

# Altrincham Area History



*St. George's Church, Altrincham*

**David Miller, 2018**

**Revised 2022**

# Altrincham Area History

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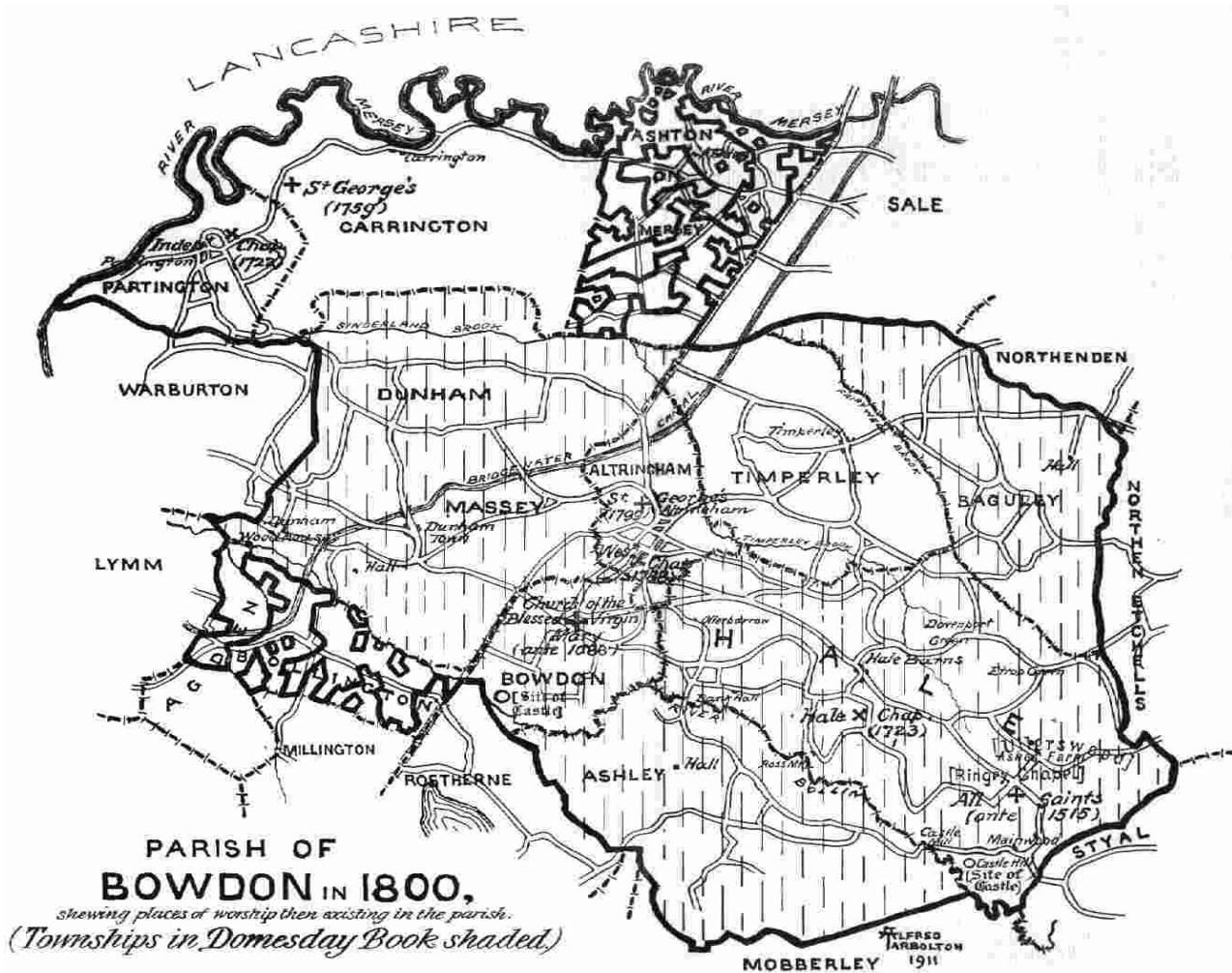
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I would appreciate any errors found or useful additional information to be fed back.

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# BOOK 1: ALTRINCHAM & AREA OUTLINE HISTORY



## ***Bowdon Parish in 1800***

***Bowdon Parish boundary in 1800 which included Altrincham, Bowdon, Hale, Dunham Massey, Timperley, Baguley, Hale Barns, Ashley, Partington, Carrington, and part of Bollington and Ashton-on-Mersey. Before Ashton and Rostherne churches were built, the parish of Bowdon covered all of what became Ashton and probably part of Rostherne parish; some farms in Ashton and Bollington were excluded by request of the farmers and belong to Ashton and Rostherne parishes respectively. Townships mentioned in the Domesday Book are shaded - Altrincham, Timperley, Sale and Carrington are not mentioned. The straight line of the Roman road from Chester to Manchester runs from the southwest to the northeast and shows the 13th century diversion to Altrincham. The 1766 Bridgewater Canal runs parallel to the northeastern section from Stretford to Broadheath, and then north of Dunham Hall to Lymm and Runcorn (Alfred Tarbolton's drawing of 1911 was taken from his book 'Ringway Chapel before the Disruption 1515-1721').***

# The Geology of the Altrincham Area

## Introduction

The ground we live on influences how we earn our living and therefore our prosperity, health and culture.

To understand the local landscape, it is useful to have an overall view of the geology of Britain.

The earth beneath our feet is covered by mountains, fields, gardens and buildings but underneath is another world.

500 million years ago the British Isles were part of a single land mass called Gondwana. Southern Scotland, England and Wales were attached to Africa, while north-west Scotland beyond the Great Glen was joined to North America. Over time, the British Isles and Europe broke away and migrated north, part becoming the shape on the map we know today.

The earth's crust of igneous rock (solidified molten rock) sitting on top of a molten core, averages about 20 miles thick and is split into a dozen or so major plates which continue to move, raising mountains and causing volcanoes. It is full of faults where rocks have fractured and slipped, sometimes thousands of feet. One we can see on local TV weather maps is the Bala Fault, at least two miles deep in parts and running from Cardigan Bay to the Dee estuary, forming a valley that crosses North Wales. Earthquakes are common there.

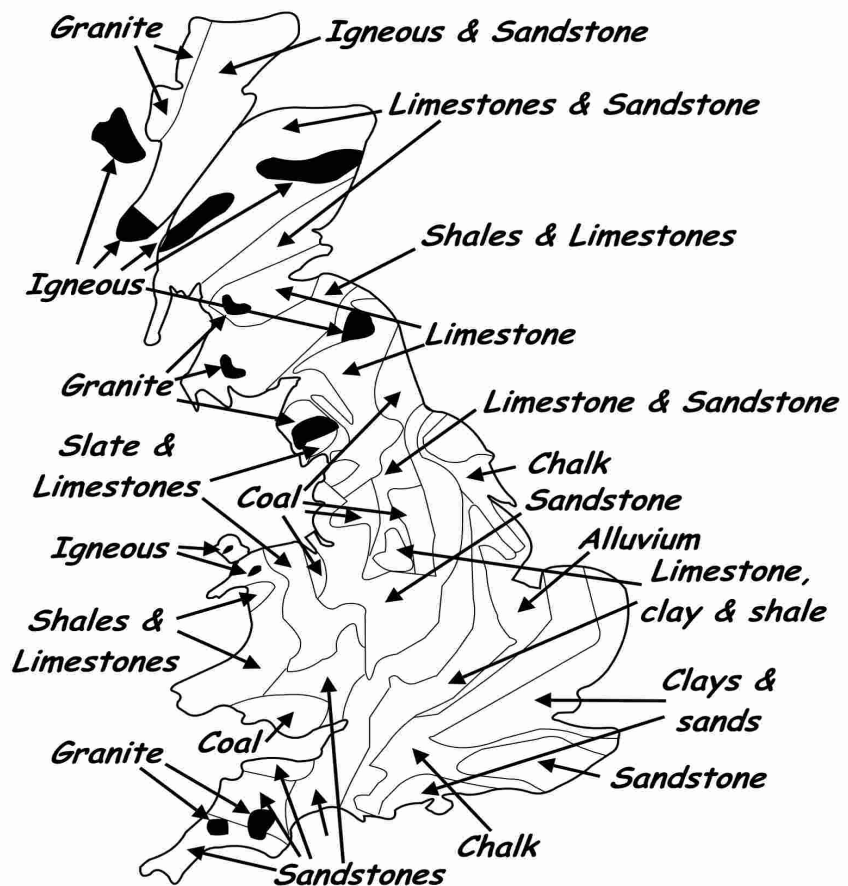
Over time, the igneous rocks in much of Britain were overlain by sedimentary deposits. These include sand and mud which was converted to slate by heat and pressure, together with other sediments such as sand deposited by rivers, limestone and chalk from sea creatures, and coal formed from tropical trees.



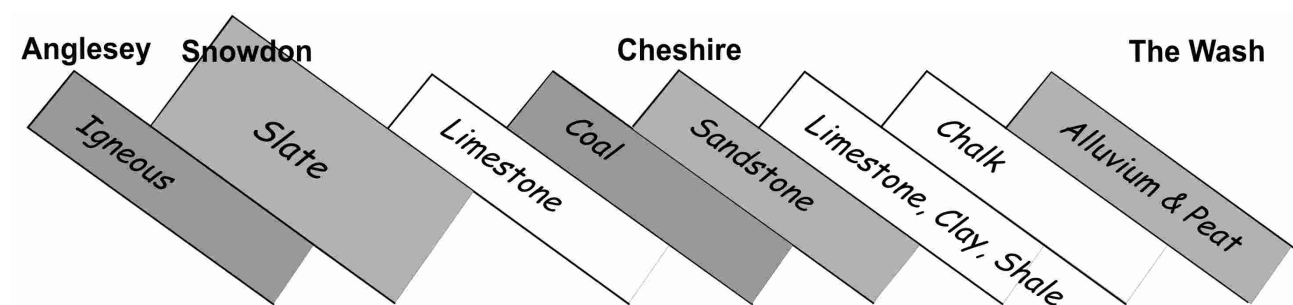
## An outline of Britain's geology

The oldest rocks in Britain are mainly on the west coast, and are of igneous origin. The youngest rocks are on the east coast as Britain's land mass rises in the west and sinks in the east.

The topography also changed as mountain ranges such as the Pennines raised low-level deposits, and ice ages reduced the height of mountains and moved debris around. The map below shows a simplified diagram of the superficial rocks of Britain. Granite is a granular igneous rock.



## A cross-section of the rocks



*A simplified cross-section of rocks from Anglesey to The Wash.*

Anglesey on the west coast is partially igneous but its main rocks are slate and limestone. The Menai Straits separating the island from the mainland lie on a major fault line.

The landscape changes as people develop the resources for their own purposes. Slate deposits in Wales are from compressed mudstones about 450 million years old and contain fossils. Slates have been much used for roofing and water tanks.

Coal deposits occur in north-east Wales and where the strata have been lifted up on both sides of the Pennines in Lancashire, Yorkshire and Derbyshire, and in Northumberland. These deposits are the 'fossil fuel' of our mining industries and drove the Industrial Revolution.

Limestone deposits in North Wales and the Pennines have been exploited for fertilising the land, building, whitewashing and for the chemical industry.

Cheshire sedimentary deposits of sand and gravel became sandstone. In the past, sandstone was used for buildings, sometimes just for foundations, with blocks of it used in Victorian times for our local garden walls.

Salt deposits (not shown) from a dried-up sea on top of the sandstone occur in Cheshire. Brine was pumped and reduced to produce salt and mined in the 'wich' towns for the preservation of food and later for road gritting. Northwich has been producing salt by boiling brine since before Roman times (see Camden). Salt deposits near the Bollin, with springs in Dunham Woodhouses, Agden and Warburton, produced good incomes in the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

Sandstone occurs again as gritstone in Derbyshire in the Pennines with limestone to its south. A band of chalk from the Dorset coast meets The Wash and contains large flint nodules, used for Stone Age tools and weapons, and later for building. There are alluvial (sand and clay) deposits and peat in the low-lying terrain down the east coast, making valuable agricultural land.

### **Solid and superficial deposits**

The local area has no superficial igneous rocks. The soils are sands, gravel, clay, moss and alluvium, together with outcrops of sandstone.

The need for vast quantities of coal for the cotton mills in Manchester triggered an early development of canal transport. The Duke of Bridgewater's Canal, the first commercial canal in Britain, was constructed in 1761 to move coal from Worsley to the Manchester mills. It was extended to Altrincham and Runcorn in 1765, increasing the movement of goods between Altrincham and Manchester. The natural contours of the land were adopted and there were no locks until it reached the Mersey at Runcorn.

The canal carried stone, slates, marl, lime, wool, cotton, cloth, coal, corn, cheese, fruit and vegetables to Manchester, and night soil (free of tax) was brought from Manchester and unloaded at Timperley and Dunham to fertilise market gardens. Cheshire farmers and landowners were allowed to transport cheese, grain and stone free of tolls. The canal was also used to import goods from the Mersey estuary to Manchester. Cotton was unloaded here for Gregg's Mill at Styal.

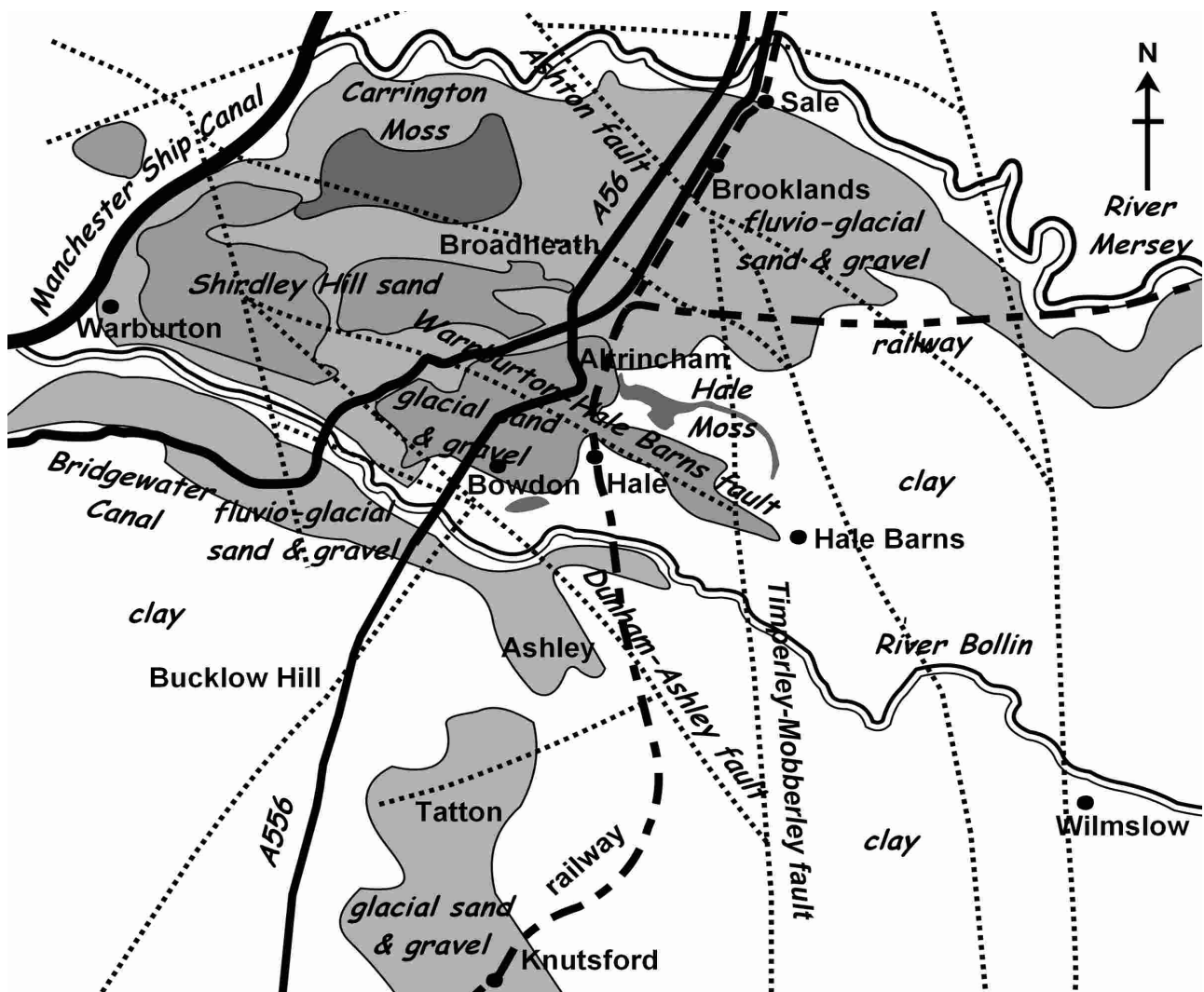
The Victorians also carved up the landscape for transport purposes. The Manchester Ship Canal was developed in 1887 to take ocean-going ships directly into Manchester via the extensive docks in Salford, bypassing the Port of Liverpool. The ox-bow lakes, left behind from straightening out meanders of the River Mersey by steam shovels and navvies, were often used for dumping waste from Manchester with some now restored as farm land.

The development of road transport was a major player in landscape change. The A556/A56 largely follows the Roman road from Chester to Manchester and York, with a diversion to Altrincham probably in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. The road from Altrincham to Manchester was turnpiked in 1765 in competition with the Bridgewater Canal. The Altrincham to Stockport route followed in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. Inevitably all this increased commercial traffic.

The railway from Manchester to Altrincham, opened in 1849, and was a key factor in local housing development. The line was extended to Knutsford and Chester in the 1860s. Two other lines were constructed in the 1850s from Stockport via Broadheath/Timperley to Warrington, with the Altrincham Stockport link remaining today. House building followed as the area became a commuter town for the city and farmland was built over.

In 1847 the Altrincham Gas Works moved from Old Market Place to Hale Moss and in the 1890s laid a tramway from Altrincham Station to bring in coal and export products, removed in the 1960s.

The area around Altrincham from Knutsford over the River Bollin to the River Mersey has some interesting geological features and the river valleys contain alluvium brought down from the Pennines giving rich soils for farming.



*The superficial geological deposits around the Altrincham area with some of the faults in the underlying solid geology. Alluvium deposits line the rivers.*

The large deposits of fluvio-glacial sand and gravel have a similar origin to glacial sand and gravel but have been moved by retreating glaciers and local rivers. Shirdley Hill Sand in Broadheath is unusual in that it originated from the bed of the Irish Sea and was blown into the Shirdley Hill area of Southport and later to Carrington and Broadheath.

## **Mosses**

Deep pools caused by glacial melt waters on clay flood plains became filled over the centuries by mosses which failed to decompose because of acid conditions. The many mosses in the area have influenced farming activities and were a major resource for villagers.

Carrington Moss, the largest, is now enclosed and used for farming, industry and recreation. Hale Moss, like all of the others, has shrunk. It originally stretched from Delahays Road to George Street, Altrincham and is now partially built over with houses and offices. Stamford Park and Altrincham Football Club ground remain as open land on the moss.

Other lost mosses retain the name: Bowdon Moss, Seamons Moss in Oldfield Brow, Sinderland Moss, Warburton Moss, Timperley Moss and Shadow Moss in Hale Barns. In their time these areas were a rich resource for villagers and the agricultural community, and the mosses to the north-west of Dunham provide a rich, dark soil for farming.

Hale Moss provided gorse kindling for lighting bread ovens, and timber and peat for fires and roofs. Animals and geese were taken there to graze and a small amount of coal may have been dug. Altrincham's water supply in the 1850s initially came from Hale Moss until it proved to be unsuitable. Channels were dug to Timperley Brook to drain the moss and enable access but unfortunately were used by the slaughterhouse and butchers to dump unwanted carcasses and became a dangerous health hazard.

Wild flowers including orchids grew on the moss and on the fringe were carr formations of swampy ground where moisture-loving trees such as alders and birches grew.

In 1619 the lord of Dunham, George Booth, bought up land including the Twiggery and Cresswell Springs and in 1621 dug a channel from near the Altrincham Football Ground on Hale Moss three miles to Dunham Hall to provide extra water to drive his corn mill (still there, now a saw mill). Other local springs were diverted into it. In the late 18<sup>th</sup> century the same water flow was used to drive several cotton-spinning mills on Grosvenor Road.

In the 1860s the moss was abandoned to gypsies before the local council worked with Lord Stamford to enclose the area. The earl donated eighteen acres of land for Stamford Park which was designed and laid out by local John Shaw and his son and opened in 1880. The rest of the moss was fenced in the 1890s and housing erected on the fringes in the 1920s.

Market gardens, often on mosses in Dunham, Altrincham, Hale, Timperley and Sale, expanded with the advent of the Bridgewater Canal to feed the growing population of Manchester in the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The produce included onions, carrots (Altrincham Carrot), celery, lettuce, rhubarb (Timperley Early) and later on potatoes (Bowdon Downs) and strawberries. The Altrincham Carrot grew up to a metre long in sandy soil. In 1851 there were sixteen square miles of market gardens around Altrincham and Sale and eight tons of onion seed and potatoes were being sown per year. In 1910 there were 157 market garden businesses in the area.



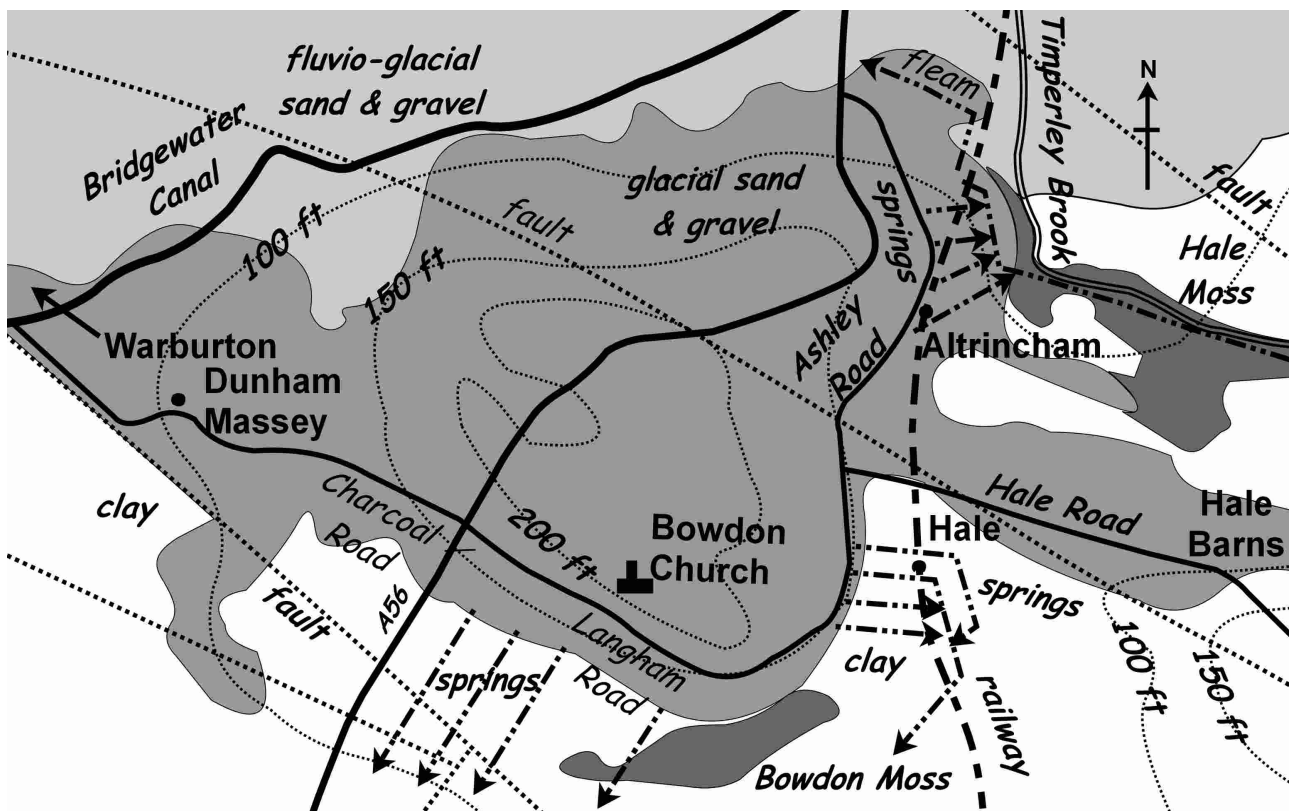
## The underlying deposits

The boulder clay areas of Hale and Bowdon were used in many clay pits, some small with temporary brick kilns used to rebuild a farm or build a new street. Two large clay pits on Hale Moss lasted for almost two centuries: Abraham Dean's pits in the area of King George's pool, and Gibbon's pit off Delahays Road with a large brickworks still in use in the 1920s, both areas now reclaimed for recreation.

There are several faults in the underlying rocks with some major ones named. The Warburton-Hale Barns Fault lies just south of Hale Road, Hale and the Dunham-Ashley Fault lies south of Langham Road, Bowdon. There are no solid rocks visible in Altrincham or Bowdon but sandstone emerges at Lymm and Timperley where it has been substantially quarried.

## Superficial deposits

Bowdon Hill rises to just over 200 feet above sea level with St. Mary's Church near its summit, an outstanding local feature when approaching from the south. The hill consists of glacial sand and gravel to a considerable depth, perhaps 100 feet in places. The sand was left as a bank when the last ice sheet retreated about 12,000 years ago leaving ridges of deposits. The hill is part of a ridge of sand and gravel running from Warburton to Hale Barns. Lying beneath is a thick layer of boulder clay brought down from the Lake District in the last Ice Age.



The superficial deposits in Altrincham and Bowdon, with springs emerging from Bowdon Hill where sand meets the boulder clay. The 1621 fleaam (canal) from Hale Moss to Dunham Hall is also shown. Contour lines are at 50 foot intervals.

The area's medieval open fields (ridge and furrow with no hedges) were used to support the military purposes of the Dunham Massey barons and the upkeep of the church. Later their prime positions were developed as villas for Manchester industrialists.

## **Springs**

Water plays a necessary part in our lives. Without it nothing grows and life is harsh. In our temperate climate, too much can also be a nuisance as illustrated by locally-named 'Slutchy Lane' at the bottom of Victoria Road in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century where a spring met clay on an unpaved road. A huge amount of effort goes into draining swampy land and culverting streams to make ground usable for agricultural, industrial and housing purposes.

Springs emerge from under the deep glacial sand of Bowdon Hill as rainwater meets the underlying impervious clay. In the north-east, springs ran from Old Market Place to power a corn mill and supply water for brewing at half a dozen pubs before flowing into Timperley Brook.

Several springs cross the line of George Street, Altrincham and were used by farms and a further half a dozen pubs, and to power an 18<sup>th</sup> century cotton-spinning mill in Norman's Place. Some of the mill building remains.

In the south-east, many springs emerge from Spring Bank on Ashley Road. Three flowed down to what is now Hale Station in the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century and supplied a brewery and several farms where Hale Village now stands. One spring on Langham Road was used to power a worsted mill in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century and another supplied the water for the Bowdon Hydropathic Hotel, now the Bowdon Hotel.

Further along Langham Road to the south of Bowdon Hill, several farms and cottages were built between Grange Road and Bow Green Road to take advantage of the springs, which also supplied drinking water for large houses on the hill.

## **Flora & Fauna**

Birds include the barn owl, blackbird, blue tit, bullfinch, buzzard, carrion crow, chaffinch, coal tit, coot, cuckoo, dunnoek, goldfinch, great tit, heron, house martin, jackdaw, jay, kestrel, kingfisher, little, greater-spotted and green woodpeckers, lapwing, long-tailed tit, magpie, mallard, mistle and song thrush, partridge, pheasant, pied wagtail, red kite, robin, sand martin, sparrowhawk, swallow, swift, tawny owl, wood pigeon, wren.

Animals and reptiles include escaped mink, fallow deer, field mouse, fox, frog, hare, hedgehog, mole, pipistrelle bat, rabbit, red squirrel before the war, rat, stoat, weasel, toad.

Aquatic life and insects include bullhead (miller's thumb), butterflies (orange tip, peacock, red admiral, small tortoiseshell, small white), caddis fly larva, common, great-crested and smooth newts, dragon flies, eels, great diving beetle, humming bird hawk moth (rare), pointed snail, ramshorn snail, stickleback.

Plants include the bluebell, common spotted orchid, giant hogweed.

## Conclusions

Fertile land, some easily worked and later heavier clay soils and mosses, gave the Altrincham area its role as an agricultural resource. Later the Industrial Revolution led to the development of transport links to move produce to supply the needs of the growing population of Manchester. Today, these links allow Altrincham people to commute, making the area a successful town on the edge of the countryside.

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## North Cheshire Place Names

### The origin of place names from Knutsford to the Mersey.

Local place names are mainly Anglo-Saxon derived from Middle English, itself derived from Old English. A few Celtic, Danish and Norse names survive in the area.

#### Celtic names

When the Romans arrived in Britain in AD43, the Iron Age Brigantes tribe had control over much of the North including Lancashire and Cheshire in the southern Celtic Kingdom of Rheged. This probably included the Altrincham area, with the Cornovii tribe in control further south in Cheshire and Shropshire.

There is some evidence of Iron Age occupation in Altrincham. Air photography has revealed several circular Iron Age farmsteads in the River Bollin Valley. There is an Iron Age site in Tatton Park and there were some finds at Warburton in 2002. 'Lindow Man' was found preserved in peat in Lindow Common in 1984 and dates between 2BC to 119AD. He had manicured fingernails and his stomach contained traces of mistletoe, a plant sacred to the Celts. Five hundred similar bodies have been found in Denmark.

Celtic place names in the surrounding area include Eccles (Welsh *eglwys*, church), possibly the River Bollin (Welsh *Lyn*, a lake) and *Hollow Bonk*, the old name for the Kingsway, Altrincham area. Bonc or bong is from Welsh *ponc* or *bonc*, a small hill or bank and occurs as The Bongs or Boncs at Lymm, Halton, Warrington, Tabley, Stockport and Goostree. Other Celtic names include Cheadle, Culcheth (Welsh *coed*, a wood), Mellor, Crewe, Tarvin, Peover, and Bryn near Wigan. Mam Tor in the Peak District is Celtic ('Peak' is named after the Anglo-Saxon tribe *Pecsaetan*), and Goyt (River) from the Welsh *gwyth*, a water course. The River Dee in Cumbria is also Celtic. Nantwich (*nant* is Celtic for a stream), Penketh and Pendlebury (*pen* is top) may be partly Celtic names.

According to Camden, when the Romans arrived Northwich was called *Hellath Du* (*Halen Ddu* in modern Welsh), meaning 'the black brine pit' which had ladders down to the brine bucketed up and boiled to produce the valuable salt for preservation and leather curing.

The Celtic language is still used in northern England for counting sheep, especially in the Lake District and auctions but formerly all over England. *Yan, Tyan, Tethera* is one, two, three in Borrowdale (up to 20 after which scratches are put on stones or stones moved from one pocket to another) and has similarities to modern Welsh. Each valley in the Lake District, Lancashire, Yorkshire, Lincolnshire, Derbyshire, Durham, the Southwest, and lowland Scotland had its own variation with about 20 in total. There are similarities with Welsh and Breton. The conclusion is that every valley had its own Celtic dialect, maybe 50 dialects in all in Britain including four in Wales and eight in lowland Scotland.

Interestingly my neighbour in the 1940s played whist every week and used 'Ace, Deuce, Trey' for 'one, two three'.

A sample of Celtic counting:

No.	Borrowdale	Welsh	Breton
1	Yan	Un	Unan
2	Tyan	Dau	Daou
3	Tethera	Tri	Tri
4	Methera	Pedwar	Pevar
5	Pimp	Pump	Pemp
6	Sethera	Chwech	Chwech
7	Lethera	Saith	Seizh
8	Hovera	Wyth	Eizh
9	Dovera	Naw	Nav
10	Dick	Deg	Dek

## The Romans

Altrincham lies just east of the major Roman road from Chester to Manchester and on to York. There is evidence of secondary Roman roads in Bowdon, Hale and Ringway, and no doubt crops were grown locally to feed the troops. A few Roman coins have been found. However there are no local names recording their presence.

## Anglo-Saxon names

There is evidence of Anglo/Saxon settlement in south-eastern England even before Roman times. The Celts were probably still in the area when Anglo-Saxons invaded, particularly from Friesland in northern Holland where their language was closely related to Old English.

Saxons initially settled in what is now East Anglia in about 460AD and spread very rapidly. The local population gradually absorbed their dress, culture and language to form the basis of English, and the Celtic language was gradually lost in Cheshire. Most of the remaining names such as Altrincham, Bowdon, Hale and Ringway are Saxon going back to the 6th/8th centuries, Bowdon perhaps 6th/7th century.

Old Market Place, Altrincham was probably settled at this time. Fragments of Saxon and Norman crosses exist in Bowdon Church and it is from this time that the first church may have been built on the site. A Saxon coin was found in the churchyard. The Saxon kingdom of Mercia reached the Mersey, north of which was the Saxon kingdom of Northumbria.

## Danish names

From the mid-9th century Danes had moved in from the east and south-east and occupied eastern Cheshire. People on the Pennines show strong Danish characteristics and their accent, especially north of the Humber, is influenced by Old Norse. Locally Toft, Knutsford and Knutsford are Danish

place names, and possibly Etrop Green in Hale. Further afield, Kettleshulme in Derbyshire is a good Viking name. In 886 King Alfred made an agreement with the Danes that the land north of a line from London to Chester along Watling Street and with its centre at York should become part of the Danelaw.

The Danes introduced low alcohol ale (Danish *ol*) to replace drinking water, which was a way of helping to sterilise water making it less likely to cause sickness, and was drunk by all including women and children. As a result, Europeans have a better tolerance of alcohol than Oriental people brought up on tea.

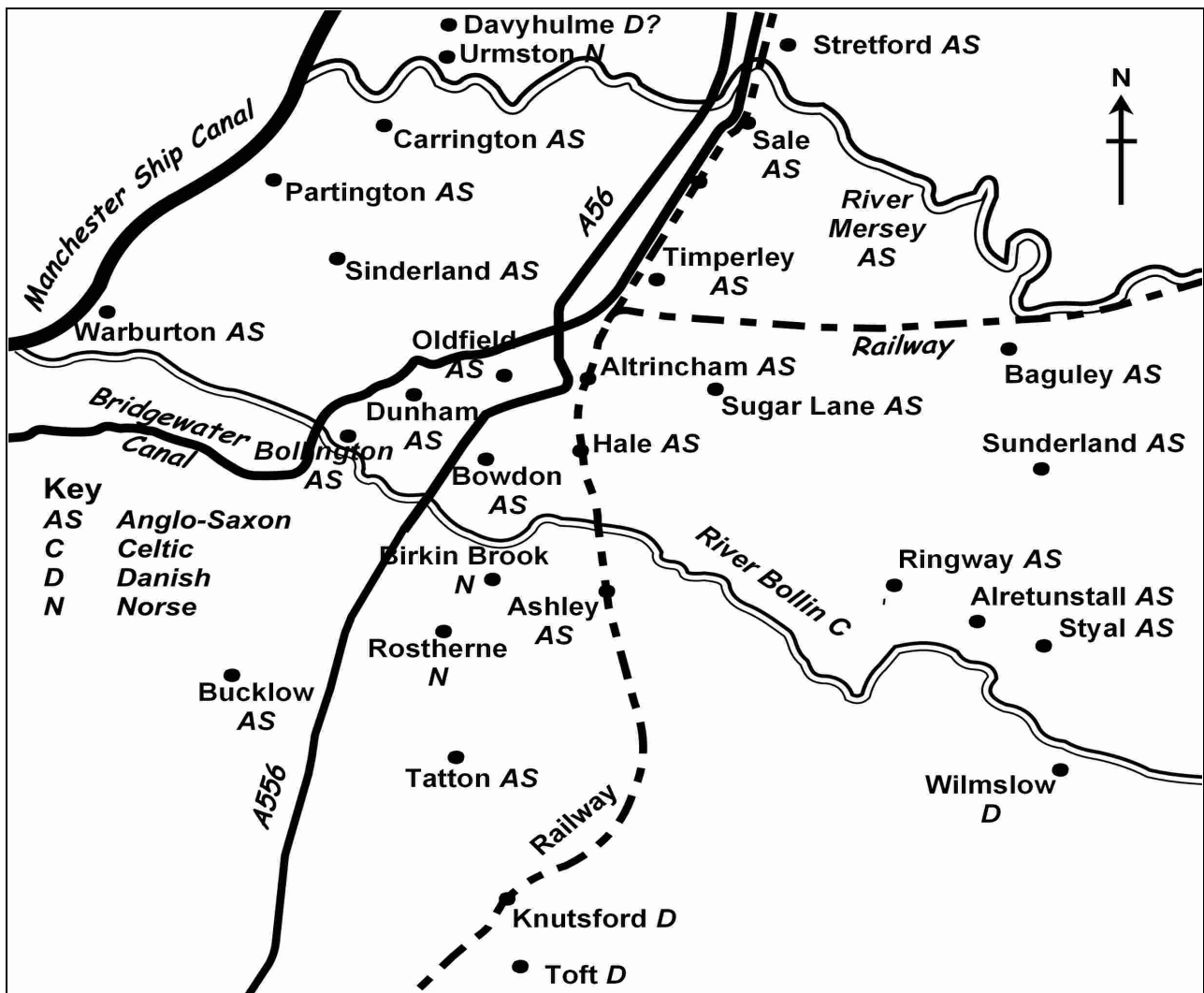
### **Norse names**

Norse people (Norwegians) came to the Wirral from Dublin and the Isle of Man from the late 9th century. In 902AD Vikings were expelled from Dublin by the Irish and attacked along the Mersey Valley. Eventually the Norse settled on the Wirral and formed separate villages from the Danes.

One Norse name on the Wirral is Thingwall from Norse *Thingvallr*, 'parliament field'. The Norse settled roughly up to Chester and the Mersey valley and some of its tributary waters (eg Rostherne, Birkin (Brook) and Urms(ton) are Norse). The Bollin Valley may have become a dividing line between the Danish northern kingdom and the southern Saxon kingdom at this time. By 1016 the Danish King Canute was ruling all of England.

### **The Normans**

Cheshire was the last English county to fall to the Normans who came over the Pennines from York to Chester in the winter of 1069-70, probably using the Roman road and passing through Dunham and Bowdon. The Norman Masci family were in the Dunham area from about 1070, following the distribution of lands by William I, previously the land of the Saxon lord Alfweard. Other than the name Dunham Massey, there are no other French place names in the area.



*The distribution of place names in North Cheshire of Celtic, Anglo-Saxon & Viking origin.*

## Place names and their meaning

**AS** Anglo-Saxon

**C** Celtic

**D** Danish

**N** Norse

### **Alretune (AS)**

Alretune or Alretunstall, 'a farm or village with alder trees'. Possibly it should be Alretone but another of that name exists in the Broxton Hundred so maybe historians decided on Alretune to distinguish the two. The manor is listed in the Domesday Book as in the Bucklow Hundred and belonging to Hamo de Masci, originally to the Saxon lord Alfward, but its location is not known. Prof Geoffrey Barker in his Bowdon History Society booklet *A History of Bowdon* suggested that the name may be the origin of the name 'Altrincham'. Morris suggests that the lost Domesday manor of *Alretune* was Alretunstall near to Davenport Green while Tarbolton thought it was near Hasty Lane. Broadhurst thinks that Alretunstall was probably part of the Saxon Sug's manor while evidence from *Place Names of Cheshire* suggests it was part of Timperley where Ridgeway Road

used to be called Sugar Lane. Hamon de Massey III granted Alretunstall to his daughter, Cicely, sometime before 1215. 'Artenstall' was a Hale Barns family name from the 14th to the 19th century. Their graves are in Bowdon churchyard. There are still Artenstall families in Lymm, Stockport and Manchester.

### **Altrincham (AS)**

The town is not listed in the Domesday Book but may have been a small Saxon village around Old Market Place. The meaning is 'the homestead of Aldhere's people' from *inga* a group of people and *ham* a homestead, village or estate. It has been spelled about 15 different ways since 1290AD. The 'ingaham' structure is fairly rare and indicates seventh century or earlier Saxon origin. Altringham in Suffolk is also Anglo-Saxon, recorded in the Domesday Book as Alrincham, again meaning 'the homestead of Aldere's people'. In Victorian times and into the 1930s, local called it 'Thrutcham'.

### **Ashley (AS)**

The name means 'ash grove'. In 1066 the village was owned by the Saxon Alfward (or Alfweard, Alweard, Elweard, Eluard or Elward), the lord of Dunham. *Weard* in Old English means 'successor'.

### **Baguley (AS)**

Baguley literally means 'badger wood'. Like many places, there have been several spellings including Baggiley.

### **Birkin Brook (N)**

The name means Birch Trees river. The brook is not shown on the map but runs out of Rostherne Mere into the River Bollin. Dodgson thinks it is from the personal name 'de Berkyn'.

### **Bollin (AS)**

Possibly from Old English *bol* (eel) and *hlynn* (water) or Celtic *llyn* (water); or a mutation of Celtic *felin* or *melin*, a mill, ie a mill river.

### **Bowdon (AS)**

There have been about fifteen different spellings of the name since the Domesday Book spelling of *Bogedone*. Ormerod says that the name Bowdon consists of two Saxon words *bow* 'a dwelling or an abode', and *don* or *dun* 'a plain on a hill', ie a down. Alternatively it may mean 'a hill by a bog'. Dodgson states that the name *Bogadun* means 'a curved hill' from Old English *boga*, 'a bend' or 'bow-shaped' and the form of the name may imply the re-use by Saxons of a Celtic site. Alternatively it could mean 'Beoga's hill or fort', Beoga being the name of a person

### **Bucklow (AS)**

The Altrincham area was in the Saxon hundred of *Bochelau* (Bucklow), held by Hamo de Masci who also held Bowdon, Hale etc, previously the manors of Alfward, the Saxon lord at Dunham. The Bucklow Hundred was one of twelve administrative divisions of the Palatine of Chester which had its own form of self-government until 1894. The hundreds were reduced from twelve to seven administration areas plus Chester by the Normans in the 12th century. The name Bucklow survived as a Rural District Council until 1974.

### **Davyhulme (D)**

Superficially, 'hulme' in the town name is from Old Danish *hulm*, 'land almost surrounded by water', should indicate a Danish or Norse township of Viking origin. However, Davyhulme Hall was built in the 12th century by the de Hulme family probably of French origin, so possibly not of Danish origin.



**Dunham (AS)**

There are several towns with this name in England. The manor in North Cheshire was held by the Saxon lord Alfward in 1066 until taken over by the de Masci family, becoming Dunham Massey. The name could mean 'the village near the hill or fortified site'. The name has been spelled many ways.

**Hale (AS)**

The name 'Hale' occurs all over England, the dative singular of the Saxon word for a nook or shelter - *halh* or *healh* - meaning 'at the nook or hiding place'; or from *leah*, a clearing in a wood. It is also Celtic meaning a marshy area growing willows, modern Welsh *helyg*, 'willows'; also 'flat land by a river'. It is unusual in retaining its Domesday Book spelling. Hale Village is now just south of Altrincham but was originally south of Chapel Lane, the area now called Hale Barns.

**Hale Moss (AS)**

An important feature of Hale was Hale Moss which originally extended from George Street, Altrincham eastwards to Green Lane, Timperley. Deep pools formed over clay deposits filled in over the centuries by mosses which had failed to decompose because of the acid conditions. For many generations Hale Moss was a source of turf, firewood and kindling, and was used as common grazing land by the Altrincham burgesses. The Twiggery and Cresswell Springs below Hale Road were the source of water flowing from the moss into Timperley Brook. In 1621 a channel was cut from here to take water to power Sir George Booth's 17<sup>th</sup> century mill at Dunham Hall and in the 18<sup>th</sup> century powered cotton spinning mills on Grosvenor Road. Two substantial brickworks grew up on Hale Moss because clay was available. Abraham Dean's claypit, round the King George's Pool area, was just outside Hale and later owned by James Hamilton, an Altrincham builder. The largest was Gibbon's brickworks, north of Grove Lane, now football pitches.

**Knutsford (D)**

Recorded in the Domesday Book as *Cunetesford*, perhaps 'Canute's ford'.

**Mersey (AS)**

The meaning is 'boundary river', probably a barrier between the Iron Age Brigantes tribe to the north and the Cornovii tribe to the south. It later formed the boundary between Lancashire and Cheshire.

**Oldfield [Brow] (AS)**

Probably the original open field in the Altrincham area, using very favourable south-west facing soils for which there is evidence of Bronze Age clearance and cultivation.

**Rostherne (N)**

The township has had more than twenty different spellings. The name is from Old Norse meaning 'Roth's thorn tree'. The church site dates from the 12th century and the present church is unusual in having dormer windows on the south side.

**Sale (AS)**

Literally the meaning is 'a place by willows', a likely site as it is on the banks of the River Mersey.

**Sinderland (AS)**

The meaning is 'land asunder', that is a separate piece of land from the main holding, or land shared. Also see Sunderland.

**Stretford (AS)**

The name means 'street ford', a reference to the Roman road crossing the River Mersey.

**Styal (AS)**

This is a corruption of 'East Hale'.

**Sugar Lane (AS)**

The old name for Ridgeway Road, Timperley. Sucar was a Saxon landholder recorded in the Domesday Book with a manor at Baggiley. Sugar Brook is in Ashley and perhaps there is a connection.

**Sunderland (AS)**

The meaning is 'land asunder', that is a separate piece of land from the main holding, or land shared. Also see Sinderland.

**Tatton (AS)**

*Tata's tun* meaning Tata's Farm, Tata being the name of a person.

**Timperley (AS)**

Ronald Broadhurst, an authority on Timperley, says that there have been numerous spellings of the township and spends several pages on its origin. He concludes that it means 'a sandstone outcrop at an open place in a wood'.

**Toft (D)**

This is of Danish and Norwegian origin and a local surname in Cheshire. There are nine 'toft' place names in eastern England and Cheshire. It means a homestead, farm, building site or curtilage, often on a hill.

**Urmston (N)**

This is partly a Norse name with an Anglo-Saxon ending meaning 'Orme's tun' or 'Orme's dwelling'.

**Warburton (AS)**

This may be named after a Saxon princess Saint Werburgh or may mean 'War's fortified town', *burgh* meaning a fort.

**Wilmslow (AS)**

Wilmslow derives its name from the Anglo-Saxon *Wighelmes hlaw*, meaning 'the burial mound of Wighelm'.

**Conclusions**

The area has been infiltrated many times, some of the invaders mainly leaving traces of their past presence in the form of place names, sometimes in the language and accents. In north Cheshire, there are a few Danish and Norse names in the south and west but most place names are of Anglo-Saxon origin.

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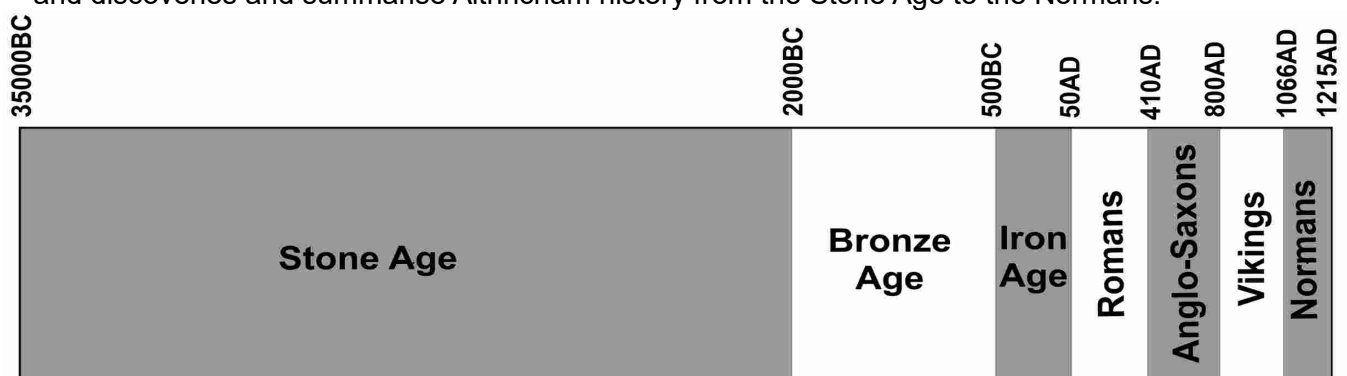
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# The History of the Altrincham Area

## Introduction

Evidence of early human activity in the area is inevitably limited by later developments as the Industrial Revolution brought population, buildings and social development. However, scattered over the whole area are archaeological remains from earliest times, while the position of roads along or around physical features such as sand ridges and mosses and hunting grounds, and tracks one from settlement to another, show how the landscape gradually changed. The origin of place names also gives clues to their history, so looking at maps tells us a great deal when interpreted by our understanding of the needs of our ancestors for food and water, wood for fire and shelter, clay for bricks and structures to enable the defence of strategic space.

In this article I show how the understanding of the history of the area is underpinned by its features and discoveries and summarise Altrincham history from the Stone Age to the Normans:



*Timescales from the Stone Age to the Normans*

## The Stone Age (35000-2000BC)

Areas relatively undisturbed by recent human activity are most likely to have clues of early man. The large parks of great houses such as Tatton and Dunham have provided this evidence. An early Stone Age flint factory dated about 8,000 BC was discovered in Tatton Park by Prof. Nick Higham. Stone Age hearths and post-holes have also been dated at Tatton as well as Bronze Age and Iron Age structures. Other significant finds have included a flint arrowhead and a blade near Dunham Hall. Flint tools have also been found in the Bollin Valley and Bronze Age and Roman finds were unearthed when Manchester Airport's Runway One was extended in the 1960s.

In the immediate Altrincham area, late Stone Age flint scrapers were found in a well in Victoria Street, Altrincham, at Timperley Old Hall off the Stockport Road, and at Oversley Ford Farm, Hale; and a flint arrowhead near Denmark Street, Altrincham. A Stone Age axe head of greenstone (jadeite) mined from a sacred site high up on Pike O'Stickle in Great Langdale in the Lake District, was found in 2001 near Altrincham. The other source of axes was Penmaenmawr, North Wales. Tarbolton suggested that Stone Age people may have constructed lake dwellings in Hale Moss for protection but his idea lacks evidence.

## The Bronze Age (2000BC-500BC)

Bronze Age activity in the Dunham area is indicated by a few burial mounds (round barrows) near Dunham Hall and Home Farm, in Dunham New Park and at Little Bollington. Late Neolithic and

early Bronze Age settlements were identified at the Little Bollington site. A bronze dagger found there in 2002 was radiocarbon dated to about 1485BC, and a Bronze Age stone hammer was discovered in 1957. In busy Broadheath, pollen analysis under the Roman Road indicated that timber was being cleared from Dunham during the Bronze Age. Further afield, the copper mines at Alderley Edge were dated to early Bronze Age, 2000BC by Manchester University, and were used by the Romans (see later).

The built-up suburban area of Hale Low just off Hale Road is believed to have been the site of a Bronze Age burial mound and perhaps the names Barrow Farm and Barrow Lane indicate a nearby barrow. A pollen analysis at Hale Moss showed Bronze Age habitation and points to cereals being grown there in the late Bronze Age.

### **The Iron Age (500-50AD)**

Evidence of local Iron Age settlement has been found in the River Bollin valley and in a few Celtic place names. When the Romans arrived in Britain in AD43, the Iron Age Brigantes tribe controlled much of the North including Lancashire and Cheshire in what was known as the southern Celtic Kingdom of Rheged. This probably included the Altrincham area, with the Cornovii tribe based further south in Cheshire and Shropshire. However, although there is little evidence of Iron Age occupation in Altrincham, photography has revealed evidence of several (circular) Iron Age farmsteads in the Bollin valley. There is an Iron Age site in Tatton Park and there were some finds at Warburton in 2002. 'Lindow Man' dated to 2BC to 119AD was found preserved in peat at Lindow Common in 1984. He had manicured fingernails and his stomach contained traces of mistletoe, a plant sacred to the Celts. When the Romans arrived in Britain in AD43, the Iron Age Celts (British, Cornish, Welsh and Picts) occupied all of Britain. When the Romans left Britain in AD410 after the fall of Rome to the Visigoths, the Celts were still in the Altrincham area and were here up to the Saxon invasions in the 5th century.

Celtic place names in the surrounding area also hint at settlement. They include Eccles (Welsh *eglwys*, church), possibly the River Bollin (Welsh *Lyn*, a lake) and Hollow Bonk, the old name for the Kingsway, Altrincham area. Bonc or bong is from Welsh *ponc* or *bonc*, a small hill or bank and occurs as 'The Bongs' at Lymm, Warrington, Tabley, Stockport and Goostree. Cheadle, Culcheth (Welsh *coed*, a wood), Mellor, Crewe, Tarvin, Peover, and Bryn near Wigan are also Celtic names. Mam Tor in the Peak District is Celtic, as is Goyt (River) from the Welsh *gwyth*, a channel. Nantwich, Penketh and Pendlebury may be partly Celtic names. The Celtic language is still used in northern England for counting sheep, especially in the Lake District but formerly all over England. 'Yan, Tan, Tethera' (up to 20) is 'one, two, three' in Derbyshire and has some similarities to modern Welsh.

### **The Romans (43AD-410AD)**

Altrincham lies just east of the major Roman road from Chester to Manchester which has been excavated in Broadheath and Mark Olly has detected a possible villa at Ashley from aerial photos. The road was first excavated in Oldfield Brow in 1964 by North Cestrian Grammar School on their playing fields and then in 1995/96 by the University of Manchester Archaeological Unit which found evidence of Bronze Age occupation underneath. The road is known locally as Watling Street and the use of the name 'Street' often implies a refurbished Roman road. It passes through Dunham Forest where local information says that, before the golf course was constructed, there was a mound that may have been a temporary Roman camp. Although most of the area boundaries have changed, a part of the original Altrincham/Dunham boundary from Oldfield Brow to Broadheath still follows the Roman road. The house Two Gates on Oldfield Road in Oldfield Brow and the footpath on to Norman Road and Davenport Lane, Broadheath are on the line of the

Roman road. It is likely that the Altrincham area had been marked out by Roman surveyors and this may have influenced later development.

Oats and barley were probably grown in the area to help support the local Roman population. 2,459 Roman coins were found in 1957 at Wolstencroft Farm, Dunham (the Agden Hoard) and many have been found around Warrington. Roman coins were also found at Ashley Heath and near the Dunham Road in Bowdon, and a hoard was said to have been found on Langham Road below the church but is undocumented and lost.

There is evidence of a Roman iron works near Ashley Hall, probably using the iron-rich sand in the area. The Romans smelted iron and bronze at Wilderspool, Warrington and produced glass and pottery. They may have also smelted lead there which could have come from Alderley Edge where Roman coins were found in the mines. Nevell found evidence for Roman lead and copper workings as well as Bronze Age for ores to be smelted which were probably carried to Wilderspool using boats from Warburton or Thelwall. Lead water pipes were used in Roman Chester.

Evidence has also been found of a Roman road to the south and west of Dunham, and between Rostherne and Tatton there is a demolished Tudor village known as Camp Green, possibly originally a temporary Roman camp. Watkin believed a secondary Roman road ran from Warrington (a major crossing of the Mersey) through Warburton and Bowdon to Ringway and Wilmslow, evidenced by a Roman coin found at Bowdon. *The New Historical Atlas of Cheshire* and *The Archaeology of Trafford* both confirm a Roman road from Watling Street to Ringway and beyond. Another investigator found evidence for such a road from Warrington through Lymm, across the Bollin at Bollington Mill and through Dunham Home Park and the New Park to join Watling Street opposite to Green Walk.

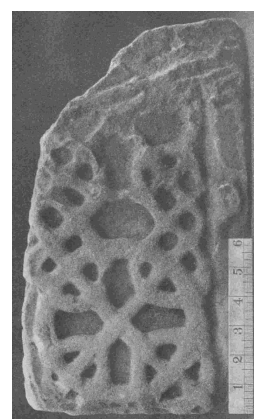
It would be logical to speculate that the height of Hale Road above the surrounding mosses would make an ideal trackway for Neolithic, Bronze Age and Iron Age settlers as well as for the Romans, but there is little evidence. Watkin was more certain that a secondary Roman road ran from the St. Margaret's Church area of Dunham Road and along Hale Road where Roman coins have been found. Second century AD Samian Ware and possible Roman tiles were found in the 19th century on the site of St. Ambrose College, Hale Barns. Samian Ware is named after the Greek island of Samos and is a high quality red-painted pottery from southern France. It is usually associated with Roman occupation and adopted by the richer Romanised British inhabitants.

A field near St. Ambrose College was called Wall Field, maybe indicating a Roman villa or a small Roman camp on the levelled ground. A Roman coin was found on the site of the forge in Hale Barns in early 2004. Wicker Lane nearby used to be called Wall Lane which may be from Old English *weall*, Latin *vallum*, a stockade but wall may also be from Old English *waella*, 'to boil'; hence a spring (the salt boilers at Northwich were known as *wallers*).

South Trafford Archaeology Group believe that there may be Roman road remains beneath Ringway Golf Course east of the clubhouse. Two fields between Hasty Lane and Warburton Green are called Nearer & Further Stratton Fields, which may indicate *street tun*, 'a farm by a Roman road'.

### Anglo-Saxons (390AD-800AD)

Anglo/Saxons settled in south-eastern England even before the Romans came and locally the evidence is in place names and some stonework at Bowdon Church. The Celts were probably still in the area when Anglo-



*Fragment of Saxon cross in Bowdon Church (JJ Phelps)*

Saxons invaded from Friesland in northern Holland where they spoke a language closely related to Old English. They initially settled about 460AD in what is now East Anglia and spread very rapidly. The local population gradually absorbed their dress, ways of life and language to form the basis of English and the Celtic language was gradually lost in Cheshire. The Saxon kingdom of Mercia extended south from the Mersey north of which was the Saxon kingdom of Northumbria.

Most of the remaining names such as Altrincham, Bowdon, Hale and Ringway are Saxon going back to the 6<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> century and Old Market Place, Altrincham was probably settled at this time. Fragments of Saxon and Norman crosses exist in Bowdon Church and it is then that the first church may have been built on the site. A Saxon coin was found in the churchyard.

### **Danish Vikings (800AD-1066AD)**

From the mid-9<sup>th</sup> century Danes moved in from the east and south-east and occupied east Cheshire where there are many stone carvings linked to their presence and Danish place names such as Toft, Knutsford and Davyhulme. In 886 King Alfred and the Danes agreed that the area north of a line from London to Chester along Watling Street (and probably on to Manchester) and with its centre at York, became part of the Danelaw. South of the line was Mercia with its capital at Tamworth, and Wessex. Alfred later managed to push the Danelaw line north to a line from the Mersey to the Wash. People on the Pennines and eastwards still show strong Danish characteristics and their accent, especially north of the Humber, is influenced by Old Norse. Kettleshulme, Derbyshire is a good Danish or Norse place name meaning 'a watery area with kettle holes'. The Danes introduced low alcohol ale (Danish *ol*) to replace drinking water, which was a way of helping to sterilise water and less likely to cause sickness, and was drunk by all including women and children. As a result of this Europeans have a better tolerance of alcohol than Oriental people who were brought up on tea. Hops to make beer were introduced from the continent about 1550.

### **Norse Vikings (900AD-1066AD)**

Norse people (Norwegians) came into the Wirral area via Dublin and the Isle of Man from the late 9<sup>th</sup> century and left Norse place names. In 902AD Vikings were expelled from Dublin by the Irish and attacked along the Mersey valley. Norse settled on the Wirral and formed separate villages from the Danes. A good Norse name on the Wirral is Thingwall from Norse *Thingvallr*, meaning Parliament Field. They settled roughly up to Chester and the Mersey valley and some of its tributaries (eg Rostherne, Birkin (Brook) and Urms(ton) are Norse). The Bollin Valley may have become a dividing line between the Danish northern kingdom and the southern Saxon kingdom at this time but by 1016 the Danish King Canute was ruling all of England.

### **The Normans (1066-1215)**

Cheshire was the last English county to fall to the Normans who came over the Pennines from York to Chester in the winter of 1069-70, laying waste a swathe of Yorkshire, Lancashire and Cheshire, probably using the Roman road and thus passing through Dunham. At that time Lancashire south of the Ribble and Cheshire was part of Northumbria. From about 1070, the Norman Mascis settled in the Dunham area on land previously belonging to the Saxon lord Aelfweard. It is not certain whether the Mascis came over from Normandy as one of William's 300 or so Companions or soon after. They also received lands in North Wales, Buckinghamshire, Hampshire and Wiltshire, deliberately spread to minimise the risk of rebellion.

Hilda Bayliss thought that the name Masci (or Maci) originated from the village of Maci (now Macey) in Normandy near Mont St. Michel and Avranches (there are four other Macis in Normandy)

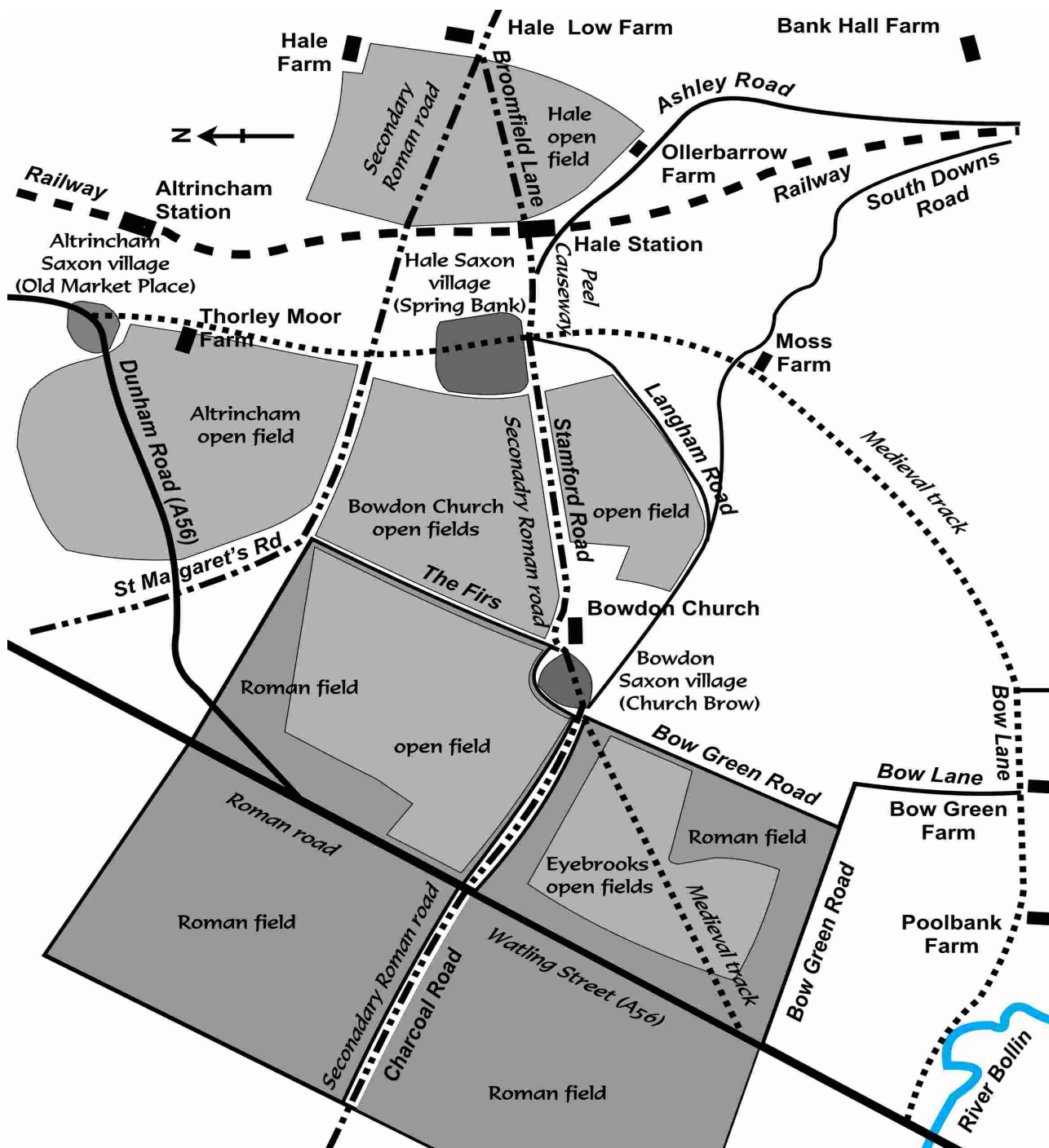
since the first Hamo de Maci married a woman from a nearby village. Norman castles were built in the 12th century at Castle Hill, Ringway and at Castle Hill (also known as Watch Hill or Yarwood Castle), Bowdon, the remains of which can still be seen near Newbridge Hollow where the A56 crosses the River Bollin. However Mark Olly thought it likely that Watch Hill was of Romano-British origin. The main branch of the local Masseys died out in the mid-14<sup>th</sup> century with the related Venables taking over and then the related Booths in the mid-15<sup>th</sup> century.

## **The Domesday Book**

Dunham, Bowdon and Hale are mentioned in the 1086 Domesday Book but Altrincham is not and was probably part of Bowdon, Hale or Dunham at that time. Dunham was in the Saxon hundred of *Bochelau* (Bucklow), held by Hamo de Masci who also held Dunham, Bowdon, etc, previously the manors of the Saxon Alfweard (or Alweard, Elweard, Eluard or Elward), based at Dunham. *Weard* in Old English means 'successor'. Many other estates in the area are listed as waste following the retributions of 1069/70. The Bucklow Hundred was one of 12 administrative divisions of the Palatine of Chester which had its own form of self-government until 1894, as did Lancashire. The gentry of Cheshire owed their allegiance to the Crown. The hundreds were reduced to seven plus Chester by the Normans in the 12th century. The name Bucklow survived as a Rural District Council until 1974. In 1086 there may have been perhaps 50 people living in the whole of the Altrincham area. What became part of Lancashire at this time was valued at £150 (Cheshire would probably be similar) whilst Essex was valued at £4,500, indicating an extreme north/south divide.

One of the oldest habitations remaining in the area is Moss Farm, South Downs Road, Bowdon, dated around 1500. Originally it, and Moss Cottage opposite, would have had an earthen floor, as did the original thatched Bow Green Farm, north of West Bank Farm at the northern end of Bow Lane, now demolished.





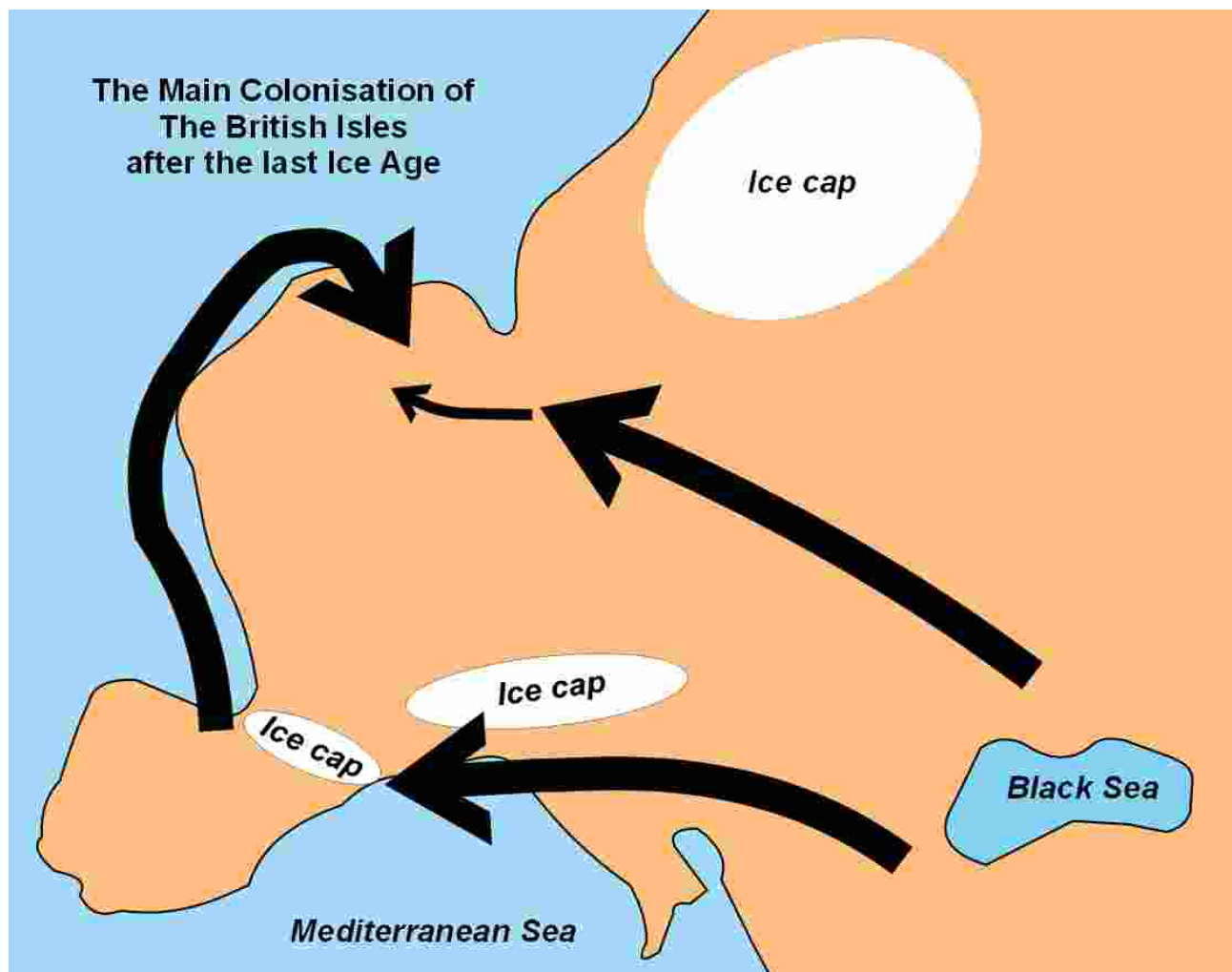
The likely sites of Roman fields, Roman roads, Saxon villages, Medieval tracks and open fields in the Altrincham area.

# The Dutch Origins of English People

## Background

Oppenheimer has extensively researched migrations to Britain in the last 15,000 years. DNA records show that, after the last Ice Age and before farming, stone Age hunter-gatherer Celts migrated from the Black Sea area mainly through Spain, the Basque Country and France, rather than through the Netherlands, bringing their Celtic language with them. They originally occupied a substantial area east of the Alps but also extending east into Turkey.

The language is no longer spoken in the east and the Celtic languages became confined to the west of Europe: Welsh, Breton (from Welsh immigrants), Cornish, Irish, Scottish Gaelic, Manx.



In Altrincham History Society (AHS) Journal 43, I outlined the origin of place names in North Cheshire which derived from Middle English, itself deriving from Old English with additions from Celtic, Latin, Danish and Norse. Examples are: Celtic (penguin), Latin (etc), French (bureau), Dutch (yacht), German (kindergarten), Danish (bairn), Norse (egg). English, Dutch, German, Danish and Norse are all Germanic languages.

Here I want to go into more depth about the origins of English as spoken in the 5th century after the Romans left the British Isles, and the origins of English people.

Old English was spoken at that time in England (except Cornwall where Cornish prevailed until the 18th century) and in southern Scotland. Its use was associated with the invasion of Anglo-Saxon people, particularly from Friesland in what is now the north-western Netherlands. Modern English is more akin to Frisian than to Dutch or German.

Before Old English was adopted in England and Southern Scotland, the local language was Celtic (Welsh), with the upper classes using Latin and, after the Normans arrived, French.

An example of Old English is *Ofer Hron Rade* which literally means "Over the Whale's Road" i.e. "over the sea". Originally Old English was written in a Runic alphabet, but the Latin alphabet was adopted from the 8th century.

### **Anglo-Saxon place names around Altrincham**

Anglo-Saxons initially settled in what is now East Anglia in about 460AD and spread very rapidly. They came from the Netherlands (particularly Frisia), Germany and Denmark. The local population gradually absorbed their dress, culture and language to form the basis of English, and the Welsh language was gradually lost in Cheshire. Most of the remaining place names such as Altrincham, Bowdon, Hale and Ringway are Anglo-Saxon going back to the 6th/8th centuries.

### **Local River Names**

The nearest river to Altrincham is the Bollin with the Birkin flowing into it from Rostherne Lake, and the Mersey to the west and north. Some of these rivers have Anglo-Saxon origins but also Celtic and Norse from when the Vikings invaded the Liverpool area from Ireland and settled up rivers flowing into the Mersey, taking their 'Scouse' accent and words with them into Warrington and Salford.

History books suggest that the name 'Bollin' may derive from Old English *bol* (eel) and *hlynn* (water) or Celtic *llyn* (water); alternatively it may be a mutation of Celtic *felin* or *melin*, a mill, i.e. a mill river. Historians struggle with the origin of the word 'Birkin' but I think it means Birch trees river, from Norse. The word 'Mersey' means 'boundary river', probably a barrier between the Iron Age Brigantes tribe to the north and the Cornovii tribe to the south. It later formed the boundary between Lancashire and Cheshire. The word is formed from Old English *maeres*, a boundary and *ea*, a river.

The Old Frisian language was closely related to Old English. You can see some of the differences

and similarities between English, West Frisian, Old English, German and Welsh in this table:

Number	English	West Frisian	Old English	German	Welsh
1	One	Ien	Ān	Eins	Un
2	Two	Twa	Tpēgen	Zwei	Dau
3	Three	Trije	Pri	Drei	Tri
4	Four	Fjouwer	Fēoper	Vier	Pedwar
5	Five	Fiif	Fīf	Fünf	Pump
6	Six	Seis	Siex	Sechs	Chwech
7	Seven	Sân	Seofon	Sieben	Saith
8	Eight	Acht	Eahta	Acht	Wyth
9	Nine	Njoggen	Nigon	Neun	Naw
10	Ten	Tsien	Tien	Zehn	Deg

### Friesland today

Friesland or Frisia (*Fryslân* in Frisian) lies sixty miles north-east of Amsterdam with the German border to its north-east. It literally means a narrow strip (a frieze) of land, referring to the islands off-shore, and the main Frisian-speaking area. The Old Frisian language was closely related to Old English and modern West Frisian is accepted as an official language in Holland and is taught in schools. Its capital and seat of provincial government is the city of Leewarden (*Ljouwert* in West Frisian). Northern Frisian containing German words is spoken in parts of north-west Germany and Denmark.

There is also a dialect known as *Bildts* which is a mixture of Friesian and Dutch, spoken by about 10,000 people in the area around Het Bildt in the north-west of Friesland.

Other than Leewarden, there are ten other cities, all connected by canal and famous for ice-skating events, and many large lakes and several national parks. Friesland is about the size of Cheshire and has a population of about 660,000. A phrase in modern Frisian is *Hot giet it* literally meaning 'How goes it' or 'How are you'.

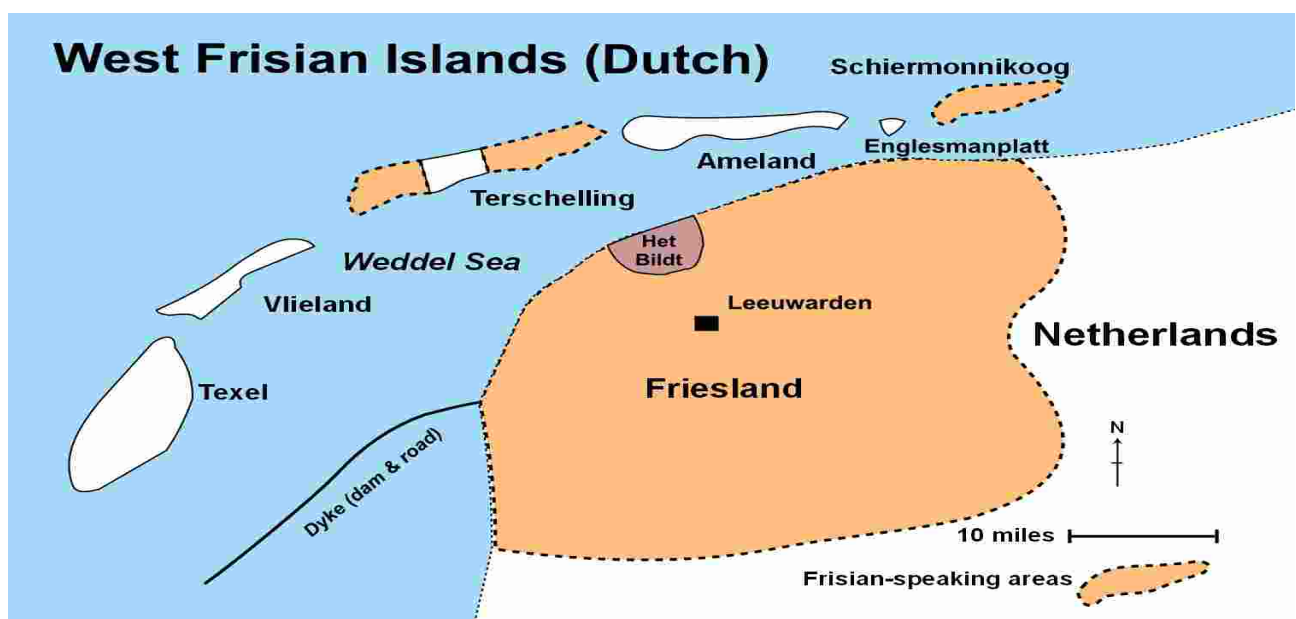
Frisia is famous world-wide for its outstanding black and white dairy cattle grazing the rich grass on the fertile ground, and its black horses.

## West Frisian Islands

About fifty sandy islands are strung out between the North Sea and the very shallow Weddel Sea. In Dutch the sea is known as *het Wad*, 'the ford' or *de Waddenzee*, and is shallow enough to wade across at low tide. It is said that you feel as though you are floating when half way across. The sea stretches from north-western Holland, through north-west Germany to Denmark, which and the islands protect the mainland. About half of the islands are inhabited.

A 20-mile dam with a four-lane road, the A7, called the "*Afsluitdijk*", crosses the southern end of the Weddel Sea, connecting the Friesland area to Amsterdam. This was part of a major reclamation of fresh water built in 1932 and has locks at each end for shipping.

Weddel Sea Islands	Inhabited	Uninhabited	Total	Notes
Dutch	5	10	15	West Frisian Islands
German	14	15	29	
Danish	3	2	5	Causeways to some; many tiny isles
Totals	22	27	49	



## West Frisian Islands

The shallow sea between the islands and the mainland is called the Weddel Sea. *Weddel* may mean 'Secure Valley', because of the sea's shallow nature. The islands in the Dutch section of the Weddel Sea Islands are called the West Frisian Islands which are between 6 feet and 20 feet above mean sea level.

There are two varieties of Frisian dialects on the mainland and three on the islands. The dialects spoken on the islands are not mutually understood but many speak Dutch as well.

The main islands are (with the West Frisian spelling in brackets):-

**Texel** The largest island in the Dutch group with the largest population and famous for its Texel sheep producing excellent lamb. It means 'southern island' in both Frisian and Dutch and has its own Dutch dialect called *Texelsch*.

**Vlieland** (Flyân) Sparsely populated at 2,000 with one village with its own Frisian dialect *Vlielandisch* and is subject to shifting sands.

**Terschelling** (Skylge) Literally 'On the Shilling' and well known for growing cranberries and tourism. A West Frisian-speaking area with eastern and western Frisian dialects (*Aasters*, *Westers*) and a central Dutch dialect (*Midlandisch*). It has a population about 5,000.

**Ameland** (Amelân) Four villages, population 2000 with its own Dutch dialect *Amelandisch*, and shifting sands.

**Englesmanplatt** Which sounds like 'Englishman's land' but is uninhabited and is a nature reserve, occasionally covered by a very high tide.

**Schiermonnikoog** (Skiermûntseach) Which means "grey monks island". The Cistercian monks are still there in their monastery founded in 1883, elevated to an abbey in 1935. They have a guest house and a farm. The island has about 1,000 residents, one village and tourism. It is a West Frisian-speaking area with its own dialect called Schiermonnikoogisch.. It is said to be the most beautiful island in the Netherlands, and is a National Park known for its pristine nature and is a paradise for bird enthusiasts.

## Sources & acknowledgments

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## Altrincham History

Altrincham is a settlement just off the Roman road from Chester to Manchester in an area that had seventh-century Anglo-Saxons settlers to the south, ninth-century Danes from the east, and tenth-century Norse (Norwegian) settlers from the Isle of Man and Ireland to the west. Existing Britons (Celts) probably integrated with the newcomers.

The name Altrincham is Old English meaning 'the homestead of Aldhere's people' from *inga* a group of people and *ham* a homestead, village or estate. It probably has 7th century origins from the early form of the name. It has been spelled about 15 different ways since AD1290, including *Aldheringaham*. Although there may have been a small Saxon settlement in Old Market Place, Altrincham may

have been carved out from one or more adjacent Saxon manors. Prof. Geoffrey Barker in his BHS booklet *A History of Early Bowdon* suggests the name 'Altrincham' may be a corruption of Altretune, a lost settlement of Hale. Interestingly, Aldringham in Suffolk was spelled *Alrincham* in the Domesday Book, possible the same Saxon name origin as Altrincham.

The name of the town was spelled *Altringham* up to about 1800 at which time the 'c' spelling began to be adopted and both spellings were used until the 1930s. It was pronounced *Awtrigem* or *Awtringeam* in the nineteenth century and currently the 'c' in Altrincham is pronounced as a 'g' and outsiders often spell it as such.

According to Don Bayliss in *Altrincham, a History*, over the centuries Altrincham has been:

- An early Saxon village
- A medieval planned borough
- A coaching town in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries
- A canal town from 1765
- A market gardening town from at least 1799
- A factory town from 1780 to 1840
- A world-renowned machine tool producer from 1885 to the 1970s.

During this time the town centre was rebuilt four times. The alignments of Market Street, George Street, Shaw's Road and Regent Road were probably laid out with the medieval borough. Market Street and George Street are also parallel to the Roman road, with Regent Road and Shaw's Road at right angles. A grid pattern was common in towns created in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries but it is conceivable that there is Roman planning influence. The outer boundary of the borough may reflect Anglo-Saxon or medieval field boundaries in the area which themselves may have replaced Roman ones. The Anglo-Saxon settlement was probably established in the Old Market



*Altrincham Market House or Hall built in 1879 by Martin Stone who later built the Town Hall. It is listed and has a blue plaque commemorating the origins of the market in Old Market Place in 1290. The open market at the side and back was glazed over in 1930 and the Saturday market started in 1932.*



Place by the 7th century and the lines of High Bank and Albert Place at the back of Old Market Place may date from that time. The town later expanded to the George Street area.

A Royal Charter for a market and fair was sealed by Edward I in 1290 and this was followed by the lord of the manor, Baron Hamo de Masci V's own Borough Charter which created Altrincham as a borough. Altrincham as a planned medieval 'new' town was probably carved from the manors of Hale, Bowdon and Dunham by the Barons of Dunham Massey to replace the ancient Saxon village and fields. Hamo's object was to improve his finances through more opportunities for local taxes and, no doubt, to improve his standing among other local nobles. The royal charter included the right to hold a Tuesday market and a fair on the Feast of the Assumption (15th August). The Tuesday market is still held and later Friday and Saturday markets were introduced. The Charter made Altrincham a free borough under the Dunham lordship. It is thought that the nearby Roman road which passes on its way from Chester to Manchester may have been deliberately closed at that time by Hamo de Massey to divert traffic through Altrincham to increase local trade in Old Market Place, Altrincham became one of 12 market towns in Cheshire.

The date of the fair was changed in 1319 to the Feast of St. James (25th July) and became known as 'Sanjam Fair'. This was held until 1895 when it was condemned as a nuisance, probably because of too much drinking. The Court of Pie Powder administered instant justice at markets and fairs and settled disputes on the spot. The name is a corruption of Old French *pieds poudreux* meaning 'dusty feet', describing itinerant traders who were instantly identifiable from their feet.

The town was administered first by a merchant guild court or *port mote* appropriate to a trading town. In the fifteenth century this changed to a Court Leet, common across England. The Court Leet had to administrate the town and oversee the local law. The court had important meetings called *View of Frankpledge* to reaffirm their responsibilities twice a year and also met every three weeks to administer a petty offences court. The officers of the court had many different responsibilities. Highways and footpaths were monitored by surveyors; commons by common lookers; impounding stray animals by pinders; testing ale quality by ale tasters who also checked bread quality; corn, flesh and fish quality by market lookers; cattle and swine lookers; water supplies by pump and well lookers; and fire prevention by chimney lookers.

The Court Leet was also responsible for controlling poaching, muzzling fierce dogs, weights & measures, scavengers and leather curing, as well as Court Bailiffs and the Town Crier. The chief paid office was the bailiff or steward. The other officers were unpaid and the Court Leet itself reported to the Quarter Sessions where Justices of the Peace presided. Constables were active in Altrincham until 1856 when they were replaced by a police force. The Court Leet was also responsible for keeping the boundaries of Altrincham defined and used to 'beat the bounds' each year with willow twigs. The last official beating took place in 1921 and was recorded by photographs, just after the the Altrincham/Dunham Massey boundary was changed to allow Altrincham to expand.

The Court Leet appointed the mayor up to 1937. The list of mayors from 1452 survives, the first two being Masseys and the last being Raymond Littler in 1973. However Don Bayliss has identified a mayor in a Dunham Massey estate survey of 1348. Sir Walter Scott quoted an old derogatory saying about some of the mayors: "*I am like the Mayor of Altrincham, who lies in bed while his breeches are mending.*"

Following the wish of Roger Grey, the last Earl of Stamford, the Court Leet was revived as a ceremonial institution in 1977. Today the beating of the bounds takes place on the second Sunday in July, following boundary markers. The Court Leet also carries out the other duties listed above and meets regularly to present reports on the town's management of everyday activities in the current day, thus continuing its ancient tradition.

The borough charter created burgesses who were freemen of the town. Burgesses had a house

on a burgage plot and held a Cheshire acre strip (about 2.1 statutory acres) in the town field which was to the northwest and southwest of the original small built-up part of the borough. Burgesses were tradesmen or tradeswomen, often with farming interests, who fixed and agreed tolls and trading arrangements with the lord of the manor. The burgesses used Hale Moss for grazing and turf cutting. Burgage plots existed down both sides of the curved part of Church Street and buildings still sit here on these plots such as The Old Market Tavern, the Old Town Hall and the shops opposite. Plots also existed on both sides of Market Street and George Street. Burgage plots in Altrincham were two perches by five, ie 33 feet wide by 82½ feet deep. Double, one-and-a-half, and those of a half, quarter or one third of an original burgage also existed. In the town's early years, besides freemen, there were also a number of unfree men.

In 1348-49 the Black Death affected the area and the population was reduced from a peak of about 650 people in 1300 down to two thirds or less. It is likely that some burgage plots were abandoned or combined with others at this time. By 1700 the population had returned to about 500 and by 1801 there were 1692 people.

The first lords of Dunham Massey, the de Mascis, recruited men from Altrincham as soldiers fighting the wars against Wales in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Altrincham men fought for the Parliamentarian Sir George Booth in the Civil Wars. It is recorded in the Transactions of the Lancashire & Cheshire Antiquarian Society Vol.72, 1962 that there may have been a Battle of Bowdon Hill on Bowdon Downs in the Civil War:

*"On Thursday XXth Marche, 1644 Colonel Brereton with his forces held his Rendezvous on Knottesford Heath and on Bowdon Downes: and thether the Scots havinge marched, joyned with them beinge in number fyve thousand or thereabouts."*

However the article concludes that this may have been a confusion with Boldon in Northumberland. Nearby actions were the siege of Manchester in 1642 when the roads were blocked with earthen barricades; the siege of Wythenshawe Hall in 1643 when a few Altrincham and Hale men were in the Royalist garrison; a skirmish at Davenport Green; and battles at Warrington, Tarporley, Middlewich, Nantwich and Knutsford.

Prince Rupert camped on Bowdon Downs with an army of 10,000 in May 1644 on his way from Shrewsbury to Stockport, Manchester, Bolton, Liverpool and on to the Battle of Marston Moor on 2<sup>nd</sup> July.

In 1621 Altrincham was described by Webb as "*a fine little market town*" but in 1666 was described by the Cheshire historian Sir Peter Leycester as "*a nest of beggars*", possibly because the Booths allowed cottagers to settle on unused land or the economy was run down. Thomas de Quincey, who spent his childhood in Manchester and wrote *Confessions of an Opium Eater*, passed through on a market day in the summer of 1814 and was "*delighted by the gaiety of the scene.*" Celia Fiennes was the foremost female travel writer of her day and passed through Altrincham in 1689, referring to The Bowdon Downs (from the present Ashley Road north to the Dunham Road) as 'champion ground', referring to unenclosed fields.

The town was rebuilt in the seventeenth century, wooden buildings replaced by brick in the late eighteenth century with the building of the Bridgewater Canal and increased wealth. By the early nineteenth century the town was divided into Higher Town around Old Market Place where trade was carried on and people lived, and Lower Town where artisans lived which was the rest including George Street, Goose Green, Pinfold Brow (Lloyd Street), Albert Street, Chapel Street and Norman's Place. Getting goods from Higher Town to George Street was not easy because of the steep bank between them known as Hollow Bonk or Hollow Bank.

Pig farming had been important in the district since the fourteenth century and even in the late nineteenth century there were forty piggeries in Altrincham, as well as eight farms and many

stables. Cattle were also reared for meat, milk and cheese and there was at least one shippon in the middle of the town at that time. By the late eighteenth century the Altrincham and Timperley areas were also noted for their market gardens, especially for onions, carrots (Altrincham Carrot), celery, lettuce, rhubarb (Timperley Early) and later on potatoes (Bowdon Downs) and strawberries. The Altrincham Carrot grew up to a metre long in sandy soil. In 1851 there were 16 square miles of market gardens around Altrincham and eight tons of onion seed and potatoes were being sown per year. In 1910 there were 157 market garden businesses in the Altrincham and Sale area. The Bridgewater Canal was extended to Altrincham in 1765 and barge transport enabled produce to be sold in Manchester, the first industrial city in the world and expanding rapidly. Commuting to Manchester also took place by canal and road, before the coming of the railways. From the late 1830s high quality suburban housing was developed for the cotton manufacturers of Manchester who found the area desirable to live in away from the smoky city.

Spinning and weaving of wool, worsteds and cottons took place in Altrincham, including handloom weaving from the mid-eighteenth century then in cotton mills from 1775. In the mid-eighteenth century one of the major occupations was woolcombing by hand. In 1793 the principle manufacturing in Altrincham was still quoted as worsted yarn and worsted cloth. Cheaper wool imports from Ireland caused their downfall and they were replaced by cotton spinning. By 1800 there were five cotton mills and the number of inhabitants had increased to about 1700. Local cotton mills were hit by competition with Manchester and they closed in the 1840s, which may have led to a resurgence of home weaving by redundant spinners and weavers. Manchester itself was hit by the cotton famine of the 1860s because of the American Civil War.

Silk weaving also took place in a number of houses in the nineteenth century. The finished articles from Altrincham would be small braid such as ribbon. The silk yarn would have been obtained from Macclesfield. The industry peaked in the 1830s and from 1870 it began to suffer from competition from abroad and from the development of artificial fibres.

A Wesleyan Chapel opened in 1788 in Chapel Walk, now Regent Road and is still remembered by the Chapel Street road sign. St. George's Church of England was built in 1799 in what became Church Street as a chapel-of-ease to St. Mary's Church, Bowdon. The first incumbent was Oswald Leicester who had started the first Sunday school in the county in a cottage in Thorley Moor Lane, now Ashley Road.

The building of substantial houses started in the late 1830s when the Earl of Stamford sold off land in Bowdon. The railways responded to this by building the first commuter line in the North West to Altrincham which opened in 1849.

Some improvement of town administration came with the Town's Meeting, which started in the eighteenth century and assisted the Court Leet with policing, roads, and health matters, and employed an Overseer of the Poor. The Vestry of St. George's also assisted with administration. Following cholera, typhus and dysentery outbreaks in the 1840s, the Board of Health was formed in 1851 but it was the 1880s before Altrincham became a much healthier place to live. The Board of Health took over the duties of the Town's Meeting and the Court Leet, leading to the Court Leet becoming ceremonial apart from electing the mayor. The Board authorised the production of 15 large scale accurate plans of Altrincham with an accompanying Book of Reference, which enabled health planning to be carried out and the rating of all properties. It was detailed enough to show slop-stones in back yards. Work started on clean water supplies and sanitation and by the late 1870s most new houses were built with a water supply, an outside water closet, drainage and a gas supply.

The duty on beer was discontinued in 1830 and this enabled anyone to brew. By 1850 there were eight pubs but no proper water supply or sanitation for most people in the town centre. By 1879 there were about 200 places licenced to sell alcohol in Altrincham. Even in 1960 beer was just 1s (5p) a pint. In the north of England in later Victorian times there was a big movement towards

teetotalism and a teetotal pub was opened at the corner of Lloyd Street and Ashley Road.

Altrincham became a Local Board of Health in 1851, an Urban Sanitary District in 1884, an Urban District Council in 1894, a Municipal Borough Council in 1937, and part of Trafford Metropolitan Borough on its creation in 1974.

Altrincham Urban District Council was formed in 1894 and met in the Old Town Hall, Old Market Place until 1900, taking over the duties of the Board of Health. The Town Hall in Market Street dates from 1900 with an extension of 1930, refurbished in 2006.

Bull and bear baiting, dog and rat fighting, and cock fighting were still taking place in the 1830s, as well as bare fist fighting. The town Wakes led to two early racecourses being built, one remembered by Racecourse Road. Altrincham has a successful football team which was formed in 1891 as a Broadheath Sunday School team, now called The Robins. The town had early theatres, a music hall and cinemas. The oldest amateur theatre is the Club Theatre (now the Little Theatre) which was established in 1896 as the St. Margaret's Church Institute Amateur Dramatic Society. The Garrick started in 1913 in a cellar on Kingsway and erected the Playhouse on Barrington Road in 1932, the first purpose-built amateur theatre in Britain. The first full time cinema was at The Central Theatre in Shaw's Road in 1907 and later there were four other cinemas: The Hippodrome, The Picture Theatre, The Regal and Hale Cinema now all demolished. The town now has two modern cinemas and an ice rink opened in 2006.

