



Bolton's Genies

The Monthly Newsletter of the Bolton Family History Society

Edition 125 – October 2024



Photo by Manchester Evening News

Good news - Work on the £50m regeneration of Farnworth is already underway. It will see 97 'design-led' homes, café bars, shops and a 'lush' green public square all created by developer Capital & Centric.

The former precinct, market and Saddle Inn covering the site have been demolished and the sites are currently cleared. Developer Scott Mallinson said: "Not only will these new homes and shops transform the high street but they'll also have a positive social impact."

Editorial Musings

One of my memories of Farnworth Market is my grandad telling me tales of Weary Willie and Tired Tim who lived under the market stalls. In the early 1950s he took me on a jaunt to find them – we never did see them.

Another vivid childhood memory is the "Wakes" on the site in Brackley Street. I can still taste the vinegary black peas and the sweetness of the toffee apples.

Best wishes

Cath Cole

Information and Updates for Members

Grow Your Tree

Laura Berry from *Who Do You Think You Are* gives 10 Easy Steps to grow your Family Tree:

- Talk to Relatives
- Organise your Information
- Find Civil Registration Certificates – use www.freebmd.org.uk then order certificates from www.gro.gov.uk
- Check the 1939 Register – use www.tinyurl.com/tna-guide-1939-reg-closed For Scotland, use www.tinyurl.com/nrs-1939-reg-form
- Search Census Returns – on all the major genealogy sites, with some free indexes on FreeCen www.freecen.org.uk
- Identify Any Wills – www.probaterecord.service.gov.uk For Wales, use www.library.wales/catalogues-searching/catalogues/specialist-catalogues/wills For Scotland, use www.tinyurl.com/nrs-visit-room
- Look for Military Records – use www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/help-with-your-research Also use Forces War Records at www.uk.forceswarrecords.com
- Search Historic Newspapers – use www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk also use www.thegazette.co.uk For Wales, use www.newspapers.library.wales
- Check Parish Registers
- Nail Down the Details – Electoral Registers, Land Tax Records, Poll Books, Criminal Registers and Workhouse Records may provide finer detail of ancestors.

Sourced by Ron Cole

Jamaican Ancestors

If, like Dame Jessica Ennis-Hill and Clive Myrie, you have Jamaican roots, you might like to use these resources:

Jamaica Archives and Records Department - www.jard.gov.jm includes church registers, probate inventories, and private and estate papers

National Library of Jamaica – www.nlj.gov.jm contains old maps, newspapers and deeds.

Registrar General's Department and Island Record Office – www.rgd.gov.jm contains Civil Registration Records, Wills and Registers of Deeds.

“Jamaican Ancestry “ by Madeleine E Mitchell – Heritage Books, 2019 is a good overview.

Also search a database of estates and plantation owners, view an interactive map of 1804 and research guides at www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs

Sourced by Ron Cole

Second Boer War

Start research at www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/help-with-your-research/research-guides/the-south-african-war-1899-1902-overview - this website describes how to find records of British Army Personnel and African Forces under British control.

Another useful website is www.angloboerwar.com

The National Army Museum website – www.nam.ac.uk/explore/boer-war includes a detailed summary of the conflict and includes maps, timelines and photos.

There is also a pay-to-view database of more than 428,500 participants in the war of 1899-1902 – www.casusbelli.co.uk

Sourced by Ron Cole

England and Wales, Death Index 1989-2023

Ancestry has updated the Death Index. Follow the link below

https://www.ancestry.co.uk/search/collections/60630/?o_lid=120691&o_sch=Email+Programs&o_xid=120691

Sourced by Jane Milne

The History of Fleetwood

This article appeared in Bolton News. It is interesting about the history of Fleetwood but also gives insights into several of the local gentry of the North West including a link to the Heskeths. Follow the link:

https://www.theboltonnews.co.uk/news/24548631.discover-hidden-history-fleetwood-lancashire/?ref=ebln&nid=784&block=article_block_a&u=27ald9ba3a766d48fa7178ef76b0b229&date=010924

Sourced by Jane Milne

England, Military Pension and Service Records, 1702-1933

These are available free of charge. Follow the link:

https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/5000008?cid=SO-00042236&fbclid=IwZXh0bgNhZW0CMTEAAR14mTrTBtYTJtbVXowGiVVhjYBEU3l9cO7ebq4ziTvXuYWYLIHwxTokTu4_aem_hIKA-Ja3FnlafQspXzpBqw

Sourced by Jane Milne

Additions to the Great Database at MLFHS Website

John Marsden has added a further 1,945 announcements of the deaths of local servicemen taken from the Bolton Journal and other local newspapers for Jul-Dec 1916 to the Great Database at MLFHS's website. These have been transcribed by Linda Bailey and Chris Hall. This is considerably more than the 716 which appeared in the issues for the first half of 1916 and almost certainly reflects the high mortality of the Somme campaign which started at the beginning of this period.

