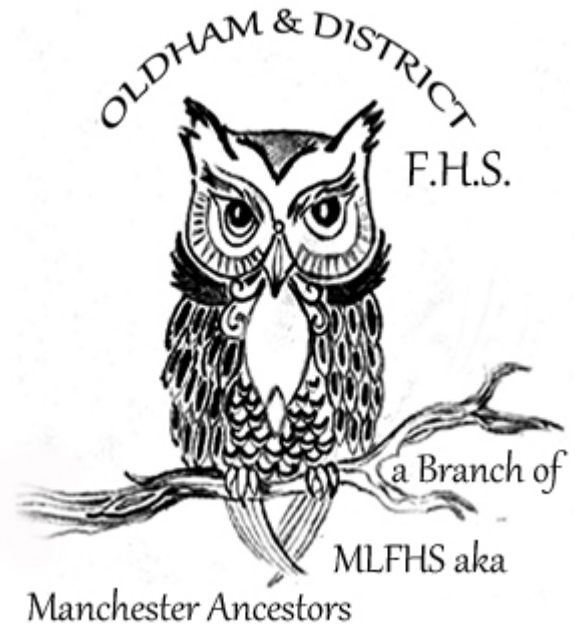


# 'e-Owls'



## Contact us :

Branch Website page: <https://www.mlfhs.uk/oldham>  
MLFHS Website homepage : <https://www.mlfhs.uk/>  
Email Chairman : [chairman-oldham@mlfhs.org.uk](mailto:chairman-oldham@mlfhs.org.uk)  
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Email Website Ed : [Oldham\\_webmaster@mlfhs.org.uk](mailto:Oldham_webmaster@mlfhs.org.uk)

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

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

**February 2024**

## MLFHS - Oldham & District Branch Newsletter

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### Branch Information & News :

#### Branch Officers for 2023 -2024 :

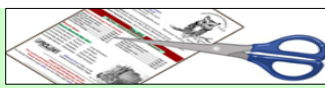
Committee Member : Chairman :	Vacant
Committee Member : Treasurer :	Gill Melton
Committee Member : Secretary :	Jan Costa
Committee Member : Newsletter :	Sheila Goodyear
Committee Member : Webmistress :	Sheila Goodyear
Committee Member : 'Country Member' :	Linda Richardson
Committee Member : Joan Harrison	
Committee Member : Patricia Etchells	
Committee Member : Hilary Hartigan	

#### 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



**Oliver Cromwell**

1599 - 1658

(Wikipedia - public domain)

~~~~~

**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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**Joint Acting Chair's remarks:**

**Gill Melton our Treasurer...**

Welcome to the February newsletter.

As I write this, we have just had our coldest January night ever and the pavements on our cul-de-sac are like skating rinks, and the road isn't much better, but it is supposed to warm up slightly for the weekend!

Our January meeting with Michael Winstanley about Life and Work in Cotton Lancashire was very popular with around 75 people attending on Zoom. He told us what was unique about the Cotton Towns, which was very interesting and, I think, enjoyed by all who attended. Our February talk is also on Zoom with Hilary Hartigan telling us about 'DNA and Ethnicity' and we are hoping this will be just as popular. Booking can be made on Eventbrite.

The Branch is still looking to recruit volunteers and committee members to help out. You don't need to live in the area to be on the committee. Maybe you could give a bit of your time to help out at the meetings or research for projects. If you want to know more about either of these roles, please contact us on 'chairman-oldham@mlfhs.org.uk' or speak to one of the committee at our next hybrid meeting in March.

Enjoy reading the rest of the newsletter.

Best Wishes

Gill Melton

Treasurer & Acting Joint Chair

~~~~~

**Editor's remarks.**

Hi Everyone,

I hope everyone is keeping well. As I begin writing this month's editorial remarks, the latest storm, Isha, is raging outside, my garden chairs are playing hide and seek and my feathered and furry friends have abandoned the garden even though there is food out for them. I have to apologise for the relative lateness of this month's newsletter; I lost the two weeks over Christmas and New Year to my first encounter with covid! Not the most pleasant experience, most of which I spent asleep in bed!

In the Mixed Bag we have more pages from *Manchester Streets & Manchester Men...* this month, continuing with Series 1, I have transcribed pages 19 to 37, mainly about Ancoats, Smithy Door and Salford Bridge over the Irwell. Illustrative drawings are in the Gallery.

We can also read more stories and anecdotes, from '*Short Stories about Failsworth Folk*' by Sim Schofield.

In the '*Online Book Links*' section, it's another random selection, hoping that at least one will catch your interest. I hope you find something there that you enjoy either discovering or rediscovering.

In the e-Postbag we have an email with photos of a medal, on a chain, dated 1944-1949 which once belonged to the sender's mother. Has anyone any ideas as to what it might have been presented for?

In the Mixed Bag transcription about the Bridge over the Irwell, there is a reference to it during the Civil War... hence the portrait of Cromwell on the opening page and, in the Gallery, pictures

of Cromwell's statue over the years, in Manchester, and it's more recent location in Wythenshawe Park.

On the [Events/What's new/Updates & Additions](#) to the Website Page we have notification of a new upload to the Video Page, entitled 'Lest We Forget - Oldham Memorials'. It's a recording of a talk given to Oldham HRG by John Fidler, in November 2023.

And, to catch up on anything you have missed, you can visit the '[Snippets](#)' page which has links to all transcriptions, articles and Gallery images in previous newsletters.

Sheila

I am always very happy to receive articles, pictures etc., for the 'Mixed Bag' or 'e-Postbag' 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](mailto: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, the new site opens in the same window so the 'back button' would have to be used to return to the newsletter. For more options, including 'open in a new tab', right-click on the link for a drop-down menu of choices.

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## Oldham & District Branch

### Monthly Meetings

2024

*Last Month's Meeting, January - on zoom only*



Saturday  
13th Jan.  
at  
2 pm



### ***Life and Work in Cotton Lancashire, c1830-1914***

*'What were the major changes in the Lancashire cotton towns during the 19th century and did they affect the roles of men, women and children?*

*Is it possible to generalise about life and work in them or were they all distinctive?*

*And how different were these towns from elsewhere in Lancashire or the rest of the country?'*

*This illustrated presentation, given by Dr. Michael Winstanley, seeks to provide answers to these questions.*

Our first meeting on the programme for 2024 was on zoom only. Proving to be very popular, it was oversubscribed several times and, I think, for the first time, I had to weed out duplicate reservations and appeal for people to let me know if they found they couldn't join the meeting so that the tickets could be re-released.

We were able to welcome Dr. Michael Winstanley with his presentation on *Life and Work in Cotton Lancashire*, circa 1830-1914. As Oldhamers we are familiar with its industrial history and strong association with the cotton industry. However, as with any topic, there is always something new to learn or see it presented from a different angle and, with Michael's presentation, we weren't disappointed.

Michael started off his talk with some background information on the various Factory Acts and how they regulated the hours that women and children could work, and the introduction of the half-timers' system in which children of a certain age could work so many hours and attend school for so many hours ... although how the children could stay awake is almost beyond belief!

Much of the presentation was based on comparisons, similarities and differences, one of which centred on whether a cotton town was primarily spinning or weaving. Manchester, cottonopolis as it's frequently known, was mainly concerned with finishing fabrics and distribution. There was also mention of the many cotton towns which had large market halls which were less likely to be found in the more southerly and agricultural districts.

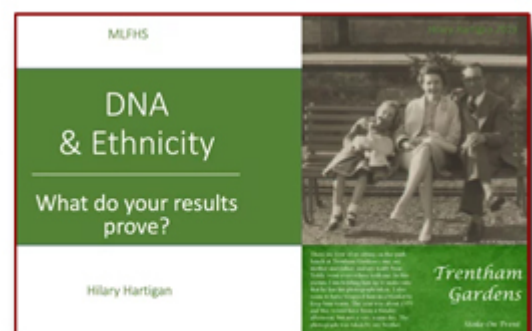
Michael then turned to the sort of lives the cotton workers could expect (but not including the years of the American Civil War, when cotton was in short supply and could only be exported from the South by the blockade runners). Alongside the many pictorial slides, Michael had prepared a large number of slides to illustrate statistics, comparatives and which operatives would earn the most (the male spinners by a long way) in weaving wages were not so widely different. In some of the towns, where statistics showed that a whole family was working in the mill, there was more disposable income that could be spent in leisure. During the annual Wakes Week, when the mills were closed, the cotton towns were virtually deserted as shops and businesses also took the opportunity to take a holiday when most of their customers were out of town. There were day excursions to local beauty spots, events and the week's holiday; for many, this was to one of the nearby seaside towns, usually Blackpool. At this point we had a laugh as we remembered how the Blackpool landlady was portrayed, on postcards etc., as a veritable dragon in 'pinny' and curlers, hands on hips and anything but a welcoming expression! The attendees, who came from near and far - including Canada, Miami, Boston (Massachusetts), Lanzarote, Nova Scotia, Southern California, and Gran Canaria, were very appreciative and engaged and the chatbox was alive, sharing memories and asking questions. Many thanks to Michael for such an interesting and informative presentation.

