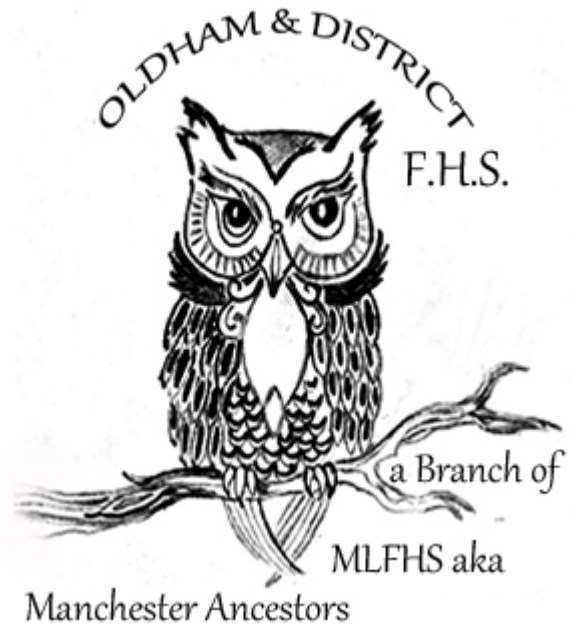


'e-Owls'



Contact us :

Branch Website: <https://www.mlfhs.uk/oldham>

MLFHS homepage : <https://www.mlfhs.uk/>

Email Chairman : chairman-oldham@mlfhs.org.uk

Emails General : oldham@mlfhs.org.uk

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](#)

September 2022

MLFHS - Oldham & District Branch Newsletter

Where to find things in the newsletter:

Oldham Branch News :	Page 2	MLFHS Facebook picks	Page 30
Other Branches' News :	Page 4	Peterloo Bi-Centenary :	Page 31
MLFHS Updates :	Page 6	Need Help! :	Page 31
Societies not part of MLFHS :	Page 10	Useful Website Links :	Page 32
'A Mixed Bag' :	Page 12	Gallery :	Page 33
From the e-Postbag :	Page 26		

Branch News :

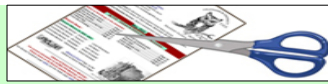
Branch Officers for 2022 -2023 :

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

Links to the Website :



['Where to Find it'](#)
On the Oldham & District
Website Pages



Newsletter ['Snippets' Page](#)
Find Articles, Transcriptions and
Gallery Images you missed



From MS. of the 12th Century
in the Royal Library, Brussels

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 and welcome to the September newsletter. September is Heritage Week throughout the Country and the Oldham & District Branch will be at Oldham Local Studies and Archives on Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> September to help visitors and answer questions on family history. Do pay us a visit if you are in the area.

I am looking forward to our meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> September. Our speaker is Stephen Counce who will tell us about the Hiring Fairs of Northern England. It appeals to me as my paternal great great grandmother to be was "hired" at the Fair in Market Drayton to join our family and marry my great great Grandfather. Her dowry was a jar of Lard! How things have changed.

Enjoy reading the rest of the newsletter.

Best Wishes

Linda

Chairman, Oldham Branch

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

~~~~~

Editor's remarks.

Hi Everyone,

I can't believe how quickly the time to start putting together the next newsletter comes around! It's been a busy month as I did battle with Windows 11 on the new branch laptop! I feel as if I might be getting there, though, at last! This is enabling us to provide a better experience, for both our zoom audience and for those in the room, by using two laptops for the powerpoint presentation, instead of introducing a separate camera. However, although we ask the speaker if they will sit in front of the zoom laptop, so that they can be seen easily, on some occasions the speaker prefers to stand. In that instance, it means that the speaker can be heard on zoom but not seen. It has been suggested that we turn the laptop camera towards the speaker but, believe me, that causes more issues than it solves! Many thanks to everyone who is supporting us at the hybrid meetings whilst we 'get it right!' We appreciate any feedback you care to send.

In the Mixed Bag we're up to Chapter XVI of 20, in the *Autobiography*, and coming to the end; only three more chapters to come. Plus we have another few pages of a '*Ginnel to Life*' about a child's life in Oldham in the early 20th century, before WW2.

In the Postbag we have another contribution from Julie Schwethelm, reliving Ashton in the '60s and '70s. Again, the memories brought back so much for me, brought up in Ashton in the 40s and 50s, but still much the same as Julie's memories. Also in the e-Postbag we have another piece from Glyn Collin, who writes about his ancestor who was caught up in the Bankside Mill disturbances.

In September, the '*Oldham Histories Festival and Heritage Open Days*' are from the 9th September to the 1st October. The programme for the events can be downloaded [HERE](#) in the Mixed Bag. The Oldham HRG's September zoom meeting is part of the Festival and is about the Ferranti Works at Hollinwood, Failsworth.

Finally, in the Gallery we can find three images taken from Sim Schofield's '*Short Stories About Failsworth Folk*' from 1905 and one from *Cassell's Illustrated History of England*, Vol. 8, of Miles Platting, Manchester. It is from a chapter about exports and imports in Victorian Britain. .

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.

~~~~~

## Oldham & District Branch

### *Monthly Meetings*

Happily, we are now holding our monthly meetings as hybrids ... simultaneously on zoom and in the library. Over the past 20 months or so, 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 remains free for everyone and is essential on [Eventbrite](#).

\* No need to book if you attend in the library.

For attendance in person, in the library, members are free, non-members £3.

Wherever you live, Welcome!

~~~~~

Last Month's Meeting ... hybrid, in Oldham Library and on zoom



Saturday,
13th Aug.
at
2 pm



The Life of the Late James Johnson

An illustrated talk given by Carol Talbot,

author of '*The Amazing Mary Higgs*' and '*Working-Class Suffragette: The Life of Annie Kenney*'

"Around September 1866 James Johnson arrived in Oldham looking for work. Many people did, but James Johnson was different, he was a slave. James escaped from North Carolina in 1862 during the American Civil War. After many escapades and adventures, he settled in Oldham and found work. He married a local woman who taught him to read and write. He remained in the town until his death in 1914."

Little more might have been known, or realised, except that in Oldham Local Studies and Archives there is a 12-page pamphlet, *The Life of the Late James Johnson - an Escaped Slave from the Southern States of America*, produced by Alice Johnson (stepdaughter?) and sold for

1d. This little, paper booklet is regarded as the only one still in existence.

Carol started her talk by setting the scene for us and placing James's early story in the context of his life as a slave in pre-civil war America. James was born into slavery in 1847, in North Carolina. In the first 14 years of his life he was owned variously by a boat builder, a planter and by a man for whom he worked on various plantations and as a coachman. Descriptions of his work, the brutal punishments he endured, his desperation and attempts at suicide, terrible to hear, reminded us, if we ever needed to be reminded, of what it had meant to be a slave.

The outbreak of the Civil War in 1861 gave some slaves the opportunity to try and escape and, in 1862, after the North had blockaded the Confederate seaports, James and 3 other slaves succeeded in stealing a boat and reaching a Union ship, the *Stars and Stripes*, patrolling the waters. When it returned to Northern controlled waters, a few weeks later, he went ashore and managed to make his way to New York and sign up on a ship bound for Liverpool. He arrived, friendless and penniless, surviving only by begging. Eventually, he left the city and, according to his own story spent the next four years, walking through the towns and cities of the north of England, and even down as far as Swansea in South Wales and including another two periods at sea.

During his years on the road, in order to find money to eat, he took to singing, dancing and 'rattlebones' outside public houses and, at his lowest ebb, joined a bare-knuckle 'Boxing Tent' where he was the sparring partner for the professional boxers. Finally, he arrived in Oldham, in September 1866 where there were opportunities to find work in this industrial town. He found employment at Platt Brothers and, in 1871 he was on the census, on Butler Street, in Werneth, as a 'Striker for Blacksmith'. By that time he had found a path of evangelising religion, and met and married Sarah Ellen Preston in 1869. It was she who taught him to read and write and have the confidence to speak of his religious conversion publicly.

After that, there is little more of his story in the booklet so we have to turn to census returns and some rather confusing BMD documentation in order to piece together the later years of his life. On the 1881 census, James Johnson was in a boarding house, in Pickering, with his wife Sarah and is recorded as an 'Evangelist (missrs)'. It is 1891 when he appears again, as James A.

This photograph, taken by an early Oldham photographer, William Thorpe, came to light some years ago in the archived collections of Oldham Photographic Society. It's believed that there is a strong possibility that this is a photo of James Alfred Johnson.

Johnson, a widower living on St. Mary's Street, Oldham. Boarding with him is 34 year old widow Mary A. Cook and her 9 year old daughter, also called Mary A. (a note reads, "daughter of the above" ie., Mary Ann). Later that year, in December, according to the Banns of Marriage, James Alfred (father Tom Johnson) married Mary Ann Cook, widow, (née Heywood).



James Alfred Johnson?

In 1901 James Alf^d and Mary Ann are living on St. Mary's Street, Oldham. With them is Alice Johnson, age 28, born in Oldham and described as 'daughter'. This is where there is more than a little confusion! In 1911, James is with his wife Mary A. and 26 year old 'daughter' Mary A. Johnson and they are living at '5 Greenacres'[Road].

Nothing has been found in searches to suggest that a child was born to Sarah Ellen and James. Carol showed us that 'Mary Alice Cook', was born to Mary Ann Cook, née Heywood, in the 4th Quarter of 1882 so, in 1901 (as Alice Johnson) she would have been 18/19 years old, not 28 (enumerator's error?).

In 1911, she is now shown 'Mary A. Johnson' age 26. On this census all their ages have 'shifted' slightly! We know this is always the same family group because James is consistently a 'blacksmith's striker' and born in America. Carol believes that 'Mary A.', 'Mary Alice' and 'Alice' are one and the same person ... extensive searching has not brought any other solution to light. In 1927, Mary Alice Cook married Edgar L. Berrett. Her address on the certificate was the same as that given on the little pamphlet about James Johnson, 5, Greenacres Road, and the one at which James was living at his death.

James died in 1914 and is buried in an unmarked grave in Royton cemetery.

~~~~~  
**September Meeting ... hybrid, in Oldham Library and on zoom**



Saturday,  
10th Sep.  
at  
2 pm



***Agricultural Hiring Fairs of Northern England***

Agricultural Hiring Fairs of Northern England Most of northern England remains rural to this day, and its farms played a vital role in feeding the ever-growing industrial workforce. An illustrated talk given by Stephen Counce

Saturday 10th September at 2pm

A hybrid meeting in the Performance Space at Oldham Library and on zoom.

