The Bowdon Sheaf

A BOWDON HISTORY SOCIETY PUBLICATION

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A BOWDON HISTORY SOCIETY PUBLICATION

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The Bowdon Sheaf

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No. 1. October 1983 40p

The Bowdon Sheaf is published by the Bowdon History Society which was founded in 1979, and is sponsored by the Cheshire Sheaf. The Society has four winter meetings and two informal summer meetings or walk-abouts as well as study groups for those who wish to take a more active part.

Bowdon has a long history as a rural community under the manorial lords of Dunham Massey and as the centre of a wide-spread parish much larger than its present size. Domesday Book records that Hamon de Massey held Bowdon and that there was a church and a priest there.

It has a different history, beginning in the 1840s, which links it with Manchester. The coming of the railway combined with large scale-sales of land in the area brought a great influx of energetic, wealthy and often cultivated Manchester men from the city which Gladstone called "the centre of the modern life of the country". The face of Bowdon was almost completely changed and it was transformed socially and culturally.

The Bowdon History Society exists to explore both these pasts and to collect material about them - written records,oral traditions and reminiscences, photographs and the evidence of the landscape and buildings we still see around us. Much has already been collected and we hope to pass it on in the Sheaf, in the belief that knowing its history adds to the enjoyment of living in or visiting a locality. Much, we think, remains to be discovered and we invite you, our readers, to send us any information you have which can contribute a piece, however small, of the jig-saw of Bowdon’s past.

Marjorie Cox.
Chairman.

RURAL BOWDON: 1 Bow Green
by Ronald Trenbath

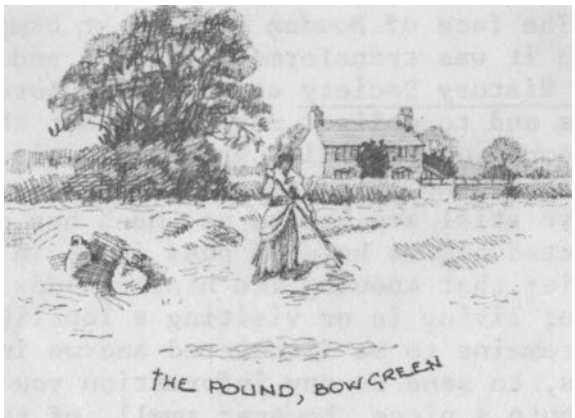
In former times Bow Green was a small rural settlement at the junction of Bow Green Road (at that time Bow Green Lane) and Bow Lane, consisting of four semi-detached cottages, a white thatched farm house and a larger dwelling which had previously been the residence of the Head Gamekeeper but subsequently included into the farmstead.

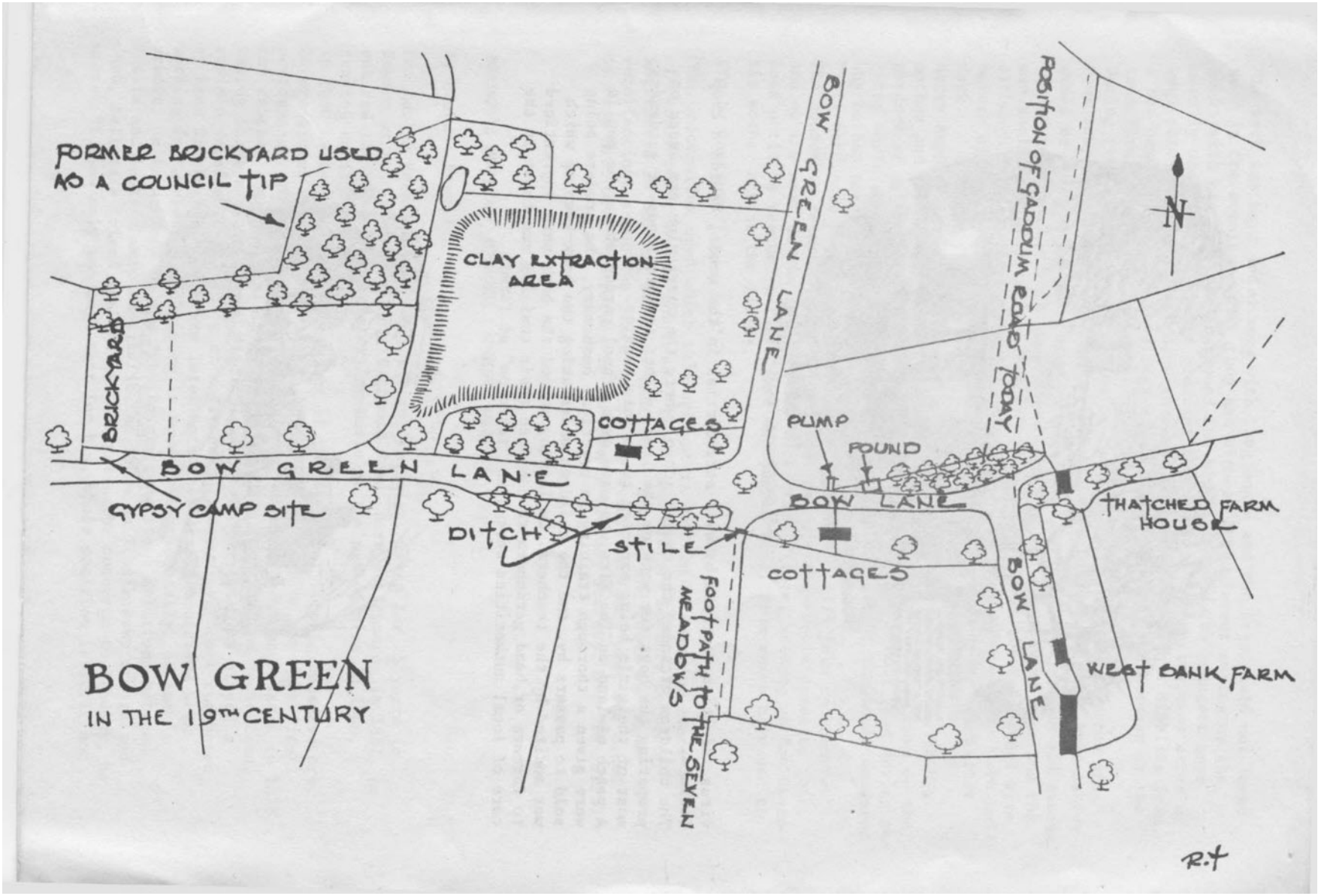
The barn to the farm consisted of a threshing floor or threshold, a barn porch, a shippon, loose box and shant for itinerant workers. The doors were of a sophisticated design to control air current needed on the threshold while threshing corn. The two roads were narrow between high hedges overhung with damson trees and provided a better route to Bowdon than the main Chester road, as the gradient was much easier. In the previous centuries salt merchants used this route but robberies and a murder madeit very precarious.

A pump, and later a tap, in Bow Lane provided the communal water supply and was surrounded by an interesting Victorian wooden fence, while an adjoining brick-walled enclosure, with a stone coping, was used for an official pound for empounding stray cattle, prior to its conversion to a highway materials store. Both the pound and the pump disappeared when Bow Lane was realigned in 1958. The cottages were constructed from bricks made from local clay, fired on site, and the wide ditch from which the clay was excavated still exists although it is now planted with trees.

Each tenant had a large garden in which to grow fruit, vegetables and flowers and to keep poultry and sometimes pigs to augment their wages. Hops were grown for use as vegetables but never used for brewing and large, purpose-made jars were used for forcing rhubarb.

The farmers regulated production to meet the requirements of their market which, to a large degree, consisted of serving the needs of the adjoining affluent residential area with milk, eggs, vegetables, fruit and fodder for the horses, and for a while strawberry growing was very lucrative until a virus infection, carried by wild strawberries in the woods, caused a crop failure.




FORMER BRICKYARD USED AS A COUNCIL TIP
CLAY EXTRACTION AREA
BOW GREEN LANE
POSITION OF GADDUM ROAD TODAY
N
BRICKYARD
COTTAGES
PUMP
POUND
BOW GREEN LANE
GYPSY CAMP SITE
DITCH
STILE
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FOOTPATH TO THE SEVEN MEADOWS
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IN THE 19th CENTURY
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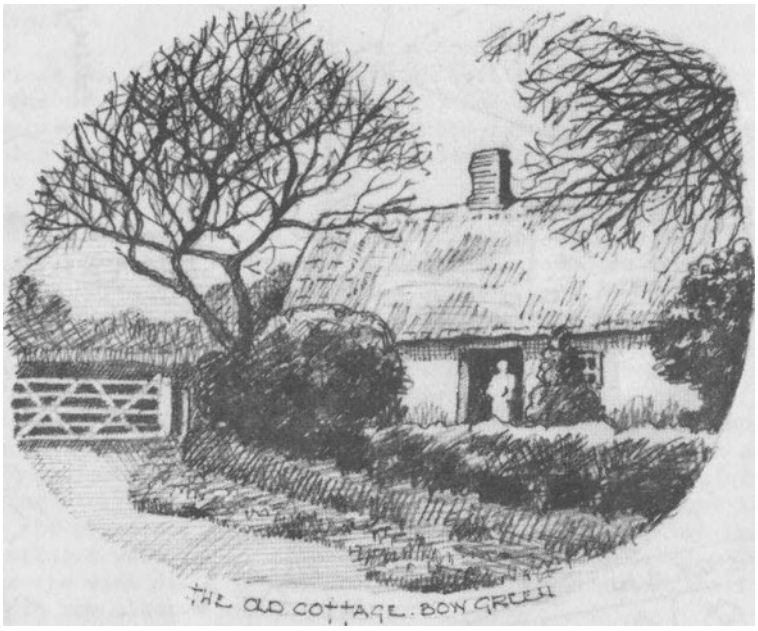


The children attended the church school where the curriculum was based on preparing the boys for work on the land, either as farm hands or gardeners, most of the girls being expected to go into service.

A patch of land on The Firs was used as a school garden where the pupils were given a thorough training in practical husbandry, the produce being sold to passers by, and the children undertaking the book-keeping which was audited by the teachers. On leaving school the boys were apprenticed to farmers or head gardeners to complete their training and those in the are of local authorities were also "taken on" at farms.



The work was hard and arduous with long hours and the boys could not leave work in the evenings until they had witnessed the farmer making up the books with his wife sitting round the kitchen table. The youngest boys usually undertook the least pleasant tasks and in the spring many acres of vegetables would be planted, with a man forming holes with a dibbling iron, a boy bending to place seedlings in position and the oldest member of the team firming-in with his heels.

During the winter farmers relied on the sale of cereals, hay, straw and root crops for income and when a load of hay was required a man from Ashley would be summoned to the farm where he would survey the hay stack and assess how to go about his work. A boy would be sent for a supply of beer and the an would carefully cut the hay into neat bales all of absolute equal size although they had been measured by eye. The man would always leave work well before nightfall as he did not like passing The Priory or the woods after dark.

Harry Aspby, who was born in one of the cottages where he lived with his mother and uncle, and ended his days after seventy odd years, worked in the gardens of a large house in Charcoal Road when he left school, and during the First World War a housemaid told him that the mistress of the house wondered why he had not enlisted.

"Tell her" said Harry, "if she makes up my wages I will join up tomorrow". The housemaid returned later to say that her mistress would agree to this, and so the next day he left for the Recruiting Office, walking up Bow Green Road until he reached a field gate on Langham Road, from which he waved to his mother across the fields.

(to be continued)

(The information upon which this account is written is based on memories of people who lived in Bow Green. The Bowdon History Society is most interested in hearing memories concerning Bowdon, and those who have recollections about the place, people or events in times past are asked to ring Mrs. Gray, Secretary to the Bowdon History Society, 061-928 1812.)

BOWDON'S MUSICAL GIANTS: ADOLPH BRODSKY Part 1
by Michael Kennedy

Dr. Adolph Brodsky, the Russian-born violinist, lived for 25 years in Bowdon at No. 3 Laurel Mount, Richmond Road. Born at Taganrog in 1851, he entered the Vienna Conservatory of Music at the age of nine in 1860, staying until 1863.

In 1880 he became senior professor of the violin at Leipzig Conservatory. International fame came to him in November 1881 when he gave the first performance of Tchaikovsky's Violin Concerto. This had been written in 1878 for another great violinist, Leopold Auer, who declined the dedication, saying the concerto was too difficult and too long. Brodsky played a revised version successfully at a Vienna Philharmonic concert conducted by Hans Richter. Twenty years later both these great musicians were working in Manchester and living in Bowdon! (incidentally, to Auer's credit, he later took up the Tchaikovsky concerto.) Relations between Russia and Austria were hostile in the 1880s as Tchaikovsky recognised when, telling a friend that he had dedicated the concerto to Brodsky, he wrote: "I know only too well that for him, whose position is still not established in Vienna, it would not be easy to appear before a Viennese audience with a concerto by an unknown composer and, in addition, a Russian, so I doubly prize his service to me".



Tchaikovsky's was not the only celebrated violin concerto to be composed in 1878. Brahms's was also soon in Brodsky's repertory and he was much in demand in the 1880s for these two works. Yet, puzzlingly for so established a soloist, he accepted an invitation in 1890 to become leader of the New York Symphony Orchestra, then conducted by Walter Damrosch. He remained for four years, but it was not a happy time. America was the Mecca for any European musicians at this time - Dvorak, for example, and later both Mahler and Toscanini. Brodsky's return to Europe in 1895 coincided with the appointment of Willy Hess, leader of Halle's orchestra in Manchester, s leader of the Boston Symphony Orchestra. Hess was also senior violin professor at the Royal Manchester College of Music which had been co-opted in 1893 with Halle as principal.

Halle offered both posts to Brodsky, who accepted. Brodsky was living in Berlin and Halle's letter recalled that Sir Charles had heard him play the Brahms in London in 1883. It is interesting to know the terms on which Brodsky was engaged - very generous when converted into the monetary values of the day. For the college professorship he received £500 a year for 36 weeks of 15 hours' teaching per week; £150 a year for 30 concerts as Halle leader with each additional concert at £5; and £95 a year for leading the 12 concerts that Halle conducted for the Liverpool Philharmonic Society. All this could be "topped up" with private tuition fees.

Brodsky accepted on a year's trial. He arrived for the 1895-6 season and led the orchestra at Liverpool on 22nd October. Two days later Halle rehearsed the orchestra for the start of the Manchester season but that evening he had a stroke and died a few hours later on the morning of 25th October 1895. It was Brodsky's sad task to conduct Mozart's Requiem at Halle's funeral. On 31st October, the day the Manchester Halle season started, Sullivan conducted and Brodsky was soloist in Mendelssohn's concerto and Bach's in A minor. Brodsky also conducted several of the Halle concerts that season including that on 20th February 1896 when Joachim was soloist in Beethoven's concerto, a remarkable example of co-operation between two great violinists.

But the art-loving businessmen and philanthropists who ran Manchester's music realised how Brodsky would be wasted as Halle leader. They offered him the post of Principal of the Royal Manchester College of Music in succession to Halle at £300 a year on top of his salary as violin professor. He was then 44 years old, full of energy and ideas. He played a major part in helping to entice Hans Richter to Manchester as Halle conductor - though it took four years - and was one of the original guarantors of the Halle Concerts Society. Like Halle, he was on friendly terms with most of the distinguished continental musicians and could attract eminent teachers to the college staff. His first major task was to replace Halle as piano professor and he brought W.H. Dayas, a Liszt pupil, from Cologne. When Dayas died in 1903, he found another Liszt pupil, Arthur Friedheim, to replace him. Later he engaged Wilhelm Backhaus and after Backhaus it was Egon Petri.

He established the college's tradition for excellent operatic performances in the early years of his principalship Brodsky conducted Nicolai's "Merry Wives of Windsor", Gluck's "Iphigenia in Aulis" and Verdi's "Un ballo in maschera", none of them very obvious or hackneyed choices. In 1904 he madea valiant effort to obtain Elgar as professor of composition - Brodsky, like so many other European musicians had been bowled over by The Dream of Gerontius - and failed only because Elgar had committed him- self to the new chair of music at Birmingham University.

Brodsky set under way a revision and stiffening of the college Diploma and brought in external examiners. Besides himself, the violin teachers included Edith Robinson and Arthur Catterall. The latter was a former College student and later became leader of the Hall£ and the BBC Symphony Orchestra. By 1913, the College's 20th anniversary, there were nearly 170 students.

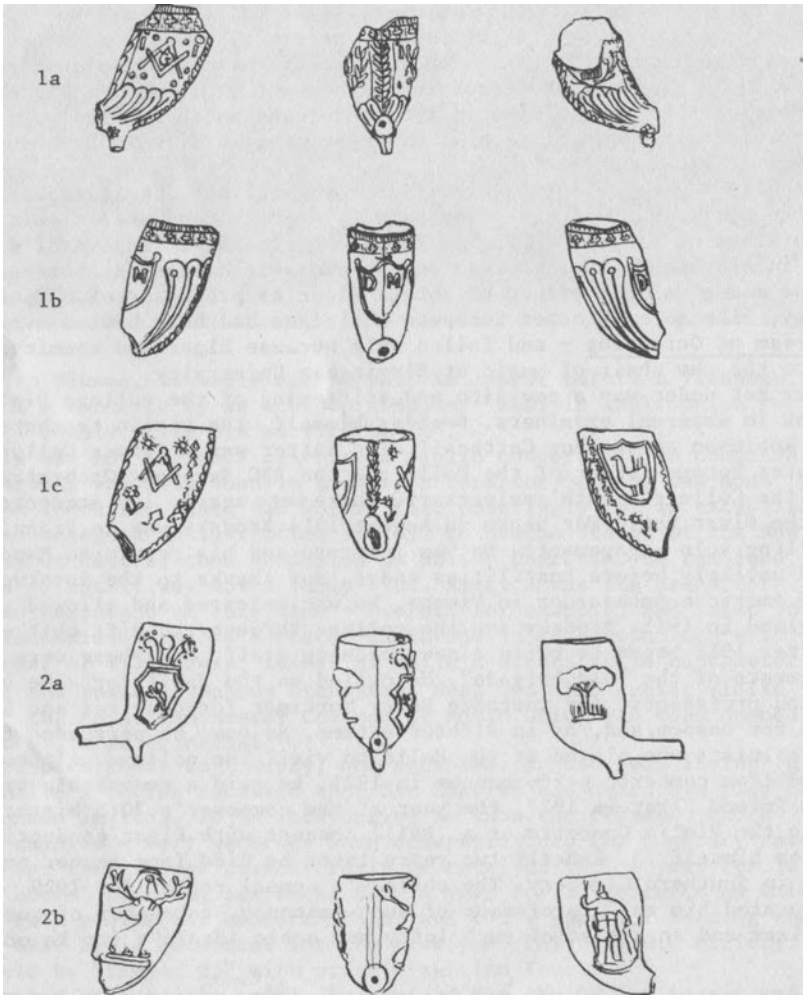
When the First World War began in August 1914 Brodsky was in Vienna fulfilling solo engagements. He was interned and his return to Manchester seemed unlikely before hostilities ended. But thanks to the intervention of the American Ambassador in Vienna, he was released and allowed to return to England in 1915. Brodsky saw the college through the difficult war years and after 1918 began to build a new teaching staff, for there were many retirements of the "old brigade". He called on the Halle for some of his woodwind professors, for instance Harry Mortimer for clarinet and Archie Camden for bassoon,and, as in Richter's time, so now, he persuaded the great soloists who played at the Halle to visit the college. Although he retired from concerto performances in 1921, he paid a remarkable tribute to his friend Elgar in 1927, the year of the composer's 70th birthday, by playing the Violin Concerto at a Halle concert with Elgar conducting. He was then himself 75. Exactly two years later he died from cancer and was buried in Southern Cemetery. The college's annual report for 1929 commemorated him as "a professor of such eminence, a teacher of such enthusiasm and an artist of such lofty and noble ideals".

(to be continued).

CLAY PIPES FOUND IN BOWDON
by M. J. King

Since the sixteenth century the craft of making clay smoking pipes in England has produced a wide variety of shapes and designs. Often the gentry had pipes especially manufactured for them, some incorporating their coat of arms or the sign of a society, for instance the Masonic mark 'V' and callipers. The pipes I have illustrated are some of the more interesting and mystifying in my collection. If you recognise any of these marks or you know where they originated I should be very interested to hear from you.

The last three pipes have been water damaged and thus the detail is hard to make out, but again if anyone recognises them or has any ideas I would be most grateful.



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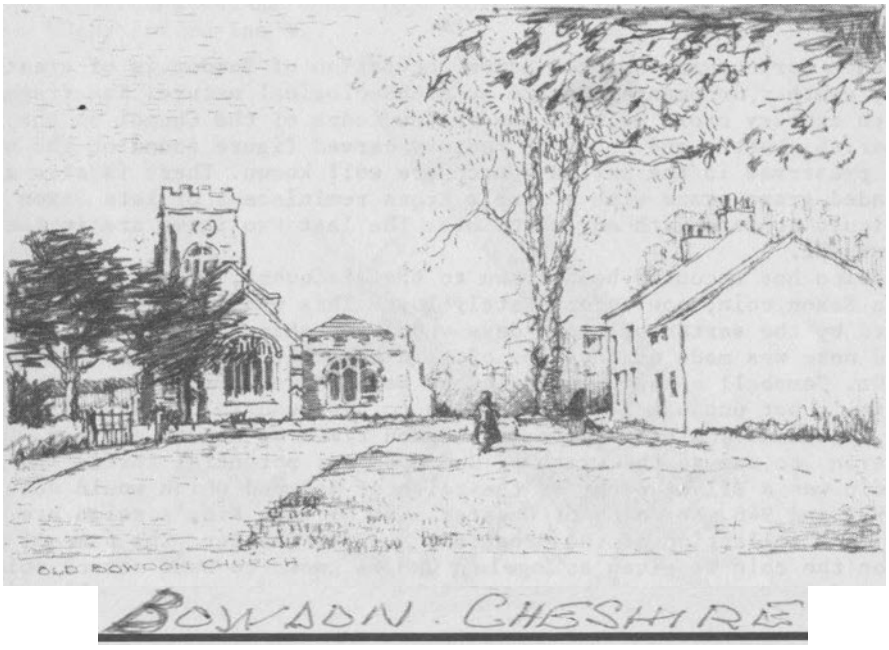
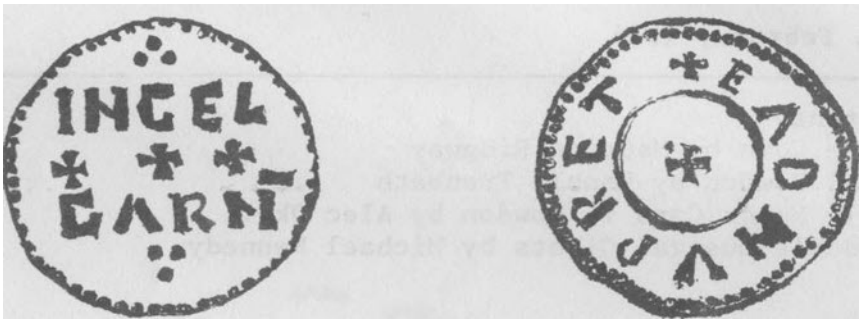
Bowdon's Musical Giants by Michael Kennedy



This drawing is based on several surveys, photographs and sketches made prior to 1858 and shows the east end of the parish church, the Griffin, the old tree and open grass area as it would appear before the church was rebuilt in 1860.

The Bowdon Sheaf is published by the Bowdon History Society which was founded in 1979, and is sponsored by the Cheshire Sheaf. The Society has four winter meetings and two informal summer meetings or walk-abouts as well as study groups for those who wish to take a more active part.

SAXON COIN
by Maurice Ridgway



Any evidence forthcoming for the Saxon occupation of Bowdon is of great interest, whether documentary or of an archaeological nature. The fragment of the 8th century cross kept on the window ledge of the Chapel of the Cross in the parish church, and the 10th century carved figure found on the site and also preserved in the parish church are well known. There is also a round-headed grave stone with a simple cross reminiscent of late Saxon work, but difficult to date with any certainty. The last two items are in the north transept.

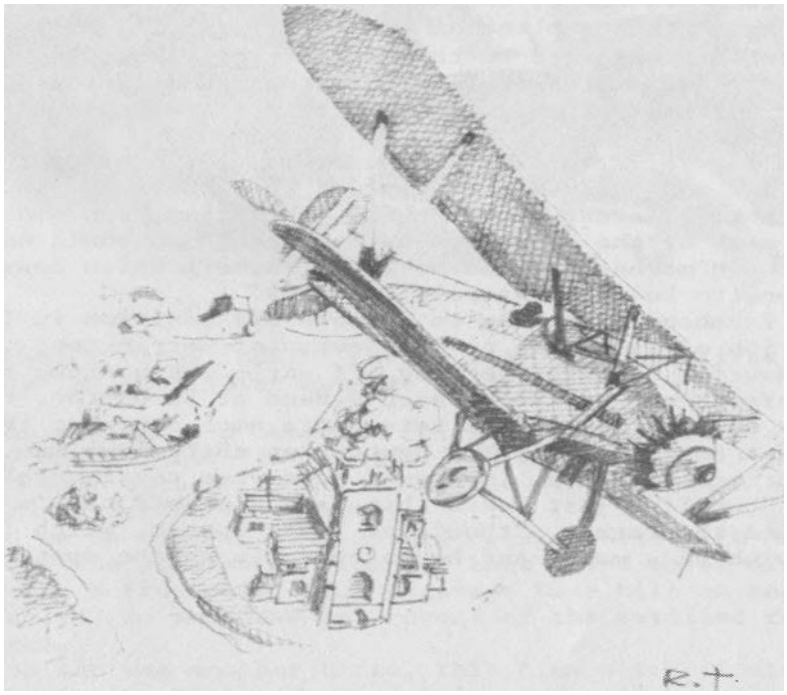
But attention has recently been drawn to the discovery, a good many years ago, of a Saxon coin, now unfortunately lost. This was discovered in Bowdon churchyard by the sexton of those days when excavating a grave space. Only a limited note was made of the type of coin and this information has been sent to Dr. Campbell a known authority on Saxon coins. His first comment is that it is not unusual for Saxon coins to be found in churchyards of old standing, presumably a projection into Saxon times of a much earlier superstition to ensure the wrath of God upon any potential thief. The Bowdon coin was a silver penny of the reign of Eadmund which would date it between 939 and 946. No coins of Chester mint of this King's reign are in the very fine collection at the Grosvenor Museum, Chester. The name of the moneyer on the coin is given as Ingelgar who is known to have struck coins at York, and in so far as any moneyer might be called common at this time he is known from a number
of coins. In view of the recent excavations carried out at York on the Viking settlement it is of great interest to know that Ingelgar struck for the Hiberno-Norse Kings of York in the first half of the 10th century. He also struck for the last Viking King Eric Bloodaxe at York, who was finally expelled and killed by Eadred (954). For the English Kings Ingelgar is known to have struck coins for Eadmund, Eadred and Eadwig. Dr. Campbell has supplied a sketch of what the appearance of the reverse side would resemble which gives the name of the moneyer. The obverse of coins struck in the time of Eadmund is also given.

RURAL BOWDON: 2
by Ronald Trenbath

With the cessation of hostilities in 1918 Harry Aspby returned from France to his home - Miss Aspby's Cottage in Bow Green - where his uncle Jim still continued to ply his trade as local slaughterer, or knackers man, sitting on the stile to the Seven Meadows waiting for custom, while Harry's mother, Ann, scoured the lanes and woods with a wheelbarrow, wearing a bright red shawl over her head, collecting fallen branches for winter fuel. Harry soon discovered that the standards of gardening at the big houses, such as the one where he was under-gardener, had deteriorated sadly due to the effects of high taxation to pay for the war.

Money was no longer so readily available for plants, heating of greenhouses or the employment of as many gardeners as previously, and outdoor staff often had to undertake indoor duties in addition to gardening. In this respect one man, who worked at a large house in Bowdon as a gardener, recalls being called upon to serve at table when his employers gave a dinner party. Many local boys, like Harry, served in the forces, some never returned, some were wounded and others were taken prisoner. One of the latter recalled being interrogated by a German officer who had previously lived in Bowdon when he worked for a German firm in Broadheath prior to the war.

During their absence the labour of local men was replaced by that of women land workers and also prisoners of war from the camp in Sinderland Green, many of whom undertook valuable drainage work and were responsible for paving some of the badly rutted lanes.



The district did not lack excitement during the war years and several people claimed that they heard very strange noises in the sky one very misty day to be confronted, when the mist cleared, by a German Zeppelin circling Bowdon Hill, apparently having lost its bearings through confusion over the position of the Parish Church and St. Margaret's Church. The trauma of this event was heightened by the fact that most of the people had never previously seen aircraft

This state of affairs was not to last long, however, as Sir Alan Cobham, within the next decade, brought his flying circus to a field near Castle Hill where he gave aeronautical displays and provided "flips for five bob" (25p). Local enthusiasm for flying soon followed through the encouragement of early pioneers such as Harry Killick, John F. Leeming and Lord Egerton of Tatton. The gradual replacement of horse-drawn vehicles by motor cars, after the war, provided opportunities for some ex-servicemen to become chauffeurs and a new category of employee, the chauffeur-gardener, emerged, but the pre- war standards in the larger gardens had disappeared, never to return, and the gradual decline continued with the slump in the inter-war years.

The motorbike also became very popular at this time, and at least two enterprising men set up business selling ex-army stock to the young men of the district, to the great consternation of the local constable, who resorted to hiding in hedges, jumping out at passing motorcyclists, and examining both their machines and their credentials for riding them. Two youths from Bow Green bought a very large machine from a dealer near the Nag's Head (now The Nag), and not being familiar with the mechanism pushed it all the way home, but on the way they were overtaken by the policeman who examined it and threatened to take action as he considered it to be unsafe and not to conform to the requirements of the law. The youths' father, hearing the ensuing argument from his nearby cottage, came out and ordered them to push the machine back again to its place of purchase.

Ownership of motorbikes also led to the mobility of labour and men, no longer tied to their immediate localities, often found it advantageous to accept employment further away from home, often leading them into leaving the district altogether.

Advertisements in the Farmer and Stockbreeder offered jobs with "all found plus £1 per week for a 54 hour week" provided that the successful applicants were "single, competent, clean, hardworking, Christian, non-smokers and total abstainers", and many of the more adventurous young men could not resist such enticements, although members of the National Farmers Union considered these Arcadian conditions to be unnecessarily generous!

One of the local farmhands, wanting to improve his position in life, decided to apply for the job of ploughman to Mr. Newton of Carrington, the grandfather of Canon Maurice Ridgway. Setting off early one morning to walk there he stopped for refreshment at the Saracen's Head at Warburton, to arrive ultimately at his destination in the late afternoon somewhat the worse for drink. There he was confronted by Mr. Newton, an abstemious man, who asked "What is there to recommend you, I haven't seen your testimonials." "No", retorted the man "but I've just heard thine and I'm told thou's a right old B". "Well," replied the farmer, "thou's at least honest, which is the highest quality I could wish of a man", and he engaged him on the spot.

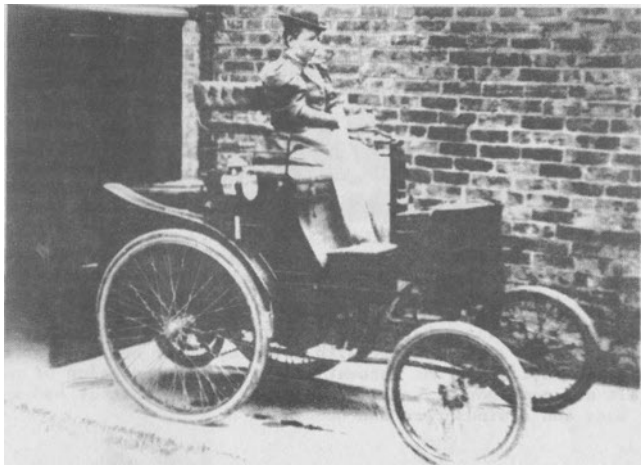
(to be continued)

EARLY MOTOR CARS IN BOWDON
by Alec Okell

Alec Okell, being possessed not only of a photographic memory, but also of a remarkable collection of actual photographs, has made a study of the pioneers of the horseless carriage in Bowdon at the turn of the century. His father Samuel, of 'Overley', Langham Road, was one of those pioneers and Alec writes:

Early in 1896 my father went to the Paris Exhibition and saw, ordered and brought to England a 'HURTU' Horseless Carriage.

It was powered with a 31 hp Benz single-cylinder air-cooled engine made by a company called 'Des Autos et Cycles Hurtu' in Albert on the Somme. My father told me it was probably the first car to be owned in Cheshire. It was a two-seater with tiller steering, wire-wheels with solid rubber tyres.



Samuel Okell's first 'HURTU' car in 1896 with his first wife Mary Ellen or 'Mellie' at the tiller outside 'Overley'.

He also told me that he had owned it for several months before the abolition on 14th November 1896 of the Red Flag' regulations which required a man with such an object on display to precede a horseless carriage and give warning of approach.

My father told me he used to have fairly regular bets with Mr. Willy Evans, who owned the stables on Vicarage Lane and a horse-drawn cab, as to whether the Hurtu would climb Vicarage Lane hill on to Langham Road, Regrettably I do not have any record of the detailed results of these challenges.

Father's second car was another Hurtu, this time a four-seater with back seat passengers facing rearwards; and built under licence in Britain by Belsize. I think it was powered by an Aster 5 hp water-cooled engine which may have been twin or single cylinder. Records indicate that this car must have been bought by my father in 1900 or 1901 Samuel Okell's first 'HURTU' car in 1896 with his first wife Mary Ellen or 'Mellie' at the tiller outside 'Overley'.

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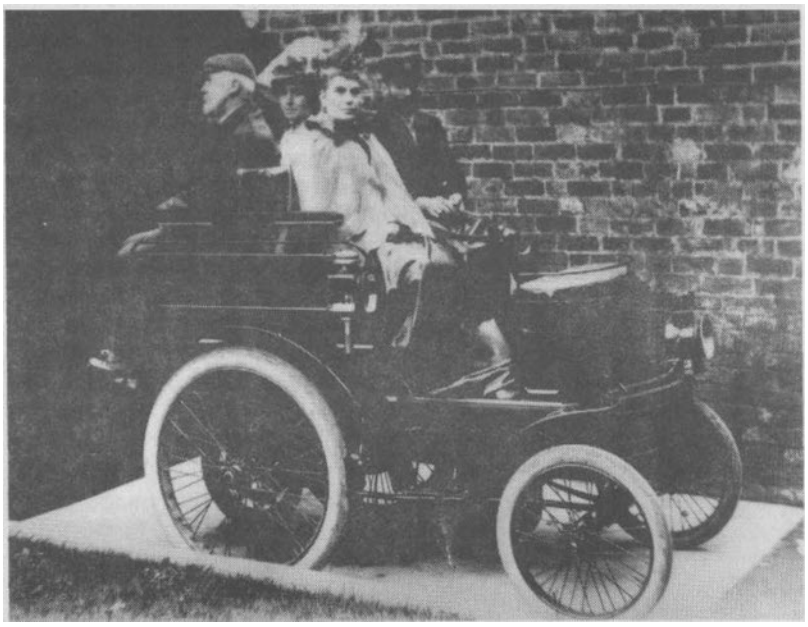
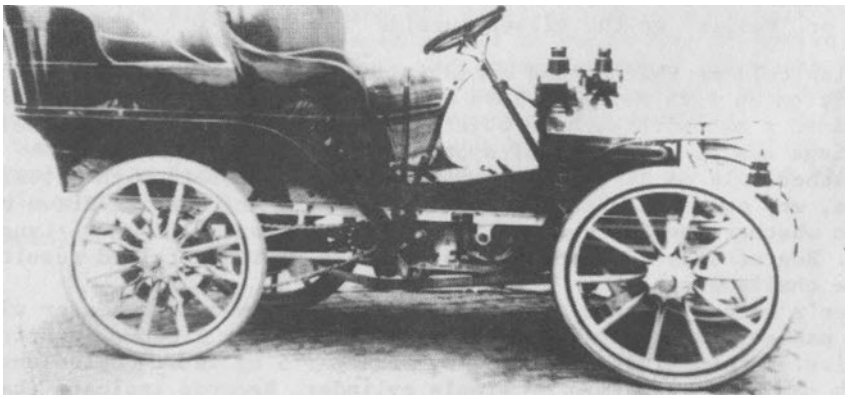
His third car was a 9 hp James & Browne four-seater, driver and passengers all facing forward. It was introduced in 1902 and had two cylinders with transverse crankshaft and flywheel between the cylinders, and a clutch and four-speed gearbox. It was without windscreen or hood and still had wooden wheels with solid rubber tyres, but had wheel, instead of tiller steering.



Samuel Okell's second 'HURTU', circa 1900-02. On the tiller at the front, Alec Okell's half-brother Percy. Beside him Mrs. Coleby. At the rear (foreground) Mr. Coleby, behind him Miss Amy Coleby who was engaged to Percy.

His fourth car (to which he changed the registration number M 16 on 6th March 1908) was a 30 hp Belsize with a six cylinder engine. Probably its most important innovation was the introduction of pneumatic tyres. It was much more like a modern motor car in that it had a 4-5 seater body and a windscreen and hood.



Samuel's third car. The 9 hp James & Browne.

It was eventually fitted with an 'Auster' screen for wind protection of the rear seat passengers who previously had had to comfort themselves with such devices as a large, oval copper tank beneath their feet covered with carpeting and filled with boiling water, plus many rugs, heavy coats, caps and goggles.

One of the intriguing features of the big Belsize was its lubrication system, described to me in detail fairly recently by my cousin Hubert Frith who emigrated to New Zealand in 1927.

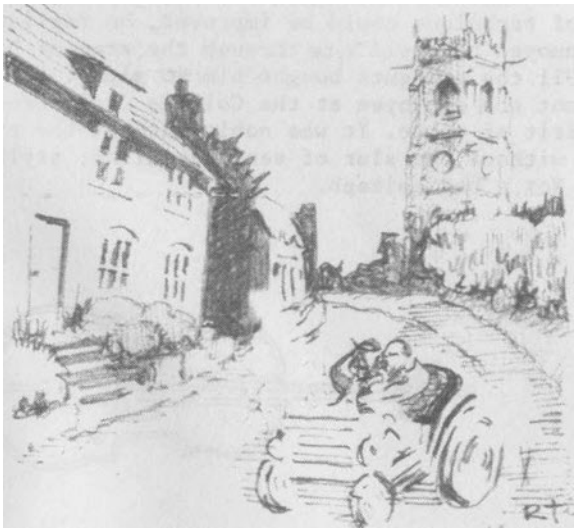
He has told me that from the front seat one could see little chains under a glass cover, hanging from a spindle and dipping into a trough of oil, then wiping drops of oil they collected into the mouths of half a dozen pipes that led to the main engine bearings.

While I was in Singapore in 1953 I heard a radio talk by the Motoring Correspondent of the Straits Times talking about a visit to London during which he had met a veteran motorist who had driven for 50 years, and claiming thereby a record.

I thought that our family could challenge that since my half-brother Arthur Percival Okell, born 1865, died 1959 aged 94, must have driven for 63 years; while his brother Ernest Gordon Okell, born 1868, died 1956 aged 88, must have driven for at least 58 years.

My father's fifth car was a light 'Fafnir' of German origin which he bought second-hand after Bates, our chauffeur, was called up during the 1914-18 war.

My mother was taught to drive it by Charlie Alexander, the Hale garage and taxi owner, but she never mastered the art of reversing. My own driving experience, at an early age, was acquired by driving the Fafnir backwards out of the garage at home and then handing over the controls to mother. In the next issue of The Sheaf Alec Okell will record some of the adventures of other motoring pioneers in Bowdon, including some remarkable ones by members of the Gaddum Family. (to be continued)



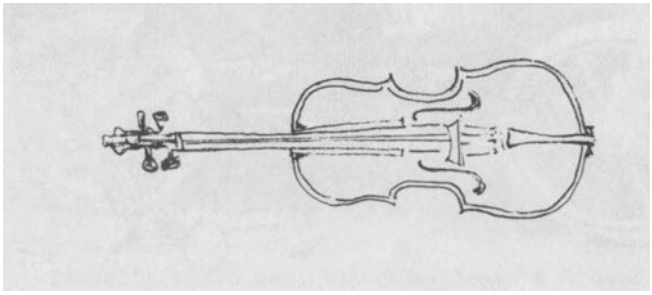
BOWDON'S MUSICAL GIANTS: ADOLPH BRODSKY Part 2
by Michael Kennedy.

One of the first acts Brodsky had performed on arrival in Manchester was to form a string quartet. Its inaugural concert was on 24th February 1896 and it played Haydn, Schumann and Beethoven. The proceeds of the concerts went to the college Sustentation Fund to help needy students and over the 23 years of the quartet's existence over £2,000 was contributed. Critics generally considered Brodsky was at his best in chamber music. His cellist colleague, Carl Fuchs, called Brodsky's playing of the Cavatina in Beethoven's op. 130 "soul-searching", and Neville Cardus thought him the best player he had known in the late Beethoven quartets. "Manchester", he wrote, "will always remember the way Dr. Brodsky would lead his quartet, how he would lie back and give himself up to a noble phrase; how, in a slow movement, you could see his very soul turning upon itself, retiring to the music's peaceful sanctuary".

There was something of the peasant about him, and it is therefore no surprise to learn that he was a much better player of Haydn than of Mozart. He was superb in the Bach concertos. Archie Camden, who often visited him in Bowdon, has left a touching picture of Brodsky's tender devotion to his wife Anna while she was paralysed and bedridden after 1921. He asked her "What would you like me to play?" and she replied "Bach please, Adolph". He was always generous in inviting students and colleagues to his home, often making music with them or just telling them about the musicians and composers he had known. It is touching for the English to know that he reserved his greatest love for Elgar's concerto, playing it "almost daily as other people say their prayers". He would often ask his assistant principal (and eventual successor) R.J. Forbes, another Bowdon resident, to walk over in the evening to play the piano reduction of the orchestral score.

As Principal of the College he was a firm disciplinarian but kindly behind his irascibility. He had a violent temper which was usually aroused by laziness or carelessness. If he thought someone was trying to do their best, then he was helpful, if not .... the door would be flung open and out would come music stand, music, violin, bow and finally pupil. Once he threw the metronome as well and smashed it to bits. He was known to have torn the score of a concerto in half in his rage and once, when asked by a student how a certain form of technique could be improved, he replied curtly "Practise it".

When he was annoyed he would bite through the stem of his pipe. On his 60th birthday in 1911 the students bought him 60 pipes! Let Archie Camden, who was both student and employee at the College under Brodsky, sum him up: "His as a true spirit of music. It was noble without the trappings of nobility; compassionate without the slur of
sentimentality; stylish without extravagant showmanship". Not a bad epitaph.



The Bowdon Sheaf

A BOWDON HISTORY SOCIETY PUBLICATION

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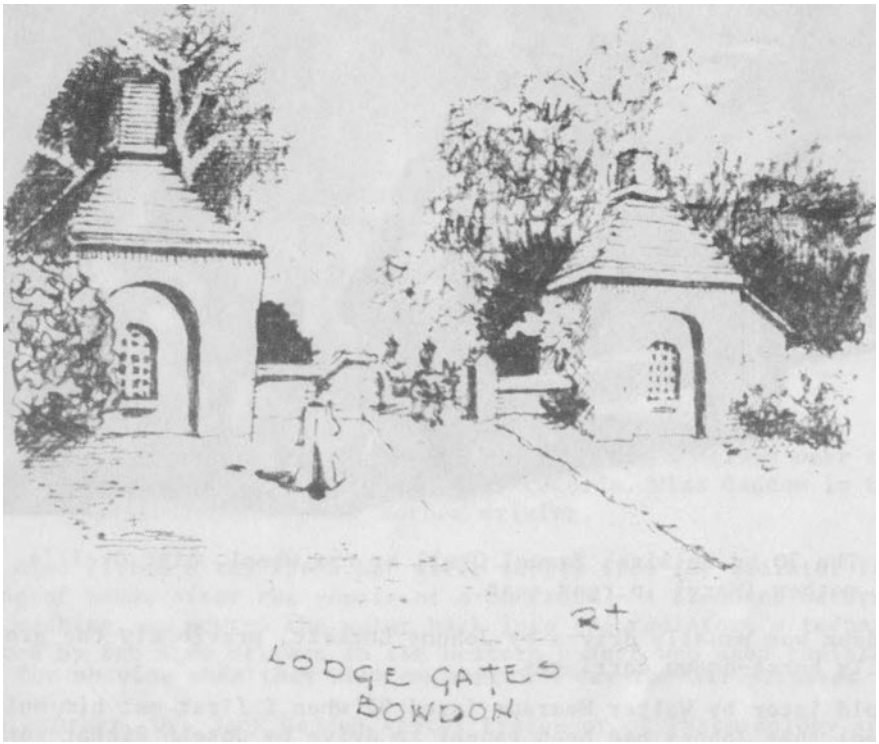


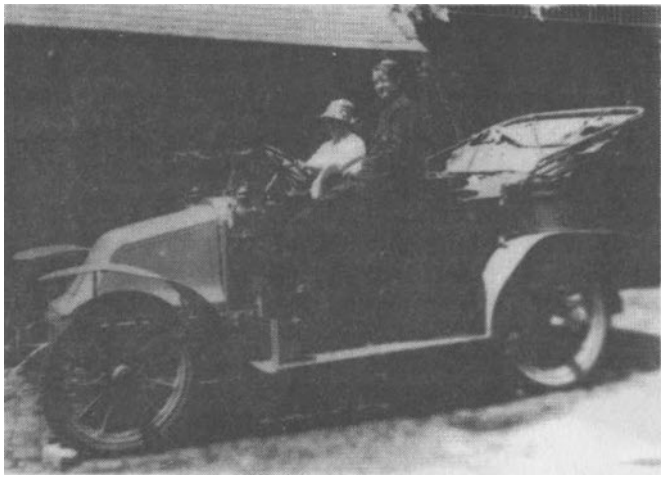
The lodge gates on Dunham Road, Bowdon, demolished by a land mine in 1940, were originally the main entrance to Dunham Massey Hall and bore a resemblance to the existing lodges at Tabley House, Knutsford.

Miss Gaddum's mother had two step-brothers, Will and Ralph (the latter known in the family as Ray) Joynson. Will Joynson went over to Ireland before the 1914/18 war to buy some polo ponies and the vendor 'threw in' a 1908 Renault motor car which he brought back to Bowdon with him.

Joan Gaddum's mother loved to drive this car and all her family were taught to drive in it. Before they had taken possession of it, the log book showed it had been driven over the Khyber Pass. It was equipped with a 'Stepney Wheel' (a device now commonly known as 'the spare'), an acetylene headlight, oil sidelights and rear light. There were no doors, however.

Later Miss Gaddum's brother Peter also acquired a 1906/7 Renault with doors and windscreen and mounted on it a mechanical windscreen wiper of his own design powered by a child's windmill toy.

I can myself, remember treating the external face of the windscreen in rain with soap or a sliced potato. (This is still a good tip in the event of failure of the now legally required double windscreen wipers and washers in freezing conditions. I am told the technique is still often used by explorers and NATO military drivers taking part in Arctic exercises, when all modern technology fails, as apparently it still does).



The Gaddums' 1908 Renault, which had been driven over the Khyber Pass, according to its records. Miss Gaddum in the passenger seat, her mother driving.

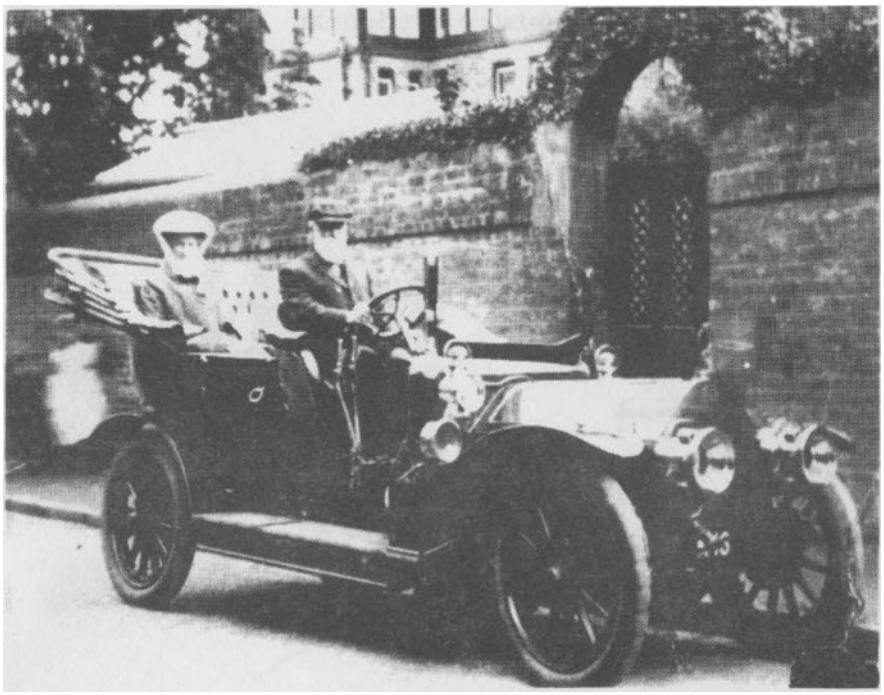
Peter also fitted a tap for a hot water supply from the radiator for the washing of hands after the repair of a puncture - a frequent occurrence. After washing, one poured the water back into the radiator, a technique repeated by 8th Army drivers in the Western Desert who used radiator hot water for shaving when they were on a-pint-a-day-for-all purposes ration. Joan's brother, Dr. Jack Gaddum (later Professor of Pharmacology and knighted) also had a pre-war Renault, from which the radiator cap was missing. He improvised by fitting a large laboratory cork with two holes drilled in it, but on occasion was heard to shout: “Look out. It's going to boil.” When it did, all of them received a hot water shower.

EARLY MOTOR CARS IN BOWDON: 2
by Alec Okell

After compiling details of his father's early motor cars (published in the last issue of The Sheaf) Alec Okell realised he knew comparatively little about other early vehicles in the district and started to research among contacts he had in local garages and other places.

Among his early sources of information was Miss Joan Gaddum of Braeside, Hall Road, Bowdon, whose grandfather Henry Theodore Gaddum, had built 'Oakley' in Green Walk,Bowdon and who had had the first telephone installed in the Altrincham area with the number 'Altrincham 1'.

Alec goes on to write: Henry Theodore Gaddum died in 1905 but his widow,Mrs. Elizabeth Gaddum bought and registered as M 2420 on 15th July 1909 an Austin 18/24 hp Landaulette (with opening rear roof section) which was painted green, the most fashion- able colour of the time for motorcars.



The 30 hp Belsize, Samuel Okell at the wheel. Alec Okell's mother (Mary) in rear seat.

Mrs. Gaddum was usually driven by Johnny Lockett, previously the groom of the family horse-drawn carriages.

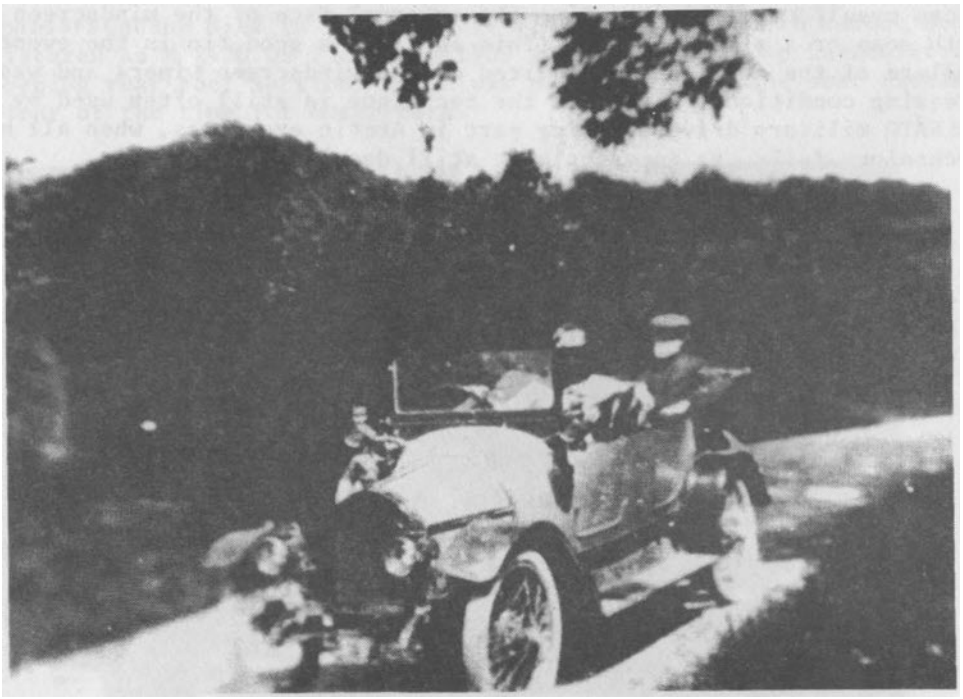
I was told later by Walter Hearsum (aged 97 when I first met him only three years ago) that Johnny had been taught to drive by Joseph Richardson of Unity Buildings, Market Street, Altrincham and later of Unity Garage, Dunham Road, but that Johnny had never really mastered the art of changing gear.

However Johnny Lockett remained Mrs. Gaddum's chauffeur and with him driving she often used to visit her son Harry, with his family, at the Priory, Bowdon.

Alec Okell has compiled records of many early cars registered in Cheshire, and particularly in Bowdon.

His references include a list of 70 cars and motorcycles registered from 14th December, 1903 - this being the first date for the compulsory registration of cars in the County of Cheshire.

His records include the registrations of four cars owned by the Duke of Westminster: of perhaps the first steam wagon made by Fodens of Sandbach, and of a 10 hp motor car (M 612) owned by Mr. Frederick Henry Royce of Knutsford, who later joined forces with the Honorable C. S. Rolls to create history.



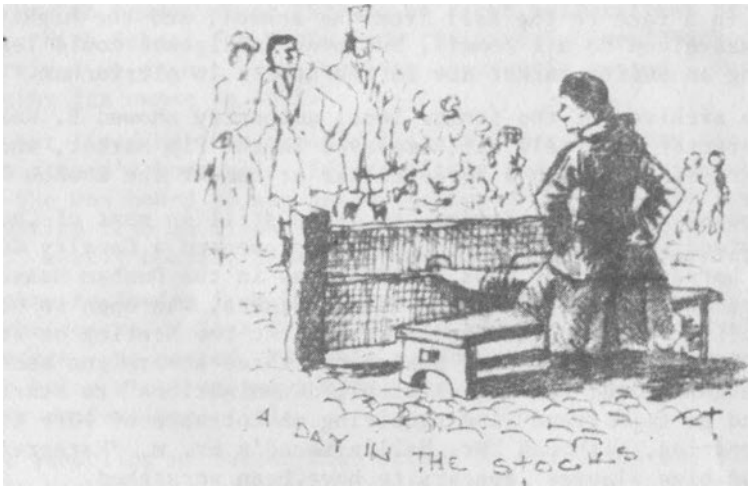
The light 'Fafnir', believed to be of German origin, which was Samuel Okell's fifth car. Alec's mother driving, apparently with panache, father adopting a relaxed attitude, perhaps for the benefit of the photographer.

(Readers of the Bowdon Sheaf with an interest in photography may have been interested in the clarity of some of the prints accompanying Alec Okell's articles. His father, Samuel, was not only a pioneer of motor cars but a keen photographer as well. The prints have been restored from a collection of his original glass negatives).

RURAL BOWDON: 3
by Ronald Trenbath

Earlier this century there was a marked difference between the dress of countrymen and that of townspeople, and there are many still living who can remember local farmers in working dress which consisted of voluminous breeches made from strong "Drills, Bedfords, Whipcords, Tweeds or Corduroys, to measure at 10/6d (52p) post free" purchased through the post from Hebden Cord Co, and worn with leather gaiters, strong leather boots, waistcoats and shirts with detachable hard collars but no ties.

For more auspicious occasions, such as visits to the cattle auction, they would often wear well-cut breeches with matching jackets and caps from Speachleys in Market Street, Altrincham. Farm workers, on the other hand, wore corduroy trousers purchased from Bradleys, tied at the knee with twine, and at milking time khaki-coloured milking slops were often used as a matter of hygiene.



Saturday evenings, one is told, were a sight to be seen when the men put on their best Sunday suits to take their girlfriends dancing at the Stamford Arms, or the annual Harvest Home Supper at the Egerton Hall, Rostherne when, no matter what the time of the year, they always managed to wear button-holes in their lapels.

Entertainment at this time would probably seem most unsophisticated to most of us today, but with very long working hours, no holidays, poor communications and very insular environments, the whole concept of leisure was different from the idea of people now. Work, though physically more arduous, was less stressful and many rural workers grew up content with a life where the division between work and leisure was far less Distinct than it is now, and a casual discussion with a neighbour during the course of the day could fulfil the requirements of social intercourse which produced the strong and interesting sub-cultures found in rural areas in the past.

Some men joined the Cheshire Yeomanry in order to get a respite in a different part of the county once a year, but otherwise people in rural communities rarely travelled beyond their local towns, and so it would be with very great enthusiasm that a circus would be welcomed when it camped at Bow Green, or a Fair when it arrived in Altrincham, and events such as the Hunt, the Races and the Wakes were almost sacrosanct in the county calendar. Altrincham provided entertainment through its many public houses, the Electric Kinema and the Hippodrome Theatre (now Studio One), which presented repertory and music hall. One farmer in Bow Green would always return early from the fields on a Saturday afternoon, saying that he was "going howt and 'aving a h'early tea" prior to a night in town, as it was known then. The village Wakes were a very old institution in Cheshire, with religious connections involving cleaning grave stones, tidying churchyards and laying fresh flowers prior to more festive activities including cock fighting, bear baiting, wrestling, archery and chasing slippery pigs, followed by the roasting of an ox.

Bowdon Wakes Races were particularly exciting, and the one in 1837 lasted for three days with a wheelbarrow race for 5/- (25p) by lads of all ages, hen racing, hurdle racing, a foot race for women, and a grinning competition. Barley hump, a hard-baked barley bread, was given at Dunham Hall to all children competing in a race to the Hall from the school, and the highly- potent Dunham ale was given to all comers, but over indulgence could lead to the culprit spending an entire market day in the stocks in Altrincham. A photograph in the archives of the former local authority showed P. Weazle. a small, impish character in a tall hat, employed in the Pig Market, who won the prize for grinning through a horse collar at one of the Bowdon Wakes. Racing was a very popular sport in Bowdon, as it is still in most of Cheshire, and an Earl of Stamford in the nineteenth century presented a Cavalry Cup for a race open to horses owned by NCOs and Privates in the Dunham Massey Squadron at Chester, and another race, the Hunter Stakes, was open to horses hunted in the Cheshire Hounds or Trafford Harriers. At the Meeting on Friday 29th September, 1843, the Dunham Massey Stakes of "three sovereigns each with fifteen sovereigns added, for horses of all denominations" to start at the "Bowdon turn and go twice round" and requiring an Entrance of 10/- (50p) was run with four entries, although "Mr. Hollingshead's br. m. 'Maragret' aged .... yellow and blue sleeves" appears to have been scratched.

The Altrincham Stakes were also run on that day for the same prize money but were "over hurdles not less than 3ft 6ins high (1.066m) with heats three times round and a distance" for an Entrance of 5/- (25p) in which five horses were entered but "Mr Atkinson's b.m. 'Lady of the Lake', orange and blue" also appears to have been scratched. The race card noted that the Ladies Purse of five sovereigns was "added to a Handicap Sweepstake of one sovereign each, for the beaten horses at this meeting, to name after the heat for the Dunham Massey Stakes. Heats twice round and a distance. Entrance 5/- three to start or the money added would not be given".

No doubt these races attracted large attendances from the local gentry and their guests in their four-in-hands and coaches, local merchants, farmers, farm hands, bookies, vendors, race-card sellers, pedlars, entertainers, sharpers and vagrants. Farm lorries were often drawn up beside the course for use as viewing platforms by the families and friends of the farmers who owned them, and the judges' coach would be stationed in a prominent position to view all the course.

A rider in his coloured tunic and cap would not take the jumps leaning forwards, as one would do today, but bolt upright with right arm raised in a stiff, unnatural position.

The venue for these races is often in dispute, Racefield near St. Margaret's Church is one obvious place, and it is known that most of the principal races of the district were run at Hale Moss, but it might be thought that the other races might be run in different places each year according to the availability of the fields, as often happens with point-to-points today. Although local racing ceased many years ago it is felt, by many local inhabitants, that it was revived in spirit when the Cheshire Forest Hunt recently transferred the point-to-point to Tatton.

AN EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY BOWDONIAN
by Myra Kendrick

Miss Mary Howes Smith lived at 2 Sunny Bank, Stamford Road, from about 1913 until her death in December 1950.

She came to Bowdon about 1910 to be first headmistress of the newly formed County High School for Girls (now the Girls' Grammar School). Where she lived on arrival we do not know, but she apparently rented 2 Sunny Bank before becoming its owner in 1921. With her lived her housekeeper Eliza and her Sealyham dog Toby. Eliza controlled her mistress's household affairs firmly and had considerable influence over her. She was heard to say authoritatively to the headmistress, who was recovering from an illness: "Get out of that draught, Miss Howes Smith!" and "H.S." meekly obeyed, though by no means a meek character.

She came to Bowdon from London at about the age of forty, but was born at sea off the coasts of Nova Scotia, where her father, a colonel in the Royal Engineers, was posted. For this reason she claimed to have no nationality. Smith being a not uncommon name, she adopted her second name, Howes, as part of her professional title.

After schooling at Sutton High School in the 1880s and 90s a gap in her known career was perhaps accounted for by family responsibilities, for she entered Newnham College, Cambridge, at the late age of twenty-nine. In 1903 she gained her Historical Tripos, but being a woman, was not admitted to a degree until 1948, when the ban on feminine graduation at Cambridge was removed. This explains why on the High School notice board in Cavendish Road she used the degree M.A., Trinity College, Dublin, for which degree she would have to pay on giving evidence of qualification.

After seven years of teaching and lecturing in London, she came to Bowdon a highly experienced woman, equipped to shape and form the new County High School. As the school in its early years had a preparatory department admitting little boys as well as girls, her local influence was widespread. An unusual feature of Miss Howes Smith's career was her appointment, during her London years, to be History and English tutor to King George V's only daughter, Princess Mary, later the Princess Royal. This continued into the Bowdon years, as after her coming north, classes for the princess and her friends were arranged for Saturdays and Miss Howes Smith travelled from Bowdon to London each weekend until this task was completed.

So it was that the Princess Royal came to Bowdon. Learning that on a visit to Chester, her former governess, with whom she still corresponded, would be within easy reach, she asked to see the school. For many girls and some small boys this was an unforgettable occasion. The Princess spent the night at Dunham Massey Hall, where Miss Howes Smith was a dinner guest, too - not for the first time, as her lively and charming personality made her welcome. Miss Howes Smith was very much part of the Bowdon community. She was a devoted worshipper at the Parish Church. From the inception of the League of Nations Union she was an enthusiastic supporter and instilled a similar enthusiasm into some at least of her pupils. She was also a member of the Sixty Club. Her local friends included the Johnson sisters, Lorna and Gladys, from the Firs: the Johnson Prizes awarded at the High School were in memory of Lorna.

Among Miss Howes Smith's local activities was membership of the Copec Housing Committee, which sought to provide good housing in Bowdon Vale at reasonable rents. Of this committee Mr. Charles Syers was secretary; Mr. F.B. Dunkerley, the honorary architect of the Vale houses, and Mr. G. Faulkner Armitage, were fellow members, and it was chaired by Mr. J. Goodier Haworth. The project comprised sixteen houses, still to be seen; application for tenancy soon greatly exceeded availability.

After retiring from her headship in 1933, Miss Howes Smith lived on at Sunny Bank for another seventeen, years. Her love of the school and the neighbourhood kept her there: then the threat of the second world war provided another motive She felt she must keep a refuge in case of invasion for a sister living in the south.

So at the beginning of the postwar era, this lively, intelligent woman with her floating garments, pince-nez on a chain, long links of beads and her keen interest in people, was still part of the Bowdon scene.



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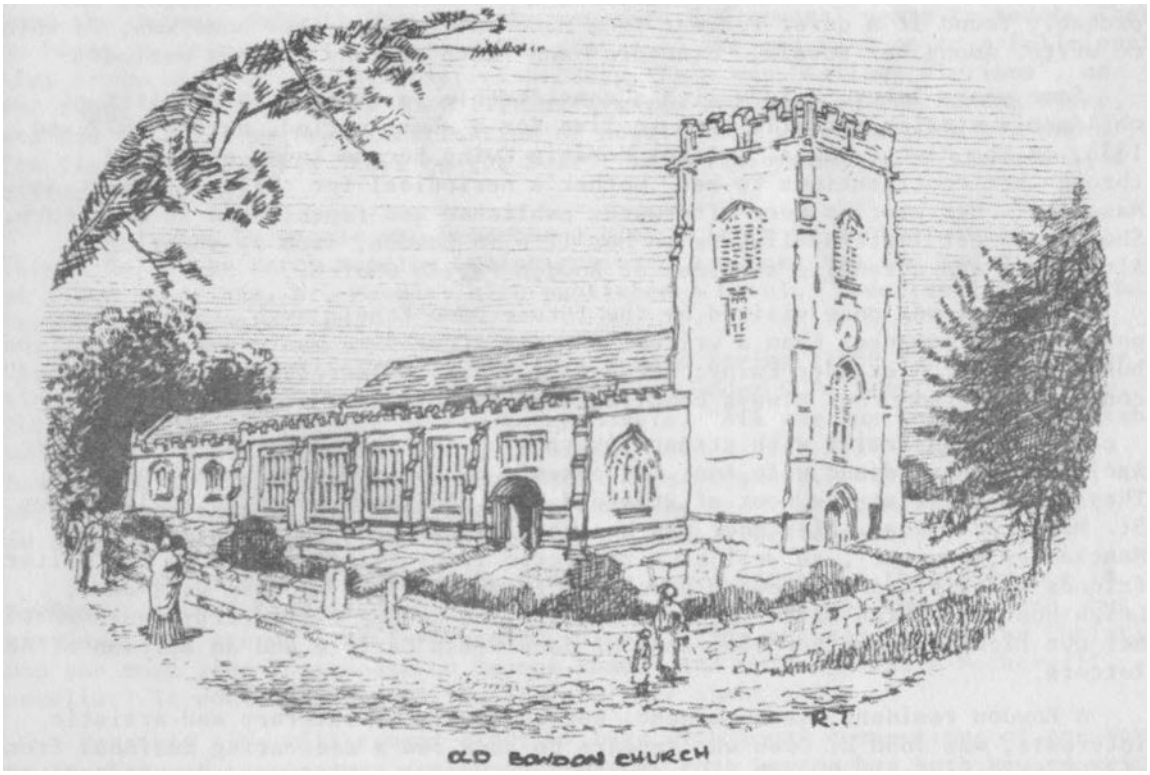

A sketch of Bowdon Church from the north based upon a survey drawing undertaken in 1858 showing the Romanesque (Norman) doorway.

BOWDON AND THE LITERARY WORLD
by Myra Kendrick

Bowdon has had its links with literary stars of varying degrees of brightness for at least one hundred and fifty years.

The earliest known such writer is William Harrison Ainsworth, a once popular Manchester historical novelist, best known for such romances as "Windsor Castle" and "Old St. Paul's". Ainsworth had family connections with Rostherne which he obviously visited often, and two of his novels, "Rookwood" (1834) and "Mervyn Clitheroe" (1858), show how well acquainted he was with nearby Bowdon and Dunham Massey. "Rookwood" introduces an episode in the career of the highwayman Dick Turpin, set in a shady spot near the river Bollin, and several events in "Mervyn Clitheroe" are clearly linked with Bowdon under a feigned name.

In the 1850s a woman novelist whose work is weathering better than Ainsworth's had close connections with Bowdon, Elizabeth Cleghorn Gaskell had been visiting here before her marriage, but evidence of frequent visits during the fifties, after the birth of her four daughters, is to be found in her letters. In these she writes graphically of the children's staying at Moss Farm, the home of the Walker family. Sometimes she herself stayed the night, and probably found it a quiet retreat from Manchester, where her home was , in which to write Among her novels, "Cranford" and "Ruth" belong to this period. Some years later, a lady with a considerable reputation as a writer of children's stories actually came to live for a short period, during 1877 and 1878, on the Higher Downs. Juliana Horatia Ewing became known and loved through her contributions to her mother's periodical for children, "Aunt Judy's Magazine". Her stories were afterwards published and republished in book form. She, too, left letters alluding to her life in Bowdon, such as shopping in Altrincham and attending services at Bowdon Parish Church.

Her house was once visited by the future Dame Ethel Smyth, better known perhaps as a composer than a writer. She was a one-time music pupil of Juliana's husband, Major Alexander Ewing; her autobiography, "Impressions that Remained" contains references not always complimentary to Juliana. A Victorian family with strong literary connections was that of Alexander Ireland and his second wife Ann, the parents of the composer John Ireland. They lived first at the foot of Stamford Road and later moved to Inglewood on St. Margaret's Road. Alexander was business manager and publisher of "The Manchester Examiner", as well as a respected literary critic. Among the writer friends who visited his Bowdon home were Thomas Carlyle and his wife Jane, Leigh Hunt and Ralph Waldo Emerson. Ann Ireland became a literary figure in her own right through her biography of Jane Welsh Carlyle and an edition of her Letters.

A Bowdon resident, less eminent, but obviously of literary and artistic interests, was John L. Owen who appears to have run a decorating business from the White Cottage on Church Brow. In 1873 he had a book of verse published by the Manchester firm John Heywood's. This volume was dedicated to the Cheshire (not Bowdon) poet Lord de Tabley, contains memorial verses to Archdeacon Pollock, late Vicar of Bowdon, and refers to a book of poems recently published by Dr. Pollock himself.

The twentieth century has had its resident writers too. It is remarkable that a second woman writer for children, Alison Uttley, also lived for some years 1924 to 1938, on the Higher Downs, actually writing her first Little Grey Rabbit books there. Mrs Uttley is said to have believed that she lived in the house previously rented by the Ewings, but modern research places the two writers next door to each other.

A contemporary of hers was John F. Leeming, whose book "The Garden Grows", an account of the creation of his own garden at the house he called "Owlpen", off South Downs Road, was published in 1935 and made great local impact. This many-sided Bowdonian, business man, aviator, novelist and gardener, won praise from P.G. Wodehouse for his comic novel "It Always Rains in Rome" (1960). He wrote books about delphinium-growing and flying and a story intended for the young, "Claudius the Bee", (1936). The naturalist T.A. Coward was born in Bowdon, and for over thirty years lived in Grange Road. He belonged to the tradition of naturalists whose works in their chosen field are so well written that they can be read with sheer pleasure. Such are his "Birds of the British Isles and their Eggs", published by Warne in 1920, the popular "Picturesque Cheshire" (1903) and his nature notes appearing in "The Manchester Guardian" for thirty-odd years.

A living dramatist, Ronald Gow, although not born in Bowdon, in childhood and youth lived successively at Bank House, Goose Green, Altrincham, Stamford Road and Portland Road. His schooling was wholly local:at Culcheth Hall kindergarten, Miss Wallace's and finally at Altrincham High School for Boys (now the Grammar School), to which he returned for several years to teach. There he began to write short plays for his pupils to act and went on to a full-length play produced by Altrincham Garrick Society. This was "Gallows Glorious", on the theme of "John Brown's Body". It afterwards appeared on the London stage, and was followed by the dramatisation of novels with which he made his name. The first of these was "Love on the Dole", in collaboration with the novelist Walter Greenwood.

There will be people who remember a play written by another local man, "Eight Bells" by Percy Mandley, which achieved a success on the radio forty or fifty years ago. Mr. Mandley also published a novel, "Madeline", set in the French Revolution period.

The popular novelist and journalist Howard Spring (1889 to 1965), at one time on the staff of the "Manchester Guardian" under C.P. Scott's editorship, introduced Bowdon into one of his later novels, "All the Day Long!". The Cornish heroine of this story comes with her brother and sister Bella to stay with a Bowdon family in a large family house he names Grosmont. Both topographical and architectural features suggest that the house he had in mind might be Denzell in Green Walk. Bella marries the son of the fictitious owner.

A slighter connection with the literary world occurs in the residence in Bowdon of Arthur Ransome, M.D.; not the author of "Swallows and Amazons", but his uncle. We are on less firm ground in mentioning the name of Agatha Christie. Did she once live in a house on Grange Road? And who was Jessie Fothergill, novelist? It would be interesting to know more about these.

Possibly time will reveal other writers with local connections of one sort or another yet these names are enough to show that Bowdon has both housed writers of some reputation and attracted others to write about it even if under a disguised name.

EDMUNDS FIELD: THE ORIGIN OF A BOWDON FIELD-NAME?

by Marjorie Cox

Edmunds Field, of about four acres, is No. 113 on the Bowdon Tithe Map of 1838 and lies east of Street Head farm and cottages and on the north side of Bow Green Road as it runs westward to the Chester Road. Its owner was the Earl of Stamford and at that date the arable field was leased to William Warburton, Senior. The origins of many Bowdon field names have been traced by J. McN. Dodgson *The Place Names of Cheshire* in but not that of Edmunds Field. What follows is a suggested origin of the name, which may not be capable of proof, only of probability, but at least brings to light a gentleman farmer of Bowdon under the later Stuarts whose agricultural improvements became known throughout England.

Among the wills of inhabitants of Bowdon from the sixteenth century onwards which are kept at the Cheshire Record Office is that of John Edmunds, gentleman, of Bowdon, made on 2nd March 1713 and proved at Chester on 23rd October 1714. One of the executors of the will was John Edmunds' 'loveing brother' (often used for brother-in-law), Nathaniel Banne, Rector of the very newly opened St. Ann's Church in Manchester, whose sister, Elizabeth Edmunds had married in 1692. John Edmunds left most of his lands to his son, George, but he left three fields in Bowdon to provide £20 a year for his 'dear wife', who also received his silver tankard and watch. These were 'the fields called Bowdon Eye, Green Eye and Bank Meadow', eye meaning island. The Tithe Map shows the first two down near the Bollin; 'Bank Meadow' does not exist, but there is a Bank Field near the Ashley township boundary on the east; all, like Edmunds Field, then belonged to the Earl of Stamford.

Though these facts about John Edmunds may be of interest, why might he have given his name to a field? I think the answer may lie in a book by John Mortimer F.R.S., *The Whole Art of Husbandry* published first in 1707 and into its fifth edition in 1721. Chapter Vlll of the fifth edition is entitled 'Of Sand' and contains 'An Account from Mr John Edmonds of Bowden in Cheshire, of his improving of Land by Sand', an improvement made in the late seventeenth Century.

His Land, he says, was Marsh-land, very flat and full of Rushes, of a black deep Mould, such as they dig Turf in; upon which Land he laid six hundred Cart-load of Sand upon a Cheshire Acre, which is near double the Statute Acre. This Sand is digged on Bowdon Downs, which is a red hot Sand of a small Grain, lying under a sandy Soil of about a spit deep, that bears nothing but Fern and a short Grass which burns away in Summer, being good Busk-wheat Land; and laying of the Sand so thick, without plowing of the Land up, he sowed it with Oats and Fitches, which yielded an extraordinary Crop. The next Winter he dunged it well with Dung, and had the Summer after fourteen loads of Hay upon an Acre. 'Tis now, he says, twenty-four Years since he sanded it first, and he has not dunged it since; and the Lard that before was not worth ten Shillings an Acre, he can now let for six Pounds, and could have two Crops of Grass upon it every Year, if he could be sure of fair Weather to make it in.

He says likewise, that he improved some of the same sort of Land by plowing of it up with a Breast-plough, and burning of it, and spreading of the Ashes while hot, and plowing of them u p , and sowing of them as soon as possibly, he could. This Land he sowed twice with

Barley, and the third Year with Oats, and then it was so soft that he could not plow it any more, which obliged him to lay it down; and he had extraordinary Grass on it for three or four Years, and then it began to run over with Rushes again, which occasion'd him to repeat burning of it again, and it had the same effect as before.

He says also, that in their Country (County) many make very great Improvement of their Lands, by laying on them the Crumbs which are scattered in digging of the Turf that they burn, which is very good for all sorts of binding Clay Lands, especially such as are overtadned (fattened) with Marie; and the Land which, he says, they dig for Turf, is extraordinary Land for Potatoes.

Mortimer's book is described in the *Dictionary of National Biography* as 'a landmark in English agricultural literature' and as having 'largely influenced husbandry in the nineteenth century'. Given this, it seems to me quite likely that John Edmunds' fame as an improving gentleman farmer might well have been perpetuated in the name of a field in Bowdon. It remains to be discovered if this field was one he himself had on lease from the Earl of Stamford and possibly, even, the subject of his experiment.

RURAL BOWDON: 4
by Ronald Trenbath

From earliest times Field Sports have been the main pastime of the gentry, with the peasantry participating in a different capacity, but most of these sports are now socially unacceptable and in many cases illegal. In the first instance these activities developed out of the primitive necessity of obtaining food, and the skills required became the subject of competition, so that one partook of activities such as hunting and shooting to test one's prowess rather than to acquire replenishment for the larder. The hunting of deer and boar were the earliest sports, and laws were enacted to make the hunting of deerthe exclusive right of the king and his court, and the contravening of these regulations provided for the death penalty in the case of anyone killing deer, and maiming for anyone attempting to do so. The wealth of a baron could be calculated by the number of parks licensed to him.

The original definition of a park was an enclosed area of land used for hunting by kings and nobles, and at Dunham Massey Hall one of the oldest deer parks exists, which originally provided entertainment for royalty and nobility. Stags were chased by hounds followed by horsemen, but in the Victorian era it became fashionable in many parks to rear hound puppies and deer calves together, and when mature the stags would be chased by hounds in a form of play, in which they were not hurt, to provide a romp enjoyed by all parties.

Cock fighting was popular locally, and very well-preserved cages, of a sophisticated design, for housing and tending game cocks may be seen in a brick arcaded cloister at the Home Farm today. Hawking is also an ancient skill which is still practised in the area and demonstrations are often given, particularly at events such as the Game Fairs held at Tatton Park.

Fishing and angling could be accommodated at the great fish pond adjacent to the Home Farm, and in the Bollin and Birkin rivers, although these temporarily ceased to function as fish reserves due to pollution.

Fox hunting, however, has remained as a controversial activity, with a great following in Cheshire, although it ceased to take place locally prior to living memory, which may account for the increase in the fox population north of the Bollin.

The seventh Earl, however, was a very keen huntsman and meets took place regularly at Dunham Massey Hall where magnificent stables of great architectural character provided for the well being and comfort of the hunters. Shooting was, and still is, a popular local sport, although the sophisticated facilities of game preservation of former times have declined and only rough shooting is practised today. Nevertheless, at the height of its popularity two shoots operated in the area, one at Dunham Massey for the Earls of Stamford, and the other at Bow Green for the Ecclesiastical authorities, which was leased to local sporting gentlemen.

Woodlands were planted such as Headman's Covert, Watch Hill Covert and Hanging Bank Covert to provide cover for partridge and pheasants while protected areas were reserved for rearing pens, and grouse was shot over the marches. Harry Johnson was the gamekeeper in Bow Green for many years and lived in the large brick house now known as West Bank Farm, and his grandson, after recuperating from wounds in the first World War, prospered and eventually became proprietor of the shoot. Shooting parties were organised and it was considered a very great honour when a young man was invited to take part. Lunch was an important feature of a shoot and competitions were organised by Shooting Times for wives who produced the best menus, but alcohol was very often prohibited at this stage.

Beaters were engaged from the local labour force who were well fed and recompensed for their labours, and an enjoyable time would be had by all, but on one occasion the local policeman was invited for a day's shooting with very serious consequences when he himself was accidentally shot! 'Siah (Josiah) Goodyear from Street Head Farm was a crack shot who would aim at a rabbit within two yards of a colleague and kill the animal without harming anyone else, but it was always a very nerve-wracking experience.

A pony and trap was sent to collect the game at the end of the day when tea was served, this time with a addition of alcohol, to be followed by the playing of cards into the early hours of the morning.

On New Year's Eve it was customary for local men to go ferreting in the woods adjacent to Castle Hill. This was a very skilled and exciting activity which is still practised, as the writer of this article found when a stray ferret took up residence in his kennels one night recently to the annoyance of his Labradors.

In the mid-nineteenth century books were written to instruct aspiring country gentlemen on the finer points of running a shoot, and great emphasis was placed on the discipline of the keepers and the need to regulate their remuneration in relation to their performance, and on the necessity of limiting the amount of poultry kept at their homes so that corn for game was not diverted to hens.

Long descriptions were given of poachers in order that they might be recognised and apprehended, and one learned that these characters were rough rascals readily noticeable by their uncouth appearance and behaviour. A copy of one such book was available for many years in Altrincham Library.

The poacher was, in fact, a menacing character, unlike the romantic notions so often held about him, and according to Richard Jefferies, writing in 1879, far from being "an idle, hang-dog ne'er-do-well" he was "to all appearances (an) industrious individual, working steadily during the day at some handicraft (being) a somewhat reserved, solitary workman of superior intelligence".

Local poachers tended to work in gangs and a poachers' depot was located, after Mr. Johnson's retirement, in an outbuilding adjacent to the stables at the back of West Bank Farm, which acted as a refuge, meeting place and a storage for equipment such as nets, pegs , traps and snares. The gin-traps, most commonly used, were very cruel and two maiden ladies, the Misses Chadwick, used to visit the coverts regularly to destroy the traps and leave notes to the effect that the owners of them should be thoroughly ashamed of themselves.



The poachers were adept at disappearing through fields and gardens at night no matter how closely they were followed by police or keepers, and from their depot they had a large area at their disposal in which to operate, including Tatton Park. Large nets were used for catching rabbit and smaller ones were used for hares, but one night in Tatton Park they accidentally netted a stag and were annoyed when it ruined their net.

One poacher, called Bowker, bred his own strain of lurchers, which he named Bedlington-Whippets, as they were a cross between Bedlington terriers and whippets. Those which he retained for his own use were, sent to a trainer who specialised in training dogs for poaching, which included the ability to sniff out gamekeepers and hide when the occasion arose.

After poaching the men would return to the depot, store their equipment, arrange their "bag" and remain hidden until dawn when they would mingle with workers reporting for work in the town. Several local dealers were only too pleased to purchase game at an advantageous price, with no questions asked, and many of the poachers were quite well paid until they were caught. Of almost equal annoyance as the poachers, to the keepers, were the local youths who played pranks on them and lured them into embarrassing situations at night, a pastime which some Bowdon residents today may remember participating in when they were young.

Accidents did occur, and there was the incident many years ago in which John Henshall was wrongly hanged, in connection with a fatal accident involving a gamekeeper, on the perjured evidence of another keeper, called Wilson, and a poacher who turned King's Evidence.

The outcry which followed when Henshall's body was put on show outside the Griffin Inn resulted in Perrin, the poacher, being forced to flee the district and Wilson drowning in the Bollin, at New Bridge Hollow, under mysterious circumstances.



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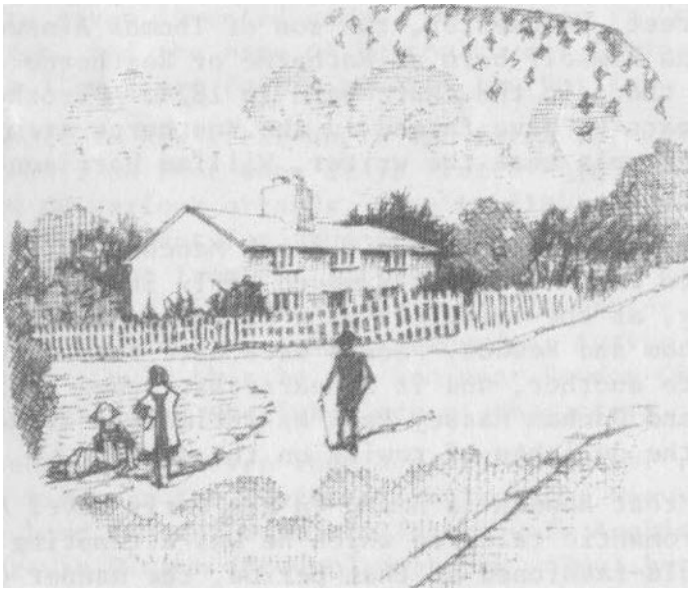


These cottages were probably called after Shepherd's Lane, the previous name of Park Road, but local romantics at one time insisted that they were named after Shepherd, the London Highwayman, although it is doubtful if he ever came so far north. Harrison Ainsworth wrote about his exploits in one of his London novels.

W. HARRISON AINSWORTH
A VICTORIAN NOVELIST'S PORTRAYAL OF BOWDON
by Myra Kendrick.

Bowdon has, rather unexpectedly, played a part in two novels by a writer who was once a best-seller. William Harrison Ainsworth (1805-1882) enjoyed great popularity as an historical novelist, of a rather sensational nature, from the 1830s until well into the present century. *Old St Pauls* about the great plague and fire of London of the 1660s, The *Tower of London* having as a central figure the famous Tower prisoner Lady Jane Grey , ancestress of the Greys of Dunham Massey, and *Windsor Castle* with its use of the Heme the Hunter legend, among others long kept their vogue. Of special interest to readers in north-west England are *The Lancashire Witches*, focussed on Pendle Hill in north Lancashire and the villages at its foot, and *Guy Fawkes* with its Manchester references: the old Seven Stars Inn near the Collegiate Church , Ordsall Hall, the home of the Catholic Radcliffe family, friends of Fawkes' Chat Moss , across the treacherous surface of which Fawkes and his companions escaped from their pursuers, and the dignified figure of Humphrey Chetham, founder of Chetham's Hospital. Coming nearer home , Ainsworth describes how he himself looked down on the bogland of Chat Moss from the heights of Dunham and later in the novel des patches some of his characters on a pilgrimage to Holywell via Knutsford and Chester.

For the Ainsworths were a north-west family. William Harrison was born in King Street, Manchester , the son of Thomas Ainsworth , a Manchester solicitor who was himself born at Rostherne or Rosthorne in Cheshire in 1778 and buried there in the churchyard in 1824. A brother of Thomas Ainsworth' s appears to have farmed in the Rostherne area and it is evident from two of his novels that the writer, William Harrison , visited his relations frequently. This would mean that from his north Manchester boyhood home in the Cheetham are a, to which his family moved early in his life , he would often make the journey, at the leisurely pace of horse and foot transport, through Altrincham and Bowdon. People were used then to walking many miles from one place to a not h e r, and it appears that young William knew his way to Bowdon hill and Dunham Massey Park as intimately as he did Rostherne churchyard and the delights of rowing on the mere.

So it is that Bowdon is named in his early novel *Rookwood* (1834), a deliberately romantic tale, in which he was attempting to write in a manner already old-fashioned at that period, the manner of Mrs. Radcliffe, familiar to the modern reader through Jane Austen's delightful parody in *Northanger Abbey*. He wanted to substitute for Mrs. Radcliffe's Italian marquises, castles and bandits an English squire, country manor and highwayman. *Rookwood*, then, is evidently a Cheshire manor house hence, too, Dick Turpin and his mare Black Bess figure in the story and a r e , in a ballad quoted at length, the heroes of an escapade on the outskirts of Bowdon. Dick himself tells the story in rhymed verse of his waylaying and robbing a horseman on a road not far from Dun ham. The road was a hollow , a sunken ravine, overshadowed completely by wood like a screen. he victim recognised Turpin, who knew he must trust to the legendary

speed of his mare to establish an alibi and escape hanging. So he applied the spur, fled "over brake, brook and meadow" and in five minutes at the most he was playing bowls at an inn at Hough Green. In a footnote Ainsworth identifies the site of the robbery as a "woody hollow", once the old road from Altrincham to Knutsford — descending the hill that brings you to the bridge crossing the little river Boll in". The road has been re-aligned since Ainsworth's days, but the site is still traceable, not far from the roundabout linking the A56 and M56. Here Ainsworth is clearly using a well-known local tradition. He writes, too, of his own visit to the spot in the year his novel was published, describing it as, in April 1834, "a perfect nest of primroses and wild flowers". The ravine near the Bollin bridge with it steep banks overhung with trees he characterises as "just the place for an adventure" such as the kind of hold-up Turpin performed.

A later novel of Harrison Ainsworth's , Mervyn Clitheroe, published in 1858, sets the whole action of a wildly romantic tale of a stolen will, disputed inheritance, midnight vigil in a churchyard and a simulated ghost in a wide setting, ranging from somewhere just north of Manchester, (Kersal Cell?) through the city, with references to Chetham's Hospital" school and the old Grammar School in Long Millgate, south through Bowdon and Rostherne, as far as Delamere. Strangely, many characters arc given Lancashire and Cheshire place names , such as the hero's Clitheroe, his great-uncle the Rostherne farmer's John Mobberley, and Malpas Sal e, the major villain of the piece. Towns and villages, while perfectly recognisable by description, are given invented names.
Manchester is Cottonborough, Rostherne is Marston, and the name of Dunton covers Bowdon, including Dunham Massey Park. The river Bollin becomes the Rollin. The hero , heir to his great-uncle who farms in Marston, rows on the local mere, crosses it on foot when it is frozen hard, and ranges between Marston and Dunton on various errands . Once he fights a duel on the outskirts of Dunton Park, not far from the site of the Turpin episode in Rookwood "about a bowshot from the little stone bridge crossing the river Rollin ". His antagonist is his rival cousin who is trying to wrench his inheritance from him by slander.

Slightly wounded, Mervyn spends the night at the Stamford Arms . Could this be the inn near Bowdon Church? The Nag's Head is another recognisable meeting-place of characters. Dunton (Dunham) Park, even then accessible to the public, is mentioned several times in the course of the act ion. Mervyn, as a lad, used to run there hand-in-hand with his future wife Apphia, whose mother had taken, a cottage in Dunton (Bowdon) near the school her daughter was attending. The day after the duel Mervyn wanders through the park, nursing his grazed arm, and revels in its magnificent woods , its herd of fallow deer, rabbits "and a few songsters of the grove" (unspecified). pleasing picture of Bowdon's hill and old church is given early in the story. The view from Marston (Rostherne) Vicarage, near the church on a high b a n k , is being described . "The fairest object in this part of the prospect was Dunton Church, which stood on a gentle hill about a mil e north of the mere. It was an old pile with a square tower like that of Marston On the right of Dunton the view was terminated by the dark and distant range of the Lancashire hills".

I again, on the icy day when Mervyn crosses Rostherne Mere on foot, he rides on to Bowdon. "Having mounted the gentle acclivity on which Dunton Church was situated, halted near its reverend walls. Hence, in Spring, the view was exquisite". Then, apparently, the whole countryside seemed snow-covered from abundant orchards of damson blossom and the hedgerow sloe. On this winter day, Mervyn's ear is suddenly enchanted by a distant peal of bells which he knows comes from Marston Church , beyond the mere. This challenge is answered by the "ringers of Dunton", disturbing jackdaws from the church tower. So clearly does a novelist of the last century bring before us sights and sounds that are recognisable today, even though the flowers of those days are less abundant now.

EARLY DAYS OF THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT IN BOWDON
by Dorothy Shelston

In nineteenth century Britain the most widely held view concerning the relationship between men and women was that their roles were complementary and that they should occupy separate spheres. Men belonged in the world of work, business and politics, women belonged in the home . This way of thinking affected many aspects of women's lives. Married women could not own property in their own right, their rights in relation to their children were limited, women could not vote and were excluded from many occupations. The Women's Movement , which came into being in an organised way in the mid 1850s, set out to change this situation. Its aims included securing certain basic rights for w o m e n , such as the right to vote , and lessening their dependence on men by giving them greater opportunities for education and employment. The early campaigners placed a high priority on improving girls' education. One of their early successes was the inclusion of girls' schools in the investigations of the Roy al Commission on secondary education set up in 1864. Anne Jemima Clough gave evidence to that Commission and she outlined a scheme for improving women's education by providing courses of lectures to be given by university lecturers, for women teachers and their senior pupils. This scheme was put into effect in 1867 and led to the formation of the North of England Council for Promoting the Higher Education of Women. The Council consisted of representatives of a number of northern towns, many of them schoolmistresses, and three leading educationalists. The first course of lectures was given in Manchester, Leeds, Liverpool and Sheffield by James Stuart of Trinity College Cambridge. One might have expected Manchester to be part of such a scheme but in 1868 Bowdon also joined. The Report of the third meeting of the Council records that: "Mrs Chambers appeared on behalf of the Ladies Education Society in Bowdon to ask for admission to the Council". This was agreed unanimously and courses of lectures organised by the North of England Council were held in Bowdon in 1868 and 1869. The first course consisted of nine lectures on the History of Ancient Greece, given by W. B. Kennedy of Pembroke College, Cambridge in the Autumn of 1868. Sixty five students attended and of them twelve submitted papers to the lecturer for comment.

This seems a large number for a community the size of Bowdon, especially as the parallel course in Manchester only attracted seventy five students. This may reflect the social composition of the area and also the large number of schools within it. Mrs. Chambers, the Bowdon representative to the North of England Council, was herself a teacher at Highbury House which was then a girls' school. The second lecture course w as held in the Spring of 1869 and consisted of eight lectures on the History of Science, given by T.S. Aldis of Trinity College, Cambridge. It proved less popular and only forty students enrolled, although this was the same as the Manchester enrolment. Mrs . Chambers represented Bowdon at the fourth meeting of the Council in June 1869, but no further lectures were held here and Bowdon was not represented at any later meetings . It seems possible that the Bowdon Ladies Education Association became part of the Manchester Association for Promoting the Education of Women. Mrs. Chambers was a committee member of the Manchester Association in 1871 and the members hip lists include the names of a number of Bowdon people.

A Bowdon resident who played an important part in the work of the Manchester Association was Emily Hall of Higher Downs. She became secretary of the association in 1875 and her arrival coincided wit h a far more vigorous phase in its work . One of its main objectives was to gain admission o Owens College for women. Two Acts of 1870 and 1871 had given the college the power to admit women but they seemed very reluctant to use it. In 1875 a formal request was made to the Council of Owens College by the Association but was rejected. The Association then called a public meeting to consider the possibility of the University of Cambridge providing Extension Classes in Manchester specifically for women. The Principal of Owens College objected to the scheme and maintained that his college was very anxious to provide for women but: "In any such arrangements care should be taken for a due separation of sexes in the lecture room. Therefore the authorities of Owens College would be compelled to have a double set of classes, and various arrangements in respect of benches and chairs ".

This meeting provoked a lively correspondence in the Manchester press and Emily Hall, in a letter which she sent to both the Manchester Guardian and the Manchester Examiner explained the predicament of women in Manchester who wanted higher education. "The college, as an institution, does nothing for u s , nor, we are told is it likely to do; and yet, when offered help by Cambridge we are met with the objection that there can be no necessity of seeking from strangers that higher education which Owens College, with a professional staff, confessedly inferior to none in the kingdom , is so well fitted to supply: of the fitness there can be no two opinions; yet as regards women it is a case of "water, water everywhere - but not a drop to drink" and because men in Manchester have exceptional educational advantages, to conclude that omen need no extraneous help would surely be somewhat illogical". The outcome was not the admission of women to Owens College but the cooperation of the senate of the college in organising courses of lectures which led, in 1877, to the foundation of the Manchester and Salford College for Women. This college was taken over by Owens College in 1883 as a separate Department for Women.

Emily Hall is also interesting because she seems to have been one of the few people in the area who was actively involved in both the education campaign and the campaign for the vote . In 1867 The Manchester National Suffrage Society had been founded to campaign for votes for women. One might have expected supporters of women's education also to support demands for the suffrage but this does not seem to have been the case. For example a comparison of the membership list of the Educational Association and the subscription list of the Suffrage Society for 1875 shows on Iv a small degree of overlap. Of 200 members of the Educational Association only 12 were subscribers to the Suffrage Society, but one of these twelve was Emilv Hall.

SOURCES:

Reports of the North of England Council for Promoting the Higher Education

of Women, 186 7-1874. (John Rvlands Library, University of Manchester).

Reports of the Manch ester Association for Promoting the Education of Women

1870-1877, (Manchester Central Reference Library, Local History Library) .

Manchester Examiner 9th April, 1875, 22nd April 1875

Manchester Guardian 9th April, 1875, 20th April 1875

RURAL BOWDON: 5

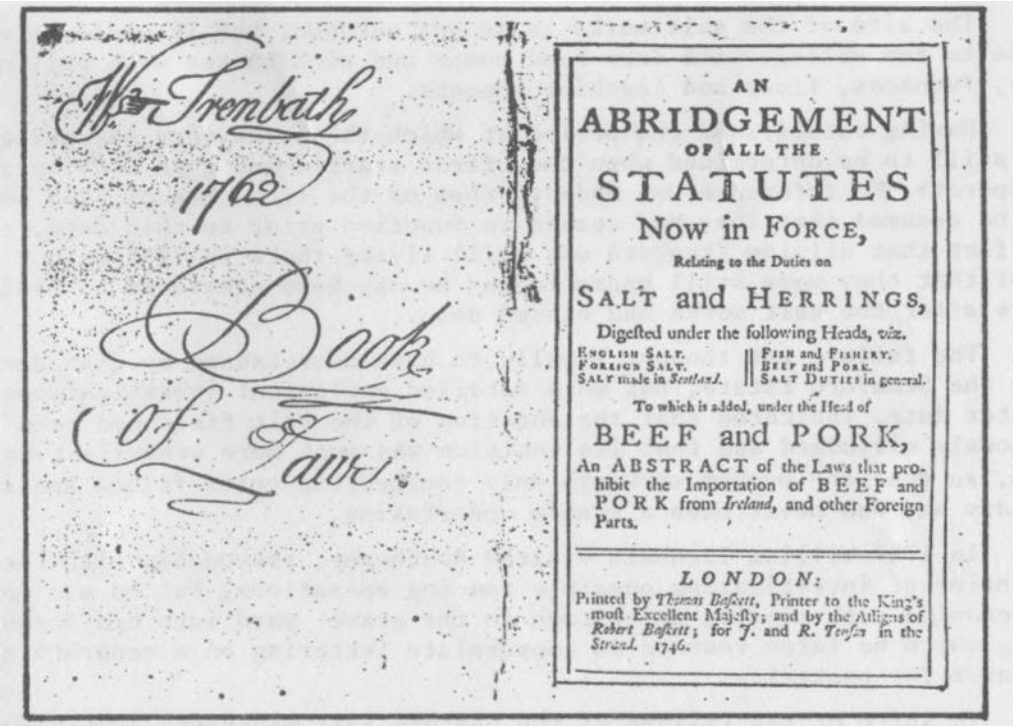
by Ronald Trenbath

Prior to the urban developments which commenced in the middle of the last century Bowdon had been a rural community, but it is not widely known that attempts were once made to "create another Northwich in the district" by the introduction of salt production. Before the last war a few of the older inhabitants of Bowdon claimed that they could remember references to salt extraction locally, and to attempts to create a salt town in Altrincham and Bowdon, but the suggestion was always completely ridiculed, because of the apparent lack of substantive evidence, in spite of references to the acts by Alfred Ingham in his history of the area in 1879.

It was known, of course, that brine was at that time being pumped at Agden, a short distance away, and continued to be pumped there into the 1950 s. but few people would accept that this could take place on the north side of the River Bollin. Recent investigations, however, have revealed an interesting project which might have seriously affected the entire area. In the 18th century prospecting to extend the central Cheshire salt fields was being undertaken by hopeful prospectors who thought that a large inland salt lake, bounded by Delamere Forest to the south, Alderley Edge to the east and Bowdon to the north , had dried out in primeval times to leave a very rich salt deposit. It was thought that the meres were formed as a result of this phenomenon , and that as Rostherne possessed unique fish life from prehistoric times, which they considered to be sea fish, it was reasoned that the bed of this mere was salt which was "being continually dissolved from broken deposits and drawn off a very dilute solution". Based on these assumptions it was argued, in the absence of more scientific forms of investigation, that the Bowdon area would be rich in salt deposits , with the result that brine pumping was started locally.

It was not known, however, for a very long time where exactly and when this took place. This mystery was to a very large degree solved in 1982 by Canon Maurice Ridgway when he was checking church records and noted a reference to "William Trenbath , Officer of Ye Salt Works at Dunham Woodhouses" in relation to the baptism of the latter's son, Benjamin, on July 18th, 1770. This entry located the position of the saltworking and the approximate period when it was opera ting.

William Trenbath was a Cornish mining engineer who recorded many incidents from his travels in Southern England, Wales and Ireland, together with items from family life, in his account book, but he never made any direct reference to his vocational activities, with the result that his reasons for settling in "Boden" in 1766, at the age of 39, were never explained. It should be noted that the references to living in Bowdon were not incorrect as Dunham was part of Bowdon at that time. Prior to this period William Trenbath had worked in the coal mining district of Coalbrook Dale and in the brine pumping area of Witton, near Northwich, where it would appear that he was an Officer in the Salt Industry. His Book of Laws, acquired in 1762, provides valuable information about the rigorously-enforced laws in relation to the manufacture and sale of salt in the 18th century, and to his duties , as Officer in enforcing them, including overseeing of payment of tax, confiscation, and dealing with salt merchants. The job must have been reasonably lucrative judging by the luxuries he bought, including clothes, boots , waistcoat s, wigs , regular purchases of wig "oyl", whips , tea and a china tea service.



The three main products of Cheshire - dairy farming, forestry and salt production - were interacting. The presence of brine in the earth was considered to enrich the quality of the pasture, the salt was used for reserving the beef carcases, prior to the advent of refrigeration, and also for curing hides for leather; wood was required for the manufacture of charcoal necessary for the production of salt, and for use in the construction of timber-framed buildings to resist the effects of subsidence, a practice which continued in Cheshire long after it became outmoded in other counties.

Many of the so-called local marl pits are, in fact, former hide pits where hides were buried with brine and lime as part of the tanning process. Charcoal production was also undertaken on a large scale judging from the workings to be found in local woods, especially the big charcoal pit in Charcoal Road. These activities offered alternative forms of employment to the local labour force from agriculture, upon which they would otherwise have been forced to depend , and as working in the salt works was clean , safe and healthy no doubt many inhabitants of the area appreciated the opportunity this offered. It has always been the proud boast of Cheshire salt producers that the conditions of work have always been safe and healthy, a claim which can be substantiated by records, and that when mining was introduced to the industry women and children were barred from working below ground. Dunham Woodhouses was an interesting example of a small 18th century salt village with brick cottages for the wallers and other employees and some earlier timber ones , which were demolished prior to the war.

Larger houses of architectural quality were provided for those in charge, one of which was three stories high with clocks in entablatures on two sides, a flight of steps to the front door and elegant wrought iron railings, stone piers and brick garden walls which might indicate a degree of prosperity when they were built. The site of the salt works is as yet unknown, but it would be very close to the village with deep hand pumps and wich houses with boiling an s, furnaces, flues and leaching troughs. Having established the period at which the works were operating it has still to be determined when they first started and when they ceased to operate. No reference was made to them on the Tithe Map of 1838 so it may be assumed that they had ceased to function prior to this date , and the fact that William Trenbath was still living there in 1795 is not proof that they were still operating as he may have continued to reside there after the salt works had closed down.

The failure was thought locally to have been caused by disagreement with the Stamford Estate, but more detailed geological investigations, at a later date, indicated that the location of the salt field had been seriously misjudged and that its position was much more westerly towards Lymm, so that the Dunham workings only touched the outer fringe and soon ran dry and had never been a viable undertaking. In 1767 William Trenbath visited Rostherne, presumably with the intention of investigating possible pumping operations , but he was more preoccupied with copying an epitaph in the graveyard into his account book, which he later rewrote in copperplate lettering on a separate sheet of paper for posterity. In spite of the failure of the venture salt merchants continued to operate in Bowdon, as references in old documents indicate, although most of them were also slaughterers. The last of these, "Salty" Warburton, only recently left the district. Writing on the subject Ingham stated that "attempts to create another Northwich in that district (Bowdon) proved futile"; and "those who know the dreary aspect imported on the face of nature by the establishments of these works, leaving out the question of damage to property by subsidence, will scarcely crave for active operations in this district". Few today would disagree with this opinion.

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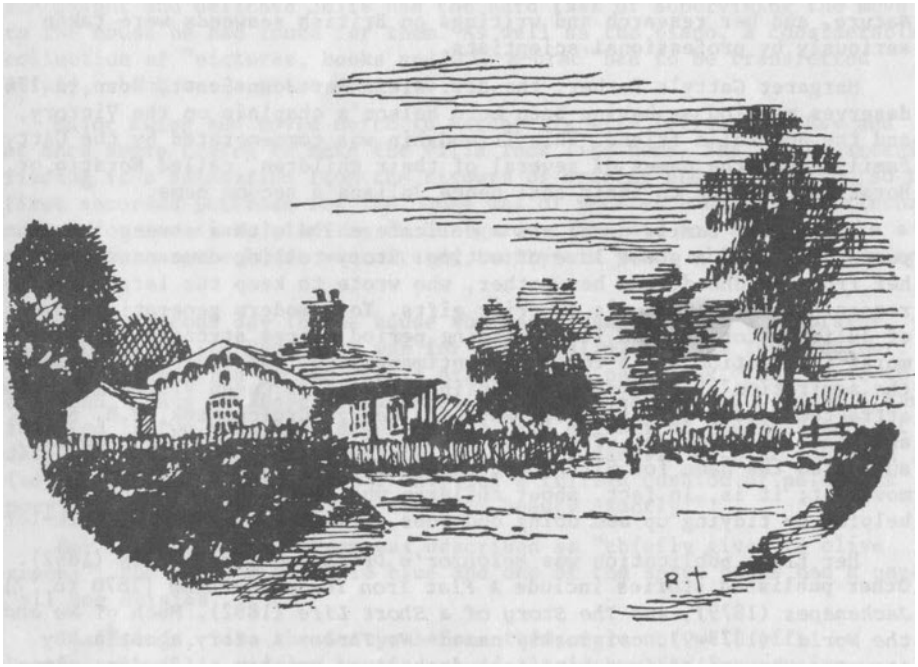


This toll house marked the southern end of the portion of the turnpike which passed through Bowdon in the Eighteenth Century.

JULIANA EWING'S BOWDON YEARS
by Myra Kendrick

Juliana Horatia Ewing, nee Gatty, (1841 to 1885), a successful and respected writer for children, actually lived for a short time at what is now known as 14 Higher Downs, Altrincham, and was then Downs Villa, High Downs, Bowdon. In May 1877 she moved from Aldershot to Bowdon to join her husband, Major Alexander Ewing of the Army Pay Department, who had been posted to Manchester. The residence was short indeed, as in September 1878, on her husbands being transferred to York, she moved house again, never to come back to Bowdon. As the early title-deeds of the house were destroyed by fire, we have no means of telling whether the Ewings bought or rented the house, but that they actually lived in it is authenticated by various letter headings. Juliana was the second child in the large family of the Rev. Alfred Gatty, vicar of Ecclesfield near Sheffield.

Her mother, Margaret Gatty, was herself a well-known writer of children's stories and the editor of a children's periodical, Aunt Judy's Magazine, in which most of her daughter's work first appeared. But the mother's real interests were scientific: her best known work for children w as entitled Parables from Nature, and her research and writings on British seaweeds were taken seriously by professional scientists. Margaret Gatty's father, the Rev. Alexander John Scott, born in 1768, deserves mention as having been Lord Nelson's chaplain on the Victory, and the admiral's friend. This friendship was commemorated by the Gatty family among the names of several of their children, called Horatio or Horatia according to their sex: hence Juliana's second name. Julie (her family name) was a delicate child with a strong personality and a great love of acting.

Story-telling came naturally to her from childhood, and her mother, who wrote to keep the large family, recognised her daughter's superior gifts. To a modern generation some of Julie's stories read like charming period pieces strongly laced with moral instruction and a touch of sentimentality, but their freshness won the admiration of Tennyson and Kipling as well as Queen Victoria and they attracted famous illustrators: Whymper, George Cruickshank, H.M. Brock and Randolph Caldecott. The title of one of her stories, The Brownies, suggested the name for Sir Robert Baden-Powell's junior Girl Guides movement; it is, in fact, about children who learnt to enjoy being helpful by tidying up and doing odd jobs, like the brownies of folk-lore.

Her first publication was Melchior's Dream and Other Tales (1862). Other published stories include A Flat Iron for a Farthing (1870 to '71) Jackanapes (1879), and The Story of a Short Life (1882), Much of We and the World (1877-9), originally named We Three, a story about a boy stowaway who sailed from Liverpool docks, was written at Bowdon, along with some children's verse and another story, The Gentleman of the Road, that was never completed. We know that in September 1877 Juliana visited Liverpool from her Bowdon home and saw the Canada Docks, relevant to her story. As We and the World was first published, like most of her work, in monthly instalments in Aunt Judy's Magazine, Julie's Bowdon period was filled with the pressure of keeping up to date with writing and proof correction.

Mrs Ewing's stories about children are attractive in that her children are real people, talking and behaving naturally, lovable and loved. They are drawn with great sympathy and their relations with adults are sensitively handled. If the author sometimes used her tales to press home certain teaching, such as the temperance theme in her Lob by the Fire, and ended some of them with the early death of a young hero, one has to accept the tastes of her time and the high mortality rate among children; she herself lost two brothers in infancy. She wrote from experience: the country village life she knew in her girlhood and the army background of her married years are both reflected in her work. She strove incessantly to achieve a crisp style, which gives her stories a refreshing movement.

In 1867 Juliana had been married to Major Alexander Ewing, "Rexie", who has his own claim to fame in being the composer of the hymn tune now known as Ewing, to which the words "Jerusalem the Golden" were subsequently set. We know that Rexie's piano was among the possessions moved into Downs Villa and a music room was prepared for him there.

Our sources of information for details about their Bowdon residence are her letters and diaries. We know that when she heard of the impending move from Aldershot, which she loved, to unknown Bowdon, it was to Julie "the awful news". Her husband had to go to Manchester ahead of her, and the slight and delicate Julie had the hard task of supervising the move to the house he had found for them. As well as the piano, a considerable collection of "pictures, books and bric-a-brac" had to be transferred safely, which was a great worry to her.

Major Ewing had moved north in March; his wife followed in May and at once began trying to make the villa look like home. She loved gardening, finding it a relaxation from the rigours of writing and publishing, so her first recorded purchase for the house was of pansies bought in Altrincham market for immediate planting in her garden. She did not have to make a new garden, as the house was already twenty-six years old when the Ewings moved in.

On her second day in the house she was arranging with a decorator about papering it. Her taste was for plain walls, but she loved colour. "I have distempered my own little drawing-room pale pink," she wrote to a friend, "have arranged my pictures and knick-knacks and I have invested in two such old carved tables, and a chair of the most ancient date and indescribable quaintness, on which I can sit without dangling (so low is it!) and to which I have put a frilled cushion of pale pink morris chintz which suits its style of beauty exactly!"

Her husband's music room was described as "chiefly given to olive greens"; the bedroom was pale blue and one of the spare rooms had a paper "all dog daisies".

The Ewings, like the Gattys before them, were not well off. Fortunately Julie enjoyed hunting round Altrincham for inexpensive fittings and furniture in pawnbrokers' and second-hand shops. She looked for seasoned wood and drawers that ran well, and seems to have shopped successfully, buying a table for £1 and wardrobes (plural) for £4.

She appears to have settled down in Bowdon and been reasonably happy in spite of very poor health. She soon made a friend of Mrs. Joynson who lived on Richmond Hill and shared her interest in the paintings of their contemporary Paul Naftel, lending Julie some of his paintings to copy. She was, this vicar's daughter, a regular church-goer. She usually attended morning service at St. John's Church, but sometimes went to Bowdon Parish Church for Evensong, Downs Villa being situated about halfway between the two. We hear, too, of attendance at Manchester Cathedral. She and Rexie enjoyed local walks with their dogs, down by the Bollin or in Dunham Park. "Exquisitely lovely" was one comment on the countryside. They visited Manchester for art exhibitions and concerts.

The residence in Bowdon ended abruptly in September, 1878 on Major Ewing's being moved to York. Again Mrs. Ewing had all the responsibility for removal, which did her health no good. That her impressions of Bowdon were not wholly favourable is suggested by a letter she wrote to her husband, them stationed in Malta, while she was staying with friends in her beloved Aldershot: "Said I to myself, 'I've been in wealthy, idle Bowdon and in ecclesiastical York and not had this -'". "This" referred to a well-attended service at the little tin church at Aldershot in which the congregation joined whole-heartedly. She had commented during her December in Bowdon on "smoke coming over from Manchester".

Under the constant moves required by army life, Juliana's health at last broke down completely. She was never able to join her husband in Malta. She died of cancer at the early age of forty-four and was buried at Trull near Taunton, where she had been living latterly. Memorials to her are to be found in the churches at Trull and Ecclesfield where her life began. But Bowdon can be happy to have been for a short time the home of this gifted and lovable woman writer.

A BOWDON AVIATION PIONEER
by John Chartres

Many distinguished airmen, aircraft designers and engineers have lived in Bowdon (or just down the road in Hale) including the bearers of such names as Leeming, Killick and Chadwick.

One whose name has not so far received much public recognition was Benjamin Graham Wood, whose last home was 'The Coppice', South Downs Road, Bowdon. The late Mr. Wood, who was a student of civil engineering at the Regent Street Polytechnic in 1909 and who became interested in aviation at the time of Bleriot's cross-Channel flight, designed and partly built a projected man-powered 'rotary ornithopter'.

His machine, recovered in parts from his home with the help of his daughter, Mrs. Ruth Middleton, is being re-assembled at the Manchester Air and Space Museum and will probably be put on display there early next year (1986). It has been registered as No. BAPC 182 by the British Aircraft Preservation Council .When men first aspired to fly they studied both the flight patterns of birds and insects and also the movement of air bubbles. The latter line of study resulted in the first successful flights by men (and women) in balloons and airships — "lighter-than-air" craft.

The examination of birds' and insects' principles took longer to culminate in flight by men in 'heavier-than-air' craft. Those who wanted to emulate the flapping movement of birds' wings in "ornithopters" never did achieve their object; and those who favoured the partial rotary movement of insect wings had to wait a long time until suitable lightweight materials and engines became available to make autogyroes and helicopters practical.

Those who concentrated on the gliding movement of such birds as gulls with their wings outstretched and still, succeeded first. Wilbur and Orville Wright added a new dimension at the turn of the 20th century by adding an engine and propeller to a glider design.

Graham Wood, who at one stage was the Chief Designer of the British Airship Company, always believed that a flying machine could be constructed combining the principles of the rotary-winged autogyroes* and helicopters with that of the bird's ability to flap its wings to gain lift. Mr. Wood was no dilettante in such matters — in 1909 he had built and flown his own glider, he taught aviation theory until 1914 and he was awarded the 171st British Aviator's Certificate.

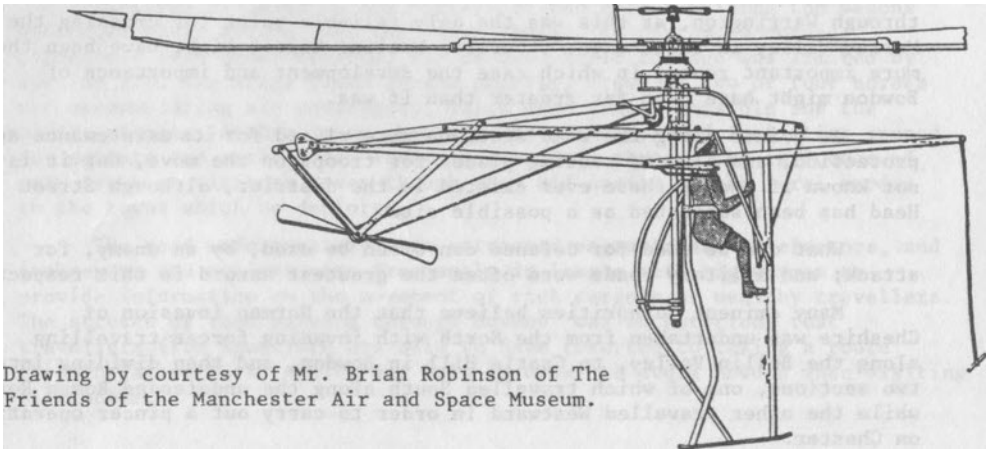
He set about proving his "rotary ornithopter" theory (combining the principles of rotating and flapping wings) in pursuit of the "Kremer Prize" for man-powered flight which was offered in the 1960s. In a thesis on the subject he wrote:

"Helicopters on average lift l0lbs per Horse Power and require 40 to 50 h.p. for each man lifted.

"Birds fly upwards fairly continuously at about 5 feet a second and much more quickly for short periods. For this performance a bird weighing one lb uses only one hundredth of a Horse Power and is therefore ten times as efficient as the average helicopter."

"Birds have the advantage of wing tip propulsion and also the advantage of intermittent support which has hitherto not been used on helicopters; but birds share with helicopters the disadvantage of a very adverse leverage which explains the excessive power requirement of helicopters as previously developed. My machine is a rotary ornithopter (a new classification)."

Graham Wood died before completing his machine or being able to attempt to fly it. The parts, mainly constructed from bamboo and nylon fabric remained in the garage at "The Coppice" however, and Mrs. Middleton and her son have been able to salve them and hand them over to experts from the Manchester Air and Space Museum.



Drawing by courtesy of Mr. Brian Robinson of The Friends of the Manchester Air and Space Museum.

*There is still some confusion over the definitions of autogyroes and helicopters. The former use rotating wings which 'freewheel' usually in the slipstream of a conventional forward-thrusting propeller, Sometimes completely freely after having been towed by land vehicles or ships. Helicopters have power delivered directly to their main rotor blades. The spelling 'autogyro' (with a 'y') is correct. The word "Autogiro" (with a capital 'A' and an 'i') is a Registered Trade Name applicable only to the products and designs of the company founded by the Spanish-born pioneer, the late Juan De La Cierva.

WATLING STREET, BOWDON

by Ronald Trenbath

The development, and often the existence, of a community depends upon communications, and Bowdon has been no exception to this rule. The construction of the Roman Road, the Bridgewater Canal in 1762, the Railway in the 1840's, Ringway Airport in the 1930's and the Motorway in 1971 has each in its way had a profound effect upon Bowdon.

The road known variously as the main Chester Road, Dunham Road and Watling Street was built by the Romans as a military link between Deva (Chester) and Mamucium (Manchester) and probably followed an ancient trackway between settlements realigned to provide long stretches of straight roadway. Originally the road by-passed the settlement which later became Altrincham and followed a straight line from a point where Denzell now stands to a position which is now Broadheath, but at a later period it was diverted through Altrincham and the straight portion of the road was eventually lost, although contours in the undergrowth in Dunham Park indicate its original position.

The main Roman artery north to Scotland was King Street which ran through Warrington, as this was the only reliable point for crossing the Mersey Valley in those days, otherwise Watling Street might have been the more important route, in which case the development and importance of Bowdon might have been far greater than it was. At points along the road stations were placed for its maintenance and protection, and also as resting places for troops on the move, but it is not known if one of these ever existed in the district, although Street Head has been suggested as a possible site.

These Roman roads were built to last and were still in use in the Middle Ages when their maintenance and repair became the responsibility of the adjoining landowners who so neglected their duties that the Highway Act of 1555 was enacted, requiring each parish to undertake this work, upon pain of fine for each parishioner in the event of failure so to do. They were also obliged to elect an honorary surveyor from among their fellows to supervise all such work.

Under the later Stuarts the increase in commerce brought greater traffic on to the roads but as this consisted mainly of travellers passing through the district local residents were resentful at having to provide facilities for strangers, with no hope of any return on their outlay, and petitions were often made to the Quarter Sessions about this injustice. In fact Defoe suggested that a national levy of £3,000 for eight years should be made to rectify the situation. The final remedy came from local private initiative when turnpike trusts were created in Cheshire, with Parliamentary powers to erect toll- gates or bars and charge fees for using the roads in return for providing satisfactory facilities for travelling. As a result of this, toll-gates were built at the Rostherne-Millington crossroad and at Ashton-on-Mersey.

These toll-gates were often provided with keepers' cottages of architectural interest designed in either the Classical, Gothick or Cottage Ornee taste. The one at Rostherne was eventually acquired by the Cheshire Constabulary for the use of the local policeman, but it was demolished for a road widening scheme between the wars. Watling Street originally forded the River Bollin at a point near Castle Hill, but it was realigned in the last century nearer to St. John-of-Jerusalem's Patch in order that a bridge could be built for easier crossing. The area became known as New Bridge Hollow.

Pack horses plied the road carrying goods between towns, but as they were very slow and difficult to overtake they caused great annoyance to other travellers. Pickfords first used pack horses to deliver silk from their Macclesfield mills in the middle of the 17th century, but they soon replaced them with trading wagons which were more efficient in every way, and could accommodate passengers.

The chime of bells on the collars of the horses pulling the wagons announced their arrival and they were always, by custom, accorded precedence over other traffic, but in 1663 their tonnage was limited by law. By 1750 the stage coach became popular, drawn by two or four horses and accommodating six passengers, which made travel possible for the middle classes. Arthur Young observed that the improved facilities opened new markets and enabled new ideas to circulate through the influence of more frequent visitors, even though they did assist in the rural exodus to the towns which he deplored.

The road unfortunately also attracted vagrants and malefactors, and innkeepers and ostlers were frequently in league with highwaymen to provide information on the movement of rich cargoes or wealthy travellers. The stretch of road passing through Bowdon was so notorious that travellers from Knutsford are said to have resorted to taking a route through Tatton Park, Ashley and Hale in order to avoid Bowdon when visiting Altrincham.

Perhaps the worst of these criminals was Edward Higgins of Knutsford whose exploits, even as far as Bristol, are very well known, and it was because of this violence that red-coated guards with blunderbusses travelled on the stage coaches.

Watling Street again became an invasion route in 1745 when the Jacobites passed through Bowdon, en route for Derby, and it is reported that the local inhabitants hid their horses among the trees along the Bollin in order that they should not be stolen by the insurgents. Inns along the road catered for the requirements of travellers, and while any man could open a house, hostlers and herbergers were required to sell food at a reasonable price. LaterLicensing Acts, however, laid down that inn-keepers should provide lodgings for travellers, tavern- keepers victuals but no shelter, and alehouses only liquor for local Inhabitants.

Inns were also supposed to provide guests with clean sheets, and landlords of the Swan Inn always boasted that Charles Stuart the Pretender had complimented the proprietor of the day upon the standard of the bed linen when he stayed there in 1745.

During the next half of the 18th century travel became very fashionable, whether by post-chaise,phaeton, on horse-back or even on foot, although foot passengers were considered to be inferior and were subjected to discrimination and could only be served with refreshments in a kitchen. Most of the inns such as The Unicorn in Altrincham, and the Swan at Bucklow had livery stables, and were often changing stations with facilities for changing horses at regular distances in order to ensure high speed travel, although this was very expensive.

It is recorded that Richard Trenbath set off from Bowdon for London on January 16th, 1771, at the age of twelve, with "Mr. Heywood, Preston carrier, who inns at The Swan with Two Nicks in Lad Lane in London", presumably to be articled or apprenticed. His father, William, followed on his horse a few days later, having first sent letters to his uncle to arrange the visit, and in his account book he noted that he had replenished the powder and "shot" for his pistol (l/4d) and paid between 2d and 6d at each turnpike, which were numerous.

During other journeys William recorded paying 4d for crossing the river at Twickenham, l/6d for shoeing and bleeding his horse at Bath, 1/- for new spurs and 3/6d for a whip. The importance of improved travel facilities for the purpose of shopping is illustrated by one visit to London when he purchased a gist and portmanteau, blacking, pins, powder, wig "oyl", writing paper, clothes brush, two pairs of stockings, and a pound of tea, and also had a cloak bag mended, his wig adjusted, shoes repaired and a shirt and "wastcoat" made and paid 6d to a porter from St. James to carry them to his lodgings. Similarly on his visits to Chester he would often make household purchases, as he noted when he directed Mr. John Meakins of North Gate Street, to kill and prepare a pig for him. He also drew attention to casualties arising from road accidents at this time, when he recorded the death of a Mr. Swan as a result of a fall from his horse.
(To be continued).

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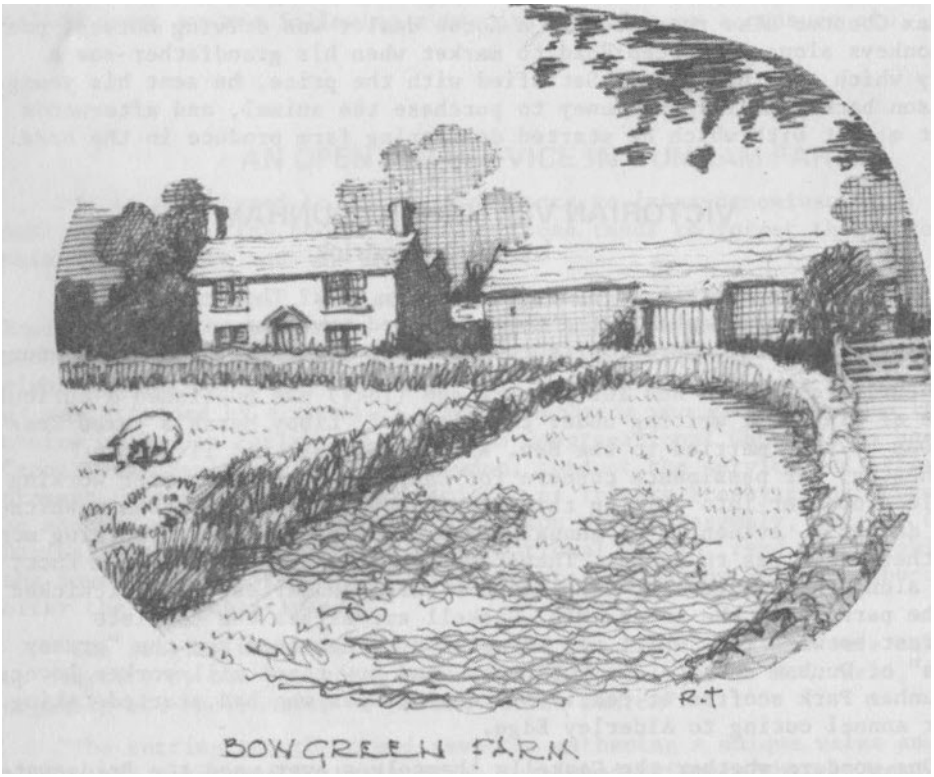


The long narrow field in front of Bow Green Farm was the last one of this shape to survive the programme of enlarging fields.

CATTLE DROVING IN BOWDON
by Max Chester

Max Chester, who lives at West Bank Farm where his family has farmed for three generations, recalls how, in his youth, cattle droving was regularly undertaken by local farmers. In those days heifers and colts were taken every year, on May 12th, to graze on the higher ground in the Pennine hills above Buxton. Prior to this operation farmers would brand initials on the front hoof of each beast, for identification, and then take them to Bow Green Farm, where Mr Goodier, the farmer, would collect them in a small paddock in front of his house. On the day a number of men, accompanied by a horse and trap, would drive the animals through Bowdon and Hale Barns to the Bull's Head at High Lane, where they were met by a party of men from Buxton who continued the journey, while the Bowdon contingent returned in the horse and trap after refreshment at the meeting place.

On October 12th the operation was repeated in reverse, when the beasts were returned to winter in the milder climate of Bowdon. This process ceased to be viable after the introduction of cattle waggons by a local man Philip Oakden. Max Chester also recounts how a horse dealer was driving horses, ponies and donkeys along Bow Green Road to market when his grandfather saw a donkey which took his fancy. Satisfied with the price, he sent his young grandson back home for the money to purchase the animal, and afterwards bought a cart with which he started delivering farm produce in the area.

VICTORIAN VISITORS TO DUNHAM PARK
by Myra Kendrick

How long has there been access to Dunham Park? The writings of Elizabeth Cleghorn Gaskell, the Cheshire bred novelist with Bowdon associations, provide proof of such access in the mid-nineteenth century. Nearly a hundred and forty years ago (1847) she published a curious piece of fictional writing under the title of "Libby Marsh's Three Eras". She was by then married to the Rev. William Gaskell and living in Manchester; her passionate concern for the plight of Manchester working people drove her into writing this story in which she describes a Whitsuntide day-trip, evidently an annual event, made by Manchester working men and their families to Dunham. They came in horse-drawn barges from Knott Mill along the Bridgewater Canal to the park boundaries, then picnicked in the park under the trees. Mrs. Gaskell emphasises the complete contrast between the "whirl and turmoil" of Manchester and the "grassy walks" of Dunham and its ancient trees, and how these mill-worker lovers of Dunham Park scoffed at restless acquaintances who had started taking their annual outing to Alderley Edge.

One wonders whether the Gaskells themselves ever used the Bridgewater Canal as a means of reaching Dunham. Certainly after the opening of the railway line from Manchester (about two years after she had published this story), Mrs. Gaskell and her husband and children were coming to Bowdon Station by train, to escape the "whirl and turmoil", then sturdily walking on to the park to enjoy the air, the great trees and the grass.

Once the two younger girls were staying at Moss Farm, Bowdon, as they often did, and their father took Meta, the second daughter, to see them. The younger girls met their father and sister at the railway station and they all walked to the park together. Mrs Gaskell wrote about the visit to Marianne, the eldest of the family, who was away at school, telling how the nine year old Flossy, who had been ill, managed the long walk well but found the fallow deer alarming. One suspects that even in 1851 deer were in the habit of following visitors in hope of being fed.

Twenty-five years later, a young Cheshire born man, later to become a celebrated artist and illustrator, took lodgings in Bowdon for a time while working for a Manchester bank. This was Randolph Caldecott, who reminisced to a friend about the charms of Dunham and its woods. It seems, however that the attraction for him was possibly as much "The Swan with Two Nicks" as the park itself.

Another crumb of literary evidence for the enjoyment of the park by the public comes in the Bowdon diary of Mrs. J.H. Ewing, the children's writer, a contemporary of Caldecott's, who in fact came to illustrate some of her stories, notably "Jackanapes", when they were published in book form. She and her husband, when living on the Higher Downs, used to walk their dogs around Bowdon and Dunham Park was one of their haunts. So when we in the 1980s enjoy the green spaces, the ancient trees and the herd of fallow deer, we are following a tradition well over a century old.

AN OPEN AIR SERVICE IN DUNHAM PARK

One is accustomed to hearing reference to inter-denominational participation during recent years, but one tends to forget that efforts in this respect were made in former times.

It is of interest, therefore, to note reports in the Altrincham, Bowdon and Hale Guardian in August, 1930 when "Bowdon churches united in a unique effort" at an open-air service in Dunham Park. The service, at eight o'clock one Sunday evening, was reported to have been a success. It was attended by a crowd of several hundreds who gathered round the choirs of Bowdon Parish and the Downs Congregational Churches to hear Canon Lowry Hamilton, Vicar of Bowdon, conduct the service and offer prayers, the Rev. L.G. Tucker, Minister of Trinity Presbyterian Church give an address which held the close attention of the assembly, the Rev G.C. Davies, Minister of the Downs Congregational Church, read the Parable of the Sower, and the Rev. F.J. Gould, Minister of Bowdon Wesleyan Church, offered the closing prayer.

"The singing was most impressive and the familiar hymns were taken up heartily by the gathering under the leadership of Dr. H.L. Read, organist and choirmaster of Bowdon Parish Church".

"The setting and the crowd gave the gathering a unique value and the clergy and ministers in their robes furnished evidence that it was no ordinary open-air meeting, but a considerable summons to worship". The effort was loyally supported by the Earl of Stamford, his mother (the Countess of Stamford), Sir Arthur and Lady Haworth and Mr Faulkner-Armitage and the Lord Bishop of Chester gave his blessing to the event.

WATLING STREET (continued)
by Ronald Trenbath

During the 18th century Betty Dunham, a gatekeeper at New Bridge Hollow Lodge, who was thought to be an illegitimate member of the Earl's family, recounted many interesting stories which illustrated a different aspect of travelling from that described by William Trenbath's documents. Her accounts record how Lady Warrington, the grandmother of the kindly fifth Earl of Stamford, regularly drove at very high speed in a coach drawn by four very large and powerful black horses to the Knutsford Races in competition against her husband, in another coach, having given him a good start ahead of her, gaily waving her handkerchief to him as she passed him at great speed, and always paying her coachman a sovereign for winning.

Lady Warrington would also drive to the Sanjam Fair in Altrincham upsetting stalls and frightening women and children, but never failing to pay compensation for her "little bit of relaxation", and regularly exchanging vulgar .jokes with local youths.

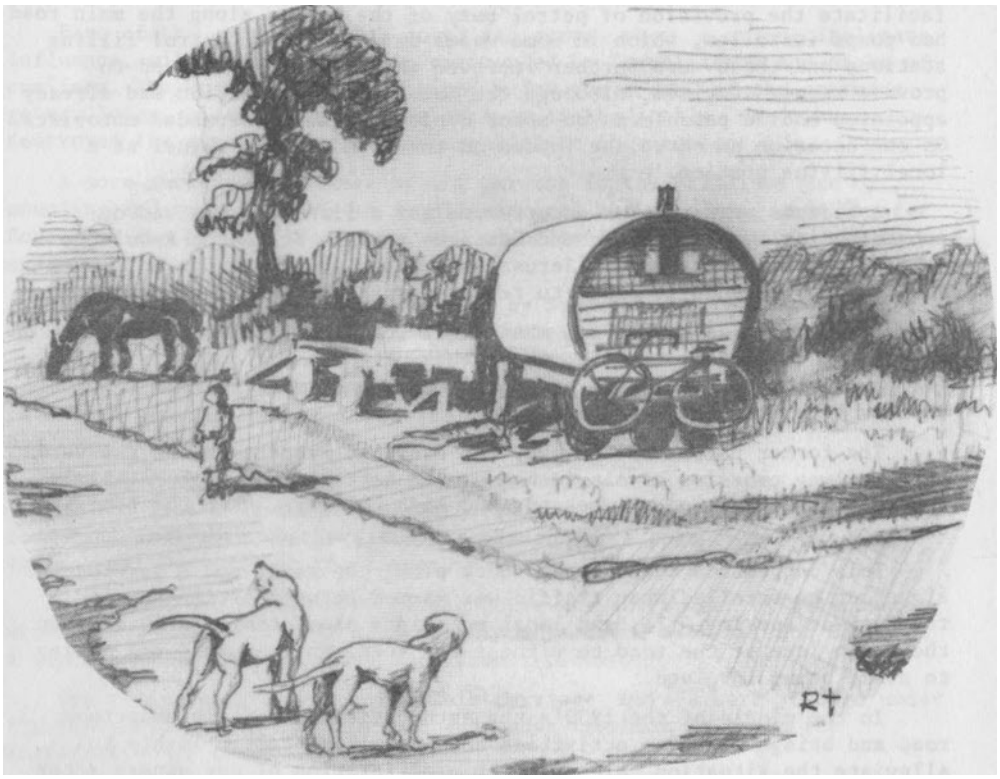
The sixth Earl retained the family tradition by driving a coach and four, and employing two postillions and a coachman to ride on before him in order to clear the way so that he could proceed unhindered. In 1842 Watling Street again became an invasion route when Chartists from Manchester descended en masse upon Bowdon, and the Earl of Stamford ordered that barrels of beer, cheeses and baskets of bread should be placed near the junction with Green Walk in order to divert their attention from trouble. This ploy worked to a large degree, although the pupils and servants at the local ladies boarding school were forced to surrender the contents of their pockets and boxes. The Principal of the school, however, was more devious and after hiding all her money and valuables disguised herself as a poor servant and claimed dire poverty in order to protect her belongings.

Haulage on this road must have been very tough going for horses and a drinking trough was placed at Street Head to provide facilities for watering them after the long haul up from the Bollin, or after negotiating the sharp inclines between Shepherds Cottages and Street Head Cottages, although many carters, in order to avoid the main road, used Bow Green Lane, which had more gentle gradients.

A building shown on the Tithe Map of 1838 at the south east corner of Bow Green Lane, where it joins Watling Street, may have been a smithy providing a service for horses in distress, as this area is still known by many of the older local inhabitants as Smithy Green.

When the condition of roads improved generally, gypsies, who had formerly lived in tents transported by horses, began to travel in horse- drawn caravans, and these colourful vehicles became a regular feature of the countryside, and as recently as 1960 they were to be seen at night encamped on a small patch: of unenclosed land adjacent to Whitfield Cottage in Bow Green.

The gypsies made and sold wooden clothes pegs and trapped and cooked rabbits, hares and hedgehogs, the latter being enclosed in wet clay prior to being roasted on a log fire, as in this way the skin and spines could be separated from the meat. The gypsy children and dogs slept underneath the caravan while the parents slept inside. Farmers learned to know which gypsy families could be relied upon to be clean, tidy, honest and considerate, and which had to be seen off, and the residents who befriended the former usually found it had been to their advantage. The Romanies often bought fine porcelain when they travelled through the Potteries, which became prized possessions to be displayed to those they respected.



Road travel began to decline in the second quarter of the 19th century as a result of the introduction of railways which provided a better service, although in Cheshire it is thought to have been due more to fluctuating trade, with the result that the main roads became deserted and businesses which relied on them for trade became depressed. Many inns and hotels fell into disuse, and whole villages became virtually isolated, and there are people alive today who can remember as children playing quite safely on the main road.

During the late 19th century the bicycle became popular, and every weekend cycling clubs from the north passed through Bowdon on the way to south Cheshire or North Wales, to the annoyance of local police who constantly prosecuted them for infringements of the law. Ellis Clark, a local builder many years ago, used to recall that before he enlisted in the army during the Boer War it was not unusual on a Monday morning for the Magistrates' Court to be overflowing with defendants, and that on one occasion, as a protest, every cyclist passing the local police station rang his bell until out of hearing distance. He noted that as a great many cycling clubs passed during the course of the day the noise was deafening.

Some of the local cottages found it lucrative to provide refreshments for cyclists, and wooden sheds were often erected in their gardens with trestle tables and forms for this purpose, with the Cyclist Touring Club logo, CTC, being prominently displayed outside.

At the turn of the century motor cars were seen on the roads for the first time, and after 1918 their presence rapidly increased. In order to facilitate the provision of petrol many of the houses along the main road had pumps installed, which in some cases developed into petrol filling stations and these were further improved when mechanics started to provide repair services, although the Automobile Association had already appointed mobile patrolmen on motor cycles to assist stranded motorists. On one occasion an aeroplane landed on the main road to refuel at a local filling station.

Accidents were regular occurrences and a first-aid box was on constant display at the Shepherd Cottages and the St John's Ambulance Brigade camped at the John O'Jerusalem's Patch at New Bridge Hollow on most summer weekends in order to render assistance when required. Policemen or AA patrolmen manned all the dangerous road junctions on point duty to control traffic, where they often became quite friendly with regular motorists, and for many years a one-armed patrolman was a popular figure on duty at Bucklow Hill.

The former narrow bridge over the canal at Broadheath and the very busy railway crossing at Altrincham caused bottlenecks which regularly resulted in congestion at weekends and bank holidays, when the traffic was very heavy.

This congestion could spread back along the road, and a spectacular sight can be recalled when traffic was jammed between Altrincham and the Swan at Bucklow Hill, and local motorists drove their families down the south lane of the road to witness the scene and returned via Ashley to avoid being involved.

In the middle of the 1930's the authorities grudgingly undertook road and bridge widening activities and installed traffic lights to alleviate the situation, although the proliferation of car owners after 1945 again produced momentous problems, only to be eased by the building of the M56.

Public benches along the main road provided viewing points for interested spectators during the inter-war years, and one placed near the Park Road junction was the meeting place for local worthies who would sit for hours watching the traffic, and reminisce on former times. On calculation one realizes that these memories would go back to the 1860s.

Erratum

In the article on Juliana Ewing's Bowdon Years in The Bowdon Sheaf No 6, October 1985, the words "the early title deeds of the house were destroyed by fire" should read "the early title deeds of the house were lost". The writer regrets the error.

DENZELL
by Valerie Trenbath

One of the largest and possibly one of the most interesting houses to be built in Bowdon during the last century was Denzell on Green Walk, built by Robert Scott in 1874 for himself and his Cornish wife who, no doubt, influenced the choice of the name, which is an ancient Cornish word. Part of the grounds, which cover ten acres, show a strong Italianate influence, with a large fountain surrounded by formal lawns and banks of conifers. The unfortunate demolition, a few years ago, of the entrance gates, lodge, clock tower and the archway to the stable yard, have destroyed the sense of enclosure essential to this concept.

A more successful feature of the gardens is the brilliant use of mounding and tree planting to totally conceal the adjoining main Chester Road from the house and grounds, and visually link them with Dunham Park Opposite.

The gardens were further developed by Samuel Lamb, the second owner, who purchased the property at the turn of the century and laid out tennis and croquet lawns. Vines, peaches and orchids were grown in hot houses and Lord Rothschild's former gardener, a man called Ellis, who specialised in orchid growing, was employed for this purpose in a workforce of sixteen gardeners.

Garden fetes in aid of charity were regular events, particularly during the 1914-1918 war, when marquees and awnings were erected to forestall inclement weather, and the gardens were open to the general public most weekends in the summer.

The courtyard at the back of the house was surrounded by greenhouses, stables and other offices, entered through s stone archway, and featured a clock tower which has since been demolished.

Two riding horses and five or six carriage horses were stabled under the protection of a head coachman and under coachman prior to the introduction of motor cars.

Cottages were provided for some of the male staff, the head gardener living at the main entrance gate and the under gardener in a cottage situated in a field behind the property.

Pevsner dismissively described the house as a luscious villa in which debased Jacobean had been mixed with Gothic and Italianate details to produce a very bad composition, but it might now be opportune to re-examine the subject with a more analytical approach, for without becoming embroiled in Pevsner's justified abhorrence of bad taste one must accord this building a greater degree of scholarship than he was prepared to give it. Viewed from the main south lawn the house shows a marked similarity, in general outline to a public building, such as a Town Hall or Guild Hall in Flanders or its northern neighbours, and further careful examination of comparative details would tend to confirm the opinion that the design of the building was inspired by the Early Flemish Renaissance with allowance for Victorian crudity.

To appreciate, this concept it is necessary to consider briefly the development of Early Renaissance architecture in Europe. This style, which had its origins in Italy, was introduced into Holland, Belgium, the Western German States and Denmark from France, not as a complete concept, as Inigo Jones and his contemporaries introduced Palladian architecture into Britain from Italy, but as decorative detailing to be applied to basically Gothic buildings. Thus elaborately designed dormer windows first seen on such buildings as Fountainebleau and Chambord may be seen repeated in almost identical forms on buildings along the western coast of Europe as far as Gdansk in Poland.

Local influences often produced regional characteristics important to the development of the style, so that in Holland the predominant use of brickwork and the sobering influence of the Calvinist Church resulted in a different expression of architectural form from that to be seen in neighbouring Belgium which was under Spanish occupation and Jesuit influence and bound by predominantly stone construction.

Belgian design was similar to French design but characterised by a greater freedom amounting to extravagance and to the grotesque with picturesque results to be further influenced by the coarse and realistic humour characteristic of all Flemish art.

Facades were often asymmetrical with total disregard for architectural balance and a complete lack of French refinement. Renaissance details were quite freely used alongside Gothic ones, to produce a conglomerate form despised by the classical purists of later years.

Apart from the general massing of Denzell most of the detailing can be seen in Ypres, Bruges, Antwerp and Ghent or in neighbouring cities across the Belgian border. The Gothic oriel window and turret, supported on an alabaster column, with quatrefoil tracery which is a dominant feature on the south elevation, is a detail common in many Flemish buildings but it can also be seen in more elegant form at Chateau d'O in northern France and with regional modifications at the Rathaus Chapel in Prague.

Steep pitched roofs similar to the one at Denzell may be seen on large buildings throughout this part of Europe but the decorative tiling is more common to northern France and Belgium and the detailing of the dormer windows and finials, also seen on Denzell, are common to buildings throughout northern Europe as previously noted. The mullioned and transome windows are a feature common to sixteenth century buildings, including Britain, although the bow windows present problems of identification. The porte-cochere is an interesting and useful feature, being a porch large enough for the passage of wheeled vehicles, and is perhaps more Italianate than other features of the building and could be a free translation of any number of Renaissance arcades, including Hatfield House in Hertfordshire. It is interesting to note that Early Renaissance architecture in England, although introduced from France, tended to have less affinity with that of northern Europe than the countries discussed, and whilst many fine examples exist from the time of Elizabeth 1, such as Kirby Hall, Hardwick, Audley End, Hatfield House and Wollaton Hall they are mainly located in rural areas and very little influence can be noted in English towns today.

This French influence was also of much shorter duration in England, than in the other countries mentioned, no doubt due to the introduction of Palladian work direct from Italy.
(to be continued)

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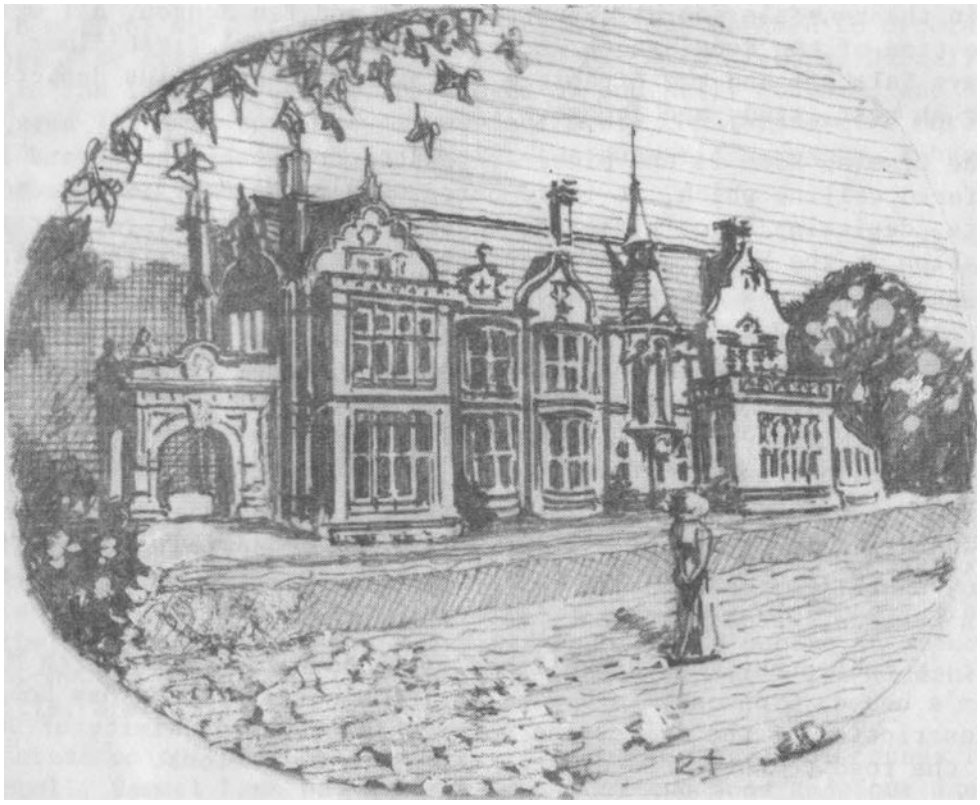

Denzell: A mid-nineteenth century gentleman's residence in Bowdon.

