

# 'e-Owls'



Part of Manchester & Lancashire  
Family History Society

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**JUNE 2019**

**MLFHS - Oldham Branch Newsletter**

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## Branch News :

Following April's Annual Meeting of the MLFHS Oldham Branch :

### Branch Officers for 2019-2020 :

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

### Chairperson's remarks

Hello and welcome to the June newsletter. I hope you enjoyed reading the revamped new style May newsletter. We have had very good comments and feedback from members so far.

For those of you who attended the May meeting, I hope you enjoyed the tea/coffee/biscuits on offer. This will now be a regular thing.

Could I also mention again that we are still looking for new committee members. If you can spare a couple of hours on one Tuesday afternoon every other month, then please consider joining the committee.

Linda Richardson  
Oldham Branch Chairperson  
email me at [oldham@mlfhs.org.uk](mailto:oldham@mlfhs.org.uk)

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### Editor's remarks.

The Peterloo Bi-Centenary is an important anniversary for us, both as genealogists and/or local historians, and the preparations for commemorative events over the next 3 months are gathering pace. The final networking meeting has been held and the Manchester Histories

printed programmes, supplementing the [Peterloo1819 website](http://Peterloo1819.com), should be in libraries and galleries etc., for us to pick up, as you read this. In this newsletter, and the next two, I'll include a section (in 'Mixed Bag') just about Peterloo and try to keep us all informed as to where we can find or see some of the events. Each month I'll include a selection for that month but those that are on-going will stay in the newsletter until they finish.

Don't forget, I'd love to include any family history stories you might want to share, or local history pieces that you wish to write. Either speak to me at a meeting or email me.

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.

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

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### **Next Oldham Branch Meeting :**

**Saturday, June 8th, 2pm**

#### ***'Famous People and Things from the North West'***

An illustrated talk by Alan Morrison, covering famous people, from the 16th century, who lived or were born in the North West and including events and organisations that are famous worldwide.

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

This meeting will be held in the Education Suite at Gallery Oldham. See Oldham pages for map) commencing at 2 pm and ending at approximately 3.30 pm.

Members of the committee will be available to assist anyone for a further half hour following the speakers talk.

Refreshments on arrival.

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

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

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There will be no Oldham Branch meetings in July and August.

From September the meetings will be at Oldham Library, as before :

September the 14th in the Performance Space; 12th October in the Education Suite;

9th November in the Performance Space.

No meeting in December.

**Newsletters** will continue on their usual monthly basis.

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### **Last month's talk, May 11th**

#### ***'Elizabeth Raffald'***

by Suze Appleton.

This afternoon, at the Branch meeting, we had a most interesting talk given by Suze Appleton. Her subject was Elizabeth Raffald, who in her short life managed to cram in an incredible number of achievements and 'firsts'.

Suze had first seen her name on a plaque in Manchester and, intrigued by what she read, decided to find out more about this seemingly forgotten 18th century woman who achieved so much and could be described as an "innovator, educator and entrepreneur".

Elizabeth was born into the Whittaker family in Doncaster, in 1773, and died in 1781 age just 48.



Suze Appleton

Her father was a schoolmaster and, by the age of 15, she was in domestic service, working in some of the larger houses in Yorkshire over the next 12 years. It was at this time that it's thought she met her future husband, John Raffald. John was working as a gardener and came from a family who were variously seed merchants, market gardeners and florists with a history going back 200 years. John Raffald became head gardener at Arley House and, not long afterwards, Elizabeth went to work there as the housekeeper. It was to Lady Elizabeth Warburton, of Arley Hall that she dedicated the book for which she is best remembered, 'The Experienced English Housekeeper'.

Not for the fainthearted ... the 800 recipes are impressive, to say the least! John and Elizabeth married in 1763 ... which meant that they would have to leave the service of the Warburton family as they did not employ married servants. On leaving Arley Hall they moved to a house on Fennel Street in Manchester; John would work on a market stall with his brother ... and Elizabeth started the first of her own string of business enterprises. In the same year as her marriage, 1763, she advertised her 'Register Office' in which she undertook to supply servants for a fee of 1/- and in the same advertisement mentioned offering a catering service



Title Page

Three years later, she opened a shop on Market Street and brought out the first edition of her '*Experienced English Housekeeper*'. The book was a runaway success and gave her a string of 'firsts' with her innovative recipes. Amongst those she is credited with being the first to put almond paste under royal icing on a cake, and, controversially, the use of flaky pastry for Eccles cakes. In 1766 she opened a second shop and also set up a cookery school, whilst John took on the running of the Bull's Head Public House.

As her fame spread she became well known for her table centres for dinner parties. Included in later editions of her book, are a suggested menu, and table layout for the dishes, for a 'grand table' so that the young and inexperienced hostess could make a good impression. She is also known known to have run a cookery school.

.In 1771 she sold the copyright of her book for £1400 ... a tremendous sum of money in those times. A year later she invested in 2 publications, one being the 'Manchester Mercury' the other, 'Prescott's Journal'. She also brought out her first Trade Directory for the district, advertising the fact in the Manchester Mercury, whilst at the same time letting everyone know that she and John were leaving the shop and were moving to a Coaching Inn, the King's Head in Salford, just off Chapel Street. This was not a back-street drinking house but was advertised as being for gentlemen who would frequent her regular 'Card Assemblies', for which she would do the catering.

Another year passed and she issued another Trade Directory ... this time with more entries. They also ventured into business hiring out carriages but there is no evidence to suggest that this was a successful enterprise.

Over the years, as well as all her business ventures she had at least 9 children ... 3 of whom survived into adulthood. However, the years, which must have seemed frantic, were taking their toll on John who, it is believed, regularly threatened to take his own life and, apparently began to drink heavily. He didn't take his own life and, following Elizabeth's death at age 48, he subsequently married again and lived to be 89 years old!

For whatever reason, in 1778, John was declared insolvent [don't let us forget that at this time anything that Elizabeth earned, bought or sold, automatically became her husband's property. However, presumably the reverse side of the coin meant that he was also responsible for any debts that she might have amassed]. They left the more up-market 'King's Head' and took on the licence of the Exchange Coffee House; apparently not a very salubrious place, she would

provide the food for the clientele. Whether or not it was to augment a reduced income, in 1780, she took a stand at the Manchester Racecourse (Kersal Moor) selling light refreshments to the race-goers.

Even so, apparently struggling as she must have been, she managed to co-write a book on midwifery with Dr. Charles White. Sadly, she would not live to see it in print as she died in 1781. After her death John was declared bankrupt ... everything was sold off to pay the debts and Elizabeth was buried without ceremony in the Raffald family vault in St. Mary's Churchyard in Stockport. She does not even have her name inscribed on the gravestone.

Suze finished by saying that Elizabeth was a woman who was constantly looking for improvement and innovation in whatever work she undertook ... and she should be recognised and respected for these achievements.

