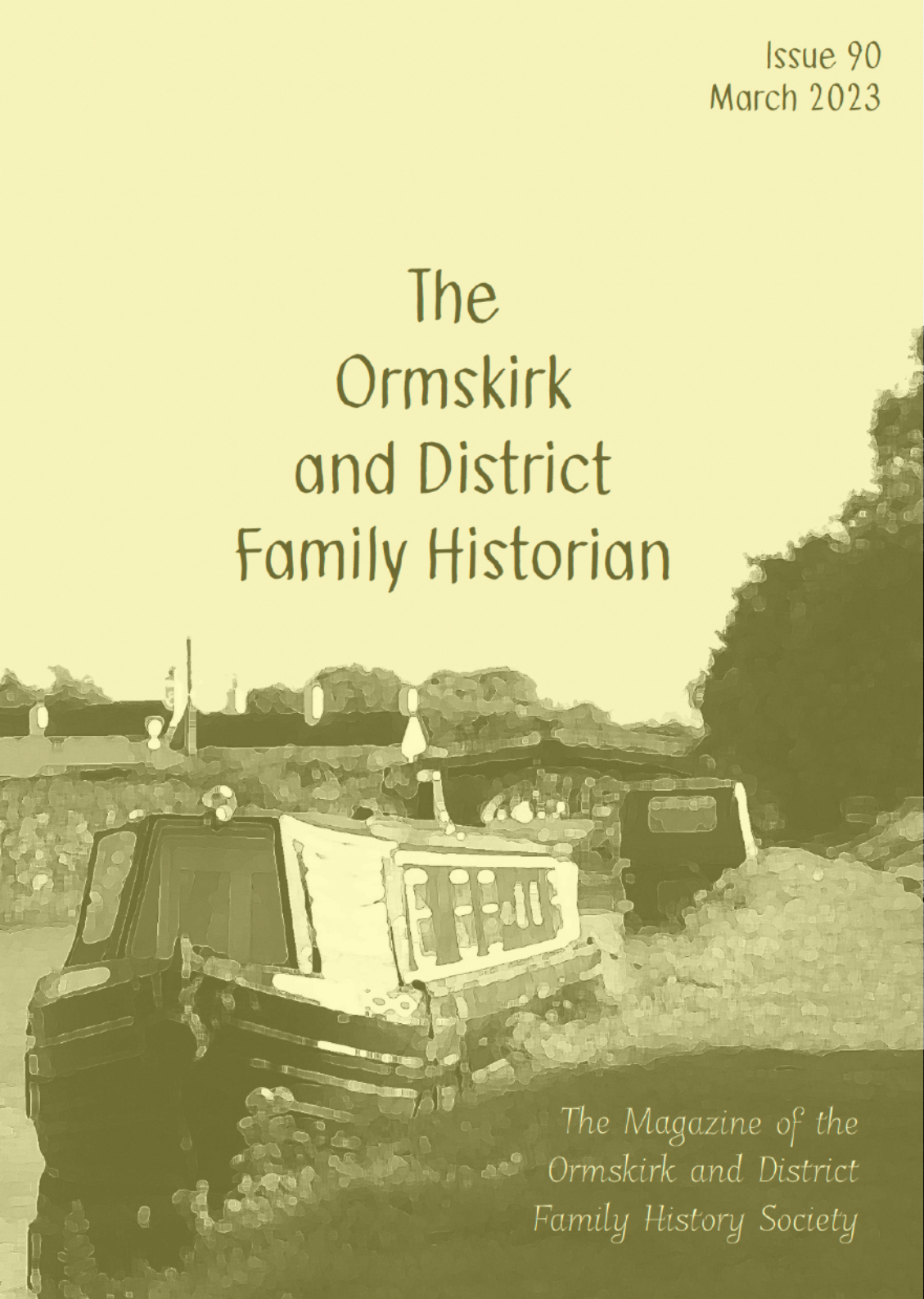


Issue 90  
March 2023

# The Ormskirk and District Family Historian



*The Magazine of the  
Ormskirk and District  
Family History Society*

# The ODFHS Useful Information Page

Ormskirk and District Family History Society was inaugurated in 1980.

Registered Charity (No. 1004895). Member of the Family History Federation.

## ADDRESS FOR ALL CORRESPONDENCE

Ormskirk & District Family History Society

c/o 27 Bath Springs, Ormskirk, Lancashire, L39 2XP

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Facebook page: [www.facebook.com/OrmskirkDistrictFamilyHistorySociety/](http://www.facebook.com/OrmskirkDistrictFamilyHistorySociety/)

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## Could You Contribute To Our Magazine?

Articles for the Ormskirk and District Family Historian are always welcome. If you'd like to send something for publication, please contact the Editor using the e-mail or postal address above, with your name and membership number. We will do our best to look after all items (and will return them on request) but we suggest that you retain any original documents.

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*"Not to know what happened before we were born is to remain perpetually a child. For what is the worth of a human life unless it is woven into the life of our ancestors by the recording of history."* - Cicero (106-143BC) sent in by Jean Haikalis (1946-2017)

## View From The Chair

As I write this welcome to the latest edition of the Ormskirk and District Family Historian, I'm looking out over my back garden, musing on what a strange time of year February can be. Cold and damp, but slightly too warm for any ice and snow, yet the first snowdrops are already here, and before long, we'll see daffodils, tulips trees covered with pink and white blossom, and all the other signs of spring.

A few weeks can make a huge difference, and perhaps I could just as easily say that about Ormskirk and District Family History Society? When our previous Magazine went to press, Kathryn (our Librarian) and Alan (our Website Manager) had been working to add digitised back copies of our journals to the Members' Area of our Society's website, and now things have developed even further!

All of you will have your own methods of researching your ancestors, but when looking for information on the internet, we can save a lot of time by searching for specific words or subjects ("Oddfellows", "Catholic", "boatmen"). Through some technical wizardry (far beyond my own skills!), Alan has added a search facility to the website's Magazine Archive which can do exactly that. To try it for yourself, you only need to log in to the Members' Area of <http://odfhs.website> - if you have any problems, please contact Alan at [website.manager@odfhs.email](mailto:website.manager@odfhs.email)

You may be surprised to read that the Society never planned to give this Magazine a "libraries" theme - it just evolved that way, with perfect timing! On Saturday 11 March 2023, ODFHS will host a special Open Day at our Research Library in the Scout Headquarters, on Wigan Road, Ormskirk. First opened to visitors on 1 June 2007, our Library has grown into a unique repository of social and local history materials, and if I had limitless time, I would enjoy nothing more than hiding myself away for a week or two, browsing through the contents of the cupboards! After the disruptions of the past few years, we're delighted to have a chance to introduce members and visitors to our collections. For the benefit of those who can't make it on the day, we will document the event in a future magazine, and on social media.

In the near future, Sally Dean (our Treasurer and Membership Secretary) will step down from both roles at our AGM in May. For the past decade, Sally has served us with efficiency, diligence and enthusiasm, and I will remember her positive, practical approach for years to come. Colin MacDonald has kindly agreed to take over as Treasurer, and I am sure that you will join me in extending a very warm welcome to him; after all, ODFHS cannot operate without a Treasurer. May I make a direct appeal to anyone who can take over the Membership Secretary's role to e-mail me at [chairman@odfhs.email](mailto:chairman@odfhs.email) or write our postal address (on page 2), to express your interest. We would be delighted to hear from you.

