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Leyland Chronicle

The journal of
THE LEYLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY



LEYLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

(Founded 1968)

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AIMS

To promote an interest in History generally and of
the Leyland area in particular.

MEETINGS

Held on the first Monday of each month
(September to June inclusive) at 7.30 p.m.
excluding statutory holidays.

AT PROSPECT HOUSE, SANDY LANE, LEYLAND.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Vice Presidents	£2.50 per annum
Adult Members	£2.00 per annum
School Members	£0.20 per annum
Casual Visitors	£0.40 per meeting

A MEMBER OF THE FEDERATION OF HISTORICAL SOCIETIES
IN THE COUNTY PALATINE OF LANCASTER

AND

THE HISTORIC SOCIETY OF LANCASHIRE AND CHESHIRE

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CONSTITUTION

1. The name of the Society shall be the Leyland Historical Society.
2. The object of the Society shall be to promote an interest in History generally, and of the Leyland area in particular.
3. The Officers of the Society shall be a President, Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer. All except the President to be elected annually.
4. The Committee shall consist of the above officers and twelve elected members who will serve for two years - six of whom will retire each year, but may offer themselves for re-election. Any Committee member who is absent from three consecutive Committee meetings without reasonable cause shall be deemed to have resigned.
5. The Committee shall have the power to fill casual vacancies which may arise during the year, but any members so appointed must offer themselves for re-election at the next Annual General Meeting.
6. The Committee shall meet at least three times a year.
7. Sub-Committees may be formed for particular purposes. The President, Chairman and Secretary shall be 'ex-officio' members of such Sub-Committees.
8. The Annual General Meeting and elections of officers and Committee Members shall be held no later than the 15th day of July in each year.
9. An Extraordinary General Meeting shall be held on the written request of five members of the Society, subject to at least three weeks' notice.
10. Any change in the Constitution must be approved at an Annual or Extraordinary General Meeting. At least two weeks' notice, in writing, must be given or proposed changes.

11. The rate of annual subscriptions will be determined at the Annual General Meeting for the ensuing year. Proposals for changes in subscriptions must be circulated to members at least two weeks before the Annual General Meeting. Subscriptions became due at the date of the Annual General Meeting. Any member who has not paid by the 31st December will be deemed to have lapsed membership.
12. The Committee may from time to time propose the election of Honorary Life Members of the Society for approval at a General Meeting. Such members will be entitled to participate fully in the activities of the Society but will not be liable to payment of Annual Subscriptions.

News & Commentary

This issue of the Lailand Chronicle coincides with the coming of Spring and Summer, and inevitably, the thoughts of many people will be centred on the coming holiday period. Hopefully, we will be blessed with good weather, but however it may turn out, people will still make the annual holiday 'trek', either to the coast or country of this land, or further afield overseas. As you will read in this issue, Mr. Ray Williams tells us of an interesting historical discovery whilst holidaying, a discovery that has very local connections. Whilst it is unlikely that other members will come across historical facts so relevant to Leyland, nevertheless, there must be items of historical interest which could be used as contributions to this magazine. Please, just jot down anything of interest whilst on holiday so that an article, no matter how brief, can be developed upon returning home. Do not worry about the correct way to express yourself; this is one of the editing jobs which will be carried out when the articles are submitted. REMEMBER - no articles - no magazine!

Readers of our November issue will remember the extensive commentary on the subject of the Worden and Somerleyton mazes and their similarity in design.

We have recently received a letter from Mr. Frank Howe (one of our vice presidents) which undoubtedly throws some light on the subject and we are hoping that more enquiry through the Lancashire County Records office may establish that the Crossleys knew Worden and the ffaringtons before they moved to Somerleyton and became titled people.

Mr. Howe's letter (copied below) is most interesting and may provide the first link in this sidelight on local history.

The Editor,
Lailand Chronicle.