DENZELL (continued)
by Valerie Trenbath

The novelty of Northern European Gothic and Renaissance architecture influenced many Victorian architects in the nineteenth century who erected buildings inspired by these sources, of which locally we have Waterhouse's Town Hall in Knutsford, influenced by Dutch Renaissance, his Eaton Hall, based on French Renaissance, Lynn's Town Hall in Chester, with strong French-Flemish influence and John Douglas's French Chateau at Eccleston, none of which has been dealt with satisfactorily by either critics or historians. The purpose of this article is not to justify or glamorise what is potentially debased architectural composition, but to accord it an interest hitherto ignored.

The interior of Denzell is as interesting as the exterior, with many features worthy of consideration. A screen which divides the hail from the vestibule is glazed with yellow and sepia glass, illustrating Elizabeth I at Tilbury and on a journey to Kenilworth, and has a marked similarity to the old glass work in the library at Dunham Massey Hall.

The fireplace is inspired by French-Flemish design with interesting blue tiles, while the wooden ceiling, although rather crude, is in keeping with the design and period of the fireplace. The staircase which forms part of the oriel window (previously mentioned) is glazed with stained glass depicting the figures of Chaucer, Shakespeare and Milton, while that in the roundals depicts Spenser, Bacon and Ben Jonson, all writers at the time of the Renaissance. A small window on the first floor landing portrays Falstaff and the fireplace contains coloured tiles depicting Labour at rest, study and repose.

The Drawing Room is the piece-de-resistance of this house and has a coffered ceiling which, it is rumoured, was painted by imported Italian artists, depicting Aesop's fables, a very popular subject for interior decoration in the Victorian era, and should be compared with similar paintings at Burgess's Castell Coch near Cardiff.

The ceiling of the billiards and smoking room is also of some interest as it is painted to show pictures of draughts, dice, cards, snooker, billiards and pipes, circumscribed by the motte "Play not for gain, who plays for more than he can lose with pleasure stakes his heart, perhaps his wife too, and whom she hath bore", a salutary warning against gambling. It would be of considerable interest to know if the original furnishings of Denzell matched the design of the house, similar to Rothschild's French Chateau, Waddesden Manor, in Buckinghamshire.

It is noteworthy that Denzell has often been identified with Mr. Oldham's house, Grosmont, in Howard Spring's novel All the Day Long, from the description of the drive, the portcochere, the proximity of Dunham Park, the road to Knutsford and the Cornish associations.

Erratum
In the first part of the article on Denzell in the Bowdon Sheaf No 7, April, 1986, the words "the Gothic Oriel window and turret, supported on an asbestos column" should read "the Gothic oriel window and, turret supported on an alabaster column". We regret this error.

DENZELL OWNERS & OCCUPIERS
by Marjorie Cox

In 1874 the new journal, *The British Architect,* began a series of articles on 'Country Mansions of Manchester', a category into which Denzell fits. Such a house, in between a large villa and a 'palace of the nobility' was for a 'Manchester man' who had acquired the means of living. in a mansion and in prosperous Manchester of the mid-nineteenth century there were many such. Although the 6th Earl of Stamford had been reluctant to sell land on Green Walk so near his park, his grandson, the 7th Earl, sold large plots in the l860s to such Manchester men as T.H. Gaddum and Spencer Bickham, whose 'mansions', Oakley and Bickham House, still stand. The ten acres on which Denzell stands were sold in 1874 by the 7th Earl to Robert Scott of 56 Mosley Street, Manchester, a spinning manufacturer.

Not much is known bf him, but he was the son of a farmer and was born at Abbey Holm, Cumberland, in 1822. Presumably he came to Manchester to make his fortune in the cotton industry, for, at the. time of his marriage at St. Luke's, Cheetham Hill, he was a salesman. By the time he built Denzell he was a man of considerable wealth and ready for a 'mansion' , for the house cost £18,000 to build, (reputedly as much as £30,000 in all) and in 1881 he and his wife were living there with a staff of nine servants. The origin of the name Denzell is a mystery,. but it has been suggested that it is Cornish: certainly Maria Scott, Robert's wife, was born at St Marago in Cornwall. Scott employed the well-known firm of Manchester architects, Clegg and Knowles, to design the house, (the brickwork was by James Hamilton) and, it is said, imported Italian workmen to decorate ceilings. The grand style in which he and his wife lived at Denzell is shown in the 1881 census: he, then aged 59 and still at work; and his wife, aged 71, were served by a resident staff consisting of a butler, and under-butler, a cook, a housemaid, two domestic servants, a head-gardener, a coachman and a groom.

Robert Scott, who is recorded at Denzell in the 1878 local street directory, disappeared from it after 1904, and Denzell was on the market in 1904. The new owner, who appears in the 1905 directory, was Samuel Lamb, a wealthy shipper of the firm of Coddington and Lamb of Peter Street, Manchester, which he in fact ran from the turn of the century.. The firm's chief commodity was cotton goods and they had cotton mills in Lancashire, Rumania and the Argentine. Later, when shipping declined, they started a Patent Knitting Company in Droylsden, making underwear.

Samuel Lamb attended the very live and influential Bowdon Downs Congregational Church and was a generous supporter of Congregationalism and also of Liberalism: Denzell was the scene of garden fetes in aid of both causes. Under Mr. Lamb the garden was a feature of Denzell — he left the house much as it was — and was open to the public at weekends. The hot-houses had vines, peaches and orchids, in which the gardener, Mr. Ellis, specialised.

Whereas no children of Robert Scott appear in the 1881 census living at Denzell, Samuel Lamb had a large family of two sons and four daughters, which in those days needed a large domestic establishment — butler, parlour maid, lady's maid, serving maid, cook, kitchen maid and house maid, and outside, head and under-gardener and head and under- coachman, later chauffeur. The staff (and their children) formed a community and group photographs of them exist taken at Denzell and at Abberley Hall, Worcestershire, the rented country house in which for seven years the Lambs spent their summer holidays, taking their staff with them.

As in many of the older Bowdon families philanthropy played a large part in the lives of the Lamb family. A photograph of Samuel Lamb shows him in the midst of a crowd of children on holiday in North Wales at his expense. His daughter, Grace, did voluntary work in Ancoats and many local people will remember the charitable works of Miss Sybil Lamb, incidentally a pupil of Culcheth School.

Samuel Lamb died in December, 1936 leaving lavish bequests to various Congregational Church organisations. After his death Denzell changed from private to public ownership, for his children, Mr C.J. and Miss Sybil Lamb gave the house and its grounds to the then local authority, Bowdon Urban District Council, in memory of their parents. The Council welcomed the offer of the grounds as a park, but was much exercised about a use for the house: it was too large for the Council offices and there was even talk of demolition. A combination of vision, chance and individual initiative led to the realisation at Denzell of the idea, new then in England, of a residential adult education college. The vision was that of Ross D. Waller, appointed Director of Extra-Mural Studies at Manchester University in 1937. Professor, as he later became, Waller lived in Bowdon at that time and describes in his short book, Residential College, the process which transformed Denzell. One of the chances was that the gardener at the house next door to his was the Chairman of Bowdon Urban District Council, the new owners of Denzell.

The University felt unable to take over the house officially, but the enthusiasts (prominent among them Mrs Waller) decided in March, 1938 to form a limited liability company and mobilised voluntary support in money, kind and labour especially from prospective students. Miss Lamb offered £150 a year for three years for resident caretakers and Bowdon Urban District Council charged only a nominal rent. It was represented on the Council of Management and stipulated that the Guild should provide teas for people using the grounds, which was done in the conservatory. The name, the Lamb Guildhouse, assumed by many to refer to the Lamb family, is revealed by Professor Waller to derive from Paschal lamb, emblematic of Christian hope and purpose, on the heraldic shield designed for the Guildhouse by Mrs Waller.

In June 1938 Denzell opened in its new capacity for a Whitsuntide weekend school. By December over 300 people had stayed there on weekend courses. Although there had been some objections in the correspondence columns of the Altrincham and Bowdon Guardian to this supposed threat to 'the peaceful seclusion of Bowdon', there was considerable local support and local people attended the lectures given by such noted figures as C. Day Lewis, L.A.G. Strong, Ashley Dukes, F.S. Sladen-Smith and Cyril Ray.

With the outbreak of war in 1939 Bowdon Council required Denzell as an evacuation centre for expectant mothers. The Lamb Guildhouse, however, remained in Bowdon for a time, as Mrs E. Lamb offered her house on The Firs, Newington, as temporary premises. After the war the Lamb Guildhouse as such disappeared, though the Association continued, and the official University residential adult education college was eventually located at Holly Royde in Withington not in a country suburb. Denzell from 1946 was leased by the local authority and opened as an annexe to Altrincham General Hospital in 1949: it remains in use under the regional health authority.

The chief sources on which this article is based are The Builder, Vol 39, the 1881 census, reminiscences of Mr George Evans and R.D. Waller, Residential College.

LOCAL SALTWORKINGS IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY
by Hazel Pryor

Recent research by Hazel Pryor shows that some salt was being manufactured in Dunham Massey in the early seventeenth century. Notes from the ledger kindly made available to her by the National Trust, in the Silver Collection Room in Dunham Massey Hall. "Abstract of Deeds etc....1714 record:"

9 August, Chas (1633)
For £200 paid. George Bowdon of Bowdon and Elinor his wife and William Bowdon grant to Christopher Anderton a parcel of land - 2 acres called Bendeye in Dunham by Bollyn River and all the Salt Springs therein, and a close of 2 acres called Hermitts Faughe in Dunham and a parcel of land in Dunham cont. 143 yards in length and 7 yards Breadth with a lane leading along one side of the Little Broadfield and Hermitts Faughe for conveniency of passage with Salt. - for 3 lives at £3 rent. - and after to Raphe Heaton for 99 years at £3 rent with power to the said George Bowdon.and his heirs to erect 2 salt pans for his won use and to have the Herbage of the lands.

7 Oct
Deed and Recovery of the above to Hugh Rigby and Ralph Worthington.

14 August, 11 Chas (1635)
Assigned back to William Booth (was to raise a portion of £1,000 for his daughters - paid in 1649)

26 December 1650
For £300 - William Bowdon to George Booth - the capital messuage in Bowdon called Bowdon Hall and all lands in Bowdon. 26 March 1651 (as 26 December 1650) Plus the Bendeye in Dunham and the Saltworks therein - Refs to:- Hermitts Faughe and the Little Broadfield.

30 April, 1651
Confirmed

11 July 1655
A messuage in tenancy of Even Evens including Bendeye and Little Broadfield as then marked out (+ ref. to Hermitts Faughe). George Booth grants to William Bowdon the said premises - forever - with proviso - to be void if any salt works be suffered to be erected therein.

(No further references).

. . . . .

TRAVELLING THROUGH BOWDON in 1689
by Celia Fiennes

Celia Fiennes, the daughter of a Cromwellian Colonel and distant relative of George Booth, second Earl of Warrington, travelled through Bowdon in 1689, when she recorded:

"Thence I went a very pleasant road much on the Downs most champion ground some few enclosures; I went by Dunham Massey the Earl of Warrington's house which stands in a very fine park. It stands low but appeared very well to sight, its old fashioned building which appears more in the inside and the furniture, old but good gardens walled in". The term 'champion ground' refers to champaign which was open and unenclosed ground.

Celia Fiennes also described salt workings which could have applied to Dunham Woodhouses.

"I came to the town (Northwich), it is not very large, its full of Salt works the brine pitts being all here and about so they make all things convenient to follow the making of salt, so that the town is full of smoak from the salterns on all side; they have within these few years found in their brine pitts a hard Rocky salt that looks cleer like sugar candy, and its taste shews it to be Salt, they call this Rock salt, it will make very good brine with fresh water to use quickly".

Nearly 300 years later, on October 3rd 1983, Sir Ranulph Fiennes, addressing the Sixty Club at Bowdon Assembly Rooms, concerning his Arctic and Antarctic Expeditions, quoted the nursery rhyme

"Ride a cock horse to Banbury Cross to see a Fiennes lady on a white horse." Celia Fiennes was the lady referred to.

THOMAS WALTON, GENT
by Ronald Trenbath

Thomas Walton, of Dunham Wood Houses, who died on February 6th, 1757, leaving property in Bowdon, Dunham Massey and Altrincham and salt refining equipment in the local salt works, gave to his executors, by a Will dated August 22nd, 1754, the sum of £1,000 for charitable uses within the township of Dunham Massey, but this bequest was extended to include Bowdon and Altrincham under a codicil dated August 23rd 1755, when the residue of his estate was also left to charity.

George, Earl of Warrington, Mary, Countess of Stamford, Lord Grey and the Honourable Booth Grey were named as executors of the Will but all of them declined to act except for the Countess, who proved the Will in the Ecclesiastical Court of the diocese of Chester, and undertook the execution of its provisions.

Money from the estate was to be used to provide sheets and blankets for the poor of Dunham Massey every year and for the poor of Bowdon and Altrincham in alternate years, while the sum of £20 was to be spent on woollen and linen cloth for the poor of Dunham Massey only. Walton expressed a wish during his lifetime that provisions should be made for the education of local children, and the Countess took it as part of her duties, as executrix, to fulfil this wish.

A plot of waste land at Little Heath, rented at 5/- from the manor of Dunham Massey, provided a site for a building consisting of a schoolroom, a kitchen, and bed-chamber for the schoolmistress, and other convenient Offices.

The development cost £207. 2s. leaving a balance of £792. 18s from the original £1,000 legacy which was placed "on real or government securities" in order that the interest could pay the ground rent, the schoolmistress's salary and "to find firing and books and other implements for use of school". On July 8th 1760, a trust deed was signed and a receipt endorsed for the balance of the legacy which was put on bond to John Jackson Esq, Great Queen Street, London, at 4% per annum.

The Countess was responsible for selecting a fit person to keep account of receipts and disbursements and general state of the school, and the owners of Dunham Massey Estate were to be responsible for appointing the schoolmistress, paying her salary and discharging her at their own will and pleasure.

Provision was made for the selection of pupils between the ages of 3 and 7, and for their expulsion if necessary, and if insufficient poor children were available places were to be made available for fee-paying Pupils.

Boys were taught to read but girls were also taught to knit, spin and to "work plain work", and all of them were taught the catechism by heart and had prayers morning and evening. They were examined at quarter day every year, or oftener if thought fit, and no fires were allowed in the schoolroom between May 1st and October 1st. A plaque over the entrance doors records "Thomas Walton, Gent" as the benefactor.

In 1759 further money from Walton's estate was used to found a school at Oldfield House at Seamons Moss on the north side of Dunham Park. £2,000 was spent on the property and £5241-13s-2d invested in 3%, Reduced Bank Annuities to provide for the instruction of 40 boys from Bowdon and Altrincham as well as Dunham Massey. The master was paid a salary of £60, but this was reduced by £20 to cover expenses incurred by his private, fee-paying pupils.

In 1867 the school was transferred to a newly-erected building on the opposite side of Oldfield Lane, and Oldfield House was converted into a private residence, the revenue from which formed an endowment so that the number of pupils could be increased to 90. During the following hundred years the school gained a wide reputation for very strict discipline and thorough basic education, and boys travelled from every part of the district to attend it for many years after alternative schools became Available.

RANDOLPH CALDECOTT, ARTIST, LIVED HERE
by Myra Kendrick

It was a young Caldecott who lodged in Bowdon in the early 1870s and perhaps a little earlier. Exactly where he lodged is at present unknown, as well as the exact dates. In 1872, at the age of twenty-six, as his career took a decisive turn from banking to illustration, first of periodicals and later of books, he left the north-west for London and did not return. But, a Cheshire-born man, he did not forget his origins.

Randolph Caldecott was born at Chester in 1846 and was a pupil at the King's School from the age of ten to fifteen, by which time he was head boy. Not particularly academic, as one of his brothers was, he started work as a bank clerk at Whitchurch, where he lodged on a farm and enjoyed country pursuits. In 1867 he transferred to the Manchester and Salford Bank in Mosley Street, Manchester (later Williams and Glynn's). It was while working there that he had rooms in Bowdon, probably for his later Manchester years.

From boyhood he had shown aptitude for drawing and a taste for country life. He loved animals, especially horses and dogs, and while in Shropshire had opportunities to study farm animals at close range. In Manchester he met artists, attended evening classes at the School of Art, sketched assiduously in his spare time (and sometimes in the bank's) and exhibited a painting at a Manchester exhibition.

He seems to have enjoyed rambling round the north Cheshire countryside for correspondence addressed to Manchester friends a few years after he left for London mentions Bowdon, Dunham, Bollington and Knutsford. So the inspiration for some of the highly expressive animals and birds (his pigs being specially amiable) of the picture books for which he became loved as his career advanced, could have come from nearby farms and fields. His jolly huntsmen are specially memorable, as well as the lively series of illustrations to "John Gilpin's Ride" and to well-known nursery rhymes such as "The House that Jack Built" and "A frog he would a-wooing go" with its hero dressed in elegant tails and carrying a bouquet.

Curiously, Caldecott has a link as an artist with another short-term Bowdon resident, Mrs J.H.Ewing, three of whose children's stories he illustrated and with whom he had an extensive correspondence. He designed a cover for "Aunt Judy's Magazine", for which she wrote and which she helped to edit, and contributes a cover design to a memoir of Mrs. Ewing written and published after her death by her sister Horatia Gatty.

Caldecott's illustrations to three of her stories, "Lob-Lie-by-the-Fire", 'Jackanapes" and "Daddy Darwin's Dovecot", published in shilling volumes by S.P.C.K., show the charm, vigour and humour of his line drawings based on country life. The old gaffers who open and close the story of the foundling boy, Jack March, who was devoted to old Mr. Darwin's tumbler pigeons and eventually inherited his dovecote; the crowds running to greet Mr Darwin and Jack as they arrive in the village street to test the pigeons' homing capacity; the fat, happy pig enjoying being scrubbed down in the sty by his owner, Jack, all in the last-named book; and in "Jackanapes" the cloaked horseman galloping away down a country lane; the brainless grey goose on the village green and the duckling it fostered; the little boy Jackanapes himself riding wildly across the green blowing a toy trumpet: these and other illustrations are little gems of Caldecott's art.

We have no evidence of return to Bowdon by the artist, any more than of where he lodged for that brief period, but we have his own words to attest his affection for the place: "Having a great love and yearning for Bowdon and Dunham," he wrote to a friend in 1873, "and the 'publics' which there adjacent lie, I think of you on these calm Sunday evenings about the hour when my errant legs used to repose beneath the deal of the sequestered inn at Bollinton."

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The Bowdon Sheaf

A BOWDON HISTORY SOCIETY PUBLICATION

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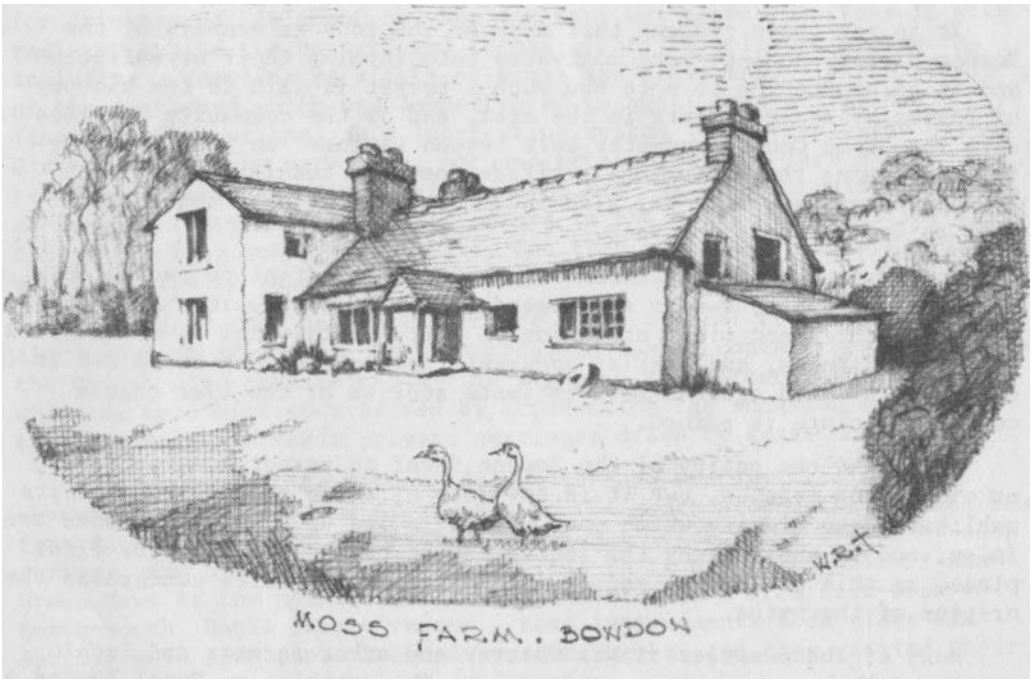


Mrs Gaskell and her family regularly visited Moss Farm, often to recuperate from illness in a rural environment.

RECORDING THE PAST
by Ronald Trenbath

Patrick Geddes, the Scottish sociologist, believed that historical heritage was the cornerstone of a stable society and the conurbation "accumulates and embodies the heritage of a region", and for this reason he was more interested in the renewal of historic towns than in the building of model garden communities.

Cecil Stewart, the architect and planner, taught his students that to ignore this important factor would have disastrous results and when his warning went unheeded and wholesale demolition and redevelopment took place in the inner cities, although undertaken with the very best intentions, the dire results can now be judged all too clearly. In further evidence of this fact it is interesting to note that the authorities responsible for building the new city of Brazilia landscaped and scheduled the contractors' compound and sheds as an area of historical interest, in the vague hope of providing some heritage on which to develop the community.

It is for these reasons that many of the founder members of the Bowdon History Society were motivated into forming their organisation and it is heartening to note how much interest is paid to the history of Bowdon by new residents in the area, and as the community develops into the "Home County commuter belt beyond Watford" so the necessity for preserving the historical heritage does not consist merely of buildings and monuments but also includes institutions, and customs and, as Geddes insisted, Folk.

In order to preserve these factors it is essential to record Folk Memories of people, events and legends from the past which have never been documented and might otherwise be lost. Statistical facts recorded in Census Returns, and similar documents, are of immense value but it is only when studied against more intimate stories of the time that a complete picture is gained.

It is not the policy of the Bowdon Sheaf to perpetuate inaccurate or misleading legends, but it is the duty of those responsible for its publication to clarify which ones may be relied upon and which ones are false, and to analyse why the latter should have occurred in the first place, as this can often lead to interesting discoveries concerning the origins of the myths.

Many of the memories of Max Chester and other farmers and local country folk have been incorporated into the articles on Rural Bowdon, and now those of Harold Bonson, in the urban area, are included in this edition of the Sheaf, and we are most concerned that these should be continued in future issues. We appeal, therefore, to all our readers to provide us with any interesting items of past events or buildings, for inclusion in this feature of our publication.

LOCAL MEMORIES
by Harold Bonson

Mr Bonson writes that "in the 1920s and presumably long before, curfew bells were rung from Bowdon Church tower at 8.00 p.m. every evening during the winter, and possibly in summer as well. The practice was to ring for about ten minutes and then, on a single bell, to chime out the date with one stroke for each day of the month. The sound of the curfew was a good signal to mothers who lived within earshot to pack their offspring to bed".

According to Ingham the curfew was rung on the fifth bell. The sixth bell was tolled for funerals followed by all six thrice each for a male, but only twice for a female.

The origin of curfew was coeve-feu or firecover, an earthenware cover which had to be placed over fire upon the sounding of the warning in order to prevent a conflagration. One such cover was recently excavated at Bewsey Old Hall, near Warrington.

Mr Bonson goes on to report that "in the mid-1920's there stood a solitary taxi outside the Griffin, where there was a long strip of setts in the middle of the road to form a taxi-rank. There was a similar strip opposite the Stamford Arms round the corner. The fountain was then opposite the north gate of the church and there were no flower beds for drinkers to lie about on. The one taxi was probably a Renault with radiator behind the bonnet, and it had plenty of polished brasswork, including a complicated affair of brass and glass tubes in the middle of the dashboard which was demonstrated to small boys of the day (including the writer) as a lubricating system (drip-feed). The driver did not seem to be very busy, perhaps because private cars and telephones were diverting business from his 'pitch', but his taxi was an elegant feature of the quiet square in the heart of the village. The taxi-ranks long outlived the taxi, but they eventually disappeared. It would be nice to think they were still under the tarmac.

It is said that before 1914 there was a special train from Altrincham to Manchester each Thursday to enable concert-goers to attend the Halle. Also that it was a fine sight in the streets of Altrincham when the wealthier ones passed by, dressed for the occasion on the way to the station in their private carriages drawn by smart horses. The geology of the Bowdon hill, with sand overlaying clay, encourages the formation of springs on the south slope. The private road from Park Road to Bow Green Road has at the lower end a series of such springs, now hidden under concrete flags in front of the wall of Bow Green Mews at the point where Bow Green Road turns from east-west to north-south. Until fairly recent road improvements took place the springs were open pools bounded by stone kerbs, and they carried their fair share of tadpoles, etc, in the spring.

On the other side of the hill is Spring Bank House and adjoining recreation ground, and Spring Road (in Hale but in Bowdon Parish). The old Bowdon-Altrincham and Bowdon-Hale local authority boundary ran along the footpath west of Spring Bank, down Stamford Road and across the junction towards Hale Station, down Peel Avenue and across the Grammar School field.

Part of the route across the field used to be an open stream which disappeared into the grounds of The Coppice, South Downs Road and eventually reached the Bollin via Motley Bank at a point below the foot of Grange Road. One can guess that much more of the boundary route was once a stream fed from springs at Spring Bank, especially as the sound of water can sometimes be heard (traffic permitting) coming from a manhole in the middle of the Langham Road-Ashley Road junction.

A VISIT TO BOWDON IN 1790
by John Byng

John Byng travelling through Bowdon in 1790, noting good inns in Cheshire, records in his diary that:.... "leaving Bowdon Church, to my left, soon entered Altrincham, a long straggling market town. At the Unicorn Inn, I was received, and treated, much to my travelling wishes, in a clean, whitewashed room, with a stone floor (for the day was hot); where a sirloin of roast beef, potatoes, cold pigeon pie, and cheesecakes, were spread forth before me, upon a clean, coarse cloth, covering a large old, oaken table, and I must needs order in addition a gooseberry pie. Most unluckily, Dunham Massey, a seat of Lord Stamford's (and lately belonging to the Booths, Earls of Warrington) was not to be seen upon a Sunday.

This place, if visible, I had not gone from or from my inn so soon (a good summer's day stop), had not a trader been turned in upon me; and that destroys all reveries, or touring accounts.

	£	s	d
Dinner	0	1	3
Wine	0	1	0
Beer	0	0	3
Horses	0	0	10
Total	0	3	4

T.B. (Byng's servant, Thomas Bush) who has no more religion than my horses, observed, with some asperity, that they are all 'Methodishes' here".

THE GASKELLS AND MOSS FARM
by Myra Kendrick

Bowdon's strongest literary association is probably with the Cheshire novelist Elizabeth Cleghorn Gaskell (1810-65) brought up in Knutsford and after marriage having her home in Manchester. Her letters give evidence of regular visits to Bowdon, especially during the 1850s, when Moss Farm was a loved retreat from Manchester atmosphere. Surviving letters to her eldest daughter Marianne between May 1851, when Marianne was away at boarding school, and January 1857, show how much the care of Miss Walker, the farmer's sister, was valued for the younger girls during periods of convalescence.

The first reference to the Bowdon farm (not named) appears in a letter of May 1851: "The two little ones are going with Hearn to lodge at Bowden in a farmhouse on Saturday." At this period Mrs. Gaskell regularly used the spelling Bowden.

A letter of 4 September 1851 shows that, with the opening of the Manchester/Bowdon railway in 1849, it was possible to escape for a day to country air at the farm, which the mention of the name Walker identifies as Moss Farm (on the present South Downs Road); it was then the only Bowdon farm tenanted by Walkers. "It was a dismal morning and we doubted if it would clear off; and indeed we gave up the thought of going to spend the day at Bowden as had been planned Then it cleared up so I sent Hearn and the three girls off with a dinner in a basket and tea and sugar to drink tea at Miss Walkers (where they lodge you know). I got away after a lunch-dinner, rushed to Bowden called on Mrs Haughton. Drank tea with the children, came home at six." Hearn was the children's trusted nurse, and the three girls Meta, then aged fourteen, Florence (Flossy or Flossie, variously spelt) eight and Julia, four.

A year later the five year old Julia was taken by her parents to Bowdon after a short, acute illness. "She is quite well now," her mother wrote to Marianne on 28 August 1852, "though easily tired and feeble owing to the hot weather; but well enough to go to Bowdon with Papa and me and stronger than I was in the walking way." This suggests another day-visit; it is not explicitly stated that the family visited the Walkers, though it seems probable.

Mrs. Gaskell herself was far from strong and very busy with Manchester commitments, so the children were used to staying at Moss Farm with their nurse, without their parents. Sometimes a Gaskell servant named Mary escorted them.

A particularly interesting reference to these visits appears in a letter of May 1851: "Hearn Meta Flossie and baby (Julia) went to Bowden yesterday. Mary took them as I was too weak and Papa too busy to go; and returned last night. Flossy was dreadfully tired when- she got there. You have no idea how weak and ill she looks, and how very weak she is. But I am glad to hear her appetite seems better. Mary says she enjoyed the farm house bread and eat an egg which she has not been able to do for a long time and planned to have milk put by for breakfast a la Silverdale." (The Gaskells spent about six weeks each summer at Silverdale on Morecambe Bay.) "Meta has taken crochet, Mr Scott's poems and her sketch book to Bowden."

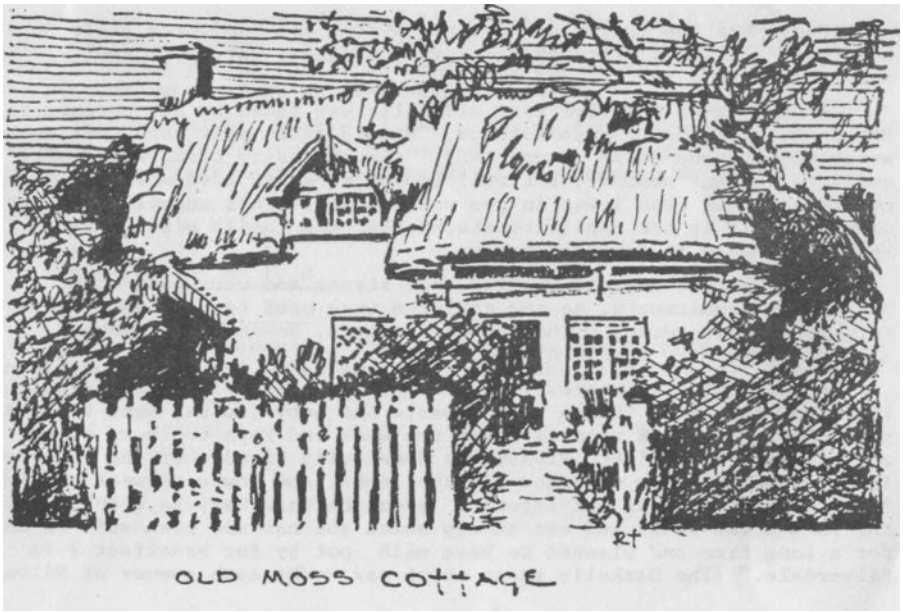
Then comes a valuable brief description of the farm: "It is a small old fashioned farm (like Wood's at Green Heys*) at the foot of the hill. More's the pity." Mrs Gaskell would obviously have preferred fresher air on the hilltop. "They have a double bedded room and a sitting room. They will stay a fortnight I think. But much will depend on Flossy. Papa intends to go over on Thursday and see if she is gaining strength."

A later letter seems to suggest that Hearn's home may have been in Bowdon, so she was, perhaps, the connecting link between the Gaskells and the Walkers of Moss Farm.

If Mrs Gaskell wrote any letters about her own periods of staying at Moss Farm, they appear to have been lost, perhaps through the destroying zeal of her unmarried daughters Meta and Julia, in respect for their mother's love of privacy.

*William and Elizabeth Gaskell, after their marriage, lived in Dover Street, on the edge of the Green Heys area of Manchester, now largely covered by university buildings, but then open farmland with a view of the Pennine hills.

The extracts are taken from The Letters of Mrs Gaskell edited by J.A.V. Chappie and Arthur Pollard (1966) and reproduced by kind permission of the publisher, Manchester University Press.

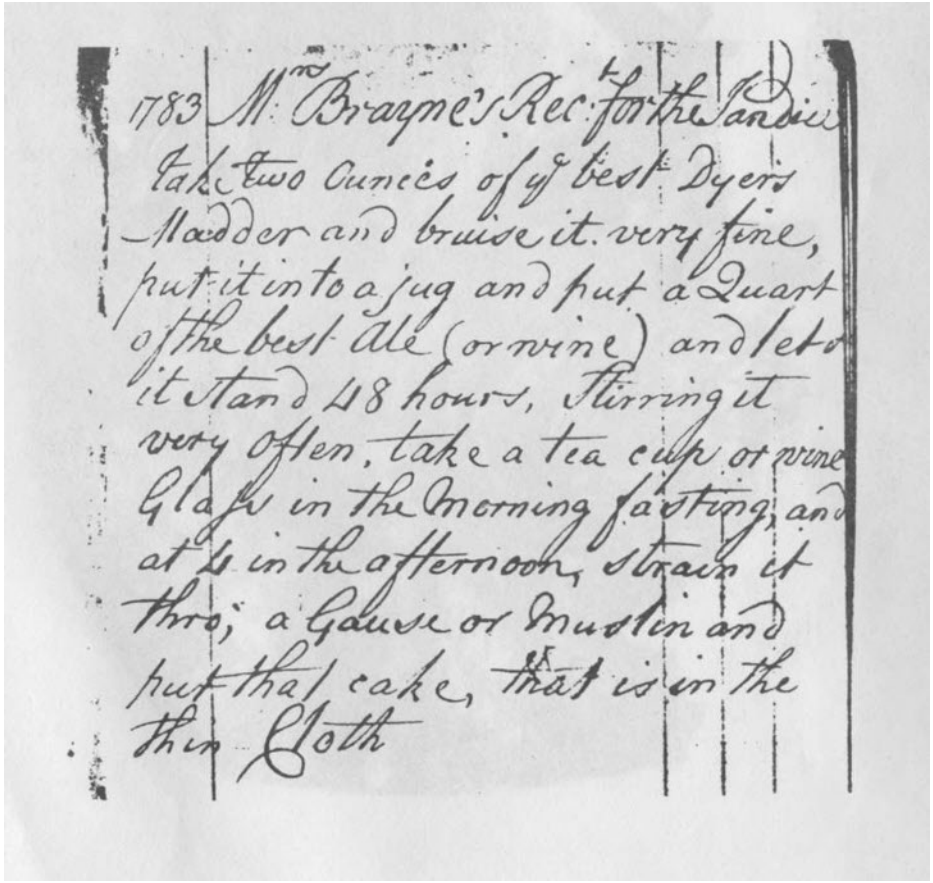


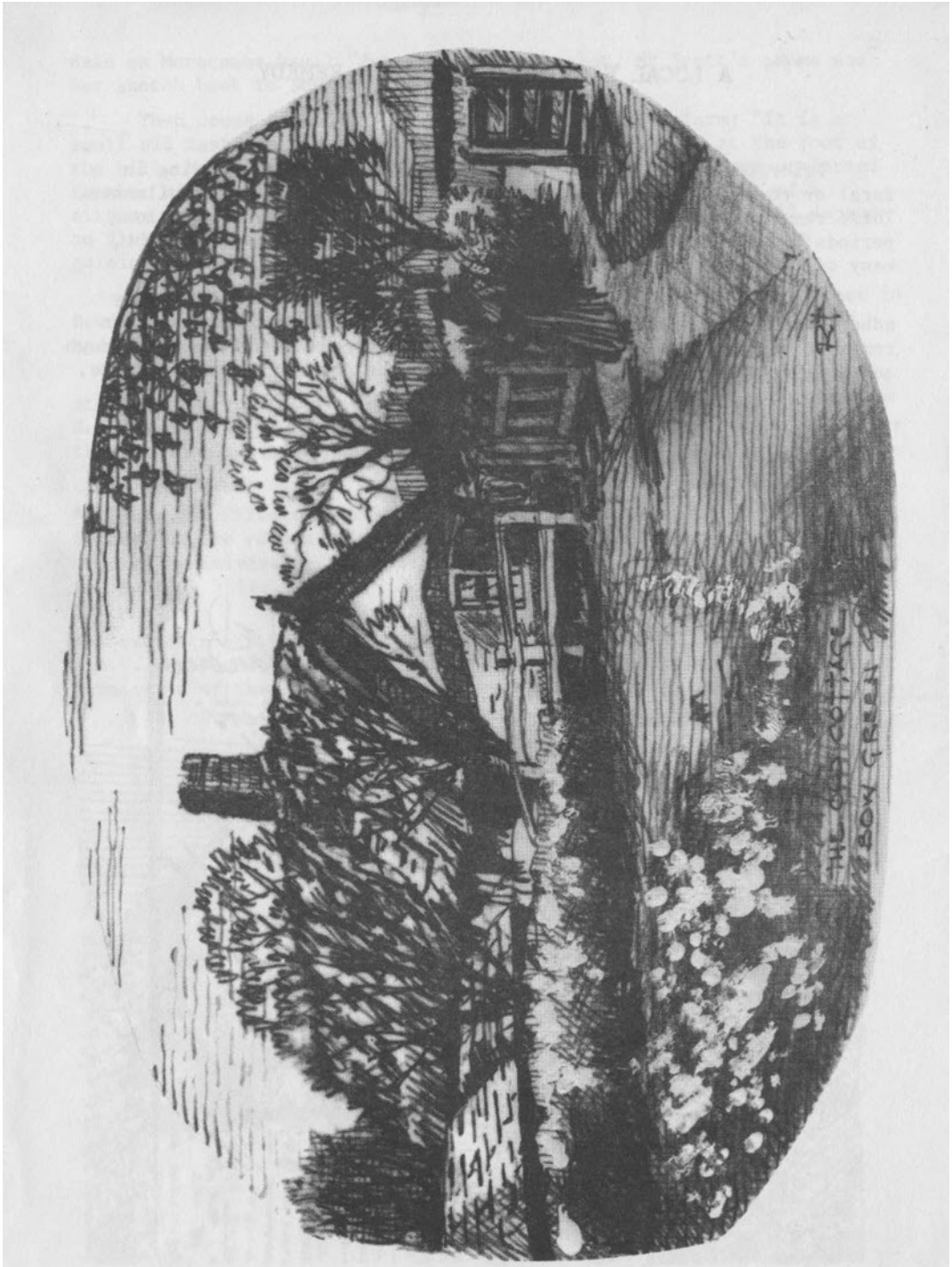
A LOCAL EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY REMEDY

Prior to the introduction of modern medicine people living in rural or remote areas had to rely on local remedies for their ailments. These remedies were the results of experiments carried out over long periods of time and were quite often efficacious although, no doubt, many of them could have had side effects.

Families regularly had their own favourite remedies which they adhered to for generations and there are many local residents who can remember having, in pre-war years, to take concoctions for whooping cough and similar childish illnesses, as well as the dreaded spring medicine, made from the formulae of local families.

The following local remedy for jaundice was given to William Trenbath by Mrs Brayne which he recorded in his account book in 1783.


1783 Mrs Brayne's Rec: for the Jandice
Take two Ounces of y^e best Dyers
Madder and bruise it very fine,
put it into a jug and put a Quart
of the best Ale (or wine) and let
it Stand 48 hours, Stirring it
very often, take a tea cup or wine
Glass in the Morning fasting, and
at 4 in the afternoon, Strain it
thro; a Gause or Muslin and
put that cake, that is in the
thin Cloth



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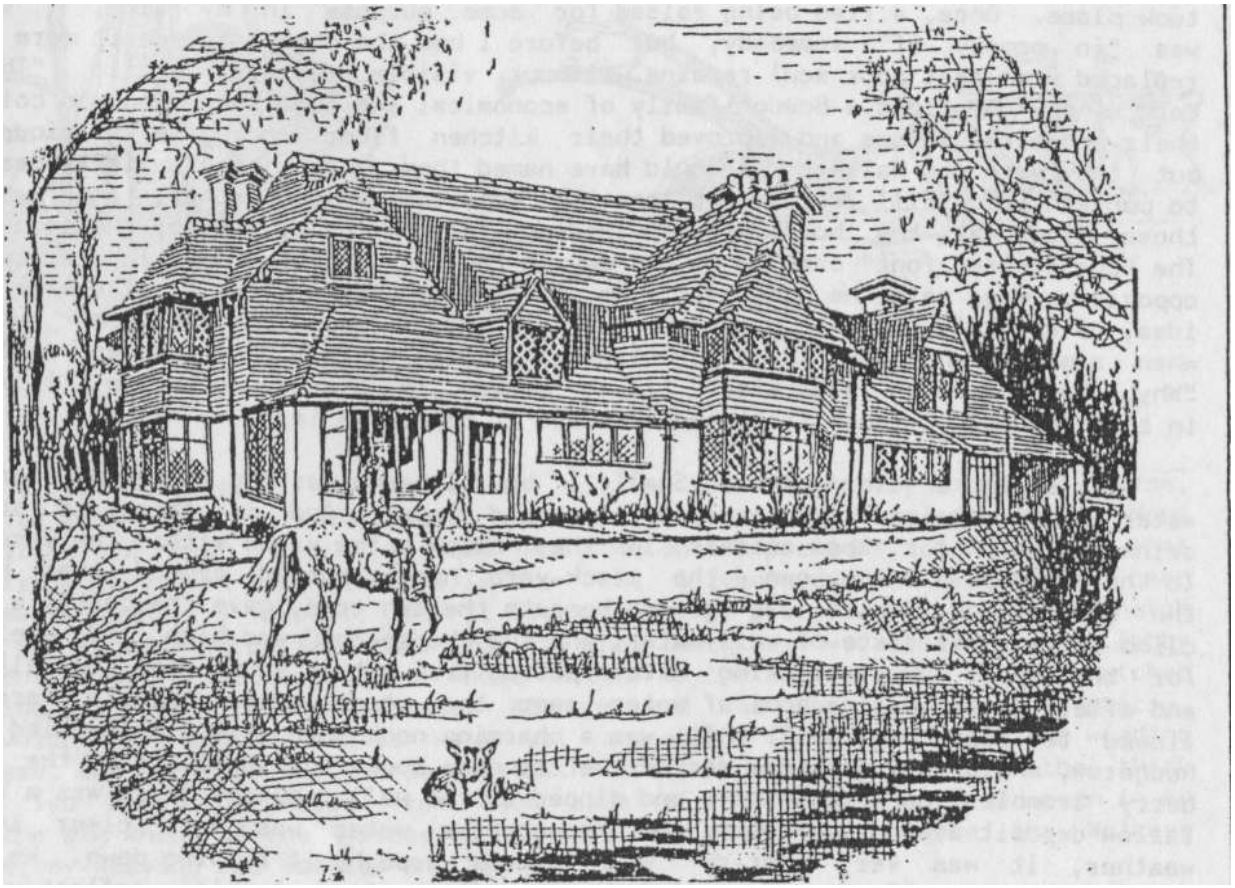


BOW GREEN

This house which was built in the 1920's to the design of Frederick Henry Brazier, Architect, was influenced by the East Anglian Domestic Work of Lutyens and the gardens were set-out in accordance with the teachings of Gertrude Jekyl.

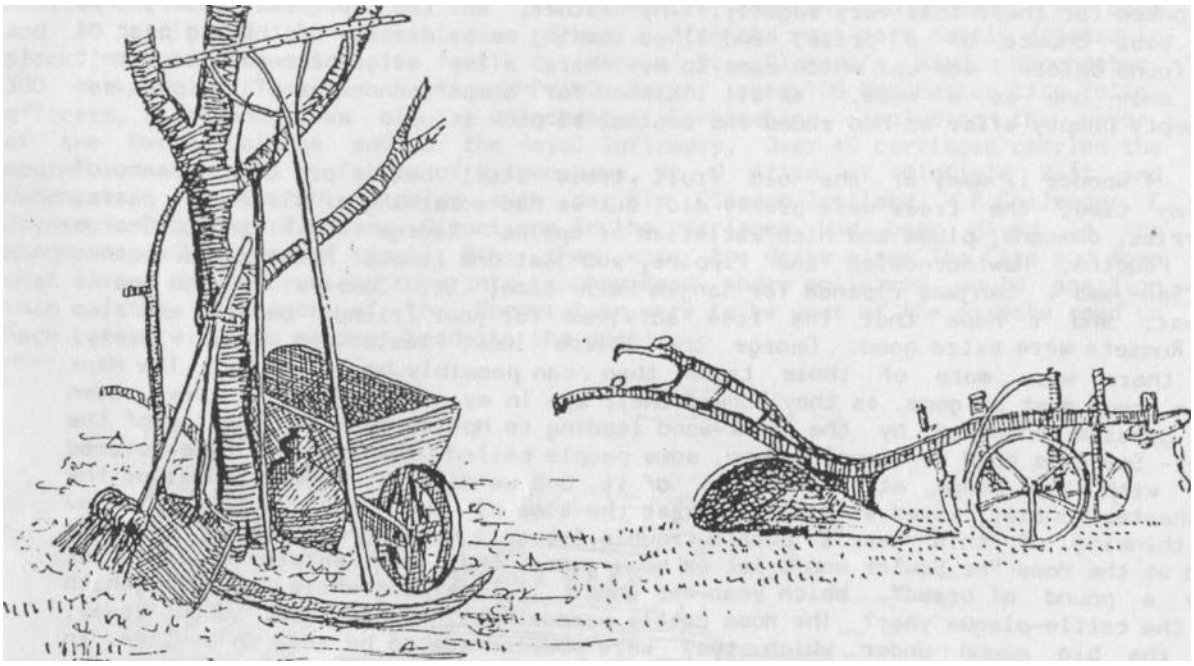
MOSS FARM
by Alice Walker

In June 1944, at the age of 80, Alice Walker, the daughter of William Walker of Moss Farm, Bowdon, wrote an evocative letter to a relative, Josephine Greenwood, in which she recalled memories which are of great interest to those living in the area today. In this letter Alice graphically described the farm and the buildings when she was young, recorded some of its early history, told of her Aunt's recollections of Mrs Gaskell's visits to them and described a local murder Hunt.

The letter is too long to be published in its entirety but extracts are given in this and future issues of the Bowdon Sheaf, the first of which, her description of the farm, is as follows:- "Bowdon Moss House was very old then, and I believe there was some rebuilding or patching-up done by the older Walker tenants, but don't think it was at the thatched end. There must have been alterations before my time. The dairy, which I knew as having only an outside entrance, plainly had once had two windows, and there was a fireplace near the door still."- - - - - - - - - - "However, quite appropriately, as you may agree, the dairy floor was paved with gravestones upside down which came from the church, either interior or exterior, when rebuilding took place. Once, a flag being raised for some purpose in my time, I saw it was "in memory of" somebody, but before I had the chance to see it more it was replaced - so that poor soul remains without visible memorial still! "The Old Lord's day" mentions a Bowdon family of economical and sagacious mind who collected their ancestral stones and improved their kitchen floor in quite a pious way, but they were not Walkers. I could have named them, had it been politely desirable to publish it! Still, we did not lose the opportunity altogether, and I expect those flags at the house front leading to the dairy were of the same order. The "christening font" came in my own day to the Moss front garden, from a cottager opposite, who said he got it from an Ashley garden - but I believe he had an idea, or was told, that it came from Bowdon. We, to be candid, were surprised when someone who saw it after transplantation to Vale House garden, exclaimed, "Why, that's a font! What else?" Is it broken in pieces somewhere, I wonder, in that garden? I fancy frost had affected it before we left.

This is a digression. Shall I be tiresome asking if the Moss drinking water is now obtained from civilised pipe and taps? And if there is still a drinking well for the animals in the hollow a few yards within the yard gate? In the old days - and my own - the stock-yard hedge curved around that hollow; the steep bank, which was grassy beneath the ash tree, gave the cattle a little climb after their taste of well-water, and the "hedge-cop" was high and sheltering for the spot. Our drinking water poured from a tile spout near the well-head, and after leaving a tiny pool of water near the stone where buckets were set, flowed to fill the well. It was a charming nook when primroses nestled in the hedgerow, and pretty greenery decked the crannies above the spout, and the black- berry brambles hung from above and dipped in the well. Always there was a reddish tallow deposit around the spout, and though the water was very clear in calm weather, it was very "carry" when storms brought it rushing down. We called this reddish clay "Car". Our old doctor often stood looking reflectively at the well - and also asked about the water source. They said it came from our Long Moss, from springs at the Yeald foot, and surface water from the hillside. They wondered if he thought it was impure, but it was lovely water to taste and so different from the stone-cold very hard pump water which served the house for general use. I think the doctor had a suspicion that there was some such spring in the Moss land! And these Moss fields under the hill must of course have been boggy enough for anything - a mere continuation of Hale Moss. Of course, Bowdon Moss House is built on marl-clay, not the wonderful gravel soil of Bowdon Hill, but real blue marl.

Is "the Pit" still at the orchard-foot behind the Moss House? We were a bit timorous of the "Big Pit" which was so deep - we were warned off it, but it was very pleasant to be beside it when the banks had big primrose tufts well over the water while you couldn't pick them, or the bushes and hedges on the fields side were white with may; and to smell new-mown hay, or hear the corncrake at dusk, or perhaps a fox's bark - sounds coming "over the water", the sweeter for it to our childish fancy! After we left we heard the pit had been drained, and flat fish found in the bottom, but I suppose it may have some water still? When work was over, or people were tired and wanted refreshment - or especially when anything was happening and our minds were over-excited, I think all the Walkers strolled down to the Pit, at their quite natural resource and escape, either alone or to talk things over.



To come indoors at the Moss of old - it was never a ghostly house; of course, the White Rabbit in the Yeald seemed the speciality of Walkers at Bowdon Moss dwelling so near - but it did not come on the premises. I don't know what alterations have been made since we left - the galvanised roof will have been made water-tight, I expect, but it did not look as picturesque as the old thatch when I saw it as a surprise-shock. You may know that there was formerly no lobby to front door or stairs, the whole width of the central part of the thatched end being one room - the house-place. At one end was the kitchen and pantry, from which the second stairs went up, and at the further end were the winding staircase, the parlour, and the larder with the window set deep in the thick wall. Two beams projected from each side of the house-place, and even in my time, the big knobs of the jersey-hooks were in place, as before the Walkers day, jersey-weaving was carried on there".

Referring to the bedroom occupied by Mrs Gaskell when she visited Moss Farm Alice wrote-

"Personally, I was fond of the room opening from the main stairs, with the deep eaves of the thatch over the little-paned window, with the lattice opening to floor level and the whitewashed post which gave some extra support to the roof. It was the servant girl's room usually, and still called "Mary's room", but after which of the Mary's I don't know. The last but one (who was there when Alfred was born and nursed him [believe) was Mary Booth. She was liked at the Moss, but married and went to America with her husband, who murdered her there - I don't know how or why.

The loft at the top of the higher part of the house had a cemented floor for the convenience of the owls and preservation of ceilings below; the entrance by the square clap door at the gable was somewhat screened in my own time by the tall Jargonelle pear tree, which must have been planted for wall fruit and had grown to greater bulk than any of the apple trees, as well as over-topping the house. The tree saved the trouble of setting a ladder if anybody ever wanted to creep inside the loft, which was only a likely haunt for starlings in my day (and how I liked to hear them pattering and crooning overhead when (woke in the morning!), and boys made an adventure of it now and then; whether they secured any ripe pears thereby, or not. They were the most luscious and delicious pears I have ever tasted, but not easy to reach, so that we looked for their fall very eagerly. My father, as the earliest riser, had the best chance of a prize, and liked teasing me by display of the big pear he had found before I was up, which came to my share after all, because it wasn't the only one as a rule. We all listened for "bumps", and alas if the pear was a Humpty Dumpty after we had raced one another to pick it up.

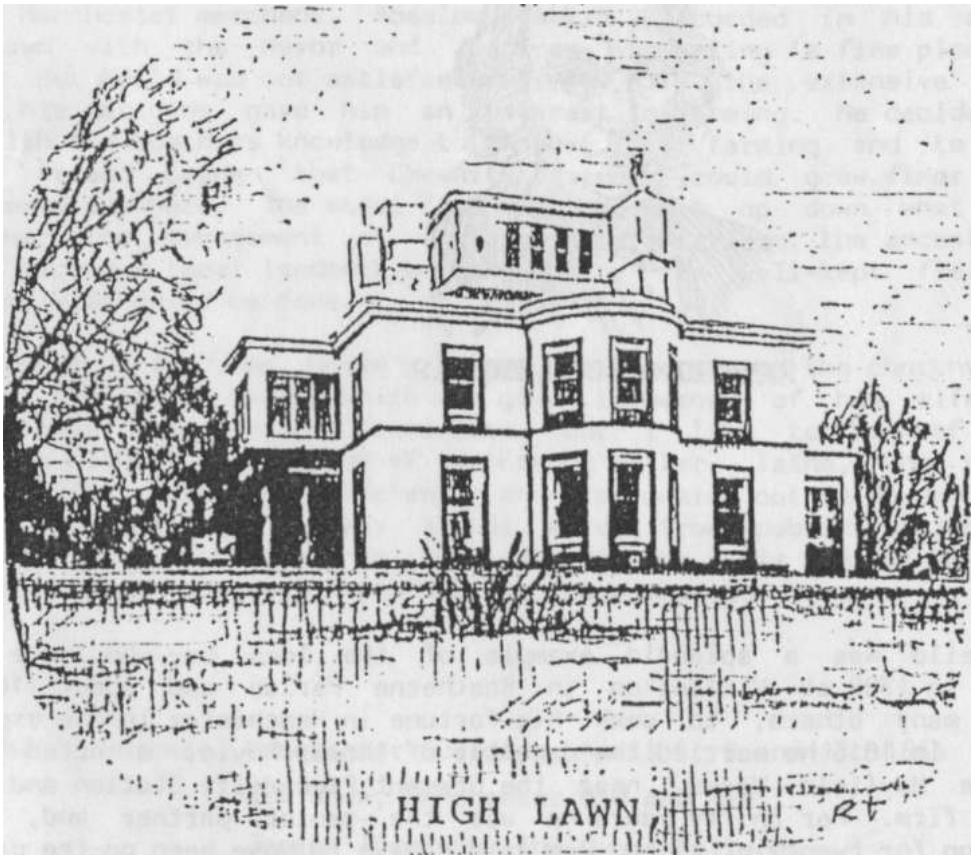
I wonder if many of the old fruit trees still bear, or indeed remain? In my time, the trees were pretty old, but we had something of all sorts; pears, cherries, damsons, plums and nice varieties of apples - George the Thirds, George the fourths, Hawthorndales and Pippins, and just one tree of Russets and another of "San-jams". Sanjams ripened for Sanjam Fair time, St. James's Day in early August, and I hope that the tree survives for your friends' benefit and also the Russets were extra good. George the Thirds look, taste and smell lovely, and there were more of those trees than can possibly be alive now. The Manx apple trees must be gone, as they looked their age in my day. Even I have seen the gypsies encamped by the Bank-wood leading to Motley Bank, on the top of the rise - Sowler's Wood or Samuel's Wood, some people called the rough, tree-covered Bank with the brook at the bottom of it, but we didn't. Thomas Sowler of the Manchester Courier, lived at Motley Bank at the time of the Irish potato famine. In thinking of this year's potato trouble I recall hearing how one of his maids said at the Moss "Mr Sowler won't let us have more than one potato apiece, but many a pound of bread". Which year was that? It is a long while ago. And which was the cattle-plague year? The Moss cattle were almost, if not all, swept away, and the big mound under which they were buried was to be seen in my time, in the Black Field hollow at the dry end where primroses grew, while the marshy end would be golden with kingcups. In my father's youth, your great-aunts and grandfather, and cousins Betsey and Sarah, could pop through the wicker at the orchard foot near the Big Pit and wander across the Black Field and down the Bollin Meadows to Ashley Mill, as freely as could be, and how charming it was to them all, as to the Gaskells! The weir and the swirling river were beautiful, and the busy mill-wheel very fascinating to watch, and the winding Bollin banks a delight for wandering. Oh dear, what charm old Bowdon had, and has lost even in my eighty years. And I suppose new England, full of pre-fabricated huts with bathrooms and electric lights, will seem a desirable land to coming generations, but the idea of it annoys me, in spite of the hope that many coils and miseries are really being swept out of the world along with most of the beauty of this "blessed isle", which the "younger end" have never seen as it is. Of course, there were sink-ditches, etc. in the good old days!!!"

The White Rabbit, mentioned in this letter, may refer to a wide-spread belief in Cheshire that white rabbits appear on properties prior to deaths, It also features in local legends and was introduced into Alice in Wonderland by that famous son of Cheshire, Lewis Carroll.

It is also interesting to note the provision of a loft at Moss Farm for the encouragement of owls in order to control the rats and mice. Alice Walker referred to the pond as a pit, which is not unusual in many parts of the country originating, no doubt, from the fact that marl pits and similar excavations were often left to fill with water, usually to relieve surface water drainage, as what are technically called balancing ponds.

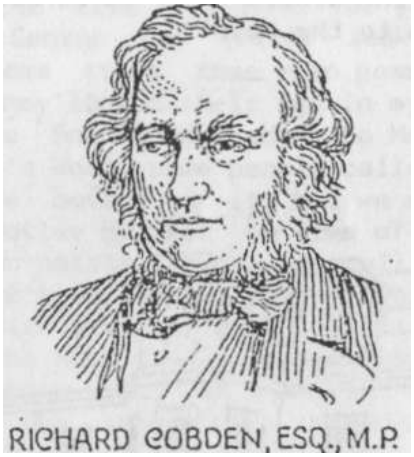
BOWDON'S EMINENT VICTORIANS: 1. WILLIAM NEILD
by Marjorie Cox

On the morning of Saturday, April 9th, 1864, there took place at Bowdon Church what must surely be one of, if not the, largest funerals ever held there. According to the Manchester Guardian, thousands of people, rich and poor, were there to show their respect, crowding the churchyard and lining the roads along which the funeral procession passed - Langham Road and Stamford Road. The procession included a company of the 12th Cheshire (Bowdon) Volunteers, 30 boys and 30 girls of the Lancasterian School, 'for the most part neatly dressed in black', about 100 gentlemen on foot-citizens of St. Clement's Ward, Manchester, 300 workpeople from the Mayfield Print Works, over 100 Manchester city Police officers, representatives of the Manchester Corporation, including the Mayor, of the Owens College and of the Royal Infirmary. Over 40 carriages carried the mourners, among them Mr Tatton of Wythenshawe, Mr J Allen of Oldfield Hall and Manchester and Bowdon notables such as Sir Elkanah Armitage, W R Callender, E Joynson and Spencer Bickham. Directions to the carriages had been given in the Manchester Guardian of April 8th: they were to drive along The Firs and down what is now Church Brow and turn into Langham Road, where policemen would position them - the carriages of the Corporation were to be west of the private road to High Lawn, 'with the horses' heads to the east'.



The man to whom all this honour was paid was one of the most outstanding of Bowdon's Eminent Victorians' - William Neild of High Lawn, the imposing stuccoed house standing prominently on Bowdon Downs. (The name is sometimes spelt 'Nield', but the correct form appears to be 'Neild'.) Alderman William Neild had died suddenly in a committee room of Manchester Town Hall at a meeting of the City Council to pay tribute to him, it was said that it was impossible to speak of the history of Manchester during the last 40 years without referring to him'.

William Neild, with his friend, Richard Cobden, was in the forefront of the struggle to secure for Manchester a royal charter of incorporation as a municipal borough. It was he who, in October 1837, initiated the struggle by refusing to serve as borough reeve in the antiquated manorial government (under the lord of the manor, Sir Oswald Mosley) which then ran the great town of Manchester, an offence for which he was fined the considerable sum of £200. It was he who first suggested that it was not fitting that Manchester should continue to be so governed, and it was he who, in October 1838, as chairman of the committee which had organised the petition to the Queen, received the charter of incorporation Only chance prevented him from being elected the new borough's first mayor, but from 1840 to 1842 he served as its second mayor and for the rest of his life his ability, energy and strong sense of duty were at the service of the city. He was especially noted for his work for the good policing of the town (created out of a number of separate townships, each with its own constabulary) during a period of unprecedented increase of population, economic ups and downs and consequent acute social problems.



William Neild was a splendid example of the local boy who 'made good'. He had been born in 1789 at Millington in Rostherne Parish and about 1809 he went, like so many others, to seek his fortune in Manchester in the expanding cotton industry. In 1816 he married the daughter of Thomas Hoyle, a noted calico printer, of the Mayfield Works, near the present Piccadilly Station and became a partner in the firm. For thirty years he was the senior partner and, though he lived in Bowdon for twenty of those, was said always to have been on the premises by 6 a.m. Hoyle's prints became world-famous, thanks to the triumph of Free Trade, a cause which Manchester businessmen like Neild championed. He was on the committee of the Anti-Corn Law League, formed in 1838, and in this, as in the charter campaign, he worked with Richard Cobden.

Neild's interests extended beyond business and civic duties. From 1822 he was a member of the Manchester Literary and Philosophical Society. Like many leading Manchester businessmen he was concerned over the social problems caused by industrialisation. He played a large part in the Royal Lancasterian School founded about 1810 by Non-conformist efforts to provide the first organised elementary education in Manchester, for Neild, though he ended as an Anglican was earlier a Quaker. He was a leading member, and President in 1850-1, of the Manchester Statistical Society, founded in 1833 to collect accurate information about social problems as a necessary preliminary to solving them. Neild even found time for statistical studies of his own: a paper read by him at a British Association Meeting on comparative income and expenditure of families in Manchester and Dukinfield was published in the Royal Statistical Society's Journal of 1841-2. On the practical welfare side he was, from its foundation in 1833 to 1850, on the committee of the District Provident Society, designed to alleviate the evils affecting the working classes of Manchester. Neild's friendship with another great Manchester entrepreneur, John Owens, linked him with the foundation of Owens College, later to become the University of Manchester. He was among the trustees appointed in Owens' will to carry out his plans for a college giving non-sectarian university education and became the second chairman, his son, Alfred Neild, succeeding him.

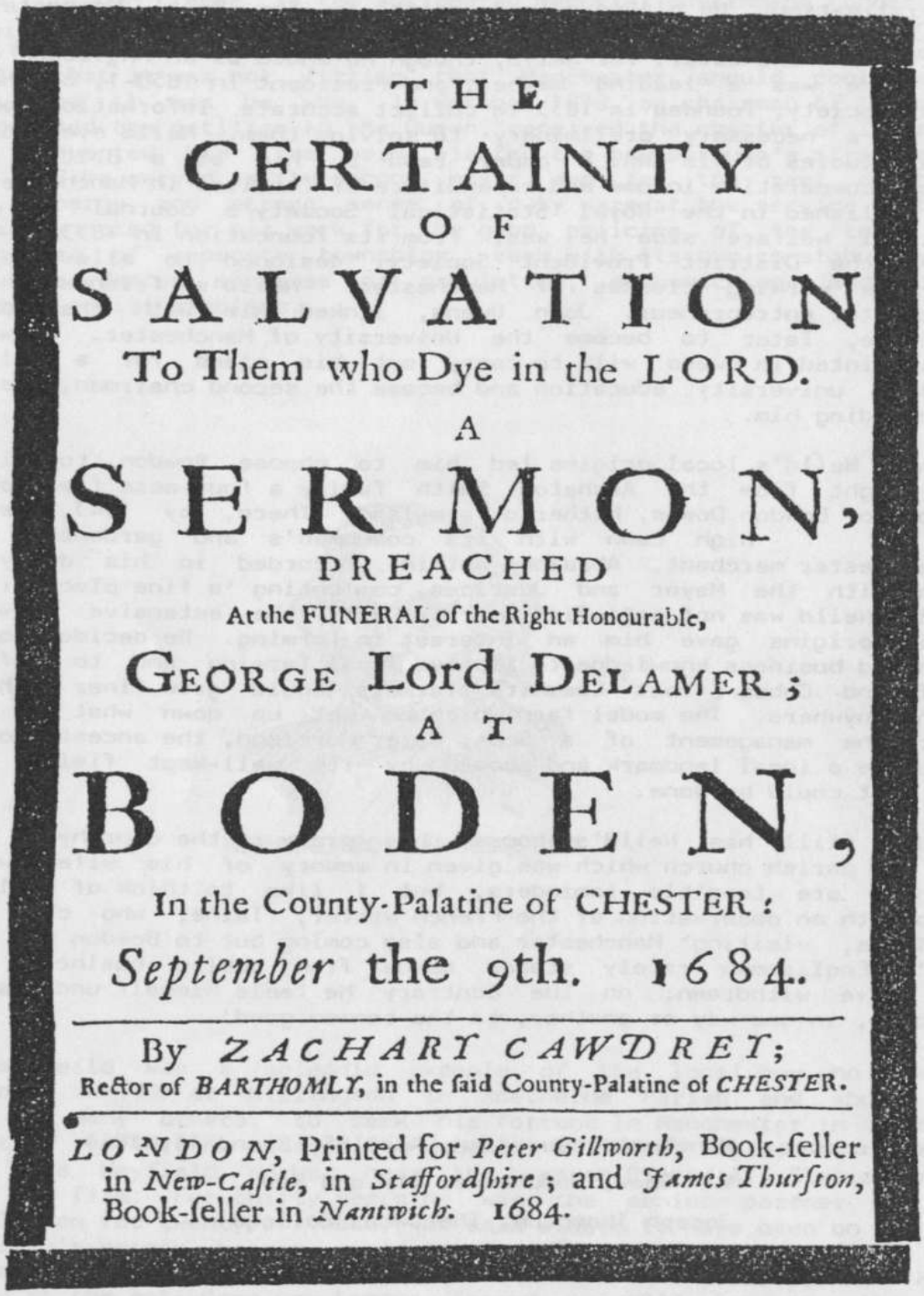
Perhaps Neild's local origins led him to choose Bowdon to live in. In 1841 he bought from the Assheton Smith family a four-acre field on the south- facing slope of Bowdon Downs, hitherto farm-land. There, by 1843, he had built High Lawn with its coachman's and gardener's cottages. A leading Manchester merchant, Absalom Watkin, recorded in his diary dining at High Lawn with the Mayor and Justices, commenting 'a fine place with extensive views'. But Neild was not satisfied merely with the extensive views: perhaps, again, his origins gave him an interest in farming. He decided to use some of his wealth and business knowledge to improve local farming and to refute a jibe of his friend Cobden that Cheshire farmers could grow finer rushes than were to be found anywhere. The model farm which he set up down what is now Grange Road under the management of a Scot, Peter Morrison, the ancestor of the estate agents, became a local landmark and showed by its well-kept fields, good crops and stock what could be done.

Bowdon still has Neild's house, his grave in the churchyard and the east window of the parish church which was given in memory of his wife, who died in 1859. These are tangible reminders, but I like to think of William Neild in connection with an observation of the French writer, Taine, who came to England in the 1860s, visiting Manchester and also coming out to Bowdon and Dunham Park. He wrote 'An Englishman rarely stands aside from public business. He does not live withdrawn; on the contrary he feels himself under an obligation to contribute, in one way or another, to the common good'.

MARJORIE COX

Chief sources

Manchester Guardian April 5, 8 and 11, 1864
W A Shaw, *Manchester Old and New*
Joseph Thompson, The Owens College
H Taine, *Notes on England* (translated by E Hyams)



THE
CERTAINTY
OF
SALVATION
To Them who Dye in the LORD.
A
SERMON,
PREACHED
At the FUNERAL of the Right Honourable,
GEORGE Lord DELAMER;
AT
BODEN,
In the County-Palatine of CHESTER:
September the 9th. 1684.

By *ZACHARY CAWDREY*;
Rector of *BARTHOMLY*, in the said County-Palatine of *CHESTER*.

LONDON, Printed for *Peter Gillworth*, Book-seller in *New-Castle*, in *Staffordshire*; and *James Thurston*, Book-seller in *Nantwich*. 1684.

Title page of an old sermon.

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The Bowdon Sheaf

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No. 11 March, 1988 40p

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Richard Wroe

This year marks the Tercentenary of the Glorious Revolution of 1688 at which time Richard Wroe was Vicar of Bowdon.

RICHARD WROE, VICAR OF BOWDON 1681 – 1690

The list of the Vicars of Bowdon, found in two places in the parish church, contains the name of Richard Wroe, and we have been fortunate in recent months in obtaining a copy of a portrait of this most distinguished gentleman. A few notes upon him may help to bring to life what at present must be a mere name upon a wooden board.

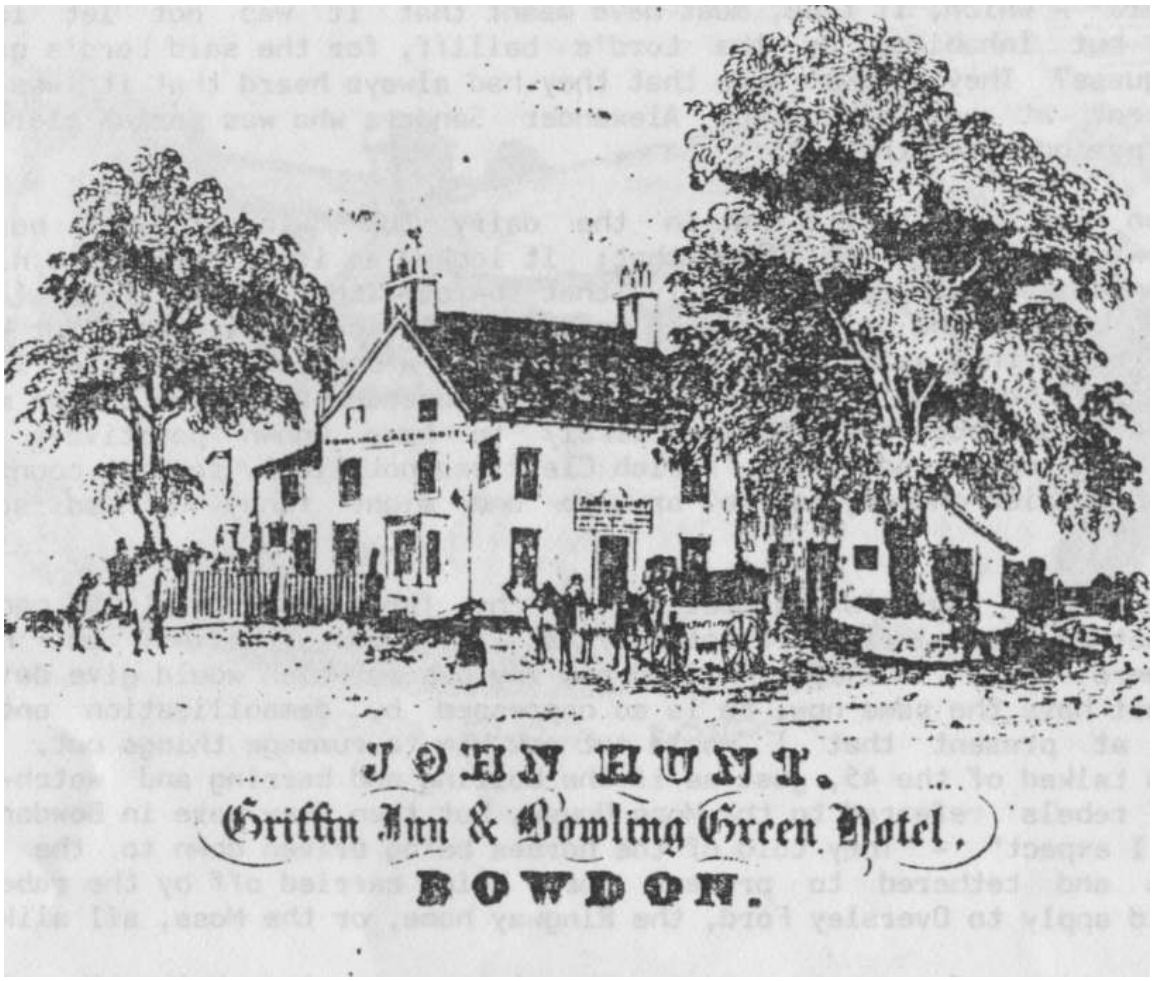
Richard Wroe was born at Radcliffe in 1641 and went to Bury Grammar School, going on to Jesus College, Cambridge in 1658, during the Commonwealth, though he himself was a loyal member of the then banned Church of England, he emerged with a BA becoming a Fellow of Jesus in the same year of the Book of Common Prayer, 1662. Dr. Pearson, who was later to become Bishop of Chester, was then Master of Jesus College and the two became great friends. Wroe also met at this time Lord Delamere and partly because (to quote) ... "he was possessed of a commanding presence and a melodious voice" and had become a preacher of some merit, a Royal Mandate was obtained from Charles II and he was presented to the vacant fellowship in the College at Manchester (much later to become the Cathedral Church of Manchester). During the Commonwealth it had become very much what one would call today an "ecumenical centre for non-conformists," to the exclusion of course of the C of E, and although some claimed at the time that his appointment and the action of the King was an interference with the rights of the College, the Visitor of the day (none other than Dr. Pearson, who had now become Bishop of Chester), was able to settle the difficulties and Wroe was installed in March 1674-5. Wroe had become Chaplain to Bishop Pearson and he was collated to a stall in Chester Cathedral in March 1677-8. On April 24, 1681 on the resignation of Francis Mosley, the Bishop made him Vicar of Bowdon, where he remained for about 9 years. At Manchester and Bowdon, by his great zeal and influence, backed by his Bishop who had written the famous standard work on the Christian Creeds ... (the author has a First Edition) he upheld the Church of England at a time when it was holy assailed by Presbyterians who attacked the creed and discipline of the Church, and by the Roman Catholics who we are told attacked her orders and authority.

(To be continued)



James II 1685-88. whose despotism precipitated the "Glorious Revolution." 1638.

JOHN HUNT of THE GRIFFIN



The bill-head reproduced above shows the Griffin Inn as it would have appeared circa 1850. It is interesting to note that the main part of the building has changed very little in the intervening years and that the small bay window on the gable-end still exists.

The tree with the stone seat round its base, similar to the one in Dunham Town today, was the venue for bull-baiting until it was stopped by the Vicar of the time, the Reverend J Law, about 1820.

In the 1861 Census John Hunt, the landlord, was recorded as being 46 years of age, born in Birmingham and married to Eliza and having one son. They employed a housekeeper, barmaid and waitress which would make it a smaller establishment than the Stamford Arms, next door, where the landlady, Mary Howard, aged 34, from Stockport, employed a barmaid, waitress, cook, kitchen maid, gardener, "hostler", and a boots.

EARLY DAYS AT MOSS FARM (continued)
by Alice Walker

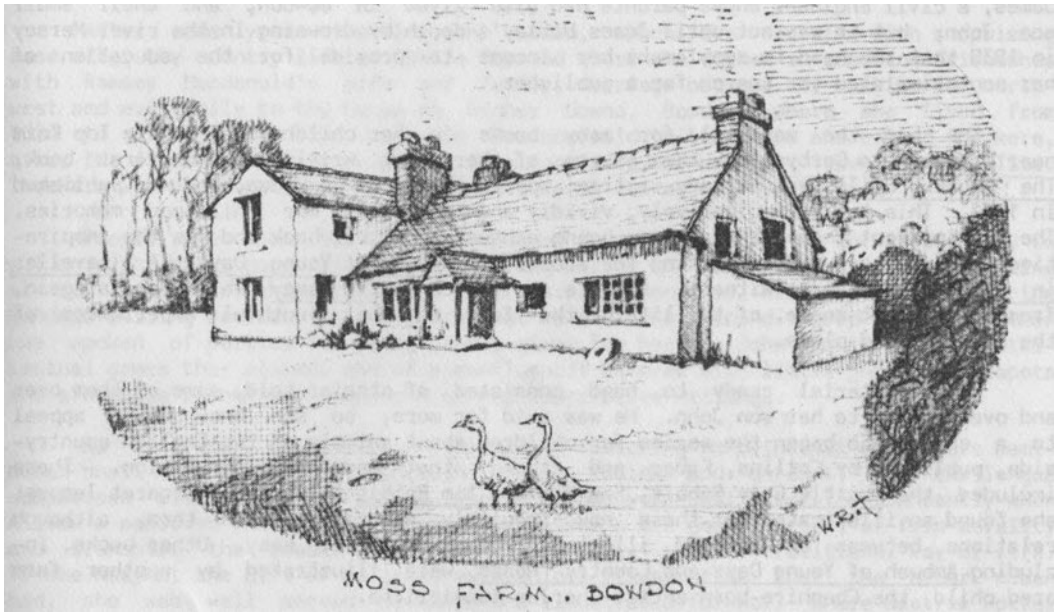
In her letter to Josephine Greenwood in 1944 Alice Walker described events which had occurred earlier in the history of Moss Farm as follows:- "Somebody once told of one of our folks "that long ago it was known as the "Manor Farm" - which, if true, must have meant that it was not let in lease to tenants, but inhabited by the Lord's bailiff, for the said Lord's gain - or so I should guess? They said at home that they had always heard that it was called "Sanders Green" at one time, and Alexander Sanders who was parish clerk in "16 something period lived there."

She then went on to record that in the dairy the "windows were built up, because of window tax I do know that; it looked as if it had been a nice room to live in, once. We know, traditionally, that before the Walker time (I can't say how long before) the dairy had been used for religious services. "Not Wesley's time - before then" they said. I surmise that it was a conventicle, maybe Independent or Baptist, but don't think Quaker meeting, because there was Quaker meeting-places elsewhere, and our forefathers so likely to have known positively enough, if Quakers were concerned. The Parish Clerk was not likely to have countenanced meetings out of parish church, was he? or else one might fancy he had something to do with it!"

Regarding her family's occupation of the farm Alice wrote "I cannot say definitely whether the Walkers were actually at the Moss in 1745, but have an idea they were there in 1750. Alfred had any papers which would give dates, and though Wyn must have the same now, he is so oppressed by demobilisation and other difficulties at present that I would not ask him to rummage things out. The old people always talked of the 45, just as if the bolting and barring and watch-keeping against the rebels referred to the Moss House, but then they were in Bowdon parish in any case, I expect". - "They told of the horses being driven down to the Bollin-side dingles and tethered to prevent them being carried off by the rebel army; and this would apply to Oversley Ford, the Ringway home, or the Moss, all alike."

An interesting reference is made in the letter to the Walkers' neighbours at Moss Cottages when Alice recounts that "There was a good patch of green stretching in front of it, and in my childhood there was still a good wedge bordering the lane up to the cottage hedge, and our "Devisacre" footpath gate. "Deborah's Acre" is the real name of those fields or one of them I believe - but don't know who "Deborah" was. The old wheelwright at the first cottage annexed the green corner for his wood-pile and saw-pit. I could tell you how by cunning removal of his "neighbour's landmark" in defiance of Ash Wednesday curse, he also lengthened his garden considerably, but his descendants might not want his moral weakness to be talked of!"

A charming reference was made to the Gaskells when she stated that - "I think it was after Grandmother Walker's death, when my father and aunts were carrying on, feeling themselves orphans though grown-up, because she was so beloved, that Mrs Gaskell came to lodge at the Moss, with her girls Florence and Julia, and their nurse. It was a happy time. When I asked Aunt W. what Mrs Gaskell was like, she said enthusiastically, "More like an angel than anything else - an angel in the house".She must have been as beautiful in disposition as looks; and she must have loved the quaint house-place, for she came again after they had "walled in" the sitting room and made the lobbies, and she cried in distress - "Oh, you've spoiled it - you've spoiled it completely." They were sorry for her disappointment, but I think they went on being glad of the warmer room. Mrs Gaskell was very happy and busy in the old parlour where the roses were tapping on the window,



and the wood fire which she loved crackling in the high grate' under the 18th century high narrow mantlepiece (which I remember myself with regret). Sherestedon the sofa as she wrote, and they were convinced that it was "Ruth" which she wrote, as it came out after that and they fancied that something of the Moss showed on it, but I never read the sad story carefully and don't know to what they referred. I do know that Mrs Gaskell talked with Aunt B. about Charlotte Bronte and "Jane Eyre",which was exciting everybody then,and she told of her visit to Haworth and exclaimed with deep feeling: "Oh, Miss Betsey, if you could see that dreadful place and know the life there, you would be so sorry for poor, poor Charlotte!" My aunts liked Mr Gaskell very much, and Aunt Betsey, who went to see them at their Manchester house, enjoyed herself greatly and said he was the most kindly and courteous host imaginable. I heard so much about them and always associated the bedroom with the window looking towards the wood and hill road with Mrs Gaskell, as if she had left some of her thoughts behind in it."

Further extracts from this letter will be published in the next issue of the Bowdon Sheaf.

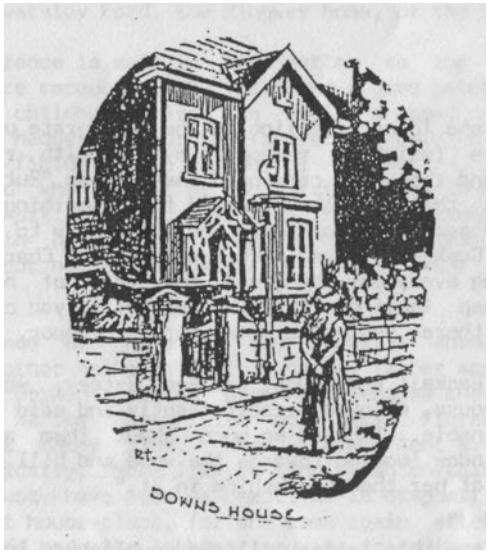
ALISON UTTLEY, A DOWNS RESIDENT
by Myra Kendrick

Alison Uttley's career as a professional writer began in Bowdon. Downs House, number 13 Higher Downs, still in Bowdon parish though postally once Dunham and now Altrincham, was where it started. She had moved there in 1924 with her husband James, a civil engineer whose parents had also lived in Bowdon, and their small son John; but it was not until James Uttley's death by drowning in the river Mersey in 1930 that the need to supplement her income to provide for the education of her son stimulated the search for a publisher.

She had the material for many books in her childhood at Castle Top Farm near Cromford in Derbyshire, the source of her best writing. Her first book, The Country Child, was already written, apparently at Downs House, and was published in 1931. This tells imaginatively, vividly and poetically her childhood memories. The reminiscent theme was far from being exhausted by this book and was the inspiration for much more of her writing for adults, as Ambush of Young Days, A Traveller in Time and others witness. As late as 1962 came Wild Honey, which speaks again, from a different angle, of the life of the farm and her youthful experiences of the deeply loved place.

Other material ready to hand consisted of stories told, some of them over and over again, to her son John. He was avid for more, so she knew their appeal to a child. So began the series for children about animals of the English country- side, published by Collins, Faber and others, that made her reputation. These included the Little Grey Rabbit, Sam Pig and Tim Rabbit tales. In Margaret Tempest she found an illustrator for these now indelibly associated with them, although relations between author and illustrator were not always easy. Other books, including Ambush of Young Days and Country Hoard, were illustrated by another farm bred child, the Cheshire-born artist Charles Tunnicliffe.

These books sold quickly and continued to sell extensively, becoming an important part of mid-century children's literary heritage.



Castle Top farm, the inspiration of so much of her writing, was Alice Taylor's (her maiden name) birthplace in 1884 and her home until adult life. "The home of my childhood," she wrote in Ambush of Young Days, "eternal, green, appears before my inward eyes." The move away from it began her secondary schooling at Lady Manners School, Bakewell, where she showed a surprisingly strong aptitude for the sciences. Then followed the move to Manchester University where she read for a Physics degree under Rutherford and became one of the university's first women physics graduates.

After some years teaching in London, which she accepted with surprising ease after the country life of Castle Top and where she formed an admiring friendship with Ramsey Macdonald's wife and family, marriage brought her back to the north- west and eventually to the house on Higher Downs, Bowdon, where she lived from 1924 to 1938, until the move to Beaconsfield to the house she called Thackers, after the stone-built farm featuring so strongly in her novel A Traveller in Time. Thackers was her home until her death in 1976 at the age of ninety-two.

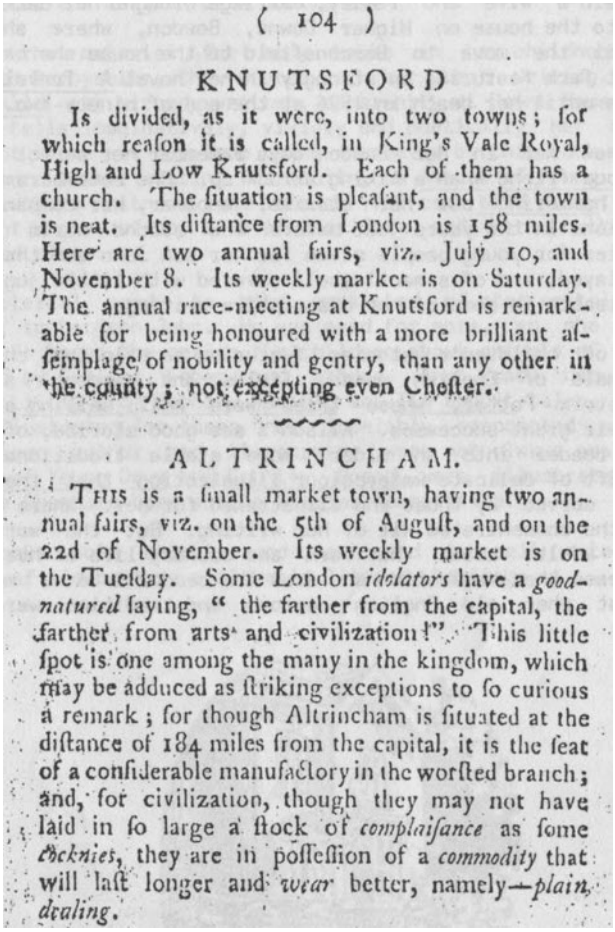
People who knew her in her Bowdon days remember her as not always easy to get on with, but a good friend when a liking struck up. One remembers her kneeling at her typewriter hammering out her stories; another, her companionship during bandage-rolling sessions in the years just before the second world war. Another has spoken of parties for young people given for her son John and the highly intellectual games they played, and of a mantle shelf covered with little jugs and teapots and ornaments recognisable in some of her descriptive writings.

As a writer of children's stories featuring as principal characters semi- human small wild animals of English woods, fields and gardens, she challenges comparison with Beatrix Potter, whose tales were still selling abundantly when Alison's achieved their great successes. Alison's are good stories, of firm morality and transport the reader into an older, more stable traditional way of life.

If she had not the gift of delicate watercolour illustration that the older woman had, she was well served by those who illustrated for her. Where Beatrix Potter is inimitable is in the concentrated wit of her writing. But the world of Alison Uttley's books for adults about the farm and country life of her childhood has magical power to release the imagination and draw the reader into a more peaceful, less mechanical past when old English customs and traditions were still living things.

NEIGHBOURING TOWNS 1791

The following extract from the History of the City and County of Chester 1791 provides impressions of Bowdon's neighbours, Altrincham and Knutsford, at that time. It is interesting to note that, by calculation, the two towns were considered to be 26 miles apart.



(104)

KNUTSFORD

Is divided, as it were, into two towns; for which reaſon it is called, in King's Vale Royal, High and Low Knutsford. Each of them has a church. The ſituation is pleaſant, and the town is neat. Its diſtance from London is 158 miles. Here are two annual fairs, viz. July 10, and November 8. Its weekly market is on Saturday. The annual race-meeting at Knutsford is remarkable for being honoured with a more brilliant aſſemblage of nobility and gentry, than any other in the county; not excepting even Cheſter.

ALTRINCHAM.

THIS is a ſmall market town, having two annual fairs, viz. on the 5th of Auguſt, and on the 22d of November. Its weekly market is on the Tueſday. Some London *idolators* have a *good-natured* ſaying, "the farther from the capital, the farther from arts and civilization!" This little ſpot is one among the many in the kingdom, which may be adduced as ſtriking exceptions to ſo curious a remark; for though Altrincham is ſituated at the diſtance of 184 miles from the capital, it is the ſeat of a conſiderable manufactory in the worſted branch; and, for civilization, though they may not have laid in ſo large a ſtock of *complaiſance* as ſome *Cockneys*, they are in poſſeſſion of a *commodity* that will laſt longer and *wear* better, namely—*plain dealing*.

The Bowdon Sheaf

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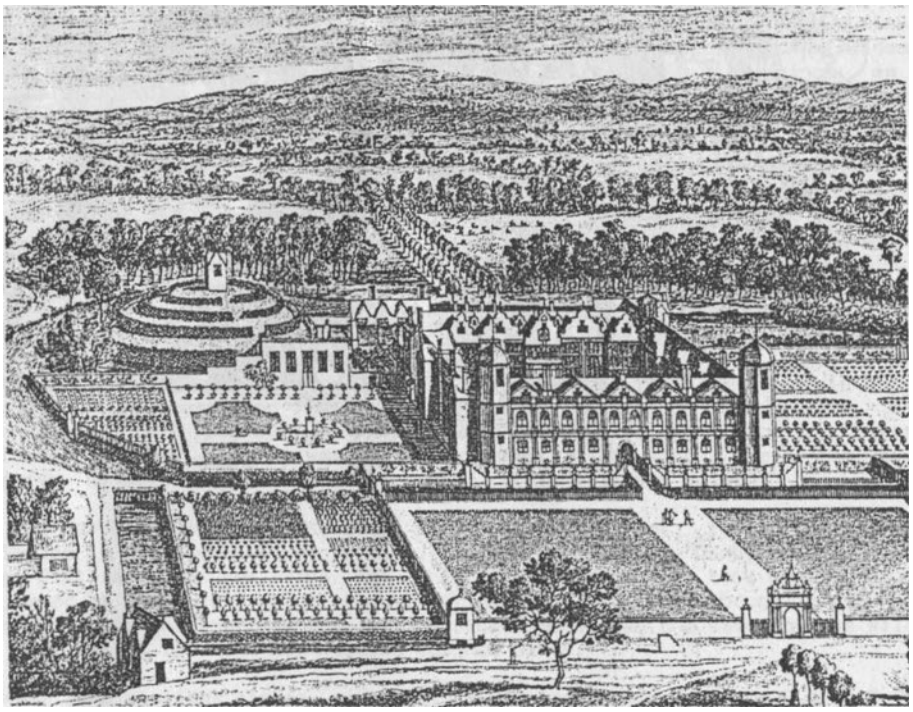
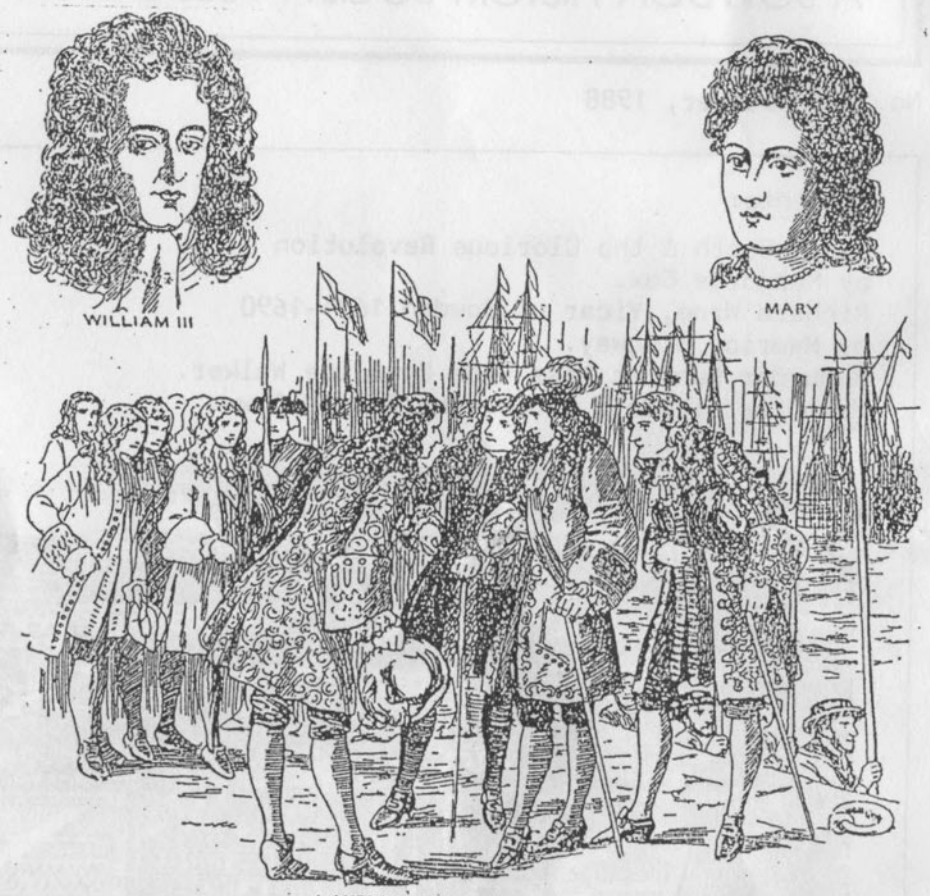


Bird's-Eye View of Dunham Massey Hall from the South
by Leonard Knyff, engraved by J. Kip, 1697 (detail)



LANDING OF WILLIAM III. AT TORBAY.

HENRY BOOTH AND THE GLORIOUS REVOLUTION
by MARJORIE COX

1988 sees the celebration not only of the defeat of the Spanish Armada but also of the 'Glorious Revolution' of 1688, a turning-point in English history.

This tercentenary is of special interest to us in Bowdon because of the part played in it by Lord Delamere of Dunham Massey Hall, the local manorial lord. The Revolution and settlement of 1688-9 laid the foundations of that stability which, by the middle of the eighteenth century, made England the admiration of Europe. This stability was in sharp contrast to the previous century marked by Civil War, and after the Restoration by the violent episodes of the Popish Plot, the Exclusion crisis and Monmouth's rebellion. Symbolically, William and Mary accepted the Crown and the Declaration of Rights in the Banqueting Hall of Whitehall Palace, from whose window Charles I had stepped out to his execution.

For eighteenth century Englishmen, particularly Whigs, the Revolution was the ark of the covenant, its 'glory' most eloquently celebrated, in contrast to the French Revolution, by Edmund Burke. Part of its 'glory' was that in England, though not elsewhere in the British Isles, it was bloodless and the product of joint action and compromise by hitherto bitterly opposed parties of Whig and Tory. Hence it has also been called the 'sensible' revolution.

It is appropriate in this autumn number of the Bowdon Sheaf to concentrate on the events of the autumn of 1600, for they reveal the mechanism and nature of the Revolution. By the summer of 1688 James II (king, despite fierce Whig attempts to exclude him as a Roman Catholic) had managed to alienate his natural supporters, the Tories and the Church of England. His arbitrary use of the royal prerogative had sorely tested their belief in the divine, hereditary right of kings and the duty of non-resistance. One June 30th (a few weeks after the birth of a son to James) seven leading men, four Whig and three Tory, wrote the famous letter inviting William of Orange to invade, promising him their support and assuring him of widespread discontent and disloyalty. William had long been waiting in the wings: as both nephew and son-in-law of James he had the reversionary interest and he desperately needed the co-operation of England in opposing Louis XIV in Europe.

On September 30th William issued a declaration blaming 'evil counsellors' for James's arbitrary actions and asserting that the sole aim of his expedition was 'a free and lawful parliament' to redress matters. On November 1st he sailed with 12,000 - 15,000 troops, (far fewer than James's), had the benefit of the 'Protestant' east wind, and somewhat unexpectedly landed at Torbay on November 5th. The area may have been the same as that of Monmouth's rebellion in 1685, but the conduct of the enterprise was totally different: calculation rather than impulsiveness, the gradual coming in of influential figures, Whig and Tory, rather than mass rallying.

William moved gradually - he remained at Exeter from November 9th to 21st: confrontation and civil war were to be avoided. By November 17th James and his army were at Salisbury, where there soon began a series of desertions to William, notably James's nephew, Lord Cornbury and his second-in-command, John Churchill, later Duke of Marlborough. James was paralysed by indecision. In the south, where the opposing armies were, the Revolution was a waiting game, diplomatic and quiet. In the north and midlands, however, things were different. Two of the signatories of the letter to William moved decisively. The Tory Earl of Danby seized York on November 21st and on the 22nd the Whig Earl of Devonshire took Nottingham, where he was joined by Delamere's relative, the Earl of Stamford. But though their actions were bold, their declarations disclaiming rebellion showed the same tone as William's and the same intent to unite all parties against James.

However the earliest rising was that of Henry Booth, second Lord Delamere, who, on November 15th called out 200 or more of his tenants, exhorting everyone with a good horse to take the field or provide a substitute. According to Macaulay, he promised his tenants (some in Bowdon?) that if they fell in the cause, their leases should be renewed to their children. In Manchester he appeared with 50 men

and the number had trebled before he reached Bowdon Downs. On November 21st the Governor of Chester Castle reported that he expected the rebels soon to form a great body and to march on London. Under Charles II, Delamere who had strong Non-conformist sympathies, had been an outspoken Exclusionist Whig, a suspect after the Rye House plot and a supporter of Monmouth who had been entertained at Dunham in 1682. Under James II he was imprisoned in the Tower after Monmouth's rebellion and was fortunate to be found not guilty of high treason by his peers, an acquittal he commemorated annually. He was set in the mould of bitter anti-popery and Whig/Tory antagonism and his declaration lacked the tact characteristic of William's (which he thought not condemnatory enough of James) and of the Revolution as a whole.

"I see all lies at stake, I am to choose whether I will be a Slave and a Papist or a Protestant and a free man." "I am of opinion" he wrote "that when the Nation is delivered it must be by Force or Miracle", and he was ready to use force. Two historians, Maurice Ashley and J R Jones, believe that the provincial risings, though militarily not very formidable, had a decisive impact on James's troubled mind, even among the many other blows that rained on him. They completed the demoralisation which led him to return to London on November 26th, send his wife and child to Louis XIV and himself take flight to France on December 12th. He aimed to leave a vacuum, throwing the Great Seal in the Thames and disbanding, though not disarming, his large army: it was desertion amounting to abdication.

The smooth progress of the 'Revolution', guided by peers and gentry and by William, was suddenly interrupted by the anti-papist zeal of some Kentish fishermen who seized James off Sheerness. His return to London touched popular sentiment and tugged at Tory and Anglican loyalty. William, then at Windsor in his steady approach to London, skilfully laid the onus on the peers and nominated a delegation of three peers, including Delamere, to get James out of London. Fortunately, James's only wish was to reach France and he asked to go to Rochester. Nevertheless, the replacement of English guards in Whitehall Palace by Dutch and James's embarkation from London on December 18th, surrounded by Dutch soldiers, created an impression of enforced departure which undermined the Tory theory of his 'desertion'. Curiously Delamere, James's enemy, was touched by his plight and James later recorded that he had treated him better than the other two lords to whom he had been kind.

The peers of England played a key role during the 'vacancy' of the throne (a nonsense in English law) and Delamere was one of six peers who, on December 25th, presented a request to William to take over the administration and arrange the election of a Convention. The Convention met on January 22nd and subtle and lengthy debates produced a decision on the change of succession satisfactory to all but a few Republican Whigs and High Tories. On February 13th the crown was offered to William and Mary and the Declaration of Rights, condemning James's arbitrary actions against liberties and properties was read to them.

Delamere was immediately, on February 13th, made a Privy Councillor and in April became Chancellor of the Exchequer, second in the Treasury Commission. But at heart he was a pre-Revolution Whig, wary of royal power and still feeling old party antagonisms, one for whom the 'sensible' revolution had not gone far enough. In 1690 he resigned office: he was rewarded, by promotion from the title of Lord Delamere, given to his father at the Restoration,, to the Earldom of Warrington and with the promise of a pension to compensate for his considerable expenses at his trial and during the Revolution. His monument in Bowdon Church records with Whiggish pride:

In the year MDCLXXXVIII
He greatly signalised himself at the Revolution
on behalf of the Protestant religion and the rights of the

RICHARD WROE Vicar of Bowdon 1681-1690 (concluded)
by Maurice Ridgway

Dr Stratford, at this time the Warden of the Collegiate Church (now the Cathedral) at Manchester, and at variance with the Fellows there, finally resigned. Bishop Pearson of Chester then commended William Wroe, his friend, to the Archbishop in such glowing terms that Archbishop Sancroft after satisfying himself that the Vicar of Bowdon could also be Warden at Manchester, finally appointed him in March 1684. It is interesting to note that in the Bishop's pleadings, he says that Wroe is the "only person among the Fellows there who is a Bachelor of Divinity" and that "ye boundaries of ye parishes (Manchester and Bowdon) join."

It appears to have been a popular appointment among the Fellows, marked by voting him on his election a sum of money to be expended in re-building and repairing the Deansgate residence of the Warden. Wroe's link with Bowdon appears to have been maintained. In any case, he was invited back to preach the funeral sermons at the funerals of the Countess of Warrington, at Bowdon, April 6, 1691 and of the Earl of Warrington, at Bowdon on January 14, 1693/4. Two years later Wroe became Rural Dean of Manchester, and the same year Rector of West Kirkby, though he probably left the parish work there to a curate, and as the custom was in those days, was content to have the stipend!

Whilst at Manchester, Wroe took a great interest in the then wayside chapel of Stretford, where John Collier was curate (he was the father of Tim Bobbin), and it is interesting to note that he gave a silver Communion Cup to Stretford church, which bears the inscription... R Wroe. S.T.P. Stretford Chapel 1707, and he also worked to have it recognized under Queen Anne's bounty. Though opposed to the Byrom family in politics he was on intimate terms of friendship with them.

Wroe was married three times. His first wife was called Elizabeth. An official biography says she narrowly escaped drowning on July 7, 1689 but as we know she died on July 30 and was buried at the Collegiate Church on August 1, it would appear that recovery was only temporary. Wroe married again in 1693 (one Anne Radcliffe) who died a year later, and took a third wife, Dorothy Kenyon of Peel in 1698. By this marriage he had four children, only one of which survived infancy.

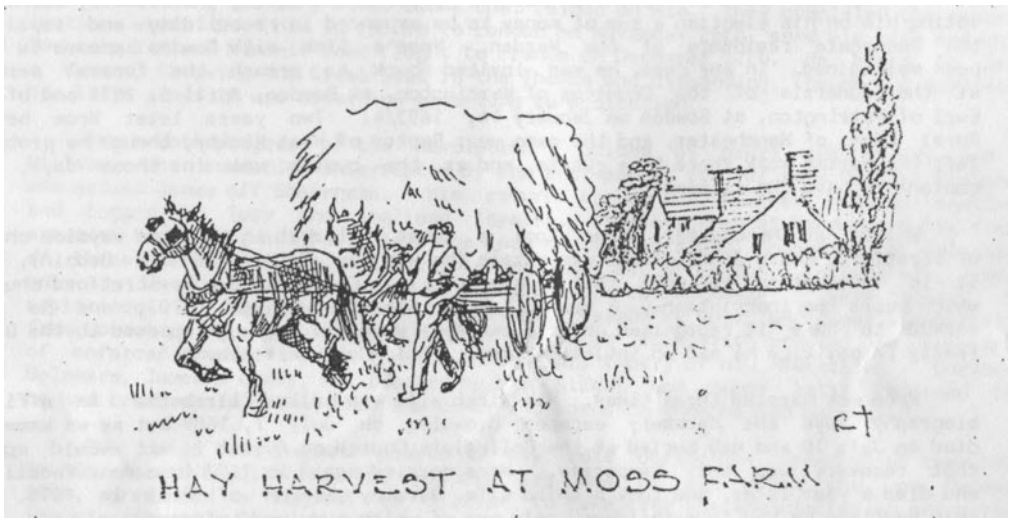
He died on New Year's Day 1718 and was buried in a vault in the Collegiate Church, where his stone and inscription in Latin could still be seen and read until it was covered up by another stone. The words of the inscription have survived, and although it made reference to his Rectorship of West Kirby and his Wardenship of the Collegiate Church for thirty-three years, made no reference to Bowdon! He was seventy-six.



Richard Wroe

A MURDER HUNT AT MOSS FARM
by Alice Walker

In a letter she wrote to Josephine Greenwood in 1944 Alice Walker recounted the following local incident "Have I told you about Jack Garner, the son of Paul, the 'Town' blacksmith, and a wild good-looking chap, whose young ways were generally disapproved and talked about? There was a servant girl named Bess at the Moss, and I suppose he courted her along with others who took his fancy, and she had other admirers later on too. Unhappily, Jack was in low company in Altrincham one time, and a woman - whether specially his acquaintance I don't remember - although it is probable - made a taunting speech about him, which infuriated him so much that he struck her down dead. I think he had some knowledge of boxing, and so ought to have known how fatal the blow could be. Anyhow, he fled, and there was great hue and cry, and the "Manchester runners" on his track up and down.

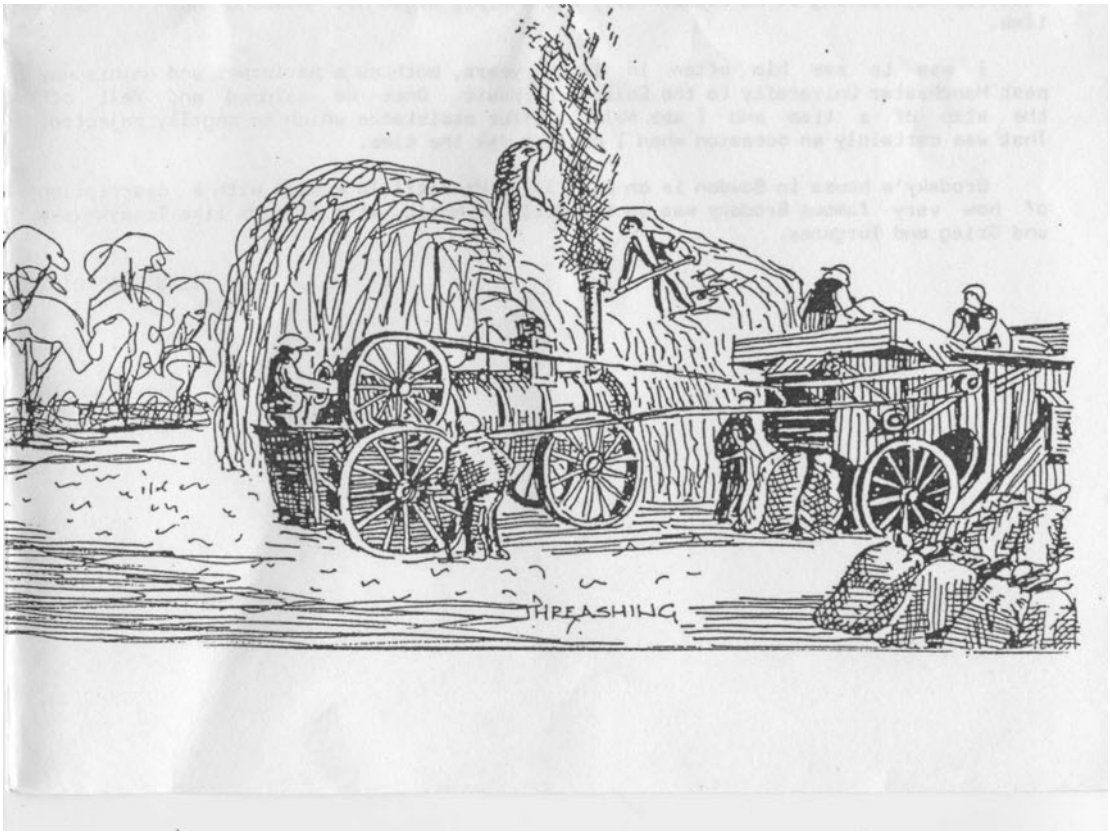


And Jack, having been about the Moss, knew of the owl-loft and made for it, and might have lain there long enough unsuspected, but in mistaken confidence, and, as I expect, in need of food, he let Bess know where he was hiding. Bess was a Delilah, and making a plausible excuse for wanting to 'run up to the Top', had permission from Grandmother or Great-grandmother Walker (not quite certain which, but think Grandmother) to do the errand that day.

Whether Jack's mind misgave him or he only wanted an airing, he was on the top of the tree looking out, and behold there came the constables pelting in force across the Yeald, and Bess leading them! Consequently Grandmother had the shock of her life outside the back porch in finding Jack Garner kneeling at her feet and pleading her to hide him, hide him for love of mercy, for the troop was almost there. It seemed a pretty quandary for her, for she had been terribly shocked like other by Jack's deed and the torment his recklessness brought on his own father, but when she looked at the lad's curly black head and sow his agonised face, she thought she could not be the one to leave him in rink of the gallows perhaps - and Paul was a neighbour - and she had never been able to dislike the pleasant scamp - she must do something, but what could she do?

There was no time for dilly-dallying and, lying upside down on the bank near the pump was the long hamper, which the men had just been using to wash the potatoes for Shudehill Market next morning. She bade Jack drop on the ground after righting the hamper, into the same space on which it had stood, and squeeze himself to the right shape. She overturned the hamper upon him and it looked exactly as it had been left! And when Bess and her Posse tore round the kitchen on their way to ladder the gable, the "Missis" was very guilelessly busy near the pump, just emptying a water bucket by carelessly swishing the contents right on the potato basket; and how taken to she was by their arrival, you can imagine, and how interestedly she watched the heroic constables going right into the lion's den when Jack made no sign of coming out. Bess was furious when he was not there and aided the hunt everywhere. I have it in mind that the Grandmother was filled with disgust when they had tossed out sheaves enough in the barn without result, but Bess went on jabbing the battens of straw with a pike in truly murderous hope!

The Missis kept Bess well occupied in a safe region, you may be sure, after the disappointed troop had gone. I cannot tell you how Jack was disposed of till darkness fell, though probably was in the 'baulks' or barn, or back to his 'den'. But I do know that when the high-piled load of potato hampers, all ready for early morning at Shudehill, lumbered and swayed from the rough stack-yard gateway, all carefully corded as usual, Grandmother had seen to it that Jack was wedged in it, with instructions to slip down in the dark of dawn when men and horses had their 'bait' at the halfway inn (the 'Cock' at Stretford, I think), and stow himself on a barge of the near canal, making for Runcorn and Liverpool. I do not know how long it was afterwards that it was reported that Jack Garner was 'doing very well in America', and am sure nobody in Bowdon ever guessed how he started his journey - probably not even Paul. Grandmother kept a still tongue about her lawless work till it was safe to confide in her children I know that Bess got herself in trouble through one of her admirers, and I think had others, but certainly was never married. But her son, who was middle-aged when I knew him, seemed a kindly decent man - like his father, who was utterly unlike the handsome dark-complexioned Jack."



MEMORIES OF ADOLF BRODSKY
by Ronald Gow

Thomas Pitfield's book of drawings called "Recording a Region" brings back many memories of Altrincham and Bowdon. One in particular takes me back to the very early years of the century. It is the drawing of the "Dome Church" - a rather splendid building on high ground in Bowdon - sometimes called "The Sinking Chapel" because it was reputed to be unsafe. It is now demolished.

I remember it especially because it was about halfway on my walk to school, from Altrincham to Miss Wallace's in Bowdon. As a Victorian I would be about seven or eight at the time and the year around 1905. A familiar figure rounding the bend at the Dome Church was Dr Adolph Brodsky. He was on his way to Altrincham Station, where he would take a train for Manchester and the Royal College of Music. About five paces behind him walked his wife and they were always in heated argument. She appeared to be reprimanding him and he would shout back at her over his shoulder. I didn't know but it may have been the normal Russian method of progression for husband and wife.

One morning, greatly daring, I stopped him and asked him the time. He took out a large watch and told me and asked where I was going and what would happen if I was late. Then he bade me hurry and I proceeded quite pleased with the interest I had aroused. Walking to school was a lonely business. I remember the next time I met him I asked him the time again, more for company than for necessity. He told me though he looked suspicious. The next time was the last. Mrs Brodsky interrupted, looking at me disdainfully and sharply urged her husband not to waste Time.

I was to see him often in later years, both as a performer and on his way past Manchester University to the College of Music. Once he slipped and fell off the step of a tram and I was able to offer assistance which he angrily rejected. That was certainly an occasion when I did not ask the time.

Brodsky's house in Bowdon is on page 38 of Mr Pitfield's book with a description of how very famous Brodsky was in the world of music, with friends like Tchaikovsky and Grieg and Turgenev.

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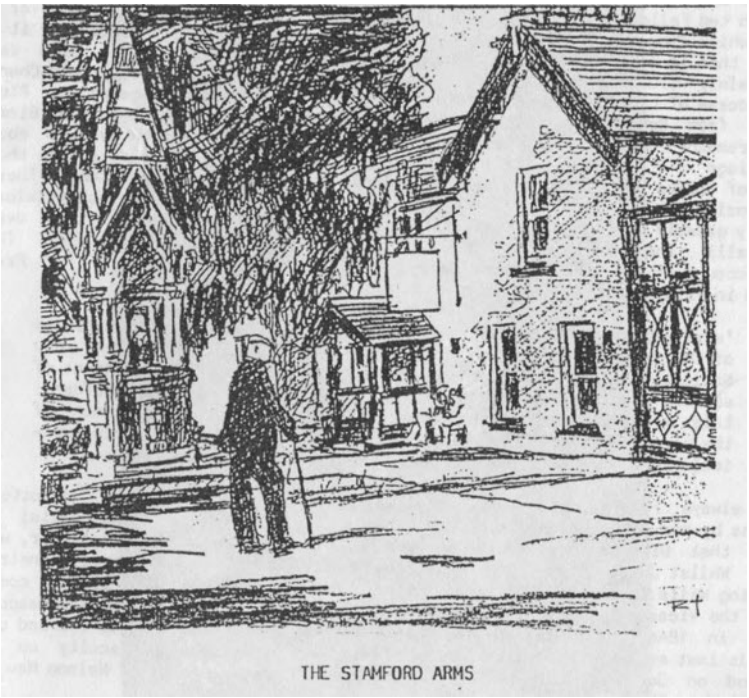

THE STAMFORD ARMS

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JAMES THOMAS LAW
by Maurice Ridgway

There is a portrait of George Henry Law in the drawing room of the Bishop's Palace at Wells where he became Bishop in 1824 having been Bishop of Chester from 1812. Whilst at Wells, where he died in 1845, he collected a great deal of the stained glass in the Palace and was responsible for demolishing part of the already ruined Great Hall at the Palace to make the grounds there more picturesque. It was however to his son James Thomas Law that he offered the living of Bowdon where he stayed from 1815 to 1821 The living was in the gift of the Bishop of Chester and as his father was the Bishop at the time it must have been a comparatively easy appointment.

James Thomas Law however had been born whilst his father was still a vicar in the Carlisle Diocese at Torpenhow on 8 December 1790. He received his education first at Carlisle Grammar School and then at Charterhouse, presumably the school kept by Dr Charles Burney the brother of Fanny Burner (Madame D'Arbly) the English novelist and diarist.

James Thomas Law's father later moved to Kelsall in Hertfordshire and then returned to the north as Bishop of Chester in 1812. It was the year James Thomas Law graduated at Christ's College Cambridge, and he proceeded to his Master of Arts in 1815. Meanwhile he was ordained deacon in September 1814 and priest in December the same year. He became Fellow of Christ's in September 1814, which he held until 1817.

His ordination to the priesthood was probably hurried as he was appointed Vicar of Bowdon on 22 July 1815. The living was worth £250. He then obtained a dispensation (from his father) to hold the living of Tattenhall worth £500 in 1816 and two years later this was extended to hold the Vicarage of Childwall in Lancashire, worth £300, which he later transferred to his brother Henry in 1822. To further supplement his income he became prebendary of Chester in 1818 which he held until 1828 and in July 1818, prebendary also of Lichfield. Along with two Fellowships at this time he was receiving an income of well over £1000 a year which in those days was a very large income. The old adage that it is not every man that is born to be Vicar of Bowdon (certainly as old as the 17th century) was certainly true in this case. Whilst still at Bowdon he was appointed Chancellor of the Diocese of Lichfield, and in 1824 Commissary of the Archdeaconry of Richmond.

He moved from Bowdon in 1826 and became Vicar of Harborne now a suburb of Birmingham where he remained until 1845. His move from Bowdon may have been brought about by his marriage (16 December 1820) at Bowdon to Lady Henrietta Charlotte Grey the elder daughter of George Henry Harry the sixth Earl of Stamford and Warrington. There are still stories about the couple which have become part of the Bowdon folklore, how the family greatly objecting to the marriage prompted the couple to elope over the garden wall!

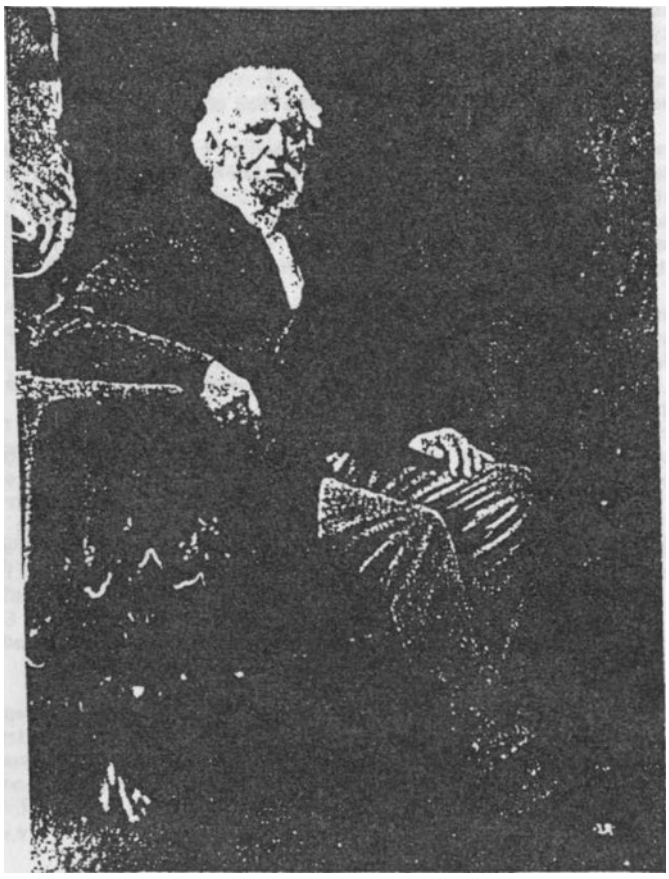
The marriage is recorded in the Bowdon Marriage Register. There is a short account of his work at Harborne in 'Harborne once upon a Time' by Tom Presterne published in 1913. Here it relates how he was... 'a very business like man. He was the means of causing the interests of the free School in High Street to be transferred to the new National Schools near the Church. He obtained the consent of all the trustees except one who was very stubborn in his refusal; this refusal was however overcome by the tactful management of the vicar. The Rev. Chancellor Law was an authority on Ecclesiastical Law.' He was always referred to as Chancellor Law, and his wife as 'Lady Charlotte'. His father was by now Bishop of Wells and in 1840 he was appointed by him as special commissary of that Diocese presumably because of the ill-health of his father, who died in 1845. Whilst James Thomas Law held the appointment he was partly instrumental in founding Wells Theological College. He resigned the appointment of special commissary in 1844, the Vicarage of Harborne in 1845 and the Commissary of the Archdeaconry of Richmond in 1846 but retained the Chancellorship of Lichfield until the end of 1873.

One of his last acts as Chancellor of Lichfield was to issue a faculty on January 1873, and on January 12th 1874 his successor Bishop Hobhouse of Nelson New Zealand was admitted as Chancellor in his stead.

A superficial reading of these details would seem to indicate that he merely sought promotion, but he coupled with his positions a lively responsibility. Not only was he responsible for the founding of Wells Theological College, but also interested himself in the Birmingham School of Medicine and Surgery at Queens College Birmingham where he was appointed Warden in 1846, (Shades of)and also helped to found Lichfield Theological College.

Tom Presterne, who wrote 'Harborne once upon a time', and who knew him, ought to have the last word which he records in his history....'He was a fine type of his time, very slim, rather tall, an oblong face, slightly bronzed complexion, black piercing eyes, and snow white hair rather bristly; and what was very singular at that time, he had a stubby moustache. This is as I saw him. His sermons were like homilies, and so interesting that I though a lad, could listen attentively. Although a dignitary, he was very homely with his parishioners,when they met in vestry on the business matters of the Church. His remarks were familiar and forcible, and were frequently quoted in the village. He was Vicar here (at Harborne) from 1825 to 1845. He resigned, and I believe he lived afterwards and died at Stapeley House Harborne...'

The date of his death was 22 February 1876, he was 86. His name appears in the Dictionary of National Biography volume xxxii (1892 Edition) where it records seven works by Law.



The Rev.d James Thomas Law

J. M. D. MEIKLEJOHN: AN EDUCATIONAL PIONEER
by Myra Kendrick

Directories and guides to the Altrincham and district area of Cheshire in the late 1850's and early 60's contain references to a boys' school in Bowdon named Rosehill School and to its headmaster, John Meiklejohn. According to the Bowdon Census of 1861, this was a modest establishment consisting of eight boarders, one assistant master and four servants, in addition to Meiklejohn himself. Day pupils are not mentioned, though there is evidence that local boys attended.

The school was situated in the area of Bowdon on the southerly slope of the hill, still popular for private schools and once known as Rosehill, hence the school's name. Its owner is mentioned in Balshaw 'A Stranger's Guide to Altrincham' as John Meiklejohn, M.D., which letters do not appear to represent a medical degree, but elements in his name: in full John Miller Dow Meiklejohn. White's Directory of 1860 gives his degree correctly as M.A., and the 1861 census return tells us that he was then aged thirty, a bachelor from Scotland.

This young man, full of energy and enterprise, was to make this school highly respected locally and for himself to make a name through his educational work both nationally and internationally.

Meiklejohn was born in Edinburgh on 11th July 1830, the son of a schoolmaster who himself ran a private school at which he educated his own son. Later John Meiklejohn taught in his father's school and at the same time studied at Edinburgh University for his Master's degree, finally graduating in 1858 after his move to Bowdon. No doubt he completed his studies some time before, but did not pay for graduation until the comparatively late age of twenty-eight. He was undoubtedly an able student, as in 1853 the university awarded him a gold medal for Latin. It is interesting to note that the M.A. degree course at Edinburgh at that date included studies in Mathematics and Natural Philosophy, i.e. Astronomy, Hydrostatics and Optics.

It would be interesting to know what led to his move to Bowdon, only recently opened up as a residential area for Manchester business and professional men. Since the opening in 1849 of the Manchester to Altrincham and Bowdon railway, a much faster means of transport than the earlier horse-drawn boats on the Bridgewater Canal, the population of Bowdon was growing fast, and there was a great need for good schools. But how did this become known to a young man born and still living in Edinburgh? The move may have been made about 1858. The school seems to have established itself quickly and to have lasted until about 1867, at which date we can read in a letter from a local resident of a presentation to the headmaster by past and present pupils of a silver service; evidently a retirement present. Meiklejohn was stated to be "away to Scotland tomorrow".

Morris's Directory of Cheshire for 1864 contains an interesting advertisement for the school, suggesting that Meiklejohn was in advance of his time in educational theory and practice. He speaks of limiting the number of pupils, and of providing a resident master for every twelve boys, thus assuring individual attention for each pupil.

He stressed the point that "average and the duller boys" received as much care and attention as the brighter ones. A good foundation was evidently laid in basic subjects such as "English Composition, Arithmetic, Writing and Reading", from which the curriculum broadened out to include classical and modern languages, mathematics, English Literature, History, Geography and other unspecified subjects. No mention is made of the sciences, but it is likely that certain boys received such instruction.

Meiklejohn was forward-looking enough to see the advantages of preparing pupils for the Oxford Local Examination as soon as they were instituted, in 1858, and as well he entered candidates for the then new Civil Service examinations, instituted in 1855. He was pleased with his boys' results in both types of examination. A note of pride in his equipment appears at the end of the advertisement: "The best English and German maps - Historical and Geographical - and the best apparatus of every kind, are used in the school

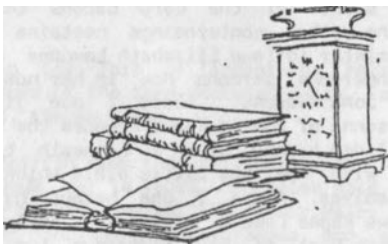
In 1864 he married. As his first child was born in 1865, the Meiklejohn sons could not have been educated at Rosehill School, for at a date difficult to fix exactly, but certainly before the 1871 census, Meiklejohn moved to London and the school disappeared from local records. The name was used again some years later by A J Pearce for his boarding and day school for boys.

Among Meiklejohn's non-local pupils was the youngest son of a famous American hydrographer, Matthew Fontaine Maury, whose great work was the charting of main ocean currents. Meiklejohn's gift for teaching had been brought to Maury's notice some years earlier, before the move to Bowdon, by the Astronomer Royal of Scotland whom Maury had asked to recommend a tutor for the sons of some of his colleagues and himself, stipulating that he wanted, not a purely classical education, but one giving attention to mathematics and science. So Meiklejohn was appointed and developed a firm friendship with Maury; hence the appearance of the youngest Maury boy at Rosehill School, where he did well n a rigorous regime, afterwards passing on to higher scientific education in London. It is evident that Meiklejohn found a great lack of suitable textbooks for use in his school, for he set about to write and publish his own in a range of subjects including English language and literature, history and geography. Bartholomews of Edinburgh published his Comparative Atlas, Physical and Political, and Chambers his English readers, though eventually, years after leaving Bowdon, he himself took over the London publishing firm of A M Holden, which, after his father's death, one of his sons carried on under the name of Meiklejohn and Son.

John Meiklejohn's career developed rapidly after his move away from Bowdon. He became successively an Inspector of schools in the year (1870) of the education act that established compulsory elementary education for all children; an Endowed Schools Commissioner in Scotland (1874) and the first Professor of Education at the University of St. Andrews (1876). He lectured widely on educational topics, at teacher training institutions such as the College of Preceptors and at educational conferences up and down the country, and was an eloquent and entertaining speaker. He became an examiner for the Oxford and Cambridge Local and the Civil Service Examinations, and through his textbooks for use in schools he had a world-wide influence. He was indeed a man for his time, helping to implement the great educational movements of the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. His own theory and practice were deeply influenced by the epoch-making work of the continental educational theorists Froebel and Pestalozzi. For instance he deplored the concept of a teacher as one who poured information into the receptive mind of the pupil. He believed in developing the child's whole personality, drawing out his interests and encouraging him to find out for himself through the exploration of books. He discouraged over-reliance on learning by rote, once so popular in schools. The small classes he advertised as a feature of his school in Bowdon were ideal for putting such theories into practice. Such are still the aims and ideals of many educationalists, although financial pressures have hampered their translation into practice.

This small Cheshire school then was the starting-point for the career of a man of ideas, wit and wisdom whose influence was indeed far-reaching.

A strong debt is owed to Miss Mary G Goss, Staff Inspector, Geography, I.L.E.A., retired, and to the Sub-Librarian, Edinburgh University and the Keeper of the Muniments, St. Andrews University.



EXTRACTS FROM THE WILL OF JAMES WATMOUGH
VICAR OF BOWDON 1647-1660
by Marjorie Cox

James Watmough, of Loton, Lancashire, was a scholar of Brasenose College, Oxford and graduated B.A. in 1638. In the upheaval of the Civil War he was given the living of Bowdon in March, 1647, as a tested Puritan clergyman. His will is dated 15 March, 1658, Old Style (the year beginning on March 25th) i.e. by our reckoning 1659, and was proved in 1661. The special interest of Watmough's will lies in the large number of specific bequests. From the clothing and personal belongings we gain some picture of the outward man the several pairs of carefully distinguished gloves, the walking staff, the 'birdeing piece' c.f. fowling piece, the old black cloak.

The named books which he bequeathed to lay friends and relations show a breadth of reading. In addition to contemporary books of sermons, meditations and essays (two by bishops), he left works which show scientific leanings - Pliny's Natural History, Francis Bacon's Natural History and Nathanael Carpenter's treatise on geography. Two members of the local gentry are mentioned: Thomas Brereton of Ashley, who built the chapel at Ashley Hall and was buried at Bowdon in 1660 and Robert Tipping, the inventory of whose own possessions, taken in 1663, included several maps. Watmough's 'loving kinsman', William Bentley of Northwich, was an interesting figure. He was an active Parliamentarian in the Civil War, a practising physician, an influential feoffee of the grammar school at Northwich and a scholarly collector of books.

Introduction
"In the name of God Amen the fifteenth daie of March in the yeare of our Lord God according to the accompt now used in England one thousand sixe hundered fiftie and eight, I James Watmough of Bowdon in the Countie of Chester Clerke beinge sicke and weake in bodie but of good and perfect memorie praised bee God for the same doe make and ordeyne this my last will 4 testament In m a m e r & forme followeing .... Also itt is my will and mind that my noates 4 manuscripts shall bee preserved & kept entire safe for the use of my eldest sonne, Also I doe hereby give & bequeath to my wellbeloved Unckle John Sorocold of Loton in the County of Lancaster gentlmn the walkinge staffe wch Mr Brereton of Ashley gave mee Also I doe hereby give & bequeath my best paire of Gloves and my best hatte to my brother Richard Watmough & I doe give & bequeath to my brother Robert Watmough my best paire of Bootes: and the birdeing piece wch Hamnett Burges hath Alsoe I doe hereby give & bequeath to my deare mother my little ringe which hath a stone therein entreateing her acceptance thereof: Also I doe hereby give & bequeath to my sister Margarett the wife of Raphe Lowe gen. my paire of plaine Cordivant gloves, Also I doe hereby give to my servant William Barrett one suite of my cloathes such as my executors shall thincke fitt, Also I doe hereby give & bequeath to my servant Margarett Owen my old blacke Cloake, Alsoe I doe hereby give to my servants John Spakeman & Ellen Shelmerdine two shillings & sixe pence apiece: Alsoe I doe hereby give & bequeath to my loving kinsman William Bentley of Northwich in the County of Chester gentlmn a Booke in my studie entituled Plinies naturall Historie; And I doe hereby give & bequeath to my brother in lawe Raphe Lowndes of Ashley two bookes in my studie of the Lord Bacons the one called his naturall historie and the other conteyneinge certaine Statutes Alsoe I doe give & bequeath to my sister in lawe Elizabeth Lowndes wife of the said Raphe Lowndes doctor Sandersons sermons now in her husband custodie & the knife which was my brother John Judsons, Alsoe I doe give & bequeath to my Nephew John Lowndes sonne of the sd Raphe Lowndes the Booke called Doctor Halls meditations; Alsoe I doe hereby give & bequeath to my Cozen James Watmough who now lives with mee, the little Bible which hee now hath & the book entituled Felthams Resolves. Also I doe hereby give & bequeath to my aforesaid Brother in lawe Raphe Lowe my gloves that have the blacke Fringes; Alsoe I doe give to Elizabeth Hunt of Bowdon widowe two shillings & sixepence,

Alsoe I doe hereby desire Mr Dunster of Northenden to preach my funerall sermon.... And 1 doe hereby give to Mr Robert Tippinge the booke in my studie entituled Carpenters Geographie; Alsoe I doe give to my said sonJohn Watmoughthe bible with my Name upon itt & the bible wch I preach in and my seale. Alsoe I doe give & bequeath to Nathan Ashton my paire of Shooes; Alsoe I doe hereby give 4 bequeath to Thomas Brereton of Ashley Esq. the booke entituled the Miscelaneous historie to Mrs Brereton of Ashley the book e entituled the blessed man written by Mr Bolton...."

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THE STAMFORD ARMS AND THE GRIFFIN
by John Chartres

The layout of most English villages includes the juxtaposition of church and public house. Bowdon may therefore be regarded as curious in having the juxtaposition of a large church and two quite large public houses in its centre. Written history 'remains silent' about the exact origins of The Griffin and The Stamford Arms. However it can be fairly safely assumed out of some documentation and passed-down memories that The Griffin was the earlier of the two establishments to be described as 'public houses' or 'inns'. The Griffin was probably not quite far enough South-West of Manchester on the Chester road to have been a coach staging post, this role probably first falling to The Swan at Bucklow Hill. Nevertheless records obtainable indicate that The Griffin certainly included livery stabling amongst its facilities as well as the normal arrangements for farmers to conduct their business transactions in comfort on market days. The origin of the name 'Griffin' poses many intriguing possibilities. A 'Griffin', of course, is a mythical monster (occasionally spelt as Griffon, Gryphon, etc) and the offspring of a lion and an eagle.

The present pub sign depicts such an animal. How did 'our pub' come to be called 'The Griffin'? There is a possible explanation in the existence of a Griffin family of 'The Manor Bartherton' (or 'Betherton') near Nantwich in the 13th century. This was apparently a Cheshire family of considerable substance, so that somewhere down the line the name may have been conferred upon the inn. 'Griffin' is NOT a common public house name. The most intriguing, and enjoyable story which this author has heard about the origins of the next-door Stamford Arms is that the building was originally a farmhouse; that the local farm workers preferred to refresh themselves out of sight and sound of their 'masters' and that the farmer's wife agreed to brew and serve ale to them in the privacy of her kitchen. Thus there arose, it would seem, something akin to an 'Officers' Mess' and an 'Other Ranks' Mess' in Bowdon.

The records held by the two brewery companies now administering the two Houses (Boddingtons in the case of The Stamford Arms and Wilsons in the case of The Griffin) begin no earlier than 1885. Both sets of records, in the form of 'indentures' relate to the leasing of the two establishments by the trustees of the then deceased Harry, Earl of Stamford and Warrington and of his widow, Catherine, the Countess. Documents relating to The Griffin show that in 1886, John Hunt obtained a lease at the rate of £75 per annum for 1 4 years. He later sold out to William Trevillier of Booth Street Manchester for £1,550; and in 1891 Arthur Oxley acquired it for the same sum, the whole 'messuage' including three roods and seven perches — 5,980 square yards, it seems.

Other negotiations at the beginning of the 20th century placed The Griffin in the hands of Wilsons Brewery, earlier known as Key & Whittaker. The Boddington Brewery records show that in 1885 Alfred Ling obtained a lease of The Stafford Arms at a rental of £84 per annum and had to insure the premises for £1,000. In 1899 Mary Ling (who was either the widow or the daughter of Alfred, and whose name is recalled by many Bowdon residents) bought the property for £5,000 under a mortgage arrangement with Boddingtons Brewery. It seems probable that both establishments became 'managed houses' under the ownership of the two breweries from the early years of this century. Both seem to have prospered.

One of the interesting developments was the building of 'The Pavilion'; an extension of The Stamford Arms, abutting on to The Griffin. It was largely a wooden construction designed to provide facilities for dancing and other social activities. Many Bowdon residents probably still remember the enjoyment of slow waltzes and quick steps on the sprung floor of The Pavilion in the years when so many meetings, so many courtships and so many happy marriages owed their beginnings to those magic words: 'Would you like to have this dance with me?' The Pavilion went on to provide this form of enjoyment into the Second World War (and what an important morale-builder a well-conducted dance floor was in those days) but eventually fell into disrepair until the day when Fire Prevention Officers declared it unsafe for this sort of activity.

It reverted to the mundane task of being a storeroom for all sorts of unwanted objects, Although its exterior, linking the two public houses and curving around the bend in the road opposite the church still made it attractive to the outside viewer. In recent years however, Boddingtons have assessed its potential, invested a very large sum of money in it and have produced another attractive asset to Bowdon. Almost concurrently Wilsons Brewery have invested in The Griffin. The present decor in The Pavilion has something about the late '20s and the '30s in it, plus something redolent of Somerset Maugham, the Raffles Hotel in Singapore and the Dragon Room in Kuala Lumpur. The Bowdon Sheaf does not aspire to provide an 'Eating Out' feature for its readers but it can be recorded that this writer and 'his companion' have eaten well at both establishments at prices which their colleagues on certain national newspapers would probably not even both to put on their expense
accounts.



The Bowdon Sheaf

A BOWDON HISTORY SOCIETY PUBLICATION

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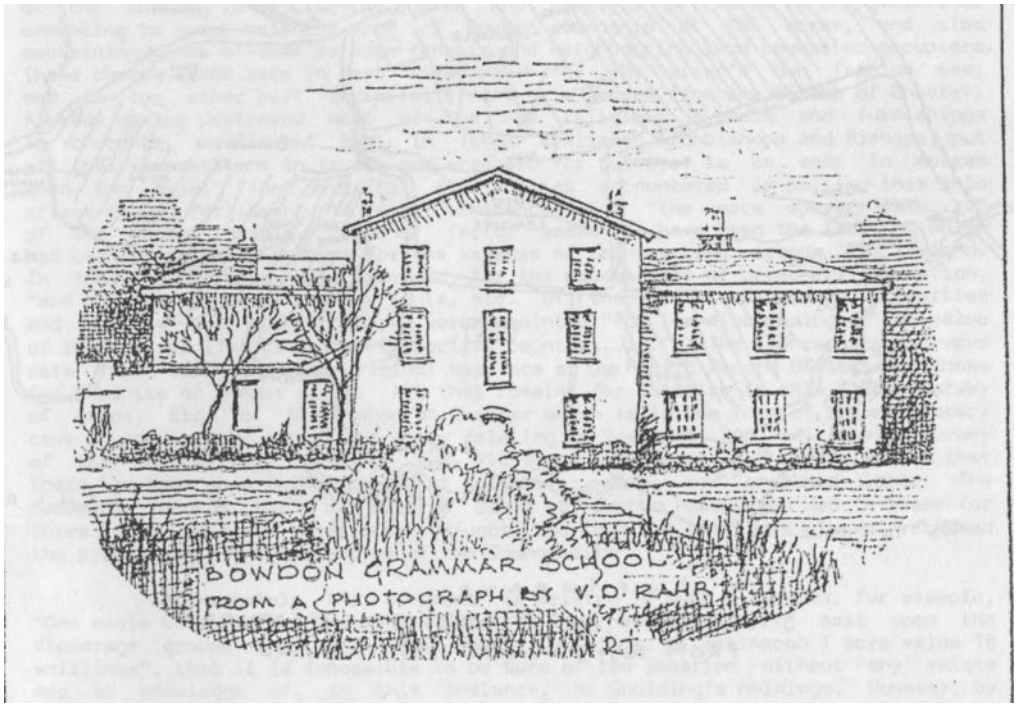
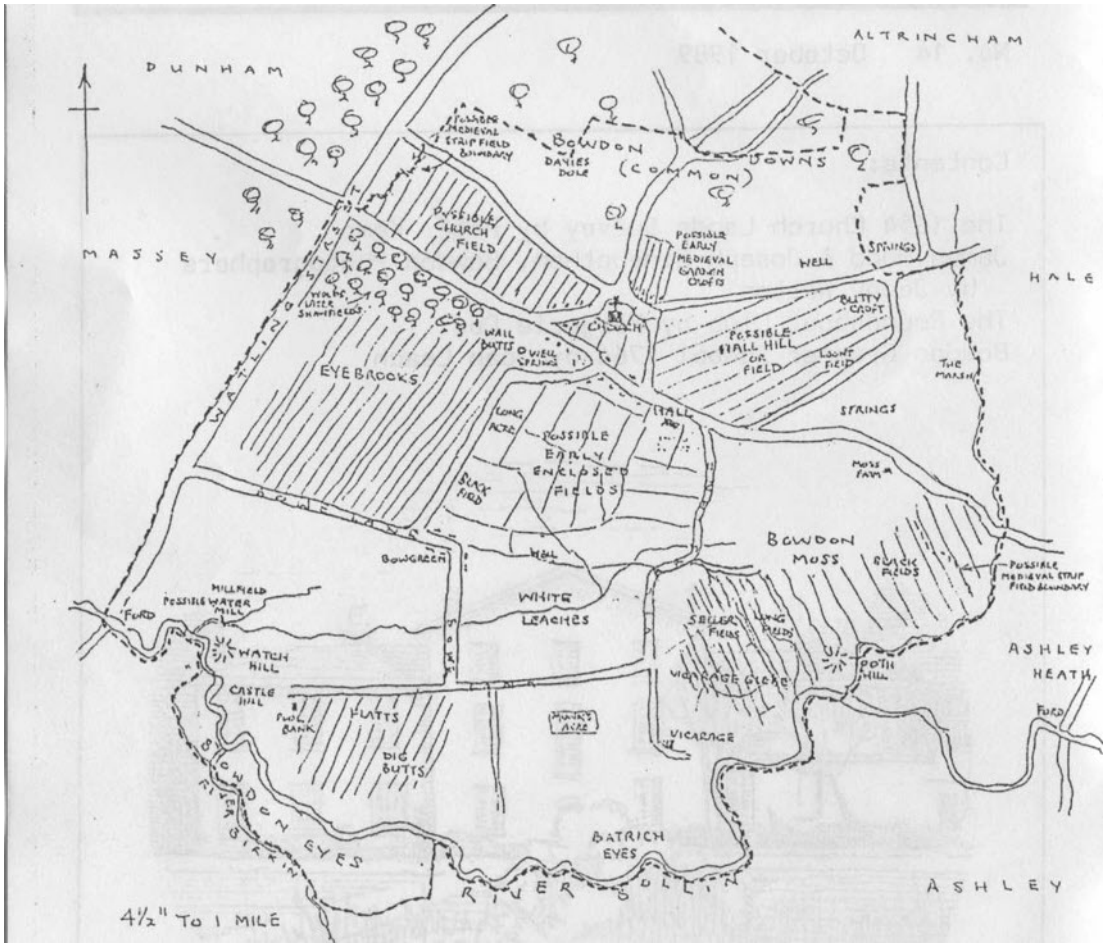


BOWDON



ROSTHERNE

SKETCH MAP OF MEDIAEVAL FEATURES
FROM 1654 SURVEY & 1838 TITHE MAP

Bowdon in the 17th Century
THE 1654 CHURCH LANDS SURVEY
by PETER KEMP

Bowdon township in the 17th century was a tiny village around and below the old church of St. Mary's on the hill, the focal point of a very large pariah of some twelve townships, all agricultural apart from the small market town of Altrincham, arid with only about 150-170 inhabitants. The population can be estimated from the Hearth Tax Returns for the years 1664 and 1674 which show respectively 33 and 34 houses with hearths, of which 24 were tiny cottages having only one hearth. The area covered by Bowdon township at the time would not be much less than the 776 acres of the 1838 Tithe Award survey, but better agricultural practices and more land taken in to Farming had already doubled the number of houses by the time of the 1801 Census to 66 with 340 inhabitants comprised of 72 Families, of whom 46 were in agriculture, 18 in trade and 8 otherwise occupied. Very little of 17th century Bowdon remains today - a Few of the rapidly dwindling Fields that remain are still recognisable, Moss Cottage (Formerly two cottages) built in 1666 on South Downs Road opposite Moss Farm is still there, as are the 17th century parts of Moss Farm itself and of Motley Bank possibly, and the church has the fine monument of the Brereton family of Ashley in 17th century costume to remind us of those days and a way of life long past.

Five years into the Commonwealth period, in 1654, there was a survey of the church lands listing names and acreages of fields in the glebelands amounting to under half the area of Bowdon township at 288 acres, and also containing names of some cottage tenants and neighbouring land owners or occupiers. These church lands were in part 'vicarial' for the vicar's own farming use, and in the other part 'rectorial', held by a lessee from the Bishop of Chester. Already having destroyed most of the old religious symbols and furnishings in churches, Parliament had, in 1646, abolished Archbishops and Bishops, put all their possessions in trust, and arranged for surveys to be made to assess them for sale. The practical difficulties encountered in putting this into effect caused Parliament to make ordinances for "the more speedy sale...." of the church assets. Another factor seems to have been the £300,000 which had been borrowed on account for the expense of transporting troops to Ireland. In 1649, a further Act provided for the maintenance of preachers, education, "and other pious use" from the rents, etc. of the forfeited church properties and assets, and commissioners were appointed "for the discovering of the value of the several livings in the respective counties ".

The Lancashire surveys date from 1650 and the original Mss. are at the Public Record Office, but those for Cheshire no longer exist. All that remains for Cheshire is this 1654 Survey of Lands, Etc. of the Bishop of Chester which is in the form of a contemporary copy in the Lambeth Mss.. The entry relating to Bowdon is "An Aditionall Survey of the Rectory or Parsonage and Viccarage of Boden...." which implies that there had been an original survey at an earlier date, now presumed lost. The document records that Sir George Booth of Dunham Massey had had 'a lease for three lives which are longe since defunct' and that the surveyors 'have returned the premisses in the Possession of the Comonwealth.'

Unfortunately the document is written in such a fashion, for example, "One smale Close called the little Batrich Eye , abutting North east upon the Viccarage ground and North west upon Gouldings, by estimation 1 acre value 18 shillings", that it is impossible to be sure of its location without any estate map or knowledge of, in this instance, Mr Goulding's holdings. However, by comparison of the field names with the 1838 Tithe Award and those listed by Dodgson in his Place Names of Cheshire, Part II, it is found that 27 17th century field names survived into the 19th century of which a few south of Bow Lane and along by the Bollin can still be identified today.

Those field names were:-

Coe Acre, Coe Field, Downs Field, Eye Brooks, Flatts, Hall Bottom, Horse Field, Hanging Bank or Field, Long Acre, Long Field, Lowe, The Marsh, Mill Field, Monks Acre, New Bridge, Pease Croft, Rough Hoy, Shays or Shawfield, Wallbutts, Well Croft and the White Leaches. For example, north of Castle Hill towards Bow Lane, Mill Field (No. 221, 1838) 4.5 acres corresponds with Mill Field (1654) 5 acres, and Horse Field on Bow Lane (No. 220, 1030) 3.5 acres corresponds with Horse Field (1654) 3.5 acres, from the location description in the 1654 document . Many of the fields are described as 'closes' meaning enclosed or hedged fields so by 1654 a good part of the 'lands' of Bowdon already had been enclosed by the principal landowners.

It would seem that the area bounded north and west by Bowgreen Road containing the Gaddum Road neighbourhood held some of these early fields. Down Bowgreen Road from the corner opposite 'The Springs' nearly as far as Bow Lane were the Long Acre (1654) corresponding with Higher Long Acre and Lower Long Acre, each 2 acres, (Nos. 189 and 190, 1838), and to the south, Blackfield (1654) 2 acres, corresponding with Blackfield (No. 193 , 1838) grown to 4.5 acres. East of that corner of Bowgreen Road and adjoining Long Acre, were Lesser or Little Cowfield (1654) 2 acres corresponding with Lower Coe Field (No. 188 , 1838) 3 acres; Cowfield (1654) 2.5 acres corresponding with Coe Field (No. 187, 1838) 2 acres; and, Greater Cowfield (1654) 2.5 acres corresponding with Higher Coe Field (No. 184, 1838) 2 acres. South of those three fields were two 1654 fields called the Little Lowe and the Great Lowe, which by 1838 seem to have grown in area by another 2 acres, and were divided by then into three fields, Lowes (No. 191) 4 acres, Further Lowe (No. 186) 2.75 acres, and Nearer Lowe (No. 185) 2.25 acres. Little Meadow (No. 192, 1838) may have been called Utley or Uttleach Croft in 1654, being a croft just outside the 'leach' or wetlands, east of the present West Bank Farm on Bow Lane.

