LANCASHIRE LOCAL HISTORY FEDERATION

NEWSLETTER
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Editor: Marianne Howell
07779 677730 mariannerh@hotmail.co.uk

Chair: Dr Alan Crosby	01772 827835
Secretary: John Wilson	03330 062270
Membership Secretary: Zoë Lawson	07471908077
Website Manager: Peter Houghton	01772 641604

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

VIEW FROM THE CHAIR

The latest issue (vol. 175) of the *Transactions of the Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire* is, as usual, full of interesting and worthwhile papers, on subjects which chronologically range from the post-Roman period to the 1920s, including a fascinating article by John Blair with a simple title: 'Early Medieval Manchester'. Its apparent simplicity, and Blair's disarming admission that the paper contains no new evidence, conceal complex arguments and innovative thinking about the development of Manchester between the Roman period and the 13th century.

John Blair is an Emeritus Fellow at Queens College Oxford and Emeritus Professor of Medieval History and Archaeology at the University of Oxford. He has written extensively and authoritatively about Anglo Saxon England and aspects of the administrative and political geography and the boundaries and territories of the period, but most of his work has been on the South and the Midlands, so it is very pleasing to see him turning his attention to a Lancashire case.

The paper is not simple or straightforward but, although potentially challenging, it merits careful study to find out the latest thinking about, and interpretation of, the limited evidence which is available for the period. One of the points that Blair makes strongly is that this long period in Lancashire's history is very poorly documented and very little understood, in comparison with counties further south and east.

The paper focuses on a range of issues, including the ecclesiastical geography and topography of the area (that is, the parishes and parish churches and their status

and relationship). This of course means that Manchester Cathedral, as it has been since 1847, is central to his arguments. Place-names and their meaning and significance are discussed, but Blair goes beyond 'simple' etymological meanings and considers current thinking in terms of the significance of names in explaining the organisation of estates. The 'regional culture of building' deals with physical evidence derived from the rather limited archaeological investigation in the city centre, focusing on the apparent presence of store-houses of the later Anglo-Saxon period which bear comparison with examples found in other contemporary centres that were unquestionably urban



Blair emphasises throughout the strangeness of Manchester's early origins: the Roman Fort at Castlefield and the area around the cathedral and Chetham's hospital are separated by almost a mile, so Manchester had at least two nuclei. It is surprising in national terms that the minster church (as he argues it was) is not built within the Roman site, but he points to local examples which follow the same pattern, including Warrington. Archaeological excavation of structures halfway between the two nuclei ties in with the lost place-name Alport ('the old port or market') suggesting there was actually another nucleus of urban development. Blair considers that the name of the Roman fort (MAMVCIVM) which gave the Anglo-Saxon name which became Manchester, was transferred to the church/castle site at a relatively late date, when Manchester was emerging as a small but significant town. Manchester was the largest town in medieval Lancashire and remained so until its rival Liverpool grew in the 18th century, and was the most important economic centre. Even in the Roman period it was the focus of seven major roads and had an important place on the national road network. So, its centrality has been evident for 2000 years.

But on a more general level it is important to recognise that Lancashire is so badly documented in the medieval period. We just don't have the archive sources which counties further south enjoy. This dearth lasts until the 16th century. A simple example illustrates this: there are almost 220 pre-Reformation wills from the parish of Rickmansworth in Hertfordshire, which is more than survive from the whole of the county of Lancashire. We have relatively few medieval deeds for land transactions and only one pre-Conquest charter (whereas many other counties have hundreds).

This means that the history of Lancashire is much harder to reconstruct, especially as archaeological excavation has been much more limited in the county than in most other parts of the region. Important work has been done in Lancaster, among other places, but there is still a scarcity of detailed archaeological assessment and much damage was done to the potential in the 1960s and 70s with the development of so many town centres. This is something which can't be rectified because destruction was total. Blair argues that there is still potential in Manchester, but everything depends on the redevelopment of urban sites, even if funding is available - which it usually isn't.

There will be blank spaces in the story, puzzles which will never be solved, anomalies which can't be explained, in the development of Lancashire before the

15th century. Speculation is unavoidable but as local historians we have to be realistic. We shouldn't invent something because it sounds attractive if there's no evidence to support our theory, but we can treasure what we do know, and we can keep looking for detail. And of course, the great discovery of documents or archaeology might be just round your corner. Keep trying!

Alan Crosby

DR BILL SHANNON (1944-2026) – AN APPRECIATION

It is with great sadness that we relate the death in late September of the renowned historian Dr Bill Shannon. Bill obtained his PhD at Lancaster University and leaves behind a wealth of published work indicating his wide range of interests, from dispute maps in Tudor Lancashire to family history about his nineteenth century Irish ancestor, John Boyle O'Reilly, 'Preston's Fenian'.

Bill's main research activities focused on cartographic and landscape history, particularly of the early modern period. These, combined with his keen interest in antiquarianism, gave rise to one of his most accomplished works, the analysis of the extensive notes, papers and maps left by Dr Richard Kuerden, the 17th century Lancashire antiquary and physician. This was published by the Chetham Society in 2020 under the title *Seventeenth-Century Lancashire Restored: The Life and Work of Dr Richard Kuerden, Antiquary and Topographer, 1623–1702*.