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### February Meeting, on zoom only



Saturday  
10th Feb.  
at  
2 pm



### ***DNA & Ethnicity - What do your results prove?***

**This illustrated presentation, will be given by Hilary Hartigan.**

Every time Hilary talks about DNA testing she updates her presentation. This talk will still have the essential information you need to get the most out of your results, but it will also look at how - and if - your DNA results can tell you anything about your ethnicity. Typically your ethnicity will



relate back many generations, perhaps centuries, so how relevant is it to our family history research?

A free, zoom only meeting... all are very welcome

Booking for zoom is essential on [Eventbrite](#)

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Details, of the 2024 programme of talks, are on the 'Meetings' page of the Branch website [HERE](#)

A .pdf, printable copy of the 2024 programme is available [HERE](#) to download from the 'Miscellany' page.

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### **MLFHS Branches delivering their monthly meetings and talks**

#### **Anglo - Scots – February**

|                                               |                                           |                                                                                        |
|-----------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| MLFHS,<br>ANGLO-SCOTTISH<br>BRANCH<br>MEETING | Saturday,<br>3rd<br>February<br>at<br>2pm | <i>'Caledonian<br/>Asylum Petitions'</i><br>given by<br>Lorna Kinnaird<br>On zoom only |
|-----------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

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

Booking necessary on [Eventbrite](#)

MLFHS Members free; non members £3

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#### **Bolton - February**

MLFHS Bolton Branch Meetings - Hybrid	Wednesday 7th February at 7:30 pm	<i>'Northerners: A History, from the Ice Age to the Present Day'</i> given by Brian Groom
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at Bolton Golf Club, Chorley New Road, Bolton, BL6 4AJ  
& Online via Zoom

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

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### **MLFHS updates**

#### **Manchester Meetings... February 2024**

|                                         |                                                 |                                                                                                       |
|-----------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| MLFHS<br>aka<br>Manchester<br>Ancestors | Saturday,<br>17th<br>February<br>at<br>10:30 am | <i>'Getting it right :<br/>Starting to build<br/>your family tree'</i><br>given by<br>Hilary Hartigan |
|-----------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

## In Manchester Central library only

Bookings on [Eventbrite](#) : members free; non-members £5.

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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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**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

101 burials and cremations undertaken in 2022 and 2023 by Blackpool Council in line with provisions of the Public Health (Control of Diseases) Act 1984.

These are funerals conducted by the Council where there is no family member prepared to arrange and/or pay for a funeral.

I have also added details of 4,156 inquests conducted by various Lancashire Coroners in 2023. In view of the sensitive nature of some of the verdicts, a three year closure has been applied to these records.

Both are thanks to Linda Bailey.

~~~~~

\* Hi All

I have just uploaded a further 724 records to the Great Database covering Horwich Locomotive Works staff with surnames PHELAN to STUBBS.

Thanks are due to Jim Chadwick and his team for these.

~~~~~

\* Hi All

We have a lot to come in 2024 with completion expected of the staff records for Horwich Loco Works and Manchester City Transport, plus a new project to index the pupils admitted to Chetham's School. There will also be a substantial collection of admissions and discharges for Bolton's Fletcher Street Workhouse in the very near future. Other projects are under consideration.

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

**Please note ...**


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



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**Moorside & District Historical Society ... Monday, 19<sup>th</sup> February, 2024.**




**Moorside & District Historical Society**  
**Monday 19th February 2024.**  
**Then & Now**  
**Grains Bar & District**  
**Drinking Houses**  
Pub Crawl around the area.  
*Part Nine ~ Local Public Houses etc.*





**illustrated presentation by Mike Smith**  
**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.***  
*Note: Other meeting planed for the third Monday of the month, next year.*  
Except for the summer break July & August + December. £2-50p including refreshment.  
April ~ September meeting in St Thomas' Church Hall.OL1 4SJ

**Licensed Bar**  


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**Saddleworth Historical Society ... Wednesday, 14th February at 7:30**

**'A Victorian Society'**

an illustrated presentation given by Christine Widdall

Society members are free, but a £3 charge to non-members is applicable at the door.

All are welcome to attend meetings. Refreshments are available.

The venue is the Saddleworth Museum Gallery, High Street, Uppermill.

Website [HERE](#)

**Saddleworth Civic Trust** has no meeting or event planned at the present time.  
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](#)

