

'e-Owls'



Part of Manchester & Lancashire
Family History Society

Branch Website: <https://oldham.mlfhs.org.uk/>
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MARCH 2020

MLFHS - Oldham Branch Newsletter

Where to find things in the newsletter:

Oldham Branch News :	Page 2	From the e-Postbag :	Page 19
Other Branch Meetings :	Page 5	Peterloo Bi-Centenary :	Page 23
MLFHS Updates :	Page 5	Need Help! :	Page 24
Societies not part of MLFHS :	Page 6	Useful Website Links :	Page 25
'A Mixed Bag' :	Page 10	For the Gallery :	Page 26

Branch News :

Following April's Annual Meeting of the MLFHS Oldham Branch

Branch Officers for 2019 -2020 :

Committee Member : Chairman : Linda Richardson
Committee Member : Treasurer : Gill Melton
Committee Member : Secretary & Webmistress : Jennifer Lever
Committee Member : Newsletter Editor : Sheila Goodyear
Committee Member : John Curnow.

OLDHAM BRANCH AGM MEETING, MARCH 14th at 1:15
(Before the programmed talk). Please try to attend.



*'Sturdy March with brows full sternly bent
And armed strongly, rode upon a ram ...'
Spenser
from: The Everyday Table Book, 1826*

Chairman's remarks :

Where does time go? I have been your Chairperson now for 12 months and it has flown by. We seem to be doing a bit better at the monthly meetings, attendance wise, and we have gained four new members in the last couple of months. The first of our meeting in January was well attended despite the weather, as was the February meeting, so I must be doing something right. I hope you will continue to support the Branch and hope to see as many of you as can make it to the Annual Meeting in March, as per the details below. We are also still really in need of a couple of volunteers to join the committee. If you are interested **please** contact me, either by e-mail or in person at the AGM, after which you could be co-opted onto the committee.

The Oldham Branch AGM will be held on the 14th March, and I hope as many of you as can will attend. This year will be a little different in that the Vice-Chairman of the MLFHS, Barrie

Henshall, will be attending to oversee the meeting.

Sadly, as mentioned in last month's newsletter, our Secretary, Jennifer Lever, has informed the committee that she will be stepping down as an officer, after the AGM, owing to her other considerable commitments. However, we are glad to report that she will continue to serve on the committee. We wish to thank her for the work she has done in the past. Following the AGM the duties of the Secretary will be shared amongst the officers and Sheila Goodyear will take on the role of website manager.

Please note that the AGM will be held at 1:15, before the the talk, which will begin as usual at 2pm.

Non-members are welcome to attend but will not be eligible to vote.

Linda Richardson

Chairman, Oldham Branch

email me at chairman-oldham@mlfhs.org.uk

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### **Editor's remarks.**

Yet another month has gone by and, like Linda, I can hardly believe it.

As we gear up for the AGM you'll find references to it throughout the newsletter ... more than once, in case you pick and choose what you want to read! A couple of interesting emails, in the 'e-Postbag', have come in and it's always great to receive them. One of them is a transcription from the 'scrapbooks' of news clippings, at the Local Studies & Archives Library. On the open shelves, they are always worth browsing for interesting little stories.

My own month has been largely taken up with finishing the research for my coming talk, at Crompton Library, in Family History Week (programme in the 'Meetings & Talks' section). It will be about my ancestor, who was transported in 1833, to Van Diemen's Land (now Tasmania). Like everything we research, we always find the unexpected and, sometimes, the shocking or upsetting. This was the case with this research... so much so that I gave it the subtitle of '*Man's Inhumanity to Man*'. I had first come across this rather bleak phrase when researching Auschwitz-Birkenau, about 10 years ago ... it is inscribed on a sculptural memorial there. Over the years, it has come back to me each time there is a report of unbelievable cruelty or abuse, whether by individuals or by state agencies. What I discovered, when researching the background for my ancestor's story, was, in every way, an example of 'man's inhumanity to man'

On a lighter note ... in the Mixed Bag I've transcribed the Oldham Pages from Baines' gazeteer of 1825.

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 unless you decide to waive that right, at the time of sending.

Editor reserves the right to edit any contributions before publication.

email me at : [Oldham\\_newsletter@mlfhs.org.uk](mailto:Oldham_newsletter@mlfhs.org.uk)

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Previous Oldham Branch Meeting

held on Saturday 8th February

'Crime in the 17th Century' - by Alan Crosby

I didn't really know what to expect from Alan's talk as, when I was looking for a picture to go with the notice of the meeting, the only crimes that seemed to be referenced, or illustrated, were to do with the great and powerful who fell from favour! What we heard from Alan was

something quite different and really interesting. His sources were mainly to be found in the County Archives at Preston. As we frequently find, as family historians, there is always more archival evidence about the paupers and criminals in our families, than about the law-abiding ancestors just getting on with their daily lives... unless, of course, they were the plaintiff.

Alan began by telling us how the justice system of the time worked ... it was very localised and informal in many ways. Rough justice was sometimes found to be administered by neighbours ... either by banging pots and pans, at night, outside the miscreant's home or by literally drumming them out of their village. Justice could sometimes be tit-for-tat and, as such, unrecorded in official documents.



from: *'London in the Time of the Stuarts'*
by Sir Walter Besant, Pub. 1903

Local magistrates could exact on-the-spot

punishments such as a fine or whipping for relatively minor offences, and had the authority to order removal of the accused to his place of origin. If a fine was not paid then the culprit could be forced to sit in the stocks for a number of hours ... usually on a Sunday and near the local church, for all to see. The more serious crimes were referred to the Quarter Sessions which, in their turn, could commit the accused to the County Assizes, held twice yearly. The judges, at the assizes, were professional men who travelled the six circuits. The Northern Circuit covered Yorkshire, Lancashire, County Durham, Northumberland, Cumberland and Westmorland. The Lent assizes were held at York, and the summer assizes were held at York, Durham, Newcastle, Carlisle and Appleby. These were the only courts which could pass the death penalty. So far it seems pretty familiar but, one notable difference was that, evidence from a witness was presented as a written document ... the witness not having to attend the court for cross examination.

In the 17th century, there were fewer crimes carrying the death penalty than in the 18th century, and they included those such as treason and murder. However, there were not many jails for accommodating prisoners for long sentences. The only one in Lancashire being Lancaster Castle. There was a 'House of Correction' in Preston which housed the short term prisoners.

Local crimes, that were reported, tended to be minor acts of theft and slander etc., which usually originated within the community. Alan told us that, in these written documents, the 'voice' of the time could be heard and, the details recorded, gave valuable insights into the lifestyles of our ancestors.

Alan then went on to give us some local examples that he had found from the early to mid 1600s ... although none of us owned up to having one of the 'names' in our own family trees! One example was from Chadderton, and concerned the theft of indigo which, in those times, was a valuable commodity because it was a permanent dye for wool. It sounded almost like 'do-it-yourself' policing as a plaintiff would petition a magistrate (in very formalised language) if he felt a crime had been committed against himself. It also seems as if the community was conscious of the troublemakers in their midst and believed it was part of their civic duty, in a way, to report anything they felt was wrong to the magistrate, who would be one of the local gentry.

In another example, a quantity of wool had been stolen from the bleaching croft at Glodwick. The petitioner accused a man, who was a lodger, and who had disappeared at the same time that the wool was stolen. There being no police force, the plaintiff tracked down the alleged culprit for himself.

In another instance, six ale-house keepers had their licences revoked for contravening certain acts regulating activities in the drinking houses. Alan also remarked that there was frequent mention of widows keeping beer-houses, implying that it was customary and acceptable.

Initial examinations of the accused were usually held in the home of the magistrate (perhaps having a room set aside for that specific purpose). A Clerk or Secretary would record what was said and then it could be 'edited' before it was presented to the court! It was not infrequent for a petition to be based on heresay, or gossip which, when investigated, proved to be a tissue of lies and vivid imagination!

Our thanks to Alan, for a most enjoyable talk.