Meeting review by Editor

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## Bolton & Scottish Branches

### **Bolton Branch :**

**Wednesday, June 5th**

***'Research, with reference to Sir Ian McKellen's story'***

by Kate Hurst, WDYTYA Researcher

Tea /Coffee will be available from 7.00pm

Meeting starts at 7.30pm,

Montserrat Room [1st floor], Old Links Golf Club, Chorley Old Road, Bolton, BL1 5SU.

All MLFHS members are welcome to attend our meetings.

Visitors are also welcome to attend the meeting @ £3

Website link [HERE](#)

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### **Anglo-Scottish Branch**

**Saturday, June 15th, 2pm - 4pm**

#### ***Ancestry Workshop***

Members will offer assistance to all, to overcome research problems

This meeting will be held in the Performance Space at Manchester Central Library. The talk is open to both members and non-members.

2pm - 4pm, Central Library, Manchester

'E Scotia' <https://angloscots.mlfhs.org.uk/> on the MLFHS website.

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## MLFHS updates

**Wednesday 26th June 2019**

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

**11:00 – 14:00**

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

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

1.00 - 1.40 : Session in Local Studies

This exhibition will take you on a journey through the stories of those involved, from espionage and cover-ups to national outrage and mourning. Ask yourself what it means to protest and

voice the issues that matter most to you. Discover the role played by local man Sam Bamford who was imprisoned for his part in organising the gathering. Find out about the spies who gathered information for the government. See the Middleton banner, the only known surviving banner from Peterloo, as well as props from Mike Leigh's recent film *Peterloo*.

Touchstones is located close to Rochdale town centre.

Approximately 5 to 10 minutes walk from Rochdale Transport Interchange with bus and tram (tram from St.Peter's Square)

access.

10 minutes from the Rochdale Railway Station

10 minutes drive from Junction 20 on the M62

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

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

a few tickets still available at time of adding to Newsletter

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### **New in the MLFHS Online Bookshop: Downloads**

We are now offering a number of our former printed or CDROM publications as downloadable files. These are considerably cheaper than their physical equivalents, do not incur postal costs and delivery is immediate!

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. 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](#) for back copies.

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### **MLFHS: The Genealogy Show - Discount**

#### **The Genealogy Show 7/8 June**

NEC Birmingham

Manchester & Lancashire FHS will have a stall at this national event and as an exhibitor our members have been offered a discount on admission.

**MLFHS Members Only** ... can claim a 10% discount on admission by quoting the discount code FHS2019 when booking online on [The Family History Show](#) web site.

Michael Couper, MLFHS

**Please do not post this offer on social media.**

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

#### **Oldham Historical Research Group:**

Wednesday, June 19th

**'The History of Whit Walks in and around Manchester'**

An illustrated talk by Canon Jim Burns, author of : 'The History and Memories of Whit Walks in

and Around Manchester'. Pub. 2014

At Oldham Local Studies & Archives, Union Street, Oldham. Door opens 6:30 for 7pm start.  
All welcome ... no membership subscription, or entrance fee on the door.  
Oldham HRG Programme [HERE](#)

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**Saddleworth Historical Society**

**Saturday June 15th at 2pm**

**"Peterloo - the View from Saddleworth."**

The Bernard Barnes Memorial Lecture. At the Saddleworth Museum, High Street, Uppermill.  
Saddleworth Historical Society has an Illustrated Presentation by Professor Robert Poole.  
At the Saddleworth Museum, High Street, Uppermill.

All welcome.

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

Refreshments available. ~~~~~

**Saddleworth Civic Trust: -**

**Thursday June 27th at 7:30**

**"Habitat for Wildlife, People & Water."**

Saddleworth Civic Trust has an Illustrated Presentation by Dave O'Hara, RSPB.  
At the Saddleworth Museum, High Street, Uppermill.

All welcome.

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

Refreshments available.  
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**Moorside & District Historical Society**

**Monday June 17th, at 7:30**

<p>June 17th</p> <p>Then &amp; Now.</p> <p><b>"The Moorside Postal Service"</b></p> <p>Illustrated presentation by Mike Smith</p> <p>Plus another subject to be arranged.</p> <p>Plans for "Heritage Open Day" in September.</p>	
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**'Then and Now : The Moorside Postal Service'**

An illustrated presentation by Mike Smith  
Meetings held at :  
Moorside Cricket Club, Turf Pit Lane, OL4 2ND.  
(Please note : new venue and date)  
All welcome. £1.50 including refreshments.  
Please note : No Meetings in July, August & December

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**Family History Society of Cheshire : Tameside Group meeting**

**Wednesday June 12th,**

This is the second part of our DNA Special. I will be demonstrating my results from Ydna, Mitochondrial DNA and Autosomal DNA so that people can choose the correct test, and a DNA Project I am linked into. DNA helped me to discover which rogue got my great grandmother pregnant, married someone else and then sloped off to Brisbane. This solved a twenty year mystery back to a family in a tiny rural part of County Armagh in Northern Ireland in the late 1700s and to contact someone still living in the same farmhouse.

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

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

See their website [HERE](#)

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## **Victoria Baths**

**7th-9th June**

### ***Weekend of Words***

"Victoria Baths is hosting its first ever literary festival over the weekend of 7th-9th June, and we'd love it if you could join us. We've put together a fantastic three days of poetry, writing workshops, author talks, music, short story readings, storytelling and a mini book fair alongside our guided tours, food stalls, tea room and gift shop - something for everyone to enjoy.

Highlights include:

A summer fundraising concert in the Gala Pool to launch the weekend - with a performance by Manchester's harp and flute duo 'The Juniper Project' on Friday evening.

Six brand new short stories from some incredible North West-based writers - all inspired by Victoria Baths. Our writers have been exploring the building and our history archives for inspiration and will be performing their new work for the first time at the Re/Place(s) event on Saturday evening.

A chance to explore and develop your own writing, with our expert-led Writing Workshops on Saturday morning, taking inspiration from the unique setting of Victoria Baths.

A Poetry Panel, with three wonderful poets sharing their work and exploring watery themes, in the Turkish Baths Rest Room on Saturday afternoon, followed by tea and cake.

The Manchester premiere of Victorian Women in Bed, a series of short plays about Florence Nightingale, amongst others, to be performed in the Females Pool on Sunday afternoon.

A full day of author talks, storytelling sessions for children and the chance to read and perform your own writing in front of an audience (or sit and listen), with a book fair featuring some of the North West's best independent publishers, in our Talks, Tales and Tours day on Sunday.

Tickets are on sale now and are limited in number for some of the sessions, so don't delay. If you need any more information, would like a programme sending to you by post or email, or need help making a booking just phone 0161 224 2020 and we'll try and help. "

More details on their website [HERE](#)

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## **'A MIXED BAG'**

**The Whit Walks ...** no doubt many of us remember a time when we wore our new clothes, bought especially for Whitsuntide, and we would join our Sunday schools and churches, to walk round the parish, accompanied by local bands. As a youngster, it meant excitement, wearing a new white dress, carrying a basket of flowers, and either holding a string on one of the big banners (I was never elevated to this status!) or a tape on the smaller ones; and then it was back to the schoolroom for soft drinks and buns afterwards. I walked in Ashton, as a young child, and remember Stamford Street pavements crowded with throngs of people, watching the processions go by, for what seemed like hours.

