

'e-Owls'



Contact us :

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

October 2021

MLFHS - Oldham & District Branch Newsletter

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Branch News :

Branch Officers for 2021 -2022 :

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



Where to find it

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



BALLOON STREET IN 1870,
SHOWING THE ORIGINAL C.W.S. PREMISES.
CWS, Balloon Street, M/c, in 1870,
'The Story of the CWS 1863-1913'
by Percy Redfern, pub.1913

Oldham Branch Meetings :

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

The newsletter will be sent out as usual. Meetings are now in place using the zoom app.
The Society Journal will go out to members as usual. It relies heavily on Branch reports and what the Society has been doing at events and fairs etc. However, this sort of news is in short supply! To fill the pages with interesting articles, it's hoped that more people will write up family stories and contribute them to the journal. Please refer to the page, 'Notes for Contributors', in the Journal, for information on how to send articles, etc.

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

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### **Chairman's remarks :**

Hello, and welcome to the October newsletter. Autumn is upon us and the trees are turning into their lovely colours.

Earlier in September, Oldham Local Authority held their Heritage Week with some interesting talks. I went to a couple of these and learned about a chap called Frederick Scrivener Hilary Basil Boddington (1892-1965). What a story; what a life he had. The talk was really fascinating and I took some notes which I have written up for the newsletter. The day after, I joined a group for a walk round Greenacres Cemetery to hear about some of the WW1 soldiers buried or commemorated there. It was interesting to learn that some of them died by accident or medical problems or suicide. Very sad. You can read more about both events in the e-Postbag.

On a lighter note, We only have two more talks to go before our Christmas break so please go to our website pages on the MLFHS website and book your tickets for these events which will take place via Zoom.

I hope you enjoy reading the rest of the newsletter as Sheila, as usual, has put in some very hard work.

Best wishes

Linda Richardson

Chairman, Oldham Branch

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

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Editor's remarks.

Hi Everyone,

At last, society seems to be moving forward with some optimism as restrictions are lifted. I had my first 'expedition', on public transport, to Manchester a couple of weeks ago, to see an exhibition at the City Art Gallery and then lunch out with friends a few days later. All I will say is that, it felt safe and comfortable and I thoroughly enjoyed myself!

Our Branch zoom meetings continue to be well supported and the talks have had many appreciative comments in the chat box and via emails. As a Branch, at the moment, we are fully committed to continue offering meetings on zoom, if at all possible, when we are back in the library. However, the details of 'how' still have to be worked out when we can try out our ideas.

My 'virtual desk' is piled high, at the moment, with articles etc., for the website and the newsletters ... I'm offering my apologies here and now, if yours is amongst them and I seem to be taking a long time to deal with it! All I will say is that, they all look really interesting! One of my first jobs, from the list, will be to upload a list of names of the original 28 Rochdale Pioneers from 1844, which was kindly sent to us by our September speaker, Sophie McCullough, to include on our Branch pages on the MLFHS website. I'll include a link to in next month's newsletter or you'll find a link (hopefully, soon!) on the '[What's New](#)' page on the website.

Since the last newsletter, 2 more articles have been added to the [Pictorial Index](#) :

(i) *The Albiston Family – 19th Century Latter Day Saints in Oldham, some of whom left for America*. From Craig Albiston, in Houston, Texas

with an article which was in an earlier newsletter and which relates to the same subject:

ii) *Early 20th century memories of the 'Tin Mission,'* on Neville Street, Oldham. From Eileen (Mills) Taylor & Sylvia (Mills) Cornell

As always, old books are top of my list in the search for interesting or informative snippets and transcripts from two I discovered are in the Mixed Bag. I hope you also find them interesting, as I hope to include more chapters from them in forthcoming newsletters.

In the e-Postbag we have contributions from readers about the demise of some of our old department stores; two events from the Oldham Histories and Heritage Days; and a story of a

missing ancestor who turned up fighting in the American Civil War.
New additions to the Useful Links section, garnered from the MLFHS facebook page are to the *Find my Past Special collections* and, in particular, to the *Manchester Special Collections*.
Lastly, I've added a permanent (hopefully useful) link to the 'Where to Find it', Oldham & District Branch index page, on the website, which can now be found underneath the list of Branch Officers, above.

I hope you continue to enjoy reading the newsletter,
Sheila

Although I am always more than happy to receive articles, pictures etc., for the newsletter, copyright is always a tricky issue so do please make sure that you have the right to use any text or illustrations that you send! It is also helpful if you include mention of your source material.
You will retain copyright of any contributions that you send, whilst allowing MLFHS to re-use the material in an appropriate manner.
Editor reserves the right to edit any contributions before publication.

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

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

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## Oldham & District Branch

### Monthly Meetings

Please continue to try and support the Branch, with your online attendance, whilst we are unable to hold our meetings in Gallery Oldham. The zoom app is free to download and use.  
It would be of great help to us, for the smooth running of the talks (especially if your first!!), if you would look at the two help sheets that we have prepared, [HERE](#) and [HERE](#), one of which will also help you in downloading and using zoom if you are a new user of it. Please be aware that the zoom app on tablets and phones does not offer as many user-personalisation settings as found on a laptop or desktop computer.

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Details, of the full programme of talks, are on the 'Meetings' page of the Branch website [HERE](#) .
Booking for an online talk is essential and bookings are on [Eventbrite](#) or by email to the newsletter or website editor.

Note: Please make sure you enter your email address correctly in both the required boxes on Eventbrite. If you have registered for the talk, but you don't receive a meeting link on the Thursday before a talk, please email me at < Oldham_newsletter@mlfhs.org.uk > and I will send one.

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

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



Saturday,  
11th Sept.  
at  
2 pm



## ***A History of the Co-operative Movement; From the Rochdale Pioneers to the Present Day***

A free, Illustrated online talk given by Sophie McCulloch, of the Co-op Archives,

*Using materials from the Co-operative Heritage Trust Archive, the talk gave an overview of the co-op movement from its beginnings to the present day. It covered the Rochdale Pioneers and their influence on the global movement, the introduction of the 'divi', and the growth of the Co-operative Wholesale Society (CWS). More than just a shop, this talk will explore how the co-op was an integral part of peoples' lives in many other ways.*

Trying to take notes, for this write-up, was more than a little difficult! Sophie's presentation was packed full of detail and pictures ... a really interesting, enjoyable and informative talk. This was one of the occasions when you might start off believing that you know something about a subject and then realise that, actually, you've known very little!

Sophie began with the question, "What is a Co-op?" The short answer is, of course, "An organisation that is owned and controlled by its own members for their mutual benefit." Sophie then went on to give us some background to this concept of 'co-operation' which could be traced back to as early as 1761 and the Scottish Fenwick weavers. In response to poverty and social difficulties, a number of other co-operative groups were started, and founded, over differing periods of time during the following years. The Rochdale Pioneers were unique in that they went from strength to strength and became the model upon which future co-operatives, around the world, would be based.

Times were bad; labour was cheap and food (meaning mainly bread for the labouring family) was expensive. In 1844, twenty eight men wanted to alleviate this hardship, both for themselves and for their fellow workers. They met together in order to discuss forming a co-operative and set about raising money, at 2d or 3d a week until, with the help of a small loan, they had £28. They named themselves the 'Rochdale Equitable Pioneers Society' and found premises for their shop at 31, Toad Lane, in Rochdale which, in earlier times, had been a woollen warehouse. By the time the 28 men had paid off their overheads, they had very little left for stock but opened their doors for business with butter, sugar, flour, oatmeal and a few candles and, after an uncertain start, went on to succeed beyond their wildest expectations. One of their initial 'objects' was to provide high quality, unadulterated goods which, in those times, was pretty unusual! Commodities would be sold at the normal retail price but the profit made would be returned to the members of the organisation. This was the dividend; the 'divi' as many of our mothers, grandmothers and gt-grandmothers would know it. Even today, so many of us still know our family's number for the 'divi'! The 'divi' was one of the unique keys to their success. Not only did it encourage loyalty by buying better quality goods at the co-op shop, at no higher price than elsewhere, it also gave the families a sense of ownership when they shared in the profits.

So successful had they become that, by 1862, they were attracting visitors from abroad to view this new 'model' of a co-operative enterprise. More and more societies were formed and became part of the Co-op movement. As trade increased the Rochdale Pioneers needed bigger premises and in 1867 moved into a new, purpose-built building, only 100 yards away.

Oldham's own Industrial Co-operative Society was officially formed in November 1850, adopting the same rules as the Rochdale Pioneers. The first shop, on Manchester Street, was opened on December 26th, 1850. As increasing numbers of Co-op societies were set up and, over the years following, the co-operatives provided more and more services for their workforce and members. In addition to the dividend, there were libraries, excursions, holidays and competitions (eg. for window dressing). There were opportunities for education, inter-store sports, drama groups and much more. The Society provided medical care, and had its own fire brigade. In 1901, the Co-op Crumpsall Biscuit Factory introduced the first 8 hour working day for its workers.



Going back to the earlier days, it was realised that it would be advantageous to have their own manufacturing base, to ensure quality and increase profits. The first serious discussions took place at Jumbo Farm, near Rochdale, in 1860. Not quite so straight forward as it might at first seem, as there was no legal legislation in place for setting up a wholesale co-operative. It took 2 years before the 'The Industrial and Provident Societies Act of 1862' "permitted one society to hold shares in another and thus allowed the creation of the wholesale society..." Subsequently, factories were opened manufacturing a whole range of goods to be sold in their own shops, including such items as footwear, clothing, foodstuffs (eg., jam) household items etc., etc. In 1869, the CWS opened its first warehouse in Balloon Street, Manchester. In 1896, the Co-op Middleton Jam & Preserve making factory was in production and to ensure a quality product the decision was taken to grow their own fruit. As a result, land in Shropshire was purchased for that purpose. A large house, already standing on the land, was later converted into a convalescent home for Co-op workers.

The success story continued up to the outbreak of war, in 1914. Circumstances forced changes. There were shortages of food and raw materials, plus the demand for suitable manufacturing premises to be turned over to producing war necessities. In the past, the Co-op had largely distanced itself from politics, although some of its founding members had come from Chartist and Reform backgrounds, but there was a growing feeling that the Co-op needed to be represented in Parliament. In 1917 an Emergency Conference was held, with the object of having a voice in Parliament, through the Co-op Party and its own MPs. This small Party merged with the Labour Party in 1927.

In the latter half of the 20th century, the Co-op activities began to decline or contract to meet the needs of a different social and economic structure. However, as we all know, it did survive and, in 2007, the Co-op Heritage Trust was set up, "to preserve the heritage assets of the co-operative movement." Their website tells us that, "We also provide secure storage for and access to records in our National Co-operative Archive; housed at Holyoake House, in Manchester where members of the public visit by appointment to do their own research."

