



**FRODSHAM AND DISTRICT  
HISTORY SOCIETY**

JOURNAL



Issue No.42  
December 2012

**Journal of**  
**FRODSHAM AND DISTRICT HISTORY SOCIETY**

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Front cover picture: Charles Lutwidge Dodgson (Lewis Carroll) at the age of 24.

## HISTORY SOCIETY NEWS

Welcome to this 2012 edition of our History Society Journal

**President:** Sir Alan Waterworth K.C,V.O

### **Officers:**

Mrs E Wakefield, Hon. Chairman

Dr K Gee, Hon. Secretary

Mr A Wakefield, Hon. Treasurer

Mrs B Wainwright, Membership

Secretary

### **Committee;**

Mrs M Dodd

Mrs M Jones

Mr B Keeble

Mrs P Keeble

Mrs D O'Neill

Mr B Dykes

The officers and committee have remained unchanged this year but the Chairman's three-year term of office comes to an end in March 2013 and we would like to encourage some 'new blood' to join the committee and take on the Chairman's role. To promote the Society, both at events and through our members, we have had a 'business card' produced that gives information on access to our historic images website, the Society's Archives which are stored in Castle Park House and our current speaker programme.

For this year's outdoor meeting in June, members went a little further afield – to Gladstone's Library, St Deiniol's Church and the 'Temple of Peace in Hawarden Castle (Gladstone's study) which is preserved as Gladstone last used it. We thank Kath Gee for organising this, also for all the work that she does as Hon. Secretary of the Society. As part of the Frodsham Town Council Jubilee Celebrations, four members of History Society – Joan Douglas, Norma Duncan, Kath Gee and Val Salisbury – manned a stall to promote the Society in a large marquee in Castle Park on a very wet Saturday morning!

Castle Park Arts Centre used the Society's historic photographs of Castle Park for part of their Summer Exhibition in Gallery 3. The Arts Centre was greatly assisted by our Archivist, Kath Hewitt, who has been busier than ever this year (see Archival News). We are grateful to Kath for all she has done to build the archival collection and deal with enquiries.

In September Kath Gee and Betty Wakefield set up a display at St Lawrence's Church as part of their History and Genealogy weekend, which was very successful and raised a surprising amount of money from donations which will go towards church restoration.

Arthur Smith has again put together an excellent Journal and we thank him and his assistant editors Kath Gee and Sheila Holroyd for their work.

As I write, a varied programme for 2013 is almost complete, including a visit in June to Peover Hall.

Betty Wakefield

## FRODSHAM AND ITS TRADESMEN IN 1782

Sheila Holroyd

“Frodsham is a small town, seated near the River Mersey, from whence great quantities of corn, cheese and salt, are carried down to Liverpool.”

This is the description of Frodsham in “The Chester Guide, printed and sold by P.Broster, in the Exchange; also by T.Longman, Paternoster Row, London, and by all the news carriers.” The second edition, dated 1782, not only gives a very thorough description of Chester, but also includes information about the county’s market towns. Apparently Frodsham’s market was then held on Wednesdays, and the town also had two fairs each year, one on May 4<sup>th</sup> and one on August 21<sup>st</sup>.

The Guide also includes a list of the principal tradesmen in Frodsham and Overton. Not all the Christian names or specific trades are given, but we learn that Thomas Farrell was landlord of the Red Lion, while John Smith ran the Bear’s Paw. William Horabin was also an innkeeper, but the name of his inn is not given. Did a small town like Frodsham really need three attorneys-at-law? That was the occupation of Francis Ashley, Daniel Basnett and J.Corwell.

Obviously Frodsham had all the essential shops and services. There are three grocers, a butcher, a blacksmith and an apothecary. To keep the ladies smart there was Miss Powell, the milliner, while a Mr Moss, the barber, shaved the gentlemen and made them presentable. Less common occupations included the clockmaker, Seddon. Charles Buchanan, the cheese factor, presumably dealt with the export of cheese to Liverpool by river, and Roger Parsons, the flour dealer, was probably also involved in the trade with the city. A waggoner and two saddlers remind us that, apart from the river, all transport was horse-drawn.



*A typical apothecary  
of those days*

The Reverend Mr Harrison and the Reverend Mr Page looked after Frodsham’s spiritual needs, while a Mr Smith acted as parish clerk. It is frustrating not to be given the occupations of all the tradesmen. As it is, we have two shoemakers but no tailors or breeches-makers listed. Still, the Guide does convey a picture of a quietly prosperous market town in the days before the Industrial Revolution and the coming of the railways in the next century transformed the society and trading patterns that had lasted so long.

*I would like to thank Mr C Birtles for lending me his copy of the ‘Chester Guide.’*

## CARROLL, COTTON AND COLONIZATION: THE SOURCE FOR THE HUNTING OF THE SNARK

John Wing

Ever since the publication of “The Hunting of the Snark” in 1876 there has been speculation as to its source and meaning. I think that the life and work of William Charles Cotton holds the answer.

I used to be the Assistant Librarian at Christ Church, Oxford, which was the college of both W C Cotton and C L Dodgson. On my retirement I presented to the college library a copy of Cotton’s “My Bee Book” (1842). On page 325 he wrote “.....summer of 1836: In my rooms at Christ Church, I had two stocks of bees, which worked through a sort cuniculus in the window sill into the open air.” He went on to say on page 359: “old Neptune ...will ...be strangely surprised to hear that we have a hundred thousand passengers on board – which is about the crew which will be shipped in ten hives.” Carroll treated Cotton’s “My Bee Book” like a child’s ABC Book with one hive equalling one ‘B’ and so for ten hives there are ten crew members in “The Hunting of the Snark” beginning with the letter ‘B’ – Bellman, Boots, Bonnet-maker, Barrister, Broker, Billiard-marker, Banker, Beaver, Baker and Butcher.

After graduating in Classics and Mathematics in which he gained First and Second Class Honours respectively, Cotton was ordained deacon on the 17<sup>th</sup> December 1837 and priest on the 22<sup>nd</sup> December 1839. After a short time as curate at St Edward’s Church, Romford, Cotton moved to Windsor Parish Church where he became a close friend of George Augustus Selwyn, a fellow curate but five years his senior. In the late summer of 1841 Selwyn was appointed the first Anglican Bishop of New Zealand and Cotton offered his services to the new Bishop. Despite the forebodings of his father’s “You are not missionary material” and Mrs Selwyn’s “[Cotton has] a temperament subject to the highest and lowest spirits, each phase lasting for some time,” the Bishop appointed Cotton as his Chaplain and Librarian.

They set sail for New Zealand, which had only been under British sovereignty since January 1840, from Plymouth on the *Tomatin* on the 26<sup>th</sup> December 1841. On board were sheep, pigs, geese, cocks and hens, at least one cow and four hives of bees. Although Cotton had wanted to take ten hives of bees he was restricted to four. His designs of hives for the voyage are described on pages 358 – 362 of “My Bee Book” with cinders and ice used to keep the bees asleep. He had been encouraged by the words of the Hon Henry William Petre on page 69 of his “The Settlements of the New Zealand Company” (1841) “....should Bees be introduced into New Zealand ....they will find abundance of food in the flower of the Phormium Tenax, as well as in others. I mention this in case any one should be disposed to take Bees as an experiment.” It is likely that this ‘N Z ark’ or ‘Z(elande) N(ouvelle) ark’ gave rise to Carroll’s “snark” and that it originally referred to the *Tomatin* and its cargo. Carroll himself regarded ‘snark’ as a compound of ‘snail’ and ‘shark’ and because of its association with the latter he used it to mean a man-eating sea creature.

After an eventful passage, for which see Arthur R Smith’s book “William Charles Cotton MA 1813 – 1879” (2006), the *Tomatin* scraped a rock in Sydney harbour. As

the damage was serious and would take several weeks to repair the Bishop and Cotton transferred to the *Bristolian* for the final leg of their journey to New Zealand arriving in Auckland harbour on the 30<sup>th</sup> May 1842. The bees did not survive the voyage. A later writer in the "Cottage Gardener and Country Gentleman" of December 1858 stated that the bees were thrown overboard by the sailors.

The Bishop and his party settled at the Waimate Mission Station, about fifteen miles from the coast of the Bay of Islands, for their pastoral work among the Maori. During his time there Cotton was acting headmaster of the school in addition to his other duties of lecturing, preaching and looking after the Sunday schools. The congregations on Sunday mornings numbered between three and four hundred and Cotton said the prayers and preached in the native tongue. He established the 'Cathedral Library' and set up a small printing press that he had brought from England. He trained one man as a compositor and another as a pressman. They printed various papers and almanacs for the Church including summaries of the Bishop's sermons for the Maori to take home. In 1844 the Church Missionary Society was unwilling to extend its lease at Waimate to the Bishop so he bought 450 acres at Tamaki near Auckland. The Bishop and his entourage moved there in November of that year to continue their good work.

After a busy four and a half years during which he had earned the Bishop's praise, "Mr Cotton is most invaluable to me, being willing to do anything and everything, and doing all with steadiness," Cotton left New Zealand in December 1847 never to return. He had done as his father wished "to prove himself within four years and then return home." He had also published "A Few Simple Rules for New Zealand Beekeepers" and "A Manual for New Zealand Beekeepers."

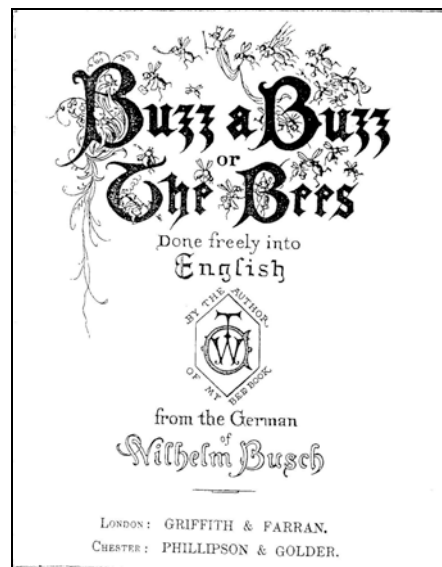
Ten years later, on the 9<sup>th</sup> June 1857, Cotton had breakfast with Carroll at Christ Church in Oxford. According to Carroll's "Diaries" (p. 68 in Volume 3 of Edward Wakeling's edition) at this breakfast Cotton promised, "to present the Common Room with his pictures." If these pictures were photographs taken or bought by him on his continental tour of 1855 they survive in a Common Room album now in the Manuscript Room of Christ Church Library. In his "Diary" entry for the 1<sup>st</sup> of July 1857 Carroll calls him "photographic Cotton." That same summer of 1857 Cotton set off on a photographic tour of France. He invited Carroll to join him but Carroll declined, as he did not fancy living out in the fields in a tent.

