

SUMMER 2020

Our programme of events remains on hold due to the Coronavirus pandemic. We regret any inconvenience caused to members but it is intended that events will resume when conditions allow.

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# MANCHESTER GROUP OF THE VICTORIAN SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

## WELCOME

Regretfully, the programme of events for the rest of 2020 have been cancelled owing to Covid-19.

At the time of writing, no indication of possible easing of restrictions in respect of theatres, conference facilities, meeting rooms etc. have been given while social distancing has drastically reduced capacity of those venues allowed to re-open. Further, local clamp-down measures for the whole of Greater Manchester have recently been introduced by the British Government.

As the majority of our members fall into the vulnerable category, we are erring on the side of caution, given the added uncertainty of a second wave of the virus.

We would hope to commence a new programme of events in 2021. Updated details will be given in the Christmas edition of the Newsletter.

In the meantime, the Victorian Society has arranged a number of talks available on line. Details are given on the Back Page.

We do hope you have found this edition of interest, and always welcome feed-back from our members.

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## ROBERT OWEN AND JOSEPH HANSOM - THE MANCHESTER CONNECTION

Penelope Harris

Having never previously been to Manchester Victoria station, the jungle of wide roads and heavy traffic, which I had to cross, came as quite a shock! My quest was the Co-operative College in Hanover Street, where the Robert Owen archives are kept. The coming together of Owen and the architect Joseph Hansom has scarcely been noticed, yet it is such that it merits a short book, soon to be published. In his impressive heyday, Manchester was Owen's heartland, 'where it all began', and Lancashire was home to many of Hansom's works, the best-known being St Walburge's church in Preston and the church of The Holy Name Jesus in Manchester, the latter post-dating his Owen period.

Owen was born in Newtown, Montgomeryshire, and Hansom in the centre of York - so what brought them together? It was Birmingham - the winning of the Town Hall competition coinciding with the hotbed of dissent which led to the Great Reform Bill of 1844 (cf Brexit!) Birmingham has been described as the battlefield between the power and politics of London, and the unrest of over-worked and impoverished operatives in Manchester cotton mills. Owen was a charismatic social-climber. His membership of the Manchester Literary and Philosophical Society gave him valuable experience for his subsequent oratory at great mass meetings. Having first worked as Manager of Bank Top Mill, and then as the Managing Director of the Chorlton Twist Company, Owen moved to New Lanark, near Glasgow, from where he campaigned for factory reform and early education for poor children. This necessitated frequent visits to London, stopping off at Birmingham on the way.

Thirty-one years younger than Owen, Hansom was just starting out on his architectural career. One of his financial backers for the Town Hall was Thomas Attwood, instigator of the Reform Bill, hence his foray into politics. He was also so involved with Owen's activities that, briefly, he was dubbed 'the socialist architect'. At one point he almost became Owen's campaign manager - building strikes and trade unions being key factors. This deflected his attention from the Town Hall and led to his dismissal and bankruptcy, perceived shortcomings being delays and lack of finance. Meanwhile Owen used New Lanark as a model for his 'Plan', large scale self-sufficient communities. Not generating the support he required in this country, he moved to America, where he tried to convert a pre-existing community to his own model. This failed, he lost all his money and returned to England. Still eager to found a community, he finally settled on a farm in Hampshire. The chalky land was unsuitable and it was too remote from his heartland to be a success.

After considerable effort, mainly from his Midland supporters as he was not resident at this stage, he invited Hansom to build a grandiose Elizabethan-type manor house. The result was likened to Drayton Manor, the new home of Sir Robert Peel, quite out of keeping with Owen's philosophies and totally unfit for purpose. He used Hansom's reputation as the designer of Birmingham Town Hall for publicity purposes, justifying his choice in the hopes that the opulence of what became known as Queenwood College would host wealthy benefactors and encourage them to donate to his project.

Initially called Harmony Hall, this was the last of Owen's major enterprises. He continued to lecture around the country, but despite having once been something of a national hero, his reputation gradually faded into oblivion. The hall was a bit of a blot on Hansom's list of works, and he quickly became recognised as the lead architect for Catholic patrons. In 1902 Queenwood College burnt to the ground and virtually nothing remains.

*Penelope Harris, MA, MHMA, PhD, a retired Fellow of the Institute of Administrative Management, has long been an enthusiastic member of both the Victorian Society and the Campaign to Protect Rural England. Her first book, "The Architectural Achievements of Joseph Aloysius Hansom (1803-1882)" was published in 2010. Publication of her latest offering, "Robert Owen and the architect Joseph Hansom – an unlikely form of co-operation" has been delayed as a result of the Corona pandemic but is due to be released shortly*



1956     *Statue of Robert Owen*

*Robert Owen Memorial Gardens,  
Shortbridge Street, Newtown,  
Powys*

*Sculptor: Gilbert Baynes*

*A replica copy of this statue was  
erected outside the Co-operative  
Bank in Balloon Street, Manchester,  
in 1994. Following temporary  
removal for road works, the statue  
was re-erected on the same site in  
2019.*

*Photo © AWD 2019*





## TALES OF THE RIVER BANK - DAKOTA AVENUE, SALFORD

Neil Darlington

*Winter 1887. On the bank of a mighty river a small gathering of Sioux stood, huddled in blankets to shield from the biting wind sweeping across the plain. Some, it was rumoured had fought at the Battle of the Little Big Horn. ....*

Historical accuracy can be a curious thing. The above may evoke images of the Far West of the United States and the film “Dancing with Wolves.” However, add the word Irwell in respect of the river and Cheshire in respect of the plain and a new, partly accurate, and now half-forgotten, truth emerges.

The Lakota and Oglala Sioux who may have stood on the bank of the Irwell in 1887-8 formed part of a troupe of 97 Native Americans, cowboys, 180 broncos, 18 buffalo, 14 mules and donkeys, 10 elk and deer and three bears when they arrived in December 1887. The company was led into Salford by William Cody, otherwise known as Buffalo Bill, who had scouted for the US army and killed buffalo to feed the soldiers before establishing his circus-like Wild West show in 1883. The British tour had started in London in 1887 where Queen Victoria, in her Jubilee Year, demanded several performances and adored the chief Red Shirt. It stopped briefly at Birmingham before reaching Salford. England might have been a long way from the Old West, but all the better for some of the Sioux, who were on the run from the US cavalry as a result of their involvement in the death of General Custer in the Battle of Little Big Horn.

