

MANCHESTER GROUP OF THE VICTORIAN SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Spring 2020

CORONAVIRUS

As a result of the current pandemic and Government restrictions on social gatherings, all meetings and visits of the Manchester Group of the Victorian Society are suspended until such time as these restrictions are lifted.

Until we can resume normal activity, STAY SAFE.

INTRODUCTION

Dear Member

Greetings and we hope this finds you well in these coronavirus days. As it might be some time before we meet again for a talk or a visit, some committee members' thoughts turned to reviving the newsletter as a way for us to keep in touch. Nationally the casework of the Victorian Society is continuing, so we thought we could cover recent Victorian Society events and items of more regional interest.

Many members in the Manchester Group pursue their own specific areas of study: we would welcome any contributions from short updates on recent findings to more considered or lengthy articles. A photo and a paragraph about a favourite lost building? Maybe a relevant book review? An idea for an item? Any comments? Surprise us! Please email to Neil Darlington at andarlington@live.co.uk or Anne Hodgson at anne.hodgson@hotmail.com.

Thanks in anticipation, enjoy the newsletter and stay well.

Anne Hodgson



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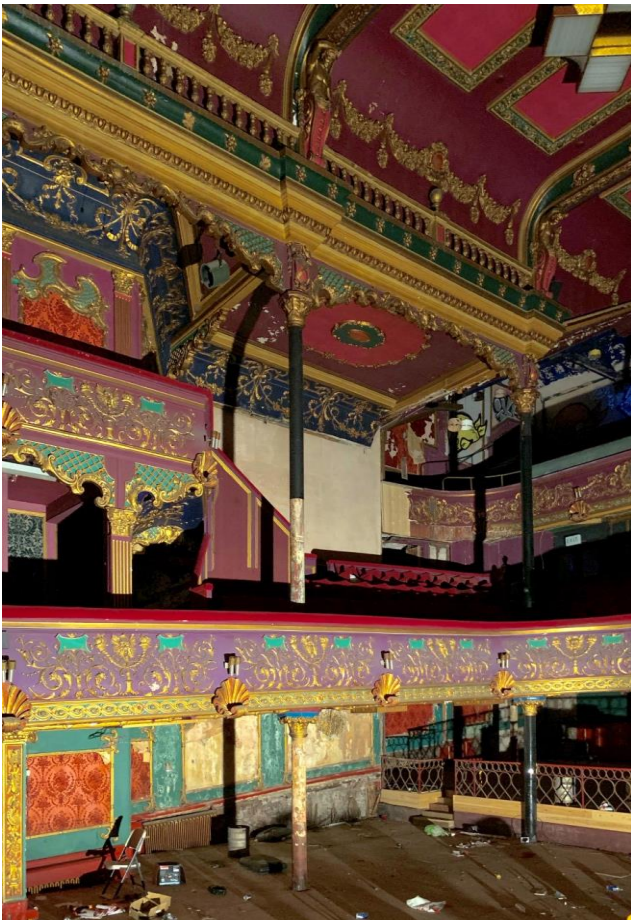
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Interior of Hulme Hippodrome Photo © Mark Watson

WILLIAM HENRY BROADHEAD AND THE BROADHEAD CIRCUIT

A Man of Many Parts'. William Henry Broadhead: His Life and Work. An illustrated talk by Dr Victoria Garlick. 27 February 2020

A packed meeting to hear this talk by Dr. Victoria Garlick included Alderman William Broadhead's great granddaughter, Jennifer Jay. Her grandmother was Hilda Broadhead, William's daughter. This was a very welcome first for our society: having a direct descendant present of the subject of the speaker's talk!

'Quick, Clean, Smart and Bright' was the motto of the theatre circuit developed by William Broadhead and his two sons. Dr Garlick's talk explained how, as a theatre owner, Broadhead rose to prominence in Blackpool before expanding into Manchester on a large scale. He was unusual in that his background was as a builder but he identified an opportunity to build theatres for a different audience. His aim was to focus on 'liminal' areas of a city: areas of high density population, where heavy industry might dominate, alongside poverty and pockets of gang violence, rather than catering for the more middle class audience with city centre theatres. Dr Garlick then charted the changing nature of entertainment in the early twentieth century as Broadhead's theatres adapted to show films as technology and tastes in entertainment evolved.