26th February, 1980

Dear Sir,

I have just re-read your preamble News & Commentary at the beginning of the last LAILAND CHRONICLE. There are two matters about which I would like to comment.

All my working life I used Ordnance Sheets to date property - with a knowledge of bye-law requirements for street widths giving separate dimensions for carriage-ways, footpaths and overall e.g. Broad Street, Leyland is ten years older than its neighbours according to the original survey.

About c.1870 Parliament discussed and fixed Imperial scales for the Ordnance survey. By this measure they put off metric for one hundred years! The scales they fixed were two 1/500 or 41.66 ft., to an inch for all town areas, comprised then of the LONDON boroughs and all county and municipal boroughs and for the rest 1/2500. This was mainly countryside but included all Urban and Rural Districts. Later the County Council and County Borough areas were added but as they adopted similar boundaries they brought little change to the Ordnance sheets. Early editions were particularly interesting - all land covered by water was coloured blue and the margins often contained the names of the original R.E. officer surveyors.

The other matter I would like to refer to is the possible reason why the Leyland and Somerleyton mazes could be of similar pattern. Most members remember me as SURVEYOR to our local council then LEYLAND U.D.C. Few know that I spent the latter part of my childhood at Somerleyton and later when my own family was growing up we frequently spent our holidays on the unique sands at nearby LOWESTOFT which in my day was only a "charabanc" run away. Also in my time I remember Lord Somerleyton away as a Lord-in-waiting to the King and Lady Somerleyton coming to the School on Trafalgar Day. Finally I would mention the windows in the parish church. I feel sure that there you can find as was well known that before taking their titles the SOMERLEYTONS were the CROSSLEYS of Lancashire & Yorkshire Carpet fame. The ffaringtons moved from the Old Worden to the new about 1810 constructing Worden Lane (called for many years New Road) and its stone wall and ledges to take the place of the MAIN DRIVE, which route the public previously followed.

They probably built the maze later as it was and still is to the west of the main layout nearby the subsequent grass lawn tennis courts and the even later arboretum with nearly 100 varieties of trees provided by the council. Unfortunately, as soon as they were open to the public both maze and arboretum were destroyed. The arboretum totally and the maze by leaving a path open from the central mound to the entrance.

Both Leyland and Somerleyton mazes had central mounds and Leylands surmounted by a single hornbeam tree as were the hedges hornbeam. Somerleytons had an elaborate half timber summerhouse on the central mound and yew hedges.

I would like to know from Mr. Fisher if these central mounds are common to all mazes or just these two. I would guess they had a similar pattern as they were probably built about the same date. What more likely than before building, the Somerleytons who were the Crossleys checked the latest design in Lancashire?

Finally I can still remember the smell of Somerleyton Hall Farm Road with its laurel hedges and fir and rhododendron plantations over which we passed in the early morning to get milk from Somerleyton's Jersey herd.

F.D. Howe, C.Eng. F.I.Mun.E.
Vice-President.

Our membership now stands at 121. Long may it continue to grow.

Please note the secretary's new address

The Editors

R. Woodward

E. Mason

William Farington

1537 - 1610

The family and myself went on our usual annual holidays the first two weeks in August 1979. The first was spent on the Isle of Wight and the last five days we came back to the mainland to stay in West Chiltington, West Sussex. The weather was very good and of course we visited Arundel Castle and many houses and churches of interest in the locality.

On the last Thursday before we came home on the Friday, I was determined to visit Parham House, the home of Mr. and Mrs. P.A. Tritton, as the house was only twenty minutes drive from where we were staying. My son and my wife's mother decided they had seen enough of houses and went into the gardens. My wife and I waited until the house was opened at 2.00 p.m. and we started our tour. After going through all the various rooms we finished up in the long gallery at the end of the guided tour, where we could browse at leisure at the pictures and objects in the gallery.

We were just leaving when my eye caught sight of an oil painting and after looking at the portrait I was astonished to read at the bottom of the painting the name of the gentleman "XVI Century Portrait of William Farington of Worden, Lancashire".