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### Oldham Branch Meeting :

**Saturday 14th March, at 1: 15pm :**

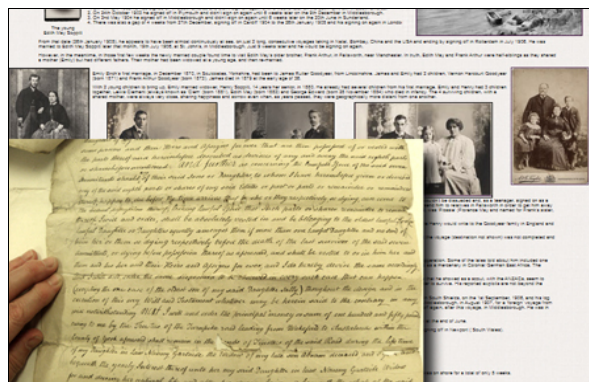
**Members' AGM - Non-members welcome to attend but, please note, unable to vote.**

**at 2:00pm :**

Jackie Depelle will give us a talk on :

**'Writing Your Family History' -**

Suggestions and ideas on how to store and preserve your family history for future generations.



To be held in the Performance Space at Oldham Library.

Refreshments on arrival.

Entry free to members, and non-members £3 (refundable if you take out membership on the day)

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Oldham Branch Meeting :

Please note this is the 3rd Saturday in the month

Saturday 18th April, at 2:00 pm

'Manchester Oddities' a talk by Keith Warrender.

"A light-hearted look at customs, buildings and characters around Greater Manchester"

Other details as for March.

image from 'Memorials of Manchester Streets' Pub. 1874



Printing Office of Harrop's Mercury, 1752

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### Oldham Branch Meeting :

**Saturday 9th May, at 2pm**

**'Confessions of a Country Lane Researcher'**

a talk by Tony Foster

An illustrated talk on interesting family and local history items over 40 years as a researcher.

Other details as for March

image from 'Memorials of Manchester Streets' Pub. 1874



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Bolton Branch : Wednesday 4th March, 7:30pm

'DNA for family research'

A talk by Rod Brackstone

Meetings are held in 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.

Website link [HERE](#)

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**Anglo-Scottish Branch, Saturday 21st March, 2:00pm until 4:00pm**

**The Anglo Scottish AGM will be held at 2.00pm**

**followed by talks about *'Members' Heirlooms'***

If you have an heirloom - be it a letter, an item that belonged to someone in your family or a curiosity that has a story to tell, please bring it along and tell us why it is important to you. We usually have a variety of items to discuss in a friendly session, the owner describes the item and the story behind it and, if it's not fragile, allows members a closer inspection that isn't possible at a larger meeting. Items brought so far have varied from Edwardian badges and military binoculars to some old coins and a handmade copper box, from WW2 love letters and a book found at a fair to photographs and medals and all have stimulated interesting discussions.

You can give us advance notice of your heirloom, by all means, by emailing us at [anglos Scots@mlfhs.org.uk](mailto:anglos Scots@mlfhs.org.uk)

Members free, visitors £3.

The meeting will be held in the Performance Space, Central Library, Manchester.

Branch Website link [HERE](#)

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MLFHS updates

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.

It is available to all members of the public whether MLFHS members or not.

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 from the 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.

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**Beginners Talks : Saturday 7th March at 10:30 am:**

***The Census***

Michael Couper looks at the reasons for taking the census and the way in which it was carried out. He will describe the varied information which each census gives. Also discussed will be ways to find your ancestor when transcription errors have occurred.

This meeting will be held in the Performance Space at Manchester Central Library. The talk 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 on Eventbrite [HERE](#)

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MLFHS Online Bookshop:

with CDs, Downloads, Maps, Registers, Local Interest Books, More General Publications, Miscellaneous Items with MLFHS Logo etc., and Offers.

Visit the [Online Bookshop](#) to see what is available.

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**MLFHS Branch e-Newsletters**

Each of the MLFHS branches publishes a monthly e-newsletter which provides useful news items. The e-newsletters are free and available to both members and non-members of MLFHS. To sign-up, simply click the appropriate link below and complete the short form on the branch e-newsletter page, where you will also find copies of past issues.

[Anglo-Scottish](#)    [Bolton](#)    [Oldham](#)

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Meetings and Talks at other Societies &/or Venues

Oldham Historical Research Group:

Wednesday 18th March at 7pm

'The Greening of the City: Urban Parks and Public Leisure'

An illustrated talk by Dr. Carole O'Reilly, Senior Lecturer in Media & Cultural Studies, School of Arts and Media, University of Salford.

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 of monthly talks [HERE](#)

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**Family History Festival in Oldham & District Libraries**

**Monday 23rd March to Friday 28th March**

Find out how you can trace your ancestors at various sessions, across the borough, in Oldham Libraries and Oldham Local Studies and Archives.

Illustrated programmes available to pick up in local libraries and at the Local Studies & Archives on Union Street.

**Help desk at Oldham Local Studies and Archives:**

Monday 23rd March, 2–4pm

Wednesday 25th March, 2–4pm



**programme**

**Monday 23rd March at 10:00am - 11:30am**

**Royton Library, OL2 6QJ**

***Zine Making*** by Rose Sergeant

Looking for a new, creative and easy way to record your family's story?

Join Rose Sergeant for this fun, hands-on session. Suitable for all abilities and experience, you'll come away with a lovely record of your story that you can share on Oldham Libraries' e-book platform if you wish.

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Tuesday 24th March at 2:00am - 3:00am

Oldham Local Studies and Archives

Family History in the Archives by Caroline Knight

Caroline Knight delves into Oldham's archives showing how original documents can throw light on the lives of our ancestors. Ancestry, Archive Find My Past and the British Newspaper

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**Tuesday 24th March at 5:00pm - 6:00pm**

**Uppermill Library, OL3 6WA**

***Ancestry, Archive, Find My Past and the British Newspaper ...***

An introduction to our free family history databases.

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Wednesday 25 March at 10.30 - 11.30am

Failsworth Library, M35 0FJ

My Family History

Roger Ivens delves into his own family history to show how records can be used to tell the stories behind the documents.

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**Wednesday 25 March at 2:00pm - 4:00pm**

**Oldham Local Studies and Archives**

***VR Experience***

Step the past with our VR experience. Led by library staff, no need to book.

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Thursday 26th March at 10:00am - 11:30am

Oldham Local Studies and Archives,

Free Online Tools

Find out how to digitise your family history using free online tools. Perfect if you want to share your research with others.

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**Thursday 26th March at 2:00pm - 3:30 pm**

**Crompton Library, OL2 8QY**

***'A Gartside sent to Van Diemen's Land' - "Man's Inhumanity to Man"***

*(quotation is from Robbie Burns' 'Man was made to mourn: A Dirge')*

In December 1832, Edwin Gartside was sentenced to seven years transportation, for theft. This talk by Sheila Goodyear looks at his family history, the brutality of transportation and the impact on the indigenous population.

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Friday 27th March at 2:00pm - 4:00pm

Lees Library, OL4 5DA

'Writing Life Stories'

A free workshop with Joss Carpreau from '*Elephant Memoirs*' who specialises in writing life stories. Find out how to capture personal histories and preserve them for friends, family and future generations

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**Saturday 28 March, 2:00pm - 3:00pm**

**Oldham Local Studies and Archives, OL1 1DN**

***Family Stories***

Mary Pendlebury shares the journey of her ancestors as they migrate from the rural Fens to the slums of dockside Hull.

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Free courses to help you to get online

Fancy trying our digital family history offer but need some help getting online? Try Oldham Libraries' free Online Basics courses.

Oldham Library, Mondays, 10.30am–12noon

Lees Library, Tuesdays, 10.30am–12noon

Royton Library, Tuesdays, 1.30–3pm

Fitton Hill Library, Tuesdays, 2–3.30pm

Northmoor Library, Tuesdays, 2.15–3.15pm

Crompton Library, Tuesdays, 5–6.30pm

Chadderton Library, Wednesdays, 5.30–6.30pm

Failsworth Library, Thursdays, 10–11.30am

Chadderton Library, Thursdays, 1.30–3pm

Uppermill Library, Thursdays, 1.30–3pm

Limehurst Library, Fridays, 10–11.30am

For more information on these events and to book your place, please contact:

email : archives@oldham.gov.uk

tel : 0161 770 4654

Or visit www.oldham-council.co.uk/libevent www.visitoldham.com

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**Library Events & Gallery talks at Gallery Oldham :**

**Gallery 1 – *Oldham Stories*:**

This gallery permanently houses both:

***Oldham Stories* exhibition**, "featuring selected objects from our extensive collections to tell and show the stories of Oldham and its local communities. From birds and shells to a recreation of an Edwardian chemist's shop, every object has a fascinating tale to tell. The display features local figures such as suffragette Annie Kenny, the pioneering natural history collector James Nield and the popular artist Helen Bradley."

