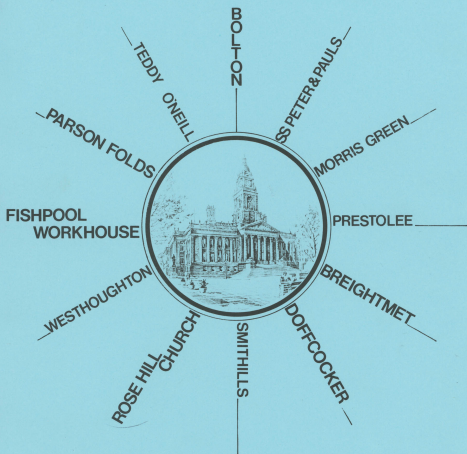


TIMES PAST



Bulletin of the BOLTON W.E.A.
Local History Study Group 3

CONTENTS

	Page
Foreword by Marie Mitchell	ii
Poor Law and the Workhouse	Betty Connor 1
Tragedy at Langshaw Ford Farm	W.D. Billington 4
Teddy O'Neill, the 'Idiot' Teacher	John Cooper 7
Parsons Folds	Arthur Clemmett 13
S.S. Peter and Paul's	Jean Flinders 17
A House on Blackburn Road	John Greenhalgh 22
Leisure in 19th Century Egerton	Helen Heyes 24
Musing by a Stream	W.D. Billington 3
Rose Hill United Reformed Church	R.L. West 33
Shops and Shopkeepers of Yesteryear	Frank Thomasson 38
Brightmet	Iris Duxbury 41
Our Village - Morris Green	Freda McFarland 43
Book Reviews and Guide to Local History Sources	46

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FOREWORD

Marie Mitchell,

W.E.A. Tutor, Local History.

It gives me great pleasure to write this foreword to the 3rd edition of TIMES PAST.

Some years ago few people had any interest in Local History until the W.E.A. ventured to start classes in the subject. These were an unqualified success and more and more people became interested and involved; they began to realise their own potential in researching and recording different subjects. With the help of the monthly Local History Workshop, started by the W.E.A., advice is available about the archives and resource material in the Bolton Library both in the Lending and Reference Sections, and other sources.

It is encouraging to learn that some people are now recording their childhood memories with tape recording, writing and photography.

All these projects make an excellent contribution to the Local History of Bolton, congratulations, and long may they continue to be produced.

FOUR LAW AND THE WORKHOUSE

by Betty Connor.

In 1927 Fishpool Institution, now part of Bolton District General Hospital, became my home for the next 23 years. This was not because I was a child of the Workhouse - though I used to play with them - but because my father had obtained the post of Resident Assistant Engineer. My grandfather was then Foreman Engineer, but was non-resident.

The house in which we were to live was the old lodge, built in 1861, along with the original Workhouse. Part of it was also the admission ward, where inmates used to be taken to be bathed (de-loused, if necessary) and were given workhouse clothing. They were then taken to the day rooms, to live out the rest of their lives. If young enough, they were given jobs to do around the grounds and in the Workhouse, like cleaning, helping in the kitchens or laundry, or calum picking, which was the unpicking of rope, to be used in water-proofing of boats.

Most of the following incidents described I remember; the later ones more clearly. A great deal of information has also been obtained from the Bolton Reference Library and Archives. Other details have been supplied by previous officers and employees of the Institution and Hospital, who devoted most of their lives to the care of others, and I am most grateful for all the assistance, willingly given, by these ladies and gentlemen.

The new Townley's Hospital was open to the public on 9th and 12th April 1913 as part of activities for a 'National Health Week', and on 10th July, on the occasion of the visit of King George V and Queen Mary, the workhouse children were invited to join in the festivities.

In October, workhouse extensions were planned. There was to be a new provisions store, bakehouse, cookhouse, boiler-house and chip-cutting shop (old trees cut down and made into bundles of firewood, by inmates, for selling). Also shoe repair shop and tailors' shop, where suits were actually made. The last tailor to be appointed was Mr. Fray. All these buildings were erected on to the road opposite the present Russell Vickers Ward, the bakehouse now being the stationery department. Also, in October, the joinery department made the coffins for the Workhouse and hospital, because outside contractors were not satisfactory.

With a few exceptions, staff at the Workhouse were resident. Rations of food, to which they were entitled, were strictly adhered to and on 22nd October, 1913 the scale of food allowances was circulated. These were achieved mainly by the efforts of the Master, Mr. Burns, to obtain the best for staff, as well as making sure that the inmates were also fairly treated regarding diet. Even during the Great War, starting in the following year, food allowances did not vary a great deal; meat being the main commodity to decrease, from 6-lb. in 1913, to 2½-lb. in 1917.

