LANCASHIRE LOCAL HISTORY FEDERATION

NEWSLETTER
ISSUE NO. 31, May 2020

COPY DATE FOR NEXT EDITION: 1ST AUGUST

Editor (pro tem) Marianne Howell
01942 492855 mariannerh@hotmail.co.uk

Honorary President: Morris Garratt

Chair: Marianne Howell	01942 492855
Secretary: John Wilson	03330 062270
Treasurer: Peter Bamford	01253 796184
Membership Secretary: Zoe Lawson	01772 865347
Website Manager: Peter Houghton	01772 641604

Please see the website www.lancashirehistory.org for more contact details.

View from the Chair

As you read this newsletter you will not need any reminder of the extraordinary circumstances brought about by a new coronavirus, COVID-19. I hope that all of you, your family and friends and members of all our societies are coping with anxiety, uncertainty and, in some cases, illness or concern about others.

Naturally, societies are unable to plan ahead with any certainty about dates, so this newsletter is different from the normal format. There are items giving information about activities which can be done at home, as well as interesting research articles.

May I remind those of you who receive the newsletter on behalf of your society that it should be distributed to all members.

My sincere wish is that by the time of the next newsletter we can see some return to normal life and activities.

Marianne

FEDERATION SPRING DAY CONFERENCE 29 FEBRUARY 2020

Sounds of Lancashire: music, song and poetry through history

The day conference was held at Burnley Masonic Hall. Each year a different aspect of local history is chosen. As usually happens, the four very different presentations combined to make for an interesting and informative day.

Prof Dave Russell 'Key workers: a history of private music teachers in England, c. 1861-c. 1921 Dave has researched the subject extensively, using information from censuses and directories, to add to what is a sparsely studied topic. He emphasised how great was the interest in music during this period, and what a large number of people were employed. By 1901, there was an average ratio of 1 musician and/or teacher per 750 of the population. Music was played at home, in churches and in concert halls

Although the larger middle class towns usually had more music teachers, it was not unusual for working class parents to spend a comparatively large amount on music education for their children. Piano was the instrument most widely taught, and some teachers included harmony and counterpoint in their curriculum. Most teachers were women, British and from their local area. It was easy to become a music teacher, although gradually there was a move to impose more professional standards.

Dr Simon Rennie: Songs of the distress: poetry of the Lancashire Cotton Famine 1861-65 Simon has embarked on a project to collate and interpret the poems, many of which he has researched in the collections at Burnley library. Over 700 have been dealt with so far.

The cotton famine was caused by over-production at a time when world markets were contracting, coinciding with the interruption of supply because of the American Civil War. 'Famine' referred to the dearth of cotton, and to the extreme hardship caused to mill workers. By 1863, half the population of Preston was receiving relief.

The poems were disseminated by an increasing number of local newspapers. Some of the poems addressed the war itself, showing opinion was divided about which side to support. Many were written in dialect by ordinary people and by men such as Samuel Bamford, William Billington, Edwin Waugh and Samuel Laycock. Simon showed that some dialect words used are of great antiquity, showing their Norse origin.

Recently there has been a renewed interest in dialect in articles in national newspapers. A folk group, Faustus, has been inspired to produce 5 songs on a CD 'Cotton lords'. More details of the project can be found at http://cottonfaminepoetry.exeter.ac.uk/.

Dr Stephen Etheridge: Southern Pennine brass bands c.1840-1914: inventing myths of northernness and class in an industrial landscape Brass bands grew out of different kinds of bands, using woodwind and percussion. By 1886 Musical World magazine claimed that it was the height of ambition for a lad to play in a brass band. Although there were bands in different parts of the country, the majority were

found in the north, where industries such as wool & cotton and mining & quarrying predominated. Many bands rehearsed in pubs and halls, often consisting of men who worked together, and they then performed in different locations and at various kinds of events.

Army bands were funded by the military, and Stephen presented images which showed how civilian bands adopted similar kinds of uniform.

There was a large social aspect connected with the bands, often with whole families involved. Some had women's committees - to provide refreshments, look after the uniforms, sell tickets and raise money. Instruments were expensive, so sometimes the fundraising was needed to pay off unsecured loans. Northern bands performed and won competitions in the south, and were often perceived to be superior. Although many parts of the north are post-industrial, many bands continue and thrive.

Jennifer Reid: Manchester broadside ballads and Lancashire dialect: at home and abroad Many ballads were printed on broadsides in the 19th century. These were large sheets of paper printed on one side so that they could be pasted up in prominent places. They would include woodcut images which were not always relevant to the text. Frequent themes were love, deception, workers' struggles and the woes of industrialisation. 'Long song sellers' would stand on street corners or in pubs, singing a few verses of a song, which would entice people to buy a song from the roll of paper.

One of the most well-known ballads was 'Come whoam to thi childer an me' by Edwin Waugh (part of which Jennifer sang). This was taken up by Baroness Burdett-Coutts, an immensely wealthy philanthropist, who printed and distributed many copies.

On her visits to Bangladesh, Jennifer has visited weavers and mills, and recorded songs by local people. She illustrated her talk with singing some Lancashire ballads, playing some of her Bangladesh recordings, and drawing parallels between the lives of mill workers in Victorian Lancashire and the current hardships of workers in Bangladesh. One similarity is between Thomas Hood's 'Song of the Shirt' and work produced after the disastrous Rana Plaza collapse in Dhaka.

As well as singing, Jennifer treated the audience to a traditional Lancashire clog dance, which was a great way to round off a very successful and interesting day conference.

NEWS FROM ARCHIVES

LANCASHIRE ARCHIVES

***Jacquie Crosby writes*:** We had a wonderful 80th birthday celebration on 1 March with over 200 people. Some had never been here before and some had travelled quite a distance – Wales and Sheffield for example – but everyone had a good time. Our Friends made more than £500 and I'd like to thank them, my staff and everyone else who helped.

During our enforced closure, we are still answering emailed and written enquiries, hoping to encourage people to collect COVID-19 material (more details below), and planning for restoring some sort of service in the future. At the moment we have no idea when that will be or what government guidance will need to be followed. It is however almost certain that it will involve appointments and pre-ordering, and that all books and documents will have to be quarantined after use. For further information why not sign up to the monthly *News from the Archives* by emailing archives@lancashire.gov.uk.

David Tilsley, Senior Archivist, *requests your participation in a topical project*

Lancashire and the COVID-19 Pandemic

Local historians can help future generations understand the effect of COVID-19 on everyday life in Lancashire by adding to a new collection at the Archives. Our nine miles of shelving hold the county's history from 1115 until now, told in millions of documents created by Lancashire people, from parchment medieval court rolls to digital sound recordings.

We are now living through another important chapter in Lancashire's story and we need your help to make sure it can be understood in the future. We'd like to know how the pandemic has changed things for you and how you feel about it.

Can you **write down** for us what life is like for you at the moment because of the COVID-19 pandemic, or make a **sound** or short **video recording**?

If you want to **write**, this could be an extended day-by-day diary, something much shorter about a single day or event, or just about how things are generally. If you want to put it in a poem, that would be great. There is no need to worry too much about spelling or grammar – it's certainly not a test! Your story is what's important.

We want to hear from people of all ages, so please encourage children and grandchildren to have a go too.

You might also have taken **photographs** that show what life has been like at home, work or where you live; it would be great to have copies of these too. Please ensure that anyone who may appear in the image is either happy to be photographed or is unidentifiable.

