



MANCHESTER GROUP OF THE  
VICTRIAN SOCIETY NEWSLETTER  
Spring 2023

# MANCHESTER GROUP OF THE VICTORIAN SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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Anthea Darlington

### COVER: Rookwood & Wrenwood. 130 and 132 Hilton Lane, Prestwich

Originally built as an almost identical pair of semi-detached houses in 1881-1882. Later extensions and alterations have done much to alter the original symmetry apparent in the illustration in the *British Architect*. These include a two-storey extension at the side of Wrenwood and non-identical extensions to the ground floor sitting rooms. These extensions have been highly successful in apparently transforming the front elevation into a single asymmetrical composition, assisted by the single vehicular access from Hilton Lane. In 1984 the two houses were combined to form a nursery school

Rookwood was occupied for over forty years by Robert Ogden (Bother of Paul?) while Wrenwood was occupied for almost the same time by Colin Mather, son of William Mather MP (Mather & Platt of Salford).

Listed Grade II

Photo © Neil Darlington January 2-23

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## URGENT APPEAL

*Could you volunteer to keep our Manchester Victorian Society Group going?!*

Volunteers are urgently needed to keep the Victorian Society's Manchester Group going. The Manchester Group of the Victorian Society which is dedicated to fighting for our Victorian and Edwardian heritage, has existed for many years. Locally, it runs a series of talks/ presentations, summer walks and visits, which are all generally well attended. The committee members who organise these events have been doing so splendidly for many years but feel the time has come to hand over to new active volunteers. The Victorian Society is very grateful for the hard work of committee members past and present.

The work for individual members is not onerous and the current committee members are more than happy to discuss what's involved with anyone who'd like to consider taking up any of the following roles which are, with the exception of the Secretary, capable of being shared to make it easier to manage:

Position:

- Chair
- Secretary / Membership Secretary
- Activities Organisers
- Social Media & Publicity Coordinators, and
- Newsletter contributors.

Please get in contact with Neil [Darlington@andarlington@live.c.uk](mailto:Darlington@andarlington@live.c.uk) if you would be interested in discussing this further. The future is in your hands - no management committee means no group or events.

## WORSLEY IN THE EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY

Although Worsley's industrial past has been well researched and documented, the works of the Third Earl of Ellesmere in the first decade of the twentieth century, especially regarding The Green, has been all but ignored.

In 1903, the Bridgewater Trust, set up under the will of the Third Duke of Bridgewater expired, and Francis Charles Egerton (1847-1914), the 3rd Earl of Ellesmere set up the Ellesmere Trust to facilitate the management of his estates at Worsley. He was succeeded by his son, John Francis Egerton (1872-1944)

The Green was originally the site of the workshops and yard associated with the canal and mines at Worsley but these workshops were transferred to Walkden in 1903. In an early example of post-industrial land reclamation, the Earl's agent, Henry Hart Green, wrote in 1904, "I am turning the old Worsley Yard into a kind of Village Green, with houses for his Lordship's employees."

In Pevsner's South East Lancashire, Clair Hartwell attributes most if not all the houses on the Green to Douglas and Minshull of Chester. Hart Davis certainly approved plans by Douglas and Minshull for a block of four cottages in 1905 (but requested the bathrooms be omitted for fear of misuse).

Although it is suggested that these houses are early examples of the Garden City Movement, it is more probable that the Earl of Ellesmere was attempting to transform the village into a traditional estate village associated with Worsley New Hall. The architects, Douglas and Minshull, having carried out work for the Duke of Westminster on his Cheshire estates and W H Lever at Port Sunlight were thus well-versed in this building type.

The houses round the Green were sold by 4th Earl in Sept/Oct 1919 to raise monies to pay death duties on his father's estate and in 1923 the entire estate was sold to Bridgewater Estates Limited, thus ending his association with the district.



*he elegant arched footbridge linking The Green with Barton Road. Erected about 1906, it replaced an earlier bridge linking the Granary with Worsley Yard.*

1903 Nos 2, 4a and 4b Worsley Road, Worsley



Above                      *Worsley Post Office about 1905*  
Reference                *Manchester Suburban Directory 1909 – Worsley Post Office*

The first scheme to be undertaken by the Third Earl was on the site of the former steam mill buildings next to the Delph. No 2 appears to have been built as a house of generous proportions, while 4a and 4b were built as a shop or shops. Worsley Post Office moved here from Barton Road about 1903. To the right of these buildings stands the eighteenth-century offices in connection with the corn mill, which by the 1890s had become a coffee tavern.



Perhaps as a result of their slight isolation from the main village, these two buildings have a long history as cafes and restaurants. By 1935 the Post Office had become Mill Brow Café, which continued as such until the early 1960s. An early postcard of the café shows a crowd gathered outside and newspaper hoardings. After a gap of several decades this has now been re-opened as The Delph Restaurant and Bar, complete with outdoor seating and fairy lights.

By the early 1960s, 2 Worsley Road had been converted into "the Casserole" restaurant, now the Tung Fong Chinese Restaurant

## 140-145 (consecutive), The Green, Worsley



Listed Grade II, this row of six dwellings received the most elaborate elevational treatment of any the dwellings on the Ellesmere estate. Although the plan is almost symmetrical the pattern of half timbering is anything but. Each of the four gables is treated differently while even the intermediate bays have two patterns of framing. Set on a stone plinth ground floor walls are of brick to the intermediate bays with upper floors and gables half-timbered, the whole surmounted by a red clay tile roof. Although the listing text suggests that the timbering is applied to brick walls in the manner of 1930s spec housing the evidence suggests that the construction is genuine. The oak may well have been acquired from Lord Ellesmere's other estates as had occurred in the 1850s. Likewise the bricks may well have been obtained from the Earl's brickworks at Boothstown and brought by canal.

The residents of the Green were first listed in the Manchester Suburban Directory of 1911, those for 140-145 being as follows: - 14 John Castle, stud manager; 15 Harry Dean, Kilmorey; 16 Rowland Bradshaw, householder; 17 John Charles Bury, householder; 18 Charles Worsley, Platt Lodge; 19 John Francis Westbrook, clerk. Residents in the other properties included John Wain, estate detective, Arthur Upjohn, previously manager of the Lady Ellesmere Coffee Tavern; James Cross, motor driver Percy Flitcroft and James E Pendlebury, surveyors, and Walter Neville Denby, artist. Others were either building trades workers or listed as householders, presumably retired, given the introduction of the state pension. W N Denby was born in Cheetham, Manchester and was active as a painter from the 1880's onwards. He exhibited at Manchester City Art Gallery. He moved to Worsley following his marriage but later moved to Holmes Chapel where he died in 1918. He had no previously known association with the Worsley district. That the Green was built for estate workers would thus appear only partially correct.