It is with relief that I reflect that a whole year has passed since we restarted face-to-face meetings after the pandemic. Perhaps, like me, you find that life only seems to get busier as we try to catch up, but technology has opened up the world of family history, and ODFHS is exploring options to broadcast some meetings live on Facebook, or create virtual talks for our YouTube channel. Our recent additions to YouTube are *Christmas Beef In Burscough* (see pg.25) and Alan Cooper's guide to the Members' Area of our website (see pg.23).

As Magazine Editor, I love nothing more than receiving your responses to articles in previous editions, and I'm often surprised by the connections you make. (I would never have made the link between the list of midwives published in Issue 89 and our Boat Families database, but if that idea intrigues you, may I suggest turning to page 15?)

As this is our Magazine of 2023, you should find your membership renewal form enclosed. We continue to offer the option to renew via UK bank transfer, international bank transfer, or the Parish Chest website; if you can attend our meetings and prefer to pay in cash, please talk to one of our Committee Members. I sincerely hope that you will stay with us for the coming year, and that you enjoy being part of the Society.

Kate Hurst  
February 2023

## *Vacancy – Membership Secretary*

This spring, Sally Dean resigns from her post as ODFHS Membership Secretary, after five years, and we are now seeking a new volunteer to take on that role.

The Membership Secretary is responsible for keeping our members' database up to date, so familiarity with spreadsheets is a huge advantage. Key duties include sending welcome packs to new members, allocating membership numbers, keeping surname interests up to date, identifying overdue subscriptions and sending renewal reminders (as appropriate). They also process membership applications/renewals received via our Parish Chest shop. Full details of how to access this system will be provided.

The Membership Secretary will be part of our Executive Committee, and prepares a short membership report at each committee meeting (held four times a year via Zoom). They liaise with the Magazine Editor to ensure that the correct number of ODFHS magazines are ordered. When appropriate, they provide details of any members who have given permission for their surname interests to be published in the Magazine. Please contact Kate Hurst (Chair) or Pam Richardson (Secretary) via the e-mail addresses on page 2, or speak to us at a Society meeting.

## *Help Wanted*

*Ken Lees*

I am trying to find out more about Michael GILMARTIN, who lived on Green Lane Avenue prior to WW1. He married Catherine GRIFFIN (known as “Kate”, and also from Green Lane) in 1913, and was awarded the Military Medal for bravery during

the Battle of the Somme. Michael was discharged from the Army in 1919, and after this, he and Catherine seem to disappear from the record. I have not been able to find evidence that they had children, or any evidence that they emigrated. Anyone with any information about Michael and Catherine is welcome to contact me at [lees.ken@btinternet.com](mailto:lees.ken@btinternet.com)

## *Obituary – June Bibby*

It is with great sadness that we announce the death of June Bibby (member B96) on 2 November 2022, aged 90. Born on 19 June 1932, June was regularly seen at ODFHS meetings prior to the pandemic, always making time to talk to members of all ages. She often joined us at our outside events, including a tour of St. Peter and St. Paul's Churchyard, Ormskirk in July 2015.

June provided a wonderful variety of articles for the magazine, including a 1953 list of residents of Scarisbrick Street, Ormskirk (since added to our Research Library), and a newspaper article about her cousin Margaret SHOLICAR being crowned as May Queen at Christ Church, Aughton in 1930.

In April 2011, she researched and wrote a 29-page essay on gardener William GOULD (a protege of Lancelot “Capability” BROWN), who was employed by Richard WILBRAHAM-BOOTLE at Lathom House, before being commissioned by Prince Grigory POTESKIN (a lover of Catherine the Great) to design the Taurida Palace Gardens in St. Petersburg. This project has been published online and can be read at <http://william.gould.bibso.com/William%20Gould.pdf>

A member of ODFHS for at least twenty-two years, June will be very much missed by all her friends in the Society, and we extend our deepest sympathies to her family.



# ODFHS at Edge Hill University

report and photo by Kathryn MacDonald (M94)

In January 2023, ODFHS (represented by Pam Richardson, Kathryn MacDonald and Jean Gidman) visited Edge Hill University for a meeting with Professor Alyson Brown (Associate Head of Department, Research, History, Geography and Social Sciences) and Dan Copley (Edge Hill University Archivist) to identify areas of common historical interest that are documented in the university's archives.

The Edge Hill Archive holds details of students who attended during its early days as a teacher training college, and a project has begun to make this information available in a digital format. For anyone who knows of an ancestor who may have studied at Edge Hill, it is well worth getting in touch with the Archivist. The department is also interested in receiving archive material related to the college, to enhance their collection.



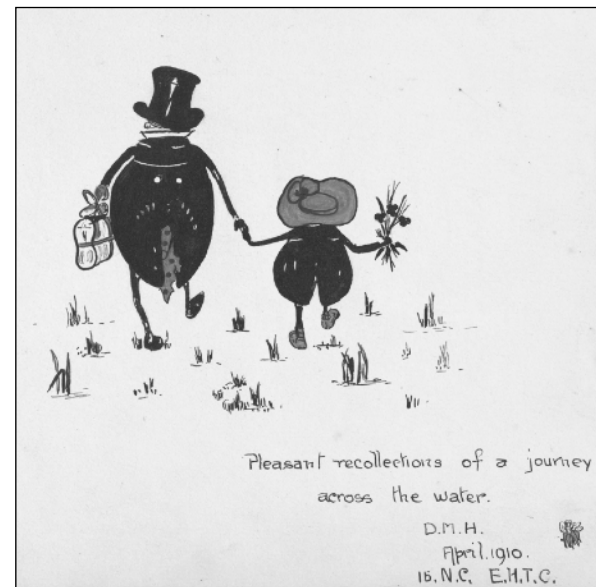
*Pam Richardson and Jean Gidman outside one of the Edge Hill University buildings*

# Edge Hill University Research Catalyst

Edge Hill University's Research Catalyst is a new group which hopes to encourage links between the Library and Learning Service and the academics in different departments of the university. In 2019 Edge Hill appointed its first permanent archivist, sparking a renewed appreciation of the value of the University Archive and the importance of creating an online catalogue to improve accessibility.

Amongst other things, the group aims to understand and enhance the value of academic and research libraries working together as partners, to collaborate with other organisations outside the university, make collections more accessible, and overcome the barriers to working with other organisations.

