



FRODSHAM AND DISTRICT HISTORY SOCIETY

JOURNAL



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INTRODUCTION



The Society is celebrating its **40th Anniversary** at the end of 2021 with this special issue titled:

40 FASCINATING FACTS ABOUT FABULOUS FRODSHAM AND DISTRICT

A small group of hard-working loyal people set up Frodsham & District Local History Group (F&DLHG) in 1981 and ran it from Castle Park Arts Centre (CPAC) pictured below. In their first 20 years they published 2 journals a year, wrote more than 20 Heritage Display pamphlets and contributed to CPAC Newsletters and fund-raising events including many of the annual Summer Festivals. The early records of F&DLHG, the Arts Centre and Festival in the Park programmes are all in our Archives.



We changed our name to Frodsham & District History Society (F&DHS) in 2008 and moved our meetings to Main Street Community Church in 2011 after outgrowing the capacity of Gallery 1 in the Arts Centre.

During 2021 the Society's membership climbed to 95. It includes some former Frodsham residents now living elsewhere in the UK and 9 long-serving Honorary Members. Our website can be found at frodshamhistory.org.uk. We normally meet on the first Monday of the month at 7.30pm. After a year of talks on Zoom the Society returned to face-to-face meetings in Main Street Community Church on 6th September 2021.

The Society promotes the value of history and heritage to the wider community through its programme of monthly talks, summer visits and occasional topical displays and exhibitions, as well as producing an annual journal of short articles with connections to Frodsham and the surrounding area. The Society is a member of the Cheshire Local History Association (CLHA) and the British Association of Local History (BALH).

We began celebrating our 40th anniversary year with a society stall at Festival in the Park 2021 (front cover photograph) and continue with this special issue of the journal.

Our numbered FACTS are grouped under 13 headings beginning with:

MOVING STORIES



1 It is well known that the Main Street Community Church, still affectionately known as the 'Iron Church' or 'Tin Church', where our meetings are held, was physically moved in 1995, see 21st century picture left. It was 'rolled' approximately 3 metres to the left to create an access road to Ashley Court & the nursing home, see images in the F&DHS Journal 49, 2019. But, this was not the first building to be moved in Frodsham...

2 In 1892, Frodsham Railway Station underwent significant alterations: the central part of the station building was 'slid' backwards onto new foundations which enabled the platform to be widened by about 5 ft to accommodate more passengers. The weight of the building was estimated to be 400 tons. It was 50 ft long and 25 ft wide and included the stationmaster's house, booking office and waiting room. The move was achieved by a large group of men and 11 'screw jacks' in 11 hours. Mr RE Johnston, the engineer, reported that *"Not a single pane of glass was broken in any of the windows..."* It was the first example of an English station being moved by a process known as the 'American Principle'. This amazing achievement was reported in local and regional newspapers throughout the country. More information can be found in the F&DLHG Journal, Issue No. 26, 1998.



FD03662 Frodsham Station c.1890



FDN0936 - Canopy built over widened platform c.1900

3 The war memorial at the Parish Church of St Laurence is a familiar sight, set in the churchyard between Church Road and the south porch. But, it was not always there... The memorial cross, in local sandstone, was designed by architect Harold S Rogers of Oxford and sculpted by Alec Miller of the Guild of Handicrafts. It was dedicated on 6th November 1921 by the Bishop of Chester.

Plans for the World War I memorial to commemorate the lives of parishioners lost began as early as April 1917, but, were the subject of controversy and dispute in the intervening years for a number of reasons, including its cost at a time when there was a pressing need to extend the burial ground. Miss Hayes of Manor House, offered the land to extend the burial ground, but she felt that the war memorial should only commemorate those Frodsham residents buried in the graveyard. The money for the war memorial was raised by the parishioners and a separate piece of land adjacent to the west end of the church and behind Church Cottages was given, enabling the memorial to be sited outside the graveyard (see image FDN2682, below left). It was moved to its present site in the 1960s after Church Cottages were demolished and before the church car park was constructed.



4 In 1976 a crumbling 17th century 'cruck barn', listed Grade II, at Woodhouse Farm, Woodhouses, came to the attention of the County Archaeologist. Old maps showed him that a similar barn had once existed at the Old Hall, Tatton, so the opportunity was taken to relocate this valuable example of Cheshire's vernacular architecture in Tatton Park. Its reconstruction was achieved by one joiner and a team of young people on a job creation scheme! Photographs (below) provided by author David Joyce *Captured Memories across the Hillforts of Cheshire* 2011.



5 Austerson Old Hall was an Elizabethan yeoman farmer's house 2 miles south of Nantwich. The solar has closely spaced oak timbers which demonstrate significant wealth. The long elevation is constructed of very widely spaced timbers that suggest a much less expensive build. Perhaps, originally, this was a single storey building which itself had been relocated and raised on to a brick ground floor.



During the 1970s, the owners had built themselves a new modern home and the listed Old Hall was falling into ruin. Chester architect, James Brotherton, spotted it whilst out walking in the area and eventually a deal was done to relocate it to Yarrangall Green, Alvanley. Today, it can be seen from the Sandstone Trail. Its reconstruction used traditional timber-frame building techniques, without the use of modern lifting equipment, to preserve its Grade II listing. 17 years later, job done!

The oak timbers have been allowed to silver naturally, rather than painted black as was the Victorian and Edwardian tradition. The 'new' property will take some 50 years to settle back down on its new foundation, as can be seen in the gentle curve in the 18 inch bressummer beam above the front solar ground floor window.

One bemused older Sandstone Trail walker exclaimed, *"I remember playing near those woods as a lad, I don't remember that house being there but it must have been!"* He was relieved to be told the house had been moved.

A WHALE OF A STORY



6 According to George Ormerod, writing in 1819, "*Woodhouses had been possessed since the reign of Henry VIII by the Nangreaves, who for several generations resided at Netherton Hall.*" This was not the present pub but a stone-built mansion, demolished long ago, and standing on a knoll surrounded by cottages. The local hostelry at Netherton was called 'The Whalebone'. This black and white timber framed building was rebuilt in 1894 (left) and demolished in 1980.

It was supposedly called 'The Whalebone' after a whale's scapula that was washed up on the marshes was placed on the facade just below the eaves. But, perhaps there was an alternative reason, connected in some way with the Nangreave family. It just so happens that when the Nangreaves left Netherton they moved to a family home in an area near Bury, still known as Nangreaves; they had inherited it from their maternal grandfather. The old house, now demolished, was approached by a tree-lined drive through an archway formed from the jaw of a whale, resting on two pillars, rather like that in Whitby, North Yorkshire (right).



MARKING TIME



7 Frodsham's early means of telling the time would have been by using a sundial similar to the one that stands close to the south porch of St Laurence Church. Its square sandstone plinth, thought to be the base of an ancient preaching cross, was topped by a copper sundial dating from 1790 and inscribed with the names, S Cooke and R Cheeseman, churchwardens of the day. It is Grade II listed. Sadly, the copper gnomon was stolen in 2008 causing substantial damage to the plinth. The image on the left, taken 29th March 2010, shows the newly restored plinth.

Somewhat fortuitously, copies of the gnomon existed which had been made by the father of local Helsby Parish Councillor, Lance Yates. Shortly before he died, Lance and his family kindly donated one of the copies to St Laurence Church. As the replacement of the stolen gnomon was classed as a repair, the church was able to securely attach the it to the sandstone pillar within the regulations which apply to listed buildings. The sundial is therefore restored for future generations to enjoy.



8 The village's first actual clock is thought to have been on the Parish Church of St Laurence. In William Beamont's *An account of the ancient town of Frodsham* 1884, he writes: "By the next entry in the Frodsham Books under December 30th 1661, we find that Thomas Joynton, the blacksmith at Trafford, was employed to make a new clock for the parish use and that he was paid £5.10s for it"



In the pamphlet by Heather Powling, *St Laurence Parish Church, Frodsham* 2015, there is a photograph, on page 21, of the church taken from the north side in 1875 where the clock is shaped like a diamond. This was replaced when the tower was restored in 1885-7 by identical clock faces on the north and south sides of the tower which are still operating in 2021. These were designed and made by clockmakers JB Joyce & Co. of Whitchurch, Shropshire. Although St Laurence clock face (left) is unsigned its internal 'setting dial' is marked JOYCE WHITCHURCH 1887. This family clock-making business was

established by William Joyce in 1690 and was successfully run by several generations of Joyces until 1965 when Norman Joyce, the last Joyce clockmaker, sold JB Joyce & Co. Ltd. to the 'Smith of Derby Group'. This company retained the Joyce name and some of its workforce to service clocks they had supplied.

