

# Newsletter

## September 2018



[oldham\\_newsletter@mlfhs.org.uk](mailto:oldham_newsletter@mlfhs.org.uk)

### Branch News

#### **Situation Vacant**

Our Chairman is retiring at the end of March 2019.

The Oldham Branch will have a vacancy in April 2019 for a

### Chairperson

if you are interested please get in touch before the 8th September.  
To find out more please email:

[oldham@mlfhs.org.uk](mailto:oldham@mlfhs.org.uk)

### Our Next Meeting

#### **Saturday 8th September**

#### **1918 - The Last One Hundred Days**

A talk by **Corporal Stewart Cook**

This meeting will start at 2.00 pm in The Lees Suite, Civic Centre, Oldham.

Free to members

Non-members £2.50

Free car parking on Oldham Civic car park for 3 hours but please get a ticket.

### Society News

#### **"We Will Remember Them": a presentation on war memorials**

**Speaker: Mike Coyle**

**Tuesday, September 4th, 10:30am**

Manchester Central Library, Manchester

This talk covers the types and significance of war memorials to families and communities, and the efforts of communities and individuals to research and preserve them.

Mike Coyle is a passionate advocate for war memorials, a volunteer with the War Memorials Trust and a fieldworker with the Imperial War Museum's 'War Memorials Register'.

John Marsden of the Manchester & Lancashire Family History Society will also talk about the Society's database of names taken from over 1000 memorials in Greater Manchester.

North West Film Archive will show a short film about the unveiling of a couple of North West War Memorials.

**This event is free and open to all but booking is essential.**

Book on Eventbrite via [www.events.mlfhs.org.uk](http://www.events.mlfhs.org.uk) or via Eventbrite on MLFHS Society's home page. <http://www.mlfhs.org.uk/>

## **Bolton FHS**

### **Dark days, dark nights: Bolton's Home Front 1938-1945**

**Speaker: Dave Burnham**

Wednesday 5th September at 7.30

at the Montserrat Room, 1st Floor,  
Old Links Golf Club, Chorley Old Road, Bolton, BL1 5SU. (There is parking for 70 cars).

Guests and potential members are sure of a warm welcome. From 7.00pm tea & coffee are available in the room, and drinks are available from the bar. Unwanted genealogy magazines and CDs can be swapped/collected at the meetings. At the end of every meeting there is a Help Desk, manned by experienced researchers, available to assist you with your genealogy problems.

The meeting are free for members of the MLFHS, £3 for non-members. There is no need to book.

## **Open Day**

The Bolton FHS is holding an Open Day at the **The History Centre, Central Library, Le Mans Crescent, Bolton** on **Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> November 10.30am to 3.00pm**

There will be specialist Help Desks covering Irish and Scottish research, Internet sites, your Brick Walls & Beginners.

To book your free exclusive 30 minute time slot telephone Barbara on 01204 309515

There will two free lectures in the basement Library Theatre:

11.00am **Peter Higginbotham** will talk about "**Life in the Workhouse**". Peter created the famous workhouses website.

1.00pm **Stephen Gill**, the popular local speaker on photography history, will be talking about photographs that have been provided by the audience. The images will be projected on to the wall of the theatre for all to see.

If you want Steve to talk about your photograph send a scan of the front and back of the picture [out of its frame or album] together with what you know about the image, and what you want to know about it, to

[boltongenies@mlfhs.org.uk](mailto:boltongenies@mlfhs.org.uk)

There will be more photographs submitted than Steve can talk about in his time slot so yours may not be selected for the show. You will have to come to the presentation to find out if it is used.

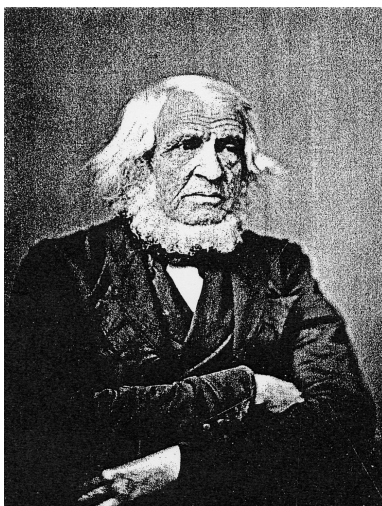
There will also be a specialist genealogy book stall and the opportunity to join the Bolton Family History Society.

## Local News

### **SAMUEL COLLINS ... THE 'BARD OF HALE MOSS'**

**1802 - 1878**

**By Sheila Goodyear**



It's difficult for most of us to claim, with any certainty that we have an ancestor, in our family tree, that was at Peterloo on that beautiful, sunny August day, the 16th, in 1819; the date that went down in history as a massacre; a shameful deed in Manchester's history.

