LANCASHIRE LOCAL HISTORY FEDERATION

NEWSLETTER
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FEDERATION ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The brief AGM will be held over Zoom

on Tuesday 18 March at 6.30pm

This will be followed by a talk: ***Knobsticks: A social history of a Lancastrian (?) term.*** Jack Southern will look at the word 'knobstick' (effectively a blackleg) and its uses in literature, involving strikes and violent incidents.

Jack is a lecturer at UCLan and an historian of modern Britain, focusing on the social and cultural history of the North of England. He is also a member of the Federation committee.

Zoë Lawson, the membership secretary, will be sending out papers in advance and a link to the Zoom.

VIEW FROM THE CHAIR

The early antiquaries who, for example, compiled county histories in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, often included a section on natural history, and one on geology (in at least its older version). There was to them no divide or demarcation line between what we would consider local or regional history, on the one hand, and on the other the natural world which provided its context. The 'amateur' practitioners three centuries ago did not have to worry about the boundaries of academic disciplines or the dividing of subjects into compartments. If they felt that a discourse on ferns was as relevant to their work as, say, a description of Roman coins, so be it – nobody was going to stop them.

Robert Plot was professor of chemistry at Oxford University who in 1677 published ***The Natural History of Oxford-shire, Being an Essay Towards the Natural History of England***. This was, to say the least, wide-ranging, covering in a chatty observational style subjects as disparate as fossils, unusual trees, meteorological phenomena, and distinctive rock formations. It also included extensive descriptions of country crafts and customs, agriculture, landscape and garden design, architecture, church monuments, mines and quarries, and antiquities. As well as being well-nigh unreadable, it also spans several of the compartments of intellectual pursuits and learning which we know today – natural history was part of a continuum of knowledge of the world, its past and our place in it.

In 1686 Plot followed this with a companion volume on the ***Natural History of Stafford-shire***. This followed the same pattern, including (besides much else) descriptions of the rivers, springs and pools of the county (amongst labyrinthine verbal wanderings concerning these phenomena across the world; and lengthy diversions into, for example, salt springs and the manufacture of salt). Plot mixes folklore and tradition with the powerful sense that custom and the old ways are fast-changing or disappearing because of the newfangled activities of the modern world.

This approach was emulated by C. Leigh, in his ***Natural History of Lancashire, Cheshire, and the Peak of Derbyshire*** which was published in 1700. This was wonderfully subtitled '***with an Account of the British, Phoenician, Armenian, Greek and Roman Antiquities in Those Parts'***. Again, there's that link between natural history, antiquarianism, and locality. The book is in a typically effusive and over-the-top literary style, but it includes a good deal more 'real world' coverage of, for example, mineral resources, coal and its exploitation, spas and medicinal waters and springs, metal ore smelting, and fishing. I'm less convinced by the Phoenicians and Armenians, who I suspect never got as far as the Red Rose County!

I have been thinking about the place of natural history in 'our' subject because it lingered on until the early twentieth century. The first volume of the ***Victoria County History of Lancashire*** was published in 1906 (there were eventually eight volumes), covering a range of countywide topics, including 'early man', 'Anglo-Saxon remains', and the Lancashire Domesday. However, 206 of the 377 pages are taken up with nine sections on the natural history of the county. These include pieces (some little

more than lists or catalogues) on such specialisms as 'Non-marine molluscs', 'Reptiles and batrachians'. The most esoteric component of this volume is probably the section on spiders – all twelve pages of it!

All of this is itself history, and in the past 100 or so years few local histories have included sections on natural history. But in recent years we've seen books on particular landscape areas, such as the sand dunes of the Sefton coast, the former lake of Martin Mere and its wetlands, and the River Ribble and its valley, which have brought together the natural history (or more likely today, 'ecology'), the archaeology and the local history of an area. This gives a more rounded and more convincing view of the landscape and its evolution, to the benefit of both disciplines. Leave out the Phoenicians, though!

Alan Crosby

THIS IS THE 50th EDITION OF THE NEWSLETTER!

NEWS News NEWS News NEWS News

The first edition of the newsletter in its current format was published in February 2012. Prior to that there were earlier versions, edited at different times by Chris Makepeace and Jill Groves.

At the time the contents differed from that of later versions, as it was produced at the same time as the *Journal*, edited by Zoë Lawson. When Jill stepped down as the editor and the journal ceased publication there was a hiatus for some time.

In 2010 there had been a wide-ranging discussion about the Federation itself, including the need for a way to communicate with members. This first newsletter of the new era showed what had led up to this fundamental review of the situation, and asked the question: *Does the Federation have a future?*

The comprehensive review was brought about as a result of the loss of some key members of the committee. In the summer of 2010, the acting Chairman, Morris Garratt, had written to members asking them if they wished the organisation to continue. In response, the membership, especially individuals, had made it clear that they were indeed supportive of the Federation continuing. Clearly this would happen only if members took practical steps to ensure its future.

Alan Crosby attended an open forum in November that year and spoke about the history of the Federation. It had set out to be an umbrella organisation covering the ancient County Palatine, not just the post-1974 administrative area. However, the Federation would perhaps have to recognise that many societies were interested only in their immediate locality.

It was proposed that the *Federation 'might organise projects as well as days of lectures…[and] might make links with other county-wide history societies and*

organisations….Links should also be considered with family history societies, civic societies and the several archives services in the County Palatine'.

It was suggested that there was merit in producing a high quality paper newsletter to keep in touch with members. Attendees at the open forum had suggested that the Federation ought to ask societies for information for inclusion in the newsletter.

This first issue also contained the kind of items which were to become staples of later editions: a review of the Federation day school about the local historian George Henry Tupling (1883-1962), and news from Lancashire Archives.

Four months later, another newsletter – confusingly also numbered 1 – appeared, thanks to Margaret Edwards volunteering for the role. She continued to use her skills and diligence until issue number 21. This first proper issue established the more familiar format of news about events, projects, publications, news from Lancashire Archives, and interesting articles. Margaret made a plea known to many an editor – asking for more contributions!

For some time the frequency varied between 3 and 4 editions annually, but is now produced three times each year.

In every area of the country, many people diligently and enthusiastically research and record the history of their county and of their local areas, and Lancashire is very blessed in this regard. The accounts submitted to the newsletter - of local history study days and talks; of appreciation of the life and work of local historians; of publications and exhibitions; of articles about people and historic events – help to build up a picture of a county rich in fascinating detail at the wider at every level.