We would also like your help in collecting **other material** that you might come across such as:

- leaflets, flyers or posters about the pandemic from district, parish or town councils;
- material from local business relating to closures or changes to how they operate;
- advice from local organisations about hygiene, social distancing and self-isolation;
- information about community efforts to help vulnerable and isolated persons;
- information from local schools regarding closures and home-schooling

Please send any contributions or questions to: archives@lancashire.gov.uk or, for hard copy to: Lancashire Archives, Bow Lane, Preston, PR1 2RE.

Please include your name, age and the place where you live (not your full address).

Please contact us if you have digital files which are too large to email.

What we receive will be kept safe for the future and made available for other people to look at and listen to. Your name and age will be included unless you ask for it to be left out. If you want to restrict public access to your contribution for a while, please let us know.

If you decide to take part, please do not risk your own or anyone else's health whilst gathering this material. All government guidelines regarding hygiene, social distancing and self-isolation should be followed.

Proposal to digitise maps from collections in Lancashire, Cumbria and Cheshire. An update from the steering group on the proposed project to digitise the tithe maps of (old) Lancashire, Cumbria and Cheshire:

After the first expression of interest to the National Lottery Heritage Fund was rejected in May 2019, a revised submission was made in September last year. As a result, NLHF invited an application for funding by 31 October 2020. A meeting with the NLHF engagement manager revealed that they require a lot more consultation work before then. The project is now called **North West Explorer: discover the streets, hills, rivers and fields.**

CHESHIRE ARCHIVES

Cheshire's archives: a story shared The project to relocate the service, create two new centres in Chester and Crewe, and help people share Cheshire's history across the county, recently received permission to start from the National Lottery Heritage Fund. This phase of the project is to develop detailed plans, leading to a further funding application in 2021. The timetable for this phase of the project will inevitably be affected by restrictions on day to day life at present but updates will be available via www.cheshirearchives.org.uk, social media and a regular newsletter.

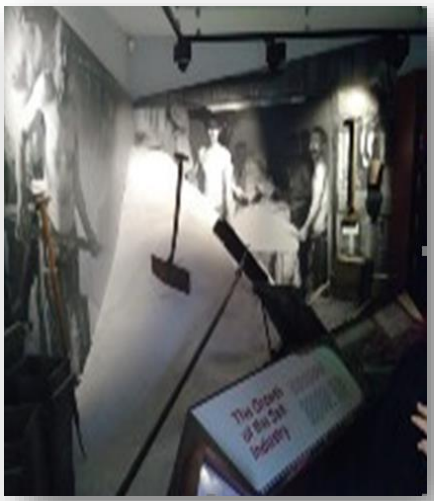
The Cheshire First World War Servicemen's Index is now complete. Over the last four years nearly 50 volunteers have been working remotely to transcribe the contents of the spring 1919 Absent Voters' Lists for all nine Cheshire constituencies.

The lists are an invaluable resource for anyone seeking ancestors serving in the First World War. Names, addresses, ranks, regimental numbers, units and notes relating to each serviceman and -woman have been extracted and added to a searchable database, which has over 40,000 entries. There is a video showing how to use the database.

NEWS FROM SOCIETIES

REGIONAL HERITAGE CENTRE

The new-look **website** is live, including a new logo. Through the website it is possible to book places on study days, make donations as a Friend or Patron, buy a publication, or enquire about consultation services. A new feature is event listings. External events will be publicised in the newsletter via a link to the originator, so that it will be up-to-date whenever the newsletter is read.



The latest meeting of the **North West Heritage Networking Forum**, supported by the RHC, took place at the Lion Salt Works, near Nantwich, in early February. This event gave members of the network (mainly trustees and officers of Friends' groups in the sector, plus the professionals they work with) an opportunity to hear a presentation about the process of rescuing the salt works from oblivion following its closure as a commercial business in the mid-1980s. The Lion Salt Works Trust worked with various local authorities to bring about the thriving heritage attraction (and community hub) that now exists.

A panel discussion included some top tips for other organisations plus glimpses of future plans – including bringing salt-making back to the site on a regular basis. The formal part of the meeting was followed by a fascinating tour of the venue – it is well worth a visit if you are in Cheshire or are looking for an interesting day out in the region. A report of the meeting will shortly appear on the new online discussion space that the RHC has set up for the Network. If you are actively involved in

heritage, especially around organisational strategy, and are not already a member you are welcome to join the mailing list. Please email nw-heritage-network@lancaster.ac.uk and do let others know about this valuable new resource for heritage organisations across the region.

SALFORD LOCAL HISTORY FORUM

A new lottery funded website about Eccles Old Road has been launched, focussing on the people and places associated with this historic route through the former township of Pendleton.

ECCLES OLD ROAD
Uncovering Salford's Lost Heritage

The authors have researched the area from its earliest times, unearthing new material about the road, its inhabitants, their occupations, families, homes and businesses. Research has been undertaken in private and public collections, archives and museums across the north west and beyond.

Census returns, newspaper reports, obituaries, wills and other historic documents, plus maps, plans and photographs give a new understanding of this area of the city of Salford. Website visitors can also access related family trees via a link to Ancestry.

A contact form is included on the website, and contributions and comments are welcome. The website will be updated regularly. It can be viewed on mobiles, tablets and computers at www.ecclesoldroad.uk.

TAMESIDE LOCAL HISTORY FORUM

Ashton Court Leet chair

In 2011 Tameside Local History Forum raised the money to buy the Ashton Court Leet chair, which was being sold at auction, to ensure its preservation in the Ashton area. In the Forum's twentieth anniversary year this chair is being displayed at Ashton Parish Church. Ashton-under-Lyne's manorial court met twice a year until the 1870s and then once a year until it was dissolved in the 1950s. Here the Lord of the Manor's Steward would sit dispensing justice, mostly in civil disputes between neighbours, but also petty criminal offences. The chair is nearly 200 years old and bears the Earl of Stamford's Crest.

Saturday 5th September 2020 will see a celebration of the 20th anniversary of the Forum at Ryecroft Hall, Audenshaw. There will be a series of talks and the various groups will have displays of their work and events - see the Forum website for more details. It will be followed by Heritage Open Days when a range of venues in Tameside will be open for visitors and special events. This will be an opportunity to see the Court Leet chair at the Parish Church. A leaflet listing HODs activities in Tameside will be available from the Forum's website and from Tameside MBC Events team.

WHITWORTH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Brian Furness *has taken up the standing invitation to send information about societies*

The society started with an assembly of like-minded individuals concerned about the rate of change in their communities and the impact it was having on local heritage. The Rev Philip Foster was the instigator in 1973. Monthly meetings proved so popular that larger premises were soon required. Local residents then began to donate 'historic' objects ranging from war artefacts to domestic utensils and appliances.

One of the members made his private garage available for storage as the collection grew. It soon became clear that if suitable permanent premises could be found, it might just be possible to create a museum. After several false starts, former industrial premises were found at North Street in Whitworth and in 1985 a **local heritage museum** was born. Now with premises, the Society could start to develop its collection in earnest. Since 1985 the Society and its collection has continued to expand and today can boast a membership of over 100.