On his return Cotton was appointed to the living of Frodsham in Cheshire by the Dean and Chapter of Christ Church. By 1862 his predecessor was writing "I hear that Cotton sits in a chair all day and never leaves the house except when he is summoned to a funeral or something of the kind." In the late 1860s, after a spell in Dr Tuke's asylum in Chiswick, Cotton's health seems to have improved but over the years he suffered periodic bouts of mental instability until in 1878, he could no longer carry out his duties and the Bishop of Chester issued a sequestration order removing him from the Frodsham living. He returned to Dr Tuke's asylum where he died on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of June 1879.



*William Charles Cotton – Vicar of Frodsham 1857 to 1879*

In the Times Literary Supplement” of the 8<sup>th</sup> June 2001 Professor Morton Cohen wrote a letter to the editor about the source for “The Hunting of the Snark.” He mentioned that Mrs Mavis Batey had brought to his attention the voyage in 1850 of the members of the Canterbury Association under J R Godley to New Zealand to found a settlement, which he named Christ Church after his old college. The more likely source is this voyage of W C Cotton and Bishop Selwyn of nine years earlier. Cotton’s further influence on “The Hunting of the Snark” is its sub-title “An Agony in Eight Fits.” In 1872 Cotton had published, “Buzz a Buzz”, his free translation from the German of “Schnurrdiburr” by Wilhelm Busch. It has eight ‘Fyttes.’



*The title page of Cotton’s book “Buzz a Buzz” with a monogram of his initials*

Was Cotton also the real person behind the Cheshire Cat in “Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland”? The talented but mad Vicar of Frodsham certainly had the right credentials to make the ‘purrfect’ Cheshire Cat – he even had the whiskers!

Notes:

- (i) I am indebted to Mr Arthur R Smith for his help and for his permission to reproduce the illustrations from pages 187 and 199 and to quote from his book William Charles Cotton 1813 – 1879 (Countyvise 2006)
- (ii) Cotton's "My Bee Book" (1842) was reissued by Kingsmead Reprints in 1970.
- (iii) I am grateful also for the assistance of Mr James Horncastle of Dunham-on-the-Hill.

## **A HISTORY OF THE BELLS OF ST LAURENCE CHURCH, FRODSHAM**

**William G Bibby**

The earliest record of bells in St.Laurence Church was in a 1609 churchwarden's report. At this time there were only four bells. In 1663 bell No.3 had to be recast because of the concern about its musical qualities. In those days bells were tuned by chipping bits off the mouth of the bell. The bell tuner then struck the bell with a hammer and listened to the resulting note. In 1668 the tenor, the largest bell with the lowest note, was re-hung to improve its handling, and in 1702 a new bell frame was installed.

In 1710 a special meeting of the parishioners was called to consider the state of the bells. The third bell was still out of tune and the treble bell, the smallest with the highest note, was cracked. The churchwardens contacted a Richard Sanders of Bromsgrove and subsequently paid him fifty pounds for recasting all the bells. When the work was completed a team of Warrington bell ringers were engaged to ring the bells and test their qualities of tune and handling.

In 1734 the "Vestry" agreed that the bells should be made into a ring of six and the work was given to a Mr.A.Rudall of Gloucester. When the six bells were returned to the tower they were hung in a new bell frame where they are to this day, 277 years later, the only major difference being that in those days the bells were rung from ground level, in what is now the upper vestry. Six pieces of wood can still be seen in the ceiling filling the holes where the ropes came through.

In 1911 the Gaskell family of "Erindale", Frodsham, donated funds to add two more bells.

**THE TWO TREBLE BELLS, THE GIFT OF  
HOLBROOK GASKELL, ERINDALE,  
FRODSHAM, WERE DEDICATED ON  
OCTOBER 9 1911**

*Plaque commemorating the Gaskell gift*

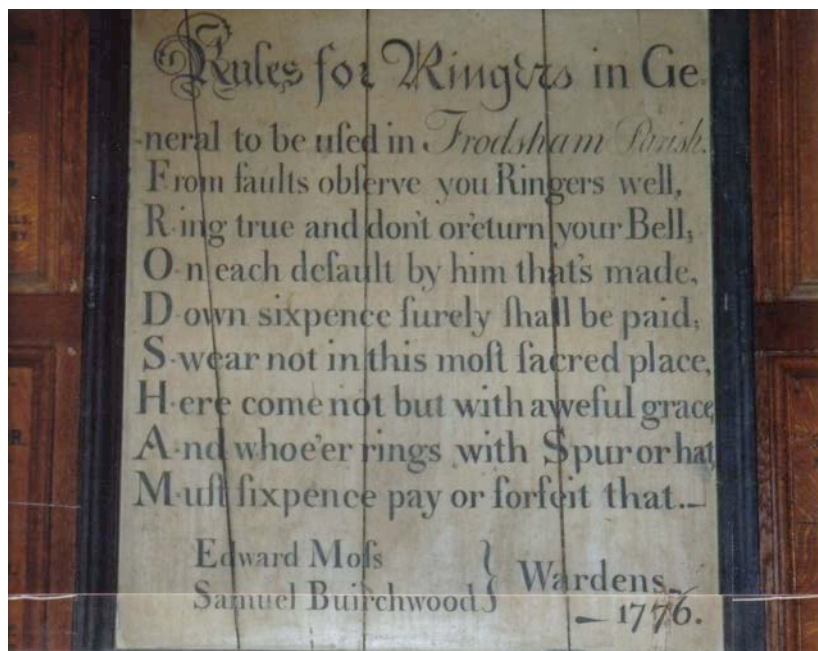


At the end of July 1911 the six bells were removed, taken to Taylor's bell foundry of Loughborough where two new trebles were cast, and the old six retuned to make an octave of eight bells. A new eight-bell frame was installed and the old clock room became the new ringing chamber.



*New ringing chamber with the clock in the background.*

In the middle of September 1911 the new ring of eight were returned, installed, and are still in regular use today.



*These rules for bell ringers hang in the ringing chamber*



*The eight bells just returned from Loughborough*



*The view across the bell chamber, with the third and fifth tenor bells in the forefront*

Until 1976 the bells rotated on their original plain bearings. These required lubricating with castor oil every few weeks so, in 1976, these plain bearings were replaced with self-aligning, fully sealed ball bearings that require no lubrication. From then until now the bells are regularly rung on Friday nights for practice, on Sunday for services and for weddings.

All the bells have inscriptions on them as follows:-

- |        |                              |         |
|--------|------------------------------|---------|
| Treble | Give thanks to God           | 1911    |
| 2      | Love God, Honour the King    | 1911    |
| 3      | Peace and Good Neighbourhood | AR 1734 |

- 4 Prosperity to the Parish AR 1734
- 5 Prosperity to the Church of England AR 1734
- 6 We were all cast in Gloucester by A.Rudall 1734
- 7 Wm. Knowles and Thomas Lancaster Church Wardens AR 1734
- 8 (Tenor) I, to the Church, the living call, and to the Grave do summon all  
AR 1734

The weights and diameters of each bell

1 Treble	4 cwt 1 qrt 22 lb	2ft 2in
2	4 cwt 3 qrt 1 lb	2ft 3in
3	5 cwt 2 qrt 6 lb	2ft 6in
4	6 cwt 1 qrt 3 lb	2ft 8in
5	6 cwt 3 qrt 20 lb	2ft 10in
6	7 cwt 2 qrt 21 lb	2ft 11in
7	9 cwt 1 qrt 15 lb	3ft 3in
8 Tenor	12 cwt 1 qrt 3 lb	3ft 6in

NB The tenor bell is tuned to F sharp

Postscript

I have been a member of the ringing team at Frodsham for 63 years. In 1949 the captain of the bell tower was my father, John E Bibby, who was preceded by my grandfather, William Bibby. When my father retired, Mr Francis Bibby succeeded him and then Mr John Oultram took up the position. Recently Mr Duncan Hyde has become the new captain.

**SOME COMMENTS ON THE HISTORY OF MANLEY**

**J.A.J.Walker**

The derivation of the name ‘Manley’ may be traced as a habitational name occurring in Cheshire and elsewhere. It comes from Old English (Anglo-Saxon) as ‘common wood or clearing’, from *gemaenne* ‘common’ and *leah* ‘woodland clearing’.

In the period from A.D. 600 to A.D. 900 Danish raiders subjected Cheshire to several invasions from the Northeast and East Anglia. Chester, it was recorded in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, was the scene for the slaughter of many Welsh in A.D. 607 by Ethelfrith's army. By A.D. 894, the Danes from Northumbria forced-marched *'by day and night, till they arrived at a western city in Wirheal that is called Chester'*. King Alfred's army was unable to overtake them before the Danes arrived at Chester. However, King Alfred besieged Chester, and slew those Danes to be found outside the walls. All the cattle in the vicinity were taken and either the corn burned, or consumed by their horses every evening. Manley on the periphery of these activities must have been affected. Not until A.D. 907, when King Edward the Elder made peace with the Danes (from East Anglia and Northumbria), was Chester rebuilt and the surrounding countryside secured.

Manley is recorded in the Domesday Survey, 1086 for Cheshire as:

*'Ipse comes tenet MENLIE Tochi tenuit ut liber homo. Ibi dimidia hida geldabilis.*

*Terra est 1 Carucata. Reddit de firma markam argenti. Tempore regi EDWARD I vale bat x. solidus.* In translation this means: 'The Earl<sup>1</sup> himself holds MENLIE. Tochi held it as a free man.<sup>2</sup> There is half a hide<sup>3</sup> rateable to the gelt.<sup>4</sup> The land is one carucate.<sup>5</sup> It renders in farm<sup>6</sup> a mark of silver. In King Edward's<sup>7</sup> time it was worth x. shillings.'

The explanation of these terms is as follows:

1. Earl Hugh Lupus (the Wolf) of Chester, his seat being at Chester.
2. The term 'free man' is to be understood as a man who was personally free but could owe rents or obligations to his lord and was often regarded as a 'lesser thegn'. A 'thegn' was a pre-Conquest noble below the level of an earl, and with local estate of at least five hides of land and a residence.
3. 'A hide' was regarded as the land necessary to sustain a peasant household and reckoned to be about 120 acres depending on the locality, date and government needs.
4. 'Geldt' was an Anglo-Saxon land tax used for military purposes.
5. 'One carucate', the Danish equivalent of a 'hide'. It was the land area ploughed by eight oxen and may have varied locally.
6. 'Farm' renders in land to provide one night's food and upkeep for the Court, but here has been commuted to cash.
7. Edward the Confessor died in January 1066.

### **The Manor of Manley**

In the reign of Henry III (1216-1272) the manor of Manley was possessed by a family who subsequently adopted the name of the township and held it under the Dones of Crowton, who held it from the Dones of Utkinton, as part of the fee of Kingsley. It continued vested in the Manleys until the 1500s, when the Birkenhead family and Henry Gee (founder of Chester races at the Roodee) separately assumed ownership.