In this account it would be impractical to give more than a brief picture of the wide-ranging items included in the 50 editions of the newsletter, but a few follow:

- Issue no. 4, May 2013, gave a report of a reception for local history societies, hosted by the county council in the council chamber *'in recognition of the key role they play in keeping local history alive in the county'.*
- Issue no. 14, February 2016, included a warning about the serious consequences for local history of the budget cuts facing the county. These included the closure of several libraries, the probable closure of museums, a large reduction in funding for Lancashire Archives, and the cessation of the community heritage service. The report by our membership secretary, Zoë Lawson, ended with the words*, 'There is no doubt that Lancashire's heritage is under a severe threat over the coming years and the Federation and its members must aim to give support where we can'.*
- Issue no. 20, August 2017. In an article *Returned from the Front* there was mention of a BBC programme featuring Nick Stone, from Norwich, whose interest was tracking down plain wooden crosses which were once used to mark the fallen on WWI battlefields. Examples from the north west were featured: there is one in St Anne's church in Sale which carries a metal strip with the words 'Unknown British Soldier'; there is a wooden Star of David at Broadgreen cemetery in Liverpool, with a plaque whose words show that it is a memorial 'to the fallen Jewish soldiers of this district'.

The advent of Covid in 2020 affected every area of life. As far as the newsletter was concerned, the Federation committee decided that, since meetings and events would not take place or be recorded, we should include interesting articles and pointers towards useful source of information for local historians. Although we have reverted to giving details of some forthcoming events submitted by local societies and others, we still include such articles.

Since taking over responsibility for the newsletter (issue no. 22, February 2018) the present editor has maintained a contents index, so past articles can readily be identified if needed.

This article concludes with two pleas:

- Zoë Lawson, the membership secretary, emails the newsletter to one named person in each society, with a request that she or he sends it to every member. Since the newsletter is the Federation's main method of communication, we feel it is important that everyone has the opportunity to read it.
- A request from the editor: **Please send copy!** Local history articles, reports about events and notices of forthcoming meetings, details of new publications…

So, with thanks to past and future contributors, and to Zoë for distribution, we go on to number 51 and beyond!

Marianne Howell – Editor

NEWS FROM ARCHIVES

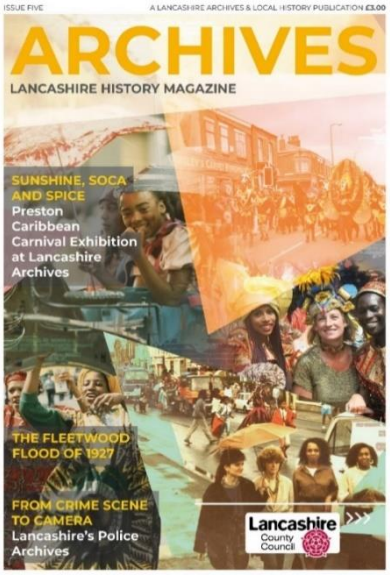
LANCASHIRE ARCHIVES & LOCAL HISTORY

Preston Caribbean Carnival 1974-2024

Let some Caribbean sunshine into your life by visiting Lancashire Archives and Local History to help us celebrate 50 years of the Preston Caribbean Carnival with our latest exhibition, Sunshine, Soca and Spice. With costumes on loan from the carnival, this exhibition is an explosion of colour and a celebration of the contribution this wonderful, vibrant festival has made to the cultural landscape of Preston and Lancashire since 1974.

Lancashire Archives are delighted to be partnering with the Preston Caribbean Carnival and historian, Stephen Poleon, and Lancashire County Museum Service for our new exhibition, which is free to visit and will be open until July 2025.

Lancashire Local History Publication – *Archives*



The fifth issue of *Archives* is now on sale, featuring articles from all corners of Lancashire and beyond, with everything from hairdressing to the Haydock Bible. Linda Sherlock shares her mother's story of hairdressing in Chorley, Nicola Crawford explores the story of the Fleetwood floods of 1927, and Bill Shannon links Preston to the Presidency via Thomas and George Haydock. Dr Stephen Tate looks into amateur journalism and Stephen Poleon re-visits the Jalgos luncheon clubs. Ashryn Rigby charts Lancaster's gay community and Madeleine Rose Edwards delves into crime scene forensics in the Lancashire Police archives.
Archives is available to purchase from in all Lancashire County Council Libraries and at Lancashire Archives, priced at £3. If you'd like to receive a copy by post, please contact the Archives at archives@lancashire.gov.uk. If you have an idea you'd like to discuss, please email us and we'd be pleased to discuss your suggestion.

You can now read previous editions of the magazine online

The deadline for submissions of articles for the sixth edition is 1 March 2025, for publication on 1 June 2025.

Lancashire Archives & Local History on Facebook!

We're delighted to let you know that Lancashire Archives & Local History now has a Facebook page! Please have a look and follow us at: https://www.facebook.com/lancsarchives

You can also follow us on Twitter at https://twitter.com/LancsArchives

Lancashire Roman Catholic and Methodist registers available on Ancestry

Lancashire Archives have been working in partnership with Ancestry to make more of our church registers available online.

Ancestry have recently launched a collection of Lancashire Roman Catholic records and Non-Conformist registers which contains high quality, colour images of many of the registers. There are nearly 3 million Roman Catholic and 450,000 Methodist church entries covering baptisms, marriages and burials. The collections are fully

indexed so you can either search by name across the whole set of records or browse through the images of an individual register.

Ancestry can be accessed free of charge within Lancashire Archives and in any Lancashire library.

News from the Archives

Our monthly digest of updates and news from Lancashire Archives & Local History has a new look and is available as a direct web-link or in PDF format. If you would like to be added to the mailing list please tell us by contacting us at archives@lancashire.gov.uk.

Improving storage facilities at Lancashire Archives

Visitors may have noticed the scaffolding being assembled around our new stacks storage tower. We are improving the storage facilities at Lancashire Archives to help safeguard Lancashire's archive collections for the future. This is an opportunity to future-proof our strongrooms and to make sure we can continue to provide the best care for all types of records including digital, photographic and written collections. The necessary building work will mean some disruption to our service. Some records will be temporarily stored off site, which will have an impact on our ability to deliver on-the-day access to some collections. All affected items will have a note on LANCAT, our online catalogue: this will let you know that advance notice of 10 working days will be needed in order to access them. This will apply to around 10% of the records in our care, so most records will remain accessible on the day.

