

'e-Owls'

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JUNE 2020

MLFHS - Oldham Branch Newsletter

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Branch News :

Following April's Annual Meeting of the MLFHS Oldham Branch

Branch Officers for 2020 -2021 :

Committee Member : Chairman : Linda Richardson
Committee Member : Treasurer : Gill Melton
Committee Member : Secretary : position vacant
Committee Member : Newsletter & Webmistress:
Sheila Goodyear
Committee Member : Dorothy Clegg
Committee Member : Joan Harrison



Midsummer Eve Bonfire
from: *The Everyday Table Book*, 1826

Oldham Branch Meetings : Coronavirus Pandemic

Please note ... with great regret but in-line with the updated Statement, issued by the M&LFHS Trustees, and on the home page of the Society website, to which I drew your attention in an earlier email, all M&LFHS Meetings, Branch Meetings and public activities are to be suspended indefinitely.

The newsletter will be sent out as usual.

There will be further updates on the Society website Home Page and on the Branch pages. The next issue of the Society Journal will go out to members as usual. It relies heavily on

Branch reports and what the Society has been doing at events and fairs etc. However, this sort of news won't be there for quite a long time! To fill the pages with interesting articles, it's hoped that more people will write up family stories and contribute them to the journal. Please refer to the page, '*Notes for Contributors*', in the Journal, for information on how to send articles, etc. The Society Facebook page [HERE](#) and the Twitter page [HERE](#) will be updated frequently.

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### **Chairman's remarks :**

I would just like to say that I hope everybody is keeping well, keeping busy and looking forward to being able to go out and about in the very near future.

I would also like to say a special thank you to our newsletter editor, Sheila Goodyear, for all the hard work she has done in keeping the newsletter going during the lockdown, especially with there being a shortage of reports on events etc.

Stay safe, and we will do our best to keep you informed through the Oldham Branch website and this newsletter.

Linda Richardson

Chairman, Oldham Branch

email me at [chairman-oldham@mlfhs.org.uk](mailto:chairman-oldham@mlfhs.org.uk)

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Editor's remarks.

Yet another month has gone by since I wrote my last 'Editor's Remarks' or even went past the front garden gate. I hope that you are all safe and well, as my own family are, and that you haven't experienced the heartache of seeing loved ones fall ill with the virus. Weirdly, in my 'time out', I seem to be busier than usual with all the things I enjoy doing (and that definitely doesn't include cleaning or decorating!). The outside world is becoming increasingly remote, even though I catch up on local and national news regularly, and I'm in daily contact with my son and daughter. I keep trying to imagine how I will feel or respond when we eventually emerge from our 'safety bubble'. I know that we will be confronted by a new normality which can be frightening in its uncertainty but, in some ways, we can see so many individuals rising to the challenges and forging new ways of living their lives, socialising remotely and finding new ways to face the future.

In the meantime, let's continue doing what we do best, whether it's researching our ancestry, gardening, cooking, or pursuing our many and varied hobbies. Let's keep ourselves safe, virus-free and, at the same time, help to ease the pressure on our vital key-workers.

Our 'Mixed Bag', this month, is very 'healthy', with contributions from Dorothy Bintley and Mary Pendlebury and, of course, a June snippet from my old 'friend' William Hone in 1826!

In the e-Postbag, we have an email from Gordon Lees about evacuee children, from Guernsey, at school in Oldham and there is also a selection of links from the MLFHS facebook page.

I have not listed any talks, for obvious reasons, but I'm still leaving the society/group names there, with a website url where available, so that you can keep a check on what might be happening with them. Hopefully, we can all find ways of pursuing our interests without risking our well-being.

PLEASE help us keep the journal and newsletters alive ... put on your 'thinking caps' and send us your photos, stories and pictures.

Keep safe and keep well.

Although I am always more than happy to receive articles, pictures etc., for the newsletter, copyright is always a tricky issue so do please make sure that you have the right to use any text or illustrations that you send! It is also helpful if you include mention of your source material.

You will retain copyright of any contributions that you send unless you decide to waive that right, at the time of sending.

Editor reserves the right to edit any contributions before publication.

email me at : Oldham_newsletter@mlfhs.org.uk

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## Oldham & District, Bolton & Scottish Branches

Please visit the Branch Websites for information and any updates :

Oldham & District [HERE](#)

Anglo-Scottish [HERE](#)

Bolton [HERE](#)

### MLFHS Branch e-Newsletters

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

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

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MLFHS updates

The MLFHS Family History Help Desk ... CANCELLED until further notice

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**Beginners Talks ... CANCELLED until further notice**

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MLFHS Online Bookshop: CLOSED until further notice

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

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## Meetings and Talks at other Societies &/or Venues

**Please note ... the relevant society/group websites or organisers care still being included, here, as they can be checked for further information or on-line resource material and activities.**

**All public activities are, of course, CANCELLED until further notice.**

**Oldham Historical Research Group: ...**

Website [HERE](#)

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Library Events & Gallery talks at Gallery Oldham

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**Saddleworth Historical Society & Saddleworth Civic Trust**

At the Saddleworth Museum, High Street, Uppermill.

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Family History Society of Cheshire : Tameside Group meeting.

See their website [HERE](#)

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**Tameside History Club :**

Website and programme [HERE](#)

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Tameside Local Studies and Archives - Regular Sessions and Events

Website and programme [HERE](#)

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## Moorside & District Historical Society

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Regional Heritage Centre :

Website [HERE](#)

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### 'A Mixed Bag'

**June 18th ... From the 'Everyday Table Book', by William Hone, Pub. 1826**



### "Buy a Broom?"

*These poor "Buy-a-Broom girls exactly  
dress now,  
As Hollar etch'd such girls two cent'ries  
ago;  
All formal and stiff, with legs, only, at ease -  
Yet, pray, judge for yourself; and don't, if  
you please,  
Like Matthews's "Chyle," in his Monolo-  
Play,  
Cry "The Ev'ry-Day Book is quite right, I  
dare say ;"  
But ask for the print, at old print shops,  
(they'll show it,)  
And look at it, "with your own eyes," and  
you'll know it."*

"These girls are Flemings. They come to England from the Netherlands in the spring, and take their departure with the summer. They have only one low, shrill, twittering note, "Buy a broom ?" sometimes varying into the singular plural, "Buy a brooms?" It is a domestic cry; two or three go together, and utter it in company with each other; not in concert, nor to a neighbourhood, and scarcely louder than will attract the notice of an inmate seen at a parlour window, or an open street-door, or a lady or two passing in the street. Their hair is tightened up in front, and at the sides, and behind, and the ends brought together, and so secured, or skewered, at the top of the head, as if it were constricted by a tourniquet : the little close cap, not larger than an infant's, seems to be put on and tied down by strings fastened beneath the chin, merely as a concealment of the machinery. Without a single inflexion of the body, and for any thing that appears to the contrary, it may be incased in tin. From the waist, the form abruptly and boldly bows out like a large beehive, or an arch of carpentry, built downward from above the hips, for the purpose of opening and distending the enormous petticoat into numerous plaits and folds, and thereby allowing the legs to walk without incumbrance. Their figures are exactly miniaturized in an unpainted penny doll of turnery ware, made all round, before and behind, and sold in the toyshops for the amusement of infancy. These Flemish girls are of low stature, with features as formal and old fashioned as their dress. Their gait and manner answer to both. They carry their brooms, not under the left arm, but

upon it, as they would children, upright between the arm and the side, with the heads in front of the shoulder. One, and one only, of the brooms is invariably held in the right hand, and this is elevated with the sharp cry "Buy a broom?" or "Buy a brooms?" to any one likely to become a purchaser, till it is either bought or wholly declined. The sale of their brooms is the sole purpose for which they cross the seas to us; and they suffer nothing to divert them from their avocation. A broom girl's countenance, so wearisomely indicates unwearied attention to the "main chance," and is so inflexibly solemn, that you doubt whether she ever did or can smile; yet when she does, you are astonished that she does not always: her face does not relax by degrees, but breaks suddenly into an arch laugh. This appearance may be extorted by a joke, while driving a bargain, but not afterwards: she assumes it, perhaps, as a sort of "turn" to hasten the "business transaction;" for when that is concluded, the intercourse ends immediately. Neither lingering nor loitering, they keep constantly walking on, and looking out for customers. They seldom speak to each other; nor when their brooms are disposed of, do they stop and rejoice upon it as an end to their labours; but go homewards reflectively, with the hand every now and then dipping into the pocket of the huge petticoat, and remaining there for a while, as if counting the receipts of the day while they walk, and reckoning what the before accumulated riches will total to, with the new addition. They seem influenced by this admonition, "get all you can, and keep all you get."