In Victorian and Edwardian times JB Joyce specialised in 'big clocks' for churches and public buildings across Britain and the empire. In Chester, the Cathedral Clock (1873) and the Eastgate clock (1885) were both by JB Joyce of Whitchurch. The Eastgate Clock has pride of place on the cover of *Joyce of Whitchurch clockmakers 1690-1965* by Steve & Darlah Thomas 2013.



The Frodsham Station Clock (left) also carries the name Joyce Whitchurch on its face, as does the Millennium Clock at the junction of Church Street and Main Street, Frodsham. More details on the Millennium Clock below...

The first electric clock was installed on Main Street in January 1938. It was located at a crossing near the Queen's Head. This clock was soon moved to the more appropriate site at the junction of Church Street and Main Street. The clock had two faces and cost £28; it was agreed that a four-sided clock was too expensive at that time. The clock was out of action for a few months in 1958 but after a major overhaul was back in position. The clock was vandalised in the 1970s and was missing for more than two years. In 1976 the Parish Councillors recommended that it should be replaced by a new clock 2ft 3in square with roman numerals and a wrought iron motif round the face, and, it should commemorate the visit of George V to Frodsham on 8th July 1925, some 50 years before!

Mr Hubert Cullum, Clerk to Frodsham Parish Council wrote to local firms and businesses asking for donations towards the installation of this new clock. BICC, ICI and Shell all committed to donating £25 each as it would 'help workers clock on, on time'. Cheshire County Council and Vale Royal Borough Council also contributed to the cost, which was estimated to be £600. Later in the year, the clock was



installed, but the support holding it up still needed to be painted.

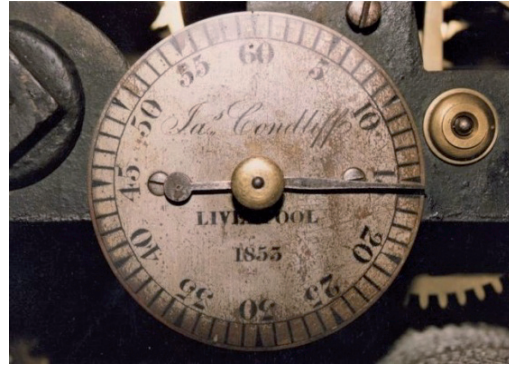


The Parish Council resigned itself to an additional expense for that work. Sadly, the clock support today would benefit from a coat of paint! This 1975 clock (maker unknown) was moved to the side of 'Kydd's Bar' in Church Street, (illustrated above right) following the installation of the new four-sided clock to celebrate the millennium.

The Millennium Clock at the centre of town displays the maker's name: JB Joyce Whitchurch but was clearly produced under the Smith of Derby Group umbrella.



The clock at Castle Park Arts Centre, a single face mounted on the tower above what was formerly the Coach House & Stables, built 1852, of nearby Park Place. The clock was made by James Condliiff of Liverpool for the estate owner, Joseph Stubs (image left FDN 1526 taken 1899). The date of the clock, 1853, is shown on the 'setting dial' illustrated below.



When Park Place was purchased by Edward Abbott Wright in 1861, he renamed the house 'Castle Park'. Wright used to travel to Oldham to conduct his magisterial duties once a week. He enjoyed the walk from Castle Park to the station but on a couple of occasions, he was late setting off and missed his train. After this he ordered the estate clock to be set three minutes fast to ensure he got there on time. In 1986, work started on the restoration of the old coach house building and its transformation into Castle Park Arts Centre. The clock was stopped, stripped down to its bolts, and cleaned of all the dust it had accumulated over the previous 133 years. The work was carried out by Eric Gent, a clockmaker from St Helens, and Philip Irvine; funded by Vale Royal Borough Council, it took two years to complete.

9 The clock on the front of 'Junoon', an Indian restaurant on Chester Road, Helsby dates from 1906. The building was originally the Parish or Recreation Room and was built in 1906 at the cost of £600, raised by public subscription. The clock was made by Fred Tweedle, watchmaker and jeweller, who lived at Heather Lea on Old Chester Road, Helsby, and who also made spectacles and dealt in Edison phonographs and records. According to the census records 1911 he was a foreman at BICC (British Insulated Callendar Cables Ltd).



Photograph (left) courtesy of John Ireland.

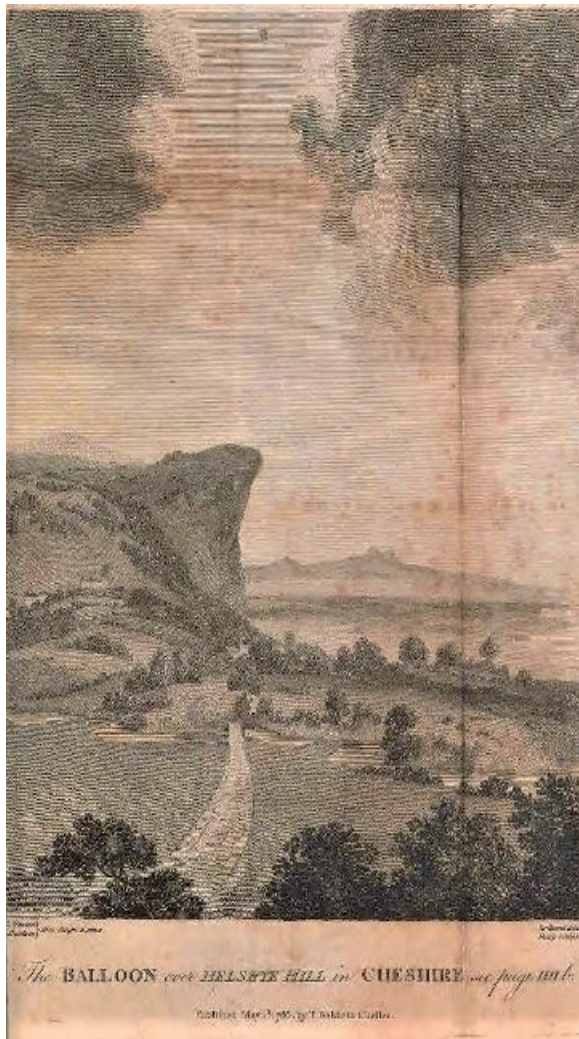


UP AND AWAY

10 Most of us have heard of the Mongolfier brothers who launched their first tethered hot air balloon flight in Paris on 15th October 1783, which was quickly followed by a ‘free flight’ in November. But, who knew the first free flight in England was by the flamboyant Vincenzo Lunardi, Secretary to the Neapolitan Ambassador in London, in a hydrogen balloon, on 15th September 1784.

The following year Lunardi made an ill-advised flight from Liverpool and landed roughly in a cornfield near Tarporley. The balloon and its occupant were dragged over hedges and trees towards the village of Tiverton where it became wedged by the side of a house. Lunardi, battered and bruised, was carried to the Swan Inn, Tarporley, where he spent the night. Lunardi found willing financial support for flights in Chester, and perhaps, with some loss of nerve, he allowed his balloon to be used by others. One such occupant was Thomas Baldwin, a gentleman scientist who had previously experimented with balloon design. Thomas, the son of Rev John Baldwin of Hoole Hall, Chester, took various scientific instruments with him when he made his flight from the Castle Yard, Chester, on 8th September 1785.

V Balloon



← Balloon

Helsby Hill viewed from a high field at the end of Sutton-Causeway on 8th Sept. 1785

Engraver: William Sharp 1st May 1786

Source: *Thomas Baldwin 1786 Airopaidia – the narrative of a balloon excursion*, 396 pp.