More recently Bill produced another *tour de force* in his book *Cumbria: 1000 years of Maps*, for which he won the Lakeland Book of the Year 2025. His expertise in historical maps led him to be closely involved in the multi-disciplinary research project, co-ordinated by the Bodleian Library in Oxford and the Institute of Historical Research, concerning the Gough Map of Great Britain of c.1400. Based on his findings Bill wrote a fascinating essay: *Red lines, over-sands crossings and King Arthur: a re-appraisal of the depiction of the North-West on the Gough map*, which was published by the Federation in 2020 in the book *Lancashire Studies: Historical Essays in Honour of Alan Crosby*.

Apart from being an extensive researcher and author, Bill was also an active member of a number of historical societies, being a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries, Vice-President of the Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquarian and Archaeological Society, a Trustee of the Cumbria County History Trust, and a committee member of the Lancashire Archaeological Society.

Apart from the world of local history, Bill had a very successful career in the Co-operative Group and was one of the key figures behind the development of the Co-op's modern approach to ethical and responsible retailing. After retiring he served for 11 years on Preston City Council, representing the Ingol and Tanterton ward. He was a major influence in the rise of the Liberal Democrat Party in Preston, and his contribution to the city earned him the honorary position of alderman, and in the Preston Guild of 2012 he was made a Burgess. Bill was very influential in so many spheres and will be greatly missed.

Zoë Lawson

NEWS FROM ARCHIVES

LANCASHIRE ARCHIVES & LOCAL HISTORY

NOTICE TO ALL ARCHIVES VISITORS

Changes to visitor access to Lancashire Archives until Summer 2027

The Lancashire Archives and Local History building on Bow Lane, Preston, will be undergoing major roofing works over the next year.

The following access changes will apply for Lancashire Archives visitors:

- The car park at Lancashire Archives will be closed until summer 2027.
- For the duration of the work, any research visitors to Lancashire Archives must book in advance to view collections in the Searchroom: https://www.lancashire.gov.uk/archives/visit-us/opening-times-and-your-visit/
- During this time there will not be a space available within the building for breaks and lunches. There are several places to buy food and drink nearby, at the railway station, and in the Preston town centre.

The 12-month project will replace the roof at the purpose-built 1975 building and is vital to protect the future delivery of the archives and local history service.

We appreciate that changes to normal access arrangements may be inconvenient for some visitors and we thank you for your patience.

For visitors arriving by car, please plan ahead for your visit and use local alternatives. There are nearby parking options at:

Park and ride - Lancashire County Council

Car Park & Parking in Preston Centre - Fishergate

Preston Railway Station Parking - Avanti West Coast

Normal arrangements for transferring and depositing collections remain in place.

For press information please see the webpage.



NEW ONLINE PUBLIC CATALOGUE

Lancashire Archives and Local History have re-launched our online collections catalogue. Access to the catalogue is through the Archives service website or via the existing web address at https://archivecat.lancashire.gov.uk

The catalogue continues to provide online access to information about the collections held by the Archives, with improved search functionality across the

database. Over time the service will be developing further online digitised collections access, making more born-digital collections accessible via the catalogue and adding new collections guides and indexes.

If you experience any difficulties in accessing the catalogue, please contact the service at archives@lancashire.gov.uk

If you are a member of a Lancashire family or local history group and would like to request an online tutorial for your members to familiarise yourselves with using the catalogue, please contact us.

LANCASHIRE ARCHIVES & LOCAL HISTORY – WHAT'S IN IT FOR YOU?



While roofing work is taking place on the Record Office Building in Preston, we want to take the opportunity to visit groups across the county to share information about the amazing collection we hold, with examples relating to your local area and how you can access them. With 900 years of Lancashire's documented heritage, we are sure to have something to support your local history research/interest, and we can also support local history events and fairs – as we did at the Mourholme & District history weekend (pictured). If you would be interested in a visit from the Lancashire Archives & Local History engagement team, please email archives@lancashire.gov.uk for more information.

LANCASHIRE LIBRARIES LOCAL HISTORY COLLECTIONS



From city to coast to countryside Lancashire has a fascinating history. Lancashire Libraries is a treasure trove of heritage where you will find local history books and online resources such as Ancestry, Find My Past and the British Newspaper Archive.

The image is: 'Her country residence', *1893, Sam Thompson collection. Photograph albums from the collection are housed at Lancaster Library. You can read more here*

In the bigger branches you will find a range of resources from maps to photographs, trade directories to historic newspapers, documents to rare publications. The collections will help you uncover local people, places and events. So, if you are interested in the history of your town or uncovering your Lancashire ancestors we have lots of collections for you to browse through. The best times for consulting the collections (check the website for more general library opening times) are:

Accrington: Local History at is open Mondays, Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays 10am-12pm, 2pm-4pm.

Burnley: Local History is open Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays 10am-12pm, 2pm-4pm, Saturdays 2pm-4pm.

Chorley: Local History is open Tuesdays and Thursdays 10am-12pm, 2pm-4pm, Saturdays 2pm-4pm.

Clitheroe: Local History is open Mondays, Thursdays and Fridays 10am-12pm, Tuesdays 10am-12pm, 2pm-4pm, Wednesdays and Saturdays 2pm-4pm.

Colne: Local History at is open Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays 10am-12pm, 2pm-4pm, Saturdays 10am-12pm.

Fleetwood: Local History is open Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Saturdays 10am-12pm, 2pm-4pm.

Lancaster: Local History is open Mondays 2pm-4pm, Tuesdays and Thursdays 10am-12pm, 2pm-4pm, Wednesdays and Saturdays 10am-12pm

Leyland: Local History is open Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays 10am-12pm, 2pm-4pm, Fridays 10am-12pm, Saturdays 2pm-4pm.

