

'e-Owls'



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

March 2023

MLFHS - Oldham & District Branch Newsletter

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Branch Information & News :

Branch Officers for 2022 -2023 :

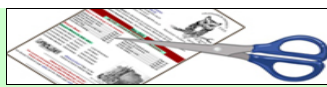
Committee Member : Chairman :	Linda Richardson
Committee Member : Treasurer :	Gill Melton
Committee Member : Secretary :	Joan Harrison
Committee Member : Newsletter :	Sheila Goodyear
Committee Member : Webmistress :	Sheila Goodyear
Committee Member : Patricia Etchells	

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



*'The Money Changer & His Wife
by Quentin Matsys of Antwerp, 1514,
Louvre, Paris*

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.

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Chairman's remarks :

Hello and welcome to the March newsletter.

First of all I would, on behalf of the Committee and myself, like to announce that Pat Etchells, retired Editor of The Manchester Genealogist, has accepted our invitation to join the Oldham Branch Committee. I am sure all our members will make her welcome at our meetings.

We are still on the lookout for new Committee members. If you are curious as to what a committee member does or are interested in joining us, then please make yourself known to any of the Committee either by email to [oldham@mlfhs.org.uk](mailto:oldham@mlfhs.org.uk) or in person at one of our meetings.

Talking of meetings, we have a very exciting programme lined up again for this year. Details of our programme will be on the website or you can pick up a paper copy at our meetings in Oldham Library.

Enjoy reading the rest of this month's newsletter.

Best Wishes

Linda Richardson

Chairman, Oldham Branch

email me at < [chairman-oldham@mlfhs.org.uk](mailto:chairman-oldham@mlfhs.org.uk) >

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Editor's remarks.

Hi Everyone,

Yet another month has flown past ... dare we hope that spring might be round the corner? I know March is usually notorious for 'vicious' weather but we can still keep our fingers crossed! Our March Branch Meeting is the first of our hybrids for 2023 and our return to the Library since our last meeting there in November. Hopefully, we will look forward to welcoming our zoom audience again and a healthy number in the library itself.

In the Mixed Bag we have more pages from *Manchester Streets & Manchester Men* (3rd series) by T. Swindells, pub. 1907. Having finished the pages on *The Market Place* (which were the last section in the book), I turned my attention back to page 1 and the Chapters on *High Street*, which have sections on a variety of topics including one on John Rylands and the library founded by his wife as a tribute to his memory. It's a slightly longer section, this month, because I didn't want to split the final chapter in each one. As always, I enjoyed transcribing the pages and hope you also find them enjoyable, informative and, perhaps, even useful!!

We also conclude Frank Pogson's, '*A Ginnel To Life*' with his final chapter.

Oldham & District's February meeting about women working underground, in the coal mines, was a most interesting, illustrated presentation given by Denise Bates ... more about it in the Branch meetings section.

Everyone must have been very busy again as, sadly once more, there is nothing to report from the e-Postbag.

In the updates section of the Branch website pages [HERE](#) you can find a link to a publication titled, '*Oldham Education Week, May 1925*' It had been passed to Linda, our chairman, to use in whatever way seemed appropriate ... From a link in the Project Pages or the Pictorial Index you can find a full transcription and a gallery of the 35 photographs which illustrated it. It provides a fascinating insight into attitudes to education and what was considered to be essential or desirable at that time. Also in the updates you can find a link to '*The Election of a Councillor, Coldhurst Ward, 1922*' which was an illustrated presentation given by Jeremy Sutcliffe and added to Family and Local History Articles on the 'Oldham Historical Research'

Website.

In the Gallery are more of my random selections! Firstly, because he was mentioned in the Mixed Bag, in *Manchester Streets and Manchester Men*, a picture of a statue of John Bright, in Rochdale. Then we have a couple of old postcards (such a rich source of memories), *Flittin'* and Waterloo School, Oldham. Finally, my chosen image for the front page is, '*The Money Changer & His Wife*' by Quentin Matsys, 1514. The full description reads, "Fig. 55 shows a lady of the Bourgeois class negotiating for the sale or pawn of a *Book of Hours* or some such manuscript, illuminated with a full-page miniature of the Virgin and Child. The money-lender appears to be weighing out to her the money. This beautiful painting which is commonly called the *Money Changer and His Wife*, is signed and dated 1514 by Quentin Massys or Matsys of Antwerp. it is now in the Louvre." It is from the book, '*Illuminated Manuscripts in Classical & Mediaeval Times*, by J. Henry Middleton, pub. 1892.

Sheila

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

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

Editor reserves the right to edit any contributions before publication.

email me at : < Oldham_newsletter@mlfhs.org.uk >

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

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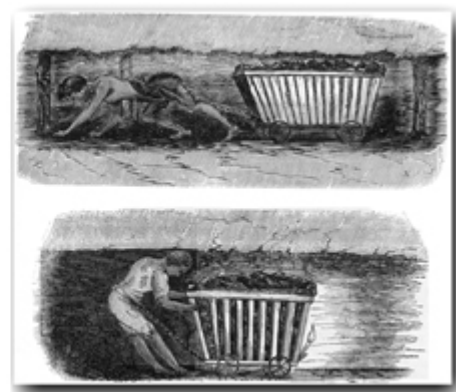
## Oldham & District Branch

### Monthly Meetings

#### Last Month's Meeting - February



Saturday,  
11th Feb.  
at  
2 pm



#### **'Pit Lasses - the Female Miners of 1842'**

An illustrated presentation given by Denise Bates who is a historian and writer.

*Denise's interest in female miners started when she discovered that she is descended from one of them.*

*The talk looks at the role of women and girls working underground in coal mines.*

*(This free talk was on zoom only.)*

Denise began her talk by putting it into the context of 'child labour' which had been the subject of political and social campaigning for decades. In 1819 an Act had been passed limiting child employment to children over 9 years of age but it only applied to work in cotton mills and factories. Calls for reform continued unabated and in 1841 Lord Ashley (later Shaftesbury)

called for a Royal Commission to investigate child labour across all industry. In 1842, the subsequent Report of the *Royal Commission into the Conditions and Treatment of the Children Employed in the Mines and Collieries of the UK*,<sup>1</sup> was published, horrifying and scandalising Victorian society.

Although this report was primarily about children working underground, in many instances it included older girls and even women in the statistics.

Conditions and the numbers of women and girls employed in the mines varied from area to area and, from research Denise believed that one of the reasons could reasonably be that economic differences between areas didn't offer the same work options for women that areas with mills and factories could. Oldham and Rochdale, typically, didn't have the same incidence of female miners that less industrialised areas did.

We learned that the work of the younger children in the mines was usually as 'trappers'.

Noxious fumes and gases were a constant health and safety hazard and, to help prevent them circulating freely, the little trapper's task was to sit by the doors which had to be pulled open and closed again when the heavily laden coal carts were pushed or pulled up to the surface. The older girls and women would be employed in carrying coals on their backs (mainly in Scottish mines), pushing the carts or pulling them. If the carts were pulled then the woman wore a heavy leather belt from which a chain was attached to the cart and she pulled it along on her hands and feet. Usually, the women would be working with a male member of the family who would use a pickaxe on the coal seam and fill the cart whilst the female would get it to the surface and then return for the next cart.

When the report was published there was an outcry of disbelief on both humanitarian and moralistic grounds. The newspapers picked up on the moralistic angle and some of the reporting concentrated on the fact that females in the mines wore very scanty clothing from which the public inferred the incidence of, and opportunities for, immoral activities. It was possibly this factor that most influenced Parliament and the call for reforms. It was also implied that women and girls enduring the harsh and debilitating conditions, which were injurious to their health, would prevent them from becoming good wives and mothers; they would be unable to perform their domestic duties as well as work! By linking names to the 1841 census, Denise found that in many instances, where the wife was working in the mine, another female (perhaps mother, daughter or sister) would be in charge of the household and family.

Rounding things up, Denise told us that the Report showed the women in negative and humiliating terms but that this might be as a result that humanitarian terms wouldn't sway the affluent owners who had much to lose; economic arguments would outweigh all others.

However, the moral imperative to 'rescue' these women and girls, would have much greater impact and lead to calls for change.

the Result: The Report was published in May 1842;

in June 1842, following the public outrage, a Bill in the Commons was sponsored by Lord Ashley;

in July 1842 it was sponsored by the Earl of Devon in the Lords.

Devon had to accept some compromises, to ensure it was passed, despite strong opposition from the wealthy mine owners.

in August 1842 the Bill became Law, *The Mines and Collieries Act*;

in March 1843 it was implemented ... making it illegal to employ all women and girls, and boys under the age of 10, for underground work.

Our many thanks to Denise for such an enjoyable and informative talk.

If you want to know more, you can visit her website at :

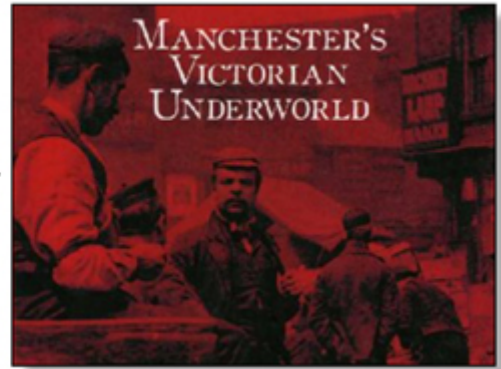
<http://denisebates.co.uk/pitlassesresearch.html>

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March Meeting



Saturday
11th March
at
2 pm



Crime City : Manchester's Victorian Underworld

"Historian Joseph O'Neill recreates the sights, sounds and smells of a lost milieu in all their fascinating detail. He chronicles the era's crooks, cracksmen, pimps, prostitutes, conmen, garroters and bare knuckle fighters, and the gin palaces, dance halls and cheap brothels that were as much a part of Manchester as giant cotton mills."

An illustrated talk given by Joseph O'Neill

This is a hybrid talk in Oldham Library and on zoom.

Free booking, for zoom attendance, is essential on Eventbrite.

For attendance in the Library, members are free, non-members £3

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The 2023 Branch Programme of Meetings will include 4 meetings as hybrids, 4 meetings only in the library and 4 only on zoom.

Details, of the programme of talks for the first 6 months of 2023, are on the website 'Meetings' page of the Branch website [HERE](#) and the rest of the programme will be added as soon as possible.

Our Annual General Meeting will be held in April, details to follow.

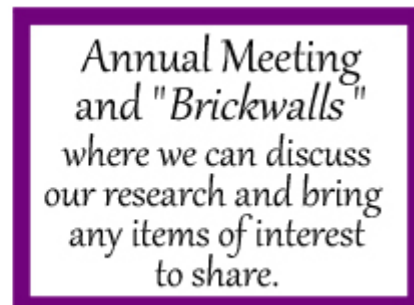
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MLFHS Branches delivering their monthly meetings and talks

Anglo - Scots ... in Manchester Central Library



Saturday,
4th
March
at
2pm



Booking will be on [Eventbrite](#)

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

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## Bolton ... hybrid meeting

|                                                          |                                                       |                                                                                      |
|----------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>MLFHS<br/>Bolton Branch<br/>Meetings -<br/>Hybrid</b> | <b>Wednesday<br/>1st<br/>March<br/>at<br/>7:30 pm</b> | <b>'DNA - Exploring<br/>Your Test Results'<br/><br/>given by<br/>Hilary Hartigan</b> |
|----------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

**Hybrid Meeting ... on zoom and on screen in the venue**  
at Bolton Golf Club, Lostock Park, Chorley New Road, Bolton, BL6 4AJ

Booking for zoom on [Eventbrite](#)

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

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MLFHS updates

Manchester ... No meetings for March in the programme at this time

All Bookings on [Eventbrite](#)

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](#)

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### **Saturday, March 25th, at Manchester Central Library**

#### ***MLFHS, SPRING FAIR - Discovering Family Lives***

Join us on Saturday, March 25th, at the Manchester Central Library for our Spring Fair.

The list of attendees for 2023 is shown on the website.

Also listed are the extra library facilities which you will find useful.

Entry is free and we will be open from 10.00am to 3.30pm.

Website : <https://mlfhs.uk/fairs>

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MLFHS Online Bookshop: [HERE](#).

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

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### **MLFHS Manchester & Branch e-Newsletters**

MLFHS Manchester and each of the MLFHS branches publish a monthly e-newsletter which provides useful news items and articles etc. The e-newsletters are free and available to both members and non-members of MLFHS Society. Members receive the Manchester newsletter automatically and non-members can browse the archive and download any they wish. You can sign up to receive the Branches' newsletter links monthly, by following the links, below.

To sign-up, for a Branch newsletter, to be emailed each month, simply click the appropriate link below and complete the short form on the e-newsletter page, where you will also find copies of all past issues to browse.

[MLFHS](#) (Manchester)

[Bolton](#)

[Oldham](#)

[Anglo-Scottish](#)

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

* Hi All

New Publication: *St. Mary Eccles RC Baptisms*

Another volume of these valuable records of persons admitted to Bolton Workhouse has been added to the Great Database.

