1870s shortly before its final demise. He started his research by saying *'…my personal recollections of Douglas Chapel extend from the year 1860 to 1874, during the incumbency of my father, the Late Rev. W. Price, during which period I was a chorister in the chapel.'*

The chapel was built of locally quarried Millstone Grit and had a mean and somewhat barn-like appearance, being blocked on the north side by Chapel House Inn which in all probability stood on the site of the original residence of the chantry priest. It was a rectangular building, extensively buttressed to ensure its structural safety. Located on the River Douglas flood plain it was subject to periodic flooding and erosion affecting its immediate surrounds.

The two large windows set within its eastern wall were of a different height suggesting that at some time after initial construction the chapel had been widened. There was no known graveyard attached to the chapel although a few persons were interred within the chapel itself at various times.

The roof was supported internally by six solid oak pillars resting on octagonal stone bases seen clearly in the interior photograph. These pillars were roughly hewn and not sawn suggesting considerable age. Of the two large east facing windows the one on the south side of the chapel (right of photograph) was lower than the one on the north side (left of photograph) corroborating the theory that at one time the building was in two sections, each under different roofs. The only entrance to the chapel was an arched doorway at the northwest corner, the door was of massive construction comprising double oak planks riveted together with iron studs.

Against the north wall was a carved pulpit also resting on an octagonal stone pillar, and in front of the pulpit was an oak panelled reading desk dated 1648. Later internal additions to the original structure included two galleries, one on the south side and one at the west end, built sometime around 1810 to accommodate pupils attending a local boarding school in Parbold Hall. After this conversion, the chapel had seating room for 440 worshippers.

The chapel was totally devoid of any coat of arms, tablets, brasses, or monuments, and suffered badly during



The chapel interior shortly before demolition

the English Civil War when Parliamentary forces are believed to have stabled their horses within the chapel overnight on their way to the siege of Latham House in 1644.

A summing up the chapel's six hundred years of evolution is as follows. Of the original chapel built prior to 1240 nothing is known. Sometime in the early 1400s a small rectangular stone chapel replaced the earlier demolished structure, and this underwent an extension on its northern side under a separate roof around a hundred years later. Further restoration took place in the seventeenth century putting the entire building under one roof, and further internal alterations took place during the early years of the nineteenth century.

As the nineteenth century progressed, the chapel-of-ease was granted more and more autonomy from the mother church and was being increasingly used by people living outside Eccleston Parish. Inhabitants of Newburgh rented pews in the chapel until Newburgh acquired its own parish church in 1852, and residents in Dalton, south of the river, also rented pews. In 1862 the London Gazette announced the establishment of a District Chapelry of Douglas facilitating the publication of banns, baptisms, churchings, and burials to be solemnised.

During the nineteenth century, with a rapid increase in population, many of the large ancient church parishes were sub-divided, Eccleston being no exception. The township of Parbold and the southern part of the township of Wrightington, which included the expanding industrial village of Appley Bridge, were placed in a separate church parish. Given the age and isolated location of the old chapel a new church was considered desirable.

A new church was possible thanks to the generosity of two individuals. Sir Thomas Fermor Hesketh of Rufford donated a plot of land for a new church higher up the valley side from the original chapel. Miss Ellen Morris of Fairhurst Hall donated much of the money required to construct the church which became Christ Church – Douglas-in-Parbold. The new church was consecrated on Thursday 28 October 1875 and the purpose of Douglas Chapel finally came to an end.



Site of the Douglas Chapel

The chapel was demolished in 1878 with much of the stone reused in building a local school adjacent to the new church. All that stands today on the chapel site is a stone monument surrounded by a few old houses. This can easily be found by walking from the centre of Parbold along the Leeds and Liverpool canal bank in the direction of Wigan until you come to Chapel Bridge (the second bridge you come to) and taking the short track called Chapel Lane down to the river.

No better epitaph could be found for the Douglas Chapel than the following words written by William Price shortly after its demolition: *'After having stood the storms of centuries and survived some of the most revolutionary periods of English history, this ancient fabric succumbed at last to nineteenth century 'progress' so that of it there is scarcely one stone left upon another.'*

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MAKE SOME NOISE in the Museum of Wigan Life

Make Some Noise – from Stage Door to Dance Floor is now open at the Museum of Wigan Life and will be in residency throughout 2023, celebrating Wigan Borough's unique history of music and entertainment.

Dynamic displays bring to life the incredible range of musical genres our towns call their own, from the great jazz musicians who made our International Jazz Festival an annual hit, through to the local bands and choirs whose stories are steeped in our towns' industrial heritage. The museum proudly celebrates thriving new local bands too, including The Lathums, The Facades, and Lottery Winners. Never-before-seen objects from George Formby, The Verve, Buzzcocks, Starsailor, and many more will also be on show.

The exhibition explores Wigan Borough's renowned Northern Soul scene. As Wigan Casino celebrates fifty years since its first record span this September, visitors can see a wide variety of badges, posters and even the bags and jackets worn to the legendary all-nighters.

We are currently exploring the history of cinemas and theatres, with Wigan boasting a wealth of first-class venues over the years including the Royal Court, the Princess, the Empire, the Ritz/ABC and Wigan Hippodrome, which hosted a variety of talent both local and international. Every three months this part of the exhibition will evolve, covering festivals and carnivals later in the year.

Each section features sound pods playing top-ten setlists to spark your musical memories and get your feet tapping. In our centre stage area, there will also be an opportunity for families to pick an instrument or two and make a start on a new musical journey.

The museum has an exciting programme of events and family-friendly activities to accompany the exhibition throughout the year, with something for everyone. You can find out more information on our social media channels or www.visitwigan.com/Whats-on.aspx

Make Some Noise will be on until January 2024. It is **free to visit**, and open Tuesday-Saturday, 10am-4pm.

Images

1. Northern Soul and Stage and Screen are both showcased here.
2. A visitor enjoying our top ten playlist.
3. Northern Soul records, patches and tickets, 1973-1981.
4. Local Talent and our Community Voice sections featuring a sound pod to listen to local brass bands and choirs.

Volunteers' Voice

Welcome to the volunteers' page of Past Forward! Across all our cultural and heritage sites, a team of volunteers work hard cleaning, transcribing, and listing our collections. They are always coming across interesting items and stories, so this is the space where they can share their discoveries.

SIDETRACKED WHILE VOLUNTEERING

BY GLENYS McCLELLAN

I am one of the volunteers helping to index the names of people who were in the care of the Wigan Poor Law Union between 1837 and 1930.

The Wigan Poor Law Union administered the Wigan Workhouse in Frog Lane, Billinge Infirmary (later known as Billinge Hospital), and the farm now known as Greenslate Farm. The minute books for all the various committees that met each month are an insight into the social history of the time.

We are indexing those who were known as inmates of the workhouse, or those who were receiving relief and maintenance elsewhere, as admission and discharge registers for the workhouse do not survive. However, whilst searching for their names and details, we see all the other aspects of running the Union. There was a Visiting Committee that checked if a home would be suitable for a young person to be looked after by a relative rather than in the workhouse. Another committee lists the purchases made and the contracts for painting, decorating, and maintenance of all the buildings. There was one committee specially for the running of the farm which supplied food to the workhouse and where some



Entrance to the Wigan Workhouse, Frog Lane

of the inmates worked. All appointments of nurses and the relieving officers are also listed.

Each month there is a record of the names of those admitted to the workhouse, sometimes with their name and address. Another list gives the names of those who had died during the previous month. There are also records of people who have been transferred to the county mental hospitals at Winwick, Rainhill and Lancaster. These would still be maintained by the local Poor Law Union which could be Wigan or one of the outlying districts like Ashton, Standish or Upholland.

There are requests from relatives asking for the return of their loved ones' clothing or any monies they may have had with them when they were admitted. Some of the requests make me laugh – someone asked for a person's false teeth! Others ask for expenses for travelling to the hospitals in Manchester or Liverpool.

I do get side-tracked when I find an interesting entry such as the following:

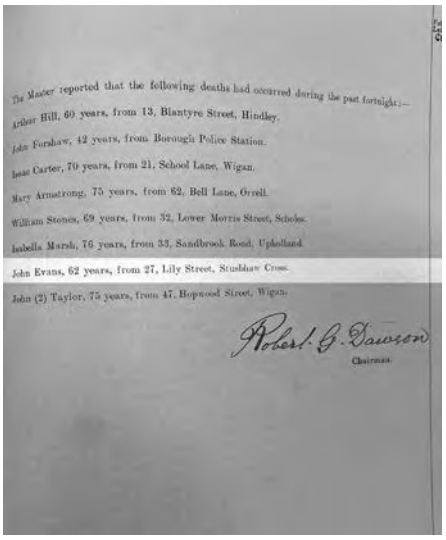
General Purposes Committee May 1926
'A letter from Dr. Barnodo's Home was read, stating that they had not been able to include the girl, Annie Elliott, in their party which sails to Australia on 11th instant (Feb.) after being passed by the Australian Authorities as a suitable emigrant she has been rejected on the grounds that she has not been two months under their care. In the circumstances it is presumed that this Board would like the girl to remain in their care until the next party sails at the rate of 10s 0d. per week for her maintenance.'

I am also a volunteer on the Leigh Family History Society's Help Desk at the Archives in Leigh Town Hall, so I had to look into the family of this girl. I found a girl's birth on the General Register Office index, www.gro.gov.uk, born in the April quarter of 1913. The other index I used to check a birth, www.lancsbmd.org.uk, gave the mother's maiden name as Phillips. I looked for her parents' marriage that had taken place in 1904. Then I found the 1911 Census for the family showing that they were living at 21 Victoria Yard, off Delegate Street, Lower Ince. By then they had three children, and their father was an engine stoker for the L.N.W. Railway. I cannot really confirm if this is the correct family without sending for the birth certificate of Annie to check the parents' full names, but in 1914 a Richmond Elliott (the father) died. However, I checked and found more births to this mother after the death of Richmond, so cannot really confirm if this is the right family, but it still intrigued me as to why this young girl was now in the care of the Dr Barnardo's organisation.

Plodding on with my indexing, I wondered what would happen to Annie and eventually, in the July minutes, I discovered another letter from Dr Barnardo's Homes mentioning that Annie was likely to sail in October 1926. I did find her on the passenger list for the THEMISTOCLES included in the party of nineteen young people, aged between thirteen and eighteen years old, that left on 11 September 1926.

I pondered where she would end up on her arrival in Australia and was so pleased when the next entry that mentioned her was a letter from Dr Barnardo's Homes stating, 'arrangements made to handover Annie Elliott to her aunt Mrs Sydney Smith, Repton, Bellinger Rive, New South Wales.' She had not gone to a school for emigrant children but to a relative. Now how do I find what happened next?

Finally, after years of transcribing the minutes of these committees to enable other people to find out more about their families, I decided it was time to ask the friendly, helpful staff if they could bring up from the storeroom the minute book for 1917. I was rewarded to find the entry of my great-grandfather's death, John Evans, in March 1917. At last a connection to my own family in Archives: Wigan & Leigh.


The Master reported that the following deaths had occurred during the past fortnight:—
Arbor Hill, 60 years, from 13, Blantyre Street, Hindley.
John Forshaw, 42 years, from Borough Police Station.
Isaac Carter, 70 years, from 21, School Lane, Wigan.
Mary Armstrong, 75 years, from 62, Bell Lane, Orrell.
William Stones, 69 years, from 32, Lower Morris Street, Scholes.
Isabella Marsh, 76 years, from 33, Sandbrook Road, Upholland.
John Evans, 62 years, from 27, Lily Street, Stubshaw Cross.
John (2) Taylor, 75 years, from 47, Hopwood Street, Wigan.
Robert G. Dawson
Chairman.