Rather late in an autumn afternoon, in Battersea-fields, I saw one of these girls by herself; she was seated, with her brooms on her lap, in a bit of scenery, which, from Weir's etchings and other prints, I have always fancied resembled a view in the Low Countries: it is an old windmill, near the "Red-house," with some low buildings among willows, on the bank of the Thames, thrown up to keep the river from overflowing a marshy flat. To my imagination, she was fixed to that spot in a reverie on her "vaderland.\*" She gazed on the strait line of stunted trees, as if it were the line of beauty; and from the motion of her lips, and the enthusiasm of her look, I deemed she was reciting a passage from a poet of her native country. Elevation of feeling, in one of these poor girls, was hardly to be looked for; and yet I know not why I should have excluded it, as not appertaining to their character, except from their seeming intentness on thrift alone. They are cleanly, frugal, and no wasters of time; and that they are capable of sentiment, I state on the authority of my imagining concerning this poor girl; whereon, too, I pledge myself not to have been mistaken, for the language of the heart is universal and hers discoursed to mine; though from the situation wherein I stood, she saw me not. I was not, nor could I be, in love with *her* I was in love with human nature.

The "brooms" are one entire piece of wood; the sweeping part being slivered from the handle, and the shavings neatly turned over and bound round into the form of a besom. They are bought to dust curtains and hangings with; but good housewives have another use for them; one of them dipt in fair water, sprinkles the dried clothes in the laundry, for the process of ironing, infinitely better than the hand; it distributes the water more equally and more quickly.

\* Fader-land, a word signifying country, but infinitely more expressive; it was first adopted by Lord Byron into our language; he englishes it 'fatherland' "

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A German Armaments Manufacturer in Oldham During World War One

This article comes from Dorothy Bintley who is one of the earliest research volunteers with the MLFHS Oldham & District Branch and also with Oldham Local Studies and Archives. On a trip to the National Archives, in London, she was asked to check what was held there about a German manufacturer, living in Oldham, during WW1. Expecting to find a slim envelope and a few hours to look at the contents, she was presented with a box full of documents which took

her several days to go through! The following article is a brief account of the findings.



Gruban Papers in the National Archives (photo by Dorothy Bintley)

Johannes Georg Wilhelm Gruban was born in Schweinitz, Prussia on February 23rd 1872 to Wilhelm and Emilie Gruban.

When he was 19, he was conscripted into the German Army and served for 13 months. On being released in 1892, he moved to London with a job as agent for Kirchner a German armaments company. This was the start of his permanent residence in England and he anglicised his name to John George William Gruban. He visited Germany from time to time and, in 1902 he married Margaret Huldechinsky in Berlin, after which she came to live with him in London.

In 1908 he bought shares in an Oldham engineering company, Haigh & Co., which had works on Plane Street. He became the Managing Director and the company's name was changed to Haigh, Gruban & Co. Ltd. His previous employers, Kirchner, claimed that his contract, with them, prevented him from competing with them via a rival company. As a result they issued a writ to restrain him. They had stopped paying him but eventually Gruban won and they had to reimburse him 20,000 marks, which was invested in Haigh, Gruban & Co., together with money he received from his father in law. From 1908 Gruban and his wife took up residence in Oldham, moving in 1913 to live in Bardsley House just over the border in Ashton under Lyne. Liselotte May was born in 1912, Eileen Olga in 1913 and John Douglas in 1915.

By 1914, Gruban had lived in England for over 20 years but had not yet become a British citizen. He applied for naturalisation, which was granted on August 29th 1914, unusual timing for a man in his position. This started the rumour mills going; a German running a British engineering company which manufactured, among other things, armaments.

On October 13th 1914, Oldham Reform Club sent a petition to the Home Office signed by forty one Oldham men:

"To His Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for the Home Department

We the undersigned Citizens of Oldham feel most strongly that a Commercial Man in Oldham, namely Mr J.G.W. Gruban of Bardsley House nr Oldham, and of the firm of Messrs. W.B. Haigh, Gruban & Co. who, until recently was a German subject and reported to be an Officer of the German Army, has been enabled to obtain, apparently through financial interests, naturalization papers.

Other Germans, less influentially placed, have quite rightly been put under restraint. This man is directly responsible for the introduction of a large number of German Workmen into the neighbourhood. If he had British interests at heart, why did he not

take out naturalization papers before war was declared? We feel that the fact that this man being at large might well be a menace to the welfare of Britain.

We are strongly of the opinion that he ought to be removed from the possibility of active operations and most respectfully ask the Home Department to investigate most carefully the circumstances.

The reason he got his naturalization papers was on the information that he was a large Employer of British labour.

He is the Managing Director of the concern, and his removal would not affect the works, in the way of stoppage, as it is one of very old standing and bore a good English name prior to his advent."

The Reform Club's petition was marked "This document is strictly private and confidential" but clearly Gruban heard about it and on October 21st 1914 sent his own letter to the Home Office:

*"Globe Ironworks
Plane Street
Oldham
October 21st 1914*

*The Right Honourable Reginald McKenna
Home Office
LONDON*

Sir,

Numerous prominent members of the Liberal Club (Reform Club), of the Conservative Club and of the Labour Party, have brought it to my knowledge that in pursuance of an agitation a petition has been presented to His Majesty's Home Office, directed against my naturalization as a British subject.

I am informed that the petition is principally due to the efforts of:

- a. Trade adversaries (T. & R. Lees of Hollinwood)*
- b. A firm of Iron founders with whom my firm had serious litigation regarding a breach of contract (Hall & Co. Ltd, principal Mr. Lees Hall).*

The statements therein are entirely without foundation, and are as follows:

- 1. That I have, or may been, a German Officer.*

My reply: I have never held such a position, and beg to humbly refer to the declarations on my application for naturalization which have been fully substantiated.

- 2. That this firm - W. B. Haigh, Gruban & Co. Ltd. - was either wholly or partially using German castings.*

My reply: We do not import and have never imported at any time an ounce of German cast iron (castings) for the manufacture of our machines.

- 3. That most or part of the workmen are German workmen.*

My reply: Out of about 300 men in the works, we have never had more than one German workman at any time; not simultaneously but following each other. Only two German workmen were thus employed during the 7 years, and both were elderly men who had lived in England for practically 20 years, and they held special positions due to their experience.