Accessed from:

Publicdomainreview.org/collection/airopaidia-1786-the-narrative-of-a-balloon-excursion

Baldwin's ascent by hydrogen balloon began at 1.30pm and the balloon travelled northeast over Alvanley, looped around Delamere Forest and was seen high over Helsby Hill by spectators in Frodsham. It began to lose height rapidly and at 3.28pm it touched down briefly in a field belonging to Belleair Farm, near Lady Heyes today. The balloon ascended again, passed above Aston Hall and finally landed near Rixton Moss, Warrington some 2¹/₄ hours later. Alan Waterworth, former President of F&DHS, recorded the story of Cheshire's first aeronaut in Issue 4 of F&DLHG Journal, September 1987: it is available from our Archives or from the libraries in Frodsham and Helsby.



Surprisingly, Baldwin's Balloon features as the highest value stamp in a set of 4 'Aviation in Hong Kong' commemorative stamps issued on 7th March 1984 and seen on eBay. Commemorating what? Not quite the balloon's bicentenary!

PILLAR TO POST



11 The introduction of the Penny Black stamp in 1840 changed the way mail was sent: you could affix your own stamp instead of taking your letter to a receiving post office which might be some distance away. Post boxes were the solution. The first locked cast-iron boxes appeared in St Helier, Jersey, in 1852 and were introduced to the mainland in 1853. There have been many evolutionary changes in post box design over the years. The 'K4 Vermillion Giant' that stands outside the Cholmondley Arms in Church Street, Frodsham, dates from 1930 and is listed Grade II. It is a combination telephone kiosk and post box, based on the successful K2 kiosk designed by Sir Giles Gilbert Scott, but with a larger footprint. Only 50 were produced and only 5 remain*. The K4 had 3 main failings: its sheer size limited where it could be sited; the stamp machines were excessively noisy making telephone

conversations difficult; and the stamp machines were not weather-proof causing stamps to stick together! The 2 stamp vending machines on Frodsham's K4 have been disabled.

* The other 4 K4 kiosks are located at Bewdley, Worcestershire, Bewsey & Whitecross, Warrington, Roos, East Riding of Yorkshire and Whitley Bay, North Tyneside. All 5 K4 kiosks were listed Grade II in 1986.

LANDSCAPE AND LEISURE TIME

Thomas Baldwin, with his bird's eye view from the balloon, would have appreciated the fantastic local landscapes that had been attracting visitors from at least the 1700s.



12 In the late 18th century, Frodsham was already a visitor hotspot famed for its natural beauty and extensive views. The medicinal qualities of the 'Cold Bath' (Synagogue Well), said to have discharged an amazing 1,700 gallons of water a minute, were widely advertised and there were opportunities for sea bathing in the vicinity. Another visitor attraction of the time was the 'spring' on Howey Lane (left). Beads of

exceptionally pure water fell from the face of the rocks giving the spring the name 'Pearls of Wigan'. Today, with a lowered water-table, beads of pure groundwater no longer seep out of this rock face.

13 Helsby was also being marketed as a leisure destination. The steam packet 'Vesuvius', embarking from the Seacombe Slipway, Birkenhead, allowed visitors landing at Ince Ferry sufficient time to travel to Helsby Hill by rail and enjoy the wonderful scenery. This was advertised in Gore's Liverpool General Advertiser 11th June 1829. But, the only 'railway' in the area at the time was the one used to carry stone from Helsby Quarry to Ince Ferry for transportation to Liverpool. Not surprisingly there are no reports of anyone making the trip!

14 By the mid-19th century, the coming of the steam railway allowed visitors from farther afield to enjoy the pleasures of Frodsham's hills. And come they did! In June 1858 an estimated 2,000 Friends of Temperance from Liverpool, Manchester and Birkenhead gathered on Overton Hill to enjoy the views and the benefits of nature. There were speeches, bands, sports and food but no alcohol. This sketch of the occasion (FDN0596) was by Mr G Hayes of Manchester.



15 Boat excursions to Frodsham along the River Weaver were popular. One such trip in July 1873 was described in some detail. 80 ladies and gentlemen, local trades-people, set out from Northwich on the decorated steamer 'Iris' at 8.30 in the morning to the strains of a brass band. The party steamed majestically along the Weaver to Frodsham where photographs were taken by Thomas Birtles, photographer, whose scenes of Northwich can be seen on Cheshire Image Bank. On disembarking they made their way to Overton Hill using paths through the fields. Perhaps they took advantage of the '1,000 steps' at Bellemonte (below): there are only 56 according to the editors!



The party "were met by Mr Rigby, the courteous and obliging proprietor of the Mountain Establishment designated 'Belmont' and having exchanged compliments, the various means of enjoyment and recreation were thrown open to them. Some played at bowls and some played at croquet; others tripped the light fantastic... and a few took advantage of the gymnasium". Some strolled along the hills and enjoyed the scenery until 4 pm when "a very substantial repast was done ample

justice to at Belmonte, the catering of Mr Rigby reflecting the highest credit to himself"
Northwich Guardian 12th July 1873.

Following the playing of the National Anthem at 7.30pm the visitors made their way back to the 'Iris', some availing themselves of 'Jerusalem Ponies' (donkeys) much to the amusement of the locals. The party arrived back at Northwich Town Bridge at 10pm having had a very enjoyable day out.

The enterprising former miller, James Rigby, bought a farm belonging to Mrs Amelia Birchwood on the side of Overton Hill about 1862. On this site James Rigby built Bellemonte House, tearooms and facilities for the increasing number of visitors. He later built the Bellemonte Pub, which gained a full licence in 1872. And, when a storm destroyed the marquee and tents housing Frodsham's Grand Bazaar and Flower Show in 1881, Mr Rigby stepped in and offered the use of his newly built pavilion. The three-day event was extended to four raising £811 for the Parish Church Restoration Funds.

Bellemonte Pleasure Grounds ran alongside the more famous Mersey View until James Rigby's death in 1892. Bellemonte House was sold to Mr Robert Trueman Smith who re-named it Aubrey House. The Pleasure Grounds were purchased by Mrs Parker-Hoose. Bellemonte Pleasure Grounds were incorporated into those of Mersey View which Mrs Parker-Hoose had inherited on the death of her father Robert Briscoe in 1887.



The roller-skating rink built by Mrs Parker-Hoose near to the Bellemonte Pub was used as an Auxiliary Military Hospital (FDN0580) during WW1, illustrated above. For more information on the hospital see the book by Arthur R Smith *From Battlefield to Blighty* 2001, republished 2015.



Other tearooms sprang up to provide for the visitors. William Webb ran refreshment rooms at his home, the 17th century former warrener's cottage, called Warrendale (FDN0637) pictured above left, but now called Valley Cottage. Note the tower of St Laurence Church in the background. Webb's mother-in-law, Ann Caldwell, had started the refreshment rooms to provide herself with an income following her husband's death in 1878.

In the 1920s, Flower Cottage (FDN0643) pictured above right, provided teas and hot water, stabling and cycle storage for the streams of visitors from river and railway station to the Mersey View Pleasure Grounds.

THE LIGHTER SIDE OF BICC



16 In 1896, ten years after the Telegraph Manufacturing Company moved to Helsby, the factory produced the cables required to light St Petersburg. Two years later they embarked on a lighter project and began the production of solid golf balls using the latex 'gutta percha' required for the manufacture of cables and now used in dentistry. The golf balls, marketed under patriotic names such as 'The Cestrian', 'The Mersey', 'The Imperial' and 'The National', were made until the 1920s when a new rubber cored ball, introduced from America, made the Helsby solid ball obsolete. In 1910 the Company patented a braided tubular grip formed from rubber covered cord to improve the handles of golf clubs and the like. It is therefore unsurprising that both James and George Taylor, the founders of the Telegraph Manufacturing Company, were also founders of Helsby Golf Club, formed in 1901!