Excerpt from the Wigan Guardians' minute book, 1917, showing the death of John Evans

Journey's End

By Brian Joyce

Coal was discovered in East Kent during excavations for an abortive Channel Tunnel project in the 1890s. However, exploitation of these deposits did not properly begin until after the Great War when collieries were opened at Betteshanger, Snowdown, Tilmanstone and Chislet.

Although many Kent men were recruited into this expanding new industry, experienced miners from other parts of the country flocked to the Dover and Deal areas. As the Leigh Journal observed in 1928, many of these emigrants were 'well satisfied with their new situation, the pleasant surroundings and the more congenial climate of the southern county'.

One such was a miner who, in 1926, wrote a letter to the Leigh Journal signing himself J. Balmer, formerly of Briggs Street in the town. He recounted his experiences since moving.

Balmer's eight hour train journey from Leigh to Dover had cost him thirty-five shillings. On arrival, he took an eight-mile bus journey to Tilmanstone. He revealed that some new arrivals, far from being 'well satisfied with their new situation', were disillusioned with the old-fashioned looking colliery, and returned home.



Chislett Colliery (Courtesy of Dover Museum and Bronze Age Boat Gallery)

Balmer stayed on though, working alongside exiles from the other English and Welsh mining districts, who, like him, relished the idea of a fresh start. He told readers that scores were from Wigan, and the colliery manager had pointed out a man who had walked all the way to Kent. Balmer lived in a two hundred bed hostel in a converted mansion which he likened to Pennington Hall. He was impressed by the good food and beds, the reading and concert rooms, and the baths, which were in an out-building.

Positive reports like this encouraged others to flock south on spec, only to be disappointed. When some Leigh men presented themselves at Snowdown Colliery in 1928, for example, they were turned away because there were no vacancies. The Leigh newspapers warned their readers not to be tempted into travelling unless they had a definite job offer organised by a local Labour Exchange.

Exaggerated expectations that the streets of Kentish pit villages were paved with gold were satirised in dialect by the anonymous columnist 'Tom Picktub' in the Leigh Journal:

'Aw t' pit brow women go t' pit wi' Russian boots and horn rim specs and they pick dirt off screens wi' fire tongs.' Once a miner had filled a tub with coal, he was paid for two, 'for t' encourage him a bit'. 'Picktub' went on to claim that when a miner handed in his lamp after a shift, 't' lampman gives him a clay pipe, an ownce o' bacca and a tally which entitles him to as much ale as he can sup'. And if a miner checked in to his next shift with a hangover,

'he gets two glasses o'brandy and two bottled Bass before he goes deawn for t' spring him a bit'.

'Tom Picktub's' article, gentle spoof though it was, served to remind readers that miners who had left the Northwest for Kent were still going to be doing the same job as they had done in Wigan or Leigh, and with identical risks. A tragic victim of this was Robert Dobson of Atherton.

At the start of the twentieth century, the Dobson family had relocated from Chorley, where Robert was born, to Mealhouse Lane in Atherton. The census of 1911 reveals that they had moved to Mather Street, and that Dobson's father and his children of working age, including Robert, were employed in cotton spinning.

However, by the time nineteen-year-old Robert attested his willingness to join the army under the Derby Scheme in May 1915, he had abandoned cotton spinning for coal mining. On attestation, his height was recorded as just over five feet one inch. This was ideal for a collier working in cramped spaces, but below the army's usual minimum requirement of five feet three inches. Dobson was therefore assigned to the Royal Army Medical Corps; he was classed as fit for foreign service in November 1915 and spent his war in Mesopotamia.

Aside from a four-month spell in hospital in Aldershot



Robert Dobson (Leigh Journal)

recovering from a chest injury, and a month-long leave spent in India, Dobson served in hospitals in and around Basra in today's Iraq until he was demobilised in April 1919.

Robert Dobson returned to his life as a collier in Atherton, but perhaps a belief that his long-term future would be brighter elsewhere, combined with a restlessness experienced by many ex-servicemen whose horizons had been broadened during the Great War, made him move south in the early 1920s.

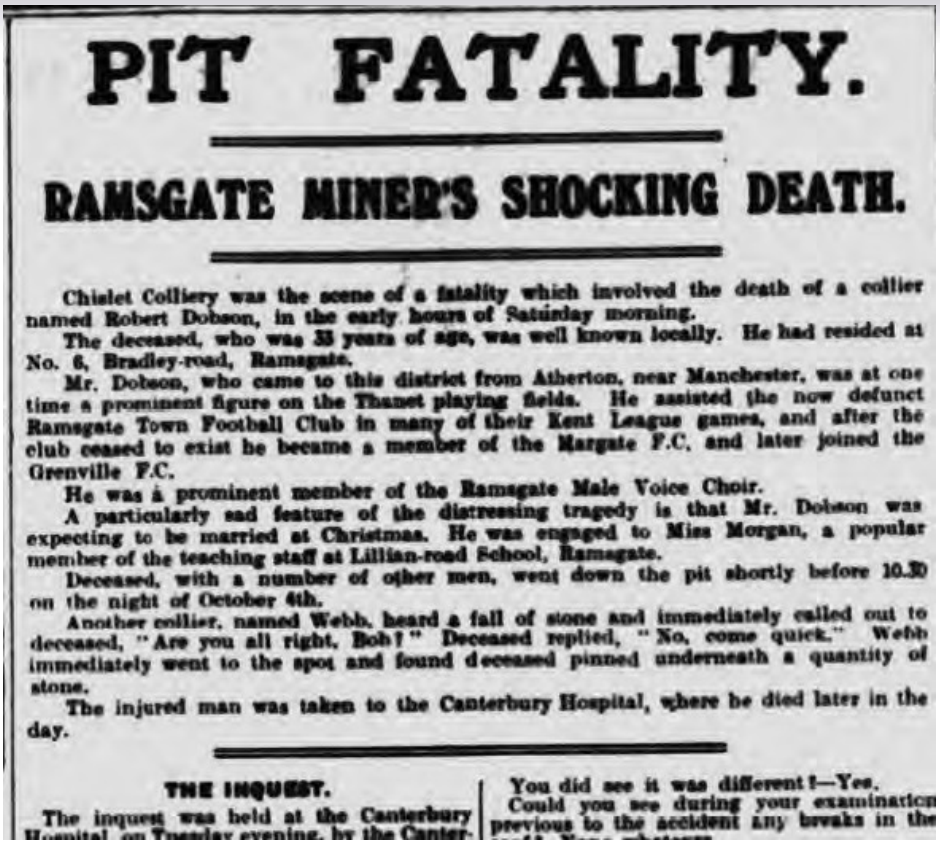
The Athertonian made his way to Chislet Colliery, which had only been producing coal since 1918. Dobson settled twelve miles from his work in the seaside town of Ramsgate. A three hundred house estate was built near the colliery in the mid-1920s, but Dobson decided to stay where he was. By then, he was well-integrated into the local community. The former footballer for Atherton Labour Club now played for Ramsgate Town, Margate and other clubs. He sang with the Ramsgate Male Voice Choir. By 1929, he had become engaged to a local schoolteacher. According to his father, Dobson had not revisited Atherton for five years.

At 10.30pm on Friday 9 October 1929, Dobson entered the cage which would take him to the pit bottom for a night shift. The Leigh Chronicle and Leigh Journal reported the subsequent events fairly briefly, but fuller accounts appeared in the East Kent Times.

Dobson and his workmate George Webb began to hew coal in separate stalls ten yards apart. As usual before starting they had checked the pit props and roof timbers and agreed it was safe to begin working. A pit deputy had already undertaken a safety check before the shift commenced and all had seemed well.

Dobson and Webb had each filled a tub with coal and were on their second when Webb heard a loud crash. He yelled, 'Are you all right, Bob? Dobson cried, 'No, come quick!' Webb stumbled to the adjoining stall and found Robert pinned under a large stone. He needed three other workmates to lift it and pull his friend to safety.

Dobson was rushed the eight miles to Canterbury Hospital by ambulance. Doctors found lacerations to his head and body. The miner was in a state of severe shock and died at 3.30am. A post-mortem later showed that he had suffered fatal internal injuries.



PIT FATALITY.

RAMSGATE MINER'S SHOCKING DEATH.

Chislet Colliery was the scene of a fatality which involved the death of a collier named Robert Dobson, in the early hours of Saturday morning.

The deceased, who was 33 years of age, was well known locally. He had resided at No. 6, Bradley-road, Ramsgate.

Mr. Dobson, who came to this district from Atherton, near Manchester, was at one time a prominent figure on the Thanet playing fields. He assisted the now defunct Ramsgate Town Football Club in many of their Kent League games, and after the club ceased to exist he became a member of the Margate F.C. and later joined the Grenville F.C.

He was a prominent member of the Ramsgate Male Voice Choir.

A particularly sad feature of the distressing tragedy is that Mr. Dobson was expecting to be married at Christmas. He was engaged to Miss Morgan, a popular member of the teaching staff at Lillian-road School, Ramsgate.

Deceased, with a number of other men, went down the pit shortly before 10.30 on the night of October 4th.

Another collier, named Webb, heard a fall of stone and immediately called out to deceased, "Are you all right, Bob?" Deceased replied, "No, come quick." Webb immediately went to the spot and found deceased pinned underneath a quantity of stone.

The injured man was taken to the Canterbury Hospital, where he died later in the day.

THE INQUEST.

The inquest was held at the Canterbury Hospital on Tuesday evening, by the Canter-

You did see it was different?—Yes.

Could you see during your examination previous to the accident any breaks in the

Newspaper extract detailing the death of Robert Dobson (East Kent Times)

An inspection of the stall in which Dobson had been working revealed that the face timbers supporting the roof were all in place; the stone had fallen between them. There had been no sign of anything untoward during the various safety checks before and during Dobson's shift, and the coroner at his inquest concluded that everyone had done their jobs properly. He recommended that the jury return a verdict of 'Accidental Death', which they did.

Chislet colliery closed for a memorial service on the Wednesday following the accident. Five hundred people, including workmates and many of Robert's new friends, attended. By then, Dobson's father, who had travelled to Canterbury to identify the body, had decided that his son should be laid to rest at home. He now began the unenviable task of organising Robert's final journey.

A week after his death, Robert Dobson, who had survived the Great War and had embarked upon what he believed to be a bright new future, was laid to rest in Atherton Cemetery.

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Celebrating Youth Voices

Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School, Leigh

This year, we opened up the Barbara O'Neill Writing Competition to the borough's children. We love the vivid detail of Sacred Heart's winning pieces, and the punchy style of Britannia Bridge's winners. And Amy Moss has really brought a neglected Billinge curiosity to life.

Our younger writing contributors get the chance to shine!

1st PLACE

My name is Doris Bond. I am a pit brow lass working at Parsonage Colliery in Leigh. I work for 2 pennies. I don't think it is enough because I can't afford new clothes and food.

I work six days per week, from 5 a.m. in the morning until 5 p.m. I have to wear thick boots to protect our feet, trousers under heavy rough skirts to protect my legs and when we are picking up coal I have blisters and dirty hands. If I fall over and my hands may be infected I won't afford the doctor.

