

Oldham and District Branch of the Manchester and
Lancashire Family History Society

Newsletter
June 2017

oldham_newsletter@mlfhs.org.uk



Branch News

Last Meeting

May 13th - North Country Folklore - Peter Watson

Peter kept us entertained with his talk this month. He brought a variety of visual aids such as images of owls, black and red cats, triangular bags full of salt, red bags containing honesty seeds or slivers of wood and knitted dolls. He explained the significance of these and how our ancestors might have used them for things such as helping them see in the dark, warding off evil, safe delivery of babies, preventing madness, or causing illness in people you didn't like!

He also showed us some written charms covered in symbols and magical chants which had been found in properties in the Pendle area to protect homes.

Next Meeting

June 10th - Skeletons in the Cupboard - Alan Morrison

This presentation is a descriptive account of how the speaker researched his family tree and the very unusual outcome he discovered. This sometimes humorous and sometimes sad account advises the listener of various sources and ways to interpret them.

Held in the Education Suite, Gallery Oldham (a short walk from Oldham Central Metrolink Stop) at 2pm

There will be no meetings in July and August. The September, October and November meetings will be held at Mahdlo, Egerton Street, Oldham.

Help Needed

Help is needed in transcribing Lancashire BMDs at Chadderton Town Hall. If you wish to volunteer please contact Rod at oldham@mlfhs.org.uk

Society News

MLFHS Help Desk

The desk is normally open **every week day** from 10.30 to 3.30. A team of MLFHS volunteers will assist you in your family history research. It would be helpful if you had a Manchester library card which can be applied for online.

Visit to Gorton Monastery



Several members of the Oldham Branch were among the 30 who visited Gorton Monastery on May 8th. We were given a very interesting talk by Claire, the Trust Coordinator, on the history of the Monastery which was actually a Friary. Friars first arrived in 1861 and the building of the Franciscan Seminary and Parish Church dedicated to St Francis was begun in 1863 and designed by E.W.Pugin.

By the early 20th century the Monastery was at the heart of the thriving working class community. However by the 1960s the community was in decline and in 1989 the friars left. The Monastery was sold to developers and was partly destroyed. Eventually it was taken over by the Charitable Trust and restoration began.

We were then shown round by Janet, the Archivist, who showed us the Memorial Register, with many illuminated pages, which dates from 1871, created to record all the names of those who gave donations to the Monastery. She also told us about the many interesting projects she is involved in.

Finally we had a look around the magnificent Church and Friary. It was fascinating to hear how the Nave was designed so that the light illuminated the statues of the Saints at certain times of the day and that of Saint Francis on his feast day. Also to hear how the statues of the Saints were saved from being auctioned off by Janet herself after seeing an advert in a Sunday newspaper.

Now the Monastery is used for a variety of different activities including weddings, corporate events and community activities.

There have been many important visitors including Prince Charles and the Queen and it is now thriving again and serving the community.



Local News

Oldham Local Studies and Archives

84 Union Street, Oldham, OL1 1DN.

Phone: 0161 770 4654

Email: archives@oldham.gov.uk

Oldham Local Studies and Archives is run by Oldham Council and is not part of our society. The archives date from 1597 and cover an enormous range of subjects and activities. However it is advisable to check on the archives website for coverage. http://www.oldham.gov.uk/info/200539/archive_collections

Monday 10.00am-7.00pm

Tuesday 10.00am-2.00pm

Wednesday 10.00am-5.00pm

Thursday 10.00am-7.00pm

Friday 10.00am-5.00pm

Saturday 10.00am-4.00pm

Staff will assist with family history enquiries at any time during the week but if you need extended one-to-one advice a family history expert is available between 2pm and 4pm every Monday and Wednesday. There is no need to book, just drop in.

Oldham Art Gallery and Museum, Union Street



Originally built in 1883 and opened on the 1st August of that year with an extension added to the rear of the building which opened on the 22nd October 1894.

With the New Gallery opening in 2002, the old Gallery closed and in 2006 the Library followed.

In 2016 the go ahead was given for this much loved old building, which has been unused since 2006, to be redeveloped and restored as a Heritage and Arts Centre. Work is now beginning and you can follow the progress on the Gallery Oldham web site and social media streams.

Last chance to see.

On Saturday 22nd April 2017 Gallery Oldham organised tours of the old building at half hour intervals. Meeting in the extension space between the old and new galleries we were all issued with hard hats and dispatched through the 'the time travel' door into the old gallery. As we walked round we could see that the old building has lots of problems, including some damp and plants growing in from the outside, but none we were told that can not be put right.

Being a Victorian building as much as possible of the original splendour will be kept and restored but it needs to be brought up to date regarding disabled access, safety etc. Passenger lifts will be put in to all floors. A new ground floor main entrance will be made from large windows on the side of the building facing and leading in



from the gardens. New facilities will be added including Cafe, Bar, Shop and Performance Studio. Of most interest to the Family and Local Historians among us one of the old long galleries will become the new home to The Local Studies and Archive Centre which is now in the old Post Office.

Work will be ongoing for the next two years. As I spent many a happy lunch hour from work in both the library and the galleries, between 1966 and the early 2000s, I am looking forward to the reopening and seeing the end results.



The special cake- I only had one piece!

By Joan Secker-Wlodarczy

Talks by Other Groups (which are not part of our society)

Royton Local History Society

John Dalton - The Man and his Manchester

A Talk by John Doughty at Downey House, Church Street, Royton at 7.30pm on **Monday 12th June.**

Saddleworth Historical Society

The Annual Village Talk - Greenfield the Making of a Saddleworth Village

A talk by Michael Fox at Boarshurst Band Club, Greenfield Lane at 7.30pm on **Wednesday 14th June.**

Oldham Historical Research Group

Passengers on the Titanic

A talk by Barrie Egan at Oldham Local Studies and Archives at 7pm on **Wednesday 21st June.**

Moorside and District Historical Society

Times Past: Mellodew's Mill Transport

A talk by William Hartley and Mike Smith

At St Thomas' Church Lounge, Moorside at 7.30 on **Monday 19th June.**

Research News

Update from Lancashire Online Parish clerk

A number of records from our area have recently been added:

Burials 1901 to 1999 from the Church of St Margaret of Antioch, Hollinwood.

Baptisms 1874 to 1878 from the Roman Catholic Church of Our Lady of Mount Carmel and St Patrick, Oldham.

That's all for this month. We hope you have enjoyed reading our newsletter. Thank you to those of you who have been in contact with us.

We value your comments.

oldham_newsletter@mlfhs.org.uk

Sue Forshaw, Newsletter Editor

Assisted by Irene Whitby