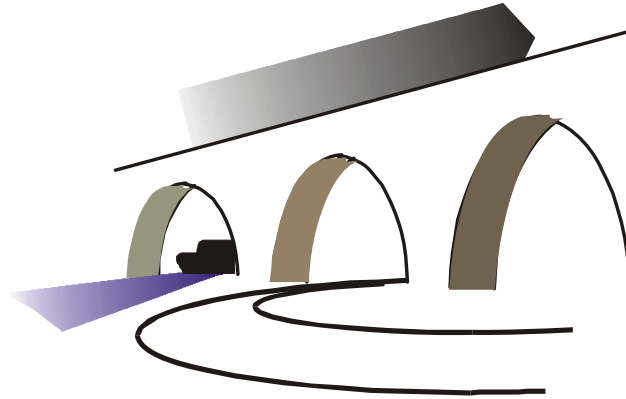


# LITTLEBOROUGH HISTORICAL & ARCHÆOLOGICAL SOCIETY



## NEWSLETTER

Vol. 24 No 1&2

Autumn 2006

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*Published by Littleborough Historical & Archæological Society Editor: Peter W Bone*

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Regn. no: 5061856 Chairman: David Grayson, Secretary: Graham W Pearson.



## Editorial

The keen-eyed amongst you will have noticed that this is the autumn edition and that the last edition was the Spring edition. What happened to Summer you might ask? The even more observant will have seen that the chairman's notes have disappeared and something very similar called an Editorial has replaced it. The reason for these changes is that with all that has been happening over the summer months time has flown by and we are only now catching up. I (Peter B) have resigned as Chairman and left the committee but have taken over as editor from Clare. There is nothing sinister about this I had simply taken on too many commitments in too many places and retirement was becoming as time consuming and stressful as work used to be. This was definitely not the

plan!! David Grayson has agreed to take over as Chairman again. Chairman's notes will reappear in a later edition *when David has had time to catch his breath.*

The Society has been very busy. We have had our AGM and elected a new committee, there has been archaeological fieldwork at Starring pottery and Cloise farm and well-supported visits to the boat museum at Ellesmere Port and The Pioneer's Museum at Toad Lane. All of which you will find something about in this newsletter. Contributions to the Newsletter are still very welcome so don't leave it to the faithful few. To make local history matter we need local historians to contribute.

## Forthcoming Meetings and Events

**Thursday Sept 12<sup>th</sup> LHAS Meeting**  
The History of the Clog – Norman Bishop.

**Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> Oct Lancashire Local History Federation "At Home"** The Mourholme Local History Society at The Village Hall Borwick Near Carnforth £13.50

**Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> Nov & Sat 4<sup>th</sup> Nov**  
**Archaeology for All** – Community

Archaeology Conference at Manchester University £10 each day

**Thursday Nov. 9<sup>th</sup> LHAS Meeting**  
"Tale of Two Cities" – Margaret Curry

**Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> Dec. LHAS Members**  
**Christmas Social**

## News in Brief

📖 **Subscriptions** were due from 1<sup>st</sup> May. I hope everyone has paid by now. ?? ££ \*\*\* !!!

📖 Mark Pearson and his team have completed the revision of the **Littleborough Pubs book**. It is with the publishers and should be available by end October on the same terms as the book we did last year.

📖 We are making great progress on identifying the RRR (**Real Roman Road**) over Blackstone Edge and have made some significant finds at Cloise farm it is too early to be definitive but look out for more in the next Newsletter.

📖 A **Field of Hope** project has been established by the Marie Curie Trust planting daffodils on the old gas works site on Hare Hill Road and keeping a Book of Remembrance in the Coach House. The Society has donated £25 in the names of Alan Luke (Co-

founder and past chairman) Jack Trickett (Co-founder and past Life President) and John Foster (Committee member who died of cancer)

📖 Work is continuing of the project to take over the **Station Buildings**. We have spoken to Paul Rowen our local MP and he has promised his support. Contact has been made with the Heritage Lottery Fund and Bernard Pratt who has a lot of professional experience in these matters has agreed to act as project manager. We expect to have a meeting with Northern Rail and Network Rail in the next couple of months.

📖 The area around **Rock Nock** has been designated as a conservation area, which goes some way to protecting this historic environment.

## Oral History Project

Oral History is a particularly important part of local history. The memories and experiences of people who live and work locally bring alive the remains of industrial buildings and the streets and shops that we see each day. These reminiscences are so easily lost but they can provide a great treasure, which adds to and explains the paper and photographic archives that we hold.