One of the first major tasks will be to produce an academic history of the University, including a project to identify the women who trained as teachers at Edge Hill between 1885 and 1909. Further information about the Archive can be found at <https://sites.edgehill.ac.uk/researchcatalyst/projects-events/>



*A drawing of two beetles, found in a Friendship Book stored at the Edge Hill Archives by Grace Marks, as part of her PhD research, on the subject of "Friendship in the Archives". Reproduced by kind permission of Edge Hill University.*

# The Will of Elizabeth Caddicke of Bickerstaffe

17 September 1658

transcribed by Kate Hurst (H101)

In the name of God Amen The seaventeenth [*sic*] day of September in the yeare of our Lord god according to the English account one thousand Six hundred ffyfty and eight I Elizabeth CADDICKE of Bicurste in the County of Lancaster Spinster being Sicke in body yet of good and perfect memory, for which I give all thankes and praise to Almighty God, and often and calling to mynde the mortality [*sic*] of man and Seriously Considering that Death is certaine to all men and nothinge more uncertaine than the tyme and houre thereof

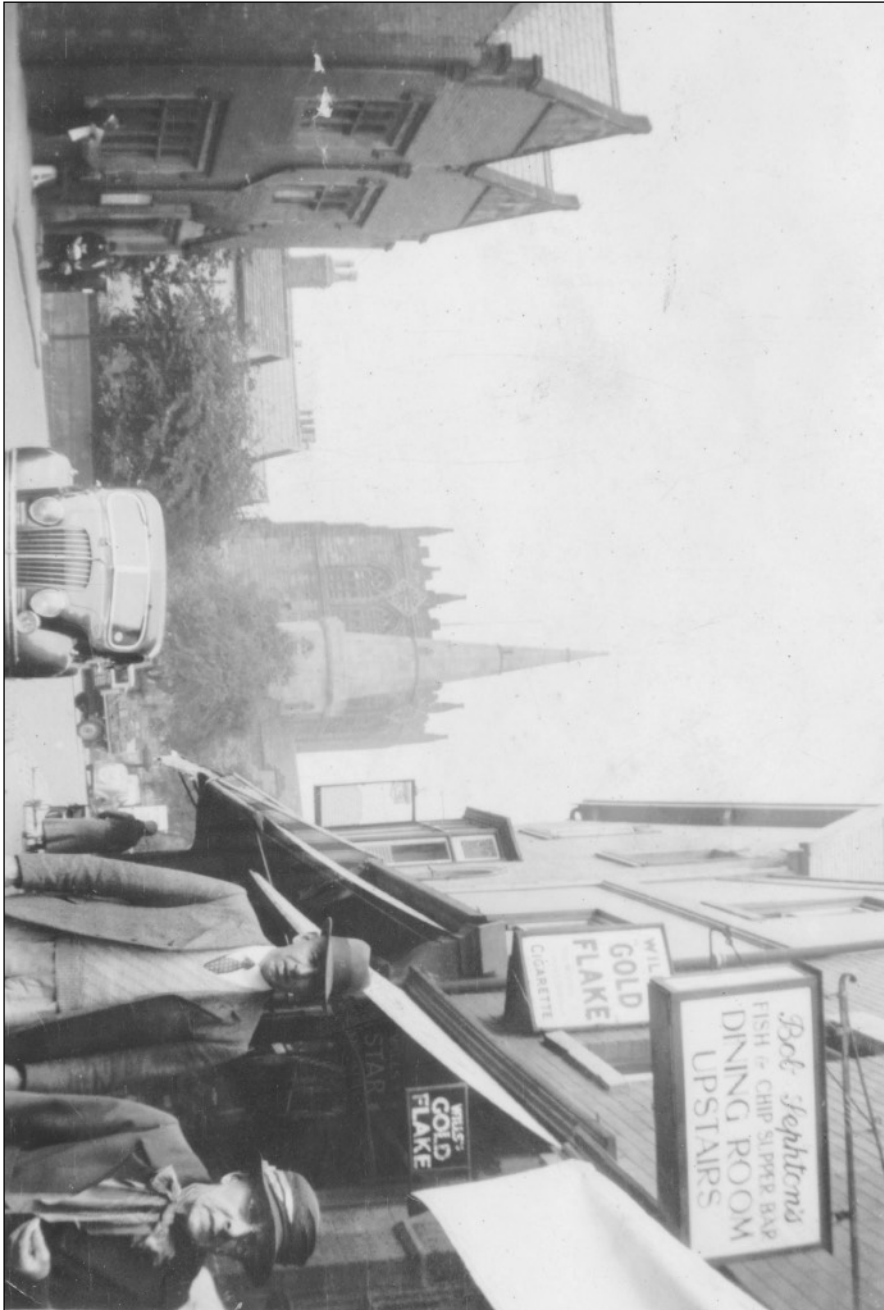
And for the Settlinge and disposeinge of such personall Estate wherewith Almighty God out of his infinite goodnesse and mercifull love conteyninge [*sic*] therein my last will in manner and forme ffoloweing, that is to Say

ffirst and principally I Commend my Soule into the hands of Almighty god my Creatour and maker, and to Jesus Christ his onely begotten Sonne and my onely Saviour and redeemer, faithfully trustinge that through the merritts of his bitter death and passion my poore Sinfull Soule shall bee Saved, and after this bodily death Joyfully received into the Kingdome of Heaven to bee placed and forever to remaine amongst his stock and glorious Saintes, and my body to Christian buriall to be interred at the Sight and discretion of my executor hereinafter named in this my present testament is declared, Specified and appointed, that is to Say

Inprimis my mynde and will is that all my said goodes Cattells Chattells and [*illegible*] with all convenient Speede after my decease bee devidied and dealt amongst my kindred

Item I give to Robert CADDICKE tenn pounds and a feather bed and a boulder and white rugge

Item to George CADDICKE the younger ffive pounds



Thanks go to Phil Ball for submitting this snapshot of Church Street, Ormskirk, c.1930, featuring a car on the road, and a sign for Bob Sephton's Fish and Chip Restaurant. We wonder who the man and woman walking towards the photographer were?

# Library Notes

February 2023

Item to Ellin BRICKHOUSE ffive pounds  
Item to Mary CADDICKE thirty Shillings  
Item to Roger WOOSEY ffive pounds  
Item to Margaret WOOSEY the daughter of the said William WOOSEY the Summe of ffive pounds

Item to William CADDICKE twelve pence & no more and, to George CADDICKE twelve pounds, one ffeather bed and two boulders, and to my godchildren every one ffive shillings, and to Jane WOOSEY ffive shillings

Item to Elizabeth PARKER my blacke gown, and the rest of my Cloathes to be divided among Margaret WOOSEY and Elizabeth PARKER and Ellin BRICKHOUSE

And all the rest of my estate to my brother Silvester CADDICKE, being my executor of this my last will and testament and my body to bee buried at the parish Church of Ormeskirke

In witsse whereof Elizabeth CADDICKE have put my hand and Seale the day and yeare ffirst above written

Elizabeth CADDICKE her marke

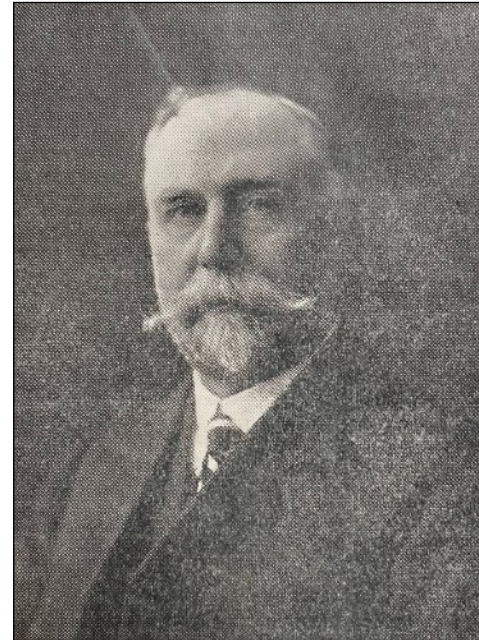
Witsse to this will

Thomas MEADOWE

Roger WOOSEY

This will was proved at London before the Judges for probate of will and graunteing administrations the ffirst day of November in the yeare of our Lord god one thousand Six hundred ffifty and eight by the vote of Silvester CADDICKE Sole executor To whome administration was commytted, hee being first by Commissysion sworn truely to administer

A scan of the original document (reference PROB 11/284/18) can be downloaded from the National Archives Discovery Catalogue at <https://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/>



The ODFHS Research Library has been loaned a bound copy of The Ormskirk Advertiser Saturday Sub-Edition covering the period November 1907 to December 1908. This is a treasure trove of local and national stories, often with detailed descriptions, biographies and photographs.