Buffalo Bill had determined upon the third incarnation of Manchester Racecourse at New Barnes as the site of his winter quarters. The earlier shows at Earl's Court, London and Birmingham had taken place in the open-air but for a Manchester winter a covered arena would be required. Attached to this main arena was to be a building (complete with steam heating and gas lighting), known as the Indian Village or Encampment. This was 200 feet long by 85 feet wide and is half the height



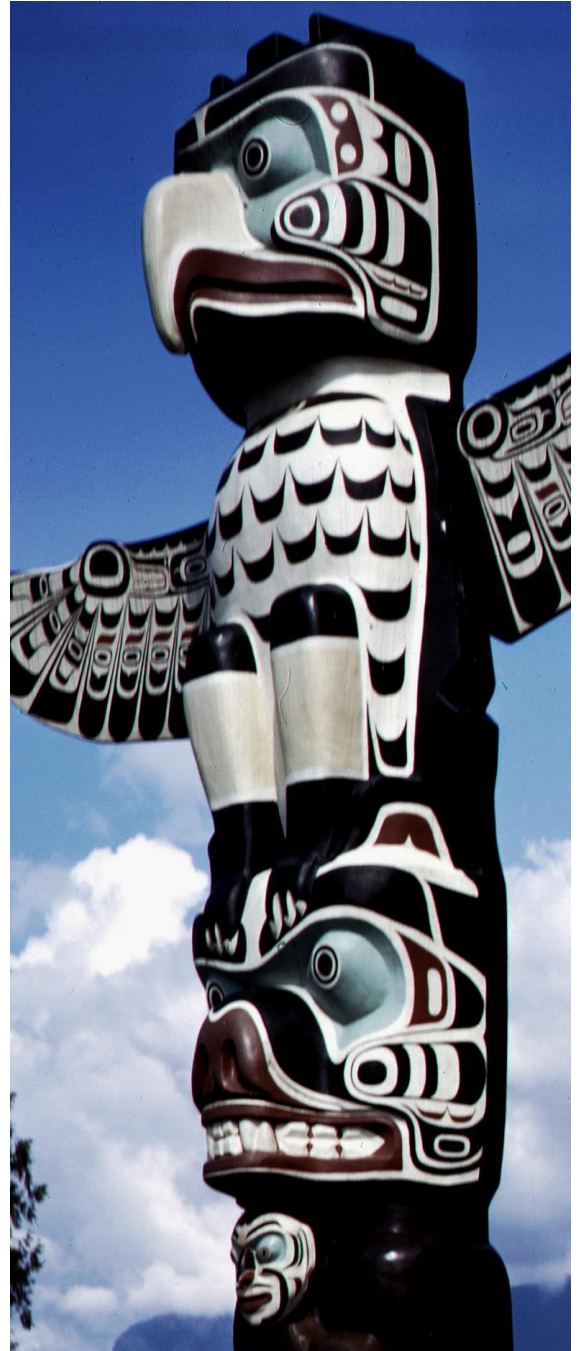
*East end of Manchester Racecourse, New Barnes showing Stands and yard facing Broadway*

of the covered arena. In the Indian Village about 40 tepees of the Indians were pitched in the centre, and the tents of the cowboys and other performers placed along the sides and at the ends of the building. This almost luxurious indoor provision runs somewhat contrary to later claims that the Sioux, camped in their tepees on the river bank, suffered exceptional hardship during the freezing winter of 1887-1888.

The first notice of the intended arrangements appeared in the Manchester Courier of 22 October 1887: "BUFFALO BILL'S VISIT TO MANCHESTER - We learn that Buffalo Bill will visit Manchester with his Wild West Show in December. Messrs. R. Mansell and have arranged with Colonel Cody to erect a structure for the show on the Manchester Racecourse. Messrs. Mangnall and Littlewoods, architects of this city, have designed the building, the erection of which has been entrusted to Messrs. R. Neill and Sons." [Manchester Courier 22 October 1887 page 14]

Within a matter of weeks, a building of colossal proportions had been completed. It stood, not as local legend would have it, on the banks of the Irwell but rather in the yard adjoining the grandstand at the racecourse. OS maps of the period indicate that the grandstand stood opposite the junction of Howard Street and Broadway. Although street alignments have been altered on a number of occasions since, this would equate with the present-day roundabout at Broadway and The Quays. The largest indoor arena in Europe at the time, it was built mostly of brick and wood, the latter being covered with asbestos cloth, to render it fireproof. The building was 600 feet long, some 200 feet wide, and 80 feet in height from the ground to the apex of the roof. By way of comparison the former Central Station train shed is 90 feet high, 210 feet wide and 550 feet long.

At the far end of the great building a space was cut off and fitted up as stage. Here a variety of scenes illustrative of life in the Far West were enacted. The stage was some 140 feet in length, and the proscenium about 100 feet wide with a height of 50 feet. A semi-circular frame was placed at the rear of the stage area, and through an ingenious mechanical arrangement the scenery could be easily changed as required. At each end of the frame were large cylinders upon which the scenery, in one continuous piece of canvas, was rolled. Effects of startling character were also introduced. In one scene a representation of a tornado was given. To produce this, three 6-foot-diameter Blackman air propellers revolving at 400 times a minute were installed. The current of air thus created was estimated at 50 miles an hour. Things were blown about the stage in all directions, and the old Deadwood stage coach forced along by the imitation cyclone.