A pleasant occasion, also on 22nd October, 1913, was the 101st birthday of an inmate, Mrs. Ruth Turner. In those days 101 was a great age to live to anywhere. Mrs. Turner's mother and father emigrated to Canada after their marriage, but for

some reason they returned to England. Mrs. Turner was born at sea on the way home, and the family settled in Nantwich, Cheshire, where Mrs. Turner was brought up, later moving to Sheffield. She met and married Mr. Turner, a Bolton man, who was a carrier with Walker's Tannery. They had three children, who all died in the same week from smallpox.

After her husband's death Mrs. Turner lived on what money she had saved, until it was gone. Then she went 'hawking' (door to door selling), and when that became too much for her, she entered the Workhouse in 1897, at the age of 85 years. At 101, her memory was good; she could hear all that was said, and only wore spectacles for reading. She arose at six o'clock each morning and made her own bed. For her birthday celebrations a lady member of the Board of Guardians made a cake. Mrs. Turner's only wish was that a visiting band should play the hymn 'There is a fountain filled with blood', whilst the inmates and staff sang. The reason for this request was that she remembered her mother singing the hymn to her when she was a small child.

This grand old lady died the following year, 1914, on 2nd June. She was buried in Tonge cemetery which at that time was made available for inmates at Fishpool.

ELIZABETH'S REIGN.

Poor Law and Outdoor Relief goes back to Elizabethan times, when the Government at the time of Elizabeth I passed a law stating that the parish or township must provide money for relief of the poor, out of the rates.

Overseers were appointed to decide who should qualify, and to distribute the money. These Overseers, who were ordinary people, were not paid to do this job until about 1790. They served for one year and were appointed street by street. Along with this, and because of poor people being a burden on the rates if they moved to another township, an Act of Settlement was passed in 1662. This allowed the Township Officers to remove any strangers who came into the township within 40 days of arrival unless that person occupied property worth £10 per year, which was a lot of money in those days.

One of the effects of the Act was to make it difficult for people to find work outside their own township. To alleviate this problem, another Act was passed in 1697 which allowed the Officers of a township to issue a certificate to anyone who wanted to travel to look for employment elsewhere, in which the Township promised to accept back the person named, and provide for them should it ever become necessary.

If this settlement certificate was disputed by the Officer of the new township, there was a strict examination of the suitability, and life of, the person or family involved. The history of their life was investigated and written down, and this in fact became a legal document.

Also at this time there was an Apprenticeship Certificate, which meant that the ratepayers paid money to train children in a job, so as not to be a burden like their parents had been. Around 1800 the Poor Law changed to include paying

people in kind, rather than, or as well as, money. This was known as Outdoor Relief. This kind of giving was supported by various charities of the township. For example the 'Ann Mort Charity' in Farnworth, which gave linen cloth in varying lengths to the poor people.

In 1810 the Workhouse in Fletcher Street was started, and completed in 1811. The Bolton Union was formed in 1837, of 26 townships in and around Bolton. Total population of Bolton was 83,369 in 1831, but in 1841, after the Union was formed it was 97,519. The governing body of the Workhouse in 1837 was known as the Board of Guardians.

At last on 28th September 1861, due mainly to the efforts of John Sheperd Birley, an undertaking of the highest importance to the ratepayers of Bolton was completed. Rev. John Sheperd Birley, M.A., was educated at Oxford, becoming later a Tutor there. He was appointed Curate at All Saints, Little Bolton, on 13th September, 1834, and was incumbent there until he resigned in 1843. Later he became Vice President of 'The Poor Protection Society' (soup kitchens etc.). As a result of that appointment he became a member of the Board of Guardians in 1839.

The Institution was 'purpose built' - the term being used even in 1861. It was said to be 'superior in workmanship and satisfactory in every minor detail as any Workhouse in the Kingdom'. (29th September, 1861, Bolton Chronicle). For the times the classification of the Inmates was said to be perfect. Poor people from Bolton and Turton were installed and inmates from the now unsatisfactory workhouses at Fletcher Street and Goose Cote Farm at Turton were transferred.

The first Master and Matron of the Fishpool Institution were Edward and Lavinia Greenhalgh, who were previously at Fletcher Street Workhouse. (Lavinia was my Great Grandfather's cousin). The first Medical Officer was Dr. Robert Alex. Clarke of Farnworth.

- * Extracts from "A Paupers' Palace", a study of the early history of Bolton General Hospital.