The face of William was slim and he had a white mustache and small goaty beard and very thin, short-trimmed hair on top. He was wearing a white neck ruff and a black doublet jacket; around his neck was a three linked gold chain of 497 links, presumably his father's. In his right hand he held a silver topped walking stick and a ring on his little finger. In his left hand he held a velvet glove and a ring on his forefinger. The portrait, which measured 27" x 25", was painted in the 16th Century, when he was 56 years old by the English school. The coat of arms was painted in the top right corner. We asked one of the guides if she could tell us the connection between the portrait and the family of the house, but she could not throw any light on the subject. We signed the visitors book and mentioned that we both belonged to the Society and that Worden Hall was quite close to where we lived.

After arriving home, I immediately wrote to the secretary at Parham House and received a very nice letter.

It seems that Mrs. P.A. Tritton's mother, the Hon. Mrs. Clive Pearson, in 1945 at a Sotheby sale of property of the late Sir Buckston Browne, purchased the portrait because she liked the coat-of-arms as heraldry was one of her great interests. However, I was very fortunate in obtaining a black and white photograph of William Farington measuring approximately 8" x 5".

William Farington was steward to Henry Stanley, 4th Earl of Derby.

I tried to find out how Sir Anthony Browne had come by the picture and discovered in papers that at the age of 58 William Farington purchased the moiety of Ulnes Walton from Sir Anthony Browne. I assume, therefore, that this person purchased the portrait from the Farington family, or was given the portrait at some time during the past.

William Farington died on the 3rd July 1610 and in his will he directed that he should be buried "within the chappell erected in the south syde of the Parish Church of Leyland". William Farington was a great man in his time and it gave myself and family a fitting end to our summer holidays for 1979.

R.O. Williams

Archaeology and Local History

Several members of the Society have attended a recent series of lectures on the above subject given by Mr. J. Hallam M.A. These are still proceeding and have included practical exercises by the class members into various aspects of local interest.

The course has demonstrated two things, first that there is a substantial interest in the subject both by members of the Society and by local non-members, and secondly, that there is a serious misconception about the meaning and methods of archaeology as applied to local history. It was clear that several potential class members were deterred by the idea that archaeology consisted only of hard manual labour under uncomfortable conditions in disinterring long forgotten Bronze or Stone Age relics.

Such activities have their proper place in archaeological activities, but the theme of the course has been to demonstrate the substantial amount of information which can be obtained by perusal of the maps and documents available to us in local libraries and County record offices and to relate it to such buildings as can still be seen in the locality or whose past existence can be inferred and perhaps confirmed by observation during disturbance of the site for modern developments or by relatively simple excavation techniques.

My own basic, perhaps over-simplified view is that history is about people and archaeology is about things. We are left in no doubt that the joint study of these two subjects is not only compatible, but is essential.

Leyland Historical Society exists for the study of our own district and consideration shows that in our area we have examples of many types of man-made constructions, including prehistoric sites, ancient roads and religious and secular buildings from the earliest periods, through Roman, mediaeval, Tudor and Victorian times, including the many examples of industrial archaeology brought about by local developments.

With the rapid changes being made in the area it is important to investigate many of the evidences of the past by the techniques of observation, recording and conservation.

It has been suggested that if there is sufficient interest in the matters outlined above, an informal group of the Society could be set up to pursue them. Anyone in the area with appropriate skills in the subject could be invited to join the group and the Society if not already a member.

Comments on the suggestion would be welcomed by any member of the committee.

G.L. Bolton

AGRICULTURE IN NORTH WEST ENGLAND

Recently I had to answer a request for information of the history of agriculture in this area and found much new historical information.

The earliest records seem to be for 1295-1296 and 1304-1305, when bailiffs near Clitheroe made out accounts. Then the most valuable animal was the ox, the average price being about 9s. Also cattle there suffered damage from wolves.