LAW MAKERS AND LAW BREAKERS

17 Documents held in Cheshire Records Office show that over the period 1624-1628 Sir Thomas Savage had a court-house and prison built in Frodsham. The court must originally have been freestanding as in 1697 a lease was granted to John Banner to erect 'shops or otherwise' on the remaining 3 corners of the court-house, one corner having already being built. Banner does not seem to have built his shops as a further lease was issued in 1752 to Elizabeth Harrison, Anne Banner and John Drakefoot, barber, to build on the remaining 3 corners. A hint that the court-house was on Church Street is that in 1741 Daniel Ashley took over the lease on a cottage on Church Street 'late in possession of John Banner and afterwards William Banner, his son'. Unfortunately, this information does not help in establishing exactly where this court-house stood. Perhaps the Girls' National School, now the Parish Hall, built in Church Street in 1835, occupies the site of the Old Court-House, or, was the court nearer to the present Queen's Head? We may never know!

It is thought that the prison was a circular lock-up facility somewhere near to the site of the present WH Smith and Costa Coffee. The 1831 census, a copy of which is held in our Archives, shows that 'the round house' on Church Street was unoccupied. The village stocks were thought to have been near to the prison, another reason to think that the court house was in that vicinity, too. The church-warden's accounts show that new stocks and a new whipping post were made by Thomas Jones in 1749, but again their siting was not mentioned. Unfortunately, the 1846 Tithe Maps throw no light on the matter.

In the early 19th century, the medieval manorial courts, or 'Courts Leet', for Frodsham Township and Baron, and for Frodsham Lordship, were held twice yearly at the Queen's Head and Millstone Inn respectively. They dealt with petty and civil crimes and disputes within the manors. They also elected people to certain public offices, e.g. the pinder, who looked after the pinfold for stray animals and the town crier. By the 1860s both courts met at Frodsham Town Hall and later in the Parish Rooms on Moor Lane, built in 1899 by public subscription. Over the years the 'Courts Leet' became more of a social occasion, before being totally abolished by 1902. The courts' powers passed to the Magistrate Court of Petty Sessions which dealt with both minor offences and administrative duties including licensing of public houses and setting the Poor Rate. The Frodsham branch of the Court of Petty Sessions for the Eddisbury Hundred, which met at the Vale Royal Abbey Arms, Oakmere moved to Frodsham Town Hall in the 1860's. The Frodsham branch included the townships



of Alvanley, Dunham, Frodsham, Frodsham Lordship and Newton. The local population soared during the building of the Manchester Ship Canal and no doubt became more lawless. It was decided that a purpose-built Frodsham Court House was required. This was built on Ship Street, on land owned by the Marquis of Cholmondeley, and opened in 1894 (pictured left).

Cases heard in the new Court House in the closing years of the 19th century were frequently for drunk and disorderly behaviour, and not always from the lower classes. In 1895 Philip Priestner, overseer for Helsby, was charged with assaulting James Brandreth, a Parish and District Councillor. The assault took place following a disagreement at a Helsby Parish Council meeting where the services of a 'Jackie Weaver' might have been beneficial. Mr Priestner was fined £5, or one-month imprisonment with hard labour. The fine was paid!

Courts of Petty Sessions were replaced by Magistrates Courts and the Frodsham Court House was declared surplus to requirements in 1970. It was purchased by Frodsham Girl Guides in 1972; they had been meeting in the adjacent former Police Station.

18 Edward Bushell, born at Higher Mickledale Farm, Frodsham, in 1620, changed the English legal system for ever. In 1670 he was a member of a jury in the trial of William Penn (future founder of Pennsylvania) and William Mead, two Quakers charged with unlawful assembly. The jury would not convict and were imprisoned until a verdict the court would accept was reached. Edward Bushell sought a writ of *habeas corpus*, resulting in a ruling from the Court of Common Pleas that a jury could no longer be punished for the verdict they returned and were free to give their verdict according to their convictions. A plaque commemorating this event stands outside the Old Bailey.



19 David of Gwynedd, brother of Llywelyn, Prince of Wales, holds the dubious honour of being the first nobleman to be hanged, drawn and quartered in England. In the year 1279, Edward I, as Earl of Chester, had granted the Manor of Frodsham to David, an ally at the time. David, who became Prince of Wales on the death of his brother, immediately changed allegiance and tried, unsuccessfully, to reinstate an independent Wales. David was condemned to death on the charge of 'High Treason'. On 3rd October 1283, in Shrewsbury, David was first 'drawn' as a traitor, i.e. dragged through the street attached to a horse's tail, then hanged as a thief. He was then 'quartered' for plotting the King's death. David was beheaded, his entrails burnt and his body cut into four. His right arm with ring was sent to York, the left to Bristol. His right leg was displayed in Northampton and the left leg in Hereford: not the most auspicious end for the Lord of the Manor of Frodsham!

20 Bear-baiting was commonplace throughout England until the Cruelty to Animals Act of 1835 made it illegal. Bear baiting and certain other activities were not, however, allowed on Sundays. At the Quarter Sessions, held in Nantwich in July 1602, Richard Williamson of Frodsham was accused of “*pyping, bearebayting and horsbayting*” in his alehouse on Sunday 10th June. Richard Williamson is recorded as holding an alehouse license in 1635, but alas its location is not known.

21 A fissure in the face of Helsby Hill is known as ‘Clatch Hooks’, a local dialect expression for ‘grasping hands’. A clutch was also part of the harness used to lower workers up and down the shafts in coal and lead mines. Similarly, it is said that a clutch was part of the frame of a gibbet where executed criminals were displayed as a warning to others.

The fissure, ‘Clatch Hooks’, is below the spot on Helsby Hill where the body of William Lowndes, was gibbeted in 1791. Lowndes was executed at Chester for robbing a post boy at Great Budworth in 1788. So, in this context, does ‘Clatch Hooks’ refers to ‘grasping hands’, or, a part of the gibbet? The editors’ preference is that the local name is probably connected to the gibbeting of Lowndes, and the name was later adopted to describe the fissure. The full story can be read on the Sandstone Ridge website at sandstoneridge.org.uk.



22 In the early 20th century William Booth of Frodsham, described as a gigantic man with the nickname ‘Slasher’ was frequently imprisoned for petty theft, whereas his namesake William Booth of Main Street broke the law in a less direct way. This William Booth, a bookseller and stationer, like many of his fellow non-conformists objected to the Education Act of 1902 which included powers to give church schools public funds. The main objection was that the money would be used to support religious teaching to which they were opposed. The National Passive Resistance League was formed to encourage non-conformists not to pay that portion of their rates which would be spent on church schools. In September 1903, William Booth, Thomas Earlam, William Noden and others were summonsed for non-payment of the rate. They were ordered to pay the arrears, plus costs, or their goods would be ‘distrained’. The following year, the auction of confiscated goods took place, with little enthusiasm, despite it being well advertised by the town crier.

THE CRUX OF THE MATTER



23 The sandstone base is all that remains of Maiden's Cross, the medieval wayside cross that marked the boundary between Alvanley and Manley. The shaft of a wooden cross fell victim to John Bruen, of Bruen Stapleford, Tarvin, and his band of followers in 1613 when they toured the county determined to destroy all images of idolatry as their religion dictated. Between 1613 and 1614 they damaged other wayside and churchyard crosses at Vicars Cross, Christleton, Tarvin, Barrow,

Eccleston and Delamere (The Headless Cross). Seven members of the group were convicted at the Star Chamber following a complaint by Sir John Savage. The fine of £500 was paid by John Bruen, who himself evaded prosecution.

Following the death of his father in 1587, John Bruen changed from being a man about town with a fondness for dancing, gambling and hunting, to a puritan, iconoclastic zealot. He rid himself of the trappings of his former life and took on his father's debts and large family, and through rigid economy and discipline brought his estate into profit again. However, his reputation for hospitality and charity remained and it is said that whilst living in Chester in the early 1600s he fed the local poor from the profits of his two mills, one being Walk Mill on the River Gowy at Waverton.

John Bruen became celebrated for his piety. He immersed himself in the strict religious disciplines and practices of the Puritans of the time, including the removal of all Papist religious images. To this end he removed all the stained glass from Tarvin Church, replacing the windows with clear glass at his own expense. In 1612, John married his third wife in Chester and returned to Stapleford. His new wife was Margaret Rutter, widow of John Rutter who died in Nantwich in 1604 following an outbreak of plague. So, John's spree of cross smashing in 1613/4 seems quite out of character!