LISTING TEXT - Row of 6 houses. c.1907. Brick, timber-framing and clay tile roof. A near-symmetrical plan with a total of 13 bays and 2 storeys. Picturesque timber-framed revival. Elevation dominated by 4 gabled projections, the outer ones projecting further than the others and having plain 1 and 2- light windows. The inner ones are jettied at first floor level and have decorative square panelling, 4-light ovolo- moulded mullion and transom ground floor windows and 3- light ovolo-moulded mullion first floor windows. Decorative bargeboards and finials. The intermediate bays which are brick on the ground floor have doors (mostly replacements) with tiled canopies and small 2-light ground floor windows, and on the first floor, 3-light windows as above. All windows have leaded lights. Central gabled dormer window and prominent brick ridge chimney stacks. The right and left returns have recessed porches with Tudor-arched openings. The group is an interesting example of the garden suburb movement and came about as a result of early de- industrialisation.

## 150-153 consecutive, The Green, Worsley

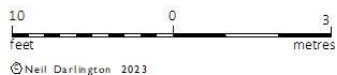


LISTING TEXT - Row of 4 houses. c. 1907. Snecked stone, applied timber- framing and stone slate. Symmetrical plan with a total of 4 bays and 2 storeys. Picturesque timber-framed revival. Paired central doors and to extreme left and right all with lean-to hoods. Snecked stone ground floor with timber-framed first floor. Projecting gabled cross-wings in bays 1 and 4 and gabled oriel/dormer windows in bays 2 and 3. 3-light stone mullion windows to ground floor of cross-wing otherwise the other 2 ground floor and 4 first floor windows have 4-light timber mullions. All windows have leaded lights. Shingles to upper portion of gables and decorative framing below first floor window sills. Bargeboards and decorative finials. 2 stone ridge chimney stacks with oversailing courses.

## 40-145 (consecutive), The Green, Worsley



Row of 4 houses. c.1907. Rendered brick with clay tile roof. Total of 4 bays and 2 storeys. Domestic revival style using sub-Voysey features. Each house is of 1 bay with doors to left in No. 147 and No. 149 and to right in the others (a later replacement in No. 148). The first floor projects above battered buttresses and 3-light square bay windows. C20 porch to No. 146. Total of four 3-light mullion and transom windows on first floor and small 2-light windows within the gables. All windows have glazing bars. 2 rendered chimney stacks which are battered



132-135 (consecutive), THE GREEN, WORSLEY

Architect: Douglas and Fordham



A block of four two-bedroom cottages backing on to the canal adjacent to the Boat House. The simplest of all the designs for The Green Red sandstone snecked ashlar walls, red clay tile roof, tile hanging to end gables. Unlisted.

The cottages remain little changed although the white picket fence shown on the early photograph (below) has been removed to facilitate car parking.



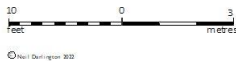


## 31-37, Barton Road, Worsley and Beanfields



31 - 37, BARTON ROAD, WORSLEY

Architect: Douglas and Fordham



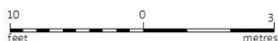
©Neil Darlington 2022



In addition to the work on the Green, the Earl of Ellesmere also built several workmen's cottages on the west side of Barton Road. Locally listed, Nos 31-37 Barton Road, comprise a row of four terraced houses, set well back, next to the Bridgewater Hotel, which have a datestone - AD 1906 with Edward VI or Ellesmere crest. Built of hard red brick to the ground floor, render above with half-timber gables and red tiled roof these are similar to the Duke of Westminster's estate cottages in Cheshire and are perhaps the block of four cottages for which Hart Davis approved plans by Douglas and Minshull in 1905 (but requested the bathrooms be omitted for fear of misuse). At the rear the houses have small yards which link to a roughly triangular parking area previously named a drying ground and to most of the other Ellesmere cottages in Beanfields in a manner similar to that adopted at Port Sunlight. Little is known of the Beansfield cottages – date of construction etc. but it is assumed that they are pre-1914.



60-59, BEANFIELDS, WORSLEY



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## PRE-RAPHAELITES IN POYNTON

### Richard Fletcher

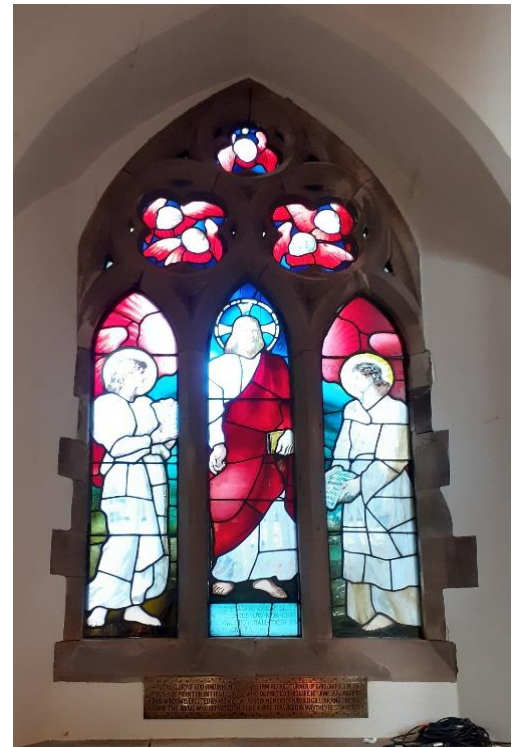
At the east end of the north aisle in St George's church in Poynton, Cheshire (J S Crowther, 1858-9; spire and belfry J Medland and Henry Taylor, 1884-5), is an unusual and striking stained glass window. It was installed in 1888 and is a memorial to one of the parishioners William Alfred Turner of Barlow Fold and his eldest son, Harold. The artist of the window was John Aldam Heaton (1830-1897), not as one might assume a member of the firm of Heaton, Butler and Bayne, but an interior designer based in Bingley and London. The story behind the commission is an interesting one.



Left: St George's church, Poynton

Right : The memorial window

Below. Portrait of William Alfred Turner by J H E Partington courtesy of Manchester Art Gallery.



William Alfred Turner (1839-1886) was the head of a cotton spinning business founded by his father Wright Turner, with mills at Pendleton. After his marriage in 1865, he took over the family house "The Laurels" on Eccles Old Road, Pendleton, and in 1870 engaged the architect Alfred Darbyshire to make some alterations to the property. He had already formed a close friendship with the architect, both of them having an interest in art and painting. They were fellow members of Manchester's Brasenose Club, and Darbyshire in his memoirs refers to The Laurels as being "the rallying point of local culture in literature and art". Darbyshire greatly admired the work of Dante Gabriel Rossetti, and encouraged Turner, a person of some wealth, to buy several of his paintings.

In 1878, Turner bought Barlow Fold on the outskirts of Poynton and again asked Darbyshire to make various alterations to the property. It was a substantial building, dating back to at least 1571, and at different times was occupied by a miller and one of Lord Vernon's agents. Turner, as an early pioneer of the use of electric light in his cotton mills and a director of the Edison Electric Light Company, built an electricity generator for the



house, and this is now a Grade II listed monument. He continued to buy paintings, and it was at Barlow Fold that a chance meeting with a Samuel Bancroft inspired the largest collection of Pre-Raphaelite art in America.