\* Online free booking, for all, for zoom link on [Eventbrite](#)

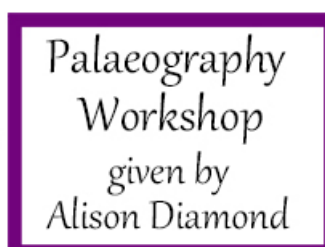
\* No booking necessary for attendance in the library; members free, non-members £3.

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

Anglo - Scots ... September



Saturday,
3rd
September
at
2:00 pm



all bookings on [Eventbrite](#)

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

~~~~~

### Bolton ... August Meeting

|                                             |                                                |                                                                                        |
|---------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| MLFHS<br>Bolton Branch<br>Online<br>Meeting | Wednesday<br>7th<br>September<br>at<br>7:30 pm | <i>A Grandmother's<br/>Legacy:<br/>my family history<br/>given by<br/>Jenny Mallin</i> |
|---------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

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.

~~~~~

~~~~~

### MLFHS updates

~~~~~

Manchester ... September 24th at 10:30am

MLFHS aka Manchester Ancestors	Saturday, 24th September at 10:30am	<i>'DNA test results - How do you use them?'</i> given by Hilary Hartigan
---	---	---

At Manchester Central Library. St. Peter's Square
Free to members of MLFHS; £3 for non-members.
Eventbrite Booking [HERE](#)

~~~~~

#### Manchester ... October 12th at 7pm on Zoom

|                                         |                                              |                                                                     |
|-----------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|
| MLFHS<br>aka<br>Manchester<br>Ancestors | Wednesday<br>12th<br>October<br>at<br>7:00pm | <i>'The History<br/>of Carnival'</i><br>given by<br>Linford Sweeney |
|-----------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|

A free, online talk for Black History Month in collaboration with Archives+  
at Manchester Central Library, given by Linford Sweeney.

Zoom booking on Eventbrite [HERE](#)

~~~~~

Keep an eye on the following pages, as some meetings may be added at short notice.

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

~~~~~

**MLFHS Online Bookshop:** [HERE](#).

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

~~~~~

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](#)

~~~~~

## 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.

\* Three more books of admission papers for pupils at the school have been completed, providing details of 157 further admissions during periods 1855-1860 and 1870-1874.

Thanks, as ever, to Jim Chadwick and his team :

(Marie Collier, Karen Hugill, Shirley King, Janet Moores, Chris Norcross) for the above.

~~~~~

* **New data has been added at www.lancashirebmd.org.uk as follows:**

Amended 34,633 Births for Manchester RD to include mother's maiden name, comprising: Newton (1896-1908)

Thanks are due to my Manchester team for the above

~~~~~

\* **New data has been added at [www.lancashirebmd.org.uk](http://www.lancashirebmd.org.uk) as follows:**

Added 18,672 Marriages for Salford RD comprising:

Barton-on-Irwell Register Office or Registrar Attended (1961-1967)

Boothstown Methodist (1961-1967)

Brindle Heath, St. Anne (1961-1967)

Broughton Park URC (1961-1966)

Broughton St Clements (1961-1967)

Broughton St John (1961-1967)

Broughton, Church of the Nazarent (1964-1965)

Broughton, Salem, Wellington St East (1962-1967)

Cadishead, Congregational Church (1963-1967)

Cadishead, Wesleyan Methodist (1961-1967)

Clifton St Ann (1961-1967)

Eccles Parish St Mary's (1961-1967)

Eccles St Andrew (1961-1967)

Eccles, Barton Road Methodist (1961-1966)

Eccles, Immanuel Methodist Church (1961-1967)

Eccles, New Congregational Church (1961-1966)

Eccles, Patricroft United Reformed Church (1961-1967)

Eccles, United Reformed Church (1963-1967)

Eccles. Eccles Evangelical/Elmwood Church (1967-1967)

Higher Broughton St James (1961-1967)  
Higher Broughton Synagogue (1961-1967)  
Higher Broughton, Presbyterian (1962-1967)  
Higher Crumpsall & Higher Broughton Synagogue (1961-1967)  
Holy Angels Claremont, Pendleton (1961-1967)  
Hope St James (1961-1967)  
Irlam St John (1961-1967)  
Irlam, Boundary Road Methodist Church (1961-1967)  
Irlam, St. Paul, Methodist (1961-1967)  
Irlams O'Th'Height, Congregational Church, Claremont Road (1961-1966)  
Kersal St Paul (1961-1967)  
Kersal, North Salford & Beth Hamedrash (prev. Romanian) Synagogue (1961-1966)  
Little Hulton St John (1961-1967)  
Little Hulton, St. Edmund (1961-1967)  
Little Hulton, St. George Methodist (1965-1967)  
Little Hulton, Wharton Untied Reformed Church (1961-1967)  
Manchester, Central and North Manchester Synagogue (1961-1967)  
Manchester, Great & New & Beth Hamedrash Synagogue (1961-1967)  
Monton Green, Monton Church (1961-1967)  
Monton St Paul (1961-1967)  
Monton, Monton Methodist Church (1961-1967)  
Patricroft Christ Church (1961-1967)  
Patricroft, Patricroft (formerly Ebenezer) Methodist Church (1961-1967)  
Patricroft, St Michael and All Angels (1961-1967)  
Patricroft, Trinity Methodist (1961-1964)  
Peel St Paul (1961-1967)  
Pendlebury Christ Church (1961-1967)  
Pendlebury St John (1961-1967)  
Pendlebury, Bethel Methodist (1962-1964)  
Pendlebury, Clifton, St Thomas (1961-1967)  
Pendlebury, Methodist Church (1963-1967)  
Pendlebury, United Methodist Free Church, Dumbell St (1961-1964)  
Pendleton St Paul (1961-1967)  
Pendleton St Thomas (1961-1967)  
Pendleton, Charlestown Congregational (1961-1967)  
Pendleton, Enys Street Methodist (1961-1967)  
Pendleton, St. Ambrose (1961-1963)  
Pendleton, Turner Hall, Astley Street (1966-1966)  
Salford Holy Rood (1961-1967)  
Salford Register Office or Registrar Attended (1961-1967)  
Salford Sacred Trinity (1961-1967)  
Salford St Ambrose (1961-1967)  
Salford St Augustine (1961-1967)  
Salford St Barnabas (1961-1966)  
Salford St Bartholomew (1961-1967)  
Salford St Clements (1961-1967)  
Salford St Cyprian (1961-1963)  
Salford St George (1961-1967)

Salford St Ignatius (1961-1967)  
Salford St Luke (1961-1967)  
Salford St Matthias (1961-1966)  
Salford St Philip (1961-1967)  
Salford, Bolton Road Methodist (1963-1967)  
Salford, Brunswick, Methodist (1961-1967)  
Salford, Central United Reformed Church (1961-1967)  
Salford, Chapel Street & Hope United Reformed Church (1961-1967)  
Salford, Gravel Lane Methodist (1961-1967)  
Salford, Great Clowes Street Methodist (1961-1963)  
Salford, Hope Congregational (1964-1967)  
Salford, Kahal Chassidim Synagogue (1964-1964)  
Salford, Lees Mission Hall, Liverpool Street (1962-1967)  
Salford, Machziei Hadass Synagogue (1963-1967)  
Salford, Memorial Road Methodist (1961-1967)  
Salford, Mount Chapel, Eccles Old Road (1967-1967)  
Salford, St. Andrew, Methodist (1961-1967)  
Salford, St. John, Methodist (1961-1967)  
Salford, St. Paul, Methodist (1961-1964)  
Salford, Trinity Congregational (1961-1964)  
Salford, Unknown (1963-1967)  
Salford, Weaste Congregational/United Reformed Church (1961-1967)  
Salford, Wesleyan Methodist, Regent Road (1961-1966)  
Salford, Westwood Methodist (1961-1963)  
Salford, Whit Lane Methodist (1961-1965)  
St Mary's, Cadishead (1961-1967)  
Stowell Memorial (1961-1967)  
Swinton St Peter (1961-1967)  
Swinton, Chorley Road (formerly Primitive) Methodist Church (1961-1967)  
Swinton, Manchester Road Methodist Church (1961-1967)  
Swinton, Methodist Free Church, Worsley Rd (1961-1967)  
Swinton, Worsley Road URC (1961-1967)  
Walkden Moor Methodist (1961-1964)  
Walkden or Little Hulton, Worsley Road North, Methodist (1961-1967)  
Walkden St Paul (1961-1967)  
Walkden, Christ the King (1961-1962)  
Walkden, Congregational Church (1961-1967)  
Walkden, Walkden Evangelical Church (1962-1965)  
Walkden, Wesley Hall Methodist (1965-1965)  
Walkden, Whittlebrook (formerly Primitive) Methodist Church (1961-1962)  
Winton, St Mary Magdalene (1961-1967)  
Winton, St. Matthew (1961-1963)  
Winton, Winton Methodist Church (1961-1966)  
Worsley St Mark (1961-1967)  
Worsley, Barton Road Methodist (1961-1967)  
Worsley, New Jerusalem Church (1963-1963)  
Worsley, Trinity Methodist (1961-1961)

Thanks are due to Sheila Lowe and her team for these.

~~~~~

* Added 1,062 BMD references from the Manchester Mercury 1825 and 806 inquests etc. from the Manchester Courier 1830, 1832, 1834, 1835. Thanks to Linda Bailey, Chris Hall and Chris Norcross for these.

~~~~~  
\* Another addition to The Great Database.  
This time 1,600 burials for St. Stephen, Audenshaw 1898-1901.  
Thanks to Mark Harrey for this substantial addition.