The name Blackfield also occurs in the Moss Farm lands, Grange Road being Blackfield Lane in former times, and it is a descriptive name for the dark, peaty soil of the mosslands. It is interesting to see that parts of the old mediaeval open field system were still in operation from the descriptions of Churchfield (some 16 lands and 2 headlands) 'on the Downs', Eye Brooks (some 25 lands and 1 headland), and Hall Hill or Field (some 15 lands) 'on the Downs' . These three Fields could have been those usually Found in the mediaeval arrangement where two were under cultivation at one time with the third being kept fallow. The 1838 field names give clues to the location of open fields from the survival of mediaeval field terms in their names, for example, Butts, Loonts, Flatts and Eyes. It is clear that the Eyebrook open field was the area bounded by Park Road, Chester Road, Bow Lane and Bowgreen Road, and containing the modern Eyebrook Road. The description 'on the Downs' for Churchfield and for Hall Hill or Field leads one to suppose that these two open Fields were east and west of the church, Churchfield being between Park Road and Green Walk , and Hall Field being between Stamford Road and Langham Road where the names Loontfield and Butty Croft appear.' The 1838 Bowdon boundary at the north-west end of the possible Churchfield is stepped and away from the main road suggesting a shared strip field boundary with Dunham Massey. Another mediaeval field site could be east of Pool Bank Farm where the names Flatts and Dig Butts occur. The sketch map on page 2 shows these and other possible features.

JAMES MUDD & JOSEPH SIDEBOTHAM Bowdon Photographers
by JENNY WETTON

James Mudd was one of Manchester's most important Victorian photographers who lived in Bowdon for nearly 50 years.

James was born in Halifax in 1821, the son of Alice and Robert Mudd. They ran a shop selling bacon and cheese, and Alice was also a milliner. However, Robert died when James was ten and, several years later, the family moved to Manchester. In 1845, James married Ann Peacock, a joiner's daughter. In about 1847, James and his brother, Robert, opened a textile design business at 44, George Street in Manchester. James had been a budding artist when the family were in Halifax. Designing prints for Manchester's largest textile industry would have been a lucrative outlet for this talent.

First Beginnings James Mudd's interest in photography probably began soon after. It seems likely that he learned about photographic techniques and processes from Joseph Sidebotham and, through him, John Benjamin Dancer. Sidebotham was a fellow textile designer and keen amateur photographer. He was also to become a life-long friend and photographic collaborator. Dancer was an important Manchester scientific instrument maker who also made cameras and was interested in new photographic processes. Sidebotham and Dancer were both members of the Manchester Literary and Philosophical Society. This society met regularly to discuss matters of scientific and literary interest. Mudd's earliest known photographs were landscapes taken using the waxed paper process in 1854. The following year, he and Sidebotham experimented on this process and they made some improvements to it.

In 1855, the Manchester Photographic Society was formed. The members were professionals, amateurs and dealers who met fortnightly to display their photographs and demonstrate new processes and equipment. Most were also members of the Literary and Philosophical Society. Mudd, Sidebotham and Dancer were all founding members of the society, Mudd being elected on to the council in the society's second year and Sidebotham being its first Secretary.

Beyer-Peacock & Company
In 1856, Mudd began a commission to document locomotives and other machinery produced at the Beyer-Peacock works at Gorton in Manchester. He may have been introduced to Charles Beyer by Joseph Sidebotham who would have known him from meetings of the Literary and Philosophical Society. Mudd's photographs would have acted as an official record of the company's accomplishments and would probably have been distributed to prospective customers. Eventually, the negatives of these photographs were sent for storage at the Gorton works and, in 1965, came to what is now the Greater Manchester Museum of Science and Industry when Beyer-Peacock closed down.

Pictorial Work James Mudd also took 'pictorial' photographs and entered many of them in important exhibitions. The first of these was a Manchester Photographic Society exhibition in 1856. He also exhibited two landscape photographs at the Exhibition of Art Treasures of the United Kingdom held at Old Trafford in Manchester in 1857. He went on to receive many prizes for exhibition photographs, culminating in the 1067 International Exhibition in Paris where he received a silver medal. After this, he retired from exhibition photography to concentrate on oil painting and drawing.

Studio and Other Commissions

In about 1856, James and Robert Mudd opened a photographic studio at 94 Cross Street. They also sold photographic apparatus From here. The textile designing business was retained as this was probably a lucrative source of income for them.

The two Mudd businesses must have been very successful as James moved from Salford to a large house at Rose Hill in Bowdon in about 1858. However, Robert does not seem to have shared James' enthusiasm for photography - he returned to the textile design trade about a year later. In 1860, James Mudd acquired a new studio in the fashionable area of St. Ann's Square. At the same time he also hired an assistant, George Wardley, who would have helped with studio portraiture. Wardley was a very active photographer and a member of the Literary and Philosophical Society. In 1866, Wardley left Mudd's employment to open his own studio in Salford. Other photographic commissions undertaken by James Mudd include work on the locomotives made by Sharp, Stewart and Company of the Atlas Works in Manchester. This commission lasted until 1885, when the company moved to Glasgow. Mudd also took many photographs in and around Manchester for the Friths publishing firm which issued them as postcards.. He undertook other important work of the machine tools made by Nasmyth, Wilson and Company of Manchester. James Nasmyth, a co-founder of the firm, was an amateur photographer, a member of the Literary and Philosophical Society, and a founding member of the Manchester Photographic Society.

In 1873, Mudd's son, James Willis Mudd, joined the firm. However, he does not seem to have been very active in the business and may have just worked in the studio. James Mudd hired a new assistant, George Grundy, in about 1880. Grundy remained in Mudd's employment until the studio officially passed to him in about 1903.

Towards the end of his life, James Mudd concentrated on painting and drawing. In the early 1870's, Mudd was inspired to illustrate Coleridge's "Rime of the Ancient Mariner". For this, he did twenty-two chalk drawings of fantastic landscapes and seascapes in the Antarctic. These were published in a booklet by the Coleridge Society in Manchester. In the 1000's he entered paintings into at least five exhibitions including the Liverpool Autumn Exhibition held at the Walker Art Gallery.

James Mudd's close friend and collaborator, Joseph Sidebotham, died in 1885. They had worked together on developing photographic processes and had supported each other throughout their photographic careers. James Mudd died in Bowdon eleven years later at the age of eighty-five. He was a very versatile photographer who took many important photographs, portraits and prize-winning photographs of artistic subjects. His technical expertise was much greater than many other photographers of his time. Joseph Sidebotham was an important amateur photographer who contributed to the early development of photography in Manchester. He lived in the Bowdon area for nearly thirty years.

Joseph was born in 1821 at Apethorne House in Hyde, Cheshire, the son of Joseph and Ann Sidebotham. ' His father was the manager of Gibraltar Mill in Hyde. The young Joseph was educated first at Denton Chapel and later at the Manchester Grammar School. After leaving school at the age of 16, he became apprenticed to Nelson and Knowles, calico printers. Later, he went to evening classes in Natural History at the Manchester Mechanics Institute. Here, he would have met J B Dancer who taught the use of the microscope at the Institute.

Sidebotham was to retain an interest in botany and entomology for the rest of his life. In 1846, he became a junior partner in the calico printing firm of Mellarid, Appleby and Sidebotham of Manchester. Five years later, he became

Sidebotham was to retain an interest in botany and entomology for the rest of his life. In 1846, he became a junior partner in the calico printing firm of Mellarid, Appleby and Sidebotham of Manchester. Five years later, he became the senior partner of the Strines Calico Printing Company. It seems likely that Sidebotham would have learnt his knowledge of photographic techniques from Dancer. As a calico printer, Sidebotham would have had a good knowledge of chemistry and was able to experiment with new photographic rocesses. When he produced his first photograph is not known but he was certainly producing highly competent pictures by 1852. Some of these photo- graphs appeared in the Strines Journal, a hand-written journal produced by members of the staff at the Strines Printwor ks. It was also at this time that Sidebotham was elected to membership of the Manchester Literary and Philosophical Society. Sidebotham probably met James Mudd in about 1850 and seems to have taught him about photographic techniques and processes.

In the early 1850's Dancer also taught Sidebotham to make microphotographs. These were ordinary negatives reduced through a microscope onto a microscope slide. The resulting tiny transparencies could be viewed through a microscope and became very popular. A few of Sidebotham' s microphotographs are now in the Greater Manchester Museum of Science and Industry's collections.

In 1866, the Sidebotham family moved to 'The Beeches' in Bowdon. They had moved to Ashton-on-Mersey ten years earlier. Joseph retired from the Strines Printworks in 1877 and was given a photographic album illustrating all the staff at their various trades. He died eight years later.

Editorial Note James Mudd lived at 1, Richmond Hill, Bowdon & Joseph Sidebotham lived on the Downs and moved to ‘Erlesdene’, Green Walk, Bowdon in 1879.

THE ROUNDABOUT CLUB
by MARJORIE COX

In the early 1860s a literary club, The Roundabout Club, was formed in Bowdon. The founders were Alexander Ireland, Horatio Micholls and J M D Meiklejohn. Ireland was a Scot by origin, business manager of the advanced liberal newspaper, the Manchester Examiner and Times and a leading literary and intellectual figure in Manchester; he lived first in Stamford Road and later at Inglewood, St. Margaret's Road, where his son, the composer John Ireland, was born. Horatio Micholls was a Manchester merchant and leading Reform Jew, of Summerfield, East Downs Road and Meiklejohn was headmaster of the notable Rose Hill School for Boys in Bowdon and later Professor of Education at St. Andrew's University.

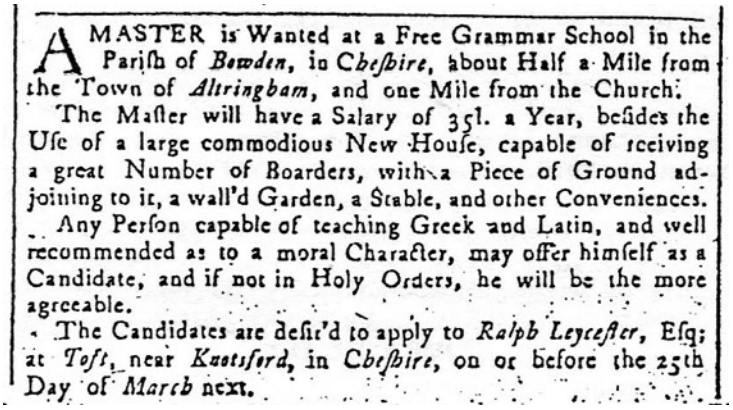
The club was named the Roundabout because its monthly meetings and dinners were held in turn at the houses of its member s, who numbered twelve. Among the original members, drawn from a variety of fields, were John Mills, banker, economist, musician and music critic; John D Morell, one of the early School Inspectors (HMIs) and a leading educationist, w ho , in 1851, showed Matthew Arnold, newly appointed an HMI, round Manchester schools; John Watson, a well-known naturalist, and James Mudd, photographer.

For the record, the other members were Mr J Leese, Mr Swanwick, Mr Fleming, Mr Marsland and Mr Phillips. Alexander Ireland was the leading spirit of the club, inspiring it with 'its remarkable qualities of geniality and its unrestrained liberty of expression of opinions'. As vacancies occurred, new members were elected and there were visitors from among Ireland's exceptionally wide range of literary

friends. Ireland was noted, too, for his interest in America and his kindness to Americans. Emerson, a close friend, stayed with him in Bowdon, and in 1957 Ireland accompanied Nathaniel Hawthorne to the famous Manchester Exhibition of Art Treasures on the occasion when Tennyson was there. It is interesting to note that James Mudd took a photograph of Tennyson during that visit to Manchester: a reproduction of it can be found in The Tennyson Album by Andrew Wheatcroft. Ireland left Bowdon in the late 1880's and we do not know what happened to the Roundabout Club afterwards, but for over twenty years James Mudd must have belonged to it. A club which had as its centre the exceptionally well-read (he was said to have a library of 15,000 to 20,000 books) and influential Alexander Ireland, friend of Carlyle and acquainted with Wordsworth, Lamb, Leigh Hunt, De Quincey and Mrs Gaskell as well as American writers, must have been a stimulating society.

BOWDON GRAMMAR SCHOOL 1764
by
JOAN LEACH

While undertaking historical research, Joan Leach noticed the following advertisement i n the Manchester Mercury, for the 27th November, 1764:



A MASTER is Wanted at a Free Grammar School in the Pariſh of *Bowden*, in *Cheſhire*, about Half a Mile from the Town of *Altringham*, and one Mile from the Church.

The Maſter will have a Salary of 35l. a Year, beſides the Uſe of a large commodious New Houſe, capable of receiving a great Number of Boarders, with a Piece of Ground adjoining to it, a wall'd Garden, a Stable, and other Conveniences.

Any Perſon capable of teaching Greek and Latin, and well recommended as to a moral Character, may offer himſelf as a Candidate, and if not in Holy Orders, he will be the more agreeable.

The Candidates are deſir'd to apply to *Ralph Leyceſter*, Eſq; at *Toft*, near *Knutsford*, in *Cheſhire*, on or before the 25th Day of *March* next.

It is interesting to note that Ralph Leycester, of Toft, was involved in this Bowdon project, but records show that the Leycesters and Stamfords were related by marriage at that time. The school concerned was the one built out of the proceeds of the will of Thomas Walton. Gent, of Dunham Woodhouses, at Oldfield Brow in 1759. The school was transferred to a new building in 1867 and named Seamons Moss School. The old building was then converted into a private residence, Oldfield House, and occupied by a Danish merchant, Viggo Rahr, whose great grand daughter Sheila Rahr Trenbath has provided a photograph of it for publication. The road adjoining Oldfield House was later renamed Walton Road, instead of Sandy Lane in honour of Thomas Walton, Gent.

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The Bowdon Sheaf

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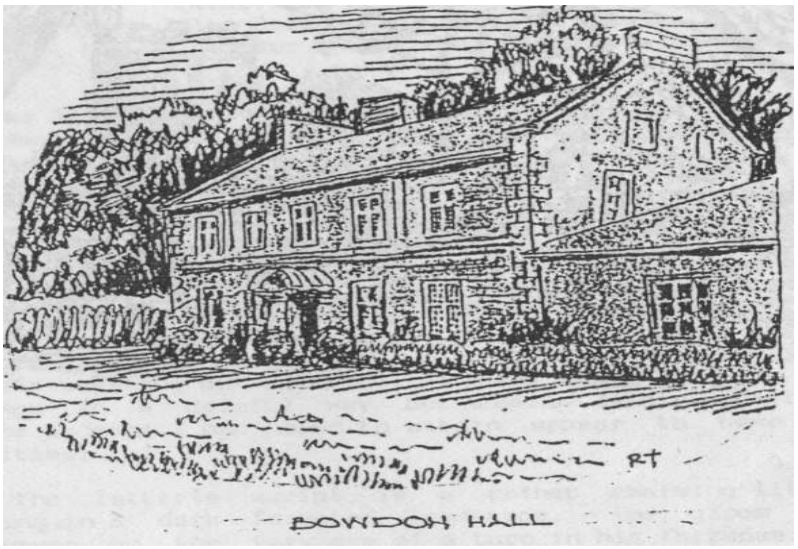

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The Firs

BYRON COOPER
by Maurice Ridgway

Byron Cooper died in 1933 at the age of 83, a colourful figure passed from Bowdon, Cheshire where he had lived at the Birches, Vicarage Lane for many years, sharing his life with his daughter Enid, also an artist, and where he had a small studio. Obituaries published at the time of his death help greatly in piecing together his long interesting life. The Manchester Guardian recalled that he had been specially selected on seven occasions to represent British Art in both oil and watercolour at International Exhibitions. These included the Paris Exhibition in 1889, where his large watercolour Grange Fell was hung in the place of honour, the St Louis (USA) Exhibition 1904, the New Zealand Exhibition (1906) the Franco-British Exhibition (1908) and the Rome Exhibition (1909). These exhibitions were organised and supported by the Art Committee of the Royal Commission appointed to assist the Board of Trade. These alone pinpoint the importance of Byron Cooper as an artist whose work should not be allowed to disappear.

It is perhaps as the father figure of the Manchester School of Painters that he is best remembered in the north west. For many years he worked in his main studio, Room 415 above the Royal Exchange, Manchester. Here he was in constant touch with persons who carried out their business in the lower Hall, and to whom passed many of his paintings, long appreciated after his death. Many may remember that the walls of the entrance to the newly established American Red Cross Officers club in Deansgate Manchester opened in February 1944, were lined with his paintings rescued from a gallery destroyed by incendiary bombs (Daily Dispatch 15.ii.1944) Byron Cooper was born in Manchester and educated first at the Revd James McDougalls School at Chadderton Hall. Later he studied at the life classes of the M.A.F.A and later with two French painters Jules Breton and Carolus Duran. As a young man he was also a keen athlete, and an amateur champion in different branches of sport, winning over a hundred medals.

In 1877 Cooper was living at 2 Raby Street, Manchester from where he wrote amusing letters to Julia Amelia Kenny whom he later married. Some of these he illustrated with sketches and cartoons. One such letter, written towards the end of 1878 reveals his passionate love of landscape and the action of light. 'Have you ever observed' he wrote to Julia, ' when looking at a landscape on a dull sort of day when everything looks black and unpromising, the wonderful effect of a momentary glint of sunlight falling across the scene, how it changes and cheers the whole aspect and banishes all gloomy thoughts from the mind? Yes? Well your welcome letters have always had the same effect on My individual landscape as the sunbeam has on Nature's prospects.

This is a rough sketch of the effect I mean. You can imagine therefore how eagerly I waited for your letter, since my prospects at the present time are anything but cheerful. I'm not aware that I am in the habit of looking at things in a doleful way but somehow Lately everything seems to have gone wrong and all the objects I had hoped to attain appear to have passed into the region of impossibilities.' Sandwiched in the latter's script is a rather charming little water colour of a beam of light shining in a dark forested landscape. The gloom reflected in his letter happened however on the very eve of a turn in his fortunes. Not only was his love returned by Julia whom he then married, but he was able to achieve a breakthrough in his artistic recognition.

Over fifty years later his paintings could still evoke in others what he could see in nature. The 'Manchester City News' in a review of his paintings could then say that "he captured the essential nature of a sunlit day as well as for moonlight, Impressionist rather than photographic, he feels colour values accurately and has apparently a grand passion for blue. At any rate the extraordinary range of his seas and skies give the impression that he cares less for green days in forests than for blue days at sea."

One could also add that he rarely if ever included humans in his pictures. Mr Algernon Graves in his second volume of 'Royal Academy of Arts' (H Graves and Co. pp.402.42s) a dictionary of works contributed to Academy Exhibitions between 1769 and 1904, lists no fewer than twenty four landscapes by Cooper, the largest number by Manchester based artists. The Manchester Guardian was quick to take note of this, but his popularity by then was unquestioned and unchallenged and met with the approval of Leighton, Alma Tadema and Clarence Whaite. They gave approval to the observation that he had solved the mystery of moonlight, seeing in it after many years of careful observation as much variety of colour as in sunshine.

He travelled extensively to obtain his scenes in North Wales, Cornwall, Devon, Brittany, Switzerland, the Kyles of Bute, Scandinavia, being but a few. One of his great passions was to recapture in his pictures the emotions aroused by his devotion to the poetical works of Tennyson. To this end he visited and faithfully recorded views in the places associated with Tennyson and his characters. These grew in number and became an exhibition which was to tour the country for a great many years, and continued long after his death to be arranged by his daughter Enid who was devoted to her father's memory.

As Vice President of the Manchester Academy of Fine Arts he made withering attacks upon Nihilism in art, especially the extremists, Post-impressionism, Pauvism, Orfeism, Cubism, Futurism, all coming under fearful attack. At the same time he gave helpful and encouraging advice, based upon long experience and observation, to students. To members of the Bolton Art Club he could stress the importance of correct outline drawing as long as it was not carried too far preferring a concentration upon the study of value and light and shade. The sooner a student is faced with nature the better. ‘When a student first ventures out to sketch from nature' he once said 'he would do well to select sample subjects, the simpler the better, an old gate or a tree trunk will serve well for a start. It will also be well to choose a grey day, as the presence of sunlight enormously magnifies the difficulties to be encountered. To resist also the fascination of colour, keeping for a time to monochrome. Never move about, looking for something better, paint the first thing that impresses, then sit and absorb it, become so completely saturated in it that even when the effect may have passed away one can recall it at will in a sort of mental picture...' His Tennyson Exhibition, of more than a hundred pictures in oil and watercolour, was designed to recapture the natural environment of the late poet laureate, and to illustrate by means of a series of landscapes the special localities in which Tennyson practically passed the whole of his life including the emotional landscape effects of which he derived some of his highest thoughts, similes and metaphors. Thus appeared landscapes at Somersby in Lincolnshire, Tennyson's birthplace, Hazelmere in Surrey where his home, Aldworth, is situated, Freshwater in the Isle of Wight, where he also had a home and finally Tintagel, Cornwall, the classic world of Tennyson's Idylls of the King.

Cooper claimed that the idea came to him when he was painting at Hazelmere, but was not aware at the time that Tennyson had lived there. He had spent the evenings studying Shakespeare and Tennyson. He had expressed a desire to paint the landscapes associated with Shakespeare but this was impossible so long after his death. He decided therefore to do this for Tennyson, his contemporary, whom he had once met in his studio as a young man and who had admired his work. He decided therefore to form such a collection and found in Messrs Henry Graves and Co at Pall Mall Gallery and slightly later at Messrs Wm Agnew and Son at their Liverpool gallery willing collaborators in his project. As this exhibition toured the country its popularity was enormous, over twenty two thousand persons visiting it when it came to Rochdale.

Byron Cooper continued to paint until the closing years of his long life, his last picture to be exhibited at the Royal Academy was perhaps appropriately ‘ the setting Sun, Cornwall' in 1929. Four years later he died in Bowdon.

Tastes and values change so that even great artists tend in turn to be forgotten. I trust there may be a revival of interest in Byron Cooper's pictures. Many years ago, soon after the turn of the century, my father and a friend were exploring the tip of Caernarvonshire, gathering material for what was to become the first Guide to Abersoch. Overlooking Porth Caeriad they found an artist at work painting the bay. They were so impressed by the quality of his work that they purchased it along with another of Porth Neigwl done in the evening, perfectly recapturing the gloom of its other name 'Hell's Mouth'. I still have them. They are signed Byron Cooper, and for many years I imagined he was related in some way to the Lakeland painter Heaton Cooper. Calling on him one day I asked if there was any connection, there was none but he had been asked the question before; he knew nothing about him. It was only when on visiting a house in Bowdon shortly after becoming Vicar that I noted a 'Byron Cooper' on the lady's wall. I asked if she could tell me in what part of the country he lived and to my surprise and joy was told 'The Birches, Vicarage Lane'. Since then the quest has been narrowed down considerably and the results are recaptured
in this present account.

For most of the information I am deeply grateful to surviving members of the family who still live in the neighbourhood. I hope that this brief record will help to preserve the memory of an artist so well acclaimed in his day, for many of his pictures were bought by private individuals as well as by well known Galleries. His picture 'Grange Fell, Lancashire' exhibited and offered for sale (£35.15) at the Manchester Athenaeum Graphic Club in January 1888 was again shown at the Paris Exhibition (Catalogue No. 199) the following year. Godrevy Light went to St. Louis (Catalogue No. 47) and was later purchased by the Manchester City Art Gallery for their permanent collection. This was an oil done in Cornwall. The Chairman of the selection committee was Sir E J Poynter PRA. The Rising Moon (Catalogue No. 438) was bought by one S Kempton at the Dublin International Exhibition in 1907 and was later shown at the Franco-British Exhibition (London) the following year.

Editorial Note: Canon Ridgway supplied a list of exhibitions which have been excluded from this issue of the Bowdon Sheaf, but a copy if available for readers to see, on request.

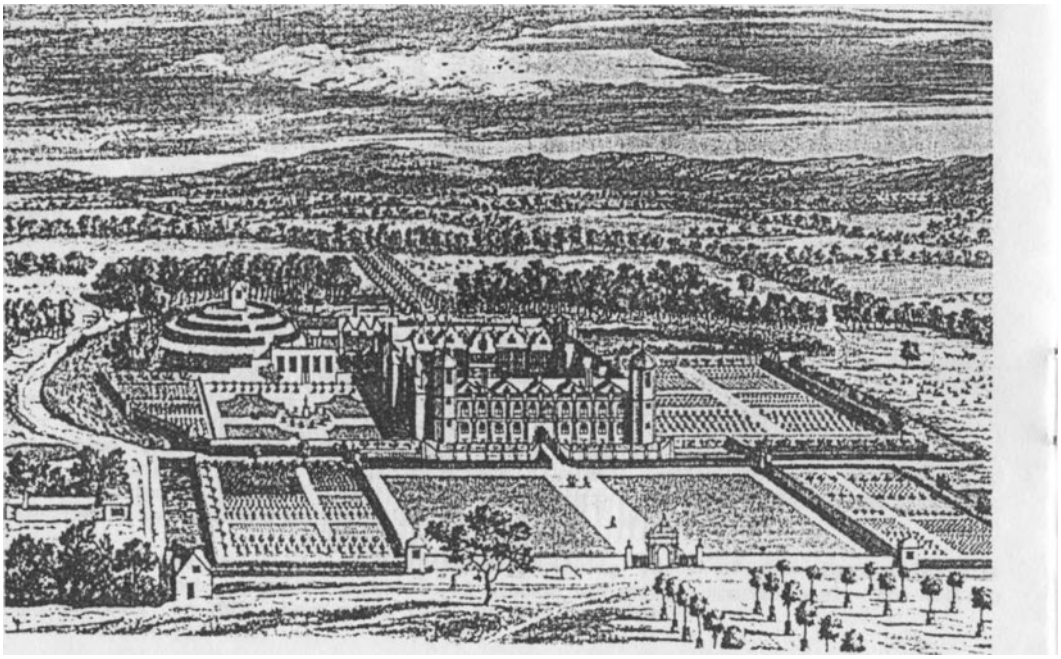


HUNTING TOWERS
by Ronald Trenbath

Drawings and paintings of the Tudor house at Dunham Massey, which preceded the present building, indicate that towers existed at each end of the elevation facing on to the park. These towers were not for the purpose of defence, as might be expected, for indeed they would have been a defensive liability in the age of cannon fire, but more probably they were hunting towers from which women and the elderly could witness hunting, coursing and hawking from a safe and secluded distance.

Such towers were common to great Tudor houses, such as Charlecote, Blickling Hall and Brereton Hall, to provide height, excitement and change of scene for the nobility and gentry. They contained viewing rooms, often with adjoining flat roofs, such as parapets, staircases and gardrobes, with rooms on lower floors for more polite entertainment and meals. The tower was often built away from the main house in woodland as, for example, Bess of Hardwick's four storey hunting tower at Chatsworth, or the one at Whitcliff Park, and were oftendesignated as mere follies by those ignorant of their true functional purpose, and they were also sometimes described, incorrectly, as banqueting houses due, no doubt, to the fact that meals were often served at sporting Events.

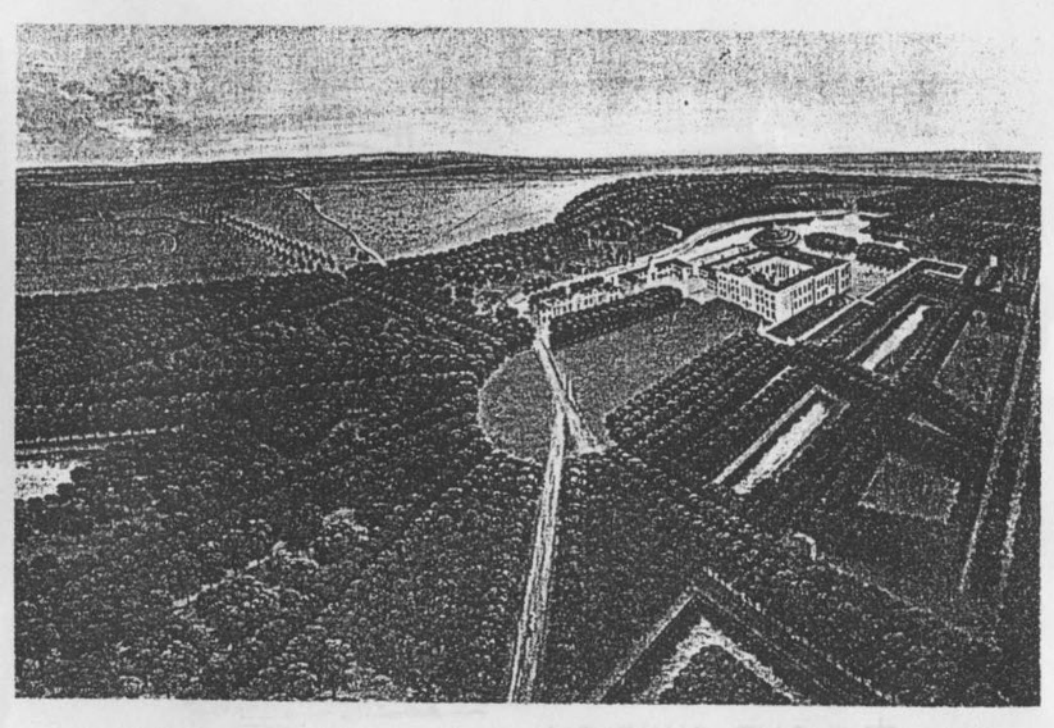
Because of the betting element, coursing was very popular and mile long grass tracks, or rides, were cut through woodland, often radiating from the hunting tower, along which hounds could chase deer, or hares, and bets laid on which ones would make kills. Six tracks radiate from the front of Dunham Massey Hall, of which the Second Earl of Warrington created four avenues in the late 17th Century, and it would be interesting to know if the remaining two tracks were rides and also if he based his avenues on original rides.



Queen Elizabeth's Hunting Lodge at Epping Forest is a three storey wooden structure which was originally a hunting tower with mural paintings which excited William Morris when he visited the building as a small boy, in the company of his father, and influenced his work in later life.

As recently as 1835 Francis Goodwin, in his "Pattern Book of Rural Architecture" advocated the tradition of mediaeval hunting towers for the bourgeoisie, which could be used more for spying on approaching and unwelcome visitors than for witnessing country sports.

It is a paradox that advocates of field sports have always claimed that their activities are commensurate with the aims of conservationists and that wild boar and wolves,to Mention only two species,only became extinct in the British Isles after they were no longer required for hunting and so no longer protected. Ironically Dunham Massey Park is now a reserve for protecting endangered species and it is interesting to note that a modern version of the Elizabethan hunting tower has been erected at Risley nature reserve in order to provide facilities for observing the wild life.

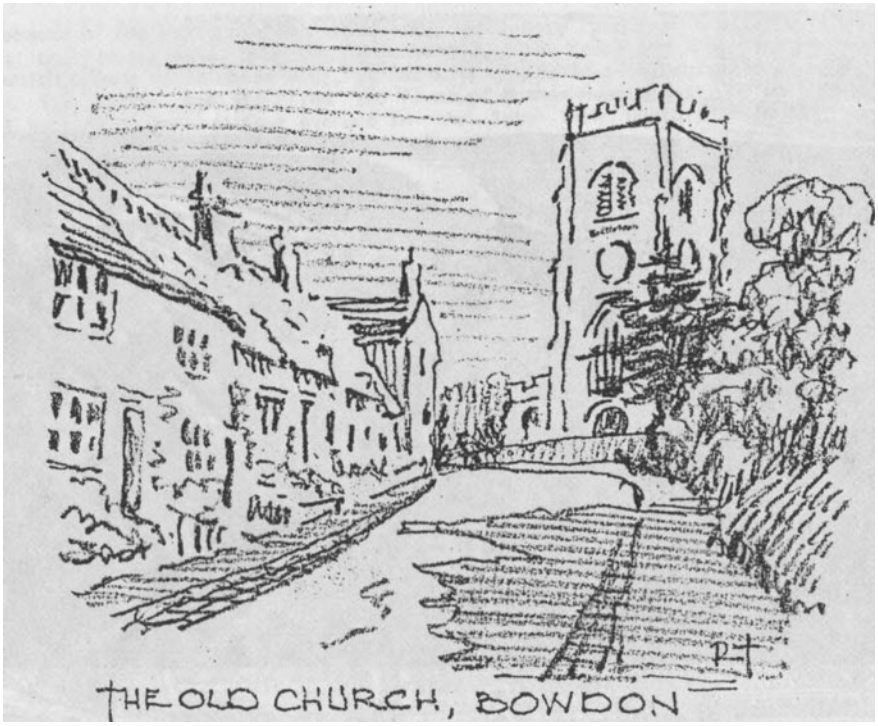


BOWDON'S REBELLIOUS BELL RINGERS

Supporters of the Corn Law Reform were overjoyed at theirsuccess in 1846 and celebrations took place in many parts of the Country. The bellringers at Bowdon Parish Church were among those who considered that they had good cause to celebrate and planned to ring the church bells, to demonstrate their pleasure, one Saturday evening. Permission for them to carry out this act was refused but they were told that they would be wellpaid instead. Dissatisfied with the outcome of their request the men forced an entry into the Church and commenced peeling the bells to the great annoyance of the Curate who pleaded, in vain, with them to desist.

Eventually the miscreants were enticed away from the tower with the promise of ale, in which they were liberally indulged, but next day they were brought before the Wardens, after the Church service, and discharged from their posts.

Information supplied by Joan Leach.



The Bowdon Sheaf

A BOWDON HISTORY SOCIETY PUBLICATION

No.16 October 1990 40p

Contents:

Fields, Tenants & Roads by Peter Kemp
The Wartime History of Dunham House by John Chartres



Fair in Bowdon, 1863, by an unknown Artist, recently discovered by Douglas Rendell. The Bowdon History Society would be pleased to receive any information from readers concerning this picture.

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FIELDS, TENANTS & ROADS
by Peter Kemp

The names and locations of Castle Hill and Watch Hill are recognised today, but in the 17th century there was , besides Hall Hill 'on the Downs', a Mill Hill. The names Millfield and Mill Hill seem according to the 1651 document's description, to have abutted upon Castle Hill, and Hill Field survived by name and location north of Castle Hill in 1838, so it is likely that Bowdon's mill was situated the re. A mill at Bowdon is mentioned in Domesday Book 1086, existing until at least the thirteenth century (Dore, 'History of Hale, Cheshire') and it is possible that it was situated as a wooden structure on an earth dam on the little stream in the present woods above Castle Hill which must have had a much greater flow of water when it drained the White Leaches (leach = wet and marshy land) and Bowdon Moss before they were taken into farming by proper land drainage and improvement. It seems reasonable that a mill of that time would be there, sufficiently near the castle and any settlement, rather than on the Bollin, a defensive feature and liable to flood in winter. Clearly the mill itself had disappeared long before the 17th century when it is possible that Bowdon farmers used the new water-mill at Dunham Hall built in 1616 by Sir George Booth, but not so long before since the names Mill Hill and Millfield were still in common usage.

The document confirms that, although there were some enclosed fields up on the Downs, it was there that the Common land shared between Bowdon, Altrincham and Dunham Massey townships along their common boundary was situated, and Bowdon Common, with perhaps the inclusion of Yeald (Heald) Common, was the major part of that area. The Common must have been very extensive since, some ten years earlier, Prince Rupert encamped there with his army in May 1641 on his way to Chester, and, on 20 March 1641/5 Colonel Brereton made a rendezvous "on Knottesford Heath & Bowdon Downes: And thether the Scotts havlnge marched, Joyned wth them beinge in number fyve thousand or thereabouts." Up on the Downs also was some common meadowland allotted as 'doles', hence Davles Dole now Devisdale. That surname, variously spelt Devis, Devies , Davis, Davles and Devias, belongs to a 17th century Bowdon family farming as husbandmen in a small way. Bowdon Common was, along with Bowdon Moss, the source of fuel for everyone, rich and poor, including the vicar, and the document sets out rights of Turbary, that is the right to cut peat and turves either on the common land there or on Bowdon Moss. No doubt Turf Lane, now S t . Margaret's Road, owed its name to the turf -cutting there on Bowdon Common. Several field names seem to stem from tenants' or owners' names for example, Ashleyes, Sanders Bank (the Sanders family were 17c yeoman farmers at Moss Farm), Turbett's Eye, Hardye Field (Two Hardys were early 17c chartered landholders , a later Hardy was a Bowdon butcher) and Toppinges.

The field called Sir Ralphes Croft retains a name which must have been conferred upon it when (Sir) Ralph Houghe was vicar in 1583. The field called New Bridge Meadow suggests that a bridge over the Bollin was in existence from before 1654, possibly a new bridge in place of the ford rather than a replacement bridge. Field names like Hemp Croft, Ryecroft and Peasecroft give an indication of their crops, and the types of field together with the use of common land suggest a mixed farming economy contemporary Inventories, such as that of Edmond Sympson of May 1640, list wheat, barley, oats, rye and French wheat as well as cattle, both for dairy and rearing purposes. The wetlands were considerable, not only from the names of the Moss and the White Leaches , but also from names like Russy Croft (where rushes grew) , the Eye lands along the Bollin, and the Marsh, part of Heald Moss, (where Altrincham Boys Grammar School is). The will of Robert Tipping (who was Steward to Lord Delamer and apparently lived at Bowdon Hall) of 1662 lists in its Inventory 'a fouleing peece' and 'a Birdlng peece which possibly were used for shooting wildfowl in those wetlands.

There is evidence also that Bowdon produce of those days not only found its way to Altrincham Market but also as far away as Manchester the Manchester Court Leet records note that on "26 Apri l 1682, Humphrey Burges, a butcher of Bodon was fined 5/- for selling 'severall peices of Beefe unwholsome' ". Inventories of the period often mention spinning wheels together with linen yarn and hemp tow , and all of which may have been employed for home consumption only. Ingham in his "History of Altrincham and Bowdon" notes from parish records" 1617, Several websters or weavers in Bowdon". So it is possible that agricultural activity in Bowdon at that time was augmented by home spinning and weaving, not only of locally-produced wool, but also in the production of worsted on an out-work basis or traders who supplied the wool or materials to the Bowdon people at Altrincham and Manchester markets.

The 1651 document mentions eight under-tenants of glebelands and property Brereton (this is John possibly, who signed the Protestation Roll 1612, made contribution to the Free and Voluntary Gift 1661, paid Hearth Tax 1661 and 1671, died 1683; may have been George died 1632), Drinckwater (this is John possibly, who marked the Protestation Roll 1612, paid Hearth Tax 1661 and 1671, died 1685; a Peter was Commonwealth clerk around 1659; and there was also a Robert), Eaton (this was John yeoman who figures in many wills from 1637 to 1650, and possibly had a wife Sibill and a family who figure until at least 1696), Goulding (or Goulden) (of Bow green yeoman had a son John who paid Hearth Tax 1661 and 1671, but Richard yeoman is more likely, who appeared in a 1631 will, made contribution to the Free and Voluntary Gift 1661, paid Hearth Tax 1661, died 1668, leaving wife Jane and family), Widow Peirson (several Peirsons, this could be Elizabeth who contributed to the Free and Voluntary Gift 1661, and paid Hearth Tax 1661 and 1671), Widow Rowlands, Widow Sanders (possibly Dorothy and one of the Sanders of Moss Farm , yeomen), and Wirrall (or Worrall) (William signed the Protestation Roll 1612 and paid Hearth Tax 1661). Other names mentioned are Hardie (Hardys mentioned before), Hollinworth, Leather (this is John yeoman and butcher, in 1637 and 1618 wills, who signed the Protestation Roll 1612, contributed to the Free and Voluntary Gift 1661, paid Hearth Tax 1661 died 1668), Widow Rowlyson (possibly Ellen who paid Hearth Tax 1661), Sympson (not Edmond yeoman died 1611, could be Richard, who marked the Protestation Roll 1642), and a Mr Tipping (this is Robert, gentleman, Steward to Lord Delamer, of Bowdon Hall, died 1662). Only three thoroughfares are mentioned in the document Bow(e) Lane,Vicars Lane (modern Vicarage Lane) and Streete Lane (the Street was Watling Street now the A56 trunk road).

The houses and cottages mentioned all seem to have been of timber frame construction. The Vicar of Bowdon lived in a thatched house of three bays (that is, three timber framed sections), possibly situated on the Vicars Lane mentioned (where the present-day house called The Priory stands) , with a garden, barn and yard, and a stable. Widow Sanders had a messuage or tenement (Moss Farm) of three bays (to be seen today much altered in the lower part of the building), with a barn, stable, orchard, garden and yard, and farmland totalling some 75 acres, (if the document can be read to include all the entries following that for the house down to the concluding statement of the right to turbary in Bowdon Moss). William Wirrall's house had two bays, and he also had a barn and stable, a garden and a barn yard.

The two yeomen Eaton and Leather had houses with kitchens (a new refinement in 17th century houses of this size) , and all the of these people mentioned had cottages of two bays, or , exceptionally three bays. The other yeoman , Richard Goulding , had an oven house attached to his cottage, so he may have been a baker as well. Finally, there are two further field names on which the 1654 document throws no light. The one is Muncks acre or Mounckes Acre which corresponds with Monksacre (No . 287 1838) 2 acres in extent, situated south Bow Lane, east of Bowgreen Farm and west of The Priory, whose name must hark back to the days when the church lands belonged to Birkenhead Priory before being taken over by the Bishop of Chester at the Reformation. The other, which is not included in the 1654 document, the 1838 Tithe Award or Dodgson, is the field at Newbridge Hollow by the Bollin called John O'Jerusalem's Patch, which seems to have its name derived from the Knights of St . John of Jerusalem who did have one or two fields in Bowdon in mediaeval times. (to be continued)

THE WARTIME HISTORY OF DUNHAM HOUSE
by John Chartres

Our Society has of course always taken an interest in the houses within 'Our Manor' in which famous people have dwelt. So far most of the houses in which the Society has taken an interest have been those in which very worthy people such as authors, composers of music, conductors of music, eminent doctors and Indeed some politicians, have dwelt. Some such houses have Indeed had plaques placed upon them. All of them one feels, have had one thing in common. The dwellers in these houses have contributed to the joy and the well-being of those who still live in Bowdon.

At the turn of this year some members of the Society, especially Peter Kemp and Ronald Trenbath took note that there was a house within our 'Manor' in which some very famous people had dwelt, such as Odette Churchill, George Cross; Violette Szabo, George Cross; to mention but two SOE (Special Operations Executive) agents who lived in Dunham House, Charcoal Road, while doing there parachute training Just down the road at Ringway and Tatton Park. Altogether nearly 5,000 ‘special agents' dwelt, at least for a few nights, in Dunham House before the war was finally won.

Being known within the Society as having a special interest in the armed Forces of this nation I was given the Job of investigating the history of Dunham House during World War Two. What an enjoyable and fascinating Job it has been! I had two immediate bonus points. The first was that Colonel Maurice Buckmaster OBE, Legion d ' Honneur, Head of ‘ F' (French) Section of SOE , was someone to whom I could write personally. Another old friend was the Deputy Colonel Commandant of the Parachute Regiment, Lieutenant General Sir Michael Gray, with whom I had ‘ soldiered' in a sort of way in Northern Ireland in the late 1960s when British soldiers and British newspaper reporters were still persona grata in those parts.

In fact Maurice Buckmaster couldn't tell me all that much because his job had kept him in London (or other less hospitable places) throughout most of the war. Nevertheless he gave me the home address of Odette, now of course Mrs Odette Hallowes. Odette wrote back saying that her memories of her billet in Cheshire were rather vague but that she did remember breaking her nose and spraining her ankle dropping through the mock-up training fuselage of a Whitley bomber, probably at Dunham House. Like many other SOE agents Odette was taken into enemy territory by alternative means to parachuting, the best of these being 'delivery' in short-landing and take-off Lysander aeroplanes. Fortuitously 1990 has been the 50th anniversary year of the formation of the Parachute Regiment and also of the forming of No. 1 Parachute Training School at Ringway - originally code-named 'The Central Landing School' in order at least to retard information reaching the enemy that we were training parachute troops at that stage of history.

At a splendid and enormous party held In one of the ‘ South Sid e' hangars at Ringway on 17 March actually marking ‘the 49th' of the first ever British parachute operation which severed the Tragino aqueduct in Southern Italy the first clues emerged, pointing me towards people who could tell me more about what happened in Dunham House, Charcoal Road Bowdon between late 1940 and late 1945.

These clues first put me in contact with Mr Peter Lee, Historian to the not- widely-advertised Special Forces Club in London, thence to Mr Ray Wooler of Annapolis County, Nova Scotia, the former Chief Instructor in parachuting of SOE agents at Dunham House. They went on via Colonel David Mallam O B E , Secretary of the Parachute Regimental Association to Mr Royston Rudd of Hull , another Instructor, and eventually to Mr John Battersby of Knutsford who is working on somewhat parallel lines with the objective of a full history of all the 'safe houses' used by ‘unconventional forces' in Cheshire during World War Two . John Battersby recently generously supplied me with a copy of an official history of the role played by those who dwelt in Dunham House between 1941 and 1945.

So far as the early history of the house itself is concerned the information was available 'within the family' as it were, from Miss Joan Gaddum, whose step-grandfather, Mr Walter Joynson, built it in 1899. He did not live long to enjoy the really lovely house he created for himself and for his wife, Dorothy.

Walter Joynson, a Justice of the Peace and a much respected member of the community of Bowdon, died suddenly while on holiday in Corfu on 19 November 1904. His widow, Dorothy, died only ten months later.

In telling the whole story of Dunham House one is left with a 35-year gap between the death of Dorothy Joynson and the probable requisitioning of the house for war purposes circa 1940. One hopes that the publication of this article in The Bowdon Sheaf may bring forth some further information about who lived in it, and one hopes, enjoyed it, during this period.

What is now fairly clear is that Dunham House, along with many other substantial dwellings in Cheshire, was selected by one of those mysterious but quite omnipotent gentlemen empowered to ' requisition' or 'commandeer' property for the ‘War Effort' circa 1940. According to Professor M R D Foot, formerly of Manchester University, the house was designated as 'No. 33 Special Training School' . In his widely respected book on the history of the SOE he refers to it as 'an Altrincham merchant's house' . An official record of the SOE designates it as ‘ No. 51 Special Training School' but this small deviation could have come about at a time when many changes of nomenclature were being made in a hurry.

There is evidence that at least one other house in the Knutsford/Wilmslow area was also requisitioned for a similar purpose. During the course of the war, segregation, by nationality, sometimes by sex, of secret agents undergoing their parachute training became desirable, sometimes perhaps, essential.

The establishment of Dunham House as a Special Training School dated from February 1941 by which time the parachute training system at Ringway had been well established. The first, and indeed ONLY Commandant of the STS at Dunham House, was Major C J Edwards of the Northumberland Fusiliers , who had achieved earlier fame in the 1920s as the composer of the song 'All By Yourself In The Moonlight'. Major Edwards remained the Commandant until the final disbandment of the School in August 1945.

At this stage the only aircraft available for the training of parachutists of any sort was the Armstrong Whitworth Whitley , one of the first monoplane bombers to go into RAF service in the 1930s rapid expansion period and an aeroplane which was not really up to front-line operational standards even by 1940-41. The Air Ministry at this time, and in particular Bomber Command , was reluctant to release any aircraft for what it saw as a secondary role' . At this time ‘ parachuting ' seemed something of a Joke to certain senior officers of the Royal Air Force , never mind what the Germans were doing.

So , the embryo Parachute Regiment and Special Operations Executive had to do their best with the Whitleys. One of the snags with the Whitley as a parachute-training aeroplane was that its back door was too small for a parachutist to step out from. A modification was therefore made at Ringway providing an 'exit hole' towards the end of the fuselage. This hole, through which trainee parachutists would drop, was surrounded by a sort of rim, making the whole arrangement look like a coal-miner's bath without a bottom to it.

The Whitley, although only capable of about 190 mph maximum speed, also had a rather high stalling speed, which meant that it would not really slow down enough to enable parachutists to depart from it in comfort. It was also, according to a recent publication by the Parachute Regiment during its 50th anniversary, ‘cold, cramped and badly ventilated'.

One of the features of Dunham House and of the satellite ‘ STS's' was a carved-up Whitley Fuselage including 'The Hole' . A number of agents got this form of dropping sequence wrong, thereby, like Odette , damaging their frontal features and other parts of their bodies. The Instructors called it 'Ringing the Bell' .

Happily the aircraft used for most operational drops by SOE agents into Europe and other parts of the world were of more modern design, from which the parachutist, be he a secret agent, or a fighting soldier could Just step out of a door, with static line attached.

An official history of SOE activities at Ringway produced by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and shown me by John Battersby makes the point that rather special living conditions were required for SOE agents during their parachute training, in that the work they were destined to do ‘Had a natural tendency to induce a high state of nervous tension'. Those special living conditions, it seems, were provided at Dunham House.

Another special aspect was that the SOE ‘parachute students' were of many nationalities. This official report goes on to say: ‘ The Only solution to these problems was to have a ground training establishment where special care could be given to the preparatory training of men and women who in many cases had come straight from a sedentary life before joining the organisation, and where individual attention could be given in order to deal with the differing temperaments and languages of the students. It appeared that only in this way could the necessary high confidence and morale be obtained.

A fairly standard course of training for secret agents needing to learn the art of parachuting was followed throughout the war. After about a week's ground training at ‘STS's' like Dunham House students would probably carry out five actual 'descents' from Whitleys. This requirement was reduced to four at a later stage of the war. These training ‘descents' would involve a take-off from Ringway Huddled in the back of a Whitley and an arrival at Tatton Park on the dropping zone area which lay to the left of the road which the present-day visitor takes while driving through the Park from the Rostherne Entrance Southwards towards Knutsford.

From October 1942 onwards special training was introduced into the technique of parachuting into water, both for paratroops and for ‘secret Agents. It was important for all to understand the technique even though, as every parachutist now knows, dropping into water is in some ways the easiest and most comfortable option of all, providing someone is around to pick you up. Rostherne Mere was used for the first formal training of parachuting into water. Undoubtedly, however, a great many trainee parachute soldiers and probably some secret agents from Dunham House inadvertently descended into Tatton and Melchett Meres if the wind was gusting a bit and the 'drivers' at the front end of an elderly Whitley hadn’t got everything right.

Ray Wooler records that Rostherne was an ideal lake for these early experiments because it was reasonably well hidden from 'the public gaze' and security was all-important at this time. One of the reasons for training agents to parachute drop into lakes was that it was thought that some important targets in Germany and other parts of Occupied Europe could be reached via lakes which might not have been too closely guarded.

Ray in fact, nearly got into serious trouble when the experimental ‘water-dropping’ harness which he was testing came unwrapped from his body about 150 feet up. He recalls that the surface of Rostherne Mere felt VERY hard on that occasion .

An officer in the Canadian Army at the outbreak of World War Two Ray Wooler came to Dunham House via a rather circuitous route, being at one stage a volunteer ski-trooper attached to the Finnish Army during their disastrous ‘little war’ against the Soviets in 1910. He remembers that at the time that Dunham House was established, SOE billets tended to be nicknamed ‘Stately 'Omes of England’ . Ray has said in letters to me that Dunham House was 'a perfect building' for its very special purpose. Apart from anything else the Whitley aircraft fuselages with their dropping holes and sand-pits underneath, could be concealed behind high walls again ‘ away from the public gaze'.

When ready for their ‘live' drops the trainee agents were driven to Ringway dressed as far as possible to look like regular paratroops. Ray Wooler commented in a letter: ‘ This worked well if we could persuade the female agents not to run around too much after they had descend ed at Tatton Park .' Other famous names at Dunham House recalled by Ray Wooler include Wing Commander Yeo Thomas, (The White Rabbit') , Peter Churchill, and General Slkorski. Although life at Dunham House was of course essentially very serious for all concerned, there were moments of light relief , some of them perhaps deliberately contrived to reduce tension.

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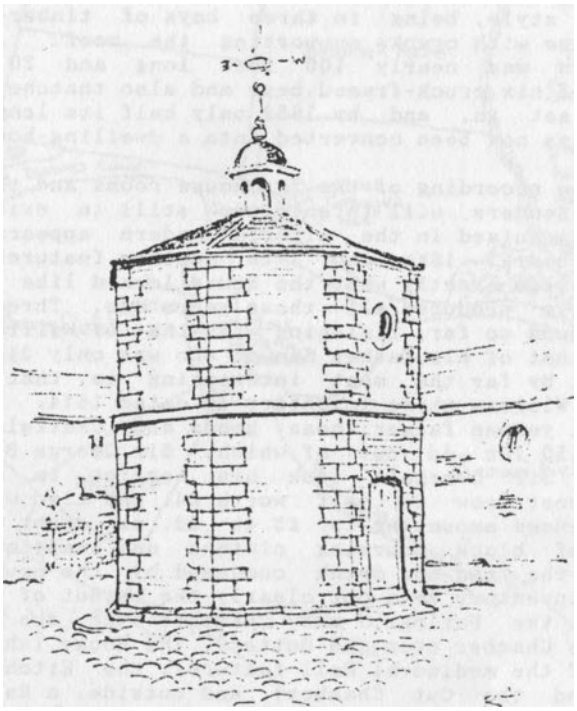

DUNHAM DOVECOT

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Bowdon in the 17th Century
Moss Farm by Peter Kemp

Moss Farm on South Downs Road opposite the end of Marlborough Road, is a building which dates from Tudor and Stuart times, as also does Moss Cottage opposite the Farm which started as two cottages in 1666. However, the Moss Farm building is much older with parts dating back to around 1500, and the yeoman farmer Sanders family were there from at least the time of the Armada 1588 until around the 1750s, when the Walker family took over occupation until well into the 19th century. Alice Walker's reminiscences, including the holiday visits of Mrs Gaskell, were published in 1987-8 in issues 9 to 12 of the Bowdon Sheaf, giving eye-witness accounts of farm life there in the 19th century.

A "Cheshire Life" article of 1959 shows the appearance of the farmhouse in 1949 and after its conversion to a dwelling-house in 1959. The original building we are told, was thatched, then partially roofed with corrugated iron in Alice Walker's time, and wholly slated from about 1900. The construction was typically Cheshire in style, being in three bays of timber-framing on a sandstone base with crucks supporting the roof. The original massive barn was nearly 100 feet long and 20 feet wide, consisting of six cruck-framed bays and also thatched until 1900; decay had set in, and by 1959 only half its length remained, which also has now been converted into a dwelling-house. From the recording of the farmhouse rooms and their contents in the few Sanders will inventories still in existence, it is clear that disguised in the altered modern appearance of Moss Farm are several 16th and 17th century features, and we can almost visualise exactly what the house looked like and what the Sanders family produced all those years ago.

Three inventories have been found so far, finishing with that of William Sanders of 1709, then that of his father Samuel who was only 31 when he died in 1665, but by far the most interesting is that of Samuel's grandfather William whose inventory is dated 1614. He was a well set up small yeoman farmer whose goods and chattels, etc., were valued at £50 10s 4d, out of which, Sir George Booth (usually called 'Old Sir George') took his herriot in the shapeof Sanders's best cow in calf worth £4, and also were taken the funeral expenses amounting to £3 4s. 0d, no doubt including the provision of black mourning clothes and trappings as was the custom, and the food and drink consumed by the mourners at the wake. The inventory sets out clearly the extent of the farmhouse premises - the Parlour, the Chamber over the Parlour,the Buttery, the Chamber over the Buttery, the House (which we see as a remnant of the mediaeval Hall feature), the Kitchen, the Cross Chamber, and the Out Chamber; and outside, a Barn and a Cart House.

This is the earliest mention of a kitchen in a Bowdon house found so far. Alice Walker, writingabout the farm building as itwas around 1885, some 270 or more yearson, mentions one end of the farmhouse still being thatched; the house-place, which must have been the House of the 1614 inventory; the kitchen at one end and the parlour at the other; and the room over the parlour (where Mrs Gaskell slept) with its thatched eye-brow windows with lattices opening at floor level, which was the Chamber over the Parlour of 1614. the owl-loft in Alice Walker's time may correspond with the Cross Chamber loft of 1614 which contained '4 new lattezes for windows'.

The evidence of reconstruction with new lattice windows is also supported by the entry 'Bricks in the Cartehouse and without the house'. This is the earliest mention of bricks found in Bowdon, and they were probably used to build the house chimneys. By 1674 the farmhouse had 4 hearths, earlier having 1 less in the 1664 Hearth Tax Return, and earlier still, the 1614 inventory suggests only 2 hearths, one in the room called the House, and the other in the kitchen where an iron grate is recorded. The only existing example of a wholly brick-built building at this time is Sir George Booth's corn-mill at Dunham dated 1616 now restored by the National Trust as the working saw-mill which it had become at a much later date. It is possible that the bricks of the farmhouse and that mill, came from the same source locally. Dunham Mill is recognisable in Kip's 1697 engraving of the Tudor Dunham Hall, where incidentally, artists's licence has turned it round through 90 degrees. Although showing the scene at the very end of the 17th century, the foreground has three large barns in front of the Hall of timber-frame, but apparently not cruck construction nor thatched. The scene also shows a tumbrel drawn by two horses in tandem crossing the Park near all the deer, and felled timber being processed near the wooden deer-fence or pale which surrounded the Park until 1743 when the present brick walling was begun. This would seem to be one of the few pictures remaining from the 17th century showing timber-framed buildings in the vicinity of Bowdon.

Returning to Moss Farm, an interesting feature recorded in the inventory is the salt chest in the chimney of the House. This, of course, refers to the usual means of keeping salt dry in a box kept in a recess in the warmth of the chimney-breast, and the feature may still be there, perhaps hidden now. Reading the details of this splendid inventory, one can almost see the farmhouse interior just as it was in 1614 with the aromas of the kitchen mingling with the sweet smell of clean rushes strewn underfoot, while outside those of the farmyard mix with the pungent smell of peat-smoke which we can experience today only in a few places mainly in the Western Isles of Scotland.

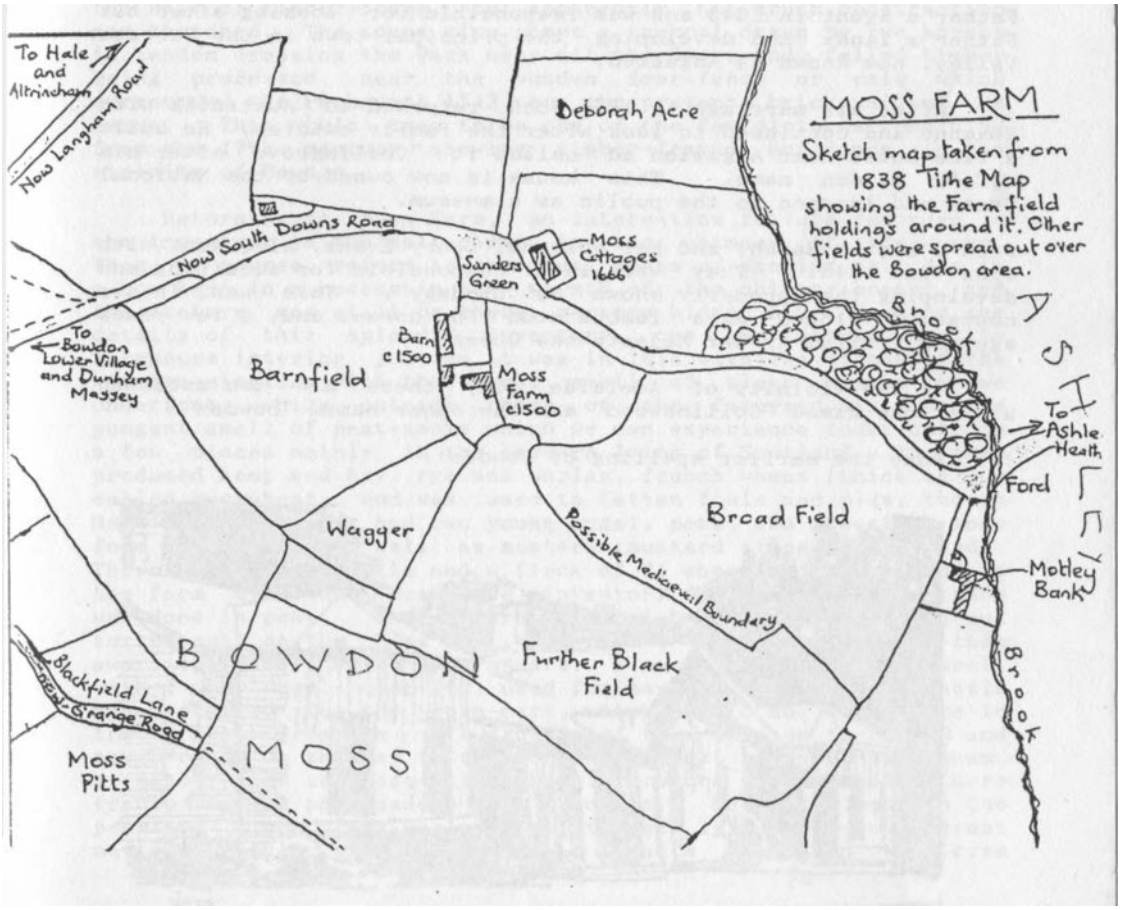
The farm produced hemp and hay, rye and barley, french wheat (which is now called buckwheat, and was used to fatten fowls and pigs, though Moss Farm then only had two young hogs), peas, and possibly some form of corn as well as mustard (mustard stones are listed). There were a few cattle and a flock of 21 sheep and lambs, and as the farm of Bowdon Moss, the inventory implies that some trade was done in peat. There were 2 wheel-barrows to move the cut turves out on the Moss and a turf-cart in which to carry them away;there were also acorn-cart, amuck-cart, and a tumbrel, with 2 new wheels for it, used for marling. Iron-bound wheels are specified for the corn-cart, which would no doubt have to travel away from the soft ground ofthe farm onto rutted and rough roads on the way to the corn-mill, most probably at Dunham, or maybe even to Ross Mill, Hale. Produce and provisions were transported by pack-saddle and panniers.

Beer was made on the premises since the barley was turned into malt in a ‘great malting vessel' and there was a 'malte arke' in the Cross Chamber. There was an old spinning-wheel in the kitchen, but no mention of any jersey-weaving which Alice Walker thought took place before the Walker's time. The ‘big knobs of the jersey-hooks’ on the two beams projecting from each side of the house- place, noted by Alice, must have appeared much later than William Sanders's time, since it is clear that he had a thriving farm and spinning and weaving were not necessary to supplement his income. In personal property, he left books - no titles are given but they would include the Family Bible - and a long bow with a few arrows as well as a sword, boots and spurs, and two daggers, so he may have served at one time in the Elizabethan militia of which nothing is known at present in this area. Two interesting items in this inventory were a double brake and two single brakes, these being tools for stripping willows ready for basket- making, and a woodcock net. The woodcock is a small but fleshy bird normally wintering in this part of England and happy in open woodland, though Coward did say that some did stay all year and breed in this locality. It would seem that the Sanders family supplemented their winter diet with fresh meat of a woodcock or two each, which must have been a welcome change from the salt beef and mutton, and strips of bacon usually eaten.

The four appraisers of the inventory, Ralph Hewitt, Edmund Simpson, John Drinkwater and Richard Urmston, all neighbours of William, took all his pewter valued at £2 5s 4d as their fee for their labours. Unfortunately no will has survived so the full extent of William's estate and the details of his beneficiaries are not known. Only his eldest son, John Sanders, appears in the inventory and he received 9s 6d on the day of his father's burial, possibly a repayment of his father's debt to him. When Samuel's mother, widow Dorothy, held the farm at the time of the Commonwealth Church Lands Survey in 1654, the land leased was 75 acres in extent which included land elsewhere in Bowdon and parts of other people's houses, and was valued at £36 9s 8d. The farm premises were then recorded as consisting of the three-bay farmhouse, a barn, a stable, an orchard, a garden and a farmyard, and that the Drinkwater family were still neighbours, that one of the fields by the Bollin had the name Sanders Bank, and that over at the Eyebrooks were several adjacent strips in the residual mediaeval field later to be named Sanders Field. There was also right of turbary in Bowdon Moss.

The 1665 inventory of Samuel Sanders's goods and chattels, etc., unfortunately does not give any indication of the rooms in the farmhouse. It does show 3 spinning wheels, but, as no wool is mentioned, they may have been employed for spinning the hemp and flax produced. A pig was now kept and a flock of 12 sheep and lambs, which would seem to be for meat production only. William Sanders's inventory of 1709 again details the rooms in the farmhouse, with some now having different names from those of 90 years earlier - a Great Parlour, a Great Chamber, the House, the Chamber over the House, the Kitchen, the Kitchen Chamber, the Plaster Chamber, and two Butteries. Clearly, from Alice Walker's recollections of the 19th century farm, the basic Hall-house design remains despite all the alterations over the centuries.

The 1838 Tithe Map shows Moss Farm with its long barn and cart- house opposite Moss Cottages and Sanders Green, and that one of the nearby farm fields was called Deborah Acre. This field was named in the 18th century after Deborah, wife of William Sanders, and was remembered as such or as 'Devisacre' (a corruption of 'Debbiesacre' no doubt) by Alice Walker. Certainly the Sanders family in their long occupationof Moss Farm must have done their share in shaping the landscape of that end of Bowdon by turf-cutting, draining, marling, taking in the so-called waste lands, and also gradually extending the productive land as Bowdon Moss - 'the great deep Bog' noted by Sir Peter Leicester in 1666 - was slowly drained. It seems certain that the Sanders's must have been there at Moss Farm for some time before the 1580s since they were well-established yeomen at that time and their farmhouse with its hall design constructed with crucks and timber-frame on a sandstone base would probably date from the previous century, but only further expert physical examination on the spot will find the clues and perhaps some of the answers. It is reasonable to conclude that Moss Farm is the oldest house in continuous occupation in Bowdon.



The Australian Connection
by Henry Ward

The records in our Parish Church of Bowdon show that, on 10th May 1855, John Howard Angas married Susanne Collins the daughter of Richard Collins and his wife Sarah. According to the Census records of 1851 the Collins family lived in Albert Square Bowdon.

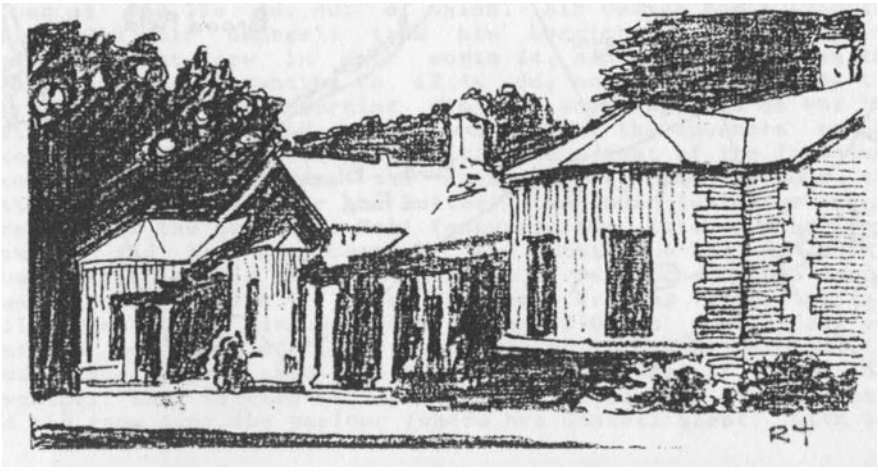
John Howard Angas was the son of George Fife Angas, a merchant, of Cheetham Hill, Manchester. The latter was however, best known for his part in the development of South Australia, and in May 1835 was appointed a Commissioner of the South Australian Company. He was responsible for sending several ships out there, including the "Buffalo" with Captain John Hindmarsh who became the first Governor of South Australia.

George Fife Angas, it appears, did not enjoy robust health and did not, himself, go out to Australia until 1850, at the age of 61. However his son, John, had already gone out as his Father's agent in 1843 and was responsible for looking after his Father's lands and developing the principal town in the Barossa Valley, now known as Angaston.

After his marriage in 1855 John returned to Australia with Susanne and continued to look after the family estates. He built a fine house near Angaston and called it "Collingrove" after his wife's maiden name. This house is now owned by the National Trust and is open to the public as a museum.

John's sister Sarah, and her husband, Henry Evans, also went with John in 1843. They were later responsible for acquiring and developing the property known as "Lindsay". This was, in due course, developed as a famous stud for horses and, a few years ago was visited by Her Majesty the Queen.

In the vicinity of Adelaide City there are two suburban areas, one named. "Collinswood" and the other named "Bowden"! (NB Note the earlier spelling of Bowden)



Memories of Dunham House

by Ronald Trenbath

During the inter-war years Dunham House was the residence of Major Sincton, a very popular sporting man, who is still remembered with great affection and some amusement by many of the older members of the rural community. A keen dog fancier, with particular interest in German Shepherd Dogs or Alsations, as they had been renamed for patriotic reasons in 1914 the Major turned his large stables into what might be described as luxury Kennels, under the direction of a Kennel Manageress who lived in the adjoining lodge.

As a service to the local community he would very kindly take other owners' dogs, as boarders, if a need arose, and it was under these circumstances that my father would board our dogs when we went on holiday, and as one who has been devoted to dogs from childhood, I was always delighted to have any opportunity to visit the Dunham House Kennels.

With the outbreak of war, and consequent end to family holidays, I no longer had any reason to visit the Kennels and it was not until 1942 that I learned that Dunham House had been requisitioned by the military and that the Kennels had been transferred to Mrs Manley's establishment in Booth Road. It was, by coincidence, that about this time a bracken fire broke out near to Shepherds Cottages. My father and I went to offer assistance to the policemen, who had discovered it while on bicycle patrol and who were trying unsuccessfully to deal with it. We were asked to hasten to Dunham House and request that troops be sent to help deal with the blaze.

I can still remember, very distinctly, on arriving at the gates, being confronted by a guard who was very agitated at our request. He called an officer who appeared equally disturbed but promised to see what he could do if we returned quickly to the scene of the fire. The significance of this event lies in the fact that even the local police did not know that Dunham House was not just an ordinary military unit with soldiers billeted in it, and that it was in fact a school for secret agents. I passed the house on numerous occasions during the war after that time and never for a moment suspected that its occupants were in any way different, or more special, than those in any of the many other locally requisitioned houses.

The authorities were however very naive if they thought that Rostherne Mere "was an ideal lake for these early experiments because it was reasonably well hidden from the public gaze" as I, and many others, often rode to Rostherne to watch the drop and rescue operations without let or hindrance from any authority, although we all thought that we were witnessing RAF Air Crew training exercises.

There was however one local man who knew all about the activities at Dunham House and this was Harry Aspby, who had been Major Sincton's gardener, and who had been asked by the War Office to remain in their employment at Dunham House throughout the war, with instructions not to talk about anything he observed there.

A very reliable man, Harry could be trusted to keep secrets and having served in France during the first World War he was very interested in meeting the Free French but it was much later, when secrecy was no longer required, that he recalled some of his memories including the occasion when great excitement was aroused when one student was arrested and taken away when it was discovered that he, or she, was a Nazi sympathiser who had infiltrated the school.

Not long after the ending of hostilities wild rumours began to circulate regarding local Secret Service activities with Dunham House being named as the Headquarters of the Free French Resistance, and exaggerated tales of General de Gaulle and agents being shipped in and out of France via Ringway and Bowdon. It is only now, forty-five years later, that John Chartres has unearthed the whole story in his instructive article "The War Time History of Dunham House".

The lodge to the house was later sold as a separate dwelling and named "Deer Leap", followed by the Stables which were converted into a house called "Hunters Moon", but later renamed "The Dunham Belfry", followed by the main house which was bought by developers and turned into flats but retained the name "Dunham House" .



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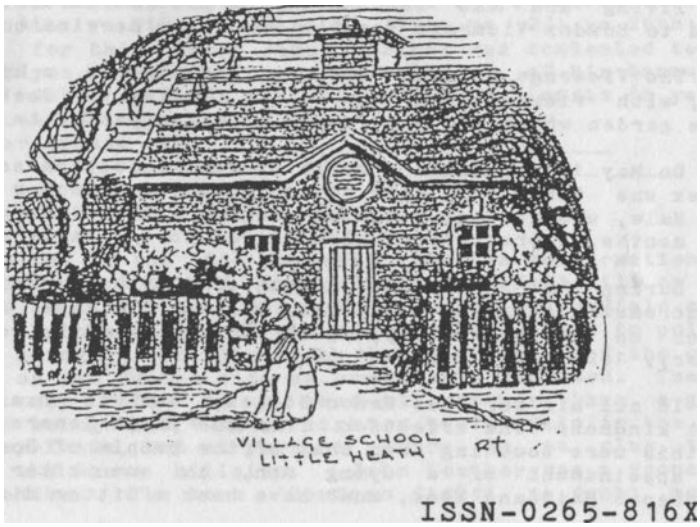

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FRANCIS TILNEY STONEX, VICAR OF BOWDON, 1919 - 1920
By Norman T Stonex

The following article is based on biographical notes provided by the Reverend Stonex's son, Norman, in 1969. Francis Tilney Stonex was born in Great Yarmouth, on 26th September, 1857, where his father, Henry, was organist at the Parish Church. Educated at Yarmouth Grammar School, Francis Stonex later attended Trinity College, Dublin, and graduated from Wells Theological College to be ordained a deacon in 1880 and a priest in 1881, after which he served as a curate at St. Mary's Church in Taunton.

In 1883 he was appointed curate at St. Michael's Church, Claughton, in Birkenhead, to commence his ministry in the diocese of Chester for the remainder of his life, becoming perpetual curate of Holy Trinity, also in Birkenhead in 1887. In 1890 Stonex married Alice Pring, daughter of Dr James Pring, of Taunton, by whom he had four sons (one of whom died in 1918 during the First World War,) and a daughter, and in the following year he was appointed Vicar of Bredbury, near Stockport, until 1893 when he became Vicar of St. Peters, Chester.

This appointment lasted until 1905 when he moved to St James, New Brighton, where he remained until after the war during which time he saw the building of the Church Hall and commencement of the erection of the daughter Church of All Saints. He was appointed Rural Dean of Wallasey in 1911 and Honorary Canon of Chester in 1917.

Stonex was offered the living of Bowdon by Bishop Jayne in 1919,but declining health made him hesitate in immediately accepting the offer until his doctor assured him that he might expect to live for a further ten years, after which he accepted the living and was instituted on 21st March of that year and moved to Bowdon Vicarage for the induction service on 26th April. The Vicarage at that time was situated in a house on Park Road, with views across the Bollin Valley to Rostherne, and a large garden which his son fought a losing battle to maintain.

On May 17th, within a month of the induction service, Canon Stonex was taken ill with severe pain. A doctor was summoned from Hale, who at once diagnosed cancer with a life expectancy of nine months, a prediction which proved to be nearly accurate. During the summer and autumn of 1919 he worked in the face of increasing pain and weakness, making his last appearance in church on Advent Sunday, 30th November. He died on13th January, 1920, at the age of 63.

In all his parishes Canon Stonex, and his family, received great kindness and affection from the parishioners, and in none was this more touching than that of the people of Bowdon, to whom the appointment of a dying man, so soon after the death of Archdeacon Maitland Wood, must have been a bitter disappointment.

It was characteristic of their feeling and there generosity, at that time, that they chose, as their chief memorial to him, a gift of £1000 to his widow who still had two sons to educate. Mrs Stonex bought a house in Bowdon Vale where she lived for seven years.

BOWDON IN THE 17th CENTURY
Evidence about Bowdon's fields found in a 1636 Bible

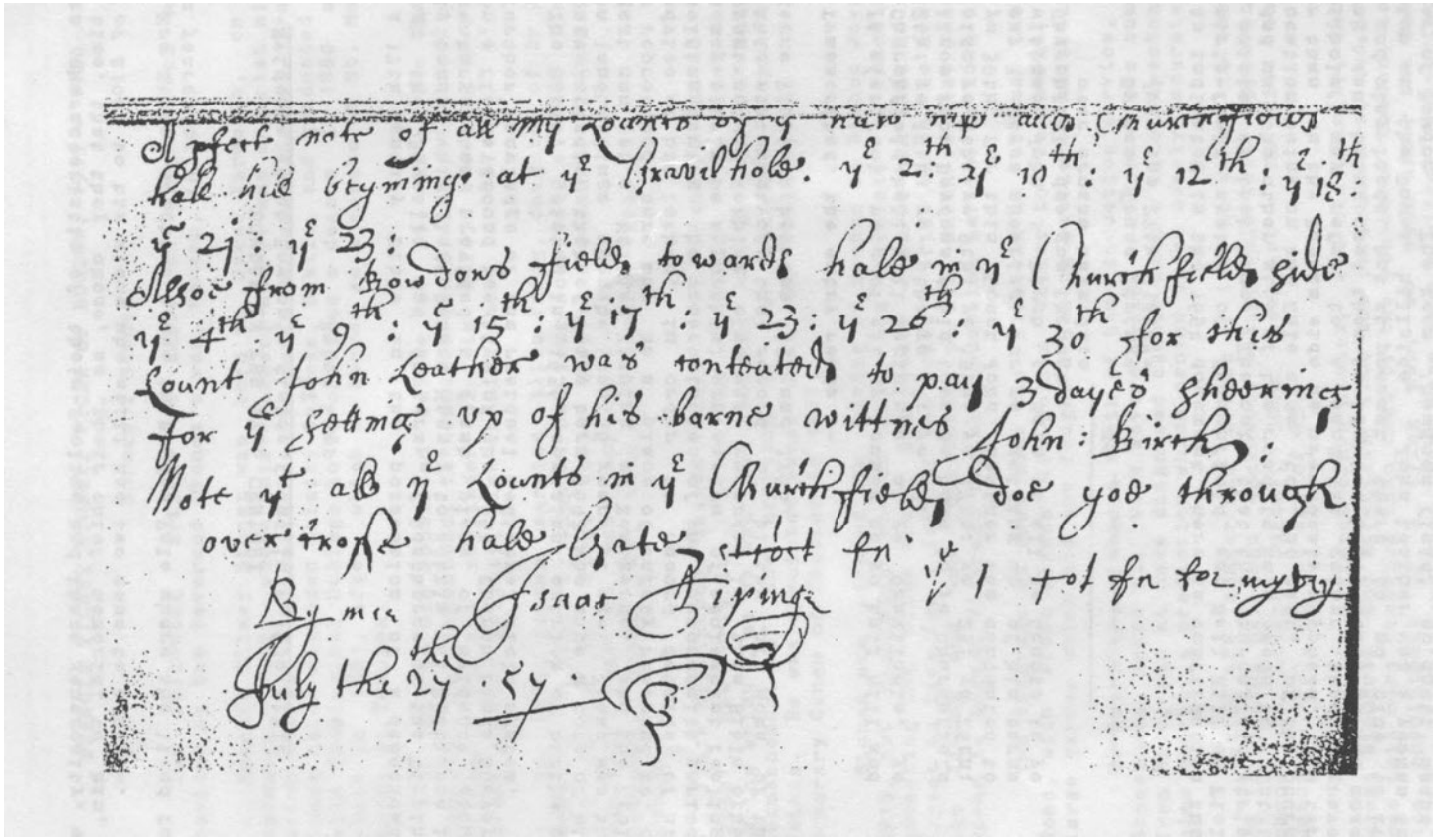
by Peter Kemp

A 17th century Bible in the possession of a descendant through the Pownalls and Carters of Rostherne of the Tipping family branch which left Dunham Massey to settle at Rostherne in mid-century, has provided a fresh piece of evidence about Bowdon's fields around the time of the 1654 Church Lands Survey, and further knowledge of the residual mediaeval field system. The Bible, printed in 1636, contains entries of births of Tippings including that of Isaac born 1612 who made a note of his Bowdon land holdings when he was 15 years of age. Isaac was the youngest son of a William Tipping of Rostherne, and the Bible entry reproduced here may be a place of safety resorted to, on the advice of his father, in order to record details of his landholding during the uncertainties of the Commonwealth period, or it may simply be a youthful expression of adolescent feelings of importance. Nothing else was recorded in this Bible other than this statement and the record of births of some of the Rostherne Tippings between 1627 and 1786.

Transcribed, the entry reads :-

> "A p(er)fect note of all my Lounts of ye hall hill and
> Churchfield hall hill begininge at ye Gravilhole ye
> 2th: ye 10th: ye 18th: ye 21: ye 23:
> Alsoe from Bowdons field towards hale in ye Churchfield
> side ye 1th: ye 9th: ye 15th: ye 17th: ye 23: ye 26th:
> ye 30th for this Lount John Leather was contented to
> pay 3 dayes sheering for ye getting up of his barne
> wittnes John : Birch : Note yt all he Lounts in ye
> Churchfield doe goe through over crosse hale Gate
> By mee Isaac Tipinge
> July the 27th (16)57"

As indicated in the 1651 document, here is confirmation that the strip-field system of Churchfield and Hall Hill or Field still existed at that time. They note that the Churchfield strips extended on the other side of the road to Hale seems to point to its location being on the Hale side, to the east, of the church rather than on the Dunham side as previously supposed. The term 'Gravllhole' may refer to a sand-pit rather than a gravel working, sand being used then to lighten heavy soils in the moss- lands and clay-lands, but at present there is no due to its location on the Downs hillside. John Leather was a yeoman and butcher of Bowdon.



A perfect note of all my Lounts of ye new new acres Churchfields
hale hill beginning at ye Gravilhole. ye 2th: ye 10th: ye 12th: ye 18th:
ye 21: ye 23:
Alsoe from Rowdons fields towards hale in ye Churchfields side
ye 4th ye 9th: ye 15th: ye 17th: ye 23: ye 26th: ye 30th for this
Lount John Leather was contented to pay 3 dayes sheering
for ye setting up of his barne wittnes John: Kirch:
Note yt all ye Lounts in ye Churchfields doe yoe through
over trosse hale Gate ~~stoot~~ fn ye 1 tot fn for my try

Ryman Isaac Tipinge

July the 27th 57.

The term 'Bowdons field' no doubt means a field held by the Bowdon family of Bowdon rather than a common field for Bowdon people. The term 'Gate' was Middle English for a road being a right of way, so this would be the main roadway between Bowdon and Hale, and it seems certain that this lay along the line of the present Langham Road rather than Stamford Road. Complementing Loont Field on the north (uphill) side of Langham Road in 1838 were two fields to the south called Botty and Nearer Botty, names seemingly derived from the mediaeval strip-field term 'butts', and the next two fields nearer to Hale were called Further Cross and Cook's Cross which may be the same field-names as the 'over crosse' mentioned in the Bible entry.

It is of interest to note that another Isaac Tipping of the same group of families, third son of William the Elder, yeoman of Dunham Massey and Bailiff to Lord Delamer,who died in1677 styling himself 'gentleman' and of Acton Grange and Norton Hall (he may have been bailiff or steward to Sir Richard Brooke of Norton 'my much honoured master'), left as one of his bequests to his second wife in his will, a 'Messuage, Lands, Tenement, (etc. 'in Bowdon') Commonly called and knowne by the name of Bow Greene Tenem(en)ts'

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIND IN BOWDON IN QUEEN ANNE'S REIGN
by Marjorie Cox

Henry Prescott, from whose diary this item is taken, was an important ecclesiastical official at Chester, where, from 1686 until his death in 1719, he was deputy registrar of the diocesan registry. Since for almost all of this period the registrar was an absentee, Prescott in fact acted as registrar, issuing all- important documents such as probate of wills, marriage licences and institutions of clergy to benefices.

Dr John Addy, who has edited Prescott's very detailed diary for the Record Society of Lancashire and Cheshire, describes him as a 'keen collector of Roman artefacts and coins'. It is in this context that the entries in the diary for June 18 and 19, 1708, relating toBowdon should be read. On June 18,while at Frodsham on diocesan business, Prescott records, 'I write to Mr Edmonds of Bowden (sic) about the old vessell I expected here.' After his return to Chester he records on the next day, June 19, 'After dinner the old Vessell comes, sent by Mr Edmonds. I send him with my letter a Guinea and pay the special messenger 4s. with intimacion that if hee approve not of the Guinea,the vessell shall be returnd. It was found this day 3 weeks by a Man digging 2yds perpendicular in a Moss a mile from the Church of Bowden.'

John Edmonds has figured in an earlier number of the Bowdon Sheaf (No. 4) as an agricultural improver of the period, probably giving the name to one or more fields. Since then I have discovered that he was the tenant under the 2nd Earl of Warrington of Bowdon Hall and its estate, and occupied the pew in the parish church previously used by the Bowdons of Bowdon who sold the hall to the Booths of Dunham Massey in 1650. Edmonds was steward for collecting rents to the 1st Earl of Warrington, Henry Booth, and almost certainly also to his son, George, the 2nd Earl. It may be that the 'old vessell' sent to Prescott was found on part of Edmonds's estate, or alternatively that Prescott wrote to him as the steward of the Earl, the manorial lord. Presumably the 'vessell' was, or was thought to be, Roman: the sum of one guinea for it was considerable at the time.

Sources

The Diary of Henry Prescott LL.B. Deputy Registrar of Chester Diocese. ed. John Addy, Vol. I 1704-11 (Record Society of Lancashire and Cheshire, Vol. 127.
Dunham Massey Papers, deposited by the National Trust In the John Rylands University Library of Manchester.

DICK TURPIN'S LOCAL ALIBI
by Harrison Ainsworth

This poem from "Rookwood" records Turpin's legendary ride from New Bridge Hollow, Bowdon, to the Kilton Inn, Hough Green Near High Legh.

Once it happened in Cheshire, near Dunham, I popped
on a horseman alone, whom I suddenly stopped.
That I lightened his pockets you'll readily guess.
Quick work makes Dick Turpin when mounted on Bess
Now It seems the man knew me "Dick Turpin" says he
"You'll swing for this Job, as ye live, do ye see".
I laughed at his threats and rows of redress;
I was sure of an alibi then with Black Bess
The road was a hollow, a sunken ravine;
Overshadowed completely by woods like a screen
I climbed the bank, and I needs must confess
that one touch of the spur grazed the side of Black Bess.
Brake, brook, meadow, and ploughed field Bess fleetly bestrode.
As the crow wings her flight we selected our road
We arrived at Hough Green in five minutes or less
My neck had been saved by the speed of Black Bess
Stepping carelessly forward I lounged on the green
Taking excellent care that by all I am seen;
Some remarks on time's flight to the Squires I address
But I say not a word of the flight of Black Bess
I mentioned the hour, it was just about four.
Play a rubber of bowls, I think danger is o'er
When athwart my next game, like a chessmate at Chess.
Comes the rider in search of the man on Black Bess .
What matter the details? Off with triumph I came
He swears to the hour and the Squires swear the same.
I had robbed him at four. While at four they profess
I was quietly bowling - all thanks to Black Bess.

THE EVOLUTION OF A SETTLEMENT
by
Geoffrey Barker

The settlement of an area is determined partly by its geology and the consequent fertility and natural vegetation. Patterns of human settlement are to be seen more from studies of the archeological sites over a wide area than in any one location. Patricia Phillips (The Prehistory of Europe, 1980) has indicated general patterns of the evolution of settlement within which that of Bowdon may be viewed.

Paleolithic man lived before the last ice age and little or no remains are extant at this latitude. Mesolithic man came after the Ice age and was a hunter of herding animals and a food gatherer. No remains are known locally. Neolithic man (4300 B.C. onward) was the earliest farmer. A Neolithic stone hammer has been found near the Bollin and a flint arrow head of the Neolithic-bronze age period near Ashley Heath. Neolithic man was here.

The change to settled farming became necessary to man as the vegetation gradually changed after the Ice age from tundra (suitable for grazing wild herds) to high forest (unsuitable for grazing and too high for browsing). These changes spanned a period of arid climate (the boreal period when the post-glacial lake in Bowdon probably dried up partially to form a bog) and a following warmer and wetter period (the Atlantic period). It was in this period that man herded his own cattle, sheep, goats and pigs. To feed himself and the animals, he grew wheat (emma), lentils, vetch and six-row barley, as shown by pollen analysis. The increase in the protein content of food is thought to have led to an increase in population and thus the Neolithic farmers came to predominate over the Mesolithic hunters.

Whereas Mesolithic man preferred riverside sites Neolithic man preferred spring lines. Bowdon would have presented such a site along the base of the glacial gravel at the level where the boulder clay begins.

Neolithic man ploughed with stone axes. Technology of farming improved through the bronze to the iron age, allowing less tractable soils to be cultivated. Thus an early Bowdon settlement could have started at the base of the hill And subsequently spread out towards the Bollin. The Bow Green farm area, being situated on a mound of gravel surrounded by clay, may also have been settled early.

Bow Lane near to Bow Green farm and the lane leading to Pool Bank farm give a good view of the terrain of Bowdon which, together with the nature of the glacial deposits (gravel or clay), enables a mental picture to be formed of possible early settlements which are indicated by the Neolithic finds and the Bronze Age burial site in Dunham New Park.

OBITUARY TO A BOWDON CURATE

The following report appeared in "Harrop's Manchester Mercury" on November 5th 1754:

"We are informed from Altrincham, that a melancholy accident happened there to the Revd. Mr. Gifford, Curate of Boden which is related in the following manner. About one o'clock yesterday morning he rose as is supposed in a dream, and opened the window of his room, from whence he jumped to the ground, and was so terribly bruised in the fall, that he expired that afternoon in great agonies. This gentleman had performed divine service both in the morning and afternoon at St. Ann's Church in this town on Sunday and went home that evening. He has left a young wife to bewail his loss, who is now lying in of her first child".

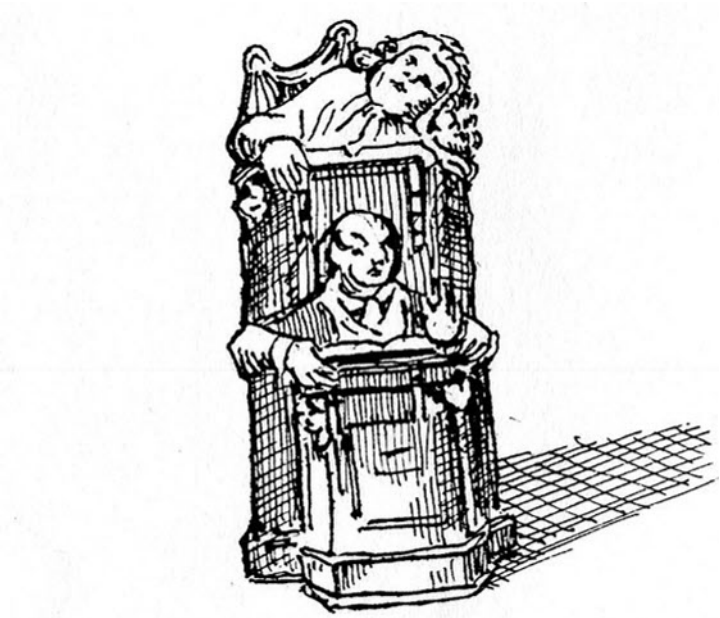
SALE OF CHURCH FURNITURE

The following announcement was made in "Harrop's Manchester Mercury" on April 7th 1761:

"To be sold on reasonable terms at the house of William Yarwood known by the sign of the Green Dragon in Bowdon near Altrincham in Cheshire.

An oak pulpit 4 sounding Board, with a pair of stairs leading to the Pulpit, both in good plight 4 condition 4 fit for the use of any country chapel.

Also two stately fresh peices or figures of Moses 4 Aaron, near 8 foot high, which by reason of a usefull alteration lately made in the Parish Church of Bowdon cannot be conveniently put up there again. Whoever is desirous to buy the said Pulpit 4 ornaments, may apply to the Church Wardens of Bowdon aforesaid or the said William Yarwood".



THE PARSON & CLERK

The Bowdon Sheaf

A BOWDON HISTORY SOCIETY PUBLICATION

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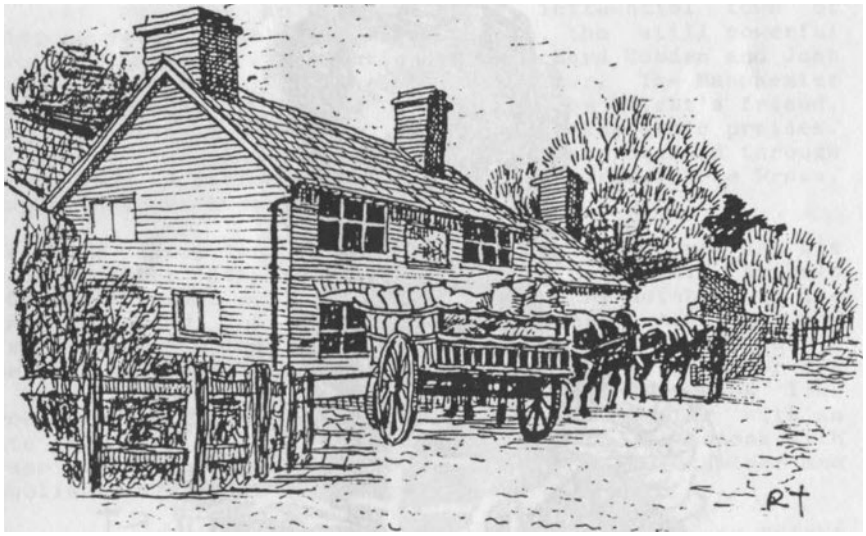


The Greyhound, Ashley

A popular meeting place for farmers and dealers at the turn of this century.

A Hungarian Refugee
Louis Kossuth in Manchester and Bowdon
by Marjorie Cox

In his autobiography, *Closed Chapters*, Judge Sir Gerald Hurst, whose family lived at Brookleigh (Booth Road) Bowdon just before the First War, mentioned a letter from Richard Cobden thanking his grandfather for a subscription to relief funds for the victims of Austrian despotism. He comments "The north of England was then deeply interested in foreign politics and in continental champions of the principle of nationality". It was the time of the revolutions of 1848 in Europe. One such champion was Louis Kossuth, the leader of the Hungarian revolution against Habsburg rule. This article sketches Kossuth's connection with Manchester - even with Bowdon - when he was a political refugee. The original Hungarian revolution of spring, 1848, was fairly described as 'the lawful revolution': its achievement was to secure for Hungary parliamentary government, civil rights and the abolition of serfdom. However, its leaders, Kossuth and the proud, historically dominant Magyars, antagonised the numerous other nationalities of Hungary - Croats, Serbs, Romanians, Slovaks - who had their own aspirations. The Habsburgs were able to exploit these divisions in order to re-impose their rule from Vienna. A fierce war, an ethnic conflict, went on for over a year, costing 50,000 lives on each side. Kossuth and his supporters fought heroically and desperately, though becoming increasingly extremist.



A Hungarian refugee who visited Bowdon during his period of exile in this country.

Finally, military intervention by the autocratic Tsarof Russia ensured a Habsburg victory, which was followed by savage reprisals. Kossuth himself fled in August 1849, into what is now Bulgaria but was then part of the Ottoman Empire; though saved from extradition, he was interned for two years, half the time in Anatolia.

Meanwhile he and his cause had won the sympathy and admiration of the liberal-minded in Britain and the USA. A leader in the Manchester Examiner and Times in 1856 recalled the feelings of 1849, 'Every mind was preoccupied with it. Every despatch was awaited with intense emotion. Every Austrian defeat was welcomed with universal joy'. When, released at last from internment, Kossuth landed in England late in October, 1851, these feelings reached a climax. Over a hundred books and several thousand articles were published, mostly in the early 1850s. All over Britain towns begged for visits from him, and in the next two months he made innumerable speeches pleading Hungary's cause and denouncing Austria and Russia. In December he left for the USA, but in July,1852,returned to England, where he lived until 1860.

Kossuth had a charismatic personality; he was handsome and idealistic and had great powers of oratory. Furthermore, when imprisoned in Budapest in the late 1830s, he had taught himself English from the Bible and Shakespeare. He was thus able, despite his foreign accent, to captivate Anglo-Saxon audiences with his eloquence.

He lost no time in visiting the influential town of Manchester in early November, 1851. There, the still powerful Anti-Corn Law League organisation and Richard Cobden and John Bright were his supporters. The Radical paper, The Manchester Examiner and Times, published and managed by Bright's friend, Alexander Ireland from 1846 to 1889, sang Kossuth's praises. Outside its office in Market Street, as he processed through Manchester, hung a banner proclaiming 'Free Trade, Free Press, Free People, Welcome Kossuth'.

Kossuth's reception in Manchester was rapturous, and his meeting on November 11th in the Free Trade Hall (said to hold 9/10,000) was crowded out. There were so many notables on the platform, including John Bright, Sir Elkanah Armitage and Alexander Ireland, with others of the Examiner and Times, that a cry came from the hall 'Keep room for Kossuth'. He spoke for one and a half hours, winning his audience with phrases like 'commerce is the locomotive of principles', and ending with an appeal to the people of Manchester and England to 'speak with manly resolution to the despots of the world'. The Examiner and Times published a special supplement on the event.

After Kossuth's return from the US, Cobden andBright continued to support him, especially against Palmerston's accusations that he had had dealings with an explosives manufacturer. They were both, however, reluctant to advocate any use of force by England in his cause. Nevertheless, during the 1850s Kossuth paid Manchester several visits, which aroused much enthusiasm, though not on the scale of 1851. The Examiner and Times reported three meetings in November 1856 in the Free Trade Hall.

At the first, his entrance was greeted by a Hungarian march on the organ, and he then spoke for two hours to an audience of 6,000 on the Italian movement for independence from Austria, a cause he linked to that of Hungary. The speech was published by John Heywood of Deansgate. In January, 1857, he made a return visit to address the Working Men of Manchester in the Free Trade Hall. In May 1859 he addressed a packed Free Trade Hall at a meeting to agitate for England's neutrality in the war against Austria and Italy.

Alexander Ireland, one of Bowdon's 'eminent Victorians', was living in Stamford Road certainly in 1855 and probably earlier in the fifties. He was a staunch supporter of Kossuth: his press printed a booklet, Kossuth in Exile, by John Hilson of Jedburgh in June 1856 - 'Published in Manchester, price 2d. by A Ireland & Co. Printers by Steam Power, Pall Mall'. The obituary of Ireland in Manchester Faces and Places states that Kossuth was his guest on his second visit to Manchester in 1854. This may have been in Bowdon, but certainly when Kossuth gave his talk to the Working Men on Saturday, January 24th, 1857, he was invited to Bowdon by Ireland. On January 20th, Ireland wrote to his close associate, George Wilson, chairman of the former Anti-Corn Law League inviting him to dinner:-

'Kossuth has promised to dine with me at Bowdon on Saturday next at 2 o'clock. Will you give me the pleasure of your company. The hour is made early as he comes in by the 7 p.m. train to lecture'.

A little later, in March 1857, Ireland accompanied Kossuth when he gave a lecture in Crewe and then to stay with John Mills and his wife at Nantwich. Ireland and Mills were old friends from the Radical forties in Manchester, and Mills, a leading banker, chose in 1864 to settle in Bowdon to be near Ireland and his lively circle. Already, in 1849, Mills had written to his wife of the 'painful intensity' of his sympathy with Kossuth and his losing cause. In 1857, his wife recorded his reaction to Kossuth's oratory: 'I never saw Mr Mills more completely carried away'.

At Kossuth's last Free Trade Hall meeting in May 1859, before his departure in 1860 to live in Turin and support the Risorgimento more actively, the chairman was George Wilson and Alexander Ireland was again on the platform. After Kossuth's emotional plea for English neutrality in the Italian struggle- 'Let Austria be forsaken by England and she will be forsaken by God', 'the whole meeting' (according to his memoirs) 'rises to its feet', 'waving hats, handkerchiefs and cheering'. Ireland was also interested in the Italian cause, and in November 1855 entertained to dinner at his house in Stamford Road the famous Italian exile, Count Aurelio Saffi, one of the Triumvirs with Mazzini of the revolutionary Roman Republic of 1849. (Saffi had originally come to see Ireland with a note of introduction from Carlyle.) At the dinner party, we learn from Absalom Watkin's journal, John Bright and Saffi discussed the Italian situation. Kossuth never returned to Hungary in his lifetime, though many other exiles did, but both he and Ireland lived to see the independence and unification of Italy: coincidentally, they both died in the same year, 1894.

A small postscript, connected with Bowdon, points up the mutual admiration between Kossuth and Manchester Liberals. Inglewood, the house in St Margaret's Road which Ireland built for himself in 1869-70, was the home from 1888 of the Hopkinson family. They were distinguished Manchester Liberals, described by Katharine Chorley in Manchester Made Them. John Hopkinson, her grandfather, had heard Kossuth in the Free Trade Hall. In their home, she writes, 'hung a portrait of Kossuth'. Below it was printed this tribute to England: 'Ah, now I am free, I feel I am free, I am free when I touch your shores'.

My warm thanks are due to the staff of the Manchester Central Library, and I am grateful to the City of Manchester Leisure Services Committee for permission to quote Ireland's letter in the Wilson Papers.

Early Threshing Machines in Bowdon
by Ronald Trenbath

The following report in the Manchester Courier on Saturday, the 7th August, 1847, was noted by Marjorie Cox, while researching a different subject.

Barley Oats

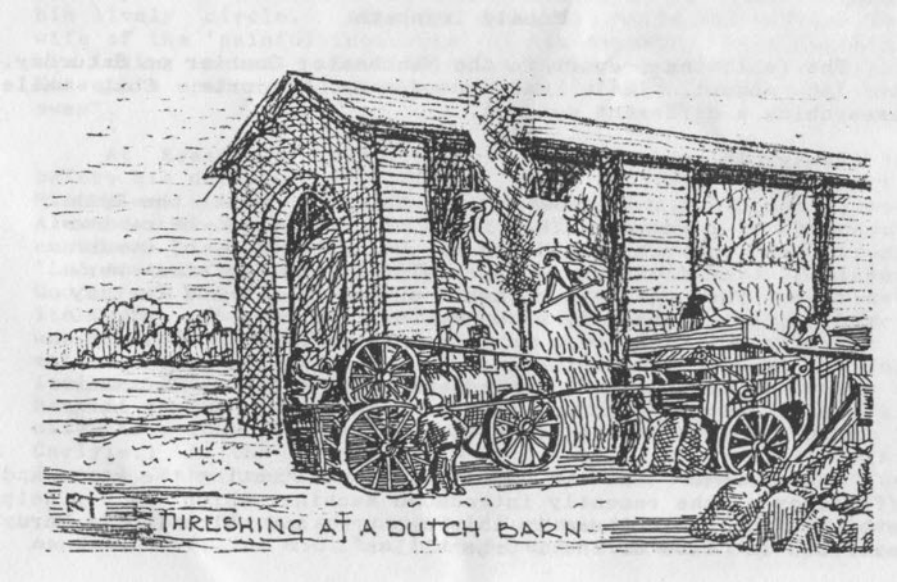
"A field of oats was cut on Saturday week, the 24th ult., at Bowdon. The field is situated below the church, and is farmed by Mr Wm. Warburton of Bowdon Hall. The field was most excellent, and the straw very fine. The oats were thrashed out on Monday and Tuesday last, by a thrashing machine; on the evening of the latter day they were taken to Ashley Mill, and will be in the market as oatmeal today. Some of the straw was sold in the market on Wednesday and again on Thursday last, being the first straw of this year's growth that had appeared in the market".

One assumes that the report was demonstrating the speed and efficiency of the recently introduced machine, which was to help revolutionise agriculture in this country, and which Thomas Hardy described in "Tess of the D'Urbervilles".

Prior to this time the practice had been to cart the corn from the fields into barns provided with tall wooden entrance doors to permit access to highly laden carts, with low doorways on the opposite walls to facilitate the exit of empty carts. Paved areas between the doors were used as "thresholds", or threshing floors, and the sheaves were stacked on either side of them. Splayed piers were built on either side of the doors, which were often provided with roofs to form porches so that the wind could be channelled through the thresholds to blow away chaff and dust during threshing.

Gertrude Jekyll wrote that:- "the flail was one of the oldest of the farmer's implements. It is formed of two rods about 3 ft 6 ins long the handle being the slighter and the swinger the thicker and heavier. There may be many yet living (1925) who can remember the pleasing sight and sound of threshing; the man's dexterity, for there were labourers who would undertake to knock all the grain out of a single head of corn stood up on end at the first blow, and the pleasant sound, the "whish" when the flail first struck the loose corn, and the thump when, after a few strokes, the heavy swinger felt the floor".

The advantage of this method of threshing lay in the fact that the corn could be threshed as, and when, it was required and could be a useful indoor job during inclement weather, whereas the cost of moving the new machinery from farm to farm and paying the crew who worked it, plus any extra labour required, meant that it had to be used continuously for three or four- working days, regardless of the weather, if it was going to prove to be economical.



Most farmers found it impossible to use the threshing machines in the traditional barns, which resulted in the open sided Dutch barns becoming more popular and the traditional barn becoming redundant.

Early in the morning when threshing was to take place the machinery would be seen chugging along the approach road to the farm with smoke bellowing from the funnel of the traction engine, which towed the thresher, and the whistle blowing to announce its arrival, a scene which Turner would have enjoyed painting. The next task was to manoeuvre everything into position near to the corn stack which was in itself a very exhausting operation.

As soon as the farmer and the driver were satisfied that all the equipment was properly aligned the work for the day commenced with workers on the stack feeding sheaves, by pikel to a man, or woman, on the box, who would cut the string or "bant" tying the corn and throw the loosened sheaves into the thresher where the operation of separating the corn from the straw took place. The corn flowed out of an aperture into bags on one side of the box where it was weighed and then carted to the granary, the chaff was directed through another opening on the opposite side of the machine into bags in which it was transported to the hen pens, or store, and the straw came out of the back where it was hand tied into bundles, if it was to be used for thatching, or passed through a baler, if it was to be used for bedding, or sold to industry.

A long tough belt, from the traction engine, drove the machinery in the thresher and was always a great source of danger, of which the workers had to be constantly aware. The driver would walk round with an oil can spurting oil into various parts of the machinery, check the gauges and overlook the regular supply of water to the boiler to ensure that it did not burst. Super heat-producing engine coal was used to stoke the furnace which resulted in the emission of very thick black smoke which with the pollen and dust, inevitably gave all concerned, other than the regular crew, very bad colds for days afterwards. The crews always appeared to be immune from catching colds but they regularly ended up with chronic chest and lung diseases, and those who worked on the boilers were subject to chronic cervical spondelosis or the farmers disease, by which name it is still known locally, but the wages paid to these workers were very much higher than those paid to farm workers.

The pollen also caused intense skin irritation and those carrying the bales on their backs nearly always received cuts on their necks and shoulders, so it is not hard to imagine that this very dirty, dangerous and exhausting job could lead to frayed tempers, especially, when milking, feeding and bedding down of cows,had to be undertaken when Threshing had stopped for the day. The fact that the operation occurred mainly in winter when the days were short and darkness came early also made life difficult.

The rats and mice which inevitably inhabited corn stacks worked their way downwards as the work proceeded, to be found hiding en-masse in the last few layers of sheaves, at which point local boys would bring their dogs and enjoy a rat chase as a finale to the operation when often a hundred or more rats would be taken.

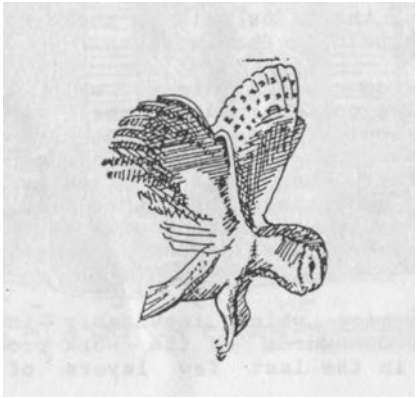
The traction engines were always the pride and joy of the drivers who would tend them with loving care, washing them, polishing the brass components and keeping them in pristine condition.

Mr Barlow, the last driver in the district kept and tended his engine long after it had become obsolete and it was fitting that it should have been driven past his house as a mark of respect to him at his funeral.

Before the destruction of Ashley Mill in the great Bollin flood at the turn of the century, corn was taken there for grinding and then often on to Ashley Station to be carried by train to various markets, as a result of which the adjoining "Greyhound Inn" became a meeting place for farmers where they could lunch, discuss affairs, carry out deals and execute their business generally. The late Reg Baker, who was landlord of the inn for very many years, as were his in-laws for many generations prior to that, told interesting tales of the carryings on and of the self employed men who virtually ran their business, such as haulage, cattle dealing and contracting, from the pub.

Anyone unfortunate enough to have taken part in threshing will know what a loathsome job it was, so when, on the 4th August 1960, the first combine harvester was operated at Bow Green a small group of local people gathered to hail its arrival and take photographs, and a cine film of the event, and generally celebrate the end of the threshing machine era, not entirely realizing that the new machine would bring its own problems.

Perhaps one of the greatest assets of the threshing yard, which was lost when combine harvesters came to dominate harvesting, lay in the fact that these yards were the habitats of barn owls. They lived on the rats and mice, and the disappearance of this feature from farmsteads contributed to the decline in population of this very beautiful and useful bird. It might be of interest to readers that a barn owl was heard calling in the garden while this article was being written and it is to be hoped that it will be the first of many more to come.



The Bowdon Sheaf

A BOWDON HISTORY SOCIETY

No. 20 October 1992 40p

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Marriage and Divorce in Early 19th Century Bowdon



The Great Barn. Moss Farm.
Sketch of the Interior of the barn illustrating an imaginary party

ISSN-0265-816X

ROSE HILL SCHOOL
by Myra Kendrick

Rose Hill in Bowdon was roughly the area now covered by South Road, East Downs Road and West Road, a site much favoured for small day and boarding schools as Bowdon developed after the opening, in 1848/9, of the Manchester to Altrincham and Bowdon railway. This had attracted a steady flow of Manchester business men to move to Bowdon and look about for schools to educate their sons and daughters.

About 1874 Alfred James Pearce opened Rose Hill School, the second of that name. A graduate of London University, he had come north to be headmaster of the British School in Oxford Road, Altrincham, since demolished. He was the author of a popular mathematics book and his reputation was such that he was invited by Bowdon parents to found a boys' school to fill a need felt. Not all wanted to send their young sons away to boarding school if a sound education could be acquired near home.

Among Mr Pearce's pupils are named sons of such local families as Calderbank, Ormson, Ridgway and Syers. Canon M.H. Ridgway's father won an attendance prize there at Christmas 1892. Mr Pearce's own son was a pupil in his father's school until the age of fourteen, when he was sent to complete his education in Germany. Similarly, sons of German customers of Manchester business men came to be educated in English at Rose Hill School. Some boys must have finished their schooling there, although in the 1890s two pupils are known to have gone on to Manchester Grammar School.

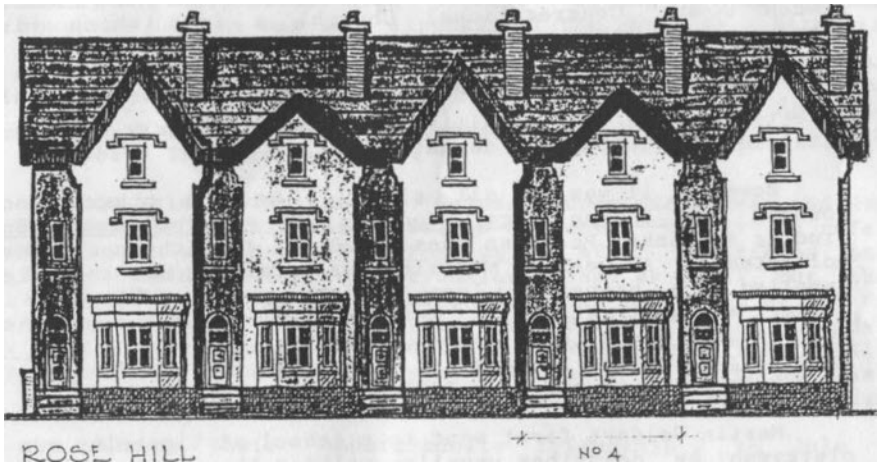
A Cheshire directory of 1874 contains an advertisement for Mr Pearce's Rose Hill School. It gives the course of instruction as including English "in all its branches", Mathematics, French, German, Latin, Physical Science, Drawing and Drill. The inclusion of Physical Science is interesting, reflecting new educational developments: it was not in the curriculum of the earlier Rose Hill School. The Principal was stated to be "assisted by French and German masters and well qualified teachers". He made an explicit point of "having a large schoolroom and playground detached from the residence".

A. J. Pearce's schoolroom, which he had bought in 1874 for £1000, had originally been built for the Methodist Chapel on Rosehill. This was being replaced by the Dome Chapel on Enville Road, itself to be demolished after about a hundred years' existence. For some time before the purchase Pearce had been renting the room for use on weekdays, the Methodists still using it on weeknights and Sundays. This building can still be glimpsed off South Road, close to the residential part of the school apparently built by Pearce. It is now converted into flats, after a short career as a laundry. The playing fields were on land opposite the schoolroom and the Pearce family lived in the small house round the corner in West Road known as Daisy Bank, which may originally have housed the caretaker of the former Methodist chapel and schoolroom. The windows of some adjacent houses have a significantly church-like appearance.

A. J. Pearce, known to his pupils as "Daddy Pearce" was reputed to be a strict disciplinarian. He catered for boarders as well as day pupils, and his daughters in turn helped him on the domestic side. The youngest, Miss Jessie, continued to keep house for his successor who took over when Mr Pearce retired about 1905. The school survived his retirement by one year only; of the two headmasters Pearce was by far the better businessman.

His grave is in Bowdon churchyard; the inscription gives his life-span as from 1837 to 1908. He had however been an active member of the Downs Congregational Chapel where, his grand-daughter understood, he was a lay preacher. Non-Conformists were indeed responsible for the founding of a number of Bowdon's Victorian Schools.

Much of this material was supplied by A. J. Pearce's grand-daughter, the late Miss Ada Pearce.



GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS' BOWDON FRIEND
By Marjorie Cox

In the poet Gerard Manley Hopkins' early diaries, which he kept when he was an undergraduate at Balliol College, Oxford, the following entry appears in 1865 "4 Rose Hill Bowden Manchester E. M. Geldart". Edmund Martin Geldart was a fellow undergraduate at Balliol, and the two became friends, close in their student days, more remote in later life. Both were born in the same year, 1844, and both died fairly young, Geldart at 41 and Hopkins at 44. Their lives were lived in a period of strong religious divisions and of a deep crisis of faith.

Martin Geldart was the son of Thomas Geldart, originally from Norfolk, who came to the area in 1856 when he became Secretary of the Manchester City Mission. After a brief stay in Altrincham, he lived until the 1870s (when he moved to The Firs) at 4 Rose Hill. The house can be identified as the last but one at the east end of the Gothic style terrace on East Downs Road. In his autobiography Martin Geldart records an incident which shows us the developing but as yet unorganised suburb, to which gas lighting came only in 1865. He came home from boarding school because of his elder brother's fatal illness, arriving at Manchester by train at 1 a.m., then taking a cab to Bowdon. He could not identify his parents' new house and the cabman set him down in a fog. Wandering round, he was eventually helped by a policeman, or rather "the private watchman who did duty in those benighted parts for that functionary". Thomas Geldart, though a Baptist, attended the flourishing Bowdon Downs Congregational Church, a fact which his son attributed to mild social snobbery. His wife, Hannah, wrote popular religious books for children. Their children had a strict evangelical upbringing, and Martin describes vividly the effects of this on a sensitive child, particularly the obsession with sin and the fear of damnation.

However, it was not all gloom. He and other schoolboys founded The Entomological Society of Altrincham and Bowdon, finding in Dunham Park an ideal habitat for the specimens they collected. A weekly magazine was started, and they cleverly enrolled as a member a local printer, who published it: in Geldart's semi-satirical autobiography it appears as The Hebdomadal Bughunter, more soberly it was The Weekly Entomologist, price 2d, and all complaints to be addressed to him at 4 Rose Hill: it ran from 1862-3.

Martin Geldart first went to a school at Timperley run by a clergyman; he describes usually walking there, though sometimes going by train, but apparently boarded (?weekly) at Woodlands Park. Later, after a brief interlude with the same master at Oxford, he was sent to Manchester Grammar School. During his time there the school's academic standing was revolutionised by a new headmaster and Geldart was the first pupil to win an open scholarship to Balliol. This made possible a career very different from the one he had visualised, aged 12, on the eve of moving to Manchester. In a letter to his father he had done a humorous drawing of "My future prospects", showing himself seated among bales labelled "The very best cotton", "finest cotton" etc.

Geldart and Hopkins came up to Balliol to read Greats in the same year, 1863, and had rooms on the same staircase. Hopkins at first found Geidart's appearance unprepossessing, but the initial impression soon wore off and Geldart became one of the circle of his best friends. They enjoyed walks together in the beautiful Oxford countryside which permeates Hopkins poems, fireside talks, luncheon and dinner parties. In his Journal on May 8th 1866, Hopkins, after noting the weather as he often did, recorded "Walk with Geldart and Nash. Curious notions of those sort of people about conceit." an enigmatic remark. Thomas Nash, also from Bowdon, was one of two close school friends of Geidart's at Balliol: all three were labelled "Manchester men", regardless of origins.

Martin Geidart's thinly-disguised autobiography, A Son of Belial by Nitram Tradleg (his name reversed! which appeared in 1882 is an important source used by biographers of Hopkins to evoke the Oxford of the 1860s, Hopkins, to whom he sent a copy, called it "an amusing and sad book". Geldart paints the intellectual exhilaration of Oxford, particularly of Balliol: no subject was taboo and viewpoints were many and varied. (He himself struck a contemporary as being "as clever a man as I ever met"). Above all, in the Oxford of a generation after Newman and the Tractarian Movement, religion was endlessly discussed. Divisions in the Church of England between Evangelicals and High Church Puseyites ran deep, and Newman, of course, had gone over to Rome. Geldart came up a convinced Evangelical: he had been baptised into the Church of England by the Vicar of Bowdon, Archdeacon Pollock, who favoured Evangelicals and regularly preached argumentative sermons (much to Geidart's taste) against Unitarians, Roman Catholics and Puseyites. At Oxford he first actually encountered High Churchmen, among them Hopkins, whose family was moderately High Church. In the hothouse of Oxford, however, Hopkins was soon strongly of the Puseyite, Ritualist or Anglo-Catholic wing of the church. A brief entry in his diary of 1865 shows a youthful mixture of idealism and pressing practicalities "Little book' for sins. Necktie. Boots to see after. Slippers? Bath, Letters to Aunt Annie, Aunt Kate, Geldart. Trousers".

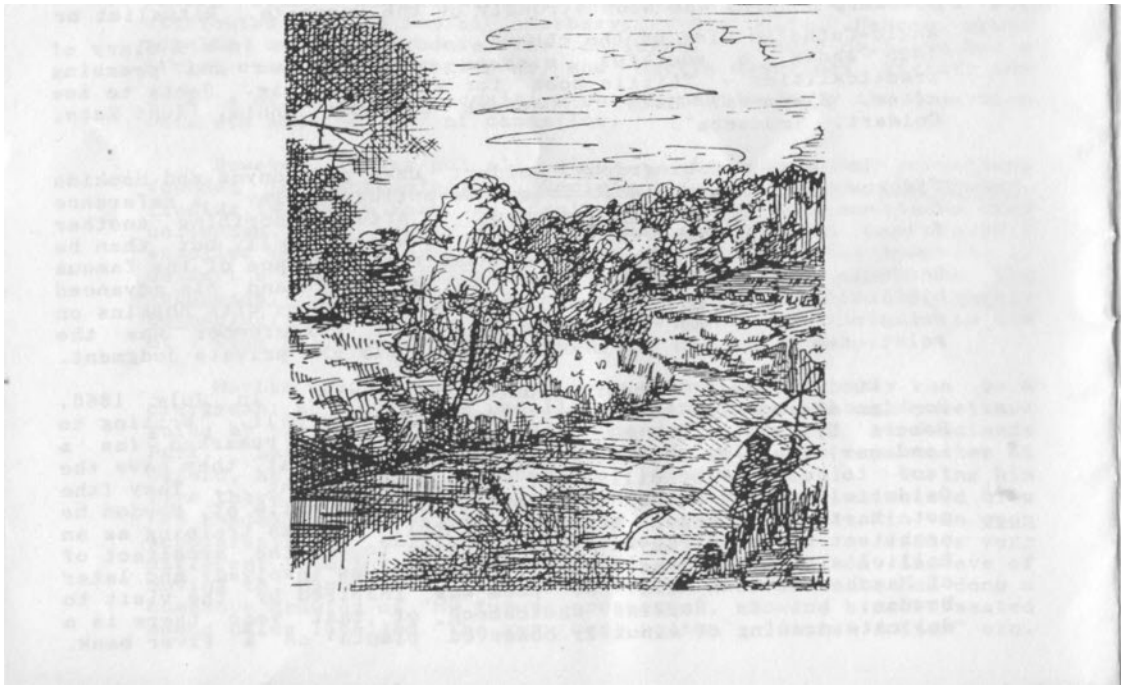
In his autobiography Geldart uses pseudonyms and Hopkins figures as "my ritualistic friend Gerontius Manley", a reference to Newman's Dream of Gerontius. After describing another friend, Geldart observes "Gerontius gushed as well, but then he meant it". Geldart was coining under the influence of the famous Benjamin Jowett (Hopkins tutor at Balliol) and his advanced biblical criticism. He recalls long discussions with Hopkins on religion, in which the crux of their differences was the relationship between the church's authority and private judgment. During their undergraduate friendship, in July 1865, Hopkins stayed with the Geldart family in Rose Hill. Writing to Robert Bridges, another Oxford friend, he remarked (as a Londoner) that Mr Geidart's office was in "what they have the face to call Piccadilly, if I remember right . They (the Geldarts) live at Bowdon eight miles off". While at Bowdon he met Martin's younger brother, Ernest, who was training as an architect under Alfred Waterhouse, soon to be the architect of Balliol's new buildings (in which Ernest was involved) and later of Manchester Town Hall. No poem was inspired by the visit to Bowdon, but in Hopkins sketchbook of that year there is a delicate drawing of minutely observed plants on a river bank, entitled "On the Bollen, Cheshire". The drawing (reproduced in *All My Eyes See,* ed. R. K. R. Thornton, p.127) is proof that Geldart had taken his friend to a favourite haunt of his on school half-holidays.

After the end of their Oxford days, in 1867, Hopkins and Geidart's lives diverged, though both retained feelings of friendship. Hopkins, while still an undergraduate, had been received into the Roman Catholic Church, and in 1868 he began his novitiate as a Jesuit. Geldart had a much more varied career.

He taught for brief periods at Manchester Grammar School and in Athens, where he became an expert on modern Greek. Later he was ordained in the Church of England at one point he was curate of All Saints', Manchester but left it to become a noted Unitarian minister until his "socialistic" views proved too much for his Croydon congregation and he resigned. His life ended tragically in April, 1885, in a mysterious disappearance from a Channel steamer, which Hopkins assumed to be suicide. In a letter of April 24th to an old Oxford friend, Hopkins lamented the death of Geldart, a "self tormentor", but found some comfort in having renewed their friendship a few weeks earlier.

Quotations from the following are by kind permission of Oxford University Press:-

The Journals and Papers of G, M. Hopkins ed. H. House and G Storey (1959)
The Letters of G. M. Hopkins to Robert Bridges ed. C. C. Abbott (1955)
Further Letters of G. M. Hopkins ed. C. C. Abbott (1938)



FOURTEENTH CENTURY FEUDS IN BOWDON
by Maurice Ridgway

A sentimental view of the pre-Reformation Church often displays a complete ignorance of the facts that go towards making the fascinating tapestry of medieval life. Take for example the latter half of the fourteenth century in the Bowdon story. For a considerable time the manor had been held by two owners. On the one hand there was the Prior of Birkenhead and on the other the Mascy family of Hale.

There was friction between them and the Parish Church, its Vicarage and parson stood betwixt the two. It was in July 1383 that Thomas de Mascy aided by his friend Hugh de Artunstall, carried off the Tithe corn. It may well have been an act which sprang from an earlier dispute which was settled by the Baron Hamo with a charter in 1278 which placed the Priory at Birkenhead securely in possession of the Advowson (this meant amongst other things that the Priors of the Benedictine Priory at Birkenhead had the right to the tithes and also could place Vicars at Bowdon Church).

In 1383 this Thomas certainly had no right to what he took away, but after all the Prior of Birkenhead was some forty miles away at the end of the Wirral. Doubtless the Bowdon parson finally got word to him. Perhaps this particular incident could be settled and was. But a few years later in 1397 Thomas, John and Richard, the sons of Robert de Mascy and others "assaulted" William' de Preston the "holy watur clerk" of Bowdon Church. Poor William, whatever had he done to deserve this? Apparently nothing, but the fourteenth-century bovver boys from Hale wanted to take it out of somebody and the Holy Water clerk at Bowdon was as harmless as anyone they were likely to find,

Why? A year earlier Richard de Wever had died, and the Prior had appointed Richard del More to be the new Vicar of Bowdon 1396. He had hardly been instituted a month when on March 3rd the Mascies (to quote) "entered the Vicarage and held it by force until Palm Sunday, threatening the Prior and his new Vicar that they should have no profit from the church unless they admitted Richard, the son of Robert de Mascy, as Vicar.

They also browbeat the Prior's tenants and tried to make them quit their holdings." Richard was only 18 and could not hold the benefice in any case. These efforts to capture this rich vicarage for one of the family evidently did not prevail and the result may well have given rise to the local proverb preserved by Sir Peter Leycester in the seventeenth-century History of Cheshire, "Every man is not born to be Vicar of Bowdon," though Peter Leycester admitted he did not know the real origin of the phrase. It is still perhaps the most often quoted of local proverbs, as it is the most inaccurate!


FIELD LABOURERS.

Marriage and Divorce in Early 19th Century Bowdon

The following Bowdon Wedding was reported in the Hereford Journal, of July 16th, 1806:-

"Married, On the 27th ult., at Bowdon, Mr Thomas Darbyshire, of Altrincham, maltster, to Miss Goulden, only daughter of Mr Joseph Goulden, of the same place, inn-keeper, after a courtship of a quarter of an hour.

The following are the facts attending this short- sighted union: Mr D and Miss G were two of the attendants at the celebration of the marriage of a relation of Miss G, on the 12th ult., when (amongst conversation usual at such times of mirth and festivity) Mr D said he was desirous of being married, and put the question to Miss G whether she would marry with him, or not? To which she answered in the affirmative, and that the marriage should take place at nine o'clock the following morning. All the persons present considered the matter merely as a joke, Mr D drew up an agreement between him and Miss G which they both signed in the presence of a number of witnesses. Early the next morning, Mr D waited upon his fair Desdemona, with the intention of proceeding in the performance of what had been agreed upon the night before; but she, having been seized with a cold in the night, requested Mr D not to be so urgent about it, alleging that she was so hoarse, she was afraid she should not be sufficiently audible in the performance of her part of the marriage ceremony. Mr D consented to a respite; the 27th ult. was fixed upon, and the marriage accordingly celebrated".

It is said that in earlier times marriages were based more on women's abilities and asset? than on their affections, Some say that such unions often resulted in happier families compared with the position today, with the very high rate of broken marriages, but at that time an unsuccessful union could rarely be ended by divorce but rather by murder or suicide.

A ploy did exist however whereby a husband could end an unhappy marriage by selling his wife, as part of his goods and chattels, to any bidder willing to buy her, and at the turn of the 18th Century a man from Ashley led his wife to the Altrincham cross, with a man prodding her with a stick from behind, and auctioned her, to accept a final bid of eighteen pence, but, in order to make the transaction legal, he had to purchase a halter from Sammy Rutter the Saddler in Church Street, and place it on the wretched woman.

Auctions of wives, similar to this, were not infrequent but not all of them were quite as inhuman as this one, as many decent husbands were able to release their estranged wives by arranging for a suitor, of the wife's choice, to make a favourable bid and so enable her to commence what it was hoped would be a happier life. One can only be thankful that, such degrading remedies are no longer acceptable in this country.

The Bowdon Sheaf

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Bowdon in the 16th and 17th centuries
The Booths and the Tippings - Landed Gentry and Yeoman Retainers
by Peter Kemp

Part 1

When one looks at the histories of landed gentry such as the Booths of Dunham Massey, not a great deal is revealed about the people associated with them or employed by them who carried out their master's orders, or those lower in the social order who were not only trusted and respected tenants but friends, all of whom contributed to the prosperity of the great house, and, by so doing; themselves as well. Such a local family were the Tippings in their association with the Booths of Dunham Hall.

The old saying, "From rags to riches and back again in three generations", applies to some extent to the Dunham Massey Tippings who rose in the 17th century from husbandmen to yeomen to gentlemen before disappearing from the ranks of Steward and Bailiff to the Booths for ever.

Tippings have been around this corner of Cheshire for a very long time, and some were local churchmen about whom little is known so far. Hugh Tipping was Rector and the miller of Ashton-on-Mersey cl522 to 1525 where he was involved in disputes over rights of way, forcible entry with seizures of hay, etc., and concerning the tithe of the corn-mill when an arbitration hearing ruled that James Massey of Sale had to pay Hugh and his assigns an annual payment for the tithe of the mill; the record of incumbents in St Martin's Church, Ashton-on-Mersey shows Hugh Tipping as Rector from 1525 to 1566, and a George Tipping later, from 1613 to 1619.

A Henry Tipping was a Chantry Priest at St Mary's Church, Bowdon, cl550 to cl557, and as patrons of the living of Bowdon, the Booths would have approved the appointment of Henry as Chantry Priest. The Chantry Chapel of the Booths, called the Jesus Chapel at that time, was built after the death of William Booth of Dunham Massey who died on 6 April 1477, "leaving certain lands in trust to provide a chaplain to pray for the health of his soul and that of his ancestors and descendants, in a Chantrv Chapel which he desired to be built in Bowdon Church for that purpose; this was afterwards built, and was said from its spaciousness "to be a faire Chappelle". (Ingham).

In Henry Tipping's time, the will of Cicely Booth, daughter of George the fifth owner of Dunham, dated 28 December 1557, makes the request that she also be buried in the Jesus Chapel,provides-money for prayers to be said for her, and goes on to make bequests to the priests - "Itm I geve and bequethe unto Sr Thoms Strettell Sr Henrie Tippinge and Sr John Percyvall i.j^{l} v.j^{s} vii.j^{d} a pece." (Note: the term Sir was a priest's courtesy title, not a knighthood). A John Tipping was one of the witnesses to the will. Its date, 28 December 1557, seems rather late for a Chantry Priest still to be in office considering the Act of Edward VI which abolished such positions in the Church, and further research is needed about Bowdon during this period of change.

A Henry Tipping of the same time was a husbandman at Dunham Massey, with a wife Maud, four sons, William, Robert, John and George, and two daughters, Elizabeth and Alice. His inventory of 1590 shows him to have been a successful small farmer with a valuation of £73. 13. 0d. and being owed in addition, £12. 15. 2d., average to good amounts for those days in this locality. Certainly he had sufficient spare cash to make loans, and among his debtors was George Bowdon of Bowdon Hall who owed him 20s., and likewise Mr John Booth of Dunham Hall, whom he excused repayment possibly in deference to his landlord. This respect was also apparent in the request in his will of 22 July 1590 that "the Right Worshippful George Booth, esquire" should oversee its execution.

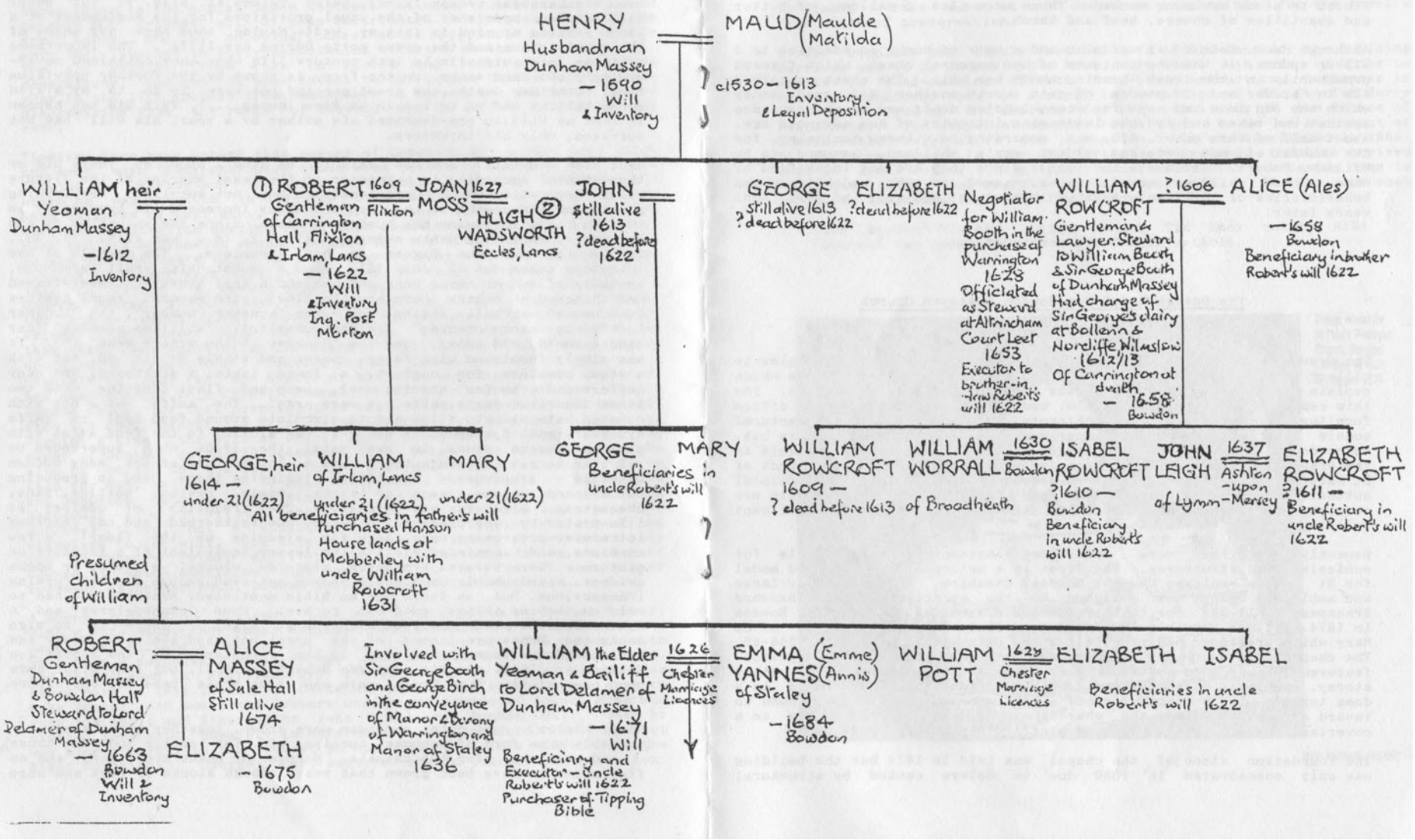
His wife Maud was left a third part of his estate "according to the Custome of the Countie", the eldest son and heir, William, being given all the farm "Implements of husbandry" as his thirdpartofthe inheritance. Presumably Maud, as one of a lease of lives tenancy arrangement, took over the farm maybe with son John to help her (as his later claim seems to imply), and William movedon to another tenancy in Dunham. His inventory taken after his death in 1612 shows him to have been a successful yeoman farmer, being valued at £146. 9. Id. Henry Tipping also made one of the usual provisions for the sustenance of a widow - "Item my mind is that my wyffe Maulde shud have her share of the great panne and the great potte During her liffe". The importance of these large utensils in 16th century life when they contained never-ending stews and soups on the fire, is shown by the further provision that, after her death, the great pan and pot were to go to "my s(ai)d sonne William and so to remain as Eire loomes..,." This did not happen in fact as William pre-deceased his mother by a year; his will has not survived, only his inventory.

Maud died in 1613, and was said to be aged "about 80 years old or thereabouts" according to witnesses at the legal hearing of the dispute about her will which unfortunately has not survived. Herfarming skills and management of the farm's economy increased its prosperity in the 23 years following her husband's death, since the valuation of her inventory, including debts owing of £22. 2. 1d., was £215, 11. 2d., triple the previous figure in his inventory, The details of her inventory taken on 22 July 1613 show a substantial small farmhouse, probably of two or three bays and one and a half storeys, timber-framed and thatched as others were at the time, with several rooms besides "the howse" or hall living-room - the "Longher Chamber", the "Longher Loft", the "harre chamber" (?higher chamber), "Williams chamber" (her eldest son's old room), and the "Chamber at the greife hede" (?). It was simply furnished with forms, chairs and stools to sit on, but with a few cushions for comfort, a frame table, a dishboard, and many coffers and arks for storing wool, hemp and flax, together with two items described as "a saffe & a wage arke". The "saffe" was a box with woven hair sidesto allow air to circulate around food kept on "saffe dysshes", and to keep flies out. It was similar to the food safes with perforated zinc sides in use until the 1940s when superseded by refrigerators.

Although there was a lot of pewterware, many wooden utensils - treenware - was listed including those used in producing butter and cheese, such as combs, bowls, basins, bottles, pans, cheesevats, a churn and dishes. The frugality of comfort is illustrated by the presence of only one featherbed and one chaffbed (otherwise mattresses were there for sleeping on the floor), a few cushions, and a painted cloth - the lesser equivalent of a tapestry or picture. There were no armchairs, pictures, clocks, mirrors, or books evident. Presumably Maud could reckon and read enough for her farming transactions, but, as there was no Bible mentioned, probably she had to rely on having things read out to her. Four "channdeleres" and "A Rysshe Candelstycke" provided lighting at night. There is no sign among the brassware listed of the greatpot and pan that Henry had designated heirlooms (nor even in the inventories of the eldest son William in 1612, nor his next son Robert in 1622), but they might have been one of the four brass pots and four brass pans her appraisers found Hemp, barley, rye, oats and corn were grown, together with "grenes" (possibly some form of cabbage), turnips, etc. for cattle and the house and some hay for the animals.

TIPPING

Three generations descending from Henry of Dunham Massey



No peas or beans are listed, and no flax seems to have been grown that year, though stocks of flax and hemp in the form of yarn and cloth are shown as well as some hemp drying in the kiln. It is evident that Maud and her daughter Alice wove cloth from the flax and hemp not only for their own use but as a product of the farm, even though no spinning wheels or looms are mentioned. 25 cattle including 7 calves were kept, as well as 4 horses, 22 sheep including 8 lambs, 2 pigs, geese, and hives of bees. There were 14 fleeces valued at Is. each, produced for sale as such since no wool was listed in stock or being worked. There were also 3 gallons of butter and quantities of cheese, beef and bacon.

Although Maud left 2 silver pins and a pair of hooks in addition to 3 silver spoons, it was the contents of her personal chest which figured prominently in the legal hearing about her will. The chest contained £29 in silver and 27 pieces of gold worth another £13, ready money which the old lady had kept for money-lending deals and as an insurance against bad times and for the increasing infirmity of her advanced age. About half of this money, £20, was, according to witness testimony, for the benefit of her deceased eldest son's children, assumed to be William, Robert, Elizabeth and Isabel since they are not identified by name. These children are, however, named as the godchildren and beneficiaries of William's brother Robert in his will of 1622, nine years later.

To be continued

The Design Model for Bowdon Wesleyan Church
by Tim Knox

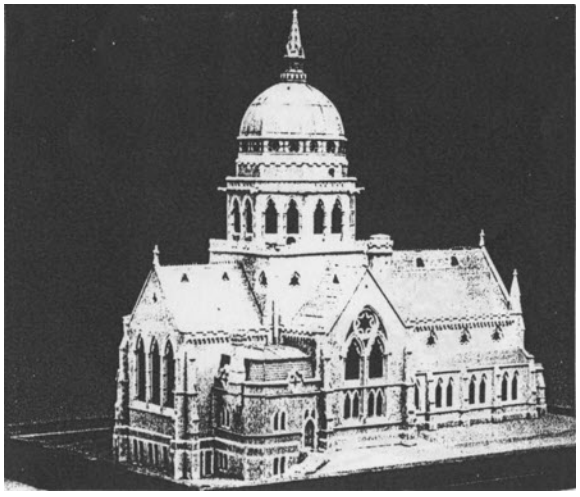
The Drawings Collection of the British Architectural Library aims to collect not only architectural drawings but also other objects which explain the development and practice of architecture in Britain. For this reason, architectural models, medals, drawing instruments, office furniture and portraits of architects are acquired. Architectural models have long been an important part of the design process but, being delicate and frequently large, they rarely survive. Models in the Drawings Collection range from James Gibbs' model for the Church of St Martin-in-the-Fields of 1721 to models by Erno Goldfinger for local authority housing of the 1960s and 1970s. Only design models are acquired and preference is given to those which are of significant buildings.

Recently acquired were two fine nineteenth-century models for ecclesiastical structures. The first is a meticulously detailed model for St Paul's Wesleyan Church, Bowdon, Cheshire. This unusually large and ambitious chapel was designed by the architect William Hayward Brakspear (1819-98) for the prosperous dissenting connexion of Bowdon in 1874. It was possibly intended to rival the nearby Church of St Mary which Brakspear had rebuilt for the established church in 1856-60. The chapel, in a freely interpreted Gothic of the Decorated period, featured an arcaded octagon over the crossing above which another storey, combining castellations and half-timbering, culminated in a dome topped with a small fleche. This curious Gothic dome found no inward expression within the church and indeed served merely as a covering for an extensive viewing platform behind the arcading.

The foundation stone of the chapel was laid in 1874 but the building was only consecrated in 1880 due to delays caused by structural problems which necessitated the rebuilding of the dome and lantern. A settlement on the fees was not reached until 1884. Brakspear's unconventional marriage to his first wife's sister led him to be increasingly ostracised from society and the chapel was his last major work. The model remained in the possession of a descendant of the architect until its acquisition, with the help of a private benefactor, by the Drawings Collection. By family tradition, the model was made by the architect's son, W S Brakspear. It is made of wood, cardboard, composition and glass on a wooden base with its original glass cover, in itself a rare survival and doubtless responsible for the model's fine state of preservation.

A very complete and finely executed set of drawings for the building survives and it is conceivable that this model was made assist in fund-raising efforts for its construction. chiefly remembered today as a pupil in the office of Sir Charles Barry where he worked on the designs for the rebuilding of the Palace of Westminster. The chapel at Bowdon reveals him to be an architect of considerable originality and invention. It was demolished in 1968. Sir Nicholas Pevsner in The Buildings of England, Cheshire, arrived just in time, noting: "This Gothic monstrosity with a crossing dome being demolished. One regrets its disappearance. It was the most ambitious ecclesiastical building in Bowdon."

The Bowdon History Society thank Tim Knox and the RIBA Journal for permission to publish this article.



Design model for St Paul's Wesleyan Church, Bowdon, Cheshire by WH Brakspear, 1874

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AUGUST 1992

Highway Robberies at Bowdon
by Maurice Ridgway

Highway robberies were not infrequent about 1800, and there were some places such as that known as Molly Charcoal's Pit in the first park, which no one cared to pass alone after dark. About 1820 Mr John Warburton was robbed on the road opposite where Finney's Lodge now stands, and which was known then as Burying Lane. He was returning from Manchester on horseback, with a considerable sum of money about him, when he was stopped there by a man living towards Baguley and robbed of every penny he had. The man left his hat behind him, and this led to his detection. He was arrested, tried, convicted and executed. On the morning of the execution the man who recounted the story was working in a field in Hale in which there also worked the sweetheart of the condemned man, and the poor girl was obliged to leave her work as the morning wore on, overcome by grief at the thought of the terrible fate of her lover.

Other robberies occurred in connection with the salt trade which was prosecuted at Bowdon. Heavy duty was levied on it and it was sold at four pence a pound. The road in those days at New Bridge Hollow ran where the narrow wood is by the side of the present road. A formidable band of thieves were called Romper Lowes gang, after the leader. A gentleman called Mr Collinge engaged in the salt-carrying trade was returning home one night with a large sum of money when he was attacked in a road leading into Bow Green Lane and robbed. In the struggle he was pulled from his horse and, unable to disengage his feet from the stirrups was dragged along the ground, and killed. The thief was called Walker-, changed hats with his victim whether by accident or not does not transpire, and in the same night went to the Bleeding Wolf Inn where he sat drinking with another man called Hooley. When they rose to leave they each took the wrong hat, making the second exchange for Walker that night. But the act marked Hooley out for the scaffold. Mr Collinge's wife was a left handed sewer and had the very morning of the robbery stitched in the lining in his hat. She identified it and on this evidence Hooley was hung. His innocence was attested some years later by Walker, who undeterred by this incident, still continued his life of crime until apprehended for a robbery at Sale, and before his execution admitted that Hooley was innocent and that it had been he who had robbed Mr Collinge.



Bow Green Lane

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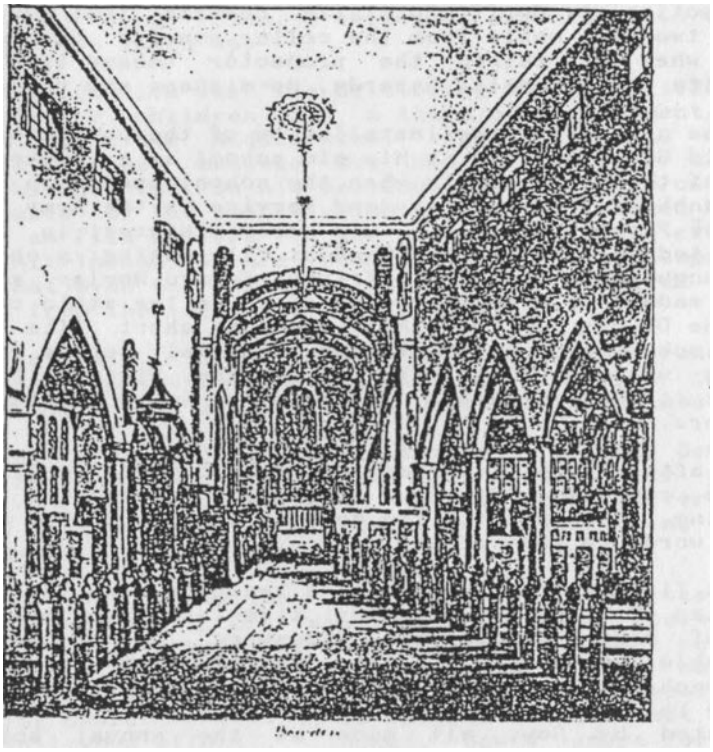

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RONALD GOW PIONEER IN THE USE AND MAKING OF EDUCATIONAL FILMS
by Douglas Rendell

Bowdon, not surprisingly, never had a public cinema within its boundary, but it had a unique private one in the school hall of the Altrincham County High School for Boys. Both the school and one of its teachers, Ronald Gow, made a small contribution to the history of the British cinema.

The school was one of the earliest, if not the first, in the country to use film in education. In the early 1920s Saville Laver, the school's first headmaster, purchased a 35mm cinema projector. Because of the stringent fire precaution regulations applied to the highly inflammable film material of the period (and until the 1950s) the projector was housed in a metal projection box outside the school building. The box was erected on the flat roof of the adjoining masters room, the films being projected through a projection port in the wall on to a roller screen at the other end of the hall.

The first boy projectionist, Geoff Sutcliffe, recalls that power was supplied by a two-core cable from the cellar running outside the building and when it rained the projector became live. Fortunately, despite the potential hazards, no mishaps are recorded. It was soon after the installation of the projector in 1924 that Ronald Gow returned to his old school as a teacher. He had been one of the first pupils when the school opened in 1912, going on to Manchester University and service in the Army towards the end of the First World War. His early interest in the theatre may have led him to try his hand at film making; a cheap 35mm camera was acquired and with his friend Edward Horley some home movies were made, film shows being given in the attic of Horley's home on the Downs. In 1917 they made a short film record of the Altrincham and District War Hospital Supply Depot at Denzell which was shown at the Altrincham Picture Theatre to give publicity to the depot where there was a shortage of volunteer workers.