The edition dated Saturday 2 November 1907 contains an account of the career of Charles HODGSON who had recently joined the Ormskirk Police Division as Superintendent. The article begins:

## THE NEW SUPERINTENDENT OF POLICE

*We have pleasure to-day in publishing a portrait of Mr. Charles Hodgson, the new Superintendent of the Ormskirk Police Division, and who comes to Ormskirk from Garstang (where he was superintendent for three years) as an official specially selected by the Chief Constable of the Lancashire County Constabulary to follow Mr. Jervis, who recently retired after 57 years' faithful service in the police force.*

*Mr. HODGSON's long career in the Lancashire police began in 1875 when he joined aged 21. He was first stationed at Old Trafford, Manchester where he was praised for solving a case of supposed burglary at a house in the city. Due to his diligent and intelligent detective*

work it transpired that the robbery had in fact been committed by the housekeeper and her two sisters, the stolen property was found buried in a chapel yard in Derbyshire.

He spent ten years in the Old Swan, in the West Derby Division during which time he was entrusted with the custody of Mrs. MAYBRICK during her detention while magisterial proceedings were in progress. Mrs. MAYBRICK was housed at the Larklane Police Station, and Mrs. HODGSON was in personal attendance. Following a move to Morecambe he received a compliment from the Coroner in a sad case involving the collapse of the end of the pier resulting in the loss of three lives. In Birkdale he was remembered for the arrest of Rev. Maurice Otho FITZMAURICE, who was described as a “rogue and a vagabond” and the Altcar murder case of WILKES, a soldier who killed his companion and was sentenced to death, but later reprieved.

The Ormskirk Advertiser article pays the following tribute:

*It will seem from the foregoing that Superintendent HODGSON's career has brought him into contact practically with all parts of the county palatine, and wherever he has been stationed he has earned the highest encomiums from those with whom he has been brought into official contact, the general testimony to his character being that he is an upright, straightforward, capable, and fair administrator of justice. Superintendent HODGSON is a worthy successor to a worthy predecessor in the superintendency of the Ormskirk Police Division.*

The Liverpool Daily Post of 26 October 1920 reported the death of Charles HODGSON, aged 66 years. He had retired from his post as Superintendent of Police in Ormskirk the previous March having completed forty-four years' service in the Lancashire County Constabulary.



The Police Offices on Derby Street, Ormskirk, in 1907



The old Police Offices and Magistrates' Court in 2022



*Alice Hignett*  
by Colin Hignett (H121)

Issue 89 of the ODFHS Magazine included an item called Local Names in The Midwives Roll (1905), and one name that was mentioned was Alice HIGNETT, of Cottage Lane, Aughton, who was in practice by July 1901, and was enrolled as a midwife on 29 September 1904.

Alice HIGNETT was my grandfather's sister, and was living on Cottage Lane when the censuses of 1891 and 1901 were taken. On 21 April 1906 she married Thomas HEWITT at Christ Church, Aughton, and the 1911 shows that she was apparently still at Cottage Lane with her four year old daughter, although there was no sign of Thomas HEWITT on their census form.

*Ann Alty*  
material contributed by Phil Ball (B101)

Shortly after Issue 89 was published, another name from the Midwives Roll (1905) caught the eye of ODFHS member Phil Ball, who described Ann ALTY of Ship Bridge, Haskayne as the "*mother-in-law of a second cousin twice removed*". Although the connection was tenuous, Phil kindly forwarded enough information about Ann to allow us to tell her story.

Ann's birth certificate states that she was born at Burscough, at 3.30pm on 9 March 1850, to William SMITH (a boatman) and Alice (nee WAREING). Exactly five weeks after delivering baby Ann, on 13 March 1850, Alice registered her daughter's birth, "signing" the document with a "X"; the registrar was Thomas SUMNER.

Although a time of birth is usually given only on certificates in cases of multiple births today, in the early days of civil registration, some very diligent registrars included this information on all birth certificates.

The ODFHS boat families website suggests that Ann's father William was born in about 1819 in Downholland, whilst her mother Alice was born on 22 August 1822 in Burscough (the daughter of boatman John WAREING, from either North Meols or Crossens). Following their wedding on 6 April 1840 at St. Peter's Church, in Liverpool, William and Alice SMITH had fourteen children; of these, Ann was their eighth (and their third daughter).

The 1851 census finds the SMITH family living at Gobins Lane, Burscough; ten years later, they had moved to Crabtree Lane. With eleven children still at home in 1861 (and eldest sons Richard, John William and Robert already working as boatmen), William and Alice's household accounted for half a sheet of the census schedule.

Ann married boatman Robert ALTY (b.1845 Downholland) on 11 November 1867 at St. John the Baptist, Burscough. Robert was of "full" age, and living at Lathom; lines were drawn in the spaces for his father's name and occupation, which may suggest that he was illegitimate. Ann (being only seventeen and a half) was described as a "minor", and a spinster, a resident of Burscough; the certificate also confirmed that her father was William SMITH, a boatman.

Ann and Robert's wedding was conducted by Reverend William WANNOP, the Vicar of Burscough, and witnessed by Mary RADCLIFFE and Henry DAWSON. Whilst Robert ALTY signed his marriage certificate, Ann SMITH made a "X" as her mark.

By 1871, Robert and Ann ALTY lived on Ship Lane, Haskayne, with their baby daughter Ellen; in one direction, two addresses separated them from the Ship Inn, and on the other, boatman's wife Elizabeth CHEETHAM and her daughter (also Elizabeth) were the only residents between them and the King's Arms. Ann was only described as "*Wife Boatman*".

The parish registers for St. Cuthbert's Church, Halsall suggest that Robert and Ann had seven children; Ellen (bapt. 19 March 1871, bur. 1 August 1871), William (bapt. 28 July 1872), Robert (bapt. 6 February 1876), twins Henry and Ellen (bapt. 30 June 1878; Henry was buried on 15 July 1878), another Henry (bapt. 19 September 1880), and Richard (bapt. 28 January 1883). This explains why the 1881 census only shows Robert (still a boatman) and Ann living with William, Robert, the younger Ellen, and baby Henry (seven months).

By 1891, Robert and Ann ALTY's street address was given as Rosemary Lane, Haskayne. Their home had three rooms, and there is a hint that they had another source of income; Robert was a "*Canal Boatman & Shopkeeper*", and the word "*Shop*" is written faintly beside Ann's details. Teenagers William and Robert were each described as "*Boatman Son*", and the three younger children were at school. Sadly, according to Phil's research, Robert junior died at Haskayne on 20 January 1898, and was buried at Halsall two days later.

In 1901, Robert and Ann's sons Henry (a canal boat man) and Richard (an agricultural labourer) were still at home. Ann's occupation was not stated, but not long afterwards the Midwives Roll (1905) revealed that on 28 April 1904, Ann ALTY of Ship Bridge, Haskayne, Ormskirk was formally enrolled as a midwife; she qualified because she had been "*in practice*" since July 1901.