Finally, we came to mention of the Women's Co-operative Guild, first formed in 1883. Its beginnings had been in a 'Woman's Corner' column in the 'Co-operative news'. Initially theirs was a 'support function' for the aims of the Society but their interests became more diversified. Local groups came together, in turn linking with other groups, which in turn affiliated to the national organisation of the Women's Co-operative Guild. The Guild members were proactive in improving women's rights in all spheres of social and industrial reform for women, and eventually became a strong voice in the demand for Women's Suffrage.

Afterwards we had Q&A from the zoom chat box, in which there were many appreciative comments from the attendees.

#### **Footnotes :**

- (i) after 1867, 31 Toad Lane (t'owd lane) was used by different trades but in 1931 was purchased and eventually became the Museum we know today in it's own little conservation area of Rochdale.
- (ii) Website of Co-op Heritage Trust : <https://www.co-operativeheritage.coop>
- (iii) George Jacob Holyoake, '*The History of the Rochdale Pioneers*' pub. 1908, (available for free download at <https://archive.org/details/texts> )

Our many thanks to Sophie for such an interesting afternoon.

Sheila Goodyear

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OCTOBER MEETING ... on zoom



Saturday,
9th Oct.
at
2 pm



The Amazing Mary Higgs

'Student, Pioneer, Wife and Mother; Undercover Tramp and Social Reformer.'

An illustrated, free talk given by Carol Talbot, author of the above book.

Mary Higgs arrived in Oldham in 1891 when her husband, the Reverend Thomas Higgs, took up the ministry at Greenacres Congregational Church. She remained living and working here for the rest of her life.

Saturday 9th October 2021, at 2pm

Booking is on Eventbrite [HERE](#)

You can learn a little more about Mary Higgs, [HERE](#) in Carol's introduction.

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## NOVEMBER MEETING ... on zoom



Saturday,  
13th Nov.  
at  
2 pm



### *Family Life in the Industrial Revolution ... the autobiography of Benjamin Shaw, 1772-1841*

A free talk given by Dr Alan Crosby, on zoom

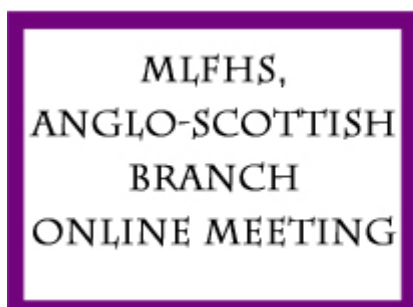
The talk covers everything from child labour, via bastardy and terrible working conditions, to problem teenagers and early death; the world of your Lancashire ancestors, 200 years ago.

Booking, and more details of the talk, are on Eventbrite [HERE](#)

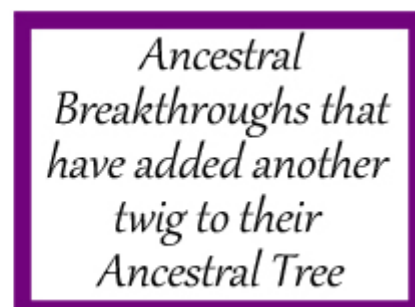
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MLFHS Branches delivering their monthly meetings and talks on-line

Anglo - Scots ... October Meeting



Saturday,
16th
October
at
2:00 pm



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**Bolton ... October Meeting**

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|----------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| MLFHS<br>Bolton Branch<br>online<br>Meetings | Wednesday,<br>6th<br>October<br>at<br>7:30 pm | <i>'Research<br/>using education<br/>records'</i><br>A talk given by<br>David Tilsley |
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**Bolton Website Pages** [HERE](#) for more information and booking details.

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MLFHS updates

**The MLFHS Family History Help Desk ...
is now open again**

**As situations change, almost daily, there is no certainty of anything!
For updated information, please check the website [HERE](#)**

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**MLFHS, Manchester Ancestors, on-line talks :**

|                                         |                                              |                                                                                                       |
|-----------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| MLFHS<br>aka<br>Manchester<br>Ancestors | Saturday,<br>2nd<br>October<br>at<br>2:00 pm | <i>'Getting the most<br/>out of your<br/>Ancestry DNA test'</i><br>A talk given by<br>Hilary Hartigan |
|-----------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

|                                         |                                                |                                                                 |
|-----------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|
| MLFHS<br>aka<br>Manchester<br>Ancestors | Wednesday,<br>20th<br>October<br>at<br>7:00 pm | <i>'Famous<br/>Mancunians'</i><br>A talk given by<br>Jean Bailo |
|-----------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|

|                                         |                                                |                                                                                                 |
|-----------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| MLFHS<br>aka<br>Manchester<br>Ancestors | Wednesday,<br>27th<br>October<br>at<br>7:30 pm | <i>'The Two<br/>Irish Wives of<br/>Friedrich Engels'</i><br>A talk given by<br>Dr. Aidan Beatty |
|-----------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

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MLFHS Online Bookshop: Is OPEN for business again [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 & Branch e-Newsletters**

MLFHS Manchester, and each of the MLFHS branches, publishes 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 MLFHS newsletter automatically; non-members can find them 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](#)      [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.

* None to include this month

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

**Please note ...**

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

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



Tuesday
12th
October
at
7 pm



80th Anniversary Talk :

'October 12th, 1941 : the Night Oldham was Bombed'

an illustrated talk given by John Fidler

Please note ... 2nd Tuesday, not our usual day.

Everyone welcome ... booking on Eventbrite [HERE](#)

Your support for our talks would be appreciated and, if you would like to join us for our meeting on zoom, or need more information, please email me at < pixnet.sg@gmail.com >.

Website [HERE](#)

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

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Saddleworth Historical Society & Saddleworth Civic Trust

No Meeting programmed at present.

Website [HERE](#)

Saddleworth Civic Trust: There are no meetings or events planned in September 2021. But it is hoped to start up again shortly after September.

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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 [HERE](#)

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Tameside Local Studies and Archives - Regular Sessions and Events

Website and programme [HERE](#)

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**Moorside & District Historical Society**

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Regional Heritage Centre :

Website [HERE](#)

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**'A Mixed Bag'**

Another old book I came across, when I chanced on a website called 'Good Reads', was called, '*Autobiography Of A Manchester Cotton Manufacturer : Or Thirty Years' Experience Of Manchester* ', pub. 1887.

Originally published anonymously, later research showed that it was written by Henry S. Gibbs. The reviewer had given it 5 stars, as had others who had read it. Intrigued, I read the review which included, "*The book itself is a lively, somewhat undisciplined narrative, with the fascination of first hand accounts of Anti-Corn Law rallies in the Free Trade Hall, visitors to Manchester such as Kossuth the feted Hungarian revolutionary and Queen Victoria (not together!), the great Manchester Art Exhibition of 1857, as well as the ups and downs of the cotton trade, and social and religious life in Manchester in the 1850s to 80s.*"

As 'historians' (for want of a better word, although it does seem a pretentious claim, at least on my part!) we are interested in the lives our Victorian ancestors might have led. For those of us in this part of Lancashire, and in particular around Manchester, Cottonopolis, it frequently leads us to look at the mills. Speaking for myself, my ancestors never aspired to any sort of station in life other than hardworking labourers who kept themselves out of the workhouse. In view of that, my research only ever, really, focused on the conditions 'on the floor' and in the back-streets. However, in a more idle moment, I started to read this autobiography from the other side of the social divide. My only comment is that, it made an interesting contrast ... but you might not want to expect too much empathy!:

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

Synopsis of Chapter I, '**Childhood and School Days**'

The author was born in 1829, in Bath, Somerset. His mother was of Irish descent and he had an older sister and two older brothers at the time of his birth and two younger sister who died in childhood. The chapter describes scenes in a happy, privileged childhood with an upbringing that gave him an enduring love of art and music.

Age five he followed his older brother to a school for "young ladies and gentlemen" where he learned to spell and read ... but remembered little else except memorising chapters from the Bible and a poem. There were games of 'fives' and 'leap-frog' to distract him into regularly playing truant. Age seven, and he again followed his brother to another school where, although he showed potential, he didn't make the most of his schooling and would suffer the

consequences, describing in great detail the caning he received and the ferocious punishment dealt out to other boys.

Notwithstanding, he believed that the school was a good one for boys not intending to enter the church or a profession. The curriculum was based on the "3 R's, Latin and French, and mental arithmetic." Art and Music "were not to be entertained" on the curriculum. One boy would spend his time drawing soldiers and horses, instead of working on his mathematical equations, and consequently punished as they were hastily destroyed. Years later, he wrote of visiting the studio, "of one of our eminent painters, a leading member of the Royal Academy ... his memory was not so good as mine, or else he did not care to dwell on the early days and the subject of horse soldiers, and its consequences, was shelved in the contemplation of a work then on the easel, and which he was preparing for the Academy Exhibition ..."

After a childhood bout of whooping cough, he had been sent to recuperate in Wiltshire where he found joy in haymaking, milking cows and riding a donkey. One of the most exciting events of his childhood was the opening of the railway line between Bath and Exeter and he and his brother "never lost the opportunity of watching the passage of trains between Bath and Bristol ... each engine bore its name in conspicuous brass letters, and were called respectively the *Arrow*, *Lynx*, *Stag*, *Dart* and *Fireball*."

When he recovered his health, he returned to school, going on to study Classics. Soon afterwards his father died, followed in the next few years by the deaths of his two younger sisters. The family circumstances had changed and it became necessary for him to earn a living for himself.

Aside from his early work, he found time to study politics, railed against the Corn Laws, and became interested in the ideals of Cobden and Bright. During the revolutionary year of 1848, he followed avidly the events in Hungary. "I began at that time to discern that Lord Palmerston was a great statesman."

Transcript: Chapter II

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

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### **REMOVAL TO LANCASHIRE—FIRST DAYS IN A COTTON MILL.**

AT about this time I received an important letter from Mr. John Thornton<sup>1</sup>, a Manchester cotton lord. He was an intimate friend of my brother, who had for some years resided near Manchester. In this letter I was asked if I would like to turn my attention to cotton spinning and manufacturing. It also contained an invitation from the writer to come at an early date and spend a week with him, if I thought favourably of the project. Nothing could suit me better. I promptly accepted the invitation, and on a gloomy morning in February, 1850, I left the London and North-Western Station at Bristol, at seven a.m., and was en route for Cottonopolis, which I reached at dusk, after the train had been several times stopped through a heavy fall of snow. It was not until I had reached Stockport, and was crossing the viaduct, which affords a comprehensive view of that town, that I began to realize the great change in my life about to take place.