Rawtenstall: Local History is open Mondays, Thursdays and Saturdays 10am-12pm, 2pm-4pm.

Skelmersdale: Local History at is open Tuesdays and Saturdays 10am-12pm, 2pm-4pm, Wednesdays 2pm-4pm, Thursdays 10am-12pm.

St Annes: Local History at is open Mondays 2pm-5pm, Tuesdays 10am-12pm, 2pm-5pm, Saturdays 10am-12pm.

LANCASHIRE LOCAL HISTORY PUBLICATION – *ARCHIVES*

Latest edition on sale now!



Our eighth issue of Archives jumps into another year of anniversaries for the Archives, as we celebrate 40 years of the Friends of Lancashire Archives, our amazing supporters' group who since 1986 have raised over £400,000 for projects at the Archives. This edition brings our usual wide range of themes and historical periods. Bernard Melling looks at the contemporary view of the county asylum at Lancaster Moor, and Keith Vernon examines the story behind the building of the Avenham Institute in Preston. Two remarkable lives are shared, by Jill Liddington recounting her research into the Nelson suffragist and campaigner, Selina Cooper, and by Shaun Corkerry who gives us an insight into the inventions of John Kitchen of Lancaster. We're pleased to share an update on the project to commemorate the 1826 Weavers' Uprising in Pennine Lancashire, and Janet Rigby brings us further stories from Lancashire's inland waterways.

The magazine is on sale at Lancashire Archives and all Lancashire Libraries priced at £3. Please contact Lancashire Archives for postal orders of the magazine, email us at archives@lancashire.gov.uk or call 01772 533039.

If you have an idea you'd like to discuss, please contact us at archives@lancashire.gov.uk and we'd be pleased to discuss your suggestion.

Issue 9 of Archives will be on sale from 1 December 2026.

You can now read previous editions of the magazine online

You can find out more about how to submit an article by visiting our website at: Ordering copies and publications - Lancashire County Council

LANCASHIRE ARCHIVES DIGITISATION SERVICE



Can't make it to Lancashire Archives but need a copy of something in our collections?

The Lancashire Archives digitisation studio is equipped to make high quality copies of archive and heritage material.

Our digitisation team use a professional DSLR camera and industry standard imaging software to create images of a range of document types, including bound volumes, parchment, maps, plans, photographs and negatives.

You can find out more on our website Digitisation service - Lancashire County Council, or you can email us archivecopies@lancashire.gov.uk

NEWS FROM THE ARCHIVES Our monthly digest of updates and news from Lancashire Archives & Local History is available as a direct web-link or in PDF format, depending on how you like to take your archives news. If you would like to be added to the mailing list please email your request to archives@lancashire.gov.uk



Can you help the Friends of Lancashire Archives? Get involved as a committee member for The Friends in their 40th year!

The Friends are looking for new volunteer committee members to join a wonderful team that is working to support Lancashire Archives' valuable work. You don't need to be an expert on the Archives, but be ready to learn and take an interest in the work of the service. The Friends are looking for people with a range of skills and experience.

The whole committee are here to support new committee members, and the perks definitely include some excellent cakes!

The Friends are the Archives' supporters club – since 1986 they've raised over £395,000 to help promote the work of the Archives across the county by funding purchases and conservation, actively promoting the use of the Archives for research, and for connecting people with their Lancashire heritage. The work of the committee also includes upholding the good governance of the Friends as a charity.

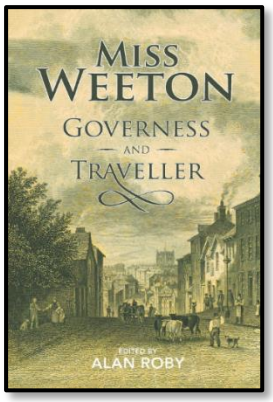
If you are interested in this opportunity you can arrange to come into the Archives for an informal chat with some of the current trustees. Please contact us welcome@flarchives.co.uk or archives@lancashire.gov.uk

You can find out more about the Friends here: https://www.flarchives.co.uk/

FEDERATION DAY SCHOOL – LANCASHIRE DIARISTS

On Saturday 24 October the Federation held its annual Day School. This year's theme provided a balanced and fascinating set of talks.

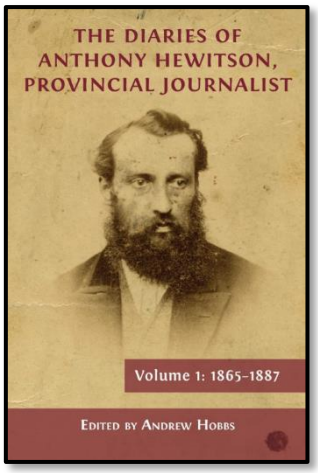
The first speaker, our own Chairman, **Dr Alan Crosby**, set the scene with his theme, **Telling in their own words: diaries and autobiography**. He used several varied documents to illustrate his points about how we should assess them. Amongst the factors to be borne in mind are: Motive; for whom the document is written; the truthfulness of the viewpoint; what is omitted or included and why; whether the diarist's account of events be externally verified; if published, whether everything should be included or not, and for whose benefit.



