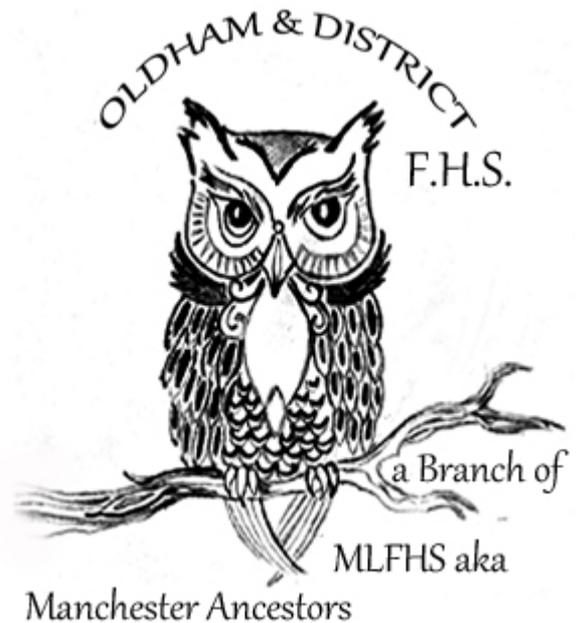


'e-Owls'



Contact us :

Branch Website: <https://www.mlfhs.uk/oldham>
MLFHS homepage : <https://www.mlfhs.uk/>
Email Chairman : chairman-oldham@mlfhs.org.uk
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Email Newsletter Ed : Oldham_newsletter@mlfhs.org.uk

MLFHS mailing address is: Manchester & Lancashire Family History Society,
3rd Floor, Manchester Central Library, St. Peter's Square, Manchester, M2 5PD, United Kingdom

Oldham & District Newsletter Archives : Read or download back copies [HERE](#)

May 2022

MLFHS - Oldham & District Branch Newsletter

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Branch News :

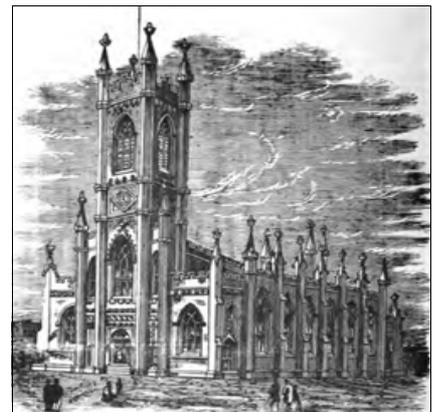
Branch Officers for 2022 -2023 :

Committee Member : Chairman : Linda Richardson
Committee Member : Treasurer : Gill Melton
Committee Member : Secretary : Joan Harrison
Committee Member : Newsletter : Sheila Goodyear
Committee Member : Webmistress : Sheila Goodyear



Where to find it

'Where to Find it' Page, on the
Oldham & District Website Pages



S.W. View of Oldham Church
from, 'Local Notes & Gleanings' G. Shaw, 1887

Oldham & District Branch Meetings :

**For current information on all M&LFHS Meetings, and other public activities,
Please check on the Branch website pages for updated information.**

The Society Facebook page [HERE](#) and the Twitter page [HERE](#) will be updated frequently.

Chairman's remarks :

Hello again and welcome to the May Newsletter. I hope you are all keeping well and enjoying the sunshine

On the 9th April we held our very first hybrid talk, given by Douglas Jackson, on the Tiffany Glass Collection. It was also the first time that Douglas had used Zoom. So it was a first for both the Branch and the Speaker. All in all the talk was a great success, apart from a small problem with the sound with some people who could not hear the Speaker very clearly. We have now resolved this problem by purchasing an additional microphone so all should be well in time for our next meeting on 14th May. Fingers crossed.

I look forward to meeting those of you who can attend the Oldham Branch Meetings after what has been a very long two years.

Enjoy reading the rest of the newsletter.

Linda Richardson

Chairman, Oldham Branch

email me at < chairman-oldham@mlfhs.org.uk >

~~~~~

## Editor's remarks.

Hi Everyone,

As I start to write this, the sun is shining and it's actually warm!!

it's been a very busy couple of weeks both for myself and for the Branch. One of the highlights for me, personally, was a long awaited theatre visit to see '*Les Miserables*', at the Lowry Theatre on Salford Quays. One of my favourite Musicals, I've seen it before, in London, and booked this visit over 3 years ago!! It was postponed twice, as a casualty of covid restrictions, in 2020 and 2021 but I allowed my booking to roll over each time. All I can say is that, it was the same wonderful experience and worth every minute of the wait.

Getting on to our Branch news, we had our first hybrid meeting in April, with our speaker in the Library with us. Over 50 people joined the zoom audience and, much to our relief, we also had an audience in the room. We knew that it wouldn't be perfect, for everyone, but were prepared to learn from our mistakes, which we are doing. We found that our biggest problem was the quality of the sound for zoom attendees (as also mentioned by our Chairman in her remarks) ... the chat box identified a number who were finding difficulties but also a number who found that there were no problems. This seems to indicate that personal devices play a large part in the quality of the sound and vision. However, we did our 'homework' and have purchased a 'multidirectional' microphone which we hope will enhance the quality for our online audience. There are still some niggles to work on but we think we're getting there! A big "Thank you," to all of those of you who came to support us, either in the room or online. It was much appreciated. In the Gallery, you'll find a couple of old postcards of Manchester and 2 engravings (with his notes) taken from Giles Shaw's, '*Local Notes & Gleanings - Oldham and Neighbourhood in Bygone Times*', in 3 volumes written in in 1887/8.

In the Mixed Bag we continue the story of the Cotton Manufacturer and, continuing British Trades, the work of the Hatter.

Saddleworth Historical Society are organising a series of short walks over the summer months, and a programme is downloadable from the link, with the Saddleworth Meeting, below.

Finally, I was recently reminded that this year marks the centenary of the BBC (radio, of course!) and it jogged a few of my own memories. I thought it might be an idea to share our early memories of the radio, in our postbag. It would be great if you would send me some of your own little stories.

For myself, the one that first comes to mind was of the radio series, '*Dick Barton - Special Agent*', in the 1940s. Mum and dad would listen to them (about 15 minutes after tea); but what stands out for me was the theme tune, the '*Devil's Gallop*'. When it started up, the three of us

would chase each other, round the square dining table, with me shrieking my head off with excitement! I had a trip down memory lane a few moments ago when I found the tune on Youtube, [HERE](#).

If you fancy a day out, locally, the Science and Industry Museum, in Manchester, is hosting BBC Centenary exhibitions and events over the next 12 months; details [HERE](#) .

Sadly, this month, again, we have no correspondence in the e-postbag to share.

Sheila

I am always very happy to receive articles, pictures etc., for the 'Mixed Bag' in the newsletter, copyright is always a tricky issue so do please make sure that you have the right to use any text or illustrations that you send! It is also helpful if you include mention of your source material.

You will retain copyright of any contributions that you send, whilst allowing MLFHS to re-use the material in an appropriate manner.

Editor reserves the right to edit any contributions before publication.

email me at : < Oldham\_newsletter@mlfhs.org.uk >

**Please note**, regarding using the links to website pages or .pdf documents : if clicking on a link when the newsletter is viewed on the internet, without first downloading it onto the computer, the new page opens in the same window so the 'back button' has to be used to return to the newsletter.

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Oldham & District Branch

Monthly Meetings

Happily, we are now planning to hold our monthly meetings as hybrids ... simultaneously on zoom and in the library. Over the past 15 months we have really appreciated the support that we have enjoyed both from local society members and those from further afield. However, in addition, we have also been able to welcome non-members with an interest in our programme, some of whom, gratifyingly, became members of the society as a result! Please continue to support the Branch, either in person at Oldham Library or on zoom if preferred.

Details, of the full programme of talks, are on the '*Meetings*' page of the Branch website [HERE](#) .

Booking for an online talk is still essential and bookings are on [Eventbrite](#).

No need to book if you attend in person.

**The talks on zoom will be free to members and non-members alike.
Wherever you live, Welcome!**

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### *Last Month's Meeting ... on zoom*



Saturday,  
9th April  
at  
2 pm



**Joseph Briggs and the Tiffany Glass Collection at the Haworth Art Gallery Accrington**  
**Hybrid meeting in the Education suite, Oldham Library and on zoom**

a free, illustrated talk given by Douglas Jackson, author of '*Mosaic*'

One of the world's finest collections of classic American art glass by Tiffany is not in New York

or London or Paris - it's in the old Lancashire mill town of Accrington. Joseph Briggs, was a native of Accrington and emigrated to America.

This was the Branch's first hybrid talk, and it was also a first zoom talk for our speaker ... 'newbies' together!

Douglas spent decades researching this subject and the result is a beautifully and lavishly illustrated book, '*Mosaic*' from which many of his illustrations were included in the talk. The story started with his meeting a man from Oldham who became the curator at the Haworth Art Gallery. On Douglas' first visit, he was shown a cupboard which, when opened, revealed glassware in a riot of colour and beautiful shapes. It was a collection of Tiffany glass ... out of fashion in the 1930s, and of low value, the Joseph Briggs of our story had sent it back to a small museum in his native county of Lancashire. It was to become a world class glassware collection of eye-watering, multi-millions of pounds in value.

Douglas took us back to the beginning, introducing Joseph Briggs and his family. Joseph was born in Accrington in a tiny terraced house and, in 1891, at the age of just 17 years old and an engraver's apprentice, he bought a one-way ticket to America, having raised the money by any number of innovative methods, such as putting on puppet shows, delivering groceries and teaching a goat to jump through a hoop!

When he first landed in America, his immediate future was similarly bizarre when he met a cowboy and joined a Wild West Show for the next couple of years. By then he wanted a change and saw an advert for workers at Tiffany's. After an unsuccessful interview, he was outside on the pavement and one of those life-changing moments happened. Out of a carriage stepped Louis Comfort Tiffany, who started chatting to the lad with an English accent. For whatever reason, Tiffany asked him to do a sketch for him ... it was so impressive, he was offered a job on the spot. Briggs was on his way!

Douglas then continued the tale with stories and illustrations of the fabulous windows being produced in the Tiffany Studios and the list of important and influential clients.

Joseph had been set to work in the mosaic department and was encouraged to bring in his own ideas and experiments. These were the years in which Art Nouveau was very popular and Joseph Briggs was a part of it as he became Tiffany's personal assistant. This was the heyday of the movement and the creation of the famous lamps and vases.

At this point, Douglas again digressed to give us the back story of the lady who would become his wife. After the Battle of Culloden in 1746, Alexander MacDonald and his son John, adherents of the Prince's, were exiled to America and subsequently Virginia and the ownership of slaves. In 1879, after the manumission of black slaves, a mixed race descendant, on the MacDonald property, Anna Grant gave birth to a daughter, Elizabeth. This child grew into a beautiful young woman who eventually married Joseph Briggs in 1898, just as his own career accelerated. In early 1901 the little family were visiting England and can be found on the 1901 census with Joseph's family in Accrington and, surprisingly, Joseph's cowboy friend from the time of his first arrival in America!

On his return to America, Joseph became the manager of the Tiffany Mosaic Department ... he was 28 years of age and already the winner of medals.

Douglas then continued to tell us of, and show illustrations of, the medal-winning craftsman and artist Joseph had become. Alongside his mosaics were the experimental works in glassware and lamps and his carvings in wood. As WW1 began, it also marked the decline of interest in Art Nouveau works. After the end of the war, Tiffany retired and Joseph was left in charge of the Tiffany Studios. Heartbreakingly, he would also preside over the demise of the Studio. Post War economic depression, and fashions in the Art World, were contributory factors resulting in bankruptcy in 1932. However, although so much Tiffany Glass had been destroyed, just thrown away, it was at this time that Joseph began sending fine Tiffany pieces to the small museum in Accrington which town was, itself, in the midst of an economic slump and these works of art went into the cupboard where they would languish for decades.

When Tiffany died in 1933 he left \$10,000 to Joseph but his will also stated that the business should also die. Joseph only outlived him by 4 years, dying in 1937. Following his own death, records, chemical formulas and glassware, were all destroyed. Finally, the business was no longer in existence.

it would be the 1960s before Tiffany Glass returned to favour and, with keen interest, prices rose at great speed and to unimagined heights.

Accrington was savvy enough, in those early days, not to accept those first overtures to buy the collection and, in the mid 1970s, opened a dedicated Tiffany Exhibition at the Haworth Art Gallery.

Douglas wound up his talk by bringing his audience up to date with some of the Briggs family members ... another story in itself!!

Our many thanks to Douglas for such a fascinating talk for our first hybrid meeting.