In 1562 an act of Parliament was passed where local magistrates could fix wages and hours of workers. If their rules were not followed then both employers and employees were punished. 12 an hour was deducted for absence; anyone who went on strike faced a month in prison and a fine of £5. If anyone paid higher wages than those fixed then he faced ten days in prison and a fine of £5. The worker faced 21 days in prison. The north of England paid poorer wages than the south.

In 1589 an act was passed which ruled that no cottage should be built unless it had four acres of land with it.

For wages: the year was divided into 2: May - October, and November to May. From May to October the wage was 6d a day, and for the other part of the year 5d a day. This was without food and drink. If by any chance food and drink was supplied it was counted as 3d a day.

In harvest time the peasants who mowed the hay were letter off. They were paid 8d a day, the same wages as masons and carpenters.

For holidays - Saturdays and the eves of holy days the labourer had half a day off.

Prices were high, and in 1595, it would have taken two days work to buy one day's food.

In 1600 a report of conditions in Northern England was made by Camden who reported that moss land was swampy and unhealthy, but turf from here was used for fuel, and the marl was used for manure. He also described the cattle as having "long horns" and "tight-moulded carcasses".

Later, in 1664, at Ormskirk, storks were sold for £1.9s.4d - £1.14s.10d each. Sheep were fed in the house with beans ground round and bran (possibly with some oats). They were given plenty of water and hay and "they were kept warm and became exceedingly fat in fourteen days".

In 1683 there was a severe winter which killed off many sheep and cattle as well as human beings. All rivers and ponds were "frozen hard".

Usually in the 17th century when taking up a lease, "the landlord was to repair buildings, the tenant carting the materials. The tenant was to discharge all taxes, serve all offices, and all the duties charged on the farm. Wages gradually improved.

In 1761:

the head servant was paid £6.10s a year.

the maid servant £3 a year

labourers 10d a year

Then 10 years later in 1771:

the head servant was paid £9.9s.

the maid servant £4.10s.

labourers 1s.8d.

Conditions were appalling, and indeed in 1785 John Holt published a survey of the agriculture in Lancashire where he remarked "some of the old built farm houses are ill constructed, and are still thatched". In a plan of the house it shows a parlour, dining-room, staircase, milk-house, kitchen and pantry. His offices show stable, shippon, thrashing-bay, shed, corn-bay, calf-crib and cart-house.

Many cottages were brick built and covered with slate. The rent: £4.6s. p.a. Their floors were clay.

One can only admire the farm workers, and it comes as no surprise when one reads that their children went into manufacturing life.

Note: Although this book is really on the history of the agriculture of Lancashire, it includes information on roads of the area, canals, fairs, imports, exports and manufacturing trades. It also gives useful advice on pests and on how to make manure and its best use. But for gardeners history of crops grown is certainly a surprise. For instance, John Holt grew liquorice and recommended 'Pontefract' to his readers. Chicory was also grown, and madder, for dying cotton.

Today conditions are certainly better than this. Imagine going to prison for striking! Wymott Prison would certainly be full. But the life even then must have been infinitely more satisfying than working in a mill all day and never seeing a blade of grass from one year's end to another.

What the Three Coats of Arms Tell

In the new Church of St. Mary, Leyland, over the massive glass doors dividing the narthex from the church proper are three Coats of Arms viz: Evesham Abbey, Westminster Abbey and Ampleforth Abbey. Many people, both non-Catholic and Catholic, have asked me what the connection between these three might be and their connection with St. Mary's, Leyland. The explanation is more or less as follows:

Evesham

In the 14th century Baron Bussel of Penwortham gave the patronage of St. Andrew's Church at Leyland to the Abbot and Conventus (Benedictine Monks of the English Congregation) of the Abbey of Evesham, under the Priory of Penwortham, which was a cell of that Abbey. This gift was confirmed by a Bull issued by Pope John XII to the Bishop of Coventry and Lichfield, and remained so until the Dissolution of the Abbey. Incidentally it is worthy of note that certain lands in the vicinity of the present Tardy Gate were granted to one John Tardy by Evesham Abbey, Dom Wilfred, O.S.B., of St. Gerard's, Lostock Hall has a copy of a declaration to that effect by the last Abbot, Clement of Lichfield.