There were the mills beneath me, of which I had heard so much, and gloomy structures they appeared; and it must have been the time for "firing up" with most of them, as there was scarcely a chimney visible which did not appear to be doing heavy duty. There was no limit in those days to the production of smoke. A master was

1. John Thompson

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not then, as now, liable to a compulsory appearance before the mayor and corporation for making more than a restricted quantity. If the municipal dignitaries are engaged in cotton, he may escape with a small fine - otherwise he is made to consume his own smoke or be for ever pestered by inspectors.

I had been making all kinds of conjectures. The sight of Stockport was not cheering to a novice,

and I almost began to wish myself in the West of England again. Then, I thought, what kind of a man am I going to see? Of course he would have a mill like those prison-looking buildings I had just passed. Of what earthly use could I be in such a place? I then began to picture in my mind Mr. Thornton's possible personal appearance - even his height and complexion. I had heard him well spoken of, and also that he dabbled in art and music. From the tone of his letter I concluded he was going to regard me as something more than a youth. So far, good. Had I not seen twenty summers? If I were not then a man, I ought to be one.

The train arrived at London Road, and in a few minutes later my cab stopped at a warehouse in Cannon Street, whither I had been directed to proceed. It was evening, and the street, which is a long, narrow one, was blocked with luries receiving bales of goods to be despatched by the night trains to their various destinations. The cabby was paid, and I found myself in a four-storied building, which seemed to contain sufficient calico to make shirts for the whole of London. I had to pass a window, through which customers and

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visitors could be seen before their entrance to the office. I soon discerned Mr. Thornton, for the contrast between a cotton lord and his clerks was marked and unmistakable. At that moment he was engaged, for it was market day, in settling an account for healds and reeds (used in weaving), about which there was a slight dispute, and I had time for a mental criticism of my new friend. It is remarkable that the decision I then arrived at of his character and disposition is the same I have since held, after thirty years of intimate acquaintance. After a hasty welcome and inquiry for those of my relatives whom he knew, we left his warehouse to catch the Bolton train, which left the New Bailey Station, at Salford, in time to reach the mill before the stopping of the engines. In those days the hours of labour extended somewhat beyond the restricted time of more recent Factory Acts. I think the time for stopping then was seven o'clock, but am not sure. During the half hour's journey in the train I had further opportunities of carefully inspecting Mr. Thornton. There was a fellow-passenger, who entertained him with some curious revelations concerning a native of the village towards which we were hastening and I watched the manner in which he received certain statements which were not complimentary to the absent person. On the whole I was favourably impressed.

The mill could be discerned from some distance, every window being lighted; the noise of the machinery also proclaimed its whereabouts long ere we reached it. I had already accomplished a long journey in addition to the shorter one we had

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just made, and was tired. The entrance into the babel of noise occasioned by the machinery, with its strange appearance, and the odour of oil and cotton, had a bewildering effect. I should have been glad to retire there and then to a quiet cup of tea. Mr. Thornton offered me a glass of sherry, and when I had declined it with thanks, proceeded to "show me through the mill." I think he wanted to daunt me. I was indeed daunted, but concealed the fact. He might have waited until the next day, for I was very wearied. The inconsiderate man took me entirely over the old mill, for it was an old one. The original proprietor had made a fortune in it, and was still the owner of the property, but it ought to have been long previously demolished.

From the scutching room we passed to those of carding, roving, and slubbing, to the mule and throstle, visiting those containing warping, beaming and twisting, and the slashing operations. From thence we got into the thick of looms which were busy in making twills and fustians, to the warehouse, where the weavers were continually arriving with large lumps of cloth which they deposited on a long table. But he had not yet completed the tour of inspection. Not only had the engines and boilers and William Meadows,<sup>2</sup> who had charge of them, to be seen and duly made known, but the drying and finishing rooms had to be visited, for Mr. Thornton not only spun warp and weft which he wove into all kinds of cloth but he manipulated the latter until what with perching and stiffening, ending, mending, dressing, and dyeing, the cotton fabric was made to resemble a piece of West of

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England broadcloth or a Yorkshire tweed. I was glad when he gave the word to leave the mill, which was pronounced shortly afterwards; but there were still some six or seven oiled and dirty books, densely columned with figures containing daily results of cotton manipulations, which had to be glanced over before we got clean away.

The night was dark and cloudy. There were no lamps, for the country about Kearsley was in those days wild and dreary, with only here and there a house, though mills and collieries abounded. After a twenty minutes' walk on cinder roads and pavements constructed of small pebbles, we reached the home of the cotton spinner, a pretty residence, though hardly discernible, with a garden and a carriage drive to the house. I had now to become acquainted with his domiciliary life, and I did not care how soon I did so, for I was almost exhausted. During the walk to the house speculation was rife as to the kind of lady I should find Mrs. Thornton<sup>3</sup> to be. On entering the comfortable home, which instantly impressed me with the neatness and good taste of feminine rule, we were met at the threshold by the lady herself. I shall ever remember the sense of relief which came over me on the first exchange of salutation. The sincerity of the welcome was unmistakable, which, added to the anxiety expressed for my physical condition in a quiet though decided tone, assured me that my visit, made under such trying circumstances, would be an agreeable one. The conversation at the tea table was intelligent and pleasant. There were many subjects and persons of which we could converse

3. Mrs. Thompson née Hampson

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in common, and I was gratified to notice the high estimation Mr. Thornton held of my brother, whose musical genius and general culture were a theme on which he dwelt rapturously. I discovered ere long my host was some years younger than his wife. Mrs. Thornton was a lady of mild manners, though evidently of a determined disposition; whilst her husband, on the contrary, had a nature inclined to be sanguine, and, I thought, somewhat frivolous. For instance, during the evening he said he should like to indulge himself with a pipe, and at the same moment cast an inquiring glance in her direction. Without raising her eyes from her crochet-work, she remarked, "You had better not, John." John, however, was intent on his desire for a fumous gratification (I did not smoke in those days), and produced from a cupboard a pipe almost as long as himself, at the same time offering me a duplicate. The wife was conscious of the presence of the "churchwardens," but her eyes were never raised from her work. Then came hesitation on the part of the would-be smoker, and a silence, during which the feminine eyes were not raised, but those of the husband met mine, as if appealing for sympathy and encouragement of which, however, I had none then. At length John said, "Must I rebel?" to which the quiet, determined lady only replied with a steadfast look at him, and the pipes returned to the cupboard. This little incident set me thinking, and determining, in my mind, the future management of so apparently a docile individual. The family consisted of two daughters, of the ages of four<sup>4</sup> and six<sup>5</sup> years respectively, whom I did not see until the next morning at breakfast time.

4. Mrs. Rawlins

5. Mrs. Sx

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After arranging to accompany Mr. Thornton to the mill the next morning at 5-40, and it being now so late as 11:30, we retired for the night. He set an alarm clock in my bedroom, to waken me at 5:15. He also had placed on my dressing table a tray containing a loaf, butter, and a cup and saucer, it being necessary to have refreshment before leaving the house so early in the morning.

I had gone to sleep, but only for a few minutes, when bang went the alarm, keeping on its furious tinkle as if it would waken the dead. For a few seconds I thought that the night had passed very quickly, but in a few more the door of the room opened, and Mr. Thornton, in his



night apparel, appeared, in a manner abject and profusely apologised after examining the clock, told me he had set it wrong. I said to him, half asleep, "To make sure, don't you think you had better set it wrong again, because two wrongs make a right?" This absurdity made him laugh so vehemently that presently I heard a female voice saying, "John, you have wakened Mary." John thus left me to repose as well as I might. The alarm afterwards discharged its duty faithfully at the set time, and when I had taken some hot tea which he kindly brought me, we started in the dark, though the stars were shining as brightly as they can in Lancashire. For want of a knife to cut it, I omitted to take any solid food with the tea.

This oversight was a serious one, and might have completely changed my future career.

After clearing the iron gates that protected his domain we were at once on the high road which leads to Manchester, and my ears were assailed by

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an extraordinary clatter to which they had not before been accustomed. On inquiring of Mr. Thornton he informed me the sound was caused by the tramping of the operatives going to their work, who were all shod in wooden clogs, which, on the pebbled causeway, produced the strange effect. The appearance of the women every now and then, when there was sufficient light to discern them as they passed to and fro, was equally strange. They wore no bonnets or hats. The covering was simply a shawl, with which they first made sure of the protection of the head, the remaining portion of the body being left to the chance of the shawl being capacious or otherwise. Being still in the darkness (how I pined for the light!) I could discern nothing of the previous night's walk, though the route was exactly the same. Presently, as we approached more nearly, I heard what was now becoming a familiar sound of the looms, for we were a trifle late, and the mills start very punctually to time, as the loss of a couple of minutes multiplied by six hundred hands means the loss of twelve hundred minutes, or two days of ten hours for an individual.

On reaching the office, Mr. Thornton at once divested himself of his coat, replacing it with a short jacket, more or less covered with cotton, at the same time handing me one for a like operation. We then sallied into the mill to repeat the tour we had made on the previous night, but as my conductor thought fit to enlarge on the merits and history of various machines, and how they performed their functions, it seemed an interminable time ere we again reached the office. Before

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arriving there, which was the most quiet place in the building except the boiler-house, I was introduced to William Meadows, the engineer, who was a native of South Wales. He had not been very long in the establishment. Mr. Thornton had a high opinion of his services, and described him as an able engineer and an estimable man. The engines were working smoothly and quietly as we entered his department, and he was calmly reading, by one of the gas jets, a book, which I observed was "The Hon. Baptist Noel on Church and State." He had one eye on the book, whilst the other followed the working of the parallel motion of the engine nearest to him. I had begun to feel very faint for want of my breakfast, and although much pleased with my new acquaintance, the great desire was to get away from all human beings at that moment. I had felt squeamish before I was half through the mill, and now I had difficulty in bearing up. By the time I reached the office I was nearly done for. After a few minutes' rest I rallied, and asking the bookkeeper for writing materials, I penned a long letter to my mother, giving her a graphic account of my experience, from the time I left the maternal roof to the present miserable moment. I told her of my hospitable reception, and of the goodness of Mr. and Mrs. Thornton, but also that the mill had well nigh made an end of me in one hour; it was therefore impossible I could pass my life, or even a portion of it, in such a terrible place. When the letter was finished, I pictured the inevitable disappointment it would produce on my mother. For some years I had been her youngest child. The rest of her children

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were settled in life, and she only required to see me fairly started in some promising path to be

rendered happy. She had endured great grief in the loss of my father, and afterwards of the dear girls Esther and Bessie; and though her grandchildren were cropping up in all directions, and they diverted her thoughts from the late afflictions, yet her uppermost desire for my success remained unfulfilled.