The Whitworth valley is rich in relatively recent industrial and agricultural history; stone mining, quarrying and stone processing, cotton and wool processing and farming. There is, however, some limited evidence of human habitation at various prehistoric times, from the Mesolithic to the iron ages. In conjunction with other organisations, investigations into the pre-history period are currently being undertaken. From the Middle Ages and possibly earlier, the Whitworth valley was criss-crossed with pack horse trails as traded goods were carried throughout East Lancashire and over the border into Yorkshire. Even today several of the pack trails can still be identified on the moorland above the Township.

'Ailse O'Fussars' – Mary Alice Hartley, Whitworth's very own pack horse drover shown with her favourite Galloway pony, Gerry

The Society's collection comprises several thousand objects, around 8,000 photographs, many media files and hundreds of documents, many of which are unique. In the early days little thought was given to a collection policy, but it is now necessary to be selective and, in general, all new acquisitions must fit with the defined collections policy. After consulting the Manchester office of the North West Museum Development team for guidance, the Modes Complete software package was purchased in 2014. Since then a small group of around 20 working volunteers has been tirelessly employed in populating the various databases within the system. There are now over 33,000 searchable records which can be accessed for research, educational or purely recreational purposes.

More recently the Society has introduced some volunteers to some of the basic techniques for object and document conservation, using a range of specialist materials, and consulting museum professionals for advice.

3-Bladed Fleam – part of the permanent collection at Whitworth Museum

In 2017 Lancashire Life Magazine, along with several other supporting agencies, headed a project entitled *'A History of Lancashire in 70 Objects'*. Museums and galleries throughout County Palatine were invited to submit an object or objects which were thought to have made an important or unique contribution to the history of Lancashire. Whitworth Museum submitted a collection of four potion or unction pots used, it is believed, by **the famous Whitworth doctors**.

The Taylor family came to Whitworth in around 1764 and initially set up business as blacksmiths and farriers. Very quickly the Taylors were called upon to reset the broken bones of horses which had

sustained injury in the nearby stone quarry. So successful was this work that the locals reasoned that since there was no resident physician in the village, then any broken bones and dislocations in human kind could be similarly treated. So the transition from farrier/vet to 'doctor' began. It appears that the 'doctors' extended their range of services to include the prescribing of various drugs, medicines and concoctions, all prepared by the doctors themselves or by members of their immediate family. They also undertook a limited amount of surgery. Bloodletting, in order to rebalance the humours in the body, took place regularly and it is said that up to 140 patients would be *"gratuitously bled"* each Sunday. This would have involved the use of a fleam rather than placing leeches on the surface of the skin.

The apparent skill of the doctors became widely recognised throughout the country and over the coming years they treated senior members of the clergy, the aristocracy and even royalty.

As a family the Taylors attended to the medical needs of Whitworth for over 100 years, and from the middle of the 19th century they were medically trained in the conventional manner. The last member of the family to practise medicine in Whitworth was James Eastwood Taylor who passed away in 1876. Dr Taylor is buried in the family vault at the nearby parish church of St Bartholomew.

In addition to its museum, the Society offers a **family history research service** which has attracted interest countrywide and beyond. Families from America, Australia, New Zealand and Canada regularly seek assistance from our dedicated research team.

Whitworth Museum is self-sustaining and is wholly run and operated by voluntary effort. It is (normally) open to the public throughout the year on Tuesday evening and Saturday afternoon each week. School visits, group visits and special parties are catered for by arrangement. For further information Tel: 01706 344894 or visit the Heritage Museum, North Street, Whitworth, Rossendale. OL12 8RE.

Postscript: In his email, Brian mentions how useful the Federation can be in developing contacts, together with exchanging ideas, specialisms and techniques. 'For example, we have recently contacted the group at Clitheroe, also members of LLHF, regarding their approach to the recording and storage/retrieval of oral history material. We are at the very early stages of a similar project. '

Do feel free to contact the website or the newsletter editor, if your society would like to link up with other groups to get advice about a project.

MORTALITY CRISES IN THE PAST: SOME LANCASHIRE INSIGHTS

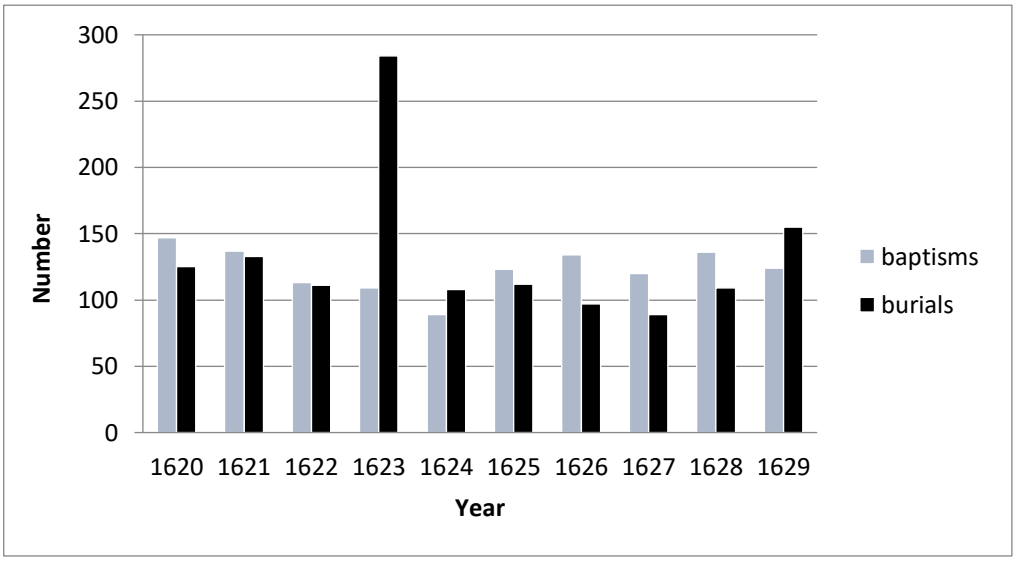
Geoff Timmins *(University of Central Lancashire) submits timely reflections on historic health crises and ways of studying them*

The recent outbreak of a novel coronavirus serves as a reminder that periods of exceptional high mortality – commonly termed mortality crises - have all too often occurred in the past. In some cases, pandemics have resulted. In others, the impact has been confined to national, regional or local levels, but with marked variation occurring from one place to another. In investigating these crises, historians have

relied strongly on parish register evidence, identifying years in which burial numbers were well above the norm. The following discussion briefly considers two examples that occurred in Lancashire, focusing on their severity and possible explanations of their causes.

Identifying mortality crises

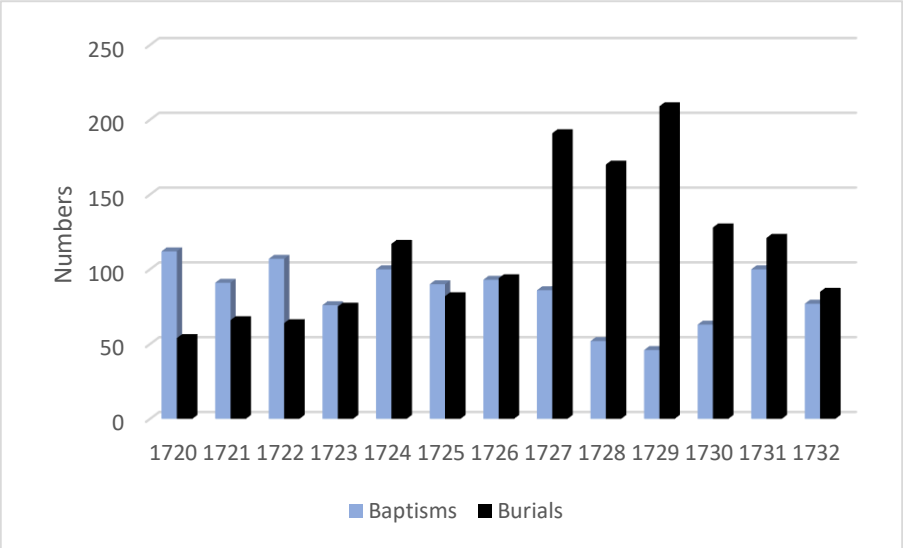
The first example is revealed in counts of annual burial totals for the 1620s. Those made from the registers of Manchester Collegiate church are shown below. As can be seen, an abnormally high number of burials occurred in 1623; they approached three times the number of baptisms.