- 4. That we imported principally German machines, to the detriment of labour here.*

My reply: This is directly opposed to facts, as the steady and immense growth of our Wages Bill and of the British men employed in these works will prove. No German or American machines have been brought to these works at any time except for the purpose of studying the latest inventions, with one object alone, viz: to appropriate these

inventions as quickly as possible for the benefit of our own firm, and to become a world's competitor of American and German firms in our branch of engineering as quickly as possible.

5. That Englishmen were discharged to make room for Germans.

My reply: This is wholly untrue. As our Continental Export Department is entirely new, we employed in this department from two to four foreign clerks - (all of whom have left this firm) as we had to conduct our correspondence in five different languages, thus achieving our aim of capturing foreign trade more quickly, and more thoroughly than it would have been the case under ordinary conditions. In no case however have these German clerks taken the place of Englishmen. To the contrary, they were instrumental in establishing a new (Continental) Export Department, for the benefit of our British workmen.

6. That my naturalization was applied for to protect financial interests only.

My reply: This is contrary to facts, and I refer to my application for naturalization. A very large amount of share capital which was formerly worthless, and held by a large number of British subjects has become worth par (sic) as a consequence of the rapid growth and development of the firm in the last seven years.

I humbly beg to inform Your Excellency that conclusive facts relating to all the above are in preparation, together with petitions of gentlemen who really and actually are most intimately acquainted not only with myself, but with this firm.

The completion of these must necessarily take a few days, when they will be delivered without delay.

I am, Sir,

Your most obedient servant

J. G. W. Gruban

The workers of W. B. Haigh, Gruban & Co. Ltd. held a meeting and, on October 24th 1914, sent a petition to the Home Office supporting their Managing Director:

The Right Honourable Reginald McKenna Esq., M.P.

Secretary of State for the Home Department

Home Office

Whitehall

LONDON S.W.

Sir,

We, the undersigned workmen, foreman and works employees of W.B. Haigh, Gruban & Company Limited Manufacturers of Sawmill and Woodworking Machines Globe Ironworks Oldham Respectfully beg to make the following statements:

Certain statements have been freely circulated in this town respecting our firm, and especially our Managing Director, Mr J.G.W. Gruban - statements which are incorrect in substance and fact and which are keenly resented by us.

We have therefore held a shop meeting today of all the workmen (excluding apprentices) in a simple plain manner, with the object of taking action against a continuance of these falsehoods being circulated, and as the obvious object is to damage Mr Gruban's position as a naturalised British citizen, to bring the true facts which are within our own personal knowledge as workmen of the firm, to your notice, viz:

1 It has been freely circulated that the bulk of the raw material used in the manufacture of our machines has been imported from Germany, and that our machines were built of German cast iron.

The true facts:- Not an ounce of casting has ever been imported from Germany, but they have always been supplied by well known English foundries.

2 It has been circulated that the bulk or a large portion of the workmen employed here were Germans, statements having been wilfully spread in the town that on the day of the outbreak of the war Germans and Austrians, workmen and mechanics, the reports varying from 50, 80, 100 and 200 had been discharged on one day.

The true facts:- During the seven years Mr Gruban has been the head of the firm, we have only seen two German workers inside this works, one an elderly man of about 58, employed as a packer, and the second a machinery demonstrator for special work, for which previously the firm had several Americans. This man was also out of military age, and according to his statement had been married for over 15 years to an English lady. No manager's or foreman's position or position of fitter, turner, planer, in the works has ever been filled by a German.

3 It has been circulated that our own British manufacture was gradually subdued, and reduced more and more by the Managing Director having imported, in increasing numbers, foreign machinery with the object of ultimately wiping out our manufacturers.

The true facts are the exact reverse. Our own manufacture has grown within the seven years by leaps and bounds, giving employment to an ever increasing number of skilled workmen. The growth is phenomenal. The plant of machinery has also been largely renewed and brought up to date. We have also seen brought into these works during these seven years a considerable number of foreign machines of a novel type, not only German, but American, Canadian, Belgian and French, leading invariably one by one to additions and improvements of our older types, and the manufacture of one by one of these novel machines was taken up by our own firm, and then the import of these sample machines was stopped, and the manufacture taken up in our own works, leading to a proportionate increase of our work and number of men employed.

The importations of these foreign machines have steadily decreased until in the Spring of this year they had become practically nil.

Many of us have met and come into personal contact with Mr Gruban during these seven years. We have never observed in his attitude that he has given preference to foreigners; on the contrary, all his efforts were obviously directed to the pushing ahead of our own plant and our own machines, and bringing the reputation of the British built goods of ours in the world's markets to the highest standard. Several years ago when the firm was altered to the name W.B. Haigh, Gruban & Company Limited, we accepted this as evidence that Mr Gruban was to be one of us for all times.

The undersigned have therefore passed the following resolution unanimously at their meeting:-

That the meeting of the men employed by the above firm hereby assembled strongly resent and repudiate the several false statements circulated in town and district.

That the facts as recorded above are the true facts within our knowledge.

And that a vote of confidence be passed in Mr. Gruban and the firm, and that a copy of this resolution be sent to the Home Office and to the press in Oldham and Manchester.

We are, Sir, Your most obedient servants."

[134 signatories]

By the middle of 1915 there was a serious shortage of shells for the war effort. One of the specialities of Gruban's company was the manufacture of lathes used in the production of shells but he needed to raise funds to expand the business so he turned to Frederick Handel Booth, the Liberal MP for Pontefract. He had been introduced to Booth socially a few months previously. At that time Booth had said he could understand the difficulties of Gruban's position since his own wife was of German extraction; her father was a German who had taken up British Citizenship and her mother was born in Amsterdam. Booth further went on to say that he knew David Lloyd George well and had influence with him. In May 1915 Lloyd George was

appointed head of the new Ministry of Munitions.

Things became even more difficult for Gruban after May 7th 1915 when German U-boats torpedoed RMS Lusitania and anti-German sentiments rose. On May 11th the men at Haigh, Gruban & Co came out on strike for a few hours objecting to working with a German who was employed as a fitter. The man was a registered alien, aged about 45 and married to an English woman. Gruban dismissed the man and the workers ended their demonstration but he felt that his own German roots would harm his business so, impressed by Booth's claim of friends in high places, he turned to him. Booth promised to raise cash to inject into the company and on July 16th 1915 he was appointed the chairman of Haigh, Gruban and Company Ltd. There were soon arguments between the two men about payment of allowances and the Ministry of Munitions began to express dissatisfaction about the running of the company and about Gruban's perceived German loyalties. Booth persuaded Gruban that the only way forward was for him to transfer the company and all his shares to Booth and this was done.

As soon as Booth had control of the company he turned on Gruban, writing letters to the Ministry of Munitions and the Home Office alleging that in spite of his naturalisation Gruban was a dangerous alien who should be interned. In one letter to the Home Office Booth wrote:

"It is beyond doubt that Gruban conducted a considerable sale of German machines, through the medium of this Company ... Many of these machines were sold as of British make ... This matter is of serious moment to this firm and its reputation ... In view of this continuous and colossal fraud (which was unpatriotic) I need only express my opinion that it would be most dangerous to place Gruban in a position that he could escape to his native land."

The head of a rival engineering company, Lewis Ransome wrote to the Ministry of Munitions in November 1915 to make sure they knew that Gruban was recently naturalised and was originally German. *"Haigh, Gruban & Co are competitors of my firm,"* he wrote, *"I hope you will not misconstrue my motives in drawing your attention to this matter."*

Gruban was a member of the local Munitions Tribunal. Someone, possibly a junior member of the ministry, wrote in the margin of Ransome's letter *"he should keep his seat"* but Christopher Addison who was deputy to Lloyd George, wrote *"I think not."* It can be no coincidence that later that month Gruban resigned his position on the Oldham Munitions Tribunal saying, *"... my time is taxed to the utmost."*

One of Gruban's former friends, E. N. Cooper, submitted a document to the Home Office in March 1916, calling into question Gruban's loyalty to Britain. He first quoted from a letter he had written to the Minister of Munitions:

"I have been up to October 1914, in almost daily contact in business and private life with Gruban for over 13 years. He is a typical German with all their strong points, weaknesses and defects of character.