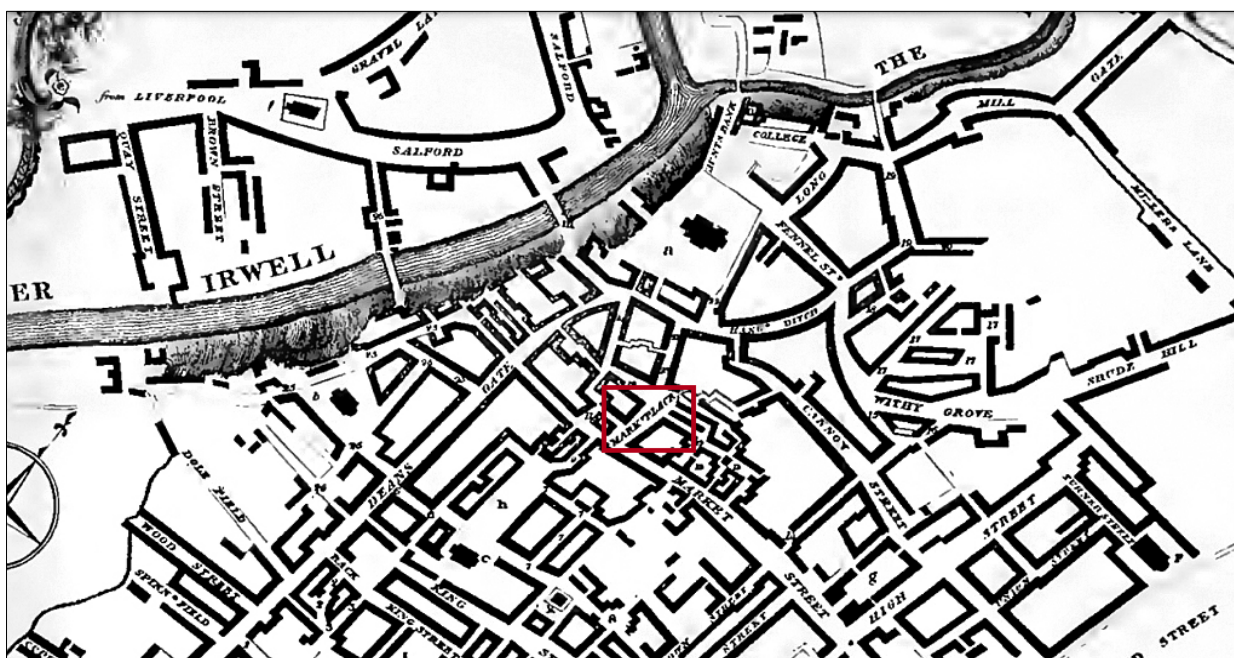
~~~~~  
**'A Mixed Bag'**

Our serialisation of *Manchester Streets & Manchester Men* Vol. 1 (1st series) published in 1906 and started in our newsletter in 2023-08. It will continue through succeeding newsletters. This month we have 'New Cross, Ancoats', 'Smithy Door', 'Old Salford Bridge', 'Manchester's First Improvement Act' and 'The Modern Bridge'. Illustrations in the Gallery.

**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





## NEW CROSS ANCOATS.

### A Few Historical Notes

To the greater proportion of the people who do their shopping in Oldham-street, New Cross is nothing more than the boundary that denotes the division between respectability and slumdom. These individuals never penetrate into the gloomy streets and courts that cover with the greatest intricacy the area known as Ancoats. Not that I would suggest that the district has been neglected in recent times by our leisured, cultured, and wealthy classes. It was not always so, however. As an Ancoats lad, living in Ancoats and attending a school in Ancoats, I remember when the only persons who visited it were those who had business connections there, and who left it as soon as they could. The terrible revelations made as to the condition of many of the houses a generation ago brought "slumming" in vogue, and daintily-dressed ladies were to be seen on fine afternoons paying calls. The outcome of this was several movements, each of which have been important factors in the improvement of the conditions under which the slum-dwellers live. To mention Mr. Rowley's work at New Islington, with its outcome, the Ancoats Brotherhood, the Healthy Homes Society, the Art Museum, and the University Settlement, is to enumerate a few of the movements that have developed during the last twenty years. But even yet Ancoats is not, and probably never will be again, a desirable place for residence.

#### **p.20 (Image of Ancoats Hall in the Gallery)**

Very different was it even a century ago, when Ancoats Lane was a country lane, when the old Ancoats Hall (th' house wheer th' mon wur buried on th' top) stood amidst pleasant surroundings; when the Crescent, long since swept away by the Midland Railway Company, was tenanted by employers of labour; and when the front of the "Ivy House" was covered with a luxuriant growth of that plant. And going back further, the contrast with the present would still be greater.

As a place name Ancoats, or Ancotes, as it was formerly spelled, is very old, dating back to the opening of the fourteenth century, when Thomas de Grelle, Lord of Mamecestre, gave to his beloved servant, Richard de Boudoun, three tofas of land, one of which was described as lying "between the way that leadeth from Mamecestre to Stockford and the way that leadeth from Mamecestre to Ancoats." and another as lying "between the way that leadeth from Mamecestre to Ancotes and the way that leadeth to Claiton." What the district was like in those days can be realised much easier by examining an interesting drawing hidden away from the public view in a volume stored in one of our public buildings. As few persons have had an opportunity of examining the picture, a description of it will be of value. It depicts the appearance of the top of Oldham-street in 1734. Standing at the top of Oldham-street we see before us a broad country lane fringed on either side by hedgerows. This was Newton Lane leading to the heath bearing that name. Other lanes run to our right and left. At the right hand corner right hand corner of Newton Lane stands a two storied double-fronted cottage, which we are told in a footnote

#### **p.21**

was an alehouse with the curious designation of "The Iron Dish and Cob of Coal", a sign as peculiar as any of which we have record in Manchester. A little beyond the alehouse stands a second cottage, these being the only buildings depicted in the picture. Near to the left hand corner of the Lane opposite to the alehouse a woman is represented as drawing water from a well or pool. This would probably be one of the pieces of water that formerly extended from Newton Lane down to Shudehill, and known as the Shudehill Pits.

A second footnote to the picture tells us that just beyond the second cottage a footpath led through the fields to the colliery at Bradford. This was in 1734, or forty-three years before the

land in the immediate neighbourhood was sold for building purposes. In 1775 Thomas Bound, bricklayer, purchased from Henry Legh and George Legh, of High Legh, Cheshire, the land bounded by Newton Lane and Ancoats Lane, and known as the Great Croft, and two years later Bound resold a portion of the whole to Thomas Hodgkinson, the boundaries being Newton Lane, Ancoats Lane, Bound-street, and Henry-street. The association of the Legh family with the district provided the names for George, Henry, Leigh, George Leigh, and Cornwall-streets. This would appear to mark the commencement of building operations hereabouts; and when, some seventeen years later, Laurent's plan was published, a fair number of houses had been built, and a New Cross had been erected at the crossing of the ways, giving a name that has long survived the erection that originated it.

## **p. 22**

Let us now glance at a second picture contained in the collection previously referred to. It is undated, but evidently represents New Cross as it appeared a century ago. The "Iron Dish and Cob of Coal" has disappeared and is replaced by a large building bearing the designation of "Crown and Kettle," many buildings have sprung up in Newton Lane, and the district has changed from a purely rural one to a suburban one. In the foreground stands a high stone pillar surmounted by a cross, and running from the base of it are the shambles that formerly stretched from Newton Lane, until the market was removed to Smithfield in May of 1821; and on the left-hand side is the rounded building familiar to all Ancoats men. As time passed other changes came, Newton Lane became Oldham Road. Ancoats Lane became Great Ancoats-street, and the Shudehill Pits disappeared, a Wesleyan Chapel being built upon the site of one of them. Another change should also be noticed. A century ago or thereabouts it was customary to bury the bodies of suicides at New Cross, and during excavations made in 1846 several skeletons were discovered.

Round about New Cross are a number of sites possessing interesting reminiscences which should be mentioned. Thus, it was in Newton Lane that Lord Derby, then in residence at the College, seized the press upon which the Marprelate Tracts were printed in 1588. These tracts, which were the outcome of the rapidly growing Puritanism of many Protestants, comprised some fierce attacks upon the Bishops, and were printed in secret. After being surprised at Kingston in Surrey

## **p.23**

and Faweley in Northamptonshire, Robert Waldegrave removed to a house in Newton Lane, where he printed a tract, "Ha' ye any work for the Cooper?" when Lord Derby surprised him and captured his press.

History has left no clue that will serve to show where the house in Newton Lane stood. But the district in later years provided other sufferers in the cause of a free press. James, or as he was better known Jammy Wroe, for many years carried on business as a printer and bookseller at 49, Great Ancoats-street, where he sold the Radical journal "The Observer." His fearless denunciation of the wrongdoings of the governing classes brought him into conflict with the law, and in the course of four months he had no fewer than thirteen processes issued against him. But the most glaring ease of injustice occurred on September 22, 1819, about five weeks after the butchery of Peterloo. On that day Mrs. Wroe and a shop boy were taken into custody for merely selling a copy of the "Manchester Observer," Mr. Wroe himself being in prison at the time, and this was the second time that she had been locked up although she had an infant at the breast. In 1820 Mr. Wroe was tried at the Lancaster Assizes for selling a copy of 'Sherwin's Political Register,' containing an address to the army, and for selling another copy containing remarks made upon a speech delivered by the Prince Regent. For the first offence he was imprisoned for six months and fined £100, and for a second he was imprisoned for a further period of six months and at the expiration of the year he was required to enter into bail for his

future good behaviour.

#### **p.24**

Twelve years later Abel Heywood, for selling an unstamped publication, "The Poor Men's Guardian." was sentenced to four months imprisonment and in 1834 and 1836 he was fined for similar offences. In later years Manchester honoured itself by appointing the Oldham-street bookseller to the position of Mayor of the city. Copies of the "Observer" and "Poor Man's Guardian" are becoming scarce, and perhaps a word or two about them will not be out of place. The first-named was stamped, and was sold for sevenpence ready money," as we are told at the head of the front page. It consisted of four leaves, each 16 inches by 11. Two pages were occupied by advertisements, and one page was filled with Parliamentary news. In the copy before me, that for May 9, 1818, the correspondence columns are the most interesting feature in an otherwise dull paper. The "Poor Man's Guardian" was described as "a weekly paper for the people. Published in defiance of law to try the power of right against might." In the top right-hand corner is a representation of the official stamp with the central design represented by a printing-press, and where the value of the stamp should appear the words "Knowledge is power." My copy was issued on June 22, 1833, and consists of four leaves about 9½ inches by 7½ in size. The front, second, and half of the third. pages are occupied by a spirited appeal on behalf of a free Press. Political matters occupy nearly the whole of the paper, the few news items including the report of the loss of ten vessels in a storm at Blackpool. Regarded in the light of modern journalism there does not appear to be anything in the

#### **p.25**

papers to justify the long system of persecution to which their publishers were subjected. A well-known character in Manchester seventy years ago was Dr. Grindrod, who lived at 5, Great Ancoats-street. He was the first medical man to join the teetotal movement, and it was therefore remarkable that his neighbours were members of the trade. Two doors away on the one side was the Crown and Kettle, whilst a beer shop was at number seven, and the Nelson Tavern at number nine. He took the pledge in 1833, and at once proceeded to speak and lecture in support of the new movement. Three years later a temperance meeting was held in a new room in Oldham Road, when the room gave way, and two persons were killed and over sixty injured. Amongst those who were converted whilst visiting the sufferers, who were attended by Dr. Grindrod, was Bishop Stanley, who, however, shortly afterwards, on the advice of his medical attendant, resumed the moderate use of alcoholic liquors. Another of the doctor's converts was John Cassell, the founder of the great publishing firm. Dr. Grindrod, on one occasion entered into a public discussion with Mr. Youil, a brewer, in the presence of many thousands of people in Stephenson Square. He also won the £100 prize offered by the National Temperance Society for the best essay on intemperance. He died at Malvern, Wilts., on November 18. 1883, in his 73rd year.

#### **p.26 (Image of Smithy Door in the Gallery)**

##### **BYGONE SMITHY DOOR.**

To the present generation, with its knowledge of Market-street, Victoria-street. and Deansgate as wide thoroughfares, the name of Smithy Door is hardly even a recollection. It is seventy years since the first step towards its ultimate destruction was taken. At that time the widening of Market-street was nearly completed, but Smithy Door still remained untouched by the improver's hand. Leading out of the Market Place it consisted of two narrow thoroughfares, the shorter one ending where the picturesque building known as the Vintner's Arms stood. Turning to the right hand the second thoroughfare ran in the direction of "Th' owd Church," but only in the direction, not to it. At the bottom of Smithy Door, on the right-hand side stood a chemist's shop, only recently removed; and to the left-hand was the road leading down to Salford Bridge. From the Bridge to Cateaton-street was a street known variously as Smithy Bank and Old

Bridge-street. Along the left-hand side ran a row of shops, backing to the churchyard; and near to where Cook's offices are was a stile, situated at the end of a footpath leading across the churchyard. Drivers of vehicles wishing to get from the end of Deansgate to the further side of the churchyard were compelled to go round by Cateaton-street, Hanging Ditch, and Fennel-street.