**The following story is from 'Oldham Stories' by Mary Dickinson :**

### ***'Whit Friday'***

Today is Whit Friday, but you wouldn't think so, everything is so quiet round here. Everyone is at work and I haven't heard a single band playing.

I was the eldest in a family of five and Whit Friday was a very busy day in our house. All our new clothes had been bought before Whit week. We also had to have special white clothes for walking round. We had white dresses slippers and socks and for weeks we had been taking

coppers to school to buy a staff of flowers or a coloured cape and a wreath of ribbons for our hair. The Sunday before we had all worn our new clothes to go to church and afterwards all the children would go from one house to another showing our clothes off and getting a penny for them.

Our parents were very proud of us and would take us to see relatives to show us off. Sometimes our mothers would borrow pennies from us to give to other children who came to our door. We had to take off our new clothes before dinner and afterwards we would gather in the street to count our money and compare notes. The sweet shop did very well that day but we saved a few pennies for Whit Friday because that was the big day when we walked round.

On the Friday morning our parents got up very early and as I was the eldest I had to help get the other children dressed. I remember my mother used to sit one or two of them on the kitchen table when they were ready. She left them without shoes right to the last minute so they couldn't run off and get dirty. The house was a shambles with boxes bags and tissue paper. My mother would be saying we'd be late and I know the boys didn't really want to walk round but they had to go. We all went to school and our parents went away, their duty was done, and the teachers would dress us up. We all lined up ready for the Procession.

When we heard the band start we all got very excited. We felt like little angels but woe betide anyone who stood on our toes. The May Queen was the most important. She went first with her page- boys and maids of honour. Then came all the children from infants to the big ones. The ladies came next with the men bringing up the rear carrying the banners. It made us feel so proud of our faith. We walked round the main roads and met up with St. Patrick's and St. Anne's. Each church had its own special band. We used to see our mams, dads, aunties and uncles. They looked so proud of us. Usually the weather was fine but I remember one year it rained very hard. The girls were wearing red leaves in our hair and the dye ran down our faces, it must have looked like blood, but we carried on Walking. After the procession we all went to a big field Where there were lots of stalls, ice-cream, sandwiches and drinks. There were games and donkey rides and the bands were playing. Our parents came and found us and we all had a good time. My dad used to have a few pints. We were all very tired and didn't need any rocking that night.

When I got married we lived in Corpus Christi parish and we walked round on Whit Sunday, so we used to go to Oldham on Whit Friday to watch the Processions. Afterwards we caught the bus to Uppermill where all the bands had gathered for the Band Contest. We loved to hear them.



### **Whitsun and Whitsuntide**

It really feels as if Summer is finally on the doorstep when people start mentioning Whitsuntide. But how many people actually know when it falls or even when it started, and why?

The Oldham Historical Research Group's monthly meeting (19th June) falls just after Whitsuntide, this year and, most appropriately, the illustrated talk will be '*The History of Whit Walks in and around Manchester*', given by Canon Jim Burns.

It was only this year, that I really started to wonder how widespread the practice used to be and when it started. I didn't know that the words 'Whitsun' and 'Whitsuntide' had different meanings. Whitsun is actually short for Whit Sunday (or, in earlier times 'White Sunday'). Whit Sunday is the 7th Sunday after Easter Sunday and Whitsuntide is the period of a few days following Whit Sunday, traditionally a holiday week in mediaeval times. Whit Friday falls in Whitsuntide Week. Different areas of the country would celebrate in different ways, here, in the north-west, it was celebrated with the 'Walks'.

Extract from: '*The Holidays: Christmas, Easter & Whitsuntide*'

by Nathan B. Warren pub 1868 (New York)

THERE is some dispute among the learned as to the meaning of the word Whitsun; it is said by some to have been derived from the custom in the Primitive Church of the catechumens wearing white garments, or chrisoms, at this time, which was then observed as one of the two principal seasons of public baptism ...

Whatever may have been the origin of the term, Whitsuntide has been from the earliest times observed in England, as in Germany, by the celebration of all sorts of outdoor sports and pastimes. It was at this season, also, that the Whitsun Ales were held - those "drinking assemblies" at which parishioners were expected to drink ale for the especial good of their souls; when the church-wardens sold the ale to the populace, in the church-yard, and to the better sort, as it is said, even in the church itself, the profits being set apart (as in our modern fairs) for the repair or decoration of the church, and for the maintenance of the poor. On these occasions were witnessed those exhibitions of archery which once made Old England famous throughout all the world: and also matches at running and wrestling, with other athletic sports. England, as Shakespeare says, was then —

"Busied with a Whitsun morris-dance."

The mummers also appear again with -

"Robin Hood and his merry men all,"

and St. George - who at Christmas was but a carpet-knight - now literally "takes the field," or rather to the field. Nor was music wanting on these occasions to enliven the sports; for besides the bells of the morris-dancers, there were the pipe and tabor in modern times, and the harp and viol in the days of more remote antiquity, according to an old ballad : -

"Harke, harke, I heare the dancing,  
And a nimble morris-prancing ;  
The bagpipe and the morris-bells,  
That they are not far hence us tells ;  
Come let us all goe thither,  
And dance like friends together."

Whitsun Ales, we propose to notice briefly a singular piece of ecclesiastical pageantry formerly connected in popular estimation with the joyous celebration of Whitsuntide.

Before the invention of printing, such religious shows were to the people very much what books and pictures are to us. The machinery then used seems ludicrous to us with our superior advantages, but it by no means follows that it appeared so to them.

But to illustrate: Whitsuntide then, it appears, was anciently distinguished from all other holidays by a singular display of fire-works of a peculiar ecclesiastical character, calculated, as was supposed, to represent to the people the descent of the Holy Ghost on the Day of Pentecost. The "Bee-hive of the Romish Church," speaking of these satirically, says : -

"They send downe a dove out of an owle's nest devised in the roof of the church; but first they cast out rosin and gunpowder, with wild-fire, to make the children afraid, and that must needs be the Holie Ghost which cometh with thunder and lightning."

But perhaps Mr. Fosbrooke's account of this extraordinary spectacle will best exemplify the custom referred to: -

"This feast," says he, "was celebrated in Spain with representations of the gift of the Holy Ghost, and of thunder from engines, which did much damage. Wafers or cakes, preceded by water, oak-leaves, or burning torches, were thrown down from the church roof; small birds with cakes tied to their legs, and pigeons were let loose; sometimes there were

tame white ones tied with strings, or one of wood suspended. A long censer was also swung up and down.”

From the same learned author we find also the following : -

“In an old computus, Anno 1509, of St. Patrick’s, Dublin, we have iv<sup>s</sup> vii<sup>d</sup> [4s/7d] paid to those playing with the great and little angel and the dragon; iii<sup>s</sup> [3/-] paid for little cords employed about the Holy Ghost; iv<sup>s</sup> vi<sup>d</sup> [4s/6d] for making the angel (thurifurcantis) censuring, and ii<sup>s</sup> ii<sup>d</sup> [2s/2d] for cords of it - all on the Feast of Pentecost.”

