

# 'e-Owls'



Branch Website: <https://oldham.mlfhs.org.uk/>  
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Part of Manchester & Lancashire  
Family History Society

**MAY 2019**

## **MLFHS - Oldham Branch Newsletter**

### **Where to find things in the newsletter:**

Oldham Branch News : .....	Page 1	'A Mixed Bag' : .....	Page 11
Other Branch Meetings .....	Page 4	Need Help! : .....	Page 14
MLFHS Updates : .....	Page 5	Useful Website Links : .....	Page 16
Societies not part of MLFHS : .....	Page 9	For the Gallery : .....	Page 17

### **Branch News :**

Following last month's Annual Meeting of the MLFHS Oldham Branch :

#### **Branch Officers for 2019 :**

Chairperson : Linda Richardson  
Treasurer : Gill Melton  
Secretary & Webmistress : Jennifer Lever  
Technical Manager : Rod Melton  
Newsletter Editor : Sheila Goodyear

### **A Message From Our New Chairperson, Linda Richardson**

HELLO TO ALL MEMBERS ...

My name is Linda Richardson and I have taken over as Chairperson of the Oldham Branch of the M&LFHS.

First of all I would like to thank Rodney Melton for all his hard work during his time as Chairman. I am looking forward to the challenge ahead and hope that members will lend me their support and backing in the future and attend as many of our meetings as you can. If members do not continue to support our Branch in Oldham, we are looking at an uncertain future.

#### **A Bit About Me ...**

I have dipped in and out of family history over the past 25 years, attending meetings of the Oldham Branch and also attending some of the courses which were held at Local Studies in Oldham. I also do a bit of teaching with a family history class at Crompton Library. During the last couple of years I have also been tasked with helping a couple of Churches in my local area to find out the backgrounds of the men who served in WW1 so that they could put together some sort of record for the Churches to keep. I have also done the same thing in regard to the WW1 memorial at the Manchester Golf Club.

The Branch is STILL looking to recruit members to serve on the committee. In particular we are looking for a Publicity Officer to promote the Branch in various ways, for example by placing

advertises in various newspapers, and placing leaflets in Libraries throughout the Borough, etc. If, on the other hand, you feel the need to ease yourself in slowly ... then volunteer to be on the committee, without responsibility, in the first place. If you feel you could give some of your time to help us, please have a chat with a member of the Committee after the monthly meeting, or email me at [oldham@mlfhs.org.uk](mailto:oldham@mlfhs.org.uk)

I hope you enjoy reading the rest of the Newsletter which has been produced by our new Editor, Sheila Goodyear.

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**Hello to everyone on this mailing list ...** I'd like to introduce myself as the new (trainee!!) editor of the MLFHS Oldham Branch Newsletter.

I'm Sheila Goodyear and have been a member of MLFHS for about 10 years. I'm also the webmistress of the Oldham Historical Research Group's website [HERE](#).

I imagine that many of us begin with a keen interest in either family or local history research and then find that there is a frequent overlap, each with the other.

Family history is more than just names on a tree ... we feel the need to understand our ancestors and know more about the lives they lived; their work; the ups and downs of their day-to-day existence; and the circumstances that motivated or dictated their actions. And that's where local history becomes important to our family history research.

Rather than start my new 'job' with preconceived ideas of what the newsletter should contain, I'd like to see it evolve, over time, as one that also includes input from our readers. This could take the form of short (or longer!) anecdotes about your own ancestors or others of whom you know; links and descriptions of useful websites we might not all have come across; notification of local events or exhibitions ... in fact, anything that you think is going to be of interest (or help) to the family/local historian.

My intention is to send out the newsletter at the very beginning of each month so I'd appreciate it if contributions were sent to me during the first 3 weeks of each month.

My thanks to Susan Forshaw who spent several years as the Newsletter Editor; encouraged me to volunteer when she stepped down; and has been a massive help since. My thanks, also, go to Jennifer Lever, who sent me a draft outline for the newsletter in order to get me started ...

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**Next Oldham Branch Meeting :**  
**Saturday, 11th May**

***'Elizabeth Raffald'*** (*An 18C superwoman-entrepreneur, innovator, publisher*)

Suze Appleton, author of the definitive biography of this remarkable woman will talk about her life and work.

Elizabeth Raffald lived from 1733 to 1781, her last 18 years spent in Manchester. During her time here she made a big impact on Mancunian society and was very influential in her area of expertise. From the age of 15 she worked in domestic service, rising to the rank of housekeeper at Arley Hall in Cheshire. Once married she set up her first confectionery shop, a kind of deli, in Manchester's Fennel St and soon became renowned for her catering knowledge and skills. But she didn't rest there. Her enterprising nature found an outlet in many different ways.

The meeting will start at 2.00 pm in the Education Suite, Gallery Oldham.

Free to members (donation always gratefully accepted) and non-members £2.50

(Note: Council Car park is free for three hours on Saturday, but make sure you get a ticket)

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**Last month's talk, 6th April :**

***The Manorial History of Chadderton – Chadderton Hall***

Mike Lawson's excellent talk covered over one thousand years of history of Chadderton.

Chadderton is one of the twenty-one estates of the hundred of Salford. The town was granted to the ancestors of Gilbert de Notton. The de Trafford family became Lords of the Manor of Chadderton and Foxdenton. Richard de Trafford gives the lands to his youngest son, Geoffrey. Geoffrey changes his name to de Chadderton and builds the first Hall.

