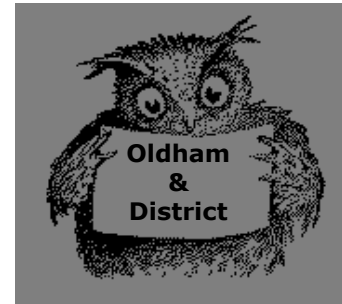


Newsletter March 2016



Branch News

Last Meeting

The Restoration of Victoria Baths by Kate Dibble 13th February

Kate's very interesting, illustrated talk took us through the many phases of the Baths from its conception to what it is today.



In the late 1890s Manchester Council decided to build "the Bath of Baths". In 1899 land was bought in Chorlton on Medlock and Henry Price was appointed as architect. The Baths were opened in 1906. By the time it was opened it had cost over £59,000 being built of the highest quality materials with many period decorative features: beautiful stained glass windows, Pilkington tiles and mosaic floors. It had three separate entrances, three swimming pools, a Turkish baths and a laundry. It also had a flat for the Superintendent.



Initially there was separate bathing in the three separate pools (first class males, second class males and females) but in 1914 mixed bathing was introduced. The baths were very popular and soon swimming clubs, swimming teams and water polo teams were formed. In the winter months of the 1930s and 40s the Baths were covered with flooring and dancing to Big Bands took place. There were also other sports such as bowling. In the 1950s the Baths installed the

first public aerotone (Jacuzzi) in the country.

There were many personalities associated with the Baths. One being Sunny Lowry who swam the channel in 1933 being only the fifth British woman to do this. Another famous swimmer was John Besford an Olympic swimmer. Besford infuriated Hitler by winning the 1934 European 100 backstroke title. Hitler had

commissioned a magnificent 1cwt bronze eagle trophy on the assumption that German favourite, Ernst Kuppers, would win.

In 1993 the Baths were closed despite a campaign to keep it open. The Friends of Victoria Baths and a charitable trust - the Victoria Baths Trust - was set up with the aim of fully restoring the building and bringing the Turkish Baths and at least one of the swimming pools back into public use.

In 2003 the Baths won the first series of the BBC Restoration Programme and won £3.4 million from the Lottery Heritage Fund. However due to rising costs restoration didn't begin until 2007. The first phase was finished in 2008.

The Baths have been used as a location for various TV programmes including Antiques Road Show, Life on Mars and Peaky Blinders. It also holds craft workshops, Arts and Craft Fairs and weddings.

It has an Open Day on the first Sunday of every month.

Tours take place every Wednesday.

For full information please go to: <http://www.victoriabaths.org.uk/visit/>

Next Meeting

Our next meeting will be on Saturday 12th March at 2.00pm.

The Battle of the Somme

Bill Mitchinson

As the centenary of the military disaster of 1st July 1916 approaches, Bill Mitchinson will offer some thoughts about why and how the battle took place and the role it played in the development of an efficient and eventually war winning army. He will look at the strategic context of, and the preparations for, the battle, the significance of several of the engagements within it and its legacy and commemoration.

Dr Bill Mitchinson is a lecturer with King's College London, at the Joint Services Command and Staff College, Shrivenham.

This meeting will be held in the Education Suite, Gallery Oldham. (nearest tram stop - Oldham Central).

Talks are free to Members but there is a charge of £2.50 to non-members

AGM

The AGM will take place on April 9th before the speaker gives their talk. We have two places to fill on the committee so if you would like to join us in helping to run the Oldham Branch please let us know. Nominations can be done at the March meeting or between now and April.

Website Update

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

Jennifer Lever has recently added a list of over 150 mills, in year order, to the

website. (Go to the tool bar and click on "archives".)

However she would like to know if anyone has any information about an artist called James Purdy who was born on the 1st April 1899 in Oldham.

He married Charlotte Lees Robinson on the 16th May 1928 at All Saints, Northmoor.

He taught at Oldham School of Art, left teaching and opened a studio at Rhodes Bank. Later, he entered the Civil Service and painted in his free time.

He died in 1972 in Nelson.

There are a number of his paintings in Gallery Oldham, one of which is entitled "Millbottom 2" painted in 1935 and depicts a mill scene in Waterhead.

However Jennifer is interested in another painting called "Millbottom" which is shown on page 261 of "Oldham Brave Oldham" by Brian Law.

She would like to write a biography of James Purdy under the title "Notable People" on the website and to also use the first Millbottom painting on the website but does not know its whereabouts to seek permission.

Therefore we would be grateful for any information about James Purdy and "Millbottom."

For information about James Purdy's paintings please go to

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/arts/yourpaintings/artists/james-purdy/paintings/slideshow#/0>

Beginners' Talks at Oldham Local Studies

Rod and Gill will be delivering their talks at Oldham Local Studies. 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 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 book please via Oldham Local Studies.

Phone: 0161 770 4654

Email: archives@oldham.gov.uk

Society News

Anglo-Scottish Meetings

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 10.30am until 1.30pm. If you have any Scottish queries, indeed any queries that we can help with, why not come along early.

