



**FRODSHAM AND DISTRICT
HISTORY SOCIETY**

JOURNAL



**Issue No.52
December 2022**

Compilers: Kath Gee and Sue Lorimer

Journal of
FRODSHAM AND DISTRICT HISTORY SOCIETY
Issue No. 52 December 2022

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PLEASE NOTE: Many of the articles in this Journal contain illustrations prefixed by FD or FDN. These are all images donated to Cheshire Archives and Local Studies (CALS) by our society for safe-keeping & online display in the Cheshire Image Bank. We gratefully acknowledge their electronic provision for use here.

**This issue commemorates our longest-reigning British monarch,
Queen Elizabeth II (1926-2022) who died on Thursday 8th September.**

CHAIRMAN'S INTRODUCTION

Officers:

Mr Frank Whitfield, Chairman & Programme secretary; Dr Kath Gee, Hon.Secretary; Mr David Fletcher, Hon.Treasurer.

Committee:

Mrs Fiona Barry, Archive Project Manager; Mrs Gill Baxter, Archivist; Mr Keith Bott; Mr John Davies; Mrs Margaret Dodd, Membership Secretary; Mr Andrew Faraday; Mrs Sue Lorimer.

Welcome to our History Society Journal 2022. At the latest count, in October 2022, the Society had 82 members including 6 Honorary Members, that's almost as many members as pre-Covid.

Sadly, we lost two of our Hon. Members as we moved into autumn. The first was Betty Wakefield, a committee member on a number of Frodsham societies during her later years. Betty was appointed Vice-Chairman of F&DHS in 2009 & served as a very able Chairman from 2010 to 2013. Betty was Programme Secretary for rather longer and helped to raise the profile of History Society with her choice of speakers. Both she and husband Tony, a former Treasurer of F&DHS, remained History Society committee members until 2019 and for most of that time held the committee meetings in their home at Manor Court. Betty died, with her sister at her side, on August 30th.

The second, more recent death, in October, was that of Maggie Jones. Maggie was Vice-chairman in 2004 and 2005 and elected Chairman in 2006. Maggie chaired the Extraordinary General Meeting held on August 7th 2006 which was called to make a change to the Constitution, recommended by HLF, to allow the award of a £29,000 grant for the society's Image Digitisation Project. Maggie continued as Chairman until 2009 when Betty replaced her. Maggie remained a committee member until 2014 when a further change was made to the Constitution allowing the executive committee to confer Honorary Membership on those deemed worthy of the honour'. Maggie was one of the first to be awarded Honorary Membership.

Looking back over 2022, we began with 2 speaker meetings on Zoom in February and March, followed by meetings in Main Street Community Church in April and May. In June we arranged a visit to Englesea Brook Chapel and Museum (Article 5, page 21) and a cruise on the steam ship Daniel Adamson (reported in Article 9, page 33). We've had, or are about to have, 4 monthly speaker meetings since September, all publicised on our website, frodshamhistory.org.uk.

Looking ahead to 2023, our year begins on February 6th with a Zoom meeting by Prof Steve Harding titled *Vikings in the Wirral*, and we hold our AGM and first 'face to face' speaker meeting in March – the start of another full, and hopefully successful, year of history.

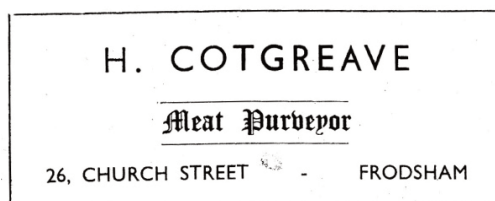
Frank Whitfield

SHOPPING IN FRODSHAM IN THE 1940s

James Greenhalgh

During the Second World War shopping was restricted by nationally imposed rationing, mainly of food but also of fuel and clothing. It was restricted also by shortages of many types of manufactured goods. What is not always remembered is that food rationing continued long after the war ended. When I went to university in 1950 I took my ration book with me to hand over to my college. In the 1940s shops in Frodsham were different from those we have today. They were mostly owned and staffed by families, so customers could build up personal relationships with those who served them, which was important in a time of shortages. The shops were also more primitive in design and construction.

I was born and brought up at 56 Fluin Lane. During the war my mother was very much occupied with cooking meals from our reduced food supplies, so I was given the job of shopping in the village. At that time there were at least four butchers in Frodsham. In Church Street **Cotgreave's** and another butcher stood opposite each other, and there was a third shop near the bottom of the street.



1949 advertisement



Left: Cowards 1949 – Bob Coward at the entrance to his shop, 68 Main St (courtesy Rob Coward)

However, for some reason we bought our meat at **Coward's**, which of course still exists, so for that I had to trek to that end of the village to collect our weekly pound of sausages which cost one shilling!

FDN1384 Kydds Grocery store, Church St, was well stocked between the wars

Church Street also had two grocers **Kydd's** on one side and Collinson's on the other. These were regarded as somewhat superior establishments, in contrast to the Co-operative store in Main Street. My mother preferred **Rogers'** grocery in Main Street, close to the Golden Lion pub. This was a decidedly primitive shop by today's standards. On entering you stepped



down on to a floor covered in sawdust (always renewed daily), see FD02456 below.

Mr Rogers with his sleeves rolled up stood behind the counter, on which there might be a joint of ham and, usually, a cat. He was assisted by two sons, although the younger son, Sydney was drafted into the forces at some point. The older son, George, was a well-known village character because he was also the village fire master. George delivered groceries to our house every week, and I can see him now, drinking tea in our kitchen. I have had to wait seventy years to have groceries delivered again, during lock-down!



Another primitive shop was Locketts, which seemed to have been constructed by roofing over an alley between two other buildings. It supplied the green groceries that we could not grow in our allotment located on the former tennis courts of Stapleton House. **Brereton's**, where Eddisbury Square is situated in Church Street, was a bigger green grocers, and at one time had a wholesale department in the building at the bottom of Fluin Lane that had once been a chapel and then a cinema.



The situation of Brereton's in Church Street (FD02476) and its well-stocked shop



I can recall only one baker and confectioner in Frodsham, and that was **Lawless's**, (FD00976) which survived until quite recently. Their shop in Church Street was an exception because it had been modernised (perhaps in the 1930s) by being fitted with steel and glass counters and display cabinets. Bread was of great importance during the war, although the 2lb loaf was reduced in size as an economy

measure. Confectionary was almost non-existent: all that Lawless's could produce was something called 'ginger strip', which was a firm confection of variable consistency but frequently too hard to bite into.

Fast food was not a big feature of 1940s shopping, but there were two 'carry out' establishments in the village. The fish and chip shop in Church Street was owned by the only other Greenhalgh family in Frodsham and we once found a truckload of potatoes at our door! Chips wrapped in newspaper were regarded by my parents as dangerous food, but as children we still enjoyed them. We also enjoyed the ice cream sold by the Miss Hollands' from their café next to the Bear's Paw. No ice cream was sold during the war, but the Miss Hollands' were the first to stock some after the war. This seemed to be made from whale oil. Sweets and chocolate were scarce but could sometimes be found at Crowther's newsagents shop (next to the chip shop) or at Smith's (next to Locketts). Smith's was of interest to us as it was a toy shop, but even when it expanded after the war it was not able to offer very much.

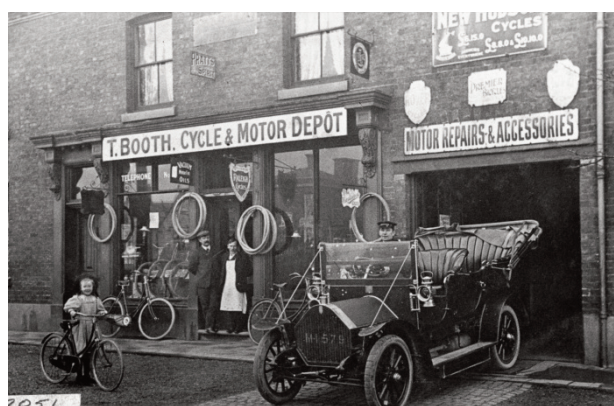
Moving away from food, I recall very occasional visits to Pollards the drapers. They were occasional because much of our war time clothing came from 'hand me downs'. But Pollards always fascinated me by its complicated overhead railway system for moving money around the shop. I was really more interested in a clothing shop near to the Bear's Paw, which sold working wear to the farmers attending the livestock market. Their corduroy trousers were so stiff and heavy that they could stand up on their own. I still have a pair of their leather gaiters.