The Earl of Chester in the mediaeval period received payment (pannage) for the right of feeding swine in Delamere Forest exercised by Manley residents. Of the nine townships surrounding the Forest, Manley was one and paid in kind two pigs every year to the earl. Pigs were numerous since Cheshire had two advantages for pig rearing, namely - extensive oak woodlands with an abundance of acorns (pig food) and a supply of good salt for meat preservation over a long period. There was a general scale applicable to 'men of Cheshire' to levy the rate for feeding pigs in the forest. Each man having seven pigs or more, up to ten, paid one pig to the earl. If he had from ten to 16 pigs, he paid one pig and one penny; for 17 to 20 pigs, he rendered two pigs; and for 21 pigs, two pigs and a penny and so on. Men who had less than seven pigs paid one penny per pig. These were the terms in Delamere Forest. Similarly, the Abbey of St. Werburgh is recorded in the Valor Ecclesiasticus of 1535 as receiving £2-0s-0d. due from Manley manor.

### **Farming and Transport in the Manley Area**

One of the improvements to soil and farming practices in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries was the extraction and application of marl as a fertilizer. This was particularly advantageous for sandy soils as the main component of marl was a type of clay containing calcium carbonate, potash and phosphates that was deposited by glaciers that crossed Cheshire in the past. Marl is found just beneath the present land surface:

there are plenty of worked-out marl pits around Manley and Mouldsworth that provide evidence of extraction today: In the 19<sup>th</sup> century records show that John St. Vigor Fox marled his Manley estate from the Dark Ark Pit at Mouldsworth. To assist in the process, he set down a light railway track, worked first by horses and later by a light engine called 'Firefly' operated by two enginemen.

The application of marl in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century was done by gangs of about five or six men, under a leader known as the Lord of the Pit. Passers-by to the field in which they were working were expected to make a contribution to the group of workers, who sang 'Oyez, Oyez, Oyez, Mr .....of.....has been with us today, and has given my lord and his men part of £1000 (if the gift was 1s. 0d.) or £2000 (if it was 2s. 0d.)'. When the job was finished the marlers carried a pole, decorated with flowers, ribbons, etc., as they went around collecting their money. A tough and hardy breed, they often passed the job on from one generation to the next. Marl was usually applied in the summer, its value as a fertilizer lasting about 12 years. By the 1840s it was being replaced by lime as an alternative, and, the opening of the Cheshire Lines Committee's Railway allowed goods for the farmers to be off-loaded at Manley station as well as being used for the transport of cattle. In the station yard, cattle-pens were constructed for this purpose.

In 1775 the antiquary, Cole, recorded that Cheshire had 'some of the most detestable roads in England.' He thought that some of the roads in Cheshire 'are so worn and rugged that it is hardly safe much less easy to pass over them.' At the end of the Roman period the ability to construct and maintain roads was lost and their condition started to deteriorate. Even in the Middle Ages, when the landholders within the manor were responsible for maintenance, the condition of roads became increasingly bad and continued to become worse. The remedy for this state of affairs lay in the introduction of Turnpike Trusts set up by private initiative. The Trusts were granted parliamentary powers to install toll bars and to charge fees for road users of a particular stretch of highway. For instance, the following charges (1828) were levied at Netherton Gate on the Chester-Frodsham turnpike:

*'For every horse or other beast drawing any coach, chaise, gig, etc., 6d;  
For every wagon, cart having nails and tires of wheels projecting more than ¼  
inch from the surface of such tires for each time of passing, 10s.'*

Since a turnpike road existed between Netherton, Alvanley, Manley and Kelsall, it must be assumed that similar charges were paid by travellers along that route. Not far from the Manley School, on the road, which continues into Manley, stood a tollgate and a tollhouse. Turnpike roads became main roads in 1878 and the Trusts were handed over to public authority by 1888.

### **Manley in the nineteenth century**

Bagshaw's Directory of 1850 describes Manley, as 'a township and small scattered village containing 1,327 acres of land, and at the census in 1841, there were 69 houses and 385 inhabitants'. John Wilson Fox owned the greater part of the land in the township. It was the son of this Fox, J. St. Vigor Fox, who at the beginning of the twentieth century transferred a plot of land in Manley to the Chester diocese for the purpose of providing a mission church.

Bagshaw records that 'This township presents great inequalities of the surface, and the whole has a wild and romantic appearance'. He states also that there is 'an extensive

and superior quarry of white stone, from which the materials of Chester Castle, Eaton House, and other buildings have been obtained.’ Considerable use was made of this stone from the 19<sup>th</sup> century for the improvement of the roads in and around Manley to assist the transportation of the material to places of use, for example, the construction of railway bridges and the Manchester Ship Canal.

A geologist by the name of James Shipman published (for private circulation) an account of his visit to the Manley quarry in 1887. His comments on the area show him to be much impressed by what he saw of the countryside on his rambles. He passed through Dunham (on-the Hill)

*“ or at least one end of it, and making my way along muddy roads, with high banks on each side covered with quite a variety of wild flowers-- blue-bells, red flowers, yellow and white.....I was soon stepping... up the hill.....my old umbrella -- faithful friend in a storm, as it has so often proved to be -- serving as my alpenstock.....Presently I reached the opening into the quarry -- the Manley Quarry -- pic-niced (sic) on the top of the hill above the quarry, on account of the splendid view of the country for miles towards the sea.....Having examined the quarry, as well as its depth and dimensions would allow of -- for it was about seventy feet deep -- I once more set off.....”.*

The directory for 1874 (Morris & Co.) records J.W. Fox to be lord of the manor. A Post Office was in existence by this date ‘with letters by foot post from Warrington via Frodsham’. The post box was cleared every weekday at 5pm. Postal Orders were issued but not cashed!

The population statistics for Manley during the period 1801 to 1901 show a rise up to 1851 with a levelling off thereafter. The figures are shown below:

1801	1811	1821	1831	1841	1851	1861	1871	1881	1891	1901
264	262	333	331	385	395	294	339	306	296	305

Peter Turner was a local diarist, who was born on 17<sup>th</sup> October 1825 and died 8<sup>th</sup> September 1906. He kept an account in note form of many activities, not only concerned with himself but of his friends and neighbours, for upwards of sixty-five years. He was a surveyor and described himself as an assistant Overseer and Numerator. One of the items he notes in his diary concerns the sport of cockfighting. A place used for this purpose was Simmonds Hill but trees did not cover it in those days. The top of the hill had some minor quarry workings that afforded cover for the participants as well as a natural bowl for the cockfight. The youths would sit around the cockpit and watch the progress of each fight. Several of the landed proprietors encouraged the sport, even though it was illegal, and some paid the penalty by being prosecuted.

Manley school was licensed for the celebration of Divine Service. By 1892 Divine Service was conducted at the school every Sunday morning and afternoon by clergy from the Parish Church of St. Lawrence, Frodsham. The Primitive Methodists also had a place of worship/chapel, erected in 1859, it being ‘a plain edifice of brick’ seating 150 persons. Manley School (for boys and girls) was erected in 1866, and accommodated 100 children with an average attendance of 58 and from the start it had a thriving Sunday School. By 1904, for example, there were 41 children attending Sunday School, ranging in age from four to 16 years with an allocation of marks for each child on which prizes were allotted. In 1908 the number on-roll was 81 children

aged from four to 18 years, an increase in both numbers and range of ages. This could be ascribed to the opening of St. John's church as well as the slight increase in population of Manley township. Disappointingly, the school Log Books from 1866 to 1920 were not in the Chester Record Office and may have been lost. They would have provided interesting information.

Without doubt, the children looked forward to treats and excursions, which were organized for their enjoyment. We see that on June 8<sup>th</sup> 1899, 42 of them and ten adults visited Mersey View Picnic and Pleasure Grounds at Overton Hill, Frodsham.

Mrs Parker Hoose, the proprietress, charged 1d for each child, 2d. for an adult, and 6d for two quarts of milk.  
S.Griffiths, Grocer and Flour Dealer, supplied  
15 dozen Buns at 9d. (per doz.); 4lbs Sugar at 8 ½ d; 6 Sweets at 2s 0d;  
3 Packets Tea at 1s 4 ½ d.  
Further supplies accounted for were  
Butter 1 ½ lbs 1s 7d; Bread (1 loaf) 5d; Tongue (1tin) 3s 6d.  
The children were conveyed by horse transport incurring charges for stabling of horses 2s 0d, and refreshment for drivers 1s 0d.

The visit to Mersey View was repeated in 1900 when Mrs Parker Hoose supplied two tins of lobster and 1lb of cake. Surprisingly, the accommodation at Mersey View cost 8s 5 ½ d!

Manley Sunday School children were not the only ones to enjoy outings. In 1899, 1900 and 1901 the records show that the Manley Church Choir organized outings. For instance, the adults went to Morecambe in 1899 and the junior members to Rhyl. The proceeds from a Parochial Church Concert in December 1900 amounting to £5-4s-10d were used to offset the cost of excursions.

#### **“BRIEF LIVES” – A Book Review**

Arthur Smith's latest book, "Brief Lives: Notable People of Frodsham in the Past", (published by Countywise Ltd), introduces us to a cross-section of people who illustrate the history of Frodsham in recent centuries. His selection ranges from clerics through schoolteachers and merchants to shopkeepers and farmers.

Many of them have left visible reminders of their presence. Edward Abbot Wright created the park and gardens surrounding Castle Park House, Joseph Kydd's shop survives though now put to other uses, and the names of many of the farms mentioned will be familiar to us all.

The author has also shown through these lives how developments in society and technology have influenced the town. The creation of the railways and the canal influenced agriculture and created new industries; better schools helped the education of the population; while tractors made work on farms easier, it meant the Worralls no longer needed horses at Five Crosses Farm.

Whether you read the book straight through or pick out the personalities you like, this is an interesting and informative book which gives valuable insights into the social history of Frodsham.

Sheila Holroyd

(Copies are obtainable from the author – price £9-50. Phone 01928 732546).

