



**FRODSHAM AND DISTRICT
HISTORY SOCIETY**

JOURNAL



**Issue No.47
December 2017**

Compiled by: Kath Gee, Sue Lorimer and Heather Powling



Journal of
FRODSHAM AND DISTRICT HISTORY SOCIETY
Issue No. 47 December 2017

CONTENTS

	Pages
CHAIRMAN'S INTRODUCTION – Brian Dykes	1
EDWARD KEMP REMEMBERED – Kath Gee	2-3
W E LAWLESS & SONS, 21 CHURCH STREET – Heather Powling	4-6
FROM SHIPBUILDERS TO COTTON MANUFACTURERS: EDWARDS OF FRODSHAM – Sue Lorimer	7-9
THE STONE MASON – Arthur R Smith	10-13
TRIP TO VICTORIA BATHS, MANCHESTER 5 TH JUNE 2017 – Gill Gleave	14-17
PETER EGERTON WARBURTON – Kath Gee	18-23
ARCHIVAL NEWS 2017 – Kath Hewitt	24-29
FRODSHAM PLAYERS – A GLIMPSE INTO THE PAST AND A MYSTERY SOLVED – Ian Lancaster	29
OUT AND ABOUT IN THE COMMUNITY – Heather Powling et alia	30-33
PROGRAMME OF MEETINGS 2018	34

Front cover picture:

The Luther House, Wittenberg, Germany, was built as an Augustinian monastery in 1504. Martin Luther took up residence in the monastery after he was ordained as a priest in 1507. By 1512, he had graduated as a Doctor of Theology and begun teaching in the theological faculty of the University of Wittenberg. Here, he developed the basic tenets of the Protestant Reformation and **posted his 95 Theses on the door of All Saints Church, Wittenberg, on 31st October, 500 years ago**. The 'Theses' called for a reform of the Catholic Church and their practices. Today the Luther House is a UNESCO World Heritage site.



CHAIRMAN'S INTRODUCTION

President: Mrs Joan Douglas

Officers:

Mr Brian Dykes, Chairman; Dr Kath Gee, Hon.Secretary; Mr David Fletcher, Hon.Treasurer.

Committee:

Mrs Margaret Dodd, Membership Secretary; Mrs Betty Wakefield, Programme Secretary; Mr Andrew Faraday; Mr Brian Keeble; Mrs Pam Keeble; Mrs Heather Powling; Mrs Beryl Wainwright; Mr Tony Wakefield.

Dear Members and Friends,

Welcome to our History Society Journal for 2017. I hope all of you look forward to reading it as much as I do. Each year we learn more interesting facts about the locality and its inhabitants: this issue will not disappoint! My grateful thanks go to the people who have enabled this production: those who have contributed articles and photographs and the hard-working compilers/editors, all of them authors as well. They have made this an interesting and topical issue.

The society continues to slowly grow in membership, which we welcome. We now have more than 90 members. That is due, in no small measure, to the excellent Programme of Meetings that Betty arranged in her final year as Programme Secretary. We thank Betty for her diligence in keeping the 'show on the road' as we welcome Frank Whitfield, our new Programme Secretary. Frank has been quietly planning the 2018 Programme of Meetings which you will find included at the end of this Journal. We applaud him for the range of topics and the variety of speakers he has found. I think we can anticipate another successful year and I look forward to meeting and introducing all of our guest speakers.

I thank all members of the committee for their hard work and commitment to making the running of the Society such a success. We are especially grateful to Kath for continuing to organise interesting summer visits appropriate for our membership: the 2017 trip to Victoria Baths, Manchester, was especially pleasurable. We are also grateful to Betty and Tony for continuing to host our committee meetings and to everyone, president, committee members and ordinary members, who have willingly helped with serving refreshments, and washing up, at the end of our meetings.

Finally, we are delighted that the collection of Frodsham Historic Images has been transferred to the Cheshire Record Office and is easily accessible for both casual viewing and *bona fide* research projects, such as for articles in this Journal, and, the Shop History Posters that were displayed in windows during Heritage Open Days week. It is pleasing to note that the last two articles in this Journal demonstrate the History Society's valued presence and diverse role within Frodsham and District.

Brian Dykes

EDWARD KEMP REMEMBERED

Kath Gee

This year we have celebrated the bicentenary of the birth of Edward Kemp, 1817–1891, the influential and respected landscape designer/gardener and author, who worked mainly in Cheshire & Merseyside.

Kemp was born at Streatham, Surrey, on 25th September 1817, the son of Charles Kemp, a tailor, and his wife, Ann. We know little about his formative years, but during the 1830s he was an apprentice under Joseph Paxton, gardener to the Duke of Devonshire at Chatsworth in Derbyshire. His apprenticeship taught him about planting trees, constructing rockeries, installing fountains and the importance of greenhouses to a large estate. Kemp also had an involvement in producing Paxton's *Magazine of Botany* and was writing articles for other gardening publications, too.

In the 1840s, Birkenhead's improvement commissioners had obtained a private bill empowering them to use public funds to build and maintain a public park. This was urgently needed to provide green recreational spaces for Birkenhead's growing industrial population. Joseph Paxton was appointed to design Birkenhead Park between 1842 and 1845, and, from 1843, Paxton entrusted the implementation of his plan to his former apprentice, Edward Kemp. When Paxton's work was completed he recommended that Edward should become the Park's first superintendent and be provided with a house... Edward moved into the 'Italian Lodge', one of the newly built properties surrounding the Park. In September 1845, Edward married Sophia, daughter of Henry Bailey who had been park steward and gardener to the Spencer family at Althorp House, Northampton.

Birkenhead Park was opened officially on 5th April 1847, and in 1849 the Commissioners decided that a superintendent was no longer required. However, Kemp negotiated a settlement that he should work for no salary, but remain in his residence. This perhaps led to him becoming a successful author of books, e.g. *How to lay out a small garden* in 1850, and *The Parks and Gardens of London and its Suburbs* in 1851; the former ran into 3 editions and is still a sought-after text. Meanwhile, the concept and design of Birkenhead Park – the first public park in the world – was attracting visitors from afar including F. L. Olmsted, the American designer of Central Park, New York. Olmsted was clearly inspired by some of the Paxton/Kemp ideas he saw and used them in his plans for Central Park.

Kemp began taking on commissions for other public parks, e.g. Grosvenor Park, Chester, 1864-67, Congleton Park, in 1871, and Queen's Park, Crewe, in 1887. Kemp also accepted commissions to lay out municipal cemeteries, e.g. Anfield Cemetery, Liverpool, in 1863, and Flaybrick Memorial Gardens, Wirral, in 1864.

Kemp's first recorded private commission was the design of a rose garden for James Barratt at Lymm Hall, Lymm, Cheshire in 1849. At Park Place, now Castle Park, Frodsham, he worked with Joseph Stubs, the wealthy manufacturer of tools in Warrington. Stubs was already a 'successful collector and cultivator of rare plants'. The following year, 1856, Kemp was commissioned to lay out pleasure grounds and a kitchen garden for Samuel Woodhouse II, the wealthy family of wine merchants at nearby Norley Hall.

For the last 46 years of his life Edward Kemp lived at 'Italian Lodge' and held the honorary post of Superintendent at Birkenhead Park whilst accepting many commissions from newly rich Victorian clients. He is known to have worked at 38 sites across England, 29 of them in Merseyside and Cheshire. Edward Kemp lived to the age of 74 and is buried in the family grave at Flaybrick. His personal estate was valued at £10,500, which is more than £1 million in today's money.



The headstone of the Kemp family grave reads:

In loving memory of MARY ANNE KEMP who died at the home of her brother, EDWARD KEMP of Birkenhead Park August 12th 1885, Aged 69 years.

Also of SOPHIA, the much loved wife of the said EDWARD KEMP, who entered into rest December 17th 1887, in her 70th year.

“UNTIL THE DAY DAWN AND THE SHADOWS FLEE AWAY”

Also of the said EDWARD KEMP, Curator of Birkenhead Park from its formation in 1843 and the Designer of this Cemetery, who died March 2nd 1891.

HE SUFFERED MUCH BUT WAS DEEPLY GRATEFUL FOR GOD'S GOODNESS TO HIM,
AND WISHED TO HAVE INSCRIBED ON HIS TOMB
“His mercy endureth for ever”

In this, Kemp's bicentennial year, guided walks have taken place in Grosvenor Park, Castle Park, Queens Park, Crewe, and Congleton Park. The impetus for these was provided by the Cheshire Gardens Trust.

2017 also marks a significant anniversary of the opening of Birkenhead Park. So, on 5th April 2017, 170 years to the day after its formal opening, the Mayor of Wirral unveiled a blue plaque at the visitor centre in the Park to commemorate Edward Kemp.

Sources:

Web information on Birkenhead Park

Moth B (2017) *Kemp's Parks and Gardens in Cheshire* Cheshire Gardens Trust

Waymark J (2009) Oxford Dictionary of National Biography – Edward Kemp

<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/96724>



W E LAWLESS & SONS, 21 CHURCH STREET

Heather Powling

Frodsham's oldest baker's shop, W E Lawless and Sons, 21 Church Street, closed in September 2017. The business had been in existence on the same site for more than 100 years. It was one of several shops owned by the Lawless family in Frodsham. The first of these was the grocer's at the corner of Main Street and Fountain Lane opened in the 1880s by William Edward Lawless's father, Edward.

Edward Lawless and his wife Sarah were born in Lancashire and began their working lives as cotton weavers. They moved to Frodsham in the 1880s, possibly because of hard times in the cotton industry in the late 1870s and 1880s. Cotton riots in 1878 and a strike in 1883-84 in Darwen would have made life difficult for families like the Lawless's.