A small file (22 records) of baptisms at Bolton, United Methodist's, St. Georges Rd./Duke St. has also been added to the Great Database

And finally, 996 baptisms for Bolton, Park Street Wesleyan Methodist Church 1863-1925 have been added to the Great Database.

Sourced by Graham Holt

Recent Events

October Meeting

The Hangman's Record

Steve Fielding – Boltonian, maths teacher, musician and author - opened his talk “The Hangman's Record” by pointing out that there were three public execution sites in Lancashire from 1843 to 1865 – New Bailey in Salford, Kirkdale in Liverpool and Lancaster Castle and there were over 200 offences that carried the death penalty. By the 1860s the death penalty was only given for murder, arson in HM's dockyards and treason. Hangings were held in public, notably at Tyburn Tree where Marble Arch now stands. Condemned prisoners were driven to their execution by cart which invariably stopped for refreshment – “one for the road”. If the prisoner did not want a final drink, they were deemed to be “on the wagon”.

When executions were to happen, the day was advertised to the public who treated those occasions like “Gala Days” when of course they were “Gallows Days”. Thomas Cook chartered trains for people to go to watch executions. On one occasion in Liverpool forty thousand spectators were there to see the event. The public deemed it to be a day out. Programmes were sold and gentlemen had to take their “hats off” so that people behind could see.

All this changed in 1868 when the Capital Punishment Amendment Act was passed – it ended public hangings.

Steve then talked about the list of approved hangmen starting with William Calcraft, hangman for London from 1829 to 1874. He operated a “short drop” which sometimes led to difficulties – the hangman had to “pull the leg” to ensure death.

William Marwood succeeded Calcraft and was hangman in London and Middlesex for ten years from 1874. He developed the “long drop” technique of hanging to ensure that the neck was broken leading to almost instant death. Marwood based his method on the weight, height and age of the prisoner.

Bartholomew Binns succeeded Marwood in London and Middlesex. He was appointed in November 1883 but only lasted till March 1884 when he was sacked for drunkenness and inefficiency.

James Berry was a hangman from 1884 until 1891. In 1885 he failed to hang Babbacombe Lee when on several occasions the trap doors refused to open. Lee was returned to his cell and his sentence was reduced to life imprisonment by Queen Victoria. At the time, it was thought that it was “divine intervention”, but it was later put that atmospheric conditions on the open-air scaffold which had been assembled using cheap wood which had warped was the proper cause.

Steve moved on to some of the murders who had connections to Bolton. He started with Kay Howarth who in 1864 murdered Richard Dugdale, a commercial traveller from Wakefield. Howarth was tried at Manchester Assizes, sentenced to death and was hanged at Strangways Prison.

In 1890 Thomas Macdonald murdered Alice Holt, a school teacher from Bolton. He was tried at St George’s Hall, Liverpool and sentenced to death. He was returned to Kirkdale Prison where a new gallows was erected and used on New Years Eve 1890 for his execution.

Steve then turned to Lancashire Hangman in the Victorian era:

- James Billington 1884-1901 – Preston born but lived and died in Bolton in 1901
- William Warbrick 1893-1910
- Thomas Billington 1894-1902 – Son of James Billington
- Robert Wade 1895-1899 – Lived in Bolton
- William Billington 1899-1905 – Son of James Billington
- John Billington 1902-1905 – Son of James Billington
- Steve listed Lancashire Hangmen of the twentieth century:
- Henry Pierrepoint 1901-1910
- John Ellis 1901-1924
- William Willis 1906-1926
- Thomas Pierrepoint 1906-1946 – brother of Henry Pierrepoint
- William Conduit 1911
- Albert Pierrepoint 1933-1956 Son of Henry Pierrepoint
- Alex Riley 1939-1946
- Herbert Morris 1939-1951
- George Dickinson 1949
- Harry Allen 1940-1964
- Robert ‘Jock’ Stewart 1950-1964

Steve reported that most murders were not planned but many were carried out on the spur of the moment, Women who murdered their babies were invariably reprieved.