The Altrincham Agricultural Show first met behind The Swan at Little Bollington, then later on a field now Groby Road, Altrincham, then on The Devisdale, Bowdon. It ran from 1861 to 1966 and farmers came from as far afield as Scotland, Cornwall and Norfolk to show cattle at what was known as the Altrincham Show, the biggest one-day agricultural show in the country. The Altrincham Carnival was held from 1924 to 1932 and Altrincham Festival started in 1977, the year of the Queen's Silver Jubilee.

Early industry developed along the Bridgewater Canal, including workshops and warehousing in the 1830s but then an industrial area known worldwide began to evolve from 1884 as Broadheath, before the development of Trafford Park. Famous names, mainly in engineering, included George Richards (machine tools, especially very large vertical borers), Thornton-Pickard (cameras), Luke & Spencer (grinding wheels), Tilghmans (shot-blasting machinery), Linotype (typesetting machinery), Kearns (machine tools, especially horizontal borers), Budenbergs (pressure gauges) and Churchills (precision grinding). They brought much work to the area, with up to 12,000 employed at the peak of about 1960 before collapsing in the mid-1970s. Today the former industrial area is partly a retail and business park.

Seamons Moss Endowed School was established in Oldfield Brow in 1764 by the will of Thomas Walton, Dunham Woodhouses salt-master, and closed in 1938. It took boys from eight to eleven initially, later to fourteen or older if going to university. The school set high standards and, as well as the usual subjects, it taught Greek, Latin and accounting. The two modern Altrincham Grammar Schools also have an excellent academic record, the Girls opening in 1910 and the Boys in 1912.

Frank and Bill Brierley lived all of their 90-odd years in Altrincham and related that, before WWII, Altrincham was known as 'Thrutcham' and Newtown was known as 'Cally'. Thrutcham is quoted in the 1885 book by Robert Holland.

## Bowdon History

Bowdon Hill is part of a glacial sand ridge extending from Warburton to Ringway and could have been important even in Neolithic times due to its height on a sandy ridge above the plain, the easily-worked land, its south-facing slopes and plentiful water supplies from springs.

A major Roman road from Chester to Manchester, known locally as Watling Street, runs partly on the line of the Chester Road to the west and has been excavated in Oldfield Brow and Broadheath. There may also be a minor Roman road or track running from Two Gates in Oldfield Brow past St. Margaret's Church and along Hale Road to Ringway, and probably another from Street Head Cottages on the Dunham Road past Bowdon Church and down Stamford Road and up Broomfield Lane to join the other on Hale Road.



*The thatched Moss Cottage on South Downs Road is listed and has the inscription 'RL 1666 HL' over the door. It was built by Robert and Helen Lewis of Moss Farm for farm labourers and is a rare example of an inscribed timber-framed building in the area. A second separate cottage originally existed at right angles on the northwest side.*

Bowdon covers 828 statute acres and was probably settled by Saxons as a village in the 7th century. According to the Domesday Book there was a mill at Bowdon in 1086 but it is not certain where this was but probably where the river divides below the Priory from tithe field name Mellins, Celtic for mills.

Ormerod says that the name Bowdon consists of two Saxon words *bow* a dwelling, an abode, and *don* or *dun* a plain on a hill, ie a down. Alternatively it may mean a hill by a bog.

Dodgson states that the name *Bogadunn* which was used in the 11th century means 'a curved hill' from Old English *boga*, 'a bend' or 'bow-shaped' and the form of the name may imply the re-use by Saxons of a Celtic site. However if the initial part of the name derives from *berg* this could imply the use of the hill as a meeting place, with *don* meaning stronghold, possibly fortified, hence 'hill fort'. Alternatively it could mean 'Beoga's hill or fort'. It was also often spelled Bowden up to the end of the 20th century.

By medieval times Bowdon had several open fields on the well-watered, well-drained and sunny south side of Bowdon Hill, the last of which to the east of Bowdon Church and the west of Bow Green Road, were finally enclosed in 1760. Watch Hill near the Dunham Road overlooking the Bollin is a 12th century motte-and-bailey castle, and Moss Farm and barn are late 15th century.

St. Mary's, Bowdon Church parochial boundary originally covered about 30 square miles from Ashley in the south almost to the Mersey in the north. When Rostherne and Ashton Churches were built, the parish was divided and farmers near the boundary were given the choice of which parish they wished to be in.

Bowdon Churchyard is D-shaped, its curved boundaries indicating great age, possibly Celtic. There is evidence of a 7th-century Saxon (probably wooden) church on the site which was probably replaced in the great rebuilding of cathedrals and churches by the Normans. There have been at least six churches here and for many centuries it was the only church in the area. The vicars are recorded since 1210. Some of the cottages below the church on Church Brow and Langham Road date from the 17th century.

Highway robberies were common in the 18th and 19th centuries, for example at Newbridge Hollow, Shepherd's Cottages and along The Firs. Salt was a valuable commodity for preserving meat and for cheese and butter making and was often stolen, as well as money and jewelry.

Unusually and remote from the main centres, Bowdon had a worsted mill at the bottom of Stamford Road from 1775 and listed in late 18th century trade directories. It is said that it was later converted to a thread and bobbin factory, probably because of the declining woollen trade.

Ribbon development began in Georgian times along Bowdon Road, the burying route from Old Market Place to Bowdon Church. This included Normans Place and The Narrows where a large Georgian house stood on the site of the present ex-Telephone Exchange; Beech Grove, later St. Annes Home; and Bowdon Lodge, now Altrincham Grammar School for Girls.

Commuters settled in Bowdon early in the first half of the 19th century, using road and canal transport to get to Manchester and even beyond. There had been a free school near the church from 1553 and from the 1840s several private schools started because of the prosperity of the area. Many of the roads are named after the Earls of Stamford & Warrington who ensured that quality houses were built near to Dunham Hall, especially on Green Walk, which was their route to Bowdon Church. By the mid-19th century Bowdon had become the retreat of Manchester cotton magnates, sometimes called Cotton Kings or Cottontots. Many of the large houses had their own croquet grounds (there were about 50 by 1874) but most were replaced by tennis courts when this became the vogue after 1874. There were also many private engineering workshops, laboratories and observatories. There are many miles of sandstone garden walls in Bowdon (and Altrincham and Hale) from sandstone quarried in Timperley, Stockport, Alderley Edge, Lymm, Helsby and Runcorn.

From the late 1890s Bowdon had its own District Council until it became part of Trafford in 1974. Parts of what we might think of as Bowdon such as Delamer Road, Higher Downs, Woodville Road and St. Margaret's Road used to be in Dunham Massey but became part of Altrincham in 1920.

Bowdon Hall, dating to 1700 but on a site dating from about 1200, was sold for £2m in 2017.

## Hale History

Hale is an ancient township probably first settled as early as the second half of the sixth century and is in the north of Cheshire historically. The place name 'Hale' occurs all over England and is said to be from Old English *halh* meaning a shelter or corner of land. A possible alternative derivation could be from Celtic meaning a marshy area growing willow trees (modern Welsh *helyg*, Cornish



*Hale Farm was on the west side of the present Queens Road and 17th/18th century buildings are still there.*

*heligan*). It was recorded as 'Hale' in the Domesday Book and never changed, which is unusual. At that time Hale had the valuable assets of half an acre of meadow and a wood "*one league long and half a league wide*" and a hawk's eyrie (which was important for rearing and training hunting birds). *Halh* is also very common in field names and is equivalent to Old Norse *hallr* and northern *haugh*, *hough*, *hauch*, *halch* or *halgh*, a hilly enclosure in a valley. The River Bollin to the south may be partly Celtic, meaning 'an eel river'.

Hale is a different settlement from Altrincham and Bowdon. Bowdon was a Saxon village and several open fields. Altrincham may have had Saxon origins but was mainly created as a medieval new borough in the 13<sup>th</sup> century with its burgesses holding a burgage plot in the town. Hale, however, was a scattering of small hamlets around greens and farms. In the Domesday Book, Hale was in the hundred (administration division of the county) of *Bochelau* (Bucklow today), held by Hamo de Masci who also held Dunham, Bowdon, etc, previously held by the Saxon Aelfweard. There is only a small amount of evidence before 1086 when the Domesday Book was compiled.

It is possible that Hale was traversed in Roman times and a few Roman coins have been found along Hale Road. It was probably settled by Saxons in the 7th century and Hale Low off Hale Road means Hale Mound and may have been a Bronze Age burial mound but burials in round mounds continued to Saxon times. The glacial sand ridge of Hale Road itself would have provided an excellent natural communications route from Stone Age times. In 1086 there may have been 25-50 people living in Hale on about 4-5000 acres rising to perhaps 300 people in the 14th century and 800 by 1800. Other than the Domesday Book, the earliest written evidence of Hale is in Massey deeds of 1281 with references to Bank Hall, Ringway and Rossmill.

Norman Dore thought that field names tended to indicate that Hale was originally a medieval settlement on the drier ground off Hale Road between Queens Road and Hermitage Road. The Hermitage Road end would have a ready supply of water from a spring now under Hale Cemetery and on Hermitage Road. Hale Low may have been the centre of the manor of Hale. Medieval open fields are thought to have been between Ashfield Road, Queens Road and Hermitage Road but may also have extended down from Ollerbarrow Road to Ashley Road. The evidence is in the narrow fields on which Peel Avenue etc are now built and field names. Tithe field number 8 is 'Hale Field' and field 949 is 'Partington Shutts', both implying enclosed open fields.

There may have been other medieval settlements near Davenport Green and north of Ross Mill Farm (East Hale), Hale Barns, all of which have indications of town fields. The Hale Barns one could be argued to be a favourite since *halh* is often associated with a river and field names there include Great Hough (Hale), Great Tom Field (town field) and Tom Field Bank (the latter is still on modern maps). Also, in the Domesday Book, Hale possessed half an acre of meadow, which was probably next to the Bollin where it could be flooded for early pasture.

As in Altrincham, the Court Leet met to deal with Hale (and separately Bowdon) matters twice a year. The meeting was both to ensure the law was being followed and to advise and hear local issues. The Town's Meeting also met to fix the rate for poor relief and highways maintenance. After the 17th century and until the mid-19th century, Hale consisted of scattered farms and cottages with small hamlets including Hale Barns and Peel Causeway.

What we know as Hale today started out as a farm and a few cottages on a track through a marsh along part of the modern Ashley Road from Spring Bank to Hale Station known as Peel Causeway. In 1830 there were about 10 households, perhaps 50 people and in 1841 about 20 households, about 100 people. From the late 1840s commuters settled and rapid expansion took place. There were about 1000 residents by 1851, 1200 by 1861, and 1700 by 1871. There was particularly rapid expansion from 1890 up to the 1914-18 War to a population of about 10,000 and many houses from this period can be observed in Hale.



The railway arrived in Altrincham in 1849 and caused house building along Ashley Road, Hale, first in 1849 from the present traffic lights to Hale Station and then in the 1870s from Hale Station to the St. Peter's Church area after the area was drained. In 1859-62 the Cheshire Lines Committee built a line out of Altrincham to Knutsford with a stop at Hale to serve Bowdon residents and called the station built on the site of Peel Causeway Farm 'Bowdon (Peel Causeway)' to distinguish it from Bowdon Station in Altrincham.

In 1866 John Siddeley built a brewery on Ashley Road opposite the present Railway Inn. William Berry, the blacking manufacturer built the first shops in Peel Causeway in the 1880s between the Railway Inn and the railway crossings.

Up to 1900 Hale was under Bucklow administration and extended from Hale Road Bridge to Hale Barns and Oversley Ford at Ringway, and to the Bollin at Ashley Heath. Hale Urban District Council (UDC) was set up in 1900 under Alfred Tarbolton, having resisted becoming part of Altrincham and for the first few years met in a tiny house in Thorn Grove. In 1901 the medieval name Peel Causeway was changed back to the Saxon name Hale through Tarbolton's perseverance. At the same time Ringway was severed from Hale/Hale Barns to become a separate parish. About 1906 the UDC moved into a new building on Ashley Road at the bottom of Cambridge Road, Hale then in 1913 into a former Girls' Home on the site of the hotel and supermarket west of the bowling green on Ashley Road. After the 1914-18 War many of the houses on Ashley Road were converted to shops on condition that their gardens could be used to widen the pavement. In 1921 the Bowling Green was created and Hale Cinema, actually just in Altrincham, opened in 1923.

After the 1939-45 War, newcomers started to call Hale 'Hale Village' and Hale became part of Trafford in 1974.

## Dunham Massey History

### Dunham history

There is evidence for settlement during the Bronze Age in Dunham Massey on the easily-cultivated soils of Oldfield Brow observed from pollen samples in the peat under the Roman road, and from the presence of barrows. The soil is a mixture of glacial sand and gravel, and some river deposits. In many parts there is underlying clay later used for brick-making. There are many heaths and mosses, the largest being Carrington Moss. Much of this land was enclosed by the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

Dunham is situated west of Altrincham and Bowdon and the name means 'a settlement near a hill'. It is listed in the Domesday



*The Bridgewater Canal built in 1765/66 through Dunham Massey is now used entirely for pleasure craft. It runs from Worsley to Runcorn via Broadheath and had no locks until Runcorn.*



Book of 1086 recording that the manor had previously held by the Saxon Earl Aelfweard, now held by Hamo de Masci (from Normandy), that there was land for three ploughs, the lord's demesne (land), an acre of woodland and a house in the city (Chester). In modern times the estate amounted to 3,500 acres but may have been larger originally. In addition Hamo held 36 other manors in north Cheshire, south Lancashire and the Wirral, and estates in other parts of the country. Dunham was probably outside the Danelaw land of the 9th century, whereas Hale was within it.

The Mascis had been given the estates in about 1070 which included the Saxon manors of Bowdon, Hale and Ashley, and when the line died out the related Booths of Wilmslow took over in 1427 and then the related Greys in 1768. Roger Grey, the 10th Earl of Stamford, bequeathed the Dunham estate to the National Trust when he died in 1976.

The Mascis, Booths and Greys all held various manorial courts and meetings would normally be at Dunham Hall. The Court Baron was a gathering of the lord's free tenants and they themselves were the judges of issues such as duties owed to the lord. The Halmote or Court Customary was a lesser manorial court for unfree tenants which was presided over by the lord's steward. Court rolls (records of meetings) survive from about 1350 and are held at John Ryland's Library in Manchester.

There may have been a motte-and-bailey castle at Dunham originally, probably replaced by stone in the 12th century. This was itself rebuilt in the early 1600s and again in the 1730s. The farms and other buildings on the estate also mainly date from the great rebuilding of this time and as a result there are only few cruck-frame and thatch buildings still remaining in Dunham whereas there are many in the adjacent Warburton. The parkland surrounding the hall may have been created by the Saxons but the present Old and New Parks date from the 1740s, redesigned by Mary the Countess of Stamford.

Dunham developed into four hamlets around two open fields with the farms in the hamlets: Dunham Town, Oldfield, Dunham Woodhouses and Bollington. From the 13th to the early 19th century these vary large fields, perhaps up to a mile square, were enclosed, often into a convenient Cheshire acre or two (about 2.1 statute acres in this part of Cheshire) and new farms were built outside the hamlets. The 14th century boundary between Dunham Massey and Warburton to the west still exists as a deep artificial ditch. On the east side of Dunham there are township boundary marks on walls in Bowdon and Altrincham. In 1920 and again later the Dunham/Altrincham boundary was moved to make room for Altrincham to expand. The population of Dunham Massey was about 900 in 1801, 3000 in 1911, 1700 in 1931 and 500 in 2001.

In the Civil Wars of the seventeenth century, little activity took place in Dunham other than the Booths rallying troops on the Devisdale and passing armies camping there. 'Old' Sir George Booth was a Parliamentarian and was on the Committee on Compounding which fined Royalist landowners after the Civil Wars.

Quakers were living in Dunham Town in the late seventeenth century and there are two Quaker graves in St. Marks Church graveyard which were originally behind Big Tree Cottage in Dunham Town.

Brick making took place in many parts of Dunham from the 17th century. Salt extraction from springs in the Bollin valley at Dunham Woodhouses became an important industry in the 17th century but probably existed well before that. Thomas Walton, saltmaster, left money to build Littleheath and Seamons Moss Schools in 1759 and 1761. The Bridgewater Canal brought prosperity to Altrincham and Dunham in 1765/6 and enabled coal to be brought to Dunham Hall much more easily from the estate coal mines.

The Broadheath industries started in 1884 with George Richards' machine tool factory. It later

included well-known names such as Linotype, Budenbergs, Kearns, Churchills, Tilmans, and Record Electrical. Several mission houses sprang up in Dunham Woodhouses and Oldfield Brow around 1900. The Oldfield Brow estate was started in the 1920s. In 1853 a (southern) railway was built across Dunham from Stockport via Broadheath to Warrington and a northern one in 1873 from Stockport via Timperley to Glazebrook and Liverpool.

In World War I Dairyhouse Farm at Sinderland was used as a prisoner-of-war camp and again in WWII as an RAF ordnance depot with a considerable rail network linked to the Broadheath/Warrington line. In WWII Dunham New Park was used as an American Army Camp, a German POW camp, and after the war as a British Army camp briefly.

In 1974 Dunham Massey became part of Trafford but retains a parish council.

## Dunham Hall

The area of the hall had been the site of the Massey headquarters since the arrival of Hamo de Masci from Normandy within a few years of the Norman conquest in 1066. The mound at the back of the hall may have been the site of a motte-and-bailey castle but more likely a viewing platform. The home was improved and rebuilt by several generations of Masseys and their successors the Booths and the Greys. The present building dates from the 1730s with the dormer windows in a lowered roof added in the early 19th century. In his will Roger Grey, the 10th Earl, left the hall and two parks, and the surrounding farms, to the National Trust in 1976.



## Masons' Marks

Medieval stonemasons were the top men in the building trade of their day. They identified themselves by masons' marks, many derived from ancient Runic, Greek and Phoenician characters. One of the oldest stone structures in the Altrincham area is the listed 1766 Bridgewater Canal aqueduct over the River Bollin at Dunham Massey on which a good selection of masons' marks can be found on the sandstone blocks.

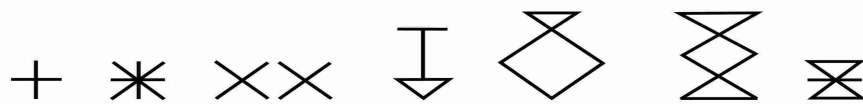
In 1814 the bridge was in danger of collapse and was strengthened by the addition of a 20 foot-wide buttress on the western side which has a track-way over it to Woodhouse Lane. Just south of the Bollin bridge is a cattle tunnel under the canal at field level. There are therefore four distinct sets of masons' marks on the bridge: the western side of the original bridge, the western extension, the eastern side of the bridge, and the tunnel. The 'DB 1814' is on a large curved block dating the bridge strengthening work and next to it there is a second 1814 date upside down. *DB* probably stands for the Duke of Bridgewater although the last duke died in 1803.

There is a good array of marks on the tunnel. The first has a single occurrence and at about five inches high is twice as large as the rest and very distinctively carved, perhaps like an anchor. There are no marks on the east side of the tunnel which ends in asbestos and concrete after the rebuild of the canal collapse in 1971 (another breach happened in January 2025).. In all there are about 40 different marks on the bridge indicating a surprising number of masons working on a single structure but on at least two different dates. The masons' marks on the west side of the bridge must be original and date from 1766. From the two dates and Stamford Papers evidence, the marks on the westerly extension were made in 1814. Those on the east side could have been made in 1766 or later, perhaps 1814. The marks on the tunnel must be the same age as the canal. Other bridges along the canal, eg at Bollington and Sale, also have masons marks.

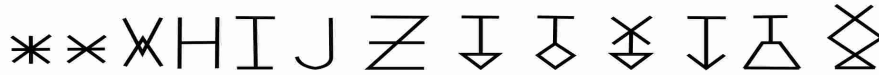
Masons' marks from the nine-inch wide granite kerb stones in the older streets of St. Helier, Jersey such as La Colomberie, are shown below for comparison. They are quite different, with many curves and arrows, unlike the Dunham Massey marks.

One form of Runic marks is also shown for comparison.

**Masons' Marks on the Bridgewater Canal Aqueduct  
over the River Bollin at Dunham Massey.**



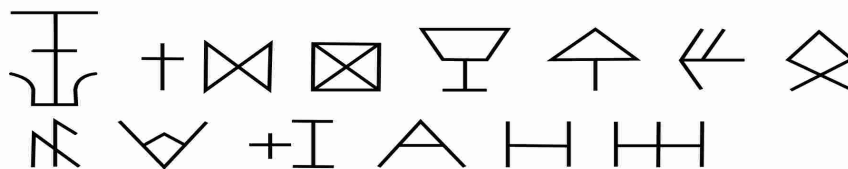
*East side of main wall.*



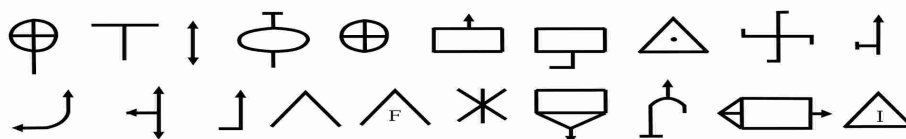
*West side of main wall.*



*Western buttress.*



*West side of the cattle tunnel under the canal  
(the first mark, about 12cm high, is twice as big as the rest).*



*Masons' marks on pavements in St. Helier, Jersey for comparison.*

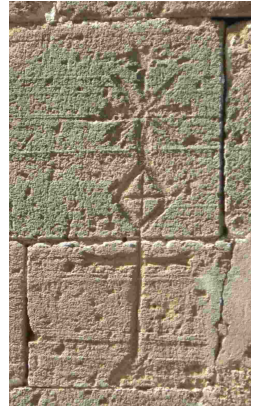
**Runic Alphabet**

A	ᚦ	Odin
B	ᚷ	Birth
C	<	Fire
D	ᚱ	Dawn
E	ᚹ	Horse
F	ᚼ	Frey
G	x	Gift
H	ᚨ	Air
I	ᚲ	Ice
J	ᚫ	Earth
K	<	Fire
L	ᚲ	Water
M	ᚱ	Man
N	ᚦ	Necessity
O	ᚫ	Ancestral
P	ᚫ	Hearth
Q	<	Fire
R	ᚱ	Wheel
S	ᚼ	Sun
T	ᚦ	Victory
U	ᚨ	Power
V	ᚷ	Joy
W	ᚷ	Joy
X	ᚦ	Thor
Y	ᚫ	Death
Z	ᚦ	Protection
TH	ᚦ	Thor
NG	ᚫ	Fertility

There were at least 32 different masons working of the original structure of 1766. Nearly 50 years later just two masons marks are repeated in the 1814 extension which may be the same masons or more likely a reuse of marks by later masons.

The tunnel under the canal just south of the River Bollin dates from 1766. It was constructed to allow the passage of cattle to the water meadows, narrow fields which existed before the construction of the sewage works to the west of the bridge in 1900. On the 1839 tithe map they are fields 644 to 649 and there is a track in line with Brick Kiln Lane across the field and under the canal, with a ford across the Bollin. There were six different occupiers of these fields in 1839 and they were important to the estate farms for early grass. The tunnel became largely redundant after the new track-way was built in 1814 as part of the buttress strengthening.

*A very large mason's mark on the 16<sup>th</sup> century Convent & Cloister of Santo Domingo de Pollenca in Mallorca, inscribed after construction, or possibly two different marks:*



*Nearer at home, a decorative mark in the form of a four-leaved shamrock on a wall in Bankhall Lane, Hale.*



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## BOOK 2: PEEL CAUSEWAY, HALE HISTORY



***The Millennium Clock on the site of Peel Causeway brewery, with Hale View cottages in the background***

# Peel Causeway

## Introduction



The 1874 Ordnance Survey map with Peel Causeway at its centre.

## Where is Peel Causeway?

Up to 1900 'Peel Causeway' was the name of the village on a section of Ashley Road from Spring Bank to the present Hale Station (Originally Bowdon (Peel Causeway) Station) but the name came to be applied to the whole of the village as far as Ashley Heath until 1901 when the name was changed to Hale. This article explores the Peel Causeway area to see what history remains and follows on from the work recorded by Alfred Tarbolton in his 1929 book *The Story of Peel Causeway*.

My intentions are to consider the location of Peel Causeway, the meaning of the name, identify the cause of the boggy nature of the area and the reason for the causeway, examine tithe field names

to look for clues, describe the buildings and tracks dating from the 18th century or earlier, and follow the development of Peel Causeway with the coming of the railway.

People first decided that the Hale area was a good place to live about 8,000 years ago and left a few Stone Age tools behind to prove it. Much of this evidence has long gone to museums but all around our town are signs left in later times such as buildings, stonework, benchmarks and other wall inscriptions, street furniture, trees and plants and ancient footpaths.

In discussing and speculating on the history of Peel Causeway modern street and place names have been used generally.

## **The history of Peel Causeway**

The place name 'Hale' was recorded as *Hale* in the 1086 Domesday Book and never changed, which is unusual. Hale was a scattering of farms with a few groups of hamlets.

Nevell, in his *Archaeology of Trafford*, provides evidence of a minor Roman road passing from Watling Street to Hale Barns via the present Bowdon Church and Hale Road. Watkin thought that a secondary Roman road may have run from Warrington (a major crossing of the Mersey and an industrial centre) through Warburton and Bowdon where a Roman coin was found at the church, to Ringway and Wilmslow. One could speculate that the Romans constructed the initial causeway across what was marshy land around the present Hale Station. However there is no early evidence of activity here and a 1702 Stamford estate map does not show a road from Bowdon Church to Peel Causeway. In fact it would be logical for the Romans to use the Hale Road sand ridge via St. Mary's Road and keep to the dry land. The settlement of Peel Causeway therefore must be entirely due to the many springs in the area.

The first mention of Peel Causeway is in a deed of 1701 when Robert Ashley took over Peel Causeway Farm from his father.

In the 1830s 'Pale Causeway' was the name given to the current area of Ashley Road, Hale from the traffic lights at the bottom of Stamford Road, Bowdon through to Hale Station. It is marked as 'Peel Causeway' on the 1874 and 1897 Ordnance Survey maps.

In the early 1830s Peel Causeway consisted of one farm and about six cottages along the edge of the causeway, perhaps 30 people. An Altrincham builder, Charles Holt, put up numbers 80 to 98 Ashley Road in 1849 and later 100 to 118, all in the local builders' style. Another builder, Samuel Brown, bought the rest of the south side to Spring Road and built Hale Terrace, 126 to 132, also in 1849. By 1851 there were about 23 households with perhaps 100 people in total.

Hale Station was built in 1859-62 to serve Bowdon residents and was named Bowdon (Peel Causeway) Station to distinguish it from the 1849 Bowdon Station at the top of Lloyd Street, Altrincham. This triggered the building of houses on the north side of Peel Causeway in the 1860s, and through the present Hale Village shopping centre from about 1870 after drainage. The name 'Peel Causeway' for the expanding village was retained by residents and confirmed by the Ordnance Survey of 1872.

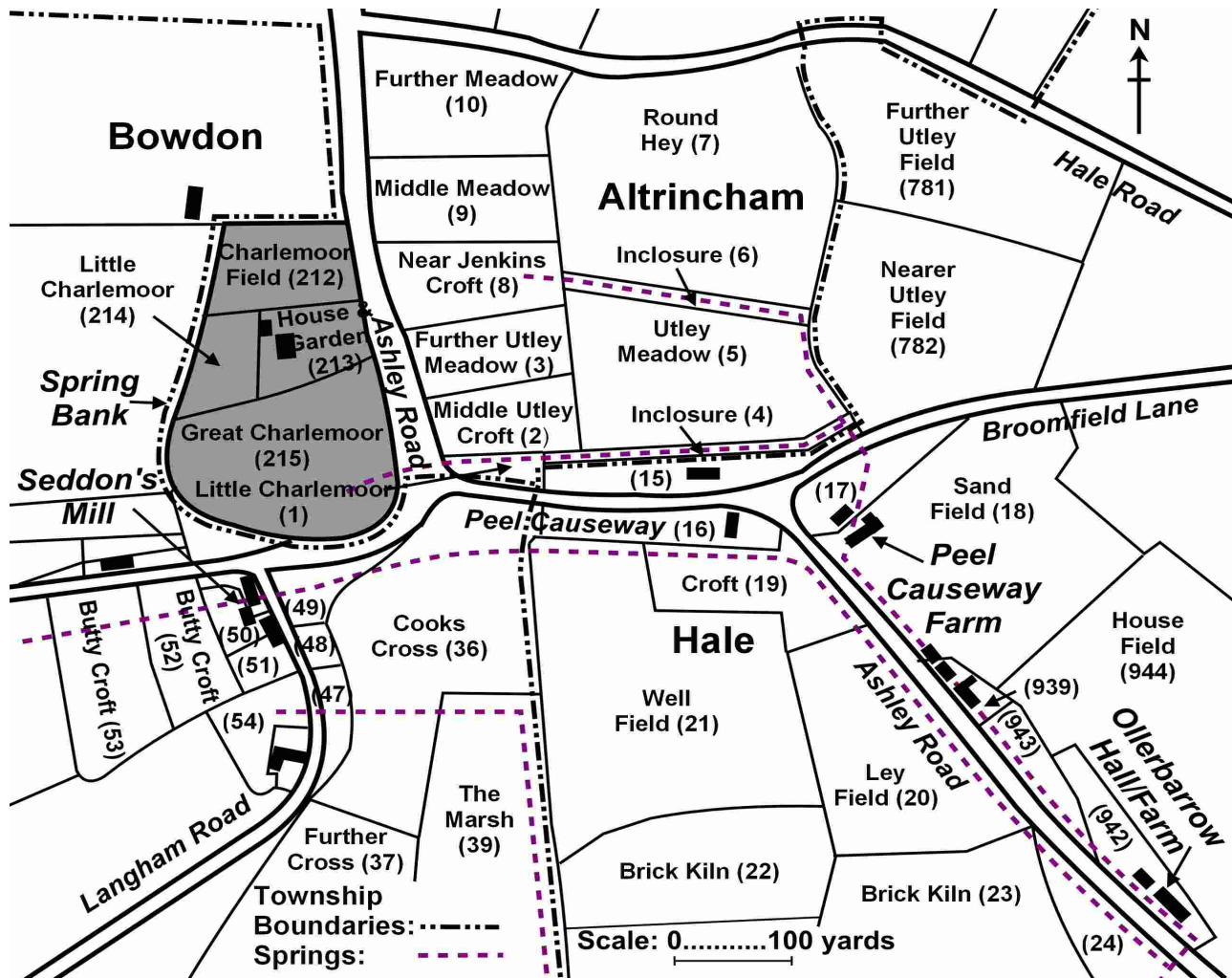
Alfred Tarbolton was elected as the first chairman of Hale Urban District Council in 1900 and immediately proposed that the name Peel Causeway for the village be changed to the older one of Hale. This was agreed from 1901 and the name of Hale for the part of Hale Barns along Chapel Lane, which was originally called East Hale, was discontinued. Many of the houses through Hale

village were later converted to shops after the 1914-18 War. It is interesting that Tarbolton should instigate the deletion of the name 'Peel Causeway' but then 30 years later write a book commemorating the name, which clearly fascinated him.

By the 1914-18 War the use of the name 'Peel Causeway' had all but vanished but the name 'Peel' still remained in the area. Until the 1950s there was still a Peel Causeway road sign on the triangle of land opposite to the Railway Inn and 151 Ashley Road is called 'Peel House'. Originally Spring Road was called Peel Crescent, and Peel Avenue still exists near the traffic lights. The office at the back of 124 Ashley Road is also called 'Peel House'.

Before being widened about 1849, the stretch of Ashley Road from the traffic lights to Hale Station would have been a narrow track. Watkin believed that it might possibly be part of a minor Roman road from Warrington to Ringway and perhaps on to Alderley Edge and the Pennines where copper and lead were mined. This is confirmed by Mike Nevell's findings in *The Archaeology of Trafford*. One might also speculate that a Bronze Age timber causeway existed here on Ashley Road crossing the marsh from a fortification on Bowdon Hill to Alderley Edge, and which the Romans overlaid with stones. Watkin was more certain of a minor Roman road along the line of St. John's Road and Hale Road.

The road from the traffic lights at the bottom of Stamford Road, Bowdon is certainly raised, with the land falling away down the entries on both sides and evidence of ditches on each side down those entries, especially on the south side. This raised causeway would be essential to cross from the well-drained Stamford Road (originally called Sandy Lane) to the equally well-drained Broomfield Lane on the sand ridge along Hale Road from Warburton to Ringway. Without this raised track the area would have been impassable and unattractive because of the boggy nature of the land caused by the underlying clay. The causeway was probably resurfaced several times, eventually with water-worn cobbles taken from the surrounding glacial drift clay. The cobbles can still be picked up in gardens and fields in the area.



The area of Peel Causeway in 1838 between tithe fields 15 and 16, now part of Ashley Road, and its environs. Four springs emerge from the Spring Bank area, causing the present Hale village area to be a very marshy place; only solved in about 1868/69 by the creation of a brick culvert down the present Peel Avenue and across the eastern side of Cooks Cross to the River Bollin. The Bowdon Hydro was built at the southern end of Cooks Cross and Altrincham Grammar School was built on The Marsh. Peel Causeway Farm has become Hale railway station. The shaded area marks the original Spring Bank estate; the present park is field 215. Modern street names are given.

## Field names and occupiers from the Tithe Map of 1838

Field names are always interesting and often give a good clue to the land or its use and can be obtained from the 1835/41 Altrincham, Bowdon and Hale Tithe Maps and Schedules of the area. The map above is of the present Hale Village area in 1838 and shows the four streams running out of Spring Bank which I shall call Spring Bank Brooks. They run across Hale to link together finally at South Downs Road and run into the River Bollin as Motley Brook. The enclosures of the strips from open fields around medieval hamlets often resulted in long thin fields or those with names such as acre, bigg, butt, dale, dole, flatt, furlong, lawnd, loon, loont, platt, rigg, selion, shoot, shott, shutt, tom, town, and other variations.

Some fields around Peel Causeway are of interest in its history:-

### Altrincham fields & occupiers

Field no.	Field name	Occupier
1	Little Charlemoor	William Warburton
2	Middle Utley Croft	Thomas Walker
3	Further Utley Meadow	Thomas Walker
4	Inclosure	Peter Leicester
5	Utley Meadow	Peter Leicester
6	Inclosure	Peter Leicester
7	Round Hey	Thomas Walker
8	Near Jenkins Croft	William Warburton
9	Middle Meadow	William Warburton
10	Further Meadow	William Warburton
212	Charlmoor Field	Peter Leicester
213	House & Garden	Peter Leicester
214	Little Charlemoor	Peter Leicester
215	Great Charlemoor	Peter Leicester

The Hale/Altrincham border at Spring Bank has some splendid Saxon field names containing *Charlemor*, meaning 'Freeman's land on a barren marsh' including two Little Charlemoor fields. *Charlmor* is from the early Saxon word *ceorl*, 'a free peasant or farmer' and *mor* 'a marsh or barren area'. The word *mor* indicates common land on clay with freemen having rights to graze and may indicate a lost Saxon settlement close by.

Peter Leicester lived at Spring Bank House (fields 212-215) and was related to Sir Peter Leycester the 17<sup>th</sup> century Cheshire historian from Tabley.

### Bowdon fields & occupiers

Field no.	Field name	Occupier
36	Cooks Cross	Ann Walker
37	Further Cross	Ann Walker
38	The Marsh	Ann Pimlott
47	Orchard	John Clarke
48	Garden	Robert Seddon
49	Garden	Robert Seddon
50	House & Garden	Robert Seddon
51	Garden	Robert Seddon



52	Butty Croft	Robert Seddon
53	Butty Croft	Robert Seddon
54	House & Garden	John Clake

Bowdon fields 48-53 were tenanted in 1841 by Robert Seddon whose family had a worsted mill here from 1775 to about 1860. Field 54 was Cooks Cross Farm.

## Hale fields & occupiers

Field no.	Field name	Occupier
15	Cottage and Garden	William Wood
16	Cottage and Croft	Richard Clarke
17	Buildings	Robert Bourne
18	Sand Field	Robert Bourne
19	Croft	Robert Bourne
20	Ley Field	Robert Bourne
21	Well Field	Robert Bourne
22	Brick Kiln	Robert Bourne
23	Brick Kiln	Robert Bourne
24	Croft	Robert Bourne
781	Further Utley Field	Peter Leicester
782	Nearer Utley Field	Peter Leicester
939	House & Garden	Peter Long
942	House, Outbuildings & Garden	John & Thomas Clark
944	House Field	John & Thomas Clark

Field 17 is Peel Causeway Farm, 939 Rose Cottage and 942 is Ollerbarrow Farm.

## Brooks and streams

Concerning brooks, observations from maps and on the ground include:

- The area of Bath Street at the back of Ashley Road down to the railway was originally a narrow field (4) called *Inclosure* and contained a spring from Spring Bank. This was probably too wet to use for grazing and perhaps fenced off for safety and the spring in its ditch formed the Altrincham/Hale boundary. In the 17th century these narrow wooded fields were called *shaws* and were often used for sheltering cattle.
- A second narrow field (6) also called *Inclosure* ran parallel to the first, half way up Byrom/Bath/Brown streets where the wide entry is and was recorded by Tarbolton as wooded. The western end of this field is where a spring and well existed at 17/19 Willowtree Road until about 1930 and the eastern end was where the railway line is now.
- These two springs eventually joined at Cambridge Road and crossed Cecil Road towards

South Downs Road.

- The fields from Spring Road south across the present Altrincham Grammar School for Boys playing fields towards South Downs Road are Well Field, Little Marsh and Great Marsh and were known locally as 'The Marsh'. Clearly Spring Road and the present playing fields were boggy ground, as one would expect from the lie of the land. 'Well' is from Old English *waella*, 'to boil', hence a spring in Well Field in what is now Spring Road and one resident reported that in very wet weather springs appeared in the cellars.
- Ashley Road formed the boundary between Peel Causeway Farm's fields (which were bounded by Ashley Road to South Downs Road and up to the Bowdon boundary running across the Grammar School fields) and those of Ollerbarrow Farm (whose fields ran from Ashley Road to Broomfield Lane and Ollerbarrow Road) and a brook is a likely boundary.
- There is evidence of the brooks as they approach South Downs Road in terms of more Marsh Fields and Brook Croft.
- All of these brooks join to form Motley Brook which is culverted under South Downs Road at the bad bends on its way to The River Bollin.
- There is an almost continuous straight line of field boundaries running along Heath Road to South Downs Road, which might indicate the line of a track or path.
- The field names along the line of Broomfield Lane are 'Sand Field' and two 'Broom' fields indicating dry sandy land.

## The origin of the name Peel Causeway

The earliest known causeway in the world is the Sweet Track in the Somerset Levels, construction dated to 3,806BC. This consisted of timber trackways made from tree trunks laid end-to-end with turf over followed by split oak planks pegged on top to form a walkway about one to three metres wide. From the Bronze Age, causeways were built across much of England using this method or simpler ones of branches and stones and varied from one to three metres wide.

Watkin reported that around the year 1700 there were many causeways in Lancashire and Cheshire. He said that they tended to be narrow footpaths about two to three feet wide used by pedestrians and horses with wooden posts at the edge to prevent carts from running on them. Some causeways were wider but un-surfaced tracks would be impassable to carts in winter unless they were frozen, despite the ruts being filled with pebbles and cinders. Causeways were often built and maintained by merchants to enable them to trade all year.



*Peel Causeway Farm, later Hale station master's house and currently a vet's practice, with the station to its right.*

According to Alfred Tarbolton the first reference to 'Peel' was in 1462 when a Massey owned the 'Pele at Hale' and the 'Pele at Thorley Moor'. *Pele* is a 14th century form of *peel*. Thorley Moor Farm was probably between St. John's Road, Ashley Road and The Downs, Altrincham. The 'Pele at Hale' was probably Hale Farm which was on the west side of the present Queens Road (a 17<sup>th</sup>

century farmhouse is still there). The land to the west of Queens Road was thought by Norman Dore to be the original Saxon settlement of Hale.

Tarbolton said that the first reference to Peel Causeway was in a deed of 1701 when Robert Ashley took over his father's Peel Causeway Farm at what is now Hale Station (only the house remains, currently a Vet's). According to Dodgson, in 1831 part of Ashley Road was known as *Pale Causeway*. Presumably the causeway was from the traffic lights to the station, but conceivably may have extended further down Ashley Road through the present shops. Equally it could have extended back to Thorley Moor Farm but this is less likely since the area was on sloping albeit wet ground.

Tarbolton reported in correspondence with John Macnamara and others in the Manchester Evening News in 1901/2 that "*there had been a brook or drain through Peel Causeway*" and "*a thatched farm building in the style of 1700 to 1740 called Peel Way Hall, which was demolished in 1886.*" He also said that "*from a ditch in front and a mill-race to the rear, Mr. Colley judged that an ancient stronghold with a moat had stood there.*"

Tarbolton speculated that the causeway might have been constructed in the 17th century to connect Thorley Moor Farm with Peel Causeway Farm but my own feeling is that it would be older, perhaps at least 14th century matching the ages of the farms in the area, but maybe older and even Roman.

The dictionary definition of 'peel' is a stake or a fence made of stakes or a (moated) stockade (14th century); later a fortified tower or keep (16th century). Peel is from Latin *palus*, *palum*, Old French *palis*, *paleis*, *piel* or *pel*, Old English *pal*, Middle English *pel*, a pointed stake or pale, ie something driven into the ground or a fence of stakes. A 'paling fence' and the words 'palisade' and 'pole' derive from it. *Palus* then came to mean a palisade or stockade, well attested since the 14th century. 'The Pale' was then used to describe defended but not necessarily enclosed territories, eg the English-governed Pales in France, the Isle of Man and Dublin, from which comes the phrase 'beyond the pale'.

In Bowdon a 1702 estate map names the north side of The Devisdale as *Old Pails*. In some areas 'pale parks' were constructed to contain animals, especially deer. Ringway may have been one of these, the original name being *Ringhey*, a ringed enclosure. This may well be the meaning in the case the 'Pele at Hale' and the 'Pele at Thorley Moor' and that these were stockaded farms. Norman Dore thought that Peel Causeway might mean 'the causeway to the stockade'. The idea of a fortified area, further lead in the 16th century to 'small castle' or 'fortified tower' as in peel towers which are mainly in Cumbria, the Scottish Border Country and in the Isle of Man, but also occur in lowland England. Many of these palisaded sites would also be moated and in Cheshire 'peel' has come to mean a moated site (probably originally with a palisade on the inside edge of the moat). An alternative is that Latin *palus* can mean a marsh which would fit the surrounding area.

The word 'causeway' was earlier *causey* or *caucie* and appears to have been converted to 'causeway' through usage. This is a similar process to 'Ringhey' becoming Ringway. The word 'causey' is still used in the North of England, Scotland and Wales. It means a raised way across low, boggy ground or marsh and became to mean a paved way. The word is from Welsh *cawsai*, a causeway, originating from Latin *calx*, limestone. *Calciare* meant to make a road from limestone or chalk and compacted limestone still makes one of the best finishing surfaces across wet ground.

It is possible then that, since the Romans presumably constructed the original causeway, they called it *Palus Calx*, the 'staked cobbled way'. Alternatively it may be a combination of Middle

English *pel* and Welsh *cawsai*, perhaps indicating late Celtic or early Saxon origins for the name.

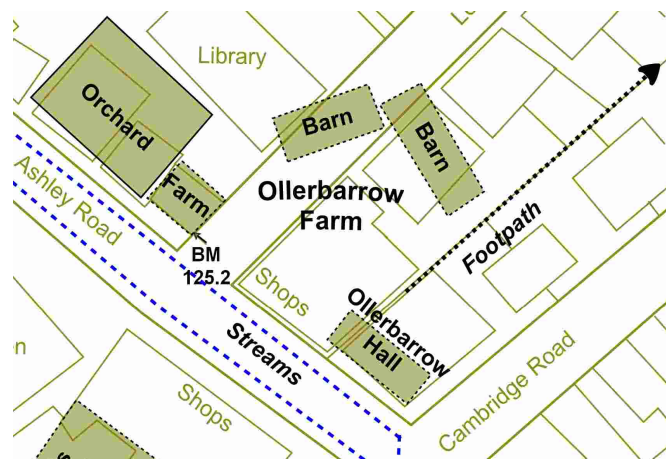
The meaning of 'Peel Causeway' may then be:

- The 'causeway across the marsh', **or**
- The 'causeway to the palisade' presumably at Peel Causeway Farm and the reference to 'peel' may be from pales used to defend the farm; this seems to be the generally accepted meaning; possibly the causeway could have led on to Ollerbarrow Hall; **or**
- The 'causeway with stakes at the edge' or 'the brushwood causeway'; foot causeways were usually guarded by wooded stakes to keep carts off them; alternatively if one wanted to construct a causeway across a wet area one would drive in stakes or pales at the edge of the proposed track to contain any brushwood and stones put down; **or**
- The causeway to the palisaded and moated site, presumably again Peel Causeway Farm at the present Hale Station since Tarbolton believed this to have been moated and possibly Ollerbarrow Hall at the bottom of Leigh Road which is known to have been a moated site; there are several other moated sites called 'peel' in Cheshire; **or**
- The causeway to the territorial area, presumably Hale (west of the present Hale Barns); **or**
- The causeway to the palisaded fort, presumably at Castle Hill, Ringway; **or**
- The causeway to the lord's palisaded hunting ground, ie Ringway.

Because of its likely Roman origins, I would like to think that the first is the favourite with the next a close second because of the many references to Peels in Cheshire at old farm sites, many moated.

In terms of Ollerbarrow Hall, the 1897 Ordnance Survey map shows that the original 14th century Ollerbarrow Hall/Farm, to which the present building at the bottom of Leigh Road was a 1740 addition, was situated at the bottom of Cambridge Road where numbers 221 to 227 Ashley Road are, and it was known to have been moated.

Peel Road, Hale was built at the bottom of the orchard belonging to Hale Farm, which may be the 1462 reference to the *Pele at Hale* mentioned by Tarbolton, so perhaps that too was palisaded and/or moated. However it is possible that the name came from Peel Causeway or from Sir Robert Peel.



*Ollerbarrow Hall and Farm from the 1876 OS map superimposed on a modern map.*

Farms and manor houses would have been moated for defence from Saxon times. Moats are nearly always on clay land and came into fashion in the 12th century. They may have been stockaded because of threats from the wars or because of feuds with neighbours. In 1315 there was major famine in Europe due to three years' torrential rain causing families to fight each other and cannibalism took place. Civil strife continued throughout the 14th and 15th centuries when there was local feuding. All of this may have been a cause of defended farms in the area but later they would be a status symbol and used for practical reasons: to provide drainage of the site, as a ready source of water to put out fires, for rearing fish and ducks. The threat of Civil War in 1642 again caused Hale families to fortify their houses

against the coming war if they could.

In addition to the several references to 'peel' properties in the immediate area of Hale including the Pele at Thorley Moor, the Pele at Hale, Peel Way Hall and Peel Causeway Farm, there are many other references to 'peel' in the wider area. Some of these are still moated sites such as Peel Hall in Wythenshawe and Peel Moat in Heaton Moor. Peel Hall was a fortified house with a moat known as the Peele or Pele of Etchells and the 14th century bridge over the moat still exists. Until 1969 there was also Stone Pale Hall in Wythenshawe with stone palings from Derbyshire. There are many other 'peel' streets in Greater Manchester, some of which may be associated with fortified sites but may also refer to Robert Peel.

There are also other 'peels' in current Cheshire place names such as Horton-cum-Peel and Peel Hall near Tarvin, Old and New Pale Farms at Delamere (named from a deer fence), Peel Farm near Congleton, Peelhall Farm at Antrobus, Peel Hall at Warrington, and in field names such as Pele Hey and Pele Croft near Warrington. There was also the 'Peel and the Mote of Great Moreton' near Little Moreton Hall in the 14th century. Walter Scott's novel *Red Gauntlet*, written in 1824 mentions 'Old Peel-the-Causeway': Maybe this was the present Hale village since he was a friend of the Hale Barns Hibbert-Wares and may have known the Altrincham area, or possibly there are other Peel Causeways.

There are Peel Terraces in Higher Downs on Thorley Moor Farm land, and one now demolished on Victoria Street and these and other references in the first half of the 19th century are probably to Sir Robert Peel, who was born at Bury, reformed the Police Force in the 1820s and was Prime Minister from 1834-35 and 1841-46.

The alternative meaning of Latin *palus* is mud, swamp, marsh, pool or lake which would fit the area but the word 'paludal' meaning 'relating to marshes' didn't come into the English language until the 19th century, so this can be discounted as a source.

## The boggy nature of the Peel Causeway area until 1868

Due to the underlying clay, springs emerge from all sides of the sandy Bowdon Hill in Bowdon Vale, Oldfield Brow, Altrincham and Hale and would be a reason for settlements being located around the edge of the hill rather than in the wet lower lands.

In trying to envisage what the Hale area looked like a few hundred years ago there are some pointers:

- The Altrincham/Bowdon boundary goes west up Ashley Road from Hale Station, over the traffic lights and runs at the back of Spring Bank, making use of the dry causeway and avoiding the marshy area below Spring Bank. From old maps the stretch



*An 18th century cottage in Garner Close off Stamford Road, Bowdon, part of the Hollybank site where a worsted mill was developed in 1775; at that time what is now Langham Road passed behind it as setts and continued as a track behind Spring Bank.*

of Ashley Road below Spring Bank was a track across fields and on the 1835 Altrincham Tithe Map the route southwards from Altrincham passed at the back of Spring Bank and on to Langham Road and Moss Farm at the end of Marlborough Road by going along what is now Garner Close off Stamford Road, Bowdon.

- There are springs all along the bottom of Spring Bank and Bowdon Hill on Ashley Road and at least four flow towards Hale. One spring was tapped by the Victorians in what are now the back gardens of 17/19 Willowtree Road where there was a blue-tiled well until 1930 when that side of the road began to be built up. The well was used to supply some of the Bowdon houses and locals remembered a spring here. This spring ran across to Victoria Road along a field boundary where a very narrow wood is marked on the 1838 Hale Tithe map and called 'Inclosure' and known as Coppice Wood. The route is still indicated by the wide entry running down Byrom, Bath and Brown Streets, which have a series of manholes. There was a large tree, demolished in 2001, growing at the back of the terrace of houses in Willowtree Road probably pre-dating the houses and on the line of the field. The back entry running the length of those houses has a considerable kink in it near the conjectured brook route and may reflect another field boundary. A map of 1876 shows a spring going east towards the Victoria Road area and until the railway was built it would have been used to irrigate the Bowdon Nursery, which existed until 1874 between the present Victoria Road and Albert Road.
- Tarbolton reported that until 1868 another spring ran in an open ditch from where the depression lies in Spring Bank at the Ashley Road/Stamford Road junction across Ashley Road and through the gardens of the houses called Salhouse (the 'sal' may be a reference to willow but in 1898 it was called Linkvretten, in 1908 Rosenau and in 1910 Blumenau), and Anne Style, numbers 97 and 103 Ashley Road, and can be heard to run near the cellars. The spring ran across Willowtree Road where until 1980 there were two ancient willow trees at the top of the Hale Cinema car park in Willowtree Road (the area of flats between number 52 Willowtree Road and Ashley Road) and more willow trees at the bottom of the car park against Bath Street. The cinema was built on the site of a pond and the boiler house used to flood and had a pump running continuously. The cellars in houses at this end of Willowtree Road also occasionally flooded. Bath Street is known to be wet and cellars in Claremont Place on Ashley Road used to flood occasionally, as did the road in the area of Hale Station when there were downpours. The spring followed the Altrincham/Hale boundary to the north of the houses in Ashley Road and crossed Peel Causeway where the station is now. This is marked on the 1897 OS map and often boundaries ran along the line of brook. Spring water then must have originally run from Spring Bank down the left-hand side of Ashley Road towards Bath Street and Hale Station to the left of the raised road. The line of manholes in Bath Place and Brown Street mark the line of the brook. A local resident reported that when a land mine went through Weetman's cart in the war at the back of 145a Ashley Road but didn't explode, it went into a stream which actually moved the bomb slightly before it was removed. Tarbolton's descriptions indicated that there was a ford at Peel Causeway Farm, which had a large pond, fed by this brook and may have been moated. It has been said that the railway crossings at Hale are prone to settlement due to water running underneath and they have to sit on a raft of concrete. The brook then went on towards the Bollin and it was reported by a Mr Rowland Fletcher that in 1851 it was fordable as it crossed Ashley Road near to the present Cambridge Road.
- The bottom of Victoria Road was known locally as Slutch or Slutchy Lane up to the last war, 'slutch' being Cheshire dialect for 'mud'. This was probably brought about by the building of the railway to Hale from 1859 causing the route from Altrincham along Ashley Road into Broomfield Lane to be diverted. The way to Hale Barns then involved going over the railway crossings and turning left up the present Victoria Road. This route would be neither



sandy (like Stamford Road and the upper part of Broomfield Lane) nor surfaced (like Ashley Road) and was probably a dirt track. In addition, as described above, a small brook probably came from the Brown Street area and ran down half of Victoria Road until the railway came. Victoria and Albert Roads were built from the early 1870s, much later than the railway, but not surfaced for some years. For comparison, the southern end of Cecil Road and all of Marlborough Road were unmade dirt roads until the late 1950s.

- Tarbolton reported in correspondence with local architect and councillor John Macnamara and others in the Manchester Evening News in 1901/2 that until 1868 a brook ran down the Spring Road or southern side of Ashley Road in the form of an open ditch, although there must have been some diversion of the flow to build the railway in 1959-62. He reported that *"there had been a brook or drain through Peel Causeway"* and *"a thatched farm building in the style of 1700 to 1740 called Peel Way Hall, which was demolished in 1886."* Some of these springs are marked on the 1897 OS map. From other descriptions Peel Way Hall must have been on the site of the present 124 Ashley Road, Hale. As already reported he also said that *"from a ditch in front and a millrace to the rear, Mr. Colley judged that an ancient stronghold with a moat stood there."*
- Further Tarbolton reported that *"in the cottages where Langham Road then turned in by Hollybank, prior to 1820/30 a small Thread and Bobbin Factory was worked by a stream which found its way into the Spring Bank Brook."* In 1774 a Robert Seddon married Phebe Clarke in Bowdon and the following year a Robert Seddon Senior leased land in Bowdon from Lord Stamford, presumably Hollybank (EGR14/2/5/60 in the Stamford Papers). In Brosters Guide to Altrincham of 1782 there is a Robert Seddon, woolcomber, listed as living in the Altrincham area. The 1793 trade directory shows a worsted mill in Bowdon run by Robert Seddon, presumably the same person and at the Hollybank site. The mill would have needed water to wash and dye the wool, and to turn a mill-wheel. Burials in Bowdon Church archives show that a Robert Seddon died in 1806, confirmed by his will. Tarbolton also reports two cottages on the Hollybank site in the 19th century on an old brickfield, one being the present 4 Garner Close which is a small late 18th century farmhouse which still has a cobbled way just to its west which is the remains of the original Langham Road line.
- In 1838 a Robert Seddon, the grandson of the above, leased all of the fields on the southern side of Stamford Road from the traffic lights almost to Bowdon Church and this is probably where water was collected from a spring somewhere between Bowdon Church and Langham Road. A head of water was probably stored in a pond on the site of Heald Road where a pool is known to have existed in the mid-19th century (see Ingham and Nickson), presumably artificial due to the sandy soil. Interestingly one meaning of 'heald' is from Old English *hefeld*, Old Norse *hafald*, the threads of the warp or the lashes holding them for weaving and a 'heald knitter' was a not uncommon occupation producing a jersey-type of fabric by machine. Heald is also a common surname. Here it almost certainly means a steep slope from Old English *helde*. There is also a Robert Seddon listed in the 1824, 1828, 1834, 1853 and 1858 trade directories who had a woollen yard on Sandy Lane, Bowdon and was a worsted manufacturer, again the grandson of the original Robert Seddon. Perhaps the mill gradually converted to producing bobbins for cotton mills when the woollen trade declined from about 1800 (there were five cotton-spinning mills in Altrincham by then).
- Although there is no sign of a brook now out of Bowdon Hill, there is evidence of the lower reaches of a stream between Ashley Road and Spring Road where a five-feet deep ditch still runs at the back of the even-numbered houses on the south side. These were named Willow Bank by the builder, Charles Holt when built in 1849, perhaps implying that there were willows on that side of Ashley Road; willow trees like flowing water. From the size of the present ditch much more water flowed down this south side of Ashley Road than on the north side. This spring joined up with the two springs traversing Willowtree Road to Victoria

Road, which went on down the odd-numbered side of Ashley Road, to Ollerbarrow Farm at the bottom of Leigh Road.

- The Bowdon Hotel on Langham Road, Bowdon was originally a very large building called the The Bowdon Hydropathic Establishment (known locally as 'The Hydro') built by Samuel Kenworthy and Thomas Warrington in 1871 as Malvern House (named after the first water-cure centre in England opened in 1842 in Malvern, Worcestershire). This was a spa and electrical treatment centre and some years ago when an extension was built at the back, a very large capped well was uncovered which originally fed a tank in the roof. The well itself was fed by a spring out of Bowdon Hill and excess water would have then have run across the present Altrincham Grammar School playing fields to South Downs Road. Tarbolton also says that the Peel Causeway stream, "*after linking up with various tributaries was joined in South Downs Road by another streamlet coming from the direction of the Bowdon Hydropathic Establishment.*" Next to the Hydro at the top of the public footpath was Cook's Cross which may have been on a crossroads where water was available to animals. There were also several ponds around the Grammar School, especially in Marlborough Road, that may have been linked to springs and reflected brick making in the area.
- The name of Ollerbarrow Farm probably indicates that there were alder trees growing at the bottom of Leigh Road and possibly all along what is now Ashley Road. 'Oller' is Old English *oler* meaning 'alder', and 'barrow' can mean 'grove' or 'wooded hill' from Old English *bearu* or it could mean a burial mound. Alder trees grow in boggy ground, usually where there is a slow movement of water and there may have been a grove of them, not just a few. According to Dodgson, Ollerbarrow Farm may have been mentioned in the 14th century as "*two acres covered with alder.*" Alder was also called 'clogwood' because of its suitability for clog soles, especially in Wales.
- The evidence reported by Tarbolton was that Ashley Road from Hale Station through the shops in the early 19th century was a 'rough track' or 'a narrow road which ran alongside the brook' and in practice from the lie of the land this was probably a marshy track difficult in winter. The 1882 25-inch Ordnance Survey map shows the area between Ashley Road and Cecil Road as marshy. The 1897 OS map shows springs running from the present Hale Station area down behind the shops on both sides of Ashley Road to Leigh Road. Here the northern brook crosses over from Ollerbarrow Farm to New Farm to join the other and goes south to the railway then south-west to Motley Brook on South Downs Road. Walking down this part of Ashley Road there are still depressions behind shops on both sides up to Westgate. Tarbolton's 1911 sketch map from his book *The Story of Peel Causeway* also indicates the remains of a ditch roughly from the bottom of Cambridge Road crossing into what is now Crescent Road, down the snicket to Cecil Road, and across Cecil Road and the fields behind Greenside Drive towards Motley Brook on South Downs Road. About 100 yards of this ditch still exists behind 'The Donkey Pitch', which is the south-eastern part of the Altrincham Grammar School playing fields and the ditch is still five feet deep and 15 feet across. The ditch then joined the other arm of the spring from Spring Bank crossing the Grammar School playing fields and became Motley Brook where the dip and sharp bends are on South Downs Road.
- The springs out of Spring Bank were partially culverted in 1868, which enabled the present Hale Village area to be drained and houses built from 1870. At this time most of the water was probably diverted down Peel Avenue to where the Grammar School Scout Hut is, across the Altrincham Grammar School playing fields to South Downs Road and then on to Motley Brook and the river Bollin. However according to the Stamford records in John Rylands Library, the culverting of an open ditch between Ashley Road and the railway was still taking place in 1901. There was a ditch, which marked the Hale/Bowdon boundary running across the Grammar School playing fields until about 1920 when, according to Norman Dore's *Altrincham Grammar School for Boys 1912-1962*, the school expanded its



fields in two stages to Heath Road and this part of the ditch was culverted. Both arms of the brook must have always existed from the considerable depression of Motley Brook before and after it crosses South Downs Road. It would seem that a substantial amount of water sometimes ran through the area, both down Ashley Road and across the Altrincham Grammar School playing fields. No doubt the main stream running through Hale was deepened and became the town ditch. Main sewers were laid in 1879, separate from the surface water culvert and perhaps this explains why much of Hale has surface water drains separate from foul drains, unlike Altrincham. In 1894 the Bowdon Local Board of Health proposed that a new sewer be run from the Langham Road/Stamford Road/Ashley Road junction across to Bow Lane and the 1882 sewer beds at Poolbank Farm but this never materialised. It was as late as 1902 before the old open ditches between Ashley Road and the railway were converted to surface water drains.

## Buildings in Hale 1838 to 1851

Tarbolton's book *The Story of Peel Causeway* is a valuable source of information on the area. The book is a reprint from a series of articles in the Altrincham and Bowdon Guardian in 1929 but many of the details had been published under the title of *Chapters for Hale Fellows* in the Guardian in 1908, in letters to the Manchester Evening News and finally in his unpublished and substantial *History of Hale* of about 1932. His descriptions vary slightly but his records and the 1838 Tithe Map indicate buildings in the following locations in the immediate area of the present Ashley Road in the 1840s:

- **Two or three thatched buildings** with their gable end to Peel Causeway and facing east on to a cartway, leading to land at the back with gardens along the cartway, the present entry between numbers 124 and 126 Ashley Road. One building was known as Peel Way Hall and was a farm with a ditch and millrace. Presumably Peel Way Hall would have been furthest away from Ashley Road on the line of the brook. The others were cottages and all had gardens. This land is probably field (16), the Cottage and Croft on the tithe map when Richard Clarke lived there in 1838. John Clarke, possibly Richard's brother, who was born in 1817 at Cook's Cross Farm on Langham Road and who was in charge of Bowdon Day School about 1840, started his own school in the cottage nearest to Ashley Road about 1843 before being appointed to Hale Barns from 1845 to 1890 and died in 1892.
- **A row of cottages of about 1835** behind where the present shops and the Railway Inn are, from about number 112 to 144 Ashley Road, perhaps as many as 20 in all, not on the tithe map, later known as Poplar Grove. One of these was incorporated into the Railway Inn and some were demolished to build the three-storey shops but seven still exist behind numbers 116 to 124, now converted to offices.
- **Three thatched cottages around Bath Place** which fronted Peel Causeway. One was marked as Cottage and Garden (15) on the map when William Wood was living there and had a garden running up to Willowtree Road. It was demolished in 1901 when the present shops to the west of Bath Place were built. A second cottage existed to the east of Bath Place with a garden running to Hale View when George Amery who had lost a leg by a canon ball at Waterloo and was a basket maker; he died about 1859 and his son continued the business. A third was where Hale View is and had a shippon and its garden extending east to Broomfield Lane and here lived James Gresty who kept a cow or two. Both cottages were demolished about 1862 to build Midland View and Hale View. The ditch from Spring Bank crossed Peel Causeway between the second and third of these cottages and fed a pond at Peel Causeway Farm.
- **Peel Causeway Farm** (the present building is mid 17th century), its outbuildings, orchard and meadow were where Hale Station is now. Tarbolton reported that the farmer in 1838

was Robert Bowne (the 1838 Tithe Apportionments confirm this and he was still there in the 1850s), and that the farm was called Peel Hall Farm at that time. The area of the causeway around the farm had been cobbled.

- **Rose Cottage**, a detached house and outbuildings on the site of Number 161 Ashley Road, on the left just past what was a bank at the bottom of Victoria Road, in which Peter Long who was a tanner and carrier, lived; adjacent was a pair of semi-detached cottages.
- **Ollerbarrow Hall** and its outbuildings between Leigh Road and Cambridge Road, most of which were demolished in 1906 leaving just the 1740 farm building at the bottom of Leigh Road. In 1838 Thomas and John Clarke were farming there as the Clarkes had done since the mid-18th century.
- **A black and white thatched cottage** opposite to Cambridge Road, demolished in 1895, in a field called 'Buildings and Garden' (39). The lower storey was sandstone similar to Bowdon Church and the upper showed oak beams.

The buildings in fields (15) and (16) are on elongated pieces of land clinging to the causeway. Peel Causeway Farm was on the edge of the causeway and on the edge of Sand Field so must have had reasonable drainage. Ollerbarrow Farm was at the bottom of a gentle slope between Leigh Road and Cambridge Road and probably had reasonable drainage on the deep sand and access to a spring for drinking water.

Ollerbarrow Hall/Farm and Bank Hall were still moated at the start of the 20th century and Tarbolton said that Peel Way Hall was also moated. It is possible that Thorley Moor Farm, Peel Causeway Farm and Hale Field Farm were also stockaded and/or moated since they are associated with the word 'peel'. It may be that all of the farms in the area were stockaded and/or moated for the practical storage of water and to demonstrate wealth, if not for defence.



*What remains of Poplar Grove today; the remaining seven 1835 houses have been converted into offices; originally there may have been as many as 20, they overlooked a brook to the south, and beyond that a marshy field where their well was, now Spring Road.*

The seven old cottages now used as offices etc at the back of 116 to 124 Ashley Road probably date from about 1835-40 and are too late to appear on the tithe map. They were known as Poplar Grove, and face the line of the old brook and may have been added to a line of older thatched cottages. Originally there were at least two more behind 112/114 Ashley Road, and others behind 128 to 144, possibly 20 cottages in all. Access was down five entries, one now built over between 100 and 112 Ashley Road plus entries from what is now Spring Road and from Peel Avenue. There were seven families in these houses in 1851, mainly single people and still seven before the 1914-18 War. The cottages were probably part of the row demolished in 1855 which were themselves demolished in 1880 to build the three-storey shops. When built, they had a reasonable view over the stream with a field beyond with donkeys in it and a well. The presence of Poplar Grove may explain why Charles Holt built numbers 100 to 118 Ashley Road with no front gardens, implying that here Poplar Grove houses existed behind numbers 100 to 110. In 1904 Henry Gibbon at number 124 converted two of these cottages into a workshop and two more into stables.

Local builder and property owner Alan Gibbons believed that a road may have passed the front of the Poplar Grove houses originally and if so they would have running water at their doorstep and that is where Peel Way Hall would have been. Another local says that Poplar Grove originally emerged with a sign on to Spring Road at the entry opposite the side of the Cheshire Midland. Some of these old cottages were altered in 2003 from workshops to become offices.

## Tracks in the Hale Area

The likely effect on travel over of the boggy ground surrounding Peel Causeway in the early 19th century would be:

- There would be a good track down Peel Causeway from Sandy Lane (now Stamford Road, Bowdon) to Peel Causeway Farm (now Hale Station), and on up Broomfield Lane through to Hale Barns.
- Although it is shown on Burdett's map of 1777 and the 1838 Tithe Map, the present Ashley Road through the shops at that time must have been nearly impassable in winter because of the marsh, with Ollerbarrow Farm sitting on the edge on drier sandy land. Alfred Tarbolton describes it as a 'muddy lane' even in 1885 when he moved to number 251 Ashley Road with his new wife. The moat at Ollerbarrow Hall could have been fed from the Leigh Road/Cambridge Road area but more likely it would have been from the boggy brook which ran down Ashley Road.
- To the south of Hale Station is a naturally raised ridge, Heath Road named after the Heath Field it ran through, and perhaps on to Ashley Heath (which was the area between Ashley Mill and South Downs Road). The 1874 Ordnance Survey map shows that Heath Road continued as a track almost to South Downs Road probably basically servicing New Farm's fields but the Tithe map shows several buildings along the Hale/Bowdon boundary. According to local testimony, until the 1930s a footpath continued on to South Downs Road, emerging between Southwold and Hurstdene/Oak Lyn (now Pheasant Rise) where the sharp bends are at Motley Brook. This may have originated as a way from Peel Causeway Farm and New Farm (which was situated to the south of Hale Bowling Green on Ashley Road) to Ashley Mill via Motley Bank.
- A dry access to Ollerbarrow Hall/Farm would have been down Cambridge Road, which shows as a track from Hale Field Farm on Queens Road, or across from the New Farm area via a short causeway. This causeway is likely anyway to give Ollerbarrow Farm access to Ashley Mill and part of the track probably still exists between Ashley Road and Cecil Road as a passage next to the Bowling Green.
- 19th century maps show that the access to New Farm was from Heath Road, then called Clegg's Lane. Heath Road would have formed the access route from Peel Causeway Farm to its fields, which were centred on the New Farm area. New Farm was built in 1860 and was financed by the railway company because of the closure of Peel Causeway Farm in order to build Hale Station. New Farm was built conveniently half way along Peel Causeway Farm's fields and soon afterwards in 1868 the land was drained by diverting all of the springs out of Spring Bank, enabling houses to be built along this stretch of Ashley Road from about 1875.

Further pointers to the older tracks include:

- Heath Road is in line with the southern section of South Downs Road and it is conjectured that this was the original way from Peel Causeway to Ashley across relatively dry ground, either via Motley Bank or Ashley Mill Lane North.
- The Old Bleeding Wolf Farm/Inn was at right angles to the present building, facing Ashley

and situated on Heather Road rather than Ashley Road when rebuilt in late Victorian times. Heather Road is in effect an extension of Park Road (which was called Dob Lane).

- The road to Ashley over the Bollin bridge crosses field boundaries whereas Ashley Mill Lane North doesn't and it is likely that the Bollin was forded a bit nearer to Ashley Mill.
- One old route from Knutsford to Altrincham was via Rostherne and Ashley, avoiding the gradient up the Dunham Road and avoiding turnpike tolls.

## Summary of Peel Causeway findings

The Name 'Peel Causeway' may date from Roman times but the first mention is in the 15th century and is derived mainly from the Latin words *palus*, a stake, and *calx*, pebbles or limestone. It may have referred to the track between the present traffic lights at the bottom of Stamford Road, Bowdon and the present Hale Station and indicated 'the causeway to the palisaded farm', ie Peel Causeway Farm, now the site of Hale Station. It may however mean a track leading to a palisaded look-out and defensive tower, as in the Scottish Borders.



The **Roads** up to about 1868 in the present Hale Village area were:

- Peel Causeway leading east from Bowdon to Broomfield Lane and on to Hale Barns. The causeway itself would stretch from Spring Bank to the west end of Broomfield Lane at its junction with Victoria Road.
- South Downs Road linking the several farms on Langham Road below Bowdon Church with Moss Farm and the Park Road and Bankhall farms and Ashley.
- Park Road (Dob Lane) leading east from Old Farm (still on Hill Top Drive) and Yew Tree Farm (where Birchfields is now) to the Old Bleeding Wolf Farm and to Moss Farm on South Downs Road.
- Bankhall Lane (Nunnery Lane) running east from Hale Barns and Bank Hall Farm to Ashley Heath Farm (now The Old House on South Downs Road) and Ashley Mill.

*The line of the brook running out of Bowdon Hill, at the back of Ashley Road shops from Peel Avenue looking down Pennington's entry to their workshops and towards Poplar Grove; the garage on the left incorporates a stone plaque labelled 'Hale Terrace 1849' from the original terrace of four houses erected in 1849 where the Railway Inn is after it was rebuilt in 1927.*

The **Tracks** up to about 1868 in the present Hale Village area may have been:

- Thorley Moor Lane linking Thorley Moor Farm (opposite to St. John's Church) going behind Spring Bank to Hollybank at Garner Close then along Marlborough Road to Moss Farm on South Downs Road and on to Ashley Mill.
- Heath Road linking Peel Causeway Farm (and later New Farm) with Ashley Mill and Ashley.
- Ollerbarrow Road and Cambridge Road linking Hale Field Farm with Ollerbarrow Farm/Hall (and possibly on to Ashley Mill).

Thus it is conceivable that the original road/track from Altrincham south through Peel Causeway to

Ashley would have gone:

- South behind Spring Bank and turned east down Stamford Road and over the traffic lights into Ashley Road; then
- East down Ashley Road to Hale Station (this was the section called Peel Causeway), then
- Turned south up Heath Road to South Downs Road and on to Ashley Heath and Ashley.

It is interesting that Heath Road was considered for a main road to Ashley after the railway came to Hale and caused delays at the level crossings.

In addition an ancient track may have run in a fairly straight line from Bowdon Church to the south via Ashley Mill, by-passing Peel Causeway.

The **draining of the area** by the Spring Bank to Motley Brook drain in 1868 enabled the present Ashley Road shopping area to be developed (as houses), before which there would be little call for this part of Ashley Road. House building started about 1870 in the shopping area and in 1875 on the corner of Warwick Road. The track which became Bower Road, pre-dated that part of Ashley Road from St. Peter's Church to the Bleeding Wolf.

**Springs** ran in ditches down both sides of Ashley Road from Bowdon Hill and Spring Bank to Hale Station, the northern one forming the boundary between Hale and Altrincham. On the south side there appears to have been sufficient water to drive Seddon's worsted mill at Hollywood/Garner Close on Stamford Road, Bowdon from 1775 and a water wheel at Peel Way Hall, now 124 Ashley Road. The water continued down both sides of Ashley Road in a south-easterly direction to Ollerbarrow Farm at Leigh Road after which the northerly branch ran over to join the southerly one at New Farm. At this point the ditch ran in a southerly direction down Crescent Road, possibly associated with the snicket between Cecil and Crescent roads. It then continued over Cecil Road probably through the post-war houses at about number 114 into the Donkey Pitch on the south-eastern part of Altrincham Grammar School playing fields where it can still be seen as a deep, wide ditch running between big ash and oak trees (and which is a Site of Special Scientific Interest). It then continued to become Motley Brook on South Downs Road.

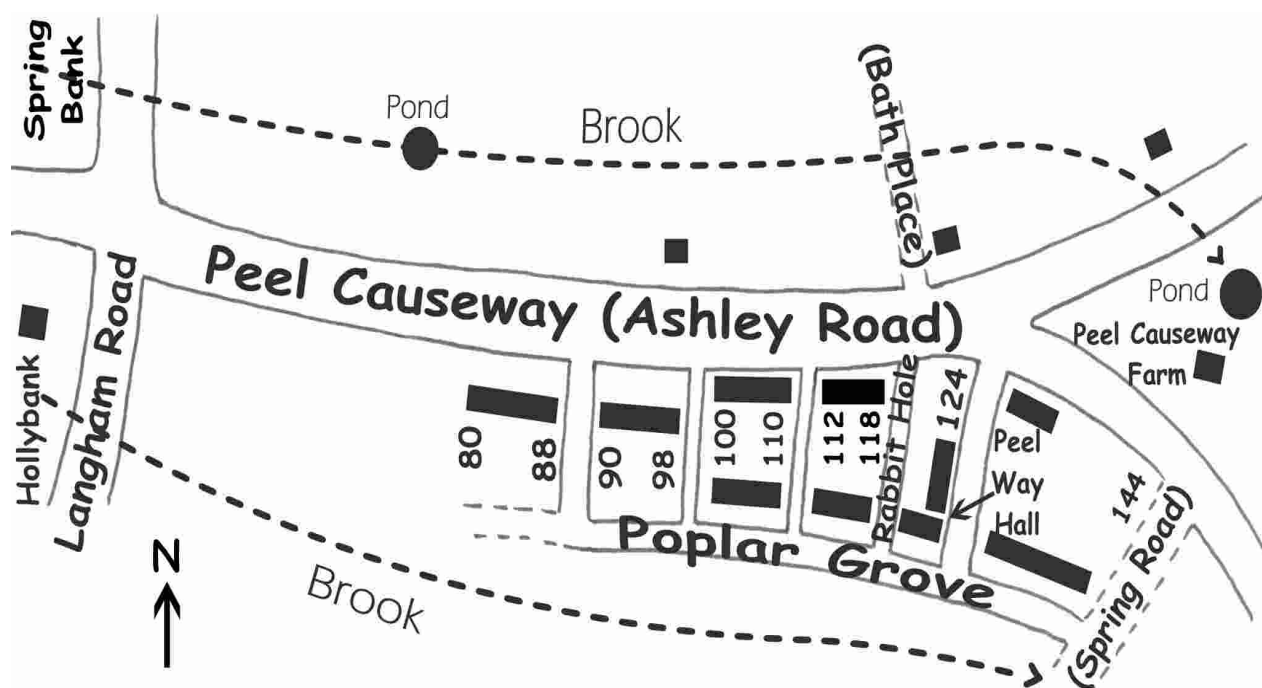
In addition a spring probably ran out of Bowdon Hill near the present Bowdon Hotel (originally the Bowdon Hydropathic Establishment) and ran across the Grammar School playing fields in an open ditch which formed the Hale/Bowdon boundary. It joined the one from Ashley Road at South Downs Road to form Motley Brook which flows into the Bollin just west of Ashley Mill.

Most of these springs were diverted in 1868 into one brook in the ditch across the Grammar School playing fields, being culverted over to cross Ashley Road, later fully culverted in 1920 across the grammar school playing fields almost down to the Bollin. From the size of the present ditch and pond behind the Donkey Pitch and that still visible at Pheasant Rise off South Downs Road, it would seem that at times a good volume of water flowed. Even where there is only a shallow slope the ditches are still five feet deep and fifteen feet across although they may in part be artificial.

## Issues remaining

- Perhaps most farms were stockaded and moated in the 15th century, explaining the reference to 'Pele' in Peel Causeway, Hale Field and Thorley Moor (and others in Manchester and Cheshire). More research is needed.
- Peel Causeway may have run from the traffic lights at Spring Bank to Peel Causeway Farm (at Hale Station) or continued to Ollerbarrow Hall (at Leigh Road). Excavations may possibly help but most evidence will have been destroyed by building work.
- There is no mention of Poplar Grove in the records before 1900. There may be some confusion about which way the 1830s cottages previously on the site of the present 140 to 144 Ashley Road faced. It is likely that they were all part of Poplar Grove and faced south and were listed as Ashley Road in census records. It is probable that the present Poplar Grove is part of a long row of cottages on the edge of the brook, which road came out on to Spring Road where the present entry is next to the offices before number 2. Some of these cottages were rebuilt in 1855 and demolished in 1880 to build the shops at 136 to 144 Ashley Road. Poplar Grove is not shown on the 1838 Tithe Map of Hale which may point to its being nearer 1840. More research into the Stamford Papers may be useful.

## The Victorian development of Peel Causeway



*Peel Causeway in 1850 with current house numbers; Hollybank was where the 1775 worsted mill was situated; the pond to the east of Spring Bank was where Hale Cinema was built; Peel Causeway Farm became Hale Stationmaster's house, currently a vet's practice; the 'Rabbit Hole' was one of several entrances to Poplar Grove, one now built over.*

### Peel Causeway 1830s to 1849

Before 1849 there were only a couple of dozen buildings in Peel Causeway, some of which still remain, and the railway had not yet reached the area. However from 1849 building took off down Peel Causeway, which became a village in itself. Many of the facilities necessary to sustain life were then produced locally.

In 1849 Charles Holt bought the south side of Peel Causeway (80 to 118 Ashley Road) and built Willow Bank, 80 to 98, 80 to 88 first. He then built ten houses with shop fronts, numbers 100 to 118. This is presumably Charles Holt, Builder and Timber Merchant of Altrincham. Samuel Brown bought the rest of the south side to Spring Road and built Hale Terrace, 126 to 132, again in 1849, now the site of the Railway Inn.



*John Siddeley's Peel Causeway Brewery which operated from 1866 to 1908 for sale. They brewed 'Siddeley's Purge', recreated for the Millennium celebrations at the Railway Inn opposite; the brewery had developed on the triangle of land opposite to the Railway Inn from a house built in 1851 which by 1853 had become a beer house, but by 1900 the brewery was regarded as an eyesore and Hale Council bought it in 1908 with the intention of demolishing it and extending Brown Street through to Heath Road and Ashley Heath to avoid hold-ups at the railway crossings but the road scheme never materialised (Cheshire Record Office).*

In 1863 Holt built The Willows, 125 Ashley Road, next to Willowtree Road for himself. Thomas Buck a builder of Bowdon built Claremont Place, a terrace of five houses, next door, again in 1863, and lived in number 143. East of Bath Place (then known as Buck's Entry and much narrower) Buck also built nine cottages he called Midland Terrace in 1863. Again in 1863 John Calderbank built the four cottages to east of Midland Terrace called Hale View. Five of the Midland Terrace cottages were converted into three shops in 1901 at the same time that the shops were built to the left of Bath Place.

## Early Builders in Peel Causeway

A summary of the development of buildings in Peel Causeway can be seen in the following tables:

Property	Builder	Year	Notes
<b>Ashley Road</b>			
80-88	Charles Holt	1849	Willow Bank
90-98	Charles Holt	1849	Willow Bank
100-110	Charles Holt	1850	
112-118	Charles Holt	??	
120-124	??	1894	Weetman's until 2003
126-132	Samuel Brown	1849	Hale Terrace, now the Railway Inn
134-144	Joseph Owen	1855	replaced by shops 1888 by Berry
The Willows	Charles Holt	1863	for himself
137-145	Thomas Buck	1863	Claremont Place
147-149	Thomas Buck	1901	to the west of Bath Place
<b>Midland Terrace</b>	Thomas Buck	1863	9 cottages
<b>Hale View</b>	John Calderbank	1863	4 cottages
<b>Spring Road</b>			
2-4	Joseph Owen	1855	



6-10	Samuel Brown	1855	
12-26	Charles Holt	1855	

In 1850 there were reported to be donkeys in a field behind 128 Ashley Road, probably until Spring Road was begun in 1855 (initially called Peel Crescent). Tarbolton described the area of the Railway Inn as a "*miniature Champs Elysée*." However James Johnson built a house in 1851 on the triangle of land opposite to The Railway Inn, sold it to Piers Lomax, a blacksmith who used it as a beer house. In 1860 John Henry Wright described as a brewer and beer retailer was in the property and eventually in 1866 Siddeley & Kent bought the house and extended the brewery.

## Peel Causeway from the 1851 census

Name	Occupation	Notes
Amery	Basket Maker	Cottage east of Bath Place
Berry, John	Gardener & coachman	Hale Terrace
Bourne, Robert	Farmer of 80 acres	Peel Causeway Farm
Broadhurst, Maria		
Coxon, Thomas	Bricklayer	Poplar Grove possibly
Gresty, Mary	Landed proprietor	Cottage where Hale View is
Halford, Peter	Tanner & coachman	Hale Terrace
Lowe, John	Linen merchant	Willow Bank
Royle, David	Agricultural labourer	Poplar Grove possibly
Royle, George	Agricultural labourer	Poplar Grove possibly
Walker, Alice	Landed proprietor	Willow Bank
Whittaker, Charles	Bricklayer	Poplar Grove possibly
Wood, William	Wheelwright	Cottage west of Bath Place

The heads of the household are taken from the 1851 Local Census. Only a couple of the new houses were occupied by 1851 (in Willow Bank).

James Berry is said to have opened a grocer's shop by 1851 but he is not in the census; he was also a rate collector. John Charles Holt, the builder of Willow Bank, was living there in 1851 but is not in the census.

Between 1851 and 1900 there was much reorganisation of the Peel Causeway shops area with the Railway Tavern incorporating another two cottages at the front (128 to 132) and one at the back. About 1855 Joseph Owen pulled down the 1830s cottages at numbers 140 to 144 to build shops and houses to rent. He was living at the time at the White Cottage, Park Road, Bowdon and was a decorator by trade. These in turn were demolished in 1888 by William Berry, the blacking manufacturer who lived on the corner of Charcoal Road, Bowdon to build the substantial three-storey shops still remaining.

## Peel Causeway from the 1861 census

No.	Occupier	Occupation	Notes
138	John Halford, later Henry Hallam	Stationer & Post Office	Later moved to Victoria Road
140	Charles Whittaker	Licencee of beer house	
142	William Johnson	Tailor (previously in the southern two of three cottages on the site c1854)	Started the Peel Street Mission on Hale Road; later Schofields
144	Joseph Owen	Builder, father of William Owen, architect	Then William Johnson, later Burston & Nixon

William Johnson was a Peel Causeway tailor in the 1860s who started a Methodist Mission in Peel Street, later Peel Road, Hale at number 29; later a chapel was built in Oak Road. When he was an apprentice in Bollington in the 1820s, he had heard his father hum as he went about his work:

*“Those Hale Barns lads, as I've heard say,  
They go poaching night and day:  
They go in the day to look them out,  
They fetch them at night when the watch are about.”*

## Balshaw's directory of 1858

Balshaw's directories of 1850 to 1860 and his *Stranger's Guide to Altrincham* of 1858 also give a snapshot of activities in the Peel Causeway area at that time:

Name	Occupation
Amery, George	Basket maker
Appleton, Elizabeth	
Bailey, Mark	
Baines, Thomas	Gardener
Balshaw, John	Peel Crescent (Spring Road); possibly John Balshaw who ran Altrincham Post Office
Barlow, John	
Barlow, Miss	
Bateman, Thomas	Boarding house
Berry, John & James	Grocers
Bourne, Robert & Mary Anne	Farmers, Peel Causeway Farm
Bradbury, Ann	
Bradshaw, Mrs	Laundress
Brown, William, Samuel, Mary	Grocers
Buck, Thomas	Joiner & builder
Burgess, John	Hay cutter
Burrows, Mrs	
Chear, Elizabeth	Bleeder with leeches
Chear, Thomas Hardy	Kept 12 donkeys at the back; used to take children to Bowdon Church
Clarke, John	Schoolmaster
Clarke, Richard	
Clayton, John	Farmer, New Farm
Darbyshire, Jane	
Delaney, William	Tea dealer

Evans, Agnes	Laundress
Fitton, Mary	Laundress
Foster, John	Clockmaker, Willow Bank
Gratrix, James	Gardener
Harrison, Ralph	Policeman
Holford, John	Butcher
Holford, Peter	
Holt, Charles	Retired timber merchant & builder
Johnson, William	Tailor
Knowles, Mrs	
Krauss, Hannah	
Leigh, Zebulon	Farmer, Ollerbarrow Farm (previously T & J Clarke)
Long, Peter	Tanner, Rose Cottage
Marsden, Samuel	Willow Bank
Medcalf & Chester	Milliners
Moult, William	Gardener
Platford, John	
Renshaw, Mark	Shop at about 118
Rushton, George	Hollybank, Stamford Road, Bowdon
Siddeley, Mr	Surgeon
Sykes, Albert	Willow Bank
Smyth, Charles Stuart	
Venables, Peter	
Whittaker, Charles	Beerseller, The Railway Tavern
Whittaker, William	Bricklayer
Winfield, Anne	
Wood, Hannah	Laundress
Wood, William	Wheelwright
Wright, John Henry	Beerseller at what became Peel Brewery

## Peel Causeway from the 1901 census

The Local Census for 1901 indicates trades in Peel Causeway, all of which except the brewery had accommodation over the shop.

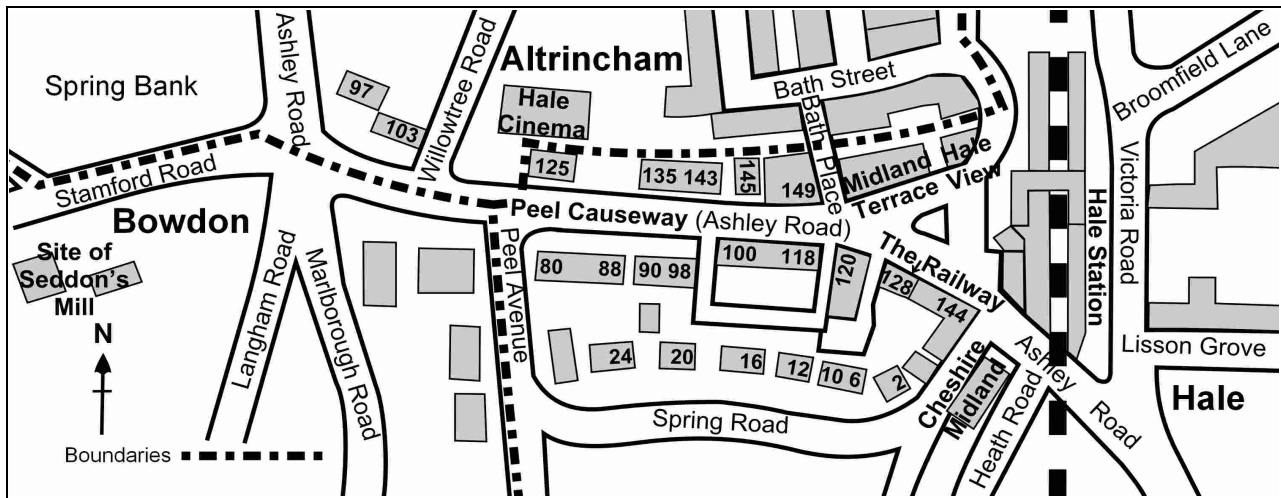
No.	Name	Occupation	Notes
100	Frank Jackson	Cycle manufacturer	Started before 1898 at 22 Victoria Road; later Herbert Jackson who also sold motorbikes
102	James Sperring	Bootmaker	
104	Wilson Crossley	Confectioner	
106	Maud Shaw	Milliner	Later Weetman
108	William Rodgers	Fruiterer	
110	Lorenzo Comer	Fishmonger	
112	Lancashire & Yorkshire Bank	Banking	
<b>entry</b>			Now absorbed into 112
114	Bella Turnbull	Draper	Walter Davies by 1911 (watchmaker) who was later at 20 Victoria Road
116	James Turner	Confectioner	
118	John Renshaw	Grocer	Later Hale Library
<b>entry</b>			To Poplar Grove (the Rabbit Hole)
120	John Sproston	Butcher	Soon afterwards, Lewis's Dairy
122	Elizabeth Gibbon	Hairdresser & tobacconist	Later William Whitehead
124	Henry Gibbon	Plumber & ironmonger	Henry Gibbon 1898, then Scholes & Weetman 1904, Edward Weetman 1905
<b>entry</b>			To Poplar Grove
126	William Brocklehurst	Coal dealer	Here since about 1870 & Brocklehursts still own land at the back
128/ 130	Caroline Mainwaring	Beer retailer	Railway Tavern, later took over 126
132	William Roberts	Grocer	John Berry set up the first grocers in Hale in 1855; the Railway Tavern absorbed it in the 1930s
134	John Southern	Baker	
136	William Harrison	Chemist	Later Robert Tootill
138	Isaac Bush	Fruiterer	Lived at Ashley Heath (1879-1956)
140	Jane Hallam	Stationer	Moved to 28 Victoria Road in 1902
142	George Ridgeway	Draper	Albert Schofield by 1911
144	Burston & Nixon	Grocers	Had stables behind in Spring Road
145	William Weetman	Painter & decorator	From 1899
Brewery	John Siddeley	Brewer	

## Peel Causeway in 1951

From local testimony, occupations in Peel Causeway just after World War II were:

No.	Name	Occupation	Notes
<b>south side</b>			
98	Alf Salmon	Plumber	
<b>entry</b>			To Poplar Grove
100	Doug Hartley	Cycles	Lived over the shop for a while
102	Lilian Bayliss	Corsetry	Lived over the shop
104	Hilda Bates	Confectioner	Lived over the shop
106	Walker	Wool shop	
108	Freeman, Hardy, Willis	Shoe shop	
110	Weetman	Upholsterer	
112	Frank Lea	Picture frame maker	Later Leech, hair stylist
<b>entry</b>			To Poplar Grove, gone
114	?		
116	Mrs Bray	Confectioner	
118	Dennis Bryan	Radio shop	Previously Combs bikes etc
<b>entry</b>			To Poplar Grove
120	Samuel Lewis	Dairy	Lewis's were farmers at Ashley until 1935; closed 1962
122	Mrs Smedley	Sweet shop	
124	Edward Weetman	Ironmongers	Several generations
<b>wide entry</b>			To Poplar Grove
126	William Brocklehurst	Coal merchant	Rear of Railway Inn
128/132	Railway Inn	Pub	
134	Smith	Electrician	
136	?	Pram shop	
138	Donald Booth	Butcher	
140	Frank Barnes	Newsagent	
142	Schofields	Hosier/drapery	
144	Burston & Nixon	Grocers	
<b>Spring Rd.</b>			
Cheshire Midland	Booth	Hotel	
<b>north side</b>			
145	William Weetman	Decorator	Employed 200 painters before the war
147	Garners	Nurserymen	Syd Armsden (motorbikes) from 1955
149	Noel Ogden	Lawnmowers	Closed 2007
<b>Bath Place</b>			
151	Eddie Price	Cobbler	
153	Swallow	Furnisher	
155	Syd Armsden	Motorbikes	
157	Ernest Sheldon	French polisher	
<b>Brown St.</b>			
159		Station master	Was 161, Peel Causeway Farm

## *Peel Causeway in 1972*



## Peel Causeway in 2001

An analysis in 2001 by the author confirmed the gradual loss of small shops and a substantial increase in restaurants and offices, some absorbing two of the original buildings.

No.	Name	Occupation	Shop fronts	Notes
<b>south side</b>				
106/108	Hale Wine Bar	Restaurant	2	
110	Porcupine	Stripped pine furniture	1	
112/114		Restaurant	2	New
116	The Bose Centre	Sound solutions	1	
118	Lee Richfield Ltd	Recruitment	1	
118a	Coffey	Property repairer	0	Back of 118
<b>entry</b>				To Poplar Grove
120a	Adam Black	Upholsterer	0	Back of 120
120/124	Weetmans	Hardware	3	Alan Gibbons from 1968
<b>wide entry</b>				To Poplar Grove
126	Green Garage (Brocklehurst owns)	Garage	0	Back of Railway Inn
128/132	Railway Inn	Pub	3	
134	Baranda	Restaurant	1	
136	Hale Newsagents	Newsagent	1	
138	Great Sun	Food takeaway	1	
140	Milton Firman	Solicitors	1	
142/144	Pizza Express	Restaurant	2	
<b>north side</b>				
145a	Beauchamp Charles	Accountants	1	
147	BOA	Hairdressers	1	
149	Fred's	Delicatessen	1	now empty
151	Danilos	Restaurant	1	
153	Porters	Nail bar	1	
155	Clarkes	Art shop	1	
157	Waterford Framing	Picture framing	1	
Station House	Vets	Vet	0	

## Conclusions

In 1851 six trades and no shops were listed and in 1861 two trades, one shop, and one pub. Balshaw in 1858 lists 23 trades and six shops. In 1901 the number of trades was ten and there were now 13 shops with only modest changes by 1951 to 11 trades and 18 shops. However by 2001 all the trades had vanished, the shops had reduced to 8 and 10 food outlets had appeared, some taking up two shop fronts. A general conclusion from all of the analyses is that there was a rapid increase in the number of shops in Peel Causeway in the late Victorian era at the expense of trades. The shops themselves are now in decline and are being replaced by restaurants (and offices down Poplar Grove).