William Henry Broadhead and his sons William Birch Broadhead and Percy Baynham Broadhead were instrumental in building fourteen and purchasing a further two theatres mainly in working-class areas of Manchester. The first theatre to be built was the Royal Osborne Theatre, Manchester in 1893 and subsequent halls were erected in working-class districts of the city. Part of their concept of respectability was to bring greater diversity of programming with 'dramatic productions of an uplifting moral nature', for working-class audiences in variety theatres at prices they could afford. As a family they displayed foresight by reacting to change. William Birch Broadhead was the inspiration behind the design of most of the theatres, and he employed as architect, J. J. Alley, to interpret his ideas. The interior design was influenced by Frank Matcham, the renowned theatre architect who designed the extant Grand Theatre, Blackpool.

Also most welcome in our audience were members of NIAMOS - the radical art and music cultural co-operative. They are based at Hulme Hippodrome, formerly known as the Grand Junction Theatre and Floral Hall, one of Broadhead's theatres which opened in 1901. (By September 2019 it was on The Victorian Society's list of top ten endangered buildings). NIAMOS (paused by the current Covid crisis) are working to save and develop this theatre as a community arts and wellbeing space: details of their ethos and programmes can be found on their website www.spacehive.com.niamos. Once reopened after the current crisis we hope to organise a visit there.

So, many thanks to Dr Garlick for a fascinating talk and to NIAMOS for their campaign to keep open the Hulme Hippodrome as a legacy of the Broadhead circuit.

Anne Hodgson

THE RYLANDS AND THE LONGFORD ESTATE

An illustrated talk by Richard Bond; Saturday 25 January 2020

The AGM of the Manchester Group was held this year at Stretford Public Hall on Chester Road, Stretford, built by the philanthropist John Rylands to the designs of William Arthur Lofthouse and opened in 1879. After a variety of uses, Stretford Public Hall was taken over by the Friends of Stretford Hall in 2015 to restore it and maintain its community use.

Following the AGM, Richard Bond talked upon the subject of John Rylands, the wealthy cotton merchant and philanthropist, and his associations with the local area. He explained that John and Enriqueta lived at Longford Hall, built 1857-1860. John Rylands died at Longford Hall in 1888 and as a tribute to her husband Enriqueta Rylands founded the John Rylands Library in Deansgate in 1899.

Although the architect of the hall has still to be established, Pevsner in 1969 described it 'as the only surviving example of the Italianate style of architecture in the Manchester district.' Richard illustrated a plan dated 1860 for a new lodge and drive on Edge Lane to the designs of the Manchester architect Philip Nunn. Richard also gave details of the extensive gardens and conservatories which were a feature of the Longford Hall estate under John Rylands,

Enriqueta Rylands died in 1908. The hall and estate were sold to Stretford Borough Council in 1911 and opened as a public park, remaining the largest of Trafford's parks. Longford Hall became the home of the council's permanent art collection. It was utilised as an art gallery and exhibition space as well as being used for civic occasions and social functions, but was demolished in 1995. In addition to the Public Hall Rylands also donated the Longford Coffee House at the junction of Chester Road and Market Street.

A well-attended meeting thoroughly enjoyed Richard Bond's talk on a subject on which many members had little previous knowledge. Our thanks go to Richard for sharing his extensive research with us, and to the Friends of Stretford Hall for their hospitality.

Richard Bond is a retired archivist who worked for twenty years for the Archive and Local Studies Collections of Manchester Central Library. He is now Chair of the Friends of Longford Park and continues to research the history of the park

PHOTOGRAPH

Stretford Public Hall, frontage to Chester Road.

Photo AWD January 2020.