~~~~~  
* Another substantial addition to the great Database.
This time a further 5,467 names from the Bolton Workhouse Creed Books covering 1888-1891.
Thanks to Graham Holt and his team for this addition to an already large record set.

~~~~~  
\* <https://www.mlfhs.uk/databases/godfrey-map-index>  
The 264 new references cover the largely rural areas of:  
Bury South 1907  
Bradley Fold 1910 and 1930 (double sided map)  
Unsworth & SE Radcliffe 1932  
Thanks to John Gartside for this latest addition.

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

Please note ...

Please check society/group websites or organisers for updated information

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



Wednesday
21st
September
at
7 pm



"Megavolts and Milliamps:

Ferranti at the cutting edge of electric power and electronics"

an illustrated presentation given by Hattie Lloyd & Jan Hicks,
from the Science & Industry Museum, Manchester.

Part of the programme for the annual '*Oldham Histories Festival and Heritage*' talks.

a free, illustrated presentation, on zoom,

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

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

Website [HERE](#)

~~~~~



**Moorside & District Historical Society**  
**No Meeting 17th July 2022**  
**150th St Thomas' Church**  
**Anniversary.**  
**Summer Break.**  
**Back**  
**Heritage Open Day** In the Church  
**10th September 2022 ~ 10~30 am. to 2~30 pm.**  
**"Church History, Plans, Photographs and Miscellany"**  
Visit the Church, take a tour to see the Tower, Bell and Clock rooms etc.

~~~~~  
Saddleworth Historical Society ... Wednesday 14th September

The Tudor Bed - its Authenticity

an Illustrated Presentation given by Adam Bowett

7:30 at the Saddleworth Museum Gallery

At this meeting Society members are free, but a charge to non-members is applicable on the door of £3. All are welcome. Refreshments are available.

Subject to Government guidelines at the time you may be asked to wear a mask.

Website [HERE](#)

Saddleworth Civic Trust has no meeting or event planned in September

If & when this situation changes members of the Society will be notified directly and through the local Press.

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. You may be asked to wear a mask.

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

~~~~~  
Family History Society of Cheshire : Tameside Group meeting.

See their website [HERE](#)

~~~~~  
**Tameside History Club :**

Meetings on zoom.

Website and programme

&

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

Website and programme [HERE](#)

~~~~~

Regional Heritage Centre :

Website [HERE](#)

~~~~~

### '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 2021, and downloadable [HERE](#)

### Chapter XVI

#### **OLD AND NEW ACQUAINTANCES - DISTRESS IN ANCOATS.**

MR. THORNTON remained for three years in New Zealand, during which time a steady and regular correspondence ensued between us, and I duly advised him of all that came under my notice in which he and his family were concerned, and of the manner in which I was carrying out the trust. He spoke rapturously of Dunedin and the surrounding country, but there was no indication given in any of his letters of that success which would justify Mrs. Thornton in leaving England to join her husband. She waited, therefore, for improved accounts before committing herself and children to the serious changes involved in the breaking-up of a good home, with its genial surroundings, and entering upon the uncertainties, inconveniences, and privations which a person in her position has to suffer on emigrating to the Australian colonies. She therefore prudently awaited events, which culminated in the return of her husband. When Mr. Thornton and I again met he found me not only a benedict but a paterfamilias settled down to domestic life. Many were his congratulations and pleasantries on the changed state of my surroundings and favourable comparisons with the old times,

#### **p. 173**

when I could offer him only a lodging-house hospitality. His visits became frequent, the good man delighting to drop in upon us and relate his colonial experiences. Mr. Thornton's visit to New Zealand had the effect of giving vigour to his constitution, and he entirely lost a tendency to headache from which he previously suffered interminably. Beyond this advantage he appeared only to have wasted three years of his existence, in addition to the outlay he had incurred. The worst feature attendant upon his return was the difficulty, after so long an absence, of again falling into the groove and settling down to profitable employment. Though he was a man fertile in ideas and of great activity, Mr. Thornton never again took up the reins satisfactorily, and had to be contented with a moderate and uncertain business whilst devoting his increased leisure time to his love of reading and the "pursuit of knowledge. When a man has withdrawn from the proprietorship of a mill he is seldom able to resume a position connected with cotton. Should the loss of capital be the cause of his withdrawal the amount required for renewed operations is generally too large to admit of its possibility. The probability is, he is too far advanced in years to take a managership, attend the market, or engage in the

financing of another establishment; young men being generally sought for such positions, and are selected from the houses in which they are already engaged.

In such circumstances the business of insurance and transactions in oil are much resorted to - so much so, as to be spoken of as "a refuge for the

**p.174**

destitute." Fortunately, Mr. Thornton was not entirely dependent on his efforts, though he succeeded in working out a business; and the support of those who knew and cared for him, he settled down once more to Manchester life.

During these anxious years I found much advantage from intercourse with Mr. Morewood. He had been a successful operator during the ups and downs of those perilous times. It was pleasant to observe him as he might be leaving the Exchange, and perhaps in the act of restoring to his pocket his well-used order book; and an agreeable and expressive twinkle of the eye would seem to indicate that the last hour had been satisfactorily occupied. His habit was to think well and deeply what he was going to do before mixing in the busy throng. By this simple process he could act on decisions previously formed; and when surrounded by ardent buyers and sellers could also post through a large amount of business in the calmest manner. On one occasion he greeted me in his well-known manner, accompanied by the inquiry if there was "anything new," and on my replying to him that he was the man who was supposed to know everything, both new and old, he proceeded to inform me that in the contemplation of higher prices he had purchased yarns to the extent of close upon a million pounds weight! Such a transaction was new to me, certainly; and I wished him a good night's repose after such momentous doings. Cotton followed the course he had predicted for it, with the result that he and his firm coined money on that and similar occasions. His transactions

**p. 175**

were so large as to influence the market, which generally advanced after he had filled his book. Doubtless such heavy business must have produced an exhausting effect, for I observed that after a "lunge" as Mr. Morewood expressed it, he generally took a holiday immediately, and I followed him mentally to the shores and hills of the lovely islands he delighted to visit, pitching pebbles into the waves, or practising his deep bass voice on the summit of one of the mountains - all this to go on until a considerable portion of the cheap purchases were used up and the time almost arrived for another venture. Unlike him my holidays were few and of short duration.

On returning to the mill from the Exchange one afternoon I passed a tall gentleman in clerical costume, who, from the position where I met him, might have just left it. When I reached the door I looked back. He had reached the corner of the street, and likewise looked back. Our eyes met, and we paused. In another second or two we each met again. We needed no introduction. In the person of the stranger I intuitively recognized the new rector of the parish, Mr. Thomas Howard,\* whilst he also correctly guessed me to be the person whom his predecessor had, he informed me, told him to "look up." We had a short conversation in the office, and whilst I regarded the comparatively youthful and somewhat delicate appearance of the young parson, I involuntarily shuddered in the contemplation of the heavy work he had undertaken and of the fate which had overtaken his predecessor.

My new friend, however, was ardent and hopeful.

\* Rev. Thomas Howard Gill

**p. 176**

He had great experience of parochial work and of preaching, and was fond of the working man. He was, moreover, the son of a parson, nephew of another, brother of several more, and had

cousins who were parsons *ad infinitum*. All these forces combined, I thought, were irresistibly in his favour if he would only act with judgment, and not sacrifice himself at the outset. I little thought what powers of labour were latent in that spare figure. In a short time the sorrowing parish was turned into one of joy, and it was soon evident the late rector was speaking from knowledge when he said he would be a man after his own heart, for was he not a man after every heart, young or old, who had yet come under his influence? We became intimate, and he was very dear to me, and in religious matters invaluable.

Whilst rejoicing in his acquaintance I was, however, painfully reminded of the recent fate of another friend. Alfius Banham, the man whom I had loved above others in my early days, and whose visit to me at F. I have mentioned in the early pages of this book, was no more. In the zenith of his usefulness and success, and apparently with a brilliant career before him, he was, by an inscrutable visitation of Providence, cut off in the prime of life by the accidental discharge of a gun. The loss to his widow and six children can be better imagined than described, and to myself it was a severe affliction. I remember the care with which I collected all his letters, how I read them and re-read them, thirty-eight in all, and I now cherish them as the outpourings of one who loved me and

#### **p. 177**

was equally loved in return. My life for many years had been so active, and devotion to business so close, that few opportunities had been afforded of visiting my parent, except at distant intervals; and so she visited us in Manchester instead. But the result was, I did not see Banham for several years before his death, and latterly, few letters had passed {between us. His last letter was warm in congratulations on my marriage and wishes for our happiness. It is sometimes remarked that early ardent friendships moderate after marriage. Doubtless Banham and I regarded each other with the same affection as formerly, but other and nearer objects of interest had sprung up, and distance of time and space may have appeared to dim all but the remembrance of regard, but they did not.

Eusebius Pigott was one of the comparatively few of my bachelor friends who was a constant visitor at my little house. As it was situated only a few minutes from his own quarters he was in and out of it continually, and acquainted with our *menage*. Eusebius professed to carry a latch-key, which unfortunately he could never find when it was wanted. It frequently happened that when he found himself at his lodging door at a late hour, he fumbled in his pocket in vain for the coveted means of admission. His landlady he described as sleeping at the back part of the house; she was also as deaf as a post; and but for the proximity of our domicile I used to tremble to think what would become of Eusebius! It was a mercy for him I was not similarly afflicted as his landlady, or he might have been left out in the cold very often.

#### **p. 178**

Eusebius fortunately was one who could accommodate himself to circumstances, and could repose occasionally on a drawing-room couch, and as ours was available for a lengthened repose, we generally left it at night ready for an emergency.

On the last occasion of an early morning visit, which was at the hour of three, Eusebius came to the conclusion that he might, after all, without very much effort of ingenuity, attach a latch-key in some manner to his person, and for a time he carried one on his button-hole; but as that was not a convenient position for it to be in when wanted he compounded with his landlady not to fasten the street door at night, and as no loss arose from nocturnal depredators the new arrangement worked

satisfactorily. And yet Eusebius had an inventive genius which should have relieved him of such inconveniences. A man who could initiate a bullet capable of slaughtering ten times the number of soldiers in one shot of those of the arms then in use, and could also discover a signal which

would for ever prevent an accident in the history of railway locomotion, might surely have introduced some kind of a spring beneath one of the flags of his door entrance which, on the pressure of his foot and pronouncing his "Open sesame," would have admitted him at once to his apartment.

Harewood complained often and loudly of his partner, who instead of bringing his share of insurance business to the firm was continually occupied in the development of some grand scheme, whilst the burden of business fell upon Harewood. It was in vain I informed him that if it were successful it might be accompanied by a new era in the

**p. 179**

happiness of mankind, in addition to bringing a fortune for Eusebius, in which Harewood would participate. It became evident that unless some change took place things could not thus go on.

Eusebius was not an actuary. Had he been one his enthusiasm for logarithms and the differential calculus might have proved serviceable to him, but for the purpose of inducing the public to insure their lives and property they were of little avail, and the volume of "Todhunter" which he carried under his arm might have well been substituted by a pocket-book. As I saw each of them frequently, it fell to my lot to have the complaints of each other dinned into my ears. I sympathized with Harewood, upon whom fell the "burden and heat of the day" of business, and hardly less with Eusebius, whose inventions hitherto had proved abortive. The latter grumbled and groaned so continuously and systematically over the failure of all his efforts, whether inventive or commercial, that I became myself depressed with the sad tale of his woes. Fortunate it was for each of us, though strange, that the "Dead March" never failed to bring out those phases which more nearly approached the angelic of Eusebius's character. The "Dead March," however, in time became hackneyed, and as there was nothing to take its place it was evident ere long there must be a new departure.

Notwithstanding the generous sympathy shown to Lancashire during the cotton famine by the whole civilized world, and the liberal contributions that flowed into the Cotton District Relief Fund, poverty and want were plainly indicated in the

**p.180**

faces of many of the people who inhabited such parishes as the one where our mill was situated. Though nearly two millions sterling in money and goods had been received, including the contribution of provisions contained in the George Griswold from North America, an offering which knit together the hearts of the people of the two great nations more than language can ever convey, much distress still existed, there being ninety thousand more paupers than was ordinary in the cotton districts.

The most distressing feature of the times was noticeable in the little children, who suffer more than adults from insufficiency of food, and it was not possible to walk the streets without this fact being impressed upon the mind.

Mr. Howard's senior curate, Mr. Cogan\* a warm-hearted Irishman, joined me in an attempt to mitigate this evil. Like myself, Mr. C. had children of his own, and our hearts were touched. We started our scheme on the same day it was planned, under the title of "The Destitute Children's Dinner Society." We hired a room and commenced feeding thirty to forty of the poor little creatures at once. Presently we were joined by other men who sympathized in the movement, which soon spread considerably. A committee was formed, and a gentleman in the city lent his office, in which the members met weekly, and he gave his own services as honorary treasurer. Subscriptions were obtained without much solicitation, and the society flourished, each year accomplishing more than the preceding one, with the result that any poor child in our district

**p. 181**

might have a good meat dinner twice a week. Mr. Thomas right, the prison philanthropist, gave good testimony to the beneficial effects the society had conferred upon the children; but the best evidence was that given by the teachers in the national and other schools, who had been made painfully conscious of the utter impossibility of any mental application whilst the body suffered

from an insufficiency of nutriment. It was from this point of view that Mr. Wright expressed himself so warmly when he pronounced his blessing on the work. Another institution in the same locality, which possibly exists to this day, was presided over and conducted by a fine, spirited, and high-souled young lady. The object of her efforts was to provide sustenance, delicately preparing for invalids and convalescents, at that critical period when medicine has done its work in reducing the patient, and the appetite must be encouraged for the preservation of life. It was a noble work, requiring much skill and judgment, with great self-denial, and ability to raise funds - which must necessarily be liberal - for its successful performance. Doubtless many lives were saved by unostentatious, but inestimable, benevolent undertaking.

Mr. Tumbleton had been vigorously prosecuting business of a less prosaic nature. I never supposed he contemplated a second edition of the marriage state, and when a gentleman on the Exchange informed me to the contrary, I was quite ready to meet the assertion with incredulity bordering on contradiction. I had not long to wait for correct information. The following morning Mr. Tumbleton

**p.182**

walked unexpectedly into the office. I noticed his altered and improved personal appearance, which doubtless bespoke something. He was embellished with new hat, walking-stick, and eye-glass, irrespective of the more important articles of coat, vest, and other articles, all of which were of the latest and most approved style. I had never before seen him so well got up. He was quite a work of art. I instinctively recalled the information imparted to me on the previous day, and waited with dignified attention the news he was about to impart. I admired his courage, and the business-like manner in which he linked one thing with another, leading up to the all-important event, and after enumerating things he was going to do, wound up with that of being married early during the following week. He received my felicitations in an appreciative and becoming mood, and I left him to have a ramble amongst the looms.