## The Old Order Changeth - Horses to Steam



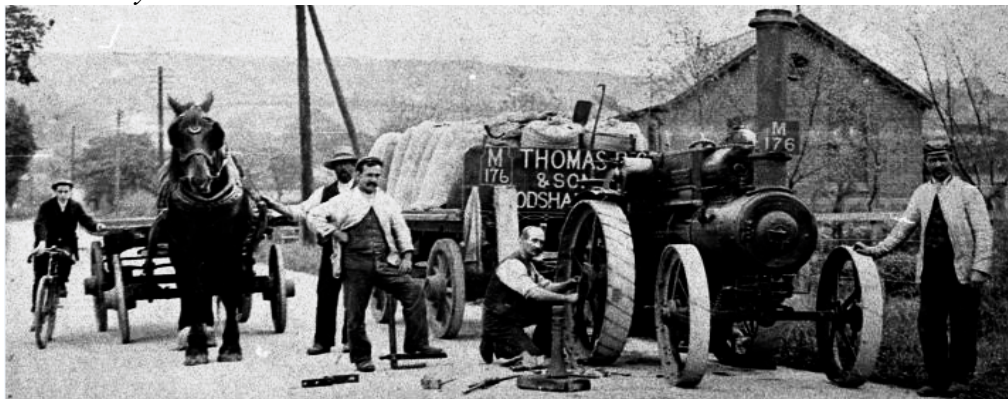
*Thomas Rigby's Mill. Grain arrived by barge then via an elevator to the top floor raised at 60 tons/hour*



*Foden Steam wagons at Thomas Rigby's Sutton Mill, Frodsham - the horses now replaced.*



*Joe Ellison and the Frodsham Mineral Water Company. Runcorn Rural District steam lorry*



*Things could go wrong. A breakdown in Chester Road, Helsby, for M Thomas and Son, Frodsham*





*A working day in Main Street resurfacing the road. Booth's motor accessory shop in the background.*



*A holiday. Crosville Motors Daimler charabancs at the Robin Hood Hotel, Helsby, now demolished*



*The well to do took the train. Helsby Station*



*And ready to go from Mouldsworth.*



*Ample railway staff eased one's journey. Frodsham Station employees.*



*Waiting to be off. Outside the Bears Paw, Main Street. The coach leaves for Tarporley Races.*



*A busy day in 1915. Main Street traffic including General Talbot's car.*



*A not so busy day. Traffic outside the Golden Lion, Main Street*



*And Finally*



*with Frodsham senior curate Rev Blackburn*

*Pictures - Courtesy of Frodsham and District History Society Photographic Images.  
[www.frodshamhistoricimages.co.uk](http://www.frodshamhistoricimages.co.uk)*

## MY SCHOOL DAYS (1913 -1927)

### Norah Randles

My school days in Frodsham were very happy on the whole. I started at Church Street Infants' School at the age of four and a half and I well remember my first day at school and most of the other children who started with me on that day. Miss Yeomans was our teacher, a very dainty little lady with dark brown hair, prominent teeth when she smiled and she was always smiling with happiness when she talked to us. She had a high-pitched rather childish voice and she really loved children and we loved her. I can never remember her being cross with us and I have no memories of naughty children having to be punished. We just loved being in school with her. I remember being given my seat in a dual desk and looking at all the nice clean glowing hair of the girls in front of me. The first day we were given sand trays - a biscuit tin lid with a thin scattering of silver sand in which we practised making letters. First a walking stick with a handle, then a hoop 0, then upside down walking sticks. Having practised making all these we went on to make letters as Miss Yeomans made them on the blackboard and we copied them carefully - "cat", "dog" - and as we drew them we said them in chorus.

At the end of an exciting lesson we shook our sand trays and all our lovely words disappeared and tins were stacked ready for tomorrow's lesson. Now it was time for a story. Large pictures illustrating the stories of Red Riding Hood, the three bears and Jack and the Beanstalk were displayed on the walls. I had heard my Aunties reading these for me but Miss Yeomans' dramatic rendering of them, with pictures to illustrate them, had me riveted with excitement as she told the story. I was always a bit scared when Red Riding Hood was talking to the fox sitting in bed with Grandmother's nighty and bonnet and glasses on. What had happened to Granny? Was she really sitting under the bed safe and sound waiting for the woodcutter to send the fox away? I was too scared to ask questions but I did hope Granny was safe and had not been eaten by the fox. I was glad when the bell rang and we could go out to play with our skipping ropes.

In the afternoon Miss Yeomans took us for a nature walk up the fields towards the Church. At the first field gate we all stopped to look for the horse that belonged to Mr Forster the carrier. He heard Miss Yeoman's voice calling him and came galloping down and put his head over the gate to be patted. But he knew that Miss Yeomans always had lumps of sugar for him and she showed us how to feed him with them, placing each lump on the flat of her hand and putting it under his nose. His tail went swishing away with enjoyment till all the sugar was gone and he turned away from us to look for some nice juicy grass. We went on round the fields and hedgerows picking the wild flowers that grew there so profusely. We learned all their names and then went back to school and after arranging them in jam jars we would be given crayons and dark coloured paper and we would draw each flower - daisy, buttercup, dandelion, ragged robin etc - in their colours with names correctly spelt under each.

Miss Yeomans came round and helped us and praised the good ones and improved the bad ones and then we handed them in to be pinned up on the wall ready for tomorrow's lessons. Time to go home and tell my mother all about school before my brothers came home from Overton School and we all had tea.

I went happily through Infants Department missing out Class 2, which Miss Button taught, and going into Mrs Hackney's class. She was a very good teacher but a great disciplinarian. Her frown brought an immediate silence to any of her classes. She liked the bright children who tried hard to please her and whose mothers she knew. Others she was rather impatient with and would rap knuckles smartly with a ruler if she thought you were not trying hard enough. I was lucky because she knew my mother and I was always trying to please her and get everything right for her. I didn't always succeed, but I did manage to avoid getting my knuckles rapped.

The top class was taught by Mrs Roberts, the Headmistress, and she was a very nice, good-tempered lady who gave very interesting lessons and always had a word of encouragement or praise for everyone. Her son was in my class and he was really naughty sometimes so she used to whack him with the cane. I think she made him suffer for us all, but he cheerfully survived every day.

In August 1914 I was sent up to the Girls' School under Headmistress Miss Crampton. It was a very worrying time because war had been declared with Germany and young men were being sent out to France to fight for their country. Big brothers were leaving home and some girls came to school white faced and sad looking because their father had joined the army and mother was left to manage the family.

A lot of mothers found work at the local jam factory and we saw them going sadly to work each morning in their spotless white aprons, turning up Sandfields to the big gates at the top which led to the Kydd and Kydd factory. At school it was as if some great sadness had fallen on everyone and we couldn't quite understand what was happening. We prayed every day for the war to end, we prayed for the Belgians who were being driven from their homes by the fighting in their towns and villages, the teachers were busy knitting stockings and Balaclava helmets for the troops.



*Miss Crampton is standing on the left with the girls of the amalgamated Standards V, VI and VII in 1906 /7. The teacher on the right is probably Miss A L Nield. Note the white pinafore dresses and the long laced up boots worn by the pupils.*

But school continued and we had some happy days. Mrs Fraser was my teacher and she was a pleasant, hardworking lady who encouraged us to learn and she helped everyone to improve. She would sit for hours marking our Arithmetic and Composition books, watching us do our "corrections" and telling or reading very interesting stories. She gave us interesting nature lessons on animals, and when it came to the lesson on rabbits I quickly offered to bring our best black and white rabbit to school to show everyone. She agreed and on the afternoon of the lesson I was sent home to collect the rabbit. My dad provided a nice new lidded basket with a bed of hay and the rabbit was taken to school for Mrs Fraser to show the class and give her lesson. I was thrilled when she asked me to come out in front of the class and pick up the rabbit by its ears to show how it should be held. The rabbit behaved perfectly and the class was very attentive and I'm sure Mrs Fraser was pleased with her lesson going so well. I offered to take the rabbit home but she said no. It was to be left on her table in its basket until home time and I must do the written work on it with the other girls. She was sorry for that decision when home time came and I picked up the basket to find a pool of water on her table, much to my embarrassment. She never mentioned my rabbit again, nor did she ever allow another pet to be brought into school.

At the end of that happy year I went to Standard II with Miss Blanche Thomas. She was the only teacher who disliked me and I could not get on with her. But the other girls didn't care much for her, she was so bad tempered and irritable with us. What we didn't know then was that she was courting a young man who was an officer in the navy and as the war news got worse and naval vessels were being sunk and sailors drowned she must have been a very worried lady. If only we had known and understood her problems.

One of the first days in her class she said she wanted to improve our handwriting and gave us sheets of paper and a Bible text written on the blackboard that we were to copy in our best handwriting. The results were to be shown to Dr Myres, the Vicar. With such an incentive to work, I was so eager to do well I really tried hard and felt my effort was quite good. When I presented it with the rest of the class she told most of us to do it again and improve the handwriting. We all went back to work but my heart was really not in it, I had made a great effort the first time and felt that the first work was really my best. When I took my second effort she tore it up and said, "Do it again". This was the last straw. My third effort was even worse and my tears had blotted some of the words. When she saw that, her little black cane came out and for the first time in my life I stood in a line of girls and was caned for bad work.

The last bell of the afternoon saved us and I ran home full of sobs and tears streaming. My mother was amazed when I told her the story and when dad came in he decided to do something. He went to meet the lady and quietly asked her to tell him why his little girl had been caned. I never heard what ensued but by next morning I had been persuaded to go back and be a good girl and try to please Miss Thomas for that day. I never quite recovered from the disgrace of being caned but never wanted it to happen again, so I was a very subdued schoolgirl at that time. But better things were in store.

At the end of six months in Standard II I was sent with the five top girls in the class to Standard III and there my teacher was Miss Hindley, a large ungainly lady with a rather unattractive appearance, straight brown hair done in a coil at the back. But she had lively blue eyes that made you look at her and listen to her. I almost worshipped

her. She introduced us to poetry that she loved to read and explain to us. She didn't insist on us learning it like parrots but by the time she had read it and explained it all and we had read it quietly to ourselves and aloud for her we knew it. Some of my favourite poems were Milton's 'L'Allegro,' 'The Burial of Sir John Moore,' 'The Lady of Shallot,' 'Wordsworth's Daffodils' and many more. She gave us a great love of poetry that I have always appreciated.

She was a good Maths teacher and problems became easy to solve under her guidance. I had become such a besotted pupil that when the last day before the holidays came I went down to the railway station to say goodbye to her and wave to her as the train departed. I suppose every schoolgirl goes through something like that. The war had now reached a terrible stage when every morning we dreaded the postman coming round with the letters. We knew that some of the girls would not be at school because they had been told that their fathers were missing or been killed in action. We had very sad services at church to remember the boys who were still fighting and pray for those people who had lost husbands and fathers. The list seemed to go on and on.

Then we started to see German prisoners arriving at the P.O.W. Camp at Hatley. They worked very hard all day cleaning out the drainage dykes and cutting new ones. We saw some of them when they were brought by guards to collect food and goods from the railway station yard. They were very conspicuous with coloured circles of cloth sewn on their khaki tunics. At first they looked rather miserable and subdued but soon they were looking better fed and quite happy. They must have been relieved to be out of the fighting and living in such a quiet and peaceful place. We had some nice hot summers during the war but of course no one went on a holiday, we all stayed at home to work and pray.