**The Community Gallery**, "which has a wide range of exhibitions by groups and individuals from the Borough of Oldham."

Website [HERE](#)

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Saddleworth Historical Society

Wednesday 11th March, at 7:30pm

"Working Co-operatively from Rochdale in 1844 to Hebden Bridge in 1870."

an Illustrated presentation by Andrew Bibby

At the Saddleworth Museum, High Street, Uppermill.

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

Refreshments available.

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## **Saddleworth Civic Trust: -**

**Thursday 12th March 2020, 7.30pm.**

***" Ripon and its Conservation Areas."***

an Illustrated Presentation by Christopher Hughes of Ripon Civic Society,

At the Saddleworth Museum, High Street, Uppermill.

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

Refreshments available.

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Family History Society of Cheshire : Tameside Group meeting

Wednesday 11th March, at 7pm for a 7.30pm start

'Medicine and Magic'

a talk by Peter Watson. He is going to combine two of his talks about Medicine and Magic and include some family remedies. Be prepared for some audience participation.

Meeting in the Schoolrooms of Old Chapel, Dukinfield

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

See their website [HERE](#)

from the website: *"We also run a 'Family Tree Detectives' session at Tameside Local Studies and Archives Library on the 1st and 3rd Tuesdays of each month between 2.00pm and 4.00pm, chiefly aimed at beginners in family history or those who may have hit a brickwall."*

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## **Tameside History Club :**

**Wednesday 11th March, at 2:00 pm**

***'Laura Smyth ...***

***will talk about her research into the Ashton poisoning case in 1886***

"Tameside History Club is a series of events that are held at Tameside Local Studies and Archives Centre, Central Library, Ashton, unless otherwise stated

These events are for everyone from local historians to those with a more casual interest in a range of popular topics and are completely **free**. Book a place on any of the talks by ringing 0161 342 4242."

Website and programme [HERE](#)

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Tameside Local Studies and Archives - Regular Sessions and Events

Wednesday 18th

Master classes

2pm - Using creative fiction for your family history

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**Thursday 19th**

Tameside History Club

2pm - The Ashton Poisoning Case with Laura Smyth and Debbie Worthington

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Tuesday 31st

Making Friends with the Archives

2pm - Churches & Chapels

At Tameside Local Studies and Archives Centre, Old Street, Ashton-under-Lyne. OL6 7SG.

To book on any of the activities below please telephone 0161 342 4242 during our opening hours or email localstudies.library@tameside.gov.uk

Website and programme [HERE](#)

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**Moorside & District Historical Society**

**Monday 17th March, 7:30pm**

**'Then & Now ... Northgate Lane'**

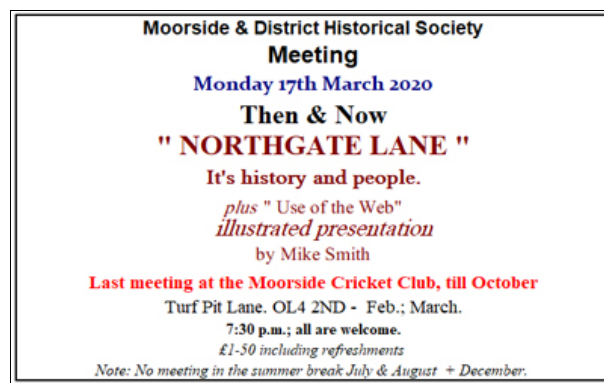
**Plus, 'Use of the Web'**

Illustrated presentation by Mike Smith

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

All welcome ... £1.50, including refreshments'

**Last meeting at the Moorside Cricket Club until October**



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Regional Heritage Centre : Website with booking and other details : [HERE](#)

Saturday 7 March 2020, 9:55am to 4:30pm

Annual Archaeology Forum

47th Annual Archaeology Forum featuring a range of speakers on developments in the field. Please note new venue: Frankland Lecture Theatre in Faraday Building (marked FAR on campus maps)

CONFERENCE

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**Saturday 4 April 2020, 9:30am to 4:00pm**

**Dialect and Regional History - from the Vikings to the voices of modernity**

The RHC is organising a study day on Dialect and Regional History - from the Vikings to the voices of modernity.

FAR - Frankland LT Faraday Building

CONFERENCE

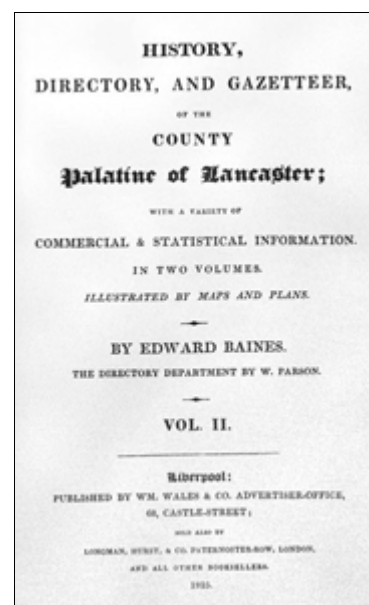
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'A Mixed Bag'

The following account of the township of Oldham is transcribed from Volume 2 of the '**History, Directory, and Gazetteer of the County Palatine of Lancaster; with a Variety of Commercial & Statistical Information.**' In two volumes by Edward Baines, 1825.

OLDHAM is a township and parochial chapelry, (connected with Prestwich,) in the Hundred of Salford, in the Deanery of Manchester, and in the Archdeaconry of Chester, 7 miles S.S.E. of Rochdale, 7 miles N.E. of Manchester, 17 miles S.W. of Huddersfield, and 190 miles from London. The three townships of Chadderton, Crompton, and Royton, are within this chapelry; and the following are the returns of the number of inhabitants in each township respectively, in 1801, 1811, and 1821, with the estimated annual value of the lands, messuages, and other buildings in each Of the 6982 families in this chapelry, 215 of them are employed chiefly in agriculture, and 6667 in trade, manufactures, or handicraft, and the remaining 100 are either

engaged in professional pursuits or unemployed.

Oldham is strictly within the parish of Prestwich, but the descendant has so much outgrown the parent, that the chapelry has begun to take precedency of the parish, and though in the population returns published by the authority of parliament, in 1811, the term "Prestwich-cum-Oldham," is applied to this parish; yet, in the succeeding return of 1821, the words are reversed, and they stand "Oldham-cum-Prestwich," but the inhabitants of Oldham, and of the other townships in the chapelry, still marry at Prestwich church, and the rector of Prestwich, in virtue of his office, holds the patronage of the living of Oldham. With some degree of subordination, there is, however, much of independence in the church of Oldham. The townships of Oldham, Chadderton, Crompton, and Royton, support Oldham church by a rate, without contributing in any way towards the church of Prestwich, and the inhabitants of these townships have the rites of sepulture and baptism at Oldham church only.



OLDHAM Parochial Chapelry		POPULATION					Estimated annual value £
		1801 persons	1811 persons	1821			
				Houses	Families	Persons	
Chadderton	Township	3452	4133	637	968	5124	7340
Crompton	Township	3482	4746	1017	1007	6482	7027
Oldham	Township	12024	16690	3836	4199	21662	29970
Royton	Chapelry	2719	3910	774	808	4933	7114
Total		21677	29479	6464	6982	38201	51451

The register books of Oldham and Prestwich are quite distinct and unconnected, and each place has its separate churchwardens. Growing, as this extensive chapelry is, in wealth and in importance, and containing, as it does, a population of 40,000 souls at least, the greater part of whom are at a distance of eight miles from the parish church of Prestwich, it was hoped and expected, when Earl Grosvenor purchased the advowson of that living some years ago, that he would have erected Oldham into a separate parish, under the authority of parliament, after the example of Chorley and several other places in this county, where Of the 6982 families in this chapelry, 215 of them are employed chiefly in agriculture, and 6667 in trade, manufactures, or handicraft, and the remaining 100 are either engaged in professional pursuits or unemployed.