William Edward Lawless, eldest son of Edward and Sarah, was born in 1878 whilst the family lived in Darwen, and the 1881 census shows that he and his parents lived at 27 Gillebrand Brow. Ten years later, at the time of the 1891 census, the family had moved to Frodsham and opened the grocery business in Main Street (photographs of the early 1900s show that this was also a bakery and confectionery). William worked for his father and is described as 'grocer's assistant' on both the 1891 and 1901 censuses. He then married farmer's daughter, Nessie Booth in 1902 and they had acquired the shop in Church Street by 1906 (Kelly's Trade Directory of 1906). They were also living there at the time of the 1911 census. By then the couple had two children, Percy and Kathleen. William still gave his occupation as 'grocer' at this point.

<p style="text-align: center;">PLAN of PROPERTY, Church Street, FRODSHAM.</p> <p>Lot 1. 2600 Sq. Yds. - 2 4000 - 3 4000 Total 1337. Sq. Yds.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Scale 30 feet to an inch</p> <p style="text-align: right;">11.10.1888</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">PARTICULARS.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">LOT 1.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">ALL THOSE TWO WELL-AND-SUBSTANTIALLY-BUILT HOUSES AND SHOPS, WITH OUT-OFFICES.</p> <p><small>Situate on the East side of Church Street, one being in the occupation of Mr. James Hough, and the other unoccupied, containing, with the Yard and Outbuildings, 488 Square Yards of Land. This Lot has a frontage to Church Street of upwards of 62 feet, and is a very desirable property, being recently built, and is in a good position for business purposes.</small></p> <p style="text-align: center;">LOT 2.—All those FOUR COTTAGES AND SMALL SHOP, <small>in the occupation of W. Paine and others, adjoining Lot 1, with a frontage to Church Street of upwards of 69 feet. The purchaser of this Lot to have the use of Road from A to B on Plan. Contents 409 Square Yards.</small></p> <p style="text-align: center;">LOT 3.—All that newly-erected BEER-HOUSE, CALLED "DROVERS' ARMS," AND TWO COTTAGES, <small>with Outhouses and Outfices, in the occupation of James Hascock and others. Frontage with road to Church Street, upwards of 51 feet. Contents 434 Square Yards.</small></p> <p><small>Lots 2 and 3 will be offered in the first instance as One Lot, and if not sold together will then be offered separately.</small></p> <p><small>The boundary between Lots 2 and 3 to be marked out from Plan by Messrs. H. LEWIS AND SON.</small></p>
<p>Lot 1 on the 1888 plan had been acquired by William Edward Lawless by 1906</p>	<p>1888 Sale Particulars</p>

On the Sale Particulars the premises at 21 Church Street are described as two houses, shops, yard and outbuildings. Part of the property was unoccupied at the time of the sale and the other part occupied by painter and decorator James Hough. From information in the 1891 and 1901 censuses, we believe that the shop which was to become William Lawless's bakery was leased or owned until then by John Roberts, a greengrocer and cab proprietor. John Roberts lived further up Church Street in 1881, and by 1911 had retired to Chester with his unmarried daughter.

From 1911 onwards, W E Lawless and Son(s) are listed in various trade directories, including Kelly's Directories of 1928 and 1939. Later guides such as the Official Frodsham Guide of 1960 include advertisements for the bakery.



After William's death in 1946, the business passed to his two sons, Percy and Kenneth. When Kenneth died it was handed down to his sons, John and David, who have owned the shop until now.



FDN2521 Lawless's with blind c.1990s

2017 marks not only the closure of a much-loved and long established bakery, but also the centenary of the death of William Edward Lawless's younger brother, Isaac Thomas. Isaac was the fifth child of Edward and Sarah, and also a baker. He originally enlisted in the 1/7th Battalion (Cyclist) Welsh Regiment in 1915 but then

transferred to the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve in June 1917. He was drafted to the British Expeditionary Force on 9th July of that year and joined the Anson Battalion on 2nd September. Able Seaman Lawless died seven weeks later, on 26 October 1917, in the Second Battle of Passchendaele - killed (drowned) in a shell-hole as a direct result of enemy action. He is named on the memorial at Tyne Cot, Zonnebeke, West Flanders, Belgium.



Group from Manor House School pointing to Isaac Lawless's name, Tyne Cot – photograph by kind permission of the school

When the service to commemorate the Battle of Passchendaele was broadcast from Tyne Cot in July 2017, part of the programme was recorded in front of the panel which bears Isaac's name. It is fitting that we are able to pay tribute to him, together with the other eleven young men from Frodsham who gave their lives in one of the worst periods of the First World War.

Albert, the youngest Lawless brother, died in France eleven months later. He was killed by a shell whilst returning with a carrying party on 27th September 1918. Before the outbreak of WW1, he had worked at the Maypole in Warrington, though in earlier years he also worked for his father. Albert was originally in the Grenadier Guards, but by 1918 was a Corporal in the 1st Battalion, The Welsh Guards. He is buried at the Louveral Military Cemetery, Nor-Pas-de-Calais. Both are remembered on the family grave in St Laurence graveyard (**OGC/11/09**).

Right: the Lawless family grave, St Laurence graveyard, Frodsham



FROM SHIPBUILDERS TO COTTON MANUFACTURERS: EDWARDS OF FRODSHAM

Sue Lorimer

This story was revealed during research for the Heritage Shop Project.

It begins in 1794, when George Edwards, a carpenter, married Sarah Hopkins at St. Laurence Church, Frodsham. They had 5 children christened at St Laurence's, then a son, George, christened in Warrington in 1808 and a daughter, Elizabeth, in Gt Sankey in 1811. George presumably moved to the Warrington area to hone his skills in shipbuilding. Sarah, their youngest child, was born in Frodsham in 1816, by which time George was a partner in the shipbuilding firm of Hayes, Urmson and Edwards at Frodsham Bridge.

Chester Chronicle 27th December 1816:

On Thursday se'nnight [last week], a fine Galliot, called the Kent, was launched from the yard of Messrs. Hayes, Urmson and Edwards, at Frodsham, in this county; she went off in a beautiful manner, and without the occurrence of the least accident. At 2 o'clock, the shipwrights, and others in their employ, were treated with a good substantial dinner, plenty of strong ale, etc, etc. A little before the Kent began to move down the launch Mr John Edwards, son of one of the proprietors, with daring intrepidity, ascended her mainmast, where he maintained his perilous situation amidst the violent concussions which so weighty a body inevitably produces, on plunging into the fickle element, and to the astonishment of a great number of spectators.

George, the shipbuilder, was also a grocer, listed as such in Pigot's Directories of 1828 and 1834 but he considered himself mainly a shipbuilder and vessel owner. When he wrote his will in 1827 he owned his own shop and the flat "William".

John b.1795, the daredevil mentioned above, became a carpenter and was widowed in 1832. He too died young in 1836, leaving his 3 young sons, Richard, James and George, to be raised by their grandparents, George and Sarah.

George Snr. died in 1839, leaving his estate to his wife Sarah, with the proviso that on her death or remarriage their son George had first option to buy the business on account of his infirmity. In the event this stipulation was unnecessary as George died later that same year. He left his mother the profits from his share of the following vessels, all sailing from Liverpool; $\frac{1}{2}$ of the "George and Sarah", $\frac{1}{3}$ of the sloop "Weaver" and $\frac{1}{2}$ of the sloop "Jane". (In August 1848, at 2am one morning, a sloop named "Jane" from Liverpool, carrying flour and sugar, was in collision with "The Prince of Wales" steamer from Belfast to Fleetwood. The steamer was run ashore with the loss of 3 men. The sloop was a complete wreck.)

Of James's children, Richard became a draper and in 1861 had a shop in Lower Church Street. He was listed in the 1860 trade directory as a silk merchant, haberdasher, hosier and dealer in millinery, flowers and funerals. He gave all that up and had moved to Everton by 1871. Another son, James, died when he was only 11. George went on to run the family grocer's on High Street, following the death of his grandmother Sarah. Mary, the eldest of George's 3 daughters, married Andrew Hutchinson of Manor Farm and their son, John Arthur Hutchinson, had a garage on High Street.

Returning to the 8 children of George Snr, two died in infancy. Elizabeth born in 1811 died aged 18. John and George have been mentioned already. Thomas, a shipwright when he married his first wife in 1821, became a successful draper and grocer in Barnton, Northwich. Sarah, the youngest, married Richard Guest a chemist of Frodsham. She lost 2 of her 3 children in infancy and her husband after only 6 years of marriage. Although her husband was from a wealthy family, his father being a gentleman farmer with land and cottages in Hatton, Sarah spent her widowhood bringing up her young daughter by herself, earning a living as a needlewoman. We will now concentrate on James, born in 1806, who is possibly the most interesting of all.

James married Martha Williams, daughter of a cheese factor of Norley, in 1835. They had 7 children, 2 of whom died young. In 1841 he had a draper's shop in Church Street but by 1851 James had moved to a draper's in Main Street, next to the Golden Lion. In the 1861 census his occupation was woollen draper, cotton spinner and manufacturer and in 1871, cotton manufacturer and draper.