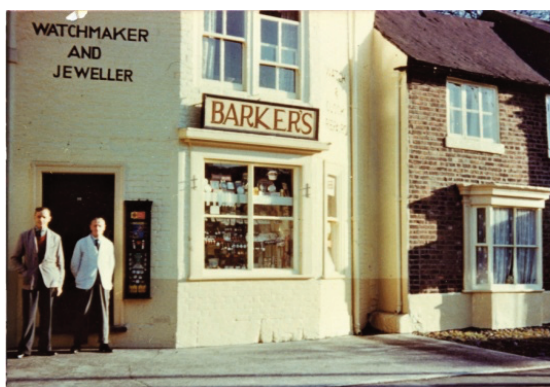


Booth's garage in Main Street (FDN2051) stocked the bicycle spare parts so essential during the war. It was the only garage that I have ever met that had a floor of wooden planks.

In the late 1940s Michael Jones opened an electrical shop near to the Old Hall. There was also a jeweller in the village (next to the station goods yard entrance in Church Street) and a

The other **Pollard's**, the ironmongers in Church Street, was my favourite shop. It sold all sorts of tools, cooking equipment, pottery and some furniture. It had a bare wooden floor and smelled permanently of paraffin. I still have and use most of the tools that I bought there as a teenager 70-75 years ago. FDN0700 Rothwell's, left, preceded Pollards the ironmongers.





watch and clock maker's shop, **Barker's**, in Main Street (FD02455). My first watch – second-hand with someone else's initials on it – came from Barker's and I still have it.

Shops offering services were also small in number. Earlam's, the chemists, opposite Pollard's the ironmongers, was probably the only shop smart enough to meet 21st century standards.

Thos. G. Cathro Ltd.
Chemists,
FRODSHAM.

ALL MEDICINAL, TOILET
AND
PHOTOGRAPHIC SUPPLIES.

1950s advertisement

Cathro's in Main Street was another long-lasting chemist. At one time it was also the Post Office, but that moved in the 1940s to its present location. From there I delivered mail as a Christmas postman, travelling by bicycle to Five Crosses and beyond. The barbers, Corker's, was located in High Street near the junction with Ship Street. In the 1940s Frodsham still had a saddler, in a wooden shop between the Church Street cinema and the railway line, and a blacksmith behind the shop.

What have I missed out, perhaps not remembering them because I did not use them? For example, there must have been a ladies' hairdresser, and I know there was a fishmonger's, although I do not eat fish. There must have been shops selling or repairing shoes. There were also shops at the outskirts of the village: a good grocer in Overton and shops at Five Crosses and Frodsham Bridge. One, on the way to the bridge was another favourite of mine: the small wooden **Littler's** sweet shop (FD02264) presided over by its owner, Mrs Littler, who was not little. However, in the 1940s Frodsham did not have many of the shops we have today. There were obviously no supermarkets. There were also no travel agents, betting shops, charity shops, cafes or nail bars.



During the war shopping could be supplemented by the Black Market, by which purchases could be made illegally. My father occasionally returned from a business trip with a leg of pork from a Lancashire farm. In the village there was one establishment which sold, from the back door, a mysterious fluid (probably an industrial solvent) that could be used to supplement the petrol ration.

My mother's seamstress, Miss Darlington who lived in Kingsway, had a lodger who brought us rather peculiar sweets from Liverpool. Even after the war I can recall the killing of a calf on a farm where I was working.

Shopping in the 1940s was restricted by scarcities, but today it is dominated by excesses. Every shop displays bewildering ranges of products, and competition among retailers is intense. Thus today shops and shopping are matters of concern with the decline of the large retail stores and the growth of internet purchasing. When self-isolating I did not enter a shop for more than a year, but survived with deliveries and click-and-collect. Frodsham has so far retained its shops which are operated in a style that I can link to my 1940s experiences, and I hope it will continue to do so.

Notes on this article:

James joined F&DHS during the pandemic when History Society had speakers on Zoom. James and his wife live in the Conwy Valley. We first met them at Frodsham Festival in the Park on 29th August 2021. We applaud his vivid memory of Frodsham in the 1940s.

The editors have added images to James' article. Those images, bearing FD / FDN reference numbers, are lodged in the Cheshire Image Bank and have been promptly provided by our society member employed by Cheshire Archives and Local Studies. Thank you, Heather. More than 4000 images of the Frodsham area can be searched at: www.cheshireimagebank.org.uk

The image of Brereton's 'well stocked shop' comes from the F&DHS archives. The society holds many other local images that require identification and cataloguing. Offers of assistance would be gratefully received. Please contact Gill Baxter, the Archivist, or any other member of the committee.

Some of the images in this article may not be easily located by History Society members, for instance:

- Pollard's, the ironmongers, is in front of the former cotton factory and where the new business 'Homebrew' is today.
- Barker's was in the right-hand part of the Queen's Head and next to the present Main Street jewellers. The image used was taken in the 1970s.
- Littler's sweet shop on Bridge Lane was demolished. The site is now occupied by the modern development, Bridgewater Close.

TWO RESIDENTS OF HELSBY

ONE MAKING HISTORY, THE OTHER RECORDING IT

Sue Lorimer and John Reidford



Sophie Ecclestone is a member of the present England Ladies Cricket Team in all formats; test, 50 over and 20/20 cricket. She has lived in Helsby all her life and was a pupil at both Hillside Primary School and Helsby High School. In cricket she graduated through the Cheshire and Lancashire youth teams but received her initial cricket education at Alvanley Cricket Club. When free from international commitments Sophie has played in the Alvanley Club first team alongside her brother James.

Sophie has represented her country in many parts of the world as a left arm spin bowler and a hard-hitting right hand batter. She is currently the number one female bowler in the world, in both the 50 over and the 20/20 games. Sophie Ecclestone is history in the making, putting Helsby and Alvanley Cricket Club on the map.

Alvanley Cricket Club was officially founded in 1884 but the Chester Chronicle records a game against Dunham as early as July 1864.



There are no photographs of the early teams from Alvanley but one exists of Helsby Cricket Club in 1895. The photograph left shows players in a match known as 'Married v. Ought-to-be's' which was held on 7th September 1895.

Samuel Lawrence Coulthurst was a renowned Victorian amateur photographer famous for his shots of street life in Manchester and Salford. He was born in Blackley in 1867 and spent most of his life in the Manchester area working as a wholesale buyer of books and stationery.



He moved to Helsby in 1925 and lived at 'Hillsborough' Bates Lane, until his death in 1939. Samuel's wife, Ann Coulthurst bought 'Hillsborough' from the Sarah, the widow of Samuel Ball, a retired clothier who had built the house c 1895.

Hillsborough House, with permission of Mr & Mrs Argust

As a member of Manchester Amateur Photographic Society, Samuel Coulthurst joined the first photographic survey of Manchester and Salford between 1890 and 1901. These historic images are now part of the Manchester Local Image Collection, which holds over 240 of Coulthurst's remarkable photographs. All are viewable online. Coulthurst deployed various means to obtain such natural shots. Sometimes, with his brother-in-law James Higson, he disguised himself as a Rag and Bone man taking photos from the cart, catching his subjects unaware.

Coulthurst also took photographs of landscapes, and his image titled 'Winter' received honourable mention at the Northern Exhibition at the Manchester City Art Gallery in 1913 (illustrated below). He exhibited all over the country and won many prizes, becoming a Fellow of the Royal Photographic Society in about 1913. Coulthurst was an expert on Lantern Slides. He gave many shows and published a book on the subject.



Did Samuel continue with his hobby whilst living in Helsby? He did exhibit some of his landscapes as part of a Photographic Exhibition held by Chester Society of Natural Science, Literature and Arts at Grosvenor Museum in 1932, but sadly these images are not held in Cheshire Image Bank. His love of the local countryside is clear. He wrote a letter to the Cheshire Observer in 1928, decrying littering, vandalism, the construction of garish red gas lamps and overhead power lines. He was also on the committee of the Helsby Sports and Flower Show in the early 1930s and had a keen interest in Freemasonry, writing several books on the subject which are held by Cheshire Archives and Local

Studies. Although not 'home-grown', Samuel Coulthurst settled comfortably into Helsby village life, allowing the village to feature, albeit briefly, according to reviews of his life and works. How sad it is that there are none of his photographs recording the history of Helsby in the Cheshire Image Bank.