After the Homicide Act of 1956, only 35 hangings took place.

He concluded by giving further examples within the Bolton area:

Betty Eccles, from Bolton, murdered her 13-year-old step-son William in September 1842. She was further indicted with the murder of two of her other children, Alice and Nancy. She was found guilty, sentenced to death and executed in Liverpool in May 1843. William Thorpe murdered his ex-girlfriend in 1925 in Bolton. He was hanged in Manchester in March 1926.

Arthur Wyatt murdered Alice Aldred at Darcy Lever. He was tried and sentenced to death but later reprieved and served 7 years in prison.

Lilian Staniforth (mother) and Rose Bridge (daughter) were jointly charged with the murder of Bridge's illegitimate baby. They were sentenced death but later reprieved. Sheila Fox, age 6, disappeared from her home in Farnworth in 1944 and has not been seen since.

Peter Griffiths abducted June Anne Devaney age 3 years 11 months from her cot at Queen's Park Hospital, Blackburn in May 1948. Griffiths was tried and found guilty of her murder. He was hanged in November 1948.

Jack Wright murdered Mona Mather at Little Hulton in April 1951. He was hanged in Manchester in July 1951

Derek Bentley was sentenced to death for the murder of a policeman in 1952. He was hanged at Wandsworth Prison in January 1953.

John Christie was a serial murderer. He was convicted on 6 counts from 1943 to 1953 and sentenced to death. He was hanged on 15 July 1953.

Ruth Ellis was the last woman to be hanged in July 1955. She was found guilty of murdering her lover, David Blakely, on 10 April 1955. She was hanged at Holloway Prison on 13 July 1955.

John Alan West was murdered by Gwynne Evans and Peter Allen in April 1964. Each tried to blame the other but they were both found guilty and sentenced to death by hanging. They were executed on 13 August 1964. These were the last hangings carried out in the United Kingdom. Capital punishment for murder was suspended in 1965 and finally abolished in 1969.

There then followed an outcry to "Bring Back Hanging" especially in the light of the Moors Murders but Governments stood firm.

Cath Cole thanked Steve for an interesting and fascinating talk.

QUESTIONS:

Rita asked "Were there two hangmen present at all hangings?" Steve answered that there were and that one might be an assistant who was being trained on the job. All hangmen were from the approved list.

Mr Nuttall asked about POWs and hangings during WWII. Steve said that there were some 500 hangings in Germany and Albert Pierrepoint went there to carry them out.

Rhonda on Zoom asked "Why wasn't the Work History of hangmen very long?" Steve answered that in effect there was little training so Hangmen had to find their own methods. If their methods worked, they lasted longer.

POSTSCRIPT:

Linda Richardson of Oldham Branch recalled having Lemonade and Crisps in Albert Pierrepoint's public house which her parents frequented.

Graham Holt of Bolton Branch recalled a case when his grandmother's sister noticed the body of a small girl in a lodge – her thinking was that it was a frock.

Janet Shaw, a MLFHS member, travelled by taxi to attend the meeting and hoped to have an opportunity to discuss a case involving a little girl, Ivy, who was murdered in Cheshire. Steve had written about it in one of his books "*Cheshire Murder Case Book*".

She had brought photographs to show to him. She said "He opened a lot of doors to help me trace Ivy's family. He also told me that he was conducting further research on the case and I am hopeful that he will let me have a copy of his findings."

Report by Ron Cole and Rita Greenwood

Please Note that a record of this talk (and all previous talks) is available for members on the MLFHS website. Members have to log-in find the Bolton Branch and click on 'Newsletter'

Non-members can go to the MLFHS website

Click on 'Branches'

Highlight 'Bolton'

Click on 'Newsletter'

Scroll down to 'Bolton Newsletter Sign Up'

Enter your 'Name and Email address'

Click on 'SIGN UP'

Each Newsletter contains a report of that month's talk.

Upcoming Events

CWGC Architecture and its Conservation

Date: **Wednesday 6 November 2024 at 7.30 pm**

Speaker: **Andrew Smethurst**

Meeting at **Bolton Golf Club & Online via Zoom**

Attendance in person at Bolton Golf Club - no booking required.