~~~~~

In the following week, we had an email from Douglas answering some questions that were asked and also giving us some more information ...

QUERIES ETC. FOLLOWING HYBRID LECTURE OLDHAM ON 9 APRIL

'Where are these houses and are they open to visit?' I'm not sure what she means by that. I mentioned two houses.

The small terraced cottage in Accrington where Briggs lived before he went to America. This was demolished many years ago and anyway was not connected with Tiffany.

The much larger house that Briggs built in Wood-Ridge, New Jersey in 1912. On my first visit in 1999 it still had some spectacular Tiffany windows that Briggs had installed (and probably designed). I photographed these, and with the owners' permission mentioned them to several Tiffany experts and dealers during my subsequent travels in America. As a result the owners were approached to sell them and did so for a considerable sum.

Ilona might have meant the Haworth Art Gallery in Accrington where the Tiffany collection is displayed. Full details can be found on the gallery's Friends website, via haworthartgallery.org

Where can Tiffany's Dream Garden mosaic be seen?

It is in the Curtis building which overlooks the historic Independence Square in Philadelphia. Besides the Dream Garden mosaic, another part of the building includes a spectacular atrium.

Queries on my book.

It is called *Mosaic* and I self-published in hardback and softback versions. Copies can be obtained by contacting me on dougjackson444@btinternet.com

I charge only a nominal price for the book but would appreciate a contribution to cover postage. I enclose a note with copies with my bank details.

STAINED GLASS WINDOWS

Of the six Tiffany stained-glass windows that came to Britain one was destroyed and a second is undergoing restoration. The other four (three in Scotland) are in churches open to the public. However in view of current visiting restrictions it is advisable to contact them about opening times :

* Duchess of Manchester memorial window (installed 1902), St Andrew's Church, Kimbolton, Cambridgeshire. Contact 01486 860792, or email revphiliphowson@icloud.com

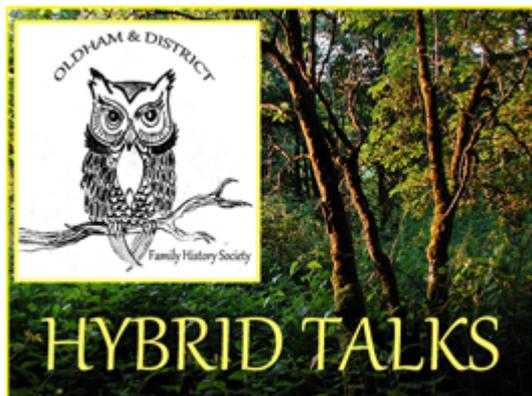
* East Memorial Window (1903), St Cuthbert's Church, Edinburgh. Office@stcuthberts-edinburgh.uk

*Andrew Carnegie Memorial Window, Dunfermline Abbey. Carnegie ordered the window in 1913 but the abbey rejected it. It was badly stored for many years and deteriorated. However, the window was fully restored and installed in the abbey on 11 August 2018, the centenary of Carnegie's death. Contact 01383 723005 or email dunfermine.abbey.church@gmail.com

* Forbes-Leith Memorial Window (1902), St Peter's Church, Fyvie, Aberdeenshire. Tel 01651 891961.

~~~~~

**May Meeting ... hybrid, in Oldham Library and on zoom**



Saturday,  
14th May  
at  
2 pm



***A History of the Coliseum Theatre, Oldham***

***Hybrid meeting in the Education suite, Oldham Library and on zoom***

The talk takes in the early history of the Oldham Coliseum and its varying fortunes. Also, the famous actors who have appeared at the theatre during its time.

A free, illustrated talk given by David Rustidge

Online booking for zoom link on [Eventbrite](#).

Booking not necessary for in person attendance at Oldham Library in the Education Suite.