Back in 1813, Samuel Mouldsdales, a draper of Frodsham, put the following properties up for auction:

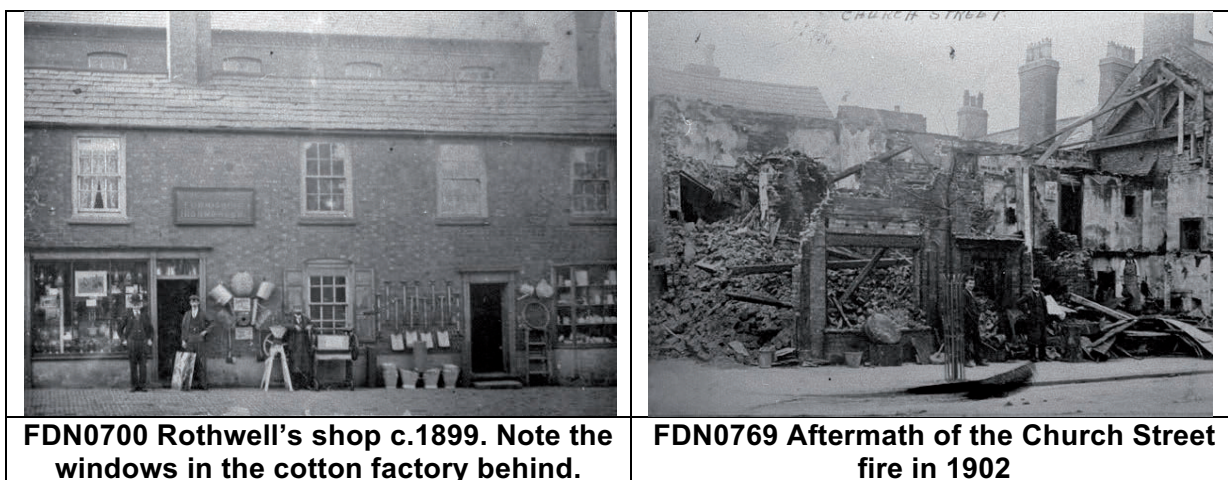
Chester Chronicle 26 March 1813

Lot 1 All that building, situate and being in front of a certain street in Frodsham aforesaid, called Church Street, lately used as a cotton factory, and at present unoccupied.

Lot 2 Twenty eight looms, now fixed up in the before-mentioned building.

Lots 3, 4 and 5 were a terrace of 3 newly built brick dwelling houses on Church Street and the advertisement stated that Lot 1 was a new building capable of being converted into 4 cottages.

That description matches the property at the lower end of Church Street, next to the Golden Lion. The cotton factory building is still there at the rear of the shops, despite the fire and explosion in 1902 that destroyed the neighbouring buildings.



It is not unreasonable to think that James Edwards purchased these properties at some point and re-established the cotton factory. James died in 1879 and in 1881 the property in Church Street, then occupied by J. W. Rothwell, ironmonger, was auctioned. It was probably then it was purchased by Mr. Rothwell who later used the "cotton factory" as a workshop for making milk churns and suchlike.

There is more evidence of a small cotton industry in Frodsham in the early 19th century.

Chester Chronicle 24 December 1802

Lot 1 That well accustomed Inn called the King's Head [now Queen's Head], in the town of Frodsham, now in full trade and in the occupation of John Shaw; comprising a substantial brick built dwelling house, with excellent stabling for 22 horses, cowhouse, barn and spacious yard and garden. Also, an extensive building situated on the above premises, well calculated for carrying on the Cotton business, being sufficiently capacious to contain 16 looms on the first floor, or the whole may be at little expense, ...converted into a malting.

James Nickson, landlord of the King's Head, in his will of 2nd May 1831, mentioned his dwelling house known as the King's Head, with its outbuildings, cotton factory, cottages, garden, bowling green and croft.

Back to James Edwards: His wife Martha died in 1857 and James married her sister, Jane. He bought a house on Main Street on 3rd August 1874 from the sisters Miss Frances and Miss Elizabeth Fawcett and retired there. We know this house as "The Gables". His shop next to the Golden Lion was taken over by another draper, Thomas Roberts. James died in 1879 and in his will he left the house to his children, allowing Jane the full use of it during her natural life. James was a wealthy and generous man. He left £10 to the Rev. John Cartwright and £5 to each of 13 friends. He also left every family in receipt of parochial relief in Frodsham and Frodsham Lordship the sum of 2s 6d, to be paid in the week of his funeral.

Of his 5 surviving children, George became a draper in Winnington Northwich. Sarah married Jabez Thompson, son of a shipbuilder of Witton. Jabez, originally a salt merchant, had a Terra Cotta business in Cuddington. Elizabeth married a veterinary surgeon of Tattenhall. Francis went to Rochdale where he established his own cotton manufacturing business, eventually retiring to Southport. James a cotton spinner by trade moved to Rochdale too and married there. He returned to Frodsham and in 1890 bought his parents' home from his brothers and sisters following his stepmother's death in 1888. He called the house "West End". At that point he was a corn, hay and straw merchant. In 1906 his daughter, Eleanor, married and moved to Swinton, Lancashire. James moved in with her and in the 1911 census described himself as a "retired cotton spinner". In July 1908 he sold "West End" to the sisters Miss Roscoe and Mrs Jameson from Knutsford who in turn sold it to Samuel Hancock who called the house "The Gables".



The Gables, 52 Main Street, in 2010

THE STONE MASON

Arthur R Smith

The work of the stone mason consisted of cutting and squaring large pieces of stone recently delivered to his yard from the quarry. Then he had to trim and shape the stone according to the requirements for which it was to be used. In Frodsham there are many places where stone has been used in the past for buildings, walls, gravestones, tombs, monuments and bridges. A good example of a stone building is Saint Laurence Parish Church where the main structure is built of stone including the pillars, the walls and window frames and outside the churchyard is surrounded by stone walls. In fact stone walls are much in evidence in various parts of the town, especially along Vicarage Lane to Five Crosses and near the Frodsham Methodist Church. In the early nineteenth century there were numerous stone cottages and many houses had stone outbuildings, a few of which can still be seen. So stone was much in use and therefore the output of the various stone masons was much in demand in those days.

According to Jacob Johnson in his *Book of Trades* (1818), the main tools used by the mason were the square, the level, the plumb-line, the bevel, the compass, the hammer, the chisel, the mallet, the saw and the trowel. In the engraved picture shown below the mason is shaping a stone with a mallet and chisel. On the round block of stone in front of him is a bevel, the two arms of which can be adjusted to make any angle. The author states that when masons or bricklayers speak of a bevel angle they mean any angle other than 45 or 90 degrees.



**The smartly dressed mason is shown hard at work carving an intricate pattern on a large block of stone
(The Book of Trades, page 374)**

In the background of the picture another workman is sawing a large piece of stone into smaller pieces. For this sort of work a different type of saw was used – one that had no teeth. One man moved it backwards and forwards and it cut the stone by its own weight and by the friction it caused. Jacob Johnson continues his description of the work of the stone mason by adding that the master mason needs to have

“powerful machines for raising or rearing large stones, or other great burdens, such as levers, pullies, the wheel and axis, crane, etc.”

Then he goes on to describe the different types of stone that the mason might choose. As he almost certainly lived in London he states that *“great use there in the city is made of Portland stone from Dorset or of Purbeck stone also from the same*

county". Undoubtedly the Frodsham stone masons often used sandstone from local quarries, for example from the quarry at Top Road, Five Crosses. According to Pigot's National Commercial Directory for 1828-29 there were a few small quarries of coarse red sandstone near the town but they were "*not worked to much extent*".

In the 1851 Census it is recorded that there were 14 stone masons in the Frodsham Township and four in the Frodsham Lordship. These figures demonstrate how much need there must have been for dressed stone for building purposes at that time, especially with the extra demand created by the construction of the Lancashire, Cheshire and Birkenhead Junction Railway which ran through the centre of the town.

According to the Census of 1861 David Hoose, who lived in Church Street, was one of the stonemasons in Frodsham. He and his wife, Sarah, had one son who was an apprentice in the trade aged 16. By the time of the 1881 Census David Hoose is described as a master stonemason.



FD02020 Palmer's Quarry at Top Road, Five Crosses, Frodsham

The census records give us some idea of John Palmer's career. According to the 1891 Census he was 21 years old and boarding with William and Hannah Lloyd who lived in Townfield Lane, near to the Vicarage (now called the Old Vicarage). His occupation is given as stonemason. Ten years later in the 1901 Census he is recorded as a mason contractor and employer. By this time he was married and had seven children – two sons and five daughters. The family lived in Church Street, Frodsham.

At the time of its opening in 1889, the Drill Hall became the home of the Frodsham (1) Company of the 2nd Cheshire (Earl of Chester's) Volunteers. However the entrance was not very imposing and so in testimony to the local volunteers who fought in the Boer War, it was decided in November 1900 to erect an ornamental archway at an estimated cost of £100.00. Mr John Palmer, builder and quarry owner of Frodsham, carried out the construction work.

According to the census of 1911 John Jones Palmer had become the Managing Director of the sandstone quarry at Top Road, Five Crosses. His wife's name was Phoebe Agnes and they had seven children. Annie, his daughter, aged 17 worked as clerk to the quarry and his son, George aged 15 had become a mason's

apprentice. He and his wife and family lived in a house which had been built of stone on his orders in 1905. Needless to say it is situated close to the quarry. He named the house Quarry Mount. One sad fact for the couple recorded in the census is that his wife had given birth eleven times but by 1911 only seven of the children had survived.