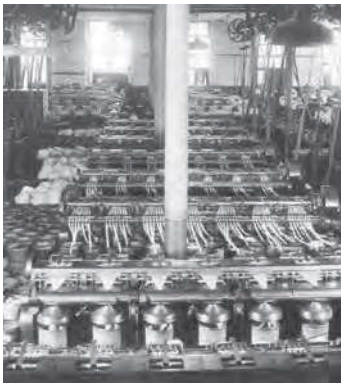
On a Saturday night in front of the fire I have a bath and it's my favourite time. And my job, I don't really like it because I don't like that I have to pick up heavy coal.

And there's other things I would like to be. I would like to be an artist. But my mum can't afford to send me to college because she hasn't got enough money.

Sienna Bond, age 9

JOINT 2nd PLACE

My name is Robert Fairclough. I am a cotton weaver and I work and I work really hard at the cotton mill. My arm gets really tired. When I get up, I get dressed, get my lunch and go to work spinning and spinning and spinning all day long. Once I got my hand stuck in it. It was bleeding really bad it got infected.



Charlie Fairclough, age 8

JOINT 2nd PLACE

My name is George Shaun Kennedy. I am a lamp cleaner working at Parsonage Colliery in Leigh. I work for 14 pennies. I don't think it is enough because I can't buy enough food for my mum and sister! I work six days per week from 5 a.m. in the morning until 5 p.m. which is 12 hours per day! I work in the lamp room. I have to clean lamps and some faulty lamps and if you accidentally break the lamps and the glass would go into your skin. I would use my cloth and drag the glass away and use my cloth to put the glass away and put the glass in the bin. Yes because now I have to pay 5 pennies and if I don't get through the day I would not get the full pay of 14 pennies. Yes but I need to be careful.

Aston Shaun Kennedy, age 8



Wigan's Ways of Wonder

by Amelia Burrows, age 10

1st PLACE

Britannia Bridge Primary School

We all know the small-town Wigan, but does anybody really know the fascinating features and qualities it has been smothering in secret since it was built? Come along the journey of information further down the paragraphs.

Celebrities Born in Wigan

Anybody know the famous actor, singer and comedian George Formby? He was born and raised in Wigan and even has a statue of himself in the Grand Arcade. Speaking of the Grand Arcade, did you know it cost a gobsmacking amount of £120,000,000?! The Wigan Warriors rugby team have won 22 league championships and 19 challenge cups!



George Formby with the army in France, 1940 (Wikimedia Commons)

Did you know the Market Hall was only built in 1877? 125 listed buildings and features stand stationary in the town of Wigan. The battle of Wigan Lane occurred on the 25th August 1651, where 3,000+ men fought in the 16th century and the 3rd English Civil War.

Mesnes Park

Mesnes Park occupies a hectare site immediately to the north west of Wigan town centre. It was opened as a public park in 1878, and includes a number of Victorian park features including a bandstand and a statue of Sir Francis Sharp Powell. The land within which Mesnes Park lies in, was traditionally known as 'the mesnes', as it was part of the manorial demesne land. Mesnes park (a jewel nestled on the edge of Wigan town centre) is famous for:

- Formal gardens
- A bandstand
- A waterfall
- Much more

Many details of Wigan still remain a mystery to us. Wigan's qualities are what make it unique to other towns.

'Just because something is little, that doesn't mean it can't hold as many special things as something big.'

How did Wigan Athletic change over time?

Maya Hazeldine, Year 6

2nd PLACE

1997-1999

In 1997, Wigan Athletic didn't start the campaign very well. Wigan Athletic held their top-flight opponents to a 2-2 draw at St James Park however lost 3-2 in the replay. Did you know by the 21st February 1997 their fortunes didn't really improve and were still in the relegation battle in 17th place only 2 points clear from getting relegated? Since then, they went on to win their final 15 league games. On the 1st of June 1999, John Benson was appointed as Wigan Athletics manager. They also got their new home (JJB stadium) which is now DW stadium.

With Johns Benson's help

Did you know? *Reading was their toughest game at this time?*

With John Benson's help, they played 26 league games undefeated but then lost at home to Oldham Athletic on 7th January 2000. John Benson was awarded the manager of the month award (Association Football Award.) John Benson left the season in 2001 and the Arsenal manager at that time was appointed in his place.

2022 (Now)

Now, their chancellor is Talal and isn't from England but he still flies over to see them play. Their manager now is Leam Richardson however he hasn't been their manager for a while. Tom Flower recently passed away after working at the club for 11 years and tackling equalities across Wigan Borough and beyond. When he first arrived the community had 12 members mainly delivering football sessions. Recently, Wigan Athletic played Blackpool on Saturday 12th November beating them 2-1. Their next match is against Millwall on the 10th December.

Wigan Athletic opened a vote 2 days ago to vote for player of the month. Wigan Athletic started in 1932. On the 27th August 1932 they played their very first league game ever against Port Vale. Their first kit was red and white tops with black shorts.

Glossary

Benson - Wigan's Manager.
Inequalities - Difference in size, degree or circumstances.
Chancellor – A senior state or legal official.

Britannia Bridge Primary School

3rd PLACE

Phoebe Hilton, Year 6

Britannia Bridge is a school that takes children from 2 all the way up to 11 years old to teach them. This place is located in Winifred Street, Lower Ince, Wigan, has 256 students, and was built in 2016. At the school, 77% of pupils achieve higher standards in reading, writing and maths at Key Stage 2. The old school was built in 1906 yet it was knocked down in 2016 due to being too old and being too small. But now they're looking how to build more houses on the top of the remains. Now we have a great school which has more children entering each and every year.

Here are some pictures of our school →







The old school

The Stork Inn

by Amy Moss,
11-16 age group



Photo credits: Wigan Observer

More than your average pub!

When you walk past the Stork Inn today, you are greeted with a saddening sight: boarded up grey windows, firmly locked doors, and an atmosphere of desertion. Sadly, this has been the case since 2019 - when the inn in Billinge closed down with the owners reporting that there would be 'no prospect' of the much-wanted return of the local institution. But how would this be different if you walked past the inn at a different point of time?

Unfortunately, if you were to find yourself on the site during the English Civil War - it would be bad news for you. This is due to the fact that, prior to the inn being built, the site was home to a Cromwellian gaol called the 'Tower Prison'. During the war, it was used by Cromwell (rumoured to have stayed on the premises on several occasions) and his Parliamentarians to jail Royalists. Infamously, on one occasion a Royalist died from typhus. Perhaps this is the reason why so many ghost stories about the inn circulate.


Photo credits: St Helens Local History & Archives (ref. STSD/42/31/10)

Most famously, there are stories about visitors to the inn being able to see a man dressed in a Civil War uniform, and of a hell hound in neighbouring London Fields. In reality, these supernatural rumours are probably a result of Billinge being an extremely superstitious community in the nineteenth century, even resulting in many Wiganers making fun of Billingers for this belief. Nevertheless, this has enticed many ghost-hunters to visit the inn. Although the crypt that housed the cells still survives (now the cellar of the inn), the gaol was torn down in 1752 and the Stork Hotel (now the Stork Inn) was built in its place. During August 1890, the landlord, James George Howard, was charged with selling adulterated rum after a police constable saw his wife topping up a bottle of rum with water. Luckily, the case was dismissed after he claimed that his wife had no idea what she was doing was wrong as she wasn't used to mixing spirits. Howard was let off with a warning to be more careful.

Later, the namesake of James George Howard (who also lived in the Stork Inn) is listed to have been killed in action during World War 1 on 16 June 1915, when he was 26, after fighting with the Liverpool Regiment. Obviously, the Howard family who resided in the Stork had a large role in shaping local history.

In the following decades, the Stork was an energetic pub which served as a vivid drinking destination with hearty meals, and as a resting place for travellers. It's fondly characterised as previously having a historic stone horse mounting block as well as having a bricked off tunnel leading to St Aidan's Church.

While it's a shame that the Stork is no longer a working pub, hopefully with the planned conversion into eighteen apartments, another few centuries of history will be created on the already history rich premises.


Photo credits: St Helens Star

A Standish Baptism

BY JIM MEEHAN



Mobbing at Wednesbury (© Courtesy of John Wesley's New Room, Bristol)

In modern Standish all churches and faiths work in unity and that's exactly how it should be. However, over 270 years ago there were tensions as new non-conformist religions took shape. The growth of Methodism, being led by John Wesley, was seen at the time as a threat to the establishment. His preaching was popular with the 'labouring classes' and his following grew. Wesley had been banned from church pulpits and began preaching in the open air to crowds of ordinary people. He once said, 'I look upon the whole world as my parish'. Unfortunately the whole world did not always make him feel welcome.

The story goes that when he visited Standish he was 'seized by ruffians' who dragged him through the malt kiln pond on High Street and chased him out of town. The story can't be verified but there are a few things on record that might support the legend.

We know John Wesley visited the area on a number of occasions including in 1764, 1768 and 1785. There is also a note he made in his journal during the 1768 visit which said, 'most of the congregation were wild as wild might be'.

And there is evidence of the Methodists receiving a far from warm welcome in 1790. The parish records show the church wardens paid the bell ringers 2s 6d 'when the Methodists preached, for driving them out of the town'. Despite all of this the Methodists persevered, and their numbers started to grow. They rented a floor in the old Quaker meeting house in Quakers' Yard (now Quakers' Place). As the congregation continued to grow they longed for a larger church of their own.

After years of trying they eventually acquired a prominent site on Standish High Street. And here's the twist; it was the very site of the malt kiln pond that, according to legend, Wesley had been dragged through.

The church would be built using money raised over an eleven-year period. To save on costs the congregation set about filling in the pond themselves. With the help of the Wigan Coal and Iron Company they moved over 980 tons of waste material from the nearby Prospect Colliery. Eventually in July 1897 the new church and Sunday School were opened.