Soon after his arrival back at school Gow recalls Laver saying, quite casually "By the way Gow, I've bought a cinematograph machine. See what you can do with it. It may be a coming thing" or words to that effect.

Gow's first attempt at making a teaching film was a record of the opening of a sundew plant by time-lapse photography "smoking a lot of cigarettes between exposures", but finding a shortage of suitable educational films, particularly in historical and geographical subjects, he turned to more ambitious projects. There followed a series of films from 1926 to 1930 produced and directed by Gow, all made at the annual school camps with additional scenes filmed locally, some in Dunham Park. The first two established Gow as a pioneer in the use and making of educational films.

The first, as an experiment, was "The People of the Axe" a one- reel film illustrative of the life of a cave boy in the Neolithic period. This was followed in 1927 by "The People of the Lake" which showed the life of lake dwellers in the Bronze Age. These films were successful, being included in an educational film library and shown in Geneva where Gow gave a lecture on the use of film in education. Later, they were shown, with other films, in schools throughout the country as part of an enquiry conducted by the Historical Association on the use of films in education. The published report included "A Note on the Production of Cinema Films at the Altrincham County High School".

The experience gained in making these films led to an ambitious three-reel Scout propaganda film in 1928 "The Man Who Changed His Mind" made with the support of Scout headquarters. The film included sequences of the Chief Scout, Lord Baden Powell and the Hale & Bowdon Fire Brigade who were called upon to provide a fire engine for the climax to the film. The film was acquired by Universal Pictures who showed it in over 250 cinemas throughout the country, a gala opening being given to 1,000 scouts at the Regal Cinema, London. Later, Gow received an 80 word telegram from Universal Pictures asking for a series on the lines of the American "Our Gang" films, a series of comedies with child actors an offer not taken up.

The next production was "The Glittering Sword" in 1929, described as a film for children with a theme of disarmament, the action taking place in the Middle Ages. Again the film was released commercially, but because Gow had been unhappy about the re- editing by Universal on his previous film, in this case the film was released by the school which had to be licenced by the Board of Trade as Film Renters for the purpose. A "premiere" was given at the Altrincham Picture Theatre at which a contemporary report states that even the censor's certificate received a round of applause from the large and lively audience.

Gow's final film, "The River Dart" was quite different in concept from his previous ventures. It set out to trace the course of the River Dart from its source on Dartmoor to Dartmouth. The making of the films was a combined effort, Gow having the knack of arousing enthusiasm in the boys, their parents, his colleagues and their wives. It was regarded very much as an activity for the boys, the production itself being regarded as educational.

The scale of production, for amateur films, was remarkable. Large sets were built on various camp sites including a lake village for "The People of the Lake" and a street scene 50 yards long for "The Glittering Sword", while there were many props and costumes to be made. The Daily Express reported on "The Glittering Sword" "..., it is hard to realise that the film was not a Hollywood effort". Indeed, Gow's camera for the film, a Pathé studio model, had been a popular camera in the early days of Hollywood. It was unusual for amateur films to be "shot" on 35mm after the introduction of 16mm "sub-standard" film in 1925, and more unusual for them to be released commercially.

It was the theatre that had been Gow's main interest during this period and it tempted him away from teaching in 1933. He had already written a number of plays, two having achieved West End production, when he received national acclaim for his adaptation of Walter Greenwood's novel "Love on the Dole".

The great success of this play changed Gow's life as it made a name for both him and for Wendy Hiller, the aspiring young actress who played his heroine and whom he married in 1937. He remained a playwright although he spent some time working for the BBC and Pinewood film studios and enjoyed a long correspondence with George Bernard Shaw.

Editorial Note
Ronald Gow died earlier this year at the age of 95 and a plaque is to be placed on the building in Altrincham where he spent part of his childhood and which is now Barclays Bank.



BOWDON IN THE 16th AND 17th CENTURIES
THE BOOTHS AND THE TIPPINGS LANDED GENTRY AND YEOMEN RETAINERS
by Peter Kemp

Part 2

The papers in the legal dispute over Maud Tipping's will run to 36 pages of lawyers' Latin and hurried verbatim recording by clerks, and include depositions from 13 witnesses examined by the Consistory Court of Chester on 29 July and 14 August 1613, concerning the validity of her two last wills The depositions may well have been taken at a sitting of the Court officials convened for the purpose at Bowdon Church as all the witnesses were local to the parish, but no evidence has yet been found to verify this. Maud's first disputed will was the one drawn up on 20. February 1613, which not only made her three surviving sons beneficiaries, but also her daughter Alice, the wife of William Rowcroft, supposedly a lawyer, who drew it up, and her second was the one made on 7 March 1613, drawn up by the curate George Vawdrey, which cut Alice out following rumours that had been spread that she had died and was buried at Wilmslow. Maud Tipping was well-known for her habit of making wills and when William Rowcroft heard the rumours about his wife's alleged death, his suspicions were aroused and he decided to contest the fraudulent will when it came to probate after Maud's death.

It seems certain that at that time there was some ill-feeling towards William Rowcroft by the Tipping brothers, and in particular by Robert Tipping. Maybe Robert resented his marriage to his sister Alice, and the fact that William was a trusted retainer of the Booths and was seen as a rival to Robert's hopes and ambitions in that direction. Maybe Robert, like his mother, was very keen to ensure that the Tipping's hard-earned wealth did not leave the immediate family. We do not know. But the case against the Tipping brothers was that first John Tipping had tried to persuade his mother to alter her will to cut Alice out so that he would receive a larger share", second that Robert Tipping had initiated a rumour that his sister Alice had died after returning home sick to Wilmslow and had been buried there; and finally that, as a consequence, Robert had convinced his mother that Alice had died and caused her to make a fresh will on 7 March 1613 leaving everything to the three sons only, with them as executors.

The evidence shows that Alice Rowcroft had looked after her infirm and aged mother at Dunham Massey until, being so ill herself that she could no longer do so, she returned home lying in a cart to Wilmslow, to rejoin her husband William where he was in charge of Sir George Booth's dairy on his estates at Bollen and Norcliffe. Far from being dead she was very much alive and made a full recovery. Indeed, she lived on until 1658 as recorded in the Bowdon registers, when she herself must have been in her 70s. As did her husband also, who, as a trusted negotiator and (supposedly) a lawyer, had been instrumental in the Booth's purchase of Warrington in 1628 as Steward of William Booth, and became Steward to William's father Sir George Booth later on his burial entry in the Bowdon registers describes him as "yeoman of Carrington and once Stuard to Sr. George Booth".

The 75 year old George Vawdrey was sent for on 7 March 1613 after Robert Tipping had persuaded his old mother that she needed to draw up a new will now that Alice was dead, and the deposition shows that she said to him that her new will would not differ very much from previous wills he had drawn up, and that her sons Robert and John would instruct him about the wording. Evidence was taken about the old lady's state of mind and memory, whether the will was read out to her, and whether it was drawn up in her presence. It transpired that the suspect will was written in another room and was brought to her for sealing and signing in the presence of Robert and John Tipping, as well as George Moores, Robert Massie and William Cotterell, all cronies of the Tipping brothers. A significant piece of evidence was given by William Artenstall who said that Moores had said to him that "Roecroft was the craftiest fellow that served his master meaninge Sir George Bouthe and yett for all his Crafte they had caught him a tricke. ..."

It is difficult to know for certain whether Alice did receive her share eventually, but the family settled down in time since Robert Tipping, the villain of the piece, made a bequest to his sister Alice and her daughters in his will when he died on 1 December 1622, and furthermore, made William Rowcroft one of his executors, One wonders why Robert Tipping should have resorted to the action he took over his mother's will when he was already a gentleman of substance, owning lands at Irlam, Carrington and Mobberley, and living at Carrington Hall, having taken over occupancy when the last Carrington moved out. Perhaps he really did see William Rowcroft as a threat to his own dominance in the Carrington area and any relationship he had with the Booths.

Sir George Booth had married Jane Carrington the orphaned daughter of John Carrington and heiress to the Carrington estates, when he was 17 and she was 15 years of age. When she died without issue, Sir George took possession of all the lands of Carrington by a lawsuit (he already owned the whole of the manor of Partington), and may well have put the Tippings in to run the estates for him. At his death, Robert Tipping of Carrington Hall was one of the richest men in the area, leaving in his will and inventory of 1622, besides land in Carrington, Flixton, Irlam and Mobberley, goods, chattels and debts owing to him of over £500. He would seem to have acted as principal banker or moneylender for the whole of Carrington and its surrounding townships where 56 people owed him sums of money ranging from 12d. to £68. The ready money float used in those transactions amounted at his death to £52. 10s. 6d. in gold and silver. The inventory shows none of the items many wealthy men accrued, such as books, pictures, musical instruments, etc., but it does show a very productive farming operation.

This is where Robert Tipping's strength lay, and it would seem that as William Rowcroft became more and more involved with official duties for the Booths and less of a rival, Robert patched up their differences and was content to continue with his successful sphere of influence and power in the Carrington area. The inventory of his farming activities list, for example, 68 cheeses, 22 gallons of butter and 2 gallons of honey, as well as considerable quantities of hemp, flax, wool, cloth, corn, barley, wheat, rye and malt. There were herds of cows, bulls and calves, 6 draught horses and 3 colts, and a family of 10 pigs at Carrington with others at Irlam.

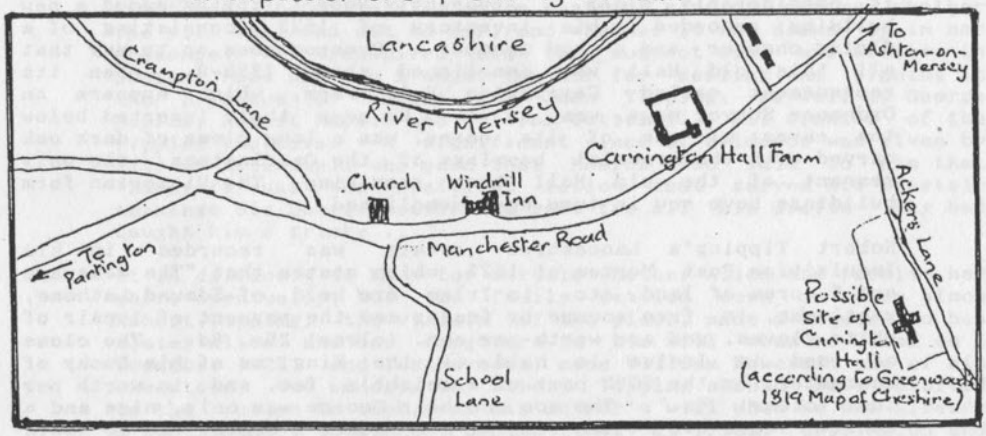
The old Hall at Carrington , where Robert Tipping lived and died, was said by Ormerod to be an Elizabethan structure with part of it considerably older. Apparently Robert Tipping added a new building, recorded in his inventory of 1623, consisting of a dining chamber and a bed chamber. Ormerod goes on to say that all this old Hall was demolished about 1858-9, when its replacement called Carrington Hall Farm, which appears on Ordnance Survey maps, was built. He says that, inserted below the eaves of one of its barns, was a long piece of dark oak carved with the armorial bearings of the Carringtons, the only remnant of the old Hall then remaining. The Victorian farm buildings have now in turn been demolished.

Robert Tipping's Lancashire estate was recorded in his Inquisition Post Mortem of 1623, which states that "The messuage and 5 acres of land, etc. in Irlam are held of Edmund Lathome, gentleman, in free socage by fealty and the payment of 1 pair of white gloves, and are worth per ann, (clear) 26s. 8d. The close of land in Irelam is held of the King, as of his Duchy of Lancaster, by the 50th part of a knight's fee, and is worth per ann. (clear) 4s.". The son and heir George was only nine and a quarter years old at the time of his father's death, so he would have been made a ward of the Crown, and the close of land in Irlam would have reverted to the Crown until he came of age, when he would have had to pay a tax called a relief in order to take possession of his inheritance. It is interesting that this Edmund Lathome owed Robert Tipping £3 as one of the debtors listed in the inventory.

Note:
(1) These valuations could be far below their actual value,
(2) The old method of holding land by Knight's Fee (or fief), being the area of land which could support a knight and his family for one year (with much variation according to quality of land), was abolished in 1660 after gradually falling into disuse. Mildred Campbell "The English Yeoman".

(To be continued)

Sketch Map of Carrington showing location of Carrington Hall Farm, 1936, and possible site of Carrington Hall.





CARRINGTON

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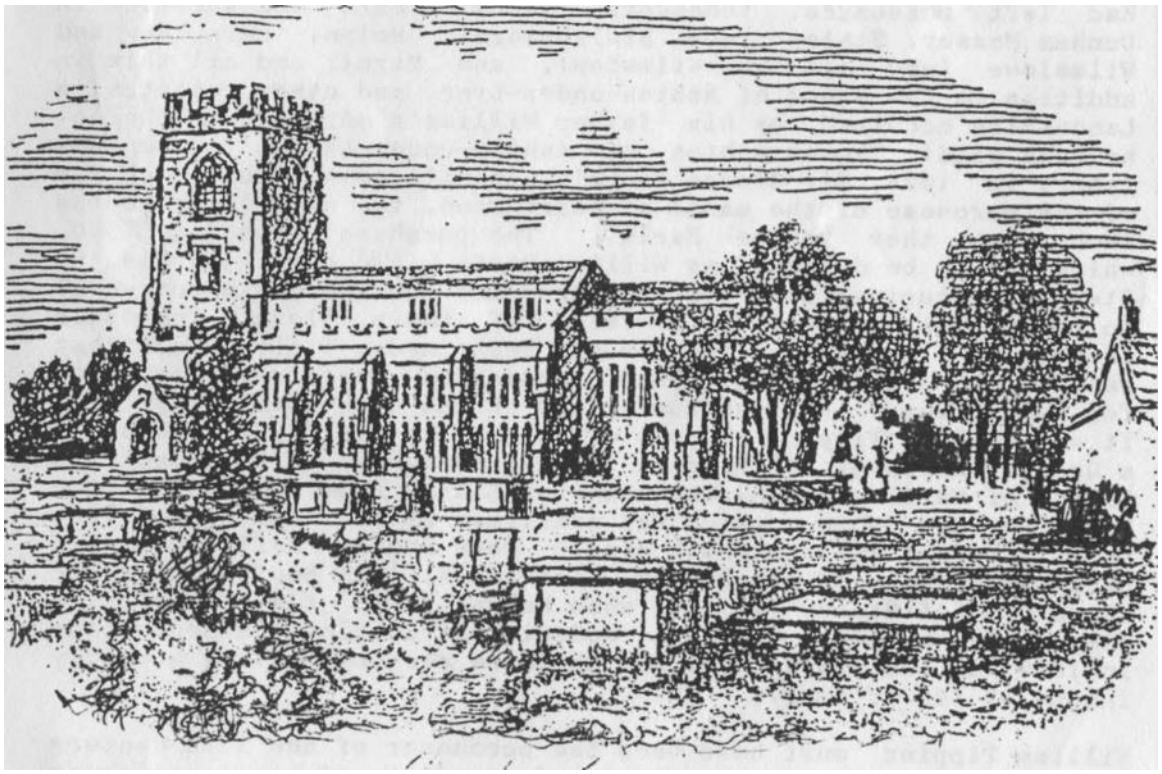

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BOWDON IN THE 16TH AND 17TH CENTURIES
THE BOOTHS AND THE TIPPINGS - LANDED GENTRY AND YEOMAN RETAINERS
by Peter Kemp

Part 3

The high point in the fortunes and status in local society for the Tipping family occurred around the middle of the 1600s when the presumed grandsons of old Henry and Maud both held office under the Booths. William, later called The Elder, was a yeoman and Bailiff to Lord Delamer of Dunham Massey when he died in 1671, and Robert, gentleman of Dunham Massey, and later of Bowdon Hall, was Steward to the same Lord Delamer when he died in 1663. Both would seem to have been born around the year 1600, but unfortunately the Bowdon Registers and Bishop's Transcripts have not survived to record their baptisms.

William Tipping married Emma Yannes (a present-day spelling is Annis) of Staley (now Stalybridge) in 1626 according to the Chester Marriage Licences. It is clear that, even as a young man, William was well-regarded by the Booths and must have acted in some capacity for them over on their Staley estate, and that it was where he met Emma. Back in 1531 when George Booth, the 5th owner of Dunham, had died, besides his manor at Dunham, he had left messuages, tenements, lands, rents and services in Dunham Massey, Staley (now Staleybridge) , Bolyn, Deyn Row and Wilmslowe (now all in Wilmslow), and Styal; and all this in addition to the manor of Ashton-under-Lyne and other estates in Lancashire acquired by his father William's marriage to the co-heiress of Sir Thomas Ashton of Ashton-under-Lyne. A century later, in 1628, Sir George Booth's son William was put in charge of the purchase of the manor of Warrington, the name later Booths took when they became Earls. The purchase price was £7300, which was to be defrayed as William Booth laid down, by his two Stewards ensuring that all the tenantry contributed a sum equal to three year's rent as a sign of their 'love' for their landlord! Such a gift having been made, William said that neither he nor his father would require any more rent or gifts for two lives. William Booth died on the 26th April, 1636, and it was William Tipping who was involved with Sir George Booth and a George Birch of Altrincham in a conveyance of the manor and barony of Warrington and the manor of Staley from the son William Booth to Sir George which was confirmed by an indenture of 1636 shortly before William Booth died. Both Staley Hall and Bollin Hall were seats of the Booths. Indeed, William Booth's place of abode was "of Staley" in 1631 when he was fined £15 for refusing compulsory knighthood on the occasion of Charles I's Coronation in 1626 as one on a list of Cheshire persons having a yearly income of £40 or over.

William Tipping must have been the purchaser of the 17th century Bible still in the possession of a descendant of his son Robert Tipping of Yarwood, through the Pownalls and Carters of Rostherne, since it was printed in 1636 by Robert Barker of London and records baptisms of the children of William and those of his Rostherne descendants. It also contains a note of the Bowdon land-holdings of his son Isaac Tipping dated 27th July, 1657, made apparently when the boy was only 15 years of age. (This has been dealt with in more detail in my article in the "Bowdon Sheaf" No.18 of October, 1991, and here I must correct the error in stating that Isaac was the youngest son of a William Tipping of Rostherne).

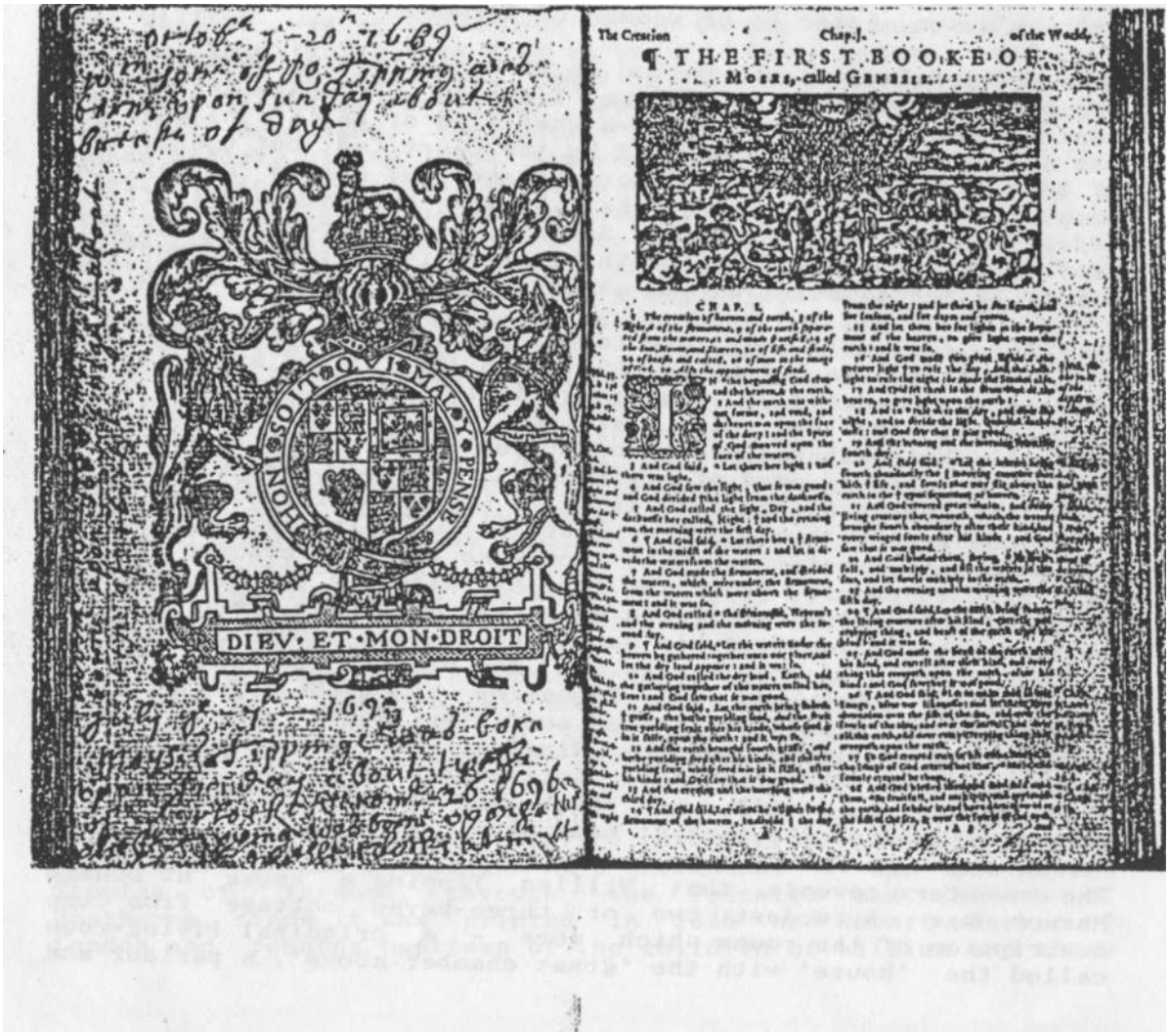
In 1655, according to a lease in the Stamford Papers at the John Rylands Library, George Booth, later Lord Delamer, assigned the Salt House formerly belonging to the Bowdons, to the two brothers William, yeoman of Dunham Massey, and Robert, gentleman of Dunham Massey - "Assignment made by my Mr. to mee Robt. Typping and William of Bowdons Salte house to ye use of my Mr.". The use of the term "my Mr." (my master) indicates that Robert at that date was already employed as a retainer in some capacity by the Booths shortly before he actually became the Steward. On the 17th July an attorney took possession of the property and delivered it to William Tipping. The witnesses to the document were, William Bowdon of Dunham Woodhouses (where the salt-house was situated), Hugh Worrelle, and the 20 y ear-old Robert Tipping, junior,

William's son, later to be yeoman of Yarwood. When William Tipping was buried on 23 March 1670/1, Bowdon Parish Register records him as "Willm. Tippinge of Dunham Bayliffe to Lord Delamere". It is not known what kind of bailiff he was. He was not the bailiff appointed by the Court Leet but the Bailiff of the Lord of the Manor, Lord Delamer of Dunham Massey. As such, it seems most likely that he was the estate Bailiff, an office immediately below the Steward, and responsible for part of the management of the Booth estates. His wife Emma survived him by 14 years, being buried at Bowdon on 6 January, 1684/5.

He left a full will and inventory, his will having been made three days before burial on 20 March 1670/1 and his inventory appraised and drawn up four days afterwards on 27 March 1671. His eldest son and heir, William Tipping of Benshall (now Benchill, Wythenshawe) had been set up earlier on marriage in June 1654 with a deed of gift and so only received a legacy of five shillings. He was just 40 while Robert of Yarwood and Isaac of Acton Grange, his younger brothers, were in their early 30s, and all clearly established as yeomen so the main concern of the will was to ensure provision for his wife and the two youngest surviving children, George and Mary, who must have been in their teens. After payment of his debts and funeral expenses, one half of his estate went to his wife and the other half went for "ye maintenance Livelyhood and Education of my Said Two Children George and Marie with goods and sufficient meats drinke Cloaths Linnen and Woollen washinge Ringinge and starchinge". The inventory shows that the 1654 settlement upon the eldest son William had been £60, and that the other two elder sons had received loans of £10 each at some time.

The inventory reveals that William Tipping's house at Dunham Massey was a modest two or three-bayed cottage from the description of the rooms which were - a principal living-room, a kitchen, a 'little chamber next to the backdoor', a ' chamber nearer the house', and a 'garnery over the shippon'. Including debts owing to him of £97. 16. 6d, his estate was valued at £360. 19. 2d, reflecting a good standard of living and a comfortable life-style. The listed farm animals, produce and furnishings give a picture of a prosperous hard-working establishment. Wool was spun on "Two great spineing wheeles and one sittinge wheele" and the yarn was "at makinge into cloaths". Besides the family Bible which survives to this day and which was valued at five shillings, there were four large pictures in frames, a brass clock, a looking-glass, a brass pan regarded as an heirloom and £47. 5s. 0d in silver plate and ready money. He asked in his will to be buried "after a Christian manner in my Ancestors burying place at ye Parish Church of Bowdon" but the site in the churchyard, probably being unmarked, is now unknown.

(To be continued)



THE ADSHEAD FAMILY AND BOWDON
by Prue Wallis Myers and Myra Kendrick

The sisters, Alice and Elizabeth Adshead became a feature of Bowdon life especially in connection with the Red Cross Association with which both had links and with the Parish church of St Mary the Virgin at which both were devoted and assiduous workers. Alice's lifespan covered most of the twentieth century and for nearly sixty years of it she was resident in Bowdon.

Their maternal grandparents, who came from Timperley, were married at St Mary's, Bowdon, in 1862, the first wedding to be conducted in the rebuilt church which at that date included Timperley within its enormous parish bounds. A photograph of the wedding party is still to be seen in the vestry.

Their father, Allen Adshead, came from Hazel Grove. He ran away from home as a lad because of his distaste for the family butchering business in which he had been put to work. So he came to Hale to work as a gardener's boy. But horses were his love, and one of his employers suggested that he should satisfy this devotion by becoming a cab driver. This he did, and was based at Altrincham railway station.

So it was that he became known to the Dunkerley family, then living at Graythwaite Lodge in Barrow Lane. Hale Barns. Allen Adshead pleased Mrs Dunkerley so much by his careful driving when she was expecting a baby that she wanted no other driver. In time, her husband, Mr Frank B Dunkerley, the architect who designed the extension to Altrincham General Hospital, had his own coach and asked Mr Adshead to be his coachman. This was in the early years of the twentieth century. Eventually the coach was superseded by a car with Allen Adshead as chauffeur.

Alice and Elizabeth's mother, Eliza Roberts, belonged to a large farming family in Timperley. She was the seventh child in a family of ten. Eliza was twenty-five years old when in 1904, she married Allen Adshead (a year older) at Timperley Parish Church. The marriage certificate stated that her father was Oswald Roberts, a farmer, and Allen's, John Adshead, a labourer.

In the early years of their marriage the couple lived in Hermitage Road, Hale, "on the Hermitage" as Alice put it. Alice was born on 1st September 1906. When Elizabeth was born on 29th June 1911 the family were living in the Dunkerley's coachman's cottage at Hale Barns.

Before her marriage Eliza Roberts had worked as nursemaid to the Gatley family of Oak Road, Hale, in which there were seven children. Eliza became a family favourite and the bond continued right up to her daughter Alice's death in 1992. The fourth Gatley child became Alice's god mother and Alice bore her name. Eliza was happy when surrounded by children and after her marriage became much loved by the Dunkerley children at Graythwaite Lodge, who, when sent to play out-of-doors in cold weather, used to make their way to the coachman's cottage where "Mrs Addie" used to give them hot cocoa to drink.

About 1923 Frank Dunkerley moved his family to a house he had designed at the bottom of Grange Road, Bowdon. This he named The Green Bend. Here the chauffeur, as Allen had now become, was provided with a delightful lodge in the grounds.

Alice and Elizabeth attended the church school at Hale Barns. Alice's bent was practical and she was a good cook and needlewoman; while Elizabeth learnt quickly and by the time she was twelve years old the school mistress declared that she had taught Elizabeth all that she herself knew. So Elizabeth progressed to Bradbury Central School, Hale, while Alice had left school at fourteen and become apprenticed to a dressmaker in Delahays Road at a wage, initially, of two shillings and sixpence a week. She became an "improver" and had to stitch meticulously at the dress seams. She remembered when zip fasteners were introduced in the nineteen thirties and learning how to insert them.

Eventually when her mother became ill, Alice had to take charge of house and family and do her dressmaking at home. This was after a period of being employed by a number of local families, specially in demand for making children's clothes. She remembered to the end of her life putting a little boy to stand on a table while she measured him for his new clothes. Years later that boy became Bishop Arnold of Warwick, recently retired. Other families she sewed for included the Hulls in Hale Barns, the Wests in Portland Road, Bowdon, and the Bells in Albert Road, then Bowdon but now included in Altrincham.

Elizabeth's career developed along different lines. On leaving school she learnt shorthand and type-writing and her first post was with the Broadheath firm of Luke and Spencer. This she held for five years, but she was already interested in nursing, one of her maternal aunts being a nurse and in 1933, on the recommendation of Mr Dunkerley who was chairman of the hospital governing body, she was appointed shorthand typist at Altrincham General Hospital. She proved her worth and in time became hospital almoner. After the National Health Service was established in 1948 the post of almoner was waived and Elizabeth was promoted deputy to the hospital secretary, Mr Geoffrey Pearson, who was in charge of six local hospitals. This post she held until her retirement in 1971.

At the hospital Elizabeth was commonly known as "Addie", though at home she was Bessie or Bess.

Allen Adshead lived until 1951, still in the Dunkerleys' service. When his children were young he saw active service in the 1914-18 war and these were hard years for his wife and young children. The back and heart troubles suffered by Eliza in later life were probably brought on by her wartime spells of potato-lifting on one of the Roberts family farms. She died in October 1955.

Soon afterwards the two sisters moved to a house in Vicarage Lane, Bowdon. Alice's sphere was the cooking and cleaning and Elizabeth's mainly the garden, growing vegetables as well as flowers. Soon they were also sharing the running of St Luke's Sunday School nearby.

For a time after her mother's death, Alice felt lost without an ailing parent to care for, but encouraged by Elizabeth she accepted an invitation to help at a newly founded Red Cross club for .the elderly in Bowdon Vale. She started in the kitchen, cleaning it and the crockery to make it fit for use. In time she became the club secretary, working closely with the chairman, Mrs Dorothy Mitchell. This work continued until the summer of 1992 when Alice became too ill for the weekly round of baking, making sandwiches, wrapping up gifts and coping with all the tasks entailed. In September of that year, about a month before her death, the Red Cross Society awarded her a long service medal and honorary life membership.

Elizabeth joined the Red Cross Society in 1935 and was an active V.A.D. The Society grew to be her main sphere of activity outside her work. She became leader of her detachment and her energy and efficiency bore fruit when the team she led won the Stanley Shield in competition with teams from all over the country. In 1939 she was appointed first Assistant and then Commandant for the Altrincham Division which came to be based on Lark Hill in Heald Road, Bowdon. This entailed organising the V.A.D. detachment (training in First Aid and Home Nursing) and the Division's administrative work. Later she progressed through the offices of divisional secretary, director and eventually president. When county and local government areas were revised in 1974, the Altrincham Red Cross division was removed from the county of Cheshire and merged with the Greater Manchester organisation, Elizabeth's role being designated co-ordinator for the newly formed Trafford area.

She was an extremely active member of the committee of Edenhurst Residential Home for the Elderly in Thorley Lane, Timperley, and was instrumental in the setting up of the Heightside Housing Project which developed flats and bungalows behind Edenhurst and in association with it.

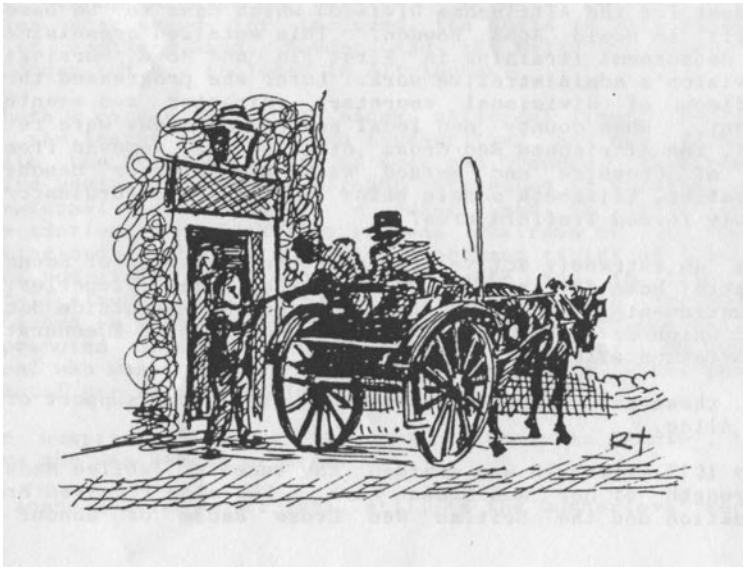
In all these activities Elizabeth had the full support of her sister Alice.

In July 1977 Elizabeth was awarded the Queen's Jubilee Medal on the strength of her Red Cross work. She also received Branch Commendation and the British Red Cross Badge of Honour "for devoted service". Finally, in the 1983 Birthday Honours List she was awarded the M.B.E.

About this time the Adshead sisters moved house again, to a flat at Richmond Court not far from the Parish church of St Mary the Virgin in Bowdon to which both were devoted and into which they poured their characteristically energetic service. Elizabeth became secretary of the Parochial Church Council and later one of the four churchwardens and Alice's practical skills were exercised in the St Mary's Guild, in embroidered kneelers and altar frontals (work shared by Elizabeth) and in baking superb bread and cakes for fund-raising activities. Her fruit cakes graced many a twenty-first birthday, wedding and Christmas celebration.

The younger sister died first, in 1986 at the age of seventy- five. Alice lived on in the flat, deeply missing the sister she had cared for and supported from childhood to the end of her life. But she had many friends and her excellent memory enabled her to keep up correspondence with those who had left the district. She was still involved with church and the Bowdon Vale Red Cross club while battling with increasing ill-health, almost up to her death at eighty-six years old in October 1992.

The Adshead family, then, as Bowdon knew it, represents over a century of local history, illustrating a revolution in social life from the era of valued and loved family retainers to the age of equal opportunity and the so-called classless society.



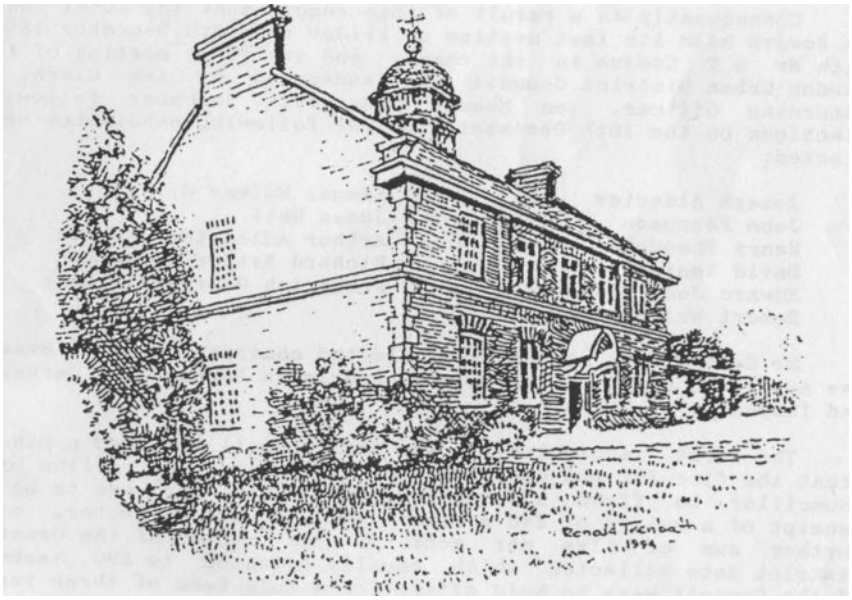
The Bowdon Sheaf

A BOWDON HISTORY SOCIETY PUBLICATION

No. 24 October 1994 50p

Contents:

Bowdon Urban District Council
Care of the Underprivileged in the Late 19th Century
Windyridge Church Brow Bowdon, by Maurice Ridgway



Bowdon Hall as it probably appeared in the 18th Century

ISSN-
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Bowdon Urban District Council

The Local Government Act of 1894 required that any place with a population in excess of 300 at the time of the previous census (1891) should form a Parish Council. This requirement could lead to official embarrassment especially in areas adjacent to the Manchester Ship Canal where men working on its construction, and living in temporary accommodation near to it, were registered as local residents. At Netherpool a fairly large population was registered at the census but it had dispersed by 1894 leaving only one householder to form a Council.

This situation did not occur in Bowdon which was already a Local Board and an Urban Sanitary Authority, with powers delegated from the Cheshire County Council, but when the Local Government Act became law on the 5th March 1894, it was required that as from the appointed day, Urban Sanitary Authorities should be called Urban District Councils and their districts known as Urban Districts and the chairmen of such districts, by virtue of their office, were to become Justices of the Peace in the counties in which their districts were situated.

Consequently as a result of this requirement the Local Board in Bowdon held its last meeting on Friday the 28th December 1894, with Mr H T Gaddum in the chair, and the first meeting of the Bowdon Urban District Council was summonsed by the Clerk, as Returning Officer, on Mondaythe 31st December following elections on the 15th December when the following candidates were elected:

Joseph Alderle	Samual Walkey Gillett
John Ferguson	James Hall
Henry Theodore Gaddum	Arthur Adlington Howarth
David Senior	Richard Arthur Warburton
Edward John Sidebottom	Frederick George Whittall
Robert Wright Trenbath	

Mr Gaddum was unanimously elected chairman and H W Evason was appointed Clerk of the Council and James Pownall the Surveyor and Inspector of Nuisances.

The first resolution of the new council included a clause "that the fine for non-acceptance or resignation of office by a Councillor be fixed at One Guinea". The Clerk was to be in receipt of a salary of £40 a year and, as the Collector, of a further sum of five per cent of the amount of the General District Rate collected, which usually amounted to £90, members of the Council were to hold office for a full term of three years and the whole of the members had to retire tri-ennially.

The Council were responsible for sewerage and sewage Disposal highways and street 1ighting; and responsibility for local roads, public seats, allotments and playing fields were later included in its responsibilities; and in 1925 Bowdon joined with Hale to provide a joint fire brigade and ambulance service with a station in Cecil Road, Hale.

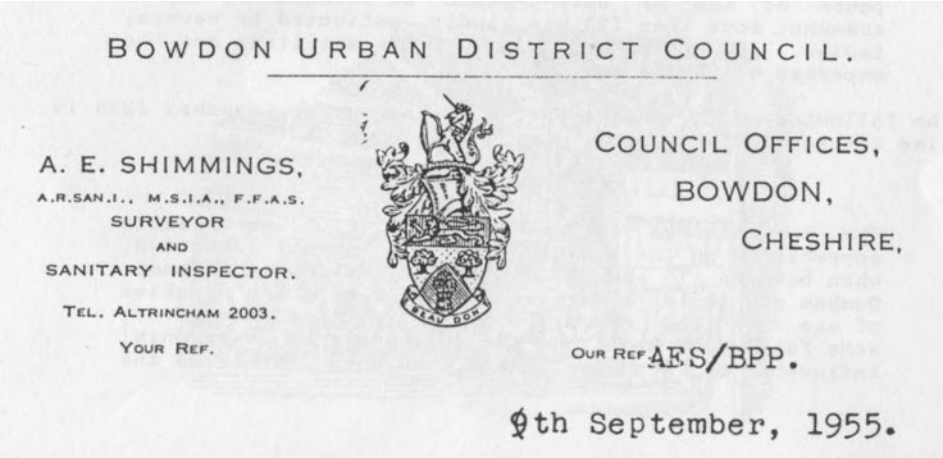
The Councillors were respected local residents, interested in the welfare of the community having served other local interests such as the church, chapels or charities. Obituaries to these men, when they died, give some idea of the sort of people they were. For many years during its existence members of Bowdon Urban District Council sat independently of party politics although they were often leading figures in either of the two parties in private life.

H T Gaddum, a keen supporter of the Liberal Party, married in Aberfoyle in 1899 and set up house in Hale but later moved to the Priory in Bowdon where he lived with his wife, family and several servants. He was a local benefactor and a very benign magistrate who often paid the fines he had imposed if he thought the accused too poor to pay them. A A Howarth not only supported the Liberal Party but later held ministerial office for which he received a baronetcy. He was not well known locally as being a benign magistrate.

The two families were united when Dorothy Gaddum and Geoffrey Howarth (later Sir Geoffrey) were married by the Bishop of Chester, at Bowdon Parish Church, in 1926.

R W Trenbath, in contrast, was a keen supporter of the Conservative Party being Honorary Secretary of the Conservative Council of Exchange Ward in Manchester and also member of the Cheshire Branch. He was president of Bowdon Bowling Club, Trustee for the building of St. Johns Church and first warden to be appointed and served on the Committee of Newtown Night School in Altrincham. His obituary noted that he had "keen interest in the welfare of Bowdon" which he defended with "strenuous and faithful advocacy".

Early boundary changes led to the removal of at least one ward into a neighbouring district council when, during the course of ten years, it was removed from Bowdon, to Dunham, then to Bucklow, and finally to Altrincham, to the consternation of rate payers as the latter charged higher rates than Bowdon.



BOWDON URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL.

A. E. SHIMMINGS,
A.R.SAN.I., M.S.I.A., F.F.A.S.
SURVEYOR
AND
SANITARY INSPECTOR.
TEL. ALTRINCHAM 2003.
YOUR REF.

COUNCIL OFFICES,
BOWDON,
CHESHIRE,

OUR REF AES/BPP.

9th September, 1955.

CARE OF THE UNDERPRIVILEGED IN THE LATE 19th CENTURY

Studies of life in 19th Century Bowdon have all too often been focused on the privileged, incoming, nouveaux riches who dominated local services, rather than on the indigenous residents whose lives must have compared very unfavourably with their wealthy neighbours.

The Church organized functions to brighten the lives of these unfortunate parishioners as the following reports, from the Bowdon Parish Magazine for December 1894, illustrate.

DINNER FOR THE AGED

> As New Year's Eve fell on Sunday, we had to anticipate the close of '93 by twenty-four hours, and have the annual dinner on Saturday. By half-past two the tables were well-filled, and over 60 guests sat down to enjoy one of Mrs Long's deservedly renowned repasts. Every seat was occupied, and every square inch of standing room was covered by waitresses, so that the scene was an animated one. After the discussion of roast beef and goose, plum pudding and mince pies, the proceedings took the form of a musical entertainment, interspersed with words of wisdom from the Rev. G Birtwell, the Rev. R K Preston, and the Rev. M W Hervey, with a running commentary by the Ven. Archdeacon Gore, who presided, completing, we believe, the majority of Old People's dinners. The musical part of the programme included part songs by some of Mr Thomas' glee club, songs by Miss Simpson, Miss Birtwell, Miss Maude Broadbent, the Rev. A G Child, Dr. Simpson, and Mr Megson, who delighted their audience with strains both grave and gay, sublime and ridiculous. Before leaving the room, Lady Stamford's bounty gave each guest the opportunity of making the important choice between a pound of tea or half-a-pound of tobacco. A sum of somewhat more than £23 was kindly collected by several ladies, and this has within a few shillings met the expenses of the dinner.

The following notice in the Parish Magazine for January 1896 is also interesting:

OLD FOLKS' DINNER

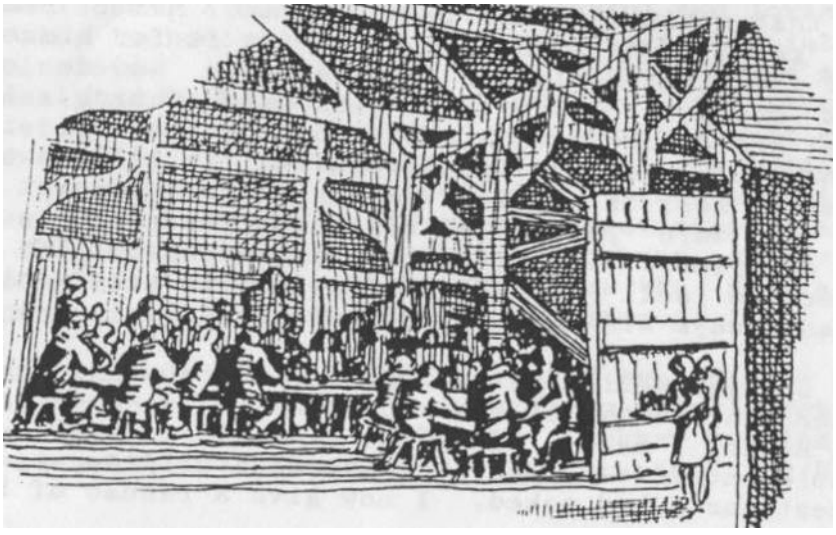
> The conveniences of the enlarged room were highly appreciated on the occasion of this annual gathering, when between 70 and 80 old people sat down to dinner. Dunham and Ashley each sent a contingent. The wrinkles of age that had not all come of mirth and laughter, were for awhile smoothed and softened by the genial influences of good fellowship and good fare; and the grandsire. who proverbially "sits in alabaster" (because, poor fellow, he has a certain stiffness about the knees), forgot his aching joints and became a boy once more.

> Then followed speeches arid music, and witty things were (of course) said and pretty things were sung and played, and the old folks nodded and smiled because they were pleased, and one of them sang - a new song. Then a vote of thanks all round, "God Save the Queen", tea, tobacco, "and so home", according to the well worn formula of friend Pepys.

It would be interesting to know the location of the "enlarged room" referred to. On a more regular basis a Lads' Club was formed which provided instruction on woodcarving, a well patronised gymnasium and a sparsely attended reading room. A Girls' Friendly Society provided cookery lessons, consisting of demonstrations and practical classes, while a Penny Bank encouraged thrift. A Men's Club was organized in Bowdon Vale and many local maiden ladies gave their services as District Visitors.

In December 1896 Mr and Mrs Hampson, of the Gorse, offered two prizes of 15 cwt of coal each, to be completed for in draughts and domino tournaments at the Men's Club, but in the following January the Committee of the Lads' Club had to exert much energy to "take things in hand" and gain "a marked increase in the attendance of the lads, and a decided improvement in their general conduct".

One can recall, many years ago, hearing elderly residents, who were alive at the turn of the century, say that, not. surprisingly, these provisions were considered paternalistic and patronising by the rural population, who were inclined to hold their wealthier neighbours in contempt, giving rise to the oft.- quoted remark by workers and tenants on the Stamford Estate that "Our Lord would n'ere dine with a cotton lord".



Windyridge, Church Brow, Bowdon
by Maurice Ridgway

To many ‘ Windyridge’ is known as Bowdon Vicarage but it has had an interesting story to tell, for there have been five Vicarages in less than 150 years and Windyridge has been the last. This is not wholly true for one of them was a pro-Vicarage and never belonged to the Church.

The ‘ Priory’ in Bowdon Vale was the first but Archdeacon Pollock moved to the large house in Park Road built about the time of the rebuilding of the Church. When I became Vicar of Bowdon the house had been divided in a quite dreadful manner and when Canon Low came back from the forces he was accommodated in what remained of the house - a flat with a study separated from it. We came to Bowdon and accepted the living as long as I did not have the Vicarage. In the six months no house could be found. The problem was solved by having to purchase my own house! No. 6 Portland Road. The Church Commission refused to acknowledge it "as it was stuccoed" - though it was an admirable house and we had many happy years there. However the Diocesan Authorities kept pestering me "when are you going to supply a Vicarage ? When I find a house suitable" was my reply.

Eventually when boarding school fees had to be met they coincided with "The Beeches" in Heald Road coming on the market which had been owned by the Hensman family, and the Church Council were very willing to help in the purchase of it had every advantage for the Parish - for we were able to help a number of families who were finding it difficult to find "a roof" - and the house was so designed that a division was possible. Even "Paddy" took up residence in the coachman's room. It kept him out of prison and was a very good watchman. Here we had a wonderful family home for the children - and many will remember the very lovely times we had with parishioners in the oak panelled billiards room.

A few years before I was due to retire we had a letter telling us that "the Authorities" would no longer accept it as a Vicarage when my retirement took place. It came as a shock. But almost at the same time I was told by Mr Noel Dethier that he had heard that a house (lived in by Mr and Mrs T Pearce, since 1939) was going to be sold. He had built it for himself and his wife after the first World War - and as they had no children he had always hoped to leave it to his Parish Church. It was next to the west end of the Church and he had designed it in terms of what he thought a Vicarage would require. In 1939 however he had been forced to sell as he required considerable amount of capital to ensure the safe passage of his invention, (he was one of the inventors of Nylon). The house then passed to Mr Tom Pearce who now agreed to sell it to the Parish, if they wanted it. Mr Dethier had always wished this to happen.

I knew Mr Dethier well - he had moved to a house in the Firs and later after the death of his second wife - to the Convent Lodge in Grange Road. I asked him about the house as it was one of considerable interest - and he gave me a written answer to many of the questions I had asked. I now give a resume of his reply.

Windyridge was built with love to give happiness to everyone and to be a permanent ‘thank-you’ to God Almighty for so many blessings. That it what I feel today as I write this.

In the March of 1918 the German's offensive made the greatest attack of the 1914/18 War in their final effort to break th rough the British lines to reach the Channel Ports. We in the Manchester's and Lancashire Regiments suffered heavy losses during non-stop attack from March 20th to the end of April.

We were accustomed to heavy shelling but in the March/April fighting we faced several gas attacks of phosgene and mustard gas and I was one of the victims but was very fortunate to recover and rejoin my unit before the War ended.

I had several weeks for convalescence and driving one day to our home in Kersal from North Wales I was struck with the beauty and position of Bowdon - and I said to myself, that is where 1 would like to spend the remainder of my life. Within a few weeks my wife and I rented a house ‘Bemerton’ in East Downs Road. The house had a flat roof over a bay window and for a time I slept on that not being used to a comfortable bed in a bedroom. I gradually became civilised and suddenly had an urge to build a home for my wife and myself.

The ideal site was near. Just west close to Bowdon Parish Church, on a high ridge of ground owned by the Church Commissioners. It was not for sale but I obtained a reduced rental by paying a capital sum.

I drew plan after plan of my ideal house to suit that particular site. The main rooms to look over the county towards Chester - the hills of Derbyshire on the east and the rise of the land towards Lymm on the west. Most houses have a back and a front. I am by nature an artist and I could not bear to think of my house on that site having an ugly back. The side facing north with the picturesque thatched (then) cottages must be preserved from any unsightliness so the plans I sketched showed an elegant front entrance, lovely stone mullioned windows of the kitchen and scullery and the same for the windows of the smaller rooms on that side of the house. In other words I made the back look like a front Every view from Windyridge was a picture of beauty and godliness. A monument to a wonderful and loving wife and a house worthy to become a Vicarage (which was his intention from the beginning). The lounge and dining rooms and the interior was designed by Liberty's of London and the fire place of brick and stone was also designed by Liberty's. An elegant and dignified design. The lounge of Liberty's design was perfected by a combination of simplicity, beauty and strength shown by the use of oak on the walls with a great supporting beam of oak across the ceiling. The oak mantelpiece and oak shelf and by the numerous electric candle lighting around the room and the strong metal central fitting of ‘ candle’ lighting.

I must add that it was with a feeling of trepidation when I showed my plans drawn to scale to Mr Brazier a local architect. To my relief he said "this could be built!" I knew nothing about the qualities of brick, stone, slates, timber etc. Mr Brazier did not disappoint me, Windyridge has given pleasure to many people, may it for ever be so". (The oak work was done by Mr Pennington).

This was the house Mr Noel Dethier built. He sold it in 1939 to Mr Tom Pearce whose grandfather taught my father at Rose Hill School, Bowdon between 1892 and 1894, just a century ago
.



WINDY RIDGE

The Bowdon Sheaf

A BOWDON HISTORY SOCIETY PUBLICATION

No. 25 March 1995 50p

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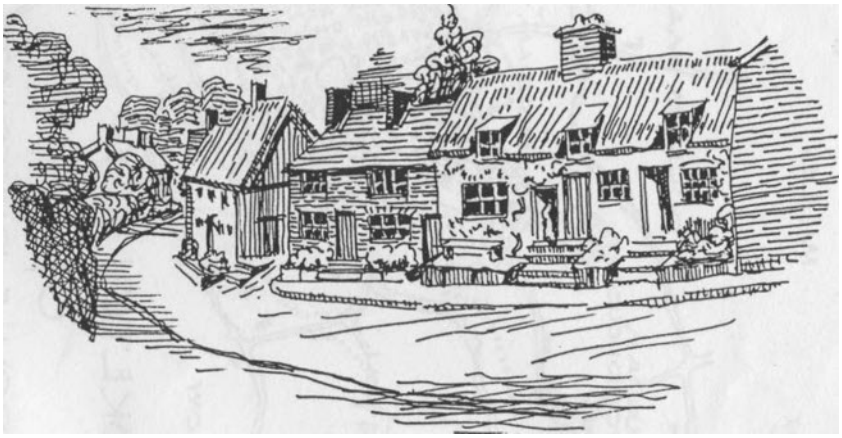
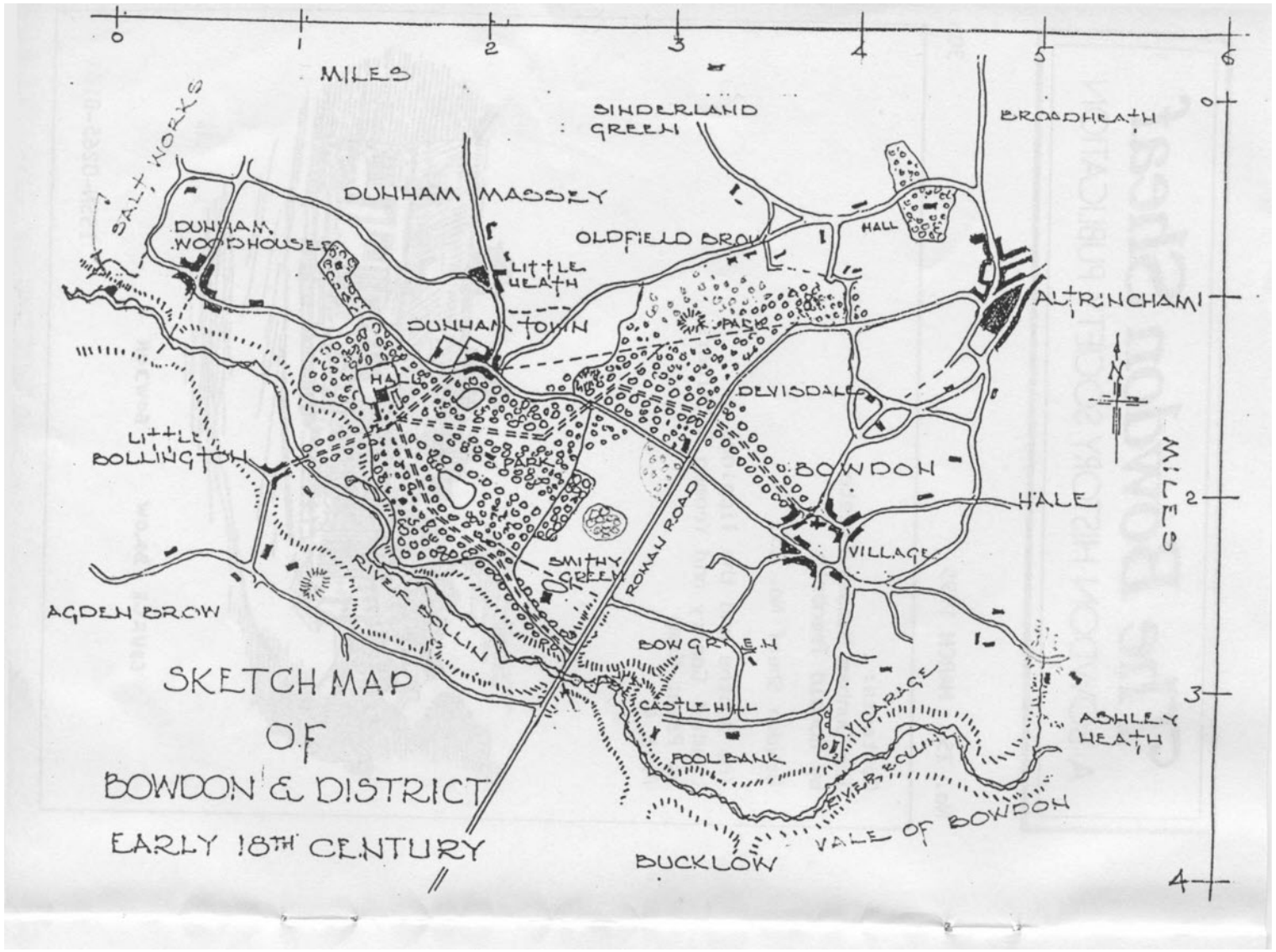
The Dunham Massey Estate by Ronald Trenbath
The Booths and the Tippings: Landed Gentry and Yeomen Retainers Part 4 by Peter Kemp



CHURCH BROW BOWDON

ISSN-0265-816X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MILES
SALT WORKS
SINDERLAND GREEN
BROADHEATH
DUNHAM MASSEY
DUNHAM WOODHOUSES
OLDFIELD BROW
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SMITHY GREEN
RIVER BOLLIN
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SKETCH MAP
OF
BOWDON & DISTRICT
EARLY 18TH CENTURY
CASTLE HILL
VICARAGE
ASHLEY HEATH
POOL BANK
RIVER BOLLIN
VALE OF BOWDON
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THE DUNHAM MASSEY ESTATE
by RONALD TRENBATH

This map, covering twenty five square miles of land in Dunham Massey and Bowdon in the early eighteenth Century, is based upon documents surviving from that time, as well as buildings still existing or known to have existed then. The Booth family, while not the only landowning family in the district, was certainly the most influential one, and it is interesting to note the large area of its parkland in relation to the the rest of the, mainly, agricultural land. The village at Bowdon consisted of a church, Bowdon Hall, a small cluster of cottages and possibly an inn, with the adjacent Devisdale used as common land for grazing and turf.

George Booth, Second Earl of Warrington, regenerated the Dunham Massey Estate, after years of neglect by his father and grandfather, and the date stones on many local farmhouses, as well as date stones on buildings at Dunham Massey Hall, indicate the vast scale of the development undertaken. Tenants on the estate were obliged to plant trees on the land they tenanted in order to replenish the dwindling stock of woodland which had deteriorated in the previous century.

John Edmonds, the Earl's Steward, who lived at Bowdon Hall, managed three tree nurseries at what are now Pitstead Covert, Headsman's (Edmonds) Covert and the garden to Parklands, in Charcoal Road. Edmonds was also responsible for introducing new methods for soil improvement which had dramatic results and were reported upon nationally.

George Booth also undertook a huge tree planting programme in his own parkland, redesigning the deer park, adjacent to the hall, with long avenues, or rides and large water features, based upon ideas introduced from Holland by William III. The whole of the deer park was encircled by a brick wall in the middle of the century. The main entrance to the park was by way of the Ash Walk which was entered off the main Chester Road, near where it crosses over the River Bollin. A driveway was also formed between the hall and Bowdon Church upon which the family ceremoniously rode, on horseback and in carriages on Sundays, which included what is now Green Walk, then a private road lined with trees.

Until the Bridgewater Canal was cut, later in the century, transport was confined to the main roads to Altrincham, Chester and Warrington for the distribution of farm produce to markets and also for salt from the Salt Works at Dunham Woodhouses. Road improvements during the course of the century made travel much more easy and more comfortable but the risk of highway robbery became more prevalent especially when trade improved and travellers, particularly merchants, had to carry large sums of money.

The Vicarage, later renamed the Priory, and the Glebe land were situated to the south east overlooking the river, and not in the village as often occurred, and Dunham Town provided property and accommodation for those connected with the hall and included a large walled garden for growing the more exotic fruit, vegetables and flowers required by the Earl and his family. (to be continued)

Bowdon Sheaf No. 25

This is the twenty fifth issue of Bowdon Sheaf which was first produced in October 1983 as the official publication of Bowdon History Society. It is a journal, published twice a year, in which anyone may write on any subject appertaining to the history of Bowdon, a policy which has resulted in a very wide range of articles being published covering aspects of Bowdon history and the heritage of the parish. The great interest aroused by the publishing of these articles has led to a large following of readers and contributors locally, as well as from other parts of the country and overseas.

While the Society will always reject trivia, it has consistently encouraged contributions which are of interest to the general public, as much as to professional historians, in the hope of engendering a lively interest in the rich local heritages, and it is very heartening to note the rewards of these efforts which are reflected in the sustained membership of the Society and the frequency of requests for further information from as far afield as East Germany, Canada and Australia.

The subjects covered and examined in Bowdon Sheaf have included folk memories, legends and reports on research by members of the Society resulting, in many instances, in the forming of impressions of life in Bowdon at given periods in the past. Research and the recording of information is proceeding at a very satisfactory rate but it is essential that this momentum is maintained and that contributors should continue their efforts for the benefit of future generations.

Erratum

It is noted that the reference to Mr H T Gaddum as living at the Priory when he was Chairman of Bowdon Urban District Council, recorded in the twenty fourth issue of Bowdon Sheaf is incorrect and that it was his son Mr H E Gaddum who lived there. We very much regret this error. An article on the Gaddum family will be featured in a future issue of the Sheaf.

Bowdon in the 16th and 17th centuries
The Booths and the Tippinqs - Landed Gentry and Yeomen Retainers
by Peter Kemp

Part 5

Nothing is known with any certainty about the origin and early life of Robert Tipping the Steward, but if he was the brother of William the Bailiff as is supposed, then he was a Dunham Massey man born around 1600-1610, and also a grandson of old Henry and Maud. Clearly he must have been knowledgeable and experienced enough in land and produce management, and displayed integrity and character of such promise early on for the Booths to take him into their trust and confidence as a retainer of ability to be in charge of their affairs. He was also of such standing in local society and sufficiently wealthy to marry into a family of ancient lineage, the Masseys of Sale.

The first record of him is in 1648 when he was described as "of Dunham Massey, gentleman" as a feoffee holding land for the use of the owner, George Booth. Young George Booth, who was to succeed to Dunham in 1652 and to be created Lord Delamer in 1661, married Elizabeth, daughter of the 1st Earl of Stamford, Henry Grey of Bradgate, Leicestershire in 1647. While in Leicestershire at this time he was assisting his father-in-law with the Parliamentarian cause, and it is very probable that Robert Tipping was one of his gentleman retinue. Robert Tipping was one of the trustees signatory to a deed dated 10 January, 1647/8 putting property (the manor of Ashton-under-Lyne) into trust to provide jointure for Elizabeth Booth following the marriage; and on 30 December 1649, he was also a trustee and signatory to an indenture to provide portions for future daughters of George and Elizabeth Booth, where he was described as "of Bradgate, Leicestershire, gentleman". It is not known whether this means that Robert Tipping was then resident at Bradgate attending to Booth estate matters there, or whether the Greys had given him some property at Bradgate as a recognition of his services.

He was married to Alice Massey of Sale, daughter of James Massie of Sale Old Hall and Mary Leycester, daughter of Sir George Leycester of Toft, and they had one daughter, Elizabeth. From around 1655, Robert appears to have resided continuously in Dunham Massey, for in that year he was a witness with his brother William to a Yannes marriage over at Ashton-under-Lyne, and, as we have already noted, he was party to the lease of the salt house at Dunham Woodhouses.

William Rowcroft, his uncle-in-law and Steward to old Sir George Booth and his successor the future Lord Delamer, died in 1658, and it seems that Robert was then appointed Steward in his place. The post of Steward to the Booths was a position of great power and responsibility as the principal servant and right-hand man who deputised and acted for them not only in leases and rents, land purchases and bargaining, but also as their representative at the Court Leet at Altrincham where, among other things, the Steward selected the Mayor from a short list presented to him by the burgesses. The status in society of a Steward was that of gentleman, and the attainment of both titles was an ambition of several successful yeoman farmers as the peak of their social ladder. It is known that the Booths had up to this time shown their preference for local men, and that, with the size and spread of their estates over at least four counties, they occasionally employed two Stewards, with the second one being a lawyer to deal with the Court Baron where bye-laws were set, and with the legal aspects of their many leases and land titles, indentures and trusts.

We do not know, but there may have been a third kind of Steward at times, whose duties would have been mainly at Dunham Hall and were ceremonial requiring the wearing of a distinguishing livery, as occurred in other large estate houses. Thus it was, in his 50s, that Robert Tipping became George Booth's lieutenant and was to see his master humiliated in the 1659 uprising with the defeat of his men at Winnington Bridge near Northwich, arrested at Newport Pagnell disguised as a woman and imprisoned in the Tower of London, but then on release created Baron Delamer of Dunham Massey in 1661 for his part in the Restoration of Charles II. With these forced absences of his master and the family's habit of spending the latter months of the year at their town house in London, Robert Tipping as Steward exercised a great deal of power and influence over a wide area as the trusted deputy for the Booths.

He was a respected friend of the Puritan Vicar of Bowdon, James Watmough, who, when he died in 1660, left to "Mr. Robert Tippinge" in his will proved in 1661 "the booke in my studie entituled Carpenters Geographie". When in 1661 also, Charles II commanded that everyone should make a "Free and Voluntary Gift" as part of the replenishment of his Treasury, the list of Bowdon donors has Robert contributing the largest amount, 10 shillings.

It is probable that Robert took up residence at the old Bowdon Hall when he became Steward in 1659. Old Sir George Booth had bought the Hall in 1650 for £300 from William Bowdon, and a covenant, as part of the conveyance, seems to indicate a lease back for two lives, probably those of William and his wife Grace. However, no third life was specified and it seems that the lease may not have been put into effect. William Bowdon was of Dunham Woodhouses where he died in 1659, and there is no evidence that he ever went to live at the Hall. It seems certain that, with the Hall probably standing empty and in disrepair, George Booth decided to let it to his Steward, thus giving him a property befitting his status and charging him to put the house back in order. In so doing they were following the familiar pattern of Halls of old families becoming occupied by the new landlord's men. Robert Tipping's will and inventory show him to have been the richest man in Bowdon, and, since the evidence of the Hearth Tax Returns of 1664 and 1674 reveal his widow Alice living in the largest house in Bowdon, their house must have been the Bowdons' ancestral home, but by then enlarged and probably in a better state of repair. Although neither the Hearth Tax Returns nor Robert's will identify old Bowdon Hall, the indicated size of his house situated in the very small area of Bowdon Township confirms that it can only be old Bowdon Hall. Whether the improvements made to it were partly at Alice's instigation considering her upbringing at Sale Old Hall, and partly due to her husband's desire to demonstrate his better fortune and status as Steward, we can only surmise, but his inventory shows four more rooms and two galleries added to the old Bowdon family house. The Hearth Tax assessments record that the house had 8 hearths in 1664 and 1674. For comparison, Dunham Hall had 37 hearths and Ashley Hall had 31, which confirms the minor rank of old Bowdon Hall.

Unfortunately Robert's tenure of the office of Steward was only to last just over 4 years. He made his will on 19 February, 1662/3 when close to death, and his burial entry in the Bowdon Parish Register reads "Robert Tippinge, of Bowdon, agent and steward to George, Lord Delamer, was buryed ye 21th day of ffebruary, 1662". His splendid inventory assessed his goods, chattels, etc. at £285, and his will bequeathed them and all his interests in lands and properties to his wife Alice, and after her, to his daughter Elizabeth. He also made provision for a posthumous son he hoped might be born, but that was not to be and sadly, his only child Elizabeth pre-deceased her mother in 1675. Only two of the properties, lands, etc. are named in the will. One at Mobberley in the tenancy of a Richard Cragg, which Alice still owned in 1672 as a freeholder according to Ormerod, was at Baguley Green (at the cross-roads just east of Mobberley Station now) ; and the other was a cottage in the tenure of Margaret Birch at Bollington (now Little Bollington) in 1666, again noted by Ormerod. All Alice's inheritance was for her use and to sell or dispose of "if shee and her twoe Brothers Richard Massey of Sale in the said County of Chester Esqr. and Willm. Massey of Sywell in the County of Northampton gentleman soo thinks fitt...." The two brothers-in-law were named as executors of the will.

The inventory gives us a very clear picture of the old Bowdon Hall, so much so that as each room is visited we can almost see the place as it was in our mind's eye. On the ground floor was the Hall, the Parlour, the Gray Chamber, the Green Chamber, the Nursery, another Chamber and Closet, and a Gallery; on the upper floor was a Room over the Gray Chamber, a Room over the Green Chamber, a Room over the Nursery, another Chamber, and an Upper Gallery. As well as the Kitchen, there was a Brewhouse, a Pantry, a further 'house' name unknown, and a well Larder. The outhouses consisted of two stables, a Granary, and a Barn incorporating a Servants Chamber. The items of gracious living detailed in the inventory such as pictures, virginals, maps, a clock and a watch, and the mirrors, glasses and silver plate, linens and comfortable beds, chairs and stools, all reflect a well-to-do lifestyle. This is the only Bowdon inventory examined so far that shows white metal or Ticknall ware in the description 'severall whyte plates"; and also "one pewter still", which may indicate that Mistress Tipping distilled a form of spirits then commonly called aquavite and, possibly, even strong cordials or medicinal potions from herbs and flowers. It is interesting that in the Upper Room over the Gray Chamber, a principal bedroom, the servant's truckle bed with its cords, which in the daytime was kept under the master's canopied bed, is listed. The cords were a primitive form of improved comfort from bare boards, and had to be tightened each night before the mattress was placed upon the bed, hence the common expression 'sleep tight'. (A nearby reconstruction shows this in the 17th century bedroom at Tatton Old Hall).

The style of Robert Tipping's house is very apparent in the furnishing detail, and there is a sense of order in the appropriateness of the contents of each room, not always found in 17th century houses. Pictures, possibly some were portraits, must have been a source of pleasure in this home, as there were over 31 of them listed. Robert had an interest in maps, two in the Hall and another large one in the Gallery, and also in geography, evident from his friend James Watmough's bequest to him. One wonders, too, whether Mistress Alice and her daughter played on the virginals and how often the family and guests were entertained with music and songs in this well- furnished and comfortable home.

Other items of interest were "a fouleing peece, a Birding peece, a little pistoll, a Muskett with Bandaliors & a holberd", and the sums of £27. 3. 0 d. in "Plate & ready money in ye house" and £5 in gold, considerable amounts in those days. The last item, "ye deceds apparell" valued at £40, shows that his assessors were impressed with the quality (and quantity perhaps) of the rich clothing they saw, far surpassing that of most local gentlemen and yeomen. Robert Tipping probably had a flair for dress and may have felt his position as Steward required him to emulate his master at Dunham Hall. In any case, the way people dressed indicated their social standing, as it did within living memory, and he may have had to wear some form of livery, especially at Dunham Hall. The figure of £40 for this one item was a greater sum than the entire assessments for some yeomen's goods and chattels. Four years after his death, his widow Alice and the daughter Elizabeth, received a bequest in the will of her nephew, Robert Massey, son of Richard Massey, Esq. of Sale Old Hall and Barbara Gleave, dated 24 February 1666/7, "to my Aunt Alice Tipping and to her daughter Elizabeth five shillings apeece to buy them gloves". Alice went on living at the old Hall at Bowdon until at least 1674, and the next year Bowdon Parish Registers record the burial of "Elizabeth daughter of mis: Ales Tipping of Bowdon march the 2th" 1674/5.

To be continued



Sir George Booth (1622-1684),
later 1st Lord Delamer.

Note
Readers may be interested to note that the subject of this article is dealt with in much greater detail in *Bowdon Hall* published by Bowdon History Society.

The Bowdon Sheaf

A BOWDON HISTORY SOCIETY PUBLICATION

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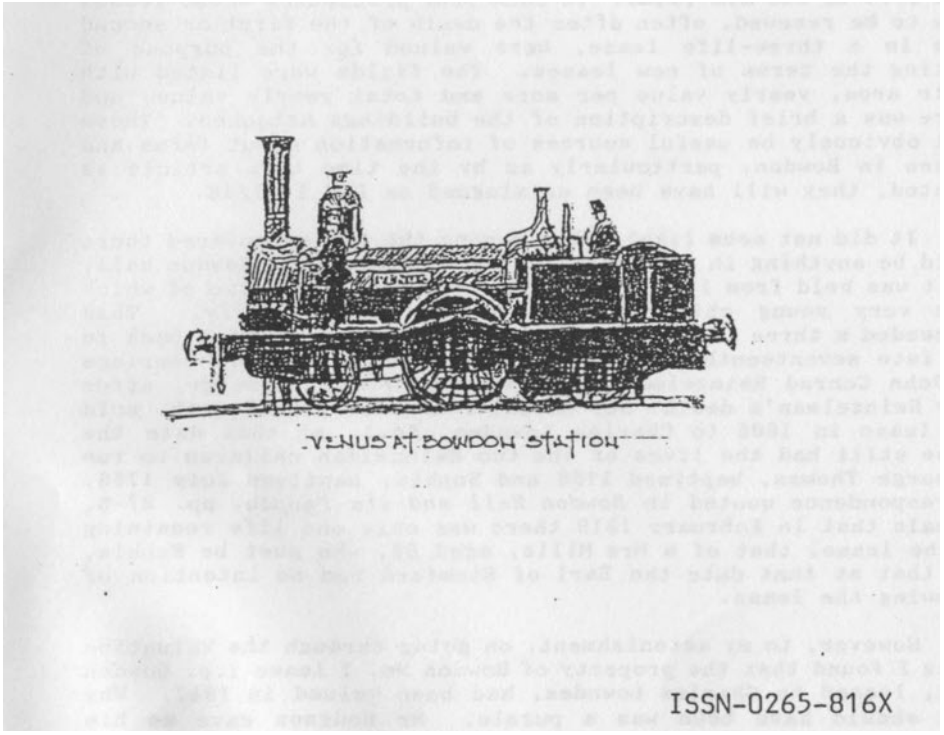


ISSN-0265-816X

BOWDON HALL IN 1817 : A NEWLY-DISCOVERED DESCRIPTION
by Marjorie Cox

In April, 1995 at an extra meeting of the Bowdon History Society Mr John Hodgson, National Trust Archivist of the Dunham Massey Papers deposited at the John Rylands University Library of Manchester, gave a most important and informative lecture to the Society on these papers. Since the death of the 10th Earl of Stamford they have gradually been transferred (with a very few exceptions) by the National Trust from Dunham Massey Hall and the Estate Office to the Library's Deansgate Building. They have come in various batches over a lengthy period, up to even this current year, and the sorting, listing and cataloguing have occupied Mr Hodgson for a number of years. To work on the Dunham Massey papers while they were arriving and being listed and before the completion of the whole catalogue has been exciting, but there was always the fear that some vital piece of evidence might have 'got away'. This was particularly so in the work on the recently published history of Bowdon Hall, *Bowdon Hall and its People.*

In his talk Mr Hodgson referred to a group of documents, received in 1991 and listed but not yet fully catalogued. These were the Valuation Books relating to the Dunham Massey Estate properties including those in Bowdon, which covered the period from 1774 to the mid-1840s. In each year properties whose leases were to be renewed, often after the death of the first or second life in a three-life lease, were valued for the purpose of setting the terms of new leases. The fields were listed with their area, yearly value per acre and total yearly value, and there was a brief description of the buildings attached. These will obviously be useful sources of information about farms and houses in Bowdon, particularly as by the time this article is printed, they will have been catalogued as EGR 14/7/48.

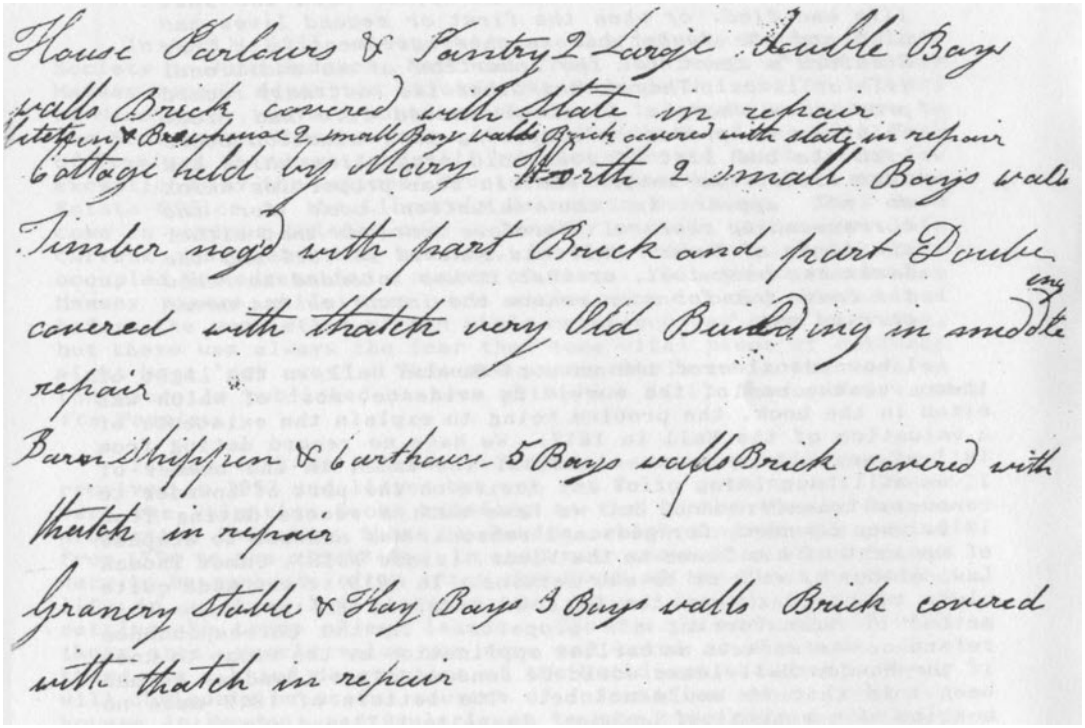
It did not seem likely that during the period covered there would be anything in the Valuation Books concerning Bowdon Hall, as it was held from 1762 on a lease for three lives, two of which were very young children, by the Heinzelman family. This succeeded a three life lease of the Edmonds family going back to the late seventeenth century and it was Mary Edmonds' marriage to John Conrad Heinzelman which was the link. However, after Mary Heinzelman's death, her daughter and heir, Elizabeth, sold the lease in 1805 to Charles Lowndes, Sr.: at that date the lease still had the lives of the two Heinzelman children to run - George Thomas, baptised 1758 and Sophia, baptised July 1756. Correspondence quoted in Bowdon Hall and its People, pp. 87-8, reveals that in February 1819 there was only one life remaining in the lease, that of a Mrs Mills, aged 62, who must be Sophia, and that at that date the Earl of Stamford had no intention of renewing the lease.

However, to my astonishment, on going through the Valuation Books I found that the property of Bowdon No. 1 lease i.e. Bowdon Hall, leased to Charles Lowndes, had been valued in 1817. Why this should have been was a puzzle. Mr Hodgson gave me his expert opinion in a letter from which this extract is taken:

The valuation books only record properties for which the leases were to be renewed either when the last life had died, or when the first or second lives had died and the tenant had reached agreement with Lord Stamford's agent for the insertion of an additional life or lives. They do not otherwise routinely record properties where a first or second life had died. This can be proved by comparing the valuation books with the odd list of leasehold properties which had lost lives: the latter contain some properties which do not appear in the valuation book for the corresponding year. I therefore conclude that either the lease of Bowdon Hall was renewed in 1817 and the lease has been lost, or that it was intended to renew the lease but for some reason the intention was never carried out. '

I have considered the case of Bowdon Hall in the light of these remarks and of the surviving evidence, most of which was cited in the book, the problem being to explain the existence of a valuation of the Hall in 1817. We have no record dating from 1817 of any change in the lease of the Hall, in the number of lives still surviving or of any desire on the part of Lowndes to renew or transfer it. But we have such a record dating from 1819, when Lowndes, for personal reasons, was anxious to dispose of the rest of his lease to the Vicar, (since 1815), James Thomas Law, either by sale or by sub-letting. In 1819 it was made quite clear to Lowndes that the Earl of Stamford did not like this method of transferring his property. In the correspondence reference was made to an earlier application by the Vicar to know if the Bowdon Hall lease would be renewed after Lowndes: he had been told that it would not be. The letters of 1819 make no mention of a renewal of Lowndes' lease in 1817 and his title was deemed to rest on his purchase from Elizabeth Heinzelman. Therefore I believe that no new lease was made in 1817. A possible alternative explanation is as follows. Since only Sophia's life remained in 1819, her brother, George Thomas, the other life, must have died earlier, though the date and place of burial remain to be discovered. Could it be that he died not long before 1817 and that his death, leaving only one life in Lowndes' lease, led the Vicar to make his enquiry about the renewal of the lease? This could have led to a valuation with a view to a possible new lease, which did not materialise. I incline to the belief that the latter explanation is more probable. In the end no renewal of a lease for lives ever took place owing to a change of policy by the Earl mentioned in the book.

However, whatever the explanation, the existence of the valuation of 1817 by Edward Stelfox means that we have not only a record of the estate fields, which we already had from other sources, but a brief description of Bowdon Hall and its outbuildings of which we were not aware when the history of the Hall was published. The description is not very informative but it is of great interest because it is the only indication of the Hall's appearance (other than the listing of the number of bays of building in the 1701 Survey) before the present century, by which time there had been alterations in the mid-nineteenth century and later.


House Parlours & Pantry 2 Large double Bays walls Brick covered with Slate in repair
Kitchen & Brewhouse 2 small Bays walls Brick covered with slate in repair
Cottage held by Mary Worth 2 small Bays walls Timber nog'd with part Brick and part Daube covered with thatch very Old Building in middleing repair
Barn Shippen & Carthouse 5 Bays walls Brick covered with thatch in repair
Granery Stable & Hay Bays 3 Bays walls Brick covered with thatch in repair

Reproduced by courtesy of the Director and University Librarian, The John Rylands University Library of Manchester.

Transcript

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In the light of this new evidence Ronald Trenbath and I wish to put on record our view of how it affects our knowledge of the past of Bowdon Hall. In general it does not add anything of great significance but two points are worthy of mention.

1. The Cottage on the field behind the Hall

Recently there has come to light in the Stamford Estate Office a map of the manor or lordship of Bowdon in 1793, clearly to accompany the Survey of that title and date described in Bowdon Hall and its People, p. 84. (My thanks are due to Mr Chapman of the Estate Office for allowing me to look at it.) This is the first estate map for Bowdon which enables us to locate map references in rentals and surveys: the absence of such maps among the Dunham Massey papers has been a constant source of frustration in our researches over many years. The map shows that the cottage, which was listed in a rental of 1760 (see Bowdon Hall and its People, p. 78) as on the House Field, facing Bowdon Moss, lay on the east side of the field behind the Hall and was a narrow building set back from Vicarage Lane. The description of it in 1817 as a very old building, thatched, and of timber, nogged with brick and daub, suggests that it went back in time beyond the origins of the present Hall building. We believe that it was a left-over from an earlier complex of buildings on the site and possibly went back to the time of the Bowdons of Bowdon. Unfortunately, by the early 1840s the cottage had gone and the croft contained only 'the site on which Mary Worth's Cottage stood'. Bowdon Hall and its People, p. 91 and Note 12).

2. Bowdon Hall and its outbuildings

More importantly, on Bowdon Hall itself, the description confirms the view given in the book that the roof was of slate and that it was probably not tiled until the early twentieth-century restoration.

The information that in 1817 the farm buildings of the Hall were thatched solves a problem which had perplexed us when writing the book. An old Bowdon inhabitant had given us a recollection from his early boyhood before 1914 of firemen fighting a thatch blaze at the Hall. Without a precise date, finding a reference to the incident in local newspapers was like looking for a needle in a haystack. Architectural evidence made it impossible that the Hall was thatched then, so, in the absence of further proof, this piece of oral evidence was not used. However, the newly-found description shows that there could have been a thatch blaze 'at the Hall', but of the outbuildings and not the Hall itself. There is thus now a most satisfactory agreement of written and oral evidence such as gives joy to any local historian.

Bowdon in the 16th and 17th centuries
The Booths and the Tippinqs - Landed Gentry and Yeomen Retainers
by Peter Kemp

Part 5

Although the three sons of William Tipping the Bailiff established themselves away from Bowdon - the eldest son and heir William at Benchill (now in Wythenshawe), Robert at Yarwood just across the Bollin (now Yarwood Heath Farm, Rostherne), and Isaac at Norton and Acton Grange (near Runcorn New Town now) - they continued in greater or lesser degree to maintain their family's association with the Booths of Dunham Massey.

Isaac, the youngest, whose birth in 1642 is recorded in the Tipping Bible, along with his note of his Bowdon landholdings when 15 years of age (see "Bowdon Sheaf" No.18, October 1991), was a tenant at Bowdon in 1671 according to the Dunham Massey Papers (EGR 1/1/6/7) at the John Rylands Library. This document is an assignment of a lease in trust, and consisted of property, namely the parsonage of Bowdon together with 7 messuages and land tenanted by Isaac Tipping 25 acres, Anne Saunders, widow [Moss Farm] 30 acres, Richard Peirson 32 acres, Jane Goolding 20 acres, John Drinkwater 18 acres, John Brereton 12 acres, John Rowlinson 5 acres, and a cottage with 2 acres of land held by Adam Shawe, - all part of the glebe lands in Bowdon. The lease was from the Bishop of Chester to George Booth, 1st Lord Delamer for the lives of himself and of Thomas and Owen Saunderson, sons of Thomas Saunderson, gentleman of Bowdon, yielding rent of £50. Lord Delamer made Nathaniel Booth, esquire, Thomas Ashton of Ashley, esquire, William Andrewes of Dunham Massey [servant to the Booths], and William Tipping of Benchill, gentleman, trustees to hold the lease for his wife, Lady Elizabeth, as jointure, and with the remainder in trust for his son, the Hon. Henry Booth, esquire.

When Isaac, now styled gentleman, died at Norton in 1677, his will left all his property, lands, etc. which included Bowgreen Tenements, and a house and land at Stockham, near Norton, to his new wife, Bridget Martin of Melling, Lancashire who he seems to have married at Middlewich the previous year, and made provision not only for the three children by his first wife, William, Richard and Rebecca, all under 21 years of age, but also for his young sister, Mary. The son Richard went to live with his uncle Robert at Yarwood for that is where he died young in 1687 as recorded in the Rostherne parish registers. The will states that Isaac was "of Norton Hall" but the inventory clearly shows that he had a house on the Norton Priory estate consisting of a "house", parlour, kitchen, and a buttery with a pantry, and chambers above the "house", parlour and buttery, and he also had another house at Acton Grange on another part of the estate. He may have been a servant in some way, possibly a bailiff/ to Sir Richard Brooke of Norton Priory, for his will has an item "I give unto my much honoured M(aste)r S(i)r Richard Brooke Barr(one)t for and in ye name of an Herriot five pounds of Curr(en)t money of England or my white in foale mare att his choyse and Election Item I give and bequeath unto my s(ai)d Hon(oure)d M(aste)r and his vertuous ladye either one pound to buy them each a Ring to bee paid by my Exec(utor)s within one month after my decease". This fawning wish must reflect Isaac's deferential regard for his master. He was not well off, leaving goods, chattels, etc. worth only £51.18s.l0d, in his inventory assessed on 26 June, 1677, which is very little for a gentleman, as he styled himself, and more equivalent to a yeoman or even a husbandman.

The baptismal entry in the Bowdon parish register for Robert Tipping of Yarwood is quite cryptic in its brevity under the heading of September 1635 - "Robt, Tippinge sonne to Willm. vith". The Tipping Bible reveals that he was born two days earlier with the entry - "Robert Tiping was borne upon Friday one houre before-sunset(erased in the Bible) after sun risinge being the 4th of September Anno Domini 1635". As a yeoman farmer at Yarwood he lived to the ripe old age of 85 and was buried in the churchyard close to the east end of Rostherne Church with his wife Mary, in 1721, she having died three years earlier.

The eldest son, William, also has his birth recorded in the Tipping Bible, but no baptismal entry has been found in the Bowdon parish register, - "William Tipinge sonne of Will. Tipping was borne upon Saturday 2 hours before day three dayes before St. Thomas Day before Christmas Anno Domini 1630 [18 December 1630]. It gives an insight of the way the calendar in Stuart times was governed by Saints' days, and the very precise way the birth of a child was recorded by its parents. Being the son of their Bailiff, William was from early on in association with the Booths and became much more involved after his father's death in 1671. He had married Anne Staley of Styal in 1654 on 15 June (Bowdon P.Rs) and had brought her home to reside at Dunham Massey. The Poll Tax Return of January 1666/7 for Dunham Massey records the family of William senior, the Bailiff, and reveals that son William was employed by him at a wage of £5 a year and also had acted and signed as one of the assessors for the poll of the township :-

“William Typinge for pole	0 - 1 - 0
and for 51i. wages	0 - 5 - 0
William Typpinge senior for pole	0 - 1 - 0
Em his wife for pole	0 - 1 - 0
George his sonne	0 - 1 - 0
Mary his daughtr for pole	0 - 1 - 0
Raph Pickson servant for pole	0 - 1 - 0
and for 2 li. wages	0 - 2 - 0”

The long entry for Dunham House (Dunham Massey Hall) shows that Lord Delamer was charged Poll Tax for William senior and for his £5 a year wage since he was Bailiff to the estate. It is interesting that at this time, 4 members of the Booth family were in residence with 20 retainers there, but Lord and Lady Delamer with Vere, Elizabeth, Diana and Anne Booth were staying in London, being looked after by 14 retainers, and that Lord Delamer himself was charged £20 plus the 1s. for his poll. The Mr. Andrewes, servant to the Booths noted in the 1671 assignment of a lease in trust above, was there, too, and was charged on the Dunham Massey assessment 13s. for his £12 wage plus his poll. The Booth family were in London only 4 months after the Great Fire of September 1666 to be shocked by the devastation in the City, and one wonders what sort of season they had in society London at that time when the country was nearly bankrupt with the disastrous Dutch naval wars and a Treasury so depleted that the Poll Tax was one of the devices brought in to raise funds for the nation.

In late 1667 or early 1668, William Tipping moved to Benchill, Northen Etchells (now part of Wythenshawe), and two of his children, Robert and Alice were baptised at Northenden parish church in 1669. That same year, the Tatton Papers (John Rylands Library) record a lease of "Hollow Meadow" for 21 years where he is described as "Yeoman of Benchill", and in the following year, the Papers record his lease of Benchill Tenement for the three lives of himself, his wife Anne, and a Gregory Grimsditch. He did keep contact with the people in Bowdon, for on 20 March, 1667/8, he was nominated overseer of the will of John Leather, yeoman of Bowdon, which also his brother Robert witnessed, and in 1668/9, he was an appraiser of the inventory of Richard Goolden, yeoman of Bowdon. When his father the Bailiff died in 1671, William is recorded as "son and heir" and "yeoman of Benchill". In the following year, 1672, he was one of the church- wardens of Bowdon, probably for the Baguley end of Bowdon's vast parish being adjacent to Benchill in Northenden parish, since church- wardens were appointed geographically. From 1671, William took his father's place as a trusted friend or servant of the Booths. As we have noted earlier, in 1671 he was trustee for Lord Delamer in the assignment of the lease of Bowdon parsonage together with messuages and land for Lady Elizabeth, and, in that same year, he witnessed Lord Delamer's will on 1 August. In 1679 he was trustee for an apportionment for the Booths, and in the following year he was again trustee under a settlement of Lord Delamer. In 1684, he was party to the mortgage of Thornton for raising portions for Diana Booth's marriage along with William Andrewes, now of Altrincham, gentleman, [servant of the Booths mentioned before] and two other Booths.

The rental records in the Tatton Papers for Benchill are interesting for some of their detail. William's lease of Hollow Meadow is dated 2 February 1669/70, the meadow being 2 Cheshire acres, for a term of 21 years at a rent of £2.10s. with a fine of 10s. and all liberties, etc. The lease for lives of Benchill Tenement was at a rent of £1.0s.2d. and 3 boons - 1 cartload of coal from Shadow Moss, 2s.Od. ; 2 rent hens or Is. Total £1.3s.4d., and the heriot was the best good or £2.10s. The Tatton Rental Survey of 1698/9 [the year he died] said that he was 68 years old and was tenant of 10 1/2 acres with an annual value of £13. To be concluded

Correction

The last page of "The Bowdon Sheaf" No.22 of October, 1993, has a sketch map showing the location of Carrington Hall Farm in 1936, and a possible site of Carrington Hall. This possibility is wrong. I am indebted to Mr. John Newhill of the Ashton & Sale History Society for pointing out conclusively that Carrington Hall was situated between the road through the village and the river Mersey about 250 yards east of the "Windmill" inn. It was a long narrow building by the river, next to the old horse-bridge crossing to Flixton."

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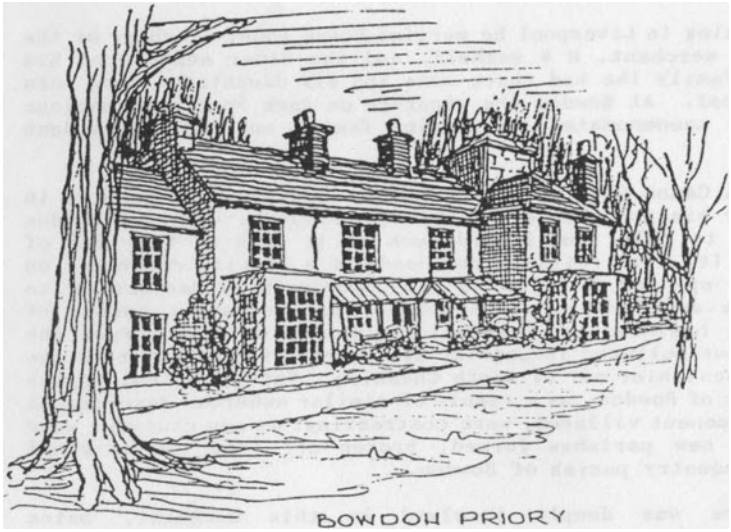
Body Snatchers of Bowdon by Maurice Ridgway.
Brief Notes.



ISSN-0265-816X

Thirty-Eight Years Vicar of Bowdon
by Myra Kendrick

Well over one hundred years ago the Reverend Arthur Gore was appointed vicar of the parish of Bowdon in Cheshire. He was of Irish extraction, born in Kilkenny in 1829. the only son of Henry Gore JP. His mother was the daughter of Nathaniel Alcock, MD. He was educated at Kilkenny College and Trinitv College, Dublin, where he had a distinguished career, becoming Classical Scholar in 1850 and, two years later, Senior Moderator in Mathematics and Physics and Gold Medallist. In 1858 he graduated Bachelor of Arts, became Erasmus Smith's Exhibitioner and gained the Divinity Testimonium, first class. In 1858 he was awarded the degree of Master of Arts and in 1890 the degrees of both Bachelor and Doctor of Divinity. Clearly, he was a scholarly and gifted man.

He was ordained deacon in 1855 and priest the following year. His subsequent career was almost entirely in England. In 1858 he was appointed Clerical Superintendent of the Liverpool Church of England Readers' Society, so he came to live in the diocese of Chester, which then included Liverpool within its boundaries. In 1861 he became vicar of St Luke's in Liverpool. The next step was an honorary canonry in Chester Cathedral in 1867 and in 1873 he moved to Bowdon as vicar of the ancient church of St Mary the Virgin, on the hill dominating Watling Street and the Cheshire plain.

While working in Liverpool he married Ellen Anne, daughter of the Liverpool merchant, H V Bushell, and the older members of his numerous family (he had three sons and six daughters) were born in Liverpool. At Bowdon the vicarage on Park Road was spacious enough to accommodate the growing family and three resident servants.

The church Canon Gore came to had been substantially rebuilt in 1860 under his predecessor, Archdeacon Pollock, vicar of Bowdon from 1856 to 1873, and looked much as it does at the time of writing. Its size reflects the needs of a growing congregation after the opening in 1848 of the railway from Manchester to Altrincham arid Bowdon. which enabled an increasing number of Manchester business and professional men to move away from the fog and soot-polluted industrial atmosphere of Manchester to the cleaner, healthier air of north Cheshire. Yet the actual parish boundaries of Bowdon, as a result of similar suburban development in its component villages, were contracting, as new churches were built and new parishes formed, broken off from the original enormous country parish of Bowdon.

Canon Gore was deeply involved in this movement, being responsible for a scheme of development which included the formation of the new parishes of St Peter's, Hale, and St Elizabeth's, Ashley. St Peter's was originally a daughter church of St Mary's, Bowdon, so under its care; and Canon Gore encouraged wealthier members of the Bowdon congregation to contribute generously to an endowment fund for the upkeep of St Elizabeth's, which had been built at the expense of the then Earl of Stamford.

The new vicar of Bowdon was a man of tireless energy. He came to a well attended, active church with clubs, societies, Sunday school and day schools. He gave these his encouragement and further development followed. The Church Council, founded under Archdeacon Pollock, evolved further under his successor, increasing in numbers. The Mothers' Meeting had about one hundred members. Early in Canon Gore's Bowdon days, in 1875, a new organ was installed, built by Jardine's of Manchester; this, itself replacing the first organ given by Lord Stamford in 1822.

It remained in service until 1960 when it was rebuilt and electrified. Another major overhaul followed in 1990. An important development in parish life was the building;in 1880, of St Luke's Church in Bowdon Vale, known at first as the Vale Mission Room. The cost of the building, £350, in those days a substantial sum, was raised by subscription, often in quite small amounts. It was very much a parish effort. At first St Luke's was under the care of the Reverend J Davies. one of the curates at St Mary's. A popular club for working men met in this building until the Church Institute was opened in the Vale and club activities were transferred there.

Other parochial activities included the "Bowdon Lectures", held monthly in the Church School in Richmond Road. The lectures were often about foreign travel, and were illustrated in their early days by lantern slides. A Lads' Club also flourished, merging in time with a branch of the Church Lads' Brigade and, I suspect, ousted after some years by The Boy Scouts movement.

At St Mary's Canon Gore followed his predecessor in developing a pattern of church services, which is the basis of the present scheme. He established the weekly 8 a.m. celebration of Holy Communion in place of less frequent afternoon or evening ones and introduced daily evensong. For children there was a monthly Sunday afternoon service, with Sunday School on the remaining Sundays. A flower service for children was also started and the first Carol Service was held in 1881 . In 1901 Sunday evening services began at St Luke's with sizeable congregations.

Gradually Canon Gore introduced a greater decree of dignity into the Sunday services. The congregation rose at the entry of clergy and choir. Numbers of the all-male choir increased; they were robed and processed in from the vestry, then situated under the tower. In these matters, the influence of the Oxford movement was felt in Bowdon.

Church finances came under Canon Gore's review. He encouraged reliance for church funds on weekly offerings rather than pew rents, which were insufficient for the church's needs. One result was a rapid increase in the number of free, unallocated seats. But the vicar was still complaining, up to his retirement, about the preponderance of small coins in the collection boxes. Church finances were not yet on a sound basis.

A decline in congregational numbers in the early nineteen hundreds he attributed to increased scope for weekend travel.

Before the vicar's retirement, the church day school on Richmond Road had been largely reconstructed and a new infants' school had been built in the Vale. A plan for enlarging the chancel at St Mary's was mooted but rejected although it would have improved acoustics. Improvements were made, however; a new pulpit and clergy-and choir-stalls among them, all still in use. The ornamental list of vicars in the choir, dating back to the middle ages, belongs to this period. A gold chalice and patten were the gift of Canon, Mrs and Miss Gore.

Meantime Arthur Gore's sphere of service in the diocese of Chester was widening. He held successively the offices of Bishop's Chaplain (1877 to 1884), Proctor for the Archdeacon of Macclesfield (1881 to 1884 and again in 1893), Archdeacon of Macclesfield (1884 to 1893) and examining Chaplain to the Bishop of Chester from 1889. In 1893 he was made a Canon Residentiary of Chester Cathedral, which meant periodic absences from Bowdon lasting three months. Fortunately Bowdon was allowed several curates. The title of Archdeacon continued to be applied to him to the end of his days although the office was short term.

Outside the diocese he was a Select Preacher at Trinity College, Dublin, in 1890 and '91. In retirement in Chester, although already in his eighties, he was actively involved in the affairs of the province of York.

His energies overflowed into many local channels. His active local interests included the Altrincham and Bowdon Literary Institution and Altrincham Library. He was for thirty years president of the Cheshire branch of the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals and was also a keen supporter of the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children and the Police Court Mission, as well as local educational causes and the Altrincham Hospital. He wrote many articles for the press pleading for support of such good causes.

Bowdon shared in two royal occasions while Canon Gore was vicar. In 1897 special services at St Mary's and other events marked Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee. Then three and a half years later a service of mourning for the Queen's death on 22 January 1901 was timed to coincide with her funeral service at Windsor.

All members of the Bowdon congregation were clothed in black. The year 1910 saw the Golden Jubilee of the reconstructed church of St Mary the Virgin. There were daily celebrations of Holy Communion, a performance of Mendelssohn's "Hymn of Praise" and social gatherings. This was the year in which Archdeacon Gore retired.

What of the man whose influence extended so widely in the parish, deanery and farther afield? Scholar, fine preacher, incisive writer, his obituaries spoke of his sense of humour and wit, ready sympathy and understanding, and the love of his parishioners for the vicar who had served them for so long. He died on 25 April 1913, St Mark's Day, and was buried in the area of the churchyard known as "the vicars' plot". His grave, under the oak tree, is marked by a tall stone cross with Celtic style decoration. His wife Ellen Anne who survived him by three years shares his grave.

He had been a major influence on Bowdon life under the reigns of three sovereigns, Victoria, Edward VII and, briefly, George V.



Canon Arthur Gore, D.D.

BODY SNATCHERS OF BOWDON
by Maurice Ridgway

About 1840 the partiality for alcoholic beverages was very strong in the bell ringers of Bowdon. When unable to raise enough money to purchase this the solemnity shown in their faces was most impressive and it made people quite mournful to look at them. It was on such an occasion that thirst sharpened a hitherto undisplayed inventive power. The plan put forward was that they should go into the corpse-line business. In other words that of body snatcher and sell it to one of the Altrincham doctors, always glad to have such a prize for research. When this story was related there were people living in Bowdon who remembered watching all night after a funeral of a relative and for several nights in the shade of the old yew tree to see that the grave remained intact. The man who put forward this idea did not have the full backing of the fellow ringers however thirsty, so they put forward a counter suggestion calculated to have the same desired effect. Namely to put forward a counterfeit corpse, one of themselves, and sell it to the doctor! They would by this not only get some money but also indulge in a lark for "they were a gradely warm lot, that they were". But "Whoa's to be th' corpse?" one asked "We'n ha' to draw short cuts, aw reckon". "Nay" says another "th' Bodkin's th'mon for that job, he's leet, an' can easily carried, an' he's pluck enough for owt has that chap. "They all agreed Bodkin, was a diminutive person and called Bodkin because he was by trade a tailor. He too agreed when plied with the question "Wilt do it. Bodkin?" and "we'n carry thee very gently lad just as if tha' wur really dead." All arrangements were made, they got a fairly large box and Bodkin laid himself in it. "'As tha any message to send tha friends before we screw thee down?" they asked him. "Na, but ha summit warm to sup when aw comes to life agin". The ringers promised and hoisting him shoulder high proceeded down the sandy track then called Burying Lane (now The Firs) to Normans Place and into Altrincham where they rang the bell at the surgeons. "We'n browt you a body, he's a gradely fresh collart un." The doctor was delighted. "Put him in the cellar," he told them. Which they Did, leaving poor Bodkin in the dark with the words "If tha finds thysel gettin' low spirited, whistle the Owd Hundredreth to thysel occasionally."

His friends then collected their pay and made off. Later that evening the doctor came to see his purchase but on unscrewing the lid Bodkin sprang out and a terrified Doctor made for the stairs quickly followed by Bodkin who escaped through the door and joined his companions over a pint or two.

It is not related how the Doctor eventually reacted to this escapade of Bowdon's Ringers.

BRIEF NOTES

A plaque to the late Ronald Gow, local dramatist, educational film pioneer and husband of Dame Wendy Hiller, was unveiled on the 17th July 1995, by his daughter Ann and son Anthony, in the presence of his niece Carolyn, the Provost of the Court Leet and representatives of both Altrincham and Bowdon History Societies and Hale Civic Society.

During a commemorative luncheon after the ceremony it was recounted that Ronald Gow's father, who was in charge of several local banks, often transferred large sums of money, in the form of gold sovereigns and florins, from one branch to another in horse drawn cabs. On one occasion the weight of the money was so great that the wooden floor of the cab collapsed and the money poured all over the road. Bystanders ran out and collected all the money and handed it back to Mr Gow and not a single penny was lost, such is the honesty of Altrincham folk.

* * * * *

A communal pump in Bow Lane, which served local cottages, the farm and game Keepers Lodge for many generations of inhabitants was finally removed by the Bowdon Urban District Council in 1957, but a replica of the original one has been replaced on the site.

* * * * *

When Catherine the Great of Russia placed the order with Wedgwood for the, now famous, frog dinner service, she stipulated that it was to be decorated with scenes from English Life including stately homes and manufacturing enterprises. The Earl of Stamford who had previously commissioned engravings to be made of his property provided views of Enville which were included in the set, which is now kept in the Hermitage in St Petersburg.

* * * * *

Following a recent archaeological examination the big mound in Dunham Massey Park, previously thought to be a tumulus, and marked as such on Ordnance Maps, is now considered to be a glacially formed hill rather than a man-made tumulus.

* * * * *

The Griffin Inn in Bowdon was formerly called the Green Dragon and is a hostelry with a very long history. A preliminary examination of the roof, panelling and timber framing tends to indicate that the present building incorporates part of a former timber framed structure of a very early date.

The inn served Bowdon parishioners in former times but its prestigious rating was reduced when the adjoining property was rebuilt as a more modern inn and allowed to take the name of the local landowning family, thus the Stamford Arms served the needs of the gentry and the Green Dragon, renamed the Griffin, served to upgrade the latter during the following century. Nothing has been written on this subject and Mrs Kinder, of the Griffin, is now undertaking research and it is hoped that some very interesting historical material will be published.

* * * * *

Many readers of Bowdon Sheaf will remember the pre-war practice of displaying newspaper placards outside newsagents, giving details of the main events covered by the current issue of the newspaper concerned. The placard illustrated here advertises the issue of the Altrincham, Bowdon and Hale Guardian for Friday October the 14th 1932, price two pence, and it is interesting to note that the wedding of Miss Gow to Mr A L Okell was the first feature. It is also interesting that domestic helps were referred to as servants at that time.

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The Bowdon Sheaf

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THE HIGH SCHOOL
ROSE HILL,
BOWDON.

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Bowdon in the 16th and 17th centuries
The Booths and the Tippings - Landed Gentry and Yeomen Retainers
by Peter Kemp
Part Six

It would seem that, some time after 1684, William Tipping returned to live in Dunham Massey, possibly in 1686 when his son and heir, also William, came of age and may have taken over the Benchill farm which is where we find him later. The 1st Lord Delamer had died in 1684 and had been succeeded by his son, Henry, as the 2nd Lord and who was to become 1st Earl of Warrington in 1690. William may have returned in the hope of some advancement considering his long association with the Booths, as well as that of his father as Bailiff and his uncle as Steward. A new Steward, John Edmonds, had been appointed, but it is not known who became Bailiff in succession to William's father. At age 55, he may have been considered and rejected on age or ability grounds.

William returned to a property in Dunham Massey lying between the Dunham Massey Park boundary and Watling Street, called New Bridge, so named from its proximity to the main Chester road bridge over the river Bollin at Newbridge Hollow. Here, on the Dunham Massey side, the escarpment of the Bollin flood-plain is still called Tippings Bank and a field adjacent is called Tippings Field. It seems very likely that the house was on or very near the present site of Dunham Home Farm, where the large pond could possibly have had its origin as a moat around New Bridge, but this requires investigation. He now styled himself as a gentleman and was a man of some substance from a reading of his will of 17 May, 1698, but his total worth is unknown since no inventory has survived. The size of New Bridge is indicated by the Dunham Massey Estate Survey of 1701 where it is described as being of 5 bays within and 8 without, of comparable size to the only other large house (other than the Hall) in Dunham Massey, gentleman William Millington's. A 5-bay house was comparable to the old Bowdon Hall in size, and it is understood that the "8 bays without" refers to the extent of the outbuildings. Clearly, this was an important house to rent from the Booths, and it seems unlikely that they would let it to anyone who was not in their employ and of some importance on their estate.

William made his will on 17 May, 1698, ten days before he died, as recorded in the Bowdon parish register where the entry reads "27 May 1698 W? Tipping Sen: of New bridge, gent, (buried 29)". This was four years after the 19-year old George Booth had succeeded to Dunham Massey and its vast estates as 2nd Earl of Warrington and was to bring in a new era of efficiency and control so restoring the family fortunes after years of neglect. The Tipping association was now nearing its end as "new brooms" came in to sweep away the past. His will left Anne "my dear wife All her wareing Apparell for her body as well Woollen and Linnen, together with the Mourning Ring I now ware on my ffinger and also the Sume of Ten Pounds to ffurnish her a Chamber, as allsoe my spectacles". He gave his brother Robert of Yarwood "one Close or parcell of land call'd by the Name of Buckley ffields Lying and being in Millington", to his son Isaac "my silver Tobacco Box" and "all rents and boons of my Land Lying in Timperly", and "all my estate Lying and being in Appleton CommonlyCall'd by the Hill-Side".

The fact that he left his eldest son and heir only "the Signett Ring I now ware" seems to signify the final act of handing on the family seal to complete his inheritance of the Benchill estate. For Bowdon, the most interesting item in the will is his legacy to provide payment for a schoolmaster - "Allsoe I give and bequeath unto my Executors herein after named the Sum of Ten pounds, the same withall Convenient speed by them The Vicar and the Schoole-Master of Bowden (ffor the time being) to be lett and putt out at Interest, and the yearly product and Interest thereof to be yearly payd for ever towards a Schoole Master for a ffree Schoole at Bowden aforesaid". The school at Bowdon, one of the very oldest in Cheshire, had been founded in 1553 and the schoolhouse had been re-built in William's time at the expense of the parish in 1670. There is another instance of Tipping involvement in educational provision in Derek Robson's book "Some Aspects of Education in Cheshire" where he says that Seamons Moss School was founded in 1710 by a Mr. Tipping and a Mr. Halsgrave. One wonders if that was where William Tipping's bequest went rather than to Bowdon School as he wished. In 1698, when he was making his will, Henry Ocklestone was schoolmaster and witnessed William's will. As a friend, Henry may have made the suggestion to leave money to the school, but William was a well-read man as his spectacles, and the books he bequeathed to his wife which she listed in her will, seem to suggest.

William's death left his wife Anne in some difficulty with regard to one of the Booth settlements of which he had been one of the trustees The second Earl had brought an action in Chancery against Sir James Langham and Anne Tipping, widow, on March 8, 1698/9, saying that, by articles of 17 June, 1670, between the Earl's grandfather the 1st Lord Delamer, and Sir James, it had been agreed that when his only child, Mary Langham, married Lord Delamer's eldest son, Henry who became 1st Earl of Warrington (i.e. the second Earl's mother and father), Sir James was to pay Lord Delamer £10,000 within 3 months of the marriage and a final £10,000 within 6 months of Sir James's death, making a marriage portion of £20,000 in total. Lord Delamer made various provisions for the second Earl's mother and father in expectation that the full amount would be forthcoming, and soon after the marriage took place and the first £10,000 was paid. By a deed of 21 September 1680, Lord Delamer, intending to make provision for his younger children, charged his lands with considerable sums of money and agreed that the remaining £10,000 should be paid to four trustees - William Tipping, gentleman, Nathaniel Booth, esquire, Thomas Ashton, esquire, and William Andrewes, gentleman, who had all died by 1698, leaving Anne Tipping as administratrix for her husband, the last surviving trustee. The second Earl's grandfather, mother and father being dead, he, as eldest son and heir, had become entitle to the lands so charged, and his petition in Chancery sought to disengage the lands and the sums charged upon them by his grandfather and father in anticipation of the final £10,000 of the marriage settlement. He asked the Court to request Sir James Langham to pay the money now at a reasonable discount or to give better security for payment after his death so that he might form a fund to offset the charges on his estate lands, and said that, because Sir James was now aged and infirm and had remarried and alleged that he no longer felt obliged to pay the £10,000, even though he had previously declared he was bound in honour to pay it, the Earl asked the Court to find in his favour.

The case was dismissed, whereupon the Earl appealed. Poor Anne Tipping now had to put her answer before the Court, which she did on 20 March 1698/9, pleading that she did not know "how far her concurrence was requisite to assist Appellant" and submitted herself to the directions of the Court of Chancery, and now to their Lordships of Appeal. The case was heard on 1 April, and a manuscript minute records that on 1 May, 1699 "the House was informed that the [parties in the] case of the E. of Warrington and Sir J. Langham are agreed". (Manuscripts of the House of Lords, New Series iii, pages 364-5). This is a good example of the 2nd Earl's determination to clear outstanding matters affecting the financial health of his inheritance of the estate, and is hardly surprising when one thinks that £10,000 in 1699 is around £5-£6M in today's currency !

Anne seems to have survived this unwanted ordeal unscathed, for she retired to Tabley where she lodged with a joiner, Thomas Robinson, and, presumably, was able to "ffurnish her a Chamber" with the ten pounds her husband had left her for that purpose. Her will has not survived but her detailed inventory has, where the list of her linens and clothing describe exactly what a country lady of that time wore. She had "In Plate, 4 Silver Spoons, one Salt, one porringer, a large wrought bowl & a Sugar box, weighed by Troy weight 21bs one ounce and a quarter at 4s.4d. per ounce = £7.3s.5d.", and a note below the total value of all her goods in the inventory, £21.10s.9d., records "Item one silver Tankard weighing 16 ounces wch Coll. Daniel seized for an herriott". Colonel Daniel was lord of the manor and made sure he exercised his rights even upon the estate of a widow. The most interesting items are the books which she may have read standing at the reading desk listed. There were 15 of them:-

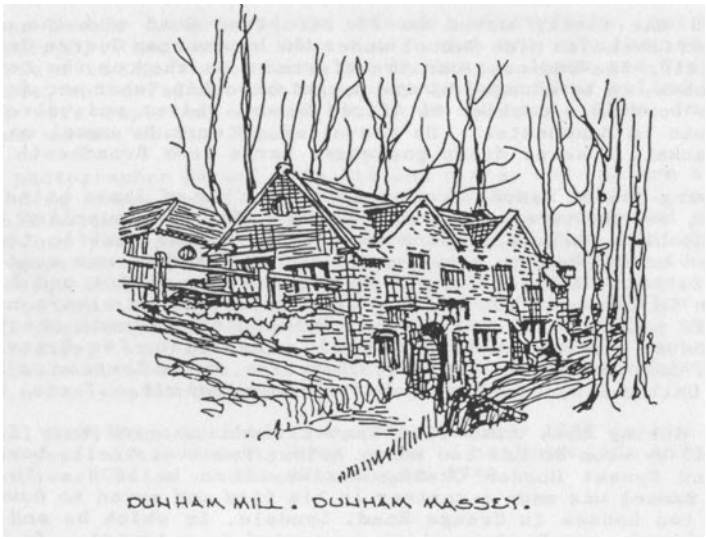
2	Expositions on the Book of Job
2	Annotations upon the Holy Bible
1	The power of Godliness of a Godly Life
1	The beast dominions over Earthly Kings
1	Glassographer, or a Dictionary interpreting all hard words
1	An exposition of the 10 Commandments
1	Mr. Richard Baxter's work
1	The Souls Exaltation
1	Mr. Baxter's 3rd edition
1	A Treatise showing the subordination of the Will of Man
1	Heaven taken by Storme
1	The psalms of David
1	Spirituall Songs

It will be seen that all but one of these books were religious. The Tipping Bible, bought by William the Bailiff, her husband's father, had been passed to Robert of Yarwood without any will bequest ; the only family details of birth, etc. in the Bible relate to William the Bailiff's children, Robert of Yarwood's and those of Robert's son William, yeoman of Rostherne, ending in 1786. The books listed in Anne's inventory of 22 November, 1703, seem to be from her and her husband's younger days, since Richard Baxter was a Puritan divine who had served the Parliamentary cause throughout the Civil War, whose learning Charles II had so much respect for that he made him one of his chaplains after the Restoration.

William's eldest son, William, who had taken over the Benchill farm, died on 23 October, 1701, aged only 36, and was buried 3 days later as recorded in the Bowdon parish register "23 October 1701 Mr. Wm. Tipping of new Bridge (buried 26)". Like his father, he had returned to New Bridge to live even though his main estate was at Benchill. No will was forthcoming and his widow, Elizabeth, who went to live in Salford, legally declined to act as administratrix, appointing William's brother Isaac, now of Simmondley, near Glossop, Derbyshire, as administrator of the estate on 28 April, 1702.

The Tippings had now dispersed away from Dunham Massey and Bowdon, and their long service and association with the Booth family of Dunham Massey Hall had ended. The second Earl distrusted most of his father's (and, indeed, his grandfather's) servants, so, even if a Tipping had shown some expertise or usefulness necessary to hold office in the Booth estates, it is very doubtful that they would ever have been considered. The Tippings had had their day.

As a postscript, it is interesting that, like the Booths whose names and associated localities are remembered in street names in Bowdon and Altrincham, the Tippings have such a link in Hale, through the Pownall connection with Robert Tipping of Yarwood. Robert's great-great-granddaughter Mary married John Pownall as heiress of the Yarwood estate, and their son and grandson were both named William Tipping Pownall. The family farmed at Yarwood Heath, Rostherne, and owned the land by the railway next to Hale Road Bridge where the housing development after 1860 as part of Newtown had its terraced streets named "William", "Tipping", "Pownall", "Yarwood", "Rostherne" and "Heath View". Despite their inferior construction, the houses were homes to a great many people until demolition in the 1970s, with the names preserved to this day in the new housing.



Samuel Okell 1838-1932 A Bowdon Resident
Article written from notes supplied by his son Alec Okell

Samuel Okell was born in Jamaica on the 31st July 1838, the day on which slavery was abolished in the British Empire. His father, William Okell, a missionary and school master, and his mother, formerly Hannah Knight, lived at the Manse at First Hill, Trelawney, but later moved to Arcadia Estate, Trelawney, where their second son William Okell was born on the 3rd April 1840.

William's career in Jamaica came to an end when he developed malaria and was invalided back to this country to recuperate on his father's farm at Dutton Lodge near Runcorn, in which area the Okell family had lived since 1475. A daughter, Sophia, was born here at this time.

On recovering from his illness, William Okell established a drapery business at 176 Medlock Street, Hulme in Manchester, where the children played in fields on which the Central Station and Midland Hotel were later built, and attended the Zion Chapel in Stretford Road.

In 1848 the family moved to 70 Stretford Road and the sons attended Cavendish High School under the headmaster George Corney B.A. Later the business was transferred to a shop on the Downs, Altrincham, to be managed by the daughter Sophia, when her father went to work as a cashier to Alfred Simon, velvet and velveteen merchants in Manchester. He travelled to work by canal on the fast packet, a horse drawn passenger barge from Broadheath.

On leaving school Samuel Okell joined the firm of James Laing Son and Co., Dry Salters, as an office boy. The firm supplied dyes and finishing materials, such as starch, to the textile trade, and when he had become experienced and promoted he was sent, in 1871, to South America to buy logwood (a dye stuff) and blood albumen in Buenos Aires and Rio de Janeiro and he always noted that his passport, at the time, consisted of a single sheet of paper dated 8th day of November 1870, granted by "We Granville George, Earl Granville, Viscount Granville, Baron Leveson, a Peer of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland ..." etc. etc.

It was during this time that Samuel Okell married Mary Ellen Percival by whom he had two sons, Arthur Percival Okell, born in 1865 and Ernest Gordon Okell, who was born in 1868. In due course Samuel was made a partner in his firm and moved to Bowdon, buying two houses in Grange Road, Lyndale, in which he and his family lived, and Firdale which he rented to a tenant. In 1888 he bought a corner site on Vicarage Lane and Langham Road and paid Martin Stone, a builder from Manchester, £2,053. 11s. 0d. to build two houses for him. One of the houses, Overley, was his residence, and the second, Netherley, he rented to a tenant. His son Arthur Percival Okell, who had joined the firm of James Laing Son & Co, moved into Lyndale in Grange Road. His other son Ernest Gordon Okell having pursued a career in electrical engineering became Chief Electrical Engineer of Plymouth and Davenport.

Arthur Percival's daughter Ruth, later became headmistress of Altrincham Girls Grammar School in the 1960's.

Following the death of his wife, Samuel travelled to Pretoria, and on the journey met Mary Lever Burdekin, who was joining her brother in South Africa to keep house for him and his small child following the loss of his wife. A friendship grew between the couple, and on her return to this country on the 24th March 1906 Samuel met her at Southampton in his Belsize 1906 vintage car, and they were married three days later at Hale Congregational Chapel on 27th March 1906.

They settled at his house Overley where their son Alec was born in 1907.

Samuel Okell continued his business activities for many years, and was regularly seen walking from his house to Hale Station in the morning, on his way to work, a tall figure with a long white beard, wearing a square bowler hat, and black jacket, with an oversize umbrella. He enjoyed long strenuous hill walks at Grasmere, when over ninety years of age, and in 1920, he took his family on a visit to Jamaica for six months to recuperate from bronchitis, to the annoyance of the headmaster of Bowdon College, who disapproved of Alec's resultant absence from school.

He was keenly interested in science, electricity, astronomy, photography, and motor cars, and was one of the earliest motorists in Cheshire owning two Hurtus, a James and Browne, a Belsize, and a Fafnir and he employed a chauffeur called Bates. These were reported on very fully by his son, Alec, in early copies of the Bowdon Sheaf [issue 2, 1984].

As a photographer Samuel made his own plates and lantern slides, including those taken on his travels in South Africa, Jamaica, as well as those in this country, and he was a successful pioneer of colour photography in the early years of this century. He also experimented with x-ray and helped a local doctor to locate a foreign body in the arm of a patient, but it was in astronomy that he was the most successful, being elected a Fellow of the Royal Astronomical Society, and building a well equipped observatory at his house with the very latest instruments available at the time, and lecturing widely on the subject. He also occasionally preached at local chapels.

Samuel died from bronchitis on 20th January 1932 in his ninety third year, after seventy five years in business, his wife dying eight years later on the 28th August 1940.

Society Notes

Members will be interested in the latest publication of a book entitled "Schools in Victorian Bowdon" by Myra Kendrick. Extensively illustrated with contemporary photographs and well researched, the book is immensely interesting and is on sale in local book shops or from the author.

Would readers please note that articles and illustrations in the Bowdon Sheaf are covered by copyright and cannot be reproduced without the permission of the writer or illustrator concerned.

On May 14th, this year, 21 members of the Society paid an evening visit to Chester and after a brief guided visit to the Booth Mansion, they were given a talk on Chester Silver at the Ridgway Gallery at the Grosvenor Museum. This was followed by a visit to the Roman section of the Museum and the Art Gallery to see the recent oil painting of Canon Ridgway, after whom the Silver collection is named. Canon Ridgway, as former Vicar of Bowdon and founder member of the Bowdon History Society, had planned to join the visit, with Mrs Ridgway, but they were prevented from doing so at the last moment.

An article on the Booth Mansion will appear in a future issue of the Bowdon Sheaf.

R.T.

Twenty-four members of the Bowdon History Society were warmly welcomed at Capesthorne Hall on the evening of June 26th. Our most informative guide described the building's vicissitudes over the centuries and showed us round the newly refurbished rooms. The descent of the ownership of the hall (Davenports, by marriage, from the mid-eighteenth century) is cleverly shown in the arrangement of the family portraits in the saloon. Among the many interesting contents, I have space to pick out just a few. I recall the wonderful early seventeenth century embroidered bed canopy on which Dame Dorothy Davenport spent sixteen years; Alan Ramsay's portrait of Rousseau, who spent several years as the guest of his admirer, Richard Davenport, the guardian of a future owner of Capesthorne, and the face of Mr Gladstone (a political enemy of a late nineteenth century Bromley Davenport) portrayed as the felon with a rope round his neck, which was the Davenport crest, signifying their centuries-old jurisdiction over Macclesfield Forest.

The visit ended with the chapel, transformed in 1884 by William Bromley Davenport's widow into a memorial to him. Most striking is a large, glittering mosaic, based on Giotto's ‘ Dormition of the Virgin’, then at Capesthorne (now in Washington), but curiously incorporating the likeness of the dead man. Finally, we wandered in the attractive gardens and absorbed the tranquillity of the park and its lake in the late evening light.

M.C.

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The Tenant of Bowdon Hall and the ‘Great Cordial Elixir’

In writing in Bowdon Hall and its People of George Edmonds, absentee tenant of the hall in the first half of the eighteenth century, I had to confess that his activities and personal life in London were something of a mystery. His accounts (in the Dunham Massey archive) for business done in the 1740s and early 1750 are for Thomas Walton, house steward to the Earl of Warrington, and, occasionally, for the Earl himself, revealed that he moved in the financial world of the City of London, in particular making investments in government loan stock, but little else emerged.

A recurring feature of these accounts, however, was the ordering and sending to Walton, and twice to the Earl's daughter, Lady Stamford, of an item called 'Stoughton's Elixir'. This came by the three dozen at £1. 7s. 0d. and was, as I commented, 'clearly a prized remedy’. After George Edmonds' death, his widow rectified Walton's account for the elixir and later, sent him a box of Stoughton by carrier. Following up this intriguing name, with help from the Guildhall Library and the Royal Pharmaceutical Society, I discovered the story of the 'elixir' and, with additional research at the Public Record Office, a personal connection between George Edmonds and the Stoughton family.

The story of the Elixir gives an interesting and amusing side-light on eighteenth century life. It is told in lively and scholarly detail by the late Raymond E.M. Davies in an article in The Pharmaceutical Journal (19 March, 1988) on 'Dr Richard Stoughton and his Great Cordial Elixir'. Richard Stoughton was an apothecary, in practice first at the sign of the Unicorn in Southwark and then across the river in the City of London in Bartholomew Lane, off Threadneedle Street, near the Royal Exchange. He began making and selling his 'elixir' about 1690 and by 1708, according to his own advertisement, many of his retail customers were selling 40 to 50 dozen bottles of it a year. It was sold at coffee houses and booksellers in London and also in Dublin and Edinburgh. In 1712, to protect his interests, he obtained a patent for what was known as 'Stoughton's Elixir Magnum Stomachicum, or the Great Cordial Elixir'. For those interested in its 22 secret ingredients, Mr Davies lists likely ones and remarks that its popularity must have gained from the fact that it could be taken in various drinks, including beer, ale, tea and white wine. Although the elixir was primarily for disorders of the stomach, the advertisements claimed its efficacy for numerous ailments, and from about 1730 its fame and market spread to America.

Richard Stoughton died a wealthy man in 1716 leaving his patent, which still had ten years to run, to his widow. She died in 1720, also wealthy, leaving the patent equally to her two sons, Richard, the elder and Aram. Aram died in 1722, but when, in 1726, the patent expired, his widow, Elizabeth, staked her claim to produce the elixir against that of her brother-in-law. Each claimed (as did another female claimant) to be the only one with the true formula and capable of supplying the genuine article. Mr Davies quotes at length the lurid charges and counter-charges made in competing advertisements in The London Journal in the summer of 1726. Richard Stoughton complained of 'ignorant Pretenders who now swarm about the Royal Exchange and Bartholomew Lane', 'artfully placed' near his own old warehouse to mislead 'a Gentleman's Servant that is sent to buy my ELIXIR'.

The focus of our interest is Elizabeth, widow of Aram Stoughton. She claimed, in an advertisement in the same paper, to supply from her warehouse near the Royal Exchange in Threadneedle Street according to another source the elixir made from the original recipe, with the help of a servant formerly employed in the business. According to her, first Aram and later she herself were co-partners with Richard, but when the patent expired, he wished to have a monopoly of the production, thereby injuring her and her children. Richard responded by casting personal aspersions on Elizabeth, which may or may not have had any foundation. He referred to 'the old tatter'd Station my Brother found her in' and to her sudden remarriage, after his death, to one, Moore, whom Aram 'mortally hated'. Moore had died in 1726, and Richard suggested that she was advertising as much for a third husband as for trade.

By this time you may well be asking what this rather sordid squabbling has to do with the tenant of Bowdon Hall, George Edmonds of Clifford's Inn, London. At the time of writing on Bowdon Hall, I knew only that he had a wife named Elizabeth, who was apparently not local, and a daughter, Mary, born about 1735. Although the date of his death (25 November 1752) was known, no will or probate record has been found and no place of burial. Now most of these problems have been solved. Despite a reference to 'executors' in the Dunham Massey papers, it turns out that George Edmonds died without leaving a will. Letters of administration were granted by the Prerogative Court of Canterbury to his widow, but, unfortunately, these are much less informative than a will. However, they do reveal that he was of the parish of St Bartholomew near the Royal Exchange, the area of the Stoughton warehouses. The registers of this church, in Bartholomew Lane, contain the record of his burial on 3 December 175 2, but no other information about him. Mary, the daughter of George and Elizabeth Edmonds was baptised in the same church on 22 June 1735, but neither there nor elsewhere has a record of her parents' marriage been found.

Before January, 1755 Elizabeth Edmonds had also died, probably not long before. She, too, died intestate and in that month grant of administration of her goods, chattels and credits was made to John Conrad Heinzelman, the husband and guardian of her daughter, Mary, who was still a minor. He also completed the administration of George Edmonds' estate, which his widow had left unfinished. The grant describes Elizabeth as of the parish of St Peter-le-Poer, a church in Broad Street, (forking off Threadneedle Street), where, incidentally, her first grandchild,

Sophie Heinzelman, was baptised in July, 1756. Most interestingly, her name is given as 'Elizabeth Edmonds formerly Stoughton': Moore was omitted presumably because the marriage was short-lived and of less importance than her connection with the Stoughtons and the elixir. The document records that her son, Samuel Stoughton (her last child by Aram), had renounced any claim on her property, so that it went to her daughter by George Edmonds.

Although Elizabeth Edmonds' name had been put into a lease of Bowdon Hall in the spring of 1734, there is nothing to suggest that she ever came to Bowdon from London. However, as a result of our knowledge of his marriage to Aram Stoughton's widow, George Edmonds has a more solid London background than before. Even after the expiry of the patent, Elizabeth must have brought with her a share of the profitable trade in her father-in-law's invention. It appears, too, that George Edmonds went to live in the locality (the parish of St Bartholomew near the Royal Exchange) where the Stoughton family carried on business. Here he was in the financial and mercantile heart of the City: close at hand were the Royal Exchange and the Bank of England, the great handler of government borrowing and public investment in it. To his role as London man of business and finance for his associates in Cheshire, George Edmonds added that of supplier of his wife's famous medicinal remedy. It would be interesting to know if surviving accounts show any other purchasers in Cheshire.

Sources:

Raymond E M Davies, *Dr Richard Stoughton and his Great Cordial Elixir*, The Pharmaceutical Journal (19 March 1988)

Proprietaries of other Days, The Chemist and Druggist, 106 (1927)

M Cox, P Kemp and R Trenbath, *Bowdon Hall and its People*, (1994)

Public Record Office, Prerogative Court of Canterbury Grants of Letters of Administration:-

George Edmonds	PRO B 6/128 f. 226
	PRO B 6/130 f. 229
Elizabeth Edmonds	PRO B 6/131 f. 177

My warm thanks are due to the staffs of the Guildhall Library, the Reader Services Department of the Public Record Office and the Royal Pharmaceutical Society and its Museum.

Marjorie Cox

Peel Causeway: A Populous Place

In a local newspaper, on the 23rd September 1891, the following report was published:-

PEEL CAUSEWAY
THE CHESHIRE MIDLAND HOTEL.

On Monday.at the Altrincham Petty Sessions, before Mr, Joynson, Mr. W. H. Higgin, QC., and other magistrates, Mr. Hockin, solicitor, on behalf of Richard Brundrett, landlord of the Cheshire Midland Hotel, Peel Causeway, made an application, under section 32 of the Licencing Act, 1874, that the justices should declare the Peel Causeway district a populous place.—Mr, Higgin: I suppose this Court has only to recommend to the Licencing Committee, which meets at Knutsford on October 5th Mr. Hockin: Yes, it is merely for this Court to express an opinion that it considers the Peel Causeway district a populous place. Continuing, Mr. Hockin said that though population of the district had grown enormously, and at present it was over 2,000.—Mr. Higgin: A district is deemed a populous place when the population is over a thousand?—Mr- Hockin: Yes. Mr. Hockin further stated that in addition to the large population, the traffic at the railway station at Peel Causeway was very large. The station master had prepared some figures, which showed that in June 9,954 passengers asked for and received tickets at the station, in addition to holders of contract tickets. In July, the number was 11,935, and in August 10,705. At the present time, the Cheshire Midland Hotel was the only fully licensed house in the neighbourhood, and, because the district had not been declared a populous place, the hotel had to be closed at ten o'clock at night, The inconvenience, in consequence, was very great, as farmers attending the Cheshire markets usually returned to Peel Causeway by the 10.21 train. Others did not return from Manchester until the 11.5 p.m. train. A considerable number of people who lived in the neighbourhood attended the concerts in Manchester, and in the evening the stables at the Cheshire Midland Hotel were filled. But at 10 o'clock, the landlord was compelled to turn out the horses,who, together with the drivers, were compelled to stand at the station, in all sorts of weather, until the arrival of the last train.—Mr. John Macnamara, surveyor, produced a plan of the district, and spoke to the rapid growth of the population. There was no other licensed house in the area shown on the plan.—Mr. W. II. Hadfield, assistant overseer for Hale, said that in 1874 the population of the district was 875, and in 1881 1,385. There was now a population of 2,005.—Mr. David I Hewes, station-master, Peel Causeway, gave evidence as to the ' traffic at the station.—The Chairman said the Bench had heard sufficient evidence to justify them to express an opinion that by reason of the density of the population, the Peel Causeway district- should be declared a populous place.

Bowdon Church Silver
by Maurice Ridgway

An early foundation of Saxon origin and later linked with the Benedictine Priory of Birkenhead with which it remained until the Reformation when the advowson was vested in the newly created Diocese of Chester (1541) with whom it remains. From the 19th century onwards its large parish has been sub-divided into numerous separate parishes.

The church has been connected with the occupants of Dunham Massey Hall from an early period, and the private chapel of the Earls of Stamford at the Hall remains one of the most interesting 18th century examples in the country and retains all its early 18th century plate complete with furnishings, most of it by the Huguenot goldsmith Isaac Liger.

At Bowdon, where a fine array of plate existed until the Reformation, gifts were still being made, or were attempted by will as late as 1559 when Robert Booth of Dunham further endowed the church of Bowdon with a 'sylver challice with a patten and shillings of money... to be contynewally prayed for their...' Whether his wishes ever materialised at this uncertain period in history is not known, but it is interesting to note the words 'challice and patten' being used in the reign of Elizabeth, when the more common descriptions Communion Cup and plate (or cover) were being encouraged.

It seems that the church at Bowdon was re-equipped with silver in 1688 by William Meredith of Ashley Hall (then in the parish) and Mary Meredith his wife who came from Lincolnshire. This information is gleaned from two remaining pieces now at Carrington (St George), and will be referred to in detail under that church. They bear inscriptions to this effect, along with the additional inscription that William Meredith's gifts were later 'bought by Mary Countess of Stamford and given for the use of St Georges Carrington in 1759 when that church was built by her family and endowed under Bowdon. How much she paid for them and what Bowdon did with the purchase money is not known. A Benefactor's board in Bowdon Church says that in 1744 Oliver Bellefontaine Gent gave to buy gilt plate for ye Communion table £105. This was a very large sum of money and when bought must have made redundant the earlier plate given by William Meredith referred to above, hence the desire to dispose of it and the willingness of the Countess of Stamford to purchase it for Carrington.

Bowdon Parish registers provide the additional information that:

'Mr Oliver Belfountaine came from Dunham Hall and was buried in Bowdon on June 5.1744. But no plate exists at Bowdon belonging to this bequest nor to this decade. The plate given by Mr Bellefontaine remained at Bowdon for only a short time. Adam's Weekly Courant published at Chester for May 10 1774 reads...

Whereas on Thursday Night the 5th instant May 1774, the Parish Church of Bowden, in this county, was broke open, by some Person or Persons unknown, who stole thereout the following plate... viz:

two large Silver flagons holding three wine quarts or more
two silver cups
two silver salvers one large and one small all double gilt and engraved underneath 'The Gift of Oliver Bellefountaine, Whoever shall apprehend the offender or offenders shall upon Conviction receive a reward of Twenty Guineas from the Church Wardens of the said parish.
NB. All silversmiths etc, are desired to seize the above plate, if offered for sale, and to take up the persons offering and send information thereof to the above Church Wardens'.

The plate was not recovered and it was replaced by a similar set the following year. One piece (if it was at the time part of the church plate) escaped the attention of the thieves as no Alms dish is listed amongst the missing plate nor carries the Bellefountaine inscription. This is a very large silver gilt alms dish weighing over 83 ounces and 18 inches in diameter and carries the London assay date for 1712/13. (see No. 1)

No further plate was added to the Parish Church until 1910 when a gold chalice and paten (copied from a 13th century chalice from Iceland and now in the Victorian and Albert Museum, London) was given to the Church by the Gore family in memory of Archdeacon Gore.



Bowdon Parish Church

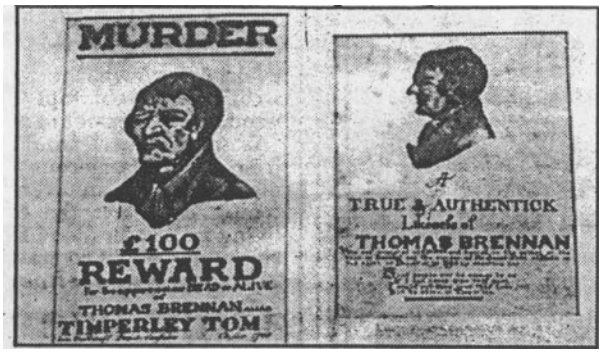
Timperley Tom: The Local Highway Man

In the late 18th Century Bowdon, and neighbouring districts, were subjected to much violence and robbery, particularly in the vicinity of the Chester Road. One of the most notorious of these criminals was Thomas Brennan, known as Timperley Tom, whose highway robberies caused fear for those travelling in the region.

Posters, similar to the two illustrated here, were circulated in the hope of bringing about his arrest which was eventually accomplished when he was brought to trial for the murder of Mr Jacob Pitt, of Hale on the night of December 30th, 1790. He was duly found guilty and executed at Chester, after which his body was exhibited hanging from a tree at Bucklow Hill with the warning:-

> "Good people now be warned by me If I had never done this deed
> I would not hang upon this tree But be alive in Timperlie."

It is claimed that his ghost still haunts the Pelican Inn, at Timperley, to this day.



The Bowdon Sheaf

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18th Century Carrier

The Preston Carrier which plied between the Swan with Two Nicks in London and the North West of Great Britain in the 1770s, travelling through Bowdon, would be very similar to the one depicted in this drawing by Thomas Rowlandson.

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William Wood of Bowdon: 'the chimney boys' friend'

William Wood of Bowdon: champion of 'climbing boys'(or boy chimney sweeps) was the subject of a short talk I gave many years ago to the Bowdon History Society. Recently, after further research, especially on his life in Manchester, I have published an article on him under that title in the Transactions of the Lancashire and Cheshire Antiquarian Society. Vol. 91, a volume celebrating the ninetieth birthday of the distinguished local historian, the late Mr Norman Dore. My purpose here is not to repeat the contents of that detailed article (off-prints of which are available), but to concentrate on Wood in Bowdon, where he spent his lengthy retirement, the period of his most active campaigning on behalf of the climbing boys and of his association with Lord Shaftesbury.

You will, doubtless, know that as a result of the increasing replacement of wood by coal from the late seventeenth century, more draught was needed for burning and so narrower flues, nine to twelve inches square. To clean these domestic chimneys and also the flues of steam engine boilers in factories, there seemed no alternative to the use of small boys (even some girls), some as young as six. The narrow, sooty, sometimes twisting flues caused cancerous growths, injury and sometimes death by suffocation or burning. Prom the later eighteenth century protest was sporadic and legislative control ineffective. Hope of abolition came with the invention, perfected in 1828, of 'the machine' - jointed rods, screwed together, with a brush at the end. Protest gained momentum and led to Shaftesbury's Act of 1840, for which Wood is said to have campaigned. Its prohibition of climbing chimneys by anyone under twenty-one and apprenticeship to a sweep under the age of sixteen should have ended the use of boys, but enforcement lay not with the police, but with concerned individuals, and was weak in country and manufacturing areas. In consequence, Shaftesbury spent the next thirty-five years trying, vainly, to get Parliament to improve the working of its own law. Not until 1875 was this achieved by licensing sweeps and making the police responsible for prosecutions. Wood was active in this cause from the 1830s to his death in 1868, but did not live to see the end of the cruel practice.

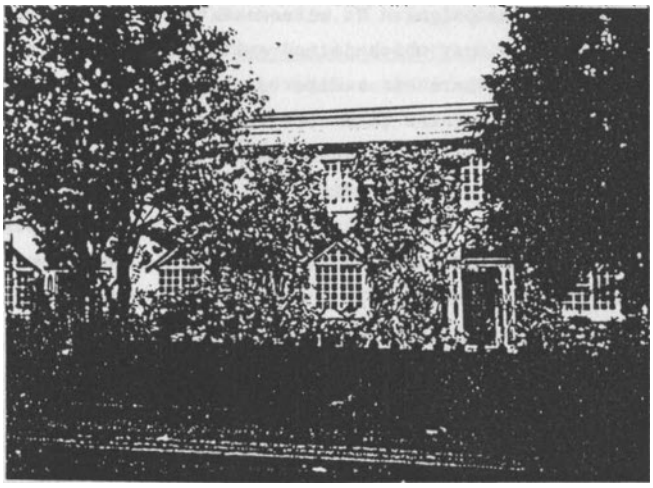
Wood was born in Bolton in 1782. His father, a Methodist, was on the lay, anti-establishment wing in the 1790s and he himself inclined to that side. He played prominent role in the Association movement of the 1830s, which bitterly split the Methodists and brought him close to the Manchester Dissenters. From early in the century until 1843, he was a woollen merchant in Manchester, and, like many merchants, still lived in the centre of the increasingly industrialised town, in Newton Street, off Piccadilly.

A horrific personal experience about 1826 began Wood’s involvement in the campaign. He witnessed the death of a boy who was climbing a chimney which joined another at the top and fell down the latter, where there was a fire burning. From then he worked to introduce 'the machine' to Manchester. Many of the sweeps were hostile to him and about 1834 played a malicious trick on him, covering his chimney with a slate to make it smoke and so discredit the machine'.

About 1843, Wood retired from business and by 1847 had come to Bowdon. Two of his daughters joined the Bowdon Downs Congregational Church in September, 1847, and he himself joined a year later. In the earliest edition of Balshaw's Local Directory, probably of 1847, he appears at Willow Cottage (a detached house, still to be seen) on the south side of Sandy Lane, later Stamford Road, where his daughter ran a seminary. Sales of land by the Assheton Smiths (of Ashley Hall) in 1840-41 in what is now the area of Stamford, East Downs and Richmond roads had led to rapid mid varied building development, and Willow Cottage was only a few years old. Wood's household in Newton Street in 1841 had consisted (in the absence of the parents) of five daughters and a son, plus one servant. In 1851, at Willow Cottage, there were himself, his wife, two unmarried daughters (both schoolmistresses), a warehouseman son, another daughter and her Canadian-born husband and the same servant. By the later 1850s Wood had moved across the road to another rented house, then called Oakfield Cottage, which also still stands, seeming externally little altered. There in the 1861 census he was, curiously, entered as 'informer against chimney sweepers', but this was replaced by 'gentleman'. Living there, too, were his wife, his two daughters, a fourteen-year old Frank Redpath, born in Montreal, (presumably a grandson) and the same servant.

Tracing the history of Oakfield Cottage is a complex business and I am indebted to Mr J.J. Rowe, Q.C. and Judge Hart for help. The building, originally one house, later two, is quite different in material and style from its first new neighbours, Oak Terrace and Sunny Bank. It is of rendered brick, small-windowed and 'Gothick' and is pretty certainly the house shown as N o . 27 on the Tithe Map of 1838 and so pre-dates its neighbours, probably by a good deal.

Until the late 1850s it had only one occupant, Mrs Elizabeth Holland, but by 1858/9 she and Wood were in what Balshaw called Oak Cottages, but later directories correctly called Oakfield Cottages. Wood lived in the lower of the two houses until 1868, his daughter, Martha, until 1900 and her niece until 1912. From then the lower house was called The Cottage and the upper one Oakfield Cottage.



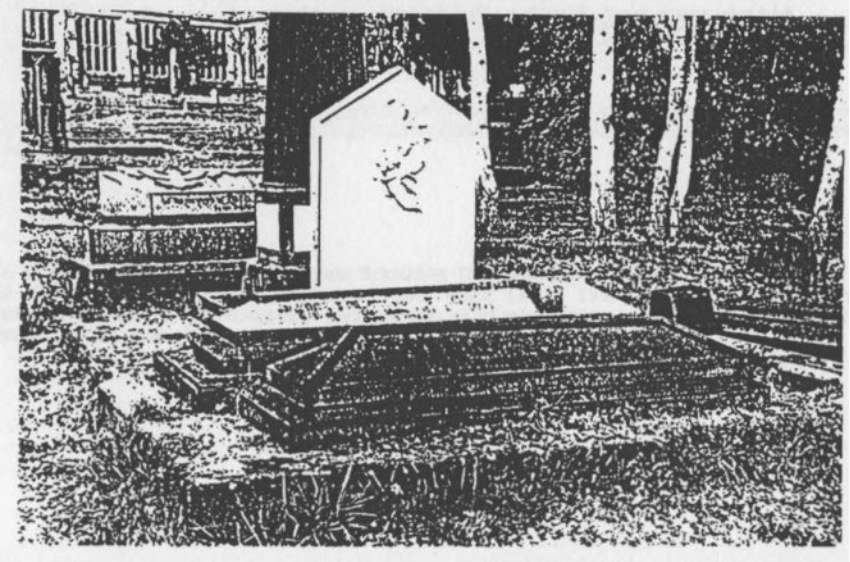
It is from these two houses in Bowdon, Willow Cottage and Oakfield Cottage, now The Cottage, that William Wood carried on his indefatigable campaign against the use of climbing boys, which earned him, the title of ‘the principal promoter in Manchester’ of the cause. To the author of Chimney Sweepers and their Friends, a pamphlet published in 1869, the year after Wood's death, and adorned with an engraving of him with a small sweep (from a photograph taken in Manchester) he seemed irreplaceable.