Zoom - Booking required - tickets now available via Eventbrite, on the following link

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/the-future-of-family-history-bolton-fhs-tickets-925096898727?aff=oddtcreator>

Members of MLFHS – free, Non-Members of MLFHS - £5.00

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) is a global leader in commemoration. Founded by Royal Charter in 1917, the Commission works on behalf of the Governments of Australia, Canada, India, New Zealand, South Africa and the United Kingdom to commemorate the 1.7 million men and women from the Commonwealth who lost their lives in the two World Wars.

Andrew Smethurst is ex military and has also driven coaches all over the UK and Europe for 20+ years. He is interested in history, especially WW1 and WW2. Andrew has been doing CWGC talks for 3 years and has also been a tour guide for battlefield tours for a number of years.

Please note: All events are subject to last minute changes due to circumstances beyond our control. Please check our monthly Newsletter and Facebook page for any last minute changes, as that is the only way we can contact people.

December Meeting

The December meeting will be a social evening for members and non-members of MLFHS. There will be a raffle, a quiz and a pie supper - meat and potato or cheese and onion. The cost of the meal will be £7.00 to members and £14.00 to non-members. Booking must be made at the November meeting when tickets for the raffle can also be purchased. There will be no speaker and no zoom.

Speakers for 2025 are now available. Click on the link:

<https://mlfhs.uk/bolton/events/meetings>

Bolton History Centre and Bolton Records

Bolton History Centre is now open in the Central Library. The Centre has informed us that "It will be located in the far right hand corner of the main library; in one of its original positions!"

The telephone number for any local history and archive queries and requests for material is 01204 332185 or send an email request to archives@bolton.gov.uk Bolton Archives and Local Studies Service aim to answer all enquiries within 10 working days.

The service can carry out 20 minutes of research free of charge. More detailed research may be carried out for a fee, this is dependent on staff capacity. Please refer to our website for charges, opening times and full details of our services: [History Centre – Bolton Libraries and Museums \(boltonlams.co.uk\)](http://boltonlams.co.uk)

A list of freelance Record Agents who can undertake more in-depth research is available at [Record agents | Research service for archives and local history | Manchester City Council](#)

In person visits to Bolton History Centre to view our digital resources can be made without appointment.

Visits to view archives and local studies material require at least 7 days notice to enable transfer of material from stores.

Access information about our local studies collections here (selecting Local Studies from the drop down menu):

<https://bolton.spydus.co.uk/cgi-bin/spydus.exe/MSGTRN/WPAC/HOME>

Access to the archive collections here (select "Search Other Archives" from bottom of page and enter Bolton Archives and Local Studies):

<https://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/advanced-search>

References to some of the websites:

<https://boltonremembers.org/> has some of the WW1 & WW2 records we have found for Bolton military personnel born, resided, or enlisted in Bolton.

<https://bolton.spydus.co.uk/cgi-bin/spydus.exe/MSGTRN/WPAC/HOME>

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This following link is the History Centre page for the services that are offered to researchers. It gives some information about archives and the records that are held. <https://www.boltonlams.co.uk/history-centre-1>

An interesting website sourced by Bolton News – “Unclaimed estates in Bolton revealed by HM’s Treasury Department for August and September”
https://www.theboltonnews.co.uk/news/24490857.full-list-unclaimed-estates-lancashire-august-2024/?ref=rss&utm_source=dlvr.it&utm_medium=twitter
<https://www.theboltonnews.co.uk/news/23758774.treasury-reveals-september-unclaimed-estates-bolton/?ref=suit>

Lancashire Records

News from The Archives



Lancashire Archives News and Events - their latest newsletter and more - follow the link:

<https://sway.cloud.microsoft/aEASp3weN2zNYUie?ref=Link>



Lancashire Archives Facebook page -

<https://www.facebook.com/lancsarchives>

Lancashire Parish Register Society link - www.lprs.org.uk

Lancashire Online Parish Clerk - follow the link www.lan-opc.org.uk

Lancashire Infantry Museum link - www.tinyurl.com/lancs-inf-mus

Activities and Events from MLFHS Branches



Please note these events are all free to subscribed MLFHS members, £5 to guests.



Manchester Branch

Next meeting – Saturday 23 November 2024 at 10.30 am –

“Validating Your Research Records” by Carol Lee in Manchester Central Library. Join Carol to explore records and methods to

validate your research.