In 1367 there were no male heirs in the de Chadderton family, so when Margaret de Chadderton married John Radcliffe the estate moves to the Radcliffes' to their heirs.

They have three daughters and the estate is divided between them: Joan the eldest marries Edmund Assheton (Magistrate), Margaret marries Ralph Standish and the youngest marries Robert Ratcliffe and they build Foxdenton Hall.

In 1620 a new Chadderton Hall is built. The estate was sold to Joshua Horton of Yorkshire in 1684 by William Assheton a rector of Prestwich.

Joshua took up residence at his death passed to his heirs eventually passing to Sir Watts Horton.

Sir Watts Horton was born 17<sup>th</sup> Nov 1753, went to Cambridge, became High Sherrieff, died 7<sup>th</sup> Nov 1811 his brother the Rev. Sir Thomas Horton, who sold the estate on 23 June 1818.

The house was used as a boarding school for girls and in 1860 for boys.

In 1897 used as a pleasure gardens and Zoo.

The Lake in the grounds was breached, in the great flood of 1927, the water flooding the hall and draining into the river. The lake was not reinstated due to lack of funds. A licence was given to Royton Pickle Factory.

Meeting review kindly sent by Jennifer Lever

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**Mayor's Civic Service**

**Sunday 26, May at 10.30am**

The following is an extract from an email received by the MLFHS Oldham Branch referring to the traditional procession, through the town centre, followed by a ceremony at Oldham Parish Church where the Mayor is invested as honorary church warden for their year of Office. The procession and church service is open to members of the public.

*"... The Mayor Elect, Councillor Adrian Alexander of Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council will be leading a Civic Procession and Service to Oldham Parish Church on Sunday 26 May 2019 at 10.30am and would be delighted for representatives from your organisation to accompany him on this occasion.*

*To participate in the procession, will you please be in attendance at the New Radcliffe Street Car Park (adjoining the Tommyfield Hotel), top of New Radcliffe Street, Oldham no later than 9.30am in order for the procession to set off at 10.00am prompt. If any of your members would like to attend the Service but are unable to participate in the procession, please could they be at Oldham Parish Church for 10.20am. For information, disabled access to the church is from Rock Street.*

*At the conclusion of the service, the procession will re-form and return to the Civic Centre where the Mayor Elect extends an invitation to you and your representatives to join him for refreshments ... "*

If you would like to be included as a representative of the MLFHS Oldham Branch, and join the group for the refreshments, please email [oldham@mlfhs.org.uk](mailto:oldham@mlfhs.org.uk) before the 14th May, to add your name to the list.

## Bolton & Scottish Branches

### Bolton Branch :

Wednesday, 1st May

#### **'Probate Records : Wills bring out the worst in people'**

A talk given by Anna Watson, a retired archivist from Lancashire Archives.

Old Links Golf Club, Montserrat Room (1<sup>st</sup> Floor), Chorley Old Road, Bolton, BL1 5SU.

see their website on MLFHS/Branches/Bolton [HERE](#) for full details.

Meetings are at 7.30pm, usually on the first Wednesday of the month. There is a help-desk before and after the meeting. Tea/coffee & biscuits available from 7pm. Drinks available from the bar.

All MLFHS members are welcome to attend our meetings. Society Members Free ...

Non-Members £3

Website link [HERE](#)

### Anglo-Scottish Branch

Thursday, 16th May

#### **'Scottish Heritage Day'**



With a special visit by 'Scotland's People' and the National Records of Scotland.

at Manchester Central Library

Thursday 16th May, 10:15 until 3:30

(Registration 10:15)

Society Members Free ... Non-Members £3

Please note booking is essential on [Eventbrite](#)

### Programme for the day :

10:15 **Registration and Reception**

10:45 **Secrets of the Royal Mile** - a history of Edinburgh by Ed Glinert who will walk us through some of the historical streets of Edinburgh by way of the alleys and back streets of the town.

12:00 **Lunch Break.**

1:00 **Scotland's People** - a talk by Iain Ferguson, Scotland's People manager, giving hints and tips on how to get the most out of the website.

**National Records** - a talk by Tessa Spencer, Head of Learning, National Records of Scotland, looking at some of the many and varied records held, from Court records to Parish records.

(Following each talk there will be the opportunity for questions of the speakers)

'E Scotia' Newsletter [HERE](#) on the MLFHS website.

## MLFHS AGM Meeting, Wednesday 17th April

At the Meeting, held in Central Library Manchester, two Fellowship Awards were presented, one of which was to the Oldham Branch's retiring Chairman, Rod Melton. Rod's reluctant decision to step down as chairman was as a consequence of his ill health.

Rod was nominated for the award by committee member Jennifer Lever. In her nomination, Jennifer drew attention to Rod's long service with the Society, in various capacities, and as the Chairman of the Oldham Branch from 2011.

We wish Rod well as he steps aside from these duties and look forward to his continuing association with the Oldham Branch.



Rod receiving his award from MLFHS  
Chairman, David Muil

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## MLFHS organised visit to the People's History Museum,

Wednesday, 24th April

Many thanks to Sue Forshaw for arranging this visit for us. 18 Society members were given an excellent and informative tour at the [People's History Museum](#) by Shirin, on 24th April.