Wood's activities, even at an advanced age, were not confined to the Manchester area. He had large placards stating the law put up at main railway stations all over the country; he bearded individuals, including magistrates, who allowed the use of climbing boys in their own homes; he visited sweeps' houses on Sundays to check if the boys had been washed; he brought prosecutions, at his own expense, in Staffordshire and he even wrote to Queen Victoria about a chimney at Windsor Castle swept by a boy. In 1853, as one of fifteen witnesses called by Shaftesbury, he gave evidence before a Select Committee of the House of Lords about the iniquities of the practice and the merits of 'the machine', and was cross-questioned hostilely of Lord Stanley of Alderley. Later, in the House of Lords in 1864, Shaftesbury supported his case by quoting resolutions to renounce the use of boys, passed at a meeting of Manchester and Salford sweeps, chaired by Wood.

Even semi-rural Bowdon was no refuge. In 1853 Wood gave a vivid account of the local sweep, an ignorant, drunken man, who employed a lad and two boys of ten to twelve to do all the work. In vain he had tried to get a local man to use 'the machine'. He himself, and others in Altrincham and Bowdon used a 'mechanical' sweep from Manchester, but as he came by train, concerted arrangements were needed, not always easy. Some awkward social situations seem to lie behind his account of asking friends how they had their chimneys swept and being told that they yielded to the sweeps' persuasion that boys were more efficient: even Wood's own wife had wavered in 1834. More painful was his lament that it was unpleasant to inform against neighbours.

Wood's last appearance in the public arena was in 1862. Shaftesbury had secured the inclusion of boy sweeps in the large-scale Royal Commission on Child Labour of 1861, the occasion for Kingsley's The Water Babies. In his evidence, taken locally, Wood confessed to being an old man, his memory at times confused, and never having kept a diary, but he gave chapter and verse for cruel treatment in the Manchester area and deplored the behaviour of magistrates who failed to convict sweeps.

By now age was telling on Wood. In 1862, after twelve years he ceased to be a deacon of the Bowdon Downs Church. His wife died in 1862 and a daughter, Mary Hannah Brailsford, wife of a Methodist minister, in 1864, aged 51. He himself died on March 5th, 1868 at his home in Bowdon, in his 86th year. Movingly, his coffin was carried to the grave in Bowdon churchyard by six master sweeps from five different towns, their tears a tribute to his work to raise them from their degraded status.



The Wood family grave plot has two tombstones and a later headstone, one covers the graves of Wood, his wife, Grace, and his daughters, Mary Hannah and Martha, and, touchingly, of Sarah Midgley, '48 years faithful friend and servant in the family', who died in 1877. The other similar tombstone is that of his son, William, of Oakleigh, Dunham Massey, who died in April, 1891, and of his wife. The younger William Wood, also of Bowdon Downs Church, was active in the Provident Society and in Newtown Night School: he has as an epitaph one appropriate to his father, too 'Their works do follow them'.

The last burial in the family plot was of Wood's daughter, Miss Martha Wood, who died on March 5th, 1900, in her 89th year, according to The Altrincham and Bowdon Guardian of 10th March ‘one of the oldest ladies in Bowdon’. Owing to the destruction by enemy action in the war of the first seven years' issues of this paper in the British Library, we do not know if there was a tribute to Wood at the time of his death, but the account of Martha's funeral shows that her father was still remembered and valued locally. Her funeral account ran: 'She was the daughter of the late Mr William Wood, a Manchester merchant, who was known throughout the country from the fact that he was instrumental in getting an Act passed prohibiting boys from climbing chimneys. Mr Wood was familiarly known as "the chimney boys' friend".' What better epitaph could he have?

Sources are given in my article in the *Transactions of the Lancashire and Cheshire Antiquarian Society*, with the addition of information from Mr Rowe and Judge Hart and extracts from *The Altrincham and Bowdon Guardian,* on microfilm at Trafford Local Studies Unit.

Flight Lieutenant John Andrew Edward DFC
1914 - 1944

John Andrew Edward's family came to Bowdon during the 1920s and until about 1949, when his father, Harold Edward, retired from managership of Manchester Liners, lived at Newlands, Portland Road.

On 19 July 1914, barely a month before the outbreak of the first world war, John was born In Antwerp where his grandfather had a business. When, in August, the German army invaded Belgium, the family fled with the loss of all their possessions. After a period spent mainly In France, they settled in England, eventually arriving in Bowdon during the 1920s. This was John s home background for the rest of his life, although he was often away, first at Radley School and then in Henley-on-Thames, where he studied accountancy.

When the second world war began, John was in his mid-twenties. He Joined R.A.F. Bomber Command and became a member of Squadron 617 which, under Squadron Leader Guy Gibson, became famous for Its successful raid on the strategic Mohne Dam in the Ruhr, using Barnes Wallis's Invention, the 'bouncing bomb'. John, as Flight Lieutenant piloting a Lancaster bomber, took part In this raid and was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for his share in it. He received his award from King George VI, on 22 June 1943.

By that time he had completed his statutory minimum number of flying hours and could have retired from active service. He chose, however, to continue and on 24 June 1944, shortly after D Day, was taking part under Group Captain Leonard Cheshire in a raid on a V2 rocket launching pad near Wizernes in the Pas de Calais. These were high level daylight raids, as the bombs, also designed by Barnes Wallis and known as "tall boys" because of their shape, had to be placed with extreme accuracy. They were designed to pierce through the hillside to the V2 storage areas below.

On approaching the target John's Lancaster was hit by flak In the port wing and both port engines caught fire. The "tall boy" bomb did not explode as the plane crashed but penetrated two metres into the ground, John among other members of the crew parachuted out, but he and most of his crew were killed. There were three survivors.

John's body was found near St. Omer in a field owned by a local farmer, who negotiated with German authorities in the area for his burial, with two of his crew, In nearby Leulinghem village churchyard. There, in time, a memorial to the three British airmen was raised. The Edward family used to tell how once, when John was flying his Lancaster back to base from Manchester, he dipped over Bowdon and saluted his parents by "buzzing" their house in Portland Road.

MK May 1997

The writer acknowledges a debt to Paul Brickhill's *The Dam Busters*, first published in 1951, and Alan W. Cooper's *Beyond the Dams to the Tirpitz*, 1983.
Two members of the Edward family have checked the details and valuable first-hand information has been supplied by Mr. Gerrard Hobbs, one of the surviving members of John's crew.

The Bowdon Literary and Scientific Club

The Club was formed some short while after 1870. and was composed of a few acquaintances of similar tastes and sympathies who met at each others houses for discussions about literature and science. The first such meeting was held at the home of Alfred Simpson. The general format later adopted was for a short paper to be read, such as a review of a book, or the description of some new scientific discovery, followed by a five minute question time. Afterwards, the main topic of the evening consisted of a longer paper in which some original results of a study, enquiry or experiment would be presented. A table was also provided on which/members could display items of general interest. Later, the content of the evening's programme would be just one paper.

As time passed, the existence of the society became well known, so that others desired to join the club. As membership increased, it became impractical to meet in member's homes and the Bowdon Parish Room came into use. The society did not keep formal records before 1887, but after that time it is known that Dr Ransome, FRS, was president during 1887/8 and that for the sessions 1888-1890 and 1898-1901, Canon Wainwright held that position, and Mr W Noel Johnson in 1907. Other presidents included Dr P H Mules, Prof T D Hall, Messrs E J Sidebotham, W M Smith, F Smith and Dr Percy Withers. During the winter seasons, the club arranged a series of lectures in the Literary Institute in Altrincham, where the speakers included Richard Procter Whymper, Dr Mules, Dr Bridge, Dr Dallinger, and Sir Oliver Lodge.

To begin with, ladies only attended certain ordinary meetings by invitation, as certain subjects discussed at the meetings were not considered suitable for them, but gradually this feeling changed until they were admitted as members on an equal standing with the men.

The Club supported the beneficial nature of the local library and on the initiative of Prof Hall, a collection of reference books, covering subjects such as science and history, were bought and presented to the Free Library. The Club did not initiate the first library in the Altrincham area; this came about by the efforts of a different organisation; the Altrincham and Bowdon Literary Society in 1847. This society acquired premises in Well Lane (now Victoria Street), and used the rooms as a library and reading room. That same year the library was affiliated with the Lancashire and Cheshire Union of Mechanics and Literary Institutes. Such was the enthusiasm with which the library was received that two years later it became necessary to move to larger accommodation. By public subscription, new premises were built in George Street, costing some £800, designed by Mr Bailey and built on land donated by George Harry, 7th Earl of Stamford. The building provided a library, reading room, lecture room and three classrooms, and was opened on March 11th, 1853. Further enlargement was required in 1865, again paid for by public donations, the necessary amount this time being £1,066. In 1877, fire destroyed the lecture room, but this was rebuilt at a cost of £1,200, In 1887, the Local Board was persuaded to adopt the Free Libraries Act and the Trustees of the Board of Directors of the Literary Institution transferred their building and property over to the Board to create a Free Library. The buildings were then further enlarged on adjoining land and at a cost of £5,100. It was this Free Library that the Bowdon Literary and Scientific Club encouraged and supported with the collection of books. The total library stock amounted to some 5,400 books, so the addition of the Bowdon collection was a significant and important addition.

The Bowdon Sheaf

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ISSN-0265-816X

Archaeological Survey of Dunham Massey

Recent surveys, which included air photography, carried out on the Dunham Massey estate by Robert Woodside and Jeremy Milln, archaeologists to the National Trust, are producing very exciting results, including evidence of Bronze Age barrows, Iron Age farmsteads and Roman roads.

Examination of early maps indicate lost field systems and other documents suggest that there might have been three Medieval deer parks, as well as the one dating from the 14th Century.

The investigations, when complete, will assist in the future conservation programme of the National Trust, as well as help in the interpretation of the property, and members of Bowdon History Society await publication of the results of the investigations with very great anticipation. It will be of interest to know if any evidence is forthcoming regarding any castles which might have been built in Bowdon, other than the motte and bailey at Castle Hill, from which, historians inform us, the Normans launched their pincer movement attack to the South after the Battle of Hastings.

Claims have been made that a castle was sited at Dunham Massey Hall and that the ziggurat, or viewing mound, was a former motte, but this theory has been debunked as impractical by strategists, as the position was totally unsuitable for the defence of the main Chester road, and its crossing of the river, or for defending anything else of military importance. Further more the so-called moat at the Hall, by virtue of its proximity to the Bollin River, could be breached within a very short period of time by a few men with picks and shovels. Bodiam Castle, the only fortification to be built under similar conditions, caused such Royal disapproval and scandal that barons never dared to repeat this mistake again.

The Dunham Massey Sconces

In 1756 George Booth, 2nd Earl of Warrington, wrote "A Weakness of my Hand almost disables me to hold my pen". Over eighty years of age, and expecting the dissolution of his "old decaying life", he was putting his earthly affairs in order, which included, as he declared, "the Particular of my Plate & its Weight", which he had previously compiled and noted as being twenty-six and a half thousand ounces of silver.

This remarkable collection of silver had been acquired by the Earl after his marriage which brought him a dowry of £40,000. Unfortunately the Earl and Countess were totally incompatible and quarrelled and "lived in the same house as absolute strangers to each other at bed and board" resulting in him publishing a pamphlet advocating divorce on the grounds of incompatibility, something unheard of at that period of history.

Among the more important items listed in the Earl's "Particular" were a set of six sconces, or wall lights, which he had commissioned in 1730-1731 from Peter Archambo, a Huguenot goldsmith, for his Great Bedchamber at Dunham Massey Hall, and are one of the last sets to have been made before sconces became un- fashionable in the mid-18th Century.

Each sconce was engraved with the Earl's monogram and coronet and had a very large backplate, to reflect the light from the candle and was richly adorned with an individual treatment of the central panel, each one showing different mythological scenes, such as Diana surprised by Actaeon and Prometheus Bound. It has been suggested that the Earl probably identified himself with Actaeon, and his wife with the vengeful Diana.

One compensation which the Earl gained from his disastrous marriage other than a large fortune, was the birth of a daughter, their only child, who later inherited his estate when she had married Harry Grey, 4th Earl of Stamford.

The silver collection was eventually moved to Enville Hall, a Stamford estate in Leicestershire, where it passed to a different branch of the family, who sold it in 1921 for £3,100, but the 10th and last Earl of Stamford bought back a large part of the collection, which he returned to Dunham Massey Hall. He was however unsuccessful in his attempt to regain the sconces, two of which were sold at Sotheby's in 1990 for £1,155,000. Fortunately two further ones were withdrawn from auction and offered to the National Trust, to whom the estate, including the silver collection, had been bequeathed on the death of the tenth Earl.

The price of the two available sconces was considerably below the likely value on the open market but with assistance from Sotheby's, and help from benefactors, they were bought and returned to Dunham Massey Hall, after an absence of 140 years, and are now on display with the rest of this magnificent collection.

Bowdon Parish Church Tower

In a recently published book a plan was illustrated of Bowdon Parish Church which was erroneously noted as having a Victorian chancel and a Medieval tower. This is incorrect. Working drawings and specifications by the architect Brakspeare, together with reports, required the complete demolition of the old church and rebuilding of a new one, between 1859 and 1860, with the new tower moved slightly away from the position of the old one and using stone from a different quarry. The only feature retained from the Medieval church was the wooden ceiling to an aisle.

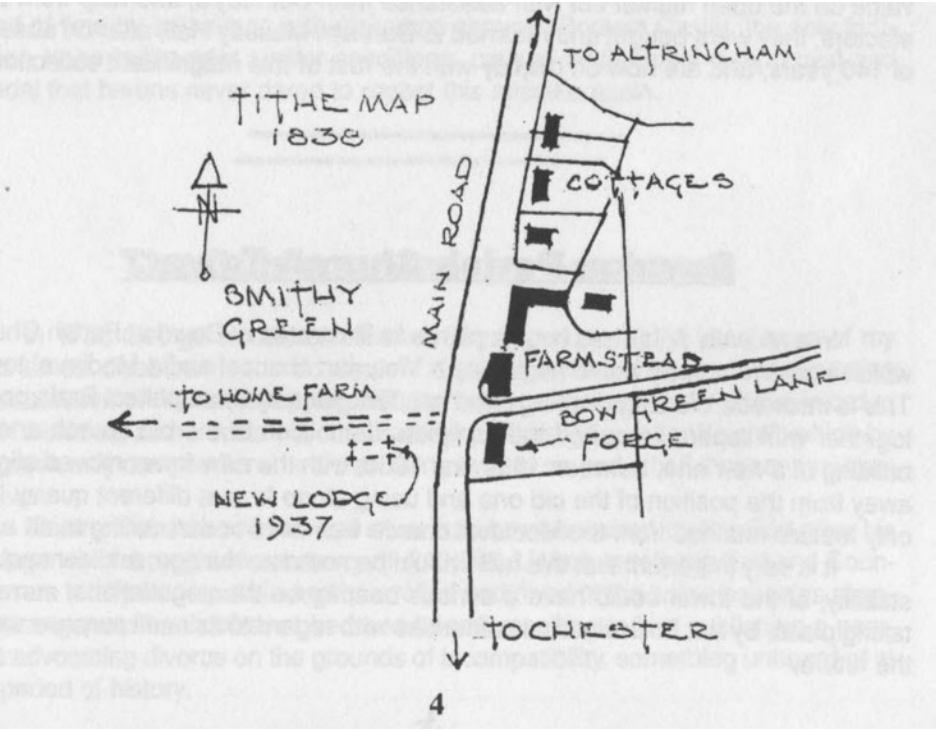
It is very important that this fact should be noted as the age, and consequent stability, of the tower could have a serious bearing on the negotiations, currently taking place, by the Ecclesiastical authorities with regard to its multi purpose use in the future.

Smithy Green
by Ronald Trenbath

To most people, who live in Bowdon, the main road, known variously as Dunham Road, the Chester Road or by its Roman name Watling Street, is a dangerous and over-used speed track, but prior to 1914 its character was totally different and children would play safely on it, only to be warned by their parents to be careful of the traffic when a horse drawn cart could be seen approaching in the distance.

Today the main feature of interest along the road is Bowdon Filling Station where one may purchase food, plants, magazines and confectionary, among a wide range of products, or read the temperature or buy petrol, but in earlier days the main feature was Smithy Green, or Street Head as it was sometimes called. This quiet settlement at the junction of Bow Green Lane and the main road was situated on the crest of a hill, the road falling steeply down to the river Bollin on the south side, and into a deep decline on the north side, prior to rising steeply towards Altrincham. It was in order to avoid this deep depression that carters and other travellers, from very early times, used Bow Green Lane as an easier ascent to Bowdon Village.

The lane was a very narrow ancient track overhung with damson trees, while the main road, descended to the south through a narrow ravine also darkened by overhanging trees and massed with ferns, ivy and primroses, a haunt for gypsies, vagrants and robbers, and not a place in which to linger after dark.



On the east side of the road were six cottages, a farmstead and a smithy which did a good farrier trade in connection with horses distressed in their travels and waggons, dog-carts and coaches requiring repairs. A horse trough which provided water for horses exhausted in the haul up to the crest of the hill, was only moved after the last war.

Opposite the smithy a drive lead up to the Home Farm and, lower down, towards the river, the main entrance to Dunham Massey Park was situated and it is not difficult to realize that Smithy Green must have been very isolated a hundred years ago, as the following extract from the Bowdon Parish Magazine for December 1894 graphically illustrates:-

MEETINGS AT STREET HEAD

> It may be of interest to those living in the more towny parts of Bowdon to know that an opportunity has been created for the clergy to draw together and to meet the cottagers and farm hands in the more distant parts of our parish, by the loan of a room in the farm of which Mr. Hall is the tenant. The apartment is not sumptuous; but it is clean, has a fire place, and is brilliantly lit up with oil lamps. Two meetings have already been held; and although the first was on a night strongly suggestive of the deluge and the second recalled the darkness of Egypt, the cottage and farm folk turned up nobly. There is not much change in country life; and merely to see one another all together; to listen together to a few words of cheer and sympathy; and to sing lustily together some well known hymn, does something to break the monotony of winter evenings, and to prevent a possible feeling of being left out in the cold.

One might wonder if the male cottagers and farm folk would not have been happier, and found greater cheer, if they had braved the road over the river and spent the evening at the Nag's Head, as it was known at the time.

In the 1930's the road, and bridge over the river, was greatly widened and realigned and a new lodge built at the entrance to the Home Farm. In December 1940 a German land mine, aimed probably at the bridge, destroyed the old lodge gate which was never rebuilt, due largely to a disagreement between Lord Stamford and the Local Planning Department, and so, apart from totally altered cottages and farmstead, little is left of the, perhaps too quiet, settlement on the periphery of the parish a hundred years ago.

Ale-house Keepers in 17th Century Bowdon
by Peter Kemp

The history of the two Bowdon inns, the "Griffin" and the later "Stamford Arms", has been researched and ably recorded in the past and since then evidence has come to light that there was an inn in 1761 "at the house of William Yarwood known by the sign of the Green Dragon in Bowdon, near Altrincham in Cheshire" (Harrops "Manchester Mercury" - Owen MSs, Manchester Central Library). Further research may reveal that the "Green Dragon" became the "Griffin", since a slight change of tail and rear feet on the sign would make the transition easy, or, maybe, the sign looked like a griffin already. The name change could be laid at the door of the new Victorian residents of Bowdon who possibly thought that the common pub name of "Green Dragon" was not suitable for their new mansion community. At this stage, we can only surmise.

So, where did people go for refreshment in Bowdon before that first known inn? Here there is evidence for the 17th century in the records of 'Alehouse Recognisances' at the Cheshire Record Office (QDL72/2/2, QDL72/2/4, QDU2/2/6 & 7). The licences are in Latin, taking the form of the 'binding over' formula used until recently by Court clerks, for people either to appear in Court or to keep the peace on pain of financial penalty. Some of the conditions they were bound over to keep were, not opening on the Sabbath, not to permit unlawful games, not to allow access by vagrants and wanderers, and to observe the local Court Leet and parish vestry regulations for maintaining order and respectability. All the entries follow the same form, which can be roughly translated thus: "Johes (John) Lether of the same [Bowdon] has acknowledged that he owes to our Lord the King ten pounds. Thomas Sanderson and Radus (Ralph) Devias both recognise that they owe to our Lord the King five pounds under the conditions set out above". Each principal is so named with the two sureties. A licence was easy to obtain unless the township had more than enough alehouses already.

In 1639, there were 7 licences granted to :- John Lether, Thomas Sanderson, Ralph Devias, Ralph Joanes, John Eaten, Roger Daniel and John Saracold. In Dunham Massey that same year, only 3 men were given licences :- James Birch, and John Lether and Ralph Devias, presumably the same pair who held Bowdon licences. In 1640 in Bowdon, there were 9 licensed premises belonging to the same people as in 1639 but with the loss of Roger Daniel and the addition of William Foxley, Thomas Goolden and Richard Rowlinson. The brewing and selling of beer and ale was often combined with another occupation since no apprenticeship was required for its skills, and home-grown barley would make the malt needed in the brewing. John Lether was a yeoman and butcher as well and had a house with a kitchen and 3 hearths where he lived with his wife and 3 children ; Thomas Sanderson was the parish clerk with a 4 hearth house for himself and his 3 children; and John Eaten was a yeoman who lived in a house with 5 hearths - all of them living in larger-than-average Bowdon houses. William Foxley was a gardener as well as being an alehouse-keeper.

Bowdon, with its population at that time of 150 contained in some 35 houses, of which nearly a quarter were alehouses, seems at first sight to have had more provision than was necessary. Ale brewing and selling was a profitable business even after the cost of the licence, and the prevalence of alehouses in Bowdon is not unexpected when the importance of the church with its large parish is considered. People who had walked or ridden from Carrington or Timperley or Baguley, all within the parish, to funerals, and baptisms, or even weddings, would need refreshment and a place to gather to discuss the event, to gossip and hear news, and generally to enjoy themselves. The alehouse provided this in the form of small beer for the children and strong ale for the men and women, and a room with forms and settles, with perhaps a fire for warmth in the larger alehouses kept by people like Lether, Eaten and Sanderson. There the gentry would mingle with the husbandmen and yeomen, smoking a clay pipe or two and drinking a few quarts of ale, while talking about their crops, the weather, market prices and other country interests. The people of Altrincham, with no church of their own, would have great need for this provision of refreshment and rest, especially after, say, carrying a coffin up the hill from Altrincham along the Narrows and Burying Lane [The Firs].

It is reasonable to assume that the alehouse with the best location in the centre of the village opposite the church and the school, and facing the open space used by the inhabitants for pastimes on Saints' days and holidays, became the inn now called the "Griffin".

Primaeval Bowdon
by A. T. Longbarn

The raised ground, later known as Bowdon Hill, which included present day Bowdon and part of Hale and Altrincham, is bound by the Bollin Valley to the south, the Mersey Valley to the north, the confluence of the two rivers to the west and Hale Moss and Lindow Moss to the east, all of which was originally marshland, with the result that Bowdon Hill was virtually an island surrounded by swamps known as the Great Mosses.

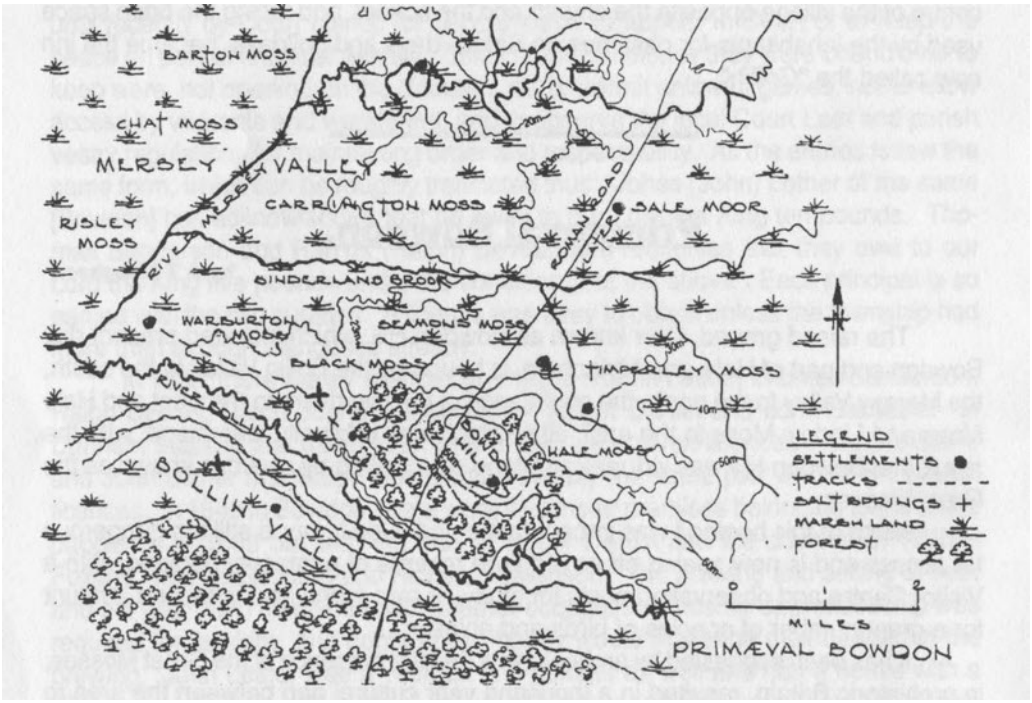
Much of this bogland was impenetrable and even today is still too dangerous for access and is now sealed off as a nature reserve of primaeval bogland, with a Visitor Centre and observation posts for studying rare fauna and flora, and a haunt for a great number of species of birds and animals.

It has been suggested by archaeologists that the presence of the Great Mosses, in prehistoric Britain, resulted in a thousand year cultural gap between the area to the south and that to the north. Islands of hard soil provided facilities for establishing settlements where tribesmen could build their huts and hunt and fish from dug- out wooden canoes which, with human and animal remains mummified by the peat, are occasionally revealed during excavations. Bowdon Hill and the higher ground to the south of the River Bollin was at the time covered in oak forest.

Originally the only point where these marshes could be crossed was at Warrington to the west and on higher ground of the Pennines to the east. The Romans constructed Watling Street to cross the area between Bowdon Hill and Stretford but it is thought that they always experienced trouble and that the preferred route was via Warrington. The Duke of Bridgewater curved his canal through firm ground running across the moss but Stevenson had to undertake a great deal of drainage and soil stabilisation before building the railway over Chat Moss.

The profusion of wild fowl on Black Moss and Seamons Moss provided sporting facilities for the Earls of Stamford and their guests in the Nineteenth Century, as recorded in the archives at Dunham Massey Hall.

Drainage and reclamation of the land for agriculture or development was carried out over a long period of time by Flemish emigrants and later German prisoners of war between 1914 and 1918. John Dalton, when teaching at Sale, collected methane gas from these mosses which he used in experiments prior to formulating his Atomic Theory, which ultimately gave rise to the creation of the nuclear industry and it is ironical that the British Atomic Energy Authority should now have its laboratories and headquarters based at Risley in the heart of the Great Mosses.



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The Bowdon Sheaf

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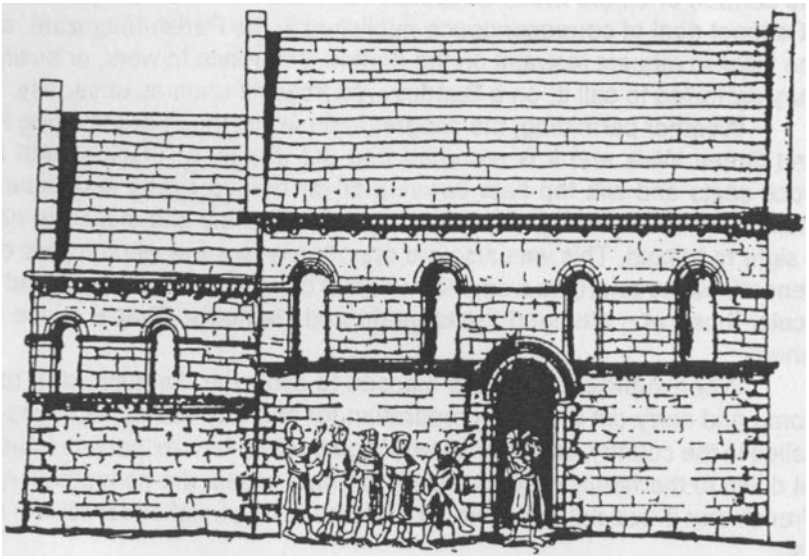


Probable appearance of north elevation of Bowdon Church in the 12th Century

Victorian Sundays in Bowdon

When three local senior citizens met recently the conversation turned to childhood memories of Bowdon prior to the last war, and then led to recalling events recounted to them by their grandparents sixty years prior to that period, with the result that a graphic description of life in late nineteenth century Bowdon was produced and in particular Victorian Sundays of that period.

The Sabbath was strictly observed at that time and followed a very set pattern. Everyone donned their Sunday best and prepared for church. The servants went to Saint John's, headed by the butler in those houses where one was employed, or otherwise by the most senior member of the staff, although it was not unknown for the master or mistress of the household to follow them in a horse drawn carriage and then to proceed to the Parish Church, to join their families for morning service, when he or she was satisfied that the staff were all safely at St. John's.

Families without transport walked to church, mother and father side by side with the children walking in pairs in front, the smallest pair in the lead and taller ones at the back.

After morning service the adult members of the congregation would gather at the Stamford Arms to await the Vicar who would join them in a glass of madeira or sherry. Conversation would be of a social nature or centred on the sermon or on the much discussed form of service, which was the subject of a great deal of correspondence published in the Parish Magazine, causing the vicar to request restraint on the matter. Reference to work, or business as they preferred to call it, on a Sunday was frowned upon as unseemly. Weather permitting, the congregation would then parade along the Firs and Green Walk and it is recorded that the display of fashion, with men in frock coats and silk top hats carrying silver topped canes accompanied by their wives in elegant tight-waisted dresses and coats and elaborate hats was a sight to behold. This was also the opportunity to meet worshippers of other denominations returning from their various churches and chapels, and in particular those who attended the large domed Methodist Chapel (since demolished).

When sufficient time had elapsed to allow the domestic staff to return home and carry out the final preparation for mid-day dinner, as it was always called in the country, each family would go back to their respective houses and sit down to the family meal at which, in many cases, the conversation was in French and it was not unknown for children to be punished for talking in English.

After dinner the younger children attended Sunday School while the more adult ones undertook good works and the parents rested or read books.

Meanwhile the servants washed up and prepared tea prior to evening service. Following this guests were often invited back for supper and an evening discussion, poetry reading or music while the younger children were put to bed and the older ones read improving books.

The evening often ended with the father of the family winding-up the hall clock and checking it against his hunter and then retiring after satisfying himself that the house was secure against intruders.

Chester News Sheet

In the Cheshire Record Office copies of the 18th Century News Sheets are preserved and at times placed on exhibition. These publications, which were printed in Chester, Liverpool and Manchester, were the forerunners of newspapers in Cheshire, and were based upon similar publications produced in Europe following the invention of printing presses.

Printing had been very slow to become established in England and Wales due, in the first instance, to Caxton holding the monopoly on printing which limited its use mainly to Westminster.

To counter this German printers set up presses in other parts of England until the Worshipful Company of Stationers introduced restrictions upon printing in the provinces which were upheld by Star Chamber, with the result that news sheets had to be printed in English in the Netherlands and shipped to this country.

As these publications contained mainly foreign news they were of interest to only a very limited section of the community whose social or business interests had strong connections with Europe.

Illegal presses were often set up here, and proprietors were fined for printing unlawful publications, as the authorities were concerned that they might incite opposition. Cromwell, when he assumed powers of dictatorship, exerted great restrictions on printing to be continued after the Restoration until, with only a brief period of freedom, the end of the 16th century. There were a few limited exceptions to the ban however such as the Oxford and Cambridge University presses, which held privileged positions with the authorities.

Following the end of censorship printers were free to publish, and in 1695 the Stamford Mercury was introduced as a regular news sheet to be followed by similar publications produced in Worcester, Shrewsbury and Liverpool, but they were not always a viable proposition as readership was limited due to widespread illiteracy.

Production was expensive not only because of the initial cost of printing, but there was an application of a 50% tax, with the result that many printers only printed news sheets when there was a shortage of work.

In 1712 Edward Ince set up a press in Chester, and realizing a great potential for printed matter in Wales began printing in Welsh, as well as in English, and a similar press in Shrewsbury developed a flourishing trade in Welsh publications.

In 1721 William Cook started printing the Chester Weekly Tatler having been previously fined £10 for printing without permission, and in 1730 Roger Adams produced a weekly journal in Chester and Manchester which developed a wide following throughout Cheshire.

Little is known about Adams' origin but it is known that he married the daughter of a Chester chemist and had a large family, who joined his printing business, although they often had long periods of disagreement. He was how- ever eventually made a freeman of the City. One of his sons walked from Chester to London at the age of 87 and eventually died in Chester in his nine- ties.

These news sheets now have an artistic appeal due to their rustic simplicity, and are often used for decoration. Many of the early sheets had interesting advertisements for the sale of property, and timber from woodlands. News Sheets developed into newspapers and later diversified into national and local newspapers when education became more universal, and wider literacy followed.

Political factions produced news sheets, and papers were edited to favour their own particular policies and often contained cartoons depicting public figures (such as the Prince Regent) in unfavourable poses. Victorian morality and prudery however brought improvements to the standard of journalism for a long period of time, although the practice of manipulating public opinion gradually returned.

The tax on papers continued however, and in the 19th century Heywood, the Manchester newsagent, went to prison rather than collect the tax payable on the newspapers he sold. Queen Victoria refused to visit the city after he became mayor until she "forgave" Mancunians when they erected the monument to Prince Albert in front of the town hall. The fight for the right to print and publish in the early period was hard won, and it is distressing that current abuse of the right is now leading readers to wish for freedom from the press rather than the freedom of the press.

Scouting at Dunham Park

Scouting started in the local area in 1908-9, when Dr Vernon Stocks and his brother, Arnold, formed the first Hale Troop and at the same time, Mr T. Plant, having read about the proposal in a Scouting Magazine, by popular request, formed the 1st Broadheath Troop. Further troops were formed, including the 1st. Bowdon, known as 'the Earl of Stamford's Own Troop'. In 1922, the first mass gathering of Scouts, the Prince of Wales Rally, took place in the grounds of the Crystal Palace. Cubs and Scouts from 1st. Bowdon took part and joined the march past and salute to the Prince and the Chief Scout, Lord Baden Powell.

During the 1920's, the 1st. Bowdon, together with 6th Altrincham, spent many weekend camps in Dunham Home Park. The south side of the drive was allocated as the summer Camp Site with a good number of bell tents set up on a permanent basis, this being a special gift from the Earl to his 1st Bowdon Troop, the 'Earl's Own Troop'. From 1922, the north side of the drive was used by the S.E. Lane's. Scouts and Rovers for Woodcraft activities and Wood Badge Training Courses, a peppercorn rent being charged for its use. Each year such courses and Rover Meets were held on five weekends with attendances of over 400 each time. The administration for such gatherings was taken over by 1st. Hale Troop.

Twenty one years after the founding of the Scouting movement, in 1929, a celebration was organised in the form of the first World Jamboree, which took place at Birkenhead; the venue being the largest public park in England, Arrowe Park; again a contingent of local Scouts attended, including members of 1st. Bowdon. Fifteen thousand Scouts attended from this country and a similar number from the Dominions and foreign countries. Altogether forty two countries were represented.

Nearer home in 1929, a Scout building was opened at the Scout Camp Site which had been set up in Dunham Park by the S.E. Lancashire Scouts for their Wood Badge training courses involving potential Scout leaders from the Lancashire and Cheshire area. Lord Stamford was a keen supporter of the Scouting movement and indeed, was the area's first President. On many occasions, when he had guests at the Hall, he would request that he bring them round the camp and have afternoon tea. On more than one occasion, Baden Powell would be a special guest and it would have been of great interest to him to see the Rover one man tents pitched as part of the Wood Badge Training Course. It was after one such visit, that the local Scouts wrote to him, requesting a Woodcraft Training area for his own Altrincham Association. Again, Lord Stamford released some land for a training area at a peppercorn rent. The wood between the canal and the park was allocated for woodcraft, a field

at the edge of the River Bollin for bridge building and swimming, while canoeing and camping took place in a private area adjoining the canal. Unfortunately this happy arrangement came to an end just a year later when the canal burst its banks and flooded the camp site. It took the canal company nearly two years to repair the damage and because the rebuilding involved narrowing the canal, canoeing became impossible. Since the estate was bequeathed to the National Trust, a similar cooperation has existed between themselves and the Scouting Movement, enabling camping to continue at the Park.

Information supplied by Arthur T Hilliker of Hale

The late Dr John Wilkinson

Dr John Wilkinson the eminent haematologist, venerated for his pioneer work, who died on the 13th August 1998, at the age of 101, will be remembered for entertaining members of Bowdon History Society at his home, Mobberley Old Hall, when he shewed them, among other items of interest, his white peacocks and black swans. The highlight of the visit however was the reconstructed 16th Century apothecary shop, which he had assembled over a period of 80 years, and which was housed in a windowless, securely constructed outbuilding with a bank vault door, to fulfil insurance requirements, as the collection was valued at over a million pounds.

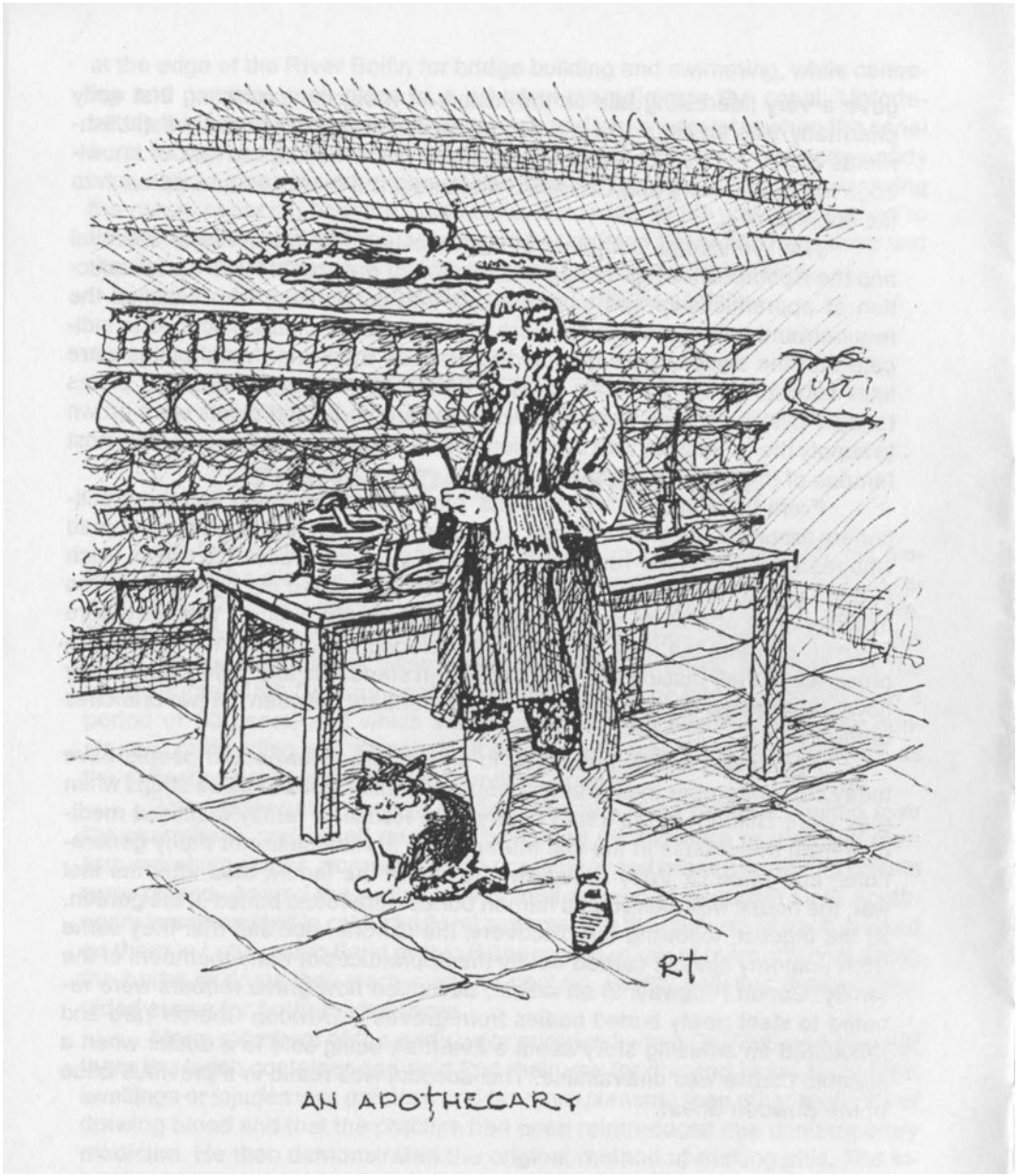
The traditional dragon (a stuffed alligator) hung from the ceiling over the centrally placed bench on which brass and earthenware pestles and mortars, weighing scales, porcelain leech containers and brass pill making boards were placed. Around the walls shelves held dozens of porcelain Delft apothecary jars decorated in colourful floral patterns with the contents of each marked on them in Latin, using florid gothic lettering and many of them still containing the herbs or drugs they were made to contain. Highly polished drawers provided space for further substances.

Many members of the party were surprised when Dr Wilkinson shewed them the leech container and said that their use for drawing blood away from swellings or injuries was painless and far more pleasant than other methods of drawing blood and that the practice had been reintroduced into contemporary medicine. He then demonstrated the original method of making pills. The ingredients were mixed together to form a dough-like substance which was rolled onto a brass grating attached to a board. This was then left to harden after which the grating was removed leaving the newly formed pills, which were then coated with gold dust for the more affluent and important patients, with icing sugar for the less rich and left untreated for the poor. Dr Wilkinson then gave a very interesting talk on the history of medicine explaining that early pharmacy was based on herbal remedies developed in monastic establishments and continued by herbalists after the Reformation, but lack of knowledge led to quackery and Charles II encouraged a more serious approach to the subject.

The Worshipful Company of Apothecaries was given Royal approval and the Apothecaries Hall became the centre of medical life with the introduction of apprenticeship and examinations and candidates, who satisfied the requirements of the profession, were given porcelain plates inscribed to indicate that the owners were qualified to practice medicine. Metal plates were later substituted for porcelain ones to be forerunners of professional plates today. Physick gardens were established where herbs and plants were grown to supply the profession with ingredients for medicines, and Chelsea, the most famous of them, is still functioning.

From this period the physicians' profession developed and the practitioners assumed the title of 'doctor' to cause confusion to visitors from abroad who reserved the name for academics from the Latin 'docere' to teach. Such surgery which was performed at that period was carried out by barbers, who displayed red and white poles outside their shops to indicate that they were surgeon-barbers, but they also were encouraged to adopt more scientific approaches to their discipline and enforce high standards and regulations. They however retained the title of 'mister' to differentiate between the two branches of medicine.

Apothecary shops flourished in all the larger towns and people alive today can remember their grandparents describing visits to these shops when they were children in the 19th century. The Renshaw family practised medicine from their house in the Old Market Place in Altrincham for many generations, and when Dr Willy Renshaw, the last of the family, died after the last war, the house was altered and human bones were found buried in the garden. At the inquest, following the discovery, the Coroner decided that they came from anatomy studies carried out by the apprentices of early members of the family. Canon Ridgway, in an article, described how grave robbers were reputed to steal newly buried bodies from graves in Bowdon Church Yard and recounted an amusing story about a live man being sold to a doctor when a suitable corpse was unavailable. This account was retold in a previous issue of the Bowdon Sheaf.



The Committee of the Bowdon History Society wish to thank Mr CS Metcalfe for his help and assistance in the printing of this issue of the Bowdon Sheaf.

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The Bowdon Sheaf

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ISSN-0265-816X

Francis Crossley of Bowdon: the St Francis of Ancoats
by Chris Hill

Francis Crossley has been likened in spirit to Francis of Assisi in following a truly Christian life. He was unworldly, faithful to his conscience, and unstintingly liberal. The example he gave, served as an inspiration to many to do their own Christian duty. His business was making gas engines (of which two good, working examples are on public display at a pumping station in Norwich). He spent the mornings at the Works, in Manchester, and the evenings trying to bring "wanderers" back to the Good Shepherd, and in both serving and in working, his efforts were directed to the greater Glory of God.

The Crossleys lived in a mansion, "Fairlie", just inside the Bowdon boundary, at the corner of Cavendish Road (then known as Warrington Road), and Catherine Road (all names connected with the Stamford family). The house lies opposite the Altrincham Girls Grammar School, which has converted it to an annexe, doubling its size. The house had a large garden, and even now it still retains its spaciousness, with substantial shrubberies and mature specimen trees, such as, a Himalayan, Indian Cedar. The house was part of a development by Lord Stamford to create an estate of large mansions for prosperous business men and merchants, following the building of St. Margaret's church and the subsequent formation of a new parish. During the period when the house was built, the difference between rich and poor was very marked, which led those people with social consciences to try to bring about reforms to aid the conditions of the poor. Frank Crossley and his wife were two such people.

It should be emphasised at this point, that in this advanced period of the Industrial Revolution, the 1870's., cities like Manchester had been flooded with people seeking better conditions from the countryside. The long association between feudal Lord and his care for those he was responsible for, had been broken and had, in industry, been replaced by the tradesman's personal obligation to his craft. This in a sense, although engendering a feeling of personal satisfaction for a job well done, resulted in a loss by the worker of his duty to a master and similarly, also resulted in the employer who had replaced the feudal master, feeling little paternalistic responsibility for the living conditions of his numerous work-force in the factory system. The Church also played its part. Before the rise in Nonconformism, the over-riding responsibility of all men was seen to be the salvation of their souls; be they rich or poor, the only thing which really mattered was Salvation. The new philosophies generated by such sectarian religions as Wesleyanism and Unitarianism, which flourished well in the Manchester area, fostered attitudes which promoted the social values of industry, thrift, a striving for success and betterment together with an element of self-interest, based it seems on the premise that looking after oneself and immediate family somehow resulted in a betterment of society as a whole, from which the working classes would also gain some benefit.

The idea of self help was encouraged by that section of the Victorian society which charitably supported prudential habits in the working classes. The Crossleys were members of Maclaren's Congregational church in Manchester and Mackennal's Bowdon Downs church. Many people who were in administrative positions or of influence, supported philanthropic or Christian charity, and other members of the Downs church, e.g. Arthur (later Sir) Haworth (Lady Haworth gave money for the building of Oldfield Congregational Church), William O'Hanlon and T.A. Coward, the naturalist, gave not only money, but time and effort to mission and social work in the slums of Manchester, but it was the examples of men such as Frank Crossley and Hewlett Johnson, who stood out from the rest in the limits they were prepared to go to, in putting their altruistic ideals into effect, improving the social conditions for the working class and the poor.

Not only did this responsibility require a lot of energy and effort from them, but their revolutionary campaigning had to overcome the laisser-faire attitudes of their own social class towards the conditions created by the Industrial Revolution Such an overturning of accepted thinking required out- standing efforts by these campaigners in order to have any effect and in the end it was the catalytic examples they gave to others, as much as their own achievements, that nurtured a more enlightened attitude, which began to change the social conditions. To demonstrate Crossley's stance which differentiated him from his fellow Congregationalists, he once spoke as a deacon at a Church Meeting at the Downs church of hating the Bowdon others loved, and urged "Let us leave this respectable place and go right down among the poor folks. That is where a church should be."

Frank Crossley is thought to have learnt his trade under Robert Stephenson in Newcastle and thereafter purchased a small business in Great Marlborough Street, Openshaw, Manchester, from a Mr. Dunlop who produced India-rubber machinery. His brother William later joined him, but they struggled to keep the business going. In 1876, the German patents of the Otto gas engine were on the market, and the two brothers saw their opportunity. They understood the value of the patents, and guessed the potential of a small engine which could replace steam where low horse-power engines were required. Frank was able to greatly improve the original design of Dr. Otto. From this venture they were able to lay the foundation for a successful business which made the name of Crossley famous throughout the world and in doing so, created the brothers very wealthy captains of industry.

Fairlie became a centre of religious influence at which many schemes for the social and religious regeneration of Manchester were hatched. His wife supported him completely in his work in that direction having become a keen Salvationist and General Booth and his wife were frequent visitors, (the Crossley's having donated a vast sum of money to the Salvationists' cause).

For some years, Frank had been closely engaged with his brother, Hastings, in a mission attached to their works in Openshaw, but eventually Frank decided on another project and had an old music-hall in Ancoats, known as “The Star", pulled down and a mission hall costing over £20,000, erected. Ancoats was renowned as the worst slum area of Manchester, so that any influence the Mission had there, would do the greatest good. This contained an attractive hall for meetings, bath-rooms and coffee-rooms, etc., for the outward needs of the local population. The original idea was to put the running of the mission in the hands of the Salvation Army, but on nearing completion, the Crossley's tried to run the mission from home, however, overseeing the building programme was one thing, the day to day running of the hostel needed much closer control. The first meeting to be held in the new hall was at 7.00 a.m., on August 4th, 1889, and the address of the establishment was; Star Buildings, Pollard Street, Ancoats.

From its opening, the Mission prospered but it did not take long for the Crossley's to realise that the running of the mission was not possible from distant Bowdon and so they therefore moved to Ancoats in November that year, sending their pictures to the Whitworth Gallery (Frank had been a great lover of art and had given to the Bowdon Downs church a huge plaster cast of Italian Renaissance sculpture designed by Delia Robbia for the singing galleries of Florence Cathedral), Francis Crossley thereby fulfilled his ideals, quoted above. This was a move against the tide, as the trend for some time had been for the more prosperous merchants and business men to move their families away from the Town, thereby to some extent, giving up their involvement in the running of the city and their pride in its development To salve their consciences for neglecting the town and its people, the owners and directors of businesses, involved themselves in serving, or contributing to, charities, as a way of improving the social conditions of the inhabitants.

The Crossley family consisted of five children, Helen K., born 1872, Richard F., born 1873, Alan Hastings, born 1878, Erskin Alick, born 1880, and Francis Marshall, born 1884. When Frank's brother and business partner, William, received the freedom of the City of Manchester, he gave tribute to Frank in his speech saying:- "I came to Manchester in 1867, to commence business with my late brother, F.W. Crossley. With him I had the satisfaction after a few years of adversity, of introducing to Manchester - I might almost say to England - a new trade which in a short time became so considerable that we were able to help forward some of the religious and philanthropic efforts so dear to our hearts. I speak in the plural, because without my brother's splendid lead and example I doubt whether I could have done very much, and because I feel that in presenting me with this great honour you have his work and noble life before your minds, and my pleasure in receiving it is increased by the thought that his memory is associated with it. To give money only becomes a great gift when self-denial is necessary to make the giving possible; but to give ones-self, as he did, is the greatest thing a man can do." A fitting tribute to Bowdon's greatest philanthropist.

Further reading:-

'Frank Crossley - Saint or Sinner ?' by Edward Mynott, Manchester Region History Review, 1997, Vol. XI.
'Life and Letters of Francis William Crossley' by J. Rendel Harris.

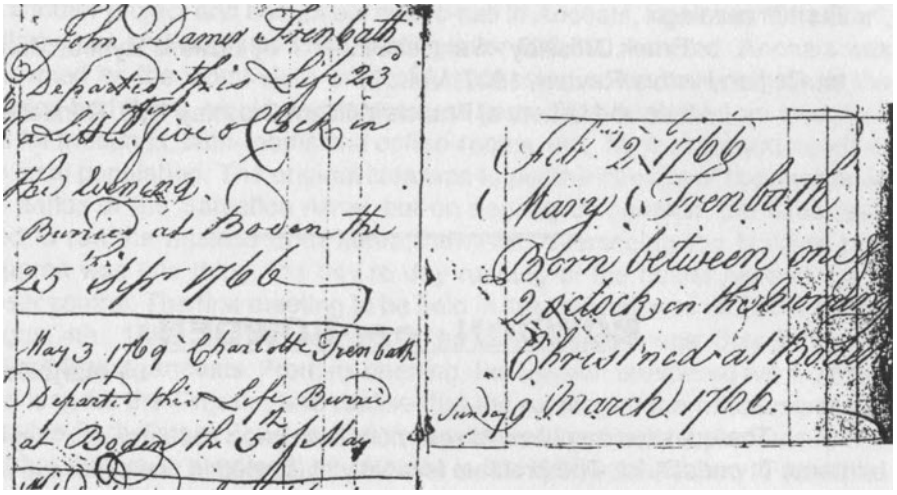
BOWDON or BOWDEN
by Marjorie Cox

The question has been raised more than once about the spelling of the name of our district. The problem is vividly illustrated in two consecutive editions of the telephone directory. I myself was baffled in 1997, when, in trying to look up the number of our local Post Office, I sought it in the March 1997 Phone Book under the spelling local people use - Bowdon, and failed to find it; to my surprise, it was under Bowden Post Office. However, in the September, 1998 edition of the Phone Book it appears as Bowdon Post Office. Similarly, what used to be the Assembly Rooms appear in 1997 as the Bowden Rooms and in 1998 as the Bowdon Rooms.

Detailed discussion of usage over the centuries must wait for a later occasion, but I recently came across a thought-provoking piece of evidence in the Dunham Massey Papers, deposited by The National Trust in the John Rylands Library of the University of Manchester. This showed that the problem and the indecision are not new. Among the Estate Records are two identical volumes of Parish Rentals (EGR 14/6/1/8 and /9) of the early nineteenth century; each volume has a red leather, gilt-tooled label on the front, though the lettering and the tooling are not absolutely identical. The volume which covers 1803 to 1815 is entitled 'Bowden Parish Rental' and that covering 1816 to 1828, 'Bowdon Parish Rental'.

I hope future issues of The Bowdon Sheaf will explore this matter further: readers' examples, drawn from different periods, will be very welcome.

The following extracts from a family archive indicate the spelling of Bowdon in the 18th century:-



The 6th Earl of Stamford and the Polish exile
by Marjorie Cox

In an article in The Bowdon Sheaf No. 19, I traced a link between the hero of the Hungarian revolution of 1848, Louis Kossuth, and the new radical men of wealth and influence in Manchester and Bowdon. Some years before that, however, there is a link between an earlier attempted revolution, that in Poland in 1830, and the 6th Earl of Stamford (1765-1845). By that date Poland, partitioned between Russia, Austria and Prussia, had lost its independent identity, a loss which the Poles refused to accept. There were several insurrections, the most serious in 1830 and 1863, which resulted in loss of life or in exile in Russia; among the exiles after the 1863 rising were the grandfather of Shostakovich and the father of Joseph Conrad.

The intensity of Polish feeling against Tsarist Russia after the crushing of the 1830 insurrection is demonstrated by an entry in Chopin's diary in 1831, on hearing of the fall of Warsaw: "OH GOD, Thou art! Thou art and avengest Thyself not! Thou hast still not enough of the Muscovite crimes, or Thou art Thyself a Muscovite."

One of the consequences of the failed risings and the state of Poland was large-scale emigration by Poles throughout Europe and the New World. One such unhappy exile after the 1830 rising ended his life in Chester and was helped by the 6th Earl of Stamford. The Cheshire Sheaf in 1913 (3rd Series, Vol. X) recorded a touching epitaph on a tombstone resting against the west end of the now demolished church of St. Martin in Chester.

NEAR
THIS PLACE LIES
JEAN KOUSKI
A POLISH GENTLEMAN
LIEUTENANT IN THE CHASSEURS,
DRIVEN FROM HIS NATIVE COUNTRY ,
HE SOUGHT REFUGE IN ENGLAND,
SINKING UNDER ILLNESS
THE CONSEQUENCE OF WANT
AND SUFFERING, HE WAS
RECEIVED INTO THE INFIRMARY
OF THIS CITY, HAVING LOST
EVERY EARTHLY GOOD
HE FOUND PEACE WITH GOD
THROUGH JESUS CHRIST
.....HOPE
ER (17th?) 1836

Weathering meant that little of the last few lines was legible, but the Burial Register showed that John Kouskie, a native of Poland, died at the City Infirmary and was buried on 23rd December, 1836, aged 27.

A later note in The Cheshire Sheaf (p.35) cited an entry in the Minute Book of Chester Infirmary for the week beginning 25th October, 1836, which recorded that "John Cofsthey" (the name obviously caused difficulty) was admitted to the Infirmary on the recommendation of Mr. Bagnall for Lord Stamford. The In Patients' Register showed that the patient, "Cofsky", was suffering from dropsy and jaundice and died on 15th December; he had been in hospital for 49 days.

It is a sad little tale, only redeemed by Lord Stamford's intervention. It calls to mind the action of a later Lord Stamford, the 10th and last Earl, described by Belinda Cousens in her "Dunham Massey: An Illustrated Souvenir". In 1938, the 10th Earl, a great supporter of the League of Nations, offered sanctuary to Haile Selassie, Emperor of Ethiopia during his exile in England.

Mr Royce in Bowdon
by Ronald Trenbath

In the early days of motoring drivers were obliged to observe the speed- limit of a walking pace, necessitating a pedestrian, with a red flag, walking in front of a moving vehicle to force it into conforming with the requirement. This regulation was replaced by another one which allowed motorists to travel at a slightly greater speed with penalties for those who exceeded the new limit.

In order to enforce this law police devised speed-traps whereby police constables concealed themselves in road side hedgerows, with a measured distance between two officers, when a motor car passed one of them he would signal to his colleague, who would then measure the time, on a stop watch, in which it took the vehicle to approach him & if it was less than a given length of time, the driver was judged to have exceeded the speed limit & would be dealt with accordingly.

At this time Mr. Royce, a partner in Rolls Royce Cars, lived in Knutsford & would often bring home prototype models of cars, at the weekends, to test them in the hills beyond Macclesfield & make any adjustment he thought necessary before returning with them to work on the following Mondays. He was however always keen to try his cars at speed & devised a way of doing so without being apprehended.

Cars travelling northward out of Knutsford passed a police station, near Canute Square, & the Sergeant in charge would telephone Altrincham Police giving car numbers & times of departure & they would then await their arrival, noting the times taken in relation to the measured distance travelled & decide if an offence had been committed.

Knowing this procedure Royce would travel out of Knutsford at a snails pace, sounding the car horn & waving to the police sergeant & then, when out of sight he would let the car out at full throttle until he arrived at the junction of Chester Road & Park Road, Bowdon where he turned right & proceeded to the top of Church Brow where he parked the car, next to the church, took out his pipe & tobacco pouch & would sit for a pleasant smoke & enjoy the view. When sufficient time had elapsed Royce would move the car on at snails pace, blowing the horn outside the Police Station & waving to the sergeant awaiting his arrival. The worked out speed would usually be calculated at about five miles per hour.

It was not long before other motorists devised ways of overcoming speed- traps & they took pleasure in entertaining fellow drivers with their exploits when they met, but Cheshire Police were not the country bumpkins, often described in popular literature of the day, & were well aware of what was happening, but no doubt they turned a blind eye on the matter until a more rational approach was taken on the subject.

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The Bowdon Sheaf

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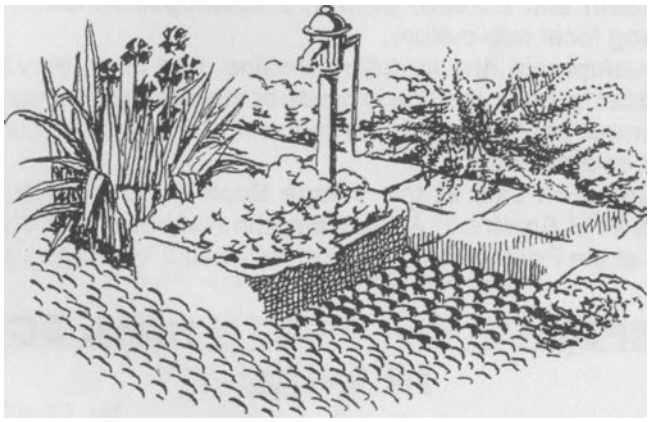


Pump, Bow Green, recently restored.

ISSN-0265-816X

The Millennium

This issue of the Bowdon Sheaf will be the last one to be published in the Twentieth Century, as well as being the last one to be published in the Second Millennium, and it also marks the Twentieth Anniversary of the founding of the Bowdon History Society in 1979. To celebrate these events the Society has published an illustrated book covering the development of Bowdon and Dunham Massey from AD 1000 to AD 2000, entitled "Images of England - Bowdon & Dunham Massey".

The more wealthy residents of large conurbations have always tended to congregate in the most salubrious areas, to produce affluent suburbs, but Bowdon is different as it developed as an independent, self governing dormitory town, following the sale of land by Thomas Assheton-Smith for residential development, taking the romantic name Rose Hill.

The move was not welcomed by other land-owners who steadfastly refused to release land for building south of the River Mersey, to keep it free from the Cottontots, as they derisively named the industrialists from the north. Disagreement however between the 7th Earl of Stamford and the Parish caused him to live on his other estates, and he realized that the construction of the railway, between Altrincham and the industrial area, known as Cottonopolis, would raise the value of his land for use in high class residential development.

This development was undertaken mainly between the middle and end of the Nineteenth Century in accordance with a well conceived master plan, centred on the new St. Margaret's Church, and encouraged Cottontots, from all parts of Britain and Europe, to form a cosmopolitan community and to develop a strong local sub-culture.

This development and its future decline, and later revival by technocrats, is traced in the book and use is made of the numerous pictures, taken by early local pioneer photographers, to recreate the image of the area during every stage of development.

The book is on sale at the Village Book Shop, Ashley Road, Hale; Waterstones & W H Smith's in Altrincham; the National Trust Shop, Dunham Massey Hall & at the Post Offices in Stamford Road & Vicarage Lane, Bowdon.

A GLIMPSE OF CULCHETH HALL SCHOOL IN 1908[1]
by Stephen Matthews

Culcheth Hall School in Altrincham has a long history, being one of the few in the area to have survived from the nineteenth century. It was founded by the two Miss Lang sisters, became a company in the 1920s after the death of one and the retirement of the other, and it is as a charity and a company limited by guarantee that it operates to this day.

The extract comes from one of two notebooks[2] kept by a Surveyor of Income Tax in the years before the first World War and it will be helpful to explain how the system then operated as that will show how the details came to be preserved.

The Surveyor was the predecessor of the present day Inspector and his responsibility was to check Returns and advise the local Commissioners about the assessments to be made. A Return of Income had to be made, as now but it was not the custom to produce accounts in support, nor was there any obligation to keep records; the Surveyor called for evidence either at random or if he was suspicious, and if he was not satisfied any dispute could well end up before the General Commissioners.

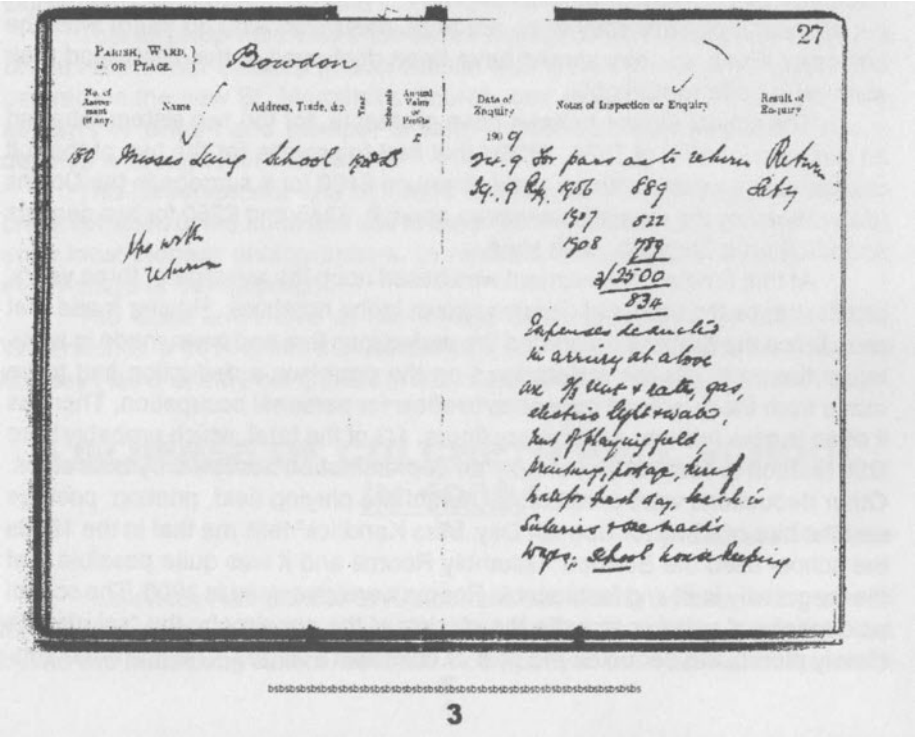
The Langs must have submitted their return in the usual way without accounts, for if they had been supplied at the start they would have been filed with the return and destroyed within a few years. For a reason which we can- not now establish, the Surveyor asked for more information. With a speed that characterises all the exchanges recorded in this and the other notebook, it was supplied within a week. We do not know what he received but it must have been less than a full set of accounts for he copied the main figures into his notebook before recording that he was satisfied that the Lang's Return was correct. The result was that the details were preserved, for the Surveyor's notebook had a greater permanence than Returns and correspondence, in departmental practice they were not to be destroyed until 30 years after the last entry. Even so, they should have been destroyed in the 1940s and their survival is quite remarkable,

The school seems to have been profitable, for the two sisters returned an average income of £834. Whilst that had to provide for the two of them it compares favourably with an assessment on £400 for a surgeon in the Downs (determined by the Commissioners on appeal), £345 and £250 for two dentists and £520 on a Surgeon, all in Hale.

At that time an Assessment was based upon the average of three years' profits, hence the total and division shown in the notebook. Having made that calculation the Surveyor recorded the deductions that had been made in arriving at the profit. As the sisters lived on the premises a deduction had to be made from the overhead expenses to allow for personal occupation, Then, as it often is now, this was an arbitrary figure, 1/3 of the total, which probably bore little relation to fact but was simply an approximation accepted by both sides. Other deductions were predictable; rent of the playing field, printing, postage and the hire of a hall for Speech Day. Miss Kendrick[3] tells me that in the 1930s the school used the Bowdon Assembly Rooms and it was quite possible that the then newly built and fashionable Rooms were also used in 1908. The school paid teachers' salaries, despite the placing of the apostrophe the "salaries" is clearly plural, and deducted the cost of one maid's wages. The grammar suggests that there was another maid who had nothing to do with the school but it may be that in practice several shared the school and domestic duties. Finally there was the cost of school housekeeping though it must have been difficult to keep school and private costs separate. One puzzle is the deduction for 2/3 of the rent, for according to Miss Kendrick, the Langs owned the building. They may have paid a chief rent which would be a proportionately heavier charge then than now, or the deduction may have been the notional annual value under Schedule A, which readers may remember in another form, the rateable value.

The Surveyor's notes give us a tantalising glimpse of the finances of the school in 1908 and its place in the economy of Bowdon. Whilst wishing that he had recorded rather more we must be grateful for what we have, for this notebook should have been thrown away in the early 1940s. Strictly we should have nothing at all.

1 The material is reproduced with the kind permission of the School Governors as well as the Inland Revenue. The views expressed are those of the author and not the Inland Revenue.
2 The Surveyor kept a summary of his enquiries in a series of numbered note- books. Compared with modern records they are very slender, measuring 7" x 4 3/4" with 44 folios, six index pages and a spare folio at the back.
3 M Kendrick: Schools in Victorian Bowdon. (1998).



GEORGE ARTHUR PICKARD of Race Hill, Chester Road.
by his grandson - Tom Pickard.

George Arthur Pickard was born in 1850, the eldest son of George Pickard of Mansfield, who from humble origins had made a great success of a wholesale grocery business, to become Mayor of Mansfield, an Alderman of Nottinghamshire County Council, and the owner of a fine property on the edge of Mansfield, Crow Hill House. The family were Quakers, and Arthur was educated at Ackworth School near Pontefract, and then for a year at Bootham School, York. During his last year at Ackworth, in 1865, his mother, daughter of a family of farmers in County Durham, died, and at the end of 1866 Arthur came home and began work in the family business in Mansfield. There he remained for thirty years, together with two of his younger brothers. The third brother, Edgar, was a keen engineer and technician, and in 1888, at the age of twenty-five, he set himself up in partnership with a Mr. J.E.Thornton to produce photographic apparatus. The firm, called The Thornton-Pickard Manufacturing Company Ltd., moved in 1892 from its original premises in Manchester to a purpose-built factory in Atlantic Street, Broadheath, the frontage of which still stands (opposite B & Q: now occupied by Broadprint Ltd.), although the business closed down in 1939. Sadly, Edgar died after a short illness in March, 1897, and it was Arthur, the eldest son, who decided to move from Mansfield to Altrincham to take Edgar's place at Thornton-Pickard.

Arthur had married in 1881 Jane Carr Wright, daughter of Isaac Wright of Bolton and his wife Christiana, younger sister of John Dodgson Carr of Car- lisle, founder of the biscuit firm. Arthur and Janie had one son, Arthur Gray, my father, born in 1882 (Mayor of Altrincham, 1928). On moving across the Pennines to Cheshire, they lived first in Hale, at a house in Hale Road called "Skeffington". But in 1905, after old George Pickard's death, they moved to "Race Hill", a large house a short distance out of Altrincham along the Chester Road, and there they remained until the end of the Great War, moving finally, via a short stay at Bowdon Hydro, to the Ashley end of South Downs Road, Hale, where Arthur died in September, 1919.

Unfortunately Arthur and Mr.Thornton did not get on - indeed Edgar had already found Thornton a difficult partner - and Thornton left the firm in 1898. Arthur suffered much from ill-health, and spent two long spells in South Africa during the 1880s in search of a cure, but to little avail. He was away from work for three months in 1900, again in 1903, when Gray had to leave Manchester University without taking his degree in order to come home to look after Thomton-Pickards and for six months in 1909 he suffered from pneumonia. Nevertheless under Arthur's management Thornton-Pickard flourished, to become one of the best known British makers of shutters, as well as of the splendid mahogany and brass stand cameras which today's collectors prize. They manufactured the Hythe Gun Camera for training aircrew in aerial combat during the war, also the Type 'A' Camera, the first official Royal Flying Corps camera designed for oblique aerial photography. The type A' was designed in collaboration with Colonel Trenchard (later Lord) and Lieutenant Moore-Brabazon (later Lord Brabazon of Tara) and after the first meeting in London between Moore-Brabazon and R. Hesketh (T-P's company secretary who lived in Westgate, Hale) a prototype was produced and rushed to France within eight days.

Arthur's great love was fly-fishing for trout. He and Gray - and I myself, briefly - fished the Birkin, but it was the Derbyshire Wye that drew Arthur, year after year, to the Peacock Hotel at Rowsley for weeks at a time. Also he fished the Axe in East Devon every spring until 1917, staying a month at Seaton. His fishing diaries are a wonderful record of immense numbers of trout caught, and in addition contain notes of public events - the death of the King (Edward VII) in 1910, the loss of "Titanic" in 1912, as well of course as the outbreak of war in 1914. Travel between Bowdon and Seaton was inevitably by train, until in 1912 Arthur acquired a Wolseley motor car, which was still on the road as late as 1927. In 1912 from Bowdon to Seaton by car was an eighteen hour journey, split over two days, and it was a matter for congratulation that there was no puncture. But the stately progress enabled Arthur to enjoy the scenery, and he writes enthusiastically about the state of the blossom on the fruit trees en route - such observations an unlikely adjunct to driving down M6 and M5! The car, which I remember vividly, had a gravity feed from the rear petrol tank to the carburettor, and when the car went up a steep hill the driver had to reach down with his left hand below the dashboard to operate a manual fuel pump, keeping his right hand meanwhile on the steering-wheel and hoping nothing was coming in the opposite direction!

Everyone who knew him, with few exceptions, always spoke of Arthur as an exceptionally kind and gentle character, including many of his employees; at his funeral, his coffin was accompanied on foot by a large deputation from the work force all the way from South Downs Road to the cemetery at Timperley. Unfortunately, although he wrote an excellent account of his father's life and work in Mansfield, he left little about himself. His poor health prevented him from indulging in public activity, in the manner of his father or of his son, although probably he was of a more retiring disposition than they, and preferred a more private life. Since he died just before my own second birthday, I have no recollection of him But occasional glimpses can be had of life at Race Hill in his time, and there seems to have been plenty of entertainment and fun among the younger set, witness the following extract from a letter written many years after the event to my father by one of his many female first cousins:

"During 1910 and 1911 we lived in Altrincham and I was often at Race Hill where Uncle Arthur and Aunt Janie were always so kind and welcoming. Gray and I went skating, riding and dancing together. He was the perfect escort! I also remember a few dancing enthusiasts prancing up and down Race Hill drawing-room to the tune of "It's a Bear, It's a Bear, It's a Bear" and "Alexander's Ragtime Band". Do you remember, Gray? And how you sat at the piano and sang "The Sea hath its Pearls" while we sat around and recovered our breath."

If there are ghosts at Race Hill, then it seems to me they ought to be very jolly.

Although my home was in South Downs Road, Hale until I got married in 1946, and my father often pointed out Race Hill to me, I never stepped inside it or even walked round the outside. There are as far as I know no photographs of the house or garden as it was early this century. Plenty of photographs of Arthur survive, but perhaps the most typical is the one of him, taken almost certainly by J.E.Thornton, when on the point of netting a trout on the Wye.

Arthur took his responsibilities as a business man very seriously, and actually committed to paper his thoughts on "Business Ethics". Amid a good deal that is optimistic, he nevertheless reached a very proper conclusion, what he called the "Golden Rule"-when contemplating a course of action, ask yourself "Would I like anyone to do this to me?" Not a bad rule for living.

THE ALTRINCHAM & DISTRICT WAR HOSPITAL SUPPLY DEPOT
by Douglas Rendell.

On 1st June 1917 the Altrincham Guardian reported that the depot "has more work before it than it can accomplish without the wholehearted support of every individual worker. An urgent appeal has come in from an Italian hospital which is directly in the fighting area and which is most terribly in need of immediate supplies. This appeal which ought to be answered by return, will be obliged, owing to pressure of work, to wait at least two weeks before it can adequately be attended to. The regrettable delay would not be necessary if the depot had been able to accumulate stocks upon which it could draw on an occasion of this kind. Will all workers see if they cannot give just a little more time to the depot so that the wounded may not have to wait an instant more than is absolutely necessary for the supplies they are badly in need of. The urgent needs for next week's work are thin red blankets (singles) for the operating theatre, bandage cloth and hospital gauze."

Within the next two weeks 13 bales containing 4,551 articles were sent to the Italian hospital.

On 8th June 1917 the Guardian reported that the depot "is working this week for St. John's Hospital, Etables, under the command of Colonel Charles Trimble RAMC. This hospital is a very large one and the order for it is correspondingly heavy and will be quite impossible to accomplish unless all workers make up their minds to give every spare minute they can to the depot. As Etables is on the coast of France an enormous proportion of our wounded pass through St. John's Hospital on the way home. Thus the hospital is in constant need of fresh supplies of dressings and clothes to replace those which are taken away by the men who are fit to continue their journey to England. It is a great pleasure to the Altrincham Depot and its guilds to be privileged to help this magnificent hospital which has the reputation of being the finest institution of its kind in France." There was a further appeal for grey calico (thick and thin), gauze, old blankets towels and linen, white natural or pink wool for blanket stitching.

In one week in June, 45 bales were dispatched containing 14,486 articles. On 22nd June 1917 it was reported that the depot had been running for just over 18 months. The organiser, Lady Haworth, was at West Hill.

On 29th June 1917 it was noted that "The authorities are delighted to be able to announce that an evening of great enjoyment lies in front of all workers and friends. Mr. Hilaire Belloc, the celebrated lecturer, has kindly consented to lecture on the war for the benefit of depot funds. This lecture will be illustrated by a unique kinema film of the recent fighting which has been given to Mr. Belloc by the French War Office. The entertainment will take place on 12th July. At the conclusion of Mr. Belloc's lecture a film will be shown of the depot at work. This film should be particularly interesting to all depot workers and their friends as it will give a comprehensive idea of the many activities which are undertaken at West Hill and Kirk Lee."

The 'entertainment' took place at the Altrincham Picture Theatre (on the site of Station House). The depot film was made by Ronald Gow (Bowdon Sheaf No 22 October 1993) and his friend James Horley (later to become a well-known local coal merchant) with a small 35mm hand-turned camera. Because of a shortage of film the camera handle was turned slowly, resulting in the speeding up of the action when projected.

Recollecting the event at the cinema 60 years later, Ronald Gow wrote .... 'I was standing beside the large Hilaire Belloc. He had just joined in singing the National Anthems - with special emphasis for the Marseillaise - in a deep bass voice. That night they were showing the first official French war film, but ours came on first. "Ha, what's this? A little local effort, I suppose..." But he grunted approval and I felt I had rubbed shoulders with the mighty.'

The reel of film was presented to the local council and came to light in Altrincham Library in the late 1970s.

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The Bowdon Sheaf

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MILLENNIUM EDITION

Meadowlands.

Thomas Pitfield.

Mrs. Frank Crossley.

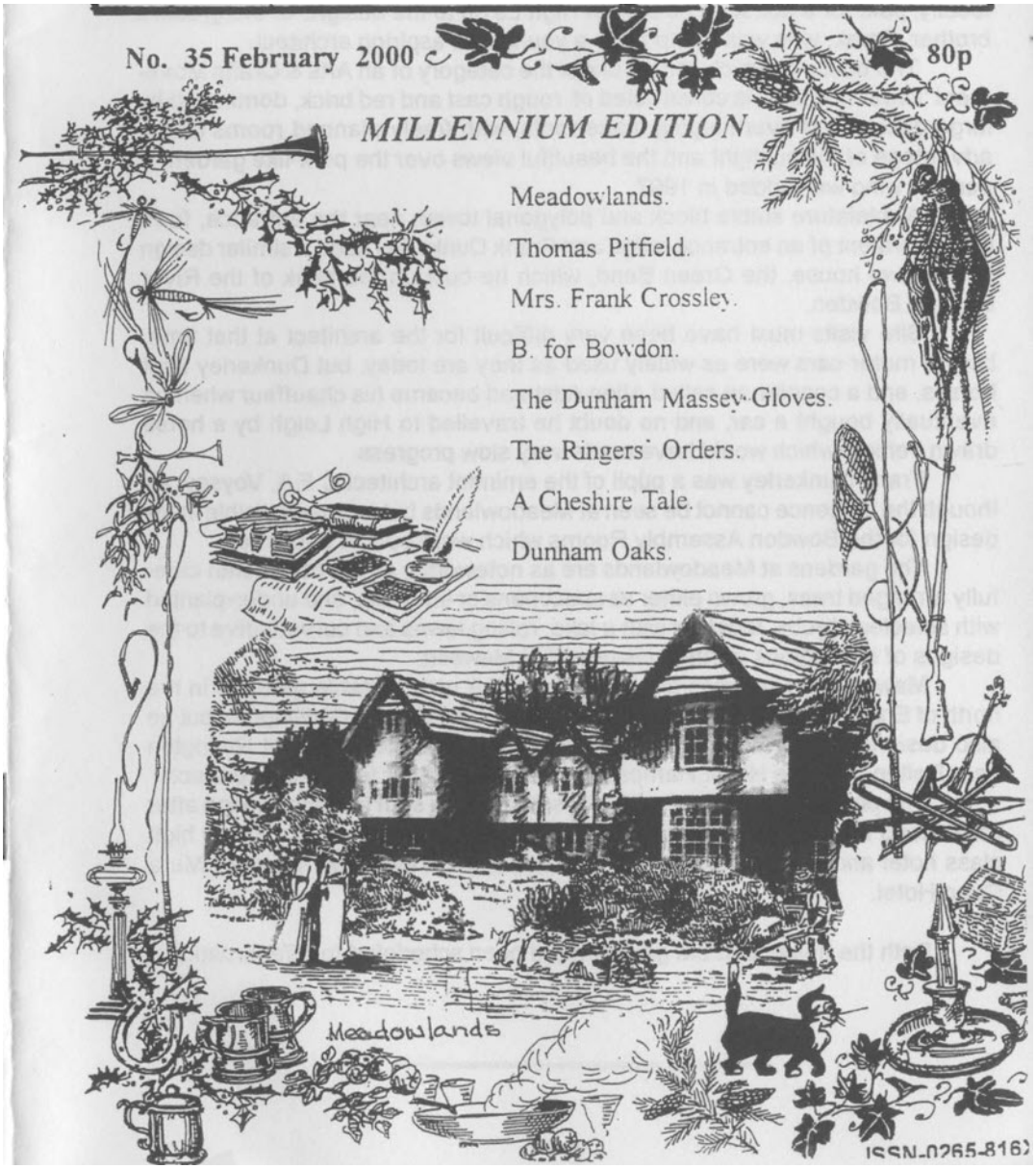
B. for Bowdon.

The Dunham Massey Gloves.

The Ringers' Orders.

A Cheshire Tale.

Dunham Oaks.



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Meadowlands
by Ronald Trenbath.

When William and Amy Dunkerley married in 1903 his family, who lived locally, paid for a house to be built at High Legh to the designs of the groom's brother, Frank, who was at the time, a young and aspiring architect.

The building, which comes under the category of an Arts & Crafts Movement 'Dream House', is constructed of rough cast and red brick, dominated by large gables and overhanging stone roofs, with freely planned rooms taking advantage of the sunlight and the beautiful views over the park-like garden. A nursery wing was added in 1907.

A miniature stable block and polygonal tower, near the entrance, form the equivalent of an entrance lodge and Frank Dunkerley used a similar design for his own house, the Green Bend, which he built on the bank of the River Bollin in Bowdon.

Site visits must have been very difficult for the architect at that time, before motor cars were as widely used as they are today, but Dunkerley kept horses, and a coachman called Allen Adshead became his chauffeur when he eventually bought a car, and no doubt he travelled to High Leigh by a horse drawn vehicle which would have made very slow progress.

Frank Dunkerley was a pupil of the eminent architect C.F.A. Voysey, although the influence cannot be seen at Meadowlands but is clearly visible in his design for the Bowdon Assembly Rooms which were built at this time.

The gardens at Meadowlands are as noteworthy as the house with care- fully arranged trees, grown either as specimens or en-mass, and under-planted with selected shrubs, together with a lake, rolling lawns and curved drive to the designs of the famous garden designer T.H. Mawson.

Mawson was responsible for many of the most notable gardens in the north of England, the best known being that at Tirley Garth at Willington, but he also designed gardens for Lord Leverhulme at Thornton Manor at Rivington near Bolton and The Hill at Hampstead, as well as other less known projects.

The property was taken by the Gas Board as a staff training college after the second world war but more recently it has been converted into a very high class hotel and very sympathetically restored, decorated and renamed Mere Court Hotel.

Both the house and the garden have been scheduled for preservation.

Thomas Pitfield 1903-1999

Thomas Pitfield, the distinguished composer and founder member of Bowdon History Society, died on 11th November 1999 at his home in Bowdon where he had lived for fifty-two years, joining the musical giants such as Hans Richter, Adolf Brodsky, John Ireland and others who had associations with the area as either residents or visitors.

Pitfield, lived throughout the twentieth century, except for three and a half years, during which time he saw more changes in every respect than anyone could have done in a previous century.

Born in Bolton, Lancashire, on 5th April 1903, the unwanted and largely unloved child of middle aged parents, his father was a jobbing builder and joiner and his mother a dressmaker, he was brought up in a hard north-country street, ultra-conservative, puritanical, Sabbatarian, narrow minded Anglican community which had no sympathy with cultural activities or pursuits which did not conform to local traditions.

When Pitfield was five he was sent to the local Church of England elementary school and at the age of eleven he was forced to collect rents from his parents tenants, many of whom, through extreme poverty, were unable to pay, but they received no sympathy from his mother and father thus causing young Tom great anguish.

At the age of fourteen Pitfield was 'pitchforked' into an apprenticeship as a draftsman in a factory making machinery for the cotton industry and it was then that he developed an interest in music and the visual arts.

It was at this point in his life, that he started to show the independence, determination and single minded tenacity that was to characterise the rest of his life, and by dint of hard work and careful saving he was able to pay for music lessons from a local organist, followed by a year studying at the Royal Manchester College of Music. Here his musical abilities broadened and he attended concerts and recitals and formed a string quartet playing a wide range of com- positions including some of his own works.

During this time at the college Pitfield met Alice Maud Astbury, a more senior student, one year older, who had been born of British parents but educated in Russia. This meeting had a great influence on his work and they married in 1934.

In 1930 he was awarded a scholarship to Bolton School of Art but his stubborn resistance to advice and constructive criticism from tutors was detrimental to his career in Fine Art, unlike his contemporary Lowry who, as a result of such tuition, was able to rid himself of inhibitions and to develop his personal style to be accepted among the greatest artists of his day.

Concentrating on craftsmanship and graphic design, Pitfield qualified as an Arts and Crafts teacher, and accepted a post teaching handicrafts and music at Penketh School, near Warrington, a co-educational boarding school, whose irresponsible, eccentric headmaster made his life a misery until the school was closed down, causing Pitfield to have a nervous breakdown.

He had little interest in politics, describing himself as 'pink', but he formed a profound dislike for the idea of taking life, to become a strict vegetarian and pacifist, which led him into joining the Reverend Dick Shepherd's Peace Pledge Union, for which he composed 'A Patriot's Hymn of Peace'. He also developed a skill for writing limericks, which greatly impressed Richard Baker.

Because of his multiplicity of talents Hubert Foss, the music editor of the Oxford University Press, commissioned book illustrations, verse, cards and cover designs, including that for Britten's Simple Symphony which led to friend- ship with the composer and also with Peter Pears.

In 1947 Pitfield was appointed as a teacher of composition at the RMCM which he held until his retirement in 1973, during which time he composed work to be performed at the Festival of Britain, as well as compositions, written at the request of Sir John Barbirolli, for the Halle Orchestra. He also wrote music for Leon Goosens, Evelyn Rothwell, Carl Dolmetsch, Osian Ellis and Archie Camden; and his pupils included John Ogden.

Wisely Pitfield concentrated on his much greater talent as a musician, rather than that of an artist, but he enjoyed sketching and in his very long retirement he produced numerous drawings and paintings of local scenes. His funeral at Bowdon Parish Church was attended by many of the greatest names in contemporary British music. Alice, his widow, continues to live in their home in Bowdon.

Mrs Frank Crossley
by Chris Hill

Mrs. Frank Crossley - whose husband was regarded as a saint for his philanthropic work, shared in his work and did much herself to ameliorate the miseries of the poor. Miss Emily Kerr married Frank Crossley in 1871 and afterwards they lived at "Fairlie", on St. Catherine Road, Bowdon, (now an annexe of the Altrincham Grammar School for Girls). She started off this good work by helping those in need in the surrounding neighbourhood. Mrs. Crossley was a consistent visitor to those in any sort of trouble, and with her quiet support, inspired hope and encouragement in those who were in depressed spirits. She also visited the sick, taking with her cheering words of sympathy and affection that invariably rejoiced the hearts of her patients. When her husband set up business in Manchester, the initial years were a struggle, but when the business eventually prospered, their enhanced affluence enabled both Crossleys to increase their Christian service and philanthropy.

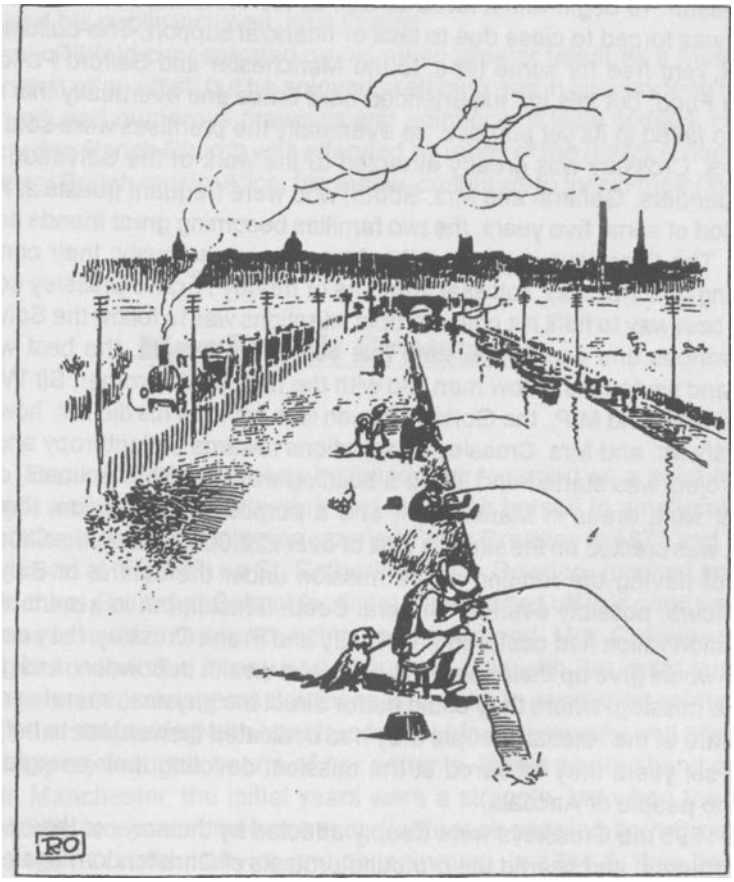
In 1884-5, they became deeply interested in the "Rescue Homes", first established as a branch of the Manchester and Salford "Boys' and Girls' Homes and Refuges", located in Cheetham Hill. The enterprise appealed strongly to the sympathy of Mrs. Crossley, and it finally resulted in the establishment of the Girls' Homes in Hale, for the rescue of waifs and strays - the lost and helpless children with which the city of Manchester abounded and for which the Cheetham Hill Homes could not adequately provide. The two buildings for the Girls' Homes were erected at Mr. Crossley's expense. No.1. Home was run as Mrs. Crossley's, until the death of her husband; while No.2. Home was placed in the hands of a Ladies Committee, who for many years carried it on with the aid of voluntary contributions - mainly from Bowdon people who were in accord with this worthy cause. Each home accommodated 30 children, who were clothed educated and trained, mostly for domestic service, until they reached the age of about sixteen. Just after the death of Mr. Crossley, No.1. Home was conducted by Mrs. Crossley with a small committee of like-minded people as herself. It existed well over 25 years and was considered a great success, partly due to the good staff Mrs. Crossley selected for the positions of matron and teacher. No.2. Home was not so successful. To begin with it fared as well as No. 1. Home, but after about 15 years, it was forced to close due to lack of financial support. The building was then lent, rent free for some time, to the Manchester and Salford Police Orphanage Fund, but this too experienced hard times and eventually this enterprise also failed in its set purpose; so eventually the premises were sold.

Mrs. Crossley was greatly attracted to the work of the Salvation Army and its founders, General and Mrs. Booth, who were frequent guests at Fairlie for a period of some five years, the two families becoming great friends and co- workers. The Crossleys supported the Army very generously; their contributions being described as 'colossal amounts of money'. Frank Crossley considered the best way to fulfil his philanthropic intentions was to follow the Salvation Army methods and open a mission, this being, he thought, the best way of serving and saving his fellow man. So with the help of his brother, Sir William Crossley, Bart, and M.P., the Gorton Mission was set up. This did not, however, fully satisfy Mr. and Mrs. Crossley's aspirations towards philanthropy and so a bigger project was started. In 1888-9 a building was bought in Ancoats, one of the worst slum areas in Manchester, and a purpose built mission, the 'Star Mission', was erected on the site at a cost of over £20,000. Initially, the Crossleys thought of having the running of the mission under the control of Salvation Army officers, possibly even by General Booth himself, but in a spirit of self- consecration which had captured both Emily and Frank Crossley, they decided that they would give up their home of luxury and wealth in Bowdon, and go and live at the mission, where they could better direct the physical, moral and spiritual welfare of the Ancoats people they had dedicated themselves to help. For the next six years they laboured at the mission, devoting their energies and zeal to the people of Ancoats.

In 1895 the Crossleys were deeply affected by the news of the happenings in Armenia, and shared the profound protests of Christendom against the atrocities occurring there. Frank Crossley was intensely concerned in leading public opinion against these horrors perpetrated by the Turks on the inhabit- ants of Armenia. As a consequence of all these activities, Frank's health suffered and he was recommended to take a convalescent voyage to India. On reaching Bombay, however, instead of resting and recuperating, he took it upon himself to visit most of the Missions Stations, offering encouragement and financial help. Thus his journey did little to improve his health, and as a consequence, he gradually wasted away, his energies having been spent. Eventually he died on March 25th. 1897. Mrs. Crossley continued to carry on with both her own projects and those previously supervised by her husband, so that she continued the 'saintly work' she and her husband had previously shared.

B. for Bowdon

The accompanying illustration is taken from a local ABC.



The drawing shows that stretch of canal between Brooklands and Timperley where there is a path on either side of the canal. It might be suggested that it could equally well be the stretch between Sale (or Sale Moor as it was known as previously) and Brooklands, but the position of the rectangular church tower identifies the view, as suggested above. From Sale, looking down the canal towards Altrincham, Bowdon Church tower appears to be on the skyline in line with the canal, but from Brooklands there must be a subtle alteration in the alignment of the canal because the church tower then appears offset from the direction of the canal. In the picture, the path on the right-hand side is the tow-path which would have been busy with horses towing barges and would have interfered with angler's lines, whereas the path on the left-hand side is a public footpath, enabling easy access for anglers, who would have been able to fish with the minimum of disruption to their lines. As well as horse-drawn barges, the drawing shows a steam powered tug, or towing barge. The train depicted would at that time, have belonged to the Manchester South Junction & Altrincham Railway. Two lines of telegraph poles are shown, perhaps one set were the ordinary telephone line, whilst the other set, apparently on railway land, carried the necessary signalling for the operation of the railway.

The sky-line shows four churches, from left to right, St. John's, a chapel-of-ease for St. Margaret's. The Wesleyan Chapel of St. John's, known locally as The Dome Chapel and familiar to the people of Altrincham by dominating the direct view from along George Street, St. Mary's, the parish church of Bowdon, and lastly St. Margaret's, its spire providing a magnificent landmark from the north side of Altrincham. The chimney is that of the Linotype, which dates this drawing as being 1898, or thereafter. It was constructed of deep red brick which used to glow in the red- dish light of the setting sun. It has been demolished. Eventually another chimney serving Budenburg's was built and still stands with its faded wartime camouflage paint. On careful examination, the clock tower of the Linotype will also be discerned. There may be the indication of another landmark between the two left-hand churches, but it is not known what this would be.

The illustration was drawn by Roger Oldham, a school friend of the eminent Bowdon naturalist and ornithologist, T.A. Coward, with whom he travelled extensively in Cheshire, which resulted in the publication of 'Picturesque Cheshire', written by Coward and illustrated by Oldham. The book is now more often bought for the illustrations than for the text.

The drawing illustrated in this issue of Bowdon Sheaf is a poor example of Oldham's very distinctive and individualistic style but it shows his use of crosshatching to maximum effect.

The Dunham Massey Gloves
by Ronald Trenbath

Lady Mary Grey, sister of Lady Jane Grey the nine-day queen executed in 1554, presented Queen Elizabeth I with two pairs of decorated gloves as a present on New Years Day 1578. Gloves always featured as symbols of status in English Society as it indicated that those who wore, or carried them were not obliged to work with their hands and as a result gloves were a favourite present to give or receive at times of celebration among people of rank.

Presentation gloves were often elaborately and richly embroidered with figures and flowers on velvet with sequins, gold thread, dyed silk floss and decorative buttons. They were very rarely worn and more often than not they would be carried in one hand.

The Queen always enjoyed drawing gloves on and off her hands in order to focus attention to her long fingers, of which she was very proud, and she employed a Mistress of Sweet Coffers, whose job it was to maintain fragrant boxes in which to keep her gloves, so no doubt she was very delighted to receive Lady Mary's gift.

Lord John Grey, Mary's uncle, was a forbear of the Earls of Stamford and it was at their London house that these gloves were discovered, in excellent condition, in 1827, when they were taken to Dunham Massey for safe keeping. Here they were again forgotten until they were rediscovered in 1986, still in perfect condition.

The Ringers' Orders
by Chris Hill

The following notice, displayed in the Belfry of St. Mary's, Bowdon, was recorded by F. W. on 17th July 1852 and subsequently printed in the "Cheshire and Lancashire Historical Collector" Volume 1,1853.

You Ringers all observe these orders well
He pays his sixpence that o'erturns a Bell
And he that rings with either Spur or Hat
Must pay his six pence certainly for that
And he that rings and does dissturbbe ye Peal
Must pay his six pence or a Gun of ale
These laws elsewhere in every Church are us'd
That Bells and Ringers may not be abused.

James Millat, Ferdinando Laughton, George Wright, James Fletcher, Joseph Drinkwater, John Pickering, Aaron Eccles, Peter Pickering, John Dean, John Holbort.

A Cheshire Tale "Through the Looking Glass and What Alice Found There" by Myra Kendrick

Bowdon can not claim Lewis Caroll as its son and put up plaques to him and his books for children, in the way that it has done for the children's writers who actually lived locally for however short a time.

But Charles Lutwidge Dodgson, whose pen name was a play on his two baptismal names, was Cheshire born and spent his first eleven years at Daresbury where for sixteen years his father was vicar at the parish church. Childhood years make a deep impression on the mind, and *Alice in Wonderland*, the first of two *Alice* books, reflects something of the countryside and creatures of this once quiet Cheshire village. Who can forget the strange vanishing animal which grins down at Alice through the branches of a tree and fades until only the grin is left?

Daresbury's old sandstone Church, set amid fields and trees, receives a steady flow of visitors who come to see the memorial window to its most famous son, situated at the east end of the Daniell Chapel and dedicated in 1934. Below the window, on a fine oak table, is kept the Lewis Caroll Memorial Album in which may be read a list of his better known writings, including his second *Alice* book *Through the Looking Glass and What Alice Found There*,1872.

It is a curiosity that in fact the book was already in print and a copy in Dodgson's hands on December 6th 1871, so that the entry in the Memorial Album, as well as, oddly enough, the title page of the first edition, is not strictly accurate. The publishers, one supposes, must have been able to complete the publication processes a little ahead of the expected time. The Encyclopaedia Britannica (11th Edition) claims 1871 as the publication date and this is confirmed by the colophon of later editions of *Through The Looking Glass* itself. Dodgson's diary tells us that on 8th December 1871 he received from MacMillan "three Looking Glasses in Morocco and a hundred in cloth" and by 27th January 1872, "They have now sold 15000 *Looking Glasses* and have orders for 500 more". *Through The Looking Glass and what Alice Found There* was already well launched.

This book has an interesting history.

Alice lovers are so used to the illustrations by John Tenniel that they can hardly imagine the characters in the story in any other form than as Tenniel saw them. It comes as a surprise, then, to learn that when he was first approached, Tenniel, the illustrator of *Alice in Wonderland*, refused to illustrate *Through the Looking Glass*. He seems to have found Dodgson tiresomely exacting to work with. It was not until Dodgson had tried several other artists without success that Tenniel at last grudgingly relented and agreed to under- take the illustrations “at such spare times as he can find”. Dodgson wrote in his diary that Tenniel thought it possible, though unlikely, that the book might be ready for issue by Christmas 1869. In fact, by June 1870 Dodgson had received only seven pictures from Tenniel.

Dodgson's own progress with the writing was not particularly fast. In August 1866 he had written to his publisher that he had an idea of writing a sequel to *Alice in Wonderland*. He did not, however, send them the first chapter until January 1869 and almost two years later a diary entry note stated that he had finished writing the book. By 27th April in the same year Tenniel had sent him twenty-seven pictures, but it was now clear that the book could not appear at Michaelmas, as Dodgson appears to have hoped.

Dodgson had some misgivings about the printing of the "*Looking Glass* writing" that appears in the book. He wrote to the publishers as early as 1868 to ask them if they would be able to print a page or two of his projected new *Alice* book "in reverse", but as time went on he seems to have felt this an unreason- able demand and reduced the amount to a mirror image of the title and first verse of the nonsense poem *Jabberwocky*

What gave Dodgson the idea of setting his second *Alice* book in a reverse world on the other side of a looking glass? It was due to the ready wit of a little girl named Alice Raikes, a cousin of Dodgson's whom she met on a visit to an uncle in London.

The grown-up cousin played a joke on the girl, giving her an orange to hold and asking her which hand it was in. On her replying correctly" The right" he turned her towards a mirror so that she could see her reflection, asking her again which hand it was in. She was puzzled by the apparent change of the orange to the left hand, but she worked out a solution for herself. "If I was on the other side of the glass, would the orange still be in my right hand?" Dodgson was delighted by this intelligent answer and claimed that it gave him the idea of the looking glass world in his story.

Yet this young cousin Alice was not the heroine of the book. It is well known that this was Alice Liddell, the middle sister of the three little girls whose company delighted Dodgson, by now a fellow and mathematical lecturer at Christ Church College, Oxford, of which her father was dean. Just as the girls' croquet games can be seen reflected in a chapter of *Alice in Wonderland*, so their introduction to the game of chess influenced the form of *Through The Looking Glass*. We follow Alice's progress as a pawn from square to square of chequered countryside, towards her crowning as queen at the end of the story, and witness her encounters with other pawns, knights, kings and queens, red and white.

In this way the material for the book was gathered until, fused with recollections of nursery rhymes such as *Humpty Dumpty* and *The Lion and The Unicorn* and embellished with nonsense verses, mirror writing and the quaint illustrations of John Tenniel, it emerged from the press at the end of 1871, bearing on its title page the date 1872.

Dunham Oaks
by Marjorie Dorber

I wish I was in Dunham
Where the giant Elm trees grow,
Just to see once more the red deer
And his gentle soft eyed doe.

I remember the blue backed swallows
As they swirled between the trees,
And the old water-mill
Where they nested beneath its eaves.

It seems the bracken stretched for miles
Just about waist high,
From somewhere beneath the tangled mass
You'd hear the game cock cry.

But, oh the walk beside the lake
Where the summer breezes blow,
Where the purple rhododendron and the
Water lilies grow.

I sat for hours, when I was young
Beneath the copper beech,
And fed the little squirrels
That played just out of reach.

I wish I was in Dunham
Where the many oak trees grow,
It seems like only yesterday
But it was many years ago.

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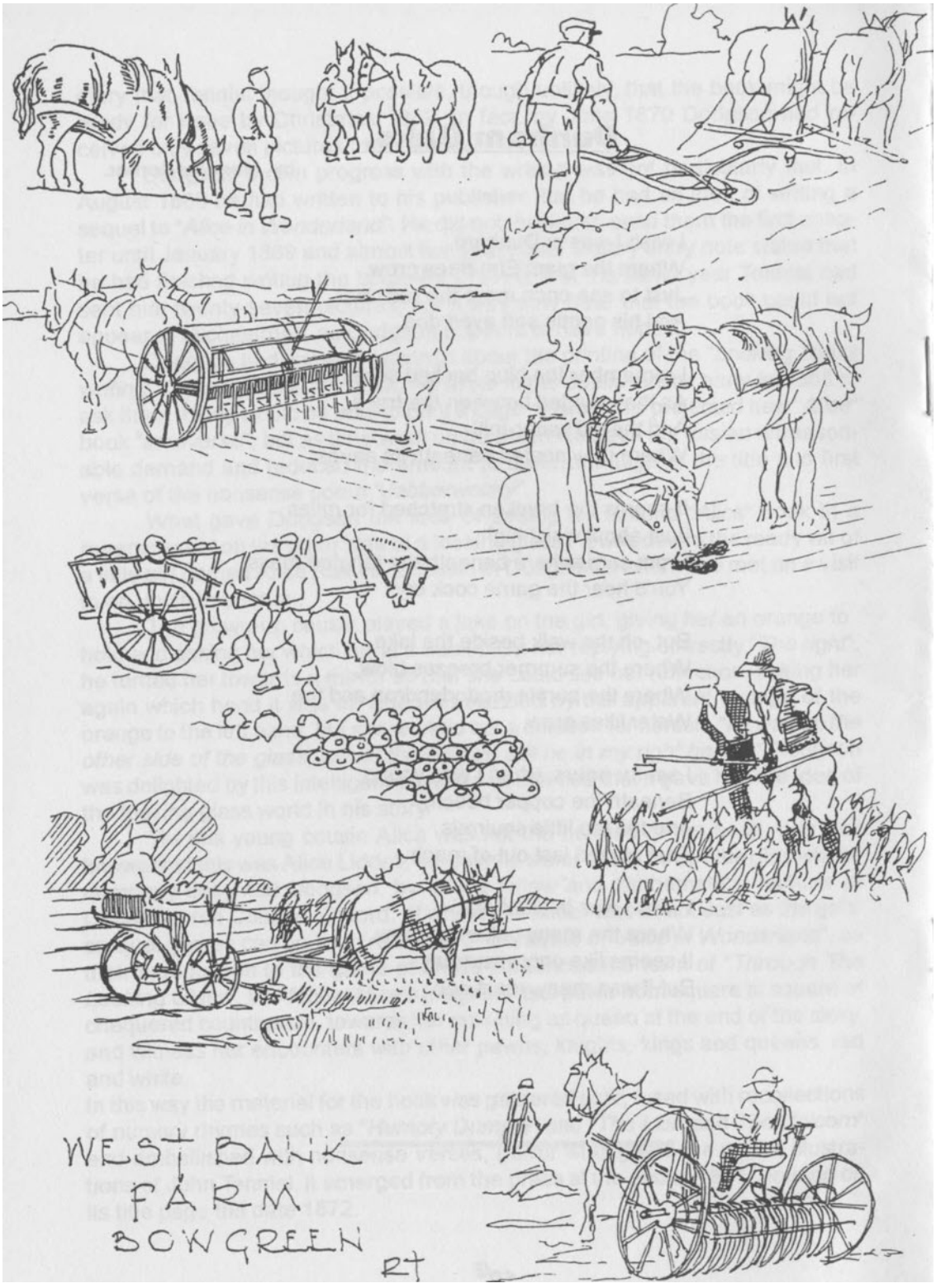
WEST BANK
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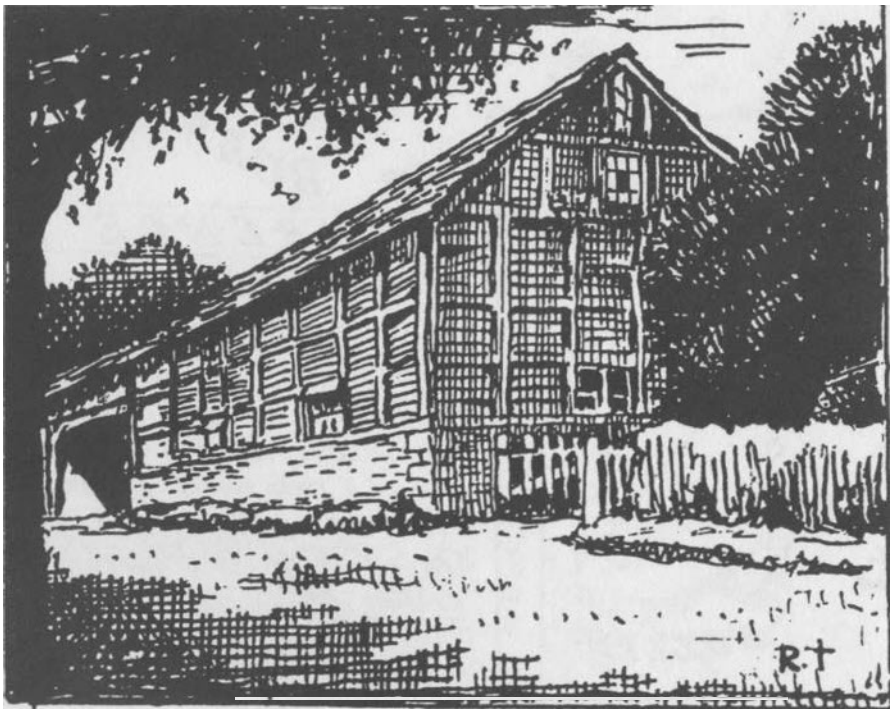

TITHE BARN, ASHLEY HEATH

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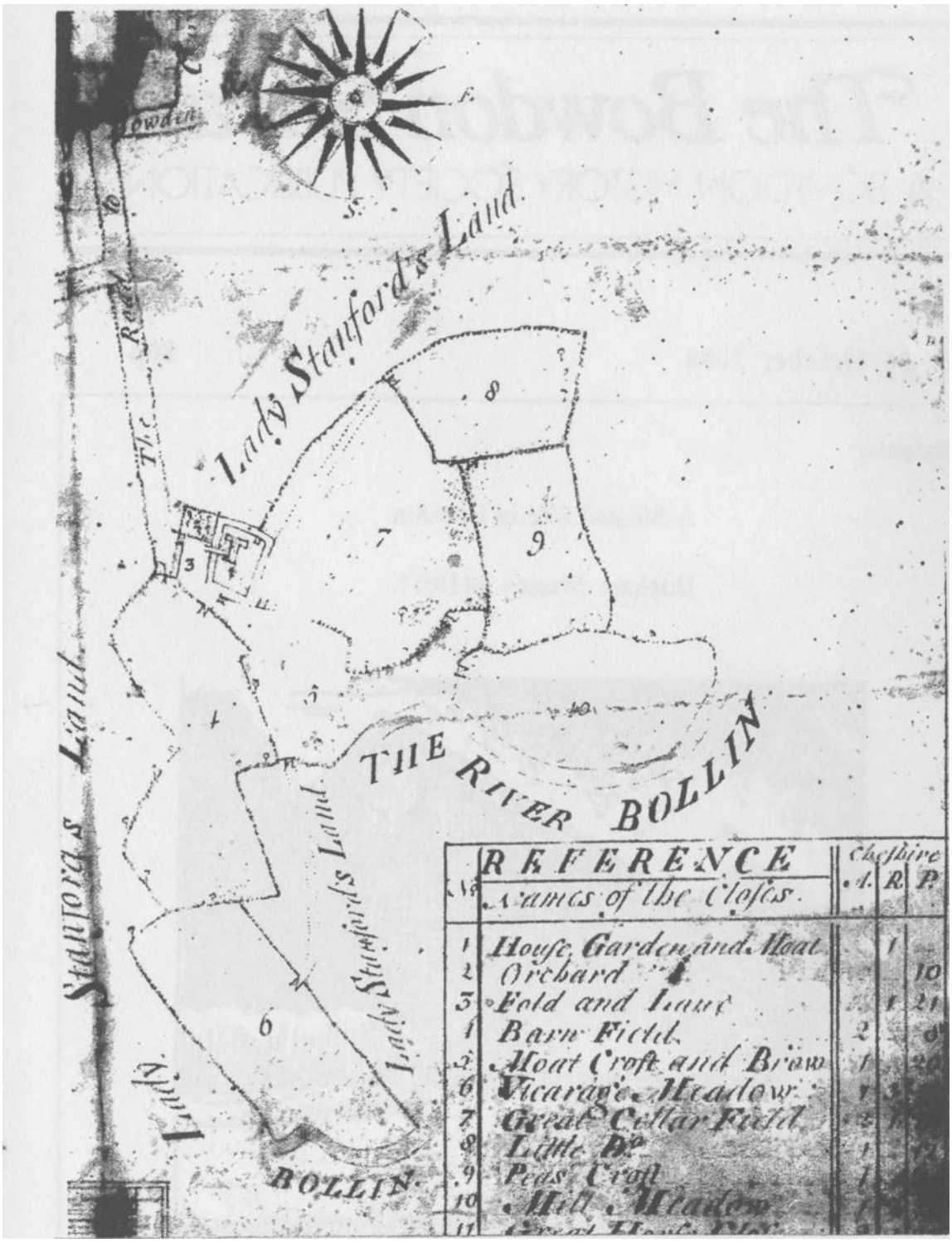
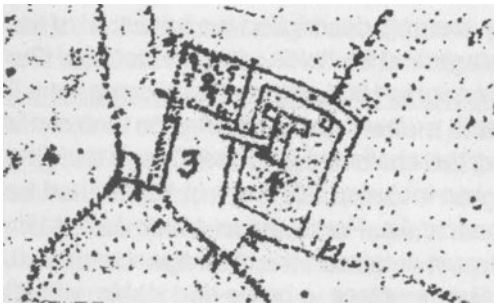


Bowdon Vicarage and those Glebe fields immediately surrounding it.
Part of the Survey Map of 1772 of Bowdon Vicarage and its Glebe lands.

A Moated Site in Bowdon
New Light on the Old Vicarage
by Marjorie Cox

The old Vicarage of Bowdon was set among the fields down by the River Bollin. In 1150, the baronial lord, Hamo de Mascy of Dunham Massey, gave to his new monastic foundation, the Benedictine Priory of Birkenhead, half of his manor of Bowdon, a considerable amount of land, and in 1278, his descendant, Hamo V, gave the Priory the advowson or right to present to the living of Bowdon. A few years later, in 1284, the Bishop of Coventry and Lichfield (in whose diocese Bowdon then lay) in order to provide for the holder of the living, decided on a division of this land between the Priory and the Vicar. A small number of fields in Bowdon township was given to the Vicar and became the vicarial glebe, from the Latin 'gleba', a clod and so soil or land. In addition the Vicar was to have various parochial dues, together with the 'small tithes' - on farm animals, flax and hemp in the whole of the very large parish of Bowdon. Unusually, he was also given the tithe of hay (normally a 'great tithe') from all the parish except the township of Dunham Massey. The Priory retained the much larger share of the land as the 'rectorial glebe' and the much more profitable 'great tithes' on cereals, for which the Hale Tithe Barn was built later. After the Dissolution of the Monasteries under Henry VIII, the Priory's land and tithes, together with the advowson, were given to the newly-created Bishopric of Chester. Ironically, from the early seventeenth century, the Bishops leased the land to the owners of Dunham Massey.



Detail of the Vicarage and Moat from the 1772 map.

The fields of the Vicar's glebe were described in the Bishop's allocation (the original in Latin) as 'all that land which once belonged to Richard, son of Hawys, next to the water of Bolyn, with all the buildings and with all the strips next to the said land, on a certain island called Greeneway';

'Greeneway' or 'Greeneye' is one of the oldest Bowdon field-names.

This vicarial glebe remained until 1863, when it was decided to build a new vicarage in Park Road, on a site and in a style more suited to a Bowdon, which had recently changed from an agricultural community to, predominantly, a prosperous 'dormitory' of Manchester. The old vicarage and some of the fields were sold to Josias Alexander, who re-named it The Priory', a name denounced in The Place-Names of Cheshire as 'pretentious antiquarianism', but, perhaps more kindly seen as Victorian historical romanticism, with a backward glance at Birkenhead Priory.

The vicarage house, which became The Priory, was not the first on the site, but a relatively late one of the end of the eighteenth century, and very little has, hitherto, been known about its predecessor. Many parishes have among their records Terriers, surveys of the incumbent's property, made at intervals for the Bishop. They can include, as do those of Ashton-under-Lyne, a living in the gift of the Booths and Greys of Dunham Massey, detailed descriptions of the parsonage house and other buildings, and of the lands. The Chester Diocesan Records contain only one Terrier for Bowdon and it is a sad disappointment, besides being damaged. It was made in July, 1728, by the Vicar, Peter Lancaster, but is mainly concerned with listing the Vicar's dues and tithes and those who paid them. There is scarcely a mention of the house, only that it 'is in good or better Repair than has been known (piece missing, ? in the memory) of Man'; as to the land and ground it was 'cultivated and improv'd'. The Vicar promised a full account 'when the Corn is reap'd', but no such full Terrier exists, if it was ever sent in. It is not surprising that John Baldwin, Vicar 1772-1815, replied to a Visitation query of 1804, that he had never seen any Terrier and none was to be found in the Registry at Chester, although he had been told by the late Parish Clerk that one had been 'deliver'd into that office' in the time of Peter Lancaster.

Until recently, the only description we have had of the earlier (not necessarily earliest) vicarage and its fields was in a detailed Survey and Valuation made by Commissioners in 1654, during the Interregnum. The purpose was to value church lands with a view to sale, following on their confiscation from church dignitaries, including the abolished Bishops, Deans and Chapters. The Vicar of Bowdon's property was included, although in 1647 it had been assigned to the new 'godlie and orthodox', i.e. Presbyterian, Vicar, James Watmough. The fields were given in the utmost detail and the vicarage was described as thatched, of three bayes, with a Garden place, a barne and stable, with the barne yard'. (For 'bay' construction see Bowdon Hall and its People, pp.51-3; several local gentlemen's houses had five bays, see p.58.)

In the later eighteenth century only bare information about the house was given by the Vicar, John Baldwin, in his replies to Visitation queries. In 1778, the Vicarage was 'in good repair' and in 1789 ' in very good repair'. In 1804, however, he reported that it was in good repair, adding 'as it is not many years since I was at a considerable expense in erecting a new one.' 'Not many years' is a rather vague phrase, difficult to interpret: could the 'in very good repair of 1789' indicate

a new building or should it be dated from only a few years before 1804? It is either very late eighteenth century or turn of the century. John Baldwin, presented to Bowdon by the Bishop on August 2nd, 1772, was a clergyman's son, baptised in Chester Cathedral, and a Cambridge graduate, LL B in 1771, of Trinity Hall. In 1794, while still holding Bowdon, valued at £140 per annum, he was made Perpetual Curate of St. Peter's, Chester, valued at £90 per annum, where previous clergy had been Baldwins.

New evidence about the earlier vicarage has just emerged in the Stamford Papers from Dunham Massey. A large number of maps and plans has recently been deposited by The National Trust in The John Rylands University Library of Manchester (Deansgate). No. 99 of these is 'A Map of the Vicarage and Glebe lands in Bowden and County of Chester belonging to the Reverend Mr. John Baldwin Surveyed September 1772 by John Earl'. The map is on vellum and the scale is 14 chains or 56 perches (Cheshire measure) to 5 inches. It has just been cleaned and made legible, but John Earl has not so far been identified. The Survey, made in the month after Baldwin's presentation, was presumably done to make a record, in the absence of a proper Terrier, of his fields, which were intermixed with those of Lady Stamford (spelt 'Stanford', suggesting the survey was by a stranger). The map, with the list of buildings and fields, contains a startling revelation. The first item in the list is 'House, garden and Moat' and the fifth is a field called 'Moat Croft and Brow', names not known from elsewhere. The map shows clearly an irregularly shaped quadrangular moat, with a bridge across it from the west to the house, whose shape is different from that on the Tithe Map of 1838.

This new evidence and its significance have to be viewed against the comprehensive survey and conclusions of David Wilson on 'Medieval Moated Sites in Cheshire' (Transactions Lancashire and Cheshire Antiquarian Society. Vol.84, 1987) and the briefer account of moated sites in Trafford in Michael Nevell's The Archaeology of Trafford (1997), pp.48-9. Wilson showed that the number of moated sites found in Cheshire (none occupied by it's proven original building) had steadily risen since 1960, and he estimated it at around two hundred, which he thought close to the medieval total. In Cheshire, they were predominantly on the Keuper Marl/boulder clay, which covers over half the 'historic' county. In such areas they tended to be one per township, and, for various reasons, usually manorial (including monastic manors and granges). As to the purpose and function of moats, he came down against drainage and water supply, though he was more neutral about fishponds. Rather than defence against major attack, he favoured feuding. Separate functions were as a sign of social standing or of the possession of more valuables, and also of following a fashion.

Bowden Vicarage is, for Cheshire, unusual in not being manorial, but it lies in a typical location, on low-lying clay land. There is also some evidence to suggest that in the fourteenth century it might have been glad of the security of a moat against feuding by branches of the Mascy family, R. Stewart Brown, the historian of Birkenhead Priory, describes what the Priory had to suffer at the hands of the Mascys of Hale, at one time holders of part of the manor of Bowdon and claimants to the advowson. In July, 1383, Thomas de Mascy with Hugh de Artunstall carried off the Priory's tithe com. In March, 1397, contesting the Prior's appointment of Richard del More as Vicar of Bowdon, several Mascys entered the vicarage and held it by force until Palm Sunday, threatening that neither the Prior nor the Vicar should draw any profit from the church until their candidate, a Mascy, was appointed. In April, 1397, the holy watur [sic] clerk' of Bowdon Church was assaulted by them. The Hale Mascys' effort failed, but in such circumstances, if a moat round the vicarage did not exist already it might well have been thought desirable. In general, moated sites are dated from the 12th to the 15th century, with a peak in the 13th, but Wilson stresses that the dating of the digging out of moats is very problematic. Those which have disappeared are even more difficult, and by 1804, when John Baldwin had built his new vicarage, the moat must have been filled in: there is no trace of it on the Tithe Map.

The moated site at the old vicarage in Bowdon should, primarily, take its place among the two hundred in the 'historic county' of Cheshire, but in the present state of local authority boundaries, it must also be seen in the context of Trafford. Nevell identifies eight certain or possible moated sites in Trafford, of which only three have positive evidence of a moat: these are Buttery House Farm in Davenport Green, Hale, and Riddings Hall and Timperley Hall both in Timperley, the first two of which he finds below manorial status. Positive evidence is hard to come by; it can be from aerial photography, archaeological field-work, field-names or documentation. The moated site at Bowdon's old vicarage, documented in 1772, with a map, is therefore an important addition to the small tally in Trafford and an addition to the total in the 'historic' county of Cheshire.

My warm thanks are due to Mr. John Hodgson of The John Rylands University Library of Manchester for much help.

I am also grateful to The National Trust for kind permission to reproduce a photograph of part of the map of Bowdon Vicarage and Glebe lands.

Chief Sources

Stamford Papers from Dunham Massey John Rylands University Library of Manchester.
Cheshire Record Office: Diocesan Records:
Survey Map No.99 of Bowden
Vicarage and Glebe lands 1772
Bowden Terrier, 6 July, 1728
EDV8/16;
Visitation Replies, 1778, 1789, 1804
EDV 7/1, 2, 3.
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Michael Nevell *Excavations of a Medieval Moated Site at Buttery House* Lane, Transactions Lancashire and Cheshire Antiquarian Society, 82. Summarised in Hale and
Ashley: The Past 100 Years, p. 197.
The Archaeology of Trafford (1997)

Editors Note Readers might be reminded of Canon Ridgway's article *Fourteenth Century Feuds in Bowdon,* Bowdon Sheaf No.20 (October 1992).

Description of the Manor of Dunham Massey from the Manorial Extent of 1410-11 in the time of John Legh of Bothes, tenant of the same place

At the same place is the site of the previously mentioned manor, surrounded by a moat. On the site is a hall with a high [i.e. first storey ?] chamber, with chapel and other small rooms adjacent, roofed with shingles; a screened passageway between kitchen and hall, roofed with boards and a granary roofed with thatch, and a gatehouse roofed with oak shingles; and certain buildings with foundations on the aforementioned site, which is worth nothing after deductions; in addition there is an orchard outside the moat which used to yield 2 shillings a year. The fields of the demesne have not been in the hands of the lord for very long time. In the time of the predecessors of the present lord they were leased in portions to various tenants and until now in the same way they remain in the hands of the lessees, whose names are appended (and the tenants are no longer aware of the rights of possession or where the boundaries lie for certain) as shown below. But there is at the same place a certain area of grass-land called Dunham Meadow, containing 9 1/2 acres with the value of 5 shillings per acre.

There is also a pond adjoining the moat around the hall which is not stocked and so it is worth nothing after deductions.

The above extract from the Stamford Estate papers at Rylands Library was transcribed by Mr. James Haworth of Sale and submitted for publication by Chris Hill.

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A Moated Site in Bowdon: New Light on the Old Vicarage

ERRATA

p.2 The following acknowledgements should appear under the photograph of the map:- The National Trust, Stamford Papers, The John Rylands University Library of Manchester.
Reproduced by courtesy of the Director and Librarian of The John Rylands University Library of Manchester.
p.3 For 'Margorie' read 'Marjorie'.
p.5 line 38 After 'favoured' insert 'security against thieves and law-breakers in unsafe times, marked by family'.

The Bowdon Sheaf

A BOWDON HISTORY SOCIETY

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Seventeenth Century Burial Laws
by Beryl Chartres

In 1667 an Act of Parliament was passed for the encouragement of the woollen and paper manufacturers. It enacted that no corpse should be buried in 'shirt, sheet, shroud or shift' but in woollen, and an affidavit made within eight days of interment that the dead was not shrouded in linen. A penalty of £5 was incurred if the law was broken. These affidavits are regularly entered in the Bowdon Parish Register. No specific entry of the enforcement of the Act appears until June 1709, when there was Alice, wife of Thomas Warburton, of Hale, buried in linen contrary to Act of Parliament. He paid ye fine to ye churchwardens of Bowdon for ye use of ye poorer Not many years afterwards the fine of £5 was enforced in the case of Mary Leigh, widow, of Bowdon, buried in linen. £2.10s where of went to the poor. In 1728, Nicholas Waterhouse, of Bowdon, a dissenting teacher, 'was buried in linnen' but there is no note made as to whether any fine was enforced. This Act was not re- pealed until 1814, and then not without some opposition.

Ref: Ingham's *Cheshire*.

Publication of Marriage Banns during the Commonwealth Period
by Beryl Chartres

In 1653, during the Commonwealth period, there was a very stringent Act of Parliament passed requiring marriages to take place before a Justice of the Peace. The form usually adapted was: 'Publication of banns of marriage was made in our Parish church of Bowdon three several Lords days between John Yeates of Lime parish and Margaret Baxter of this parish, which days of publication were the 4th, the 11th and the 18th days of December in the year 1653, and were married the 23rd day of December within the same year before me, Peter Brookes, Esquire'.

The following contains the first reference to a trade which was the staple one in the district:- 'Publication of banns of marriage was made in our parish church of Bowdon three several Lords days betwixt Wm. Tippinge of Hale, woollin webster (woollen weaver) and Katheren Hall of Ashley, both of this parish of Bowdon and were married by me, Thomas Standley (Stanley) of Alderley, Esquire, one of the Justices of Peace of this County , on 6th day of February, 1653'.

Proclamation was in some instances made, generally by the bellman, at the cross in the market place. These proclamations usually read ‘Publication of banns was made in the Altrincham Market, within our parish of Bowdon, three severall market days betwixt Edward Woodall of the parish of Ashton upon Mercey Bancke, and Anne Canington of this parish and were marryed the 16th day of September in the year of our Lord God 1654, before Tho. Brereton, Esquire.’ Some of the entries state that publication was made between the hours of eleven and two in the market place, but this does not appear prior to the year 1656 to have been a popular method, as three quarters of the proclamations were made in 'our parish church'. In 1656 and 1657 the publications were, with few exceptions, made in the local market place 'at the close of the morning,' on 12 o'clock. In 1658 they were made in solitary instances, but they are solemnised by the Vicar, James Watmough.

Ref: Ingham's *Cheshire.*

BUCKLOW HUNDRED AND THE CATTLE PLAGUE. 1865-66
by Stephen Matthews

In 1865-66 British cattle herds were afflicted by an epidemic of Rinderpest, a viral infection for which there was no certain cure. The first cases were identified in the early summer of 1865 after diseased animals had been imported from the Baltic into Hull and then swiftly dispersed around the country by rail. It is probable that the importer had been pressured into accepting diseased cattle and that he used Hull because the import checks there were known to be slack.

The disease spread rapidly, though it did not reach Cheshire until early October 1865 and Bucklow Hundred until a month later. It then raged until early summer when mass slaughter brought it under control. Cheshire was hit harder than any other county both in absolute terms and in the percentage of beasts, losing 38% of its stock at a cost of nearly £1m. Nearly 94,000 animals were attacked (68%), of which about 80,000 died or were slaughtered. This compared with losses of 1.87% in Lancashire and 4.86% in Staffordshire, with far smaller numbers. We do not know the full extent of the losses in the rural areas around Bowdon, for Dunham was let to tenants from about 1850 and the surviving papers make no reference to the plague. The Cattle Plague Com- missioners published summaries by Hundreds not parishes or other smaller units, so we have to be satisfied with Bucklow. There the plague appeared in 551 places, among herds totalling 8925 beasts.

The figures for the affected sites are:

Healthy beasts slaughtered	320	3.58% }	
Diseased slaughtered	4372	48.98% }	75.34%
Died of disease	2034	22.78% }	
Recovered	1031	1 1.55%	
Unaccounted for	30	0.33%	
Unaffected on the 551 sites	1138	12.75%	
Totals	8925	99.97%	

We may assume that 8925 was about 2/3 of the total cattle population, in line with the rest of the county and there were somewhat fewer than 3000 owners of livestock. We know this because the Stockport Surveyor of Taxes requisitioned 3250 returns for the census of March 1866. That related to all livestock except horses, not just cattle, so the total would have included urban dairymen and individuals with their own milk cow as well as the (probably) few who had other animals but no cattle. The incidence of loss is typical for the county, for among herds affected it ranged from 78.9% in the Wirral to 67% in Daresbury Hundred. On the Arley estates in Great Budworth, Warburton and Lymm the numbers fell from 274 animals in 1864 to 125 in 1866, a drop of roughly 55%. Some larger herds were almost wiped out. We do obtain one glimpse of the impact at a local level from reports in the Chester Chronicle. In each issue it reported upon one area in more detail, usually in west Cheshire but on 24 March 1866 it concentrated upon Knutsford Division, giving the following details of losses in the preceding month

Township	**Cattle lost**	**£ Value**
Ashley	13	245
Bowdon	3	56
Dunham Massey	6	92
Hale	27	346
High Leigh	143	1856
Lymm	59	919
Timperley	1	20
Warburton	22	403

There were no losses in Altrincham, Agden, Bollington, Millington or Rostherne in that month These figures, multiplied by the nine months of serious outbreak, could give us an idea of the total losses.

The cost for the county was estimated as not far short of £1 m, of which about £350,000 was met by compensation under an Act of February 1866. Most of the major landowners assisted their tenant farmers by direct payments, loans and rent remissions, but this generosity cost them dear, for the compensation paid was not a grant from central government funds, as it would be now, but was met from an increased county rate to which they were the major contributors, either as payers in their own right or because tenants were entitled to deduct half the extra rate from their rents. They thus paid twice, an injustice which probably caused John Tollemache of Peckforton, a south Cheshire M P , to object to the compensation clauses in the Commons' debate on the Act. All the Government was prepared to do was to advance a loan of £270,000 repayable over 30 years at 3% interest. Worse, although towns within the County paid the rate, neighbouring cities like Liverpool did not, even though they depended so heavily upon the rural hinterland as E W Watkin, a Stockport MP . protested in vain.

All this might seem unfair and unsympathetic to us, used as we are to UK. and EC. compensation, but in the mid-nineteenth century few people saw the role of government as being responsive to disasters of this sort. Loans were the remedy for industrial and other crises; charity was the remedy for hardship amongst the unemployed workers. There was much debate. The government would go no further than make a loan and Gladstone expressed outrage at the unprecedented idea of a payment to relieve agricultural hard- ship. The farming community nevertheless called for compensation from government or anybody. Some people, like a Nantwich correspondent to the Chester Chronicle, thought that public subscription was the answer. Another correspondent argued that farmers were capitalists like mill operators and thus by class not a suitable subject for charity. If they had not insured their livestock as they should have done, they deserved no sympathy . This overlooked the fact that there was little cattle insurance to be had; there was probably none commercially and the small local associations were too poorly funded to survive. The solution, for this school of thought, was that the landlords, as co-partners with the farmers, should dip into their well-lined pockets and plough back some of the profits they had taken in rent. This argument had some force, for in 1852 James Caird M P , an 'improving' agriculturalist had noted in his English Agriculture 1850 that Cheshire landlords took too much of the profit in rent to enable their tenants to save any money. In the end, it was this view that prevailed.

The virulence of the plague was probably largely self induced. The Plague Commissioners and others commented upon the unwillingness of Cheshire farmers to report illness or to slaughter animals. This caused the plague to spread fast. Caird considered that Cheshire feeding methods were poor, for cattle weakened in the winter when they were not fed properly, surviving on a meagre diet of straw, eked out with a little hay and turnip after Christmas. This was precisely when the plague struck hardest These factors, with a concentration of cattle to supply the milk and meat markets of the nearby cities, almost certainly made the crisis in Cheshire much worse than elsewhere.

Despite the terrible economic damage to the county , two much needed improvements sprang from the plague. The first was that it enabled the government to begin the series of annual censuses of livestock and crops, which have continued ever since. Various governments had attempted to hold these for many years but had been defeated by the obstinacy of the farming community and the lack of a suitable administrative mechanism. The disaster of 1865-66 broke that resistance and a successful livestock census was held in March 1866, organised by the Surveyors of the Inland Revenue. Virtually all occupiers of property were persuaded to complete a return, assisted, for the first time by the gentry and clergy , who had also opposed previous attempts. In June there was a less successful crop census, which was seen as a greater intrusion into privacy.

The other improvement was that the losses spurred the government into introducing legislation to encourage both local mutual and commercial cattle insurance schemes. In 1865-66 insurance had been almost unobtainable and although there were some estate schemes they were generally poorly funded with the further weakness that subscription was usually voluntary rather than contractual. There was none on the Arley estates as the tenants could not agree upon terms. The few there were failed soon after the plague began, both in Cheshire and Lancashire.

A Rostherne Epitaph
by Ronald Trenbath

On a visit to Rostherne in 1767 William Trenbath enjoyed reading an epitaph on the gravestone of Richard Anson which he noted in his account book. The reason for this rather odd action on his part, may be accounted for in the circumstances of his childhood and education.

When he was born, in a remote part of Cornwall in 1726, William's parents considered that he would eventually , as the youngest son, have to leave home and seek his fortune outside the Duchy . The problem with this requirement lay in the fact that the Duchy of Cornwall at that time, consisted of a community which was isolated from the rest of Britain by the very wild terrain and, nearly impenetrable, moorland of Dartmoor, Exmoor and Bodmin Moor as well as the Tamar River which made it less difficult, at the time, to reach New York by sea from Cornwall, than to travel to London.

This isolation had, over the centuries, led to the retention of a very strong and independent Celtic sub-culture, with clan loyalties, which antagonised people from neighbouring counties, who always considered the Cornish to be French, a not unreasonable conclusion as Cornish fishermen, sailors and merchants had, for centuries traded with their Celtic brothers in Brittany , resulting in much intermarriage and practically all Cornish families having French ancestry .

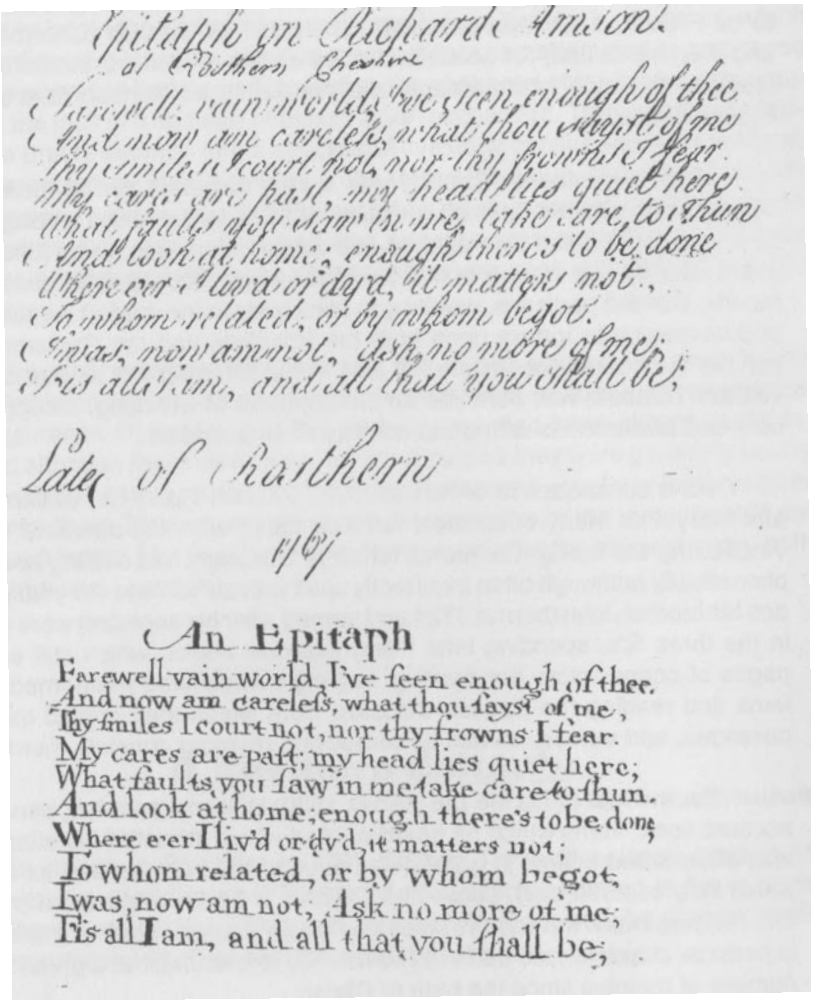
The Seventeenth Century was a very turbulent period for the Duchy commencing with the Spanish 'invasion' of 1595, when John Trenbath's neighbour was decapitated by a cannon-ball outside his house, to be followed forty years later by the trauma of the Civil War when, according to contemporary reports, Cornish partisans, unwilling to participate in the conflict, wreaked havoc and unspeakable torture upon both the Royalists and the Parliamentarians, leaving the country devastated. It was in the aftermath of all this chaos that William Trenbath was born into an environment of wrecking, smuggling, robbery and lawlessness with great hostility to all outsiders.

As a consequence of this situation William's parents, William Senior, and Mary , like many other local families faced with this dilemma set about 'Anglicizing' the family. The name, formerly Trenbagh, had already been re-spelt phonetically (although often incorrectly spelt with an 'M') and the young William and his brother John (born in 1721 and named after his ancestor) were grounded in the three R's, spending time filling exercise books, which still exist, with pages of copper plate handwriting, solving complicated mathematical problems and reading the English Classics, from which they copied quotations, passages, and verses, as well as composing rhyming couplets themselves.

For the rest of his life (he died in 1800) William recorded, usually in an account book, items which he heard or read which attracted his attention. He also often noted events in great detail quoting the hour, as well as dates, on which they occurred, and, between 1736 and 1772, he wrote down more than fifty recipes which formed the basis of a family cookery book at a later date. It is perhaps characteristic that in 1750 he tried to calculate, at a given time, the number of minutes since the birth of Christ.

William, his wife, Ann, and their children, finally settled in Cheshire on 7th April 1761 when they arrived in Northwich where they lived before moving in 1766 to Dunham Woodhouses, in the Parish of 'Boden', where he commenced his duties as Salt Revenue Watchman at a salary of £30 a year (£5 more than his colleagues in central Cheshire), to be promoted to Salt Officer in 1770, a strange situation as his brother John, at home in Cornwall, was a successful smuggler , to the dismay of John Wesley who wrote begging him to cease the practice and set a better example to others.

On his return home William rewrote the epitaph from Rostherne as shewn:



Epitaph on Richard Amion.
of Rosthern Cheshire

Farewell vain world, I've seen enough of thee
And now am careless, what thou sayst of me
Thy smiles I court not, nor thy frowns I fear.
My cares are past, my head lies quiet here.
What faults you saw in me take care to shun
And look at home; enough there's to be done
Where ever I liv'd or dy'd, it matters not.
To whom related, or by whom begot.
I was; now am not; Ask no more of me;
'Tis all I am, and all that you shall be;

Late of Rosthern

1767

An Epitaph

Farewell vain world, I've seen enough of thee.
And now am careless, what thou sayst of me,
Thy smiles I court not, nor thy frowns I fear.
My cares are past; my head lies quiet here;
What faults you saw in me take care to shun.
And look at home; enough there's to be done;
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I was, now am not; Ask no more of me;
'Tis all I am, and all that you shall be;

Sources

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The Salisbury MS Record Office
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The Grove of Eagles (novel & sources) Winston Graham
The King's General (novel & research) Daphne du Maurier

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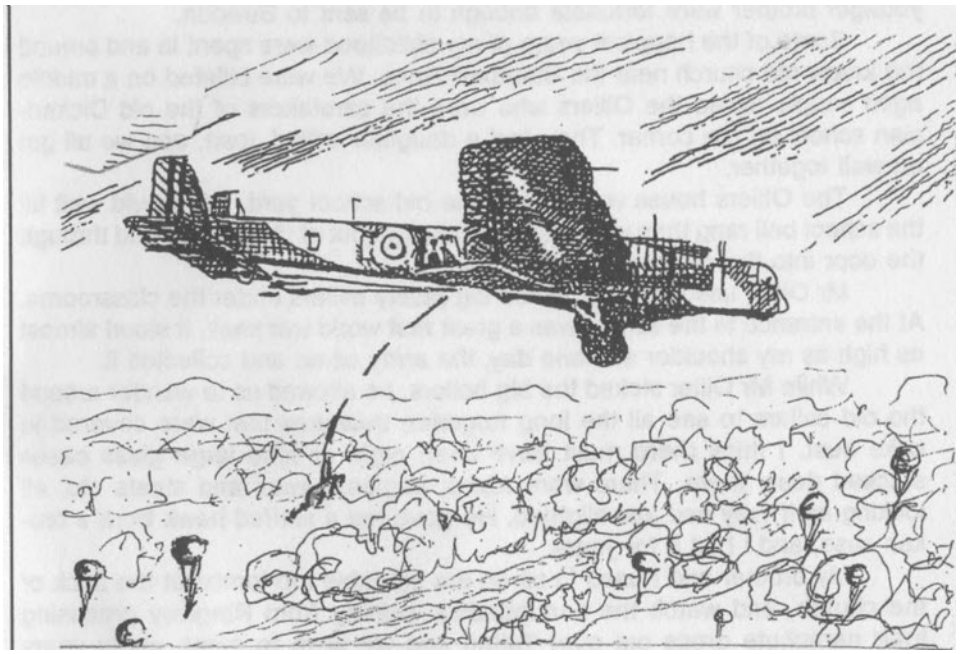
Dunham Mill in the Middle Ages.
Bowdon and the Income Tax 1908-1914.



Parachute Training over Tatton

War Time Memories
by Marjorie Dorber

In August 1939 plans were made, in the light of the impending war, to evacuate children from areas considered to be at risk from air raids to districts considered safe from them, and as Bowdon was thought to fall within the latter category, children were herded into trains and buses and brought to local billets. No thought was given to the matching of children to the families receiving them and, in consequence, a great number of evacuees were homesick and very unhappy and their parents came and returned home with them to discover later that Bowdon was not a safe area, due to its position in relation to Ringway Air Base, the Broadheath armament-making factories and the Sinderland Munition Depot.

Some of the children did stay for the duration of the war and enjoyed the experience, one of whom, Marjorie Dorber, records her happy memories as follows :-

I am an old Stretfordian, born at the side of the great Longford Hall in the once beautiful gardens of Longford Park.

When war broke out in 1939, I was 11 years of age, and when it was decreed that children were to be evacuated to the countryside, I and my younger brother were fortunate enough to be sent to Bowdon.

Some of the happiest years of my childhood were spent in and around the lovely old church near the Stamford Arms. We were billeted on a middle aged couple called the Olliers who were the caretakers of the old Dickensian school on the corner. They had a daughter called Joan, and we all got on well together.

The Olliers house was next to the old school yard. We would wait till the school bell rang then we would step straight out of the kitchen and through the door into the playground.

Mr Ollier used to show us the big musty cellars under the classrooms. At the entrance to the school was a great first world war shell, it stood almost as high as my shoulder and one day, the army came and collected it.

While Mr Ollier stoked the big boilers, he allowed us to wander around the old cellars to see all the long forgotten treasures that were covered in coke dust. I think there must have been eight or nine large glass cases stacked down there. There were foxes, eagles, hawks and stoats etc. all looking as if they had just alighted. He gave me a stuffed hawk from a bro- ken case, and I had it for years.

My brother and I used to sit on the old table top tombs at the back of the church, and watch the commando's training from Ringway practising their parachute drops out over Tatton and we were to meet, many years later, some well known people who had done their training at Bowdon.

Standing with our backs to the school entrance, the Stamford Arms facing us, the road ran to our right where a row of shops were, and where Mrs Oilier did her shopping. This road ran straight down till it joined the main road. At that junction on the left hand comer was a small field and in it was a display by the RAF . I think it was a 'Wings for Victory' show. Here amongst ail the things on show was a crashed German fighter plane, and we were allowed to sit in the cockpit and were told it was the first fighter to be shot down; there was always a crowd waiting to get in and turn the wheel at the side of the pilots seat. When the wheel was given a couple of sharp turns, the plane roared, and the children thought they had started its engines. Much of our play time after school was in Dunham Park. In those days, the public was not allowed on the left hand side of the main drive up to the hall. There were so many rabbits, they seemed to be everywhere we looked. We could hear the game cocks calling, and the lake at the front of the hall was full of ducks and water hens.

My father used to take us to the park when we were smaller, and very often he would sit against the iron railings against the old mill and chat with who I understood to be Lord Stamford about the 1st World War.

We gathered horse chestnuts for drying for the 'conker contests' that were always going on from school to school, all wanting to be 'King Conker'.

Many years later I married an army man who came back from fighting in Burma (14th Army, the forgotten one) and it was his job to guard the German prisoners of war in Dunham Oaks. This area is now a golf course, and the only sign of the camp that is left is the entrance across the footpath going up to the top of Bowdon Hill. The prisoners had built an island for the lorries to turn round and out again. Here they had built a large replica of one of the castles of the Rhine, it was first class and stood about 3ft x 4ft on top of the rockery. Years later, my husband and I went to see if we could find it, but it was turned on its side, just bulldozed to one area and covered in weeds. About three years ago, on another quick visit, we found that the whole camp area had a large earth bank placed over it.

It's sad because we had to answer an SOS from Germany by a group of German veterans who had been at the camp and were wanting to visit the area.

Mr Ollier had a person working with him who seemed to stay at the house from time to time. They had a large allotment at the bottom of the hill on the left hand side. This area at that time was just field after field right up to Lymm Corner. Our job was to walk down to the fields and take him his dinner whilst he tended the vegetables.

At the junction of the hill and the road from Bowdon to the main gates of Dunham Massey was a row of little cottages (still there today), at the door of the first cottage an elderly man in union shirt and dungarees used to sit in his doorway selling peanuts. He had a large sack by his side, and was weighing out 1p-2p-6p bags of nuts for the squirrels. I can honestly say when we bought the nuts, the squirrels did not get them.

Bowdon was a very big hit with the American troops, and the then current boy friend wandered all over Bowdon and Altrincham.

There is a group that has formed in Knutsford called the General Patton's Group and they meet at the Royal George Hotel in the town centre. We were invited to attend, which we did, they had a guest of honour from the States and a General Patton look alike. The Mayor and Mayoress were sat with us and I felt rather embarrassed at the G. Patton lookalike. He did get him off to a T, but Patton was like that. I watched him on a few local news reels and found him to be another swaggering Custer, Mussolini and Herman Goering. He was giving a pep talk to his troops - one of which was my then sweetheart, he gave out his famous remark with 'your blood and my guts we will win the day', to which one of the troops replied to his buddies, 'has he got that the right way round', Patton was not liked by our troops or his own, and Monty let him know it, the rest is history.

[Bowdon Sheaf is always pleased to publish reminiscences, like this, which give a picture of social activities in previous times.]