His sympathies remain German notwithstanding any statements he may have made.

His principles and commercial morality are of a low order and his system of conducting business is largely through espionage.

There is trustworthy evidence that there was always in Gruban's employ a large number of Germans, usually quite young fellows who were serving or had served in the German army. These men drew small salaries and were subsidised by some Institution in Germany.

They attended office as they thought fit, were allowed frequent leave to Germany and to visit the German Consul in Manchester and were paid privately by Gruban, not by the firm's cashier.

Gruban himself used to make two or three visits every year to Germany nominally on business ... he continually had three German clerks (often men who could not speak a

word of English) writing letters in German to Germany, correspondence not filed with that of the firm but kept by him under lock and key.

It was stated that one of these men told Gruban to sit down and remember that he was his superior officer. Gruban at once sat down.

Gruban always spoke disparagingly of everything British. In November 1911 he said to a British employee "Your King and Queen are very nice but not equal to our Kaiser." At Christmas 1912 he had a party at his house and sang "Deutschland uber Alles" and other national songs with his German employees.

On the 3rd October 1914 he informed a former employee that his newly opened branches in Germany were getting along all right and were being properly protected by the Government. He said, "You know how I manage these things."

A present employee of the firm has reported confidentially that Gruban arranged with a German girl called SCHUTTE, who left at the outbreak of war, to get money from German debtors and to correspond with him by means of a code. This employee saw towards the end of February 1916, a letter in this girl's writing on Gruban's desk with a Dutch stamp and the postmark Gravenhagen (or something like that).

His firm have been engaged in the manufacture of machines for munition work In this capacity he has caused grave dissatisfaction to the Ministry of Munitions."

Gruban's former friend went on to quote the reply he received from the Minister of Munitions:

"The Ministry of Munitions have decided in the interests of the output of munitions of war to appoint a supervisor to take charge of Messrs. Haigh, Gruban's business. The reasons for this decision are as follows:

1. The firm have frequently furnished incorrect information to the Ministry of Munitions.
2. They have frequently and deliberately ignored the instructions given by the Ministry for the purpose of expediting the output of machine tools.
3. They have instructed their sub-contractors to disobey the instructions of the Ministry.
4. There is a very strong presumption that they have deliberately attempted by various subterfuges to evade the regulations of the Ministry of Munitions as to the limitations of profits.
5. There is definite proof in some cases, and strong presumption in others, of acts of commercial dishonesty on the part of Mr. Gruban: for example, there is definite proof that Mr Gruban himself arranged for the payment of secret commissions to individual members of firms with which he was dealing.

The Ministry of Munitions are reluctant to take over the firm under the Defence of the Realm Regulations and have decided to appoint a supervisor. He will have no power to exclude Mr Gruban from the works until he commits some definite overt act of disobedience to his instructions, but it is, in the opinion of the Ministry, exceedingly probable that if Mr Gruban is left at large he will be able, and will endeavour to interfere with the management of the firm in such a way as to hinder the output of munitions. In the opinion of the Ministry, it is very desirable in the interests of the output of munitions that Mr Gruban should be interned. In this connection, it is important to remember that in the performance of his business he has been in a position to obtain information about the supply of munitions, the location of munition works and other matters affecting munitions of war which would be of considerable value to the enemy: for instance, he has necessarily had access to Woolwich Arsenal and other Government and private factories. This consideration appears make it very desirable that he should be left, since if he possesses any feelings of hostility towards this country they will naturally be accentuated by the action of the Ministry intervening in the management of his firm."

Up to the time of the outbreak of war Gruban was German by nationality and, there is no reason to doubt, also by sentiment. It is impossible to believe that the outbreak of war has made any change in his sympathies. It is clear that he is an able and unscrupulous man, and as is pointed out by the Ministry of Munitions, he has necessarily a very extensive knowledge of war in this country.

In the circumstances it is clear that while at large he is a danger to the public safety and it is recommended that he should be interned."

The order for Gruban's internment was made by the Secretary of State for the Home Office on March 25th 1916. Gruban and his lawyers appealed but on April 19th he was arrested in Oldham by the local police and escorted by train to St Mary's Institution, Cornwallis Road, Islington, a former workhouse which now served as an internment camp. Gruban's lawyers continued to protest about the internment and on May 16th he was granted bail in the sum of £250 and allowed to move to the Kenilworth Hotel in London. The conditions of his internment were that he resided only at a place approved by the Secretary of State, that he did not travel more than 20 miles without permission and that he did not own a motor car. The internment orders were completely revoked on August 2nd 1916 leaving Gruban free to consider what action he should take against Booth, who in his opinion had stolen Haigh, Gruban & Co. from him. He and his family took up residence in Kent, his wife declaring that she never wanted to visit Oldham again. Gruban lived in Kent for the rest of his life.

Since July 1915, when he had been more or less forced to hand Haigh, Gruban and Co. to Handel Booth, Gruban had received no income from the company. Even after the internment restrictions had been set on Gruban, Booth continued to write to the Home Office. In a letter of June 6th 1916 on the company's headed notepaper he stated:

"It is beyond doubt that Gruban conducted a considerable sale of German machines through this company from 1909 to 1913. Many of these machines were sold as of British make ... In view of this continuous and colossal fraud (which was unpatriotic and a gross misuse of our relations with Dominions beyond the seas) I need only express my opinion that it would be most dangerous to place Gruban in a position that he could escape to his native land."

Now that he was on bail Gruban sought to regain control of the company and the case of Gruban v Booth opened at the King's Bench Division of the High Court of Justice in London on May 7th 1917, Gruban was suing Booth for having fraudulently deprived him of his business in Oldham. It was very high profile and attracted huge public interest; Gruban, a German business man with interests in munitions against Handel Booth MP who claimed to have influence with David Lloyd George. The case lasted six days and was reported prominently in all the national newspapers, the case was so popular the barristers found it physically difficult to get into court each day. Although both parties were represented by eminent barristers of the day - Gruban by Patrick Hastings and Hubert Wallington, Booth by Rigby Swift and Douglas Hogg - the case was almost entirely one sided. The jury took just ten minutes to find in favour of Gruban and awarded him £4,750 damages. Booth appealed the damages but before the appeal could be heard in court the two sides agreed that Booth would pay Gruban £3,900. A statement said, *"Since the trial of the action certain facts have come to the knowledge of both parties which have given an entirely different complexion to the matters out of which the differences between them arose, and that it was considered that if such knowledge had been in their possession before the action was instituted such action would not have been brought"*. In January 1918 a case, largely fuelled by Booth's assertions, accusing Gruban of defrauding the Australian government by supplying wrongly labelled machinery was opened and dismissed.

Handel Booth MP had been publicly shamed, he kept his seat until the general election in

December 1918 but was not re-elected.

In April 1918 Gruban wrote an application for National Service which he forwarded to the Ministries of Reconstruction, Food, National Service, Labour and Agriculture as well as the War Office and the Board of Trade. He said: *"I respectfully ask ... that my services ... may be employed in the best possible interests of the state. I am a British subject, though of Saxon origin, in my 47th year. Whilst not physically strong, I am mentally very active."* He listed among his qualifications his linguistic knowledge, journalistic experience, office organisation, and *"an intimate knowledge of Foreign Engineering Markets, especially relating to German trade"*.