Barlow Fold, Poynton

Samuel Bancroft (1840-1915) was a cousin of Darbyshire's, and his father had emigrated to America and set up cotton mills in Wilmington, Delaware. On a visit to Barlow Fold whilst in England, Bancroft was captivated by one of Rossetti's paintings, "A Vision of Fiammetta". He started to look out for and purchase other works by Rossetti, and his interest gradually broadened to include other Pre-Raphaelite painters such as Burne-Jones and Spencer Stanhope. After his death, the collection remained with the family until 1931 when they donated it to the Wilmington Society of the Fine Arts together with 11 acres of land on which to build a museum to house it. This was named the Delaware Art Museum, opening in 1938 and containing in their own words the "largest and most important collection of British Pre-Raphaelite art and manuscript materials in the United States



*Sam Bancroft Esq.*

Samuel Bancroft

The choice of John Aldam Heaton as the designer of the memorial window was very appropriate as he was a close friend of Rossetti's and was responsible for obtaining some of the first commissions for the firm of William Morris, Faulkner, Marshall and Company, including the stained glass in the east window at Bradford parish church, now the Cathedral. He published several books, and a selection of his wallpaper designs are held at the Victoria and Albert Museum. He went on to work with Richard Norman Shaw in designing interiors for the White Star Line ocean liners, and it is believed that the Titanic, although built after Heaton's death, used some of his designs.

After Turner's death in 1886, his family moved to a smaller property nearby, and two years later the majority of his art collection was sold at Christie's in London. The painting "A Vision of Fiammetta", which so impressed Samuel Bancroft, is now in the collection of the composer Andrew Lloyd Webber.



A Vision of Fiammetta

## NINETEENTH CENTURY ROPE WALKS

Neil Darlington

The story of rope making in the Manchester region during the nineteenth century is now largely forgotten. While the use of rope probably brings to mind the rigging of sailing vessels and other maritime use, , rope makers were common in towns and villages throughout Britain, during the nineteenth century. Almost all have disappeared with little physical evidence remaining and now they are only remembered in road names like Roperly or Ropewalk.

Traditionally rope was made of 3 strands (hawser-laid) although sometimes it was of 4 strands (shroud-laid). The strands were made by twisting yarns together. Until the middle of the nineteenth century maritime rope was, normally made from hemp from the Baltic, grown in Russia. During the Napoleonic Wars, the Royal Navy was concerned that this source might be cut off and so encouraged the growing of the raw material in this country. One such location was around Bridport, Dorset, which developed a major rope-making industry. Perhaps the most important historic ropeworks in the UK is the ropery at Chatham Historic Dockyard. Ropes have been made on this site since 1620 and it is still in operation, retaining almost all its historic machinery and equipment. Various buildings accommodate the storage of materials, mainly hemp and tar, and the preparation of the materials. The most spectacular buildings are the rope laying houses which are 1,100 feet long.

The principal element of a ropeworks was a long, straight and level surface on which ropes could be laid out. In Greater Manchester the length of a rope walk was typically 100 to 150 yards. A rope walk of 120 yards would make a rope of 250 feet in a single length. Since ropes were rarely requested in lengths of more than 50 feet, such rope walks were more than adequate. Most were sited on still undeveloped fields close to town centres such as at Brindle Heath, near Pendleton and at Red Bank. As Victorian towns expanded, these sites were lost to subsequent development and thus surviving physical evidence of rope works is rare.

However, demand for rope and twine was not solely restricted to maritime use. At a domestic level these included dog leads, washing lines and skipping ropes but uses ranged from drive ropes for cotton mills, specialist twine for bookbinding, bell ropes lead ropes for horses and cattle halters. Thus, many Victorian towns and villages had roperies on their outskirts producing a variety of products using cotton, jute, and flax as well as hemp. The Red Bank district of Manchester had at least four rope works at various times during the nineteenth century, all of which have disappeared without trace. Until the construction of York Street (now Cheetham Hill Road), Red Bank formed the principal road from Manchester to the North.

Rope making was frequently carried out in the open air. Where covered rope walks were built the structure was often basic as an advertisement in the Manchester Guardian indicates:

*TO BUILDERS - WANTED, an ESTIMATE for a Rope Walk, 100 yards long and six yards wide, the roof to be built either or corrugated iron, with iron pillars; or built of wood, and covered with ¾ inch boards. For particulars apply to TOOTHILL & PLATT. 19, Watling Street, Manchester [Manchester Guardian 6 October 1855 page 6 – contracts]*



The following is a selective list of rope makers operating in the Manchester area during the nineteenth century but others have been found at Salford, Hulme and Newton Heath. The sources are mainly old maps and trade directories of the period. Also included is the rope works in the village of Hawes, North Yorkshire, where manufacture still continues

## Rope Manufactory, Roger Street, Red Bank, Cheetham

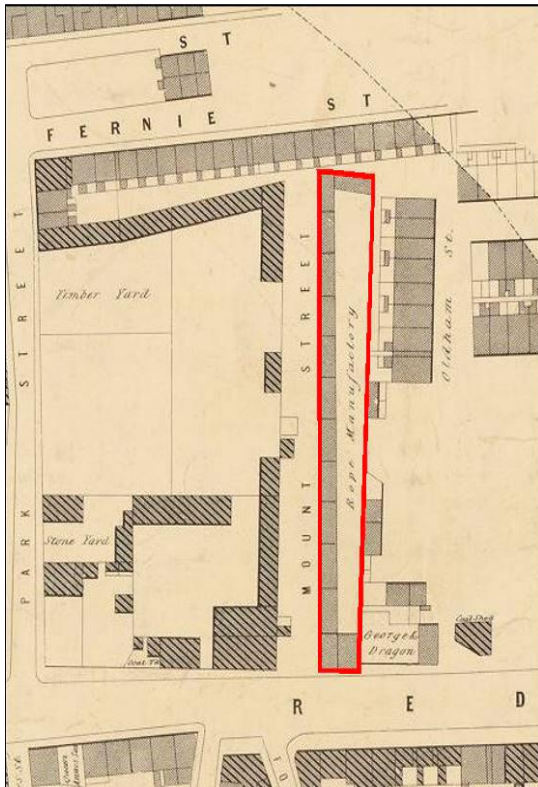
An early ropery shown on Banks and Co's map of 1831. It comprised a rope walk extending north/south, connected to a small rectangular building fronting onto Roger Street. It is likely that this housed the rope-winding mechanism, although it unknown how this was powered. The ropery appears to have been short lived; two rope manufacturers are listed at Red Bank in Pigot's trade directory for 1828-9, although no precise address is given, but neither are listed in Pigot and Slater's directory for 1841. By 1892 the site had been fully redeveloped.

