

Bolton's Genies

The Monthly Newsletter of the Bolton Family History Society

Edition 117 – February 2024



Watercolour by Bolton Artist, Paul Titterton

This month's photograph is of the old Astoria Palais de Danse on the corner of Bridge Street and St George's Road. Many readers would have spent a happy evening on Valentine's Day with friends, partners or former partners. How many would have caught the last bus - just after 11 pm - No 30 to Dunscar via Astley Bridge as seen in the painting? Anyone missing it would have a journey by Shanks's Pony. Those interested in Paul's paintings should log on to Bolton Art Circle.

Sourced by Ron Cole

Editorial Musings

Following Wayne Ashton's fascinating talk about Bolton textile and engineering industries connections with Russia one of our regular zoomers, Diane Greasley, contacted Wayne. There was an interesting outcome. Diane and Wayne discovered that Diane's 2x great grandfather married Wayne's 3x great grandmother. Diane and Wayne are pursuing their family connection and possible links to Russia.

Rita Greenwood supported by Ron and I were pleased to represent BFHS on Radio Bolton FM's Community Corner on Wednesday 14 February. Rita's expertise and skill shone through and the broadcast was a success. Community Corner is a useful source of information of life in and around Bolton.

Best wishes

Cath Cole

Information and Updates for Members **Catholic Records**

MLFHS have a website for Catholic Records - visit
<https://www.mlfhs.uk/databases/catholic-records>

Tillotson's Mercury

There have been 9,164 index entries uploaded to the MLFHS database. These relate to Tillotson's Mercury Newsletter November 1939 – March 1946.

Tillotson's (Bolton) Ltd was the publisher of the Bolton Evening News and other publications. The in-house Mercury Newsletter was created to keep the staff and former colleagues informed about what was happening to everybody during the Second World War.

After the war the seventy-five editions of the Mercury Newsletter were collected and published as a single volume which members of the Bolton Family History Society have now transcribed. This volume links to images of the original Newsletters where more information may be found.

Thanks to Graham Holt of BFHS and his four volunteer transcribers who did this work.

Horwich Loco Works Staff Records

The MLFHS's database now has 11,189 records of staff from 1867 to 1931. The records contain information about employees including their name, age on entering, their occupation, date they started employment, their rate of pay and the date they left.

Bolton Fletcher Street Workhouse

33,154 records have been added to MLFHS's database. The records contain information regarding the admission and discharge registers of the Fletcher Street Workhouse from 1837 to 1861. In 1861 Fletcher Street Workhouse was replaced by the Fishpool Workhouse.

These records marry up well with the much larger transcript of the Fishpool Workhouse Creed Books to provide a mostly continuous record of Bolton's poor from 1837 to 1911 - a total in excess of 130,000 records.

Thanks to Graham Holt of BFHS and his volunteer transcribers who did this work.

Members of MLFHS can access the database at the MLFHS website. Members need to log-in and click on Search to enter the Great Database. Enter the surname of the person and the year of search - it is better initially if you choose +/- 5 years. On the next page choose 'Member Results' and click on it. Then scroll down successive pages to see if your ancestor is there.

Non-members can join Bolton Family History Society at the MLFHS website for an annual fee of £15. Join on-line and gain immediate access to the MLFHS's Great Database which contains over 1 million references.

Pauper Ancestors

"Who Do You Think You Are" had an interesting article by Peter Higginson in this month's edition about Workhouse Records. There are some interesting links as follows:

Relieving Officers Application and Report Book - link: (Ancestry.co.uk)
www.tinyurl.com/BedfordRelievingOfficer

Pauper Examination Books - link: www.tinyurl.com/WandsworthUnion

Workhouse Medical Officer's Report Book - link:
www.tinyurl.com/AmpthillWorkhouse

Cottage Homes Admissions/Discharge Register - link:

www.tinyurl.com/Hornchurchcottageshomes

Medical Officer's Relief List - link: www.tinyurl.com/MedicalOfficersReliefList

Infirmery Admission Register - link: www.tinyurl.com/InfirmeryAdmissions

Religious Creed Register - link: (Findmypast)

www.tinyurl.com/ReligiousCreedRegister

Interesting Fact: The largest workhouse in England was on Brownlow Hill, Liverpool; it had a massive 3,500 places and it must have been an intimidating place to enter.