The People's History Museum building is fascinating in itself. The collection is housed in what was once a hydraulic pumping station, on Bridge Street, overlooking the River Irwell. From 1894 until 1972 three pumping stations provided energy across the city, through a system of high-pressure water pipes, supplying power for a variety of needs. It wound the Town Hall clock; it pumped the organ in the cathedral; and it raised the safety curtain at the Opera House!

The archive collection began life in London in the mid '70s and then made the journey north, to Princess Street, in 1990. In 1994 the now redundant Pump House was opened on Bridge Street as the Pump House People's History Museum ... in 2001 the combined sites were named the People's History museum.

The building we enjoy today came as a result of redevelopment, from 2007 to 2010, including a new 4 storey extension. It houses permanent galleries, changing exhibitions, conservation work and the extensive archives. And, there's a very good cafe ... and a little bookshop!

To quote from the Museum's own 'About' page, " ... it is the home of ideas worth fighting for - where our radical past can inspire and motivate people to take action - to shape a future where ideas of democracy, equality, justice and co-operation are thriving." To back all this up, the museum holds one of the most extensive collections, of left-wing political material, covering the past 200 years or so, including the largest collection of trade union and political banners "in the world."

Getting back to our visit, Shirin took us into the "Peterloo and Protest" temporary exhibition where we saw artefacts which had been chosen especially to tell the story of the massacre of 16th August 1819. Each of these items had its own story to tell.

The first item we saw was a large portrait of Hugh Hornby Birley (1778- 1845) who was a rich mill owner and Captain of the Manchester and Salford Yeomanry who led the charge on the



fateful day. He was brought to trial, with others, in 1822 ... but was speedily acquitted. The portrait was donated by one of his descendants, Dr. Rick Birley, who is ashamed of his great great grandfather and the part he played on that day. The Birley family were an important family in Manchester and the Birley name can still be found in parts of Manchester today. You can read more of his story [HERE](#).

Two small, slim publications can be seen ... one, a first edition copy of the 'Masque of Anarchy', by Percy Bysshe Shelley, written in 1819 and sent for publication to Leigh Hunt. Fearful of reprisals during the years following, it was 1832 before it was actually published.



The second is a similar size and is the satirical publication 'A Slap at Slop', by William Hone.

It is open at p.35 and shows George Cruikshank's memorable depiction, 'Victory of Peterloo'.

The British Museum description of the image reads, "A monument in a black border inscribed Manchester August 16, 1819. On a base bordered by skulls and flanked by shackles is an equestrian statue: one of the yeomanry slashes at prostrate figures, a woman and infant being conspicuous. The base is decorated with a crown irradiated by daggers and bayonets"

This familiar image is used on the Memorial Campaign T-shirts.

We were also shown a colourful commemorative glass plate, in a frame, showing the massacre. Similar items would have been seen in pubs in Manchester after the event. It was interesting to note that alongside the men on the hustings can be seen a woman dressed in white, thought to be Mary Fildes of the Manchester Female Reform Society, holding a flag which had the cap of liberty on the top of the pole. Mary managed to escape arrest on 16th August and went into hiding.

On the same wall is an engraving of a cartoon, by George Cruikshank entitled 'Universal Suffrage or the Scum Uppermost' An unpleasantly grinning monster represents Radical Reform and warns of the dangers of giving the vote to the masses. It was published one month before Peterloo.

There is a silk dress on display, having belonged to Mrs. Mabbott, who owned a confectionery shop in Shude Hill and was caught up in the ensuing carnage.

On the far wall is a large banner, simply made, from Skelmanthorpe near Huddersfield. It was made in 1819 by Mrs Bird (a pattern-maker), to honour the victims, and is on loan from the Tolson Museum, Huddersfield. Kept safely hidden for many years, it was only brought out to be paraded at Reform Meetings across West Yorkshire and then returned to hiding after each one. It has also become an important symbol of liberty and democracy over the past 200 years, being used by the Chartists and also during the 1926 General Strike.

You can read more of that story [HERE](#)

Also exhibited is a Peterloo Commemorative Medal, with an inscription round the edge reading, '*These things will not endure nor be endured*' and in the centre, '*The Magistrates and Yeomanry of Manchester - God Confound Them*', On the obverse is a depiction of the yeomanry sabring the crowd.

A short film, commissioned especially for the exhibition, brings to life the story of Peterloo, protest, and the road to democratic reform

The Museum has a permanent Exhibition of Peterloo artefacts and that was our next 'port of call'. This Main Gallery of the museum begins with the theme of Revolution. In here are other Peterloo objects including a commemorative handkerchief, and two sabres used by the Yeomanry and donated by a family from Droylsden.

The theme of the next section is Reformers. The strange tale of William Cobbett's quest to bring the bones of Tom Paine, the author of "*The Rights of Man*", back to Britain from America, for respectful re-burial, was related to us.

In this section one can also see the Liverpool Tin Plate Workers' banner of 1821 which is the oldest trade union banner in the world.

In the next section entitled "Workers" there are displays about the Tolpuddle Martyrs, the Match Girls' Strike of 1888 and the Dockers' Strike of 1889.

The last section in this gallery deals with voters and here we saw the first minutes of the Labour Party written by Ramsay MacDonald in 1906.