## Rope Manufactory, Mount Street, Red Bank

Reference Mount Street Works: Adshead's map of 1851;

A rope works was established on this site about 1818 and continued until the 1890s. The site was partly replaced by public baths during the early twentieth century.

The yarns were often tarred especially for maritime use, being pulled through a tar-kettle by capstan driven by horse power, then dried prior to use. Such a process with its associated hazards, was being carried out at Mount Street Rope Works as a report in the Manchester Guardian of January 1849 indicates:



FIRE - On Wednesday evening about half-past five o'clock, William Davies discovered that the premises of his employer, Mr. Joseph Fleming, rope, twine, and tarpaulin manufacturer, Mount-street, Red Bank, were on fire. He immediately gave information at the police yard, and Mr. Rose proceeded to the place with the Thames engine, followed by the Water Witch and the Mersey. On their arrival, the building, which is two storeys high, was filled with flames, arising from the combustion of pitch and other inflammable materials, and the fire being communicated to some adjoining cottages, and also to the timber yard of Mr. Joseph Timperley. The engines were got into play and the fire was gradually extinguished. The damage done to the building, which belongs to Mr. Timperley, is £100, and to the stock of Mr. Fleming, £200. Neither of parties were insured. The fire was at first confined to a small machine called a "nipper," which is used in tarring rope and twine, and during the process of which it squeezes the surplus tar into a receptacle placed beneath it. A candle was near the machine, and it is supposed that the rope must have caught fire at the candle, before being drawn into the machine. A man who was attending to it endeavored to extinguish the lighted rope; but the burning material fell into the tar below, and the flames spread rapidly over the building. [Manchester Guardian 10 January 1849 page 6]

A COVERED ROPE WALK TO BE LET, at a low rent either weekly or yearly, situated in Mount Street, Red Bank. Apply to Samuel Kershaw, estate agent, 20 Victoria Street. [Manchester Guardian 28 March 1860 page 4] 8 December 1859 page 4; 29 November 1859 page 4]

## J Ogden's Rope Works, Ashley Lane/ Lydia Street, Red Bank

Adshead Map 1851

A rope-walk close to the bridge over the Irk

## Charles Johnson's Rope Works, Ledger Street/ Miller Street



Sited on Miller Street at the edge of Angel Meadow this rope walk was close to some of the first cotton spinning mills in Manchester, it is probably one of the earliest rope makers in the area. An advertisement in the Manchester Guardian of March 1871 provides a description of the works at that time.

TO BE LET a Commodious ROPEWALK, centrally situated, 100 yards long, 80 yards of which are covered in; with warehouse 25 yards; and large dressing room; together with stabling and two cart entrances. There is sufficient ground for a second walk to be made. — J. C. COOPER, 18, Miller Street, near Swan Street. [Manchester Guardian 9 March 1871 page 3]

Reference      Adshad Map 1851  
Reference      Manchester Guardian 9 March 1871 page 3 – To Be Let - Mills Manufactories, Works, etc.

<p><b>London Offices:</b>                  DASHWOOD HOUSE, 9 NEW ROAD STREET, E.C.  <b>WORKS:</b>                  RICHMOND HILL, &amp; SPRINGFIELD MILL, SALFORD.                  GLOSS MILLS, LEEDS.                  BARLOW FLAX AND JUTE WORKS,                  BARROW-IN-FURNESS.                  6 BETHNAL GREEN ROAD, LONDON, E.</p>	<p><b>MANCHESTER</b>                  TELEPHONE No 72.</p> <p>— 0 —</p> <p><b>LONDON</b>                  TELEPHONE No. 1180.</p>	<p><b>Branch Warehouses:</b>                  KIDDERMINSTER.—COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS.                  LIVERPOOL.—GRILL CHAMBERS, WATER STREET.                  GLASGOW.—347 GEORGE STREET.                  BIRMINGHAM.—NEW STREET.                  HULL.—5 FRANKS DOCK SIDE.                  BELFAST.—48 GEORGE LANE.                  DUBLIN.—41 MARY STREET.</p>
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Head Office: 21 MAJOR STREET, MANCHESTER.

**THOMAS BRIGGS,  
 SPINNER AND MANUFACTURER.**

**CANVAS,**

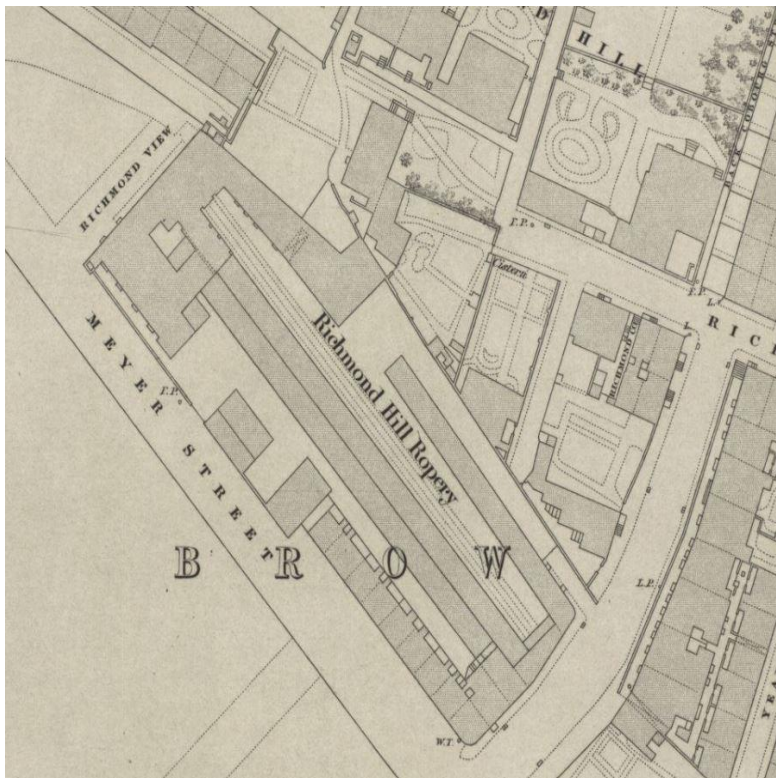
SHEETING, SACKING, &c.; ROPES, SPUN YARN, ENGINE FLAX, HEMP & JUTE YARNS,  
 COTTON YARNS, &c.; MACHINE-MADE TWINES, LOBBY AND STAIR OIL CLOTH,  
 DUTCH CARPETINGS, &c.

**BRIGGS' PATENT LINED BAGS FOR SUGAR, COFFEE, &c.**

Railway Wagon, Cart and Stack Covers, Cotton and Linen Oil Cloths,  
 Patent Tarpauling, Patent Packing and Hoops, Iron and Steel, for  
 Packing purposes; Brattice Cloth, &c., for Collieries.

PATENT DRESSING for WAGON COVERS. BRIGGS' PATENT ROOFING CLOTH.