Baptisms and burials at Manchester in the 1620s

In the three preceding years, baptisms were somewhat higher than burials, though the gap was narrowing. Quite probably the local population was increasing, unless some people moved elsewhere. During the next two years, however, burials were higher than baptisms, so that the size of the population was likely to have fallen, probably quite significantly. Recovery is evident over the next four years until another check occurred in 1629.

The second example shows baptisms and burials recorded at St. Mary the Virgin's church at Deane, near Bolton, during the 1720s and early 1730s. It differs from the 1623 Manchester example in that burials showed much higher levels than was normal for three years rather than for a single year; that the crises had been building up for several years before the peaks occurred; and it declined only gradually from the peak years. The number of baptisms also fell below normal levels, especially in 1728 and 1729. They recovered somewhat thereafter, but remained lower than burials. It is highly likely, therefore, that the local population fell to a considerable extent over the period.



Baptisms and burials at Deane, 1720-32

Reasons for population crises

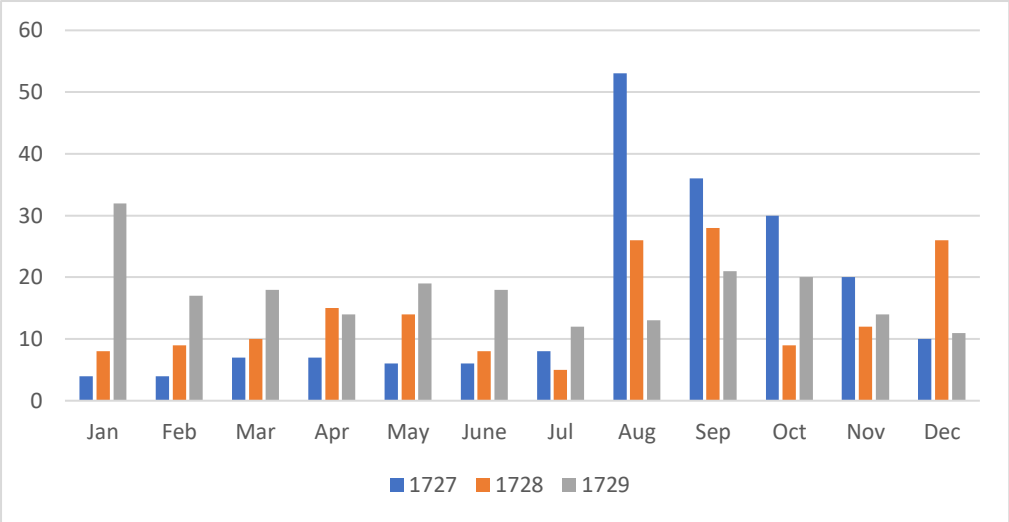
Two main lines of reasoning are used in attempting to explain why population crises arose. One is that an outbreak of some type of disease occurred. The other is that there were severe food shortages, usually as a result of harvest failure, so people starved to death. Both conditions may have applied, though, with people becoming more liable to succumb to disease because they were ill-nourished.

Occasionally, the clergymen compiling the registers gave clues as to why the high mortality arose. For instance, in June 1829, the vicar at Deane, James Rothwell, noted in his register: “Most of these dyed of agues, pluraisy, etc, tho a fever came ye first.” ‘Agues’ meant chills and sweats, 'pluraisy' an inflammation of the lungs. Could he have been referring to influenza? In another note he wrote that: “ ... in some respects ye disorder resembled ye Plague and continued amongst us above two years”. Some diseases, such as bubonic plague and cholera, can cause very sudden and steep rises in mortality levels, but neither can explain the catastrophe at Deane, since bubonic plague disappeared in England during the 17th century, and cholera did not reach Britain until the 19th century.

In fact, the population crisis of the late 1720s was widely spread in Britain, though varying in intensity between localities. Contemporaries commented on severe outbreaks of disease, mentioning 'suffocating cough', catarrh, 'inflammatory fevers' (any of which might be the result of 'flu) and whooping cough. But they also remarked on a poor harvest in 1728, which may have impacted through high prices on the amount of food people could afford to buy. Inadequate nutrition as well as disease may have contributed to the crisis, therefore.

Further insights into the probable causes of population crises arise from compiling monthly totals of burials for the crisis years. The chart below shows those at Deane church. As can be seen, the first sharp rise occurred in August 1727. But lower levels were recorded from the closing months of the year, when food shortages would have been expected to have arisen. Even lower numbers were recorded from

January to July. More or less the same pattern was repeated over the next two years, but with the burial peaks being lower and occurring in September. So, these figures lend more support to disease rather than starvation being the cause of the crisis.



Manchester monthly burial totals, 1727-9

But what of the 1623 population crisis? Although much smaller in scale than that of the late 1720s, this crisis has received a good deal of consideration from historians. The consensus is that, given high food prices resulting from several harvest failures, along with depression in wool textile production, starvation was the primary cause. Yet uncertainties remain, including the finding that, as in the late 1720s, the crisis did not have its maximum impact during the winter months. But perhaps by then, at least for the time being, a balance between numbers of people and available food supplies had been restored. With fewer mouths to feed, families could avoid starvation.

Further investigation

Other insights into the nature and causes of population crises can be obtained by examining the baptism figures for the crisis years. At Manchester in the late 1720s sharp falls occurred compared with the usual numbers earlier in the decade. And in 1623, a much-reduced level of baptisms arose compared with annual numbers across a sample of parishes during the preceding decade. One concern here is that any undernourishment of young women might inhibit ovulation and hence their ability to conceive. Age-related deaths can also enter into the account, assuming that those recorded in burial registers as son, daughter or child of…, were not usually adults. In 1623, for example, sample data from the county showed that 35 per cent of burials were of children, compared with an average of 44 per cent during the 1610s and 1620s. Perhaps children were being sheltered from the food shortages that are thought to have occurred.

The discussion so far has centred on so-called aggregative analysis. Essentially, this technique involves making annual and monthly counts of vital events recorded in parish registers and drawing interpretations from them. Evidence from other sources,

including contemporary comments, can be incorporated in seeking explanation. Much can be learned as a result. An alternative approach, but one that is far more time consuming, is to undertake a family reconstitution exercise. The aim here is to recreate the vital life experiences of a sample group of families. So, by comparing individual baptism and burial entries in a parish register, insights can be obtained into such matters as infant mortality levels and whether whole families rather than individual members were affected during crisis years.