Alan Roby took as his theme **Jane Austen and Nelly Weeton's battle against prejudice and bigotry in Hanoverian England**. Although there was a great contrast between the lives of the two, Alan said that both would have been hampered by the position of women in society at that time. The facts of Jane Austen's life are well known, and she had the advantage of coming from a well to do middle class family. Nelly, by contrast, had to earn her living, and suffered from an abusive marriage. When the marriage failed she lost access to her only daughter. Alan's book is the definitive account of Nelly's life and writings, including diaries and letters.

The diaries of James Garnett of Waddow Hall 1858-1900 – a cotton manufacturer's world, was the topic of the next speaker, **Dr Eleanor Fisher**. James Garnett kept a diary from 1858 to 1900, and included topics such as the weather, nature, shopping, events foreign and domestic, his religious beliefs and practices, and visits from friends and family. A quarter of his writing is concerned with the cotton trade. A team of volunteers transcribed the diaries and they have been digitised. They form a rich resource for the study of so many aspects of life in the second half of the 19th century.

The final speaker**, Dr Andrew Hobbs**, brought us **The diaries of Anthony Hewitson (1836-1912) and what they can and can't tell us.** The diaries tell us an enormous amount about provincial journalism of the period. Hewitson held various posts in newspapers of Preston and further afield, and combined working for newspaper owners with freelance work. He is equally well known as a dedicated historian, carrying out field trips, collecting oral histories and transcribing documents – such as the diary of Thomas Tyldesley, one of the King's commanders in the Civil War. Dr Hobbs has published his work in 2 volumes on open access.



This was a very successful day, and Zoë Lawson, our membership secretary is to be thanked for making the arrangements.

NEWS FROM MEMBER SOCIETIES

PRESTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Monday 9 November: ***Creating a county: the emergence of Lancashire, 700-1200, with*** **Dr. Alan Crosby**

Monday 14 December: ***A window to the universe: the past, present, and future of the Preston Observatory, with*** **Graham McLoughlin**

All talks are held on the second Monday of the month in the Central Methodist Church, Lune St, Preston PR1 2NL. Talks start at 7:15pm but doors open at 6:30pm for registration and refreshments. Visitor admission £5.

REGIONAL HERITAGE CENTRE

Saturday 21 November 9:30am-5:00pm: ***Railways: 200 years that transformed Britain*****. Venue: Lancaster University, or with the option to attend online.**
Booking closes on 12 November.

The conference is jointly organised by the Regional Heritage Centre and the Midland Railway Society. Rather than looking only at railway history, the four speakers explore the much wider impact of the railways on 19th and early 20th century Britain: how they changed population and economic growth, transformed literature and ideas about modernity, challenged Victorian law and corporate regulation, and shaped the working lives of railway employees.

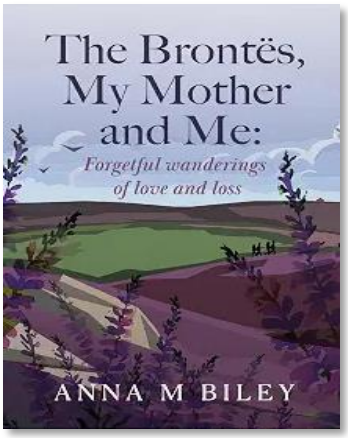
The conference is open to everyone, with no specialist knowledge required. There will also be a showcase of new research by Lancaster postgraduate students.

Tickets are £40 standard, £36 for RHC Patrons and Friends, £20 for students, or £20 to attend online. In-person tickets include lunch and refreshments (student tickets exclude lunch). Full programme and booking: https://www.lancaster.ac.uk/regional-heritage-centre/events/railways-200-years-that-transformed-britain/

FRIENDS OF PENDLE HERITAGE

Higherford Methodist Church, Barrowford BB9 6JH

Tuesday 17 November 2:30pm: ***The Brontës, my Mother and me: forgetful wanderings of love and loss*** Members £4, Non-members £6, Refreshments £1



This is a tender story of mother-daughter love and gentle compassion. Walking the hills with Cathy and Heathcliff in Brontë country, the author **Anna Biley** ponders her mother's final-year diaries and the forgetfulness and frailty that emerges from her stories. The book is so much more than a tribute to a mother, who is a representative of the resilient northern women of the war generation. It is a coming-of-age story, about shaking off traditional female roles, as well as a lens for reading Jane Eyre as the voice of a grieving young girl. Signed copies of Anna's book will be available to purchase for £8.

Tuesday 8 December 2:30pm: **Members' Event**: **Christmas Fair**
Members no charge, Non-members £6

Tuesday 19 January 2027 2:30pm: ***My Grandma's heirloom*****, with Bob (Robert) Abel**, Chairman of the Earby and District Local History Society. A family story about a pendant, a soldier whose life had been saved, and a trail from the late 19th century coal fields of Yorkshire to London, Egypt, and the Sudan.

Members £4, Non-members £6, Refreshments £1.

SOUTH PENNINE ARCHAEOLOGY GROUP

Tuesday 24 November 2:00pm: ***My walk around the boundary of historic Lancashire*****. A talk by Philip Walsh**

Ashday Lea Masonic Hall, Rawtenstall BB4 6QX. £5 for members, £6 for non-members, tea, coffee and biscuits included.