The April meeting on the **16th April** will be the AGM followed by members showing and talking about their heirlooms.

Visit to The Police Museum

It is hoped to arrange a Society visit to The Police Museum in April. Information about the visit will be announced on Eventbrite shortly. So please keep an eye on the MLFHS website.

Online Book Shop

<http://www.mlfhs-shop.co.uk/>

The online shop has a new look.

There are a number of books about Oldham, local maps and CDs on sale in the online shop. You can also purchase the popular Ancestral file for £4.00.

Discount

Don't forget that you can get a discount of 15% off a total spend of over £10.00 at our online shop by entering the discount code **NUSHOP** when you get to the checkout (offer ends 17 April 2016).

Who Do You Think You Are

The Society is having a stall at the WDYTUA show at Birmingham NEC 7th - 9th April. If you are going why not come along and say, "hello!"

Local News

The British Newspaper Archive

The British Newspaper Archive currently has nearly 600 titles of historic local newspapers digitised and online meaning you can search by name or keyword and get instant results. So far none of the Oldham titles is featured, you have to go to Oldham Local Studies and Archives and wind your way through the films until your arms and eyes ache. **The Oldham Standard and the Oldham Chronicle** both published six days a week from the 1850s, the Standard ceased publication in 1946 but the Chronicle is still with us.

The BNA asks people to vote for which newspapers they should digitise next. Go to <http://tinyurl.com/gu65geu> and vote for one or more of the Oldham papers or add a comment if you wish.

This is heartfelt, at the Volunteer Group on Tuesday I am researching what life was like in Oldham July - Dec 1916, the period covering the Battle of the Somme. After 9 sessions I have just started December. Keyword searches would be much faster and easier on the eyes.

A full list of the titles online is at

<http://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/home/NewspaperTitles#M>

By Dorothy Bintley

The British Newspaper Archive is free to search at Manchester Central Library with a Manchester Library card.

Searching For Oldham Roots

A few months ago I wrote about the family of Jerry Hall who left Oldham for a new life in America. Of course hers were not the only family who left to be pioneers in a new land.

Recently some visitors from Canada arrived in the area searching for the family roots of the family of Richard Chadwick Fitton (1871- 1942) of Royton. The visitors were taxied round the Oldham area by **John Consterdine**, a Manchester taxi driver, to see various locations associated with the Fitton family. John's company is **Manchester Taxi Tours** which specialises in history tours including family history tours. John will plan his tour to meet the needs of your research taking you to different locations associated with your family history.

Using **Lancashire BMD** it was found that **Richard Chadwick Fitton** was born in 1871 in the Delph/Saddleworth area. He was the fourth child of James Chadwick Fitton (a cotton carder) and Betty Dinah Brierley.

Census records showed that the family were living in Royton in 1881 and moved to Heyside, Royton, a bit later. Like many families they lived in a triangle of streets around the local mill in Heyside, the mill being their place of work. Although their houses in Perth Street and Water Street have gone you can still see other terraced houses that remain in those streets. The other family home at 174 Heyside has been knocked down and replaced by Heyside cricket club.

Richard Chadwick Fitton worked as a cotton piecer before joining the Royal Lancaster Regiment around 1890. He then served for 18 years in different parts of the Empire including Malta and Hong Kong but always returned to Heyside.

He married Margaret Dean in 1893. **Using parish registers at Manchester Central Library** it was found that he probably attended St Mark's Church, Heyside, as two of his children were baptised there in the 1890s. His addresses at that time were 180 Heyside and 190 Heyside.

He had a very successful career in the army and attained the rank of Colour Sergeant and became a skilled marksman. However when he retired from the army he decided to start a new life with his family in Canada. **Canadian Passengers Lists** showed that he emigrated to Canada in 1910 with his wife Margaret and three children settling in New Brunswick where he started a new life as a farmer.

Using a free website - **Soldiers of the First World War - Library and Archives of Canada** it was found that Richard enlisted again at the start of the First World War in the Canadian Expeditionary Force at the age of 42. By googling his name information about his later career and life was found on a military web site and in **The London Gazette**. It was found that he attained the ranks of Warrant Officer Class I as Sergeant Major of the Canadian Infantry Depot in France in 1915. Later commissioned an Honorary Lieutenant and Quartermaster, he returned to Canada taking up various staff positions before being released in 1917 'surplus to requirements'.

He moved west to northern Alberta where he obtained a homestead and became a very active and prominent citizen of the small community of Spirit River where he resided. Richard died around 1946 in Alberta.

By searching military records on **ancestry.co.uk** it was found that, back in Royton, his younger brother *Edgar Fitton* had joined the King's Own Royal Lancaster Regiment and had been killed in action on 2nd March 1916 in Flanders. The **MLFHS website -War memorials** shows that Edgar is commemorated on the War Memorial in Royton Park. Brother *Herbert Fitton* probably attended Blackshaw Lane School as he is on the school Roll of Honour also shown on the **MLFHS website**. Herbert joined the Canadian Expeditionary Force at Le Havre in 1915 having previously briefly served in the King's Own Royal Lancaster Regiment. **Canada Ocean Arrival Records** show that he emigrated to Canada in 1920 to join Richard in Spirit River leaving his wife and family behind in Shaw (as far as we can tell.)

