

Oldham and District Branch of the Manchester and
Lancashire Family History Society

Newsletter April 2017

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Branch News

Last Meeting

Saturday 11th March

The Poor Law in 1834 by Alan Crosby

We were very pleased to welcome Alan Crosby to our meeting this month to give us a very interesting and informative talk on the Poor Law in 1834.

A system of poor relief had been set up by an Act of Parliament in 1601, known as the 43rd Elizabeth, which formalised earlier practices and set out a national system of poor relief in England and Wales. Later Acts amended the 1601 Act but its main principals remained in use until 1834 when The Poor Law Amendment Act was passed.

Under the old system the parish was responsible for the poor and was managed by an Overseer of the Poor. Poor relief was funded by the rates and the poor could have relief in their own homes. Relief could be given in kind as well as money.

In 1662 an Act of Settlement stated that everyone had a place to which they legally belonged and this place was responsible for looking after them. Removal orders allowed for the poor to be sent back to their parish of origin.

From 1723 communities could set up workhouses for the sick, disabled, infirm, very elderly and very young but outdoor relief was still possible.

The growth in population and the growth in industrialisation with people migrating to the towns meant the parish system couldn't cope and the system needed reforming.

The new system of 1834, which was set up by the Poor Law Amendment Act, did away with the parish and set up a national system in England and Wales with central government being responsible for poor relief. Poor Law Unions, managed by Poor Law Guardians elected by the rate payers, were set up. All Poor Law Unions were to construct a workhouse. There was to be no more outdoor relief - the only help that was available was in the workhouse which was to be the last resort. There was segregation on gender, age and physical condition and there was to be no exception. The workhouses were to be run on a strict economy with all expenditure being approved by the Poor Law Board in London.

The workhouse came to be feared by all. However the cotton famine in Lancashire brought unemployment and the workhouses couldn't cope. Some Guardians refused to obey the system and started to give relief to the poor outside the workhouse.

Eventually new legislation was brought in such as the introduction of Old Age Pensions for those over 70 in 1909 and the introduction of unemployment insurance and health insurance in a limited form in 1911. However the workhouse system continued into the 1930s.

Facts about Oldham Union

Oldham Union was formed in February 1837 with 8 townships to serve a population of 61,000. There were 21 Guardians.

Townships - Alkrington, Chadderton (3 Guardians), Crompton (3 Guardians), Middleton (3 guardians), Oldham (6 guardians), Royton(3), Thornham and Tonge.

The Union Workhouse was located in Coldhurst (Rochdale Road) and was built between 1848-1851. It was extended in 1855, 1877, 1881 and 1886. Later it was renamed Westwood Park Poor Law Institution and then Boundary Park.

<http://www.workhouses.org.uk/Oldham>

THE OLDHAM BRANCH NEEDS YOU

As our Treasurer and 2 other Committee Members are standing down at the Oldham Branch **Annual General Meeting**, to be held on **Saturday 8th April** at 2pm (directly before the talk by Tony Foster entitled "And In Flew Enza"), we need **2** new Committee Members.

As a member of the Committee you will have a say in how the branch is run and choosing our speakers for next year. We usually only meet about every 2 months and meetings do not usually last longer than one to one and a half hours, so it is not an onerous task. If you would like to know more about becoming a member of the Committee please email us at oldham@mlfhs.org.uk Ian Etchells is happy to speak to anyone about the Treasurer job. His email is ianetchells78@gmail.com

Next Meeting

Saturday 8th April

And In Flew Enza - Tony Foster

This talk is based on the Spanish Flu that was a worldwide pandemic and resulted in 50 to 100 million deaths during 1918-1919. There were 228,000 deaths in the UK of which 611 deaths occurred in Oldham. In the talk Tony will outline the various sources that can be used to explain how the flu affected the local community and how they coped with this "new" flu. The talk will also explain the commercial remedies that could be purchased over the chemist counter. Tony has been involved with family history research since the early 1970s and is a Vice-President of the Lancashire Family History & Heraldry Society. In 2000 he completed a MA in Local History.

Held in the Education Suite, Gallery Oldham (a short walk from Oldham Central Metrolink Stop) at 2pm