Please continue to book and visit the Archives as usual and if you have any questions please get in touch.

Keeping East Lancashire in the Picture

Keeping East Lancashire in the picture - Lancashire County Council

Our project supported by the National Lottery Heritage Fund and Friends of Lancashire Archives continues into 2025. In the next few months look out for updates on newly digitised photographic collections, events at Lancashire libraries, and activities with our project partners and local schools. A few highlights include:

- Our amazing volunteers scanning approximately 41,000 images; we are now busy cropping the scanned images ready to upload onto the Red Rose website for volunteers to begin adding contextual information.

- Two schools in Accrington, Hyndburn Park Primary and St John Augustine, and a school in Burnley, St Peter's, visited us in October and November and took part in 'Explore' sessions ahead of working on their exhibitions.
- In September we joined in with Colne's 1970s festival; in October we celebrated with the Aawaz community group in Accrington Library, showcasing images of wedding dresses and photographs scanned by Aawaz volunteers. The exhibition was opened by LCC Councillor Loraine Cox and the Mayor of Hyndburn.
- The Hollins School, Accrington Camera Club, and KELP collaborated in capturing some outstanding images by the photography pupil group who worked with the camera club, with residential care homes, with pupils and residents, capturing some very special memories and moments.
- KELP contributed to Hyndburn Council's Enlighten event, and the creation of an augmented reality walking trail, where visitors can explore historic images through their mobile phones via QR codes (*Enlighten Accrington – AR Walking Trail*). They reported 5000 visitors over the 2 days.
- New displays in Burnley, Colne and Nelson libraries, with 'Work & Play' themed exhibitions of images drawn from the collections, showing the local populations in a range of occupations/work and at leisure.

SPEAKERS' CORNER

Your local society needs you! Societies are always looking for speakers to fill their programme each year. If you give talks on local history topics which you think will interest people in your area or further afield, please send us your details. Our newsletters reach all the members of the 80 societies which are members of the Federation.

If you would like to do so, please send:

- Name
- Contact details
- Subject(s) covered
- Areas where you are willing to give talks
- Whether you would deliver over Zoom, if asked
- Any other relevant information

Please do not include details of fees, as this can be discussed with the organisation when you make contact. Any agreement will be made between the speaker and the group, so the Lancashire Local History Federation cannot accept responsibility for any aspect of the arrangement.

mariannerh@hotmail.co.uk Marianne Howell, Newsletter editor.

PAUL GASKELL

CONTACT DETAILS: paulgask@googlemail.com

SUBJECTS COVERED:

Published sources for family and local history. This interactive talk considers the publications of bodies such as the British Record Society, Catholic Record Society and county publishing societies.

Research at home using your local libraries' online resources. This interactive talk looks at some of the resources that local library services make available free of charge to their members for online use at home.

DELIVERY: Although born and bred in Wigan, I now live in Oxford. Hence my talks are optimised for online delivery via Teams or Zoom.

ABOUT THE SPEAKER: Paul Gaskell has been researching his family history for the last 45 years. He served as a trustee and executive committee member of Oxfordshire FHS for seventeen years and, more recently, was Hon General Secretary of Oxfordshire Record Society for five years. Much of Paul's working life has been spent as a trainer, tutor and coach; this is experience that he now uses for the benefit of those wanting to advance their family and local history research.

We have had a request from Rochdale Antiques Society for speakers at their meetings. They meet monthly from September to May, in Norden. If you are, or you can recommend, a speaker who could offer topics which may be of interest to people curious about local history and / or antiques, please contact the editor.

NEWS FROM MEMBER SOCIETIES

PRESTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY www.prestonhistoricalsociety.org.uk/

Talks take place on the **2nd Monday of the month** at Central Methodist Church, Lune Street, Preston, PR1 2NL. Doors open from 6.30, talks 7.15-8.30.

10 February	*Religion in Tudor Lancashire 1520-1620*	Alan Crosby
10 March	*19th Century Lancashire work songs & broadside ballads.*	Jennifer Reid
14 April	*Your history on your doorstep: Exploring Lancashire Archives & Local History*	Alex Miller
12 May	*Chimney pots and chamber pots: Working-class housing in 19th century Lancashire*	Geoff Timmins

ALICE LOCK

Tameside Local History Forum pay their tribute to Alice, who died in November 2024

As we pay tribute to our dear friend Alice Lock we also remember her dedication to Tameside Local Studies and Archive Centre, where she held the post of Local Studies Librarian for 38 years, until her early retirement in 2013 at the age of 59.

Alice wrote many publications on the history of the local area which can be found on the shelves in the centre. She had a special interest in Stamford Park, and also wrote articles in the Lancashire & Cheshire Antiquarian Society *Transactions*, for which she created a searchable inventory. Her last article to be published was *Suffragists in Ashton-under-Lyne in 1911*.

She was a member of the forum, where she was the minutes secretary, and was secretary for the Lancashire & Cheshire Antiquarian Society.

Many tributes have been paid to Alice, who will be sorely missed by so many people in the borough and beyond. Work colleagues spoke of her as the perfect boss, who made it possible for them to do things; she was not one for a fuss but was instrumental in fighting for better conditions for the Tameside archives and for them to remain in the borough for all local people to access. She created a wonderful collection of historical books that can rival that of any local studies and archive centre in the country.

Alice loved to travel and had been to many places around the world. She was born in Exeter and still visited on a regular basis.

The Forum will be celebrating 25 years in 2025 - Alice played a major role in these years. Part of her legacy is that she encouraged and helped so many people in projects, publishing and much more. We can thank Alice for our wonderful Local Studies and Archive Centre and how it has evolved into what it is today.

We will be exhibiting the work and projects we have been involved in over 25 years at Ashton Market Hall from 25 February to 20 May.