Westminster

Upon the dissolution of Evesham a monk by name Fakenham of that Abbey became chaplain to the Bishop of Worcester, who later became Bishop of London. (Bonner). Under Edward VI he spend much time in the Tower. Upon the accession of Mary he was released and preached at her Coronation in 1553. He afterwards became Dean of St. Paul's. Later with 15 other monks he offered to return to monastic life and on Friday, November 20, 1556 they resumed choir duties at Westminster Abbey.

When the Abbey monks were again dispersed under Elisabeth I, Fakenham (Feckenham) was made a prisoner in the Tower once again together with another monk of Westminster, Dom Buckley. Feckenham was removed to Wisbech where he died.

Buckley remained in the Tower until an old man then he was placed under more or less house arrest in the Gate House of his old Abbey of Westminster. While there being 90 years of age and feeling his end was nigh, he clothed two young clerics with the Habit of St. Benedict granting them all the rights and privileges of the English Benedictine Congregation.

These two monks were exiled and after many trials gathered together and gave the habit to a number of Englishmen and set up the Abbey of St. Laurence at Dieulouard in Lorraine. When the religious upheavals in France caused them to return to England and they eventually settled at Ampleforth in Yorkshire.

Ampleforth

The monks of St. Laurence, Ampleforth are now known the world over since their Public School is one of the largest in the world. Since 1845 the Monks of Ampleforth have served the Catholics of St. Mary's, Leyland, thus the present monks at St. Mary's are the direct successors of the monks of Evesham, Westminster and of the Benedictine St. Augustine of Canterbury, who was sent to England by another great Benedictine Pope St. Gregory.

Thus the three ARMS.

E.P. Farr

The Douglas Cross

Hidden away near the southern limits of Leyland Hundred stands an interesting stone cross. It can easily be reached by winding lanes from the main B5239 road. After travelling in a westerly direction over Parbold Hill, one passes the junction with the B5246 road to Rufford, turning left down Wood Lane.

We explored this lane on foot at Easter, passing a row of new houses and bungalows with pleasant gardens facing south. We turned right along a narrow track, Chapel Lane, and came to the railway. This was the wigga to Southport line, with signal box and crossing-keeper's house. By the white gate we saw the L.M.S. notice, giving warning to trespassers. On the farther side of the crossing there was an older notice with its metal letters still clearly discernible: LANCASHIRE AND YORKSHIRE RAILWAY. It threatened the trespasser with a fine of forty shillings. Whilst we stopped to read the notice, two trains passed, but these were of modern diesel kind.

The cobbled track led to the canal with its stone bridge. A barge was moored nearby, and on the opposite bank was a tall, barn-like building which had SOUTHPORT BREWERY painted on the wall. We passed an old stone farm house, treading carefully through the farmyard, and bearing left we continued along a grassy track.

Suddenly we saw the Douglas Cross, enclosed within iron railings. The Cross of Celtic design stood on stone steps, and we read the long inscription.

HERE STOOD
OLD DOUGLAS CHAPEL
FOR FOUR FULL CENTURIES LOVED
AND THRONGED BY THOSE WHO WORSHIPPED
GOD FROM ALL THE COUNTRY ROUND.
EXISTED 1526.
REBUILT 1621. DEMOLISHED 1875.

THE HOLY TABLE, FONT AND PULPIT ARE NOW IN
DOUGLAS PARISH CHURCH.
THIS CROSS, CARVED FROM THE OLD THRESHOLD STONE,
WAS ERECTED JULY, 1906.
"YOUR FATHERS, WHERE ARE THEY?"