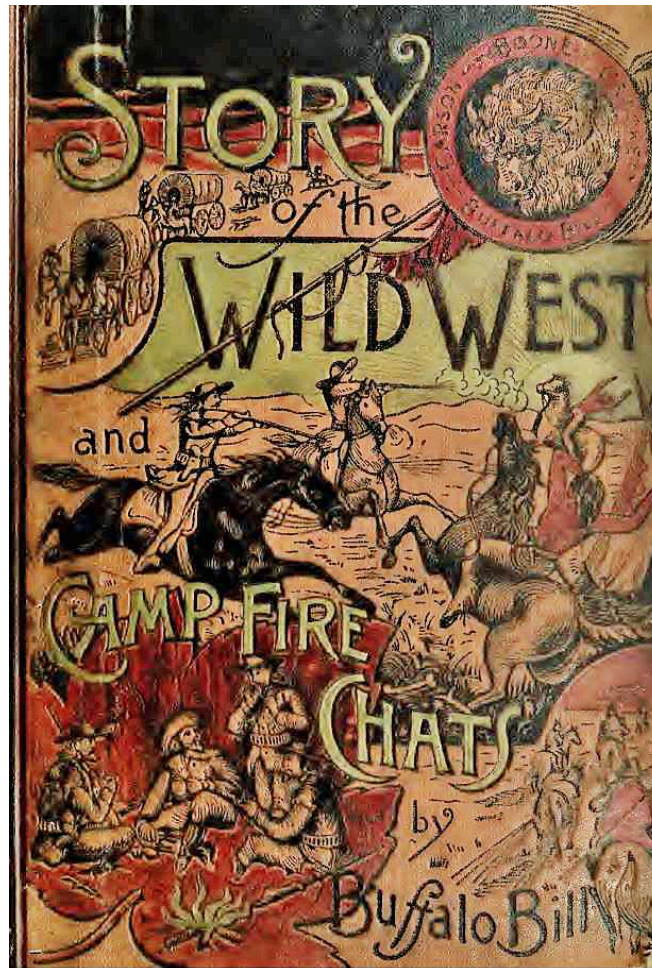


The main building seated 6,000 people, and provided standing room for 2,000 in addition. Galleries ran on each side, and at the end facing the stage, to rear of which was a promenade. The large space between the galleries—a sort of amphitheatre—allowed performances to take place additional to those given on the stage. The company also occupied the permanent stable

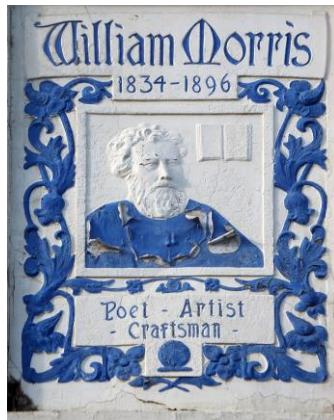


buildings belonging to the Racecourse Company, which could accommodate 200 horses. The buffalo and other animals were placed in a shed at the back of the amphitheatre. The permanent second-class stands, belonging to the Racecourse Company, parallel with the main building, and only separated by a street 20 feet wide, with large bars on the ground floor, were partially utilised as cooking and dining rooms for the troupe, and the intermediate rooms used chiefly as wardrobe rooms. The building was heated by steam pipes, and a multi-tubular boiler was installed for that purpose. The interior was lighted with 15 arc lamps; and two large masts with two lamps each, and one mast upon the apex of the building also having two lamps lit the outside grounds. In addition to the electric light some 2,000 gas lights were distributed over the building. It was also noted that "The interior presents a very bright and attractive appearance. From the ceiling descend gay streamers, and bright trophies adorn the supports of the roofs, the royal coat of arms, and the 'Stars and Stripes' being pretty equally distributed."

In 1888 the Wild West Show returned to America (save for those who missed the train and had to make their own way back to South Dakota) and the building demolished. Within a few years the racecourse too had disappeared to allow construction of No 9 Dock and the intended No 10 Dock. However, Salford's Sioux legacy can still be found in local street names such as Cody Court, Sundance Court, Dakota Avenue, and Kansas Avenue.



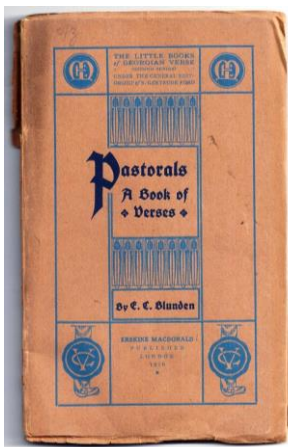
William Cody's autobiography "The Story of the Wild West and Camp Fire Chats" contains an extensive description of the entertainments performed in Manchester



## WILLIAM MORRIS IN SHARSTON

Richard Fletcher

At the corner of Longley Lane and Harper Road in Sharston is an Art Deco style factory building with a plaque over the entrance depicting William Morris. The building, which dates from 1940, was originally the premises of the William Morris Press, a private printing firm. However, the origins of the company go back to the early 1900s, when two printers, William McClement and William Duggan, decided to start their own business. McClement was a keen Socialist and in the early 1900s lived at the Manchester University Settlement, a social reform establishment modelled on Toynbee Hall in the East End of London. Although born in Ayrshire, he had been in Manchester since the late 1880s and had probably heard William Morris lecture during his annual visits to the city. Duggan was born in Salford, and in the 1901 census was shown as a boarder with McClement at an address in Broughton, so this was probably how they met. Morris was obviously a great inspiration to both of them, and it was appropriate they should name their printing press after him. The first premises were on Lloyd Street, between Deansgate and Albert Square, but disagreements must have developed between the two men because in January 1909 the partnership was officially terminated. McClement continued to run the business on his own, first at 42 Albert Street, then from 1917 at 41 Gartside Street, and Duggan set up his own printing firm at 23 Blackfriars Street.



As well as business stationery and publicity leaflets, the firm published various Socialist literature and local history books. Between 1915 and 1916 they printed an attractive series of poetry volumes published by Erskine Macdonald of London called “The Little Books of Georgian Verse”. Erskine Macdonald was the alias of Galloway Kyle, the founder of the Poetry Society.

When McClement retired in about 1920, the management was taken over by Robert Gawtreay Bradshaw, who went on to become president of the Master Printers’ Association. It was he who decided twenty years later to move the firm out to Sharston, where a new light industrial park had been set up.

In the words of the firm’s chairman, Dr J J Mallon, “[The new premises] will be spacious, well lit and well ventilated. They will be set in a semi-rural environment of grass and trees. They will, of course, have all the modern appliances which increase efficiency and minimise discomfort and fatigue. They will, and this is their highest praise, be not completely unworthy to be associated with the great name of William Morris, the master craftsman, poet and artist, who glorified work and saw in it the noblest of man’s occupations.”



James Joseph Mallon was a great social reformer. Born in Manchester, he became an early member of the Independent Labour Party and was warden of Toynbee Hall in London from 1921 to 1954. He had been at the Manchester University Settlement with McClement and had maintained his connection with the company ever since.



The architect of the Sharston building is not known, but there are several similar factory and office buildings of the period in the area, including the Scholes factory built in 1931 by Cruickshank and Seward. The William Morris plaque probably came from the Gartside Street building, as its style and lettering are more akin to Arts and Crafts than Art Deco. What is interesting is that the Press took over the Gartside Street building in 1917 from Walter J Pearce, who ran a painting, decorating and stained-glass business, and it could well have been Pearce who designed and made the plaque.

It is not known when the Press ceased production, but the latest publication date I have found for one of their books is 1990. Several companies have occupied the building since.