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## BOOK 3: ALTRINCHAM AREA VIRTUAL TOURS



*The Old Town Hall, Old Market Place, Altrincham*

# Altrincham Boundary Walk & Map

This article was written in 2014 and is mainly a snapshot of that time.

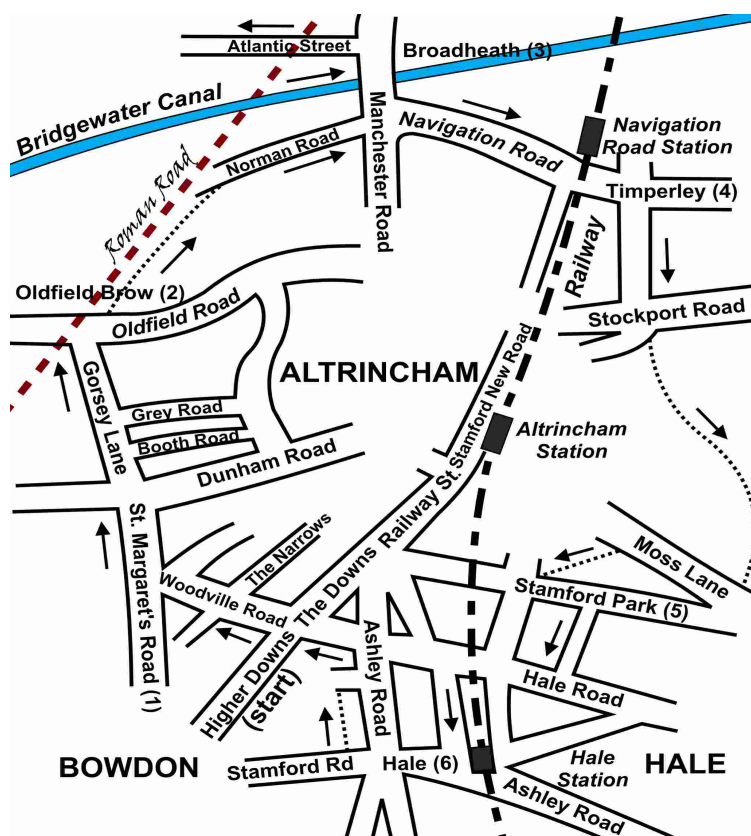
## The Origins of the Altrincham Boundary Walk

Parish boundaries sometimes go back to Saxon times and it may still be possible to trace the enormous Bowdon Parish boundary, which covered about 30 square miles between Ashley in the south and the Mersey in the north. The Altrincham boundary however is much younger and probably dates from the 13th century. A Royal Charter was sealed by Edward I in 1290 and was followed by Hamo de Masci V's own Borough Charter, which created Altrincham as a market borough.

The Beating of the Bounds by the Court Leet has been going on since then and has continued with breaks. The beating was carried out to define Altrincham's boundary before accurate maps were drawn and to check on any illegal alterations to fences. Beating took place by hitting boundary markers or *meres* with willow twigs but only one original marker remains. However, wall markers such as 'D/A' indicating the Dunham/Altrincham boundary and 'A/H' indicating the Altrincham/Hale boundary still exist. The Bowdon section defines the old boundary between Dunham and Altrincham, which existed until 1920 when a large area of Dunham was transferred to Altrincham to allow its expansion into Oldfield Brow. In 1920 the beating of the bounds was transferred to the new boundary briefly and a photographic record made.

The beating custom was ended in 1921 but beating of the original boundary was revived in 1974 and takes place on the second Sunday in July. Fourteen new marker plaques were erected but many have vanished. However, small square red concrete flags were set in the pavement in 1984 along all of the town part of the route are an excellent guide. The Boundary Walk is described from the official starting point at 1 Higher Downs, Bowdon but it can be joined anywhere (such as Hale Station or Broadheath) and done in sections.

The walk follows a clockwise route around Altrincham from Higher Downs, along St. Margaret's Road, to Oldfield Brow, along the line of the Roman road to Broadheath, to Timperley, Stamford Park, Hale Station, and back to Higher Downs. If the boundary is walked, it is eight miles and will take about five hours with a break. Boots will be necessary for some parts in wet weather and the walk is best undertaken in good weather.



The narrative below is based on one produced by Dr Don Bayliss as the Charter Walk and published by Trafford Leisure Services, together with the Altrincham Court Leet guide, notes for walk visitors by Chris Hill, with additions from Bernard Champness on the Broadheath industrial Estate.

The modern names of roads and places are used generally, with any earlier ones given. The number after a street name in a paragraph title refers to the number on the map. A **highlighted Surname** refers to a brief biography in this website. ***Bold Italics*** indicates changed walking directions.

## Higher Downs (start)

Higher Downs was originally the upper part of The Downs.

Start at 1 Higher Downs where there is a boundary stone of about 1840 in the garden wall marking the Altrincham/Dunham Massey boundary, with a benchmark over it. There is also a green plaque on the wall of the house placed by the Court Leet.. This is probably on the line of a minor Roman road to Ringway past the present St. Margaret's Church to Two Gates in Oldfield Brow, and the boundary probably originally followed this line exactly.



*The listed Altrincham/Dunham Massey boundary stone with a benchmark above it.*

**Hugh Wallis**, who was a leading figure in the Northern Art Workers Guild and the Red Rose Guild, had a large house and studio across The Downs where the 1960s houses are at number 80, to the right of the Victorian pillar-box.

### ***Take Woodville Road towards Bentinck Road.***

St. Anne's Home was on the left, now St. Anne's Gardens, and is covered in the Altrincham Walk. Woodville House, the large red brick Jacobean style building on the right, was the 1908 manual telephone exchange and a red telephone box has been retained to remind us. On the right just after it is The Narrows and on the left Bowdon Road, both of which form part of an ancient burying way from Old Market Place, Altrincham to Bowdon Church which continues along The Firs. The latter was known as Burying Lane along which the parish hearse would be drawn. In about 1800 there were still stiles to negotiate, later converted to stumps, at The Narrows as the cortege left Altrincham Town to cross the fields to Bowdon Church for burial. There is a benchmark on the corner of Bowdon Road.

The house Calabar on the right just after The Narrows may be partly 17th century. Downs Cottage on the left is listed and contains a 16th century staircase which originally led to the Stamford Gallery in Bowdon Old Church. Note the old coach houses tucked away down a track on the left. The area to the right of Woodville Road down to Broadheath was a large medieval open field.

The boundary actually drops down Bentinck Road and curves across to St. Margaret's Church and the snicket just after to Groby Road is probably a replacement for the original boundary route.

***However, bear left then right into St. Margaret's Road.***

There is a benchmark at the top of Groby Road.

## **St. Margaret's Road (1)**

St. Margaret's Road was originally called Turf Lane and is thought to be part of a minor Roman road to Ringway. **John Ireland**, the composer, was born in 1879 at Inglewood (built 1870), opposite and to the left of Woodville Road, where he lived until 1893. There is a plaque on the gate. Haigh Lawn to its right was an auxiliary hospital during the last war.

Towards the end of St. Margaret's Road there is a Victorian pillar-box on the left followed by the 1921 War Memorial, which was originally on the Dunham Road opposite to the church.

St. Margaret's Church ahead on the Dunham Road in an area known as Highgate, was built in 1855 from brick-sized Yorkshire stone and is listed. It was commissioned in this prominent position by Lord Stamford to rival St Mary's Bowdon, before there was any housing in the area. The church and the road are named after Lord Stamford's sister Margaret and Lord Stamford had the road moved, straightened and widened to give the view of the church. It is likely that the original Turf Lane was in line with Gorsey Lane. The church had a 100 foot spire that was taken down in 1927 because it was unsafe, possibly due to traffic. **Dr Hewlett Johnson** was the curate from 1905 and then vicar from 1908 to 1924. He became Dean of Manchester, then Dean of Canterbury, and was known as The Red Dean because of his left-wing views. The church spent £500,000 on the tower and other areas in 2003/4.



*Park Farm, Gorsey Lane, Altrincham.*

The boundary goes between the church and the vicarage to its right and there is a marker near the gate of the new vicarage. It has been said that the boundary used to go through the vicar's study in the old vicarage but maps show it going through the grounds. The Court Leet used to have sherry with the vicar during their boundary walk

The Court Leet walk goes down Gorsey Lane opposite and turns right into Booth Road, Wainwright Road and The Close. Two houses in The Close have built into their deeds the right of the Court Leet to go across their property and they hold a key to allow access. The walk emerges on Oldfield Road where there is a small boundary plaque. However the following route to 'Two Gates' is shorter and more interesting.

***Go on down Gorsey Lane to the left of the church to Oldfield Road.***

There are Dunham/Altrincham boundary markers in the form 'D/A' both in Booth Road and Grey



Road, put there at the insistence of Lord Stamford. At Booth Road is Park Farm where a local farmer Andrew Curtis **Sparkes** lived.

## Oldfield Brow (2)

Two Gates, earlier Two Yates, where Thomas Boswell stayed several times and Rommel's chauffeur lived in a converted outbuilding after the war, is on the line of the Roman road, which then continues down the track opposite towards Broadheath. The boundary however crosses this track and makes to the left of the Linotype building and crosses the canal, before bearing east to join up with the Roman road.

***Take the track opposite to Gorsey Lane across to Norman Road.***

Here we traverse the line of the Roman road from Chester to Manchester. The North Cestrian Grammar School dug here in 1964 and proved the existence of the road. The school uses the land for their sports ground, originally the cricket ground for Luke & Spencer who produced abrasive wheels. Before that Clibrans Nurseries used the land on both sides of the path from the 1870s. STAG undertook a further dig in 2003 and found masses of slightly imperfect abrasive wheels. In 1995/96 the road was excavated in Broadheath by the University of Manchester Archaeological Unit who found local evidence of Bronze Age occupation underneath from pollen. At the end of the track Norman Road turns left over the canal, which cuts through the boundary and through the ancient field system.



*Two Gates in Oldfield Brow, on the line of the Roman road.*



*The 1833 Warehouse & the Budenberg Haus Project looking west on the Bridgewater Canal.*

## Broadheath (3)

***Turn right along Norman Road to the Manchester Road.***

In 1885 an American engineer, George Richards, opened a factory in Broadheath on what was to become one of the first industrial estates in the world. Good transport was available on the Bridgewater Canal and by road to Manchester. The Broadheath industries began to evolve as the first in the world, pre-dating Trafford Park by 10 years, which is usually described as the first but was post-1896. Later every major works here had its own rail link. Famous names (mainly engineering) included Budenbergs (pressure gauges), Churchills (precision grinding), Kearns (machine tools), Linotype (typesetting machinery), Luke & Spencer (abrasive wheels), Tilghmans (shot-blasting machinery), Thornton-Pickard (cameras), Record Electrical (electrical measuring equipment), and George Richards (very large machine tools).

The old Linotype Works (1897), offices grade II listed, is on the left and is now occupied by several businesses including Altrincham Glass. The Linotype was originally established in Hulme Street, Manchester in 1896 but moved to Broadheath in 1897. It supplied the world with typesetting machines to the early 1980s until replaced by computer typesetting. The clock in the tower was rung three times to summon employees to work. The major road, which originally went directly into the estate, is called Lady Kelvin Way in honour of Lord Kelvin who worked with Linotype in his later years. Other roads on the estate are named after directors.

Andrew Curtis Sparkes a local farmer whose Park Farm was on Gorsey Lane and whose fields ran down to the canal, sold land to the Linotype and Budenbergs. In 1905 he blockaded the Linotype to try to prevent further expansion of the estate. He dug a trench and parked wagons across the track used by the Linotype to move machines out to the Manchester Road. Linotype took him to High Court and won. He was the chairman of the National Farmers' Union Insurance. His grandson, **Dr. Curtis Albert Sparkes** eventually became the Technical Director of Kearns and lived at Two Gates on Oldfield Road. Kearns were just beyond the canal on Atlantic Street and specialised in very large precision horizontal boring machines with a machine shop with a 20-foot thick concrete floor. All of these precision engineers used to work by the train timetable and stop work as a train passed through.

## Budenbergs

After Linotype are the remains of Budenbergs (1914) who were world leaders in the design and manufacture of pressure gauges. They were capable of grinding to 5 millions of an inch. The clock tower incorporated a 32-foot column of mercury used to calibrate their calibration test gauges. The gauges are fully documented and can still be found all over the world on static and mobile engines such as ships and submarines. The Budenberg family ran the firm for four generations and came from Magdeberg, Germany originally. The firm moved to Salford and the site was developed as apartments in 2004/5.



*Budenbergs listed offices with its clock tower after the chimney was demolished, being converted to apartments.*

Weldon Road and Lawrence Road on the right

were part of a gated model village built from 1907 for Linotype company employees and which included sports grounds.

***At Manchester Road turn left, go over the bridge and cross Atlantic Street.***

Numbers 139/141 Manchester Road are listed.

The Bridgewater Canal was opened in 1763 to transport coal from Worsley to Manchester and extended to Altrincham and Lymm in 1765. James Brindley planned the canal in 1761 with Francis Edgerton, Duke of Bridgewater and the Countess of Stamford. The Countess insisted that the initially proposed route be changed to skirt the Dunham Estate. The canal carried stone, slates, marl, lime, wool, cotton, cloth, coal, corn, cheese, fruit and vegetables to Manchester, and night soil (the latter free of tax) was brought from Manchester and unloaded at Sale, Dunham and Timperley to fertilise market gardens. Cheshire farmers and landowners were allowed to transport cheese, grain and stone free of tolls. The canal was extended to Runcorn by 1775 and was used to import goods from the Mersey estuary to Manchester. Cotton was unloaded here for Greg's Mill at Styal.

On the left is the rest of the Broadheath Industrial Estate where about 12,000 were employed in various often-interrelated engineering industries in 1960 and had been the best in the world. The machine tool industry in Broadheath was still making big profits in the late 1950s but went downhill in the 1960s and many were making big losses by 1970. Most had gone by the mid 1970s, to be replaced by retail outlets. The causes of the collapse include failing to modernise, failing to work with universities, failing to train sufficient skilled engineers, inflation, and over-burdensome accounting methods. Italians, Germans and then the Japanese took over the machine tool industry in succession.

On the left is the site of Luke & Spencers who made abrasive wheels, which can be found buried around the area. The building on the opposite corner of Atlantic Street was a Cunliffe Brooks bank.

Atlantic Street was named after Atlantic Works where George Richards had traded in Philadelphia in the 1860s and 70s as Richards, London & Kelley, producing large-scale woodworking machinery, and who set up George Richards in 1884, initially producing woodworking machinery. Ben Tilghman also came from Philadelphia where his firm had developed sandblasting techniques in 1870, said to have been developed after seeing wind-blown sand cleaning window glass. Charles Churchill also came from the States.

Just past George Richard's Way is the listed Railway Inn and the Cheshire Cheese, then Sinderland Road. The boundary goes another 400 yards down Manchester Road past the listed St. Alban's Church, under the 1873 Timperley to Warrington line, past South Trafford College to Timperley Brook. It then back-tracks along Timperley Brook on the east side of the Manchester Road and follows the brook to Hale. We will follow a more practical route to cross the canal and railway later.

## **Davenport Lane**

***At Sinderland Road turn sharp left down Davenport Lane and follow this diagonal line across the Homebase car park.***

The boundary approximately followed the Roman road from Oldfield Brow to Broadheath and became disused in the 13th century. We are now going southwest towards Chester down the boundary and on the line of the Roman road which bypassed Altrincham. The University of

Manchester Archaeological Unit excavated here in 1995/6. There is a modern boundary marker on the corner shop where the Roman road rejoins the Manchester Road. Behind Davenport Lane is Huxley Street where on 25 October 1941 eight people were killed by two parachute mines.

The Broadheath Retail Park and much of the car park is on the site of George Richards, which was established in 1885 to build very large machine tools. Vast vertical boring mills, 35 feet in diameter were a specialty and were used to manufacture propellers for the Queen Elizabeth, Queen Mary, gun turrets for battleships, etc. Tilghmans, who produced shot-blasting equipment, was at the west end.

Pizza Hut is on the site of Thornton-Pickard, the camera firm who invented the roller-blind (or focal plane) shutter. Duke's Cottages, created from the former Altrincham Workhouse, were named after the Duke of Bridgewater, and were between Thornton-Pickard and the Manchester Road shops. The workhouse was built in 1756 on 10 acres of land donated by George Booth, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl of Warrington to the trustees of the workhouse to enable it to be self sufficient. It originally produced woollen yarns and worsted cloth and had nine looms in 1824.

The Atlantic Timber buildings at the crossroads incorporate a barn from a farm which was on the sub-station site ahead, the site of the first Altrincham Power Station built by Manchester Ediswan Co. of Broadheath in 1894 and fed by coal from the canal wharves nearby.

***Cross Atlantic Street and after the substation go down to the canal ; then turn left along the the Bridgewater Canal.***

The canal was the main force behind the later 18th and early 19th century growth of Altrincham but it declined from 1849 with the coming of the Manchester South Junction and Altrincham Railway.

On the right the listed offices of the Linotype can be seen with Linotype houses beyond. After that is the redevelopment of the Budenberg site with *Budenburg Haus* hanging over the canal, with the listed offices at the back incorporated. Next door is an 1833 grain warehouse known as the Bridge Works, later a flourmill. Canal boats went in under the arch and cranes unloaded goods into the warehouse for distribution by horse and wagon. The wharf of the south bank was used as a coal yard till about 1980. Along here 1852 was a lime-kiln, processing limestone from Buxton into quicklime by burning, essential for cleansing privys and the tanning industry, and slaking for whitewash and mortar.

The setts under the bridge have ribs which enabled the horses to get a better grip. Just to the east of the bridge are the filled-in concrete steps which allowed horses to be rescued after falling in the canal.

Fast passenger transport was developed on the canal from 1767 when it took an hour to get to Manchester from Broadheath. There were three boats a day each way. Passengers alighted on the right where the Old Packet House is, which is the 1767 packet (parcel) house/commuter terminal, the oldest canal warehouse in the world, demolished in 2023. The unloading area still exists in the basement



*The Old Packet House pub  
(Altrincham Area Image)*



of the hire shop and the building originally had three storeys. The Sea Cadets building just beyond on the left is on the site of the canal stables.

In 1851 St. George's Church started a floating mission church here and it was still in use in 1871.

## **Broadheath Bridge**

***Leave the canal just after the Sea Scouts building and turn left over the bridge to stand on Broadheath Bridge.***

The bridge was originally built over the canal in 1765 as a very narrow bridge but it was widened in 1830, 1907, 1935 and 1988. The plaque on the bridge tells its history and was cast by **Hugh Wallis**. There is a trig point at the Navigation Road end of the bridge.

***Turn left down Navigation Road and on a mile to the railway crossings.***

The Old Packet House pub on the left dates from the construction of the canal and the buildings to its left are where goods were unloaded. The Navigation Inn opposite was built in 1801. The road was originally called Stamford Road which continued to Altrincham as the present Grosvenor Road. The Rigby Memorial School was where Trafalgar House now is on the right. The school formed a football club in 1891 which became the Altrincham Association Football Club in 1903. Perhaps they played on Navigation Road Recreation Ground further along on the left. Jock McAvoy (Joe Bamford), the 1930s champion boxer, lived just past here at a shop when young.

The railway was built in 1849 and Navigation Station in 1931. Until the 1960s there was an 18th century farm just northeast of the crossings.

## **Timperley (4)**

***Go over Navigation Road railway crossings into Wellington Road to the bridge over Timperley Brook.***

Timperley Brook flows out of Ringway and Hale Moss and in part is the ancient Altrincham/Timperley boundary. There is a Court Leet plaque near here.

***Turn right into Woodlands Parkway along to Stockport Road.***

The railway crossing was known as Barlow's Crossing in the 19th century after a local landowner. Woodlands Parkway is the western edge of a former estate which **Brooks** the banker had intended to build. He laid out what is now Woodlands Parkway and Wellington Road as the main estate roads but only built about ten houses before he died. The Woodlands Hotel was at the northern end of the parkway was developed from two of these houses and demolished in 2003. There is another Court Leet plaque on the Stockport Road bridge.

***Cross the Stockport Road and take the path (Lovers' Walk) at the side of the Timperley Brook.***

The site of Timperley Old Hall, which was occupied to about 1847 and is still moated, is behind the trees on the left. Excavations from 1989 into the early 90s revealed a Saxon hearth of the 9th century and dated the earliest building on the site to the 13th century which was owned by the de Masci family, and the last one 17th century. Stone Age and Bronze Age artifacts have also been

found here.i

The oldest Stone Age artifact was carbon dated to 41,000BC but may have been carried by water or ice from elsewhere. Timperley Hall to the east has been dated at about 1800 with its listed outbuildings known as the Napoleonic Barns and the 1934 Golf Course behind. Trafford plan to uplift the area including King George V Pool to form a wildlife corridor through Stamford Park and John Leigh Park to Oldfield Brow and Broadheath.

***Cross the brook and keep it on the right, traversing the edge of the football field.***

## **King George's Pool**

King George V Pool ahead was constructed in 1910 and given by the Earl of Stamford to Altrincham in 1937 in memory of George V. It was much used for fishing and ice-skating. It was originally called Dean's Pond and was one of the clay pits and brickyard run by Isaac Dean and his son 'Nib' (Abraham) in the second half of the nineteenth century. Some wildlife can be seen including moorhens, coots and an occasional heron.



*King George's Pool, originally Deans Pond, previously Dean's Claypit.*

***Go clockwise around the pool, which the boundary skirts, to the exit gate.***

After the pool with the brook on the left, the sites of the 19th century brickworks and gasworks are on the right, now the 2002/4 estate. The brickworks was in use until about 1920 with the 1847 Gasworks eventually taking over the whole site. This path was part of Lovers' Walk.

Originally few trees grew on Hale Moss but it had carrs at the edge where alders and birches grew. In the 19th century curlews were still to be seen here and orchids grew but some of it consisted of stinking pools of stagnant water and was blamed by some for the 1878/79 smallpox epidemic in Altrincham. Note the numerous drains coming into Timperley Brook. These drains started as 18th century cuts, which affected the moss's use for communal grazing, kindling, turf etc, but turf was still cut, often illegally, until about 1850. It was finally drained properly about 1900 and various small factories set up on the site.

## Hale Moss

Up to about 1900 Gypsies used to camp in the area and the 19th century census returns contain entries for a Gypsy caravan and a tent on the Moss. The Gypsies in Hale had well-known leaders Charles and Emperor Boss. In 1871 a Boss family on the Moss consisted of Uriah, his wife Simia, and Uriah's father Joseph. A second Boss family was Charles, his wife Syria and children Eli, Walter and Emperor. In 1881 the Boss family on the Moss consisted of Charles, Emperor, Uriah, Eli, Lyan, Walter, Sinai, Agness, and children Annie, Fannie and Rhoda. By 1913 Emperor (his real name) had abandoned the open air life as a horse dealer and was living at 24 Queens Road, Hale, appropriately in business as a furniture remover and firewood dealer. His father Charles was from Knutsford. He died in 1936 aged 71 and is buried in Hale Cemetery to the left of the entrance.



*Altrincham Football Club ground known as 'Moss Lane' built on Hale Moss in 1910.*

From here back to Higher Downs the boundary coincides with the present Hale/Altrincham/Bowdon boundary.

***Eventually bear right towards Golf Road, making for the Gas Board pylon.***

The Football Ground and allotments are intended to maintain an open space. The allotments were provided in the 1914-18 War and by 1918 there were 560 allotment plots in Hale.

## Bannermans

***Turn right along Moss Lane.***

Moss Lane was originally called Ham Lane. Opposite Stamford Park there is a marker flag in the pavement outside where the Bannermans Shirt Works was. Bannermans operated in 1805 in Manchester but moved to Ireland in 1976. The site was redeveloped for housing in 2003-4. To its right was Edward Holme Engineers where they had moved in 1926 but the original building had been occupied by the Saver Clutch Company in 1909 followed by the Ruby Cycle Company from 1919 to 1923. Warburton's abattoir was at the back.



*The site of Bannermans and Edward Holmes Engineers on Moss Lane.*

***Cross Stamford Park diagonally in a south-westerly direction to the end of Charter Road.***

## Stamford Park (5)

Lord Stamford donated the 16-acre park to Altrincham in 1880, half of it being in Hale and half in Altrincham. Strictly the boundary runs at the back of the Bannermans site and crosses through the duck pond, which was originally a bathing pool. The pond is just north of a channel cut three miles from Hale Moss in 1621 to supply water to Dunham Hall for the ponds, moat and mill. By 1780 it was also used to power cotton mills in Grosvenor Road.

In the park there is an original boundary stone and opposite the exit to the park there is a boundary plaque on the wall of the shop on Stamford Park Road at the bottom of Hawthorn Road.

## Boundary Markers

***Bear right along Stamford Park Road and turn left into Finchley Road.***

Strictly the boundary goes up the next road (Ashfield) roughly to the first entry on the left and then cuts across the back gardens to Finchley Road. The red flags actually go up Ashfield Road but it is more interesting to go up Finchley Road.

***Go to the top of Finchley Road and turn left into Elm Road.***

There is a boundary marker inscribed 'A/H' on the bedroom windowsill of number 28 Finchley Road. There is another 'Hale/Altrincham' boundary marking in the garden wall of number 34 Elm Road and the boundary goes straight through the 4 inch gap between 32 and 34 to Hale Road.



*Four boundary markers between Stamford Park and Hale Road; clockwise from the top left: Stamford Park, Hale Road gatepost, Elm Road garden wall, Finchley Road window sill.*

The 'tree' roads here are built on the site of the original Hale's Town Fields, which were narrow strips of land made from an open field.

## Hale Road

***Turn right up Hawthorn Road and right on to Hale Road.***

Hale Road was originally called Long Lane and runs along a sand ridge. The boundary forms a large loop around the top of Ashfield Road, perhaps because of Money Ash Farm's fields.

Note the tiny Utley Field View opposite, which was built about 1860, older than Albert Road and Victoria Road, and looked over Nearer and Further Utley Fields where the railway runs. The privies were converted to flush toilets in 1911. There is a fine boundary marker on a gatepost between numbers 65, 'Hale Side' and 67 Hale Road. Opposite used to be a stone lion on a wall; only the wall remains, the lion or one like it being in Trafford MBC Sale Waterside reception. Paul Young, the popular musician who died in 2000, lived at number 63 where there is a blue plaque. In the 1870s Bowdon Nursery was operating where Victoria Road and Albert Road are.

***Go over Hale Road Bridge and turn left down Brown Street.***

## **Hale (6)**

The boundary goes just over the railway bridge and transverses the building on the left then back to Victoria Road before immediately crossing the railway into Brown Street, following the edge of Further Utley Field and Nearer Utley Field. The Court Leet used to cross the railway by means of a gate in the Victoria Road fence and sleepers between the rails. The Brown Street houses were built about 1890, the last of the 'B' streets. Half way down Brown Street, the wide entry is where a spring ran out of Spring Bank and the round manholes mark the line of the culvert across the 'B' streets.

The blocks of apartments and houses and the car park on the left are on the site of the railway goods yard, which closed in 1963. The two-storey building near the bottom right was a blacksmith's until the mid-20th century.

Stand by the entry just after the garage where there is a red marker flag in the pavement. The boundary goes up this entry behind the houses along the course of an old spring. The Court Leet used to be able to walk up here but it is now blocked.

Hale Station was originally called Bowdon (Peel Causeway) and was built in 1859-62. On the left of the station, and currently a Vet's Surgery, is the station-master's house, previously the 17th century Peel Causeway Farm. This part of Ashley Road was known as Peel Causeway and may have been part of a secondary Roman road from Warburton to Ringway.

***Turn right up Ashley Road to the traffic lights.***

The Millennium Clock (there is a plaque under it) is on the site of John Siddeley's Peel Brewery, famous for Siddeley's Purge which was recreated for the Millennium celebrations at The Railway pub. The brewery's cellars were visible during the building work for the clock.



*The Millenium Clock on the site of Peel Causeway Brewery.*

Hale View and Midland Terrace to the north of the clock were built in 1863 and the houses further up Ashley Road on both sides were built in 1849. All of these houses were built in Hale on the relatively dry land on the edge of the causeway between two brooks. The boundary here runs up the entry behind all of the houses to the north of Hale View, Midland Terrace and Ashley Road to emerge on to Ashley Road just before the sub-station. The Hale/Bowdon boundary then goes down the middle of Peel Avenue opposite to the sub-station and across the Altrincham Grammar School playing fields to South Downs Road. Queen's Villas on the south of Ashley Road lie in Bowdon.

## **Bowdon (7)**

***Cross the traffic lights into Stamford Road, Bowdon***



Stamford Road was originally called Sandy Lane and was still unmade in 1900. From 1775 and into the early 19th century there was a worsted mill run by the **Robert Seddon** family near 18th century cottages in Garner Close on the left, one of which remains.

## Spring Bank

***Bear right up the passage behind Spring Bank Park.***

The first house on the left has a Court Leet plaque on the side. This track was the original road before Ashley Road was built.

***Turn right down Cavendish Road then left along Ashley Road.***

Brunswick Cottage on the right was built in the 1840s. Note the small oriel window. The boundary cuts through to Albert Square to the left of what was the YWCA building now flats, which is on the site of Thorley Moor Farm. The farm was built on waste land enclosed in the early 18th century and specialised in growing strawberries. This part of Ashley Road used to be called Thorley Moor Road.

***Turn left into St. John's Road.***

The listed church was built in 1866 and is on the site of Thorley Moor Farm outbuildings where some of Bonnie Prince Charlie's troops are said to have stayed overnight on the 1st December 1745. The innkeeper of the Bleeding Wolf, Hale was recorded to have killed a trooper here with his own sword. It is just possible that the name 'Thorley Moor' is a corruption of its adjacent fields, several of which incorporate the name 'charlemor', from Old English *ceorl* and *mor*, the farmer's rough marshy ground, which is now Spring Bank, and the name may indicate the site of a Saxon settlement. The church was de-consecrated in 2016 and sold for flats.

***Turn left again into Albert Square.***

There is a plaque on the coach house on the left where the boundary emerges. Boundary Cottage here was built before 1852 near the site of Thorley Moor farm, following the building of Bowdon Station in nearby Railway Street in 1849. There are three wells in the gardens, probably from the farm days. The Altrincham, Bowdon and Dunham Massey boundaries all meet here.



*Stamford Road, Bowdon with Garner close in the distance & Spring Bank to the right.*



*St John's Church built in 1866.*

## **Bowdon Downs**

***Go back to St. Johns Road and turn left.***

From here across to The Devisdale and the Dunham Road was originally a sandy area called Bowdon Downs and was a recognised camping ground for passing troops. In May 1644 10,000 of Prince Rupert's Royalist troops stayed here on the way from Shrewsbury to the Battle of York. Altrincham men fought for the Parliamentarian Sir George Booth in the Civil War but the Altrincham area was otherwise unaffected by the war.

There was a duel to the death on Bowdon Downs in 1685 between Sir Samuel Daniel of Tabley and Captain Robert Ratcliffe of Ordsall Hall. The latter lost and is buried at Northenden Church and the field was afterwards known as the Bloody Field.

The boundary carries on up St. John's Road back to 1 Higher Downs to complete the tour. At the top left of St. Johns Road is Levenhurst, once the home of artist **Helen Allingham** who was the first woman to become a member of the Royal Watercolour Society.

## **Higher Downs (finish)**

# Altrincham Walk & Map

## Introduction

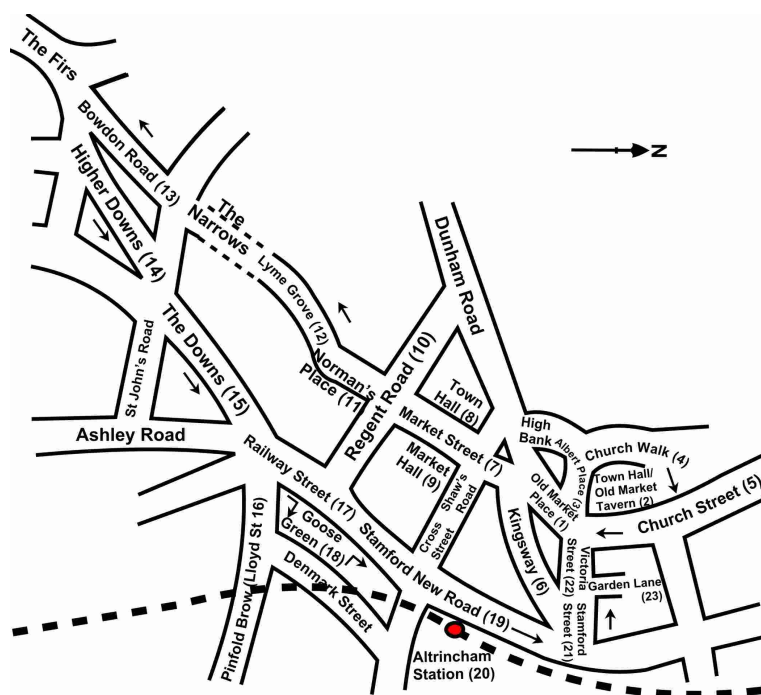
The walk initially explores Old Market Place with the Old Town Hall and its other buildings, including the Orange Tree public house. Going up what is probably a medieval track, the remains of Arnold's Yard can be seen on the right with its Young Pretender connections. We then go past the site of the Stamford Bowling Club and on through the churchyard of St. Georges, the oldest church in Altrincham.

Old and listed buildings in Kingsway and Market Street are discovered. The Market House is observed as we walk along the ancient burying lane towards Bowdon Church, passing through Norman's Place, Lyme Grove, The Narrows and Bowdon Road.

At the edge of The Devisdale, part of the ancient Bowdon Downs, once used as a camping ground for passing armies, we turn back towards the town centre along Higher Downs with its literary associations and The Downs with its Regency terraces.

The history of Pinfold Brow, Railway Street and Goose Green are explored, together with Stamford New Road, one of the main shopping thoroughfares. We go past the present Altrincham Station then back to Old Market Place up ancient Victoria Street with its Garden Lane secret.

The modern names of roads and places are used generally, with any earlier ones given. The number after a street name in a paragraph title refers to the number on the map. A **highlighted Name** indicates a brief biography in the Biographies paper. ***Bold Italics*** indicates a change of walking direction.





## Old Market Place (1)

The walk starts at Old Market Place, possibly the site of the original Saxon settlement and now a Conservation Area. It became the medieval trading centre, created in 1290 by the fifth baron Hamo de Masci, possibly to help his military finances. A number of the buildings have medieval timbers and were built on narrow burgage plots which existed around Church Street, Old Market Place and Market Street.

Houses on burgage plots were often built gable end on to the road and several bays deep to maximise the plots per street, plots being 48 feet wide and 120 feet deep. All the original houses would be timber with wattle and daub, with their main room open to the rafters and thatched. Many of the more affluent burgesses would live in houses in Old Market Place that would be two or three storeys, with an agricultural activity, workshop or shop on the ground floor and living accommodation above.

Old Market Place was originally laid out with cobbles which were replaced by setts in 1896. The 1684 Buttermarket lay in the middle of Old Market Place in front of Albert Place until about 1845. All sellers of butter and cheese were compelled to bring their wares there. Poultry, cattle, sheep, pigs etc were probably also sold in the market, together with other food, flowers, firewood, second-hand clothes and general house wares.

Over the Buttermarket was the courtroom with a lock-up at the side until 1838. There were also a stocks and a whipping post. Public floggings, eg for stealing, took place here until the early 19th century. More serious offences such as burglary and poaching were dealt with at Knutsford or Chester. In front of the Buttermarket was the Market Cross, which was also of religious significance. Intending brides and grooms had to declare their intentions here. There was an inn between the Buttermarket and The Unicorn Inn (now the Old Market Tavern) known as The Roundabout House, which was pulled down for road widening in 1845 and the licence transferred to the Roebuck.

The three-day Sanjam Fair was held in Old Market Place from 1319 to 1894. It opened with the ceremonial court of Pie Powder (French *pieds poudrés* referring to the dusty feet of travellers). In 1823 a man sold his wife here for 18d (7½p) which he believed was legal if he provided a halter to put over her neck.

Thomas de Quincey, in his *Confessions of an English Opium Eater* described Old Market Place in 1814 as he travelled by stage coach from Manchester to Chester: “*fruits and flowers were scattered about in profusion; even the stalls of the butchers, from their brilliant cleanliness, appeared attractive; and bonny young women of Altrincham were all tripping about in caps and aprons coquettishly disposed.*”

The Market Place Traders and Civic Society erected the replica cross, stocks and whipping post in



*Old Market Place with the Old Market Tavern, previously the Unicorn, in the background and what was the Orange Tree to its left; Brooks Bank just shows far left.*

1990. The lintel from the Police Lock-ups of 1838 in George Street, which were closed in 1866, was incorporated into the stocks' seat.

## The Old Town Hall (2)

The Old Town Hall faces Old Market Place and adjoining on the left is the Old Market Tavern, formerly The Unicorn.

The Old Town Hall was built by the Earl of Stamford in 1849 and is listed. It sits on several burgage plots which previously contained the Unicorn stables. The oriel window on the Church Street side is in the Council Chamber where the Court Leet met. The basement was used by Tuesday market folk until the new market hall was built and as a soup kitchen before and during the 1914-18 War and in the 1920s. The clock and bell tower is a copy of the original 1684 buttermarket bell tower and the original bell was re-hung here but is now in the possession of the Court Leet. This bell was used to summon the volunteer fire brigade until 1866 when the Police Station on the Dunham Road opened. There are holes in the cornice to the right of the yard entrance where the chain to the clock bell went, together with the hooks on which it was put out of the reach of children. The Old Town Hall was merged with the Unicorn about 1910.



*The 1849 Old Town Hall with its council chamber in the centre of the first floor, the Unicorn to its left.*

## The Unicorn

The Unicorn is a late 18th-century listed building on a burgage plot. It replaced an earlier building on the same site. It was a mail coaching inn, had livery stables and was used as an Excise Office. The stagecoach from Manchester to Chester used to call each morning and deliver the post and newspapers (newspapers were more than £10 each at today's rates). According to Alfred Ingham, Guy Fawkes was carried wounded from Malpas through Altrincham to Ordsall Hall, Salford (this is before the Parliament gunpowder incident). Possibly he rested here.

In the 17th and 18th centuries a spring came past the Unicorn and ran down the middle of Victoria Street. It then joined the stream from Hale Moss to form a leet that was used to feed cotton mills in the Mill Street area and which was then channelled to feed the lake, moat and mill at Dunham Hall three miles away. The landlord of the Unicorn is said to have used the spring to turn a small water wheel for milling.



*The Old Market Tavern, previously the Unicorn.*

On the wall of the Old Market Tavern is a blue plaque commemorating the lighting of the hotel from the first gasworks in the Altrincham area in 1844, the gas plant for which was at the back of the hotel.

The Orange Tree to the south of the Old Market Tavern and some of the adjacent buildings have fragments of 16th and 17th century buildings. The Orange Tree, which has been a pub only since the 1880's, consists of two ancient timber buildings which had an alley on the left and has wattle and daub remains in a back room. To the south of the Orange Tree in 1880 was a shop, then the Horse & Jockey Inn and then the Red Lion Inn (now a restaurant). In his novel *Peveril of the Peak*, Sir Walter Scott, who had friends in the area, named a pub in 'Altringham' as The Cat and Fiddle, perhaps another name for the Unicorn or the The Red Lion, which had housed Jacobite troops in 1745.

Going up between the Old Market Tavern and the Orange Tree, Albert Place and High Bank may pre-date the medieval town and represent where an older Saxon village existed. Behind the Old Market Tavern was the stable yard of the hotel, later Arnold's Yard, now town houses.

Sir Walter Scott in *Peveril of the Peak* gave the name Cat & Fiddle to the Unicorn and says "*At length near Altringham, a halt became unavoidable, and a place of refreshment presented itself in the shape of a small cluster of cottages, the best of which united the characters of an alehouse and a mill, where the sign of the Cat (the landlord's faithful ally in defence of his meal sacks), booted high as Grimalkin in the fairy tale, and playing on the fiddle for the more grace.*" 'Grimalkin' is also mentioned in *Macbeth* and means 'an old (grey) evil-looking female cat'.

Jacobite troops stayed in the area in 1745 on their way to Derby following the recruitment of 200-300 troops in Manchester. 500 of the 6,000 troops were acting as a decoy as though making for Wales. The Jacobites arrived in Altrincham in snow on Sunday 1st December having had to rebuild bridges the previous day which had been demolished at Barton, Stretford, Cheadle and Stockport by the pro-Hanoverian Liverpool Regiment. Horses were stolen in Sale and farmers in the Altrincham area hid their animals in woods and barred doors and windows while the troops were passing through.

Some troops may have stayed in the old wooden buildings in Arnold's Yard, certainly at the Red Lion Inn in Old Market Place, in George Street and at Thorley Moor Farm, opposite the St. John's Church site off Ashley Road. Bonnie Prince Charlie himself is said to have stayed at The Swan at Bucklow Hill.

One local was standing at the top of Victoria Street off Old Market Place and was informed by a Highlander that "*he must give up his brogues.*" They then passed through Hale on the way south via Macclesfield to join the rest of the troops. The innkeeper of the Bleeding Wolf in Hale is said to have slain a straggler at Thorley Moor Farm with his own sword and a farmer at Ringway shot another.

The 1810 St. George's Jubilee School stood on the left side of the entrance to Arnold's Yard until 1859.

## **Church Walk (4)**

### ***Bear right along Church Walk.***

The area on the left, now built on, was used by the Stamford Bowling Club and the green and club-

house are on the 1838 tithe map but not in a 1799 Unicorn inventory. The club may have originally met before that at the Stamford Arms & Bowling Green Hotel in Church Street and the club could go back to the 1730s but there is no evidence. Presidents are known from 1870.

Church Walk is what remains of an ancient path joining Old Market Place with the Wheatsheaf. All of the area to the west of this path was originally part of the town's open field.

**Bear right** through the grounds of the listed St. George's Church that was built in 1799 for Oswald Leicester. All but the tower was rebuilt in 1896. Beyond, St. George's National School building, now used partly by an undertaker, dates from 1860.

## Church Street (5)

Church Street ahead was called Turnpike Road until the late 19th century and was renamed Church Street after the rebuilding of St. George's Church. It was probably a 17<sup>th</sup> century bypass for Altrincham, the original road going behind the church and across the fields to the Wheatsheaf. Until 1938 it was a narrow lane when old cottages on the west side were pulled down to widen it. Lord Stamford insisted that the trees now in the central reservation of Church Street be preserved. Numbers 30/32 are 18th and 19th century. Number 32 has part of a gravestone in the garden at the back inscribed "*...and their son (John) who departed 14th March 1802 aged 9 weeks, and their daughter (Ann) departed 27 March 1802 aged 1 year and 11 months....and daughter of John and Elizabeth Hankinson who departed 1 May 1805 aged 6 months. Mary Hankinson his second wife departed this life the ? February 1821 aged 45 years.*" The burials were actually at St Mary's, Bowdon and it is not known how the gravestone got there.

The Cresta Court Hotel and the offices to its north were built in 1973 on the site of the large posting house called the Stamford Arms & Bowling Green Hotel that was listed in a directory of 1660. Advertisements of the 1820s indicated that the hotel had "*apartments for private families, saddle and harness horses on the shortest notice, and a billiard room.*" The bowling green was the only one in the district until the 1830s. The hotel was converted to Stamford House in the 1880s to become the home of the international architect **George Armitage** and was used by the Home Guard in the last war.



*St. George's Church partly from 1799.*



*18th century shops and offices on tithe plots in Church Street; originally the houses had their back doors on the busy Church Street and number 16 still shows the Georgian front door and windows at the back of the building which originally had a garden.*



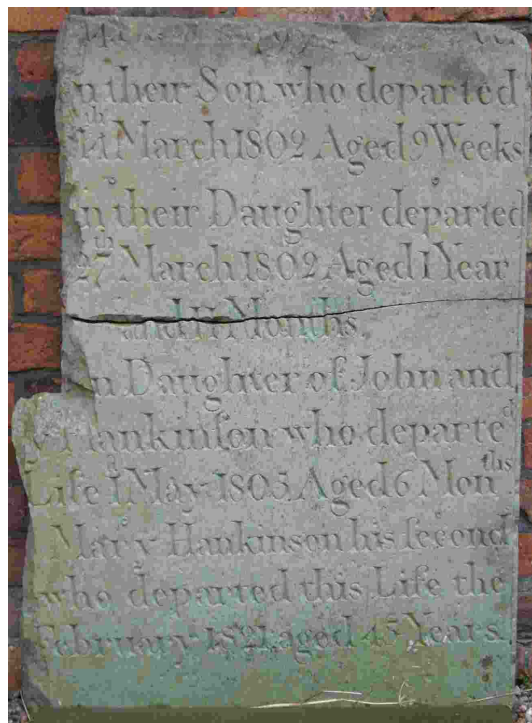
**Go south up Church Street back towards Old Market Place.**

Number 16 Old Market Place on the east side was built in the early 19th century and is listed. Numbers 8/10/12 are each one third of a burgage plot.

Number 6 was four bays deep, was probably built in the 15th century on a half burgage plot and was the oldest building in Altrincham. It had to be demolished in early 2004 after failing to save the structure in the redevelopment of the north side of Kingsway in 2002/6. The owners are known back to the 15th century and include Sir William Brereton, the Cheshire Civil War General and the son-in-law of Sir George Booth of Dunham. Nine mayors of Altrincham have owned the building and it was a grocer's shop for 230 years until 1982. The vaulted cellars extended under number 8 and were used as an air raid shelter during the war. A barn of about 1840 was revealed behind 6 Old Old Market Place, perhaps linked to the cattle market or used as stables. The remains of two cellar dwellings were also found.

To its south was the original Horse & Jockey Inn and one of the public bake-houses, both probably demolished in the mid 19th century to build Kingsway. It is said that Robert Boardman, who also bred horses for the Earl of Stamford including the Bay Malton from which the pub in Oldfield Brow took its name, kept the original Horse & Jockey. What is now the George & Dragon pub at the north end of Church Street took that name for a while, afterwards becoming St. George & Dragon. A new inn in Old Market Place then used the Horse & Jockey name.

The spectacular bank in Old Market Place is listed and was formerly Cunliffe Brooks' Bank. It was built in 1870 in sandstone for **W C Brooks**, has a 32-foot high banking hall window with houses to the left and right for senior employees. Originally there was a weather vane with 'WCB' in it and his initials are on the left-hand chimney. The bank was taken over by Lloyds about 1900. Brooks bought several hundred acres of land between Hale Barns and Sale from the Earl of Stamford in 1856. He lived at Prospect House in Hale Barns and in 1862 created Brooks' Drive from Prospect House to Brooklands Station during the cotton famine. Until the 1920s tolls were collected at a bar at Wythenshawe; the toll-house is still at the roundabout.



*Hankinson gravestone at the back of 32 Church Street.*



*Barn at the back of 6 Old Market Place.*

The Wagon & Horses coaching inn was at the end of Market Street opposite to Brooks Bank and

was pulled down in the 1850s to link Old Market Place directly to the Dunham Road. Beyond the bank down the Dunham Road, the offices were built in the late 1860s and are listed. Just beyond, the Unitarian Chapel was opened in 1872 by The Reverend William Gaskell, husband of author Elizabeth Gaskell. Sylvan Grove and Groby Place to its left were built on the narrow strips which made up one of the Town Fields and which pre-dated the Dunham Road. The old police station opposite was built in 1866 and was used until 1981. It included a Magistrates Court, used until 1986.

## Kingsway (6)

Kingsway was named after the visit of the Prince of Wales to Altrincham in 1887. Kingsway/Post Office Street opposite to the Brooks Bank was originally called Hollow Bonk or Hollow Bank and in the early 19th century was described as very steep. It was a short cut from Higher Town down steps to Lower Town but was not accessible to traffic. The main traffic route was via Market Street and Shaw's Road. Kingsway was built in the 1860s when Hollow Bank was filled in and the names Lower Town and Higher Town were discontinued.

Numbers 2, 4, 6 and part of 8 Kingsway are listed. Numbers 8/10 formed Byrom's drapery store, which was built in 1867 and closed about 1985. Byroms were previously in Old Market Place about 1850. Altrincham Garrick Society first met in Byrom's cellar in 1913 with the entrance on Post Office Street at the back. Even in those early days the society was producing about 10 plays a year and used to perform at the Stamford Public Hall (now demolished) and the Unitarian Chapel on the Dunham Road.

The shops and offices around the top of Post Office Street again built by Brooks, complement the style of the Old Market Place bank, and have weather vanes with Brooks' initials 'WCB' in them. Numbers 2, 2a, 4, 4a Old Market Place are listed.



*George Ernill had run his butcher's shop on 14 Kingsway for 57 years when he retired in 2013. Four generations of Ernill butchers traded as butchers on Kingsway.*

## Market Street (7)

### ***Go forward into Market Street.***

This was originally part of a burying track going from Old Market Place to Bowdon Church across fields. This end of the road was called Windy Harbour, later King Street then High Street, with the far end known as The Narrows or Bowdon Lane.

The Georgian part of Market Street was the main Chester Road until the 1850s when the direct route to Old Market Place was made.



*1 Market Street, Altrincham.*

Numbers 1 to 7 Market Street are listed. Number 1 was the original Postal Office sorting office built by Brooks about 1880, later Morrison's Auction Rooms. **Morrisons** were established in Altrincham in 1875 as accountants and estate agents. Number 3 was the original Altrincham Post Office. Numbers 5 and 7 are early 19th century. Number 5 had a croquet ground behind in 1852. Number 7 was used as the Bucklow Rural District Council Offices at the end of the 19th century and is where **Hugh Wallis**, the local art metalworker, first set up his studio in Altrincham in 1900 (see The Downs). Keoghs, Nicholls, Linsell & Harris on the left at number 23 have expanded from solicitors originally established in 1733 as Nicholls and Worthington.

Numbers 10 to 16 and the Stamford Estate Office are listed and 6 to 10 have fragments of 16th/17th century buildings. Numbers 10 to 12 are mainly early 19th century and the long plots had workers' cottages and gardens at the rear extending over what is now the Dunham Road. Numbers 14 to 16 are early 19th century although the rainwater head has 1752 on it.

Number 16 has a blue plaque to the artist **Helen Allingham** who lived here from 1849-62 and which was afterwards the Board of Health and the Overseers and Tax Offices. Helen's parents lived at number 5 opposite. The bricked-up arch just beyond was the old carriage entry to the Stamford Estate Office.

## The (New) Town Hall (8)

The Town Hall on the right was built in 1900 and the Extension on its left with Dutch gables in 1930, all by Stones. The Fire and Ambulance Station and a public mortuary were at the back until 1962.

In side the Town Hall entrance is a memorial to the 161 men from former Chapel Street, Altrincham who volunteered in the 1914-18 War, a national record for one street. There are also 1919 telegrams from King George V praising the 161 men from Chapel Street which he called "*the bravest street in England*" and who volunteered in the 1914-18 War (a national record), and the Roll of Honour of April 5 1919 listing the 161 men. There is also a

citation to **Private W Speakman V.C.** who became President of the Altrincham & Bowdon Civic Society. They, the Court Leet and Altrincham History Society meet in the Council Chamber where there are two large elaborate chairs in the Jacobean style carved from a Dunham oak tree and presented to the Court Leet in 1875 by Edward Neild of Bowdon when he was Mayor of Altrincham. Neild was a partner in a furniture-making firm originally established by John Starkey in 1790 in the town. There are also chairs which were used by the council members which are in oak and dated 1901, by local carver Joseph Phillips. The whole building was refurbished in 2005/6. In front of the 1930 Town Hall Extension of is a bronze of a fishmonger by local sculptor Colin Spofforth erected in 2008.



*The 1900 Town Hall with the 1930 extension on the left, both built by Martin Stone.*



St. Margaret's Church Institute was to its south. It was built in 1896, used as a Town Hall Annex since the 1960s and demolished in 2005. The stone palings in front possibly came from a farm in Greenwood Street demolished to build the Altrincham Working Men's Conservative Club in 1882. Market Street at this point used to be called Windy Harbour and was the route from Old Market Place to George Street via Shaw's Road on the left. Originally Shaw's Road was called Shaw's Lane or Shay Lane and before that Barnum's Lane. The original Unitarian Chapel existed down here on the right from 1816 to 1872 and was one of the main burial grounds in Altrincham. The chapel was adapted to become the first permanent theatre in Altrincham and called The Central (1907 to 1933). Its entrance was down a covered passage to Shaws Road at what became number 17, the junction of Central Way and had gravestones paving its back yard before the last war. The Central also showed films from its opening and seated 200. By 1914 it had become a full-time cinema, often known as the Bug Hut or the Flea Pit. The proprietors of The Central organised outings for children and the 1909 trip to Mobberley was filmed and has been preserved in the North-West Film Archive. Afterwards the building became a snooker hall and finally a postal sorting depot until the 1960s.



*The listed Market House or Hall, built by Martin Stone in 1879; the 1930 open market is to its right.*

## Market Hall (9)

A Tuesday market has been held in Altrincham since 1290 when Hamo de Masci created the borough by charter. The Market House is listed and was built on meadows in 1879. It has a blue plaque to the left of the door commemorating the origins of the market in 1290 in Old Market Place. The glass-covered outside market was built in 1930 on part of the site of the Cheshire Rifle Volunteers' Training Ground and the Saturday market started in 1932.

The far end of Market Street was originally part of the burying track to Bowdon Church over fields. The track was known as The Narrows and had stumps across it until the late 19th century. It was widened in 1870 to become Bowdon Lane and then just part of Market Street. The hospital dates from 1870 as Altrincham Provident Dispensary and Hospital and was designed by local architect Peter Pons who lived in Groby Place and came from Russia. He built on what had been the site of the Cheshire Rifle Volunteers' Training Ground. The Nurses' Home to its left was previously Oddfellows Hall, originally the Altrincham Building Society. The rest of the road was built over in the 1880s. The hospital building was replaced in 2017/18.



*The Grapes Inn between Albert Street and Chapel Street; there is a blue plaque on its right to the 161 men from Chapel Street who volunteered in WWI.*



## Regent Road (10)

The upper part of Regent Road was originally called Garden Walk or locally The Patch. Some of the large houses on its left were used to accommodate American officers during the last war.

The lower part of Regent Road was known as Chapel Walk after the Wesleyan Chapel originally on the corner of Chapel Street. Meetings of local Roman Catholics originally started in George Street and then two cottages at 71/73 New Street on the left were bought and a small Gothic building erected in 1858 (now demolished). The present number 77 is in the 1918 directory as a Roman Catholic Club.

New Street, Chapel Street, Albert Street and Waterloo Place off The Downs were first developed from the 1820s on farm land belonging to Alcock's Farm, not part of Lord Stamford's estate. Houses were not to his standards and in many cases ended up in multiple occupation. Until about 1850 there were a number of hand-loom weavers in New Street, Albert Street and Chapel Street (and Victoria Street). At that time there was little clean water, no proper sanitation and there were many middens around the houses. Albert Street and probably the others was paved with cobbles. There were many lodging houses in Chapel Street and Frank and Bill Brierley recalled in the 1920s seeing people sleeping over ropes for a few pence to avoid being picked up by the police as down-and-outs. You see this in films sometimes such as *The First Great Train Robbery*.

The buildings at the bottom right of New Street were built in the 1840s and have graduated slates on their roofs. There were seven dwellings described as 'cellars' here in the 1920s. All Saints Church on the right, now offices, is six-sided and contained pews, a lectern and candlesticks from the workshop of Robert Thompson of Kilburn, Yorkshire with his mouse trademark.

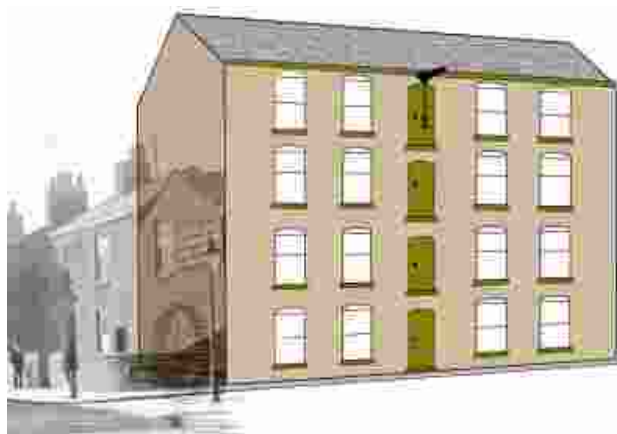
The Grapes pub replaced the Georgian Methodist Chapel in 1898. There is a memorial on the side of it to the 161 men from 70 houses in Chapel Street who volunteered in the 1914-18 War (a national record). Twenty-nine of them lost their lives and the British Legion has documented the life of each person with photographs. The building at 7/9 Regent Road was the Forester's Arms pub.

## Norman's Place (11)

### ***Cross Regent Road into Norman's Place.***

The land on the left was called Norman's Field, named after landowner George Norman who in 1738 was asked to remove stiles from the track from Altrincham to Bowdon Church and replace them with stumps.

In 1784 a cotton-spinning mill was built here by John Eccles and the building on the left is what remains of the factory with the mill-occupier's house to its left on Regent Road, now a shop. Originally the mill was 62 feet long and four storeys high but the Earl of Stamford bought the house, mill and land, reduced the mill to two storeys and formed six cottages from the house and mill. The mill has been truncated in length



*An artists impression of Norman's Field Factory cotton-spinning mill (1784) in Norman's Place with the mill house to its left on Regent Road, part of both buildings remaining.*

to build the car park at the back.

Kinder's house has been extended to Regent Road as numbers 31 and 33, and the current Edwardian extension to the mill as number 35 at the corner was carried out by Jacob Bowland in 1910.

Houses in Norman's Place are late Georgian and early Victorian and this is a Conservation Area. The Limes on the left is early Victorian. The Poplars was on the right and had whale's jaw bones as an arch over the drive in the 19th century. Oswald Leicester used it as the second Sunday School in Altrincham and it had a lecture hall. It was demolished in 1977 and the site converted to sheltered housing.

Numbers 2 to 8 were built about 1810 and are listed. They were designed to a high standard for one person and a servant. They have barrel-vaulted cellars extending under the back yard, lead gutters and Regency porches. The builder also put in a well which collapsed during building but no life was lost. Alfred Ingham, the local publisher and historian, lived at number 6 in the late 19th century.

Beyond, the Elms is listed and was built in the 1750s with 19th century additions and was originally two houses. Richmond House at the top right is also listed, was built in 1804, incorporates an earlier building and was a boarding school in the 1840s. The school was run by Elizabeth Cliffe and her three sisters, who had moved the school to 70 (now 80) The Downs by 1858.

## **Lyme Grove (12)**

***Bear right into Lyme Grove.***

All of the land between here and Broadheath was originally a large medieval open field. The Victorian character of the 1867 houses here has been retained and this is a Conservation Area. The garages at the back of number 21 were stables.



*Mid-Victorian Lyme Grove looking back to Holly Bank.*

Going up The Narrows to the left of Lyme Grove, this was part of the ancient burying track from Altrincham to Bowdon which then continues as Bowdon Road. Up to about 1820 the whole of the area between The Downs and The Narrows was a market garden built on medieval open field strips known as Alcock's Farm. The stone palings on the right may have come from the farm which was on the corner of New Street and The Downs. At the top left is the 1908 Telephone Exchange now offices, which replaced a large Georgian house in extensive grounds called The Red House. It still has a red phone box outside.

***Cross over Woodville Road into Bowdon Road.***



*A Crossley wing at St. Anne's Home.*

## Bowdon Road (13)

The former St. Anne's Home on the left, was a pioneering consumption hospital, but incorporates the original 1837 house Beech Grove and its 1870s white brick Italianate extensions. It was named after Anne, the wife of **Joseph Sidebotham**, who in 1883 sold the house for use as a hospital and donated £2000. The Crossley brothers of Crossley Motors, helped finance the late 19th century extensions. It was closed in 2004 and redeveloped into houses and apartments in 2011/12, now known as St. Anne's Gardens. Bowdon Downs Congregational Church further up on the left, was built in 1848 at the instigation of original owner of Beech Grove, Ibotson Walker, a trustee. It was extended in 1868.

Bowdon Road continues southwest as The Firs, previously Burying Lane, to St. Mary's Church. To the west is an entrance to The Devisdale (Devis's Dole), previously part of Bowdon Downs, which held the Altrincham Agricultural Show from 1896 to 1966 and which had started in 1861 at Bollington. It was said to be the largest one-day show in the country. Farmers came to show cattle from all over Britain, including Norfolk, the West Country and Scotland. Machinery and animals came by train to Altrincham and Hale stations as well as by road. For locals it was a day out and an opportunity to buy prize bacon and vegetables at the end of the show. During the last war troops were under canvas here.

The whole of the area from Langham Road across the Devisdale to The Downs and to the Altrincham border was known as Bowdon Downs until about 1750 and the Devisdale was used as a common. 10,000 of Prince Rupert's troops camped here and on Knutsford Heath in May 1644 on their way from Shrewsbury to Marston Moor during the Civil War. In December 1688 Lord Delamer, later the Earl of Warrington, rallied forces here from his tenants in support of the Prince of Orange, afterwards William III, who had arrived in England.

### ***Turn east.***

Bowdon Lodge which was built some time before 1838, became the Altrincham County High School for Girls in 1910. The entrance lodge is original and some of the main building remains. Opposite as an annex to the school, is Fairlie where **Francis Crossley** lived.

## Higher Downs (14)

***Turn northeast into Higher Downs which was built in 1851/52.***

Houses on the right are numbered from 1 to 15 from the bottom. Most residents had one or two servants here in Victorian times, many from outside the area.

**Juliana Ewing** who wrote children's stories lived at number 14 Higher Downs in the late 1870s where there is a Blue Plaque. **Alison Uttley** famous for her Little Grey Rabbit stories lived next door at Downs House, number 13, from 1924 to 1938 where again there is also a Blue Plaque. Dr Arthur Ransome, the surgeon



*1850s Victorian houses on Higher Downs.*



and half-cousin of the author of the same name, lived at 12 Higher Downs from 1862 to 69. **Thomas Alfred Coward** the naturalist was born at number 8 in 1867.

Opposite, the four imposing Victorian houses in Beechfield date from 1852/53 and sit in a charming retreat, being the carriageway entrance to the 1848 listed Bowdon Downs Congregational Church which is in the Perpendicular Gothic style. On the right the date MDCCCLXXV is inscribed on the wall.

The listed Altrincham/Dunham boundary stone of about 1850 is incorporated into the garden wall of number 1 at the bottom right, indicating the boundary of the ancient (1290) Borough of Altrincham with Dunham Massey. This is where the Altrincham Court Leet start Beating the Bounds each July. Above it is a benchmark.

Just around the corner in St. John's Road, artist **Helen Allingham** lived at Levenhurst.

## The Downs (15)

Number 62 The Downs has been dated to 1796. **Hugh Wallis** and his son Brian, metalworkers from 1911 to 1964, had a house, workshop and studio where the 1960s houses numbered 80, 80a, 80b The Downs on the left are situated. Hugh was a leading figure in the Northern Art Workers Guild, was a founder-member of the Red Rose Guild, and his work is highly prized. His display cabinet always contained examples of his work which were never stolen. The remains of the wrought iron brackets which supported the cabinet are still in the cottage wall on the left of the 1960s houses.



*The listed Altrincham/Dunham Massey Boundary Stone with a benchmark above it.*

Many of the houses on the west side of The Downs Conservation Area are listed and were built before 1850 using hand-made bricks. Many have semi-circular fanlights and columns to the porch in the Regency style. Downs Place (56) was built in 1839 and Victoria Terrace (36) in 1837.

Alcock's Farm was near the top left of New Street, on the site of 66-70 The Downs today. Its land was the site of enclosed strips from an open town field which extended from The Downs to New Street and down to Regent Road. It was developed for housing from the 1820s. Wellington Place on the left was built about 1840 and named after the Duke of Wellington when he was Prime Minister in 1828. Note the curved ends to New Street and Wellington Place, possibly representing the ends of medieval strip fields where the plough turned. The houses down Osbourne Place were built of Large White Bowdon Brick on edge for the façade.

Number 39 on the right before the shops was built in the 1840s in Italianate style. The Congregational Church first met in Altrincham in 1839 in the 1830 Aitkenite Chapel at the bottom of The Downs, numbers 12/14. The Presbyterians and the Baptists also used it. The building still shows the original construction and inside has been found evidence of its use as a church.

## Pinfold Brow (Lloyd Street 16)

Lloyd Street running east from the bottom of The Downs used to be called Pinfold Brow, where stray animals from Hale Moss were penned on the brow of a hill (the pinfold was near Stamford Park). It was a village green and had a forge, a wheelwright's shop and a timber yard.

Each September Bowdon Wakes Races were usually held on the Devisdale but sometimes at Goose Green or here on the edge of Hale Moss until the mid 19th century where a racecourse had been built. The Wakes lasted for several days. Events included horse, pony and donkey racing, a wheelbarrow race, climbing the greased pole, a juggling match, a grinning match, bolting hot dumplings, hen racing, eel spearing, foot races and a fair. In addition a great assortment of goods would be sold. The Wakes attracted people from some distance including Manchester and Salford. Bare fist fighting was also held on the Pinfold and Hale was famous for its bare fist fighters.

There is a blue plaque to artist and local historian **Basil Morrison** at 6 Lloyd Street.



*The site of Bowdon Station between Goose Green and Lloyd Street.*

## Railway Street (17)

Originally Railway Street was a lane of early 18th century thatched cottages connecting George Street with Ashley Road and The Downs. It was treated as part of The Downs but later called Ashley Lane.

Bowdon Station was built here in 1849 at the back of the present buildings on the east side, between Goose Green and Lloyd Street, specifically to serve Bowdon residents and included a hotel. The station was made redundant in 1881 when the current Altrincham & Bowdon Station was built. It became electric railway sheds until 1970. The shops on the east side of Railway Street were originally mid-19th century railway workers houses which faced the railway. The single-storey lock-up shops were added at the back of the houses at first floor level in 1895 after Bowdon Station closed. The area was partly redeveloped in 2003/6 with shops and flats and a new Altrincham Hospital built in 2013/14.



*The Downs Hotel on Railway Street.*

The Downs Hotel previously at the bottom of The Downs was a posting house dating from about 1850. In the middle of the road opposite there was a horse trough and a cabbies' hut until the early 1900s. From 1907 to 1931 trams used to run up to the bottom of The Downs from Manchester, turning round by moving the pantograph from one end of the tram to the other. Behind Railway Street to the west is Lloyd Square which used to contain several blocks of back-to-back cottages, the remains of which can be seen up Kings Court. Number 28, now Lepps, has

been a jewellers since the 19th century. Dean's grocers, hop merchants and seeds-men were in this block about 1850, when the Deans lived over the shop. Wainwright & Dean were still at number 36 in 1960. On the far right is the listed County Galleries, originally a bank.

Between the bottom of Regent Road (Chapel Walk) and Goose Green opposite were three pubs: The Woolpack Hotel, The Orange Tree and the Faulkners Arms. The last two were 17<sup>th</sup> thatched and the Faulkner's Arms straddled what is now Stamford New Road. These two were blocking the development of the road in the 1880s and were pulled down. The licence for The Orange Tree was then transferred to Old Market Place and The Stamford Hotel built in its place which itself was demolished with the building of The Graftons in 1966.

The Woolpack was a low thatched and whitewashed building of 1679 at the bottom of Regent Road with its entrances on Railway Street. It looked like a longhouse and perhaps it had been a farmhouse originally. It was rebuilt in 1865 and demolished in 1969. Altrincham Football Club used the Victorian Woolpack as changing rooms before they moved to their present ground in Moss Lane during the 1914-18 War. All of the old inns here and in Old Market Place would have brewed their own beer, many into the 20th century, using water from a spring running down Regent Road.

Originally Regent Road was very narrow here with a thatched cottage opposite the side of the Woolpack which was used as a public bake-house. A room above was approached by outside stone steps known as Jacob's Ladder.

***Turn right opposite to Regent Road into Goose Green.***

## **Goose Green (18)**

Altrincham folk call Goose Green 'Goosey Green'. Some of the houses date before 1835 and the locals from Lower Town took their geese on to Hale Moss through here. It would also have been one of the main routes out of town across Hale Moss. In the 18th and 19th century the area was fairly densely populated and in the 1850s cottages were occupied by a market gardener, wheelwright, weaver, bobbin-turner, blacking maker and a cobbler. Isaac Garner was a shoemaker and bred geese. James Smith was a bobbin-turner and grew early Bowdon Downs potatoes. In the late 18th century these potatoes were said to have been sold at the Manchester market for 16/- (80p) and 20/- (£1) for a score (20). Another version says 1/- (5p) per pound, either way expensive. For comparison, in 1817 potato prices generally were 1/6 (7.5p) for 90 pounds, before the potato famine of the 1840s.



*Medieval Goose Green which led to Hale Moss.*

Standing on the bridge beyond, the old Bowdon Station lay to the south, the area being redeveloped in 2003. There used to be a cockpit on Denmark Street just past Goose Green until about 1850 when fights were held on Shrove Tuesday and at Easter.



### ***Retrace your steps to Stamford New Road.***

There is a blue plaque to **Ronald Gow**, the dramatist on the building on the right. Barclays Bank was built in 1883 and Gow's father became the manager. The family lived over the bank from 1900 until 1910. Gow's father also managed several of the local banks and used to transfer gold and silver coins between them. One day the cab collapsed with the weight but all of the cash was recovered. Gow was a pupil and later a teacher at Altrincham Grammar School for Boys and married Dame Wendy Hiller.



*Mossburn Buildings on Stamford Road date from the 1880s, built on allotments which had been burgage plots backing on to George Street.*

### **Stamford New Road (19)**

This road was built up in the 1880s on George Street gardens, orchards and market gardens, with Hale Moss coming right up to the gardens until the advent of the railway.

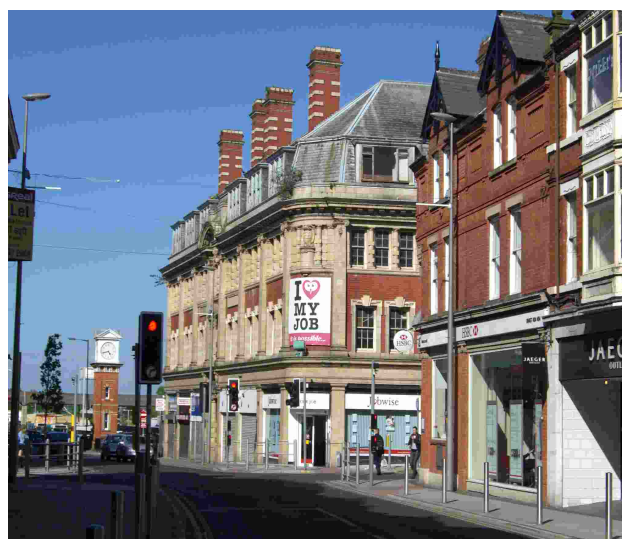
On the corner of Grafton Street on the right is a typical Montague Burton Art Deco building, originally with a billiards room above for its customers while they waited. The building is dated 1936 and the initials 'MB' are on the corner façade.

On the west side of Stamford New Road next to number 74, and on the right of the entrance to The Causeway with its original setts, is a benchmark, one of just two left in central Altrincham. The Causeway led from George Street to the gardens on which Stamford New Road was built.

The early Post Office was originally on Market Street but in 1899 it was transferred to this site which, together with Mossburn Buildings next door was designed by **John Macnamara** utilising terracotta and developed by **J H Broun**.

On the right after the traffic lights at Cross Street is the listed Stamford House previously Station Buildings. The building was erected in 1905 and was the first substantial office block in Altrincham with 84 offices originally. The Manchester architect was Charles Heathcote, and the local developer was J H Broun and his initials can be seen in the terracotta on the corner.

Cross Street was originally part of Moss Lane, which used to be called Ham Lane and started at George Street. From the 17th century there were market gardens to supply Manchester on both sides of Moss Lane as it left the town eastwards.



*Station Buildings, now Stamford House, with the station beyond.*

## Altrincham Station (20)

Altrincham Station is on the site of the medieval Skin Pit Field, which was used for leather processing. Maps also show that there were tenter-frames in the area of the station where bleached and fulled cloth would be stretched on tenterhooks.

Altrincham and Bowdon stations were both built in 1849 but the present station replaced them in 1881 and the old stations were closed. There is a blue plaque in the booking hall commemorating 150 years of the railway to Altrincham. The original Altrincham Station was situated just south of the footbridge near The Old Mill pub and Bowdon Station was near Lloyd Street. The line was electrified in 1931 at 1,500V DC and changed to 25,000V AC in 1971. The Metrolink was opened in 1992 replacing the electric trains and runs on 750V DC. The 1880 Clock Tower is a listed building and nearby there used to be a horse-cabbies' hut.

Opposite to the railway station on Stamford New Road are the Station Hotel (44) and number 42, which are both listed. Number 42 has been empty for years but used to be Jimmy Brooks, the undertaker who rented bike storage for rail passengers in the passage at the side. To their right used to be the Library where, on the first floor, there was a citation to **Captain E K Bradbury** VC, son of Judge Bradbury. In the reference section of there was the bell from Oakfield Street School.

The area was extensively redeveloped in 1966 before which Kingsway (the bottom end was called Station Road when it was built about 1850 until 1908) came out at the pedestrian crossing. It contained one of three Co-op stores in the Altrincham area and the 1908 Temperance Billiard Hall. Further on down Stamford New Road on the left was the 1898 Jubilee Baths. Next door, where Station House is now, was the Picture Theatre, which existed from 1913 to 1966. Hilaire Belloc gave a commentary to a film here in 1917 on the war effort and it had an orchestra into the 1930s.

## Stamford Street (21)

*Turn left up Stamford Street.*

This first section was sometimes called Cinder Street and was part of the Stockport Road, which was known as Turnpike Road in the mid 19th century. The Railway pub (demolished 2009) originally had a malthouse to its left and to its right was a large private house called The Gables. To the left of the pub site is Spring Bank House (35), the original building being at one time the home of **John Siddeley** the chemist and brewer. His seed merchant's business was next door at number 33.



*The Malt Shovels on Stamford Street partly dates to the 17th century.*



Spring Bank House was the site of the Hippodrome (1912-86) which was built in 1912 as a variety theatre with an orchestra but showed films from the start. It seated 1,800 and Gracie Fields and Donald Peers performed there. There were also amateur nights when locals could demonstrate their skills, and the North Cheshire Amateur Operatic Society used to play there. By 1931 it was converted to a permanent cinema for talkies and Frank Randle and George Formby used to visit. To the left of that was the splendid Springfield House with steps up from both sides and originally a girls' boarding school. The Springfield Road area was a farm in the 19th century.

The Malt Shovels opposite was originally a barn and Police Street behind was known as Back-o'-th'-Barn. There is a benchmark in the brickwork, unusually. The houses and shops beyond The Malt Shovels further up Stamford Street date from the 1840s. This part of Stamford Street was called New Road when first cut in the 1820s.

***Continue straight up Victoria Street towards the Old Town Hall.***



*Peel Terrace on Victoria Street, now demolished, with Garden Lane on the left leading to the backs of the buildings on Church Street.*

## **Victoria Street (22)**

Victoria Street was called Well Lane until 1837 and the Great Well was on the corner of Victoria Street and Springfield Road. Note the names Springfield Road and Spring Bank nearby indicating a water supply in the area.

In 1880 a 'splendid well' was reported near the site of the Mechanics Institute towards the top left of Victoria Street. In 1980 the South Trafford Archaeology Group excavated a medieval brick-lined domestic well here, presumably the same one. It had been used from the 14th century until the late 19th century, despite a privy being situated quite close by. As well as some intact pieces of pottery, thousands of sherds were found in the well including Buckley pottery and a flint scraper. Behind on The Knoll, a medieval corn or malt-drying kiln was found dating to the early 14th century.

Victoria Street was the main road to Stockport and until 1932 was a narrow street with 16th to 18th century buildings on both sides. The doors of those on the south side came directly on to the road and the street originally had a drain down the middle out of Old Market Place. Peel Terrace on the north side (demolished 2007) was built in the 1840s and named after Sir Robert Peel. The cottages were empty in 2006, pending demolition and the site redeveloped in 2010. The 1847 Mechanics Institute was a cottage/shop towards the top left and was transferred to a new building in Lower George Street in 1852 as the Free Library which itself was demolished in 1975.

## Garden Lane (23)

Before leaving Victoria Street **take the first right into Garden Lane** which was named after the Old Pear Tree Tavern Gardens which used to be just after Garden Lane and demolished in 1934. The lane serviced the backs of the burgage plots on Church Street. It is still a retreat from the traffic and contains some delightful houses and hidden gardens. Walk some of the way up to view the backs of the older and lower buildings on Church Street that originally had their fronts on this side.

### **Return up Victoria Street.**

The Old Roebuck on the right has been dated to 1836. Note the steep roof on the Don Supper Bar at the top right indicating a previously thatched roof. It has medieval timbers but is mainly 17th to 19th century. Some of the Georgian buildings on the right from 10 to 18 and 26 to 32 Church Street are back-to-front with the fronts of the original houses on Garden Lane and the backs on the less pleasant Church Street. The low building (number 18) may be 17th century. The Workers' Educational Association under the direction of the Greater Manchester Archaeological Unit surveyed a number of the older buildings in Old Market Place in detail in 2000. **(finish)**



*The rear of 30 Church Street showing the original Georgian front.*

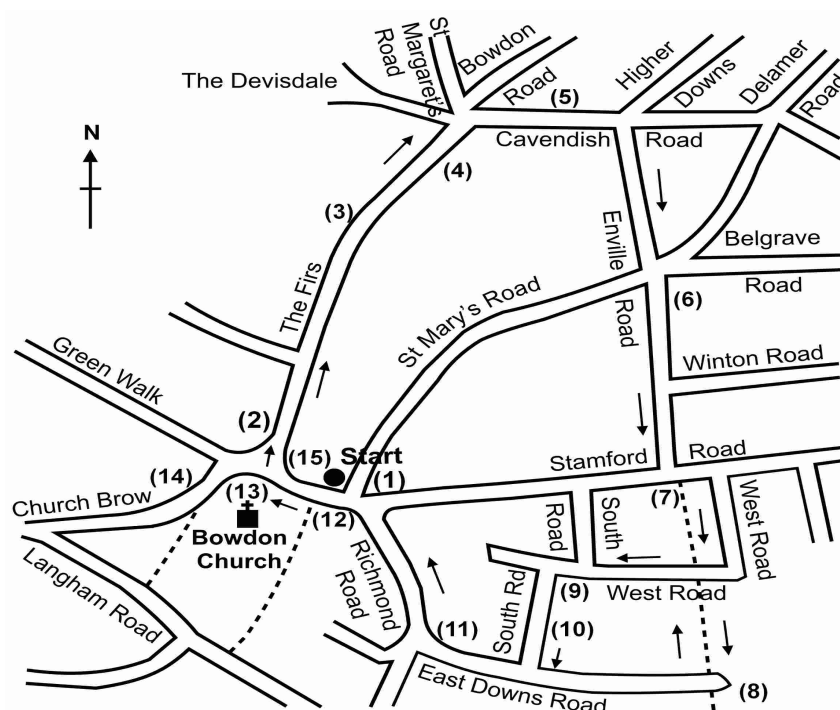


*The Don Supper Bar, originally a 17th-century house, with the 18th century Old Roebuck Inn on the right.*

## Bowdon Tour & Map

This short tour starts and ends at St. Mary's Church, Bowdon, is just under two miles and will take an hour. The walk covers central Bowdon and follows the route: The Firs, Cavendish Road, Enville Road, Narrow Walk, West Road, South Road, East Downs Road, Richmond Road, Church Brow, and back to Bowdon Church. Bowdon Village is a Conservation Area.

The modern names of roads and places are used generally, with any earlier ones given. The bracketed number after a heading in a paragraph title refers to the number on the map.



A **highlighted Name** indicates a brief biography in the Biographies article. ***Bold Italics*** indicates a change of walking direction.

Start at The Griffin car park opposite the church.

### St. Mary's Road (1)

St. Mary's Road is named after Bowdon Church. Nevell and others believe that a minor Roman road passed Bowdon Church from Watling Street and along Hale Road. St. Mary's Road would be the logical route to keep to higher ground and avoid the boggy area of Peel Causeway at Hale Village.

The Polygon opposite to the Griffin car park was built in the early 1880s, provided offices for Bowdon Urban District Council Offices and a few local shops. The windows at the top were photographic studios from 1883 to 1921.

On the right just below The Polygon, the white houses at numbers 16/18 Stamford Road are in the Cottage Orn  style.



*The Polygon, built in the early 1880s, provided offices for Bowdon Urban District Council Offices and a few local shops. The windows at the top were photographic studios.*

On the left of St. Mary's Road is a row of bowling green hut, now converted to a residence and built on a tithe field called Bowlinggreen field, originally an open field called Church Fiels, enclosed in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Opposite the offices were Ormsons builders originally.

***Go along The Firs opposite to Bowdon Church.***

## **The Firs (2)**

The memorial fountain to Francis Marriott in front of the Stamford Arms is dated 1872 and is listed.

On the right past the Stamford are the original stables of the pub, recently a garage. Just past that, air raid shelters existed until the 1950s. The Bowdon Assembly Rooms were built in 1903, designed by local architect Frank Dunkerley. They are in trust from the Bickham family for use as a local amenity. The Griffin, The Stamford and the Assembly Rooms are on the site of the medieval Garden Crofts.



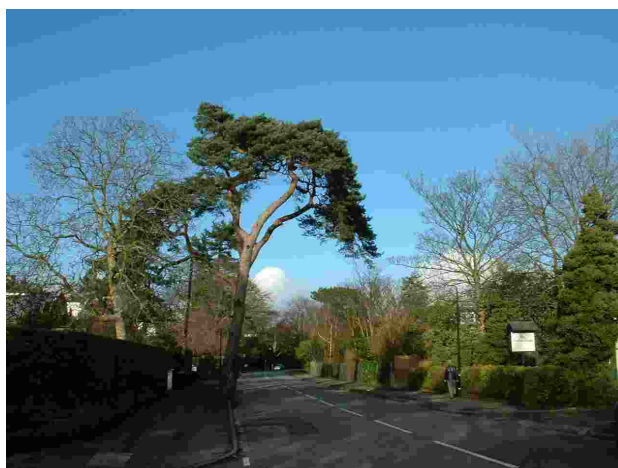
*The Assembly Rooms on The Firs.*

Bowdon Bowls and Tennis Club is on the right (the entrance is on Winton Road). The Bowdon Cricket Club used these grounds in 1865 before they moved to South Downs Road in 1874. Bowdon Croquet Club is on the left. The Bowdon Bowling and Croquet Club started here in 1873. In 1909 it converted to the Bowdon Bowling and Tennis Club after tennis ousted croquet as a favourite sport from 1874 and Helen Bickham (of Bickham House) purchased land from Lord Stamford for the club.

The Bowdon Croquet Club was separately established on its present site in 1911 and is on the site of a field on the tithe map called Bowling Greenfield on which a bonfire and fireworks were set off in 1813 to celebrate the defeat of Napoleon. The Croquet Club, which has four lawns, is thought to be the seventh oldest in the country but only just survived when sheep and goats grazed the lawns during the 1914-18 War. In the 1870s there were about 50 private croquet greens in the Altrincham area.

The Firs was originally a very sandy lane called Burying Lane. It was a continuation of the path from Old Market Place, Altrincham through Norman's Place and Bowdon Road to Bowdon Church.

To the west (left) side of The Firs were Sparrow Greaves Fields, ie infested with sparrows. The Bowdon water tower and underground reservoir used to be down Elcho Road on The Devisdale (Devis' Dole) from about 1870 to 1930. It would be nice to think Elcho Road is named after Bonnie Prince Charlie's commander and no doubt some of his troops camped here in 1745. However, like so many local road names, it is a



*The old Scots Pines on The Firs were cut down about 2009 and sadly not replaced by the same species.*



Stamford family name. The oval road sign is original.

In the 18th century the Bowdon Wakes were held on The Devisdale and included many sports and amusements and much eating and drinking by men and women. Events included horse, pony and donkey racing, a wheelbarrow race, climbing the greased pole, a juggling match, a grinning match, bolting hot dumplings, hen racing, foot races including one for women, gingerbread stalls and a fair which included swing boats.

There is a benchmark on the gatepost of number 7 on the left. The two Scots Pines just beyond Elcho Road from which the road was named were about 200 years old when cut down in 2009 and possibly planted when Bowdon Downs was enclosed.

## Hans Richter (3)

**Hans Richter**, conductor of the Hallé 1899-1911, lived at number 27 The Firs on the left from 1901 to 1911 where there is a blue plaque. Note the Italianate front door.

Bowdon Downs was originally a very extensive area covering much of Bowdon: from the Chester Road east to Langham Road and from the border with Altrincham to Park Road. It was used as an assembly ground when the local lord of the manor recruited troops ready to wage war.

The troops of Prince Rupert and his brother Maurice camped on Bowdon Downs in May 1644 during the Civil War. On their way from Shrewsbury to York, they had recruited 8,000 troops in Shropshire and aimed to recruit in Lancashire. 10,000 troops camped on Knutsford Heath and Bowdon Downs and then attacked Stockport which surrendered. Over the next couple of months Bolton and Liverpool were laid to waste following resistance, before the troops went off to do battle at Marston Moor near York where they lost.

At the end of The Firs on the west side is one of the entrances to The Devisdale which was part of Bowdon Downs and towards the end of September held the Altrincham Agricultural Show from 1896 to 1966, which had started in 1861 at Little Bollington. It was said to be the largest one-day show in the country and farmers came from all over Britain including Norfolk, Cornwall and Scotland to show cattle, horses, pigs, cheese, butter, poultry, vegetable, fruit, cereals, flowers, honey, birds, dogs, rabbits, and fowl. Machinery and animals came by train to Altrincham and Hale Stations as well as by road. For locals it was a day out and an opportunity to buy prize bacon and vegetables at the end of the show. Children were given the day off school to attend it.

During the last war troops were under canvas here. The Devisdale is now an important wildlife corridor and Conservation Area.

## The Bowdon Synagogue (4)

The Bowdon Synagogue, which was built in 2003, is towards the end of the Firs on the east side. Just after, Robert Luke of Luke and Spencer lived at Carlton House, and there is a story that one day his cab driver fell out of the cab but the horse still took him home.



Devisdale House was just past The Devisdale

*The Bowdon Synagogue was built in 2003.*

entrance on St Margaret's Road and was designed by Alfred Waterhouse. It was commissioned and lived in by Dr Arthur Ransome, an uncle of the author. The gateposts are still there. Opposite are two fine Italianate houses, probably dating from the 1840s when the style was popular.

Opposite to the entrance to The Devisdale is Bowdon Road, again part of the burying lane from Altrincham to Bowdon, along which the cortège would walk.

***Bear right into Cavendish Road.***

## **Altrincham Grammar School for Girls (5)**

The Altrincham County High School for Girls on the left was built in 1910 on the site of Bowdon Lodge, retaining part of the original building of the early 1830s and the lodge. The building was used as an air-raid shelter during the war.

Judge James Bradbury chaired the joint Altrincham, Bowdon, Hale and District Education Sub-Committee established in 1903 to look at the provision of state schools in the Altrincham area, including Altrincham County High for Girls (later Altrincham Grammar School for Girls), and Judge Bradbury was the first chairman of the Board of Governors. His son was Captain **Edward Kinder Bradbury V.C.**

The first Headmistress was Miss Smith. The school has a very fine academic record. Opposite as part of an annex to the school, is the side entrance to Fairlie where **Francis Crossley** of Crossley Motors lived from 1874 to 1890. Stop to admire the very fine 'ivy' gates in the Art Nouveau style.



*Altrincham Grammar School for Girls, showing part of the original 1830s building.*

***Turn right into Enville Road.***

## **Enville Road (6)**

The town houses (Mallory Court) at the top of Belgrave Road on the left are on the site of the 1874 large Methodist 'Dome Chapel' which was designed by Sale architect William Henry Brakspear (who also designed Bowdon Church). It was a landmark in the area with its Italianate green copper dome. During the war the basement was used to store emergency food for the Altrincham area.

The building always suffered from subsidence, even while being constructed, probably because it was built on a field called Well Field. The chapel closed in 1968, only £7,500 being obtained for it. One stained glass window was incorporated into St. Peter's Church, Hale. The

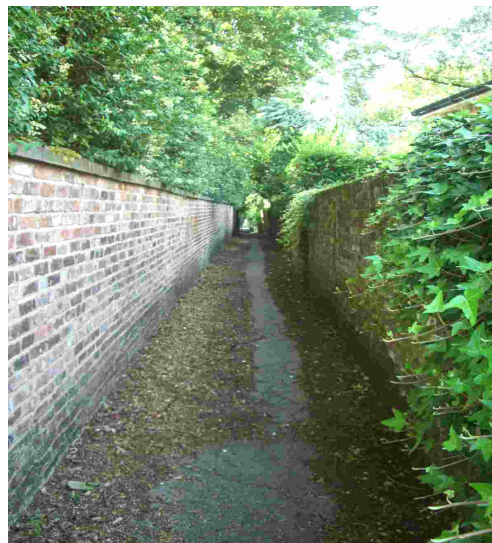


*The Manse for the now-demolished Dome Chapel.*

very fine manse is still behind in Enville Road.

## Narrow Walk (7)

Narrow Walk originally ran from Bowdon Lodge at the Bowdon Road/Cavendish Road junction to East Downs Road. It continues as Nield's Brow leading down to Langham Road and South Downs Road and was probably originally a path to Moss Farm, The Grange on Grange Road, and to Ashley Mill. The road was named after William and Alfred **Nield** who lived at High Lawn and Dingle Bank next door. Abel Heywood the prominent Manchester publisher and Radical Mayor of Manchester who planned the new Manchester Town Hall lived here from 1872 to 1893, then known as Summerfield.



*Part of Narrow Walk near High Lawn.*



*High Lawn at the end of East Downs Road with its observation rooms looking across the Cheshire plain.*

High Lawn is a grade II listed building at the eastern end of East Downs Road in an area known as Rosehill. In the 18th and 19th century the land was owned by the Assheton-Smiths of Ashley Hall. Bryant's map of 1831 shows a racecourse here. Rosehill was a valuable site with views over the Cheshire countryside and was fully developed from 1842 when the landowners sold Ashley Hall and their Bowdon lands. Many of the houses are built of Large White Bowdon Brick on edge.

William and Alfred Nield (or Neild) were calico printers in Manchester in the first half of the 19th century. William Nield was the second Mayor of Manchester from 1840-1842. He was a Quaker from Millington and bought land on Rosehill to build High Lawn in 1843 in the Italianate style. William died in 1864 in Manchester Town Hall and is buried in the Bowdon Churchyard. About 150 coaches lined Langham Road for the funeral.

***Backtrack down Narrow Walk to West Road and turn left.***



## West Road (9)

Opposite at the junction of Narrow Walk and West Road there is a benchmark.

Handsworth House on the left is a Methodist care home. Belfield (or Bellfield) House was a school in 1854, now flats.

Highbury on the west side of West Road was an 1870s school for girls, then an extension to Altrincham Preparatory School for Boys from 1950 to the present day.

At the top left of West Road a Wesleyan Chapel was built in about 1860 on the east side on a field called Bell Field, originally a small medieval ridge-and-furrow open field called Bell Clapper Field, possibly a field dedicated to producing income for the church bells, situated between Stamford Road, Richmond Road, East Downs Road and West Road. The stonework from the chapel survives in the upper window arches of the three 1888 terraced houses (numbers 19 to 23) erected on the same site and called Laurel Bank. Number 23 is now West Lea and was a school in 1901. At one time all of these houses were schools.

The houses in South Road opposite are early Victorian in the Georgian style.

In the late 1960s and early 70s, mountaineer **Chris Bonington** lived at Newcroft at the top of West Road.

**Turn left into the western part of South Road.**

## South Road (10)

Rosehill School was in the building on the east side dated 1860 and which had been a Methodist schoolroom. By 1871 Professor Theophilus Dwight Hall had taken over from T M D Meiklejohn who ran a day and boarding school there. The school was renamed Bowdon College and moved to South Downs Road in 1874.

The original building was bought in 1874 by A J Pearce (known as 'Daddy' Pearce) as a school with playing fields on land opposite. It was used as a Sunday School at weekends. Canon **Maurice Ridgway's** father attended school here in 1892.



*Numbers 19 to 23 West Road incorporate some stonework in their upper floor from the Wesleyan Chapel previously on the site.*



*Rosehill Methodist School, later became Bowdon College, South Downs Road.*



The schoolroom finally became a laundry and then a dwelling and was refurbished as apartments in 2001.

***Turn right into East Downs Road, continue to Richmond Road.***

Many of the houses in East Downs Road were built in the 1840s, well before the railway came to Altrincham. **Thomas Pitfield**, the composer, poet and artist, built number 21 (his house was demolished in 2000) and knew **Adolf Brodsky**. His wife Alice was born in Russia, of English parents and only spoke Russian until she was 14.

## Richmond Road (11)

Richmond Road was originally, and is still locally, known as Richmond Hill. The houses were built in the 1850s.

The talented artist **Gladys Vasey** lived at number 4 Laurel Bank on the corner of East Downs Road where there is blue plaque and a fine benchmark on the gatepost. She had a most adventurous life, including leaving her husband after 53 years of marriage for a young man.

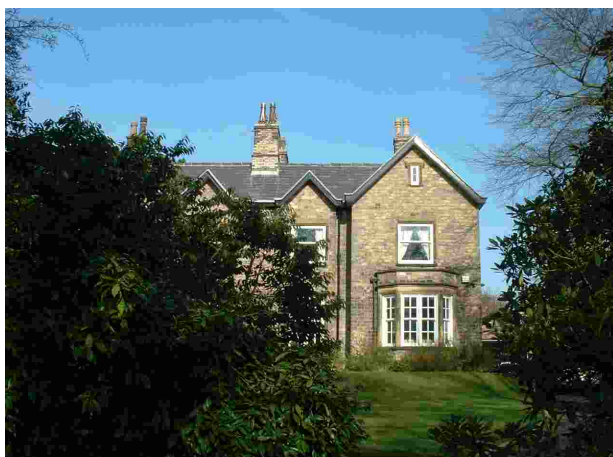
**Adolf Brodsky** the Russian violinist lived at 3 Laurel Mount, again marked by a blue plaque. He was the first person to play Tchaikovsky's Violin Concerto and led the Hallé Orchestra. Brodsky's nephew lived in the same house afterwards.