In the upstairs gallery are various posters from the Labour Party and many large banners.

At the end of the tour we were taken into the Archives where we were shown the large store room with archival stacks full of newspapers, magazines and pamphlets. The Archivist very kindly displayed Peterloo newspapers for us. Some of us found it very difficult to drag ourselves away ... but hunger won and we ended this most interesting visit in the cafe with very welcome coffee and sandwiches.

Review by Sue Forshaw and Sheila Goodyear

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**Saturday, 4th May**

**A new talk by John Marsden**

***Can These Dry Bones Live?***

The death of an ancestor might not be the end of the research but perhaps the beginning. In this talk, John Marsden will discuss the records that are generated by a person's death and how they may be used for new lines of research. The talk will centre on graveyard memorials and newspaper notices but also on death certificates, wills, burial registers, and other resources. Questions such as "When and where did (s)he die?" and "Where was (s)he buried?" will be discussed.

These talks are aimed at people new to family history research or those who simply wish to refresh their knowledge. The talk will be held in the Performance Space on the ground floor of Manchester Central Library on Saturday 4 May 2019 and will last from 10.30am until approximately 12.30pm.. The talks are free to Society members but non-members are most welcome to attend for a small charge of £3.00 (refundable for anyone who joins on the day).

Bookings on MLFHS's page on [Eventbrite](#)

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## **This May we celebrate Local Community History Month.**

**Wednesday 8th, 15th & 22nd May**

Why not visit the Manchester & Lancashire Family History Society Help Desk area to discover more about three important local communities?

On display over three successive Wednesdays will be photos, books, maps and research guides for Salford (8th), Bolton(15th) and Oldham (22nd).

Free, drop-in, 10.30am-3.30pm

There will also be archive handling sessions from 12-2pm on 8th, 15th and 22nd May on the ground floor of Central Library near the cafe.

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### **MLFHS Special Meeting**

**Saturday 11 May 2.00pm:**

***Using DNA Testing for Family History Research.***

by Brian Turner

DNA testing for family history is a relatively new and developing method of research the researcher can add to the many other avenues that we have at our disposal. Testing can result in developing new family finds, confirm or disprove previous research, and may produce some unexpected results - hence the above warning. The talk will give an overview of the type of DNA tests available; discuss the practical aspects of DNA testing from the speaker's own experience; and go on to describe what you may expect to find and what you can do with the results once you have them.

This meeting will be held in the Performance Space at Manchester Central Library.

The meeting is free to members. A fee of £3.00 will be charged to non-members but this is refundable if the individual joins the Society on the day of the talk.

Booking is required. Please book on MLFHS's page on Eventbrite [HERE](#)

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**Wednesday 22nd May :**

**Peterloo walk beginning 10.30, in Manchester**

To commemorate the 200th anniversary, Chris Makepeace will take us on a walk around the area of St. Peter's Square where the event known as Peterloo took place in August 1819. He will show us some of the buildings which witnessed the massacre and are still standing, and which give us an idea of what the area was like at the time.

Chris was once Manchester's Local History Librarian and later the prover of historical information for the Greater Manchester Planning Department. He has also been a part-time tutor for the University Extra Mural Department and has taught local history courses at Wilmslow Guild for the WEA, Opportunities and Activities, Ridge Danyers College and for History Inc. He has also compiled a number of books of photographs of Manchester over the years and has given talks to a number of local organisations and societies and written over 100 sets of notes for the Godfrey series of Old OS Maps.

The walk will last approximately one and a half hours so probably won't be suitable for people with mobility problems.

**For MLFHS members only.**

**Meeting point is Manchester Central Library for 10.30am**

Free ... Booking is essential as places are limited. Please book on Eventbrite [HERE](#)



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**Wednesday 26th June 2019**

**Visit to Touchstones, Rochdale : A tour of the "*Protest and Peterloo*" Exhibition**

**11:00 – 14:00**

11-12 : Looking around the exhibition and speak to curator Sarah Hodgkinson

12 -1.00 : A chance to have lunch in the cafe

1.00 - 1.40 : Session in Local Studies

This exhibition will take you on a journey through the stories of those involved, from espionage and cover-ups to national outrage and mourning. Ask yourself what it means to protest and voice the issues that matter most to you. Discover the role played by local man Sam Bamford who was imprisoned for his part in organising the gathering. Find out about the spies who gathered information for the government. See the Middleton banner, the only known surviving banner from Peterloo, as well as props from Mike Leigh's recent film *Peterloo*.

Touchstones is located close to Rochdale town centre.

Approximately 5 to 10 minutes walk from Rochdale Transport Interchange with bus and tram access.

10 minutes from the Rochdale Railway Station

10 minutes drive from Junction 20 on the M62

There is no dedicated parking at Touchstones, however, there is pay and display parking on The Esplanade at the Town Hall. 3 hours free parking at Rochdale Town Hall (but get a ticket).

Cost £5.00. Please book on MLFHS's page on Eventbrite [HERE](#)

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***Meetings at Societies not part of MLFHS***

**Oldham Historical Research Group:**

**Wednesday, 15th May**

***'16th August 2019 - Bi-Centenary of the PETERLOO MASSACRE'***

**What's it about? & looking at what's happening in commemoration, this year.**

An illustrated talk by Sheila Goodyear

At Oldham Local Studies & Archives, Union Street, Oldham. Door opens 6:30 for 7pm start.