As the visitor passed from the Market Place down Smithy Door he would observe three narrow passages running off the left-hand side of the thoroughfare. One

#### **p.27**

of these, Bayley Court, was a cul-de-sac, but the other two led into Deansgate; the first, Fleece Court, being almost straight, but the other one, known as King's Arms Entry, like many other back streets of those days, was extremely irregular and crooked. On the opposite side of Smithy Door were the Shambles, a fragment of which has survived. The houses and shops in Smithy Door were without exception ancient, a few were dilapidated and in a bad state of repair, hut most of them were in a fair state of preservation, whilst a few were picturesque, and superior as specimens of the black and white style of architecture to anything that we have to-day. Let us now note a few of the more interesting features associated with this delightful bit of old Manchester, and endeavour to learn somewhat of the citizens who inhabited those ancient dwellings.

But before dealing with the inhabitants let us repeat the story of the name as it was told to us by our grandfathers. In the ancient days, long before the County Court was instituted, a Freeholders' Court met at intervals to adjudicate on matters of debt or trespass. On one occasion a blacksmith summoned one of his customers before the Court, and when asked to produce proofs of the debt alleged to be due, asked permission to bring the same. In due course he returned, carrying with him his smithy door, on the back of which he had chalked the score due to him, History does not say whether this novel form of ledger was accepted as evidence by the Court, but we are told that the incident originated the name of the thoroughfare. The story is illustrated in the carving over the entrance to Victoria Arcade, next to Mason's shop.

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Let us now endeavour to imagine ourselves as strolling through the quiet streets of the growing town early in the last century. We cross the Market Place and enter Smithy Door, noting the buildings as we pass them. The first that draws our special attention is a tavern kept by widow Wilmott. When we examine it we find, however, that the tavern only occupies part of the original building, whose two gables are surmounted by a lantern springing from the roof. Before its alteration the house must have been of sufficient size to rank as important, and its tenant would be a leading townsman. But of this we know nothing, deeds like other documents failing to supply us with the information. In 1800 the premises were occupied by J. R. Saunders, importer of Irish linen, but four years later we find Mrs. Wilmott in occupation, and there she and her family remained for nearly forty years. As Wilmott's Vaults it was known until 1840, when James Sandiford took it over, by whom it was styled. the Vintner's Arms. Next door to the Vintner's Arms was the shop of Jacob Williamson, or Old Jacob as he was oftener called. Here was to be seen a curious assortment of books, rare plates, masks, swords, and other stage properties. Many were the scarce books and prints that passed through his hands, and his shop was for many years the resort of the bibliophiles of the town. The proprietor himself, it has been said, was the greatest curiosity contained in the collection; his manners, expressions, dress, and mode of dealing being peculiar to himself.

It was from the lower end of Smithy Door that Roger Adams issued the first Manchester newspaper.

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Copies of the paper are exceedingly rare, and it is not at all certain when the first issue appeared. It seems, judging from copies extant, that it was in December, 1718, that the "Manchester Weekly journal" commenced that series of newspapers which has continued until to-day. The price of the paper was one penny, to which was added the tax of a halfpenny. It struggled on until 1725, when Adams shook the dust of Manchester off his feet and returned to his native town Chester, where he issued a paper with the title of "The Chester Courant." Apart from publishing the first Manchester newspaper Adams should be remembered for having printed the first book issued from the Manchester press. It consisted of a series of lectures delivered before the Mathematical Society by John Jackson, and was issued in 1719. In later years Adams' widow having succeeded her husband in the printing business at Chester, issued from her press an interesting volume, now scarce, bearing the title of "Manchester Vindicated," dealing with the Jacobite rebellion of 1745.

At the junction of Smithy Door and Deansgate stood a house whose circular bow windows and overhanging gables gave it a most picturesque appearance. It was occupied at one time by John Easby, a writer of more than ordinary ability, and who for many years was the Manchester representative of the "Era." Born of humble parentage, he owed his education to Ann Hinde's Greencoat Charity, and was possessed of such versatility that in later years he excelled as actor, journalist, lecturer, and preacher - a range sufficiently wide to suit nearly any taste. He issued in 1843 a pamphlet

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entitled "Manchester and Manchester People, &c., by a Citizen of the World," in which many of the local institutions are subjected to a scathing criticism, not entirely justified. His publications "Bog Logis's Budget" and "Paddy Kelly's Budget" were probably the most scurrilous papers ever issued in the city.

Failing to obtain success in journalism, Easby became the host of "Number Six" beerhouse, which stood near the Lower Mosley-street Schools, where he died in 1852. Opposite the corner from Easby's shop stood a well-known druggist's shop. For over a century the business was conducted on the same site, in the early part of the last century by James Brereton, who was succeeded by Griffiths Hughes, whose death occurred recently. For the greater part of the century the business has only had three proprietors. The earliest date I can trace with reference to the business is 1772, when John Leigh was in occupation. To the Manchester men of seventy years ago few institutions were more popular than was John Shaw's Club, which had originated at a punch house famous tufty years before. Some account of the club and its eccentric founder will be given on some future occasion. For the present we are concerned in the fact that from 1835 to 1838 the club met at the Unicorn Inn, kept by Joseph Challender, which stood at the corner of the Market Place and Smithy Door. Just at this point the street was very narrow; in fact, the space between the two curbstones was only just sufficient to allow a vehicle to pass, and the footpaths being proportionately narrow, it was dangerous for any persons

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to attempt to pass the spot at the time that a cart was passing. Compare this with the width of Victoria-street at the same spot and we realise how great has been the change. This change commenced in 1833, when the widening took place on the left-hand side, part of the Smithy Door buildings being removed; but it was not until over forty years later that all trace of Smithy Door was removed, and the Vintner's Arms and its surroundings gave place to the present Victoria Buildings.

It was during the first of these alterations that an interesting discovery was made which reminded those who saw it of the days of Henry VIII. In the year 1540 the Collegiate Church of Manchester (in common with six other places principally collegiate) obtained the right of

Sanctuary, this constituting it a "place of privilege for term of life to all offenders and malefactors, of whatsoever quality, kind, or nature their offence might be, for which saide offences and crimes the paine and punishment of death should ensue, by the statute laws and customs of the realm," other than murder, rape, burglary, highway robbery, or arson. This was the very doubtful privilege conferred upon the people of Manchester in 1540, and it was soon found that it did not tend to peace and order. Hollingworth says; " But within a year or two the Sanctuary was found prejudicial to the wealth, credit, great occupiyings, and good order of the said towne; in which towne, sayth the statute, it is expedient that honest, true, and credible persons, and not any manner of light person or persons should inhabit." He then goes on to say

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that the latter occasioned "idleness, unlawful games, unthriftiness, and other enormityes in the laborers, servants, and others of the said. town," that "divers thefts and robberies and felonies were committed," that the town was not yet walled, nor had it either "Mayor, Sheriffe, Bayliffe, or other head officer than the Steward of the Lord of the Manor, nor any prison or goale."

In response to so strong a case the right at Sanctuary was removed from Manchester to West Chester (Chester), which had no such trade of merchandise, and had a strong goal, a Mayor, &c. In connection with the right of Sanctuary, several houses in the town were devoted to the accommodation of those who sought refuge. To each of these was attached a chapel with an altar, to which inmates might retreat if necessary. Tradition says that one such house stood at Hyde's Cross, where the Old Boar's Head stands, and another in Old Millgate. Whilst the alterations in Smithy Door referred to were in progress a small building with an oriel window and the remains of a statue of the Virgin Mary was discovered. The matter aroused much interest, and it was the general opinion of antiquaries that the building had formed a chapel connected with one of the Sanctuary houses of more than three centuries before.

Contemporaneous with old Smithy Door was the old Salford Bridge, to which I hope to refer to later.

### **OLD SALFORD BRIDGE**

#### **p.33 (Image of the Old Bridge in the Gallery)**

When nearly seventy years ago the old Salford Bridge, over the Irwell, near the Cathedral, was taken down, after a life of over four and a half centuries, there disappeared from view one of the most interesting relics of the early days of the town.

Before the days of bridges fords were in general use and excavations made more than a century ago seemed to point. to a ford having crossed the river where the Victoria Bridge of to-day stands. Succeeding the ford was a wooden bridge, some of the supports of which were discovered more recently by workmen engaged in digging out foundations on the Salford side. After this came the stone bridge of three arches, between which were built small angular recesses. The bridge was only wide enough for one vehicle to pass over at a time, and the footways being very narrow the recesses served as retreats for foot passengers.

The earliest recorded reference to the bridge is dated 1368, when Thomas del Bothe, a yeoman, residing at Barton, in the Parish of Eccles, in his will directed the payment of £30 to the Salford Bridge. In addition to this we are told that during his lifetime Bothe or Booth built, at his own expense, a little chapel that stood on the bridge. Travelling being dangerous in those days, in chapels like this travellers offered thanks for the completion of a journey, or prayed for safety during one in which they entered.

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Three times tell an ane bead,  
And thrice a Paternoster say;  
Then kiss me with the Hold Rood  
So shall we safely wend our way.

In 1588 the bridge was seen by John Leland, the antiquary, who thus describes the Manchester of his day. "Manchestre, on the south side of the Irwel river, standth in Salfordshire, and is the fairest, best builded, quickest, and most populus tounne in all Lancastreshire, yet is in it one Paroch chirch, but is a College, and almost thorowhowt dobleilyd. There be divers stone bridges in the towne, but the best is of three arches over Irwell. This bridge divideth Manchestre from Salford, the which is a large suburbe of Manchestre. On this bridge is a praty little chapel."

### **CHAPEL CONVERTED INTO A PRISON.**

At the time of the Reformation the little chapel or chantry was closed. and in course of time there being no prison in the town, it came to be used as such. In the records for 1573 we therefore read that: "What person soever shall be found drunken in any alehouse in the towne shall be punished all night in the Dungeon, and pay sixpence to the poor," and further that if the drunkard could not pay the fine, the publicans had to pay it for him. The dungeon was still in use as such to 1628.