Conclusion

Counting annual and monthly totals of baptisms and burials listed in parish registers can prove highly revealing about local population changes. They do not give a complete picture of the amount of change that occurred from one year to the next, because they take no account of the people moving away from a parish and others moving into it. And monthly gaps in the entries, especially when they do not normally occur in a register, can indicate a degree of under-recording. Yet trying to measure the impact of local population crises, and to explain why they arose, can prove to be a fascinating and rewarding type of investigation to undertake. The results obtained are all too revealing about the dreadful levels of human suffering that past generations could experience as disease and famine periodically struck their communities.

Further reading selection

E. M. Edwards, *Crisis in Lancashire: Survey of the 1720s Demographic Crisis* (UCLan MA dissertation, 2008). Online at <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/9a90/27f41a89c8c4e146946dceea2dc93109d53b.pdf>

J. Healey, 'Land, population and famine in English uplands', *Agricultural History Review,* 59, II (2011), pp. 151-75. Online at <https://www.bahs.org.uk/AGHR/ARTICLES/59_23_Healey.pdf>

C. D. Rogers, *The Lancashire Population Crisis of 1623* (Manchester: Manchester University Extra Mural department, 1975).

S. Scott and C. J. Duncan, 'The mortality crisis of 1623 in north-west England', *Local Population Studies*, 58, (1997), pp.14-25. On line at <http://www.localpopulationstudies.org.uk/PDF/LPS58/LPS58_1997_14-25.pdf>

G. Timmins, *Dying in Droves: History Mysteries and Parish Records* (BBC History Trails, 2005). Online at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/trail/htd_history/evidence/hist_mysteries_and_recs_03.shtml>

C. Ivers, *Middleton's 1623 Population Crisis: Famine of Fever at the 'Golden Cluster'* (Middleton Archaeology Society, 2016). Online at <http://middletonas.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/Middleton-Population-Crisis-1623-final.pdf>

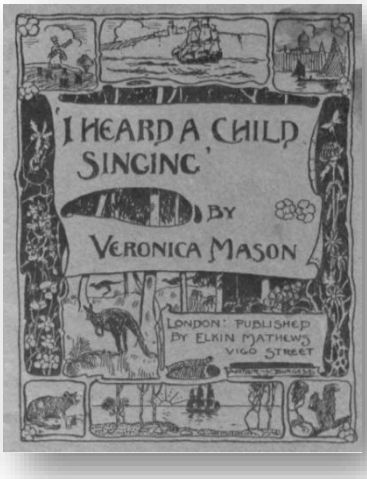
ONE THING LEADS TO ANOTHER: LOCAL HISTORY ON THE WORLD STAGE

Mike Winstanley *illustrates how we can never predict where research will lead*

Local history isn't, or shouldn't be, just local. There are always wider contexts and links to explore which can help us to appreciate the significance of what is happening in our own area. It also works in reverse. Sometimes the investigation of local history contributes to a greater understanding of events elsewhere in the country, or even elsewhere in the world. This was brought home to me when I began investigating the author of a village history pageant which took place in 1912 at Halton on the River Lune. As we know, one thing leads to another and what we intended to research finishes up being replaced by other apparently more fascinating subjects, but little did I imagine where my pageant research would lead me.

It begins and ends with Veronica Mason, the author of the 'dream pageant'. Who was Miss Mason? This was the first hurdle since, as family historians know, people did not always use their first names. I could not find her anywhere until I chanced on a reference to Annie Veronica … She turned out to be the great grand-daughter of someone I had already studied – Thomas Mason, West India trader around 1800, promoter of the first cotton mill in Lancaster and owner of the *Abram*, a ship I had written about. On her mother's side she was descended from Samuel Howitt, an 18th century artist whose son had established a medical practice in Lancaster. That aspect I have put aside for later research…

Her father Thomas had owned silk mills in Lancaster and Wray – but I decided to leave that to others. She was also cousin of the rector of Halton, Reverend John Harold Hastings, who was promoting the pageant. Again, another avenue opened up which still needs exploring – he had been secretary and treasurer of the Christian Socialist League, a radical campaigning society which emerged in the 1900s. He and his curates were all socialists dedicated to promoting what he called 'the old Social Gospel of the Founder of Christianity'. But it was something even more unexpected which really intrigued me. Veronica's name turned up on various websites in Australia, and particularly Tasmania. This explained why her family were missing from the 1881 and 1891 censuses. Fortunately, unlike in this country, ALL historical newspapers are fully digitised, searchable and freely available on the National Library of Australia's Trove website, along with many other sources https://trove.nla.gov.au/. The Masons appeared frequently in the *Hobart Mercury* in the 1880s and 1890s and Veronica continued to be referenced well into the twentieth century on a national level. What was going on?



Her father's silk business had failed in 1877. After a brief spell in Northern Ireland, the family emigrated to Tasmania in 1881 for reasons which still elude me. Historians are still grappling with the motivations behind emigration. By the mid-1880s they were living in the old magistrates' house in the infamous ex-penal colony of Port Arthur. They renamed their home 'Clougha', a mystery to all in Tasmania but well known to everyone in Lancaster as the mountain which rises up behind the town. The press provided reports of Tom's farming ventures - importing Shropshire sheep in particular - and his prominent role in the township. The family also attracted attention, particularly his two cultured daughters, (Annie) Veronica and (Grace) Heather, who knew all the native plants, painted, exhibited 'Port Arthur Pottery' at international exhibitions in Hobart and, in the case of Heather, even made and sold 'Clougha' butter. The family returned to England in 1896, settling first in Devon and then in London where Heather attended the Slade School of Art and exhibited bronze medallions in the Royal Academy and at Rodin's Salon in Paris – yet more avenues to explore! Veronica published a short collection of poems in 1907, *I Heard a Child Singing'*, again available freely on Australian websites. It turned out that this collection, and one poem in particular, had significance beyond anything I had imagined, and it was this avenue I pursued.

Veronica's poem 'The Wattle' was a simple, natural celebration of the *Acacia pycnantha* which burst into flower each spring and which was being promoted as the official emblem of Australian identity in the 1900s. 'Wattle Day' was celebrated annually in mass gatherings and schools throughout Australia from 1910. The poem was recited on these occasions, and even set to music by several composers such as Frank Bridges. Ironically, Veronica never returned to Tasmania and it seems unlikely that she ever benefited financially from her unexpected fame. She continued to live a quiet life in England with her parents and then her niece, whom the family had brought back with them from Tasmania and for whom the poems were undoubtedly written to remind her of her childhood days there. Veronica died in Reading in 1947 where her sister Heather had pursued yet another career as an agricultural biologist.

So, what began as a simple question – who was the woman who scripted a dream pageant for Halton in 1912? – ended up with the writing of an article for the journal of the *Tasmanian Historical Research Association* https://www.thra.org.au/ about a famous Australian poem and an English family's contribution to the history of an ex-penal colony which is now a World Heritage Site. This all goes to show how difficult it is for historians to envisage the outcomes of their research, and why it is always worth continuing to ask questions. One thing does indeed lead to another – but what that 'other' is often turns out to be more appealing and potentially more significant that one's original subject. Now, I just need to get back to pageants – unless I am distracted again, which is more than likely…

STREET NAMES

Bob Dobson *suggests an interesting project for societies*

Local history societies in the county, and their members, are in limbo so I float an idea that might help pass the time, though I realise that everyone will be hampered in making progress on my proposal by the present restrictions on travelling about and libraries being closed.