The writing of the letter and the thoughts it produced must have revived me. I began to feel better - moreover, it was becoming daylight. Somehow, I brightened up under the influence of returning light, and added a postscript to my letter. How many times in my life have I thought and talked of that P.S., which was to the following effect : "Do not regard the views expressed as final. Wait until you again hear from me. I will write to-morrow, after repeating the terrible round, and if with the same experience you may expect me shortly." I said nothing to Mr. Thornton, who was busily occupied with one thing and another, and at 8-30 we left for his house to obtain breakfast. He changed the route on this occasion, and we passed a good-looking church of the Barry architecture, wherein he informed me was a fine organ. We also passed other places of worship, and a Mechanics' Institution. He informed me the working classes were very intelligent, more so than in the West of England; also that the village contained some young men who possessed genius, and who, if encouraged and stimulated by those who had been favoured with greater opportunities, might become shining lights,

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enumerating a few of them, and giving their history. I took these remarks as a hint, but I was not in a philanthropic humour, and the young geniuses passed from my mind.

By the time we reached the house I was altogether a different person to that of an hour previously, but I was not able to take much breakfast. This circumstance was observed by the lady residing. She had also observed the

uncut loaf on my dressing table in the early morning, and correctly guessed the absence of a knife had been the cause, for which Mr. Thornton and myself were both censured - he for his neglect, and I for my "mock modesty" in not asking for

a knife. This was the first time I had seen her playful. She was much concerned on hearing of my experience at the mill, assuring me it was entirely due to the want of food, and that in future she would herself see after the knife.

I now saw the two little daughters. They were neat specimens of humanity, and full of fun, and spent all the time in examining the new arrival. The governess was present, but being a friend as well as governess she did not appear to

exercise much influence. On the whole, they carried out, as far as they were able under the circumstances, their mamma's strict notions of the correct demeanour of young ladies' in the presence of gentlemen.

The next morning, being fortified with bread and butter and hot tea, I again went through the mill ordeal with some variations, and came out unscathed. I then wrote another letter to the maternal, withdrawing the remarks previously

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made, and informing her she would certainly not see me before the week had expired, as I now viewed matters in a different light. During the three years that I afterwards diligently went to the performance of my mill duties at half-past five in the morning, which was some hours before my landlady and her husband thought it necessary to rise - locking up the house after I was outside, and slipping the key under the door - I only once omitted the essential bread and butter. On the occasion of my so doing I wished to ascertain if the effect would be the same as on that first morning. I was not similarly affected, however, for I had become seasoned.

Before the week-end expired I had taken kindly to the new life, and this fact was so obvious to Mr. Thornton that he suggested my remaining where I was, of becoming a cotton lord, and sending home for my wardrobe. It was, however, necessary for me to find lodgings, and here arose a difficulty. There was not a place in Kearsley where rooms could be found, until, after much inquiry and hunting, an old pensioner and his wife were discovered, who graciously offered to take me, on the assurance that I was a quiet young man, and would not give much

trouble - provided, also, I would not object to sit in the same room with the old couple. Of course I consented to this arrangement, under the circumstances, and in a day or two received my trunks from home, and found myself established in quarters of my own. I was sorry to sever the connection from the family with whom I had spent a memorable and happy week. Mr. Thornton arranged my

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salary in a satisfactory manner, observing that in devoting my services to him he wished me to "learn all I could, and practice all I knew." His wife continued to be interested in my welfare, frequently calling at my lodgings to ascertain if my wants were attended to.

The old pensioner, Mr. Thomas Crewes, was a tall, white-haired man, with a majestic mien. He had served in the Peninsula under Frederick Duke of York, and was a regular veteran. His wife had followed him in his campaigns. She was an ungainly personage, and much bent in figure. If she could have been restored to the perpendicular, her husband told me she would have measured six feet in her stockings. This was the personage with whom in future I should spend my evenings. Mr. C was a quiet and taciturn man. He was a good and consistent Wesleyan, and read his Bible with regularity and devotion. Indeed, of an evening he was rarely to be seen without the large volume outspread before him. Many were the discussions we had upon doctrinal points. He had not the slightest respect for John Calvin, whom he considered a "mistaken man," nor had he any reverence for the clergy of any denomination except the Methodists, whose teachers he deemed the best in the world, and the only ones worth hearing. Mrs. Crewes was altogether different to her husband, of whom I thought her unworthy. Her bent form was caused by rheumatism. She had an unpleasant sneer and a disagreeable voice, which she sometimes used vigorously, and I never observed her to ponder over the sacred volume as did her husband. Mrs. Crewes, however, had a

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great capacity for the use of tobacco, and she smoked from the largest pipe she could procure. Had I only been a smoker in those days, but I was not! Her favourite time for smoking was the same moment as that of my mid-day dinner. She considerably sat in the front of the fire-place, with her back to me, and the pipe being a long one and Mrs. C.'s figure semicircular, the bowl came directly under the chimney. The advantage I gained in the diminution of the fumes of her bad tobacco were more than counterbalanced by the hideous spectacle she presented during the operation of smoking.

The Crewes must have been fairly well off at that time. In addition to her husband's pension, which was a good one, and the sum I paid her for the use of the rooms and attendance, Mrs. Crewes derived some revenue through dabbling in leeches! In the window of the sitting-room I occupied with the old couple there was an imposing sign, informing the inhabitants of the neighbourhood that Mrs. Crewes kept and applied leeches of approved quality. She was also in great request with the well-to-do of the inhabitants in the event of a death, when her services for the proper arrangement and disposal of the departed were deemed indispensable.

There were no children; and it was no wonder, therefore, that with all these sources of income the Crewes should feel themselves justified in the indulgence of certain luxuries. These consisted on the part of the old woman, who had the lion's share (in addition to the unrestricted use of the "churchwarden"), in the proprietorship of three

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cats. I believe they also must have served in the Duke of York's campaign. The cats were not kittens nor young cats, but very old cats, and they were the exclusive property of madame.

There was also a dog, which was not a young one either, which was the property of the old man, of whom he was the companion, and in that fact lay the cause of the beast's misery, for he led an unhappy kind of life. Mrs. Crewes was a tyrant, as her meek man knew, as well as his dog. Although he was powerful enough to have pitched her through the window, notwithstanding her prodigious length, his only reply, when she dubbed him a "foo," and called him other as endearing names, was an extra swing

to the rocking chair in which he sat, and which, to my discomfort, he was frequently swinging when not reading his Bible. He was too pious to swear at her; too amiable even to answer her back when thus attacked. This endurance on his part only increased her anger. It was at such times the poor dog suffered. She punished the old man by kicking his four-footed friend, and only then would the hitherto long-suffering husband arise in anger, and declare in a voice of thunder he would endure it no longer!

More than once have I seen her clear away after this expression of righteous indignation.

There was no lobby to their house, which was a two-storied building, comprising four small rooms, consisting of my bedroom, their bedroom, the sitting-room and the kitchen. When either of the old people was tired of my company they could retire to the kitchen; when I was tired of theirs I found refuge in my bedroom, which, however, was

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only just large enough to hold the four-poster on which I slept. On the opening of the front door the whole of the sitting-room was exposed to the view of passers-by. On one occasion, when returning for the evening, on opening the door, I came suddenly on a spectacle. It consisted of a group of three women, who were sitting in a semi-circle around the fire-place. Each woman had a long "churchwarden" protruding from her mouth, and was blowing away as if her life depended upon the speedy consumption of the weed. I need scarcely say that one of this precious trio was my landlady, who, on observing my astonishment at the weird scene which presented itself to my gaze, set up an immoderate laugh, in an unearthly pitch, in which she was afterwards joined by the two other women. "What a sight for Shakspeare!" I thought. Surely he would have given all he possessed to have witnessed it. The nearest approach I have ever seen to it was in his play of *Macbeth*.

More next month.

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Sometimes, when we're thinking about the trades in which our ancestors were engaged, we can have a pretty good idea of what was probably involved, day to day. This would be particularly true if we were looking at the late 19th or the early 20th century, even before modern technology became so much apart of our everyday lives. However, if we step farther back in time, we don't have such a clear understanding about what the work might have involved. Recently I stumbled across a book published in 1827, called '*The Book of English Trades*'. It's crammed with woodcuts and brief descriptions of practically everything that might be defined as a trade. Over the months, I will add a few to the newsletters.

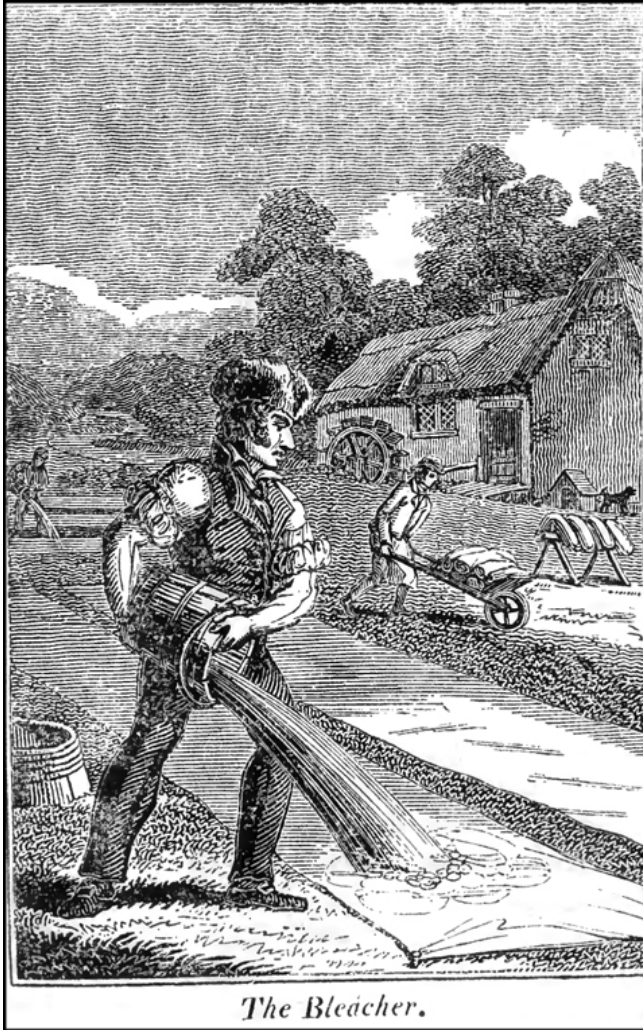
I'm going to start off with the 'Bleacher' because I have one in my family, around that time in what was then, a pretty rural Salford!!

THE BLEACHER.

Bleaching is the art by which those manufactures, which have vegetable substances for their raw material, are freed from the colouring matter with which such substances are naturally combined, or accidentally stained; and the pure vegetable fibre, deprived of these coloured matters, is left to reflect the different rays of light in due proportion, so as to appear white. Besides the spoils of animals, mankind, to supply their natural want of covering, have, in all countries, had recourse to vegetable substances, preferring those whose fibres excelled in strength, durability, and pliancy; and experience having proved, that flax and cotton were well adapted to such purposes, these substances have been very generally adopted, and formed into such cloths as the skill and industry of the weavers could execute.