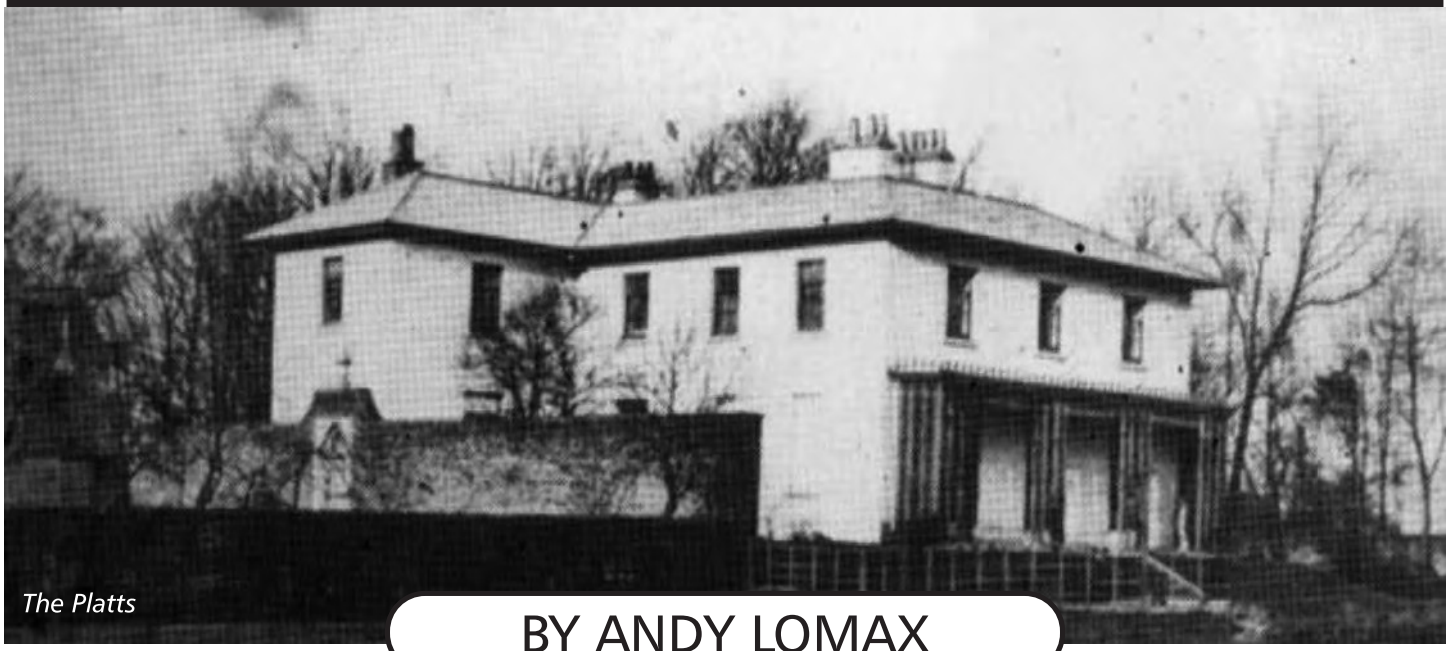
The old Quaker Meeting House in Quaker's Yard where the early Methodists rented a floor.

Standish Methodists could have been resentful of the treatment dished out to their founder, but they looked at it another way. Being dragged through the pond was a kind of baptism; a baptism for their religion in Standish which went on to flourish. Thanks to their founder and their own hard work, the church is built on solid foundations in every sense.

Opening ceremony of the Chapel on Standish High Street, 1897.



Humphrey J.G. Walmesley
of Westwood, Ince, Wigan



The Platts

BY ANDY LOMAX

Humphrey was born June 1846 at 'The Platts', Platt Bridge, Wigan, second son of William Gerard Walmesley and Caroline De Trafford of Westwood House, Lower Ince. Humphrey was given the middle name Jeffreys after his grandmother Elizabeth Jeffreys, who married Charles Walmesley. The name Gerard was passed down through the family once the Walmesleys and Gerards became related in the mid-1700s (marriage record not yet found). It is interesting to note that the first-born son (Humphrey's older brother) was named William Gerard Walmesley after his father, and passed away in 1877 aged just thirty-six.

In the same year, Humphrey married Marie Gertrude Manley on 18 September at Sicklinghall, Wetherby, North Yorkshire, and gained the line of succession from his deceased brother in the meantime. Their father had passed away ten years previously, but William Gerard did oversee an extension to the family chapel at Westwood House in 1873. Both father and son can be found buried together at Ince Cemetery.

Like many landed families of the time, generations did their part for the Empire and represented the military in various forms. Both Humphrey and his older brother, William, served in the Yeomanry Cavalry, the mounted component of the British Volunteer Corps, representing the Lancashire Hussars. Humphrey was made Captain in May 1881.

Humphrey decided to exercise the family wealth by leaving Westwood House and Wigan altogether, moving to the small market town of Hungerford, Berkshire, in the year 1893. He purchased Inglewood House and estate and in 1905 had the family chapel at Westwood dismantled brick by brick and rebuilt at Inglewood. Three old hatchments from the chapel were transferred to their own chapel at Wigan Parish Church before using the canal system to bring the Westwood chapel down to Berkshire. Well known architect Pugin had overseen the chapel being built between 1856-57, and then the extension of 1873.



Westwood House



Inglewood House
(courtesy of Hungerford Virtual Museum)

According to the 1901 census, Humphrey describes his occupation as J.P. in the County of Lancaster and living on his own means. Humphrey improved the estate dramatically and was known for placing the family coat of arms in each building possible.

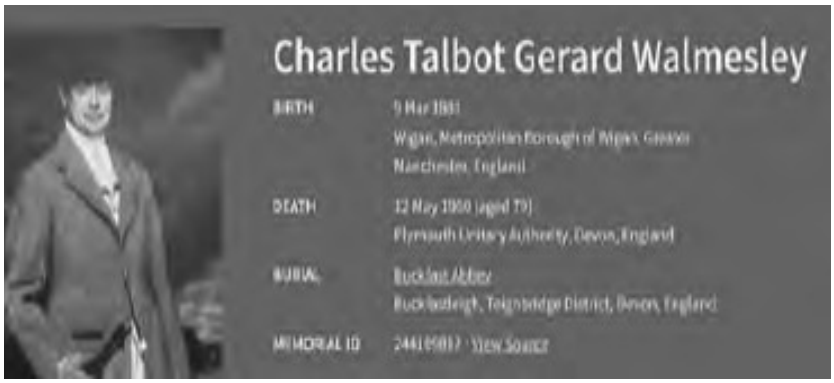
He saw that the Walmesley Chapel at Wigan Parish Church was restored between 1898 and 1901, and was smart enough keep hold of much land and property back in Wigan as a vital source of income. An estate office was required for these functions and was promptly built in the year 1896 on Rodney Street, Wigan, complementing the Town Hall next to it.

He once tried to claim a vote in Wigan as well as Berkshire by saying he kept a bed at the estate office when visiting; his claim was thrown out. In later years the building became the home of accountants Crossley & Davis, and today Franco's Italian restaurant. In 1907 Humphrey granted the Parish Church permission to use the chapel but they were forbidden to have an altar or celebrate Holy Communion in it. In and around this time, Westwood House was demolished, reason unknown.

In 1912 there was a major fire in the basement at Inglewood House. Staff rushed to gather valuable works of art on to the lawns whilst the fire was extinguished. On Boxing Day 1919, Humphrey J.G Walmesley passed away, aged seventy-three, leaving all effects to the next in line, his first son Charles Talbot Gerard Walmesley (1881-1960) - effects worth around £3,400,000 in today's money. His second son, named after himself, passed away in 1932 aged forty-nine. He was for some time a rubber planter in Ceylon, today's Sri Lanka.

Charles made the big decision in 1928 to sell Inglewood House to the De La Salle Brothers, a Catholic Order. The further estate, boasting around 4225 acres, was sold to other buyers. The 1920s in this country became a decade of difficulty for many landed families who had to make financial decisions and downsize considerably. Here in Wigan it was Standish Hall and Beech Hill Hall, to name only two, that saw demolition during this decade and maybe many more estate properties saw the same demise.

The family are still around today living on the south coast of England.



Photograph of Charles T. G. Walmesley (courtesy of Archie Needs)

Sources:

Wikipedia, Find a Grave, Hungerford Virtual Museum, Archives: Wigan & Leigh, WiganWorld, FindMyPast & Historic England.

Appreciations:

Peter Fleetwood, Jim Meehan and Ron Hunt

EXHIBITION CALL-OUT – CAN YOU HELP?

Calling all music lovers!

Did you or someone you know go to the Bickershaw Festival? Do you have memories of when Joy Division came to Leigh? Did you see Green Day when they played at The Den? The Museum of Wigan Life would love to display your festival and gig related keepsakes, objects, posters, tickets, photographs and more in the changing displays of their new music and entertainment exhibition 'Make Some Noise – Stage Floor to Dance Floor'. Please contact Joan Livesey on j.livesey@wigan.gov.uk if you can help.

Our Town Project by Andrea Foster

In November 2022 Archives: Wigan & Leigh organised an 'Our Town' project to be held at some of the local libraries around the borough. This was an Archives 'road show' of sorts which aimed to showcase to local people some of the items and documents held here at Leigh Town Hall.

Preparations for this event had actually started much earlier in the year, with volunteers looking for items of interest relating to a specific town within the borough. Living in Bryn, I naturally picked Ashton-in-Makerfield.

On the shelves in the super storage room at Leigh Town Hall are boxes of newspaper clippings and leaflets that have been saved and sorted over the years and organised according to subject matter. There are boxes on cotton, canals, and coal (mining), and on each of the towns within the borough.

The 'Ashton box' is a treasure chest of history, from stories



Holy Trinity Vestry Minute Book



Ashton Library

on town heroes such as William Kenealy and Sam Woods to small booklets from the carnivals and dance festivals held in Ashton throughout the 1960s and 70s. Having sifted through the documents, a final selection was made as regards what to take to the 'Our Town' event.

Additionally, the Archives hold old record books such as the Ashton Township book dating back to 1741, and various books relating to Ashton Grammar School. Then there are Ashton's Holy Trinity registers of marriage banns and deaths, and a vestry minute book dated 1843. Even the inside covers of these books are works of art with their ornate marbled patterns.

Some items, such as Roger Lowe's diary of Ashton-in-Makerfield, are simply too fragile to be handled. However, this can be found in the Archives permanent exhibition in Leigh. Written over 400 years ago, remarkably it has survived and is a glimpse into one man's life who lived in Ashton, and a testament to the way in which people lived at that time. Thankfully the diary has been published as a book and is available to buy online, or can be borrowed from Ashton Library.

More Archive items literally 'unfolded' with old paper maps of Ashton, together with silver trophies in celebration of Ashton's arts festival. Once



William Kenealy commemoration stone, front of Ashton Library

all were safely boxed together, our stash was complete and good to go. With the date and venue of Ashton Library set, now all we needed was an interested audience. Helen Kavanagh, our new Archivist, announced the event at St Thomas' Church one Sunday in the hope of spreading the word, and details were also circulated via the usual social media channels.

On the day, with the library doors opening at 1pm, I had butterflies and a sinking feeling that no one would turn up. Thankfully, and to both Helen's and my delight, there was a steady flow of visitors (over seventy people) and much interest in the items on display. This made the day all worthwhile.

It is a joy to witness that special connection people can make with history. A lady recognised her mum in a photograph in a music concert brochure from 1925 to 1945. There was much interest in the old paper maps of the area and how different the landscape of Ashton looked over a hundred years ago. A couple with a special connection to the church carefully turned the beautifully handwritten pages of the vestry minute book, dated 1843. Many visitors remembered the seventies' street carnivals, music and dance competitions, and I spotted my sister-in-law's name as one of the entrants in the Ashton-in-Makerfield Competitive Dance Festival held when she was ten.

On the day, the library actually sold out of copies of the Archives 'Past Forward' magazine. With so much curiosity and enthusiasm it is hoped that this event will be repeated again. In the meantime, why not come and visit us, and the permanent exhibition, at Archives: Wigan & Leigh at Leigh Town Hall. Also, if you are interested in local history visit Ashton Library, or your own local library, and have a look at the 'local history' section of books available to borrow.



Visitors exploring the different exhibits from the Our Town project, Ashton Library

The Clayhole Frank Hilton

The Clay hole down Swan Lane at Hindley Green, is a local, popular beauty spot, loved by children, fishermen, and dog walkers alike. But the man behind it was one Edward Johnson.

At the time (c.1868) Edward Johnson was the owner of Swan Lane Colliery, and Long Lane Colliery and brickworks. The clay for the bricks came from a field situated between Long Lane and Green Lane. All signs of the collieries and brickworks have gone except for the 'Clayhole', Swan Lane's only legacy of a bygone era.