In 2018 Philip was the first person to walk the entire boundary of the County Palatine. The walk lasted 31 days, and resulted in his raising over £5,000 in sponsorship for the North West Air Ambulance. Philip is Chairman of the Friends of Real Lancashire, and will also speak about their quest to have the historic county properly recognised. https://digspag.org.uk/forthcoming-events/

LANCASHIRE AND CHESHIRE ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY

25 November 2026 3:00pm*: Who really made the music college? The hidden story behind the establishment of the Royal Manchester College of Music*, Zoom talk with Dr Anna Wright



Most histories of the Royal Manchester College of Music begin with the words 'the RMCM was founded by Sir Charles Hallé'. While it is true that he was the figurehead of the project and the first Principal, he was supported by a small group of people who undertook much of the work to get the scheme off the ground, and it would not have happened without them.

Drawing on her PhD research, in this talk Anna will tell the story of the foundation of the RMCM, introduce us to some of the key people and explore the network of connections between them.

Wednesday 16 December: *Mary Higgs (ne Kingsland): A pioneer in women's education.* Zoom talk with Carol Talbot



Mary Kingsland was the first woman to study and lecture on natural sciences at Girton College, Cambridge in the 1870s, but after she married a Congregational minister she was not allowed to continue.

In 1891, Rev Higgs became minister of a church in the industrial town of Oldham, where Mary began a life of campaigning on behalf of the needy, especially homeless women. In 1903, she went undercover as a tramp to gather first-hand evidence of conditions in lodging houses and workhouses, publishing her findings and suggestions. As a result, she contributed to the improvement and building of lodging houses for homeless women, such as Bent House in Oldham and Ashton House in Manchester.

Just before her death in 1937, she was awarded the OBE. Visit www.landcas.org.uk to learn more.

MOURHOLME LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Wednesday 25 November 7:30pm: *Field names in the North West of England*, with Professor Angus Winchester. The names of fields, those most minor of place names, provide a richness of detail, bringing alive past environments and the history of the farming landscapes.

Wednesday 16 December 7:30pm: *Brockhole 126: A pictorial history of a house and garden,* with Kevin Grice. The history of Brockhole, on the shore of Lake

Windermere from its construction in 1900 to the present day. The talk draws on rare photographs, archives and other documents.

Meetings are held at Gaskell Hall, Silverdale, LA5 0RA. Visitors £2 per talk.

For more details visit www.mourholme.org.uk

FRIENDS OF WINCKLEY SQUARE

Thursdays 3 and 10 December 2:00pm – 4:00pm: Christmas event: *Mrs Godfrey's Regency Winckley Christmas*. Central Methodist Church, Lune Street PN1 2NL.
Join us to enjoy a cosy Christmassy afternoon with music, mince pies, mulled wine (0%), and hot chocolate. The afternoon includes a Regency Christmas slide show followed by a Christmas talk by Susan Douglass. Taking real people and matching them to real events of the time, discover how they (might have) spent a Regency Christmas in 1814 together. This is the same event on both days because places fill very quickly. To book: https://www.trybooking.com/uk/GWES.

Sunday 13 December 3:00pm-5:30pm: Winckley Square Christmas concert
Don't miss the free annual Christmas concert organised by the FoWS. Join in traditional Christmas carols around the Christmas tree, and sing along with the Ukulele Strummers and SARABAN. Meet friends and family and enjoy the entertainment with mulled wine, mince pies, parched peas as well as food and a tipple from the pop-up licensed bar.. Details: https://www.trybooking.com/uk/GWXT

HORWICH HERITAGE

The article below is an edited version of one written by **Judith and Stuart Whittle**

SCHOOL VISITS

As soon as Horwich Heritage Centre opened in 2006, the society made it our mission to educate and entertain local school children with as many aspects as possible of our fascinating local history. Horwich Heritage is focussed on *'preserving the past and promoting the future'* and we take great satisfaction from helping the children to appreciate how the past has shaped the way we live today.

Since we started 19 years ago, thousands of local primary school pupils have visited the centre. We run 2 different types of sessions: the first kind are one-off requests from teachers for full classes of 30, to cover subjects like *A Victorian childhood, The history of Horwich, Horwich & the Industrial Revolution, Lord Leverhulme, The Suffragettes, Evacuees* and *Wartime Horwich.* Each session includes archive film and/or PowerPoint presentations, interactive involvement with our exhibitions e.g. how to drive a steam locomotive, role playing and creative play – and the feedback has always been excellent.

The second type of session is called *Locomotiv8ors* which we have been running for the past 13 years supported by an Awards For All grant from the National Lottery. To run this, we have teamed up with Bolton Playing For Success, who provide us with a qualified teacher, Janet Rhodes, teaching facilities, and transport to and from school. The scheme involves children aged 9-10 from different primary schools coming to an After School Club for 5 sessions, which we aim to make both interactive and enjoyable. To give you an idea of

the material we cover, here are the outlines of the 5 sessions we are currently providing [*edited for reasons of space – Ed.]*:



Session One starts with a study of *Victorian childhood* and how much has changed since then: from children starting work at the age of six to the strict routine of the Victorian classroom, the hardships of everyday life and the simple toys they had to play with. The aim is to help the children recognise how much more privileged they are today with all the home comforts, modern devices, education and health care systems and transport options now available to them. The re-enactment of the Victorian classroom is certainly an 'eye opener', with the emphasis on punishment for all sorts of misdemeanours. They are also intrigued by simple toys and games which were often much more physical and imaginative than the electronic games of today.



Session Two is about *Evacuees*, both here in WW2 and in Ukraine and Gaza today. Having watched a short film about evacuation from London in 1939, the children are asked how they would feel about leaving their homes and families to live with strangers. The children are amazed to see the Morrison shelter, the rationed food items and the Spitfire in our WWll area, and greatly enjoy trying on armed forces uniforms. The session concludes with food sampling from the days of rationing - anyone for Spam, powdered egg or jam sandwiches?