It would soon be observed, that the action of water, together with that of the sun and air, rendered those rude cloths whiter than they were at their first formation; and since the first step towards refinement is to add beauty to utility, as the state of society improved, a desire to give them a pure and spotless white would naturally arise. The idea of white raiment being the emblem of innocence and peace, which seems to have been very early entertained, would

make every means for facilitating the removal of natural or adventitious stains more earnestly studied.



Accident would probably discover, that a certain degree of putrid fermentation carried off colouring matter from vegetable fibres. Hence the practice of macerating cloth in water, mixed with putrid urine and the dung of domestic animals, which has been continued to our days.

From the earliest accounts we have of India, Egypt, and Syria, it appears that these enlightened nations knew the efficacy of natron, (the nitre of scripture,) an impure mineral alkali, found in these countries, for combining with, and carrying off, the colouring matters with which cloth is stained; and it is still found in great abundance by the present inhabitants, and used for the same purpose. We are also informed by Pliny, that the ancient Gauls were acquainted with the use of a lixivium, extracted from the ashes of burnt vegetables, as a detergent, and knew how to combine this lixivium with animal oil to form soap. But though these nations appear to have early acquired some knowledge of the art of bleaching, the progress of improvement which they made in it, when compared to the

advantages which some of them enjoyed, was very inconsiderable. The same practices seem to have been handed down from one generation to another, without any material improvement. In India it would appear, that the art of bleaching, as well as that of staining of cloths of various colours, are not in greater perfection at present, than they are described to have been in the days of Herodotus. Even in Europe, when the arts, after they have been once introduced, have generally made rapid progress, the art of bleaching made very slow advances, till towards the end of the eighteenth century. At this period the oxymuriatic acid, and its effects, were discovered by Scheele; and its application to the art of bleaching, by Berthollet, has given it an impulse towards perfection unknown in the history of any other art. It now became evident that oxygen had an affinity with the colouring matters with which cotton and Linen manufactures are stained; and that, by a proper use of the alkalis, along with the oxymuriatic acid, these colouring matters could be removed, and the goods rendered white, in a space of time almost instantaneous, when compared with the former method of bleaching.

Upon these discoveries the present improved state of bleaching is founded. The machinery and utensils used in bleaching are various, according to the business done by the bleacher. Where linen or heavy cotton cloths are whitened, and the business is carried on to a considerable extent, the machinery is both complicated and expensive. It consists chiefly of a water-wheel, sufficiently powerful for giving motion to the wash-stocks, dashwheels, squeezers, &c. with any other operations where power is required.

After the process of washing by the dash-wheel, the water is compressed from the cloth by means of squeezers. The boilers used in bleaching are of the common form, having a stop-cock at bottom for running off the waste ley. They are commonly made of cast iron, and are capable of containing from three hundred to six hundred gallons of water, according to the extent of the business done.

The substances used in bleaching, are chiefly pot and pearl ashes, soda, soap, oxymuriate of potash, oxymuriate of lime, manganese, muriatic acid, and sulphuric acid.

The common operations of bleaching, consist of steeping, bucking, boiling, immersion in the oxymuriatic¹ acid, souring, washing, &c.

Steeping is a process made use of for cleansing the cloths designed to be bleached, from the substances used by the weavers in their manufacture, and is principally effected by means of an alkaline ley at a blood-heat.

Bucking is one of the most important operations in the bleaching of linen goods: it consists in boiling the cloths in caustic alkaline ley, by a heat gradually raised, and thereby dissolving, and taking off their colouring matter.

Boiling in the bleaching of linen cloth, is only used when the goods are nearly white with pearl ashes alone, or with pearl ashes along with soap, towards the end of the whitening process.

Immersion in the oxymuriate² of potash. The linens, after being clean washed, are steeped in it for twelve hours, then drained, and washed for being further bucked or boiled.

Souring is, in general, the last or finishing process in bleaching, as afterwards the linens are only further washed in spring water, in order to their being blued and made up for the market.

In preparing the sour, into a large fir tub, lined with lead, as much sulphuric acid is added to water as will give it the acidity of strong vinegar. The acid and water must be well mixed together before immersing the linens, which are generally steeped in it for twelve hours. Where washing is mentioned, it must be always understood that the linen is taken to the washstocks, or dash-wheel, and washed well in them for some hours. This part of the work can never be overdone; and on its being properly executed, between every part of the bucking, boiling, steeping in the oxymuriatic acid, and souring, not a little of the success of bleaching depends. By exposure, is meant that the linen cloth is taken and spread upon the bleach-green, for four, six, or eight days, according as the routine of business calls for the return of the cloth, in order to undergo further operations.

There are a variety of processes adopted for the bleaching of goods of different degrees of fineness: muslin, for instance, requiring a process varied from that adopted for coarse linen; and more delicacy is still necessary in bleaching coloured cottons and pulicates into which permanent colours are woven.

The plate represents the bleaching of cloth, as it is now sometimes practised, by pouring water upon it, as it lies exposed in the bleaching-ground, to whiten, by the united operations of the sun, the air, and moisture, the cloths having previously passed through proper alkahne leys: this is called the *old* method of bleaching, the *new* is by the more expeditious process of oxymuriatic acid, &c.

Footnote

1. 'oxymuriatic acid' was the term used for what we now know as 'chlorine'

2. 'oxymuriate' was the term used for what we now know as a 'chloride'

and then we can turn to the Brickmaker :

THE BRICK-MAKER.

Brick-making is the art of forming and manufacturing Bricks.

The earliest mention of Bricks is to be found in the historical books of the Old Testament, where we find that Noah's three sons, together with their wives and children, departed from the eastward and travelled into the land of Shinar. "And they said one to another, go to, let us make brick, and burn them thoroughly; and they had Brick for stone, and slime had they for mortar."

Whether these Bricks were really exposed to the action of fire, as the passage seems to imply, or merely dried in the sun, is a point by no means settled; but according to the testimony of Herodotus, who was upon the spot, the Bricks which composed the tower of Babylon were baked in furnaces. That unburnt Bricks were also employed in the earliest buildings appears certain, from the testimony of some of the oldest historians, and from proofs still existing.

Unburnt Bricks were used in Egypt; the making of them was one of the tasks imposed on the

Israelites during their servitude in that country; but the oldest edifices which at present remain there are principally of stone. At what time burnt Bricks were first introduced, or in what country, cannot be determined; the Greeks were certainly acquainted with the art of burning Bricks, as appears from Vitruvius, who instances several buildings in which this material was used, and both sun-dried and burnt.

The business of a Brick-maker is carried on in the open fields, and its mode of operation may be seen in the neighbourhood of most large towns. The art, in almost all its branches, is regulated by different acts of parliament: and Bricks may be made of pure clay, or clay mixed in certain proportions with sand or ashes.

The clay is first moistened and tempered with water, either by the feet, or by means of a machine or mill worked with one or more horses.

When it is fit for moulding into bricks, several persons are usually, in the neighbourhood of London, employed upon the business of making a single Brick; these are called gangs: they consist of one or two men, a woman, and two children, to each of which is assigned a different department in the occupation. A gang in full work will make many thousand Bricks in a day.

In the plate the man only is represented, in the act of moulding the clay into the shape of a Brick: he stands under a sort of thatched cover to keep off the sun and the rain; on the board before him are all his implements; the mould into which the clay is put, the clay itself, which is brought to him by another person, a vessel with some water, and a little heap of sand; and on his left hand lies the ruler with which he takes off the superfluous clay from the mould.

The inside of the box or mould is exactly the shape and size of a Brick: the workman throws the clay into this with some violence, having first scattered a little sand about the sides of it; and then scraping off the superfluous clay, he turns up the mould on one side, and placing a small board at the bottom of the mould, shakes out the Brick and places it down in order, to be placed by another person on the barrow, which, when loaded with about 20 Bricks, is wheeled away, and the Bricks are packed upon their edges by the assistance of the boards, which, when drawn from them, leave sufficient space for the air to circulate between them to dry them. When the pile is made of the proper height, generally three, or at most four feet from the ground, they are covered with long straw or tiles, so that they may dry gradually without being exposed to the direct rays of the sun, which would crack them; heavy rains would also be injurious to them; these are likewise kept off by straw or tiles. As soon as they are sufficiently dry for the purpose, they are to be burnt in a kiln. Here great art is required in piling the Bricks, so that the fire may circulate through every course and in all directions. Brees, that is small cinders from sea-coal, is the fuel used in burning Bricks, and when once well lighted, it will keep burning several days, till the Bricks are completely finished.

Bricks when finished are of different colours, according to the clay of which they are made, but they must be all of one size; namely, nine inches long, four inches and half broad, and two inches and a half thick. A duty of 5s.10d. is charged upon every thousand of common Bricks; of



The Brick Maker.

course this business affords a large revenue to government.

The most beautiful white Bricks in this country are manufactured at Woolpit in Suffolk; these are brought, by means of water-carriage, to all parts of England, where great neatness in Brick-work is an object.

Stourbridge clay and Windsor loam are esteemed the best for making Bricks that are required to bear a very intense heat. These are used for coating furnaces, and lining the ovens of glass-houses, where they stand the utmost fury of the fire.

A gang of Brick-makers will earn a handsome living: sometimes it happens that the whole gang consists of branches of the same family, as the father and mother, and four or five children of different ages; these will earn from two to three guineas a week; but they work many hours, and their labour is very hard.

In connection with the trade of Brick-making, we must notice the manufacture of tiles, which is a sort of thin Brick, made use of in the roofing of houses, and also, when something thicker, for the purposes of paving. Those for covering the roofs of houses are of different shapes, according to the uses for which they are intended; there are plain-tiles, ridgetiles, gutter-tiles, pan-tiles, &c. they are all made according to certain guages; and the makers are subject to heavy penalties if their tiles exceed the dimensions fixed on by the several acts of parliament. The kilns in which tiles are burnt are large conical buildings: in these the tiles are piled from the bottom to the top before the fire is lighted. A very large manufactory of this sort is situated near Bagnigge Wells [London].

Dutch clinkers are imported into England for the purposes of paving; they are long narrow Bricks of a brimstone colour, very hard and well burnt, so as to be nearly vitrified.

Flemish or Dutch tiles, which are glazed and painted, were formerly much used for chimney jambs. Some thirty or forty years ago it was not uncommon to see a complete Scripture history, and other curious devices, in a parlour fire-place.