**Harry Killick's** parents lived at Southfields at the bottom left of Richmond Road which became a hospital for Manchester children during the war. Harry built racing cars and small planes and was a life-long scouter, always to be seen in his flying helmet and shorts, and late in life in a kilt.

***Bear right up Richmond Road.***

Prof. **Sir William Boyd-Dawkins** who was Britain's first Engineering Geologist, lived at Richmond Lodge, Richmond Hill on the west side in the early 20th century. His widow Mary lived there until 1954 and left many of his possessions to the Buxton Museum. William had many interests such as geology including a survey for the Manchester Ship Canal, and paleontology including Wookey Hole in Somerset and the Alderley Edge Bronze Age mines.

Bowdon Church School stood where the 1970 flats are just to the north, with the master's house next door. The school was moved to Grange Road in 1969 as Bowdon Church of England Primary School. The original grammar school was on the



*Adolf Brodsky the Russian violinist lived at number 3 Laurel Bank on the corner of East Downs Road and Artist Gladys Vasey lived at number 4.*



*The Griffin dating from the 18th century was originally for workers but is now upmarket.*

site of Bowdon Free School and was founded through a will of 1553 in which Edward Janny, a Manchester merchant, donated land for which **Robert Vawdrey** was the executor. The school was rebuilt in 1670, 1806 and 1855. The first recorded schoolmaster was Henricus Chapman 1563 and the head teachers from 1636 are recorded.

Scriven House opposite, The Ridge, the shop, The Hollies, and Farwood are all listed.

## The Griffin (12)

The listed Griffin public house ahead was built in the late 18th century but may incorporate an earlier building. It is probably named after the coat of arms of the Earls of Stamford. It was originally called the Green Dragon and in the 19th century was The Griffin & Bowling Green Hotel. The car park at the back was built on a field called Bowling Greenfield.

There used to be a large tree in front of The Griffin on which locals perched to watch bull baiting until it was banned by the vicar in 1815. In Victorian times there was a stand for horse cabs here.

When the Stamford Arms was built, the Griffin became the pub of lower social status and was used by servants and Bowdon Vale residents since there wasn't a pub there. This also enabled the upper classes to keep an eye on their servants' drinking. It used to have a bowling green.

***Continue round to the left towards the church.***

## Bowdon Church (13)

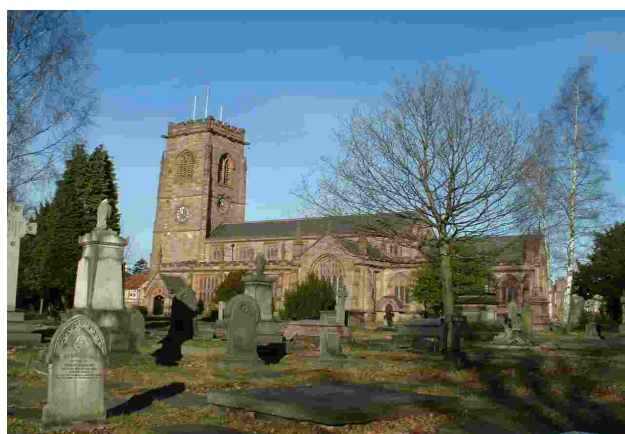
Stamford Cottage on the left is where the schoolmaster of the Bowdon Church School lived and this building dates from 1806. Behind are the Parish Rooms opened in 2007.

The listed churchyard was originally about a third of its present size and D-shaped, possibly indicating a Celtic origin. It was extended east and south in 1815 and again in 1859 and 1876, this time down to Langham Road which involved demolishing a house on Langham Road and building the present retaining wall.

There are paths down both sides of the churchyard, the western one being the more ancient. The stonework for the first half of the western path pre-dates the present church and is probably 18th century. Much of this wall is listed and many of the stones have Roman numerals.

The churchyard's 'D' shape prevented the devil from hiding in corners. The early tombstones were deliberately laid flat and some have been reused as paving. When the church was rebuilt in 1860 some of the gravestones were moved outwards and no longer cover the original grave. Some were also moved to the cellars of The Priory in Bowdon Vale which was the vicarage at the time.

As one would expect there are some interesting graves here including **John and Sarah Siddeley**, the brewers. The oldest gravestone surviving is 1617 for William Artinstall of Ringway. There are about 41,000 people buried here in 5,000 graves.



*St. Mary's Church, Bowdon from the south.*

The listed church is situated about 70 metres above sea level and is a landmark from all points of the compass, even more so when it had pinnacles. From a seat behind the church there were views across Cheshire on clear days to Alderley Edge, Jodrell Bank, the sands of the Wirral and Bowdon Vale. These views have been largely lost due to the trees and houses. An ancient yew tree grew near the southeast corner of the church until about 1960 when it became dangerous.

The church originally served an area from Ashley nearly to the Mersey and Partington to Ringway, perhaps 30 square miles. Later on 'chapels of ease' were built in outlying districts to make it more convenient for parishioners. Parish records go back to 1628 and the first burial recorded is Henry Arstall de Ringey on 19 January 1628. William Tipping was a woollen webster when he married here in 1657.

St. Mary the Virgin's Church is at the centre of the Bowdon Village Conservation Area. Go into the magnificent church if it is open and look at the roof. Also see their website for a tour.

The church is thought to have originated about 650AD in Saxon times but was rebuilt in 1100, 1320, 1510 and 1858/60, at the latter date because of pressure from the Cotton Kings for a bigger church although it was said that the old one was very solidly built. Stones from older buildings on the site are scattered around Bowdon gardens. The Earl of Stamford contributed to the current building of which the base of the tower survives from the previous church. The external sandstone came from Runcorn and the internal from Lymm.

Brakspear designed this 1860 church, usually known as Bowdon Church, which was mentioned in the Domesday Book and may have been founded in the 7th century. A well-preserved Saxon silver penny of Edmund of about 940 was found in the graveyard in the 19th century and documented but lost.

The present church is Perpendicular Gothic in Cheshire New Red Sandstone and is listed. It has an ornate hammer-beam roof and particularly wide aisles. It is thought that the medieval ceiling of the north aisle was restored and incorporated into the new building. Many of the vicars are known from 1210. The remains of a Saxon Cross of about 750AD lie in the Chapel of the Cross and there are monuments to the Booths, Grays and Breretons. There are fragments of the Saxon, Norman and medieval churches, some collected from local gardens. A sundial post in the graveyard may have been a Saxon cross. There is a 15th century octagonal font. A number of treasures from the church have been lost including a bell-ringer's three-gallon jug with the bell-ringers' names on it and a 16th century battle helmet.

As in many English churches, the English peculiarity of 'change ringing' took place on the peel of six, now eight, bells. For security purposes, up to the end of the 19th century a curfew bell was rung in the winter, as it was in other Cheshire churches. In Bowdon's case it was rung at 8pm on the fifth bell from October 17th to February 14<sup>th</sup>. Up to about 1865 this was followed by the day of the month in rings. The Parish Ringers were also hand-bell ringers.

The bells are rung from the belfry and the following verse from the end of the 19th century can be found inscribed there:

#### THE RINGER'S ORDERS

*You ringers all, observe these orders well  
He pays his sixpence that o'erturns a bell  
And he that rings with either spur or hat  
Must pay his sixpence certainly for that;  
And he that rings and does disturb the peal  
Must pay his sixpence or a gun of ale  
These laws elsewhere in every church are used  
That bells and ringers may not be abused.*

*James Milliatt, Ferdinand Laughton, George Wright, and James Fletcher (Churchwardens)  
Joseph Drinkwater, John Pickering, Aaron Eccles, Peter Pickering,  
John Dean, John Hobbart, (Parish Ringers)*

In early Victorian times it is said that an Altrincham doctor bought the bodies for dissection and there is a story that on one occasion the bell-ringers played a prank and sent one of their friends in the coffin alive.

There is a benchmark on the church pillar facing The Firs. Just before the steps past the church entrance is a small memorial to Florence May (oooo) Smith 1904-1993 who was known as 'Oh,Oh'; is there any connection here with oo which is Old English for 'she' and is a Cheshire word?

## Church Brow (14)

***Follow the road past the church down Church Brow a short way.***

Church Brow is part of Park Road. The corner of the churchyard here catches the wind off the Cheshire Plain and Windy Ridge on the south is 1920s listed and was the vicarage. It is in the Arts & Crafts style with a balcony on the Langham Road side. Liberty's of London, the Arts & Crafts furnisers, designed much of the interior. Canon **Maurice Ridgway** lived here from the early 1960s to the early 1980s.



*Windy Ridge on Church Brow in the Arts & Crafts style, later St. Mary's Vicarage.*

Opposite, the former police station was converted to houses in 1971, still with the wartime siren housing. Number 1 Church Brow just below is 1720 and listed and has late 18th or early 19th graduated slates. Numbers 3 and 4 are listed and previously contained another house, number 2. They were all thatched originally, the last thatch being burned about 1950 by a passing steamroller. Numbers 5 to 6 are 18th century and listed and have 18th century graduated slates. Number 7 is 16th century, listed, with sandstone foundations probably from Timperley. It has a timber-framed gable and rear, and was thatched until 1914 (note the steep roof). Number 7a is listed and was Bowdon Old Forge. Numbers 8, 9 and 10 are also listed. The brickwork of the tall garden wall on the right below the cottages is in English Bond. Opposite on the left, The White Cottage is 18th and 19th century and listed.



Church Brow could be part of a minor Roman road from Watling Street to Ringway. Rather than follow Park Road to the Dunham Road, it may have taken the line of an old footpath that crosses Stanhope Road to Streethed Farm on the Dunham Road. At the bottom right Park Road carries on as Charcoal Road but was originally called Shepherd's Lane.

***Turn back up Church Brow and left into Green Walk.***

Green Walk was originally called Sparrow Lane and was constructed by the Stamfords about 1760 as a private drive from Dunham Hall to Bowdon Church and had locked gates at each end. As part of the Stamford estate the road was developed from the 1840s by Lord Stamford to attract rich families who could afford large residences to preserve the attractive route to church. The largest houses in the area were built on Green Walk, in many cases for cotton and silk magnates. It used to be claimed that that there were more millionaires here than in Park Lane, London.

At the bottom right of Green Walk is Denzell, built for the Scott Family (cotton spinning) in ten acres in 1874 on tithe plot 766 by Hamiltons, a firm of local builders still working in the 1950s. The Lamb Family (cotton shipping) lived in it from 1905 and gave it to Bowdon UDC in 1936 and it was then known locally as Lamb's Gardens. During the war it was used as a war supply depot and to house evacuees. Denzell, nearby Erlesdene and Hilston House are all listed buildings. Just before was Woodside, home to **Jesse Haworth**.

Opposite to Denzell is Gorsefield now Bickham House named after the owner **Spencer Henry Bickham** described at a Manchester silk manufacturer in the 1861 census. Bickham House was given by his daughter Miss Helen Bickham to be used as a residential home for the aged. It opened in 1951 and preserves most of the original features including considerable rear gardens and a hidden kitchen garden. Mansions along here were specified to have a tradesman's entrance, hidden staff quarters with their own staircase, a billiard room, a library, stabling, a hidden kitchen garden and Bickham still has all of these. Miss Bickham kept a chauffeur, three gardeners, a cook, three maids and a cowman to look after the cow kept in the kitchen garden, and coach horses in the paddock below, now Bucklow View. Up to the wartime the house was still lit by gas. West Hill next door was a hospital supply depot during the 1939-45 War.

***Turn back towards Bowdon Church.***

## **The Stamford Arms (15)**

The Stamford Arms opposite to the end of Green Walk dates from before 1765 and is shown on a 1793 map of Bowdon. The older wing is on the right of the entrance, possibly originally a farmhouse. It was called the George & Dragon before 1765 and later the Red Lion. The round Pavilion to its right was built about 1870 by Ormsons (who were based in St Mary's Road) for dances and social receptions and had a sprung floor. Dances were held there until the 1950s after which it became dilapidated until the brewery restored it in the 1980s. 160 sat down to supper there for the Bradbury Central School (closed 1985)



*The Stamford Arms and Pavilion, with the Griffin on the right.*

centenary reunion in February 2010.

During the war Special Operations Executive personnel used do parachute training at Tatton Park, staying at Dunham House on Charcoal Road. SOE personnel staying here included Odette Sansom (née Brailly, married Peter Churchill, finally Hollowes, and died in 1995) who received the George Cross. Violette Szabo (née Bushell) also trained here, was shot aged 23 at Ravensbruck in 1945 and received a posthumous George Cross. Yeo Thomas (who wrote The White Rabbit) and General Sikorski (the Commander-in-Chief of the Free Polish Forces) also trained here. Trainees used to go to the Stamford Arms and the Griffin, as well as the Swan with Two Nicks at Bollington, where rooms were reserved for their use to keep them separate from the public.

**Harry Killick** the local racing driver and scouter used the Stamford as his local with his home-made racing car parked outside. **(finish)**

# Hale Walk & Map

## Introduction to Hale Walk

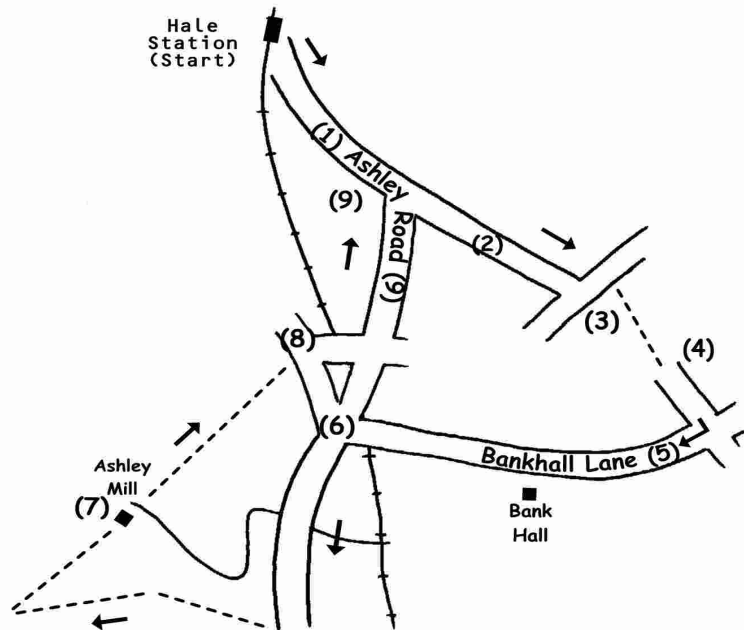
The tour starts at Hale Station and is a total of about four and a half miles including an optional one-and-a-half mile section to Ashley Mill, and will take a couple of hours. Boots may be necessary if the optional part is walked in wet weather. The walk covers the Hale Village and Ashley Heath areas and follows the route: Ashley Road, Bower Road, Park Road, Arthog Road, Bankhall Lane, Ashley Heath, Ashley Mill, South Downs Road, Ashley Road and back to Hale Station.

The first half of the walk is the route taken by **Leo Hartley Grindon**, a Manchester amateur naturalist and rambler in 1866 following the coming of the railway to Hale in 1862 (see his *Country Rambles*). Grindon followed an ancient track across country running between Peel Causeway Farm/Ollerbarrow Farm and Barrow Farm/Ross Mill Farm to Cotterill Clough, most of which can still be walked today.

The modern names of roads and places are used generally, with any earlier ones given. The number after a street name in a paragraph title refers to the number on the map. A **highlighted Name** indicates a brief biography in the Biographies article. ***Bold Italics*** indicates a change of walking direction.

## Hale Station (1)

The original station was built between 1859 and 1862 specifically to serve Bowdon residents and was originally called Bowdon (Peel Causeway) Station, the name being changed to Peel Causeway in 1899 and Hale in 1902. The station platforms, the signal box, the offices and the footbridge are all early 1880s following extensive rebuilding in polychrome bricks and are listed. The footbridge was originally enclosed and extended to Victoria Road. In 1863 the line was extended to Northwich as the Cheshire Midland Railway and was used to carry salt, which was essential to the meat trade in Manchester and the main reason for this part



Looking back towards Hale Station.



of the line.

Before the signal box was built, the gates were opened by hand and the gate-man was on duty in a hut near the gates night and day. There was an occasion when he had been on watch for two nights and a day and was asleep when a train crashed through the gates.

When the railway was built a road bridge similar to Hale Road Bridge was planned instead of the crossings and later a subway was proposed but perhaps fortunately neither materialised. The line still relies..... on ICI traffic to survive and has carried limestone from the Peak District to Northwich since about 1880, in hoppers since 1936. Today it also carries hoppers from Liverpool docks carrying wood-chips from the USA to power the Drax power station in Yorkshire.

Before the railway was built, Broomfield Lane continued westwards and had to be diverted around the present Victoria Road, which was originally unmade and known as 'Slutchy Lane'.

The walled area around the bottom of the station car park on the left was where the Victorian horse cabs waited and emerged through the iron gates. The Victorian cabbies' 1900 wooden hut still existed at the end of the wall on the right into the 1950s where the stone coping is. The cast iron gateposts, and the stone gatepost protectors have the initials 'CLC'. Cheshire Lines Committee was formed in 1863 of which the Cheshire Midland line to Chester became part in 1865.

***Walk south along Ashley Road towards the main Hale Village shopping centre.***

Ashley Road from the station through the present shops was originally called Ollerbarrow Lane and was described in the 1830s as a 'track by a brook'.

The large building on the left was The Royal Bank of Scotland, formerly Williams Deacon's Bank of 1927, taken over in 1930 but keeping its identity. Just after, Rose Cottage stood on the left in 1838 where number 161 Ashley Road is now and there were no other buildings until Leigh Road.

In the early 1860s ditches still ran behind the present shops on both sides of Ashley Road from Spring Bank and the position of these ditches can be seen down entries. The area between Ashley Road and Cecil Road was a marsh.

After draining the area, houses were built from the 1870s with front gardens and trees and the original houses can be seen in many cases behind the present shops. The houses were converted into shops from 1908 but mainly in the 1920s, with permission being granted if the front gardens became the footpath with a view to future road widening. The road name 'Westgate' on the left, although late Victorian, perpetuates the idea of the old position of Saxon Hale around the Queen's Road area and comes from Danish *gata*, a road or pathway.

Emily Petremant who founded Broussa School (named after a village in Turkey and now Hale Prep) in Broomfield Lane originally ran a school near the Bleeding Wolf before the 1914-18 War. She then moved the school to 199 Ashley Road, which managed to retain some of its front garden after others had gone because it was set back but was converted to a shop in 1931.

## Ashley Road (2)

The small listed building just before Leigh Road now called Ollerbarrow House (no. 211) was built about 1740 and was part of Ollerbarrow Hall's farm buildings. Ollerbarrow means 'alder grove' implying a wet area, probably along the line of Ashley Road. The farm's fields were 24 Cheshire acres (about 50 statute acres) and ran up to Broomfield Lane and Ollerbarrow Road. They were worked until 1908 when houses surrounded the farm. The building is made of small hand-made bricks from a brickyard at Riddings Road.



*Ollerbarrow Farm, now Ollerbarrow House.*

There were plans for a cinema on this site before the 1914-18 War but local protests stopped it and instead a Willowtree Road site was approved. Ollerbarrow Farm was used as the local police station and later the WRVS. A library was behind on the site of the farmyard and outbuildings, this area still used as an allotment after the war. It was probably the last house to retain its full front garden when the road was widened and a token garden remains. The site was converted to shops and houses in 2022 and the library moved behind the bowling green.

The buildings from 221 to 227 Ashley Road are on the site of Ollerbarrow Hall which was held by Aldcrofts in 1406, Masseys from about 1430 until William Vawdrey married Mary Massey, daughter and heiress of John Massey. The Vawdreys held it until 1674 when it came into the hands of the Ashley family who held it until 1760. Clarke's held it to about 1850, and finally Zebulon and Mary Leigh to 1906 and after whom Leigh Road is named. The Leighs also had a shop on Hale Road. A pen-and-ink drawing of the farmhouse exists in the Owen Manuscripts in Manchester Central Library. A moat around the hall was said to have been still visible until about 1900. 3 Cambridge Road has an old apple tree in the back garden which may be from the hall. Hill's Bakery on the left at 217 was established in 1912 and used coke ovens until 2000, the last in the area to do so.

Cambridge Road on the left was built up from 1877, partly on a field called Oakfield which was a narrow strip enclosed from a medieval open field. The back gardens of the house on the odd side are on the line of an ancient track that led from Ollerbarrow Farm to the open fields around Hale Road and Hale Farm down Queen's Road. A section of the track still exists at the top of Cambridge Road as a shortcut to Stamford Park School. Number 13 has some remnants of the Dome Chapel, Bowdon incorporated. Hale Urban District Council Offices were transferred to 229 Ashley Road at the bottom of Cambridge Road from their original tiny offices in Thorn Grove off Albert Road before moving to where where the Britannia Hotel is now at the start of the 1914-18 War.

## St. Peter's Church

St. Peter's Church was dedicated in 1892 by The Right Reverend Dr. Francis John Jayne, Bishop of Chester on land donated by the Harrops and is largely constructed of Ruabon red brick to the designs of architects Tate & Popplewell. Just before it was built, services had been held in Hale Station waiting room. It was the first church with its parish entirely within Hale and the foundation stone came from old Bowdon Station in Altrincham. It is said that two bottles of beer are walled up inside the tower. The clock was installed in 1912. **Maurice Ridgway** was curator here during the war.

**Turn left into Harrop Road then right into Bower Road.**

Harrop Road is named after an old local family who owned a large part of eastern and southern Hale, inheriting it from the Worthingtons.

## Bower Road (2)

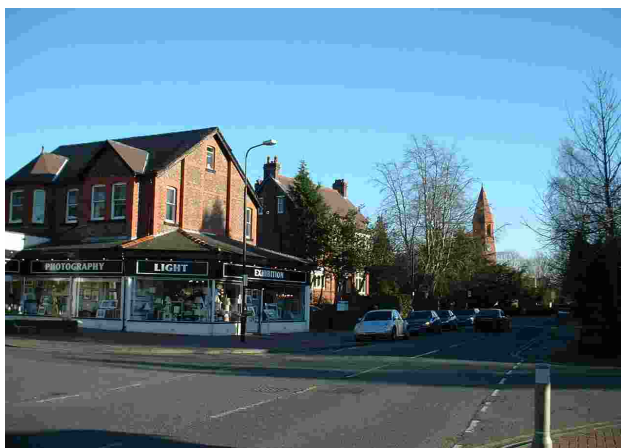
This was originally a track with a stile at Ashley Road across fields to the top of Bankhall Lane and on to Barrow Farm and Ross Mill Farm. From the name and its position, one can envisage that this was a pleasant country walk across a field of cows during the summer in the 19th century. Even in 1911 it was still just a cinder track. The oak tree on the left just after Riddings Road survives from those days. 'Riddings' means ancient enclosures or clearings and the road takes its strange shape from the 'Kiln Field', indicating brick making, on which it was built.

Houses were constructed from about 1900 at the Harrop Road end of Bower Road to the early 1920s at the Kensington Gardens end. Author **Richard Mason** was born at number 14 .

## Park Road (3)

Park Road was originally called Dob Lane, possibly where daub (clay) was obtained and local field names incorporate 'dob'; but it can also mean 'an extension of land'. A John Dobb lived here at one time, perhaps taking his name from the lane. The lane was a way between the Old Bleeding Wolf Farm on Ashley Road and the Old Farm still at the top of Park Road on Hill Top Drive. Originally the lane was quite wide and Gypsies used to camp at the side. The land south-eastwards from Park Road was originally part of Hale Barns and Ringway to 1900. In the late 19th century Clibrans had extensive nurseries much of the way up on the right. During the war the newly-built houses in Parkhill Drive further up on the right were used to house troops. The estate was built on the grounds of the 1865 house called Park Hill.

In the 19th century at the end of Bower Road on Park Road stood a poorhouse consisting of three ancient whitewashed cottages which were single storey and thatched until 1821. They were used until 1834 when workhouses were formed into unions and new ones built, and these cottages were pulled down in 1863.



*Cambridge Road & St. Peter's Church before redevelopment in 2006. The building on the left was originally Hale Council Offices.*

**B V Bowden**, computer and educationalist pioneer at Manchester, lived at Roxana, the house opposite to Bower Road, in the later 1950s and 60s. The house and Frankwyn next door were built by **Adam Fox** in 1898. Lower down Park Road on the left is the 1960s Wadham estate. The upper part of the estate, now Fernlea, was originally called Brick Field indicating clay pits and was very marshy due to springs. Brick making was taking place here in the 1850s and perhaps they were used for the nearby Yew Tree Farm on the site of the present Birchfields. The farm was occupied by John Kinsey, surveyor and collector of taxes, in the 1850s and was still standing in 1960. The farmland was used for the playing fields of Wadham House School (built in 1898) on Arthog Road until the 1950s and Lightoaks, which is still on Arthog Road, was the dormitory.

***Turn left up Park Road then second right up the passage to Woodhead Road.***

Opposite the far end of the passage was the White Cottage with beehives, mentioned by **Leo Grindon**.

***Turn right to the end of Woodhead Road and through the passage to the top of Arthog Road.***

## **Arthog Road (4)**

On emerging from the passage there is a Victorian pillar-box on the right, this style dating from the 1880s. The road is named after Arthog Hall near Barmouth and was initially a private road. When the road was to be developed, an approach along Bower Road was planned but failed, resulting in the present steep hill that must have been difficult for horses.

The hollow ahead called Holloway Clough was partly filled in and the hill levelled for the houses, some of which were built before Arthog Road itself. Holloway, previously Halliwell, may be from Old English *holh* and *weg*, a hollow way or from *halig* and *wella*, a holy well.

Walk along the level part which had stumps across it in the 1920s and buses had to turn around here. Overdale on the right was the first house to be built and stood on its own for a long while with difficult access and visitors frequently got lost. The second was Dingleside next door. **Professor Gordon Black**, who led the way in computing at Manchester in the 1960s and 70s and after whom the term 'Black Box' (which was always orange) is said to be named, lived in Alan Drive opposite.

Following the collapse of the Labour Government in 1931 due to the world financial and employment crises, Ramsey MacDonald, Stanley Baldwin and ministers met at Halliwell House on the corner of Bankhall Lane and Rappax Road, previously Hillcote, leading to the formation of the National Government. Baldwin finally became Prime Minister in 1935.

***Turn right into Bankhall Lane.***

If instead you want to continue to Ross Mill Farm and follow **Leo Grindon's** walk, continue opposite into Rappax Road from which paths lead down to the Bollin right or forward to Barrow Lane and Rossmill Lane. Rappax is the plural of 'roebuck' and it is named after a field called Rappax.

## Bankhall Lane (5)

Bankhall Lane may have formed part of the Warrington to Macclesfield Road. At the top a small brook runs out of a field called Ding Well up above Bankhall Lane and down Holloway Clough on the right, flows under drives and then turns left down to the Bollin. Locally the clough is known as The Dingle. The banks of the dingle are deep sand and this was used to fill sandbags during the war. On the wall of Holloway Clough, just before Hope Cottage, is a fine carving of a shamrock by the wall-builders, with the date 1899, now upside down.



*A four-leafed shamrock carved by wall builders on Bankhall Lane.*

Hope Cottage is an early 16th century timber-framed building and was originally three cottages. In the 19th century they housed a carpenter, a wheelwright and a joiner. Before 1953 it had been called variously Halliwell Clough and Holloway Clough and is listed. A track behind led to Barrow Farm and Ross Mill Farm (which was **Leo Grindon's** route) now diverted by the 1903 Hale Golf Course. The track also led to the River Bollin via Jacob's Ladder, a steep way down.

A (holy) well once existed opposite to Hope Cottage in the dingle. Lower down the road on the left another path leads to the stretch of river known as the Rappax Bollin, named after the large field crossed from Bankhall Lane called Rappax.

## Bank Hall

Ahead on the left is Bank Hall, a listed timber-framed building which is mainly early 18th century. The hall was largely rebuilt in 1607 and sold, much rebuilt and slated in 1760. The porch with a room over is 17th century in style and is flagged, probably dating from the 1607 rebuild. The earliest reference to buildings here is in the 13th century when the owners were referred to as 'Le Bonc', which may be Welsh *bonc*, or Old Norse *banki*, a small hill.



*Bank Hall on Bankhall Lane dates from about 1700.*

Masseys held the hall from the late 13th century and certainly in 1377, Talbots in 1411, Vawdreys (one of the few Roman Catholic families in the area) from at least 1550 to 1763, and then Egertons when it was 98 statute acres, and Fowdens from 1764 to the 19th century. It was farmed by James and Jane Worthington with two servants and four agricultural workers in 1871 and 1881 when it was still 98 acres. **John Owen** sketched it about 1875. Edwin Sylvester Kearns was farming it before the 1914-18 war and just afterwards there was a Gypsy encampment here.

It was derelict in the 1970s before being rescued by Eddie Shah who revolutionised the newspaper industry by introducing computer typesetting and colour printing in the early 1980s. Shah was



besieged here in 1983 during a union dispute and the hall was fire-bombed. Bank Hall was recorded in 1860 as having a moat and some of this shows on the 1838 Tithe Map. The remains of the moat, between the hall and the road, was filled in by Clibrans about 1930.

Bankhall Lane was originally called Nunnery Lane and there is a line of nine yew trees just after Bank Hall, probably about 400 years old. Historian **Alfred Tarbolton** reported fourteen trees in the 1930s. There may have been a nunnery here, possibly Bank Hall itself, but there is no evidence. Alternatively the trees may have been planted to indicate that a Catholic family was living there and certainly the Catholic Vawdrey family were there in the 16th to mid-18th century.

There is a benchmark on the left of Wyngate Road.

## Tolland Lane

Tolland Lane was originally called Back Lane with narrow fields to its west and just the four cottages of about 1800 at the Bankhall Lane end, which were farm labourers' dwellings called Towlands in 1851. One of the cottages is called Shambles Cottage perhaps referring to when it was used as a shop with an open front and a stall. 'Tolland' is probably a corruption of Townland meaning the open fields of a medieval settlement, which may have been close by but surrounding field names on the 1838 map don't support this. An alternative source is from the Danish place name *Tollund*.



*Early 18th century cottages on Bankhall Lane with Tolland Lane on the right.*

Clibrans started garden nurseries in Carrington and Oldfield Brow in the early 1870s. In 1896 they moved their main nurseries to the left of Bankhall Lane and by 1911 they had 400 acres of land in the area. The firm closed in 1968 following the death of William Clibran in 1964. They did much trade supplying expanding suburbs and councils, became the biggest nurserymen in the country and were known worldwide. They also had contracts with Crown establishments and supplied trees for forests in Delamere, Wales and Scotland. Their warehouses and offices were where the mid-1990s Belgravia Gardens are. They had extensive growing areas at Ashley, Ashley Heath, Bowdon, Hale, Timperley, Urmston and Llandudno, and shops and warehouses in Manchester.

The Hale Sewage Works at the back was built in the late 1870s, partly on a field belonging to Peel Causeway Farm called Bank Meadow. It originally used alder trees and rushes to filter the sewage. In 1914 it was reported in the local Guardian that it was "*an abominable and public nuisance*." In 2004 it was closed and sewage is now pumped from here through Hale Barns to the main works at Broadheath.

Over the railway bridge the 2002 apartments on the left are on the site of West Dene which itself had replaced a wheelwright's shop and old thatched cottages.

## Ashley Heath (6)

Ashley Heath originally stretched along Bankhall Lane, west across Ashley Road, to the Bowdon boundary. The area is a Conservation Area although much redevelopment has taken place.

At this point an optional route may be taken by turning left towards Ashley and making for Ashley Mill. Otherwise take a shortcut and save a mile by going over to Ashley Mill Lane North opposite and go to paragraph (14).

### ***Go left down towards the River Bollin.***

Madeley Close is on the site of Madeley House, sold in 1970 for £12,000 when seven houses were built on the site. Kinseys, the cabinet makers of Hale Village, lived here in the 1950s and 60s and had a hut in the garden where they made TV cabinets. In the entrance to the close the name of Zena Dare, the music hall artist, is said to be carved on the large beech tree, probably when she was playing Peter Pan in Manchester in 1906 and stayed with the Holmes family here.

On the right opposite to Madeley Close stood Ford Bank House which was built before 1828 and which had a duck pond in the garden. In the 1970s it was replaced by houses but the gateposts still stand. Behind the original iron railings at the end of the stone wall there used to be a circular concrete spigot mortar block from the last war used by the Home Guard to defend the bridge over the Bollin, but it has vanished or is buried. The ground to the left and right of this side of the Bollin was an isolated field belonging to Peel Causeway Farm at what is now Hale Station.

Originally there was a ford over the Bollin before a bridge existed but since the road crosses through the middle of ancient field boundaries it is likely that the original crossing was a bit lower down or up the valley. The bridge is earlier than 1828 and has a benchmark on it. Tarbolton reported mere (boundary) stones 300 feet on each side of the bridge indicating the limit of the approach the county had to maintain under a 1531 Act.

After the bridge, ahead is Hall Lane leading to Ashley Hall, which dates from the 15th century and was the ancient seat of the de Ashley family (who had renamed themselves from Massey) in the 13th century and the Brereton family until 1660. Mary Queen of Scots stayed one night at the hall and there is a resident ghost, the Spectre of the White Lady. In 1715 it was the meeting place of Jacobite Supporters in the area but it was decided not to support the Old Pretender and, having taken that decision, those present were recorded in a painting now hanging at Tatton Hall. During the war the local reserve of timber was stockpiled high all along the drive. It is said that iron was smelted on the banks of the Bollin here using the iron-rich sand.

### ***Turn right down Ashley Mill Lane.***

## Ashley Mill Lane

Coppice Farm on the right was occupied by Thomas Ashley in 1838, and John and Ann Blease in 1851 who farmed 33 acres. The tithe barn, originally part of Coppice Farm, is probably 16th century and is listed. It was surveyed by the University of Manchester Archaeological Unit assisted by STAG in 2004 in preparation for possible conversion to



*Coppice Farm Barn on Ashley Mill Lane.*



offices. It is estimated that there are 300 tons of oak in the barn that has oak weatherboarding, unusual for Cheshire. The central section of the barn is a threshing floor with a pair of crucks on each side.

Coppice Nurseries was run by Clibrans in the 20th century and continued after 1967 by the Newton family to the early 2000s. Mr Newton was the manager of Clibrans Nurseries for nearly fifty years. The building opposite was the local smithy which still has a very worn mounting block on the Ashley Road side.

Ashley Mill Lane was a common route for poachers to access the Tatton estate, and one man was hung in 1830 for allegedly shooting a bailiff following a chase along here and along Bankhall Lane. Another poacher of the 1930s I knew, recalled a tale of cycling home from here with a shotgun split under his coat and wearing spectacles without glass as a disguise. At the Bleeding Wolf, police, who were investigating a serious crime, stopped him but he was allowed to continue.

***At the 'Y' junction bear left towards Ryecroft Farm.***

There has been a farm here since the 13th century and the presents building probably dates from the early 16<sup>th</sup> century. The lane is Victorian and the original farm entrance was from the Tatton road. The Hopes have farmed here since the 1860s. The fields on the left are known as the Polo Fields where the Manchester Polo Club played until 1951. The clubhouse and stables were half way down the first stretch on the left where the mound is just before the path on the right. Local lads got jobs stamping down the hoof prints and practised horse riding on their bikes. Ahead is Fish House Plantation, often known as Fish Wood.

***Turn right over the stile across the field back to Ashley Mill Lane.***

Stand at the top of the rise and look back beyond the Polo Fields where parachute practice from tethered balloons and aircraft could be seen over Tatton Park during the war. Walking on, there are good views of Alderley Edge to the right, and Bowdon Church on the left and the large white house High Lawn. Notice the small cobbles in the soil.

***At the lane go left towards Ashley Mill.***

## **Ashley Mill (7)**

Walking down the medieval cobbles, another wartime spigot mortar base used to be situated on the right to defend the bridge. The late 18th century mill building itself no longer exists but was on the left at the bottom of the cobbled path. It had double undershot water wheels and was derelict by 1890 following disastrous flooding of the Bollin valley on 29 June 1872 when nearly five inches of rain fell in a short time. The mill would have ground much of the corn in the Hale and Ashley area and the footpaths and tracks in the area are due to the mill's existence. In 1851 James Davenport was the miller with his wife Sarah.



*Ashley Mill house on Ashley Mill Lane.*

### ***Cross the bridge back over the meandering Bollin.***

The remains of the header pond and millrace with its divided leat can just be distinguished on the right, especially in winter. They were filled in after the 1939-45 War. Originally there would have been a ford here. This part of the Bollin used to be called Carter's Bollin and, before and up to the 1939-45 War, was extremely popular with locals and would look like Blackpool sands at weekends. The river was polluted in the 19th and 20th century at Bollington but is now clean again and fish have returned, including trout.

### ***Continue up the hill.***

The 1965 award-winning development was on the right with its lawns down to the Bollin was called Riverside. The original Riverside was a bungalow built by Altrincham developer **John Henderson Broun** for his retirement, in the terracotta style of his buildings in Stamford New Road and Willowtree Road, Altrincham. The 1965 building was demolished in 2014. Clibrans Nurseries had the fields on the left. Continue up Ashley Mill Lane North along the setts laid by Broun as a drive to his bungalow to emerge at Ashley Heath.

## **Ashley Heath again (6)**

The buildings opposite to Ashley Mill Lane North against the railway were part of Ashley Heath Farm held by the Ashleys about 1800 and John Taylor about 1870. The farm's fields were around Park Road and Bower Road. A couple of the outbuildings on the left were used by **Harry Killick** to build his light aircraft, racing cars and high-quality trailers in the 1940s and 50s. This is a Conservation Area.

### ***Turn second left into South Downs Road.***

## **South Downs Road (8)**

The Old House (previously The Manor House), Ashley Heath, on the left opposite to Heather Road is partly 17th timber-framed and is listed. It was originally two houses; one a farmhouse was occupied by Ashleys in the 17th century. Opposite is Elmhurst where local historian **Alfred Tarbolton** lived from 1898 to 1903 and the pillar-box to its right is late Victorian.



*The Old House on South Downs Road.*

***Turn right into Heather Road to reach Ashley Road and turn left at the cross-roads.***

## **Ashley Road (9)**

Heather Road is named after Heather Croft, the field to its south. Note the three rail bridges in the area, an expensive undertaking in the 1860s when there was little road traffic. In 19th century trade directories this area was described as Motley Bank, which today we would think of as further down South Downs Road.

The Old Wolf Garage on the left was established as the Hale Motor Company in 1914 and was originally the Bleeding Wolf pub's coach house. Len Ollier started there in 1927 where he operated the first petrol pump in the North of England. It was renamed the Northern Automobile Company about 1937 when the Holmes family took over.

The Bleeding Wolf was a three-storey Mock-Tudor building of 1897 and listed but was closed and sold with the garage in 2002 for redevelopment and is now called Heathgate with Wolf Grange adjacent. It picks up the Altrincham area Gothic theme with its extravagant turret. An earlier building was originally part of a farm that existed from about 1800 to 1898 (which itself had replaced an earlier building) on the site of the garage forecourt facing Ashley. Land belonging to the farm extended from here to opposite St. Peter's Church. It is said that the new 1900 building enclosed part of the old to preserve the licence, a common practice.



*The Bleeding Wolf on Ashley Road with the Old Wolf Garage to the left.*

The pub took its name from Hugh Lupus, (Hugh D'Avranches, the nephew of William I who became Earl of Chester in 1071), and whose crest included a wolf. *Grosvenor* (at Chester) means 'mighty hunter' in French/Latin. He was also known as Hugh the Fat. However one local legend says that the last wolf in England was killed near here about 1470 and was buried under the (original) doorstep. When Bonnie Prince Charlie's troops stayed in the Altrincham area in 1745 the innkeeper is said to have killed a straggler in Altrincham. Sarah Ashley held the licence in 1807.

## Park Road

Opposite to the Bleeding Wolf is Park Road (Dob Lane) with the first road on the right, Nursery Avenue, where **Alan Turing**, who made a large contribution to code decryption during the war and to computers afterwards, lived at number 25 in the late 1940s.

Going back towards Hale Village the villas here and on Park Road are in a Conservation Area. A new Congregational Church (now part of the Altrincham United Reformed Church) on the left was opened in 1913. The original church of 1899 is still at the back. The latter and the 1904 St. Peter's Assembly Rooms opposite in Cecil Road were used as auxiliary hospitals during the 1914-18 War. This end of Cecil Road was unmade until the 1950s.



*Hale Bowling Green & Hotel.*

Most of the houses in this part of Ashley Road are more elegant than those built before 1875 and are based on standard architects' designs. **Alfred Tarbolton** first lived in Hale at The Lodge, now 247 Ashley Road opposite to Crescent Road. Somerleaze 245 Ashley Road, just before Warwick Road, was built in 1877 and is the second oldest house along here. **Roy Chadwick** who designed



the Lancaster and Shackleton Bombers lived at Kingsley in Gilbert Road off Warwick Road during the late twenties and early thirties.

Just after Warwick Road there is a benchmark at number 243 Ashley Road. Numbers 241 (Oakfield) and 243 (Holmecroft) were built in 1879. Fields surrounded it with Cow Lane at the left-hand side where the cows came down to Ashley Heath Farm. The larger copper beech in the garden has been estimated to be 260 years old.

The Hale Conservative Club was on the right until it closed in 2008. The building was called St. Baldred's Hall, named after a mythical Northumbrian saint, and used as a social centre. It was built in 1881, the second of two girls' orphanages funded by **Francis Crossley** of Crossley Engineering and in 1898 was lent by Mrs Crossley to Manchester and Salford to be used as a Police Orphanage. In 1903 it became St. Baldred's Hall and in 1925 Hale Conservative Club. During the war a school evacuated from Guernsey was accommodated here until a school could be set up in Bowdon, which after the war led to the formation of St. Ambrose College, Halebarns.

***Walk down Crown Passages on the left just after Crescent Road.***

## **New Farm (9)**

The restaurant in the car park is partly an old farm building from New Farm, which was farmed from 1862 to 1910 by which time houses surrounded it. The last farmer was James Billington. The building was the premises of Walter Preston and his son Billy, farriers and blacksmiths from 1910 to the 1950s. The farmyard itself was on the present car park and behind what was Barclays Bank stood Clegg's Garage with Clegg's Rooms above until about 1970, again part of New Farm. The upper part of the wooden building was accessed by an external stair and was used as St. Peter's Sunday School at one time. New Farm's 80 acres were previously those of Peel Causeway Farm and stretched from South Downs Road to the Bleeding Wolf. The farmer from Peel Causeway Farm, John Clayton, moved to a new farm here when railway building started in 1859.



*The restaurant in New Farm outbuildings across the bowling green.*

***Walk across the car park and left into the passage next to the Bowling Green.***

## Clegg's Lane

The passage is probably the remains of a track from Ollerbarrow Farm and New Farm that was still used at the start of the century. It crossed the railway track at the back of the car park at 82 Cecil Road to reach Heath Road and South Downs Road. Heath Road was known as Clegg's Lane until about 1900. Perhaps there is a family link with Clegg's Garage that was later in a building to the left of Crown Passages. The car park against the railway is where the Hale & Bowdon Fire & Ambulance Brigade was based from 1925 until the early 1960s, and the listed wartime siren is still there at the back right on a tall pole.

**Edward Theophilus Nelson**, the first West Indian barrister in England, lived most of his adult life at 49 Cecil Road. 47/49 was one house originally.



*The track to Clegg's Lane over the railway with the wartime siren at the back right.*



*Edward Theophilus Nelson's house in Cecil Road, Hale.*

***Walk back to Ashley Road over the Bowling Green and turn left.***

## **Hale Village**

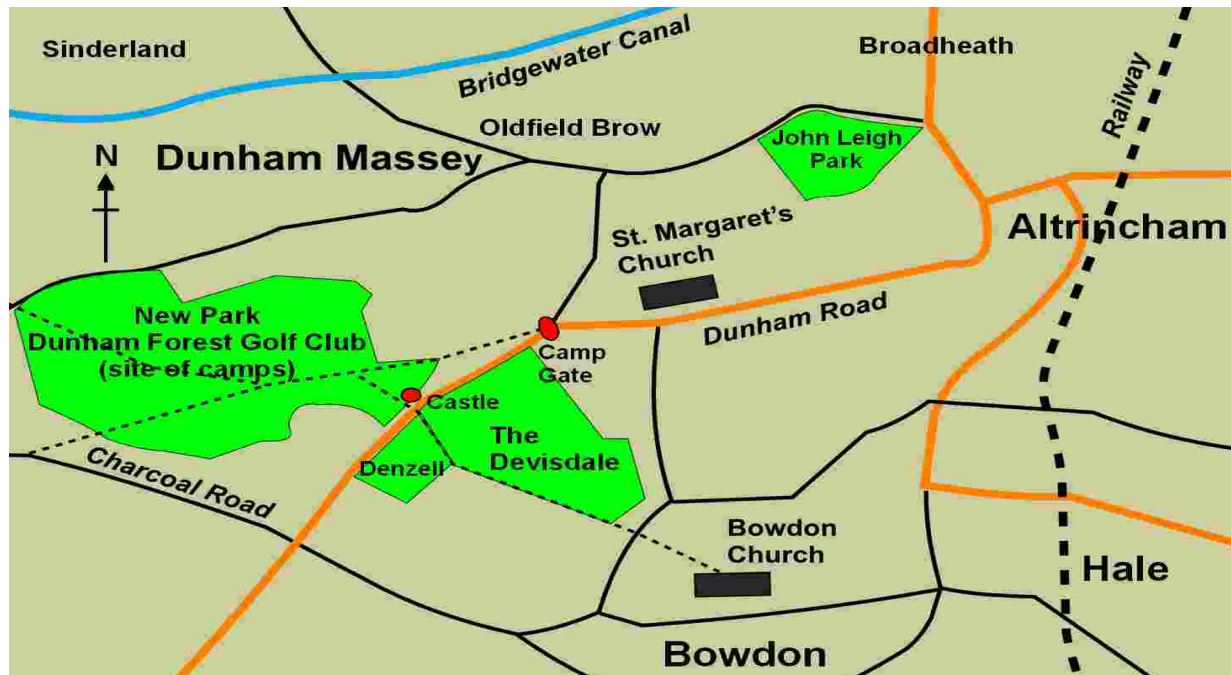
Hale Village is a Conservation Area. The shops to the south of the bowling green were built in 1913. The bowling green and the monkey puzzle tree were laid out in 1921, the latter replaced in 2021. Hale Urban District Council had purchased the land in 1901 from the Stamford Trustees to be used as public land. It has been under threat of development, eg as a proposed car park for the adjacent hotel. The Ashley Hotel was built about 1970 and stands on the site of the Altrincham Girls' Home built in 1882 by Henry Kenyon and funded by **Francis Crossley**. In 1910 the matron was a Mrs Alice Death! The building became Hale Council Offices in 1913 and was demolished in 1970. To its right was the Bowdon Roller Skating Rink of 1876, which pastime only lasted three years. In 1888 it became the Drill Hall and had an internal balcony. It was originally used for drilling volunteers and later American and British troops during the 1939-45 War. After the war it was used for wrestling, etc.

A couple of doors up at 188 were Southern's, bakers in the Altrincham area since 1820. Numbers 168/170 retain their 1920s shop fronts. There is a right of way between 184/186 to the buildings on Cecil Road. The last building before Hale Station on the left was Martin's Bank, previously the Lancashire and Yorkshire Bank of 1906 that had been in Peel Causeway originally, with the only remaining tree on Ashley Road pre-dating the shops. On the railway embankment along here a local retired railway line inspector who always wore clogs, used to grow comfrey which he carried in his bowler hat and which he would rate highly against many modern medicines.

## **Hale Station (finish)**

## BOOK 4: DUNHAM MASSEY PRISONER-OF-WAR CAMP

### The location of the camp(s)



*The site of the American Army Camp, later a German Prisoner-of-War Camp in Dunham New Park, in relation to the surrounding towns, the site now largely occupied by the Dunham Golf Club.*

### Dunham Massey American Army Camp

The site of the Dunham Massey estate is mentioned in the Domesday book as a manor belonging to the Saxon earl Aelfweard. It consisted of a hall at Dunham surrounded by what we now call the Home (or Old) Park, the later New Park to its north, the Devisdale (the lord's rabbit warren) to the east and about 3,500 acres of farmland. Along with many other manors spread around the country including about 36 in North Cheshire, South Lancashire and North Wales, it was given to the Norman Hamo de Masci in 1070 and passed to the Booths in 1427 then the Greys in 1758 then left to the National Trust in 1976 by Roger Grey, the 10<sup>th</sup> Earl.

In 1758 Mary, Countess of Stamford inherited the Dunham Massey estate on the death of her father, George Booth, the second Earl of Warrington. She had married Harry Grey, the fourth Earl of Stamford and they created the New Park (originally called the High Park, now sometimes called the second or upper park) in 1765. They planted it with oaks and built a drive for the family's Sunday visits by coach from Dunham Hall to St Mary's Church, Bowdon crossing the Chester Road (the A56) into Green Walk (originally Sparrow Lane). It also contained a wide ride from



Dunham Hall towards St. Margaret's Church at the Altrincham end which became the main track through the army camp. All rides and Green Walk were gated and the whole of New Park was fenced with split oak palings.

What became the Dunham Massey Prisoner-of-War Camp was set up in Dunham New Park as a base for American troops when the USA entered the war in December 1941 after the bombing of Pearl Harbour. Many of the buildings were of timber construction on brick foundations but later ones were corrugated-iron Nissen huts.



*The main entrance to the Dunham Massey camps from Altrincham on the corner of the Dunham Road and Bradgate Road looking south-west (DM).*

In 1941 there was already a substantial army presence in the Altrincham area, including on The Devisdale and in New Park, and Lord Stamford was hard-pressed to prevent the destruction of Home Park which surrounded Dunham Massey Hall. In April 1941 he agreed to release more New Park land to extend the Army Vehicle Park. After a storm at the end of December, 100 oaks and beeches were felled and new roads laid in the camp.

In April 1942 The Devisdale, just across the Chester Road from the New Park, was being used for troops under canvas, as it had been in medieval times and in the English Civil War in the 17th century. In July the British Army authorities were considering requisitioning Home Park for a troop camp, cutting down all the trees and draining the ponds. Senior British Army officers and US Army officers inspected the whole area on the 9 September and the Army wanted 155 acres of Home Park for a camp with huts. None of this suited Lord Stamford who had to work hard to get support for its preservation. On 2 October 1942 the War Office inspected New Park and declared it ideal for a US camp. They proposed that it be used for US troops for 12 months which was confirmed on 8 October. Home Park was spared and the Devisdale rejected. Preparation started immediately and it was expected that by December new roads would have been laid out and New Park occupied.

On the 28 March 1943 Lord Stamford inspected the site for a proposed hospital camp and its associated sewage system. On the 7 October US officers stated that they were very enthusiastic

about the camp, the best they had seen since arriving in England. American troops arrived in October. On 4 January 1944 Lord Stamford toured the US New Park camp and on 7 January was relieved to hear that the proposal to build a hospital had been dropped.

## Charles Frame

### An ex-US soldier's memoirs

Charles W Frame was an American soldier who was billeted at Dunham for just four months from January 1944.

Charles emailed the author to say:

*"We had gone to Iceland on the 27th July 1941 to relieve some British soldiers who were needed in Egypt. We left Iceland on the 28th December 1943 on the ship Empress of Russia and took 48 hours to get to Greenock, Scotland. It was beautiful going up the Firth of Clyde. We were pale looking compared to the GI's coming from the States who all had deep tans from much sun exposure. We landed on the 30th December and were put on a train directly to Altrincham and trucked up to the camp at 7am. We were the first troops in the camp."*



Charles Frame as a  
US soldier  
(with his permission).

Charles explains further: *"When my radar unit, the 1st Aircraft Warning Co., left the USA for Iceland, the US was not at war and we were dressed in the clothes of the old peace-time army. Our dress uniform included a woven-knit black tie. After Pearl Harbor in December 1941 and the draft was started, they changed much of the dress uniform. Because we were in Iceland they didn't issue us any change of uniform. The new dress uniform had a tan-color tie, so all the American's coming to England directly from the States had these tan ties and we from Iceland were wearing our black ties. So all men from Iceland were referred to as the 'Black Tie Boys'. We still had the old pre-war steel helmets which were taken away and we were issued with the new style helmets."*

While stationed at Dunham, Charles met Jean Bunnell from Sale at a dance at the Altrincham Stamford Hall (now demolished) and for their first date they met under Altrincham Station Clock, as many generations have done. They were married in May 1944 in Reading and remained so for 56 years.

Unsurprisingly there is no mention of the Dunham Army Camp in the Altrincham Guardian local newspaper, but in the Guardian of 18 February 1944 two American soldiers were reported to have been stabbed to death in the Woolpack Hotel at the bottom of Regent Road, Altrincham, now demolished. Initially the police dealt with the incident and the possible culprits handed over to the US Army Police 'of a north-west camp'. Charles Frame confirmed this saying that *"the Woolpack was used by American troops from Iceland and that the culprit was a US soldier."*

### British Prisoner-of-War camps

At the start of World War II there were only two Prisoner-of-War (POW) camps in Britain and no standard design. By the end of hostilities the number of camps had reached over 400, holding over 400,000 prisoners. Because of security and the large numbers, many POWs were sent to Canada (and later the USA) after interrogation and classification.

There are relevant records at the National Archives, London, but German POW records were handed to the German Federal Government and are archived in Berlin. The only useful documents in the Dunham Massey Stamford Papers in Manchester University's John Rylands Library archives are Lord Stamford's war-time diaries. The best local records are held in Trafford Local Studies but information has also been gleaned from local residents. Much of this article is based on written and verbal reminiscences of POWs, guards and residents of the area.

### **The national background to POWs**

In July 1941 the first of an intended 50,000 Italian POWs, mostly captured in North Africa, were sent to Britain. Many were suffering from malaria, typhoid and dysentery, needing specialist care, and there was a danger of spreading malaria to the local population, particularly on the south and east coast where the mosquito involved in the spread of malaria thrives.

Barry Sullivan's book *Thresholds of Peace* gives a substantial account of prisoners of war in Britain generally. It was thoroughly researched from published and unpublished British and German sources, and from interviews and correspondence with about 250 individuals including 60 Germans.

POWs started their interrogation in several Home Counties' camps sometimes called 'cages', often football stadia. They were sometimes persuaded to collaborate on a voluntary basis before being sent to other camps. Ardent Nazis were sent to Canada and remote parts of England or Scotland. Combs, razor blades and knives were confiscated and POWs were not allowed to keep diaries. Once in a camp the Germans were often allowed to make their own rye bread which suited their digestion better.

The Geneva Convention forbade forcing POW officers to work but about 85% of all POWs did so. They were generally employed on the land but some were involved in building access roads around Wembley Stadium for the 1948 Olympics and on other preparatory work.

The Schutzstaffel (SS) were part of the Wehrmacht and had a reputation for prowess in the field of battle but also for atrocities. They could be distinguished by a tattoo of their blood group on their upper left arm, a practice used by the USA in World War I. In Russia some SS were beaten up by comrades and there were attempts to disguise tattoo marks, including by amputation.

The war in Europe ended at midnight on 8 May 1945 by which time over 3,700,000 Germans were in British hands in several countries. Of these only 500,000 were detained and the rest released in time for the 1945 harvest.

At the end of the war the USA and Canada returned prisoners to Britain and British camps were hard pressed to accommodate them. POWs were re-interviewed to assess their Nazi loyalty and given a re-education programme. POWs were returned to Germany from 1946 but if they remained loyal to the Nazi cause a few remained as late as 1949. Of the 400,000 POWs dealt with by Barry Sullivan, about 25,000 elected to stay in Britain.

In early 1946 a quarter of the agricultural force in Britain was made up of POWs but fraternisation with locals was not allowed. By December 1946 this attitude had been relaxed and POWs were allowed to visit private homes, walk within five miles of the camp, and accept small gifts such as sweets and tobacco. Some were invited into British homes for Christmas. Amorous liaisons were

still forbidden.

After the war, repatriation was said to be urgent because the national cost of keeping POWs was £90,000 per day (20p per day per POW!). POWs were selected for release using several criteria, including length of stay, occupation, health, hardship in the family and political leanings. The repatriation rate was quickly stepped up from 2,000 to 15,000 per month with the object of returning all POWs by the end of 1948, usually on the same trains used to bring British POWs home. However, government policy was to hold them back because of a shortage of agricultural labour. Most were returned by August 1948.

### **Newsletter for Germans**

From 1946 to 1948, to help German POWs to understand English, the government produced a fortnightly eight-page newsletter entitled *English for All*, subtitled *Fortnightly for German P.O.W.* from issue 31. Number 1 was dated 2 April 1946 and publication continued until at least number 48 on 24 Feb 1948. Passages were classified as: A=Advanced, B=Intermediate, C=Beginners and the front page usually contained an 'A' article. Some parts were in English and German and difficult words were always translated. Articles included: Art, Australia, ballet, biographies, Christmas, coal mining, crafts, cricket, crosswords, English and American phrases, English grammar, football, gardening, historic houses, horse-racing, humorous anecdotes, Hyde Park speakers, jokes, lifeboats, medicine, New Zealand, pantomimes, parliament, plays and music, police, public schools, Quakers, radio, railway stations, sayings, South Africa, stories, street scene, the Boat Race, the free press, the home, and the postal system. A few camps produced their own newsletter and camp 184 at Llanmartin, Newport, South Wales got special praise. The Control Office for Germany and Austria also awarded English diplomas.

### **POW camps in Cheshire**

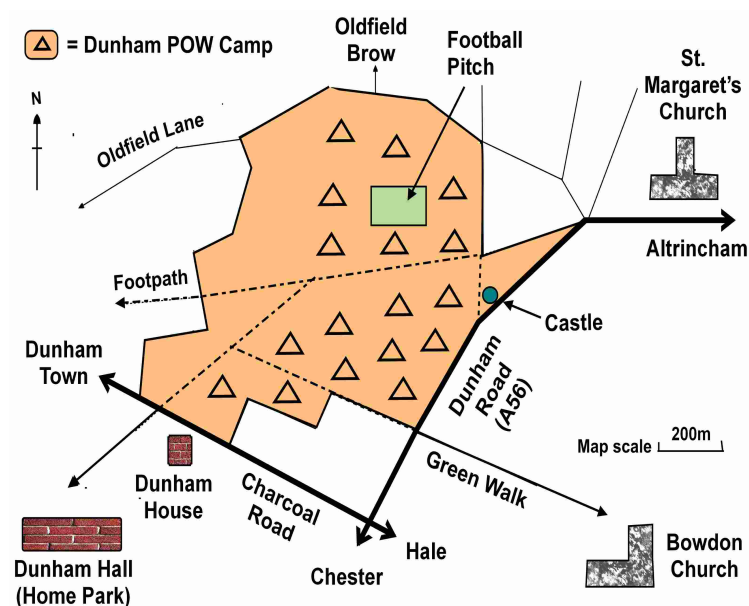
By late 1942 substantial permanent camps were needed to hold POWs from North Africa and several large firms were commissioned to build them in concrete, timber and corrugated iron. Some were built by the POWs themselves while sleeping under canvas. There were about twenty camps in Cheshire including in the north: Delamere Forest, Dunham Massey, Great Budworth, Knutsford, Marbury Hall Northwich, Mobberley, Nantwich, Oulton Park, Tarporley, Racecourse, Toft Hall, and Warburton. Toft Hall was said to hold 38 nationalities of which the British recognised 26, each segregated and many POWs there were on a list of probable war criminals. Dunham Massey was camp number 189, which number it shared with the Northwich camp.

In the UK there were many escapes from POW camps. In 1949 there were over 50 escaped POWs still at large and at least two reached Germany. The attempted escape from Grizedale Hall (POW Camp 1) in the Lake District, filmed as *The One That Got Away*, is the story of Oberleutnant Franz von Werra who eventually escaped from Canada to the USA and back to Germany. There was a similar escape attempt from Marbury Hall when four POWs reached the United States Army Air Force base at Burtonwood, Warrington and were apprehended at the controls of a Marauder bomber.

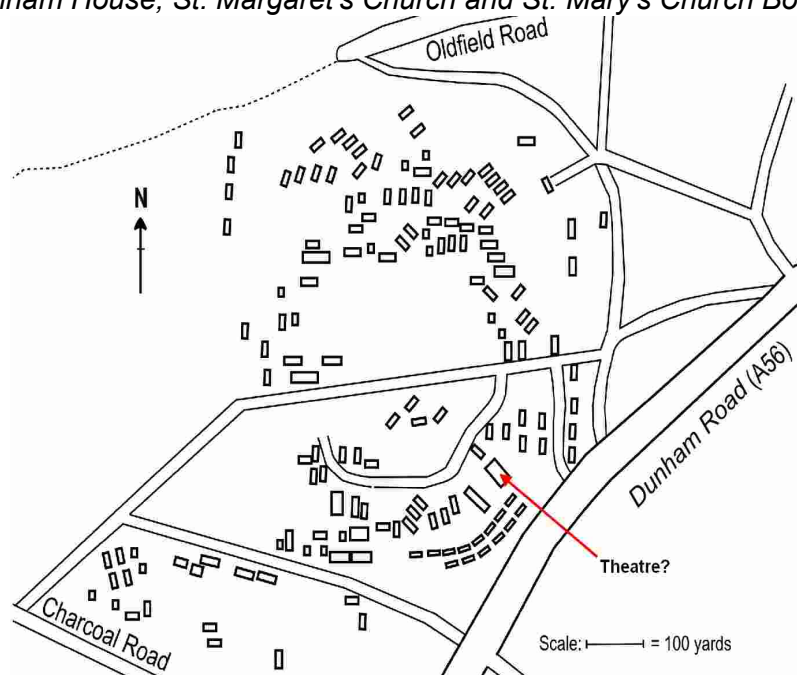
Parts of a few camps around Britain have been preserved as part of our heritage but nothing remains in Cheshire. There are many brick foundations remaining of the Dunham camp.

# Dunham Massey POW Camp

## Maps of the camp



*The New Park area of Dunham Massey showing the site of the American Army Camp, later a German Prisoner-of-War Camp, the tracks, the football pitch, and the castle; as well as Dunham Hall, Dunham House, St. Margaret's Church and St. Mary's Church Bowdon.*



*The Dunham Massey POW camp drawn from a Russian map of the area of about 1950 which shows about 190 huts of various sorts.*



The US troops moved to Aldermaston in May 1944 at very short notice to prepare for the Normandy invasion leading to D-Day on the 6 June. On the 18 October 1944 Lord Stamford was informed that the empty camp was to become a POW camp holding 3,500 prisoners and an inner, stronger fence would have to be constructed to contain them and that this involved felling trees.

The first POWs brought to Dunham in the first week of November 1944 were said to be Italians captured in North Africa. Security was strict but local girls were able to talk to the prisoners through the fence and threw them chocolate and cigarettes. The Italians built a shrine in the camp.

The loss of men in the home agricultural force to the Armed Forces was a problem, partly solved by the training of Land Girls. In addition the Army had traditionally helped to get the autumn crops in. This was solved by employing trustworthy Italians. When the Italians joined the Allies, Italian POWs were moved to part of the WWI camp at Sinderland then used as an ammunition depot and non-Fascist prisoners put to work, mainly on farms where their agricultural skills could be utilised. They proved to be hard workers and were very popular.

The Italians and the Germans soon to arrive had to be kept separate because of friction between them. All POWs had patches on their back and legs and Italian POWs had different uniforms to distinguish them from Germans. Germans had white or yellow round patches if no Nazi sympathy, grey if some sympathy, or black if Nazi. Italians usually had a chocolate brown battledress which had ITALY within an oval patch.

German POWs arrived and two German Jews assisted with interpretation. Initially there was hostility between the prisoners and their guards until both realised that there were advantages from co-operation, and a black-market in cigarettes developed.

The POWs were guarded by Polish Army soldiers who patrolled the perimeter fence. There were two watchtowers equipped with searchlights. British troops were only concerned with administrative duties. Later more SS prisoners arrived, ranging in rank from lance-corporal to sergeant-major. There were regular random searches of the huts and POWs were counted two or three times a day which took about an hour each time. POWs called it an *Appel*. No-one ever escaped.



*A drawing of Dunham Massey huts by a POW  
(Altrincham Area Image Archive).*

If a POW needed to be transferred to another camp this would be by train with the POW handcuffed to his kit bag. An orderly-room sergeant received the following after one delivery to Northumberland: "*Received, one live body of one prisoner-of-war.*" POWs had a strict code of conduct and dealt with theft themselves. At the end of the war security was relaxed and POWs used to lock themselves up at night.

At its height in 1945 there were about 220 buildings in the camp, housing perhaps 6,000 POWs, well above the average of under 1000. The POWs had closely-shaven heads and highly-polished boots. The many SS troops could be identified by tattoos of their blood group on their arms. A former orderly-room sergeant said "*they were Rommel's men.*" The British camp adjutant was called Fisher and the commander was Lieutenant-Colonel George W Kilby. POWs said that they were well treated by him and the other British officers.

Reliable POWs were given the opportunity to work on farms, in market gardens, at Dunham Hall, and in other occupations and were said to be very efficient. Most usually volunteered to ease the boredom. Local builder Alan Gibbons used to drive POWs to nearby farms. Some worked behind the bar in the British Officers' mess.

On the 23 November 1944 the camp commandant Colonel Buisserat toured the camp with Lord Stamford and by then there were 4,000 prisoners, some as young as 16.

At the end of the war Albin Bellauf, who had directed the laying of mines in Guernsey, helped to dispose of them and was then transferred to Dunham Massey POW Camp.



## 1945 OS map

A



1945 Ordnance Survey map of the New Park area of Dunham Massey (Altrincham Area Image Archive). The Oldfield Brow estate is at the top. The Dunham Road (A56) crosses the bottom diagonally. The camp is in the bottom left with about 200 huts visible. The road through the huts is the main track through the camp. The spot is where the castle was built. The circle on the left has been said to be a tumulus but is probably a glacial sand mound, and the football pitch is to its right.

## 1948 aerial photo



*Part of Dunham North Park in 1948, showing some 60 POW huts at the bottom left. There were around 200 buildings in total. Most of the huts were about 60 feet by 20 feet with some smaller, some larger. The football pitch is at the bottom left surrounded by huts. The track through the camp is below the football pitch with the Dunham Road (A56) to its right and below. Bonville Road runs up the centre, crossing Bradgate Road, to Oldfield Road with the Oldfield Brow estate at the top left. The Bridgewater Canal is visible just beyond. A section of Roman road is at the top right as a track across a field and another through a wood at the bottom, marked by arrows. Just below centre right is St. Margaret's Church (John Davidson).*

### **Model castle**

The Germans POWs constructed a substantial model Bavarian castle about six feet high with realistic turrets, close to the bend in the Chester Road, next to the path from the Chester Road opposite to the entrance to Denzell (which was used to house war evacuees). The castle was made of bricks, concrete blocks and earth with a moat fed by natural drainage (the water is still there). It had a section of railway line running into a tunnel and was surrounded by a flower garden. Lamb's Gardens at Denzell were open to the public at weekends which made a walk to see the castle more enjoyable and there would often be someone working on it. At least one other castle was built, close to Charcoal Road but not visible to the public.



*The model of a Bavarian castle made by German POWs from scrap material, which used to stand just inside the camp fence on the Chester Road (A56) opposite to the entrance to Denzell (Altrincham Guardian).*

### **Other leisure**

In their spare time POWs used their skills to produce craft work. They produced high-quality Christmas cards printed from home-made woodcuts. They also made toys which were sent to German children via the Red Cross. After hostilities ended, POWs made toys and wooden items to exchange for cigarettes with the guards (money was not allowed). Pokerwork was a speciality and included peacocks about nine inches high made out of timber and decorated using a red-hot poker. They were very popular in the Oldfield Brow area. A Hale man has a delicately-carved wooden box decorated with a cap badge of the Royal Army Service corps, a Timperley woman has a cigarette box and a Hale woman has a folding work box; all carved by POWs. Locals often donated scrap timber to them.



*Work box produced by a POW (Joan Morris).*

A theatre had been built by the Americans and the POWs put on several concerts including a Schubert Evening on 28th February 1945 and a Mozart Concert consisting of excerpts from *The Magic Flute* on 16th April 1945. An invitation was issued: "*The Lagerfuhrer of No. 189 POW camp has the honour of inviting RSM Mr Tilly and his sergeants to a Mozart concert*" (Altrincham Guardian 15.12.83). After the war ended POWs were allowed to bring their male employers to see

the shows but they had to be dressed in uniform.

### The football pitch & Bert Trautmann

The POWs converted a large hollow used as a roll-call area into a football pitch with terraces. Bert Trautmann was temporarily stationed at the Northwich POW camp before moving to a Lancashire camp. At the end of the war he took part in a football match at the Dunham camp between German POWs and a Manchester team. Bert, who was famous for his big hands, later played for St Helens and was goalkeeper for Manchester City Football Club from 1949 to 1964. He died in 2013.



*The site of the Dunham Camp football pitch in a natural hollow, looking north from the main footpath (DM).*

### Alfred Paeserack

Although ex-POW Alfred Paeserack didn't remain in the area, he retained links with several families for at least 50 years. He hand-wrote his memoirs in 1995 when he was 75, in capitals and in German, and these were translated and typed as twenty-four A4 pages. They are held in Trafford Local Studies, together with sketches of POW camps in Cheshire produced by a Dunham POW (it has *Herausgegeben im camp 189 England 1947* on the front), and includes a cartoon and several photographs donated by Alfred, and correspondence with Trafford Council and contacts in the area. These substantial well-written notes give a valuable insight into conditions at the camp.



*A sketch similar to one by a Dunham POW. The drawing is based on the wartime American cartoon character Chad who often said 'Kilroy was here' (DM).*

In his memoir Alfred tells of his capture in 1944 and the journey to Dunham Massey POW Camp in 1945 where he says he remained until 1948 before being released back to Germany. He described the camp as “a very fine park with oaks and rhododendron bushes whose flowers scented the camp.” The perimeter was guarded by barbed-wire rolls with lookout towers and searchlights, patrolled by Polish soldiers who were not allowed into the camp. Alfred said that men from POW camps around the country were transferred there, especially paratroopers, submarine personnel, pilots, soldiers, Waffen SS and the airforce. He said that there was no interrogation, a statement contradicted in *Wartime Cheshire* which says that POWs were interrogated for information by skilled linguists and the process of de-Nazification carried out to enable POWs to be repatriated.

Alfred remembered that rations were small. The food consisted of about 1,500 calories per day for those who worked, otherwise 1,000, barely half of their needs and not enough to maintain body temperature in winter. They were supposed to be the same as those received by British soldiers who needed 2000 per day, 4000 if digging trenches. Dunham POWs' breakfast was one slice of bread and one third of a bowl of porridge. In the afternoon soup was served on a flat tin plate with a thin slice of bread. For the first few months only cabbage soup was available.

Supper was a cup of tea and two slices of bread with a very thin layer of spread made from a small allowance of cheese snacks ground together with milk powder and spices. Ground raisins also made a tasty spread. POWs adopted the *Kalorien-Spargang*, an energy-saving shuffle. Later the



POWs were allowed to build a bakery to make German grey bread which they preferred to the British white. Showers were allowed on Friday or Saturday when clothes were washed as part of the process.

The huts were mostly half-round corrugated iron but the sleeping barracks were concrete with asbestos-cement roofs. There were 50 men in a barrack which had tables and chairs in the middle. The mattress, blanket, kit bag and towel, had to be kept folded with plates etc on top. Rooms were checked constantly. No photographs were allowed and sleeping was not allowed during the day. There were three roll-calls per day with the POWs in columns of five. Eventually POWs built flower beds and grass areas around the huts, the paths were improved and the huts painted white. Alfred assisted other POWs to convert a large hollow used as a roll-call area into a football pitch with terraces.

The camp offered courses in languages, business studies, engineering, history, etc. A theatre group was formed and performances with proper sets and costumes were given. One dress was made of hearts cut from tin cans and sewn together. A choir and orchestra were formed, with all the music played from memory. One performance was of the operetta *Glückliche Reise* (Bon Voyage) with a railway station set, wagons and good costumes.

A pastor and a priest were given rooms for church activities and later prisoners were allowed to attend local churches. Mail was read aloud by comrades and Alfred received his first letter at the end of 1946, dated December 1944. It had been chasing him around POW camps from his home town of Elbing in Poland which was overrun by the Russians. POWs were allowed to send search cards to the Red Cross to find their families.

The German camp leader was staff sergeant Hans Doneck who encouraged POWs to respect the British camp commander. As a result the latter negotiated with London for better food and POWs went on to normal rations.

In 1946 the camp was given the status of labour camp. Ten men were allowed to work as a trial and soon POWs went out to farms, companies, road builders, market gardeners such as Clibrans, Caldwells, and Cheshire County Council. Most POWs worked and Alfred got a job as a pipe layer with nine other POWs and ten locals who all got on well. Plenty of tea was available and any remaining was exchanged for bread. POWs were given one bonus cigarette per day for good work, which was worth a meal. Later a small amount of plastic money was issued which could be used to buy necessities. Alfred also mentions Guenther Rakow, paratrooper and staff sergeant, who was in charge of 300 Dunham POWs on a construction site, the Grange Estate, Timperley. In August 1944 batches of Dunham POWs were assigned to building two new large housing estates for Liverpool Corporation off the East Lancs Road. They were under armed guard and their tasks were constructing roads and laying out sewers.

One day Alfred was sent on his bike without a guard to work on a farm and made contact with the family next door. There he met six-year old Julia Roberts, who lived at Raingill Cottages near Red Beech Farm on Henshall Lane, and was invited back to her house for tea and cake after work each day where Julia taught him English. In later years Alfred contacted Julia (now Whitelegg) in North Wales and they visited each other.

Alfred was then allocated to a large farm next to the Bridgewater Canal where another POW lived who was a hard worker. Both had 'POW' on their trousers. The winter of 1945-46 was hard and at that time he worked on a potato farm next to the Manchester Ship Canal. It was very rare to get potatoes in the camp so a few were smuggled in and eaten. In the autumn of 1946 Alfred was sent with several others to Gorton each day to work for the Military Police as a painter. From there

much food was smuggled into the camp. After some time quarters were found for the POWs and supervision was reduced.

Alfred remembered Willy Nellesen, an art painter who produced a poster for a dance in Gorton. Four POWs were allowed to go to the dance where Alfred met local girl Margaret and courted her every night for several weeks. Other POWs included Airforce Sergeant Heinz Fischer who trained Alfred in boxing, Heinz Peters a married painter and professional dancer; and Willi Wiegmann who stayed in England and went to work in London.

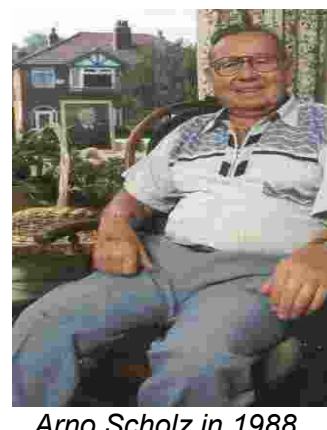
In 1946 POWs from the USA arrived. Their conditions had been better in the USA and they negotiated better rations including cake. Towards the end of the life of the camp there were no guards on the perimeter fence and the public came in to see it, especially at weekends. Alfred made several English friends whom he continued to meet after the war.

## Arno Scholz

### An ex-POW who stayed in Altrincham

Arno K Scholz (or Arnold) was born in Garstewitz near Leipzig, East Germany, and brought up to a hard life on a small farm. In 1930 he joined the army and worked on the autobahn from Leipzig to Munich.

Arno wanted to enter the navy and in 1934 he joined his first ship. In 1936 he worked in the Olympic Village in Berlin and saw the games. From 1936 to 1939 he was in the Spanish Civil War and was on the Bismarck when it was scuttled in 1941. He was 18 hours in the water before being picked up by a Spanish collier and taken to neutral Spain. He was divorced from his German wife.



*Arno Scholz in 1988  
(courtesy of Living  
Edge).*

On returning to Germany, in August 1944 he was captured by the Americans near Paris and taken to an orchard with only a blanket and water and was later transferred to Dunham. His memories there included the brass bands that the prisoners formed and played for the local people. He was a keen football player and helped to build the terraced ground in a natural hollow.

He worked at Dunham Hall in the rose garden and there met Florence Ivy Shakeshaft. On his release at Easter 1948 he went to lodge with her and her husband on Ashley Mill Lane. Her husband died and Arno moved away but he met Florence again some years later and eventually they were married. They lived on Ladybrook Avenue and Park Road, Timperley and for 15 years he worked for Clibrans the local market gardeners which closed in 1968. He is remembered as always working with his shirt off, being kind to the apprentices at Clibrans and riding a Douglas Vespa smoking his pipe upside down. After the war he recalled that it was easy to slip out of the camp and go to the cinema in Altrincham.

Arno finally met with his younger sister after nearly 60 years apart. He was always open about belonging to the SS. He left a recording of his life with the North West Sound Archive before he died in 2001.

## Kurt Lasch

Kurt Lasch was born in Seifendorf, Saxony, Germany in 1913 to Klara and Bruno Lasch and later lived in Chemnitz. He was in the Afrika Tank Corps and was captured in France by the Americans and sent to Hyde Park in London, then on to Dunham Massey POW camp. After the end of the war he worked in the rose nurseries of Clibrans of Hale for a couple of years and then went to work for Hallman's, market gardeners on Hallman Lane, Heyhead, Ringway.

On a visit to the Tatton Cinema in Gatley he met Florence Scott with whom he settled and they had five children. After the market garden closed he became a car park attendant at Manchester Airport and later a steward at the airport club. Flo and Kurt lived in a tied cottage on the Hallman estate until he died in 1984. He never spoke German to any of his children and rarely spoke of his past in the German Army. Flo continued to live in Hallman Lane until 1990 when the houses at Heyhead were pulled down to develop more car parking space for the airport. Flo died in 2005. There is a memorial plaque to them on the site of the old Heyhead Church.



*Kurt Lasch from  
Seifendorf  
(Brenda & Dennis  
Lasch).*

## Other ex-POWs

Charlie Hutchinson from Dunham Massey worked for Bucklow RDC and was allocated three POWs from the Dunham camp to assist him: **Wilhelm Freitag**, **Karl Heinz Einsiedel** and **Heinz Galinnus**. They all kept in touch after the war.

**Heinrich Nadig** was the subject of an enquiry from a German historian to Altrincham History Society. Nadig was a German POW, a married man said to have been held at Dunham Massey Prisoner-of-War Camp until 1948, who finally returned to Germany in 1951. In his absence he was tried in Germany for sending a local priest to a concentration camp and acquitted. The



*Wilhelm Freitag, Charlie  
Hutchinson, Karl Heinz Einsiedel  
and Heinz Galinnus, Dec 1946  
(Gina & Ron Hutchinson).*

late repatriation may have been because of lingering Nazi loyalties. No further information on Nadig has emerged.

**Franz Wagner** was born in Cessky Krumlov, Czechoslovakia in 1922 and at the age of 16 was taken by the occupying German forces to labour on a farm in Austria for a year. However he ran away and returned home where he was allowed to remain and work in a local saw mill. At 19 he



was drafted into the German air-force for service in Russia and France. He was wounded in France in 1944 and, after being sheltered by a French family for several days, he finally reached an American field hospital near Cherbourg. As a POW he was then taken to New York, then to a Boston camp and later to North Carolina to work in fields and plantations until the end of the war. In 1946 he was moved to Glasgow, then Peterborough and then the international camp at Toft Hall, Knutsford. He was allowed to do gardening at Crewe Hall and then as a farm labourer in various parts of Cheshire. At the end of the war Franz was offered the options of returning home, working on bomb disposal or farming and chose farming because of the Russian presence at home. He developed a friendship with Jean Hayward, a librarian at Altrincham Library who helped him with books and English. After he was offered work by Stanley Morton at Dairyhouse Farm and Jean found him lodgings at Whitely Place, Broadheath. He married Jean in 1950 and worked at Brookside Farm. They had a son Paul and Franz became a naturalised British subject with the help of Mr Morton who was a JP. He worked for Mr Morton for 20 years then moved back to Whitely Place and worked for the Linotype until his retirement. Franz finally moved back to Dunham Massey where he died in 2014.

**Andy Kisbert** was ex-Waffen SS and had the blood group tattoo. He joined the army before the war and was in the Battle of Stalingrad in late 1942 but survived. He was captured at the Battle of the Bulge in January 1945 after being surrounded by US Army flame throwers. He was brought to Dunham Camp and eventually worked at Oak Farm in Hale and later as farm manager at Cussons' Farm on Chapel Lane in Hale Barns. Finally he worked on the Manchester Airport extension project. He married Sheila from Hale Barns and they had two daughters. They lived in Acresfield Road, Timperley and Andy brought his sister Marie over in the 1950s to live in the same road and she married a local. Andy had a brother Hans Kisbert also stationed at Dunham who was severely wounded.

**Ottomar F A L Kruse** met local girl Muriel Weetman at St Mary's Church, Bowdon. Muriel was one of seven siblings and worked in her father's Weetman's Ironmongers, Hale and, despite losing her brother Tom in the war, they married in June 1948. They settled in Timperley and Ottomar worked at Walkers Ironmongers on Deansgate Lane and had an ambition to buy a boat on the Mediterranean. They were later divorced and he returned to Germany.

**Willy Schmidt** married local girl Mabelle Farrow in 1947 and they lived at 62 Hale Road, a new house built just after the war.

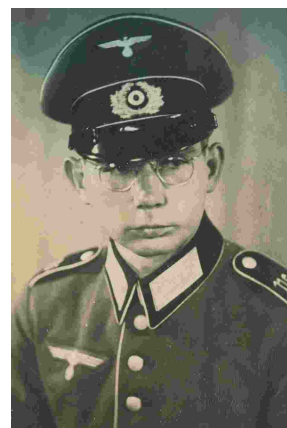
**August Schmitt** visited the McKenzie family regularly for tea and the family sold tin boxes and toys made by POWs on a stall in Altrincham Market. He continued to keep in touch after the war ended.

**Gunther Kelle** married Bridget Quinn in 1948. They kept The Grapes public house on Regent Road, Altrincham.

**William Feick** was the groundsman for many years at Timperley Cricket Club.

**Johannes Buchholtz** didn't stay in Altrincham but the Buchholtz family kept in touch with a former local family, the Currys. Johannes said he was in the Dunham camp until 1949 which differs from the account in the Altrincham Guardian.

**Gerhard Hasenkrug** attended Altrincham Baptist Church. There he repaired, restored and polished an old table which is now the communion table. In the 1990s he



*Willy Schmidt taken in Germany in 1939 (Max Storey).*

ventured out of East Germany for the first time after the war and returned to Altrincham to see it.

**Hans Nossky** worked at Ash Farm in Dunham Woodhouses in the 1950s and 60s and after that for Cheshire County Council while living at Plumley. From his experiences archived by the BBC, he doesn't appear to have been in the Dunham Camp.

**Gunther Platz** worked at Hilston House on Green Walk, Bowdon and for Ormsons the builders in Bowdon.

**Ernst Stauffer** was in the paratrooper medical unit and served on the Eastern Front. He married Mary Cooper who was a teacher and whose family lived in Grappenhall. Mary was born in the early 1920s in Hull and her father was a tanner and later managed a tannery in Warrington. Mary and her mother were keen supporters of the Peace Pledge Union. After they married, Ernst and Mary ran a poultry farm in Witherslack, Grange-over-Sands. Mary pre-deceased Ernst by a few years.



**Albin Bellauf** was responsible for laying mines on Guernsey and remained on the island after its liberation on the 9 May 1945 and worked with the bomb disposal team who had the plans of the mine laying from Germany. In April 1946 Albin was sent to the Dunham Massey camp and returned to Germany after release.

**Heinrich Pfarr** came from Luneberg and was captured in Belgium in 1944. After interrogation at Sheffield, he was transferred to Dunham and repatriated in 1948. He was a keen footballer and played a game against a Manchester team at Dunham Camp.

**Kurt Schroeder** befriended local Ken Veitch and after Kurt's return to Germany in 1949, they kept in touch until Kurt died in 1969.

## Others

In January 2010 there were still two ex-POWs living in the area, including Franz Wagner. The other wished to remain anonymous. Other POWs, of which very little is known, include **Karl** a joiner who married a Hale Barns girl. Several others who worked for Clibrans in addition to Arno Scholz and Kurt Lasch are remembered by June Miller as **Young Kurt**, **Old Joe** (40 with blond hair), **Little Joe** (17 with curly red hair), **Ferdinand** who always wore a long-sleeved union shirt in summer and winter and married a schoolteacher from Sale, and another who later became a cook in Knutsford. Others are known to have stayed but their names have been forgotten. Statistically there should be many more from the Dunham Camp who stayed in the UK.

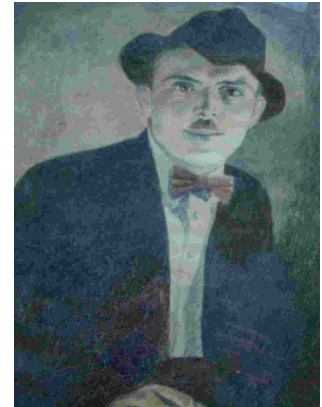
## Waclaw Piekarski

### An ex-Polish Guard's experiences

Waclaw Piekarski (his forename is pronounced 'Vatswaf') had a remarkable adventure before arriving in Dunham Massey as a guard. Brought up in Chojnice (pronounced 'Hoyneetsa') within sight of the corridor between Germany and East Prussia, he became a professional musician, playing many wind instruments and led his own band which included his two brothers.

When Poland was invaded he was interned in a POW camp and forced to work for the Germans. While there, his first wife was killed (they had three children) and he escaped in civilian clothes to attend her funeral. He was captured and threatened with being shot as a spy but he kicked out the window of the police station and, with three others, took a fire engine from the fire station opposite and, with bells ringing, was waved over the nearby German border. They drove to Berlin where he gave himself up.

Since he spoke fluent German and his father had fought for the Germans in World War I, he was allowed to join the German army. He was posted to Belgium and then France where he was badly injured by an American shell in 1944, damaging his foot and losing his hearing, and was captured near Caen in Normandy. His German dog tags confirmed his Polish origins and he was taken to Scotland and then Dunham to serve as a guard.



*Waclaw Piekarski, sketched in chalk by a German POW at Dunham Massey camp (Roman & Maz Piekarski).*

### The Polish Band



*Waclaw Piekarski was brought up in Chojnice and became a professional musician, playing many wind instruments and led his own band with his two brothers. Waclaw is on the right in this Polish Army band (Roman & Maz Piekarski).*

Polish soldiers used to like a beer at the Orange Tree pub in Old Market Place, Altrincham and worshipped at St. Vincent's Roman Catholic Church where Waclaw met Teresa Dalton. They married in 1948 at St Vincent's Church after he was demobilised, and lived in Manor Road then Orchard Road, Altrincham. They had four sons: Zdzisiek (pronounced 'Zgeeshek'), Roman, Maz, and Eugene.

After the war Waclaw ran the Dunham Woodhouses Band whose members met at the Downs Hotel, Altrincham. He worked for Hawkers Men's Outfitters in Altrincham and later as a gardener for Cheshire Education Committee. He became a naturalised Briton and died in 1997.

### **The Dunham Woodhouses Band**



*The Dunham Woodhouses Prize Band, led by Waclaw Piekarski, at the back of the Downs Hotel, Altrincham about 1950. Waclaw is on the right. Other members remembered by Jean Morris include: Robert Morris, Dennis Winkly, Arthur Dawson, Doug Lord, Frank Crystal, Roy Sherbourne, Les Baxter, Bob Beaty and Tom Crystal (Roman & Maz Piekarski).*

Roman and Maz, Waclaw's two middle sons, attended St Vincent's School and Blessed Thomas Holford School. The boys were inspired by clockmaker Dennis Blackwell in Orchard Road and both became apprenticed to clock makers. The brothers ran clock maker's shops together in Sale and Broadheath from 1983 to 1989 after which they moved to the near-derelict school at Tabley, Cheshire, then part of the Tabley estate, to set up their cuckoo clock collection and repair business. The building is listed and now belongs to the Crown. The Piekarskis own a collection of over 600 antique cuckoo clocks, the largest collection in the world, together with several fairground organs, and antique motorbikes and sidecars. The brothers are recognised by the Germans as the world experts on antique cuckoo clocks and own an equally large exhibition in the Black Forest.

Roman Kukulski was another Polish guard who later ran a barber's shop near Manchester Cathedral.



## Dunham House



*Dunham House, Charcoal Road, Special Training School STS51a, opposite to the southern edge of the Dunham prisoner-of-war camp and within view of the above three hut foundations, is where Special Operations executive agents were trained, including Odette Churchill GC and Violette Szabo GC (DM).*

John Chartres, a journalist for the Times, wrote several short books on the war including *The Training of World War Two Secret Agents in Cheshire* about Special Operations Executive agents trained at Dunham House for operations in France, at two other locations nearby, and at Ringway Airport (STS51).

Early in the war Colonel Maurice James Buckmaster OBE, Legion d'Honneur, leader of the French section of Special Operations Executive, needed a training centre for Allied agents operating in occupied territory. On 19 February 1941 Lord Stamford was visited by a Captain March-Phillips who was looking for a large house for 'very secret work'. He toured Dunham Hall and decided that, while it was secluded, he "*would not consider Dunham as it was more of a museum than a house.*" Instead nearby Dunham House, a large country house on Charcoal Road, was chosen. Odette Churchill who survived the war, and Violette Szabo who died in Ravensbrück concentration camp, both of whom were awarded the George Cross for their bravery, were trained there. Agents used the Royal Air Force base at Ringway both for training and operational purposes and General Sikorski, Prime Minister of the Polish Government in exile during the war, trained there.

Ronald Trenbath said that an enemy agent once penetrated Dunham House but was apprehended. The matter was kept secret at the time and little reference to it has been made since.

Before the POW camp was established, Ronald Trenbath and his father were walking through New Park when there was a bracken fire on the north side of Charcoal Road at a house backing on to the camp near to Shepherd's Cottages and they were asked to go to Dunham House to ring the fire brigade. There they were abruptly stopped by a guard with a rifle and told that this was a military area and they needed to keep out. However a young officer came to deal with the request and escorted them to the gate very politely. A number of houses around the area had been

requisitioned by the Armed Forces and it was many years before Ronald found out what was really going on at Dunham House.

At the end of the war Dunham House was used as an officers' mess for the POW camp.

## **Oral history**

### **Mike Arron, photographer**

In 1944, sixteen year old Mike Arron started working for the Northern Press Photo Agency from their offices at 189 Ashley Road, Hale. The agency had a contract to photograph 4,000 POWs at Dunham Park Camp which meant extra supplies of scarce photographic materials, a help for their main business of weddings and commercial photography.

Initially Mike went with Edward Chorlton, the owner of the business, but after a while Mike worked alone, travelling to the camp on his bike on a regular basis. His photographic equipment in a large, heavy leather case, included a Reflex camera and many glass plates and slides, all balanced on the handle bars of his bike. The camera was made by Thornton Pickard who had a factory in Atlantic Street, Broadheath. Mike used to report to the main camp entrance on Dunham Road where he was taken into the camp with a guard. Most of the guards were Polish, though some of the troops were British.

Mike says that most of the time one guard was considered enough but on one or two occasions the guard was doubled following an intake of SS troops. Much of the time POWs were a quiet group. He thought some could have been Italians, happier to be in Altrincham rather than at the Russian front. Mike photographed 10 or 12 POWs on one plate, each prisoner holding his number in front of him, full face and profile. Private photographs were not allowed. The plates were processed in Hale and the prints sent off. Over time Mike became familiar with the routine and so did the POWs and he used to have tea with them. He was surprised to find how sweet the tea was as sugar was in very short supply.

Mike's visits became social events, a change from routine for the POWs and opportunities to talk to someone from the outside world. Two or three POWs were photographers and they tried to carry on a conversation with him. He had no set routine and just went when required because the camp had a regular turnover. Hostilities in Europe ended on 8 May 1945 and arrangements for the repatriation of POWs were put into place. Mike remembers that after the POW camp closed it became a British Army camp for a while.

Mike was called up into the RAF in February 1947 and by May was in Germany as a photographer. He often joins annual reunions in Germany with 60 others.

Mike also recalls that the first and second battalions of the Manchester Regiment amalgamated at Dunham Park on 1 May 1948. On the 1 June 1948 this new battalion, together with the eighth and ninth Territorial Army Battalions of the Regiment, were inspected at Dunham Park by Queen Elizabeth, performing her first public role as Colonel-in-Chief.

### **Ronald Trenbath remembers**

Ronald lived in Bowdon all of his life and remembered many incidents about the wartime:

*"The first prisoners of war were Italians captured in North Africa and brought to Dunham in the first week of November 1944 after the Americans had left. When the Italians did a U-turn during the war and joined the Allies in defeating the Germans, the Italian POWs were reclassified as 'co-operators' and were released to work, mainly on farms where they proved themselves to be very*



*hard working and very popular. The Italians wore brown outfits including a brown shirt and tie, different from German POWs. They were greatly missed when they were repatriated after the war. The Italians held a bitter hatred towards the Germans and were always kept separate."*

Near the end of the war Ronald was walking along Black Moss Road from Oldfield Brow towards Dairyhouse Lane when he saw a high-ranking German officer in full regalia, exercising with two guards marching behind him.

*"Towards the end of the war many prisoners were found to be disillusioned and fearful that the Russians might take over Germany if Britain did not succeed in gaining a strong position there first, and some were prepared to bring an early end to hostilities by cooperating with the Allies. These soldiers were code-named 'Bonzos' and trained at York House in Timperley, a Special Operations Executive house, to rejoin their army and spread disinformation, but the operation came too late to be of much assistance because the German Army surrendered before the plan could be very effective. A group of them was sent to retrieve Hitler's hoard of art work taken from galleries, museums and private collections in Europe."*

Ronald recalled meeting an Italian ex-POW in Rome after the war who said *"Staying at Dunham POW Camp was the best holiday I ever had."* He was also told that as a result of the war many Sicilians married British women and went back to Sicily.

In the mid-1990s Ronald took a party of ex-German POWs around Dunham Hall and the former POW camp site (now part of the Dunham Forest Golf & Country Club).

