

# 'e-Owls'



## Contact us :

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

## December 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



*Peace and Goodwill  
for Christmas & the New Year*

## 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

As we move towards the end of 2021, I should like to thank you all for the support you have given the Oldham & District Branch over the last 12 months. I should also like to thank all those who supported us with our Zoom meetings each month, especially the people who joined us from farther afield in the UK and from overseas.

Thank you also to my Committee members for their hard work and support throughout the year. May I wish you all a very happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year.

My 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,

I suddenly realised, as I was booking an appointment, that the time has come to get a new diary! I know I'm never off my computer and there's a calendar attached to my email addresses and anything else you care to mention but I do like my paper diary to have at hand whether I'm in the house or out and about! And I mustn't forget the Christmas cards, which I leave so late before posting them, that I usually have to send them 1st class, which really grieves me, even if it is my own fault!!

One thing I do need to mention is that of the 1921 talks, for members, on the MLFHS Manchester programme leaving many members disappointed. As many of you have probably already realised, I am occasionally the zoom host for a Manchester meeting, and the 1921 talk was one of them! I've tried to clarify the situation in the '1921' section, below.

Just after the last newsletter went out, I uploaded an interesting new article, contributed by Paul Thomas, to the Oldham HRG website, entitled, '*Manchester-Austerlands Turnpike*.' There is a link to it [HERE](#) . Further down that page you will also find a link to another article by Paul, entitled, '*The Oldham Joneses : Where there's muck there's brass*'. Another new page, this month, is mainly for website visitors who are not on the newsletter mailing list. On the [Updates & Additions](#) you'll find a link to the new page, [Snippets from the Monthly Oldham & District Newsletter](#) on which I've listed articles and images, transcriptions and gallery pictures which have appeared in the newsletter. The list includes the date of the newsletter in which they appeared. They can be accessed through the links on the newsletter archives page.

In the Mixed Bag we continue with transcriptions from the Book of Trades in 1827, and the autobiography of the cotton manufacturer in Manchester. In the e-postbag, we have two brilliant articles, from readers, on Christmas memories. The third email is from a reader who sent me some of her family history story which I recognised as also relating to my husband's family! It's all about the power of sharing!! Finally, in the Gallery, Wakes 1905, a Hiring Fair and an image of an old peat cart from the very early 19th century or late 18th.

It only remains for me to wish you a happy Christmas, from the Branch committee, and we hope to welcome you all back in the New Year.

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.

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](#).

**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,  
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

Alan Crosby is no stranger to giving talks at MLFHS meetings and they never disappoint. This was no exception. In Oldham we consider ourselves fortunate to have Rowbottom's Diary of everyday happenings during a similar period in time - that of the late 18th century and early years of the 19th. They differed in that Rowbottom focused on a diary of happenings in the locality and the world in general, whereas Benjamin Shaw's was a record of his family history and activities, within a local context, written between 1826 and 1828, and looking back over the many years of his own life.

Whilst there were not dozens of pictures, of people and places, I personally was fascinated by the photos of the little journal. Alan told us that it was handmade by Abraham, with cheap paper, sewn with thread, and with a brown paper cover. It's also understood that Abraham had also made his own pen and knib with which to write his family 'story'. What struck us all was the neatness of the easily read script and the pages on which we could see no crossings-out. It was all the more remarkable as he had only learned to read and write at age 20.

The '*Family Records*' were written with his children in mind, with 'potted' biographies of his own parents, and short accounts of other forbears on both sides of his family. There follows a detailed history of his own life, with all its trials and tribulations, including losing part of a leg. He was born in Dentdale, a remote area of the Yorkshire Dales, then worked for some years at Dolphinholme near Lancaster, before spending the rest of his adult life in the industrial town of Preston.



He certainly doesn't sound the most likeable of men ... judgemental of family and neighbours alike whilst confident in his own opinions. He was mean ... there are constant references to his wife's inability to keep within the budget. There is an added element of bitterness in his narrative as he feels he was trapped into the marriage, when his girl friend, Betty Leeming (living and working away in Preston) becomes pregnant after he spent a couple of days with her. She subsequently gave birth to a son 2 weeks early. Straight away Abraham suspected that she was already pregnant when he stayed with her ... and even writes that it could be better if she died. She doesn't, and the child is named for his own father, Joseph, but he could never overcome his suspicion.

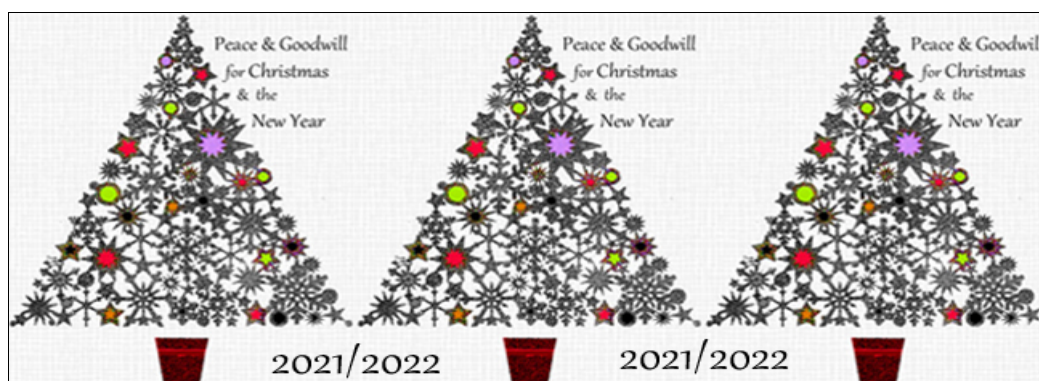
The early marriage and unlooked for pregnancy plunged the little family into a desperate situation of poverty which seemed to become the hallmark for the rest of his life.

His writings include references to the politics of the time and happenings in Preston. He included, "*details of wars, battles, political upheavals, the births and deaths of royalty and famous people, and of trends in society - taxation, civil unrest, good and bad harvests, unemployment and inflation ... [all of which] set the personal narrative firmly in perspective.*" Over the years, he kept regular notes and it was on these that his final narrative was based. Where dates and events were identified, Alan had checked them for mistakes but found that Benjamin was very reliable in what he was writing.

Alan's talk was so absorbing, and based upon the book he had written in 1991, as a result of his work on Benjamin's account. It was published by the Record Society of Lancashire and Cheshire. If the talk (or this synopsis) has whetted your appetite to read more, then you can find the book on that Society's website [HERE](#) . There are a number of their other publications available to read on this page [HERE](#)

Our many thanks to Alan for this absorbing talk.

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**NO MEETING IN DECEMBER**



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**JANUARY 2022 MEETING... on zoom**



Saturday,  
8th Jan.  
at  
2 pm



**'Hanging the Pacifist': Margaret Ashton (1856-1937)**  
**Manchester's first woman councillor**

*A short introduction to the life and times of Margaret Ashton. The talk will look at Ashton's extraordinary life, her political career, her involvement in the suffrage movement and, during WW1, her work in the anti-war and pacifist movement. It will look at the story of her lost portrait, rediscovered in 2006, and rehung in the Town Hall - hence the title of this talk ... 'Hanging the Pacifist.'*

A free, illustrated, online talk, given by Dr Alison Ronan

Booking and more details on [Eventbrite](#)

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**February Meeting ... on zoom**



Saturday,  
12th Jan.  
at  
2 pm



***A Grandmother's Legacy: the Early Days***

*How Benjamin Hardy in 1798, a seventh generation weaver ancestor of Jenny Mallin from Mirfield in Yorkshire, sails to Madras with his British Army unit, fights for the next 22 years in India and decides to settle his family there for the next five generations.*

A free, illustrated, online talk, given by Jenny Mallin

Booking and more details will be on Eventbrite

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**MLFHS Branches delivering their monthly meetings and talks on-line**

**Anglo - Scots ... No Meeting in December**

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

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**Bolton ... November Meeting**

|                                                        |                                                |                                                                                                                |
|--------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>MLFHS<br/>Bolton Branch<br/>online<br/>Meetings</b> | Wednesday,<br>1st<br>December<br>at<br>7:30 pm | <b>'Christmas food<br/>and drink through<br/>the ages'<br/>given by<br/>Sylvia Levi &amp;<br/>Simon Fowler</b> |
|--------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

**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 the situation can still change, there is no certainty of anything!**

**For updated information, please check the website** [HERE](#)

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**Manchester ... December Meeting**



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

MLFHS Manchester, Eventbrite Bookings [HERE](#)

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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.

\* Bolton, Deane, St. Mary, Baptisms

Baptisms 1813-1866 transcribed by Bolton & District FHS (14,353 records)

Bolton, Walmsley Old Chapel, Burials

Transcript of burials 1793-1840 (167 records)

Oldham, Shaw, St. Paul's Methodist Church, Burials

Burials 1817-1872. Transcribed from the Burial Registers by Linda Richardson, Gillian Melton and Joan Harrison. (381 records)

Eccles, Pendlebury, St. John, Burials

Burials at St. John's church 1842-1889 transcribed by Mark Harrey (2,375 records)

In addition to these new data sets, I have now completed the adding of listings for all of the data sets in the great Database so that you should be able from the contents listing to open up a descriptive document containing an alphabetical listing of all of the records (except for Pendlebury, St John, which will be added when all of the registers have been completed)

\* Chris Willis has spent some time improving the street index to the 1934 Lancashire Street Atlas in the member area. This includes correction of some errors introduced when the printed index was converted to machine-readable format using OCR and some further corrections which relate to errors in the original printed index. Finally 125 new entries have been added.



I have now replaced the index with the new version.

Thanks to Chris for his work on this invaluable index, now of 44,139 streets.

\* I have just uploaded a further 1,787 birth, marriage and death notices transcribed from the Manchester Courier for 1835 to the Great Database.

There are approx 1788 entries. Thanks to Chris Hall and Linda Bailey for these.

There are now 21,514 announcements from years: 1804-1806, 1809, 1825-1830, 1831, 1835, 1837, 1895

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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**



Wednesday  
15th  
December  
at  
7 pm



***An informal evening based around : Remembering our own Christmas Memories***

We are inviting you to join us, at this zoom meeting,  
and share your own memories of Christmas, and any old customs you know of.  
Everyone welcome ... More details and free booking on Eventbrite [HERE](#)  
Your support for our meetings would be appreciated and, if you would like 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 Wednesday 8th December, at 7:30pm.**  
at the Saddleworth Museum, Art Gallery, High Street, Uppermill.

**" Lord Austin & Lord Nuffield - Giants of the Motor Industry."**

an illustrated presentation given by Julian Hunt.

Society members free but a charge to non-members on the door of £3.

All welcome. Refreshments available. Masks should be worn.