John Palmer's house, Quarry Mount, at Top Road, Five Crosses, Frodsham

In those days Palmer's also had a wooden shop in Church Street opposite to Station Lane. Behind the shop was a yard where the stonemason worked on memorials and other products. The mason, who was about to make, say, a gravestone, would start his task by using his skill as a draughtsman drawing out on the slab of stone the shape of the memorial. Then he would chisel away at the stone following the lines until it was the required shape. For any angle other than 90 or 45 degrees the mason used scantlings, that is, two strips of wood nailed together so that they could be opened out to any required angle. The same angle could then be drawn wherever it was needed on the stone. In addition the mason often used a zinc sheet, which had been cut and filed to the right pattern, to mark on the face of the stone various decorative mouldings. Once the pattern had been marked out the mason could set to work and carve out the design on the stone.



The restored stone barn next to the Ring o'Bells at Overton after the roof and the upper section of the gable-end wall was blown down in the fierce gales of January 18th 2007. The tower of Saint Laurence Parish Church is in the background.

Millstone House, which has the date 1693 on the hearth stone, is a good example of how sandstone was used in the construction of many dwellings in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The foundations and the lower half of the walls were built of sandstone and above that the building was timber framed.

	
<p>Millstone House, which stands at the corner of Main Street and Marsh Lane, was formerly an inn and a farm. Its name probably derives from the fact that in the past there were a number of corn mills in the vicinity</p>	<p>The inglenook fireplace in Millstone House showing how the builders made good use of sandstone</p>

Even in Victorian times, when there was a rapid increase in the building of houses in brick, many properties had cornices, window sills and doorsteps made of stone. At the same time there were many other uses for stone, for example for garden walls, kerbs on roads, cobbled streets and for paving stones, not to mention for the building of bridges, horse troughs and fountains. When the Vicar of Frodsham, Rev'd Fanshawe, and the Parochial Church Council decided in 1835 that the town was in urgent need of a school for girls, they drew up plans for one to be built in Church Street on land provided by Lord Cholmondeley. With financial help from the Church of England National Society the school was soon under construction. It is interesting to note that to reduce costs the floor of the school was paved with flags or paving stones. This particular use of stone was commonplace in many buildings in those days, for example on farms in cowsheds, barns and farmyards and in tradesmen's premises such as the blacksmith, the wheelwright and many other trades.

Editors' note:

Further information on local quarries and quarrying has been published by The Sandstone Ridge Trust (2017)

The Ridge: Rocks and Springs – a sandstone legacy

The 132-page book is available for loan in local public libraries.

TRIP TO VICTORIA BATHS, MANCHESTER – 5 JUNE 2017

Gill Gleave

On a wet June lunch time 34 of us departed by bus from Frodsham Community Centre to the Longsight area of Manchester for our visit to the Victoria Baths.

Parked up outside, you immediately saw the grandeur of this grade II listed building, the façade decorated with multi-coloured brickwork and terracotta and a wooden clock tower, which have all been restored. It was opened to the public in 1906 by the Lord Mayor of Manchester, J Herbert Thewlish, who described it as a “water palace” of which every citizen is proud. It cost £59,114 to build and no expense was spared. Manchester City Council regretfully closed the hugely popular baths in 1993 due to the high cost of maintenance and remedial work, the building was left to become derelict. Good news though, a multimillion-pound restoration project began in 2007. The building was chosen on the first series of the BBC’s Restoration programme and awarded £3.4 million from the Heritage Lottery Fund. Most of the award was spent on the front of the building, as shown on the picture below, and more money followed from English Heritage.



Victoria Baths, listed Grade II

We entered via the “female” entrance, the other entrances being “1st class male, 2nd class male” and an unsigned entrance which we later found out to be the private door to the superintendent’s flat. The first room was a waiting room, where, originally, the ladies would have waited to be collected and then escorted home, after their visit. They would not have walked alone in the early 1900’s. The room now houses the Aerotone (Jacuzzi) which was installed in 1952 and was the first public one in the country, it did not look overly inviting but we were informed that it was used for health reasons and football players from both Manchester teams have used it. As we waited for our guides we could hear a group of school children singing and then saw them exercising in the empty swimming pool. Good to see the building being used even if not for swimming.

The group was split into two. Our party with our well informed and interesting guide walked along the length of the building. We were now in the entrance of the 1st class males, with its own turnstile and admission booth. You noticed the floor to ceiling green and cream tiles and mosaic floor. Some would have been from pattern books of the time, but also a number of bespoke designs. It housed a plaque commemorating the main people involved with the opening of the baths complex, including the designer, City Surveyor, T de Coursy Meade, his assistant Arthur Davies, and Henry Price, the City Architect, who supervised the work. One of the many stained glass windows in the building that was pointed out was of a rugby player. Golf and cricket were represented in other rooms, but nothing of swimming which seems rather odd.



The 1st class males entrance hall



The Angel of Purity window

From here we entered a suite of rooms known as the Turkish Baths, comprising three hot rooms with levels of rising heat – the Tepidarium, the Caldarium and Laconium. There was also a wet steam room known as a Russian Bath and a Rest or Cooling

Room used to acclimatise yourself after using the Turkish Baths. A fabulous stained glass window of the famous Angel of Purity (see picture) is a feature of this room and gives it a very relaxing and calming ambience. It is hoped that the Turkish Baths will become fully operational and able to accommodate paying visitors once again. The difficulty with all these type of projects is achieving 21st century standards of customer expectation whilst complying with strict English Heritage guidelines.

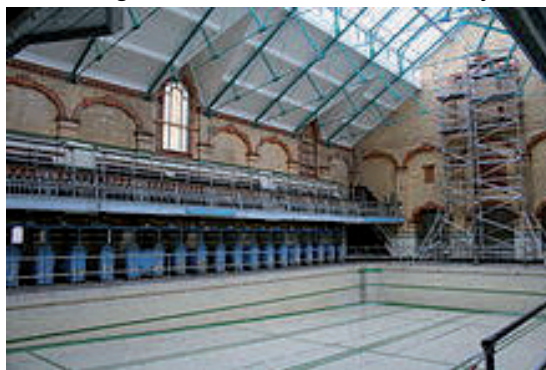
Walking over the glass floor which had been uncovered as part of the restoration, we walked back the full length of the building before going upstairs.

We then get our first proper viewing of the female only pool, one of the three Olympic-sized swimming pools which were originally designated for separate use by 1st class males, 2nd class males and female only. Mixed bathing was introduced with great caution in 1924 and later in the 1920's mixed bathing sessions were held every Sunday morning enabling families to swim together for the first time. The females would have had water coming into their pool from the 1st and 2nd class male pools, highlighting their position in society!!

On entering the 2nd class male pool, we could see where the slipper baths or 'wash baths' would have been round the edge of the pool. This was an important amenity as many houses would not have their own baths, something we take very much for granted these days. Unfortunately none of the baths have survived.

Next, we saw rooms that were part of the Superintendent's Flat which in its day had 4 living rooms including a kitchen and 4 bedrooms. The original superintendent was part of the planning team and he made sure his accommodation was more than adequate. Families of the superintendents became excellent swimmers naturally and some represented the country in the Olympic Games. As part of the next major stage of restoration, plans have been drawn up to restore the flat into rental apartments to provide much needed regular income.

Finally we entered the 1st class males – or gala pool. This was designed so that it could be floored over during the winter months and used as a venue for dances, concerts and lectures. We were instantly struck by the lavishness of the area. Each of the changing rooms had doors with their own stained glass window, with more stained glass windows along the outside of the building and at either end. They have been restored to their magnificent splendour, showing pictures of countryside, to give an air of well being, even though it was in the heart of a city.



The 1st class males or gala pool

We were then told about Sunny Lowry born in January 1911, who learnt to swim at Victoria Baths and went on to swim the English Channel in 1933 – at her third attempt. She dedicated her life to swimming, and became a teacher of swimming and life-saving. She was fit and healthy well into her 90's and actively supported the Victoria Baths campaign until her death in 2008. English Heritage gave permission for a small stained glass window to honour her, even though it was not part of the original building.



This ended a very informative and interesting tour.

There has been a large amount of restoration work completed and plans have been drawn up for the next stage which is the completion of the Turkish Baths and the Superintendent's Flat – both for income generation. The Victoria Baths Trust is working hard to raise money to make the building viable and their long term aim is to bring it back to its former glory and to have public swimming here again, today this can only happen on one-off occasions. Presently, it is used in film and TV productions, for art and education, wedding ceremonies, various fairs and guided tours for groups like ours.

Our thanks go to Kath Gee for organising an excellent trip.

Postscript: Runcorn Baths

Originally Runcorn had its own Salt Water Baths. It opened in 1822 and proved very popular. Runcorn became famous as a health resort:

"Runcorn benefits from its pleasant and salubrious situation. The air is impregnated with health and the salt water bathing is very good"

The present Runcorn Swimming Baths were built as an indoor market in 1856 with stalls on the outside. The building became a lively social centre for the people of Runcorn when it was converted in 1907 for dances and as a swimming pool. Interestingly this is around the same time as the Manchester Baths were opened. At this time health and well-being was being promoted throughout the country.

The external building fabric was brick and local Runcorn Sandstone – nothing as fancy as the Victoria Baths. The windows are now boarded up but I can't imagine they ever had elaborate stained glass. Previously there were internal balconies with seats but these are no longer there, however, it is still open, well used, and operated by Halton Borough Council.



Runcorn Swimming Baths

PETER EGERTON WARBURTON 1813-1889

British military officer; Commissioner of Police for South Australia; Australian explorer

Kath Gee

This article began as simple fact-finding for a walk around Norley: A Tale of Two Manors, which was part of the Frodsham Festival of Walks 2017.

Peter Egerton Warburton was the 7th of 10 children of Reverend Rowland Egerton and his wife, Emma. Emma was the only daughter of James and Emma Croxton. Their family home was Norley Bank, one of two large estates in Norley, Cheshire. 19th century maps and documents convey the extent of the estate and historic images show the size and character of the house.