~~~~~  
MLFHS Branches delivering their monthly meetings and talks

Anglo - Scots ... May Meeting

MLFHS,
ANGLO-SCOTTISH
BRANCH
MEETING

Saturday,
7th
May
at
2:00 pm

*Tracing Your Scottish
Ancestors at the
National Archives
given by
Audrey Collins of TNA*

In person in Manchester Central Library ... bookings on [Eventbrite](#)

Anglo-Scottish Website Pages [HERE](#) for more information and booking details

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**Bolton ... May Meeting**

MLFHS  
Bolton Branch  
Hybrid  
Meetings

Wednesday,  
4th  
May  
at  
7:30 pm

*Taking Care of  
the Past :  
Packaging & Handling  
Archives  
given by  
Mark O'Neil*

A hybrid Meeting on zoom and at  
Bolton Golf Club, Lostock Park, Chorley New Road, Bolton, BL6 4AJ

all bookings on [Eventbrite](#)

**Bolton Website Pages** [HERE](#) for more information and booking details.

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MLFHS updates

The MLFHS Family History Help Desk ...
For any updated information, please check the website [HERE](#)

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**Manchester ... May Meetings**

|                                         |                                            |                                                                                                                                             |
|-----------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| MLFHS<br>aka<br>Manchester<br>Ancestors | Saturday,<br>11th<br>May<br>at<br>10:30 am | <i>“Urmston, Flixton &amp;<br/>Davyhulme, a Collection<br/>of Antiques and Curios”</i><br><br>given by<br>Michael Billington                |
| <b>&amp;</b>                            |                                            |                                                                                                                                             |
| MLFHS<br>aka<br>Manchester<br>Ancestors | Saturday,<br>11th<br>May<br>at<br>1:00 pm  | <b>AGM ... followed by</b><br><i>“Lydia Becker -<br/>Suffragist, Scientist<br/>and Trailblazer”</i><br><br>given by<br>Dr Joanna M Williams |

bookings on [Eventbrite](#)

Keep an eye on the MLFHS Events Page or Eventbrite Bookings page, as some meetings may also be added at short notice.

MLFHS Manchester, Website Events Page [HERE](#)      MLFHS Manchester, Eventbrite Bookings [HERE](#)

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MLFHS Online Bookshop: [HERE](#).

with CDs, Downloads, Maps, Registers, Local Interest Books, More General Publications, Miscellaneous Items with MLFHS Logo etc., and Offers.

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**MLFHS Manchester & Branch e-Newsletters**

MLFHS Manchester and each of the MLFHS branches publish a monthly e-newsletter which provides useful news items and articles etc. The e-newsletters are free and available to both members and non-members of MLFHS Society. Members receive the Manchester newsletter automatically and non-members can browse the archive and download any they wish. You can sign up to receive the Branches' newsletter links monthly, by following the links, below. To sign-up, for a Branch newsletter, to be emailed each month, simply click the appropriate link below and complete the short form on the e-newsletter page, where you will also find copies of all past issues to browse.

[MLFHS \(Manchester\)](#)      [Bolton](#)      [Oldham](#)      [Anglo-Scottish](#)

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MLFHS Updates to the Great Database (located in the Members' area of the Website)
Emails to the Members' forum, from John Marsden (webmaster), listing the updates.

* I have just added a further 114 sets of admission papers 1887-1900 to the Royal Manchester School for the Deaf & Dumb to the Great Database.

Thanks as always, to Jim Chadwick and Marie Collier for these additions.

The names of those admitted appear below.

AINSWORTH, William ... ALLEN, William Thomas ... AUSTIN, William Kershaw ...
BATESON, Violet ... BAXTER, Charles Victor ... BERRY, John ... BESWICK, Gordon ...
BOOTH, Emily ... BRIDGES, Martha ... BRIERLEY, Fred ... BRINDLE, Norman ...
BROOKS, Samuel Henry ... CARLEY, John ... CHEETHAM, Samuel ... CLARKE, Ernest ...
CLARKE, John ... CLUGSTON, Henrietta ... COLLIER, Edmund ... COLLIER, James ...
CRANK, Alice ... CROFT, Hannah ... CROOK, Emma ... DRIVER, John Robert ...
DUFFY, Arthur ... EASTWOOD, John Henry ... FISHER, Susannah ... GARDINER, Albert ...
GARNER, Annie ... GIBSON, Frank Harvey ... GILES, Frederick William ... GILL, Thomas ...
GRANGER, Alice ... GREENHALGH, Florence ... GREGG, Mary ... GUY, John Henry ...
GUY, Thomas James ... HALL, John Edward ... HALL, Samuel ... HALLIWELL, Martha Ann ...
HAMNET, Herbert Stanley ... HARDWICK, Ethel May ... HARDWICK, Squire ...
HARRISON, Ethel ... HARRISON, William ... HARRISON, William ... HATTON, Mary Jane ...
HAVERY, Edith Bell ... HERMAN, Fred ... HICKMAN, Mary ... HILL, Kathleen Alice ...
HINDLEY, Mary Elizabeth ... HORRIDGE, John ... HOWARTH, Gertrude ...
HUDSON, Thomas ... HUGHES, Margaret ... HULMES, Arthur ... KIRKBY, Fred ...
LAMB, Elizabeth ... LAMBERT, Fred ... LAWSON, William Edward ... LISTER, Dyson ...
LOMAS, Henry Morten ... LONG, Sydney ... LORD, Clara Ethel ...
MACARTNEY, Robert John ... MARLER, May ... MARSH, Ellen ... MATTHEWS, Martha ...
MILLER, Frederick ... MINARDS, Francis George ... MORRIS, Jessie ... MOULT, Caroline ...
NEAL, Jonah ... OLIVE, William ... ORAM, Margery ... OWEN, Eliza Jane ...
OWEN, Florence May ... PARKINSON, George ... PEARSON, Edward ...
PICKSTONE, Sarah ... PLATT, Margaret Ellen ... POTTER, Alice Maud ...
PRENDERGAST, John Herbert ... ROSTRON, Ellen ... ROUGHSEGE, John William ...
ROYLEY, John ... SCRAGG, George Frederick ... SHAW, Thomas ... SMITH, George Abel ...
SMITH, Margaret Ellen ... SMITH, Nicholas ... STOTT, Cecil ... TATE, Alfred ...
TATTERSALL, Joseph ... TAYLOR, Nelly ... THORNEYCROFT, Jane Elizabeth ...
TONGE, Elizabeth Ellen ... TONGE, Harriet Ann ... TRAVIS, Rebecca ...
TWEEDALE, Ann Elizabeth ... WALKER, Charles Thomas ... WALKER, Sarah ...
WALLWORTH, Edith Bell ... WEIR, Ronald ... WHEELTON, Joseph ... WHITE, Joshua ...
WHITELEY, Thomas Alfred Gilbert ... WILDE, Annie ... WILLIAMS, Edward Thomas ...
WILLIAMS, Iorwerth ... WILLIAMS, Mary ... WINTERBOTTOM, Lena ..., WOODWARD, Elsie ...

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\* Another substantial addition to the Great Database.

This consists of a further 1,999 birth, marriage and death announcements from the Manchester Mercury 1821 and 1822, kindly transcribed by Linda Bailey and Chris Hall.

These early newspaper announcements can be invaluable for that 'difficult' period shortly before the introduction of civil registration and census returns which included names.

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* have just added a further 198 street/building references to the Godfrey Map Index. These relate to the sheet for Royton in 1932 and come thanks to the work of Paul Thomas. More on the way!

~~~~~  
\* Indexes for another two Alan Godfrey maps have been added to the web site index: Failsworth & Hollinwood 1932 and Failsworth South 1931

Thanks again to Paul Thomas for the above.

~~~~~  
* Another substantial addition to the Great database in the form of burials at Salford, Holy Trinity

Church 1813-1854.

Thanks to Mark Harrey for this addition.

Unusually, many of the burials in this register include a cause of death.

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\* Dukinfield South 1897 & Stalybridge 1897

Thanks again to Paul for these extensions to the indexes for maps covering parts of Tameside.

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* FEATURE!

Those familiar with the old printed indexes to the Manchester maps will know that these located streets and buildings down to one of the ten sections into which these maps are divided by the way they are folded.

The indexes produced subsequently have included these references but up to now it has not been possible to include them in the online index. This is now possible and for this latest couple of maps, these references have been included. I plan over the coming days to re-visit the earlier index entries (most of them!) and to replace the basic entries which identify only the map with full entries which include the references as above. This will, I hope, make the index a lot more helpful to those who own copies of these useful maps.

MORE WELCOME!

As you can see from the coverage plan at

<https://www.mlfhs.uk/?view=article&id=346&catid=9>

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\* An Easter present from Paul Thomas. I have just added the 180 street and building references for the Godfrey map for Heaton Chapel to the website index.

Thanks to Paul for another one completed. Indexing of several other maps is currently in progress.

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**Meetings and Talks at other Societies &/or Venues**

**Please note ...**

**Please check society/group websites or organisers for updated information**

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Oldham Historical Research Group: ... Meetings continue on zoom



Wednesday
18th
May
at
7 pm



Women's War Interest Committee in Manchester during WW1

A free, illustrated talk on zoom, given by Dr. Alison Ronan

Everyone welcome ... More details and free booking on Eventbrite [HERE](#)

Your support for our meetings would be appreciated and, if you would like more information, please email me at < pixnet.sg@gmail.com >.