I passed from Miss Hindley's class to Miss Higson's Standard IV. At the end of my term with Miss Hindley I had passed the exams with flying colours, top in Arithmetic and English. Miss Crampton came to the classroom and announced the results and then said that the top five girls would be passing on to Standard V and would be taking the Scholarship Exam for entrance to Runcorn County Secondary School. I could hardly wait to go home and tell my mother and father the good news. They were very pleased.

The next two years passed quite quickly. The war dragged on for a few more months. Food was rationed and everything was very scarce. My Aunty Sarah had been used to buying a half pig and salting the bacon and ham for use in the winter. Somehow she was able to get her usual pig as a great favour and in secret and she helped us out by sharing what she had. As well as that my mother had always bought fresh farm butter from Mrs Molyneaux at Kingsley. Every Thursday she would arrive on her bicycle with her butter basket and leave mother her usual two pounds of butter. No one seemed to know about it and no questions were asked. I suppose we were just lucky to have friends.

The following November we had news that the war was over and an armistice had been signed. The news came on a very dull misty Monday morning. There was no real rejoicing. We were all sent home from school and we quietly filed out of the school gates rather dazed and unable to realise that the ghastly war that had claimed

the lives of so many husbands, sons, brothers and uncles who would never come back was at an end and we accepted the news with silent thankfulness.

By the time I took the Scholarship Examination the war had been over for two years and our family dream of building a new house and moving the business was coming true. I started school at Runcorn in 1920 and moved house in 1921. My schooldays in Runcorn were very happy. I liked being taught in mixed classes and soon made friends with the boys in my first form. I progressed normally through the school excelling at Physical Training and Games. I was hockey captain and we had a good team which played other grammar schools in the area. I played tennis and netball and liked swimming. My examination results were good at first but not so good in the middle school. But when I reached the sixth form and saw a chance to go to college looming ahead if I got good results, I really put my back into work and even surprised myself when I obtained School Certificate and then Matriculation and was able to go to college to train as a teacher.

*The above article is an extract from Chapter 7 of the late Norah Randles' memoirs.*

## **SCANDALOUS BEHAVIOUR! - KENRICK JONES, CLERK OF FRODSHAM**

**Philip J. Littlemore**

It is often said: "We can choose our friends, but we are stuck with our family." Family history is a fascinating subject and whatever we discover, whether we like it or not, we cannot change the facts. From the study of parish records and other sources, any information gleaned about the people whose names we find preserved in these ancient documents, can only add to our knowledge of them as part of local history. If nothing else, the following gives us a glimpse of two such named clergymen (and one character in particular!), who lived in seventeenth century Frodsham.

During my researches, I was fascinated to discover that an ancestor, Mary Littlemore, a member of the main branch of the family line, and born in 1619 at Hatley, in the Netherton township of Frodsham, had married a clergyman, Richard Banner. The youngest of eight children, Mary was the daughter of Thomas Littlemore, Yeoman, and his wife Alice (nee Nangreave) and until marriage resided at the large family property known as 'Littlemores.' Mary was the sister of my 8 x great grandfather, Richard Littlemore, Yeoman (1616-1670).

Richard Banner was born on the 14th January, 1610/11, the son of John Banner, Minister of Stoak, and his wife Joan. In 1631, at the age of 20, he entered the University of Oxford and the following year, on 3rd November 1632, gained his B.A. from Brasenose College, followed by his M.A. on 4th June 1635.

On completion of his time at Oxford, Richard Banner was appointed curate to Rowland Heywood, the vicar of St. Lawrence's. Rowland Heywood had taken up office in 1632 and during his ministry at Frodsham, had been particularly active in establishing and looking after parish charities. Richard Banner, aged 29, married 21-year-old Mary Littlemore in 1640. They had one daughter, Margaret Banner, baptised

at Frodsham on 3rd February, 1641/2. In the same year, and shortly after the birth of his daughter, the family left Frodsham and Richard Banner followed in his father's footsteps, becoming vicar of St. Lawrence's, Stoak. He later became incumbent at Burton (St. Nicholas) and by 1661, vicar at Eastham (St. Mary). He enjoyed his living for only four more years, for within the altar rails of the fine old church, is a tablet with this inscription: "Here lyeth the body of Richard Banner, clarke and vicker of Eastham, who died the vi day December 1665." He was aged 54.

Although there is evidence to suggest that (like his father), Richard Banner's churchmanship leaned more towards the 'Puritan', he did conform to the tenets of the Church of England and appears to have had a fairly uneventful ministry - unlike another Frodsham clergyman I discovered who was also associated with my family!

A distant relative from another branch of the family, Margaret Littlemore, who was born 30 years later than Mary Banner (nee Littlemore), had also married a member of the clergy. Mary Littlemore's grandfather (William Littlemore) and Margaret Littlemore's great grandfather (Richard Littlemore), were brothers.

The family of Richard Littlemore and his wife, Elizabeth, were living in Pinmill Brow in the early 1600's. Their sons, John Littlemore (1594-1640), Richard Littlemore (1599-1627), and Thomas Littlemore (1603-1648), also resided at Pinmill Brow. Living close to the church, they certainly had no excuse for being late for Divine Service on a Sunday morning!



*This photograph, taken around 1900, shows Church Cottages at Overton, standing at the top of Pinmill Brow that leads into Howey Lane. These ancient cottages probably date from the seventeenth century and were situated in what is now the church car park. Sadly they were demolished in 1927.*

Richard Littlemore's grandson, William (the son of John Littlemore), was baptised at Frodsham on 3rd June 1624. At the age of 23 and having courted a young lady from a distant parish, he married Deborah Wardley, the eldest daughter of Hugh and Margaret Wardley of Dunham Woodhouses, near Altrincham. Deborah Wardley was just 15 years of age when she married William Littlemore at the parish church of St. Mary, Bowdon, on 15th March, 1647/8. They had offspring: John, born in 1647 (died



aged six years old in 1653), and Margaret born c. 1649. William Littlemore died at the relatively young age of 31 and was buried at Frodsham on 20<sup>th</sup> January, 1654/5, His widow remarried one Robert Smith at Frodsham in 1657. Their marriage was to last only five years when Robert Smith died and Deborah married again in 1661, taking for her third husband, Thomas Cowley, a wealthy Yeoman.

Frodsham was a large parish containing many townships: Frodsham, Netherton, Woodhouses, Overton, Bradley, Helsby, Alvanley, Manley, Norley, Kingsley and Newton. When the vicar, Theophius Cooke MA, retired in 1663, his position was taken by John Davie MA. John Davie continued in his post for 45 years until 1708. He was to appoint a young man by the name of Kenrick Jones as clerk (an old term for a clergyman) who was to assist him with parish duties in much the same way as a curate does today, i.e. conducting services, baptisms, marriages and burials at the parish church.

Kenrick Jones, as his name suggests, was a Welshman, born in 1645 at Soughton, midway between Flint and Buckley and not far from Connah's Quay in Flintshire. He was the son of David Jones and as a young man had obviously received a good education and wished to become a clergyman. In order to do so, the Church demanded that its clergy be graduates of Oxford or Cambridge. He attended Jesus College, Oxford and matriculated (that is to say he was admitted formally to membership of the University) in 1663, at the age of 18. On completion of his training, he became clerk at the ancient parish church of St. Bartholomew at Thurstaston, Wirral, which is situated midway between West Kirby and Heswall, before taking up his post at St. Lawrence's, Frodsham.

Love must have blossomed between 28-year-old Kenrick Jones and his bride of 24 years, and the marriage licence for 'Kenrick Jones of Thurstaston, Clerk, and Margaret Littlemore of Frodsham, Spinster' was issued at Chester on 10th February, 1672/3. They were married the following day, 11th February, at Frodsham, by John Davie, the vicar.

Kenrick and Margaret's first child came along soon after marriage and was baptised at Frodsham on 12th December 1673. As became fashionable at this time with people of the 'middling' or professional classes, the baby boy was given the maiden name of his mother as a first name and the baptismal entry reads: "Littlemore Joanes fil [son of] Kenrici" with the added information that he was born on the 13th November. Sadly, he lived only four months. A daughter, Deborah, followed in 1675, (obviously named after her maternal grandmother), a son named Kenrick (after his father) in 1676 and another daughter, Margaret (named after her mother), came along in 1677.

As respected and revered members of the local community, officials of the church were to be sober in their deportment, not wear long hair, avoid gaming houses and generally to be of good report. On meeting their parishioners, men folk would touch their hat and ladies bob a curtsey. However, far from apparently upholding the high morals of the church, the records tell us that the unseemly behaviour of their clerk must have brought the church into disrepute. His scandalous behaviour as a man of God and as a member of the clergy must have been the talk of Frodsham and the surrounding townships.

What then, may we ask, was this scandalous behaviour?

In 1678, the same year that Kenrick Jones had conducted the marriage ceremony of John Hatton, Gentleman, and Mary Davie, the vicar's daughter, he was brought before the Court Leet and Court Baron (this was the manorial court which dealt with petty law and order) and was fined the sum of 10 shillings (an amount equivalent to roughly around £35-40 today) for "making an assault on Hugh Davie and Drawing Blood." It therefore seems that it was a particularly nasty attack and with the victim most likely to have been related to the vicar!

What the general temperament of Kenrick Jones was and whether he was liked or disliked in the parish, we can only conjecture, but it would appear that he had a somewhat aggressive nature, and certainly not in keeping with his vocation. Whatever the provocation by Hugh Davie, Kenrick Jones was obviously a man who was inclined to resort to physical abuse but he did, however, remain in his clerical post.

In June 1679, Kenrick's wife, Margaret, miscarried of an imperfectly developed child with the burial entry in the parish register for 25th June, 1679, reading "The abortive Child of Mr. Ken:Joanes." Sadly, and obviously as a result of complications with her pregnancy, Margaret died ten days later and was buried on 5th July 1679.

In 1681, three years after the attack on Hugh Davie, Kenrick Jones was to appear yet again before the Court Leet and Court Baron. This time, he was fined 6s. 8d. for "Drawing Blood on George Hayward." This second attack commanded a lower fine than the first and so presumably it was rated not quite as vicious! Despite his volatile nature, Kenrick Jones continued to serve as clerk at Frodsham. He also appears to have been somewhat slipshod in his approach to his work, particularly where marriages were concerned, for the records tell us that on: 25th July, 1686, Robert Lightfoot and Margaret Leadbetter "were married by Mr. Kendrick Jones without licence or banns asking." He was therefore not even complying with the law - and this was a man responsible for upholding and regulating certain moral and legal codes of conduct!