Oldham and District Branch

Next meeting – Saturday 9 November 2024 at 2.00 pm – “It Happened in Oldham – Darker Stuff” by Chris Herd. A Zoom only meeting. Booking

on Eventbrite. Free to everyone.



Anglo Scottish Branch

Next meeting – Saturday 2 November 2024 at 2.00 pm in Manchester Central Library. “The Scottish Colourists” by Julia Harwood. Booking on Eventbrite. Members free and non-members £5.00

Other Local History Societies’ Meetings

WE ADVISE CHECKING THEIR RESPECTIVE WEBSITES PERIODICALLY FOR UPDATES AND DATES OF MEETINGS.



Halliwell Local History Society <http://goo.gl/8erYyr>

Email: enquiries@halliwell-lhs.co.uk

Next meeting – Tuesday 26 November 2024 at 7.30 pm - “The Spanish Flu Epidemic of 1918” by Steve Irwin at St Luke’s Church, Chorley Old Road, Bolton BL1 4JE.



Turton Local History Society <https://goo.gl/adx4GM>

Next event – Thursday 28 November 2024 at 7.30 pm - “AGM and Members Evening” at Harwood Methodist Church, Longsight, Bolton BL2 3HX

Email: mlandypublishing@yahoo.co.uk

Westhoughton Local History Group – <http://goo.gl/XNugI5>

Next meeting – Thursday 21 November 2024 at 10.30 am – “Pretoria” by Alan Davies who is the world authority on the Pretoria Pit disaster of 1910. He will give an updated talk. The event will take place in Carnegie Hall via the upper floor of Westhoughton Library, Library Street, Westhoughton BL5 3AT Doors open at 10.00 am.



Horwich Heritage Centre - <http://goo.gl/fSPsj>

Next meeting - Tuesday 12 November 2024 at 7.30 pm – “Last Weekend of Peace/First Weekend of War” by Geoff Scargill at Horwich

Community Centre – free to members and non-members are £2.00 per meeting. Exhibition: August to November 2024: “120 Years of Lever Park” at Horwich Heritage Centre with free admission.

Open Days, Admission Free, are held most months on Saturdays between 10.00 am - 1.00 pm

BFHS's Regular Venue

Our regular venue is Bolton Golf Club, Chorley New Road, Bolton BL6 4AJ, although this may vary occasionally due to circumstances beyond our control. Any changes will be announced on our Facebook page (link <https://www.facebook.com/BoltonFHS> accessible without subscription) and in this newsletter. It is always advisable to check before leaving home. <https://www.boltongolfclub.co.uk/contact/how-to-find-us/> provides helpful directions.

Talks are usually provided by a visiting speaker, but occasionally speakers may deliver their talks by zoom. This happens when the speaker, who is known to be a first-rate expert in their field, is based some distance from Bolton. Those present at the golf club and zoomers will see our speaker streamed on screen. It is not necessary to book a place to attend the golf club in person, but it is essential to book for a zoom place at <https://www.mlfhs.uk/bolton/events>. The link will be emailed to you several times.

Meetings are on the first Wednesday of most months. The golf club opens for roomers at 7.00 pm for a 7.30 pm start and zoomers can sign in from 7.15 pm. The club has a bar and tea or coffee is available.

Meetings from other branches of the MLFHS are available and free to all members. These meetings, like ours, may be live, zoomed or hybrid. <https://www.mlfhs.uk/> is the link for events.

Key Information about Bolton Family History Society

- Website: <https://www.mlfhs.uk/bolton>
- Speaker Bookings: boltonprog@mlfhs.org.uk
- Genies enquiries: boltongenies@mlfhs.org.uk
- Bolton helpdesk: boltonfhishtelp@gmail.com
- Newsletter Archives since July 2014:
<https://www.mlfhs.uk/bolton/newsletter/archives>
- General Society enquiries to the BFHS Secretary, Christine M Ellis
bolton@mlfhs.org.uk
- Manchester Research - email a brief enquiry to <https://www.mlfhs.uk/virtual-help-desk>
or visit us at
- Bolton Facebook page <https://goo.gl/n99qtW> 976 Likes and 1K people following on Facebook
- Bolton Research Collection on the MLFHS website: (For members only)
<https://www.mlfhs.uk/bolton/research>
- Join the MLFHS/BFHS at: <https://www.mlfhs.uk/join>
