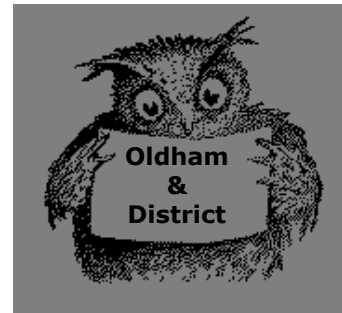


Oldham and District Branch of the Manchester and
Lancashire Family History Society
Contact us at oldham@mlfhs.org.uk

Newsletter February 2016



Branch News

Next Meeting

Our next meeting will be on Saturday 13th February.

The Restoration of Victoria Baths

Kate Dibble

This talk describes the background to Victoria Baths being built and how local people used the Baths and facilities for over 80 years, some of whom made history in their own right. We then follow the 'Restoration' story. The talk concludes by relating some of the inventive and surprising ways in which Victoria Baths is used today.

Kate Dibble is a Manchester and North West Blue Badge Guide, specialising in tours connected with literature and especially Mrs Gaskell, Manchester Town Hall, Chinatown and the Palace Hotel. She very much enjoys the variety of her work and the people she meets on her tours.

At The Education Suite, Gallery Oldham, Greaves Street, Oldham beginning at 2pm. No charge for members, £2.50 non-members.

Website

Our branch website is developing well under the management of Jennifer Lever. She has recently added a timeline of Oldham history.

<http://www.oldham.mlfhs.org.uk/>

Sad News

On Christmas Day one of the Bolton committee members, Val Leese, who has been on some of our London Trips, lost her husband Trevor. He was taken suddenly ill on Christmas Eve and died on Christmas Day in hospital. Six of the Bolton committee attended the funeral. They had been married 48 years and lived in their present house for 44 years.

Beginners' Talks at Oldham Local Studies

Rod and Gill will be delivering their talks at Oldham Local Studies and Archives. All talks will start at 10.30 and last for about an hour. All talks are free but they do ask for a donation to Dr Kershaw's via a collection box.

Friday 26th February - Getting Started

Friday 4th March - Civil Registration

Friday 11th March - Census

Friday 18th March - Before Civil Registration/Parish Records

Friday 1st April - Wills

Friday 8th April - Maps

We ask that you please book via Oldham Local Studies and Archives.

Phone: 0161 770 4654

Email: archives@oldham.gov.uk

Society News

MLFHS Project Volunteers Wanted

The Society is constantly engaged in a wide range of Projects to preserve and publish original source materials to assist its members and others in their researches. Many of our members as well as a number of non-members already contribute time and skills to initiate, develop and bring these projects to a successful conclusion.

More archives of material are coming to hand and the Society is considering new projects all the time. However, before they can be started more volunteers must be recruited.

Most of our members will be familiar with the skills required to be able to contribute to any project for they are often the same skills they use in their own family history research – transcription, checking data, editing, typing. More and more, familiarity with computers, scanners and digital photography is advancing the speed and efficiency of our personal research and these skills too can be used in project work. Training and guidance are always given by skilled Project Leaders.

If you are interested in making your contribution to achieving the aims of the Society by taking part in a project, why not consult the MLFHS Projects link on the Society web-page [<http://www.mlfhs.org.uk/projects>] to see the variety of Active Projects in progress and contact the Project Leader if you see a subject that interests you. Alternatively, please contact me at

davidmuil1943@fsmail.net and I can put you in touch with a Project Leader who will welcome your assistance.

David Muil [Member 13008], Projects Committee Chairman

Help with Family History Research

Manchester Central Library

The Society Help Desk, which is located on the ground floor, is open every week day from 10.30 to 3.30 pm.

Free access to Ancestry.co.uk, findmypast, Manchester online burials and British Newspaper Archives.

Research Guides

Free research guides are available to download on the MLFHS website. They are also available at Manchester Central Library Help Desk.

Anglo-Scottish Meetings

Memories and Memory by Anne Reid

Saturday 20th February

2 o'clock at Manchester Library

Anne Reid will be giving us a fascinating insight into the process for recording the stories behind your family tree, community or organisation. Anne is from Dumfries and has worked as a Senior Life Interview Consultant for 5 years - travelling all over the UK and as far afield as Montreal, Canada - helping folk record their family histories and life stories. She will share anecdotes and tips about how to find the missing pieces and capture them to create a fuller picture.

