



Newsletter July 2018

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Branch News

Situation Vacant

Our Chairman is retiring at the end of March 2019.

The Oldham Branch will have a vacancy in April 2019 for a

Chairperson

if you are interested please get in touch before the 8th September.
To find out more please email:

oldham@mlfhs.org.uk

If the vacancy is not filled the branch will CLOSE

Our Last Meeting Saturday 9th June

Evolution of Asylum Patient Photography

David Scrimgeour

David reviewed the history of photography and how it came to be a useful tool in the medical profession and illustrated the talk with many photographs of the inmates, starting with Wakefield Asylum.

Doctor Hugh Welch Diamond (1809-1880) was a psychiatrist and a keen advocate of photography to advance the treatment of mental disorders. By taking photographs of the patients, he argued that they would be able to identify the patient in case of escape and aid the psychiatrist memory.

Doctor Diamond was appointed to the Surrey County Asylum and took the first

pictures of patients.

Commercial photographer Henry Hering was commissioned to take pictures of Asylum patients to examine their face for evidence of their mental health conditions. His most celebrated photograph was of Richard Dad, who was also a well-known artist. He continued his work in Bethlem Asylum.

In Scotland, Professor Thomas Laycock (1812-1876) used images of asylum patients to illustrate his lectures.

Doctor William AF Browne (1805-1885) was elected as Commissioner of Lunacy in Scotland in 1857, shown a photograph in his talks of the 'The Wightman Family', the parents, Mother and Father and five of their children who had been committed, but on a closer study of the photograph it can be seen that it is a montage of photos and on one of the figures, hands are positioned on the top and bottom of a head to keep it still, this equals paint shop pro of today.

Doctor James Crichlow-Browne (1840-1938) son of William AF Browne, who was appointed Medical Director of West Riding Asylum (1866-1876 changed photographic styles from a plain background to posed in a garden.

Charles Darwin wanted photographs to prove his theories, particularly 'pylon erection' which (the speaker showed a photograph of Ruth Lockwood 1868 whose hair stood upright). Charles asked for pictures of emotions, but he wanted genuine photographs, not staged.

By 1889 taking photographs of patients died off, but from 1895 to 1902 a photograph of was taken of every patient in the Asylum, both old and new patients, which amounted to 4000 pictures in the seven-year period. To round off David reminded us that - Doctor Diamond said one of the advantages of taking a patient's photograph was that if he escaped a picture would aid him to be found and returned, in all this time no patient escaped.

William Moore, a patient of an Asylum, was committed for trying to cut his wife's throat and subsequently released to return home. His picture was published in the newspapers in Jan 1896 to aid his capture after he killed his wife and absconded. He was found in Derbyshire and eventually tried and found guilty.
By Jennifer Lever.

No meetings until September

Society News

Manchester Quarterly Meeting.

Wednesday 18th July

To be held in The Friend Meeting House, Mount Street (at the back of Central Library)

10.30 am To Road to the Armistice

Speaker: Steve Williams

The guns finally fell silent at 11 o'clock on the 11 November 1918. The talk

reviews the First World War, as well as the final days that brought the surrender.

12.00 pm Lunch

1.00 pm WarGen - Recording Memories of World War 2

Speaker: Michael Thompson

Founded by broadcaster and historian, Dan Snow, and author and broadcaster, James Holand, WarGen aims to record the memories of as many survivors as possible. They remain crucially important witnesses to the most cataclysmic war the world has ever known. Michael plans to introduce Society members to the concepts of WarGen, give some illustrations as to how WarGen material can be used and talk about how MLFHS members might be able to contribute to WarGen.

Book on Eventbrite on the Society's home page.

MLFHS: "We Will Remember Them"; A presentation on War Memorials by Mike Coyle.

Tuesday 4th September 2018, 10:30 am

The end of the WW1 Centenary gives us the opportunity to consider the Legacy of that War and the loss to our communities. That Legacy includes the range and number of Memorials commemorating those lost in wars, civilians and armed services men and women. This talk covers the types and significance of war memorials to families and communities, as well as those efforts of the communities and individuals that seek to research and preserve them.

Mike Coyle is a passionate exponent of war memorials and their significance. He's a Regional Volunteer with the War Memorials Trust and a Fieldworker with the Imperial War Museum's 'War Memorials Register'.

There will be the opportunity to see a short film from the NWFA's collection showing the unveiling of a couple of North West War Memorials.

John Marsden will also explain the MLFHS War Memorials Project.

This event is open to all but booking is essential.

Local News

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

Saddleworth Historical Society

Traditional Farmhouses in and around the Lancashire and Yorkshire Pennines

An illustrated presentation given by J. Kevin Ilingworth at the Catholic Church Hall, off High Street, Uppermill on Saturday 18th August at 2.00pm.

All welcome but a charge of £3.00 on the night for non-members.

Oldham Historical Research Group

The American Civil War : Lancashire and the Cotton Famine.

A talk by Dr. Gervase Phillips, Principal Lecturer in History, MMU, at Oldham Local Studies and Archives on **Wednesday 25th July** at 7.00pm.

Mayoral Sunday 2018

On Sunday 27th May I joined the procession from the Civic Centre to Oldham Parish Church, for the annual mayoral Sunday service. The weather was lovely, warm and sunny and this year we had come to welcome Councillor Javid Iqbal at the start of his year in the office of Mayor of Oldham.



The service was conducted by the Vicar of Oldham, The Revd Derek Palmer with The Revd Jean Hurlston, Borough Dean of Oldham, and The Revrd Charles Annis. Representing the rich diversity of the people of Oldham, the 1st Reading was from Matthew 5:1-12, the 2nd from the Holy Quran and the 3rd Reading Prayers read by Mr Ashoksingh Sisodia ending with the mantra "Let all the world be Happy. And there by all the beings in the world".

By an ancient custom of the Parish Church and the town, the Mayor of Oldham has a right to be an Honorary Churchwarden. The photo shows Councillor Iqbal receiving the Stave of Office as Churchwarden during his year as Mayor of Oldham.

By Joan Secker Wlodarczyk.

Written and edited by Sue Forshaw.

I would like to thank Irene Whitby who has proof read the newsletter for the past few years. Unfortunately she has had to give up for personal reasons. Thank you very much Irene for all your hard work.