This latest batch of 7,935 records relates to admissions 1908-1911 and thanks are due to Graham Holt and his team.

This addition, incidentally, brings the number of name records in the society's databases to a total of 3,305,794.

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\* I have added 357 references for the Stalybridge & Ashton 1892 map to the Godfrey Map Index at

<https://mlfhs.uk/databases/godfrey-map-index>

Thanks are due to John Gartside.

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* Hi All,

Further additions as follows:

1,468 references for maps:

Leigh North 1892 and Leigh South 1892 Indexed by Chris Willis.

Blackley & Lower Crumpsall 1915; Moston 1933; Trafford Park South 1937; Broughton Park & Crumpsall 1907 and Barlow Moor & West Didsbury 1905 indexed by John Marsden.

The index now covers 104 maps and contains a total of 28,963 references to streets and buildings.

The number of maps not yet indexed is reducing steadily, but there are still more to be completed. If you have any of the maps still shown uncoloured at :

<https://mlfhs.uk/?view=article&id=346&catid=9> and are prepared to spend a few hours creating an index, I'll be happy to let you know how to go about it.

There are particular gaps between Bury and Manchester/Salford and around Bolton, but any contributions will be welcomed.

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\* The latest volume of Roman Catholic baptism registers covering St. Mary, Eccles 1879-1923 has now been published as a downloadable file with index, transcription and scanned images of the original register at:

<https://www.mlfhs-shop.co.uk/collections/registers-roman-catholic/products/dl1632>

All MLFHS publications previously issued as CDs/DVDs have now been converted into downloadable files with consequent reductions in price and saving the ever-increasing costs of postage - particularly to purchasers outside the UK.

The full catalogue can be found at :

<https://www.mlfhs-shop.co.uk/collections/downloads>

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Please note ...

Please check society/group websites or organisers for updated information

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**Oldham Historical Research Group: ... on zoom**



**Information update ...**

Owing to changing circumstances, the Oldham HRG (always an informal group) ceased to function, even as such, after our February Meeting. However, after discussion at the meeting, it was agreed that although the regular monthly meetings would cease, we would hold 'ad hoc' meetings as and when we had volunteer speakers. As a result, we are hoping to hold a number of meetings over 2023.

Please keep an eye on the Eventbrite bookings page or sign up to 'follow' and receive a notification when a new meeting is planned.

Everyone will be welcome ... More details and free booking will be on [Eventbrite](#)  
Your support for our meetings was, and still is, appreciated and, if you would like more information, please email me at < [pixnet.sg@gmail.com](mailto:pixnet.sg@gmail.com) >.

Website [HERE](#)

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Saddleworth Historical Society ... Wednesday 8th March at 7:30

***"The Manor of Marsden and the Copyhold Elite-
How the Manorial System shaped a West Yorkshire Community."***

an illustrated presentation by Dr. Stephen Miller

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.

Website [HERE](#)

Saddleworth Civic Trust has no meeting or event planned in March.

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

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

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Family History Society of Cheshire : Tameside Group meeting.

See their website [HERE](#)

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**Tameside History Club :**

Meetings on zoom.



Website and programme  
&

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

Website and programme [HERE](#)

**Regional Heritage Centre :**

Website [HERE](#)

**Moorside & District Historical Society**, Moorside Cricket Club, Turfpit Lane, OL4 2ND

**Moorside & District Historical Society**

**Monday 20th March 2023.**

**"Local Heys Farm"**

**From it's Inception  
to Present Day**





**To be held in the Moorside Cricket Club, Turfpit Lane, Moorside. OL4 2ND**

**7-30 p.m. all are welcome. Please use the rear side door.** Licensed Bar

*Note: Other meeting planed for the third Monday of the month, next year.*

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

April ~ September meeting in St Thomas' Church Hall.OL1 4SJ

**Monday 20th March, at 7:30**

**'A Mixed Bag'**

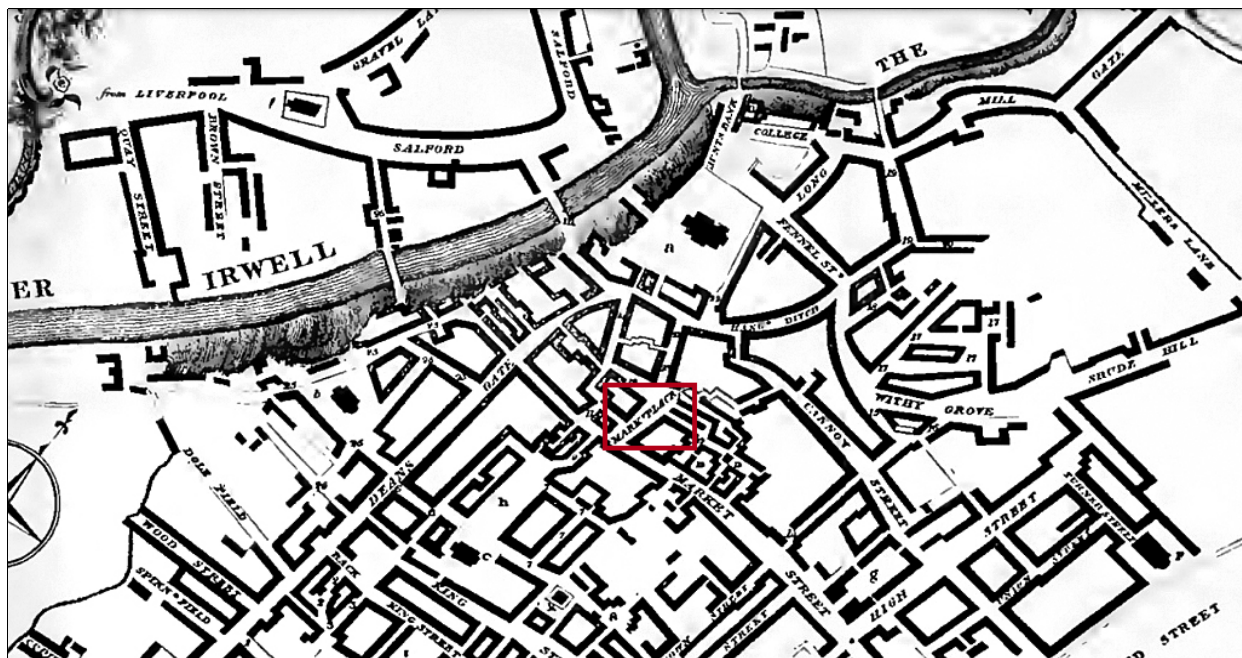
***Manchester Streets & Manchester Men (3rd series) by T. Swindells, pub. 1907,***

Our serialisation of *Manchester Streets & Manchester Men* (3rd series) started in the newsletter for 2022-12, and through the newsletters for January and February, with transcriptions of 'The Market Place', from p.131 to p.220. The next transcription, below, takes us back to page 1, and 'High Street Annals'

**Map of Manchester - Salford 1772, with Market Place** (Larger scale on website [HERE](#))

from: **OLD MANCHESTER - A Series of Views ...** Drawn by Ralston, James, and Others

Introduction by James Croston, Pub 1875



## HIGH-STREET ANNALS.

### PART I - IN 1650.

Although there are several references in the Court Leet Records to High-street, it is not quite clear that the references are to the present thoroughfare bearing the name. Thus as far back as 1559 we read of a watercourse which ran alongside the holding of Hugh Travers into the High-street. On the other hand We find no reference to the street on the plan representing Manchester and Salford as they were in 1650. Where High-street is, were open fields extending from the gardens at the backs of the Market-stead Lane houses to Withing Grove and Shudehill, which together formed a pleasant country lane. The houses in Market-street appear to have extended to a point somewhere near to the corner of High-street, and it is very probable that a field path ran from there to the bottom of Shudehill.

### IN 1741.

Whatever was the condition of High-street in 1650, by the time that Casson and Berry issued their plan of the towns in 1741 it had become an important thoroughfare. Houses appear to have been erected along the greater part of its length from Market-street Lane

### p. 2

to the corner of Turner-street. Gardens were attached to the houses, and beyond were the open fields interspersed by hedgerows and occasional trees. The houses in the street were probably occupied by some of the wealthier amongst the burgesses, and in future chapters reference will be made to two of them. One was a fine mansion standing on the right-hand side of the street a little way out of Market-street Lane and occupied by Jeremiah Bower, and another one was an even more imposing residence that stood at the corner of a short lane, afterwards extended and now known as Cannon-street. The streets running off High-street were Garden-street, Turner-street, Back Turner-street, and several unnamed thoroughfares. The site of the present market was unbroken field land.

### IN 1793

When Laurent's plan was issued, still further changes had taken place. High-street was rapidly becoming a commercial centre, although many of the houses were still the residences of the well-to-do. The back land had been largely built upon. Cannon-street had been opened out, and on the gardens attached to many of the houses buildings had been erected approached by narrow courts such as may be seen behind Market-street. The garden in front of Mr. Bower's

house had been superseded by posts and chains arranged semi-circular fashion. A small field was still uncovered by buildings in Friday-street, and on the opposite side of Watling-street were a number of gardens. Spring Alley opened out-of Nicholas Croft, and the origin of the name

**p. 3**

is verified by the fact that in the latter thoroughfare, near the corner of Spring Alley, was a public pump, which served to supplement the cisterns which held rain water, and formed an important branch of the water supply of the town in those days. The land on this side of High-street, prior to the forming of Cannon-street, formed one large field, which extended from Marsden Square to Shudehill. In 1745 the rent of the field, together with a house and stable, was £5 per annum. A few years later the field was converted into a brickcroft, and by the close of the century had been covered with buildings. Leaving the street, we will now turn our attention to some of the public movements connected with it, to a few of the more prominent of its one-time residents, and to a few of the commercial undertakings associated with it.

**EARLY ROMAN CATHOLIC CHAPELS.**

In dealing with Roman Catholic Chapels it will be as well if I preface my remarks by the statement that in speaking of Roman Catholic chapels I refer to those that have been known as such in contradistinction from those connected with Protestant churches. This explanation is necessary, otherwise I might be reminded that prior to the Reformation the parish church was connected with Rome, and I do not wish to become engaged in a theological controversy. After the Reformation the first definite statement we have respecting a Roman Catholic place of worship in Manchester has reference to a room that stood nearly two centuries ago near to where Blackfriars Bridge is. Like the first Wesleyan

**p. 4**

meeting-room, this little chapel was a room overlooking the river, which was then a clear stream, inhabited by numbers of fish. There were severe penalties imposed in those days on all persons officiating as priests, and the meetings therefore took place in secret. The approach to the room was by a flight of stairs from Parsonage, and at the bottom of the stairs sentinels were fixed to give warning to the worshippers above in case the priest-hunters or pursuivants appeared in the street, or lane as it was then. In the week-time the room was used for the purposes of a dyehouse. The congregation was only small, but as times became more tolerant it was decided to remove to better premises. For this purpose a building was either built or purchased behind High-street. It stood just behind the buildings at the corner of Church-street, and was approached from the two thoroughfares by two passages, both of which still exist, one being known as Roman Entry. The priest whose name is associated with this move was the Rev. Mr. Helme. Services were conducted there until 1774, when a chapel was opened in Rook-street. This building, which in later years was used as a warehouse, was of two storeys. On the ground floor were a number of rooms used as a residence by the officiating priest, and on the floor above was the chapel. Although so situated, Aston tells us that it was larger than most Dissenting chapels, that the altar was handsomely decorated, and that over it were three paintings of considerable merit. In 1778 the Rev. Rowland Broomhead was appointed to take charge of the cause in Manchester, and took up his residence at Rook-street. For forty-two years he laboured in the

**p. 5**

town, and during that period he not only laboured unceasingly in the interests of his Church, but interested himself in many social and educational movements in the town. As giving some idea of the increase in his responsibilities whilst labouring in Manchester it may be stated that whereas when he came to Rook-street the number of Catholics in Manchester only numbered

1,000, when he died the number had increased to 40,000. He was responsible for the building of the first St. Mary's chapel in Mulberry-street, and St. Augustine's chapel in Granby Row. He died on October 12, 1820, and was buried at St. Augustine's. Further references to the Granby Row chapel must be deferred for the present.

### **THE OLD MARKET CROSS.**

As most of my readers will be aware, our forefathers always associated the holding of a public market with a representation of the cross. Why this should have been so we are not told. Two of the most reasonable explanations may be given. One is that the market place being a place of public resort, the cross was placed there for the convenience of those attending the market who wished to offer up a prayer, just as similar erections are found in Roman Catholic countries today. Another is that it was thought that the presence of the emblem of the national religion might have a deterring effect upon traders who sought to obtain an undue advantage over those with whom they were dealing. Leaving the solution of the problem, it may be said that Manchester for many generations had its Market Cross, which stood

#### **p.6**

opposite Old Shambles. In 1752 the old cross, a stone erection, was replaced by a more ornate one, which was surmounted by some curious ironwork, and a gilt crown. The old cross was removed to High-street, and was set up at the Nicholas Croft end. It served no useful purpose there, and the only persons who used it in any way were the boys of the neighbourhood, who amused themselves by climbing to the top of it. This continued until at length it fell to pieces, and in course of time disappeared. It is a curious coincidence that when the old cross was removed to High-street, although then far away from the public market, the land in the immediate neighbourhood should some generations later be adopted as the site of a new market, and that to-day it should be one of the most important markets in the country.