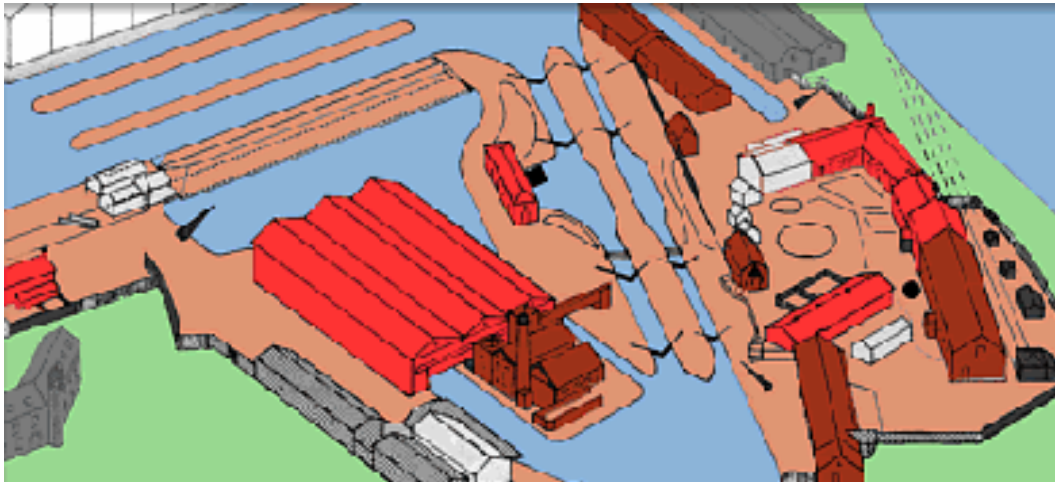
We want to preserve the oral history of Littleborough so Tina Cranston and Dilys Pearson have recently completed a refresher course at the North West Sound Archive in oral history research

and recording. They want to interview as many people on as many subjects as possible. So we are looking for people to come forward and take part in the project. I am assured by Dilys and Tina that there is no need to be shy ..... *nothing will surprise them*. It is simply a matter of giving a couple of hours of your time to be interviewed. So if you have a personal story or know of a friend or neighbour who can contribute please contact them. Your story does matter, you and what you have to say are an important part of our local history.

## Our Visit to Ellesmere Port Boat Museum

It was not the brightest of summer days on the 13<sup>th</sup> August when we went to Ellesmere Port Boat Museum but that did not detract from it being an interesting and enjoyable trip for everybody. The Boat Museum is one of three museums run by The Waterways Trust, which is a national charity, which works with others to promote greater public enjoyment of our inland waterways. The museum is on the Shropshire Union canal in a 7-Acre, 200-year old historic dock complex on

the south bank of the River Mersey, the museum has recently undergone a £2 million makeover. The historic port buildings are complemented by the modern new exhibitions which feature a host of computer based exhibits and interactive displays, giving visitors lots to see and do. The museum has the largest collection of canal boats in the world, a working lock and dock workers cottages, the museum provides a glimpse of what life was like during the heyday of our waterways.



## Your New Committee

Following our AGM on the 8<sup>th</sup> June and my (Peter Bone) subsequent decision to resign as Chairman the committee now comprises

David Grayson - Chairman  
Graham Pearson – Secretary  
Dilys Pearson – Treasurer  
Judith Pauls – Meeting Organiser

Simon Askew  
Anita Clegg  
Malcolm Cook  
Tina Cranston  
Peter Schofield

Please give them your support, without them there would not be a Society.

## Evening Visit to Pioneers Museum at Toad Lane

14<sup>th</sup> September was our evening visit to the Rochdale Pioneers Museum at Toad Lane. We were welcomed by Malcolm Price who gave us an excellent talk on the origins of Co-operation, the history of the building and its progress to the present day. He explained that the aims of the museum were

- To preserve and maintain the store building and collections relating to the Rochdale Pioneers and the Co-operative movement in general.
- To provide an educational experience for visitors that includes the origins and development of the Rochdale Pioneers Society in the context of 19th century Rochdale.
- To promote an understanding of the motivation and dedication of the Rochdale Pioneers.
- To communicate an understanding of the co-operative alternative and co-operative values and principles as defined by the Pioneers and their contribution and relevance to current times.

The Museum gets enquiries and visitors from all over the world so it was not such a culture shock to have a group of folk from Littleborough.



## **Fothergill and Harvey Part 1 (Origin to 1914)**

***Amongst the papers of the late Keith Parry which have been donated to the Society was an unpublished short history of Fothergill and Harvey written by Alexander (Sandy) Harvey. We thought this deserved a wider audience so Graham Pearson has reviewed the text and we will publish it in parts in the next three newsletters***

The company was founded in 1846 by Alexander Harvey, son of Charles Berry who adopted the name Harvey, and two Fothergill brothers and it specialised in merchanting cotton cloth in Manchester.