DOMESTIC STAINED GLASS BY E A TAYLOR

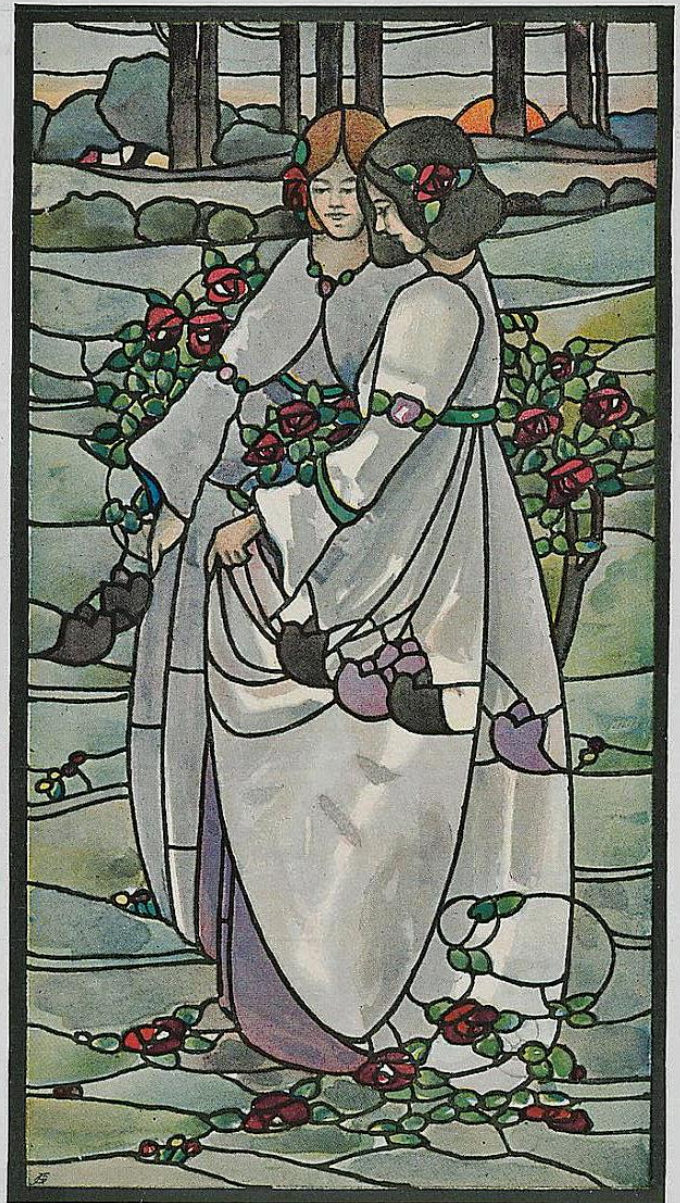
The Glasgow School in Salford

The son of Major W E Taylor of the Royal Artillery, Ernest Archibald Taylor was born in Greenock on 5 September 1874., the fifteenth of seventeen children. He was raised by his uncle, and began his working life as a draughtsman in the shipyards of Scott and Company. In July 1898 he had moved to the established and successful cabinet-making firm of Wylie & Lochhead, of Glasgow as a trainee designer and about this time he began evening classes at the Glasgow School of Art (1898-1903). Here he met C R Mackintosh, who was to be a great influence on Taylor. He also attended furniture design classes at the Glasgow and West of Scotland Technical College, becoming a part-time Instructor in furniture design at the School of Art from 1903 until 1905, while also working on various private commissions.

Taylor married fellow artist Jessie King in November 1908 and following a honeymoon on Arran, the couple set up home at 50 Bolton Road, Pendleton, in Salford, where their only child, Merle, was born. They had met over a decade before when he moved into the same block of studio apartments in St. Vincent Street, Glasgow in 1897. They became engaged in November 1898, and around this time he began attending part-time classes at the Glasgow School of Art, where Jessie was a full-time student.

The move to Salford had been occasioned by Taylor's appointment as designer and manager of George Wragge Ltd, and for the next two years he was particularly involved in producing designs for stained glass window commissions, such as this for a Drawing Room Window and the "Princess of the Yellow Rose". A brief resume of his activities at this time was included in the Studio yearbook of 1909:

Mr. E A Taylor, who has been so prominently associated with the modern movement in decorative art in Glasgow, has transferred his studio to Pendleton, where he is designing for Messrs. Wragge, of "The Crafts," Salford. Mr. Taylor has applied himself to almost every branch of the decorative arts. He designs interior fittings, furniture, carpets, wallpapers, stained and leaded glass, metal-work, mosaics, posters, &c., and is a worker in gesso, glass, and mural decorative painting. His most recent important works include a memorial window for St. Bartholomew's Church, Rosario de Santa Fé, Argentine Republic; six windows for the Unitarian Church, Pendleton; an oak reredos and decorative panels for Woodbine Street, Salford; and designs for a private residence in New York. An article on his work was published in the December number of *The Studio*, 1904, and some of his designs have appeared in all the previous issues of *The Studio Year Book*. [Studio Yearbook 1909 page 75-76] – *Neil Darlington*



TALES OF THE UNEXPECTED

George Barker Cooper: The Man who got away with Murder?

In researching George Wragge, art metal worker and stained-glass maker, a curious story emerged regarding his wife, Edith, throwing light upon the dark world of domestic abuse which she had endured during her first marriage.

On 7 November 1891 at Manchester Cathedral George Wragge married Edith (Mrs. George Barker Cooper) the youngest daughter of Josiah Jones, of Southport, late Manchester who was *recorded as a widow* (my italics) at the time of her second marriage. It was almost immediately apparent that she was a divorcee and that the status of widow was a polite fiction, presumably designed to allow her marriage according to the rites of the Church of England.

In 1878 Edith had married George James Barker Cooper, the son of George Cooper, a Manchester merchant (I and JG Cooper), and by 1882 they had two children. It is clear that the marriage was already in serious difficulty when, in March of that year, George Barker Cooper appeared at Altrincham Police Court charged with shooting at his wife with intent to murder her. In evidence Edith stated that her husband had beaten her many times, and that she had got thoroughly afraid of him. He had often threatened to shoot her and pointed a) pistol at her although he always later apologised. About December 1880 he had met Ellen Ditchfield whom he openly took as his mistress, and on the Saturday before the incident, had taken her to the Isle of Man, returning with her to the family home on the Tuesday evening. His father was present when he brandished a pistol and during a scuffle the gun was fired twice. George Barker Cooper denied that he had deliberately attempted to murder his wife and was subsequently acquitted of the charge.

It was later claimed that a married woman eloped with Cooper in 1884, leaving a note for her husband announcing her intention of going to America "with George." The couple proceeded to Boston, Massachusetts, and are said to have lived together there. In Boston a child was born of which Cooper was allegedly the father. Two years later he deserted the woman, returning to Manchester and resuming work at his father's warehouse. When Cooper's return became known, the wronged husband proceeded to the warehouse, and in the presence of the employees administered to Cooper a sound horsewhipping.

Finally, Edith began divorce proceedings on the grounds of assault, desertion and adultery. The petition was filed on 17 March 1890 and the final decree issued on 27 October 1891. Less than two weeks later she married George Wragge.

George Cooper also re-married in November 1891 to Edith Annie (nee Cooper), a barmaid in a Douglas Hotel. The marriage proved short-lived and similarly brutal. In September 1892 she was found dead in their room at the Regent Hotel having received a fatal knife wound to the chest. Cooper was subsequently charged with her manslaughter, the trial attracting considerable press interest in the United Kingdom. He was sentenced to ten years penal servitude. In the Isle of Man, the sentence was widely regarded as inadequate and popular feeling against both the Bench and jury ran high. Following the trial, an editorial in the Manchester Guardian concurred with a widely held view that he had been fortunate to avoid both a charge of murder and a life sentence for manslaughter, noting "It is a melancholy reflection that such a type has come out of Manchester."

What became of George Barker Cooper is unknown. Meanwhile Edith and George Wragge remained married for over forty years until their deaths in 1932.

References Manchester Guardian, 17 March 1882, page 5; Manchester Guardian, September 1892 various issues for accounts of the trial on a daily basis. For a more detailed account see Keith Wilkinson "Manx Murders, 150 years of Madness Mayhem and Manslaughter" Chapter 14.