Website [HERE](#)

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# Moorside & District Historical Society

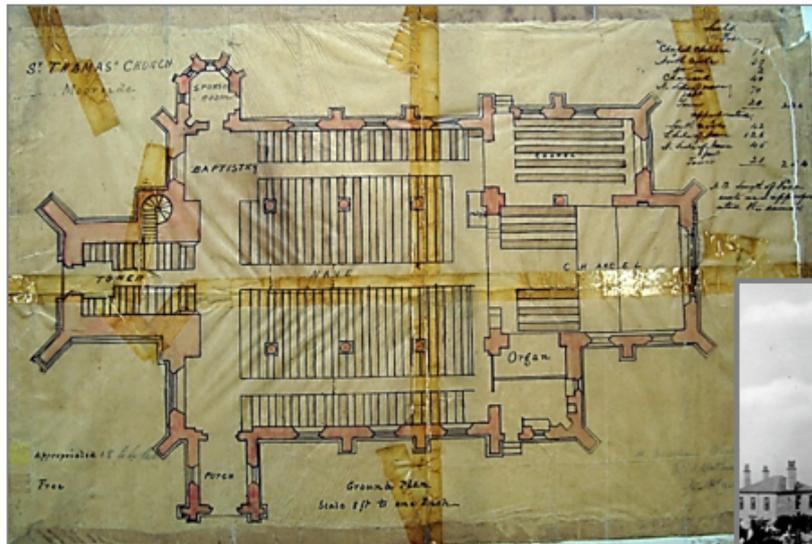
Monday 16th May 2022.

## 150th St Thomas' Church Anniversary.



"Church Plans and Miscellany" ~ Start of the year of celebrations.

illustrated presentation by Mike Smith



To be held in Moorside St Thomas' Church, OL1 4SJ

7-30 p.m. all are welcome.

Church, Lounge or Vestry.

*Note: Other meeting planned for 2022 if all goes well for the third Monday of the month.*

Except for the summer break July & August + December. £2 including refreshment.

**Saddleworth Historical Society** Wednesday 11th May at 7.30pm

**"Elizabeth Raffald - Manchester's 18th Century Domestic Goddess."**

an illustrated presentation given by Suzy Appleton

at the Saddleworth Museum, Art Gallery, High Street, Uppermill.

Society members free but a charge to non-members on the door of £3.

All welcome. Refreshments available. Masks should be worn.

Website [HERE](#)

**Saddleworth Civic Trust** has no meeting or event planned in May 2022.

**For both societies :**

Please note that if there is any upturn in the state of the ongoing Covid Pandemic, any or all of these meetings might be cancelled. Members of each Society should check with any Committee member, at the Museum office, if in doubt.

**SADDLEWORTH HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

**GUIDED WALKS, SUMMER 2022 (Series 9 Rev.1)**

For contact details, a list of the walks and other details, view or download the .pdf programme

[HERE](#)

**Library Events & Gallery talks at Gallery Oldham; Curator talks [HERE](#)**  
on [Eventbrite](#) and [Instagram](#)

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Family History Society of Cheshire : Tameside Group meeting.

See their website [HERE](#)

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**Tameside History Club :**

Meetings on zoom.

Website and programme

&

**Tameside Local Studies and Archives - Regular Sessions and Events**

Website and programme [HERE](#)

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Regional Heritage Centre :

Website [HERE](#)

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**'A Mixed Bag'**

**'Autobiography Of A Manchester Cotton Manufacturer : Or Thirty Years' Experience Of Manchester ', pub. 1887.**

Originally published anonymously, later research showed that it was written by Henry S. Gibbs. The reviewer had given it 5 stars, as had others who had read it.

The author used pseudonyms throughout ... actual names, where discovered, in the footnotes.

**Serialised in the newsletters :**

The earlier chapters and an introduction can be read in previous months' newsletters, starting in October, and downloadable [HERE](#)

**Transcript: Chapter XII**

**PARTNERSHIP WITH A MANUFACTURER - AN ANCOATS MILL.**

THE commercial crisis of 1857 was attended with much inconvenience during the time I was adapting myself to my new sphere. The change was great from being amongst business men all the morning to finding myself in an office about ten feet square, sitting vis-a-vis with an old gentleman who watched every movement I made with much earnestness and attention. This kind of thing did not last long, for shortly afterwards he absented himself for many weeks. Before the contemplated visit to the Hydropathic Establishment could take place there were many things to be done, the most important being that of my introduction to the firms with whom in future I should have to transact our business. This was an interesting process, and occupied a considerable time in its accomplishment, and took place on the Exchange.

The Lancashire men of business are proverbially unartificial and plain-spoken. Notwithstanding this characteristic, and the absorbing thought required in some of their weighty transactions, many were the jokes and home-thrusts made on that occasion. The introductions were attended by congratulations from some and warnings from others, but more or less with jokes from all; and

**p. 131**

Mr. Tumbleton, too, seemed to be a lover of a joke. The remembrance of one introduction remains. It was made to a man who had passed the middle period of life. He had a gentlemanly exterior, with corresponding manners. When I was presented to him he seemed in marked contrast to the others. The easy and graceful movement he made when offering me his hand and expressing his best wishes for my welfare formed such a contrast as to live in one's

memory. Our workpeople were a heterogeneous body, differing greatly from those of Mr. Thornton; lacking their simplicity and quiet manner. The building of the mill was unsuitable for its object. It consisted of four stories and an attic. It contained 408 looms, and there were upwards of a hundred of them laced on each floor. Looms should be worked only in sheds of not more than one story. When so arranged vibration is avoided. In our place, with four floors of looms, comprising one hundred in each, the vibration can be imagined. So great was it, there was once an alarm that the building was going to collapse, and the workpeople rushed frantically into the street in a state of panic. For a time engineers and millwrights were puzzled how to prevent a disaster. The only remedy that could be devised was found in bolting the walls with iron rods, running diagonally from the top through to the bottom of the building, clenching the beams of the floors in their passage, and holding the structure as compact as it was possible. Notwithstanding all this precaution, the vibrations could be only partially reduced, and the mill continued to rock

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considerably. Sometimes a visitor would ascend to the top of the staircase, where, immediately overhead, was a cold water cistern, for the purpose of trying the effect. No one ever remained there more than a minute to my knowledge. The sensation produced by the "rocking" caused some persons to become giddy, but filled most of them with fright, and compelled the speedy retreat of all. We had a beam engine of Fairbairn's manufacture, the first made of its kind, the steam being cut off with tappet valves and revolving discs. A mortice-wheel geared into the fly-wheel, and drove an upright shaft, which extended from the first floor to the top of the mill, driving the looms and beaming frames. We had neither a warehouse nor an office in the city, and as the mill was inconveniently situated, customers rarely paid us a visit. They had to be seen at their warehouses or else on the Exchange.

The ill effects of the crisis passed over, followed by the usual increase of activity, and I had become sufficiently master of the situation for the Malvern hydropathic business to come off. A visit also to Blackpool was made, and on its termination the much talked of expedition to Malvern took place.

During Mr. Tumbleton's absence, which continued for three months, I received a large number of letters from him. They contained graphic and enthusiastic accounts of the water achievements as prescribed in the establishment where he was staying. He described the cold bath which he took every morning at seven o'clock, and sometimes earlier; also the walk of three-quarters of an hour's duration before taking his breakfast.

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Then the breakfast itself, which was succeeded by a warm bath of 100 degrees of heat, followed by buckets of cold water, which were thrown upon the patient, producing a "grand effect," and ending at half-past five in the evening with a "cold dripping sheet."

This was one of the bills of fare, which varied daily. Then there were the highly-edifying lectures given by the Doctor on that much-neglected portion of the human system the skin, and also of many more of the vital organs. The visitors, who were chiefly clerical, were described as being very intelligent and agreeable. Amongst them was a reverend Canon, who lost no opportunity of expressing his admiration for Manchester, and his appreciation of the mental and physical energy of its citizens. .

Although he gave indications of a desire to return and witness the progress of events connected with the new firm, yet in contemplation of the extraordinary vigour which had been imparted to him, and of which he hoped for augmented supplies, under the influence of packings, perspirings, immersions, and douchings of daily occurrence, he apologetically confessed his inability to leave Malvern for the present. Moreover, he was now enjoying better health than he had experienced for eight years. I required his presence in view of important and necessary changes in the mill. There was nothing for it, however, but to let them remain in abeyance until

the hot and cold water had fully accomplished their purpose, and I wrote to him not to hasten his return.