The path then leads to the River Douglas, where there is a long wooden footbridge. Two footpaths lead across the fields to Dalton Lees Road. The path to the left goes a short distance by the river, then bends right and passes along the drive of Priorswood Hall. From Dalton Lees Road one can climb the hill to Ashurst Beacon.

The railway, canal and river all run very close together in the valley, the River Douglas marking the boundary of the old Leyland Hundred. Half-way up Parbold Hill can be seen the spire of the new church of Douglas and Parbold, with the beautiful spire of the Roman Catholic church on the level road below.

Parbold was held by the Lathom family along with their other estates. A Robert de Lathom was living there in the thirteenth century, and before the Reformation some lands were granted by them to the Knights Hospitallers. The name "Priorswood Hall" is a reminder of the site of their lands.

There was a chapel in the Douglas valley at Parbold before 1526, a church built about 1420, and a certain John, priest of Douglas, is referred to in a deed of 1240.

It is a very peaceful scene today, but three hundred years ago the country folks were involved in the troubles of the Civil War. During the Commonwealth period under Cromwell a Puritan minister called Jonathan Scholefield was installed in the church here. On the restoration of the monarchy at the return of Charles II the minister "was ejected from Douglas Chapel" in 1662.

He found refuge with friends in Tunley where he died in 1667, but later in 1691 an Independent Nonconformist chapel was built there.

It was at first Unitarian, then Presbyterian, and today is known as the United Reform Church. Built in the reign of William and Mary, Tunley chapel was one of the earliest Nonconformist churches to be founded in England.

The Douglas Cross stands now, a lonely guardian of the pathway, and we found it very difficult to imagine that only a hundred years ago - "worshippers thronged" here.

Nessie Markland

A Talk by Mrs. Pheobe Hesketh
On Her Life in the Village of
Rivington

At the December meeting of the Association, Mrs. Pheobe Hesketh gave a fascinating talk on her life in the village of Rivington on the hills above Horwich; the village near the reservoirs of the Liverpool Waterworks.

Mrs. Hesketh came to Fisher House - a neglected Georgian dwelling - for a "short time" on her marriage in 1931, but the house, with all its problems of size, damp and decay and the huge demands for heating, won her heart, and the family lived there for 30 years.

The Rev. John Fisher, after whom the house was named, was vicar of the Parish from 1763 - 1813 and housed and taught 40 boys there!

Rivington has well documented ancient buildings. The first Hall was built in 1202 and rebuilt in 1478 by Robert Pilkington in wood and plaster round a quadrangle. It lasted 300 years! In 1566 James Pilkington, the Bishop of Durham, founded the Free Grammar School of Queen Elizabeth. The present building is dated 1714 on the site of the original school and it was built by direct labour, good dressed stone, strong iron, studded oak doors and diamond pane windows. It was taken over by the Lancashire County Council in 1903 who extended it in 1905. In 1940 they proposed to close it, but strong opposition to this won a reprieve.

The Church is mostly Elizabethan in design. The earliest gravestone now to be found is 1616; the earliest memorial 1627. The Register of baptism and burials dates from 1703. Earlier ones are presumed lost in a fire. There are numerous carved stones in the area. Another rare feature in Rivington is a detached bell house built in 1540 for a large bell.

To return to the memoirs of Mrs. Hesketh, she found kindness, comedy, drama, scandal and the charm of nature in the village. She had stone flag floors and an antique rusty stove to contend with. There were hooks for hams in the ceiling and bells for servants, relics of more prosperous living. She had to cope with 15 oil lamps! When her book was written, various villagers mentioned were consulted and were outraged at the pictures of themselves! This entailed much revision.