Kenrick Jones performed two marriage ceremonies for his late wife's distant relatives who were from the main branch of the family:

1. Samuel Smoult to Mary Primrose on 10th August 1687. Mary Primrose was the daughter of Margaret Primrose (nee Littlemore) who was the third daughter of Thomas Littlemore, Yeoman, of Netherton, and Alice his wife.
2. William Hind of Ince and Rachel Littlemore (by licence) on 16th January, 1688/9. Rachel Littlemore was the daughter of Richard Littlemore, Yeoman, of Netherton, and Jane his wife.

Kenrick Jones lived another 13 years after the death of his wife, Margaret, and was buried at Frodsham on 9th June 1692, aged 47. His son, Kenrick, and his two daughters, Deborah and Margaret, survived him. It seems likely that Kenrick junior moved away from Frodsham as his name disappears from the parish records.

Seven years after her father's death, Margaret Jones, now aged 22, married Thomas Knowles of Barrow on 17th February 1698/9 at Frodsham. Thomas Knowles was a Yeoman and in the same year of his marriage, had taken out a lease on a property from the Rt. Hon. Richard, Earl Rivers, at an annual rent of 17s. 3d. Margaret's sister, Deborah, now aged 24, is also named in the lease and is described as a spinster.

## TALES FROM THE VICARAGE

### Dilys O'Neill

During one part of her life, Ada Lightfoot, a Frodsham resident, acquired a post as a maid to Dr. and Mrs. Myres at the Vicarage in Church Lane. When Ada first started there, she lived in but said that she didn't like her bedroom. It was a large room and she slept in a fourposter bed. On one wall there was a big placard on which was printed an old Cornish prayer which said; "From Ghosties and Ghoulies and long legged beasties and things that go bump in the night, Good Lord deliver us." Ada called it the haunted room and although she never saw anything ghostly at all, she asked that she could go home to sleep instead of there.

Mrs Myres was a busy lady, and would sometimes go up to London on the train. One of Ada's duties was to get the Vicar's lunch and a couple of his favourite's were a mixed grill, and fish and mash. Apparently he was a late riser and often stayed in bed until noon. As he was a very learned man and a keen historian - he probably retired late "burning the midnight oil." One day the verger came round quite flustered saying, "Where is he? People have come to the church for a wedding". Ada had to wake the vicar quickly and he dashed to the church to officiate.

On one occasion, Mrs Myres was going to entertain the Mother's Union at the vicarage for afternoon tea, so she travelled to Chester in the morning to purchase some cream cakes from Hollands, (a high class confectioners). On her return at lunchtime, Ada had to help to prepare some sandwiches, which were laid out on a tea trolley along with the delicious cream cakes. Shortly before the visitors arrived - disaster struck! Someone had left a side door open, and the dog had got in and eaten all the cream cakes! Mrs Myres was devastated and Ada said that she got the blame although it wasn't her fault.



*The Vicarage of Saint Laurence Church, Frodsham, in the 1920s*

## AND FROM THE NORTH A GREAT ARMY CAME (PART 1)

**Ken Crouch**

### The Beginning of the First World War

Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> August 1914 was an unusually hot bank holiday and the gathering war clouds in Europe seemed a million miles away from the peaceful Cheshire countryside. Talk of war was on everybody's lips but most people believed that it would not happen and that if it did, it would be a European conflict.

Events in Europe were having no effect on the holidaying population. Although the usual bank holiday weekend excursion trains had been cancelled, normal services were still in operation and many visitors from nearby towns were enjoying themselves on Frodsham Hill and Mersey View Pleasure Grounds. However behind the scenes the government were going ahead with low-key military preparations. For instance the British Fleet had been kept on station after its annual review. On Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> August the Cabinet received a telegram saying that Germany was to invade Belgium on the next day. Following this information the Liberal government ordered the immediate mobilization of all naval reservists and medical staff. Trains leaving Liverpool on Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> August were packed with naval reservists.

During the bank holiday Monday the government decided to mobilize the armed forces. Post office workers, who had been kept on standby over the weekend, prepared and delivered 100,000 mobilization telegrams on the same day. Telegrams were sent to regulars on leave, whilst mobilization orders were sent to reservists and territorials throughout the country. In Frodsham, within hours, the pleasant bank holiday was forgotten. The only topic of conversation and interest was the war. War against Germany was finally declared at 11 pm on Tuesday the 4<sup>th</sup> August 1914.

Five hours earlier at 6 pm the order "Mobilize" was sent to the headquarters of the local territorial force, the 5<sup>th</sup> (The Earl of Chester's) Battalion, the Cheshire Regiment. Telegrams were then sent to all local headquarters ordering mobilization. Frodsham, together with the town of Lymm, was the home of 'F' Company, the 5<sup>th</sup> battalion of the Cheshire Regiment with 110 men serving as part-time soldiers from the two towns. During the evening a large number of local people gathered to watch as more and more uniformed territorial soldiers assembled at the Drill Hall, situated on Main Street. Many of the onlookers were also anxious to volunteer to go and fight the Hun. By Wednesday morning (5<sup>th</sup> August) the majority of territorials had reported to the Drill Hall. Later in the day the soldiers had organized themselves sufficiently to undertake a six-mile route march. Crowds of well-wishers lined the route during the march, cheering and waving as the troops passed by.



*Recruiting for the Cheshire Regiment in a factory yard.*

The town's people were very much afraid that an invasion could happen at any time. Minor panic spread through Frodsham on the morning of the 6<sup>th</sup> August when the sound of gunfire was heard from the direction of Liverpool, many people fearing that an invasion by Germany was taking place. By the end of the first week of the war the Chester Chronicle was reporting:

*"Numerous others, not Territorials, were constantly enquiring at the Drill Hall and are anxious to join whatever they can be taken for. In fact the youth and middle-aged of the district have fully caught war fever and it would be no trouble to get a body of men together at Frodsham Drill Hall, which could be made serviceable with little moulding. But would there be sufficient tools of war to go round?"*

On August 22<sup>nd</sup> 48 men had volunteered. The number was made up of 26 territorials, six reservists and 16 New Army recruits. Territorial soldiers had been recruited for home defence only and were not required to fight outside of the UK. They had to volunteer to fight outside of the country and I assume that the reference to 16 territorial volunteers meant that these men had committed themselves to overseas service. Initially the 5<sup>th</sup> Cheshires had had problems getting enough volunteers to bring it up to war strength. 1000 men plus officers was the requirement before it could go on active service and initially insufficient men came forward to bring the battalion up to strength. Eventually the missing numbers were made up from volunteers out of the 4<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> Cheshires, both of which were Territorial forces.

By the 29<sup>th</sup> August the local newspaper reported that Frodsham was helping out with men. John Darlington of Main Street had a son, four stepsons and a grandson serving in the forces. Peter Walker of Overton had three sons in the army whilst Mrs. Birtles of the Town Hall had a son and two grandsons who had volunteered. 24 men enlisted at the Drill Hall on the 1<sup>st</sup> September and the Chester Chronicle reported:

*"On Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> September a number of young men were sent away and told to return the next day as staff were unable to cope with the numbers."*

It also added the first of what was to be a constant criticism for the remainder of 1914: *“What has become of Kingsley and Norley’s young men? Don’t they know they are urgently needed? There are scores of eligible young men in these country districts and we have not yet heard of a single enlistment from them.”*



Recruiting campaigns were a regular event. Together with a band, a platoon of the Cheshire Regiment would parade up and down Main Street and moved by the stirring music young men would step out from the crowds and join up.

*Kitchener’s New Army recruits into the Cheshires, note the dark blue trousers initially worn by the New Army.*

By the 5th September a recruiting staff for Frodsham had been arranged. This consisted of CE Linaker, WG Linaker and Dr W E. Burton. They would attend the Drill Hall on Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday each week. Towards the end of September recruitment started to tail off not only in Frodsham, but also throughout Britain. The local recruiting officer wrote to the Cheshire Chronicle to complain that more men should be coming into Frodsham to enlist.

In the cities there was a sudden and tremendous increase in the number of suitable men coming forward for the colours when the idea of the ‘Pals’ battalions was introduced. This was most notable within the large cities of the North of England where many thousands of men rushed to enlist. These battalions were raised independently of the War Office and were privately financed. They consisted of men from the same trades, offices and towns. There had been a reluctance for middle-class volunteers to come forward for military service and this idea, initially from the War Office, was taken up by Lord Derby and following his appeal the first of the ‘Pals’ battalions were set up in Liverpool. Little did people realise the disastrous consequences that were to follow. It was said, following their annihilation during the Battle of the Somme in 1916, that the ‘Pals’ battalions were: *“Two years in the making and two hours in the breaking.”*

In October there was a further rush of volunteers in the New Army when the height restrictions on recruits were lowered. This allowed more men to be eligible for military service and sufficient men came forward for a complete division to be eventually formed. The battalions raised went by the affectionate name of ‘Bantams’. By the end of 1916 they, like the ‘Pals’ battalions, had virtually ceased to exist due to their high casualty rate and comment was being made at this time that replacement drafts of troops were of extremely poor physique.

So the stage was set. The volunteers from Frodsham and the other districts of the parish left for war. The reservists returned to their regiments, the territorials went either to do service within this country or abroad. The volunteers in Kitchener's New Army went off to their training camps to learn how to be soldiers.



*Codford St Mary where many New Army soldiers did their basic training.*

In September the Frodsham Parish Magazine reported:

*"We have bidden God-speed to our men of the Frodsham detachment of the 5<sup>th</sup> Cheshires already. It was good that a church parade was held on the Sunday morning that they left. Many people are also busy knitting socks and wraps for them. Now sewing parties and ambulance classes are going on. Every day the church bells will ring out at noon as a call to everybody to pause for a moment and offer prayer to our soldiers and sailors."*



*The 5<sup>th</sup> battalion of the Cheshires going to war.*

By the beginning of 1915, there were 185 Frodsham men serving with the forces, 55 in the Territorials, 109 in the New Army and in the navy and 16 in the regular army. Further local men were recruited during 1915, but as elsewhere, numbers of recruits fell dramatically. The local recruiting officer wrote on several occasions to the Chester Chronicle, criticising local men for not coming forward to fight against the Germans. At the beginning of 1916 the Government was forced to introduce conscription, opening the net wider to draw more and more men into the conflict. With the introduction of conscription the Frodsham recruiting office was no longer needed so it was closed down and all conscripts then reported to Chester

Over the 50 months of the Great War large numbers of Frodsham men and women became involved with the conflict. Many gave their lives and are now buried in graves worldwide or commemorated on memorials large or small across Europe and the Middle East

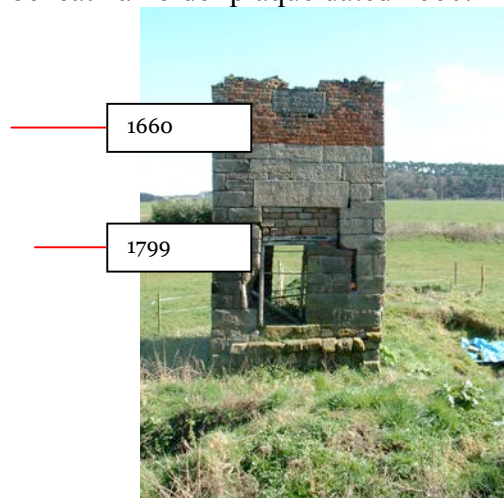
## **MANLEY OLD HALL: THE BIOGRAPHY OF A CHESHIRE FARM**

**Jennie Astall and John Lack**  
**NWAS Archaeology**

NWAS Archaeology is a small volunteer-based group that took over the long-standing excavations at Manley Old Hall Farm in 2008. Another group had opened the excavations in 2001. We understand their aim was to find the remains of the moated manor house mentioned in the English Heritage Grade II listing of the dovecote on the farm. Sadly, they commenced excavations without undertaking desk research or a detailed geophysical survey of the site. When NWAS Archaeology took over, some of the trenches had been open to the elements for more than seven years and the landowner was keen to have them backfilled and returned to pasture.