TEDDY O'NEILL, The 'Idiot Teacher' of Prestolee

by John Cooper.

Prestolee is the small village on the banks of the River Irwell, midway between Bolton and Radcliffe, bounded on the West by the river itself and on the East by the Manchester to Bolton canal. Between the years 1918 and 1946 working life in the village centred around two large cotton mills and a paper mill known as the 'croft' on 't'other side o't bridge', i.e. Stoneclough. Social life in this closely-knit community focused on the Church and its school hall, the Working Men's Club and the pubs. The one school, Prestolee Council, was a typical elementary state school of the pre-Butler Education Act era with infants and main school departments, grammar school selection by scholarship at 11 years and a statutory school-leaving age of 14 years for the remaining pupils.

This well-established, hard-working but cosy parochial way of life was rudely interrupted in 1918 by the appointment as headmaster of Prestolee School of one E.F.O'Neill, at 28 years of age the youngest headmaster in the Lancashire County. To become affectionately known as 'Teddy O'Neill' by pupils, parents and villagers and, less affectionately, as 'O'Neill - the Idiot Teacher' by his critics, his tenure at the school lasted until his retirement in 1963. The whole of this period was notable for the many radical changes and innovations he and his wife, Isabella, instituted in the educational system operating in the school, and the repercussions these had on the local community. The methods he adopted mirrored the remarkable personality of a man born in a Salford pub, a self-educated social reformer, idealist, nature lover and innovator. Arrogant to the extent that he did not suffer fools or critics gladly, he was nevertheless abounding in humanity, especially in relation to the educationally and socially underprivileged. This motivated him to dedicate the whole of his working life, his leisure and his financial resources towards the development at his school of what he regarded as a truly liberal approach to educational and social values.

Known locally as the 'Do as you like' school (but by O'Neill himself as the 'Do it yourself' school) his 'Progressive' methods have been considered by many to have been very much ahead of their time. Subsequently, the school was visited by educationalists both national and international.

The Present Study.

This is part of a predominantly oral, local history project with the aim of looking at this remarkable headmaster and his unconventional, and often controversial, methods through the eyes of individuals who knew him either as pupils, parents or colleagues.

The Early Years.

Teddy O'Neill came to the school in 1918 with a zeal for change which, apparently,

brookd little opposition. It is said by many that his first action was to tear down the school time-table and replace it with a picture of the Laughing Cavalier! Classrooms as such were abolished along with time-tables; open plan use of space was organised, with each pupil having his or her own desk containing reference books and resource material generally. Hourly time-tables were substituted by an individual pupil's weekly 'Plan' operating roughly as follows:

1. Daily assembly including the school hymn.
2. The Lesson (one formal lesson per day in a basic subject).
3. Primary Subjects (basically the 3 R's but taught informally largely on a project basis.
4. Secondary Subjects (associated subjects such as art, woodwork, geography, science).
5. Optional Subjects (any of the above with the addition of others such as gardening, music, cookery, library studies, metalwork etc.)

Each set of primary and secondary subject tasks had to be completed each week, at the pupil's own pace, before any of the goals of optional subjects could be reached. Much of the educational activity was of a multi-subject, practical and informal nature. The then common 'drill' approach to practical work was changed to 'D.I.Y.' methods directed towards the production of 'useful' items for pupils and school such as bookcases, climbing frames, garden and other furniture.

Musical knowledge and appreciation was encouraged by the acquisition of second-hand 'pianolas' with hundreds of rolls of popular and classical music. Most daily newspapers from the 'Dispatch' to the 'Manchester Guardian' were taken, and time allowed for perusal prior to their filing for project, or 'research' work, as it was termed in the school.

One can readily see what a committed and dedicated staff was needed to bring any degree of orderliness and self-discipline to this multifarious learning environment, and most past pupils remember their teachers, and especially O'Neill himself, with great affection and admiration.

Teddy O'Neill's reforming zeal and his love of nature are reflected in his composition of the school hymn, sung each morning and at other unspecified times during the day.

The Prestolee School Hymn (First verse and chorus)

To the tune of The Holy City.

One night I lay athinking;
There came a vision fair;
I saw a new green Lancashire
Beside the Irwell there.
The children played like fairies
Mid flowers and clean streams rare.
It was a NEW JERUSALEM
For all the people there.
It was the Lord's own Lancashire;
A land for our love and care.

CHORUS

O Prestolee; dear Prestolee;
God bless its people here;
And may they sing to Christ our King -
'We'll build your Temple here'.

Extra-curricular Activities.