19TH & 20TH CENTURY FRODSHAM SCHOOL STORIES

1 OVERTON COTTAGE LADIES BOARDING SCHOOL

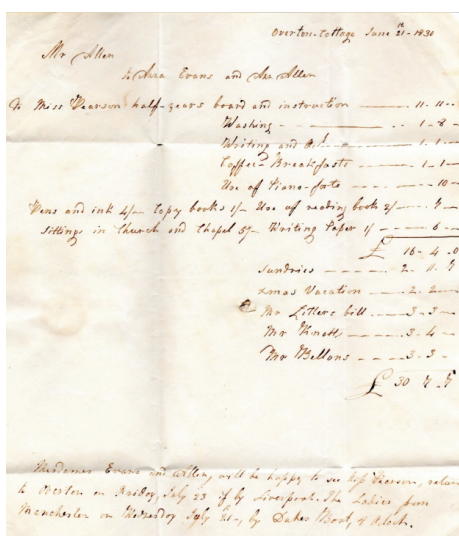
Sue Lorimer

Overton Cottage once stood at the junction of Bellemonte Road and Hillside Road, near the Bull's Head. It was a Girl's Boarding School for about 70 years.



Miss Currey's Boarding School for Young Ladies was probably the first such establishment in Frodsham. In 1813 the fees were 35 guineas per annum and the students had to furnish themselves with 4 towels, one dessert spoon and one teaspoon. Laundry was 12s 6d extra per quarter. This school had closed by 1817 and in the 1820s it became Evans and Allen's Academy. Photograph courtesy of N Smith.

Property now demolished. Date of image not known.



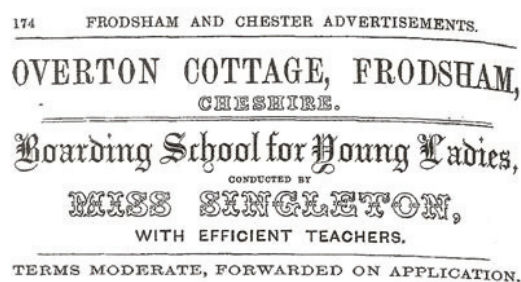
This invoice turned up recently in a collection donated to the Archives by Martin Smith. The invoice, dated June 21st 1830, was for half year board and instruction for a Miss Pearson with extras itemised for washing, writing and art, coffee and breakfasts, use of the pianoforte, pen and ink, copy books and writing paper, use of reading books, sitting in church and chapel, sundries and a charge for the Christmas vacation.

Sundries included: ribbons for coat, travelling to Liverpool, cleaning of bonnet, shoes mended, repair to frock, and one shilling for a tooth extraction. The total bill was £32 19s 9p. Miss

Pearson would be collected for the next term on 23rd July if coming from Liverpool, and ladies from Manchester would be collected on July 21st by Dukes Boat.

When Anna Evans died in 1832, Ann Allen continued to run the school, which was leased from the Marquis of Cholmondeley. An airy schoolroom and extra bedrooms were added in 1840, giving accommodation for up to 30 boarders. In July 1840, Ann Allen sold Rock Villa in High Street, Frodsham, to William Pickering. It is not known why Miss Allen had bought Rock Villa from the estate of William Warburton in 1837. Maybe she was intending to move the school, but decided on an extension to the Overton property instead. Teachers continued to collect students from both Manchester and Liverpool at the start of terms. The pupils from these towns had the

advantages, in Overton, of 'salubrious air, good water and pleasant walks', as well as being able to attend the Parish Church and occasionally the Wesleyan Methodist Chapel. On her death in 1860, at the age of 81, Miss Allen left the lease, the business and a pew in the Parish Church, to her assistant teacher Isabella Singleton.



Miss Singleton continued running a successful school with the help of governesses until her retirement at the end of 1881. In January 1882 all her personal furniture, household goods and the contents of the school were auctioned. There were two pianos, two long dining tables with twelve forms, three large school tables and

six desks and the contents of all the many bedrooms. Everything was sold, all the kitchen equipment, curtains, carpets and school books. Miss Isabella Singleton went to live with a nephew in Birkenhead, where she died in 1903, aged 92.

The advertisement (above) is an extract from the Morris Directory 1864



The property on the site of Overton Cottage, Ladies Boarding School, today

2 EDITH MARY ATKINS AND HER SCHOOLS IN FRODSHAM

Richard Vickery

Edith Mary Atkins was the youngest of six children, all girls, born to John and Mary Ellen Atkins, a prosperous lower middle-class family of Irish descent living in Liverpool. They all survived into old age, which is unusual for this time, and none of them married. The six children were:

Ellen Hadden (Nellie) Atkins	1876-1951
Amy Frances Atkins	1878-1954
Annie Winifred (Winnie) Atkins	1880-1955
Elizabeth Gilman (Lizzie) Atkins	1882-1955

Alice Harrietta Atkins

1886-1960

Edith Mary Atkins

1888-1972



Former Prospect House School, Church Street

The first 'Atkins' school was at Prospect House in Church Street, Frodsham, from around 1909 and was a kindergarten. Then in 1913 the family and school moved to Windygates in Red Lane and the school was for primary school age children. By 1921 the school had moved to Oaklands in

Vicarage Lane and stayed there until Edith died in 1972. Their mother, Mary Ellen was the principal but Elizabeth and Edith Mary were teachers.

By 1901 eldest daughter, Ellen, had left the 'Atkins' home and she does not appear in the 1911 or 1921 censuses with the rest of the family. But she is recorded in the 1939 Register, living in Ilkley, Yorkshire, and is described as a Wesley Deaconess, retired. She died in Warrington in 1951.

Also, second daughter, Amy, is not living with the family in 1911 and 1921 but is shown in the 1939 Registry as living at Oaklands, and her occupation is given as retired Maternity Nurse so she was not greatly involved with the school.

Alice is living with the family in 1921 and 1939 but is working as an Architect Tracer (draughtswoman) in Rock Ferry, so isn't helping at the school either.

By 1911 Mary Ellen, matriarch and now a widow, was living at Prospect House in Church Street with three of her daughters, Annie, Elizabeth and Edith Mary. Annie is described in the 1901 census as a Pupil Teacher and in the 1911 census as a School Teacher. By 1921 she is described as a Teacher with Liverpool Education Committee. She is a qualified teacher, probably in one of the council schools.

In the 1911 census Elizabeth is described as a Music Teacher and in the 1921 census as a Teacher at Oaklands School in its early years, though she does not appear in the 1939 Register.

The youngest of the six sisters, Edith Mary Atkins, is the person most involved in the three schools in Frodsham. In 1911 she is described as a Kindergarten Teacher living at Prospect House. The school was there from 1909 to 1913 and below is a copy of the Kindergarten Open Day Prospectus from the History Society's archives.



TIME TABLE.

	WEDNESDAY.	THURSDAY.	FRIDAY.
10.00.	<u>STORY.</u> To teach language and cultivate the imagination and sympathy.	<u>NATURE LESSON.</u> To train the powers of observation, and foster a love of Nature.	<u>PAPER CUTTING.</u> An expression lesson to give training in accuracy and neatness.
10.25.	<u>BUILDING.</u> To cultivate the powers of expression and to teach form and measure.	<u>BLACKBOARD DRAWING.</u> An expression lesson to encourage boldness and freedom in style.	<u>BRUSHWORK.</u> To train the artistic faculties.
10.45.	<u>RECREATION.....</u>		
11.10.	<u>NUMBER LESSON.</u>	<u>STICK LAYING.</u> An expression lesson to give training in accuracy.	<u>READING.</u>
11.35. to 12.0.	<u>CLAY MODELLING.</u> To exercise the creative faculties.	<u>KINDERGARTEN GAMES.</u> To bring the child's most natural form of expression i.e. play, into educational channels.	<u>SAND MODELLING.</u> To exercise the creative faculties. To introduce Geography.

Open Days programme at Prospect House, Wed April 13th – Fri April 15th 1910



FDN1064 Windygates

In 1913 the Atkins family and the school moved to Windygates in Red Lane. Here, the children are of primary school age.