### **Chris Hill**

Chris remembers that Italian POWs were later put in charge of German POWs. He remembers one ex-POW who worked with him at the Gas Board who said that there were hard-line Nazis in the camp who were tried by an unofficial German POW court. Another POW named Otto worked in the walled garden of Dunham Hall and married the sister of a friend of his from the Lord family who had a wool shop in Oldfield Brow. He later moved to Canada with the Lord family.

Once the POWs hung a swastika on a flag high over the Chester Road and a fire engine had to be called to remove it.

### **Bob & Elizabeth Jones**

Bob's brother used to sell cakes to the American Army at Dunham from outside the main gates and was left embarrassed when they vanished at short notice in preparation for D-Day. Bob remembers Italian POWs with yellow patches on the back of their overalls and Elizabeth took lunch from her aunt and uncle's market garden in Baguley to POWs working in fields nearby.

### **Derek Cardin**

Derek lived in Oldfield Brow as a child and he and friends used to visit the American Army Camp. One day they arrived to find a hut 'blistering hot' with a roaring fire in a metal stove and the soldiers trying to make chips by boiling 'a pound of best butter'. At the time the civilian ration for butter was two ounces per week. They were attempting to emulate the chips made in the local chippy at Oldfield Brow which they reached via a short cut next to Judge Hogg's house 'Tirbracken' on Oldfield Lane (which later became the site of the golf clubhouse). On several occasions they were invited to Derek's parents house for a cup of tea with their chips.

One day there was a small ammunition explosion in the camp and a few soldiers were taken to Park Hospital at Davyhulme. Derek's father went on his bike to visit them since he knew several of them. The hospital had been transferred to the US Army in 1943, having become a British Military hospital in 1939.

### **Keith Gowing**

Keith recalls that American troops had rifle practice at Hale Drill Hall (demolished), bringing scarce chocolate drink. He also remembers school friend Geoff Lovatt taking a severely-wounded POW, Hans Kisbert, the brother of Andy, back to Nuremburg after the war and helping in his pub for a while.

### **Dennis Brookes**

Dennis lived over the tripe shop in Railway Street and recalls a tipper wagon bringing POWs back from the fields losing its load in Railway Street.

### **Kath Curry**

Kath married Altrincham teacher and Garrick Playhouse member Howard Curry and the family met former Dunham POW Johannes Buchholtz in Austria in 1965 and kept in touch with the family.

### **Flo Payne**

As a teenager working at Woolworths, Flo remembers that some evenings the Americans organised a coach for the female staff and would take them back to the camp as dancing partners with the latest American music and refreshments laid on.

### **Joan Morris**

*Joan says "Every day as I went to work in Altrincham on my bike I would pass the entrance to the compound where the prisoners were kept. Some would call out 'Guten Tag'. This compound was not in the main park itself, but in what we called the second park, on the northern side of Charcoal Road. After the war some of the Germans settled in the area. One, who I only ever knew as Hans, worked on a farm and later worked for the Roads and Bridges department of Cheshire County Council. I knew Polish guard Wacław Piekarski well."*

**WR** Would like to know more about Italian POW Salvatore Mastrangelo who came from near Naples.

### **Alan Turner**

Alan recalls that he learned German at Altrincham Grammar School just after the war and the teacher obtained German pen-friends for the class from the POWs.

**BB** and her sister remember the Americans at Dunham. Her sister was an officer in the Women's Junior Air Corps (the WJACs) who occasionally still have a reunion. Her commanding officer was approached by the American padre to ask if any of the girls would be willing to join the men for church services on Sunday evenings at the camp and a truck was used to pick them up in Altrincham. He also got permission for them to go to dances held at the Stamford Hall. The girls also helped out at the American Donut Dugout in two empty shops near the Post Office on Stamford New Road, Altrincham. Her sister used to come home reeking of fat and had to bathe,

wash her hair and change her clothes. The family became friendly with a private and a colonel, and they visited their house occasionally, both very well mannered and courteous. They both survived the war and the colonel came from the States to visit their parents after the war. He was a surgeon by profession and a talented pianist. Officers were billeted on Booth Road and the GIs frequented the Vine Inn at Dunham Woodhouses. Betty remembers the latter in their glamorous uniforms, all looking like officers which seemed very unfair on British soldiers. Naturally some local girls became GI brides.

### Personal memories

*In December 1946 my mother met two soldiers from Dunham at St. John's Church and invited them for Christmas dinner. As a present they brought a toy made by a POW which consisted of a 'table tennis' bat with four pecking hens on strings with a lead weight which was swung around. It had good hen figures and was brightly painted. I also remember walking through the park between rolls of barbed wire and seeing a football match taking place to the northwest of the path in a natural hollow. Sadly, at about that time, one POW hanged himself from an oak tree.*

### The camp closes



*On the southern edge of the camp site, next to Charcoal Road, are the remains of three huts concealed in the woodland. Each is about 60 feet by 20 feet. Two have doorsteps and one has a ramp. There are several other smaller buildings visible. A local says that they were used by the British and by guards (DM).*

On 16 December 1948 Altrincham MP Frederick Erroll asked the Secretary of State for War what decision he had reached regarding the future of Dunham Park Camp, Altrincham. In a written reply Mr Emanuel Shinwell replied, *"It has been decided to hand back the North Camp of Dunham Park as soon as possible on condition that it can be restored quickly to the War Department in the event of an emergency."*

When the POW camp was being closed villagers in Dunham Town saw two wagons full of seats passing through one morning; it turned out that they had been stolen from the theatre.

After the camp closed there was an auction of the buildings and two went to Larkhill but some of the huts could not be sold and were left, resulting in Lord Stamford complaining that the site was left in a mess.

Several British soldiers, Polish guards and German POWs from the camp stayed on in the area. POWs were initially allowed to live in the huts and many became gardeners. Some had contact with Oldfield Brow residents, selling small items of homemade bric-a-brac and several married local women.

The Bavarian castle was said to have been broken up by Joe Wyatt of Tadman Grove, Oldfield Brow who used some of the contents to build a rockery in his back garden. In 1955 just a mound of earth remained in the park and the huts had gone, leaving a few foundations and concrete floors showing.

As one would expect there is nothing in the Altrincham Guardian referring to the POW Camp during the war but a few references afterwards. It reported on 24 November 1944 that *"Farmers face 1945 Labour Shortage,"* and this was reflected in the Government's view after the end of the war in 1945. On 27 July 1945 the Guardian reported that German POW labour was to be used in the construction of half of the 300 new houses to be built on the Grange Estate in Timperley.

The Guardian also reported that Altrincham Council wanted the camp to rehouse 1075 homeless people on their waiting list. The camp was ideal with a good water supply and a sewerage system laid for the Americans. The War Department argued that the camp was needed to continue to house German POWs. However the mayor of Altrincham was informed by Col. Fisher, the commandant of the camp, that the camp would be free of POWs by the end of August 1946. However, on the 20 September there were still 400 POWs remaining in the camp, mainly working in agriculture. The POWs had a good name from farmers and were expected to return to Germany after the harvest since none was a Nazi.

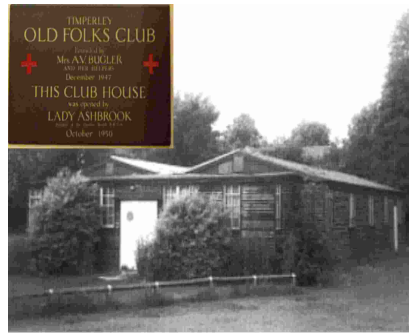
An Altrincham Guardian reporter visited the camp and said that *"It was laid out as a charming sylvan retreat. The sentry box and other buildings were 'spick and span' and newly whitewashed. There was evidence of Teutonic thoroughness and attention to detail. The POWs had just finished their day's work and were washing. The only eyesore was the barbed-wire fencing. There were about 40 POWs per hut, compared with 22 for British troops in similar conditions."*

The Secretary of State for War said that there were plans for a permanent army camp at Dunham because it was the only suitable site meeting their needs in the Manchester area, and that the council would be contacted before anything happened. On 5 December 1946 the first British troops arrived at the camp for training. Use of the camp finished at the end of 1948.

### **The camp site today**

Today, part of New Park opposite to Denzell has two large underground reservoirs and much of the rest is now Dunham Forest Golf Club. Walking through the camp site using the footpaths, little can be seen of the camp except for a few bricks but the woodland is unchanged on the track from the main entrance. The hollow where the football ground was created was partially filled with tree roots when the golf course was laid out in 1961 but is still visible.

### **Larkhill, Timperley**



*Larkhill Red Cross hut & plaque (photo rescued before demolition by Roy Griffiths).*



*Larkhill today (Roy Griffiths).*

Lady Ashbrook of Arley Hall, Cheshire and the Countess of Dunham Massey both belonged to the British Red Cross and they arranged for two timber ex-POW huts to be brought from the Dunham camp to Larkhill, on Thorley Lane, Timperley to be combined into a single large hut with metal posts down the centre, and to be used as a Red Cross club house. Eric Williams took a film of the hut being erected in 1950. It was officially opened by Lady Ashbrook as an Old Folks' Club. Arno and Florence Scholz belonged to the Timperley Over-60s Club who met there and Arno believed that one of the huts was the one he had lived in as a POW. The huts was demolished in 1999 to build the new community centre which was opened by Lady Ashbrook's son, the 11th Viscount Ashbrook, the Hon. Rowland Francis Warburton Flower on 11 November 2001, and contains the original plaque commemorating the opening of the hut.

## Tony Glynn

### The last intake of British soldiers at Dunham

Tony was stationed at the Dunham Massey Camp as a young man of 18 carrying out his National Service training. Having read the author's draft article, Tony said (with his permission to quote):

*"I first arrived in Altrincham in June of 1944. The Americans were well established at the camp but they departed then, giving way to the German POWs as the invasion of France gathered momentum."*

*"I remember huge lines of the Italians marching down to Mass at St Vincent's Church every Sunday morning. They seemed to require very little supervision. I remember the Donut Dugout in the middle of the town and the GIs marching to it in squads. I think they took their meals there. My cousin, Eileen, told me about the murder by stabbing at the Woolpack pub which had occurred before my arrival. Ever afterward, I shuddered when passing the Woolpack but I had known GI stabbings elsewhere."*

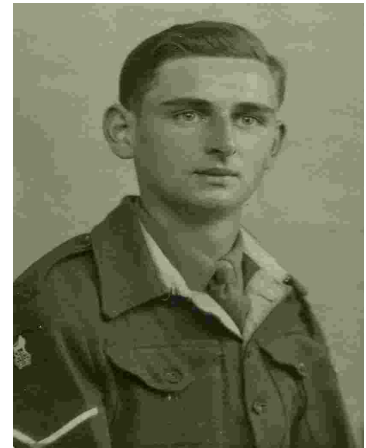
*"Near my school in Ardwick, there was a Victorian mansion, turned into what was grandly called 'The Cotton Club' for the use of black GI's. There was strict segregation in the US Army and black and white units were kept well apart. One night, a fight broke out there and one man stabbed another to death. I remember going to school in the aftermath of it and seeing the premises guarded by black US military police in their white steel helmets - the police were called snowdrops. Even the name of the Cotton Club was a nod to racism. The original Cotton Club in Harlem had only black performers - the great Duke Ellington's band was the main attraction for years but the patrons were all white. Blacks were not permitted to enter. Incidentally, the club was operated by gangsters, one being the vicious Owney Madden, born in Liverpool but taken to the US as a baby."*

*"An enduring tale in Manchester when I was a kid, which became almost an urban legend, had it that the Saturday dance at Belle Vue which was taken over by white GIs, was invaded by black troops and there was a furious and bloody battle. I can't remember that there was any press coverage but it seemed to be very widely believed."*

*"I left school in the summer of 1945, just after the war in Europe ended, and the war against Japan ended when I was on my last summer school holiday. My sister and I celebrated VE Day and VJ Day in Southport where we stayed with my grandparents. Then I returned to Manchester to live with my father. I was called to Dunham Camp in February 1948 to do my National Service."*

*"The map showing Charcoal Lane brought back memories. We were trained to salute on the march, pounding up and down Charcoal Lane with a Captain named Taylor (somewhat foul mouthed, which was rare in officers) bellowing at us. 'I want to see your arms go up and down at the same time, like a row of chorus girls' legs'. The officer in charge of our squad was a certain second lieutenant whom, being Mancunians, we called 'Mr Farridge'. He was not much older than the rest of us and like all with a single pip on the shoulder, he probably thought he was a budding Napoleon. I have since thought that his name might properly have been 'Farage' and could he have been the future father of the Farage of UKIP fame?"*

*"Already, Russia was being seen as the next potential enemy. I recall trying to handle the now*



Tony Glynn, Lance Corporal Royal Ordnance Corps, 1949 (with his permission).



obsolete Bren gun in the deep snow on the edge of the canal. I was clumsily trying to change the barrel of the weapon. It had to be done with one man manning the gun, lying down, and his mate lying beside him changing the barrel speedily. I remember Mr F standing over me and roaring: 'Faster, faster. You can't fiddle about like this when your weapon seizes up on the Russian front'. Lying in the snow, I had the gloomiest of thoughts that war with Russia would be no picnic. Again in the snow, this same Mr F was marching us along beside the canal when he gave the order to turn towards the canal. 'You'll keep marching until you hear my command to halt. Until you hear the command, you continue marching into the canal'. He waited until the first men in the squad were on the the very edge of the canal before gave the command."

"At that time, in the camp was Private Paddy Connor, the last soldier to have taken Queen Victoria's shilling in my grandfather's war, now called the Second Boer War but to my grandfather's generation it was always 'The South African War'. Paddy was written up in the Manchester Evening News just before I went into the army and he was waiting to become a Chelsea Pensioner. He was a sprightly little redheaded Irishman who must have been very young when he joined up. He had charge of the band boys, the boy soldiers who were training to be musicians. You could then join the army as a boy soldier at 14 which to me now seems positively evil."

"Dunham Camp gave me the worst experiences of my time in the army but that was probably because we were all raw and scared stiff most of the time. There were no comforts or organised entertainments or sports except the physical training under the PT instructors. The rest was endless drilling and weapon training. We were not treated with kid gloves, though my crowd had a great squad sergeant Joe Kyte who scared us at first but he later proved to be a true gentleman. When we left, we had a whip-round of our meagre cash to make a presentation to him but he nipped it in the bud. He said that sort of thing was not done in the army. He merely did as he was ordered to knock us into shape."

"The legend of a ghostly White Lady grew out of the presence in the camp of the tumulus, the burial mound of very ancient origins which we were not allowed to trespass on but she certainly made an appearance in the gossip columns of the Manchester Evening News. She was of course, totally fictitious, no doubt dreamed up by the old sweats of the 1st Manchester Regiment who trained us, to put the wind up us callow youths. I remember that a certain Corporal Todd claimed to have seen her and she scared him stiff - and Todd, who had been a prisoner of the Japanese, was regarded as a real tough guy. On my first night on guard, having to walk around the inner perimeter of the camp, I laughed off the White Lady yarn but I kept a firm grip on my pick-axe handle (the only weapon we were allowed to carry) just the same. The deeper I got into the darkness and the trees the more scared I became."

"I was startled to see Dunham House was on Charcoal Lane and I might even have seen it. I've long been interested in SOE and I knew about the women agents living in Dunham House while training at the parachute school at Ringway. I wondered if it was near the camp. The book and film 'Carve Her Name With Pride' telling the tale of Violette Szabo have been slammed by SOE historians. The book was written by R J Minney, who once edited the film weekly 'Picturegoer'. As I remember it, both book and film make no mention of her end in Ravensbruck concentration camp. But that might have not been known when they were created. I think the truth was discovered by Vera Atkins who was Maurice Buckmaster's right-hand woman. She toured Europe well after the war to find out what happened to various SOE agents who were captured. I think it was she who discovered from former prisoners and ex-guards that Szabo and others were put to death in Ravensbruck, probably by hanging. A very detailed book worth reading is 'The Women Who Lived For Danger' by Marcus Binney."

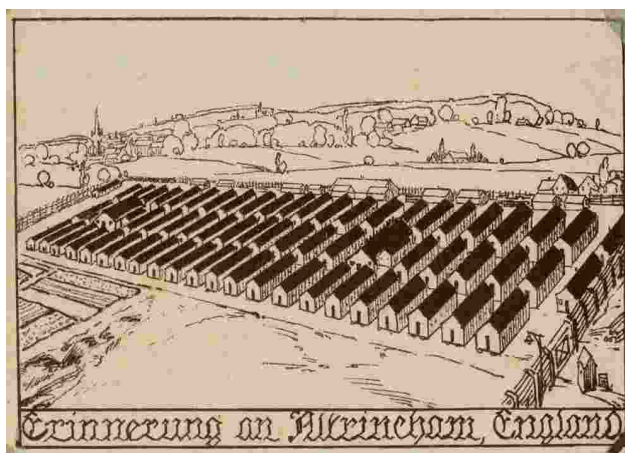
"We were the last intake to be trained at Dunham. The personnel selection officer told me that

*because I was physically fit and almost six feet tall, I could go into either a guards regiment or the Royal Military Police but only if I chose, otherwise I would be posted to some other unit. My father, ever the proud Irishman, urged me to go into the Irish Guards but I wanted none of that guards' discipline and the constant meaningless ritual would drive me nuts and to be in the Military Police meant being hated by the whole army. Thus, I was posted to Portsmouth and into the old Royal Army Ordnance Corps now called the Royal Corps of Logistics, the lads who defuse unexploded bombs, though mercifully, I did none of that."*

*"We left the camp on 1 April 1948, the day the army came off its wartime footing and went onto a peacetime basis. The First Manchesters who had trained us went off to Germany and the camp closed."*

## Sinderland Camp

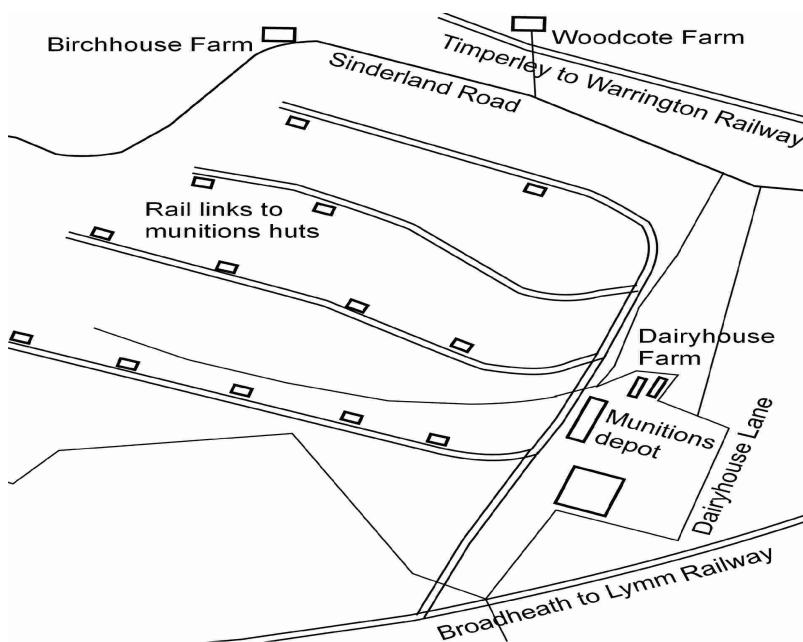
Land just west of Dairyhouse Farm at Sinderland (about a mile away from the Dunham POW camp but still part of the Dunham Massey estate) was used in WWI as a POW camp for Germans and Austrians. The Government rented 300 acres of land from the Stamford Estate, Cheshire Lines Committee and Manchester Corporation and moved Sinderland Road nearer to the railway. This was for a German POW camp which the Germans helped to build in 1917 and was used for just a year or so before becoming an army depot. There were about 60 POW huts quite close together according to a post card of the time (credit AAIA), perhaps holding 1000 or so prisoners. Around the camp was a high barbed wire fence patrolled by guards with machine gun posts and pill-boxes at strategic points.



In WWII the camp was used as a munitions depot, known as the RAF No. 2 Stores (Ammunition) Depot Altrincham, the first in the country. The munitions were produced in Broadheath. Two diesel locomotives were used to move wagons and train loads of munitions were shunted on to the main line at night and moved around the whole country.

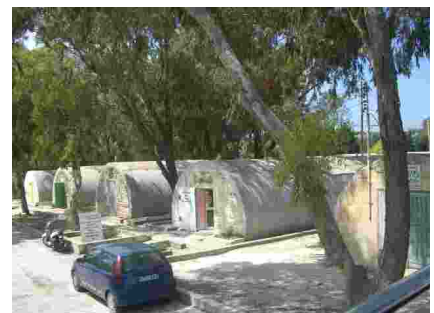
*The RAF No. 2 Stores (Ammunition) Depot at Sinderland showing the railway sidings to the munitions buildings and the connection to the Broadheath-Lymm line. A connection was also made to the more northerly line (from a Russian map of the area of about 1950).*

In April 1944 a small camp was built just outside the unit to receive 75 Italians from Hednesford in Staffordshire by removing airmen from the Sinderland camp and housing them under canvas. In



May one of the four huts was converted into a dining hall and cookhouse, and 100 Italians Co-operators arrived. 16 were sentenced to 21 days' detention for failing to report for work and were transferred to Tarporley, whilst a further seven were transferred back to Hednesford on account of their detrimental influence on Italian Co-operators and their desire to revert to POW status. In July the number of Italians was increased to 201 including one officer by erecting four more barrack huts. A canteen and recreation room were constructed using Italian labour with material from aircraft packing cases.

In October, work continued on extensions to the NAAFI airman's cookhouse, dining hall and ablutions, and work at the Italian camp neared completion. In November nine men were returned to Hednesford Holding Unit prior to repatriation and a further nine in December. Fourteen were repatriated in January 1946, eleven in February and 134 were transferred to RAF Kirknewton, Glasgow in March. The accommodation was then used by the RAF, enabling the de-requisitioning of houses in April. After the war, the maintenance depot continued to store and supply munitions until 1957 when it closed and the farm land was restored.



*Ex-POW Nissen huts in Malta put to modern usage.*

## East Chinnock Church



*East Chinnock Church, Somerset with the Gunther Anton inscription and one of his windows (DM).*

Two hundred miles from Dunham another story of reconciliation was played out after the war ended. Gunther Anton was shot down over Southampton when he was 18 years old. He was sent to a POW camp at Houndstone, Yeovil, Somerset but was allowed to work on a farm in East Chinnock. He attended the local church and conceived the idea of giving the church a stained glass window after the war for the kindness shown by villagers.

On his return to East Germany in 1948 Gunther joined the family stained glass window business and in 1962 returned to Somerset bringing his gift of the window showing scenes of Christ's life and ascension, now in the south wall of the nave near the chancel. By 1982 he had replaced all of the plain glass windows in the church. Finally in 1988 he filled in the arch between the nave of the church and the bell tower with glass bricks overlaid by a design of the lamb of God and the flag of victory in stained glass. Getting the two tons of glass blocks to East Chinnock was tricky because of their weight. The problem was allegedly solved by a church member who was a senior officer from the Royal Navy Air Station at Yeovilton who arranged for a test flight of a four-engined training jet to Germany with all of the seats removed. On arrival back in Britain there was a problem with Customs & Excise but in the end it was agreed that the blocks were basically sand and a £20 duty was paid.

In all Gunter had spent 26 years donating the stained glass windows to East Chinnock Church. The last time he visited East Chinnock, he placed a handful of pebbles on to the local pub bar and said that was all that was left of his favourite chip shop. When Gunther died in 1989, eight people from the village attended his funeral in Germany.

## Acknowledgements

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## BOOK 5: ALTRINCHAM TEXTILE MILLS



### ***Norman's Field Factory***

***An artist's impression of Norman's Field Factory (a cotton spinning mill) which stood at the corner of Norman's Place and Regent Road, superimposed on a photograph taken about 1900 of the remains of the truncated mill building with the mill house to its left (DM/Altrincham Area Image Archive).***



# Altrincham Textile Mills

Despite the lack of a substantial water supply to power them, there were several woollen and cotton mills in the Altrincham area. For completeness I have included a very early woollen mill just over the Altrincham boundary in Bowdon and two later velvet-cutting factories in Altrincham.

## Spinning & weaving in Cheshire

It was common practice for farmers and smallholders in Cheshire to keep a few sheep, often less than a dozen, to supply wool for the household. Cheshire's clay land was generally unsuitable for large flocks because the wet conditions caused foot rot. The wool was spun at home and woven into woollen or half-linen/half-wool cloth. Cottagers were able to dye the cloth, especially if there was a stream for fulling (cleaning) and for providing water for dyeing. Hammers were used to remove oil, dirt and other impurities,. Flax was also grown to extract and weave the linen. There were many linen and wool weavers in the area at this time, often working with their own machinery in the upper rooms of a cottage or shop. Finished cloth was collected and sold by a travelling salesman called a chapman.

In their research into 17th and 18th century wills, Groves and Foster have identified hemp and flax being widely grown in Cheshire until the mid-18th century, after which cheaper flax was imported from Ireland and Lancashire. On the 1830s tithe maps there are two flax fields in Dunham Massey; two in Hale; one hemp field in Dunham and two in Hale. These plants were grown in the Altrincham area for home spinning and weaving: hemp into rope, twine and coarse cloth; and flax into soft linen and sailcloth. Hemp and flax were also used to string longbows until the end of the 16th century. Spinning was a labour-intensive process and it took several spinners to keep one weaver busy. The production of linen yarn from flax was particularly time consuming and initially involved seed removal, 'retting' in water to loosen the fibres, 'scutching' to crush the stalks, and 'heckling' to comb out the short fibres leaving the long, soft, valuable fibres.

Most linen in Britain was produced in the north-west and Warrington developed a considerable sailcloth industry, producing one third of all of this type of cloth in Britain in 1756. Linen and wool clothiers in Manchester bought flax and wool to be spun and woven in workers' own homes, then finished and marketed in Manchester. However by 1800 flax and hemp production had considerably reduced due to cheaper imports, including flax from Ireland from 1750 and hemp from the continent.

Raw cotton was obtained from the Mediterranean area from the 16th century and used in fustian (a stout combination of cotton and linen, named after a suburb of Cairo called Fustat) and produced by a cottage industry. The early Manchester Cotton was actually a cloth with a linen warp (along the weave) and a cotton weft (across the weave) known as fustian. The inclusion of cotton in fustian enabled better dyeing. The import of pure cotton cloth (calico) from India from 1670, both white and brightly-printed, was banned by the government because of its effect on the woollen industry. The cotton-based spinning, weaving and associated industries in Lancashire and north Cheshire evolved to meet the demand.

Larger quantities of raw cotton were imported into Manchester from the mid-18th century, again from the Mediterranean area. Outlying towns around Manchester developed industries linked to the cotton trade. Some, like Stockport, became large-scale producers of cotton while others specialised in particular aspects such as bleaching, dyeing and printing. This was a natural

development from the cottage industries of the time.

The 1736 Manchester Act removed all restrictions on cotton manufacture, allowing the manufacture of strong cloth with a linen warp and a cotton weft and fustian manufacture considerably expanded. In 1783 the first cotton-spinning mill opened in Manchester, multi-storey to deal with the various stages of cotton processing.

Cotton arrived as raw imported bales which had already been cleaned with a 'gin' (engine) to remove the seeds and stalks. The processing in Britain involved further cleaning; carding to align the cotton fibres; rolling into loose hanks; combining, stretching and twisting hanks into a thread; combining and twisting threads into yarn; and winding the yarn on to a bobbin. To enable dyeing to take place, oils were first removed, and the yarn dyed, rinsed and dried ready for weaving. A similar process was used for wool, whether carried out at home or in a factory.

In 1764 James Hargreaves invented the Spinning Jenny which used multiple spools to speed up cotton thread production at home. In 1869 Richard Arkwright developed the Water Frame which produced a stronger thread.

In 1775 the first wool-spinning mill opened in the Altrincham area at the bottom of Stamford Road, Bowdon at Holly Bank opposite to Spring Bank. Large cotton-spinning mills using water power followed to the north in Grosvenor Road, Altrincham from 1780. They took advantage of the 1766 Bridgewater Canal to transport raw cotton imported from the West Indies via the River Mersey into the Manchester Docks. Finished thread was mainly sent to the Lancashire cotton-weaving mills as well as a small amount for local weaving. Steam power was introduced into some of these mills from around 1801. From 1849 the railway to Altrincham facilitated the movement of goods for a few years until the trade died. There was also a velvet-cutting factory on the edge of Hale Moss in 1872 and a second one by 1874, presumably using cloth from Lancashire.

The major silk town in Cheshire was Macclesfield but Stockport also had water-powered silk mills in the 18th century. There were silk-braid weavers in Altrincham cottages in the 1830s. Adjacent Knutsford and Lymm also had mill-related industries. In 1753 a silk mill and cotton and linen spinners are recorded in Knutsford.

About 1900 there was a velvet-cutting factory in Lymm which, as in Altrincham, used the canal to transport materials from Manchester, returning the cut cloth by the same route. So, although the cottage industries of spinning and weaving existed, there was no large-scale cotton spinning industry here.

Altrincham seems to be unique as a town well away from the substantial water power available on the Pennines and yet having had several cotton-spinning mills in its history.

## Health & Safety Rules

<b>RULES</b> to be observed in the <b>POWER-LOOM</b> Manufactory of W & R Turner, Helmshore with A List of <b>FINES</b> attendant on neglect thereof <b>APRIL 1836</b>		
	<b>S.</b>	<b>D</b>
<i>Any Weaver or Spinner</i> being absent Five Minutes after the Bell Rings	0	3
If absent more than Five Minutes, or entering the Room before the Bell Rings	1	0
<i>Any Weaver or Spinner</i> allowing Ends or Pullings to lay upon the floor	0	3
<i>Any Weaver or Spinner</i> allowing Bobbins to lay upon the Floor or otherwise than Skip or Jenny	0	3
<i>Any Weaver</i> mixing the Warp Ends with the Weft Pullings	0	2
<i>Any Weaver</i> taking away the Weft of another	0	3
<i>Any Weaver</i> taking or exchanging Shuttles	0	3
<i>Any Weaver</i> mixing empty Bobbins with full ones	0	2
<i>Any Weavers</i> quarreling, each	1	0
<i>Any Weavers</i> fighting or striking each other, each	1	0
<i>Any Weaver or Spinner</i> leaving the Room between Bell Hours, except by leave	1	0
<i>Any Weaver</i> after having downed or finished his or her Piece, neglecting to put in all the Pullings and rolling them up (Warp and Weft separate) in his or her Piece	0	6
<i>Any Weaver</i> leaving his or her Loom and going to that of another	0	3
<i>Any Weaver</i> neglecting to weave up his or her Bobbins ( <i>except when they cannot be done, and the fault is in the Spinning, and in that case to be determined by the Overlooker</i> ) per Bobbin		

[The rest is missing]

*The big cotton mills of Lancashire had safety rules even in the early 19th century. The above is an example of a poster in a mill in the Rossendale Valley displayed to its workers.*

## **Background to Altrincham Mills**

In 1771 the first water-powered cotton-spinning mill in the world was opened by Richard Arkwright at Cromford in Derbyshire. Like many parts of Britain, Altrincham gradually responded to the Industrial Revolution by introducing larger-scale mechanised methods to the production of woollen yarn and cloth traditionally a cottage industry, and then applied to cotton.

Manchester was one of the first industrial cities in the world, rapidly expanding from the mid-18th century onwards. The city's damp climate and that of the surrounding towns on the western edge of the Pennines suited the production of cotton yarn because the fibres broke less often.

Transport played an important part in the success of Manchester and Altrincham, enabling coal, raw cotton, yarn and cloth to be transported more cheaply. From 1766 the Duke of Bridgewater's canal was completed to Altrincham and the potential for ease of transport was realised overnight. In the same year the road between Altrincham and Manchester was turnpiked to compete with the canal. Altrincham had a limited supply of water available to drive milling machinery from Hale Moss and entrepreneurs started to consider Altrincham as a site for new mills. From 1849 the railway also became an important factor in the town's success.

Interestingly, there is a large gravestone in Bowdon Churchyard to a mill owner with simulated fabric on the top in stone.

## The Fleam to Dunham Hall

Although there were no substantial streams in Altrincham, there were many springs out of Bowdon Hill, and the Cresswell and Twiggery (withy) Springs emerged on Moss Lane and Stamford Park Road, Hale. Springs in Altrincham ran from (Old) Market Place down Victoria Street (where the Great Well was situated, and several pubs and the malt mill would have used the water). Another ran down Regent Road (which had several pubs), and more ran across George Street near the Bricklayers Arms is, some of which are recorded on the 1852 Board of Health Plans.

In 1621 an artificial channel called a fleam or leat was cut from Hale Moss just southeast of the present football ground (Cresswell and Twiggery Springs) via Grosvenor Road (previously Stamford Road) just over three miles to Dunham Massey Hall. The purpose of the fleam was to supplement the water from Dunham Park used to power the 1616 mill belonging to 'Old' Sir George Booth. This fleam was also fed by other springs from Altrincham. The channel is marked on the 1835 tithe map.

Although *Altrincham, a History* states that there was a water-powered mill on Grosvenor Road in 1621, I have not been able to find evidence that the fleam was used to power mills before 1780, although one would have expected a corn mill here.

The Stamford Papers list Sir George Booth buying Cresswell and other springs for £16 in 1619 (EGR3/3/3/2), presumably in preparation to build the fleam later cut to Dunham Massey by William Rowcrofte. The Stamford Papers also contain a Grant of Liberty made in 1621/22 to Sir George Booth by John Caryngton, Edward Bent, and George Birche to construct a watercourse from Hale Moss to the Peck Mill of Dunham Massey (EGR1/1/4/8). The peck the mill was probably a saw mill.

The water available to the Altrincham mills may have been greater than today as springs out of Hale Moss and Altrincham have now been culverted into tile drains and along ditches and into Timperley Brook. The drop from Hale Moss to the Grosvenor Road mill site is about seven feet where it powered undershot waterwheels, before dropping another sixteen feet to Dunham Hall where it supplied an overshot water wheel in a corn mill built in a small ravine, still standing today but converted to a saw mill.

The Booths and Greys would have needed a continuous flow to Dunham Hall for their purposes and the watercourse was so important that Mary, Countess of Stamford, insisted on its preservation when the Duke of Bridgewater negotiated building the Bridgewater Canal across Dunham Massey from 1758 into the early 1760s.

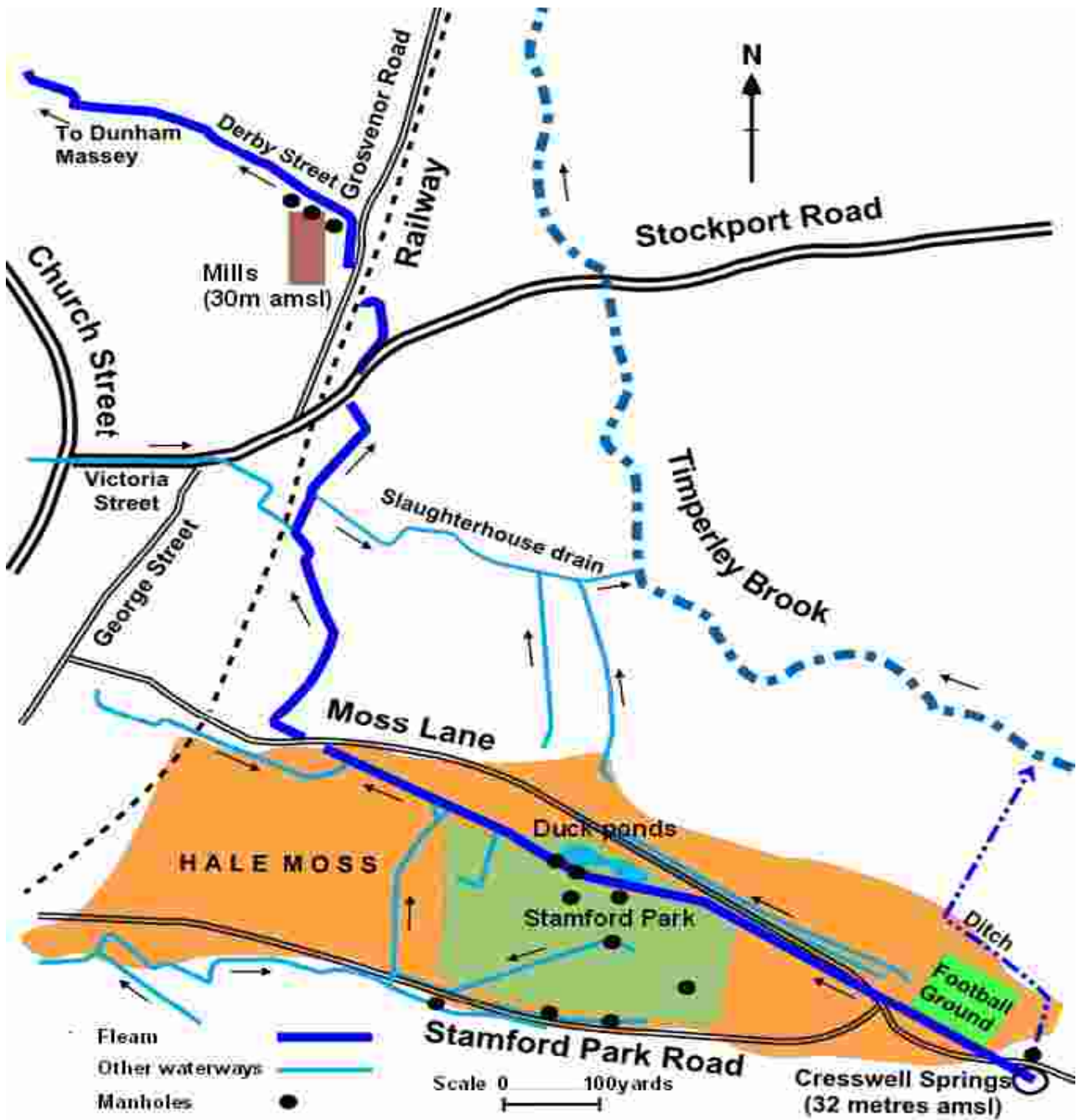
The fleam from Hale Moss crossed Stamford Park just south of the present duck ponds (which used to be a swimming pool), down what is now Mayor's Road and Oakfield Road, under the railway, along Grosvenor Road near to Mill Street, and along Derby Street. En-route to Dunham it originally passed under the Bridgewater Canal four times via U-tubes: first near the Linotype, briefly under the canal and back near School Lane bridge at Dunham Town, and finally back under the canal near Whiteoaks Wood to Dunham Hall.

The source of the fleam has now been diverted along a four-foot-deep ditch running from the back of the King George Hotel on Moss Lane, Hale and behind the the football ground into Timperley Brook, where there is still a considerable flow of water. The ditch is marked by a line of large willow trees. Presumably the source behind the King George is Cresswell Springs, but one local historian says the springs were a well which used to be inside the Moss Lane allotments.

There are several manholes on Stamford Park Road and in Stamford Park, some on the fleam but others associated with the ditches draining the moss. Some old circular manholes can be seen in Urban Avenue and Balmoral Road which probably mark the later line of a drain from the duck-ponds into Timperley Brook and are not on the line of the fleam. However there are three circular manholes on the south side of Derby Street which trace the line of the fleam. By using a fluroscein dye in about 1930, the Altrincham & District Natural History & Literary Society *"proved that the fleam was still flowing in the Broadheath area but it has since been diverted."*

It would seem, by comparing the 1790 map (see later) with the tithe and 1852 maps, that the fleam along Grosvenor Road originally went as far north as the present Ellesmere Road but by 1835 was diverted down Derby Street.





The three-mile 1621 fleam (a channel dug to take water to a mill) from Hale Moss to Dunham Massey, and other associated waterways in Altrincham, was used to power cotton mills in Grosvenor Road, Altrincham from 1780. The drawing is based on the 1835 tithe map, the 1852 Board of Health Plans, and the 1876 OS map. 'amsl' means 'above mean sea level'. All maps have north at the top unless otherwise indicated.

## Altrincham Mills

Hamo de Masci V created Altrincham Borough in 1290 with a charter which includes the words, *"It is my will also that my burgesses shall grind all their corn growing upon the land of Altrincham or stored in the same town at my mills giving every eighteenth measure as multure,"* (Bayliss, 1992). It is thought that the source of water for these mills was in the Old Market Place and in 1983 the South Trafford Archaeological Group found evidence of a corn mill on Victoria Street. Possibly there was a second mill towards Timperley Brook.

In the late 18th century woollen spinning and weaving mills and then cotton spinning mills were built in Altrincham. The 1790 Stamford estate map of Altrincham map shows one mill on what is now Grosvenor Road. The 1791 Universal British Trade Directory describes the town as a *"seat of worsted manufacture"* and the 1793 directory lists Altrincham's principal manufacture as worsted yarn, worsted and hair shags (coarse cloth). In the first half of the 19th century wool spinning, worsted production, and cotton spinning are described, as well as corn milling. Leech mentions 100 hand-loom weavers in Altrincham in the first half of the 19th century, so there were considerable spinning and weaving activities in the town at that time.

Mills and factories known to have existed in the Altrincham area include: the Bower's Buildings Mill, Norman's Field Factory, Seddon's Mill, Smith & Taylor's Mill (the Long Building), Woodside Mill, and two velvet-cutting factories. The earliest was operating from 1775, before the Manchester mills which operated from 1783. The Altrincham textile mills had closed by 1830.

Like the Manchester mills, the Altrincham cotton spinning mills were affected by the decline of trade after the Napoleonic Wars when there was much less demand for cloth. This resulted in the 'Blanketeers' marching from Manchester to London and later the Peterloo Massacre.

The 1833 Grade II Listed grain warehouse is on the south side of the Bridgewater Canal at Broadheath and was later used as Hulbert's Flour Mill. In 1897, Newton's Corn Mill was built at 237 Manchester Road, Broadheath. It was operated by John Waterhouse in 1910 and demolished in 2002. John Waterhouse also had a corn mill in Brewery Street in the centre of Altrincham in 1942. However, I have excluded these later mills and the Altrincham Malt Mill which was on Stamford Street, again in the centre of Altrincham.

## Local History authors on Altrincham Mills

**Ingham** writing in 1879, identified three large factories in Altrincham for the manufacture of woollens and cotton yarn and a mill for bobbin turning, all still worked by water power in 1801. Two of the mills were on the northeast side of Altrincham near the old Altrincham Station, towards the southern end of what is now Grosvenor Road, with a dam a few yards further south. At the time of his writing, the dam had been filled in and had become Mill Street.

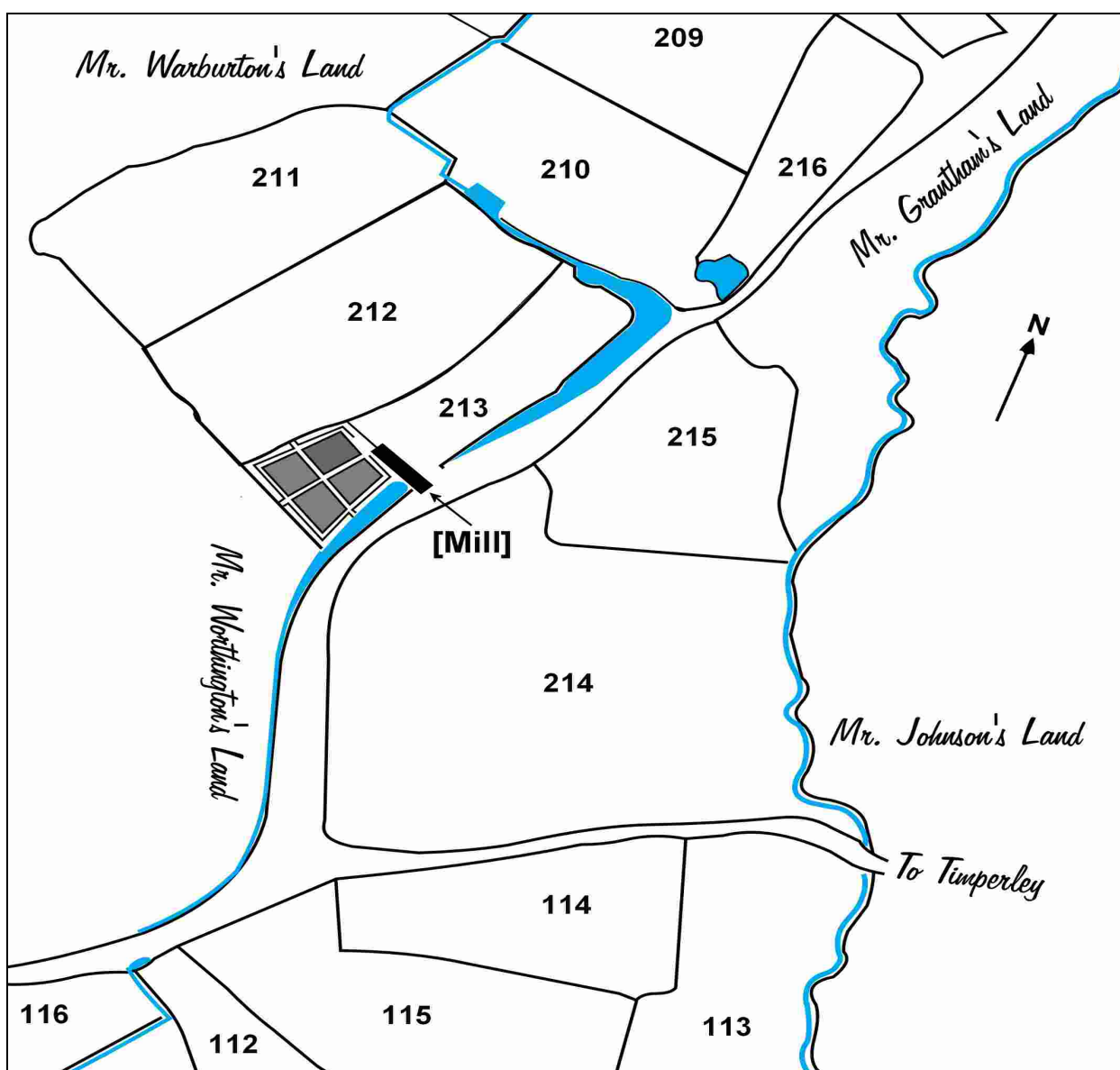
Ingham also said that the fleam water source from Hale Moss was joined by a spring coming from near the Unicorn pub in Old Market Place where Walter Scott mentions a mill attached to the pub. Ingham also recorded that in 1824 the Altrincham Workhouse had nine looms and wanted to increase this to 16.

**Nickson** in 1935 said that until the middle of the 19th century, a brook went from Hale Moss to Barlow's Crossing 3/400 yards from Stockport Road, where it turned the wheel of an old worsted and woolcombing mill owned by Hugh Jepson who employed 20 workers. The mill dam was later used to form the site of the railway's engine sheds, by which I think he meant the sidings constructed especially for the mills on Grosvenor Road, the land now used by a plumbers' merchants.

Nickson continued to say that further south were once the saw mills of Mr Delves, demolished long before 1849 to make way for a cotton factory built by Mr Booth, a Manchester manufacturer. One part was a bobbin-turner's shop with twelve turners run by John Anderton. At the side of the factory was a street of cottages called Cinder Street, later changed to Mill Street. Adjoining the factory was the large corn mill of John Lupton, mayor of Altrincham in 1832. The cottages in Derby Street were occupied by the factory hands. Nearby was a large private house called Mill House, demolished after World War II and replaced by houses.

**Nevell's** research into the Land Tax Returns for 1794 to 1831 in Altrincham showed two mills, one run by Hugh Jepson from 1794 to 1831 and a cotton works run by James Bowen mentioned in 1795. As late as 1834 Pigot's Directory listed Charles Jepson as a worsted manufacturer and having a woollen yard, Samuel Spencer as a cotton manufacturer, and James Mitchell as a thread manufacturer. According to the 1838 Tithe Awards and Map, there were three mills to the north-east of the centre of Altrincham.

## 1790 Stamford Estate Map of Altrincham



The 1790 Stamford Estate plan of the Grosvenor Road area of Altrincham (EGR11/5/11 & DM). Timperley Brook runs up the right-hand side. Stockport Road is at the bottom. Grosvenor Road runs from the bottom left towards the top right. On the full plan the fleam from Hale Moss can be traced towards Dunham Hall. It flows down the west side of Grosvenor Road and ends in a dam in front of the mill in plot 213. The plan shows a single mill and at that time the fleam flowed further north than on later maps when it was diverted down Derby Street along the south-western edges of plots 211 to 213. The pond in field 216 is probably the 'Reeding Pit', used for retting flax and referred to in the field name on the tithe map on which Woodside Mill was built.

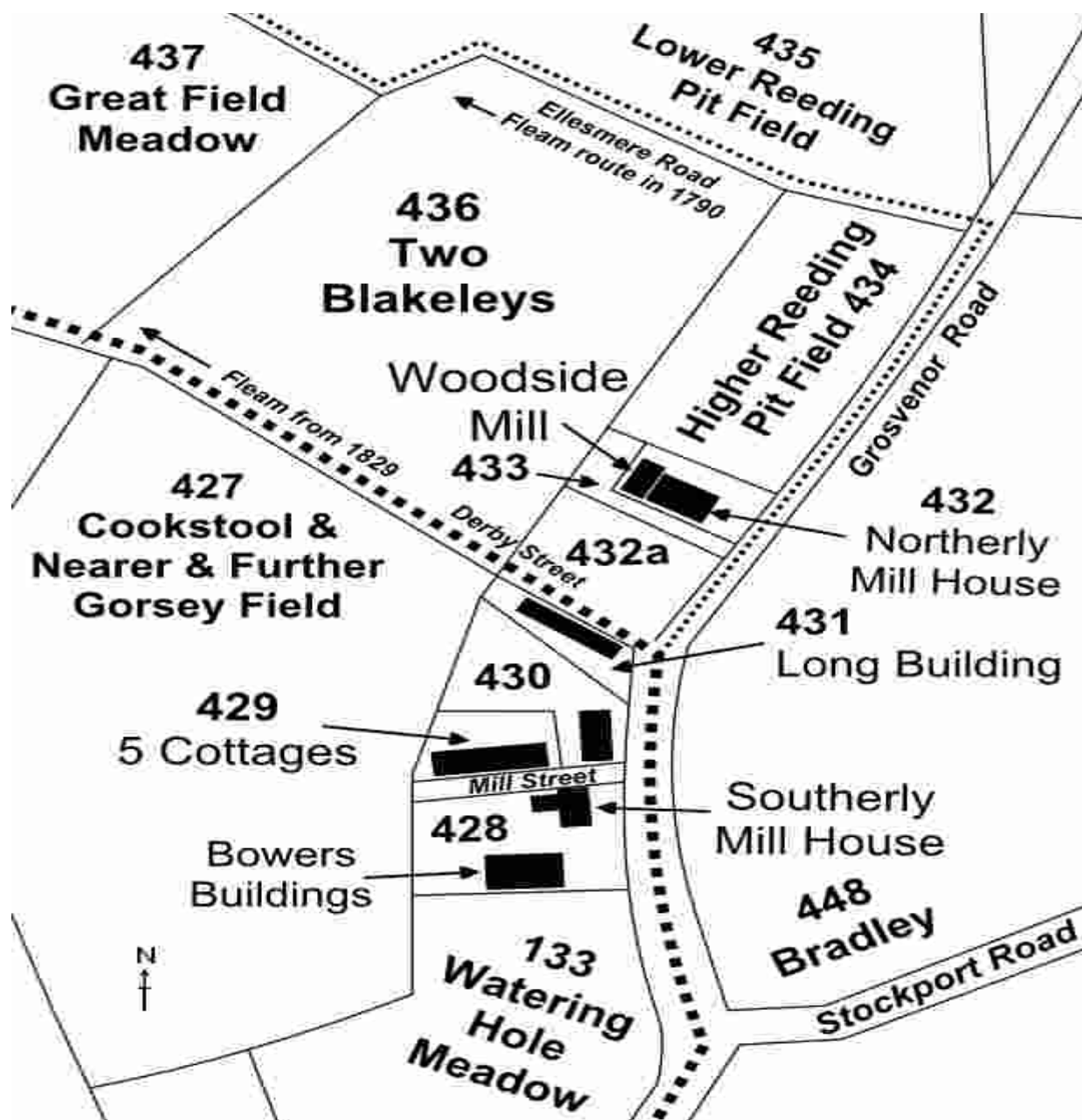
## Grosvenor Road, Altrincham Mills

Three textile mills on Grosvenor Road, Altrincham have been traced from Land Tax, Stamford Papers, Adverts, Directories, Tithe, Census & 1852 Board of Health records.

<b>Mill 1 Woodside Stamford land 1778-1828 Higher Reeding Pit Field</b>		<b>Mill 2 The Long Building Thomas Warburton land 1780-1829</b>		<b>Mill 3 Bowers Buildings Steam mill 1794-1826</b>	
<b>Date</b>	<b>Owner/tenant</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Owner/tenant</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Owner/tenant</b>
1778	Joseph Smith has a building for machinery powered by the Fleam	1780	Smith & Taylor build & occupy a mill near to mill 1	1794	Cotton works
1780	John Taylor has a cotton factory	1784	William Douglas & Thomas Warburton	1826	George Lupton & John Lupton
1782	Ad. for a 4-storey plus cellar 46' x 25' cotton mill with 2 wings of 2 storeys 25' x 18'	1791	Ad. for 120' building of two storeys suitable for jenny or mule	1828	John Lupton miller William Hambleton bobbin turner John Johnson ditto Samuel Smith ditto
1784	John Taylor & Hugh Jepson	1791	Thomas Owen & Thomas Warburton	1829	George Lupton & John Lupton millers
1803	Jepson himself	1797	Exors. Thomas Warburton & Thomas Owen	1835	Ben Lupton & John Jackson corn mill Tithe plot 428
1804	Jepson cotton factory & house	1798	Exors. Thomas Warburton & William Douglas	1835	Don Bayliss in his 1841 book wondered if the mill on plot 430 had been cotton
1804	Jepson & Thomas Thurstfield	1799	Heirs Thomas Warburton & Douglas	1852	By 1852 the mill had been demolished
1817	Jepson & John Mills	1803	Heirs Thomas Warburton, John Mills		
1820	John Mills worsted manufacturer dies	1816	Isaac Davenport & John Mills		
1821	Jepson & Mary Mills	1819	William Pass & Charles Jepson		
1826	Jepson & Mary Mills house	1821	William Leyland & others		
1828	Mary Mills, woollen yarn & worsted manufacturers	1826	William Pass & William Leyland		
1828	John Atherton bobbin turner; William Johnson ditto	1830	William Pass & Henry Hooly		

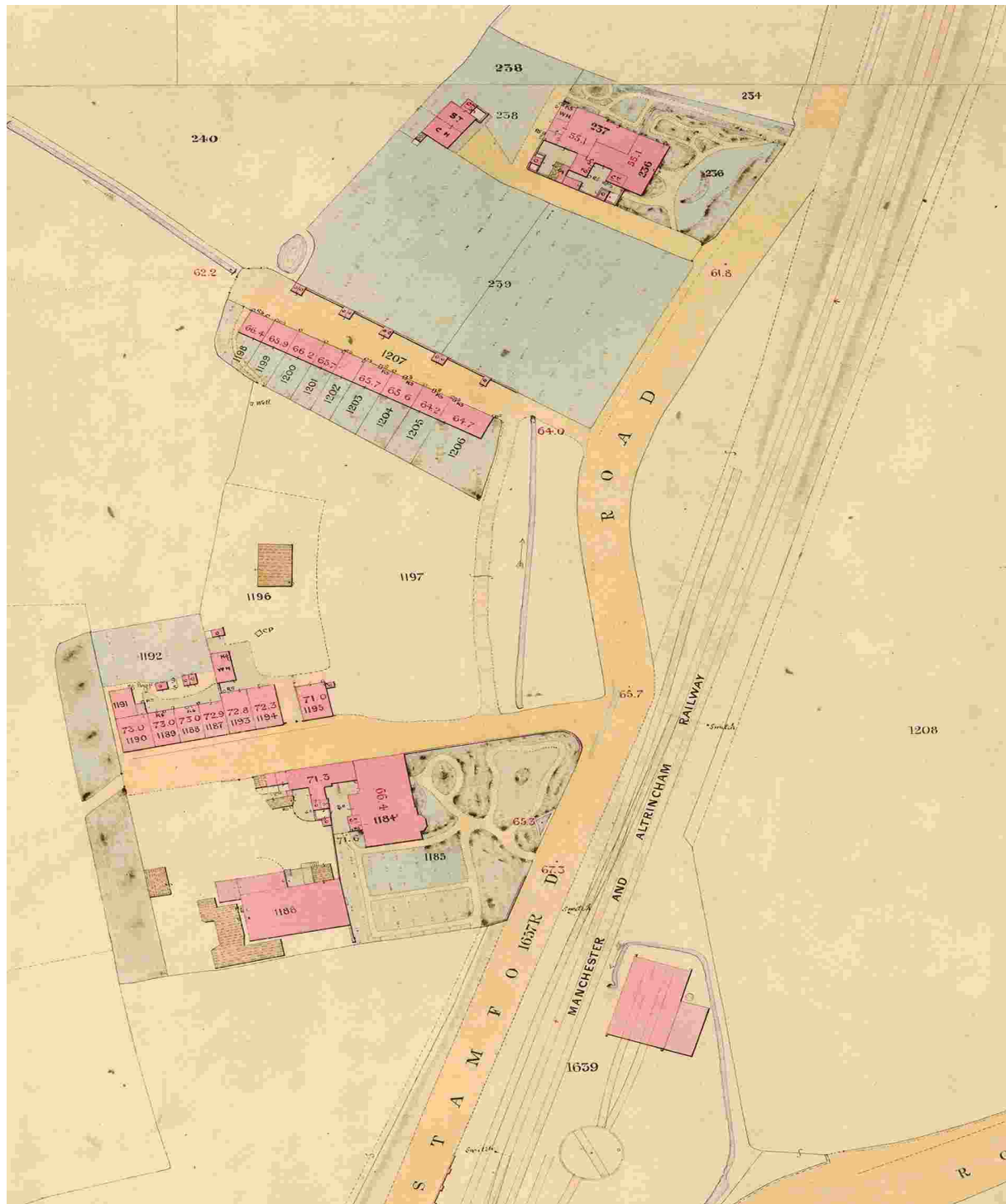
1829	Jepson & Mary Mills, house & land, no mill	1831	Pass & Miss Hooly		
1835	Tithe plots 432, 433, 434	1835	Cottages, no mill Tithe plot 431		
1952	By 1852 the mill was enlarged to become the northerly mill house	1952	By 1852 the mill was converted to cottages		





A plan of the Grosvenor Road mills superimposed on the 1835 tithe map. The 17<sup>th</sup> century fleam in 1790 flowed down what is now Ellesmere Road but was diverted to Derby Street when the Woodside Mill closed (DM).

## 1852 Board of Health Plans



The fleam can be seen running north from the south-east corner of the map, going around the engine sheds, under the railway and Grosvenor Road, under Mill Street, along Derby Street, and leaving for Dunham in the north-west corner. Plots 236, 237 are the northerly mill house and 1184 the southerly mill house. Plots 1198 to 1206 are the Long Building (Altrincham Area Image Archive).

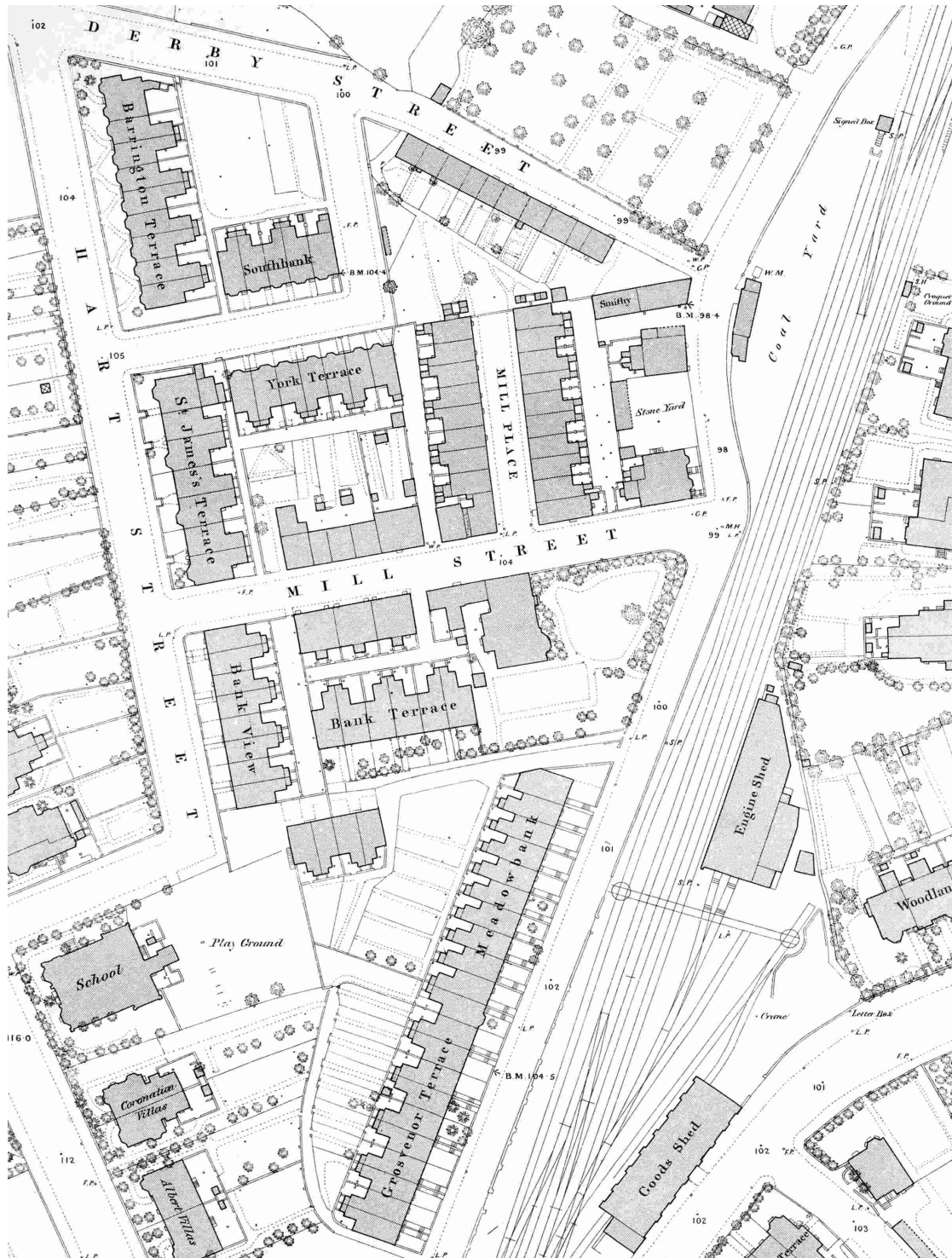
The sites of some of the Grosvenor Road mills are shown on the 1852 plans. The northerly mill (Woodside) has become part of the northerly mill house and woollen and cotton milling had largely disappeared from Altrincham. The road just to the north was called Mill House Road at that time, now Poplar Avenue. The cottages on Derby Street just to the south (the 'Long Building') are now nine in number. The southerly mill house and cottages are shown as on Mill Street. The mill previously to the south-west of this mill house has gone.

The 1849 railway sidings just to the east of Grosvenor Road were built to service the mills with coal, but cotton mill actively had ceased had gone by 1852 so maybe it served the corn mill. A plumbers' merchants is now situated on the site.

**The 1852 plots of interest are:**

No.	Plot	Owner	Occupier	Description
236	House, Yard & Garden	Mrs Worthington	Job Haigh	northerly mill house
237	House, Yard & Garden	Mrs Worthington	Bolton Molineux	northerly mill house (previously Woodside Mill)
1184	House	Benjamin Lupton	Mrs Thompson	southerly mill house
1186	Corn Mill, House, Yard, Piggery etc	Benjamin Lupton	Thomas Jackson	corn mill (previously a cotton mill)
1189	House	The Mortgagee of William Pass (J Reddish)	James Starkey	Mill Street
1190	House	Ditto	John Ford	Mill Street cottages
1199	House & Garden	Ditto	James Ackerley	Derby Street cottages (previously the Long Building)
1200	House & Garden	Ditto	John Kershaw	Derby Street cottages
1201	House & Garden	Ditto	Mrs Calderbank	Derby Street cottages
1202	House & Garden	Ditto	Mrs Bradman	Derby Street cottages
1203	House & Garden	Ditto	Lee Combes	Derby Street cottages
1204	House & Garden	Ditto	James Combs	Derby Street cottages
1205	House & Garden	Ditto	John Kirk	Derby Street cottages
1206	House & Garden	Ditto	Thomas Bridges	Derby Street cottages
1207	Road or Street & 9 Necessaries	Ditto	The same & others	Derby Street

## 1876 Ordnance Survey Map



The northerly Mill House (north-east of Derby Street) and southerly mill house on Mill Street are still present on the 1876 map but the mills have gone. The coal yard opposite to Derby Street was supplying the corn mills. Mill Place was built in 1866/67. The nine cottages on Derby Street are present (Altrincham Area Image Archive).

## Mill houses

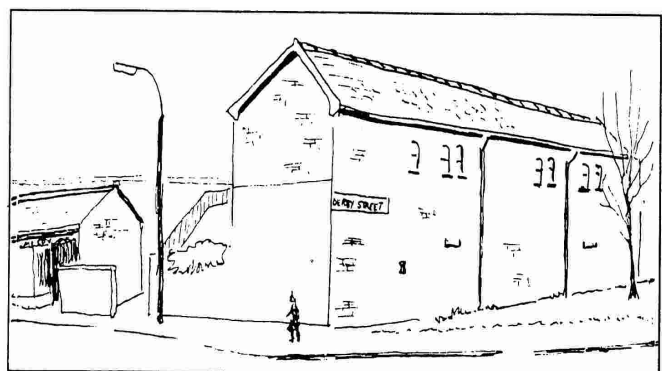
Two mill houses are shown on the 1852 plans, the northerly one here.

*The site of the northerly mill house as plots 236 & 237 mill house on the 1852 plans, and in the photo below. The bay windows were added later. The remnants of the mill can be seen on the right (Altrincham Area Image Archive).*



## Long Building, Derby Street

This was Smith & Taylors Mill. The building was converted to eight cottages which were demolished in the early 1960s. Sketch by Don Bayliss.



## Corn Mill, Grosvenor Road

An early corn mill may have been built on Grosvenor Road in the 17th century taking advantage of the stream, but no evidence has been found.

In 1834 and 1835 John Jackson was listed as a corn miller here (tithe plot 428). In the 1841 census John Jackson was the corn miller and beer retailer as well as running a saw mill. In 1835 and 1852 the corn mill owner was Benjamin Lupton and the 1852 occupier was Thomas Jackson (1852 plans plot 1186).

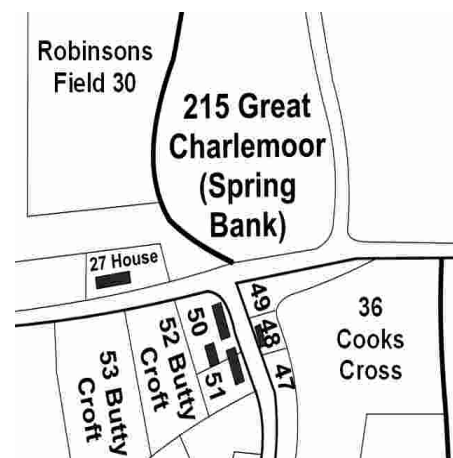
## Seddon's Mill, Stamford Road, Bowdon

This mill was just over the Altrincham border on what was called Sandy Lane, now Stamford Road, Bowdon, and has been included to complete all of the textile mills in the Altrincham area. It has the oldest recorded date. For over 75 years it was managed by three generations of Seddons.

Robert Seddon was born in 1715 and came to Altrincham as a chapman (an itinerant dealer) in the early 1750s. In 1759, he witnessed the will of Ralph Pimlott.

Marjorie Cox researched the mill for Bowdon History Society.

In 1775 Robert leased land on Sandy Lane, Bowdon from the Earl of Stamford. The lease was for three lives, his own and those of his sons Robert junior (born 1752) and Thomas (born 1754). The lease was for a cottage, tenement and two fields both named Butty Croft and one named Well Croft, the latter higher up Bowdon Hill near Enville Road where there were springs (EGR14/2/5/60).



*The location of Seddon's Mill on fields 48 to 53 near Spring Bank on the Bowdon tithe map.*

Date	Event
1775	Robert Seddon leased land on Sandy Lane, now Stamford Road, from the Earl of Stamford
1775	Stamford Papers Valuation Book lists a dye house
1782	Valuation Book lists a warping (thread winding) mill, dye house, comb shop
1793	Trade directory lists a worsted mill which can be identified as Seddon's Mill

In 1775, Robert Seddon senior opened a small worsted factory next to Butty Croft at what became Hollybank, on Sandy Lane, Bowdon where the small Hollywood estate is now opposite to Spring Bank. Although the mill may have initially been operated manually or by horse, there is evidence of a small stream passing the site and a header-pond may have existed higher up the hill fed from a spring in Well Croft. Downstream, at the back of the Ashley Road, Hale shops, there is still a substantial gully where water once flowed before it was culverted across the Altrincham Boys' Grammar School playing fields in about 1868.

Testimony given to Tarbolton in the 1880s reported that there may have been a header pond at Heald Road but this has not been found on any maps, despite this being essential for a mill which had a waterwheel powered by a spring. However a pond here is mentioned by Ingham and Nickson.

By 1800 wool was going out of fashion and the enterprise lost its trade. According to testimony given to Tarbolton, the mill appears to have been converted to a small cotton thread and bobbin factory by about 1825, although the trade directories record it as a worsted factory into the 1850s. A bobbin turner was living in a cottage at the bottom of Stamford Road in the 1850s opposite to the mill and may have worked for Seddon.

Robert junior and Phoebe Seddon had a daughter Ann born in 1775, and sons John, born in 1778, and Robert, born in 1786, the year their grandfather Robert died. The latter Robert continued to run the mill after his father Robert junior died in 1806, leaving a valuable estate of 'under £1500',



so was clearly very successful. The 1851 census indicates that the mill was still producing worsted when the youngest Robert was 65 and living on the south side of Sandy Lane. An 1855 directory has a Robert Seddon living at Oak Hill, Stamford Road, Bowdon and in 1858 a Robert Seddon died in Altrincham aged 72, clearly the same person, by which time the mill had closed.

Thus three generations of the same family ran a small but very successful worsted mill in the late 18th and early 19th century, using a spring which must now be culverted, for washing and dying, and for water power and for which there is some physical evidence.

## **Norman's Field Factory, Norman's Place, Altrincham**

### **Location**

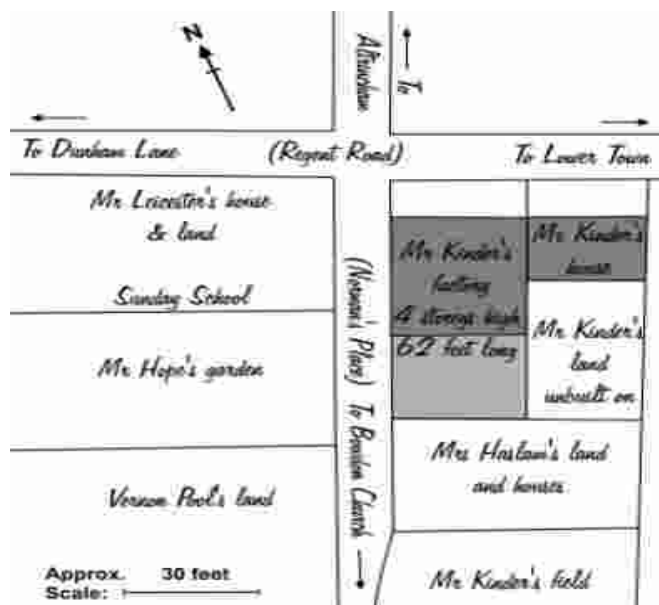
The position of this cotton-spinning mill on the corner of Regent Road and Norman's Place is unusual, well away from the mills on Grosvenor Road where a reasonable flow of water was available.

There had been a spinning mill since about 1784 at Norman's Field which can be identified as Norman's Place, off Regent Road (EGR14/1/21). From its size and date the mill must have been water-powered, but there are no springs shown on early maps and so any water-course, down Regent Road (and possibly Norman's Place), must have been culverted. The presence of five old pubs on the route (Grapes, Foresters, Woolpack, Orange Tree, Faulkers) would all need water for brewing. A resident of Lyme Grove south of Norman's Place says water flows under some of the houses at the southern end.

### **The mill's working life**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Event</b>
1784	John Eccles owner & occupier of the mill
1785	James Brownell joins John Eccles as tenant
1786	John Eccles insured Norman's Field cotton spinning mill for £100
1789	Thomas Hancock was tenant
1790	Vernon Poole was tenant
1794	The mill & house passed from Eccles heirs to Samuel Kinder of Hayfield who occupied it
1795	Miles Rowthorn was the tenant
1798	John Crossley was the tenant
1800	Miles Rowthorn was the tenant again
1808	Kinder sold the mill, house & land to the Earl of Stamford

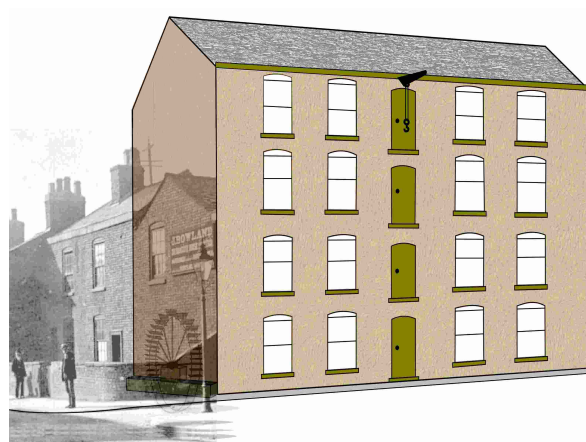
The 1807 plan of Norman's Field Factory on the corner of Regent Road & Norman's Place. The darker shading indicates the remaining buildings (DM/EGR4/1/8/4/11).



The remains of Norman's Field Factory on the corner of Regent Road & Norman's Place about 1900. The building on the right with the 'J Bowland' decorators sign is part of the original factory on Norman's Place. The building to its left is Kinder's house (Altrincham Area Image Archive).



An artist's impression of Norman's Field Factory (a cotton spinning mill) which stood at the corner of Norman's Place and Regent Road, superimposed on to a photograph taken about 1900; Kinder's house is to the left (DM/Altrincham Area Image Archive).



## The Mill for sale

In a letter to the Earl of Stamford dated 16 December 1807, the earl's agent James Worthington laid out possible terms of an agreement with Samuel Kinder to buy Kinder's house, the factory and the land (EGR4/1/8/10-11). The agent estimated the value of the house and empty factory at £860 with a total of £1,570 to include a chief rent from Mrs Haslam's land which Kinder must have owned previously. The agent negotiated this down to £1,400 and suggested that the top two storeys of the factory could be removed and the rest converted to houses. There was also a suggestion that what is now Norman's Place could be widened and a new road taken through to The Downs. The agent suggested that the Earl would not want this and it didn't happen.

## Purchase by Lord Stamford

The purchase of the factory, house and land by Lord Stamford was completed in 1808 (EGR14/1/1) and the tithe map of 1835 and the 1852 Board of Health Plans show two cottages on the site of Kinder's house and four on the site of Norman's Field Factory.

Part of the factory building still exists at the northern end of Norman's Place, reduced to two storeys and truncated to 35 feet in length to make a car park at the back, leaving just two of the original four cottages. Kinder's house is to the east on Regent Road with a cottage (number 31) built in front of the eastern part and a shop (number 33) in front of the other. The mill was extended in the Edwardian style to Regent Road as number 35 in 1910 by painter & decorator Jacob Bowland. Kinder's house was demolished in 2019 when the mill was redeveloped.



*Norman's Field Factory today with the 1910 extension as 35 Regent Road, and Kinder's house and its cottage and shop extensions to the left (DM).*



*Norman's Mill being redeveloped in 2019, showing one of several large beams (Sue Nichols).*



There are several other old buildings in Norman's Place: the Georgian house The Limes was built behind the mill on Kinder's land. On the west side of the road, numbers 2-8 are a terrace of houses built about 1810, Richmond House can be dated to about 1820, and The Elms in the 1750s.

## The Halemoss Velvet Works, Hamon Road, Altrincham

An early fabric called Manchester Cotton used a linen warp for strength with a cotton weft for dying and was known as fustian. Later, cotton was used for both warp and weft and the name fustian retained for thick-twilled all-cotton cloth with a short pile. The Altrincham velvet works would be dealing with this type of cloth rather than silk cloth and was therefore producing velveteen rather than velvet. It is not known where the fustian came from but presumably Lancashire or Stockport.

The fustian was stiffened with flour paste and stretched on frames and the cloth cut manually, mainly by women. It was a very skilled and labour-intensive process and not fully mechanised until the 1920s.

Cutting was done with a sharp knife, often by candle at night, and at the turn of the century young women worked 80 hours per week, often while looking after a baby.



*The 1874 OS map of Moss Lane/Oakfield Road showing the Halemoss Velvet Works off Denmark Street with a second one off Oakfield Road.*



*The Factory Shop, formerly the Velvet Works, on the left left behind the later house on Hamon Road in 1996, with the Stamford Forge with the chimney on the far right, and the Bridge Inn on Moss Lane behind the trees, all now demolished (Hazel Pryor).*

Mike Nevell published his findings from the excavation of the 19th-century fustian-cutting shop on Hamon Road, now the site of Tesco, in *Altrincham History Society Journal* 21. The area was still part of Hale Moss on the 1852 Board of Health Plans. The works was constructed in 1872 when Henry Stringer occupied it. Samuel Appleton is listed in the Altrincham Rate Books of 1873 as operating a Fustian Cutting Shop. The site is named Halemoss Works on the 1876 OS map, standing next to St. Vincent's School. By 1875 the shop was owned and occupied by Joseph Platt who continued to own the property until at least 1881. The building was empty in 1878/9. By 1886 the property had been sold to Louis Litherland who used it as a carriage and coach-building works and in 1910 it was being run by David Litherland.

Most of Denmark Street to the west was demolished in 1973 leaving the works and St. Vincents School standing. In the 1980s it was known as the Factory Shop, selling school uniforms and inexpensive clothing. It was sold about 2000 by Ronald Hopkins for the development of a supermarket.

Just northeast of the factory was a small single-storey ribbon-and-braid-weaving factory with its entrance on Moss Lane, visible on the 1876 OS map when it was an 1876 blacksmiths forge. The factory was still operating in the 1960s.

A second velvet-cutting works named the Oakfield Factory is shown on the 1876 OS map off Oakfield Road, demolished by 1908.

## Conclusions

Linen and wool spinning in the Altrincham area is recorded in cottages in the 17th and 18th century and probably took place much earlier. The earliest fabric mill was a worsted mill in Bowdon. With the mechanisation of spinning, several small mills were constructed in Altrincham in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century and early 19<sup>th</sup> century for cotton spinning, supplying the Lancashire cotton industry with thread and later bobbins. Most were short-lived due to lack of economy of scale, competition from Lancashire, and the lack of demand for cloth after the Napoleonic Wars and the consequent depression in the 1820s.

Initially most of the mills were driven by water power and while there is no evidence, given the presence of steam-power after 1800, one must assume that the industry was reasonably up-to-date with spinning machinery. However the mills were some distance from the Bridgewater Canal which would have been used to supply coal and Altrincham failed to compete with the evolving and massive Lancashire mills.

Water power was still important in the 1820s at Woodside Mill and this was never a steam-driven mill. The mills were relatively small and many of the workers lived in the cottages in Mill Street and Derby Street. The cotton-spinning industry survived for 75 years in Altrincham with many changes of ownership and probably with difficulties. According to Leech much hand-loom weaving continued into the second half of the 19th century in Altrincham.

Family history research into the 1841 census and marriage certificates records braid silk weavers living in cottages in Albert Street and Chapel Street in the 1830s.

Two velveteen factories opened on the edge of Hale Moss in the 1870s, probably importing fustian from Lancashire or Stockport.

Altrincham seems to be unique as a town well away from the water power of the Pennines and yet having had several cotton-spinning mills in its history but no efficient coal supply to modernise the industry in the first half of the 19th century.

The only physical remains of former 18th century textile industry buildings is that on the east side of Norman's Place near Regent Road where Norman's Field Factory has been reduced to two storeys and truncated to two cottages, with the mill-owner's house behind, now converted into a modern cottage.

Sue Nichols has done much research into Land Records and concluded that my interpretation of the Grosvenor Road mills is wrong (see the Altrincham Heritage website).



## Summary of the Altrincham mills

### Mills table in date order

Mill/factory	Location	Power	Use	Opened	Closed	Evidence for location
Corn mills	Victoria Street	Water	Corn milling	13th century	-	From STAG excavations
Seddon's Mill	Stamford Road, Bowdon	Water	Worsted spinning & weaving, bobbins	1775	1851	Location documented; the earliest of the mills
Woodside Mill	Grosvenor Road	Water	Cotton spinning, worsted	1780	1829	Tithe plots 432, 433, 434
Smith & Taylors Long Building	Grosvenor Road/ Derby St	Water	Cotton spinning	1780	1829	Tithe plot 431
Norman's Field Factory	Norman's Place	Water	Cotton spinning	1784	1826	Location known from Stamford leases
Bower's Buildings Mill	Grosvenor Road	Water, steam	Cotton spinning, corn mill	1794	1831	Tithe plot 428
Halemooss Velvet Factory	Hamon Road	Hand	Velveteen cutting	1872	1877	Shown on the 1876 OS map

## Acknowledgments

This article acknowledges the considerable research carried out by Bernard Champness for Prof. Peter Solar on Altrincham cotton mills and by Sue Nichols into the Grosvenor Road mills. Many thanks also to Don & Hilda Bayliss, Marjorie Cox, Chris Hill, Judith Miller, Sue Nichols and Hazel Pryor for their contributions.

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Tithe map of Altrincham in *Cheshire Tithe Maps Online* in the Cheshire Archives website.

## BOOK 6: BIOGRAPHIES OF ALTRINCHAM PEOPLE



***Curtis Sparkes, Engineer***

## Allingham, Helen (1848-1926) Artist

Helen M E Allingham was born in Derbyshire in 1848 where her father was a doctor. The family moved to 16 Market Street, Altrincham in 1849 and later to Levenhurst, St. John's Road, Bowdon.

Her father and a sister died in a diphtheria epidemic of 1862 and the family moved to Birmingham where she was encouraged in art by an aunt. She went to Art College in London where she studied under Millais, settled in London and then Surrey. There she became a leading watercolour artist, famous for her cottage scenes, much used on chocolate boxes.

Helen was the first woman to become a member of the Royal Watercolour Society. She died in 1926 and there is a Blue Plaque at 16 Market Street, Altrincham to commemorate her.



## Armitage, George Faulkner (1849-1937) Architect

George Armitage, whose father William was a cotton manufacturer in Manchester, was born in Townfield House, Church Street, Altrincham in 1849.

He qualified as an architect and furniture designer and became internationally known. He lived and worked from Stamford House, Church Street (where the 1973 Cresta Court and offices are now), which was originally the Stamford Arms and Bowling Green Hotel, famous in the Manchester area for its bowling green. He designed and furnished many large properties in London and designed the memorial cross in the Garden of Remembrance opposite to St. Margaret's Church. He also designed the WWI memorial porch in the Bowdon Downs Church.

He married his cousin Annie, became a magistrate, was mayor of Altrincham during the whole of the 1914-18 War and died in 1937.

## Arron, Michael (1928-2023) Professional Photographer

Mike Arron was a Manchester-based press photographer who spent most of his career as a freelance covering major news stories, some of them harrowing. He covered the disasters at Aberfan (1966), Ibrox (1971), Manchester airport (1985) and Lockerbie (1988), as well as the Troubles in Northern Ireland. He rarely spoke of such experiences but was determined to show the world what had happened.

Mike was born in 1929 in the Levenshulme area of Manchester to Joan (nee Ford), who was employed in service in Cheshire houses, and Morris, a master tailor who had fled a pogrom of Jews in Lithuania in the late 1880s.



He left school at 15 to work at the Northern Press photographic agency in Hale, where, during the second world war, his first commission was to photograph German and Italian prisoners being held at the Dunham Massey prisoner-of-war camp. Cycling there with a large, old-fashioned Thornton-Pickard reflex camera and glass plates balanced on his handle bars, he became friendly with the prisoners and would have tea with them.

In 1947 he signed up with the RAF for his two years of national service, and asked to go into the photographic unit. The officer in charge refused to write down his request on the relevant form, so when he had to leave the room for a short while, Mike liked to tell the tale of how he nipped round to the other side of the desk and wrote it in himself. Mike attended many reunions in Germany after his service.

After the RAF Mike gradually established himself as a freelance photographer. He was away from home a lot, but outside work, family and friends were very much his focus. He finally hung up his cameras at the age of 72, when he came home from a job complaining that a PR person had annoyed him so much that he was calling it a day.

Mike married Shirley Newton in 1959 after they had met at a dance in Alderley Edge, Cheshire. At their wedding she refused to wear a white dress because he refused to wear a top hat and tails – and that was pretty much how they carried on for 58 years; very different but very together.

For many years Shirley ran the business side of Mike's activities from home, and in retirement they became regular crown green bowlers. He also enjoyed fly fishing in the remotest parts of Caithness and Sutherland.

On 31st October 2023 Mike died in Scotland where Shirley had died in 2017. He is survived by his daughter Clare and his three grandchildren, Tom, Lucy and Neil. His son, Simon, a motoring journalist, died in 2022.

Thanks to Clare Arron for the link to her obituary of her father in the Guardian.

## **Bayliss, Donald Gordon (1924-2017) Local Historian**

Don Bayliss was born on 13 October 1924 in Fallowfield and moved with his parents to Sale where he remained until his twenties. He gained a BA and an MA at Manchester University, and a PhD at Leeds University.

Don served with the Royal Navy on a mine sweeper during World War II, ending up in the Far East and returning on the battleship King George V. He was very proud of his medals and always attended local Remembrance Day services.

In 1948 Don married Hilda Elizabeth Heaton in Swinton, where the bells rang out for the first time after the war and a great crowd gathered. Their marriage lasted for 69 years and it was a very real partnership as they shared many interests including sailing and music, as well as researching and writing about local history. Their two children, Susan and Roger, both achieved high academic status.





He decided to make his career in teaching and from 1949 spent ten happy years at Bedstone College, Shropshire, where he was a valued member of staff. He was well remembered for his directing the school orchestra, rugby and tennis coaching, and for his Austin 7 and Lanchester cars. He edited the book *Bedstone, The First Fifty Years*, in 1998.

He became a lecturer in Geography at Carnegie College (now Leeds Beckett University) and moved to Hale in the early 1970s to become Head of Geography at John Dalton College (then Manchester Polytechnic and now the Manchester Metropolitan University).

On retiring, Don and Hilda took a keen interest in the town's history and development. In 1988 Don was invited to join the Court Leet which keeps alive some of the old laws and traditions such as reaffirming the Altrincham boundary with the annual 'Beating the Bounds' in July. With Hilda he negotiated the installation commemorative paving stones in Charter Road for the 700<sup>th</sup> charter anniversary. In 2002 Don was invited to serve as the Court's Provost, later becoming Alderman and serving as Surveyor.

Together with **Norman Dore**, he founded Altrincham History Society in 1988 and was the society's first chairman, holding that office for 27 years, later becoming president. At 91 he still attended meetings and gave short talks. His greatest legacies are his books on local history. He published a dozen books including *Altrincham a History* (editor, 1992); *A Town in Crisis: Altrincham in the Mid-Nineteenth Century* (2005); *Altrincham in 1841* (editor, 1994); *Buildings of Central Altrincham in the Year 2000* (editor, 2000); *Dunham Massey, Cheshire: A History* (joint editor, 2010); *Historical Atlas of Trafford* (1996); *The Changing Landscape of Bowdon, Cheshire* (joint author, 2017). He also wrote many articles for the history society journal. Don and Hilda spent several summers in Normandy researching the roots of the Massey family.

Don was also Vice-President and former Chairman of Altrincham & Bowdon Civic Society, and a member of the South Trafford Archaeological Group. He was involved in the development of the town, preserving worthwhile buildings, monitoring planning lists, and recording properties to be demolished. When Don was president, he and Hilda helped to raise funds and press Trafford to install the sandstone replica for the 1730 cross pulled down in 1850 to widen Old Market Place. Don designed the cross which was accompanied by stocks in Old Market Place for the 700<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Charter in 1990. Don made an outstanding contribution to the well being and advancement of Altrincham in his work for the Civic Society and other organisations. He led a working group to preserve the Town Hall and its artifacts. Don was also part of a working group which influenced the preservation of the façade of the 1872 Altrincham Hospital and the building of the 2015 hospital. Don wore his scholarship lightly but his knowledge and experience were wide. He was very modest and easy to collaborate with.

Don and Hilda were keen sailors and over the years had two canal boats. Later their wooden 18-ton Plymouth Hooker (a gaff-rigged fishing boat built in the first decade of the 20th Century) was moored at Port Penrhyn, Bangor and had taken over 10 years to restore by Don, a talented carpenter. At one time they also had a fibreglass yacht which they kept for a few years in southern France. Don was still attending the sailing club at Sale Water Park at 91.

He was also a skilled model maker and railway enthusiast. He had a gauge 0 railway layout in his attic, and a gauge 1 railway line around his garden with his garage as the sheds and using his own hand-built carriages. He also helped to run the Walton Park railway in Sale, driving his own 5-inch steam engine. He had a 5-inch electric railway engine under construction when he died. A birthday present one year was a full-sized railway wagon kept in the Midlands.

Don was a skilled violinist and until 2016 played in two quartets who met weekly, with Hilda playing the piano. He also played in local orchestras, was an occasional painter in oils and enjoyed poetry.

Don and Hilda were awarded a joint Honour by the British Association for Local History for their work in Local History at their annual Local History Day in London in June 2007 (photo above).

Don was a very sociable, welcoming person who enjoyed family life and always looked forward to a game of croquet when the family visited. His mantra was *"Keeping busy keeps me fit."* His enthusiasm and leadership will be greatly missed.

Lord Martin Rees FRS, Astronomer Royal, in *Moving On Up* by Sarah Brown (ed. 2003) said of Don:

*"I was very fortunate in many of my teachers who taught me enough to gain entry to university. But it's those who I encountered early on who've left the deepest impression. If I had to single out one formative influence, it would be my first geography teacher Don Bayliss, a Mancunian who was a fine geographer. In his spare time he gained a PhD and wrote on local history. For ten years he worked at the same school, Bedstone in Shropshire. He taught geography brilliantly but what was even more marvelous was the way he taught everything else. GK Chesterton averred that, 'if something is worth doing, it is worth doing badly'. This seemed to be Don Bayliss's maxim. The most unmusical among us had violins put in our hands; we were all encouraged to draw, paint and make models; to go on small-scale expeditions and gather wildlife; to sing, act and play games. Some pupils had untapped talent but Don Bayliss tapped the un-talent of the rest of us. I still can't draw well but I enjoy trying. I learned early on to appreciate natural history. I'm not musical but I still like to bash out slow movements on the piano when nobody's listening. I turned out to be good at maths and that led me towards a career in Science. But Don Bayliss inspired me to do and enjoy many things I was bad at. For that and much else, I'm eternally grateful to him."*

Don Bayliss died 26 April 2017 aged 92. Hilda died 15 November 2021 aged 98.

Thanks to Dr. Roger Bayliss for assistance with details of his parents.

## **Black, Gordon (1923-1990) Computer Pioneer**

Professor Gordon Black was professor of automated data processing in the Faculty of Technology, the University of Manchester Institute of Science & Technology (UMIST, merged with the Victoria University of Manchester in 2004) from 1964 to 1968. He then became professor of computation in the new department of computation at UMIST in 1968. He was appointed director of the regional computer centre from 1969 until 1 October 1983, when he became a consultant to the Computer Centre. This post was held concurrently with his UMIST post. He retired in 1988.

Gordon Black was born in Whitehaven, Cumbria in 1923. His father worked for the local railway depot. Gordon went to local schools and Manchester University where he obtained a doctorate. He married Brenda Balsom in 1953 and they had four children when they lived in Alan Drive, Hale. He was an excellent pianist.

Dr. Gordon Black played a major part in the concept of a 'Black Box' in 1948 when he was a research scientist for the Ministry of Aircraft Production at Farnborough. His prototype was equipped with gyroscopes and the idea was developed by the Australian David Warren as a Black Box Flight Recorder.

The idea of a National Computing Centre was raised in Parliament in December 1965 with the object of reducing wasteful duplication of computer programming, and to develop and expand training systems analysis and programming, in co-operation with computer manufacturers. At the time Dr. Black was Technical Manager (Computing) in the Reactor Group of the Atomic Energy Authority and part-time Professor of Automatic Data Processing in the Faculty of Technology of Manchester University. He became the first Director of the Centre, which was opened in 1967, first at Risley near Warrington, later at UMIST and then in 1973 purpose-built premises on Oxford Road, Manchester.

In the early 1960s Prof. Black was consulted several times by Manchester Corporation (now Manchester City Council) about its intention to acquire a new computer system. In 1968 he published *International Computer Bibliography* and in 1975 became a consultant to the International Computers Limited (which later became part of Fujitsu). Prof. Black died on 12 February 1990.

Thanks to Jonathan Black for assistance with details of his father.

## **Bonington, Chris (1934) Mountaineer**

Christian JS Bonington was born in Hampstead, London in 1934. During the war he was evacuated to the Lake District and it was there he got his taste for the mountains.

He first climbed in Wales when he was 16 and then started an army career. In the early 1960s he climbed most of the prestigious peaks in the world including the first ascent of Annapurna, Nuptse and the first ascent of the Old Man of Hoy in 1966, televised in 1967. He climbed it again in 2014 aged 80.

He married Wendy Marchant in 1962 and they had three sons Conrad, Daniel and Rupert. Initially they lived in the Lake District and he earned a living from lecturing, writing, photography and journalism. The family lived in Bowdon from 1968 to 1974 at Newcroft in West Road. Nick Estcourt who lived in Peel Avenue, Bowdon, was a programmer with Farrantis and was Chris's closest friend. Nick joined Chris on the Annapurna expedition of 1970 and the 1972 attempt on Everest when they reached 26,000 feet. Nick later ran a climbing shop in Altrincham.