However, there is one lady, Jennifer Tonge, who knows for sure that her 2x gt-grandfather was there and she, with her husband, has kindly helped me to put together the story, which starts off, for us, with her 3x gt. Grandparents.

On 2nd September, 1783, James Collins, a weaver, living in the Parish, married Sarah Marlor in St. Mary's Church, Oldham. Over the following years, at least 7 children, Joseph (1784), Sarah (1787), James (1790), Mary (1792), John (1796),

Alice (1799) and Samuel (1802), were born to James and Sarah, and were baptised at St. Margaret of Antioch, in Hollinwood. At the time that the first four children were baptised, the family were living in Hollinwood. When Alice and Samuel were born they were living at Simister Fold. Samuel, their last-born child, is Jennifer's 2x gt. Grandfather.

Samuel was born on the 1st December, 1802 and baptised on the 5th. We know more of Samuel's life because Jennifer provided me with a copy of two books of poems, written by him, called 'The Wild Floweret' (published in 1875) and 'Poems & Songs' which, very conveniently for us, have some biographical notes by B.B. from which I have extracted the following ...

"... The author was born on the 1st of December, 1802. His parents were then living in an antiquated cottage situated in Drury Lane, Hollinwood, near the turnpike road leading from Manchester to Oldham.

Samuel was the youngest of a numerous family of the Collins', seven of whom have lived to be fathers and mothers ... The grandfather, Joseph Collins, was, I have been informed, the first individual who officiated as clerk at St. Margaret's Church, Hollinwood; commencing his duties about the year 1765, His son, James Collins, an honest, frugal and industrious handloom weaver, married a Miss Sarah Marlor, daughter of James Marlor, of Hollinwood, of whom our poet was born.

It can readily be imagined from subsequent characteristics, that Samuel Collins was one of those beings whom our grandmothers were apt to distinguish by the term 'old-fashioned children,' as he had no sooner got out of his 'dadins,' than manifestations of an artistic bent began to show themselves. Drawing chalk figures on the house flags, cutting models in newspaper, were his first essays in a pursuit which, whatever might have been his early attachment, seems to have been abandoned in after years. It was not, however, until he had obtained those objects dear to aspiring children - a box of paints and a veritable camel's hair pencil - that that art found itself deserted by our youthful votary; as, from what I can learn, it appears that through his manner of handling the pencil during the production of farm-yards, hare and hounds, race-horses, etc., he acquired a habit that seriously interfered with his progress in the art of penmanship. Oftentimes might he have been seen squatting by the side of his mother, who instructed him in her homely manner whilst she plied the bobbin-wheel. How much of poetry may have been drunk in at this period.

When about 5 years of age, he was sent to school, the old one, near the Reservoir, then taught by Mr. Thomas Taylor, father of Mr. Edmund Taylor, the late schoolmaster. His stay with Mr. Taylor was but a short one, as he had not an opportunity of acquiring even a superficial knowledge of arithmetic until some years afterwards, during his attendance at night-school.

Like a good many of his brethren, who have been condemned to hopeless ignorance through the misfortune of being poor, Collins, when very young, was

put to work. He became a bobbin-winder to those in advance of him. The younger branches of a weaver's family know how to appreciate such an infliction, for their portion of the ordeal is the most trying; and it is no wonder that they should take to wooden creations of 'Punch and Judys', birds' nesting and even donkey-riding (who has not indulged in the latter?) rather than be tied to the three-legged stool, and be heart-sickened by the never-ending supply of 'empties' ...

When about thirteen years of age, Collins confesses to have perpetrated his first song, which was on the occasion of a game at 'I spy!' He was sent out along with two others to hide, one of them (Nut Bradley) slipped the rest, and crept into a cart, in which a number of girls were playing; the song was to record the fact. One verse read as follows:

'One neet as we wur playin' at 'I spy!'  
Ther' wur Nut Bradley, John Bocky, and I,  
We went to hoide us, Nut fro' us did part,  
An' went among th' wenches i' owd George' cart.'

Collins became early associated with politics, and was an ardent supporter of Hunt and Cobbett when these two agitators were in the zenith of their popularity. He was present on the field during the ever memorable affair at Peterloo; not merely as an idle spectator of the scene, but as an earnest sharer of the views which led to the gathering. This occasion, and the associations connected therewith, perhaps induced him to enter upon the hazardous, and rather thankless task of writing political songs, and other pieces of a similar tendency. The literature of that period was strongly impregnated with the political element, and no doubt our poet fell in with the feelings it engendered in susceptible minds, and wrote what afterwards his more seasoned judgement would condemn; as few of his productions of that time survived the period at which they were written. But he was young at the time, and knew the strength of fancy's wing without the power to control its flights ...