All welcome ... no membership subscription, or entrance fee on the door.

Oldham HRG Programme [HERE](#) & Peterloo Project pages [HERE](#)

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**Saddleworth Historical Society (in conjunction with the Huddersfield Canal Society: -**

**Wednesday 22nd May,**

***'The Standedge Tunnels'***

an illustrated presentation given by Trevor Ellis.

7.30pm. At the Saddleworth Museum, High Street, Uppermill.

All welcome.

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

Refreshments available.

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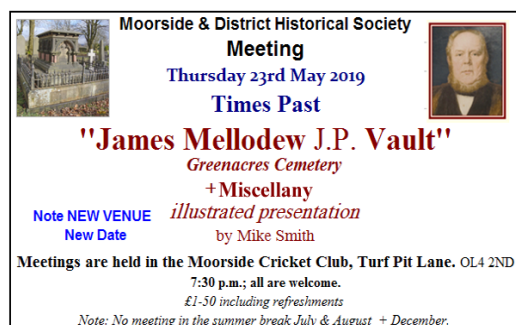
## Saddleworth Civic Trust: -

No Presentation in May.

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## Moorside & District Historical Society

Thursday 23rd May, at 7:30



### 'James Mellowdew JP - Vault'

Greenacres Cemetery

+ Miscellany

An illustrated presentation by Mike Smith

Meetings held at :

Moorside Cricket Club, Turf Pit Lane, OL4 2ND.

(Please note : new venue and date)

All welcome. £1.50 including refreshments.

Please note : No Meetings in July, August & December

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## Family History Society of Cheshire : Tameside Group meeting

8<sup>th</sup> May : -

### 'The Styal Apprentices'

Stan Bristow, National Trust Speaker for Styal, will give a talk about the Apprentice house and the conditions they worked in.

Meeting in the schoolrooms at Old Chapel Dukinfield, opening our doors at 7.00pm for a 7.30pm start. Refreshments are served on arrival.

There is an entry charge of £2.00 for members and £2.50 for non members.

See their website [HERE](#)

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## Manchester Golf Club :

30th May, at 6:30pm

**Hopwood Hall (project)**

The guest speaker is Hopwood De Pree who is an American actor, comedian, film-maker, entrepreneur and philanthropist. He has moved from Los Angeles to Middleton to rescue his ancestral home – Hopwood Hall.

Hopwood will be giving a short presentation about the project; there will be a Q&A afterwards. Hopwood Hall is just a few hundred yards away from the club.

It promises to be a very interesting evening, the event is free with tea/coffee available from the bar, but you do need to reserve a place.

Oldham Branch has been given ten tickets, which will be released on a first come first served basis. Please contact the Society at [oldham@mlfhs.org.uk](mailto:oldham@mlfhs.org.uk), by the 16th May, to book a place.

Manchester Golf Club, Hopwood Cottage, Rochdale Road, Middleton M24 6PG  
(near Slattocks roundabout and Industrial estate)

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**'Archaeology of Death in Greater Manchester'**

A talk given by Norman Redhead, Director of the Greater Manchester Archaeological Advisory Service at the University of Salford

7:15 pm at the Friends Meeting House, Mount Street M22 5NS

£8 – no need to book

[Manchester Victorian Society](#) link .

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**'A MIXED BAG'**

**Have you ever wondered about the origins of May Day and dancing round the Maypole?**

extract transcribed from :

**'Old English Customs : Extant at the Present Time'** - by P.H. Ditchfield, pub. 1896

**"The eve of May Day at Oldham is known as Mischief Night**, when it was the custom for the people to play all manner of tricks on their neighbours. My informant remembers to have seen a thatched house in a village near Oldham adorned with mops, rakes, brushes, on the tops of which were stuck mugs, tubs, pails, or anything portable up to a five-barred gate. Sometimes companies would stay up all night playing and singing in order to welcome the incoming May."

and another extract transcribed from :

**'A Picture of the Manners, Customs, Sports, and Pastimes, of the Inhabitants of England, from the Arrival of the Saxons Down to the Eighteenth Century, Selected from the Ancient Chronicles And rendered into Modern Phraseology.'**

by Jehoshaphat Aspin, Pub. 1825

"The first of May was consecrated, and kept in honour of the goddess Flora. The Romans on this day used to go out and fetch laurel, green boughs, branches of trees, and flowers, with singing and rejoicing, and with them they adorned their houses. This custom, continued by the Christians, was condemned by the council of Toledo, on account of its origin yet it has been constantly kept up in England.

"On the kalend, or first of May," says Bourne, "commonly called May-day, the juvenile part of both sexes were wont to rise a little after midnight, and walk to some neighbouring wood, accompanied with music and blowing of horns, where they break down branches of trees, and adorn them with nosegays and crowns of flowers: when this is done, they return with their booty homewards, about the rising of the sun, and make their doors and windows to triumph with their flowery spoils; and the after-part of the day is chiefly spent in dancing round a tall pole, called a May-pole, which, being placed in a convenient part of the village, stands there, as it were consecrated to the goddess of flowers, without the least violation being offered to it in the whole circle of the year." These games are now confined to country towns and villages; but formerly, London itself was not without them. "In the month of May," says Stow, "the citizens of London, of all estates, generally in every parish, and in some instances, two or three parishes joining together, had their several Mayings, and fetched their May-poles, with divers warlike shows, with good archers, morrice-dancers, and other devices for pastime, all day long; and towards evening they had stage-plays and bonfires in the streets. These great Mayings and May-games were made by the governors and masters of the city, together with the triumphant setting up of the great shaft, or principal May-pole, in Cornhill, before the parish church of St. Andrew."