But in the British Isles, with the dawn of the Reformation, all remnants of these extraordinary and exceptional pyrotechnic exhibitions disappeared, and there remain now only for consideration those customs and usages the relics of which have survived, and which more properly belong to the Whitsuntide of our English forefathers.

Easter Ales and Whitsun Ales, so called from their being held on Easter Sunday and on Whitsunday, or on some of the holidays that follow them, originated from the wakes. These wakes, according to Mr. Strutt, were primitively held upon the day of the dedication of the church, or on the birthday of the saint whose relics were therein deposited, or to whose honor it was consecrated. The generosity of the founder and endower thereof was at the same time celebrated, and a service composed suitable to the occasion. This is still done in the Colleges of Oxford, to the memory of the respective founders. On the eve of this day prayers were said and hymns were sung all night in the church; and from these watchings the festivals were styled “wakes;” which name still continues in many parts of England, although the vigils have been long in disuse.

These wakes when first established, it is said, greatly resembled the Agapoe, or Love-Feasts, of the early Christians. In process of time, however, the people assembled on the vigil, or evening preceding the saint’s day, and came, says a quaint old author, “to churche with candellys burnyng, and would wake, and come towards night to the churche in their devocion.”

The old author above quoted on the subject of these wakes, mentions certain scandalous excesses into which the people had gradually fallen, unmindful of an ancient canon which required that, “Those who came to the wake should pray devoutly and not betake themselves to drunkenness and debauchery,” - vices to which it seems our Anglo-Saxon forefathers were always too much inclined; he says: “And afterwards the people fell to letcherie and songs, and daunces, with harping and piping, and also to glotony and sinne; and so toured the holyness to cursydness.”

Whatsoever truth there may have been in these serious charges, it is certain that in proportion as these festivals deviated from the original design of their institution, they increased in popularity, the conviviality was extended, and not only the inhabitants of the parish to which the church belonged were present at them, but they were joined by others from the neighbouring towns and parishes.

The church-wardens and other chief officers of the church, observing these wakes to be more popular than any other holidays, shrewdly conceived that by establishing other institutions somewhat similar to them, they might draw together a large company of people, and annually collect from them, gratuitously as it were, such sums of money for the support and repairs of the church, as would be a great easement to the parish rates. By way of enticement to the populace, they brewed a certain portion of strong ale, to be ready on the day appointed for the festival, which they sold to them; and most of the better sort, in addition to what they paid for their drink, contributed something towards the collection; but in some instances, the inhabitants of one or more parishes were mulcted in a certain sum, according to mutual agreement, as appears by an ancient stipulation couched in the following terms : -

“The parishioners of Elvertoon and those of Okebrook in Derbyshire, agree jointly to brew

four ales, and every ale of one quarter of malt, between this and the Feast of St. John the Baptist next coming, and every inhabitant of the said town of Okebrook shall be at the several Ales; and every husband and his wife shall pay two pence; and every cottager one penny. And the inhabitants of Elvertoon shall have and receive all the profits coming of the said ales, to the use and behoof of the church of Elvertoon; and the inhabitants of Elvertoon shall brew eight ales betwixt this and the Feast of St. John, at which ales the inhabitants of Okebrook shall come and pay as before rehearsed; and if any be away one ale, he is to pay at t'oder ale for both."

Stubbs, on the subject of these ales, says : -

" In certain townes where drunken Bacchus bears sway, against Christmass and Easter, Whitsunday, or some other time, the church-wardens - for so they call them - of every parish, with the consent of the whole parish, provide half a score or twentie quarters of mault, whereof some they buy of the church stocke, and some is given to them of the parishioners themselves, every one conferring somewhat, according to his ability; which mault being made into very strong ale, or beer, is set to sale, either in the church, or in some other place assigned to that. Then, when this nippitatum, this huffe-cappe, as they call it, this nectar of life, is set abroach, well is he that can get the soonest to it, and spends the most at it, for he is counted the godliest man of all the rest, and most in God's favour, because it is spent upon his church forsooth! If all be true which they say, they bestow that money which is got thereby, for the repair of their churches and chappels ; they buy books for the service, cupps for the celebration of the Sacrament, surplices for Sir John (the parson), and such other necessaries, &c.



In reading the above, some allowance should be made for the prejudices of Stubbs, who was one of those puritanical zealots whose reformatory labors in the succeeding century so disastrously ended in a general subversion of all things both in Church and State. However, those more charitably disposed will much prefer the benevolent good humor of honest Old Aubrey, that eminent antiquary of the seventeenth century, whose character for veracity, it is said, has never been impeached : -

"There were no rates for the poor in my grandfather's days, says he, but for Kingston St. Michael (no small parish) the church ale at Whitsuntide did the business. In every parish

is, or was, a church-house, to which belonged spits, crocks, etc., utensils for dressing provisions. Here the housekeepers met and were merry, and gave their charity. The young people were there too, and had dancing, bowling, shooting at butts, etc.; the ancients sitting gravely by and looking on. All things were civil and without scandal.”

At these Whitsun Ales there were chosen a Lord and Lady of Yule, or Ale King and Queen, who were attended by a steward, sword-bearer, purse-bearer, and mace-bearer, with their several badges or ensigns of office. They had, besides, a page or train-bearer, and a jester dressed in a parti-colored jacket; and with this mock court, they maintained such state and ceremony as their means would permit, presiding over the sports and pastimes of the festival. Sometimes holding this court of theirs in an extensive empty barn or other building suitable for the purpose, extemporized for the occasion into something like an ancient baronial hall.



Extract from: '**Lancashire Folk Lore**'

by Harland & Wilkinson, pub 1867, London.

The Feast of Pentecost, or Whitsuntide, was formerly kept as a high church festival, and by the people was celebrated by out-door sports and festivities, and especially by the drinking assemblies called “Whitsun-Ales.” One writer (inquiring whether the custom of “lifting at Easter” is a memorial of Christ being raised up from the grave) observes that, “there seems to be a trace of the descent of the Holy Ghost on the heads of the Apostles, in what passes at Whitsuntide Fair, in some parts of Lancashire; where one person holds a stick over the head of another, whilst a third, unperceived, strikes the stick, and thus gives a smart blow to the first. But this probably is only local.” \*

“Whit-week,” as it is generally called, has gradually grown to be the great yearly holiday of the hundred of Salford, and the manufacturing district of which Manchester is the centre. This seems to have arisen from the yearly races at Manchester being held from the Wednesday to the Saturday inclusive, in that week. After the rise of Sunday-schools, their conductors, desiring to keep youth of both sexes from the demoralizing recreations of the racecourse, took them to fields in the neighbourhood and held anniversary celebrations, tea-parties, &c., in the schools. The extension of the railway system has led to “cheap trips” and “school excursion trains” during Whitsuntide; which are occasionally taken to Wales, the Lakes, and other great distances. Canal boats take large numbers of Sunday scholars to Dunham Park, Worsley, &c. Short excursions are made in carts, temporarily fitted with seats. It is customary for the cotton-mills, &c., to close for Whitsuntide week to give the hands a holiday; the men going to the races, &c., and the women visiting Manchester on Whit-Saturday, thronging the markets, the Royal Exchange, the Infirmary Esplanade, and other public places; and gazing in at the “shop windows,” whence this day is usually called “Gaping Saturday.” The collieries, too, are generally closed in Whit-week; and in some the underground horses are brought to the surface to have a week’s daylight, the only time they enjoy it during the year. The mills, coalpits, &c., generally have the requisite repairs of machinery, &c., made during this yearly holiday - those at least which would necessitate the stoppage of the work at another time.