As no previous research into the history of the site had been undertaken, a context for the archaeological evidence was missing. The authors of this article embarked on researching that history in early 2009 and unearthed what we found to be a fascinating story that was published in 2011. This article aims to offer a short summary of the history of the farm and briefly refer to the results of the excavations.

English Heritage, in their classification of 1970, listed the dovecote as being formerly the gatehouse or porch to the original mediaeval moated manor house. Their conclusion had always concerned us, as the dovecote did not appear to be well enough constructed to have remained standing for such a lengthy period of time and with dimensions of 3.2m x 3.2m (10ft 6ins x 10ft 6in) appeared too small for either of the supposed purposes. We also observed that the field containing the dovecote appeared to have been scooped out. The east side of the dovecote displays two plaques (see Photograph 1) with the more recent plaque, dated 1799, being situated several courses of stone and brick beneath an older plaque dated 1660.



*Photograph 1: Dovecote at Manley Old Hall Farm ©*

Our research shows that the dovecote was in fact constructed after 1840, as it does not appear on the tithe map of that year. Stone and materials from earlier buildings have



been re-used in the construction, which we judge to have been completed by 1845, when the farmhouse is known to have been in place. We also found that the field in which it is situated was called Marl Field on the tithe map, as marl clay had been extracted from it.

The site of Manley Old Hall Farm was the location of the dwellings of the owners of the manor of Manley from its inception circa 1235. The farm was first rented out to tenant farmers from the mid to late 18<sup>th</sup> century. Our research shows the sequence of buildings at the farm started with Manor House I, when the manor of Manley was created during the reign of King Henry III (1216-1272). The first mention of the de Manley family is in a charter dated 1235, so we take the view that the manor had been established and the first manor house built prior to that date. Manor House II that was built in the late 16th/early 17th century succeeded this building. William Webb wrote at that time, in his tour of the Eddisbury Hundred, of seeing a *'fair lordship called Manley, wherein is an ancient seat and a fair house.'* The reference to a 'fair house' indicates to us that Manor House II had replaced the original mediaeval manor house. If it had still existed, he would have made reference to such.



*Photograph 2: Manley Old Hall Farm ©*

The existing farmhouse (see Photograph 2) was constructed between 1840 and 1845 as evidenced by the 1840 tithe map showing the footprint of Manor House II; and a statement by the Right Reverend Francis Gastrell in his *Notitia Cesterensis* (1845) that reads: *'Manley Hall, like its predecessor, has been taken down, and a farmhouse occupies its site.'* The farmhouse has been built over the cellars of Manor house II, some 15 metres from where Manor House I stood. The stonework around the front door of the farmhouse is from Manor House II.

The site has therefore had continuous occupation for almost eight hundred years. During this period it has evolved from providing foodstuffs for the manorial families, to an industrial farm reflecting the 'philosophy of improvement' in agriculture that started in the seventeenth century.

The ownership of the lands of Manley can be traced back, through the Domesday Book, to 1066 when a Saxon named Toki owned them. At the time the Domesday Book was written (1086), the land was owned by the Earl of Chester. The Norman family given the manor adopted the 'de Manley' name. Articles in the *Cheshire Sheaf* and several mentions in George Ormerod's *The History of the County Palatine and City of Chester* provide a family tree and some snippets about the family.

The best-recorded member of the de Manley family is Richard who in 1363/64 was one of the two sheriffs of Cheshire. He was Escheator of Cheshire on four occasions during the reigns of Richard II and Henry IV. Richard was also a fighting man. In 1406 he and others were commissioned to take a number of men at arms and archers from the Eddisbury Hundred to reinforce the Broxton Hundred against the Welsh rebels, following Owen Glendower's revolt. Service to the king continued down the family line. John de Manley is reported in 1417 as having five archers assigned to him in the service of King Henry V, when Peter Hickson de Manley was also listed as being an archer from the Eddisbury Hundred. The Manley family left the manor in 1539 (they had dropped the 'de' from the family name by 1427). William Manley inherited the manor at the age of 19 years. Sadly, he was rather dissolute and in a piecemeal way sold off packages of land from the manor to settle his debts, until it had all passed into the possession of John Birkenhead, the Recorder of Chester. John had ownership of the manor on two occasions. His first period of ownership only lasted four years, as it then came into the possession of Henry Gee, Chief Magistrate in Chester (1533 and 1539) and Lord Mayor in 1534 and 1540. It was Henry Gee who founded Chester races at the Roodee after banning football being played there. On his death, the manor was taken over by Laurence Dutton who had been sheriff of Cheshire in 1531. His daughter was married to William Manley.

The estate passed back into the ownership of the Birkenhead family around 1570 and we are of the view that Manor House II was built during this period of their ownership. Richard Birkenhead's daughter, Jane, married the Reverend Gregory Turner, Rector of Sephton, who subsequently inherited Manley and lived there from c.1607 to c.1615. In turn, their daughter married into the Legh family from East Cheshire who owned Manley for just a few years before selling it on to Robert Davies, around 1618. The Davies family lived at Manley for just over 120 years, up to 1741. It is during this period that agricultural improvements started to be made, which we will touch on later in this article.

The plaque on the dovecote, dated 1660 (see Photograph 3), refers to the Davies family. The plaque states:

John Davies youngest  
sonne to Robart  
and Elizabeth Davies  
of Ashton 1660

The local tradition has it that the plaque commemorates John Davies who drowned in the moat or pond at Manley Hall. The historical record shows otherwise. John Davies was the youngest son of Robart (sic) and Elizabeth Davies and inherited Manley from his father upon his death in 1658. However, John Davies lived for a further 31 years, which indicates to us that it was John Davies who had the plaque made. We are of the view that he did so to commemorate his inheritance in 1658 and 1660 marks the year he moved into Manley hall, perhaps after having some renovations completed.



*Photograph 3: 1660 plaque on dovecote ©*

It was significant for a youngest son at that time to inherit property; hence the mention of his situation on the plaque, which we believe, will have been placed in a prominent position on Manor House II.

The male line of the Davies family ended in 1741 with the death of Thomas Davenport Davies, John's grandson. The family's estates passed to Salisbury Davies, Thomas's sister. She had married Sir Matthew Deane who owned large estates in County Cork. They did not produce an heir so the estate passed to Sir Matthew's brother, Sir Robert Deane, who was a barrister and the MP for Cork. His son, Sir Robert Tilson Deane (who was created Lord Muskerry), inherited his estates, including Manley. Lord Muskerry rented the house and farm out to a tenant farmer, named John Snelson c.1780 and subsequently sold the Manley estate to Thomas Lowton, a lawyer from the Inner Temple, in 1789. The Snelson family remained tenants on Manley Hall farm until 1889. Thomas Lowton has left his mark in two ways, one professionally and one at Manley Old Hall Farm. Professionally he founded the Lowtonian Society, for solicitors in London, which still exists to this day. His second legacy is the 1799 plaque currently sited on the dovecote (see Photograph 1). It is fairly indistinct and can only be read close up and states:

Renovated by Thomas Lowton,  
Inner Temple, 1799

It refers to the extensive works he had undertaken at the farm.

Thomas Lowton died in 1814 and left the Manley estate to his nephew, Thomas Wainwright (also a lawyer), with a condition that he changed his surname to Lowton. A portrait of Thomas Wainwright Lowton hangs in the Grosvenor Museum. He died in 1830 and a sepulchral memorial to him and his wife Elizabeth can still be seen in the Parish Church of St. Laurence, Frodsham. When Thomas Wainwright Lowton died, the estate passed to his nephew, Thomas Robinson, who was also required to change his surname to Lowton. Upon his death in 1867 the estate was sold to John Wilson Fox, who died in 1882. It is there that we lose some of the continuity of ownership as ironically, as we approached the present day, information about landowners became more difficult to find. However it would seem that the estate remained in the Fox family until World War 1. It was then purchased by the Cirencester (Women's) Conservative Benefit Society. There were a number of comparatively short duration tenancies until 1923 when the Ford family moved in as

tenants and they purchased the farm outright in the early 1950s. Their descendants are still there today.

We know from an inventory of 1669 that Manor House II was quite a substantial building. At that time the surrounding land supported 60 sheep and 20 lambs, 17 cattle (including one bull and four calves) and seven pigs. There was also 'corn upon the ground'. It would seem that there had been a process of 'agreed enclosure' of the open fields and common land. Enclosure was a necessary precursor to agricultural improvement that started in a small way in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. By the early 18<sup>th</sup> century, improving their estates for profit became a priority for landowners. Developments in planned farm buildings were part and parcel of improvements of the soil and farming practices.

Natural resources were exploited at Manley Hall, this included the extraction of marl clay for soil improvement and brick making at the farm's own brick kiln. Coal was also extracted from a small deposit on the estate. The improvements to the soil and farm buildings at Manley Hall were to improve pasture and housing of cattle, in order to maximise milk yields and the production of cheese. The importance of pasture and recognition of the time, effort and money that had been applied to improving the pasture lands was still paramount in 1874, when a later John Snelson signed a tenancy agreement with John Wilson Fox. The farm at that time was just over 223 acres but in any one year the tenant was permitted to have no more than 56 acres under tillage.

The archaeology on the farm supports the historical research. The finds show that there has been a midden on the farm since the late 16<sup>th</sup> century. Also there is a small number of building materials finds from the mediaeval period.

Our book *Manley Old Hall: The biography of a Cheshire farm* is not currently for sale. However there are copies in Frodsham, Helsby and Chester libraries, as well as the Cheshire Records Office and the Frodsham and District History Society Archive.

<http://www.nwasarchaeology.co.uk>

### **ARCHIVAL NEWS** **Kath Hewitt. (Archivist)**

As one door closes another one opens, sometimes with surprising results. This year has been one of searches, coincidences, detection, red herrings and odd requests. Of the thirty enquiries dealt with between January and September, only a few of the most interesting or curious are recorded below.