Dunham Mill in the Middle Ages
by Jim Haworth

'Old' Sir George Booth's noted and delightful Dunham Mill is believed to have been built in 1616, but what about before that date? Was there a previous mill on the same site?

These are intriguing questions but the evidence available to date is rather tenuous. Certainly a Dunham Mill did exist in the medieval period and it was water-powered. In fact four mills appear repeatedly in various documents of the Stamford Papers: Dunham, Bollington, and Ross (or Rass) Mills.

Incidentally an interesting extra detail is worth a mention here. Dodgson (Place Names of Cheshire) says that Ross Mill ‘was probably a horse mill', presumably associating the name with the Germanic *res*, meaning a steed. However the documents definitely describe it as a water-mill and it is worth noting that all the early references have the word spelt with an -a- (variously Ras/Rass/Rasse). *

The earliest mention of Dunham Mill in available documents come in the manorial extent of 1347, when the four mills are referred to as Bollington, Dunham and the two water-mills called Hale Mills.

An account of 1380, giving details of costs of repairs, names the Hale mills, 'Castell and Passe', together with Bollington and the 'Pool Mill', which must be the Dunham one. It is interesting to see that a description of the manor which heads the manorial extent of 1411, refers to 'a pool adjoining the moat'. Here we have some tantalising hints. The moat with adjoining pool is clearly not dissimilar to what we know was there later from the famous aerial views painted in the 17th. and 18th. centuries, much of which of course may still be seen today. Was the Pool Mill so called because it was fed from this system ? Surely this is perfectly feasible; and if it were true then we should be justified in wondering if Pool Mill actually stood on or near the site of the present mill. Of course when Sir George built his mill he needed to construct the watercourse from Hale Moss to the moat because the natural supply was inadequate, but this does not necessarily mean that an earlier mill would have been unworkable; it could have had a smaller water-wheel, or been used part-time; or perhaps, some 250 years before Sir George's time, the natural water supply was greater.

The 1411 description of the manor quoted above makes no mention of a Dunham mill, and the survey of the estate which follows refers only to the other three mills. Likewise, in manorial accounts for 1414 and 1417, Bollington, Castle and Rass Mills all appear but Dunham Mill is absent, suggesting that it was out of use during the early years of the 15th. century.

On the other hand, several documents dated 1439 record the granting of various parts of the Dunham Massey estate to Sir Robert Booth (the first of the Booths at Dunham) and his wife Douce: all four mills are included, but this time the Dunham one is referred to as a fulling mill. This revelation may prompt us to wonder if the earlier Dunham Mill always was for fulling, but I think it unlikely. There is no other mention of fulling; and among the repairs to Pool Mill in 1380, mentioned above, the 'hurst' received attention. A hurst is the sturdy frame which is required to support the mill stones, so clearly it must have been a com-mill On the basis of the information outlined here it would seem that an early Dunham corn-mill became unused at some point between 1380 and 1411, and was either converted to, or replaced by, a fulling mill before 1439. As to its, or their, location, we have glimpsed some interesting possibilities, based unfortunately, on very inconclusive evidence. Perhaps the question will only be answered by some future archaeological investigation. In the meantime we can always hope that further and more persuasive documentary evidence is waiting somewhere to be revealed.

* Elsewhere Dodgson derives Rasse from either Middle English *rasse*, a level space, or Old English *raesc*, a rush, rushbed.

Editorial Note The Pool Mill may have been the one associated with Mill Field, at Pool Bank Farm, which probably served the Motte and Bailey on the adjacent Castle Hill. RT.

Bowdon and the Income Tax 1908-1914
by Stephen Matthews

This note is based upon three Inland Revenue notebooks, which I recovered from a builder's skip, long after they should have been thrown away about 1950. Their survival depends upon the fact that if you put something in a store room and leave it, it will stay there until the room is needed for some other purpose! The notebooks themselves are far from a complete record of the Surveyors' activity, for two of them record the investigations made by them into understated profits or returns that had not been made, whilst the other is a summary of what were regarded as more serious offences which had to be reported to the Board. For 'Surveyor' read 'Inspector', the contemporary equivalent, but note that at that time the Commissioners actually made the assessments and the Surveyor's job was to monitor that process.

The main tax record would have been the annual assessment books to which each entry in the investigation notebooks is cross referenced, and there were certainly other records. The first of the two notebooks runs from 1908 to 1909, with 52 entries from all parishes, and the second, which runs from 1909 to 1911, contains 58 entries. Some of the enquiries lead to an increased tax bill; some returns were accepted; some assessments were reduced. There seems to have been two levels of enquiry: routine current year enquiries whose outcome was not reported to the Board and recoveries (Back Duty) where a formal settlement was made with the Board, possibly with penalties. These are summarised in the third book, for 1910 to 1928. It is a sad reflection of human behaviour that of the 110 investigations carried out, 74 resulted in an increased assessment.

In the early years of this century, Altrincham did not merit a tax office of its own but formed a part of Manchester 8 which covered a vast area of southern suburbia and out to Lymm. Mr E G Edwards was the surveyor named in the first book and Mr James Todd's name is given in the second. They both conducted investigations in all parishes, not just in Bowdon. If we remember that first and, where necessary, additional, assessments were made by the Commissioners, we realise that the Surveyors had to achieve their ends by persuasion and using the Commissioners' power to raise a bigger assessment to bring a reluctant taxpayer into line. An insider, whether looking at the notebooks as an Inspector or as a tax advisor might say that very little has changed. The surveyors queried the returns of a wide range of taxpayers and very often met the same mistakes and explanations as the Inspector does today. The two Notebooks reveal that the investigations covered 31 occupations, ranging from surgeons to plumbers, from com millers to land speculators, as well as interest received and income from assets held overseas. Regrettably, even Church of England clergymen failed their scrutiny, though none of them were in Bowdon or its surrounding parishes.

What about Bowdon? It was not then, any more than now, a hive of commercial activity, but the Surveyors kept an eye open and the two notebooks record six reviews. Two of them were of schools, one of an individual who had failed to declare interest, and the other three were tradesmen. The result, set out in a table at the end, is not encouraging. The two schools declared profits accurately but the three tradesmen substantially under-declared their profits. The Surveyor took the most serious view of the 'middle-class' sin of omitting interest, for whilst he settled the other cases himself, that failure was reported to the Board and may have attracted penalties as well - the records have gone. In addition to these six cases, the third, summary, record book gives us another three from Bowdon, shown in the table at the end. This book recorded offences which were reported to the Board and all three related to bank omitted investment income; this was clearly regarded as a more serious matter than the accounting lapses of mere tradesmen.

By our standards the figures are small, such is the effect of inflation, and whilst £12 tax may not seem much, at a maximum rate of 1s 4d in the £1, the concealed interest must have been around £180, a substantial amount of money for those days. If the tax rate were lower, the concealment would have been even greater. The Surveyor's notes indicate that since there were no records, the figure was something of a bargaining exercise anyway. Of the tradesmen, none of them kept any complete records and so were unable to produce any accounts. Both the grocer and the innkeeper had kept a record of expenses, but not of takings, a common fault even today. One little reminder of the days when tradesmen delivered to the door (with out the aid of the Internet) is that the grocer claimed £1 5s a week for the upkeep of his horse and stable rent. To solve this, the Surveyor made an estimate of the takings and deducted the expenses to arrive at a profit, letting the trader accept it or not. In Bowdon, as generally elsewhere, they did, for they had no evidence for a challenge. The builder's assessment seems to have been pitched at just a bit more than he would admit to! Were the inhabitants of Bowdon any worse than others in having a 60% failure rate (four successful challenges out of six) ? For comparison, the Surveyors made more challenges in Hale, eleven being recorded for the same period. Of these, nine were successful, so the failure rate was 81%, and two of the offences were more serious, one resulting in recovery of over £200 tax. The result is not statistically valid on such a small sample and Bowdon was probably no better and no worse than anywhere else!

One difference from modern investigation is the speed with which liabilities were calculated. Most investigations were over in weeks, if not days, compared with the protracted practice now. Fiscal life was less formal than now as records were few and far between and computer printouts had not replaced the quick calculation done on half a sheet of paper, that everyone seemed to accept as fair. The times taken are shown in the table.

This note has been written under the constraints of Revenue confidentiality. Personal tax records do not enter the public domain until 100 years after the event and one result has to be a frustrating anonymity. That is perhaps desirable in a local publication for descendants of some of the people named in the notebooks still live in the area and some of the businesses still flourish. I would not want to embarrass any of my readers!

Grocer Declared £300, assessed finally on £460 in six days.
Innkeeper Declared £200, assessed £300 after calculation of profit in 14 weeks.
Joiner & Builder Declared £200, assessed £250 in 43 days.
Culcheth Hall School Accepted in five days.
Individual Bank Interest Nothing declared, £12 tax accepted in 60 days.
School Accepted.
Jersey Rents 1903 9 £10 omitted each year.
Omitted Dividends £47 omitted - Tax £2 15s 8d.
Bank Interest Omitted £9 7s 3d tax paid.

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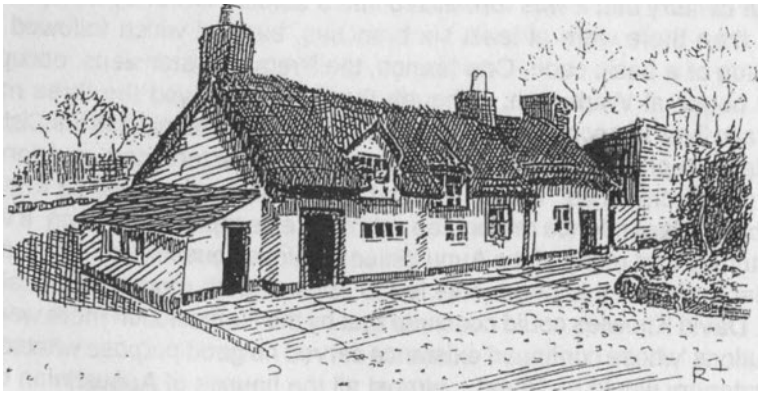

A Dunham Massey Longhouse
Circa 1945

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Mobberley Priory
by Stephen Matthews

HISTORY

This Priory has attracted little attention, for example, the ecclesiastical volume of the Victoria County History of Cheshire gives it no more than a few lines (Vol III, p. 124). We do not know for certain when it was founded or for how long it survived. We know that it was founded by Patrick de Mobberley before 1208 as a house of regular Augustinian canons and it had been appropriated by Rocester Abbey in Staffordshire by the middle of the century. It has generally been inferred that it was situated in the church at Mobberley but unfortunately the surviving masonry gives no indication whether that was literally true and the main fabric of the building is later, of a typical Cheshire design (Richards 1973. p. 238). Aerial photography and excavation might provide an answer but both are difficult on religious sites. We need not, however, think too much about elaborate conventional buildings for the establishment must have been small and the canons could well have operated within the church, subject to only minor re-arrangements such as perhaps more altars. Their residence would probably be a relatively simple structure attached to the church or a little way away.

The Augustinian Order had evolved from loose groups of clerics who followed a regime set out by St Augustine of Hippo, and it was not until the mid twelfth century that it was formalised into a defined Order by a Papal decree. Even then there were at least six branches, each of which followed its own variation of a basic code. One branch, the Premonstratensians, occupied the small house at Warburton. Although the canons obeyed the three monastic vows and lived in a community, they were not cloistered monks like the Cistercians, but played a practical role in society, undertaking pastoral care and serving the local parish churches. This could lead to tension for they wished to preserve their own independence rather than submit to episcopal supervision. It was also unfortunate that many of the Augustinian religious houses were also among the smaller ones, for this commonly led to abuses, both moral and fiscal so that Dom. David Knowles could conclude that by the Reformation there were many institutions 'whose continued existence served no good purpose whatsoever. In this category would be found ...almost all the houses of Augustinian canons.' The cause was that founders, and their families, frequently regarded their foundations as family property where relations could be placed and where tax exemptions could be enjoyed; fortunately, perhaps, Mobberley's absorption by Rocester spared it from Dom. Knowles' harsh judgement.

Ormerod dated the transfer to Rocester in the decade before 1240 on the slender argument that one of the witnesses to the appropriation document was Richard de Coudray who was presented to the church of West Kirkby by Abbot Walter of Chester, who died in 1240. Presumably his reasoning was that after that date, Richard would not be available as a witness, but that does not follow. Higham put the date at about 1250, though he gave no grounds (Higham 2000, p.70) but the document granting the Priory to Rocester makes it more likely that the terminal date was the year beginning October 1237, for one of the witnesses was D(omi)no Richard de Draycote who was Justiciar in that year. This date is compatible with Ormerod's.

PATRICK

We know little of Patrick. He must have been a man of some substance at county level for he witnessed charters which, to judge by the other witnesses, must have been issued in Chester at Earl Ranulf's 'court'. He attested second alter the Justiciar Philip de Orby to William fitz Rad. de Mobberley's charter. He attested the charter of Richard fitzWarin de Tatton, in fourth place. His name was first in two charters of Petronilla and her husband Alan, but the absence of senior figures suggests that they may not have been issued in Chester. He had an interest in all of these but his familiarity with official circles is indicated also by his appearance as a witness to Philip of Orby's grant of Goostrey to St. Werburgh's in 1192-1208 (Tait 1920, no. 541).

THE CHARTERS

Lack of interest in the Priory is surprising because its history is evidenced by no fewer than twenty-seven charters, which certainly or probably relate to it. The foundation charter itself has been lost and we have to presume that the two saltworkings (salinas) in Northwich that Patrick de Mobberley acquired were passed on by him to the Priory, that is the assumption that Ormerod and everyone since him has made. What do the charters tell us?

It is clear from them that the Priory's demise was not due to a fault in the foundation charter as is sometimes said. Even if that had been so, other donations followed to add to its possessions. Apart from the two saltworkings which Patrick himself had acquired, another two followed, given directly by other members of the same family from Millington. Patrick must have given rights in the church and lands at Mobberley as well, for his brother Augustine issued a charter of confirmation. It would seem that a very determined attempt was made to put the Priory on a sound legal footing for confirmations were also obtained from other family members and superior lords. All this must have cost a great deal, for two charters were certainly issued at Chester, and another four probably were, one was probably issued in Manchester (or Salford) whilst attendance would have been needed at Lichfield for the Bishop's Licence. It is of course possible that those not stated to be at Chester could have been issued elsewhere as Rannulfs 'court' moved around the country but although that might reduce the cost most of the legal overheads would remain.

THE WITNESSES

We can learn a little from the witness lists about the sequence of gifts, if not their absolute date. Not only the original gift by Patrick but a subsequent donation by Richard fitzWarren de Tatton (Ormerod's, no. 11) must have been made before 1208 for both were included in the confirmation by Earl Rannulph whose first witness was Rannulf de Mesnilwaring who ceased to be Justiciar and presumably died in that year. The same witnesses link no. 1, by Cristina Punterlin, and no. 2 by Aitrop de Millington to much the same time. Another group can be dated before 1229 since they were witnessed by Philip de Orby who was Justiciar until that year. No. 23 can probably be dated to 1228, for two of the first three witnesses were signatories to the concord that settled the dispute within the Venables family in August of that year (Barraclough 1953, pp.31-33). Nos. 26 and 27 must have been made together because with the exception of an additional priest in the latter, the witness lists are identical.

We have, then, a priory soundly established, at least in terms of legal title to its assets, which was appropriated to Rocester Abbey in Staffordshire probably about thirty years after foundation. Rocester was another Augustinian House on the Dove between Ashbourne and Uttoxeter, which had been founded about 1146 by Richard Bacon, a nephew of the Earl of Chester. It was not well endowed and its buildings were probably modest, for the earthworks which mark its site are thought to be post-medieval. In 1300 Rocester obtained a Papal confirmation of its possessions which included its interests in Mobberley, though not necessarily the Priory as a going concern but simply its property interests. It is probable that the group of canons was disbanded and a vicar installed. Rocester appears to have lost its ownership during the next two hundred years, for Mobberley did not appear amongst its possessions at the Dissolution in 1538.

WHY THE APPROPRIATION?

So much for fact and it is extremely unlikely that we will ever know any more. We can, however, speculate a little further to consider why Rocester should have been interested in acquiring such a small and separated possession. There were not many Augustinian houses and that may have provided some attraction; it would certainly have made appropriation easier. Rocester had been founded by a nephew of the Earl of Chester and it retained a Cheshire perspective for a John, chaplain of Rocester was a witness to Gilbert's charter no. 24 and later William de Rocester was one of the monks sent to the king in 1249 to seek approval for their election of a new abbot. St Werburgh's in its turn, retained lands at Rocester (Tait 1920 no. 61).

Neither of these reasons is likely to provide the answer on its own, and the reason for the takeover is more likely to be a mixture of personal and economic interests. As for personal motive, Gilbert de Barton was the son of Patrick's daughter and William de Norton, one of the other donors. His own interests appear to have lain elsewhere; he also gave property to Cockersand Abbey, Lancashire and his clerical witnesses suggested a wider clerical circle. He was patron of a house that was probably peripheral to his interests and was too small to survive for long as an independent entity. Amalgamation with an- other house of the same Order would provide a better future for the various donors' intentions, even at the price of losing the foundation itself.

Economically, there was in fact a good deal of logic in the appropriation. Mobberley must have been a small house, supporting only a handful of canons at most but it was not necessarily poor. Whilst there may be uncertainty over what precisely Patrick gave in the first instance, in addition to its rights in Mobberley it subsequently acquired land and a mill at Tatton and it probably had a share in, if not all of, the revenues of the church itself. We may note that one of the documents (Ormerod, no. 22) records the purchase rather than the gift of property; Henry fitz William de Castello transferred all his land in Stainilliscroft for a cash payment of three marks of silver and an annual rent of twelve pence per annum. This is important for it indicates that the Priory was running at a profit, or at least had spare cash. In addition to these conventional assets, Mobberley had another source of income, which may have put it in quite a different category. If we accept the assumption that Patrick gave it his two saltworkings in Northwich, and it was later given shares in two more, it must have held a significant industrial asset. Admittedly, it had to pay sub-rents of various amounts to the donors but it would only be worth giving it the workings if there were a worthwhile profit after these rents had been paid. That profit would be a useful addition to Rocester's revenues and might well provide the explanation for its acquisition of a relatively distant possession. Rocester was itself a small house and its own survival may have been precarious. What it would need to improve its own position would be another house, with significant assets but little in the way of liabilities. From what we know of Mobberley it satisfied both these requirements and forms an interesting example of monastic investment in industry rather than agriculture.

If we put the two motives together, the result was an ideal solution. Patrick rid himself of an unwanted responsibility and Rocester gained a profitable asset. The donors' intentions were not to provide a beautiful or romantic building for future generations to admire, but to ensure the good of their souls after death. That could be best served by amalgamating the assets of two modest houses even at the price of losing the physical presence of one of them.

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NARPAC: A Wartime Memory
by Ronald Trenbath

In 1940 the British Government introduced the Harvesting Scheme whereby older schoolchildren and students were encouraged to help with harvesting on farms which were short handed and many local teenagers eagerly joined it.

In the final stages of the corn harvest that year an air raid on the precision instrument factories in Broadheath caused large oil containers to explode to be followed by some horrendous night bombing after which most of the teenagers also volunteered to join the civil defence.

This caused problems for the Chief Warden who realized that inexperienced under age participants could cause more problems than they could solve, but enthusiasm among future personnel had to be encouraged. In order to resolve the problem these volunteers were invited to attend talks on first aid and on the work and running of the Civil defence and also to act as casualties in training exercises, this involved standing in a given position with a luggage label attached to clothing on which was written the nature of the injuries and in due course wardens would proceed to take all necessary actions, such as bandaging, fixing splints & arranging for stretcher bearers, after which doctors would assess the results and subject the wardens to oral tests. Unfortunately over excited wardens on one occasion dropped a stretcher and the occupant be- came a real casualty, so volunteers became less enthusiastic about participating as casualties.

Later, more senior participants were allowed to become Fire Guards to assist the National Fire Service (NFS) in dealing with minor fires and were involved, among other activities, in being instructed in the use of sand bags and stirrup pumps and the manning of fire appliances. I was given the task of drawing a rough sketch map of the area and of marking on it hydrant points, assembly positions and any other items of importance; and also of checking daily that those who were on rosta duty were aware of their times of duty.

Mayors and Councillors often attended exercises to the annoyance of wardens who considered them to be interfering and pompous and they were greatly embarrassed when a Senior Fire Officer was sprayed in the face by an over enthusiastic fire guard pointing a stirrup pump in the wrong direction.

Eventually I was invited to join NARPAC, a branch of Civil Defence which the government was keen to develop, few had heard of it then, and few remember it now, but those in power treated it very seriously. It was explained to me that morale in the cities most targeted by the enemy, such as Coventry and London, was deteriorating very alarmingly due to civilians being worried by the fate of their pets, particularly lonely people such as women separated from their husbands and families, and that an order had been given at a very high level to set up the National Air Raid Precautions for Animals Committee to deal with the problem and that a local branch had to be formed immediately.

Delighted to be involved in this work I was pleased when the appointed leader came to organize the group. A tall, slim woman dressed in tweeds and wearing brogues arrived, taking long strides, with dogs to heel, and addressing everyone in a very loud booming voice. We soon nicknamed her 'Doggy'. Suggesting that we commenced work straight away, and satisfied with their response, she declared everything to be 'Jolly good' and the group was thus formed.

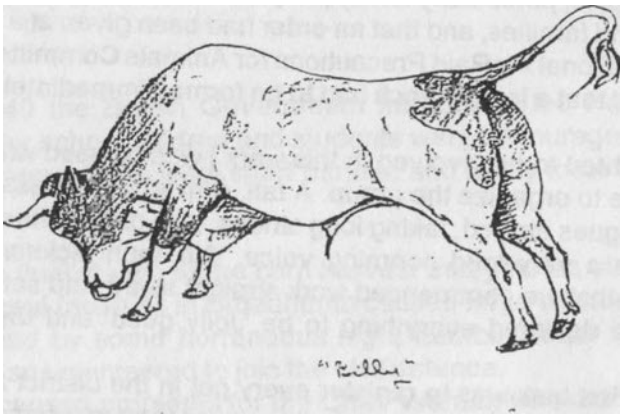
Our first task was to register every pet in the district and issue identity discs but we were told to only deal with pets as the farm animals were covered by the War Agricultural Committee. The registration was very time consuming as we had to listen to the histories and anecdotes of all the pets concerned and we soon discovered that every pet in Cheshire was a 'caution', to use the local vernacular.

The next task was to receive instruction from Vetinary Surgeons on animal first aid and to be shown how to muzzle, bandage and render initial treatment to injured dogs and cats using patients brought for the purpose. Pet lovers being generally gregarious, our sessions always ended on light hearted notes.

As the war progressed, and local attention from the enemy diminished, so our activities became confined to exercises and we were never called upon to demonstrate our skill, except for dealing with a rabbit affected by car fumes who, after gentle heart massage and a whiff of oxygen soon regained good health, but the instruction did come in useful later in treating pets in my care (dogs, cats and goats) for minor injuries, real or imagined.

One incident might be recorded when we disobeyed instructions and dealt with an escaped bull. Armed with pikels we followed him on bicycles along the lanes of Dunham Massey eventually persuading him to return home to White House Farm where his owner, Nathaniel Priestner warmly thanked us but warned us not to be too foolhardy. However we knew Billy the bull to be a gentle docile creature who enjoyed plenty of food, a comfortable loose box, job satisfaction and always appeared contented with life.

If these memories appear to be in the league of the television series 'Dad's Army' I would emphasize that during serious incidents such as the bombing of Broadheath the local Civil Defence personnel acted with the bravery, efficiency and dedication to be found everywhere in the country during the war.



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The Bowdon Sheaf

A BOWDON HISTORY SOCIETY PUBLICATION

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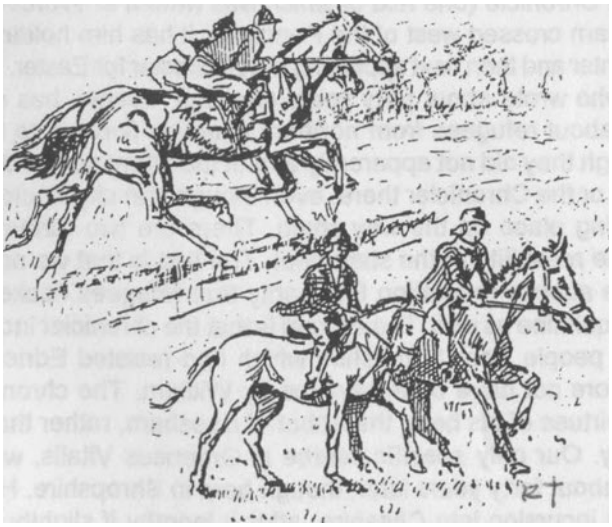


The Nook Riding School, Bowdon

ISSN-0265-816X

Hale, Bowdon and the Harrying of the North, 1069
By Stephen Matthews

One of the oft repeated tales of the Norman Conquest is that of the harrying of the north, that grim trail of destruction across northern England that left the countryside so devastated as to be uninhabitable for decades afterwards. The evidence for it is said to be the many references in Domesday Book to places which were 'waste' in 1086. This is so engrained in our historical belief that it is almost sacrilegious to question it - but nevertheless, is it entirely true?

Before looking at Domesday two points must be made. The first is that there is a distinction to be made between what happened to the east and west of the Pennines. There is no doubt that Yorkshire and the northeast suffered a terrible punishment for repeated rebellion - although the extent of that has been questioned in the last decade or so - and the evidence lies not only in Domesday but in chronicle narratives. There is much less evidence for Cheshire. The county had been involved in an apparently minor uprising in support of Edric the Wild, who was based in Herefordshire and the Welsh Marches. This culminated in the sacking of Shrewsbury but the rebels had melted away when faced with the royal army. Crucially, Cheshire was not involved in events east of the Pennines nor did its Mercian Earl cause William any trouble. As far as Norman retribution is concerned it is interesting what the chroniclers did not say. The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle (one text of which was written at Worcester) does not say that William crossed west of the Pennines: it has him holding his court in York at Midwinter and then next appearing at Winchester for Easter. The Evesham Chronicler, who wrote about forty years after the events, has a generalised observation about refugees from northern counties flocking to his Abbey for support, though they did not apparently attract the attention of either 'Florence' of Worcester or the Chronicler there, even though that city would have been a logical stopping place on the way south. There are two further reasons for suspecting the reliability of the statement. The first is that we are told that so great was the abbot's reputation for charity that refugees flocked there from Ireland and Aquitaine as well. The second is that the chronicler included among the refugees people from Shropshire which had resisted Edric's attack and should therefore not have been ravaged by William. The chronicler is really 'puffing' the virtues of his hero, the Abbot of Evesham, rather than writing objective history. Our only specific source is Ordericus Vitalis, writing in Normandy, also about forty years later, though born in Shropshire. He does mention William's incursion into Cheshire, after a lengthy if slightly muddled account of the fighting in the north east.

His account is brief:

"Then he undertook an expedition against the Welsh and the men of Chester, who had recently crowned their many lawless acts by besieging Shrewsbury. His army, which had already endured great hardship, feared that even greater trials were in store in this journey. They feared the wildness of the region, the severity of winter, the scarcity of food, and the terrible ferocity of the enemy The king, however, maintained a calmness worthy of Julius Caesar in this crisis, and did not deign to attempt to hold them with prayers and promises. He continued on the venture he had so boldly undertaken, commanded his faithful troops to follow him, and counted any who chose to desert him as idle cowards and weaklings. And so he pushed on with determination along a road no horseman had attempted before, over steep mountains and precipitous valleys, through rivers and rushing streams and deep abysses. As they stumbled along the path they were lashed with rain and hail. Sometimes all were obliged to feed on horses which had perished in the bogs. The king himself, remarkably sure footed, led the foot soldiers, readily helping them with his own hands when they were in difficulties. So at last he brought his army safely to Chester and suppressed all risings throughout Mercia with royal power. He built a castle at Chester and another at Stafford on his return, garrisoning both and supplying them with abundant provisions. Then going on to Salisbury he distributed lavish rewards to the soldiers for all they had endured..."

This account makes clear that William's army was exhausted, demoralised and probably not very large. It moved with difficulty in the wet clays of a Cheshire winter, its main desire apparently being simply to keep on the march There is no mention of either serious opposition, fighting or of widespread destruction. The only overt mention of destruction is in Domesday, in the reduced number of houses in Chester but this was probably caused by the building of the castle in the existing urban area, as it was in many other cities like York and Lincoln. Without citing them, we may note that other chroniclers, like Simeon of Durham, make no more than generalised statements about the cruel Normans.

With this lack of specific support from chroniclers in mind, let us look at the evidence from Domesday. There the great question is the meaning of 'waste'? Usually, it has been taken to mean just that - the land was wasted, useless, uninhabitable - and this has given us the traditional picture of a derelict landscape. This view has been increasingly challenged. Historians recognised that it created difficulties, for some places, like Nether Peover (in the table below), were said to be 'waste' but nevertheless paid tax or had a value. Northenden was 'waste' but had a church and was worth three shillings. The explanation was unsatisfactory for it involved giving different meanings to the word in different places, to suit the desired interpretation. Thus in 'Welsh' Cheshire it was said to mean that the land was fit and habitable but not rich enough to yield a profit to a landlord, whilst in 'English' Cheshire it meant that it was derelict. This is illogical and has been increasingly challenged, with a uniformity of meaning being adopted, similar to that applied to 'Welsh' Cheshire: that the Domesday values indicated no more than the level of profit to be obtainable by a landlord. How then do we view the area round Hale and Bowdon and interpret the ravaging march of William's army? First, we must note that although William is generally

supposed to have followed the line of the old Roman Road from Manchester to Chester, there is no clear and undisputable scar of devastation either along it or from a crossing point via the Mersey nearer to Warrington. A table of entries for our immediate area will show how places fared:

Values in Shillings. * = tax paid even though the place described as 'waste'.
For example, in Peover N, the entry shows both 'waste' and worth 12d.

Column 1 = place; 2 = VCH reference; 3 = Value in 1066; 4 = Value 1069;
5 = Value 1086; 6 = Occupier 1086; 7 see above.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Hale	229	15	W	12	Hamon	
Bowdon	228	W	W	3	Hamon	*
Ashley	231	W		W	Hamon	
Tatton	191			4	W Fitz Neil	
Tatton	272			3	Ranulph	
Mobberley	236	12	W	5	Bigot	
Lower Tabley	269	W		W	Joscelin	*
Over Tabley	194	10?	W	W	W Fitz N	*
Do	195	7	W	W	W Fitz N	*
Dunham	227	12	W	10	Hamon	
Mere	257	8	W	W	Gilbert deVen	*
Rostherne	259	4	W		Gilbert deVen	*
Lymm	292	10	W	8	Osbem	
Warburton	190	5		2	W Fitz N	
Warburton	293	5	W	2	Osbem	
Peover Neth	196	5	W	W	W Fitz N 12d	*
Peover Sup	273	15	W	4	Ranulph	
Peover	258	W		W	Gilbert	*
Peover	275				Ranulph	*
Budworth	205	6		8	W Fitz N	
Brereton	262	20	W	20	Gilbert	
High Legh	255	10		5	Gilbert	
Sunderland	313	3		W	Gil/Ham/Ran	*
Millington	192	W		W	W Fitz N	*

The inescapable conclusions from these values are:
1. Whatever the extent of devastation in 1069, many places had made a substantial recovery by 1086 so that it is not possible to think about large swathes of east Cheshire lying derelict and uninhabitable by that date.
2. The reductions in value do not suggest a clear line of attack as is so often stated. Why should Bowdon, right on the presumed line of attack, be worth more in 1086 than 1066? On the other side of the road, Dunham lost little value. The two Tableys moved in the opposite direction. Why should Mobberley, further away, have suffered more?
3. A number of places were ‘waste’ in 1066 and their state cannot therefore be blamed upon any action by William or his army. D. Hill (Atlas of Anglo- Saxon England) suggests Welsh attacks in the Confessor's reign as the cause, but this is not wholly convincing for the east of the county.

Whatever damage William did, there were clearly many other factors at work: the competence of the occupiers as landlords, the effects of earlier wars with the Welsh and of the uprising before William entered the county as well as the general fragility of the economy, with poor returns dating back to the Confessor's reign. 'Waste' was nothing new.

Further Reading

A fuller version of this paper should appear in Northern History during 2003. The most directly relevant recent study is D.M. Palliser; Domesday Book and the 'Harrying of the North', Northern History, 29, (1993), which has a considerable bibliography. It covers events east of the Pennines.

A.R.Bridbury; 'Domesday Book: a re-interpretation', in The English Economy From Bede to the Reformation (1992).

Some early Vicars of Bowdon
by Maurice Ridgway

On looking through some of the back numbers of Bowdon Sheaf I find that I wrote articles on Richard Wroe (1681-1690) and James Law (1815- 1821). These are to be found in issues of the Bowdon Sheaf Nos 11 to 13. As we have now reached No 39 it seems proper that I should submit something on some of the early Vicars and priests at Bowdon and leave the later Vicars to somebody else (especially one who was there from 1962).

The generally accepted list of Vicars of Bowdon, recorded on a board at the west end of the church, contains almost fifty names, but as this list begins in 1210, at the time of Magna Carta, there is ample evidence to show that there are over 500 years in which the names are not recorded. Over 1200 years of Parsons!! Of the rest I have been able to gather together little bits of information and I can now pass it on - even then I can only touch the fringe of the cassocks of many more, but it forms quite a fascinating study of an interesting group of persons.

Ignatius, writing in the second century as he was taken across Asia Minor to become the afternoon's enjoyment in the Colosseum at Rome (to become lions' meat) came to write *Ubi episcopos ibi ecclesia* - Where the Bishop is there is the church, But as many prefer to ignore the writings of the Apostolic Fathers this dictum is forgotten or not known. But to return to Bowdon. From the earliest times the parish priest is put there by the Bishop. In a true sense he is put there for the Gospel to be preached, converts baptised and the faithful fed by sacrament and prayer within a special district named a Parish. His jurisdiction and liturgy is part of the laws of England. It is sometimes forgotten that the Church in England was one before England was established as a separate country. We should remember that when talking about the 'disestablishment of the Church'.

It is a curious coincidence that the first parish priest known by name at Bowdon was Gilbert, at the time of Magna Carta, a document which upholds the freedom and independence of the Church of England, called in the document Ecclesia Anglicana, a phrase which was not popular at the reformation hut is nevertheless true.

In the late 14th Century, Bowdon lay between the rival holders of the Manor, The Prior of Birkenhead and the Massey family of Hale. Thomas Massey carried off the Tithe corn though he had no right to it. The parson informed the Prior of Birkenhead who settled the matter but three sons of the Masseys 'beat up later the Holy Water Clerk of Bowdon'. Richard de Wever was appointed by the Masseys of Hale who entered the vicarage and held it by force until Palm Sunday, threatening that they would not profit until one of their number was made Vicar, even though one was eighteen years old. Efforts to pinch rich livings may have accounted for the local proverb, old in the 17th Century, that 'everyone is not born to be Vicar of Bowdon'.

So to the time of the Reformation and the time of Thomas Runcorn who Was Vicar of Bowdon from 1535 to 1557. In his time he saw the dissolution of the monasteries, including the Birkenhead Priory who held the Advowson, the right of presentation to the Vicarage at Bowdon. He witnessed the formation of the new Diocese of Chester in 1541 now partitioned off from the Lichfield, Coventry and Chester Diocese, survived the troublesome times of Edward VI and Mary Tudor but did not reach the reign of Elizabeth for he died in 1557. He had come to Bowdon as Vicar in 1535 on 1 February, fourteen years before the first Book of Common Prayer was introduced. He had already been at Oxford, obtaining a BA in 1518 and MA in 1521 and four years later became Archdeacon of Bangor; resigning a little later but restored in 1541 whilst still Vicar of Bowdon. In his day plurality was rife. Thomas Runcorn excelled in this so was probably non-resident for a good deal of the time, leaving his duties to a Vicar (Vice Cure by definition for he would be the Curate who was in charge. Curate means Cure of Souls, used still at the time of induction). At Bowdon the Diocesan list gives Dominus William Wright 'Exstipendio Thomas Runcorn".

Where was Thomas Runcorn? He was also Rector of Llanrhaeadr in 1543; at Winchester he was a Canon in 1541; Weaverham in 1554 and also Bebington the same year; Prebendary of Chester 1552 and Canon of Lichfield 1553, and still at Bowdon and by then also Archdeacon of Bangor. When the Priory of Birkenhead ceased, Bowdon was given to the new Diocese of Chester 1541. The first Bishop of Chester was John Bird and the new Dean of Chester was the new titular head of the Cathedral who had been the last Abbot of the Benedictine Monastery of Chester, now the Cathedral. His time as Dean was very short for he died the same year and was followed by Henry Mann, a one-time Carthusian Monk. Bishop Bird would have remained Bishop but he had married and Queen Mary did not like married clergy and removed him. By then the advowson of Bowdon had been sold to Edward Janney of Manchester, so when a vacancy occurred on the death of Thomas Runcorn in 1557, his executor, Robert Vawdrey presented the living to John Hanson, a graduate of Balliol, Oxford, who had been Rector of Stapleton Tawney in Essex, Worlingworth in Suffolk and Thornington. Bishop Cotes, who had followed Bishop Bird at Chester, had known Hanson at Balliol also made him Archdeacon of Richmond (then in the Diocese of Chester). After Queen Mary's reign he retired, along with Bishop Cotes, to Louvain in Belgium where he died in exile in 1565.

To return to Thomas Runcorn, he was buried at Bebington in the Wirral and his will (dated 1556) was reprinted in the Cheshire Sheaf. It gives a great deal of information on the man and his habits. He disposes of his horses: to Sir Thomas Hokcroft his bay Hampshire gelding, to Lady Grosvenor his bay gelding, to Robert Fletcher 'my young trotting horse and a nag that runneth at Sutton, to William Troutbeck a gelding and to his brother and sister another gelding and a nag. He was generous to his servants; both in England and Wales, £10 to two women in Beaumaris where he had a house, and £6.13.4 to the Poor of Bowdon. Gowns, books and a ring to various friends. To Bebington a gown, a vestment, superaltar and corporas; to Mr Gregorie a hogshead of wine, and £10 to Mr Ellis if he will take good ways and the silver deposited by his sister as security on a loan with the pawnbroker to be repayed and returned to her.

John Hanson was also Vicar of Runcorn but was deprived in 1561. He was followed by Robert Vawdrey, the son of the executor of Thomas Runcorn. We do find, however, that one Adam Wood claimed to be Vicar of Bowdon in 1559 but as his name appears in the will of Robert Booth of Dunham it is possible he was his chaplain at Dunham Hall.

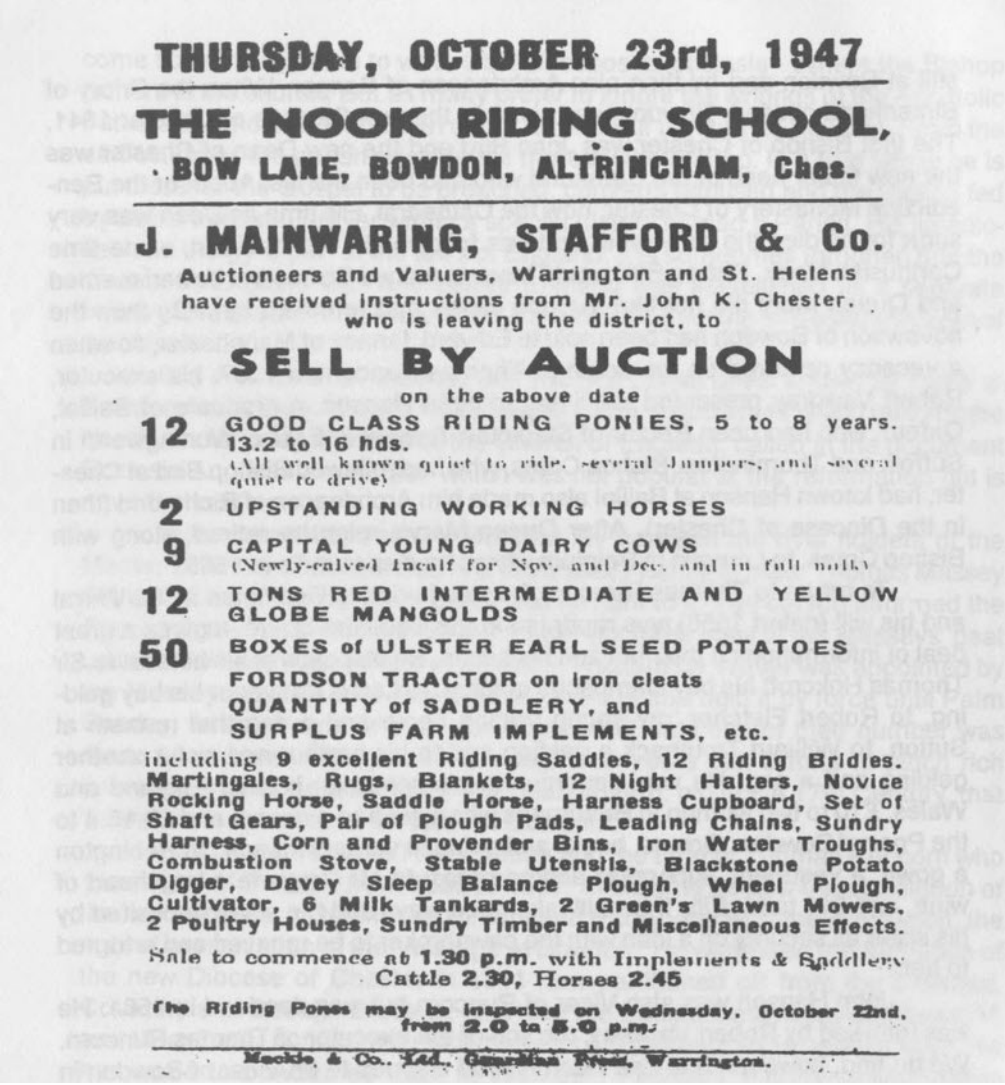
Robert Vawdrey remained at Bowdon for about twenty years, for we learn he gave evidence at the divorce of George Booth and Elizabeth Massey that she was 'only three years old at the time and that she stood on a form in the chancel of Bowdon church betwixt the arms of Isabel Cleworth and could not pronounce the words correctly'.

Robert Vawdrey was followed by William Legh in 1582.

The Nook Riding School by Ronald Trenbath

The Nook Riding School was situated, for many years, on Bow Lane near to West Bank Farm which the Chester family farmed during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

It was the leading centre providing tuition in equitation by an experienced Riding Master, high class riding horses for hire or purchase and livery facilities for hunters, under the proprietorship of John Chester. The establishment closed in 1947 to be worked as a small holding during the next twenty years.



THURSDAY, OCTOBER 23rd, 1947

THE NOOK RIDING SCHOOL,

BOW LANE, BOWDON, ALTRINCHAM, Ches.

J. MAINWARING, STAFFORD & Co.

Auctioneers and Valuers, Warrington and St. Helens
have received instructions from Mr. John K. Chester,
who is leaving the district, to

SELL BY AUCTION

on the above date

12 GOOD CLASS RIDING PONIES, 5 to 8 years. 13.2 to 16 hds.
(All well known quiet to ride, several Jumpers, and several quiet to drive)

2 UPSTANDING WORKING HORSES

9 CAPITAL YOUNG DAIRY COWS
(Newly-calved Incalf for Nov. and Dec. and in full milk)

12 TONS RED INTERMEDIATE AND YELLOW GLOBE MANGOLDS

50 BOXES of ULSTER EARL SEED POTATOES

FORDSON TRACTOR on iron cleats
QUANTITY of SADDLERY, and
SURPLUS FARM IMPLEMENTS, etc.

including 9 excellent Riding Saddles, 12 Riding Bridles, Martingales, Rugs, Blankets, 12 Night Halters, Novice Rocking Horse, Saddle Horse, Harness Cupboard, Set of Shaft Gears, Pair of Plough Pads, Leading Chains, Sundry Harness, Corn and Provender Bins, Iron Water Troughs, Combustion Stove, Stable Utensils, Blackstone Potato Digger, Davey Sleep Balance Plough, Wheel Plough, Cultivator, 6 Milk Tankards, 2 Green's Lawn Mowers, 2 Poultry Houses, Sundry Timber and Miscellaneous Effects.

Sale to commence at 1.30 p.m. with Implements & Saddlery
Cattle 2.30, Horses 2.45

The Riding Ponies may be inspected on Wednesday, October 22nd, from 2.0 to 5.0 p.m.

Mackie & Co., Ltd., Guardian Press, Warrington.

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Canon Maurice Ridgway BA FSA

Members of Bowdon History Society will be saddened by the death of Canon Maurice Ridgway on the 20th December at the age of 84. As a founder member of the Society he was temporary chairman until the first meeting when he handed over the office to Marjorie Cox.

Born into a clerical family in Stockport, where his father was vicar, he later attended King's School, Chester, when his father was appointed vicar of Tarvin. From here he went to St David's College, Lampeter, to train for Holy Orders which he completed at Cambridge, to be ordained at Chester Cathedral in 1941.

As an historian and antiquary Maurice had a great interest in silver and he became a noted authority on Chester silver, resulting in the opening of the Ridgway Gallery at the Grosvenor Museum and his portrait being put on permanent display. He was also an authority on Mediaeval rood screens and was awarded the prestigious Fellowship of the Society of Antiquaries for his work in this field.

The Ridgway family had long associations with Bowdon, his grandfather having attended Rose Hill High School as a small boy. On his appointment as vicar of Bowdon in 1962, Maurice realized the importance of local history in the life of a community with a rich heritage, and in 1979 he set about forming a history society with local enthusiasts.

Fearful that academic influences could defeat the objects of the Society, he was insistent that articles in The Bowdon Sheaf and talks at the Society meetings should be on a popular level. As a member of the Committee he enlivened the meetings with his great sense of humour, and he inspired all who attended with his dedication to the work of the Society, as he did in all matters in which he was involved, sometimes taking stands on issues in the face of popular opinion if he considered that the occasions demanded it.

Early in his career, Maurice was made responsible by the Church for the welfare of vagrants, and he often retold his experiences, which would have made an interesting book if he had recorded them, including instruction on the method of making leather shoe laces from old boots and other details of their way of life.

Maurice's many articles on local subjects, which have appeared regularly in The Bowdon Sheaf, helped to attract the large readership that has grown during the last 25 years. He was widely respected by parishioners, including those from other denominations and religions.

'Old Sir George' Booth and the 7th Earl of Shrewsbury
by Marjorie Cox

Sir George Booth of Dunham Massey (1566-1652) figures in histories of Cheshire as a pattern of the Cheshire gentry: 'free, grave, godly, brave Booth, the flower of Cheshire'. He was a pillar of the county community, which consisted of numerous inter-related gentry, with no dominant member of the nobility. Although his lands were less extensive than those of some other gentry, Booth's lengthy headship of the Commission of the Peace and his status as a survivor from the reign of Elizabeth I, a reign which became legendary under the early Stuarts, gained him great respect and influence.

Sir George appears in a somewhat different context in the Advice sent by William Cavendish, Earl of Newcastle to the future Charles II shortly before the Restoration, while both were still in exile. The lengthy letter lists ways for the future king to maintain the monarchy. The extract concerning Sir George Booth appears in The Gentry in England and Wales 1500-1700 by Felicity Heal and Clive Holmes, by whose kind permission it is reproduced here.

Newcastle (1592-1676), a man of wide interests, had been Governor of Charles, Prince of Wales from 1638, when his charge was eight, to 1641 and remained a respected friend. His advice was based partly on deductions which he drew from his memories of the smooth running of government under James I. As the authors comment, 'there is a good deal of romantic nostalgia in this account of the relationship that linked King James I, the Earl of Shrewsbury and Sir George Booth'. None the less, there is much of interest in Newcastle's description of the old ways, whereby the network of a hierarchical society effortlessly supported royal authority. Arguing for Charles's need to 'keepe upp your Nobility and Gentery' and to maintain order and ceremony, Newcastle recalled the following incident:-

> In my time, Gilbert, that great Earle of Shrewsbury whoe was a wise man, had a gentle soule, a Loyall, - at a St Georges feaste, I have knowne Sir Georg booth a Cheshere knight And of six, or seaven thousand pound, a yeare, weare my Lord of Shrewsburys blew Coate on St Georges Day, - as also Sir Vinsent Corbett, whose brother had 10,000 a year, & after the death of His brother, hee had 4 or 5000 a yeare, & hee wore my Lords blew Coate ... butt the nexte day they satt both at my Lords table nexte to him, & nothing butt good Coosen Corbett & good Coosen booth, & they were very wise in itt, for thus they did oblige my Lord, to bee their servant all the yeare After, with his power to serve them, both in Courte and Westminster Hall, [location of the central courts of justice] and to bee their solister [solicitor]* - agen my Lord had no business in the Country, but they did itt for him, - & then the King had an Easey busines, for whatsoever busines his Majestie had in any County in England, or in all England, itt was but speaking to Shewsbury, or Darby, & such great men, itt was Done with Ease & subilety ... & what doth itt coste your Majestie, a blew Riban, a privey Counsellor shipp, or such offices as your Majestie cannot bestow better, then uppon such great men ... then all their kindered, freinds, dependances, servants tenantes, are well pleased, & your Majestie safe.

This description of 'clientage' and the chain of influence and obligation is vivid and compelling, but the origin of the connection between Sir George and the Earl, who died in 1616, is as yet unclear. The term 'cousin' may not be as significant as it appears to us; its use then was looser, covering more distant kinship, and even just as a term of friendship or familiarity.

However, there is no doubt as to why Newcastle mentions Gilbert Talbot, 7th Earl of Shrewsbury twice, as a pattern of the old nobility. Newcastle's father, Sir Charles Cavendish of Welbeck was the youngest son of Sir William Cavendish of Chatsworth (later 1s t Earl of Devonshire) and 'Bess of Hardwick'. After Sir William's death, 'Bess' married twice more, and her fourth husband was George Talbot, Earl of Shrewsbury. She was thus the grandmother of Newcastle and the step-mother (and Subsequently mother-in-law) of Gilbert Talbot As young men, Newcastle's father and Gilbert Talbot travelled together on the continent and remained life-long friends, and it was from Gilbert Talbot that Charles Cavendish acquired Bolsover, a mediaeval keep, and began his own building. Newcastle himself made splendid additions - a Gallery and Reception rooms, where he entertained Charles I and Henrietta Maria in 1634 with a masque by Ben Jonson called 'Love's Welcome to Bolsover' and, as those of you who have visited Bolsover will recall, the Riding School, built to satisfy his passion for horses. He was the author of two books on horsemanship, one of which has illustrations showing horses being schooled in front of his various houses, including Bolsover.

It is therefore no wonder that Gilbert Talbot bulked large in Newcastle's youthful memories, and there is no reason to doubt his account relating to Sir George Booth, even if its significance is puzzling.

* in the general sense of 'one who solicits'

Felicity Heal and Clive Holmes: *The Gentry in England and Wales 1500-1700* (1994)
Mark Girouard: *Robert Smythson and the Elizabethan Country House* (1983)

Thoughts on some Bowdon Field Names
by Marjorie Cox

There is a danger that the Tithe Map of 1838 can be seen as the tablets of stone on which the names of fields from time immemorial were graven. It is true that some names have a long continuous history: some were recorded in the 16th century and one as early as the 13th, but some names disappear and others drop out of formal use. The Parliamentary Commissioners in 1654 noted names of fields in the vicarial glebe not recorded elsewhere. One is 'Sir Ralphe's Croft abutting south upon the river Bollen'; possibly the 'Sir' was not a knightly title, but the clerical title of a former Vicar. Another was a close called 'The Huggle'; although this does not seem to be found elsewhere, and certainly not on the Tithe Map, it remained in local memory as late as 1882. In that year a correspondent wrote to The Cheshire Sheaf, fearing that the name would be lost to memory and re-appear as 'Smithville, Rose Lodge, Grass Lea or some other fashionable but meaningless and inappropriate name'.

Another name in the 1654 Survey is 'the two seller feilds', which became in the Tithe Map 'Cellar Field', giving rise to speculation about its meaning. It would seem, from the history of the carving of the Vicar's glebe out of the total land originally given to the Priory of Birkenhead, that this name probably goes back to the period between 1150 and 1284, when the Priory was the sole owner. A comparable field-name near Chester is given in J McN Dodgson The Place-Names of Cheshire, Part V, Section li, pp 130 and 74. This is 'the two Sellars Meadowes' (1662), 'Cellerers Medowe' (1539-47 and 1579), both meaning land for the use of the cellarer of Chester Abbey, the monastic officer in charge of the cellar and provisions. Presumably the 'seller feilds' in Bowdon were for the use of the 'cellarer' of Birkenhead Priory, until they were transferred by the Bishop to the Vicar.

The Origins of the Mothers' Union in Bowdon
by Maurice Ridgway

Apart from the photographs of my baby days (of which as in so many homes there are a great many!), one of the earliest is of myself taken in about 1920 sandwiched between a Mrs Currie and a Mrs Scarlett, and surrounded by many dozen 'Mothers' on the steps of Portwood Vicarage, Stockport, where my father was the Vicar of St Paul's. The Church and Vicarage have since disappeared. The Church and its surrounding graveyard (where my grandparents are buried) now desecrated and used as a children's playground, and the Vicarage built over by a housing estate. But the group was started by my mother during the First World War as 'The Women's Help Society' or the WHS. It contained many widows including Mrs Currie, whose married life lasted three days, and her husband's body is among the unknown.

So I kept good company and it was an official link with Parish life, and as I celebrate my 60 years as a priest this year, I feel I could speak with some sort of authority! So let me say something about 'Bowdon Mothers'.

The Reverend William Pollock, later Archdeacon of Macclesfield, became Vicar of Bowdon in 1856. He succeeded the Reverend William Galfridus Mann who was the last to occupy the Old Vicarage (The Priory) for he was an exceedingly active gentleman, and almost immediately set about drawing up plans for a new Vicarage and a new Church. The work was begun in 1858, a Vicarage suitable for a Bishop and a Church like a Cathedral.

Hand in hand with this activity went a great sense of caring and mission for the expanding community. Bowdon Vale as a community came into existence about this time, and the Hill was also providing vast residences for the Manchester merchants. The Reverend Mann cared also for the vast number of servants and others who made their livelihood by serving them. The Vale became known as Soapy Town from the lines of washing which decorated the tiny gardens. The Vicar also in keeping with the times set up a Penny Bank and House Meetings throughout the Parish, which embraced Altrincham, Hale, Ashley and Dunham, and it is in this period that we have to find the roots of what was to evolve as the Mothers' Union.

I do not think it is an idle boast to say that what Mary Sumner had in mind when she drew together for the first time the mothers of her husband's parish to the Vicarage in 1876, had already taken place in Bowdon certainly in 1873, three years before. Unfortunately details are hard to come by, for we have only what is called Bowdon Parochial Magazine to go by, and this appeared in 1873. It was launched by Bishop Alford who came to live in Bowdon from China! His presence in the Parish added to the five other curates. Bowdon Parish had, in 1841, a population of 549 and 115 houses. In 2002 we have a population of 6000 and about 2000 houses. Times have changed, Clergy strength has increased in inverse proportion!

We find therefore a year before Mary Sumner called together her mothers at the Vicarage, Bowdon having an already old-established Mothers' Meeting held at Peel Causeway (as well as a Penny Bank) under a Miss Sharpe, meeting on Mondays in the afternoon between 2.30 pm and 3.15 pm. The Bowdon Vale Meeting met in a house in Priory Street which had been purchased (and later extended) to serve as a Church Community Centre. This was the embryo of St Luke's Church which was to come later in 1880, and the Bowdon Vale Club later still.

By 1886 the mothers were meeting in St Luke's Church (which also housed a billiards table until the Bowdon Club was erected when it was moved to it). As far as I can gather, it continued to be used until 1941 when for a while the British Restaurant took over, and Mrs Low enrolling members of the Mothers' Union, was appealing for an alternative meeting place.

In the 60s and 80s these mothers' meetings were held in numerous places: Hale Mission Room (for St Peter's, Hale had not been built), Ashley, Bowdon Vale and at Bowdon in the Old School Room in Richmond Road (now demolished). The Bowdon Mothers' Meeting met on Mondays at 2.00 pm, the same time as the meeting at Bowdon Vale. These parish mothers' meetings continued to meet until, in 1894, a Miss Maiden came from London to talk about the Mothers' Union, after which this title was used in the Parish Magazine for the first time. It was an attempt to bring together these rather disconnected mothers' groups and affiliate them to the positive ideals of a central organisation founded by Mary Sumner, and which in 1876 had been given a Royal Charter, as Queen Victoria was very keen on the movement, as were other female members of the Royal Family.

I must quote from the Parish Magazine of 1888. The mothers were meeting in the Vale in the 'Institute', as they called it, in Priory Street. They had complained of the cold (it was February). Later that year they had planned to go to Alderley Edge, but the Railway refused to take bookings subject to the weather. Not to be defeated they hired cabs and wagonettes.

Six years later came a meeting at Hale (St Peter's had just been built, but was still in Bowdon Parish) and a Mothers' Union branch was formed of the existing members. In the evening of 23r d October 1894 Miss Maiden, having visited 20 dioceses, came to Bowdon Vale and spoke to the mothers in similar vein. It would seem that this meeting helped to promote a further link with the Mothers' Union, a sort of umbrella organisation, and members continued to meet weekly on Mondays, and those willing to be linked with a wider branch also met monthly.

By 1897 (Jubilee Year) this link was further established between parish groups by a visit from Mrs Sumner herself to St Margaret's Institute on 22nd January. Miss Binyon was the Parish Secretary for the Mothers' Union, and the Mothers' Meeting met under Mrs and Miss Pigot.

By 1904 Miss Geldart was running the Vale Mothers' Meeting but, by 1910, Miss Binyon was still Parish Secretary for the Mothers' Union. The weekly meeting under Mrs Gore and Miss Geldart, and the monthly meeting of the Mothers' Union seem to have been the pattern about that time. The programmes seem to indicate that for the Mothers' Union there was a higher spiritual content, and in 1913 one of the speakers was Mrs Hewlett Johnson, first wife of the Red Dean who was then Vicar of St Margaret's, Dunham Massey.

Reports on meetings give an insight into what happened. In 1908 there were 40 present for a New Year's Party, some bringing the fruits of motherhood, and of their babies it was remarked 'their behaviour was above all praise'. They dined 'on turkey, ham pies and many other nice things', and then they had dancing and games. A one-sided competition brought to a close many exciting struggles. It seemed scarcely fair to match one of the bachelor curates reading the needle competition against his colleague, a married man; the bachelor won hands down.

Records of the First World War are missing, but in 1924 Mrs Lowry Hamilton was elected Enrolling Member, and she wrote a long description of a meeting in the Parish Magazine in 1925. Outings became popular. In 1927 they went to Liverpool (fare 3/9d), in 1928 to Buxton. In 1941 many men and women were away, including the Vicar (Canon Low). In 1947 Mrs Mulliner, wife of a former Vicar of Tilston Fearnall, lived at The Priory with the Gaddums, and Mrs Bleckley was the Secretary, followed by Mrs Wadsworth in 1952 when Mrs Cashmore was Treasurer, who later took over as Enrolling Member, followed by Mrs Ingram ... they are all known to me, for they fit into my 21 years as Vicar of Bowdon.

So, may I close with a personal memory. Just before the War, my mother spent ages organising an appeal for a caravan which was to be sent by the Mothers' Union to Africa; it was known as the 'Johnson caravan'. Many years later, I met Mrs Johnson's sister, the famous Miss Gladys Johnson who lived on The Firs. I occupied a wonderful memory- link with her when I told her how, as a teenager, I had been sick of the Johnson Caravan appeal. She laughed and shared my sympathy!!

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The Bowdon Sheaf

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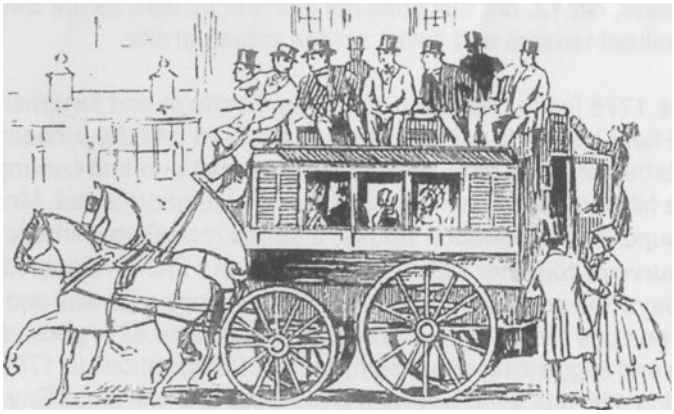


A Horse-Drawn Omnibus

ISSN-0265-816X

Industry in Agricultural Bowdon
by Marjorie Cox

We are accustomed to think of Bowdon as for many centuries a purely agricultural community, which, in the nineteenth century, was rapidly transformed into a residential suburb. The first systematic development was initiated when in 1840-1 the Assheton Smiths of Ashley Hall sold all their Bowdon lands, some of which lay along Sandy Lane, known from the early 1850s as Stamford Road. Like them, the Earls of Stamford owned agricultural land on both sides of the whole length of Sandy Lane, and it is on one of their leasehold properties, right at the bottom of the south side of the lane, close to the present crossroads, that there was industrial activity from the late eighteenth century.

Bowdon Tenement [holding] No.11 in the Earl's voluminous records, then a cottage and about one Cheshire acre (2.1 statute acres) and a new 'inclosure' in Bowdon was leased in 1718 to Deborah Hobson, widow, and in 1757 to Anne Topp, whose name was used for it into the next century. In 1775, a new lease was made to Robert Seddon, 'chapman' (itinerant dealer), for three lives, his own (aged 60) and those of his two sons, Robert (23) and Joseph(21). Seddon may already have been Anne Topps' undertenant. Robert Seddon was already established in the locality by 1759, when he witnessed the will of Ralph Pimlott, but he held no land then. In 1767, however, he leased from the Earl the next tenement, No.12, but this does not concern us here as the Seddons were only intermittent tenants and it was not the industrial site.

The 1775 lease described No.11 as a cottage and tenement, plus two fields, [the field behind the house] alias Butty Croft and the orchard alias Well Croft, the latter across a lane running from Sandy Lane and curving round the base of the hill, but not on the line of the present Langham Road. More valuable detail is found in the Valuation Books, a series recording periodic valuations based on surveys, together with 'Observations'. In 1775 the Observations listed 'House 2 Bays [the section between two crucks] rough cast wall and thatch one work shop one dye house and one shippen for his Cows all in good repair'. More interesting and suggesting expansion, are the Observations in 1782: 'One Bay for a Warping mill, one small bay for a Dye House and one small Bay for a Comb shop all with Brick walls covered with Thatch in repair now building'.

Here are listed three stages in the production of yarn for the worsted industry. The woolcomb, with its iron teeth, was used for combing the wool smoothly, specifically for worsted manufacture, and wool combing, a skilled operation, remained a handicraft industry to the mid-nineteenth century. It was an unhealthy job, as a charcoal stove had to be kept burning to warm the teeth and the wool. The combed wool would be spun in the household or locally. A warping mill was not a building, but an ingenious piece of wooden machinery (see illustration) for organising the spun yarn ready for use as the warp of a worsted loom. It would fit into an outbuilding and was operated by one man or, later, by water power. The presence of these work shops on Robert Seddon's land is contemporary with the flourishing of the textile, especially worsted, industry, both factory and domestic, in and around Altrincham in the 1790s and early 1800s. A commercial Survey of 1793 (copy kindly lent by Mr C. Hill), which included Altrincham, refers to the town's 'principal manufactory' as 'worsted yarn and worsted and hair shags', 'shag' meaning coarse cloth. John Aikin, writing about Manchester's environs in 1795, recorded of Altrincham that 'the spinning of combed wool prevailed formerly throughout this district, the wool being delivered out at Manchester by those who employed Jersey-combers there to the people when they came to market and the worsted yarn being sold to the small-ware manufacturers.' (Small-wares were small textile articles e.g. tape and braid.) It looks as if the Seddons were trying to compete with Manchester by doing their own woolcombing as well as producing the worsted yarn and preparing it for the loom. Did they also put out their prepared yarn for local weavers? A detailed reminiscence of Moss Farm Bowdon records Jersey-weaving there.

By 1786, Robert Seddon I, chapman, had died and his son Robert Seddon II, woolcomber, succeeded to the tenancy. (It is unclear which of the two was the 'shag-maker' of that name, who acted as executor of an Altrincham tenant in 1774.) By 1787, Robert Seddon, woolcomber, was a churchwarden of Bowdon Parish Church, and in 1793 he figures in the Survey mentioned above, as a worsted manufacturer. His will, proved in 1806, shows that he lived on his premises and his estate was valued at probate at 'under £1500', a significant sum. He left his leasehold property, household goods and furniture to his wife, Margaret, for life and then to their son, another Robert, while a son, John and a daughter, Ann Clark had monetary bequests. One of his executors was his brother, Joseph, 'of Manchester, merchant'. It seems most probable, and significant, that he was the Joseph Seddon in Bancks's Directory of Manchester, 1800, who was a partner in a fustian and small-ware firm there.

The valuation in 1807, at the renewal of the lease to Robert Seddon III, woolcomber, and his mother shows what seems a flourishing set-up: 'House parlour and kitchen and a small Bay for a Comb shop all join together Walls part brick and part Timber Noged with dobe Covered with thatch in repair a small Bay for a dye house Walls Brick covered with Slate in repair Barn and Stable 2 Bays Walls Brick covered with Thatch in repair'. There is no mention of the warping mill. Apart from cursory valuations in 1785 and 1786, without detail, there is no information between 1782 and 1806, and it is impossible to say how long the warping mill continued in use.

Robert Seddon III appears in Pigot and Deans Manchester and Salford Directory of 1821-2 as 'worsted manufacturer', but not in that of Pigot and Son of 1836. This may reflect the decline of the worsted and textile industry in Altrincham in the first half of the century, described in *Altrincham: a history,* ed Don Bayliss (p.36). As a result, Seddon may have been diversifying; in 1831 he acquired the lease of tenement No.12 and at the time of the Tithe Map (1838) he held the fields, houses and cottages of both Nos 11 and 12 and a large Assheton Smith field (soon to be sold) further up Sandy Lane. By 1843, however, there are clear signs of decline at No.11. The valuation was depressing: 'House outbuildings Workshops and Garden held by Seddon. House 2 Bays Timber and Plaster and thatched out of repair House and kitchen Brick Slated in repair Two cottages Brick and thatched out of repair One cottage slated in repair'. Seddon's lease of 1813 was surrendered and renewed to Hannah Hampson, widow, of Dukinfield, mortgagee. Could she be the Hannah Hampson, sister of Thomas Hulme of Bowdon, woolcomber, whom he mentioned in his will, proved in 1802?

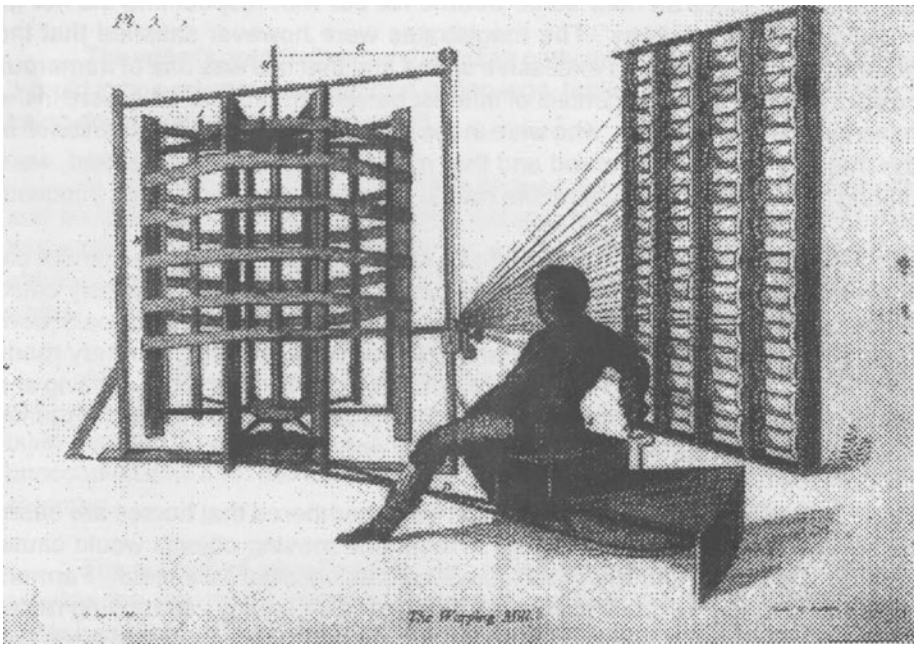
1846 marked another downward turn for the Seddon enterprise. The house and bam were in repair, but there was only one cottage 'in middling repair', and the Workshop was reported 'taken down'. The lease was returned in September, 1846 and the new lessee of both Nos. 11 and 12 was Frederick Grundy, solicitor of Manchester, possibly with Bowdon connections. By 1847-8, Grundy is listed in Balshaw's directory as living at 'Holly Bank, Sandy Lane', which appears to be a house on Butty Croft, presumably built by himself; it was later called Hollywood (see O.S. map 6" to 1 mile, 1953). Meanwhile, in 1847-8, Robert Seddon was living at Oak Hill, Sandy Lane, a newly built semi-detached house at the top of the south side and appears there, now named Stamford Road, in the census of 1851, still as a worsted manufacturer, aged 65, with his wife and two daughters. He is still at Oak Hill in 1854-5, but in 1858-9 the only Seddon in Stamford Road is Miss Seddon.

The leasing records, particularly the Valuation Books, may reveal other examples of early industry on the land of the Earl of Stamford, though this is unlikely to apply to Bowdon, where the name Seddon seems to be the only one connected with manufacture in the Manchester and district directories. This study of Tenement No.11 traces the rise and fall of the industrial enterprise of three generations of one tenant family.

Chief Sources

1. The relevant leases in the series EGR 14/2/5 and the valuations in the series EGR 14/7 in the Dunham Massey Archive deposited by The National Trust in the John Rylands University Library of Manchester.
2. The Survey of the Earl of Stamford's Manor of Bowdon, 1793, with accompanying map in the Dunham Massey Archive.
3. The Bowdon Tithe Map (1838) and Apportionment (1839).

My warm thanks are due to Mr John Hodgson and the staff of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester (Deansgate) for much help. I am grateful, too, to Mr John Messner, Curator (Industry), Museum of Science and Industry in Manchester, to the Local Studies Unit and Technical Library, Manchester Central Library and to Mrs Dorothy Shelston.



From R. Guest, A Compendious History of the Cotton-Manufacture (1823)

The Horseless Carriage in Bowdon
by Ronald Trenbath

The Macclesfield Courier on the 20th September 1902 reported that on the previous Monday, at Altrincham, Samuel Blinkhorn, a Manchester gentleman, was summoned for furious motoring on the Knutsford Road, Dunham Massey, on the 16th August that year.

Mr L. Caldecott, prosecuting on behalf of the police, told the court that, following complaints, Sergeant Hunt and two other officers of the Cheshire Constabulary had, with the aid of a watch and powerful field glasses, witnessed the accused over a quarter of a measured mile in 50 seconds, which he calculated to be a speed of 18 miles an hour. The summons was for driving to the common danger of passengers.

The defendant stated that he kept his motor car for pleasure and never exceeded 12 miles an hour as he treated his car with respect and did not go 'ripping and tearing away'. The magistrates were however satisfied that the defendant was riding at an excessive speed and that this was one of numerous cases in which there was conflict of interest between motorists, who were in the minority, and horse drivers, who were in the majority, and that the convenience of the majority must be observed and that motorists, by their great speed, were driving horses and carriages off the roads. A fine of £5 and costs was imposed.

A century later this report might be read with incredulous amusement but consideration of the conditions which existed in the early 20th Century could produce understanding of the antipathy for motorists. Early motor cars were fitted with very basic hand brakes and quite primitive steering, country roads were winding and surfaced with soft material, so that any vehicle travelling at a speed greater than that of a horse would have difficulty in making an emergency stop, especially when rounding blind corners or bends in roads.

Added to these difficulties it must be remembered that horses are easily frightened and to be confronted by strange fast moving objects would cause them to shy or bolt and many serious accidents occurred as a result. Farmers often complained that their cows had stampeded on seeing fast moving motor cars, causing them to prematurely drop their calves, and cottagers often lost poultry who roamed freely on roads and lanes at the time, and the incident dealt with at Altrincham Magistrates Court in 1902 might be compared with a Ferrari racing car being driven at top speed today between Bowdon Church and St Margaret's Church. Trains were segregated on railway lines so why were motor cars not separated in a similar way?

In spite of the risk of loss of popularity several Bowdon residents bought cars and had their coachmen trained as chauffeurs. The difficulty in maintaining a supply of petrol caused great problems as suppliers were few and far apart, and motorists were often stranded at road sides for very long periods when they ran short of petrol which had to be brought, often from a great distance, by horse drawn conveyances, although most cars carried spare cans of petrol on their running boards.

For local driving residents had cans of petrol delivered to their homes and at Bowdon Hall an early petrol pump still exists near the garage. It would appear that the authorities gave little consideration to the high risk these practices imposed on the neighbourhood

Early motor cars produced great dust clouds as they were driven along the often unsurfaced roads to cause nuisance to pedestrians and roadside property. Drivers and passengers regularly wore specially produced dust coats, which covered the whole body, and wore goggles to protect their eyes. Their appearance, looking like beings from another planet, must have caused consternation to those unfamiliar with motor traffic.

The writer's grandfather purchased an early motor car and proclaimed that it could in no way compare with four strong legs, bridle and reins, and insisted on being driven rather than drive himself.

In the course of time blacksmiths shops undertook repairs to motor cars and installed petrol pumps to become garages serving motorists rather than horsemen, and gradually the motor car was accepted by the general public, although cases did continue of irate equestrians lashing at drivers with their whips.

After 1918 most new detached houses built locally were provided with garages and semi-detached villas were usually provided with enough space to build garages if required later, although those which were built were often left unoccupied until after the Second World War when car ownership became more common.

The authorities were however very slow in accepting the change, failing to provide the necessary road improvements, and in the early 1950's Punch published a cartoon showing two elderly civil servants remarking to each other that the horseless carriage appeared to have come to stay. All this changed after 1960 when legislation required urban developers to provide two car spaces per dwelling, motorways were constructed, and railways virtually destroyed by the Beeching Plan, a 'U' turn which produced the car based culture of today. Perhaps greater heed should have been given to the opinion of the magistrates in 1902 !

The Horse-Drawn Omnibus
by Marjorie Cox

An advertisement in the first edition of Charles Balshaw's Stranger's Guide and Complete Directory to Altrincham, Bowdon and the surrounding neighbourhood. Undated, but not later than 1848 and probably 1847.

HANNAH HOWARTH

Tenders her grateful Acknowledgments to her Friends and the Public for the liberal support she has received since she commenced running Omnibuses to and from Manchester, and begs to inform them that her Omnibus leaves the

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HOUSE on the Downs

Entry in the Directory of Altrincham:

Hannah Howarth Coach proprietress on the Downs.

Was this a routine advertisement in the first edition of the new Directory or a response to the imminent threat of the opening of the railway between Altrincham and Manchester, which happened in 1849?

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BOOTH MANSION, CHESTER

ISSN-0265-816X

Bowdon History Society - 25 Years

This year marks the twenty-fifth anniversary of the founding of Bowdon History Society. In 1979 the vicar, Canon Maurice Ridgway, called a public meeting at which, following consultation with interested parishioners, he recommended the formation of a history society to study and record the rich heritage of Bowdon. The resolution was accepted unanimously and the vicar then resigned, as self-appointed temporary chairman, in favour of Mrs Cox who as a professional historian, he considered to be better qualified to hold the office.

Following this adoption a committee was formed and the work began of organising the society. The word local was omitted from the title as, by doing so, the opportunity was provided to expand interest beyond the immediate confines of the parish, but focusing on the main interest in Bowdon.

Canon Ridgway, as a committee member, was very keen that the approach of the Society should be broad based to cover as wide an aspect of the very long history as possible, and not to confine it to narrow aspects of the subject, in order to encourage every section of the community to participate. Similarly it was recommended that, whilst trivia should be avoided, an over academic approach would be inappropriate and that interest should be maintained at a popular level. In view of the strength of membership, compared with other Cheshire Societies, of the length of its existence, it would appear that Bowdon History Society has so far achieved its aims.

During the twenty five year period over 200 talks have been given, 43 issues of the Bowdon Sheaf have been published as well as several larger publications, notably 'Bowdon Hall & Its People' and the Millennium Book 'Bowdon & Dunham Massey', now in second edition. Visits have also been made to places that have historic connections with Bowdon.

In the contemporary global attitude of rejection of smaller local community interests by larger dominating authorities, it is essential that those at the lower level should maintain their independent heritage & subculture for the benefit and enrichment of future generations.

These factors should also be very seriously considered at national level in view of the increasingly dominating influences of Washington and Brussels.

Bowdon Lawn Tennis Club

In 1877 J. R. Bradbury negotiated to rent a plot of land measuring 2060 sq yds from the Earl of Stamford. The land lay at the end of Elcho Road on the north side of the Devisdale, a huge open meadowland ringed by ancient trees. Four grass courts were laid and this small ground was named the Bowdon Lawn Tennis Club. With a membership of approximately seventy two gentlemen with a committee headed by a Treasurer, a Secretary and a Ground Manager, to oversee the club. By 1893, a Mixed Doubles Tournament was played. A photograph of that year shows ladies and gentlemen both participating, with spectators seated at tables around the courts. In the distance, across the open fields can be seen the old spire of St Margaret's Church on the Dunham Road.

The ladies who are playing in these early photographs came from the Ladies Lawn Tennis Club to the east of Bowdon Lawn Tennis Club over the land owned by the North Cheshire Water Company and beyond the big tree. For the sum of £1 a year Miss Rachel Heald, as ground manager, had rented a plot of land from the Earl of Stamford. It must have been a fairly rough piece of grass separated from the Devisdale meadowland by only a stretch of iron railing. Doubtless Clibrans, the nurserymen who were to level the courts and Mr Garner, the Groundsman (paid 12 shillings a week in summer and 5 shillings in winter) waged continual battle against the buttercup and clover seeds which would have wafted in on the summer breezes. The Ladies Lawn Tennis Club comprised fifty-six members headed by Miss Heald, Miss Gaddum, Mrs Nield, Mrs Haworth and Mrs Golland - names well known in Bowdon.

The minutes of the Club give a glimpse of old Victorian Bowdon, into a way of life which was to disappear forever with the events of 1914. The ladies, meeting annually at 'the hut on Devisdale' discussed the subscription, set at one guinea for full members and 10s 6d for country members, the cost of relaying the four courts and the decision to hold an 'entertainment' to be entitled 'The Cafe Chantant' to defray some of the expense. Lively debate ensued every year as to the best dates for the 'At Home' events, how the needs of the croquet players on their undersized lawn could be reconciled with the requirements of the lawn tennis players. The club's domestic arrangements were also important: Mrs Alice Walton looked after the Hut and the teas, the cakes for those long, lazy summer afternoons were to be brought from Mrs Scott's on Station Road. In 1902, the ladies had a new pavilion built, again paid for by a dramatic and musical entertainment and this time held at Bowdon College on South Downs Road. The pavilion, which was constructed by Pennington the joinery company on Stamford Road, had a verandah, two dressing rooms, a kitchen with a china cupboard and it measured approximately 15' x 12', at a cost of £75. Despite the passing of nearly a century, the excitement accompanying the plans for the opening of the new pavilion is conveyed to the reader of the minutes; members of the Gentlemen's Club were to be invited, so the courts must be in good condition; will Mr Garner, no longer in the first flush of youth be able to cope? A primus stove will be required for tea and extra tablecloths and tea cloths must be clean and ready for the day.

No description remains about the opening of the little pavilion on May 10th 1902. One is left to imagine long ago, a warm day in summer, with perhaps some sort of celebratory tournament being played beneath the spreading branches of the trees, and ladies and gentlemen gathering in the pavilion on the edge of the Devisdale for cups of tea and cakes from Mrs Scott's.

That day must have gone well. For with the close of 1903 came discussion about the possible amalgamation of the two clubs. Members of the Ladies Lawn Tennis Club, their sisters and daughters, and wives, sisters and daughters of Bowdon Lawn Tennis Club members, were all invited to play at Bowdon on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays after 4pm. Similarly, the Ladies ground was to be open to members of the Gentlemen's Club on Tuesdays and Thursdays. One groundsman was in future, to manage both grounds. The co-operation between the two clubs was obviously successful. It relieved the men on the one hand, from the necessity of sorting out refreshments; tea was to be provided by the ladies every Wednesday and Saturday at a charge of only sixpence. The ladies on the other hand, no longer had to fret about the exorbitant cost of balls, netting and leaning tennis posts since this side of affairs was now managed by the gentlemen. With the greater availability of grass courts, two lawns at the Ladies Club were to be permanently given over to croquet.

This reciprocal arrangement continued to flourish and develop as the years passed. Still however, the two clubs paid their individual rents to the Earl of Stamford and maintained their separate locations. In 1906, both clubs contributed to the Welcome Fund for the Earl and Countess of Stamford on their arrival at Dunham Massey. Old committee members gave way to new ones, Miss Rachel Heald, the founder of the Ladies Lawn Tennis Club died in 1908. Younger sisters were now allowed to play at the club in the school holidays and boys under seventeen were permitted to play in the mornings provided that they brought their own tennis balls and were chaperoned by an existing member. Then on July 8th, 1914, shortly before the outbreak of war, an Extraordinary General Meeting was held at the Bowdon Lawn Tennis Club. It was resolved that the two clubs should join as one, but the outbreak of war, just four weeks later, caused the amalgamation to be deferred and consequently the seventeen members of the club, including those mentioned above, who were killed in action, were never to see it happen.

The years 1914-18 saw a suspension of the Annual Tournaments as many of the members were away at the Front, their subscriptions waived. Both clubs contributed funds to the Altrincham War Depot, Bowdon ladies made sandbags for the war effort in the pavilion, and it was suggested that officers at the John Leigh Hospital might use the grounds. The ladies were invited to use the lawns at BLTC at any time so their club was closed and sheep put to graze on the grass.

In the year following the Armistice, the Annual Tournament was once again held and plans for the amalgamation of the clubs were resumed, in 1920, the first joint meeting was held when it was proposed to lease an adjoining plot of land and to surrender the old plot on which the ladies club had stood. The membership now stood at eighty gentlemen and eighty ladies. Grass court numbers 5, 6, 7 and 8 were laid and estimates obtained for the laying down of two hard courts. The pavilion at the Gentlemen's Club was enlarged at each end to accommodate the increased membership and the trees adjacent to it, felled. The Ladies pavilion was taken down from its old spot by the railings on the Devisdale and reassembled at the left of the entrance on Elcho Road.

It became traditional that the Annual Bowdon Tennis Tournament should be held in the week after Wimbledon. The Coleman Cup for Ladies Singles was introduced in 1924, followed by the Leaf Cup for Men's Singles in 1930. In 1936, the Jubilee Cups were played for in a Mixed Doubles (Level) event. Membership expanded, including in the list such names as Miss Lamb of Denzell House, Herbert Lee of Hilston House and Lord Stamford of Dunham Massey. A Tournament Dance took place for the first time in 1923 and Juniors were now allowed to play on both grass and hard courts. Electric lights were installed in the pavilion in 1934 replacing the gas ones which the ladies had welcomed as a modern alternative to oil lamps just thirty two years before.

In 1930, a group of trustees for the club were able to purchase the land that had hitherto been held on lease from Lord Stamford. Additional land stretching to Green Walk was made available and the sum of £1298 7s 6d was paid. The Altrincham Agricultural Society removed the cattle and plans for a new clubhouse and two squash courts were drawn up by the committee. Disappointingly, the final estimate was too high, so instead, another hard court was added for £225, making a total of three. Thirty years later, plans to purchase the defunct reservoir on the Water Company's land to the east of the club proved unsuccessful when it was hoped to make the reservoir into a swimming pool which was opposed by the Earl of Stamford and so the land reverted to part of the Devisdale. With this final purchase of land in 1930, BLTC possessed eight grass courts, three hard courts and land for further expansion when required. When in 1939 the Second World War began and tennis activities ceased all energies were concentrated on the war effort, all tournaments were suspended. Subscriptions for those serving in His Majesty's Forces were again waived, and although the AGM's continued throughout the war, accounts, in the interests of economy were not sent out. After 1945, the return to normality was slow, for the club was desperately in need of tennis posts, nets and string netting, however, by July 1948, it was possible to hold a weekend tournament, the first since 1939. It was the start of a new era.

The Annual Tournament was restarted the following year and the number of events rose steadily to twelve. A Junior Tournament was played in September though the date was later moved to the third week in July. Coaching had been offered by Mr Nash in the 1930's at a cost of 2s 6d a lesson and after the war, Miss Shaw gave lessons to both adults and juniors for 6s a half hour. Every year promising juniors were recommended for County Coaching and participated in County Championships. The age of competitive tennis had arrived in Bowdon.

In the sixties and seventies, tennis at Bowdon was greatly strengthened by the presence of several county players. From 1961 Mrs R D Armstrong, an ex-Cheshire captain and Wimbledon player, dominated the Tournament scene, winning the Mixed Doubles (Level) with her husband, also a county player, no less than five times. The Ladies team included two other county players, Mrs Cathy Savage and Mrs Mary Penn, who also played at Wimbledon, and in the Cheshire County LTA Championships of 1972-74, Bowdon were twice winners. Ten years on, Bowdon won the Cheshire Ladies Veterans Championship. In 1986, the Men's First Team won the North East Cheshire League Division VII and in the following year won Division VI.

More recently Bowdon Men's Teams 1 and 2 have played in Division III and VIII respectively of the NECL and the Ladies Team in Division V. In addition, the junior teams have been successful; the U18 play in Division III and the U15 and U13 in Division I of the Junior NECL.

In 1991 another court was built and all four courts were astro-turfed for all round play, and membership and success went from strength to strength.

Booth Mansion, Chester
by Ronald Trenbath.

When George Booth, 2nd Earl of Warrington, succeeded to his estates and titles in 1694, his first task was to re-establish his fortunes and properties, following their decline through neglect as a result of the political aspirations of his father and grandfather. During the remainder of his life he rebuilt his town house, Booth Mansion, in Chester, Bowdon Hall in Bowdon, and his main house, Dunham Massey Hall, and replanned and replanted the adjoining deer park.

In 1700 Booth rebuilt an imposing town house in the Rows on Watergate Street, Chester, to be known as Booth Mansion. In his petition to the City Assembly, for permission to undertake the work, Booth promised to rebuild his existing dwelling house, and the one adjoining it, and replace them with a new building which would be ‘an ornament to the street’.

The two existing buildings were of stone construction and dated about 1260 and 1280 respectively, and sufficient of Booth's original house survives, within the later building, to allow a full reconstruction of it. A decorated timber arcade in the other house has been tree-ringed and dated to about 1260, making it the oldest piece of carpentry in the country.

These thirteenth century houses had at a slightly lower level than the street, stone undercrofts supporting strong wooden floors with massive timber joists and boarding, which were covered in hardcore and blinded with ashes to support thick stone paving slabs to ensure protection from fire. Stone cupboards were let into the walls and stone arches were built over the Row, much of which survives today. Each building would comprise a shop, sleeping chambers, a kitchen, stables and brew house for a merchant and his family.

The Row was at first floor level and constituted a right-of-way, which had to be maintained by the owner, an obligation still in force today.

Booth's new superstructure was built in brick with a grand staircase to an upper floor which contained large and spacious reception rooms. The front facade was of Dutch classical design, introduced into this country after the accession of William and Mary and adapted by Christopher Wren and Roger Pratt, and included facing brickwork with stone quoins, leaded cross windows, a large projecting cornice and classical columns along the Row and was built out of alignment with neighbouring property in order to distinguish it from them.

The family took up residence here during the Season' where they would entertain lavishly and enjoy the company of guests and neighbours and attend social functions.

Booth Mansion like most of the buildings constructed for the Earl have many common features with a distinct crudity of design, compared with other buildings of the period in Cheshire, such as Oulton Park (1716) and Aston Park (1715). A Huguenot, Boujet, appears to have been one of the earliest architects commissioned by Booth, followed by John Norris, but to date there is little information regaining who was responsible for other works undertaken on his behalf.



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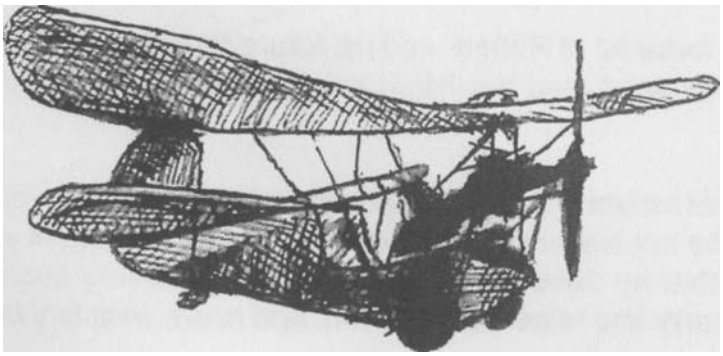

KILLICK'S FLYING FLEA

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Bowdon Sheaf
Changes in Publication

Due to increasing difficulties being experienced in the production of the Bowdon Sheaf, the Committee of the Bowdon History Society has decided that, in future, only one issue will be published each year instead of two as formerly.

Commencing with the 2004-2005 Session, the Bowdon Sheaf will be available for purchase prior to all future November Meetings and will be enlarged from eight to twelve sheets. It is hoped that this change in programming will result in more efficient publication.

A Bowdon Developer in the Wild West

by Ronald Trenbath

When Robert Crossley Trenbath, at the age of twenty-one, failed to return to his home in Albert Square, Bowdon, his family were very worried and distressed, but their attitude changed to one of anger when it was revealed that he had absconded and taken a one way ticket to New York.

The reason for Robert's behaviour was never explained; it might have been to escape from a domineering family or it could have been an attempt to satisfy a desire for independence, but whatever the reason he never returned and instead built himself a new life in America.

The fortunes of Robert, and his future family, interested A.L. Rowse who undertook research and published articles upon which the following account is given.

On his arrival in the United States Robert became involved in farming but as neither he nor his family had ever had any experience of agriculture, it is not surprising that he does not appear to have been very successful, but he did however marry and raise a son, Edwin, and move west to Washington State. In Central southern Washington the Yakima River joined the Columbia River to traverse half-a-million acres of sage bush desert sparsely populated by native Indians, but like most desert areas in the United States of America the land was very fertile and could be made productive if water becomes available, so, with the Indians confined to reservations in the hills, it was possible to clear the land, introduce irrigation and cultivate the land to create what ultimately became one of the largest wine producing areas on the American continent.

During this period Edwin and the family went into the business of insurance and real estate to become the foremost developers in the Yakima Valley.

It would be very interesting to know more about their pioneering activities in the early days of the conquest of the west, but the lost contact between "the American cousins" and their family in Bowdon has rendered this impossible, in spite of attempts by Rowse to bridge the gap.

In participating in property dealing and development Robert and Edwin were continuing a very long family tradition. Circa 1380 the Trenbath family sold part of their land in Cornwall and in 1442 "Richard de Trenbagh Wartha" bought it back from "Thomas Polperde Polper" in an indenture which described it as "La Ville de Trenbagh Wartha", at advantageous terms, a mediaeval form of equity release. In 1751 William Trenbath undertook the sale of Havening Hall and Estate on behalf of the Earl of Dorchester at the turn of the 20th Century Robert's uncle, George Trenbath, negotiated the sale of Trafford Park for industrial development, on behalf of Sir Humphrey de Trafford, since which time the family have been involved in urban development in many parts of the world mainly in Australia.

Sources
Correspondence and articles etc by A. L. Rowse – Cornwall Record Office.
Note *Wartha* means ‘Upper’in the Cornish language.

Under Canvas at Bowdon

The following article was published in the Graphic on 25th August 1888 and included in a book entitled:

“History as Hot News:
The late 19th Century World as seen through the eves of the
Illustrated London News and The Graphic 1865-97”.
by Leonard de Vries (1976).

Last year a number of the lads belonging to the Hulme and Chorlton-on-Medlock Lads' Club, situated in Mulberry Street, Hulme, were taken to Strines, in Derbyshire, to spend a few days under canvas. The experiment was so successful, and gave such pleasure to the lads, that it was determined to repeat it this year during Whit Week, which is always a period of holiday-making in Lancashire.

The programme was as follows:- A camp was formed on the ground of the shooting range at Bowdon, Cheshire, which was kindly lent for the occasion. Tents were erected for sleeping, kitchens for cooking food, and a canteen and large mess tent were provided for use in the evenings. Each day the lads were to undergo a short drill and, for the sake of discipline, the routine of a regular military camp was preserved. The amusements provided consisted of cricket and football matches, swimming and bathing, athletic sports, and in the evenings, concerts and entertainments. There were five hundred applicants for the trip, but the resources of the committee were insufficient to take more than 180. The camp, which is the rifle range of the Third Cheshire Volunteers, is situated on the banks of the Bollin, not far from New Bridge Hollow, on the old Roman road to Chester. It lies in a sheltered position amid undulating ground. Some twenty conical-shaped tents were provided, with wooden floors, each accommodating some ten lads. Besides these, there were the officials' quarters, a large marquee for a mess-room, and a wooden structure for a kitchen. The cooking operations were carried on over trench-fires in the open air.

Mr Alexander Devine, the originator of the scheme, found the lads wonderfully amenable to discipline. The reveille sounded at six a.m. when the boys turned out and washed. Then the morning parade was held. Breakfast followed, both it and the subsequent meals being announced by bugle-call. Lads who were belated were punished by being sentenced to 'potato-drill,' that is, to peel the potatoes for their own and their companions' dinners. From the reveille until 'lights out' was sounded at ten p.m., the bulk of the time was the lads' own. It was a great pleasure to see so many lads, some of whom are from almost the lowest class, and who, but a short time ago, were spending their leisure hours in the streets, now enjoying the liberty of country fields, and fast becoming tanned with fresh air and sunshine.

Scouting in Bowdon and Dunham Massey
by Peter Kemp

Until Local Government changes in 1974, Altrincham County High School for Boys (then called Altrincham Grammar School as now) was actually situated in Bowdon with part of its grounds extended into Hale, and it never was in Altrincham. It had its own Boy Scout Troop, a large one exclusively for the boys of the school, the 3rd Altrincham, of which I was a member from 1933. I left school in 1938 having become a patrol leader (Kangaroos), a King's Scout, holder of the All-Round Cords, the Impresa Medal, and with the woodcraft name of 'Hound-by-Night', the latter bestowed for prowess in following a fox-oil trail in the dead of night through Delamere Forest by smell alone ! The 6-day School week in those days included in its curriculum games on Wednesday afternoons and Scouting, and I chose the latter, not having any interest or aptitude for games.

The then brand-new Scout H.Q. with its verandah supports of Canadian Indian totem pole designs just starting to be carved and today still used by the Scouts, was the centre of all our activity. From there 'wide games' were pursued all over Bowdon, and stalking skills were acquired with each other in the bracken of Dunham New Park then in its original state long before the coming of the reservoir, the war-time prisoner-of-war camp, and the final redevelopment of the golf course. Baden-Powell's 'Scouting for Boys' ideas were still very much in practice at that time. At Easter-times we camped in Delamere Forest near the Cheshire Hunt kennels at Cuddington under the leadership of science master Mr G. W. Sutcliffe, the Scoutmaster (woodcraft name 'Squirrel'), but at weekends in Spring and Summer short camps were held in a field at Home Farm on the Dunham Massey estate down by the Bollin within sight and sound of the Chester Road traffic over New Bridge Hollow.

After Saturday morning school and a quick trip home for a bite of lunch and change into uniform, it was back to School where the trek-cart was loaded at H.Q. with equipment and personal gear for the haul to the camp site with 2 scouts at the crossbar steering, 2 on each side-trace pulling and one or two at the back pushing when necessary. The route lay down the cindered Marlborough Road through its gate and on up South Downs Road and Langham Road to turn left for the easy run down Bow Green Road (a few houses and still a lane in part) to cross the main Chester Road (busy with traffic and much narrower then) at Streethead Farm over on to the Home Farm lane, through the farmyard and over the big field behind, to come to a halt at the top of the Bollin escarpment where the troop had a small hut where permanent equipment was kept beside our water tap.

Four or five patrols set up their green tents close to the river with Squirrel in his one-man tent; the Rover Scouts, old boys of the School, completed the encampment with all their tents. There we settled down, dodging the cowpats, making woodfire kitchens complete with fireplace, grease-pit and trap, mug-tree and larder, not forgetting the communal latrine to be dug out and screened. The patrol leader organised his scouts, often being head cook with an assistant and sending the younger ones foraging for wood and carrying water for washing and cooking. I recall dead-wood gathering along the wooded main Dunham Hall drive towards the gatehouses (later bombed out of existence by the Luftwaffe) and marvelling at the profusion of blue-bells and their scent. If we had been lucky and the weather was hot, we stripped off and swam and bathed in the Bollin's pools where I remember Malcolm Clowe, a school senior and crack swimmer, doing

his renowned speedy crawl-stroke. Under the supervision of the Rovers, towers and bridges were built of wooden poles lashed together with rope, and an aerial ropeway was slung across the Bollin for crossing by pulley, including the trek cart in its sections. Inter-patrol competitions and tent inspections were held and other Rover Scouts and Assistant Scoutmasters such as Harry Killick and Wilf Laidlar came down on the Sunday to help. Saturday night was the occasion for the great campfire where we all sat around the blaze and sang our scout songs, yarned, and had our cocoa and biscuits. Some Sundays, our parents were invited to visit, and usually about teatime we broke camp, cleared the site and replaced turves before loading the trekcart up for the happy tired trek back up the hill to School. I only recall one complete weekend washout when camp had to be abandoned as we were all soaked through to the skin; the tents were left to dry hanging in a bam at Home Farm while we trudged back with our ground-sheets round our shoulders in the teeming rain. All very character-building, it is said! And we still had our weekend homework to do when we got home! Happy days nonetheless with fellow scouts I still remember such as Stobo, Renshaw, Copeman, Hancox and Westwood amongst others.

Little did we guess that most of our Rovers and senior scouts would shortly be away fighting for King and Country, and that some would never return.

Editor Note - Malcolm Clowe achieved distinction academically and athletically both at school and at university, qualifying in medicine. During the war he joined the Merchant Navy as a medical officer where he lost his life rescuing colleagues following the torpedoing of his ship for which he was posthumously decorated.

T'WAS EVER THUS
by Stephen Matthews

ADULTERATION OF FOOD IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

This little note refers back to a time when there was a tax on tea, both green and black varieties. This tax was administered by the Board of Inland Revenue, which referred to an unusual question in its Report for 1870. In its reports the Board sometimes reflected upon developments over a number of years, which is why this extract refers back to 1862: rarely did its dry official language match the sarcasm of its comment.

Adulteration of Tea

The progress of science has preserved the forest trees of Britain from annihilation. Instead of the ruder process of substituting the British for the Chinese leaf, our modem tea dealers have recourse to pigments which revive, to outward appearance, the exhausted dregs of the genuine article. Prussian blue and a little gum give what is called a facing to black tea; and there are materials, not, it is to be feared of so innocent a nature by which black tea is converted into green. This latter practice appears to be so general as to have become a regular and recognised part of tea dealers' business; and it is not a little amusing to see how entirely unconscious they are of the real purport of their acts. They write to us that they doubt whether it can be contrary to any provisions to convert black tea into green; that if this really be the case, they must of course give up the practice, but that they hope to find that our officers are mistaken in so informing them, as it will be extremely inconvenient for them, and a great interference with their trade. We fear that we may be open to the reproach of having departed from the calmness of official style and phraseology in pointing out to some of these gentlemen in our replies, that there is another law, besides that in the statute book, which they had somehow contravened.

Nothing can better show the state of feeling upon this subject than the following letter from one of them, which we present without comment, in its genuine simplicity.

"To the Commissioners of Inland Revenue

London 29th April 1862

Gentlemen, A scarcity of green tea having taken place, while we have an abundant supply of black tea, this season, I shall be much obliged by a reply to the following question:-

Is it legally right to stain black tea, green, or vice versa, by such staining there being no increase in the weight, such tea having duly paid the legitimate duty.

Your most obedient servant"

The assertion that there would be no increase in the weight was intended to assure the Board that there would be no loss of duty on that score.

A Startling Experience for Altrincham Firemen
Report from the Altrincham & Bowdon Guardian of Wednesday, 15th, Nov.,1893
by Chris Hill

At two minutes to eleven, on Saturday night (11th. Nov.), information was brought to the Altrincham Fire Station, that a fire had broken out at High Lawn, Rose Hill, Bowdon, the residence of Mrs. Carlisle. The brigade at once turned out in charge of Superintendent Youlton. Meanwhile the outbreak, which had occurred in the cylinder chamber in the bathroom, had been subdued, the house being well fitted up with fire extinguishing appliances. The cylinder chamber was almost demolished and much damage was done to the bathroom and the room below, by water. The damage is estimated at about £25. The origin of the fire is unknown.

The news of the outbreak spread with great rapidity, and before the brigade arrived, a crowd had assembled in front of High Lawn. On brigade's arrival, the people shouted in a manner which startled the horses pulling the fire engine, and an alarming accident was the result. It appears that the driver had endeavoured to check the speed of the horses when near to High Lawn, and had got them well in hand until about twenty yards distant from the house, when owing to the shout set up by the crowd, the horses burst into a furious gallop. Then came the exciting part of the incident. The large iron gates which stand in front of the house were closed, probably with a view to preventing the people from surging into the grounds. Had the gates been opened, the fire engine could easily have been brought to a standstill in the carriage drive, and the catastrophe which followed would have been averted. It would have meant death and destruction to have continued the course of the engine in a straight line, consequently it had to be directed down a steep incline (Neild's Brow), which runs down the side of the residence to South Downs road. The brake of the engine was applied, but the horses were unmanageable and the engine shot down the incline at a terrific rate. It was a sight to appal the stoutest heart. Several of the firemen jumped into the roadway as the engine, with ever-increasing speed, continued its downward course, but the majority remained on, clinging to each other in a state of the most intense fear and excitement. Like an arrow from a bow, the engine dashed across Langham Road, and into the narrow road at the bottom of Neild's Brow. The driver of the fire engine had never once lost his head and his presence of mind was marvellous. By superhuman exertion of strength, when the engine was commencing the descent of this second incline, he swerved the horses round and directed them into the hedge which fences a turnip field and skirts the right of the incline. The horses dashed through the hedge, the engine was overturned, the firemen pitched off in all directions, and the driver was hurled into the field a distance of thirty feet. Thus the mad career of the runaway horses ended.

The fire engine was variously damaged, while one horse lay under the broken pole and the other lay stretched across its fellow, The harness had to be cut to extricate the horses, one of which was slightly injured. A young man named John Bailey (who had no right to be on the engine, but was assumed to have volunteered to help the brigade, in defiance of an order given by Superintendent Youlton), was discovered lying on the ground with his legs under the overturned engine. At first it was thought his legs were broken, but these fears were groundless and happily he was only severely shaken. He was sent home to Broadheath in a cab. Fireman Bowland suffered from a dislocation of the right shoulder, and will probably be incapacitated from duty for some weeks. The rest of the firemen were more or less cut and bruised. Superintendent Youlton, who jumped off when the fire engine was turned down the first part of the incline, had his hands and knees badly cut; and P.S. Christian, who accompanied the brigade, and had also endeavoured to escape from injury when the horses were tearing away at a breakneck pace, had jumped into the roadway soon after Superintendent Youlton, had one of his hands badly cut. The members of the brigade had to drag the damaged engine back to Altrincham, and it required great exertion to raise it from its position in the field. This task was performed in the presence of a jeering crowd of people, who blamed the firemen for the occurrence and hooted them in consequence.

On returning to Altrincham the brigade stocked and made ready another engine, to be used in case of emergency. It was stated by one person that the brake had failed to act, and that it was out of order. To prove the fallacy of this statement, while the engine was standing in the yard at the fire station, the brake was applied, and the people were asked to move the engine, but although they exerted their greatest strength, the engine could not be moved in the least degree. It was also stated that the brake was not applied descending Neild's Brow, but the curb-stone all the way down bears marks of the wheel grating along it in consequence of the brake having been applied, proving this statement also, to be wholly fallacious. It would be well if the Altrincham Local Board insured the members of the fire brigade against accidents (of course only sustained in the execution of their duty). In view of the great dangers to which the men are exposed when attending a fire, it would mean the expenditure of only a few shillings per year for each man. Saturday's experience being a startling instance.

As a post script, it may be mentioned that Fireman Isaac Bowland died as a result of his injuries, a year later, on 28th. November, 1894. The original account was somewhat longer and has been edited slightly.

A Boyhood Inspiration
An Appreciation of Harry Killick, 1897—1966
by Peter J. Kemp

At Grammar School in the 1930s, among our 'role models' — to use today's term—was Harry Killick, a Rover and Scoutmaster of the 3rd Altrincham Troop of Boy Scouts, a mainstay of this great troop, one of the largest in the country. He had made the Scout Movement the major occupation of his life since becoming too old to fly and for motorcar racing, and it was to remain so almost to the very end of his life.

In my case, he was one of the reinforcing influences for me becoming a volunteer pilot in the 1939-1945 War, so following my father's World War I experience as an R.F.C. pilot. The 1930s were exciting times in the conquest of the air- we watched the King's Cup Air Race pass over Sale while lunching in the garden ; also the R100 airship droning over (little did I know that when called up for pilot training tests in the R.A.F. it would be at Cardington, Bedfordshire with its great airship hangars (still there)) the great England - Australia Air Race won by Scott and Campbell Black in the De Havilland Comet and Sikorsky had flown his helicopter. Locally my dreams of flying were further inspired by a school trip to London which took in a visit to its main airport at Croydon where two of Imperial Airways huge silver corrugated aluminium biplane 'airliners' were on view, and also seeing Sir Alan Cobham's Air Circus in action at a large field at Ridgeway Road, Timperley - Harry Killick had done some "circus" flying, I understand. We schoolboys knew that Harry flew occasionally at Woodford, the home of the great manufacturer A.V.Roe, and two of us cycled there in the hope that we might see him and beg a flight — unfortunately not; the same happened when I did see Amy Mollison's husband Jim at Barton aerodrome, then the airport for Manchester before Ringway.

But real excitement was kindled when around 1935 Harry started to build a 'Flying Flea' aircraft invented in 1933 by a Frenchman M. Henri Mignet. The plans for construction were published in the magazine "Popular Mechanics" and the little aircraft's airborne adventures were extensively reported in the "Daily Express". The 1935 cost of materials to make it, except for the engine and propeller, was £25. Harry's workshop was in one of the lock-up premises on Ashley Road just over the railway bridge on the left from the Bleeding Wolf crossroads (now developed as smart offices). The 'Flying Flea' was a single-seat tiny short machine of wood and canvas construction powered by a motor-cycle type engine, and it looked almost like a pram fitted with two wings, but no tailplane, only a rudder - elevation control was by warping the main wing and there were no ailerons! Such a design was a sure recipe for trouble and some enthusiasts lost their lives. It is doubtful whether Harry ever flew his machine since the French

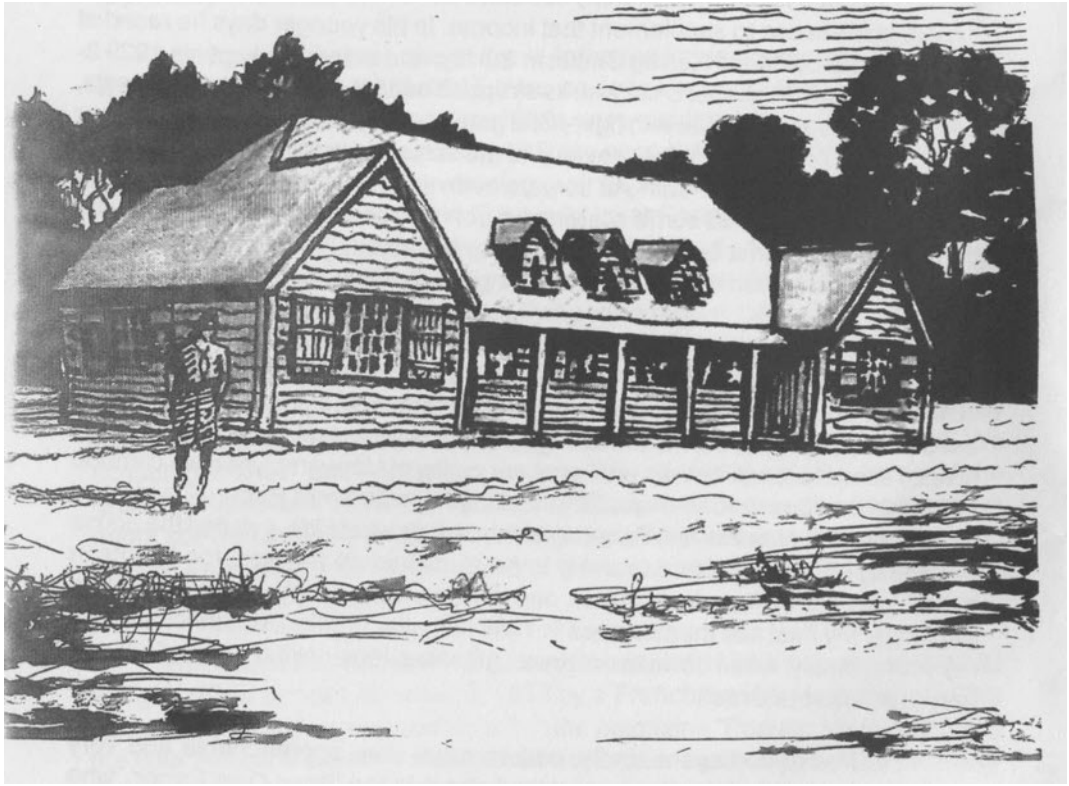
authorities banned the Flea' from flying in 1936 and our Air Ministry in 1937, even after modifications in design to overcome its uncontrollable diving and stalling problems. Harry, with his usual good nature, allowed us boys to come and see what he was doing and to answer all our eager questions. Later schoolboys will remember his attempt to build a pedal-powered autogyro for the £5000 prize on offer, and having to telephone Ringway Airport for clearance to try to take to the air in his back garden!

Henry Durant Killick, who was educated at Bowdon College, lived in Vicarage Lane, and was the ninth child in a large family of a Manchester merchant and J.R who left him a small annuity sufficient for most of his needs; he did build trailers at his house to supplement that income. In his younger days he raced at the famous Brooklands Racing Circuit in Surrey, and indeed he kept his 1929 2-seater Alvis open-top sports car with its strapped bonnet, 'knock-on' wire wheels, and 4-speed crash gearbox with right-hand gate change, until he died. I remember the great excitement when he drove up to the school for us boys to marvel at its lines and obvious power - some of us were even allowed to sit in the driving seat! His moustache covered some scarring he got from some mishap when he was burned in the fire that broke out. The racing fuel used in those days was very volatile and cars often caught fire on starting or refuelling.

Nobody ever recalls Harry wearing long trousers. He always wore his faded khaki Rover Scout uniform, though towards the end he did take to wearing a kilt instead of shorts for his Scottish ancestry. He smoked a small briar pipe and used a walking stick with a V thumb grip when we were at Scout camp or on hikes; I seem to recall he was with us at our camp at Ullswater when we climbed Helvellyn and descended along Striding Edge. He had met Baden-Powell and had attended jamborees and Scouting absorbed his whole life. I visited the house in Vicarage Lane once and found it to he furnished as a hostel for Scouts in transit with North American Indian and African artefacts as well as Scouting trappings. My final sad memory was in 1966 just after moving to Altrincham with my young family, when down in the town I glimpsed him looking gaunt, tired and very ill across the street.

He was to us boys a kindly, patient man, very approachable and very much in the mould of the heroes we read about in the “Boys Own Paper”, who counted boy scouts as his family. So much so, that when suffering from cancer, he was compelled to resign from the Scouts and very sadly took his own life. An adventurous bachelor of means In the true English tradition, one of Bowdon's characters, much loved and missed.

With grateful thanks to Ronald Trenbath, the Manchester Museum of Science and Industry, Air and Space Section (which has details of the 'Flying Flea’ and one on show), and to Trafford Local Studies, Sale for a copy of the Obituary In the 'Altrincham, Hale and Bowdon Guardian' for 15 December, 1966. Also to the websites of the RAF Museum, the North East Aircraft Museum and the Alvis Register Ltd.



3rd ALTRINCHAM SCOUT TROOP HEAD QUARTERS

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The Bowdon Sheaf

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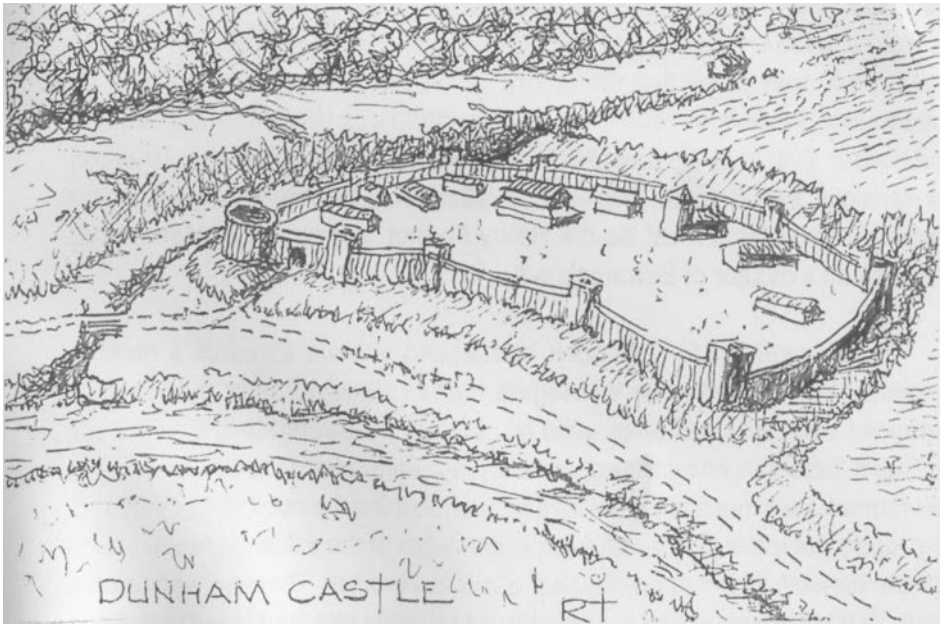


ISSN-0265-816X

William Edwards of Bowdon Hall, and
St Margaret's Church, Dunham Massey
by Marjorie Cox

This article arises out of a visit to St Margaret's Church by members of the Bowdon History Society last May, timed to coincide with the 150th anniversary of its consecration in June 1855. The building of the church was commissioned by the new, young 7th Earl of Stamford and began in 1851, but was soon stopped. There then followed a competition for a new design between six architects, three of London and three of Manchester. It was won by William Hayley of Manchester, who, from the 1830s to 1860, built a large number of churches in Manchester and district, the nearest being St Anne's, Sale in 1854. Apart from serving the needs of the inhabitants of new and projected houses built on Stamford land, St Margaret's provided the Earl with a local living in his gift, unlike St Mary's, Bowdon, which belonged to the Bishop of Chester. Although in Dunham Massey township, the site was so close to Altrincham township that the boundary ran through the vicarage.

Members admired the church and its position (some even went to the top of the tower) and the lofty interior with its stonework and fine hammer beam roof, with carved angels. Dr. K. Lee's leaflet named not only the architect but also the builders: Bowden, Edwards and Forster. Readers of the Society's book, published in 1994, Bowdon Hall and its People by Peter Kemp, Ronald Trenbath and myself, may recall that the tenant of the hall from about 1848 and the subsequent owner from 1858 to his death in 1870 was William Edwards, joiner and builder. Originally the firm of builders, later contractors, based in Chorlton-on-Medlock, was Bowden (William) and Edwards, but later there was a third partner, Forster, who must be the Henry Forster, gentleman of Manchester, who was an executor of Edwards's will.

My research for the book had traced William Edwards's roots to Anglesey, but I did not then investigate further. However, after publication, I remained interested and later, quite by chance, discovered that a neighbour, Mr Ralph Tattersall, knew the actual farm, Pwllpillo, where the Edwards family had farmed. I am much indebted to him for contacting the occupant of the farm, who kindly put me in touch with two descendants of the Edwards family, not of William himself, who had no children, but of his brother, Thomas, who farmed there.

William, as appeared in the book, was greatly attached to his numerous nephews and nieces, some of whom lived or stayed at the hall. The Edwards descendants proved to be diligent family historians and greatly expanded my knowledge. Through one of them I learned of the existence of a book in Welsh, Enwogion Mon 1830-1912 by R. Mon Williams, on famous men of Anglesey, in which William Edwards appears. I am most grateful to the Anglesey Record Office for providing a photocopy, with translation, of the entry on him, which was taken from an article in Cymry Manceinion (The Welsh of Manchester) and runs as follows:-

> "A patriotic and successful gentleman who was born in Pwllpillo, Rhoscolyn in 1792. A carpenter by trade, at an early age he moved to Manchester. He was a capable craftsman and unequalled in the construction of staircases. He opened his own workshop in 1832 that soon became the most important in Manchester. He built some of the finest banks, warehouses and mansions in the town and neighbourhood. He was one of the most well known in Welsh circles, noted for his geniality and love for the land of his birth. He amassed great wealth and resided at Bowden (sic) Hall outside the city. He built 'Ty Wridin' in Rhoscolyn with the intention of residing there but death intervened. He died on June 16 1870 and was buried in Rhoscolyn."

This, even allowing for some possible hyperbole, provides a welcome increase in our knowledge of Edwards's career, since it is extremely difficult to discover information about builders in Victorian Manchester, in contrast to architects. It is tantalising to be told that he built 'some of the finest banks, warehouses and mansions' and it would be interesting to know if Hayley used the firm elsewhere.

It has never emerged how Edwards came to rent Bowdon Hall; in the book I dismissed as coincidence the fact that his partner's name was 'William Bowden' (of Didsbury Cottage), the name of the owner who sold the hall to the Booths in the seventeenth century, but possibly there was more to it. Three years after St Margaret's was consecrated, Edwards bought Bowdon Hall from the Earl of Stamford, who by then lived mostly at Enville Hall, not at Dunham Massey, and was selling land on a large scale in the locality for building. True to his origins, Edwards farmed the Bowdon Hall estate and, in 1862, was asking if he could rent some neighbouring glebe land from the Earl, "as I am short for the succession of crops."

William Edwards was succeeded at the hall in 1870 by his niece, Jane, daughter of his brother, Thomas, who had lived there with her uncle and had recently married Robert Warburton, of an old Bowdon family. Bowdon Hall continued to figure in the Edwards family history, as a niece of Jane. Margaret (her sister Alice Lloyd's daughter) lived with her intermittently for several years, since the Bowdon air was considered better for her than her native, strong sea air. A daughter of this niece was one of my excellent informants and sent me a photocopy of a picture postcard of 'Bowdon Old Hall', produced by Thornton Ltd Altrincham. It was dated February 13, 1904, was postmarked Altrincham and the writer, another niece of Jane, wrote “keep this as it's the only one I have been able to find.” Presumably she wanted the family to have a memento of the hall, for with the death of the childless Jane Warburton on January 7, their close link with Bowdon was broken. Although a life interest in the Bowdon Hall estate remained with Jane's nephew, William Hugh Edwards, godson of William Edwards, he never lived at the hall. He lived in Anglesey, where he inherited property from his father, Hugh, J.P. and Deputy Lieutenant, until his death in 1929; for a decade or more he leased Bowdon Hall to tenants and then, in 1919, sold it.

My special gratitude is due to Miss M. Lloyd Jones and Mrs Eirlys Lloyd Jones. William Edwards's letter re renting glebe land is in The Stamford Papers, E.G.R. 14/78/5/104 in The John Rylands University Library of Manchester.

Some Thoughts and Queries on the Castles, Mills and Halls of the Barony of Dunham Massey

by Peter Kemp

By the year 1070, following the ruthless Norman harrowing of Cheshire in the 1069 winter when the Conqueror's punishing force laid waste much of the area, the first Hamo de Mascy took possession of his new barony granted to him by Hugh Lupus d'Avranches, the new Earl of Chester, as one of the eight barons created for Cheshire's feudal government. The Domesday Book of 1086 tells us that he took over the ousted Saxon freeman Alweard's holdings in Dunham, Bowdon, Hale, Agden, Ashley, Baguley and Bollington (now Little Bollington), all devastated and depopulated and described as 'waste'. It has been estimated that only 11,000 people were left alive in the whole county.

It is well known that the Anglo-Saxons had spurned and mostly destroyed anything left by the Roman occupation, preferring to live in small loose knit groups rather than towns and villages, and that for security, they settled away from the major Roman roads; thus Bogedone (Bowdon), Doneham (Dunham), Aldhere/inga/ham (Altrincham), Sealh (Sale on its original Sale Moor site) and Asshetun (Ashton-on-Mersey) for example, were Anglo-Saxon 'townships' well away from the Roman Watling Street, the main road from Manchester to Chester. Although the 'Street' had decayed through neglect in the 600 years since the Romans departed, it was still the only major thoroughfare in the area and a well-worn route for traders and communication; any enemies or invaders would have come that way principally.

It is also well-known that the Normans' system of conquest and consolidation used wooden motte-and-bailey castles or forts quickly thrown up for protection and intimidation, and as bases from which their territory could be administered and defended. For absolute control, defence and counter-attack, the site chosen always had strategic importance and the de Mascy Dunham Castle at Castle/Watch Hill next to the Roman road ford across the River Bollin demonstrates this in all respects being raised on a bluff on a promontory flanked by the river at the front and a small ravine with a considerable stream and marshes at the back.

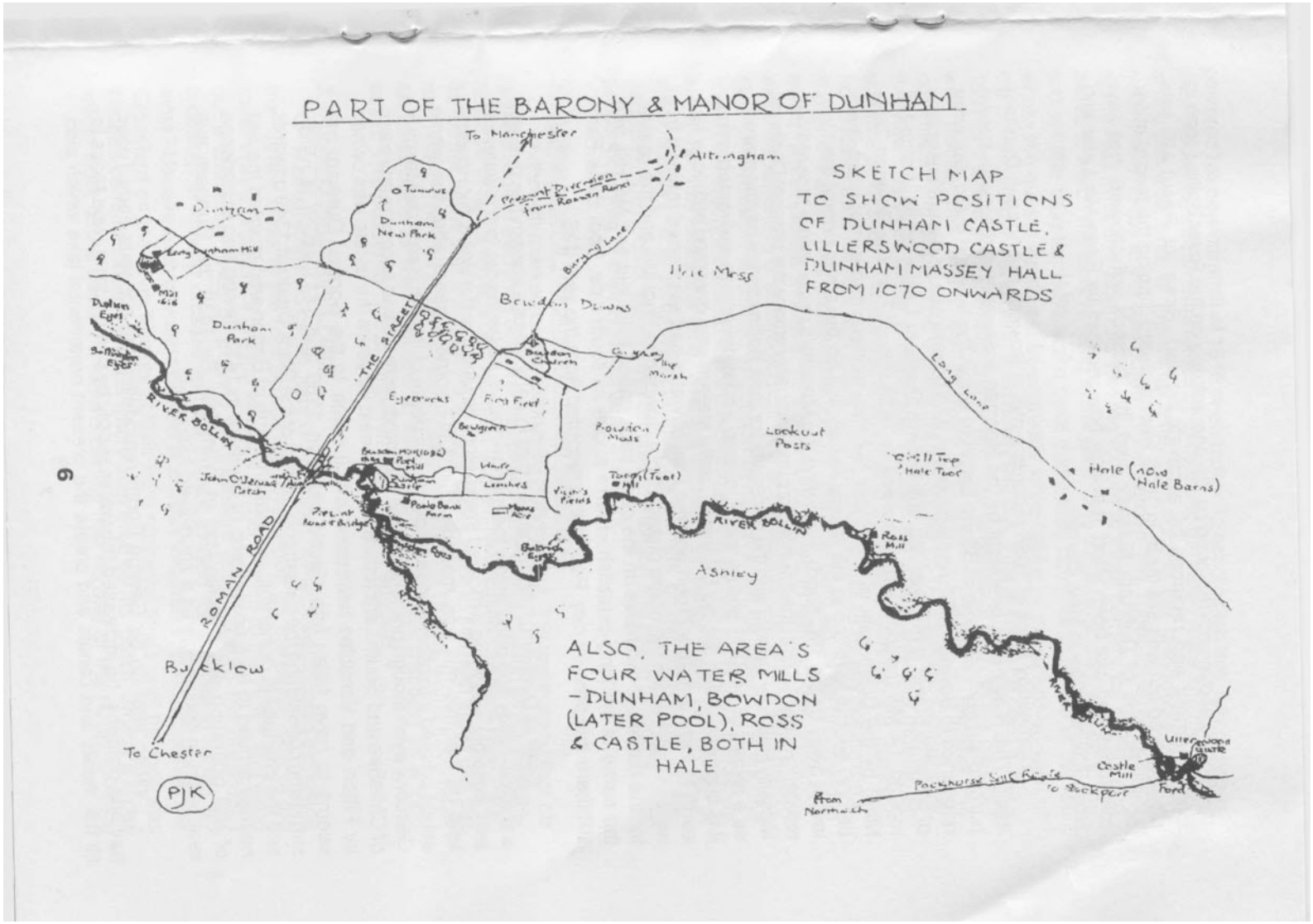
It must be remembered that the whole area was undrained and much wetter than it is now over 900 years later; the rainwater soaked into and then ran off Bowdon Downs lower down, hence Hale Moss (which required Hale causeway to cross over it from Bowdon), Heald Moss or The Marsh (where Altrincham Boys Grammar School stands), the moss of Moss Farm, Bowdon next to 'the great deep Bog' recorded by the 17C historian Sir Peter Leycester, and finally, the 'White Leaches' or wetlands displaying white bog cotton, all running one into the other and all draining into both the stream past Motley Bank and the stream to the rear of the Castle mound. The River Bollin, like the River Mersey, was untamed and untapped, so its flow was greater than now, and it wandered through wide reed-beds and water-meadows containing 'Eyes' or island-like areas which would be impassable every winter or cloudburst, and was a principal line of defence and protection. Hamo de Mascy would have lived in his hall within the bailey alongside the castle together with his armed men, horses, stores, etc., and cattle and tenants could be sheltered inside the bailey stockade in times of danger.

It is suggested that the Saxon Alweard's hall of residence may well have been at or near the present site of Dunham Massey Hall well away from the 'Street' in his hunting ground and close to his Saxon tribesmen in the scattered settlement of Dunham (settlement(ham) at or near the Hill (dun)) on the good agricultural land on the anticline of Bowdon Hill. There was a stream flowing through the settlement, since augmented and feeding the lake and moat area of Dunham Massey Hall, but, according to Domesday, no castle or mill recorded; the Saxons only had ditches and palisades for protection of their halls.

That first Saxon hall may have been destroyed in the Norman invasion, but later when Norman rule was consolidated and accepted mainly, rebuilt on the same site as the hall of the de Mascys when the castle was either decayed or 'slighted' and abandoned, or it may have been used as a hunting lodge for a short while. The adoption of Dunham as his baronial title and the name of his castle, strongly suggests that the first Hamo de Mascy made it plain to all and sundry that he was taking possession of the fiefdom of Alweard of Dunham, which included all the neighbouring 'townships' as the Saxons called them. Bowdon was the location of the Saxon chapel or church on the customary high point where St Mary's Church now stands, and little else since the township land was undrained and of poor quality, as its few inhabitants had been killed or had fled when faced with the Norman advance. Parishes began to emerge in Cheshire after 920 when the county became part of the diocese of Lichfield and resident clergy were appointed in place of the peripatetic priests. Bowdon parish was huge containing 10 townships and parts of two others until its gradual breakdown into separate units in recent centuries as populations grew.

Later Norman lords everywhere began to rebuild their churches in the Norman style, as happened at Bowdon though no trace has remained. The present parish boundary mostly along the line of Watling Street on that side which nowadays puts the Dunham Castle site in Bowdon did not then exist, the original ancient parish boundary coinciding with that of the barony. Hamo de Mascy also erected a castle further upstream by the River Bollin at Ullerswood on the Hale boundary on the bluff above and beyond the present Castle Mill (Chronicle of 1173), and between his two castles there was a lookout point at Tooth (Toot, Tout) Hill near the present house called The Priory which guarded the intervening space as an early warning post, probably with a horn, fires or flags to signal approaching danger. Little is known about Ullerswood Castle which, like Dunham, was adjacent to a stream draining Shadow Moss (now under housing and Manchester Airport). There is no evidence that either Dunham or Ullerswood were ever rebuilt in stone. It is suggested that at both sites watermills were owned by the de Mascys using the water flow of both streams adjacent to their castles for their income and convenience and as of right.

The sparse evidence available in this historical period in this area of Cheshire raises several questions for our Society members to consider, of which it is suggested the most intriguing are the following :-


PART OF THE BARONY & MANOR OF DUNHAM
SKETCH MAP
TO SHOW POSITIONS
OF DUNHAM CASTLE,
ULLERSWOOD CASTLE &
DUNHAM MASSEY HALL
FROM 1070 ONWARDS
ALSO, THE AREA'S
FOUR WATER MILLS
- DUNHAM, BOWDON
(LATER POOL), ROSS
& CASTLE, BOTH IN
HALE
To Manchester
Altringham
Dunham
Dunham New Park
Dunham Park
Bowdon Downs
Hale Moss
Eyebrooks
Bowdon Moss
Lookout Posts
Hale (now Hale Barns)
Ashley
Ross Mill
Castle Mill
Ford
Bucklow
To Chester
RIVER BOLLIN
ROMAN ROAD
THE STREET
Long Lane
Packhorse Salt Route
To Stockport
From Northwich
PJK

1.Where was Dunham Mill and Bowdon Mill ?

Mr Jim Howarth's article detailing his very useful research of 14th and 15th century documentary evidence of the watermills of the Dunham Massey estate (Bowdon Sheaf No.38, October 2001) makes it clear that there were four mills altogether - Bollington, Dunham, and the two Hale mills called Castle and Rasse (Ross). Certainly Castle Mill was on the Ullerswood Castle stream mentioned above until replaced by the one actually on the River Bollin (gone in living memory and replaced by a private house). Ross (or Rass) Mill has disappeared but was still there in 1630 when Edward Tipping the tenant miller of the Booths of Dunham Massey died; his father's will showed that new millstones had just been fitted. It is only now recalled by Ross Mill Lane and Ross Mill meadow in Hale Barns.

Domesday Book of 1086 records a mill at Bowdon but none in Dunham itself. This may be an oversight by the Norman assessors in their well-known hurry to survey the whole of Saxon England within the time set them. But what happened to Bowdon Mill? And where was it? The only site with a sufficient flow of water to power a mill was the one behind Dunham Castle on its Watch Hill mound. (A Mill meadow was recorded in 1838 (No.277 on the Bowdon Tithe Map) by the Bollin east of the Priory but this modern name (not used there before) seems to relate to the recent Ashley Mill on the other side of the river, swept away by the 19C flood). Following the Massey's move into a moated hall residence after 1326 in their hunting ground (probably where the present Dunham Massey Hall now stands) and the necessity for their Bollin castles having passed, as a record of 1410/11 shows a hall, chapel and outbuildings well-established, it is suggested that the old Dunham Castle stream was dammed with logs and earth to form a mill pool (perhaps the flow of water had slackened making this necessary). Hence the name change from Bowdon to Pool Mill and the reason for the names of two fields on the north bank called Mill Field and Mill Hill, and the name of the long-established farm above its south side, Pool Bank Farm still there this present day. Pool Mill is recorded from the year 1380.

Over at Dunham, it is suggested that in early times a stream ran through a shallow valley and pond below the manor-house, powering the lord's watermill and, possibly, supplying a moated area before flowing into the Bollin. Mr Howarth tells us that this mill was mentioned in 1347 some six years after the whole estate passed into other hands following the death of the 6th Baron de Mascy in Gascony even though branches of the Masseys were spread across many parts of Cheshire and South Lancashire. For the next 90 years the estate was owned by Fitton and Venables heiresses until it came to the Booths. Dunham mill seems to have fallen into disuse between 1380 and 1411 which is hardly surprising considering the catastrophic effect of the Black Death of 1349 onwards and the changes in ownership. Sir Robert Booth of Barton who married the last heiress arrived to take possession of Dunham in 1433 having had experience of mill operation at his Bollin Hall at Wilmslow. By 1439 the Dunham mill reappears in documents as a short-lived fulling mill.

When later on Sir George Booth remodelled the previous early Tudor hall and gardens, he increased the water supply by conduit from Hale Moss to fill his moats and canals and create the present ornamental lake which also powered his new cornmill of 1616 seen today. To accomplish this, any previous dam across the stream was raised by excavating the valley sides and the course of the mill leat, and, at the same time, constructing the fashionable viewing mount seen today at the lake corner of the garden. His Tudor-style remodelling of the Hall front and side had viewing towers at three corners for guests and ladies to watch the deer hunting in the park. The viewing mound (similar to the two at Little Moreton Hall) would have had a little banqueting house at the top where the guests would eat sweetmeats while taking in the raised-up view of the house, gardens and park, then newly laid out. This is still to be seen in Kip's 1697 bird's-eye view showing one or two new avenues of trees in the park but with house and mound out of scale with artistic licence to impress the commissioning owner, and the mill turned round by 90 degrees! Confusingly, the view has been taken that the site of Dunham Castle was this mound, an unstrategic location of no defensive strength at the edge of level ground, guarding no roads or approaches, and easily ignored and bypassed by any hostile force. If ever the water was a defensive feature, the lake dam would be breached in hours. No evidence whatever has been uncovered to support this assertion, either documentary or archaeological. The accepted authority of Cheshire history, George Ormerod, is quoted in support because when he viewed the mound c1816. He thought it looked like a castle mound (to please his host?), but as we know, he, like everyone else, was not infallible as things have turned out in other matters. It is inconceivable that the owners of this important estate, especially the Booths, would have omitted to mention 'the castle mound' in their proud recording of their Hall, gardens and park.

2. Is that really a Tumulus in Dunham New Park?

Although marked on the Ordnance Survey Map, it is understood that no archaeological evidence of burial has been found in this mound which possibly could be in fact a vestige of a Norman warren. Now called Dunham New Park, its former name was the High Park and it dates back to Norman times like the main park. The site in the dry sandy area high on the Downs would have been an ideal place for the Normans to introduce their coneys (rabbits) as a food asset. This possibility needs further investigation, I suggest.

3. John O'Jerusalem's Patch.

A small strip field called John O'Jerusalem's Patch was located alongside the 'Street' close to the ford across the River Bollin on the castle side of the road. Was this patch of ground where a former pilgrim to the Holy Land eked out a charitable living by praying for travellers about to face the hazardous crossing, or having crossed to give thanks to God for survival in return for alms? Usually such travellers prayed at a cross installed at such crossings like Crossford on the River Mersey at Sale from medieval times until the ford was bridged centuries later. Perhaps a holy man lived on his 'patch' beside a cross within sight of the castle? It seems certain that no one of the Hospital of St John of Jerusalem owned it or gave it its name. The origin of this field's name may never be resolved.

Regarding Pool Mill, Dunham Castle and the Tumulus only further expert archaeology will reveal more of the whole picture. Also needing future investigation, I suggest, to complete the Norman defence sight line along the Bollin between Dunham Castle and Ullerswood Castle, another Toothill would be needed around about Hill Top (?Toot), Hale, if the elevations bare of trees would allow it. Perhaps this is too much to ask for now that area is all built up.

It is to be hoped that the authorities have plans to clear carefully the Castle Hill area of undergrowth and trees, allow a fresh archaeological survey to be undertaken, and to maintain the site as one of historic importance with information plaques as part of the Bollin Valley Park.

Sources :-

Bowdon Sheaf various articles
Dunham Massey National Trust
Monastic and Collegiate Houses in Cheshire Roland W. Morant
The Archaeology of Trafford Michael Nevell

The Rebuilding of Church of St. Mary the Virgin, Bowdon, Cheshire
by Ronald Trenbath

The influx of commuters following the opening of the railway to Bowdon in 1849 caused a population increase which rendered the parish church inadequate to cope with the extra parishioners. This factor, combined with the deteriorating state of the building, lead the church authorities to instruct Giles Gilbert Scott, a prominent architect, to undertake a feasibility study to deal with the problem.

Scott's report strongly recommended retaining and restoring the old building and enlarging it to an adequate size, rather than to demolish it and build a new structure.

After due consideration W.H. Brakespear, an architect from London, was commissioned in 1858 to undertake a survey and submit two schemes, one for restoration and enlargement, and one for an entirely new building.

The survey was very detailed, to include measured drawings and photographs and revealed an interesting building consisting of a collection of parts from previous periods ranging from 12th century Romanesque (often wrongly referred to as Norman) to late 18th Century Georgian, a tapestry of styles typical of most village churches in this country.

The building was reported to be in good condition, with sound foundations, except for the deterioration of some of the external features. The restoration and enlargement scheme submitted provided for the raising of the tower by 14ft 3ins, the roof of the south aisle by 2ft 5ins and the nave roof raised sufficiently to form a taller clerestory with a hammer beam roof. The former chancel and side chapels were to be demolished and replaced with a transept and new chancel, with a Stamford Chapel to the south side and a vestry and organ on the north side. Both aisles were to be extended westward to encase the base of the tower into the body of the church, the whole operation lengthening the building by 27ft 5ins. The external wall of the south aisle, which was out of alignment, was to be rebuilt on a straight line.

While this scheme would have retained much of the original building, the Romanesque and Early English features would have been replaced by ones in the Perpendicular style, so that very little of the original features would have been preserved. This action would have conformed with the Victorian belief, fostered by the Cambridge Camden Society, that no building should be left a collection of parts from different periods but should be rebuilt in one particular style to provide uniformity, even if this involved the destruction of sound features which displayed different architectural styles from the rest of the building. It was only after large public demonstrations that Westminster Abbey and Westminster Hall were saved from these acts of vandalism.

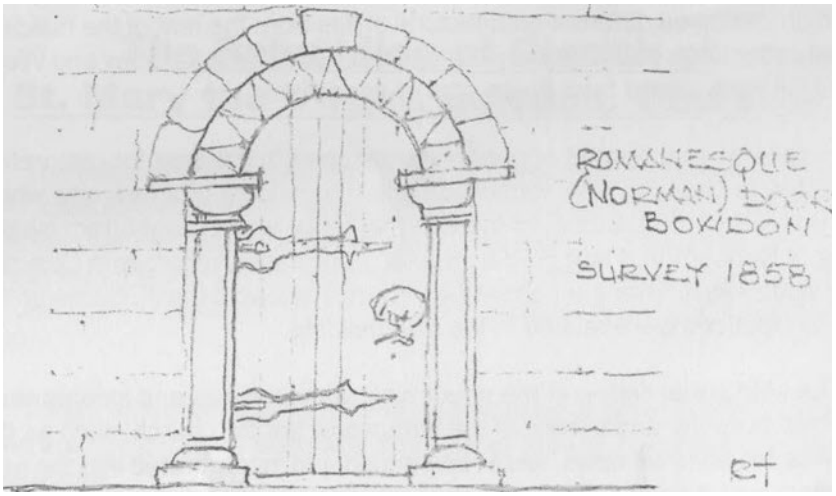
In spite of very heated opposition Breakspear's scheme for restoration was rejected in favour of total demolition and the building of a new one which was completed in 1860. Stone for the external fabric was brought from Hatton Quarries at Runcorn and that for the internal fabric came from Lymm Quarries with salvaged stone from the demolished church reused as infill. Some of the original foundations were reused in the new building.

The Mediaeval ceiling in the south aisle was restored and incorporated into the new building, and certain of the features of the old church, such as the square-headed aisle windows, were reproduced and incorporated into the new design which was basically Perpendicular with idiosyncratic additions. The presentation drawings, now housed in the Cheshire Record Office, are of a very high standard of craftsmanship and colouring and the architects perspective was bought at Sotheby's in 1992 from money left to the church and now hangs in the vestry.

The detailing and workmanship of the new building was very crude compared with that of a genuine Mediaeval church and has not weathered well during the last 144 years.

Ruskin wrote that the life-style and aspirations of mediaeval craftsmen created Gothic architecture and that this could not be recreated in the totally different conditions of the 19th century, each period he held, had its own style of architecture, valid for its own age and that to attempt in one age to recreate the style of another one was bogus and fraudulent.

The new building lost the intimacy of a village church but fitted in well with the ostentation of the developing dormitory town. Its enlarged size on the hill top made it a landmark for many miles to the south especially to travellers on Chester Road. The red sandstone gave the building a dominance over adjoining property, but as the surface of this stone darkened and hardened with age it acquired a dull appearance as though affected by atmospheric pollution. The cleaning of the stonework at the end of the last century might have destroyed the hardened surface to cause deterioration in the not too distant future, and one questions the wisdom of this action.



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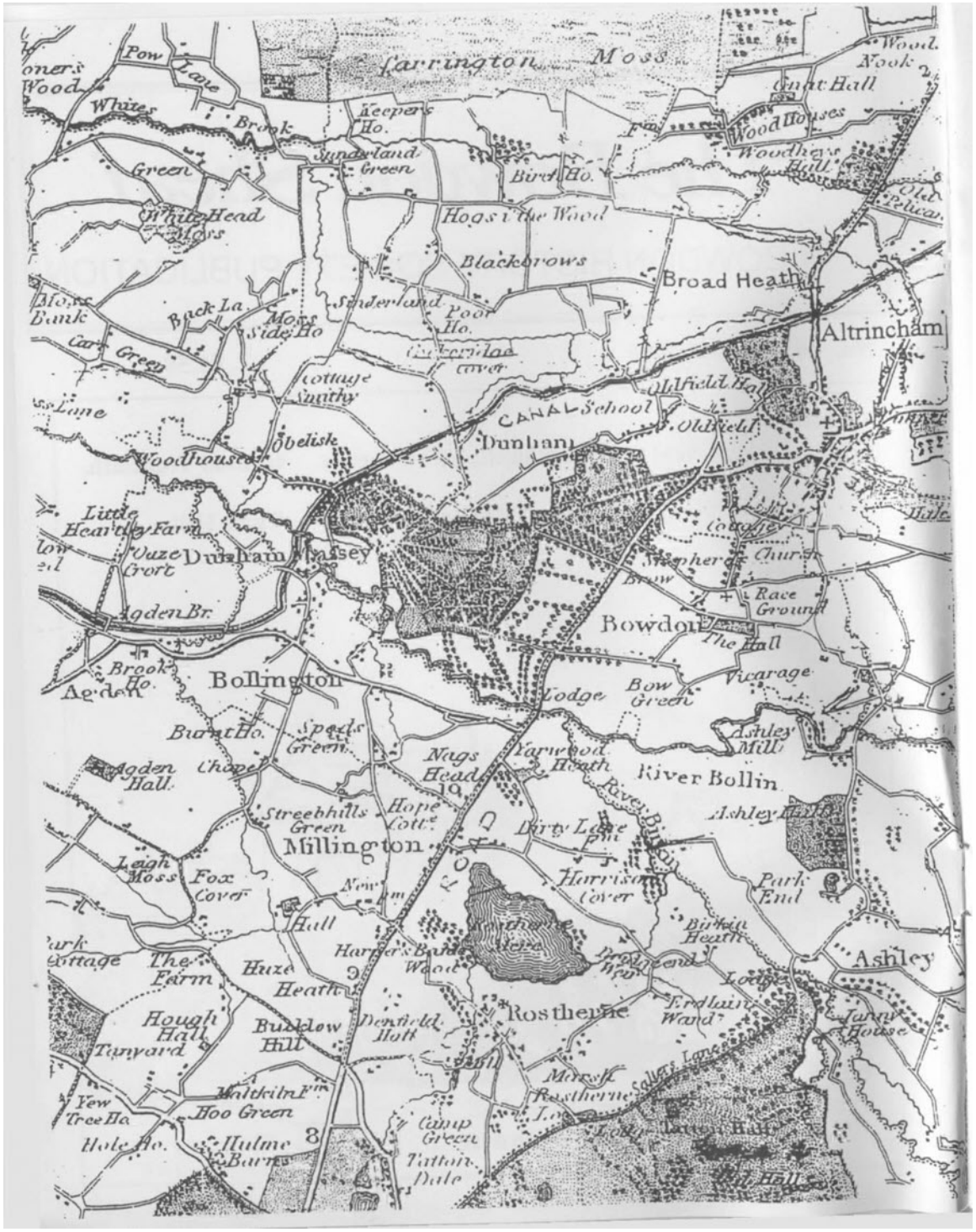
Carrington Moss
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Birch Ho.
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Green
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Hogs i' the Wood
Blackbrows
Broad Heath
Altrincham
Back La.
Moss Side Ho
Sunderland
Poor Ho.
Cottage Smithy
CANAL
School
Oldfield Hall
Oldfield
Dunham
Obelisk
Woodhouses
Little Heartley Farm
Ouze Croft
Dunham Massey
Agden Br.
Brook Ho.
Agden
Bollington
Bowdon
Race Ground
The Hall
Vicarage
Lodge
Bow Green
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Speds Green
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Yew Tree Ho.
Hole Ho.
Hulme Barns
Camp Green
Tatton Dale
Marsh Rostherne
Saliers Lane
Tatton Hall

Local Transport in the 18th Century
by Ronald Trenbath

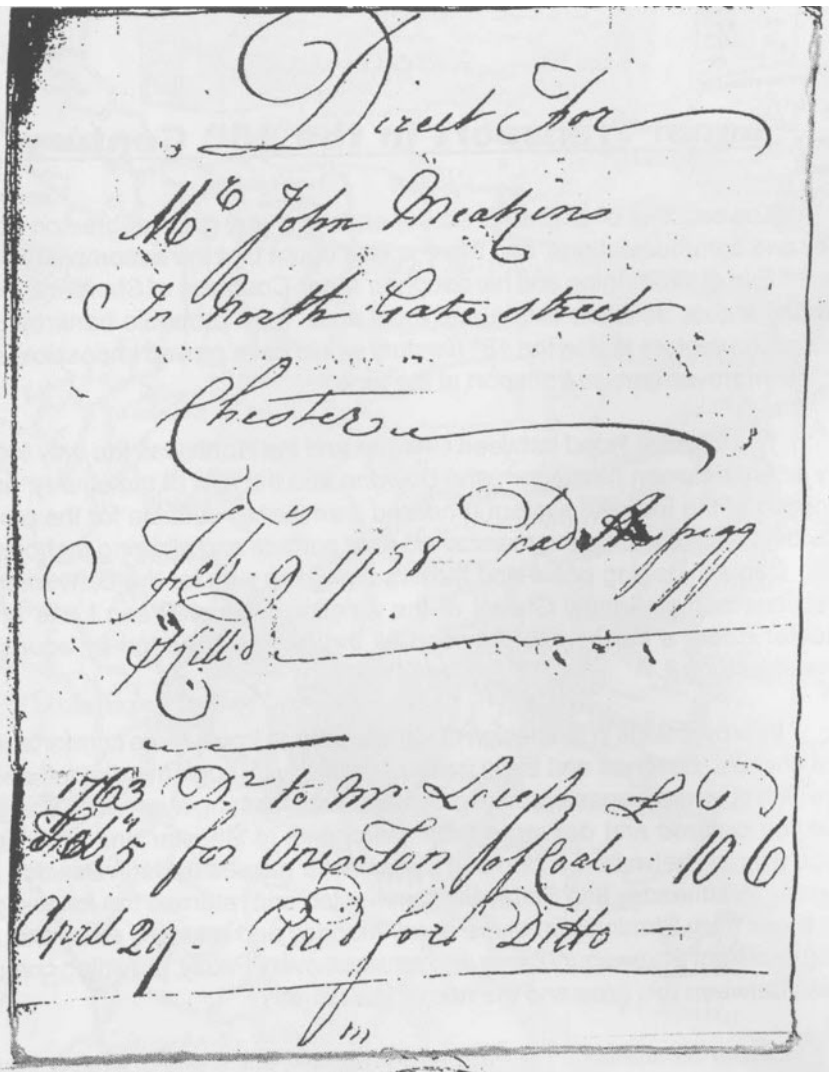
The success of an enterprise depends to a very great degree on accessibility and communications, and there is little doubt that the accomplishments of the 2nd Earl of Warrington and his daughter Mary, Countess of Stamford, in transforming a near destitute estate and local area from probable bankruptcy to a successful venture during the 18th Century would have proved impossible except for the improvements in transport at the time.