Sole Tent Maker, for Her Majesty's War Office, and Contractor for Government and Railway Stores  
 Sacks, Bags, Sackings, Baggings, Tarpaulings, &c. Hessians (18 inches to 108 inches wide).



In the early nineteenth century there was a fashion to name the more select outer suburbs of Georgian Salford and Pendleton after London districts. These included Islington, Adelphi, New Windsor, Strawberry Hill, Paddington and Richmond Hill. This last-named was on higher ground to the north of Salford, overlooking the crossing of the Irwell at Broughton Bridge. Originally it had been laid out with villa residences set in their own grounds. However, by the time of Adshead's map of 1851 this exclusive district was in decline. The map extract still shows several villa residences and their gardens remaining but with industry in the form of a Thomas Briggs's ropery having been established. In addition, two blocks of genuine "back-to-back" houses had been built nearby. The ropery was started by Thomas Briggs (I) although the date of its establishment is unclear. The Glasgow Index of Firms gives a date of 1815 but this cannot be correct given that Thomas Briggs did not arrive in Manchester until about 1835.

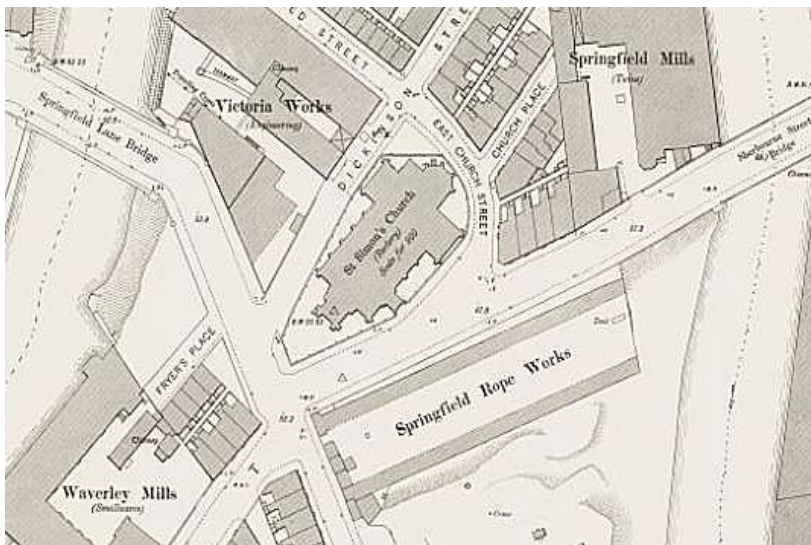
**ROPE ENOUGH**—We have often heard of "long yarns," and of giving man "rope enough;" but think the rope just manufactured by Thomas Briggs, of Richmond Hill ropery, Salford, outdoes any of which we have heard. It is or nearly two miles and a half in length; weighs upwards at two tons; and is without any splicing, and all in one piece or length! It has been made for Messrs. G. C, Pauling and Co. in connection with the works at the new Theatre Royal, Manchester. It is manufactured by patent machinery, and refutes the notion that has generally prevailed that such mortal coils" can only be made at Gateshead. [Manchester Guardian 16 July 1845 page 4]

When Thomas Briggs (I) retired in 1868, the business was continued by his son and grandson, both also called Thomas, well into the twentieth century. During the first World War Thomas Briggs Limited were supplying tents to the War Department.



This extensive business dates its foundation to the year 1815, and concurrently with the development of the trade and commerce of the United Kingdom, large factories and works have been established in various parts of the country, viz., at Nos. 2 and 4, Southgate Road, London, N.; the Springfield Works, Salford; the Richmond Hill Works, Salford; the Globe Twine Mills, Leeds; the Manchester Rope and Twine Works; and the Barrow Flax and Jute Works, Barrow-in-Furness. Such is the extent and magnitude of the operations of this firm that in the aggregate many thousands of workpeople are employed. The head office of the firm is situated at Major Street, Manchester, and branch establishments at 2, Budge Row, Queen Victoria Street, London; Oxford Street, Kidderminster; 48a, Church Lane, Belfast; 51, Mary Street, Dublin; Oriel Chambers, Water Street, Liverpool; and 4, Exchange Chambers, New Street, Birmingham.

The productions of these immense factories embrace canvas, sheeting, sacking, hessians, sacks and bags, ropes, machine-made twines, jute, hemp, and cotton yarns, printed jute rugs and squares, lobby and stair oil-cloths, Dutch carpetings, railway-waggon, cart, and stack covers, dressing for covers, roofing cloth, brattice cloth, tents, sail canvas, seaming twines, Briggs' patent lined bags for sugar, coffee, &c., patent tarpauling, patent packing, and iron and steel hoops for packing purposes. Mr. Thomas Briggs is also the sole tent maker for her Majesty's War Office and contractor for government and railway stores. [Glasgow Index of Firms, 1888]



*The Springfield Works Salford, comprising both Springfield Mills and Springfield Rope Works, set in a meander of the River Irwell.*

*St Simon's Church built to the designs of Richard Lane and made famous by L S Lowry is also shown*

A rope measuring 4,374 yards, or nearly two miles and a half, was made by Mr. Thomas Briggs, of Richmond Hill Ropery, for Messrs. G C Pauling and Co., in connection with the works of the new Theatre Royal. [July.1845 Annals of Manchester]



*Proving that a fortune could be amassed from the production of some of the most mundane of objects, Thomas Briggs (II) moved to the select district of Broughton Park taking up residence at Hazel Slack on Old Hall Road, opposite the entrance to Broughton Old Hall. The house has long since disappeared but the gate and gate posts remain.*

*Photo ©AND 2011*

## 1830-1939 Seedley Ropery, Harrison Street, Pendleton,

Samuel Handley, Manufacturer of Rope, Twine, Cotton Band, and Printers' and Bleachers' Cotton Sewing,  
Reference The Century's Progress: Lancashire, 1892. London Printing & Engraving Co

SEEDLEY ROPERY, HARRISON STREET, PENDLETON, MANCHESTER - THE history of this noted house dates back to the year 1830, when it was established by Mr. John Handley, the grandfather of the present proprietor. A reputation was soon earned for the superior quality of the goods and their thorough reliability, and the house gradually advanced in popularity and patronage. Additional enlargements have been necessitated, until at the present time the house takes a foremost position among similar local establishments. Large and commodious premises are occupied, consisting of an extensive brick and slate structure, two stories high, and comprising a suite of well-appointed offices, warehouses, storerooms and workshops, the hemp picking being carried on the second floor. There is ample yard accommodation, containing a range of excellent stables and coach-houses, while the rope-walk is an exceptionally fine one, being one hundred and fifty yards long, with brick and slated sheds, each eight yards wide on either side.