Maiden's Cross was an important feature in the area, marking the Frodsham Ancient Parish boundary and the extent of Delamere Forest. Psalm 100 was sung there by the Frodsham clergy and congregation on their 'Perambulation of the Bounds' in 1762. Maiden's Cross is listed Grade II and is a Scheduled Ancient Monument. It was damaged by vehicles in 2004 and has now been restored to its proper position on Manley Road, Alvanley, opposite the Woodland Trust's Wheeldon Copse.

24 Mistreatment of the High Cross in Chester was recorded when, in 1594, a gibbet was erected nearby. Its purpose was to encourage good behaviour on the part of troops being

shipped to Ireland. In some documents 'the maiden' refers to a type of gallows or gibbet. So, did Maiden's Cross in Alvanley serve a more sinister purpose in times gone by?

Tensions between the Church of England and the radical Protestants increased and the destruction of religious images continued. In 1641 relations between the King and Parliament finally broke down. A Parliamentary Ordinance issued on 18th August 1643 stated that "*all Monuments of Superstition and Idolatry should be removed and abolished*". Whether this edict affected the behaviour of a local man, Ralph Wilcoxon, is subject to conjecture but, for whatever reason, he vandalised The High Cross at Chester. This 15th century cross, with its central position by St Peter's Church at the intersection of the four main streets was the site of public proclamations and a rallying point. It was more ornate and gilded than it is today; the niches would have contained statues. It was held in high regard.

Ralph Wilcoxon, baptised in 1611 at Frodsham, was the fourth of ten children born to Richard Wilcoxon of Manley. He had moved away from Cheshire to become a procurator in Bury St Edmunds and was returning to his father's home in Manley when the incident occurred in Chester. To be found to be a Parliamentary supporter in the Royalist stronghold of Chester would have been a very serious matter at the time. Thus, the petition he made to the Mayor, Randle Holme, in 1644 told how he had suffered under the Parliamentarians, had his house broken into, goods plundered and been threatened with imprisonment. He had been forced to flee, leaving his wife behind and had been fighting for His Majesty's garrison in Ashby de la Zouch. He said that he was a stranger in Chester and that it being dark he didn't realise it was a cross or that it had arms or a crown on it, or how infirm the cross was.

Was Ralph being truthful about his affiliations? We will never know and Ralph's fate is unknown too. It is said that the High Cross was finally pulled down by the Parliamentarians at the end of the Siege of Chester in 1646. Was it re-erected after Ralph Wilcoxon's vandalism only to suffer a similar fate a few years later? Or did the pulling down of the High Cross by Parliamentarians make a better story?

The High Cross in Chester, pictured in the Roman Gardens in 1961, was re-sited close to where it originally stood by the Chester Civic Trust to commemorate European Architectural Heritage Year in 1975. This illustration, CHH (ch3420), is from the Cheshire Image Bank Collection held by the History Hub at Grosvenor Museum.



OLD WAYS



25 In mediaeval times salt was carried overland by pack horse from Cheshire 'wiches' to Frodsham Quay, the highest navigable point on the River Weaver at the time. The probable route into Frodsham was via Bradley and on to Hob Hey Lane where the cobbled and stone-edged surface can still be seen (left). This is part of Frodsham Parish Bridleway no.74.



The Salt Road then followed the continuation of Townfield Lane, Bridleways no. 73 and 72, the latter a worn-down sunken route or 'hollow way' (left). Eddisbury Way and Ellis Lane, on lower ground east of the bridleway, may have been an alternative route to the port depending on the surface conditions. Both routes emerge on Bridge Lane nearly opposite the former Baptist / Union Church. From there the track would have dropped down to Frodsham Quay. It is difficult to

pinpoint exactly where the quay would have been in medieval times, especially bearing in mind that the present bridge is the fourth, and was built to the east of the previous bridge site(s). The end of the route to the port could have been quite different from now.

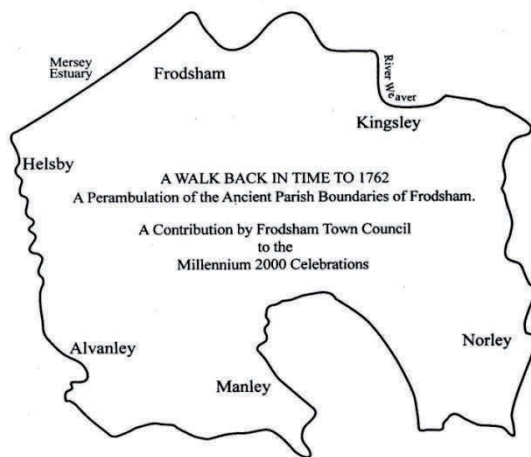
The Cheshire Sheaf August 1912, in the Chester Courant, contains a description of *The Old Road at Frodsham*:

"During the excavations in connection with the laying of the sewer for the east end of Frodsham, the workmen have come across an old pavement road at a point near the riverside near Messrs. Heywood and Massie's works. The road is on the quayside, some six feet below the present one, which runs down the quay and is composed of large pavement stones. The width has not been ascertained but there is little doubt but what the road found by these workmen is one which in olden days led to the ford across the river prior to any bridges of any description being built. Old residents have some recollections of a road leading from the east end of Barley Groves (still traceable) straight across in the direction of the river by where the Union Church is built and the pavement road uncovered is no doubt part of the same old road."

The John Douglas designed Union Church, completed in March 1887, was built on the site of an old tavern, The Saddle aka The Horse and Jockey. The 1899 OS Map shows a footpath leading from the Union Church to the Bone Works on the River Weaver. This route, partly through a modern housing estate, still exists today. But, was it the final section of the old Salt Road?

26 Transportation of salt overland was slow and expensive. Gilbert Gerard of Crewood Hall, Kingsley took advantage of the ancient ford on his land at Pickerings, by the River Weaver, where salt could be loaded onto flat bottomed barges and floated down to Frodsham for export. He rented land from Thomas Marbury in 1633 so that he could load and unload rock salt and coal near the ford, paying the inhabitants of Crowton 2d per ton for 'Trespass of Carriage'. Gerard was responsible for the upkeep of the road from Crewood Common to the river. Gerard later built a quay and salt house by the River Weaver.

The excise duty on salt had been used to finance Parliamentary troops in the Civil War. However, in 1653, Gerard bought the right to collect the salt tax. The agreement was for all duties on native salt made in Cheshire and Shropshire and a moiety of all the profits made by fines and seizures of salt. Strangely this agreement only lasted a year, maybe it wasn't as profitable as expected, but the family remained connected with the salt trade. Gilbert's son Benjamin, was described as a 'salter of London' in 1678 and the Crewood Estate was known to have exported salt beef to the capital.



It is thought that the name "Crewood" comes from the old Celtic word "cryw" meaning weir or ford. Crewood Hall is literally on the boundary of the Ancient Parish of Frodsham. The account of the Perambulation of the Bounds 20th May 1762, made by Frodsham Parish clergy, churchwardens, students and some parishioners, tells that they walked via Crewood Hall where *"the boundary line passed through the salting room window, thence thro' the wall into the parlour up to the fire place, where a hymn was sung by the clerk and others, then issuing out through the middle of the parlour window, the scholars and the other boys passing through"*.



F&DLHG members picnicking at Crewood Hall during their beating of the bounds in 1992 (from F&DHS Archives)

27 'All roads lead to Rome' or in the case of Alvanley most roads lead to the Roman camp of Birch Hill, 200 metres northwest of Birchdale Farm, Kingswood. There are no standing remains of the camp, a Scheduled Ancient Monument, but the enclosing ditch with its characteristic curved corners is visible as crop marks on aerial photographs. Small camps like Birch Hill were usually used as campaign or training camps.

Research by RJA Dutton suggests that there were three routes from the Chester to Warrington Roman Road that passed through Alvanley in the direction of Birch Hill Camp. The first, 'The Ridgeway', probably originally ran from Iron Dish, near Helsby High School. The second followed 'Primrose Lane' and then at Alvanley and would have continued eastwards on higher ground to the south of the present 'Commonside'. This is still a public right of way. The third route started in Dunham on the Hill, passed over the brook near Peck Mill then headed towards the present church, where it would have met the previous route. It is pure conjecture that the first two routes are Roman but a trench dug by Dutton in 1994, near to Peck Mill, revealed traces of a Roman embankment with a metalled surface.