The Chester Road between Chester and the North was the only satisfactory artery between Altrincham and Bowdon and the rest of the county, and the adoption of the turnpike system rendered it eminently suitable for the purpose, providing a satisfactory and maintained road surface and allowing for hostelries, livery stables, staging posts and farriers along the way for the convenience of travellers, and at Smithy Green, at the junction of Bow Green Lane and the Chester Road, a blacksmith provided all the facilities needed by equestrians travelling along it.

Improvements in the design of vehicles made travel more comfortable and post-chaises, coaches and traps passed regularly through the district, and carriers with covered wagons provided delivery and passenger services and goods could be ordered and delivered from merchants in Chester and other towns. Stage wagons between London and Manchester passed through Bowdon every Monday, Wednesday and Friday to Manchester, and returned the following day, and those from Birmingham came every Monday and returned every Saturday, and those from Shrewsbury came and returned every Friday, providing communication between this area and the rest of the country.

On the 16th January 1771 Richard Trenbath, at the age of twelve, travelled from Bowdon to London with Mr Heywood, a carrier from Preston who plied between the Swan with Two Nicks, in Lad Lane, London and the north of England. Richard had new clothes for the journey, eleven shilling for expenses and nine shillings and sixpence for the wagon, and was followed later by his father, the local Salt Revenue Officer, on horseback.

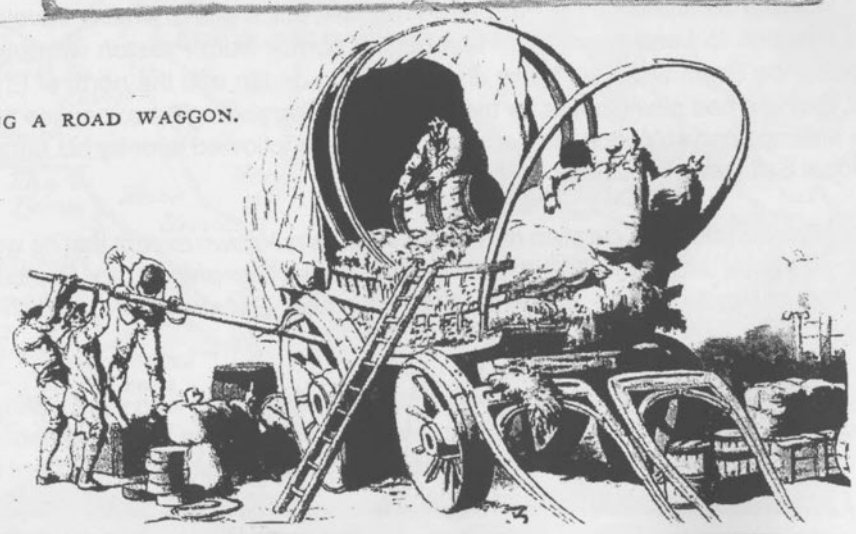
The purpose and duration of Richard's visit is unknown except that he was visiting his great uncle, and that he returned to Cheshire later and married Frances, daughter of Randal Clarke, of Lower Withington near Goostrey, at Northwich in 1789.



Direct For
Mr John Meakins
In North Gate street
Chester
Feby 9 1758 Paid the pigg
Kill'd

1763 Dr to Mr Leigh £ s d
Feby 5 for One Ton of Coals 10 6
April 29 Paid for Ditto

LOADING A ROAD WAGGON.



Richard Set for London
the 16 Jan; 1771. By Wm Heywood
Preston Carrier who
Inns at the Swan with
two Necks in Lad-
Lane in London

would be there the 24

2 pr Stockings	1	10
fore body for a Waistcoat & making	4	6
Shirt	2	8
making		6
Shoes Mending		7
Ginger Bread		2
the Waggon	9	6
Spent		6
Richard for Expences	11	
Fick in Pocket		4
	£ 1	11 7

BELOW: THE SWAN WITH TWO NICKS . LAD LANE



a busy coaching inn. Engraving after Pollard. 1831.

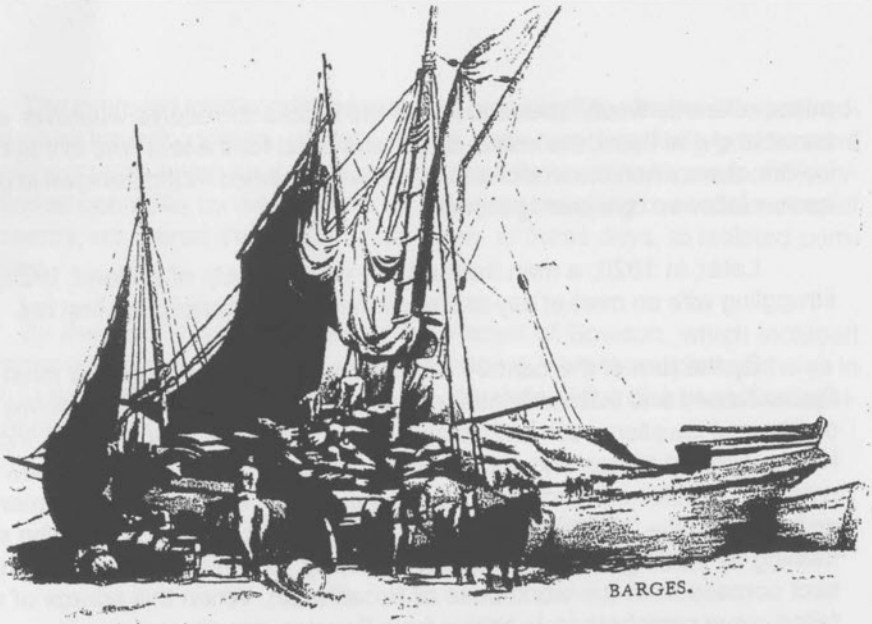
The road did however attract vagrants and malefactors who were often in league with ostlers and innkeepers who provided information on the movement of rich cargoes and wealthy travellers to highway men and robbers. The extent of robbery and violence locally due to the prosperity and expanding development of the district was such that travellers from Knutsford to Altrincham gained permission to travel through Tatton, and approach it from Ashley and Hale, to avoid Bowdon, and it is recorded that William Trenbath always travelled armed with his pistol, powder and shot.

The most infamous highway robbers locally at this time were the Romper Lowes Gang, the merchant-cum-highwayman Higgins of Knutsford and Thomas Brennan known as Timperley Tom who murdered Jacob Pitt of Hale on 30th December 1790, for which he was hanged and his body exhibited on a tree at Bucklow Hill, since which time people have reported seeing his ghost at the Pelican Inn.

The extension of the Bridgewater Canal, at this time through Dunham Massey to Runcorn and eventually the Midlands, provided scope for local commercial expansion and a wharf was constructed near to Dunham Hall for the export of local produce and import of supplies such as coal. It also provided for passenger transport with comfortably fitted out packet barges with facilities to provide food on long distance journeys. The barges passed Altrincham to Lymm, Warrington, Preston Brook and Runcorn at 10 o'clock in the morning, returning at 4 o'clock in the evening every day except Sunday, and on Saturday when boats sailed at 8 o'clock in the morning and returned at 12 o'clock.

A floating chapel at Broadheath catered for the spiritual needs of the canal folk. Members of local families regularly travelled on the canal well into the 19th Century. Improvements in transport together with the economic expansion of the Dunham Massey Estate towards the end of the 18th Century brought increased prosperity to the market town of Altrincham. The building of warehouses and •workshops along the Bridgewater Canal at Broadheath catered for new local industries such as Worsted yarn manufacture and a limited amount of cotton spinning and also local agriculture found a ready market for its produce in the towns of the Industrial North.

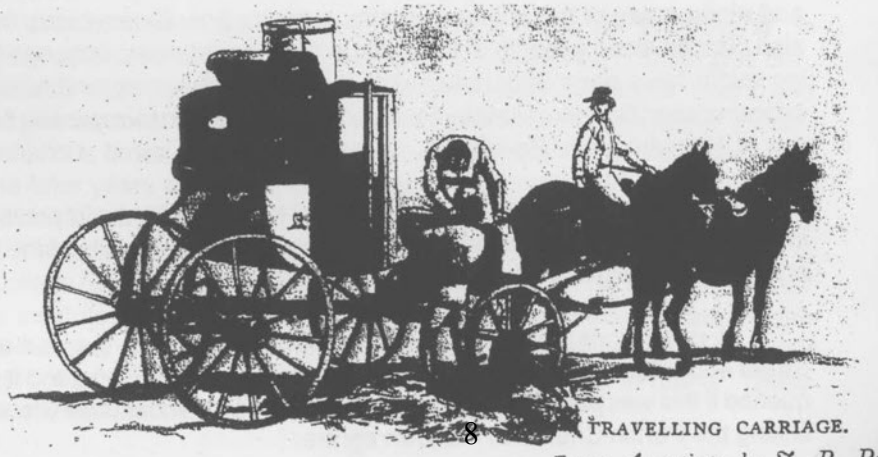
With ever-increasing passenger traffic passing through the town many hostelries opened which were reported to have provided a very high standard of accommodation and cuisine, and De Quincey recorded how, as a very small boy, he had stayed in a hotel overlooking Altrincham marketplace and that, in spite of his tender age, he had been excited by the scene of vibrant activity and thriving trade.



BARGES.



PACK-HORSES.



TRAVELLING CARRIAGE.

From Aquatints by J. B. Py

As well as providing a venue for the butter market, pig market, cattle market, and for itinerant traders to display and sell their wares, the market place was also the social centre where the Town Crier would broadcast local, regional and sometimes national news, and those found guilty, by the magistrates, of minor offences would spend a day in the stocks to receive whatever anyone cared to shy at them, the scolds bridal was used for the last time in this country in Altrincham when the wretched woman was wheeled round the town in a wheel barrow followed by a jeering crowd.

Later, in 1820, a man from Ashley with the help of a friend, brought his struggling wife on market day and auctioned her, accepting the first bid.

By the turn of the century wealthy merchants had replaced most of the timber-framed and thatched cottages with elegant brick-built town houses; silver smiths and jewellers such as Eustace Parker, opened shops; lawyers, including Harris, opened offices and doctors established surgeries. The Renshaw family practised medicine from their house in the Market Place for many generations and well into the 20th century, accepting fee-paying articled pupils who started training by making pills and studying anatomy, for which the doctor would dissect corpses from the workhouse at Broadheath. When this source of supply failed grave snatchers stole bodies from Bowdon churchyard.

In spite of the high level of crime in the district, it was recorded in the British Directory of Trade, Commerce and Manufacture, at the end of the 18th Century, as an area to be "much esteemed and resorted to on account of its cleanliness and pleasant situation" and the number of gentlemen who had villas and country houses in the parish was noted. It also recorded that there were five non-conformist chapels in the parish, but only one Anglican Church prior to the building of St. George's Church as a Chapel of Ease, which might indicate a degree of independence necessary in a successful society to be found locally at that time.

In order to present a pleasing appearance to the district trees were planted along the side of the Chester Road from the Bollin River to the centre of Altrincham and along many of the adjoining roads, such as Bow Green Lane, trees were also planted along a length of the canal in Dunham Massey, although the planting might have been undertaken with a view to enhancing and enlarging the appearance of Dunham Massey Park and Hall rather than to improving the amenities of Altrincham and Bowdon.

A traveller in the 18th Century could not have failed to be impressed by his initial views on entering the district from either direction, in spite of the toll gates and possible danger of attack.

A prestigious and elegant estate office was built at the end of Market Street and villas sited along Bowdon Road and Normans Place, and it might be queried if this was part of a never-completed plan for a linear urban development linking the Parish Church to the town centre.

The improved road conditions provided better facilities for the itinerant traders, such as travelling tinkers, peddlers, tailors, chair-menders, knife-grinders and rat-catchers upon whom rural communities relied for household goods and services and whose visits, by virtue of their experiences travelling over wider areas of the country, countered the insularity common in those days to isolated communities.

By the end of the 18th Century the Parish of Bowdon, which included Altrincham and Dunham Massey, was a flourishing, vibrant and pleasant area in which to live and work, in comparison with the state of the district at the beginning of the century.

Sir William Boyd Dawkins
by Chris Hill

Sir William Boyd Dawkins, B.A., M.A., D.Sc., FRS, FSA, FGS, (1837- 1929), famous geologist, paleontologist and antiquary. Born at Buttlington vicarage, near Welshpool, Montgomeryshire, Dec. 26th., 1837, only son of Revd Richard and Mary Ann, nee Youngman; died 15th. January, 1929, aged 91. He was educated at Rossall (an Anglican public school near Fleetwood) and Jesus College, a predominately Welsh college at Oxford, 1854-60, where he gained a 2nd. class degree in Classics and a 1st. in natural sciences. He was diverted to geology by the inspiring personality of Prof. Phillips at a time when natural sciences were not popular.

Sir William Boyd Dawkins, lived for some years at "Woodhurst" in Fallowfield, but moved to Bowdon, to Richmond Lodge, No.1, Richmond Road, sometime after 1916, until his death. He earned himself the title of 'Grand Old Man', and was known throughout the world as an eminent geologist and authority on prehistoric times. He lived over sixty years in the Manchester area and during the later years of his life, carried on his scientific work at his Bowdon home. He came to Manchester when thirty one, and for thirty six years after that, acted as a science lecturer at the Manchester Museum in Peter Street, and at Owens College (which afterwards became Manchester University). "The 'popular lectures' which he instituted justified their title; they aroused great interest among the industrial masses of the city and his cogent style, his enthusiasm in his work and his gift of succinct illustration, imparted rare knowledge to many." These lectures were free and held on weekend afternoons.

An outstanding achievement was his investigation of the prehistoric age. As an undergraduate, in 1859, he discovered the oldest cave in Great Britain (Wookey Hole) near Wells, with its hyena den and evidence of human occupation, from which he reached conclusions about the human and animal species living in these islands before the dawn of civilization. These threw him into sharp controversies with the anthropologists of the time, a situation he appeared to relish with its attendant publicity in the press. In 1861, he became the first recipient of the Burdett-Coutts scholarship, founded at Oxford to promote studies in geology.

His two most widely known books are: "Cave Hunting: Researches on the Evidence of Caves respecting the Early Inhabitants of Europe" (1874), which was an attempt to gather together the growing mass of material on cave exploration, from all over Europe, into one volume; and "Early Man in Britain and his place in the Tertiary Period" (1880), which was written as a companion work to the distinguished historian, John Richard Green's "History of the English Peoples". The two men were college friends, and their intention in writing the books was that each should complement the other. He also collaborated with W. Ayshford Sandford on "British Pleistocene Mammalia", issued in parts 1866-72.

After the 1870's. he was drawn towards applied, or 'engineering' geology.

He travelled extensively and had various adventures. In Australia, he outwitted a gang of swindlers who hoped to obtain £120,000 in respect of an alleged deposit of kerosene shale in which they had interested a body of Manchester speculators. The professor was sent out as a consulting engineer, to report on the worth of the 'find'. He discovered that the whole thing was a fake, that the 'vendors' were a clique of 'desperadoes' and did not in fact own the property of which they were seeking to dispose. He declined a bribe of £8,000 which they offered him to allow the deal to be completed. He bore himself with such easy self-reliance that he safely parted company with them. He also went to Nevada during the silver boom, and had a chance of buying a mine where the ore held out great promise, for $350, but his work at home had a firmer hold on him, and he gave no attention to 'get-rich-quick' propositions.

From 1861 to 1869 (before he started at Manchester), he became a member of the Geological Survey of Great Britain at Southampton, during which time (eight years), he was occupied with the mapping of the Wealdon and associated formations in Kent and the Thames Valley. He became interested in the rich mammalian contents of the cave-earths and gravels. For his work on Pleistocene Mammalia, Dawkins was elected in 1867, at the early age of 28, to the Fellowship of the Royal Society.

In 1872, he came to Manchester at the request of Professor Huxley (with whom he had worked as a junior colleague on the Geological Survey at the Royal School of Mines in Jermyn Street, London), to become curator of the Manchester Museum in Peter Street, where he was to reorganize the city's Natural History collection which had fallen into desuetude and consequently was shunned by the public and by students. Two years later, in Oct. 1874, he was the first to be elected to the Chair of Geology at Owens College, a position he held until 1908, after which he acted as an advisor to the Museum which had joined the University. He proved to be an attractive and inspiring teacher, supplementing the college lectures by practical demonstrations in the field. His summer courses of field-excursions were open to others besides his ordinary students and thus attracted many amateurs who were members of local societies. Between 1875-8, he carried out further excavations at Creswell Crags near Worksop.

In 1880, he gave the Lowell Lectures in Boston. In 1882, he was elected honorary fellow of his old college, and also elected President of the Anthropological Section of the British Association. This same year, the Channel Tunnel Committee employed him, when he made a special survey of both coasts discovering the Dover coalfield (1890), as a result of his investigations. He also took part in the first boring operations. The next year he laid down the line for a tunnel under the Humber. He advised on the water supply to many places, including Hull, Dover, Eastbourne, Brighton, Worthing, Croydon, etc. "He acted as consultant to many private and Parliamentary bodies with respect to water supplied from chalk strata in the London area, and was engaged more than any other geologist of his day, as an expert witness in court cases" (Manchester Guardian, 16 Jan., 1929). Apart from Australia, he was consulted by diamond mining firms in South Africa and in Italy about the Carrara marble quarries. Later, in 1888, he became President of the Geological Section of the British Association, while in 1889, his services to Geology were recognised by the Geographical Society of London, with the Lyell Medal. In 1892 he supported efforts to obtain compensation for those who suffered the effects of subsidence due to brine pumping in the Northwich area. He was invited to join various societies in America and the Continent as an honorary member and was an Hon. Professor of Geology and Palaeontology at Victoria University, and received an Hon. Degree of D.Sc. at Manchester. Dawkins published many scientific papers.

He retired from his professorship in 1908, after 36 years work. He was a member of the Athenaeum Club in London, and his recreational hobbies were fishing and gardening. In 1918, the Geological Society of London awarded him their Prestwich medal. In 1919, the honour of Knighthood was conferred on him. Sir William married twice, on the second, occasion to Mrs. Mary Lilian Congreve, widow of Hubert Congreve, in May 1922. He had one daughter Ella (d 1969), by his first marriage which was in 1866, to Miss Frances Evans, nee Poole. She was the daughter of a clerk in the Admiralty and she died in 1921.

His mind was quite unaffected by age and he wrote many articles and essays, as well as books. On his 90th birthday, he said "One's work ought to be finished after 90 years, but I suspect I am rather a slow dog, for I still find plenty to do." In 1908, he gave a forty minute lecture on cave exploration in Derbyshire without referring to any notes. During this same year, he presented a collection of drawings and wall paintings, illustrating the dawn of art, to the Manchester City Art Gallery and this was exhibited for two months during that summer. Most of the earliest drawings were from caves in the South of France. When he was 91, he insisted on travelling to London to propose a toast at the Geological Society dinner. Valuable furniture and cloisonné enamels were also included in the gift. He bequeathed his books and many papers to Buxton where a Boyd Dawkins room was established in the Museum to house the collection. There is a catalogue of his papers in the Rylands Library Bulletin 74(1992), 3-36. His speleological papers are at Oxford University Museum. On his death he left just over £24,698. His remains were cremated at Manchester Crematorium. His wife, Lady Dawkins, must have found the Lodge too much for her to manage on her own, so she moved next door to No.4 Richmond Hill, (presumably letting the bigger house), and it was there, in her 90th. year, that the coroner (four days later), found she had had the misfortune to be 'poisoned by Coal Gas, accidentally inhaled', on 25th. April, 1954.

When Manchester celebrated the 75th. Anniversary of the granting of the Charter in March 1908, he wrote a special message for the Evening Chronicle on the back of two envelopes, in which he drew attention to the importance of the city's open spaces and parks as a relief from the grime-covered buildings, and hoped that in another hundred years, the city would be smoke free.

Although his international reputation was based largely on his researches into the story of pre-historic man, be is also remembered as a popular science lecturer, author, consulting engineer, traveller, discoverer, and speaker; so Manchester and Bowdon may well be proud to have had so distinguished a citizen and resident, if only for a short while.

Refs.

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My thanks to Mrs. Cox for the advice and information she provided.

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COTTAGES AT BOWGREEN

ISSN-0265-816X

A Plea for The Preservation of Bowdon Church

under the name of T. Fowler & Sons, St. Ann's Square, Manchester 1856.

I have heard that it is in contemplation among certain persons to take down Bowdon Church, and to erect a new building upon its site.

I write in the hope of staying the hand of the destroyer. When I confess that I am not an owner of land in the neighbourhood, and am not even an inhabitant of the parish, I dare say many will think that I have little right to interfere.

But though neither a landowner nor a parishioner, I have, in common with all, an interest in the preservation of beautiful objects, and in addition together with thousands of persons who, though no longer resident in the neighbourhood, still look back with affection to Bowdon as the home of their ancestors, have a right to demand that the Church should be preserved, fraught as it is to us with so many and varied associations.

Now, in the first place, Bowdon Church is not an ugly object. Far from being so, it has always had the reputation of being a very beautiful one. It is not in the way. Of course if a new street were contemplated it would be absurd in this utilitarian age to ask that a mere Church should be an impediment to the improvement; but fortunately the old footpaths have not yet grown too old for modern use.

The building is in want of repair, and very probably it will cost as much to effect the repairs in a proper manner as to erect a new Church. The good people who attended the meeting the other day, viewing the thing in much the same light they would have regarded the purchase of a new or old lamp, very possibly thought, with Aladdin's wife, that the new article would be better worth the money.

> O money, money! must we sacrifice everything at your shrine!

Is there not, also, another motive lurking at the bottom of this scheme of destruction? I fear that the magnates of Bowdon are dissatisfied with their plain, unadorned Church, and have come to the conclusion that it is not a building in unison with their brick and stuccoed villas.

This is true enough, but it is the brick and stuccoed villas that are at fault, not the Church. It remains in its severe simplicity the redeeming point in the landscape - a standing protection against the bad taste and pretence which surround it - and I do not see the wisdom of pulling it down, so as to secure uniformity in ugliness.

For, after all, this boasted architecture of Bowdon is ugly. To many, indeed, all these fine mansions - with lofty porches and diminutive gardens - are an eyesore, and they look back with regret to the time when Bowdon was the quiet spot it used to be, when no huge railway poured its human stream upon it, and when from the churchyard scarcely a house could be seen, to mar the beauty of nature.

Now such persons are not landowners, and the latter doubtless view the matter differently, and I am not going to be so foolish as to complain that the Manchester people have had the wisdom to run away from the smoke of their city, though their invasion may not have had a tendency to refine the country.

But I do think that a greater degree of taste might have been exercised in their architecture - that the buildings might have been less huddled together - at all events, we have a right to say, hold - when civilisation puts its sacrilegious hand upon our beautiful Church.

Let the tradesmen of Manchester build how and where they like, so that they leave our Church and churchyard untouched.

Heaven knows we have little enough of antiquity left. Do let us preserve the few farmhouses and old Churches which prove we are not entirely of yesterday.

I do not know whether the antiquity of Bowdon Church is not the great argument with some people for pulling it down. It is one of the signs of this utilitarian age to speak and think cooly and contemptuously of antiquity.

People never seem to consider that when our ancestors raised these buildings, which in their Gothic strength, in spite of storm and tempest, rebellion and Puritanism, have descended to us, they did so with the intention that they should endure.

But we seem to think that we have a complete ownership over the works of former days and may either preserve or destroy as suits our caprice. The idea never strikes us that possibly we have no right wantonly to destroy the works of others, that a duty may, perhaps, rest upon us religiously to guard them.

The creed of modern times is a belief in self and the present, which places all former ages under a cloud, and attaches everything excellent and rational to the nineteenth century only.

We can understand that it would be a folly, and even a crime, to alter the reading of Shakespeare, to destroy a play, to add a scene, or toy with the things made by such a mind, but we should laugh at the idea of crime in connection with the demolition, or mutilation of an old Church, or a picturesque farmhouse. Yet the fraud seems much the same in the one case as the other.

No one can be more anxious than I that the Church should be properly repaired but I do hope that the repairs will not be carried out in the spirit which we see sometimes.

There is among some people an innate desire to alter what is beautiful: - it is a pity that this desire leaves unscathed what is ugly. If All Saints' Church is burned down you find it restored, brick by brick, with scrupulous accuracy, but how often if the object be beautiful are innovations and wanton additions introduced which destroy its character altogether.

I trust that every reparation in Bowdon Church will be in unison with the old building; let us have no patch-work monstrosity. Alter the architecture, and you spoil it. You may make it more beautiful, perhaps, in an architectural point of view, but we shall be losers nevertheless.

What is beauty? Your St. Margaret's is an exquisite building, and reflects great credit upon the architect, and upon the persons who prompted him to his noble work. It is a building worthy of the high purpose for which it was intended.

It will be an object of admiration when this generation has passed away and is crumbling in dust, and our children will point to it to show that good taste had not in the 19th Century entirely died away in Cheshire, whatever might be the case in the neighbouring counties.

But beautiful as St. Margaret's is, and though the eye wanders with pleasure over the fluted columns, the painted windows, and the vaulted roof, there is one thing wanting - age. It is modern.

There is no association connected with it. No fond imagination can fill the aisle with the creatures of the past - the beings to whom we ourselves owe our being - no grey-headed grandsire in his yeoman pride, ever stood in this pew, no stately dame ever leant on that alter rail, or gazed through yonder pane. All is present and new - the past an empty blank.

Now Bowdon Church is a different place altogether. It may not be carved so richly, or formed so artistically, but it has that venerable beauty which no artist, save time, can give.

For more than eight hundred years has it looked down upon that fair valley of Cheshire. The ownership of neighbouring lands has changed hands. The Masseys, the Fittons, the Booths are gone, yet still the old Church, which they endowed and prayed in, and which they, at least, regarded as the embodiment of everything that was beautiful and holy, rears its walls to heaven.

Can imagination do nothing here? There is scarcely a farmer or yeoman for twenty miles round who has not some family tradition connected with Bowdon Church.

Even the stranger cannot fail to be impressed, as he gazes upon a building so old and reverend, and to many there is not an arch, or a window, which does not call up solemn and tender memories.

Why should we destroy this treasure house of beautiful association? Let it not be taken down. On the contrary, let it be restored to its old glory by a workman capable of feeling worthily the holiness and importance of his task; let the modern pews give place to the old benches; take down the unseemly gallery; remove from the walls the tawdry paint and whitewash. Then indeed, gentlemen of Bowdon, you will have done your duty, and will be worthy of much honour.

If the Church be insufficient to accommodate the congregation, why not erect an additional Church? If you choose, let both Churches be under the same vicar. Surely some proper and convenient site might easily be procured.

There erect a second St. Margaret's, there build a church which will be worthy of being trodden by the feet of our suburban magnates; leave Bowdon Church, in its plain and holy simplicity, for the poor gentlemen, yeomen and farmers, who look upon it with a respect, perhaps romantic and foolish, but which has grown with their years and increased with their stature, where hearts would be well-nigh broken if it were taken down or so altered and adorned as to lose its present character.

Ages ago, in that venerable building, their ancestors were carried to the font, worshipped, were married, and now rest from their labours beneath its aisle, or in the churchyard outside.

And when they themselves pass from life they had hoped, and hope still, to lie beside their fathers, beneath the shadow of that hoary pile which has been their spiritual home in life.

It has never crossed their fancy that the old tower could possibly be taken down, or that those bells would be silenced to which they have listened with emotion ever since childhood, whose chimes may be pleasant music, and nothing more, to the strangers who have migrated to the district and built themselves fine mansions, but speak a very different language - a language full of meaning - to those whose sires held the land upon which these fine mansions stand.

I trust that those in whose hands the fate of Bowdon Church rests will think well before they act.

I do not appeal to men who would gladly, if they had the power, pull down Westminster Abbey, and replace our Manchester Cathedral by some light and airy structure, better suited to this light and airy age.

I commit the cause of Bowdon Church to those who do not think it mere romance to handle with gentleness and reverence the works of the dead. If they exert themselves Bowdon Church may be saved, and I am satisfied that the day will come when they will feel proud that they have preserved this glorious relic of the past from falling a victim to modern Vandalism.

Editorial Note
Many readers will consider that the observations expressed in this plea, on the bad taste and pretensions of developers in Bowdon, at that time, could be applied to current developments today.

Your Dutiful Son: A Sketch of William Grey
by Stephen Matthews

The Grey family contained many interesting and colourful members, and not the least of them was the Rev. William Grey (1819—1872), the father of the ninth Earl of Stamford. His life was a mixture of the exciting and routine for his career took him from England to Bermuda and to Newfoundland where his son was born, and back again to the relative obscurity of clerical England. His life is set out in a brief biography in the catalogue of the Dunham collection in the John Rylands library, from which these biographical details are taken and where more intimate glimpses of him can be found in a number of letters which he wrote either to his own or his wife's family. Those to his father were always signed as from 'your dutiful son', which is what he wanted to be.

William was born in 1819, the second son of the Rev. Harry Grey, who was then Vicar of Knutsford in Cheshire. His strong evangelical convictions did not suit some of his congregation and after he had withdrawn for a prolonged absence, opposition to his return lead to his final resignation in 1824. He later lived around Bristol and from 1847 in Torquay. After taking his degree at Oxford, William was ordained in 1843 and after two spells as a curate in Wiltshire, he was appointed chaplain to the Bishop of Newfoundland. After a brief visit to the diocese, he married Harriet, daughter of the Rev. Francis Henry White, who was related to the Gilbert White of Selbourne. They had one child, the future ninth Earl, born in Newfoundland in 1850 where William had become Principal of St. John's Theo- logical College, now the Newfoundland Memorial University. His stay was shorter than it should perhaps have been but Harriet could not cope with the climate and they were forced to return to England. To judge by his letters he was probably not too unhappy to return, though disappointed not to have done his duty as he would have wished.

In this short piece I will pass over his adventures in England, but he continued to write long letters to his father when he was abroad. Unlike many Victorian gentlemen, William was a fair artist, having the ability not only to describe a landscape in words but to draw the picture as well. Some of his letters contain little pictures, illustrating landscape and buildings in Newfoundland, which is what we will consider in this article.[1] They are not finished works but simply uncoloured ink sketches either in the body of the letter or on a blank page at the end. William inserted them because 'I know that you are fond of illustrated letters, so I have given on the other side a view of the present church & schoolroom, with the blacksmith's house, stable and forge as seen from our bedroom window. You see we have some noble hills, although what is shown in the sketch is nor so high by 300 feet or so of others close by'. On the last page of the letter was the sketch, figure 1 below, inscribed 'Portugal Church from the Parsonage'[2]. At the end he included a picture of his Allington Rectory from the south east (figure 2).

The fisheries caught his eye and he not only wrote a description of the fishermen's stages, but in the middle of the text inserted two little sketches (9 cm across) to make clear what he meant.

These stages are made of the wood of the country - they are built as piles driven into the bank, so that the stages 'head' is always well beyond low water mark. At a distance they look like large bathing machines when seen in front. At the stage head one or two ladders made of nailing long sticks across the supporting posts, where the fishermen get up and down from their boats.

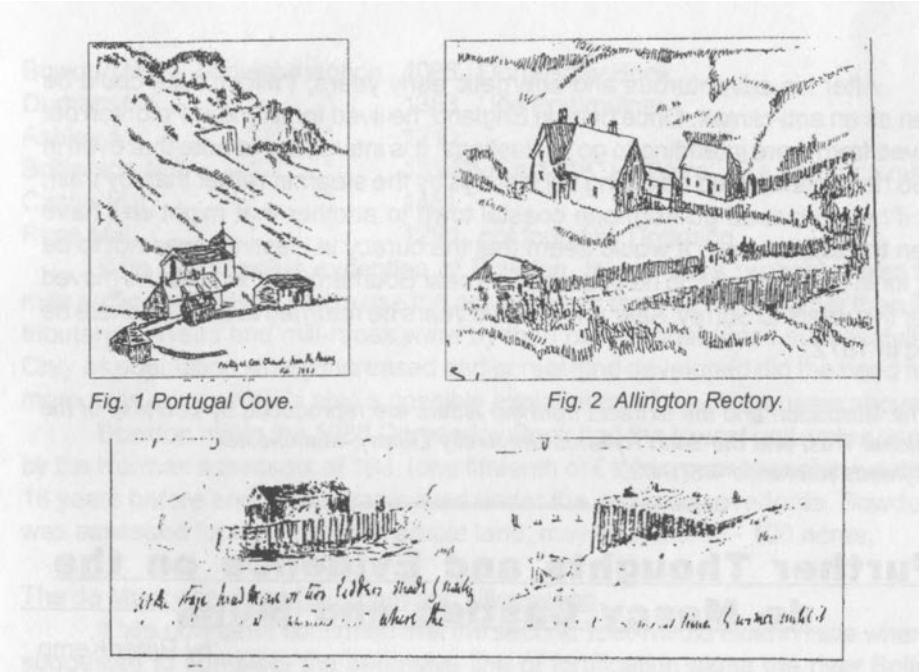

Fig. 1 Portugal Cove.

Fig. 2 Allington Rectory.

Figure 3, fishermens' stage (left) and flake (right).

Domestic life and scenery came together in one long letter, unfortunately too lengthy to quote when the couple were getting their house ready and visiting the neighbours, showing off baby. William was at times irked by what must be the bane of every junior clergyman's life, the heavy hand of a rather overbearing bishop: 'I fear now that we shall not get to Portugal Cove until the beginning of next summer - for I see that it is not the Bishop's wish, & it is scarcely my [lot] to leave this before the Bishop's return' (18 Dec. 1850). In the event, Harriet's health suffered - or was that the excuse? - and the family returned to England and a series of curacies in the south of England.

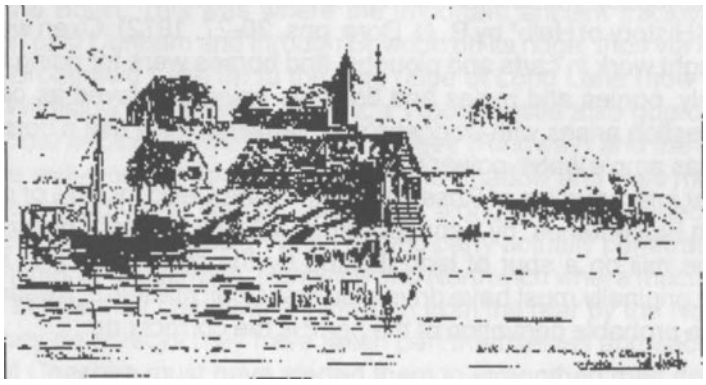

Figure 4, 'Battle Harbour, Parsonage and Church, Labrador. Church consecrated July 5th1857.. "and on the same day the Bishop gave confirmation to five Esquimaux the first fruits of their efforts."

After his adventurous and energetic early years, William's life could be seen as an anti-climax. Once back in England, he lived for a time in Paignton but moved from there intending to go to Hastings. It is interesting to note that even in 1855 he contemplated travelling to Hastings by the steamer rather than by train, but if he did indeed go from one coastal town to another that might well have been the easiest way. It would seem that the curacy in Hastings was not to be his, for in December 1855 he obtained one near Bournemouth, whence he moved after five years to Surrey. After another five years he returned to Exeter, where he died in 1872.

1 The illustration and the extracts from the letters are reproduced by courtesy of the National Trust and the John Rylands University Library, Manchester.
2 Rylands reference EGR4/6/1/4/33.

Further Thoughts and Evidence on the de Mascy Castles and Mills
by Peter Kemp

Ross Mill, Hale

Due to a misreading, in the publication of the original article, the alternative the alternative spelling of Ross appeared as Passe instead of Rasse in the "Bowdon Sheaf No. 21 of October, 2001 and in the subsequent article in No. 45 of October 2005. We apologise for this error. [corrected in this version].

The name Ross or Rasse has been given a possible interpretation by some as a 'flat area' and by Prof. J. McN. Dodgson in his authoritative work "The Place names of Cheshire" as 'horse'. But it seems very doubtful that such a prized animal would have been used instead of, say, an ox in the mundane task of milling as early as 1291, the date of the first-known record of the mill when the then Hamo de Mascy granted it free from toll with lands in Hale to Jurdan de Davenport. ("History of Hale" by R. N. Dore, pps. 20-27, 1972). Oxen were then used for draught work in carts and ploughs, and horses were for riding in battle and travel only, ponies and mules and donkeys being employed as pack animals. The question arises with Dodgson's explanation "Why use a horse when the location has ample water-power?"

Another interpretation of Ross derives from the Celtic for a hill or promontory ("English Placenames" by Kenneth Cameron) which exactly describes the location of the mill on a spur of land flanked by the river Bollin and the little stream which originally must have driven the first small mill there. Readers may agree that this probable derivation of the name is the correct one.

Notes on the other Barony mills

The following list drawn from Dodgson's "Placenames of Cheshire" Part II reveals the earliest mention of the Barony mills:-

Bowdon Mill	earliest mention	1086, Domesday Book
Dunham Mill	" "	1353 'lee Poolmulne'
Ashley Mill	" "	1210
Bollington Mill	" "	1354 but in 1318 'Le Were'. (? a weir for a mill)
Castle Mill.	" "	1481
Ross Mill	" "	1291, not found by Dodgson

With the possible exception of Bowdon, these dates probably refer to mills sufficiently developed to use the actual flow of the river Bollin rather than its tributaries. Weirs and mill-races were by then being constructed successfully. Only as population slowly increased and cereal land developed did the need for more mills arise which is also a possible explanation of the dates given above.

Bowdon Mill in the 1086 Domesday Book had the lowest unit value used by the Norman assessors of 16d. (one fifteenth of £1) in a poor township wasted 16 years before and still not recovered under the de Mascy overlords. Bowdon was assessed for only 1 hide of arable land, maybe some 60-100 acres.

The de Mascy castles of Dunham and Ullerswood

It has now been confirmed that the second Toot-hill did exist in Hale where suggested to complete the defensive line of fortification along the river Bollin between the two castles (see" Bowdon Sheaf" No.45, October 2005). Even as late as the 1838 Tithe Award and Map for Hale, two fields, No. 369 Toot Hill and No. 371 Higher Toot Hill indicate the location of the defensive look-out point, still open farm-land at that time. ("The Placenames of Cheshire Part. II by J. McN. Dodgson, p. 26).

The major castle of Dunham on Watch Hill was most probably built by the first Hamo de Mascy soon after his arrival in his new domain in 1070, but when the minor castle of Ullerswood was built is not yet known. It could have been erected later to protect the vulnerable corner (or nook) of de Mascy territory at the far end of Hale (now Hale Barns) where Oversley (Wulfric's clearing) Ford crossed the Bollin. This was where the important ancient trackway ran from Warburton past Dunham and through Bowdon on its ridge, then via Peel Causeway and Broomfield Lane on to the long ridge of Long Lane (now Hale Road) towards Wilmslow. Ullerswood (Wulfric's Wood) castle also guarded the deer and wild boar enclosure of Ringhaie or Ringey (Ringway) and the good arable land of the well-wooded ridge bounded by the Shadow and Hale mosses to the north. Ullerswood castle was probably built, along with the connecting toot-hill posts about 1150 when a bold Welsh raiding party actually penetrated as far as the salt wiches of Middlewich, Nantwich and Northwich where much destruction occurred before their complete annihilation from the rear by the Normans. The ever-military de Mascys may have taken part themselves and such deep penetration of Cheshire must have alerted them to strengthen their defences only some nine miles further on from Northwich.

Both castles are recorded in the Chronicle of 1173 when the barons under the Earl of Chester rebelled against Henry II, but It does not say whether they were attacked or destroyed at that time. Both castles would have been in clear view from the south, if not from the north as well, since the whole length of the Bollin, running as it did through de Mascy lands on both sides, from the Warburton boundary to Ullerswood would have been cleared of trees to bow-shot range some 2-300 yards across the river. The de Mascys were known at one time to have had five knights in their retinue - perhaps Ullerswood castle had one of those knights in command of the men-at-arms and bowmen manning that important outpost.

It would seem that the de Mascys felt confident that their other barony boundaries were safely guarded by trusted Norman friends and relations. William FitzNigel, Constable of Chester and Baron of Halton, as senior baron of Cheshire, had been granted tenancy of 30 or so manors by the Earl of Chester including Sale and Ashton-on-Mersey and half the manor of Warburton (the other half went to FitzNigel's seneschal Odard de Dutton); Hamo de Mascy's young nephew Hamo de Carenton held Carrington and Partington. Thus the northern county boundary along the river Mersey with what was to become Lancashire was secured by those Norman compatriots of the de Mascys as well as by the formidable (in those days) barrier of the wide Mersey marshlands.

Housing in Bowdon in 1863
by Stephen Matthews

From the middle of the nineteenth century Surveyors of Taxes (the predecessors of the modern Inspectors) were required to provide statistical reports for the Commissioners in Somerset House, about the tax yield and assessable values of their districts. Their district reports were amalgamated to provide national statistics and the original returns were not preserved, so that it is generally impossible to arrive at the underlying material. It is therefore only rarely that we can recover the details for individual localities.

By chance a bundle of about 250 Inland Revenue circulars has been preserved in an archive which belonged to a Mr Henzell. who ended his career as the Surveyor for Stockport and an additional part of north Cheshire, in effect, Bucklow Hundred. They run, with a few gaps, from 1839 until 1866, not long before he retired shortly after 1870. He glued the circulars and instructions that he received into a minute book and whilst this makes interesting reading for the student of administration, more valuably, he often wrote a copy of his report on either the back of the circular itself or on additional sheets which he glued in beside it. These reports provide useful, though limited, economic data for Stockport and the surrounding countryside in those years.

One particular request, made on the 16th November 1863, was for a report, township by township, of the number of houses chargeable to Income Tax.

(implicitly under Schedule A), split into four value bands up to £20, with the numbers and values of houses in each band. To remind those with shorter memories, Schedule A created a notional value for the occupation of property which was then added to and assessed upon the occupier. Mr Henzell replied on the 16th December and inserted a copy of his schedule in the minute book after the circular. His report covers sixty townships in all, in alphabetical order but for this note I have extracted the figures for Bowdon and its next door neighbours, Altrincham and Hale. The reason for the enquiry was probably Parliamentary reform, which was a major concern in the 1860s, and which led to the issue of a number of reports almost certainly based upon figures produced by the Revenue. Having examined them, I cannot see any which adopted this particular breakdown of values and it is most likely that the detailed figures provided were re-grouped as the various reports were prepared. A similar request was made in 1865, but on that occasion Mr Henzell did not keep a copy of his reply.

Mr Henzell has thus given us an idea of the pattern of housing in Bowdon and the surrounding area in the abstract. We know how many houses there were in each of these value bands, but that does not enable us to under- stand what sort of houses they were. For that we can turn to the Rating valuation lists, for the Schedule A assessments and the Poor Rates used the same values, which were fixed by Union Assessment Boards We also have a scattering of appeals against the proposed valuations. The figures for Bowdon, with Altrincham and Hale for comparison, are set out in the table below:

	Under £5		£5-£10		£10-£15		£15-£20		TOTALS	
PLACE	No:	Value	No:	Value	No:	Value	No:	Value	No:	Value
Bowdon	4	16	66	447	15	189	8	132	93	784
	4.3	2	70.9	57	16.1	24.7	8.6	16.8		8.4
Altrincham	90	340	680	4860	154	1774	79	1316	1003	8290
	8.9	4.1	67.7	58.6	15.3	21.3	7.8	15.8		8.2
Hale	5	18	60	405	29	353	17	285	111	1061
	4.5	1.6	54	38.1	26.1	33.2	15.3	26.8		9.1

What I have done is set out in the top line for each place the number of properties in the particular value band and in the lower line the percentage that represents out of the total, both for number and value. Thus, 4 x 100/93=4.3%. Those four houses represented 4.3% of the total number but only 2% of the total.

value (16 x 100/784). By comparison. Altrincham had double the percentage of the poorest houses but they represented 4.1% of the total value. Hale had much the same profile as Bowdon but had more property at the better end of this market.

What sort of properties were these? The Altrincham Valuation lists and appeals against valuations give us a fair indication, for the lists served as the basis for both the Poor Rate arid Schedule A. From an appeal meeting in 1863 we learn that in Bowdon, Samuel Pimlott succeeded in obtaining a reduction in his premises in Langham Road, as 'Gardener, Fruiterer and Shopkeeper' from the proposed £13 down to £10. Towards the bottom of Stamford Road, Mrs Whitehead had lesser success, but still managed to have the value of her house at Sunnybank reduced from £20 to £19 10s 6d. The valuation lists themselves give us more comparisons: in Altrincham, for example, cottages in Victoria Street ranged from £3 16s 0d to £5 12s 0d. A railway porter occupied a cottage in Stamford Road (Altrincham) worth £5 12s 0d whilst Susan Goulden's house in Ashley Road was worth £12 16s 0d.

More prestigious houses existed: a solicitors clerk, Mark Pearson's, house in Stamford Road was worth £24 whilst John Mort, actuary to the Savings Bank, lived in one worth £38 8s 0d. From these it is likely that the threshold for 'gentlemen's property' lay around the £20 level, which was why that figure was picked by the Parliamentary enquiry. What we can see from the figures is the growth of housing for the artisans and tradesmen next down the social order.

There are many other comparisons that the reader can draw from the figures, I have made only the most basic.

This bundle of papers was found by the author but is now lodged at the Cheshire Record Office. Its contents are reproduced by consent of the Inland Revenue but the views expressed are the author's and not those of the Revenue.

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Bowdon's Name - an alternative explanation
by Peter J. Kemp

Some ten years ago (Bowdon Sheaf No.33) our then chairman Marjorie Cox wrote a short article discussing a variation in the spelling Bowdon or Bowden in the 19th and 20th centuries, and asked for examples from different periods. The accepted authority on Cheshire place names, Prof. J. McN. Dodgson listed those he found over the ages :-

Bogedone	1086
Boudon	1189-99,1406
Bowedon	1345
Bothedun, Baw(e)don, Baudon	1455
Baw(e)den(e)	1537, 1546
Boodon	1549
Bowden	1438,1488, 1535, 1695
Bodon	1611
Bodun	1617

and said it may have originated as 'bogadun', a curved hill. This would appear to be an acceptance of the bow shape seen commonly in the other Bowdens throughout the country, but our Bowdon hill does not have an appearance of a bow from whatever angle one looks at it. If we reject an archery bow shape what can the origin be? Readers may prefer a better explanation derived from the earliest spelling by the Anglo-Saxon scribes employed by the Normans when compiling the Domesday Book in 1086, viz. Bogedone. A 'don' or 'dun' means a fortified hill and the 'Boge' element is probably the name of its owner in Anglo-Saxon days 'Beoda' or 'Beoga' who could have taken over a former Celtic earthworks on the site of the present Bowdon Parish Church. The present curved northern boundary of Bowdon churchyard may still continue to show a Celtic earthwork element present in several such churchyards today. The 'don' or 'dun' (as in Dunham, a homestead by the hill) is more certain than 'den'. Variations in spellings have occurred over the centuries due to dialect and accented pronunciation being interpreted by whoever wrote the sound down, uniform spelling being a relatively modern discipline. It is to be hoped that our Bowdon will continue to be written as Bowdon for evermore.

"Sir Gawaine and the Green Knight" and the Massey connection
by Peter Kemp

In the 14th century, although English was becoming spoken by everyone, French was still the ruling classes preference in speech and among those who could read and write. Latin and French were used for legal dealings and formal business. Towards the end of the century English began to gain ascendancy over French due to the patriotic fervour which grew from 1337 onwards in the Hundred Years War against the French. Also the realisation grew that it was essential to have better communication with the commoners, the labourers and husbandmen in particular, in view of the unrest following the devastation of the Black Death of 1349 (and subsequent recurrences) which had prompted the Statute of Labourers in 1351. English was not the language of the Law or Parliament until 1362, and even then it continued to be written down in Anglo-French. In Cheshire a turning point for English had been reached in 1358 when Ralph Higden, a Chester monk, after three journeys to Rome, obtained permission from the Pope for the Chester Mystery Plays to be performed in spoken English.

Here, in Cheshire, the de Mascys are associated with the classic medieval poem "Sir Gawayne and the Grene Knight", a masterpiece told in 2530 lines and written in the North Midland dialect of Middle English. This wonderful romantic poem is not rhymed but uses the fashionable alliterative construction then in favour with a refrain occurring irregularly. It is an amazing survival of that chivalrous age yet the language is difficult to follow for present-day readers. It tells of a time when King Arthur and his knights were feasting when the door suddenly bursts open and this totally green knight appears — green skin, hair and armour (green being associated in the Celtic mind with death) — and lays down a challenge to a beheading game, and demonstrates by severing his own head and then replacing it. The whole concept of the Green Knight has been fashioned by the sorceress Morgan le Fay in her campaign of evil to cause as much hateful trouble in King Arthur's court as possible. The knights are fearfully reluctant but the senior knight of the Round Table, Sir Gawaine, accepts the challenge to find the Green Knight within the year and complete the ordeal. Whereupon the Green Knight disappears. Sir Gawaine spends the whole year searching throughout Cheshire, through the forests of Mara and Mondrum (Delamere) into the wild forest of Wirral, one of the more identifiable locations since that is where he completes his quest. The poem describes the Wirral as "the wildernesse of Wirral."

"The wilderness of Wirral:

few lived there

Who loved with a good heart

either God or man"

(a modern English quote)

The immensely powerful Randle (Ranulph) de Meschines (1120-29), Viscount of Bayeux, lord of large areas of Northern England and Earl of Carlisle and Chester, had afforested the Wirral for game and hunting, but in 1376 King Edward III had most of the trees felled because they had provided a haven for vagabonds and criminals.

The author of this wild story is still unknown as is its date of origin, though now generally accepted to be around 1350. Its dedication, and by some its authorship, is attributed to a Massey of Cheshire. Some writers say John Massey of Cotton, another a Hugh Massey, maybe of Tatton, and others to the Masseys of Dunham (but that principal line ceased with the death of Hamo VI in 1341). Other scholars have suggested that Hugh de Mascy wrote this great poem himself, but which Hugh?

Clearly this early medieval poem of supernatural fantasy had great appeal and affinity with the Massey's love of combat and feasting in those chivalrous times. The development of the English language at that time was slowly assuming the Midland vernacular as standard and Chaucer's London and southern dialect of Middle English was being superseded, paving the way for the English we speak and write today. It is evident that, some 280 years after their arrival in Cheshire, the Norman-French de Mascys had finally abandoned their original tongue, and were now committed Englishmen fully appreciative of and speaking the developing English language to the extent of having a major romantic poem dedicated to one of their number.

As an afterthought, readers may care to speculate whether some repetition of history occurred another six hundred years on when perhaps an ingrained love of English and its spoken word inspired a member of the Canadian branch of the Cheshire Masseys and his family to excel in the acting profession on stage and in films and television. He was the distinguished actor Raymond Massey (1896- 1983) who was drawn to star in the fantasy science-fiction film "Things to Come" (1936) and also the romantic never-never land of "The Prisoner of Zenda" (1937), whose son Daniel (1933-1998) was also an actor of some note and daughter Anna Massey, CBE, today still a well-known accomplished actress.

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Dunham Massey American Army & British Prisoner-of-War Camp
by David Miller

At the start of World War II there were only two Prisoner-of-War camps in Britain but eventually the number reached around 450 holding over 400,000 prisoners. Because of the large numbers and for security, after interrogation and classification, many of the prisoners-of-war were sent to Canada.

Barry Sullivan's book *Threshholds of Peace* gives a substantial account of prisoners-of-war (POWs) in Britain generally. Interrogation started in several Home Counties camps before prisoners moved on to other camps. POWs included Schutzstaffel (SS), part of the Wehrmacht, who had a reputation for prowess in the field of battle and for atrocities. They could be distinguished by a tattoo of their blood group on the upper left arm.

On 2 October 1942 the War Office inspected the New Park section of the Dunham Massey estate and declared it ideal for an American Army Camp. Troops arrived in October 1943. Charles Frame, an American soldier, was billeted at Dunham for just four months from January 1944. He remembers arriving in Glasgow, the train journey to Altrincham and the march to Dunham. Charles met local girl Jean Bunnell at a dance at Altrincham Stamford Hall and they married in May 1944.

The American troops left at short notice for the Normandy invasion in May 1944. On the 18 October 1944 Lord Stamford was informed that the empty camp was to become a POW camp for 3,500 Germans.

The first prisoners-of-war, Italians captured in North Africa, were brought to Dunham in the first week of November 1944. When Italy did a U-turn during the war and joined the Allies, the Italian POWs were reclassified as co-operators and were released to work, mainly on farms where they proved to be hard working and very popular. They were greatly missed after they returned home at the end of the war. The Italians hated the Germans and were always kept separate from each other in the camp.

In 1944 sixteen year old Mike Arron started working for the Northern Press Photo Agency from their offices on Ashley Road, Hale. The agency had a contract with the Ministry of War to photograph four thousand POWs at Dunham Park Camp. After a while they decided that Mike could be trusted with the work on his own and he used to cycle to the camp regularly and later had tea with the POWs after the photography sessions.

The prisoners were guarded by Polish soldiers; British troops were mainly concerned with administrative duties. There were regular random searches of the huts and POWs were counted two or three times a day. Six thousand were housed in the camp by 1945.

The Germans constructed a substantial model Bavarian castle about six feet high which stood quite close to the bend in the Chester Road opposite to Denzell. In their spare time they used their skills to produce craft work including 'pokerwork' done with a red-hot poker. At Christmas they produced high-quality Christmas cards printed from home-made woodcuts. A theatre had been built by the Americans and the POWs put on several concerts there including excerpts from *The Magic Flute* on 16 April 1945.

It is alleged that the Germans held unofficial court marshals for hard- line Nazis and dealt with petty offences such as stealing.

Early in the war Colonel Buckmaster, while reorganising the Intelligence Services, commandeered Dunham House, a large country house adjacent to the prisoner-of-war camp, as a training centre for Allied agents operating in occupied territory. Odette Churchill and Violette Szabo, both of whom were awarded the George Cross for bravery, were trained here.

Agents used the RAF base at Ringway both for training and operational purposes. An enemy agent once penetrated Dunham House but was apprehended. The matter was kept secret at the time and little reference to it has been made since.

Towards the end of the war many prisoners were found to be disillusioned and fearful that the Russians might take over Germany if Britain did not gain a strong position there first. Some were prepared to bring an early end to hostilities by cooperating with the Allies. These soldiers were named 'Bonzos' and trained to rejoin their army and spread disinformation, but the operation came too late to be of much assistance as the German Army surrendered before the plan could be very effective. A group of Bonzos was sent to retrieve Hitler's hoard of art work taken from galleries, museums and private collections in Europe.

Hostilities ended on 2 September 1945 and arrangements for the repatriation of POWs were put into place. In 1945 over 3,700,000 Germans and other nationalities were in British hands in several countries but of these only 500,000 were detained and the rest released in time for the 1945 harvest.

POW Bert Trautmann, who was to be goalkeeper for Manchester City Football Club from 1949 to 1964, was temporarily stationed at the Northwich POW camp. At the end of the war he took part in a public football match between German POWs and a Manchester team, held on a pitch constructed by the POWs in a natural hollow in the Dunham camp.

In early 1946 a quarter of the agricultural force in Britain was made up of POWs. By December 1946 they were allowed to visit private homes, walk within five miles of the camp, and accept small gifts such as sweets and tobacco.

After the war repatriation of POWs was urgent because of the cost to the public purse: £90,000 per day. The repatriation rate was quickly stepped up from 2,000 to 15,000 per month with the object of returning all POWs by the end of 1948. They were interviewed to assess their Nazi loyalty and given a re-education programme. They returned to Germany from 1946 but those who remained loyal to the Nazi cause remained captive as late as 1949 in some camps. About 25,000 elected to stay in Britain.

At least twenty ex-POWs and Polish guards stayed in the Altrincham area or kept close links. Many became gardeners. Alfred Paeserack, a POW at Dunham between 1945 and 1948 left the area but kept links with several families for over 50 years. He wrote his memoirs in 1995, which are held in Trafford Local Studies and include sketches of POW camps in Cheshire produced by a Dunham prisoner, and several photographs of himself and a Dunham girl he befriended.

Alfred said rations were small. Breakfast consisted of one slice of bread and one third of a bowl of porridge. In the afternoon soup was served on a flat tin plate with a thin slice of bread. For the first few months only cabbage soup was available. Supper was a cup of tea and two slices of bread with a very thin layer of spread. Showers were allowed on Friday or Saturday when clothes were washed as part of the process.

There were 50 men in a hut which had tables and chairs in the middle. The blanket, kitbag and towel had to be kept folded on the mattress with plates etc on top. Rooms were checked constantly. No photographs were allowed and sleeping was forbidden in the daytime. There were three roll-calls per day with the POWs in columns of five. Eventually prisoners built flower beds and grass areas around the huts, the paths were improved and the huts painted white. The POWs offered courses in languages, business studies, engineering, history, etc. A theatre group was formed and there were performances with proper sets and costumes. One was of the operetta *Gluckliche Reise*, with a railway station set, wagons and good costumes.

A pastor and a priest were given rooms for church activities and were soon allowed to go to local churches without a guard. Later prisoners were also allowed to attend churches. In 1946 ten Germans went out of the camp to work as a trial and soon POWs were working for farmers, companies, road builders, market gardeners such as Clibrans and Caldwells, and for Cheshire County Council. Before long all POWs were working. Alfred's job was as a pipe layer with nine other POWs and ten locals.

An ex-POW who remained in the area after the war was Arno Scholz from Leipzig, East Germany. In 1936 he worked in the Olympic Village in Berlin and saw the games. From 1936 to 1939 he was in the Spanish Civil War and later served on the Bismarck. In August 1944 he was captured by the Americans and transferred to Dunham. He worked at Dunham Hall in the rose garden where he met Florence Shakeshaft and they married later. His old POW hut was brought from the Dunham camp to Larkhill, Thorley Lane, Timperley where it and another was used as a Red Cross club house. The huts were demolished in 1999 to build the new community centre.

Other POW names known include Heinrich Nadig, Ottomar Cruise, August Schmitt, Andy Kisbert, William Feik, and Gerhard Hasenkrug. An ex-POW guard who remained in Altrincham was a Polish man Waclaw Piekarski (his forename is pronounced Vatswaf). He married an Altrincham girl and their sons Roman and Maz who run Cuckoo Land at Tabley own over 600 antique cuckoo clocks, the largest collection in the world. Waclaw became a professional musician, playing many wind instruments and led his own band with his two brothers in Poland. He was sent to the Dunham Massey camp in 1944 to guard German POWs. Polish soldiers worshipped at St. Vincent's Roman Catholic Church, where Waclaw met Teresa Dalton and they married there in 1948. Waclaw, who led the Dunham Woodhouses Band which met at The Downs Hotel in Altrincham, became a naturalised Briton.

Today part of New Park near Denzell has two large underground reservoirs and much of the rest is now the Dunham Forest Golf & Country Club. Some hut foundations can still be seen at the camp site, and the football ground hollow with its natural terraces is still there.

My thanks are due to many people for their contributions including Mike Arron and Ronald Trenbath; and David Eastwood for the dates from the war-time diaries of Lord Stamford, which he has been given permission to access by the National Trust.

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The Bowdon Sheaf

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Fallow deer in Dunham Massey Park.

The herd dates from the Saxon Period.

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Some Old Bowdon Houses
by Peter Kemp

We look at our Bowdon area today as a suburb of Altrincham and as a dormitory for residents working further afield built up in Victorian times and to the present day, but what do we know about houses existing before that have long since disappeared? Moss Farm c1500 on South Downs Road is still with us as Bowdon's oldest property together with its cruck barn now converted into a dwelling and, across the road, Moss Cottage 1666 (See Bowdon Sheaf Nos. 9-12 and 17). However, three lost properties have left recorded traces behind fortunately identifying their sites, type and a few of their occupants who paid rent to their owners, as follows :-

1. House and Croft called Birch's (A Bowdon Hall estate rental)
Behind the Church Brow cottages but accessed from Green Walk (originally Sparrow Lane) and a driveway leading into a downhill footpath are now situated a large Georgian style house semi-detached called 'The Cedars' and 'Westhill' with, further down, 'Kirklea Mews'. On the 1838 Tithe map this plot was just under 1 acre statute and called 'Birch Croft'. When these properties were erected a huge canted brick wall was built to retain the infill which eliminated the lower steep slope in order to flatten the site. The steepening evident in the 17th century at the bottom of the plot is still evinced by the flight of steps in the footpath down into Langham Road. Whether the cottage of the Birch family was at the top or bottom of this slope is not known, but it is likely that it was situated near the Church Brow cottages and the spring-line for water.



The historical evidence is as follows:-

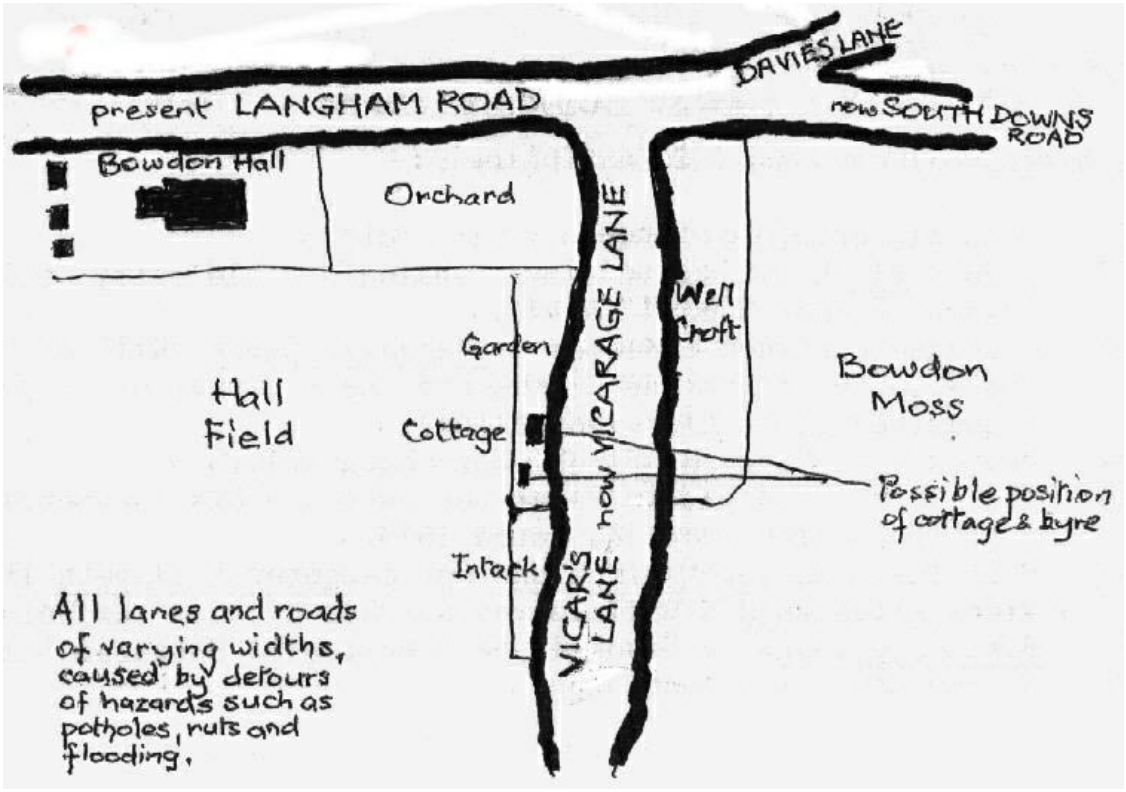
16C	Possible origin of house on the croft.
1657	A John Birch witnessed Isaac Tipping's Bible entry of land- holding in Bowdon (Bowdon Sheaf No.18).
1662	Cottage in Bowdon tenanted by Margaret Birch (will of Robert Tipping 1662/3, steward to the Booths and their tenant of Bowdon Hall, when he bequeathed it to his widow Alice).
1664	Hearth Tax. Margaret Birch Not chargeable
1666	The above noted by Sir Peter Leycester in his monumental book on Cheshire, Part IV Bucklow Hundred, dated 1673.
1667	Poll Tax. Margaret Birch and her daughter Elizabeth living in the cottage.
1668/9	Widow Ellen Wood's will leaves all her clothes remaining at Margaret Birch's cottage to "my beloved freind Margaret Buirch."
1674	Hearth Tax. Not mentioned.
1730	In the Booth steward John Edmonds's time, with his 4 March 173¾ lease of Bowdon Hall and lands, etc., is a lease made by him to a sub-tenant of a cottage on the estate dated 17 July, 1730 at a rent of 6d per annum. This tenant was allowed to "make use of the cloths [sic] hedge in Birch Croft for drying his and his family's Cloths only." One sub-tenant might be the John Okell.
1740-52	In Booth steward Thomas Walton's time, he collected rents due to Bowdon Hall from tenant George Edmonds (son of John Edmonds) as part of the financial arrangements for him since Edmonds was by then resident in London. Specifically Walton's account made to Edmonds for 30 June 1743 shows:- "1 year's rent from Sam. Renshall of the Croft behind Birches house £1.1.0d." 1 year's rent from Elizabeth Heath for Birches cottage.

12s.8d., by Taxes 7s 4d and in Cash 12s.8d. 1 year's reserved rent from John Okell 6d. [This appears to refer to yet another very small cottage (location not identified) rented by John Okell which was recently a smithy (as shown on a c1760 list of Bowdon Hall leases). Such a smithy must have been at the foot of Church Brow either on or adjacent to Birch Croft. No occupational title is given for John Okell, yet he may have been a blacksmith in need of drying his clothes washed after his grimey labours].

1838 Birch Croft is in the location as shown on the sketch map above on the Tithe Schedule and Map, and is in the possession of the Earl of Stamford's tenant of Bowdon Hall, William Warburton, Junior.

Shortly afterwards, Birch Croft was sold for the present-day development.

2. A Small Cottage with Garden and Intack (Bowdon Hall estate rental)
This property was situated just down Vicar's Lane (Vicarage Lane) from its Langham Road junction alongside the former Hall Field behind Bowdon Hall and south of its orchard on that corner. It consisted of a small two-bayed thatched cottage and two-bayed outbuilding in a garden, with an 'intack' or intake (a roadside verge and wasteland). The garden could have been for kitchen vegetable use with a cow kept in the byre. Water would have been drawn from the well or spring in Well Croft across Vicar's Lane.



The historical evidence is as follows :-

16C	Possible origin of cottage (see 1817 description below).
1674	Hearth Tax. A 'void' house of 1 hearth held by Alice Tipping, widow of Robert Tipping (steward to the Booths) of Bowdon Hall.
1701	Survey of Dunham Massey Estate in Steward John Edmonds's time. A house of 2 bays within and 2 bays without included with Bowdon Hall.
1760	Rental c1760. House [Bowdon Hall] Field inclusive of the Cottage facing Bowdon Moss.
1793	1793 Survey of Dunham Massey Estates. Following "House [Bowdon Hall] and Gardens, Lease No.1, Farmyard and Orchards, and House Field" is "A cottage and Garden 1 rood 11 perches Statute or 24 perches Cheshire measure" and "An Intack to ditto" 10 perches Statute or 4 perches Cheshire measure.

1806	In the will of William Pimlott, his widow Sarah was left "the little adjoining house to the Manor House [Bowdon Hall] now tenanted by James Hall."
1817	Valuation Lease No.1 (Bowdon Hall) to Charles Lowndes describes "Cottage held by Mary Worth 2 small bays, walls timber nogged with part brick and part daub covered with thatch, very old building in middleing repair."
1838	Tithe Schedule and Map. Cottage now gone. "The site on which Mary Worth's cottage stood."
1868	In May, 1868, John Edwards, nephew of William Edwards, owner of Bowdon Hall from 1858, bought from the Earl of Stamford the plot of land east of and adjoining the Hall on the corner of Langham Road and Vicarage Lane amounting to 6000 square yards. In August, he bought the land adjoining to the south down Vicarage Lane amounting to 5000 square yards, intending to build himself a house with an extensive garden and pleasure gardens. However, he had overstretched himself and went bankrupt. No development occurred.
1888	Samuel Okell bought the corner plot (as above) and built 2 semi-detached houses, 'Overley' for himself and family and 'Netherley' to let out, for £2053. 11. 0d.

These two houses still exist. A cottage said to be 'very old' and still deteriorating in 1817 must have been well over 250 years old then. It disappeared between 1817 and 1838 and its site together with the modern alignment of the metalled Vicarage Lane is now covered by housing development there and by Hall Road and its houses. Bowdon Hall orchard disappeared under the 1888 Okell houses.

3. New Bridge, Dunham Massey

This Dunham Massey Estate property is included with this Bowdon article since it was situated just over the border across the main Chester Road where Dunham Home Farm is opposite the Bow Green Road junction, and had Tipping family connections.

The New Bridge over the Bollin was an all-weather cart bridge (recorded in 1618) probably built in the late l6C to replace an original horse bridge alongside the ford. That type of bridge may well have existed for many years with the wooden structure being rebuilt each time it collapsed in floods or due to rot. The Masseys and Booths of Dunham Hall would have funded and provided it and charged tolls as a profitable source of revenue. The new bridge gave its name to Newbridge Hollow which had evolved over the years by the wearing away effect of traffic on the floodplain escarpment by feet, hoofs and cartwheels as it descended and ascended from the river crossing — it had veered away from the old Roman Road line. Modern road works have altered the slope and width of this A556 road so much that the hollow-way is hardly apparent today. I remember the 1930s roadway being widened there when steam-powered machines were uprooting the stumps of the well-wooded sides of the hollow. The main entrance driveway of Dunham Massey Hall emerged there between its gatehouses sadly demolished by a bomb in World War II. There was also a field nearby named Newbridge Meadow and Lord Delamer's bailiff is remembered by a field called Tippings Field together with Tippings Bank, part of the escarpment lower down towards the Bollin.

Its 17C history is given in my articles on 'The Booths and the Tippings' Parts 5 and 6 in 'Bowdon Sheaf' Nos. 26 and 28. Following William Tipping's death at age 30 there, its history from that date 23 October 1701 to 1764 has been found in the Dunham Massey Estate papers. Lady Mary Robartes, sister to the 2nd Earl of Warrington, Henry Booth, took over ownership of New Bridge, and William Tipping's widow Elizabeth (who had gone to live in Salford) continued the rental until 1709 when she probably died. The Estate Rental Book No.2 records New Bridge being 'out of lease' in October 1709 with a new tenant of Lady Mary, one Joseph Key being recorded as tenant till 2 February 1764.

We do not know for certain that William Tipping, the elder, yeoman and Bailiff to Lord Delamer of Dunham Massey who was born around 1600 and died in 1671, may have lived at New Bridge, but it is a strong possibility considering its site on the estate next to the main approach to the Hall. His eldest son, William, born 18 December 1630 became a yeoman at Benchill, Wythenshawe from about 1668 and maintained strong links with Bowdon and Dunham Massey estate affairs. He returned to live in Dunham Massey some time after 1684 following the death of the 1st Lord Delamer, possibly in 1686 when his son and heir, also William, came of age and took over the Benchill farm. The 2nd Lord Delamer, who was to become the 1st Earl of Warrington in 1690 probably considered William 2nd too old at 55 to succeed his father as Bailiff having appointed an outsider John Edmonds as his Steward. But William was allowed to rent New Bridge in succession to his father.

The house itself is recorded in the Dunham Rental Book No.2 as "5 Bays within and 8 Bays without", as large as old Bowdon Hall and an important Booth family property. Five bays would make it about 60 feet long and a cluster of farm buildings amounting to 8 Bays in all indicates a large prosperous farmstead. It was the Home Farm for the Booths, and its siting by the main driveway to the Hall would impress any visitors to the big house. Its tenement lands consisted of 28 acres (5 meadow and 23 arable) and when Joseph Key took over the lease the lands included "2 Street (head) fields, Redmore fields and Longley meadow" also. The value of the New Bridge estate rose from £39.15.0d. a year in 1701 (Rent £2.14.0d.), to £44 p.a. in 1704 (Rent in boons £1.4.2d. plus a herriot of 40s.) to £60 p.a. (to be paid £30 at Martinmas and £30 at Lady Day) in Joseph Key's time till 1764. It is interesting that the 1701 rental may not have been paid entirely in money, and seems to have consisted of 1 capon and 4 hens, plus a 'boon' valued at £1.4.2d. for :-

1 Load of Coal to Dunham Hall
8 Loads of Turf to Dunham Hall
20 Loads of Turf ready to cart
and to perform Barley reaping of 1 acre
1 Day ploughing
1 Day mucking with team

The 1704 rental contained an obligation to plant "3 oaks, 2 elms or 2 ashes until 100" with no penalty. Clearly this was a fine working estate farm and, although New Bridge house has long gone, the present Dunham Farm on or very near its site continues to thrive as a 'Home Farm' on the edge of the Dunham Massey parkland.

(Further research in the future in the Dunham Massey papers will no doubt reveal more of this property's history, in particular the Valuation Books 1774-1846 at the Rylands Library, Dunham Massey Papers EGR 14/7/48).

Altrincham Grammar Schools
by Ronald Trenbath

On the 26th April 1996, in celebration of Founders' Day, the pupils of Altrincham Grammar School for Boys assembled in Bowdon Parish Church with the Staff, Governors, Lord Lieutenant of Cheshire, Mayor of Trafford, Ministry of Education Officials and honoured guests, when the York Herald from the College of Arms in full insignia, presented the headmaster with a new school coat of arms, on behalf of Her Majesty the Queen, in recognition of its scholastic success at the national level. This event was followed by a buffet lunch at the school hall with senior boys in attendance.

The school, originally named Altrincham High School for Boys, was founded in 1912 largely through the endeavours of Judge Bradbury, as a fee-paying school with grants from Cheshire County Council for which scholarship boys received free places. Aware that Britain was seriously lagging behind the USA and Europe in training professionals and senior management executives, essential for commerce and industry if the country was to maintain its lead in the world, the government encouraged grammar school and high school education as a means of attaining this end as the public school system only catered for the requirements of non-vocational families.

Saville Laver, the first headmaster, developed a policy based, he claimed, on the French education system and guided the school on the course it was to follow in future years, which included a good general education, character-building, leadership and tenacity of purpose, in accordance with the school's motto Labore Omnia Vincit. A strict disciplinarian, he encouraged self discipline rather than enforcement and the results are witnessed in the successes of pupils during the last hundred years which have included judges, QCs, a bishop, ambassadors, professors, lawyers, surgeons, architects, a politician and a noted playwright.

Laver, a Cambridge Classics Scholar, was a striking figure, bald- headed, wearing pinz-nez and a winged collar. Always in academic cap and gown, he inspired respect and affection from scholars and staff but he could be a formidable opponent in adversity.

Extra-mural activities were strongly encouraged as much as games, and boys were free to choose pastimes to suit their personal inclinations. These included a school camp in Wales or Devonshire, a large scout troop (visited by the founder, Lord Baden Powell), a debating society, science visits, concerts, plays, producing films, and fencing (the gym instructor was a champion fencer). During the Second World War, Field Marshal Mongomery visited the School and indicated that he was very impressed.

Early success encouraged many very competent teachers to apply for positions on the staff, including former pupils who returned following graduation at university, usually Oxford and Cambridge.

Fund-raising activities in aid of school requirements not covered by normal funding, were encouraged. Concerts, sales of work, and bridge drives became local social events enjoyed mainly by parents. Some said that it was more like a family than a school. As a result of one such enterprise, money was raised to build the Canadian-style wooden scout headquarters which attracted wide attention at the time.

The Altrincham Grammar School for Girls, originally named Altrincham High School for Girls, was an entirely separate organisation founded in 1910, again through the influence of Judge Bradbury, two years earlier than the boys high school. It was similarly fee paying with grants from Cheshire County Council, to meet the needs of middle-income families who considered the education from local private schools to be totally inadequate.

At the time the female population of the country exceeded that of the male population by more than a million, a situation to be exacerbated fourteen years later by the world war, and women were increasingly having to support themselves and penetrate into employment (including the professions) previously held by men.

To meet these requirements, the new school adopted a policy of providing instruction that would "draw out and strengthen the qualities of the mind, rather than the mere acquisition of knowledge," with "mental training to make the mind quick and alert with clear thinking and sound judgement and "to overcome difficulties with success." The school motto "Fortiter, Fedeliter, Feliciter" was carefully considered before acceptance but has proved to be applicable.

Bowdon Lodge, a derelict country lodge with extensive grounds in Bowdon, was purchased and demolished and replaced by a new building designed by architects Sankey & Cubbon, to suit the requirements of a modern school at the time and within easy access of all parts of the catchment area; although suitable at the time it had very little room for future expansion.

Mary Howes Smith, the daughter of an army officer and tutor to the Royal Family, who had studied at Cambridge, was selected as the first headmistress. Known as 'HS' she was "formidable, dominant, feared by staff and pupils, governors, and many parents, but she respected those who stood their ground." Very dedicated she would assist all those who were eager to succeed but would not tolerate uncouth behaviour. A regular guest at Dunham Hall, the earl considered her wit and conversation an asset to a dinner party.

Boys between the ages of seven and ten could attend the preparatory department, giving rise to a elitist, chauvinist minority, until 1934 when it was decided to adopt a girls-only policy and boys changed to the new but independent Altrincham Boys Preparatory School.

Suitable staff were carefully selected as the school intake gradually increased in size to form a harmonious whole.

Aware that most of the pupils would not be career girls, great emphasis was given to domestic science and similar subjects, as well as more cultural pursuits such as art, music, and literature, with extra- mural activities including girl guides, school plays, and garden parties.

A highlight in the early history of the school was the visit by Miss Howes Smith's royal pupil Mary, Princess Royal, daughter of King George V, who requested a visit to the school when staying at Dunham Massey Hall. Local dignitaries with some of the parents assembled with pupils and staff to receive and welcome her. She showed great interest in the school and its wider influence and granted a day's holiday in recognition of the visit.

During the following years the school developed the early policy to achieve high success at national level and enrich the cultural life of Bowdon and adjoining districts, and to witness, with the boys' grammar school, the eclipse of many local private schools including the once-famous Bowdon College.

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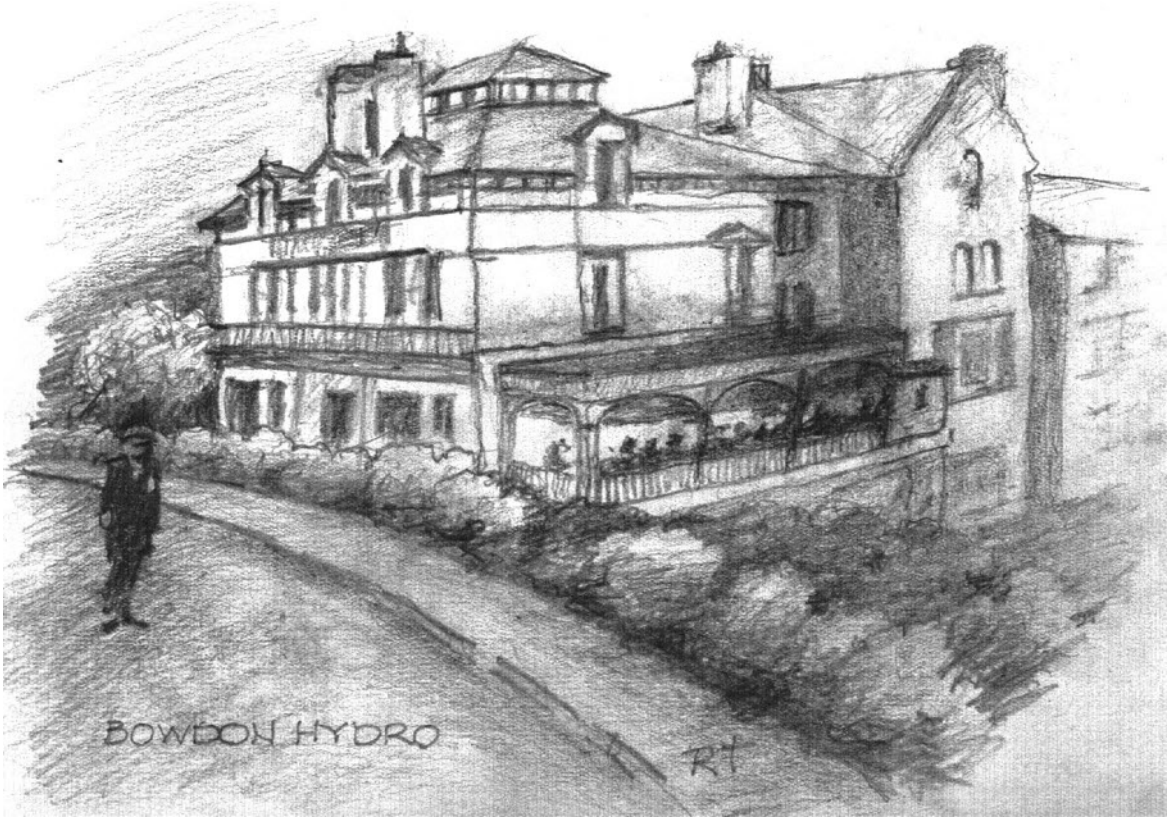

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The Spoils of War

by Chris Hill

An email query in July 2010 followed by a Christmas-time written enquiry from the National Tank Museum in Suffolk to the Altrincham History Society, asked if Altrincham had accepted a tank after World War I when the government circulated this offer to a number of towns in England. At that time, roughly speaking, Altrincham was more concerned about where to erect a war memorial to those killed in the conflict. The Court Leet strongly advocated a site in the Old Market Place, while the council did not consider it a suitable place. This generated much discussion and eventually, possibly because of traffic problems even in those days, the Altrincham War Memorial was erected at the junction of St. Margaret's Road and Dunham Road, actually outside the town in Dunham Township. This memorial was designed by George Faulkner Armitage who also designed a war memorial for Bowdon. This memorial is a porch dated 1921 with stained glass windows, the entrance to the church on Higher Downs where Bowdon History Society holds its meetings. It seems pretty certain that Altrincham did not take advantage of the offer of a tank to put on display.

If I remember correctly, when on a Blue Badge guided tour of the Deansgate area of Manchester probably in Lower Byrom Street, the guide pointed out some pavement posts blocking vehicle access that were cannon barrels captured during the Crimean War and brought back as salvage.

Going further back in time, following the Napoleonic Wars, a large amount of money from captured treasure and the sale of wartime spoils was distributed throughout England to the parishes. As I have heard the tale, Bowdon Parish spent some of the money on having two houses built in Apsley Grove. On wandering round the backwaters of Vicarage Lane, attracted by an intriguing farmhouse there, I chanced on a magnificent magnolia in bloom, worthy of a photograph, and as a result got chatting to the lady owner of Magnolia Cottage who passed on this information from a knowledge of her deeds. I hope this causes more about this little bit of local history to surface.

In passing, Apsley House was the residence bought by the nation for, and in appreciation of, and the achievements of the Duke of Wellington in the wars

against Napoleon. If I remember correctly, the address of Apsley House is No.1, London.

Just to continue this theme of the remnants of wars, after World War II the country was littered with many examples of the remains of wartime. Pill boxes come to mind; there was one for some time left at the top of the Warburton Bridge over the Ship Canal. Incidentally, it is claimed that some of the arches above the roadway of the bridge had to be replaced to strengthen it, to carry the weight of tanks travelling into Cheshire, and the 'old' and 'new' types are still to be seen. A couple of pillboxes were left at the munitions site at Sinderland, the one near the entrance having recently been covered up with soil. The other could be seen from Carrington Lane. Another open machine gun 'nest' can still be found on the north bank of the disused entrance to Dunham Hall from the Chester road. It overlooked the Lymm Corner junction and Newbridge Hollow. One dreads to think how long it would have remained active had an actual skirmish been necessary.

Another type of wartime relic in some cases left for years if their removal was not urgent, were the concrete platforms for anti-aircraft guns. I am told there was a site at Altrincham Grammar School and that the gun was buried there with its barrel sticking out of the ground. I was there in 1945 and never heard of such a thing. However, there was a home guard bullet hole through one of the window frames of the cloakroom nearest to Mr. Broom, the caretaker's house, which was a source of interest to us boys. Another site is said to have been near the Bollin bridge at the Bleeding Wolf. Again, a site is mentioned in the literature as being on the outskirts of Hale Barns village, but I looked for this concrete base without success. Readers may well have memories of other local leftovers from wartime, or the results of the benefits of wartime booty.

The Disappearing Grammar School Gun

by Ronald Trenbath

Boys who attended the Altrincham Grammar School prior to 1945 will remember the small cannon which had formed a decorative feature when the school was first built in 1912. Mr Laver, the headmaster, ordered it to be

buried after 1918 by ‘Pharaoh’ Parks, the caretaker, as it was considered to be a hurtful reminder to those who had suffered in World War I.

This act led to the more adventurous and archaeologically-minded junior boys discovering the site and excavating it. It was then buried on a different site, only to be tracked down again and re-exhumed by young boys. This game between juniors, staff and seniors became a tradition for many years, reported humorously one speech day by the next headmaster, Mr Hamblin.

Authority finally won and the offending weapon disappeared, possibly as scrap metal in World War II. Some former pupils of that era will have happy memories, particularly as cubs, of tracking down the gun and secretly excavating it in traditional Mortimer Wheeler fashion, and we are indebted to Chris Hill for reviving these memories.

Bowdon Polo Club

by Ronald Trenbath

Prior to the outbreak of war in 1939 residents in Bowdon would often enjoy a pleasant and entertaining afternoon sitting at the Polo Grounds at Ashley Heath, watching Bowdon Polo Club compete with local rivals, while young boys would select suitable and vacant grounds and practise on bicycles the sport performed by their seniors.

It was an idyllic site situated between the tithe barn on Ashley Mill Lane and Fish House Plantation on the lane to Ryecroft Farm, being a very large, level and well-drained field, with a neat row of resting stables, clearly shown on the 1910 Ordnance Survey map together with a pavilion.

Polo, which was recorded in early evidence as being played in 525BC in Persia, was introduced into India where it was developed as a very popular game. It was adopted by Assam Tea Planters in 1850 under the name “Hockey on Horseback,” and an article in The Field magazine in 1869 extolling its virtues, motivated ‘Chuck’ Hartopp and two fellow officers of the 10th Hussars to form teams and play the first public game in Britain at Houndslow a few weeks later.

Interest spread rapidly to Cheshire where horse breeders shewed keen interest and a Bowdon team was formed in 1891, followed by other local parishes, in keeping with the county's long equestrian heritage.

As the sport developed it was accepted that, in the interests of safety and to combat dangerous play in what is a very dangerous game, Field Rules would have to be introduced. In time these were published as the Hurlingham Polo Association Rules of Polo 1939, to be applied nationally and accepted internationally. The rules were extended to cover other items than safety and introduce standardisation covering ground size; number of players in a team; duration of play; scoring of goals; handicaps; and head gear. The initial training of players on bicycles was recommended, although it is doubtful if local boys were aware of this when they practised on bicycles. No requirements were specified regarding ponies and it was left to a rider's discretion concerning the animal he chose, but it was generally accepted that the polo pony is a type rather than a breed and that it should be between 12 and 16 hands, steady, alert, capable of speed, with courage and good playing temperament. Cheshire bloodstock dealers were quick to meet these demands and many of them diversified from breeding hunters and race horses to specialise as polo-pony breeders, exporting to other areas of the country.

It was also specified that a team would consist of four players and that seven-minute chukkas should make up a game, with eight chukkas constituting a full game.

In 1906 the Marquis of Cholmondley joined his team, the Manchester Polo Club, with Bowdon Polo Club to form a formidable team, to be joined by Wirral Polo Club in 1939. The club transferred their ground to Little Budworth in 1951 and took the name the Cheshire Polo Club, claiming to be the oldest club in England and ranking with Hurlingham for prestige.

Many local residents will remember, with nostalgia, the occasion when the Duke of Edinburgh and the young Prince Charles came with the Windsor Club, together with Jimmy Edwards' team 'Wacko', to play against Cheshire at Little Budworth, the Duke practising before the match and the spectators diplomatically ignoring him, until the field was cleared in order that Edwards and de Ferranti could land their plane and helicopter. A child ran on to the course and the Duke heroically charged across on his pony and lifted him to

safety. The event provided most excellent play and a socially pleasant afternoon never to be forgotten.

It would be interesting to know if any of the boys who practised on bicycles at Ashley Heath ever became serious players. Several became very keen riders but it is not known if any of them ever played polo.

The Bowdon Hydropathic Establishment

by David Miller

The Bowdon Hotel on Langham Road started life in 1871 as the Bowdon Hydropathic Establishment.

The origins of hydropathy

Hydropathy, now called hydrotherapy, involving the use of warm or cold water for the management of pain relief and treating illness, was practised in early Chinese, Japanese and Egyptian cultures and is still popular today. The Romans had public baths for citizens and used springs in the treatment of illness. After being lost for centuries hydropathy was revived in Austria in the 1830s. From the mid-1840s hydropathic establishments were opened across Britain, often linked to teetotalism. Malvern spring water was used as a medical treatment in clinics in England. Bathing establishments were known as spas where natural healing waters emerged as springs, often in limestone regions such as at Bath, Cheltenham, Buxton and Matlock some of which have been used since Roman times. Often the water was drunk as well as used for bathing, generally good but sometimes tasting foul and smelling of bad eggs. Hydrotherapy treatment is still used today for improving mobility, for muscular relaxation and for improving blood circulation.

The Stamford Papers

In the Stamford Papers in the John Rylands Library, catalogue editor John Hodgson says, "Following the arrival of the railway in Altrincham in 1849, the 7th Earl of Stamford took advantage of the increased demand for land by selling building plots in Altrincham, Hale, Bowdon, Dunham Massey and Bollington, whilst reserving an annual chief rent. In the absence of local authority planning controls, Lord Stamford imposed restrictions on the number of buildings, the materials used and the future use the buildings. The

sale of plots was continued by his agents after his move from Dunham Massey to Enville Hall in 1855 and by his trustees after his death in 1883, and continued into the 20th century."

John has identified the Bowdon Hydropathic Establishment on an OS plan (EGR14/14/6) as building grounds BG81 and BG91. BG81 was sold to Samuel Kenworthy, hydropathist of Altrincham in 1871 (EGR14/13/3/64), while BG91 was sold to Thomas Warrington, builder of Altrincham, in 1873 (EGR14/13/3/74).

Samuel Kenworthy, hydropath



Samuel Kenworthy (Malcolm Shifrin)

Worrall's *Directory of Cheshire* 1871 lists Samuel Kenworthy as the proprietor of the Bowdon Hydropathic Establishment on Langham Road, as does an advertisement in the *Manchester Guardian* of June 30th 1871.

Samuel Kenworthy was born in Oldham in 1836 and in the 1851 census was recorded as an 'iron moulder'. In 1861 he was living with his father Charles in Oldham who was connected with the firm of Lees & Co, engineers and iron moulders. Samuel became interested in hydropathy after visiting Matlock for his health and studied in his spare time.

Samuel set up his first hydro in the Isle of Man where he met and married Esther Backwell and they had two sons Arthur (b.1864 Oldham) and George (b.1868 Altrincham). In 1871 he was listed as running a hydropathic establishment in Bowdon while living on Stockport Road, Altrincham with his wife, brother Charles who was his assistant, two servants, two lodgers, and his sons Arthur and George, a substantial household. Having purchased land in Bowdon on 20th May 1871 to built the Bowdon Hydro on Langham Road, he lost no time in advertising it widely in the spring of the same year. By 1876 he had also established a hydropathic establishment on the corner of Bold Street/Bath Street, Southport and in 1881 and 1891 is recorded as living in Southport.

Dr Alastair Durie in a paper given to the Scottish Church History Society in 2001 quotes him as a "veteran hydropath of Stockport," saying that he "was asked what he thought about the growing practice of providing entertainments. He said that 'at peak holiday times there might be some

relaxation, but only within very strict limits: we certainly don't approve of dancing or alcoholics'." Stockport is a misprint for Southport where he moved in the middle of the 1870s and lived until his death in 1899 aged 63. His son Dr Arthur Kenworthy took over the business. In the 1880s Samuel published a treatise on "the treatment of common complaints and hydro," and in 1889 a directory of hydros in England and Scotland. Samuel advertised himself as a hydropathic physician, licensed by the Hygeia-therapeutic College in New York. An advertisement in the *Manchester Guardian* for The Limes Hydro in Southport of the 19th May 1894 listed it as having "separate suites of Turkish, Russian, electro-chemical and hydropathic baths for men and women."

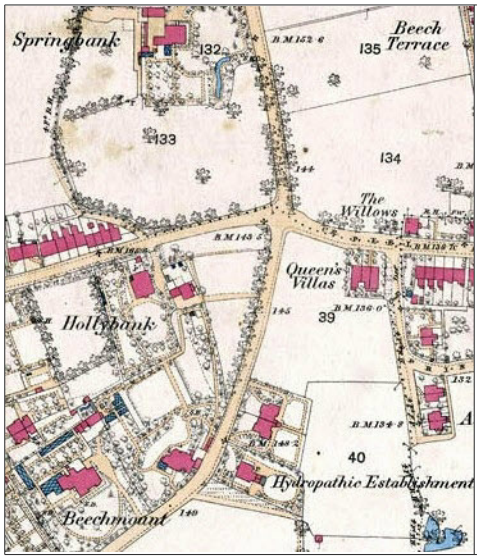
Thomas Warrington, builder

Warrington family history records that Thomas Warrington and his son George Harry built the Bowdon Hydro, though no other evidence has come to light. Thomas Warrington was born in Altrincham in 1821, trained as a carpenter and joiner and became a builder in Altrincham. From 1859 to 1887 he acquired building land from the Stamford estate, constructing eleven large houses in Barrington Road; Grimsworthy, Hadleigh, and Westleigh in Groby Road; and shops in George Street. The planning records show that in 1897 Thomas also applied to build a music hall and theatre in George Street although there is no evidence that he succeeded with this plan.

In 1872/74 Thomas Warrington was a member of the Altrincham Local Board, the forerunner of the local council. In 1873 and 1874 he again bought land in Bowdon from the Stamford estate, consisting of plot refs BG91 on 9 Aug 1873 (EGR14/13/3/74) and BG98 on 21 Dec 1874 (EGR14/13/3/80). On the former he built a pair of large semi-detached houses, Langham Lea and Hawthorn Lea, next to the Bowdon Hydro with a chief rent of £26.6.8. On the latter he built a pair of large semi-detached houses, Farley Lodge and Stancliffe on the corner of Cavendish Road and Delamer Road with a chief rent of £34. At the time his address was Chapel Road (the lower part of the present Regent Road).

George Harry Warrington

From 1878 to 1887 Thomas Warrington's son George Harry followed in his father's footsteps and bought land in Bentinck Road, Altrincham where he built four houses: Hillside, Grasmere, White Lee, and Rockwood.



The Bowdon Hydropathic Establishment on the 6" OS map surveyed 1876.

The Bowdon Hydro

The front of the large building was on Langham Road but the bulk of it faced south. It was built on part of a field called Cook's Cross which was glebe (parish) land belonging jointly to the Bishop of Chester and the Earl of Stamford. The Hydro, as it became known, attracted patients suffering from respiratory problems. It provided spa and electrical therapy and contained a public Turkish Baths. People came from some distance to this treatment centre which used water from a large capped well fed by a spring out of Bowdon Hill, found on the site during building work at the rear in the 1970s, to prime a tank in the roof. It is unlikely that the spring water contained healing minerals but probably some iron was present from sandy Bowdon Hill. The electrical treatment consisted of a chair for the person to sit in with containers for arms and legs to which batteries would be attached in various combinations, not unlike TENS machines used today for pain relief. The facilities are listed in directories of 1883 and 1898.

The *Manchester Guardian* of 11 August 1902 advertised the Bowdon Hydropathic Establishment as having:

> "An Excellent situation. Turkish Massage and all hydropathic treatment. Every comfort. Terms moderate. Good private rooms. Tel 0207."

An advertisement in the *Altrincham Guardian Year Book* for 1907 also described the establishment:

> "Arthur Cotterill is the manager and offers A Delightful First-class Residence for Families as Visitors, or Patients wanting treatment, Russian, Steam Baths, Packs, Massage etc. Commercial men

accommodated. Near Hale and Altrincham Stations. Telephone no. 1207."

The 1911 *Altrincham Guardian Yearbook* advertised first-class accommodation from 7s per day (£2 2s 0d per week), Smedley's System of Hydropathy, and the Latest Electric Baths. In a guide to Hale in the 1920s the Hydro advertised facilities for billiards, tennis and croquet. There were also garages and the hydropathic, electrical treatment and massage were still advertised.

The Bowdon Hotel

In 1967 Noel White and Peter Swales, directors of Altrincham Football Club, each bought a one-third share of the hotel. In 1968 Noel moved in to run the business and in 1969 took over as sole owner. At that time an item remaining from the hydro days was a unit finished in copper with a tap fixed to the door frame leading from the entrance hall into the bar area. The Hydro name was dropped in 1969 and it became the Bowdon Hotel as there was no longer any hydropathic treatment on the premises. However about 1970 when builders were remodelling the lower ground floor, they came across a section of white glazed bricks. This is what became the Cheshire Bar and Cheshire Suite, so there was still some hydro evidence remaining at that time.

Noel extended the building to the south and later bought the two large semi-detached houses in Langham Road to the north, numbers 1 and 3, Langham Lea and Hawthorn Lea, which were built in yellow brick similar to the Bowdon Hotel. Beyond that was part of Garner's Nurseries which also had land across Langham Road, now Garner Close. Noel later bought the land next to Langham Lea and Hawthorn Lea from the Garners to use as a car park and donated a small area of land at the northern end to Bowdon UDC. He carried out the first extension to the south in 1972, creating 21 extra bedrooms and laid out the car park. When Noel carried out this extension, the contractors had some difficulty with what they termed 'shifting sands', presumably a spring used to supply the hydro.

A colour leaflet of 1982/3 described the facilities: There were 41 bedrooms each with a radio, colour TV and phone, all but three with ensuite bathrooms. There were facilities for business conferences, banquets, receptions, and dinner dances every Saturday, in three suites: the Marlborough, the Cheshire



The Bowdon Hotel in 2011

and the Executive. Dining was for residents and non-residents and offered 40 main dishes.

The Bowdon Hotel Ltd and the land were sold in January 1986 to Frames Tours Ltd, including planning permission to link the two houses to the north. They carried out the extensions seen today in about 1992. The Bowdon Hotel is now part of the Mercure chain and includes a health club with a gym, an indoor swimming pool, a spa pool, a sauna, a steam room and a solarium, not too dissimilar from the original hydro facilities.

Oral history

There are many springs out of Bowdon Hill caused by rain drainage in the deep sand hitting the underlying clay. One spring may have been used to power a fustian mill built near to the hotel site in 1776 where Garner Close is now, just above Langham Road. Another spring would have supplied water to the Hydro well. Local historian Alfred Tarbolton wrote that streams bordering both sides of the present Ashley Road linked up with various tributaries in South Downs Road including one coming from the direction of the Bowdon Hydropathic Establishment. All of these springs have now been culverted but there was evidence of their presence when Willowtree Road and Ashley Road sewers were renewed in 2010 and the contractor had some difficulties draining the Ashley Road area.

Local tradition says that a medicinal well existed in medieval times at the junction of what is now Stamford Road, Ashley Road, Langham Road and Marlborough Road. 'The Springs' still exist in Bow Green Road used by Victorians for fresh water, now sadly covered over but, when visible, were full of fresh-water shrimps, a good sign of pure water.

Harold Trenbath and friends often visited the Turkish Baths at the Hydro, as recommended by local GPs, to alleviate arthritis in the 1920s. One could see patients sunning themselves in the glass veranda overlooking the rose beds of Garners Nursery which were a local 'sight' in spring and summer.

Many very wealthy patients, particularly women, travelled some distance in expensive Rolls-Royces and Bentleys with chauffeurs and personal maids, for treatment at the Bowdon Hydro. The cars were parked at the rear of the

building on Marlborough Road where the chauffeurs would attend and clean them when not travelling. The chauffeurs would lodge at bed-and-breakfast accommodation often run by the wives of mechanics at the local garages, and would entertain their hosts with interesting gossip from all over the country. Some patients were permanent residents.

It is said that Roger Grey, the last Lord Stamford, used to visit the Bowdon Hydro as a break from Dunham Hall after his mother died.

Samuel Kenworthy and Thomas Warrington had great foresight when they acquired the land from Lord Stamford and built the Bowdon Hydro and adjacent houses.

Thanks to George Higham, John Hodgson, Sue Nichols, Malcolm Shifrin, Ronald Trenbath, Andrea Warrington, Noel White and Trafford Local Studies for their assistance with this article.

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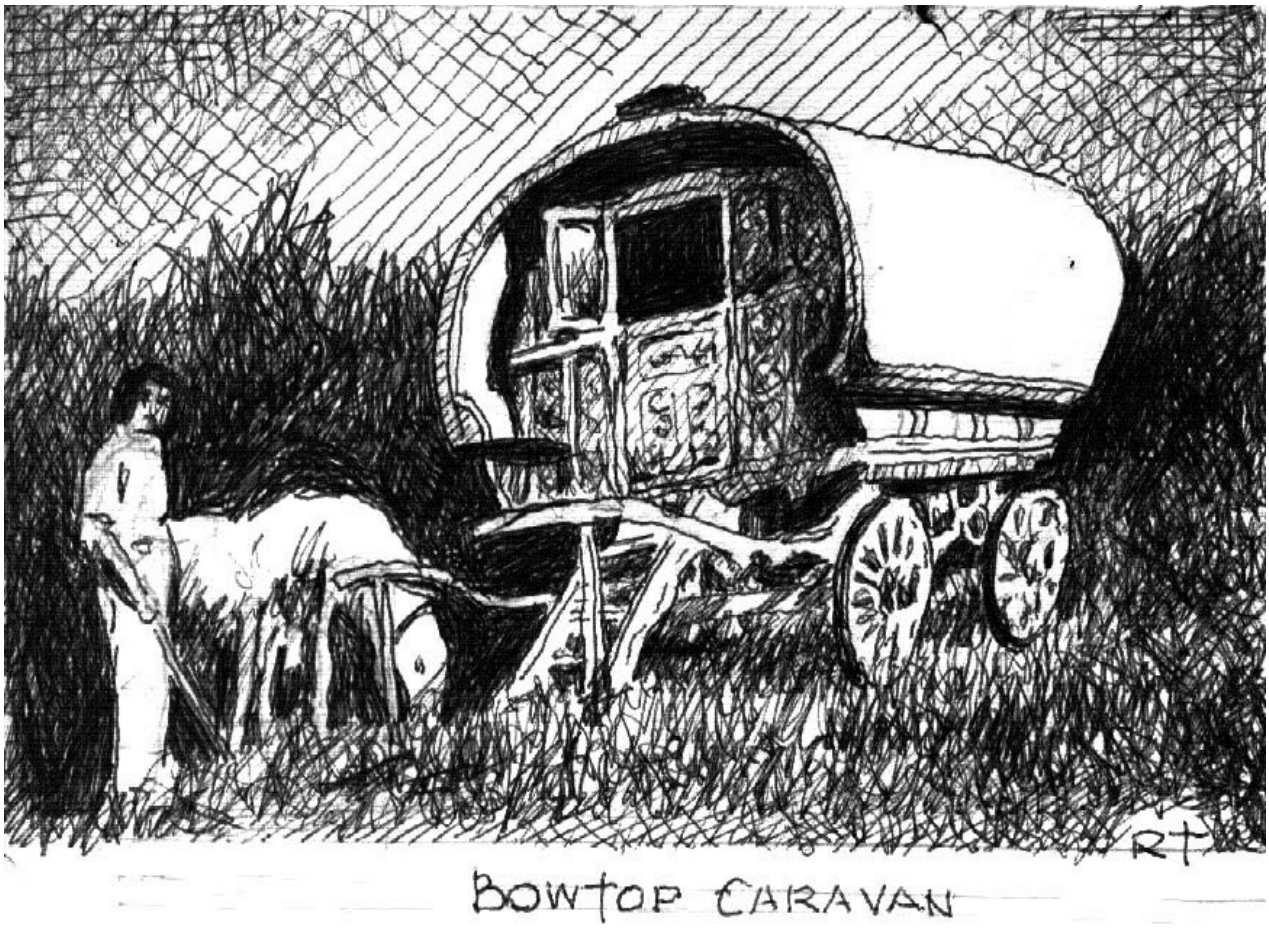

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Gypsies in Bow Green

by Ronald Trenbath

In September 1958 Gypsies, in a Bow Top caravan, encamped with lurchers on waste land in Bow Green Road. Tethering the horse by a long halter to a post in the hedge, leaving ample room for him to graze on the grass supplemented by further food in a nosebag, the children gathered wood and other fuel from the hedge rows, while the father lit a fire prior to searching the fields and woods for edible fruit, herbs, vegetables and wildlife from which the mother prepared a meal in a large iron pot suspended from a tripod over the fire.

Settling around the fire the family enjoyed the evening eating and talking until dusk when the children were put to bed in thick woollen blankets under the caravan into which the parents retired after dark. Examination of the ground later indicated that hedgehogs had formed part of their diet.

The following day the father cycled around local farms undertaking any work available, while the children roamed the urban areas selling home-made clothes pegs and mother carried out the family washing with water brought from Bow Lodge, the nearest house.

The father, a tall, dark, swarthy and well-built man was dressed in normal male dress, common at that time, rather than the more colourful attire with bright head and shoulder scarves and gold earings worn by his father.

Max Chester, of West Bank Farm, remembered a family of gypsies who visited them every year before the war, to assist with the harvest, commencing with hay in May and finishing with potatoes in November. Dominated by an elderly matriarch, they lived in immaculately clean and highly-decorated caravans with cut-glass mirrors, lace, canaries in gilt cages and fine porcelain bought during stops in the Potteries. Max recorded that they were completely honest and trustworthy because they were true Romanys and not rough van dwellers with whom they were often mistaken.

Romanys, or Gypsies as they were called locality from the ancient belief that they were Egyptians, lived by their own very distinctive culture. A matriarchal society, they upheld their ancient rituals involving marriage, virginity outside marriage, the funereal burning of caravans and possessions, penalties for offences against their moral codes, and many other customs

unknown to the uninitiated. They also left secret signs on walls and in hedges to notify their brethren of matters of common interest or concern.

Many people considered that Gypsies possessed mystical powers enabling them to cast a spell to either cure or curse as well as forecast the future, a myth often exploited by a few unscrupulous Gypsies and many other van dwellers such as travellers and Irish tinkers.

The different and distinctive lifestyle caused great suspicion with the general public, particularly in the suburbs, and they were often blamed for the offences of others. Noted for their love of children, they were regularly accused of kidnapping when children disappeared, and when one missing boy at Appleby Horse Fair was discovered with a Gypsy family suspicion of kidnap arose, but in fact the boy had wandered away from his parent and was lost until the Gypsies found him and took him into their care.

Adult Gypsy women sold brooms and brushes or more often baskets which they made from split willow, with handles of ash or hazel, as well as smaller items such as clothes pegs and lace. Knowledgeable in country lore, the male Gypsy was expert in tracking and trapping birds and animals with the aid of home-bred lurchers, and selecting flora for food or herb cures. He was often accused of poaching although many took the precaution of obtaining permission from landowners and gamekeepers before undertaking their practices.

As accomplished equestrians, they usually traded in horses, purchasing discarded or sickly beasts which they doctored and sometimes doped to resell at horse fairs. Max's grandfather saw one such dealer driving a herd of colts up Bow Green Road and fancying one of them made an offer. Well satisfied with the price, he obtained a fine beast with which he started a very lucrative milk delivery round.

Locally the Gypsies travelled singly but often they moved together in convoy between fairs and shows where they parked in circles around fires entertaining themselves, often playing violins. These convoys were regularly seen travelling on the Chester Road to Knutsford for the Royal May Fair and on one occasion a black mobile chapel was seen in the procession.


SHOWMAN WAGON

Gypsy caravans or vardos have been used in this country for at least 250 years, reaching their peak in Victorian times until superseded by petrol-driven horseless carriages. There were two main types of wagon: the large and heavy Showman and the lighter type known as the Bowtop. This was more commonly used by Romanys while the Showman was often associated with non-Gypsy horse dealers, traders, showmen and wealthy travellers who had them specially built to suit their taste with mahogany interiors and cut-glass mirrors.

The major framework was made of hardwood with ash or oak wheels and ash axles, clad at the sides and roofed in pine, the weather boarding and underwork being half clad, with a distinctive barrel-shaped canvas roof with decorated sides, front and back. Both types of caravan were brightly decorated in the baroque folk-art tradition common in this country in previous centuries to be seen on caravans, canal barges, wagons, farm implements and carts, Punch-and-Judy theatres, circuses and fairgrounds, with primitive but colourful decorations inspired by the very much-more-sophisticated work found in stately homes, together with horses brasses designed in the same genre.

This colourful folk art was discouraged by the drab Victorians as vulgar but it lingered on into the twentieth century when the Arts and Crafts Movement realized the impending loss but did very little about it, although Gertrude Jekyll in her excellent book *Old English Household Life* did register mild concern and protest. More recently the value of the caravans has been realized and the renovation and rebuilding of them is now taking place at exorbitant prices to decorate gardens of expensive houses. Folk art is being re-invented with the graffiti decorations on boring bare walls in areas of deprivation and studied and catered for as an ingredient to, hopefully, help heal our sick society following the first decade of the twenty-first century.

Haigh Lawn Hospital

by David Miller

Haigh Lawn on St. Margaret's Road, Altrincham, was built in 1869 as a mansion for George Hodgkinson, a cotton manufacturer. However, during the First World War it served as a hospital when it was lent by the then owner Richard W Shiers as an annexe to Altrincham General Hospital for the treatment of injured officers from Britain and the Colonies. It opened on 14 February 1915 with 40 beds, which increased that summer to 58 with a tent in the garden to provide four more beds for septic cases. Bowdon Assembly Rooms on the Firs was also leased for a yearly rent of £60. It opened on 27 October 1915 with 48 extra beds, making total of 106.





Auxiliary military hospitals such as Haigh Lawn were operated by Voluntary Aid Detachments (VADs) recruited mainly by the British Red Cross and organised on a county basis. The vice president of the Cheshire branch was Lady Penelope Stamford of Dunham Hall. VAD Cheshire/82 in the Altrincham Division was registered on 25 January 1915 to staff Haigh Lawn under Commandant Mary Hewlett Johnson, the wife the Rev. Hewlett Johnson vicar of St Margaret's Church, later the famous 'Red Dean' of Canterbury Cathedral. Hewlett Johnson opposed the war, but agreed to be the chaplain to the prisoner-of-war camp at Sinderland. The Quarter Master at Haigh Lawn was Mrs Fleming Spence and the Medical Officer in charge, Dr Brian Melland.

The British Red Cross Branch Handbook for 1915 has a description of VAD Cheshire/82 as on 6 March 1915. There were about 70 members in the Altrincham Detachment, of whom 30 were nurses. The rest were cooks and helpers in the housework. 17 nurses and 12 helpers were on duty over a 24-hour period. One member of the detachment was on special service at a military hospital in Stockport.

Auxiliary hospitals rarely treated serious injuries and so the cases at Haigh Lawn were those suffering from rheumatism, gas and frostbite. Their requirements were especially warmth, newspapers and gramophone records. Electric light and gas were supplied at a reduced rate, and water free of charge. In addition many gifts of beds and equipment were received, including 20 beds and lockers from the staff of Oldham Road goods depot of the Lancashire & Yorkshire Railway, and beds and bedding from friends in Ancoats.

The hospital was liberally supported by subscriptions and donations from individuals, and the War Office gave a grant of two shillings per man per day. In 1915 the actual cost per man per day was two shillings and nine pence halfpenny. In the same year the treasurer of the hospital reported that the total income had been £2648. Expenditure consisted of food £982, equipment £280, medical £126, coal & light £151, stationery £23, laundry £69, wages £232, repairs £35, rent £12, and sundries £58 – a total of £1870 giving a surplus of £680.

The club house at Bowdon Croquet Club was used to house nurses staffing the Haigh Lawn Hospital, and wounded soldiers were allowed the use of one of the lawns. However, because of the demands of the war on resources the club could not maintain the greens. In 1917 one solution was to let sheep graze on the lawns but they were replaced by goats and their milk sold to the Haigh Lawn Hospital for the benefit of 'delicate soldiers'. There was also a 'fowl house' on the terrace. The nearby Devisdale was also used for recreation.

Mary Johnson's name is among those listed in the *Manchester Guardian* in 1917 and 1919 as being awarded Red Cross Honours. There is also a plaque and a flag in St. Margaret's Church commemorating the work of VAD Cheshire/82 at Haigh Lawn and its annexe between 14 February 1915 and 31 May 1919. When Mary died in 1931 the *Manchester Guardian* of 17 January

reported in her obituary that: "*Under her leadership the Cheshire BRCS offered an auxiliary Red Cross hospital in 1915 at Haigh Lawn, initially 64 beds rising to 194 after several extensions and annexes at the Assembly Rooms and the Congregational Hall* [presumably at Bowdon Downs Church] *Mrs Hewlett Johnson was the commandant, livewire, and the inspiration of the hospital. A large contingency of Canadians and New Zealanders came under her care. Some said that Haigh Lawn was a reminder of home.*"

Inside the porch at the entrance to the main building of Haigh Lawn today there is a plaque which commemorates its use during the First World War. The inscription reads: "*Haigh Lawn was originally built by Mr George Hodgkinson on land acquired from the Earl of Stamford in 1872. In 1915 the second owner Mr Richard Shiers lent the house to the Red Cross for use as a Military Hospital. A complete internal reconstruction was carried out to create these apartments by the Newcombe Estate Company Ltd in 1983*." The present mansion and outbuildings now house 22 apartments.

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Captain Edward Kinder Bradbury, VC

by David Miller

Edward Kinder Bradbury (one of two Altrincham VCs) was born at Parkfield, Groby Place, Altrincham, on 16th August 1881 the son of Judge J K Bradbury who practised on the Bury-Bolton circuit. Edward was awarded the VC, the highest award for bravery, for his heroism under fire in a battle in Northern France during WWI. He was educated at Marlborough College and passed out of the Royal Military Academy at Woolwich entering the Royal Artillery in May 1900. He was promoted to lieutenant in April 1901 and

from January to October 1902 he was employed with the Imperial Yeomanry for service in the Cape Colony during the latter stages of the Boer War. He received the medal for South Africa with two clasps. From February 1905 to March 1907 he was employed with the King's African Rifles, and promoted to captain on 4th February 1910. Captain Bradbury was a respected man among his fellow officers. Whilst on leave he was a keen fisherman and rider. He hunted with the hounds in County Cork, Ireland, and on a very wet day at Punchtown Races in Ireland he won the 'Soldiers Race' on his own horse named 'Sloppy Weather'.

On the outbreak of the Great War Captain Bradbury was second-in-command of 'L' Battery, Royal Horse Artillery with the British Expeditionary Force which, after being faced by an enemy far superior in number to our own, was retreating from Mons in Belgium on 1 September 1914. His award of the Victoria Cross was gazetted on 2 November 1914. Néry – a remote, ancient village northeast of Paris – lay on the path of the retreat.

'L' Battery was attached to the first Brigade of Cavalry and provided firepower to the cavalry with their six quick-firing thirteen-pounder guns. They were the last to arrive in Néry late in the afternoon of August 31st. It had been a very hot day and they had stopped on the way to water their horses. They had to bivouac in an open field at the extreme south end of the village and therefore well to the rear.

They moved right out in the open in order to lay down good horse lines. Orders had been given overnight for the units of the Brigade to be saddled up and ready to march at dawn but a dense mist delayed any start. At 5.45 am high explosive shells began to fall on the village from twelve German guns situated on high ground less than a thousand yards away.

The German guns concentrated their fire on the horse lines of 'L' Battery and the Queen's bays next to them. The unit soon became a shambles as 150 horses were blown to pieces and many men had been killed or wounded. Major Sclater-Booth, the Battery Commander, was at the Brigade Headquarters to find the latest news.

Captain Bradbury raced forward, calling out for volunteers. When the men heard his rallying call "Come on! Who's for the guns?" They all responded "I am." Bradbury's rallying call is famous all over the world. Today at the assembly of the US Army Reserve Blue Devils Horse Platoon, who represent

the US Army and the US Army Reserve as a mounted ceremonial and equestrian sport unit, the call is made to the platoon “Who's for the guns?” and the answer by each member is “I am.” They say it is “In honour of the Kings Troop Royal Horse Artillery” but in fact, to be more precise, they pay tribute to Captain E K Bradbury, VC.

A number of men responded to Bradbury and they succeeded in manhandling three guns against the enemy to return fire. Two of these guns were soon hit and put out of action leaving only ‘F’ sub section under Captain Bradbury acting as layer and Sergeant David Nelson, acting as range setter. Sergeant Nelson found the range at 750 yards but he was soon wounded, and to add to that problem the ammunition wagons were 20 yards away. Battery Sergeant Major George Dorrell then arrived to assist and Captain Bradbury ordered Sergeant Nelson to seek medical attention, but he refused, stating that he couldn’t move anyway.

BSM Dorrell then relieved Captain Bradbury instead, and the captain ran across to the ammunition wagon under intense enemy fire and was hit by a shell which blew off his leg. Despite this crippling wound he managed to support himself on the other leg and continued to direct the fire of the gun until he was hit again. Captain Bradbury died later. Twelve German guns were eventually captured.

Captain Bradbury was buried at the Néry Communal Cemetery in France. His Victoria Cross was presented to his mother by King George V at Buckingham Palace (his father had died in 1913). RSM Dorrell and Sergeant Nelson were also awarded the V.C. The three Néry Victoria Crosses are now in the possession of ‘L’ (Néry) Battery Royal Horse Artillery at Woolwich, along with the ‘Néry Gun’. At dawn on 1st September each year the action is remembered by ‘L’ Battery who present a thirteen-pounder field gun and a single shot.

Captain Bradbury died on 1st September 1914 and Altrincham Higher Elementary School was renamed Bradbury Central School in his honour. The ‘L’ (Néry Battery) Members’ Association intend to visit the village of Néry in 2014 to commemorate the centenary of the action at Néry.).

Peter Kemp

Peter John Kemp, who died on 17 July 2012, was a founder member of the Bowdon History Society. Born in the South of England, he moved with his family to the North West when his father, a World War One aerial combat pilot, was transferred in his job.

Educated at Altrincham Grammar School for Boys, Peter was a prize-winning pupil, gaining very high marks in the Civil Service Entrance Examinations. After the outbreak of war he enlisted in the RAF and was sent to America for training. He was promoted to the rank of Flight Lieutenant and, instead of returning to Britain, was retained in America to train both British and American airmen. When he returned to this country he continued as an instructor, always regretting not participating in active service.

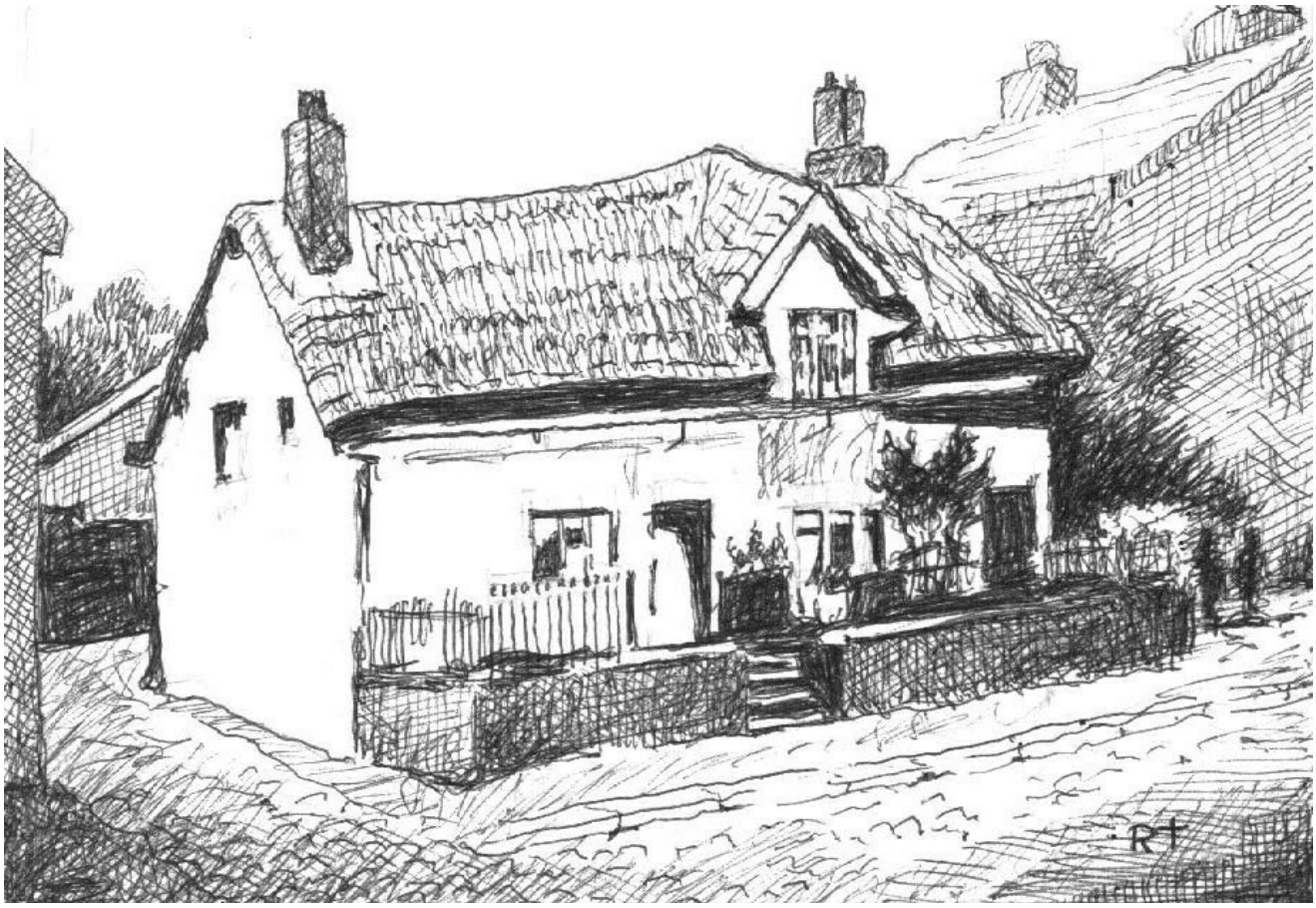
After the war Peter rejoined the Civil Service in which he served for 30 years with a distinguished management career, during which time he met his wife Edwina, to whom he was married for 60 years, raising two sons and a grandson.

Peter's interest in local history was awakened when he moved to Downs Villa, 14 Higher Downs, the former home of Juliana Ewing the Victorian writer of children's stories, and next door to the home of twentieth-century author Alison Uttley. He researched the history of the Higher Downs, giving lectures and publishing a booklet. He went on to assist, as co-author, with a book on *Bowdon Hall and Its People* and a short history of *Bowdon and Dunham Massey*, as well as many other publications on the subject and also contributed to the *Bowdon Sheaf* many times.

As a member of Family History Societies in Essex and Cheshire, Peter was keenly interested in all aspects of family and local history, playing an important role in the formation and directing of the Bowdon History Society.

Peter was honoured to be elected a Liveryman of the Worshipful Company of Coopers and a Freeman of the City of London.

RT 2012.



Does anyone recognise this cottage? It is similar to one which used to be at the bottom of The Downs on the corner of Ashley Road but this has been discounted.

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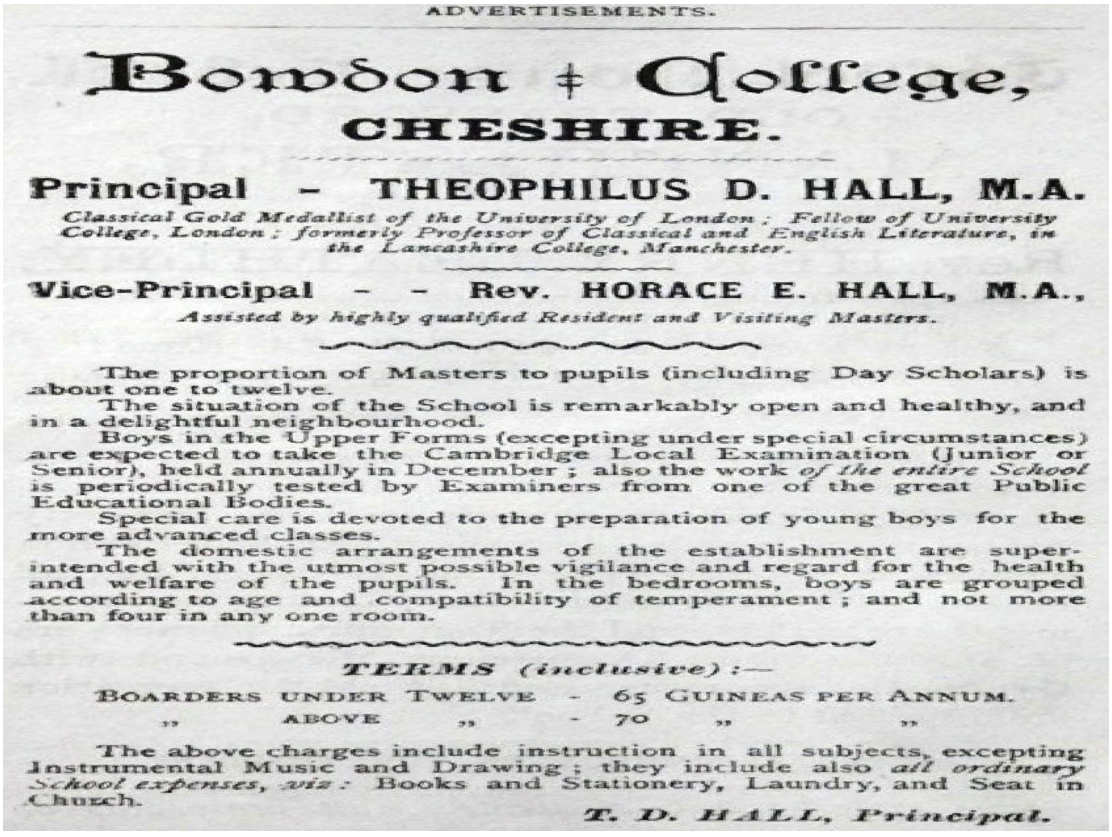
An Unexpected Connection with Bowdon's Musical Greats **Chris Hill**

Alfred Tarbolton **David Miller**



ADVERTISEMENTS.

Bowdon College, CHESHIRE.

Principal – THEOPHILUS D. HALL, M.A.

Classical Gold Medallist of the University of London; Fellow of University College, London; formerly Professor of Classical and English Literature, in the Lancashire College, Manchester.

Vice-Principal – – Rev. HORACE E. HALL, M.A.,

Assisted by highly qualified Resident and Visiting Masters.

The proportion of Masters to pupils (including Day Scholars) is about one to twelve.

The situation of the School is remarkably open and healthy, and in a delightful neighbourhood.

Boys in the Upper Forms (excepting under special circumstances) are expected to take the Cambridge Local Examination (Junior or Senior), held annually in December; also the work *of the entire School* is periodically tested by Examiners from one of the great Public Educational Bodies.

Special care is devoted to the preparation of young boys for the more advanced classes.

The domestic arrangements of the establishment are superintended with the utmost possible vigilance and regard for the health and welfare of the pupils. In the bedrooms, boys are grouped according to age and compatibility of temperament; and not more than four in any one room.

TERMS (inclusive):—

BOARDERS UNDER TWELVE - 65 GUINEAS PER ANNUM.
" ABOVE " - 70 " "

The above charges include instruction in all subjects, excepting Instrumental Music and Drawing; they include also *all ordinary School expenses, viz:* Books and Stationery, Laundry, and Seat in Church.

T. D. HALL, Principal.

SSN-0265-816X



Dr Adolph Brodsky

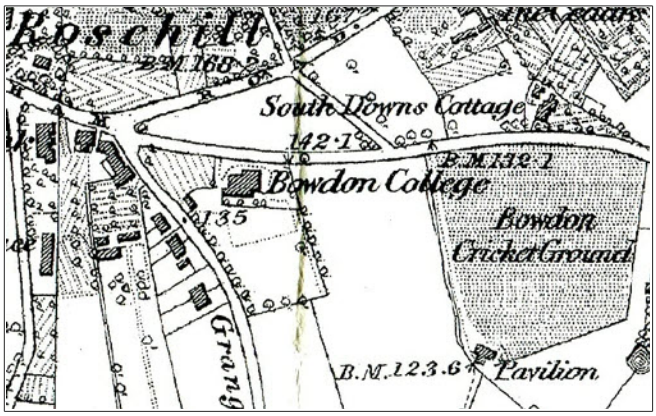
Bowdon College

by David Miller

Bowdon College on South Downs Road was a flourishing private school between 1874 and 1936, taking day pupils and boarders from 8 to 18.

In 1880 school attendance had become compulsory for pupils up to age 10 gradually rising to 15 in 1947. The 1902 Balfour Education Act made County and County Borough Education Committees responsible for higher education and the result was grant-maintained grammar schools with scholarships from primary schools resulting in the great expansion of low-cost public education and the establishment of many successful primary, secondary and grammar schools in the area.

Many of the early schools followed the national pattern of being associated with churches or were privately owned. Bowdon had a free grammar school in Richmond Road from 1553 which was rebuilt twice and eventually became Bowdon Church Primary School. However the Bowdon area provided an opportunity for private education, especially in the Victorian era when many schools opened.



Bowdon College on the 1876 OS map

By 1870 Professor Theophilus Dwight Hall, a professor of law, Greek and Latin who lived at 10 Higher Downs, had taken over from Professor T. M. D. Meiklejohn who ran a day and boarding school at Rosehill, South Road, Bowdon (subsequently a laundry, now apartments). Its success caused the demise of Bowdon Grammar School at Oldfield House in Oldfield Brow, set up in 1761. Professor Hall renamed it Bowdon College and in 1874 transferred the school to the South Downs Road site. He had bought building ground on what had been part of Bowdon Moss from Lord Stamford in 1870 and built the college on a field called Big Moss on the corner of South Downs Road and Grange Road.

As pupils increased he added more land in 1875 south to the footpath to York Drive and east to Bowdon Cricket Ground, most of which was later used by Altrincham Grammar School for Girls. The college was aimed at Altrincham tradesmen who were prepared to pay modest fees for a good education at a secondary school. There was no school board. In its time it was probably the best school in a wide area until state schools gradually took over following the 1902 Education Act.

Professor Hall retired in 1892 when he was succeeded by William Matthew Smith, formerly headmaster and co-owner of Thanet College, Kent who commissioned the two-storey extension on the western side later used by Altrincham Preparatory School.



Bowdon College front from South Downs Road



Bowdon College back

Boys were taught by specialists in classics, maths and science, or modern languages. They were trained for business careers and prepared for Oxford, Cambridge and Manchester universities, as well as technical schools, the Civil Service, Sandhurst and the Navy. Younger boys aged eight or more were specially prepared for public schools and the Osborne Naval College.

The very large main building was then used as the headmaster's house and to house boarders. At the back was a small sports ground surrounded by trees, later used by APS for Sports Days, with a much larger field beyond.

In 1895 a gym, fives courts and a workshop were added and in 1897 new classrooms were built and the drainage completely renewed. In 1903 a physics laboratory was added and in 1911 the chemical laboratory was refitted.

John Whitehead was a pupil at the college during the 1890s and won many prizes for his work, including ten leather-bound books still possessed by the

family, for progress in Latin, English, music, mathematics and modern languages, all signed by William Smith. John joined the family firm in Moscow importing cotton-spinning machinery from the UK.

In 1902 the Bowdon Lawn Tennis Club used the college facilities to stage dramatic and musical evenings to raise money for a new ladies' pavilion.

Basil Morrison happily recalled William Smith who was popularly known as 'Pike' and specialised in English grammar, English literature, religious studies, and business studies. One of his habits was to walk up and down between the desks while peeling an apple and explaining some important aspect of the English language, in such a way that the peel of the whole apple would be carefully preserved, never unbroken and dangling to the floor in one piece! William was undoubtedly a man for whom most of the boys had the highest respect and affection due to his capacity to teach interesting topics, his very good style, his manners, his respect for other people and objects, his integrity, good sportsmanship and religion; sometimes lacking today. He taught these things very simply and painlessly through example.

Pike thought out the school's motto while at Rosehill, ***Nisi Deus, Sine Deo, Nihil*** (a play on words: 'If there is no God without a God, there is nothing') which complemented the school badge – a plain white fleur-de-lis which stood out on the black school caps which the boys at the Grammar School seemed to envy.

In the 1920s there were about 250 pupils. Across Grange Road was Pimlott's shop, used by the college as a tuck shop, as did Altrincham Prep School later.

William Smith worked with Judge Bradbury and others to extend secondary education in Altrincham. He retired as head of Bowdon College in 1925 but continued as a teacher. The Bowdonian Association of the college marked his retirement with a billiard table with all accessories and furniture and a diamond ring for Mrs Smith. The association congratulated him on running such a successful school when private schools were finding it difficult to survive. In later years he took an active part in local politics.

Their son George William Smith took over the headship with his sisters Barnie and Joan who specialised in classics and English. George did not match up to his father in gaining the respect of his pupils and used the cane a lot. Basil Morrison recalled getting the cane most Saturdays for poor

Algebra. He was sent to select a cane from six which varied from thin to thick and to wait by the usual radiator where he pre-heated his hands to minimise pain.

William died in 1933 and George decided to close the school in 1935. A. W. Cowburn, who had two sons at the school, purchased the building and converted it to ten apartments.

The college had a close link with Altrincham Grammar School for Boys and parents from both schools appealed to AGSB headmaster Mr Walter Hamblin for help. Four of his senior teachers William Crabb, Arthur Hill, Edward Mason and Alexander Sherriffs founded a junior school for 5 to 11 year old boys and a limited company was formed with shareholders including Lord Stamford and Messrs. Hamblin, Crabb, Hill, Mason and Sherriffs. Altrincham Preparatory School opened in September 1936 in part of the college building with 23 pupils. At that time Edward Mason was still a senior maths teacher and deputy head teacher at AGSB but became headmaster of APS in 1946 and his wife Edith taught music and speech. They were a very ambitious and dynamic pair. The school used the gym extension as the assembly hall with classrooms over the top and a new staircase on the west side. In 1950 APS bought Highbury, a Victorian girls' school in West Road which currently houses the infants. In 1997 they built a new junior school on Marlborough Road and in 2013 took over the old Bowdon Preparatory School buildings on Stamford Road.

One of the pupils who attended the Bowdon College was local scouter and amateur flying and racing car enthusiast Harry Killick, who was there before WWI.

Ashley Cricket Club have records of matches with Bowdon College in 1899 and 1900.

Finally a snapshot from the Victorian era: the 1882 book *Beauties of Shakespeare* by the Rev. W. Dodd was recently for sale on eBay at £70. It contains the following inscription: "Prize for Best Influence and Fellowship award to Ford Smith by the Masters and Boys of Bowdon College, July 1892, W. M. Smith, Headmaster." The book cover is in gilded, tooled leather with the Bowdon College emblem on the front.

Bowdon College was demolished in 1998 and College Flats built on the site. Pike's adjacent house, The Oak, was retained at that time but later replaced by a modern house. Opposite on South Downs Road is a commemorative bench to Ted and Edie Mason provided by their step-daughter Barbara Bale (neé Bayman).



Altrincham Preparatory School (Altrincham Area Image Archive)

Acknowledegments
Alec Jeakins for details of his great-uncle John Whitehead.
The late Basil Morrison for his recollections of 'Pike'.

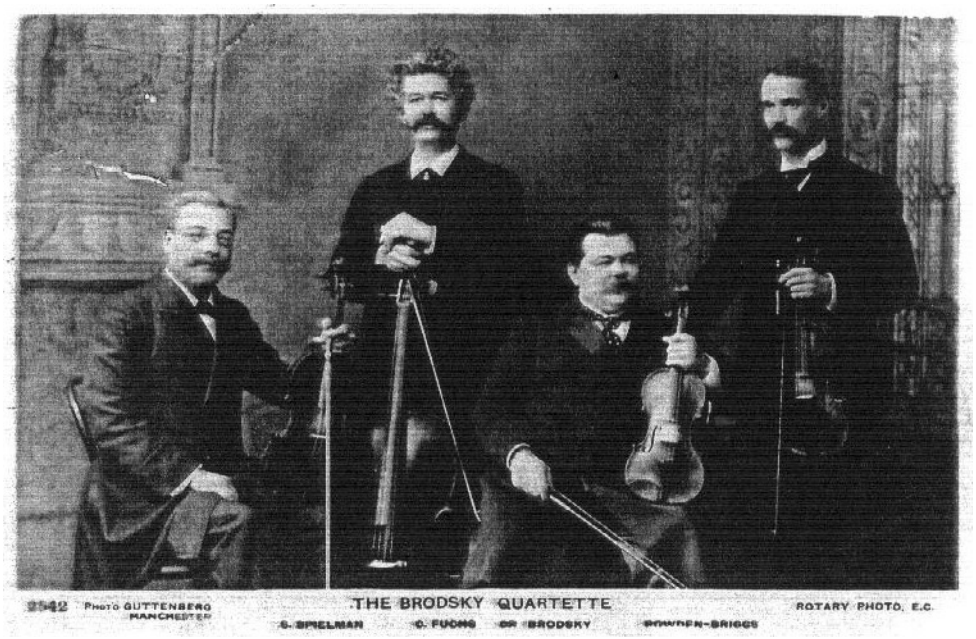
Sources

Altrincham Guardian, March 20 1925.
Altrincham Preparatory School website.
Guardian Year Book for 1912.
Myra Kendrick, *Victorian Schools in Bowdon*, 1996.
Stamford Papers in John Rylands Library:
building ground 78, 4 August 1870 (EGR14/13/3/61).
building ground 101, 31 December 1875 (EGR14/13/3/82).

There are also copies of the college magazine The Bowdonian in the Cheshire Record Office with the college history in the December 1928 issue (not investigated).

An Unexpected Connection With Bowdon's Musical Greats

by Chris Hill



The second Brodsky Quartet with Simon Speelman (conductor), Carl Fuchs (cello), Adolf Brodsky (violin), and Christopher Rawdon Briggs (violin).

While I was attending one of Andrew Wilde's piano recitals to benefit the Young Musicians Trust, in the post-recital discussions Adolf Brodsky was mentioned and a couple offered me a picture of this great violinist. There is a Blue Plaque on the house where he lived in Richmond Road. When the postcard came, it depicting the 'Brodsky Quartet', consisting of S. Spielman, C. Fuchs, Dr. Brodsky and C. Rawdon Briggs. Like Andrew Wilde, the Brodsky Quartet played to raise money for needy musicians and over 23 years collected £2000. The reverse of the postcard was also of particular interest. The card was from Brodsky himself to Mrs. Behrens at 'Holly Royde' (the venue for many musical soirées), 30 Palatine Road, Withington, posted 19 April 1904. The message was in German. The name Behrens struck a chord with me, as I remembered the name occurring in a list of participants of 'Musical Evenings in Bowdon', the subject of a book which is one of the Treasures left to our History Society by Mrs Daintree, a late member. Miss. D. Behrens, presumably the daughter of Gustav, contributed to several 'evenings' giving pianoforte solos and duets and also vocal items. She also gave a talk on Schumann during one of the musical evenings, held

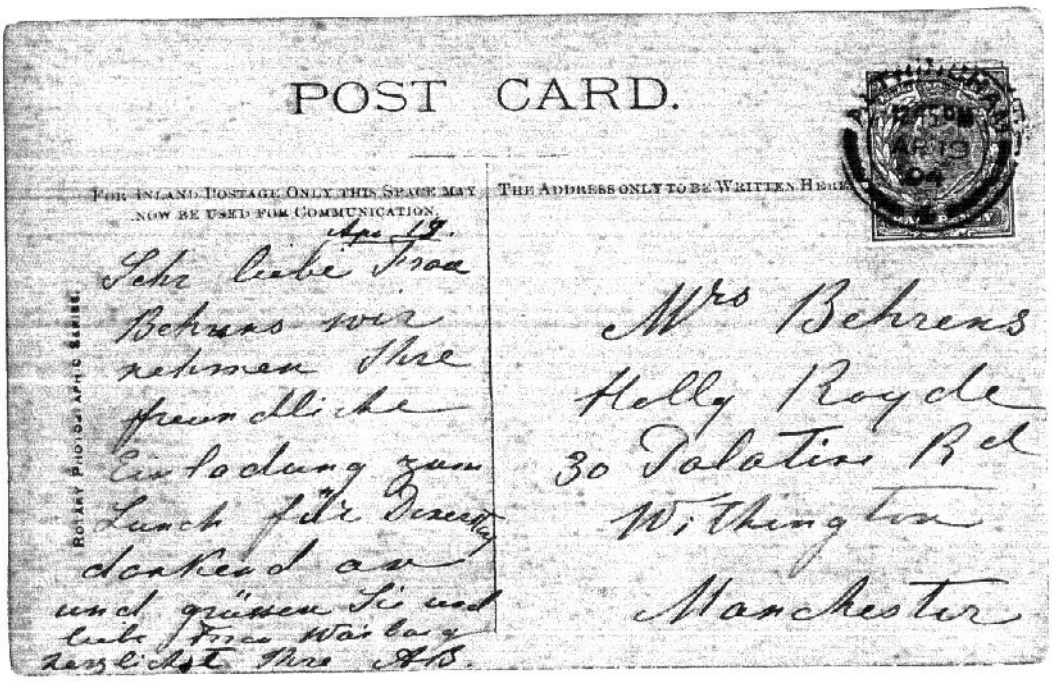
on 12 December 1905, at ‘Woodleigh’, a house on the corner of Suffolk Road and Harrington Road. In more recent times, a Mr. Tombs, an architect who had offices in Manchester, lived at 'Woodleigh' and I, along with other youngsters, used to visit the house to cut stamps from the office mail, which were then packaged and sold to raise money for a some worthy cause connected with the Hale Road Baptist Church of which Mr. Tombs was a member.

Miss. Behrens lived at ‘Holmacre’, just opposite 'Woodleigh' (a grade II listed building) and during the War both houses were used to billet evacuees. Because this included children who were sent to Oldfield Brow Primary School, I became friendly with some, especially with a lad whose surname was Gifford (I think he eventually emigrated to Australia and set up a successful business) and so I was a frequent visitor and remember the house had a large room containing a stage, no doubt once used for musical evenings.

'Woodleigh' is another house which bears a Blue Plaque, designed for the Bowdon Conservation Group by Tom Pitfield, another ‘musical great’ who lived in East Downs Road.

Brodsky of course was an internationally known violinist who was jointly leader of the Hallé and Principal of the Royal College of Music. However, only two days after landing in England from New York, Hallé, the conductor of the orchestra, had a stroke and died. Brodsky took over his position while the Hallé Concerts Society, chaired by Gustav Behrens, thought that Brodsky was wasting his talent as a violinist by concentrating his attention on conducting and therefore sought to have Hans Richter take up the post of conductor. Four years passed before Hans Richter came to the Hallé in Manchester and took up residence at ‘The Firs’, on The Firs. Later on, Sir Leonard Behrens became chairman of the Hallé Concerts Society, serving from 1932 to 1974. A frequent visitor to Hans Richter was Edward Elgar whose own house was called ‘The Firs’. I wonder which came first?

Another personal connection with ‘Woodleigh’, was that having learned to play the violin under the tuition of Clarice Dunnington (a Hallé violinist), I accompanied a small group of friends carol singing one Christmas at the big houses in Bradgate and Dorset Roads, sometime during the forties.



Alfred Tarbolton, Lawyer, Local Councillor & Local Historian

by David Miller

Alfred Tarbolton was an important local historian who lived variously in Hale, Bowdon and Altrincham. He published many booklets on Hale and fought for Hale's autonomy in local government.

William Alfred Tarbolton was born in Chorlton-on-Medlock on 14 April 1861, the son of G. S. Tarbolton who was a partner in a transport firm, after which his parents moved to Whalley Range, probably from Hull where GS had changed his name from Tarbotham. He was educated privately, articled as a solicitor in 1878 and was admitted in 1883. He became a partner in the Manchester firm of Brett, Hamilton and Tarbolton. In 1902 he was made a Justice of the Peace, a post he held for 30 years and Honorary Secretary and later a President of the Manchester Law Society, which society he served for 33 years. He became Commissioner of Income Tax for the Altrincham District.

In 1883 Alfred married Hannah Elizabeth Jones, another solicitor and the daughter of T. E. Jones, also a solicitor, and in 1885 they moved to Hale.

In 1887 Hale Parish Council resolved to work towards local autonomy. In 1898 ratepayers met at the Bleeding Wolf public house, Ashley Heath and a committee was appointed including Alfred to co-operate with the Parish Council. In 1899 he was appointed gas lighting inspector for Hale and was elected as the first chairman of Hale Urban District Council in 1900. He was responsible for preserving many of the old council records from the 17th to the 20th century, which are now in the Chester Record Office. He campaigned to change the name of his local village from Peel Causeway to the more ancient name of Hale, and to preserve its independence from Altrincham.

According to various directories, in 1886 the Tarboltons rented The Lodge, 247 Ashley Road, Hale from William Owen, architect and surveyor who lived at 249. They then lived at Elmhurst, 24 South Downs Road, Ashley Heath from 1898 to 1903. In 1903 he bought land from the Stamford estate and built Athelney (presumably making a link with King Arthur's castle in Somerset), South Downs Road which is in the Arts & Crafts style. Initially he attended Bowdon Downs Church but moved to St. Johns and held various posts there. In 1911 the Tarboltons moved to Altrincham and were living at The Manor House, Woodlands Road, Altrincham in 1929 and attended St. George's Church. Altrincham Methodist Church is on the site of this house.