Oldham is strictly within the parish of Prestwich, but the descendant has so much outgrown the parent, that the chapelry has begun to take precedency of the parish, and though in the population returns published by the authority of parliament, in 1811, the term "Prestwich-cum-Oldham," is applied to this parish; yet, in the succeeding return of 1821, the words are reversed, and they stand "Oldham-cum-Prestwich," but the inhabitants of Oldham, and of the other townships in the chapelry, still marry at Prestwich church, and the rector of Prestwich, in virtue of his office, holds the patronage of the living of Oldham. With some degree of subordination, there is, however, much of independence in the church of Oldham. The townships of Oldham, Chadderton, Crompton, and Royton, support Oldham church by a rate, without contributing in any way towards the church of Prestwich, and the inhabitants of these townships have the rites of sepulture and baptism at Oldham church only. The register books of Oldham and Prestwich are quite distinct and unconnected, and each place has its separate churchwardens. Growing, as this extensive chapelry is, in wealth and in importance, and containing, as it does, a population of 40,000 souls at least, the greater part of whom are at a distance of eight miles from the parish church of Prestwich, it was hoped and expected, when

Earl Grosvenor purchased the advowson of that living some years ago, that he would have erected Oldham into a separate parish, under the authority of parliament, after the example of Chorley and several other places in this county, where the necessity was less urgent. From causes with which the public are unacquainted, this expectation has not hitherto been realized; and it may be judged advisable that his majesty's commissioners for building new churches should exercise the powers with which they are invested, of dividing the parish into districts for ecclesiastical purposes. §

The town of Oldham is situated on an eminence, near the source of the Irk, and is washed on the east by a branch of the Medlock. These streams formerly contributed in a material degree to the manufacturing prosperity of the place, and they are still of considerable utility, but the general introduction of steam engines has diminished the necessity for water-power, and supplied its place by a more potent and an unfailing agency.

The church is an ancient structure, dedicated to St. Mary; it was built in the year 1476, by Sir Ralph Langley, Knight, person of Prestwich, and the third warden of Manchester. †* The Radcliifes, the Cudworths, and the Hortons have each family monuments within it, and are all, as well as the Asshetons, whose burial-place was Middleton, closely identified with the chapelry of Oldham.

The ancient family of the Radcliffes, of Royton Hall, are descended from Nicholas Fitz Gilbert de Radcliffe, youngest brother of Fitz. Gilbert the fourth baron of Kendal, in the time of Henry II. which Nicholas held the manor of Oldham of his nephew William the first lord of Lancaster.** This family of the Radcliffes, long settled in the chapelry of Oldham, became connected, by intermarriage through successive ages, with many of the principal families in the county of Lancaster; and Wilham Radcliffe, Esq. by marriage with Elizabeth Dawson, a Yorkshire heiress, succeeded to the Milns-bridge estate in that county. This William, dying without issue, on the 26th of September, 1795, bequeathed his estate to his nephew, Joseph Pickford, of Althill, Esq. who, in compliance with the will of his maternal uncle, took the name of Radcliffe, and who, for his "exemplary exertions as a magistrate,"*** is resisting the spirit of insubordination which existed amongst the cloth-dressers in the West-Riding of Yorkshire, in the year 1812, was created a baronet, on the 2d of November, 1813. Sir Joseph, on his death, in 1818, was succeeded by his grandson, the present Sir Joseph Radcliffe, Bart. of Campsall Park. The ancient family of Radclife, which spread from the parent stock of Radcliffe Tower, in this county, into the branches of Ordsal, Oldham, Smithells with Edgeworth, Wimmersley, and Todmorden, after having risen nearly to the summit of English nobility in the Earls Sussex of that name, is now almost extinct in Lancashire.

The Cudworths, of Wemith Hall, are a branch of the Cudworths, of Cudworth, in Yorkshire; and John Cudworth, by marriage with the daughter and co-heiress of Matthew de Oldham, in the reign of King

end of page

Footnotes:

§ In an Inquisition, made by order of Parliament, on the 4th of June, 1650, Oldham is called a parish, and the church "Oldham Parish Church," of which the Rev. Robert Constantine was minister, with a stipend of £100 per-annum, paid out of the tithes, amounting to near £140.

† Sir Ralph was the second son of Langley, of Edgecroft. This family became extinct in the reign of Elizabeth; the last of them being Sir Robert Langley, who left four daughters, one married to Reddish, of Reddish; the second to a younger brother of the Lelghs, of Lime, by whom he had Alkrington, now in possession of the Levers; the third to Assheton, of Chadderton, who became patron of Prestwich; and the fourth to Dauntzey, of Agecroft, whose descendants now possess the ancient seat of the Langleys.

* Deed in the Tower

** See Vol. 2 p. 6

*** Secretary of State's Letter

new page

John, became possessed of this estate. In the thirty-fourth of Henry VI the manor-house took fire, and was destroyed, and the family records shared the fate of the mansion. In due time the house was re-built, and the manor and estate remained in the family till the early part of the last century. Dr. Ralph Cudworth, son of Ralph Cudworth, "Chief Lord of Oldham," as Fuller calls him, was born here. About a century after his death, Joshua Cudworth, Esq. the representative of the family, sold Wernith Hall, and the estate, to Sir Raphe Assheton, of Middleton, who presented it as a portion to his third daughter, Catharine, on her marriage with Thomas Lister, of Arnoldsbiggin, Esq. This estate, which consists of about one hundred acres of land, with valuable minerals, chiefly of coal, and extensive common rights, was sold to Messrs. Parker and Tidebottom, of London, for £25,000 and re-sold by them, in the year 1794, for £30,000* to John Lees, of Oldham, Esq. the father of Edward Lees, Esq. the present owner. Hugh Oldham, Bishop of Exeter, who lived on the eve of the Reformation, was born at Oldham, in a house still standing, in Goulburn street, and was doubtless a descendant of Matthew de Oldham. Fuller says of this prelate, that he "was no ill scholar, and a good man, most pious according to and above the devotion of the age he lived in; he was a foe to monkish superstition, and a friend to university learning. Brazen Nose College, in Oxford, and Corpus Christi College therein, will for ever bear witness to his bounty to advance religion and learning. Besides the town of Manchester has good cause to remember him, who founded and endowed a school therein** (the Free Grammar School), with large revenue, appointing the warden of the college therein Caput Schola. This bishop, having a tough contest with the Abbot of Tavistock, was excommunicated for refusing to stand to the decision of the court of Rome, and dying excommunicate*** was buried upon the brink of his own chapel, on the south side of the cathedral."

Oldham Church was originally a small, simple edifice, suited to the manners and the means of the inhabitants. As the number of parishioners has increased, the Church has been enlarged, and it consists at present of a body, a chance], and two aisles, with a tower attached. The Rev. John Fallowiield is the incumbent. The dilapidating hand of time, operating upon a building never remarkable for its strength, and necessarily impaired by the alterations it has undergone, combined with the circumstance of the inhabitants within the chapelry having swelled to upwards of 40,000 souls, has suggested the propriety of providing suitable accommodation, and an act has accordingly just been obtained, conformable to the resolutions of the parishioners in vestry assembled, for taking down the present Church, and building a new one in its place; the funds for defraying the expense of the erection to be raised by an assessment upon the inhabitants, to which the owners of property are to contribute two thirds, and the tenants one-third. The commissioners under the million act have it also in contemplation to build a new Church, on a site near the bottom of Greenacres moor, in this township, principally to accommodate the inhabitants of the populous village of Mumps, the cost of which is estimated at £15,000. St. Peter's Chapel, in Chapel-street, High-street, was built in 1765, by a voluntary subscription raised by the inhabitants; and in the year 1804, this structure was enlarged, and provided with a fine-toned organ. The incumbent is the Rev. William Winter.