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In the course of business I had occasion to call at the extensive mill owned by the gentleman who had impressed me with his graceful greeting on the Exchange, and was received by him with the same courtly manner. He introduced me to his oldest son, who had recently returned from Germany, where he completed his education, and was now engaged in cotton with his sire. He was rather good-looking and showed the effect of Continental drill in his erect figure. I thought him somewhat brusque in manner, and lacking the grace and ease of his father, though he favourably impressed me. At my next meeting on the Exchange, with the father, we conversed on matters other than the everlasting cotton. Music was the chief topic, and he told me his son was an enthusiast, and performed both on organ and pianoforte. Moreover I was told that my own love for the Divine Art would doubtless have such a cementing influence as to give the new firm many an advantage which otherwise would not be accorded to it. The pleasant effect produced by this unexpected announcement was only modified by the remembrance that my new partner knew or cared no more for music than a cow does of or for a mince pie, though he would be a participator in the advantage I was to enjoy.

Not long after this, the father with his son, who became my *Fidus Achates*, honoured me with their presence at my lodgings, and we devoted much of the evening to the discussion of musical subjects. A return visit was made to their house, and a friendship began, ending on the part of the father only with his lamentable death. He was

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taken away far too early for those who, like myself, could discern the nobility of his nature. For years I sadly missed his presence in the daily throng assembled on the Exchange. Though now finally separated from Manchester and all of those whom I once knew and cared for there, the son of my honoured friend remains faithful to me, being one of the few who recalls by his intercourse the pleasant memories of the past.

On the 19th March, 1858, Mr. Thornton executed a deed wherein he “nominated, constituted, and appointed me in his place and stead, and deputed me, my executors and administrators, his true and lawful attorney and attorneys,” and shortly afterwards sailed for Dunedin in New Zealand. He had for some time contemplated a visit to one of the colonies, to examine its resources with the object of providing a future home for his family, and would have made it earlier if I would have consented to accompany him. My mother expressed herself so decidedly hostile to such a proceeding on my part that the subject could not be broached a second time, and my good, worthy friend and “governor” made the voyage alone.

I took leave of him with some emotion at the London Road Station. On the platform he met Mr. George Wilson (the famous chairman), who said to him, “Where are you going, John?” and received for reply, “To New Zealand;” which caused that gentleman to open his eye in amazement. As far as I remember, they travelled together in the same carriage. After his departure I began to be impressed with a feeling of the

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responsibility that had devolved upon me. I had been sufficiently at his house and at his side to be well acquainted with his affairs, though I contemplated some trouble in one or two quarters. These latter considerations however I laid aside in recognizing that “sufficient for the day is the evil thereof” Nevertheless in later months my time was most inconveniently absorbed in matters relating to the trust, so much so, I regretted there had not been some other individual found who might have been “nominated constituted, and appointed” instead of myself.



Again, a continuation from previous months' newsletters, starting in October with an introduction, which is downloadable, [HERE](#)

from, '*The Book of English Trades*' published in 1827

### THE HATTER.

Some kind of covering for the head, either for defence or ornament, appears to have been generally worn in all ages and countries where the inhabitants have made any progress in the arts of civilized life. Herodotus, indeed, states that the Egyptians were accustomed to appear bare-headed, but this assertion must be considered subject to limitation, probably comprising only some of the poorer classes, as from other documents it appears they were no strangers to this article of dress; and it is well known that a crown was the sign of royal authority.

The form, substance, and colour of head-dresses have been exceedingly various, according to the different circumstances or humours of the wearer. The Persians wore turbans, and other nations inhabiting the Indian Peninsula wore a kind of covering for the head, which, like the thatch of a lowly cottage, seemed calculated to divest the building of all proportion. The imperial turban is said to have been composed of almost a whole bale of muslin, variously twisted and formed: the ministerial turban was smaller, but of superior height. From the Persians the Jews borrowed those large turbans which adorned their, elders, doctors, and scribes. The mitre of the priests was their own. Several of their tribes adopted the caps which the Romans were accustomed to give to their slaves on their being given their liberty: hence, in numerous instances, the cap has been a symbol of liberty.



*The Hatter*

The ancient helmets were a substitute for hats, made of steel, brass, and sometimes more costly metals. In our own country, Stowe informs us that the English used to ride, and go winter and summer in knit caps and cloth hoods; and the best sort in silk thrummed hats.

Head-dresses, from their variety, simplicity, and mutability, had hitherto been an object of little regard in a manufacturing or commercial point of view. The introduction of felt hats has occasioned a uniformity and extent to this article of dress, unknown to former ages, and has proved of considerable importance to the manufacturer and the tradesman. Curiosity is naturally excited to become acquainted with the particulars respecting their invention, but the the operation of individual interest in this, as in numerous other instances connected with the arts, seems to have buried it in obscurity, and little information on the subject can now be obtained.

Passing over the story about St. Clement, the fourth bishop of Rome, and some other idle tales of the dark ages, it appears that felt hats were invented at Paris by a Swiss, about the commencement of the fifteenth century. They were not generally known till Charles the Seventh made his triumphant entry into Rouen, in the year 1449, when from F. Daniel's account of that entry, it appears he astonished the whole city by appearing in a hat lined with red silk, and surmounted by a plume of feathers; from this entry their general use is dated.

How far the manufacture of hats was practised on the Continent before they were made in England we cannot say, but we learn that in the beginning of the reign of Henry the Eighth, Spanish felt hats were made in England by Spaniards and Dutchmen.

In the second year of James the First, the feltmakers of London obtained a corporation, and hired a hall near Christ-Church, the king granting them various privileges and liberties

England is now become the grand mart for the manufacture of hats; and hence the article is exported to the Continent, America, and various other parts of the globe: our laws prohibit the introduction of foreign hats, to encourage, of course, our domestic manufacture.

The materials in general use for hat-making, are lambs'-wool, rabbits' and hares' fur, beaver, sealwool, monkey-stuff, or neuter-wool, camels'-hair, goats'-hair, or estridge silk, and cotton. The best fur is from the backs of the different animals; it decreases in value as it approaches the belly.

As the process is nearly the same in all, it will be sufficient if we describe the method made use of in the manufacture of beaver hats.

The skin of the beaver is covered with two kinds of hair; the one long, stiff, and glossy; the other is short, thick-set, and soft, and is used alone for hats.

To tear off these kinds of hair and cut the other, women are employed, who make use of two knives: a large one, something like a shoe-maker's knife, for the long hair, and a smaller one, nearly in the form of a pruning-knife, with which they shave or scrape off the shorter hair.

Experience has shewn that the hair of fur cannot be evenly and well fitted together unless all the fibres be first separated, or put into the same state with regard to each other. This is the object of the first process of hat-making, and is called *bowing*. The materia] is laid upon a platform of wood or wire, about four feet square, called a *hurdle*, which is fixed against the wall of the work-shop, and is enlightened by a small window, and separated by two side partitions from other hurdles which occupy the rest of the space along the wall. The hurdle, if of wood, is made of deal-boards not quite three inches wide, disposed parallel to the wall, and at the distance of one-fortieth of an inch from one another, for the purpose of suffering the dust and other impurities

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of the stuff to pass through; a purpose still more effectually answered by a hurdle of wire. The workman is provided with a bow, a bow-pin, and a basket, and several cloths. The bow is a pole of yellow deal, or ash, about seven feet long, to which are fixed two bridges, somewhat like that which receives

the hair in the bow of the violin. Over these is stretched a cat-gut about one-twelfth of an inch in thickness. The bow-pin is a stick with a knot, and is used for plucking the bow-string. The basket is a square piece of ozier-work, consisting of open straight bars, with no crossing or interweaving; its length across the bars is two feet, and its breadth eighteen inches. The sides into which the bars are fixed are slightly bent into a circular curve, so that the basket may be set upright on one of these edges near the right-hand end of the hurdle, where it usually stands. The cloths are linen. Besides these implements, the workman is also provided with brown paper.

The *bowing* commences by shovelling the material towards the right-hand partition with the basket, upon which the workman holding the bow horizontally in his left hand, and the bow-pin in his right, lightly places the bow-string, and gives it a pluck with the pin. The string, in its return, strikes upon the fur, and causes it to spring up in the air, and fly partly across the hurdle in a light open form. By repeated strokes the whole is thus subjected to the bow; and this beating is repeated till all the original clots, or filaments, are perfectly opened and dilated, and having thus fallen together in all possible directions, form a thin mass or substance for the felt. The quantity thus treated at once, is called a *batt* and never exceeds half the quantity required to make one hat.

When the *batt* is sufficiently bowed, it is ready for *hardening*; which term denotes the first commencement of felting. The prepared material being

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evenly disposed on the hurdle, is first pressed down by the convex side of the basket, then covered with a cloth and pressed backwards and forwards successively in its various parts by

the hand of the workman. By this process the hairs are twisted together, and the lamellæ of each hair, by fixing themselves to other hairs, which happen to be directed the contrary way, keep the whole in a compact state.