One unusual character was a Mrs. Finch who, when her husband died, draped everything in black for a year. A man and his three sisters never washed! To enable one to go to a party, without offence to the neighbours, a friend lent her a hat, dress, and coat, only to discover on seeking their return - a few days later - she was still wearing them! There was no love between the Church and Chapel, and when the minister would disturb the Church Service by holding his in the open air on the Green, the vicar procured a large tin tray and some heavy keys to bang with and drove the Chapel Service inside!

Mrs. Twig was found to be mentioned, she was a herbalist, astrologer and Spiritualist and so sought after as a "wise woman". Another unusual story told was of the death of a villager high on the hills. The Liverpool Water Authority sent seventeen men with seventeen spades to dig a track in the deep snow for the funeral.

The whole area won Mrs. Hesketh's affection. The hills, the horse riding and the pattern of changing seasons were an endless joy for her and the family too.

Mrs. Pheobe Hesketh's book is in Leyland Library. For a vast amount of historical detail that I found most interesting, and remarkable remembering it concerns a small area of Lancashire.

I used J. Rawlinson's "About Rivington" from the Historic Library.

R.B. Kelley

The Lancaster Canal

Our speaker on January 7th was Mr. John Gavan, ably assisted by Mr. David Slater who operated the projector.

The Lancaster Canal is one of our most delightful waterways. It is a lone canal, and does not connect with any other canals and the only way you can sail off is by way of Glasson Dock. To do this you must take the locks from Galgate down to Glasson, six locks in all. The canal is fed by Killington Lake and enters the canal at Crocklands.

There are three hire firms, one at Catforth, one at Galgate and the other at Carnforth. The most beautiful stretch is from Lancaster to Tewit Fields, and at one part it overlooks Morecambe Bay. To moor up your boat and watch the sun set over the bay is something to remember.

When we first hired a boat it was in 1955. There were only about thirty boats then, a small hire firm at Catforth and a few private boats. The canal was covered in weed, and we had to stop at times to free the propeller; now it is well kept and there must be a few hundred boats moored, here and there, but as there are 45 miles of navigable water, there is plenty of room for more.

Of course it is much more expensive now than it was when we began our cruising.

Anyone wishing to know more about the Canal Trust or the boating should pay a visit to the museum at Garstang in the Owd Tithebarn; you could also have a meal or a drink there. It is well worth a visit.

M. Marland

The Restoration of Samlesbury Hall

The Speaker for the February meeting of the L.H.S. was Mr. Drinkall, a Surveyor and Trustee of Samlesbury Hall.

Mr. Drinkall first complimented the meeting on the number of members present; at other similar talks he has usually had only twenty or so people to hear him.

Samlesbury Hall was a family house built c.1320. There is evidence of the existence of a moat. In 1926 a group of Blackburn business men formed the Samlesbury Trust to purchase the Hall, and so prevent its total demolition, as it was in a state of great disrepair. As a result they became known as the Friends of Samlesbury.

Towards the end of the 1960's the Lancashire branch of the Council for the Protection of Rural England (C.P.R.E.) were seeking fresh premises and through the efforts of their then Secretary, Mr. Stanley Jeeves, it was arranged that they should move their offices to Samlesbury Hall. About 1971, Mr. Jeeves made two proposals. One was that the Samlesbury Trust and the C.P.R.E. branch should link up, both from the angle of combined operations for the Samlesbury Hall restoration and for the future plans for maintaining the Hall and developing it as a public place of interest. The other proposal was that the stables should be refurbished as offices, and a lecture hall for future activities be built above. Both proposals were agreed upon, and the wisdom of the second one particularly can be seen today in the lectures and other regular activities held in the Aseroft Hall, as it is known. So about 1971 restoration work began on the stable and cottages at the rear of the Hall. After completion of these premises it was decided that the grounds should be renovated before the Hall. In this way people could see the progress of the restoration work without having to walk along unmade paths. Thus the car park and main drive were developed and then the courtyard. Large circular patterns of granite setts were laid in the Courtyard which demanded the services of old craftsmen. Work on the Hall could now be commenced.