*Photographs of building and plaque - © Richard Fletcher.*





1868-1871      St John's Church Waterloo Road Cheetham

Built to the designs of Paley and Austin the church was erected as a memorial to Edward and Sarah Loyd of Coombe House, near Croydon Surrey, (formerly of Green Hill, Cheetham), at the expense of his son Lewis Loyd, Monks Orchard, Surrey, who also donated the site. The foundation stone was laid by his second son Lieut Colonel Edward Loyd, of Lillesden, Hawkhurst, Kent on 19 March 1869.

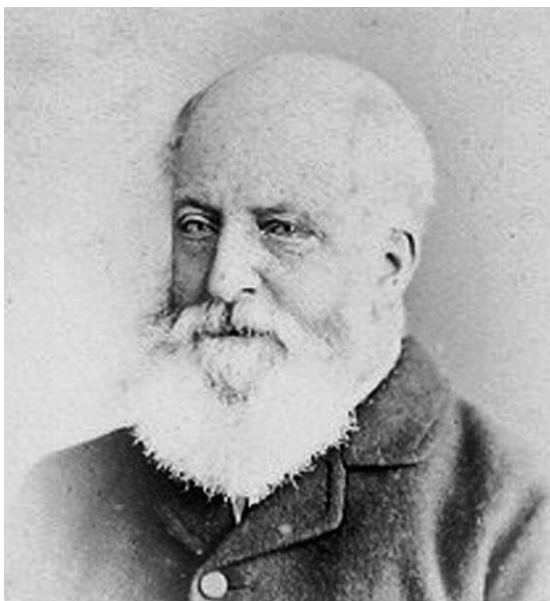
## THE LOYDS OF MANCHESTER – ESCAPE TO THE COUNTRY

Neil Darlington

For the fortunate few, nineteenth century Manchester offered the opportunity to amass vast wealth. One such, the Jones-Loyd family had established a banking business in King Street Manchester in the 1780s and by the 1840s had amassed a considerable fortune mainly through their investment in the railways. Their Manchester bank building still remains and some may recall the time when this was still a branch of the National Westminster Bank, finally closing in the 1990s. Having made their money in Manchester, the Loyds departed to the greener pastures of South East England.

EDWARD LOYD Senior was the son of William Loyd Esq of Court Henry, Carmarthenshire and uncle of Lord Overstone. He was born in 1780 married in 1809, Sarah, daughter of John (Joseph?) Taylor Esq of Blackley He was a banker in both Manchester and London and a Magistrate for Lancashire. In the 1820s he acquired a country residence at Green Hill on Cheetham Hill Road. and was later instrumental in establishing St Luke's Church. In the 1840s Edward Loyd senior sent his eldest son, Lewis Loyd, and his younger son, William Jones Loyd, to the London branch of the bank in Lothbury, Edward Loyd junior remaining with his father at the King Street branch. Ultimately in 1848, Edward Loyd senior, retired, and the Manchester business was separated from the London concern. Following his retirement in 1848, he moved to Coombe House, near Croydon Surrey. He died on 30 January 1863, aged 83 when his estate was valued at "less than £600,000" (approximately £60 million in present terms). He was very much the self-made man. According to his own testimony, Edward Loyd had arrived in Manchester with but a shilling to his name.

LEWIS LOYD – His eldest son, Lewis Loyd, spent his early childhood at the bank in King-Street; and at Green Hill, which the family later acquired as their 'country residence'. Aged fifteen, Lewis joined his cousin, Samuel Jones-Loyd, later Lord Overstone, at Eton, where William Gladstone was a contemporary. Again, he followed Samuel to Trinity College, Cambridge, before returning to Manchester to work at the bank, to whose London house in Lothbury he was soon transferred. He worked there alongside Samuel under the leadership of Lewis Loyd, senior, Samuel's father and his own uncle, and lived 'over the shop'. Soon after this, on his uncle's retirement for health reasons, Samuel assumed leadership with Lewis as his deputy. Especially after attaining his peerage in 1850, though still nominally head of the firm Samuel became increasingly involved in public life and the 'real practical management' devolved to Lewis. In 1845, he had married Frances Harriet, daughter of Admiral the Hon. Frederick Paul Irby of Hoyland Hall, Norfolk.



EDWARD LOYD Junior, the second son of Edward Loyd was born in 1820 at King Street and educated at Eton and Trinity Cambridge. In 1846 he married Caroline Louisa, daughter of J. F. Foster, Esq of Sale Priory, and Kempstone, Bedfordshire, following which he moved to Prestwich Lodge, Hilton Lane, Prestwich. (The house was demolished relatively recently, but its surrounding park now forms the greater portion of Prestwich Golf Course.) By this marriage he had two sons and five daughters. In 1852 he purchased the Lillesden estate in Kent as his country estate and set about rebuilding the house. At the time Edward Loyd was 32 years old and, it would seem, bent on social aggrandisement. Within fifteen years Edward Loyd junior, banker of Manchester had transformed into Lieutenant Colonel Edward Loyd of Lillesden Kent and Thornhill, Cowes, a respected member of the Kent gentry and a prominent member of the Royal Yacht Squadron. In 1876 he was appointed High Sheriff of Kent.

*Edward Loyd Junior/ Colonel Edward Loyd (1820-1890)*



At Lillesden, Loyd immediately demolished the Elizabethan house, replacing it with a Victorian mansion and made estate improvements, such as damming the Kent Ditch stream to create ornamental lakes; he also provided a gas works, an ice house, a modern water supply and tower. These features together with a new lodge, a stable block and a kitchen garden are shown on the 1862 OS map. The lodge is known to have been designed by W R Corson of Manchester, who succeeded to the practice of J E Gegan in 1856. It therefore appears reasonable to attribute the design of the mansion to John Edgar Gegan.



*Captain James Haughton Forrest (1825-1924)*  
*The R.Y.S. schooner Gelert coming into Cowes Roads, with the Royal Yacht Squadron on the headland beyond. oil on canvas. 20 x 30 in. (50.8 x 76.3 cm.)*

Edward Loyd was elected a member of the Royal Yacht Squadron in 1865 at a time when his sometime neighbour, Lord Wilton of Heaton Hall, Prestwich, was Commodore. Over the next twenty-five years Edward Loyd owned a succession of craft, including a “schooner yacht” ordered from R. & M. Ratsey at West Cowes and launched from their yard by Mrs. Sandford, Colonel Loyd’s cousin, on 18th April 1867. Named for the legendary dog “Gelert” from Welsh folklore, the yacht was registered at 168 tons gross (94 tons net) and measured 98 feet in length with a 20-foot beam. Edward Loyd owned the yacht from 1867 to 1870. In 1871, he purchased the yacht *The Daydream* which remained in his ownership until 1876. Both yachts were painted by Haughton Forrest and it is likely that they were commissioned by Loyd when the artist was living in West Cowes between 1870-1871. He acquired Thornhill next to the Squadron headquarters at Cowes as his summer residence. Following his death, the Squadron acquired the gardens of Thornhill which they added to the lawns of the Castle in 1891.