It is always fascinating to visit the places where our families lived and worked. Some people have further to travel to see them than others!

For information about Manchester Taxi tours

<http://www.manchestertaxitours.co.uk/>

For information on the history of St Mark's Church, Heyside.

<http://www.stmarksheyside.org.uk/welcome/our-history/>

St Mark's Heyside Parish Records can be seen on microfilm at Manchester Central Library.

Baptisms-1870-1945- MFPR 1412

Marriages-1879-1922- MFPR 1413

Marriages-1922-1962- MFPR 1414

By Sue Forshaw, Lynne Wilkinson and Elsie Lowe.

Somme Centenary

The Oldham Historical Research Group

In last month's Newsletter I drew your attention to the Somme Centenary Project, a joint initiative between Oldham Historical Research Group and the Local Studies and Archives. We now have the Project on the website with a number of early entries. We have started our collection of Soldiers who served in those battles; we have a map and overview of the Battles; and there are a number of letters, diaries and histories. You can see the menu page here: <http://www.pixnet.co.uk/Oldham-hrg/World-War1/Somme/menu.html>

We need your help to add to the categories that are already there and also to create new ones, such as Care of the Wounded etc. Also, we have uploaded the first 2 or 3 'Have your say' comments about the Somme ... all anonymous, of course ... and are hoping for as many more as possible. If you can't get into the Local Studies on Union Street, send them to our email address, pixnet.sg@gmail.com marked, 'Have your say on the Somme.'

More details about the project are on the website. If you have any questions then please write to me at the email address and I'll do my best to help.

Sheila Goodyear
Oldham Historical Research Group

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

Chadderton Historical Society Thursday 3rd March at 7.30pm Themed Party: Psychedelic Sixties.

There will be a 60's style buffet which is free but donations are asked for at the end and you have to bring your own drinks. Attendees are encouraged to go in 60's gear but this is not essential. This will be held at Chadderton Football Club

Saddleworth Historical Society

Wednesday 9th March at 7.30pm

The Rise and Fall of Sir Edmund Buckley by Julian Hunt

This will be held at Sandy Lane Church, Dobcross.

Royton Historical Research Group

Monday 14th March at 7.30pm

James Butterworth of Oldham- Postmaster, Historian and Reformer by Dr Robert Poole

Downey House, Church Street, Royton.

Oldham Historical Research Group

Wednesday 16th March at 7pm

Aspects of Werneth Park - a Sedentary Walk by Jeremy Sutcliffe.

Oldham Local Studies and Archives, Union Street, Oldham.

Behind the Scenes Tour of Gallery Oldham (Organised by Gallery Oldham)

Tuesday March 22nd 2pm "Social History"

"While many of our exhibitions contain objects from the collections it is not possible to show everything permanently. We run special tours of our stores to look at objects that are not currently on view."

Sessions are free but please consider a suggested £3 voluntary donation to support the work of the Gallery.
Booking essential on 0161 770 4742

Victoria Station Memorial

Next time you arrive at Victoria Station, Manchester, instead of exiting by the main entrance on the front, turn left and walk towards the side entrance near the Java coffee shop and have a look at the beautiful memorial to men who left Victoria during WW1 and did not return. The plaque to one side reads:

The Soldier's Gate was refurbished during the Redevelopment of Victoria Station in 2015.

The contemporary insertion into the original gateway features a map which locates the sites of World War 1 Commonwealth grave sites and cemeteries through Northern France and Belgium.

The size of individual penetrations through the Steel corresponds to the number of fallen Buried in each location.



By Dorothy Bintley.

Research News

News from Findmypast

News about the 1939 Register:

As you are all probably aware by now access to the 1939 Register will be included in an annual subscription to FMP from 16th February.

We were unsure if this would also apply to the Library version. However, we have had confirmation from Myko that yes, it WILL be included in the library edition available at Manchester Library and Oldham Local Studies from 16th February.

The Lost Cousins newsletter has a special edition about the 1939 Register.

<http://lostcousins.com/newsletters2/1939special.htm>

Irish Research

If you are researching Irish ancestors you might find this link useful.

<http://www.mlfhs.org.uk/eyir-handout.pdf>

Update from Lancashire Online Parish Clerk

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

Recently added from our area:

[Baptisms 1830 to 1837](#) from Wrigley Head Wesleyan Methodist, Failsworth

[Baptisms 1730 to 1741](#) from the Church of St Chad, Rochdale

[Marriages 1902 to 1908](#) from the Church of St Matthew, Chadderton

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

Royton

| |
|---|
| <p><i>If you have any local news, articles or photographs please email us so we can include them in our newsletter.</i></p> |
|---|

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