~~~~~

From Mike Hoddy (see August newsletter for first chapters and more details)

This manuscript was an account written by Frank Pogson of Oldham that describes his life in Oldham from the early 1920s to 1939. It was mostly around the Derker area and the 3rd Oldham Boys Brigade at Hope Congregational Church. Mike's own family members had been associated with the BB since 1904.

We're happy to serialise Frank's story, in the newsletter, over the next few issues.

A GINNEL TO LIFE
Childhood in a Lancashire Mill Town
1924 - 1939
by Frank Pogson
CHAPTER IV
CHESTS AND BOWELS

It was no chance which caused the cotton spinning industry to be settled in the north west of

England. With steam power came urbanisation, satanic mills and smog but the natural humidity was just what was required for the spinning of raw cotton. Infant mortality was high, tuberculosis was still prevalent and was then spoken of as 'consumption'. Workers in the factories ran the risk of developing various industrial diseases which included a form of pneumoconiosis as well as 'spinners' cancer'. There was no Clean Air Act on the statute books. Fogs and smogs were regular features of life in the north west as factory and household alike belched forth thick sulphurous smoke from their chimneys.

Wages were low and bellies needed to be filled and so children were encouraged to eat a lot of stodgy foods. Had offal not been available cheaply, many would have had little protein at all. Tripe, sausage, black-pudding, lambs' fry, sweetbread, trotters and cowheel eked out the diet for many but bread always remained very much the staff of life. The importance of bread is stressed in the story of the little boy with his mother on the tramcar. He watched in amazement as a nursing mother proceeded to feed the infant at the breast. He rejoined his mother with, "It'll never eat all that without a butty." Many folk failed to maintain a balanced diet and it was hardly surprising that many, and women in particular, seemed to be preoccupied with their chests and bowels.

The services of doctors were available but not so readily available as they are today. A few visits either to or from the doctor would cause his man to be knocking at the door to collect amounts, sometimes as low as sixpence a week, until the bill was paid. Quacks and 'old wives' abounded and lots of patent medicines were sold in little boxes stuck on cards which adorned the walls of the local chip-shop or other retail establishments. Laxatives were high on the sales chart followed by backache and kidney pills or, wind and water pills. There seemed to be no end to the combinations.

p.18

Some people preferred herbal remedies and there were many herbalists in business who might be consulted. My mother favoured herbs and had her own concoction which she brewed whenever any of us suffered chest colds, coughs and flu. She treasured the last box of Mrs Schofield's ointment. That deceased lady had made it in accordance with a recipe handed down but lost on her death. Often chemists would be consulted and some built up reputations for having a good 'cough bottle'.

When I was about seven years of age, there came an epidemic of scarlet fever and diphtheria. Children were going down like nine-pins and the isolation hospital at Westhulme, Oldham, was full. Quite a number of young people died. My parents were anxious and in consequence, so was I although I did not express my anxiety to anyone. The seriousness was emphasized for me when an older cousin in his twenties contracted diphtheria and later developed mastoids. He was poised for sometime between life and death but survived to have a successful career in insurance.

In the years before the second world war, working-class culinary tastes were conservative in the extreme. It was not customary to dine out for pleasure and so, if it was necessary for personal or business reasons, people often looked for the sign, "U.C.P." (United Cattle Products) whose restaurants were believed to serve wholesome northern dishes at wholesome northern prices. Young men and women out late at night might eat their fish and chips from a white scrubbed table in the shop but this could hardly be counted as dining out. Men taking an evening stroll might call in at the local tripe shop where tripe, already cut up and set on skewers rather like kebabs, could be purchased and eaten in the shop. Alternatively, at another establishment, they could buy a generous saucerful of peas for a couple of pence, to be eaten in what was known as a Pea Saloon. On one afternoon each week during the winter months, the wife of the local Off-Licensee made her own black pudding in a tray rather than in skins.

Customers called at tea time bringing their own basins or dishes with them. Vendors walked or drove round the streets at tea time calling out "Peas all 'ot". They offered a choice of black or green peas on your doorstep. With salt and pepper and a touch of vinegar and a plateful of bread and butter, this often constituted a hot meal for some workers returning home in the evening.

Returning from the Recreation Ground on a summer evening, it was possible to round off the evening with a duck and muffin as we walked the rest of the way home. Described as 'French Muffins', they still seem to be peculiar to Oldham. They are the size of a barm cake but the texture is quite different. For one penny (1d) a full savoury duck (rather like

p.19

a faggot) was served on a full muffin. For a half-penny ($\frac{1}{2}$ d), half the quantities were served.

Limited means and conservatism led to an almost unvarying menu each week according to season. Potato pie was, however, a must with my mother each Wednesday come wind come weather. It is still a tasty dish whose main ingredients are beef, either cut up or minced, onions and potatoes done in the oven with pastry crust on top. The ratio between potatoes and meat depended upon the means of the family. With a large family, a little meat had to go a long way.

The fear of sickness was real for being off work for any reason inevitably meant no pay.

Children from large poor families could be seen, in the mid-thirties, playing barefoot in the streets of some localities. Many children were skinny and some were physically deformed.

There were many bow-legged people which deformity could without doubt be attributed to a dietary deficiency in childhood. It was hardly surprising that as an only child and inevitably precious, I frequently gave rise to parental concern since they constantly anticipated illness.

I have been known to facetiously remark that my mother enjoyed my "poor health" in order that her role as mother might be fully exercised according to her earlier experiences. The fact that I was a bit skinny together with the fact that I did not eat copious meals was cause for parental anxiety. Apart from normal childhood complaints, I remained remarkably healthy but my parents continued to expect the worst. I was frequently dosed with various concoctions. Without any justification, it was once feared that I was anaemic, with painful consequences for me after being dosed with junior Iron Jelloids. A varied and balanced diet, clean air, exercise and healthy conditions without over-crowding, was really all that was required to create a physically healthy community. It was not until after the second world war that conditions began to improve although the war-time rationing presented a healthy balanced diet and the Nation's health had never been better. As the economy expanded and the standard of living rose, dishes began to be served in the north west which had been unheard of before the war and, hypochondriacs apart, the era of preoccupation with chests and bowels was over.

CHAPTER V

IN THE MIDST OF LIFE

Death is something that happens to other people far away, or so it must seem to many folk born after the second world war. Even then, when the death of a close relative overtakes them, the professionals take over and shield them from all but the actual loss of a loved one. Many, therefore, have attained to over half their three score years and ten without ever having seen a corpse. The trappings of funerals too, have become more discreet and the modern low slung streamlined hearse blends inconspicuously in the heavy traffic of today.