CLAYHOLE

Neh back In 1874,
A chap named Edward Johnson
Decided that he'd make some bricks
Cos everybody wants some

He had a field near Tewit Hall,
Which linked up to his coal mine,
Bout halfway dewn Swan Lane it were
Along bi mineral rail line.

He found a patch that seemed just reet
Where clay were soft and thick
He took a sample, an dried it out
It made a perfect brick.

Edward said, 'I'll make these bricks,
To benefit mankind.'
But the only legacy bequeathed
Was the hole he left behind.

It created a haven for wildlife
Water voles, frogs and newts
Waterfowl came bi cartloads
Like moorhens, swans and coots.
Canadian geese would make it home
Crested grebe and dab chicks
It changed the face of Hindley Green
When young Teddy made his bricks

Generations of kids paddled it's shores
Made rafts and walked the plank.
And swam or bathed on sunny days,
Or sat fishing on the bank.

Skating on it in winter,
Though not a good idea.
For its centre did have hidden depths
Leaving parents fraught with fear.

Neh 'Westlake' is its posh new name,
The jewel in the crown,
Wi children's slides an swings an stuff,
And benches all around.

But to Hindley Green stalwarts
an die-hards,
Of a town built on cotton an coal,
It'll never be 'Westlake' to us lot,
It'll always be just 'Clayhole'.

On the same terms as men: women redraw Wigan's municipal politics 1919-1923

By Yvonne Eckersley

The years 1918 to 1923 were a time of political upheaval for Wigan. At the general elections of 1918, 1922 and 1923, Labour's John Allen Parkinson defeated Conservative and Liberal candidates to become Wigan's MP; and the annual municipal elections brought challenges and changes to the political character of Wigan and its council.

During the First World War, when the question of extending the franchise was considered, the government hadn't intended to grant women a vote in local elections. In the draft bill, men aged twenty-one were to be granted a vote in municipal and parliamentary elections whilst women over thirty, providing they paid rent, owned property, or were wives of electors, could vote in parliamentary elections only.

This caused consternation among supporters of women's suffrage. Many women's organisations formally objected. In November 1917 Ashton-in-Makerfield's Park Lane Cooperative Women's Guild sent a letter of protest to the Home Secretary. These objections were successful; the Representation of the People Act, operational from 1918, gave women the right to a municipal vote on the same terms as men. As a consequence at least 26,000, i.e. half of Wigan's municipal electors, were women, and, given that the turnout at the elections of 1919-1923 was around 80%, thousands voted.



Park Lane Cooperative Society, Bryn St., Ashton -in-Makerfield (PC2009.419).

The importance of the press

On a practical level, Wigan newspapers published details of who was entitled to vote in council elections; how to register and cast a vote, especially pertinent to first time voters; election dates; times; and the locations of polling booths. They listed candidates for each ward, their political allegiance, and the names of their male and female nominators. After each election, they published the results and commented on their impact on the balance of power in Wigan council. Importantly they provided platforms from which each political party reached out to convince voters that they were best suited to govern Wigan.

At the same time the newspapers published council meetings verbatim. By reading these reports voters could read exactly who supported and who objected to policies and decisions that affected their lives positively or negatively. Consequently, by reading these reports voters could assess objectively which candidates they could trust to deliver the services that suited their needs and vote accordingly.

Women's disillusionment with Wigan's Conservative council

The extension of the franchise coincided with a time when the plight of working people in Wigan was dire. Quite apart from the poverty, caused by high

unemployment and low wages, from which there seemed no escape, there was the everyday threat to life that directly affected women as women; something the existing council seemed reluctant to address. Wigan's maternal and infant mortality rates were some of the worst in Britain. The Wigan Observer reported that Wigan's Medical Officer of Health had identified the link between high maternal deaths among women giving birth in premises not fit for childbirth, and Wigan's lack of antenatal clinics and maternity homes. He further identified that many of their babies died as a result of living in substandard, overcrowded houses, with unsatisfactory means to dispose of sewage.

He was critical of the council's tendency to blame the 'so-called emergency' and 'the economy' for their delay in addressing these issues. Indeed, on at least one occasion the council was complicit in maintaining these conditions. In 1922, numbers 3 and 4 Birkett Bank, bought by the council in 1919 after bomb damage had rendered them unsafe, were described by Wigan's Sanitary Inspector in the Wigan Observer. The council allowed two families, both with six children, to live in the two bedroomed houses. Each house had no back door to facilitate ventilation, no running water and, because there were no drains, residents had to empty their dirty water etc directly onto the street.

Women's political involvement

It was necessary, given the numerical size of the new electorate; the geographic area of the Borough; the short period of time between the nominations and polling; and the complexity of canvassing, for each party to recruit a large body of election workers. Importantly, given that half the electorate were women, it was seen as not only appropriate that women formed a considerable proportion of election workers, but desirable, especially as it was regarded preferable for women to canvas women.

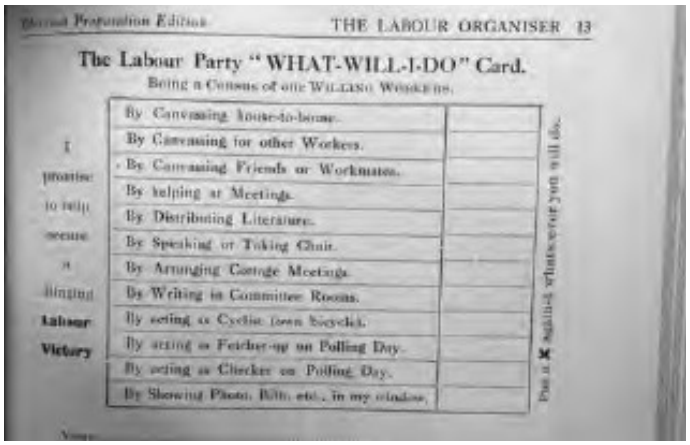
Consequently, each party worked to integrate women into their party machinery. In January 1919, J. J. Robinson, the National Labour Party chairman, speaking in Wigan, appealed to Labour women to 'help set up a Labour organisation in the town such as was never seen in Wigan and one which would rival the excellence of Wigan's Conservative Party's'. The Conservative's Wigan Ladies Primrose League, established in the 1890s and well versed in the art of political organisation, had been joined by the Women's Branch of the Constitutional Association as co-organisers for Wigan's Conservative Party and together they formed a formidable force.

Wigan's political parties were fortunate, they could draw on the expertise of women involved in church, charity, temperance groups, Cooperative Women's Guilds, trade unions, and political parties. Mrs Ball, member of the committee of the Wigan Weavers Association, itself unique being all female, was asked to help draw up the Ince Labour Party's constitution when it was formed in November 1919.

In the same year, the committee of Park Lane Cooperative Women's Guild sent Mrs Walkden and Mrs Bridges to the Wigan Cooperative Society meeting where the fusion of Wigan's Cooperative Society with the Labour Party was agreed. This was something that caused the women constitutionalists some concern, not least as women who shopped at Coop stores might vote for Labour candidates. At their annual picnic a Miss Banister from Liverpool advised the women to be wary of the opinions of the 'evil workers' who worked for Cooperative candidates.

Women political workers

The role of a political organiser was to establish an infrastructure to ensure the success of their party's candidates. This task was complex. It included


THE LABOUR ORGANISER 13

The Labour Party "WHAT-WILL-I-DO" Card.

Being a Census of our Willing Workers.

I promise to help secure a Ringing Labour Victory

By Canvassing House-to-house.
By Canvassing for other Workers.
By Canvassing Friends or Workmates.
By helping at Meetings.
By Distributing Literature.
By Speaking or Taking Chair.
By Arranging Cottage Meetings.
By Writing in Committee Rooms.
By acting as Cyclist (own bicycle).
By acting as Fetcher-up on Polling Day.
By acting as Checker on Polling Day.
By Showing Photo, Bills, etc., in my window.

Put a ✖ against whatever you will do.

Recruiting Women Workers (Reproduced with permission from the Labour Party Archives, Manchester).

organising public women-specific meetings where women could hear local and out of town speakers propagate their cause, and where much of the work could be a matter of logistics. There were many such meetings in Wigan, and they were popular, the Wigan Observer reported audiences of hundreds.

On the other hand, the task of reaching women who, for whatever reason, were not able to attend

these meetings, needed a different strategy. Identifying this, Labour's Marion Phillips drew up an action plan. This advocated three main methods of canvassing: house to house visiting, where canvassers were advised to discuss women's issues and to leave party leaflets; street corner meetings, where workers, who had been designated an area in each ward, would call at nearby houses to inform women that a meeting was to be held in twenty minutes and a bell would to be rung to announce the start of the meeting. There two or three women election workers would give short speeches and answer questions. And 'cottage meetings', where women who were unable to attend, perhaps because of family commitments, or were uncomfortable with attending outdoor meetings, or during inclement weather, could be reached. I have no direct evidence of how the Conservative Party canvassed this group of women, but it is reasonable to assume they had a similar plan.

Being involved in canvassing was not without personal risk for women. In 1922 Emily Dickinson, whose estranged husband had been violent to her, unsuccessfully summoned her husband for desertion and reinstatement of the weekly maintenance payments for her and their five children. In court the reason for the summons was ignored. It was that she was a woman who 'held advanced political views', a member of the women's section of the Labour Party, who 'played a prominent part in connection with the Labour Party' which took priority. At one point it was put to her, 'If you would just promise your husband not to take a prominent part in politics you could probably live happily together'. After failing to address the cause of the summons, the court decided there was no evidence of desertion and magistrates dismissed her case. This left Emily with no means of providing for herself or her children.

Personalising women workers

Finding the identity of all the women involved is not possible. Some names can be found, usually in the press or archived records of the societies they belonged to. Newspapers identified women speakers; those who proposed and seconded resolutions; gave votes of thanks to speakers; or were listed as supporters of candidates. These were often women who had earned the respect of the community through their public work. Hence we learn that Poor Law Guardians, Helen Fairhurst and Mrs Ashurst; councillors and guardians,



Martha Hogg. Wigan's first woman councillor, 1919.

Elizabeth Hart and Martha Hogg; and Miss Livesey of the Tenants' Defence League often appeared on Labour platforms. Whilst the charitable and political work on women's behalf gave Marion Lamb, of Wigan's Women's Liberal Association, and Wigan's Women's Temperance Society, sufficient social and political standing to propagate the Liberal cause among women.

Plus there was Mrs Lee, who, as chairman of the Wigan Women's Constitutional Association, organised the Conservative election campaigns. Although the countless individual women who worked for the election of their chosen candidate, either as part of the party machine or independently, are anonymous, recognition of their involvement as political activists gives them an identity.

Women councillors

At a by-election in October 1919 Wigan weaver Julia Walkden, was the first female candidate to stand for Wigan Council. She was nominated by the women's section of the Labour Party and supported by the Wigan Weavers Association but was not elected. She stood again in November 1919 but was again unsuccessful. She was eminently qualified to appeal to women voters. As a member of the Wigan Weavers Association's committee she had earned a reputation for negotiating with employers on the behalf of mill workers.

Her work on Wigan's Court of Referees was especially important to unemployed women

who, because they refused to accept work in domestic service, had their unemployment benefits stopped. Her work was not confined to women as wage earners. As a member of the Food Control Committee, the Profiteering Committee and her work for the provision of Maternal and Child Welfare in Wigan, her work touched on the everyday life of all Wigan's women.