Session Three is all about how *Our Industrial past* has set us on a course for all forms of pollution and climate change. Starting with a piece of coal, we travel through time to bring about awareness of factory life, materialism, consumption and waste. We then focus on the impact of modern day global travel compared to the horse and cart of 120 years ago. Gathering in our Victorian kitchen, with the coal fire and no electricity, the children then experience a working day with Mother cooking on the range and washing with the dolly tub and mangle before deciding who goes first in the tin bath for the family's weekly wash. They then have to come to terms with the absence of bathrooms and inside toilets. Looking at an everyday object (everything from a toy, a tee shirt, a plastic water bottle to a kitchen gadget), the pupils are asked to look at its life cycle and consider how and where it is made and how it can best be recycled. And to end the session, they start to design a sustainable 'house of the future' recognising the importance of green technology and the use of the latest fuel-saving devices.

Session Four is entitled *Health and wellbeing*, for which we bring in a fitness expert for guidance on food choices and a healthy lifestyle. We have fun with physical games and exercises and share ideas on how to keep fit physically and mentally. We offer guidance on how coping in difficult situations when they feel unhappy or vulnerable. The children really like this session because of the amount of movement and interaction.

Session Five is the final one when we invite the children to do our own ‘20 objects’ quiz. They have a clue for each object and then have to find it in the centre. and provide as much information as possible about it. This leads to a lot of discussion and helps to recap everything we have discussed over the 5 weeks. It is also the time to complete the ‘sustainable houses’ started in week 3 and for the pupils to present them to their colleagues explaining the features included in their design. We find the inquisitive nature of the children and their enthusiasm to learn about and enjoy being in the centre very rewarding - and the feedback over the years has been most encouraging. Sadly, Norman Pendlebury, one of the mainstays of our schools programme, is no longer with us, but we hope to continue them for many years to come for the benefit of future generations of Horwich school children.



PS: And we make sure they know all about Bolton Wanderers!

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The article above was written in response to Professor Geoff Timmins’ request (in Federation newsletter no. 56, August 2026, p.5) for experiences of teaching local history in schools In response we received this fascinating contribution, about bringing local history to life in the Heritage Centre rather than in the classroom.

Geoff’s comments on the Centre’s provision of activities for children: *Reviewing details of the provision reveals the impressive ways in which the sessions help children in learning and teaching terms. Involving them in active forms of learning features strongly, especially by enabling them to handle items from the Centre’s collection, encouraging them to examine, comment on and formulate questions about them.*

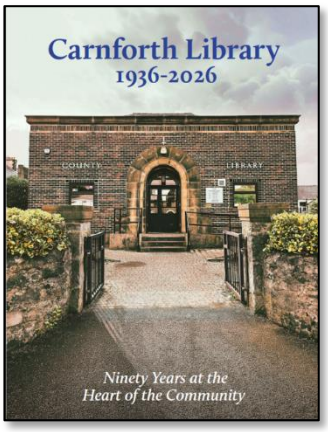
In promoting historical understanding, children are learning about the varying forms of evidence available in studying the past, as well as about the problems arising in using it to achieve historical interpretation. They are invited to engage with the key issue of change over time and to assess the impact on how people lead their everyday lives. Whilst promoting local history is strongly represented in the activities, they are also involved in considering current issues that arise from the changes they address, including pollution and climate change.

The programme has been operating for almost twenty years. Long may it continue!

We would be interested to receive more responses, from either teachers or local societies, via email to the editor mariannerh@hotmail.co.uk.

GLOBAL LINK

The Role of Carnforth Library: 1936-2026 and Beyond



Global Link's National Lottery Heritage Fund project marking Carnforth Library's 90th anniversary has now concluded with a series of events and heritage activities.



These have included a very successful open day in July 2026 and the installation of a heritage plaque on the library, marking its opening in 1936 as one of Lancashire County Council's first generation of purpose-built public libraries.

A key outcome is a new booklet charting the library's history from its opening in 1936 to the present day. You can **view or download the book** here: https://globallink.org.uk/carnforth-library-1936-2026-and-beyond-2/

NEWS ROUNDUP

COMMUNITY ARCHIVES AND HERITAGE GROUP

Thursday 5 November 11:00am: A webinar about Artificial Intelligence

Topics will include:

- How AI tools can help community heritage groups with some of the time-consuming jobs involved in looking after a collection, such as cataloguing, describing and organising digital files.
- How to write clear prompts, how to check the results, and how to refine them until they are accurate and useful.
- What these tools do well, what they're less useful for, and what to consider when choosing between free and paid options.

You can sign up via Eventbrite https://tinyurl.com/3tc2tayh

This workshop forms part of the wider 'Spaces, Places and Belonging: Community Hub' skills development and training programme, funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC).

For more information on this programme please visit the National Archives website https://tinyurl.com/34brn9wf

USING ART TO ACTIVATE HISTORIC SPACES

Wednesday 11 November 1:00pm-2:30pm

The Heritage Network is offering this online event which will illustrate how art in various forms can be used to activate underused or overlooked spaces, reveal hidden histories and diverse narratives and support new uses for historic buildings. This session is for anyone interested in heritage, arts, or community-led reuse of buildings— no prior knowledge needed.