In 1859 they took over a small weaving shed in Littleborough from a small family firm, King & Co., and this was to become Sladen Wood Mill. One of the Fothergills' ran the mill and lived at Sladen Wood House. He eventually had two daughters, one of whom was Jessie, the author of many novels, drawing on her experiences in the area. They both went to live in Windermere, a favourite part of the world for all the family.

Gordon Harvey joined the business in 1879, on the retirement of Fothergill. He also lived at Sladen Wood House, where he was joined by his brother Ernst in 1886 and they lived there until the turn of the century. The mill had by this time been greatly enlarged and improved.

Gordon and Ernst ran the Littleborough end of the company, with Charles and Harry, two of the five brothers, looking after the Manchester end: Sydney taking no part in the company, whatsoever. Charles and Ernst were two main founders of Sale RU Football Club, for whom both played and this appears to have helped develop an elite reputation for the company in Manchester,

although the company's expansion was almost entirely due to the expansion of weaving facilities at Summit and, in 1886, the construction of the Rock Nook Spinning Mill.

Gordon Harvey was an early environmentalist, working to ameliorate the effects of pollution: his main concern being the acid rain that stunted the growth of trees, flowers and vegetables. However, building an extra-tall chimney onto Rock Mill to allow the prevailing wind to take the smoke over the hill into Yorkshire did little to alleviate the problem. At around this time, Gordon and Ernst made many changes to help their workforce, following the lead of their father, and brought in many environmental changes in the mills, before eventually building houses at Dean Head which, in their day, were exceedingly comfortable. There were plans to build on the opposite side of Todmorden Road but the First World War intervened and this never happened.

Ernst married in 1900 and moved into Gale House until taking over and altering Town House in 1911: the first time that this property had left the ownership of the Newall family and their Norman ancestors for many hundreds of years.

At the turn of the century, both Gordon and Ernst were busy in local politics; the

former being responsible for the building of the Central School, despite opposition from “the Royds family and the reactionary Dr Salts”.

Meanwhile, Green Vale Spinning Mill had been built and Rock Nook extended to accommodate more weaving and yarn preparation. Raw cotton was carried overnight from Manchester by canal barges until, in the twenties, when it became essential for this movement to be made by Motor Lorry. An extension to Rock Nook created a garage with space for the family’s private cars as well; these being a Belsize for day to day use and a Daimler for holidays. The lorries were used on social occasions when fundraising garden parties were held at Town House and for those prepared to pay, groups of people were taken on trips to the top of Blackstone Edge seated on forms strapped to the back of the flat lorries.

## Excavation at Starring Pottery

In the real heat of July from 15<sup>th</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup> came National Archaeology Week and as our contribution to this nationwide event the Society, in collaboration with the members Manchester Regional Industrial Archaeology Society (MRIAS), did a trial excavation at Starring Pottery. Our objective was to define the site and assess it for future excavation. MRIAS members did a measured survey and Bernard Champness has drawn up the survey and marked the positions of our trenches and the location of the kilns. Richard Windslow did sterling work excavating one of the flues, revealing a beautiful triple course brick arch about 400mm below ground, which allowed us to locate the line from one of the kilns to the chimney. Unfortunately, we had a visit from some of our more moronic citizens, who apparently having fortified

There had been a long term association with the Bowden family who developed khaki dyes at their Grove Dyeworks and the two companies eventually went into partnership. This led to F & H producing khaki drills in quantity in time for the Boer War and sold to the army. The dyes were only for use by F & H and this allowed them to corner the market which in turn gave the company great profits. The 28” coarse drills were sold in vast quantities to South Africa, the Philippines, Brazil and the US Army in Panama. A lighter weight drill was produced for the market in India for use in the production of Jeans.

This led to Gordon taking a lot of criticism as an MP at Westminster as he had grown wealthy from manufacturing materials for army uniforms but argued vehemently against all forms of warfare.

themselves with “tinnies” of the amber fluid decided to test the strength of the arch by jumping up and down and collapsing it. Such is some peoples understanding of the value our heritage!

Undeterred, Peter Schofield put his expertise to work with the metal detector and we were able to identify the line of the tramway that connected the pit where the coal and clay were mined to the site. During the week we welcomed a party of school children from Littleborough Community Primary School and explained the site to them and they have put together a display in the school using some pieces from the site, photographs and maps. This year we concentrated on identifying the kilns, but there is much more to learn on this site. The layout of the grinding, mixing, moulding and drying rooms needs to be

explained and we can learn a lot more about the kiln structure with a deeper excavation. I would like to thank the landowners for their permission to explore the site and the members of both

Societies for all their hard work, and believe me in the heat it was HARD WORK .I hope we will be back next year, *with a mini digger*, to explore further.



### **1. Surveying the site**



### **2. Brickwork pathway on the outside of the Kiln**



### **3. Looking down on the brick arched flue**