The Boningtons bought a cottage in the Lake District in 1971 and moved back permanently in 1974. The 1975 Everest expedition was successful in getting two climbers to the top but Nick died on K2 in 1977 and is commemorated in Bowdon Churchyard with an oak tree. Chris has written about 20 books and has written for and appeared on TV several times. He was awarded a CBE in 1986, was knighted in 1996 and was installed as Chancellor of the University of Lancaster in 2005.



## **Bowden, Vivian (1910-1989) Computer Pioneer**

Dr B V Bowden (later Lord Bowden of Chesterfield) is perhaps remembered best as a computer and educational pioneer in Manchester and for his early book on computers *Faster Than Thought*.

He was born in 1910 in Chesterfield, Derbyshire, the son of a schoolmaster. He was educated at Chesterfield Grammar School then Cambridge and graduated with a First Class Honours in Natural Sciences in 1931. He worked in the Cavendish Laboratory with Lord Rutherford and was awarded a PhD in 1934.

After a further year of research in Amsterdam he taught physics in Liverpool and Oundle for five years. In 1939 Bowden married Marjorie Browne. He spent the war in radar research in Britain with Robert Watson-Watt and in the USA, and then a year at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

In 1950 he joined Ferranti Ltd in Manchester where the first British digital computer was being built. He described himself as a 'computer salesman' when he sold a Ferranti Mark 1 computer to the University of Toronto in 1951. As a result of his role at Ferranti, who were working closely with Manchester University in computer development, he worked with Professor Freddie Williams, Dr Tom (later Professor) Kilburn and **Alan Turing**.

In 1952 while still at Ferranti, he was the editor and main contributor to an early book on computers entitled *Faster Than Thought: A Symposium on Digital Computing Machines*, published by Pitman in 1953. Alan Turing contributed the section on chess.

However Vivian's forte was education and in 1953 he became Principal of Manchester's College of Science and Technology, later the University of Manchester Institute of Science and Technology (UMIST) and established it as one of the leading universities for the study of engineering and technology. At the time there were just four professors in what was then partly a Faculty of Technology of Manchester University as opposed to twenty in the Faculty of Science and he fought to strengthen its resources and for technological education reform. During his time as Principal the number of students increased tenfold. His staff said he was always a fair man.

From 1960 to 1964 he was chairman of the Electronic Research Council of the Ministry of Aviation and was created a life peer in 1963, becoming Lord Bowden of Chesterfield. In 1964 he was appointed Minister of State at the Department of Education and Science but was not comfortable with the workings of Whitehall and resigned in 1965. He returned to an academic life at Manchester's College of Science and Technology, later to become the University of Manchester Institute of Science and Technology, and of which he remained Principal until he retired in 1976. As part of his work he advised a number of firms about automation, including Kearns in Broadheath who produced machine tools. In retirement he wrote many papers on education and a history of UMIST.

When he first moved to the Altrincham area in 1950 he lived at Woodleigh in Bradgate Road, Altrincham and in 1955 moved to Roxana, Park Road, Hale. In the 1970s he moved to Pinecroft, Stanhope Road, Bowdon and continued to be active in the House of Lords until he died in 1989 aged 79. Lord Bowden married four times: Marjorie Browne (1939), Diana Stewart (1955), Mary Maltby (1967), and Phyllis James (1974), and had a son and two daughters. His papers are archived in John Rylands Library.

Thanks to Diana Murray for the details of her father, Dr BV Bowden.

## **Bradbury, Captain Edward Kinder, VC (1881-1914) Soldier**

Edward Kinder Bradbury was born on 16 August 1881 at Church Bank at the bottom western side

of Richmond Road, Bowdon, now demolished and replaced by flats. His parents later moved to Parkfield, at the end of Groby Place, Altrincham.

Edward was the son of Judge James Kinder Bradbury, who practised on the Bury-Bolton circuit, and Grace Dowling. Edward was awarded the VC, the highest award for bravery, for his heroism under fire in a battle in Northern France during World War One.



Edward was educated at Marlborough College and passed out of the Royal Military Academy at Woolwich entering the Royal Artillery in May 1900. He was promoted to lieutenant in April 1901, and from January to October 1902 he was employed with the Imperial Yeomanry for service in the Cape Colony during the latter stages of the Boer War for which he received the Queen's South Africa Medal. From February 1905 to March 1907 he was employed with the King's African Rifles and promoted to captain on 4th February 1910.

Captain Bradbury was a respected man among his fellow officers. When on leave, he was a keen fisherman and rider. He hunted with the hounds in County Cork, Ireland, and on a very wet day at Punchtown Races in Ireland, he won the Soldiers Race on his own horse named 'Sloppy Weather'.

On the outbreak of the Great War Captain Bradbury was second-in-command of 'L' Battery, Royal Horse Artillery with the British Expeditionary Force which, after being faced by an enemy far superior in number to their own, was retreating from Mons in Belgium on 1 September 1914.

Néry – a remote and ancient village in Picardy, south of Compiègne – lay on the path of the retreat. L Battery was attached to the first Brigade of Cavalry and provided firepower with their six quick-firing thirteen-pounder guns. They were the last to arrive in Néry late in the afternoon of August 31st. It had been a very hot day and they had stopped on the way to water their horses. They had to bivouac in an open field at the extreme south end of the village and therefore well to the rear. They moved right out in the open in order to lay down good horse lines. Orders had been given overnight for the units of the Brigade to be saddled up and ready to march at dawn, but a dense mist delayed any start.

At 5.45am high explosive shells began to fall on the village from twelve German guns situated on high ground, less than a thousand yards away. The German guns concentrated their fire on the horse lines of L Battery and the Queen's Bays next to them. The unit soon became a shambles as 150 horses were blown to pieces and many men were killed or wounded. Major Sclater-Booth, the Battery Commander, was at the Brigade Headquarters to hear the latest news.

Captain Bradbury raced forward, calling out for volunteers. When the men heard his rallying call "*Come on! Who's for the guns?*" They all responded "*I am.*" Bradbury's rallying call is famous all over the world. Today at the assembly of the US Army Reserve Blue Devils Horse Platoon, who represent the US Army and the US Army Reserve as a mounted ceremonial and equestrian sport unit, the call is made to the platoon "*Who's for the guns?*" and the answer by each member is "*I am.*" They say it is "*In honour of the Kings Troop Royal Horse Artillery*" but in fact, to be more precise, they pay tribute to Captain E K Bradbury, VC.

A number of men responded and they succeeded in manhandling three guns against the enemy to return fire. Two of these guns were soon hit and put out of action leaving only F sub section under Captain Bradbury acting as gun layer and Sergeant David Nelson, acting as gun range setter. Sergeant Nelson found the range at 750 yards but he was soon wounded, and to add to that

problem the ammunition wagons were 20 yards away. Battery Sergeant Major George Dorrell then arrived to assist and Captain Bradbury ordered Sergeant Nelson to seek medical attention, but he refused, stating that he couldn't move anyway.

Battery Sergeant Major Dorrell then relieved Captain Bradbury instead, and the captain ran across to the ammunition wagon under intense enemy fire and was hit by a shell which blew off his leg. Despite this crippling wound he managed to support himself on the other leg and continued to direct the fire of the gun until he was hit again. Captain Bradbury died later. Twelve German guns were eventually captured.

Captain Bradbury was buried at the Néry Communal Cemetery in France. His Victoria Cross was presented to his mother (his father had died in 1913) by King George V at Buckingham Palace. BSM Dorrell and Sergeant Nelson were also awarded the V.C. The three Néry Victoria Crosses are now in the possession of L (Néry) Battery Royal Horse Artillery at Woolwich, along with the 'Néry Gun'. At dawn on 1st September each year the action is remembered by L Battery who present a thirteen-pounder field gun and a single shot.

Captain Bradbury died on 1st September 1914 and his award of the Victoria Cross was gazetted on 2 November 1914. The L (Néry) Battery Members Association visited Néry in 2014 to commemorate the centenary of the action at Néry, with Bradbury family members present.

Altrincham Higher Elementary School was renamed Bradbury Central School in his honour.

Thanks to Yvon Debuire of Néry for assistance with Captain E K Bradbury VC.



Church Bank has been demolished and apartments built on the site. A Blue Plaque to Captain Bradbury was unveiled on 1st September 2014 on the corner of Langham Road and Richmond Hill with family members present.

## Brodsky, Adolf (1851-1929) Violinist

Adolf Brodsky was born in Taganrog in south-west Russia in 1851 and learned to play the violin from the age of four. He attended the Vienna Conservatory of Music at the age of nine from 1860 to 1863.

He married Anna Skadovskaya in 1880 and in the same year was appointed Senior





Professor of Violin at Leipzig Conservatory. His friends included Tchaikovsky, Grieg, Elgar and Brahms. He was the first performer of Tchaikovsky's Violin Concerto in Vienna in 1881 which was dedicated to Brodsky and which was conducted by Hans Richter.

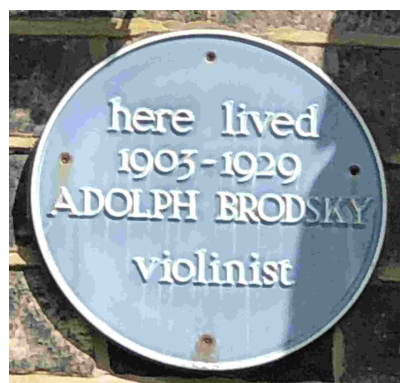
In 1890 he became leader of the New York Symphony Orchestra before returning to Europe. In 1895 Sir Charles Hallé offered him the post of Senior Violin Professor at the Royal College of Music in Manchester and Leader of the Hallé Orchestra, and he subsequently settled in Bowdon. Within weeks of Brodsky's arrival, Hallé died and Brodsky took over as principal of the college and occasional conductor.

In 1915 Brodsky was interned by Austria as a Russian Jew for a while in a concentration camp in Hungary, but after a petition was sent back to the UK.

Dr Brodsky founded the Brodsky Quartet, which has been reformed, and which originally included the cellist Carl Fuchs. Fuchs lived in Didsbury, was the principal cellist in the Hallé from 1887 to 1914, professor at the Royal Northern College of Music from 1893 to 1942, played for Queen Victoria and died in 1951. The author went to school with his grandson Richard Fuchs. Elgar dedicated his String Quartet to the Brodsky Quartet.

Ronald Gow as a boy used to see Brodsky going to Altrincham Station down Portland Road where Gow lived. Brodsky played a Guarneri violin (said by some to be superior to Stradivarius) made in 1736 and called the Lafont after an early 19th century owner, which Brodsky bought in 1880. Nigel Kennedy bought the instrument in 1990 and said that the tonal qualities were astonishing, and that it sounded far more sophisticated than a Stradivarius he played.

Brodsky was generous with local children, often giving them 6d for running errands. He retired in 1921 aged 77, died in 1929 and is buried in Southern Cemetery. Anna died in 1954 aged 102 and there is a Blue Plaque at 3 Laurel Mount, East Downs Road, Bowdon where they lived from 1903 to 1929. Brodsky's nephew Leon Picard took over the house and when Picard died in 1958, the Royal Manchester College of Music bought the extensive Brodsky papers from his estate for £50, now with the Royal Northern College of Music.



Thanks to Chris Hill for the photograph.

## **Brooks, Samuel (1793-1864) Banker**

Early Victorian banker Samuel Brooks, bought land in Hale Barns in 1857. By the time of his death he had created Brooks Drive from Hale Barns to Brooklands Station.

The Brooks were Lancashire farmers who came to south Manchester and grew rich through cotton, banking and property development, finally owning 800 acres in the Hale area. The name remains in Brooks' Drive, Brooklands Road and Brooklands Station. The family came from Whalley near Clitheroe on the Ribble and Whalley Range in Manchester was laid out by Samuel Brooks and was named after his home village.

His father, William Brooks, traded in raw cotton and in partnership with his wealthy friend Roger Cunliffe became bankers, founding the firm of Cunliffe-Brooks & Co. of Blackburn. Samuel, who

was born in 1793, joined a Manchester calico-printing firm, Reddish, Brooks & Co and opened a branch of the bank in Manchester. By 1846 he owned 628 acres of land in Sale and in 1852 he bought the Stamford land in Ashton-on-Mersey. Samuel Brooks, who was known familiarly in the Stretford neighbourhood as 'Owd Stink o'Brass', bought 800 acres in Hale when land was sold following the departure of the 7th Earl to Enville Hall in Staffordshire in 1854.

In 1857 Samuel bought an estate of 32 acres in Hale and two years later agreed terms with the Manchester, South Junction and Altrincham Railway Company for land to build a new station to serve his property development on Brooklands Road. Brooks' name was also given to the station, which remains today as Brooklands Metrolink Station.

His son, later Sir William Cunliffe-Brooks, bought more land, until the estate stretched from Davenport Green to Warburton Green and Brooklands, and included much of Hale Barns. By 1862 he created Brooks' Road, now Brooks' Drive linking his home, Prospect House on the Wilmslow Road in Hale Barns, and Brooklands Station with the intention of creating a coach route to the station to improve his journey to work. The general layout of the Brooks' estate, of which the Hale section was only a fringe, was planned in a manner worthy of the eighteenth century. A great carriageway, double-hedged and tree-lined, with plantations eight yards wide on either side, was intended to run four miles from Brooklands Station to Warburton Green but the stretch from the Wilmslow Road to Warburton Green was never completed. Samuel Brooks launched the scheme and personally supervised the first stages, lunching every day at The Unicorn in Hale Barns.

After his death in 1864 his son William continued the drive with one break at Roaring Gate Farm to Stockport Road, where it linked up with the Brooklands section. During the late nineteenth century, Sir William Cunliffe-Brooks (1819-1900), MP for the division, enjoyed the role of lord of the manor at Hale Barns. He planted trees on Hale Barns Green, fenced it and provided a drinking fountain. He removed the old smithy and the cottages nearby, replacing them with a new smithy and houses. He gave land for the mission church, built at a cost of £750, and headed the list of subscriptions for rebuilding the Church of England school in the village. He also paid for the installation of lighting and water supply in the village. The shape of present-day Hale Barns was considerably influenced by his patronage.

After his death the estate was held in trust for his grandchildren, the children of Lord and Lady Francis Cecil, but none ever lived in the neighbourhood, and in 1917 it was broken up into lots and sold. Part of the great avenue remains as Brooks' Drive.

In Altrincham, the spectacular black and white bank in Old Market Place is listed and was formerly Cunliffe Brooks' Bank, taken over by Lloyds about 1900 and now offices. The bank was built in 1872 in the Vernacular Revival style in sandstone for WC Brooks. It has a 32-foot high banking hall stained glass window and houses to the left and right for managers. Originally there was a weather vane with 'WCB' in it and his initials are on the left-hand chimney. Opposite, the offices in Market Street around the top of Post Office Street were also built by Brooks. They complement the style of the bank and have wrought iron weather vanes with Brooks' initials 'WCB' in them.

Thanks to Hale Civic Society for details of Samuel Brooks.

## **Broun, J H (1829-1910) Property Developer**

John Henderson Broun was born in Stockbridge near Edinburgh in 1829, parents James a solicitor, and Isobel, neé Anderson. He had brothers James, David, George and Henry and by 1841 James

had come to England, with John perhaps following in his footsteps.

In 1871 Broun was in Huddersfield as a cotton spinner employing 130 hands and in 1881 was living in Chorlton-on-Medlock working as a Master Doubler in Cotton. In 1899 he built the Mossburn Buildings block of shops and offices in Stamford New Road, Altrincham when he employed local architect John Macnamara following national tenders. He bought tithe fields Middle and Further Uttley Croft, Near Jenkins Croft, and Middle and Further Meadow and created Willowtree Road, Altrincham. He developed the terrace on the even side of Willowtree Road from 1904 using Ruabon brick and terracotta facings. In 1905 he built Station Buildings (now Stamford House, architect Charles Heathcote), Stamford New Road, which was the first office block in Altrincham. In 1891 he was living at 5 Queens Road, Hale.



In 1896 he built his own house, The Bungalow later renamed Riverside after his death, on a hill overlooking the River Bollin on Ashley Mill Lane North (see plaque above, still preserved). It was single-storey Accrington brick with stone dressings, a parapet wall and Westmorland green slates, and was approached by a long drive, paved with stone setts which are still in place. The ornate windows had granite mullions with carved capitols and internally walls were oak panelled with oak-coffered ceilings and parquetry floors. It was so distinctive it gave Mr Broun the nickname of 'Bungalow Broun'.

He owned the land between Willowtree Road and Ashley Road, which was still fields in the 1920s, and donated a strip of land to widen Ashley Road from Hale Road to the traffic lights at the bottom of Stamford Road, Bowdon. When he died in 1910 he still owned Station Buildings, Mossburn Buildings and land on the west side of Willowtree Road.

John left his estate to his brother James' children. James' daughter Annie came to live in Riverside and died there in 1925, probate granted to her niece Stephanie Stansfield Broun (d1974), the daughter of Annie's brother John (d1940). The building was demolished in the late 1950s and in its place was built an award-winning development of 1965, which incorporated a plaque in the patio floor from the old building, bearing John's initials. That building was itself replaced in 2014 by an ultra-modern building, designed and developed by the new owner.

Thanks to James Broun for details of his great, great, great, great, great uncle John Henderson Broun.

## **Calveley, John Grange (1943-2021) Cartoonist**

Grange Calveley became famous as a writer and cartoonist of a character he called Roobarb. He was born in 1943 in Hale, probably in Sandleigh Avenue where his parents lived in 1939. His father Samuel was a captain in the King's (Liverpool) Regiment who was killed in Italy in 1944 aged 30 and is buried there. Samuel had been a Police Constable in Altrincham. His mother was Alice Williams. Grange had an older brother David and attended Bradbury Central School in Hale in the late 1950s when he lived in Appleton Road. He became head boy at Bradbury, left school at 15 and went into advertising. He moved to London



and wrote and directed advertising campaigns. Here he met Hanny Sitowska and they married in 1969. Grange was the creator and writer of Roobarb, the popular cartoon series screened on British television from 1974.

His inspiration came when he and Hanny moved into their new St. Albans home and bought a Welsh border collie. The first thing the dog did was to water the rhubarb and from that moment on was called Roobarb. Grange started drawing sketches of a dog's adventures and kept imploring the BBC it to take up his idea, which also featured a cat called Custard, based on his neighbour's pet. The BBC finally agreed and Richard Briers collaborated in the recordings. Thirty five-minute episodes of Roobarb were produced and sold to more than 40 countries. It was the first animated British TV series to be drawn and coloured entirely with felt-tip pens and the characters were deliberately made to 'shiver'. Roobarb was green and Custard was red. In 1976 he created another cartoon series of 30 episodes called Noah & Nelly.

In 1977, they moved to Sydney, Australia to work on children's programmes such as Super Flying Fun Show, then for ABC where he devised a new animated series called Captain Cookaburra's Road to Discovery written with Hanny. In 2000, Grange set up a website recalling Roobarb and registered a company Green Dog Films Ltd (Cartoons), based in Bathurst, New South Wales. They had sons Spencer and Piers who is still a director of the company. In 2005 they produced another series called Roobarb & Custard Too, written and produced by Grange and narrated by Richard Briers. Hanny died in 2011 and Grange in 2021.

## **Carman, George (1929-2001) Barrister**

George Carman QC was born in Blackpool in 1929, father Alfred and mother Evelyn who brought him up a strict Catholic. He attended St. Joseph's College in Blackpool and then Upholland Seminary near Wigan.

Following National Service, he attended Balliol College, Oxford where he read law and was one of only two who received an un-vivaed first degree, ie not borderline. He joined Lincoln's Inn and in 1953 was awarded a certificate of honour in the Bar finals.

Having started work in London he moved the same year to Manchester to be nearer to his family and married Ursula Groves. The marriage lasted three years and in 1958 he met his second wife Celia Sparrow. They married in London in 1960 and moved to Woburn Drive, Hale. They had one child, Dominic, born in 1961. They then moved to Park Road, Hale in 1963 and while there George had his first high-profile cases working for Manchester United. He became the only barrister who was a household name in the UK following a series of trials which earned him the titles of 'Great Defender' and 'King of Libel'. Trial names from the 1970s include George Best, Jeremy Thorpe, Arthur Scargill, Peter Adamson, Ken Dodd, Elton John, the Hamiltons, the Maxwells, Richard Branson, Tom Cruise and Mohamed Al-Fayed.

When he lived at Park Road, he enjoyed a drink at the Bull's Head, Hale Barns and at Hale Conservative Club. In 1971 George became a Queen's Councillor and at that time was earning £20,000 per year. A year later he was appointed as a Recorder. His second marriage broke down in the early 1970s and George and Dominic moved to a house in Didsbury.

In 1973 George married Frances, a chef he had met in Edinburgh and they moved to Altrincham where he used the Griffin as his local. In 1980 they moved to London to be near Lincoln's Inn but the marriage ended in 1983. He retired in Wimbledon in 2000 and died in 2001.

Thanks to Dominic Carman's biography of his father George Carmen.

## **Chadwick, Roy (1893-1947) Aircraft Designer**

Roy Chadwick CBE MSc was born in 1893 at Farnworth, Lancashire, a fifth generation of engineers. He became probably Britain's greatest aircraft designer.

He joined British Westinghouse, later Metropolitan-Vickers, in 1907 as a trainee draftsman and studied at Manchester College of Technology, later UMIST. In 1911 he moved to AV Roe & Company, generally known as AVROs, whose main factory was at Newton Heath. He studied at the Manchester Institute of Science and Technology. He moved to the research works at Hamble, Southampton and became Alliott (later Sir) Verdon Roe's Personal Assistant and Chief Designer in 1917 at the age of 24, later Technical Director. After designing wooden aircraft up to 1925, he designed many metal aircraft including the Anson, Manchester, Lancaster, Lincoln, Shackleton, and at Ringway the York, and the prototype of the Vulcan. He invented the idea of introducing nitrogen into the top of fuel tanks to prevent explosions, first installed in the Avro Lincoln.

In 1921 he married Mary Gommersall of Urmston and they returned north in 1928. Much of his later work was done at Chadderton and from 1929 he lived at Kingsley, Gilbert Road, Hale until his death. In 1943 he was awarded the CBE for his work but was killed just after take-off from Woodford on a test flight to fly over the Lake District in 1947.

Thanks to Harald Penrose's book *Architect of Wings* for details of Roy Chadwick, and to Roy's daughter Margaret Dove for her website <http://roychadwick.com>.

## **Cherry, Helen (1915-2001) Actress**

Helen Mary Cherry was born in Worsley in 1915, the daughter of Captain, later Major, John William Cherry and Annie Nall. She was educated at Harrogate, went to the Manchester Art School and trained as a commercial artist.

However, she won a part as an extra in a Christmas musical and went on to work in repertory in Rusholme, Chester and Altrincham for two years. She was a member of the Altrincham Garrick for a short period in the 1930s and probably lived briefly at her parents' house Hylcroft, 31 Langham Road, Bowdon at that time.

Helen first began in the theatre as an extra in 1938 and then moved to London in 1940. She joined Robert Atkin's open-air Shakespearian Company in 1942. She became a classical actress and was renowned for her Shakespearean work throughout the 1940s and 50s in London and Stratford. She appeared with Trevor Howard in 1944 and in 1945 Helen married Trevor who died in 1988; there were no children.

In the 1960s Helen was active in the Ban-the-Bomb demonstrations. She occasionally worked on stage in the 1960s and 70s and her last appearance was in 1982. She also made several films from the 1960s to 1980s and was in several television programmes such as *The Professionals*. Helen continued working on TV until 1990 and died in September 2001.

## Coward, TA (1867-1933) Ornithologist

Thomas Alfred Coward MSc FZS, was born at 8 Higher Downs, Dunham Massey (now Altrincham) in 1867 and was still living there in 1910. His parents were Thomas and Sarah who were resident at 8 Higher Downs from 1858 to 1895, with grandparents Edward and Elizabeth at number 7. His older siblings were Charles, Alice and Annie.

Thomas was educated at Brooklands School, Sale and at Owens College (now Manchester University). He attended Bowdon Downs Congregational Church and was a member of the Bowdon Literary and Scientific Club from 1895. In 1901 his profession was stated to be an agent/merchant and at that time he was working for his father's calico bleaching and finishing firm.

In the early 1900s the firm was taken over and he retired to become an internationally recognised ornithologist who wrote extensively on nature, on local history and on Cheshire. The first of his ten publications was *The Birds of Cheshire* in 1900, at which time he was living at Tryfan, Warwick Road, Hale. He later wrote *Picturesque Cheshire*, *The Vertebrate Fauna of Cheshire*, *The Birds of the British Isles and their Eggs*, *Bird Haunts and Nature Memories*, *Life of the Wayside and Woodland*, *Bird Life at Home and Abroad*, *Bird and Other Nature Problems*, *Cheshire – Traditions and History*, and *The Mammalian Fauna of Cheshire*.

During the 1914-18 War he was Acting Keeper of the Manchester Museum and was variously Chairman and President of the Altrincham and District Natural History and Literary Society. He was also an amateur astronomer and owned his own telescope.

He married Mary Milne in 1904 and died in Bowdon in 1933. When he died, public subscriptions were raised to buy and preserve Cotterill Clough near Castle Mill, Ringway as a Nature Reserve. All of his field notes are archived at in the Department of Zoology at Oxford.

Thanks to Knutsford Ornithological Society for details of TA Coward.



There is a Blue Plaque to Thomas Coward at Brentwood Villa, 6 Grange Road, Bowdon where he lived from 1902 to 1933.

## Crossley Brothers, Engineers

**Francis William Crossley** was born in County Antrim in 1839 of a Protestant Huguenot family, and came to England in the mid-1860s with his family.

At the age of 18 Francis started training as an apprentice engineer in Newcastle-upon-Tyne. His younger brother William John, who was born in 1844, joined him in England in 1867. With loans from relatives, they acquired an existing business in Great Marlborough Street, Manchester and set up as Crossley Brothers, making machinery for producing India rubber and flax. The business almost failed when for five years they were lodging at 1 Bell Place, 24 Stamford Road, Bowdon, the home of local builder Martin Stone (who later built Altrincham Town Hall).

Francis married Canadian-born Emily Kerr at St. Margaret's Church in 1871 and they set up home



at Oaklands, Langham Road, Bowdon and had five children. By 1874 Francis and Emily had moved to Fairlie on Cavendish Road, Bowdon, now an annex to Altrincham Girls' Grammar School, and were there in 1890.

In 1876 the Crossley brothers secured rights to sell the Otto-Langden four-stroke gas engine and by 1881 they were employing about 300 men. They later produced their own engine and motor designs, leading to the establishment of Crossley Motors in 1910. Francis and his family attended Bowdon Downs Congregational Church and became teetotal, Francis donating to charity his personal share of the profits from the sales of Crossley engines to the likes of breweries, public houses and music halls. The business was very successful and eventually moved to making buses.

The local philanthropic work of Francis and Emily included the building and managing of two 'Preventative and Rescue Homes' for destitute girls on Ashley Road, Hale. One is the former Conservative Club at number 239 and the other became the UDC offices, now demolished for the Ashley Hotel and supermarket. Francis and Emily left Altrincham to live among the poor at Star Hall, Ancoats, a former music hall which they rebuilt as a hostel and early form of religious community centre. It was taken over by the Salvation Army to whom Francis was a great benefactor.

Francis died in 1897 and left over £600,000. He is buried in Philips Park Cemetery, Manchester and the following year Emily came to live in a cottage at 38 Henry Street, now Oak Road, Hale and possibly funded the setting up of the Oak Road Methodist Church. She moved to Frodsham in 1904 where William had founded a sanatorium in 1903. She died in Switzerland and left £164,000.

**William John Crossley**, who ran the business side of Crossley Motors, lived at Glenfield, Dunham Road, Dunham Massey. William was a founder-director of the Manchester Ship Canal and the first Liberal MP for Altrincham in 1906, knighted in 1909 and dying in 1911.

He contributed significantly to St. Anne's Home, Dunham Massey, financing a new wing in 1886. He also built a daughter church to St. Johns in Pownall Street, Altrincham. In 1901 he founded a tuberculosis sanatorium in Liverpool and in 1905 one at Delamere. William's name is on a 1908 memorial foundation stone of Altrincham Baptist Church, Hale Road. William's son Kenneth (also knighted) later ran the business and carried out missionary work, including in India. All of the Crossleys donated much to charity, including to the now demolished Dome Chapel, Bowdon.

Thanks to Sue Nichols & Bernard Champness for details of the Crossley Brothers.

## **Dawkins, William Boyd (1837-1929) Engineering Geologist**

Professor Sir William Boyd Dawkins MA FRS FGS FSA was a geologist, paleontologist and antiquary. He was born on 26 December 1837 at Buttington Vicarage in Welshpool, Montgomeryshire, the son of Rev. Richard Dawkins.

He went to Rossall School, Fleetwood and then to Jesus College Cambridge where he studied both classics and natural science, graduating in 1860 and became a geologist. As an undergraduate he began the excavation of the hyena den at Wookey Hole, Wells, Somerset. In 1861 he was appointed to the



Geological Survey of Great Britain and worked from the Jermyn Street Museum in London. He was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society in 1866.

He was appointed curator of the natural history collections at the Manchester Museum in 1869 and became the first Professor of Geology at Owens College (then in Quay Street later becoming the Victoria University of Manchester in Oxford Road) from 1872 until his retirement in 1909 aged 72, and was knighted in 1919. He became Britain's first Engineering Geologist and was involved in the coal industry, water-supply projects and Edward Watkin's abortive Channel Tunnel project of 1880. He produced the geological report of the feasibility of the Manchester Ship Canal. He continued to take an interest in cave remains and in 1874 found tools used for mining at Alderley Edge, probably from the Bronze Age.

About 1900 he excavated St. Beuno's Cave at Tremeirion in Denbighshire where he found the bones of the bear, fox, horse, lion, mammoth, spotted hyena, wild cat, wolf, and woolly rhinoceros, as well as traces of human habitation from around 30,000 to 40,000 BC including flint scrapers and other tools.

William Boyd Dawkins was founder and first president of the Lancashire and Cheshire Antiquarian Society when it was formed in 1883, and was a Justice of the Peace for 25 years. He published many books including several on the Isle of Man and several hundred papers. He wrote *Cave Hunting* (1874) and *Early Man in Britain* (1880), and was co-author of *The British Pleistocene Mammalia* (1866-1912).

In 1866 he married Frances Evans in Dartford, Kent and in 1881 they were living at 11 Norman Road, Rusholme, Manchester. They had a daughter Ella Selina who married the Rev. Samuel Taylor. Sir William's wife died in 1921 and in 1922 he married Mary, widow of Hubert Congreve, both of whom had been close friends of the family. Sir William died on 15 January 1929 at his home Richmond Lodge, Richmond Hill, Richmond Road, Bowdon where his widow had lived as Mary Congreve and she was still living there in 1951. She was always known as Lady Boyd Dawkins, her husband having adopted Boyd as part of his surname. Lady Mary died in 1954 aged 90.

Some of William's possessions are in the Buxton Museum where the Boyd Dawkins Room is dedicated to his life and that of Dr. J Wilfred Jackson. Sir William had opened the museum in 1928 and when he died in 1929 his widow Lady Mary followed his wishes and donated his library, manuscripts and correspondence to the museum. The room also includes some of his pictures, ornaments and furniture from his study, together with antiquities and fossils. His notebooks and diaries are at the John Rylands Library, Manchester and there is an archaeological collection in the Manchester Museum and the British Museum. Manchester City Art Gallery, where he was on the committee for 17 years, has some of his furniture, paintings and enamels. Some papers are also in Jesus College Oxford, and Wells Museum.

Thanks to Dr. J Wilfred Jackson's biography of William Boyd Dawkins.

## **Donegan, Lonnie (1931-2002) Skiffle Musician**

Anthony James Donegan was born in Glasgow in 1931. He was the first British Pop Superstar, became leader of Skiffle in the UK in the early 1950s, and was known as the King or Sultan of Skiffle. Skiffle is music with jazz, blues, folk and roots influences, usually using home-made instruments such as a washboard.

Lonnie's father was a professional violinist and the family moved to East London in 1933, hence Lonnie's Cockney accent. In 1939 he and his mother were evacuated to his aunt, Grace Baxter, in Oldfield Brow, Altrincham. Her husband Tom Baxter became mayor of Altrincham in 1954. Lonnie attended St. Ambrose College at its original Oakleigh building on the Dunham Road until 1946 when the family returned to London. He learned the guitar in the early 1940s and by the end of the 1940s was playing in clubs. He was invited to join Chris Barber's traditional jazz band and learned the banjo.

He was called up for National Service in 1949 and posted to Vienna where he mixed with American troops which gave him opportunities to hear American records and their forces radio network. In 1952 he formed the Tony Donegan Jazz Band, influenced by Huddie Ledbetter who was known as Lead Belly. He soon took the name 'Lonnie' from the blues musician Lonnie Johnson. In 1953 he sang and played guitar and banjo with Chris Barber in the Ken Colyer's Jazzmen, and in intervals provided a skiffle break with a cheap guitar, a washboard and a tea-chest double bass.

In 1954 he recorded the hit 'Rock Island Line' which was in the top 10 in the UK and the USA. He had three No. 1s including 'My Old Man's a Dustman' in 1960 and 'Putting on the Style'. Lonnie released hits in the UK and the USA until the arrival of Little Richard, Elvis Presley and the Beatles in 1962.

He continued to record in the 1960s and early 70s and in 1976 went to live in remote Lake Tahoe in the Sierra Nevada until he had a heart attack. After surgery he returned to work for a while but spent much of his time at his house in Malaga. He needed more surgery in the 1990s and suffered a second heart attack. In 2000 he recorded a last album with Van Morrison in Belfast and received an MBE. He married three times and had seven children. In 2002 after further heart surgery he went on a tour of the UK but died at Peterborough aged 71 after a two-hour performance at Nottingham.

## **Dore, Norman (1906-1997) Historian**

Robert Norman Dore was born in Cardiff in 1906 and educated at Cardiff High School where he excelled at history and sport. In 1925 won an Open History Scholarship to Trinity College Oxford, graduating in 1929.

From then until 1941 he was Senior History Master at Llandovery College in South Wales and then went into the Royal Airforce. In 1946 he became Senior History Master at Altrincham Grammar School for Boys (where he taught the author) until his retirement in 1969.

In 1948 he married Nancy Cole and they had two sons, John and Giles. In 1949 he was elected to the Lancashire and Cheshire Antiquarian Society, becoming a Council Member in 1957, Honorary Secretary 1958 to 1963, and President from 1964 to 1966 and 1988 to 1990. Together with **Don Bayliss** he founded the Altrincham History Society in 1988.

Norman had a confident and powerful speaking voice and with this and his enthusiasm for his work, he was revered and kept complete command of his audience, whether pupils or adults. In the 1950s and 1960s he lectured in the extra-mural departments of Manchester and Liverpool Universities and to WEA groups. He was a fellow of the Royal Historical Society and President of the Altrincham History Society from 1989. He was an authority on the Civil War in Cheshire and broadcast on the radio on the Civil War in the Manchester Area. He was awarded an honorary MA

by Manchester University for his local history work.

He was also a gifted writer and wrote a *History of Altrincham Grammar School for Boys* (1962), *The Civil Wars in Cheshire* (1966), *The Great Civil War in the Manchester Area* (1972), *A History of Hale, Cheshire* (1972), and *Cheshire* (1976) in the Batsford series on Northern Counties. His greatest work however was the editing of the two volumes of *The Letter Books of Sir William Brereton*, the 17th century parliamentary general of Handforth Hall, for the Lancashire and Cheshire Record Society. The Letter Books cover just one year of the siege of Chester 1645-46 and contain copies of over 1200 letters, accounts, minutes and lists in shorthand and cipher. Norman spent over 30 years on the work and the first volume was published in 1984 and the second in 1990.

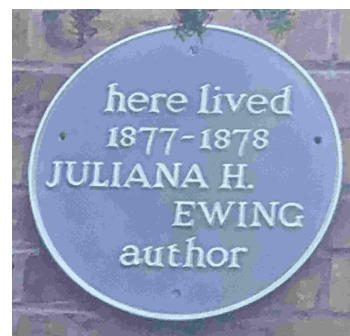
Along with **Alfred Tarbolton**, Norman was responsible for depositing the Hale Urban District Council records at the Chester Record Office. He always retained his enthusiasm for cricket and was a member of Ashley Cricket Club. He was still researching and lecturing when he died in 1997 aged 90.

Thanks to Professor John Morrill's obituary of Norman Dore in the Lancashire and Cheshire Antiquarian.

## Ewing, Juliana (1841-1885) Author

Juliana Horatia Ewing Orr was born in 1841 in Sheffield and died in 1885. She was the second of the ten children of the Reverend Arthur and Margaret Gatty.

She wrote the Nursery Magazines from about 1856 and her first book appeared in 1862 as *Melchior's Dream & Other Tales*. One of her well-known stories was *Jackanapes* (1884). Her mother started the *Aunt Judy's Magazine* and editorship continued under Juliana after the death of her mother.



In 1867 she married Major Alexander Ewing and they immediately sailed to Halifax, Nova Scotia where he had been posted. There is a Blue Plaque at Downs Villa, 14 Higher Downs where she lived briefly from 1877 to 1878.

## Fleming, Arthur (1881-1960) Radio Pioneer

Sir Arthur Percy Morris Fleming CBE was born in 1881 at Newport on the Isle of Wight where he died in 1960. He was an electrical engineer particularly involved in the manufacture of radar equipment in the 1914-18 War and later radio transmission.

Having trained in the USA, in 1902 he joined the British Westinghouse Company (later Metropolitan-Vickers), Trafford Park where he worked on transformer design and became Chief Engineer and Superintendent in 1913. During the 1914-18 War he did work on submarine-detection gear and for this work he was awarded a CBE in 1920.

In 1916 he was living at 133 Hale Road, Hale and moved to Highclere, 235 Hale Road in 1922.

As a result of his electronics work at Westinghouse he became a pioneer in the development of radio and in 1920 established 2ZY, the second British transmitting station to broadcast programs on a daily basis which it did until 1923, at Trafford Park. He had set up a receiving station in his attic in Hale and in November 1922 received a broadcast from Pittsburgh USA, which was passed to Trafford Park by land-line, and which was broadcast to the Greater Manchester area: the first public broadcast across the Atlantic.

From 1931 to 1954 he served as director of research and education at Metropolitan-Vickers. His work on radar helped to establish radar stations in this country by 1939 and he was knighted in 1945 for his war effort.

Some of his personal papers are kept at The National Archive for Electrical Science and Technology. Thanks to Philip Holland & Hale Civic Society for details of Arthur Fleming.

## **Fox, Adam (1847-1916)** **Property Developer**

Adam Fletcher Fox was born in 1847 at Quarry House, Gosforth near Holmrook in the Lake District, one of nine children of John Fox and Margaret Fletcher. He wanted to be a builder after watching Muncaster Castle being renovated but his parents didn't approve. However he apprenticed himself to a builder in Egremont for seven years (after the first year his parents relented and bought him a pony to help him get there instead of walking) but there was little work so he walked south, picking up work en route including making some pews at Cartmel Priory, ending up in Hale about 1871 looking for work as a joiner.



Adam got a job with Whipps painters on Hale Road bridge and lodged with the Reeces in Peel Causeway (Hale). He married Mary Reece (or Rees) in 1873 and they had three sons Ernest, Charles William and John Edward, all shown in the photo above. Ernest had a daughter Edith, and Charles had a daughter Margaret who married Neal Hyde, the brewer. Margaret and Neal had two sons Adam and Philip and a daughter Julia. John married Edith Holmes and they had daughters Margaret (Peg) and Barbara (Betty).

As well as an entrepreneur, Adam had a spirit of adventure which led him to spending three years in New York as a clerk of works on early skyscrapers.

Adam became a very successful builder himself. He first put up four large high-quality semis at the northern end of Victoria Road, Hale numbers 100-106 with access at the rear from Albert Road. He bought 1 and 3 Spring Road and the builders yard next door.

He purchased a large plot of land from the Harrop estate about 1905 facing south-west between Park Road, Hale and Harrop Road and built an estate of about 25 villas, each with a substantial Chief Rent. There were eight houses on the north-west side of Park Road north-east of Bower Road, eight houses on Park Avenue on the south side, and nine houses between Park Avenue,

Park Drive and Harrop Road, plus a tennis club. He also built Roxana and Frankwyn on Park Road opposite to Bower Road.

In 1901 he built his own house, Holmrook, in Heath Road from which he ran his business, and the whole of adjacent Seddon Road in 1909-11. Roseneath in Seddon Road was built for his eldest son Ernest who took over the business. The house had access to the workshops behind in Spring Road.

About 1901 Adam went on a world tour, visiting relations and friends in the USA, Australia and New Zealand. In New Zealand he met the long-serving Prime Minister of New Zealand, Richard Seddon who was born near St Helens, Lancashire. He and Adam had become friends about 27 years earlier when Adam had gone to New Zealand to arrange for the erection of a gravestone for his brother William who had been killed felling a tree. Richard Seddon died in office as Prime Minister in 1906 on the return leg of an official voyage to Australia. However in 1911 his widow Louisa and their daughters Mary and Rubi visited the Foxs and Hale Civic Society have a photograph of them all together outside Roseneath at the naming of Seddon Road.

Adam died at Mountain Ash, Ravensglass, Cumberland in 1916. He may have been distantly related to Fletcher Christian who was born in Cockermouth and famous for his part in the Mutiny on the Bounty.

Thanks to Margaret Hyde and Margaret Birchall for details of their grandfather Adam Fox.

## **Gaddum, John (1900-1965) Pharmacologist**

Professor Sir John Henry Gaddum was born at Butts Clough Farm in Hale on 31 March 1900, the eldest of six children of Phyllis Barrett and Henry Edwin Gaddum, whose forebears had come from Trieste.

The Gaddums were a local dynasty which made a fortune in textiles, specifically silk. They expanded the technology of the time but also developed liberal and social interests and became important scientific academics.

The family originated in Germany in the 16<sup>th</sup> century and came to England to found a cotton and silk empire in Manchester. The family name 'Gaddum' can be traced back to 1585 and was first recorded in 1604 in Velbert in the duchy of Berg between the Rhine and the Ruhr where a Louis im Gaddum lived. The name Gaddum appears to be related to the word garten (garden) and may in this case mean an enclosure, a homestead, or a farm. The local branch of the Gaddums eventually moved to Trieste, then in Austria but now Italy, and moved to Didsbury in 1848, then Bowdon in 1870. HT Gaddum built Oakley mansion on Green Walk in 1869 (up for sale at £12m in 2022). The Gaddum name is commemorated in a Bowdon road name.

John's father was a silk merchant who had lived at The Priory in Bowdon Vale and who also did much charitable work. His grandfather Henry Theodore Gaddum had purchased the Butts Clough estate in Hale Barns from the Leather family. John was educated at Miss JD Wallace's school at Belfield in West Road, Bowdon until 1905 and then moved to Langham Lea on Stamford Road, Bowdon when it took girls including Gaddum daughters. Other pupils at the school were **John Ireland**, the composer, and **Ronald Gow**, the dramatist.

John Gaddum was then educated at Moorland House School, Heswall, Cheshire, and from 1913 at



Rugby School. He won two leaving exhibitions and in 1919 went to Trinity College, Cambridge on an entrance scholarship for mathematics, and read medicine. He won a senior scholarship at Trinity and obtained second-class honours in Physiology. In 1922 he became a medical student at University College Hospital, London. In 1925 he applied for and won a post at the Wellcome Research Laboratories under JW Trevan, writing his first paper on the quantitative aspects of drug antagonism. From 1927 to 1933 he worked for Sir Henry Dale at the National Institute for Medical Research in Hampstead.

In 1929 John married Iris Mary Harmer, daughter of Sir Sidney Harmer and Laura Russell. In 1933 he accepted the Chair of Pharmacology at the University of Cairo. In 1935 he was appointed Professor of Pharmacology at University College London, and in 1938 he took the Chair of Pharmacology at the College of the Pharmaceutical Society, London. When the war broke out he worked at the Chemical Defence Research Station, Porton Down then later in the Army as a Lieutenant Colonel.

In 1942 he accepted the Chair of Materia Medica in the University of Edinburgh and built up an outstanding research department. In 1958 he became the Director of the Institute of Animal Physiology at the Babraham Institute, Cambridge. He became a Fellow of the Royal Society, was knighted and awarded an honorary LL.D at Edinburgh in 1964 and died in 1965.

The British Pharmacological Society commemorate the services of John Gaddum to pharmacology by awarding a medal and a prize about every two years for important contributions in the field of pharmacology.

## **Gow, Ronald (1897-1993) Film Pioneer**

Ronald Gow, film pioneer and dramatist, was born in Heaton Moor, Stockport in 1897. His parents were Anthony and Clara and his father became the manager of the Lancashire & Yorkshire Bank on Railway Street, Altrincham, later Barclays Bank.

The family lived over the bank from 1898 until 1909. Gow's sister Jenny was born in 1907. His father then managed the Lancashire & Yorkshire Bank branch next to Hale Railway crossings and the family lived at Oakleigh in Portland Road, Bowdon.

Gow first attended Culcheth Hall kindergarten (his report of 1904 is in Trafford Local Studies) and was then an original 1912 pupil at Altrincham County High School for Boys (later Altrincham Grammar School for Boys), remembered by Gow as a happy school under headmaster Saville Laver. In 1913 at AGS, Ronald was the first person to win the Bradbury Prize for 'Public Spirit' (donated by Judge Bradbury, the first Chairman of the Governors). It consisted of eight volumes of Dickens novels (donated to the AGS library by Anthony in 2014).

At AGS, Gow was friendly with Edward (Ted) James Horley who became Mayor of Altrincham in 1956. They were both good all-rounders, good sportsmen and both became house captains. At cricket Gow was praised for being a "*vigorous hitter...but without the persistent practice will never*



*lose the stiffness of his attitude.*" Ted Horley instigated the Old Altrinchamians Newsletter and became first General Secretary and Editor. Gow later became first President of the Old Boys.

While at the school Gow produced several films with Horley and used to get his films developed at the National Film Agency on Victoria Street, Manchester run by a Mr Stott. Stott sold Gow a Pathé Frères, Paris 35mm movie camera No. 803 for £100 (about £5,000 today), put in for repair but not claimed and formerly owned by a cameraman working for DW Griffiths, the pioneering American film director. Hollywood used this type of camera for its productions at the time.

While still a pupil at the school, in 1917 Gow was asked to make a publicity film for Lady Lily Haworth's War Supply Depot on Green Walk in Bowdon. The use of 35mm film by amateurs was unusual and may be the earliest in the UK.

Gow took a degree in chemistry at Manchester University, in the same building where Ernest Rutherford had split the atom in 1917. After a spell in the Army, in 1923 Laver persuaded Gow to return to the school as a teacher. Influenced by the fact that Laver had bought a 35mm kinematograph projector, the size used in the cinemas at the time, Gow agreed to teach there, offering science, history, English and Latin and anything else required. Gow's sister Jenny was the secretary to the headmaster at that time.

Gow's films were all celluloid and very inflammable and so for fire safety reasons they were projected from a purpose-built booth perched on the flat roof of the staff room through two holes cut into the assembly hall next door. The projector was powered by an arc lamp so that two people were required to operate it. John Williams was at the school at that time and remembered the first projectionist teacher Jack Chorley (who taught the author). John was later the assistant projectionist, on the arc lamp. Geoff Sutcliffe (who also taught the author) was the first pupil projectionist. Despite the danger of nitrate film there was never any problem with fires.

At the time the films were not thought to be particularly important, although fun but are now recognised as pioneering amateur work and of educational value. They were in black and white and were silent. One of Gow's first films was based on a sundew plant brought from a bog in Snowdonia and Gow filmed it absorbing a fly.

The first serious film made at school after Gow returned as a teacher was *People of the Axe*, filmed in 1926 at Swanage school camp in Dorset. The following year *People of the Lake* was filmed at the Westward Ho! camp in Devon. These were large productions with elaborate sets. Many props and scenery were made at the school and moved to the camp. All of these school films were written and directed by Gow and all exterior scenes were shot at the camps. Professor Sir William Boyd-Dawkins provided advice for the latter film which was shown at Altrincham Picture Theatre and well publicised in Britain and in the USA. It made a profit and was hired out to several schools. A copy was sold to the Scouting Association for hiring to scouting organisations around the world. The Film Society based in London reported that the films were of educational value and Gow was invited to give a lecture in Geneva.

The strong scouting element at the school was the theme of *The Man Who Changed His Mind* which was filmed the following June, again at Westward Ho! Part of this film was taken in Hale where the local fire engine was used. Robert Baden Powell gave the film his support and appears in a cameo role. The film was premiered at the Regal, Marble Arch with 1,000 scouts present. Because of its success it was distributed by the European Motion Picture Company.

In 1929 *The Glittering Sword*, a peace propaganda film, was embarked upon at the school camp at

Stoke Fleming in Devon. The film was a mammoth undertaking and a two-reeler. It was given a 'U' certificate by the British Board of Film Censors and a publicity pamphlet was printed by Altrincham printer Thomas Balshaw. The film was shown at Hale Cinema and the school became the official film distributor and made a profit. The Manchester Guardian described it as "*A notable production, acting delightful, photography clear and well judged.*"

In the 1920s, Gow belonged to the Garrick Theatre in Barrington Road, Altrincham which put on his plays. He was Chairman for 1927-28 and made an Honorary Life Member.

In 1930 Gow made a last film at the school called *The River Dart*, showing the river from its source to the sea in Devon.

Gow left the school in 1933. He had written a large number on one-acts and several full-length plays and in 1933 got his play *Gallows Glorious*, based on the life of slave John Brown, in the West End. The first night was staged at the Shaftesbury Theatre and was received with resounding notices but on its second night took only £30 of which Gow got 5%. Despite its lack of success financially, he decided to continue as a playwright.

In 1934 Gow received national acclaim for his adaptation of Salford-born Walter Greenwood's novel *Love on the Dole* in which Wendy Hiller (later OBE, Dame) took the lead. The play, about unemployment in Salford during the 1920s depression, went on stage in London and New York. Wendy was from Bramhall, Cheshire and a member of the Rusholme Repertory until *Love on the Dole* swept her to stardom. She met Ronald at the Gaiety Theatre, Manchester after Ronald had submitted the script of *Love on the Dole* to the Gaiety. The Gows married in 1937, following Ronald's several proposals and her final acceptance at the top of the Empire State Building.

Gow had to earn a living and so got a job as a scriptwriter at Pinewood Studios where he wrote six film scripts. Wendy was the star of the film *Lancashire Luck*, later published as a play. Gow and his wife eventually moved to their long-term home at 'The Spindles' in Beaconsfield where they had two children Anthony and Ann, and where he wrote or adapted about 30 stage plays, and was later involved in films and TV.

In 1995, a 44-minute film about Gow's life entitled *Ronald Gow, Film Pioneer, 1897-1993* was made by Douglas Rendell with Nick Dodson of Railfilms as director and narrator. Copies on tape and DVD are held by the Manchester Museum of Science & Industry. The film starts with the unveiling of the Blue Plaque by Anthony and Ann and included the unveiling of the Cinema100 plaque at the school in 1996. Gow at 95 was interviewed by Nick Dodson and excerpts from Gow's films were included. Doug is seen turning and panning the 35mm camera. Doug Rendell and family, members of Altrincham History Society committee and John Williams were present at the unveiling and there was a celebration lunch afterwards at Francs Restaurant.

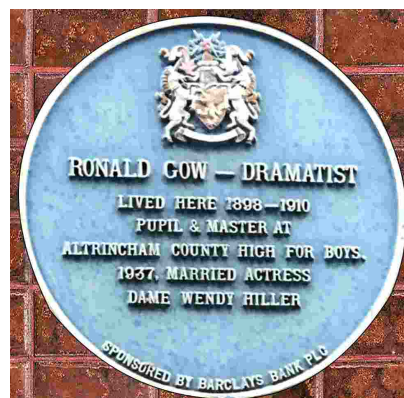
Gow had given the 35mm movie camera to local photographer and historian Douglas Rendell who in 1997 gave it to the Museum of Science & Industry in Manchester for their collection. The museum valued the camera at £25,000 at that time and it is displayed in full working order today. Ronald Gow died in 1993 and Wendy died in 2003. They were married for 56 years and are buried together in Radnage Church, Buckinghamshire.

When Hale Cinema closed in 1978, a number of reels of Gow's films were found in the cellar, having languished there for nearly 50 years, which Doug Rendell rescued. Many more of Gow's films were stored in his garage and garden shed. The ones saved have been restored and are under the guardianship of the North West Film Archive, and can be hired in digital format. The

North West Film Archive includes *The Altrincham & District War Hospital Supply Depot*, *The People of the Axe*, *The People of the Lake*, *The Glittering Sword* and *The Dart*.

There is a Blue Plaque to Gow on the wall leading to Goose Green opposite to Altrincham Hospital, dedicated by children Ann and Anthony in 1995.

Thanks to Anthony Gow and Carolyn Okell-Jones, and to Doug Rendel for Bowdon Sheaf 22 1993, and to Chris Hill for Altrincham History Society Occasional Paper 8.



## Grindon, Leopold Hartley (1818-1904) Botanist

Leopold Grindon was an amateur Victorian scientist with particular interest in botany and ornithology. He was the son of a Bristol solicitor and city coroner, and contributed to Bristol naturalists' activities. Although he never lived in the Altrincham area, he spent much time here and his writing about the area drew people from Manchester and around to explore and enjoy the natural beauty of the surroundings.

In 1838 aged 20 he moved to Manchester where he worked as a cashier for John Whittaker & Co. and by 1840 was a leading contributor to *Flora Mancuniensis*, a catalogue of flowering plants. He collected plant specimens now housed in Manchester Museum, and by 1852 he was lecturing at the medical school where he was well respected for his botanical knowledge. Among his many books was *Manchester Flora* (1859) in which he described Cotterill Clough as an outstanding spot for botanists. By then the railway had reached Altrincham enabling Manchester people to visit for days out. In 1860 Grindon formed the Manchester Field Naturalists' Society with **Joseph Sidebotham** and the Bollin valley in Hale became one of their preferred haunts.

In 1882 he published *Country Rambles* describing one of his favourite walks from Hale Station into the Bollin valley at Bankhall Lane following an ancient track running between Peel Causeway Farm, Ollerbarrow Farm, Barrow Farm and Ross Mill Farm to Sunbank Wood and Cotterill Clough, most of which can still be walked today. This proved a huge success and many Manchester people followed the route. He published about 30 scholarly books up to 1892 and in 1895 he was living in Cecil Street near the university for convenience. In 1893 Leo married Rosa Elverson in Chorlton. He died in 1904 aged 86 and Rosa donated the Shakespeare Window for the entrance hall to Manchester Central Library in his memory.

## Hartley, Doug (1921-1996) Racing Cyclist

Douglas K Hartley was born in 1921 in Chorlton, Manchester of parents who were shopkeepers. He joined the West Manchester Cyclists Touring Club in the late 1930s and then the Dukinfield Cycling Club and took part in time trials.

During the war he joined the RAF and later the Police and at that time a Doctor Abraham who examined Doug commented especially on his extraordinary physique. In 1942 he was declared the best all-round racing cyclist in Britain based on timed distance and endurance trials.

After the war he worked for Raleigh in Manchester and married Margaret Wain in 1949. That year they took over a cycle shop at 100 Ashley Road, Hale that had been opened about 1897 by Frank Jackson and later run by Herbert Jackson. Herbert later sold the business to Victor Bailes who

sold out to Doug in 1949.

Doug and Margaret lived over the shop initially, later at 79 Ashley Road and finally at Mere where the house backed on to the golf club, next to Doug's favourite hobby. Roy Goodwin joined him in 1950 and became his manager until the shop was sold in 1996 after Doug's death.

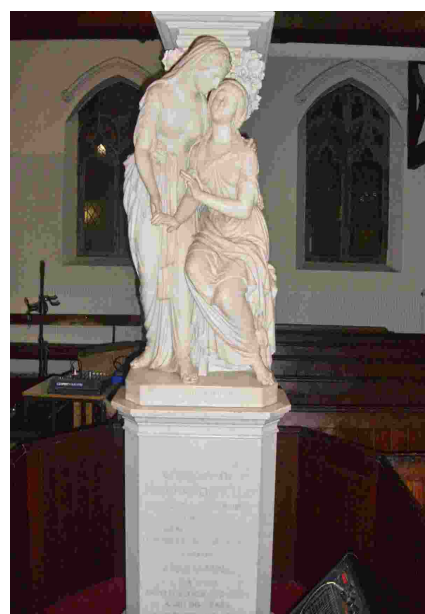
Doug was a friend of Reg Harris who built bikes after he retired from racing and Doug bought many from him in the 1950s and 60s as well as building his own. Doug expanded the shop by buying 104 Ashley Road and later 102 and replaced the 40 by 15 foot wooden workshop at the back of number 100 by a brick one. Local builder Kennedy rebuilt numbers 100 to 104 as flats in 2000. Seamons Cycling Club, Altrincham have a Doug Hartley trophy.

Thanks to Roy Goodwin & Margaret Hartley for details of Doug Hartley.

## Haworths (Yarn Merchants)

*The memorial sculpture  
to Jesse and Marianne Haworth  
in Bowdon Downs Congregational Church  
by J Warrington Wood (DM).*

The Haworths were a Cottonopolis dynasty who used their wealth to help the community, becoming involved in Manchester and leaving a lasting legacy in the cultural life. Some followed interests in football, art, and archaeology. Nonconformists and staunchly Liberal, the family were major philanthropists. This branch of the Haworths originated in Bolton but Ian Bryce in his *High Lawn, Bowdon* paper records another branch from Bury, also in the cotton industry, who came to live in Bowdon in 1896.



### James Dilworth & Son

The Dilworth textile firm is central to the Haworth story. James Dilworth was born in Preston in 1790 and became apprenticed in the Birley & Hornby cotton factor, gradually rising within the firm. In 1820 James decided to go into business himself as a yarn commission agent in Preston and in 1837 opened a warehouse in Manchester. In 1842 he closed the Preston operation to concentrate on the Manchester textile business. He died in 1854 and his son John died in 1858. The Howarths eventually took over the Dilworth business until it was dissolved in 1916.

### The Haworth Family Tree

Founder of the dynasty was James Haworth (1765-1834) born in Bolton, Lancashire. His son was Smalleshaw Haworth (1802-1858), and Smalleshaw's sons were Abraham (1830-1902) and Jesse (1835-1921). Abraham and Jesse began their careers in the firm of Dilworth and Son, yarn commission agents in Manchester. Abraham had a daughter Elizabeth Goodier, and four sons, Arthur Adlington, Alfred, John Goodier, and Frank Abraham. John married Euphemia, the daughter of Rev. Alexander Mackennal, the first Minister of Bowdon Downs Congregational Church. Arthur was later knighted for his work for the Liberal Party. Jesse funded archaeology excavation in Egypt and an Egyptian Collection at the Manchester Museum.

### **Abraham Haworth (1830-1902)**

Abraham was born in Bolton in 1830 and his parents moved to Salford when he was about 10. They became members of Hope Congregational Church and Abraham went to the Sunday School there. His parents were of humble origins but Abraham achieved a leading position among men of wealth and influence and was throughout his life a Nonconformist. John Dilworth of Salford, a member of the church at Hope, took on the young Abraham in his warehouse. From this foothold he rose to become a partner and eventually head of the firm of John Dilworth and Son, Cotton Merchants.

Abraham took a great interest in education and became a governor of Manchester Grammar School in 1872. In 1877 he was appointed School Treasurer and Chairman of the Estates & Building Committee, overseeing the erection of the New Building. This opened in 1880 and Abraham was a major contributor.

He continued to lead the Dilworth firm which became the biggest yarn merchant in the country. In 1861 he married Elizabeth, daughter of John Goodier a member of the Society of Friends. They had a daughter Elizabeth, and four sons Arthur, Alfred, John and Frank who all joined the Dilworth firm and became directors.

Abraham moved to Bowdon about 1870, became a deacon of Bowdon Downs Congregational Church and entered into a project to establish a Nonconformist theological college in Oxford, now Mansfield College. He became a staunch Liberal supporter but avoided being put up as an MP. The family lived at Hilston House on Green Walk, Bowdon where Abraham had a collection of watercolours some of which he left to Jesse. The building is now listed and converted to several apartments. Abraham died aged 72 at Hyères, a favourite nineteenth century Riviera resort just east of Toulon where his wife is also buried.

### **Jesse Haworth (1835-1921)**

Jesse, Abraham's younger brother, married Marianne. The couple were childless. Like his older brother, Jesse also became a partner in James Dilworth and Sons and was one of the longest established members of the Royal Exchange in Manchester. He was also a deacon of Bowdon Downs Church and lived at Woodside House, Green Walk, Bowdon, demolished in the 1960s.

Jesse was a keen Egyptologist and financed a number of expeditions to Egypt, amassing a collection of antiquities which he bequeathed to the Manchester Museum. His interest in Egyptology began in 1877 when Amelia Edwards published *A 1000 Miles Up the Nile*. He and his wife read the book and recreated Amelia Edwards' journey in 1882 which resulted in their supporting Egyptology at the Manchester Museum from 1887. He was also a director of Manchester United Football Club.

Abraham and Jesse became ardent art collectors and both loaned many paintings to the Royal Jubilee Exhibition in Manchester in 1887, including works by Holman Hunt, Millais and Palmer. Jesse also collected ceramics.

In 1886 Professor Sir William Flinders Petrie set up an archaeological body independent of the Egypt Exploration Fund, and Jesse offered to finance his excavations without conditions. In 1890 he presented his collection of Egyptian objects to Manchester Museum and in 1912 made a substantial contribution to the building fund to house the Egyptian collections. In recognition, the University of Manchester conferred upon him the honorary degree of Doctor of Law.

In 1919, he donated a further £10,000 to the museum and under the terms of his will bequeathed £30,000 and his private collection of Egyptian Antiquities. He also bequeathed a large collection of



watercolours, including works by Turner, to the Whitworth Gallery in Manchester.

A memorial to Jesse and Marianne Haworth of *The Sisters of Bethany* by Warrington sculptor John Warrington Wood, is in Bowdon Downs Church. The plinth includes the words "*In memory of Jesse Haworth, LLD, who died Oct. 23<sup>rd</sup> 1920 aged 83 years, Deacon of the Downs Church 1876-1892, and of Marianne, his wife, who died Feb. 12<sup>th</sup> 1937 aged 96 years, Deaconess 1891-1937.*"

### **Sir Arthur Adlington Haworth (1865-1944)**

Abraham's son Arthur Adlington was born in Eccles, Lancashire and educated at Rugby School. In 1891 he married Lily Rigby, the daughter of John Rigby, a cotton merchant of Altrincham, and they had three children.

Arthur also joined the Dilworth firm and became chairman of the Manchester Royal Cotton Exchange. An interest in politics and public service led him to local government and he became a member of the first Bowdon Urban District Council in 1894.

Later he became involved in national politics and represented South Manchester for the Liberal Party from 1906 to 1912. In 1911 he was created 1st Baronet Haworth of Dunham Massey for his services to the Liberal Party. He held the office of Junior Lord of the Treasury in 1912 and chairman of Mansfield College, Oxford. He was a JP for Cheshire and Shropshire and lived at Normanby on Bonville Road, now demolished.

Arthur was active in the Congregational Church and in 1915 became Chairman of the Congregational Union of England and Wales. He took a leading role in the NSPCC and commanded the Altrincham Battalion of the Cheshire Volunteers. He died in 1944 and his eldest son inherited the baronetcy to become Sir Arthur Geoffrey Haworth.

### **Lady Lily Haworth(1864-1952)**

Lady Haworth, wife of Sir Arthur, was well connected to the local society of the area through her father, John Rigby. She was a JP for Lancashire, a supporter of the Liberal Party, and President of the Altrincham and Bowdon Women's Liberal Association. Through these connections and with family friends, she formed the Bowdon War Hospital Supply Depot on Green Walk, opened by the Countess of Stamford in 1915. She also funded the establishment of Oldfield Brow Congregational Church in 1925.

### **Sir Arthur Geoffrey Haworth (1896-1987)**

The title passed from Arthur Adlington, the first baron, to his son Arthur Geoffrey (known as Geoffrey) and then to Geoffrey's son Philip. Geoffrey married Emily Dorothea Gaddum of the Bowdon textile family by the Bishop of Chester at Bowdon Parish Church in 1926. He served in the army in WWI and then graduated from New College, Oxford and became a JP for Cheshire. In 1931 Geoffrey decided to leave the cotton trade and bought land in Peover near Knutsford. In 1933 and in his 40s, he became a full-time farmer attending farming college. He became chairman of the Hallé Orchestra under conductor John Barbirolli. Geoffrey's son Philip was also a retired farmer, originally in East Anglia then assisting his father at Free Green Farm, Peover. Philip and his wife Joan opened their two-acre garden here twice a year for charity. They had five children. Joan died in 2017 and Philip in 2019.

## **Hibbert Ware, Samuel (1782-1848) Scientist**

Titus Hibbert was a prosperous Manchester linen merchant and took his son Samuel into

partnership in 1771. In 1780 Samuel married Sarah Ware, the daughter of a Dublin soldier who had inherited an estate, which included Partington Farm and which is still in Wicker Lane, Hale Barns next to the Bulls Head. From the outbuildings of this farm across the road, The Ivies was built which is now the vicarage of All Saints Church.

In 1782 Samuel II was born in Chorlton. He was educated in Manchester, studied medicine in Edinburgh where he gained an MD and settled there in 1815, entering into a variety of archaeological and scientific investigations. Samuel II married Sarah Crompton in 1804 and they had a daughter Sarah Hibbert. Samuel II became a friend of Sir Walter Scott who probably visited Samuel's homes in Edinburgh and York. He wrote several books and numerous papers and is regarded as an Antiquary and Geologist. He married three times and finally retired in 1844 to The Ivies, Wicker Lane, Hale Barns.

He was a prolific writer, researched and wrote about the history of the Manchester including his magnum opus *A History of the Foundations in Manchester of Christ Church College, Chethams Hospital and the Free Grammar School* and a history of the Altrincham area.

Captain Edward Jones sketched and measured the tithe barn in Hale Barns for him, which measured 87 feet by 19 feet. Samuel was a trustee of the Cross Street Chapel, Manchester and died in 1848. He had six children and the youngest, Titus Hibbert Ware II (1810 to 1890) who lived in Stamford Road, Bowdon, was a barrister in Manchester and is buried in Bowdon churchyard.

In 1868 Titus married Mary Stewart who wrote several novels such as *The Old Tithebarn* written in 1880 and in 1882 wrote *The Life and Correspondence of Samuel Hibbert-Ware*. In 1869 they had a son William Augustine who was living in St. Margaret's Road, Bowdon in 1894 and died at 39 in 1908. There are several thousand archived papers of these and other related Hibbert Wares at the John Rylands Library in Manchester, dated from 1770 to 1880.

## **Ingham, Alfred (1849-1932) Newspaper Manager & Historian**

Alfred Ingham FRHS was born in Illingworth, Yorkshire in 1849 and became a journalist. By 1871 he lived at 4 Alfred Street, Broughton, Lancs as a shorthand clerk in chemistry. In 1881 Alfred was at 65, George Street, Altrincham as a local newspaper manager with his wife and five children. By 1892, Kelly's directory cites this address as the offices of the Altrincham & Bowdon Guardian which later moved to 71 George Street. By 1891 he had moved his family to 84 George Street where he described himself as a bookseller, stationer, publisher and author. In 1896, 84 George Street was described as the location of the 'Altrincham Divisional Chronicle'. By 1901 Alfred was living at 6 Norman's Place, Altrincham but then 13 Framingham Road, Sale in 1911. He published *The Altrincham Advertiser* and in 1878 wrote *Altrincham and Bowdon, with Historical Reminiscences of Ashton-on-Mersey, Sale and Surrounding Townships*, illustrated with engravings. He died 14 May 1932 and is buried in Brookland's cemetery.

## **Ireland, John (1879-1962) Composer**

Alexander Ireland was a newspaperman who published the *Manchester Examiner & Times* and was still editor at age 70. He was born in Scotland 1811 and in 1870 was living at Inglewood on St. Margaret's Road, Bowdon, previously living at Oak Terrace in Stamford Road, Bowdon in 1861 (Deposed Hungarian President Louis Kossuth lodged with him in the 1860s).

Alexander was a founder of the literary Roundabout Club in Bowdon and had a personal library of 20,000 books. He married Annie and their son Dr. John Nicholson Ireland was born in 1880 at Inglewood where there is a plaque to him on the gatepost. John's parents had four other children and the parents died in 1893/4.

John attended Leeds Grammar School for a while and from 1893 at age 14 he studied piano and organ at the Royal College of Music in London. He shared a lodging with his sister in London and in 1898 moved to Chelsea where he married Dorothy Phillips in 1927 but the marriage was short-lived. In 1938 he moved to Guernsey just before it was invaded, when he returned to London.

He was a composer, organist, pianist and teacher and produced vocal, piano, chamber and orchestral work. At the RCM he taught composition, one of his pupils being Benjamin Britten. He was awarded a doctorate in 1932. He also wrote the score for the 1946 film *The Overlanders* concerning a cattle drive across Australia when there was a threat of Japanese invasion. In 1953 he moved to Sussex where he died in 1962 aged 83. The John Ireland Society was formed in 1960 and is still active.

## **Jackson, Robert (1915-1969) Naturalist**

Robert Jackson was born in Knutsford in 1915. Following a childhood as an enthusiast for anything to do with animals and early training in water garden management, he set up his first business breeding and selling tropical fish in Ashley.

As the business expanded he moved first in 1946 to Park Avenue, Timperley and then in 1952 to Holly Bank on the corner of Grove Lane and Delahays Road, Hale. Holly Bank had been used to house Belgian refugees during the war and had been two cottages. By this time the business, Robert Jackson (Naturalists) Ltd, had developed to include not just the large scale breeding of tropical fish but also the importation of a wide variety of animals for the increasing number of zoos throughout the British Isles.

The outbuildings and grounds of Holly Bank were adapted for their new purpose. Outdoor pools for cold-water fish and greenhouses for the breeding of tropical fish were built. Locals soon became accustomed to the chirping of frogs or even the occasional lizard that had escaped to their garden. A second business, Zoological Exhibitions, also had its base at Holly Bank. Whilst initially this concentrated on running small seasonal aquaria in various parts of Britain, it did form the foundation for the fulfillment of Robert Jackson's lifelong ambition, to own and run a zoo.

In 1962 this dream came to fruition when in November of that year he moved with his wife and three sons to Colwyn Bay, North Wales where he founded the Welsh Mountain Zoo. Holly Bank was demolished that year. Although running the zoo left little spare time, what was available was spent pursuing his other passion, angling.

Sadly in May 1969 he was killed by a falling tree while fishing in the River Elwy in Denbighshire. The family continued running the zoo and the long-term future of Robert Jackson's dream was ensured when, in 1983, the family passed ownership to the newly formed charity the Zoological Society of Wales. Robert's three sons Tony, Chris and Nick continued as directors of the zoo. Mrs. Margaret Jackson retired and became President of the Society.

Thanks to Nick Jackson for the details of his father Robert Jackson.

## Johnson, Hewlett (1874-1966) Dean

Dr Hewlett Johnson was born in Broughton, Salford in 1874, the son of Charles Johnson and Rosa Hewlett. His father owned Johnson & Hobbs, Wire Manufacturers. Up to age 12 he was educated at home, then in 1886 he attended King Edward Grammar School, Macclesfield where he was awarded the Divinity Prize in 1889 and 1890.

When he was 16 he entered Owens College, Victoria University, Manchester where he gained a BSc in science and was awarded the Geological Prize in 1894, studying under Professor **William Boyd Dawkins**. Hewlett had intended to become a missionary like his two sisters but in 1895 his father arranged for him to work for three years as an apprentice at Ashbury Carriage Works in Openshaw making rolling stock. He trained as an engineer and became an associate member of the Institute of Civil Engineers in 1898.

In 1900 he went up to Wycliffe Hall, Oxford and then three years at Wadham College from 1901 and graduated with a Theology degree in 1904, following in the footsteps of his grandfather Alfred Hewlett. In the vacations he helped at Ancoats Lads' Club in Manchester and there met Mary Taylor and they married in 1903. He was ordained as a deacon and became curate of St Margaret's Church (then in Dunham, now Altrincham) in 1905 then vicar in 1908. He was well known for his left-wing views but was well respected by all for his hard work, including trying to get improvements to Altrincham's housing conditions.

By 1910 Hewlett described himself as a socialist and during WW1 was rejected as a chaplain since he did not fully support the war in his sermons. However, he became chaplain to a prisoner-of-war camp in Sinderland and continued to support local political activities. Mary worked in the Cheshire Red Cross and became a local commander. In 1919 he was made an Honorary Canon of Chester Cathedral and Rural Dean of Bowdon in 1922. He had ambitions to make St. Margaret's a major Anglican centre and plans were drawn up to extend the church at the west end and included cloisters on the north side. Building work was well on when funds ran out in 1923 when the benefactor, Mary Grafton, died and the extension remains unfinished today.

He was appointed Dean of Manchester Cathedral in 1924 and Dean of Canterbury in 1931, the year of Mary's death, where he became known as The Red Dean which also went with his ruddy complexion. He travelled in Europe, Russia, Poland, China, Cuba and the USA and lectured and wrote widely on those countries. He published *The Socialist Sixth of the World* in 1939 and received the Stalin Peace Prize in 1951. He became chairman of the *Daily Worker*. He retired in 1963 at the age of 89 and died in 1966 just after completing his autobiography *Searching for Light*.

Thanks to Colin Graham and George Lee for details and photo of Hewlett Johnson.



## Keller, Rudolf Ernst (1920-2014) Linguist

Rudolf Ernst Keller was born in a rural village in Winterthur, Switzerland in 1920 and became the Henry Simon Professor of German Language and Medieval German Literature at the University of Manchester. He studied English and German linguistics at the University of Zurich completing his doctorate in 1944. During the war he was a teacher at the *Gymnasium* in Winterthur and attended a language school in Lausanne, but his ambition was always to have an academic career, and when the war ended he came to England in 1946 to take up a post as a temporary lecturer at the University of Manchester, where he studied for his MA.

Within days of his arrival in England, he met Ivy Sparrow, in London where she worked at the Ministry of Education, and after a visit to Switzerland that summer they married in March 1947, and she moved to Manchester with him. At that stage it was possible that they would eventually return to Switzerland, but his subsequent appointments as assistant lecturer at Royal Holloway Collage in 1949, and then as senior lecturer in 1952 and later professor back in Manchester, meant that they made their permanent home in England, first in Withington, and in retirement in Hale, Altrincham. Their daughter Elizabeth was born in Egham in 1951 and Rosemary in Withington in 1955. In March 1960, the year he was appointed a Professor, he became a British citizen.

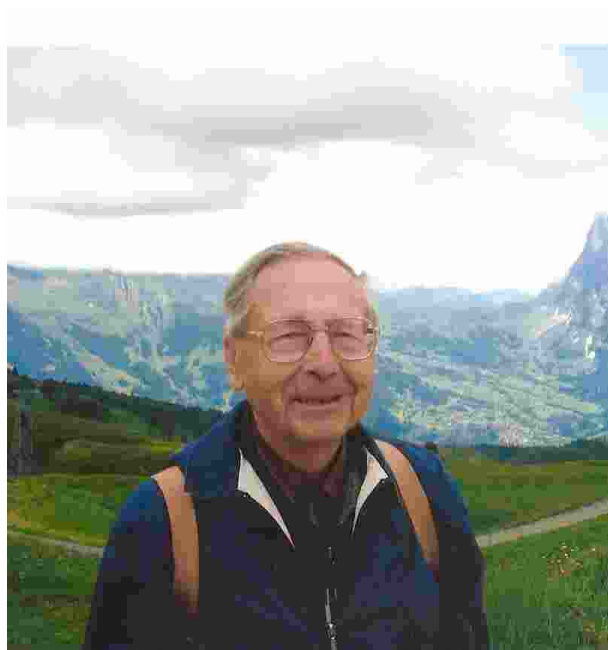
His time in Manchester coincided with a period of university expansion, and the German department was one of the largest and most successful in the country. Many of his colleagues subsequently became professors in other British universities, and his administrative skills led him to become Dean of the Faculty of Arts (1968-70) and Pro-Vice-Chancellor (1976-79).

He was a pioneer in the development of modern linguistic theory, applying this to his work on the modern German language and his study of German dialects and their history. This was recognised by his appointment as a Corresponding Member of the Institut für Deutsche Sprache in Mannheim, where he spent a term in 1979, and in 1981 the Goethe Institute awarded him the Goethe Medal for his positive contribution to the "deepening of a lively and fruitful dialogue between Great Britain and the Federal Republic of Germany."

His main publications are: *German Dialects: Phonology & Morphology* (Manchester U.P.1961), and *The German Language* (London, Faber & Faber, 1978).

Ruedi loved history and travelling, and, once he had a car in the 1960s, the family explored Europe en route to visiting his parents in Switzerland. In retirement he and Ivy enjoyed travelling more widely, particularly to Greece, which inspired him to teach himself modern Greek. While visiting Elizabeth and her family, temporarily in the US in 1990, he was particularly thrilled to visit the canyons of the American south west.

He spent several years devotedly caring for Ivy who suffered from dementia, but after her death in 2007, he went travelling again, going on cruises to the Black Sea, the Baltic and Egypt, accompanied by Rosemary and her husband. An outstanding visit for him was to Troy, where he



found that Homer was right – it was windy.

At home he enjoyed gardening, working a vegetable plot reminiscent of the one he had helped his father with as a child, and making jams and jellies which he loved to share with his family. He enjoyed seeing his two grandsons grow and progress to university, and to the end of his life he retained a lively and critical interest in the University of Manchester, politics and world events.

Rudolf Keller died in Altrincham in 2014 at the age of 94.

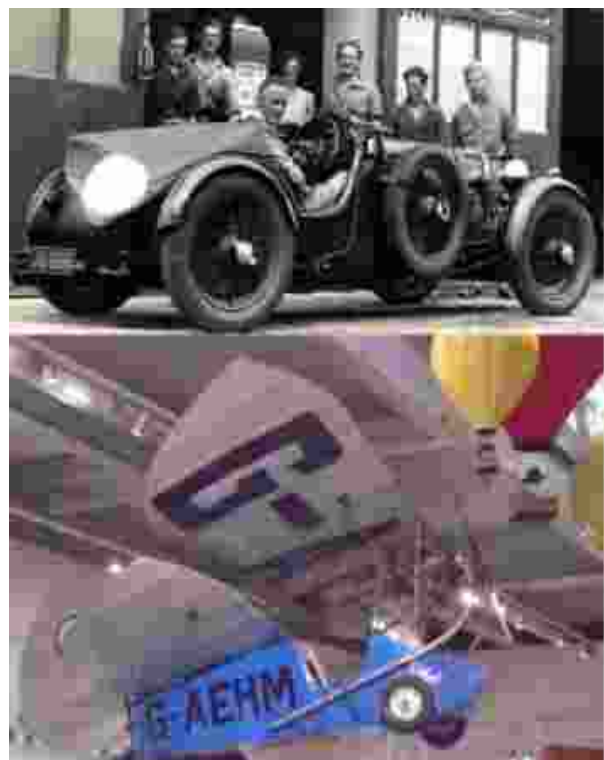
## **Killick, Harold Durant (1877-1966) Scouter**

Harry Killick was the son of Thomas William Killick, an East India merchant, magistrate and local historian who lived at Southfield, Richmond Road, Bowdon from the late nineteenth century to 1914. Harry, born in 1897, was one of nine children, and went to Bowdon College on South Downs Road. Harry was said to have been a member of the Lancashire Aero Club (who have lost early membership records in a fire) in the 1930s and 40s and was a friend of **John Leeming** and **Ronald Gow**.

He flew occasionally at A V Roe's Woodford Aerodrome and did some circus flying. In the 1920s and 30s he built racing cars in the Southfield coach house on Langham Road, and later in farm buildings at Ashley Heath, now offices. In 1935 he built a Flying Flea at his Ashley Heath garage from a French kit at a cost of £25 for the bodywork, but probably never flew it. The Flying Flea had two wings but no tail-plane, just a rudder, was very unstable without aerolons and was later banned by the Air Ministry. Harry and scouts paraded it around Hale and Altrincham with its engine running as part of the VE Day celebrations. He also built a helicopter in his back garden I am told.

Harry, who had a reputation for eccentricity, took part in the scouting movement all of his life and was always to be seen in shorts and a flying helmet and, in later life, in a kilt in celebration of his Scottish ancestry. During the war he was scoutmaster at Altrincham Preparatory School and assistant scoutmaster with the 3rd Altrincham Scouts at Altrincham Grammar School where he was known as Albatross, with Scoutmaster Geoff Sutcliffe as Little Squirrel. It is said that he once lost his false teeth in the snow and had the scouts searching for them.

He told the scouts one tale of flying so low that his wheels touched a hedge, but fortunately the tail touched telephone wires and brought him level again. In 1951 the scout camp was at Loch Earn in Scotland and on the return journey Harry was seen racing down Shap Fell at 80mph, overtaking the train. He raced at Brooklands, took part in hill climbs, and is said to have introduced the roll bar to racing cars. He made several sports cars including one from a kit. One he kept all of his life, JO 666, an HDK Special he named 'The Dart' was based on a 1930 1.5 litre





Aston Martin open-top two-seater sports car with wire wheels and a four-speed crash gearbox. It had distinguishing leather straps around the long home-built aluminium body and a fin on the back. It was green originally but Harry painted it black in the 1950s.

Harry was often to be seen around Bowdon and Hale in the car in the 1950s and early 60s. In response to a competition with a £5,000 prize, he attempted to build a pedal-powered autogyro and had to phone Ringway Airport for clearance for an attempt to take off from his back garden. He also built high quality 'HDK' trailers and assisted the 3<sup>rd</sup> Altrincham Scouts to build very professional soapboxes with gears and cable brakes for the Northern Soapbox Derby at Southport in the 1950s.

He lived at Bowborough, Vicarage Lane, Bowdon, which always had a flag flying outside and the cellars were fitted out as a hostel for scouts from other countries. He had a shop which amongst other things sold sweets which he often gave away to scouts. Harry always smoked a pipe, had skin tanned from the outdoors and wore a mustache said to be covering up scars from an accident. When camping and walking he used a walking stick with a V-shaped thumb notch. In the summer Harry used to camp in a small tent at Rhosneigr and the above picture of Harry was taken at Lakeside Service Station by Alan Bolton with Gerry and Pauline Gasson 3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> from the right and David Goodhand 2<sup>nd</sup> from right. The lower picture is a Flying Flea in the Bristol Industrial & Maritime Museum.

In the 1950s he rebuilt an Austin Seven Special for Philip Nelson, reg. WM9010. Harry died in 1966 after a battle with cancer. His obituary is in the Altrincham Guardian for 15 December 1966.

Thanks to Peter Kemp, Peter Gasson, John Killick & Ludo McGurk for details of Harry Killick.

## Le Breton, Edith (1912-1993) Artist

Edith le Breton painted in Salford, Altrincham and Dunham Massey, as well as on the continent, for 50 years. She had a national profile but was best known for her paintings of northern scenes. They are representational paintings, usually oil on canvas but sometimes watercolour, and generally chronicle post-war life in the north. Edith was friendly with Lowry who took an interest in her work. She also worked in other crafts such as painting china and textiles.

Edith Winifred Alice Sapple was born in 1912 at New Barns Farm, Weaste, Salford, just off Eccles New Road, near the site of the old racecourse. Her father Hugh was a policeman from Welshpool, Powys who served as an officer with the Manchester Dock Police. Edith inherited her love of painting from her mother Edith Primrose (née Tipping). Edith Jackson took her great-grandmother's French name of le Breton to use as an artist. Edith started painting at six and when she was nine she went to Seedley Council (later Primary) School, Salford, demolished in 2011.



At the age of 11 she won a prize at Lewis's Art Exhibition in Manchester, for a portrait of Princess Elizabeth. At 13 she was awarded a scholarship to Salford School of Art and at 15 sold her first watercolour and obtained a first-class studentship to study for a further three years. The family showed Edith's early artwork to the artist Dame Laura Knight who advised Edith to "*paint the people around you.*" In 1933 at the age of 20 Edith married Cyril Jackson and in 1939 they lived in

Langworthy Road, Salford.

At the outbreak of war Cyril joined the RAF as a Military Policeman. He was injured in the war and was in hospital for a lengthy period so Edith had to provide for the family, which by then included their two young sons Peter and Dennis. She bought plain Royal Doulton china which she painted and sold to Kendal Milne's store on Deansgate, Manchester. In 1936 she was introduced to Laurence Lowry by the director of Salford Art Gallery, Albert Frape, who gave her much support and encouragement.

In 1937 Edith held an exhibition at Salford Art Gallery and Frape asked Lowry to choose one of her paintings for the gallery. The Jackson family was bombed out in Salford and Edith bought a corner provision shop and off-licence on the corner of Pownall Street (now Road) and Rostherne Street in Newtown, Altrincham where they remained until 1954 after which they moved to 13 High Street, Altrincham. Edith and Lowry had both belonged to the Salford Arts Club and he wrote to her with encouragement to continue to paint despite setbacks and difficulties. They continued to correspond until his death in 1976.

Edith was elected a member of Manchester Academy of Fine Arts in 1952, had her work in their annual exhibitions and was a member until 1966. She was also a member of The Lancashire Group of Artists. She was awarded a fellowship in 1959 by the International Society of Arts and Letters and arranged an International Children's Art Exhibition in Manchester for the United Nations. Edith had exhibitions at the Medici Galleries, London; and group shows at the Manchester Academy of Arts, Lancashire Group Artists, and Altrincham Society of Artists. She is represented in permanent collections in Salford City Art Gallery, and in private collections in Europe, the United States, Central and South America, Australia and New Zealand.

She judged children's exhibitions, contributed poems to literary journals and was associated with the Manchester Academy of Fine Arts. She painted a Manchester United match for Matt Busby and the 1972 Preston Guild (which only meets every 20 years). She exhibited nationally and sold at Sotheby's and Christies. In 1959 Edith and Cyril retired to Magnolia Thatched Cottage, near the Axe & Cleaver public house in Dunham Massey and then to Breton House, 1 Big Tree Cottages, Woodhouse Lane, Dunham Massey, where she painted for Roger Grey, the last Lord Stamford.

About 1990 Edith and Cyril moved into Sheltered Housing at 26 William Walk, Newtown, Altrincham, which is just a few doors from where her Russell Street shop had been. Edith Le Breton, MAFA (1952), FIAL (1959), died in 1993, painting right up to the end.

Edith's sister Mavis Hermione Sapple was also a painter and wrote a book in 1982 covering their early life entitled *A Salford Childhood*, which is in Salford Public Library. Cyril was a member of Altrincham Court Leet from the 1970s and was still attending in his 90s until he died in 2004.

Some of Edith's street scenes have a shop called 'Jacksons', sometimes with her in the doorway, and incorporate her sons or grandchildren and her dog, often in a Salford or Altrincham context. She must have produced several hundred paintings, and for some she wrote a short poem on the back.

Edith painted many pictures, usually very colourful, after the war including the 1977 street party in Pownall Street, *Silver Jubilee*, celebrating the Queen Elizabeth's Silver Jubilee with tables stretching away into the distance which has very detailed work in the bricks and setts and which took a month to complete. Her shop is in the right foreground with 'Jacksons' over the window.

Her children and dog are included in the scene and Edith is looking out of the shop window. Salford Art Gallery and Trafford Local Studies hold some originals, and prints can be seen in Altrincham General Hospital and Wythenshawe Hospital Intensive Care and the Heart Unit.

Edith's paintings include:-

*In the Air Raid Shelter* (1942), *A Salford Street* (1949, original at Salford Art Gallery), *The Salvation Army in Pownall Street* (1950), *Newtown, Old Altrincham* (1962), *In the Vatican* (1967), *The Little Beggar Child of Rome* (1970), *The Fairground* (1971), *The May Queen Procession* (1971, Stockport, poem on the back), *The Pavement Artist* (1971), *Knutsford Royal May Queen, the Day the Queen Rides By* (1972), *The Pensioner* (1972), *The Preston Guild* (1972), *The Bandstand* (1973, Stamford Park, Hale), *The Procession* (1973), *The Winter Wedding* (1972, St Luke's Church, Weaste), *Busy Winter Street Scene with Street Traders & Shoppers* (1975), *Barrow Boys* (1976), *Sam Bone Man in Salford Town* (1976), *The Old Street Market Man* (1976), *The Silver Jubilee Party* (1977, Altrincham), *A Christmas Market* (poem on the back), *A Market Day in a Welsh Town*, *A Street in Lancashire*, *A Summer Day*, *A Wintry Scene in Stamford Park*, *All the Fun of the Fair* (Salford), *Altrincham in the Snow*, *Altrincham Market*, *Altrincham Scene*, *Back Street in Manchester*, *Busy Street*, *Child of Salford*, *Christmas Shopping*, *City Centre*, *Coronation Preparations*, *Come to the Fair*, *Down & Out*, *Dunham Massey Rose Queen*, *Fairground*, *Forbidden Fruit*, *Forty Winks* (the original is in Trafford Local Studies), *George Street Altrincham*, *Hey Ho Come to the Fair*, *Joe, Kendals*, *Lancashire Canal on a Sunday Afternoon*, *Marbles*, *Memories of Broadway Salford*, *Monday Evening*, *Monday Morning*, *New Street Altrincham*, *Newtown Old Altrincham*, *On Sunday Afternoon*, *Pensioner*, *Pownall Street Altrincham*, *Salford History*, *Salvation Army*, *Schooldays*, *Seen from a Train*, *Street in Salford*, *Snow in the Potteries*, *Snow Over the Little Park*, *Soccer Game*, *Stamford New Road Altrincham*, *Street Scene in New Street Altrincham* (original in Trafford Local Studies), *Scene in Newtown Altrincham* (the original is in Trafford Local Studies), *The Apprentices' Strike Trafford Park*, *Soccer Game*, *The Blackbird at Magnolia Cottage*, *The Canal at Broadheath*, *The Evacuees*, *The Football Match*, *The Jubilee Dress* (on fabric, held by the Jackson family), *The Little Church*, *The Little Park in Salford*, *The Little School* (St Margaret's C of E School, Albert Street, Altrincham), *The Little Street Market*, *The Local Derby* (Manchester United v Manchester City, for Matt Busby), *The Man on the Bus* (a finger painting), *The Night Watchman* (a finger painting), *The Old Street Market*, *The Playground*, *The Royal Salford Hospital Pageant*, *Street Scene*, *The Snooze*, *The Student on the 64 Bus* (Rome), *The Victorian Flat-Iron Market in Old Salford*, *The Wanderer* (a finger painting), *A Wintry Scene in Stamford Park*, *View from the Downs*, *Young Boy*.

*The Jubilee Dress* was painted on polyester cotton using ICI acrylic paint developed in Blackley, Manchester. Until that time textile designers had been restricted by technical barriers which ICI overcame by inventing new dyes. The dress took two months to paint with scenes from the Knutsford May Day procession and the work celebrated the golden jubilee of the sale of Edith's first painting at the age of eight. The project followed the painting of a Christening robe which was worn by her grandchildren.

Thanks to Peter Jackson for the details, the photo and paintings of his mother Edith le Breton.

## **Leeming, John (1895-1965) Flying Pioneer**

Henry Hartley Leeming married Edith Lowe in 1883 and John Fishwick Leeming was born in Chorlton in 1896. Henry worked with his older brother John H Leeming as a Silk Manufacturer and Oil Merchant. It is likely that John F Leeming also worked for the business.

The Leemings were living in Withington in 1901 and John was sent to a preparatory school in Southport where he first saw the pioneering efforts of powered flying at Birkdale. In 1910 he made his first glider and tried it on the sands there.

The family moved to Hale in 1915 and in 1923 were living at Alderbank, 40 Ashley Road, Altrincham. In 1918 John married Sarah Tabernor and lived at 38 Albert Road from 1920 to 1923 but later in the 1920s were said to be living at 23 Spring Road, Hale.

John built his next glider in 1921 in his parents' cellar, later moved to the garage as it got bigger, then the greenhouse. In 1924 he flew his fifth glider which he had built from scrap from Avros with friends Tom Prince and Clement Wood, the glider known as an 'LPW' after their initials. All his later gliders could be dismantled and stored in a garage. He crashed the glider and rebuilt it with a Douglas motorbike engine installed but it was too heavy to fly and they could only trundle around the field.

In that same year 1924, John and nine friends formed the Lancashire Aero Club in his greenhouse, the first aero club in Britain with John as first Chairman and later President. Originally the club flew from Hough End Fields and in 1925 considered a field at Ringway where the airport is now but eventually used a site at Woodford. The war stopped flying and the club restarted at Barton in 1946. The club is the oldest surviving aero club in Britain and the largest. Manchester Corporation opened Barton Aerodrome in 1928 but it proved to be unsuitable for large aircraft.

John was famous for landing on the Chester Road near The Swan Inn in the 1920s to refuel at a petrol station and for a planned landing on Helvellyn in 1926.

John became an authority on flying, was asked to find a new airport site by Manchester Corporation in the 1930s and recommended the Ringway site, which at that stage Manchester Corporation rejected but eventually opened an aerodrome there in 1938.

In the early 1930s he built Owlpen, York Drive, Bowdon where he developed a two-acre garden, all up the left hand side of York Drive and Theobald Road. At the end of the plot near to the Lady of the Vale Convent he spent the whole of the 1930s developing the garden and built The Barn out of reclaimed handmade bricks and old oak beams and with a Priest's Hole.

The house itself The Badgers was built in 1948. He is said to have helped fund the neighbouring Bollingworth House given by Fanny Baxter to establish Our Lady of the Vale Convent on condition that he reserved the right to use an entrance from Theobald Road. His wife lived there for the last five years of her life. Eventually he owned 5.5 acres at the top of Theobald Road, up to the convent on the right, and a larger acreage on the left.

He sold his first published article at thirteen and became internationally known for his books, which sold in large volumes. Between 1935 and 1960 he wrote ten books including in 1935 *The Garden Grows* on the building of the garden, and *Manchester & Aviation*. In 1936 he created *Claudius the Bee* for the *Manchester Evening News* for which Walt Disney bought the film rights. In that same year he wrote his autobiography *Airdays*. He also became an expert on delphiniums and bred pedigree pigs.

John was a friend of **Harry Killick** and must have also known **Graham Wood** who lived close by at The Coppice, in South Downs Road who was also a flying pioneer and whose restored 'Rotary Ornithopter' machine with flapping wings is in the Manchester Air and Space Museum.