As an infant, I was well aware that death was a factor to be reckoned with although I then felt myself to be completely immune. Hardly a weekday passed without the sight or sound of a funeral which was dramatically impressive and ostentatious. The clatter of the hooves of the black, immaculately groomed and plumed, Belgian horses heralded a magnificent procession

headed by an ornate hearse followed by the immaculate coachwork of black horse-drawn coaches. As the cortege passed, policemen saluted and men and women paused in respect of the mystery of death, if not the departed. The men raised their head-gear and, as a boy, I learnt that cap-raising, whether to a woman or a corpse, was an essential drill in etiquette in those pre-war years.

Adults had been well conditioned to the reality of death and it figured largely in many plans for material and financial providence. I had often heard my mother speak of her mother's dictum on the subject that 'one should prepare for a death as for a wedding.' This referred to a rather more grisly 'bottom drawer' of white linen and socks. When death was imminent in the neighbourhood, we children were given strict instructions not to play or make a noise in the vicinity. On arising one morning, it may have been observed that poor Jenny across the back alley had 'gone' in the night for the backyard gate

p.21

was missing from its hinges. During the night 'poor Jenny' would have been laid on its hard surface and would remain on it until her coffin arrived. It would have been unheard of for the body to be removed from the home before the funeral and, despite the overcrowding in some two-up and two-down homes, families lived for days with the body in the house. To do otherwise would have been considered indecent. Immediately following death and its certification, it was customary to send for one or other of the local 'body-snatchers'. It was usually an older woman in the locality who undertook to 'lay away' the departed and at all times of day or night, her little black bag of tricks was packed and at the ready with lint, bandages and cotton wool together with a couple of pennies to lay on the eyelids. She would first strip and wash the body and then clothe it in a clean white nightshirt or dress. These women provided a service but there always appeared to be competition between them, hence my earlier reference to them as body-snatchers. There was an element of power-seeking in it, or so it seemed. These ladies appeared to gain some vicarious satisfaction in attending to such personal matters to the exclusion of the nearest and dearest.

Addressing the bereaved was always approached euphemistically for death was not to be mentioned directly. Sorrow, sympathy and condolences were expressed in "the loss", as it was acknowledged that the loved one had "passed away", "now received his Crown of Life", "passed to higher service" or, "had been taken from them". In other company, when housewives gossiped, it was another story. "Have you heard whose gone dead?" There would then be some discussion of the circumstances of the widow. When this had continued for some time, one of the older women present might interject, "There's lean sorrow and fat sorrow!" I noticed that this always and finally ended the discussion and was only spoken of in that way when it was a case of "fat sorrow", meaning that the widow had been left in favourable financial circumstances.

Olive was my Godmother's half-sister who lived with my aunt and uncle in the next street. A pale young woman who suffered from asthma, she was kind and gentle and, as an infant, I had often been entrusted into her care. I would be about six years of age when we were aroused in the night by my uncle who told my mother that Olive had passed away. Two days later, I was taken to see Olive as she lay on the bed in the back bedroom of the two-up, two-down terraced house. On the day of the funeral, I was taken to see Olive for the last time. It was customary for bereaved households to keep all the curtains closed until after the funeral on which day, all the neighbours drew their curtains as a mark of respect to the deceased. The incandescent gas mantle gave Olive's face an ethereal

p.22

quality as I was encouraged to touch her forehead and 'not be afraid'. Children were regularly

subjected to this sort of thing but it was, nevertheless rather frightening. Olive looked like an angel in her white shroud and that is exactly how it was intended to be. As I grew older, I began to realise that funerals had a theatrical element which was skilfully exploited and stage-managed by undertakers. People wanted it to be so and each member of the family so bereaved had a part to play. Neighbours would be watching, so all had to go well and everything be correct.

On another occasion, I was taken by my mother on the night before my father's eldest brother's funeral to view the body. I must have been nine or ten years of age but as I got older, and my imagination more fertile, the experience became even more eerie. Uncle Joe lay in his coffin in an alcove in the front room, since they had a house with a lobby. Aunt Ellen turned up the gas light as we approached the coffin. With his bald domed head and a moustache, I am forever reminded of uncle Joe when I see a picture of Lenin except, that uncle Joe did not have a beard. I think that I asked if I could sleep in mother's bed that night.

Children, on the other hand could be quite hard and callous if they were sufficiently removed from emotional family involvement. I recall one occasion when the young daughter of a fairly large family died. There was a steady stream of children into the home opposite the school at lunchtime before the funeral. I suppose that even young children liked to gloat a little about the fact that they were still alive at least.

It was usual for neighbours and relatives to visit and view the body on the evening prior to the funeral. Suitable, but very unoriginal, expressions were made in awed tones. After the funeral, the widow would be complimented on the worthy funeral and all spoke as if they really knew exactly what the dear departed would have wanted. No contradictions came from across the great divide. Occasionally, something might go wrong. Perhaps, as the coffin was being lowered into the ground those on the ropes would allow the head to descend slightly ahead of the feet. Although all heads should have been bowed in prayer at the committal and all eyes closed, at least one vigilant male relative would later voice his opinions in no uncertain terms to those responsible for causing such an affront and distress to the mourners.

In good health, however, jokes abounded. People could still laugh at themselves. The man, for instance, who called on his friend only to find that he had died was met by the widow. Taken to view the body, he murmured an appropriate comment, "Doesn't he look well?" only to be rejoined by the widow with, "He ought to do. He's just had a week at Blackpool." Or the

p.23

the sick visitors who were heard to comment on their way upstairs to the sick room that, "This bend must be awkward for getting coffins round."

The old threat of the workhouse still seemed to linger and to many older folk, their greatest fear was that they may have to go to a pauper's grave. To remain respectable was all that mattered. I once saw a pauper's funeral. The sole vehicle, if it is still in existence, must now be a collectors' item. It combined a hearse with a small coach or half coach, on the rear. Unlike all other funerals I had seen with the hearse literally covered in wreaths of flowers, this had none. It was a stark and depressing sight but who travelled in the half-coach? The blind was down and I could not see. Could it have been a chaplain who would offer the last prayer for the soul of the departed? Or, was it a cold municipal official anxious to see that the limits of charity were not exceeded?

Providence and thrift were very much matters of real concern in those days of insecurity and poverty. Children, since all could not be expected to attain to adulthood, were insured at birth. The Prudential did good business in policies which cost as little as 1d or 2d per week. To avoid the ignominy of 'going on the parish' or on 'public assistance' as it became known, self help societies had sprung up many years before in the form of sick and burial clubs. The officials of

these bodies, probably artisans themselves, were august men who took their responsibility very seriously indeed. On Club night, arrayed in their best and probably only suit and often wearing a winged 'come to Jesus' collar to their shirt, they sat at the seat of custom. Each had a small part to play. One took the cash and gave the change, another entered the amount on the member's card and then passed it to another official who entered the amount into a large ledger. Others paid benefit out when satisfied that all the rules had been satisfactorily met. One felt in the presence of such a body of men, it would have been improper to smile.

My parents belonged to the Black Horse Family Burial Society. The "Black Horse" had nothing to do with funeral horses but was in fact the name of a public house which still stands in Watersheddings, Oldham. It was an exclusive Society as membership was only open to the children of members as they gained their majority. The contributions were not excessive but neither were the benefits on death. Other benefits, however, were rather unique and tended to emphasize the family nature of the Society.

The Annual Report of the Society always showed it to be solvent and gradually

p.24

a considerable reserve of funds accumulated. So it was that, every so often, a bonus was returned to the members and their families in the form of a large family party. The local Cooperative Halls were taken over and the members sat down to a magnificent, but typical, burial type tea of cooked meats followed by trifle, jelly and cakes. This was followed by a concert given by local artists and we were treated to excerpts from the operas of Gilbert and Sullivan. A comedian told jokes which I failed to understand but for the first time in my young life I heard a man play a tune on a saw. Later, both halls were in use as old time dancers made up sets for The Lancers and the moderns showed their paces in the quicksteps and foxtrots. It was the one and only occasion I saw my mother father take to the floor as they danced The Lancers. There were more refreshments and more dances before everyone went home after a 'reight gradely do.' It was this occasion to which I earlier referred as most of my aunts and uncles, both paternal and maternal, together with many close friends and neighbours were all present.

The Chief mourner always liked to think that the departed had been given a good 'send off' and that every one of the official mourning party had been entertained to a worthy tea. To many in those days, a good burying tea was the height of blissful pleasure and indulgence. My dear irreverent aunty Ruth was often known to express that she could just eat a damn good burying tea. As an adult, I have often felt that I have attended more happy funerals than weddings. Having attained his three score and ten and more and having had a jolly good life, it has in more recent times been possible to mourn and give thanks for the life passed and then go on to enjoy a reunion meal in fellowship with relatives and friends now scattered.

Cremation was still suspect by the working classes and since the nearest Crematorium was at Rochdale, it was not considered. There was a need for ritual, drama and time honoured custom in those drab days. Funerals provided something on which people could hang their self-respect. Although I feel that our approach to death today is much more realistic, the fact remains, as in my mother's trite quotation, "In the midst of Life, we are in death."

CHAPTER VI

THE SOUND OF MOVEMENT

The noise of children at play varies little from decade to decade, from continent to continent, but the noises of a community have changed most dramatically since the mid twenties and thirties. No longer in the urban industrial communities do we hear the 'hooters' or whistles of the many mills and factories which sounded, in differing keys, across the town at certain times during the working day. Church bells are still with us but, perhaps regrettably, they no longer

seem to impinge on the community with the same significance which once they did.

Road noises were most frequent since the roads and streets were laid with stone sets rather than smooth macadam. One could not fail to hear the approach of the iron shod hooves of horses and the iron bound wheels of the carts they were drawing. Even the two wheeled solid rubber tyred milk floats, from which local farmers retailed their milk 'loose' from two large churns with brass taps, could be heard approaching. Many such vehicles persisted on the streets well after the second world war. Light deliveries were undertaken by flat carts which had a central pole overhead on which could be pulled a tarpaulin when the weather was inclement. Coal arrived at the home by horse drawn cart and refuse collection was made by a metal two wheeled cart in the shape of a semi cylinder which might be tipped easily. Heavy loads of raw cotton arrived at the mills on a cart stacked high and driven by a team of horses. Mounted policemen were a regular daily sight on the streets of the town but en masse made a most impressive vanguard to any civic procession. The clatter of hooves and wheels on the cartroad, as the highway was known, reverberated between the mills, shops and terraces and could be heard over a considerable distance.