Alfred Tarbolton became interested in the nursing movement and was Vice-President and Chairman of the Altrincham and District Nursing Association from 1909 to 1922. He took a keen interest in local history and was an exceptional researcher. He was also a poet. After a bad start spending some years searching for the mythical 'Farmer Peel' he did much to preserve the history of the development of Peel Causeway and Hale. He interviewed some of the older people from Hale and produced several publications including *The Handy Book for Hale* (1900), *Local Government in Hale* (1907 in the Altrincham Guardian), *Chapters for Hale Fellows* (1908 in the Altrincham Guardian), *The History of Hale Methodist Church, Local Government in Hale* (1908), *Records of Hale* (1921, originally published in the Altrincham Guardian in 1908), *Ringway Chapel Before the Disruption 1515-1721* (1923, after publication in the Altrincham Guardian of that year), *The Renaissance of Hale* (1925) and *The Story of Peel Causeway* (1929). He also lectured on the subject and in 1932 was working on a book on the

complete history of Hale from Saxon times to the 1920s, the draft of which is in the Chester Record Office in two volumes (LUH4/1) and which was based on Chapters for Hale Fellows and his other works.

In their final years the Tarboltons lived at the original Brooklands Hotel, Brooklands, now demolished. Alfred Tarbolton died on 4 June 1934 and his death is registered at Manchester, reference 8d/102. He has a road in Hale named after him.

The Tarboltons had a daughter Lilias Una born in 1886 who married Captain Archibald James Hepburn in 1911 and they had children Patricia (1912-2007) and Philip Archibald (1915-1993). Captain Hepburn was killed at Gallipoli in 1915 and Una died in 1938 and is buried in Hale Cemetery.

Tarbolton is a unique surname and there were only 37 in the 1901 census. However there appear to be no Tarboltons in the UK currently. There is a small town near Ayr called Tarbolton, which is presumably where the name originated. The town is famous for its Robbie Burns connection where he lived about 1780, and for the Bachelors Club.

With thanks Philip Hepburn for details of his great-grandfather Alfred Tarbolton.

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Max Newman's house in Albert Square

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James Peake, Vicar Of Bowdon (from about 1684 to 1689)

A difficult man in times of crisis

by the late Joan Leach

The Reverend James Peake was vicar of Bowdon for about seven years during the late 17th century. While not one of Bowdon's longest serving vicars and unfortunate to be there during troubled times, he was an independent-minded clergyman at odds with his bishop and left his mark as shown in the diary of the Bishop of Chester. Thomas Cartwright, the bishop, was not a man who won much respect as he curried favour with James II and was the second bishop to be appointed by him at the time when the country was divided by James' attempts to promote the Roman Catholic cause.

Chester was not a wealthy see so it was customary for the bishop to hold the living of Wigan, too. On visiting that church Cartwright was welcomed by three curates one of them being the Rev. James Peake and a little later he wrote in his diary:

"Dec 6 1686. I discharged Mr Peake from attending the cure of Wigan any longer than till Christmas because he is Vicar of Bowdon." It is a mystery why Peake was not already at Bowdon as he seems to have been licensed there in 1684 following the promotion of Richard Wroe, "the silver-tongued preacher" to the wardenship of Manchester College as the Cathedral was then known.

Peake was a Cambridge graduate, BA 1672, MA 1676 and fellow of Magdalen College. His first appointment had been to Great Wilbraham, Cambridge.

He had been appointed to Bowdon by Bishop Pearson, Cartwright's predecessor, in 1684 and about this time Peake married Frances Weston, daughter of the Vicar of Christleton, Chester.

Peake and Bishop Cartwright did not have an easy relationship but unfortunately the diary does not reveal why, though Cartwright wrote that he received *"another satirical letter from Mr Peake which I answered on Dec. 14 1686."* It seems as though he had a sharp tongue and spoke his mind.

In February Lord Clarendon, Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, was in Chester where Cartwright *"Waited upon my lord to the Cathedral where Mr Peake preached a sermon of the duty of government before my Lord Clarendon and Lord Derby instead of a Lenten sermon."*

"24 Feb. My Lord and Mr Thomas Cholmondeley intercede for Mr Peake's indiscretion."

"25 Feb. At night the Governor and Col. Daniel brought Mr Peake to me who made frivolous excuses for his indiscretion of which I gave him a severe reprimand and exhorted him to humility and told him that I believed my counsel was in vain to a man of such pride of spirit and petulancy as I had found him to be and that I would not have thrown it away upon him but at the persuasion of Mr Thomas Cholmondeley, who requested me to try him once more and that if he did amend it was beyond my hopes and that I had withdrawn his licence of preaching but for Mr. C's intercession, but upon his amendment he need not despair of my favour."

On another occasion Cartwright tried to act as peacemaker between Peake and his in-laws:

"lst Sept. 1687 Mrs Weston [the Rev. Peake's mother-in-law] was with me after prayer and I endeavoured to reconcile her to her daughter and her husband who I find hath carried himself as ill to his father-in-law as ever he did to his father in God."

National events were to remove Cartwright and Peake from office. James II, who had appointed the bishop, fled the country with Bishop Cartwright in his wake. James Peake became a non-juror; that is he refused to take the oath of allegiance to William and Mary. A number of clergy and bishops believed that having taken the oath once it was unethical to take it again while the deposed James lived and they were ejected. Some later returned but others suffered hardship for their principles.

It is not clear exactly when Peake left Bowdon. His successor, John Hyde was appointed in 1691 but the register of marriages suggests that the parish may have been left without a resident vicar since from an average of 15 marriages a year there was a slump to only six in 1690, three in 1691, six in 1692 and then up to 16 in 1693.

James Peake moved to Knutsford where he was in trouble again. In 1704, a case of libel was heard by the Chester Consistory Court brought by Mrs Frances Peake against Samuel Leadbeater. Witness, Randle Bostock* stated:

"Mr Leadbeater show'd a great deal of passion and us'd several words against the said plaintiff and her said husband and this deponent (Randle Bostock) reproved him for it and indevor'd to vindicate the reputation of them both…upon which he grew rather more violent and persisted in his ill language and speaking of ye sd. plaintiff hee said shee was a proud whore, a King James' whore and a proud bitch, and speaking of Mr Peake at ye same time hee said he was a Jacobin, a King James rogue or to that effect." (CRO EDC 1704/11).

James was certainly not a popular king, though his attempts to remove penalties on Roman Catholics also helped to win tolerance for dissenters. With William and Mary came the Act of Toleration; it is difficult to tell why the Peakes should still have aroused such passions in 1704.

As late as 1711 the Rev. James Peake was referred to as the late vicar of Bowdon.

* The incident seems to have taken place at The Roebuck Inn. In 1738 Wesley preached from the steps of the inn.

Max Newman - A Distinguished Resident of Bowdon

by Chris Hill

Bowdon seems well furnished with Blue Plaques commemorating artistic residents of national fame who have lived there, but not those with a scientific background. However, a book on Alan Turing by Professor B. Jack Copeland of Canterbury University, New Zealand, published in 2012, mentions that a mathematician, Max Newman, who set up the Royal Society Computing Laboratory at the University of Manchester, lived in Bowden. The mistaken spelling of Bowdon results, probably, from consulting the Max Newman Archive at Plymouth University, where a letter written by Newman to his wife gives his address as Albert Square, Bowden. Newman, like Alan

Turing, had worked during the war at Bletchley Park on code-breaking computers, the machines he was responsible for being the 'Heath Robinson' computer and later, the very fast deciphering computer named 'Colossus', a giant electronic digital computer designed and built by brilliant Tommy Flowers who worked for the Post Office. Before the war, Turing had been a King's College student at Cambridge attending lectures by Prof. Newman, a person of great repute, being considered the foremost mathematician in England. Alan Turing continued his studies at Princeton where he obtained his PhD at Princeton. Newman also did a short spell there. It could be said that Turing was Newman's protégé as he helped Alan with a paper on Godel's Theorem about the validity on which the logic of mathematics was based; Alan having been inspired by one of the lectures and the resulting thoughts, led to the design of a mechanical way of carrying out calculations; hence computers.

When Newman left Bletchley Park he went to Manchester where he bought a house in Albert Square and he chose Alan Turing to be Deputy Director of the computing laboratory (there was no Director). However, Newman brought two of his assistants from Bletchley Park to Manchester, Frederic Williams and Thomas Kilburn, both of whom had experience in electronic circuit design. It seems Turing, when he arrived at Manchester, was given the cold shoulder and only had limited access to the computer Williams and Kilburn were building, which was 'Baby', to be the world's first electronic stored-program digital computer. Turing lived in Hale quite near to Newman, and frequently visited, being considered a family friend; they even went on holiday together. One of Newman's sons, William, became quite friendly with Alan and eventually became a mathematician in his own right.

Some years ago, efforts were made to have a Blue Plaque put up in Hale to Alan Turing, but although the Chancellor of Manchester University agreed to sponsor the Plaque, as part of Trafford's Blue Plaque scheme, it never happened. The Borough was willing to pay for two plaques a year but welcomed extra nominations, if they were sponsored by other bodies and were thought worthy candidates by the Blue Plaque Committee. Newman's contribution to mathematics, and along with Turing, their work on solving the German's wartime coded messages, is considered to have shortened WWII by at least a couple of years and consequently saved many lives.

Additionally, his involvement, both during and after the war, with the development of computers, the use of which has radically changed the present world, is surely worthy of being commemorated by a Blue Plaque.

As well as having been a resident in Albert Square, Newman moved to Grange Road and then, when he decided to return to Cambridge and needed to sell that house, he took a flat in 'Woodleigh', a large house at the far end of Bradgate Road.

The Gaddum Family

by Ronald Trenbath & David Miller

Background to the family

The Gaddums were a local dynasty which made a fortune in textiles, specifically silk. They expanded the technology of the time but also developed liberal and social interests and became important scientific academics. The family originated in Germany and came to England in 1826 to found a cotton and silk empire in Manchester. The Gaddum name is commemorated in a Bowdon road name.

The family name ‘Gaddum’ can be traced back to 1585 and was first recorded in 1604 in Velbert in the duchy of Berg between the Rhine and the Ruhr where a Louis im Gaddum lived. The name Gaddum appears to be related to the word *garten* and may mean an enclosure, a homestead, or a farm. The earliest member of the Gaddum family on record is Johann Wilhelm who was born in Neuwied and died in Manheim.

In 1832 the Gaddum estate in Velbert, where the family had lived for 200 years, was sold. It consisted of four buildings, gardens and farm land. That branch of the family moved to Neuwied and then Mannheim.

Family Tree

The Gaddum family branches are numerous and we are mainly interested in the branch which eventually moved to the Altrincham area. The descent we shall trace is the above Johann Wilhelm (1694-1764) to Philipp Isaak (1745-1784), Johann Jakob (1768-1815), Frederick Edward (1805-1866), Henry

Theadore (1835-1905), Henry Edwin (1865-1940), and John Henry (1900-1965).

Johan Jakob was orphaned at age 16 and in 1788 joined his uncle Heinrich Frohn in Trieste in Frohn & Co and six years later became sole partner. He became the Bavarian consul in Trieste. He had eight children including Friedrich Edward, born in 1805.

Frederick Edward Gaddum 1805-1866

Frederick was born in Trieste in Austria (Trieste was annexed by Italy in 1920) and came to Manchester in 1826. An announcement in *The London Gazette* of 30 June 1847 stated:

"*THE Partnership heretofore subsisting between the undersigned, John Diethelm and Frederick Edward Gaddum, in the business of Merchants, carried on at Manchester, was this day dissolved by mutual consent. All debts due and owing to or by the said firm will be received and paid by the said Frederick Edward Gaddum. John Diethelm. Frederick Edward Gaddum.***"**

Frederick Gaddum became a naturalised Briton on the 23rd September, 1848. He was the first of his family to adopt England as home and built the substantial house Adria, so named to remind him of his Adriatic origins, on Fog Lane, Didsbury, a rural idyll at the time. He was clearly a big cigar smoker and imported 617 lbs of cigars in 1847 and 631 lbs in 1849 but isn't recorded in the 1851 census. In 1853 he had commercial premises in Cross Street, Waterloo Road, and Oxford Road, Manchester. He became a member of the Manchester Chamber of Commerce in 1866, died the same year in Didsbury and was buried in Didsbury Church

Henry Theodore Gaddum 1835-1905

Henry was the first Gaddum to live in Bowdon. He was the son of FE Gaddum and in 1851 he was lodging in Moss Side, Manchester and working in the family business. In 1864 he married Emily Elizabeth Joynson of Ashton-on-Mersey and they lived initially at Brighton Grove, Rusholme, Manchester.

After his father's death, he lived briefly in Italy where he was involved in the silk business. On his return to England, he decided to settle in Bowdon

where he bought land on Green Walk from Lord Stamford and built Oakley, moving there in 1870. In 1875 he left his brothers in the family business to start his own silk company, H T Gaddum & Co.

Henry became a JP and first Chairman of Bowdon UDC in 1894. His many interests included hunting with the Cheshire Hunt, and early motor cars. He had the first telephone installed in the area with the number 'Altrincham 1'. In the 1890s he built Brockhole in the Lake District as a holiday retreat, now a visitor centre.

A keen supporter of the Liberal Party, he was a local benefactor and a very benign magistrate who often paid the fines he had imposed if he thought the accused too poor to pay them. He died at Oakley in 1905.

His widow, bought and registered as M 2420 1909 an Austin 18/24 hp Landaulette, with an opening rear roof section, which was painted green, the most fashionable colour of the time for motorcars (Sheaf 3 1984).

Henry Edwin Gaddum 1865-1940

Harry was the eldest of five surviving sons of H T Gaddum and was born at Brighton Grove, Rusholme. He gained a varied educational experience including in China. On his return to England he lived at Butts Clough Farm on the banks of the River Bollin in Hale Barns purchased by his father from the Leather family. Harry's main interest was not in the business, despite his involvement in it. He developed a social conscience and in 1894 was the Honorary Secretary of Altrincham & Bowdon Provident Society.

In 1899 he married Phyllis Barrett and they first rented High Clere on Hale Road. In 1900 Harry joined the District Provident Society, now the Family Welfare Association.

In 1905 the family moved to the 18th century The Priory in Bowdon Vale which Henry bought and where he had several servants. Three of his six children were born there, with John the eldest. The Priory had previously been Bowdon Church Vicarage but by 1905 this had moved to Park Road. While at the Priory, the family enjoyed walks across the Bollin and Birkin meadows to services at Rostherne Church.

The Manchester District Provident Society had been established in 1833 by Dr James Kay Shuttleworth who had set up the Manchester Board of Health

in 1832, William Langton and Benjamin Heywood. The society was later renamed the Gaddum Society and in July 1936 Gaddum House, the headquarters of the Gaddum Centre, was opened in Queen Street Manchester named after Harry Gaddum, the President of the Society. There is a memorial tablet with the inscription: "Harry Gaddum, 1865-1940, A man greatly loved because greatly loving."

Harry was Liberal in politics. In 1905 he became a magistrate and in 1935 Chairman of the Altrincham Bench. In 1913-19 was a member of Bowdon UDC and in 1919 he founded Manchester & Salford Council of Social Services.

In 1934 he republished a history of the Gaddum Family and Anthony Gaddum published a revised history in 2005.

Henry Edwin Gaddum died in 1940 and was buried at Rostherne. His obituary in the Manchester Guardian stated that he was, "Principal of H. T. Gaddum & Co silk merchants of Macclesfield, but most widely known for his charitable work."

John Henry Gaddum 1900-1965

John Henry Gaddum, the eldest of six children of Henry Edwin Gaddum, and Phyllis was born in Hale on 31 March 1900.

John was educated at Miss JD Wallace's school, which was at Belfield in West Road, Bowdon until 1905 and then moved to Langham Lea on Stamford Road, Bowdon. This was a co-educational school and the Gaddum daughters were also educated there. Other pupils at the school were John Ireland, the composer, and Ronald Gow, the dramatist. John Gaddum was then educated at Moorland House School, Heswall, Cheshire, and from 1913 at Rugby School.

He won two leaving exhibitions and in 1919 went to Trinity College, Cambridge on an entrance scholarship for mathematics, and read medicine. He won a senior scholarship and achieved an honours degree in Physiology. In 1922, he became a medical student at University College Hospital, London. In 1925, he applied for and won a post at the Wellcome Research Laboratories under JW Trevan, writing his first paper on the quantitative aspects of drug antagonism.

From 1927 to 1933, he worked for Sir Henry Dale at the National Institute for Medical Research in Hampstead. In 1929, he married Iris Mary Harmer, daughter of Sir Sidney Harmer and Laura Russell. In 1933, he accepted the Chair of Pharmacology at the University of Cairo.

In 1935, he was appointed Professor of Pharmacology at University College London, and in 1938 he took the Chair of Pharmacology at the College of the Pharmaceutical Society, London. When the war broke out he worked at the Chemical Defence Research Station, Porton Down, then later was in the Army as a Lieutenant Colonel. In 1942, he accepted the Chair of Materia Medica in the University of Edinburgh and built up an outstanding research department. In 1958, he became the Director of the Institute of Animal Physiology at the Babraham Institute, Cambridge.

Professor John Gaddum became a Fellow of the Royal Society and in 1964 was knighted and awarded an honorary LLD at Edinburgh. The British Pharmacological Society commemorates the services of John Gaddum to pharmacology by awarding a medal and a prize about every two years for important contributions in the field of pharmacology.

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Laurence Binyon (1869 -1943), War Poet

SSN-0265-816X

Bowdon's Link with the War Poet Laurence Binyon

by Ian Bryce

Dr Robert Laurence Binyon CH, commonly known as **Laurence Binyon (1869-1943)** secured a lasting place in history. He was one of 16 great war poets commemorated on a slate unveiled in Westminster Abbey's Poets' Corner on the11th November 1985. It is not generally appreciated that this man who penned ***The Fallen***, a poem which contains some of the most evocative words in the English language and most often recited, was from a Bowdon family.

The fourth stanza has been claimed as a tribute to all casualties of war, regardless of nation:

> ***They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old***
> ***Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn,***
> ***At the going down of the sun, and in the morning,***
> ***We will remember them.***

Laurence Binyon was educated at St Paul's and Oxford, where he read classics. He worked at the British Museum between 1892 and 1933 and was Keeper of the Prints and Drawings department. In 1904 he married Cicely Margaret Powell, a historian, with whom he had three daughters. Later in life he was appointed Norton Professor of Poetry at Harvard and Byron professor of English Literature at Athens University. Throughout his life he worked as a poet, playwright and and art historian. In the first world war he volunteered for the Red Cross, assisting wounded soldiers as an orderly in 1916. Two years earlier, moved by the outbreak of war and the high number of casualties of the British Expeditionary Force, while visiting cliffs in Cornwall, he penned the poem ***The Fallen*** which was published by The Times on 21st September 1914. It was later to adorn war memorials throughout Britain, is often recited at Remembrance Sunday Services here and Canada and is an integral part of Anzac Day services in Australia and New Zealand.

The Quaker Binyon family had moved here from Kendal and were generally respected for their sterling integrity. Lawrence's grandfather **Alfred Binyon (1800-1856)** was one of eight children born to **Benjamin Binyon (1768-1835)** and Deborah Burt. His father had been one of six children born to **Benjamin Busby Binyon (1727-1823)** and Ruth Wakefield. Tradition stated that her father Roger was a rich banker who provided Richard Arkwright with the capital to begin business in the cotton trade, though it was her half-brother John (1738-1811) who founded the Wakefield bank in 1788.

Alfred's father was a partner in a twine manufacturing firm called Binyon and Taylor, and later had a shop and restaurant. He had an uncle who was a cotton manufacturer. There was also two male cousins who were tea dealers, coffee roasters and chocolate makers and two female cousins who carried on a tea business and a ready-made linen warehouse. His own early business ventures were not, however, very successful. He built the Borough Buildings, where most of the shops remained empty, and after changing hands several times they were disposed of by means of a lottery, the tickets costing a pound each. Around 1820 he took over a failed dye works at Ardwick Bridge, Chorlton-on-Medlock and running it for five years, by which time he was financially embarrassed.

His fortunes evidently improved markedly from 1828 when he married Lucy Hoyle, two years his junior, at the Friends' Meeting House in Manchester. She was one of the daughters of the proprietor of Thomas Hoyle & Son, a large and successful calico printing business. Six years later her father died and he was admitted a partner, along with his brother-in-law William Neild, subsequently of High Lawn Bowdon (see my booklet on *High Lawn*) and another brother-in-law Joseph Compton, into the business that her grandfather had founded in 1782.




Alfred Binyon and Lucy Binyon

The 1841 census records them living at Chorlton Lane, Stretford, with three sons and two daughters (two more daughters died in infancy), a governess and four house servants. In 1851 they were at a house named *Bella Villa* in

Moss Side, a pleasant and respectable neighbourhood. The eldest son and two daughters were still there, another daughter had been born, the second son was away at school and the third apparently died. There were also a governess, a nurse, a cook, an under cook, two housemaids and a footman. The house had disappeared by 1931 when the Whalley Range estate was being built.

Over in Bowdon, Alfred's sister, also named Lucy (1811-1883) lived with her husband George Robinson, a tea and coffee merchant, at *The Cedars* on Langham Road (now a care home). Just across the way his in-laws the Neilds were living at *High Lawn.* They, in turn, on the East Downs Road side of their house, had their married daughter living at an adjacent house *Fir Bank* and only a few years later their married son would be living at another one *Dingle Bank East*. One gains the impression that this lovely neighbourhood was being colonised by these inter-related families. Alfred bucked the general trend of settling here himself (though we will see later that his son and namesake was to follow it) and instead decided to re-locate much further afield.

On impulse he bought a small estate about a mile outside Grange-over-Sands on the Windermere road leading to Lindale with a view to erecting a family residence there to be called *Merlewood.* It was chosen for its elevated position, having extensive views to the south over Morecambe Bay and to the North-East over inland country, the West and North-West being sheltered by a romantic woody hill called Eggerslack. The Ulverston Advertiser reported that on 19th May 1853 there was a ceremony in which the first stone was laid followed by a speech from Alfred. The Lancaster Borough Band played the national anthem and other airs, and his workmen were given a lunch of bread, cheese and ale. The Binyons took up temporary residence at a nearby house named *Yewbarrow Lodge* while the Elizabethan-styled gabled house was being constructed. On 11th September 1853 whilst on holiday in the Pyrenees he wrote home to his architect George Webster saying "I often think of Merlewood and wish I could have daguerreotypes sent me of its progress. I am getting anxious to return although I have received decided benefit from the change of air and scene."

Lucy Binyon is known to have died in the Pyrenees eight weeks later on 6th November 1853, age 51, which prompts the question of whether she may have been ailing for some time. If so, that would account for them taking a long holiday in this region and might shed some light on the their decision to move so far away from Manchester and its polluted atmosphere. She is recorded as being buried that month in the Protestant part of the public cemetery at Bagneres de Bigorre, Hautes Pyrenees. The town was famous for its 50 hot springs, which were recommended for nerve, lung and digestive complaints, and in August the following year the Westmorland Gazette reported that a grand fancy bazaar had been held at *Yewbarrow Lodge* in aid of the erection of a protestant church there. Work continued on not only the construction of the mansion but also the creation of landscaped gardens with extensive plants and shrubberies. Large quantities of goods were transported there, causing considerable extra work for officials of the Lancaster and Carlisle railway. The Lancaster Gazette reported on the 14th April 1855 Alfred hosted an evening for them at the King's Arms in Milnthorpe, where they were treated to a grand supper. The station master "proposed the health of Mr Binyon, and long may he live to enjoy his new habitation", but this was not to be, for he died on 21st April 1856 (age 56) from atrophy of the heart and dyspnoea, and was buried in Lindale.



Merlewood

The house in which he had invested so much time, money and commitment (pictured from Eggerslack) became a Grade 2 listed building in 1975 and has had a chequered history. After his death it was sold to Eliza Horrocks, widow of Samuel Horrocks of the cotton manufacturing firm Horrockses, and stayed in her family till 1930. A few years later it was turned into a hotel, before being requisitioned by the War Office in 1940 as a training centre. It was converted back into a hotel in 1947 before being bought by Nature Conservancy in 1951 and turned into laboratories known as Merlewood Research Station. In recent years it was acquired by HPB (Holiday Property

Bond – a timeshare company) who completely renovated and restored the house, created nine apartments and leisure club in the mansion and built 46 cottages in the grounds.

As the elder son it is perhaps only to be expected that **Alfred Binyon junior (1832-1907)** appears to have joined the family business. In 1851 at the age of 18 he was living in the parental home and described as an apprentice calico printer. He would have become a man of substance following the deaths of his parents, and by 1861, still in his twenties, he was living in Bowdon on Green Walk with a wife (Sarah Clarke, whom he married in 1857 at Bowdon Parish Church) with a daughter, son (yet another Alfred) and three house servants. Later that year another son was born but he died aged 10 months. By 1871 there was another son and daughter (though only two servants) but they had moved to another house – *West View* – on an an unnamed highway off Park Road (now known as The Springs). Interestingly, his occupation was now showing as a Captain of the 40th Lancashire Rifle Volunteers. They had been formed in 1859 and the records show that he had first been commissioned as an Ensign in June 1862 and made a Lieutenant in February 1863.

The volunteer corps were spare-time soldiers, rather like today's Territorial Army. Largely middle-class organisations, they were dominated by "gentlemen", tradesmen, artisans and clerks. Evidently on census day Alfred was involved in some activity with his battalion, although the British Empire does not look to have been engaged in any military campaigns at the time. They were at the same house in 1881, by which time the elder son and daughter had left home, and his occupation was described as a merchant in printed cotton, so he had possibly parted with the family firm. By 1891 he was described as living on his own means and at *Laurel Bank* on Stamford Road, the younger son now having left home, and just one servant. By 1901 they were in South Road, the younger daughter Ethel, 36, still at home and described as a governess, working on her own account at home. At the time of his death in 1907 they were at *Leanfield* on Winton Road. His wife Sarah survived him and lived until 1922, when she would have been about 83.

There is a noticeable tendency for the younger sons of wealthy textile families to have entered the clergy, and this was the path followed from a young age by Alfred junior's sibling **Frederick Binyon (1838-1920)**. In

1851, age 12, he was a scholar living in Grantchester, Cambridgeshire, at the home of a curate. Completing his education at Cambridge University he was ordained a Deacon in 1861 and started his career as a curate, firstly at Blackburn, then Lancaster. Ordination as a priest, by the Bishop of Manchester, took place in 1865, and the following year he married Mary Ann Dockray, from a Quaker family. Her father, Robert Benson Dockray, was the main engineer of the London and Birmingham Railway. They would go on to have seven sons and two daughters, though only four sons and one daughter survived childhood. Between then and 1892 he had four ministries in total, at Burton-in-Lonsdale (Yorkshire), Hammersmith, Fulham (both London) and finally Winchcombe, (Gloucestershire). It was Frederick's second son, Laurence whose rose to fame as the War Poet.

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Marjorie Dilys Cox, 1923 - 2014



Gordon & Marjorie Cox

Marjorie Cox (née MacHattie) died on 6th October 2014 at Bickham House Care Home, Bowdon, A respected historian in her own right, she was the chairman (never the chair) of the Bowdon History Society from its foundation until she withdrew from the position in 2008.

Marjorie, as everyone knew her, was a native of Liverpool where she was born in 1923. She attended Aigburth Vale High School for Girls and from there went to Newnham College Cambridge in 1941 gaining her degree in 1944. However, like all Cambridge women at that time, she was not formally allowed to graduate.

Marjorie then participated in a government initiative recording wartime transport provision; for this she was recruited by her college principal, Betty Behrens whom she greatly admired. She then returned to her own research, working at Manchester University with the distinguished historian Sir Lewis Namier. It was at Manchester that she met and married her husband, R.G. (Gordon) Cox, a member of the University 's English Department.

Marjorie and Gordon became fixtures, both in Manchester and in Bowdon. Few couples can have shared their interests so affectionately. Both were fine scholars in their respective fields, both were dedicated musicians regularly playing in quartets, and each had memories of Cambridge friendships. During the war Gordon had served in Italy and in Egypt with the Society of Friends, and Marjorie too had Quaker affiliations. They travelled regularly on the

continent, mostly in Italy, and it was thus all the more a tragedy when Gordon died, very suddenly, in the summer of his retirement in 1981.

Inevitably Marjorie was bereft. But she coped with her loss and Gordon's sister, another Marjorie and also a widow, came to live with her in Bowdon while Marjorie returned to her work with Bowdon History Society. At meetings her great skill as a chairman was to get the most out of visiting speakers. Often on these occasions the request for questions and further discussion can fall flat but with Marjorie in the chair it never did: her enthusiasm, together with the range of her historical knowledge always ensured a lively evening. She was particularly interested in Bowdon's great houses, and in 1994 she published, with Peter Kemp and Ronald Trenbath a detailed study of Bowdon Hall. She published articles in the *Bowdon Sheaf* - were ever such articles so carefully prepared?

Her final research uncovered an early chaplain to the Earl of Warrington, a Huguenot refugee, who eventually became vicar of Ashton-under-Lyne. One of the Manchester History Department's professors told us that in draft this promised to be a fine piece of work. But Marjorie, who gave a lifetime of research to her subject, did not live to complete it. As many of us know from experience she had an unquestioning capacity for friendship, better described perhaps as love. Members of Bowdon History Society were certainly fortunate in having had her at their head.

Marjorie ended her days at Bickham House, perhaps appropriately since it was a house she knew of from her own research, and if you visited her there you would find her still investigating its distinguishing features. Marjorie always enjoyed living in Bowdon where she had so many friends. Bowdon History Society gave her the opportunity to use her many talents and its members will surely miss her.

Alan and Dorothy Shelston

William Ronald Trenbath, 1921 to 2014



Ronald & Valerie Trenbath

Ronald was born and lived all of his life in the Hale/Bowdon area. He attended Altrincham Grammar School for Boys and then worked on a farm during the war.

After the war he studied architecture at Manchester University School of Architecture where he and Val met. After they married they designed their and his parents' houses in Bow Green Road, next door to each other, and which Ronald said were the first to be built in the road. Val and he lived there throughout their married life, and after his parents' deaths, they sold their own house and moved next door into Bow Lodge.

Ronald held many architectural positions, including with the old Coal Board, the Coop, and the Inland Revenue, but the great pride and joy of his professional life was his appointment to the planning and development of Warrington New Town.

After he retired he concentrated on his art, love of and interest in the countryside (including their dogs) and local history, being a founder-member of Bowdon History Society. He was a committee member until his death.

He and Val helped to edit the Bowdon Sheaf, for which Ronald did all the drawings and illustrations.

We hope that many of his history records and architectural drawings will be going to the Cheshire Records Office at Chester.

Beryl Chartres

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Bowdon Parish Church by local artist George Caley

SSN-0265-816XS

Frederick Charles Collens 1876-1895

by Ann Nosowska

On Friday February 15th 1895 the Manchester Times reported that weather of terrible severity had (again) been experienced throughout the United Kingdom and on the Continent during the past week. The cold had been of phenomenal intensity and had occasioned much suffering ….. and considerable loss of life. At Southport the ice on Hesketh Park Lake was almost six inches thick; the lowest temperature recorded was 1.3 degrees. *This was in degrees Fahrenheit – where freezing point is 32 degrees, the Celsius equivalent being -17 degrees.* At Wilmslow on Saturday February 9th 26 degrees of frost had been recorded (-14.5 C).

An "occasional correspondent" of the Manchester Courier and Lancashire Advertiser, writing on the previous Friday reported that, "A most extraordinary sight was to be seen at Blackpool. The sea was an almost continuous sheet of ice for a mile out or more. So thick was this ice that the fishing boats could not make their way through it. Such an occurrence had never been witnessed before by even old inhabitants."

Other newspapers reported ice floes on the Mersey at Liverpool and on the Humber with the attendant disruption to trade and to shipping. The suffering of the poor was immense. Soup kitchens were set up in Manchester whilst Boards of Guardians of the Poor deliberated on their responsibilities, and their abilities, to alleviate the distress. All over the country there were reports of men, women and children being found frozen to death, canal and river skaters drowning and deadly accidents caused by exploding boilers.

But the poor were not alone in their misery. The prosperous population of Bowdon also felt the effects of the coldest ever February or the "Great Freeze", as it became known. The following extract taken from An Enquiry into the Distress by the Special Commissioner for the Manchester Times of February 15th 1895 gives an insight as to how the merchants of Bowdon might have been affected:

> "Even the well to do have not escaped. Rich sables and abundance of food do not keep us at normal heat, neither are they a complete protection from the chills. Moreover the internal economy of many houses, including some on which thousands of pounds have been spent, is not adapted to the maintenance in a comfortable condition of the human body. Hundreds of highly esteemed citizens who are amply provided with this world's goods have endured privations that are not lightly borne, in consequence of the water supply and the gas supply of their establishments becoming suddenly stopped. Scores of kitchens, generally bright with the ruddy glow of huge fires, are now cold and desolate, owing to the fear that the presence of burning coals in the immediate proximity to a paralysed boiler will wreck the whole place. And added to the misery of the situation is the unbanishable fear that, upon a thaw setting in, the pipes will burst and jets of cold, pure water spring, uncontrolled and uncontrollable, from unaccustomed quarters, with the result that walls and ceilings will be ruined, and filth and dirt reign supreme."

However, for the young and energetic, with time for leisure, the arctic conditions must have been a magical godsend affording them a very rare opportunity to venture onto the ice to indulge in one of the crazes of the late nineteenth century – skating! Roller skating at the time was a popular and exciting pastime for the young and ice skating was also extremely popular. Local newspapers ran advertisements for shops newly stocked with ice skates and for businesses where used skates could be sharpened. Belle Vue Zoological Gardens proudly advertised that they could offer skating and curling on ice which was kept in the best possible condition, lighted by electric light each evening and costing only 6d each all day. On Friday 22nd and Saturday 23rd February the London & North West Railway Company laid on day excursions form Manchester to Lake Windermere where conditions for skaters had never been better.

An indignant reader of the Liverpool Mercury felt moved to write to the editor:

Liverpool Mercury Friday 22 February 1895

SKATING ON WINDERMERE

> "Gentlemen, I do not think the Liverpool public can be aware of the magnificent condition of the Windermere Lake for skating. The ice is perfectly safe, and as there is a hard frost in this district every night, it is likely to remain so. I left Liverpool at 11.37 this morning, and was on the ice by three o'clock, and enjoyed the most splendid skating I have ever had. At Preston and Lancaster I saw notices up advertising cheap railway excursion tickets. Why cannot the railway companies issue cheap day excursion tickets from Liverpool? I feel sure thousands would avail themselves of the opportunity of witnessing a scene that may only occur once in a lifetime. They might get through their business in the morning before starting, have three hours on the ice, and get back comfortably in the evening. A band of music, which can be heard for miles, tents and booths for refreshments, which, by the by, are excellent and very cheap, add to the enjoyment, to say nothing of the splendid scenery, which is now quite Alpine."

The London & North West Railway Company obliged by offering excursions to the lake leaving Lime Street station at 8.20 am on Fri 22 and Sat 23. The lake was frozen from end to end and the ice was in excellent condition.

Dozens of young people from Bowdon and district took full advantage of the ice but *their* destination was closer to home than the Lake District. On Tuesday 12th February one girl, named Needham, fell and broke her leg in two places whilst skating on Rostherne Mere. Ten days later the world speed skating record was broken on the Mere by two seconds when J Bates of Leigh beat F Litherland of Sefton over a quarter of a mile course.

On Saturday 16th February the extensiveness of the skating area and the excellent condition of the ice attracted a large number of people from the city and the suburbs, including from Bowdon. Amongst the skaters that day were

Frederick and Arthur Collens, two brothers, aged respectively 18 and 17, the sons of Mr Henry Collens and his wife Ellen. The Collens family had lived on Prussia Terrace, Langham Road in 1881. At that time a house on the terrace could be rented for £35 pa.[1] They moved to Wrexham briefly but had returned not very long before 1895 to live in Sandiford House on Stamford Road, Bowdon. This was a handsome detached house which had been the birthplace of Philip Perceval Graves in 1876. He was the older half brother of the famous poet Robert Graves.[2] Henry Collens was a master draper who was employed as an agent for cotton ware. There were seven children in the family, the two eldest were children of a first marriage and by 1895 Frederick and Arthur had three younger sisters,, Winifred aged 16, Edith Maud aged 14 and Hilda aged 12.

It is not difficult to imagine the eager anticipation of the Collens brothers and their friends as they arrived at the mere. The surface was well frozen over, with the exception of a small patch at the north end where a stream of water had its inlet into the mere. They skated until well into the afternoon but by half-past five the fading light made it difficult to see all the surface of the water and the hole in the ice created by the stream was barely discernible. A fellow skater, Mr Scott of Longsight in Manchester, skated towards the hole but just in the nick of time he noticed it. At that moment the two brothers were skating towards the spot from the other side and Mr. Scott shouted to warn them of the danger. Arthur Collens, who was skating in front of his brother Frederick, heard Mr Scott's warning and immediately changed course and yelled, "Look out Fred!" But Frederick either did not hear the cry, or else he was going too fast to stop, and he plunged into the freezing water and disappeared under the ice. In an attempt to rescue his older brother Arthur too fell in. Hastily several of the skaters formed a line and succeeded in pulling him from the water. They managed to drag him to the bank where luckily a member of the Ambulance Society, Mr Crowther, who was an employee of the Manchester Post Office, administered life saving first aid. Suffering from exhaustion, and the effects of his immersion in the ice cold water, Arthur was taken to the home of the lodgekeeper, Mr Kirkbride, where he was brought round with the assistance of Dr Charles Jones of Peel Causeway Hale.



Skaters on Rostherne Mere in 1895. Photograph by courtesy of Altrincham Area Image Archive.

Meanwhile nothing had been seen of Frederick Collens and so another skater, Mr T Clark, hurriedly removed his skates and any superfluous clothing before bravely diving into the mere in search of the missing youth. He swam about for several minutes, until he became exhausted, but his efforts were in vain. He too had to be assisted to the lodgekeeper's cottage. Mr Trueman, an agent of the Egerton family, secured a boat in order to break the ice around the scene of the accident but there was no sign of Frederick. With darkness setting in the rescuers had no alternative but to wait until the following day and it was on the morning of Sunday February 17th that Frederick Collens' body was recovered.[3]

How Arthur Collens returned home to Stamford Road is unknown and how the awful news was broken to his poor parents that their other son was drowned, and his body was missing, is unimaginable. They placed an obituary in the Manchester Courier on the following Wednesday:

> "Collens.—On the 16th February, aged 18 Frederick Charles, the beloved son of Henry John and Ellen Collens, of Stamford-road, Bowdon.—Drowned whilst skating on Rostherne Mere.—lnterment, one o'clock today at Bowdon Church.—No cards."

The funeral was reported on Thursday 20th in the Manchester Courier.

> "The funeral of Mr. Frederick Charles Collins (sic), the victim of the skating accident on Rostherne Mere Saturday last, took place at Bowdon Parish Church at one o'clock yesterday. A large number of

people assembled in the churchyard. The chief mourners were the father and six other members of the family, and friends.
A large number of beautiful wreaths were deposited, and the utmost sympathy was manifested on all hands for the bereaved."

However that was not quite the end of the story for on 11th May 1895 at Manchester City Police Court Mr E Crowther, the employee of the Manchester Post Office who had saved the life of Arthur Collens, received an honorary testimonial from the Royal Humane Society for his gallant assistance to Arthur Collens who had been in imminent danger of drowning.

In Bowdon Churchyard there is a gravestone commemorating members of the Collens family. Sadly one of Fred's younger sisters Edith Maud died in the new year of 1906 from double pneumonia. She had been a music student.

In Loving Memory of Frederick Charles beloved son of Henry John and Ellen Collens who was drowned whilst skating on Rostherne Mere. Feb 16th 1895 aged 18 years.
Also of Edith Maud second daughter of the above who passed away Jan 9th 1906 aged 24 years.
Also of their father Henry John who died on June 5th 1917 aged 72 years.
Also of Ellen Collens wife of above who died Oct 22nd 1933 aged 90 years.

Henry John Collens died in Sale leaving effects to the value of £1116-5s-5d.

Sources:
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2. Oxford Dictionary of National Biographies.
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An Observation on 'Social Ecology'

by Chris Hill

The simple geology of the Bowdon / Altrincham area is that of a hill of porous sand and sandstone sitting on a layer of impervious clay. The interface between these two materials is indicated all around the hill by seeps and springs. In some cases this has resulted in subsidence to relatively modern houses built over the interface, requiring rebuilds or piling.

In times gone by, when there were far fewer buildings covering the landscape, people were much more knowledgeable about the countryside and its features, such as springs, mosses, rocky outcrops and landscape gradients. An example is the now redundant water supply which topped up the moat at Dunham Hall. Although there is sufficient drainage now from the south-eastern corner of the park to serve this purpose, in former times when water was also required to power the saw mill, a gravity feed was relied on from springs in Hale Moss, running north of the present Bridgewater canal and by White Oaks Wood and then into the Park close to the railed gap in the park wall and so to the moat. It was because of local knowledge about surface drainage possibilities, that this was originally put into operation.

With the coming of the railway from Manchester, a building boom in the Altrincham / Bowdon area resulted. The Earl of Stamford owned most of the land in the area and he was reluctant to allow building on his land without adequate compensation in terms of ground rent. This expense could be absorbed in the cost of building larger, mansion-type houses, most of which were rented out, but proved to be a critical consideration in the building of small dwellings. After the limited amount of ‘cheap’ land had been used up, the rapidly increasing population, including the workers attracted and required for the Broadheath factories, found it difficult to find places to live. This resulted in a sharing situation, with houses being occupied by several families. The Linotype, for example, wanted the council to build an estate for its workers, but the damp land available, close to the factory, required concrete rafts on which to build each home, adding half as much again to the cost of building. This extra cost made the undertaking economically

impracticable and so the firm had the houses built itself, to quite a good standard. This general problem resulted in the Oldfield Brow estate. The Countess wished to commemorate her late husband by donating land to the council for 'worker's cottages'. Originally, the land occupied by Oldfield Hall had been considered, but Sir John Leigh jumped in before the Countess and presented the estate to the council to be used as a park for the citizens of Altrincham. A parcel of land similar in area to John Leigh Park and somehow separate from the rest of the earl's estate, was a convenient second choice, resulting in the estate at Oldfield Brow.

The more affluent incomers to the area preferred the higher land of Bowdon (then part of Dunham), especially if there was a nice view, but this only occurred on the edges of the hill and there are plenty of houses built on the flattish top of the hill without a view. The builders were happy to accommodate the incomers from grimy Manchester. The lower areas of the Town, as explained above, were too damp and in former times a string of mosses ran from Warburton to Hale, which in some places required horses to be fitted with wide shoes to prevent them sinking into the boggy ground. Local people used to say, 'that land's too damp, they'll never build on there'. Over time, with drainage by farmers, these mosses became suitable for agriculture. Similar arguments apply to the land on the other side of the hill, south of Langham Road. Think of The Springs on Bow Green Road, and further east, the springs mentioned in a previous Bowdon Sheaf in an article about Mrs. Gaskell spending summer holidays at Moss Farm. In more modern times, say from WW1, the pressure of population increase and the requirement for more houses reached a crisis point, obliging Altrincham Council to apply to Parliament to have its boundaries increased. This was achieved in 1919 by taking over a large part of Dunham Massey, allowing more land for houses and in Broadheath, more land for factories. In addition a large estate of worker's council houses was also built there.

So, returning to the original theme, if one wishes to have an idea of where the clay / sand interface lies, one way of doing this is to look for the areas where the big houses have been built and where such houses are absent. The builders of former times were no fools and they would have chosen land

allowing them to build big houses on sure foundations, i.e. on dry sand / sandstone. Until after WW2, there were plenty of unused open spaces which had been considered unsuitable for building, either because they were damp, or because of potentially high ground rents. Some had been used as recreational areas, allotments or were still fields used by farmers, but by using modern techniques of building, such spaces were acquired and built upon. Another indicator of where the interface occurs, is the existence of old farms, either the former sites or maybe still surviving buildings; farms, cottages or even clumps of old holly trees, where a well or spring was a necessity of everyday living. Thus a rough idea can be obtained as to where the geological interface exists. The problem of water supply to houses on the higher parts of the hill when the building boom took place, was solved by the local water company building a water tower on the Devisdale to which water was pumped, giving a suitable head of pressure.

For a more detailed investigation into the sites of wells and streams, the twenty inches to the mile 'Detailed Plan of the Township of Altrincham', surveyed and published by the 'Local Board of Health' in 1852, gives extensive information and is available at Sale Local Studies Library. However, it only covers the historic Saxon boundaries of Altrincham, omitting neighbouring Dunham, part of which lay on the hill, but nevertheless, it aids the above idea, which is intended to be a rough and ready general observation, which does not seem to have previously been in circulation.

Brakspear's drawing of his proposed 1860 St. Mary's Church

by David Miller

In the September 1991 issue of the Bowdon Church News Canon Anthony Martin relates an interesting story about what at first appears to be an early photograph of the rebuilt Bowdon Church of 1860. On closer inspection the illustration shows the church with only one clock face whereas it now has four. In fact this is a watercolour over a pen-and-ink drawing of a perspective design for the new St. Mary's Church to be built in 1858 by its eventual architect William H Brakspear.



The drawing was submitted to the church authorities to be considered to replace the 1510 building. Brakspear won the competition and the church was built to his design with one or two modifications which included four clock faces. The new church was consecrated on 27 September 1860.

The picture was initially retained by the Brakspear family but later sold. In April 1990 its owner decided to sell it and Canon Martin thought that the best place for it would be St. Mary's Church, the only problem being raising the funds. It so happened that in the very week of the sale the church received a substantial legacy from Mrs Elsie Evans in memory of her late husband the Rev. Sydney Evans who had been brought up in Bowdon, sang in the choir and became ordained. He served in various parishes and retired to Shrewsbury.

After consultation with the churchwardens, it was decided that it would be fitting to spend part of the legacy on purchase of the picture. The result is that we have a magnificent 24" x 18" picture of the proposed church in the Vestry to which is attached a plaque with the following words:

> "The perspective view of the design for St. Mary's Church, Bowdon by the architect William H Brakspear, was bought in 1991 from Sotherby's out of a bequest from Mrs Elsie Evans in memory of her late husband The Revd. Sydney Evans, brought up in the parish."

Brakspear also designed St. Paul's Wesleyan Methodist Chapel on Enville Road, known as the Dome Chapel, which was built in 1880 and demolished in the 1960s.

The Bowdon Sheaf

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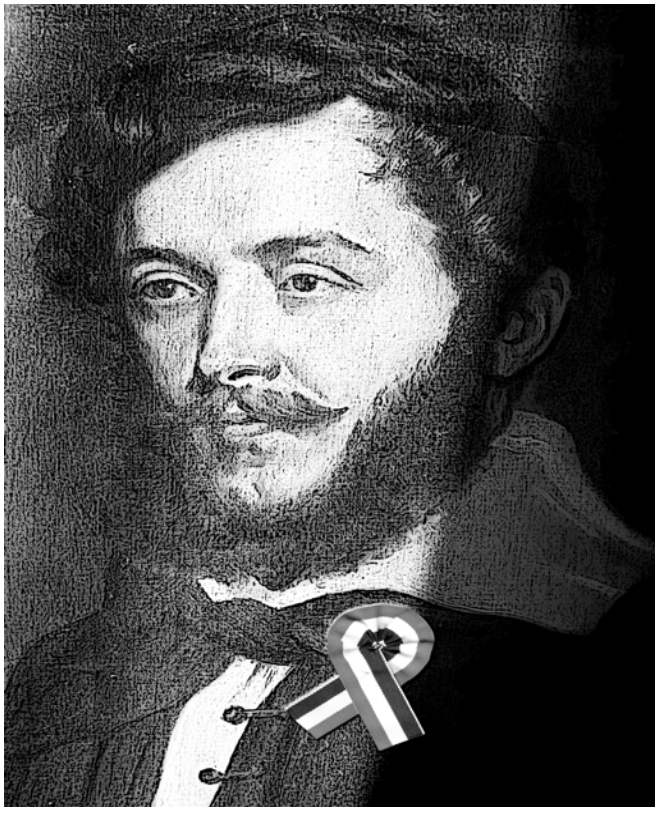


Louis Kossuth

SSN-0265-816X

Louis Kossuth (1802-1894), Hungarian Statesman and Freedom Fighter

by Gabor Olah

Marjorie Cox, late Chair of Bowdon History Society, wrote an article in Bowdon Sheaf 19, March 1992, entitled 'A Hungarian Refugee: Louis Kossuth in Manchester and Bowdon', and this article adds some further details.

Commemorating Hungary's national day, His Excellency Peter Szabadhegy, Hungarian Ambassador, and the Lord Mayor of Manchester, Councillor Paul Murphy OBE, unveiled the Lajos Kossuth Plaque at Manchester Town Hall on 15 March, 2016. After the unveiling, the Lord Mayor invited all the guests to his private suite for a light lunch and were mesmerised by the voice of Ildiko Csige who sang traditional Kossuth songs.

The group later walked to the Central Library where the Lajos Kossuth exhibition organised by MIZU? magazine was launched. The exhibition ran from 16 March to 2 April.

Lajos Kossuth de Udvard et Kossuthfalva was a lawyer and journalist who became Governor-President of the Kingdom of Hungary during the revolution of 1848-49. In 1849 he was deposed and, as an impressive orator, travelled to Great Britain and the United States raising support for the Hungarian cause, and funds for the victims of the Austrian despotism at the time of the 1848 Hungarian revolution against the Habsburg rule.

There are many statues of Kossuth around the world and most towns in Hungary have a road named after him. There is a Blue Plaque in Kensington, London where he stayed.

Kossuth landed in England in late October 1851 and spoke in various cities pleading the Hungarian cause. On 11 November he travelled to Manchester and the same night addressed 9,000 people in the Manchester Free Trade Hall for one and a half hours. Notables present included John Bright, the president of the Board of Trade and a Radical statesman; Sir Elkanah Armitage, the industrialist and Liberal politician; and newspaper publisher Alexander Ireland.

Many articles appeared in the Manchester Guardian, including one covering his reception after the journey from Birmingham to Manchester and his meetings in the Free Trade Hall.

In December Kossuth left for the USA but returned to England in July 1852, where he lived for nearly a decade. John Bright and Richard Cobden the industrialist, continued to support him at several meetings in Manchester, Bolton, Wigan, Rochdale and Stockport.

Kossuth spent several years in Bowdon as a guest of the Ireland family, using their home as his Manchester base while giving speeches and attending meetings to promote the Hungarian cause. From 1852 to 1860 Louis stayed at 7 Oak Terrace, now Green Oak, 81 Stamford Road, Bowdon (below), with publisher Alexander Ireland. The house appears to have been built about 1847, later than numbers 83-85 which were built about 1837, probably by the same builder but there is a variation in the brickwork.

In 1860 Kossuth moved to Turin where he died in 1894.

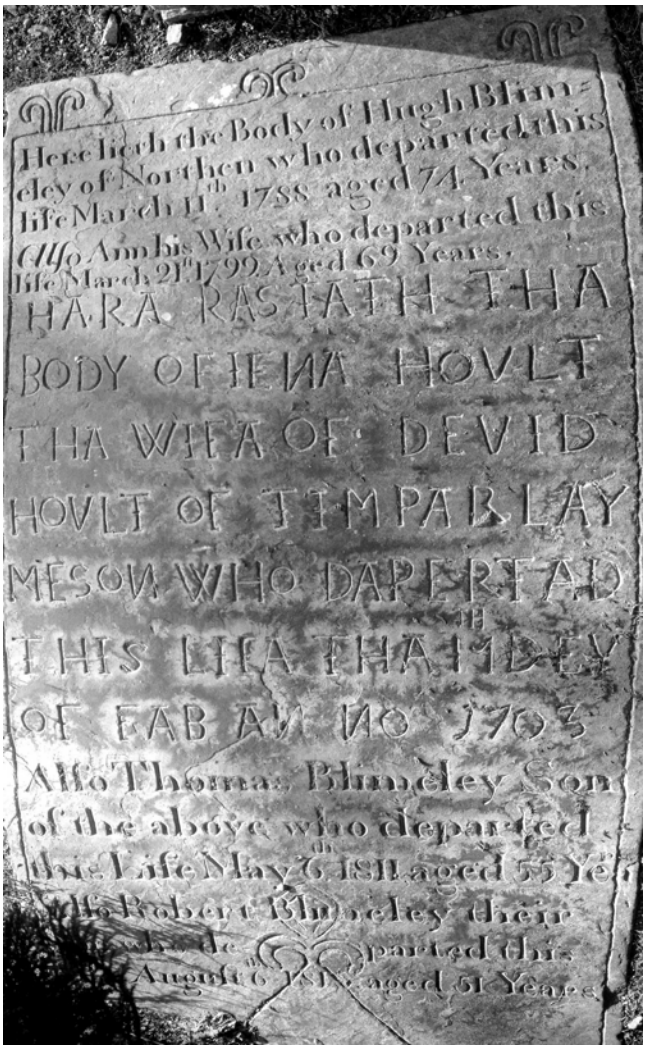
Alexander Ireland was the publisher of the Radical newspaper *The Manchester Examiner & Times*, still editor at age 70. He was born in Scotland in 1811 and by 1870 had moved to Inglewood on St. Margaret's Road, Bowdon. Alexander was a founder of a literary organisation in Bowdon, the Roundabout Club, and had a personal library of 20,000 books. His son, composer Dr. John Ireland, was born in 1880 at Inglewood where there is a plaque to him on the gatepost.



A Bowdon Church Gravestone

by Judith Miller

One of the strangest gravestones in Bowdon Churchyard is in memory of Jane Hoult, dated 1703 and situated on the east side of the south-west door. The peculiarity of the inscription lies mainly in that the letter **A** is carved as **E** and vice-versa, and the **N**s are backwards. The letter **U** is inscribed as **V** (not too unusual). All of the letters are in capitals and size, shape and alignment are slightly irregular.



All of this makes the gravestone very unusual and interesting. It seems most likely that the work was by a mason who had little grasp of spelling, although just possibly this spelling could reflect pronunciation. At the time spelling was not standardised which happened gradually following the invention of printing and from the arrival of the first dictionaries in 1604.

The original Hoult inscription

HARA RASTATH THA
BODY OF JEИA HOVLT
THA WIFA OF DEVID
HOVLT OF TIMPARLAY
MESOИ WHO DEPERTAD
THIS LIFA THA 17th DEY
OF FAB AИИO 1703

Translation

HERE RESTETH THE
BODY OF JANE HOULT
THE WIFE OF DAVID
HOULT OF TIMPERLEY
MASON WHO DEPARTED
THIS LIFE THE 17th DAY
OF FEB ANNO 1703

Whatever the reason, this inscription seems exceptional. It marks the grave of the wife of a mason and we can speculate that it might be the work of a member of the Hoult family or an apprentice.

Four more people are also remembered on the stone, presumably from the same family but with a different family name. They are all much later: Hugh Blimeley died in 1788 and his wife Ann in 1799. Their sons Thomas died in 1811 and Robert in 1818. Here the inscriptions are unexceptional but it is the middle one with the mistakes that we remember and enjoy.

From *Bowdon Church News, September 1971.* Thanks to Derrick Murdie for access.

The Haworth Family Dynasty

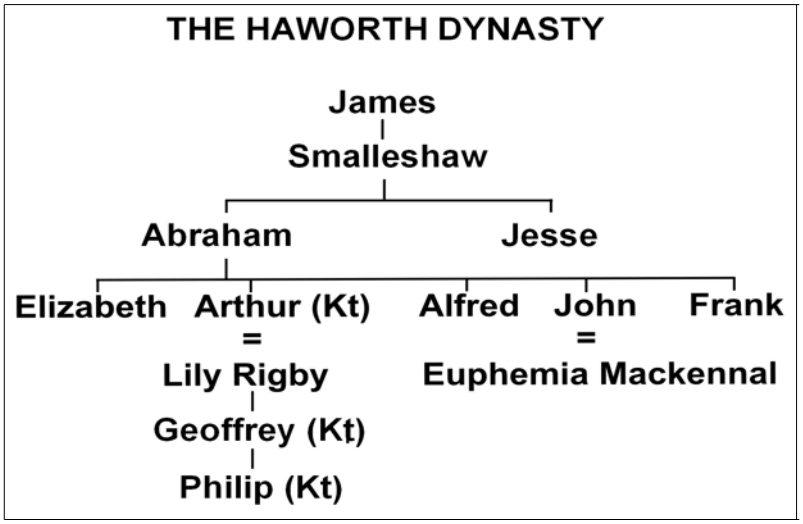
by David Miller

The Haworths were a Cottontot dynasty who used their wealth to help the community, becoming involved in Manchester and leaving a lasting legacy in the cultural life. Some followed interests in football, art, and archaeology. Nonconformist and staunchly Liberal, the family were major philanthropists. This branch of the Haworths originated in Bolton but Ian Bryce in his *High Lawn, Bowdon* paper records another branch from Bury, also in the cotton industry, who came to live in Bowdon in 1896.

James Dilworth & Son

The Dilworth textile firm is central to the Haworth story. James Dilworth was born in Preston in 1790 and became apprenticed in the Birley & Hornby cotton factory, gradually rising within the firm. In 1820 James decided to go into business by himself as a yarn commission agent in Preston and in 1837 opened a warehouse in Manchester. In 1842 he closed the Preston operation to concentrate on the Manchester textile business. He died in 1854 and his son John died in 1858. The Haworths eventually took over the Dilworth business until it was dissolved in 1916.

The Haworth Family Dynasty



The founder of the family was James Haworth (1765-1834), born in Bolton, Lancashire. His son was Smalleshaw Haworth (1802-1858). Smalleshaw's sons were Abraham (1830-1902) and Jesse (1835-1921). Abraham and Jesse began their careers in the firm of Dilworth and Son, yarn commission agents, in Manchester. Abraham had a daughter, Elizabeth Goodier, and four sons: Arthur Adlington, Alfred, John Goodier and Frank Abraham. John married Euphemia, the daughter of Rev. Alexander Mackennal, the first Minister of Bowdon Downs Congregational Church. Arthur was later knighted for his work for the Liberal Party. Jesse funded archaeology excavation in Egypt and donated his Egyptian Collection at the Manchester Museum.

Abraham Haworth (1830-1902)

Abraham was born in Bolton in 1830 and his parents moved to Salford when he was about 10. They became members of Hope Congregational Church and Abraham went to Sunday School there. His parents were of humble origins but Abraham achieved a leading position among men of wealth and influence and was throughout his life a Nonconformist. John Dilworth of Salford, a member of the church at Hope, took on the young Abraham in his warehouse. From this foothold he rose to became a partner and eventually head of the firm of John Dilworth and Son.

Abraham took a great interest in education and became became a governor of Manchester Grammar School in 1872. In 1877 he was appointed School Treasurer and Chairman of the Estates & Building Committee, overseeing the erection of the New Building. This opened in 1880 and Abraham was a major contributor.

He continued to lead the Dilworth firm which became the biggest yarn company in the country. In 1861 he married Elizabeth, daughter of John Goodier, and a member of the Society of Friends. They had a daughter, Elizabeth, and four sons Arthur, Alfred, John and Frank who all joined the Dilworth firm and became directors.

Abraham moved to Bowdon about 1870, became a deacon of Bowdon Downs Congregational Church and entered into a project to establish a Nonconformist theological college in Oxford, now Mansfield College. He became a staunch Liberal supporter but avoided being put up as an MP. The family lived at Hilston House on Green Walk, Bowdon, where Abraham had a collection of watercolours some of which he left to Jesse. The building is now listed and converted to several apartments. Abraham died aged 72 at Hyères, a favourite nineteenth century Riviera resort just east of Toulon where his wife is also buried.

Jesse Haworth (1835-1921)

Jesse, Abraham's younger brother, married Marianne Armitage in 1874. The couple were childless. Like his older brother, Jesse also became a partner in James Dilworth and Sons and was one of the longest established members of the Royal Exchange in Manchester. He was also a deacon of Bowdon Downs Church and lived at Woodside, Green Walk, Bowdon, demolished in the 1960s.

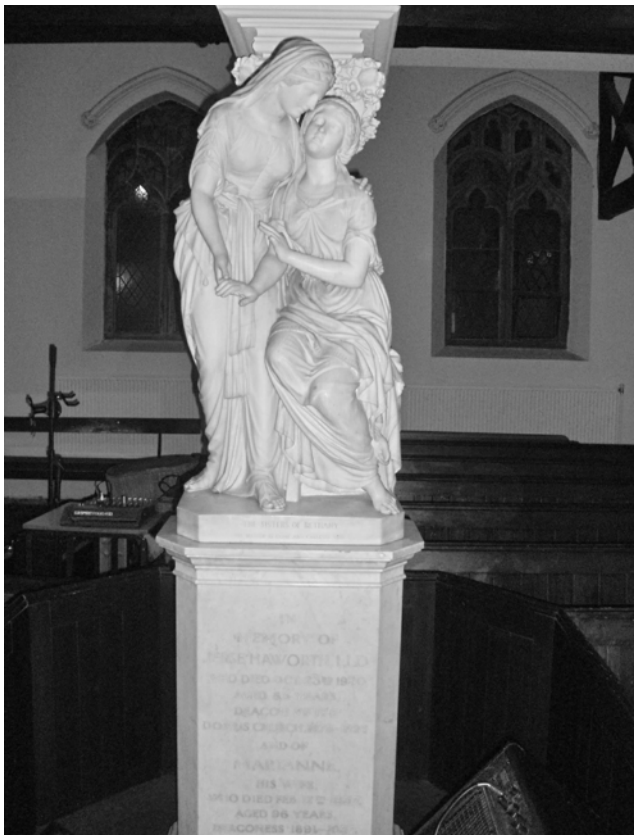
Jesse was a keen Egyptologist and financed a number of expeditions to Egypt, amassing a collection of antiquities which he bequeathed to the Manchester Museum. His interest in Egyptology began in 1877 when Amelia Edwards published *A 1000 Miles Up the Nile*. He and his wife read the book and retraced Amelia Edwards' journey in 1882 which resulted in their supporting Egyptology at the Manchester Museum. He was also a director of Manchester United Football Club.

Abraham and Jesse became ardent art collectors and both loaned many paintings to the Royal Jubilee Exhibition in Manchester in 1887, including works by Holman Hunt, Millais and Palmer. Jesse also collected ceramics.

In 1886 Professor Sir William Flinders Petrie set up an archaeological body independent from the Egypt Exploration Fund,

and Jesse offered to finance his excavations. In 1890 he presented his collection of Egyptian objects to Manchester Museum and in 1912 made a substantial contribution to the building fund to house the Egyptian collections. In recognition, the University of Manchester conferred upon him the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws.

In 1919, he donated a further £10,000 to the museum and under the terms of his will bequeathed £30,000 and his private collection of Egyptian antiquities. He also bequeathed a large collection of watercolours, including works by Turner, to the Whitworth Gallery in Manchester.



A memorial statue to Jesse and Marianne Haworth of *The Sisters of Bethany* (opposite) by Warrington sculptor John Warrington Wood, is in Bowdon Downs Church. The later plinth includes the words "*In memory of Jesse Haworth, LLD, who died Oct. 23rd 1920 aged 83 years, Deacon of the Downs Church 1876-1892, and of Marianne, his wife, who died Feb. 12th 1937 aged 96 years, Deaconess 1891-1937*."

Sir Arthur Adlington Haworth (1865-1944)

Abraham's son Arthur Adlington was born in Eccles, Lancashire and educated at Rugby. In 1891 he married Lily Rigby, the daughter of John Rigby, a cotton merchant of Altrincham, and they had three children.

Arthur also joined the Dilworth firm and became chairman of the Manchester Royal Cotton Exchange. An interest in politics and public service led him to local government and he became a member of the first Bowdon Urban District Council in 1894.

Later he became involved in national politics and represented South Manchester for the Liberal Party from 1906 to 1912. In 1911 he was created 1st Baronet Haworth of Dunham Massey for his services to the Liberal Party. He held the office of Junior Lord of the Treasury in 1912 and Chairman of Mansfield College, Oxford. He was a JP for Cheshire and Shropshire and lived at Normanby on Bonville Road, now demolished.

Arthur was active in the Congregational Church and in 1915 became Chairman of the Congregational Union of England and Wales. He took a leading role in the NSPCC and commanded the Altrincham Battalion of the Cheshire Volunteers. He died in 1944 and his eldest son inherited the baronetcy to become Sir Arthur Geoffrey Haworth.

Lady Lily Haworth(1864-1952)

Lady Haworth, wife of Sir Arthur, was well connected to the local society of the area through her father, John Rigby. She was a JP for Lancashire, a supporter of the Liberal Party, and President of the Altrincham and Bowdon Women's Liberal Association. Through these connections and with family friends, she formed the Bowdon War Hospital Supply Depot on Green Walk, opened by the Countess of Stamford in 1915. She also funded the establishment of Oldfield Brow Congregational Church in 1925.

Sir Arthur Geoffrey Haworth (1896-1987) and Sir Philip Haworth (1927)

The title passed from Arthur Adlington, the first baron, to his son Arthur Geoffrey (known as Geoffrey) and then to Geoffrey's son Philip. Geoffrey was married to Emily Dorothea Gaddum of the Bowdon textile family by the Bishop of Chester at Bowdon Parish Church in 1926. He served in the army in WWI and then graduated from New College, Oxford and became a JP for Cheshire. In 1931 Geoffrey decided to leave the cotton trade and bought land in Peover near Knutsford. In 1933 and in his 40s, he became a full-time farmer attending farming college. He became chairman of the Hallé Orchestra under conductor John Barbirolli. Geoffrey's son Philip is also a retired farmer, originally farming in East Anglia and then joining his father in Peover. Philip and his wife Joan open their

two-acre garden in Peover twice a year for charity. They have five children.

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The Bowdon Sheaf

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Bowdon Church in 1855 photographed by Joseph Sidebottom (Altrincham Area Image Archive)

SSN-0265-816X

Go! Pull Down the Tower…..

by Ann Nosowska

On 4th October 1858 W. H. Brakspear, the architect charged with rebuilding St Mary's Church, Bowdon, reported on the condition of the tower. Since his last report to the Building Committee, the nave roof, the gallery, the organ and the churchwardens' seats had been removed, revealing the wall and archway into the church. Brakspear had discovered them to be *"exceedingly dilapidated throughout from the foundations."* There were many cracks; the arch and its piers were badly mutilated with many serious indications of failure. The walls were found to be composed of rubble which was in a bad state whilst the mortar itself was crumbling into dust. In addition, interments had disturbed the foundation walls in which both the stone and mortar had perished. *Due to the subsidence of the archway piers there were serious cracks with general displacement of the materials.*

Originally the Building Committee had supposed that the ancient tower, which dated from the early sixteenth century, might be retained. They had intended merely to restore the turret staircase, the belfry storey and the upper part of the tower, raising it a little at the same time. This plan was in the estimate for Brakspear's original contract but now his advice was clear – they must consider entirely rebuilding the tower from its foundations. He went so far as to state that he considered a *repair* of the tower was out of the question. Furthermore he advised them that it was both necessary and desirable to increase the dimensions of the new tower. He proposed that the height should be 109 ft to the top of the pinnacle vanes in order to harmonise with the increased importance of the new church. This would mean an increase of 32 ft on the height of the contracted new tower.

What were they to do? They were faced with an increased bill for the rebuilding of the church, meaning that additional subscriptions would have to be sought. Three weeks later Brakspear submitted a revised estimate together with a new tender from the builder, Samuel Delves, which excluded the replacement of the clock and the rehanging of the bells. He thought it desirable

that these matters should stand over for future and mature consideration. So the total amount of tender for the completion of the new tower was £2083-2s-8d. However, an adjustment amounting to £1148 9s 6d was made for all the work and material contained in the original estimate relating to the tower. The Building Committee had no option but to agree to the revised plan.

However as the absent 7th Earl of Stamford was the patron of the church, they felt obliged to inform him of Mr Brakspear's alarming report and to seek his permission to demolish the tower; maybe they hoped that he might increase the donation of £600 which he had already promised for the rebuilding of the church. Soon after his recent marriage the Earl had removed to his estates at Enville in Staffordshire and at Bradgate Park in Leicestershire. The gentlemen of the Committee communicated their concerns to the Earl but apparently he did not empathise with the need to demolish the old tower and he even went so far as to say that if it was demolished he would no longer support the scheme.

There was no time to be lost! Accordingly on 2nd November 1858, the Building Committee resolved to send their architect on a 'mission' to Bradgate. There he gained the sympathy of the Earl of Stamford's agent Legh Richmond, but it appears that the Earl had still to be won over! The following is a copy of Mr Brakspear's report to the Committee on his return from his mission:

Gentlemen

In compliance with the Resolution of your Committee past on the 2nd inst. instructing me to see Mr Legh Richmond with as little delay as possible, and to lay before him my Reports on the condition of the existing Tower of your Parish Church, together with the plans and estimates of the proposed new Tower. I beg to state that I proceeded to Bradgate Park on the following morning and succeeded in obtaining at a late hour in the evening an interview with Mr Legh Richmond, and explained that I had been sent by a resolution of the Building Committee for the purpose of laying this subject fully before him, as well also as before Lord Stamford should it be so desired. I explained also that the Committee were exceedingly desirous of consulting his Lordship upon all steps of importance before proceeding, and that progress was in this case stayed until the wishes and feelings of Lord Stamford could be known.

Mr Richmond stated that the subject had been named to Lord Stamford sometime since in a manner to induce the belief that the proposition to

Rebuild the Tower was unnecessary, and that his Lordship had expressed himself so strongly as to say, that should this step be taken, he would withdraw all support and countenance from the undertaking, Mr Richmond considering therefore that he could not name the subject again to his Lordship.

Mr Richmond however was induced to satisfy himself upon the real position of the business by reading carefully my reports and examining the Designs prepared for the proposed new Tower, the result appeared to be a conviction that the condition of the present Tower compelled the course proposed, he consequently consented to ask an interview of Lord Stamford at once, which being obtained the matter was clearly laid before him and Mr Richmond on his return exclaimed ***– Go! Pull down the Tower!*** *Lord Stamford is satisfied with the explanations given and withdraws his meditated opposition.*

Lord Stamford begged that the Committee should be acquainted with the fact of how much he felt the compliment they had paid him, and how much obliged he felt also for the consideration shown him on this occasion.

It being contrary to Lord Stamford's custom to transact business at the late hour of my visit, was the apology conveyed for not seeing me, he however would have done, had I thought it well to accept his invitation to remain at Bradgate over the night. On Mr Richmond's assurance however that the business could not be advanced as it must be considered now quite settled in so far as Lord Stamford was concerned, I deemed my mission at an end, and that my proper course was to return at once.

I may be allowed perhaps in conclusion to say that the Designs were approved both by Lord Stamford and Mr Richmond

I have the honour to be Gentlemen
Your obedient Servant
W. H Brakspear

Sale Bank Nov 1858

The new church was consecrated by the Bishop of Chester on 26th September 1860, a little over two years since he had laid the foundation stone in the North East angle of the Chancel. On 29th March 1862 the Rev. William Pollock, in his capacity as Chairman of the Building Committee, reported to the Vestry that the entire rebuild had cost £12,371 16s 7d not including individual donations towards the furnishing and decoration. He reported that, *"….the Committee did not hesitate to improve on the original plans and*

specifications" and that *"a new tower was built at a very large expense but greatly to the security and beauty of the church."*

Thus it was that St Mary's Church at Bowdon got its magnificent tower to complement the much enlarged and impressive new nave and choir that we see today.

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A Child Marriage in Bowdon

by Judith Miller

Today we recoil in horror from stories of child marriages. In the sixteenth century, however, it was not unusual, particularly among royalty and the aristocracy for whom power alliances and dowries were more important than personal preferences.

There were several instances in Cheshire among the middle and upper classes of children being united in this way. In the Bowdon Church News of February 1972, the vicar, Maurice Ridgway, writes of the betrothal in Bowdon Church in 1567 of Elizabeth Massie of Hale, a child of two, to George Boden. At that time a betrothal was a formal ceremony as binding as marriage and the arrangement was perfectly legal.

The Rev. Robert Vaudrey, who performed the ceremony, declared in evidence that Elizabeth, who was held on a bench in the chancel by Isabel Cleworth, could not pronounce the words properly. The little girl copied the vicar and Isabel to say the vows: "I Elizabeth take thee George..." and the ceremony was completed.

In 1585, following the couple's application to the Bishop of Chester, the marriage was dissolved. It had lasted for 18 years and Elizabeth, now 21, and George were free to find new partners.

Maurice Ridgway cites another instance of a child bride as Joan Chadderton, the Bishop of Chester's daughter, who was married to Richard Brooke the son and heir of Norton when she was only nine.

(Edited from Bowdon Church News February 1972; thanks to Derrick Murdie for access).

The Heald and Hall families

by Ian Bryce

There is a strong tendency for our local roads, particularly the older ones, to have been named or renamed after prominent local families, the main thoroughfares Stamford Road and Langham Road being but two examples. Since the 1850s they have been connected by Heald Road, which begs the question of whether there were some minor aristocrats or a civic dignitary who bore that name. The houses were built on an area known as *Heald Common* and there was also an expanse of land just south of Langham Road once known as *Heald Moss*. The consensus of opinion is that the original derivation was from the Old English words *healh* or *helde*, meaning a steeply-sloping area or protected area. My research into the subject revealed a Heald family who had once lived in Bowdon and Hale, and who were linked with some well-known persons. Their story spans three continents, and though devoid of influence on the naming of roads around here, it is one worth recounting.

Although the family had originated in Yorkshire, **Nicholas Heald (1803-1896)** was born in St John Hackney, London, one of six children born to a Joseph Heald and his wife Rachel (neé Marsden), and, having married Mary Helen Coates (1812-1898), a native of Manchester, in 1832, came to live in the city the following year. By 1845 they had three sons and three daughters, mostly born in the Eccles/Pendlebury area, and in 1861 were living in the Bredbury Hall area of Hyde. By 1871 they were established in their "home for life" which was *Brunswick House* on The Firs in Bowdon, a semi-detached residence adjacent to the junction with St

Margarets Road i.e. where the *Woodridings* apartment blocks now exist.

By all accounts Nicholas had a chequered professional and business career. When he moved to Manchester it was to practise law. He was subsequently in the calico printing business, firstly in partnership with his brother-in-law John Coates and two others, but this was dissolved in 1840. When the Lancashire Insurance Co, was formed in Manchester in 1859, he was its first chairman. In 1871 his occupation was given as merchant/calico printer, then in 1881 and 1891 as a merchant only. Along the way he also worked for a banking concern and as a secretary to the engineer and entrepreneur Sir Joseph Whitworth, though the dates of these are not known to me. On his death at the age of 93 he left estate valued at £254 15s.

The second son **Walter Heald (1841-1925),** was educated at Manchester School and Rugby before going up to Cambridge in 1859 but had to leave after about a year following the collapse of his father's business, and joined Williams Deacon's Bank. In 1866 he travelled to South America for several years, where he represented a firm of exporters, Krabbé Higgins & Co. of Buenos Aires, and was initiated there into the Excelsior Lodge of the English Freemasons. The following year he, along with four other English migrants, formed the Buenos Aires Football Club, the first association club in Argentina. In 1871 he was recorded as a merchant's clerk staying in Bowdon with the family and their servants but the previous year in Buenos Aires he had become engaged to Miss Emily Isabel Elaine Krabbé (1852-1926), the daughter of his employer, and they were married in 1874, going on to have two daughters and two sons in the ensuing eleven years. The bride's father Charles Brehmer Krabbé (1818-1875), had been born in Falmouth, Cornwall (though the family originated in Denmark) and emigrated to Brazil.

Walter returned home with Emily to join the family business and in 1881 they were living in Ashley Heath, declaring his occupation as an export merchant to Manila. I believe that their house was named *Ford Bank* and situated on a large wedge of land at the fork of Ashley Road and Ashley Mill Lane North, nowadays

occupied by several smaller modern houses. By 1887 however the business was again in difficulties and he withdrew from it, resulting in a move to the south of England. The AGWR (Argentine Great Western Railway) was then being formed and he became the Secretary of its London office, living in Hampstead, London, in 1891, shortly afterwards moving to Bromley, Kent and finally to Weybridge, Surrey in 1904. He was a freeman of the City of London, having been admitted in 1872 by Patrimony (i.e. by virtue of his father being a member) into the Company of Merchant Taylors and from 1914-1919 served as a special constable in the Surrey Constabulary. Whether due to luck, thrift or shrewdness Walter died a wealthier man than his father, his estate being valued at £24,323 3s 9d and his widow's the following year at £39,777 8s 7d.

His elder son **Walter Marsden Heald (1885-1957),** became a barrister having served in the Territorial Force (Suffolk Regiment) in the first World War, firstly as Sergeant, then Second Lieutenant from May 1915. Wider recognition was achieved by younger son **Charles Brehmer Heald CBE MD FRCP (1882-1974)** (right). Educated at Cambridge, he undertook his clinical studies and graduated at St Bartholomew's Hospital, London. He was consultant physician at the Royal Free Hospital and subsequently consulting physician for rheumatic diseases at Middlesex Hospital. He had the distinction of serving as a medical officer in all three branches of the armed forces during the First World War, having been a temporary surgeon in the Royal Navy on the battleship *Conquerer,* a temporary lieutenant-colonel in the Royal Army Medical Corps and principal Medical Officer in the RAF Middle East, where he took his pilot's wings. After the war he took a keen interest in electrotherapeutics and played a leading role in the development of physical medicine. In 1915 he married Edith Hildegarde Mason (1894-1980) with whom he had three daughters,



but the marriage evidently did not endure for the rest of his life. Some of the family papers held in the Manchester University library are described as the gift of Dr Heald “and the estate of his common law wife Florence Lucy (Kit) Greenhill”. Records are in existence showing that a person of that name was born in 1907 and died in 1997, having registered as a nurse in London in 1931 and qualified by examination at University College Hospital, London.

The doctor was close to his eldest daughter **Nancy Heald (1916-2007),** who was educated at Benenden and presented at court in the last year of King George V. She worked voluntarily for charities in London, and in 1937 she was on a trip to the Antipodes to assist in settling needy British children in overseas dominions when in New Zealand she met an Australian Sir Vincent Fairfax. He was one of the fourth generation of a family who had emigrated from Leamington Spa to Sydney in 1838 and risen to prominence as media proprietors, especially in the area of newspaper publishing and in some cases also in the arts and philanthropy. They married in 1939 in London (where Vincent managed the Fairfax office) and returned to live in Australia just as the second World War was being declared, going on to have two sons and two daughters. By permission of the Queen, she was styled Lady (Vincent) Fairfax to avoid confusion with a neighbouring Lady Fairfax, who was the wife of Vincent's cousin Sir Warwick. She had great organising ability in several fields and was generous with her time and donations to worthy causes.

Nancy's grandfather Walter had three sisters and in 1866 the youngest of them, **Kate Heald (1842-1932),** was married to **John Hall (1834-1896)** who was from a family of prominent Unitarians who were successful iron and steel merchants and manufacturers. The family firm Hall and Pickles was founded in 1812 and is still one of the largest independent stockholders in the United Kingdom, now in the hands of the 7th generation and operating in locations all over Great Britain. Over the next 12 years they had four daughters and two sons. In 1871, by which time the first three children had been born, they were living in Groby Place, Altrincham with four servants. The following year they were to move to a much larger new home called *The Grange*, which was constructed for them in the parish of

Ashley Heath. As its name might imply, the house benefited from an idyllic rural location, built on the north side of the Bollin valley with fine views over it, and accessible either by a long driveway from the lower end of Broad Lane or an even longer footpath from Bankhall Lane. Thus it remained until the surrounding area became built up in the early 1900s, whereupon it became the house furthest along on Rappax Road, and nowadays will be familiar to many as the Altrincham Priory Hospital. On census night in 1881 Mr and Mrs Hall were not at home but staying at Sandal Grange, Sandal Magna in Yorkshire, where one John's sisters (Mary Byfield Hall) was married to William Marriot, a colliery proprietor. The children, ranging in age from three to fourteen, remained behind at *The Grange* attended by a governess, cook, housemaid and two nurses. By 1891 the elder son, also named **John Hall (1870-1930),** was shown as being an iron merchant with his father. He went on to be Director of steel production at the Ministry of Munitions during the First World War.



The life of the second daughter **Edith Byfield Hall (1868-1970)** (right), is notable, and not just on account of her exceptional longevity. She was of a musical disposition and was a friend of Hans Richter (the Hallé conductor from 1899 to 1911). Amateur music-making at home was then popular in the Bowdon and surrounding area, and she hosted several musical evenings at *The Grange* around 1907. At one of them she is recorded as having performed on the piano with a Miss Richter (presumably daughter of the above) and with Miss Jordan, who was sister-in-law to Carl Fuchs, the cellist in the Brodsky Quartet. In October 1914 she was engaged in the British Red Cross and three years later recorded as being appointed as commandant to one of their 3,000 auxiliary hospitals, at *Raynor Croft* on Green Walk, Bowdon (now the Bowdon Croft private hotel) with an annexe at Hilston House at the far end of that road. The hospital had been

transferred there from Brachendene on Charcoal Road, which ultimately became the Iranian consulate and is sadly now in a totally derelict state.

It was not until 1932, following the death of her mother, that Edith left The Grange after six decades, together with her spinster sister Connie (Constance Marsden Hall,1873-1960), and moved to a house on Green Walk near to Bowdon village centre. The new home became known as Byfield House and later simply Byfield, which was their paternal grandmother's maiden surname and makes several appearances in the family tree as a middle name. Together with the adjoining house Lynwood it would eventually become the premises of the Transform Clinic and at the time of writing is going through a second transformation (pardon the pun) into a development of luxury apartments to be known as Highbank.

The passion for and involvement in music continued into her twilight years. A great occasion was made of her 100th birthday in August 1968, when she was visited by Sir Adrian Boult (a fellow Unitarian, previously Chief Conductor of the BBC Symphony Orchestra of the London Philharmonic Orchestra) and photographed in the national press with Sir John Barbirolli, who had helped save the Hallé Orchestra from dissolution in 1943 and conducted it for the rest of his life. The picture of them shown is inscribed *"for Alice with love, love Edith Hall"*. The recipient was a Miss Alice Knowles, her housekeeper and companion, and in 1989 she passed it on to the late Marjorie Cox, the Chairman of the Bowdon History society from its foundation until 2008.

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Protests & Forgetfulness

by Chris Hill

What did you do last Heritage Weekend? This was an opportunity to visit buildings or places, which are normally closed to the general public, or which one has to pay to enter. The added advantage of visiting such places at this special time, is that there are usually guides and displays to help the visitor appreciate what there is to be seen. Seldom seen booklets, postcards, or other material can be acquired, and objects normally kept safe in archive deposits may be put on view. My wife had been reading a book by the T.V. walker, Mike Parker, about footpaths and had come across the famous footpath at Flixton known as the 'Bottoms Footpath'. Since days long gone, villagers had used this path to reach the parish church and the 'Church Arms' pub, but in the early 1800's it was closed, much to their annoyance and inconvenience.

The trouble came about due to a Wright Lee Wright (W.L.W.), inheriting some land and a house from a relation, Ralph Wright, in 1801. W.L.W. had some standing in the local church, St. Michael's and in the following few years bought more land to add to that already belonging to the house. He also renamed the house 'Flixton House', which is now owned by Trafford and is used for wedding receptions and the like. Unfortunately, although W.L.W.'s. fortunes had improved now he was a man of substance, the established families of the local gentry gave him the cold shoulder. This did not deter W.L.W. and, owning a substantial estate in the village, he took over the vacant pew in the church which had previously been that of the former squire and family. Having extended his estate he wanted to be master of all he surveyed. He took exception to people walking across his land in the middle distance, so he took matters into his own hands and without going through the proper procedures. Being a Justice of the Peace he

held a dinner at his home for brother justices and got a retrospective document signed, backing up his closure. The villagers who had used this footpath since time immemorial, were naturally not too pleased and a less convenient footpath ran parallel to 'The Bottoms Footpath' and out of sight from Flixton House was subject to flooding, making it impassable for parishioners. The outcome was that villagers took W.L.W. to court and got the path opened again. The 'Squire' brought several court cases over the next two years, trying to get the path closed, but with the enthusiastic support of Manchester papers, particularly the *'Gazette'*, the matter was finally settled in favour of the villagers. Due to the publicity, this *cause célèbre* brought about the formation throughout the country of many Ancient Footpath Preservation Societies. This is why this path is important and should therefore be known about, especially by local villagers; but this does not seem to be the case.

I had known about the significance of this footpath having taken part in a course of walks some decades ago arranged by Don. Lee, the Manchester Footpath Manchester Man working, at the time, for the W.E.A. and the Open Spaces Society. He wrote an account of this dispute in a booklet 'The Flixton Footpath Battle' and there is a small plaque on a post on the footpath; a Trafford Blue Plaque near the station was destroyed by fire and not replaced.

It so happened that the Saturday we chose to look at the path was also part of National Heritage Weekend and also a big United football match day, but this was overlooked before setting off. So we didn't have lunch at the Church Arms and there was some trouble getting a bus to Flixton due to all available buses taking supporters to Old Trafford. The path lies between two golf courses and runs mostly parallel with a railway line, but although perhaps seldom used these days, the path was in good condition. We came out at the church with its bunting out and were able to inspect, first W.L.W.'s. large tomb, on the south side and, although the inscription is hard to read, the squire's name and Flixton House can still be seen on the tomb's west side. There were guides aplenty inside the church and several interesting exhibits, however, there was no mention of W.L.W. despite a plaque on the wall to him.

None of the guides knew much about the national significance of the footpath and I therefore suggested it would be worth a mention next year. Our expedition was finished off with cream and jam scones in the parish rooms, a building attached to the graveyard.

However, the reason for this article is 'forgetfulness'! Not only in the above example where not only the villagers, but no doubt the school children are unaware of their famous (in some limited circles), footpath. Similar uprisings involving in some cases thousands of protestors, or viewers, which once shook the foundations of local society, are forgotten in the 'mists of time'. Well before the above 'battle' there was one at Darwen when the local vicar, who had a living in Dorset, the Rev. William Arthur Duckworth, decided to ban public access to a large, local moor, including a well used footpath, for no particular reason. At the time when most ordinary folk walked, a short cut was valuable in saving time and effort. A few years later in the same area, Colonel Richard Ainsworth, the owner of a huge bleach works and Squire of Smithills Hall, decided to close access to the moors at Winter Hill, again including a well used footpath known as Coalpit Lane. This was so he and a few friends could enjoy game-bird shooting. The people of Bolton rose *en masse* the following weekend, Sunday, 6th. September, 1896, when tens of thousands registered their protest, sweeping aside policemen and gillies, to assert their right to the fresh air of the moors. The following two weekends also saw multitudes invading the moor, but in diminishing numbers as the Colonel started issuing writs to prominent protestors.

These protests were on a far larger scale than the 'Kinder Trespass' with our local hero, Benny Rothman of Timperley, but due to circumstances this incident is much better remembered than other similar events, especially by Manchester people.

Even closer to home, there was an enormous protest involving tens of thousands of angry folk when Lord Egerton closed access to the shores of Rostherne Mere. This came about because Lady Egerton took exception to the lack of respect she expected from visitors when she rode through the village in her carriage. The villagers who lived in the Earl's houses knew which side their bread was buttered and acknowledged the local nobility by kowtowing, but

the visitors were under no such obligation. It should be said that this happened at a time when bicycles were becoming readily available and many cycling clubs were formed to explore the beauty of the countryside and get away from the smog of the city. It also provided a means of mingling with the opposite sex without the need of a chaperon. So, because of the beauty of the mere, being not too far from the large conurbation of Manchester, Rostherne was a very popular venue. I believe the Earl used the excuse of too much litter being left round the lake as the reason to prevent access, but in addition the local pub., the White Horse was also closed as further punishment. The building still stands, facing up the lane leading to the churchyard entrance and due to a slight difference in the shading of the bricks on its frontage, it can be seen where the pub. sign used to be positioned.

Just one more example, this time not a protest but an enjoyable event. At one time tens of thousands assembled on the banks of the Mersey at Warburton to watch the annual rowing regatta which attracted boat crews from all over the country, but other towns, noting the popularity of these races, started their own and so after a few years the Warburton regatta diminished in popularity and the event ceased. The only local event to carry on from these times are the races at Agecroft on the Irwell.

Strange, is it not, how the spontaneous uprising of the multitudes become a 'nine days wonder' and are forgotten!

P.S. Under the development blueprint (Oct. 2016), which will shape Trafford over the next twenty years, the area around Flixton station, Flixton House, the Bottoms Footpath and parts of William Wroe golf course, have been earmarked for 750 new homes, thus changing the present rural nature of the footpath and maybe even require it to be diverted or converted into a road.

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View from Bowdon Church Tower
(Altrincham Area Image Archive)

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The Origins and Evolution of East Downs Road

Ian Bryce

1840 and 1841 were important years in the history of Bowdon because land in the area owned by the Assheton Smith family was sold off for residential development. The family originated from the Asshetons of Middleton and had succeeded the Breretons at Ashley Hall by marriage when **Ralph Assheton (1594-1643)** married Catherine Brereton, whose father had died without male issue. He was succeeded by his son **Thomas Assheton (1633-1684)** and in turn by his son, **Thomas Assheton (1678-1759)** who was to enhance their future fortunes considerably in 1724 when he married **Harriet Theodosia Smith (1699-1773).**

The Smith dynasty had held the *Tedworth* estate at Tidworth in Wiltshire since 1650. Her father, John Smith (1655-1723), had been a famous political figure, a Whig Member of Parliament for Beeralson, Devonshire, and later Andover. He went on to become Chancellor of the Exchequer and Speaker of the House. His father of the same name had been granted the manor of the *Vaynol* estate in Snowdonia in 1699, and John inherited it when his elder brother died without issue. On his death the estates passed to his son Captain William Smith, the brother of Harriet. William died childless in 1773, 36 weeks after his sister, having left his estate to her son (another Thomas, born in 1725) who changed the family name by appending his uncle's name to it by act of Parliament. Thus he was now known as **Thomas Assheton Smith,** but not for long, as he died in 1774.

The Ashley estate went for life to the younger son William Henry Assheton Smith (1756-1839), the elder one **Thomas Assheton Smith II (1752-1828)** inherited both the *Tedworth* and *Vaynol* estates and moved away from this area. *Vaynol* amounted to over 35,000 acres, much of it rented out to tenant farmers, and he amassed substantial wealth by exploiting the rich deposits of slate on his land. He played a major part in the emerging Welsh slate industry by developing the Dinorwic quarry on his estate at Llanberis and also Port Dinorwic as a point of export for the slate,

connecting them via a private railway. In 1793 he built a magnificent Georgian Villa on the estate, called *Vaynol Hall*, overlooking the Menai Straits, where he stayed for a few months each year, with a coastal landscape park added in 1820. A dyed-in- the-wool Tory, he was Member of Parliament for Caernarvonshire from 1774 to 1780 and for Andover from 1797 to 1821 and a keen sportsman noted for his involvement in cricket.

Thomas Assheton Smith III (1776-1858, pictured), the eldest surviving son, was born in Westminster, London and followed in his father's political footsteps firstly by taking over the Andover constituency from 1821 and holding it for 10 years, and later by representing Caernarvonshire from 1832 to 1837. He was known for pioneering work on steam yachts and was an all-round sportsman, noted as a pugilist at Eton School and later as one of the outstanding amateur cricketers of the early 19th century.



Following the death of his father he lived at Tidworth where he rebuilt *Tedworth Hall,* and in summer enjoyed sailing in the Straits adjacent to *Vaynol*. He was a crack shot and a fanatical fox-hunter, out with his hounds four days a week until a year before his death, acquiring the sobriquet 'the British Nimrod'. On the death of his uncle William he inherited the Ashley estate, but it was in financial difficulties as he had five sisters needing annuities, and in 1840 he sold it to William Tatton Egerton of Tatton Park.

By 1841, in his mid-sixties and having few remaining ties to, or interest in, our locality he cashed in on the demand there for building land, disposing of various holdings. Amongst these were three arable fields, each between 4 and 5 acres, tenanted by a George Pimlott, on the south-facing slopes of Bowdon Downs and with splendid views over the Cheshire Plain. They were named on

tithe maps, from east to west, *Davies Lane Field, Great Downs* and *Nearer Downs,* and should he have wanted to exercise some influence over how the area was developed, the seller could have divided the fields into building plots, imposed covenants and sold them off individually. As this was not the case, he sold them as single units to three separate buyers and left it to them to decide what use was made of the land. It transpired that they were to use them in three very different ways.

The sales were concluded concurrently in July, and five months later the three purchasers agreed between themselves that a new road eight yards wide should be laid across the land from west to east. The road would have not only have facilitated the creation of a new neighbourhood but also fulfilled a practical need, as access from the south (i.e. Langham Road) entailed ascending 30 feet on a steep gradient – quite a challenge in the days of horse-drawn vehicles. The copy of the indenture illustrated on the next page shows the proposed road starting at the highest point on *Nearer Downs* and keeping to the same land contour as much as possible whilst still allowing room for building plots of a reasonable depth to be created on either side.

The new road, to be known as **East Downs Road**, only continued as far as the border of *Davies Lane Field*, since the purchaser was retaining the land for the exclusive use of himself and his family. This was prominent Manchester businessman and civic leader **William Neild (1789-1864)**, who over the following two years constructed, in grand Regency style, the grandest mansion in the area and named it *High Lawn*. In the next two decades he would go on to acquire two further plots of land on the east from the Earl of Stamford, extending his grounds as far as Heald Road, remodeled the house in Italianate fashion, adding the crowning glory of a belvedere, to a design by Alfred Waterhouse. There is much more about Mr Neild, his life, career and family, and subsequent owners of the mansion in the paper "*High Lawn,*
Bowdon, in Victorian times."



Indenture dated 1841 showing the proposed new East Downs Road across Nearer Downs Field & Great Downs Field.

The adjacent field, *Great Downs,* was bought by **Alfred Binyon (1800-1856)**, the brother-in-law of William Neild and also one of his co-partners in the family calico printing business founded by their wives' grandfather in 1782. Here he created and sold six building plots, which were generously-sized, particularly on the southern side, being designed to accommodate detached or semi-detached villas which were large, although not on the scale of *High Lawn*. The houses were built in the distinctive pale 'white Bowdon brick' and were owner-occupied, which was then not the norm. In 1850 only 26 out of 113 houses on a Church Rate Assessment were recorded as such. Mr Binyon did not come to live in the area himself but his son and namesake would later become a long-term resident. Details of their lives and families can be found in the February 2015 *Sheaf* article entitled "*Bowdon's link with the war poet Lawrence Binyon.*"

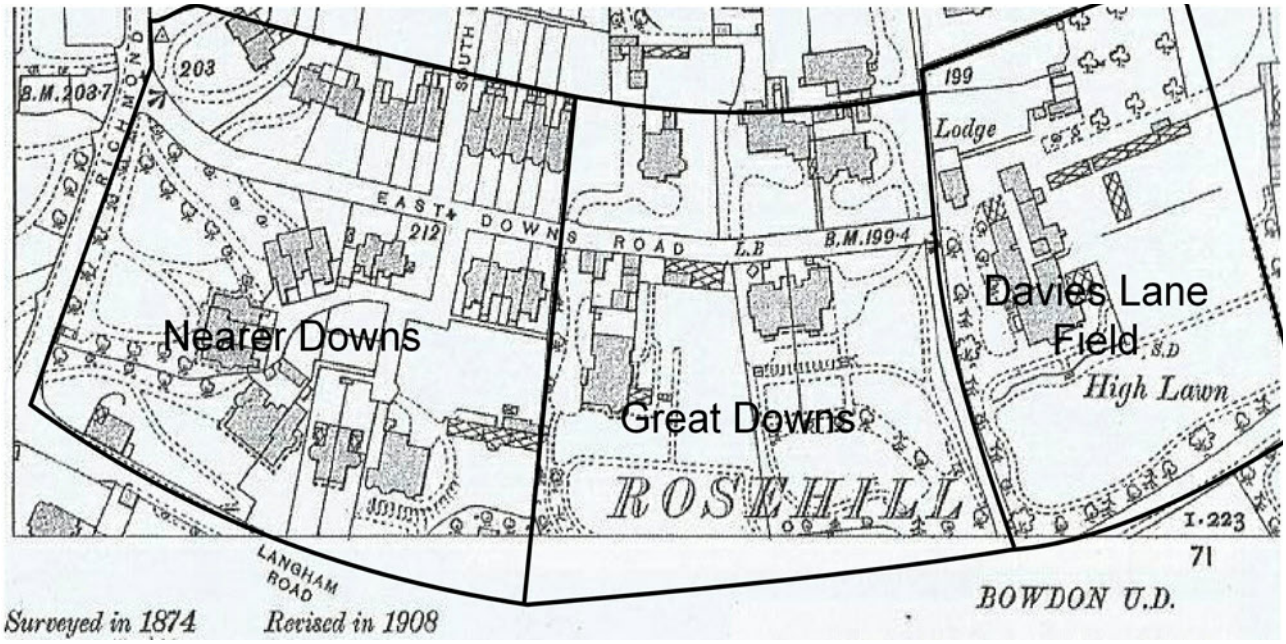
Later in the 1800s, a notable resident of one of these houses *Summerfield* (later Cransley School), was Abel Heywood, a publisher and radical who served two times as Manchester's Mayor.

Perhaps the most interesting, and certainly the most diverse, use of land was made by **John Barratt (1773-1848)** the purchaser of *Nearer Downs*, a local man and a merchant in Manchester. The tithe records show him as having extensive land holdings all over North Cheshire, but there is no connection, as far as I am aware, with the modern house-building company that bears his surname. He kept the land in his family, dividing it into two parts and endowing it to the next generation.

His son-in-law Richard Hampson (1811-1866) was given a slice of land along the west side where he planned, built and continued to own a series of houses, which were not detached but arranged in pairs and threes giving the impression of being grander than was actually the case. His solicitor son, James Barratt (1807-1866), acquired the larger portion of the field and built a small number of houses – one of them being *Rose Hill Cottage,* which was sold in 1844 along with some adjoining land, to John Spence, a Manchester surgeon.

In 1847 Mr Spence sold off some of his land on the east side to two Manchester grocers, who built an imposing pair of semi-detached houses on it, and in 1850 he sold the house itself. The bulk of James' part of the field, however, was sold off in individual plots, many quite small ones, to buyers who built on them in different styles, the outcome being a remarkable and charming collection of houses of varying size and appearance. These included a small terrace of four houses in the Palladian style (numbers 10/12/14/16) which were built in 1845 for a man named Perkins and became known informally as 'The Candle Ends'. The story is that Mr Perkins was the butler to the then Earl of Stamford and by collecting and selling the candle ends from Dunham Hall, he was said to have made enough money to build those four houses. When the area was mapped in 1876, there were a total of 31 dwellings on this former field, one of them being the single-storied *Swiss Cottage* on

Langham Road (opposite the Vicarage Lane junction), which in recent years has been shielded from public view by tall fencing.



1874 OS Map showing East Downs Road with Nearer Downs Field, Great Downs Field & Davies Lane Field superimposed & the initial buildings including High Lawn on the latter field.

In 1876 the name of the road on the west side was shown as *Rose Hill Road* but when the maps were revised in 1908 it had been given the present name *Richmond Road* with the name *Rosehill* (a Victorian invention) applied to this area as a whole. It is remarkable how the density of the housing increases from right to left, and not difficult to discern where the original field boundaries existed.

During the 1950s and 1960s there was some infill development on East Downs Road, with three smaller houses built in the grounds of the large villas in the *Great Downs* area, one of which was to the design of and occupied by the composer, poet and craftsman Thomas Pitfield. During the present century those recent houses have all been demolished and replaced with larger ones of strikingly differing designs. Inevitably some of the larger houses built in the mid-1800s have been turned into luxury apartments but it is gratifying to note that, unlike those on the parallel West Road, all of them have escaped the bulldozer.

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The Will of Edward Janny, Merchant

by Judith Miller

Education in Bowdon was given a boost in 1553 when a Manchester merchant, Edward Janny (or Janney), left a sum of £4 to pay for a schoolmaster to teach poor boys of the area.

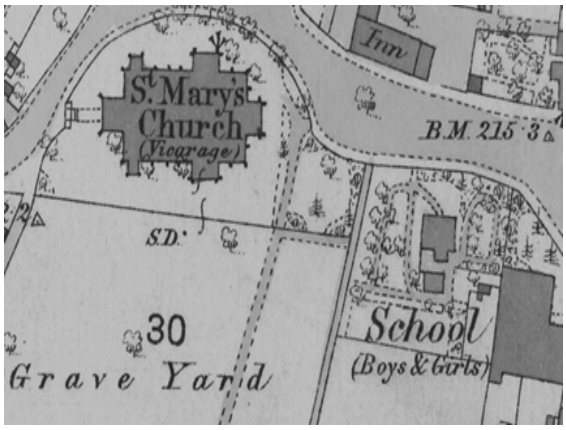


Bowdon Church School (Altrincham Area Image Archive).

The retired bishop's scribe who transcribed Edward Janny's wishes actually wrote: "...*£4 yearly to be payed to a suffyeyent and honest scole mayster to kepe a ffre scole at Bawden to instruct youthe in vertue and lerninge...*" Janny, a Manchester draper, was buried in the Parish Church of Manchester, now the cathedral. He must have been a wealthy man for his will was many pages long. He left: "*howses, shoppes and tackes in Manchester*" to his wife and many items to friends, servants and relations. We don't know where he lived but he must have spent time in Bowdon and liked the people for he left 13s 4d for the repair of the lane between Altrincham and Timperley and £3 6s 4d to the poorest householders in Bowdon. Two local men received legacies: Thomas Cropper was left a gown faced with 'chamlet' (a satin-like lining material) and Henry Allen a furred gown faced with 'budge' (lambskin).

The vicar of Bowdon, the Rev. Robert Vawdrey, was left an advowson (the right to nominate a priest) and lease of the vicarage of Bowdon. When he made his own will in 1568, he also remembered Bowdon and left £4 15s to "*pay an honest and learned schoolmaster to teach grammar at Bowdon*."

The original school site next to the church is featured on the 1876 Ordnance Survey map opposite. In 1969 the school was moved to Grange Road.



Ordnance Survey Map of 1874 showing Bowdon Church School in relation to the church (Altrincham Area Image Archive).

Over four hundred years after its foundation, local historian Basil Morrison was the auctioneer who sold the school and land near the church in 1971, now apartments at the top of Richmond Road, for £20,800 at a sale at the Unicorn Hotel in Old Market Place, Altrincham. The money raised became part of an Education Trust controlled by five appointed trustees, the vicar and four churchwardens, and went towards the cost of the new Bowdon Church of England School in Grange Road. The thriving school was completely rebuilt to nearly double the size to 480 pupils in 2015.

(Edited from Bowdon Church News August 1971; thanks to Derrick Murdie for access).

Gravedigger reply to an advertisement in 1867

Derrick Murdie

Transcript of an application for the post of gravedigger dated 1867.

"Carrington March 25th 1867

Gentlemen

Perceiving an advertisement in the Bowdon Guardian that the situation of Gravedigger for the very Beautiful & Venerable Parish Church of Bowdon will be vacant at Easter, that your honourable Wardens are prepared to receive applications for the situation.

I beg most humbly to offer myself a candidate for the situation, assuring you that should you have the kindness to favour me with the appointment that the duties thereof shall receive my most devoted and energetic attention, and that it will be my aim and endeavour to perform them in such a manner as to meet with your approbation. I may be allowed to say that I have a Nephew that I have brought up who is in his 14th year, that will be able to render me much assistance, you will remember that I was engaged numbering the gravestones in the Church Yard which I hope met with your approval, should I become your servant I shall, with your consent be most willing to engrave Stones for you or the parties owns the Graves & that economically as I wish to bring up my nephew to engraving stones.

It will be honesty on my part to inform that my age is 52 which you will consider rather too old, but if you will take into consideration the Age of my Nephew and the assistance he will be able to render me will compensate a little for my Age, nevertheless should I become your servant that the duties shall be performed faithfully and diligently.

As my chief object in offering myself is that I want to meet with a situation where I can make a comfortable home for a Deaf & Dumb Sister who is my housekeeper.

Gentlemen

I am your humble

Servant Jn° Daine

Collins Fold

PS. Should you wish a reference as to my character be, I refer you to the Curate of Carrington the Revd. R. Bramby and to Mr John Davies the Clerk of Ashton upon Mersey Church."

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The Bowdon Sheaf

A BOWDON HISTORY SOCIETY PUBLICATION

No. 59 October 2019 **£1.50**

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Old St. Mary's Church, Bowdon before the rebuild of 1858
(Altrincham Area Image Archive)

SSN-0265-816X

When the Weathercock on Bowdon Steeple Winked!

Ann Nosowska

On a dull drizzly evening on Wednesday 7th August in 1850 a small group of people made their way to the old St Mary's Church in Bowdon where, probably with the aid of candles or lanterns, they climbed to the top of the church tower. There was a storm brewing but that had not dampened their spirit of anticipation for they were expecting to witness a spectacle never before seen! The expectant parishioners took up their positions and turned their eyes towards Manchester.

On the previous Friday evening a large gathering of Manchester worthies had attended a meeting, presided over by the Mayor, John Potter Esq., in the large room of the Town Hall (which was then in King Street) to witness a demonstration of Mr Staite's new electric light.

The Manchester Times on Saturday 3rd August reported that Mr Staites:

"Proceeded to the more practical part of his lecture by displaying the power of deflagrating iron, steel and zinc, which the electric force possesses. He then exhibited a small lamp, the light from which was generated by simple voltaic electricity upon a small piece of iridium in a glass chimney; the luminous effect produced being equivalent to a gas light of ordinary dimensions, although it differed very manifestly from gas in the purity and intensity of its flame….The lecturer afterwards introduced his grand electric light, which he stated to be obtained by the use of electro magnetism.… The effect was truly electrical. An intense furnace of light seemed to have been instantaneously ignited….The whole room seemed pervaded with a sort of double-distilled daylight, an aggravated sunshine. The gas chandeliers, which had hitherto appeared respectable enough, were now rendered perfectly ridiculous. Yellow, smoky glares, their aspect was now utterly contemptible and, upon the ceiling their shadows – the shadows of the glass globes in which a large jet of gas, be it understood, was then

burning, were absolutely black - as though each globe were an impenetrably dense and opaque body."

Mr Staites next demonstrated the even more startling effect produced by placing a large dioptric lens and a parabolic reflector in front of the electric light. It was reported that the room was not large enough to hold the brightness of the light. In this light he held up by turns a lighted wax candle, a tallow candle and a coal gas flame – and "to public contempt" he was able to show that as they burned they each emitted a thick stream of vapour. Finally he was able to prove that, even when totally submerged, the electric light was not extinguished. He asserted that there was no practical obstacle to prevent the regular use of this new mode of lighting.

The mayor announced that on the following Wednesday night the 7th August at nine o'clock, the light would be demonstrated to a group of scientific men from the roof of his own house at Buile Hill estate, Pendleton in Salford. Buile Hill House was a fine neoclassical mansion with a stone balustraded platform on its rooftop (since grade II listed but currently in need of restoration). Thus it was that people gathered at high points for miles around Manchester in the hope of witnessing the phenomena. News of the success of the experiment was reported to the Manchester Courier and Lancashire General Advertiser which published several similar accounts in its edition of Saturday 10 August 1850. For example Mr. Edward Taylor of Rochdale, sent the information, that eighteen gentlemen went to Tandle Hill, about four miles from the town and fully six in direct line from Buile Hill. The night was rainy and the atmosphere thick yet, when the light was turned in the direction of the hill, it was distinctly seen. When it was turned away, they could perceive the reflection only and no diffused light. From Denton, eight miles south-east from Buile Hill, the Rev. T N Farthing also forwarded an account of what he had observed. Rev. Farthing corroborated the statement of a gentleman who communicated similar information from Bowdon as to the revolving character of the light. It reminded him very much of some of the lights he had seen on the sea coasts on clear nights.

The electric light was first observed from Bowdon Church tower at about a quarter past nine. Bowdon was said to be about eight miles in a straight line from Buile Hill. A drizzling rain was falling at the time, and the light was not very distinct at first but that was partly attributed to the residual daylight at the time and to the unfavourable state of the atmosphere, which between the two points was dull, heavy, and damp. Afterwards the light seemed to increase in size, and the changing of position of the reflectors was very plainly detected and seemed to be constant, never remaining exactly in the same position for two minutes in succession, which gave it the appearance of a revolving light in a lighthouse.

The gentlemen on the church tower reported that:

"the light appeared to be elevated about three yards above the head land in the distance and bore first a striking resemblance to the rising of one of the larger planets Jupiter or Venus as they appear when just rising on the verge of the horizon; afterwards the body of light was larger in extent but seldom attained so great brilliancy as the planets possess on a clear night. About half-past nine o'clock the power of the light seemed to increase considerably, and it appeared of larger size….the light being, as seen from Bowdon, strictly confined to one bright ball, which appeared in some part of unequal brilliancy, and at times somewhat dazzling, but in no instance so intense as to throw any shadow or to afford the slightest additional light by which to enable the spectators either to read or even see any object more distinctly with than without it. For one second, and for one second only, could the light be said to attain great brilliancy, and this was about a quarter to ten o'clock at which time a very considerable light was produced, and we have little doubt that had it been directed upon the church, which it was not, and for a sufficiently long period for observation it would have been found to illumine a considerable extent the venerable pile, but the bright light was but a flash, and afterwards very little more was to be seen, the exhibition being to all appearance at an end and at ten o'clock the rain came down so heavily to render speedy retreat

very desirable. The night, it must be observed, was not favourable for the exhibition, as there was a strong wind blowing throughout the period from nine to ten o'clock, accompanied by rain, but until ten o'clock the rain was not heavy."

The newspaper article concluded:

"We should certainly like to see this power tested under more favourable circumstances and perhaps, if Mr. Staite were to offer to have another exhibition, his worship would not object to let the roof of his house be used again. It would be extraordinary to see the little white cottages at Pott Shrigley in the middle of the night, or to surprise the inhabitants of Bowdon by letting them read the time on the dial of their clock."

Poems were penned about Mr Staite's demonstration. One such, published in the Manchester Times on 10th August ended with a mention of Bowdon – and some poetic license!

That just one other fact I'll mention:
The weathercock on Bowdon steeple
Was seen to wink by several people!
STAITES "lightning" struck the bird with wonder,
Ten thousand voices pealed the "thunder",
And, Jones, unless I'm much mistaken,
Folks' incredulity was shaken,
That light's "A fact" and Staite will "do it",
Let clever people look unto it.
Of my impressions you've the pith.

NOTE: William Staite (1809-1854) was a pioneer of electric lighting but he received little recognition for his work. Numerous demonstrations were given throughout England and serious interest in his system of electric lighting was shown by railway companies and dock authorities. The problem was that there was as yet no cheap electricity supply and very few practical generators.

Chemical batteries were too expensive. The death of Staite in 1854 brought to an end these early attempts to use electricity for illumination.

(G Woodward in IEE Proceedings Vol.136, Issue 6, November 1989).

Postscript: Electric lighting was eventually installed in St Mary's Church, Bowdon by the Altrincham Electric Supply Co. in 1901.

Minutes of the Wardens of Bowdon Church in 1821:

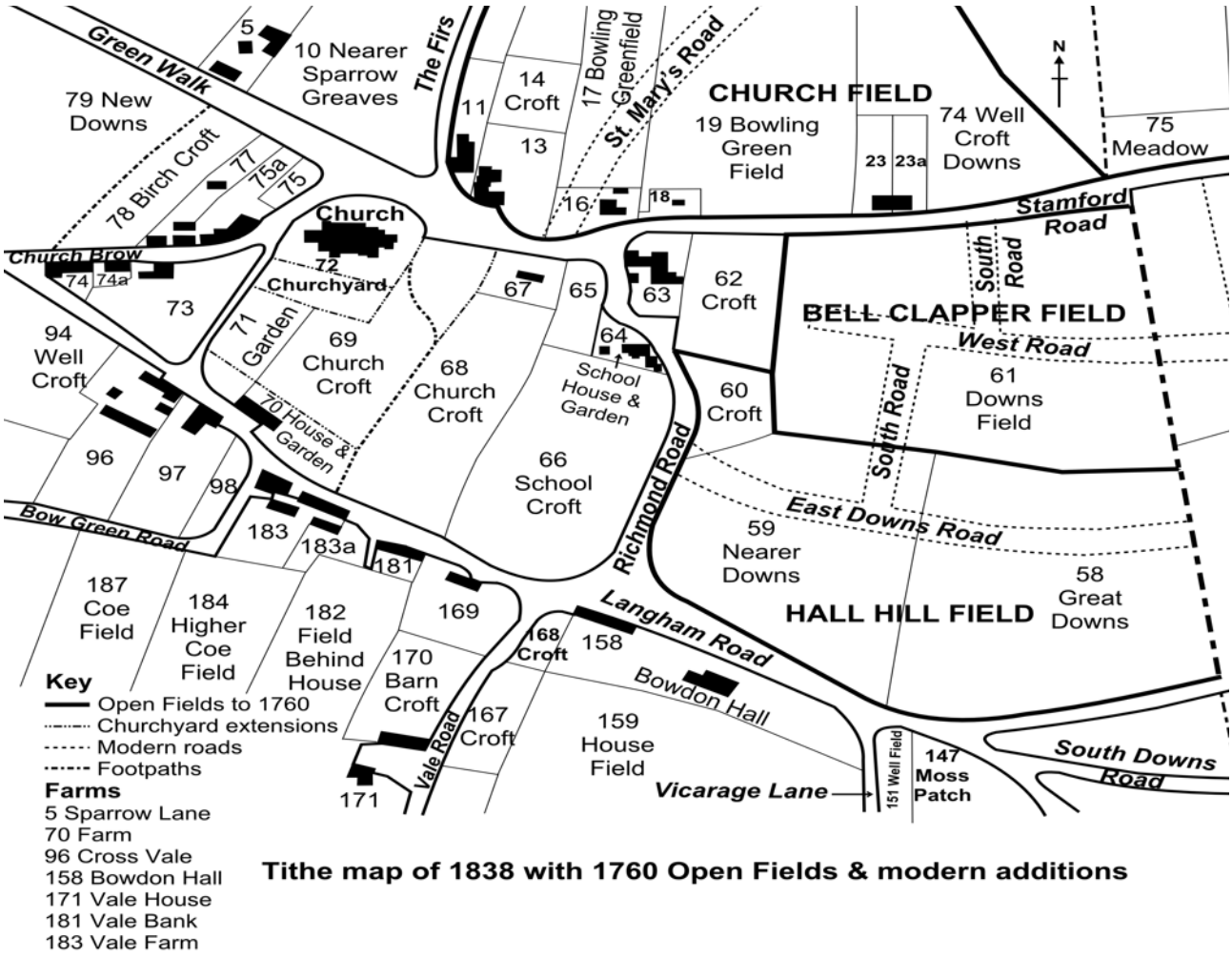
"Wardens authorised to provide a pulpit cushion and cloth for Communion Table to replace those stolen. Ordered a China or Spode Manufacture Bowl for the Font. No cattle to be admitted in future into the churchyard."

Bowdon Village in 1838

David Miller

Introduction

This article adds to Peter Kemp's notes on Old Bowdon Houses in Sheaf 49, and on Don Bayliss' description in *The Changing Landscapes of Bowdon*. It is based on an accurate drawing of the 1838 tithe map with roads added after that time shown dashed. Also shown are the last remnants of three open strip fields close to the church which were enclosed by 1760. There were four more open fields down Bow Green Road, making seven in all; most unusual for a township. Also shown is the gradual expansion of the churchyard in three phases from 1815 to 1876. The village is built on deep sand overlying boulder clay which produced springs very suitable for settlements along Langham Road. One can still be seen at the bottom of The Springs on Bow Green Road.



Tithe map of 1838 with 1760 Open Fields & modern additions

Bowdon Village from the tithe map of 1838 with new modern roads shown dashed, and the three Open Strip Fields which were enclosed by 1760 superimposed. They were shared by the Church, Assheton-Smith and Lord Stamford. Church Field had 17 strips, Bell Clapper 7, and Hall Hill Field 13, all drainage north-south.

Roads

The old roads in the area run through the village from the west, diverging at the church, the northerly branch to Altrincham, the easterly down Stamford Road to Hale, and the south-easterly to Wilmslow along South Downs Road. There is some evidence that the Stamford Road route had been a minor Roman road from the copper mines at Alderley Edge to Warburton and a smelting site at Warrington. Both of these roads contain several cottages and Langham Road several farms. The roads outlined in dashes such as St. Mary's Road and East Downs Road, are all Victorian built, on the ancient Open Fields. Stamford Road was called Sandy Lane

until Victorian times. The Firs was originally called Burying Lane, the last part of the route from Altrincham to Bowdon Church for the burial cortège. Green Walk was built about 1740 by the Fourth Earl of Stamford as part of his coach driveway from Dunham Hall to Bowdon Church. Bow Green Road leads to the site of four further open fields, the Eyebrooks.

Fields

It is well documented that three open fields existed just east of the village: Church Field to the north of Stamford Road, Bell Clapper Field between Stamford Road and East Downs Road, and Hall Hill Field, named after Bowdon Hall just to the south. It is thought that Bell Clapper Field was so named because its income was used to support the church. All of these fields were divided into strips running north-south including the very steep Hall Hill Field. The strips were shared between the three major landowners: the church (glebe), Assheton-Smith of Ashley Hall, and Lord Stamford of Dunham Hall, each having alternate strips. These strips were formed by a primitive plough to give a raised bed and drainage channels and by mutual agreement were consolidated into fields for more efficiency by 1760. The other tithe fields were gradually enclosed between the 13th and the 17th century. Named fields are shown on the map; those with only a plot number are all House, House & Garden, Garden. Details of plot and strip owners and occupiers can be found in the Kemp and Bayliss articles.

C**hurch & Churchyard**

Bowdon Church is situated at 200 feet above sea level, almost the highest point on Bowdon Hill. To the north are the extensive Bowdon Downs stretching to Altrincham, long used to assemble armies, for horse racing, and in the 20th century for the Altrincham Agricultural Show. To the south a steep scarp drops down to Bowdon Vale. The church site may date to Celtic times, certainly Saxon and the church was rebuilt in 1100, 1320, and 1858 (the last architect was W H Brakspear who also designed the now- demolished 'Dome Chapel'). The churchyard lies on a steep slope to the south and contains 5,000 graves with 40,000 burials. It was

extended in 1815, 1859, and 1876 down to Langham Road, the last requiring the demolition of the large building in tithe plot 70. The wall on the west side is medieval.

Buildings

None of the buildings on the tithe map are recorded as farms but this can be derived from the size of the holdings and the later Victorian names. Many of them are aligned to Langham Road where the sand of the hill met the underlying boulder clay and produces springs or allowed wells to tap into the fairly pure water. Drinking water, from plot 94 Well Croft, had to be carried to the buildings higher up and a path still exists from The Springs (plot 94) to Green Walk. Many of the buildings along Langham Road still have wells, eg Bowdon Hall which dates from 1700 and is still a substantial building despite demolitions. A hall has existed here since 1200. Another source of water existed on the north-eastern side from plot 74 Well Croft Downs which may have been used to power Seddon's 1775 woollen mill lower down Stamford Road. The buildings on plots 11 and 13 may have been farms originally but are now The Stamford Arms and The Griffin pubs. There is still a bowling green on plot 19 today. All of the other buildings are listed as houses in the tithe schedule but are in fact cottages, most with a garden and occupiers often rented additional land for sustenance.

Sources

Bayliss, Don & David Miller, *The Changing Landscapes of Bowdon*.
Bowdon tithe map & schedule 1838.
Kemp, Peter, Bowdon Sheaf 49, *Some Old Bowdon Houses.*

Big Bang in Bowdon

Judith Miller

The explosion occurred in December 1906 when a workman lit a cigarette on the steps of the public drinking fountain opposite St Mary's Church, Bowdon.

The incident was reported in the Manchester Guardian of December 2nd and in St Mary's parish newsletter in January 1907. Two boys delivering newspapers about 7am reported a strong smell of gas to local workmen near the fountain. One of the men went to investigate and lit a cigarette in front of the fountain. The gas escape caused the fountain to explode and fragments of stone were hurled into the air breaking the outside glass of one of St Mary's clerestory windows and the tops of some church railings. The force of the explosion flung both workmen several yards and one of the newsboys had his foot crushed by debris and was taken to Altrincham Hospital for treatment.

The fountain had been erected in 1872 by Mrs Elizabeth Marriott in memory of her husband, Francis Marriott, a Manchester solicitor. Elizabeth was the sister of the well-known surgeon, Arthur Ransome. She and Francis lived at Greenbank on The Firs around 1858 and later at Lea Hurst on St Margarets Road. They had four sons and one daughter.

The restored fountain is constructed of ashlar stone and polished granite with a three-stepped plinth, octagonal corner columns and two troughs. There are four recesses with cusped arches and polished granite columns under a Gothic style canopy. The recesses have fountains and bowls alternating with the inscriptions. At the time of the explosion, as can be seen in the photograph on the next page, it stood in front of the church, roughly in the centre of the square at the crossroads with Stamford Road and The Firs. Following restoration in 1972, it was moved much nearer to the Stamford Arms, presumably to help the flow of traffic. Bowdon Conservation Group contributed to its restoration.

Marriott Memorial in the 1950s (Altrincham Area Image Archive).



The inscriptions on the fountain read as follows:

In Memoriam
Francis Marriott
born January 30 1830 died
January 3 1871 Erected by
his wife
anno domini 1872
The Fear of the
Lord is a Fountain
of Life. prov: X1VXXV11

The opposite panel reads:
Blessed is the man
that trusteth in the Lord and whose hope
the Lord is:
Jeremiah 17:7.8 & part 8. Verse

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A BOWDON HISTORY SOCIETY PUBLICATION

No. 60 October 2020 **£1.50**

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Bowdon Church (from the front cover of Isobel Waller's poems)

SSN-0265-816X

BOWDON HISTORY SOCIETY

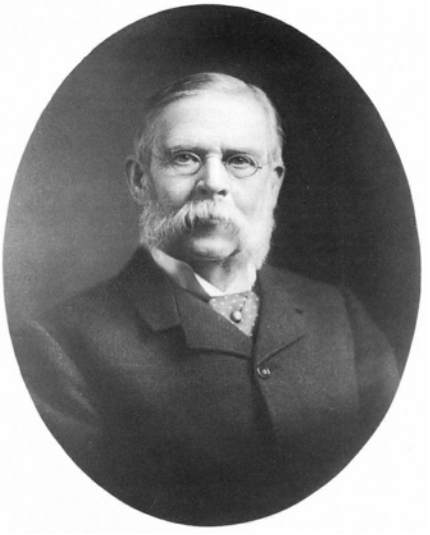
Bowdon History Society was founded in 1979 and aims to bring local people together to further knowledge of the history of the area through talks, visits, research and publication of an annual journal and occasional papers. Members meet four times a year in an historical local church for talks and we always welcome new members and visitors. More information can be found on the internet.

Richmond Road, Bowdon

Ian Bryce

The houses on the west side

I wrote about East Downs Road in edition 58 of *The Sheaf* and readers may recall that the houses on the west side of *Nearer Downs* field (i.e. those nearest to Richmond Road) were built and owned by a **Richard Hampson (1811-1866).** In addition to this land he acquired the two steep-sloping fields named *Church Croft* and *School Croft* on the other side of Richmond Road (i.e. the land bordered by the Church School, St Mary's churchyard and Langham Road) and built a further nine houses there.



Richard Hampson Joynson

Richard Hampson was a silk manufacturer and up to 1845 had been a partner in a firm known as Peter Joynson & Co. in Fountain Street, Manchester. His sister married one of the other partners, and ownership of the houses eventually passed to one of her sons, **Richard Hampson Joynson (1839-1908).** He was a silk merchant and JP, and described as “a Manchester evangelical Tory”. He lived at *Chasefield* on Park Road, (where there are now several detached houses on a private road of the same name). He was the principal benefactor of St Peter's Church, Hale, where his wife (Susan, 1836-1896) laid the foundation stone in November 1890. They had one daughter, **Grace Lynn Joynson (1873-1952)** who in 1895 married William Hicks (1865-1932), a solicitor and aspiring politician.



Grace Lynn Joynson-Hicks (National Portrait Gallery)

Following the marriage they combined their surnames and henceforth her husband was known as **William Joynson-Hicks.**

He went on to have a distinguished political career, first entering Parliament in 1908 by defeating Winston Churchill in a by-election in Manchester North West and remaining an MP up to 1929, later representing Brentford and finally Twickenham. He held office as Postmaster General, Paymaster General, Financial Secretary to the Treasury, Minister of Health and was eventually Home Secretary in Stanley Baldwin's second government from 1924 to 1929. Popularly known as “Jix”, he was a Privy Counsellor, and received a knighthood and latterly a peerage, becoming the 1st Viscount Brentford.

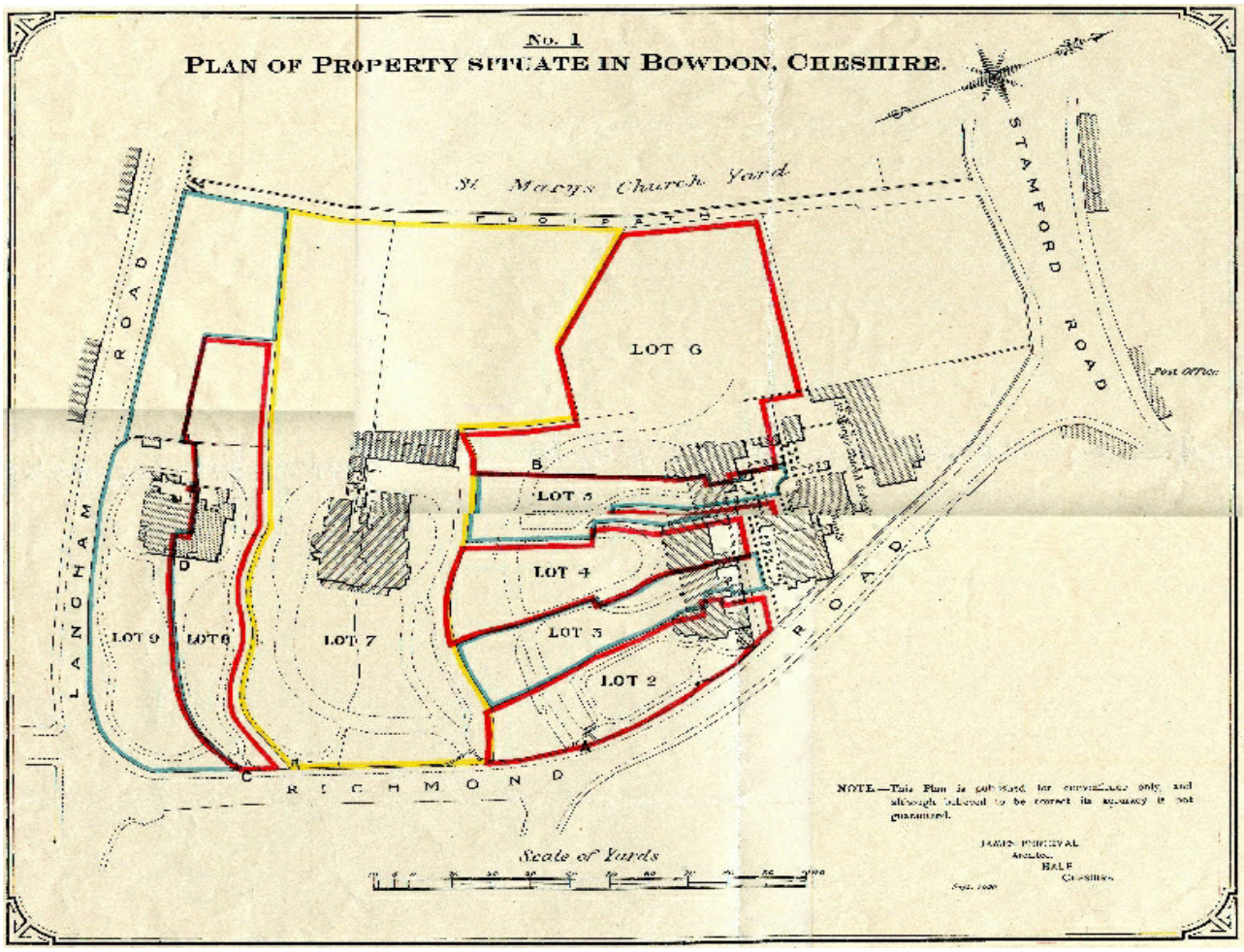
In 1920, by direction of the Trustees of R H Joynson Esq. and Lady Joynson-Hicks, a portfolio of properties in Manchester and Bowdon were sold off by auction, including eight lots comprising the houses built in the above-mentioned fields. The auctioneers published particulars giving detailed information in respect of all the accommodation, the tenants and their tenancies. They commanded annual rents ranging between £42 and £115, while the land areas were between 804 and 8906 square yards, and the land rental being between £4 and £20.



William Joynson-Hicks (National Portrait Gallery)

The layout plan illustrated opposite shows that on the lower part of the land (i.e. nearest to Langham Road) was a pair of semi-detached houses named as *No. 3* and *No. 4 Church Bank.* Higher up was another pair of semi-detached houses, which were sold as a single lot, and then known as *Ingledene* and *Church Bank.* It seems likely that these last two were originally *No. 2* and *No. 1 Church Bank,* consistent with the practice for numbering adjacent pairs of houses adopted in the area. At the highest point on the land (i.e. nearest to the Church School) there was a terrace of five houses known as *No. 1* to *No. 4 Richmond Hill* and (closest to the churchyard and with more extensive land) *Richmond Lodge.* They remain standing and thus named to this day.

All nine houses had been built on the *School Croft* field, with five of them later having had their grounds enlarged considerably when the adjacent field *Church Croft* was purchased from the Earl of Stamford. An intermittent dotted line on the auctioneers' plan shows where the boundary between the two fields once existed.



Plan of the properties on the west side of Richmond Road for sale in 1920

Ingledene and the adjoining house (sold as Lot 7) were combined into a single building which during the Second World War was used as a children's nursery. In 1946 it was purchased by the *Waifs and Strays Society* (which would later become the *Church of England Children's Society*) who used the building as a residential nursery home for 26 children up to the age of five and as a training school for nursery nurses. In the 1980s it became a treatment centre for children with emotional problems and in 1989 a unit for teenagers to provide support for those making the transition from institutional care to independent living. It finally closed in 1991 and the building sold in 1992. It is now a private residence and forms part of a gated

development known as *Richmond Green* with five modern detached houses on the land.

The remaining pair of semi-detached houses have been demolished and there is now a block of eight luxury apartments (which continue to bear the name of *Church Bank*) with a further detached home facing Langham Road at the rear.



Ingledene on Richmond Road, Bowdon (as a children's home)

****

Church Bank on Richmond Road, Bowdon *David Miller*

The early Victorian period saw the rapid residential development of Bowdon by the wealthy entrepreneurs of Manchester, attracted by the rural surroundings within easy reach of the city, by train from 1849. Two interesting families lived at Church Bank and produced people who had significant influence on the social and educational development of the area.



Church Bank (Tony Lysaght)

The Bowdon OS Map of 1876

On the 1876 OS map are 1 & 2 Church Bank, now Ingledene, with 3 & 4 below. In 1838 the plot was owned by Thomas Assheton Smith but sold to the Greys of Dunham Hall by 1872 when a survey was carried out by George Smith (see the Stamford Papers John

Rylands Library ref. EGR14/11/7/72). Just to the east of Richmond Road were Bell Clapper Field and Hall Hill Field, two of the five Open Fields surrounding Bowdon Church (see p119 of *The Changing Landscape of Bowdon,* Cheshire).

Church Bank

Below, 3 & 4 Church Bank was a pair of large semi-detached properties recorded in the 1871 census and shown on the 1874 map. In 1881 Number 4 on the left side was occupied by the Bradbury family and in 1891 Judge James Bradbury was living there with his wife Grace, children Margaret, Edward Kinder, Sylvia, and three servants. At that time servants would have used the basement as a kitchen and living room, and slept in the attic. By 1910 the Bradburys had moved to Parkfield, Groby Place in Altrincham.



Church Bank on the 1876 OS map with Ingledene above (AAIA)

Judge James Bradbury

Judge James Kinder Bradbury was born in Saddleworth in 1848 and in 1878 married Grace Dowling from Timperley. They had moved into Church Bank by 1881 and had three children. James became a judge of the Lancashire County Court, serving the Bury and Bolton circuit. He was politically active in Altrincham, particularly in education. He chaired the joint Altrincham, Bowdon, Hale and District Education Sub-Committee established in 1903 to look at the provision of state schools in the Altrincham area, including Altrincham County High for Girls (later Altrincham Grammar School for Girls) and Stamford Park Primary School. Judge Bradbury was the first chairman of the Board of Governors of the former.

Captain Edward Bradbury VC



Plaque to Captain Edward Kinder Bradbury VC on the garden wall at Church Bank.

Edward Kinder Bradbury the youngest child was born on 16 August 1881 at Church Bank. On the outbreak of the Great War, Captain Bradbury, a career soldier, was second-in-command of L-Battery, Royal Horse Artillery with the British Expeditionary Force. After being faced by an enemy far superior in number, the force was retreating from Mons in Belgium on 1 September 1914. Edward was awarded the VC, the highest award for bravery, for his heroism under fire in a battle at Néry, a remote village in Picardy, Northern France. Edward is buried in the village and a remembrance ceremony is held annually on the date of the battle. Ceremonies were held in France and Bowdon on the centenary of the battle with members of the Bradbury family present at both events. Bradbury Central School on Queens Road in Hale (demolished 1985 and replaced by St Andrew's Court) was named after him and a Blue Plaque erected at Church Bank in 2014. Edward was one of only two Altrincham VCs, the other the late Bill Speakman who died in 2018.

Prof. Ross Waller

Ross Douglas Waller was born on the Isle of Wight in 1899 and by 1911 the family had moved to Chorlton, Manchester. In 1937 Ross became Director of Extra-Mural Studies at Manchester University and the family moved to 3 Church Bank. In 1938 with his wife Isobel, he attempted to raise funds for a Workers' Educational Association college hostel in Bowdon, suggesting Denzell on the corner of Green Walk and the Dunham Road as a suitable building. It had been left to Bowdon Urban District Council by the Lamb family after Samuel Lamb died in 1936. Ross described in his booklet *Residential College* the process which would have transformed Denzell but the University felt unable to take over the

house. Marjorie Cox recorded in Sheaf 8 that, nevertheless, enthusiasts including Ross's wife Isobel, decided to form a limited company in 1938 and mobilised voluntary and financial support. Miss Lamb offered £150 per year for three years for residential caretakers and Bowdon Urban District Council offered to charge a nominal rent but the project failed to materialise. Isobel designed a heraldic shield for the Guildhouse. In 1945, Ross was awarded an MBE for his work as Honorary Secretary of the Manchester Regional Committee Central Advisory Council for Adult Education in the Forces. He was later awarded a CBE for his work in Community Development. In 1949 he became Professor of Adult Education in the Faculty of Education at Manchester. In 1952 he was Chairman of the Manchester Dante Society and British-Italian League. In 1954 he again proposed that Denzell should become a WEA Centre but to no avail.

Ross's wife **Isobel Waller (née Brown)**
Isobel Brown, a relation of the owners of Affleck & Brown's store in Manchester, was born in 1902 in Scotland. She met Ross in Florence, married and in 1934 gave birth to a son David Michael. Isobel became a well-known personality in Altrincham through her remarkable support for people in need of help. She became concerned about the plight of homeless people and those who had gone astray, and would offer a bed at Church Bank to those in need. With this in mind she brought into use the house's extensive cellars where the children had slept for safety during the war and she turned a disused coal cellar into a chapel. To the two substantial bedrooms she added a kitchen and a bathroom with toilet. The bedrooms and the kitchen had large windows and a separate entrance. From time to time a family was housed here until found accommodation. Individual homeless people were given a roost in summer houses and an old caravan. She also used the attic of the house but in 1973 the Public Health Authority closed the cellars down. At the meeting she said that she had housed 80 homeless people free over 30 years in cases which neither the social services nor the parish clergy could deal with. Isobel was brought up a Presbyterian but converted to Roman Catholicism.

Isobel's Poems

Isobel produced at least two booklets of poems which she sent to friends. They reflect her compassion for people and nature, and life in Bowdon in the 1970s. The second of her poems is actually by her daughter Angels and illustrates the busy household:

Angels' version of 3 Church Bank, May 1973.

Five and twenty people knocking at the door
We've just had a cup of tea, we'll have to make some more,
Five and twenty people ramb'ling through the Hall,
Cat or dog on every chair . . can't sit down at all . . .
Five and twenty people want so much to stay,
One has found himself a bed and won't go away.
Four and twenty people needing cups of tea,
One has gone to move his car, leaving twenty three..
Arthur in the Summerhouse,
Asians in the upper flat, Paddy down below,
Sammy in the Caravan . . . nowhere else to go . . .
Three and twenty people at the close of day
Find there is much to eat, three go away
Twenty weary people backing through the door
Find the drive entirely blocked by five and twenty more.
by Angels Waller

(Angels' poem quoted with her permission).

Prof. Michael Waller

Isobel and Ross's son David Michael Waller was born in 1934 and became an outstanding student at Altrincham Grammar School. He studied Humanities at the University of Oxford and Russian at Manchester University. Michael married Manon Lallée in Lancaster in 1970 and they have two daughters. He became Professor of Politics at Keele University and its first Director of European Studies. He was co-founder of the Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics, and of the Journal of Environmental Politics. He has published many articles and books.

Conclusion

All of the houses on the west side of Richmond Road and West Bank on the east side were sold by auction in 1920 by the direction of the Trustees of the late R H Joynson and Lady Joynson-Hicks.

Such houses often became too large to manage, resulting in multiple occupancy and were demolished and replaced by purpose-built apartments. Church Bank was replaced in 1984 by nine apartments built on the same footprint. The land is now part of the Bowdon Conservation area.



Church Bank apartments today.

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Hugh Kirkpatrick Hall 1749-1788 *Ann Nosowska*

High on the wall to the west of the south door of St Mary's church in Bowdon can be seen an elegant Georgian memorial bearing the following simple inscription:

> *Sacred to the memory of Hugh Kirkpatrick Hall Esq., of Jamaica and late of Ashley in this County who died the 27th January 1788 in the 38th year of his age.*
> *Also Martha his wife, the second daughter of Marsden Kenyon Esq., of Manchester who died on the 14th day of January 1780 in the 26th year of her age.*

A brief obituary to Hugh Kirkpatrick Hall appeared in the Manchester Mercury on Tuesday 5th February 1788: "*Sunday se'nnight died at Ashley in Cheshire, Hugh Kirkpatrick Hall, Esq., late of the Island of Jamaica*." His funeral took place at Bowdon on the 6th of February where the church register simply records, "*Hugh Kirkpatrick Hall of Ashley Esq., 38*."(i) However, the details of his wife's death are not as they are recorded; the church burial register tells a slightly different story. An entry on 2nd March 1790 says, "*Hall, Martha, wife of Hugh Kirkpatrick Hall of Ashley, Esq.,was interred at St Anne's Westminster on the 19th January 1781 and being removed from thence, was on this day March 2nd (by a Faculty from the Bishop of London) deposited in her husband's vault at Bowdon*."(ii) At the time of Martha Hall's death her eldest child would have been about four years old and so when the memorial was erected by S Hope of Manchester, in or after 1790, there may have been few members of the family who remembered the exact year of her death.

But who was Hugh Kirkpatrick Hall, born in Jamaica and yet late of Ashley? This memorial poses tantalising questions. One secret not revealed by the memorial is that the profits of the slave trade spread far and wide - even into this corner of Cheshire. The story of Hugh Kirkpatrick Hall can be found in letters and estate documents (1709-1892) held in the University of California, San Diego in the Mandeville Special Collections Library.

In the late 17th century Thomas Hall of Worcester had emigrated to Jamaica where the Hall family engaged in sugar production for over a century. The Halls married into a second sugar plantation family, the Kirkpatricks, and later into the Dehany family who were slave traders from Bristol. These early generations directly supervised their plantations, while later descendants came to live in England, leaving the management of their estates to attorneys and overseers. In the summer of 1758 Thomas and Mary Hall (née Dehany), with their young family, made the treacherous journey across the Atlantic. Ambitious and wealthy eighteenth century fathers, were concerned to ensure that their sons were sufficiently well educated to take their place in aristocratic society. That meant educating them in England. Thomas Hall was no exception. It was

also necessary for him to introduce his young daughters into the world and to 'bring them on' socially. By the time the family arrived in England Hugh Kirkpatrick was aged 9, his sisters Mary and Sarah were aged 10 and 3 and their two younger brothers, William and Thomas were aged 8 and 1. Thomas Hall snr also had another daughter in Jamaica, the 'natural' child of a slave.

Hugh Kirkpatrick and William Hall were soon enrolled at Eton and they entered the college in September 1759 for a fee of 3gns each. Their younger brother, Thomas, followed them to Eton in 1764 for a fee of 5gns.[iii] "*I am glad you have placed my Dear Girl & Boys att Schole & don't doubt but they will be pleased with their situation and endeavour to fetch up their lost time*," wrote their grandmother from Jamaica.

The Hall family first took up residence in Golden Square, the most fashionable address in London, where their last child, a daughter named Dehany, was born in 1759. They maintained close contact with Jamaica and gifts were frequently exchanged – cheese was sent from England, turtles, parakeets, exotic fruit and even a monkey came from Jamaica. How much Hugh remembered about Jamaica or what he knew of his father's business there is unknown. His childhood, when not away at school, was spent in expensively comfortable rented houses and, although his father returned to Jamaica for a while, he spared no expense to ensure that Hugh did not waste his time at Eton. He was to be disappointed. Hugh did not have good school reports.

In 1763, whilst his father was back in Jamaica and Hugh was away at school, his wife Mary Hall died. On his father's return to England, Hugh and his brother were entered at Trinity College Cambridge with a tutor to supervise their studies. The tutor wrote to their father, "*I can't but lament the total loss of time of your sons at Eton; a loss the more to be regretted as it must necessarily have connected them with the idle & less deserving part of the school, from whose society I can't pretend to keep them clear*."

With the death of his father in 1772 Hugh, aged 23, inherited the bulk of the Jamaican estates which he managed through attorneys

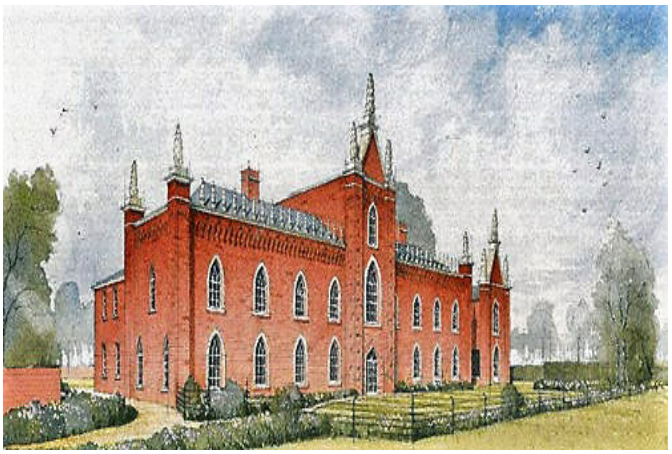
in Jamaica and John Kennion his agent in London. He still enjoyed an occasional turtle feast and his table profited from exotic treats from his own estate. However, Hugh also had the responsibility of managing the sugar plantations from a great distance. Quantities of sugar, molasses and rum were exported but Hugh experienced problems with his agent in Jamaica. There is no evidence that he ever returned to manage the problems, nor can we know how much he was aware of the living and working conditions of the slaves that were purchased and sold on his behalf. At home in Marylebone he was very prosperous.

Hugh Kirkpatrick Hall married Martha Kenyon at Westminster on 18th May 1775. She was an orphaned minor, about six years Hugh's junior, the second daughter of a wealthy merchant, Marsden Kenyon of Manchester. The Kenyons were an important Lancashire family and Marsden's father, Edward Kenyon had married Hannah Marsden at St Peter le Moors Bolton in 1709. A Mr Marsden had an impressive house in Market Street Lane, Manchester and the adjacent square was named Marsden Square. (iv) Hugh and Martha's marriage was witnessed by Hugh's brother-in-law, another plantation owner, and by his London agent, John Kennion. The ceremony was conducted by Arthur Onslow, chaplain to the House of Commons.

The couple had three children. The first child, Thomas, was born at 'The Vache' near Amersham in 1776 but by 1778 the family was living at Booths Hall in Knutsford which was the property of the Legh family. Their second son, John, was baptised at St John's Knutsford in 1778 and their daughter, Harriot, was baptised there in March 1780. Hugh enjoyed hunting and horse racing, he subscribed to the Manchester Agricultural Society and he was a steward at the Knutsford and the Manchester races. Amongst his society friends were the 5th Earl of Stamford and Warrington and his two brothers, John and Booth Grey, Sir Thomas Egerton and Peter Legh.

Sometime in 1780 Hugh Kirkpatrick Hall moved to Over Tabley Hall. It was there, on Christmas Day 1780, that he made his will. He left all his household goods to Martha whilst his children were provided for from his Jamaican estates. In this will he also left money for the

maintenance and education of his Jamaican illegitimate half sister, Elizabeth Hall. Martha Hall died in Southampton, only weeks after her husband made this will. He lived long enough to add codicils to it. Martha's body was taken to St Anne's Church Soho, the final resting place of Hugh's parents, for burial on 19th January 1781. She had probably died on January 14th as recorded on the memorial in Bowdon church (although not in 1780 as stated there).



Over Tabley Hall - by permission of Howard & Seddon architects

Whatever Hugh had planned before Martha's death, by the end of 1784 he and his family had moved once more – this time to rent Ashley Hall, where he was living when he died on 27th January 1788. He was living there with at least three long-standing servants and his wife's sister, Elizabeth Kenyon, who was caring for him and his children. In 1790 the boys, Thomas and John, were admitted to Eton College and, according to the school register, Thomas was admitted to Trinity College Cambridge in 1794 whilst John went to Trinity Hall in 1796. Neither graduated but that was not unusual at the time.

So behind the relatively simple memorial in St Mary's Church, Bowdon, lies a full and fascinating eighteenth century life spent in highly privileged circles and financed by a trade which to modern eyes is abhorrent. We can never know what role religion played in Hugh Kirkpatrick Hall's life, or whether he was a regular member of the congregation at St Mary's Church in Bowdon. He had married into a nonconformist family and it is interesting to note that in 1785 he was one of the subscribers to a new publication by Hezekiah Kirkpatrick (no relationship found) entitled "*Sermons on Various Subjects; With an Account of the Principles of Protestant*

Dissenters, Their Mode of Worship, and Forms of Public Prayer, Baptism, and the Lord's Supper." Hugh Kirkpatrick ordered four copies of the book and he was in good company – including Peter Kenyon jun. of Liverpool, John Kennion Esq. of Liverpool, who ordered four copies, and John Legh Esq. of Cheshire.



Hugh Kirkpatrick Hall's sister Mary Hall in a painting by Benjamin West. With rights from Wadsworth Atheneum Museum USA

Notes

(i) Bowdon Parish Registers record no. 12-2-11.
(ii) Bowdon Parish Registers record no. 12-10-19.
(iii) Eton College Register 1753-1790 by R.A. Austen-Leigh 1921.
(iv) From the first authentic street map of Manchester. Produced by Russel Casson and John Berry between 1741 and 1757. In Chetham's Library Manchester.

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