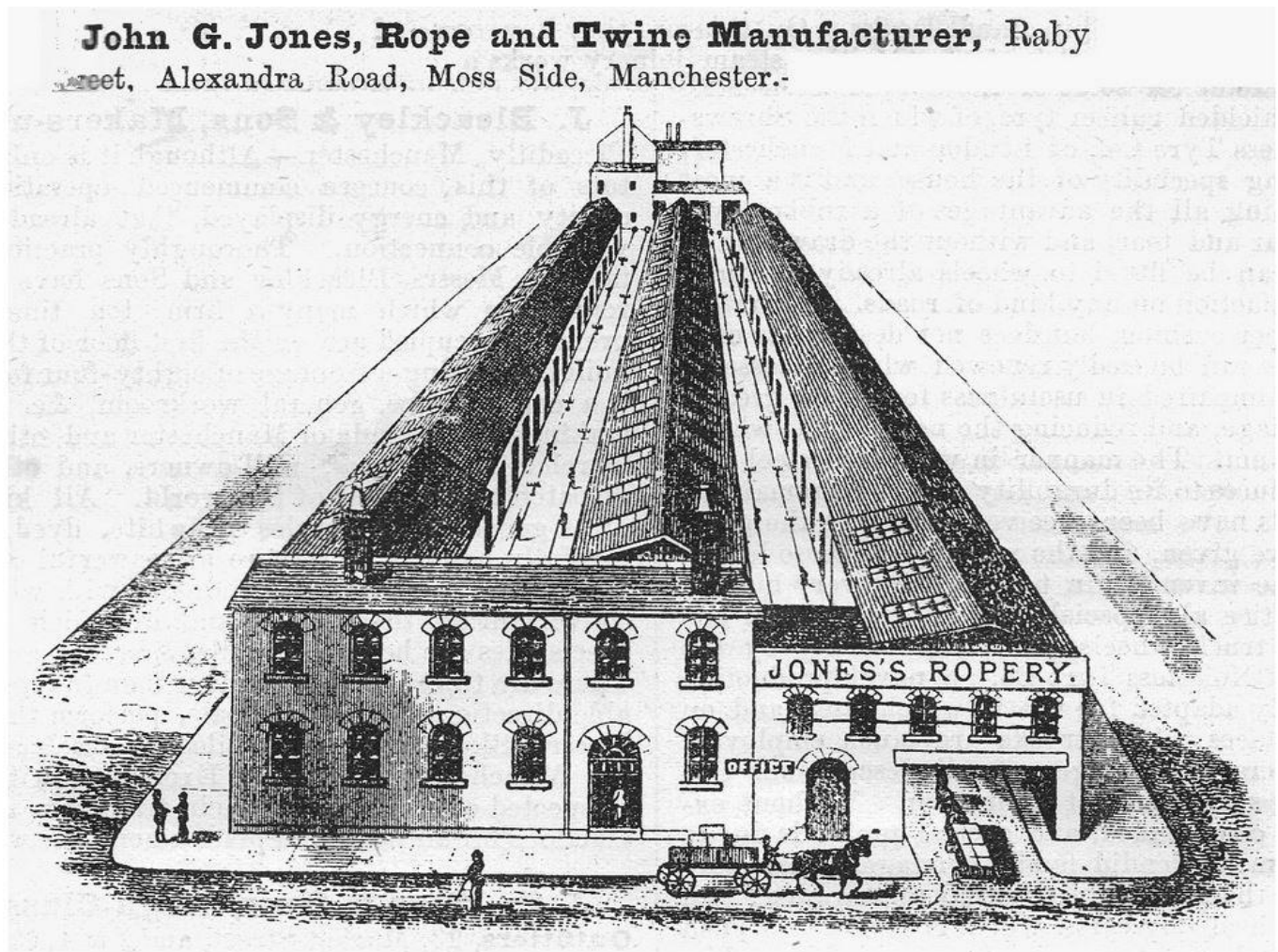
The establishment has been well arranged for the purposes of the trade, and the plant and machinery are of the most modern and suitable kind. Under most favourable conditions, a large and important business is controlled in the manufacture of every description of rope, twine, cotton band, and printers' and bleachers' cotton sewing. Wherever these goods have been introduced they have obtained a ready appreciation, and among the best judges of this class of work they are immense favourites and in constant demand. They are known specially for their reliable quality, and buyers can confidently rely upon receiving exactly what they require and what they order. Every care is exercised in the proper selection of the material, and each process of manufacture is carefully watched, as the proprietor is desirous to fully maintain the high reputation the house has enjoyed for so many years. The admirable efficiency of the productive resources of the firm, and the extent and weight of the transactions they engage in, enable them to produce good articles at the least possible outlay, and to quote such prices as cannot be beaten in the trade. A speciality is made of cotton ropes, much used now for driving purposes in cotton mills, as they work very much more steadily than leather bands, last longer, and are less expensive.



Extensive and varied stocks are held of the different goods manufactured, which have been selected with due regard to the requirements of the trade, and most orders for current goods of any magnitude can be executed from their ample stores with promptitude and completeness. By the superior merits of its manufacture, the house has developed a connection of a widespread and influential kind, its patrons being found among the principal mill-owners, manufacturers, rope and twine merchants in the United Kingdom, and export shippers. A large and efficient staff of experienced hands are kept constantly employed to meet the continuously increasing demands. Mr. John Handley, the sole proprietor, has had large experience in this department of industry, and is recognised as a skilful and successful manufacturer. His personal supervision is bestowed upon the business to its manifest advantage, and every effort is made to oblige patrons and to merit their continued support. His transactions are based upon principles of strict fairness and honesty, and in social and commercial circles alike he is held in great esteem for his personal worth, his high sense of public duty, and his uprightness.

## John G Jones Rope and Twine Manufacturer, Raby Street, Moss Side, Manchester

Reference The Century's Progress: Lancashire, 1892. London Printing & Engraving Company



THERE is always a special interest attaching to old institutions, whether they be of a national, municipal, or industrial character, and prominent among the latter class in this district of the city is the old-established business of Mr. John G. Jones, rope, twine, and cotton banding manufacturer, dating back in its foundation to the year 1840. The business was established by the father of the present proprietor, originally in Embden Street, and about fifteen years ago was removed to the more extensive and commodious premises now occupied. These are located in Raby Street, Alexandra Road, Moss Side. The works are laid out on an extensive scale, the rope walk being fully one hundred and twenty yards long. The various departments are replete with machinery and appliances of the most improved construction, and the premises throughout have been specially fitted up in the most careful and complete manner, to ensure the effective and economical working of a large and increasing business. The motive power is communicated from a twelve horse-power gas engine. Mr. Jones gives constant employment to upwards of thirty experienced hands in the manufacture of ropes of all kinds. Twine and cotton banding, oil cloth, tarpauling, canvas, paper, &c., are also largely dealt in. A large and comprehensive stock is always on hand, ready for immediate delivery. These goods are well and favourably known in the trade. They have now been over fifty years in the market, and it is interesting to note that, in spite of the keen competition of the times, they not only maintain their high reputation for excellence of material, manufacture, and finish, but are making greater headway than ever, both at home and abroad. In addition to the extensive home connection, Mr. Jones does a very large business with the leading shipping houses for export, chiefly to Australia, South America, and India. Mr. John G. Jones is a thoroughly practical man, with an experience extending over many years, and this advantage, combined with the possession of one of the largest and most complete works in the district, enables him to compete on favourable terms with any firm in the trade. [The Century's Progress: Lancashire, 1892]

## Brindle Heath, Pendleton

An early rope walk, was already established by 1837 at Brindle Heath close to the Manchester Bolton and Bury Canal and Manchester and Bolton Railway near Cock Robin Bridge. The district lies to the north-west of Pendleton Church and at the time of the 1848 OS map was still of open fields and orchards. Within half a century the flat land at lower levels was covered by industry and the steeply sloping higher ground covered with workers' cottages.