On September 25, 1642, the Royalists under Lord Strange commenced. the siege of Manchester. Lord Strange approached from the direction of Stretford to Deansgate, and Sir John Tyldesley attempted to force a passage of the bridge from Salford. This was continued

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for a week. at the end of which period the besiegers raised the siege and left the neighbourhood.

### **MANCHESTER'S FIRST IMPROVEMENT ACT**

At this stage a period of a century passes without any record concerning the bridge, During this interval the population of both towns steadily increased, as did consequently the traffic passing over the bridge. This led to important changes. In 1775 an Act of Parliament was obtained for the purpose of widening several of the streets in the town and for laying out new ones. This was the first Improvement Act granted to the people of Manchester and in accordance with it the first street improvement scheme in the history of the town was commenced. It seemed to be a natural development of this policy that the only thoroughfare for vehicular traffic between the two towns should be improved.

Aston, writing in 1804, says that until 1773 "it was highly dangerous for foot passengers to meet a carriage; and it was often a work of labour for persons not very active to get over the bridge on a market day, as they were often obliged to take refuge in the angular recesses which at that time were on both sides of the bridge, to escape from impending danger." Therefore it was that in the year named the bridge was widened on the side nearest to "th' owd church."

The dungeon or prison was removed, and the approaches to the' bridge were widened.

Of the dungeon which stood on the arch nearest to Salford a few more words should be said. It was of two- storeys, the lower one of which was below the level

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of the bridge, and was haunted by rats, and it was said that one man confined there on a charge of drunkenness had his toes eaten away by them. The flooding of the river was also a source of danger to prisoners, and about 1760 a man was found drowned in the prison, the only opening into the lower room being the doorway from inside. The bridge having been widened, it continued to be used until 1837, when it was decided to take it down and build a more modem one. On September 7 it was finally closed to traffic, and the work of four centuries before was demolished. For the convenience of foot passengers during the period of reconstruction, a temporary wooden bridge was erected.

### **THE MODERN BRIDGE**

On March 3, 1838, the first stone of the present bridge was laid by Mr. Elkanah Armitage, boroughreeve of Salford. This was on the Manchester side, and three months later the first stone on the Salford side was laid by Mr. J. Brown, boroughreeve of Manchester. In the

columns of the "Manchester Guardian" for March 27, 1839, appeared the following statement, which will give some idea of the rude and primitive manner in which the old bridge had been constructed - "On removing the keystone of the arch on the Salford side the whole of the masonry from the keystone to the centre pier fell over at once in to the river, precipitating three or four of the workmen into the river: but, fortunately, none of them received any more serious injury than considerable fright and a thorough ducking. On

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examining the centre pier it was found to be quite untouched and unshaken, each of the three arches having merely pressed upon or rested against the outer surfaces of the pier and abutments." One wonders how the old bridge had stood so long.

The progress of the erection of the new one suffered several delays. Thus on October 16, 1838. much of the stonework was washed away by a flood, and Mr. Gannon, the contractor, endeavouring to save the centres of the arch, had his leg broken; and on January 7, 1839, the centres were thrown down during a tremendous gale. On Much 23, of the some year, however, the keystone was set by Mr. Humphrey Trafford, and on June 20 the bridge was opened with a grand procession. It was christened after the young Queen, the second anniversary of whose coronation was celebrated on the opening day. The total cost was £20,800, and the first vehicle to cross the bridge was a wagon belonging to Messrs. Lupton and Adamthwaite, brewers, Cook-street, Salford. It was not until 1851 that the Queen passed over the bridge. On October 10, coming from Worsley, she entered the city, being received by the Mayor on the bridge, an arch sixty feet high having been erected on the Manchester side.

Prosaic and commonplace as the bridge may appear to the passer-by, its site, as we have seen, has witnessed many changes, and through the various stages of the city's development has played an important part. [Note: The bridge would become known as the Victoria Bridge]

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Continuing the serialisation of:

### **'Short Stories about Failsworth Folk '**

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#### **ANOTHER FINE CHARACTER**

which Moston had was that of old Thomas Lancashire, who, up to his death, was the income-tax collector for the district, and who, in the old days, faithfully served the township in the capacity of assistant surveyor and highway rate collector. Lancashire was quite a different stamp of a man to Owd Gimp. He was the very essence of quaintness and integrity. In his time, Moston was governed by a vestry, and there have been some lively doings at these annual Vestry meetings. When I came to reside in Moston, it was the custom of the old farmers to whip up their friends to this vestry meeting, to vote for their nominees. After the meeting, at Streetfold

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School, the whipped-up ratepayers used to be taken to "Th' Owd Bell," and there treated with drink for the votes they had given at the meeting. When I came to Moston, I had a part in striking a blow at this system of clique representation, and I am pleased to say we succeeded in killing it. I remember at one vestry meeting there was a proposal to advance the salary of Lancashire, the assistant surveyor. The old man would have none of this. In his honest and quaint way, he said, "Aw dunnot want my salary raisin'. Aw've never ax't for it, an' it'll be time to raise my salary when aw ax yo'." And so the honest old man refused to have his salary raised. There are not many officials of the present day who would take the same straightforward course as Lancashire did. In reading his accounts at one of these vestry meetings, he



mentioned an item of what had been paid in repairing a road in the township. There was a half-penny in the item. An old man in the audience sang out, "Never mind th' hawpenny, Tummy; we ha' no time to bother wi' th' hawpennies neaw." "Aye, but yo'n ha' to have um," replied Lancashire. "Aw shall render an account to th' uttermost farthin'." At this same meeting there was a little, undersized, deformed man got up to speak. A person in the audience, not knowing the man, and thinking he was speaking seated, sang out, to the amusement of the meeting, "Stond on thi feet, mon, stond on thi feet, theau bad-mannered busybody." It used to be quite an entertainment for me to attend those meetings in company with my old friend Ben'Brierley. I have often wondered why Brierley did not embody in a sketch the proceedings of the "Election of o'erseers an' surveyors." With incorporation with the city of Manchester, these meetings have become things of the past, and the old characters have also departed with

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the new order of things. If some of the former inhabitants were to return to the scene of past times, they would now scarcely know the district in which they once lived and played their parts.

#### **A CURIOUS MOSTON CHARACTER,**

who used to figure prominently at the vestry meeting, was Old Downes, the philosopher of Hall Street. Downes was as quaint as he was original, and he was one of those men who had an abounding hatred of "red. tape." I remember, on one occasion, someone had been referring to the Local. Government Act of 1888. Downes got up in the meeting, and, waxing quite eloquent in his denunciation of the Act, said, "Be hanged to this Local Government Act. It's nowt but an owd tin can 'beawt bottom in it." Whenever Downes was seen coming into the meeting, there would be such running remarks as follow made by the audience: "Hello, here's owd Downes comiri'. Neaw then for summut abeawt Hall Street." At that time Hall Street was in a most wretched condition, and the then existing rural sanitary authority seemed powerless to remedy the state of the street, and so it became an annual grievance with Downes. He suggested on one occasion that the name should be changed to Ichabod Street. It will be remembered that Ben Brierley lived and died in this street. I remember going once to see Brierley, shortly after Downes had given it the new name. The street was ankle-deep in mud. On reaching Brierley's house, I was telling him of the desperate ettort I had had to wade through the dirty street. Brierley related. the following amusing incident connected with it. He said: "The other day I was coming down the street, when I saw an old woman

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putting a shovelful of ashes on the street. I said to her, 'I see you are quite busy this morning.' 'Aye,' replied the old dame, 'it's time some on us begun a-mendin' th' street, for there's awlus somebody pokin' fun at it. Ther neaw talkin' ut changin' its name to 'Dicky Bob Street.' But win not ha' this new name, will we, Mesther Brierley? If t'other neighbours 'ull nobbut help me, win mend it eaurselfs."

Such was the condition of the street before incorporation. With the new order of things, the street got paved and put in a good state of repair, and I believe old Downes lived to see his dream of a "good street" realised.

#### **MOSTON TEETOTALERS.**

New Moston was once noted for its teetotalers. There was old Elijah Dixon, the Chartist, who suffered imprisonment for his views. Then there was that sterling, and humorous character Christopher Hodson, and likewise William Heywood. I remember the last-named was such a teetotal enthusiast that he erected in his garden a tall monument, on which was written, in cut stone letters, the following:

"WATER IS BEST."

"Temp'rance beverage, good as can be,  
Better far than rum or brandy;

If this truth provoke your fury,  
Let horse and ass be judge and jury."

Heywood was not only a teetotaler, but he also had a strong aversion to tobacco. I remember coming home with him once, from Oldham, in the train. A number of Platt's workmen got in the compartment, some of whom would persist in smoking. It was not a smoking compartment, and Heywood remonstrated with his fellow-passengers

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for infringing the bye-law. One of them, well knowing the veteran teetotaler, said, "Teetotalers are fit for nowt, an' they con do nowt, noathur." Heywood replied, "Well, I'm over seventy years of age, and I'll run the best man amongst you, one hundred yards, when we get to Failsworth." I patted the old man on the back, and said, "Bravo, Mr. Heywood, and I'll be your backer, and see you have fair play." "I knew Heywood to be a good runner, for I had seen him run a race in Sunday school sports. The challenge was accepted by one of the company, and, on reaching Failsworth, Heywood, on alighting from the train, called out, "Where is this man who is going to run me?" The man had, however, cleared off, and was nowhere to be found, and so Heywood had a walk-over, and he departed with his backer in triumph.

**LOVE AT THE WINDOW.**

**A STORY IN VERSE.**

I knew an honest country lad  
Who loved a village lass,  
That dwelt within an ivied cot  
Which he was wont to pass,  
And linger at the garden gate,  
Where he would there rejoice  
To hear in mellow, ringing tones  
His loving sweetheart's voice.

And, should he catch a glance of her  
While waiting at the gate,  
It mattered not if he at work  
Was thrown a little late;  
For he would then light-hearted feel,  
While passing on his way,  
To have his idol's image fixed  
Before him all the day.

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This loving and attentive swain  
Daily more bolder grew, Until at last he could not pass  
The cot wherein he knew,  
His pretty little sweetheart shed  
Her rays of gentle love,  
Which made her modest, humble home  
Seem like a sunny grove.