Philip Stubbs, in his "Anatomie of Abuses," printed A.D. 1595, writes, "against May-day, Whitsunday, or some other time of the year," from which it is evident that the Mayings were not

confined always to the first of May, "every parish, town, or village, assemble themselves, both men, women, and children, and, either altogether, or dividing themselves into companies, they go, some to one place, some to another, where they spend all the night in pleasant pastimes, and in the morning they return, bringing with them birch boughs, and branches of trees, to deck their assemblies withal. But the chief jewel they bring from thence is the May-pole, which they bring home with great veneration;" having "twenty or forty yoke of oxen, every ox with a sweet nosegay of flowers tied to the top of his horns," to draw it. The May-pole itself, (called by the critic a stinking idol), was "covered all over with flowers and herbs, bound round with strings from top to bottom, and sometimes it was painted with various colours; and two or three hundred men, women, and children, followed it with great devotion. Thus equipped, it was reared, with handkerchiefs and flags streaming on the top; they straw the ground round about it, they bind green boughs about it, they set up summer halls, bowers, and arbours, hard by it, and then they fall to banqueting and feasting, to leaping and dancing," &c.

It seems to have been the constant custom, at the celebration of the May-games, to elect a Lord and Lady, or King and Queen, of the May, who probably presided over the sports. Thus Strype relates, that on the 30th of May, in the fourth year of Queen Mary, A.D. 1557, "was a goodly May-game in Fenchurch Street, with drums, and guns, and pikes; and with the nine worthies, who rode; and each of them made his speech: there was also a morrice-dance, and an elephant and castle, and the Lord and Lady of the May appearing, to make up the show." The Lord of the May, and without doubt his Lady also, was decorated with scarfs, ribands, and other fineries: hence a citizen, in the old comedy of "The Knights of the Burning Pestle," says, "Let Ralph come out on May-day, in the morning, and speak upon a conduit, with all his scarfs about him, and his feathers, and his rings, and his knacks, as Lord of the May." Soon after, Ralph enters, properly habited, and makes a speech, beginning in this manner:

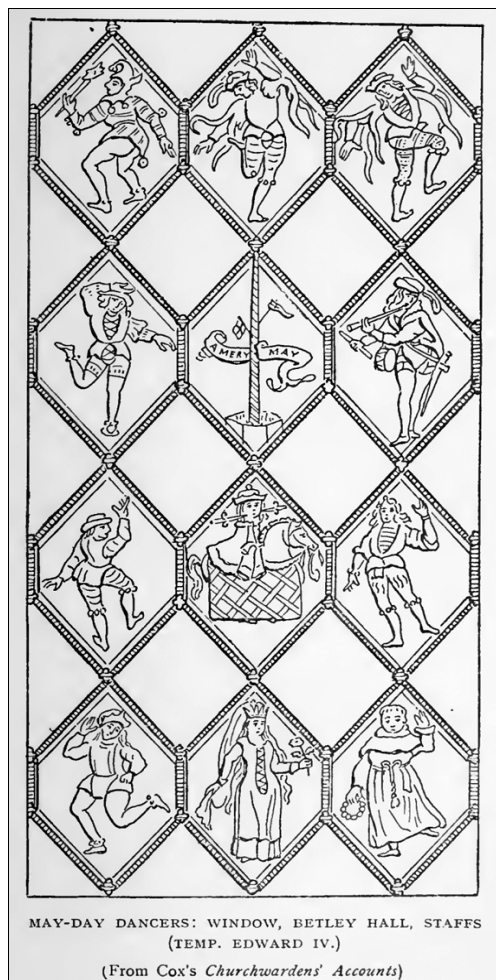
*With gilded staff and crossed scarf, the May Lord here I stand.*

At the commencement of the sixteenth century, or perhaps still earlier, the ancient stories of Robin Hood and his frolicsome companions, seem to have been new modelled, and divided into separate ballads, which much increased their popularity; for this reason it was customary to personify this famous outlaw, with several of his most noted associates, and add them to the pageantry of the May-games. He presided as Lord of the May; and a female, or a youth in a female habit, in the character of his faithful mistress, the Maid Marian, was the Lady of the May. His companions were also equipped in appropriate dresses, and distinguished by the title of Robin Hood's Men.

Henry VIII. when young, delighted much in pageantry; and the early part of his reign abounded in gaudy shows, some of his own devising, others contrived for his amusement. Among the latter may be reckoned a May-game at Shooter's Hill, exhibited by the officers of his guards, about two hundred in number, clothed in green, and headed by their captain, who personated Robin Hood. They met the king, on May-day morning, in the seventh year of his reign, as he was riding out on a maying, from Greenwich to the high ground of Shooter's-hill, accompanied by the queen and a large retinue of nobility, of both sexes. The fictitious foresters arrested the progress of the royal party, and their chieftain required of the king that he should stay and see his men shoot. The king gave his assent; and, on a whistle from Robin Hood, all the two hundred archers shot off at once. This was repeated, on a second whistle from the captain; and, by a contrivance in the heads of the arrows, they made a loud and strange noise, which greatly delighted the king and his party. Robin Hood then approached his majesty, and invited him to see the manner in which he and his companions lived: the royal party accordingly suffered themselves to be conducted into the wood under the hill, where, in arbours made with boughs and decked with flowers, they were served with venison and wine, the archers in the mean time blowing their horns.