\* '*Gent. Mag.*' vol. liii., for July, 1783, p. 578.

Article compiled by Editor



**Sunday 26th May was Mayoral Sunday**, Oldham's annual Civic Procession from the Civic Centre to the Parish Church. MLFHS Oldham Branch had been invited to send representatives to join the gathering and then return to the Civic Centre for refreshments. Linda (Chair), Joan Secker-Wlodarczyck and I accepted the invitation.



The yearly service follows ancient tradition and invites the newly elected mayor to take up the office of Honorary Church Warden, of the Parish, for the term of their office. Today the Mayor was a lady, Councillor Ginny Alexander, and in place of a mayoress, her husband took on the role of Consort. Gazing round the church before the service started, my mind started wandering back (as it does!!) to 1910, when Dame Sarah Ann Lees became the first Lady Mayor of Oldham and only the 2nd in the whole of the country (Elizabeth Garrett Anderson was the first, in 1908. A long-time suffragist, amongst her many achievements, and 'firsts' she was the first woman to qualify in Britain as a physician and surgeon). Since the Incorporation of the Borough, in 1849, there have been 154 mayors, only 9 of whom were women. Women would have to wait another 51 years before there was a second Lady Mayor to follow in Dame Sarah Anne's footsteps; Alice Amelia Kenyon would be that person, in 1961.

Still with my mind wandering, I began to think back to the time in which the chapel/church first existed in Oldham. The earliest records of a church on this site, as an ancient chapelry, date from 1406, but it's believed that its origins go back much further in time, to the late 1200s. Although a contentious issue, Prestwich has always claimed to be the 'mother' church and Oldham a 'daughter', meaning that Prestwich was entitled to payments, from Oldham, for such items as bread, wine and candles for the altar at Prestwich. This argument was raised time after time but the decision was always in Prestwich's favour until 1656, when it seems to have been dropped, as the levy didn't appear in the churchwardens' accounts. However, Prestwich still insisted on retaining the rights of 'Mother Church' ... a situation becoming ever more complicated as Oldham grew in size and chapels were built in Crompton, Royton and Chadderton. To quote from '*The Story of the Ancient Parochial Chapelry of St. Mary's, Oldham*', by Revd. George Perry-Gore, in the Quincentenary year of 1906, page 27,

#### "The Relation of the Townships to the Chapelry

As the parochial chapelry increased in population and importance it was a perfectly obvious development that the ancient chapel should acquire an increasing power of jurisdiction within its own borders, and become the centre for ecclesiastical unity to the townships of Crompton, Royton and Chadderton, which the parochial chapelry embraced; but as the Mother Church of Prestwich always exercised her controlling power over the whole chapelry, the relation of the ancient chapel to the townships was always rather that of a senior among equals than of parent among children, and wherever a new church and district was formed the exact relation to both the Mother Church of Prestwich and the Ancient Chapel were carefully and distinctly defined in the deed of consecration."

By the 1820s the old church was in a pretty bad state of disrepair and a decision was taken to build a new one, at an eventual cost of £30,000 when it was completed, in 1830. This amount was raised by a levy on all the inhabitants of Oldham, whatever their religious affiliation.

To quote, page 48,

"... when it came about that Oldham Church was to be rebuilt the then Church Officers were also semi-state officials who regarded the laying of a rate upon the whole chapelry as quite a proper way of raising the necessary sum, and thus imposing upon Non-Conformists, Roman Catholics, and non-believers obligations in matters for which they had no sympathy.

But having compelled the whole community to contribute to the erection of the Mother

Church, ordinary ideas of equity would compel us to suppose that the old rights of the Parochial Chapel, (that it should be free to the whole people) at least should be preserved, but, alas, to add blunder to blunder, it was determined to secure the right to sell the proposed pews in the church to the highest bidders, with both the liberty to sell the pews as a freehold property or to sublet at a rent to the tenant, and to this sad scandal for a time was added a property vote in the county.

Thus the whole pew accommodation of the church excepting a few narrow seats beneath the West Gallery and some in the galleries, passed into the hands of those able to purchase them, and as a perfectly natural result the system was soon fruitful in most disastrous effects upon the spiritual life of the Church.

The poor were practically excluded, and the church became for all intents and purposes a proprietary chapel of the wealthy and the well-to-do middle classes. And as if it was necessary to emphasise this deplorable division of classes in the House of God still further, an iron grid was drawn across the aisles at the time of public worship to separate the approaches to the free seats from those privately owned."

So, back to the 21st century ... after a week of pretty decent weather, the heavens opened, this morning, on the procession. Following the Oldham Band were church dignitaries, Council officials, the Mayor and councillors, friends and numerous representatives from local organisations who had been invited to join the procession to the church. Undaunted, by the time we got into the church, we were pretty wet! However, it was warm and welcoming, in the church, as we took our seats. As I returned from my daydreaming, the clergy and choir came up the aisle followed by the Mayoral party and the band struck up for the first hymn which starts, "I vow to thee, my country..."

The Revd. Derek Palmer, Vicar of Oldham, took the service and opened by welcoming the new Mayor and her consort. This was followed by, Readings (Philippians 4:4-9) from Julie Davies, Christies at Oldham, and from The Quran, by the former Mayoress, Councillor Yasmin Toor. Following the readings the congregation sang the hymn, 'Jerusalem'. This was followed by another reading, Luke 10: 25-37, by Clare Taylor, Action Oldham. The reading was the Parable of the Good Samaritan, and the sermon which followed, given by the Mayor's Chaplain, Revd. Denise Owen, expanded upon this theme with relevance to our 21st century lives. Concluding this part of the service, the Leader of the Council, Councillor Sean Fielding read the poem, 'If' by Rudyard Kipling.



It was then the moment for the Vicar to invite the Mayor to take up the office of Honorary Churchwarden ... to which she agreed and was congratulated with applause from the congregation. Nikki Kirkham read a poem by Spike Milligan, 'Smile' ... which had us all smiling in response.

Final prayers and the hymn, 'Guide me, O thou great Redeemer', followed by 2 verses of the National anthem brought the proceedings in church to a close.



Back to the Civic Centre, and it was still raining the proverbial 'cats and dogs' but when we got

there, there was a very welcome cup of coffee/tea and biscuits.

by Editor ... with many thanks to Joan Secker-Wlodarczyck for the photos.