As days passed by, this village lad  
Grew more courageous still;  
And with a stick he one night went  
To tap the window sill  
Belonging to a little room  
Wherein his sweetheart slept,

Expecting she's have been surprised,  
And from her bed had eapt.

He thought aright, for she atonce  
Unto the window flew,  
And, seeing who was ther, she felt#Tat something wasto-do;  
And in a hasty manner, she  
Opened the window wide,  
And, with her fond heart beating fast,  
"Is something wrong?" she cried.

"no, no!" replied the lovesick swain, "My darling I have com  
To ask of thee one *sweet, sweet* word  
To carry with me home."  
The maiden. who reluctantly  
Had left her cosy bed,  
Sang "Treacle!" in her lover's ear,  
And from the window fled.

With feelings which w'twere folly to  
Attempt now to describe,  
This disappointed lover left,  
And to his home he hied,  
Where he that very night resolved  
This maiden he would wed,  
And never more the window tap  
To rouse her from her bed.

And very soon the village bells  
With music filled the air,  
Proclaiming loud, in merry peals,  
The wedding of the pair.  
Whene'er they talk now of the past  
His wife cannot refrain ,  
From slyly speaking of the night  
He tapped the window-pane.

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### **SOME STORIES TOLD BY OLD ROBIN.**

Some time since I was told of a noted character we had in the district, who had related some good stories to Ben Brierley, but "Our Ben" died before he could use them. I, therefore, sought out this character. He is known in the village as "Owd Robin." He has passed the midway between eighty and ninety years of age," but I found him to be hale and hearty, and possessed of a fine fund of rich, rough humour. I shall endeavour to relate what he told me in his own words and dialect, as near as I can, omitting a few of his more expressive and out-spoken words.

### **HOW "OWD ROBIN" GOT HIS "KESMUS" DINNER.**

When I asked Robin if he knew me, he replied, "Know thee! Aw should think aw do. Aw knew thee when theaw were a lad and worked i' th' brick yard; an' later, when theaw were a hondloom weaver. Talkin' abeawt weaving, aw'll just tell thee heaw aw once geet a good Kesmus dinner. Just afore Kesmus, i' 1856, aw were ut my wit's end as to heaw aw were to get a Kesrnus dinner.

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I had some work i' th' loom of a poor sort, an' could hardly mak' salt eawt uv it. Well, it coom to my ears ut ther' were a manufacturer i' Middleton, named Rose, ut had got a good order for a certain class o' woven goods. He were wantin' weavers, an', i' order to get 'em, he were offerin' a beauty of a sovereign to each weaver who would tak' eawt a warp. This wark he were givin' eawt they coed 'Double Bump.' As aw tow'd thee, aw'd a warp i' th' loom uv a' poor sort, but aw thowt to mysel', 'Come, Robin, theaw mun get a warp, an' a sovereign, an' mak' thysel' an' th' family a good Kesmus dinner.' Aw went to Middleton, geet a warp, an' a sovereign wi' it. As aw were comin' whoam wi' this wWarp, an' th' sovereign, aw kept turnin' the coin o'er, feart it would turn into a new farthin'. Eh, we had a fine Kesmus dinner eawt o' this sovereign. Th' childer doanced abeawt th' hearth-stone as lively as young kitlins, an' they made some rare marlocks wi' one another. When Kesmus had bin o'er some weeks, this Middleton manufacturer sent for my wark, but, theaw sees, aw'd never touched it, as aw had no' gettin' beawt t'other piece which I had i' th' loom. Aw sent him back word ut Owd Travis, th' drawer-in, were so busy ut aw could no' gate his warp, so he sent another weaver to tak' it off my hands."

"When aw'd woven my poor piece deaun, aw went. again to Middleton to see if aw could have another beauty warp. But by this time th' order were completed, an' wark were scarce ut every place. Looms were standin' idle i' every loom-heawse, an' weavers were at the'r wits' end what to do. So aw tow'd Rose's putter-eawt ut aw wanted to act square wi' him, an' if he'd find me warp aw'd weave this sovereign off ut two shillin' a cut. Th' chap were anxious

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to get his sovereign back, so he feaund me a warp, an' for six months a w'd wark whilst t'other weavers were idle. Talk abeawt perpetual motion, it were not in it, compared wi' my constant wark. T'other weavers wondered heaw it were as aw could ha' wark, an' they could no'. But, theaw sees, aw used my wits, as well as my honds, an' that were th' sacret o' me gettin' my Kesmus dinner, an' wark besides, for six months."

**HOW ROBIN GOT CREDIT AT A BADGER'S SHOP.**

"But aw'll tell thee another bit uv a skit, an' heaw aw geet five weeks' credit at a badger's shop (a grocer's). It were at a time when th' trade were slack, an' hond-loom weavers were bein' hard put to it heaw to keep body an' th' soul together. Aw'd a family o' little childer, an' aw did no' like to see 'em clem.' Aw'd run a big shop score on wi Owd James Schofield, ut kept a badger's shop, near to Owd Sally Blackwell's. Owd James were a daycent sort of a chap, an he're a big Ranter (Primitive Methodist). But kind-hearted as he were, he could no' afford to let his stuff go eaut o' th' shop till he saw some signs of it bein' paid for. So he sent word to me ut aw'd gone to th' length o' my tether, till aw geet some wark. well, aw could no' see my childer starve, when aw knew there were plenty o' summut to ate i' th' shop. Aw bethowt me 'uv a plan heaw to get some more credit wi' owd James. Aw went deawn to Manchester wi' my empty wallet, an' aw managed to scrape twopence together. Aw went i' th' Shudehill Market, an' bowt a big, thumpin' cabbage wi' this money. Aw put

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this cabbage i' my wallet, an theaw knows, a cabbage is very mich like a warp i' booath shape an' size. Aw went marchin' off whoam wi' this wallet o'er my shouder, as merry as a cricket. When aw geet to owd Schofield's shop, he're standin' at th' dur, an' he seemed quite pleosed ut aw'd gotten, as he thowt, a warp. "Theaw con neaw ha' some more groceries," he sais. Well aw geet fiv weeks' credit eawt o' thatcabbag, afore owd james feaund me eawt. Aw've no deawt he could have expressed his feelin's in thoose two lineso' Sam Laycock's, where a chap says to th' owd Bellman:

"Eh, theaw rascal!" aw sai, "to do tricks ssich as these,  
Wherever dost t' think theaw'll ha' t' goa when theaw dees?"



## BLUCHER AND HIS ALE SHOT

When Robin told me this story, he said, "Theaw'd know owd Blucher?" "Yes," I replied, "I knew him very well." "Well," he continued, "theaw knew a queer stick, if theaw knew him. He're a funny tempered chap as ever lived. Did theaw ever yer heaw he once wiped an ale shot off?" "No," I replied. "Then," said roben, "aw'll just tell thee. As theaw'll happen recollect, Owd Blucher did a bit o' ostlin' for John Pearson, when Pearson keptth' Waffon an'Horses Inn, at th' bottom o' th' Hollinwood. Mrs. Pearson had gettun a new sarvant, an' whenhoo geet up th' first mornin', afore her Mesthur an' Missus, Owd Blucjer were potherin' abeawt i' the' yard. So this new sarvant axt Blucher wgat t'other sarvant did first thing in a mornin'. Blucjer replied, "Hoo never did nowt; hoo're a regular lazy beggar. Things abeaut have bin goin' to th' bad for a lung time." Pointin' to a door in the bar, Blucher said,

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'Does theaw see that dur? Aw dunno' believe it's bin washed for over two years. Theaw'd better get that done for a start.'" It seemed that Blucher's "ale shot" was down on the door, in chalk figures. "Well," continued Robin, "this new sarvant set to, an' gave this dur a good scrubbin', wi' soap an' water, an' in a very short time it were as cleon as a new-made penny. I happent just to be passin' at th' time, when Blucher beckoned me in, an' showed me heaw he'd got rid of his 'ale shot.' Then he went into th' yard, whistlin' like a lark. While aw're in, John Pearson coom deawn th' steers, an' into th' reaum wheere aw were. He said to me, 'Aw wonder heaw it is us Owd Blucher's so merry this mornin'?' 'Theaw'll ha' no need to wonder lung,' aw said, 'if theaw'll just look ut back o' that dur.' On lookin', Pearson feaund eaut ut Blucher ud had his 'ale shot' wiped eawt. 'Aye,' he said, 'aw see why he's so merry. He's startin' wi' a cleon dur again. That 'ale shot' uv his had bin runnin' on for over two years. An' I've no idea heaw much it were, noathur. Heawever, aws't ha' to let him off this time, for aw see this new sarvant us done it beawt a thowt, an' Blucher's not to blame.'"

## A WELSH GAMEKEEPER.

Old Robin told me, in his quaint and inimitable way, of an adventure he once had in Wales with a Welsh gamekeeper. He said :- "Aw once went on a shootin' expedition i' Wales. A farmer i' that country had given me permission to shoot o'er his lond. He said ther' were plenty uv rabbits to be had. But aw soon feaund eawt that what few rabbits ther' were on his lond coom fro' an

### p.169

adjoinin' preserve. Seein' this, aw planted mysel' at back uv a hedge, as near as aw could to this plantation, an' as th' rabbits coom eawt in th' fielt close by aw kept pottin' 'em off fro' th' fielt aw stood in, which aw'd consent to shoot o'er. As aw shot 'em, aw kept puttin' 'em in a hole 'at aw'd made. When aw'd bin at this game a while, an' had got a good bag uv rabbits, a fine, strappin' Welsh gamekeeper coom suddenly on th' scene. Aw could see he meant business, for he'd a big thick stick in his hont. He begun to jabber at me i' th' Welsh language, but aw could no' tell a word ut he said. Still, aw could see he're in a towerin' rage. Theaw sees it would no' ha' done for me to ha' run away, so aw stood my greaund to face th' music. Well, aw started a talkin' back to him i' broad Lancashire dialect. Eh, aw wish theaw'd yerd us two beggars pitchin' into each other - me i' good owd Lanky, an' him i' th' Welsh tongue. Seein' as aw're makin' no impression on him, aw said to mysel', 'Robin, theaw mun put a bowd front on, tak' th' bull by th' horns, an' get eawt o' this scrape as weel as theaw con.' So, aw raised my gun to my shoulder, an' pointed it straight at him. If he could no' understond my dialect, he knew what that meant. Theaw should ha' sin that beggar jump o'er a fence, an' tak' off like a wild goose. He set up a yell as if he'd bin a Red Indian. He ran across a fielt as fast as ony hare, th' cawves uv his legs swellin' eawt like two balloons. When he'd gotten abeaut fifty yards he looked back, an' aw raised my gun again. He set up another yell, took off, an' aw dunno' believe ut he ever looked

back ony more, or stopped till he geet in his own heause. When he'd gotten fairly eawt o' th' road, aw took my rabbits eawt o' th' hole, made my way to th' railway

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station, an' took th' first train to Manchester. Theau sees, that shop were gettin' too warm for me. Heawever, aw never yerd ony more abeawt it. Aw'll bet that Welsh beggar believes to this day, if he's livin', ut aw're some lunitic ut had brocken loose eawt uv an asylum, an' that he'd had a narrow escape wi' his life."

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### From the e-Postbag

Another query received with the hope that someone, somewhere, might be able to shed some light on these two photos!!

"I wonder if you can help me trace the significance of this item. I have no idea what the *Merry Makers* were. It is inscribed with my mother's name and shows she would have been a "member" aged 5 to 9 going by the dates on the inscription. Mum lived on Schofield St, Oldham at this time.

Many thanks for any information,"

Regards,

Linda Dewar

If anyone can help Linda in any way, you can email her at < [lindacdewar@gmail.com](mailto:lindacdewar@gmail.com) >



Front



Back

The back of the medal reads, MERRY MAKERS, Jean Shoebridge, 1944-49 and there is what looks like a silver hallmark below the inscription..

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## Internet links for freely available books/texts

A monthly selection of links to mainly 19th century publications at the Internet Archive of Books & Texts website and on some occasions Google books or other free websites. Those included will be mostly out of copyright and available, as a .pdf, to read online or download to your own device. There is no need to sign up unless you want to 'borrow' the more recent, copyrighted publications which are available to read online but not download.

\* *A History of the Ancient chapel of Denton, in Manchester Parish : including sketches of the townships of Denton and Haughton,*  
by Booker, John, Pub. 1855

[HERE](#)