Other Roman finds in Alvanley include a gold coin and jewelled ring found in 1886, a lead weight discovered in 1955, fragments of pottery and a 'bronze fibular trumpet brooch' inlaid with silver. Details of these sites and finds can be found on the website 'Revealing Cheshire's Past'. The illustration (left) is of a similar Romano-British bronze fibular trumpet brooch from the National Museum of Scotland's collection.

A small Roman Fortlet at Ince was not identified until 1994. It is thought that it was constructed in the early years of the occupation to monitor marine traffic along the coast. What else is lying beneath the soil just waiting to be discovered?

TERRACES WITH A TALE TO TELL



28 Terraced housing was a popular way to produce high density accommodation for the working classes in the 19th century. So it was used when the Telegraph Manufacturing Company, Helsby, needed to house its incoming employees. In 1888 the firm built two terraces on the west side of the road using bricks made at the factory site. The one known as 'The Avenue', illustrated left, is still in its original form and deserves to be listed Grade II for Group Value. By 1895 the Cable

Works employed 350 workers, rising to approximately 1,000 in 1914. Further terraces were built: Cable Terrace, Crosland Terrace and Back Crosland Terrace, the latter two are named after the joint founder of the works George Crosland Taylor. All three terraces still exist and provide a proud legacy of the company that became BICC.



House about 1878 (photograph courtesy of John Ireland). The terrace became known as 'Post Office Terrace' for obvious reasons, although its official name was 'Ebenezer Terrace'. It is possible that it was given that name in memory of Ebenezer Peers, son of the former postmaster, Richard Peers of Rose Farm, who had died in 1869 at the age of 21. On the other hand, Abraham White, a staunch Methodist, could have named the terrace from the biblical reference in Samuel 7:12. 'Ebenezer' is Hebrew for 'stone of help' and many early Methodist Chapels bore that name.

29 John White, a Chelsea 'Out' Pensioner and his wife Jane, came to Helsby in the late 1870s to take up the position of sub-postmasters. His post office/grocer's shop was at the end of a terrace on Chester Road, almost opposite Rose Farm which had previously served as Helsby's post office. The terrace of 6 cottages and 2 shops had been built by John's brother Abraham White of Bank



from the estate of Henry Lowe, deceased, of Sutton Hall in 1885 by William Guest, stone merchant of Runcorn. Mark Smith, a contractor from Widnes, had already bought land and cottages opposite also from the Lowe estate. Guest purchased Helsby Quarry later in the year and Smith had right of way over the access road, Quarry Lane. In May 1886 Guest sought permission from West Eddisbury Highways Board to cross two roads with a rail track to the sidings at Helsby Station. This railway was to use the same route from the quarry as the original tramway of 1828, i.e. down Quarry Lane. Guest started to lower the level of the road affecting Smith's access to his property. A row ensued and Smith took Guest to court. A three-day court hearing in November 1887 resulted in Guest having to restore the road to its former level and pay costs. It is said that Guest built the terrace of cottages so tall to spoil the view from Smith's cottages and his newly built house, 'Gorsehill', hence the name 'Spite Row'. Perhaps they were built so tall to maximise the space available but that would spoil a good story! Certainly, Mark Smith never liked 'Gorsehill' and built the neighbouring 'Mountskip Villa' for his own use. The stress was not good for Smith, who suffered from heart disease. He collapsed and died on Chester Railway Station on 17th August 1894 following a trip to London. He was aged 57. Eventually, Guest built his railway which passed immediately behind "Spite Row". The course of its route can still be seen today!

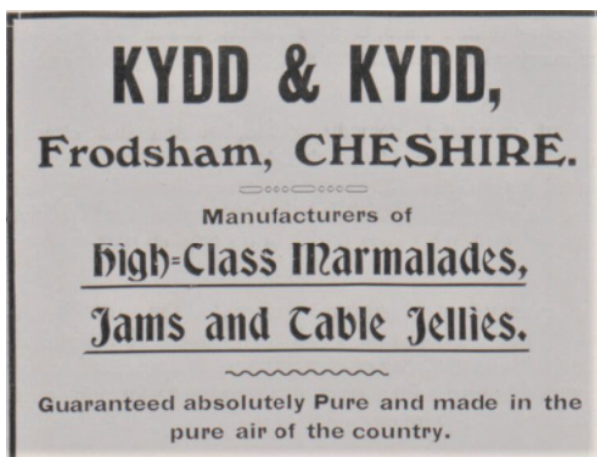
30 'Post Office Terrace' is a reasonable nickname, but the name 'Spite Row' or 'Spite Houses' needs more of an explanation (photograph courtesy of Jane Arnold). This terrace of 3 storey sandstone cottages stands on Robin Hood Lane, Helsby, opposite Quarry Lane which is the lower access road to Helsby Quarry Local Nature Reserve. The small plot of land on which the terrace stands was purchased

31 It seems to have been common practice to give houses nicknames. The terrace, 'Cliff View' (right) off Marsh Lane, Frodsham, although called that on census returns and maps was known as 'Booth Street' by local folk as it was built by William Booth in the 1880s. The 'Cliff' referred to would be Helsby Hill.

William Booth, who was active in local politics, farmed 60 acres and lived at 12 High Street (next to Crosbie House).



32 Derfel Cottages, London Road have always had the nickname 'Jam Works Cottages' as they were built in 1902 for workers in the nearby factory which was founded by Joseph Kydd, grocer and provisions dealer of Church Street, Frodsham. Joseph had put the day to day running of the factory in the hands of his 2 brothers.



At the outbreak of the Boer War in 1898 the firm were contracted by the War Office to supply jam for the troops fighting in South Africa. Some one million jars were shipped out in 1900 alone. It was round about that time that the 2 brothers died within months of each other. Joseph Kydd sold the jam factory to Morris and Jones of Liverpool who built the cottages. The cottages were named after the 6th century Celtic Christian Monk, Derfel Gadarn, and the village of Llandderfel, near Bala, which was the birthplace of joint owner David Jones.

Jam continued being produced at the factory under the name Kydd and Kydd into the early 1960s when it was owned by Gleason's Cereal and Dried Fruit Packers. In 1973 when they left the area the factory was demolished. Thankfully the pretty Derfel Cottages remain as a lasting reminder of the jam factory, a part of Frodsham's past for many years. The advertisement is from The War Office Times and Naval Review dated 1st January 1910.

33 Alvanley Terrace, Frodsham, has an interesting history. The land was sold by William, Marquis of Cholmondeley to John Bethell, a retired druggist of Church Street. Bethell had built numbers 1, 2, and 3 by 1881 and within a couple of years, numbers 4-9 were built, bigger and grander than the first 3. John Bethell was one of 4 sons born into a Warrington clockmaking family. In the 1851 census John and Edmond were tea dealers while William and Thomas were grocers in the Warrington area. John and William emigrated to Bulla, near Melbourne, Australia in the 1850s. They must have been pioneers as the settlement was only founded in the 1840s. John became a druggist or chemist, was the local postmaster and owned hotels and a bakery. His brother owned the general store. John made frequent trips between Britain and Australia before retiring to Frodsham about 1880, where he used his money to develop Alvanley Terrace. Frodsham was the home town of his uncle, William Bethell, a cooper, but why 'Alvanley Terrace'? The Bethell family had links with Alvanley. John's father was born there and his grandparents and two uncles are buried at St John's Church Alvanley.



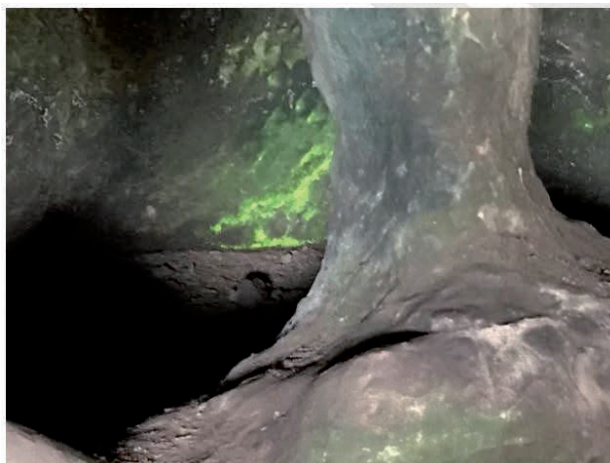
John Bethell died in 1891 and in his will left part of his estate to his niece back in Bulla, Australia. William Bethell remained in Bulla where he died in 1881.