The event is free to members of certain organisations, otherwise the cost is £10.00. A recording will be made available afterwards to everyone who has booked. Places can be booked via Eventbrite https://me-l.co/x1e2tlrs.

The shipwreck mural by Colin Seal and Mitchell House (photo by Evelyn Simak on Wikimedia Commons) is on the sea wall at Sheringham.

MANCHESTER & LANCASHIRE FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY

Thursday 12 November 7:30pm: *Delinquents and debtors in Lancaster Prison*, with Michael Winstanley. This is a Zoom talk organised by the Oldham branch. See the website https://mlfhs.uk/oldham/events/meetings for details.

STUDY DAY: LANCASHIRE AND THE SECOND CIVIL WAR

The Battle of Winwick Society in association with the Battlefields Trust

Saturday 14 November 10:00am-4:30pm

Winmarleigh House, 15 Winmarleigh Street, Warrington WA1 1NB

Speakers:

- Charles Singleton (Keynote Speaker) – The New Model Army in Lancashire: an army comes of age
- Dr Ismini Pells – The Preston Campaign 1648: the soldiers' stories
- Dr Stuart Jennings – Colonel Francis Thornhagh and the Nottinghamshire horse at the Battle of Preston
- Dr Andrew Abram – Oliver Cromwell's military achievement in Lancashire
- Paul Beckmann – The Battle of Winwick: mapping the archaeological evidence

Cost of £45.00 includes a buffet lunch. Further information and booking via Eventbrite https://tinyurl.com/2y4b8s8t

HERITAGE CRIME CONFERENCE

Friday 27 November 9:30am-3:00pm. Winter Gardens, Church Street, Blackpool FY1 1HL

This **free** conference, open to all, is organised by the Lancashire Partnership Against Crime, including the police and the Police & Crime Commissioner, and the Councils of Blackpool, Wyre and Fylde. It will provide guidance on preventing and responding to heritage crime, as well as the opportunity to connect with experts and fellow custodians.

For further information and to reserve a place, visit Eventbrite https://tinyurl.com/ys8mr9d9

CARING FOR YOUR COLLECTION

Mills Archive Trust

The Mills Archive Trust, an accredited archive and library service in Reading, is a registered charity dedicated to the protection and preservation of the records of milling history. Its extensive collection of resources includes mills of all kinds, from watermills to cotton mills.

The trust is running a **webinar series entitled *Caring for your collection***. It will give an overview of what an archive is, why we should preserve historic records, how to start sorting collections of documents, photographs and digital files, and how to care for them. It is suitable for beginners or people with experience, and is recommended by previous participants.

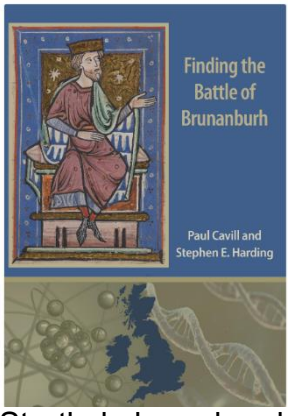
Part 1: Saturday 21 November 2:00-4:00: Overview, arrangement, description

Part 2: Saturday 28 November 2:00-4:00: Preservation and access

Cost: £50.00 for both sessions; £35.00 for one; students: free – email iba.tony@millsarchive.org for details. After the session participants will have access to the recorded seminar. For more information and to book visit www.millsarchive.org/caring-for-your-colection/

[Could your society sponsor a young person to attend the course? That would assist with caring for your collections, as well as encouraging the next generation to become engaged with heritage and local history – Ed.]

PUBLICATIONS OF INTEREST



FINDING THE BATTLE OF BRUNABURGH

Paul Cavill & Stephen E Harding

University of Chester Press, 2025

ISBN 978-1-910481-15-8, £19.99

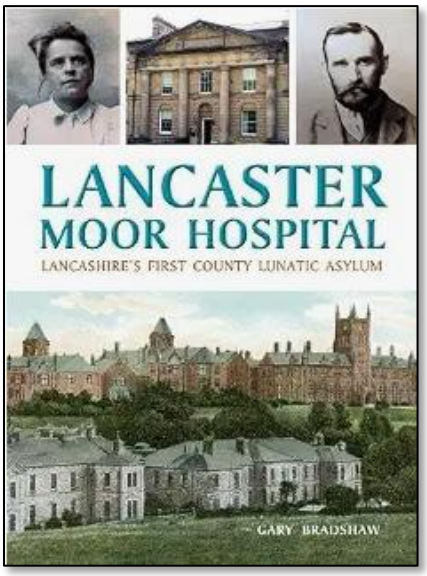
Brunanburh was where the greatest and bloodiest battle in England before the Norman Conquest. Athelstan, king of the English, won a resounding victory over a coalition of Scotsmen, Norsemen from Ireland, men from the kingdom of Strathclyde and probably Northumbrians. The story of the battle was told again and again, and well over fifty medieval writers recorded it in various forms.

But where specifically did the battle take place? This book offers the insights of two scholars, specialists in very different disciplines, to give the most comprehensive analysis of the evidence currently available. The sources, literary, linguistic, historical, scientific and archaeological are examined in detail. Combining specialist knowledge of place-names with ongoing chemical isotope analysis and provenance of archaeological finds, this book paves the way for finally locating Brunanburh.