Twenty or so years ago, a list was started in my home town (Accrington) library of every street in the town around the year 1950. A trade directory was used to make the list, and a card filing system was started. The cards were used to state why each street was named. It was well under way when I came across it, but I became interested in it and have contributed plenty to it since. I am suggesting that others could start a file for the streets in their town and make it available to others. The card filing system could be replaced by a digital record.

It didn't take me long to realise that the giving of names to streets had much to do with those who owned the land on which the streets were built. In Accrington's case, much land in the town in the early days of the Industrial Revolution was owned by a few wealthy men who perceived that the folk coming into the towns from the country to work in the new cotton mills needed houses, so drew up plans for new streets to be built.

One of the Accrington men was Jonathan Peel, brother of Prime Minister Robert . The two were close and it came as no surprise to me that Jonathan named several streets after Robert's colleagues in the Commons and the Lords (Wellington, Canning, Russell, Pitt amongst them) He named others after members of the extended Peel family (Robert, William, Bertha, Hanna, Annie) and some after people in the town with whom he did business (Mr Moore, a land agent, Mr Tasker, a blacksmith, Mr Addison, a surveyor, and Mr Bradshaw, a civil engineer). Of course, at this distance in time from the initial naming, it cannot be proved that these names are indeed connected to these men. In the case of Arnold Street, though, we have proof in that Mr Arnold, MP for Salford, where Peel had strong connections, made a speech in Accrington and stated that twenty years previously Peel had told him of his intention of naming a street after him.

I have been greatly helped in pursuing the naming of Accrington streets by consulting the numerous plans which the council gave to the library. Thus I can be aware of just when the street came into being. Most libraries will not have these, and it will be necessary to check censuses and trade directories to ascertain it. I am further helped by the library having lots of cuttings from the *Accrington Observer.*

My research is still on-going. I like to think that in years to come when I'm in a celestial library, local historians will be able to quickly find out just why Persia, India, China, Holland, Poland, Russia and Swiss streets were named. (They were countries to which Frederick Steiner, a local industrialist who had bought land from Peel and built the streets, exported printed cloth. His daughters married well, which is why Empress, Countess and Princess Streets were so named)

I suggest societies could consider starting a research group in order to record the reasons why local streets are so called. There is a great deal of pleasure to be had from the exercise.

CHILDREN'S INVESTIGATIONS INTO LOCAL HISTORY: MAKING USE OF ONLINE SOURCES

Geoff Timmins *shows that children can learn much, in terms of skills gained and knowledge acquired, from the study of local history*

At a time when children have more limited schooling than usual, to suggest they have much to gain educationally from undertaking local history exercises may seem, to be polite, rather foolish. After all, local history is hardly a key component of learning and teaching in schools, even though it features amongst the National Curriculum requirements. Surely priority must be given to providing learning opportunities in subject areas that are seen to be more important, especially maths and English? Until more normal times emerge it could be argued that teaching other subjects, including the humanities, can be safely set aside.

Such arguments are too narrowly focused, however. In the first place, by carrying out investigations in local history children will certainly engage with English language work, since they will need to present their findings in written or spoken forms, or perhaps both. Making a written summary of elderly relatives' comments about their school life provides an example. Secondly, opportunities also abound for children to apply basic numeracy skills. For instance, they might extract data from a local parish register to prepare frequency distributions of ages and supposed causes of death. Both are given in Anglican registers from 1813 onwards. Accurate counting and systematic recording of data would be required, perhaps with the totals being presented as percentages. As well, children might practice their ICT skills by displaying their findings as graphs, making use of spreadsheet facilities. Without doubt, studying local history can play a useful role in enhancing children's language and numeracy skills.

But studying local history can also bring an opportunity to develop other, equally important intellectual skills. To the fore amongst them is that of interpreting evidence. Consider, for example, local Ordnance Survey maps, which became widely available during Victorian times. For Lancashire, they cover the entire county during the 1840s and again during the 1890s. Accordingly, children can use the two editions to discover the types of change that took place in their towns or villages between these dates. Did the numbers of mills and the rows of nearby houses increase, for example? They might consider where the mills were being built - mainly alongside canals or rivers - bearing in mind the need to obtain water for steam engines. They might judge whether the changes were small or large, perhaps listing features that stayed the same and others that changed; suggest why they were occurring – the growth of trade and industry, for example; and what impact that might have had on past generations, beneficial or otherwise. Smoke pollution from increased domestic and industrial coal burning, and road accidents from rising traffic levels are cases in point. That children are thinking about these matters and making reasonable suggestions rather than coming to definite conclusions is the key consideration. They are being required to think and to realise that historical interpretations are open to question. Historians have to learn to live with uncertainty!

In drawing conclusions about the changes taking place in local towns and villages during Victorian times, children can make use of the population totals available in each decennial census, starting in 1801. These statistics plainly give evidence about a further change that was occurring in their localities, as well as another source of evidence to help them assess the extent to which change occurred. In other words, using more than one type of primary source can help to strengthen historical interpretation. The opportunity for using census totals to engage further with numeracy is easy to appreciate.

Assessing the reliability of historical evidence is a further intellectual skill that can be developed. Looking for bias, incompleteness and inaccuracy enter into account. Consider visual images of localities, for example. Postcards showing towns in the past tend to focus on busy main streets. Also, sunny days prevail. A different and less favourable impression of a town would have been given if, say, a deserted main street on a gloomy and wet winter's day had been shown. To take another and far less wholesome example, local public health reports dating from the early Victorian period tend to describe the worse examples of insanitary housing rather than providing a general survey.

Consider, for example, the table below, showing the number of houses and privies in different parts of Blackburn in 1852. Over a thousand houses were surveyed. The privies would probably have emptied into open cesspools, as large-scale maps of the period testify; they did not have water-closets at that time. Several questions can be asked about the table, for example:

- how many people on average would have shared a privy, bearing in mind households would have averaged above five people, many being young children?
- how did this average vary between streets?
- how did people living in streets with no privies manage?

LOCALITY.	Houses	Privies	LOCALITY.	Houses	Privies
Hole'ith wall	10	4	Freckleton street	35	5
Stead fold	15	5	James street	17	3
Shire brow	5	0	Old square	9	1
Revidge fold	9	2	Duke street	14	2
Back'oth hill, Green gown and Ashton fold	12	0	Queen street	17	1
Folly	8	1	Blakey moor	26	4
Pleck gate	11	3	Water street	31	3
Toddy	8	1	Starkie street	28	6
Wagtail	9	2	Cleaver street	67	18
Higher barn	11	3	Syke street	25	12
Red rake	6	1	Moor street	112	34
Lane ends	25	1	Woolley banks	76	18
Top of Revidge	7	2	Penny street	71	20
Everton	8	1	Salford	27	5
Bent street	12	2	King street	9	1
Leyland street	46	10	Northgate	7	0
Dale street	20	5	Darwen street	10	4
Brunswick street	34	8	Brook street	7	1
			Lark Hill street	39	13
			Total	1165	246

Source: J. Withers, *Report on the sanitary Condition of the Borough of Blackburn* (1853)

With regard to evaluating the reliability of the evidence, however, a key question to ask is: how many houses were there in the town in 1853? Withers' estimate is 10,000. So, even if this figure is on the high side, it is clear that the survey provides no details about sanitation provision in the great majority of the town's houses. Nor does he give details about how the survey was compiled. Not only is the survey incomplete, but it may not be entirely accurate.