In 1911, the ALTYS lived at Ship Bridge, Haskayne; Robert was a "boat-man", whilst Ann (as we might expect) was a midwife. After forty-three years of marriage, four of their eight children were still alive - and their daughter Ellen was already a married mother of three boys.

Ellen's marriage to William Henry LANGTON (another boatman) from Lydiate,

took place on 29 December 1900, at St. Cuthbert's Church, Halsall; one of the witnesses was Henry ALTY (probably her younger brother). When Ann ALTY died from heart disease and dropsy (oedema) at Haskayne, Downholland, on 19 January 1917, aged sixty-six, it was her son-in-law William LANGTON who registered her death two days later.

Ann was buried at St. Cuthbert's Church, Halsall, on 24 January 1917. Thanks to Phil's research, we believe that her gravestone can still be found there today, and she is also listed on our Boat Families website. Her Person ID number is I08841.

## Talk Reports

### **26 October 2022 - What Connects William the Conqueror, Monty Python, Burscough Wheelwrights and Manchester Airport? by Keith Broadbent**

An intriguing title for our October talk, but we weren't kept in suspense for very long - we were quickly told that the answer was our speaker, Keith Broadbent.

Keith began researching family history about four years ago, following the receipt of a message from a cousin containing information he and his wife Julie were unaware of about her family. This actually turned out to be incorrect, but by the time they had established that, they were hooked on family history, so Keith began researching a set of his great-grandparents, Joseph Mace PERCIVAL and his wife Martha Ellen, who had lived in Stockport. He started with Martha Ellen, who he knew little about. He was quickly able to find a marriage certificate for them; various census entries confirmed that Martha's father George BIRTWISTLE (a blacksmith) was born near Haslingden.

From the church records Keith found that George had been born into a large farming family at Cribden End, on the moors above Haslingden. After George's father died, his mother moved the family to Ewood Bridge (on the outskirts of Haslingden); George then travelled to Stockport, where he settled. Keith was able to find church records for the family going back three further generations. At one time, they were living in a commune in a large house on the moors, known as Hartley House; the ruins still exist today.

Whilst researching in the Lancashire Archives at Preston, he was lucky enough to find documents which traced the genealogy of the BIRTWISTLE family back over thirty generations to a gentleman named Ralph de Bridtwesell in 1209. At that time Reyner, son of Ralph (b.1160) received a grant of land from his Norman liege lord, who had himself been granted it from William the Conqueror.

This document was a worldwide collaboration between BIRTWISTLE descendants and contained all of the BIRTWISTLE family which Keith had found in and around Haslingden, but they were not aware about anything about George after 1851, when he migrated to Stockport. As far as they were concerned, he just ceased to exist. However, Keith was able to give them all the information they needed to add his branch of the family to the document.

Returning to Joseph Mace PERCIVAL, Keith was also lucky enough to find an old one-name study on the PERCIVAL family which showed that the name originated from Breheval (now Brehal) in Normandy, France. This contained information on Ascelin de Perceval, an adventurer with William the Conqueror who was given several estates in England. He founded a church in Weston in Gordano, Somerset, and his grandson Sir Richard de Percival was a Crusader in Palestine, losing both a foot and his left hand in battle, but fighting on courageously. He is said to be the inspiration for the Black Knight character in the film *Monty Python and the Holy Grail*.

Keith went on to tell us about his wife's family. Julie and her sister Jackie were born in Oldham, but Keith discovered that their great-great-grandmother was born in Burscough in c.1833-1835, before moving to Haydock, from where one of her children (Julie's and Jackie's great-grandfather) moved his family to Oldham.

In 1841 Thomas FORSHAW (their great-great-great grandfather) together with his wife Ann and their children, lived in Sheep Cote Hills, Burscough (roughly around the Higgins Lane/New Lane area); Thomas' occupation was a wheelwright. They appear to have followed their daughter Betty, who moved to Haydock with her husband, where he found work as a wheelwright in a coal mine.

The final link in the chain related to Robert WOODALL and Elizabeth DEARDEN, Keith's great-grandparents, who came from a large farming family in Northern Etchells, Cheshire. At Ringway Chapel, in the centre of this area, Keith had found 76 baptisms, one wedding and 16 burials linked to his family. He showed us an old map and also a modern satellite image of the same area; from these, it was clear that the entire area is now covered by Manchester Airport.

In conclusion, Keith said that he had tried to show examples of some of the things he had uncovered in his research; he hoped they had been interesting and might prove useful to others in their research.

### **23 November 2022 - Quiz hosted by Colin MacDonald and Social Evening**

An end-of-year quiz is becoming a bit of a tradition at our November meetings, and after the 2021 edition was conducted via Zoom, Colin MacDonald kindly agreed to resume his role as quizmaster for an in-person quiz to round off our programme for 2022, and his efforts were enjoyed by all who attended (including seven visitors).

Six teams competed to answer the eight-round quiz, and after some challenging questions, the "Roughyeds" were declared the winning team with 61, narrowly beating "3 Old Fogies" (who scored 59.5 points), and "Them and Us" (with 55 points). Chocolate Oranges were awarded to each member of the winning team.

A bookstall was set up in one corner, and members brought a generous selection of raffle prizes, including mulled wine, Buck's Fizz, a colouring book, all kinds of sweets and confectionary, and various toiletries. In total, the raffle raised £35 for

Society funds.

Particular thanks go to Jackie James and Julie Broadbent, who arranged a wonderful buffet of crisps, mini mince pies, cocktail sausages, Christmas cake bites, and squash, further enhanced by a large quantity of Ormskirk gingerbread (in bow shapes), baked by one of our members.



(above) Raffle prizes given by ODFHS members; the buffet of cake, crisps, mince pies, Ormskirk gingerbread and other treats.  
(left) The Society's impromptu bookstall.

### 25 January 2023 - New Year, New Start: Enriching Your Research with ODFHS Publications by Kathryn MacDonald, Alan Cooper, Emma Davison and Kate Hurst

Family history researchers know the thrill of finding a new piece of information relating their subject or the world in which they lived. The satisfaction which comes with being able to breathe life into the story of our ancestors, to stitch together snippets gathered from here and there, all helps to give colour and depth to family trees.

The aim of January's meeting was to demonstrate how resources from the ODFHS

Library, videos and data collections might provide researchers with such insights into the lives of Ormskirk and District ancestors. To this end, a series of short presentations looked at what can be found and how these valuable collections might be accessed. There are over forty ODFHS videos which can be viewed via the website or YouTube. The most popular subjects are *Inside Ormskirk Parish Church*, *A Tour of Ormskirk Churchyard* and *Ormskirk and District People and Places*. A promotional video created by Kate Hurst in Spring 2021 to demonstrate the range of Society activities was played to the audience. This video can be seen by visiting [www.youtube.com/@odfhs/videos](http://www.youtube.com/@odfhs/videos) and searching for "ODFHS Promotional Film | Spring 2021".

Kathryn MacDonald, ODFHS Librarian gave a flavour of the material available via the ODFHS website. There is a growing collection of photographs and postcards of local scenes through time in the Gallery section, which can be accessed from the main menu and does not require a log-in. Local publications such as parish church magazines, town guides and friendly society annual reports can be found in the members' area.