Website [HERE](#)

**Saddleworth Civic Trust** No meetings planned until February

**For both societies :**

Please note that if there is any upturn in the state of the ongoing Covid Pandemic, any or all of these meetings might be cancelled. Members of each Society should check with any Committee member, at the Museum office, if in doubt.

## Moorside & District Historical Society

**Moorside & District Historical Society**  
We are back, assuming the current regulations hold true.  
Monday 17th January 2022.

**"Miscellany"**  
Catch up on the past two years missed happenings.  
Plus a talk on local historical Miscellaneous events etc.  
illustrated presentation by Mike Smith

**St Thomas' Church Tower Cross**



Left: The old 1872, well weathered iron cross.  
Right: The new 2019 Stainless Steel cross.

To be held in the Moorside Cricket Club, Turfpit Lane, Moorside.  
7-30 p.m. all are welcome.  
Note: Other meeting planned for 2022 if all goes well for the third Monday of the month.  
Except for the summer break July & August + December. £1.50p including refreshment.

Monday 17th January 2022

### 'Miscellany'

Catch up on the past two years missed happenings.

Plus a talk on local historical Miscellaneous Events etc.

Illustrated presentation by Mike Smith  
To be held in the Moorside Cricket Club,

Turfpit Lane, Moorside

at 7:30pm all are welcome.

£1.50, including refreshment

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

See their website [HERE](#)

## Tameside History Club :

Meetings on zoom.

Website and programme [HERE](#)

&

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

Website and programme [HERE](#)

## Regional Heritage Centre :

Website [HERE](#)

## 'A Mixed Bag'

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

Originally published anonymously, later research showed that it was written by Henry S. Gibbs. The reviewer had given it 5 stars, as had others who had read it.

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

### Serialised in the newsletter : Part 3

The earlier chapters and an introduction can be read in previous months' newsletters, starting in October, and downloadable [HERE](#)

### Transcript: Chapter V

#### **THE QUEEN'S VISIT - MUSIC in MANCHESTER - A FACTORY FIRE.**

THE visit of the Queen to Manchester was a stirring event. It took place on October 7th, 1851. I suppose in no county in England is loyalty more genuine and intense than it is in Lancashire. Of course, we had a universal holiday, and the workpeople, by tens of thousands, in their best attire, radiated towards Manchester.

At the nearest railway station of the township where I lived, which bears the name of Moses Gate (I never was able to trace any particular connection between the place and the great law-giver) the trains from Bolton and the North stopped longer than at other stations, for the



purpose of collecting passenger tickets. This circumstance, and it being necessary to run additional trains to meet the increased traffic on this particular occasion, made the morning a very busy one at Moses Gate Station. I watched train after train depart with dismay. There was not standing room in any of them for myself and other passengers, who were left on the platform. I began to fear I should be deprived of my anticipated view of royalty, when a train arrived from Bolton, some of the carriages having seats upon the roof. As there was no accommodation inside I found myself in almost no time in company with other

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similar enthusiasts, riding towards Manchester on the roof of a train, with my legs dangling, for there was no step for their support. There was an iron rail, however, on which to lay hold with the hand. I did not altogether like the situation, notwithstanding its novelty. We were not far from the engine, and the steam and coke cinders blew into my face and eyes most abominably. Worse than all, it began to rain. I had an umbrella, which, without thought, I hoisted for protection from the rain. In another half minute it was smashed through coming into contact with the arch of a bridge under which we were passing, between Moses Gate and Halshaw Moor. Fortunately I had a sufficiently effective hold with one hand upon the rail to retain my seat; but it was a marvel I was not killed. On passing this spot, in later years, as Paterfamilias with his tribe bound for the sea-shore, I have thought of the umbrella and the narrow escape of its owner. The journey was an expensive one through the destruction of the umbrella, which the Queen never made good, nor the railway company. It only now occurs to me I might have obtained damages from the latter! On the arrival of the train at Clifton, the stationmaster was so shocked to see where we were perched, that by a squeezing process inside accommodation was provided for us; but we were somewhat weather-beaten when we reached our destination. I saw the Queen and Prince Albert, with the young Prince or Princess who accompanied them, but I was not a witness of the singing of some 20,000 children at Peel Park, in presence of Her

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Majesty, and which caused her to shed tears, as it undoubtedly would me had I been present. There was not much in Kearsley to divert the mind. I felt the want of music dreadfully, and Saturday evenings frequently found me in Manchester, at the Mechanics' Institution in Cooper Street, where concerts of an unpretentious kind were given by an energetic little man whose name was Weston. I never heard him perform on any instrument; he simply got up the concerts and conducted them himself. There was no orchestra, the instruments being the organ belonging to the building, a square pianoforte, and an occasional violin. The conductor greatly resembled Jullien in face and figure, and his manner generally strikingly resembled that of the great maestro. Mr. Henry Walker, a modest young fellow, a lad in those days, was the accompanist on all occasions, doing duty in a manner very satisfactory to the audiences, who were not niggardly in the bestowal of applause. The vocalists were few, and did not vary much. There was a powerful soprano, Mrs. Sunderland,\* *tour de force*, and a Mrs. Winterbottom, who possessed a rich contralto voice. She once melted me in her interpretation of "He was despised," from the Messiah, finishing the song with an artistic shake, and making it one of the most perfect things I ever heard. Two young sisters named Sudlow also sang at those concerts. One of the male vocalists, Mr. George Perrin, a tenor, and Signor Delavanti, an amusing buffo, frequently made their appearance. The latter, who I afterwards discovered was an Irishman

\*sang "I know that my Redeemer liveth" with great effect.

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named Delaney, sang with great humour; his performances were an attractive feature at the concerts. There were other vocalists whom I have forgotten. Many a pretty ballad and part-song were given on those occasions, and often with great skill and pathos.

Those were the only concerts at that time given in Manchester with any regularity which were available for the general public, the Concert Hall being like a sealed book to the mass. Mr.

Charles Halle had not long arrived in Manchester. The first time I heard a performance of Mr. Halle was in the beginning of 1853, at a miscellaneous concert at the Free Trade Hall, on which occasion he gave his services. The concert was given on behalf of a charitable object. At this concert he performed only two pieces, a fantasia of Liszt's from *Le Prophete*, and No. 1 of the *Lieder Ohne Worte*. The other artists were the inevitable Signor Delavanti and Mr. George Perrin, who on that occasion sang in English, Rossini's duet, *Un Segreto*, in a tame manner, I thought, after the rendering of old Lablache and his nephew Nicholas, whom I had previously heard sing it at a morning concert in Bath.

A man will not be long in a mill without a stirring incident of some kind or another, generally in the form of an accident. Sometimes the women have fits, which are painful to witness. The men also suffer from the same cause. At another time an unfortunate individual gets caught by a band or strap, and if he be not sufficiently heavy to cause the strap to become disengaged from the

pulley he is whirled up to the ceiling in no time,

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and loses a limb or his life as the case may be. I have heard of a girl being scalped as neatly as if operated upon by a Mohican. In this instance her tresses, which were somewhat lengthy, accidentally became mixed up with the cotton that was being passed through the "scutchers" at which she was engaged, and she was in almost a moment left in the unfortunate predicament described. Fortunately in my time, or any other that I heard of, we escaped any mishap of this kind. But we were not left without a "stirring incident" either. One morning, when I was completing my attentions to the cumbrous wages book I thought I heard, above the clatter of machinery, the sound of "Fire!" from a female voice. It was only a few moments before the sound was repeated again and again most unmistakably. In a shorter time than I take to write it the sounds had accumulated into such a hideous chorus as to make my blood run cold. I had often heard women scream and make a noise about nothing, but now men's voices were mixed up with those of the women, and in addition to the shoutings of "Fire!" which came nearer and louder, there was a terrific sound, occasioned by the tramping of many clogs, which increased every moment and resembled thunder. The next moment - for everything was momentary - the door at the top of the stairs fronting the office window burst open. Then, what a sight for a man who for the previous two hours had been anxiously absorbed in figures and calculations, and was now contemplating a quiet breakfast! for I always took my breakfast in the office. Our workpeople might have been all

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actors, and each individual a Mrs. Siddons, for the unutterably horrid effect they produced on my mind.

The women were, of course, the first to escape through this doorway. But why did they not walk out quietly, as they might have done, with calmness and dignity, each one enveloped in a protecting shawl? There was really no need for them to make such a helter-skelter exit from the place. With their rolling eyes, hair loose and flying in all directions, and their arms unnecessarily used in the apparent act of dragging each other from the place of destruction, they seemed to descend the steps in a seething mass. After considerable effort I was able to pass this mass of yelling humanity, at the same time crying "Shame!" upon them for the noise they were making, to which they took no heed. I found

myself, in spite of smoke, which was rapidly coming from the place of mischief, in presence of the cause of the hubbub. My whole system had received such a shock from the experience of the last few minutes that a reaction took place, and I beheld with wonderful calmness, all things considered, the spectacle that greeted me on entering the scutching room. There was conflagration and no mistake. The scutcher in the centre of the room was a mass of fire, burning with irresistible fury. The flames savagely looked as if they had got where and what

they wanted with such a grip that nothing but total extinction would satisfy their devouring greed. By this time the engines had been stopped, and the ubiquitous engineer was on the spot. William Meadows was a man

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who knew no fear. At one moment seeming quite at home surrounded by sparks, in the next he shook them off, and mounting a ladder with the agility of a cat, proceeded to inspect various openings in the extensive wall through which the shafting was received from the adjoining cardroom for driving purposes. He rightly divined that in a minute or two the room would have to be left to the devouring element, and hastened to examine all the vulnerable points, to which he must turn all his energies and attention, but it would be on the other side of the wall, for now the devoted room was almost full of flames.

The two rooms were connected by an iron-proof gangway, the metal doors of which being now both closed there was no danger from that quarter. But the danger of the fire protruding through the shafting openings in the wall was imminent. If only a few sparks fell through into the cardroom the whole place must go. There were some four or five of these openings at wide distances from each other and at a considerable height from the floor. Each opening now showed a furnace on the other side. To fill them up was vital, but it seemed an impossible achievement. How to fill them up was quickly decided on by the engineer's ready wit. (It must be done with clay, to procure which buckets were soon let down through a window to the side of the cold water lodge, where, fortunately, there was an abundance of the article used in puddling the sides of the bank. As the buckets were filled they were re-hoisted through the window and passed' on to Meadows, who, on the top of a ladder, received the

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welcome ductile substance and conveyed it to the jaws of the fiery cavern, thus resisting the progress of the fire inwards. But "Clay, clay, more clay!" is wanted. The orifices are so large a hundredweight of it is nowhere. Then comes a shout, "The fire is coming through the opening on the left! We shall never be able to Keep it back at all points." Another ladder arrives, and with it more clay from another source. How manfully they fight the monster, who peers first through one opening and then another, to be met with a successful slap in the face by a bucketful of the ever-welcome though still insufficient clay. This was a case of puddling under difficulties. The wall was now becoming dangerously hot; the fire engines, however, belonging to those of our neighbours who possessed them, were on the spot, but through neglect of previous practice on the part of some of the manipulators, they did not afford the speedy relief that was hoped for. There was an opening larger than the others requiring immediate and special attention. Let this be effectively closed, and the hose be brought to play on the large area of heated wall and we may hope for a successful issue. At length the hose was in full play, and then followed a stand-up fight between fire and water on the one side and a human being on the other, the fire facing him as his mortal and avowed enemy, with whom he was battling unflinchingly, whilst the water was pouring upon him from behind, though with friendly intent yet with most alarming prospects. At one time it appeared a question of cooking, either of roasting or boiling, as the water was

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thrown back from the hot wall which it cooled, but afterwards frequently fell over the devoted man, who performed his offerings of clay until the fire was appeased.