Later the lease for numbers 1, 2 and 3 Alvanley Terrace was held by James Nicholls, a local butcher; Joseph Bell, a Widnes engine driver and the Ormrod family of post office fame. Those houses were occupied by railwaymen and a housepainter, whilst 4-9 were let to people higher up the social scale, including an architect, land agent, a master joiner and business owners, who often had servants. The most famous occupant in 1891 was Joseph Kydd, the grocer and jam factory owner, before he moved to grander premises on Fluin Lane!

John Bethell and others were also responsible for building 22-30 Church Street. Kydd's grocery shop was number 22 on the corner of Kydd's Wint. Number 30 was demolished in the 1960s as part of the Eddisbury Square development, but 22-28 survive.

GOBLINS, FOSSILS AND CAVES

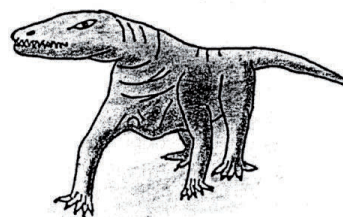
34 It is no wonder the Frodsham Caves have long been associated with fairies and goblins in local legends. They are one of the few sites in Cheshire where the magical Shining Cave Moss or Goblin Gold can be found. It has also been found in caves at Helsby. Photograph taken by Nick Holmes and courtesy of the Sandstone Ridge Trust.

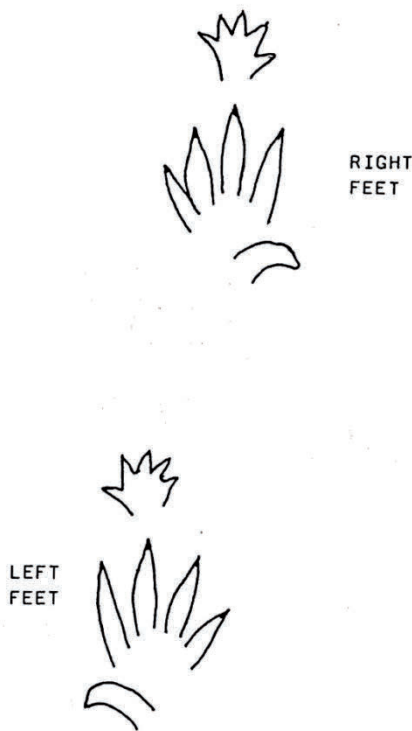


This very rare luminescent moss, *Schistostega pennata*, was discovered in the Frodsham Caves by James Frodsham Robinson (1838-1884) a chemist and noted botanist of Main Street, Frodsham, as early as 1878. James Robinson spoke on botany locally and gave lectures at Owens College, Manchester, where he became a curator. His life history is told in Arthur R Smith's book *Brief Lives* 2012.

35 Charles Kingsley, author and social reformer, served as a Canon of Chester Cathedral from 1870 to 1873. In 1871, he founded the Chester Society of Natural Science which was prominent in the establishment of the Grosvenor Museum in 1885.

One of the Society's early excursions was a visit to Helsby in June 1871 to study the rocks and flora of the area. A party of 65 ladies and gentlemen, headed by Canon Kingsley arrived on two special coaches attached to the 2.40pm train from Chester. After admiring the wonderful views from the top of Helsby Hill, the party visited quarries in the area where Canon Kingsley had hoped to find fossil footprints of *Labyrinthodon*, or what he called the 'Keuper Lizard'. The quarry master had told him that in the past he had seen a vast number of similar fossils and promised to inform Canon Kingsley should more be discovered.





The fossils footprints referred to probably belonged to the *Chirotherium* or Hand Beast, whose five-digit footprints have been found in Triassic sandstone quarries across Cheshire. The *Chirotherium* sketches are from the F&DLHG pamphlet *The Elusive Chirotherium* by John Adams 1994.

Before returning to Chester some of the party enjoyed the hospitality of Mr William Farish of Hillside Villa, Helsby, a well-known figure in the Temperance Movement and the first 'Temperance Mayor' of Chester in 1877/8.

Ten years later in June 1881, a group of approximately 40 members of the Chester Society of Natural Science revisited Helsby Crag. They were joined by a party from Frodsham which included "a black boy, whom we were informed is the son of King Ja Ja of Old Calabar, and the rival of Oko Jumbo".

This would have been the young Prince Waribo, see image FD01407 (right), who at the time was a pupil of Manor House School, Main Street, Frodsham. He tragically died in April 1882 from a respiratory infection and is buried in St Laurence graveyard. For further details see F&DHS Journal Issue 45 2015.



After visiting the quarries on the hill, the party "examined a cave of considerable extent, though not natural, it having been quarried for the purpose of obtaining the rubbing stone, a domestic article which needs no explanation as to its use". The

newspaper report does not mention if any luminescent moss was seen! Note the person for scale at bottom left in Conker Cave (above). Photograph by Peter Snape and courtesy of the Sandstone Ridge Trust.

MORE ANNIVERSARIES

36 2021 is the 50th anniversary of the opening of the Hapsford to Clifton section of the M56. The idea of a North Cheshire Motorway was first mooted in 1947 and the route agreed with Cheshire County Council in 1958. By the 1960s the villages along the A56, particularly Helsby and Frodsham, were suffering problems with the heavy traffic. In 1964 Helsby formed its own Residents' Road Action Committee to fight for a by-pass. It was soon joined by Frodsham to become HAFRAC (Helsby and Frodsham Road Action Committee). They carried out road censuses and lobbied both the County Council and the Government, but their big break came on Saturday 25th July 1964. The Prime Minister, Alec Douglas-Home was due to pass through Helsby on his way from Chester to Warrington. HAFRAC arranged for a group of children to stand on the grass verge at the top of Queen's Drive, Helsby, holding placards reading 'By-Pass A56 Now'.



By happy accident, literally, the PM was delayed by a minor collision in the village. As a result, his car pulled over allowing the chairman to give the PM a leaflet and car sticker, which Douglas-Home promised to pass to Ernest Marples, Minister of Transport, in person. He was as good as his word and within six weeks the A56 By-pass was in the roads programme.

Work started in 1968 and was completed in 1971, much to the relief of local residents who had suffered years of noise and disruption. The first official car travelled along the new stretch of motorway at 11am on Sunday 20th February 1971 following the simple cutting of a ribbon. In that car were Mr Mark Carlisle, MP for Runcorn and Mr G Harrison and Dr J Dearden from HAFRAC. In fact, the Dearden family was the first to use the motorway, having been given permission to WALK the length, prior to its opening to traffic.

This section of the motorway, on the southern edge of the Mersey Marshes, is at one of the lowest elevations in the country. 1½ million cubic yards of peaty substrate were excavated and replaced with sandstone to a depth of 30 feet. It is said that these excavations revealed nothing of archaeological importance, but, more recently, a piece of bog-oak found in a drainage ditch alongside the M56 has been dated at Queens University, Belfast.

The Dendrochronology Report states that the tree started growing 6,855 years ago and lived for 270 years during the Stone Age! When it fell down it was preserved by the wet peaty soil in which it grew.

The number of bridges required along this stretch of the M56 added to the massive expense. The foundations for the 3,136 ft long viaduct over the Weaver Valley went down 60 feet until rock was struck. The 490 ft long 7-span viaduct built to cross the Ellesmere Port-Helsby railway line and the branch line to Mouldsworth cost in the region of £500,000.

Even the famous railway contractor Thomas Brassey ran into trouble whilst building the Chester to Warrington stretch of the Birkenhead, Lancashire and Cheshire Railway through Helsby Marsh, or 'bog' as he called it, in the late 1840s. A mile long stretch had to be made solid by driving piles down 30-40ft for the foundations and filling it with a super-structure of strong sandstone.