In the early twenties out-of-school activities in state elementary schools were relatively unknown. Most ex-pupils speak in glowing terms of the formation by O'Neill of a school Guild to which all children contributed 2d per week. From the fund pupils were taken, on a rota basis, to Manchester to visit Art Galleries, concerts and even shops. A summer camp was set up at Plumley in the heart of the Cheshire countryside and lasted for over thirty years. Batches of pupils attended regularly at the O'Neills' home at Stand, and stories are related of taking the piano onto the lawn, the enjoyment of singing, dancing and games, and the planting of rose trees alongside the public roads leading to their home.

Teddy O'Neill's Night School.

In the middle '20s O'Neill brought into being, without permission of the LEA, what many past pupils and parents feel to be the most far-reaching of his innovations. This was the opening of the school in the evenings. Firstly, the school and its gardens were re-opened in the evenings for pupils to continue their daytime activities (their weekly Plan) if they so wished. The second phase allowed past pupils to attend also, thus creating probably one of the very first Youth Centres. Eventually the school was opened every evening from 6.00 pm to 9.30 pm to pupils, parents and the public generally, drawing people of all ages from the village and even further afield. Teachers in neighbouring schools say how some of their own pupils even attended! This development, kept going for many years in the '20s with unpaid staff and parent 'helpers', perhaps anticipated the subsequent development of Community Centres and the current trend towards Community Schools.

Local Opposition.

As with most innovators, Teddy O'Neill attracted opposition from many quarters as he implemented his radical ideas. In the earlier years the criticism came from a minority of parents; the local teachers' union, and eventually the LEA and even the school governors.

The teaching unions (of which originally O'Neill was not a member) objected to the school staff being asked to work 'out of hours' and to some of them being unpaid also. The LEA objected to what they saw as a squandering of financial resources and the danger of a lowering of standards of education, especially in the basic subjects. All were concerned with standards of pupil safety in a school environment in which practical work with mechanical tools predominated. Over the years several inquiries were held by the County and Local Education Authorities, the Inspectorate, and the school governors, but Teddy O'Neill, by sheer perseverance and persuasiveness, survived them all. No evidence of lowering of standards appeared to have been proved, and with certain assurances regarding the above-mentioned criticisms, the original experimental period of three years was extended indefinitely.

An Explosion of Ideas.

When finally the opposition to O'Neill's methods subsided, many more innovations were introduced as part of the teaching and learning process, led by the indefatigable Teddy O'Neill himself, and his growing band of skilled pupils and 'helpers'.

His passion for nature and living things had previously manifested itself in the digging up of the school playground and its conversion to gardens with flowers, vegetables and even animals. In later years garden pools, lilies, fish, fountains, pagodas, windmills and other exotic constructions covered the grounds and skyline of this school in the shadow of a cotton mill. The whole complex became known as the 'Lido', a backwater of natural beauty for the use and relaxation of all. Ultimately, in co-operation with the then privately owned Lancashire Electric Power Co., the Lido was annually decked with coloured lights, the company providing the floodlights and power and the pupils wiring and installing the lights. Several of the National and local newspapers of the time, such as the News Chronicle and the Farnworth Journal, carried stories and pictures of this annual display, to become known as the Prestolee Illuminations. Past pupils and Teddy O'Neill himself speak with perhaps justified pride of the achievement which, on one occasion, is said to have attracted 29,000 spectators in a week, paying an admission charge of 6d, and giving a much needed boost to school funds.

The End of an Era.

Teddy O'Neill became a father figure in the village of Prestolee. Second and third generations of pupils attended the school, both day and evening, a continuing period of innovation and exploration through and after the Second World War. In 1951, O'Neill's service to Prestolee and education generally was recognised by the award of the M.B.E. In 1953, however, this doughty headmaster was faced with a tide he could not stem: the implementation of the new Butler Education Act which creamed off his older pupils for the neighbourhood Secondary Modern School. In an interview to the Farnworth Journal he said: "It is the decapitation of my life's work." Two teachers were redundant at the school so he solved the problem by resigning himself, together with his wife Isabella who had worked alongside him for the whole of this 35 year old educational experiment.

Oral Interviews.

The following extracts are taken from some of the oral interviews. The full, unedited versions, together with a small amount of documentary material, are available for consultation in the Local History section of Bolton Central Library.

E.T.O'Neill. (Recorded in 1951 by K.Howarth of the N.West Sound Archive).

I was a rebel right from being a pupil teacher.