In 1920 Martha Hogg became Wigan's first woman councillor. She was nominated by the Wigan Women's Labour Party, of which she was president; the Wigan Midwives Guild of which, as a practising midwife, she was a member; and Scholes Labour Club. She had first stood in 1919 but was not elected. She served as a councillor from 1920 to 1923 when she lost her seat but she was constantly re-elected from 1924. She served on the Health, Housing, Pensions, Maternity and Child Welfare, Insanitary Housing and Conversions, Baths, and Blind Persons Act committees. As her contributions on these committees were public knowledge, women voters would have been able to assess how she, and by extension Wigan's Labour Party, were working to improve their quality of life.
She was elected to Wigan Board of Guardians in 1922, the same year as Labour's Elizabeth Hart and Conservative's Elizabeth McAvoy. The following year Elizabeth McAvoy of Wigan's Constitutional Association, who had seconded the nomination of Lord Balniel as the Conservative Parliamentary candidate for Wigan, was returned as a Conservative councillor at her second attempt. She was Wigan's second woman councillor.



Elizabeth McAvoy, Wigan's second woman councillor, 1923.

Changing the balance of power in the council

Traditionally Wigan Council had been dominated by Conservative councillors and challenged in council by Liberal members. However, by 1919 the Liberal Party in Wigan was in decline, not least as many of their aims were increasingly becoming identified with the emerging Labour Party. Recognising this, Wigan's Liberal and Labour parties came to an agreement. In the effort to change the balance of power in the council they adopted a policy of not competing with each other if they fought against Conservative candidates.

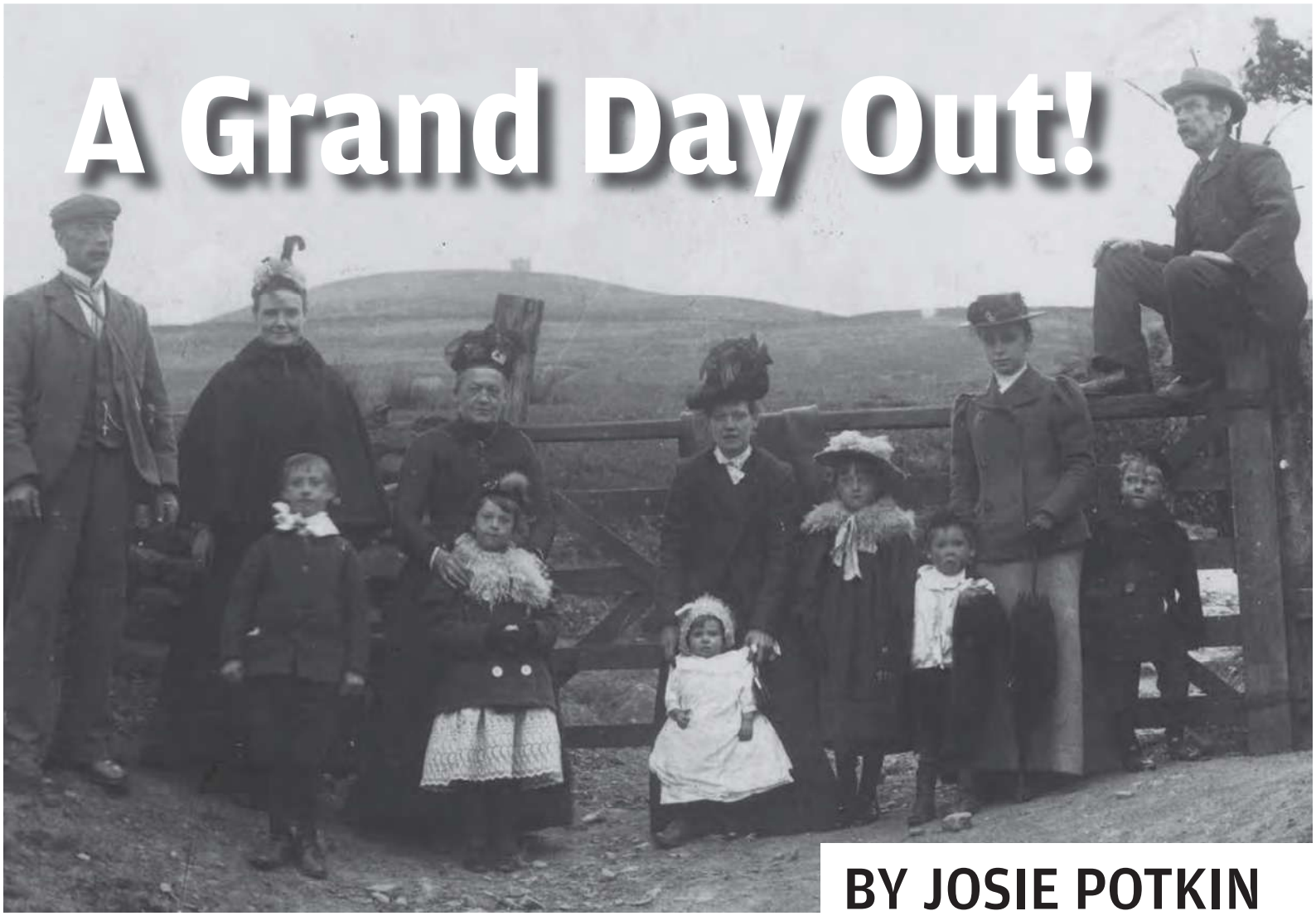
Though there were two Liberal candidates in 1919 there were no contests between Liberal and Labour candidates. Quite the reverse. On at least one occasion Liberal and Labour women joined forces to campaign against Conservative candidates. At a public meeting called specifically for women voters, Liberal and Labour women united to promote the candidature of the Liberal candidate, J. J. Fortune. With Marion Lamb of Wigan's Women Liberal Association as chair, there were two speakers: Mrs E. A. Bottomley of Wigan's Cooperative Women's Guild, a prominent Liberal who had seconded the Liberal candidate Robert Alstead to oppose Labour's John Allen Parkinson at the 1918 General Election, and Helen Fairhurst, well known in Wigan as a Labour Poor Law Guardian with a history of trade unionism, women's suffragism, member of Wigan's Labour movement, and an ardent supporter of John Allen Parkinson.

The political map of Wigan redrawn

During this period the policy of uniting Labour and Liberal forces into a progressive alliance in order to dislodge the Conservative Party's dominance of Wigan's Council was succeeding. From 1919 Labour and Liberal councillors and aldermen were increasingly and consistently outnumbering their Conservative counterparts. Significant as this was, arguably the most significant change was the recognition that women as voters and party activists were politically powerful. And that women were prepared to use this power to elect councillors they perceived as sympathetic to their needs.

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A Grand Day Out!



BY JOSIE POTKIN

Some years ago I was given a family group photo by a cousin, but unfortunately he was unable to identify most of the people shown. I was intrigued by the picture, recognising three members. On reflection, I thought it was an odd group, with no adult males of working age.

The couple I recognised were my great grandparents, Ellen Mather (1) and James Davies (2), who had nine children and spent most of their lives in Golborne. James had been a miner and later a checkweighman, plus involving himself in Ellen's confectionery business, which was on Heath Street. I presumed that the other members were likely to be their sons and daughters, but I wanted to be sure.

I knew a lot about the family from my father and grandfather and have lots of early photographs as there were a number of keen photographers in the family. My starting point was the census, then trade directories and newspaper articles, beginning with Ann Davies, who was the eldest daughter of James and Ellen.

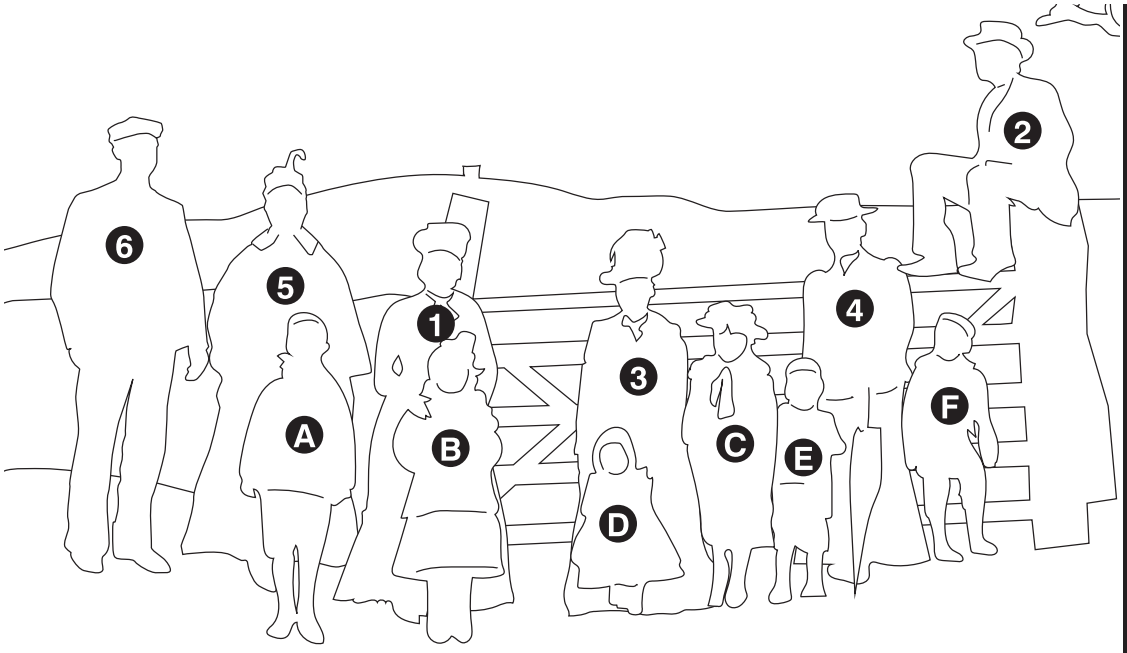
From other pictures it was obvious she wasn't on the photo. Ann, like her mother, was a confectioner. She had married Robert Jump and later had three children, a boy and two girls. Sadly, Ann died in 1899. Grandparents brought the three children up (family information), so it is likely that James Alban Jump is (A), Mary Gladys is (B), and Agnes Jump, usually called Cissie, is (C).

After Ann's death the next daughter, Elizabeth, began working with her mother in the shop. She too had married and had three children but was soon widowed. Her husband was Edward Andrews, a miner, who caught enteric fever (typhoid). At the time there was no satisfactory treatment for the complaint. Edward would have had a painful death, but today he would have survived after a course of antibiotics. From this picture, and comparing it with the other, I recognised the woman in the large hat as Elizabeth (3). Looking at the ages of the remaining three children it is likely that they are hers, that is, Frances Andrews (D), Edward Andrews (E), and John Andrews (F).

Now, there were just three adults I needed to identify. I began with the young woman in the 'boater'. All James' and Ellen's daughters were married except one. I thought the young woman looked about fifteen years old and was probably living at home. Their only unmarried daughter was Harriet Davies (4), so this could be her.

The two people on the left of the picture were a mystery; unlikely to be a couple as the man was so much older. The woman is the only one in the picture engaging with the photographer. Were they connected in some way? Working out the identity of the photographer seemed to be the answer. My father, James Davies, enjoyed photography but would have been a small child when this was taken, so it would probably have been one of his uncles, one of James' and Ellen's sons. The only one who pursued photography as a career was John Davies, helped by his wife Elizabeth. If John is behind the camera then, soon to be his wife, is Elizabeth Moore (5). Her mother died young so the older man could be her father, John Moore (6).