Edward Loyd died on 21 December 1890 at his residence at Lillesden on 21 December 1890 and was laid to rest at the nearby Hawkshead Church.

## ERNEST NEWTON AND THE CHESHIRE VICARAGES

Richard Fletcher

Ernest Newton (1856-1922) was one of the founding members of the St George's Art Society in 1883, which went on to become the Art Workers' Guild, the most influential group promoting the Arts and Crafts movement. After training with Richard Norman Shaw, he set up his own practice in London in 1880, designing large domestic houses, predominantly in Kent and the south-east of England. Among the exceptions were four vicarages in Cheshire, all built for the vicar of Prestbury, the Rev Canon Reginald Edmund Broughton, within whose jurisdiction the parishes lay.

Why he chose Newton as the architect is not known – perhaps there was a family connection, perhaps he had a recommendation from a friend or colleague, or perhaps he had looked through Newton's 1890 book "A Book of Houses" and was attracted by what he saw. The four buildings are markedly different in style, reflecting the neighbourhoods in which they are located.

### Prestbury, St Peter's

When Broughton was appointed to Prestbury in 1889, the vicarage he moved into was the large building now called The Manor House on the opposite side of the road to the church. For reasons unknown this building was deemed unsatisfactory, and Broughton commissioned Newton to build a new vicarage standing in its own grounds a short distance away. It is a large house in brick with copious tile hanging and timber framing and is now Grade II listed. Unfortunately, it is shielded from public view by a screen of trees and bushes, but a drawing of it was made by the architectural artist T Raffles Davison. Recently it was sold to a private owner, and the current vicar lives in more modest premises nearby.



### War Memorial Porch, Prestbury, St Peter's

Ernest Newton died in 1922, but in the same year Canon Broughton asked his son, William Godfrey Newton, to design a war memorial for Prestbury church. It was installed in a space at the foot of the west tower and consists of a long stone panel bearing the names of the dead above a stone bench. On the ceiling are highly decorated beams painted in red, white and gold, and a central beam bearing the legend "Their name liveth for evermore". It was probably whilst working on this monument that William Godfrey Newton was introduced to Broughton's daughter, Mary Dagmar, and four years later they were married, establishing a further link between the Newtons and Prestbury. *[Photo © Richard Fletcher]*





## Lower Withington, St Peter's

Lower Withington vicarage is situated on Longshoot Lane in the village. It is listed as "Curate's cottage, Lower Withington" in The Works of Ernest Newton written by his son, William Godfrey Newton. The nearby church, a tin tabernacle, was erected in 1891. It was dedicated to St Peter and served as a chapel of ease to Prestbury. The curate stayed at Lower Withington for five years, but when he left, the house was taken over by the schoolmaster of the Church of England school, and was renamed The School House. The building is in the Cheshire vernacular style with much decorative brick and tile work and a black and white timbered porch under a catslide roof.

*[Photo © Richard Fletcher]*



## Bollington, St John the Baptist

The Bollington vicarage, situated on Shrigley Road, is quite different in appearance to the previous two, and like most buildings in the village is built of stone with a slate roof. The cost of £2,000 was partly funded by Queen Anne's Bounty. The church of St John the Baptist was closed in 2003, and the parish became part of St Oswald's at Bollington Cross. The vicarage is now in private ownership.

*[Photo © Richard Fletcher]*



## Saltersford-cum-Kettleshulme, St John the Baptist

The church of St John the Baptist, commonly known as Jenkin Chapel, is situated at Saltersford, a remote moorland location, but its vicarage was always in the village of Kettleshulme. In 1912, Broughton commissioned Newton to design a new vicarage, which he did in a suitably plain style to blend in with the surrounding buildings. In 1921, the parish was split into two – the Saltersford half joined Rainow parish and the Kettleshulme half joined Taxal parish over the county border in Derbyshire. The vicarage became privately owned and was known as "Glebe House", a name it has retained up to the present day. It is a Grade II listed building. *[Photo © Richard Fletcher]*



## CHURCH FITTINGS: THE EAGLE LECTERN

David Martin

The tradition of using eagle-shaped lecterns goes back to the middle ages and the symbolism of the eagle comes from the belief that the bird was capable of staring into the sun and Christians similarly were able to look on the dazzling brightness of God as seen in scripture. Alternatively, the eagle was believed to be the bird that flew highest in the sky and was therefore closest to heaven, and symbolised the carrying of the word of God to the four corners of the world. The eagle is the symbol used to depict St John the Apostle, whose gospel is said to witness the light of divinity in Christ, so in art John is often depicted with an eagle.

If not an eagle, lecterns were sometimes modelled as pelicans. The pelican is believed to pierce its own breast with its beak and feed its young with its own blood. It became the symbol of Christ sacrificing himself for us. The belief probably came about because of the pelican's red-tipped beak and very white feathers, and because long-beaked birds such as the pelican are often to be found standing with their beaks resting on their breasts.



Most eagle lecterns are made of brass and date from Victorian times when they were produced on an industrial scale and became a standard fitting in Anglican Church interiors. One such manufacturer was Thomas Potter and Sons, a firm of art metal workers in West Hampstead, London who provided a brass eagle lectern for St Paul's Church, Kersal Moor, Salford, in 1885 in memory of a parishioner, E W Roylance. The iron and brass foundry of Thomas Potter & Sons was established about 1860 by Thomas Potter of Poplar House, a West End Lane resident by 1854. Among the foundry's products were metalwork for the outer screen walls of G. E. Street's Law Courts (built 1874-82) and for Welbeck Abbey (Notts.), besides church fittings, including another brass lectern at St Paul's Onslow Square London. The foundry had closed by 1894.