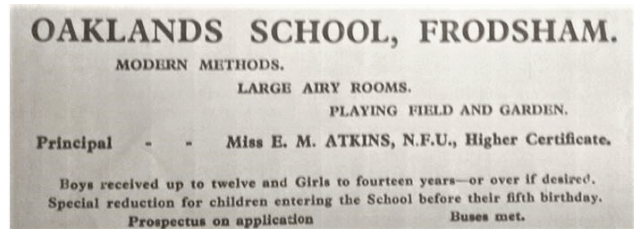
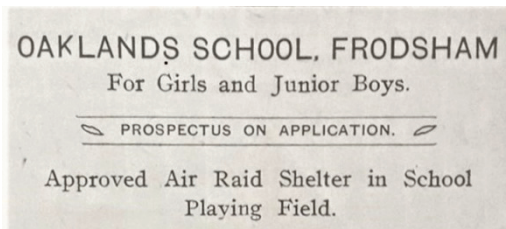
FDN1002 Windygates pupils & teachers on

October 2nd 1914

By 1921 Edith Mary is the Principal of Oaklands School in Vicarage Lane. This school lasted a further 50 years until 1972. There are images of the school pupils from the 1930s and post-war period in the Cheshire Image Bank. It seems likely that the family rented the house.



FDN1119 pupils at Oaklands, probably in the late 1930s



The advertisement on the left is from a wartime Parish Magazine and the one on the right probably from the 1950s

Edith Mary Atkins died in 1972, aged 84, after 62 years as a teacher!



Oaklands (above), Windygates and Prospect House, once private schools, are all private residences today.

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE CASTLE PARK ARTS CENTRE

THE CLOCK TOWER BUILDING AND GARDEN

Keith Bott

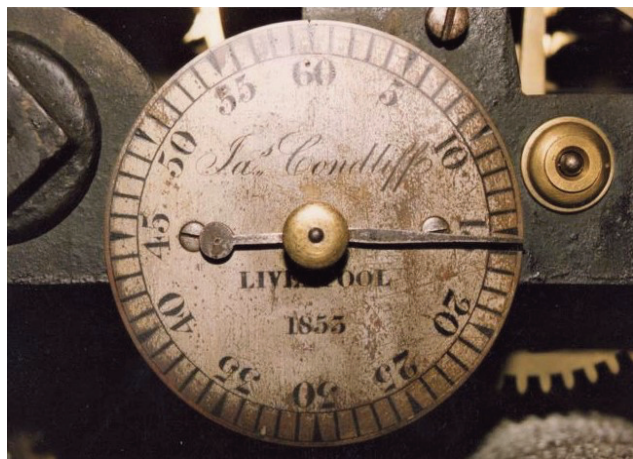
Castle Park Arts Centre, formerly a double coach-house, stable block and clock tower was built in 1852, and was an important outbuilding of Park Place estate. The estate was bought by Joseph Stubs in 1851 and remodelled by him. In 1855 he employed Edward Kemp to layout the grounds. On Stubs death in 1861 Park Place estate was auctioned and sold to Edward Abbott Wright. Edward promptly changed the name to 'Castle Park' and made it his family home. Castle Park was bequeathed to the local authority in 1933 for the use, enjoyment and benefit of local inhabitants after which buildings were repurposed and the grounds became a public park.

As the twentieth century progressed the buildings and their uses changed. The Frodsham Society, in 1977, expressed concern that proposals for Castle Park House might not be compatible with the original Trust Deed and put forward alternative suggestions. But, on reflection, it was felt to be too ambitious a step for the Frodsham Society to take. Instead, their interest became focused on the coach house and stables which included the estate's timepiece: the clock tower. This building was recognised as a key part of the estate and enjoyed an attractive location and landscape setting. Some of the spaces were still being used for Council storage and accommodation, but it was felt that it had far greater potential. The Frodsham Society offered to act as a focus for individuals and local groups with ideas for its future use and potential that could be put to the Council.



FDN1526 Clock tower and stables in 1899

Below, the setting dial of James Condliiff's clock dated 1853



Under the sponsorship of the Society, a Frodsham Arts Centre Working Party was formed in 1978. This was made up of volunteers under Chairman Kenneth Leake to explore the feasibility of establishing a Centre at which performing and visual arts and crafts would be promoted. It met regularly from June 1978 onwards and set about talking to and gathering information from various bodies, organisations and institutions in the region including local museums, galleries and art schools that might be interested in using and/or assisting in the development of an Arts Centre.

To stimulate discussion, the Society produced outline proposals for the Clock Tower Building (their preferred name), formerly the Coach House and Stables. Though modest in size (somewhat under 3000 sq. ft.) this building had benefited from some re-building necessary after a fire several years before. There were sizeable rooms suitable for meetings and exhibitions on both ground and first floor, whilst the part not damaged by the fire had smaller rooms suitable for art or craft activities.

During 1979 the Working Party held several meetings with Councillors and Officers at which their plans for the possible conversion of the Clock Tower Building were discussed. The cost of the work involved was estimated at £30,000. To this, professional fees would need to be added. Running costs (excluding the costs of mounting exhibitions and other events) were also estimated at £3500 per annum, based on the Frodsham Community Centre experience.

The Council gave the Working Party's proposals a sympathetic hearing, whilst stressing the current restraints on expenditure. It undertook to carry out a feasibility study of the outbuilding, report on its condition and define the future requirements. The results were published in a Report to its Policy and Resources Committee and presented to the full Council in July 1980. As a result, the Council agreed to offer the Clock Tower Building on a 35 year lease at a rent of £5 per annum. This offer was subject to the Frodsham Society / Working Party showing, within two years from autumn 1980, that they could raise the necessary funds to convert the building.

The Frodsham Society / Working Party decided to establish a formal project, 'Castle Park Art Centre Frodsham', with its own letter heading and logo to give the project a specific identity. Initial activity concentrated on such things as drafting property management documents, establishing a management structure, redefining and examining in greater detail the type of facilities which might be provided.

The Society joined the Association of Independent Museums offering a fund of experience and information. Members of the Working Party also attended two national symposiums on setting up facilities of this type and were greatly encouraged by the number of precedents for this sort of provision. Most examples were characterised by one main feature, the degree to which the realisation of such projects depended upon the determination of the local population to see the project implemented. In that context the response to the Council offer was very encouraging.

On the 16th January 1981 a cheese and wine evening was held at Frodsham Community Centre to present the project to the public. The 250 people present gave it their enthusiastic support. Those attending included; The Chairman of Cheshire County Council (Cllr G Ford), the Chairman of Vale Royal District Council (Cllr S Williams), the Chairman of Frodsham Parish Council (Cllr Mrs D.Downey) and Chairmen of Neighbouring Parish Councils. Many other local organisations were represented including Norton Priory Museum. The Project was illustrated by a slide show and plans which were subsequently displayed at the Frodsham Library. In addition, a proforma was issued in the Frodsham Society's Interact Magazine asking for expressions of interest from people who were either skilled in, or wishing to pursue, a range of activities. More than 50 people had indicated their interest in over 30 different activities which could find a home at the Centre, or, in 5 skills associated with running it.

To bring the Arts Centre into being and manage it, it was decided to form a company without share capital, limited by guarantee, to be known as Castle Park Arts Centre Ltd, which would be registered as an educational charity. By the end of 1981, the limited company had been formed and the charity registered. Initially, 3 Trustees were appointed: Chair-Kenneth Leake, Treasurer-Alan Hollinshead and Secretary-David Reston. This situation applied until the first AGM the following year when a full Board of Trustees was elected: Chair-Jim Cox, Treasurer-Alan Hollinshead, Secretary-David Reston, plus Kenneth Leake, Howard Talbot and David Evans.

The Working Party became the Executive Committee and one of their main priorities was to raise the funds for the conversion of the building which was now estimated to be over £40,000. Their remit was to consider all possible sources of finance: grants, donations, voluntary fund raising activities, etc. They embarked on an extensive and ongoing fund raising programme. By the end of the financial year (March 1982) a total of £7,000 had been raised or promised.

Effective from April 1982, the Executive Committee commenced a membership drive with initially two categories of member: Founder @ £5 pa and Member @ £2 pa. They also decided to produce a quarterly magazine / newsletter under the editorship of Howard Talbot (and subsequently Kay Knott) which included details of forthcoming events, both locally and further afield, and progress with the financial support. The first edition was published in the summer of that year.

Fund raising continued during 1982 and by the financial year end (March 1983) total funds available or promised stood at £29,000, which included the offer of a £16,500 grant from the Council. In December, the Council extended its lease offer for a further six months.

During 1983, negotiations with the Council regarding the terms of the lease and the securing of planning permission were ongoing, together with discussions with the

Castle Park Trustees regarding the proposed use of the Clock Tower Building. In the autumn of 1983, following positive discussions with Castle Park Trustees and in the knowledge that finances from all sources would soon reach £45,000, the Arts Centre Trustees agreed terms of appointment with Keith Smith of Lymm in association with Austin Smith-Lord of Warrington to act as Consultant Architects for the conversion of the Clock Tower Building.