I was keen to work out when the photograph was taken, and first thought I could do it by trying to date the clothes, but unfortunately this would only give me a rough idea. I felt it must have been taken round about the turn of the century. Harriet seems to be the most fashionable of the group with her 'boater'. This style seems to have lasted a long time, perhaps from as early as the 1880s. It suddenly became the height of fashion again in 1906 when Theodore Roosevelt wore one whilst visiting the Suez Canal. As two of the children had died young I was able to date the picture from no later than late summer 1903.



FAMILY GROUP

1 & 2 Ellen Mather and James Davies

3 Elizabeth Andrews

4 Harriet Davies

5 Elizabeth Moore

6 John Moore

A, B, C James Alban Jump, Mary Gladys Jump and Agnes Jump (cared for by James and Ellen)

D, E, F Frances Andrews, Edward Andrews and John Andrews (children of Elizabeth)

The family believe the outing was to Rivington, perhaps they even went up the Pike? The only remaining question was how did this group get there? There was no local train station, and also the little ones may not have been able to walk a great distance. I knew James had a horse drawn van, so that could possibly have been how they got there; but how did they all fit?

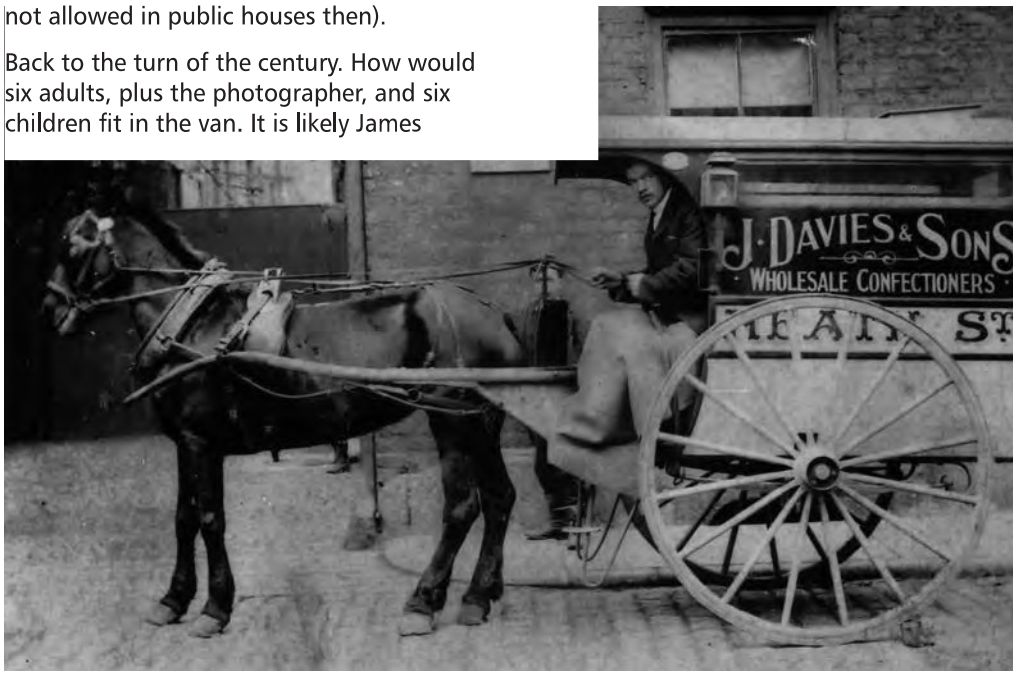
In the 1950s my Uncle Frank, the only one in the family who had a car, would take my family and his out for a ride on a Saturday night in his lovely Bentley. There would be eight of us, four adults and four children all squashed together. We'd stop at a country pub, the children sitting outside with lemonade, the adults inside (children were not allowed in public houses then).

Back to the turn of the century. How would six adults, plus the photographer, and six children fit in the van. It is likely James would have driven, leaving three adults each side each with one child on their lap. Because of the limited space a great deal of planning must have taken place before they set off.

The second picture (below) shows James' son, Ernest, holding the reins of the van. On his father's retirement Ernest continued with the family business, and so begins another tale.

Sources

Information from family members. Census returns 1841 to 1911. Trade directories. Newspaper articles.



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

Submission Guidelines

- Electronic submissions are preferred, although handwritten ones will be accepted
- We prefer articles to have a maximum length of 1,000 words but please contact us if you would like to submit an article of a greater length
- 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.

BY KEITH SUTCH - PART THREE

Wigan Warriors – 150 years of history



Central Park, Wigan

The introduction of Super League was perhaps the biggest change to the sport of Rugby League since the restructuring in 1906-07. Changes included rebranding of the game, franchises, summer rugby, firmer pitches to promote expansive open play, and the renaming of the club from Wigan to Wigan Warriors. Wigan's dominance came under threat with the new league, now fully professional, and the introduction of the salary cap and the 20/20 rule. Although the club achieved initial success, the road ahead was not straightforward.

By 1997 Wigan's invincibility was halted as off the field problems were to torment the club. Wigan's finances had plummeted and with debts of £3 million, it was decided Central Park should be sold. Local businessman and owner of Wigan Athletic Football Club Dave Whelan expressed that he wanted to buy Central Park and have Latics share the ground with the Warriors. He offered £4.5 million for the ground and pledged to spend a further £12.5 million to turn it into a 20,000 all-seater stadium for both clubs.

Shareholders had voted for the idea, but the Wigan board had another offer to consider from the Tesco supermarket chain, which was rumoured to be closer to £10 million. If the Tesco offer was accepted, Wigan would be homeless. Another idea at the time was that Wigan would share a ground with Bolton Wanderers at the new Reebok Stadium, which was in the process of

being built. The suggestion angered Wigan fans as the Reebok was located miles outside of Wigan town centre.

Eric Hughes became coach of Wigan Warriors in 1977, replacing Graeme West following the club's second early exit from the Challenge Cup in consecutive years. The first exit was against Salford in 1996, which ended Wigan's eight years and forty-three games unbeaten run in the Challenge Cup; a record to this day which may never be equalled. The fallout from the defeat was massive as Graeme West was sacked and, a couple of days later, Va'aiga Tuigamala was sold for £1 million to Newcastle Falcons; an offer Wigan could not refuse due to the massive debts they had.

In mid-February, Rugby League sources continued to tout the club as future lodgers of the new Reebok Stadium due to Dave Whelan's offer to buy Central Park having been rejected by the board. The board consisted of four people: Jack Robinson, Arthur Thomas, Tom Rathbone, and John Martin. They all had a vote over Whelan's offer and Martin, who ran the Riverside Club at Central Park, was the only member of the board who voted for it. The other three voted against as they were holding out for an increased offer from Tesco, which would result in Wigan moving out of the town to Bolton.

In early March Tesco increased their offer to buy Central Park to £12.5 million and news broke that the ground sale was to go ahead. On 29 October 1997 it was heard that Wigan would not be moving to the Reebok Stadium. Mike Nolan, who owned a finance and car leasing business in Wigan, took over as chairman of the club from Arthur Thomas. He was joined on the board by John Martin, who returned following a row with the old members.

Tesco agreed to let the club stay on at Central Park until the end of 1999, when they would join up with Wigan Athletic at their new stadium, which was about to be built at Robin Park. In November the new board sacked Eric Hughes and began making sweeping behind the scenes changes with a view to a new beginning in 1998.

John Monie returned to Wigan for the 1998 season and guided them to a historic win in the first ever British Super League Grand Final at Old Trafford, Manchester, beating Leeds by ten points to four. Monie stayed with Wigan until the end of 1999 when he moved to London Broncos.

On an emotional day of high drama, Wigan's final game at Central Park was against arch-rivals St Helens on Sunday 5 September 1999. Wigan legend Ellery Hanley returned as St Helens' coach, and an impressive Jason Robinson try ensured the game was won by Wigan 28-20.

The first game at the new stadium saw a defeat in a Super League play-off match against Castleford on 19 September 1999. Maurice Lindsay returned as director, and one of his first jobs was the sacking of head coach Andy Goodway in November, following the Warriors' failure to win a trophy for the first time in fifteen years. After the sacking of Goodway, Wigan seemed to lack some stability regarding the head coach's position. They had six different coaches in nine years, not including those who took interim control, i.e. Denis Betts, Stuart Wilkinson, and Andrew Farrar.

Within a six-year period Wigan had a total of seven coaches, including those covering as interim, with little or no success. During this time, they won just one piece of silverware in 2002, the Challenge Cup Final at Murrayfield, Edinburgh. Kris Radlinski became the only Wigan player to win the Lance Todd Trophy away from Wembley Stadium, due to the ground going through a major refurbishment.

This Challenge Cup win would be Wigan's last trophy for several years as the club experienced a lean spell relating to the instability of the head coaching role. Stuart Raper was replaced by assistant coach and local lad, Mike Gregory. 2004 saw Gregory guide Wigan to the Challenge Cup final at the Millennium Stadium, Cardiff, but the game ended with a loss to St Helens. This turned out to be Mike Gregory's last match as head coach. He travelled to the United States of America to receive treatment for an illness that he had been suffering from for quite a while. It was sadly revealed that he had motor neurone disease and he did not return to Wigan.



Inside Central Park, Wigan, 1999 (PC2015.21026)

Denis Betts took over as head coach before being replaced by Ian Millward. Millward had a disastrous start to the season and wasn't really accepted by the supporters. When he subsequently led the club to their biggest defeats in the Challenge Cup and Super League, along with missing out on the play-offs for the first time in the competition and club's history, Millward was relieved of his duties as head coach on 11 April 2006.

Millward's replacement was the former Bradford and Great Britain coach Brian Noble. Noble took over during a relegation battle, which at one point looked as though Wigan would lose. However, he has been credited with keeping Wigan in the Super League following a number of impressive performances and some big influential signings, which would have some major impact on the club down the line. Despite having just £60,000 available to spend under the salary cap, Noble bought Michael Dobson and Stuart Fielden from Bradford Bulls for a world record £450,000.

At the end of the season, when the club's books were audited by the league's accountants, it was found that there was an unauthorised overspend of £222,314. This led to allegations that the club cheated their way out of relegation by deliberately spending money they didn't have due to salary cap restrictions. The club was eventually only found guilty of breaching the spirit of the cap by trying to restructure existing contracts, a breach that would see Wigan deducted four Super League points for the 2007 season, having already lost two Super League points the previous season for similar offences.

On a positive note, to help Wigan's desperate fight against relegation, former Great Britain full-back, Kris Radlinski, came out of retirement and offered his services to the club for free until the end of the season. Radlinski who had called time on an illustrious playing career due to a persistent knee injury, made himself available to the Wigan coach for the club's remaining twelve league matches.

As Wigan survived relegation in 2006, further speculation hit the club with news of a new owner. After months of speculation, Ian Lenagan was named the new owner of Wigan Warriors, his boyhood team. Lenagan bought the club from former JJB Sports magnate and Wigan Athletic chairman Dave Whelan. As well as buying the club, Lenagan also bought the training facilities at Edge Hall Road, the former stadium of Orrell Rugby Union Football Club, as well as a fifty-year lease on the JJB Stadium.
In October 2009, after a defeat by St Helens in the semi-final playoff game, Noble announced he would be leaving the club, and this sparked a worldwide search by the board of directors for his replacement. Michael Maguire, an assistant coach to Craig Bellamy at Melbourne, was appointed as the new head coach ahead of the 2010 season.