The main portion of the mill was saved. The blowing-room, with all above and below, including cotton, was more or less destroyed. There was a fine display of activity on that occasion by a gentleman, Mr. Rideout, who accompanied his own fire engine to the spot, which was some miles distant from his extensive paper works, and worked with and directed the men in a manner reminding one of the exploits of a distinguished nobleman in London, who has a praiseworthy mania for extinguishing fire. As for William Meadows, had I been the Queen I

should have made him a baronet on the spot.

This disaster proved a great loss to Mr. Thornton. The amount to which the property was insured was ample to cover everything had everything been destroyed. In this instance the stock of cotton was larger than usual and had not been provided for by an additional risk. The amount for which he was covered fell short of some £1,500 of the value of the destroyed property. It was many weeks before active operations recommenced, as a portion of the mill had to be rebuilt.

Whatever honour the Queen might, hypothetically, have been disposed to confer upon the man who saved the mill, my worthy employer's wife was not so inclined. It appears that during the conflagration she was watching the distant smoke and flames from her residence, with the most ardent hope that the whole place would be

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annihilated. Such a result would have been hailed by her with the greatest satisfaction, as it would have been followed by her release from the village of Kearsley (which she regarded as a place of banishment), and a return to her native city of Manchester, where her relatives chiefly resided. I believe she reproached William Meadows more than once for having "rivetted the chain that was so near severed."

In adjusting with the insurance offices, the salvage, which was considerable, was assessed at a low figure, and remained Mr. Thornton's property. As it consisted chiefly of damaged cotton (by fire and water), and we could not work it up, and it was desirable it should be disposed of in the most advantageous manner, it was decided to advertise in a Bolton paper that the cotton more or less burned at the fire would be sold privately, on a certain day, and I was entrusted with the matter. After receiving instructions not to sell it for less than a fixed sum, which was more than the value set upon it by the office, I was left to my own devices, and found myself presently an important personage amongst waste-dealers, who came in numbers sufficient to inspire me with the conviction that burned cotton was greatly in favour. I adopted a simple way of managing the visitors, by receiving one at a time into the office. The amounts offered for the whole quantity, en bloc, varied considerably, one man estimating that it contained much more water than did another. Whether the profit intended to be obtained by the bulk of the bidders was very large indeed, or the purchaser incurred a heavy loss in the transaction,

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I don't know; but the successful man, who was the highest bidder, gave me more than double the sum I was offered by many of the others. Judging from the difficulty of keeping down the stock of goods in Manchester, I concluded that the selling of the raw material, even when half consumed, was a more pleasant occupation than the selling of cloth.

Mr. Thornton was so satisfied with the manner I had disposed of the burned cotton and the much higher figure I had obtained for it than he contemplated, that he urged me to go to Manchester, and personally manage the warehouse there. I cheerfully agreed to his proposal, and whilst mentally blessing the burned cotton which had led to it, regretted that poor Mrs. Thornton had still to remain at Kearsley, and that in future I should see little of her and the children. I had now been three years at the mill, where I had made close application, and was an adept in many things. I had a keen eye for the value and quality of cloth, and was also familiar with the cash book, journal, and ledger, which had been brought to me monthly for examination. These and a few other qualifications were regarded as amongst the good reasons for my being transplanted to Manchester at the commencement of 1853.

## **CHAPTER VI**

### ***MANAGING A MANCHESTER WAREHOUSE***

I PARTED reluctantly from my worthy little landlady and her husband, with whom I had lived happily and comfortably for nearly three years. I remember how she told me, with tears in her



eyes, the place would no longer be a home to them after I was gone. How friendly we had been! Had I not read books to them on winter evenings until Robert would fall asleep (except when Uncle Tom's Cabin happened to be the volume, the effect of which was to keep him awake half the following night through sheer sadness)? Had I not been with them at the time when that terrible accident occurred to Robert and his master, when both were thrown from the carriage, the latter losing a limb in consequence, and each of their lives was endangered? Had not my old square Broadwood (the door being always open so that they could enter my room with freedom) been as much a source of pleasure to them as to myself? They were as familiar with my songs, my Sunday music, and Beethoven's *Sonata Pathétique*, as I was. And now they would hear no more music, and what was more sad, would probably see no more of me. Even the two children set up a howl. Altogether it was too much for me. Vowing I would never come over without calling upon them,

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I got away. I kept my promise, but the next time I saw them, they were living by the Windsor Bridge, at Pendleton, where Robert had obtained a coachman's situation with a Mr. Bradshaw. I afterwards was told he had done this hoping I would again take up my quarters with him and his wife.

There were others of whom I took leave, but as I should probably meet many of them again in Manchester the parting was not so affecting. Amongst the latter was Mr. Edward Phelps, who was perhaps my most congenial friend whilst at K. He was some years my senior, and was the manager of a large chemical works in the neighbourhood. He showed literary taste, was musical, performing on the flute and the inevitable cornet. He played a good game of chess, and was a buyer of old engravings, of which he had an interesting collection, quite unique he thought: it certainly contained many fine impressions of Wille, William Woollet, and Raphael Morghen. It was an intellectual recreation to spend an evening with him, and as I could delight him through being the happy possessor of some fine examples of watercolour art, we were frequently at each other's 'diggings.' I first met him at a debating society, at the Mechanics' Institution, whither I resorted on an evening, to read the daily papers only, but where he was a shining light as he was also of kindred institutions in Manchester. He was a fierce Liberal in politics. and was somewhat latitudinarian in his religious views. Apart from these drawbacks, and that he had rather a patronising manner, he was a companionable man. I frequently

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met him afterwards in Manchester, where he too came to reside, but it is many years since I saw him.

William Meadows parted from me with a cheerful countenance, saying I should make my mark in Manchester. For some time we had in the office, under my immediate control, a little fellow belonging to the village, who had worked with such diligence as to become almost master of the situation. His writing so resembled my own, I was many times puzzled when his documents came under my attention. Some dozen years afterwards, when occupying an important position in one of the largest of the neighbouring mills, he informed me he owed that position to me. "You made aman of me, sir, when you told me to chuck the 'ready reckoner' into the fire, and trust to my mental powers." William Crawshaw was, like many others, so awed with the formidable wages book that he made use of extraneous aid to help him through. I was sorry to leave him also, it being pleasant to contemplate a successful career which oneself has, in a measure, helped to bring about.

There was also a young married couple who occupied the lodge of the mill of which they had the charge, towards whom I felt a warm attachment, and of whom I took a lingering leave. They, too, hailed from Wales, and their strong Celtic accent had a pleasing effect on my ear. They had every morning converted the office into a breakfast room for me, and I vividly recall the pleasurable sensations produced by the transformation. They were near relatives of W.

Meadows.

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I soon fell into the Manchester routine. The most disagreeable of my duties was that of collecting accounts. This, however, at most, was only carried on during a portion of two days in the week, chiefly on the Friday, and occasionally on the Tuesday. My great objection to this necessary performance was the loss of time it occasioned when every moment was valuable. It affected me in this way: I had frequently to collect, on a certain Friday morning, a large sum, say £1,200, from some fourteen or sixteen houses, whose combined accounts, due on that day, equalled that amount. It was ever present to my mind that at least this sum, minus that required for wages and perhaps some oil, tallow, coal, leather, &c., must be remitted in the afternoon to Liverpool, for cotton. Having arranged the order of my calls at the various offices where I am to receive money, I find on my arrival at the first of them a string of personages on the same errand as myself. The office may probably be on a second floor, and from it, beginning at the lucky individual whose privilege it is to be "next" in the order of securing the "needful," following a long passage containing a double row of collectors, and then down the two flights of stairs, lined on either side with these gentlemen, to within a yard or two of the main entrance of the establishment, there are probably some hundred and fifty persons waiting for cash. The whole of them must be satisfied ere my turn comes! Time is valuable. What must be done? A rapid mental calculation has to be made. How long will it take the cashier to pay off all these fellows, in

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addition to those who come after the last man has been settled? If the cashier be an active one, the whole may be disposed of in, say, a couple of hours. Some, however, take a much longer time than others. No man knows this fact better than a collector. The time has to be utilised in reconnoitering the other houses, which, perhaps, are at a considerable distance off, and where the collectors are in less strength. Probably this surmise turns out to be a correct one, there being a lull in numbers in the new quarter. After receiving the cheques, yet another calculation for the economy of time, as the houses do not pay after one o'clock. Very likely the most formidable obstruction of the morning proves to be the one where the first call was made.

I always sympathized with collectors. To be a successful one he requires to be patient, keen, cool, and active; and his position being one of great responsibility, having large sums of money frequently under his control, his integrity must be unassailable. Many a time have I watched an exhausted individual take with hopeless resignation his place, some seventy or eighty down the list, to wait his "turn." I have hoped he only had that one account to collect. If otherwise, unless his principal rejoices in a good balance at his banker's, he will be in poor show when the fatal hour of one arrives. Sometimes, in spite of all one's calculations and the greatest exertions, the clock hand pointed to that figure on the dial which was the signal to cease payments, before the whole of the accounts were collected. We took care to hook the biggest fish earliest in the morning, so

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that if any were uncaught within the prescribed limit of time they should, at any rate, be the least important. Sometimes a good-natured cashier would, if properly approached, give one a cheque, after hours, attended perhaps with a growl for not having come at the right time!