There is an article also called *Scouring-Bricks*, which is a mixture of clay and sea-sand, and slightly baked. These Bricks are, as far as we know, only made at or near the town of Bridgewater, in Somersetshire, from the clay obtained on the sides of the river Parret, which flows through the town. This peculiar mixture of clay and sea-sand is occasioned by the velocity with which the tide flows at this port. The trade in *Scouring-Bricks* has materially increased during the last twenty years : they are sent to London and various other parts of Great Britain.

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## From the e-Postbag

**A family story sent by our reader, Glyn Collin**

### FINDING JONATHAN

My Dad Joseph Collin was born in 1933, his great-great-grandfather died in 1833 at Oldham, a machine maker aged 49 years. Joseph had had two wives and nine children, all accounted for except the youngest, Jonathan born in March 1830 when both parents were 46 years old. In Joseph's will his eldest daughter Mally was charged with maintaining and educating his two youngest sons Joseph and Jonathan. Mally had her own illegitimate son Joseph Thomas Collin, in 1830 and she married the father in 1834, Gregory Whitehead a builder and timber merchant, and the boys were apprenticed as house joiners. When Mally's step mother died in 1836 she took full responsibility for her brothers and Jonathan was with her family in the census returns of 1841, 1851 & 1861. In 1861 Jonathan was an iron worker and above his name was written Jno, so he was calling himself John, had he stuck to Jonathan he would have been easier to find. John seemed to vanish after 1861, all the Johns checked were negative. I suspected he had gone to America as his elder brother Job emigrated in 1839 and after living in New York Mills and Milwaukee he settled in Lodi Wisconsin in 1856 but there was no sign of John there.



No one just disappears and after years of searching and brain wracking, I received an email from America with a picture of another John Collin, a grandson of Job, he was sitting in a rocking chair on his veranda holding a violin; he was a very good musician. This jogged my memory of a John Collin who was a musician in the US Civil War, but I had dismissed him as he was ten years too young. I had a proper look at his service record and at the bottom it said born Oldham England! He had joined the 150th New York Infantry at Poughkeepsie aged 22, born 1840 but the Town Clerk's records had the same details with a birth year 1833, I knew I had found him at last. He had enlisted on September 19th 1862 and said his birthday was also September 19, not March 14 so he was either having a laugh or he did not know his own birthday! Brother Job's gravestone says he was born Lancastershire 22nd October 1816 which is wrong because he was baptised in Oldham in August 1815 so must have been born October 1814.

It turned out that John first went to the USA in 1854 and joined the Bobcats, the 5th Infantry at Boston in December 1856 for 5 years. They were sent to Camp Malco on the Malco River in Florida in January 1857 to remove the Seminole Indians from their homeland swamps, skirmishing around Fort Myers. In June 1857 they were posted to Fort Laramie in Wyoming part of the Buchanan Expedition against the Mormons but John & several others deserted at New Orleans on June 22nd. At that time over 50% deserted before completing their service due to garrison life being dull and little to relieve monotony. John returned to Oldham and a job in an iron works.

In 1861 civil war broke out in America and Lancashire was alive to the cause, John returned in 1862 and enlisted for 3 years as a Musician (Drummer) in company H of the 150th NY Infantry aged 22. He must have liked being 22 as he also said he was 22 in 1856. Maybe he had learned to drum in his previous service? They were not required to carry arms though some did. They were the tongue of the camp conveying orders. Each company had 2 drummers and a waggoner. The Regimental Band was formed at Camp Dutchess Poughkeepsie mainly of drummers and musician. Years later Charles E. Benton wrote a chapter about the band in The Dutchess County Regiment, there were about 20 members and John Collin is named as the only member from Company H. He wrote that John Collin was an English boy, the others were American born except John Simon born Normandy France. The regiment left by steamer down the Hudson to Jersey City and took trains to Baltimore where they spent the winter of 1862-3. They gained the reputation of being an excellent military band. Their first experience of battle was at Gettysburg, where they were detailed as stretcher bearers making frequent trips to bring the wounded from battle. On the first day they relieved the 15th Minnesota Regiment near Little Round Top, working late into the night carrying wounded off the field. The surgeons worked in a stone barn near Baltimore Pike and another further south. Band members served in both hospitals. On one occasion the band gathered the dead of the regiment and laid them side by side behind the breastworks, Colonel Ketchams thoughtfulness, of having this done whilst battle was raging, prevented their dead being lost in the confusion until the regiment was withdrawn and replaced. The regiment was then posted to guard the Chatanooga to Nashville Railroad against guerillas over the winter of 1863-64. At the battles of Resacca & New Hope Church in 1864 the band was with the regiment and served carrying back the wounded and assisting in the field hospitals for a week, the wounded taken to the railroad to be cleared. From then they advanced to Atlanta but John was sick in hospital for the months of July & August 1864 (although he was still paid his \$13 a month) so missed the Siege of Atlanta. They were marching towards the enemy when news of the surrender came so they proceeded to Washington for the Grand Review then on to Poughkeepsie to be mustered out on June 8 1865, when the regiment dispersed.

Throughout all campaigns the band shared its fortunes, furnishing music when required. John did not return to Oldham but there is a burial in Nashville City Cemetery on December 13th 1865 of a John Collin, age and cause of death unknown; a pauper of the city buried in Soldier Yard East End in an old grave. When soldiers' remains were claimed by kin to take home the

vacant graves were used again so John was buried by the Corporation of Nashville in a second-hand grave, a sad end and even sadder if his family in Oldham never knew his fate.



Was in Hospital Memphis Jan 1864

Many thanks to Glyn for sharing this account, and family photos with us.

If you want to read more about the Dutchess County Regiment, of that time, the following books are freely downloadable from the Internet Archive :

'As Seen from the Ranks' - A Boy in the Civil War' by Charles E. Benton, pub. 1902 [HERE](#)

'The Dutchess County Regiment - in the Civil War' based upon the writings of Rev. Edward O. Bartlett, edited by S.G. Cook & Charles E. Benton, pub. 1907 [HERE](#)

| Names           | Co. | Regt              | State                 |
|-----------------|-----|-------------------|-----------------------|
| Joseph Collin   | 26  | 23 <sup>rd</sup>  | W. Va 3 <sup>rd</sup> |
| William Carr    | B   | 99 <sup>th</sup>  | 2 <sup>nd</sup> ...   |
| William Nichols | 26  | 76 <sup>th</sup>  | ...                   |
| William Sanders | B   | 30 <sup>th</sup>  | ...                   |
| William Reble   | K   | 1 <sup>st</sup>   | hans...               |
| Allen May       | D   | 130 <sup>th</sup> | 2 <sup>nd</sup> ...   |
| Alvin Garner    | ... | 20 <sup>th</sup>  | ...                   |



John Thomas Collin with his fiddle; he was disabled as a result of polio

## An email from Desmond A.J. Flanagan

### Lewis's and Store Life

The predicted demise of Department Stores in our town Centre has been long coming – and now it's come! It began in Manchester in the 1960's and the first 'out-riders' of our Town's decline began with the appearance of Parking Meters along the city streets. Then came the 'out of town' shopping centres that sprang up - like foreign legions waiting to pick off local warrior tribes. Finally, the growth of car ownership meant that the municipal bus services – once the backbone of community movement, were no longer financially worth maintaining. In losing famous companies like Lewis's, Kendal's and Paulden's, three of the early established Department Stores, the city has lost not only multi-storied shopping venues and meeting places, but also popular local folk memories.

For example, Lewis's Ltd. established in the city in 1850's, were famous for their 'Money Back Guarantee' then an innovation in retail trade, and their spectacular in-store events were well known. My grandmother, born in the early 1880's, recalled the occasion in the 1920's when Lewis's flooded half of their basement shopping area to create an attraction called 'A Trip to Venice'. With several Gondolas floating on a mini lagoon - around which was placed painted

scenery of Venetian buildings, shoppers could take a ride in a Gondola and imagine they were no longer in crowded Manchester, but had been transported in imagination to Venice! -and all this was done to promote that seasons' Italian merchandise.

In those days, a staff of over 2000 people were employed by Lewis's, Manchester, with several similar sized Department stores around this country, and in Lewis's Ltd heyday, there would be hardly a trade or skill that was not employed in the Company's promotion, selling and distribution of goods and services to the general public.



For my part, having decided to change my career, get married and leave professional Theatre in 1959, I was attracted to the steadier 'show business' of retail trade, and returning home to Manchester I applied for a job in the Display Department of Lewis's – on the confident assumption that if I could arrange actors on stage, I should be able to arrange dummies in a shop window! Which proved to be the case – and after a provisional trial period as a trainee, I remained in Display for three years, before gaining promotion as an assistant manager in the Advertising Department and Exhibition Hall co-ordinator, which was much more interesting for the following eight years.

Once I'd moved into the Advertising and established myself as a team member, I reactivated the declining Lewis's Staff Dramatic society, which did much to foster my presence in the company, and we presented some popular productions which were staged in various city venues in aid of the Shopworkers charities. This led to my role merging from office assistant to Public Relations officer, responsible for presenting or coordinating events that interacted with the public, such as special promotions with celebrities, Bi-monthly Exhibitions, fashion parades, and all events involving Father Christmas – including Father Christmas's arriving at the Store on the first Monday in November – which usually involved a pre-advertised drive from Manchester Airport in some spectacular vehicle – such as 'Batman & Robin's Cadillac one year, which drew such an enormous crowd to the Store that the City Police Inspector reported it was like a "Royal Visit and 'The Beatles' combined" .

One of the most emotional part of my job was arranging 'Father Christmas' (one of our Doormen) visits to the two local Children's hospitals to distribute small presents. I would liaise with the Matrons how many children would be on the Wards on the day of our visit, which were always a joyful event, but It was often distressing to learn from the Nurses how many sick children had been admitted just before Christmas, whose parents were untraceable when discharge time came after Christmas. And the patients we visited at the Geriatric hospital in Wythenshawe were always grateful to see 'Father Christmas' again - probably for the last time.

And so the Christmas shopping season came with its 'Jingle Bells' music, specially animated shop window displays, sparkling Holly wreathed counters and ever smiling shop assistants. The two trading peaks for all the city's stores were Christmas and the January Sales, and at Lewis's that included free entertainments all year - such as Flower Shows, Brass Band Competitions, and Children's Ballet and Talent Contests in the famous Exhibition Hall on the Stores' top floor.

I enjoyed my eleven years working for Lewis's, Manchester. It was a good company with honest principals. It provided a secure basis for me and my family, a self-affirming recognition within the Company, and the wider community, and in 1970 when I was asked by the Manchester Evening News and Chamber of Commerce to co-ordinate the first 'Shopping Festival of Manchester' - with Lewis's approval, it provided me with a spring-board to launch my own promotion company.