2019 LISTED BUILDINGS IN GREATER MANCHESTER

In 2019 the following structures in Greater Manchester were given listed status by Historic England:

Old White Lion Hotel, 6 Bolton Street, Bury

A pub has existed on this site since at least the 1840s. The present building mostly dates from the 1880s. Historic England considers it a good example of a late nineteenth century pub, noting that it retains good internal decoration and bar features including fixed seating, a carved timber bar back, decorative ceilings and staircases, as well as the panelled ground-floor Oak Room which has a high-quality and remarkably well-preserved decorative scheme." Grade II listed CAMRA Historic interior.



Chimney: Crimble Mill, Heywood

Listed as 'an increasingly rare survival of an extant mill chimney and a distinctive component of steam- powered mills. The chimney, which dates to the early 20th century, is part of a larger complex of buildings, including the adjacent engine house and fire-proof warehouse attached to its south gable wall and the 1880s warehouse attached to the north gable wall. Although the mill itself was originally listed in 1967 it has long remained vacant and is now semi-derelict. The long-term future of this mill complex remains uncertain.

Unicorn Hotel, 26 Church Street, Manchester

Built in 1924 and standing at the junction of Church Street and Joiner Lane, the Unicorn is a rare Manchester example of an “improved” inter-war public house, little altered and well preserved both internally and externally. The internal planning, range of facilities offered and restrained decoration reflect the changes in attitude and liberalisation of licensing rules during this period. Improved pubs were generally more spacious than their predecessors, often with restaurant facilities, function rooms, etc., gardens, and consciously appealed to a mix of incomes and classes. Listed Grade II. CAMERA Historic pub interior.



Rochdale Bridge

A bridge has existed on this site since mediaeval times. The growing importance of the route from Manchester to West Yorkshire led to its rebuilding and upgrading in 1667 and again in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Listed Grade II.

Jackson's Boat Bridge, Rifle Road, Sale

Designed and built by the well-known Manchester engineering and iron-foundry company, E T Bellhouse and Company of Eagle Foundry, in 1881, the bridge is situated at an important and well-established historic crossing point of the River Mersey, having replaced an earlier timber trestle bridge. Linking Sale in Trafford and Chorlton in Manchester, the foot bridge was designed using the “through truss” to produce an unusually light single-span bridge. Now considered an important survivor of a rare form of nineteenth century wrought iron construction, in 2017 the bridge was threatened with demolition when Trafford Council announced plans to replace the old narrow structure with a new bridge. Revised proposals published in 2019 retain the (now listed) bridge with a new bridge suitable for cycles built alongside.

SIR PHILIP SYDNEY STOTT - ARTS AND CRAFTS ARCHITECT



High Street, Stanton Village

For those in the Manchester area Sydney Stott is best known as a prolific mill architect. Step over the threshold of the Court Barn Museum in Chipping Camden and he is transformed into (Sir) Philip Scott, a significant Arts and Crafts architect in the North Cotswolds; his past indiscretions in Lancashire totally forgotten

Philip Sydney Stott, the third son of Abraham Henthorn Stott, senior, constructed more mills than any other in the Oldham area was. Educated at Oldham Grammar School, he was a partner in his father's firm from 1881 to 1884 before leaving to set up on his own account. During the Edwardian period, he was responsible for 18 of the 66 new mills put up between 1900 and 1915. Altogether he put up more than 124 mills, both spinning and weaving, of which 28 were in Oldham and 28 were overseas. His overseas work covered the continent of Europe including Bulgaria, Austria and Germany, Denmark and Norway in Scandinavia, Mexico, Argentina and Chile in South America, Syria and Egypt and China. By 1906 he had amassed sufficient wealth to purchase the estate of Stanton Court, Stanton, near Broadway, in Gloucestershire, a house dating from around 1620.

In his biography of Philip Stott, John Lang noted "He bought the Stanton Court Estate on 10th August 1906 at an auction in London. For the sum of £ 26,971 he acquired the mansion, Stanton Court itself, together with 882.5 acres of land. There were four farms (two of them let as a pair) and twenty-six cottages. Stott described his acquisition, perhaps with some exaggeration, as derelict. Certainly, it was in urgent need of attention."