Mr. Thornton had a good connection amongst the Manchester merchants. There was a fine array of names in the ledger. Nearly all the most important houses, home and shipping, were amongst his customers. With such magnificent surroundings, why should he not make a fortune? The reply to this interrogatory gradually unfolded itself to my mind. I was made conscious, in time, of the fact that our goods were not manufactured with that regularity of quality which characterised those of the successful makers. Hitherto I had been accustomed to see only such fabrics as were manufactured at K.; and, comparing these one with another I

could easily decide on their respective values. It was quite another thing to compare them, side by side, with cloths of other makers. I have more than once been put to the blush when a brusque buyer, having refused to pass an invoice - in consequence of which determination I was disappointed in receiving cash - has invited me downstairs to inspect the last delivery, and compare it with a former one. "Look on this picture," pointing to the article as it should be; "and now on this," directing my attention to the piece which should have been of a similar quality, but which was much inferior. "Do you consider this a fair fulfilment of my order?" "Certainly not," is my reply; "but if

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you will kindly pass the invoice I will send you another piece in exchange for the faulty one." "But," says he, "hey are all alike." "Surely not?" was my inquiring answer. A score out of fifty pieces are brought and set out on a counter for my delectation. The first we examine is worse than the one we have been inspecting; so is the second, and the third; so are they all! My agony of mind is great, and I am compelled to accidentally glance my eye upon something or another in the place which has apparently attracted my attention, to have a moment for reflecting how to escape from the present dilemma.

I want immediate cash for wages, and on no consideration do I want to see the goods returned to the warehouse. "How can I satisfy you?" "You cannot satisfy me." "How can I meet you?" "By allowing me a penny a yard on the whole delivery." This answer is staggering, and unless modified I can see distressing results. It was not, however, delivered as his ultimatum; and on my proposing to him the allowance of a halfpenny per yard, he acceded to my request, and passed the invoice, to my great relief and astonishment at being "let off" comparatively easy. The allowance meant a reduction of six per cent from the invoice, which was bad enough, but also meant that in future buyers' visits to our establishment would probably be few and far between.

I believe there is no trading community in the world where money transactions were conducted so satisfactorily as in Manchester. On the day an account was due you might regard it with the

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same equanimity as if the money were already deposited to our credit at the bank. Manchester was not to blame if my experience of it was contrary to this. It was not every buyer who would be so merciful as the one mentioned. Many in similar circumstances resolutely declined to pass invoices, and the cash, so much needed, was not forthcoming when often it was most urgently required.

There were only three persons employed at the warehouse. There had been five, but they were now reduced. There was a salesman, who was on the point of leaving, to be replaced by Mr. William Brownrigg, a man of so lively a nature and capacity for talking nonsense that he was poken of in the city as "Gassy B." There was also a porter, Edward, and myself. Mr. B. was many years my senior, and had an extensive acquaintance with Manchester men (buyers) and their ways. He was not well educated though he seldom did violence to the Queen's English beyond his irregular and eccentric aspirations, which, when he became emphatic, were very marked. After his arrival, I remarked the additional number of callers who visited our establishment; if they were not customers I was assured by Brownrigg they would very shortly prove themselves such. For some time scarcely an hour passed that some new face did not present itself, and if Brownrigg were absent the face with its belongings disappeared for the time being, to become visible again soon afterwards, and also familiar. From the large number of men he knew Brownrigg might have been a Freemason, but he

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was not. I could not resist watching his movements with interest, and his keen eye soon made him conscious of the fact. It was obvious that in conjunction with his vast knowledge and experience he had abilities which should have secured him a much higher position than the one

he was going to occupy in our warehouse. After we had arrived at a more intimate stage of our acquaintance I informed him of this view which I entertained of him. He professed gratification, and augured therefrom we should work amicably together. Our united aspiration was to raise the house of Thornton to a position of greater eminence than it hitherto occupied, and the first necessary step for the accomplishment of this

object was to make a careful and exhaustive examination of the whole of the stock of cloth, which consisted of grey and finished goods. This proved a work of considerable time and labour. In its performance I had opportunities of observing the activity and aptitude of Brownrigg. He was an artist in his way, and I sometimes found myself watching with admiring eyes the manner he handled a piece of cloth. The removal of it from its previous resting-place; its passage in his arms to the counter, as if it were one of his own children; the severing of the cord which held it together; the unfolding and examination of each lap with his subtle fingers, as if it were material upon which bank notes were to be printed, were done with marvellous rapidity; the whole making quite a picture. His respective blessings or curses, as the case may be, which followed the examination of each piece were pronounced

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with a promptness reminding one of Charles Mathews.

At the conclusion of this undertaking, in which the whole strength of the warehouse was engaged, and from which we emerged day after day in a besmeared and dusty condition, B. concluded the stock was not of that high order which would meet the requirements of his numerous friends in London, Glasgow, Dublin, and elsewhere. He had written out an imposing array of firms with which he was acquainted, and of whose continued support in his new position he was confident. Many of these names were new to me, and I hailed with delight the prospect of an extended business connection. We soon had evidence of the favour with which he was regarded, not only by the visits of old friends, who received and returned his interminable jokes and sallies, but also by the actual business which resulted.

I began to have visions of our future eminence. It had become evident, however, for its fulfilment that the stock must be augmented by the introduction of higher class fabrics, our own being deficient in quality as well as quantity. Now began our difficulties of action. To a limited extent we introduced other makes of cloth, with good results, but the operation was regarded with little favour by Mr. Thornton, who was naturally more anxious for the steady and regular disposal of his own manufactured goods than those of others. This view was quite reasonable, but the argument we enforced was to show that the sale of his cloth would be facilitated by our course of action. Mr. Thornton was not to be convinced, and for the

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first time I found myself in conflict with him. We made good progress, however, Brownrigg attending to the preparation and disposal of finished goods, whilst I worked with the greys.

Our warehouse had become so busy it was necessary to have additional help, and that I should be relieved of the financing. Mr. Thornton engaged Mr. Speakes, an elderly gentleman, for his cashier, and also a younger man to assist in collecting, for the performance of which, through advanced years, Mr. Speakes was unequal. Brownrigg was indefatigable in his visits to the Royal,

Queen's, Albion, and other hotels where his outside friends from the great towns were to be found when they made their periodical visits to Manchester for buying purposes. How well he knew them all, and they knew him! After escorting them in triumph to the warehouse, the banter and jests with the most of them became continuous, almost interrupting the necessary attention to the main object of it all, which was to make as large a sale as possible.

We were fairly good workers, except Mr. Speakes, who was rather inert, somewhat querulous, and metaphysical. Being also some thirty years (at least) older than any of us, he was not equal to the amount of toil we imposed upon ourselves. He used to express his surprise and sorrow



that I should smile at Brownrigg's sallies, which he considered were often unseemly and inappropriate. Whilst agreeing cordially with Speakes that Brownrigg's mirth and humour often lacked edification, I was fain to apologetically hint that an occasional flash of wit was enlivening,

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and its recognition not necessarily attended by ill consequences. I had to remind Mr. Speakes he had seen his day, having been the owner of three wives in his time (not all at once), and the progenitor of little Speakes innumerable, whilst we were comparatively juvenile. Surely his serious countenance and my smiling features were equally becoming.

*More in next month's newsletter.*

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Again, a continuation from previous months' newsletters, starting in October with an introduction, which are downloadable, [HERE](#)

from, '*The Book of English Trades*' published in 1827

### THE BOOK-BINDER.



Book-binding is the art of sewing together the sheets of a book and securing them with a back and side boards. Binding is distinguished from stitching, which is merely sewing leaves, without bands or backs; and from half-binding, which consists in securing the back only with leather, the pasteboard sides being covered with blue or marbled paper; whereas, in binding, both back and sides are covered with leather.

At what time the art of book-binding was first invented it is impossible to ascertain; but Phillatius, a learned Athenian, was the first who pointed out the use of a particular kind of glue for fastening the leaves of a book together; an invention which his countrymen thought of such importance as to entitle him to a statue. The most ancient mode of binding consisted in gluing the different leaves together and attaching them to cylinders of wood, round which they were rolled. This is called Egyptian binding; and continued to be practised long after the age of Augustus. It is now wholly disused, except in oriental countries, and in Jewish Synagogues,

where they still continue to write books of the law on slips of vellum sewed together, so as to form only one long page, with a roller at each extremity, furnished with clasps of gold or silver. The square form of binding which is now universally practised, at least in Europe, is said to have been first invented by one of the kings of Pergamus, the same to whom we owe the invention of parchment.

Modern or square binding is of two kinds : the one particularly adapted to printed books where leather forms the general covering, and the other more immediately applied to account books, where parchment or vellum is made use of as the outside covering.

In this business the first operation is to fold the sheets according to the proper form; that is folios into two leaves, quartos into four, octavos into eight, and so on; this is usually the work of women, who perform it with a slip of ivory or box-wood, called a folding-stick: in this they are directed by the catchwords and *signatures*, which are the letters with the numbers annexed to

them, at the bottom of the pages of the first one or more leaves in each sheet.

The leaves thus folded and laid over each other in the order of the signatures, are beaten on a stone with a heavy hammer, to make them solid and smooth, and then they are pressed. Thus prepared, they are sewed in a sewing-press, upon packthreads or cords, which are called bands, at a proper distance from each other; which is done by drawing a thread through the middle of each sheet, and giving a turn round each band, beginning with the first, and proceeding to the last. The common number of bands is six in folios, and five in quartos and octavos. In neat binding a saw is made use of, to make places for the bands, which are sunk into the paper, so that the back of the book, when bound, may be smooth, without any appearance of bands. After this the backs are glued, the ends of the bands being opened with a knife, for the more convenient fixing of the pasteboard; then the back is turned with a hammer, the book being fixed in a press between boards, called backing-boards, in order to make a groove for admitting the pasteboards. The boards being then applied, holes are made for drawing the bands through, the superfluous ends being cut off, and the parts hammered smooth. The book is then pressed, in order for cutting, which is performed by a machine called a plough. After this the book is put into a press, called the cutting-press, betwixt two boards, the one lying even with the press, for the knife to run upon, the other above, for the knife to cut against.

The book being cut, the pasteboards are squared with a proper pair of iron shears, and it is then ready for sprinkling, gilding, blacking, or marbling the leaves. If the leaves are to be gilt, the book is put between two boards into a press, and when the leaves are rendered very smooth, they are rubbed over with size-water, the gold leaf is then laid on, dried by a fire, and burnished off.

The head-band is now to be added, which is an ornament of thread or silk, placed at the extremities of the book across the leaves, and woven or twisted about a roll of paper.

The book is now fit for covering: calf-skin is the most usual cover; this is moistened in water, and cut to the size of the book; the edges are then pared off on a marble stone. The cover is next smeared over with paste, then stretched over the pasteboard on the outside, and doubled over the edges withinside. The book-binder then fixes it firmly between two boards to make the cover stick the stronger to the pasteboards and the back; on the exact performance of which depends the neatness of the book. The back is now to be warmed by the fire to soften the glue, and the leather of the back is rubbed down with a folding-stick or bodkin, to fix it close to the back of the book. After this, it is washed over with a little paste and water; two blank leaves on each side are then to be pasted down to the cover, and when dry, the leaves are burnished in the press, and the cover rolled on the edges. The cover is now glazed with the white of an egg, and then polished with a polishing iron. If the book is to be lettered a piece or pieces of red morocco are pasted between the bands, to receive the title, &c. in gold letters.