When the felt is thus managed the cloth is taken off; and a sheet of paper with its corners doubled in, so as to give it a triangular outline, is laid upon the batt, which last is folded over the paper as it lies, and its edges meeting one over the other, form a conical cap. The joining is soon made good by pressure with the hands on the cloth. Another batt, ready hardened, is in the next place laid on the hurdle, and the cap, here mentioned, placed upon it with the joining downwards. This last batt being also folded up, will, consequently, have its place of junction diametrically opposite to that of the inner felt, which it must therefore greatly tend to strengthen. The principal part of the intended hat is thus put together; and now requires to be worked with the hands a considerable time upon the hurdle, the cloth being also occasionally sprinkled with clear water. During the whole of this operation, which is called basoning, the felt becomes firmer and firmer, and contracts in its dimensions. It may be easily understood that the chief use of the paper is to prevent the sides from felting together. A superior method is said to be, that after the bowing, and previous to the basoning, a hardening skin of leather, alumed, or half-tanned, should be used instead of the cloth, and pressed upon the batt, to bring it by an easier gradation to a compact appearance. This operation of basoning derives its name from the process of working being the same as that practised on a wool-hat

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after bowing; the last being done upon a piece of cast-metal, three feet across, of a circular shape, called a bason; the joining of each batt is made good here by the motion of the hand, that is, by rubbing the edges of each batt, folded over the other, to excite the progressive action of the filaments in felting, and to join the two together.

The basoning is followed by a still more effectual continuation of the felting, called *working*. This is done at an apparatus called the *battery* (see the back part of the plate,) consisting of a kettle containing water slightly acidulated with sulphuric acid, to which, for beaver-hats, a quantity of winelees, or the grounds of beer are added, or else plain water for rinsing out, and eight planks of wood joined together in the form of a frustrum of a cone, and meeting in the kettle at the middle. The outer or upper edge of each plank is about two feet broad, and rises a little more than two feet and a half above the ground; the slope towards the kettle is considerably rapid, so that the whole battery is little more, than six feet in diameter. The quantity of sulphuric acid added to the liquor is not sufficient to give a sour taste, but only renders it rough to the tongue. In this liquor, heated rather higher than unpractised hands could bear, the felt is dipped from time to time, and worked on the planks; before which it is plunged gently into the boiling kettle till fully saturated with the liquor, which is called *soaking*. The imperfections of the felt present themselves in the course of this part of the work to the eye of the workman, who picks out knots and other hard substances with a bodkin, and adds more fur upon all such parts as require strengthening. The added fur is patted down with a wet brush, and soon incorporates with the rest. Many Hatters, to hurry this work, use a quantity of sulphuric acid, and then to make the nap rise and flow, they kill or neutralize the acid, and open the body

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again by throwing in a handful of oatmeal; by this means they expedite their work, but at the same time they leave it quite grainy from the want of labour. This, in handling the dry grey hat, when made, may be in part discovered. The beaver for the nap is laid on towards the conclusion of this kind of working. The hat now possesses the form of a cone, and the several actions which it has undergone, have converted it into a soft flexible felt, capable of being extended, though with some difficulty, in any or every direction; therefore, the next thing to be done is to give it the form required by the wearer. For this purpose, the workman turns up the edge or brim, to the depth of about an inch and a half, and then returns the point back again

through the centre or axis of the cap, so far as not to take out this fold of the same depth. The point being returned back again in the same manner, produces a third fold, and thus the workman proceeds until the whole has acquired the appearance of a flat, circular piece, consisting of a number of concentric undulations, rings, or folds, with the point in the centre. This is laid upon the plank, v/here the workman, keeping it wet with the liquor, pulls out the point with his fingers and presses it down with his hand, at the same time turning it round on its centre in contact with the plank, till he has by this means rubbed out a flat portion equal to the intended crown of the hat. In the next place he takes a block, to the crown of which he applies the flat central portion of the felt, and by forcing down a string from the sides of the block, causes the next part to assume the figure of the crown, which he continues to wet and work until it has properly disposed itself round the block. The brim now appears like a flounced or puckered appendage round the edge of the crown ; but the block being set upright on the plank, the requisite form is soon given by working, rubbing, and extending this part. Water only is used in the

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operation of fashioning or blocking; at the conclusion of which it is pressed out by the blunt edge of the copper implement used for that purpose, called a *stamper*.

Previous to the dyeing, the nap of the hat is raised or loosened out with a wire-brush, or carding instrument. The fibres are too rotten after the dyeing to bear this operation. The dyeing materials are logwood, a little oak bark, and a mixture of the sulphates of iron and of copper, commonly known under the names of green copperass, and blue vitriol.

The hats are boiled with logwood in water, and afterwards immersed in the saline solution. The dyed hats are, in the next place, taken to the stiffening shop. One workman, assisted by a boy, does this part of the business. He has two vessels, or boilers, one containing the grounds of strong beer, and the other containing glue dissolved in water, a little thinner than that which is used by carpenters.

The beer-grounds are applied in the inside of the crown, to prevent the glue from coming through to the face, and also to give the requisite firmness at a less expence than could be produced by the glue alone. Were the glue to pass through the hat in different places, it would be more difficult to produce an even gloss upon the face in the subsequent finishing. The glue is therefore applied after the beer grounds are dried, and then only upon the lowerface of the brim, and the inside of the crown. For this purpose the hat is put into another hat, called a stiffening hat, the crown of which is notched, or slit open in various directions. These are then placed in a hole in a deal-board, which supports the brim, and the glue is applied with a brush. In France, however, they use wine-lees instead of beer-grounds, and gum-water instead of glue.

The dry hat, after this operation, is always rigid, and its figure irregular. The last dressing is given by the application of moisture and heat, and the use

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of the brush, and a hot iron as before mentioned, somewhat in the shape of that used by tailors, but shorter and broader on the face. The hat being softened by exposure to steam, is drawn upon a block, to which it is securely applied by the former method of forcing a string down from the crown to the commencement of the brim. The judgment of the workman is employed in moistening, brushing, and ironing the hat, in order to give and preserve the proper figure; (see the front part of the plate) when the brim of the hat is not intended to be of an equal width throughout, as is sometimes the case for military hats, it is cut by means of a wooden or metallic pattern. The contrivance for cutting them round is very ingenious and simple. A number of notches are made in one edge of a flat piece of wood, for the purpose of inserting the point of a knife, and from one side or edge of this piece of wood there proceeds a straight handle, which lies parallel to the notched side, forming an angle somewhat like that of a carpenter's square.

When the legs of this angle are applied to the outside of the crown, and the board lies flat on the brim of the hat, the notched edge will lie nearly in the direction of the radius, or line pointing to the centre of the hat. A knife being therefore inserted in one of the notches, it is easy to draw it round by leaning the tool against the crown, and it will cut the brim very regular and true. This cut is made before the hat is quite finished, and is carried entirely through; so that one of the last operations consists in tearing off the redundant part, which by that means leaves an edging of beaver round the external face. When the hat is completely finished, the crown is tied up in gauze paper, which is neatly ironed down. It is then ready for the subsequent operations of lining, &c, for sale.

These hats are, in the trade, commonly called *stuff-hats*; another kind much in wear, but of course

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inferior in quality, are called *plate-hats*: they consist, in the interior, of wool, and are merely covered with a better material on the outside. The commonest hats of all are called *cordies*; they are made wholly of wool, or some such coarse material. Another kind of hats is latterly got up in the trade, called *castor-hats*, but we believe this is only a name adopted to set off the article, rather than as conveying the quality absolutely designed by the term, *castor* being merely the Latin word for the beaver.

Silk hats have also within these few years come into wear. They are formed of a stout oil-case, and the fine pile of the silk is fixed by some process of glueing, or gumming, on the outside. They are very neat, and have the advantage of being waterproof, but the silk, without great care, soon wears off, and the hat immediately loses its beauty.

Hats of the finest quality are made in large quantities in London, and also at some of our provincial towns: but the cordies are made in vast quantities at, and in the neighbourhood of Bristol, as well as plate and castor hats. The cordies form a regular article of exchange with the London manufacturers for their stuff goods.

Hats are worn of various colours, but those most in use at present, are black, drab, and white. The white have a nap of rabbits'-fur, selected from the skins. Drab hats are made of stuffs of a natural colour selected for the purpose.

The master Hat-maker employs frequently a large capital, and numerous hands. The journeyman's earnings are good; but we fear, as in numerous other trades, that his habits are not calculated to induce him to make the most of them.