Horse drawn traffic had its own temptations for little boys and many could be observed swinging from the tail boards of slow moving coal carts, despite exhortations from adults who prophesied an untimely end if one fell off and under the wheels of an on-coming motor car or lorry. Amateur gardeners had an ample supply of high grade manure practically on their doorsteps

p.26

though few homes had gardens as such but keen gardeners there were whose produce was of a very high standard, grown on allotments amidst rickety fences and tatty greenhouses and outbuildings - but, really, horticulture has no place here.

While motor vehicles were on the increase, one could not really imagine life without horses. As children, we were constantly being warned to keep out of the cartroad for fear of being knocked down. By modern standards, traffic was light and we certainly did not keep out of the cartroad all the time.

I recall that May Day was a special day, though not a holiday. It was in fact better known as 'Bell Horse Day'. All carters seemed to take a great pride in their turnout at all times but, May Day was of special import. Many a carter was up all the night before, grooming his horses and 'fettling' his brasses and harnesses. There was keen competition between carters, which was encouraged by employers, for the best turn-out and decoration of the horses. Manes and tails were plaited with red, white and blue ribbons or braid, while brass bells, sometimes in a row, were fastened to harnesses on the heads or backs of the horses. The sound of clattering hooves on the cartroad was that day to the accompaniment of the pleasant sounding tinkle of bells. Even the horses seemed to respond and step out with the gait of thoroughbreds.

To the boys, May Day was of no special significance except that the lighter nights and the promise of better weather would give more time for the playing of seasonal games of cricket, peggy and ducky on the barren crofts around the area in which we lived. To the girls, May time offered a very positive activity. With little or no adult help, a butterbarrel hoop would be fixed to the end of a brush tail and covered with coloured crepe papers to become a mobile Maypole and a set pattern of dances would be practised. Some girl's 'useless' little sister was then arrayed as a vestal virgin but her main function was to sit on a small buffet (stool) and hold up the pole while the older girls danced around it. At the end of the performance, which always concluded with the National Anthem, the older girls moved on with the pole, often leaving the tiny Queen of the May to stagger with the 'throne' as best she could, exhorted by the older girls to hurry, to the next venue. Carefully avoiding the evidence of horsedrawn vehicular traffic on

the road, the next venue was selected and the performance began again and was then repeated over and over again on the streets of the locality.

Railways had proved safe and successful and so it was that some still

p.27

toyed with steam traction. The arrival of the fair at Oldham Wakes time was a sight to be seen as all the vehicles carrying the parts of the 'Dragons' and other rides were drawn as trailers by steam traction engines. These were always immaculate with polished brass, enamel and burnished steel. After towing, the engines then provided the motive power to generate electricity to drive and illuminate the rides on the fairground. The pride of the operators was apparent to the eye of the beholder and nothing offended. This cannot be said of the noise, smell and appearance of the diesel generators of the modern fairgrounds. The fair, of course, closed on Sundays but the proprietors provided organ recitals in the evening which were played on the steam organ in the centre of The Dragons.

The Corporation had a steam gully wagon which operated in identical fashion to the modern diesel driven vehicle we see on the streets today. Steam, however, created the vacuum for drawing up the sludge from the grids. Tirelessly we followed its progress around the streets and then relived its function in our play. Mr. Batley, a local coal merchant, had a fleet of dark blue steam-driven lorries which, if I recall correctly, had pneumatic tyres. They silently glided over the stone sets and must have been very economical to operate. Sadly, by the mid-thirties most, if not all, steam lorries had disappeared from the streets.

The internal combustion engine had developed and while the cheapest saloon car was out of reach of all but the professional classes, some 'young bloods' from the terraces had motor bikes. Just as today, they seemed to be very noisy. There were no crash helmets and it was customary for the riders of such vehicles to wear a cloth cap back to front with goggles over the top. One of my older cousins, who was a joiner, had a motor bike which he kept in the kitchen of his parents two up, two down terraced house. Others progressed to three wheel vehicles with two wheels at the front and a chain drive to a single wheel in the rear.

Commercially, lorries and vans were becoming more viable although the larger vehicles still tended to have solid rubber tyres. The last vehicles I recall in use with solid tyres were the Dennis fire engines of the towns Fire Brigade. Earlier, two tea companies had operated fleets of small chain driven two-stroke engined vans which pop-popped around the town on solid tyres. It was rare for a motor car to draw up outside your door except it be the doctor making a call. A strange vehicle would cause a minor sensation in the street. not to mention the speculation as to who it

p.28

might be and why? There was little privacy living in those close-knit Communities of a mill town. Mr. Webb had a garage and was a taxi proprietor at the top of the street. He was childless and his wife was a school teacher and so, with two incomes, he seemed a wealthy man to be respected. He had a dark Austin saloon and a maroon and black cab which was also an Austin. He always drove at a most sedate pace because, it was said, that he had nearly once knocked down a child. I do not remember ever travelling in one of his vehicles even though it was often at the railway station on those days when we had been on excursions. We had to content ourselves with shanks' pony.

Uncle Lewis was one of my fathers two brothers who 'got on'. Uncle Lewis had a large house and an Armstrong Siddeley saloon car which, on reflection, was more of a status symbol than a vehicle for the benefit of his family. It was taxed for comparatively few months of the year although he was a mill manager and was never out of work; I can still remember the exciting

smell of it when, on one memorable occasion, I had opportunity to ride in it. With the smell of real leather upholstery tinged with a feint whiff of petrol, occasionally beggars could ride - but not often.

Strangely enough, my Uncle John, the one who really 'got on', never owned a motor car. He commuted daily from Southport to Manchester on the Club train and if he really needed a car would hire one together with a driver. One Sunday he sent word to my parents that we should be ready in the afternoon as he was staying with his wife's relatives in Oldham and would pick us up and take us out. For me it was an exciting occasion as the large taxi vehicle drew up outside our door. It seated six adults and myself quite comfortably in the rear. We made our way across Manchester before joining the country lanes of Cheshire. After making a call in Knutsford, we proceeded to Pickmere. Uncle John had had an urge to revisit a beauty spot which he had probably first visited as a lad on a Sunday School outing. What met his eyes shocked him to the core. A small fairground was in operation and, being in the early thirties, as far as the eye could see were cycles, tents and canoodling couples. Another idyllic memory shattered, we beat a hasty retreat from this scene of debauchery and, I think, Uncle John tut-tutted all the way back to Oldham.

By the late thirties had come the baby Austin, the Morris Five and the £100 Ford and more single men who were in work began to take to the road under power. The AA and RAC men on the roads still saluted the members of their respective organisations as they passed. The elitism of the private motorist would soon pass forever.

p.29

Tramways first came to Oldham in 1889 and so by the time I had arrived on the scene they were well established on the main streets of the towns and cities of the north-west. The magnificent proportions of the vehicles impressed me as they clanked their way through the town, occasionally showering sparks as the trolley passed over the overhead points on the live cable overhead. It was many a lad's ambition to become a trolley boy but I do not recall lads being used to turn the trolleys round at the end of the line in Oldham as they did in Manchester. It was always a delight to travel on a tram car and if it happened to be a two-bogie Manchester Corporation car, so much smoother the ride. Travelling with mother meant one had to travel in the lower saloon where we sat on seats which ran down each side of the car being sure, of course, to stand for a lady if all other seats had been taken. Strap-hanging is an art now only fulfilled on the London Underground at rush hour. Alone, with father or a pal, it was always upstairs where it was possible to sit facing the way the tram was travelling and view from a vantage position the passing show. Many of the earliest trams I recall had completely open top decks which appeared to be totally unsuitable most of the time for the climate of the north west. Coming downstairs to alight would cause little boys to contort themselves in order that they might tread on the warning clang bell used by drivers.

Special occasions caused illuminated trams to be driven on the main roads and I was once allowed to stay up when I was taken to Greenacres Hill to see an illuminated tram. It carried the victorious Oldham Rugby League team on its return from Wembley, with the trophy displayed in the lower saloon. I was lifted high in order that I might see this wonderful thing which had come about. It made its way to Watersheddings and I often wondered if the players had to walk from the main road to the ground some distance away.

To me, trams were an essential part of life even though we had to walk to the main road before we could use them. A new word came into my vocabulary as my father explained that the sideways swaying motion at speed was known as oscillation. The tramway networks of the north west were all connected and actually went over the Pennines into Yorkshire. It is on record that a special illuminated car was loaned to Leeds City Council by Liverpool when it was

driven over continuous tracks all the way to Leeds.

The passing of the tramways is to be regretted, dangerous as they became as independent traffic increased. The clanking noise of trams, the protestations of metal on metal as they negotiated tight curves in the track,

p.30

the map of the automatic points and the sound of sand being released onto greasy rails all added to the sound of movement as did the crack of arc-welding gear when tracks were being repaired by electricity when the welders hooked bamboo poles on to the live overhead cable to connect the power. Much has been written about tramways by folk far better qualified on the subject than myself but I cannot avoid the nostalgic memories of those days of the tramcar.

Railways had an air of permanence which seemed to typify the Nation as a whole and it came as no surprise to me to find that the track was known as the permanent way. The development and romance of railways has no part in this narrative but the era of steam power has left its indelible mark upon me as I recall the sights, sounds and smells of the railways which were often synonymous with the excitement of a journey or outing. Pavlov's dogs were no more excited by outside stimuli than were we lads by the sights, sounds and smells of the railways.

There were still a number of different railway companies operating but, in the main, the Country was covered by the big four. Oldham was dominated by the London, Midland and Scottish Railway Company although London, North Eastern stock could be seen on the track of the Oldham, Ashton and Guide Bridge Railway at Glodwick Road or Clegg Street stations. This local company merely owned some few miles of track but it was track which formed the connection between the former Great Central Railway main line at Guide Bridge and the former London, North Western's line at Greenfield which was where it joined the main Manchester - Huddersfield trans-Pennine lines. The O.A. & G.B. Railway permitted both L.N.E and L.M.S. companies to operate the line for given periods of the year. This always seemed a wasteful duplication as both companies had to keep suitable stock available. The Cheshire Lines Railway also operated in conjunction with the O.A. & G.B. Railway and at one time offered an evening excursion to Southport for 1/9d return (about 8p). I went for 10½d. Leaving Oldham, Glodwick Road at 5pm one Saturday evening, the train proceeded at a good pace through Cheshire and Aintree to arrive at Southport, Lord Street, promptly at 7pm as scheduled. The return journey was another story which would give rise to a public inquiry today. The carriages were old and without toilet facilities. Lit by gas, the lights fluctuated eerily all the way home. Although leaving on time at 9pm from Lord Street Station, which is now a bus station, it was in fact 3am when the weary travellers arrived at Glodwick Road Station, which is now demolished, in Oldham.