Future Meetings

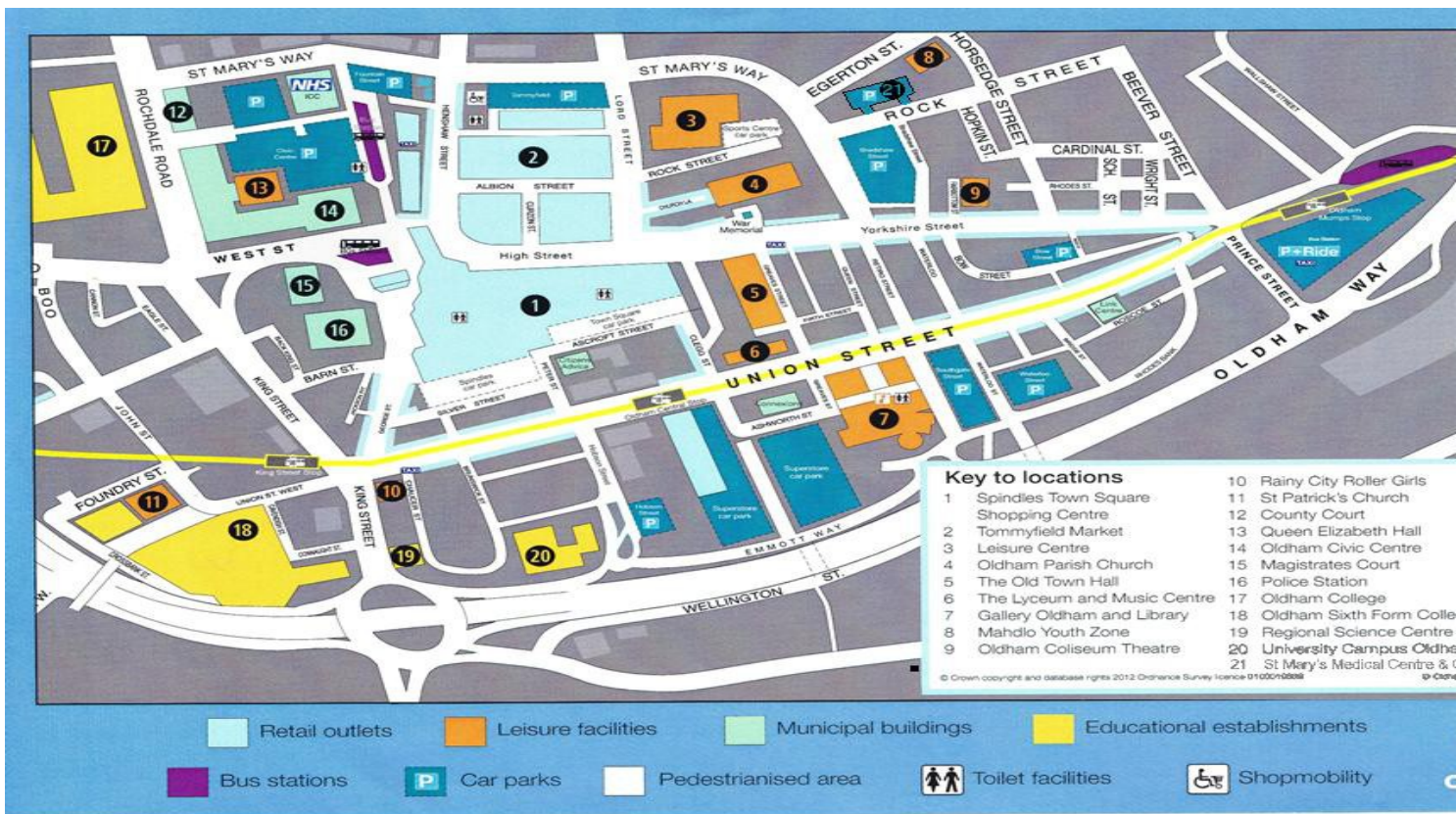
May 13th - North Country Folklore - Peter Watson

This talk will look at some of the 'Folk-Learning' relating to healing, protection, the supernatural, popular beliefs and superstition. Peter lectures on social history, medieval history and popular culture and has been giving talks for 40 years. His particular interests are protective, healing and image magic, and the uses of magical artefacts.

June 10th - Skeletons in the Cupboard - Alan Morrison

This presentation is a descriptive account of how the speaker researched his family tree and the very unusual outcome he discovered. This sometimes humorous and sometimes sad account advises the listener of various sources and ways to interpret them.

There will be no meetings in July and August. The September, October and November meetings will be held at Mahdlo, Egerton Street, Oldham. (marked 8 on the map) More information in later newsletters.



Society News

Saturday 1 April 10.30am: Beginners' Talk- Pre 1837 Research

Jean Newman explores **Parish Registers**, with brief mention of other Parish Records. The talk will cover the following:

- The importance of the Parish to our ancestors
- Baptisms and Burials 1813-1837
- Marriages 1754-1837
- Earlier Registers.

- Pitfalls and problems - ideas for solving them.
- Other Parish Records

These talks are aimed at people new to family history research or those who simply wish to refresh their knowledge.

This talk will be held in the Performance Space at Manchester Central Library.

The talk is free to members. A fee of £3.00 will be charged to non-members but this is refundable if the individual joins the Society on the day of the talk.