This appointment was to have a major effect on the club as, not only did he bring success in the form of silverware to the D.W. Stadium, he also had as his assistant Shaun Wane, following in his footsteps and enriching the club's philosophy for the next six years, adding six major trophies to the four won during McGuire tenure.

Shaun Wane became Wigan's longest-serving coach in Super League, before leaving the club in 2018 to take up positions in international rugby with the Scotland Rugby Union National team, before taking

the head coaching role with the England National Rugby League team; as well as returning to Wigan as Leadership and Management Director.

Michael McGuire had the honour of receiving coach of the year from the Man of Steel Awards in 2010, the first Wigan coach to achieve the feat. He was followed by Shaun Wane in 2018, proving the significant impact both men had on the club over an eight-year period of success.

Under the guidance and tenure of McGuire and Wane, Wigan Warriors' supporters witnessed their most successful period since 1994, winning Challenge Cups, League Leaders Shields, Grand Finals, and a World Club Challenge.

After leaving the club at the end of 2018, Wane was replaced by Adrian Lam, who emulated McGuire and Wane by winning the coach of the year in 2020, following perhaps the most dramatic Grand Final ever experienced, and a very difficult season for Rugby League and all sports due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Prior to, and during, the pandemic more controversy hit the club with the launch of a new digital age badge replacing the old Wigan coat of arms, which had been adopted as their emblem from around the early 1960s. Although the Wigan Warriors crest is the most traditional in the sport, and will always remain part of the club's identity, recognising the digital age is now upon them. The club needed to move forward with a rebrand to find new fans away from the sport and to maximise their exposure on digital platforms and broadcasting media, as well as providing commercial opportunities to secure the sport's future.

After a disappointing end to the 2021 season, Adrian Lam moved on and new Matt Peet was appointed to the role of head coach. Matt Peet has been part of Wigan's history for over thirteen years, both as a Wigan Academy player and in a range of coaching roles. Matt Peet leads the club as head coach for 2022 and beyond, as the youngest Super League coach. Peet collected his first trophy as a coach by winning the Challenge Cup at Tottenham Stadium with a late Liam Marshall try from an excellent Harry Smith kick, and I am sure he will guide the Wigan Warriors beyond its 150th year anniversary and the great celebrations of the club's long history and success.

CAN YOU **HELP?**



We have been sent this photo by a customer who is looking for any information about the Wigan Sens group. We know that the young man in the middle of the second row is Albert Rothwell, aged 15. Can you identify anyone else in the photo? Do you know what the Wigan Sens group involved?

If you have any information, you can contact us at pastforward@wigan.gov.uk or write to us at Archives: Wigan & Leigh, Leigh Town Hall, Market Street, Leigh, WN7 1DY

Aspull and Haigh Historical Society

When: 2nd Thursday of the month
Where: Our Lady of Immaculate Conception Parish Room, Haigh Road, Aspull, WN2 1YB
Time: 2pm start
Costs: £3
Contact: Barbara Rhodes 01942 222769

Billinge History and Heritage Society

When: 2nd Tuesday of the month
Where: Chapel End Labour Club, 213 Main Street, Billinge, WN5 7PB
Time: 7pm for a 7.30pm start
Costs: Unknown
Contact: Geoff Crank 01695 624411

Culcheth Local History Group

When: 2nd Thursday of the month
Where: Culcheth Community Centre, wJackson Avenue, Culcheth, WA3 4EL
Time: 7.30pm
Costs: £3
Contact: Zoe Chaddock 01925 752276

Leigh Family History Society

When: 3rd Tuesday of the month (no meetings in July, August and December)
Where: Derby Rooms, Turnpike Centre, Leigh, WN7 1EB
Time: 7pm
Costs: Members – £1, non-members – £2
Contact: Mrs G. McClellan 01942 729559
Volunteers from the Society run a family history help desk at Archives: Wigan & Leigh, Tuesday-Friday, 10.00-13.00, by appointment only.
Ring 01942 404430 or email archives@wigan.gov.uk

Skelmersdale & Upholland Family History Society

When: 1st Tuesday of the month (no meetings in January, July and August)
Where: Upholland Methodist Church, Alma Road, Upholland, WN8 0NR
Time: 7pm for a 7.30pm start
Costs: £1
Contact: Bill Fairclough 07712766288 or Caroline Fairclough at carolinefairlough@hotmail.com

Tyldesley Historical Society

When: Last Monday of the month
Where: St George's Primary School, Darlington Street, Tyldesley, M29 8DH
Time: 7pm for a 7.30pm start
Costs: Unknown
Contact: www.facebook.com/tyldesleyhistoricalsociety

Wigan Archaeological Society

When: 1st Wednesday of the month (no meetings in January and August)
Where: Real Crafty, 9 Upper Dicconson Street, Wigan, WN1 2AD
Time: 7.30pm
Costs: £3
Contact: www.wiganarchsoc.co.uk

Wigan Civic Trust

When: 2nd Monday of the month
Where: Deanery Church of England High School, Frog Lane, Wigan, WN1 1HQ
Time: 7.30pm
Costs: Unknown
Contact: Peter Taylor 01942 725828

Wigan Local History and Heritage Society

When: 2nd Monday of the month
Where: Real Crafty, 9 Upper Dicconson Street, Wigan, WN1 2AD
Time: 7.15pm
Costs: Membership from £10 per year
Contact: www.facebook.com/wiganhistoryandheritage

Schools' Culture Workshops at the Museum of Wigan Life, Archives: Wigan & Leigh, and the Turnpike

FREE* workshop sessions for SCHOOLS

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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.

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AML ARCHIVES: WIGAN&LEIGH

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

There's lots going on across the Council's cultural venues to get involved in and make the most of the summer days. Here's a selection of just a few events and activities, but do keep a look out for the new May – August What's On guide, our website, and social media channels for full listings.

Events

Saturday 22 April, 12-1pm

Pete Shelley – in his own words by Louie Shelley

Pete Shelley was lead singer and songwriter of the punk band, Buzzcocks. He spent his formative years in Leigh and died in 2018 but the stories behind all Buzzcocks' songs from their heyday in the punk and post-punk years have been documented in the book 'Ever Fallen in Love'.
Museum of Wigan Life, £2.50 including refreshments. Booking essential, ring 01942 828128 or email wiganmuseum@wigan.gov.uk

Saturday 6 May, 12-1pm

History of Cinemas in Wigan by John Gostellow

Join historian John Gostellow for his illustrated talk on the rise of cinema attendance in the 1930s, the many impressive buildings that were built, and its decline with the arrival of television.
Museum of Wigan Life, £2.50 including refreshments. Booking essential, ring 01942 828128 or email wiganmuseum@wigan.gov.uk

Friday 26 May, 7pm

George Formby birthday concert with the George Formby Society

On the day George Formby was born, join us for a birthday celebration of music and song presented by a small group of members of the George Formby Society.
Museum of Wigan Life, £5. Booking essential, ring 01942 828128 or email wiganmuseum@wigan.gov.uk

Friday 2 June, 7pm

The Rugby League Time Tunnel with Tony Collins

Explore the past, present and future of rugby league on a multimedia journey with Professor Tony Collins.
Museum of Wigan Life, £5. Booking essential, ring 01942 828128 or email wiganmuseum@wigan.gov.uk

Saturday 10 June, 12-1pm

Bickershaw and Leigh Festivals by Chris Hewitt

Join festival promoter and historian Chris Hewitt for a talk focussed on two iconic local music events.
Museum of Wigan Life, £2.50 including refreshments. Booking essential, ring 01942 828128 or email wiganmuseum@wigan.gov.uk

Regular Activities

Soul Time

Join Manchester Camerata for a music and chat group for people living well with dementia and their carers and families. For more information contact info@manchestercamerata.com
Museum of Wigan Life, Wigan
Every other Monday, 1pm-3pm,
FREE, drop in

Museum Minis

Join us at the museum for a fun and relaxed session full of engaging storytelling, songs and craft activities for parents and carers with little ones. Suitable for age 0-5 years.
Museum of Wigan Life, Wigan
Weekly on Wednesdays, 10.30am-11.45am
£1.50 per child (includes drinks for parents / carers and children), please call the museum to book on 01942 828128 or email wiganmuseum@wigan.gov.uk

Turnpike Tots

Turnpike Tots is our creative play session for little artists aged 0-5 years and their grownups!
The Turnpike Gallery Studio, Leigh
Weekly on Wednesdays, term-time only, 10.30am-11.30am
FREE, drop in, visit trybooking.co.uk/BOMV to book.

Sensory Saturdays

Enjoy our exhibition space in a relaxed setting and borrow a themed sensory backpack to explore with.
Archives: Wigan & Leigh, Leigh Town Hall
Last Saturday of the month, 10am-1pm
Free, drop-in

Playful Saturdays

Explore the archives and get creative with our free craft activities and lego.
Archives: Wigan & Leigh, Leigh Town Hall
Every Saturday, 10am-1pm and 1.30pm-4pm
Free, drop-in

Make Some Noise! Exhibition tours

Our curators will guide you through our music and entertainment exhibition at the museum.
Museum of Wigan Life, Wigan
Wednesday 3 May, Wednesday 7 June, Wednesday 5 July, 12-1pm
Free, booking essential, ring 01942 828128 or email wiganmuseum@wigan.gov.uk

Leigh Town Hall Tours

Discover the history of Leigh Town Hall and explore the archives collections on this free guided tour.
Archives: Wigan & Leigh, Leigh Town Hall Last Wednesday of the month, 11am start
Free, book online on Archives: Wigan & Leigh Eventbrite

Museum of Wigan Life building and permanent exhibition tours

Our curators will guide you through the museum's permanent displays and the history of the building.
Museum of Wigan Life, Wigan
Wednesday 5 April, Wednesday 7 June, 12-12.45pm
Free, booking essential, ring 01942 828128 or email wiganmuseum@wigan.gov.uk

Exhibitions

Archives: Wigan & Leigh permanent exhibition

Family-friendly displays showcasing the stories and original objects and archives that make up the local history of the borough.
Leigh Town Hall
Tuesday-Saturday, 10am-1pm and 1.30pm-4pm, FREE

Every Community Needs a Stage

Celebrate the rich history of Our Town exploring the archive collections of local townships. Part of the permanent exhibition and display of local history in Leigh Town Hall.
Archives: Wigan & Leigh, Leigh Town Hall
Tuesday-Saturday, 10am-1pm and 1.30pm-4pm, FREE

Climate. Emergency. Hope.

An exciting exhibition of contemporary art which responds to the most urgent issue of our time. Climate. Emergency. Hope. explores the climate crisis through the unique perspective of young curators from Wigan and Leigh.
Alongside the exhibition we are running a programme of events inspired by key environmental dates, including

- World Earth Day 22 April
- Stop Food Waste Day 27 April
- World Bee Day 20 May

Turnpike Gallery, Leigh 1 April-7 June, Tuesday-Saturday, 10am-4pm, FREE

Creating Place

Creating Place celebrates our local environment through an interactive exhibition that will evolve and grow over the summer. Join us in the gallery for artist-led activities for all ages, inspired by this year's theme of 'home'.
Turnpike Gallery, Leigh
1 July-16 September, Tuesday-Saturday 10am-4pm, FREE

ARCHIVES: WIGAN&LEIGH

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

Made possible with Heritage Fund