Please find more information on our website
www.tamesidelocalhistoryforum.org.uk

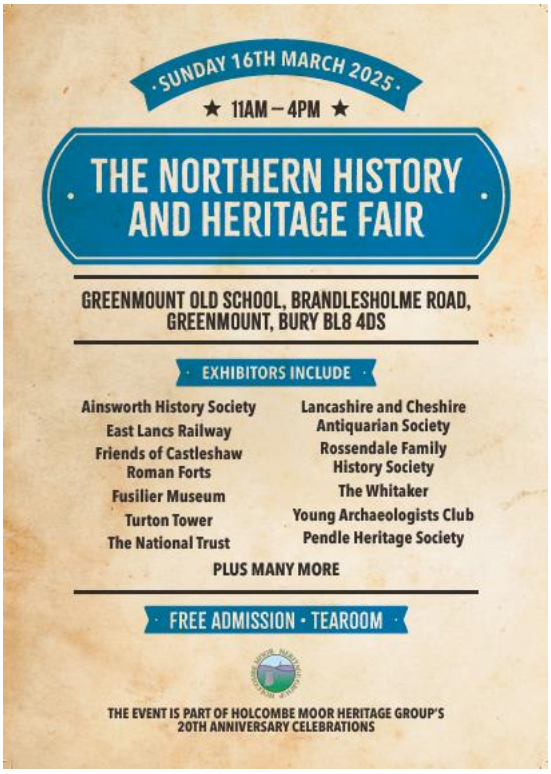
BARNOLDSWICK HISTORY SOCIETY

A remarkable find has recently been donated to the society. It is a cash book dated January 1762 for a business importing tobacco, pipes and fine wines from as far afield as Lisbon and the Canary Islands. The document has not been studied in any detail, but has revealed that the turnover of the business was in excess of £10,000.

Converting that into modern currency is not straightforward, but this is certainly a huge amount for what was then a small village: the bustling town of today would not develop for many years. The book was apparently found stuffed up the chimney of a cottage in Walmsgate, one of the oldest streets in the town, but the cottage would not have been built as early as the mid-eighteenth century.
I wonder if any other members have encountered similar documents relating to the trade in wines and tobacco. How were such valuable goods transported safely over very long distances when roads were poor and the canal had not been built? Any thoughts to alanrobertsbarnoldswick@gmail.com.

Alan Roberts

HOLCOMBE MOOR HERITAGE GROUP



MOURHOLME LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Meetings are held in Gaskell Hall, 17 Emesgate, Silverdale LA5 0RA. Annual membership costs £10, or £18 per couple. Visitors pay £2 to attend a single meeting. www.mourholme.co.uk

Wednesday 26 February: *Thomas Mawson: a Lancastrian garden designer*, with Brian Smith. Thomas Mawson designed gardens in the area, including Grey Walls in Silverdale, and Rydal Hall in Ambleside. The talk tells of his remarkable life and the gardens he designed.

Wednesday 26 March: Cromwell's northern journey 1648, with Nick Burton. An imagined journey walking in the footsteps of the New Model Army across Yorkshire and Lancashire to fight the Battle of Preston.

Wednesday 30 April: The Leeds Children's Holiday Camp Silverdale, with Stephanie Davies. The talk explores the history of the camp in Silverdale from 1904, with oral histories from children who stayed there and the staff who looked after them. The founder of the charity, Mrs Helen Currer Briggs, was the first Lady Mayoress of Leeds, and had connections with the Lake District and the Arts and Crafts designer, Charles Francis Annesley Voysey.

This will be preceded by a short AGM.

REGIONAL HERITAGE CENTRE

Saturday 1 March: Annual Archaeology Forum
Lancaster University Library events space

Topics include:

- Dr Richard Bradley (Reading University): Re-excavations at the site known as King Arthur's Seat
- Dr Nicholas Overton (Oxford Archaeology): The contribution of archaeology to biodiversity and re-wilding
- Dr Helen Evans (Oxford Archaeology): Current excavations along the A66
- Professor David Breeze (independent scholar): Elizabeth Hodgson and her 19th century archaeology in the north west

£30, with concessions for patrons of RHC and students. The event will also be live-streamed (details supplied when booking). Book via https://tinyurl.com/3w8en4te

Saturday 24 May: Study day in conjunction with Lancaster Military Heritage Group, to mark the 80th anniversary of the end of World War ll, and its impact in the north west. More details to follow.

FRIENDS OF PENDLE HERITAGE

Meetings take place at Higherford Methodist Church, Barrowford BB9 6JH

Saturday 22 February 2025, 1.00-4.00pm: Winter Words afternoon. Admission £10. Come and talk to the authors, with the opportunity to purchase signed copies of their books. The programme includes:

- **1-2pm Gavin Jones**, a writer based on the borders of Lancashire and Yorkshire. He is currently working on a series of four novels located in the

Dales. He will deliver a workshop on the art of short story writing, from inception to publication.

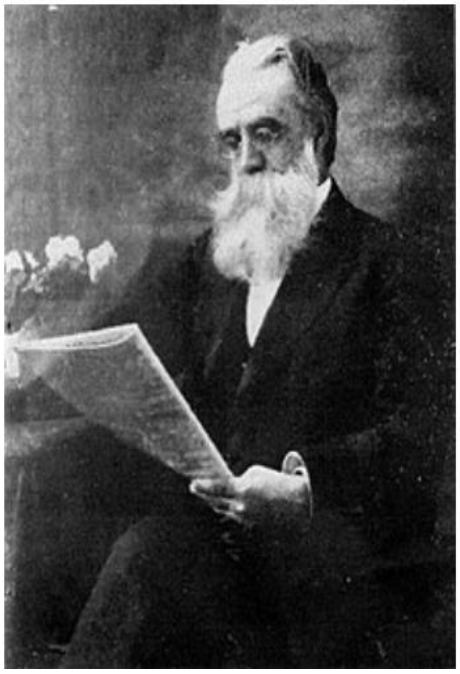
- **2.00-3.00pm Jenny Palmer**, a member of the Clitheroe Writing Group and Poetry Stanza, will talk on two of her books: *Whipps, Watsons and Bulcocks*, a Pendle family history 1560-1960, and *Witches, Quak*ers *and Nonconformists*.
- **3.00-4.00pm Nicola Nuttall**, *The Stars Will Still Be There* tells the story of the life of Nicola's daughter, Laura, and her death from brain cancer: one incredible bucket list and the extraordinary power of having something to look forward to.

Monthly meetings: Non-members £5, Refreshments £1

Tuesday 18 March 2025, 2.30pm: Recent discoveries reported to the British Museum's Portable Antiquities Scheme, with Alex Whitlock. Alex is Lancashire and Cumbria Finds Liaison Officer based at Lancashire County Council's Museum Service, and a freelance finds specialist. He will outline recent discoveries by members of the public in the north west. Every year our picture of the past residents of England's north west broadens and deepens through their objects, both exotic and domestic, found by residents of the present.