A montage of images from the ODFHS website gallery



## What's Coming Up? Spring/Summer 2023

A pre-recorded presentation from Alan Cooper (our Website Manager), who, at the time of recording, was speaking from a snowy Glasgow, described the new website search facility. The full text of back copies of Society magazines, scanned documents, the library catalogue, descriptions accompanying photographs can all be searched using keywords via the search facility in the Members' area. This has already proved invaluable in helping with research, saving hours ploughing through individual documents. The recording is available on YouTube, under the title, "*The ODFHS Website | A Guide To The Members' Area | 25 January 2023*".

On a similar theme of making data more accessible, Emma Davison, who is currently studying at Edge Hill University, has been working on a database which will make the ODFHS data collections searchable as a whole. During her presentation Emma showed how, at present, it is necessary to search each data collection (for example, church yard memorial inscriptions, burial records and tithe maps) individually. In future, her work will make it possible to search for ancestors across multiple collections. ODFHS data collections are available via Parish Chest at <https://www.pari chest.com/ormskirk-district-fhs-3508.php>

The evening was rounded off with a recorded talk from Kate Hurst, ODFHS Chair which introduced our Boat Families website. Kate described the origins and background to the project, and looked ahead to how the website might be extended in future. This talk can be accessed via the ODFHS website or searching YouTube. It is one of a series of online talks Kate has created, on subjects as diverse as Christmas Beef in Burscough, the 1918-19 flu epidemic in the Ormskirk area and the Ormskirk gingerbread tradition. A series of observations and examples of research successes from the audience were much appreciated.

Any members wishing to look at resources in the members' area of the ODFHS website can contact Alan Cooper [website.manager@odfhs.email](mailto:website.manager@odfhs.email) for a login and password. The Research Library is open by request; please contact Kathryn MacDonald at [macdonald6465@gmail.com](mailto:macdonald6465@gmail.com) if you would like to arrange a visit.

*Report by Kathryn MacDonald.*

### Face-To-Face Meetings

- |               |   |
|---------------|---|
| 22 March 2023 | Not Just The 3 "R"s - Life in a Lancashire School by Mrs. Louise Wade |
| 26 April 2023 | Royal Connections to West Lancashire by ODFHS Committee Members       |
| 24 May 2023   | AGM followed by a presentation (subject to be confirmed)              |
| 28 June 2023  | Speaker to be announced   |

*Our in-person talks are held at the Guide HQ, Moorgate, Ormskirk, and begin at 7.30p.m. All welcome; non-members are requested to make a £2 donation. Refreshments available. At the time of going to press, the Society is hoping to arrange a talk about the Edge Hill University Archives. Please see [www.odfhs.website](http://www.odfhs.website) for any changes to our programme.*

### Zoom Meetings

- |               |                                  |
|---------------|----------------------------------|
| 16 March 2023 | ZOOM Family History Chat, 2p.m.  |
| 13 April 2023 | ZOOM Family History Chat, 11a.m. |
| 12 May 2023   | ZOOM Family History Chat, 2p.m.  |
| 8 June 2023   | ZOOM Family History Chat, 11a.m. |
| 13 July 2023  | ZOOM Family History Chat, 2p.m.  |

**If you have not yet received access details for our Zoom meetings but would like to attend, please contact Kate Hurst (ODFHS Chair) at [chairman@odfhs.email](mailto:chairman@odfhs.email)**

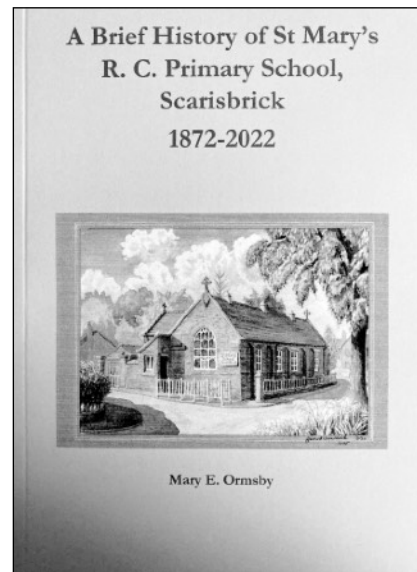
## New ODFHS Virtual Talk on YouTube

In January 2023, the Society released a new virtual talk, inspired by the records from a nineteenth-century local charity which formed the basis of our “Burscough Beef Awards”. The video is available free of charge at [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com) under the title *A Virtual Talk | Christmas Beef In Burscough*.

## New Book on St. Mary's RC School, Scarisbrick

In 2022, St. Mary's Roman Catholic Primary School in Scarisbrick celebrated its 150th anniversary, and to mark the occasion, local resident Mary Ormsby has researched and published a history of the school. Printed in A5 format, *A Brief History of St. Mary's R.C. School, Scarisbrick 1872-2022* is 127 pages in length, illustrated with black and white photos, and has been written using school log books, headteachers' reports to Governors, and memories of staff and pupils at St. Mary's School, spanning the years 1939 to 2022.

Priced at £6 (plus £2.50 postage), the book can be obtained by contacting Mary Ormsby at [mormsby@btinternet.com](mailto:mormsby@btinternet.com) and all proceeds will be donated to St. Mary's RC School, Scarisbrick. The ODFHS Research Library now holds a copy.



## Interesting News

### NEW CATHOLIC RECORDS FROM MANCHESTER AND LANCASHIRE FHS

In January 2023 Manchester and Lancashire FHS released five new collections of Roman Catholic baptism records, which are available from their online shop as digital downloads. The parishes are St. Michael, Ancoats (7699 baptisms covering 1877-1917), St. John, Chorlton-cum-Hardy (1008 baptisms covering 1893-1931), St. Mary, Levenshulme (1442 baptisms covering 1853-1920), Corpus Christi, Miles Platting (3845 baptisms covering 1890-1908), and St. Edward, Rusholme (1047 baptisms covering 1862-1908). All include transcriptions and images of the records, plus an index of names; prices range from £1 to £2.

Please see <https://www.mlfhs-shop.co.uk/collections/downloads> for further details.

### SATURDAY OPENINGS FOR LEICESTERSHIRE AND RUTLAND FHS RESEARCH CENTRE

From 14 January 2023, the Leicestershire and Rutland FHS Research Centre in the Rutland Suite, 2nd Floor, 7-9 Every Street, Leicester, LE1 6AG will be open between 10a.m. and 12.30p.m. on the second Saturday of each month. Visitors are asked to contact [publicity@lrfhs.org.uk](mailto:publicity@lrfhs.org.uk) or visit [www.lrfhs.org.uk/centre.php](http://www.lrfhs.org.uk/centre.php) for more information. The Research Centre is also open between 10.30a.m. and 3p.m. on Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays.

### PHOTOGRAPHS OF COVENTRY SAVED FROM A SKIP

A collection of 8000 glass negatives taken by Coventry photographer Arthur Cooper between the 1940s and 1960s, which were rescued from a roadside skip, have been digitised and published online as part of Coventry University's Coventry Digital Archive. Noticing the lack of identification details, project director Dr. Ben Kyneswood is appealing to community groups and organisations to assist with the identification of people and places, and the scheme has already received a helping hand from Martin Williams (chairman of the Friends of Coventry Cathedral), who was able to caption around 700 pictures, including one showing rubble being

cleared from the Cathedral after it was bombed during the Blitz. Other shots feature weddings, festivals, and visits from royalty and celebrities. The pictures can be viewed by visiting <https://coventry.digital/> and creating a username and password. To contact the project team, please e-mail [ac4693@coventry.ac.uk](mailto:ac4693@coventry.ac.uk)

#### NEW MONUMENTAL INSCRIPTIONS FROM POWYS FHS

In February 2023, Powys Family History Society published a CD-ROM of monumental inscriptions for St. Michael and All Angels Church, at Llanfihangel Rhydithon, Radnorshire. Priced at £6.00 plus postage, the new data can be purchased via the Powys FHS online shop at [www.powysfhs.org](http://www.powysfhs.org) and is listed in the Radnorshire Publications section, under the Memorial Inscriptions sub-section.