There are copies of three brief, polite refusals to Gruban's offer in the records in The National Archives but no evidence that Gruban's offer of service was accepted.

After the war the Gruban family settled in the south east of England. Liselotte May (1912), Eileen Olga (1913) and John Douglas (1915) were all born in Oldham and Patricia Ruth was born in Bromley, Kent in 1920. None of the children appears to have married, the three daughters all died in Kent, Liselotte in 1963, Eileen in 1994 and Patricia in 2005. John Douglas died in 1993 in Anglesey, he is mentioned in the London Gazette of August 3rd 1943 as having received a promotion in the Middlesex Command 1st Division of the Home Guard. Gruban hit hard times after the war. He set up as an engineer in Great Eastern Street, London and Chislehurst, Kent but was declared bankrupt in 1922. He set up a further company, Gruban Engineers Ltd., but was again declared bankrupt in 1940.

John George William Gruban died on Boxing Day 1950 aged 78 years, his wife Margaret, who was 10 years younger than him, died in 1967.

Sources: The National Archives HO 144/1327/255116
 The Times Newspaper Archive May 7th to 14th 1917
 The British Newspaper Archive

Editor's Note : If you have access to 'Find My Past' (at home or the Public Library), you can search their Newspaper Collection for June 1954, with the keyword 'Gruban', to find an article, written by Edgar Lustgarten. It is titled, *'Hastings Knocked the Smirk Off Handel Booth's Face - The Case That Set Him On The High Road to Success'*. Lustgarten (born in Salford in 1907) was well-known as a broadcaster and crime writer, including accounts of earlier court cases and investigations. This particular article is of Gruban's success in a court case, against the politician Handel Booth, in 1917, when represented by Patrick Hastings. Hastings was still a junior barrister, at the time, but one with a very successful career ahead of him.

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**The following newspaper transcript was sent to me by Mary Pendlebury, who is a founder member of the Branch.** It concerns the 'Brierly Map' which is a fascinating pictorial glimpse (drawn from memory) into Oldham in 1815. I love it because my own ancestor's butcher's shop, on Yorkshire Street, is named on it ... 'Steeple'.

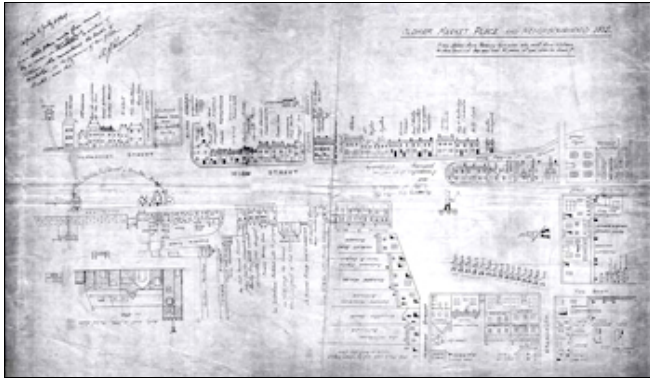
If you want to see the map in more detail, follow the link [HERE](#) to the Oldham HRG website. Several years ago the Map was featured in an exhibition at Oldham Local Studies & Archives Library, and its accompanying article, from the time, can be read after the newspaper transcript.

### ***A Glimpse of Oldham Life Long Ago***

The following letter, written by Mr. John P. Brierly, from Melbourne, to G. B. Neild, Esq., will be read with interest by our readers. The writer, in acknowledging the receipt of a newspaper containing an article on the "Good Old Times", proceeds to relate a little of his knowledge of men and manners in Oldham in 1812. He says: "My father, who was a partner in the firm of Whitehead, Gatley, and Brierley, hat manufacturers, Coldhurst, where I was born, removed into the Market-place. I went to school kept by old Mother Pimley, in a row of old stone houses. The school was next above Mary Mellor's, off Cockhouse-fold. Sarah Goose, old clothes dealer,



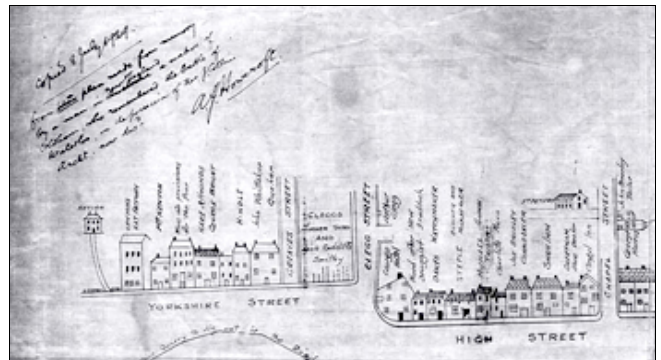
and her son John, lived in the same row above. On the opposite side was another row of old stone houses, the two next to Garden-pit were thatched. Bullock and Cupid, greengrocers, lived opposite, and next below lived my great uncle Joseph Scholes, (the celebrated “Big Dody”) who weighed 36 stone, and was carried to his grave not shoulder height, but by twelve bearers at a time, with extra sticks under the bier. He died in 1814. I knew him, as he came almost daily to our house.



Brierley Map

I went to the school before mentioned from 1813 to 1816. At that time I used to fetch flour from old John Taylor’s of Primrose-bank, at 6s. per peck; meal, 4s.6d.; both very unsound and bad – not at all the yeast that “Berm Billy” could bring (he went three times a week to Manchester, and carried a canful on his head, and brought second hand newspapers and sold them for 4d. – the first price 7d.) nor all the cossing of the mug of dough at old Dan Mills’ could get it to rise.

Never a harder working woman than Mrs. Mills, baker. Treacle was then 4d.; salt, 4d. There was a duty of 3½ d. per pound on salt, but there were so many excisemen to prevent smuggling that it cost 3¾ d. to collect 3½ d. So the duty was abolished to the great surprise and gladness of poor people. Trade was very bad at that time, and a great many people were starving. One man at Heyside, who kept many apprentices at hand-loom weaving, was “had up” for illusage to them. He had a piece of bacon tied to a string which they sucked in turns to get their potatoes “down”. Many other cases I could relate, but I don’t want the poor people of this day to see the same bad times. In a few years things improved; in fact, I have seen many ups and downs in trade. In 1817 I went to the London schoolmaster Blaymire, in Duke-street – a very strict and clever man – and left July 17<sup>th</sup> 1819, to commence working. I had melted the glue (all hats were stiffened with glue then) on August 16<sup>th</sup> in that year, and left it to see the processions from Lees, Mossley, and other places go to Peterloo, Manchester. I had for schoolmates at Blaymire’s John and Robert Whitehead, Winterbottom, Okell and Simpson (Hollinwood), Lees Wrigley (Copster-hill), Maiden (Bardsley-brow), John Earnshaw (Glodwick), and John Beckett, Robert and James Taylor (Vineyard), Wild (Mount-pleasant), Brideoak (Waterhead), William and George Barlow (Rhodes), Arthur Clegg’s and Abel Fielding’s sons (Dolstile), Henry Gatley (Nook), my old friend John Holden (of Highlands, who always sat next to me), Daniel and William Evans, and Andrew (of Edge-lane), and Michael Morton (of Streetbridge), and a host of others – Bamfords, Hadfields, Cleggs, Chadwicks, Tetlows, Rowlands, Taylors, Schofields, and Mellors. I see by the paper my old friend and schoolmate Mr. Thomas Mellor is still alive. He is a clever, well-educated man. I used to go with Tom’s cousin, John Summerscales, to the old church. He sat in the gallery. I remember the iron spiked bars that divided the singers, Peter Blaze and others, from the musicians, Jonathan Galloway, Thomas Whitehead, and others, to prevent them from fighting. The names of the scholars will show the names of the families 61 years ago who could afford to pay 7d. a week, and the distance they came. No schools here like those in the good old times, when we had to fetch all drinking water from Nook or Moo Meadow well or Swineclough. I have fetched hundreds, if not thousands, of cans full on my head (and in slippy weather down it would come over your fustian, and then you would soon be covered with icicles), before the waterworks