37 A Runcorn resident and colleague has placed his 32nd Blue Plaque in the town (right) to celebrate the 50th anniversary of Runcorn Busway and posted details on Facebook. An edited version is included below.

"The one feature which makes Runcorn different from any other town in the world is the Busway. It represents an effort to restore public transport to its proper place as an element of life in the community".

- Runcorn Development Corporation.



The Rapid Transit System, or Busway as people quickly preferred to call it, was one of the triumphs of Runcorn New Town development during the 1970s. In the light of current worries about pollution, traffic congestion and the way we are treating our planet, it showed great foresight to envisage a whole new town built around a public transport system. And, in Britain, it happened first in Runcorn.

The Runcorn system was devised to encourage people to travel by bus rather than by car. The nine New Town estates were connected to the Busway by locating them along the eastern loop of a 14-mile figure-of-eight route, the plan being that no resident would be more than five hundred yards or five minutes walk from a bus stop. Bus stops in the established 'old' town made up the western loop of the circuit. There was a 3-km stretch in this loop where multi-purpose roads were used. At the centre of the two loops was Shopping City.

Friday 29th October 2021 was the 50th birthday of the Busway. It can be seen as the forerunner of the cycle lanes and bus lanes we now use in towns and cities across the United Kingdom. And, the noble ideas behind the Busway concept are more relevant and pressing today than they have ever been.

38 Street sales have been a colourful feature in Frodsham since 1279 when Edward I granted the manor of Frodsham to David of Gwynedd, brother of Llywelyn, Prince of Wales, along with the rights to hold a weekly market.

Those rights lapsed but were renewed 360 years ago, on 8th October 1661, on the oath of 'twelve good and lawful men' of the County of Chester, in the Common Hall of Pleas in the Castle of Chester; King Charles II granted Thomas, Earl Rivers, i.e. Thomas Savage and his heirs, the market Charter for Frodsham.

"the market to be held on Thursday every week at the vill of Frodsham in the County aforesaid and to hold likewise two fairs every year at the same vill of Frodsham one of which on the fourth day of May and the other upon the 10th day of August (St Laurence Day) and throughout those days for ever and to receive the tolls and profits coming and arising therefrom to him and his heirs..." Text translated from the Latin document held by Chester Record Office.



Frodsham market rights were eventually sold to Northern Markets, which has managed Frodsham's Thursday market in Main Street for many years.

39 1871 was a good year for church and chapel building. Christ Church in Crowton was consecrated in October of that year. Originally built as a Chapel of Ease to Weaverham Parish Church, it is now in the deanery of Frodsham. It was built of red sandstone on land given by Ralph Oswald Leycester of Toft Hall. The cost was largely met by voluntary donations.

The Hurst Methodist Chapel, Kingsley (right) is also celebrating 150 years of worship in the present building. This is the third Methodist Chapel on this site. The first was started about 1787 but funds ran out before it could be roofed. Fortunately, two friends, Joseph Janion of Mouldsworth and George Pugh of New Pale, Manley came to the rescue and completed the building at their own expense. Joseph Janion's family had farmed at Bradley Orchard, Frodsham and it was he who had allowed a Methodist chapel to be built about 1803 on his land at Windmill Hill, Chapel Lane, Frodsham. Today this is the northern end of Fluin Lane,



George Pugh was famous within Methodist circles for the 'Love Feasts' held at New Pale, that, it is said, lasted for days. A newly rebuilt chapel and schoolroom was opened on the Kingsley site on 16th August 1818 by the Reverend James Crowther Jnr, which in turn was demolished to make way for the present, third, Wesleyan Chapel, which opened in 1871. The newspapers did not report this opening, whereas the laying of the Memorial Stones on 10th September 1870 was covered by the Northwich Guardian. The stones were laid by Henry Lowe of Sutton Hall, who had been a worshipper there for 28 years and Thomas Hazlehurst of Runcorn, no stranger to the task, having already laid 73 similar stones! Both gentlemen became Trustees of the Wesleyan Chapel in Fluin Lane in 1874 and Thomas Hazlehurst was the benefactor of The Eden Chapel, Bradley Lane, now a private house, and Trinity Methodist Church, High Street, Frodsham.

40 One hundred years ago, the year 1921 saw the unveiling of many memorials to the fallen in World War I. The Frodsham War Memorial, situated on Overton Hill, was unveiled by Colonel W Bromley Davenport on 24th September 1921. The land on which the memorial stood was purchased from Marquis of Cholmondeley, his brother-in-law Percy John Paravacini and Arthur Maitland Wilson by the War Memorial Committee and the Parish Council of Frodsham Lordship for the sum of 5 shillings. The cost of the memorial, said to be £1,049, 15s, had been raised by public subscription. Further land was acquired by the committee from the Wright family in 1923 and from Mrs Sarah Parker Hoose in 1924 for the Memorial Field approach from Bellemonte Road. The War Memorial together with The Gates and Railings are listed Grade II.



The previously mentioned war memorial at St Laurence Church (fact 3) was dedicated in November 1921. Trinity Methodist Church on High Street, unveiled their monument in Spring 1921. It originally stood nine feet tall with a lamp fixed to the top, on a plinth of Yorkshire stone. The base of that war memorial now stands in the garden at the front of Frodsham Methodist Church on Kingsley Road (left). It was restored by Frodsham's World War I Commemoration Group, and rededicated on 3rd September 2017, the centenary of the death of Staff Nurse Ethel Saxon, who is named on it. She was one of only a handful of women to be named on war memorials.

Helsby was slightly ahead of Frodsham in commemorating World War I. James Taylor JP unveiled their memorial on 25th April 1920.

F&DHS Journal writers believe that by researching and recording past lives and events we are in a small way paying our own tribute to those people who have helped make Frodsham and District a fabulous place to live.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many thanks to everyone who has contributed to this year's special edition of our journal, especially John Davies, Tim Deepmore and Sheila Holt who have delved into their deeds and family histories for information.

Other facts have been gleaned from documents catalogued during the Archive Modernisation Project supported by the Marshes Community Benefit Fund and the Cheshire Records Office, British Newspapers Online and other sources that are too numerous to mention here. The sources for any of the facts can be supplied by the editors on request to the email address:

fdhsarchive@gmail.com

We are grateful to staff managing Cheshire Image Bank for their prompt supply of images bearing FD and FDN prefixes and for the single CHH image (all credited in the text). The Sandstone Ridge Trust kindly gave us permission to use photographs taken by Nick Holmes and Peter Snape. Jane Arnold, John Ireland, David Joyce, Stuart Allen, Fiona Barry and Fran Miller have allowed us to use their material and/or images; other photographs have come from Kath Gee's private collection or were freely accessible on the web.

Most of all we are indebted to that fore-sighted group of founder members of Frodsham & District Local History Group, namely: Richard Martin, the first Chairman, Arthur R Smith, the first Secretary, Howard Talbot of Aston who became our President, and Derek Heckle. Several of the early members of Local History Group were made Honorary Members for their sterling work in research and recording, and/or as an active committee member.

Frodsham & District History Society has achieved much during its 40 years and will continue to research and document our historic area in the future.

FRODSHAM & DISTRICT HISTORY SOCIETY

Meeting Dates and Programme 2022

**Membership £5.00 p.a. + £2.00 per meeting. Visitors £3.00.
Subscriptions due at the start of the year.**

January	No meeting – decision made at AGM 2020
7 th February	Speaker Chris Green - Youtube 'History Chap' The great storm of 1703 (Zoom presentation)
7 th March	AGM + talk to be arranged (Zoom presentation)
4 th April	Monty Mercer – Hoole History & Heritage Society The Roman road from Chester to Wilderspool, Warrington (In MSCC)
9 th May	
6 th June	
4 th July	
5 th September	
3 rd October	
7 th November	
5 th or 12 th December	

Details of talks & visits May-September still to be arranged.

Two weeks before each meeting further details will be placed on our website frodshamhistory.org.uk and emailed to members.

Frank Whitfield, Programme Secretary and Chairman arranges
the meetings for 2022.