In my first school, in Salford, discipline was so strict the pupils got one stroke of the cane for each sum they got wrong. I was given a class of 65 with

two classes in one room and I went stark raving mad. I held my real classes in the school yard when the head had gone home!

In those days education was thought of as 'arms folded, hands on head, left right, left right, I had a good home and I left!'

We only had one lesson a day but we had loads of books bought for a few coppers each on Shudehill Market. The pupils were encouraged to rummage and talk to me about everything.

The children could work inside or outside the school, leave the class when they liked but they did a lot of wonderfully hard work.

Most of my pay was spent on the school. I bought circular saws, planing machines and other power tools and, being a practical man, taught the pupils to use them safely.

In the early days I was subjected to terrible attacks from all sides including teachers. Eventually I joined the local N.U.F. and they gave me protection. Unfortunately, teachers did not understand then, especially when I opened the school at night without the L.E.A.'s permission.

Later we had bus loads of trainee teachers from many Colleges and Universities on visits and I was also invited to lecture at some of them, including Oxford.

Eventually the L.C.C. recognised the evening school as a Youth Centre, all my 'helpers' were paid and from then onwards opposition fell away.

Past Pupil and Volunteer Evening School Warden, 1923. (Recorded 1964).

I remember Teddy O'Neill coming to the school on the first day and from then onwards I became one of his biggest friends and I was also the last person to see him alive.

You did your school work because you had a liking for doing it, because it was made in such a manner as to be so interesting.

I was an unpaid warden at the evening school on five nights a week and if pupils wanted to do this, or next week's work, they did it at night so they could do something else during the day and that's why it was christened the 'do as you please' school.

I was given the key to the whole school when I was 15 years of age.

Mr O'Neill was a very aggressive person to anyone who disagreed with him, but the children all loved him.

We made blackouts for the windows so we could keep the night school going all during the war.

He kept in touch as much as possible with his former pupils and their parents even during his retirement and was a character well known in the village.

Past Pupil, 1926. (Recorded 1985).

When I finished work at the mill I would go to the school every night. You could read newspapers, do woodwork, play chess and other games or just sit around and talk.

The mill owners didn't care very much for what went on at the school in that they appeared to take little interest in the social side of the village.

I found Teddy O'Neill a blend of kindness and aggressiveness, highly strung, easily go off the rails with pupils if they were dirty, say.

He was aggressive about the working conditions in the village factories which he seemed to think oppressed working people and he was almost a fanatic about this. I think he was more of a social reformer than an educationalist. Strangely enough we boys did not feel to be oppressed by the industrial conditions he raved about.

O'Neill's system at the school had no effect on the working conditions of children or their parents but they certainly helped to open some windows on the world in that working class community.

I found my stay at the school a very happy time with no imposed discipline.

Most parents, including mine, were satisfied with Teddy O'Neill's methods and co-operated very closely. A small minority withdrew their children at the age of about 9 or 10 years because they felt the main purpose of the school should be to help them pass for the Grammar School.

Teacher in Neighbouring School (Traditional Methods) 1932. (Recorded 1986)

The opinion of most local teachers was 'all that freedom is too much for children O'Neill's pupils who transferred to our school invariably were comfortably relaxed, good readers, articulate, never overawed in their new (traditional) learning situation, even if below average ability.

Teddy O'Neill's night school became an attraction to many of our own lower ability children, 'always something interesting going on down there' they said.

Part-time Teacher (Evening School), 1942. (Recorded 1986).

I made myself available to pupils in the evening for the informal study of subjects such as literature (stories), choral speaking, nature study, needlework, gardening etc.

Teddy O'Neill was very communicative and liked to talk about his ideas; he seemed to want to enrich the children's lives with the beauty of nature, literature etc. to compensate for the drabness and restrictiveness of their industrial surroundings.

His originality was amazing, and often surprising. I once saw him pull a live frog out of his pocket instead of drawing one on a blackboard.

OUR VILLAGE - MORRIS GREEN

by Freda McFarland

At the beginning of the twentieth century, Morris Green was just a small village with one street - Morris Green Lane - and a few streets running off it; six small farms, and by 1905, a beautiful miniature park.

This was the picture at the time of the Pretoria Pit Disaster on the 21st of December 1910 - when 344 men and boys lost their lives. The twenty victims from this area may not seem many compared to the total, but from such a small community, it was indeed a disaster - particularly for Mrs Wild, who lost her husband and two sons; and Mrs Unsworth, whose husband and son were both killed.