### **HIGH-STREET ANNALS.**

#### **PART II.**

### **A NOTABLE BUILDING.**

In 1736 Jeremiah Bower, a member of a well-known Manchester family, built for himself a mansion in the suburbs of the town. He was engaged in business as a hatter, and in selecting a site for his new house was influenced by two considerations. For business reasons he wished to be near the town, but on the other hand, he was desirous of enjoying a garden. The hatting business would be conducted on the premises, with probably a separate entrance at the side of the house for convenience. He found a site to his liking at the top of Market-stead Lane, immediately behind the houses facing that thoroughfare. The house built under those conditions stands to-day, a little way out of Market-street and between Bridgewater Place and Bread-street. It is sadly altered in its appearance and surroundings, but it still survives, quietly reminding us of the Manchester of nearly two centuries ago. It has an interesting story, which I will endeavour to narrate.

Let us commence by describing the surroundings of the house when it was built. It faced into what was nothing more than a country lane, a garden occupying the space in front, and another one being behind the house. At the top of the lane were the Shude Hill fields, in some of which were a number of pits occupying the site of Swan-street. Church-street was another

#### **p.8**

country lane, and at the bottom of Mr. Bower's back garden ran the stream sometimes dignified by the name of river Tib. It ran open through the fields, and on its bank was a footpath much frequented on summer evenings by loving couples who would saunter along as far as the corner of Newton Lane, where another footpath led them past the pits into Shude Hill. Very pleasant would such a ramble be through fields frequented by the throstle and blackbird. In



summer, the air fragrant with hawthorn blossom, honeysuckle, or new-mown hay, was in wonderful contrast with what we know it to be. As Mr. Bower strolled in his back garden his view across the fields would be uninterrupted, save by an occasional farmstead, and in the further distance would be seen the picturesque gables of the ancient black and white hall of Ancoats, a few years later to become associated with the ill-fated Charles Edward Stuart, known in history as the young Pretender.

#### **A FAMILY OF WORTHIES.**

Having said somewhat respecting the house and its surroundings, let us turn our attention to the family who lived there. Jeremiah Bower was a public-spirited man, who took his share in the affairs of the town. In 1724 he was a churchwarden of the Collegiate Church, in 1734 he occupied the position of senior constable of the town, and in 1743 was appointed to the high office of boroughreeve. His name appears in connection with several charitable movements, and on September 20, 1745, he presented a brass candelabrum to the choir of the church. A few days later he showed hospitality

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to certain of the Pretender's followers, and ten years later he died, leaving what was in those days an enormous fortune, amounting to over £4,000. He was succeeded by his son, Benjamin, who was born in 1731, and who like his father succeeded to the position of churchwarden, senior constable and boroughreeve, holding the last-named office in 1775. Some time just after this he appears to have removed from High-street. The town was rapidly growing, and Mr. Bower left High-street on retiring from business, and took up his residence in the more rural district of Lever-street, where he was living in 1788.

A brother of Jeremiah Bower, named Miles, carried on business as a hatter in Deansgate, and in Casson and Berry's plan of the town in 1741 is a view of houses occupied by him and one of his sons. They appear to have been a pair of fine semi-detached mansions, similar in appearance to Mr. Dickenson's house in Market-stead Lane. He was constable of the town in 1735. The hatting trade was evidently a prosperous one, for in 1773 father and son were described as gentlemen. Miles Bower died in 1780, and was buried at St. Ann's Church. His son John, just referred to, married an heiress, Miss Joddrell, and contrary to custom, took her name. Another son, John Foster Bower, became a lawyer of repute. He became Recorder of Chester, and purchased the manor of Taxal, near Whaley Bridge. He was very short-sighted, and had an eye-glass fixed to the end of his riding-whip. Hugh Leycester, a member of the well-known Cheshire family, and who became one of the judges for North Wales, on one occasion when met with

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a party of legal friends, including Erskine, Bower, and others, at Buxton, hit off Bower's whim in the following lines :-

"May you be ever on the hip,  
Your eye still seated in your whip,  
And may that whip be broke or lost,  
Whene'er your stumbling blade you've crossed,  
And no bungling glazier nigh  
To help you to another eye.  
Blind may you be to all around you,  
Though every Buxton belle surround you,  
Nor catch one beam of Stella's light,  
Unless the glazier gives you sight."

When Foster Bower died, he bequeathed the Taxal estate to his brother, John Bower-Joddrell,

who died at Bath in 1796. The Joddrell Arms, a well-known house at Whaley Bridge, and a street in the Deansgate district, alike derive their names from the same family name.

### **AS A COACHING HOUSE.**

Soon after Benjamin Bower's removal to Lever-street, the mansion was converted into an inn, and for forty years continued to be one of the principal, if not the principal, coaching houses in the town. For this purpose great changes were necessary. The front garden was removed, and in its place a semi-circular carriage drive was made bounded by posts and chains. On what had been the back garden, a long range of stables and other out-buildings were erected. In the meantime the river Tib had been culverted over, the footpath along its bank was gradually taking the form of a street, that portion adjoining the inn stables being at first called Stable-street. The house contained accommodation

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for over one hundred guests, and was known as the Bridgewater Arms. At the time of the conversion of the building travelling by stage-coach was in the earlier stages of development. Not many years before, a startling announcement had been made to the Manchester people. A flying coach was advertised, and it was boastingly declared that "However incredible it may appear, this coach will actually (barring accidents) arrive in London in four days and a half, after leaving Manchester." Dominie Sampson would probably have pronounced such a declaration as "prodigious." In 1760 the journey was performed "If God permit," so the announcement ran, in three days, and the inside fare was £2 5s. In 1772 the "London Flying Machine," by Samuel Tennant, left Manchester three times a week, completing the journey in two days ; and in the same year a stage coach was run to Liverpool three days a week. In 1773 the latter was styled a Diligence. It left Manchester at six in the morning, the passengers breakfasted at Irlam, dined at Warrington, drank tea at Prescott, and dropped comfortably into Liverpool at nightfall. In 1788 the number of coaches leaving the town had increased to twelve daily. Four of these had the new inn as their rendezvous. "The London Royal Mail Coach with a guard all the way, sets out from the above inn at (or soon after) one o'clock each morning, and arrives at the "Swan with Two Necks," Lad Lane, in London, in twenty-eight hours." The fares were : To Leek, 16s.; to Derby, £1 10s. ; to Harborough, £2 10s.; to Dunstable, £3 13s. 6d. ; and to London the same fare. The Carlisle Royal Mail Coach started

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at two o'clock (or soon after) each morning, the fares to Lancaster being £1 2s., and to Carlisle £2 6s. The third coach starting from the Bridgewater was the York Royal Mail Coach, which left at nine each morning, the fare to York being £1 8s.; and the fourth was the Liverpool Royal Mail Coach, which left at 1p.m., the fare to Liverpool being 14s.

In August, 1789, the inn was taken over by Mr. Hartley, of Birmingham, whose advertisements made special note of the sign which had been painted by Mr. Stretch, the artist. The proprietor challenged comparison for convenience and elegance with all the other coaching houses in the North of England. The number of coaches running from the house had increased considerably before the next change in the tenancy took place.

### **HIGH-STREET ANNALS.**

#### **PART III.**

### **A NOTABLE BUILDING.**

The next landlord of the coaching house was Alexander Paterson, who had previously been host of the Lower Swan Inn, Market-street Lane, and during whose regime the Bridgewater Arms was visited by a number of notable persons. One of these has left us his opinions of the inn and the town. Robert Southey, poet laureate, visited Manchester in 1808, and published

afterwards his impressions of the tour he was then making under the title of "Letters from England" under the assumed character of a Spaniard.

### **ROBERT SOUTHEY IN MANCHESTER.**

With some abbreviations the references to Manchester are as follow:

"The entrance into the city reminded me of London; we drove so long over rough street stones, only the streets were shorter, and the turns we made more frequent. It was midnight when we arrived at a spacious inn, called the Bridgewater Arms. In these large manufacturing towns, inns have neither the cleanliness nor the comfort which we find in smaller places. In the country there is a civility about the people of the house which, though you know hospitality is their trade, seems to show something of the virtue. Here all is hurry and bustle, customers must come in the way of trade, and they care not whether you are pleased or not.

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We were led into a long room, hung round with great coats, spurs, and horse-whips, and with so many portmanteaus and saddle-bags lying about, that it looked like a warehouse. Two men were smoking over a bottle of wine at one table, and describing diagrams with a wet finger, a single one was writing at another table, with a large pocket-book lying open before him. We called for supper, and he civilly told us that he had also given a like order, and if we would permit him, should be happy to join us. To this we, of course, acceded. We found him to be a commercial traveller, and he gave us some information concerning Manchester. It was going towards two o'clock when we retired. I must not forget to tell you that over the entrance to the passage on each side of which the bedrooms were arranged, is written in large letters, 'Morphean.' "

### **THE FACTORY SYSTEM IN 1808.**

Southey came to Manchester carrying with him letters of introduction to some resident who appears to have taken the poet round the town, pointing out certain features and in other ways interesting him. He goes on to say,

"He took us to one of the great cotton manufactories, showed us a number of children who were at work there, and dwelt with delight on the infinite good which resulted from employing them at so early an age. I listened without contradicting him, for who would lift up his voice against Diana at Ephesus? "You see these children, sir," said he, "they get their bread almost as soon as they can walk about, and by the time they are seven or eight years old bring in money. There is no

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idleness amongst us; they come at five in the morning, we allow them half an hour for breakfast, and an hour for dinner; they leave work at six, and another set relieves them for the night; the wheels never stand still."

It would have been vain to argue had I been disposed to do so. I thought of the cities in Arabian romance, when all the inhabitants were enchanted; here Commerce is the Queen-witch, and I had no talisman strong enough to disenchant those who were daily drinking of the golden cup of her charms. Southey says that the most interesting thing he saw in the town was the skin of a snake, fourteen feet long which was preserved in the Chetham College library."

### **OTHER NOTABLE VISITORS.**

A more notable personage than Robert Southey visited the inn a few years later, and makes a reference to the visit in one of his finest essays. Thomas de Quincey, in his paper on "The English Stage Coach," refers to his passing through Manchester on his way to Westmorland. Arriving in the town about six o'clock, he stayed for some time at the Bridgewater, having left

his cloak on the box seat of the coach that he had secured. The coach was to resume its journey northwards about midnight, and de Quincey, having become tired of waiting inside the inn, decided on a walk through the streets of the town. It was about eleven o'clock, and he says

"The night, however, being yet dark, as the moon had scarcely risen, and the streets being at that hour empty, so as to offer no opportunities for asking the road, I lost my way; and did not reach the

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post-office until it was considerably past midnight; but to my great relief, I saw in the huge saucer-eyes of the mail, blazing through the gloom, an evidence that my chance was not yet lost."

Ascending the coach he took his seat and resumed his journey, his description of which includes some of the most striking examples of word-painting to be found in his works.

Nearly twenty years earlier he had made that secret departure from the town described equally graphically in his "Confessions"; and about thirty years earlier he had as a child witnessed that awesome home-coming of his father to the house known as Greenhay, described in an earlier chapter of the same volume.

When Maximilian, Archduke of Austria, visited Manchester in October, 1818, he stayed at the Bridgewater. Another visitor to the inn left behind him a memorial of his visit which is yet carefully preserved. On one of the upstairs windows he scratched with a diamond the following lines : -

Adieu, ye streams that smoothly flow,  
Ye vernal airs that gently blow,  
Ye fields by blooming spring arraid,  
Ye birds that warble in the shade I  
Unhurt, from you my soul could fly,  
Nor drop one tear, nor heave one sigh ;  
But, forced from C---'s charms to part,  
All joy forsakes my drooping heart.-17-L-97.

The love-lorn swain and his beloved have long since paid the last debt due to Nature, but the verse survives, taking us back to the Manchester of our great grandfathers. Our thanks are due to those who have for so many generations carefully preserved to us so interesting

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a relic. Whenever the building is pulled down it should be handed over to one of our public museums.

**ROBBERY OF MAIL BAGS.**

It will be noticed above, that de Quincey refers to the mail coach calling at the post office, for the mails. Prior to January, 1816, the letter-bags were sent to the inn and were there placed upon the coach or taken from the coach as the case might be. One January night in 1816 the London mail-coach arrived as usual, and whilst the guards were taking out the London mail-bags, the bags from Derby, Ashbourne, Leek, Macclesfield, and Stockport were stolen, and no trace was afterwards found of either the thieves or their plunder.