~~~~~  
\* *Handbook for Lancashire* (almost like a gazetteer ... dozens of adverts for foreign and British hotels etc.

G Phillips Bevan , John Murray (Firm ), A T Davidson, Publ.1880

[HERE](#)

~~~~~  
\* *Housing conditions in Manchester & Salford*

Marr, T. R pub. 1904

[HERE](#)

## MLFHS FACEBOOK PAGE

A short selection of entries from the MLFHS FACEBOOK PAGE ...  
since the last newsletter :

\* Scottish Indexes Search Our Record Sets

As well as the global search it can be useful to search our historical record sets individually to find those elusive ancestors!

[HERE](#)

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\* How to find name change records in the UK

Paul Blake looks at the records for tracing someone who legally changed their name

[HERE](#)

~~~~~  
\* Nursing Stories from Archives+

[HERE](#)

~~~~~  
\* John Grenham – Irish Roots

Catholic Parish Map Confession

We just put up much-improved maps of the Catholic parishes of Ireland, the usual all-singing, all-dancing... with a nice auto-complete search.

[HERE](#)

~~~~~  
\* Researching with our POW and Internee records (National Archives)

[HERE](#)

~~~~~  
\* North West Film Archive

75 years ago Manchester said goodbye to its first generation of trams.

Catch a glimpse of the last one in this BBC newsreel of the time shared with the permission of

the BBC Archive team.

[HERE](#)

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\* How to find WW2 POW records

[HERE](#)

~~~~~  
\* How a "poor bloke" in Salford invented the UK's first ever bus service

[HERE](#)

~~~~~  
\* The Workhouses in Ireland

[HERE](#)

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\* I Could Have Been a Judge... My Unhappy Relationship with Latin

[HERE](#)

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\* It is 50 years since the creation of Greater Manchester  
Striking photos of Manchester and Salford taken 50 years ago take us back to 1974  
Manchester Evening News

[HERE](#)

~~~~~  
\* The Victorian Commons - "I shall persist." Joseph Brotherton (1783-1857) and late hours in the Commons.

[HERE](#)

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\* Victorian wars:

What wars took place during the Victorian era, and how can you research them?

[HERE](#)

~~~~~  
\* The deadly health scare that left people across Greater Manchester suddenly paralysed

[HERE](#)

~~~~~  
\* How to find bankruptcy records online

[HERE](#)

~~~~~  
\* 17th century history: The best websites for family history

[HERE](#)

~~~~~  
\* Why Irish townlands are important

[HERE](#)

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

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

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**PETERLOO : the Bi-Centenary**

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](#)



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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***The Website of Oldham Historical Research [Group]***



For more local articles, images and information, please visit the website [HERE](#)

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**Need Help!**

**Oldham Local Studies and Archives**  
**CLOSED on the 30<sup>th</sup> November 2023**

From their website:

*In preparation for our new home at Spindles the service will close at 84 Union Street on 30 November 2023. A temporary service will operate from Oldham Library in 2024 until the Spindles site is ready. We will not be able to accept new donations or provide access to physical archives during this time. Our digital resources will be available as usual.*

*Opening hours*

*We are open Mondays and Wednesdays to Fridays, 10am–5pm, Tuesdays 10am-2pm, and Saturdays 10am-4pm.*

[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](http://Peterloo-Manchester)  
Ranulf Higden Society (Latin transcription) - [Ranulf Higden Soc.](http://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](http://Manchester-Regional-Website)

### Some Useful Sites

GENUKI - [Lancashire](http://Lancashire)  
Free BMD - [Search](http://Search)  
[National Library of Scotland](http://National-Library-of-Scotland) - Free to view, historic, zoomable maps of UK :  
1891 - Oldham and locality [HERE](http://HERE)  
Online Parish Clerk Project : Lancashire - [HERE](http://HERE)  
British Association for Local History - [HERE](http://HERE)  
and for their back issue journal downloads - [HERE](http://HERE)  
Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire, website, [HERE](http://HERE)  
and for their back issue journal downloads, website, [HERE](http://HERE)  
Internet Archive ... The Internet Archive offers over **24,000,000** freely downloadable books and texts.  
[HERE](http://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](http://HERE) and Research guide [HERE](http://HERE)  
Historical Maps of parish boundaries [HERE](http://HERE)  
Regiments & Corps of the British Army (Wayback machine) [HERE](http://HERE)  
Special Collections on Find My Past [HERE](http://HERE)  
FmyP - The Manchester Collection [HERE](http://HERE)  
Goad fire insurance maps of Manchester [HERE](http://HERE)  
Cheshire Parish Register Project [HERE](http://HERE)  
Huddersfield Exposed [HERE](http://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)



## For the Gallery

### ***Oliver Cromwell in Manchester***

This statue of Oliver Cromwell was originally sited in Victoria Street, Manchester (commemorating the Siege of Manchester in the English Civil War). It was taken away when part of Victoria Street was redeveloped and subsequently erected at Wythenshawe Park. (It was sculpted by Matthew Noble in 1875 and removed from Victoria Street in 1968.)