In spite of this disaster and later, the loss of so many loved ones in the 1914-1918 War, the people of Morris Green worked to raise enough money to build a Church. Older residents tell of making raffia photograph frames with a picture of the proposed Church inset; also tablets of soap with the same picture were on sale. People were persuaded to pay 6d. (2½p) to buy a brick, and the Infant Sunday School had a Bell Sunday once a month - at this they took a Silver collection - which they dropped into a specially-made glass jar, so that they were able to see the money grow! The Earl of Ellesmere gave the plot of land where the Church now stands and by 1923, the district became the Parish of St.Bede, with a Vicar in charge. Services were still held in the school and the Vicarage was a terraced house in Deane Church Lane.

As was usual in those days, there was also a Mission attached to the Church. This started in a room over the top of Deakin's Mineral Water Works at the bottom of Haynes Street, but in 1925 it moved to the pebble-dashed building at the corner of Peveril Street. Mr Povey, a lay-reader from Church, took charge and I am indebted to his son, John, for preserving the Accounts Books for 1908-1942. All expenses are carefully recorded, and we are given a picture of Mission life.

Income for 1908-1909 amounted to £29.18s.2d. This came from collections, donations, tea-parties, and even loaning the Mission Room for 2s.6d.(12½p). Out of this small income £2.10s.2d. (£2.51p) was spent on a party for the children, plus 5s.(25p) for a Conjuror; 4s.6d.(22½p) for the loan of a piano, and £2.15s.9d. (£2.75p) for prizes, which would be given for good attendance. Hymn singing must have been considered important for in that year 9s.0d.(45p) was spent on Choir expenses; £1.14s.0d.(£1.70p) on music copy - when a copy of music would cost maybe 6d.(2½p). Hymn Books cost £1.11s.8d. (£1.59p) and a Choir Outing cost £2.2s.2½d. (£2.11p). Another expense, which is still with us, was broken windows! Nevertheless, after paying the caretaker, cleaning lady, coal, gas and water bills, plus numerous small repairs, at the end of the year they had 4s.6d. (22½p) in hand!

Mrs Beckwith, one of our older residents, remembers attending the "Band of Hope" meetings held at the Mission. The aim of these meetings was to instil in

the children the horrors caused by drinking alcohol. I believe they had lantern slides to really emphasise the message!

Unfortunately in 1955 the Bishop decided that the Mission was no longer needed, and the building was sold. In true Morris Green style, the congregation did not accept this and they built new accommodation at the end of Sloane Street. Although the people attending now are few, they still manage to balance the books!

Methodism attracted many people in Morris Green. 'Zion Methodist' started in a cottage at the bottom of Morris Green Lane in 1874 - moving later to a disused tannery nearby and then to a purpose-built Chapel on St Helen's Road, where the supermarket now stands. At first it was known as 'The Primitive Methodist', and then later, as 'Zion Methodist' - which it remained until 1967. In 1967, along with the congregation from the Chapel in Peace Street, they joined Daubhill Methodist, and the three together have since been known as 'St Peter's Methodist Church' on St Helen's Road.

In 1931 it was decided that work on an Anglican church should be started. A great deal of money was still needed, and fund-raising was the order of the day. The Rev.A.E.Beswick, the Vicar, organised a 'mile of pennies' from Morris Green Lane to High Street. He also got permission to stand with a collecting box in the foyer of the Majestic Cinema - which stood at that time on St Helen's Road, between Henry Street and the Lantor mill. Mr Beswick also formed an Ex-Services Guild, and it was they who organised the yearly Gala Day when a band, followed by the Rose Queen and her retinue led a procession round the Parish, and on to a field on Slack Pold Farm. Admission to the field was 6d.(2¹/₂p) for Adults, 3d.(1p) for Children. Souvenir programmes were 1d., and there were stalls, sideshows and displays. Teas were served, and after tea the band played, and there was dancing until dark! The ex-service men also bought the first church organ in memory of their fallen comrades and on 21st October, 1932 the Church was consecrated.

Between the Wars, things were not easy. There was a great deal of unemployment, and 'short time' (3 days' work per week) was quite common. Maybe because of this, people had time, which they gave freely to church and youth activities.

With the coming of the Second World War, people were kept busy on war-work, some full-time, some part-time, some voluntary. The Rev.C.Pringle, who was now the Vicar, made sure that the men and women in the Armed Forces were kept in touch with the Parish. The Church magazine and small gifts were sent to them. Choir boys, together with their Choir Mistress, Miss Hulme, and her helpers, dug for victory in the Church gardens, and, unfortunately, the gates and railings had to go in the desperate need for iron. A Memorial to those killed in both World Wars now stands in the Garden of Remembrance in the Church yard.