I recall many Sunday school outings and excursions on the train, together with the occasional holiday to Southport which was always by rail. The steam noises and the sulphur smells added to the sensuous

p.31

delight. At home, daily train whistles could be heard and according to the resonance of the note, many claimed to be able to tell when a change in the weather was imminent. The clank, clank clank of shunting could be heard across the town and the clicketty-click, clicketty-click of the wheels on the joints in the lines could be heard as some trains went through at speed.

A visit to a station was always of interest. It was the size of everything that was so impressive together with the orderliness and, so far as the regular service went, its reliability. As a child, I gazed at those magnificent steam monsters. Once, I had a ride on the footplate of an engine from Oldham Mumps Station to the next at Royton Junction. It so happened that a friend of my uncle was a fireman on a train which had come through from Liverpool. It was a Sunday and I

could not get to school quickly enough next day to tell my friends of my one-upmanship par excellence.

Wartime and post war travel have taken on new aspects which we have now come to expect and take for granted. To many in those pre-war years, the railways remained a fact of life which were only used on special occasions and then it really was an occasion.

We still have the sound of movement with us and no doubt always will. It is, however, a vastly different sound today as modern cars, diesel trains and overhead jet planes combine with police and ambulance sirens and ice-cream vendors jingles to create its own modern symphony. No more will the hooter sound at 1:30pm from the foundry of Platt Brothers. No more will tramcars clank up to Waterhead and to Grains Bar, or single deck trams oscillate down Mills Hill and under the now raised railway bridge to Middleton. As for horses, in the main we tend only to see them on the roads if the young ladies from the riding school deign to pass our way. As for rhubarb and the allotments they have long since suffered.

to be continued next month

~~~~~

### From the e-Postbag

I had two emails from Julie Schwethelm, in Germany... this is the second, saved over from August's newsletter ...

#### *Random recollections*

##### **The Market (Ashton-under-Lyne)**

Indoor markets have always held a special fascination. Having grown up in Lancashire, the home of black puddings and numerous other local delicacies only to be found on market stalls, whenever I enter any market hall today I still experience a kind of magic that conjures up in my mind's eye the Ashton Market of my childhood.

Once you arrived at the market it was like stepping into another world altogether. One of the highlights for me was a ride on the elaborately painted swing boats. I recall a thick rope you pulled to get the boat swinging higher, and the thrill of hoping you wouldn't get a bigger child dumped in your swingboat with you in case they pulled the rope too vigorously and sent the boat swinging into outer space.

It was short of a national disaster when they dismantled the heavy wooden affair, I think probably for safety reasons. The only health and safety risk I remember is getting a splinter in your finger. Those were the days when a bout of measles could be just as life threatening for a child as falling out of a swing boat.

There was an ice cream hut and a little kiosk that sold hot dogs and beefburgers that can probably be classed as the forerunner to a Big Mac. There were no MacDonald's or Burger Kings in those days, the closest we got was the Wimpy Bar.

I remember the outdoor market stalls with their drab grey awnings before they gave way to the brightly red, yellow and blue striped ones. Apart from all the household wares, dress materials, records, shoes, clothes and almost anything else you could imagine, I particularly remember rows of beautiful flower stalls where local growers sold enormous chrysanthemum blooms as big as footballs.

There was nothing you couldn't buy on Ashton Market, it was simply a treasure trove, and the traders, many of whom had been there for generations, gave it that characteristic warmth and familiarity. At one of the entrances to the market hall was the Lucky Dip where for threepence you could dive into a big green box filled with sand and pull out a surprise, usually some cheap plastic toy made in Hong Kong. Years later a hat stall took over the location. I once bought a hat there, but I don't think it was because I really needed a hat. It was a little journey back to

the days of the lucky dip.

The hall had a flagged floor and over a hundred stalls huddling up against each other and yet somehow logically arranged. The smell of the indoor market was unique. All sorts of different odours floating from the stalls and mingling into that singular indoor market smell: fresh fruit and vegetables from Walker's, bacon, cooked meats, ham off the bone and pork pies from Redman's, cough candy from Gleave's you bought by the quarter in a white paper bag, loose biscuits in every flavour, shape and size, British cheeses in abundance, tripe and cow heel, cuts of beef, legs of pork, steak and kidney, lamb chops and chickens, sausages, crumpets, oven bottoms and muffins – not the American variety but the flat white bread ones. There was everything that made up a wholesome English meal or went with a cup of tea.

There were little cafés with formica topped tables, Bailey's hardware stall selling all the household goods you could possibly think of from Brillo Pads and Lifebuoy soap to clothes racks and hanging baskets. You could buy shoes, coats and anoraks, dresses and skirts, children's clothing, carpets from the roll, haberdashery with endless varieties of ribbons and buttons, jewellery, Marks and Spencer seconds from Queenie's, stockings in the fashionable sixties shade of American Tan, men's socks, greetings cards, toys, bedding, curtain material and goodness knows what else. After trailing around Manchester in vain in search of some obscure item, it was always a comfort to hear my mother say, "We'll get it on the Market."

Ashton-under-Lyne is a town with a long market tradition. A royal charter to hold a market was granted in 1284 and for the next 500 years, Ashton market was the focus of the area, which was rural with most people earning their living from the land. As industries developed in Ashton during the nineteenth century, the market expanded to serve the growing population. The present Market Hall was started in 1829 and was extended several times to its present size. Then in 2004, the historic Market Hall, a Victorian Grade II listed building, was gutted by a fire which broke out in the early morning of 25 May due to an electrical fault. Although the first fire crews arrived within four minutes, the building was already ablaze. The roof collapsed and virtually everything inside the building was destroyed, including 116 stalls and the livelihoods of whole families. Fortunately nobody was injured in the fire, and the shell of the building survived the flames and remained almost intact, so that the old hall was able to be re-opened in November 2008 with an up-to-date interior with much-improved facilities. The majority of the retailers returned after trading in the temporary Phoenix market until the refurbishment was finished, but that wonderful quirkiness of the old indoor market had disappeared forever in the smoke.

How precious are our family memories. Thank you again, Julie, for bringing my own of Ashton market back to the surface. After I married, over 53 years ago, I still dragged my husband back to do the weekend shopping in Ashton! Oldham didn't get a look-in for several years!

~~~~~

Another welcome contribution from our reader Glyn Collin :

Hi Sheila,

THE BANK TOP DISPUTE 1896-97

From:

Huddersfield Daily Examiner, Tuesday September 15, 1896

AN OLDHAM MILL DISPUTE DISORDERLY SCENES

For the last three months there has been a dispute in connection with the Bank Top Spinning Company's mills, and No. 2 has been stopped. No. 1 has been worked,

however, with the aid of a few new operatives. Latterly, when the imported workers have been expected in the streets, they have had a rough reception, and on Saturday and Sunday the police arrested some of those who were alleged to have been disorderly. On Monday Fred Gascoyne, described as a piecer, was charged at Oldham with doing malicious damage to the mill on Sunday, and the magistrates fined him £2 and costs. J. Boden, minder, C. Bagshaw, cardroom hand, and John W. Jackson, cardroom hand, were charged at the same court with disorderly conduct on Saturday and were remanded.

~~~~~

### Glyn's story

My grandfather was born at Wellyhole Street, Leesfield, his father THOMAS COLLIN was a machine fitter at the nearby Bank Top Mills. Local people called him Tom Mechanic; they said he was the finest mechanic they ever had at Bank Top Mills. He could do anything without help and however drunk he got in *The Fire Engine* he was always at the mill at 6am next morning. Tom's father and grandfather had a machine making business and all the sons were trained as mechanics. On all the census returns and certificates, Tom was a cotton machinery fitter but, on his death certificate, it says Mechanic Ironworks?



Tom with second wife,  
Elizabeth Abbott in 1886

Tom died of epithelioma of the tongue aged 56. His son said he was earning good money but wouldn't buy a new pipe. He cut his tongue on a broken clay pipe which caused the cancer. At the end he couldn't take a spoon of water and was taken into Oldham Infirmary to be given relief.

I thought maybe he went to the ironworks if the cotton dust aggravated his condition? His son-in-law was an iron turner at Platt's so maybe asked for a position for him. Tom would need to work for as long as possible as there were no benefits or widows' pensions and he had four young children.

Then I discovered that, at the time of his death in November 1896, The Oldham Chronicle was reporting on battles that were going on in the street outside his house due to the Bank Top Dispute so maybe he had left to remain in a secure job for as long as possible.

A study of the dispute revealed it was a strike called by the union and dragged on for over a year.

In July 1896 the papers said it had lasted three months and imported workers (scabs) were being used. In August the mill was summoned for four cases of breaking section 40 of the 1895 Factory & Works Act. In September the scabs were going to work in cabs to dodge the shouting and hooting of the pickets and cases were tried in court for disorderly conduct. On October 30th it was reported that, in the 22nd week of the strike, chance of a settlement was slight.

~~~~~

The Cotton Factory Times.

"In things Essential, Unity: in things Doubtful, Liberty: in All Things, Charity."

"Give me, above all other Liberties, the Liberty to Know, to Utter, and to Argue freely, according to Conscience."—Milton.

No. 610. VOLUME XII.

MANCHESTER, FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 19, 1896.

PRICE ONE PENNY.

September 1896

Column taken from page (split into 4 ... read 1-4. Last line of each, repeated as first line of next)

1

PRICE ONE PENNY.

Strike at Bank Top Spinning Company.