Our regular venue is Bolton Golf Club, Chorley New Road, Bolton BL6 4AJ, although this may vary occasionally due to circumstances beyond our control. Any changes will be announced on our Facebook page (link <https://www.facebook.com/BoltonFHS> accessible without subscription) and in this newsletter. It is always advisable to check before leaving home. <https://www.boltongolfclub.co.uk/contact/how-to-find-us/> provides helpful directions.

Talks are usually provided by a visiting speaker, but occasionally speakers may deliver their talks by zoom. This happens when the speaker, who is known to be a first-rate expert in their field, is based some distance from Bolton. Those present at the golf club and zoomers will see our speaker streamed on screen. It is not necessary to book a place to attend the golf club in person, but it is essential to book for a zoom place at <https://www.mlfhs.uk/bolton/events>. The link will be emailed to you several times.

Meetings are on the first Wednesday of most months. The golf club opens for roomers at 7.00 pm for a 7.30 pm start and zoomers can sign in from 7.15 pm. The club has a bar and tea or coffee is available. We have a table with recycled genealogy books and magazines, Godfrey maps of local areas and discounted equipment.

Meetings from other branches of the MLFHS are available and free to all members. These meetings, like ours, may be live, zoomed or hybrid. <https://www.mlfhs.uk/> is the link for events.

Recent Events

February Meeting

Northerners: A History from the Ice Age to the Present Day

This month Brian Groom, journalist and writer gave a talk based on his book of the same name. He began by providing his answer to the question what is the North and who is a Northerner? (Where people who identify themselves as northern live). His definitions are flexible because boundaries have shifted over time. Although the Scottish border of 1237 remains fundamentally the same to this day, some counties such as Cheshire were originally in Mercia rather than Northumbria.

The earliest northerners were likely members of a hunting group, perhaps among those who crossed from Europe over Dogger land, the ancient land bridge. There have been other major fluctuations in climate and geology over the ages. For instance, a dinosaur skeleton was discovered in York and named Alan after the palaeontologist who discovered him but, 175 million years ago when it died, this area was south of the equator. More recent evidence of early occupation is found in hand axes discovered in Wiltshire, probably belonging to Homo heidelbergensis who used stone blades. A settlement from 9,000 BCE was also found near Scarborough. In Roman times, the area was home to the Brigantes, whose queen, Cartimandua, made peace with the Romans, and perhaps because of this is not as well known today as rebel queen Boudica. During the Roman period, six emperors visited the north, the first of whom was Hadrian whose wall was the biggest Roman project in Britain. In the third century AD, Britain became self-governing and was divided into Britain Inferior (north) and Superior (south and Wales).

After the departure of the Romans in 409 AD, there were many migrants from northern Germany, and Northumbria grew in power and independence. King Oswald of Northumbria introduced Celtic Christian missionaries to his kingdom and was the first English king to die a martyr, in battle against Mercia. The Northumbria of the Middle Ages is known for many notable people and events; the Venerable Bede, born in Jarrow (present-day Tyne and Wear) , and Alcuin born in York, both therefore Northumbrians. There were also great monasteries such as Lindisfarne, missionaries, and famous libraries. Unfortunately, the political organization of Northumbria was unstable as it relied on continual expansion through conquest. In 793 AD, the Vikings attacked Lindisfarne and in 876 AD they took York. Scandinavians in the north of England (converted to Christianity and intermarried). It is estimated that today there are 900 loan words in English from Scandinavian language). Vikings from Dublin expelled King Eric, also a Viking, in 954 AD.