The letters or other ornaments are made with gilding-tools, engraved in *relievo*, either on the points of puncheons, or a round little cylinder of brass. The puncheons make their impressions by being pressed flat down, and the cylinders by being rolled along by a handle, to which they are fitted on an iron stay, or axis.

To apply the gold, the binders glaze the parts of the leather with a liquor made of the white of eggs diluted with water, by means of a bit of sponge; and when nearly dry, they slightly oil them and then lay on pieces of gold leaf, and on these they apply the tools, having first warmed them in a charcoal fire. When the gilding is finished, they rub off the superfluous gold, and polish the whole.

The business of the book-binder, in general, requires no great ingenuity, nor any considerable strength of body. Journeymen can earn thirty shillings a week; and much more if they are good workmen, and are intrusted with very fine work. Formerly book-binding was not a separate trade, but it was united with that of the stationer: it is now, however, carried on alone, and book-

binders are generally employed constantly throughout the year.

All *stationery* work is sewed with strong waxed thread, and as the vellum or parchment is never attached to the back like leather, but lies hollow and loose, when the book is open, it cannot, of course, afford that security to the back which leather does; it is therefore common to line the back, between the slips, with coarse canvass or slips of leather, letting them come as much over the sides, as to paste down with the boards and slips. The boards for stationery are not so thick in proportion as for printed work, and when put on, are placed at least half an inch from the back, on each side of the parchment slips which books are sewed upon: you must cut with scissars a very narrow strip, which is not to be pasted down, but left for the purpose of drawing through the parchment when the cover is applied, serving to attach the cover, before it is pasted to the boards. Parchment or vellum covers should always be lined before they are put on, and applied before they are quite dry. Different kinds of bindings are distinguished by different names, such as *law bindings* *marble binding*, *French binding*, *Dutch binding*, &c. In Dutch binding, the backs are of vellum. In French binding, a slip of parchment is applied over the back between each band, and the ends are pasted on the inside of each pasteboard. This indorsing, as it is called, is peculiar to the French binders; who are enjoined, by special ordonnance, to back their books with parchment. The parchment is applied in the press, after the back has been grated to make the paste take hold. The Italians still bind in a coarse thick paper, and this they call binding *alla rustica*. It is extremely inconvenient, as it is liable to wear without particular care.

The price of binding is regulated by certain printed lists agreed on between the bookseller and the bookbinder.

In the plate the man is represented in the act of cutting the leaves of the book; on his right, on the floor, are his glue-pot and paste-tub; behind him are his tools for gilding; and on his right is the press for bringing the books into the least possible compass.

In London, the business of gilding the leaves of books is a separate employment, and it is done before the boards of the book are covered with the leather.

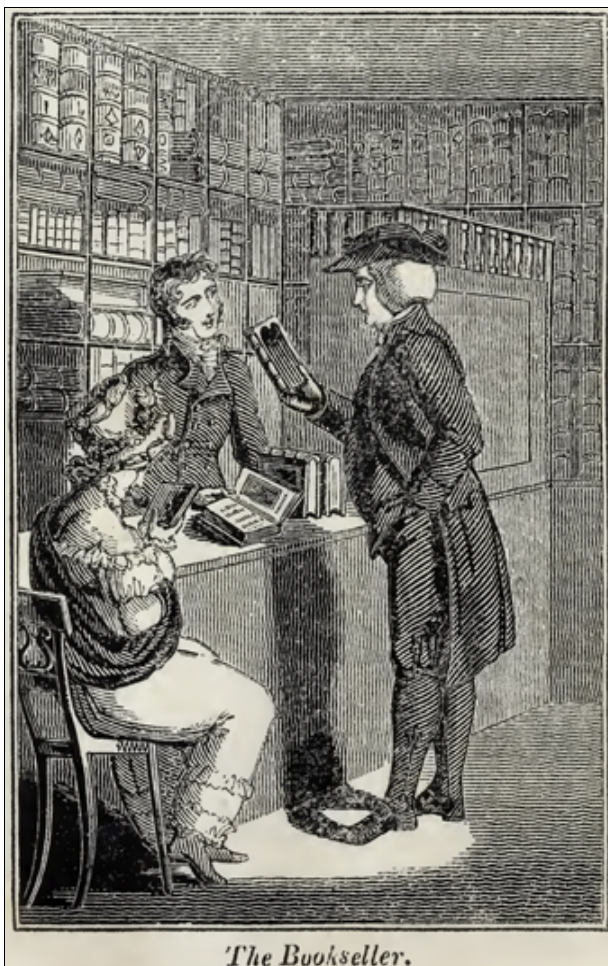
### THE BOOKSELLER.

Before the invention of printing, and of the manufacture of paper from linen, books were so scarce and dear, as to be without the reach of all but persons of considerable opulence. Though the materials of which they were made had been as cheap and as plentiful as paper is at present, the labour of multiplying copies in manuscript, would always have kept their numbers comparatively scanty, and their price high.

Hence in all the nations of antiquity, learning was almost exclusively confined to the people of rank, and the lower orders were only rescued from total ignorance, by the reflected light of their superiors, and raised above the rudeness of barbarism, by that partial improvement which men of cultivation and refinement necessarily impart, in a greater or less degree, to all within the sphere of their influence. The Papyrus, a kind of broad-leaved rush, being the cheapest material for the reception of writing, was of course in most general use. When this could no longer be procured, in consequence of the conquest of Egypt by the Saracens, parchment was then substituted, but it was so difficult to be procured, that it was customary to erase the writing of an ancient manuscript to make room for some other composition. In this manner many of the best works of antiquity were lost for ever. Books were for many ages so scarce, that to present a book to a religious house, was thought so valuable a donation as to merit eternal salvation, and it was offered on the altar with great ceremony.

The making of paper such as we now see it, is dated by the generality of writers at the eleventh or twelfth century; but the honour of the discovery is claimed by different and distant nations. The first book which was printed on paper manufactured in Enland, came out without a date about 1495 or 1496, about fifty years after the invention of printing, although for a long while afterwards it was principally brought from abroad.





The art of printing necessarily produced the Bookseller. Indeed, we believe that the earlier printers were also Booksellers, as are some of the Printers of the present day; but the lapse of years, and a variety of other circumstances, have generated many trades and subdivisions of trades, to our forefathers wholly unknown. Even the trade of a Bookseller is considerably subdivided, at least in London.

The Bookseller of the present day is a person of considerable importance in the republic of letters, more especially if he combines those particular branches of the trade denominated *Proprietor* and *Publisher*: for it is to such men our men of genius take their productions for sale: and the success of works of genius very frequently depends upon their spirit, probity, and patronage. It is also to such men that the reading public generally are indebted for almost every important work of a voluminous kind. Those bulky and valuable volumes, the various Encyclopaedias, would never have made their appearance had not a Bookseller, or a combination of Booksellers, entered upon the speculation by

employing men of science and learning in the various departments of those works, and embarking large capitals in the undertaking.

The sums of money employed in such concerns as these are immense, and the regularity and dispatch with which some of these extensive bookselling concerns are conducted, exceed the conception of those persons wholly unacquainted with the affair.

Paternoster Row has been, for a long period, notorious as the place in which some of these large establishments are carried on, and where a great number of Bookseller's shops and warehouses abound. The Stationers' Company have a Hall not far distant from it, where a copy of every book must, by a late Act of Parliament, be deposited when published, in order to secure to the proprietor or author of it the sole profits arising from its publication and sale. A copy must also be deposited in the British Museum, the two Universities, and some other public establishments, amounting to eleven in number.

In London, and some other large bookselling establishments in the kingdom, books in the wholesale way are sold in quires: lists of such sales are constantly handed about amongst the large dealers in books.

Some Booksellers in London confine their trade to particular departments. There are Law Booksellers, Medical Booksellers, Foreign Booksellers, Religious Booksellers, Booksellers of Education and Children's books; others deal in old books only, and some principally in rare and scarce books: the rarity being in numerous instances the criterion of value. A rare copy of the *Decameron* of Boccaccio was sold a few years ago, for upwards of *two thousand pounds*, when the book might have been bought in London at the same time, recently printed, for a few shillings! The form of a book, the style of the printing, and the name of the printer, add materially to the value of these conceits. The books called black-letter books are also much esteemed.

The sale of some books of fancy and genius, in the present age, if not in price, has exceeded in number, the books of any former period. We may mention those of Lord Byron, Sir Walter Scott, and Mr. Thomas Moore, as instances of the extraordinary and rare good fortune of these



gentlemen. Whilst other works, perhaps of equal, although of course of very different merit, have sunk almost dead-born from the press.

The sale of periodical publications is in Great Britain of considerable importance: it consists of Magazines, Reviews, and a variety of other productions published for the most part monthly. Other works are frequently divided into numbers and published weekly, in order to make the price, when they are bulky, come easy to the purchasers. By these means an infinity of books, and a vast body of information, have been diffused throughout the community, and which have made the trade of a Bookseller one of the greatest interest and importance to mankind.

It is by the diffusion of knowledge by books that all species of tyranny and oppression can be most effectually resisted; it is by the diffusion of books, that mankind become acquainted with their moral and religious duties; and it is also by books that men generally become distinguished for their intelligence, probity, and worth; for where the diffusion of knowledge by books has not taken place, there we most commonly find the relative and social duties at a very low ebb.

Newspapers are another species of books very valuable in their kind; but as they are not often sold by Booksellers, we content ourselves with merely making mention of them.

The plate represents the inside of a retail Bookseller's shop. No explanation whatever can be necessary.

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### From the e-Postbag

Christmas is really coming! In the e-Postbag this month we have two wonderful contributions on the theme of remembering Christmas.

Do you remember posting your letters up the chimney to Santa? I certainly do, hoping against hope that the letter would whirl away, disappearing into the darkness. Here we have an email from Helen Marrs, who tells us the story of a rather special letter sent up the chimney to Santa.

#### A Christmas Story – 1911 to 2011

On Christmas Eve 1911, a young girl penned a personally designed letter to Santa with a request for gifts, and a good luck message, at her home in Oaklands Terrace, Terenure in Dublin. She put it in the chimney of the fireplace in the front bedroom for Santa. The message to Santa was explicit.

*"I want a baby doll and a waterproof with a hood and a pair of gloves and a toffee apple and a gold penny and a silver sixpence and a long toffee."*

As well as the requests for gifts from Santa the letter also contains drawings and a message of "Good Luck" to Santa from the child, who signed herself A or H. Howard.

However the letter did not burn. It was discovered by the house's current occupant, John Byrne, when he was installing central heating in 1992. "At that time, the fireplaces were made of brick with a shelf on either side," said John who works in the building industry. The letter was found on one of the shelves. It had remained remarkably intact given the passage of time and was only slightly burned from fires set in the house over the years. Since then, he had kept it as a souvenir of another time but with the stamp of childhood innocence which still exists today. At that time he was unsure when the letter had been written.