John flew in Wellingtons during the war and on a trip to Malta in November 1940 ran out of fuel over southern Sicily and was made a prisoner-of-war with Air Marshall OT Boyd. He wrote a book on his experiences as a POW *The Natives are Friendly*.

Before the war John had set up the Northern Air Transport Company based at Barton. After the war he ran a business in Broadheath extracting the oil from rags from the various engineering works, producing new cloth and reclaimed oil. He died in 1965 aged 69.

Badgers was put up for auction in 1966 consisting of 5.5 acres, a swimming pool, a thatched outbuilding, a garden studio, farm buildings and grazing land, in three lots if not sold as a whole:

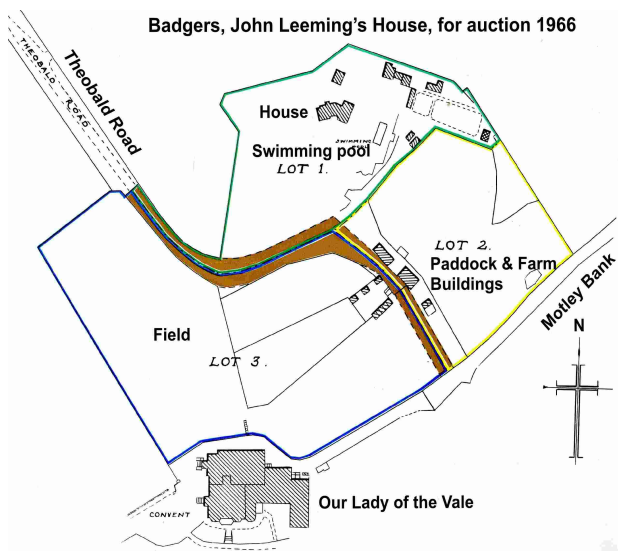
- House & garden
- The paddock and farm buildings
- The residue of the land

Thanks to Wikipedia and Doug Rendell for details of John Leeming.

## Macnamara, John (1845-1925) Architect

John Macnamara was born in Leeds in 1845. He moved to Manchester in 1857 and became a pupil-teacher, college student and later a headmaster. He decided to study architecture and surveying.

In 1874 he was appointed as assistant to Maxwell Roscoe, surveyor to the trustees of the Stamford Estates (the 7<sup>th</sup> Earl had left Dunham Hall and was residing at Enville Hall in Staffordshire at that time). He then became a surveyor for the estates of the larger part of Hale, working for the Harrops, Leathers, Fowdens, Bowers, Leicesters, Cramptons, Worthingtons and others. He took over the development of Bower Road when it stalled and designed the following roads: South Downs Drive, Park Drive, Harrop, Belmont, Prescott, Leicester, Ollerbarrow, Westgate, Hazlewood, Leigh, Rappax, North, and Bancroft.



About 1900 he ran his business as architect, surveyor and property agent from 35/37 Hale Road, later from The Hermitage on Bancroft Road where the 1960s houses are. He taught in the Altrincham Technical School which was linked to the Old Free Library in Lower George Street. He worked with **JH Broun** to design and build Mossburn Buildings on the west side of Stamford New Road, Altrincham.

He was elected on to Hale Urban District Council in 1902, opposing **Alfred Tarbolton**. He represented the poorer people in Hale, criticised the right-wing council and planned to build affordable housing. He supported amalgamation with Altrincham to allow better-shared facilities. He later put up for Altrincham Council but came back to Hale Council in 1911 for a couple of years.

He gave £250 and land for the building of St. David's Mission Church on Grove Lane, and persuaded his clients to donate land to the community. He also gave land for the Hermitage Bowling Club. He was the second president of the Altrincham and District Natural History and Literary Society. For 25 years he was a warden of St. John's Church and manager of St. John's Schools. He died in 1925.

## **Mason, Richard (1919-1997) Novelist**

Richard Lakin Mason, author and film scriptwriter, was born at Dalkieth, 14 Bower Road, Hale in 1919. His father GE Mason was an electrical engineer and his mother was Constance Mason, née Mead. Richard wrote two early books under the name Richard Lakin and then achieved fame with his 1947 book made into the film with Dirk Bogarde *The Wind Cannot Read*. Perhaps his most famous book however was *The World of Suzie Wong*, made into a play in the 1950s and a film in 1960 starring William Holden, Nancy Kwan, Sylvia Syms and Michael Wilding. He retired in the late 1950s, spent most of his time in Rome and died in 1997.

## **Morrison, Basil David (1915-2012)**

Basil David Morrison was an auctioneer and estate agent in the family firm of David Morrison & Sons but was best known for his drawings of local buildings and street scenes, which are highly prized recordings of the area.

Basil's ancestor Peter Morrison was born in 1813 in Dumfriesshire (he died 1865) and came south to work as a farm bailiff and then farmer at the newly-built (1840) Grange Farm on Grange Road, Bowdon, now the Grange Court estate. Peter married Margaret Clegg in 1845 and their son David was born in 1850 (died 1929). David founded the family business of David Morrison & Son (Estate Agents) in 1875 who were estate agents and auctioneers in Altrincham. David was Mayor of Altrincham in 1895. The firm also arranged emigration and sea passages to the colonies.

David married Mary Sparrow in 1877 and in 1884 they had a son David Stanley (died 1954) who was also Mayor of Altrincham in 1926 and was Basil's father. Stanley married Marguerite Beckett in 1909 and founded the Altrincham Rotary Club in 1929 of which Basil was President in 1957. Stanley was also awarded the Paul Harris Fellowship Medal bestowed on very few Rotarians. Basil was also President of the Chamber of Commerce.





Basil Morrison was born in Leigh Road in Hale. He had one older brother Phillip whose son David perpetuates the family name. His father Stanley was a great influence on Basil, introducing him to the form of buildings and their construction techniques which was helpful to his art in later years. Basil was educated at Bowdon College on South Downs Road run by headmaster William Smith. Basil had the highest regard for Smith but was caned most Saturdays by the next headmaster for his poor Algebra homework! He later attended Giggleswick Boarding School in Settle, Yorkshire, finally taking and passing his Professional Examinations of the Chartered Auctioneers Institute via Grimes College in Manchester.

Basil's teenage years were spent at Anne Style, 103 Ashley Road, Hale where his father had installed two silent film projectors from the Altrincham Hippodrome in the attic. Basil and his friends used to present shows with an accompanying commentary.

Basil joined the family business but soon after, as World War II loomed, he joined the RAF and specialised in Radio and Advance Warning Technology in Bomber Command. He worked in operations rooms in various locations of England during the Battle of Britain and later overseas, finishing his war years in Burma and India. Just before joining the RAF, he met a pretty girl called Joyce Stephens who he knew instantly was the girl of his dreams. Having proposed to her in the first few weeks of courting, Joyce turned him down, preferring to 'wait a while' to see if they were matched. How wise she was considering that war was around the corner.

Basil wrote love letters from where he was stationed but was not allowed to mention his address for fear of 'spies'. However, even then he was drawing on the letters and practising calligraphy to create a special impression. Sometimes he might obtain special leave for 48 hours and would return home to see his family and Joyce.

At that time he was sometimes seen in his Three-Wheeler Morgan. He later purchased his famous RAF Blue Four-Wheeler Morgan and was driving this until he was aged 95, the year before his death. He married Joyce in 1941 and they honeymooned at the Langdale Chase Hotel in Windermere.

Luckily surviving the war, Basil returned to the Altrincham area to raise his family. They always lived locally, first in Nursery Avenue in Hale, then Hale Road, Belmont Road, Park Road Bowdon, Richmond Road Bowdon and latterly at Murieston Road, Hale.

They had three sons: Stephen who trained with Christian Barnard (noted for the first heart transplants) in South Africa; Maxwell who became a financial consultant; and Jonathan who continued the tradition of Estate Management in Altrincham. The family's favourite holiday haunt was Borth-y-Gest, near Porthmadog in North Wales. They went back to the Langdale Chase Hotel for their 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary.

Basil was always doodling and drawing on scraps of paper, even on the table cloths of Spink's Café above the bakery on Railway Street (now Kings Court). Frank Spink was a personal friend and his golf partner at Hale Golf Club. Basil decided to go to art lessons and during the 1960s went each Monday or Tuesday night to learn about art and how he could harness his passion for drawing.

This was the turning point of Basil's drawing career and shortly afterwards he produced a series of black and white drawings. From that point Basil immersed himself in art and was often seen in Cheshire and North Wales sketching with his pad and easel, the drawing later to be completed at home. All the highly accurate and detailed drawings he produced took many hours. To remind

himself how many hours he spent, he would write the numbers of hours in numerals and hide them in the drawing. If you look carefully, you might be able to spot one or two. Look for the bowler hat.

From the drawings he produced calendars, match box covers, notelets, coasters, dinner mats and tea towels. Perhaps his most famous productions were his Christmas cards. In addition to his card drawings he also prided himself in creating handmade greetings cards for birthdays, for his many friends and family. There were at least six cards being made during his final few months of his life which were never completed.

Joyce died in March 1999 and Basil felt the huge loss of his best friend and natural mate, something he never got over. He continued sending her birthday, Christmas and anniversary cards every year. This loss was to push Basil to fill his time with art. He was extremely busy and undertook many private commissions of beautiful period houses and country estates, always seeking permission from the owners first.

He also found time to develop his grandfather's interest in old Altrincham and, like his grandfather, gave illustrated lectures on local history. Nearing retirement he found time to incorporate some of his drawings and knowledge of Altrincham in his 1980 book *Looking Back at Altrincham*, since followed by many other authors producing at least 20 books with a similar title and look, all published by local firm Willow Publishing.

He amassed a substantial collection of old photos of the area, including his own, and converted these to slides. His photos are now in the Altrincham Area Image Heritage collection. He gave talks to many clubs and open evenings on Old Altrincham, using the slides to enlighten interested audiences. His last two talks were filmed by the family. Basil gave two interviews, one of which was sound recorded and the second on camera. These are still held by the family and one is in the North West Sound Archive.

Basil's art profits always went to charity and he donated to many good causes including the Rotary Club of which he was a member, Past President and a Paul Harris Fellow. The Altrincham Rotary Club have worked tirelessly to raise large sums for various charities, very successfully for the eradication of polio the world over. Basil was also a Past President of Altrincham Society of Artists and the National Association of Decorative and Fine Arts Societies.

Basil was a former president of the Altrincham & Sale Chamber of Commerce and in 2009 made a podcast on YouTube for them, a fitting memorial to his skills as a speaker. Basil was an active member of both Altrincham History Society and Hale Civic Society and was a Fellow of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors. He was a volunteer guide at Dunham Hall for many years. Until 2011 Basil was the oldest Morgan driver in the UK and when he motored up Stamford New Road, Altrincham, shoppers paused to admire the shiny blue sports car.

Basil's final artwork was for Hill's Bakery in Hale to celebrate their 2012 centenary. Basil died on 7 June 2012 aged 96 and about 500 people attended a memorial service at St. Peter's Church. He left three sons, nine grandchildren and eleven great grandchildren.

There is a Blue Plaque to commemorate Basil Morrison over 6 Lloyd Street, Altrincham where he had his last estate agency.



Thanks to Jonathan Morrison for his help in recording his father's life.

## **Nelson, Edward (1874-1940) Barrister**

Edward Theophilus Nelson was born on 22 October 1874 in Georgetown, British Guiana (now Guyana) where his father Philip was a wealthy builder. He was educated at St. Philips School, Georgetown and came to Oxford in 1898 to read law at St. John's College (the wealthiest college in Oxford, with estates stretching to Cambridge). Some authorities say he was born in 1878 and dates on his Blue Plaque and grave differ.

In 1900, his second year, he was elected Secretary to Oxford Union and was nominated as Treasurer by Raymond Asquith, the son of Herbert Asquith. He held the position for 1900/01, which post has been held three Prime Ministers. On 31 March 1900 he received a telegram from Georgetown's Argosy who cabled their congratulations. There are two group photographs of him at Oxford. In 1901 he was living in Eltham, London and graduated in 1902. He was called to the Bar at Lincoln's Inn in 1904, probably the first West Indian to be called to the English Bar.

He lived at Beech Holme, Stamford Road, Bowdon in 1906, then 2 Laurel Bank, Stamford Road in 1907 probably as a lodger. He moved to Cecil House (now 47/49) Cecil Road, Hale in 1909 after splitting it into two houses and living at 49. He remained there for the rest of his life and attended St. Peter's Church.

He had a legal practice at 78 King Street, Manchester and in 1910 was defence barrister in a dramatic case at Dukinfield, Cheshire, the murder of George Harry Storrs who was stabbed 15 times on 1 November 1909. The case was known as the 'Gorse Hall Murder', later the 'Stalybridge Murder'. Edward first appeared at Duckinfield Magistrates Court for Cornelius Howard who was subsequently acquitted by jury at Chester. Edward then successfully defended a second accused, Mark Wilde. The experienced Mr Nelson successfully argued in court that if the only witnesses to the intrusion at Gorse Hall were convinced that Cornelius Howard was the murderer, then their identification of Wilde as the murderer must be ignored; and that if there was any reasonable doubt about Wilde, he must be acquitted. After only 50 minutes, the jury agreed with the barrister and Wilde was found not guilty. There is a portrait of Nelson as Wilde's barrister at the Chester trial in the *Stalybridge Reporter*.

In 1919 Edward was retained by the London-based African Progress Union to defend fifteen Black Men charged with riotous assembly and assault in the aftermath of the race riots in Liverpool in the summer of 1919. Seven hundred Black men and their families had been removed from their homes. The local paper said that he had conducted the defence 'with great clearness and ability'. Edward was well known in legal circles in Lancashire and Cheshire and frequently appeared on cases at the Assize Courts as well as in Petty Sessions and County Courts. Some of his more important cases reached English Law Reports and can be accessed on CD. In March 1913 Edward stood for West Ward of Hale Urban District Council as a Conservative candidate and was successful with 224 votes against his opponent's 91. There is a report in the *Altrincham Guardian* of 28 March 1913.

Nelson was elected Chairman of the Hale Lighting, Hackney Carriage and Fire Committee in 1913. He was deeply interested in literature and was elected as Chairman of the Library Committee from 1921 to 1939. He was Chairman of the Council in 1917/18 and 1937/38 and part of 1939, and was generally a prominent figure in the public life of Hale. He remained a councillor with Hale until his

death in 1940.



*The opening of the original Conservative Club at 163 Ashley Road, Hale, with Edward Nelson fourth from right (AAIA).*



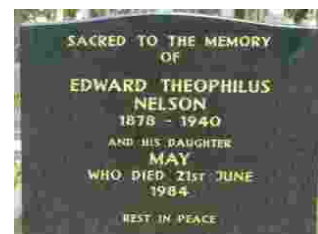
*Edward was a member of Hale Cricket Club First XI (fourth from left above from AAIA) which was associated with St. Peter's Church and played behind Hale Chapel, Hale Barns. He also played for Bowdon and Sale. Several photographs of him are held by Hale Civic Society.*

An authority on rating and valuation he was chairman of Hale Council's Rating and Valuation Committee since its inception and was the first representative of Hale on the County Valuation Committee and its chairman from 1936 to his death. He was also first Chairman of the Cheshire Urban District Councils' Association and a member of the District Councils' Association of Great Britain. He was a recognised authority on Local Government and understood the legal aspects. He was a small, quiet and modest man and was clearly very popular. His colleagues respected his friendship, his depth of knowledge, his considerable ability and his fairness.

Edward was a member of Hale Cricket Club First XI (fourth from left above from AAIA) which was associated with St. Peter's Church and played behind Hale Chapel, Hale Barns. He also played for Bowdon at South Downs Road. He also played for Sale Cricket Club. Several photographs of him are held by Hale Civic Society.

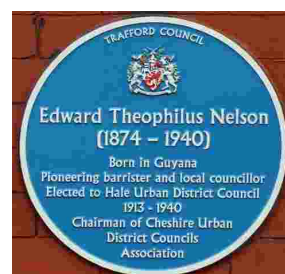
Edward married Beatrice Lewis in British Guiana where they had a daughter Onasie or Onassie, known as May.

Edward died on 3 August 1940 aged 62 with the service at St. Peter's Church, Hale. He was buried in Altrincham Cemetery, Hale (below), witnessed by a large group of local worthies and his daughter May and his niece Vera. Edward's Deaths Register reference is Bucklow 8a 470, cemetery plot C4. In 1942 Edward's sister Jane Nelson was living at 47 Cecil Road and in 1974 Onasie A Nelson, Nelson's daughter known as May or Maisie.



May lived at 47 Cecil Road and died 21 June 1984 and was buried in the same grave. An oil painting of Edward and some of his furniture were sold locally for £4,900.

There is an obituary of him in the Manchester Guardian of 5 August 1940 and the Sale Guardian of 9 August 1940. There is a more substantial biography of E T Nelson by Jeffrey P Green in New Community Volume 12 Number 1 1984 and a book by Jonathan Goodman covers the stabbing of George Harry Storrs.



A Blue Plaque to Nelson was unveiled on the 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2024 on the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his birth at 49 Cecil Road, Hale.

Thanks to Jeffrey P Green's book *Black Edwardians: Black People in Britain, 1901-1914* for details of Edward Nelson.

## Newman, Max (1897-1984) Mathematician & Code-breaker

Max Newman's work during World War II at Bletchley Park led to the construction of the Colossus computer and later The Baby computer at Manchester University.

Max Neuman was born in London in 1897, the son of Herman Alexander Neuman. Max won a scholarship to Cambridge, Anglicised his name to Newman and took up teaching. He then returned to St. John's College, Cambridge and was elected a Fellow in 1923. He was appointed a mathematics lecturer in 1927 at Cambridge where his lectures inspired **Alan Turing** to embark on his computing career. Max was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society in 1939.

*Max Newman's house in Albert Square, Bowdon*



Max married Lyn Irvine and they had sons Edward (1935) and William (1939). In 1942 he was

recruited to work at Bletchley Park and worked with Tommy Flowers to produce the Colossus computer which contained 1800, later 2400, valves.

In 1945 Newman was appointed Professor of Mathematics at Manchester University and established the Royal Society Computing Machine Laboratory.

When the Newmans left Bletchley Park, they bought 'Maycroft' in Albert Square, Bowdon. Newman brought two of his assistants from Bletchley Park to Manchester, Frederic Williams and Thomas Kilburn, both of whom had experience in electronic circuit design and they produced The Baby in 1948, the world's first stored program computer, based on Turing's ideas.

Newman chose **Alan Turing** to be Deputy Director of the computing laboratory. Turing lived in Hale quite near to Newman, and frequently visited the family. One of Newman's sons, William, became friendly with Alan and became a mathematician in his own right. Max retired to a village near Cambridge in 1964 and died in 1984.

Thanks to Wikipedia and Chris Hill for details of Max Newman.

## Owen, John (1815-1902) Historian

Knowledge of many now-vanished dwellings in Hale depends on the researches of John Owen in the 1870s and **Alfred Tarbolton** in the 1900s. John was born in Bolton in 1815 and sadly died in the Stockport Workhouse in 1902.

A successful corn dealer in Stretford Road, he retired early and devoted the rest of his life to antiquarian pursuits: copying gravestones and memorial inscriptions (which earned him the nickname of 'Old Mortality'), parish registers, sale notices and every kind of document with a bearing on the history of Manchester and its environs.

Owen married twice and had several children. He lived mostly in Manchester, Stretford and Sale, but always took an interest in the more outlying areas, and from 1874 to 1876 lodged at the Lower Buttery House, Davenport Green, Hale. An ancient footpath led from the house across Shay Lane and came out on the Wilmslow Road opposite Prospect House. Just west of Prospect House was a provision shop which Owen used. The lower end of the footpath had been closed by the Brooks when they began to make their great tree-lined avenue, but Owen constantly went along it, having discovered that there had been no magistrates' order for the closure. He let it be known that he would proceed against anyone who attempted to interfere with him and defend any action for trespass and was left unmolested.

He had a great interest in what would now be called vernacular architecture and sketched hundreds of old buildings, many of which have now been pulled down. His drawings are often the only record of their appearance. He wrote many newspaper articles but never published a book. Nevertheless, even within his own lifetime, the eighty-odd volumes of his notes, sketches and cuttings had become a quarry from which other authors drew their information. These volumes were purchased by Manchester Corporation and are deposited in the Manchester Central Reference Library and available on microfilm. Many of his sketches have been digitised.

Thanks to Hale Civic Society for details of John Owen.



## Pitfield, Thomas (1903-1999) Composer

Thomas Baron Pitfield was born in Bolton in 1903 where his father was a master joiner and builder. He learned his skill as a wood-carver in his father's workshop and left school at 14 to train as an engineering draftsman.

His parents allowed him to have piano lessons and he bought a 'cello and at 21 enrolled as a composition student at the Royal Manchester School of Music where Carl Fuchs of the Brodsky Quartet taught him. He formed a string quartet and began composing. In 1930 he won a scholarship to the Bolton School of Art where he trained as a teacher and cabinetmaker. His music and cover designs were published by Oxford University Press and others. During the 1930s he taught at Penketh School and Tettenhall College, Wolverhampton and in several Schools of Art, and held exhibitions in several large art galleries.

During the war he registered as a conscientious objector. He married Alice Astbury who was born near Moscow of English parents who escaped from Russia in 1917. Tom and Alice were vegetarians and pacifists. They first lived in South Staffordshire where he taught cabinet making and then moved to Gawsorth near Macclesfield. In 1947 he was invited to join the staff of the Royal Manchester School of Music, now the Royal Northern College of Music, as Professor of Composition and his pupils included John Ogden. In 1947 they settled in Bowdon where they lived for 52 years. They built a house on an old school tennis court at 21 East Down Road (now demolished). Tom retired at 70.

Tom was a teacher, a composer of church music, a musician, a poet, an artist, a wood-carver and an author, and thus a polymath. He received commissions from Leon Goossens, the Hallé Orchestra and the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra. He composed about 200 pieces of music, wrote about 10 books and 60 publishers have printed his work. Altrincham people were very familiar with his pen-and-ink drawings especially on calendars and Christmas cards. He knew **Adolf Brodsky** from his student days at the Royal Northern Collage of Music and who lived nearby. He also knew Brodsky's nephew Leon Picard who lived in Brodsky's house afterwards.

Unusually, Tom had been asked to write his auto-obituary in an amusing vein for the Bolton Evening News. He finished with:

*"Within a pit  
Within a field  
My property  
Lies here concealed  
No other home  
I now possess  
So kindly note  
My new address."*

Tom was a friend of Benjamin Britten and Peter Pears. He was a founder member of Bowdon History Society together with **Maurice Ridgway**. Tom died in 1999 aged 96 and Alice soon afterwards. Services were held for him, using his church music, at Bowdon Church where he used to play the organ. In 2003 celebrations of his life were held in 15 locations around the England.

## Rendell, Douglas (1918-2015) Photographer & Local Historian

Doug Rendell was born on 16th November, 1918 in Sale, Cheshire, the middle of three children. His parents Oscar and Nettie (née Livesey) married in 1910 and moved from Accrington, Lancashire to Sale before the Great War. Oscar worked for Kearns Engineering and rose to become managing director. Doug attended primary school on Broad Road, Sale and Altrincham Grammar School for Boys from 1930 to 1936. There he was taught by film pioneer **Ronald Gow** who interested him in photography, along with Doug's father who developed his own films. Doug's maternal grandfather owned a cinema in Accrington and his paternal grandfather was co-inventor of the Stroud & Rendell science lantern, so he was destined to be a photographer even before Gow's and his father's influence.



After school Doug studied photography in Manchester College of Technology, and there he met Joan Hill. He then studied cinematography in London, but joined the Royal Navy when the war broke out in 1939. During the war Doug served on the HMS King George V as an official war photographer and saw service in the Far East.

Doug and Joan Hill married in 1943 at St. Mary's Church, Bowdon. Three days after getting married he was on the way to Scapa Flow to become photographer on board the battleship HMS King George V.

Doug and Joan had two daughters, Jane and Dianne. In 1946 they settled in Crescent Road and set up a business as a photographer, initially from home. Soon afterwards, they opened a shop on Ashley Road, Hale with Ken Wilson as 'Rendell & Wilson', carrying out much commercial as well as portrait photography. Ken Wilson emigrated to Australia in the 1950s. The commercial photography was for Broadheath industries, including Kearns boring machines, Thornton-Pickard cameras and **John Leeming's** oil extraction business.

Doug was a very practical hard-working person who got on the with the job in hand. Later he became involved in the local community and spent much time recording the area in pictures and collecting old photographs, most used in his local history publications. His local history photographs are held by Hale Civic Society and he donated digital copies to the Altrincham Area Image Archive.

Doug wrote several history books with photography as their theme:

*Hale and Ashley the Past 100 years* (1987) with Denise Laver.

*A Directory of Professional Photographers in Altrincham and Sale 1860-1939* with Ian Gee for the Royal Photographic Society (1990).

*The Photographic Collectors Club of Great Britain* (1992).

*The Thornton-Pickard Story* (1992).

*Cinemas of Trafford* (1998).

*Bowdon and Dunham Massey* with Ronald Trenbath and Chris Hill (1999).

*Photographers in the Altrincham Area* (2005).

In 1995 he produced a DVD with Nick Dodson of Railfilms as director and narrator, making a 44-minute film *Ronald Gow, Film Pioneer, 1897-1993*. Ronald had used a 35mm movie camera formerly owned by a cameraman working for DW Griffiths, the pioneering American film director. Gow gave the camera to Doug who gave it to the Museum of Science & Industry in Manchester for their collection in 1997. The museum valued the camera at £25,000 at that time and it is displayed in full working order today. The museum also has a copy of the DVD.

Doug was an active member of Altrincham History Society, Bowdon History Society, and Hale Civic Society. A lifelong interest in railway engines led to a model railway around his garden.

He was also on the group commissioned in 2000 by Hale Civic Society to bring Norman Dore's *History of Hale* book of 1972 up to date, and spent much time researching at Chester in the archives. Unfortunately the book was still only in draft form without illustrations when he died. A few copies were published privately in 2016 by David Miller as *A History of Hale, Cheshire (Revisited)* which includes some of his photographs.

Joan died in 1995 after much care from Doug who himself passed away on 26th January, 2015 aged 96. The *Manchester Locomotive Society* noted his passing, as did the *Old Altrinchamian*, the AGSB magazine.

With thanks to June Allen (née Rendell), Jane Smith and Dianne Butterworth, and Mike Arron (photo) for their help.

## **Richards, George (1856-1935) Engineer**

In 1884 American George Richards opened the first engineering factory in Broadheath, later to become the centre of the machine-tool industry and one the biggest employers in the area. The industrial development on this convenient Broadheath site with good rail, road and canal links attracted several other engineering firms including others from the USA: Linotype, Tilghmans, and Churchills.

George Richards was born in 1856 in California, USA to parents John and Paulina. John was a noted engineer, author and inventor and made woodworking machine tools. George trained as a mechanical engineer and in 1873 arrived in England aged 17. In 1877 he went to Sweden and joined the Kopings company who manufactured high-class woodworking machinery. He came to Manchester in 1880 and set up a works in City Road in partnership with Edward Atkinson, who lived at 4 Richmond Road, Bowdon, making woodworking machinery.

The 1881 census shows him married to Annie also born in the USA and lodging at 76 Sloane Street, Moss Side. Annie may have died or they divorced because in 1882 he married Amy Ford-Smith at Barton-upon-Irwell. Amy was the daughter of Harriet and William Ford-Smith who ran an engineering company. Their son George Tilghman Richards was born in 1883. The Manchester business expanded into tool making and Richards built a new factory in Broadheath financed by BC Tilghman in 1884 on 4½ acres, which he called the Atlantic Engineering Works from his origins. It was situated on land previously donated by the Earl of Warrington to the workhouse trustees. In 1882 Richards applied for membership of the Institution of Mechanical Engineers in London, giving his occupation as a woodworking engineer. His principal proposer was his father-in-law, William Ford-Smith. In 1885 he began producing horizontal boring machines.

In 1891 George and Amy were living at Leicester Villa in Burlington Street (later Road), Altrincham,

not too far from the factory. They were divorced in 1894. In 1896 Tilghmans Sand Blast Co. moved into Broadheath and took over George Richards & Co. because of financial problems but kept the name.

In 1897 Richards left the company because of disagreements with Tilghmans management and moved to London and then Brussels (he spoke French). According to Richards he was promised £25,000 for his share of the company but received little. In 1901 Amy and her son George Tilghman Richards, an engineering apprentice, were living with her parents at Woodstock, Palatine Road, Didsbury. George Tilghman Richards became chief designer for the aviation department of William Beardmore, shipbuilders of Scotland, and wrote a history of typewriters. He died in 1960.

George and Amy Richards divorced and George married his third wife Josephine Van Niewenborgh in 1902 in London where he set up a new engineering business. They had three children: Marie-Louise, Richard and Edward. Later they divorced in 1916 and she moved to Canada then the USA and remarried.

In the 1990s the railway through Broadheath was demolished and a retail park built with a new road on the line of the old railway, which was named George Richards Way in honour of this engineering pioneer who had such a profound influence on Broadheath in the 12 years he was there.

It is not known when he died but it would be about 1935.

Thanks to John Richards (Australia) and Henry Dawson for assistance with their grandfather George Richards (both are descended from the Belgian marriage).

## **Richter, Hans (1843-1916) Conductor**

Janos (Hans) Richter was born 1843 in Hungary where his mother was an opera singer. He studied at the Vienna Conservatory, became a professional horn player in Budapest, and later Wagner's musical secretary. He was brought to England by Wagner to conduct six concerts in London in 1877. He conducted first performances of works by Brahms, Elgar, Bruckner, Tchaikovsky and Wagner amongst others. For 20 years from 1879 he toured Britain with his Richter Orchestra. He was a conductor at the Hallé Orchestra from 1899 to 1911. At that time he lived at 'The Firs', 27 The Firs, Bowdon where there is a plaque and where Bartok and Elgar visited. He retired finally to Bayreuth in 1911 where he died in 1916.



## **Ridgway, Canon Maurice (1918-2002) Authority on Silver**

Canon Maurice Hill Ridgway was born in 1918 at Stockport where his father was vicar of St. George's Church.

The family moved to Tarvin near Chester and Maurice attended King's School, Chester, which was founded in 1541 and was closely linked to the cathedral. He then went to St. David's College, Lampeter, now part of the University of Wales. Maurice was ordained at Chester Cathedral in

1941.

In 1949 Maurice married Audrey Turner and they had two sons and three daughters.

Maurice was a member of the Chester Diocesan Advisory Committee for nearly fifty years and chairman of a similar committee in the diocese of St. Asaph. He was also a member of the Society for the Preservation of Ancient Buildings. He was a joint editor of the local history journal *The Cheshire Sheaf* from 1966 to 1971 when it closed down but which he restarted in 1976.

Maurice was curate of St. Peter's Church, Hale from 1944 to 1949, then a spell in the 1950s at Bunbury, Cheshire where there is a statue to him and when he contributed to the Historical Atlas of Cheshire. He became vicar of St. Mary's, Bowdon from 1962 to 1983 and an honorary canon of Chester Cathedral in 1966. He developed the Church music at Bowdon and the choir remains one of the best in the North of England. His obituary says that in all of his parishes he made a point of visiting parishioners each year.



He had strong links with Bowdon where his father had attended Rosehill School in 1892 and there are Ridgway gravestones in Bowdon Churchyard back to at least the mid-18th century. When at Bowdon Church, he held bi-lingual services with the Welsh Chapel in Willowtree Road, Altrincham and was said to be fluent in Welsh. He was the instigator of the Bowdon History Society in 1979 and continued to write scholarly articles for the society and learned journals even after he retired to Rhydycroesau, just on the Welsh side of the border near Oswestry. He involved himself in the preservation of the church of the ancient Pennant Melangell Chapel which houses the oldest Romanesque shrine in Europe.

He was considered an authority on Cheshire silver and Chester hallmarks and wrote three volumes on the history of the Chester Goldsmiths after the Chester Assay Office closed in 1962. He was also an authority on medieval rood screens, particularly Welsh ones, and was awarded the Fellowship of the Society of Antiquaries for his work in this field. There is a Ridgway Gallery at the Grosvenor Museum with his portrait on display. He died aged 84 in December 2002 at Ely in Cambridgeshire, just three days after moving to his new home.

Thanks to Marjorie Cox of Bowdon History Society for details of Maurice Ridgway.

## **Rodger, George (1908-1995) Photographic Journalist**

George William A Rodger was a photographic journalist born in 1908 at 145 Hale Road, Hale, one of four children and where his father is listed as George Frederick Eck-Rodger. He attended Miss Petremant's School at what became Broussa (named after a village in Turkey and now Hale Prep) in Broomfield Lane, Hale and then went to St. Bede's in Cumbria.

At 17 he entered the Merchant Navy, took various jobs in the USA and got a taste for travel, and in the 1930s for photography. He worked for the BBC as a photographer until 1939 and then joined

the Black Star Photo Agency. He had wartime Blitz pictures published in Picture Post then joined *Life Magazine* for whom he went to Africa and Burma.

He married Cicily Husset-Freke in 1943 and then covered the war in Europe including Belsen and the surrender of Germany. In 1947 he was one of the four founder members of Magnum, the prestigious international photo-journalism agency that included Robert Capa, Henri Cartier-Bresson and David Seymour.

Unfortunately George's wife Cicily died in 1949 and he married Lois (known as Jinx) Witherspoon in 1953. He later rejected war because of what he witnessed in Belsen. He was most famous for his African works and published a number of books on them and, one on the Blitz in London. He travelled 7,000 miles in Africa in 1940 and another 20,000 in 1948 photographing tribal societies. George died in 1995 in Kent and there is a Blue Plaque to him at 145 Hale Road, Hale.



Thanks to Philip Holland for his help with George Rodger's biography.

## **Rohde, Shelley (1933-2007)**

### **Journalist, Author, TV Presenter & Biographer of LS Lowry**

Gillian Shelley Mary Rohde (pronounced Ro Dee), née Hall, was born on 17<sup>th</sup> May 1933 in Paddington, London. Her father was a scriptwriter and her mother an actress, an ideal background for her future career. Shelley took the surname of her mother's second husband, the pilot Douglas Rohde, and was largely brought up by her maternal grandmother, Patricia Reardon.



Shelley grew up in Nottinghamshire and left school at sixteen with few qualifications. She began work with the Nottinghamshire Free Press, Sutton-in-Ashfield; then The Star in London before it merged with the Evening News; and then joined the Daily Express, a top paper in Fleet Street.

Under the editorship of Arthur Christiansen, at the age of 21, Shelley was appointed the first woman foreign correspondent in Moscow and she learned Russian. When Nikolai Bulganin and Nikita Khrushchev visited Britain in the late 1950s, Shelley acted as unofficial interpreter for the media.

Shelley married John Weaver in 1958 and the couple had four children: Gavin (1958), Christian (1961), Daniel (1963), and Michele (1966), all of whom grew up to have successful careers in the performing arts.

In the 1960s she left Fleet Street to freelance from a large house 11 Portland Road, Bowdon, which hosted many talented writers, musicians, artists and other friends who were entertained there alongside the children, a dog and a parrot. Shelley retained the surname Rohde for professional purposes.

Financial pressures persuaded her to take a job with the Daily Mail in Manchester where she soon became the senior feature writer. She covered most major stories in the North of England and



Northern Ireland in the 1960s and 1970s.

One of the people she interviewed was the reclusive artist L S Lowry. After several meetings, she researched and wrote: *LS Lowry: A Biography*. The book made the best sellers' lists and was turned into a drama and a ballet. She also found the money to buy a wreck of a house in the Alpes Maritime region of France and here wrote *The A-Z of Lowry*. It won the Portico Prize for Literature in 2002 and led to commissions for an A-Z of Van Gogh and another of Rembrandt.

Shelley turned to broadcasting, presenting regional news alongside Tony Wilson as well as hosting her own *Live from Two* chat shows for Granada Television, and producing ethical debates for the BBC

In 1981, Johnny Marr at age 17, moved into Shelley's attic. Here he wrote *The Hand That Rocks The Cradle* and then on the same day *Suffer Little Children*. It was in that room that The Smiths were formed with Morrissey and where they rehearsed initially.

Shelley died on 6<sup>th</sup> December 2007.

I am obliged for Gavin Weaver's help with this biography of his mother.

## **Seddon, Robert (1715-1786) Worsted Manufacturer**

Robert Seddon was born in 1715 and came to Altrincham as an itinerant dealer in the early 1750s, probably from Lancashire. In 1759 he witnessed the will of Ralph Pimlott.

In 1775 Robert Seddon senior, who was described as a chapman, leased land on Sandy Lane, Bowdon from the Earl of Stamford (EGR14/2/5/60). The lease was for three lives, his own, and those of his sons Robert II (born 1752) and Thomas (born 1754). The lease was a cottage and tenement and two fields, Butty Croft and Well Croft. In 1774 Robert II married Phoebe Clarke, the daughter of Thomas Clarke and Phoebe Burgess of Ollerbarrow Farm, at St. Mary's Church, Bowdon.

In 1775 Robert senior opened a small worsted factory at Hollybank, on Sandy Lane, Bowdon (known as Stamford Road from the 1850s), where Garner's Close and the Hollywood estate is opposite to Spring Bank. Although the mill may have been operated manually initially, there is evidence of a small stream passing the site and a pond existed in the mid-19th century higher up the hill at Heald Road (Nickson), probably used as a header pond. Just north of Enville Road are Winton Road and Belgrade Road. Here, Well Field on the tithe map, where the Dome Chapel was built, probably caused sinkage of the foundations. A spring from here may have been used to feed the header pond at Seddon's Mill.

The mill is confirmed by the presence of a dye house in the 1775 Stamford Valuation Book and the 1782 Book (EGR14/7) lists a warping mill, dye house and comb shop. Hargreaves developed his Spinning Jenny in 1765 and Arkwright had invented the water-driven spinning frame in 1769, which led to the development of water-powered mills. If Seddon's mill was water-powered he was in the forefront of the Industrial Revolution.

Brosters Guide to Altrincham of 1782 also lists a Robert Seddon, woolcomber, living in the Altrincham area. The 1793 trade directory shows a worsted mill which can be identified as Hollybank and lists Altrincham's principal manufacture as worsted yarn, worsted and hair shags

(coarse cloth). However by 1800 wool was going out of fashion and the enterprise went downhill. According to testimony given to **Alfred Tarbolton**, the mill appears to have been converted to a small Thread and Bobbin Factory about 1825 although the trade directories always name it as a worsted factory right into the 1850s. This may be supported by the fact that a bobbin turner was living opposite to the mill at the bottom of Stamford Road in the 1850s.

Robert II and Phoebe had a daughter Ann born in 1775 (who in 1796 married another Clarke), and sons John born in 1778 and Robert III born in 1786. In 1786 Robert senior died and Robert II continued to run the factory until he died on 6 May 1806. Robert II appears to have married again, because when he died his wife was Margaret; one of his will executors was his brother Joseph who was a Manchester merchant.

Robert III continued to run the mill after his father died. He married Catherine and they had children Margaret born 1800, Mary born 1803, Edward born 1811, and Robert IV born in 1815 who died in 1847 aged 32. They also had daughters Frances born in 1817 and Harriet born in 1821.

Bryant's 1831 map names the area of the mill as 'Siddon's Brow', a corruption of Seddon. A Robert Seddon attended a Bowdon Vestry meeting in 1832, presumably Robert III. According to the 1851 census, Robert III aged 65 was still producing worsted. It records that he was born in Bowdon and was living on the south side of Sandy Lane (Stamford Road), Bowdon with his wife Catherine and daughters Frances and Harriet.

The 1855 directory has a Robert Seddon living at Oak Hill, Stamford Road and a Robert Seddon died aged 72 in 1858, clearly the same person, by which time the mill/factory had closed. Frances died in 1857 aged 44 and Catherine died in 1862 aged 77. Harriet was still living at Oak Hill, Stamford Road, Bowdon in the mid-1860s, taking in lodgers.

The family is interesting in that it ran a worsted mill in the late 18th and early 19th century using for power what must have been a tiny stream which no longer exists and for which there is only a small amount of evidence.

Thanks to Marjorie Cox for details of Robert Seddon. Some family details are my conjecture. ERG references are from the Stamford Papers in John Ryland's Library.

## **Siddeley, John (1824-1908) Brewer**

John Siddeley was born in 1824 and became a Chemist, Druggist and Seed Merchant at 30 Church Street then at Spring Bank in Stamford Street, Altrincham in the 1860s and 70s.

His advertisements indicated "*physician's prescriptions carefully prepared*" and that he sold "*genuine patent medicines*." He also offered toilet soap, perfumery, tooth, nail and hairbrushes, colza oil (related to rapeseed oil), genuine wax, sperm & composite candles, teas, coffees, spices etc and "*every kind of garden flower and agricultural seeds*." At that time he also owned a pub in Police Street opposite called The Rising Sun.

He is perhaps most famous for his brewery which stood on the triangle of land opposite to The Railway Inn near Hale Station from about 1863 to 1907. He bought a small building from brewer John Henry Wright who was married to Sarah Ann Davenport, the sister of John Davenport (see below). He was in business with Thomas Kent, a brewer from Slaithwaite. His special brew was known as Siddeley's Purge which was recreated for the Millennium celebrations at The Railway.

John Siddeley's father was Samuel, a farmer from Davenham near Northwich. In 1858 John married Sarah Anne Davenport, the daughter of John Davenport who was mayor of Altrincham in 1855. John Davenport had a daughter Elizabeth who married William Siddeley, John Siddeley's brother in 1865 and in 1866 they had a son John Davenport Siddeley born in Chorlton but who went to school in Altrincham and who founded Siddeley Motors and became Baron Kenilworth.

John Siddeley was Mayor of Altrincham in 1878 and died in 1908. There are several Siddeley graves in Bowdon churchyard.

## Sidebotham, Joseph (1824-1885) Pioneer Photographer

Joseph Sidebotham was born in 1824 in Hyde, Cheshire. In 1852 he became a member of the Manchester Literary & Philosophical Society and married Anne Coward, who was born in 1823 in Manchester, in Bowdon Church. She was the aunt of ornithologist Thomas Alfred Coward. Joseph was a successful calico printer and a colliery proprietor by inheritance, as well as being a talented photographer, astronomer and botanist.

He was the founder of the Manchester Photographic Society in 1855 and took some of the earliest photographs in the Altrincham area. From 1868 to 1879, the family lived at The Beeches, previously Beech Grove and built in 1837, on the corner of Higher Downs and Woodville Road, then in Dunham Massey,. They had children Joseph, Edith, Lilian, Annie and Nasmyth, who along with their father, contributed to the illustrated Family Diary in the 1870s.

Joseph considerably extended the house and built an observatory and greenhouses in the extensive grounds. By 1879 they had moved to Erlesdene on Green Walk, Bowdon and sold The Beeches to The Manchester Hospital for Consumption and Diseases of the Throat for £5000, donating £2000 towards converting the house into a tuberculosis hospital. The hospital opened in 1885 as the only free sanatorium in Britain and was called St. Anne's Home, after Joseph's wife Anne, who had died in 1882. The buildings are now residential St. Anne's Gardens.

1886 saw the opening of a new specialist wing, financed by engineer **William J Crossley**. Joseph had died in 1885 and is buried along with other members of the family in Bowdon churchyard.

Thanks to Sue Nichols who wrote *St. Anne's Home* for details of Joseph Sidebotham.

## Sparkes, Curtis (1905-2002) Engineer

Curtis Albert Sparkes was born in 1905 into an old Altrincham family. His grandfather Andrew Curtis Sparkes was a farmer at Park Farm who had organised the 'Broadheath Blockade' in 1903.

His father was Curtis Edwin Sparkes and Curtis Albert was born in 1905. He attended Oldfield Brow Seamons Moss Endowed School and then Altrincham Technical School. On leaving school he briefly worked for Metropolitan Vickers Electrical Company Limited in Trafford Park and then joined HW Kearns in 1919.



When he was 16 he built his own motorbike. After serving an apprenticeship in the works he entered the Drawing Office. He attended the Manchester College of Science & Technology, later the University of Manchester Institute of Science and Technology (UMIST) now merged with the Manchester University, and gained his Higher National Certificate in Mechanical Engineering there in 1926.

In 1929 Curtis married Hilda Hall who died in 1970 and in 1972 he married Erika Pohl.

Curtis became a member of the Institute of Mechanical Engineers and a member of the Manchester Association of Engineers to which he belonged for 70 years. He became Kearns' Chief Designer in 1938, Technical Director in charge of design and development in 1955 and Managing Director from 1969 until his retirement in 1970.

He spent 50 years of his working life with Kearns and invented the world's first computer-controlled boring machine in 1955. After retiring at 65 from the merged Kearns-Richards company, he continued as a consultant with Budenbergs and with Fairey Engineering at Stockport until he was 95.

In 1988 he gained his Master of Science at the Victoria University of Manchester, and was awarded his Doctor of Philosophy there in 1991 at the age of 86, the oldest person in Britain to achieve this.

As a leader of the Machine Tool Industry, Curtis was a member of many national and regional committees. He was a past President of the Manchester Association of Engineers, a Member of the Council of the Institution of Mechanical Engineers, Chairman of the North West Branch of the Institution of Mechanical Engineers, a Member of the Production Engineering Research Association Technical Policy, a Committee Member of the Ministry of Technology Committees on Machine Tools, Founder Member of the Machine Tools Industry Research Association, and a member of several other worthy bodies.

He was also a member of UMIST Council and several of its committees and was a consultant on Machine Tool Developments for the United Nations. For his contributions to the Machine Tool Industry he was awarded the Constantine Medal by the Manchester Association of Engineers and won the UMIST Medal for outstanding services to that institution. The Altrincham Court Leet made him a Burgess and Freeman of Altrincham in 1991.

In his spare time Curtis invented a number of devices for hospital laboratories including a fast-working filter to speed up blood tests. He also designed a unique folding baby push-chair, which is still manufactured in Japan.

Over the last 10 years of his life Curtis wrote a book on the Machine Tool Industry in Broadheath entitled *Famous for a Century*, published privately in 2008 by his wife. Curtis died in 2002, leaving his wife Erika and son Edouard, a daughter-in-law and a grandchild.

Thanks to Erika Sparkes for details of her late husband Curtis Sparkes, and Roger Law for the photo.

## Speakman, William VC (1927-2018) Soldier

Private Bill Speakman was born in Altrincham in 1927 at 17 Moss Lane, and later brought up by his mother Hannah and step-father Herbert Houghton at 27 Moss Lane.

Bill was one of the few privates to have been awarded a Victoria Cross and is probably the best-remembered recipient of a Korean Victoria Cross, probably because of his well-publicised appearances on Remembrance Day commemorations as a Chelsea Pensioner being pushed down Whitehall in a wheelchair. He attended Oakfield Street Infant School then Wellington Road School, where he always played centre half or goal keeper at football because of his size. He was also a good swimmer.

At 15 he joined the cadets of the Cheshire Regiment and at 18 joined The First Battalion, The Black Watch. He was six feet seven inches (2m) tall and, although born in Cheshire, had dark Scottish looks, and was known as 'Big Bill'.

After serving in Trieste, Hong Kong and Germany, Bill volunteered for Korea in 1951. In 1952 he was awarded the Victoria Cross for his actions when wounded and under fire from the Chinese in November 1951. Outnumbered ten to one by the Chinese troops, he mustered six other men and led waves of grenade attacks on enemy lines to hold the UN position on Hill 217, despite being wounded in the leg. He came home to an official reception in Altrincham, which included his speech from the Town Hall balcony. When King George VI died he represented the Army when the Services broadcast tributes.

He married Rachel Snitch in Singapore and they had six children. He retired from the Army at 40 and bought a house in Huntingdonshire. He sold his war medals for £1,500 to repair the house, which were later sold in 1982 for £20,000 but are now preserved in the War Museum of Scotland at Edinburgh Castle.

He later moved to Torquay, was divorced in 1972, and went to South Africa where he changed his name to Speakman-Pitt, remarried and had another daughter.

In 2003 Bill returned to Altrincham to have a local bridge, the Woodlands Road Flyover, named after him, and where there is an oblong plaque. He was also made a Freeman Burgess of the Borough of Altrincham and an honorary member of the Altrincham & Bowdon Civic Society.

In 2010, as the only surviving VC holder from the Korean War, Bill returned to South Korea with other veterans to take part in a series of commemorations to mark the start of the fighting.

In 2011 Bill launched Trafford Housing Trust's care scheme in Timperley.

Bill became president of the Altrincham and Bowdon Civic Society and a Chelsea Pensioner. He died in 2018.

There is a Blue Plaque to Bill Speakman on the facade of



Altrincham Station, and an oblong plaque on Speakman's Bridge over the railway.

## **Tarbolton, Alfred (1861-1934) Local Historian**

Alfred Tarbolton was a local historian who lived variously in Hale, Bowdon and Altrincham. He published many booklets on Hale and fought for Hale's autonomy in local government.

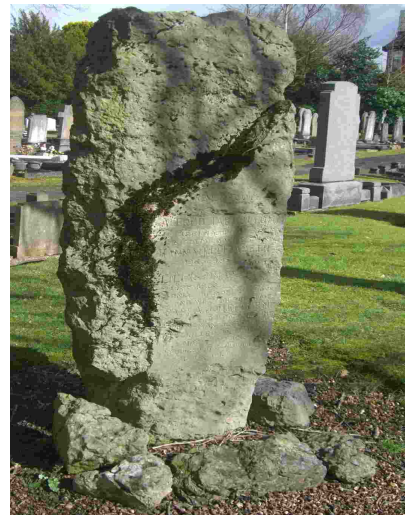
William Alfred Tarbolton was born in Chorlton-on-Medlock on 14 April 1861, the son of G S Tarbolton who was a partner in a transport firm, after which his parents moved to Whalley Range, probably from Hull where his father had changed his name from Tarbotham.

He was educated privately, articled as a solicitor in 1878 and was admitted in 1883. He became a partner in the Manchester firm of Brett, Hamilton and Tarbolton. In 1902 he was made a Justice of the Peace, a post he held for 30 years and Honorary Secretary and later a President of the Manchester Law Society, which society he served for 33 years. He became Commissioner of Income Tax for the Altrincham District.

In 1883 Alfred married Hannah Elizabeth Jones, another solicitor and the daughter of TE Jones, also a solicitor, and in 1885 the couple moved to Hale.

In 1887 Hale Parish Council resolved to work towards local autonomy. In 1898 ratepayers met at the Bleeding Wolf public house, Ashley Heath and a committee was appointed including Alfred to co-operate with the Parish Council. In 1899 he was appointed gas lighting inspector for Hale and was elected as the first chairman of Hale Urban District Council in 1900.

He was responsible for preserving many of the old council records from the 17th to the 20th century, which are now in the Chester Record Office. He campaigned to change the name of his local village from Peel Causeway to the more ancient name of Hale, and to preserve its independence from Altrincham.







In 1886 the Tarboltons rented The Lodge, 247 Ashley Road, Hale from William Owen, architect and surveyor who lived at 249. They then lived at Elmhurst, 24 South Downs Road, Ashley Heath from 1898 to 1903. In 1903 he bought land from the Stamford estate and built Athelney (above), making a link with King Arthur's castle in Somerset, South Downs Road which is a fine house in the Arts & Crafts style.

Initially he attended Bowdon Downs Church but moved to St. Johns, Altrincham and held various posts there. In 1911 the Tarboltons moved to Altrincham and were living at The Manor House, Woodlands Road, Altrincham in 1929 and attended St. George's Church. Altrincham Methodist Church is on the site of this house. Alfred Tarbolton became interested in the nursing movement and was Vice-President and Chairman of the Altrincham and District Nursing Association from 1909 to 1922. He took a keen interest in local history and was an exceptional researcher. He was also a poet.

After a bad start spending some years searching for the mythical 'Farmer Peel', he did much to preserve the history of the development of Peel Causeway and Hale. He interviewed some of the older people from Hale and produced several publications including *The Handy Book for Hale* (1900), *Local Government in Hale* (1907 in the Altrincham Guardian), *Chapters for Hale Fellows* (1908 in the Altrincham Guardian), *The History of Hale Methodist Church, Local Government in Hale* (1908), *Records of Hale* (1921, originally published in the Altrincham Guardian in 1908), *Ringway Chapel Before the Disruption 1515-1721* (1923, after publication in the Altrincham Guardian of that year), *The Renaissance of Hale* (1925) and *The Story of Peel Causeway* (1929).

He also lectured on the subject and in 1932 was working on the complete history of Hale from Saxon times to the 1920s, the draft of which is in the Chester Record Office in two volumes (LUH4/1) and which was based on *Chapters for Hale Fellows* and his other works. In their final years the Tarboltons lived at the original Brooklands Hotel, Brooklands, now demolished.

Alfred Tarbolton died on 4 June 1934 and his death is registered at Manchester, reference 8d/102. His wife died the same year. They are buried in Altrincham Cemetery on Hale Road. Hale, plot

number 35H.

The Tarboltons had a daughter Lillas Una who was born in 1886 who married Captain Archibald James Hepburn of the Manchester Regiment in 1911 and they had children Patricia (1912-2007) and Philip Archibald (1915-1993). Captain Hepburn was killed at Gallipoli in 1915 and Una died in 1938 and is also buried in Altrincham Cemetery. The Tarboltons have a road in Hale named after them.

The name 'Tarbolton' may come from Celtic *torr*, a hill, plus Old English *bothel* and *tun*, a settlement with a special building. Tarbolton is a rare surname and there were only 37 in the 1901 census. However there appear to be no Tarboltons in the UK currently.

There is a small town near Ayr called Tarbolton, which is presumably where the name originated. The town is famous for its Robbie Burns connection where he lived about 1780, and for the Bachelors Club.

Thanks to Philip Hepburn for details of his great-grandfather Alfred Tarbolton.

## **Timpson, William Anthony (1911-1998) Shoe Retailer**

Anthony Timpson's ancestor also Anthony, was born in 1811 and worked as a silk weaver in Rothwell, Northamptonshire. He was married to Mary and their son Charles, born in 1828 in Kettering, was also a silk weaver. By 1851 Charles was married to Mary and a foreman at a silk factory. Their son William Timpson was born in 1856. By 1871 Charles was listed as a shoe merchant and in 1871 as a shoe merchant (salesman) and in 1881 his son William as a shoe clicker (produced the uppers of shoes). By 1891 William had made great progress in the shoe trade and was listed as a shoe manufacturer and 1901 as a boot manufacturer.



William Timpson, Anthony's grandfather, in effect started the family business by making bootlaces in Rothwell, Northamptonshire at the age of eight. Aged twelve his father sent him to work for his brother Charles who was a shoe wholesaler in Manchester. He delivered boots on a wheelbarrow but also attended night-school. William then returned to Rothwell to learn shoemaking. William later managed the business but soon realised that sales would be his fort  and returned to Manchester in 1865 to eventually open his own shop at 298 Oldham Street which he outfitted to a high standard.

William was very successful but suffered from ill health and was advised to leave Manchester and moved to Kettering. There he open a shoe factory in 1884 making shoes exclusively for his own shops but also bespoke shoes for customers for whom they held wooden shoe lasts. By 1909 he had 26 shops, 20 in Greater Manchester. His eldest son Will expanded the business into Lancashire, Yorkshire and Scotland.

William Anthony Timpson was born in Kettering 1911, the son of William Timpson junior and Florence Butlin. In 1936 he married Hilda Mercy Smith in Kettering and moved to Hale and are listed in the 1939 Hale electoral roll as living at Cranoe, Elmsway and a shoe buyer. Their son

John was born there in 1943 and now heads the current family business with his son James as chief executive. During the war, Anthony belonged to the Altrincham & District Auxiliary Fire Service which had its headquarters in Bowdon. Dame Kathleen Ollerenshaw was a cousin.

In 1929 William died, Will ran the business and Anthony took on men's purchasing. His cousins John and Geoffrey Noakes became ladies buyer and property manager respectively. By 1952 they had 225 shops which Will visited every year, a practice later continued by Anthony and his son John, and grandson James.

By 1970 Anthony and his cousin Geoffrey were the only remaining directors and Anthony became chairman and Geoffrey deputy. Professor Roland Smith was recruited to produce a corporate plan and later joined the board.

In 1972, Geoffrey Noakes proposed that Anthony Timpson step down as Chairman, seconded by Roland Smith and the board, which now included Bert Brownhill, the computer manager, voted in favour. Geoffrey and Bert were both colonels in the Territorial Army. Anthony held a family meeting at his home to get support for his remaining as chairman.

In 1973 United Drapery Stores acquired William Timpson, John Timpson staying on as managing director from 1975. In 1983 John led a management buyout for William Timpson but in 1987 sold the loss-making shoe retail business to rival George Oliver, concentrating on its repair shops. Today, Timpsons has shoe repair, locksmith and engraving, and digital photo shops enterprises based in Wythenshawe with over 2000 branches. They are also the largest dry cleaning company in the UK. The company employs many ex-offenders as part of its social policy.

Anthony Timpson died in 1998 aged 87.

Thanks to Sir John Timpson for his assistance and the photo.

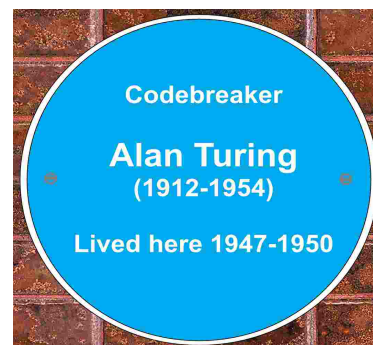
## Turing, Alan (1912-1954) Mathematician & Code-breaker

Alan Turing lived at 25 Nursery Avenue from 1947 to 1950 before moving to Wilmslow where he died. The then residents of the Hale house didn't want a Blue Plaque **so I have designed one.**

Dr Alan Mathison Turing, OBE, FRS has been said to be the 'Father of Modern Computing' or the 'Founder of Computer Science'. He was born in Paddington, London in 1912, his father Julius Mathison Turing and mother Ethel Sara Stoney. His uncle was Sir Demot Turing.

Alan may have inherited his maths skills from his grandfather John Robert Turing who took a mathematics degree at Trinity College, Cambridge. During his school years at Tunbridge Wells, Kent and Sherbourne, Dorset, Alan was described by two teachers as a genius at maths (but he was very poor at other subjects). He took an interest in Einstein's theories, astronomy and quantum theory. He won a prize at school for a maths paper describing a chain reaction.

He won a scholarship to Kings College Cambridge in 1931 where he gained a Maths Degree with distinction in 1934, and in 1935 was elected a Fellow at the age of 22. He was also a Marathon



runner.

In 1935 he investigated the idea of a machine to carry out mathematical functions and logic, based on work by von Neuman, and in 1936 wrote a paper on the design of computers entitled *The Turing Machine: On Computable Numbers*. As a result computers were sometimes known as Turing Machines (with an umlaut over the 'u').

During 1936-38 Alan was at Princeton University, where he attended lectures by Albert Einstein and Max von Neumann and wrote papers on logic, algebra and number theory, and gained a PhD. There in 1938 he built an electro-mechanical binary multiplier to solve codes and conceived the idea of a 'Turing Machine' using sequential logical steps, programs, process control, storage and input/output.

In 1938 the Government Code and Cipher School recruited him for decrypting coded messages from the Naval version of the German Enigma machines, the decoding of which had been thought to be impossible. As war was declared in 1939 he moved to Bletchley Park where he worked in Hut 8. In 1941 he was engaged to Joan Clarke who later became the Hut 8 deputy. Turing redesigned the Polish 'Bombes', which were electro-mechanical machines used to speed up the decryption of cipher messages and which were working at electronic speeds by 1942. He was self-taught in electronics and had some success in decrypting messages.

He worked with von Neuman and Tommy Flowers, a Post Office engineer who constructed the first programmable machine, Colossus, using his knowledge of telephone exchanges. Turing was awarded an OBE for his work.

In 1942 he was sent to Washington to update American code breakers. In 1945 designed a speech scrambler and was recruited by the National Physics Laboratory to write a report on the design of an electronic universal machine, including programming. This resulted in the Automatic Computing Machine (ACE) in 1946 but a Manchester team were ahead.

Max Newman (previously Neuman) who lived in Bowdon and was Professor of Pure Mathematics at Manchester University from 1945, secured a post for Alan at Manchester University in 1948 as a Reader. He worked on the first stored program computer with Freddie Williams (later knighted) and Dr Tom Kilburn (later Professor). Freddie Williams had patented cathode ray tube storage and in 1947 became Professor of Electronic Engineering at Manchester. Alan became in effect a writer of software for pioneer computer engineer Williams and the 2048 bit Baby computer ran its first program in 1950.

Alan wrote a paper on *Computing Machines and Intelligence*. He predicted that there would be intelligent computers within 100 years. He became a Fellow of the Royal Society in 1951 for his 1935 work.

In 1951 he was appointed Assistant Director of the Royal Society Computing Laboratory at Manchester University and in 1953 became a Reader (senior lecturer) in Theoretical Computing. He invented the idea of the 'Turing Test' to determine whether computers were able to respond like human beings. He contributed a section on digital computers applied to chess in Vivian Bowden's 1953 book *Faster Than Thought*.

Alan Turing lived at 25 Nursery Avenue, Hale from 1947 to 1950 then in Adlington Road, Dean Row, Wilmslow where there is a Blue Plaque. Turing was prosecuted in 1952 for homosexual acts and died from cyanide poisoning on 8 June 1954 aged 41 at Wilmslow.

A statue to him was unveiled in Sackville Park, Manchester in June 2001 and Turing Way in East Manchester has been named after him. In September 2009, the Prime Minister apologised for his past treatment.

Babbage had the idea in 1812 of mechanically calculating and printing mathematical tables and about 1820 adapted the idea of using punched cards from Jacquard looms which had been invented in 1804 to control the weaving process. Babbage had also invented the idea of program loops and built part of a mechanical calculating machine (which has since been reconstructed).

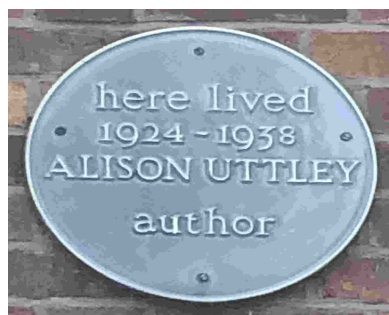
Thanks to Andrew Hodges book and the website dedicated to the memory of Alan Turing; also to Chris Hill of Altrincham History Society.

## Uttley, Alison (1884-1972) Author

Alison Uttley was born at Castle Top Farm in Cromford, Derbyshire in 1884 as Alice Jane Taylor, father Henry Taylor.

She took an honours physics degree at Manchester in 1906. She was a suffragette and a close friend of Ramsay MacDonald. When first married, she lived in the Old Vicarage in Knutsford which had featured in Mrs Gaskell's *Cranford*. She married James Uttley from Bowdon and they had a son John and moved to Bowdon in 1924.

Alison was a prolific writer of some 20 adult books and 40 children's books from 1931 upon the death of her husband to the early 1970s. She is particularly remembered for the *Little Grey Rabbit* books, which she wrote while living in Bowdon. Much of her inspiration came from Castle Top Farm. There is a Blue Plaque at Downs House, 13 Higher Downs, Bowdon (right), where she lived from 1924 to 1938. She then retired to Beaconsfield, Buckinghamshire where she continued to write, including a cookery book and a history of Buckinghamshire, and where she died in 1972.



## Vasey, Gladys (1889-1981) Artist

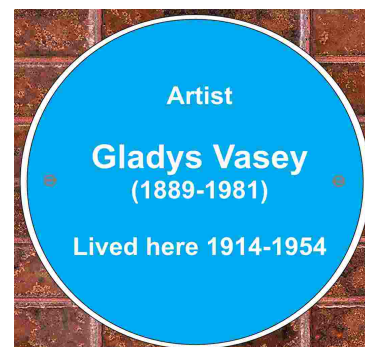
My own records and that of Altrincham Heritage say that Vasey had a Blue Plaque at 4 Laurel Bank but there is none now, and none on the internet, **so I have invented one.**

Gladys Vasey was a talented artist who lived at 4 Laurel Mount, East Downs Road in the 1920s, next door to violinist Adolf Brodsky at number 3.

She and her twin sister Eva were born on 8th June 1889 while their parents were on holiday in Blackpool. Their father, Philip Johnstone, came from a musical family and married Agnes Ellinger whom was of Anglicised-German descent. The family lived in Broad Road, Sale and the twins attended Sale High School for Girls. In 1907 the girls were sent to a finishing school in Germany to learn French and German and be instructed in music and the arts.



Back home Gladys attended art classes in the studio of Polish artist William Fitz at the same time as L S Lowry. In 1911 she married Roland Vasey, an insurance surveyor, at Sale Independent Chapel, and they moved to the Wirral. Roland was promoted and they moved to Bowdon, finding a house on Richmond Road.



In 1916 their daughter Gabrielle Agnes was born and in 1922 Madeleine Isobel. Gladys often sketched but sometimes she played the piano with Brodsky accompanying her on the violin. By 1928 Gladys had already undertaken a commission to paint a portrait of Florence Clibran, the wife of the local nurseryman. In 1930 the girls were sent to different boarding schools.

In 1936 she spent some time at the art school of Lamorna Birch at Lamorna Cove in Cornwall and came under the influence of Stanley Gardiner who gave her much guidance, advising her to move from portraits to landscapes. She exhibited at the Manchester Academy of Fine Art. In 1940 they sold 4 Laurel Bank and moved to Bayfield House on Stamford Road, Bowdon.

Their daughters both went to agricultural college and Roland bought Llan Farm near Llanyblodwel in the Tanat valley where Gladys converted an outbuilding into a studio. After ten years here they sold Bayfield House. In 1961 Gladys exhibited at the Royal Society of Portrait Painters, hanging alongside Augustus John and Laura Knight. In 1953 the Vaseys sold Llan Farm and moved to Llanrwst and then Glandwr in the Conway Valley.

After 53 years of marriage Gladys left Roland to live with James Sumner and they moved to Herefordshire where James died five years later.

In 1969 she moved to Aberaeron and set up a studio in the garden. After her health declined, she died in Aberystwyth Hospital on 22nd January 1987. An exhibition of her work was held in 1991 at the National Portrait Gallery's centre at Castel Bodellwyddan. She always signed her work **Vasey**. Her painting of her daughter Madeleine is hung in Manchester Town Hall. There should be a Blue Plaque to Gladys Vasey at 4 Laurel Mount.

Thanks to Ronald Trenbath for his Bowdon History Society article on Gladys Vasey for which he consulted Robert Meyrick of Aberystwyth University.

## **Vawdrey, Robert (16th century) Landowner**

Robert Vawdrey (or Vaudrey) who lived in Bank Hall, Bank Hall Lane, Hale in the early 16th century and Riddings Hall, Timperley. He claimed aristocratic descent for his family from Sir Claude Vawdrey who came from Normandy soon after William the Conqueror and was allocated land in Cheshire by the Earl of Chester.

Robert had a house in London, a townhouse in Bridgegate, Chester and was Vice-Chamberlain of the County Palatine. Robert was the executor of a deed in which Edward Janney, a Manchester merchant, donated land in 1553 for the building of a Free School in Bowdon. Robert Vawdrey made a bequest of £4 per annum to the school in 1600, continued by his second son John.

Robert died in 1570 and left Bank Hall to his third son John who died in 1626. When John's wife



died in 1632 the estate passed to Richard, the eldest son who however became Catholic and he was living there in 1640. To keep Bank Hall safe it was made over to Henry, the second son.

Another Robert Vawdrey, possibly Richard's son, helped to defend Wythenshawe Hall in 1643 in a minor Civil War siege.

There were Vawdreys in the Hale area from at least the early-15th century. They farmed at Ollerbarrow Hall (often in the records as Owlbarrow or Oulerbarrow or Ellerborough, from Old English *oler* or *alor*, an alder tree) and at Bank Hall, both of which have remaining 18th century buildings.



Bank Hall (see picture) went back to the 14th century, and may have been rebuilt in 1607 from a beam found with that date. It was first held by Masseys then Vawdreys from the early 16th century to 1760. Ollerbarrow was held by Vawdreys from the early 15th century to the early 18th century. There were also Vawdreys at Riddings Hall in Timperley in the 16th and 17th centuries. All of these buildings were originally moated.

The relationships of the family are complex and not fully documented. Three Vaudreys were mayors of Altrincham: Alexander in 1616, George in 1636 and a George again in 1671.

Vawdrey is a Roman Catholic Cheshire family name originating from France. There are several Vaudrey and Vaudry villages near Besançon, near the Swiss border, and a Vaudry village in Normandy, the latter being the likely source of the name, close to the town of Vire, 50 miles east of Granville.

John Randle Vaudrey of Fordingbridge was not a proven descendant from the Hale branch but was certainly very French in looks. His uncle Hugh Vaudrey who was descended from the William Henry Vaudrey, Lord Mayor of Manchester, claimed descent from the Hale Vawdreys and his research papers are at the Cheshire Record Office. There are many Vawdrey graves in Bowdon Churchyard.

## **Veno, Sir William Henry (1866-1933) Druggist**

One of Altrincham's residents during the early 1920s was Sir William Henry Veno, founder of Veno's Drug Co Ltd. He was born William Reynard Varney in Castle Douglas, Scotland on the 22nd December 1866.

William went to school in Newton Stewart in Dumfries & Galloway and then served an apprenticeship at Garliestown Post Office Wigtownshire as a Telegram Learner. He then went to sea aged 17 as a cabin boy on the Union Line and moved to America where he stayed for three years. Whilst in America he acquired a formula for Veno Cough Cure.

When he was 22 he returned to London and developed an interest in politics and public affairs and was in demand as a public speaker. In 1891 at the age of 25 he went back to America to work in advertising. On August 24th 1894 he patented Veno's Drug Co Ltd in Pittsburg Pennsylvania, under his name William Reynard Varney. William was inspired by



President McKinley's inauguration speech whilst in America and met his future wife, Mary Pearson who had moved to America with her parents in 1881.

After the McKinley election he came back to England and located himself at 418 Chester Road, Manchester in the factory depicted on the Veno's Cough Cure bottles. They also manufactured Germolene, Veno's Seaweed liniment, and Dr Cassels tablets under the Veno banner. His business became more and more successful and he was knighted at Buckingham Palace on Friday 25th June 1920 on the occasion of the King's birthday in recognition of his recruiting work during the war.

Sir William carried out further fund-raising work and speeches, opening the Leigh branch of British Legion on 5th March 1921 and a theatre in Manchester among other engagements. He also became Mayor of Altrincham for 1923-24. He was a staunch Conservative and was officially connected to the party for more than 20 years. For some time was the Chairman of the Altrincham Polling District and Chairman of the Divisional Association.

As an accomplished speaker, he was called upon to carry out many after dinner speeches. He was also a Freeman and a Liveryman of the City of London and was connected with the Freemasons in London. After an unconfirmed cancer scare when he had a growth from his lip removed, he offered £20,000 for a cure for cancer. He also gave a donation to Middlesex hospital for the work they had done.

In November 1924 the Veno Drug Company was sold as a going concern and became part of Beechams Drug Co in 1925. After the sale of Venos Sir William started up several companies including the Cellulose Acetate Silk Company (photographic films) and Transmutograph Ltd, but these companies were much less successful. In May 1932 he set up a company selling products invented by a Dr Knox of the USA.

On 6th March 1933 Sir William was found dead in the grounds of his home, Woodlands in Bonville Road, Dunham Massey. He had gone out shooting rabbits in his grounds. His wife Mary found him lying face down in the wooded area with a gunshot wound to the chest. The inquest declared a verdict of "Suicide during impulsive insanity." The inquest also showed that there was no evidence that Sir William was troubled or of unsound mind in any way, although he had lost a substantial amount money over the years with further business adventures, Sir William was still a wealthy man when he died.

Thanks to Paul Parker for details and photographs of his great-grandfather Sir William Henry Veno.

## **Waller family, Bowdon academics**

### **Prof. Ross Waller (1899-1988)**

Ross Douglas Waller was born on the Isle of Wight in 1899 and by 1911 the family had moved to Chorlton, Manchester. In 1937 Ross became Director of Extra-Mural Studies at Manchester University and the family moved to 3 Church Bank, Bowdon. In 1938 with his wife Isobel, he attempted to raise funds for a Workers' Educational Association college hostel in Bowdon, suggesting Denzell on the corner of Green Walk and the Dunham Road as a suitable building. It had been left to Bowdon Urban District Council by the Lamb family after Samuel Lamb died in 1936. Ross described in his booklet *Residential College* the process which would have transformed Denzell but the University felt unable to take over the house. Marjorie Cox recorded in Bowdon Sheaf 8 that, nevertheless, enthusiasts including Ross's wife Isobel, decided to form a

limited company in 1938 and mobilised voluntary and financial support. Isobel designed a heraldic shield for the Guildhouse. Miss Lamb offered £150 per year for three years for residential caretakers and Bowdon Urban District Council offered to charge a nominal rent but the project failed to materialise. In 1945, Ross was awarded an MBE for his work as Honorary Secretary of the Manchester Regional Committee Central Advisory Council for Adult Education in the Forces. He was later awarded a CBE for his work in Community Development. In 1949 he became Professor of Adult Education in the Faculty of Education at Manchester. In 1952 he was Chairman of the Manchester Dante Society and British-Italian League. In 1954 he again proposed that Denzell should become a WEA Centre but to no avail. He died in 1988.

### **Isobel Waller (1902-1989)**

Isobel Brown was born in 1902 in Scotland. She met Ross in Florence, married and in 1934 gave birth to a son David Michael. Isobel became a well-known personality in Altrincham through her remarkable support for people in need of help. She became concerned about the plight of homeless people and those who had gone astray, and would offer a bed at Church Bank to those in need. With this in mind she brought into use the house's extensive cellars which had been servants' quarters and where the children had slept for safety during the war, and she turned a disused coal cellar into a chapel. To the two substantial bedrooms there she added a kitchen and a bathroom with a toilet. The bedrooms and the kitchen had large windows and a separate entrance. From time to time a family was housed here until found accommodation. Individual homeless people were given a roost in summer houses, the greenhouse and an old caravan. She also used the attic of the house but in 1973 the Public Health Authority closed the cellars down. At the meeting she said that she had housed 80 homeless people free over 30 years in cases which neither the social services nor the parish clergy could deal with. Isobel was brought up a Presbyterian but converted to Roman Catholicism. She produced at least two booklets of poems which she sent to friends. They reflect her compassion for people and nature, and life in Bowdon in the 1970s. She died in 1989.

### **Prof. Michael Waller (1934-2021)**

Isobel and Ross's son David Michael Waller was born in 1934 and became an outstanding student at Altrincham Grammar School. He studied Humanities at the University of Oxford, and Russian in the Army and at Manchester University. Michael married Manon Lallée in Lancaster in 1970 and they had two daughters, Nadia and Florence. He became Professor of Politics at Keele University and its first Director of European Studies. He was co-founder of the Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics, and of the Journal of Environmental Politics. He published many articles and books. Micky, as he was known to his friends, also played the violin and sang. He completed his mother's biography in 2021 and died aged 87 in October 2021.



Thanks to Michael Waller, Michael Chester and the Keele University website.

### **Wallis, Hugh (1871-1943) Art Metal Worker**

Hugh Wallis was born in Kettering in 1871 and trained in art at Bushey, Herts in the 1890s. It is not known where he trained in metalwork. He went into business initially as an artist in which he excelled but moved to metalwork because it paid better.

In 1900 he opened a studio at 7 Market Street, Altrincham when he was living at The Poplars, Burlington Street (now Road). In 1904 he married Dora Myfanwy Watkins of Llanfyllin, Montgomeryshire and 1907 he moved his studio to 2 Station Buildings, Stamford New Road, Altrincham. At that time they were living at Carn Brae, Hazelwood Road, Hale. In 1911 they moved home to a large house at 72 The Downs, Altrincham, now three 1960s houses and renumbered as 80, 80a, 80b. In 1918 he still described himself as an Artist and exhibited paintings at the Royal Academy.

Hugh did much of his metalwork at The Downs, had a studio in the house and employed five or six people in workshops behind. His showcase was on the left-hand wall of the front garden and always contained examples of his work (which were never stolen) and the remains of the wrought iron supports for it are still there.

Hugh became a leading figure in the Northern Art Workers Guild and was a founder member of the Red Rose Guild of Artworkers which was established in Manchester in 1920 and of which he later became chairman. Meetings were for some time held at the Whitworth Art Gallery who still have a close interest in Hugh. Pilkington's Tiles supported the guild and Margaret Pilkington acted as Honorary Secretary. Hugh produced some outstanding beaten copper, pewter and brass, usually in combination, often bought for special occasions such as weddings and now much collected.

Examples of his metalwork are oval bowls, rose bowls and mirrors in copper with diagonally inlaid bands of pewter or white metal around the edge. Pieces however also included trays, bowls, vases, jugs, tea sets, fire screens, curbs, coal buckets, ashtrays and wall lights. He produced wall lights for the new Council Chamber in Altrincham, no longer there. He produced the plaques for Broadheath Bridge detailing its history. He was also a silversmith and produced ewers, crosses, alms dishes, altar ornaments, challenge shields, cups, trophies and memorial tablets. He illustrated books, painted in oils and water, produced colour prints from stencils and woodcuts and sold pottery and pulp-ware from his studio.

Hugh's brother Thomas moved to the area to join him and was living 20 Hale Low Road, Hale in 1939 and they continued to work together until Hugh died in 1944. Hugh had a son Philip who lived in several counties and became county chess champion of each, including British Chess Champion in 1962.



*Hugh Wallis tray with  
HW logo at the bottom*

Hugh's younger son Brian, born in 1913, joined the family business in 1930 and continued the metalworking tradition until he retired to Penzance in 1964 with his sister Ruby where he died in 1981. Brian produced bowls of the same style and quality as Hugh and continued to use Hugh's logo so it is difficult to distinguish the two. Brian also produced small items such as bowls and ashtrays, which were often used for presentation purposes, for example for retiring schoolteachers. The Government of the day used to present visiting dignitaries with them.

Brian was also an amateur authority on butterflies and an enthusiastic cricketer with Ashley Cricket Club where he was known for his effortless and laconic sense of humour. He also took a lead in The Old Altrinchamians Football Club and was an accomplished after-dinner speaker at reunions. In *The Old Altrinchamian* magazine he often signed himself as 'Rip Van Wallis'.

Thanks to Margaret Thompson for her book *Hugh Wallis – Artist & Art Metal Worker*.

## **White, Noel (1929-2019) Businessman & Football Director**

Noel was born on 18 December 1930 in Altrincham and attended Stamford Park Primary School, followed by Bradbury Central Secondary School from 1941 to 1945. Noel was in the football team from the first year and remembered playing against Wadham House School. His best subjects were geography, book-keeping, arithmetic and algebra. Playground games included football with a tennis ball, tick, marbles and conkers. In later life he attended many Bradbury Reunions. He was in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Hale Scouts which had a camp near Pickmere run by Geoff Sutcliffe.

During the war he remembered the three bombs that fell in Byrom and Bold Streets and one on Weetman's decorators' shed.

When he left school his first job was as an audit clerk with J Percy Clow, accountants in Spring Gardens, Manchester, where he received excellent training. He then had two years National Service in the Royal Army Medical Corps and one year back with Clows. After this he took a job as an accountant with the Music Exchange, Portland Street, Manchester, then worked as a cost clerk with Linotype in Broadheath.

It was from the experience he gained at The Music Exchange that he developed the idea of a music shop in Altrincham and it was on 22 January 1955 that, along with Peter Swales who he had met up with at the accounts office previously, the first White and Swales shop opened at 2 Cross Street. Many of the top recording stars paid promotional visits including Cliff Richards, Tex Ritter (*The Wayward Wind*), Marino Marini Quartet (*Volare*), Eve Boswell, Marvin Rainwater, etc. Their second shop was in Stockport, and a third shop was at 55 George Street, Altrincham previously Nobles Furniture, where they commenced selling and renting TVs and white goods. They eventually had a chain of 15 shops in Cheshire and South Manchester, in addition to a head office and service department in Cecil Road, Hale. In 1968 they sold the business to the national electrical giant Thorn Industries Ltd.

Just before selling White and Swales they had each bought one third in the Bowdon Hydro Ltd, on Langham Road, Bowdon, Tony Kirkland owning the other third. By 1969 Noel became the sole owner of the hotel business and started an expansion programme. The Bowdon Hotel as it is later called, was the first hotel in south Manchester to be awarded an RAC and AA 3-Star appointment and an Egon Ronay recommendation.

Noel had an extensive career in football, playing for the Royal Army Medical Corps Depot 1st Team, Chester Football Club and Linotype, and then with Peter buying the majority shareholding in Altrincham Football Club in 1961. Peter became chairman, and Noel became vice-chairman and general manager. They spent a lot of time organising fund-raising events. A memorable match was an FA Cup fixture with Wrexham in 1963 with Cliff Michelmore commentating from the top of the stand which I saw. When fog rolled off Timperley Brook the match had to be abandoned and was played twice more before Wrexham beat Altrincham.

In 1967 Peter moved to Manchester City Football Club, eventually becoming chairman and Noel became chairman of Altrincham. In 1976 Noel joined the Football Association as a divisional representative and became a life vice-president. He left Altrincham FC in 1986 after 25 years to become a director of Liverpool FC where he spent 21 years, two years as chairman. He was a member of the FA's International Committee for 26 years, the last 14 as chairman, retiring in 2010. He attended World Cup Finals in Italy, France, Japan, and Germany.

Noel died in Bowdon on 30 June 2019.

## Wood, Edgar (1860-1935) Architect

Edgar Wood was born in Middleton, Manchester in 1860, the sixth of eight children of industrialist Thomas Broadbent Wood and Mary Sykes from Huddersfield. He was educated at Middleton's Queen Elizabeth Grammar School and after much sketching as a youth, became a trainee with a Manchester architect.

In 1881 he was living with his uncle Joseph Wood in Rochdale as an articled architect pupil. He passed his RIBA exams and became an associate of the firm in 1885. He eventually set up his own offices in Middleton, moving to Manchester in 1897. He became an architect respected in England, Germany and Scandinavia. His work was mainly domestic but he also designed several churches and commercial premises, filling his buildings with fine furniture in the Arts & Crafts style. He invariably wore a black cloak lined with red silk.

Wood was regarded as the most avant-garde architect in the north of England. He was one of half a dozen specialising in houses in the Vernacular Revival Arts & Crafts style which he built all over the country, receiving many commissions from Middleton, Rochdale, Oldham, Huddersfield, Salford, Stretford, Bramhall and Hale. He also designed furniture, jewelry and metalwork. He was a founder member of the Northern Art Workers Guild set up in 1896 and became Guild Master in 1897. He was also briefly a member of the Red Rose Guild and knew **Hugh Wallis** well. He was president of the Manchester Society of Architects for 1911-12.

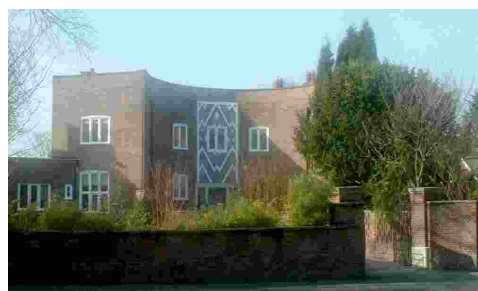
Edgar Wood built and lived at Redcroft, 33 Rochdale Road, Middleton for 30 years where he built several houses, shops and churches. He helped to conserve St. Leonards Church in Middleton and designed the new roof. He also saved the Old Boar's Head from demolition. In 1901 he built the first flat concrete roof in England at 1 Towcroft Avenue.

Between 1884 and 1893 he developed his Art Nouveau style in Salford and Middleton. During the period 1891 to 1898 his designs were Arts & Crafts Romantic and from 1899 to 1905 developed Art Nouveau Expressionist in Middleton. From 1901 to 1914 his designs are described as Pioneer Modernist and include a church, houses and shops in Middleton.

Wood rescued the colonnade of the old Manchester Town Hall from King Street and it was re-erected in Heaton Park. He designed the First Church of Christ Scientist in Daisy Bank Road, Rusholme in 1903 and some of the interior of Timperley Church.

In Hale his work was all domestic. He built nine houses around the Hale Road/Park Road junction, 115 to 121 Park Road and 20, 27 Planetree Road, two with flat concrete roofs. Numbers 224, 226, 235 and Halecroft on Hale Road, are Edgar Wood. All except 235 and Halecroft are in the Arts & Crafts style with plans held by the Royal Institute of British Architects in London.

In 1916 Wood built Royd House, 224 Hale Road, Hale as his retirement home, the only grade I listed building in the area. The house has a flat concrete roof, curved walls, corridors and rooms and is in the Modernist Movement style using Lancashire Red Brick, Portland Stone and Pilkington's tiles. He probably did the tiling work on the





front façade himself and certainly laid out the back garden. He also designed the interior including the furniture.

Edgar Wood's houses are among few in the area mentioned by Pevsner. In 1922 he retired to Italy and died there in 1935, leaving no family.

Thanks to John Archer for Edgar Wood's biography.

## **Wood, Benjamin Graham (1883-1967) Aviation Pioneer**

Graham Wood was born in Huddersfield and studied civil engineering at the Regent Street Polytechnic in 1909. He became interested in aviation at the time of Blériot's cross-Channel flight of that year.

Wood was taught to fly by the Hewlett-Blondeau Flying School at Brooklands in Surrey and was awarded his Aviator's Certificate by the Royal Aero Club in 1912. He was at one time been chief designer for a British airship company and married Lucy Hearn in 1918 in Hampstead.

In the 1960s the Kremer Prize was offered for a successful man-powered flight. Wood's last home was The Coppice on South Downs Road, Bowdon and here he attempted to build an man-powered Ornithopter there, an aeroplane which flies by flappings its wings, originally illustrated by Leonardo da Vinci. Graham's machine was a rotary version, mainly built from bamboo and nylon fabric.

Graham died before completion but parts of his machine were recovered by his daughter and given to the Manchester Museum of Space and Industry (MOSI) and have been restored. Wood knew other local early aviators including **John Leeming**, **Roy Chadwick** and **Harry Killick**.

Thanks to the Manchester Museum of Science & Industry and John Chartres in Bowdon Sheaf 5, 1985 for details of Graham Wood.

## **Young, Paul (1947-2000) Musician & Songwriter**

Paul Young, one of the most highly acclaimed singers in the country, was born in Wythenshawe on June 18th, 1947. He took an early interest in music and by the age of five was singing in the local church choir.

While still at high school in 1962, he formed his first band Johnny Dark & the Midnights. In 1964 he became lead singer of the prominent 60's Manchester beat band The Toggery Five, which took its name from a hip men's wear shop in Stockport. After a succession of notable Manchester bands, Paul went on to form Sad Café in 1976. Their first single Every Day Hurts reached number three in the hit-charts, followed by two more top twenty singles from their Façades album.

In 1985 Paul went on to co-found the internationally renowned Mike & The Mechanics, with Genesis guitarist Mike Rutherford and ex-Ace and Squeeze singer Paul Carrack. Paul's final work as a vocalist was to join the all star line up of the SAS Band, formed by Spike Edney, the fifth member of one of the largest ever super groups – Queen.

Paul died suddenly from a heart attack in 2000 at his home at 63



Hale Road where he lived with his wife Patricia and son Jason, and where there is a Blue Plaque to him.

Thanks to Jason Young for his biography of his father Paul Young.

## **BOOK 7: LISTS**

**Altrincham Mayors  
The Altrincham Blitz  
Altrincham Streets & Places  
Glossary of Terms  
Timeline of Events**



***Altrincham United Reformed Church, Hale***

## Altrincham Mayors

Many of Altrincham's mayors from 1452 are known:

1452 Edward Massey  
1483 Richard Massey  
1547 Roger Booth  
1552 John Royle  
1555 John Norris  
1556 John Ryle  
1557 John Ryle  
1558 Ralph Massey  
1559 Ralph Massey  
1560 William Ardron  
1561 George Newton  
1562 George Newton  
1563 George Newton  
1565 Ralph Massey, Senior  
1588 George Aldcroft?  
1614 William Rawlinson  
1616 Alexander Vaudrey  
1618 Robert Lingard  
1619 Richard Brereton  
1620 Edward Bent  
1621 Randle Wright  
1622 George Birch  
1623 William Rowlandson  
1624 William Hesketh  
1626 William Hesketh  
1627 Robert Parker  
1628 Robert Lingard  
1629 James Leycester  
1630 Randle Wright  
1631 Peter Rowlinson  
1632 George Birch  
1633 Richard Brereton  
1634 Richard Brereton  
1635 Jeffry Coe  
1636 George Vaudrey  
1637 Lawrence Leicester  
1638 Richard Wright  
1639 George Ashton  
1640 Robert Linguard  
1641 William Hesketh  
1642 William Rowlinson  
1643 Henry Cartwright  
1644 Henry Cartwright  
1645 George Parker  
1646 John Bent  
1647 George Birch

1648 William Leicester  
1649 George Vaudrey  
1650 Richard Brereton  
1651 Richard Brereton  
1652 Richard Brereton  
1653 Henry Bradshaw  
1654 Richard Wright  
1655 Peter Parker  
1656 John Ashley  
1657 Robert Hesketh  
1658 Thomas Hesketh  
1659 Henry Smith  
1660 Robert Lingard  
1661 John Palden  
1662 William Rowlinson  
1663 James Doe  
1664 George Birch  
1665 George Parker  
1666 John Coe  
1667 James Brookes  
1668 George Aldcroft  
1669 George Hardey  
1670 William Leicester  
1671 George Vaudrey  
1672 Richard Wright  
1673 George Cook  
1674 Robert Lingard  
1675 George Parker  
1676 Thomas Doe  
1677 John Ashley  
1678 Henry Hesketh  
1679 William Delves  
1680 Richard Wright  
1681 George Birch  
1682 Henry Smith  
1683 James Brookes  
1684 John Burgess  
1685 James Ashley  
1686 Thomas Hesketh  
1687 Joseph Pierson  
1688 George Hardey  
1689 John Leather  
1690 Jeffrey Stockley  
1691 Jeffrey Stockley  
1692 Robert Lingard  
1693 Robert Leicester  
1694 Timothy Taylor  
1695 William Hesketh  
1696 Henry Smith  
1697 James Hardey  
1698 George Aldcroft  
1699 John Eccles

1700 Jeremiah Brundrett  
1701 George Birch  
1702 George Leicester  
1703 William Grantham  
1704 John Bent  
1705 William Higginson  
1706 John Higginson  
1707 Robert Ashley  
1708 George Smith  
1709 James Warburton  
1710 John Smith  
1711 Edward Garnett  
1712 John Cooke  
1713 Thomas Royle  
1714 Robert Lupton  
1715 Robert Frith  
1716 Charles Crosswell  
1717 Robert Leather  
1718 John Ashley  
1719 James Hardey  
1720 Richard Royle  
1721 James Robinson  
1722 Samuel Holt  
1723 John Smith  
1724 John Hardey  
1725 Joshua Grantham  
1726 William Leicester  
1727 Fernando Laughton  
1728 Richard Berry  
1729 William Taylor  
1730 William Royle  
1731 Richard Leigh  
1732 John Birch  
1733 James Fletcher  
1734 George Smith  
1735 George Warburton  
1736 George Royle  
1737 Henry Smith  
1738 John Worthington  
1739 Aaron Eccles  
1740 Joshua Grantham  
1741 Thomas Royle  
1742 John Smith  
1743 Richard Nield  
1744 Robert Frith  
1745 George Ashton  
1746 George Burgess  
1747 Benjamin Irlam  
1748 John Leigh  
1749 Richard Royle  
1750 George Twyford  
1751 Joseph Grantham



1752 George Robinson  
1753 Peter Bailey  
1754 Thomas Royle  
1755 James Wainwright  
1756 Samuel Lamb  
1757 Richard Crouchley  
1758 The Hon. Booth Grey  
1759 Isaac Shaw  
1760 Nathaniel Priestner  
1761 Charles Cresswell  
1762 Robert Ashley  
1763 Edward Cooke  
1764 John Birch  
1765 Thomas Moore  
1766 William Rigby  
1767 Thomas Warburton  
1768 William Leicester  
1769 John Walthew  
1770 William Parkinson, Junior  
1771 William Taylor  
1772 George Cooke  
1773 Isaac Worthington, Junior  
1774 John Ratcliffe  
1775 John Derbyshire  
1776 George Lupton  
1777 William Howard  
1778 Thomas Duncalf  
1779 Edward Darbyshire  
1780 John Austin  
1781 William Pooks  
1782 Vernon Poole  
1783 Oswald Leicester  
1784 John Clough  
1785 Charles Poole  
1786 Robert Mills  
1787 John Eccles  
1788 Robert Leicester  
1789 James Staples  
1790 Aaron Brundrett  
1791 Thomas Howard  
1792 James Walthew  
1793 Timothy Brownel  
1794 James Gratrix  
1795 William Parkinson  
1796 John Atherton  
1797 Samuel Howard  
1798 Samuel Hardey  
1799 George Burgess  
1800 George Worthing  
1801 Peter Leicester  
1802 Samuel Walker  
1803 William Ashley

1804 William Smith  
1805 Thomas Royle  
1806 John Postles  
1807 Thomas Carter  
1808 Abner Partington  
1809 William Royle  
1810 Thomas Darbyshire  
1811 John Mitchell  
1812 Samuel Hope  
1813 John Austin  
1814 Isaac Davenport  
1815 John Mitchell  
1816 John Barratt  
1817 William Ashley  
1818 John Drinkwater  
1819 Joshua Ashcroft  
1820 Samuel Bruckshaw  
1821 Samuel Renshaw  
1822 Timothy Brownell  
1823 Samuel Street  
1824 Samuel Clarke  
1825 John Faulkner  
1826 John Hope  
1827 Richard Irlam Grantham  
1828 John Clarke  
1829 John Adshead  
1830 Nathaniel Pass  
1831 Robert Shelmerdine  
1832 John Lupton  
1833 Charles Poole  
1834 Richard Poole  
1835 Isaac Harrop  
1836 Isaac Harrop  
1837 William Hamilton  
1838 Isaac Gaskarth  
1839 Joseph Arstall  
1840 Isaac Gaskarth  
1841 Joseph Bruckshaw  
1842 William Collier  
1843 William Collier  
1844 William Renshaw  
1845 James Royle  
1846 James Matthews  
1847 Joseph Hall  
1848 George Massey  
1849 Richard Broadbent  
1850 Richard Broadbent  
1851 Mark Pierson  
1852 Mark Pierson  
1853 George Berry  
1854 Samuel Barratt  
1855 John Davenport

1856 William D. Nicholls  
1857 William D. Nicholls  
1858 John Mort  
1859 John Mort  
1860 John Howard  
1861 Charles Balshaw  
1862 James Street  
1863 Thomas Balshaw  
1864 Samuel Delves  
1865 Samuel Delves  
1866 Samuel Delves  
1867 James Astle Kelsall  
1868 James Southern  
1869 Humphrey Davis  
1870 Joseph Gaskarth  
1871 Joseph Gaskarth  
1872 Matthew Fowden  
1873 John Shelmerdine Mort  
1874 Samuel Burgess  
1875 Edward Neild  
1876 William Greenwood  
1877 William Greenwood  
1878 John Siddeley  
1879 Joseph Gaskarth  
1880 James Byrom  
1881 George Smith  
1882 Henry Balshaw  
1883 Henry Balshaw  
1884 Benjamin Riley  
1885 George Bowen  
1886 Joseph Gaskarth  
1887 James Hamilton  
1888 William Griffin  
1889 Eustace George Parker  
1890 Joel Foden  
1891 William Agar Renshaw  
1892 John Dale  
1893 William Griffin  
1894 William Griffin  
1895 David Morrison  
1896 Frederick Raymond Barber Lindsell  
1897 James Grimble Groves  
1898 James Grimble Groves  
1899 Samuel Thompson  
1900 James William Byrom  
1901 William Agar Renshaw  
1902 William Agar Renshaw  
1903 Edward Thomas Cleathero  
1904 Alfred Golland  
1905 Alfred Golland  
1906 Alfred Golland  
1907 Samuel Birtles

1908 Harold Gaskell Syers  
1909 Godfrey William Bonson  
1910 William Shield  
1911 Gerald Whitwham  
1912 William Cooke Renshaw  
1913 George Faulkner Armitage  
1914 George Faulkner Armitage  
1915 George Faulkner Armitage  
1916 George Faulkner Armitage  
1917 George Faulkner Armitage  
1918 George Faulkner Armitage  
1919 Henry Francis O'Brien  
1920 William Walton Baker  
1921 Harry Gordon Cooper  
1922 Arthur Broadbent Ireland  
1923 William Henry Veno  
1924 Thomas Clarke  
1925 Robert Reid Duncan  
1926 David Stanley Morrison  
1927 James Kayley  
1928 Arthur Gray Pickard  
1929 Arthur Percy Hill  
1930 Alfred Pailthorpe  
1931 William Waterhouse  
1932 William Waterhouse  
1933 William Waterhouse  
1934 William Waterhouse  
1935 William Waterhouse  
1936 William Waterhouse  
1937 The Rt. Hon. Roger Grey, Earl of Stamford  
1938 William Waterhouse  
1939 William George Henry Biddle  
1940 Thomas Clayton  
1941 Edgar Webb  
1942 Albert Weston  
1943 William Harold Walker  
1944 Richard Holcombe Lee  
1945 Sidney Newns Garner  
1946 William Bradley-Jones  
1947 James Sumner Pearson (died in office)  
1948 Alfred Whitely May (April)  
1949 James Herbert Cosgrove  
1950 Arthur Vesey  
1951 J. Leonard Warren  
1952 Raymond S. Watson  
1953 Frank Gibson  
1954 Thomas Baxter  
1955 G. Anthony Haigh  
1956 Edward J. Horley  
1957 Edith M. Fitton (first Lady Mayor)  
1958 Robert M. Kelsall  
1959 James L. Baxendale

1960 Edward M. Chorlton  
1961 Ian M. MacLennon  
1962 Lillian M. Smith  
1963 Raymond Street  
1964 George Harmer  
1965 Wilfred Yates  
1966 Ethel M. Hoyle  
1967 George Hoyle  
1968 Derek Harper  
1969 Roy Hall  
1970 M. William Hiett  
1971 J. B. Dunn  
1972 Stephen Williamson  
1973 Raymond Littler, who was the last mayor of Altrincham.