end of page

Footnotes

* Butterworth's Oldham

** See Vol 2 page 77

*** In 1520

new page

The other places of religious worship in Oldham, are the Methodist Chapel, in Manchester street, built in 1789, and opened by the Rev. John Wesley, on Good Friday, in the year 1790, which superseded a small chapel erected in this place for the same religious community in 1775; the Baptist Chapel, situated at the top of Manchester street, built in the year 1805, by the followers of Mr. Alexander Kilham, the founder of the Methodist New Connexion, but sold by

them in 1816 to the Baptists, by whom it was opened on the 6th of September in that year; the Unitarian Chapel, in Lord-street, opened on the 4th of Jan. 1816; the Independent Chapel, in Queen street, built in 1822; the Independent Methodist Meeting-house, in George-street, built by a sect of seceders from the Methodists; and the Primitive Methodist Chapel, in Grosvenor-street. There is also a Meeting-house for the Society of Friends, at Twif-lane, Royton, which community has existed here ever since the foundation of Quakerism. To all the principal places of religious worship, in Oldham, Sunday schools are attached, and the inhabitants are laudably emulous to afford instruction to the rising generation. The new chapel and schools at Salem, built in the year 1824, by John Lees, Esq. of Lower Clarksfield, are dedicated to the use of the church of the United Brethren, (Moravians.) Clarksfield has been the residence of the family of Lees, ever since the reign of James I. In the year 1625, this estate was purchased by Mr. John Lees, from Sir George Booth, of Dunham park, and was devised to the late John Lees, Esq. of Ashton, in 1766, who resided there in the early part of his life, and at his death, in 1815, the property descended to John Lees, Esq. of Fairfield, the present owner. Under his direction the ancient mansion has been greatly improved and beautified, and in addition to an extensive view of the vale of the Medlock, the situation commands a prospect of the Cheshire, Derbyshire, and Staffordshire hills, as well as of the mountain scenery of Greenfield and Stanedge.

The Free Grammar School of Oldham, situate in School croft, was founded by James Assheton, Esq. of Chadderton-hall, in 1611, and endowed with about a statute acre of land in the centre of the town. This land is now built upon, and the rents of the premises yield a salary both to the head master, the Rev. William Winter, and to his usher. The trust deed bears date the 15th of May, 1607, and the original trustees were the principal inhabitants of the chapelry, with Lawrence Chadderton, Master of Emanuel College, Cambridge, at their head. According to the provisions of this deed, the children were "to be freely instructed in the English, Greek, and Latin tongues, and withall in good manners." In addition to these branches of learning, the education is partly commercial, and writing and arithmetic are taught, for which the usual quarterage is paid. An inquisition, sans date, quoted in the Kuerden MS. orders,* "that the feepees being dead, a new deed shall be executed." The commissioners further report, that "James Ashton, of Chadderton, dec: did by deed made to Law Chaderton and other fees grant a real charge of 40s. for eur to the schoole of Oldham out of a ms in Oldham there in occ: of Rog. Taylor and of James Rodes and not payd for 52 y[ears.]"

OLDHAM SUNDAY SCHOOLS, 1825

Church Sunday School contains	2000
Methodist (Wesleyan) St. Domingo st.	1000
Baptist, Henshaw street	200
Methodist (Independent (George st.)	400
Independent, Greenacres moor	200
Methodist (Primitive) Grosvenor street	300
Independent, Queen street	200
Unitarian, Lord street	80

end of page

footnote:

* Fo. 619

new page

Oldham has had the honour to produce two of the most munificent benefactors of this county - Hugh Oldham, bishop of Exeter, and Thos. Henshaw, Esq. an opulent hat manufacturer. The richly endowed Free School, at Manchester, is a perpetual monument of the bounty of the former; but the charity of the latter has hitherto been obscured, and is almost unknown. It has

already been stated, in this work, but it may not be improper here to repeat, that Mr. Henshaw, by will, dated the 14th of November, 1807, bequeathed £20,000. for the endowment of a Blue Coat School, at Oldham, and the same amount for a Blind Asylum at Manchester. By a codicil to this will, made in the following year, he bequeathed the further sum of £20,000 for the endowment. of the Blue Coat School, leaving to his trustees. an option either to establish the school at Oldham, or at Manchester. A provision in the will disqualifying the trustees from building, or purchasing lands, or erections, for the use of these establishments, has hitherto prevented them from carrying into effect the benevolent intentions of the testator, and the money has in consequence accumulated to the. sum of £90,000. Endeavours are now making by the trustees to bring these charities into active operation, and it is fervently to be hoped, that some method may be devised to withdraw this immense fund from the unfruitful embraces of the high Court of Chancery, and apply it to the use of those for whose benefit it was intended. Though the will forbids that any part of the principal sum devised should be expended in the purchase of lands or buildings for the use of the charities, the restriction may not apply to the appropriation of the accumulated interest to this purpose, and £30,000. would provide sufficient premises for both institutions.

The Bible Society has an auxiliary in Oldham, established in the year 1821, connected with which there is a Ladies' Bible Association of the same standing. The Benevolent Society for the relief of the sick is another of the charities of this place, established in 1814; and the Humane Society administers both to the temporal wants of the sick, and to their spiritual necessities.

Manufactures have grown in this place with astonishing rapidity. Sixt -years ago there was not a cotton mill in the chapelry; at present there are no fewer than sixty-five, of which all, except two, have been built during the present century. These mills, which are wholly employed in spinning cotton, are all worked by steam, and there are, within the same limits, one hundred and forty steam-engines used in the various processes of manufacturing. and mining. The vicinity of Oldham to Manchester, the great mart for cotton goods, the advantages of water, but above all the abundant supply of coal, from the mines in the surrounding townships, have constituted this one of the most extensive and improving seats of the staple manufacture in the county. The goods chiefly made here are fustians, velveteens, and cotton and woollen cords.

The manufacturers of Glodwick, in this township, lay claim to the invention of the spinning jenny; but that claim is urged with so entire an absence of dates and particulars, that it is not likely to shake the well-founded pretensions of the reed-maker of Leigh, as exhibited in the history of the rise and progress of the cotton trade in this work.*

The original staple trade of Oldham, and that for which this place has been for many ages pre-eminently, distinguished, is the manufacture of hats.

end of page

footnote

* See vol. 1 p 113 - 119

new page

As early as the year 1482, a great alarm existed in this county, on account of the introduction of machinery for the abridgement of manual labour, as applied to the fulling of hats, which operation had hitherto been performed by the action of the hands and feet; and it is probable, though there is no positive evidence of the fact, that the journeymen hatters of Oldham were amongst the number of those who petitioned parliament, with some success, to forbid the use of the new machines; however that may be, the hat manufacture has continued to prevail in this place ever since, and it is now carried on to a greater extent here, in proportion to the number of inhabitants, than in any other town in the British empire.

The coal mines in this neighbourhood open an important branch of trade, and give employment to a large number of persons. Every township in the parish has its collieries, and the quality of the coal obtains for it a preference in the Manchester market. The quantity of fuel dug up yearly

from the numerous beds is immense, and the supply seems inexhaustible. The coal strata, as well as all the other minerals, dip here to the S.S.W., or, as it is technically called, to the two o'clock sun; and coal is found at all the distances, from the surface to a depth of 150 yards. The beds vary in thickness, from half a yard to five feet. The trade and traffic of the neighbourhood, both in coal and in the various branches of the manufacture, are essentially promoted by the inland navigation; and the Oldham Canal, which commences at Hollinwood, on the west side of the town, and communicates with Manchester, Ashton-under-Line, and Stockport, as well as the Rochdale canal, which passes through the heart of the township of Chadderton, co-operate to enrich and improve this district. To add to the number and to the facilities of conveyance, a railway is projected from Oldham to Manchester, and it is difficult to imagine a more advantageous situation for the application of this new mode of conveyance, whether with regard to the easy inclined plane on which the road may be constructed, or the vast weight of coals and merchandise which daily pass in this direction.