Tuesday 8 April 2025, 2.30pm: Violet's story, told by Denise North. Denise will present a collection of picture postcards collected between 1903 and 1937, which when assembled into date order tell Violet's story during this period.

THE VICTORIAN SOCIETY – MANCHESTER BRANCH



Wednesday 12 February 7.00 for 7.15pm. £10

Friends Meeting House, 6 Mount Street M2 5NS

The life and times of William Edward Armitage Axon (1846-1913), with Lucy Evans

Lucy Evans has written a biography of W E A Axon, who was an important figure in the history of the Lancashire & Cheshire Antiquarian Society, a social reformer and a prolific writer. She has identified over 1000 books, pamphlets, articles (Many in LCAS *Transactions*), obituaries, poems, translations, stories and dialect pieces.

His early deprived upbringing gave no clue to his eventual rise to be a librarian in Manchester central library and a member of the literary staff at the Manchester Guardian.

ORMSKIRK AND DISTRICT FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY

Further details about the Society and how to join can be found on our website Membership (odfhs.website).

Meetings are held monthly on the 4th Wednesday of each month (except December) at the Guide HQ, Moorgate, Ormskirk, L39 4RU (opposite Hesfords). Talks start at 7.30p.m. Non-members welcome (£2 admission). Our full events programme can be found on our website www.odfhs.website, and on Facebook www.facebook.com/OrmskirkDistrictFamilyHistorySociety. Our next meetings are:

- 26 February: ***A Slice of Gingerbread*** by Kathryn MacDonald
- 26 March: ***The Enumerator's Walk, 1911, Long Lane, Aughton*** by Norma Gregson
- 23 April: ***Celebrating VE Day and remembering WW2***
- 28 May: **AGM** (plus short presentation)

We hold a monthly ***ODFHS Family History Help Desk*** on the 1st Monday of each month (excluding bank holidays) from 10.30am – 11.30am at Ormskirk Library, Burscough St, Ormskirk, L39 2EN – all welcome.

On 13 January, the launch of our Lancashire County Council crowdfunded second booklet ***Family History and Landmarks of West Lancashire*** was held at Ormskirk Library. It was attended by over 60 people and we gave away lots of books. In the photo are the Mayor of West Lancashire Borough Council, Councillor Julian Finch (centre left) and the Chairman of Lancashire County Council, County Councillor Tim Ashton (centre right). Copies of ***Landmarks*** are now available in West Lancashire libraries and both booklets are available as a digital download https://www.odfhs.website/index.php/downloads. Email the society if you would like a printed copy (for the price of a stamp).

Our 2025 programme opened with a great talk by Brian Farrimond on Mediaeval Manuscripts. Specialising in Lancashire, his multimedia presentation included a YouTube video, a Radio 4 discussion and short excerpts of beautiful mediaeval choral music. The audience were invited to examine dozens of examples of pages from manuscripts, including both facsimile documents and original vellum / paper pages in protective pockets, and to admire glorious coloured illustrations from the texts and

the interiors of buildings like the Sistine Chapel. Brian's talk was just excellent – informative, entertaining and hugely knowledgeable. Brian said he would be willing to give his talk to other groups or societies - anyone wanting to book Brian for their own organisation can email him directly at brianfarrimond@mailbolt.com .

ODFHS 45th Anniversary Competition. We've decided to mark our 45th anniversary with a competition, open to both members and non-members. The subjects are "*Who is your most interesting West Lancashire ancestor?"* or *"What is your most interesting family discovery related to West Lancashire?"*. Choose one of these and tell us about it in 300 to 750 words, and add photos and illustrations as you want. The winner will receive a year's free membership. Entries must be received by 31 May 2025 and the results will be announced on 1 August 2025. The best entries will be published in the ODFHS Magazine *The Ormskirk and District Family Historian* (subject to space). Start planning now and look out for more details later.

CHADDERTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Griffin, the society's newsletter, contains interesting articles, including:

- Oldham is marking 175 years since its incorporation
- The Cow and Calf in Chadderton Fold – part of a series about forgotten inns of a bygone age
- Major Charles R E Radclyffe – part of a series about lords of the manor of Chadderton and Foxdenton
- The 80th anniversary of Chadderton swimming club
- Within the parish of Deane – in the series about townships that never developed

More details about the society from the Secretary chaddtown@yahoo.co.uk

ST HELENS HISTORICAL SOCIETY - A heartwarming occasion

On Friday 1 November a small group of us from the society arrived before midday at the mayor's parlour in St Helens Town Hall. You might have thought that this would include Mary Presland. But no - we were there without her, waiting for her to turn up. We had a secret surprise for her.

And so it came to pass that when Mary and her daughter Kit arrived, Madam Mayor and her Consort also duly appeared. And Mary was so deservingly presented with the Mayor's Award for Outstanding Service to the Town, in gratitude for her 65 years (and counting) magnificent and indefatigable dedication to St Helens Historical Society and to St Helens heritage overall. We had managed to keep it secret, and she was in equal measure

delighted, surprised and, with her wonderfully under-stated personality, a little embarrassed.

From the Town Hall to another reception at the Friends' Meeting House, the venue for our monthly meetings (everyone always welcome). Ceremonial cake-cutting ensued, viewed and applauded by a splendid turnout of SHHS members.

We did Mary and ourselves proud!

Mike Stankiewicz (Chair)

An appreciation by Dr Paul Booth, President of St Helens Historical Society
I have known Mary Presland for over half a century. She was introduced to me, as a name, by an administrator working in the Institute of Extension studies of Liverpool University in the early 1970s when I was organising and teaching Local History courses for the general public. 'In St Helens', I was told, 'there is this fierce lady called Mrs Presland'. I pulled Mary's leg over this description of her more than once over the years! In fact my introduction to St Helens and its history had come a few years earlier, and this was another Presland connection; as a research student I was in a group taken to St Helens by John Harris, then a senior lecturer in the university, to examine its industrial past. Dr Harris was responsible for taking a university evening class in the town, and was thoroughly well-qualified to do so. Together with his friend from Cowley School, Dr Theo Barker, he had published in 1954 *A Merseyside Town in the Industrial Revolution*, an economic and industrial history of St Helens. The class was so successful that it led to the formation of the St Helens Historical Society in 1959: Mary has served as secretary ever since.

Later, Mary ran courses for adult learners at the local college, where her husband, Graham, was a lecturer, and it was at that time that I was roped in to give some help. 'Roping in' is a skill at which she is particularly adept, as many others might testify. She also established research groups within the society that resulted in a number of excellent publications.