Many thanks to Desmond for sending this to us.

~~~~~

A couple of emails from our chairman, **Linda Richardson**, who caught up with a couple of events in the '*Oldham Histories Festival and Heritage Open Days*' programme and has kindly written up a little bit about each of them.

The first was about 'Basil Boddington', billed as '*From Big Game Hunter to the Manager of the Roxy Cinema, Failsworth— A talk exploring the life of one of Oldham's more colourful characters.*'

THE ADVENTURES (AND MIS-ADVENTURES) OF FREDERICK SCRIVENER HILARY BASIL BODDINGTON

1892 – 1965

AKA - BASIL BODDINGTON

During Oldham Histories Festival, I attended a talk at Crompton Library relating to Basil Boddington. I went to the talk because I and my pals were "sent" to the Roxy Cinema in Hollinwood on a Saturday morning (no doubt to get us from under the parents feet) and it peaked my interest.

Please bear in mind that research is still ongoing by Oldham Local Studies.

Basil was apparently born in Johannesburg, but no record of his birth has been found yet. His parents originated from Stoke on Trent, and Basil was one of 13 children. His Godfather was Leander Starr Jameson of Boar War fame. He was educated at King Edward School in Johannesburg and also at Rugby School in England.

Amongst his friends were Trader Horn, Frederick Courtney Selous, Cecil Rhodes and James H. Sutherland.

On his journeys he crossed Africa twice (east to west and then west to east), China, India, South America and Europe travelling approximately 330,000 miles.

During his lifetime he had several "jobs" including big game hunter, assistant tea taster, artist and poster designer, gold prospector and diamond miner, boxing booth showman and cinema manager.

He was the first person to show films in Africa

During WW1 he was engaged in recruiting men amongst the indigenous population in Portuguese East Africa, and in 1923 he was working as British Consul at Port Amelia and in 1924 he returned to England.

During his time in Africa he acted as a location finder for film studios, including the films *Blue Lagoon* and *King Solomon's Mines*.

In 1931 he worked as the Manager of the New Oxford Theatre in Manchester and General Manager of the Theatre Royal Bolton.

In 1937 he became Manager of the Roxy Cinema Hollinwood Oldham until he was dismissed in 1947 for some misdemeanour (which is as yet not known).

He then moved to Blackpool and managed a newsagents shop for a while.

He died on the 26th February 1965 at 575 Lytham Road Blackpool leaving the sum of £4926 according to the Probate Records.

~~~~~

The second event was : **Greenacres Cemetery WW1 Walk : a guided tour of the cemetery's World War One graves.** This was actually a look at the graves of fallen soldiers who were buried privately or with families, rather than with the CWGC headstones with which we are all so familiar.

### GREENACRES CEMETERY WW1 WALK

#### Organised by Oldham Local Studies & Archives

On Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> September I took part in the above event. Although I live in the Oldham area I had never been to this cemetery, even though, as my cousin tells me, we have a number of relative buried there. It is a beautiful place and well maintained and I was surprised at how big it is. It was a sunny day which made the walk all the more comfortable.

The walk began and we were shown the graves of some of the soldiers who were killed, injured and died later, died accidentally, and some who had committed suicide.

Our tour guide, Roger Ivens, told us some details of the soldier's family, where he worked, which regiment he was in and how he died, together with a photograph of the soldier.

Some of the graves were very ornate, as the photographs show. Some had had the headstone renewed by the CWGC and one or two were a bit care worn and in need of tlc.

I thoroughly enjoyed the tour and will, some day, go back and try to find some of my ancestors and have a look at some of the other WW1 graves in this cemetery.

Linda Richardson

Chair – Oldham Branch



Lieutenant George Geoffrey Needham, M.C., 1st Batt. Lancashire Fusiliers, Remembered on the family Memorial in Greenacres Cemetery.

He died of wounds in August 1915 and is buried in Gallipoli.

He was the son of Sir Geoffrey William Needham and his wife, Sarah, of 'Holly Bank', Werneth, Oldham

~~~~~



Soldier's Memorial, Greenacres



Soldier's Memorial, Greenacres

~~~~~

I've received **the email below from the Netherlands** and wondered if anyone amongst our readers might have any knowledge of this Oldham soldier from WW2 ...

*Good day,*

*My name is Raimondo Bogaars, and I am doing research for the foundation Erfgoed 40-45, gemeenten Valkenswaard en Waalre.*

*Our foundation, collects, preserves and educates the history of World War II in the vicinity of Valkenswaard en Aalst-Waalre, Holland.*

*At the moment my research is focused on the soldiers who are buried in the war cemetery of Valkenswaard.*

*For this I am looking for relatives and information of:*

ASHWORTH, FRANK

Rank: Lance Corporal

Service No: 3781227

Date of Death: 23/09/1944

Age: 24

Regiment/Service: Highland Light Infantry (City of Glasgow Regiment) 2nd Bn.

Grave Reference: I. A. 7.

Additional Information:

Son of Harry and Nellie Ashworth, of Oldham, Lancashire

*Maybe you could help us to trace relatives or help us with information about this person.*

*Kind regards,*

*Raimondo Bogaars*

*Secretaris Stichting Erfgoed 40-45, gemeenten Valkenswaard en Waalre*

*Voorzitter werkgroep: Valkenswaard War Cemetery Adoption Program*

I've found Frank Ashworth with his family on the 1939 Register and sent the writer a scan with the following information :

It appears that **Frank** was living with his family, at 78, Greenwood Street, Oldham

Frank was born on the 15th May 1920.

His father was called Harry, born in 1887 and his mother, Nellie, was born in 1893



His elder brother was also called Harry, born in 1917

Also living in the family home, were (what we can assume) his father's 3 unmarried sisters: Alice (born 1884), Elizabeth E. (born 1889) and Mary (born 1893).

I haven't had time to do any more searching but if anyone can add anything about descendants or the family, please let me know and I'll put you in touch with him.

~~~~~

I received an email from **Roger Ivens, at Oldham Local /studies & Archives**, a few days ago, about the **Greater Manchester Local Heritage Listing Project now taking place in Oldham**.

As many of our readers have strong links, been born and brought up in the Oldham district (or even still live here!) it may be that some of you have buildings in mind that you might wish to nominate.

Details of how to do so are in the email; part of which is copied below.

I realise the links to the zoom meetings are short notice for readers but that won't prevent you from emailing the contact or nominating your choice of building[s].

copy of email :

"We have been asked to contact you with regards to the new Greater Manchester Local Heritage Listing Project now taking place in Oldham. The project aims to identify and recognise historic buildings and structures that make a significant contribution to the character and local distinctiveness of the area and are considered by local communities to be of importance. The project is being carried out by the Greater Manchester Combined Authority, District Councils and the Greater Manchester Archaeological Advisory Service (GMAAS). So far, GMAAS has gathered information on potential local list candidates from the Historic Environment Record, Conservation Area Appraisals and Neighbourhood Plans. However, they also need members of the local community to give their opinions and nominate heritage assets so cherished historic buildings and sites can be given greater consideration in the planning system. If you are involved with a local heritage society, or just have an interest in local heritage, GMAAS would love to hear from you.

You can find out more about the project and how to make nominations on the website [Home - Greater Manchester Local Heritage List \(local-heritage-list.org.uk\)](https://www.greatermanchester.gov.uk/home-greater-manchester-local-heritage-list-local-heritage-list-org-uk). If you would like to find out more, or are interested in working with GMAAS to help nominate some of the potential candidates they have identified, please come along to one of the 30 minute introduction Zoom meetings, to be held by GMAAS on the 28th of September (10.00 am) or the 29th of September (6.00 pm).

If you would like to attend a zoom meeting or discuss this further, please contact Kate Spencer, the Local Heritage Listing Officer at GMAAS on K.Spencer7@salford.ac.uk. You can attend the zoom meetings by following the invitation links below.

LHLP Meeting invitation 28/9/2021 at 10:00 am

Kate Spencer is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: LHLP Meeting

Time: Sep 28, 2021 10:00 AM Greenwich Mean Time

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/95489263675?pwd=RHZOWmVSaXFDNm9qSW5XNTdKYXhaUT09>

Meeting ID: 954 8926 3675

Passcode: 7jfdWJ

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**LHLP Meeting invitation 28/9/2021 at 6.00 pm**

Kate Spencer is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: LHLP Meeting

Time: Sep 29, 2021 06:00 PM Greenwich Mean Time

Join Zoom Meeting

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## 1921 ... a Census Centenary

As all we family history enthusiasts are well aware, the 1921 census should have been released this year ... however, for obvious reasons, it won't be! Hopefully, we can look forward to its release in 2022.

MLFHS, **1921 Centenary Project** ... follow the links to the short introductory video [HERE](#) , other short videos and the many blog articles (19 and counting!) [HERE](#) which are full of unexpected information, making fascinating reading (they're on the public access pages). A dedicated 1921 page, bringing it all together, is [HERE](#). and a 1921 World Timeline is [HERE](#).

A great deal of hard work has gone into this project, including bringing us some talks, on zoom, with a 1921 link ... follow the links and enjoy just what the team have found for us.

The final Journal (*Manchester Genealogist*) of the year, will be a special **1921 Centenary** edition.

And, for our newsletter, I'm still hopeful that some of you may have your own 1921 memorabilia to share with our own readers.

Please, get in touch with me, through the newsletter email address, either to ask questions or contribute scans of ephemera, photos or narratives (long or short!).

~~~~~

Being the 'bookworm' that I am, and still thinking about the centenary of 1921, inevitably, I began to wonder about the books that might have been published in that year ... if I'd walked into a bookshop in Manchester or, indeed, any other city, in 1921, what might I have found, newly published, on the shelves?

I don't know why I should be surprised at the number of publications, the vast range of topics, and the literary awards I found for that year, but I was! Amongst the more 'light reading' was a little book called "*What I Think*" ...by *Famous Writers of To- Day*'. It was a collection of short pieces, first published in the '*John o'London's Weekly*' and '*The Strand Magazine*', edited by H. Greenhough Smith. In the '*Introduction*', he writes: "This little volume is unique. It is a volume mainly about books, written not by the critics, but by the far more interesting people who are writing books themselves ... " the following extract is from :

REBECCA WEST.

I do not know how I write my books, except that I write them on six writing pads at once. I write the rough draft of a page on the first page of a pad; then on the second I write the rough draft of a paragraph; then on the third I write the rough draft of a sentence; on the fourth and fifth I write the sentence more and more desperately; on the sixth I write the fair copy. People who do not otherwise admire my work tell me that this performance, particularly when carried on at a high speed, reminds them of Cinquevalli.

As regards the plot of the book, I think out a very elaborate plot for my books and short stories, complete from the first word to the last; I usually find at the end of the story that not one atom of this plot has survived. The characters take the story in charge. How one gets them I do not know; they come to one out of anywhere. I can't imagine taking a character from real life, unless one wishes to indulge in the pleasures of libel.

and this one, written in the third person, comes from :

ARNOLD BENNETT.