A chalybeate spring was discovered at Lees, about a mile from Oldham, 30 years ago, which acquired a considerable degree of celebrity. "This spring," says Dr. Walker, of Huddersfield, "is distinguished from the great majority of chalybeates, by the presence of aluminous earth;" "it owes its impregnation to its contiguity to coal pits, and perhaps to the decomposition of pyrites so abundant in this district." The saline contents of a quart of the Oldham spa water, the Doctor found, by analysis, to be as follows: Sulphate of iron, 21-0; sulphate of alumina, 5-6; oxyde of iron, in solution with carbonic acid, 4-0; sulphate of lime, 1-4. The indiscriminate use of this water is strongly condemned, and when there is a feverish state of the system, it is absolutely forbidden; but, as a tonic remedy, it is entitled to confidence, and it is strongly recommended in scorbutic and scrofulous complaints, and indeed in all that class of cutaneous diseases connected with constitutional debility. "When properly used," says our authority, "this spring seldom fails to renovate the appetite and spirits, and to amend the general health and strength."*

end of page

Footnote

* A small wine-glassfull, which contains nearly two grains of the salt, is a proper dose to adopt in the first instance, and may be repeated two or three times a day. If it agree with the patient, the quantity may be increased, but, from its astrigent properties, care must be taken to counteract any tendency to obstipation.

new page

About four years ago this spring was in so much repute, that the waters, which were supposed to be a sort of universal specific, whether taken internally or applied externally, were taken to a distance, and sold at a high price; but undue popularity of all kinds has generally its season of re-action, and the virtues of the Oldham spa water are now as much under-rated as they were formerly over-valued. Like other water, it will ultimately find its level.

Oldham is preparing to compete in the race of public improvements which, at this period, prevails so generally in the manufacturing towns of Lancashire. It is in contemplation, and the surveys for the purpose are already made, to establish, with as little delay as possible, both water works, which have long been wanted, and coal gas works, which will greatly improve the appearance of the town by night, and for the generation of which luminous vapour the raw material is so near at hand. A police act, with powers for erecting a town-hall and public offices, is also prepared for the next session of parliament. This is the more necessary, as Oldham has become a principal connecting link between the two first counties in the north of England - York and Lancaster, and the number of carriages and travellers passing through the town, both by night and by day, is already very large, and daily increasing.

There is no regular market-day here, but Saturday is observed as a kind of vegetable and flesh market. There are three annual fairs for cattle, horses, sheep, and pedlery, two of them stationary, and the third moveable; the fixed fairs are on the 2d of May, and the 8th of July, and the

moveable fair is on the first Wednesday after the 12th of October.

Soon after the memorable 16th of August, in the year 1819, the attention of all England was directed to a judicial inquiry which took place in this town, arising out of the death of one John Lees, a cotton spinner, and which proceeding was called emphatically the *Oldham Inquest*. The deceased, while in attendance at the Manchester reform meeting, over which Mr. Hunt presided, had received several bruises in different parts of his body, and a sabre wound upon his arm; to these injuries he had not paid proper attention, in consequence of which a mortification ensued, and he died on the 7th of the following month. To ascertain the cause of his death, an inquest was summoned, by the clerk of the coroner for the district, the principal being at that time from home on his professional duty, at the assizes at Lancaster. After an investigation continued by adjournments, partly in the presence of the coroner, and partly in that of his deputy, for several weeks, and conducted in the spirit of those unhappy times, the whole proceeding was rendered nugatory by a decision of the Court of King's Bench, which determined that the inquest was illegal, because it was not originally held by the coroner, but by his deputy; and, though the coroner had caused the body to be disinterred that it might be viewed by him in the presence of the jury, yet, as he had not re-sworn the jury, after the inspection, the defect of the original holding was not remedied. Under these circumstances the jury was dismissed without being called upon for their anxiously expected verdict.

The Chapelry of **ROYTON** extends to the north of Oldham, and though the least of the three dependant townships, it contains a population of upwards of 5000 inhabitants. The village is situated in a deep valley, and is fast assuming the form of a regular town.

new page

There is here a small episcopal chapel, subject to Oldham, called St. Paul's, built in the year 1754, on land presented by Thomas Percival, Esq. of Royton Hall, for that purpose. The mansion called Royton Hall was long in the possession of the Byron family, (the ancestors of the illustrious poet of that name) and who were the principal proprietors of the soil. After the decease of Mr. Percival, this hall was occupied by Joseph Pickford, Esq. (afterwards Sir Joseph Radcliffe, Bart.) but it is now falling into decay. This township has the usual characteristics of the parish: the cotton manufactures prevail to a considerable extent, and valuable beds of coal are found under at least one-half the land.

CHADDERTON is situated to the west of Oldham, and forms a right angle with Royton. The early history of the township is chiefly distinguished for its two mansions, Fox-denton-hall and Chadderton-hall, and for the families by whom they were occupied. At the period when the liberties of England began to assume a settled character, both these mansions were possessed by the Traffords, but soon after Magna Charta was granted by King John to the demands of his barons, Richard de Trafford conferred the lordship and manor of Chadderton upon his second son, Geoffrey. This Geoffrey assumed the name of Chadderton, and his daughter, Margaret, having married John Radcliffe, grandson of Richard de Radcliffe, of Radcliffe-tower, Fox-denton passed as a dowry into that family. The hall is now sharing the fate of Royton-hall. Chadderton-hall was the birth-place of Dr. Lawrence Chadderton, who lived at the period of the reformation, and was amongst the number of the principal reformers. Fuller says of this divine, that "he was intended for a lawyer, and in order thereto brought up some time in the inns of court, till he (was 20 years of age, when he) changed his profession, and admitted himself in Christ's College, at Cambridge. His father (who was nuzled up in popish superstition) hearing that he had altered his place, studies, and religion, sent him a poke with a goad therein, for him to go a begging therewith, disinheriting him of the fair estate of Chadderton, which otherwise had descended upon him." This eminent divine became master of Emanuel College, and survived, with sound faculties, to the patriarchal age of ninety-four years. Dr. William Chadderton, bishop of Chester, and one of the ecclesiastical commissioners for Lancashire, along with Henry Earl of Derby, in the reign of Elizabeth, appears to have been a member of this family. The father of Dr. Lawrence Chadderton having disinherited his son,

and bequeathed his estates to the Radclifes, Chadderton passed by marriage to Edmund Assheton, son of Sir John Assheton, of Ashton-under-Line, who married Joan the daughter and coheiress of Richard Radcliffe. About the year 1690, William Assheton, a descendant of Edmund, sold the manor and estate of Chadderton to Joshua Horton, Esq. of Howroyd, in the county of York, which possession, on the death of his father in 1708, descended to Thomas Horton, whose son William was created a baronet in 1764, and was succeeded by his son Sir Watts Horton, Bart. in 1774, who, by marriage with Henrietta, daughter of James Lord Strange, became allied to the Stanley family. During the time of Sir Watts Horton, Chadderton was in its zenith: the house was well stored with pictures, and the park and pleasure grounds, with their bold and varied scenery, appeared to the greatest advantage. Sir Watts, dying without male issue in 1811, was succeeded in his title and estate by his brother Sir Thomas Horton, Bart. Clerk, who dying in 1821, without issue, the estate devolved partly upon Thomas Horton, Esq. and partly upon ___ Reece, Esq. who married the only daughter of the late Sir Watts Horton, and now possesses Chadderton-hall, which is unoccupied.

Near to Chadderton-hall, but in the township of Oldham, is an Episcopal Chapel, built in the year 1765, at which the Rev. W. R. Hay, the present vicar of Rochdale, was assistant curate soon after he had, like Dr. Chadderton, quitted the bar for the pulpit. There is no existing record, written or traditional, of any great battle fought in Chadderton, but one of those tumuli, raised on the remains of departed warriors, rears its head in the lawn, near the front door of the hall, and seems to indicate that this has been a scene of some considerable military operation. This tumulus has been materially reduced, and a number of ancient relics have been found here.

CROMPTON, the most northern part of the parish, has the largest population of any of the townships associated with Oldham; and its growth in numbers and in trade has fully kept pace with the other parts of this flourishing district. A bleak situation and somewhat sterile soil have produced a race of hardy and laborious men, and the close connexion with Saddleworth has given to the people much of the manners and character which prevail in those mountainous regions. An ancient free chapel belonging to the establishment stands at Shaw, in this township, which was twice enlarged and re-edified during the last century. Crompton-hall, like too many of the other ancient houses in the neighbourhood, has fallen into decay.