Brierley Map - Top Left

were made; and before the gasworks were made, if we turned out after dark we took a swing lantern with horn instead of glass in it. If you met another party with one, what with fear and old women's tales you were sure to see ghosts, hobgoblins, or witches until the hair of the lads stood on end through fright. I used to play football on Boardman ground, when it was all fields from Pig-street to Rowland's factory on both sides. There was a barn near the top of Grosvenor-street, with large stone pillars for entrance gates to the hall, opposite Thomas Heywood's, Bent. Old Rowley, wheelwright, and Joseph Chadwick, lived there. His sons, John and Benjamin, and myself, used to play together, and they were better than me at running. I knew Riley, "the Itinerant"; Taylor, the Royton poet; Nicholson, of Lees; Sam Bamford, of Middleton; John Scholes, author of "The Bridal of Naworth" &c.; James Butterworth, and Edwin, his son, historians; old Richard Herd (poet), of Oldham then, now of Howgill, and all the old people from Colonel Lees to old Bob Farrand.

Now I will say a few words on this new country. When I arrived here, more than a quarter of a century ago, there was not a street in Melbourne flagged, and I did not see a cab in Hotham, then a part of the city. Now there is an omnibus every six minutes past my door, and twice as many cabs. Forty-five years since there was not a white man in the colony, now Melbourne is one of the handsomest cities in the world. I have seen London, Paris, Dublin, and most of the large towns in England, &c. the exhibition – a large handsome building – opens on the 1<sup>st</sup> of October, but I will leave others to describe it.

I have sent you a sample of flowers grown in my little garden in the winter – all flowers, lilies, &c., grow all the year round.

Meat is cheap here: 1d. to 2d. per lb. for mutton, 1½ d to 3d. for beef., prime; inferior half-price. Bread, 2d, per lb. to 2½d.; rabbits, 3d. to 6d.; hares, 1s. 6d. to 2s. Rents are high. Trade is bad, and there are many out of employment. Government is employing 1,200 men at 6s. per day, who would otherwise be out of employment, and will reduce wages to 4s. per day.

I was just thinking I knew James Butterworth when he kept the post-office below the Spread Eagle. All letters were 7d.: if double 1s. 3d. The post-office was removed at his death to the Market-place, to the shop occupied by Mr. R. Lord, whose father was here yesterday. I let him a paddock more than two and a quarter miles round, and he owns more than double the size of mine, so he owns more acres than there is in the township he was born in – Royton. He has a good house; cow stalls for 40 or 50; sometimes, he milks 70 or 80; and he makes cheese and butter. All this he has got by working hard night and morning.

Remember me to all my friends. I am laid up in the house, having knocked the skin off my shin by accident, so I have time to think and write about old and new times; only, a fast writer, sometimes I put the cart before the horse. Should any person want information, I can give, I shall be glad to give it.

From your old friend, John P. Brierly  
Lothian-street, Hotham, August 25<sup>th</sup>, 1880.

## **Article accompanying the Local Studies & Archives Exhibition of some years ago :**

### ***Thoughts from abroad ... Oldham before 1849 ... John Phillips Brierly***

The man...

These maps were drawn by John Phillips Brierly (1809 -1895). Born at Nook, near Oldham, he was schooled in the town, and helped in his father's hat trade there. His was a time of rapid social, commercial and political change. He witnessed the Peterloo processions of 1819 and, in 1832, voted in Oldham's first general election.

The industrialisation of cotton spinning drew waves of immigrants into new towns such as Oldham. By mid-century, the local population had increased four fold, and the town was booming. There was agitation to replace the unelected Police Commissioners with an elected Council. John Phillips Brierly was a Commissioner himself - in 1839, he chaired their meeting which approved the building of Oldham's first Town Hall. Nonetheless, he supported the new

Incorporation Committee which successfully gained Oldham's first Charter in 1849. In 1851, he was working in partnership with two brothers, as a "Hat Manufacturer Master", employing "22 Hatters and 110 in Cotton Mills". Yet before the end of the decade, he emigrated to Victoria, Australia. Why would such a man do this? Gold had been discovered in Victoria, which became besieged by fortune seekers. Nothing tells us why Brierly left his home town - but was he, too, struck by "Gold Fever"? Or was he discouraged by new restrictions on employment practices?

All in all, John Phillips Brierly seems to have been a man of some standing. Like so many prominent local people of history, though, his life can now only be constructed from scarce snippets of information and inferences. Using this exhibition, *[Editor's note ... the exhibition referred to was several years ago]* and the Local Studies and Archives resources held here, can you help us to add more to his story?

...and his maps

John Phillips Brierly's two maps of Oldham are the earliest known to show the town centre in such detail. They depict the scene on "Rejoicing Day" after the Battle of Waterloo, in 1815. We do not know when the maps were created, but Brierly says that he drew them from memory : "I remember it as well as yesterday". They were certainly made after 1836, and possibly as late as 1883 -1886, in response to requests for family history information.

Brierly was not very happy with his drawings :- "I was nearly burning this sketch it is such a botch". Despite this, recent research has shown that they are quite accurate, as far as we can tell. Many details match other contemporary sources held in Oldham's Local Studies and Archives collections.

In 1929, A. J. Howcroft, an architect, local historian, and Mayor of Oldham, copied the maps. He may have been inspired to do so by the reprinting of Joseph Brierly's family history that year. Oldham Local Studies Library had long held a photograph of Howcroft's copy, without knowing its history. Another copy of the maps has recently been acquired by local artist Gary Millward. He has used it as a reference for new drawings of how Oldham might have looked in 1815.

In 1995, the original maps were unexpectedly brought to the notice of Oldham MBC by Timothy Brierly, great-grandson of the family historian, Joseph. They were then very generously donated to Oldham Local Studies and Archives by Mr Brierly's cousin, Mrs E. Blaxland, on behalf of the family.