During the planning phase, it was identified that the weather, and years of neglect, had affected the structure of the building more severely than had been expected and extensive renovation work would be necessary. This resulted in a revised upper cost, est. c.£80,000, based on the necessary work being carried out by contractors.

To minimise the expenditure, in collaboration with the architects, an application was made to the Manpower Services Commission (MSC) to consider the project as an assisted scheme. The project was accepted by the MSC and it was agreed that there would be major input from the Community Programme and the Youth Training Scheme (YTS) teams managed by Ellesmere Port Royal British Legion Training Centre. It was provisionally estimated that the work should take about 12 months to complete with a possible start before the end of January 1984.

During 1984 the Council agreed to broaden the lease to include the lower and upper courtyards together with a parcel of derelict land located to the south of the main Clock Tower Building. In the event, work on the conversion did not commence until September 1984 and continued at a slow pace throughout 1985 and into 1986. Extensive work was necessary, both internally and externally, to deal with subsidence, dry rot, re-pointing brickwork, cleaning the cobbled forecourt, dry lining walls, strengthening main beams, installing new window frames, plumbing, tiling, plastering, erecting partition walls and painting. In addition work was undertaken on the central heating system, a lift for the disabled and the main electrical system. Suitable furniture was also necessary and this was either given or purchased cheaply and then given a major facelift. Supplementing the main work-force was a band of willing helpers under the supervision of Frank Taffs, Fabric Officer.

As a result, it was forecast that the Centre would not be open until Spring 1986. Power was first connected in April and limited use of the building was available from the second half of April, with two exhibitions of local arts and crafts being organised. The Clock Tower Building with its three galleries, entrance foyer, two craft rooms, a committee room, kitchen and toilets was finally completed in the summer of 1986. To celebrate, the Arts Centre organised a garden party in Castle Park on 19th July. This was the first 'Victorian Day in the Park' which was to become an annual event.

The clock on the roof of the building, originally supplied by James Condcliff of Liverpool, had been stopped and covered during the re-building. Prior to re-starting,

it was stripped down, checked and thoroughly cleaned. This work was carried out by St Helens clock maker Eric Gent and steeplejack Philip Irvine and was funded by the Council.

Because of the delayed building programme, planned use of the Centre for art and craft exhibitions, displays, classes, workshops, social events, and lettings had had to be delayed and the first regular users were not able to be welcomed into the Centre until the autumn 1986 season. Activities were to include; children's dancing, patchwork, lace making, machine knitting, china painting, spinning and weaving, photography, pottery and organ music together with the four original groups, set up in 1982, that had continued to meet in member's homes or the community centre. The groups were: literature, classical music, art and local history (the original name of our society).

From September 1986, the Centre had an Administration Officer, Roger Mew, who was available 3 days each week on secondment through the National Westminster Bank enterprise scheme.

The Arts Centre was officially opened on 11th October 1986 by Lord Leverhulme who unveiled a wall-mounted bronze plaque in the foyer to commemorate the occasion. He was presented with a ceramic plaque of the Centre painted by Beth Savage. Over 100 guests attended including the local MP, MEP and Chairmen of the County, District and Parish Councils together with representatives of Trusts, founder members of the Centre and local societies who had helped financially with the project. The ceremony was followed by a party in the evening and an open day on Sunday 12th October.



The renovated Clock Tower Building



The Round Table Gate in 2006

Clearly, without the cost savings arising from the MSC's funding of the building work, the project could not have been undertaken. However, after 8 years of concerted effort and fundraising, coupled with delays and frustrations the objective of transforming a formerly dilapidated coach house and stables into a thriving and physically sound community Arts Centre had been successfully achieved.

Whilst work on the main building was underway, attention was also given to the development of the parcel of derelict land to the south of the Clock Tower Building which formed part of the extension to the lease agreed by the Council in 1984. Discussions were held with Frodsham Round Table and they agreed to fund, design and develop it as a garden, particularly suited for disabled and visually impaired people. Under the joint supervision of Eric Rafferty (Chair of the Round Table Sub-Committee) and John Grenside (representing the Arts Centre), both keen gardeners, construction work was undertaken by an MSC funded YTS team from Ellesmere Port Royal British Legion Training Centre during the autumn 1986 to create raised beds and paved areas. Planting of aromatic and scented plants was then carried out in Spring 1987 by John Grenside and Round Table members. Future maintenance of the garden was to be in the hands of the Arts Centre.

The Round Table Garden for the Disabled was officially opened by Cllr Marie Birkenhead, Leader of Vale Royal District Council, on 5th July 1987 during the second Summer 'Victorian Day in the Park' organised by the Arts Centre in collaboration with Frodsham & District Round Table. This event attracted over 2000 people! The garden has undergone several subsequent make-overs and the commemorative gate, pictured above, is now a decorative feature on the exterior Arts Centre wall.

Today, Castle Park Arts Centre is a vibrant meeting place and cafe, a venue for live music and art exhibitions and is unique in Cheshire. It is a tribute to those who worked so hard for its establishment.

Acknowledgements

Kath Gee and Gill Baxter, F&DHS Secretary and Archivist
Peter Vickery, CPAC Chair of Trustees

Sources

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VISIT TO ENGLESEA BROOK CHAPEL AND MUSEUM

Camille Bradford

Introduction to the visit



On Monday 13th June 2022 History Society organised an afternoon coach trip to Englesea Brook Museum of Primitive Methodism near Crewe. The small village of Englesea Brook is a Conservation Area with several listed buildings. The Museum is the only heritage site to focus on the 19th century working-class movement which became known as the Society of Primitive Methodists. Hugh Bourne (1772-1852) was instrumental

in its foundation. Hugh was brought up in a small mining village near Stoke on Trent. He developed a style of open-air preaching, combined with public confession of sin, group prayer, and hymn singing. This was clearly distinctive from the Wesleyan norm and provided the model for subsequent 'camp meetings'. The first camp meeting was held near the summit of Mow Cop in 1807.

Primitive Methodist chapels began to appear around the Staffordshire/Cheshire border before spreading more widely. Hugh Bourne is buried in the graveyard at Englesea Brook. In 2022 the Museum is commemorating the 250th anniversary of Hugh Bourne's birth.

The Bourne Chapel in Main Street Frodsham (now apartments) is our local example. Englesea Brook Museum holds a time capsule that was discovered during refurbishment. They also hold a 'quilt' signed by former members of Trinity Methodist Church, 1891, which we will be able to view. This guided visit includes the small graveyard, pretty village and refreshments in the schoolroom cafe.
Photograph of Bourne Chapel taken 23 .5.2008



Camille's illustrated account of the visit

I joined the History Society on a trip to the Primitive Methodist Chapel at Englesea Brook. Hugh Bourne was instrumental in its foundation and this year they are commemorating the 250th anniversary of his birth. He is buried in the cemetery opposite the chapel.

On arrival we were given a history of the chapel and they had out on display the large signature cloth [quilt] the ladies of Trinity Church Frodsham had embroidered and that we donated to them a few years back. This was such an amazing piece of

work, looked after for many years by Ruth Caldwell, the mother of a History Society member, and it was lovely to see it again.



We were then able to look around the Chapel and the museum, which is very well set up with interesting items from the past, including several Sunday School banners. There was a lovely old printing press which was fascinating to see with all its letters.



This cart, above left, was pulled by a minister as he travelled around the country and he used it to stand on so he could be seen whilst preaching outdoors. Above right is a funeral trolley and behind are small posters of Sunday School banners.



We asked where the toilets were and were directed out to the yard...

No problem, they have actually built a modern block as well!

While everyone was out having drinks on the pleasant little patio I went back to the chapel to take some more photos and climbed up the narrow stairs to the balcony.

Here you have a very steep incline, with boxed pews on either side. I also liked the wonderful woodwork on the harmonium.



Next door to the museum car park is a temperature and moisture controlled brand new building for storing precious artefacts. They have lovely shelves for the rolled up banners, all kept in protective bags. Then shallow drawers for small items like keys or letters or objects sent back from missionaries overseas. Down the middle of the room was a large glass cabinet to display items such as sets of china, crockery, silverware and clothes. On the top shelf was the glass time capsule [1876] found at the Bourne Church, Frodsham in 2013. Unfortunately it was too high for me to see it properly. The contents are too fragile to take out now. [History Society members working on our own archives were inspired by this purpose-built facility for storing and displaying archives. A grant from HLF had financed it.] It was a very pleasant and interesting afternoon and I can highly recommend a visit!