Attribution: ***HERE***

Photograph taken 1960 by Ben Brooksbank

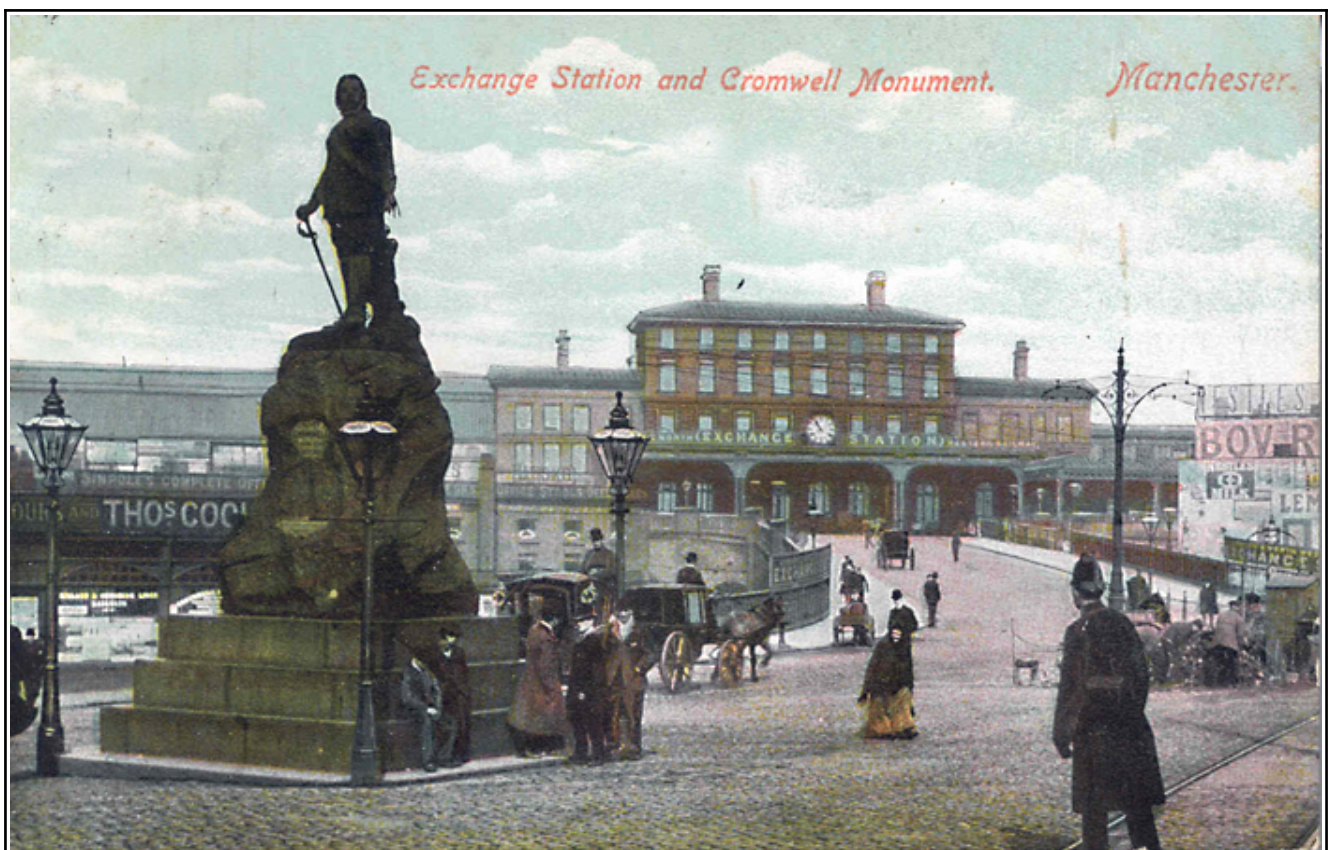


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***Early Postcard - Cromwell's Statue, in Manchester***



***Exchange Station and Cromwell Monument, Manchester***

Attribution: Thomas Cook Group plc, CC BY-SA 2.5, via Wikimedia Commons





***Cromwell's Statue in Wythenshawe Park***

Attribution: Cnbrb, CC BY-SA 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons

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The following images are taken from :

***Old Manchester. A Series of Views of the More Ancient Buildings in Manchester and its Vicinity, as they appeared fifty years ago.***

Drawn By James Ralston, and Others

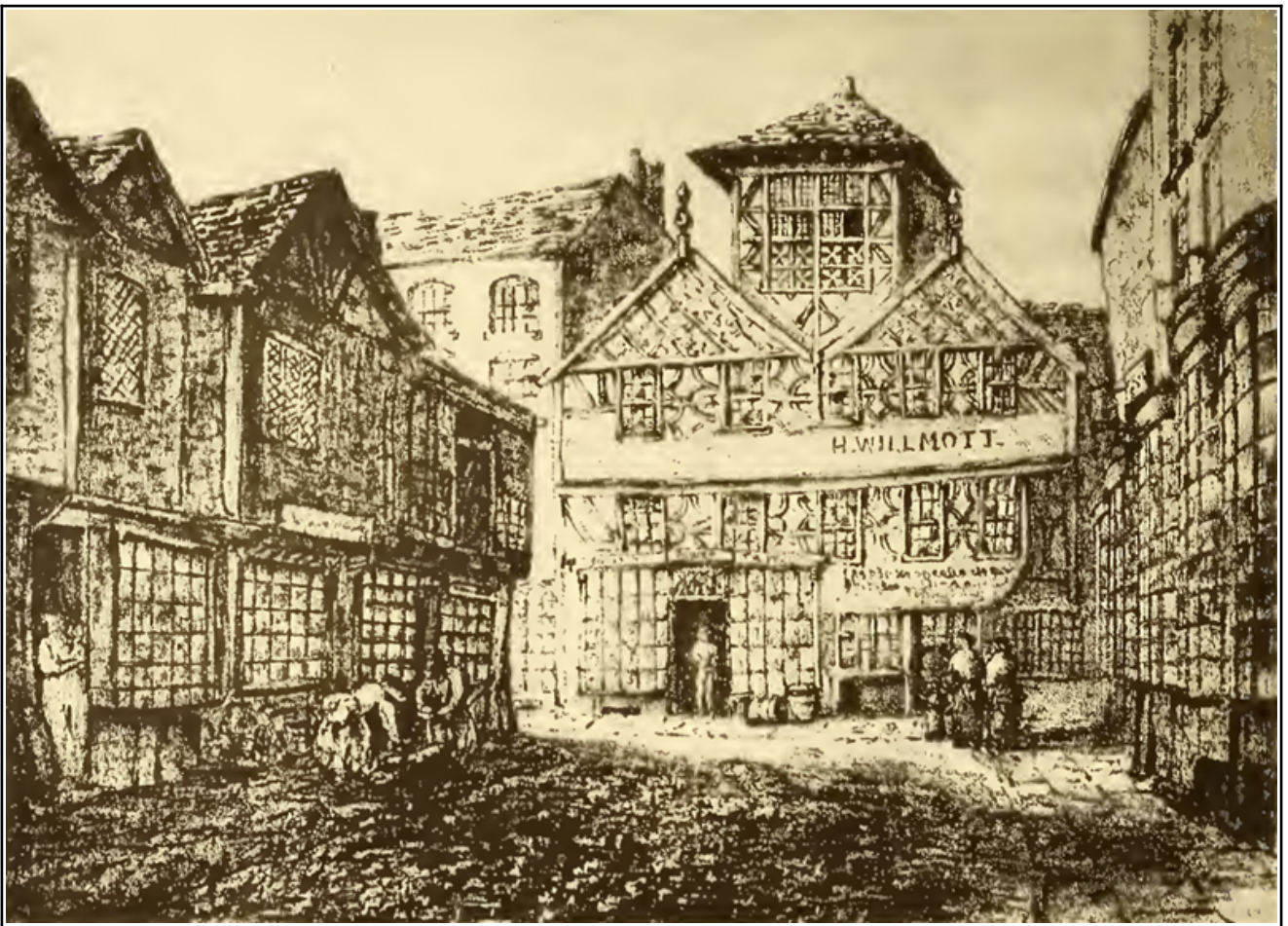
With an Introduction by James Croston, F.S.A., F.R.Hist.Sc. published 1875.



**plate 31 *Ancoats Hall***

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**Plate 15 Smithy Door**



**Plate 14 Old Salford Bridge**