However, when the 1911 census came out he did some research and found the answer to his quest. At that time there were three children living at the address. Hannah Howard was 10 at the time, Fred was 7, and Lily 13, and the Howard family had all been born in England, including parents Fred Hamer Howard, an "under manager" in a plumber merchants and his wife Mary Elizabeth. (known as Polly) . As the letter would be 100 yrs old at Christmas 2011, John decided to publish it in his local newspaper.



Away on the other side of the world in Tasmania, by the wonders of modern technology, an ex-pat Irish girl was reading The Irish Times on-line. The grand-daughter of Fred Howard junior, she realized that the young girl who had written the letter was her great aunt, christened Hannah but known to the family as Annie.

At this point emails began to fly round the world, firstly to her mother in Dublin, then to Fred's other daughter Joyce, now living in England. Annie had married in 1931 and had 2 sons.

One had moved to Scotland and the other son, given the name Howard as a Christian name was now living in Belfast. Joyce contacted him to tell him about it. He had just heard himself. His wife, recognising the street name, read out the story from the newspaper with the address but, until she read about the 1911 census including Hannah Howard, did not make the connection to his mother. Hannah was actually born on Christmas Day 1900. She had died in 1978.

Hannah's father, Fred Hamer Howard, was my grandfather's brother, one of the 10 children of Moses and Mary Jane Howard, 7 boys and 3 girls born and brought up in Blackley, Manchester. Fred married Polly Dean in 1894. Lily was born in 1897 and Hannah in 1900 with young Fred following in 1904. Fred worked for Baxendales, a large ironmongers warehouse in Manchester and in about 1906 he had moved to their Dublin branch for promotion.

A family photo which we can date fairly accurately to May / Jun 1901 shows Fred with Polly holding the baby Hannah. It may have been Hannah's christening as 2 unknown ladies have been identified as Polly's mother and sister. Lily, then 4 is sitting on the grass at the front.

The eldest son had died in 1896 and the eldest girl Annie and husband had gone to South Africa for his health but the other 6 brothers and 2 girls, with families, are there together.

Over the next few years the family were to spread out, Fred to Ireland and 3 of the brothers emigrated to the USA, married there and had families. Despite the distance family ties remained strong, with visits by family between the US, Manchester and Dublin.

In recent years, with the use of email, communication has been easier and more frequent. So within 24 hrs of the story appearing in the Irish Times it had bounced around the world to Howard descendants in Tasmania and Australia, back to Ireland, to Scotland to Annie's other son and to 4 places in England, Cumbria, Derby, Devon and Southport as well as Manchester. Also to several places in the United States, from Boston in the North, to Florida in the South, and west to Denver.

Did Annie get her baby doll? We think so because Annie's sister Lily married but had no children and Fred's daughter still treasures the baby doll that belonged to her Aunt Lily. Many thanks, Helen, for such a lovely little story which really is 'family history'.

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Secondly, we have an email from Julie Schwethelm, who wrote, " I have just been mooching around the Oldham Historical Research Group website and discovered this event lined up for December, '*Remembering our own Christmas' past; ancient customs and practices*'. One of my childhood recollections is to do with Christmas, not Oldham, but Droylsden isn't that far away, anyway we were all Lancastrians then, before Tameside was invented. So I'm sending you a little text I wrote a few years ago. "

### **Mistletoe and Mince Pies**

When Father Christmas was comfortably installed in his fairy grotto at Lewis's department store in Manchester, we knew that we didn't have to wait much longer for Christmas to arrive. As well

as the traditional visit to Lewis's there would be Christmas parties at Edge Lane Methodists Sunday school and then at Manchester Road Primary school, then the holidays would begin.

The only thing I can remember about the Sunday School Christmas parties in the "Beginners" class is waiting quietly for Father Christmas to arrive. We would all sing "Away in a manger" and then a bell would ring outside in the corridor, where the parents were standing patiently to escort their offspring home, and Father Christmas would enter the room with a large sack filled with presents. At the primary school Christmas parties I remember mostly the long trestle tables set up in the hall where we would have a sort of afternoon tea with sandwiches and jelly. Father Christmas of course didn't make an appearance, after all we were already quite grown up. Instead there was a nativity play. We spent a lot of time cutting out, crayoning and gluing things to decorate the classrooms. In our third year at primary school we concentrated on angels, and it was interesting to see all the different apparitions which emerged first from our imagination, then from the materials provided, and found their way onto the classroom walls as a rather peculiar frieze. Linda proudly brought to school some impressive pairs of angel hands that her big brother had drawn and cut out. Unfortunately they were much too big for the rest of the angels and we had to whittle them down to size, so they ended up looking more like paws by the time we got the proportions more or less aligned.

At home, the first project to be launched was always The Cake. A decent Christmas cake needs to mature. Strangely, like its big sister the Wedding Cake, it is always eaten with enthusiasm by people who don't like all the fruit and systematically poke it out, leaving not much else at all, apart from a sticky mess on the plate. Dousing the cake with brandy is of course not a good idea for households with children, so ours was limited to the masses of currants, sultanas, glacé cherries and candied peel all competing for the best place in the mixture. My favourite bit was the icing which covered the layer of home made marzipan. My mother always did a snow scene, fluffing up the icing with a fork and poking little decorations into the thick sugary topping. A snowman, a little figure clad in a red outfit and pulling a toboggan, a bedraggled looking fir tree...all these were made of some kind of plaster, with paint that was wearing off, and they were probably highly unsuitable for putting anywhere near anything edible. But they came out of their box every year and were complemented by a paper cake frill. That had to be renewed because it tended to become not only very sticky but also rather soggy.

We would ceremoniously cut into the cake at tea time on Christmas Day, after the customary salad with the boiled bacon that tasted of washing day and not even remotely of bacon. The piece of cake therefore mutated into a kind of saving grace, something to look forward to after the cold boiled bacon salad.

The humble mince pie was my favourite. We would eat them cold with a cup of tea, or warm with custard or home made cream. My mother had a Bel Cream Maker which spent its early life stowed away at the back of a sideboard cupboard until it was rediscovered and came into its full glory whenever my mother had made apple pie, mince pies or trifle. The top was made of pale green Bakelite, the base was moulded glass. It was fascinating just listening to the amazing sound it made every time my mother lifted the handle to pump the warm mixture of melted unsalted butter and milk, with a great deal of elbow grease, into the glass base, magically transforming it into thick cream. If she lifted the handle too high in her enthusiasm, the valve part would leave its intended position and float in mid air. After much swearing, my mother would finally manage to reassemble the device and the wonderful squelchy creamy sound would fill the kitchen again.

On Christmas Eve one of the traditions that lasted for years was the visit of Margaret, our neighbour from the house opposite, when she brought my Christmas present. In the early days, when I still believed in Father Christmas, she would come across after she had seen my bedroom light go out and knew that I had gone to bed, to make sure she didn't spoil the magic. Margaret and Jack had a daughter ten years older than me. They were true eccentrics, but Margaret had a heart of gold. On Christmas morning after the excitement of opening the

presents Father Christmas had left in my pillow case in the living room, I would go across to Margaret's to thank them for their present. It was always something very special to which she had clearly given a lot of thought. One year it was a lovely white musical jewellery box which played the theme tune of the Dr. Zhivago film, while a tiny ballerina turned a pirouette on a red velvet stage. I still use it. Margaret and Jack's house never ceased to fascinate me. Every corner was full of something, the mantelpiece utterly overcrowded with Pendelfin rabbits, and the whole room so full of collectable ornaments and figurines that there was hardly any space left to put down the cup of tea I was always offered.

Like us, Margaret would hang all the Christmas cards over the mantelpiece. We tried various systems to accommodate the vast numbers of cards we received in the weeks before Christmas. One year they were fastened with little green and red plastic pegs to a sort of washing line and strung horizontally across the walls, conveniently fixed to the picture rails. At Christmas these picture rails came in useful as strategic fixture points for all kinds of Christmas decorations. For the remaining eleven months of the year they served merely as high horizontal dust collectors. Our living room was devoid of pictures or paintings, the only hanging object was a large and rather chunky looking bevelled edge mirror hanging on two heavy chains which seemed to cling to the picture rail for dear life with two rather frightening claw-like brass hooks. During the festive season this rather ugly mirror always had two sprigs of holly incongruously shoved behind it.

The Christmas card washing lines did not become our standard procedure. My mother preferred her established method which consisted of lengths of red ribbon fixed with drawing pins to the aforementioned picture rails. She would meticulously fasten the back of each card to the ribbon with a dressmaking pin, carefully arranging the cards by size and weight and ensuring that the inside of each card could be viewed as long as it didn't disturb the overall symmetry of appearance or create an imbalance. This worked quite well until our budgie Billy arrived on the scene and created whirlwinds by flying the length and breadth of the living room at break-neck speed. This set the ribbons in motion so that they fluttered, twisted and turned, entangling the cards and leaving the back of the cards where the front should have been.

Putting up the tree was another of those wonderful predictable rituals. We had a real Christmas tree only once in my childhood career. The first shock was having it banned to the hall because the living room was too warm. I wasn't at all keen on this new location, which was normally reserved for a piece of mistletoe hanging over the front door. Then, despite the damp coldness of the unheated hall, it managed to lose most of its needles in record time. It made a Big Mess. That was the first and last time we ever had a real tree. I remember three artificial Christmas trees. All were the kind that could be conveniently folded away like an umbrella and stored in a narrow cardboard box under the bed. The first one bore a strong resemblance to a sweeping brush, but it was green. It features on some early black and white photographs. It was small enough to merit a table. The second tree was a four feet high silver contraption which managed to lose its tinsel-like needles enthusiastically all over the carpet every time it was pulled out of its box. I can remember dressing this tree. It didn't need any tinsel, but I seem to remember we still draped garlands of it across the branches. You can never have too much of a good thing. The third tree was white and slightly taller than its predecessor, and looked beautiful when it was new. However it soon turned a delicate shade of grey.

All the decorations spent the rest of the year under my parents' bed in a suitcase that was yanked out periodically for cleaning, so that breakages were inevitable. The bells seemed to be particularly fragile whereas some of the older glass decorations such as the yellow pine cone or the indented coloured baubles were sturdier. Even the clip-on glass bird lived a long and healthy life, retaining its tail despite the months spent in a suitcase.