After the entertainment, with which the king and queen were much pleased, the royal party returned towards Greenwich, and were met on their way by two ladies, riding in a rich open

chariot, drawn by five horses, each horse having his name upon his head, and upon every horse sat a lady with her name written. The two ladies in the chariot were splendidly attired, one of them personifying the Lady May, the other the Lady Flora; and "they saluted the king with divers goodly songs, and so brought him to Greenwich.



"Mayings and May-games had attracted the attention of the nobility and gentry long before the time of Henry VIII. In the old romance of "The Death of Arthur," Queen Guenever is represented as announcing to the knights of the round table her intention to ride a-maying, early in the morning in the woods and fields beside Westminster;" and they are directed to be clothed in green, to be well horsed, and have each a lady behind him, followed by an esquire, two yeomen, &c.

May-day is still observed in the different parts of the kingdom, with somewhat of mirth and jollity, but nothing like what took place in the days of our forefathers. The Maypole is kept up in many country villages, and after it has been dressed with ribands and garlands, a dance takes place among the youths and girls of the place. In some parts of Somerset and Gloucester, children deck themselves with chaplets of cowslips and wild hyacinths, and in this manner go about begging halfpence for the purchase of toys and gingerbread.

In Dorsetshire, the boys, at an early hour of the morning, come forth, some with garlands, composed of three hoops of different sizes, bound round with flowers, and fastened longitudinally upon a stick, in the manner of the ancient Bacchanalian Thyrsi; while others blow their horns, or tin

trumpets with all their might, shouting at intervals Arour! Arour! probably, a corruption of Aurora! Aurora! or rather Aruer! an oriental title of the sun.

In the metropolis, the observance of May-day is confined to the lowest orders. In the reign of Queen Ann, and probably before her time, the milk-maids decorated their pails with flowers and ribands, with the addition of borrowed plate, as silver cups, tankards, and salvers, and carried them upon their heads to the houses of their customers, where they danced, in order to obtain a small gratuity. In later times, the plate, with the other decorations, were placed in a pyramidal form, and carried by two chairmen upon a wooden horse. The maidens, with their musician, walked before it, and performed their dance without any incumbrance. This was called the Milkmaid's Garland, but it has not been abroad for some years.

In imitation of the foregoing, a set of people, well known to parish officers by the title of Bunters, have a garland, consisting of an inverted basket, covered with flowers and brass culinary utensils. With this they parade the streets, and dance to the sound of rough music, frequently accompanied with a Jack-in-the-Green. The latter piece of pageantry consists of a hollow frame of wood, or wicker-work, in the form of a sugarloaf, but open at the bottom, and sufficiently large and high to receive a man. The frame is covered with green leaves and bunches of flowers interwoven with each other, so that the man within may be completely concealed; and, as he dances with his companions, the populace are mightily diverted to see the green pyramid jig about.

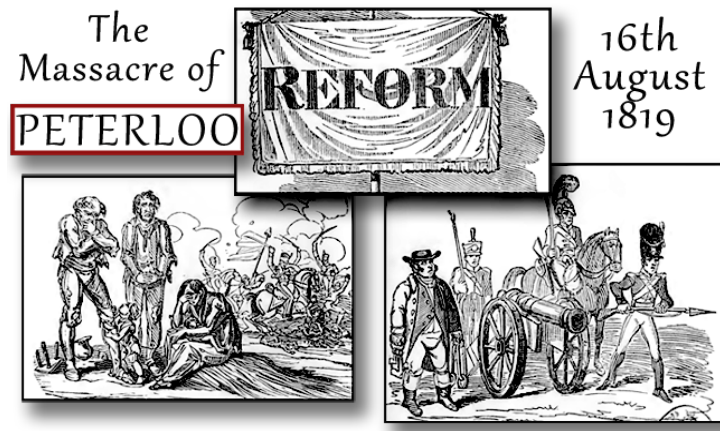
The chimney-sweepers of London have also singled out the first of May for their festival, at which time they parade the streets in companies, disguised in various manners. Their dresses are usually decorated with gilt paper and other mock fineries; they have their shovels and brushes in their hands, which they rattle together; and to this rough music they jump about, in



imitation of dancing, while a boy in girl's clothing holds out a brass ladle to receive the contributions of the bystanders. Some of the larger companies have a fiddle or drum with them, and a Jack-in-the- Green, as well as a Lord and Lady of the May, who, with smutted faces, follow the minstrel with great affectation of stateliness, and dance as occasion requires."

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Visit the website for **The Peterloo Project** with particular reference to the Oldham area at [Peterloo-Manchester](#)



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### **2019 is the Bi-Centenary of the Peterloo Massacre in Manchester.**

Manchester Histories have created a website to publicise all that is happening around the region in the weeks leading up to the anniversary on 16th August.