William the Conqueror faced several revolts in the north and responded harshly, hunting down rebels and “harrying” northern lands. Towns and crops were burned, and many died of starvation as evidenced by population and land value decreases. Six hundred years of border warfare with Scotland ensued and smaller kingdoms within the area extending from the English Ribble and Humber valleys to the Scottish Forth, regularly changed allegiances between England and Scotland, concentrating more on the profits of cattle thieving, feuding, arson, kidnapping, murder, and pillaging. Their soldiers became known as Border Reivers, a term that is often now romanticised. Their skills when disciplined were admired and some also became mercenaries. Crime flourished. The 12th and 13th centuries saw development of industry (wool spinning and weaving) and monasteries and population growth. In the 14th and 15th centuries, Northern landowners provided soldiers for the Hundred Years War and the Wars of the Roses and gained political influence as a result.

The Tudor period began the ascendancy of the south over the north, which became marginalized. The North was conservative in religion and largely supported the Royalists over the Parliamentarians, culminating in revolt. The Pilgrimage of Grace, a revolt against Henry VIII’s break with the Catholic Church and the dissolution of the monasteries, began in [Yorkshire](#) in October 1536, and spread to other parts of [Northern England](#) including [Cumberland](#), [Northumberland](#), [Durham](#) and north [Lancashire](#). It included 30,000 people. In the 17th Century Civil war, socially conservative northerners tended to be Royalists, although there were some exceptions. Bolton for instance supported Parliament and was the site of a massacre by Royalists in 1644. Manchester also supported the Parliamentarians. In the Jacobite uprising, Charles Stuart arrived in Manchester but found few volunteers for his cause.

With the start of the Industrial Revolution later in the 18th century, populations rose and there were huge local changes as work moved to factories from homes. There were several economic and geographic reasons for the dominance of the north at this time. There was available investment capital and high average wages as well as economically liberal policies. The north possessed valuable and much needed natural resources such as rivers and coal for power as well as a large port at Liverpool enabling importation of cotton fibre and export of finished goods. There was abundant iron and chemicals and existing cottage industry with skilled workers. Not to mention the invention of the spinning mule by Samuel Crompton in 1779. This all allowed the development of steam power, the textile industry, and the railway, as well as steel production. The north became an engine of growth and attracted many immigrants from Ireland and elsewhere in search of work. In 1693, Lancashire’s economy ranked 35 of the 39 counties but by 1843 it was second. The years 1790 to 1850 saw huge population growth, bringing increased production but also increased urbanization, and accompanying disease and loss of livelihood to factories. Luddites protested the loss of traditional work and mechanization. The Year without Summer (1816) and the accompanying harvest failure, and the Corn Laws which kept bread prices

high resulted in widespread privation. This culminated in the Peterloo massacre of 1819, when Hussars were called in to disperse a large protest in favour of universal suffrage.

The 19th Century saw another influx of Irish escaping the potato famine and a subsequent backlash. Slavery was initially supported by northerners as they benefited from the slave trade and from the cheap cotton produced in the southern U.S. In the 1860s American Civil War, the north initially supported the American South. A cotton famine occurred due to overcapacity and the blockade of the US south. Opinion towards slavery shifted however, after it was abolished in the US at the end of the American Civil War.

The textile industry flourished after this, and Bolton became a boomtown with 216 mills. Population grew across Britain. In 1800, London was the only town with a population greater than 100,000 but by 1891, there were 23 and much construction of civic buildings. At the same time the role of women was changing, and the period produced writers such as the Brontes and Elizabeth Gaskell and activists such as Josephine Butler who worked successfully to end coverture and criminalize child prostitution. It also saw the beginning of the women's suffrage movement with the activist Lydia Benn. Some in society now had leisure time and this saw the creation of parks and building of libraries and the establishment of spectator sports. By the 1880s, Blackpool was thriving as a working-class holiday destination.

The Edwardian period saw peace and prosperity but also union organization, suffragettes, and the formation of the Labour Party. In 1908 there was industrial conflict in the cotton, shipbuilding, and coal industries. The North tended to support the Liberal or Labour Parties, except for Lancashire which had a strong working-class conservative population. The year 1911 was a high point in the influence of the north when it had 36.6% of the UK population and 30% of the economy but after this began an industrial decline in part due to lack of innovation. Population share has now dipped to 27.5% and economic share to 20%.