The types of investigation outlined above can all be carried using resources that are available online:

- For transcriptions of parish registers in Lancashire, visit the *Lancashire Online Parish Clerks'* website at <http://www.lan-opc.org.uk/>.
- High quality images of Lancashire's historic Ordnance survey maps at various scales, including the six inches to the mile series, can be viewed on the website of the National Library of Scotland at <https://maps.nls.uk/>.
- Population totals for towns and villages in 19th century Lancashire are given in the *Victoria History of the County of Lancaster*, vol 2, pp. 331-50. They are online at <https://archive.org/details/cu31924088434547/page/n351/mode/2up>.
- Visual images of Lancashire past can be seen, for example, in Lancashire County Council's *Red Rose Collections* at <https://redrosecollections.lancashire.gov.uk/index.php?WINID=1587992743205>.
- Flickr and Francis Frith visuals are other possibilities.
- Only a few Lancashire local health reports appear to be available online, but the following are:
    - Accrington - https://archive.org/details/b20423275/mode/2up.
    - Bacup - http://www.bacuptimes.co.uk/index_htm_files/publichealthreport.pdf
    - Wigan 1849 - http://www.mikeclarke.myzen.co.uk/1849%20Wigan%20health.pdf

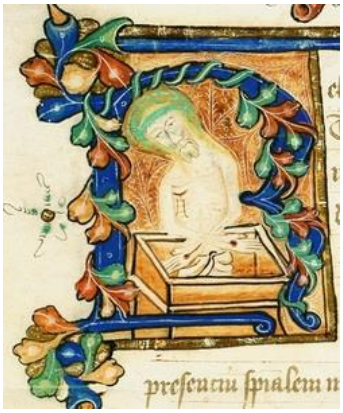
Online examples of local health reports for elsewhere in the country can be found by searching the *Internet Archive* website, typing in the search text context facility 'Report to the General Board of Health on a Preliminary Enquiry into …'. In this way, comparative studies can be undertaken.

ONLINE SOURCES FOR LOCAL AND FAMILY HISTORY

***Zoe Lawson** has gathered together a large range of research resources*

While we all have to 'Stay at Home' we have an ideal opportunity to start new research or find additional sources for projects in progress. There seems an infinite supply of free online sites which can be tapped into, so there is no reason why local and family research cannot be continued at home. The following is a list of useful sites, some of which will be familiar to many, but hopefully there will be others that will be less well known.

Archive Catalogues



Illuminated capital from a mandate of John Till, Prior Provincial of the Order of Dominicans in England, 1418. (Lancashire Archives DDHU 53-3)

Archive catalogues are always a good starting point and many online catalogue entries provide significant detail, though not a substitute for looking at the original document when archives offices re-open. Here are the websites of the larger archives in the area:

Lancashire Archives
https://archivecat.lancashire.gov.uk/calmview/;

Manchester City Archives
https://www.manchester.gov.uk/info/448/archives_and_local_history;

Liverpool Archives
https://liverpool.gov.uk/libraries/archives-family-history/liverpool-archive-catalogue/

Not forgetting the National Archives which also contains Lancashire material
https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/search

Genealogy Sites https://www.ancestry.co.uk/ and https://www.findmypast.co.uk/ are well known and offer a 14 day free trial.

https://www.familysearch.org/en/ is the largest site to offer free access to records from old censuses, birth registers, etc. It includes the International Genealogical Index (I.G.I.) which has parish records for several countries including Australia, Canada and the USA, as well as the UK.

www.genuki.org.uk This website doesn't hold records but contains a vast amount of historical information that will help you find the records you need from anywhere in the UK.

https://www.jewishgen.org/new/ Jewish genealogy website.

Births, Marriages & Deaths The Register Offices in the county of Lancashire hold the original records of births, marriages and deaths back to the start of civil registration in 1837. The county's family history societies are collaborating with the local registration services to make the indexes to these records freely searchable via the internet at http://www.lancashirebmd.org.uk/

Free access to records of births, marriages and deaths for the whole of the UK is available at https://www.freebmd.org.uk/search. Note that not all records have yet been transcribed.

Parish Registers The Online Parish Clerks project for Lancashire aims to extract and preserve records from the various parishes and to provide online access to that

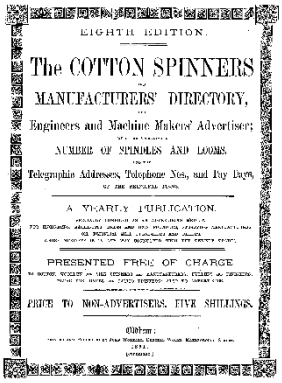
data, free of charge, along with other data of value to family and local historians conducting research in the county of Lancashire. https://www.lan-opc.org.uk/

Census https://www.freecen.org.uk/ this site offers free internet searches of UK nineteenth-century census returns but it is a work in progress and only the 1861 census is complete for Lancashire. Other areas are covered more comprehensively.

Some local history societies have transcribed their own census records, e g. Tatham History Society has transcribed all the censuses between 1841 and 1901 for Tatham and surrounding villages. http://www.tathamhistory.org.uk/census-index.php.

Wills & Probate https://probatesearch.service.gov.uk/#wills for probate and wills from 1858 to the present, though there is a charge of £3 for a copy of a will.

Trade Directories
University of Leicester Special Collections has 54 trade directories for Lancashire online https://cdm16445.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p16445coll4


EIGHTH EDITION.

The COTTON SPINNERS

MANUFACTURERS' DIRECTORY,

Engineers and Machine Makers' Advertiser;

NUMBER OF SPINDLES AND LOOMS

Telegraphic Addresses, Telephone Nos, and Pay Days,

A YEARLY PUBLICATION.

PRESENTED FREE OF CHARGE

PRICE TO NON-ADVERTISERS, FIVE SHILLINGS.

Oldham:

Newspapers Historical newspapers provide online, easily-searchable first-hand accounts and unparalleled coverage of the politics, society and events of the time. Lancashire Libraries offer free access to historic newspapers. Users need to enter the barcode number from their library card. This gives online access to national, regional and local newspapers from the eighteenth to the twentieth century, taken directly from the holdings of the British Library, which includes the Burnley Express, Lancaster Gazette, Preston Chronicle and other Lancashire newspapers. https://www.lancashire.gov.uk/libraries-and-archives/libraries/digital-library/

The complete digital edition of *The Times* (London) from 1785 to 2010 is available free using the barcode of library cards from Lancashire (see link above), Manchester https://www.manchester.gov.uk/directory/127/online_reference_library/category/1219 and Liverpool https://www.readliverpool.co.uk/reference/

The Guardian (1821-2003) and *The Observer* (1791-2003) are also available free to Manchester Library card holders (see link above).