*Copy of article, Courtesy of Oldham Local Studies & Archives.*

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Answers to last month's QUIZ

- 1 What do the following abbreviations stand for?
TNA **THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES**
IWM **IMPERIAL WAR MUSEUM**
CWGC **COMMONWEALTH WAR GRAVES COMMISSON**
WSPU **WOMEN'S SOCIAL & POLITICAL UNION**
ILP **INDEPENDENT LABOUR PARTY**
RFC **ROYAL FLYING CORPS**
- 2 Whose Diaries survive which document the daily happenings in Oldham in the late 18th and early 19th Centuries? ans : **WILLIAM ROWBOTTOM**
- 3 The Butterworth father and son, who were published writers and local historians in the early 19th century, were called?
Father's name : **JAMES**
Son's name : **EDWIN**

- 4 As what were Members of the WSPU known, after 1906?
ans: **SUFFRAGETTES**
- 5 Who was Oldham's first Lady Mayor in 1910?
ans: **DAME SARAH LEES**
- 6 Failsworth, Chadderton and Oldham twinned with European towns in the 2nd half of the 20th Century. Can you name them?
Failsworth **LANDSBURG AM LECH (GERMANY)**
Chadderton **GEESTHACHT (GERMANY)**
Oldham **KRANJ (SLOVENIA)**
- 7 What was the day, date, month and year of the Peterloo Massacre?
Weekday **MONDAY**
Day date **16th**
Month **AUGUST**
Year **1819**
- 8 What was the name of the Oldham man who died of his injuries at Peterloo, and whose subsequent inquest became of national importance?
ans: **JOHN LEES**
- 9 For what event did 'Egbert' visit Oldham in 1918?
ans: **TANK WEEK**
- 10 The 'cotton famine' in Lancashire was the result of which war?
ans: **AMERICAN CIVIL WAR (1861 - 1865)**
- 11 In which year did Oldham receive the Royal Charter of Incorporation in which Oldham became a Municipal Borough?
1832 1838 1841 1845 **1849**
- 12 In which year did Oldham gain the right to return two Members of Parliament to Westminster?
1796 1811 **1832** 1839
- 13 Percy Bysshe Shelley wrote a poem, following Peterloo, which wasn't published until 1832 as the content was considered too inflammatory. What was it called?
ans: **THE MASQUE OF ANARCHY**
- 14 In which country did the Oldham Comrades spend 1918?
ans: **ITALY**
- 15 Which hatmaker's name is associated with two bequests, each of £20,000, to endow both a Bluecoat School in Oldham and a Blind Asylum in Manchester?
- 16 What do Nile, Lily, Briar, Marlborough, Windsor and Durban all have in common?
ans: **ALL ARE MILLS**
- 17 Which local newspaper began publication in Oldham in 1854?
ans: **[OLDHAM] CHRONICLE**

- 18 On which hamlet was Ben Brierley's 'Daisy Nook' (in his writings) based?
ans: **WATERHOUSES**
- 19 In which town was Ben Brierley born?
ans: **FAILSWORTH**
- 20 Can you name the four 'Meres' of Saddleworth?
ans: **QUICKMERE**
ans: **LORDSMERE**
ans: **FRIARMERE**
ans: **SHAWMERE**
- 21 Can you unscramble these historic local placenames ?
REDHEESGO 2 words **SHORE EDGE**
AATGHEG ... **HAGGATE**
ETLMRAMIWHAE LA 3 words **WATER HEAD MILL**
ENERCSAREG ... **GREENACRES**
OFLSDCIETK ... **STOCKFIELD**
ELOAOTRW ... **WATERLOO**
OEBNIKLOMN ... **NIMBLENOOK**
WHSEAHSPSEE ... **SHEEPWASHES**
LE GUEERNBTR 2 words **BUTLER GREEN**

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### From the e-Postbag

**This email came from Gordon Lees**, a friend and fellow member of the Oldham Historical Research Group. He's titled it, **'Eighty Years on, from June 1940'**: It is intended for inclusion on the Oldham HRG website but I know it will also be of interest to many of our newsletter readers.

Hi Sheila,

I think this link [HERE](#) would be of interest to our history pages and far more than I could write comprehensively.

I will add to it later, as we had one of the boys, Leonard Marquis, living with us.

When he got home again and got married he had a bungalow on Braye Road in Guernsey and called it '*Cleveleys*' because we holidayed over there some time during the war and coming from a small island he loved it.

His brother Geoffrey, who was a bit younger, lived on Manley Road nearby with a lady called Mrs. Smith, who I don't think had any children.

Other boys lived in our area as it was near Hulme Grammar.

Leonard, on the 1942 photo is far left and the 2nd row down from the back. He is distinctive as his hair is parted on the right and you can see his tie.

It is harder to find Geoffrey as we have no photo of him, to compare, when he was younger.