During the interwar period, unemployment in the north was 2-3 times that of the south. On the other that hand, wages grew for those who were employed. Hollywood dominated the film industry, but Britain had its own movie stars including Gracie Fields who later went to Hollywood and George Formby, actor, singer, and comedian. Gracie famously insisted that four of her films be made in Britain. During WWII, the factories of the north were important to the war effort but were also targets for bombing. Liverpool was the most heavily affected but Manchester and Sheffield also suffered damage. The post-war period brought demand for higher standards of living and some prosperity, but the industries of the north were falling behind as of the 70s and 80s and the cotton industry had died out. There was some prosperity in a few northern towns and seaside resorts.

The Arts Council was formed in 1946 to promote increased opportunity for all, following WW2. For 70 years, they worked closely with Government and

partners to give more people opportunities to enjoy and benefit from great art and culture, with special attention to regional writers and artists. Several films and television programmes were made about northern life. The 60s also brought new music in the form of the Mersey beat, most famously the Beatles but also many others. In the 1980s Manchester's music scene produced many bands including Joy Division.

Brexit has brought uncertainty about the future. Many northerners voted to leave the EU, but the impact is not yet clear. The economy still shows a clear north-south divide.

Thus, Brian ended his 10,000 years of northern history in 45 minutes. One question was asked, regarding how it was known that Samuel Crompton left only £25. Brian admitted the source for this story is not known.

Upcoming Events

Ray Jefferson from his new book 'The Bolton - Bridgeman Connection'.

Wednesday 6 March 2024 - HYBRID MEETING

Ray, a local author and lifelong photographer, believes photography should be valued according to the contribution it makes to society. He is the chairman and a photographer for the voluntary community and arts organisation Bolton Documentary Photography, meet the team (boltondocumentary.co.uk).

The story tells how the Bridgeman family (later elevated to the Earls of Bradford) were involved in the story of Bolton over 350 years and it is a development of the exhibition which was mounted in the parish church in 2017.

Maggy Simm will talk about Henry Dawson's presentation album and T Taylor Ltd of Bolton

Wednesday 3 April 2024 - HYBRID MEETING

Maggy is a retired teacher who has been involved in local history for many years, latterly as a member of the u3a. She will explain how she became interested in Henry Dawson's album.

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Advance Notice of 2024 BFHS Speakers



Catholic Research in Lancashire

1 MAY 2024 - HYBRID MEETING

Kate Hurst - Kate will tell us that she has passionately studied family history since her late teens. She spent endless hours at the Lancashire Archives in Preston and is now familiar with some of the records there. She is keen to help those researching in the north-west of England.



How the American Civil War affected the Lancashire Cotton Famine

5 JUNE 2024 - HYBRID MEETING

Stephen Irwin - Stephen, a historian, recently retired after more than 17 years as the Education Officer for Blackburn Museum. His talk will explore the impact of the American Civil War on the people of Lancashire.

Speakers for the remainder of 2024 will be published each month in this newsletter. Speakers have been invited for all months up to November 2024 and are available to view on the following website: <https://mlfhs.uk/Bolton/events/meetings>

Bolton History Centre and Bolton Records

Bolton History Centre is now open in the Central Library. The Centre has informed us that “It will be located in the far right hand corner of the main library; in one of its original positions!

The telephone number for any local history and archive queries and requests for material is 01204 332185 or send an email request to archives@bolton.gov.uk Requests take seven days to turn around and will either be looked at in the lab at or the museum at Crompton Place. References to some of the websites:

<https://boltonremembers.org/> has some of the WW1 & WW2 records we have found for Bolton military personnel either born, resided, or enlisted in Bolton.

<https://bolton.spydus.co.uk/cgi-bin/spydus.exe/MSGTRN/WPAC/HOME> Spydus catalogue for local studies search.

<https://www.boltonlams.co.uk/history-centre-1> This link is the History Centre page for the services that are offered to researchers. It gives some information about archives and the records that are held.

An interesting website sourced by Bolton News – “Unclaimed estates in Bolton revealed by Treasury for June”

<https://www.theboltonnews.co.uk/news/23622610.unclaimed-estates-bolton-revealed-treasury-june/>

Lancashire Records

News from The Archives



<https://www.ukbmd.org.uk/>



Lancs OPC www.lan.opc.org.uk



Lancashire Archives News and Events - their latest newsletter and more - <https://sway.cloud.microsoft/7mSlCj789vgwTDac?ref=Link>

Lancashire Archives Facebook page - <https://www.facebook.com/lancsarchives>

Activities and Events from MLFHS Branches



Please note these events are all free to subscribed MLFHS members, £3 to guests.