### An Almost Forgotten Centenary?

Linda (Chair) brought it to my attention, this morning, that she'd read a newspaper article celebrating the centenary, on June 14th/15th, of Alcock's and Brown's 1919 achievement in being the first men to fly non-stop across the Atlantic, winning a life-changing prize of £10,000. Apparently, there is very little being planned here to celebrate this amazing feat of endurance although the 50th anniversary had been marked by a Royal Mail set of stamps and in 2005 a U.S. pilot, flew a replica of their bi-plane over the same route. However, in Clifden, Galway, near where the men landed, they are having anniversary celebrations in big style, and have borrowed the commemorative statue of Alcock and Brown from Heathrow. What Linda and I found of particular interest was that the two men were both from Manchester.

In 1919, WW1 was finally over, war-weary men were being demobbed, vengeful treaties were being negotiated in the corridors of power, and these two men were amongst those returning to 'civvie street', after the war.

John Alcock was born in 1892 in Stretford. Before the war he trained as an aircraft mechanic, learned to fly by 1912 and had already taken part in an air race. At the outbreak of war he joined the Royal Naval Air Service as an instructor. In late December 1915 he received his commission as a flight sub-lieutenant. In 1916 he was transferred to active duty at Mudros. Whilst serving there, in autumn 1917, he was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross and, at some stage, was promoted to Captain. On a later raid he had engine failure, came down in the sea off Gallipoli and, after managing to swim ashore, was taken prisoner.

Arthur Whitten Brown was born to American parents in 1886, in Glasgow. His father was in Britain to set up a Westinghouse factory, which was eventually sited in Trafford Park, Stretford, where Arthur then grew up and started an apprenticeship in engineering. In 1914 he enlisted in the University and Public Schools Battalion, then applied for, and received, a commission in the 3rd Battalion Manchester Regiment. He saw service in France but was then seconded, to the 2nd Squadron Royal Flying Corps, as an observer. He was shot down twice over France and captured, after the second time, in November 1915. After having been interned in Switzerland (because he had American parents?) he was repatriated in late 1917. He spent the remainder of the war working in the Ministry of Munitions, where he met his wife-to-be. After the war, and looking for employment, he approached Vickers which had taken over Westinghouse. He was subsequently asked if he wished to join Alcock (already on board as the pilot), as his navigator, for the Transatlantic 'Daily Mail' Aviation Prize. History tells us he accepted the offer!

The Daily Mail owner, Lord Northcliffe, had put up the prize money of £10,000 for the first non-stop flight across the Atlantic, as early as 1913, but the war had intervened ... now a number of war-time pilots were looking at this prize and fancying their chances. Alcock had approached Vickers to sponsor him and was given the use of a modified Vickers Vimy bomber, a bi-plane, and found his navigator at the same time!

But time was not on their side! At that time of year the attempted flight would start from St.



Statue to Alcock and Brown  
outside the Heathrow Academy  
... creative commons licence

John's, Newfoundland, and landfall would be in Ireland. Already, men and planes, followed by dozens of reporters, were assembling at the starting place, all trying to be the first ready to set off. At last, and heading down the makeshift runway, disaster almost overtook them ... laden down with hundreds of gallons of fuel, the plane only just managed to clear the edge of the ominously close forest before heading out to sea and into what became a nightmare journey of 1890 nautical miles lasting over 16 hours. After taking bearings and setting a course, the first 4 hours of the flight went smoothly but then they ran into a dense bank of fog and everything that could go wrong started to do so. Batteries failed; the radio transmitter failed; an exhaust pipe overheated and disappeared in flames; the noise from the engine was deafening; they were in an open cockpit and their heated flying suits lost power; snow, freezing conditions, gauges covered in ice; strong gusts of wind that caught and threw them about; plunging out of control towards the sea, and only feet above it before Alcock could gain control. On occasion, when snow filled the cockpit and affected the engines, Brown had climbed out onto the wings and cleared it with a knife. Occasionally, in this nightmare, there was a glimpse of stars with a quick chance to check their bearings and adjust their course. At a high altitude, with everything iced up and barely working, they were only 30 minutes from landfall as they started their final descent. The snow melted into a puddle round their feet, the ice began to melt, the sea, not far below them was rough and threatening ... suddenly, land was there ... right in front of them!

Amazingly, when they identified the Marconi wireless station, they discovered they were only a matter of a few miles off course. But the excitement wasn't over just yet! Looking for somewhere to land, men were waving and shouting from the ground ... a patch of green looked good for landing so down they came ... taxiing straight into a bog and going nose-down! The shouting and waving had been in warning - not in greeting! All was well, though ... as they were immediately swept up in the hectic round of receptions, galas and speeches as the news of their achievement was broadcast around the world.

On their return to England they were the heroes of the day ... they were presented with their prize money, at a grand luncheon in London's Savoy Hotel, by Winston Churchill who also declared they would soon be receiving knighthoods ... which they did.

Arthur was now in a position to marry and John had his own plans. By October, Arthur had married and was on honeymoon in America whilst John Alcock had returned to test-flying at Brooklands and competitive flying at weekends.

John Alcock was present at the Science Museum in London, on December 15th, 1919, when the Vimy plane returned to London and was presented to the nation. Just three days later, on the 18th, he was to deliver a new Vickers plane, the Viking, to Paris for an aeronautical show. Weather was dismal but, despite advice to delay setting off, John left for Paris but without a navigator. Again, fog and winds were the enemy and, on seeing land, John was probably unsure of where he was and, flying low, he got into trouble over Rouen ... his plane crashed to earth and he died of his injuries soon afterwards.

His coffin was received with ceremony in London and conveyed to Manchester for burial in Southern Cemetery. His grave is marked by a tall, white, Celtic-design cross. A service was held in Manchester Cathedral at which, along with friends and relatives, representatives of many aviation organisations were present. Arthur was still in America at the time of his death.

Arthur Whitten Brown's own life wasn't untroubled, either. He returned to England and, working for Metropolitan-Vickers, in 1923 he was made their chief representative in Swansea. During WW2 he served as an officer in the Home Guard but in 1941 rejoined the RAF working as a training officer dealing with navigation. His health was steadily deteriorating and in 1943 it had worsened to the extent that he had to resign his post.

His son, Arthur, was serving with the RAF as a Flight Lieutenant and in June 1944, age 22, he

crashed and died in the Netherlands. Arthur's own health continued to deteriorate, no doubt accelerated by grief, and in October 1948, although still working at MetroVic on restricted duties, he died in his sleep as the result of an accidental overdose of sleeping tablets, age 62. His widow, Marguerite Kathleen (née Kennedy) survived him until 1952, when she died in Swansea, age 56.

It would have been good to find 'happy-ever-after' stories for the 2 men ...

My notes:

quick searches on Find My Past, didn't reveal any verifiable (on my part) evidence for any births, marriages, deaths or census returns in the lives of the two men ... I did find Marguerite Kathleen Kennedy's birth recorded in Gateshead in 1896 and on the 1939 register in Swansea, with Arthur, but listed under the hyphenated surname Whitten-Brown.