Free for members. Non-members £3.00.

Please book via Eventbrite.

FamilySearch Website by Brian McKechnie

Saturday 19th March

2 o'clock at Manchester Library

Our March meeting, on Saturday 19th, is a presentation by Brian McKechnie, Patron Services Manager UK and Ireland LDS Church on the FamilySearch website.

This site has changed enormously since the days of the IGI, with data from a large variety of sources and it is all free.

Free for members. Non-members £3.00.

Please book via Eventbrite.

N.B. The branch will be meeting in the morning when we have booked the bank of computers on the 3rd floor. These will be available from 10.30 until 1.30. If you have and Scottish queries, indeed any queries that we can help with why not come along early.

Visit to Chetham's Library

On January 14th a group of members visited Chetham's Library in Manchester. We were given a tour of the medieval building by Michael Powell the Librarian followed by a handling session of some of the library's archives.



The building which houses the library dates back to the 1420s when it was built by Thomas De Warre as accommodation for a college of priests.

Our tour began in the Baronial Hall which was the dining room for the Warden and Fellows of the Collegiate Church. From there we passed through the three-sided cloisters which are very unusual as they are doubled storeyed, the upper floor being the Fellows'

bedchambers.

On the upper floor you find the historic library which was founded in 1653 as a public library under the will of Humphrey Cheetham. Chetham's aim was to create a library to rival those of Cambridge and Oxford.

The magnificent reading room has a very famous small alcove with a four-sided desk where Marx and Engels once sat. The room contains the original furniture including twenty-four chairs where many famous people have sat including Defoe, John Wesley and Dickens.



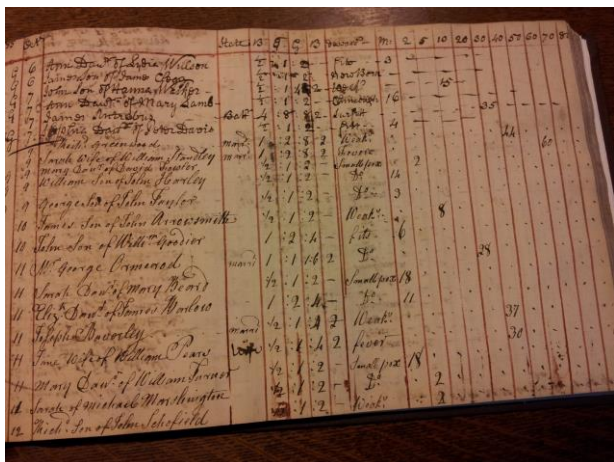
The old dark wood carved cabinet in this room was originally part of a bed frame belonging to Adam de Hulton and dates to the early 1500s. The carving at its top dated 1653 does not actually belong to the original bed frame. Bonnie Prince Charlie is said to have slept in this bed. Its value as it is now about half a million pounds.

The chained library, which you can also see in this room, was one of the original five small libraries of books which were created under the will of Humphrey Chetham to be placed in the parish churches of Manchester and Bolton and in the parochial chapelries of Gorton, Turton and Walmesley. The one in this room is the library from Gorton.

Looking down on the room is the only contemporary portrait of Humphrey Chetham. One of the other portraits is of James Crossley who was involved in choosing the books for the Central Library many years ago.

We were then taken to the Audit room where we viewed the archives which Michael had chosen for us to view.

The first archive was from the Cathedral Archive which is kept at the Cathedral but is looked after by Chetham's. All the registers are now available on



Ancestry site. However the Cathedral Sextons' books were brought for our viewing. These books, especially the earlier books, can be very good sources for family historians as they may include details of the tolling of bells, approximate age at death and cause of death. By the 1800s not all details were included and the later records don't generally include the cause of death – except in the case of the more unusual cause's e.g. drowning, suicide and cholera in the

summer of 1832.