*David Martin is churchwarden of St Paul's Church, Kersal*

## FROM THE LOCAL PRESS

A vicar of a church near Manchester, about to go away on holiday announced at the Sunday morning service - The Reverend X will take charge of the parish during the month of August. Hymn beginning "If I go not away the Comforter will not come." Again, at the evening service a similar announcement - The Reverend X will take charge of the parish during the month of August. Hymn beginning "There remaineth therefore a rest for the people of God." [Manchester City News 13 August 1892 Page 7]



## WILL MELLOR – A MANCHESTER ARTS AND CRAFTS BOOK ARTIST

Barry Clark

I have long been a collector of books on the arts and crafts movement and since taking up bookbinding in 2010 my book collecting has been extended, and includes fine bindings too if they are within my price range . . . rarely! However, on one of my regular visits to the Carnforth second hand bookshop I came across a set of the Bookbinding Trades Journal, volume one 1904-1911, bound in half leather with some elegant arts and crafts decoration. There was no binder's name but it was contemporary and attractive, and I was intrigued by the Journal. On closer examination I saw that the editor, William Mellor, edited the Journal from an address not much more than a few hundred yards from where I live in Chorlton, and that his son, also William, had done almost all the exquisite headings, borders and illustrations. I bought it. Little did I realise it would set me off on a journey to discover more about this father and son partnership who had lived in my home suburb some hundred years or so before.

William Mellor snr, a lifelong trade unionist and active socialist, was the prime mover in persuading his union, the Bookbinders' Consolidated Union, to launch the Bookbinding Trades Journal in 1904. With no professional writers on the staff and mainly dependent on 'members of our own craft for contributions to our columns', the Journal featured union news, articles on developments in the trade, book reviews and extended pieces on craft aspects of bookbinding. Mellor believed the Journal would be particularly instructive to young members because 'we know how difficult it is, nay, almost impossible it is for many of our younger men to find an opportunity cultivating the higher branches of our handicraft: the rush and stress of competition makes rapidity of workmanship a much more valuable commodity to the average employer than skilled craftsmanship'. The Journal was well received and sustained a presence under Mellor's editorship until 1914 when it closed.

As well as being a key figure in his bookbinding trade union, William Mellor snr was active in the wider Labour movement. He helped to establish the Manchester and Salford Independent Labour Party, and served as a Labour councillor for the Blackley and Moston ward from 1916 until his death. He was also the Secretary of Manchester and Salford Trades Council. Following retirement Mellor continued his work as a Manchester city councillor where he was known for campaigns in favour of slum clearance, expansion of council house building and improvements in public health. At his death in 1934 it was recognised that on public health matters, particularly baths and wash houses, 'much of Manchester's progress... was due to his influence.'

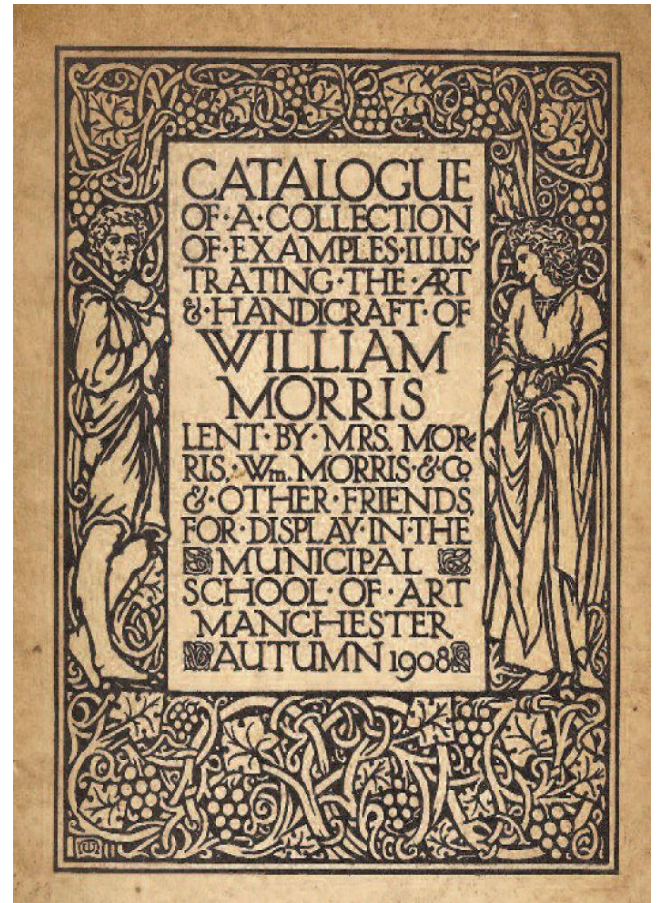
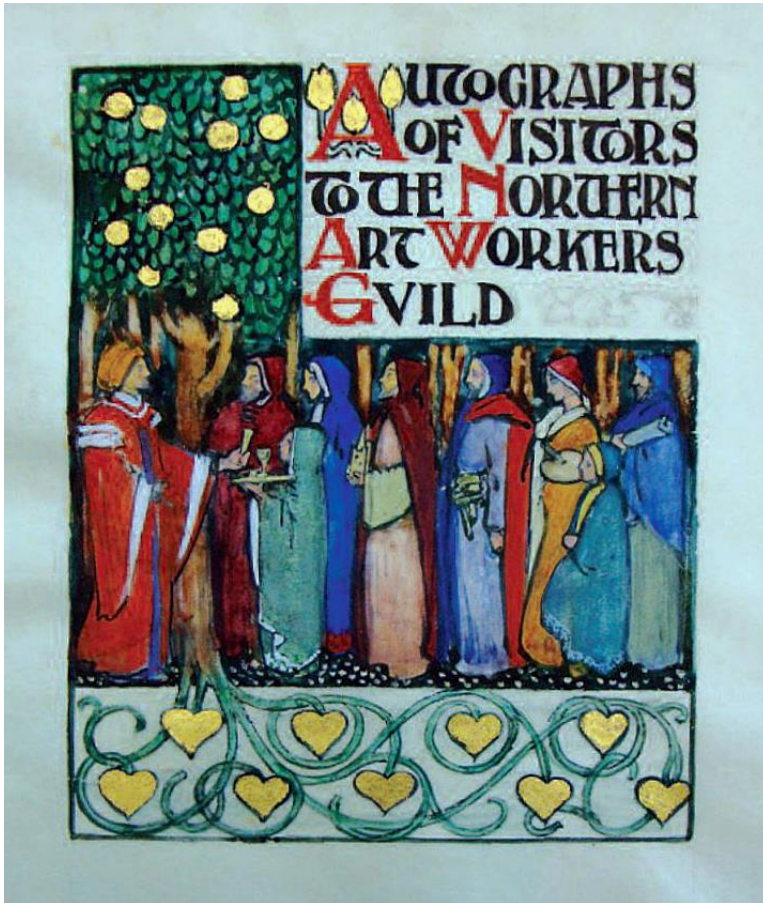


However I was more interested in the son, Will. With both parents bookbinders (his mother was a trimmer and stitcher in the trade before marriage) it's perhaps not surprising that he should be apprenticed as a bookbinder in Manchester. He attended both the Printing Crafts Department in the School of Technology, and the School of Art. Will would have benefited from the latter's fine arts and crafts collection which included Cobden Sanderson's binding for his Dove's Press *Ecce Mundus: Industrial Ideals* and the *Book Beautiful*, a vellum binding by the Cotswold binder Katherine Adams (Emery Walker's favourite binder) as well as work from the Kelmscott Press.