According to Dr. Aikin, the chapelry of Oldham consists of 4025 statute acres of land, of which the principal part is now enclosed. The soil is extremely variable, and by no means capable of raising a sufficiency of food to supply the wants of the inhabitants. The land is principally in grass, but there is considerable quantity of potatoes grown and some corn crops. The district is bare of wood, though timber might be planted in many situations, particularly on the sides of the hills, that would yield both profit, shelter, and ornament. The increase of population in the last century was considerable, as the following return will show ; and the ex- tract from the parliamentary census at the head of the present chapter proves, that this great increase has been nearly doubled within the present century:-

POPULATION		
in 1714	in 1789	in 1792
Oldham1732	Oldham8012	Oldham 9480
Chadderton760	Chadderton ... 2404	Chadderton2512
Crompton872	Crompton1916	Crompton2056
Royton260	Royton1584	Royton 1728

The growth of the manufactures has exceeded the growth in the numbers of the people, and if

the inquiry is made at what place in the county of Lancaster, in proportion to its size, are cotton mills rising most rapidly? the answer is, at Oldham.

new page

POST OFFICE, OLDHAM.
POST MASTER, WILLIAM BAMFORD; Office, Lord street.
(TWO PENNY POST)

The Mail (ie. a Riding Post) arrives from Manchester with letters from all parts of the kingdom, at 8 o'clock am.; the delivery of letters commences at 5 past 8 am. The Mail departs at a 1/4 past 4 pm.; at 4 the box closes; and from that period until the bags are sent off 1d each letter is required.

Letters are received for the Post-Office at the Hat and Feathers, Mumps, with 1d. each.

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**From the e-Postbag**

I've received some emails, recently, pointing me in the direction of some really useful websites. The following links take you to two websites where their older, regularly published journals have been archived, and free to search, read and download as .pdf files.

**British Association for Local History** website, [HERE](#)

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

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

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

I'll add these links to the 'Links' pages in the next newsletter.

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Many thanks to Mary Pendlebury, who emailed this transcript, from a book of old newspaper clippings, which can be found in the Local Studies and Archives. It was published in *The Chronicle* on 19th July 1879.

An Oldham Worthy

This title, as applied to John Wrigley, sometimes called "The Churn Milk Sergeant", may, perhaps be challenged, being that he was born in the adjoining parish of Saddleworth. Whoever may be disposed to do so, I shall, nevertheless, contend that, as he filled a public office in our borough for the long term of twenty-two years with credit to himself, and during that time gained the good opinion of all classes, I am justified in styling him an Oldham worthy. Mr.

John Wrigley was born at Woolroad, near Dobcross, on the 3rd of October, 1777, and at an early age entered the army.

Very little of that period of his life can now be gleaned, but from the fact that he was promoted to the rank of sergeant it may be taken for granted that he had acquired the goodwill and won the confidence of his superiors. One instance of his courage and endurance while he was a private may told, it is so characteristic of the man, and, because it gained him his first step of promotion from the ranks. He was a member of Captain Frazer's company of the Royal Artillery, at that time engaged in South America, under General Whitelock, uncle of the present incumbent of Saddleworth Church. In the hasty disembarkation of the troops and implements of war at the mouth of the river Plate, the elevating screw of one of the heavy siege guns had been left behind, and the loss was not discovered until the regiment halted on the second day after they left headquarters. What was to be done? The gun was useless without the screw. The advance had been a difficult one, alternately leading through forest and swamp, and harassed by the horsemen of the enemy. A party could not be spared to go back for it, and it was a risky undertaking for anyone venturing alone. Private Wrigley was suffering from some injury to the hand which prevented him from taking ordinary duty, so he volunteered to return to headquarters for the missing gear.

With provisions for three days in his knapsack, and the good wishes of his comrades for his safe return, he set out alone on his dreary march. He succeeded in reaching headquarters without adventure. Obtaining the required article, and with a renewal of his provisions, he set off, without loss of time, to rejoin his regiment, which had continued the onward march. When he had got near the end of the second day's journey he became aware that he was followed by a party of the enemy, mounted upon their wiry mustangs. Unarmed, a cripple, and encumbered with his load, he made the best of his way towards the swamp, occasionally turning to point the elevating screw at the advancing foe. Whether it was the strangeness of the weapon or the daring of the man that cowed them, they kept without the range of his harmless missile, and he was able to gain the swamp, where they could not follow on horseback, and where, under cover of night, he was able to elude his pursuers, but with the loss of one shoe and stocking. On the night of the fourth day, following the wheel track of the guns, he saw the watch fires of his regiment, and we may imagine his joy at the sight. With a load halloa he proclaimed his coming; an answering shout testified that his approach was noted, and a party at once sallied out of the camp to meet him.

Without any demonstration he was relieved of his burden, and permitted to take that rest he stood so much in need of, and to reflect, as he thought, upon the thankless task in which he had recently ventured his life. Not for long however, was he allowed to remain at his slumbers. At the break of day the bugle call to assemble was heard, and the whole camp were gathered together in hollow square. Private John Wrigley was called out of the ranks, where he stood with only one boot on, and the bootless foot covered with a coating of mud to make it more 'uniform'. A few appropriate remarks from General Whitelock, and a speech from Captain Frazer, conveyed to the men their appreciation of Wrigley's services, and his promotion, the captain adding that to the end of his life he would stand Wrigley's friend, a promise which was faithfully kept.

After the conclusion of the war in South America the remnant of the regiment was brought back to London, where Wrigley met with, married and "then" asked for the permission of his colonel to marry a young Welshwoman. The permission was at first refused, and Wrigley was in a dilemma, but explained to, and obtaining the aid of a major who was on friendly terms with Wrigley's colonel, the requisite permission was granted, and the happy pair made truly happy, for it must be remembered that at that time it was a serious offence for a man to marry without the sanction of his superior officer.

From London the Royal Artillery were sent to Ireland, and from there, after only a short stay, to the Mauritius, and thence to Ceylon, where he saw some hard fighting. It was on the voyage out that he suffered one of the keenest pangs which it is possible for an inland man to suffer; his eldest son died, and the body was cast overboard. Whilst in Ceylon he served in various capacities; first as surgeon's assistant, and afterwards as superintendent of the ammunition factory.

During the first period of the cholera, in its worst type, was raging, and as he used to say, "It was sharp work all round in those days". One morning, as he was "clearing out" the hospital of the dead bodies of those who had passed away during the night, he was surprised to hear one whom the doctor had passed for dead begin to remonstrate with him about his proceeding, saying, "Howd on Jack; awm none dead yet". "What does tha pretend to know better than th' doctor? Thaw'rt dead in his books, aw cantell thi, un tha mun come eawt". Taking up the obstreperous patient, who would not conform to the doctor's decision by dying right away. Wrigley took him to his own quarters, where, by the kind nursing of himself and family, the man recovered, and lived many years after to hear Wrigley's banter about having "just spoken in time".

After his discharge from the army he came to Oldham about 1823 or 4, and began work as a brickmaker in Union-street. The Messrs Cousin's were at that time engaged building Cousin's Factory (Priory Mills), and it was there that he wheeled nearly all the clay that was required for

the bricks to build it. He next joined the Oldham constabulary. At that time the police office was called "Th' New Lockups", and was situated in Lord-street. The old dungeon in the Old Market Place having been pulled down shortly before. The new lockups was situated next door to the public house then kept by G. Bentley, and is now called The Painters' Arms.

On the opening of the present Town Hall in 1841, he was installed as the first town hall keeper; an office he kept until his death. His last residence was in George-street or Bardsley Brow, as it was then called; and his family kept a greengrocer's shop there. It was the eccentric Jess Ainsworth that gave him the soubriquet of "Churn Milk Sergeant". John Wrigley rests near the north entrance to Oldham Church, and though a flat stone marks his resting place there is no inscription upon it to show the curious, the grave where our hero we buried.

There are yet some in the flesh who knew him, and more than one living who were police officers at the same time. It must ever be a reflection to those that think that "We carved not a line, we raised not a stone" to the memory of one who was such a respected servant of the borough for 22 years.