Hugh Bourne's tomb in the graveyard

FRODSHAM AND HELSBY'S EDWARDIAN HOCKEY BOOM

Jim Ormandy

Hockey in the north, from the mid nineteenth century, was a game growing in popularity in certain districts and institutions yet, like many sports, it was to be shaped by groups whose interests were rooted in class privilege and class exclusiveness. The second and successful attempt to set up a Hockey Association (HA) in 1886 would create the first sporting organisation to have royal patronage and royal participation. The Duke of Clarence, second in line to the throne, was to be its president and could be found playing at Trinity College Cambridge. The members of the HA who codified the rules of the game were drawn from clubs based in the exclusive upper middle-class enclaves of metropolitan London. The game would quickly be embraced by the upper middle-class gentlemen in the affluent suburbs of Liverpool and Manchester. In 1888 the Wirral had six clubs all of which had upper middle-class members such as accountants, bankers, clergymen, cotton brokers, landowners, merchants, solicitors and shipowners. Similarly in 1888, the Cheshire suburbs of South Manchester had several clubs, such Alderley Edge, Bowdon, Brooklands, Kersal, Sale and Timperley, whose membership was exclusively upper middle-class.

Just a few years later the daughters of the aristocracy and gentry, who were attending the new ladies colleges of Cambridge, Oxford and London were soon at the forefront of establishing hockey as a suitable game for women. They organised the All England Women's Hockey Association in 1896. The aristocratic ladies of Cheshire were soon picking up sticks...

Lady Margaret Ormsby-Gore, daughter of Charles Gordon, 10th Marquess of Huntley and wife of the future Baron Harlech, along with the Marchioness of Cholmondeley were the driving force behind the establishment of Malpas LHC in 1897. They would organise teams to play each other under the titles of Malpas v Overton. Both teams were organised by these ladies and played each other regularly. The Marchioness's daughter, Lady Lettice Cholmondeley, was seen to be an accomplished player and Lady Ormsby-Gore a formidable goalkeeper.

Hockey as a team sport grew and experienced downward social diffusion quickly. It was played across all the sectors of the middle class proving to be popular as both men and women could play competitively, separately, or together in mixed hockey games, in a period where the debate over women's emancipation reached new heights. Women playing hockey and especially mixed hockey, as they were competing on an equal footing alongside men, were even accused of being 'new women' and likely suffragettes. The men and women of the upper middle-class families of Frodsham and Helsby would soon find the time to play mixed hockey. The Brandreths and Thornelys of Helsby and Harry Smith's in-laws, the Dicksons of Chester, were all prominent founder members. In September 1900 a meeting was held in the Helsby home of Mr Harry Smith, Solicitor and Director of Chester Chronicle, to discuss forming a hockey club for ladies and gentlemen to be known as Helsby HC. The following officers were elected: Captain, Harry Smith; Vice-captain, James Gray Brandreth, owner of the milling business Hutchinson and Brandreth; Hon. Secretary, his sister, Miss Marion Brandreth; Hon. Treasurer, Miss Carrie Thornely. Committee members: James Taylor, co-founder of The Telegraph Works and future Justice of the Peace; Herbert Guest, tanner, son of Edwin Guest JP and the Rev Charles Robert McKee, curate at Helsby 1897-1902 (who would leave to become the Vicar at Bickerton Malpas). It was resolved that the teams would play in scarlet and the annual subscription was 5 shillings.

One of the first ladies games was against the Queen's School Old Girls resulting in a very easy win for Helsby by six goals to nil. The Queen's School, where the Brandreth girls had been educated, had been playing hockey since 1896. For Helsby, Miss Joan Dickson, captain, and Miss Bertha Dickson, played brilliantly, the latter of whom scored twice from outside right. The Dickson ladies were cousins and daughters of William & George Dickson the seed merchants and nurserymen from Newton in Chester. Harry Smith had married Edith Dickson, Bertha's sister.

Meanwhile, on the same day the men played at Mold with Helsby taking the lead after five minutes with a goal from Molyneaux. The game ended with a 6-3 win for Helsby. Helsby's team that day was:

Goal keeper, Herbert W Guest; full backs, Gordon Dickson and Edward Crosland; half backs, Rev Charles R. McKee, Harry Smith (Captain) and Rev Charles Wray;

forwards, Gray Brandreth, Arnold Thornely, W A Molyneaux, Frederick Thornely and R Wright. Clergymen such as McKee and Wray were keen advocates of the game, participating and often being founder members of clubs across the shires as they often saw themselves as gentry, or, part of the new professional classes.

In their first season Helsby were to play several mixed games which were becoming popular at the turn of the century. A closely contested mixed game against an aristocratic Overton side ended in defeat, 3-2, with Helsby claiming the first Overton goal to be offside. The Helsby mixed team was: Goal keeper, Miss R Cartwright; backs, Gordon Dickson and Frederick Thornely; half backs, Mrs H Smith, Arnold Thornley and Miss Bertha Dickson; forwards, Gray Brandreth, Miss A Thornley, W A Molyneaux, Miss Marion Brandreth and Johnson Thornely.

A local mixed derby was held in November 1901 between Helsby and Frodsham. Helsby won the fixture 5-1. The teams were as follows:

Frodsham: Messrs Boston, Molyneux, Sutton, Wallington, Smith and Dickson, and Misses Worth, Isaacs, Baxter, Irvine and Entwistle.

Helsby: Messrs G Brandreth, A Thornely, C Lewis, L Brandreth, Harrison and F Thornely, plus Misses C Thornely, M Brandreth, N Day, Dickson and D Wright.

Another was played on 25th January 1902, but following the establishment of Frodsham Hockey Club as part of Frodsham Athletic Club in 1901, most of the male Helsby players defected to Frodsham!

Frodsham Hockey Club appeared in the 1901-02 season playing local teams and the second XI teams of several established clubs. By 1903, at the request of the cricket section, each section of the Athletic Club became financially independent.

Fixtures in their early years give a flavour of how hockey was spreading across the region. They played teams from Warrington, Widnes, Southport, Liverpool, New Brighton, Rock Ferry and Crewe.

Transport to away games was by train and post-match revelries often meant returning on a late train. Their 1903-04 season saw them still unbeaten in mid-February scoring 70 goals and only conceding 12. When founder member Ted Wallington of Sutton emigrated to Texas, they suffered their only defeat.

At the AGM at the end of the following season (1904-05), Captain, Dr Thomas James Selby, reported that their record was 21 matches, 11 won, 6 lost, 4 drawn. He commented that *"Several members had resigned for business reasons, but it was hoped and justifiably anticipated that new members would be forthcoming to make up the deficiencies. It is expected that there will, next season, be a sufficient complement of ladies to raise a full team, several additional ones having- promised to play. Mr Francis Boston, of Halton Grange Runcorn, was re-elected president. Mr John Ockleston. of Oakdale, Vice-president, while Mr Harry Smith, of The Bungalow, Helsby, was appointed Captain, Vice-captain, Dr Selby, resigned to take up the secretarial duties, and Mr Evelyn J Sutton was re-elected Hon. Treasurer."*

1906 saw a notable double victory over Bebington 2nd XI 8-1 away and 12-1 at home followed by a 5-2 victory over Chester 2nd XI. The local newspaper had rightly forecasted this rich vein of form reporting at the start of the season. *"Prospects for the forthcoming season are, on the whole, good. Most of last season's players are available, while several new members have joined."* Mr. F Boston was still the President, Mr Moore, Captain, Mr William Sandys, Vice- captain, Mr W Ferguson, Hon. Secretary, and Dr Thomas J Selby, Hon. Treasurer. The season opened with a practice match followed by a home game against Oxton 2nd XI. Bebington. Chester and Oxton were clubs affiliated to Cheshire HA and their 1st XI teams could boast several international players, but Frodsham like the majority of clubs would remain unaffiliated. They saw little point of paying 10s 6d for membership as none of their players were likely to play for the county and there was no other benefit to be had. The HA had deemed that affiliated clubs should not play unaffiliated ones, but the clubs generally ignored the ruling for their lower teams as it was beneficial to play local sides rather than travel further to the few affiliated clubs.

Affiliation to Cheshire HA would peak in 1908 at 21 clubs yet there were at the time 50 clubs playing in and around Liverpool and more than 70 in the Manchester districts. Clubs came and went, some finding it difficult to find pitches or fixtures and others because they lost key personal who had devoted time and energy to organising the club. Others found it difficult to recruit players to replace older players.