The year 1950 brought yet another worry for a number of Morris Green residents - when their houses were affected by mining subsidence. Two houses had to be demolished, and one or two families were re-housed whilst the faults were rectified.

The Church was badly affected, particularly at the East end. The Vestry was shored up for some time, and men from the National Coal Board worked in the Church during the week, while members of the congregation spent their Saturdays getting everything as clean and as normal as possible for Sunday.

BOB, THE MILK HORSE

One village characteristic of this area went with the passing of 'Bob'. He must have been one of the last horses in Bolton to be used for milk deliveries and was a great favourite with young and old. My own children loved to see him enjoy a "jam butty" when he called at Grandma's and when he retired to Bleakholt Rest Farm, several children gathered in the field at Top O' Th' Heights to say goodbye to him.

The building of a public house in the area met with a certain amount of opposition. The Brewers, Magee Marshall, canvassed the residents, and assured people that what they proposed was a village Pub. They even persuaded the Rev.C.Pringle to open it on July 27, 1963 and he agreed, feeling that it was good for people to have somewhere to go for a quiet drink and a chat.

During the years following the Second World War, a great deal of farm land in Morris Green was taken for house building, and for the Bayward Schools. So it was hardly surprising when, in 1970, after a plan to build on 300 acres of farmland by Morley Homes was approved by the Bolton Technical Services and Planning Committee, that the residents of Morris Green decided to take action. Representatives, including Councillors Arthur Gledhill and James Parkinson, put their objections to the Council, and handed in a petition. After considering this, the Planning Committee reversed its decision. Morley Homes then appealed to the Ministry of Housing and Local Government, which resulted in a public inquiry being arranged for 21st October 1970. The Residents' Association decided to hold a meeting in the School and the response was fantastic! Long before the start of the meeting, it was 'standing room' only! The Chairman was Mr A.McGready and Councillor Gledhill stressed that the few remaining fields were the area's only amenity. Councillor Parkinson added, "They are all we have, apart from a decent Church, and a decent pub." Mr Cyril Morris agreed to act as local representative and advised people to write letters to the Minister of Housing. An appeal was made to everyone to attend the public inquiry in the Town Hall in Bolton on 21st October.

On the day of the Inquiry, a bus was hired to take the older residents to the Town Hall. Many of us who were working, arranged to work lunch hours in lieu of time off, in order to attend.

The room at the Town Hall was crowded, and although it got a bit hectic at times, the residents' Solicitor guided us through it! A short time later, Morris Green folk were very happy to hear that the Minister had decided in their favour.

Naturally, we felt that this was the end, but sadly, twice since then we have had to make appeals and gather petitions. I am afraid that we shall always have to be on the alert if we are to retain some of the 'green' in the now growing suburb of 'Morris Green'.

I. Book Reviews

Local historians about to begin their first project could do worse than start at the kiosk bookstall of the Bolton Central Library. The books reviewed below are fairly recent additions, all are available for sale, and may also be consulted in the local history section of the Library. The majority are also in the Lending Library section.

Victorian Years - Bolton 1850-1860 by Raymond Hargreaves

Published 1985 £3.50

The story of Bolton and its people as told in the local newspaper of the time - The Bolton Chronicle.

The Cotton Mills of Bolton 1780-1985 by James H. Longworth

Published 1987 £9.95

A well illustrated historical directory of local mills engaged in spinning, manufacturing, finishing and allied trades, resulting from authoritative research on the rise and fall of the local textile industry.

The Barefoot Aristocrats. Edited by Alan Fowler and Terry Wyke.

Published 1987 £6.95

The title refers to mule spinners who were the aristocrats of textile operatives with regard to both skill and pay. The book traces the origins, development and subsequent demise of their powerful Union known as the Amalgamated Association of Operative Cotton Spinners.

Many Mansions. The growth of religion in Bolton 1750-1850.

Published 1985 £3.50

Well known local history consultant Dr. Dale has produced the most exhausting piece of research on this subject. Those intended to research the history of their own Church or Sunday School should start here.

Four Bolton Directories 1821/2, 1836, 1843, 1853

Published 1982 £2.50

Four reproductions of business and occupational directories for the above years in one volume. Another good starting place.

On the Manchester, Bury and Bolton Canal, by Alec Waterson.

Published 1985 £2.00

A journey by passenger boat in the 1780s from Church Wharf, Bolton to Salford is described in detail, including the negotiation of the Nob End locks and junction. The second part of the book consists of a first-hand record of the working life of the author and his father on the canal at Ladyshore, Little Lever.