There followed a systematic programme of improvement work which eventually encompassed every building in the village. Stott began with his own house, Stanton Court, removing all traces of Georgian accretions, replacing them with "correct" Neo- Jacobean restorations. He altered the pitch of the roofs, moved the front entrance and the main staircase and generally made the house more habitable. Almost immediately he built a reservoir to provide Stanton Court and the village with running water. He later furnished the village with a Swimming Pool, extensions and heating to the School, a Parish Hall and electric street lights featuring lanterns on wrought iron brackets very much in the Arts and Crafts style and to Stott's own design. Philip Stott moved permanently to Stanton Court in 1913 and continued to repair and improve the village to a state of almost unbelievable perfection until his death in 1937. Pevsner considered it architecturally perhaps the finest of the small North Cotswold villages.

The year he purchased Stanton Court, he joined the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings and over the next thirty years he fully restored all the properties he owned, from farmhouses to cottages, as well as importing a timber-framed barn (North/South Barns) from Offenham. His improvements and alterations were always carried out with great care and discretion. The cottages were to be fit to live in. However, internal alterations and some changes to the rear of the properties were permissible, but nothing was allowed to spoil the frontages. Perhaps recognising his own limitations, he requested Sir Ninian Comper restore the church and design the rood screen and reredos.

Sir Philip Stott died at Stanton Court in 1937 and lies buried in the churchyard.



PHOTOGRAPHS

Stanton Court, Entrance

*Burland Parish Hall, Stanton; 1912. Architect - Philip Stott
1 Stanway Road, restored by Philip Stott.*

*Bracketed off the wall on the right is one of the lanterns
designed by Stott as part of the street lighting scheme*



THE PRINCE CONSORT AND THAT OTHER EXHIBITION

Prince Albert's patronage and support for the 1857 Art Treasures of the United Kingdom Exhibition in Manchester has long been regarded as important concerning facilitating the loan of artworks from the aristocracy. There may be two other respects in which his involvement was critical to the style and nature of the final exhibition. Firstly, concerning the geographical origins and timelines of the exhibits and secondly because of the inclusion of photography as an art form.

On the first point, in the suggestions for the exhibition put forward on 28th March 1856, one proposal was for the inclusion of "a chronology of British painting". In her book on the Exhibition, Elizabeth Pergam notes that, in a letter written by Prince Albert to Lord Ellesmere 3rd July 1856 supporting the Exhibition, the phrase "educational direction" is underlined. In another letter written by Thomas Fairbairn, he paid credit to Prince Albert for "having enlarged our views and intentions". Albert had studied at Bonn University the history of the renaissance. Art history at that time could be said to be a German pre-occupation. In particular, Albert had an interest in collecting paintings of the Northern renaissance e.g. Cranach and early examples of the Italian schools e.g. Duccio, then known as primitives. Neither of those categories were well represented in British aristocratic collections. Thanks to loans from Prince Albert and others, both categories were shown in the 1857 exhibition.

Photography had been shown at the 1851 Crystal Palace Exhibition because it was a new technology, the French and British patents dating from 1839. Prince Albert was a pioneer advocate of its use and in March 1842 became the first British Royal portrait subject via the Daguerreotype process. In 1852, Prince Albert commissioned a photographic record of all the Royal Collection's Raphaels. He went on to make this a Europe wide photographic project for that artist. The consent of the Prince and Queen Victoria enabled the Manchester 1857 Art Treasures Exhibition to be the first opportunity for the public to view photographic portraits of Royalty. However, to secure photography's place as an art form, more complex outcomes were shown such as one by a Swedish artist/photographer called O.G. Rejlander. A composition printed from thirty separate photographic negatives was produced entitled "The Two Ways of Life". In the centre of the image is shown a Father/Sage figure with two sons – one chooses the right life, the other the wrong one, suitably depicted with naked figures. On seeing the finished print, Queen Victoria purchased a copy to present to Prince Albert. The composition is generally accepted to be based on Raphael's "School of Athens" painted for the private library of Pope Julius the second in the Vatican.

Did the Prince Consort slightly change the remit of the 1857 Exhibition and suggest the inclusion of photography? I rest my case.

David Astbury





BACK PAGE

This Newsletter has been prepared by committee members of the Manchester Group of the Victorian Society for distribution by email.

As the present lockdown would appear set to continue for some months, the committee are proposing to issue a further edition of the newsletter in early September. Contributions are most welcome.