The fairy lights were a sure recipe for irritation. Every year they had to undergo a test, a sort of dry run to check if they were working at all and if so, which of the bulbs was loose or had "gone" and needed tightening or replacing. Sometimes they seemed to have a secret "one out, all out"

agreement, but usually the culprit could be hunted down and exchanged for a new bulb. Our fairy lights were made by a company called "Pifco". This always sounded as if they were destined by way of their name alone to go up in smoke as soon as they were plugged in. There was nothing fairy-like about the enormous brown Bakelite plug. Inevitably we would have gone through the testing procedure in great detail, ensuring that the whole set was in full working order, then we would carefully wind them evenly around the tree, stand back to admire the results, plug them in, and then – nothing. No sign of life at all. One out, all out. Not so much as a "Pif". In the end, after much twisting of bulbs in difficult to reach places we would manage to get the tree illuminated with the colourful fairy lights. We would then cross our fingers that they would remain working until after New Year. Sometimes this even happened. More often than not, they would stage another "one out, all out" campaign and leave us writhing behind the tree in search of the ringleader. The Christmas fairy, perched rather precariously in her ballerina pose at the tip with her once white tulle dress and silver cardboard wings, remained unperturbed and continued to concentrate on not falling off the tree.

Father Christmas was everywhere, not only at Edge Lane Methodists, but all over Ashton, especially at Arcadia, the Co-op store, and in several Manchester department stores. How on earth did he do it? When I was a little girl, my mother took me to see Father Christmas at Lewis's, Manchester's oldest and most fascinating department store. She would enthuse about the days when Lewis's, which opened in 1877, had a glass dome with an atrium reaching down from the fifth to the ground floor, filled with wonderful Christmas decorations. It must have been like fairyland, especially when Father Christmas arrived and descended from the dome into his grotto on a golden ladder. Lewis's was a wonderful store. I don't remember the dome as it had been blocked off to comply with fire regulations, but I do recall the old wooden escalator which chugged up to the first floor where haberdashery was located, and the uniformed lift attendants with their peaked caps, calling out "ground floor – street level". The Soda Fountain must have been quite remarkable in its heyday, but I can only remember it as a self service basement cafeteria with modern sixties plastic seating. I would have a glass of raspberry pop which only Lewis's Soda Fountain seemed to serve. On the fifth floor there was a ballroom with a sprung floor, which in the sixties was still being used in between staff dances for exhibitions. There was also a posh restaurant and a cafeteria.

After the atrium had disappeared forever, Father Christmas set up camp in the toy department, which I think was on the fourth floor. His fairy grotto was filled with wonderful animations and thousands of twinkling lights, it was a wonderful experience as a child to wander through this sparkling fairyland on the way to see Father Christmas. I remember receiving a mechanical fairy queen doll which, after being wound up, would glide gracefully across the dining table, twirling in her glittering gown. I played with her for hours. Sometimes, when it's very quiet, I can still hear the metallic whizzing sound of her gown sweeping the floor.

There was only one thing that spoilt the magic of Lewis's fairy grotto for me. That was Uncle Holly, some crony of Father Christmas's, dressed in a rather silly suit and top hat with holly motifs, no doubt well padded with cushions underneath his bursting waistcoat, and heavily made up with bright red holly-berry coloured cheeks and white snow-like whiskers. His job was to keep impatient children entertained while they were queueing to enter the grotto. He scared me to death. I would always try to hide behind my mother if I saw him anywhere near. I was scared of anybody dressed up. The clowns at Belle Vue circus, our regular New Year's Day outing, horrified me. While other children were squealing with excitement whenever a clown approached their row, I would shrink into my seat pretending I wasn't there and hoping they wouldn't see me. Even puppets frightened me. When we were on holiday on the Isle of Wight we would often go to the puppet theatre at Sandown. This was fine as long as they didn't leave the little stage, but after the show the lady would come down into the audience of children with one of the large string puppets, making him shake hands with my eager contemporaries. I have never really grown out of this strange fear of people in disguise.



There were no Christmas markets, these would not arrive on the British Isles for several decades. But Albert Square in Manchester always staged its ceremony of switching on the lights on the enormous spruce tree. The tree, like that in Trafalgar Square, was a present from Norway as gratitude for Britain's support during the Second World War, a tradition which has continued until the present day. My favourite trees however were to become the two real fir trees which adorned Fairfield Moravian church, and whose acquaintance I would make when I became a pupil of Fairfield High School at the age of eleven. Our school Carol Service was held at the neighbouring Moravian Church in Fairfield Square. As the church was not big enough to hold all the girls and their parents, who were cordially invited, there were two services, an afternoon service for the junior school and an evening service for the senior girls. The Moravians had brought with them their traditions, including the Herrnhut Star, which came to be known as the "Moravian Star", hanging in the church and at each doorway in Fairfield Square, the Moravian community. The Christmas trees were decorated with straw stars and real candles, and they stood majestically at each side of the altar. That was something completely unknown to us with our brightly coloured electric fairy lights and gaudy decorations, and I was impressed by the quiet simplicity and stillness as the candles flickered gently to the sound of the school choir. When I started to learn German and was finding out more about Advent and Christmas traditions, one of my ambitions became to spend a Christmas in Germany. At the time it was more of a dream, something I'd like to do sometime in the distant future. Little did I know that only ten or so years later I would be living in Germany, making my own straw stars and lighting real candles, one for each Advent Sunday, leaving behind me forever the temperamental multi-coloured Pifco fairy lights.

Thank you so much for this, Julie ... there was so much I could relate to from my own childhood, in Ashton-under-Lyne, my school days at Fairfield High, and my grandparents living in Droylsden.

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**Finally, Chris Angrave sent a couple of emails** about her memories of grandparents in Failsworth. That struck a chord in my own memory! My husband's family were deeply rooted in Failsworth and, reading further, I realised that Chris was writing about a family that had a close friendship with them, and Martin ( my husband) remembered them well!

The first email had two photographs attached, one was of the Lancashire Special Constabulary, Failsworth, in 1942, and Chris wrote, "*On the front row is my Step Grandfather Harold Taylor, also the lady on the far right, front row is my grandmother Irene (Renee) Harrison née Alcock. Renee was a young widow at the time of the photograph. She and Harold went on to marry in September the same year.*

**Back Row - Special Constables :**

Whitehead, Newton, Taylor (J.)

**Middle Row - Special Constables :**

Riley, Chadderton, Rigby, Hughes, Self, Booth, Bradburn, Oakes, Scholes, Brierley, Smith, Seville, Oates, Thompson, Hunt, Flannery, Etchells, Sharples.

**Front Row -**

**Group Leaders :** Bennett, Wild, Heywood (H.P.)

**P.S.** 894 Young,

**A.P.W.** Ashton,

**Sectl. Commander** Taylor,

**District Commander** Clayton,

**Superintendent** Webster,

**Inspector** Tyson,

**Asst. Dist. Cdr.** McAdam,

**A.P.W.** Harrison,

**Group Leaders :** Kay, Birchenough, Andrew, Robinson



*Renee talked to me about her Special duties which involved her being a driver, driving her Commander (Harold) and other senior officers. Harold was also a widower, they had known each other as school friends, and being a Special reintroduced them. He was a wonderful kind grandpa, always spoiling myself and my sister.*

*She also drove an ambulance as part of her volunteering. Her and Ruth Ashton (the other female in this picture), would be sent out in the evening, patrolling Failsworth Graveyard (somewhere near Lord Lane?) and other male Constables would hide behind gravestones and jump out to frighten them."*



*and the second one was the wedding photo of Harold Taylor and Renee Harrison, "on 15th September 1942 at Failsworth Methodist Chapel, they exited the chapel under an archway of Failsworth Specials truncheons. They had a wedding reception at the Union Club, Oldham, and a honeymoon in North Wales."*

*I emailed Chris, in reply ... "I immediately recognised Harold's name! He and Irene (known to his friends as 'Renee') were great*

*friends of my husbands' parents. They each had a caravan on a site, at Alderley Edge, for many years, and my husband, Martin, remembers you and your sister being there sometimes!*

*Harold's shop was on Oldham Road, as you say, and my father-in-law's shop was down the road at 598. The family lived across the road at 'Failsworth View'. Jim was an ironmonger.*

*Martin has more memories of them at Alderley Edge, including your gt. grandmother (sometimes) and Bobby, the dog!*

*Martin's family were very strong Methodists, dating back to the late 1700s, and we have a great*

deal of memorabilia archived. Somewhere, we have some photos of Harold with Martin's dad. I went through a pile of photos last week but couldn't find the ones I wanted (there are just so many!!)." [Chris ... I'll keep searching and send you copies when I find them!]



Chris responded again, "I think Martin's family caravan was diagonally opposite Gran & Pa's. We had such a happy childhood, they would shut the "shop" Gents Outfitters, on a Saturday and off we would go, with Bobby the dog too! Fancy Martin remembering Bobby's name, best dog ever, big Dulux dog. I possibly remember Martin - is he a bit older than me (I was born 1956), [yes, Martin is 10 years older!] I vaguely remember a teenage boy. (No offence Martin)

*I think our caravan was the oldest - leaded windows & gas mantels inside! No health & safety in those days. In the photo is Renee & Harold, but also looking out of the window is mum (Pat Taylor, nee Harrison) & my sister Lynda, the photo was taken in 1959.*

Many thanks, Chris, for this trip down 'memory lane', for Martin and I especially!

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## 1921 ... a Census Centenary

MLFHS, **1921 Centenary Project** ... follow the links to the short introductory video [HERE](#), other short videos and the many blog articles (20 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 connection ... 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.

### **MLFHS, 1921 talks :**

**29th January, *The 1921 Census : What can we discover?***

**2nd February, *Exploring the 1921 census***

### **Clarifying the situation for MLFHS Members :**

As many of you already know, the initial talk on the 1921 Census, from MLFHS, in January, was up to capacity almost within the hour. We have a mandatory cap of 100 on all of our zoom meetings. We knew it would be a popular talk but hadn't anticipated the landslide of registrations within, literally, a couple of hours, plus a waiting list as well! As we knew so many members were really disappointed, a second speaker was booked but there was a similar avalanche of bookings (only one talk could be booked by any one person) so we are back to square one! However, there is a ray of light! It is planned to record the first talk which will be available, for a short period of time, in the members' area of the website. Hopefully, this will alleviate the disappointment that so many members are feeling. Our real hope is, that if members find they won't be able to join one of the meetings, that they will cancel in time for someone else to take their place.

**Looking for an extra illustration for the second Eventbrite listing**, I came across several publications relating to the 1921 census (the 'reveal' of which is so eagerly anticipated!) and also to the 1851 census. That earlier census was the first that really placed our ancestors in time and place with their relatives. The 1841 was almost a 'taster' for what we got in 1851. Not exactly bedtime reading! These publications are more for just browsing 'bits' unless you are seriously researching a topic. They can all be read or downloaded, as .pdfs from my 'best friend' the Internet Archive.