Visit their website for all the news [HERE](#)

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### **Peterloo Film**

**Sunday, 16th June, 7pm**

Mike Leigh's film, '*Peterloo*' will be shown at Playhouse 2 in Shaw on Sunday, 16th of June. Tickets will be available from 6th May and will cost £4. Ticket Office: Interiors, 37 Market St, Shaw. Tel 01706 840400. Open 10.00am - 4.00pm, Mon, Wed, Thu, Fri & Sat., or book on the Playhouse website [HERE](#)

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**NEED HELP!**

### **The MLFHS Family History Help Desk**

Don't forget if you hit a wall, the Society has a help desk at the Central Library. It is located on the ground floor of Manchester Central Library at St. Peter's Square. Our location, from the main entrance, is to the right, beyond the cafe. The Help Desk is open every weekday, Monday to Friday, except for Bank Holidays, between 10.30am and 3.30pm. Central Library is adjacent to the St. Peter's Square Metrolink station with direct services from Altrincham, East Didsbury, Eccles, Bury, Oldham, Shaw, Rochdale and Ashton under Lyne and with easy connections from other lines. Many bus services from South Manchester stop at the Oxford Street end of Portland Street, which is a five-minute walk from the library. Other services may arrive at Shudehill Interchange or Piccadilly Bus Station. Shudehill is about 15 minutes and Piccadilly about 10 minutes' walk from the library. There are Metrolink connections adjacent to both bus terminals.

If you can avoid coming by car then do so! There is no parking at Central Library, even for disabled parking.

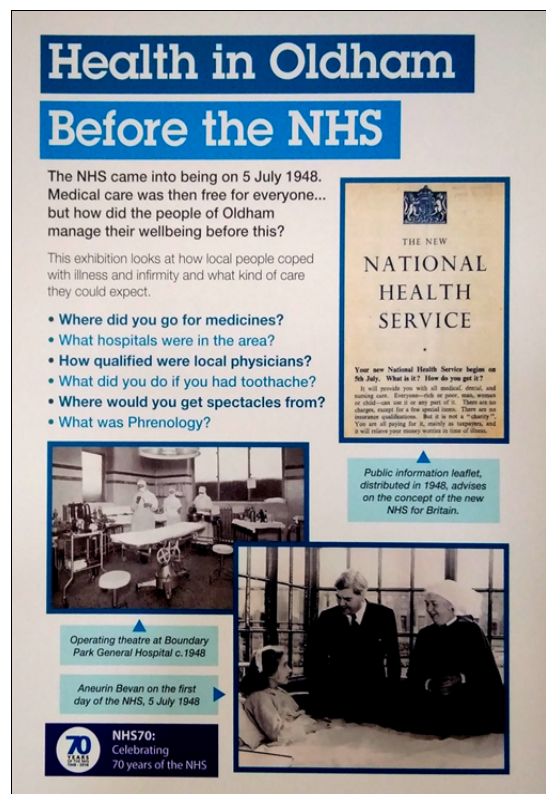
## Oldham Archives and Local Studies

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

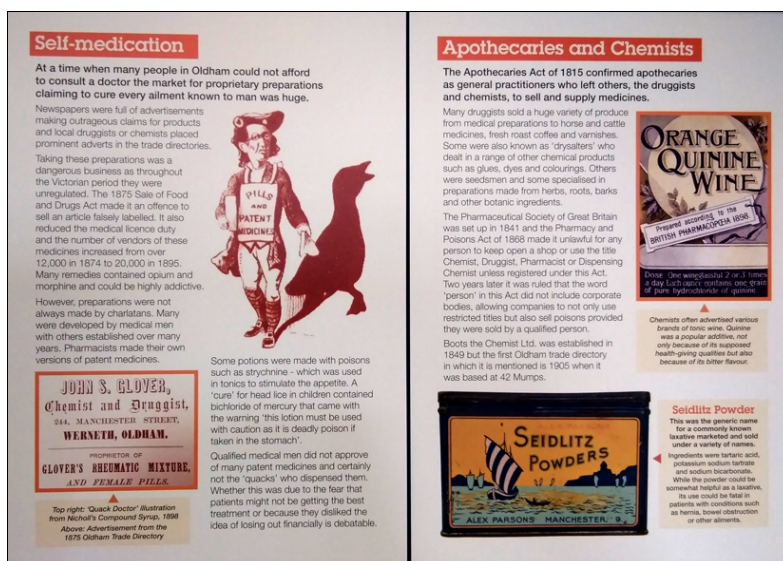
There are regular Family History Advice Sessions every Monday and Wednesday afternoons from 2-4pm. There's no need to book. Just turn up with all the information you have and the resident family history experts will be on hand to help.

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 are regularly changing displays in the Local Studies. The current one is : **'Health in Oldham Before the NHS'.**



[Opening hours](#) and contact details.

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.

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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)  
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](http://Lancashire)

### Some Local Archives

Barnsley Museum & Discovery Centre – [www.experience-barnsley.com](http://www.experience-barnsley.com)  
Birkenhead – [www.wirral.gov.uk/libraries-and-archives](http://www.wirral.gov.uk/libraries-and-archives)  
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)



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)

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

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**For the Gallery**

**Thorp Farm, Royton in 1899**  
From Ben Clayton's Photo Album



Courtesy Sheila Goodyear