The collection includes an eight-part map of the County Palatine of Lancaster by William YATES and Thomas BILLINGE from 1786, Joseph ADSHEAD's "Twenty four illustrated maps of the township of Manchester, divided into municipal wards" from 1850-51, and a nine-part "Plan of Manchester and Salford" created by William GREEN between 1787 and 1794, which includes street names, public buildings, landowners' names, and the outlines of proposed new streets). William GREEN's Plan of Manchester and Salford may be of particular interest to ODFHS members, as it names the Earl of Derby as the owner of several plots of land in the Cheetham area. The Mapping Manchester Collection is available to access free of charge at [www.digitalcollections.manchester.ac.uk/collections/maps/1](http://www.digitalcollections.manchester.ac.uk/collections/maps/1)

*Our thanks to the Family History Society of Cheshire for sharing this information.*

## *The Mapping Manchester Collection*

Members with ancestral links to Manchester may wish to investigate the University of Manchester Library's Mapping Manchester Collection. Comprising more than 140,000 maps dating from the sixteenth century to the present, the collection is the largest of its kind and originated in the Geography Department with a loan of maps from two private collectors, Colonel Dudley MILLS and R. H. BOOKER. It has since been enhanced by the addition of 3,000 maps from the Manchester Geographical Society.

Concentrating on Manchester and the surrounding areas (including the county of Lancashire), the collection documents the expansion of Manchester as an industrial city, and show how it was transformed by railways, cotton mills, factories and gas works over time. It features hand drawn plans, official government maps, modern prints, ephemera, contemporary artworks, and antiquarian maps.

## *Get To Know Medieval London Project*

The Center for Medieval Studies at Fordham University, New York City, and the Institute of Historical Research at the University of London are working together on a new project, Get to Know Medieval London. The source material comes from over 3000 mediaeval London property records (dating from the thirteenth to sixteenth centuries) from the city's Husting Court, where cases involving London's inhabitants were heard, and records of judgements and agreements were made. Originally written in Latin, the Husting Court documents detail addresses, interactions with neighbours, the distribution of different occupations, property markets, and the family and social connections of property holders.

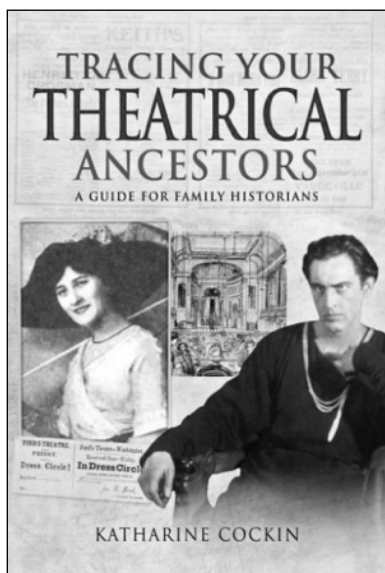
Between 1979 and 1988, a small team of researchers working on a project called *The Social and Economic Study of Mediaeval London c.1100-1666* translated thousands

of these records, and transcribed them onto index cards. In 2022, the cards were scanned, and the information they held has been transferred to the Medieval Londoners Database, which aims to assist researchers seeking information about an individual's family and social connections. Anyone who is interested in volunteering with the project can visit this link to check for future transcription opportunities; no training is involved, and an internet connection is the only requirement:

[www.zooniverse.org/projects/kowaleski/get-to-know-medieval-londoners](http://www.zooniverse.org/projects/kowaleski/get-to-know-medieval-londoners)

## *Tracing Your Theatrical Ancestors*

*press release from Pen & Sword Books Ltd.*



How can you find out about the lives of ancestors who were involved in the world of theatre: on stage and on film, in the music halls and travelling shows, in the circus and in all sorts of other forms of public performance? Katharine Cockin's handbook provides a fascinating introduction for readers searching for information about ancestors who had clearly defined roles in the world of the theatre and performance as well as those who left only a few tantalising clues behind.

The wider history of public performance is outlined, from its earliest origins in church rituals and mystery plays through periods of censorship

driven by campaigns on moral and religious grounds up to the modern world of stage and screen. Case studies, which are a special feature of the book, demonstrate how the relevant records can be identified and interpreted, and they prove how much revealing information they contain. Information on relevant archives, books, museums and websites make this an essential guide for anyone who is keen to explore the subject.

*Tracing Your Theatrical Ancestors* is due to be published by Pen and Sword Books Ltd. in February 2023. Priced at £14.99; 192 pages, paperback.

ISBN - 9781526732057

[www.pen-and-sword.co.uk](http://www.pen-and-sword.co.uk)

## *The Unsolved Murder of Elizabeth Threlfall*

### *Part One*

*by Dot Broady-Hawkes (H117)*

Elizabeth ORRITT was baptised at Ormskirk Parish Church on 26 February 1806, the eldest daughter of Thomas and Peggy ORRITT of Whiteleys Lane, Lathom. On 8 November 1824, she married farm labourer Thomas THRELFALL of Scarth Hill at the same church. Thomas had been baptised at the Skelmersdale Chapel on 5 February 1804, son of Henry THRELFALL and Ellen (nee COOK) of Scarth Hill.

Thomas and Elizabeth had two sons; Henry (born 6 December 1826) and John (born August 1829). It would seem that the family lived with Thomas's parents, and then with his uncle on a farm in Halsall, where Thomas worked as a farm labourer. By 1832, Elizabeth had left her husband and sons and taken a job as a



live-in servant at the Black Bull public house in Aintree, also known locally as the Aintree Iron.

On the morning of 16 October 1832, the body of a young woman was spotted floating in the Leeds-Liverpool Canal, close to Halsall Bridge. Thomas BALL, a potato farmer from Halsall, and one of his potato pickers, Jane BALSHAW, were walking to the potato field across the bridge when they saw the body. A canal boat belonging to Robert SHAW was moored by the bridge, and the body was ten to fifteen yards to the stern.

Thomas BALL took a pole from SHAW's boat and pulled the body to the canal side. Richard SHAW, brother of the boat captain Robert SHAW, helped lift the woman from the water, and carried her firstly to the house of William MARTIN, and then to the Halsall Warehouse Machine House.

Local parish constable James KIRBY, a Halsall farmer, was alerted and he sent for the Coroner. It was suggested the dead woman was the wife of local man Thomas THRELFALL, who was working in the local fields for his uncle, Edward THRELFALL. James KIRBY fetched Thomas from the field, to see if he could identify the woman as his wife. THRELFALL apparently did identify the deceased as his wife Elizabeth; the Coroner gave his report to the local magistrates, and Elizabeth was buried in Halsall Parish Church graveyard.