After this the mails were delivered to, and collected at the post office. Soon after this the inn was taken over by Henry Charles Lacy, who became the principal proprietor of mail and post-coaches in the town. The coaching at the inn prospered and in the directory for 1824 We find that ten mail-coaches started from High-street daily, in addition to about a dozen post-coaches. This continued until 1827 when Lacy purchased Mr. C.B. Potter's house at the corner of Mosley-street and Market-street which he converted into an hotel and coaching house. He



transferred thence his posting business, named the house the Royal Hotel and New Bridgewater Arms, and carried on the business until the advent of the railway drove the stage-coaches off the road. After Mr. Lacy left, the High-street building underwent another change. The posts and chains in front were removed, and a new

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warehouse reaching to the street building line was erected on the site. The stables and outbuildings at the back were also pulled down and warehouses extending to Tib-street erected. Thus built up and shut in, the building still stands, serving in its old age the purposes of a commercial establishment. There may still be seen several interesting features. which may be noted. In addition to the pane of glass bearing the lines printed above, there is to be seen in Bread-street, a spout head, probably the oldest in the city, dated 1736, and bearing the Bower initials. There may also be seen in Bridgewater Place and Bread-street the corner stones that formerly marked the front of the building, and from some of the windows inside the warehouse may be seen the original entrance used first by the members of the Bower family, and afterwards by the guests who stayed at the Bridgewater Arms.

### **HIGH-STREET ANNALS.**

#### **PART IV.**

#### **MANCHESTER'S FIRST WESLEYAN CHAPEL.**

In previous articles we have dealt briefly with the earliest days of Wesleyan Methodism in the city, and more in detail with the second chapel erected in the town. We shall now relate the story of the first chapel built by the members of the denomination. The little band of worshippers who met in the garret overlooking the river, at the bottom of the Rose and Crown entry, met with a considerable amount of success. The room proved too small for the number of persons who were desirous of attending the services week by week, for the rickety condition of the building deterred them from allowing the room to be filled. Further accommodation was, therefore, sought for elsewhere, and temporary accommodation was obtained in an old chapel that stood in Thorniley Brow.

The story of that building must be deferred, for after occupying it for a short time, the Methodists entered into their new chapel. It is a matter for regret that no view of the latter building as it originally appeared, is known to exist. It was built in a narrow lane running out of Church-street and parallel with High-street. The thoroughfare is now known as Birchin Lane, and the old chapel is usually spoken of as the Birchin Lane Chapel. Such was not, however, its original name, as I recently discovered. In going over the first

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Manchester directory I found frequent references to Methodist-street, which name does not appear in later issues. After careful examination I found that the street name Birchin Lane had taken its place. This is to be regretted, as the original name would have been of value as having historical association, just as Roman Entry, already referred to, reminds us of our first Roman Catholic chapel.

The building was plain in appearance, and was built entirely of brick. There were no pews, but forms were provided for worshippers. Inclusive of the gallery it would accommodate about three hundred persons. It is believed that John Wesley opened the new chapel on Easter Sunday, April 7th, 1751. In his journal we read that after preaching he went to the new church, which would be that of St. Ann, and it is suggested that the preaching referred to would take place in the new chapel, probably at the early hour of five in the morning.

#### **EARLY WESLEYAN METHODISM.**

We know, however, that he was here again in 1752, for after spending three days in a searching

examination of the members of the Manchester Society, he found "reason to believe that there was not one disorderly walker therein." From time to time he visited the town, sometimes with results which were not altogether satisfactory, for we find him saying in 1759 that he found "less disorder" than he had experienced in some previous years. In this connection a sentence from his diary is worth reproducing : "Wretched magistrates, by refusing to suppress, had encouraged the rioters, and had

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long occasioned tumults, but some were now of a better spirit." In 1765 the Conference was held in the Chapel, Mr. Wesley presiding. There was no business of special interest, but when next the leader visited the town he expressed his opinions in a manner that could not be misunderstood. He had been having tea with a prominent member of the Birchin Lane chapel congregation, Adam Oldham, a wealthy hatter, who resided in a large house that stood at the corner of the newly-made Oldham-street. Referring to his reception at the house of his friend, he said, "But how I was shocked! The children that used to cling about me, and drink in every word, had been to a boarding school. There they had unlearned all religion, and even seriousness, and had learned pride, vanity, affectation, and whatever could guard them against the knowledge and love of God. Methodist parents who would send their girls to hell, send them to a fashionable boarding school!"

#### **A SUNDAY SCHOOL PIONEER.**

Another member of the congregation was Thomas Fildes, concerning whom something should be said. He was a grocer carrying on business at the corner of Travis-street and Bank Top, as that portion of London Road was then called. He had as a neighbour a shoemaker named John Lancaster, who having been converted to Methodism under the ministry of the Rev. Mr. Grimshaw, of Haworth, joined the Birchin Lane congregation when he came to Manchester. Lancaster lived in a house that stood in Travis-street, near to the corner of London Road, the site since being absorbed by

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the premises of the Red Lion Hotel. On November 20th, 1785, he opened his cellar for the purpose of a Sunday school, and a week or two afterwards he was joined by Thomas Fildes. The two, together with Edward Smith, who was a wire-worker living in Granby Row, proceeded to make the room comfortable and attractive for the young folks, for whom it was intended. As a result the venture proved to be a success and an adjoining cellar was added. This in turn gave way for superior accommodation. Mr. Fildes built some cottages in 'Worsley-street, immediately behind his shop, and he had built over the cottages a large room which served the purposes of a Sunday school. This was about 1787, and until 1811 the work was carried on in the room. Then a move was made to a building that stood behind where Borough Buildings stand. The London Road Sunday school is still in existence, standing now next door to the Grosvenor-street Wesleyan Chapel. Mr. Fildes in addition to his services to the Sunday school movement, was the founder of a society that did a great work for many years. It was known as the Strangers' Friend and Sick Visitation Society. His early death resulted from his philanthropic work, for whilst engaged in sick visiting he contracted a fever which ended fatally at the early age of forty-seven. He was interred in St. John's Churchyard, Deansgate. He left two sons, Thomas and James, who, in addition to continuing the Bank Top business, opened a shop numbered originally 69, but afterwards 40, Shudehill. The London Road shop was a grocer's shop until a few years ago, but the Shudehill one has disappeared.

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In this connection I would like to thank many of my readers for very interesting letters and for mementoes of Old Manchester which I prize very much. One of the most notable of the latter is

a special constable's staff given to me by a descendant of James Fildes. This interesting relic of bygone days is furnished with the original leather band which fitted over the wrist of the user. An inscription pasted upon it says, "A relic of Peterloo. Special constable's staff which belonged to the late James and Thomas Fildes, grocers, Shudehill, Manchester." The kind thought that prompted the giving of so interesting a relic of Old Manchester to one who was a stranger personally is fully appreciated by the beneficiary. Few are the particulars which have survived respecting the old chapel. It is stated that the building still stands, but a careful examination fails to produce any corroborative evidence that such is the case. We know very little more of the names of those who attended the services held within its walls, and of the history of the movement there. We do know, however, that a member of the congregation, Richard Barlow, for sixty-five years rose at half-past four in the summer and five in winter. Another member of the congregation was James Brierley, who met in Peter Kenworthy's class. Kenworthy was a corn and flour dealer, who lived in Spear-street, and James Brierley became a smallware manufacturer in Long Millgate. He was a magistrate for many years, served in the office of boroughreeve for two years, and died at Mossley Moss Hall, Congleton, in 1842. The first female class leader in Manchester was Mrs. Bennett, who kept a grocer's

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shop at the top of Market-street Lane, and who was also a member of the congregation.

In 1752 Manchester formed a part of the Cheshire circuit, which included Lancashire, Cheshire, Derbyshire, Staffordshire, and part of Yorkshire, and in that year the contributions of members of the Society in Manchester towards the support of the ministry in one quarter amounted to £2 3s. 5d. Thirteen years later the cause had prospered so much that Manchester was made the head of a new circuit, the first ministers appointed to it being James Oddie, John Oliver, John Murray and Isaac Waldron. Services were held in the chapel up to the opening of the Oldham-street Chapel in 1781, but appear to have been discontinued soon afterwards. The building would then be altered to meet business requirements, and to-day it bears no resemblance to a place of worship.

#### **THE KILHAMITES.**

The first secession from the Wesleyan Methodist body occurred in 1797, when a number of members under the leadership of the Rev. Alexander Kilham formed the nucleus of the church now known as the Methodist New Connexion. In their early days they were more generally known as the Kilhamites. Their first place of worship in Manchester was erected at the Nicholas Croft end of High-street. It is described as a fine brick building, bearing on the front a stone tablet on which the words "Mount Zion" were cut. The building proved to be much too large for the congregation, and in 1807 it was sold, and a smaller one erected in its stead

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in Oldham-street. Aston, in his metrical history of Manchester, refers to the building in the following lines :

The same year, 'tis a truth, which you may rely on,  
Was opened a chapel they called Mount Zion.  
In bee-hives too full - a mere trifle alarms,  
Hence leaders are chosen, and hence proceed swarms;  
So the Methodists thus - leader Kilham impell'd -  
Rejected the Conference Laws, and rebell'd.  
And erected Mount Zion, and there took their stand -  
Their union, alas! was a mere rope of sand;  
A few years dissolved it; lacking faith, zeal, or gold,  
Mount Zion was put up to auction and sold.

The building in Nicholas Croft was afterwards purchased by the Lord of the Manor, and for some years was used as a meal and flour market, a cheese market being held in the basement. After being known as "The Old Mealhouse" for some years, it served the purposes of a Manor Court, where was held the Court Baron, County Court, and Court Leet. From 1835 to 1850 it was used as a Sunday school by the congregation attending the Cannon-street Chapel, and at a later period was pulled down by the Corporation, who had obtained it when purchasing the manorial rights.

#### **A NOTABLE RESIDENT.**

When High-street was still a high-class residential street, and before Cannon-street had been formed, there stood opposite to the end of Church-street a fine mansion, a View of which has survived. Like most of the houses built in the early part of the eighteenth century the building was almost severe in its plainness, but judging from the facts that it had three windows on either side of the front door, and was of three storeys high it was

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roomy. It was the residence of Thomas Johnson, described in our earlier directories as "manufacturer of silk and cotton handkerchiefs." His father, who probably built the house, was appointed High Sheriff of Lancashire in 1755, after serving a boroughreeve of Manchester in 1752. The son was elected to the latter position in 1783. When the Volunteer movement of the closing years of the century was being organised, an interesting event took place in High-street. Colonel Ford had formed a corps which was known as the Manchester and Salford Light Horse Volunteers, and on October 25th, 1798, they met for their usual parade in Dawson-street, now forming the lower end of Mosley-street. After performing a series of evolutions they formed into line and, accompanied by the boroughreeves and constables of Manchester and Salford, and the gentlemen of the town they proceeded to the residence of Mr. Johnson, who was the uncle of their colonel. There they were presented by Mrs. Ford, who was supported by the Misses Ford, with their regimental colours and a royal standard. Mr. Johnson was also interested in the Sunday school movement, and when the committee was formed in 1784 he was appointed vice-president. The family name is perpetuated in the street named Johnson-street. Colonel Ford was a manufacturer of check and African goods, whose town house stood in King-street, where the Reform Club is, and whose country house was Claremont, Pendleton. He was born in 1768, and was educated at the Grammar School, and at Baliol College, Oxford. He married Elizabeth, daughter of Francis Ingrain, of Wakefield, was an active

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magistrate, retired early from business, declined a baronetcy, and went to reside at Abbeyfield, near Sandbach, where he died April 15th, 1839. A monument to his memory was erected in the parish church at Sandbach.

#### **A CELEBRATED ANTIQUARIAN.**

In a house that stood near to Mr. Johnson's, there was born on October 20th, 1785, a child who in later years became widely known for his work as a historian. George Ormerod, after receiving the elements of education at the Grammar School, passed, as many other Manchester men have done, to Brasenose College, Oxford, where he graduated. In early life he showed a taste for heraldry and topography, and in 1819 he published what proved to be his greatest work, the "History of the County Palatine and City of Chester." This was followed by a number of less important publications, of which the latest was the "Roman Remains, Sedbury," and "Chapelry of St Briavels," issued in 1860. Some years before his death his sight commenced to fail, and he retired to Sedbury Park, which is situated on the beautiful peninsula of Beachley, between the Severn and the Wye. That interesting relic of ancient England, Offa's Dyke, runs through the park, and Mr Ormerod's last important work was to trace its course, and



write upon it the monograph referred to. He died at Sedbury Park on October 9th, 1873.

## **.HIGH-STREET ANNALS.**

### **No. V.**

#### **JOHN RYLANDS.**

The account of High-street would be incomplete if it contained no reference to the connection of John Rylands with its vicinity. Not only was he a notable feature of the commercial life of the city for a long period of time (and since his death, and so long as Manchester continues to exist will his name be associated with the magnificent institution in Deansgate) but in this immediate connection he is of particular interest to us as forming a connecting link between the High-street of nearly a century ago and that of to-day. When he took his first premises in New High-street stage-coaches ran daily from the Bridgewater Arms, and very few warehouses had been built in High-street; when he died not only had the inn been converted into warehouses and used as such for over half a century, but nearly the whole of the land in the neighbourhood had been covered with buildings of a similar description.