In a more general search for the hyphenated name there is a marriage in 1943 for Arthur (presumably their son) to Barbara E. Bowers, in Swansea (and then her 2nd marriage in 1949 to Kenneth L. Crowle in Folkestone). Apart from these there are several entries for later generations and dozens for the London Gazette, RAF lists etc. There are none immediately identifiable before the 1939 register.

by Editor,

Information gleaned from:

Find My Past

[Aviation History](#)

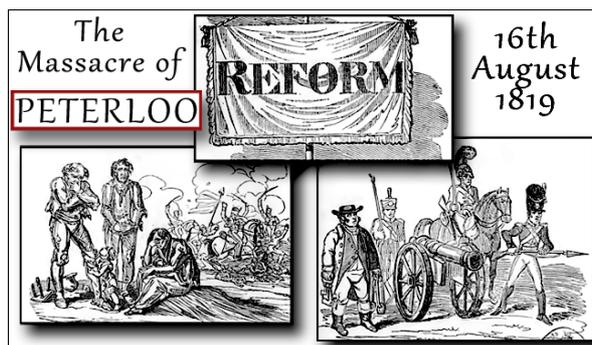
[Wikipedia - Arthur Whitten Brown](#)

[Wikipedia - John Alcock](#)



## **PETERLOO : the BI-CENTENARY**

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



### **Manchester Histories - Peterloo 1819**

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

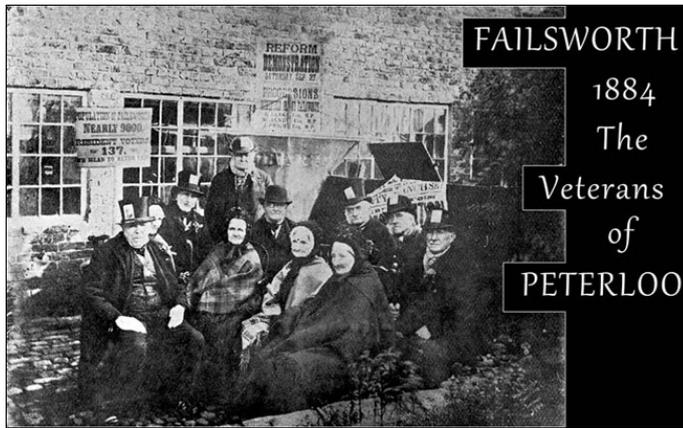
Visit their website for all the news [HERE](#)

The following entries are a selection from the Manchester Histories Peterloo1819 printed programme which can be found in local libraries, galleries etc. and on their website



**Manchester Central Library, Saturday June 7th, 2pm**

**'The Peterloo Photograph'**



Join historian and broadcaster Michael Wood and Michala Hulme, a professional genealogist and social historian at Manchester Metropolitan University.

"Clearing out his parent's house after his mother's death two years ago, Michael Wood found a box of memorabilia. there were photos, letters, postcards and books that had belonged to his father, whose family had lived in Failsworth from the 1720s.

Among them was a photograph from 1884 showing a group of 11 Peterloo Veterans from Failsworth.

Eventbrite booking [HERE](#) (there is a charge)



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

Mike Leigh's film, '*Peterloo*' will be shown at Playhouse 2 in Shaw on Sunday, 16th of June. Tickets will be available from 6th May and will cost £4.

Ticket Office: Interiors, 37 Market St, Shaw. Tel 01706 840400.

Open 10.00am - 4.00pm, Mon, Wed, Thu, Fri & Sat.,

or book on the Playhouse website [HERE](#)



**Manchester Central Library, Thursdays at 1pm : June 13th, July 11th, August 15th**

**'Peterloo' Film Screenings.**

Written and directed by Mike Leigh

Eventbrite booking [HERE](#) (there is a charge)



**Manchester Art Gallery, Sunday June 9th**

**Commemoration of Peterloo : Manchester Community Choir**

"This is to commemorate the 200th anniversary of the Peterloo Massacre and will coincide with the Art Gallery's Peterloo exhibition '*Get together and get things done*'.

We will be thrilling you with songs of social justice, protest and freedom with a little audience participation!

Warm up at 12:30. We will be performing at 2pm for about 30 minutes. It is free of charge and seating is available for the audience.

Website [HERE](#)



**Working Class Movement Library, Wednesday June 26th, 7pm - 8pm**

**'Protest & the politics of space in Manchester : Not just Peterloo'**

by Katrina Navickas, who is Reader in History at the University of Hertfordshire.

" '*Not just Peterloo*' – the first in a series of talks on state violence. This talk reflects on the history of suppression of political meetings in Manchester and Salford during the 19th century. It examines the role of the authorities at the Peterloo Massacre, and places this within the longer context of how magistrates and then the Corporation sought to control and prohibit popular

political protest in parks, squares and moors throughout the century.

There will be an opportunity to share histories and memories of contested spaces of protest after the talk."

Admission free.

Website [HERE](#)

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### **PETERLOO MASSACRE 200th Anniversary - Guided Walking Tours**

**Sunday June 23rd, 1pm and Friday July 19th, 11:30am**

by Sibby - Manchester Tour Guide

"Revisit the locations and events of the Massacre..."

Booking on Eventbrite [HERE](#) (charge £10)

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### **The following entries are for PETERLOO exhibitions on-going for several weeks :**

#### **Oldham Gallery**

Website [HERE](#)

May 25th to September 21st

**'From Waterloo to Peterloo' ...**

#### **Working Class Movement Library**

Website [HERE](#)

May 31st to September 19th

**'Peterloo: News, Fake News and Paranoia' ...**

#### **People's History Museum**

Website [HERE](#)

March 2019 to February 2020

**'Disrupt? Peterloo and Protest'**

#### **Touchstones Museum & Art Gallery, Rochdale**

Website [HERE](#)

May 18th to November 2nd

**Protest & Peterloo**

#### **Manchester Craft & Design Centre**

Website [HERE](#)

May 23rd to September 7th

**Misshaping Peterloo**

#### **John Rylands Library**

Website [HERE](#)

March 21st to September 29th

**Peterloo, Manchester's fight for Freedom**

#### **Manchester Central Library**

website [HERE](#)

June 7th to September 28th

#### **'The Hidden Tableaux's Peterloo Massacre 1819'**

'Hidden' is an on-going series of photographic tableaux by Red Saunders, artist and founder of 'Rock against Racism'

"The 'Hidden' project shines photographic light on great moments in the long struggle of working people for democracy and social justice. The aim of the project is to reproduce important historic scenes involving the dissenters, revolutionaries, radicals and non-conformists who have so often been hidden from history."

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

Don't forget if you hit a wall, the Society has a help desk at the Central Library.

It is located on the ground floor of Manchester Central Library at St. Peter's Square. Our location, from the main entrance, is to the right, beyond the cafe.

The Help Desk is open every weekday, Monday to Friday, except for Bank Holidays, between 10.30am and 3.30pm.