In the year 1826 he took one 'for better for worse' in the person of Miss Rachel Stansfield, who has made him an exemplary wife, and has been the means of sheltering his grey hairs behind a family composed of four sons and three daughters of whom the sons and one daughter are now living.

No class of work-people in the kingdom have been subject to so many fluctuations in the remunerative principle as the great body of hand-loom weavers. Like the Stock Exchange, their prices current are continually ebbing and flowing. To adjust the differences which have often occurred betwixt the employer and the employed through these changes, Samuel Collins has many a time served upon weavers' committees and deputations, and may claim to have been instrumental to the bringing about of a reconciliation without sacrificing the interests of one party or the respect of the other. In 1838, when Chartism sprang up, our poet re-entered the political arena, and did battle with the pen on behalf

of the unenfranchised. He joined a branch association of that body, which held its meetings at a private house on Ralph Green. This place of meeting was subsequently abandoned for a more commodious building situated at Pew Nook. Here the association held together for several years. A Sunday and night-school was established in connection with the society, and the members may take credit upon themselves for having been the means of forming a reading public in Hollinwood, and of giving an impetus to that reform movement which is now reaping such a large popularity throughout the country. Collins, it appears, wrought conspicuously on behalf of this association, and indeed for the cause of reform generally. He was often deputed to attend council meetings held both in Lancashire and Yorkshire, but more in the character of an adviser than as an agitator. He suffered a little odium through his denouncing the land scheme propounded by Feargus O'Connor, and his disapproval of the notorious Chartist leader, with regard to corn-law repeal agitation.<sup>1</sup> This odium he has, however, out-lived, and has had the gratification of seeing that the fruits of the two contemporary movements have been in accordance with his anticipations.

The life of a hand-loom weaver presents few features of sufficient interest for a biographer to dilate upon. We may sum up his career in one sentence - A CONTINUAL STRUGGLE FOR BREAD. Collins has experienced all the bitterness of such a struggle. He has wrestled hard with poverty, yet in the strife he has had the consolation dear to every man, that of having a good helpmate to take her share of the work. Though apparently enjoying robust health, he has suffered more or less from asthma during a period of nearly forty years, and that may have had much to do with sharpening the pangs of poverty, as well as giving a seeming irritability to his disposition, which may be considered the roughest point in his otherwise amiable nature. Uneducated, for he must be classed amongst the unfortunate in that regard; he has, nevertheless, been a reading and thinking man. He has subscribed to one or other of the Liberal newspapers for a period of fifty years, and that is saying a great deal for one in his position.

He says, "I have never slept more than a dozen nights away from Chadderton," and that circumstance may account in some measure for the local character of his poetry. He has been continually hovering about home; that home, which from what we can glean through his writings, has been, and continues to be, as it were, a part of his existence. His song, 'Ancient Cottage, Fare Thee Well,' breathes a strain whose echoes are getting fainter as time wears on. It develops one of those traits of tender regard for old and long-cherished associations which are rapidly disappearing in a people who, from the nature of their pursuits, are becoming more migratory in their character, and more superficial in their attachments to past memories. The time is coming when we shall cease to sing 'Still dear to me is the home of my childhood', for it will be a matter of uncertainty as to which of the many tiers of red glaring brickwork round about us contains such a home ..."

B.B. [Ben Brierley?]

Manchester, May 26, 1859

<sup>1</sup>My note ... just to clarify, Fergus O'Connor was strongly opposed to the repeal of the Corn Law

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We have now, that which Samuel's biographer did not have ... easy access to census returns and parish registers etc. From these sources we can piece together his family in some more detail.

In 1826 Samuel married Rachel Stansfield in the church of St. Margaret of Antioch, in Hollinwood.

Samuel's first two children were Mary and Sarah, both of whom died in infancy, Mary in 1828, age 15 months and Sarah in 1830 age 9 months.

On the 1841 census we can find Samuel living with his wife Rachel and four subsequent children, Betty (bap.1831), Joseph (b.1834), James (bap.1835) and Algernon Sidney (b.1839). They were living on Drury Lane, Chadderton and Samuel's occupation is recorded as 'S Weaver' (ie., 'silk' weaver).