In 1836 Thomas THRELFALL joined the new Liverpool Police Constabulary as a Constable, and took up a post at Toxteth. In 1840 he married Martha JONES at St. Peter's, Liverpool, and brought his sons from his first marriage to live with his new family in Toxteth. He served for around twelve years, and then took a pub tenancy in Preston Gobballs, Shropshire, and later a farm in the same village. There appears to have been little or no evidence to make a case against anyone for Elizabeth's death in 1832. Certainly Thomas THRELFALL was not charged with any involvement.

Nineteen years later, things were to change dramatically and the death of Elizabeth was looked at again. It all came about when boatman Richard SHAW fell seriously

fell seriously ill in 1851. Believing he was on his death bed, Richard started to tell his doctor that he had witnessed the murder of a young woman on the canal, and that he could not find peace with his maker if he did not tell the truth about what happened that night in October '19 or 20 years ago'.

The insistence from Richard to his doctor that there had been a murder led to the allegations being heard by Dublin-born Richard FANNING, Chief Superintendent of the Lancashire Constabulary who lived at the old Police Station in Aughton Street, Ormskirk. Local enquiries with family at Scarth Hill revealed that Thomas THRELFALL no longer lived in the district, but in Shropshire. The Chief Superintendent sent local Police Constable WIGNALL to Shrewsbury and (with the cooperation of the Shropshire Constabulary), Thomas THRELFALL was brought back to Ormskirk to appear before Mr. Richard BRANDRETH at the Court.

*This article will be continued in Issue 91.*

## *Rufford Old Hall and Royal Celebrations*

*by Julie Broadbent (B120)*

I enjoyed reading about local celebrations of royal events in the ODFHS magazine marking the late Queen's Platinum Jubilee last summer. Amongst them was a short item from 1911 reporting how villagers in Rufford celebrated the coronation of King Edward VII, including their enjoyment of hospitality from the tenant of Rufford Old Hall. This especially interested me because I used to be a room guide at Rufford Old Hall, and I well remember how much the Hall's visitors enjoyed

hearing stories of past events and people there. Mostly these concern the HESKETH family who lived there from the 1500s, but sometimes the house was let out to tenants. There's not as much known about these, so any new information is welcome.

The Rufford magazine item did provide new information for me, since it mentioned the name of a tenant living at Rufford Old Hall in 1911, a Mr. Robert RANKIN. This was something I wanted to know more about, so I decided to use standard family history research methods to see if I could find out more through census records and Google.

What I found was really interesting (to a Rufford volunteer anyway). Here are some facts I was able to establish:

- Robert RANKIN, born in 1877, came from a long established shipping family hugely involved in developing trade routes between the UK and Canada. Shipbuilding in both Glasgow and Liverpool was a major part of the business alongside its trade interests.
- Rufford Old Hall was Robert's first married home. He lived there for just a few years. Later he moved to Broughton Towers, a huge place in Broughton in Furness that some people might know of. He gifted it to Lancashire County Council after the Second World War and it became a residential social services facility for them. We often used to visit Broughton for holidays and recall going past the imposing gates of Broughton Towers.
- At the start of the First World War in 1914 he joined the Royal Army Service Corps, which managed the transport of troops, equipment and supplies. So Robert would have been able to make good use of his background in transport.
- After returning to the family business at the end of the war, he went into politics as MP for Liverpool Kirkdale from 1931 to 1945, and became well known as a public figure in Liverpool.

- In the Second World War he combined his political work with duties for the Home Guard, which will be well remembered from the BBC comedy 'Dad's Army'.
- In retirement from Parliament, he became Chairman of the family business in Liverpool and was much involved in community and business organisations before he died in 1960.

Rufford Old Hall only played a small part in Robert's life, but it's good to be able to fill in a new episode in its history, and I'm grateful to have got the first inkling of Robert's story from the ODFHS Jubilee magazine. I've passed on my findings to other volunteers at Rufford - perhaps they'll make new stories for visitors to the Hall.

## *Pupil Teachers of 1890 and 1893*

*Preston Herald, 31 May 1890 and 27 May 1893*

During the early 1890s, the following local candidates passed the examinations required for them to qualify as pupil teachers, and their results were published in the Preston Herald.

If you have found any of these named in your family tree, we would be interested to know whether these newly-qualified students pursued teaching careers in later life, whether locally or further afield.

Examined at Preston, Blackpool and Southport, October 19th, 1889.

CLASS I.

BALL, Emily	Maghull	National
BISSETT, Mary E.	Burscough Bridge	
PEACH, Joseph	Ormskirk	United Charity

CLASS II.

BENSON, Ellen	Aughton	Christ Church
DAGNALL, Ellen	Bickerstaffe	
HALL, Elise	Ormskirk	United Charity
JENKINSON, Martha	Aughton	Christ Church
RIGBY, Sarah	Bickerstaffe	
SEDDON, Joseph	Bickerstaffe	
WINROW, Arthur	Ormskirk	United Charity

CLASS III.

ACKERS, Mary J.	Halsall	
BAILEY, Clara E.	Altcar	
BENSON, Mary J.	Bispham, Ormskirk	
GRAYSTON, Alice	Aughton	Christ Church
LEATHERBARROW, Annie	Ormskirk	United Charity
ORMESHER, Elizabeth	Ormskirk	United Charity
RIMMER, Alice	Bickerstaffe	

George STEEL *[sic]*, M.A., H.M. Inspector of Schools.  
D. BOSTOCK, Sub-Inspector.  
May 24th, 1890.

Examined at Preston, Blackpool and Southport, 22 October 1892.

CLASS I.

ALCOCK, Robert	Bickerstaffe	
BISSETT, Margaret	Burscough Bridge	Wesleyan
STIRTON, Jessie	Ormskirk	United Charity

CLASS II.

BALL, Mary	Ormskirk	United Charity
CLEGG, Robert	Ormskirk	United Charity
DALLIMORE, Edith	Ormskirk	United Charity
HEWSON, Georgina	Ormskirk	United Charity
HURST, Mary	Ormskirk	United Charity
MacCOY, Mary E.	Ormskirk	R.C.
MARSHALL, Mary	Halsall	
STAZICKER, Margaret	Burscough Bridge	Wesleyan
SUMNER, Mary	Aughton	Christ Church
TURNER, Alice	Ormskirk	United Charity

CLASS III.

LARGE, Henry	Bickerstaffe	
TRICKETT, Annie	Aughton	Christ Church
TYRER, Elizabeth	Lydiat	C.E.

George STEELE *[sic]*, M.A., H.M. Inspector of Schools.  
D. BOSTOCK, Sub-Inspector.  
Preston, May 23rd, 1893.

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## Society Facilities

### Research Library

Located in the Scout Hall, Wigan Road, Ormskirk, a short walk from the bus and railway stations, and local car parks. The Research Library is now open to visitors by appointment; please contact Kathryn Macdonald at [macdonald6465@gmail.com](mailto:macdonald6465@gmail.com) if you would like to arrange a visit.

### Meetings

These are held at the Guide HQ, Moorgate, Ormskirk on the fourth Wednesday of each month (except December); please e-mail [chairman@odfhs.email](mailto:chairman@odfhs.email) for details.

### Ormskirk Library Help Desk

Our Help Desk at Ormskirk Library, Burscough Street, Ormskirk runs from 10.30am to around 11.30a.m. on the first Monday of each month (except UK Bank Holidays).



*Covering the Sixteen  
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Downholland, Halsall,  
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