It is difficult to imagine anyone more worthy to be given an accolade by her town than this 'fierce lady'.

NEWS ROUNDUP

Monday 17 February 7.00-8.00pm. This talk, presented by **Graham McLoughlin** FRAS, the Secretary of Preston & District Astronomical Society, reveals the intriguing career of Preston-born Frank Holden.

His fascination with astronomy began when he observed the 1927 total solar eclipse at the age of 10. He went on to be assistant curator at Jeremiah Horrocks

Observatory, and later he moved to South Africa as astronomer in charge of Lamont-Hussey observatory.

The online talk is free, but booking is required. Book via the Forest of Bowland National Landscape Facebook page https://tinyurl.com/ytzhr4dj or Lancashire County Council https://tinyurl.com/2chkpvf5. After booking the online link will be sent out one week in advance.

ROCKET 200

This year marks the 200th anniversary of the world's first inter-city railway between Liverpool and Manchester. Manchester Histories www.manchesterhistories.co.uk is one of the principal partners, and have organised another networking event.

Thursday 20 March 5.30-7.30pm: Global Theatre Space, ground floor, Museum of Liverpool, Pier Head, Liverpool L3 1DG. Free.

The meeting will

- Provide an update on progress to date including the new brand
- Listen to other network partners' plans and ideas
- Receive ideas on exploring any new opportunities and collaborations

Anyone is welcome to attend and to bring ideas to the project. It is a free event, but booking is necessary via this link https://tinyurl.com/j7hyzs2z

LOCAL STUDIES TOOLKIT

The toolkit was designed two years ago by The National Archives. Although it has been designed for librarians, the advice will be useful for anyone working with heritage resources, whether in libraries, archives, museums or local history groups.

The toolkit can be viewed on the CILIP Local Studies Group website https://tinyurl.com/98ayryw7 .

Grab your broom sticks and join comedian Edy Hurst on a wyrd and wonderfull journey of self-discoverie through the realms of the Lancashire Witch Trials, Neurodivergence and the Vengaboys!

Combining comedy, clowning, live music and a giant cauldron, Edy Hurst's *Wonderfull Discoverie of Witches in the Countie of Himself* is a new magical and mystical comedy theatre show that offers a humorous, heartfelt and unique insight into the shifting and sometimes mysterious world of late-stage ADHD diagnosis.

Witches on Tour! | Edy Hurst - Comedian [If a large enough group wishes to book together, it may be possible to arrange a discount – please contact the editor for more details.]

WORKING CLASS MOVEMENT LIBRARY – EXHIBITION: The collectors, the cameraman, the poets and the pits

To mark the 40TH anniversary of the miners' strike, the Working Class Movement Library is hosting an exhibition until 25 July.

The artefacts on display are all taken from the library's own collections. The photos were taken by John Harris and were framed to show the dispute from the miners' point of view. The poems were written by women, some of them the wives of miners. Thus the exhibition gives the unique perspective of people who were there.

51 Crescent, Salford M5 4WX. www.wcml.org.uk

HERITAGE OPEN DAYS IN SEPTEMBER

An early reminder that now is a good time to prepare if you wish to participate in HOD in 2025. This year's theme is architecture. On the HOD website there are pointers towards exploiting the theme, if you have a building or buildings in mind:

- Who built the structures around us?
- Why were they built?
- How were they built?
- What impact have they had?

Registration opens on 3 March, with a deadline of 14 August. There is a great deal of information to guide you through the process, including a resource pack, and the opportunity to sign up to the monthly newsletter. www.heritageopendays.org.uk

HOW FAR BACK CAN YOU TRACE YOUR RAILWAY ANCESTORS?

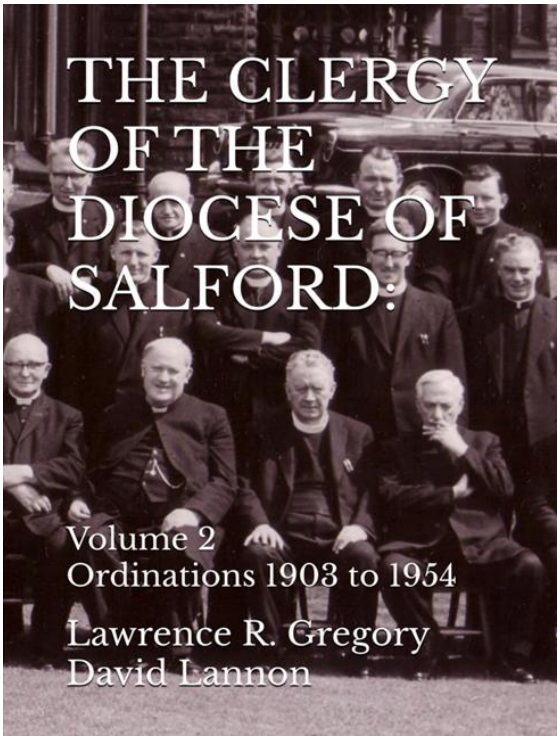
Railway 200, the year-long programme of anniversary events in 2025, marks the bi-centenary of the opening of the Stockton and Darlington railway, which began the transformation which changed the world forever.

The programme will celebrate all aspects of railways, including the people – their pride, passion and professionalism. The youngest representative of the UK's oldest rail family will be invited to some of the many celebratory events planned.

Descendants who can claim railway ancestry before April 1846 are invited to email railway200@gbrtt.co.uk with their contact details, and the Railway 200 team will get in touch. Find out more about Railway 200 and the search here.

PUBLICATIONS OF INTEREST

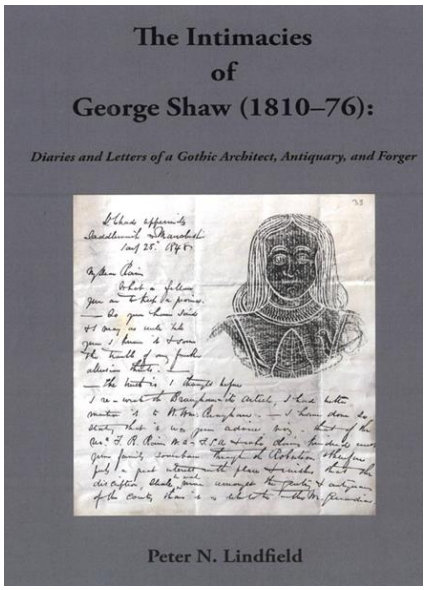
The Clergy of the Diocese of Salford
Volume 2: Ordinations 1903 to 1954



Lawrence R Gregory & David Lannon

This volume covers all priests ordained between 1903 and 1954 by Bishops Casartelli, Henshaw and Marshall. (v.1 was for the period 1850-1902.) There are nearly 600 profiles of individuals within this period. These priests lived and ministered in an era of contrasts: between expansionism and contraction, and building churches and closing them, in the context of dealing with the changes to society and the church in the post-World War II era.