Will had an illustrious student career at the School of Art from 1903-1909. He won many School awards, as well as prizes and free scholarships for his illuminated manuscripts, for his pen and ink work, and for his bindings in the annual National Competitions organised by the Board of Education. As early as 1904, at the age of 18, he exhibited items in the annual Clarion Guild of Handicraft Exhibition. His bookplates were much praised in the Studio, and other national journals featured his bindings for

Charles Rowley's *A Brotherhood Treasury* and *Brotherhood with Nature* and Cobden Sanderson's *Ecce Mundus*. 1904 also saw the launch of the *Bookbinding Trades Journal* and in that year alone there were over twenty illustrations by Will.

Will Mellor continued to exhibit his work - at the Manchester Art Gallery Autumn Exhibition in 1907, at the Walker Art Gallery in Liverpool in 1907, and at the Manchester School of Art exhibition of former students' work in 1909. It is at the latter that he first showed his illuminated manuscript *Golden Wings*: a romance told by William Morris - thirty vellum leaves written in gold and colours, bound in white vellum with green silk ties. Like many arts and crafts binders, Will often used vellum in his bindings - both as decorative panels on the boards, and as limp vellum bindings secured with silk ties. The 1909 exhibition featured three more bindings by Will including *Autographs of Visitors to the Northern Art Workers' Guild*, another book of vellum leaves with a decorated white vellum cover with laces and an unfinished illuminated title page.



Will Mellor had completed his apprenticeship as a 'book finisher' in 1906, and by 1911 he described himself as a 'Designer for Book Decoration' working on his own account. He designed the cover for the catalogue of the exhibition *The Art and Handicraft of William Morris* at the School of Art 1908; he continued to illustrate the *Bookbinding Trades Journal* until its demise in 1914; he provided illustrations for the Manchester-based *Journal of Decorative Art*. He presumably did much commercial work as by 1923 he is described as 'probably one of the ablest designers of advertising matter practising in the North of England'. During this period Will was also the Honorary Secretary of the Manchester-based Northern Art Workers Guild (NAWG). Established in 1896, it met regularly and had a lecture programme of monthly speakers - the 'visitors' who signed the *Autograph* book designed and made by Will. During Will's period as Secretary, 1905 onwards, the visiting speakers included Douglas Cockerell who, along with Cobden Sanderson, revived the art of hand bookbinding. The NAWG held three exhibitions of members' work, two before Will's time as Secretary in 1898 and 1903 (he later bound these two



catalogues as one, for himself in full leather) but the third in 1911, held at Manchester Art Gallery, featured six of his bindings and seven illuminated drawings on vellum or parchment. He also designed the cover of the catalogue. Will was the last Secretary of the NAWG and its archive has never been located.

Will Mellor survived the first world war, returning to civilian life in January 1919. He resumed his relationship with the Journal of Decorative Art contributing illustrated articles, and was an assistant teacher at Manchester School of Art from 1920/1 through to 1924.

From the 1880s Manchester was an important centre of the painting and decorating trade. The monthly Journal of Decorative Art was established in 1881 by W G Sutherland snr. The Journal was targeted at decorative practitioners, with practical articles and extensive international coverage; there were features on historical and contemporary decorative artists and designers, it was strong on wallpaper (including an article on Voysey designs), and had a strong arts and crafts presence. W G Sutherland snr ran a substantial painting and decorating business and was President of the Manchester and Salford Association of Master Plasterers and Painters. He was influential in organising a national convention in 1894 in Manchester that resulted in the formation of the National Association [Federation from 1918] of Master Painters of England and Wales and The Institute of British House Painters and Decorators. The latter adopted the Journal and Sutherland continued as its editor, and also Secretary to the National Association of Master Painters; he was succeeded in both posts in 1915 by his son, also W G Sutherland. All were based at Albert Square in Manchester. 'Artistic' painting and decorating was also promoted in Manchester around this time by Walter J Pearce, who also had his own painting and decorating business but is now more well known for his arts and crafts stained glass work. Pearce wrote his own book on Painting and Decorating (1898, Griffin & Co, many editions), and until 1917 was Head of the Painting and Decorating Department at Manchester School of Art. He was a founder member (later a Master) of the Northern Art Workers Guild, and contributed an essay 'Concerning Painters' Processes' in the NAWG 1898 Exhibition Catalogue. W G Sutherland snr also supported the NAWG - he seconded the motion to establish the Guild at the meeting at Manchester School of Art, in 1896. The Cantrills were another important family in Manchester's painting and decorative arts, with their own business, active in the Master Painters as well as being active supporters of the NAWG; WH Cantrill was Head of the Painting and Decorating Department at the School of Art after Pearce.

It was this Manchester network of the School of Art / the Northern Art Workers Guild / the Journal of Decorative Art / the Master Painters that both nurtured Will Mellor's artistic development and provided him with employment. He became the Manchester Area Secretary of the Master Painters in 1919/20, and around the same time was appointed National Secretary to the Joint Education Committee of the Master Painters and the Painting Operatives Trade Union. In 1924 he succeeded W G Sutherland jnr as the General Secretary to the Master Painters, which continued to be based in Manchester, until his retirement in 1944.

In my early research I thought I was uncovering a talented Manchester bookbinder with a lifelong involvement in the craft. However, it seems that Will did little book design, binding, illustration or calligraphy after his apprenticeship / student days. He undertook some advertising work for his employer, and he was at times a member of the Design and Industries Association (there was an active Manchester branch) in the inter-war period, and the Manchester-based Red Rose Guild but he never exhibited any work. However, in his will dated 1958 he continued to describe himself as a 'decorative artist'. He died in Torquay in 1966. His wife had pre-deceased him and there were no children. However, his work lives on - he donated the two Northern Art Workers Guild bindings to Manchester City Libraries in 1952 and the Library purchased three other bindings by him in 1953. All are available to view by appointment.