Man Power Services Commission: Community Projects (Bolton) 1984/5

1. The Textile Industry of Bolton - origins, growth and decline. £4.50
2. Bolton's Disused Railways £2.50
3. Coal in Bolton £2.00
4. Bolton's Markets £1.50

A series of excellently illustrated guides suitable for students and teachers; each book also has a bibliography of primary and secondary source material.

Sounds Gradely. Edited by Ken Howarth.

Published 1985 £3.50

A collection of dialect and other words used in Lancashire Folk Speech. Compiled by the Director of the North West Sound Archives.

The People's Monuments. By Paul Salvesson.

Published 1987 £2.00

A guide to forty sites and memorials in the North West (many in the Bolton area) spanning some hundred and fifty years of working-class social history. The booklet contains historical notes, photographs, map reference for each example and a useful bibliography.

Harwood Friendly Societies - Sick and Burial. £1.15

A further volume in the excellently produced series of monographs published by the Turton Local History Society. It traces the history of the Harwood Methodist and Temperance Movement and the various mutual aid societies which predated our present state welfare system.

A Most Excellent Dish - Tales of the Lancashire Tripe Trade.

By Marjory Houlihan. Published 1988. £2.50

A well researched slice of Lancashire's (and Bolton's) social history woven round the origins, manufacture, retailing and consumption of one of the County's traditional foods. The book contains photographs, drawings and maps. It also includes a useful directory of Lancashire tripe dressers and dealers in 1924, and a selection of English and Continental recipes for the preparation of the dish.

Barrow Bridge. By W.D. Billington, published 1988. £1.80

This slim booklet contains a wealth of information on the industrial, social and natural history of our well-known local beauty spot. Walks in the area and a useful account of the fauna and flora of the valley add to the value of the publication.

The Non-Conformist Chapel in Rivington: by Joan Holding and Colin Rogers,
published 1988. £2.00

Following an introductory chapter on the history of the Chapel, the main contents consist of extracts from its Registers. There is also a personal name index and a place name index, both of which will be invaluable to local family historians.

Aircraft Factories: by A.D.George, published 1986. £1.00

A concise summary of a research project by Manchester Polytechnic on the history of aircraft factories in the North. The completed project together with an extensive collection of photographs can be consulted at the Urban Studies Centre, Castlefield, Manchester.

II. A Guide to Local History Sources.

1. Quarter Sessions.

Minute Books
Calendars of Prisoners
Accounts
Administration Records
Deposited Records
Brewster Sessions
Land Tax, Tithes
Watch and Ward

2. Town Records.

Minute Books
Rate and Account Books
Removal Records
Apprenticeship Records
Courts
Improvement Commissioners
Burgess Rolls, Poll Books
Poor Law and Unions
Boards of Health and Education
Highways

3. Church Records.

Parish Records (Births, Marriages and Deaths)
Vestry Minute Books
Diocesan Records, Visitations, Registers
Licences
Terriers (Church Lands)
Episcopal Courts
Probate Records (Wills - at Chester up to 1858)
Charities
Lists of Inhabitants

4. Estate Papers.

Estate Maps and Surveys
Rents and Leases
Title Deeds
Sales and Valuations
Accounts
Manorial Records
Mineral Rights
Correspondence

5. Business Records.
 - Letter Books
 - Accounts and Valuations
 - Invoices
 - Catalogues
 - Parts lists and Drawings
 - Contracts
6. Family Papers.
 - Correspondence
 - Wills, Accounts and Private Papers
 - Diaries
 - Note Books
 - Recipes and Remedies
7. Transport Concerns.
 - Acts of Parliament
 - Maps and Plans
 - Contracts
 - Correspondence
 - Fares and Time Tables
 - Property
8. Maps.
 - Ordnance Survey, from 1840.
 - Tithe Maps
 - Private Map Printers
 - Maps for Commissioners and Inquiries
 - Enclosure Maps
9. Education Records.
 - Minute Books
 - Class Records
 - Teachers Minute Books
 - Diaries and Correspondence
 - Inspectors' Visits
 - Special Schools
 - Sunday Schools
10. Government Records.
 - Census Returns
 - Inquiries and Commissions
 - Domesday Survey
 - Tax Returns
 - Enclosures
 - Royal Law Courts
 - Parliamentary Papers
 - Statutory Authorities
 - Armed Services
11. Newspapers.
 - Local and National Newspapers and Magazines
 - Books of the Day
 - Town Directories
12. Societies.
 - Lists of Members
 - Minute Books
 - Periodicals
 - Events.

(Peter Northcott Dale, BA(Hons). Ph.D.)