From Amazon: £25.00 pbk; £35.00 hbk.



The Intimacies of George Shaw (1810-76)

Peter N Lindfield

As a teenager George Shaw worked in his family's woollen mills, but by the 1840s he had built up a sizeable architectural practice in Uppermill. His firm built and re-modelled churches and homes, as well as creating painted glass, cast-iron work, and furniture.

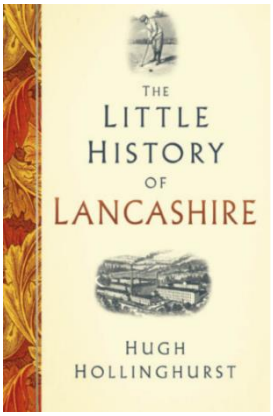
The book provides an important new account of Shaw's formative years as an architect and antiquary, using extensive extracts from his diaries and correspondence. They show how he leveraged his knowledge to produce fake 'Tudor' furniture, sold as genuine ancient relics to Northern aristocrats.

Dr Peter Lindfield is an architectural historian, specialising in the Georgian and Victorian eras. He is a member of the Society of Antiquaries and a lecturer in the Welsh School of Architecture.

The Regional Heritage Centre has arranged an introductory offer for the book, until 31 March 2025. The price is £25 (inc. p&p) – normal price £39.95. To order a copy, email the Chetham Society's General Editor, Prof Tim Thornton t.j.thornton@hud.ac.uk and quote *RHC newsletter* to claim the discount.

The Little History of Lancashire

Hugh Hollinghurst



Stroud: History Press, Dec. 2024, 192pp. £14.99

The author was a deputy headteacher in Liverpool for twenty-six years. After retirement he wrote a number of books, mainly on local history and the art and architecture of Liverpool. He has given talks on his specialist subjects to 68 different societies in the Merseyside area. He lives in Crosby.

Review by Dr Michael Winstanley
former senior lecturer in history, Lancaster University

Lancashire is not short of county histories. Does this volume offer a different approach or new insights?

It is part of series of 'Little Histories' and is clearly written to a format, aimed at what one might call the popular market. The keyword tags on the publisher's website are 'Local History', 'Trivia' and 'Gifts', and the blurb suggests that the focus is on 'those who suffered – and those that benefited'. There are 30 illustrations, mostly from Wikimedia Commons. There are a few, seemingly random references but no original sources. The chapters are subdivided into short, loosely related sections dealing with discrete topics, sometimes in considerable detail, rather than outlining general developments.

The actual subject matter is often far from obvious from the subheadings. The section on Georgian coalmining for example is headed 'Nothing except a sip of cold water; 'An international reputation' is about the Countess of Ellesmere's domestic science school; 'All this we endure for the good of the country at large' is about colliers' discontents in 1818 and 1881; 'So long to our cursed landlord' deals with the Cragg family of Wyresdale.

Sometimes the sections take on a different format. Peterloo, for example, is dealt with as a 'Tragedy performed in three scenes'. St Peter's Field is erroneously described as a piece of waste ground that was being cleared for the redevelopment of the centre of Manchester. Overall the subject matter is also weighted towards developments in and people from south west Lancashire which is perhaps not surprising given the author's previous illustrated volumes on Crosby, Blundellsands, Sefton and Liverpool.

Unfortunately there are rather too many basic errors throughout this book to inspire confidence in its content. Some of the earlier histories are credited by Hollinghurst, although Crosby is unfortunately omitted from the bibliography, and Edward Baines' work mysteriously is dated to 1907 and edited by Farrer and Brownbill. In addition the one society's journal which is singled out is consistently misspelt – *Historical (sic) Society of Lancashire and Cheshire.*

Another basic error which should have been picked up is the Roman altar to Lalonus Contrebis which Hollinghurst says is at Ribchester but was found at Lancaster and can be seen in City Museum there; the other example of the use of Contrebis in this country is not in Yorkshire but in the Lune Valley. Both are fully described on the website, 'Roman Inscriptions in Britain'. *Contrebis* is actually the title of the annual journal of the Lancaster Archaeological and Historical Society!

It is good to see William Hutchinson of Liverpool receiving attention but the various articles by Philip Woodworth in *HSLC* make clear that his tide measurements began in 1764, not 1768. (The first four years were given to the Holden brothers who compiled the first tide tables.) The Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834 can hardly be described as a result of 'the desire of the better off to do their duty and help paupers'. The Slavery Abolition Act was 1833, not 1835. The cholera epidemic which prompted Kitty Wilkinson to pioneer washhouses in Liverpool was in 1832, not 1846. Clitheroe did not get its first MP in 1832; in fact as a pocket borough it lost one of the two it had previously enjoyed.

For the reader seeking a comprehensive, accessible authoritative of the county, therefore, I would still recommend some of the tried and tested earlier histories

RESEARCH ARTICLE

THE HISTORY OF A HOUSE: NEWBROOK HOUSE

Thomas McGrath

The history of a house can tell us much more than just the names of the different people who lived there. Each resident leaves their mark on a property, and occasionally on the wider community. Newbrook House, which once sat just within the border of Over Hulton and Atherton, was one such house. Floorplans of the property survive in Lancashire Archives. The spacious mansion of 22 rooms had a servants' wing, barn, stables and, later, garages and tennis courts. It sat nestled in 2.5 acres of land on Newbrook Road.

The 'Squirearchy': the Kearsley family

The earliest residents I have been able to trace at Newbrook House are the Kearsley family. James Kearsley died there aged 88 in 1808. His obituary described him as '*universally and deservedly esteemed for his integrity, benevolence and sincerity of heart'*. The Kearsleys may have owned land; it is hard to tell whether they owned or rented Newbrook House, but nonetheless they were a powerful socio-political force. Edward Kearsley, a merchant-manufacturer, lived there next. He had married Ann (Nanny) Hodson in Wigan in 1780. Nanny's brother, John Hodson, was Wigan's MP from 1802 to 1820.