Hockey attracted retired footballers and rugby players who could prolong their sporting life playing a non-contact game, but it was becoming a sport primarily

associated with women as it had become part of the curriculum for girls in secondary schools from 1906 onwards.

It is unknown why the Frodsham HC disbanded and failed to appear for 1907-08 season though several 1906-07 match reports commented on the fact they were as usual short-handed. This was linked to men failing to turnout and team members such as Gordon Dickson, Gray Brandreth, Lewis Brandreth, H Day and Arnold Thornely playing for Chester HC in the 1906-07 season. Also, many of the founder members had grown old and others left the district such as Harry Smith who had retired to Llandudno due to ill health. It seemed that having spent one season struggling to field a team, senior players moved on.

Mixed hockey remained popular. Frodsham Mixed appeared regularly playing teams such as Penketh Friend's School and Widnes Mixed. A ladies team was appearing occasionally from 1905 but it was not until November 1908 that Frodsham Ladies HC was established playing not at the Athletic club, but at the Mersey View Pleasure Grounds. They were playing in colours of green and blue thanks mainly to the initiative and enterprise of the Rev Richard L Mann.



FD07390 Members of Frodsham Ladies Hockey Club team c.1909

The picture of the team depicts them with a trophy and the information on the Cheshire Image Bank caption includes the names Winifred Rodgers, Mrs Gertrude

Holland, teacher, and Miss Nellie Jones. When founded in 1908, Mrs R H Dutton, wife of a bank manager, was elected president, Miss Frances Nicholas, daughter of Thomas Nicholas, manager of a chemical works was Captain, Miss Alice Barrow, school assistant, Hon. Secretary and Treasurer. The committee members were Misses Mary McWaters, a teacher, B Button, W Rodgers, and Peterson. They played practice matches in November and December before starting fixtures in 1909.

The playing for cups and league competitions was prohibited by both the HA and the All England Women's Association yet the unaffiliated clubs often held tournaments, sometimes with trophies. Women's leagues would begin in Manchester in 1910; with Leigh and Altrincham St. Margaret's being the 1st division winners before the First World War. Leigh LHC suffered a heavy 5-0 defeat at home in their friendly game with Frodsham LHC in October 1913. By this time, Helsby had their own ladies hockey club playing local teams such as Halton & Sutton LHC, who defeated them 7-0 in the 1912-13 and Lymm Ladies who defeated them 2-0 in the first game of that season. Locally, women's hockey was proving to be a popular pastime in the villages and townships of Cheshire. Further afield, Tarvin LHC, formed in 1903, were drawing crowds to their games and they were still drawing large crowds in 1907, when they narrowly lost 2-1 to Halton & Sutton.

Frodsham and Helsby were very much a part of this Edwardian hockey boom which initiated the sporting emancipation of women. In the pre-World War I period women were still derided for playing masculine team sports. Mixed hockey where men and women competed equally against each other was ridiculed by the press, the HA and the All England Women's Hockey Association, who refused to recognise the mixed game. This was a time when women who got married were often compelled by employers, or expected to give up work and leisure pursuits, to look after their husbands and start a family. Yet, this rule was being broken and the 'hockey girls' or 'new women' as they were known were increasing in number in Frodsham and Helsby!

A BEACON ALIGHT!

Fiona Barry and Nikki Barker

Frodsham has a long history as a beacon lighting site, due to its prominent visibility across the river Mersey. Beacons have been used as a means of signalling an enemy's advance since the end of the 12th century, and most notably to warn of the Spanish Armada in 1588. William Beamont, the Warrington historian, wrote "*we do not know however that the beacon at Frodsham blazed forth its fiery torch when the Spanish Armada was over*", but the removal of the beacon at Frodsham was mentioned in the Queen's instructions on 9 November 1595!¹

The 1893 Manchester Weekly Times² article about Beacon Hill, Frodsham, stated that "*It is said that, until recent times, might be seen marks to guide the eye of the watchers to a corresponding beacon on Mow Cop and to others in Lancashire, Shropshire and North Wales*". In the church books at Frodsham, the following entry: "*1613, laid down to Robert Caweworth and Richard Hickson for the making and setting up of the beacon at the request of Sir John Savage*", at a cost of 16 shillings. On 25th June 1666 King Charles II's Secretary, William Morrice, wrote to the Lord Lieutenant of Cheshire, the Earl of Derby, in anticipation of an invasion by the Dutch, saying "*You are to take special care and give speedy Orders that yo'r Beacons be watched by sufficient p'sons within the respective hundreds next Adioyneing to the Seaside, and Fired as there shall be Occasion.*"³

In the last two hundred years beacons have become a symbol of celebration, to mark Royal Coronations and Jubilees. The Warrington Guardian⁴ published an article about Mr Ben Rigby, who had a unique record of beacon building, commencing with Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee in 1887, when he was 21, the Queen's Diamond Jubilee beacon in 1897, King Edward's Coronation in 1902, followed by King George's Coronation in 1911, the Peace Celebrations in 1919, and finally King George's Silver Jubilee in 1935. In 1937, aged 75, Ben Rigby was appointed Chairman of the Beacon Fire and Fireworks Committee. Wednesday 12th May, the first of two days of celebrations for George VI's Coronation, ended with a torch-lit procession of boy scouts to the Beacon at the top of the hill, after which Mr Rigby lit the beacon, which was followed by a magnificent firework display.

Neville Kiernan⁵ recorded the role of Frodsham scouts in the beacons of 1935, 1937, 1949 (1st Frodsham Scouts 40th anniversary), 1951 (the Festival of Britain), Queen Elizabeth's coronation in 1953, her Silver Jubilee in 1977, the Royal Wedding in 1981, and the 400th anniversary of the Armada Beacons in 1988.

¹ *A History of Frodsham* by Beamont, William

² Manchester Weekly Times, 2 June 1893

³ Cheshire Sheaf, volume 1, p209, April 1879.

⁴ Warrington Guardian, 30 January 1937

⁵ *A Hill afire!* by Neville Kiernan, 1988.

There were beacons lit for Her Majesty's Golden Jubilee in 2002, and Diamond Jubilee of 2012. The programmes of many of these events are held in the History Society's Archives.

Helsby celebrated Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee with a bonfire on Helsby Hill built by Mr Lewis and Miss Thornely. To celebrate the Diamond Jubilee in 1897, the bonfire was erected by the Telegraph Manufacturing Company's (later BICC's) Fire Brigade, and supervised by George Crosland Taylor, the company's founder. Helsby Hill was registered as an Ancient Monument in 1956, so fires are no longer allowed as they damage the underlying archaeology. In 2012 Queen Elizabeth's Diamond Jubilee beacon was a gas post beacon commissioned by the local blacksmith at Dunham Hill Smithy. It was registered to be part of the National Beacon Scheme.

To celebrate Her Majesty the Queen's Platinum Jubilee, Girlguiding Cheshire Forest applied for, and was granted, permission to light a Jubilee beacon. The gas post beacon was lit at 21.50 on 2nd June 2022. It was one of the last of the 1,500 beacons in the country to be lit. Girlguiding Cheshire Forest is made up of 11 Divisions across Cheshire, Halton and Warrington and Frodsham Hill can be seen from at least 5 of the



Divisions, thus the County Commissioner asked Frodsham Town Council for permission to light a beacon on top of the hill. The Council granted permission for the event to take place at the top of Overton Hill, by the War Memorial. Members of Cheshire Girlguiding were invited to make tea light lanterns to celebrate the event, and to send in photographs of their creation.



Girlguiding Cheshire Forest invited Cheshire Scouts to be part of the celebration and the invitation to take part was extended to the local community too.

Those wanting to join the celebrations by walking up the hill, were invited to meet in Castle Park. The procession made its way up the Sandstone Trail to Forest Hills Hotel, where refreshments were available. At 21.50, the beacon was lit with a large crowd watching, including representatives of Mersey Weaver Scouting, Cheshire Forest Trefoil Guilds and some Ukrainian refugees who had newly arrived in Frodsham and Helsby. A month later the County Commissioner, Nikki Barker, received a certificate from the Pageant Master, Bruno Peek, thanking

GirlGuiding Cheshire Forest for their involvement with the celebrations.

ARCHIVE NEWS 2020-2022

Gill Baxter, F&DHS Archivist

I have had a busy time with queries having to be answered without access to our Archive store during the pandemic. Our continuing Archives Modernisation Project is going well but there is still a lot to do. An advantage of the project is familiarising myself and members of our team with the varied documents, artefacts, and photographs which we have in our collection, and an appreciation of the generosity of the many donors and researchers over the years since the Society was formed.