Michael explained that at one time the Cathedral was performing weddings for as many as 30 couples at once. It was cheaper, at that time, to marry in the Cathedral as only one fee was payable. To marry in a parochial church a fee would be paid to the local church and the same charge again would be payable to the Cathedral. People often moved into the parish to be married at the cathedral as no questions were asked and the banns were not read as normal but were posted in the church porch.

We were also shown a small portion of the very vast Leech collection. Everyone in the family had to keep a diary and they have been kept for about 3 or 4 generations – there is even a 'diary' from Miss Hermione Humber who was a motor car! The archive includes 15 boxes, 200 volumes and more from one family, there are also photographs, bills and a vast pedigree as well as 7 volumes of a WW1 diary. All manner of 200 years of family intrigue is available, some of which is now on the internet.

Chetham's specialises in diary collections so we also saw the diary collection of John Read, who was a pupil of CS Lewis at Oxford, and the WW2 diary kept by Albert Bracegirdle from his time as a prisoner of war in Stalag Luft 7.

We would like to thank Michael for a very interesting and fascinating tour and talk.

For further information please see the Chetham's Library website:

<http://www.chethams.org.uk/collections.html>

Parts of the Leech diaries have been transcribed and can be seen at:

<http://www.leechdiaries.com/>

By Sue Forshaw and Ruth Walker

Local News

Oldham Local Studies and Archives

84 Union Street, Oldham, OL1 1DN.

Phone: 0161 770 4654

Email: archives@oldham.gov.uk

Oldham Local Studies and Archives is run by Oldham Council and is not part of our society. The archives date from 1597 and cover an enormous range of subjects and activities. However it is advisable to check on the archives website for coverage.

http://www.oldham.gov.uk/info/200539/archive_collections

Monday 10.00am-7.00pm

Tuesday 10.00am-2.00pm

Wednesday 10.00am-5.00pm

Thursday 10.00am- 7.00pm

Friday 10.00am-5.00pm

Saturday 10.00am-4.00pm

Staff will assist with family history enquiries at any time during the week but if you need extended one-to-one advice a family history expert is available between 2pm and 4pm every Monday and Wednesday. There is no need to book, just drop in.

Talks by Other Groups (which are not part of our society)

Chadderton Historical Society

Thursday 4th February at 7.30pm

Manchester Oddities by Keith Warrender

Chadderton Football Club

Saddleworth Historical Society

Wednesday 10th February at 7.30pm

Richard Oastler and Yorkshire Slavery by Dr John Hargreaves.

This will be held at Dobcross Band Club.

Oldham Historical Research Group

Wednesday 24th February at 7pm (N.B.This is the 4th Wednesday)

Jackson Pit and its history by Peter O'Connor

Oldham Local Studies and Archives, Union Street, Oldham

The Battle of the Somme 1st July to 16th/18th November, 1916

As you're no doubt very well aware, 1916 sees the centenary of the Battle of the Somme. Oldham Historical Research Group, together with the Local Studies and Archives, is running a Special Project to commemorate the Battle and its impact on the people of Oldham, both here at home or fighting on the Somme.

The Battle of the Somme was, in effect, a series of Battles in which, by November, there were 650,000 Allied casualties. On the first day, alone, there were 20,000 men killed and almost 40,000 injured. Many of the Battle names are familiar to us: Albert, Bazentin Ridge, Delville Wood, Pozieres Ridge,

Guillemont, Gincy, Courcellette, Thiepval Ridge, Morval, Le Transloy and Ancre Heights. The Battles of Fromelles and Gommecourt, were subsidiary battles intended to divert German troops and support the Somme offensive.

Originally conceived as a joint Anglo - French initiative to break through the German lines, this plan foundered when the Germans launched their attack at Verdun in February 1916, occupying a large proportion of the French army for the remainder of 1916. The British Commander in Chief was General Haig. It was decided to go ahead with the plan, just the same, relying on the British 4th Army, under the command of General Rawlinson, and with the French 6th Army in support. The decision also served to relieve some pressure on the French at Verdun when some German forces were diverted to the Somme after July.

The British 4th Army included some Australian, Canadian and Indian Divisions. A significant number of the Lancashire and 'Pals' Battalions were also in the 4th, including the 24th Battalion of the Manchester Regiment, the 'Oldham Comrades'. The 24th had been converted to a Pioneer Battalion in May 1916 and was attached to the 7th Division. It was on the Somme for the duration of the Battle.