LANCASTER MOOR HOSPITAL:

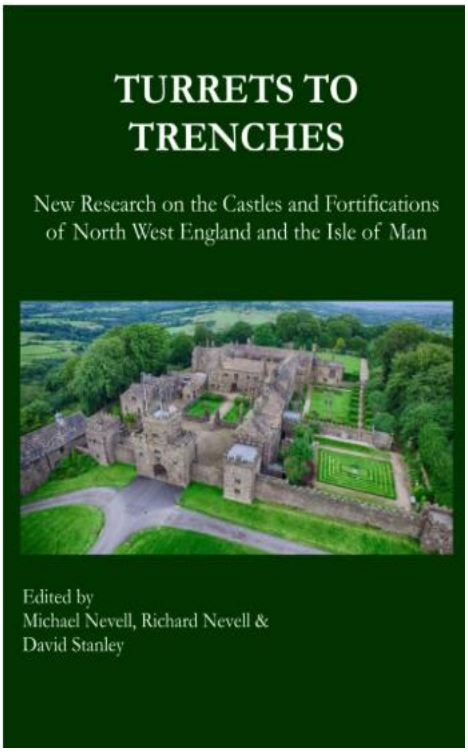
LANCASHIRE'S FIRST COUNTY LUNATIC ASYLUM

Gary Bradshaw



Palatine Books, 2025. 192pp, 100+ ills.
ISBN 9781910837528 £14.99.
The Asylum opened in 1816, using methods which would be unacceptable today, with their brutality and emphasis on containment and control, rather than treatment and cure. Over time, until its closure in 2000, care gradually improved and it became a pioneering centre for the humane and enlightened treatment of people who were mentally ill.

Gary Bradshaw trained as a mental health nurse at the hospital. He has used the archives to research the history of the hospital, and some of the patients' stories.



TURRETS TO TRENCHES:

New research on the castles and fortifications of North West England and the Isle of Man

Michael Nevell, Richard Nevell & David Stanley [Eds.]

Council for British Archaeology North West, 2026
ISBN 9781919440002
Thirteen chapters review the investigations into eight sites and five monument types, from the Norman Conquest to the Second World War. This work was undertaken by professionals, academics, and community-based individuals and groups, showing how archaeological study can provide new insights into familiar, but often understudied, monuments. It concludes with a chapter on current and future research trends for the region.

REQUESTS – CAN YOU HELP?

ORAL HISTORY – CAN YOUR SOCIETY OFFER ANY TIPS?

Westhoughton Local History Group have been conducting oral history interviews for some time but want to hear from other societies undertaking similar projects.

The group has completed a number of interviews, and has a dedicated computer for the project. They have AI-generated transcriptions, but these will need to be edited and summarised to make more sense. They are investigating whether the sound archive at Manchester central library will be able to host the recordings.

If your society is willing to share experiences, particularly in the transcribing and storage of interviews, please contact them via the editor mariannerh@hotmail.co.uk.

LOOKING FOR HARRISON ANCESTORS

Polly Lynn, of Illinois, USA, has traced her ancestry to the Harrisons of Waddington in the 1680s and is also interested in the Harrisons who were Quakers at Ray Head Farm, Bolton-by-Bowland parish.

If you had a dissenting Harrison ancestor, either of Waddington parish or of Bolton-by-Bowland, she would love to hear from you at pkljdl@gmail.com.

COME TO ONE OF OUR LOCAL HISTORY EVENTS!

You will find new information about places, events and people in Lancashire's rich history, engage with like-minded fellow attendees, and make contact with others who may have ideas to share.

DAY SCHOOLS

Each year we host a day school on a different aspect of Lancashire's history, inviting speakers with a deep knowledge of their subject. To give some past examples:
The changing fortunes of King Cotton • Vernacular buildings in the North West
• 1215 and all that: Living under the law in medieval North West • Traditional crafts
• Toil & strife: Working conditions in the North West • Pageants and processions
• Music • Canals
And our most recent topic was Lancashire diarists (see brief report above).

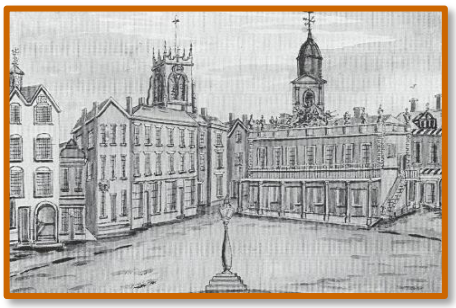
The day schools represent excellent value for money, as they include lunch, tea/coffee & biscuits as well as food for the brain!

AT HOMES

We invite a local society to host an annual At Home for people from across the county, so that they can give talks about aspects of their history which non-residents may be unaware of. The afternoons are usually taken up with visits to interesting local sites to explore more of the history. In recent years we have been to:
Tatham – St Helens – Stockport – Leyland – Lancaster – Westhoughton – Ribchester – Chorley – Preston.

SAVE THE DATE! The members of Wigan Building Preservation Trust are looking forward to welcoming you to their At Home on 12 June 2027, when they will have a varied programme of walks and talks which they hope will result in attendees learning more about the town's proud history. Details and booking form in the February newsletter. Explore the website www.wiganbpt.org







If your society would like to host a future At Home, please email the editor mariannerh@hotmail.co.uk. We can give guidance with your planning, and assure you that the Federation will underwrite the costs of the day.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETINGS

Since Covid, we have found that having the event online has worked well. The AGM is very short (thanks to Zoë Lawson circulating the papers in advance), followed by an interesting talk by a guest speaker. Look out for notification in the February newsletter about the 2027 AGM in the Spring.