Manchester branch –

Next meeting – 13 March 2024 at 11.00 am - 2.00 pm in Manchester Central Library. “Showcasing the 60th Anniversary of our Society and our 3.4 million records.” An open event - see displays of archival resources, from Salford vehicle registrations to the massive sets of Catholic Parish Records. Speaker: Trustees (to be confirmed)
Cost: Members - Free and non-members - Free

Advanced notice of a future event - Saturday 13 April 2024 - 11.00 am - 2.00 pm
MLFHS Spring Fair - Manchester Central Library - Free to everyone.



Oldham and District Branch

Next meeting: Saturday 9 March 2024 at 2 pm
“Made in Manchester” - a talk by Brian Groom

A hybrid meeting in the Performance Space at Oldham Library - MLFHS members are free and visitors £3.00 All are very welcome
Booking for zoom attendance is on Eventbrite. Free to everyone - All are most welcome.



Anglo Scottish Branch

Next meeting: Saturday 2 March 2024 at 2.00 pm
“Annual Meeting + a talk on CWGC” by Ken Nisbet.

An online meeting via Zoom

Booking via Eventbrite - Free to members Non-members £5.00

Other Local History Societies' Meetings

WE ADVISE CHECKING THEIR RESPECTIVE WEBSITES PERIODICALLY FOR UPDATES
AND DATES OF MEETINGS.



Halliwell Local History Society <http://goo.gl8erYyr>

Email: enquiries@halliwell-lhs.co.uk

Next meeting – At the time of publication of this Newsletter there is no notice of a future meeting for Halliwell LHS



Turton Local History Society <https://goo.gl/adx4GM>

Next meeting - At the time of publication of this Newsletter there is no notice of a future meeting for Turton LHS

Email: mlandypublishing@yahoo.co.uk

Westhoughton Local History Group – <http://goo.gl/XNugI5>

Next event - 21 March 2024 - “Bibliophilia” A talk by David Kaye - The love and lure of books.

Future event - For various reasons, WLHG have re-scheduled their visit to HAREWOOD HOUSE. It will now take place on THURSDAY 28 MARCH 2024. Please contact CINDY RITCHIE on 07818 212939 for full details.

The cost is £34.50 per person.

Meetings usually take place on the 3rd Thursday of the month in Westhoughton Library, Market St, Westhoughton BL5 3AU.

Horwich Heritage Centre - <http://goo.gl/fSPsj>



Next event – 12 March 2024 at 7.30 pm - “John Wesley’s Local Legacy” - A talk by David Kaye

This event will be held at Horwich Community Centre, Beaumont Road, Horwich BL6 7BG. It is free to members. Non-members are welcome with a £2.00 admission fee payable at the door.

Open Days, Admission Free, are held most months on Saturdays between 10.00 am - 1.00 pm

New Exhibition: “Centenary of Horwich Harriers” On now till 31 May 2024 at Horwich Heritage Centre with free admission.

Key Information about Bolton Family History Society

<https://www.mlfhs.uk/bolton>

•Speaker Bookings: Boltonprog@mlfhs.org.uk

•Bolton helpdesk: boltonfhishelp@gmail.com

•Newsletter Archives since July 2014:

<https://www.mlfhs.uk/bolton/newsletter/archives>

•General Society enquiries to the BFHS Secretary, Christine M Ellis

bolton@mlfhs.org.uk

•Manchester Research - email a brief enquiry to <https://www.mlfhs.uk/virtual-help-desk>

or visit us at

•Bolton Facebook page <https://goo.gl/n99qtW> 976 Likes and 1K people following on Facebook

•Bolton Research Collection on the MLFHS website: (For members only)

<https://www.mlfhs.uk/bolton/research>

•Join the MLFHS/BFHS at: <https://www.mlfhs.uk/join>