FDN0489 Norley Bank house, south side (undated). Sadly, it was demolished in 1957

Emma Croxton was a sister of Sir Peter Warburton, 5th Baronet of Arley. When Sir Peter died without issue on the 14th May 1813, Rev'd Rowland and Emma were living at Norley Bank House. Their first child, Rowland Eyles Warburton, aged 7, inherited the estates of Arley and Warburton, and Rev'd Rowland and Emma were granted royal permission to append the name 'Warburton' to their own. It is, perhaps, unsurprising that their next child & 4th son, born on 15th August 1813, was christened Peter. It is aspects of Peter Egerton Warburton's life that I have researched and presented here.

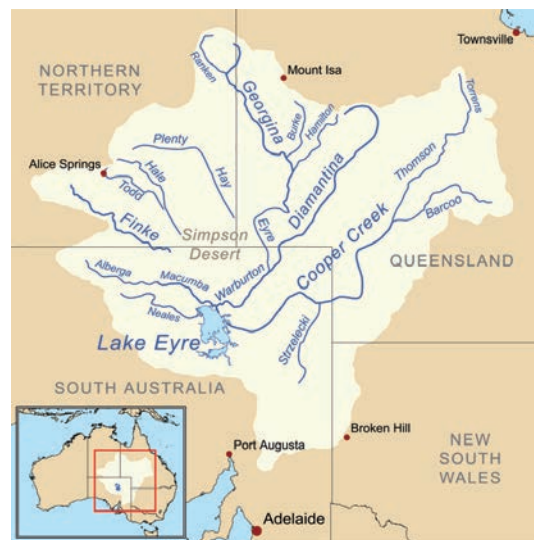
Peter was educated at home and by tutors in France until the age of 12 when he entered the Royal Navy. Peter served as a Midshipman on HMS Windsor Castle (1) for the next 3 years. Then, in 1829 he entered the Royal Indian Military College at Addiscombe, Surrey, and on 9th June 1831 he became an ensign (2) in the 13th Native Infantry Battalion, in Bombay. Peter served in the army for 22 years.

He was promoted to lieutenant on 18th July 1837 and to captain on 24th January 1845. He had married Alicia Mant of Bath, the daughter of a solicitor, on 8th October 1838. They had 3 sons and 3 daughters.

Peter retired from the army, with the rank of major, in 1853. Soon afterwards he, and presumably his family, visited his youngest brother, George and his wife, Augusta, in Albany, Western Australia. George Egerton Warburton was a pioneer settler. His sister-in-law, Eliza Grey had married George Grey, a British explorer who had mapped the coast of Western Australia in the 1830s. George Grey had been appointed the 3rd Governor of South Australia (1841-45) which was followed by Governor of New Zealand (1845-54). In these positions he gained a reputation of trouble shooter. Through these connections Peter and his family travelled to Adelaide, South Australia, where Peter took up the post of Commissioner of Police. He was also appointed a Justice of the Peace.

For almost 14 years and with increasing financial support from the South Australian Government, he was able to develop morale-boosting reforms in the Police Service and a policing presence as the 'economic frontier' of South Australia expanded.

Throughout this time there were exiting opportunities to explore little-known districts with the purpose of identifying potential grazing lands. Peter's first 4 explorations into the hinterland included the areas around Lake Torrens & Lake Eyre.



Lake Eyre Basin map by Kmusser for *The Rand McNally New International Atlas* (1993) <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=9643977>

During his 5th expedition, to the north shore of Lake Eyre in 1866, Peter discovered a large river which he traced back from Lake Eyre to near the Queensland border. It was subsequently named after him: the Warburton River.



Fast flowing Warburton River which follows the eastern edge of the Simpson Desert

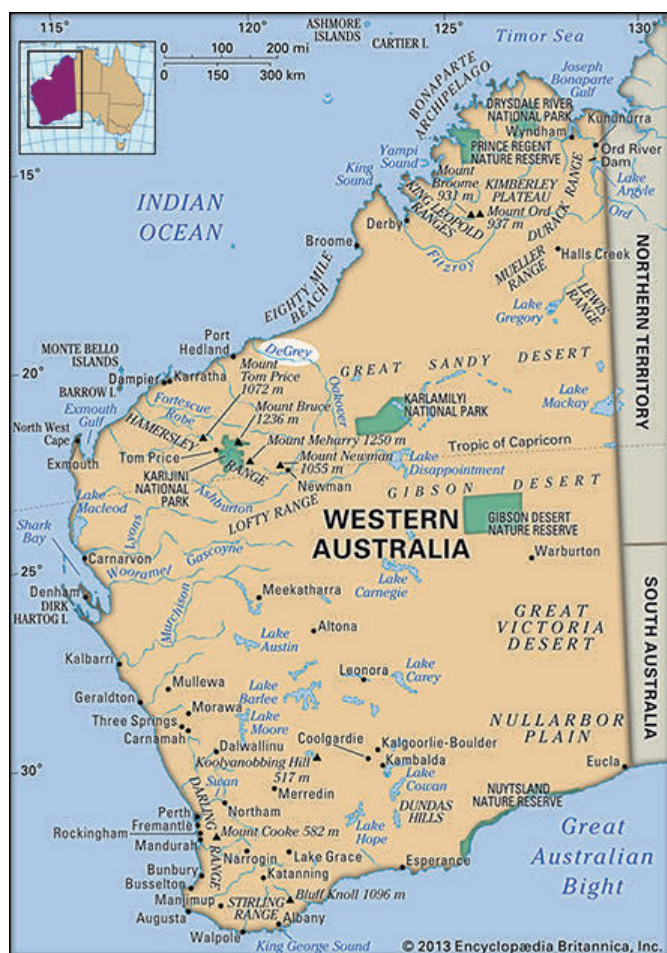
Peter's fascination with exploration and frequent absences from his post as Police Commissioner antagonised members of the provincial government and after a secret hearing he was pressured to resign. This he refused to do claiming he'd been victimised and unfairly treated. However, on 24th March 1869 he accepted the appointment of Chief Staff Officer and Colonel of the Volunteer Military Force of South Australia.

Three years later, at the age of 59, Peter embarked on his 6th 'great expedition' - the largest, longest, most life-changing and last.

On 21st September 1872, Peter Egerton Warburton left Adelaide, leading an expedition of 7 men, 17 camels, plentiful provisions and with the aim of finding an overland route to Perth and evaluating the nature of the country between. The team of explorers included Peter's son, Richard; JW Lewis, an experienced bushman; 2 Afgan camel drivers plus an assistant; an expedition cook; and Charley, an indigenous Australian tracker. They reached Alice Springs on 21st December in the midst of drought and decided to wait there during the summer months. They set off again on 15th April, but were soon having to deal with extreme heat and lack of water. They headed for two rivers, but discovered their courses had been wrongly mapped. As they crossed Northern Territory they passed two distinctive, previously mapped mountains and reached the furthest point of an earlier expedition by other pioneers on 20th August.



The explorers pressed on across the arid desert terrain and survived only by hunting out the natives to discover their wells. At one point they lost 4 camels and for three weeks in October they subsisted on the meat of a single camel and were plagued by ants. By 12th November Peter had lost the sight of one eye and believed he was close to death from starvation, but, they supported each other and struggled on reaching the Oakover River in Western Australia on 11th December. They were still 800 miles north of Perth and 200 miles from the coast. They followed the course of the river with Peter strapped to one of the two remaining camels, all of them exhausted and poorly nourished. On 30th December they were lucky to meet settlers who took them to the DeGrey [Sheep] Station, near Port Hedland on the north coast, which they reached on 11th January 1874.



Above, left to right:

Key places on the explorers' route in Western Australia

Richard (son), Peter, JW Lewis
c.1874. National Library of Australia

The expedition had become the first to cross the continent from centre to west, to survive a crossing of the Great Sandy Desert and to cover nearly 1000 miles of country hitherto unknown to Europeans.

The explorers were enthusiastically received at Perth and then Albany, on the south coast, before returning to Adelaide. Back in South Australia their success was celebrated at a public banquet and the legislative assembly awarded Peter £1000. Peter attributed his survival to Charley, his aboriginal companion. The expedition's choice of camels for transport probably contributed to their survival, too.

In Britain, the Royal Geographical Society (RGS) awarded Peter their Patron's Gold Medal for 1874 (3). In November 1875 Peter came to England for six weeks and was awarded the CMG (4). With assistance, he published an account of his expedition: *Journey across the Western Interior of Australia*.

Thereafter he lived at his property and vineyard, called Norley Bank (*sic*), in Beaumont, near Adelaide and died there on 5th November 1889. He was buried in the nearby churchyard of St Matthews, Kensington, which is also the resting place of composer, Percy Grainger. Peter was survived by his wife, two sons and a daughter.



Norley Bank, Beaumont, Adelaide, with daughters, Ethel and Mary, plus Alicia and Peter to the right. This property has also been demolished. Image courtesy of Burnside Library via the President, Burnside Historical Society

My researches for this article have mainly used online sources, both British & Australian. I have also benefited from email correspondence with Meredith Ide, President of Burnside Historical Society, Adelaide, and the RGS in London. I have sought to check out a number of minor factual discrepancies in the online accounts I have used, and have noted an improving evaluation of Peter's achievements as time passes. For instance, an Australian biography published in 1949 concluded with the following disparaging statement:

"Coming to Australia when past 40 years of age Warburton had not the outback experience that is necessary for exploration work. Though he succeeded in crossing Australia from Adelaide to the north-west coast it was fortunate that the whole party did not perish, and Warburton can scarcely be ranked among the greater Australian explorers."