Central Library is adjacent to the St. Peter's Square Metrolink station with direct services from Altrincham, East Didsbury, Eccles, Bury, Oldham, Shaw, Rochdale and Ashton under Lyne and with easy connections from other lines.

Many bus services from South Manchester stop at the Oxford Street end of Portland Street, which is a five-minute walk from the library. Other services may arrive at Shudehill Interchange or Piccadilly Bus Station. Shudehill is about 15 minutes and Piccadilly about 10 minutes' walk from the library. There are Metrolink connections adjacent to both bus terminals.

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

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## **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.

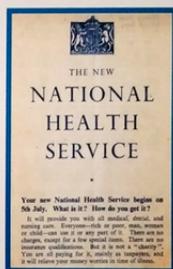
# Health in Oldham

## Before the NHS

The NHS came into being on 5 July 1948. Medical care was then free for everyone... but how did the people of Oldham manage their wellbeing before this?

This exhibition looks at how local people coped with illness and infirmity and what kind of care they could expect.

- Where did you go for medicines?
- What hospitals were in the area?
- How qualified were local physicians?
- What did you do if you had toothache?
- Where would you get spectacles from?
- What was Phrenology?



Public information leaflet, distributed in 1948, advises on the concept of the new NHS for Britain.



Operating theatre at Boundary Park General Hospital c.1948

Anurin Bevan on the first day of the NHS, 5 July 1948



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

### Self-medication

At a time when many people in Oldham could not afford to consult a doctor the market for proprietary preparations claiming to cure every ailment known to man was huge. Newspapers were full of advertisements making outrageous claims for products and local druggists or chemists placed prominent adverts in the trade directories. Taking these preparations was a dangerous business as throughout the Victorian period they were unregulated. The 1875 Sale of Food and Drugs Act made it an offence to sell an article falsely labelled. It also reduced the medical licence duty and the number of vendors of these medicines increased from over 12,000 in 1874 to 20,000 in 1895. Many remedies contained opium and morphine and could be highly addictive. However, preparations were not always made by charlatans. Many were developed by medical men with others established over many years. Pharmacists made their own versions of patent medicines.



Some potions were made with poisons such as strychnine - which was used in tonics to stimulate the appetite. A 'cure' for head lice in children contained bichloride of mercury that came with the warning 'this lotion must be used with caution as it is deadly poison if taken in the stomach'. Qualified medical men did not approve of many patent medicines and certainly not the 'quacks' who dispensed them. Whether this was due to the fear that patients might not be getting the best treatment or because they disliked the idea of losing out financially is debatable.

**JOHN S. GLOVER,**  
Chemist and Druggist,  
84, MANCHESTER STREET,  
WERNETH, OLDHAM.  
PROPRIETOR OF  
**GLOVER'S RHEUMATIC MIXTURE,**  
AND FEMALE PILLS.

Top right: 'Quick Doctor' illustration from Nichol's Compound Syrup, 1898  
Above: Advertisement from the 1875 Gosham Trade Directory

### Apothecaries and Chemists

The Apothecaries Act of 1815 confirmed apothecaries as general practitioners who left others, the druggists and chemists, to sell and supply medicines. Many druggists sold a huge variety of produce from medical preparations to horse and cattle medicines, fresh roast coffee and vanishes. Some were also known as 'crystalers' who dealt in a range of other chemical products such as glues, dyes and colourings. Others were seedmen and some specialised in preparations made from herbs, roots, barks and other botanic ingredients. The Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain was set up in 1841 and the Pharmacy and Poisons Act of 1868 made it unlawful for any person to keep open a shop or use the title Chemist, Druggist, Pharmacist or Dispensing Chemist unless registered under this Act. Two years later it was ruled that the word 'person' in this Act did not include corporate bodies, allowing companies to not only use restricted titles but also sell poisons provided they were sold by a qualified person. Boots the Chemist Ltd. was established in 1849 but the first Oldham trade directory in which it is mentioned is 1905 when it was based at 42 Mumps.



Chemists often advertised various brands of tonic wine. Quinine was a popular additive, not only because of its supposed health-giving qualities but also because of its bitter flavour.



Seidlitz Powder  
This was the generic name for a commonly known laxative marketed and sold under a variety of names. Ingredients were tartaric acid, potassium sodium tartrate and sodium bicarbonate. While the powder could be somewhat helpful as a laxative, its use could be fatal in patients with conditions such as hernia, bowel obstruction or other ailments.

[Opening hours and contact details.](#)

## WEBSITE LINKS

### Other Society Websites

- Catholic Family History Society – [www.catholicfhs.co.uk](http://www.catholicfhs.co.uk)
- Cheshire Local History Association – [www.cheshirehistory.org.uk](http://www.cheshirehistory.org.uk)
- Chadderton Historical Society (archived website) – [www.chadderton-historical-society.org.uk](http://www.chadderton-historical-society.org.uk)
- Lancashire Family History and Heraldry Society - <https://www.lfhhs.org.uk/home.php>
- Lancashire Local History Federation – [www.lancashirehistory.org](http://www.lancashirehistory.org)
- Liverpool and South West Lancashire FHS – [www.lswlfhs.org.uk](http://www.lswlfhs.org.uk)
- Manchester Region Industrial Archaeology Society – [www.mrias.co.uk](http://www.mrias.co.uk)
- Oldham Historical Research Group – [www.pixnet.co.uk/Oldham-hrg](http://www.pixnet.co.uk/Oldham-hrg)
- Peterloo - [Peterloo-Manchester](http://Peterloo-Manchester)
- Ranulf Higden Society (Latin transcription) - [Ranulf Higden Soc.](http://Ranulf Higden Soc.)
- Royton Local History Society – [www.rlhs.co.uk](http://www.rlhs.co.uk)
- Saddleworth Historical Society – [www.saddleworth-historical-society.org.uk](http://www.saddleworth-historical-society.org.uk)
- Tameside Local History Forum - [www.tamesidehistoryforum.org.uk](http://www.tamesidehistoryforum.org.uk)
- The Victorian Society - [Manchester Regional Website](http://Manchester Regional Website)

### Some Useful Sites

- GENUKI - [Lancashire](http://Lancashire)
- Free BMD - [Search](http://Search)
- [National Library of Scotland](http://National Library of Scotland) - Free to view, historic, zoomable maps of UK : 1891 - Oldham and locality [Here](http://Here)
- Online Parish Clerk Project - [Lancashire](http://Lancashire)

## Some Local Archives

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

Birkenhead – [www.wirral.gov.uk/libraries-and-archives](http://www.wirral.gov.uk/libraries-and-archives)

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

Chester - [Cheshire Archives & Local Studies](#) (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](#)

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

Stockport – [www.stockport.gov.uk/heritage-library-archives](http://www.stockport.gov.uk/heritage-library-archives)

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

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## For the Gallery

### Whitsuntide Walks in Edwardian Failsworth



### Whit Walks on Wickentree Lane, Failsworth



### Whit Walks in Failsworth

Courtesy Editor