SALE OF PROPERTY OF THE LATE JOHN WOOD, DYER, OF BRINDLE HEATH. PENDLETON -LOT 2. All that FIELD, adjoining the bridge over the Bolton Railway in Brindle Heath, called Bonny Robin Bridge, containing 8,424 square years. This field is partially occupied by Thomas Iliffe as a rope walk, and the remainder is used for grazing. The whole is well adapted for building land, it having a good sewer running about 100 yards up the field and from thence under the railway and canal. [Manchester Guardian 14 January 1837 page 4]

By 1889 this rope works had disappeared from the OS map with Villiers Street under development. See also Manchester Rope and Twine Works Orchard Street near Whit Lane on the opposite side of the Manchester Bolton Canal

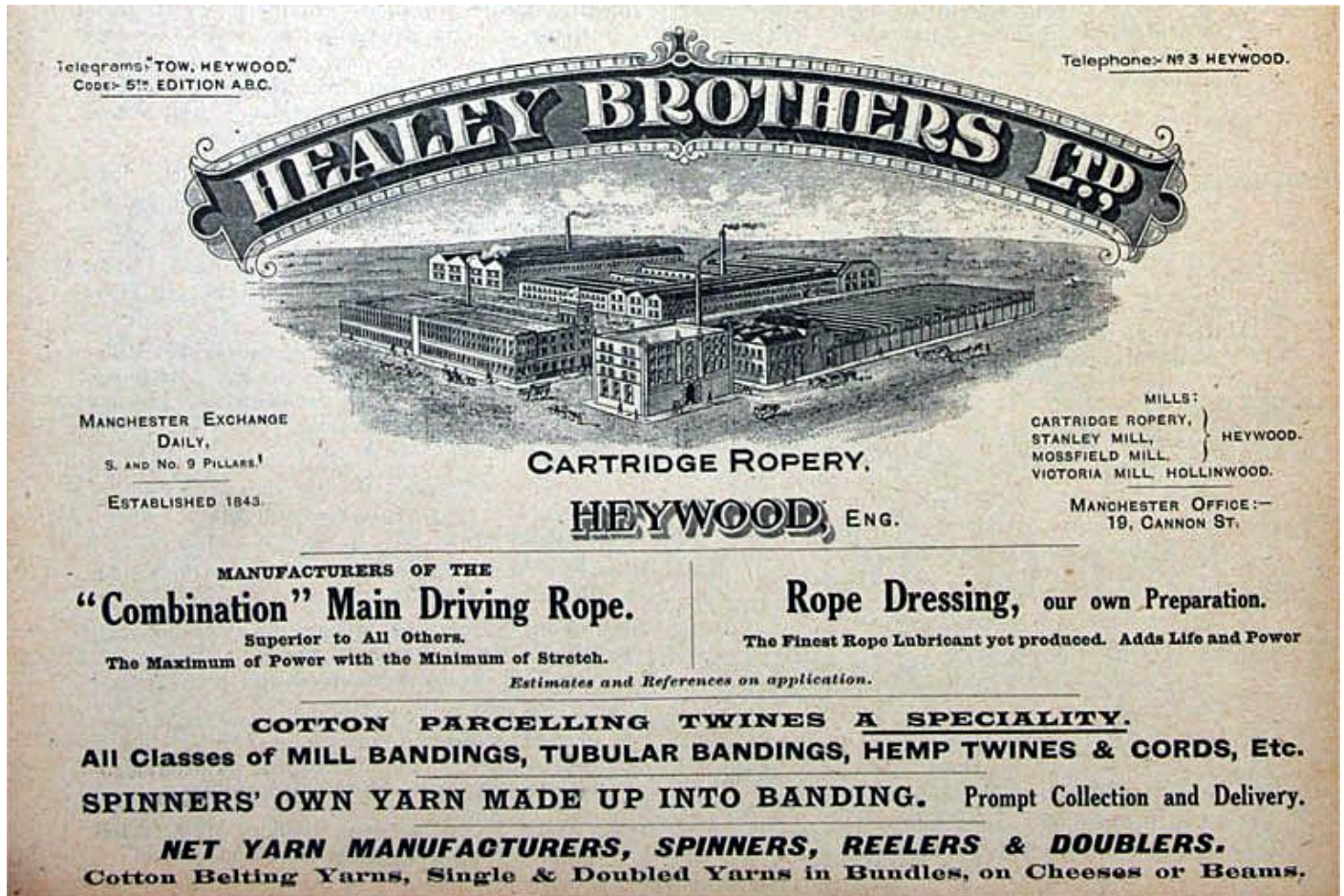
## Lancashire Hill Rope Works, Stanbank Street, Reddish

Occupied by Reuben Rivett in the late nineteenth century for the manufacture of rope drives in textile mills. The rope walk was parallel to Stockport branch of the Ashton Canal. Note also the Lancashire Hill Ropery on the opposite bank of the canal



## Cartridge Ropery, Brunswick Street, Heywood

This Heywood ropeworks was established by William Healey in 1843 and became Healey Brothers Ltd in 1874 when sons William, Robert and Jehu took over the business. It manufactured many types of rope and twine, including mill drive ropes. A rope walk stretched from Cartridge Ropery through the grounds of "Brooklands," owned by the Healeys until 1940. In 1960 Healy Brothers were taken over by British Ropes, later British Twine and Rope. The building was still in use in 2018.



Telegrams: "TOW, HEYWOOD."  
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Reference Heywood Trade Directories

## Outhwaites Ropemakers, Town Foot, Hawes, North Yorkshire

A rare example of a rope maker still in production. For many years the works were open to visitors but Covid 19 restrictions caused this to end.

Records of ropemaking in the Yorkshire Dales village of Hawes date back to the early 18th-century, when rope was essential to local farmers, as well as in mines, factories, and ships. Outhwaites has been in business since 1841 and is still working in the village as a manufacturer of rope, braid, cord, and twine for purposes ranging from bell ropes to dog leads, clothes lines to lead ropes for horses and cattle halters, as well as skipping ropes. The longest ropes used to be made on an outdoor rope walk, and still today the company uses the parking lot when an especially long rope cannot be made indoors.