However, in later works Peter's reputation and contribution to geographical knowledge have been more widely appreciated and honoured. For instance, the remote settlement of Warburton, Western Australia, two mountain ranges, the Warburton River and the Warburton Beetle, *Stigmodera murrayi*, are named after him. And, he was depicted on one of six Australian stamps, issued on 6th June 1976, which commemorated Australian explorers.



The portrait of Peter Egerton Warburton (1813-1889) above, was taken by an unnamed photographer c.1874.

Notes relevant to the text

- (1) HMS Windsor Castle was a full rigged, timber sailing ship built by the Royal Dockyard at Deptford. Her keel was laid in 1774 and she was launched into the Thames in 1790. She had cost £51,198.8s.6d to build and was manned by a crew of 738 officers, men, boys and Royal Marines. She was of similar age & design to the 'Fighting Temeraire'. Between 1826 and 1829 Peter would have sailed with the ship from Plymouth to Portugal, carrying troops, before returning to Plymouth. The ship also sailed with troops from Portugal to the Mediterranean and to Valletta, Malta for a refit in 1828.

<p>HMS Windsor Castle Type: 2nd rate (size) ship in line (fighting ship); 98 guns Launched: 1790; Disposal date or year: 1839 BM: 1874 tons</p>	<p>HMS Temeraire Type: 2nd rate fighting ship; 98 guns Launched: 1798; Disposal date or year: 1838 Disposal Details: Sold. The subject of Turner's painting when she was being taken up the Thames to be broken up. BM: 2121 tons</p>
<p>Information from the Naval Database www.pbenyon.plus.com/18-1900/W/05251.html</p>	

- (2) **Ensign.** Until 1871, when the term was replaced by 'second lieutenant', **ensign** was the lowest rank of commissioned officer in infantry regiments of the British Army. It was the duty of officers of this rank to carry the colours of the regiment.
- (3) **Patron's Gold Medal.** Since 1832 the monarch has approved the award of two Royal Geographical Society Gold Medals annually. They are awarded for recognised excellence in geographical science and discovery. The Patron's Medal is engraved with the recipient's name and date of the award. One side of the medal displays the head of young Queen Victoria and on the reverse side is the figure of Minerva. In 1874 the Patron's Medal was awarded to:

"Colonel P. Egerton Warburton for his successful journey across the previously unknown western interior of Australia."

- (4) **CMG** is one of the classes of the **Most Distinguished Order of Saint Michael and Saint George.** It is a British order of chivalry founded in 1818 by George, Prince Regent, later King George IV and is named in honour of two military saints. The Order includes three classes, in descending order of seniority and rank: *Knight Grand Cross* or *Dame Grand Cross* (GCMG), *Knight Commander* (KCMG) or *Dame Commander* (DCMG) and *Companion* (CMG). The Order was originally awarded by the monarch to those holding **commands** or high position in the Mediterranean territories acquired in the Napoleonic Wars, and was subsequently extended to holders of similar office or position in other territories of the British Empire.

ARCHIVAL NEWS 2017

Kath Hewitt

This has been another busy year for the archive service with increasing numbers of interesting, tantalising and unexpected enquiries and donations, too many to list in this report.

Every so often serendipity plays its part.

An interesting press cutting was donated recording the sale of a tea caddy made in 1760 by George Cooper, woodworker, from the mulberry tree which grew in Shakespeare's garden and cut down by the Reverend Francis Gastrell of Frodsham. Recently, there was a television repeat of 'Time Team's' excavation of Shakespeare's house 'New Place' in Stratford upon Avon. Inevitably, Francis Gastrell's part in the story was enthusiastically re-told by Tony Robinson, and soon I was about to have something of a surprise.

In 1971 the deeds of our land and Victorian house in Fluin Lane, were deposited in the Midland Bank. Forty-seven years later, when HSBC, as it became, closed its doors we had to retrieve everything and looked at the contents of the box more closely. The earliest deed revealed that on October 3rd 1768, The Reverend Frances Gastrell of the Lordship of Frodsham, along with Corbett Costard of Frodsham, Gentleman, and Robert Wainwright Ashley of Frodsham, Gentleman, sold our land together with its cottage, garden and small croft in the Short Furlong in the Town Field of Frodsham, to John Jones, Yeoman of Bellair, Kingsley, for the sum of sixty one pounds and nineteen shillings. The property was to be rented and occupied by William Eaton farmer, and John Jones was responsible for the collection of the rent of seven shillings and eight pence per year to King George III. The beautifully hand written deed is signed and sealed by the Reverend Francis Gastrell, Costard and Ashley.

Francis Gastrell, the wealthy Vicar and Clerk of St Laurence Parish Church, married to Jane, daughter of Sir Thomas Aston, in Aston Chapel 1752, is remembered for buying Shakespeare's house, 'New Place' in Stratford upon Avon and out of spite, cutting down Shakespeare's tree in 1756. Later he demolished New Place itself, thwarting the town's authorities over non-payment of taxes, and the annoying 'tourists'. He made a very hasty retreat from Stratford as a result. Francis died on 5th April, 1772 and Jane on 30th October, 1791. Both are buried in Frodsham. This brief account is recorded fully in the National Archives and Shakespeare's Birthplace Trust's Archives.

Whilst original deeds are on my mind, The Town Council is in the midst of moving rooms in Castle Park House and has taken the opportunity to sift through volumes of past papers, maps and reports recording Frodsham's changing face over many years. In view of this, I was asked if the archives would accept some of them into its safe keeping. Many of these papers are gems of information about pathways, fields, trees, land ownership, rights of way, the marshes, the ship canal, official reports into buildings, and maps covering Frodsham, Helsby, Ince and Elton. The original deeds, referring to lands given to the Parish Council to establish the Memorial Field, the War Memorial commemorating the Fallen of WW1 (and WW2) and the approach walk on Overton Hill, were given by leading members of the public by 1924 and are most interesting. Every aspect of the area's development is recorded with its agreements and controversies - fascinating records.

The Archive's collection of donated photographs and slides grows steadily with superb black and white views of the Runcorn/Widnes Transporter Bridge, the Weaver Navigation, River Weaver boats, old Frodsham and the Helter Skelter in the process of being demolished. Photographs of the various Archive and WW1 Exhibitions, including the construction of the Somme Commemoration Poppy Cascade mounted in the Health Centre last year, are all on the Archive website's 'Photo Collections' for you to browse.

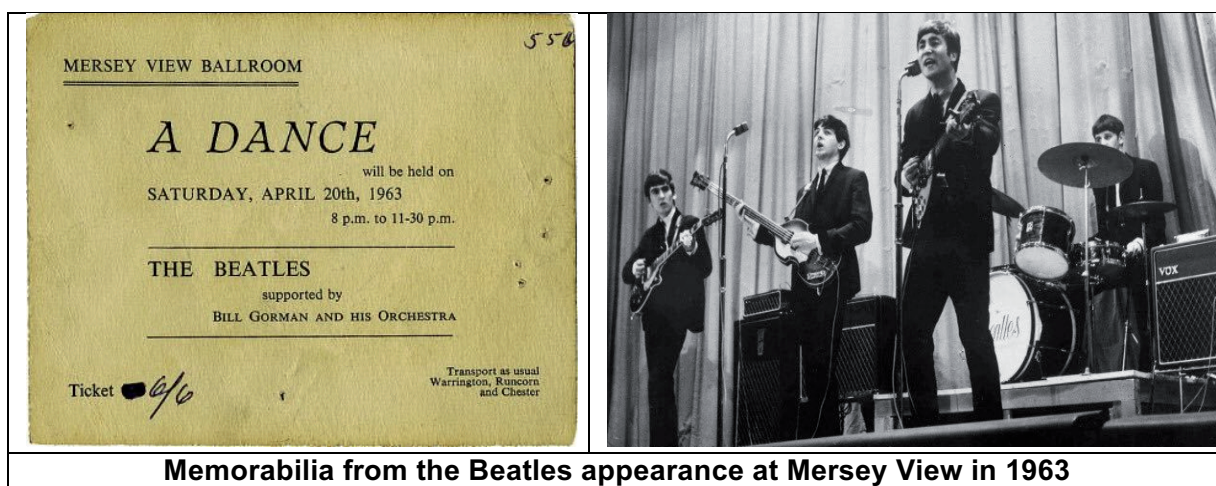
Having watched the new bridge being built over the River Mersey it was interesting to listen to Councillor Liam Jones who has been working on the construction as a CAD engineer apprentice. I was able to add his written experiences to the file which also contains original accounts by men who worked on the Viaduct repairs in 1938, and the construction of the M56 J11-14 opened in 1971.

The usefulness of our large archives was made very clear when I was able to provide material for three very interesting projects which, when completed, their reports will be an invaluable addition to the archives. Many years ago, Mrs Dorothy Smith began gathering information about the history of Frodsham shops and their owners and passed this information to Sue Lorimer who began to research further afield. From the archives, I gathered 37 files, our "Old Frodsham" photographic books, and other sources for Sue, who spent time in the archive room extracting useful information for the Frodsham Shops Project - reported elsewhere in the Journal.

Peter Vickery was able to draw information from 29 files to begin a history of Castle Park Arts Centre - a mammoth task. Frodsham and District Local History Group (now F&D History Society) was a very active founder member in 1981, regularly donating sums of money from plants, books and pamphlet sales in support of the Arts Centre. Our own minutes make interesting reading as plans progressed and developed between the fledgling committee and the new Arts Centre. Arthur Smith, who was very involved in the Centre's inception, is also collating his memories and documents. The Society remained there for over thirty years until moving to 'The Iron Church' in Main Street - the end of an era.