John Rylands was the son of Joseph Rylands, a thriving manufacturer, of St. Helens. He was born in February, 1801, and after obtaining the best education that the district provided, he commenced to work for his father. For this he received a weekly payment, and at once showed signs of that shrewdness and capacity for business, which in the end enabled him to achieve such marvellous results. With his first earnings he purchased

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a miscellaneous collection of trinkets at an auction, and sold them separately at a profit. Acting on the advice of an old nurse, he invested his small but increasing capital in yarn, and started weaving on his own account. In this way his days were occupied; but on Saturday afternoons he assisted his father in a shop that the latter had opened at Wigan. This went on for two years, when he was taken into partnership by his two brothers, John travelling on horseback, and carrying samples in saddlebags through Shropshire, Cheshire, and North Wales, and his brothers superintending the manufacturing operations at home. Business prospered, and, the father joining the sons, the now world-famed style of Rylands and Sons came into existence. It was not to be expected that John Rylands would be content that the firm should continue to regard a second-rate provincial town as its centre of operations. His ambition led him to urge the taking of a warehouse in Manchester. Thus it was that the premises then known as 11, New High-street were rented and opened in 1822. In view of the extensive premises now occupied by the firm, and the tremendous nature of its operations, it will be as well to describe this first warehouse and its staff. It was only a few windows long, was very narrow, and the employees comprised six men and one salesman. Notification of the opening of the warehouse was sent to over a hundred customers whose names were on the books of the firm; but during the first week that the place was open no customers appeared. The second week opened better, and on the Monday a customer from Rochdale spent about £20. Prosperity followed, and very soon

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additional works were required, and the Buckley House estate, together with dyeworks and bleachworks, was purchased. A second estate was purchased in 1825, and soon afterwards a spinning mill was erected. Up to about 1829 the firm confined their operations to goods of their own manufacture, but in that year a change was made. Mr. Rylands attended the Scotch and Irish markets, visited London for the purpose of purchasing fancy goods, and very soon the firm had added to their business extensive departments in each of these branches of the home trade. This hitherto undreamed-of departure in the manner of conducting business was resented by many Scotch and Irish manufacturers, and an attempt to boycott the enterprising firm was made, but it failed to attract much support. In 1847 Mr. Rylands senior died, soon

afterwards Richard Rylands retired from business, and in 1849 Joseph Rylands retired. John Rylands was, therefore, in 1849, the sole proprietor of the still growing concern. To attempt to detail the record of continual progress and development is beyond the possibilities of our space. The only check that he received during his only career was a fire in 1854, which burned down the New High-street warehouse. The damage done represented a sum of £200,000, and a loss of £40,000 was sustained. When Mr Rylands died he was the largest cotton manufacturer, the largest finisher, and the largest textile distributor in the United Kingdom, if not in the world. His mills contained 200,000 spindles and 5,000 looms and his finishing works at Heapey, which were half a mile in circumference, were turning out cloth at the rate of thirty-five tons per

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day. It is said that the number of his employees reached 15,000 in the various concerns which go to form the undertaking known as Rylands and Sons. In 1855 Mr. Rylands purchased the Longford Hall estate, Stretford, and erected there a fine new residence, where he died on December 11th, 1888.

Mr. Rylands did not confine his interest and energy to his own immediate business concerns, but took a leading part in various public movements. From the first he was a strong supporter of the Ship Canal movement, and when the project was first brought forward he intimated his intention of taking £50,000 of shares. To this he added another £10,000 at a later stage, and when the preliminary payment of £360,000 was insisted upon, he was the first to contribute. The late Dr. Joseph Parker published some thirteen years ago some interesting reminiscences of the great business man. He referred to his simplicity of appearance, voice, and dress. He said, referring to Mr. Rylands' warehouse : "Many of the buyers had larger watch chains. Several heads of departments outshone him in the matter of shirt studs, as diamonds outshine pearl buttons. And many a young clerk simply reduced him to humiliation in the matter of conspicuous neckties." Such was the appearance of the man whose wealth ran into millions. We are given an interesting but characteristic glimpse of him in his garden at Longford. The story runs: "In walking round his Longford gardens we came upon a bookkeeper, from whom Mr. Rylands ascertained precisely how much garden stuff had been debited that morning to Mrs. Rylands. There was an account in

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black and white. Every cauliflower was charged. Every melon was set down in silver. 'This is the only way,' said the millionaire, 'by which you can really tell whether a garden pays or not.' " Another story is worth telling. Dr. Parker was on one occasion walking through the warehouse with Mr. Rylands when he suddenly stopped before opening the door of a room. "I want you to take notice of the man in this room, and tell me afterwards what you think of him." The Doctor said that the man did not impress him beyond the fact that his mouth seemed to be very loosely made. To this Mr. Rylands replied, "That man has a better knowledge of cotton spinning than any other man of my acquaintance. He has dined with princes and statesmen. I am paying him a pound a week for pasting papers into a blank book. I would give him a thousand to begin tomorrow, if he could do one thing." Dr. Parker wondered what that one thing could be and said so. "Hold his tongue," replied Mr. Rylands. "If I were to take him into my confidence, and put him into the position in this concern for which he is qualified, in less than a month he would spend his evenings in a taproom with a long clay pipe in his mouth, and tell everybody who came what they were doing at Rylands's." My concluding quotation will interest many who never knew Mr. Rylands. Dr. Parker, after speaking of the association of Mr. and Mrs. Rylands and Miss Tennant with his chapel, and after speaking of the manner in which all three were ever willing to assist him in his work, says that on one occasion Mr. Rylands related to him the story

of Miss Tennant's life, dwelling with something like

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rapture upon her splendid fortitude under circumstances which test human quality and strength. "I wish," said he, "if the expression may be allowed, that she may live with us till she dies." A few years later Mrs. Rylands died, and later again the merchant married Miss Tennant. As Mrs. Rylands she survived her husband, and as Mrs. Rylands she has made many munificent contributions to public institutions and public funds; but all her other deeds are eclipsed by the princely manner in which she has built, equipped, and endowed the magnificent library which will ever remind posterity of one of the greatest men that ever trod the streets of Manchester.

**HIGH-STREET ANNALS.**

**PART VI.**

Reference has been made in previous volumes to a number of the better-known business names that have been associated with High-street. These include Butterworth and Brooks; Kershaw, Lees, and Callender; Wood and Westhead; and Thomas Worthington. Several others remain which must be noted, inasmuch as the names have been in one way or another connected with the life of the city.

**FORT BROTHERS AND CO.**

Eighty years ago the firm of Fort Brothers and Co., calico printers, carried on business at a warehouse that stood nearly opposite to the end of Church-street, numbered in 1826, as 20, but afterwards, when the buildings had been re-numbered, as 49. There were two brothers who carried on the business, John Fort and Lawrence Fort. The former resided at Read Hall, near Whalley, and managed the Works, which were situated at Oakenshaw. His brother Lawrence resided in 1826 at 60, Faulkner-street, a street at that time devoted entirely to residential purposes. In later years he removed to Sedgley Hall. The firm was a wealthy one, and stood in high estimation in commercial circles; and these two facts probably led to an incident the story of which has been told by one of the parties concerned.

Richard Cobden, the son of a yeoman of Midhurst,

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had been trained for a commercial life in London. In 1828, being twenty-four years of age, he, along with two other young men whose capital did not in the gross represent more than a thousand pounds, and half of which had been borrowed, decided to come to Manchester and to obtain an agency to sell printed calicoes. They travelled by the Peveril of the Peak coach in the remarkably short space of twenty hours. Arrived at the New Bridgewater Arms, they were so ignorant of Manchester affairs that they were compelled to consult a directory before they could move further in the matter. After due consideration they introduced themselves to Fort Brothers and Co., to whom they explained their object. So convinced was Mr. Fort of the bona-fides of the young men, that an agency was at once arranged, and two years later the account between the two amounted to an indebtedness of forty thousand pounds. In 1831, the partnership having proved to be entirely successful, the young firm decided to print their own calico. With this object in view they rented from the Forts an old Works at Sabden, and Richard Cobden purchased a house in Mosley-street to be used as a warehouse. In this way began the connection with Manchester which in the end proved to be so advantageous for English commerce in general, but that of Lancashire in particular.

**DANIEL BURTON**

Next door to Wood and Westhead's warehouse was that of Robert Turner, who was concerned in the Wakefield abduction case, to which reference was made when dealing with Portland Place. A few doors past Turners'

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was the warehouse occupied by Daniel Burton and Sons, calico printers, whose Works were at Rhodes, near Middleton. For over 70 years the name was familiarly known in Manchester commercial circles, and the concern was always highly esteemed on account of the strict integrity that marked their doings. Old Daniel Burton commenced operations about a century ago, and was very successful. He had four sons, two of whom succeeded him in business, and two became preachers. Dealing with the latter first, one of them, Charles, after acting for some time as a Wesleyan preacher, joined the Church of England. He was the founder and first rector of All Saints' Church, Oxford Road, and for many years played a somewhat prominent part in the public life of the city. A more detailed account of him will be given in connection with his church. His brother, James Daniel, also became a Wesleyan minister, but died at an early age. The other sons of Daniel Burton were John and George, both of whom were leading lights in the Methodist movement of 70 years ago.

John Burton was a trustee and a hard worker in connection with the Oldham-street Wesleyan Chapel, and George became somewhat popular as a local preacher. In those days, as has been previously stated, there was much poverty and discontent amongst the operatives of Lancashire. On many occasions this culminated in a riot, when the Dogberries who played the parts of constables and watchmen were reinforced by the military. On one occasion there was a riot at the Rhodes Works, and a messenger was at once despatched to Manchester to ask for the assistance of the cavalry. As

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a result a troop of Scotch Greys galloped over, and soon succeeded in dispersing the rioters, who had secured an entrance to the Works. This action aroused a considerable amount of feeling against the employers, and George Burton was once reminded of the occurrence in humorous fashion. Preaching in the little Wesleyan Chapel at Rhodes a few weeks after the said event he duly read out his text for the morning. It consisted of the words, "What must I do to be saved?" and no sooner had he read them than there came the response in shrill tones from a member of the congregation, "Send for th' Scotch Greys."

**ABSALOM WATKIN.**

The warehouse, 26, High-street, was for some time occupied by Absalom Watkin, who for many years played an important part in the political life of the town. He was a Londoner by birth, and came to Manchester about 1800 to become a clerk to his uncle, John Watkin, who was a cotton broker. As a young man he identified himself with a number of political and social movements, and when in later years the Anti-corn Law League was commenced, he became a prominent member. During the general election of 1847 Mr. Watkin was very much in evidence, and seconded the nomination of John Bright\* on the hustings in St. Ann's Square. His speech on that occasion was unusually concise and to the point, and is in view of succeeding events very interesting. The burgesses were reminded that by electing Mr. Bright they would confer the greatest honour upon him that they possibly could, that by so doing they would raise him in the House to a degree of "importance and influence

*footnote: \* Photo of statue of John Bright in 'Gallery'*

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proportionate to the wealth and independence of this great constituency," and that he would go "unfettered by any pledges," but would be "guided by known principles and strict integrity."

Less than eight years later, just after the battles of Alma and Balaclava, had been fought, Mr. Bright received an invitation from Mr. Watkin to attend a meeting of the Manchester Patriotic Committee. Mr. Bright declined the invitation, and in his reply made a complete exposure of the shallowness of the grounds upon which the war was sought to be justified by its advocates and



supporters. This letter aroused much feeling in the country, and was published in all the leading Continental newspapers, including the "St. Petersburg Journal." In December, the Mayor of Manchester called a meeting in the Town Hall to discuss Mr. Bright's action. Mr. Bright attended, and after a resolution in favour of the war had been proposed by Mr. Watkin, and seconded, he rose to defend his action. This he did in fearless fashion, with the result that the resolution was not passed. Three years later Manchester rejected the great Tribune of the people, Mr. Watkin taking a leading part in the opposition offered to him. Mr. Watkin died on December 23rd, 1861. One of his sons was a member of the City Council from 1858 to the time of his death in 1875. He sat for St. James's Ward from 1858 until 1869, when he was elected to the Aldermanic bench, and was Mayor of the city in 1873-4. Another son, Edward, took an even more prominent part in public affairs}, He became a well-known member of Parliament, received the honour of knighthood, wrote

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several volumes, the best known of which is an account of the life and work of Richard Cobden; and by marriage became concerned in one of the best known illustrated journals. A more detailed account of his life must be deferred for the present.

to be continued

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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 B.B. since 1904.

We've been happy to serialise Frank's story, in the newsletters.