I've had many donations over the last two years including local postcards, some of which I haven't seen before, e.g. a Netherton House School badge and photos. A donation including a certificate for service as a Pupil Teacher, a cookery book 'Tested Recipes' which is a souvenir of Frodsham Parish Church Bazaar 1909, and a pencil from Frodsham Savings Bank all came from a single donor whose grandparents lived on Main Street.



There have been requests for information, one about the location of the Frodsham Lock Up - usually a cell where the 'crime' of being drunk and disorderly would be dealt with (slept off!) and a couple of requests from the short-lived Nub News site for information about Synagogue Well and Frodsham Castle.

Others have given information. One person has created a website dedicated to their family history. Others have donated their research about subjects that interest them relating to the local area, such as The Grand Cinema and the Sutton Tunnel railway accident, the latter published in *A Guide to the Industrial Heritage of Merseyside*. An historian who wonders whether the locations of the poem 'Sir Gawain and the Green Knight' could be based on Frodsham Castle and Upton's Caves has provided us with a link to his website.



In September I visited a local Primary School to share some of the maps in our collection with Year 5. We looked at maps from 1577 to 1841 on CD and Cheshire Tithe Maps online. I enjoyed my time in the classroom. Afterwards, the teacher tweeted "A fascinating visit from our local Archivist, Gill Baxter, to examine a number of tithe and OS maps – what fun finding our houses!"

I am expecting a package of aerial photographs of Frodsham Marshes taken about 1999. It will be interesting to see what other changes have occurred besides the development of the wind farm.

Altogether a busy two years with sixteen requests for information in 2020, twenty-four in 2021 and seventeen so far in 2022 with a couple of months left until the end of the year.

OUT AND ABOUT IN THE COMMUNITY

POST-PANDEMIC EVENTS

Kath Gee and Sue Lorimer

Walks – As summer 2021 progressed and people became more confident of being with others we arranged 2 identical short walks, one on 5th July and the other on 2nd August, for our members and friends. Sue had been researching Frodsham's former public houses during lock-down, so we planned a walk around 8 of the locations in Frodsham town centre. The buildings of 6 of these are still in place but have been repurposed. It was interesting to learn their individual history & when they had undergone change(s).



FDN2483 The Dog & Partridge c.1890s FD07573 Horseshoe / George c.2000

Old Schools below

5·101-103·Main·Street.¶ 1820-1823·Crowther's· Boarding·School·for·Young· Gentlemen;·1828-1838· Faulkner's·Boarding·School·for· Boys;·1841-1844·White's· Academy·(All·Methodists.)·..... 1871-1876·Rev·Borwick's· Frodsham·Academy··KG12.1.22¶	6·Manor·House,·64·Main· Street.¶ 1876-c1889·Borwick's·Manor· House·Boarding·School·for· Girls·and·Boys;·..... 1886-c1889·Misses·Borwick· and·Melross·Day·School·for· Ladies·.¶ KG·photo·29,3,2014¶ α

Building on last year's 'Lost Pubs' walk, we decided to study the old schools of Frodsham this year. Once the former schools were identified a circular walk was

planned around 18 of them. As many of the former schools had Methodist connections, the walk was first trialled with the Frodsham Methodist Church walking group on 19th March. Later in the summer, we wrote the article, *Methodist Schools in Frodsham*, for their quarterly Magazine and illustrated it with Crosbie House and Frodsham Academy. The latter and its successor Manor House are illustrated on the previous page.

We led the 'Old Schools walk' again on 30th April as part of the Frodsham Festival of Walks. It was described as follows in the walks brochure:

A Picture-Trail Around Former Frodsham Schools... Meeting at Eddisbury Square... A circular 3-mile walk via Main Street, Castle Park, Netherton Drive, Carriage Drive, Middle Walk, Overton, Fieldway, Ashlands and Church Street... You will be walking on town centre pavements, quieter sections of road and woodland paths.

All 18 images, with brief descriptions, were available to walkers to load on to their mobile phones – a development that was a new innovation and much appreciated.

On July 12th this year, Frodsham hosted its second Cheshire Local History Association Quarterly Meeting in the Main Street Community Church, and not wanting to miss an opportunity to showcase Frodsham we offered a shortened 'Old Schools walk' for the membership. One member, who had a personal connection with the Misses Atkins, was prompted to complete his family history, an excerpt of which is included in Article 3 page 10 in this journal.

A version of the 'Old Schools walk' was also planned for F&DHS members on the afternoon of July 19th. Unfortunately that happened to be the hottest day of the year! Fearing heat exhaustion on the climb up to Overton, it was decided to postpone the walk on this occasion.

Talks – At the end of March, Sue gave a talk to Helsby Village Society on the history of **Bank House, Helsby**, through the lives of prominent Methodists, i.e. the Lewis, Midwood and White families. Sue also linked Bank House to Helsby Creamery and Willie Hallas and his Hallastone Middle White pigs. The evening concluded with a general discussion on local history with a useful exchange of information.



Visits – As a follow-up to an earlier speaker meeting we were invited to visit **St Boniface Church, Bunbury**. This we did on October 6th 2021, a glorious early autumn afternoon. Our group was guided by former church warden, David Kendrick. We enjoyed an external perambulation of the church before entering to view its treasures. In the chancel we saw the tombs of 2 important local knights. One was Sir Hugh Calveley (c.1315-1394) who spent much of his time fighting in France, and on

his return to Cheshire founded St Boniface Church, Bunbury. The other tomb was that of Sir George Beeston (1499-1601). In George's 102 years he was Admiral of the Fleet, and commanded the ship 'Dreadnought' against the Spanish Armada when he was 89! On a lighter note, we were amused by the words on the church wall (below right).



St Boniface Church

Sir Hugh Calveley's tomb

One of our society visits this year, on June 24th, was a cruise on the River Weaver on the restored steam ship, **Daniel Adamson**, affectionately called 'the Danny'. We had hoped to sail from Acton Bridge down to Marsh Lock, Frodsham. But, the opening mechanism on the Sutton Weaver Swing Bridge was faulty, so the Danny sailed from Anderton Boat Lift down to its mooring at Acton Bridge and back to Anderton. None of the passengers seemed to mind the last minute change of route.



Acton Bridge swinging



Anderton Boat Lift at cruise end

Displays – Since late summer 2021 we have mounted displays on our table-top boards in 3 separate places at different events.

The first was the post-pandemic **Festival in the Park** held on Sunday 29th August 2021, a well-attended, beautiful afternoon in Castle Park. This annual festival began in 1986 as a fund-raising 'Victorian Day in the Park' to support Castle Park Arts Centre. See Article 4 page 15. Recent festivals have been run by Frodsham and Helsby Rotary Club as more of a social occasion and where local organisations can showcase their activities. The festival this year reverted to its traditional slot, the first Sunday in July. This summer, our display boards celebrated the Queen's coronation

by focusing on Frodsham in the 1950s, aspects of our town 70 years ago and 3 international achievements.



In addition to Festival in the Park, this display was included as part of the 'Platinum Jubilee Exhibition' in **Frodsham Library** during the summer.

The acquisition of a lockable, glass corner cabinet, which is now a permanent library fixture, allows the secure inclusion of artefacts in exhibitions. The most recent presentation was on the 'Frodsham Bee' and the next one will be on the 'Frodsham Players'.

We have also mounted displays to complement the themes of **History Day at the Grange Theatre, Hartford**. Last year, the theme was 'Cheshire's Pioneers' held on October 30th 2021, and this year, 'Strongholds of Cheshire' on 29th October 2022. Both themes gave us scope to display local illustrative details, for example, 2 hillforts, Frodsham 'Castle' and the Cold War bunkers on Helsby Hill and Beacon Hill, Frodsham, in October this year. Next year's theme is 'Cheshire in the 1920s'. Whether indoors, or outdoors under a Gazebo, our historical displays have always encouraged conversation and sometimes resulted in additional valuable information for our archives. Occasionally, new members have been recruited to our Society too.



Finally, we conclude with a **conundrum**: These images in the Cheshire Image Bank (FDN1902 and FDN1903) show the obverse and reverse of a medal awarded to OAKLANDS in 1921. It appears to have a silver mark on the reverse which we haven't been able to track down. Neither do we know the significance of the medal. We'd be delighted if anyone can throw light on this.