Ian Lancaster borrowed Frodsham Players superb collection of production programmes, photograph albums and newspaper articles. This archive is truly a social history from 1942 onwards and Ian is writing a 75th celebratory history of the company. His report is in this Journal.

Dafydd Rees, a visiting Welsh American, from Cape Cod, Massachusetts, emailed to say he was researching 'The Beatles' appearance at Mersey View in 1963, to complete a history of the group. After several emails and telephone calls, Dafydd met Gillian (Jill) Fell who had much to tell. Finally he met John Lawless, of Lawless Bakery, (whose family once owned Mersey View) and who was at that 1963 concert and so Dafydd had his full story. A copy of the Concert ticket is below. A lengthy but worthwhile detective story was completed. It was interesting to learn that Dafydd's father was born in Bangor and his grandfather was the Principal of Bala Bangor Theological College in Bangor.



Memorabilia from the Beatles appearance at Mersey View in 1963

Billy Price of Ashville, Alabama, asked for information about his Frodsham Whitley ancestors. From the archive's Parish Registers of Births, Marriages and Deaths, I noted entries from 1534 to the middle 1600s. From 'Ancestry' Heather Powling found that the family emigrated to the Isle of Wight in Virginia c.1628. There was also the hint of a more interesting life story, if it could be proved with more research. At one time a George Whitley lived at Norley Hall and according to Sue Lorimer, his family is buried in Alvanley graveyard - maybe of the same family? Heather and I are hoping for more information from Billy eventually.

Two satisfied Americans!

Gavin McGrath requested information about Victoria Hall in Chapel Lane, which now houses Kingsley Carpets. In very short space of time from various sources, I was able to piece together the following information.

The first Methodists in Frodsham worshipped in a barn in Church Street but in the early 1800s they built a chapel in what became known as Chapel Lane - later Fluin Lane, and the house standing close to the chapel was the minister's home. The chapel was used until 1873 when the new Trinity Methodist Church was built on High Street and Victoria Hall was converted into a silent cinema. On the 12th March 1919 there was an advert in a local unidentifiable paper –

“Wanted. First class Cinema Pianist to open March 24. Apply, Miss R. Baker, Manageress, Cinema, Frodsham, near Warrington.”

It remained popular until the Grand Cinema was built in Church Street in 1923 with its newfangled 'Talkies'. The stage remained in Victoria Hall but for other purposes. From then on, the Hall became Edgar Brereton's 'Fruit, Vegetables and Coal' depot, followed by Jeff Williams, a dairy milk man, and then sold to Rigby's Dairy business which remained there for a long time. Finally it became Kingsley Carpet and Curtain Shop and remains so until the present.

Gillian (Jill) Fell had seen an unknown photograph of her father, Gerald Abrams, in our 'Frodsham and Helsby' old photographs book and asked if she could obtain a personal copy. She had already searched through the Cheshire Image Bank website, our Archive website and contacted Chester Record Office without success. Eventually, Linda Clarke of Chester Record Office asked if I could help Gillian! Finally, I contacted two of the editors of the book, Norma Duncan and Arthur Smith, who suggested the possible donor, in 1995, might have

been retired teacher, Bill Bibby - and it was. Gillian telephoned Bill, who had once taught her at Frodsham High School, and was given his original photograph to copy for her personal use. My thanks go to Norma, Arthur and Bill. I am including part of Jill's reply because of its local interest.

"Bill also jogged my memory of something that I have heard of before but forgotten all about. There is a film that Bill (Bibby) did at school called 'The Coat.' My dad is in the film and not only that but part of it was filmed in our house at Prince Way! I also found out that a man who took my photographs when I was a baby, Cyril Valentine, worked as a basket maker with my dad at Bibby's. He had a shop in Overton when I was at the junior school. All of the people mentioned in this paragraph were also Bell Ringers at the church in Frodsham and George and Norah rang at the Cathedral in Lincoln. While on holiday I would go to bell practice with them and I have rung the bells there. Dad was good at it and whenever we heard bells he would always count the number of bells ringing."

Judith Shore, a long time member of the History Society but now living in Wales, has researched her family's history and other local families, for many years. She has requested that her notes and research articles be placed in our archives for safe keeping. At the time of writing, the first large parcel has just arrived and waits to be read with anticipation and then recorded.

Two enquiries concerning houses in Helsby arrived almost on the same day. With Sue Lorimer's local knowledge, she was able to give Joanna Bunting the history of Heathercliffe Care Home on Old Chester Road.

Sue and Nick Smith jointly helped Paul with fascinating information about his property and former owners of 'Hill Rough House', Alvanley Road. All this information is now in the archives.

Flower Cottage update

John Davies, of the Flower Cottage coat discovery, recently contacted me again about a WW1 Staffordshire Regiment Army cap badge and a spent bullet he had found earlier in Flower Cottage garden. Even more interesting, he had also discovered a tiny anchor hidden in the original chimney space. He describes the size of the anchor from point to point on base as 10 cm by 9.2 cm tall and the ring is 2.7 cm in circumference. He has shown the anchor to experienced iron workers who agree that the workmanship is 'very good'. John's theory is that it may have had string attached to the ring, thrown down to a roof thatcher who would tie the next bundle to be pulled up. The cottage may still reveal more as time passes.



Tiny anchor, spent bullet and Army cap badge – finds from Flower Cottage, Overton

Mr. Geoffrey Boow, one of several visitors this year spending time in the archive room, donated a short history, and photographs of his well known family from 1923 onwards, plus a family WW2 Certificate and snaps of Volunteer Street where they lived in the 1960s.

Photographs of a formal group of the Frodsham Oddfellows Society in full regalia, and one of a general outdoor gathering, some officers with regalia, are particularly interesting additions. I have included one photograph below. My thanks go to Geoffrey.



The Frodsham Oddfellows Society. Mr Boow's grandfather is standing back left

Finally, I thought that the following news article from an unknown newspaper c.1860s, would be a delightful end to my report. My grateful thanks go to the 'Frodsham Memories' website for this addition to the archives. NB. The Viaduct was completed by 1850.

Temperance Demonstration at Frodsham

"On Monday last, there was a great gathering of the friends of Temperance at Frodsham, from Liverpool, Manchester, Birkenhead and other neighbouring places. The day was most propitious. Several juvenile bands ascended the celebrated Overton Hills from whence they enjoyed one of the most magnificent and extensive views that can be commanded in any part of England, embracing the Rivers Mersey and Weaver, the splendid viaduct, bridges, and tunnel at Frodsham, the Welsh Mountains, Halton Castle, and Aston Hall, and numerous objects in many counties in Cheshire and Lancashire. The site chosen for the day was on the side of the hill towards Delamere Forest, in a field engaged for the purpose of holding forth the principles of Temperance and enjoyment. Some 2,000 persons must have been present, and were addressed by some of the leading speakers on temperance. Sports of various kinds were carried on during the day. There was no lack of the good creatures which exhilarate and do not inebriate as numerous parties from the neighbourhood came with ample supplies. We cannot but think that those who availed themselves of this trip into one of the healthiest parts of Cheshire, were delighted and physically improved."

Contents of the Archives held in Castle Park House – September 2017

214 Books; 655 Document files (each file may contain one A4 sheet or up to 100); 60 + Maps; 15 Posters; 2,000+ slides /images; Artefacts; 135 Journals 1986 – 2016.

Should you wish to visit the archive room please contact me kath.hewitt@btinternet.com, you would be very welcome. Pink hard-back Archive Files are available in Frodsham Public Library and at Reception in Castle Park House, or, visit our Archive Website – frodhistoryarchive.co.uk.

My thanks go to Mrs Dorothy Smith, Nick Smith and Simon Longden for sharing their local knowledge and time. My thanks also go to Mrs Hazel Catt and Mrs Jaquie Bowe of Castle Park House who have passed on enquiries and promoted the Archives to visitors. My very special thanks to Steve McEntee who has solved niggling website problems for me!

FRODSHAM PLAYERS A GLIMPSE INTO THE PAST AND A MYSTERY SOLVED

Dr Ian Lancaster - Chairman, Frodsham Players

I contacted Kath Hewitt in the hope that the History Society Archives could help me with some research.

2017 represents a very special year for the Frodsham Players as we celebrate our 75th Anniversary. During that time, we have presented more than 160 plays in a number of venues. Our own records were thorough in terms of when plays had been produced, but had no information on the venues. We were very interested to find out where our shows had been produced, and the archive helped us tremendously as it confirmed that The Players had first performed in the hall at Frodsham C of E Primary School. The archive also solved another mystery. We were very keen to find out details of the first production. Our own archives indicated that we had performed "Three One-act Plays, but that was all we knew. The first of the three scrap-books in the archive, solved the mystery. There on the inside page was the programme for the very first production, held on October 23rd 1942. The three plays were "Chin Chin", "But my Dear" and "The Ghost in the Garden". We tried to get hold of copies of the scripts, but sadly they're no longer in print - even Amazon & eBay couldn't help!

The archive then revealed more secrets as we found that the players had performed not only at the primary school but the Army Cadets Hall, Parish Hall, Secondary School, Community Centre (from 1967) and St Laurence Church. The archives also revealed that The Players had donated a considerable amount of their takings to charity in the early days.

There were also found press cuttings which gave a fascinating insight into our early productions. The Chester Chronicle, who reviewed all of our early productions described them as "racy," "adventurous," "ambitious" and "triumphant."