Edward and Nanny's son, John Hodson Kearsley, a brewer, went on to become mayor of Wigan in 1813, 1819 and 1825. He was also, infamously, on-and-off MP for Wigan during the 1830s. He was unpopular with the general public for his staunch conservative views and he was attacked during one election campaign. He was described as a '*little thick-set man, with an inclination to corpulency*' and also as having '*a figure in which latitude has successfully contended with longitude'*.

We also know about his sister-in-law, Anne Taylor, who had married James Kearsley in 1820. Anne died in 1829 aged 38, leaving an interesting will. She stated that she '*acted solely from a sense of duty'* and left her two sisters, Ellen and Jane, £100 each. This money was originally part of Anne's inheritance from her father. The wording of the will was crucial, as she left clear instructions that the money was for her sisters only, '*for her sole use separate and apart from, and exclusive of her present or any future husband, and in such manner that the same may not be under his control, or subject or liable to his disposals, debts, contracts, forfeitures or engagements*.' This was especially important as married women had no rights to any property at this time, unless explicitly stated in legal documents such as Anne's will.

The Nobility: The Hultons

William Ford Hulton (1811-1879) married Georgiana Lister Kaye (1815-1877) in 1839. They moved to Newbrook House after this, where they remained for the next 18 years. William was heir to the vast Hulton estate, with a family lineage in Over Hulton stretching back to the late 12th century. His father William had a somewhat infamous relationship with his tenants and the wider population. He was one of the magistrates who oversaw the Peterloo Massacre in 1819, and was notorious in the treatment of his workers at Newbrook collieries. William and Georgiana had four children: one of their descendants is the actor and writer Julian Fellowes.

Industrial Elites: The Sharp, Burrows, and Wright Families

Newbrook House was later occupied by a different sort of wealthy family – the industrial elite who made fortunes through trade and industry, two of whom lived at the house. Henry Sharp, the managing director of the Bolton Steel and Ironworks, lived there between 1861 and 1889. Between 1903 and 1915 Frank Thurlow Wright, who was the son of Tyldesley-mill owner Caleb Wright, was a later occupant.

At the turn of the 20th century Newbrook House was the home of Miles Formby Burrows (1857-1943) and his wife, Gertrude (1862-1943). Miles was the son of Abraham Burrows, co-owner of Fletcher Burrows Mining Company which controlled the collieries in Atherton, owned Howe Bridge Mills, and built a model village for their workers. Gertrude followed in her mother-in-law's footsteps and was a leading figure in the local temperance movement. It was whilst living at Newbrook that she opened The Coffee Pot as a temperance venue on Bolton Road in 1901. Gertrude later gave Formby Hall, a civic and recreational venue, to the people of Atherton in 1916. A descendant of Miles and Gertrude is Edoardo Mapelli Mozzi, the husband of Princess Beatrice.

Behind the Green Baize Door

Of course it wasn't just the wealthy families who resided at Newbrook House, but also the teams of servants who catered to their every need. There was a three-roomed lodge at the entrance to the grounds, which was usually home to a member of the outdoors staff and his family.

On average there were usually six servants living at Newbrook. The youngest traceable servant to work there was Martha Ellison, a 16 year old kitchen maid. The oldest was 80 year old Joseph Smith, a gardener - who was assisted by his son! The servants came from many different places: Atherton, Liverpool, Birmingham, Herefordshire, Suffolk, Yorkshire, Scotland and Wales. In 1911 the Wright family employed Alphonsine Guyward [or Tuyward] as a lady's maid. Alphonsine was born in France and the Wrights would have been seen as the height of fashion. What Alphonsine thought of her adopted hometown is unknown.

The end of Newbrook House

The house remained a family home until 1933. The following year plans were drawn up to split the house into three separate dwellings. Another plan was to divide the whole property into flats and bedsits. In this scenario the elegant drawing room of the Kearsleys would have become a living room and bedroom, the library of Miles and Gertrude Burrows would have been changed into a functional kitchen, and the billiard room of the Hultons carved up into another kitchen, bathroom and bedroom. In the end it proved cheaper to demolish Newbrook House and the lodge; the land was divided up by a private developer and 22 houses were built on the site for the aspirational and socially-mobile middle classes of the 1930s.

Thankfully the stories of the house and those who called it home still survive - it just takes a little digging in the archives!

Sources

- Lancashire Archives – DDHU/acc9350/E62 (plans of Newbrook House) & WCW/Supra/C873/23 (will of Anne Kearsley)
- National Archives – Census records
- Archives: Wigan & Leigh – Images of Newbrook House/Road, Gertrude Burrows
- Chester Courant, 7 May 1816, p.3
- Manchester Mercury, 12 January 1839, p.5
- The Field, 7 March 1891, p.72
- Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News, 3 February 1912, p.3
- Farnworth Chronicle, 17 April 1915, p.4
- John Hodson Kearlsey – https://victoriancommons.wordpress.com/2024/09/18/the-walking-beer-barrel-john-hodson-kearsley-and-parliamentary-debates-in-the-1830s/
- John Hodson Kearsley & the election riots – https://www.wiganlocalhistory.org/articles/wigan-election-riots-of-1831
- https://www.gracesguide.co.uk/Bolton_Iron_and_Steel_Co

Dr Thomas McGrath is a historian whose main interest lies in the histories of everyday spaces and places. In 2021 he completed his thesis which examined the homes of merchants and manufacturers in Manchester and Liverpool in the 18th and 19th centuries. He works at Archives: Wigan & Leigh.

REQUEST

DOES YOUR SOCIETY HAVE A SAFEGUARDING POLICY?

We have been asked about safeguarding by one of our member societies.

It seems that some grant-making bodies ask whether applicants have such a policy in place. It may be that societies are covered by policies drawn up by the buildings which host meetings and conferences. However, should societies themselves have written and accessible documents on the subject?

Two websites with useful information about the issue are www.ncvo.org.uk and www.resourcecentre.org.uk/information/safeguarding/

Please let the editor know your views and, if you have such a policy, more details which we can share with other groups.

Marianne Howell mariannerh@hotmail.co.uk

SAVE THE DATE FOR THE ONLINE AGM AND TALK

TUESDAY 18 MARCH

COPY DATE FOR THE MAY NEWSLETTER

MONDAY 21 APRIL