It was found necessary to damp-proof the structure and this revealed the need for repairing and making water-resistant the plinth upon which the Hall stood.

The main wooden corner structures were found to be rotting, and these had to be replaced with steel girders.

The Priest-room was in a very poor condition. Great care had to be taken that no damage to the defective glass in the adjoining bow window was sustained whilst repairs to the Priest-room were carried out. It is in the bow window that the Heraldry of Lancashire is depicted.

When work was completed on the Long Gallery, load tests had to be carried out before it was opened to the public. Although it had, doubtless, been frequented by many people in the past, it was anticipated that there would be a far greater number visiting the Long Gallery following restoration. This forecast was proved to be accurate in no uncertain terms!

In the Chapel, a tableaux of sculptured figures representing various crafts, e.g. spinning and the potter's wheel, has been established as a permanent tribute to nature and some of the things it supplies.

The only part of Samlesbury Hall not yet touched is the Great Hall. Here can be seen a Minstrels Gallery, but this is not genuine. The oak screen was moved from the Dining-room end to its present location as a Minstrels Gallery in the Victorian era. There are, however, plans afoot for this area of Samlesbury Hall to be refurbished and thus to complete the restoration.

Roy Woodward

Leyland Historical Society - March 1980

The Members Night Meeting consisted of three main speakers, Mrs. R.B. Kelley, Mr. R.O. Williams, and Mr. B. Morris. They spoke on 'Proceedings and Ways of the Magistrates Court', 'Numismatology' and 'Local History'.

Mrs. R.B. Kelley gave the first talk on the Magistracy. Drawing on her thirty years experience and service as a Magistrate, she outlined the method of selecting magistrates, from a list of names put forward by various groups, for example, political parties, church bodies, Women Institutes etc. They are vetted and if considered suitable are approached to see if they are interested in serving. Then they are listed and eventually appointed by the Duchy of Lancaster.

The requirements they must fulfil are the taking of the Oath of Allegiance to the Queen and the Judicial Oath which are taken at the Crown Court.

While serving as Magistrates they must constantly remember the Judicial Oath by which they promise 'to do right by all manner of people, after the laws and usages of the Realm - without fear or favour, affection or ill-will. Mrs. Kelley continued by listing the different courts. Magistrates attend and the varied cases brought before them - tragic, serious and otherwise. She reminded us that our system of Courts dated back to an act of 1361 and the Statute of Winchester of Edward I, and has developed from these.

Our next subject was 'Numismatology' and the speaker was Mr. R.O. Williams. He began by giving us an outline of the history of coins, starting with ladies of 6,000 years ago bartering with metal they found and had fashioned into jewelry which they exchanged for food and pots. In the East, tea was used, after being cast into bricks. He continued through the Greek period when the first coins were struck in silver, and the gold coins struck in Asia Minor.

In England silver was the metal chosen. The old unit of corn was weighed and given a silver value.

24 grains of corn = 1 penny weight. Silver is still the basis of our currency. "Sterling" is the old name for a silver penny.

Mr. Williams traced the development of our other coins and metals used, right up to the present day decimal coins.

At the end of his talk, Mr. Bolton gave a short talk about a Roman silver denarius. He displayed an authentic one and also a Victorian replica.

Mr. B. Morris was our last speaker. His topic was "Local History". His interesting slides included the Old Cottages of Worden Lane, and St. Mary's Old Church, original and present day. He drew attention to various features on buildings which are un-noticed by many people, for example the foot scrapers on St. Mary's Old Presbytery steps, the insurance medals in Fox Lane, the date stone on Haydocks butcher's shop. He concluded his slides and commentary with some illustrations of Spring Gardens (formerly Bradshaw St.), mentioning Jimmy O'Neil's Lodging House and the numerous 'home industries' of the inhabitants.

The meeting ended with Mr. Cumpstey's vote of thanks to the speakers for a fascinating evening - a real feast of history.

E. Chaloner