Having access to the archive has provided a wonderful glimpse into our history and we are really grateful. We have used the photographs, programmes and press cuttings to add detail to The Players website, www.frodshamplayers.com, and to create a series of YouTube films. We have also posted a number of the photos onto the "Frodsham Memories" Facebook site, which has allowed some of our retired members to re-connect with us. We've had some great comments from the members of our audience who remembered being at the shows. Some of the archive material was also on view at The Players 75th Anniversary Party at Forest Hills on Saturday 28th October.

OUT AND ABOUT IN THE COMMUNITY 2017

Heather Powling, Kath Gee & Sue Lorimer

1. St George's Day Festival at St Laurence Church, 23 April 2017

The History Society was represented at the Service of Youth and Community in St Laurence Church to celebrate St George's Day 2017. Kath Gee placed a mission statement leaf on behalf of the History Society on the tree which had been created by Helsby High School Art Department and which now stands in St Laurence Church. It was good to take part, along with many other local societies, in a celebration of all that makes Frodsham such a vibrant place to live. Andrew Rudd read his poem, 'Spirit of Frodsham', at the Service and has given us permission to reproduce it here.

Spirit of Frodsham

It's there but you can't see it.
It turns the blades of the windmills
above the roofs of the houses.

There it is, walking the sandstone trail
then returning down Middle Walk
to the sound of bells.

It conjures chandeliers from bare trees,
turns the branches outside the church
into a festival. It whispers to the toddler

wobbling at the top of the high slide:
you can do this. You pass a friend
in Eddisbury Square - it flashes

from one face to another. There it is,
glancing along the bar in the Bear's Paw,
or the Ring O'Bells, passed over the
counter

in Morrisons or Cowards. And here
the children come, full of it, out of school.
This is a place where it grows,

it's been growing a long time. Froda,
by the Weaver, building a stockade
for his beasts, edging his rough patch

with a hem of safety, wrapping it round
his children. The first shopkeepers,
setting out stalls on their burgage plots,

and the farmers bringing carrots
on a Thursday, to a street that was wide
enough to give it room to breathe.

Keep it breathing, keep it shining.
It's an earth-heart, a hearth. It's ours.

*Andrew Rudd
April 2017*



Frodsham market

2. Festival of Walks, 22 April – 1 May 2017

Four walks specifically planned to include and talk about extant historical and heritage features were part of the Frodsham Festival of Walks programme this year. **Kemp's Castle Park** celebrated the bicentenary of Edward Kemp's birth by focusing on those features that are a legacy of Kemp's 1855 design, e.g. the formal garden with geometric paths and fountains near the house, grading to informal woodland and parkland at a greater distance and the use of evergreens for winter colour & interest.

The walk around **Historical Ince** drew attention to a long-settled rural community and, despite the encroachment of industry, the slow pace of change over several centuries.

The circular walk around **Norley: a Tale of Two Manors** focused on the history and legacy of the two manors and the benevolent role of their owners in the life of the village.

In contrast, the **Grand Finale...** took a short walk around the diverse heritage of Overton, including the 'Don Bradman plaque' on Churchfields and the view across the Mersey Estuary; the nationally important geological site on Howey Lane; the Woodland Trust's Frodsham Hill Wood; the almost complete loss of timber-framed thatched cottages in the heart of Overton; and, the resting place of the African Prince in St Laurence graveyard.

3. Heritage Open Days, 7-10 September 2017

Frodsham participated again this year in the national Heritage Open Days – Buildings Open to View – scheme. Kath Gee successfully involved six local venues in the event: The Old Hall, Queen's Head, Bear's Paw, Ring o'Bells, Castle Park Arts Centre and St Laurence Church all welcomed visitors over some or all of the days. Whilst it is difficult to gauge how many extra visitors there were at the hostelryes, the Old Hall and Art Centre had a steady trickle of dedicated viewers. The church recorded more visitors for tours than last year on the Saturday and the musical finale and tea was very well attended on Sunday. We are grateful to all the volunteers who helped and hope that this will be an annual feature in Frodsham's heritage calendar.

4. The Heritage Shops Project – 3-10 September 2017

Over the summer Sue Lorimer, Kath Gee and Heather Powling worked on a project designed to showcase the history of 18 shops in Frodsham town centre. The initial aim of the **Heritage Shop Project 2017** was to display each shop's history on an A3 poster, placed in the actual property window, during the week of Heritage Open Days. The posters drew on information from the Society's archives, online historical sources and parish records, and, the valued help of past and present shop keepers and local residents. The posters include historic images collected by our Historic Images Project team over many years, and now displayed in Cheshire Image Bank

maintained by Cheshire Archives & Local Studies at the Cheshire Record Office. Most of the posters also include copies of old advertisements. If you missed seeing them, or would like to see the posters again, we plan to exhibit them in the Link Gallery of Castle Park Arts Centre during May and June 2018 where we hope to attract a wider audience. We are grateful to Frodsham Town Council for their grant towards the cost of mounting this exhibition.

The Heritage Shop Project would not have been possible without the support of F&DHS, Kath Hewitt, our Society Archivist, Linda Clarke at Cheshire Archives & Local Studies and Liz Kenny at Frodsham Town Council for publicising the event. Our thanks also go to Dorothy and Nick Smith, Dave Jackson, John Nield, Joe Beswick and members of the Coward, Crowther, Lawless and Cotgreave families for their help with the research. This is an ongoing project and the research continues.

5. **Re-dedication of the Trinity Methodist War Memorial – 3 September 2017**

Members of the History Society are also members of the Frodsham World War I Commemoration Group. Two years ago the Group arranged the restoration of Trinity Methodist Church War Memorial, which is now at Frodsham Methodist Church on Kingsley Road. One of the names was illegible and a space was left in the hope that the 'missing name' would be traced. Finally, after two years of research, the Group found evidence to establish that the missing name was that of Staff Nurse Ethel Saxon who died in Karachi (India) on 3 September 1917. Ethel's aunt lived in Frodsham at the time of the First World War, and it was to Mrs Thornton, of Deyne Court, High Street, that Ethel's effects were eventually returned in 1921. The group was delighted to be able to make contact with members of Ethel's family. It was a privilege to have her great-niece, Lynn Lynch and her husband attend the re-dedication of the Memorial at Frodsham Methodist Church on 3 September 2017, the centenary of Ethel's death. They brought a photograph of Ethel with them, so we now know not only who she was and something about her war service in the Territorial Nursing Force, but we also know what she looked like. A piece of research which has been richly rewarded!



Great-niece Lynn at the War Memorial



Photograph of Ethel Saxon

6. Battle of Passchendaele exhibition at Frodsham Community Centre

The World War I Commemoration Group organised an exhibition at Frodsham Community Centre from 13 September to 26 October to commemorate the centenary of the Battle of Passchendaele. The poppy cascade originally created for and displayed at Frodsham Medical Centre in 2016, was moved to the Community Centre and set up in the foyer. Details of the twelve young men from Frodsham who died at Passchendaele were included in the exhibition - a sad record of the toll of lives from a relatively small community at this horrific stage in the War. Thanks to Kath Hewitt, Allen Wales, Geoff Abnett and Ken Crouch for their work in bringing the story of the battle to life for visitors to the Community Centre. The Group also screened the film of 'Passchendaele' at St Laurence Church on 4 October.



*Frodsham Remembers
Passchendaele
The 3rd Battle of Ypres*

The Cascade commemorates the Frodsham soldiers who lost their lives at the Battle of Passchendaele in 1917 during WW1.

The poppies were made by the children of our Primary Schools and mounted on the netting by volunteers of Frodsham's WW1 Group.



The poppies represent the fallen soldiers - the hessian on the floor suggests the mud of the battlefield - the mesh appears like barbed wire and the rough twig crosses illustrate the trees destroyed by shelling.

Lest We Forget

Tailpiece: Commotion in Frodsham, February 1875

This was caused when a crowd gathered to watch a steam-boiler, 15-16 tons in weight, 30 feet long and 8 ft. in diameter being taken from the railway station to its new home on the site of the old liquorice works at Frodsham Bridge. Horses could not move it so a traction engine from Oakmere was called upon. Work started at 10 am, but stopped soon after, when the wheels under the boiler sank in soft tarmacadam on the brow in the direction of the bridge. It took 7 hours to move it on to more solid ground with the use of blocks, ropes and jacks. They only managed to get the boiler as far as Frodsham Bridge when darkness fell and all was abandoned until the morning. The boiler was delivered safely the next day to the new owners, Messrs Eichbaum and Hunter but for what purpose is unknown.

FRODSHAM & DISTRICT HISTORY SOCIETY

Programme of Meetings 2018

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

8 th January	175 years of the Cunard Line Derek Arnold
5 th February	A Whistle, Truncheon, and a Pair of Boots Bill Johnson
5 th March	Physick, Pothercary, Chirurgeon Clare Moores
9 th April	From the Earth Cometh Light - the Story Behind 'The Dream' Gary Conley
14 th May	Was Cheshire Historically a Northern, Midland, or Welsh Border County? Prof Graeme White
11 th June (Mon)	Guided afternoon tour of the Adelphi Hotel, Liverpool, with included afternoon tea Organised by Kath Gee
3 rd September	Servants and their Families of Erddig Jill Burton
1 st October	Fred Waldron – Engineer Extraordinary Dr Tom Preston
12 th November	History of Marbury Hall and Parkland Mary Jeeves
10 th December	Not so Solid Ground – the effect of salt mining at Marston and Northwich Colin Edmondson

Frank Whitfield, Programme Secretary, has arranged the meetings for 2018