Samuel and his family (those still living at home) continued to live in the same area, although not at the same address, until his death in 1878. He is always recorded as a hand-loom silk weaver on the census returns. Similarly his wife, Rachel, is always referred to in the same way until after Samuel's death. In 1881 she (as 'head of household') was living with their son John Volney on Ashton Street, Chadderton, next door to son-in-law John and their daughter, Betty, with their own children. In 1891 Rachel was living with son James and his family, on Thompson Lane, in Chadderton. Rachel died in January 1892.

Samuel and Rachel's daughter, Betty, was the first of their children to marry and leave home. She had married John Whitehead, a builder, in 1840 and, on the 1841 census they were living next door, to her parents. John and Betty would have a total of 7 children (identified from the census returns). Betty died in 1895, in Southport, and in 1901 John was shown as keeping a lodging house on Manchester Rd., Southport.

Samuel and Rachel's eldest son, Joseph (who was Jennifer's gt. grandfather) was with them on both the 1841 and 1851 census, then married Mary Ashton, in 1859, with whom he had two children. Mary died, in the early 1870s and Joseph married again, this time to Mary Holland, with whom he had 3 children. One of these three children was Samuel, born in 1878, who was Jennifer's grandfather. In 1881 the family were living in Hale Moss, and Joseph was no longer a silk handloom weaver but a labourer. By 1891 Joseph had again been widowed and in 1901 he and his youngest son John are to be found living with his daughter Alice and her husband Thomas Duncalfe.

Joseph's son, Samuel, had married Agnes Ellen Forrester, in 1900, at Failsworth Wesleyan Church. In 1901 they were living on Long Lane and Samuel was a cotton spinner. By 1911 Samuel and Agnes Ellen have had 2 sons and 2 daughters (their first son died in 1905, the first year of his life). The family were still living on Long Lane. Samuel and Agnes Ellen would go on to have 2 more daughters and 2 more sons, between 1911 and 1919. Samuel Francis Collins (who would become Jennifer's father) was born on the 9th Mar 1914, in Chadderton and died in February 2000 in Failsworth. On the 1939 Register we can find Samuel and Agnes Ellen living in Chadderton at 72 Chestnut Street (one additional entry is redacted).

Samuel Francis Collins married May Chesworth in August 1939, in Failsworth Bethel Methodist Church. Their daughter, Jennifer, was born in Failsworth in 1944 ... a direct descendant of the Peterloo veteran, Reformer and Chartist, Samuel Collins, The Bard of Hale Moss.

By Sheila Goodyear ... with grateful thanks to Jennifer & Frank Tonge for their generous help.

You can read more about Samuel, his family, some of his poems, and Peterloo at :

[www.peterloo-manchester.uk/a-menu.html](http://www.peterloo-manchester.uk/a-menu.html)

## **Peterloo 2018**



This year is the 199<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Peterloo massacre and there is a film telling the story due for release in cinemas on 2<sup>nd</sup> November.

On Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> August a larger than usual group formed outside Central Library to hear a revised list of names read out by John Henshaw and see two plaques, inscribed with the names of the victims, and flower placed on the steps of the St Peter's Church memorial in St Peter's Square, Manchester. The group then marched the short distance to the forecourt of the old Central Station with flags from the film kindly loaned by Mike Leigh the films director.



On Sunday the 19th Maxine Peake was joined by others to read the names and tell us what happened to some of the injured in the days and weeks after the Peterloo attack. Despite the rain earlier in the day a good many people had gathered in front of G-mex, many having walked all the way into Manchester from the surrounding areas as the people did on 16<sup>th</sup> August 1819.

By Joan Secker - Wlodarczyk



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

### **Saddleworth Historical Society and Friends of Castleshaw Roman Fort**

#### **Unravelling the Mystery of a Ruin: revealing the medieval Grange at Castleshaw.**

Illustrated Presentation by Norman Redhead at Saddleworth Museum on

**Wednesday 12th September** at 7.30pm.

non-members £3

### **Oldham Historical Research Group**

#### **The Seven Holy Crosses of Oldham**

A talk by Roger Ivens at Oldham Local Studies and Archives on **Wednesday**

**19th September** at 7pm

### **Moorside and District Historical Society**

#### **Strinesdale day and Sunday school**

A talk by **Mike Smith** at St Thomas' Church Lounge, Moorside on **Monday 17th September** at 7.30 pm.

There will also be a Heritage Open Day at St Thomas' Church, Moorside on **8th September** which includes a guided tour of the War Graves in the churchyard by Mike Smith at 11.30 am and 2.00 pm.

Sue Forshaw

Newsletter Editor

[oldham\\_newsletter@mlfhs.org.uk](mailto:oldham_newsletter@mlfhs.org.uk)