*Barry Clark is an arts and crafts enthusiast, and since his retirement a keen bookbinder. Some members may recall the small exhibition of Will Mellor's work curated by Barry Clark held first at MMU Special Collections and later at Manchester Central Library.*







## A VISIT TO A WEST RIDING TOWN: HALIFAX, BANKFIELD, AND THE AKROYD CONNECTION

Anne Hodgson

Just a year ago, in a different world, members of the Manchester Group were driven over the Pennines to explore some aspects of Halifax in the West Riding of Yorkshire, in particular the Akroyd connection.

Colonel Edward Akroyd MP (1810-87) was one of Halifax's foremost and wealthy mill owners and worsted cloth manufacturers. He bought Bankfield, a modest Regency villa, in 1838. After inheriting his father's estate and business in 1847 he was then able to lavish money on his home and over many years extended and decorated the mansion: it transformed into a magnificent Gothic Italianate palazzo. The 1867 wing, designed to impress by John Bownas Atkinson of York at a cost of £20,000, was where our tour began as we passed through the entrance with a port-cochere leading to a grand marble staircase whose walls and ceilings are painted with motifs inspired by the Roman freschi at Pompeii and Herculaneum. There were many more impressive rooms including a private Anglican chapel and a magnificent library with original oak bookcases and an imposing marble fireplace. It is open as a public library: a very spectacular one! After Colonel Akroyd's death in 1887 it was purchased by Halifax Corporation and became a museum - which it still is (Grade II listed: for more information see [museums.calderdale.gov.uk](http://museums.calderdale.gov.uk)). The museum is also home to an extensive collection of fashion and textiles which represents the influence of world textile design and techniques on local historic textile production with examples from the Far East, Egypt, the Balkans and India and then the many pattern books of West Yorkshire manufacturers. Many thanks to our member, Beryl Patten, for being on hand to talk further about this significant collection.

Akroyd was also renowned for spending much of his considerable wealth on philanthropic, political and religious projects. David Glover, the local Halifax historian, then led us on fascinating walking tour of the conservation area of Akroyden, Colonel Akroyd's second venture into the design and building of a model village on Bankfield's doorstep to accommodate workers at the company's Haley Hill mills. (His first had been at the rural site of Copley, just outside Halifax where, again, provision for a workforce was needed for the company's mills there.) Akroyden was designed in the Gothic style by GG Scott. Later, a local architect, WH Crossland, was employed under Scott's supervision to modify the original designs of the houses as locals deemed them too similar to almshouses. Between 1861 and 1868 ninety or so terraced houses were built around a spacious, grassy quadrangle known as 'The Square'. In 1875 Akroyd had a monument modelled on an Eleanor Cross erected there, dedicated to Queen Victoria and thus known as The Victoria Cross. The houses themselves were built in different sizes for workers from various pay grades and classes to be able to live side by side as Akroyd had a vision of a socially mixed society: the more middle-class families would set a good example to working class ones. Backyards, piped water and drains were to be supplied to all houses and the streets were wide for ventilation. Low cost mortgages were available to facilitate home purchase and owners would have their family initials carved on a shield above the front door - such shields are still visible today. However, Akroyd's ambition with social experimentation was not realised: only ninety-two of the planned three hundred and fifty homes were built as the mortgage costs were out of the reach of most of his workers! Other facilities were built including a school, shop and recreation club to create a more cohesive community.

Standing boldly on Haley Hill, downhill from Bankfield and opposite Akroyden is the beautiful and striking All Souls' Church. (Grade 1, 1856-9, now in the care of the Churches Conservation Trust). "It is, on the whole, my best church" wrote its architect, Sir Giles Gilbert Scott. According to Pevsner the style is Scott's favourite late thirteenth century Early Decorated. It is imposingly large and has a commanding NW tower and octagonal stone spire, the second highest in Yorkshire. Sculptural decorations inside and out are by J Birnie Philip, an iron chancel screen is by Studmore, tiles by Minton, some stained glass is by Hardman and some by Clayton and Bell. The pulpit is carved from Caen stone and the font is spectacular: Cornish serpentine on polished red granite steps. The church and its vicarage (also GG Scott) were, of course, commissioned by the devout Colonel Akroyd and he also donated the land. It was consecrated on All Souls' Day, 2nd November, 1859. Our thanks to Jackie Butterfield for showing us around. She and others work tirelessly to maintain access to and use of this glorious church. This is a challenging task as, again according to Pevsner, the choice of materials by Scott

“unwittingly left a disastrous legacy by using magnesian limestone and local sandstone for colour contrast, the former causing the latter to decay.” Nevertheless, the church is still a magnificent and notable local landmark.

Our day also included a visit to Shibden Hall (Grade II\*). This time last year it was in the news for its association with Anne Lister, its owner, otherwise known as Gentleman Jack. The Hall had been used as the setting for the recent BBC drama “Gentleman Jack” about the life of the enigmatic Anne Lister herself. The Hall dates back to the fifteenth century but in the 1830s she commissioned John Harper and Samuel Gray to make improvements to the Hall: terraced and rock gardens, cascades, a boating lake and a Gothic Tower. In the 1850s there were further changes with the creation of a Paisley Shawl design garden by Joshua Major. On a local note Joshua Major had earlier won a design competition to create Peel Park, Salford and Philips Park Manchester. Opened in 1846 Peel Park was the first public park in the U.K. opened that was funded by people’s subscriptions.

When life returns to the carefree pre-lockdown days maybe this article will give some inspiration to those who were unable to accompany our day out: the Akroyd connection in Halifax is well worth exploring!



*Left: All Souls' Church 'with memorial statue of Colonel Edward Akroyd in the foreground'*

*Above: Bankfield*

*Photographs © Fiona Moate 2019*



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### ON-LINE LECTURES

The Victorian Society is currently organising a series of online lectures available on Crowdcast.

Such events are and will be taking place over the next month(s). Full details can be obtained on the Vic Soc main website under events [www.victoriansociet.org.uk](http://www.victoriansociet.org.uk)

as well as on Twitter: @thevicsoc;

and Facebook [com/thevicsoc](https://www.facebook.com/thevicsoc)

In addition, there is an Email Newsletter issued to all who sign up. To date this has received little publicity but for those wishing to subscribe, application can be made on the home page of the main website – top right corner. Alternatively use the link <http://thevictoriansociety.cmail20.com/t/j-c-iridqtkty>



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 late November/December. Contributions are most welcome.