Cllr. Allen Wales and Mr. Ken Crouch are continuing to collate the names and details of the fallen in two world wars from the various War Memorials in Frodsham and their on-going research will be added to the archives. Last year's enquiries regarding the two world wars, struck chords in many people's memories both sad and humorous. More stories emerged of wartime experiences - about Italian POWs (plus three photographs) who worked on Peel Hall Farm, Worrall's farm and on the marshes - of Irish land-girls billeted in the half built Helsby High School and of the disgraced British soldiers being marched through Frodsham to the Drill Hall - all snippets of information now recorded. A copy of a letter sent home by a serving Frodsham soldier to his family 1944/5, in a brief moment of rest, vividly recounts his

Division's push through Belgium, the liberation of villages and towns and their next advance to Berlin.

Mrs. Draper of St Helens donated a suitcase full of Frodsham press-cuttings, photograph albums, a photocopy of a German Bomber's aerial map of Runcorn detailing areas to avoid bombing (ICI); and the WW2 Army Service records of a family member from his draft in 1939 to his demob in 1945. The final document is his letter of application for a gardener's job in Castle Park. Keith and Mary Helsby donated the wartime record of Keith's father and a copy of his certificate 'With Pride' awarded to 'Leslie Helsby'. Several other local wartime documents and Christmas cards have been given to the archive, adding to a growing file.

Dr. Allan Richardson of Rainhill Historical Society got in touch regarding a letter he had received from Yvonne Stephens (nee Aston) in Australia, recalling his visit there eight years ago when he had conversed with her brother about Frodsham. Yvonne included a photograph of King George V's visit to Frodsham in 1925- showing her ancestor, John George Aston - the 'Mayor' of Frodsham. Beryl Wainwright and I met Allan and were able to identify J.G. Aston as Clerk to the Council, not the Mayor. Through emails, Yvonne asked for further family information which I was able to find, including when a John Aston was the licensee of the Bull's Head 1871 -1877. From her letter it seemed that the 'family' home might have been at Dunham Hall and Google Earth showed that the house was just a short distance from the Wheatsheaf hostelry in Dunham Hill. We found it empty, built in 1676 and now part of a farm. The present owner had no record of the Astons in his family papers – so maybe they had been servants. Photographs of the Hall, St Laurence's Church and the Bull's Head were emailed to Australia to add to Yvonne's records. She and her brother intended to visit Wales and Cheshire later in the year. So ended a long 'detective' enquiry but curiously, Dr Richardson remained adamant that he had never met Yvonne's brother in Australia!

Philip Jenkins of Devon made contact seeking details of family graves and especially their memorial inscriptions in St. Laurence's churchyard. Frodsham Library had all the information I required on microfiche but I was defeated by weather and long grass when trying to find the last two graves to trace 'missing' children. Once again, long emails were exchanged and such absorbing local family history details were gathered which, coincidentally, touched on my father's family in Cheshire and Yorkshire.

After much investigation, Mr. Lance Yates had a potentially exciting theory that there might be a Titanic connection with 'Beechlands' in Howey Lane. Did the very wealthy Liverpool businessman Alfred Rowe and his wife live there before the ship and he went down? However, Sue Davy and the present owners looked into the deeds, which showed that it was an elder brother's widow who had bought the house and moved to Frodsham from Liverpool in 1919.

Sometimes, enquiries can lead down wrong and amusing alleyways. Glyn Bowen of Telford wanted to know if a pewter tankard, engraved with '*The Frodsham Cup*' 1892, various military insignia and the name '*Sergeant F. S. Franklin*', belonged to someone in Frodsham. I contacted the Curator of Chester's Military Museum, Major T. E. Pickering but even he was baffled. Eventually he reported that the sergeant probably belonged to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Voluntary Battalion of the Rifle Volunteer Corps, raised in mid Cheshire in 1859, and the Cup would have been awarded as a prize for a

musketry competition. All Major Pickering's detailed information was emailed to Glyn who soon replied with a 'bombshell'. He had traced Sergeant Franklin to a Bedfordshire Regiment and had discovered that The Cup had nothing to do with either Frodsham or a musketry competition; it was just someone's name and had been in the *Bedford Omnibus Society's* possession for years! So ended a puzzling but enjoyable red herring.

Ann Moncrieff, who was taking a course at Oxford University's Continuing Education Department, enquired if there was any evidence of Viking settlement in the Frodsham area and if any artefacts had been found. Relevant pages from Dr. Dodd's "*A History of Frodsham and Helsby*" were scanned and emailed to her, plus contact names and numbers of Chester Record Office, the Grosvenor Museum and the archaeologist Dan Garner, which proved helpful to her. At the last moment before her course work had to be handed in, Alex Cowan of Runcorn Historical Society was able to send her evidence of an artefact found near the Runcorn Bridge and with her last excited email, Ann promised a copy of her work for the archives.

In 2005 Castle Park House was closed and all the formal photographs of past Chair Persons of Runcorn Rural District Council, (of which Frodsham was a part) which had graced the staircase, were donated to the History Society, but as we had no storage facilities they were sent to Northwich Salt Mine - recorded in the History Society's February minutes of 2005. So began a frustrating search to find them. My emailed enquiry was kindly passed from pillar to post until they were finally located, not in a salt mine but in an unlighted Vale Royal lock-up garage in Hartford amongst old chairs, broken furniture, boxes of papers and rubbish. The 1932 plaque donating the estate from the Abbott Wright grandchildren to 'Runcorn Rural District and the Parish of Frodsham' has been cleaned and mounted on the wall as you enter Castle Park House. All 55 large formal photographs from 1894 onwards are now stored in the basement ready to be shown again if needed.



*This 1932 plaque, donating the Castle Park Estate to 'Runcorn Rural District and the Parish of Frodsham,' has been cleaned and restored to Castle Park House and can be seen on the wall as you enter the building.*

A New Zealand lady made contact about the records of the Children's Home where her brother had lived for some years. I passed this on to Claire Hayes who was able to help with information. A rather ghoulish enquiry was made by a gentleman wanting the 'history' of the mortuary in Kingswood (ex- Crossley Hospital) which is now his

home, but I was unable to help this time! Archive material is proving useful to Mrs. Susan Lorimer of Helsby, who is researching prominent families in Helsby in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries – the Haspell, Lewis, Burgess and Brandreth families and their links to Methodism in Helsby. I hope to report more on this detailed research next year.

I have gathered a collection of newspaper cuttings, photographs and local magazines celebrating the Queen's Diamond Jubilee and the London Olympics 2012. Several Frodsham people have participated – Mr. Joe Beswick had the honour to carry an Olympic Torch in Macclesfield; Gary Barlow OBE gathered children of the Commonwealth to sing for the Queen and organised the Diamond Jubilee Concert outside Buckingham Palace; Daniel Craig (as James Bond) escorted the Queen in the Olympic Opening Ceremony in the helicopter adventure; Dale Jennins, an architect involved in the design of the Olympic Stadium was invited to join the Guard of Honour for the entry of Sir Steve Redgrave into the Arena at the Opening Ceremony; Catherine Prisk spent three hard months rehearsing as a volunteer drummer in the Opening Ceremony and continued working at the same time; Kate Birkenhead, a cheerful Games Maker, said that those two weeks of looking after so many different people were the best of her life. In the Closing Ceremony Gary Barlow and 'TakeThat' had the honour of performing the final song prior to the cauldron being extinguished. Congratulations to all of them!

Visitors have spent a good deal of time in the archive room and Alex Cowan, Runcorn Historical Society's archivist and I have exchanged visits that proved interesting and useful. Mr. Arthur Smith has very kindly donated many interesting and wide-ranging documents, books and cuttings to the archives. He also borrowed documents from the archives referring to St. Laurence Church for their History Weekend in September. The CD of the 1938 cine films of the repairs to Frodsham viaduct has arrived from the North West Film Archive Manchester at last, but is short - only four minutes- and of disappointing quality. However, the film is an important addition to Frodsham's history. Castle Park Arts Centre borrowed and exhibited over 80 photographs of the Estate and staff, taken in 1891- beautiful copies from the Abbott Wright family's own collection which are held in the archives. As always, this was a very popular exhibition.

Thank you to everyone who has passed on information, donated books, memory voice tapes and documents this year, especially Mrs. Dorothy Smith, Mr. Nick Smith, Mrs. Jackie Bowe of Castle Park House, the ladies of Frodsham Library, Kim and Heidi of Castle Park Arts Centre and Mrs Anne Pitt of the Town Council, who have contacted me about enquiries and been so helpful.

Paper copies of the full archive lists are available *in bright pink hard-back files* in Frodsham Library and in Castle Park House Reception where you can peruse them at your leisure. CDs of the Archive Lists and Dr. Dodd's slides of Frodsham 1960 to 1980 are in the lower ground floor and also in Frodsham Library for viewing on their computers. To bring you up to date - there are 189 books, 529 documents/files, 41 maps, 15 posters, slides, acquisitions, paintings, journals 1986 -2011, and Frodsham High School's closing exhibition 1940 – 2009, stored in Castle Park House. If you should wish to visit the archive room please contact me on:

Telephone - 01928 733005

email - [kath.hewitt@btinternet.com](mailto:kath.hewitt@btinternet.com)

## **Frodsham & District History Society**

### **PROGRAMME OF MEETINGS 2013**

All indoor meetings are held on Monday evenings at Main Street Community Church,  
Frodsham and start at 7.45pm  
Membership £5.00 p.a + £1.50 per meeting. Visitors £3.00

- |             |   |
|-------------|---|
| 7 January   | <b>Manley Old Hall Farm</b><br>John Lack and Jennie Astall  |
| 4 February  | <b>Why did Liverpool Cathedral lose two towers?</b><br>Geoffrey Johnson   |
| 4 March     | <b>AGM &amp; Hands off our Heritage</b><br>Councillor Hilarie McNae   |
| 8 April     | <b>Ordinary life in Cheshire in the Quarter Sessions records</b><br>Dr Paul Booth   |
| 13 May      | <b>Dating wood in Cheshire</b><br>Dr Johnathan Lageard  |
| 3 June      | <b>Guided Monday afternoon visit to Peover Hall, including Stables, Gardens, Church and tea.</b><br>Organised by Kath Gee |
| 2 September | <b>The bloody fields of Waterloo</b><br>Michael Crumplin  |
| 7 October   | <b>Cheshire Knights and their Ladies</b><br>Tony Bostock  |
| 4 November  | <b>Discovering Cheshire's historic designed landscapes</b><br>Barbara Moth (Cheshire Gardens Trust)                       |
| 2 December  | <b>Wise words and country ways</b><br>Idris Evans   |