The *London Gazette* is a free site searchable by keyword which is useful for wills and probate, bankruptcies, information about companies, and records of military promotions and awards etc. https://www.thegazette.co.uk/

Maps

Mario maps. This mapping site from Lancashire County Council contains local maps and aerial photographs for the whole county. Some historic maps for the region are also available. You can select a location and then overlay historic maps, photographs and information. This site also provides interactive information on administrative boundaries and local census and social statistics. http://mario.lancashire.gov.uk/agsmario/

Online versions of old maps of Lancashire and town maps. https://www3.lancashire.gov.uk/environment/oldmap/

The University of Manchester's map collection can be browsed online. This collection includes over 250 mostly 19th century Ordnance Survey maps and over 150 maps of Manchester. https://www.library.manchester.ac.uk/search-resources/special-collections/guide-to-special-collections/map-collection/online-map-collection/

Manchester Library list other map resources available https://www.manchester.gov.uk/directory_record/212387/historical_maps/category/1367/view_all_collections

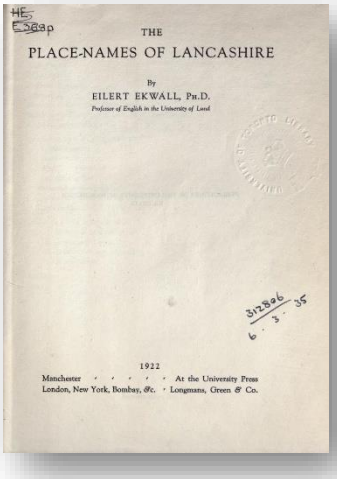
National Library of Scotland also hosts a good selection of old Ordnance Survey maps for the UK. https://maps.nls.uk/

Other digital sources Lancashire County Council's Red Rose Collection includes old photographs, a newspaper index to articles in local Lancashire newspapers from the 19th century onwards which are held on microfilm and in cuttings files at libraries across Lancashire. Note that digitisation of these indexes is still on-going, so this online index is by no means exhaustive. https://redrosecollections.lancashire.gov.uk/

Elizabeth Roberts Working Class Oral History Archive is published by the Regional Heritage Centre at Lancaster University and hosts the transcripts of interviews carried out by Dr Roberts and her collaborators during the 1970s and 1980s. The interviews captured memories of working-class life in North West England – specifically in Barrow-in-Furness, Lancaster and Preston – and are focused on the period from the late nineteenth century to the outbreak of the Second World War, and from the Second World War through to 1970. The archive can be explored in various ways and has a subject search facility. https://www.regional-heritage-centre.org/

The Long Long Trail is a very comprehensive website for researching soldiers of the British Army in the First World War, 1914-1919, as well as amount of background information. https://www.longlongtrail.co.uk/

Books and journal articles Internet Archive provides online copies of many local history publications such as the *Transactions of the Lancashire & Cheshire Antiquarian Society*, volumes of the *Chetham Society* and Eilert Ekwall's *Place-names of Lancashire*. https://archive.org/index.php


THE
PLACE-NAMES OF LANCASHIRE
By
EILERT EKWALL, PH.D.
1922
Manchester ... At the University Press
London, New York, Bombay, &c. ... Longmans, Green & Co.

All articles from the *Transactions of Lancashire & Cheshire Historical Society* are available online from vol 1 (1849) to vol. 157 (2008). https://www.hslc.org.uk/archive/

Online access to articles of *Contrebis* the journal of the Lancaster Archaeological & Historical Society available one year after the initial publication in print. http://www.britarch.ac.uk/lahs/contrebis.htm

On the British Association for Local History site every issue of *The Local Historian* is freely available online dating back to the 1950s, apart from the last three years, which are restricted to individual members of the BALH. https://www.balh.org.uk

British History Online is a digital library of key printed primary and secondary sources for the history of Britain and Ireland, with a primary focus on the period between 1300 and 1800 but also has online copies of *Victoria County History of Lancashire.* https://www.british-history.ac.uk/

The following digital libraries https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/ and https://www.google.com/ and https://www.hathitrust.org/ have many key printed sources.

Courses and Tutorials The National Archives run online tutorials, for example, a Latin tutorial at http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/latin/ and a palaeography one at https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/palaeography/a

Future Learn have a wide range of free online courses, some of which are history based such as *Learning from the past: a guide for the curious researcher. Learn how to understand the past to explain the present, and get to know the amazing sources and resources of the British Library.* https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/learning-from-the-past

The Community Archives and Heritage Group (CAHG) is a national group which aims to support and promote community archives in the UK & Ireland

CAHG brings together bodies and organisations concerned with community archives, and provides a forum for the regular exchange of views and information.

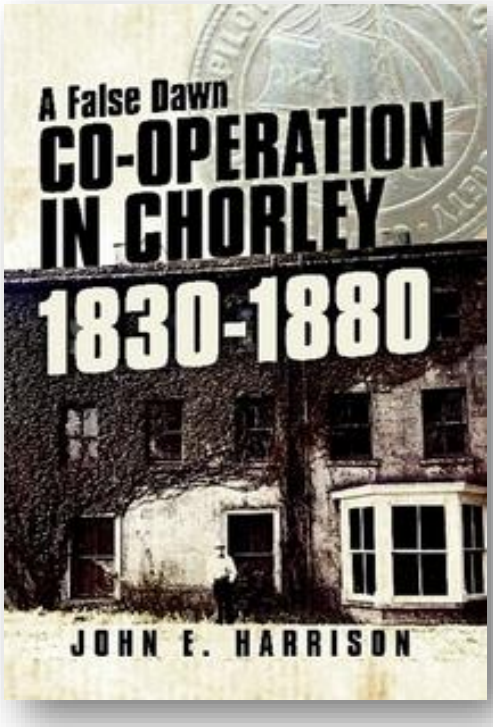
It is free to join the CAHG and, if your group does so, you would be eligible to put your group or project forward for one of their annual awards. Because the annual conference has had to be postponed, the deadline for applying for an award has been extended to 30th June. All details of how to join, and how to apply for an award are on the website www.communityarchives.org.uk.

MANCHESTER HISTORIES

Manchester Histories have produced an online version of the Peterloo 2019 Impact Report which highlights and reflects on the work that has been produced as part of the 200th commemoration of the Peterloo Massacre, and the Peterloo Anthology**,** which showcases the talent of young people involved in the Radical Read project.

There are also two short videos highlighting the Peterloo 2019 programme and From the Crowd.

PUBLICATIONS OF INTEREST



Co-operation in Chorley 1830-1880: a false dawn *by* John E Harrison

The book is available from Amazon and in softcover and e-book formats initially from Lulu at www.lulu.com/spotlight/jeh2020
Price: £7.99
Ebook £5.50

ISBN 9781684718580

It is hoped that the print version will be available in local bookshops, and from online sources, and the ebook from various ebook platforms (prices will vary).

When meetings of the Chorley Historical and Archaeological Society resume, the book will be available to buy on those occasions.

The Co-op was the cornerstone of communities in nineteenth- and twentieth-century Britain, with services impacting members' lives from the cradle to the grave. But today we are in danger of forgetting the impact of the co-operative movement, not just in Chorley, but across Lancashire and the United Kingdom. Chorley had three very different co-operative societies between 1830 and 1880, all of which were relatively short-lived. This book tells the story of these societies in the context of both the general development of co-operation and Chorley's social, political, and industrial development. The book illustrates the difficulties in running different forms of co-operative businesses in the early decades of the movement.

John Harrison is a member of Chorley Historical and Archaeological Society. His MSc. thesis at UMIST was entitled "The Development of Medical Care and Public Health in Nineteenth Century Chorley". This is his first book.

The Federation Committee would be very pleased to hear from anyone who would be interested in taking on the role of newsletter editor. This is one of the principal means of communication with members, and is published four times a year. Guidance would be freely offered.

Please phone or email Marianne Howell.

COPY DATE FOR NEXT EDITION

1st AUGUST 2020