CHAPTER XVI TO WORK AND WAR

"As an office junior, you can expect to earn about ten-shillings (50p) per week," so we were told by a teacher at the Scotfield School where those of us in the Commercial Glass at Waterloo Central School attended on certain days each week. Jim managed to defy the utterance by getting himself a job in the office of a Failsworth Brewery at £1 per week. "No junior," said the teacher deprecatingly, "is worth so much."

No plum job presented itself to me as I found myself being sent from the School to the Office of an Accountant who had his Office over a shop at Rhodes Bank on the main road. I recall little of it except that it was rather a dingy office and the sole occupant was the Accountant himself who wore plus fours. I failed miserably to get back the narrative of the shorthand test he had dictated and was not at all surprised when I was not offered the job. I returned to school nonetheless still confident that something would turn up. Shortly afterwards, I was sent to the Tay Mills at Higginshaw, for a test and interview. This time, I was not expected to do any shorthand. I must have impressed reasonably well and it was sometime after I had commenced to work there that I was asked by the Company Secretary whether I was related to John Pogson, Secretary of the Federation of Master Cotton Spinners in Manchester. Uncle John, the only one who really 'got on', had not exerted any influence on my behalf and was unaware of my entry into the Cotton Industry. I was rather surprised to find myself in a cotton mill office for, while it had long since been decreed that I should be a white collar worker, it was also understood that it should not be in cotton which was then considered to be finished by my parents. Experience had taught them that office workers remained in work when mill workers were laid off. Earlier, newspapers had reported each week the loss of thousands of spindles as more and more mills closed during the

thirties. It had been tacitly agreed by myself and my parents that this job was to be a stop-gap until something better came my way. 1

"Tay Spinning Company Limited", I announced as I nervously answered the phone for the first time. Although we had been given some experience at School on an inter-comm. phone, the real thing was daunting and I failed completely to

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understand what the caller said. It sounded like a foreign language or someone speaking in tongues. Unfortunately I was not filled with the right kind of holy spirit to understand it. Despite the Company's noteheadings, I had chosen to announce the title of a long defunct company which was then still proclaimed in tiled bricks on the tower of the mill. I should have simply announced, "Tay Mills Limited". The phone continued to present me with problems for a little while until my confidence grew and my ability to use it increased. Children brought up with a phone today have no such problems or inhibitions as those I experienced.

My working day began at 8-50am, half an hour before the rest of the Office Staff arrived. My immediate predecessor was pleased to initiate me in order to take full advantage of his new status which would give him an extra half hour in bed. In doubtful denizens of the two mills, I had to locate and read the gas and electricity meters daily. I entered figures into a book convinced that no one ever looked at it while being almost certain that I was not reading the meters correctly. The next duty involved a trek down the 'L' shaped mill yard between the two mills and past the fire-hole or boilerhouse and onto the railway siding. Here, I clambered up the sides of the railway wagons in order to estimate and record the quantity of coal in each wagon in terms of, full, half-full or empty. It now seems fantastic that a lad of 14 years of age was required to do this but it all seemed natural enough in 1938. On those fine Spring mornings, I felt myself to be a rather important little cog in what seemed to be a large industrial machine. Imagine, climbing on railway wagons officially!

The old fashioned office was fitted with those high desks at which it was possible to stand or to sit on one of those high stools. The Staff consisted of two clerks, a typist and a cashier and the office boy. The Company Secretary and the Salesman had small offices of their own.

Unfortunately, the office boy did not have a desk of his own and when not engaged in other jobs or errands around the mills, was expected to stand bowed over low cupboards entering in a book, skip(basket) numbers so that the skips might be traced should they fail to return empty from the weaving mills of east Lancashire I always found this to be a backbreaking task and I much preferred being sent off on errands. Almost everyday, I had to take the bus into Oldham in order to deposit cheques and other documents with the Midland Bank or visit the Office of Arnold Brierley in Clegg Street. At first, it felt strange to be wandering about the streets in the town centre in the middle of the morning but I was really quite enjoying my new found status and imagined importance. I walked home for lunch in the hour allowed and just about had time to eat it before resuming work at 1:50pm until 5:50 pm. By that time in the first week I was shattered I had never before spent so much time on my feet in any one day. I was almost too

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tired to drag myself to the Boys' Brigade activities in the evening. It is amazing how the body and mind quickly adjusts to new routines and demands for, after the first two weeks, I thought nothing of it no matter how long I had been on my feet.

An office boy in a mill office in those days was considered to be a cut above the mill workers and I quickly learnt how young subalterns must have felt when sent out to command a platoon of men. Thank God for the experience and authority of an old serjeant. The phone would ring and I found myself on the way to the Cotton Chamber as a load of raw cotton had just arrived. Bale after bale was hoisted to the top floor and then swung in. Each was placed on a hand truck

and wheeled to a weighing machine on which I had to weigh them. Thank God for the older man in charge for I found myself under great pressure to get each bale weighed and the weight entered into the appropriate book. When the last bale had been weighed, I then had to add up the total which in theory should agree with the total weight shown on the way-bill. A narrow margin for variation was allowed but I was petrified as each bale dropped onto the scales in case I should get it wrong. Inevitably the worst happened on one never to be forgotten day and the totals did not tally at all. The whole load had to be handled again until the wrongly entered bale was found. It was a nightmare as the men in the cotton chamber grumbled, as well they might, particularly as it turned out to be one of the first bales brought in with which I had blundered. I was glad to disappear as quickly as I could down through the cardroom where the raw cotton, after being broken up, was combed and cleaned. It was a relief to get back to the skip books.

I had soon found myself familiar with the various rooms and departments of the mill complex but the noise seemed tremendous and the flapping driving belts dangerously close to my head in some rooms. In the 'Jinny-gate'(after the spinning 'jenny'), the heat was intense and piecers, big and little according to their function, worked barefooted and stripped to the waist under the surveillance of the Spinner himself. Incessantly the Mules travelled out and in, drawing out the yarn as the twist was put in. In the other mill, Ring spinning as distinct from Mule spinning was undertaken and for certain yarns was considered to be superior. The Winding and Beaming rooms were quieter and, apart from the man in charge, were manned entirely by women. A lorry was again heard in the yard but this time I was called to the cellar where all the waste material collected and was bagged and sold to dealers who made a living by employing women at ridiculously poor rates of pay to pick shoddy. The result was then made into inferior cotton goods. It was the same process as in the cotton chamber except in reverse. As I weighed the bags with a wider margin for error, I was under no great pressure. My first payday arrived but before I received my modest pay, I discovered that

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I had a very important function to perform in the life of the mill. I had to pay the wages. Two days before, I had been supplied with small slips of paper which I proceeded to number. After that, they disappeared but, on Friday morning, the cashier entered the Secretary's Office and after some time had passed, I was summoned and told to take a large tin tray to a particular room in the mill. The tray was filled with small open tins on each of which was embossed a number. I made my way down the yard and into the ring room, carefully keeping my elbows into my sides for fear of being struck by the machinery which was spinning round on each side of me. Every door into the mill was weighted so that it might close automatically behind anyone passing through. It was extremely difficult to open one outwards while carrying a tray, unless someone happened to be around to assist.

In each room in the mill there was an appointed place, at which I was required to stand each pay day, and there the operatives approached the Office Boy. Each had a numbered slip in his or her hand which was passed to me in turn. They were the slips I had numbered earlier. I had seen poverty and I knew that my father's wage was not high, but I was somewhat shocked to realise how little some men were actually receiving. I took the slip and looked at the number and then reached for the tin with the corresponding number. If there was a bank note in it, I took it out and then emptied the loose silver and copper into an expectant hand and then passed over the note. Back I then went to the Office for the next tray until all the operatives had been paid.

One Friday, the inevitable happened. whether a weighted door swung back at me with force or whether I simply tripped, I shall never know. I measured my length when half-crowns, florins,

shillings, sixpences, threepenny bits and copper flew everywhere. One or two workers helped me collect all the coins together and I disconsolately made my way back to the Office where the Cashier and the Secretary had to start recounting it again. I felt terrible about the accident but I do not recall being admonished in any way.

On my first Friday, just before lunch time, I was handed my very first pay packet, such was the refinement for office staff. I took it home intact and gave it to my mother. It contained a crisp new ten shilling note which meant that my pay was a little over that amount as my insurance and unemployment liability had been met. From my mother, I received a florin (10p) which, I calculated, was an increase in my pocket money of 300%. Wealth indeed.

In those days, the national insurance cards on which insurance stamps were stuck weekly for each employee, had to be renewed at the employment exchange but for juveniles, the cards had to be exchanged at the Juvenile Employment Bureau. As Office Boy, it fell to me to take the precious bundle of cards

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which had been neatly tied up into a brown paper parcel, to the Education Offices on Union street West, Oldham. I entered the building after opening what seemed to be a huge door. I found myself in a vestibule but before I could turn and gently close the door, it was snatched out of my hand by the wind, slamming shut with a resounding crash. I turned a corner to enter and found myself in a hall in which girls were sat at tables all around the room. All heads were raised and all eyes were upon the miscreant who had slammed the door. The blood rushed to my face and I wished that the ground would open and swallow me and then, with horror, I saw her. Alma smiled and whispered something to her nearest colleague who also smiled. I collected the new cards and ran since the ground would not mercifully open.

Each evening I was required to go to the local Post Office to send out samples of cops of spun cotton to prospective customers. They were always sent out in cardboard boxes which were covered with shiny blue paper and which held either one or two cops. Sometimes I bought the insurance and unemployment stamps for for the mill.

No one in the office or the mill advised me that I should not speak outside of what was being spun at the mill. My mother, however, as a one time weaver, warned me that other and rival mills might be interested to learn of what 'counts' were being spun. I was to remain loyal to my employers and keep quiet. Even had I known what counts, or gauge of cotton was being spun, I doubt in 1938 whether anyone would have been interested. In my mother's day, industrial intelligence was important and loyalty to one's employer imperative.

So much seemed to happen in the two or three months that I was Office Boy at the Tay Mills. I felt that school was already far behind me. Sadly, the mills were soon to close and both have now long since been demolished. On looking back, office juniors in those days were literally thrown in at the deep end but, somehow, we survived. There was an air of predestination about as the awaited better job turned up and I passed to my second appointment.

In every Branch and in every window of the Central Premises was displayed a printed poster which proclaimed,

"Wanted, OFFICE BOY, for duties in the General
Office of the Oldham Equitable Cooperative
Society Limited, Greenwood Street, Oldham."

I cannot remember just how I actually applied for the post but I do recall attending for interview one Monday evening along with a dozen or more other lads, including George from my Infant and Junior School days. George was then actually attending at the High School and not really expected to leave school for another two years. Such was considered the security which the job

then offered, it was sufficiently tempting for the chance to gain the School

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Certificate to be sacrificed. We were summoned individually, not into the office of a junior personnel manager but into the Board Room. There, before those august and often severe looking men, many of whom wore those winged shirt collars, I stood erectly at the end of the long table and answered questions put to me in as firm a voice as I could muster, being careful to end each reply with the word, "Sir." It was an awesome experience and I learnt how the little prince must have felt when asked, "When did you last see your father?" I somehow knew that the job was mine but George's mother did not speak to my mother for months.

"He's so lucky, if he fell off the Co-op. he'd fall in the divi.(Dividend). "Such was often said of seemingly lucky people and, of course, I felt that I was a fortunate fellow indeed. The Co-op. offered undoubted and 'everlasting' security, a regular and a little above average income. My parents clearly sat back and rejoiced in the achievement. There was nothing more they could do for I had arrived and would, without doubt, stay and prosper in such security until I retired. Ronald was a tall young man of 17 years who seemed very knowledgeable and worldly wise. He instructed me in my duties as Office Boy as well as confiding in me his preferences in relation to all the female members of the staff. At the time, he had a strong predilection for an older married woman who worked in another office. I learnt a lot from Ronald but not all of it related to the work in hand.

For many, Monday morning is never a welcoming prospect but to the Co-op. Office boy, it was positively horrible. At the top of the list of duties carefully listed by Ronnie, read "Beef Books". Off I went to the abbatoirs to collect the books, with bits of dried meat and grease adhering to them, which contained the carbon copies of the orders sent out to all branches during the previous week. I was required to work out the total for each page in pounds, shillings and pence, without the use of an adding machine or calculator. This would have been all right had not the Office Boy been at the beck and call of just about everybody in the office. Constantly, I was sent on errands throughout the complex of the Central Premises. As a result, it sometimes became a nightmare to get the beef books finished before the deadline of Wednesday. I was frequently reminded of my incompetence and told that if I could not do the job properly, someone would have to be found who could do so. I took these threats seriously although there was no real danger, but I was not to know that then.