I had the pleasure of seeing, a few days ago, the funeral card of which the following is a copy, and I suggest that it should yet be placed upon his gravestone:-

*Sacred to the memory of the Late Lamented
MR. JOHN WRIGLEY
of George-street Oldham
who departed this life August 23rd in the 72nd year of his
age, and was interred at the Oldham Parish Church,
on the 28th of August 1848;
Having served as a soldier in the Royal Regiment of Artillery
upwards of twenty years and as a police officer
in Oldham for 22 years.*

Here slumbers one who malice slandered not;
In life respected, not in death fogot;
With humble virtues fraught, in duty's sphere,
He moved as husband, friend and father dear.

Beloved he lived, in peace he died,
His life was desired, but God denied;
He died in Jesus, and is blest;
How sweet his slumbers are,
From suffering and from pain released'
And freed from every snare.

Perhaps someone else will repeat some of the racy anecdotes with which his name is associated, for many are the laughable scenes that have been enacted between him and Jesse Ainsworth, of Pit Bank.

S.W.

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**This email comes from Diane**, hoping that someone can add to the story that she is researching:

Hello,

From conversations with my gran before she died, I know that my mother, Margaret Joyce Fountain (born 15 October 1937) lived in the greater Oldham/Manchester area much of her life (the family had strong historical roots in the Hollinwood area) – she attended several schools – New Moston Primary School, Werneth Prepartory School, Chadderton Grammar School, Hulme Grammar (played piano in recitals and purportedly won the school's music prize [completely new to me when I learned this; she never touched a piano in our shared lifetime])

... I also learned that she was in a play at Zion (suspect Zion Methodist Church) in 1955 [got a newspaper clipping with an image of her playing a maid) and again, had no idea]. After school, she went to Park Hospital Davyhulme for nurses training, met my dad, married, had me and moved to the US in 1960

Since she died at a relatively young age (before grandchildren), I have been on a mission to learn more about her both for my own personal interest (as a daughter) and to share with her grandchildren. Literally everything I know about her is [HERE](#).

I do appreciate any help with learning/documenting her more. In 2021 I will be giving a luncheon talk at a genealogical conference where I live (in the US) about researching her life as a child/youth (years after her death) and all that I learned from that experience to hopefully encourage others to do the same for their parents. Basically, I realized how little I knew of my mother and her life before she became a mum. So, anything you might share about her would be so appreciated.

Diane has also emailed to tell us that:

The only time I actually made it to Oldham Local Studies was like 25 years ago and I had a 1 year old in a stroller. We were visiting Hollinwood cemetery also (where much of the family is buried as well as my mom's ashes). I just didn't really appreciate what I didn't know until 10 years later and that is how life laughs at you sometimes.

... Newspaper research is so tricky because I don't really have specific dates for any "events" or things like that. And, the time period is modern enough that many archives don't really focus on creating resources for the 20th century ...

I did actually donate a copy of the first round of my research to the Oldham Local Studies library. The catalog link is [HERE](#). I'm pretty sure this was the basic research I did on the families and does not include the later pieces I created regarding my grandparents, mother and other individuals that I targeted ...

If you think you can help, please email < danielrichard@yahoo.com >

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This email came from Geoff Scargill, who gave a talk at the Quarterly Meeting of MLFHS, in Manchester, in January. It was a really interesting talk, introducing us to a Manchester 'worthy' of whom none of us, in the audience, had heard of before. Geoff uses his talk on this subject to raise money for cancer research.

You will find an account of the story, from the meeting, in the next journal (on the Oldham Pages).

The Story of Nimble Ned

One of the most amazing characters in Victorian Britain was Edward Watkin, aka as Nimble Ned or the Railway King. He was a visionary, who bubbled with great schemes. He built the Great Central Railway from Manchester, the last mainline into London till HS1 and he so relished tackling the impossible that he should be remembered for what he failed to do as much as what he achieved. But he isn't remembered for either. Perhaps the most amazing fact about this amazing man is that Sir Edward Watkin MP has been almost totally forgotten. Time to remember him?

Watkin was born in 1819 in Northenden, in those days a sleepy little village on the Cheshire side of the Mersey. He had a good pedigree. His father, Absalom drew up the petition of protest against Peterloo, led the local campaign for the 1832 Great Reform Act and helped Cobden and Bright bring down the Corn Laws that had put bread out of the reach of the starving masses. Edward's sister, Elizabeth, suffered from a nervous complaint and died, unmarried, at the age of 45. He had two brothers, John, a rector in Lincolnshire, and Alfred, who became Lord Mayor of Manchester but died at 50 of port and good living. In addition to helping in the Anti-Corn Laws campaign Edward persuaded local businessmen to close early on Saturdays,

in the mid-nineteenth century an ordinary working day. He led a brilliant campaign to raise money for the first Parks for the People of Manchester and Salford. By then he had met Mary, the daughter of Jonathan Mellor, a prosperous businessman living at Hope House in King Street, Oldham. They married in Oldham parish church on 3 September 1845 and went to live in Failsworth. They had two children, Alfred and Harriette.

Just before he got married Edward left his father's cotton warehouse in High Street, Manchester, and began a railway career that made him famous. When he died in March 1901 – in Northenden – obituaries appeared throughout the world. But he never liked being called a railway man. If you google him look out for his channel tunnel, started in 1880. After two miles, the government – panicking that the French would invade Britain through a hole in the ground – stopped him.

And what about his Eiffel tower that became Wembley Stadium? And building the longest railway in the world while helping the British Cabinet to create Canada? While you are googling, look for The Icebergs painting, an American masterpiece, which hung forgotten in his Northenden home, Rose Hill for 116 years, before being sold in New York for four and a half million pounds.

Like to know more? It's all on the website [HERE](#) or email < thewatkinsociety@gmail.com > Our aim is to make Watkin famous for a second time. If you know of a group that would like a talk on Edward Watkin please contact me at < gscargill@gmail.com > I've give talks about Watkin throughout the North West with the proceeds going to cancer research. (My running total is £102,000.) The audiences always say the same thing: Why have we never heard of this amazing man?

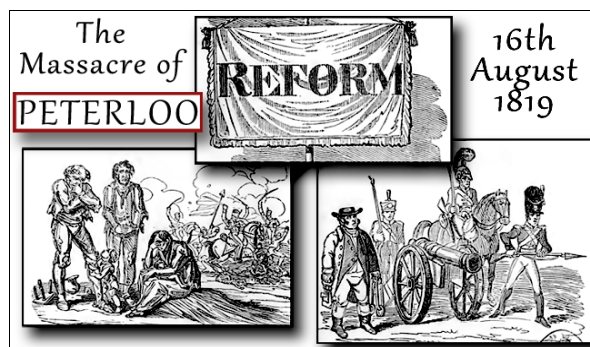
Geoff Scargill

Chair of The Watkin Society

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](#)



Although the long-anticipated Bi-Centenary has come and gone, there are some Peterloo websites still active with 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](#)

Peterloo Memorial Campaign Group ... to find out more about the memorial etc. organised by the Memorial Campaign Group, visit their website. [HERE](#)

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 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.

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](#)

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

### Some Useful Sites

GENUKI - [Lancashire](#)

Free BMD - [Search](#)

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

1891 - Oldham and locality [Here](#)

Online Parish Clerk Project - [Lancashire](#)

British Association for Local History - <https://www.balh.org.uk>

### Some Local Archives

Barnsley Museum & Discovery Centre – [www.experience-barnsley.com](http://www.experience-barnsley.com)

Birkenhead – [Local & Family History](#)

Bury – [www.bury.gov.uk/archives](http://www.bury.gov.uk/archives)

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

Derbyshire - [Local & Family History](#)

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

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

Manchester - [Archives & Local History](#)

Oldham - [Local Studies & Archives](#)

Oldham - [Oldham Council Heritage Collections](#)

Preston – [www.lancashire.gov.uk/libraries-and-archives](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)

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SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION



YOUTHS RECEIVING HOLY COMMUNION

Sacrament of Confirmation

Youths Receiving Holy Communion

B. Museum, Royal MSS., 6 E. ff. 472, 337a



ARCHIDIACONAL VISITATION



SACRAMENT OF MATRIMONY

Archideaconal Visitation

Sacrament of Matrimony

B. Museum, Royal MSS., 6 E. vi., ff. 133, 375-

Images taken from the series: '*The Antiquary's Books : Parish Life in Mediaeval England*'
by Abbott Gasquet, D.D., Published 1906