## THE RESTORATION OF MANCHESTER TOWN HALL: AN UPDATE

Mark Watson

Saturday 28 January 2023 at Stretford Town Hall



*Manchester Town Hall shrouded in white plastic sheeting during restoration works, taken from the roof of Blackfriars House. Image © Sian Crosby December 2022*

At a well-attended meeting Mark gave his latest progress report regarding the refurbishment of Manchester Town Hall. Covered in scaffolding and shrouded in white plastic sheeting giving weatherproof conditions within, the town hall currently gives a ghostly apparition in the cityscape.

Restoration work continues apace. Mark's recent tour of the town hall included access to the various levels of scaffolding and he noted that this had allowed details, such as the exquisite carving of the gargoyles to the tower, to be examined at close hand rather than from street level. It was apparent that the original builders had not compromised on the standard of workmanship on such carvings.

Likewise, digital photography had allowed wall decorations high up in the shadows and previously all but unseen to be properly examined for the first time since their creation

At the time of his visit the re-roofing of the building was in progress. In a change from the first proposals the roof slates are now the size of those originally specified rather than those currently available as standard.



## ALL SAINTS (RC) CHURCH, BARTON-ON-IRWELL

James Crowley,

Architectural Historian and Secretary at Historic Churches Committee for Wales and Herefordshire,

Saturday 18th February 2023 at Stretford Public Hall,



James Cawley provided an interesting and illuminating talk on the Grade I listed All Saints RC Church at Barton-on-Irwell as a follow-up to the Manchester Group visit there last year. James who was brought up in the district abounded with knowledge of both the original building and subsequent changes.

*Left: The Apsidal east end of All Saints Church and the De Trafford Chantry Chapel photographed from Redcliffe Road.*

© Neil Darlington September 2022

Built near the western boundary of Trafford Park, which, at the time, was still the country estate of the de Trafford family, the present church replaced the first All Saints Chapel of 1818. Work on the new building commenced in April 1865; it was consecrated on 9 June 1868 and opened on 18 June 1868. Sir Humphrey de Trafford donated the site of 4955 square yards and "offered not less than £25,000 in order that a grand church be erected to the glory of God". The church was completed in the later years of E Wellby Pugin's partnership with Ashlin. The builder was Glaister of Liverpool who had just completed St Ann's Church, Stretford for the same architect and patron.

The plan included the building of the presbytery to the south of the church together with a linking cloister. The church was planned conventionally, with the major axis running east-west and comprised the nave with side aisles reduced to processional ways, chancel with polygonal apse and north porch. In the French Gothic tradition there were no transepts but in Pugin tradition each of these elements was expressed elevationally and roofed separately. The de Trafford Chantry Chapel, already complete, was linked to the chancel at the end of the north aisle. The north porch was placed on a secondary axis running north to south and directly opposite the cloister link to the presbytery. The original sacristies were demolished in 1950 to allow the construction of a church hall with dormitories over.

Our thanks to James for his most illuminating talk.

## “THE SECRET GARDEN”: LINKS BETWEEN FRANCES HODGSON BURNETT’S MUCH-LOVED BOOK AND HER EARLY LIFE IN VICTORIAN MANCHESTER AND SALFORD.

Anthea Darlington

Saturday 4th March 2023 Stretford Public Hall, Chester Road, Stretford, Manchester M32 0LG

The famous children’s writer was born in Cheetham Hill, but after the death of her father and the decline of the family business she spent her childhood in genteel poverty in Seedley and Islington Square in Salford, where an ‘enchanted garden’ and ‘an old, forgotten, deserted’ hidden garden gave her a love of gardens which continued for the rest of her life and served as the inspiration for her best-known book.

Anthea examined the many gardens which she either created or which inspired her, and the one in Salford which didn’t! The first garden was in Seedley Grove, Pendleton, a pleasant row of houses on a private road in an area still agricultural,

with large merchants’ houses to the north and the beginnings of industrial development to the west. No trace today alas- Tesco Metro at Salford Precinct occupies the site. In later life she called it ‘that enchanted garden (which has) remained throughout a lifetime, the Garden of Eden...flooded with perpetual sunshine and filled with the scent of... new-mown hay, apple blossom and strawberries.’ The next was in Islington Square, a square of Georgian terraces which had come down in the world, already surrounded by areas of extreme poverty and overcrowding which Friedrich Engels described as ‘filthy and disgusting.’ In the centre was a walled garden with a locked door, ‘the poor, old, forgotten, deserted garden’ whose ‘forgotten trees and flowers’ she could only visit in her imagination.



The only garden Frances had access to between 1863 and 1865 was that of her oldest friends from Islington, the Hadfields, who had moved to a pleasant house in Strawberry Hill beside the Manchester, Bolton and Bury Canal with a view across the fields across the river Irwell to Manchester. Frances’ family had been forced to make a new start across the Atlantic with relatives in Knoxville, Tennessee, but by the late 1860’s she was earning enough money by her published writings not only to support her family but to afford to return to England to revisit the Hadfields, which she did on many occasions. The 3 girls must have sat and walked and talked many times in the large communal garden, whose winding paths and circular lawns can be seen clearly on the 1848 OS map. Though the houses are long gone, as indeed are most of the terraced workers’ houses which replaced them, the remains of the garden with its species trees are still there (look on Google Streetview!). The one garden which Frances never visited was that at Buile Hill in Pendleton, despite many online references to her having both stayed there and

written much of ‘The Secret Garden’ while visiting. There was never a ‘secret garden’ at Buile Hill, nor anything like the summer garden she had enjoyed for that year at Seedley. Frances was writing her book in Kent between 1898 and 1910 when it was published: by 1897 Buile Hill was empty and eventually sold to Salford Corporation in 1903.



The strongest inspiration for ‘The Secret Garden’ undoubtedly came from the walled garden she discovered and restored at her English home, Great Maytham Hall in Kent between 1898 and 1907. The Salford gardens may be lost to us, but we can visit Great Maytham’s ‘secret garden’ under the National Gardens scheme every summer.



## Volunteers are urgently needed to keep the Victorian Society's Manchester Group going. See page 3

The Manchester Group of the Victorian Society is dedicated to fighting for our Victorian and Edwardian Heritage. The committee members who organise these events have been doing so splendidly for many years. However all are now in their seventies and feel the time has come to hand over to new active volunteers.

Earlier this year Stefan Jarkowski offered to act as chair. However, on 1 May he announced his resignation as a result of other commitments. We thank him for his contributions in the last few months. The existing committee members now find themselves in the same position as in December 2022 regarding this post. However, there has been some success with four members expressing interest in joining the committee.

Nonetheless the continuation of the group is by no means certain. There are currently no plans for further events and talks. Without a new membership secretary further communication by email could become impossible.

If you can help save our group, please contact me as soon as possible.

Neil Darlington Editor [andarlington@live.co.uk](mailto:andarlington@live.co.uk)