Each morning I had to report to the Secretary of the Society to see if he required any meat from the butcher's shop. I would receive his order and proceed through the Central Grocery Department and into the Butcher's Shop

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to place the order. Without reminder, I was later expected to go and collect the order which would accordingly be paid for by the Secretary. I had to remember a lot of things and dismissal loomed on more than one occasion when I forgot something. Every Monday afternoon, for example, I went up into the Board Room to change the nibs in the pens, refill the ink wells and put out clean blotting paper for the weekly meeting of the Board. One Monday night at home, I awoke in a cold sweat. I had forgotten to 'do' the Board Room. The next day, I crept into the Office only to find that my memory had not failed me, the Board Room had not been neglected. Other errands would take me into the furnishing and hardware department or to the drapery and mantle department. By that time in 1938/9, I am sure that ladies had long ceased to wear mantles but the Co-operative Movement seemed to cling to and use names from a by-gone age. So confident also in its permanence that it was quite content for its shops and premises to occupy off-centre sites which later gave the appearance that the Co-op. had always just missed out. The fact was in those days, it did not need the so-called best sites and with a reasonable

dividend for its members, what had it to fear from the private retail sector.

In addition to my official errands, I was frequently sent out by other members of the staff. Twenty Players cigarettes cost one shilling (5p), but I had strict instruction to get them in the Chemist Shop instead of the Grocery department. For some strange reason, they retailed at eleven pence ha'penny if purchased at the Chemists Shop. All the time, my beef books and other jobs remained untouched on my desk. At a tender age, it was a situation I had to learn to live with and it is a situation which has never ever quite left me.

On Saturday came a welcome task over which I could relax, taking care and time since there were few errands to be run on that day. A senior clerk had summarised and tabulated all the beef figures in pencil. I sat on my high stool, occasionally changing to stand, as I inked in the figures in a big ledger-like Beef Book and felt important. Sometimes, a counter clerk would hand me a death certificate to copy onto one of the Insurance Society's duplicate forms. One cause of death seem to come more frequently than others. "Carcinoma", I soon discovered meant cancer but whether it related to smoking or lack of clean air or other causes, I do not know.

The Office and its corridors were lofty and lined with tiles. The Office floor was of parquet bricks but in the hall and passageways to which the public had access the floors, were of mosaic marble tiles. There was a real air of permanence about it all with its solidly built desks and oak doors and panelling. For a busy office with ten or eleven employers working in it, there were only two phones. One was standing on Ronald's desk next to my desk. It was of the old upright variety with a separate earpiece

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which rested on a single arm set just below the microphone. The other phone was set on the wall inside an oak and glass Kiosk positioned near to the office door. I was required to answer the phone and if the Secretary was wanted he would invariably proceed to use the phone in the kiosk. The Society had its own exchange with a small manually operated switchboard which connected the Central Premises to all but two of its outlying branches. Normally operated by a lady telephonist, as such ladies were then called, calls sometimes came through after she had left. I loved going up to the exchange to put the call through to the branch required and to wait until the caller had finished.

The Senior Counter Clerk was a middle aged man who appeared to have some private means. To me as the junior, he had an air of mystery as well as eccentricity about him. "Boy," he would call from over the oak partition when I would dutifully respond. Each day he sent me to buy a one-penny scone but it had to be from a nearby confectioners and not the Cooperative Society's own confectionery department. Before going for my own lunch, he gave me a miniature spirit bottle containing milk to take down into the cellar where there was a gas ring. I had strict instructions to brew his China tea in a pint mug and then add the milk after boiling it in a sixpenny aluminium pan. Sometimes I was a little late when I slapped the milk in without first boiling it. I then usually had to swear blind that I had boiled the milk. Other times I would be distracted and allow the milk to boil over. In the cellar remained a mass of miniature spirit bottles and an array of burnt out pans. They remained as a testimony that earlier office boys had been no more successful than I.

Early one Saturday afternoon, Mr. Shaw called me and gave precise instructions to visit certain homes in Taylor Street and the Courts off that Street in order to collect the rents, for I then discovered that he was a property owner. I went down the side of the recently erected Greenacres Branch of the Yorkshire Penny Bank to the slums I knew to be there. I had passed many times but never before had I paused at the door of one of those decrepit homes where people lived in appalling squalor and pungent smells. "Tell Mr. Shaw I will come and see him," was the only response I got. It is extremely doubtful whether he received any return on such a

dubious investment. It seems likely that he was unable to face any of his tenants but for me, it was a thought provoking experience.

While working at the Co-op., I spent a fair amount of time down that cellar in addition to making tea for Mr. Shaw. Weekly, I boiled the jelly. An old iron pan was used for this process which involved brown glutinous lumps.

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when boiling, the jelly was poured into a shallow tin tray. The skill lay in avoiding the formation of bubbles on the surface since it was imperative that it be serenely smooth when set and cool. The tray was then taken up into the Office where a small piece of paper, on which had been written certain figures in a special ink, was pressed onto the surface of the jelly. Its position was carefully marked on the jelly with strips of gummed paper. The original removed, further blank pieces of paper could be pressed onto the jelly and the figures were primitively duplicated in purple ink. Photocopiers had not been conceived. Frequently, after putting the pan of jelly on the gas ring, I would be called away and the jelly would be forgotten until clouds of black pungent smoke were emitted from the cellar into the Office. I disliked the jelly job.

As the Quarter progressed and the time for the payment of the dividend drew near, I commenced to write out the dividend slips with the name and share number of every member. Soon I would be down the cellar again with a bucket of soapy water to wash down the open fronted docket holders on which would rest the members' share books as they came to collect their dividend after the holders had been brought upstairs for the quarterley ritual. Dividend varied according to how much each member had spent during the quarter and was paid out on a particular Wednesday, Thursday and Friday over the Penny Bank counter. On the Friday, however, all those members whose share numbers exceeded 14,000 were paid in another room which was up the corridor. A hand written notice was produced and hung at the junction of the corridors which indicated the additional payment point. The Society must have had little confidence in its members ability to read and so I was posted at the junction to call out the notice from time to time rather like a town crier. At the age of 14 years, I stood there for some time not daring to open my mouth. Eventually I plucked up courage when few customers, if any, were about and commenced, "All.....", and tailed off as the sound of my own voice reverberated around the tiled confines of the building. Later, I tried again when customers turned round to look at a little lad whose face went deep red. I had another try when it was quiet and soon learnt to modulate my voice until I could confidently call, "All over fourteen thousand this way please", and leave the accoustics to do the rest. By tea-time I was quite enjoying myself and was actually waiting for customers before making my announcement. Everyone stared but by then I stared back brazenly for I had realised that I was doing something which the majority of those entering would have difficulty in doing. It was my first experience of public speaking. Although the subject was rather limited, I am certain that the initial oratorial venture helped me greatly in later years.

On commencing at the Co-op., I discovered that my pay had increased by one

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shilling and sixpence (7½p). The hours were not long but were somewhat unsocial. Commencing work at 9am, I returned home for lunch at 12-30pm until 2pm. On Mondays, the Office closed at 6pm but on Tuesdays, like the shops, the Office closed at Noon for the rest of the day. On Wednesday a three-quarter of an hour tea break enabled me to go home for tea before returning to work on until 7pm. On Thursday and Friday evenings, the Office closed at 8pm but I was allowed to go home at 6pm every other Thursday. Saturday was a full day with a shorter lunch break, the Office closing at 4pm but I got one Saturday afternoon off in three. A whole range of social activities was on offer from the Employees Social Committee for which

one penny each week was deducted from my pay. These included dances held in the large hall upstairs, excursions to Co-op. factories, theatres and smoking concerts. Although I did not smoke, I was anxious to get value for money and so attended my first and only Smoking Concert. We were entertained by straight artists including my colleague Ronald. He had a good bass~baritone voice and as well as singing in Moorside Church Choir he aspired to concert work. I was very impressed. There was no bar but tea and refreshments were provided along with a limitless supply of Co-operative cigarettes. My mother complained for weeks that my clothes still smelled of stale tobacco smoke and was not entirely convinced that I had not tried a 'crafty drag' on the noxious weed as well.

I was becoming more clothes conscious but funds would not permit any sartorial extravagance. I persuaded my mother that I needed a new tweed overcoat but, it had to be for 'best'. On weekdays as winter approached, I could be observed going to work in a dark tailored overcoat which reached half way down to the calfs of my legs. Unfortunately, it had not been tailored for me but had been passed down by an aunt when older cousins had grown out of it. Used to wearing a school cap in winter, I required headgear. I affected my first trilby hat at the age of 14 years. I felt quite grown up but in that overcoat, I must have looked like a junior Mafioso. No wonder some of the Check-office girls smiled.

On Christmas Eve I realised that all the errands I had run at the expense of my standing tasks had not been in vain. Following a little speech by Mr. Shaw, I was presented with over £1 in cash. It was wealth indeed. The Office, nonetheless, remained open until 6pm. We had prepared early for Christmas by reserving two seats in the Circle at the King's Cinema. They were the best and cost one shilling each. Suitably attired in best overcoat, trilby, artificial silk muffler and kid gloves, I made my way into town with Gordon to see Lesley Howard in "The Scarlet Pimpernel". Sadly, we walked home with anti-climatic feelings since those

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two gorgeous young women we hoped might come our way had failed to do so. Neither did we have opportunity to rescue any maiden from dire straits on our way home.

My 15th birthday approached in 1939 and I found myself working on Good Friday. The Office was quiet and the day dragged but this time, we gained a concession when it closed at 4pm. The economy was improving and my father had returned to work in the mill in his own trade as a mill mechanic. It seemed that Easter that everyone was trying to ignore the possibility of war despite the fact that during the recent winter months, gas-masks had been issued.

Practically all retail Co-operative employees were members of the National Union of Distributive and Allied Workers (NUDAW). I became a very junior union member. Mr. Asa Taylor was the Society's Fishmonger but he was also the Union Branch Secretary. On certain Thursday or Friday evenings, he was permitted to make phone calls on Union business. Unfortunately, he always used the kiosk. We all hoped that the phone would not ring again there that night for the kiosk still tended to smell of fish the next morning. One such evening, before entering the kiosk, he slapped a duplicated circular on my desk saying that I should apply for 'it'. 'It' turned out to be a vacancy for a junior at the Union's Central Office at Fallowfield, Manchester. I carefully took the circular home and tried to explain that everyone had said that I should apply for the position. With consternation writ large across the faces of my parents, I was told that they would 'see'. To give up a secure job gained in the face of such great competition seemed to be folly in the extremes.

Next day and unbeknown to me, my mother got out her best hat and coat and in the afternoon took the train to Manchester. She walked to the Royal Exchange to the foot of the stairs where, on the wall was Painted a human hand pointing the way to Uncle John's Office where she arrived without prior appointment. "Should he apply?". "Certainly, Alice," replied Uncle John. It

was the seal of approval. Having referred to Uncle John so frequently as the one who really 'got on', some further background now seems to be appropriate. A little older than my father, John also started his working life at the mill in Derker, Oldham, as a packer in the warehouse. He must have been quite bright but the secret of his great success lay in the fact that he went to night school and quickly mastered the new Pitman's Shorthand. He became indispensable at meetings and soon he had changed his job as he moved into the Office of the Oldham Operative Spinners. He was not long in becoming Assistant Secretary. As with so many Craft Unions, the constitution of this very local union laid down that the General Secretary must have at one time been a spinner himself.

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This clearly cramped the style and ambitions of Uncle John and so he transferred to the other side to become Secretary of the Oldham Master Cotton spinners. Later, he was to become Secretary of nationally acclaimed Federation of Master Cotton Spinners with his Office at the Royal Exchange, Manchester. He moved in high circles and we received postcards from him as he attended Cotton Congresses in various parts of the world. He visited Italy and had an audience with Pope Pius XII, although not a Roman Catholic. He flew to Germany where he was introduced to Hitler but, as one little man to another, Uncle John was not impressed. He did not like flying and following a meeting in Prague, he insisted on returning overland by rail. Shortly afterwards, he developed a severe heart condition and was off work for a considerable period before picking up the threads again.

Having gained two posts already on my own merit, I made written application for the post with NUDAW. One bright Spring evening I was summoned for interview and test. As I entered the interview room I was surprised to hear the Chief Administrative Officer of the Union say, "Oh yes, we have heard about you." I could not swear to it, nor dare I reveal my suspicions to any colleague when later I commenced to work there but, while recuperating from his illness, Uncle John had taken a Mediterranean cruise on the liner "Voltaire". By coincidence, on the same cruise was Mr. Joseph Hallsworth, later to become Sir Joseph, General Secretary of NUDAW. Likely as not, Uncle John had put in a good word for me. He died suddenly in Manchester in 1941.

On Trinity Monday in June 1939, I was up early in order to catch a train at Mumps Station. A half-rate contract by rail to Manchester cost half a crown (12½p) a week until I attained the age of 16 years. It was seven miles to the big city and a further three miles to Fallowfield. Life really had begun to open up and every day became an adventure for me. I quickly found my way around the city and began to see myself as quite the young man about town. I received a copy of the salary scale and found that pay for a 14 year old was double that which at school I had been led to believe was normal. Since I was now 15 years of age my pay amounted to £1. 4s. (£1. 20p) per week. For the ordinary clerk with the Union, the scale went on beyond the usual 21 years, reaching a maximum of £5 per week at the age of 25 years. In those pre-war years, £5 per week was a middle class income comparing favourably with bank clerks.