Returning to the Project ... if you have any photos, letters, diaries, documents, stories, memorabilia from activities etc., relevant to Oldham and Oldhamers, and reflecting life at that time, either at home or overseas, we would love to hear from you. It doesn't matter how much or how little; it can all be added.

The material that we gather will be included on Special Project pages, dedicated to the Somme in 1916, on the Historical Research Group's website, and linked from this page, <http://www.pixnet.co.uk/Oldham-hrg/World-War1/Menu.html>

Scanned contributions (best jpeg quality) can be attached to an email and sent to pixnet.sg@gmail.com. If this isn't possible then we can arrange for them to be scanned at the Local Studies Library if you contact me by email to make arrangements. If you have any further questions then email me and I'll do my best to answer them.

The Local Studies Library is also keen to have your personal feelings, for evaluation purposes, about the Battle of the Somme; the events, the legacy and how you feel it affected people either as individuals or as a community. Anything you write would be completely anonymous and you can fill in a sheet at the Local Studies Library. If your opinions change over the course of the commemorative months you can fill in another one!

We hope to have the project on-line as soon as possible so please get in touch.

Sheila Goodyear

Oldham Historical Research Group

If you have any local news, articles or photographs please email us so we can include them in our newsletter.

Research News

News from Ancestry.co.uk

New Records

The Police Gazette 1812-1902 ,1921-1927.

This collection contains printed publications used for communication between members of the police force in the United Kingdom between 1812 and 1927 (with gaps in coverage). It contains information on wanted criminals, crimes committed, criminals who had been apprehended, and missing persons.

Northamptonshire Parish Registers

Ancestry have made available online parish registers from Northamptonshire. There are now over 7 million baptism, marriage and burial records in their collection which extends from the commencement of parish registers right up to 1912.

News from Findmypast

News about the 1939 Register:

"From the 16th February 2016, Findmypast's premium record set, the 1939 Register, will be made available to 12 month Britain and World subscribers as part of their subscription packages, giving them unlimited access to the records of 30.5 million people.

"And there is more good news for our subscribers. We are freezing the price of their next renewal on our 12 month subscription packages as we increase the price of new subscriptions by 20% on February 16th."

Findmypast has also added the following records recently:

England Pollbooks and Directories 1830-1837

Hertfordshire, Parish Registers Browse, 1538-1988

Surrey, Southwark, Newington Apprentice Register 1891

Plymouth & West Devon Electoral Registers, 1780-1973

Ancestry and Findmypast are free to search at Oldham Local Studies and at libraries across the borough. They are also free to search at Manchester Central Library.

The National Archives uploads WW1 hospital diaries

The National Archives has boosted its online collections with the addition of 247 downloadable First World War hospital diaries to its Discovery service. Released in December to mark Disability History Month, the documents offer an insight into the daily treatment of wounded troops, including those suffering from mental as well as physical impairments. Several diaries also cover veterinary hospitals, which were used to treat horses and mules injured in combat. Find out more and explore the diaries here (document downloads cost £3.30 each).

Update from Lancashire Online Parish Clerk

<http://www.lan-opc.org.uk/>

Recently added from our area:

[Confirmations 1891 to 1972](#) from the Church from the Roman Catholic Church of St Aidan, Royton

[Marriages 1905 to 1907](#) from the Church of St Andrew, Oldham

Baptisms and Burials 1601 to 1628 from the Church of St Chad, Rochdale

Baptisms 1822 to 1832 from the Church of St Chad, Rochdale

Baptisms and Burials 1762 to 1770 from the Church of St Michael and All Angels in the Parish of Ashton under Lyne

Marriages 1882 to 1890 from the Church of St Thomas, Werneth, Oldham

If you have any tips or know of any useful websites please email us so we can include them in our newsletter.

That's all for this month. We hope you have enjoyed reading our newsletter.

Thank you to those of you who have been in contact with us. We value your comments and contributions.

Sue Forshaw, Newsletter Editor.

Assisted by Irene Whitby & Jane Murphy