#### **1921:**

\* *Census of England & Wales 1921 : General Report with Appendices* pub. 1927 [HERE](#)

\* *The Census and Some of its Uses : The Census Act, 1920, for Great Britain and 'The Census (Ireland) Act, 1920'* pub. 1921 [HERE](#)

#### **1851:**

\* *Census of Great Britain in 1851 : comprising an account of the Numbers and Distribution of the People, Their Ages, Conjugal Condition, Occupations and Birthplace ...* pub. 1854 [HERE](#)

\* *Census of Great Britain, 1851 : EDUCATION ...* pub. 1854, [HERE](#)

\* *Census of Great Britain, 1851 : RELIGIOUS WORSHIP ...* pub. 1854, [HERE](#)

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

since the last newsletter :

\* Death by Corset and Tight Lacings in the 1800s  
[HERE](#)

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\* The Tithe Applotment Books are the most comprehensive Irish census substitute from the early 19th century, but there are many problems with their coverage, availability and interpretation. This video addresses these problems.  
[HERE](#)

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\* Welcome to Irish Genealogy Toolkit  
Your free and independent guide to finding your Irish ancestors  
[HERE](#)

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\* Welcome to The Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh Digital Collections. We have thousands of digitised photographs online, with collections including the Scottish Women's Hospitals, Craigleith Military Hospital Edinburgh & the Scottish Horse Mounted Field Ambulance.  
[HERE](#)

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\* Maps ... National Library of Scotland  
We've just added detailed historic @OrdnanceSurvey ... town plans for over 400 English and Welsh towns to our maps website. From castles to cathedrals, pubs to prisons discover 19th century towns and cities in great detail.  
[HERE](#)

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\* Mapping the First World War  
[HERE](#)

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\* Free UK Genealogy -1880s fashion: the decline of the bustle  
[HERE](#)

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\* Records of 320,000 Punjab soldiers from first world war uncovered  
Military files of Indian troops left unread in Pakistan museum for 97 years go online.  
[HERE](#)

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\* British Jews in the First World War - We were there too.



[HERE](#)

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\* The Original Rocketmen of Scotland.

As Guy Fawkes Night approaches, join us on a voyage of discovery as we uncover Scotland's first fireworks.

[HERE](#)

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\* Principal Medieval Records Specialist, unboxes the archive and talks us through Chaucer's London.

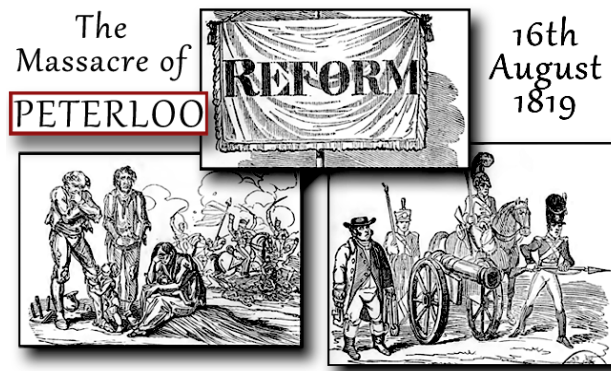
[HERE](#)

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\* 1921 census release ... photographs of life at the time

[HERE](#)

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

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**PETERLOO : the Bi-Centenary**



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

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

You can make searches on websites such as :

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

Visit their website [HERE](#)

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**Need Help!**

**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](http://www.catholicfhs.co.uk)

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

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

Lancashire Family History and Heraldry Society - <https://www.lfhhs.org.uk/home.php>  
Lancashire Local History Federation – [www.lancashirehistory.org](http://www.lancashirehistory.org)  
Liverpool and South West Lancashire FHS – [www.lswlfhs.org.uk](http://www.lswlfhs.org.uk)  
Manchester Region Industrial Archaeology Society – [www.mrias.co.uk](http://www.mrias.co.uk)  
Oldham Historical Research Group – [www.pixnet.co.uk/Oldham-hrg](http://www.pixnet.co.uk/Oldham-hrg)  
Peterloo - [Peterloo-Manchester](http://Peterloo-Manchester)  
Ranulf Higden Society (Latin transcription) - [Ranulf Higden Soc.](http://Ranulf-Higden-Soc)  
Royton Local History Society – [www.rlhs.co.uk](http://www.rlhs.co.uk)  
Saddleworth Historical Society – [www.saddleworth-historical-society.org.uk](http://www.saddleworth-historical-society.org.uk)  
Tameside Local History Forum - [www.tamesidehistoryforum.org.uk](http://www.tamesidehistoryforum.org.uk)  
Tameside Local & Family History - <http://tamesidefamilyhistory.co.uk/contents.htm>  
The Victorian Society - [Manchester Regional Website](http://Manchester-Regional-Website)

### Some Useful Sites

GENUKI - [Lancashire](http://Lancashire)  
Free BMD - [Search](http://Search)  
[National Library of Scotland](http://National-Library-of-Scotland) - Free to view, historic, zoomable maps of UK :  
1891 - Oldham and locality [HERE](http://HERE)  
Online Parish Clerk Project : Lancashire - [HERE](http://HERE)  
British Association for Local History - [HERE](http://HERE)  
and for their back issue journal downloads - [HERE](http://HERE)  
Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire, website, [HERE](http://HERE)  
and for their back issue journal downloads, website, [HERE](http://HERE)  
Internet Archive ... The Internet Archive offers over **24,000,000** freely downloadable books and texts.  
[HERE](http://HERE) There is also a collection of 1.3 million modern eBooks that may be borrowed by anyone with a free archive.org account.  
Made in Greater Manchester (MIGM) [HERE](http://HERE) and Research guide [HERE](http://HERE)  
Historical Maps of parish boundaries [HERE](http://HERE)  
Regiments & Corps of the British Army (Wayback machine) [HERE](http://HERE)  
Special Collections on Find My Past [HERE](http://HERE)  
FmyP - The Manchester Collection [HERE](http://HERE)

### Some Local Archives

Barnsley Museum & Discovery Centre – [www.experience-barnsley.com](http://www.experience-barnsley.com)  
Birkenhead – [Local & Family History](http://Local-&Family-History)  
Bury – [www.bury.gov.uk/archives](http://www.bury.gov.uk/archives)  
Chester - [Cheshire Archives & Local Studies](http://Cheshire-Archives-&Local-Studies) (linked from Discovery at the National Archives)  
Derbyshire - [Local & Family History](http://Local-&Family-History)  
Leeds - [Leeds Local and Family History](http://Leeds-Local-and-Family-History)  
Liverpool Archives and Family History – <https://liverpool.gov.uk/archives>  
Manchester - [Archives & Local History](http://Archives-&Local-History)  
Oldham - [Local Studies & Archives](http://Local-Studies-&Archives)  
Oldham - [Oldham Council Heritage Collections](http://Oldham-Council-Heritage-Collections)  
Preston – [www.lancashire.gov.uk/libraries-and-archives](http://www.lancashire.gov.uk/libraries-and-archives)

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

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

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



## For the Gallery

Found whilst browsing through some old postcards - Oldham Wakes in 1905



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(from the *Illustrated London News*, Nov. 12th 1881)

### A HIRING OR STATUTE FAIR

Among the old provincial customs and institutions still observed in some country towns in the North of England, the yearly Statute Fair, with its appointment of hiring farm-servants, both male and female, who stand all day in the market place for personal inspection, is quite in character with the fashions and notions of the olden time. the reader who happens to be acquainted with the "Songs and Ballads of Cumberland and the Lake Country," edited by Sidney Gilpin, and published in Carlisle in 1874, will recollect several pieces in that rich collection of racy popular poetry, descriptive of the humours of such a rustic gathering as 'Rosley Fair, near Wigton, or 'Giggledown Fair,' celebrated in merry verse by Mark Lonsdale and John Stagg the blind fidler. there is also the story of 'Croglin Watty,' from an explanatory note upon which it may be learnt that , "in Cumberland servants employed in husbandry are seldom engaged for a longer term than half a year. On the customary days of hiring, they proceed to the nearest town; and, that their intention may be known, stand in the market-place with a sprig or straw in their mouths.





" The honest poor fellow who tells his own experiences in the prose interlude of this song, one of Robert Anderson's genuine pictures of country life about the beginning of this century, was rather unlucky when he stood at 'Carel,' that is, at Carlisle, with the token of willing service between his lips. "The wives," he says, "Com' roun' me in clusters: "What weage dus t'e ax, canny lad" says yen." "Wey, three pun' and a crown; wunnet beate a hair o' my beard." "What can t'e dui?" says anudder. "Dui! wey, I can plough, sow, mow, shear, thresh, dyke, milk, kurn, muck a byre, sing a psam, mend car gear, dance a whorndyke, nick a naig's tail, hunt a brock, or feicht iver a yen o' my weight in as Croglin parish." So Watty is hired by a cross and miserly old dame, "wi' a kill-dried frosty feace," who treats him badly, till he goes home to his father and mother on the fellside, and to the true love of his sweetheart Nan. We dare say there may be another such Watty, and perhaps another such Nan, among the young persons who appear in Mr. Emslie's drawing of a 'Hiring Fair' reproduced in our large Engraving, where they are seen standing on the pedestal of a broken column, the ancient Market Cross, with the sprig of straw in their caps, instead of in their mouths. It must be weary waiting in that position, when so little notice is taken of them by the comfortable farmers and farmers' wives strolling about in the foreground, and exchanging neighbourly and household talk with each other, or bargaining over poultry, sucking-pigs, and more important dealings in cattle. As for the other distractions of the fair, the show booths, the swings, the merry-go-rounds, and the pedlar's display of tempting fancy wares, they are beheld only in the far distance. In general, this institution is on the decline: the registry offices have had a considerable effect upon the public hiring of servants, and though there are a fair number of girls and young men standing about on such occasions, the attendance has greatly diminished in the last twenty or fifteen years. The duties of those hired are set forth in a ballad that is received with much favour by the bystanders. "Dairymaids and ploughboys gay," says the chorus, "Don't be hired without good pay : For you've to plough and make the hay, And milk the cow at the break of day." The distinction between the condition of rich and poor is feelingly touched on : the farmer and his wife in bed drinking their wine, and the ploughboys and dairymaids "compelled to rise when the wind does blow, And face the weather through wind and snow." But unpleasant though some aspects of the life may be, the poet remarks that, "there are smiling faces up and down," "Susan, Martha, and Sarah smart, And Matilda Jane in a carrier's cart." Of the same Sarah he finds occasion to add that she is the

girl for a dairymaid, "She can make the butter, cheese, and whey, And dance with John on the hiring day."

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

The image below is 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.



### **The Peat Cart**

"This is a portrait of a Peat Cart in Langstroth Dale, and is, we believe, the only one now remaining of this original construction. The wheels are particularly well adapted for passing through the turf without much obstruction or difficulty. Peat, it is well known, is the general fuel used in the mountainous and moorland districts. It is dug or cut into pieces about the size and form of a common brick, piled in small heaps to dry in the sun, and afterwards stacked or put under sheds for use.,