Booking is required. Please [CLICK HERE](#) to book.

The Society Help Desk will be open after the event. The desk is located on the ground floor of Manchester Central Library on the far side of the main entrance.

Thursday 6 to Saturday 8 April: WDYTYA?

MLFHS will have a stand at the annual Who Do You Think You Are? family history event at National Exhibition Centre, Birmingham. We look forward to meeting lots of our members at this not-to-miss three day event.

Wednesday 19 April 10.30am: MLFHS Quarterly Meeting and AGM

10.30 am The Munificent Sir John Leigh

Speaker: Leslie Turner

Sir John Leigh, 1st Baronet (of Altrincham) was a Manchester man who made his fortune in the Lancashire cotton industry. In 1922 he launched his career as a politician, which lasted until 1945. He built and equipped a number of hospitals in WW1 and made other public benefactions including a public park in Altrincham.

11.45am Annual General Meeting

12.30 pm Lunch

1.30 pm The Archaeology of Salford, revealing the City's Past.

Speaker: Dr Mike Nevell

This meeting will be held in the Performance Space at Manchester Central Library. The meeting is free to members. A fee of £3.00 will be charged to non-members but this is refundable if the individual joins the Society on the day of the talk.

Booking is required. Please [CLICK HERE](#) to book.

Online Forum

Have you signed up to our online forum?

The forum is an e-mail discussion list with several hundred members which enables members to contact each other and exchange information. Membership of the forum is free, but is only available to members of MLFHS.

Discussions on the forum should be about genealogy and family history in the Greater Manchester area. Topics might include location and interpretation of records, the meaning of old words, pastimes and customs and announcement and discussion of new web sites. Some forum members are prepared to look up information in local archives for members who have difficulty accessing these

records. A frequent comment is about how friendly and helpful the members are. Many problems have been solved and connections made as a result of comments made to the list.

For example a recent enquiry asked about the whereabouts of wills in Saddleworth prior to 1858. Another member was able to point them in the right direction. For information see:

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

Local News

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

Saddleworth Historical Society

Victor Grayson: The Man and the Mystery

A talk by David, Lord Clark at Saddleworth Museum at 2.00pm on **Saturday 1st April.**

Chadderton Historical Society

Bygones

A talk by Raymond Rush

At Chadderton Foorball Club, Andrew Street, at 7.30pm on **Thursday 6th April**

Royton Local History Society

The Artefacts of Folk Magic

A Talk by Peter Watson at Downey House, Church Street, Royton at 7.30pm on **Monday 10th April.**

Oldham Historical Research Group

Mannocks, Prockters and Holdens- Oldham Cotton Spinners

A talk by William Hartley at Oldham Local Studies and Archives at 7pm on **Wednesday 19th April**

Research News

Update from Lancashire Online Parish clerk

A number of records from our area have recently been added:

[Baptisms 1853 to 1858 and Banns 1810 to 1811 and 1836 to 1840](#) from the Church of St Mary, Oldham

[Marriages 1937 to 1951](#) from the Church of St Andrew, Oldham

[Baptisms 1862 to 1870](#) from the Roman Catholic Church of Our Lady of Mount Carmel and St Patrick, Oldham

[Banns 1924 to 1941 and Marriages 1921 to 1937](#) from the Church of St Andrew, Oldham

GRO launch final phase of PDF trial

The GRO yesterday announced the commencement of the third and final phase of their PDF trial.

This time the focus is on marriages and more recent births and deaths - records that were not digitised during the DoVE project nearly a decade ago:

Births 1935-2006

Marriages 1837-2010

Deaths 1958-2006

The cost of each PDF will be £8 and must be made online and include a GRO index reference.

The trial will end just before Easter, at 4pm on Wednesday 12th April - or when 40,000 PDFs have been sold, whichever comes sooner.

A full GRO index is available on microfilm at Manchester Central library

Family Search

Over 7,500 records in FamilySearch's [Derbyshire parish registers](#) collection have been indexed by volunteers. The free site has also indexed records and added images to its [Chelsea Pensioner](#) records.

Findmypast

A register of participants in the Second Anglo-Boer War compiled by a military enthusiast over 25 years has been added to [Findmypast](#).

Irish documents and photographs go online

Over 43,000 historic Irish documents and photographs have been made available online via a new resource.

Free to use, the [Dublin City Libraries and Archive Digital Repository](#) provides access to an array of items from the Dublin City Council archives, such as the Fáilte Ireland Photographic Collection, showcasing images of Irish people, places and tourist locations dating back to the 1930s.

Other highlights include the Irish Theatre Archive, as well as the Birth of the Republic Collection, which features documents relating to the Irish State between 1864-1942.

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.

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Sue Forshaw, Newsletter Editor

Assisted by Irene Whitby