I learnt much that was new that summer and gained much confidence despite which I failed to get friendly with a girl on the train who came from Shaw. I learnt of the origins of the Labour movement and of Keir Hardie, the first Labour MP. Collections were taken up in the Office for the British contingent

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fighting with the International Brigade in Spain. The Union had few problems as most Cooperative societies were virtually closed shops. Only one industrial dispute marred the scene at Torridge Vale Dairies and I have no recollection how it ended. After only a month in my new post, the war clouds thickened and some clerks began to be called up and were then known as

"militiamen". Soon, they were to be joined by those members of staff who belonged to the Territorial Army, and a number did. Apart from typists, the Union employed all male staff but war was soon to change all that.

For the first time in my life I was unable to go home for my lunch and so I took advantage of the subsidised meals in the staff dining room and began to enjoy culinary dishes not previously experienced at home. The young and well paid Union clerks were very clothes conscious and I quickly learnt what was and was not proscribed by fashion. One never wore black shoes with grey flannel trousers. Halon shops abounded in Manchester and all seemed to be well patronised by my new colleagues. Harris tweed jackets with woollen ties were fashionable on a Saturday when more casual wear was permitted. Some of the officials arrived then at the Office wearing plusfours. The war still seemed a long way off as I travelled daily to and from Manchester and thought what I might do with three weeks holiday.

The letter came from London and was addressed to me at home. I had completely forgotten that earlier in the year while enthusing about my former colleague's bass-baritone voice, I had written to Mr. Carroll Levis about it. Mr. Levis was well known on stage and radio for his "Discoveries" and was currently appearing at the Palace Theatre, Manchester. Here then was an audition for Ronald. I phoned him at the Co-op. in Oldham and informed him of this opportunity which now presented itself.

After tea one evening I met Ronald at the railway station and for the second time that day travelled to Manchester. We made our way to the theatre in Oxford Street and as instructed went round the side to the stage door. The small yard there was crowded with young people all hopeful of being discovered. Some carried props while other had musical instruments and I still retain a vision of one young man literally staggering in with a full drum kit. I was glad that Ronald only had a piece of sheet music to bother about. At last we got inside and Ronald passed his music to a lady sat at a piano. Ronald commenced to sing but before he had completed the first line of the song he was stopped and the next hopeful was called in. For a brief moment I had stood in the wings as the show went on. We never saw the great man but we returned to Oldham undismayed for no one else had been granted any longer for their audition.

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Later in the year I received another letter. The Carroll Levis Organisation was courteous in thanking me but regretted that, due to the war, it was now no longer possible to proceed further in Ronald's case.

Oldham Wakes at the end of August 1939 really marked the end of the pre-war period for during that week, while many people were away on holiday, a partial blackout had been imposed and barrage balloons were already in position. The windows of buses and tramcars were painted in opaque blue and returning holidaymakers joined the scramble to purchase blackout material.

On that historic Sunday morning we heard the voice of Neville Chamberlain tell us that we were at war with Germany. The old lady from next door came into our home weeping and declaring that all the young men were going to be killed. A comforting thought for my parents but she had never tended to be optimistic. The lights were going out all over Europe but for me the light had never shone more brightly. Before me lay all my adult life. Behind me was the glorious experience of childhood.

I blinked in the light as I stepped out of the ginnel.

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POSTSCRIPT

Oldhamers were known as 'rough-heads', not because of their tonsorial condition but because of the rough woollen locally made caps they were once known to wear long before the Industrial Revolution. Despite this nickname which persisted, the natives of Oldham were of proud stock and were proud of their town and its achievements.

The Coat of Arms of the former County Borough of Oldham, with its array of wise owls, was ever before us in many prominent places. Underneath the Arms were the words, "Sapere aude" - "dare to be wise". Few folk had any knowledge of latin and so our teachers translated these wonderful words as if casting a magical spell. It was as if having heard these words as a child, the mantle of Solomon would automatically fall upon every man and woman born within the boundaries of Oldham.

Even as a child, it seemed to me that people were either wise or they were not. In all humility, how could anyone like me dare to be wise? Perhaps the clue lies with the owls on the Coat of Arms. Owls who the wiser grew the less they spoke. As children we chattered on verbalising about almost everything with which we came into contact or which was new or of interest. With the passage of time and a measure of experience comes an appreciation of the fact that there is an appropriate time for everything, and a need for discipline and self-control to go with it.

"For everything its season, and for every activity under the heaven its time:

a time to be born and a time to die;
a time to plant and time to uproot;
a time to kill and a time to heal;
a time pull down and a time to build up;
a time to weep and a time to laugh;
a time for mourning and a time for dancing;
a time to scatter stones and a time to gather them;
a time to embrace and a time to refrain from embracing;
a time to seek and a time to lose;
a time to keep and a time to throw away;
a time to tear and a time to mend;

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a time for silence and a time for speech;
a time for love and a time for hate;
a time for war and a time for peace. "

Ecclesiastes 5 vv 1-8

"Dare to be wise" was perhaps a challenge to us to learn, for anyone who dares to be wise without knowledge does so at his peril.

Many thanks to Mike Hoddy for sharing this story with us.

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**From the e-Postbag**

No correspondence this month.

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MLFHS FACEBOOK PAGE

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

since the last newsletter :

* A Weaving Of Words ... Chetham's Library Blog

[HERE](#)

* Greater Manchester town's lost days - its streets, shops and teenage bedrooms

[HERE](#)

* Pandemic Retrospective Part 3: A comparison of the strategies in dealing with the pandemics. (with links to parts 1 & 2)

[HERE](#)

* A history of Valentine's Day celebrations – from fertility festivals to the first cards

[HERE](#)

* Knock, knock. Who's there? Black Rod: the Early Centuries

[HERE](#)

* The Family History Guide : If you have yet to discover this website, you are in for a treat. It's one of the largest information sources for British and Irish research, with links to 1000's of source articles, record collections, and orgs.

[HERE](#)

* Parliament and the Elizabethan energy crisis

[HERE](#)

* Ancestral Memory Is It Fact or Fiction?

[HERE](#)

* How gruelling was the Victorian workhouse?

[HERE](#)

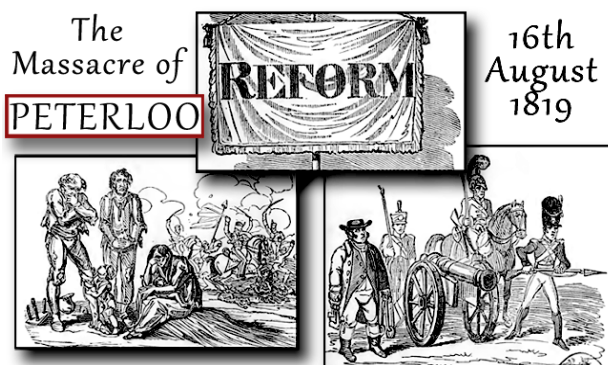
* Mapping Manchester - Manchester University digital collections

[HERE](#)

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

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

PETERLOO : the Bi-Centenary



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


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

You can make searches on websites such as :

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

Visit their website [HERE](#)

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Need Help!

Oldham Local Studies and Archives

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 previously, 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 archives please visit :

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 or telephone 0161 770 4654.

Local Studies and Archives at 84 Union Street, Oldham, **OL1 1DN**,

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

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

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

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

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

[Oldham Council Heritage Collections](#)

There are regularly changing displays in the Local Studies Library.

[Opening hours](#) and contact details.

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## Website Links

### Other Society Websites

Catholic Family History Society – [www.catholicfhs.co.uk](http://www.catholicfhs.co.uk)

Cheshire Local History Association – [www.cheshirehistory.org.uk](http://www.cheshirehistory.org.uk)

Chadderton Historical Society (archived website) – [www.chadderton-historical-society.org.uk](http://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](http://www.lancashirehistory.org)

Liverpool and South West Lancashire FHS – [www.lswlfhs.org.uk](http://www.lswlfhs.org.uk)

Manchester Region Industrial Archaeology Society – [www.mrias.co.uk](http://www.mrias.co.uk)

Oldham Historical Research Group – [www.pixnet.co.uk/Oldham-hrg](http://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](http://www.rlhs.co.uk)

Saddleworth Historical Society – [www.saddleworth-historical-society.org.uk](http://www.saddleworth-historical-society.org.uk)

Tameside Local History Forum - [www.tamesidehistoryforum.org.uk](http://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](#)

Huddersfield Exposed [HERE](#)

### Some Local Archives

Barnsley Museum & Discovery Centre – [www.experience-barnsley.com](http://www.experience-barnsley.com)

Birkenhead – [Local & Family History](#)

Bury – [www.bury.gov.uk/archives](http://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](http://www.lancashire.gov.uk/libraries-and-archives)

Stockport – [www.stockport.gov.uk/heritage-library-archives](http://www.stockport.gov.uk/heritage-library-archives)

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

York – [www.york.ac.uk/borthwick](http://www.york.ac.uk/borthwick)



Postcards



*'The Flit' (moving to a new home)*

*F. Brierley, Empire Studio, Oldham & Rochdale.*

Back of postcard

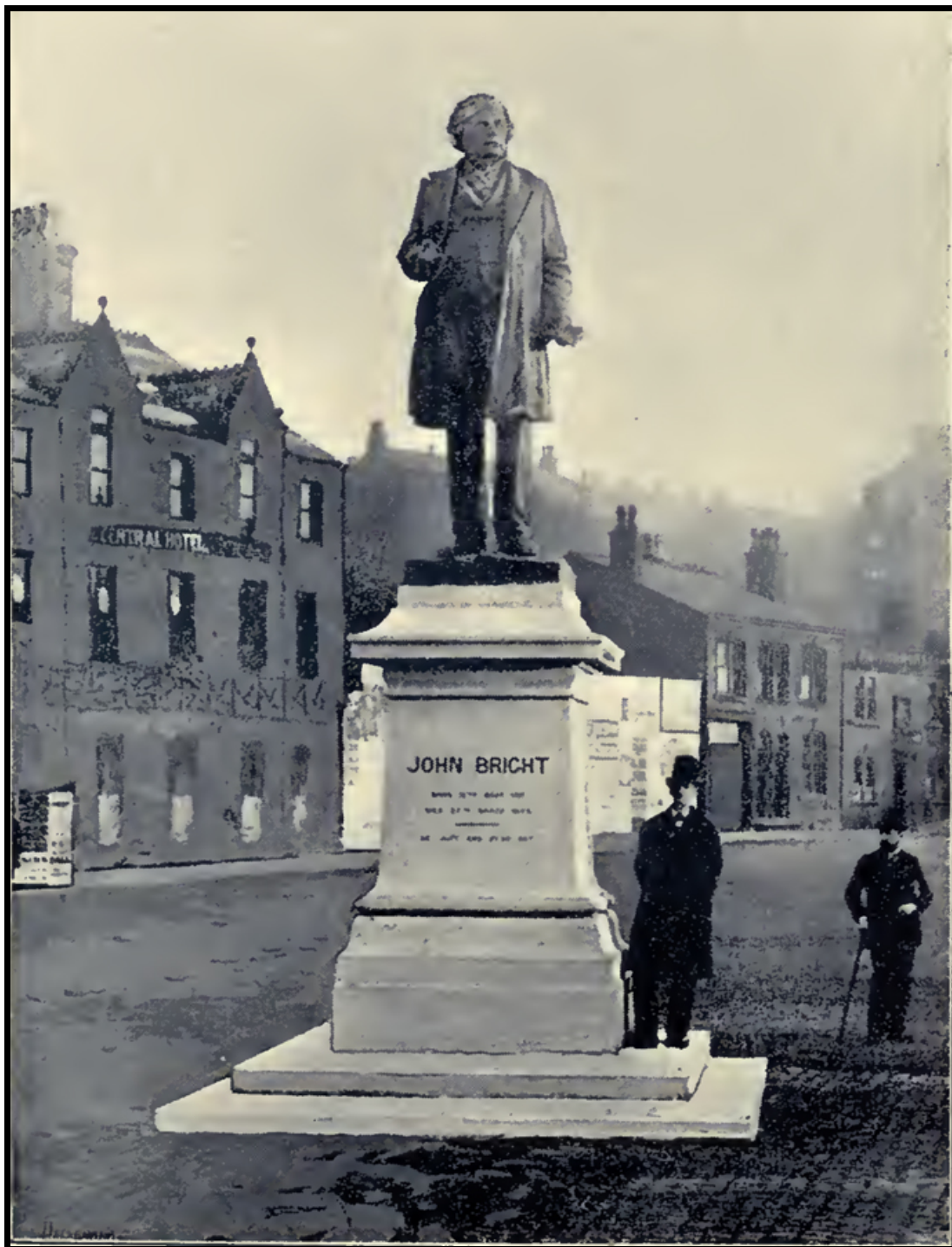
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Waterloo School, Hardy Street, Oldham

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*Bronze Statue of John Bright in Town Hall Square, Rochdale*  
from : *The Works Of John Trafford Clegg*  
*["Th' Owd Weighver."]*  
pub. 1895

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