On Saturday at noon, when the workpeople were seemingly making home from the mill in cabs, an unusual presentation of feeling was displayed, and a breach of the peace of a large number of police prevented arrested, but were. Several of the ringleaders were charged with riotously liberated on bail. They Ira Bowden, mindfully conduct. Their names are Shaw, 3, Heap-street and thorn-road; Charles Bag-Jackson, Wellhole-street; and John William Court, on Monday morning. At the Oldham Police on the application of Mr. they were brought up, but, them, a remand was granted, who appeared for At the Oldham Police Court Wednesday. journe cases were heard. Mr. Wednesday, the ad-the prisoners.—P.C. Johnson Sixsmith represented Saturday afternoon he was on duty that at 12 15 on saw the prisoners, who were out of Lees-road. He men, standing at the bottom of Ogden-street, with other to Banktop Mill, where the prisoners, which led employed. About one o'clock three men, formerly Banktop Mill, who had filled vacancies employed at Ogden-street to Lees-road. The prisoners down crowd immediately surrounded them, and about the hooted at them. There was a boy with a band near, and Boden shouted "Let's throw the—"

2

near, and Boden shouted "Let's throw the— the handcart." Witness conducted the men to police station, and the prisoners shouted after them the way. He was obliged to give the men protection and to lock up the prisoners. Ogden-street was about half-a-mile from the police station, and the prisoners followed all the way. — Cross-examined by Mr. Sixsmith: How many of them hooted? About 200 or 300 people.—Why did you select these men? Because they were ringleaders and caused the crowd to assemble.—There was no violence, or any threat of violence? There was no violence, but if the police had not been there—Never mind "if the police had not been there." Was there any threat of violence? No. —Who was arrested first? Bagshaw.—Were they standing together? About a few yards apart.—Didn't you arrest Boden and Jackson in Greenacres-road? Yes, because as soon as I arrested Bagshaw the others went off around the corner. — Police-constable Conway corroborated.—Mr. Sixsmith, for the defence, asked their worship to treat the case as a charge of disorderly conduct simply, and to dissociate from their minds the question of the strike, because it had nothing to do with the strike so far as the men were personally concerned. —Harriet Ashworth, 140, Lees-road, wife of John Ashworth, said she had nothing to do with the strike. After one o'clock on Saturday afternoon she heard a noise in the street. She went to the door and saw a lot of children following the three men the police were escorting down the road. The prisoners were walking quietly a few yards behind, and the children were doing the shouting. She thought there were only about a dozen upgrown people there. — Amelia Whitehead, 45, Gladstone-road, who also had no connection with the

3

dozen upgrown people there. — Amelia Whitehead, 45, Gladstone-road, who also had no connection with the strike, corroborated, as did also Edward Nolan and John William Pontikes.—The Bench retired to consider their decision, and on returning into court the Mayor said:—There has been a considerable conflict of evidence in this case, but it is clear that you three prisoners were in the crowd, and that you followed the men to the police station door, so that you formed part of the disorderly crowd. I don't know whether you are aware or not that you put yourself in a position of jeopardy. In cases of this kind we have the power to send you to the quarter sessions for trial. I hope there will be some kind of order in the neighbourhood of Lees-road, and that we shall not be under the necessity of dealing so strongly as I have suggested, as this kind of disturbance cannot be permitted in the street. You have no right to interfere with any men going to or from their work, or at any other time. I hope you will try to conduct yourselves—you three in particular—in a proper way. Of course the offence cannot be overlooked, and our decision is that each of you is fined 20s. and costs or 14 days' imprisonment.

On Sunday evening, when the workmen were being conveyed to the mill, the tumult assumed more serious and extended proportions, and windows were broken, and this was followed by the immediate apprehension of a young man, a pleader out on strike, named Fred

4

on a young man, a pleader out on strike, named Fred Gascoyne, residing in Vigo-street, not very far from the mill. Bail was tendered for him later on Sunday evening, but this was refused, and he had to spend the night in the cells. He was brought up before the bench, and his case was dealt with. Mr. John Wild was the chairman of the bench.—Inspector Ormrod, who conducted the case, said it was the custom to bring the workpeople employed at the Bank Top Mill to their work in cabs, and on Sunday night a number of the hands were so proceeding to the mill. The prisoner and a large crowd of people followed, shouting and hooting. The prisoner had a large stone in his hand, weighing four or five pounds, and when he got to the mill lodge he deliberately threw it through a window, doing damage to the amount of one shilling.—The prisoner acknowledged the offence, and said it was done under excitement.—The Chairman: But you will not be allowed to carry on in this way. It is not the way to bring the strike to a conclusion; it is only tending to prolong it. It is a disgrace to you and other people beside, and it can't be permitted. Have you been there since? — Inspector Ormrod: It was only last night the hands were brought to the mill in cabs, and remained there all night ready to commence work this morning.—The Chairman: We can send you to prison without the option of a fine for this offence, but as this is your first offence you will be let off on the payment of a fine of 40s. and costs. If you are brought here again the full penalty will be inflicted. We are determined to stop this work. Any-one else brought up will have to go to prison.

On November 3rd, three fourths of spinning machines were in operation and November 13th, Police were picketing Wellyhole Street. November 22nd, windows were smashed at the mill

and at the manager's house which resulted in Police Court proceedings on November 25th. On November 30th two cases of street obstruction were heard in court. On December 11th, 300 were on strike, no change and the same on Dec 18th.

On January 8th 1897, spinners, cardroom operatives, loom overlookers & weavers formerly employed by the Bank Top Spinning Co. assembled in large numbers at Clarksfield Conservative Club. On January 15th, they were fighting a battle. On January 22nd, Policemen summoned in court for assault. by January 29th and then March 26th there was no change and settlement was remote. On April 2nd applications were made to the union on behalf of the spinners on strike.

I can't yet find how the dispute was eventually settled but, by then, Tom's family had left Oldham to join relatives in Yorkshire

~~~~~

**MLFHS FACEBOOK PAGE**

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

\* Five Tips for Deciphering Old Handwriting  
[HERE](#)

~~~~~

* The top ten sins of a genealogist
[HERE](#)

~~~~~

\* Historic england - The Historic Beach Holiday Packing List  
[HERE](#)

~~~~~

* Greater Manchester Museum of Transport - Trolley buses
[HERE](#)

~~~~~

\* History Scotland - Explore Scotland's Incredible Past  
[HERE](#)

~~~~~

* John Grenham has launched surname maps of all Irish civil death records 1864-1922
[HERE](#)

~~~~~

\* Rylands Blog - Dr Clifford Hall: A ship's surgeon  
[HERE](#)

~~~~~

* The Historic England Blog - 5 Sites That Tell the Story of Early Anglo-Saxon England
[HERE](#)

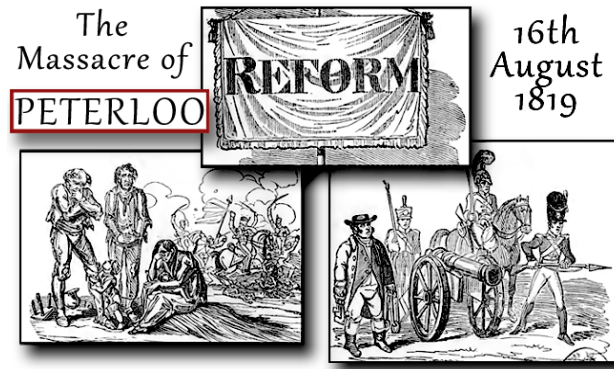
~~~~~

\* Rylands Blog - Visit to William Cowley Parchment Makers  
[HERE](#)

~~~~~

* For many more, visit the MLFHS Facebook Page : [HERE](#)
And [HERE](#) is the link to the MLFHS Twitter page.

~~~~~



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

~~~~~

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](#)

~~~~~

**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.

~~~~~

Website Links

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](#)

Goad 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

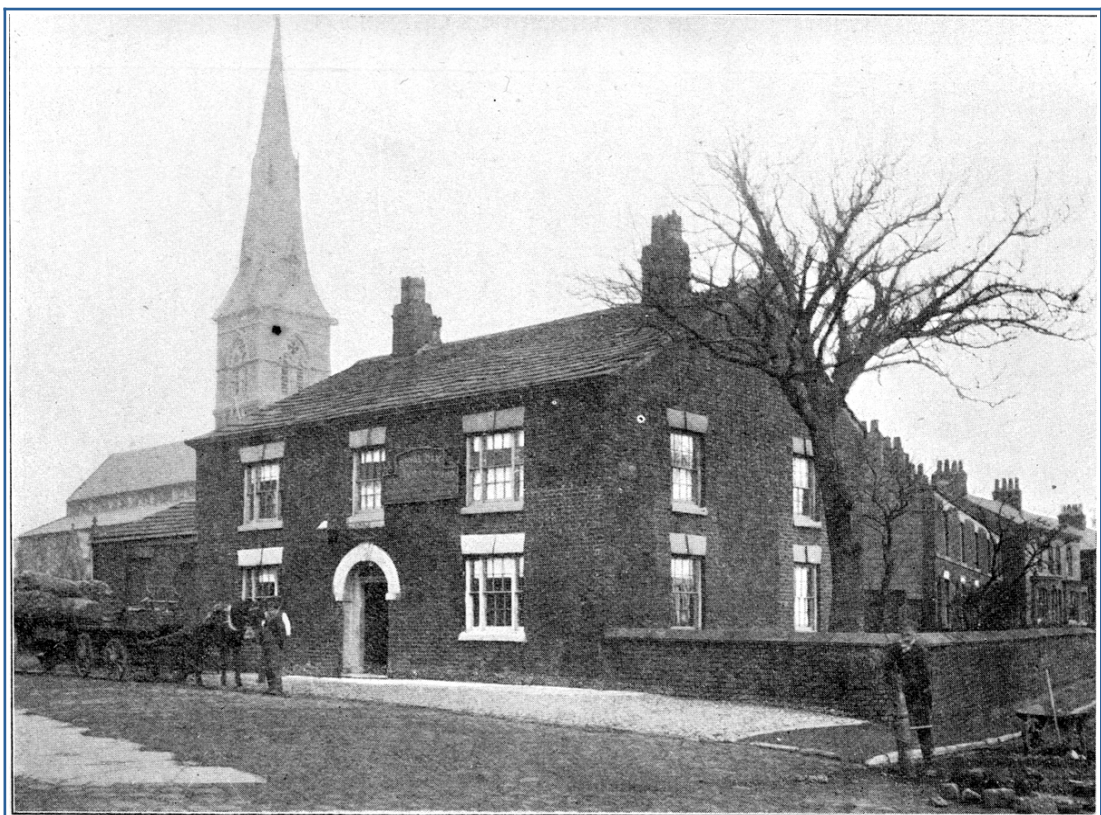
Illustrations from 'Short Stories About Failsworth Folk'

by Sim Schofield, pub. 1905



"TH' OWD PACK HORSE INN."

'Th' owd Packhorse Inn'



THE ROYAL OAK.

"The Pig and Fork" mentioned in Brierley's "Layrock or Langleyside."
Failsworth Church appears in the background.

*The Royal Oak ... 'The Pig and Fork' mentioned in Brierley's 'Layrock of Langleyside'.
Failsworth Church appears in the background.*



“WAGSTAFF FOWT.”
The source of Brierley’s first prose article, “My Uncle’s Garden.”

~~~~~  
From: *'Cassell's Illustrated History of England'*



COTTON MILLS, MILES PLATTING, MANCHESTER.