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From the e-Postbag

No correspondence in the e-postbag this month

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**A short selection of entries from the MLFHS FACEBOOK PAGE [HERE](#) ...**

since the last newsletter :

\* xx The British Pop Archive

The John Ryland's is home to the extraordinary British Pop Archive - the first of its kind with a special exhibition

[HERE](#)

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* Discover the curious world of London Transport's Lost Property Office

[HERE](#)

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\* Magnificent Maps of London

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* Manchester's cherished 550-year-old pub that was doomed by The Amdale

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\* Beggars' badges in Scotland

[HERE](#)

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* Historic England: 100 years of aerial images go online

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~~~~~  
\* Oral history recordings are a fantastic resource for family historians

[HERE](#)

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* Belle Vue's lost rollercoasters and rides and the people who made them

[HERE](#)

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\* "A Female Parish Clerk?!"

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* When Did the Gregorian Calendar Start in Each Country?

[HERE](#)

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\* Lies, stories, misinformation and collective memory: extracting vipers and unmasking cavaliers in the 1659 Parliament

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* Fascinating photos capture behind the scenes on the famous cobbles 60 years ago

[HERE](#)

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\* Take a digital tour of Ordsall Hall - a place to visit on a sunny day

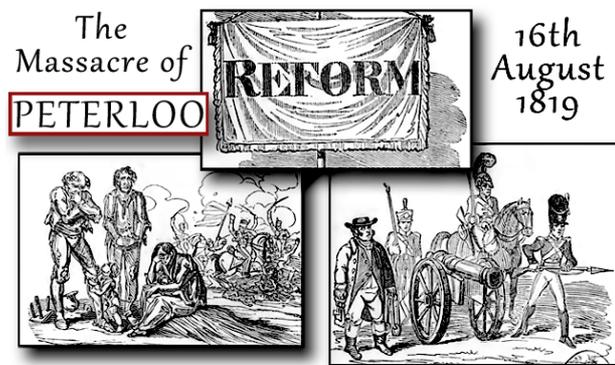
[HERE](#)

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* For much more, visit the MLFHS Facebook Page : [HERE](#)

And [HERE](#) is the link to the MLFHS Twitter page.

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**PETERLOO : the Bi-Centenary**



Visit the website for **The Peterloo Project** with particular reference to Oldham, people, accounts, life at the time and more ... at [Peterloo-Manchester](#)

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Although the long-anticipated Bi-Centenary has come and gone, there are some Peterloo websites still active with history, news, photos and reports.

You can make searches on websites such as :

Manchester Histories - Peterloo 1819 ... Manchester Histories have created a website which publicises all that is happening, or has happened, around the region.

Visit their website [HERE](#)

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## Need Help!

### **Oldham Local Studies and Archives is open**

#### **Our opening hours are as follows:**

Monday, Wednesday, Thursday & Friday 10am-5pm; Tuesday 10am-2pm; Saturday 10am-4pm.

Although it will not be essential to book your place as has been the case over the last few months, we encourage you to consider booking in advance as this enables us to get everything ready in time for your visit, particularly if you wish to view archives. To order please visit:

[https://www.oldham.gov.uk/forms/form/891/en/local\\_archives\\_document\\_order\\_form](https://www.oldham.gov.uk/forms/form/891/en/local_archives_document_order_form)

If you wish to use PCs to access family history websites or to use microfilm readers, we advise you to book a place by contacting us at:

[archives@oldham.gov.uk](mailto:archives@oldham.gov.uk) or telephone 0161 770 4654.

#### **Local Studies and Archives at 84 Union Street, Oldham, [OL1 1DN](#),**

Archives are unique, original documents created in the course of everyday activities. Oldham's date from 1597 and cover an enormous range of subjects and activities :

- Hospital records
- Poor Law Union records
- Coroners Court records
- Local Authority records including Chadderton, Crompton, Failsworth, Lees, Oldham, Royton and Saddleworth
- Schools and education records
- Records for statutory bodies like the police force
- Church and religious records
- Business records
- Solicitors and estate agents records
- Trade unions and associations records
- Co-operative Society records
- Sports, entertainment and leisure records
- Personal, family and property records
- Society and Association records
- Records of Oldham communities

There is no charge to look at archival records although you would need to bring proof of your name and address (e.g. your driving licence) to do so.

Most archives can be produced immediately, with no advance booking required. However, some archives are stored off-site, in which case at least 2 days' notice is required in order to see them.

**Other archives may be closed due to their fragile condition, or because they contain confidential information.**

[Oldham Council Heritage Collections](#)

There are regularly changing displays in the Local Studies Library.

[Opening hours](#) and contact details.

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Other Society Websites

Catholic Family History Society – www.catholicfhs.co.uk
Cheshire Local History Association – www.cheshirehistory.org.uk
Chadderton Historical Society (archived website) – www.chadderton-historical-society.org.uk
Lancashire Family History and Heraldry Society - <https://www.lfhhs.org.uk/home.php>
Lancashire Local History Federation – www.lancashirehistory.org
Liverpool and South West Lancashire FHS – www.lswlfhs.org.uk
Manchester Region Industrial Archaeology Society – www.mrias.co.uk
Oldham Historical Research Group – www.pixnet.co.uk/Oldham-hrg
Peterloo - Peterloo-Manchester
Ranulf Higden Society (Latin transcription) - Ranulf Higden Soc.
Royton Local History Society – www.rlhs.co.uk
Saddleworth Historical Society – www.saddleworth-historical-society.org.uk
Tameside Local History Forum - www.tamesidehistoryforum.org.uk
Tameside Local & Family History - <http://tamesidefamilyhistory.co.uk/contents.htm>
The Victorian Society - Manchester Regional Website

Some Useful Sites

GENUKI - Lancashire
Free BMD - Search
National Library of Scotland - Free to view, historic, zoomable maps of UK :
1891 - Oldham and locality HERE
Online Parish Clerk Project : Lancashire - HERE
British Association for Local History - HERE
and for their back issue journal downloads - HERE
Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire, website, HERE
and for their back issue journal downloads, website, HERE
Internet Archive ... The Internet Archive offers over **24,000,000** freely downloadable books and texts.
HERE There is also a collection of 1.3 million modern eBooks that may be borrowed by anyone with a free archive.org account.
Made in Greater Manchester (MIGM) HERE and Research guide HERE
Historical Maps of parish boundaries HERE
Regiments & Corps of the British Army (Wayback machine) HERE
Special Collections on Find My Past HERE
FmyP - The Manchester Collection HERE
Goat fire insurance maps of Manchester HERE
Cheshire Parish Register Project HERE

Some Local Archives

Barnsley Museum & Discovery Centre – www.experience-barnsley.com
Birkenhead – Local & Family History
Bury – www.bury.gov.uk/archives
Chester - Cheshire Archives & Local Studies (linked from Discovery at the National Archives)

Derbyshire - [Local & Family History](#)

Leeds - [Leeds Local and Family History](#)

Liverpool Archives and Family History – <https://liverpool.gov.uk/archives>

Manchester - [Archives & Local History](#)

Oldham - [Local Studies & Archives](#)

Oldham - [Oldham Council Heritage Collections](#)