For many years Mr. Arnold Bennett used to have regular hours of work, but now is no

longer a creature of habit in this respect. However, most of his work is done in the morning, though he never begins until eight o'clock at the earliest, whereas in the old days he would begin at six or six-thirty, or even five-thirty. He rarely works in the afternoon except under pressure of business, and never in any circumstances in the evening. He never writes fiction or articles twice over.

Mr. Bennett gets most of his ideas walking about the streets, and he does not sit down to write until he knows fairly exactly what he is going to say, and he scarcely ever makes any alterations. In the case of plays, however, he usually writes his stuff twice over, as he finds it impossible to fit together all the bits of dialogue at the first try. Plays have to be altered and altered; that is his experience. Indeed, they are never done until the curtain goes up on the first performance. This does not mean that he will materially alter the structure of a play. No! But he will alter details endlessly.

Mr. Bennett has two styles of handwriting one rather ordinary for articles, essays, etc., and another rather extraordinary for novels, short stories, etc. - but both kinds are very small and quite different from the styles in which he writes letters. He never dictates anything not even a letter. As regards correspondence, he finds it much easier to write letters in shorthand, by means of which for a number of years he earned his living forty years ago. His secretary then transcribes the shorthand note. "What beautiful shorthand you write!" said another secretary to Mr. Bennett's secretary in a certain office during the war. "That is Mr. Bennett's shorthand," his secretary replied. He is very proud of this unsolicited testimonial.

~~~~~

**From the Newspaper** searching the *ManchesterGuardian* for October 1921 and Oldham (to try to limit the entries!) it came up with 79 results. The majority concerned sports fixtures, some were about the state of the cotton industry, a few were about theatre and entertainment, and a couple about politics. By far the greatest number, other than for sport, were about the terrible famine in the Volga area of Russia; too many by far to transcribe here. There were heartbreaking stories of children on the streets literally dying of hunger in front of the witnesses; there were descriptions of the conditions in the area of the Volga (roughly 3 times the size of England); there were reports of relief work and accompanying each article was a subscription list (which was where the 'Oldham' search tag was picking up). The famine was caused, amongst other things, by the long hot summer and the resultant drought.

**Just one to read:**

*The Manchester Guardian*, 18th October 1921

### **A Record Summer : The Famine it has Brought to Russia**

Extract:

"To most of us this year will always be memorable because of its beautiful summer. We shall remember it as the time when the most reckless holiday hopes were fulfilled, when for once we could wear out our hot-weather clothes and forget the shape of our umbrella handles. We shall remember the long chain of brilliant days slipping past, one after another like smooth and lovely pearls; and ending in that rosy flood of sunset which is said to afford much satisfaction to shepherds. Flowers of all seasons bloomed together, as they do in fairyland; spring came tentatively back to blend her tender shades with the mellow tones of autumn. And this when the threat of drought forced us to water the gardens with the leavings of scullery sinks and laundries. Memories of this radiant summer, now trailing reluctantly away, will impress themselves on our minds and grow more and more cherished as winter drops over us.

In the Volga valley - a district of low plains and small huddled villages - the people too will always remember last summer. To them it has been a time of pitiful, ineffectual, longing for rain, of desperation dulling to resigned despair. Instead of a normal rainfall of 14 inches in 10 months they have had 2½ inches. It is a purely agricultural district;



and the staple food is bread. Through June and July the peasants watched their harvest shrivel under the brazen skies and their means of livelihood fail them. In August, and September they watched their children weaken and die of hunger. Starvation kills slowly and very dreadfully, but by; this time the tawny leaves from our October trees are not falling more quickly than those tragic Russians. Without help from outside there will be no spring, perhaps no winter, for a large part of the twenty million inhabitants of that famine-stricken country..."

Also in *The Manchester Guardian* in October 1921 :

**on the 11th** there is a report of Chamber Colliery Company bringing an action for larceny against Thomas William Beckett, accusing him of stealing their coal from land on Oldham Edge since July. His defence was that he had been given permission by the owner of the surface land. According to the report, the fact that the defendant claimed he had been given the right, removed the charge of larceny, whether he was mining the coal or not.

What at first seemed, to me, a case of a man digging a little coal for his own needs, from near to the surface became a little more that that when it was revealed that he had employed as many as 35 men!

The case was adjourned.

**on the 25th** we read that a nine year old Failsworth boy, called W. Schofield, of Hobson Street, was killed by a steam waggon on its way to Oldham. His playmate said that he had been walking alongside the vehicle when he lost his balance and fell.

**on the 31st** it was reported that a '**Lady Motorist was Badly Injured**. Mr Arthur Fleming, of Brodrick Road, Oldham, with his wife, a doctor, were on their way home from Knutsford when the light on their car failed. They stopped to deal with it but another car, coming from the same direction, ran into the stationary car. Mr. Fleming jumped clear, as did their passenger, but his wife who had been standing on the footboard, was thrown under the second car and severely injured.

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

since the last newsletter :

* Australian ancestry: How to find your Australian ancestors

[HERE](#)

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\* Anger and reason in the 1893 coal lockout. video talk by Quentin Outram  
the Society for the Study of Labour History

[HERE](#)

~~~~~

* Hot Air Balloon Weddings ... Was this just an American tradition?

[HERE](#)

~~~~~

\* How the kitchen took over our homes :

It has evolved from back-room scullery to housewife's hell to today's sleek open-plan space, where cooking is about performance

[HERE](#)

~~~~~

* All Things Georgian, 'Life below stairs - the duties of a Georgian housemaid'

[HERE](#)

~~~~~

\* We're off to Oldham in today's #NWFAdailyreel for a look at everyday street scenes and activities in the town in 1948. When Oldham had a busy market.

[HERE](#)

~~~~~

* The untold story of Britain's POW camps

[HERE](#)

~~~~~

\* Step back in time with over 300,000 vintage photos

[HERE](#)

~~~~~  
* Historic England blog ... 10 Eccentric English Customs, Traditions and Ceremonies — and the Stories Behind Them

[HERE](#)

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

## PETERLOO : the Bi-Centenary



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

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

You can make searches on websites such as :

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

Visit their website [HERE](#)

## Need Help!

### Coronavirus Pandemic

### Oldham Local Studies and Archives is open again

#### Coronavirus Update and Statement July 2021 :

Oldham Local Studies and Archives is pleased to announce that it is now fully open to the public.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Although it is no longer mandatory, we are encouraging visitors to continue using masks where possible and to respect 2m social distancing with regard to staff and other users.

Hand sanitisers will also continue to be available.

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

**In normal times** there are regular Family History Advice Sessions every Monday and Wednesday afternoons from 2-4pm.

There's no need to book. Just turn up with all the information you have and the resident family history experts will be on hand to help.

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

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

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

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

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

[Oldham Council Heritage Collections](#)

There are regularly changing displays in the Local Studies Library.

[Opening hours and contact details.](#)

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Website Links

Other Society Websites

Catholic Family History Society – www.catholicfhs.co.uk

Cheshire Local History Association – www.cheshirehistory.org.uk

Chadderton Historical Society (archived website) – www.chadderton-historical-society.org.uk

Lancashire Family History and Heraldry Society - <https://www.lfhhs.org.uk/home.php>

Lancashire Local History Federation – www.lancashirehistory.org

Liverpool and South West Lancashire FHS – www.lswlfhs.org.uk

Manchester Region Industrial Archaeology Society – www.mrias.co.uk

Oldham Historical Research Group – www.pixnet.co.uk/Oldham-hrg

Peterloo - [Peterloo-Manchester](#)

Ranulf Higden Society (Latin transcription) - [Ranulf Higden Soc.](#)

Royton Local History Society – www.rlhs.co.uk

Saddleworth Historical Society – www.saddleworth-historical-society.org.uk

Tameside Local History Forum - www.tamesidehistoryforum.org.uk

Tameside Local & Family History - <http://tamesidefamilyhistory.co.uk/contents.htm>

The Victorian Society - [Manchester Regional Website](#)

Some Useful Sites

GENUKI - [Lancashire](#)

Free BMD - [Search](#)

[National Library of Scotland](#) - Free to view, historic, zoomable maps of UK :

1891 - Oldham and locality [HERE](#)

Online Parish Clerk Project : Lancashire - [HERE](#)

British Association for Local History - [HERE](#)

and for their back issue journal downloads - [HERE](#)

Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire, website, [HERE](#)

and for their back issue journal downloads, website, [HERE](#)

Internet Archive ... The Internet Archive offers over **24,000,000** freely downloadable books and texts. [HERE](#) There is also a collection of 1.3 million modern eBooks that may be borrowed by anyone with a free archive.org account.

Made in Greater Manchester (MIGM) [HERE](#) and Research guide [HERE](#)

Historical Maps of parish boundaries [HERE](#)

Regiments & Corps of the British Army (Wayback machine) [HERE](#)

Special Collections on Find My Past [HERE](#)

FmyP - The Manchester Collection [HERE](#)

Some Local Archives

Barnsley Museum & Discovery Centre – www.experience-barnsley.com

Birkenhead – [Local & Family History](#)

Bury – www.bury.gov.uk/archives

Chester - [Cheshire Archives & Local Studies](#) (linked from Discovery at the National Archives)

Derbyshire - [Local & Family History](#)

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

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

Manchester - [Archives & Local History](#)

Oldham - [Local Studies & Archives](#)

Oldham - [Oldham Council Heritage Collections](#)

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

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

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

York – www.york.ac.uk/borthwick



For the Gallery

from : '*The Costume of Yorkshire*' published in 1814

The two images below are from the above mentioned book ... although referencing Yorkshire specifically, I imagine that, at that time, their dress would have been pretty similar at least in the North of England.

There are 40 engravings in the book, illustrating the different pursuits and occupations of the time, each with a short description.

Stone-Breakers on the Road



Stone-Breakers on the Road

As gravel is not in general plentiful, except on the coast, the roads in Yorkshire are usually made of stone, which abounds in almost every part of the county. It is brought in large pieces from the quarry, and thrown from the carts on the road side, at convenient distances, where repair is necessary. Men are employed afterwards to break it, and spread it, as here represented.

The Teasel Field



The Teasel Field

The Teasel, or *Dipsacus sativus*, is a plant much cultivated in the East part of the West Riding, though from the impoverishing nature of the crop, which requires two years to bring it to maturity, it is seldom approved by the proprietor of the soil. It is, however, an article of essential importance to the Clothier, who uses the crooked awns of the heads of this plant for raising the nap on the cloth. In the autumn of the second year, the heads of the plant are cut off, carefully dried, and after being fixed upon the long sticks, are conveyed away for sale. Temporary sheds are usually erected in the teasel fields for the work-people employed, who not unfrequently form very interesting groups.