Many thanks Gordon, I found it a really interesting article. I'm going to look forward to whatever more you send for me to add to it.

~~~~~

A second email from Gordon Lees,

"Captain Tom Moore : RAF flypast in veteran's honour

Two wartime RAF planes have flown over Captain Tom Moore's home to honour the war veteran and fundraiser on his 100th birthday.

He watched as the Hurricane and Spitfire flew overhead."

BBC news headline

Sheila,

Whenever I see these "iconic" machines still flying I wonder how many people in our Town think, my Dad/Grandad could have made part of the two that are still flying. Well, maybe I can. My Dad, Asa Lees was a sheetmetal worker and I became one as well during the 1950's. With all the cotton mills in Oldham, and especially textile machine makers like Platt's/Asa Lees (no relation I add!), and other firms, there were many small firms in the area making and repairing products for the mills. So, when the 2nd WW happened, many of these little companies turned to making Aeroplane parts for Spitfires, Hurricanes and, later, the Lancaster, a bomber, with Avro's being nearby.

The aluminium and other metals were allocated to bonded warehouses, by the Government, for each company.

Dad worked at one such firm at the bottom of Lee Street (near Manchester Street) called Fielding's, in what, I presume, had been an old mill. My elder brother and I used to take his dinner at Saturday lunch time because of all the long hours they worked.

Other people that worked with the skilled men were people from other walks of life who were sort 'conscripted', their normal employment not being considered to be essential. I seem to remember Dad complaining about one being a solicitor, who became an inspector, and rejected some of his work, for some minor snag, regarding rivets which were holding two pieces together, and it was not to his satisfaction.

A lot of women were also trained as helpers to hold / assist in riveting by holding 'weights', which were blocks of steel, at the back of difficult parts, and for which four hands were needed. Two of these ladies were daughters of Granelli's who had a shop on Manchester Street making ice cream. And after the war finished, when we were out with Dad on the market, he ,visit the 'cart' to buy an ice cream for my sister and myself and have a chat.

Prior to the war starting, Dad was secretary to the Oldham Branch of the Sheetmetal Workers' Union, (part time) with membership well over 1200 in the area. His salary was the annual sum of £30. If he was called out on disputes with some of the committee, they were recompensed, for lost time. I would think that became a sore point, many a time, with whoever he was working for.

After the war, during the late 1940s, this post became a full time job with fewer members but I think by then Dad had had enough and did not fancy the job anymore.

Before the war started all unions had meetings in Birmingham with the board of Trade including (Ernest Bevin?) who laid down a lot of rules so every one knew exactly where the unions stood, to avoid any trouble.

Trust my thoughts are some use to anyone who is interested,
Gordon.

Many thanks again, Gordon, for another really interesting piece.

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**A small selection from the May entries, on the MLFHS Facebook page, [HERE](#). ..**

**North West Film Archive**

**A Film A Day**

LS Lowry - the Industrial Artist famous for his matchstick figures and mills scenes but actually a fascinating figure - seen here at work and talking about his work at home in Mottram. See it from the BFI player [HERE](#)

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## **Your film today from NWFA - 'A Day in the Life of Bolton'**

### **A Day In The Life Of Bolton (c.1927)**

VIMEO.COM

A Day In The Life Of Bolton (c.1927)

The first of a proposed Lancashire Town Series of films made by First National Pathe, detailing scenes of daily life in Bolton. Featuring footage of primarily female workers arriving for work at a large cotton mill, children at the Oxford Grove School, the police force directing traffic and firemen at work. Male workers are seen leaving the iron and steel works and there are views of the town's busy streets and the Town Hall. A society wedding, the Annual Police Sports day and junior boxing bring the film to an end. Sponsored by Lewis's of Manchester department store. [HERE](#)

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## **Happy memories of Belle Vue**

Welcome to Belle Vue · Virtual Belle Vue

Welcome to Virtual Belle Vue, Chetham's Library's digital archive of Belle Vue Gardens. [HERE](#)  
Explore over one hundred years of manuscripts and ephemera from Manchester's legendary pleasure garden or just use the search box at the top of the page.

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## **Archives + latest Online Memory Box**

Wythenshawe

[HERE](#)

\*\*\*\*\*

## **North West Sound Heritage ... Saving thousands of at-risk audio recordings across the North West of England**

Domestic Service Interviews from the Manchester Studies Oral History collection [HERE](#)

Household servants, dated 1900. (m08148) [note: The photograph was taken earlier than many of the interviewees would have been working, but the image gives an insight into the uniform they may have.

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## **An MP and an Epidemic in Civil War London**

EARLY MODERN HISTORY, HEALTH AND MEDICINE, JAMES I TO RESTORATION

As we face challenges unfamiliar in modern times, our director, Dr Stephen Roberts, looks back at one parliamentary diarist's response to disease in the community around him. [HERE](#)

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## **The Northern Quota ... News Live from Manchester**

**James Niven: the doctor who saved Manchester from worst effects of Spanish flu pandemic.** [HERE](#)

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**Each week Archives+ will publish a memory box for an area in Manchester**, this week our archive collections cover Manchester City Centre and the surrounding area. Below you will find a collection of images from the City Centre, alongside 6 worksheets. The worksheets are set around 6 themes: Industry, Place, Health and Living Conditions, Pastimes, Radical Thinking, Communities. Using the worksheets as prompts to start up a conversation, write down your findings on a piece of paper, or if you prefer type into a tablet or PC.

For more information see the Archives+ blog post [HERE](#)

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## Street Games We Used To Play

VIMEO.COM

Film No. 5294 Title: STREET GAMES WE USED TO PLAY Producer: Sam Hann [HERE](#)

Street games played by boys and girls in 1950s Burnley. Children are seen playing games that include conkers, leapfrog, cards, marbles, hopscotch, skipping and hoop and stick. There are improvised and adapted versions of jacks, rounders and football, plus other imaginative games using the urban environment of cobbled streets, pavements, alleyways, waste ground, lampposts and walls.

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For so much more, visit the MLFHS Facebook Page :[HERE](#)

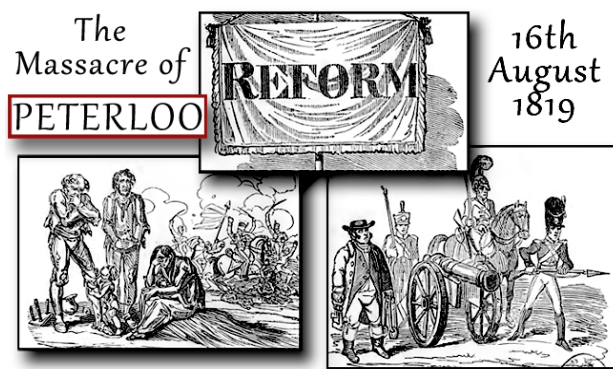
And [HERE](#) is the link to the MLFHS Twitter page.

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## PETERLOO : the Bi-Centenary

Visit the website for **The Peterloo Project** with particular reference to Oldham, people, accounts, life at the time and more ...



at [Peterloo-Manchester](#)

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Although the long-anticipated Bi-Centenary has come and gone, there are some Peterloo websites still active with news, photos and reports.

You can make searches on websites such as :

Manchester Histories - Peterloo 1819 ... Manchester Histories have created a website which publicises all that is happening, or has happened, around the region.

Visit their website [HERE](#)

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

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## Need Help!

**Oldham Local Studies and Archives - CLOSED until further notice.**

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

There are regular Family History Advice Sessions every Monday and Wednesday afternoons from 2-4pm.

There's no need to book. Just turn up with all the information you have and the resident family

history experts will be on hand to help.

Archives are unique, original documents created in the course of everyday activities. Oldham's date from 1597 and cover an enormous range of subjects and activities :

- Hospital records
- Poor Law Union records
- Coroners Court records
- Local Authority records including Chadderton, Crompton, Failsworth, Lees, Oldham, Royton and Saddleworth
- Schools and education records
- Records for statutory bodies like the police force
- Church and religious records
- Business records
- Solicitors and estate agents records
- Trade unions and associations records
- Co-operative Society records
- Sports, entertainment and leisure records
- Personal, family and property records
- Society and Association records
- Records of Oldham communities

There is no charge to look at archival records although you would need to bring proof of your name and address (e.g. your driving licence) to do so.

Most archives can be produced immediately, with no advance booking required. However, some archives are stored off-site, in which case at least 2 days' notice is required in order to see them.

**Other archives may be closed due to their fragile condition, or because they contain confidential information.**

There are regularly changing displays in the Local Studies Library.

[Opening hours](#) and contact details.

## Website Links

### Other Society Websites

Catholic Family History Society – [www.catholicfhs.co.uk](http://www.catholicfhs.co.uk)

Cheshire Local History Association – [www.cheshirehistory.org.uk](http://www.cheshirehistory.org.uk)

Chadderton Historical Society (archived website) – [www.chadderton-historical-society.org.uk](http://www.chadderton-historical-society.org.uk)

Lancashire Family History and Heraldry Society - <https://www.lfhhs.org.uk/home.php>

Lancashire Local History Federation – [www.lancashirehistory.org](http://www.lancashirehistory.org)

Liverpool and South West Lancashire FHS – [www.lswlfhs.org.uk](http://www.lswlfhs.org.uk)

Manchester Region Industrial Archaeology Society – [www.mrias.co.uk](http://www.mrias.co.uk)

Oldham Historical Research Group – [www.pixnet.co.uk/Oldham-hrg](http://www.pixnet.co.uk/Oldham-hrg)

Peterloo - [Peterloo-Manchester](#)

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

Royton Local History Society – [www.rlhs.co.uk](http://www.rlhs.co.uk)

Saddleworth Historical Society – [www.saddleworth-historical-society.org.uk](http://www.saddleworth-historical-society.org.uk)

Tameside Local History Forum - [www.tamesidehistoryforum.org.uk](http://www.tamesidehistoryforum.org.uk)

### Some Useful Sites

GENUKI - [Lancashire](#)

Free BMD - [Search](#)

[National Library of Scotland](#) - Free to view, historic, zoomable maps of UK :  
1891 - Oldham and locality [HERE](#)

Online Parish Clerk Project : Lancashire - [HERE](#)

British Association for Local History - [HERE](#)  
and for their back issue journal downloads - [HERE](#)

Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire, website, [HERE](#)  
and for their back issue journal downloads, website, [HERE](#)

Internet Archive ... The Internet Archive offers over **24,000,000** freely downloadable books and texts.  
[HERE](#)

There is also a collection of 1.3 million modern eBooks that may be borrowed by anyone with a free archive.org account.

### Some Local Archives

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

Birkenhead – [Local & Family History](#)

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

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

Derbyshire - [Local & Family History](#)

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

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

Manchester - [Archives & Local History](#)

Oldham - [Local Studies & Archives](#)

Oldham - [Oldham Council Heritage Collections](#)

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

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

Tameside Local Studies and Archives - <https://www.tameside.gov.uk/archives>

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





## FAILSWORTH WESLEYAN METHODIST CHURCH

### AMATEUR THEATRICALS

In the 1920s, the Wesleyan Church Group produced a series of amateur theatricals, including *"Dogs of Devon"*, *'The Magic Cup'*, *Erminie* in 1928, and *'The Emerald Isle'* in 1929.

Photographs from those productions, below.

Photographs in the collection of Martin Goodyear



'The Dogs of Devon'



'The Emerald Isle'