Preston – www.lancashire.gov.uk/libraries-and-archives

Stockport – www.stockport.gov.uk/heritage-library-archives

Tameside Local Studies and Archives - <https://www.tameside.gov.uk/archives>

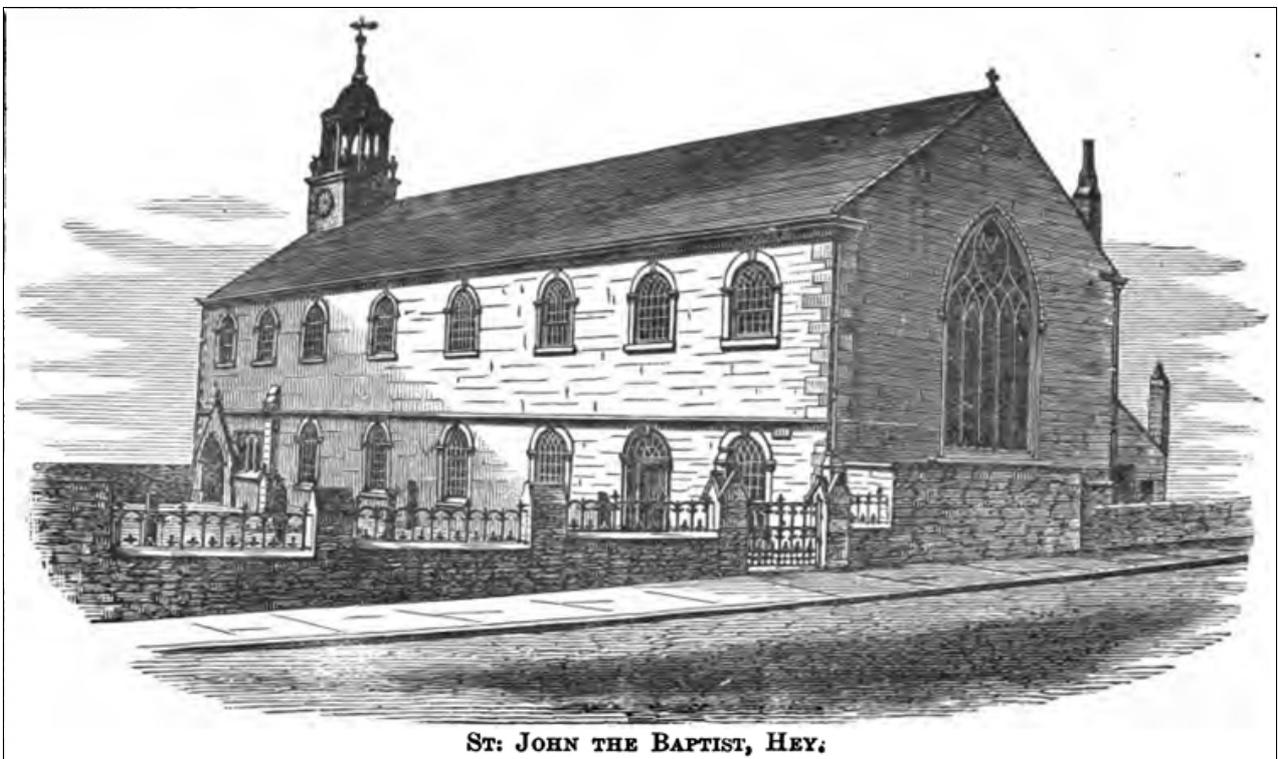
York – www.york.ac.uk/borthwick



For the Gallery

'Local Notes & Gleanings - Oldham and Neighbourhood in Bygone Times',

by Giles Shaw, in 3 volumes, written in 1887/8.



Churches in the Oldham Rural Deanery

Hey Chapel or Church

This chapel, dedicated to St. John the Baptist, was built by the liberality of the people of Lees, who were at great inconvenience, their Parish church being at Ashton. Most of the contributions were given in kind, viz., in stone, lime, and sand, the farmers lending their horses and carts to ...

the things required, whilst the masons, carpenters, joiners, and labourers all gave their services. Seats in the church were allotted to the contributors to the building in proportion to the amount given. Whilst the building was in progress the parishioners of Oldham and Saddleworth living near Lees felt that if they could share in the ministrations of the Lees chapel it would be a great benefit to them. So, though built by the Lees people, an arrangement was made by which it became a chapel of ease for those who were at too great a distance from the Churches of Ashton, Oldham and Saddleworth, and fees were paid to all three for baptisms, marriages and burials. The building thus erected was a small, plain, stone structure, of four windows in length, with a cupola chancel at the east end. It was consecrated by Bishop Peploe, of Chester, in the year 1743, the patronage being vested in the Rector of Ashton. The first marriage entered in the register is dated September 6th, 1743. but some dispute occurring about fees between the three churches, no marriage was celebrated at Hey Chapel from September 30th, 1753, to November 28th, 1860. The register of baptisms begins on May 29th 1743, and that of the burials on December 18th, 1744, and these have gone on without a break ever since. About 1820 a new burial ground, a short distance from the chapel, was consecrated. In 1791 an addition to the east end of the chapel was made, of two windows in length; and a similar addition has been made by the Rev. G.D. Grundy, at the west end, the building now being eight windows in length. From 1868 to 1872 funds were raised and the interior of the building was entirely renovated, and a new roof put on. The cost of these alterations, &c., was defrayed by subscriptions raised from - 1st, those who had sittings in the church; 2nd, the owners of the graves; and 3rd, those whose children attended the school. From this limited number upwards of £2,500 was raised. The interior of the church is now very neat and handsome (a detailed description of which is deferred till a brief account has been given of all the churches in Oldham and neighbourhood).

The Rev. G.D. Grundy, M.A., is the present vicar, and has ministered here nearly 48 years. He is the fourth holder of the living, the first incumbent being the Rev. Richard Hopwood, the second the Rev. _ Becket and the third the Rev. William Winter who was also the incumbent of St. Peter's, Oldham, Mr. Mattinson being his curate at Hey. It is worthy of notice that in all the alterations &c., to the chapel, and the building of a commodious and handsome vicarage, the expense has all been defrayed by the parishioners. This chapel at Hey is now become the Hey Parish Church, and is included in the rural deanery of Oldham, and has now no connection with Ashton except that the rector of Ashton is still the patron.

Jno. Hollinhead , Werneth

OPENING OF THE MIDDLETON FREE LIBRARY

March 9, 1889

The fine weather which prevailed on Saturday enabled a large number of people to witness the opening of the Free Library at Middleton. Early in 1887 it was decided to celebrate the Queen's Jubilee by erecting a free library. The interior of the building is well adapted for the purposes to which it is to be put. The ground floor comprises the reading-room and library, while upstairs there is one large room, which, however, can be divided into three parts by means of sliding partitions, and which will be used as classrooms for educational purposes. the Middleton, Tonge, and Alkrington Free Library has transferred its volumes to the the new institution, and the newsroom hitherto provided by Mr. A. Butterworth will cease to exist.

The opening ceremony should have been performed by Professor Ward, Vice Chancellor of Victoria University, Manchester, but owing to indisposition, he was unable to be present, but an excellent substitute was found in Professor Boyd Dawkins. A procession was formed at the Town Hall, and proceeded by way of Suffield-street, Manchester New-road, and along Long-street, where the building is situate. the volunteer fife band headed the procession, followed by the local volunteers, under Captain Lees; then came the fire brigade, police force, the Mayor

(Councillor J.W. Lees, J.P.), and members of the Town Council. Several thousands of people lined the route. Arrived at the library, Councillor Heywood, chairman of the Jubilee Committee, formally handed over to the Mayor a gold key, with the deed of transfer and a list of the subscribers. The Mayor, in turn, handed the key over to Professor Dawkins, who, unlocking the door, declared the place open. After an inspection of the various rooms, a meeting was held in the upper room, where the Mayor presided, and was supported by Professor Dawkins, the Mayor of Salford (Alderman A.L. Dickins), Councillors Heywood, Thorpe, Halliday, Aspell, Mr. W.B. Scott, the Rector of Middleton, Mr. F. Entwistle (Town Clerk), and others.



Professor Boyd Dawkins referred to the use to which the new institution would be put, and said that the first foundation he knew of in connection with Middleton was the foundation by the Dean of St. Paul's of a Grammar School. The foundation dated back to the time of Elizabeth, and it was distinctly established for the advancement of learning and for the advancement, as it was phrased, of the Christian religion. He certainly thought that ancient foundation was receiving a considerable addition to its working power by having that building as a result of the Queen's Jubilee. It seemed to him that in Middleton, in the time of Queen Victoria, they were really carrying out to greater perfection and advantage than heretofore the idea of the founder of the Grammar School in the time of Queen Elizabeth. This was a great occasion for Middleton and it was a great pleasure to him to find himself assisting in that day's work. He had always done what he could in his own way for the advancement of knowledge and learning, and he could assure them, as a member of Owens College and Victoria University, that it was with the liveliest feelings of interest and sympathy that the college authorities saw institutions such as the library rising up round Manchester. They felt that they had their work to do in Victoria University, that they were working really in the same field of labour as those gentlemen at Middleton who had founded that free library. They welcomed Middleton as an important addition to the army of workers against ignorance - workers who were trying to make the people better than they were before. (applause)

Luncheon was afterwards served in the National Schoolroom adjoining, the caterer being Mr. Wood, of the Old Boar's Head Inn. the following toast list was gone through : - "The Queen and Royal Family" proposed by the Mayor; "The Clergy," proposed by the Mayor of Salford, and responded to by the Rev. T.E. Cleworth, Rector of Middleton; "The Subscribers," proposed by Mr. McKie, and responded to by councillor Thorpe; "The Vice-Chancellor of Victoria University,"

proposed by Councillor Aspell, and responded to by Professor Dawkins; "The Architect," proposed by Mr. W.B. Scott, and responded to by Mr. L. Booth; "The Jubilee Committee," proposed by Mr. Travis, and responded to by Councillor Heywood; "The Ladies," proposed by the Mayor, and responded to by the Rev. J.O. Jelly.



Owen's College, Manchester



Ye Olde Rover's Return Inn, Manchester