In 1974 Altrincham became part of the new Metropolitan Borough of Trafford. All local mayoralties were discontinued and merged into a single office of 'Mayor of Trafford'.

**With acknowledgement to Don Bayliss's book *Altrincham a history*.**

## The Altrincham Blitz

An article in the Hale, Bowdon & Altrincham Guardian summarises the Blitz in the Altrincham area:

The Blitz in the Altrincham area lasted from 28th August 1940 to the 25th October 1941 and the area had 137 casualties, 21 fatal [George Cogswell says 26 fatal]. The sirens sounded in the Altrincham at 22:39 hours on Wednesday 28th August 1940. Altrincham was 'privileged' to receive some of the first bombs of the war to fall in the North West. It is officially recorded that 41 high explosive bombs and one incendiary fell in the Altrincham district that night - a night most people remember as "the petrol tank blaze" which could be seen for a couple of days from afar. That was the first of many raids which the Altrincham Guardian chronicles. It vividly recalls many things, among them the hours of sleeplessness and the deep sympathy which all felt for the townsfolk who were most to suffer. Those who were always inclined to the theory that many of the bombs dropped on Altrincham were released by harassed German pilots will find support for their argument in this article. A large percentage fell on farm land and did no other damage than craters in turnip fields which seemed to have a peculiar attraction for Jerry bombs. The aggregate damage to property and in personal injury throughout the entire area was certainly out of all proportion to the cost paid by the enemy. Another feature of the report (and one which favours the jettison theory) is the number of unexploded bombs, which must not be confused with delayed action bombs. Damage between the first raid on the 28th August 1940 and the last raid on the 25th October 1941 can be summed up as follows: Altrincham: 70 houses destroyed, 282 severely damaged, 1,192 slightly damaged, 20 killed, 31 injured, 73 slightly injured; Hale: 10 casualties 1 fatal and 3 seriously injured; Bowdon: 3 casualties.

**28th August 1940** High Explosive (HE) bomb hit a petrol storage tank at O'Brien's Oil Works in Broadheath next to the canal. Two tanks containing 25,000 gallons of fuel were involved. There were no casualties. HE bomb hit a dwelling house in King Street, Altrincham causing considerable damage to the house and other property, 4 casualties. HE bomb dropped in the front garden of a house in Bold Street, 2 houses partly demolished and others slightly damaged, 3 casualties. House in Byrom Street directly hit, 3 houses partly demolished; a child was rescued from the debris of the partly demolished house. Another house in Byrom Street (at the corner of Bath Street) directly hit, considerable damage also to the adjoining garage and shops; no casualties. A bomb went through the roof of a shed behind Weetman's decorator's shop at 145 Ashley Road and buried itself in the yard; many of the residents in the locality temporarily evacuated. An oil bomb dropped in the front of Southwold, South Downs Road, Bowdon which was damaged but without casualties; trees set on fire were extinguished before the arrival of the Fire Brigade. A bomb fell in Marsland Field, off Stockport Road, Timperley, one in Harveys Paddock, off Stockport Road and 3 more in the adjoining market gardens, 2 in a field off Shaftesbury Avenue, 4 on the Altrincham Municipal Golf Links, 4 on Bowdon Golf Links causing slight damage to Dunham Church, the vicarage and post office, 4 bombs in a field off Charcoal Lane, 1 bomb in Back Lane Ringway, 1 HE bomb at Taberners Farm Timperley, 1 at Warburton Green Farm and 1 at Sun Bank Farm Ringway. A bomb dropped on the main Stockport-Liverpool railway Line, quarter of a mile from Baguley Station. An unexploded bomb penetrated Woodcroft, Aimson Place, Timperley and passed through the ceiling to the ground floor; there were people in the house at the time, but no casualties. A bomb fell in Kelsall Drive, Timperley which partly demolished 2 houses, no casualties. A bomb at the Nags Head Hotel, Chester Road went through an outbuilding, one of a stick of 11 bombs dropped, the others burying themselves in the turnip fields.

**29th August** 23 HE bombs and about 100 incendiary bombs, fell at Tabley Mere, Plumley, High Leigh, Pickmere, Lymm and Thelwall. Some HE bombs did not explode. There were no



casualties.

**5th September** Bombs fell at Tabley and Peover; 26 incendiary bombs fell at a farm. There was no damage and no casualties.

**25th September** A stirrup pump put out a small fire started by incendiaries in the dog paddock of Brook House, Brooks' Drive, Timperley. Another incendiary started a small fire at a garage in Brooks' Drive. An unexploded bomb dropped on the school in Hasty Lane, Ringway. 4 incendiaries fell on Ringway Golf Course and another in the school yard of Bradbury Central School, no damage, no casualties. An unexploded incendiary hit a railway cottage at Sinderland Green. 1 bomb dropped in the roadway in Park Lane, Bollington, near to the Swan with Two Nicks Hotel and 13 more buried themselves in the fields between Park Lane and Spode Green Farm, Bollington.

**7th October** Soldiers occupying a tent in the Ringway area were unhurt when an incendiary hit the tent, 8 incendiaries fell in the field at Eaves Hollow (Hasty Lane), Ringway, 2 bombs fell at Oak Farm Hale Barns. There were no casualties. 2 bombs dropped near Castle Mill Swimming Pool, Ashley. There was no damage, no casualties. 6 incendiaries fell in Ringway fields.

**10th October** An unexploded Anti-Aircraft (AA) shell lodged in the footpath at 39 Stokoe Avenue, Oldfield Brow; there were no casualties. This was the home of the Lockett family who had to move in with relations while the shell was defused. Unexploded shells dropped in the kale field at Seamons Moss Farm and another in the tennis courts adjoining The Narrows, Altrincham.

**18th October** 4 bombs in the fields at Mere and Agden. The first caused damage to the outbuildings at Faulkner's Farm, Chester Road. 1 dropped at 8.20 pm, exploding at 1.50 am the next morning. Another dropped at the same time exploded at 10.00 pm. A fifth bomb made a crater in Ford's Field near Agden Hall.

**19th October** At 11.10 pm an unexploded AA shell went through the roof of the footbridge on the island platform at Altrincham Railway Station and exploded on striking an iron support. A second unexploded shell fell in the garden of Woodlands Cottage, Harrington Road, Altrincham.

**20th October** HE bombs, 1 oil bomb and incendiaries dropped at Rostherne; a cottage was damaged, but there were no casualties. A field at Dunham Massey received an unexploded bomb. There was no damage and no casualties when a bomb fell near Broad Oak Cottage, Back Lane, Ringway.

**28th November** A parachute mine dropped on waste land causing broken shop windows in George Street, Altrincham. 2 bombs fell on Stamford Farm, Bollington and 2 at Edge Hill Farm, Bollington. 2 bombs fell in the fields of the Home Farm, Dunham Massey and 4 fell in Dunham Park. There were no casualties.

**20th December** An unexploded AA shell embedded itself in the garage floor at 1 Orchard Drive, Hale. Bombs fell in the fields at Oak Farm, Ringway, Heathlands Farm, Warburton and Priestner's Farm, Warburton.

**21st December** An unexploded AA shell fell on the fairway of the Altrincham Municipal Golf Links.

**22nd December** The alert lasted 12 hours. An unexploded shell hit the front of 306 Manchester Road, West Timperley with damage to the house and adjoining houses. 10 houses were damaged by a bomb which dropped at the rear of 89 Woodhouse Lane East, Timperley. A bomb fell at the

rear of 30 Crofton Avenue, Timperley with damage to the house. Another bomb fell at the rear of 201 Sylvan Avenue, Timperley where there were three casualties. Incendiaries fell in the roadway and gardens of Sylvan Avenue, Timperley. An unexploded AA shell fell in the front room of 5 Cleveland Road, Hale. There were no casualties. A bomb dropped in a field 50 yards off Urban Road. A parachute mine demolished Dunham Park Lodge on the main Chester Road near Lymm Corner. Another parachute mine dropped in a field off the main road causing damage to a house. A bomb dropped in Sylvan Avenue and another in Crossgrove Road, Timperley; 1 casualty. There were 4 casualties when a bomb damaged 24 Westwood Avenue, Timperley. Another bomb made a huge crater in Newstead Terrace, Timperley and 27 Greenway Road, Timperley. Large-calibre HE bombs dropped on the Linotype Estate (Lawrence Road) and 20 houses were rendered uninhabitable; 1 casualty. A bomb dropped in the market gardens off Sylvan Avenue, Timperley, another in the gardens in Rossett Avenue causing damage. A bomb dropped in Jackson's Nursery, Moss Lane, Timperley and one in Greenway Road Timperley. A bomb buried itself in a tank at Altrincham Sewage Farm. Another bomb dropped at Sunnyside Farm, Mobberley caused neither damage nor casualties. Unexploded bombs fell at Grange Farm, Yew Tree Lane, Ringway.

**23rd December** An HE bomb made a direct hit on a house at the corner of Oakfield Street and Moss lane, Altrincham; 1 man, 2 women and 3 children were buried in the debris. 3 children and 9 adults were killed. A bomb at the corner of Charter Road and Hamon Road made a big crater and damaged property. A third bomb dropped in the yard of Holts the builders on Manor Road. 1 bomb hit a bungalow in Hasty Lane, Ringway causing 2 casualties, another dropped in a field at Bucklow Farm, Ringway. One of three bombs dropped at Grotto Side Farm, Lower Peover resulting in 1 man and 2 women being killed. Approximately 50 incendiaries were dropped in the vicinity of Dunham Mount, Dunham Road, Altrincham causing a fire but no casualties. A bomb dropped in gardens at 22 Kingsley Drive, Timperley, demolishing 4 houses; no casualties. 7 houses were demolished by a bomb in Park Drive, Timperley, while a bomb near Oldfield, Park Road, Timperley caused 1 casualty. 2 HEs fell near Skelton Junction, Timperley, and another badly damaged 51 Park Road, Timperley. A bomb struck a house in Bloomsbury Lane, Timperley; no casualties. Another which was dropped in Altrincham Cemetery damaged headstones and the Cemetery Chapel. Other bombs were dropped at 135, Park Road, Timperley, Marsland Nursery, Grove Lane, Timperley, Bradbury Central School yard/playing field, Graysands Road, Hale, Yew Tree Farm, Sinderland Green, Street Head Farm, Chester Road, Bowdon and Chapel House Farm, Ashley. Unexploded AA shells fell in the Altrincham District caused little damage and no casualties.

**9th January 1941** A bomb at Ringway and an HE bomb causing damage and casualties hit Manor House, Hale Barns. Another fell on Manor Grange, Wicker Lane, Hale Barns causing damage and casualties (1 fatal). A bomb hit McEwen's Garage, Wilmslow Road, Hale Barns and a second fell at the rear of Knutsford View, Hale Barns. Bombs dropped in a field between Brooks' Drive and Hasty Lane, Hale Barns. About 150 incendiaries recorded in a field off Well Lane, Timperley and Roaring Gate Lane, Ringway, many being dealt with by the residents. An HE bomb fell in the grounds of Elm Farm, Wilmslow Road, Hale Barns and 4 more at Oaklands Farm, Hale Barns. The same night 10 bombs dropped at Oughtrington and Lymm, 1 hitting a public shelter and an air-warden, who was an Altrincham man, was killed.

**11th March** Bomb fell in a field at Higher House, Ashley and 4 in a field at Wood End, Mobberley.

**14th March** Unexploded bomb in a field at Tanyard Farm, Back Lane Ashley.

**2nd May** 14 bombs counted in fields between Dunham Massey and Warburton and about 250 incendiaries dropped in Dunham Park. The fired bracken and undergrowth were quickly extinguished.

**7th May** Total damage caused by 3 bombs dropped in fields adjoining Whitehouse Farm, Dark Lane, Dunham Massey was broken windows of the farmhouse. A bomb in Twiggery Wood, Ashley caused neither damage nor casualties.

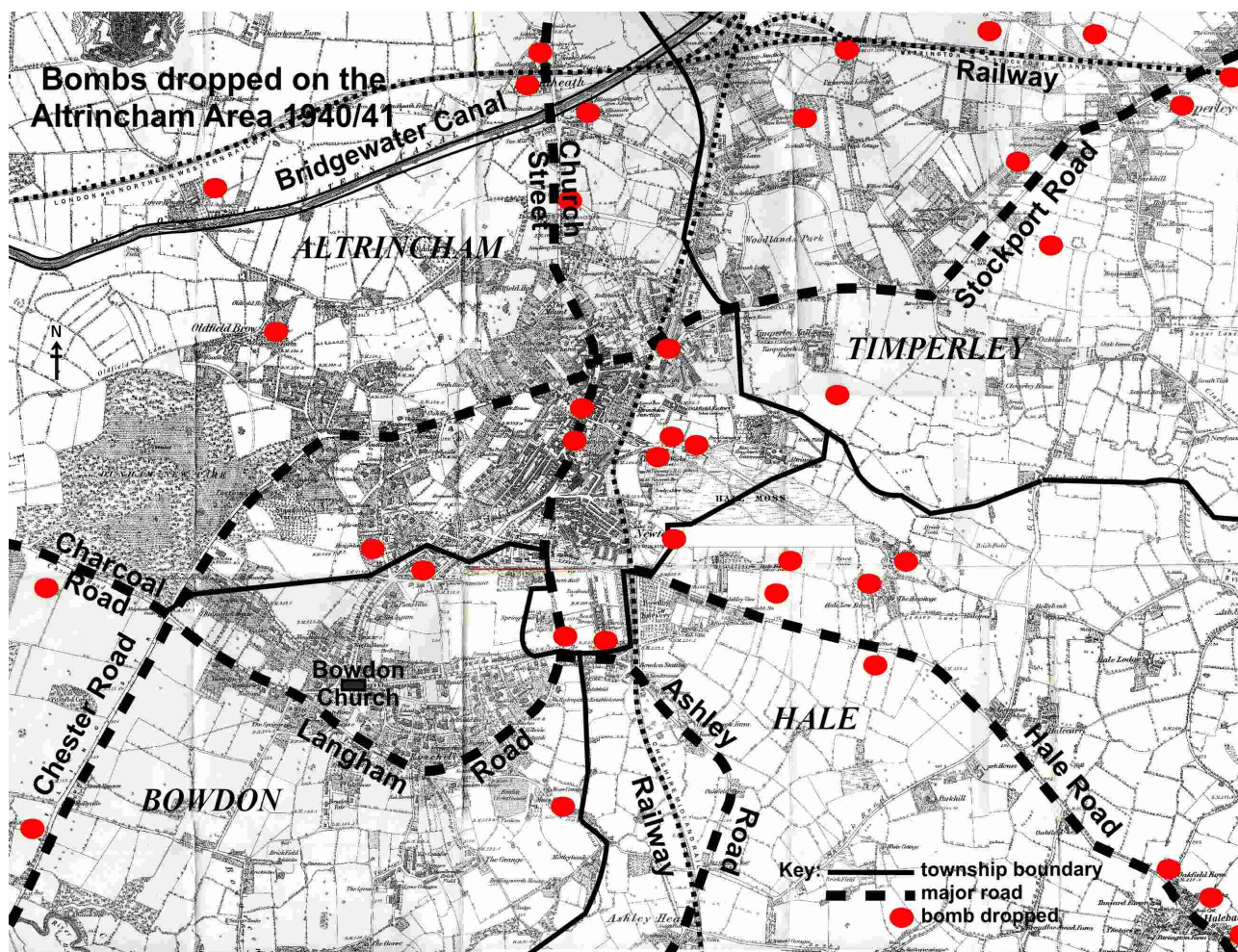
**25th October** 2 Parachute mines dropped in a works area at Broadheath, one hitting the confectionery (sweets) works at the corner of Huxley Street and Wright Street. Extensive damage caused to houses and shops. 5 men and 3 women were killed. A full time warden, aged 71, was one of the victims.

Timperley suffered a substantial number of bombs, many not shown, but Bowdon few. The targets were probably the industry at Broadheath, the railway and major roads such as Hale Road, used to transport ammunition, shells and bombs to Ringway Airport and anti-aircraft guns around the town.

## References

Altrincham, Bowdon & Hale Guardian, 27th October, 1944: *The Full Story of the 1940-41 Blitz*, extracted by Bob Jones.

Cogswell, George, *Greater Manchester Blitz Victims*, [www.greatermanchesterblitzvictims.co.uk](http://www.greatermanchesterblitzvictims.co.uk)



*Some of the bombs dropped on the Altrincham Area during the blitz of 1940-41*

# Street & Place Names

Many of the roads around Altrincham have links to Masseys, Booths and Greys of Dunham Massey Hall, including Bentinck, Bonville, Booth, Bradgate, Catherine, Cavendish, Delamer, Dorset, Elcho, Enville, Grey, Grafton, Groby, Grove, Hamon, Harrington, Heald, Langham, Massey, Norfolk, Portland, Stamford, Suffolk, Theobald, Turnbull, Winton, Woodcote and Woodville.

Others street names often describe natural features of the area such as Ashley, Barrow, Broomfield, Carr, Downs, Firs, Grove, Heath, Heather, Low, Marlborough, Money Ash, Moss, Ollerbarrow, Riddings, Sandiway, Shay, Slutch, South Downs, Spring, Uttley, Whitecarr and Willowtree.

Many places and streets have changed their names or their spellings:

**Old name**, modern place or location

**Alcock Street** New Street, Altrincham.

**Alderbarrow** Ollerbarrow, Hale OE alder grove.

**Altrincham** OE, 'the homestead of Aldhere's people'; from *inga* a group of people and *ham* a homestead, village or estate. It has been spelled about 15 different ways since 1290AD. The 'ingaham' structure is rare and indicates seventh century or earlier Saxon origin. Barker suggests it is a corruption of the lost Hale settlement of *Alretune*.

**Altrincham Street** Church Street, Altrincham.

**Altringham** Altrincham.

**Ashley Lane** Railway Street and Ashley Road, Altrincham.

**Back Lane** Tolland Lane, Hale; Bowdon Road, Bowdon.

**Back Moss Lane** Half a dozen cottages at the back of the cottages to the west of the Bridge Inn on Moss Lane, Altrincham.

**Back o' th' Barn** Police Street, Altrincham.

**Bank Street** Woodlands Road, Altrincham.

**Barrington Fields** Near Barrington Road, Altrincham.

**Beggars Square** To the left of the Bricklayers Arms, George Street, Altrincham.

**Bell Place** 24/26 Stamford Road, Bowdon.

**Beswick's Lane** Bow Lane, Bowdon.

**Blackfield Lane** Grange Road, Bowdon.

**Blossom Street** British Schools Road, Oxford Street, Altrincham.

**Bochelau** Now Bucklow, one of the Cheshire hundreds in the Domesday Book; Saxon.

**Bollin** The nearest river to Hale, possibly from OE *bol* (eel) and *hlynn* (water) or Celtic *llyn* (water); alternatively a mutation of Celtic *felin* or *melin*, a mill, ie a mill river.

**Bowdon** Originally *Bogedon*, the name used in the eleventh century means the dwelling on a hill or stronghold from OE *bode*, a dwelling and *don/dun*, a plain on a hill. *Boga* could be from OE 'a bend' or 'bow-shaped', hence 'bow-shaped hill'.

**Bowden** Bowdon.

**Bowgreen Lane** Bowgreen Road, Bowdon.

**Bowden Lane** Now a footpath from Newbridge Hollow to Watch Hill and Bow Lane, Bowdon Vale.

**Bowdon Lane** The southern end of Market Street; previously just part of The Narrows, Altrincham.

**Bowdon Downs** Railway Street, Altrincham.

**British Schools Road** Oxford Road, Altrincham.

**Burlington Street** Burlington Road, Altrincham.

**Burying Lane** The Firs, Bowdon.

**Chapel Lane, Chapel Walk, Chapel Road** the lower part of Regent Road, Altrincham.

**Chapel Square** Part of Chapel Street.

**Church Lane** Church Brow, Bowdon (strictly Park Road).

**Cinder Street** Mill Street and the lower end of Stamford Street, Altrincham.

**Clegg's Lane** Heath Road, Hale.

**Cookstool Blase** Mill Place off Mill Street, Altrincham.

**Cow Lane** Was on the right-hand side of St. Baldred's Hall, Ashley Road, Hale until c1880.

**Cresswell Springs** A spring near Altrincham Football Ground which fed the 1621 fleam to Dunham Hall.

**Cross Street** Before Stamford New Road was built, this was part of Moss Lane since Hale Moss started at George Street.

**Davenport Road** Davenport Lane, Broadheath.

**Davies Lane** Langham Road, Bowdon.

**Dob Lane** Park Road, Hale.

**Downs, The** The part now called Higher Downs; was in Dunham Massey until 1920.

**Dunham** The 'homestead on the hill', or 'below the hill'.

**Dunham Lane** the upper part of High Street, Altrincham and also the Dunham Road.

**Dunham High Park** Dunham New Park.

**East'Ard or Eastod or Easter Lane** Hale Road/Wilmslow Road, Hale Barns.

**East Hale** An early settlement southwest of Hale Barns, between Chapel Lane and Barrow Lane.

**Etrop Green** Possibly a corruption of Norse *athroppe*, apple farm or village.

**Farthing Street**, Albert Street, Altrincham ('farthing' can mean a fourth-part).

**Firs Road** The Firs, Bowdon.

**Garden Lane** Named after the garden of the Old Pear Tree Tavern which used to stand on the north side of Victoria Street, Altrincham.

**Garden Lane** West of Old Market Place; originally a lane from High Bank through garden plots to Townfield House, now largely lost.

**Garden Walk** The upper part of Regent Road, Altrincham.

**Gas Lane** Urban Road, Hale.

**Goosetree Green** Goose Green, locally always called Goosey Green, Altrincham.

**Gorrell's Gate Farm** Thorley Moor Farm; on what is now the St. John's Church site.

**Hale** *Hale* occurs all over England, the dative singular of the West Saxon word for a nook or shelter - *halh* or *healh* - meaning 'at the nook or hiding place'. In the north it means alluvial land on a river bank; or from *leah*, a clearing in a wood. Also Celtic meaning a marshy area growing willows, Welsh *helyg*, 'willows'.

**Hale Farm** Hale Field Farm, Queens Road, Hale.

**Ham Lane** Moss Lane, Hale.

**Hancock Square** Lloyd Square, Altrincham.

**Henry Street** Oak Road, Hale.

**High Downs** Higher Downs, Bowdon.

**High Street** Market Street, Altrincham.

**Higher Town** Old Market Place, Altrincham until the about 1860.

**Hollow Bonk/Banc** Kingsway, Altrincham.

**Hope Square** an almost-enclosed court of 12 cottages behind 25 Regent Road, Altrincham between Chapel Street and New Street named after the owner; it had eight nine-foot deep brick-lined middens, four privys and four open cesspools in the centre.

**Islington** The original name for Newtown, preserved later as Islington Street.

**King Street** Market Street, Altrincham.

**Knutsford Road** Dunham Road, Bowdon.

**Leicester Road** Culcheth Road, Altrincham.

**Lester Lane**, Hermitage Road and the easterly end of Grove Lane, Hale.

**Lester Road** Leicester Road, Hale.

**Lime Grove** Lyme Grove, Altrincham; possibly from Latin *limes*, a trackway.

**Lloyd Square** A square behind the west side of Railway Street, Altrincham at the bottom of Regent Road.

**Long Lane** Hale Road, Hale.

**Lord Street** Newtown, between Lloyd Street and Pownall Street.

**Lovers' Walk** the extension of Oakfield Street across Hale Moss to Timperley Brook, Altrincham.

**Lower Town** George Street and Goose Green. Albert Street areas Altrincham, used until the mid-19th century.

**Lycett's Lane** Bow Lane, Bowdon.

**Mamucium** Roman Manchester.

**Mersey** Boundary river.

**Money Ash** OE *manig*, many ash trees.

**Morrison's Lane** Grange Road, Bowdon (after Peter Morrison, known in the family as 'Scotch Pete').

**Moss** Moss Lane and Urban Road from Manor Road eastwards.

**Moss Lane** Vicarage Lane, Bowdon.

**Moss Pub, The** The King George V, Moss Lane Hale.

**Mount Pleasant** Off The Mount, Altrincham.

**Narrow Walk** A track from Stamford Road, Bowdon to East Downs Road.

**Narrows, The** A track from Old Market Place to Bowdon along the line of Market Street, Norman's Place, The Narrows, Bowdon Road and The Firs.

**Ned's Lane** Part of the Wilmslow Road in the centre of Ringway at the Romper Inn.

**New Road** The upper section of Stamford Street, Altrincham leading up to Kingsway.

**Nield's Brow** The track and then road from East Downs Road, Bowdon to Langham Road and South Downs Road.

**Nunnery Lane** Bankhall Lane, Hale.

**Occupation Road** became Bentinck Road, Altrincham.

**O'er th' Gutter** Lower Town south of Kingsway, Altrincham; Th' Gutter was a spring emerging from Post Office Place and crossing George Street.

**Old Chapel Lane** Regent Road.

**Old Street** A road parallel to and to the north of Shaw's Road; possibly the original Hollow Bonk.

**Ollerbarrow Lane** Ashley Road, Hale from the station through the present shopping area.

**Peel Causeway** Peel from Latin *palus*, OE *pal*, a stake, plus Latin *calx* or *cealc*, pebbles, chalk or limestone, plus 'way'. Perhaps a brushwood or staked causeway. The houses on Ashley Road from Spring Bank to present Hale Station; from about 1870 extended to the whole of Hale Village until 1901 when it was renamed Hale.

**Peel Crescent** Spring Road, Hale.

**Peel Street** Peel Road, Hale.

**Pinfold Brow** Lloyd Street, Altrincham used to be called Pinfold Brow, ie where animals were penned on a hill. 'Brow' is northern dialect *brew*, the slope below the projecting edge of a hill and is from Old English *bru*, Sanskrit *bhru*, an eyebrow.

**Poplar Grove** The houses at the bottom of the entry between 118 and 120 Ashley Road, Hale; the entry was also known as 'The Rabbit Hole'.

**Post Office Place** ran from Kingsway down to George Street (later into Station Road), Altrincham.

**Queens Highway** The Downs, Altrincham.

**Richmond Hill** Richmond Road, Bowdon.

**Ringway** A fenced hunting park; other spellings include Ringey, Ringeye, Ringhey Park, Ringehay; probably 'ring hey', a circular hedged enclosure; 'hey' OE *haeg*, a hedged enclosure. Spelled 13 different ways since 1281.

**Rose Hill** East Downs Road, Bowdon.

**Rose Hill Road** Richmond Road, Bowdon.



**Ross/Rass** (Mill) Rass is probably from Celtic *Ras*, a race of water.

**Saunders Green** the South Downs Road end of Marlborough Road, Bowdon.

**Sandy Lane** Stamford Road, Bowdon; also Walton Road, Oldfield Brow.

**School Lane** Walton Road, Oldfield Brow.

**Shaw's Lane** Shaw's Road, Altrincham; said to be the boundary between Upper and Lower Town; also Shay Lane, Hale Barns.

**Shay Lane** Shaw's Road, Altrincham.

**Shepherd's Lane** Park Road, Bowdon.

**Sinderland Lane** Sinderland Road, Broadheath.

**Slutch or Slutchy Lane** The southern end of Victoria Road, Hale.

**Sparrow Lane** Green Walk, Bowdon.

**Springfield Lane** Springfield Road, Altrincham.

**Stamford Road** Grosvenor Road and Navigation Road, Altrincham.

**Stamford Street (upper)** Kingsway, Altrincham.

**Station Road** A continuation of Kingsway towards Altrincham Station, now gone; also Lower George Street from about 1860.

**Street, The or Street Lane** Watling Street, the Dunham Road.

**Styal** Probably 'East Hale'.

**Sunderland** OE, land asunder, separate, apart, remote, private. A lost village east of Hale Barns.

**Sugar Lane** now Ridgeway Road, Timperley, probably named after the Saxon lord Sug.

**Sunderland** Old English, land asunder, apart, remote, private; an area east of Hale.

**Swang Lane** Hill Top, Hale (*swang* is a swamp).

**Thorley Moor Lane** The first part of Ashley Road, Altrincham from The Downs.

**Thrutcham** A local name for Altrincham, still used in the 1930s.

**Timperley** is Old English and means an 'open place in a wood on a sandstone outcrop'.

**Tipping Street** This street and five others close by were named after William Russell Tipping of Yarwood Heath Rostherne by the developer.

**Toft** Old Danish, a homestead, farm, building site or curtilage (and a local place and surname).

**Top Hillock** The area above Stamford Street.

**Towlands or Townland Lane** The cottages at the Bankhall Lane/Tolland Lane junction, Hale built about 1800; Old English *tun*, 'farm' and *land*, 'cultivated land'; or possibly from the Danish place name Tollund.

**Turf Lane** St. Margaret's Road, Bowdon.

**Turnpike Road** Church Street from half way down and Manchester Road; also Stockport Road, Altrincham.

**Twiggy Springs** A spring where osiers were grown for basket making near Altrincham Football Ground.

**Unicorn Inn** Old Market Tavern, Old Market Place, Altrincham.

**Vicar's Lane** Vicarage Lane: originally St. Mary's Vicarage was in Bowdon Vale.

**Wall Lane** Wicker Lane, Hale Barns.

**Warrington Road** The upper part of Cavendish Road, Bowdon.

**Watling Street** The Roman road from London to Chester; also used locally for the Roman road from Chester to Manchester; tThe Dunham Road, Bowdon.

**Watson Street** Lilac Road, Hale.

**Well Lane** Victoria Street, Altrincham.

**Well Street** Lower George Street up to about 1860.

**Wellington Street** Between 73 and 75 New Street, Altrincham, now just an entry to Wellington Place remaining.

**Windy Harbour Road** Market Street, Altrincham, where it meets Shaw's Road .

# Glossary of Terms

Several thousand words were peculiar to Cheshire and adjacent counties because the local dialect was derived from the northwestern rather than the southeastern variation of Middle English. Middle English (ME) had come from Old English (OE) by incorporating many Norman French words. OE derived from the languages of the Jutes, Saxons, Angles, and Frisians. Old English was very similar to Old Frisian and even today some phrases in Friesian can be understood by English speakers. The language incorporated Latin and some Celtic words such as *ass*, a donkey in Old English, and *causie* Welsh for a causeway, as in the old name for Hale village, *Pele Causey*. However, there was also a strong Scandinavian influence in the Altrincham area, with words borrowed from Old Norse as well as Irish, French and Dutch. The Northern European languages have left their mark on English generally, as well as on the Cheshire dialect. The use of these languages is particularly strong in buildings: wall is from OE *weall*; roof is from Norse *hrof*; window is from Norse *vind* (wind) plus *auga* (eye); door is from Norse *dyrr*; stair is OE and Old Dutch *steiger* (a ladder). See Holland, Robert, *A Glossary of Words Used in the County of Chester* (1885).

The following northern words are all derived from earlier languages and show the influence of the Saxon and Norse invaders and settlers: *asker*, *barley*, *bawm*, *bonk*, *bong*, *brew*, *brow*, *clemmed*, *cop*, *cowd*, *fettle*, *flit*, *freak*, *gammy*, *gawp*, *gawmless*, *mangle*, *oo*, *petty*, *pike*, *pikelet*, *pobs*, *scotch*, *shippon*, *skrike*, *starved*, *swang*, *thrutch*, *traipse* and *un*.

In Hale, sixteenth and seventeenth century legal documents and gravestones omit the 'o' in Royle and Hoyle, perhaps indicating their pronunciation. In the nineteenth century and into the twentieth century Altrincham was pronounced *Awtringham*, missing out the 'l'. Wilmslow is still pronounced *Wimslow* locally and Rostherne is pronounced *Rostern*.

A selection of local and other local history words follows.

(**OE**=Old English, **ME**=Middle English)

**Acre** Old Norse *akr*, not originally used as a measurement but meaning a cultivated piece of land, sometimes a collection of loonts (furrows) indicating enclosure of an open field.

**Agistment** Feeding ground for cattle.

**Asker** A newt; Old Norse and Gaelic *ask*, a lizard; local dialect.

**Ashley** Ash glade.

**Barley** To claim a truce, possibly from French *parler*; used in playground games; local dialect.

**Barrow** OE *bearwe*, dative of *bearu*, a grove or wooded hill or swine pasture.

**Bawm** OE *bawm*, a tree; to dress up something; to spread a covering of material; local dialect.

**Benchmark** An inscription carved into a piece of stone wall and marked on 6-inch and 25-inch Ordnance Survey maps of the 1870s to 1900s. Many of the remaining benchmarks are usually about a foot from the pavement on a solid piece of stone and date from this period. All benchmarks incorporate a vertical arrow with a bar above relating to the height shown on the map. They have often been destroyed by rebuilding or raised footpaths.

**Bigg** Probably a variation of 'big' as in bigg field, ie an open field.

**Birkin** Birch trees river, Norse; a local river.

**Bonk/Banc/bong** From Old Norse *banki*, Welsh *ponc* or *bonc*, a small hill or river bank; as in Hollow Bonk in Altrincham and The Bongs at Lymm, Warrington, Rostherne, Tabley and Goostree.

**Bordar** A small farmer or crofter.

**Bower** Probably from Dutch *bouwen*, to farm; related to Old Norse *byr*, a settlement; OE *bur*, a cottage.

**Brew/brow** OE *bru*, Old Norse *brun*, Sanskrit *bhru*, an eyebrow; the slope below the projecting edge of a hill; probably related to Welsh *bron* or *fron*, the breast (of a hill) and perhaps Irish *brú*, a bend in a river.

**Burgage** A plot of land in a borough on which a burgess's house was built. Burgage plots in Altrincham were two by five perches, ie 33 feet wide by 82.5 feet deep; triple, double, half, third and quarter plots could also exist. They date from the 13th century in Altrincham when there were about 120 burgages compared with Knutsford's 38. Burgess property could be sold.

**Burgess** A tradesman/woman who owned land called a burgage in a borough and had an acre in the town field. The rental for the burgage and land in Altrincham was 12d in 1290 and a burgess may have owned more than one burgage.

**Burh/burgh** A Saxon fortified town, eg Chester.

**Butt or botty** The raised part of a strip in an open field, sometimes used for archery; the end of a field where the plough turned; an irregular piece of pasture land; probably indicating strips from an open field; next to a boundary.

**Buttery** From Old French *boutellerie* where wine and ale was kept in butts (hence butler), later the kitchen.

**Bylaw** Town law from Old Danish *by*, Old Norse *byr*, an isolated settlement; now local government law.

**Cally** A colloquial name for the 1840s Newtown part of Altrincham built to house railway workers; origin unclear but may be a generic term for railway builder from 'Caledonian', similar to the origin of 'Navy'.

**Carucate** From the Latin *caruca*, a plough; a measure of ploughland used in the Danelaw which included Hale. It can be equated to a hide in Cheshire although it means the area ploughed, rather than its value which was recorded in *hides*. About 120 acres.

**Carr** From Old Norse *kjarr*, overgrown marshy land containing alder, willow and birch.

**Catchpole** A person who catches fowl.

**Causey** A causeway from Old French *causie*; still used in northern England, Scotland and Wales.

**Celts** Small dark people who settled in Europe from the east. In England from 350BC (Iron Age) to the 10th century AD.

**Ceorl** OE, a churl, freeman, small farmer, hence 'churlish'.

**Chapman** A travelling salesman.

**Charter** The Royal Charter sealed by Edward I (Edward Longshanks) in 1290 allowed Hamon de Massey V to hold a market and fair in Altrincham. It was followed soon after by Hamon's own (undated) charter, creating a market borough. Hamon's object was to improve his finances through local taxes. Money had become difficult due to wars and dowries. The charter made Altrincham a free borough separate from Dunham (which included Bowdon), created the court leet and included the right to hold a Tuesday market and a fair on the Feast of the Assumption, in 1319 changed to the Feast of St. James. The Tuesday market is still held and later a Saturday market was introduced.

**Charterer** A freeholder.

**Cheshire acre** References to farming in Hale before 1786 used the Cheshire Acre which was about twice as big as a modern acre (based on an 8-yard perch instead of the statute 5.5 yards and 2.1 statute acres). Some later documents and census records may still be in Cheshire acres and it is sometimes difficult to tell. On the 1830s tithe maps field names incorporating the word 'acre' refer to Cheshire acres but measurements in the apportionments table are in statute acres.

**Clemmed** OE *clemmen*, to shrink up; hungry, starved; local dialect.

**Clough** OE *cloh*, a small valley or dell; Dutch *kloof*, a ravine.

**Consideration** When one of the named lives in a lease died a new name could be added for a 'consideration' and this was also a time when the rent could be altered.

**Cop** OE *copp*, a hedgebank or top of a hill.

**Court Leet** A manorial court held twice a year electing constables, officers and juries to administer law in Altrincham, Bowdon and Hale. It tried petty offences, oversaw the law, (constables were active until 1856 when they were replaced by a police force), and dealt with issues concerning the following: highways and footpaths (surveyors), commons (common lookers), poaching, stray animals (pinders), drunkards, weights & measures, ale quality (ale founders, tasters and conners), bread quality (bread lookers), market trading (market lookers checking on corn, flesh and fish), cattle and swine lookers, water supplies (pump and well lookers), fire prevention (chimney lookers), the poor, scavengers (refuse collectors), leather curing, Court Bailiffs and the Town Crier. The Court Leet also created the Guild Mercatory to promote free trade. It appointed the mayor until 1937 and the list of mayors of Altrincham from 1452 survives, the first two being Masseys, the last Raymond Littler in 1973. It was also responsible for defining the town boundaries by beating the bounds with willow twigs each year. The ceremony was revived in 1977 at the wishes of the last Earl of Stamford and the Court Leet currently beats the bounds in July following modern boundary markers and small square red paving stones set in the pavement.

**Cordwainer** Shoemaker or leather worker, originally from Cordoba in Spain.

**Covert** Overgrown land used to give cover for game.

**Cowd** Dutch *kond*, cold; local dialect.

**Crannog** A lake dwelling.

**Culcheth** A narrow wood from Celtic *coed*.

**Danegelt** A tax raised to buy off Danish invaders, or to maintain an army to oppose them.

**Danelaw** In 876AD Alfred the Great split England into Wessex/Danelaw, approximately along the line of Watling Street, the present A5 road from London to Chester, and possibly on to Manchester along the present A556. Thus Hale may have been in Danelaw territory but Dunham in Mercia.

**Daub** Clay used to infill hazel twigs on a timber-framed building.

**Dee** Celtic *Deva*, goddess.

**Den** A valley, swine pasture.

**Deva** Goddess in Celtic, giving the River Dee.

**Dob** An extension of land.

**Dole/dale** OE *dal*, Old Danish *deill*, Welsh *dol*, an allotment or strip of land, eg the Devisdale; sometimes indicating an enclosed field.

**Down/dun** OE and Celtic meaning a hill or hill fort; in Ireland, Scotland and parts of England a fortified house or hill, a fort, eg Maiden (*Mais Dun*) Castles in Cheshire (Bickerton), Dorset and Durham.

**Enfeoff** To grant land.

**Eye** OE, a watermeadow, often in a loop of a river.

**Fettle** OE *fetel*, Old Norse *feddla*, good condition; local dialect.

**Field** OE *feld*, open country, a piece of arable land; often an indication of an enclosed field.

**Flatt or flat** Old Norse. A piece of level ground in an open field consisting of parallel strips.

**Flit** Norse *flytja*, to carry; to move house; local dialect.

**Flu** French *fleuve*, ON *floi*, a watercourse, as in Ringey Flu, part of the Bollin on 17th-century maps.

**Fold** An animal pen, as in Pinfold Brow.

**Foreigner** A Norman, a large landlord and to all intents a freeman.

**Frankpledge** An Anglo-Saxon system of tithing households into tens to monitor their own conduct.

**Freak** OE *frecca*, a warrior or man.

**Furlong** OE *furh* and *lang*, furrow long, the length of a ploughed strip in an open field, approx 220 yards.

**Gammy (leg)** Welsh *cam* or *gam*, crooked, lame, dialect.

**Gate** Danish *gata*, an allotment of pasture, a roadway or pathway.

**Gawmless** Scandinavian, stupid; local dialect.

**Gawp** Dutch, to stare stupidly; local dialect.

**Gelt** Danegelt; a tax payable to the Danes.

**Ginnel** A narrow passageway between buildings, especially in a city, sometimes covered.

**Grange** French, an outlying farm, usually associated with a monastery.

**Green** 'Green' often means a small settlement around pasture and arable fields, possibly dating from the early Middle Ages; Hale had about ten greens, many still existing.

**Grove** OE *graf*, a copse.

**Halimote Court** a court or guild presiding over farming or other practices.

**Ham** OE *ham*, an enclosure, hence a house.

**Hay or hey** OE *haeg*, an enclosure marked off from the forest by a hedge for inspection, protection or slaughter of beasts such as deer, wild hogs, domesticated pigs, goats, cattle or sheep.

**Haugh/hough** OE *haga*, an enclosure.

**Heald** OE *healh* or *healh*, or *helde*, a steeply sloping area; a protective area, as in Heald Moss and Heald (or Yeald) Common, Bowdon; can also mean the warp in weaving from OE *hefeld*.

**Heriot** Death duty in a lease clause, originally in kind, later as money.

**Hide** From the OE *higid* or *hyda*, meaning 'household', may represent the value of the ideal land to support one or a group of families. Actual size varied depending on the fertility of the land, but is estimated to average 120 statute acres which became the standard after 1066. In the Domesday Book it was used as a unit of tax measurement.

**Hoitytoity** Old Norse *hutututu*, arrogant or haughty.

**Hollow Bonk** The Kingsway area of Altrincham, described as a precipice in the early 19th century, was a short cut from Higher Town (Old Market Place) down steps to Lower Town (George Street) but not accessible to traffic. Kingsway itself was built in the 1860s when Hollow Bonk was filled in and the terms Lower Town and Higher Town discontinued. 'Bonk', a bank, may be from Welsh *ponc* or *bonc*, a hillock; also occurs as The Bongs at Lymm, Warrington, Rostherne, Tabley and Goostree.

**Holt** OE, a small wood.

**Hulme/holme** From Old Danish *hulm* and Old Norse *holmr*, land almost surrounded by water; a water meadow.

**Hundred** A division of a shire/county from the 10th century. A hundred contained 100 hides; eg Bucklow.

**Ingham** Old Norse *innam*, an enclosed meadow (and a local surname).

**Intake** Land enclosed from waste, Old Norse *intak*.

**Journeyman** A qualified craftsman; originally a worker hired on a daily wage (French *journée*).

**Land/lawnd/loon/loont** A unit of land for ploughing or enclosures incorporating the ridges of an open field.

**League** The Domesday league is thought to have been about three miles.

**Leat** A channel dug to form a mill race, Dutch meaning a canal

**Leah/ley/lay** OE, a clearing in a wood (and a local surname).

**Low** OE *hlaew*, a slope, hill or mound, as in Hale Low; sometimes describing a grave mound.

**Mangle** Dutch *mangel*, clothes wringer; local dialect.

**Marl** Natural silt and limey clay mixture used for fertilising sandy or peaty ground.

**Mere** OE *maer*, a boundary; hence mere stones, boundary stones; an inland sea.

**Messuage** A dwelling house, its outbuildings and land, Old French *menage*.

**Moat** OE *mote*. Originally built to defend property but later used to display wealth, often filled with water. Also useful to breed fish and for fire-fighting. Related to the French word *motte* meaning a defensive mound. In the 15th century moats were reinforced during the Wars of the Roses and again in the 17th century Civil Wars. Many moat sites remain in Cheshire.

**Moiety** Half, Latin *medietas*.

**Mor/moor** OE *mor*, a barren, wet wasteland.

**Moss** OE *mos*, a bog.

**Oo/hoo** OE *heo*, she or wife; local dialect.

**Neatherd** A cow herder for the local lord.

**Neolithic** New Stone Age.

**Oller/ouler** OE/Norse *oler* or *alor*, alder trees, growing only in marshes, often known as the clog-wood tree because it was used to make clogs; also used to make Iron Age wheels.

**Ollerbarrow** OE *oler* or *alor*, alder tree plus OE *bearwe*, dative of *bearu*; a grove or wooded hill or swine pasture.

**Open field** From Saxon times villagers shared common land which they divided into flats, furlongs or shoots, which themselves were divided into selions, loonts or lands which were strips of land allocated to families.

**Palatine** Cheshire was made a palatine by the Normans whose earl exercised sovereign power over the county.

**Pannage** A charge for allowing pigs to forage for acorns in the woods.

**Pantry** From Old French *paneterie*, a bread store.

**Parker** A deer park keeper.

**Petty** French *petit*, small; the little house, the privy; local dialect.

**Pie Powder** The Court of Pie Powder administering instant justice at markets and fairs across England. A corruption of Old French *Pieds Poudreux* meaning 'dusty feet' describing itinerant traders.

**Pike** OE *pic*, a pointed hill or the gable end of a house.

**Pikelet** Welsh *bara pyglyd*, dusky bread; a crumpet; local dialect.

**Pingot** A collection of strips into a narrow field.

**Platt** OE and German, a plot of low land; in Cheshire a wooden footbridge; sometimes an indication of an enclosed field.

**Pobs/pobbies/papes** Latin *pabulum*, baby food; bread and milk; local dialect.

**Raddle** Another name for wattle, the hazel or willow twigs used to form the base for clay daub on a timber building.

**Ridding** OE *rydding*, a clearing in a wood.

**Rigg** The ridge left between ploughed furrows, from Old Norse *hryggr*; sometimes indicating an enclosed field.

**Sal** Willow; Sale means 'at the willow'.

**Sanjam Fair** A corruption of St. James' Fair originally held for three days in Altrincham around the Feast of The Assumption (15 August). The date of the fair created by the 1290 Charter was changed in 1319 to the Feast of St. James and became known as *Sanjam Fair*, held on July 24, 25 and 26. Sanjam Fair was opened by a procession of the Court Leet and was held until 1895 when it was condemned as a nuisance.

**Scrike** To shed tears (Manchester), Old Norse *skrikja*.

**Scutch grass** Old French *escoucher*, couch grass; local dialect.

**Seisin** Freehold possession of land, Old French *seisir*.

**Selion** Old French *sillon*, a furrow, an unfenced strip of land; sometimes indicating an enclosed field; a fraction of a furlong or acre when ploughing the arable fields of the open field system. The oxen ploughed the land in a circular fashion producing a central ridge.

**Serf** A tenant not free to travel or marry without his lord's permission; largely vanished after the 1348/9 Black Death because of labour supply and demand.

**Shaw/shay** OE *sceaga*, a small wood or coppice.

**Shippon, shippen** OE *scypen*, a sheep pen; it came to mean a cowshed in the North.

**Shire** OE *scire*, from *sciran*, to divide; a division of land.

**Shutt/shott/shoot** OE *sceat*, a projecting piece of land.

**Sinder** Most probably 'separate land' as in Sinderland, Broadheath (also see Sunderland).

**Slutch** Norse *sluss*, Cheshire dialect for mud, mire, sludge (as in Slutch or Slutchy Lane, Victoria Road, Hale).

**Snicket** A narrow passageway between buildings.

**Socager** Norman, a small landlord.

**STAG** South Trafford Archaeological Group.



**Starved** OE *steorfan*, to die a lingering death; dying of cold (rather than hunger); local dialect means hunger.

**Stile** OE and Old Dutch *steiger*, a ladder; an opening in a hedge, related to 'stair'.

**Street** OE *straet*, a paved way, often near a Roman road, as in Watling Street and Stretford.

**Sut** OE southern, as in Sutt's Brook and Sutt's Hollow, Bollington.

**Swang** Old Norse *swangi*, a low place; a swamp.

**Tenterframe** A wooden framework on which cloth was stretched with hooks after bleaching and fulling and before teasing and cropping.

**Termor** A tenant or lessee paying rent without any service involved.

**Thorley** Possibly Norse, Thor's Wood, or thorn tree wood as in Thorley Moor Road, Thorley Lane; a local surname.

**Thorp** Norse, an outlying farm (and a local surname).

**Thrutch** OE *thryccan* to squeeze (as in 'thrutch up', make room for me); local dialect; Altrincham was known as *Thrutcham* in Victorian times to the 1930s.

**Tithe** OE *teogoth*. One-tenth (sometimes one eleventh) part of produce as a local tax, eg for the church; the tithe could be a crop, pigs, eggs etc; replaced in the 1830s Tithe Apportionments by a rent charge based on area of land occupied fixed to the price of corn. The term *tithe* was also used when grouping ten families together in *frankpledge*.

**Tom/town** An open field near to the town centre, eg Oldfield, Altrincham and Tom Field Bank, Hale.

**Tontine** A club whose participants contributed equally at perhaps a penny a week to a prize that was awarded to the participant who survived; from Lorenzo Tonti, an 18th century Italian banker.

**Toot** OE, a lookout, possibly from a threat of Danish invasions.

**Townfield** OE *tun*, farm plus *feld*, field, the open cultivated field of the local community.

**Traipse** Old French *trepasser*, to pass over; dialect meaning to walk with a weary step.

**Tun** A tenant or large farmer, regarded as a settlement and hence township.

**Un** Welsh and French *un*, one; local dialect.

**Uttley** or **utley** An outlying field or wood (and a local surname).

**Vestry** Parishioners forming the governing body of the church and its parish. It also looked after the poor. To be eligible, parishioners had to be financial contributors to the church.

**Villein** Norman French *vill*, equivalent to the Saxon *tun*, meaning a tenant, usually a large farmer. Later meaning a partially free peasant.

**Wattle** Hazel branches and twigs used to form the base for clay daub on a timber building.

**Weard** OE meaning successor.

**Yan, Tan, Tethera ...** Celtic via ME, not local to Altrincham but interesting as a method of counting sheep all over England and still used in the Lake District, with similarities to modern Welsh.

**Yeoman** A small farmer owning a farm.

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# Timeline

## A local and national timeline follows:

**Stone Age** 35000-2000BC. Stone Age axes and flints found in the whole area. The oldest Stone Age finds in the region were at a flint tool factory in Tatton Park dated 10,000BC. Mesolithic 3000BC and Bronze Age 2000BC settlements at Ringway. Rectangular buildings and long barrows.

**Bronze Age** 2000-500BC. Bronze Age burial mounds in Dunham Massey. Analysis of pollen from under the Roman road in Broadheath gives evidence of burning, indicating land clearing. Copper mines at Alderley Edge date from about 2000BC. Round houses, cremation and round barrows.

**Iron Age** 500BC-50AD. Evidence from air photography of farmsteads in the lower Bollin Valley. Round houses and rectangular graves.

**Celtic** 500BC to 10th century AD. *Bollin* and *Hollow Bonk*, the old name for Kingsway in Altrincham, are partly Celtic. 'Lindow Man' found preserved in peat in Lindow Moss in 1984 whose remains have been dated to 61AD may indicate Celtic rituals continuing after Roman occupation.

**Roman** 43AD-410AD. A Roman road passes through the Altrincham area from Chester to Manchester. Roman coins found on Hale Road indicate a secondary Roman road. The Romans established forts in Chester (Deva) in 60AD and Manchester (Mamucium) in 79AD. Evidence of early Christian worship in Manchester 3rd century AD and Christian burials at Eddisbury Hill Fort 390AD.

**Anglo-Saxon** Angles and Jutes from the Baltic invaded and settle the southeast about 390AD and the Saxons about 450AD. Anglo-Saxons arrived in the north in the 6th century. In the Anglo-Saxon Chronicles, Manchester is said to be within Northumbria. Most local place names indicate Anglo-Saxon settlement. A Saxon hearth has been excavated at Timperley Old Hall. The remains of a Saxon cross are in Bowdon Church.

**Danish Vikings** invaded Britain from Scandinavia about 800AD. In 886AD Alfred the Great splits England into Wessex/Danelaw. Hale became part of the Danelaw whereas Dunham Massey may have been in Wessex.

**Norwegian Vikings** ejected from Dublin 902/3 settled in West Cheshire. The term 'Cheshire' was used for first time in 980AD. Rostherne and Urmston are Norse (Norwegian) place names. Toft, Knutsford and Davyhulme are Danish place names. Alfred the Great 871-899, Ethelred the Unready 979-1016. Canute 1016-1035, Edward the Confessor 1042-1066.

**1066** The Battle of Hastings and the Normans conquered England. Cheshire was the last English county to fall to the Normans who crossed the Pennines from York to Chester in the winter of 1069-70, probably using the Roman road. Cheshire was said to have been laid waste in retribution for late resistance. William I 1066-1087.

**1070** Cheshire was created a County Palatine. William I's nephew Hugh d'Avranche, took over the Earldom of Chester. The Norman Masci family occupied the Dunham area following the distribution of lands by William I via his earls.

**1086** Cheshire was divided by the Saxons into 12 hundreds or administrative divisions including Bochelau (Bucklow) which included the Altrincham area. The Normans took over Saxon estates and reduced the number of hundreds to seven plus Chester. The Domesday Book was compiled by the Normans with Hale, Bowdon and Dunham listed (but not Altrincham). There may have been perhaps 250 people living within the parish of Bowdon Church which stretched from Ashley to Sale. Transport was by boat and horse and cart. Glass windows were used only in the best houses. William II 1087-1100, Henry I 1100-1135.

**1169** Lancashire was formed from north Cheshire and parts of Yorkshire and Furness. Steven 1135-1154, Maud 1141, Henry II 1154-1189, Richard I 1189-1199, John 1199-1216.

**1215** Magna Carta was sealed which gave rights to the public. Bowdon Hall built about 1220.

Henry III 1216-1272. Edward I 1272-1307.

**1290** Altrincham was given a market charter by Edward I and created a free borough by Hamon de Massey V of Dunham. Priests and vicars of St Mary's Church, Bowdon are known from about 1300. England's population was about three million. The longbow was in use.

**1317** Enclosures in the area started in the 14th century and continued to the 19th century. Three years' torrential rain led to famine. Edward II 1307-1327.

**1342** The dispute over the Dunham estate following Hamon de Massey VI's death was finally settled in 1433. The end of the Masseys in Dunham Massey. Edward III 1327-1377.

**1349** The area lost half its population in the Black Death and some land reverted to nature as a result. Richard II 1377-1399.

**1400** Owain Glyndwr attempted to restore Cheshire to the Welsh. Henry IV 1399-1413.

**1415** Cheshire archers were at Agincourt. Henry V 1413-1422, Henry VI 1422-1461.

**1433** The manor of Hale was split between the Booths, Stanleys & Chauntrells. The Booths of Bollin (Wilmslow) eventually took over most of the former Dunham Massey estates.

**1455-1471** Wars of the Roses. Edward IV 1461-1483.

**1474** Altrincham was described as 'a poor thing with a mayre'. Edward V 1483, Richard III 1483-1485, Henry VII 1485-1509.

**1500** Moss Farm, Bowdon and its tithe barn were built about now.

**1515** Ringway Chapel built. Henry VIII 1509-1547.

**1536** Dissolution of the monasteries.

**1543** England and Wales were united. MPs were elected for Cheshire, previously a Palatine county. Edward VI 1547-1553, Jane Grey 1553, Mary I 1553-1558, Elizabeth I 1558-1603.

**1565** Sir Walter Raleigh introduced tobacco & potatoes.

**1605** Outbreak of plague in Cheshire. Gunpowder Plot.

**1629-1640** Dissolution of Parliament by Charles I.

**1642-1649** Civil Wars. Siege of Wythenshawe Hall. Siege of Manchester by Royalists when earthen barriers were erected at entrances to the town. Charles I 1625-1649, beheaded.

**1642-1660** Commonwealth rule.

**1644** Royalist troops of Prince Rupert of the Rhine camped on Bowdon Downs in May 1644 during the Civil War.

**1653** Humphrey Chetham died leaving money to found Chetham's School and Library. Cromwell 1651-60, Charles II 1660-1685.

**1685-1688** James II, William III 1689-1702, Mary II 1689-1694.

**1707** Great Britain formed by the union of England and Scotland. Manchester was developing as the first industrial city in the world. Queen Anne 1702-1714.

**1715** First Jacobite Rebellion supported the Old Pretender in Scotland. Jacobite supporters met at Ashley Hall, led by Sir Peter Legh of Lyme Hall. Manchester's first newspaper, the Manchester Weekly Journal, 1719. George I 1714-1727.

**1724** First turnpike road in the region between Manchester and Buxton opened. George II 1727-1760.

**1745** Second Jacobite Rebellion. Some of the Young Pretender's troops stayed overnight in Old Market Place, Altrincham.

**1760-1820** George III.

**1765** The Bridgewater Canal, the UK's first modern artificial waterway, took coal from Worsley to Manchester.

**1766** The Bridgewater Canal was extended to Broadheath, enabling the export of local produce from Hale to Manchester. The Altrincham to Manchester road was turnpiked.

**1775** Robert Seddon opened a worsted mill in Bowdon. Pleasure boats on the Bridgewater Canal. The Sunday School movement started.

**1779** Market gardening started in the area on a large scale.

**1780** The first cotton mill in Altrincham opened.

**1783** The first Sunday School in Altrincham opened.

**1815** The Battle of Waterloo. Bull & bear baiting outside Bowdon Church was stopped. 48,000 tons of coal were imported into Manchester annually from Worsley via the Bridgewater Canal to power cotton mills.

**1819** Peterloo Massacre, Manchester. Manchester Guardian founded 1820. George IV 1820-1830.

**1821** The Altrincham to Stockport road was turnpiked. William IV 1830-1837.

**1836** The Altrincham Poor Union which extended to the borders of Warrington and Northwich was formed. There were 15,960 power looms in Manchester. Tithe Maps were produced with accompanying apportionments tables. Queen Victoria 1837-1901.

**1844** Town gas production from coal started at the Unicorn Inn, Altrincham. Potato famine 1845/46.

**1848** The Public Health Act set standards for water supply, street cleaning, refuse collection, and sewage disposal.

**1849** The Manchester, South Junction and Altrincham Railway opened, as the region's first commuter route.

**1851** Altrincham Local Board of Health was formed following cholera in the 1830s/40s. Water pumps were installed in Altrincham town 1852. Window Tax was repealed allowing better light and ventilation in houses.

**1861** The American Civil War causes a cotton famine which resulted in Lancashire and Altrincham mills closing. Soup kitchens were set up.

**1862** Bowdon (Peel Causeway) Station (later Hale Station) opened.

**1867** The Factories' Act forbade employment of children under eight and restricted those under 13 to half a day.

**1868** John Siddeley opened Peel Causeway Brewery. Spring Bank brooks were culverted enabling house building in Hale village from 1870.

**1884** Broadheath industrial estate was started by American George Richards.

**1891** Altrincham Football Club founded.

**1894** Urban and Rural District Councils were created, consolidating Poor Law and sanitation. Bucklow Rural District Council was established. An electricity power station opened in Broadheath. The Manchester Ship Canal opened. Thirlmere Aqueduct opened giving Manchester soft water from the Lake District.

**1900** Hale Urban District Council was set up to form modern Hale. Peel Causeway was renamed Hale and Ringway became a separate parish.

**1901** Labour Party formed. First electric trams ran in Manchester and aircraft developed. King Edward VII 1901-1910.

**1904** Horse-drawn bus ran from the Old Bleeding Wolf, Hale to Broadheath. Horse-drawn trams were operating in Broadheath until 1924. The Midland Hotel, Manchester opened and Rolls met Royce here resulting in the formation of Rolls-Royce.

**1907** Electric trams ran from Altrincham to Manchester.

**1909** AV Roe flew the first British plane and a year later built and sold them for £450.

**1908** Retirement pensions started. George V 1910-1936.

**1911** Captain Scott visited Seamons Moss School, Oldfield Brow, fund-raising for his final Antarctic expedition. Ford factory opened at Trafford Park for assembly-line production of Model T cars.

**1912** Titanic sank on maiden voyage. Scott's last expedition to Antarctica.

**1931** Trams to Manchester were replaced by buses. Building started on the Wythenshawe housing estate.

**1936** Edward VIII abdicated. George VI 1936-1952.

**1937** Altrincham became a Municipal Borough. Frank Whittle invented the jet engine.

**1938** Ringway Airport, now Manchester International Airport, opened.

**1940** Blitz in Broadheath. Christmas Blitz inflicted serious damage on central Manchester. Dunkirk and Battle of Britain. Income Tax 10s (50p) in the £1.

**1951** Census triggered local slum clearance.

**1952** Elizabeth II ascended the throne.

**1954** Wartime rationing ended.

**1962** Population of Altrincham, Bowdon and Hale about 63,000. Co-operative Insurance Society skyscraper opened in Manchester.

**1974** Altrincham, Hale, Bowdon and Dunham Massey become part of Trafford Metropolitan Borough Council.

**1990** Altrincham Borough celebrated 700 years.

**1991** Tim Berners-Lee invented the World Wide Web.

**1992** Metrolink opened between Bury, Manchester and Altrincham.

**2000** Hale Millennium clock was built.

**2001** Runway 2 completed at Manchester Airport.

**2022** Queen Elizabeth II died and King Charles III ascended the throne.

## BOOK 8: BRADBURY CENTRAL SCHOOL 1910-1985



### ***Bradbury Central School***

*Roger Colling's 1984 drawing of Bradbury Central School from Queens Road. The school house (the housewifery) is on the left with the girls' entrance just behind it. The boys' entrance is on the right of the building.*

**Altrincham History Society  
Occasional Paper 21**



## **A paper to celebrate Bradbury Central School 1910-1985**

Because of the limited official documentation found on Bradbury Central School, I have relied on former pupils' memories for much of the detail, for which I thank them. I welcome corrections and additions to the text for future editions.

### **The 1902 Balfour Education Act**

At the beginning of the twentieth century there was disorder in the administration of education and Britain was falling behind its rivals, the USA and Germany, in this and other fields. In order to remedy the situation, the Education Act of 1902 was a major step in the reform of both elementary and secondary education. In the new act administrative responsibility was given to local government bodies to be known as Local Education Authorities. In Altrincham's case the Urban District Council was not large enough to function as a separate body and so direction came from the county council at Chester. Because of the size of the county, the area was divided into administrative sub-committees of which there was a representative officer in Altrincham Town Hall.

From time to time the Central Board of Education in London issued regulations regarding the curriculum. For example in 1904 all secondary schools were to introduce a school certificate in English language and literature, geography, history, a foreign language, mathematics, science, drawing, manual work, physical training, and household crafts for girls.

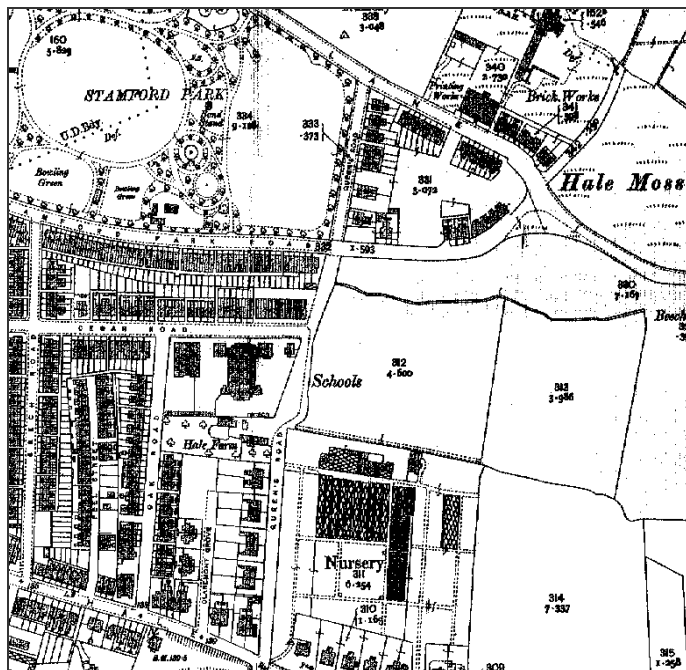
The code of 1905 allowed the provision of higher elementary education and some LEAs took advantage of this by creating Higher Elementary Schools of which Bradbury was one, founded by Cheshire County Council from Chester, not Altrincham UDC. Under the Act of 1907, other authorities such as Manchester created central schools at the outset. Bradbury was later to become one of these. Apart from private schools and the ancient grammar schools, another new system ran side-by-side with the higher elementary system and that was grammar schools founded by LEAs. Altrincham was to have two of these, one for girls and one for boys. The majority of the boards of management of such schools were appointed by the LEA; there were no religious tests and at least 25% of the places were free. Access to the free grammar school places from the primary elementary sector was by a test at the age of 11, the '11-plus exam'. Alternatively children in the elementary or secondary sector could leave at twelve and go into employment, or take a test similar to the 11-plus to enter a higher elementary school (where fees were still paid) such as Altrincham Higher Elementary School which later became Bradbury Central School.

### **Judge James Bradbury**

James Kinder Bradbury was born in 1847 the son of George Bradbury, a farmer of Kinders, Saddleworth, Oldham. He was educated at Liverpool and Caius College, Cambridge and became a lawyer, qualified as a barrister, and practised at the Manchester Bar. In 1875 James joined the Northern Circuit as a judge covering county courts in Bolton, Bury, Oldham and Rochdale. In 1878 he married Grace Dowling from Timperley and they lived at Church Bank, Richmond Road, Bowdon where their son Edward was born in 1881. They later moved to Parkfield, Groby Place, Altrincham. Judge Bradbury died of influenza and pneumonia in 1913 aged 65 at St. Raphael in the south of France while on a two-month holiday in Spain and the Riviera. He is buried in the Alphonse Karr Cemetery in St. Raphael in a grave with the inscription "James Kinder Bradbury (1847-1913) of Altringham, Cheshire" on the gravestone. The name of Judge Bradbury's widow, Grace, who died in 1924, is also inscribed on the stone.

## The origins of the School

Judge James Bradbury chaired the joint Altrincham, Bowdon, Hale and District Education Sub-Committee established in 1903. It organised the building of Navigation Road and Stamford Park Schools in 1906. In 1910 the committee opened Altrincham Higher Elementary School (later renamed Bradbury Central) and Altrincham County High for Girls (later Altrincham Grammar School for Girls), and Judge James Bradbury was the chairman of the Board of Governors of these schools. Altrincham County High for Boys (later Altrincham Grammar School for Boys) was opened in 1912. The Roman Catholic authorities anticipated the state secondary schools by opening Loreto in 1909, then a small private secondary school for girls which moved to its present site on the Dunham Road in 1912.



*This early 1908 map shows the site of Bradbury Central, to be built where the word 'Schools' is opposite to Stamford Park Primary School on Queens Road. The field is shown on the 1838 tithe map as Nearer Hey, enclosed from the Medieval Hale open field. It measured exactly one statute acre. The building over Queens Road from the bottom left corner of the field is Hale Field Farm. Note the proximity of Stamford Park Primary School to the west and nursery fields to the south.*

Bradbury Central School was opened in 1910 as Altrincham Higher Elementary School, providing commercial and domestic education for 250 pupils with Mr Alfred William Boucher as head teacher. It was renamed in honour of Judge Bradbury's son, Captain Edward Kinder Bradbury V.C., after his death on 1 September 1914 in World War I.

Pupils came from a wide area including Northwich, Knutsford, Lymm and Cheadle. The school had a high reputation for commercial subjects. In 1910 pupils could leave school at age twelve if they and their parents wished and many went into commerce, industry and the building trade. Compulsory ages for school attendance were: to age 10 in 1880, 11 in 1893, 12 in 1899, 14 in 1918, 15 in 1947, 16 in 1972.

The first pupils at the school included those from the 1858 Independent British Schools situated off what is now Oxford Road, Altrincham. Over the next few years Bradbury Central provided education for a wide-ranging population, taking its place in an education system with grammar schools at the top accessed by examination and producing academics and scientists, and

including the Roman Catholic Loreto and private schools such as Bowdon College and Culcheth Hall. Grammar school fees would have loomed large for families with small incomes, especially when added to the price of uniforms, and no doubt many children who passed the 11+ exam would not get to grammar school because of the extra costs involved.

Bradbury must have been one of the first, if not the first, in the area to be co-educational. Strong efforts were made to control relationships, including separate entrances, cloakrooms and playgrounds for boys and girls, and there was a school rule about not speaking to the opposite sex when coming to and from school.

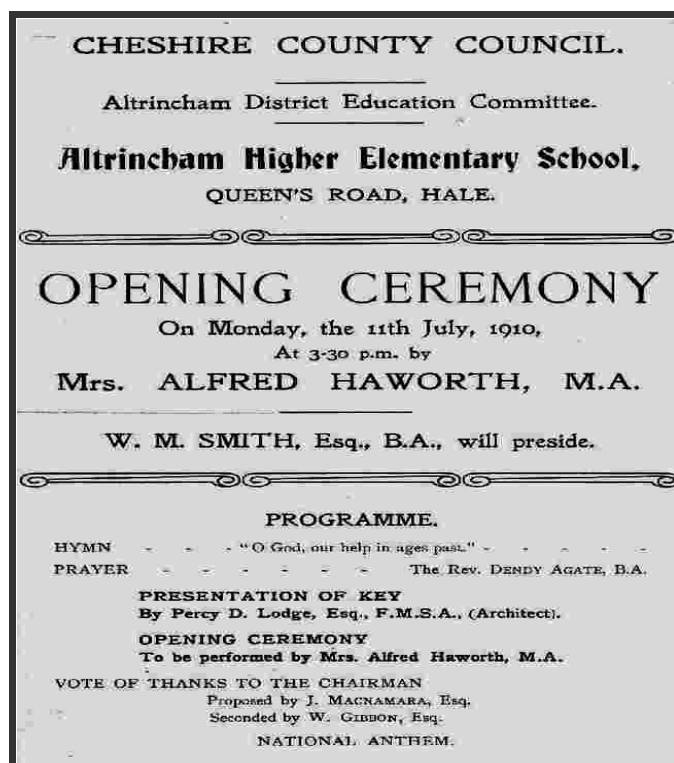
## The opening ceremony

At the opening ceremony for the school architect, Percy D Lodge, handed over the key and John Macnamara proposed a vote of thanks for the chairman. Mr Macnamara was at that time an Altrincham councillor and the noted Altrincham architect of Mossburn Buildings on Stamford New Road. In the evening a programme of music was led by the school orchestra. The 1<sup>st</sup> violins were Edgar Pickstone (leader), Francis Moorman, Douglas Megson, Jennie Bell; 2<sup>nd</sup> violins Reginald Gleave, Walter Collins, Lyndon Hall, Edna Rowley; 'cello Ida Taylor; pianists Clarice Petrement and Sybil Crossley. There was also a school choir and soloist Laura Boucher.

The school opened for pupils on Monday 15 August 1910 at a cost of 6d per week (perhaps £3 in 2010 values) but there were scholarships.

## Buildings

The main school building included a hall surrounded by classrooms (see the plans and drawings in Appendix 3). The hall was used for assemblies, dances, games and as a gym. There were separate boys' and girls' entrances but no front door. The drawings show six classrooms on the ground floor with 25 desks per room, two per desk for around 260-plus pupils. There is also an art room on the ground floor. The upper floor contained practical rooms including science. There were two separate buildings for woodwork/metalwork and housewifery (probably built as the caretaker's house originally). For some years two teachers lived in the housewifery building and both boys and girls practised their housekeeping skills in a real situation, making the beds, washing up, washing and ironing. The housewifery building was also used by Bowdon Church School. Later there was an additional prefabricated building for cooking and baking.



*Bradbury entrances  
(Mike Arron)*



## School Houses

Until 1930 the school was divided into eight houses, four for girls and four for boys. In 1930 the houses were reduced to four, combining girls and boys:

Girls	merge	Girls & Boys	merge	Boys
York	→	York (blue)	←	Beatty
Lancaster	→	Lancaster (red)	←	Bradbury
Tudor	→	Tudor (green)	←	Cornwell
Stuart	→	Stuart (yellow)	←	Haig

## School mottos

The boys' motto was *"To set the cause above renown; To love the game beyond the prize."*

The girls' motto was *"Henceforth the school and you are one; And what **you** are the race shall be."*

## The Staff

### Head Teachers (approximate dates)

Mr AW Boucher	1910-1932
Mr RW Shuard	1932-1952
Mr CRigby (JP)	1952-1957
Mr KD Bradshaw	1957-1959
Mr W Terry	1959-1976
Mr RL Shotton	1976-1985

### Headmistresses

Miss Young
Mrs Knight
Miss Docker

## Teachers

In 1914 the staff were listed as AW Boucher (headmaster), Miss I Clark (housewifery), Miss ME Cooke, (biology & maths), J Crossley (commercial & literary English & music), A Grounds (physics), J Nutall (woodwork), Mrs A Oldham (cookery), Miss L Southwell (hygiene & sewing), Miss R Underwood (French), AE Walden (chemistry). The local Guardian of 23 April 1915 said *"Mr Irving Webster, a master on the staff at Bradbury Higher Elementary School, left in December 1914 as Captain in 11 Battalion The West Riding Regiment (Duke of Wellington's). The Principal has been informed that his wrist was badly slashed in the fighting at Neuve Chapelle where the Army suffered heavy losses. Mr Webster was now in hospital at St Alloys near Neuve Chapelle."*

Teachers listed in 1951 were RH Bates, N Bispham, Miss P Bradshaw, TN Burbage, Mrs DB Burke, Mrs B Derbyshire, Miss B Edisford, WL Evans, R Finch, Miss B Foote, S Griffiths, A Laurence Jones, F Knowles, Mrs JP Lawson, CH Mann, Miss B Mills, A Mitchell, RW Murray, Miss EV Platt, C Rigby, Mrs D Riley, Miss M J Searle, Miss PE Thomas, BH Whinfield.

Staff in 1956 included: Miss Berry (English & maths), Miss Docker (English & geography), Miss Foote (housecraft), Miss Gardner (art & games), Miss Hodges (needlework), Miss Searle (housecraft), Mr Bispham (light crafts), Mr Burbage (handicrafts), Mr Christie (religious knowledge), Mr Evans (English & maths), Mr Griffiths (maths, science & mechanics), Mr Hall (history), Mr Jones (science & biology), Mr Knowles (art), Mr Mitchell (music), Mr Pritchard (library), Mr Somers (handicrafts), Mr Whinfield (rural studies, technical drawing & the school garden), Mrs Armstrong (commercial subjects), Mrs Atkinson (needlework), Mrs Burke (history, maths, games & dancing), Mrs Derbyshire (physical training), Miss Docker (geography), Mrs Gray (English, geography, maths

& games), Mrs Knights (housecraft), Mrs Mayers (geography & maths), Mrs Westbrook (maths & religious studies), Mrs Yarrow (canteen).

The staff in 1964/5 consisted of: Mr Arthur Prescott (5th form), Mrs Margaret Helm (4TC), Mr D Hickling (4th), Mr Jim Burbage (4PB), Mrs D Burke (4PG), Mr Selwyn Griffiths (3TC), Mrs J Bates (3TH), Mr Les Evans (3PB), Miss Margaret Searle (3PG), Mr Keith Smith (2A), Miss Diana McGregor (2Alpha), Mr Duncan Rutter (2B), Mrs F D Armstrong (2R), Miss Margaret Bailey (1A), Miss Sue Henry (1Alpha), Miss E Dransfield (1B), Miss Edith Berry (1R), Mr John Thomas (physical education), Mr David Wilson, (science), Miss B Foote (domestic science), Mr Norman Bispham (craft), Mr Peter Braun (woodwork), Mr Stan Whitehead (deputy head & French), Miss Lilian Docker (senior mistress).

Teachers' names in 1984 included Adams, Boudier, Greenough, Knowles, Nuttall, Stearman, Turner, Walden, and Young.

## **Subjects taught**

Girls and boys were taught together in most classes, but with the girls on one side and the boys on the other.

In 1910 the school prospectus encouraged potential pupils to apply for entry to the school. Pupils received practical training in preparing them for industry and commerce. They had to be aged between 12 and 13 on admission and had to remain at school for three years. There were free scholarships for at least a third of the scholars, based on an examination in English and arithmetic.

On the commercial course for both sexes the subjects taught were accounting, citizenship, drawing, drill, English language and literature, French, history, manual instruction, mathematics, music, practical geography, practical science, shorthand, sport, and writing and composition. Boys were also taught metalwork and woodwork, and girls had classes in cookery, housewifery, hygiene and laundry.

Teachers previously listed in 1956 illustrate the wide range of subjects taught. In addition, accountancy, citizenship, cookery, drawing, metalwork, shorthand, typing and woodwork were offered.

The domestic course for girls consisted of drawing, drill, English language and literature, geography, history, maths, music, and writing and composition. Games included cricket, football, hockey and swimming. Classes were numbered 1a, 2a, 3a, 4a (commercial) and 1b, 2b, 3b, 4b (technical). Later there was a fifth year. Class sizes from 1960s photos show an average of 33, perhaps 35 allowing for a couple missing from a class.

Below is a weekly timetable for class 4 commercial in 1958 with the names of the teachers underneath:

<b>M</b>	History Hall	Commerce Armstrong	Games Gardner	Music Mitchell	English Gray	History Hall	English Gray
<b>T</b>	PT Derbyshire	Maths Westbrooke		Geog Docker	Art Gardner	Commerce Armstrong	Religion Westbrook
<b>W</b>	English Gray		Maths Westbrooke		Commercial Armstrong	Commercial Armstrong	
<b>T</b>	Needlework Atkinson		Maths Westbrooke	Geog Docker	Commerce Armstrong	English Gray	Commerce Armstrong Religion Westbrook
<b>F</b>	Housecraft Knights				Dancing Burke	Music Mitchell	Games Gray English Gray

School certificates were awarded in July following Joint Matriculation Board exams. After World War II a night school was held at Bradbury with subjects such as woodwork, metalwork, technical drawing, languages, photography, and art & craft.

### Open Days & Speech Days

An **Open Day** was held on Friday 20 July 1956 in the afternoon and evening. There were exhibitions of work (see the 1956 staff list). In the afternoon and evening there was country dancing, physical education, a dress parade, dramatics, and the choir, recorders and violins.

**Speech Days** were probably held most years except for the war time. Two memorabilia illustrate the format of the meetings:

A **Speech Day** was held at the Stamford Hall, Altrincham on Wednesday 30 January 1957 at 7:15pm. The event was chaired by Harold B Moore, the chairman of the governors, and the speaker was Dr FC Couzens, JP, headmaster of Hyde County Grammar School. The school song was sung followed by the headmaster's (C Rigby) report. Four songs were sung by the school choir, followed by the chairman's remarks, and the presentation of prizes by the Dr Couzens. Form and subject prizes, and certificates were awarded. Inter-house trophies, the Boucher cup, the Clegg Shield, the Harry Searle cup, the Redford cup, the Eustace Parker cup, and the Adams cup were presented for athletics. The strings then played four pieces, and recorders two. Dr Couzens addressed the assembly, the head girl and head boy expressed the school's thanks to the speaker, and the school hymn was sung. The Rev. John Heywood offered a prayer and the national anthem was sung.

A **Speech Day** was held in the Stamford Hall on Wednesday 19 February 1958 when the speaker was SH Woodiwiss, principal of Alsager Training College, with Harold B Moore as the chairman. The proceedings were similar to 1957. The school song was sung, the headmaster (K D Bradshaw) gave his report, there were two songs by the school choir, the chairman's remarks, an address by SH Woodiwiss, two songs by the choir, presentation of prizes, an expression of thanks by head girl Margaret Walker and head boy Anthony Williams, and the school hymn and the national anthem were sung.

### Plays, musicals and the School Band

There was a strong musical tradition at the school. The operetta *The Daughter of the Regiment* was performed in 1910, and in the 1950s and 60s the tradition owed a great deal to music teacher Laurence Jones, and later to Margaret Bailey. Laurence staged *The Band Wagon Show* on



November 12-13 1954 and there was a musical evening on 30 March 1960 with soloists, folk dancing, duets, a brass band, and a choir.

On the 4 to 6 May 1961 a comic operetta *The Secret Weapon*, libretto by Maureen Fell and music by Laurence Jones, was produced. Clive Miller aged 17 led the violins, one of which was his tutor Tony Smith. *The Princess and the Swineherd* was staged 24 to 26 May 1962, directed by Lilian Docker. Three one-act plays were produced from 1 to 3 May 1963, directed by Duncan Rutter, Laurence Jones and Lilian Docker. *The Bells of Bruges* was performed on Thursday to Saturday 30 April to 2 May 1964, produced by Mrs M Fell and Laurence Jones. There was a musical evening on 15 March 1967 with a choir. Laurie later conducted the Hale Light Orchestra from its initiation.

Richard Hagon (on the right of the picture) writes: "*In March 1968 the school presented a musical play in two acts called The Seventh Dungeon. Over fifty boys took part and the school hall was transformed into a theatre, with staging, lighting and a full-height backdrop painted in the art room. During the next few years the Bradbury Boys' Brass Band performed many concerts. The following gives some idea on how busy they were throughout the school year: On the 26 March 1969, a brass band concert included pieces by Haydn, Brahms and Offenbach. On the 11 July 1969, a musical evening, featured a 'cello solo by Peter Carney, a tenor horn solo Bist du bei mir by J S Bach performed by Richard Hagon, and a cornet duet by John Hawker and Peter Henstock, with musical director Margaret Bailey. 17 Dec 1969 A Christmas brass band concert featured a clarinet solo by Peter Waters, euphonium solo by Philip Young and songs by the first and third year pupils. On the 18 March 1970 a brass band concert featured a clarinet solo by Peter Waters, a cornet solo by John Hawker and a euphonium solo by Philip Young. In April 1970, the brass band went to Seaton in South Devon to perform in several venues: the Memorial Hall, Colyford, Seaton Methodist Church, Woodroffe School, Lyme Regis, and Cross Road Community Centre in Seaton. The boys camped out in a local field which was enjoyable but a bit chilly at times! On 18 April 1970 the band took part in the Heaton Mersey Music Festival. On the 8 July 1970 an end-of-term concert featured solos by Peter Waters, Philip Young and a clarinet trio by Peter Waters, Richard Hagon and Robert Reid. This was the final concert for us all in the 5<sup>th</sup> year as we departed our school life for pastures new at college and to start our working lives. All of us in the band were eternally grateful for the time and effort put in by Margaret Bailey (music teacher), Charles Holt (band tutor), and Mr Lincoln (band tutor) who made our musical life at school so enjoyable.*"



## Sports Days

Pupils were very enthusiastic about sports activities and sports days were held on the playing fields at the side of the school on summer evenings. The school also took part in inter-school sports at other local schools. Examples of sports day programmes include:

Year	Events
1931	The first recorded sports day was held on 1 July 1931 at 6:30 pm. Events included flat races, a plant pot race, hoop races, high jump, sack races, skipping, relay, slow cycle, hockey dribbling, a potato race, an obstacle race, long jump, netball shooting, wheelbarrow, and a tug-of-war. Trophies were distributed by J Clegg, the chairman of Altrincham, Bowdon and Hale & District Education Sub-Committee, and chairman of the school managers. The headmaster was RW Shuard and the admission programme cost 2d. The Altrincham Borough Prize Band entertained.
1932	13 July. Trophies were again presented by J Clegg. The Clegg Shield was presented for swimming, and the Boucher Cup for house champions was presented by scholars and staff to commemorate the retirement of the first headmaster, AW Boucher. The Altrincham Borough Band entertained.
1933	5 July. Guests included J Clegg and trophies were distributed by AB Ireland, JP. The judges were E Mealor, J Pickston, J Southern. A swimming gala was held in September.
1934	11 July. J Clegg was chairman and trophies were distributed by Miss O Earlam, Inspector of Schools, Cheshire County Council.
1935	17 July. J Clegg chairman and trophies were distributed by the Rev. Miles Williams.
1936	1 July. Trophies were distributed by JB Hall, County Organiser of Physical Training.
1938	13 July. Trophies were distributed by Right Hon. Earl of Stamford, Mayor of Altrincham. The judges were T Barnett, E Mealor, J Southern (all head teachers).
1939	28 June at 6:30pm. Trophies were distributed by Miss M Altham, County Organiser of Physical Training.
1984	The final Annual Athletic Sports Day for the school was held in the afternoon of 18 July and the staff played the Old Boys at cricket at 5pm. The staff cricket team consisted of RL Shotton (capt), JTH Allen, Barry Comar, RH James, MCM Ridley, RG Jones, D Shaw, J Thomas, AG Tyrie, DP Lilly, and J Morris.

## Out-of-School activities

Activities included inter-school football, cricket, and netball; a school camp in 1964; camping and archery in Tatton Park; inter-school sports days; school dances; visits abroad; staff cricket and hockey matches; weekend field trips; various school clubs and publications. Clubs included at various times: puppet, model-making, dancing, rabbit, judo, antiquarian society, art, photography, chess, volleyball, cross-country, camping, stamp collecting, gym, the prefects club, and the lunch-hour club.

## Visits abroad

Vibrant cultural activities were reported in the school magazine and weekly newsletter. Thirty pupils and six teachers travelled by train and boat to Switzerland on 20 April 1954. Mount Pilatus was ascended by bus on the last day to 7,000 feet where the snow was reported to be 30 to 40 feet deep. On 26 May 1955 there was an extensive holiday in Italy when 3,000 miles were covered by coach. The party first drove to the Channel and crossed to see the Somme Battlefield. They then drove on to Milan, Florence, Sienna, Rome (where they saw the Colosseum, the Arch of Titus, climbed to the top of St. Pauls, and saw the Pope), Naples, Pompei, and Capri (where they

saw Gracie Fields' property and reported that house prices were very cheap!). From the hostel they could see Naples, Vesuvius and Pompeii. On the return journey they saw Pisa with its tower leaning 16 feet, Genova, San Remo, Nice, Fontainebleau, Paris, and Dunkirk.

## **The annual school magazine**

**The Blue Eagle**, the school magazine, was produced annually from 1953 to 1983 at least and illustrates a wide range of social and cultural activities, including holidays abroad. The school was obviously thriving. The magazine was well-produced and contained an editorial. The magazine forms an invaluable source of information about school life and out-of-school activities. The 1953/54 editions were supervised by Mr Rigby and Mr Finch.

The 1953 edition was edited by Valerie Smith (the daughter of local musician Tony Smith) and Hugh Robertson. It gave a detailed account of activities at the school, each article by a different pupil. It included songs, quizzes, drawings, narratives, sports results, riddles, poems, stories, jokes, clubs, excerpts from books, rural studies, pets, embarrassing moments, school houses' activities, and Parent/Teacher Association activities (which started in 1953).

The 1954 edition was edited by Barbara Renshaw and Lance Wilson. The magazine reported the speech day on 19 January, which included choirs and the recorder group. A school concert was held on the last day of term. The PTA held a garden fete in September. On the 15 December 100 cakes were displayed for judging.

In 1955 Janet Ward and Kenneth Chorlton were the editors. On the 2 May there was a trip to Moreton Old Hall. On the 26 May there was an extensive holiday in Italy. There were visits to Kendal Milne's dairy, corporation greenhouses, Manchester Library Theatre, and Stratford-on-Avon. There was an open day on the 13 July, which included access to the school canteen.

The 1959 edition reported visits to Austria, Rome, the Isle of Wight and London. An operetta was performed, and there was a drama festival. There were visits to the Daily Mail, the Manchester Ship Canal, and the Wedgwood Social Services Club.

In 1961 there were visits to the Stork Margarine Factory, Kemsley House, and an Altrincham Council meeting. The Easter camp on Anglesey was reported, a holiday in Venice, and trips to Edinburgh and New Brighton. There were updates on the school library, and on musical activities.

In 1962 there were visits to the Refuge Assurance Society in Manchester, and Barton Power Station. There was feedback from the School Leavers Conference at the YMCA buildings on Ashley Road, Altrincham, and on clubs' activities.

The 1964 edition included the head girl's and head boy's reports, the speech day, a garden fete, and camping at Tatton. A fifth year was introduced for external examinations. There was a trip to London and prefects' dances. Many Hallé Orchestra visits were made and clubs were reported. The antiquarian society visited Warburton and Lymm Churches, and there was a camp at Tatton Park when food was prepared, scientific studies made, mapping carried out, the hall and gardens visited, and a survey of Ashley made. Parents visited at night when there was a bonfire. Later there was a visit to Ashley Hall Farm by train, the Heinz factory, camping at Rhoscolyn near Holyhead, and a visit to White & Swales shops at 2 Cross Street and 55 George Street. White & Swales was one of the firms placing advertisements in the magazine.

One of the last magazines, in 1983, reported on clubs, the school library, the school vehicle and trailer used for canoes, and a skiing holiday.

## The school's Weekly Journal

The journal was produced for 1953-54, initially edited by Hilda Bishop, assisted by Enid Brown and reported on sports activities, particularly matches against other schools. It also throws light on other activities such as trips to the theatre.

1953	Activity
Sept 4	<b>Issue 1.</b> There were reports on football, netball, and the puppet and lunch hour clubs.
21	A report was given on the 80th Altrincham Agricultural Show which included cattle, dogs, rabbits, cavies, poultry, garden and farm produce. Football was Sale v Bradbury.
28	Football was Royal Deaf School v Bradbury & St. Bedes v Bradbury.
Oct 5	There was a Blackpool Illuminations trip. Football was Lymm Grammar v Bradbury and netball was Bradbury v Ashton-on-Mersey.
12	Football was Altrincham Grammar School v Bradbury and netball Loreto Convent v Bradbury.
19	Football was Bradbury v Knutsford Secondary and netball Bradbury v Wellington Road.
Nov 2	Football was St. Bedes v Bradbury. A school dance was held on 23 October including old scholars, reported by Valerie Smith. A careers talk was given.
9	Football was Stretford v Bradbury and netball Bradbury v Culcheth Hall juniors.
23	A visit to the nearby gasworks was organised. There was no sport.
Dec 7	Netball was Bradbury v Sale Moor. There was a display of about 70 Christmas cakes.
<b>1954</b>	
Jan 11	Editors were Enid Brown and Rita Martin. Football reported was Bradbury v Ashton-on-Mersey.
18	Football was Bradbury v Ashton-on-Mersey and netball Ashton-on-Mersey v Bradbury.
25	Football was Bradbury v Sale Moor.
Feb 1	A speech day was held at the Stamford Hall on the 27 January. The school song, school hymn, and national anthem were sung and the 1953 film <i>The Conquest of Everest</i> was shown. The dancing club was reported.
8	A school dance was held on 5 February.
15	Preparation was made for a trip to Switzerland. Badminton and table tennis were reported.
Mar 1	Football was Bradbury v Lymm Grammar and netball Bradbury v St. Bedes.
8	<b>Issue 21.</b> Football was Wellington Road v Bradbury.
15	Football was Manchester Grammar v Bradbury and netball Bradbury v Culcheth Hall.
22	Football was Bradbury v Wellington Road and netball Bradbury v Sale Moor (2 <sup>nd</sup> ).
29	Football was Royal Deaf School v Bradbury and netball Bradbury v Sale Moor.
April 5	Netball was Bradbury v Loreto Convent and a netball rally held at Sale Moor School included Ashton-on-Mersey, Sale Moor, Wellington Road, Culcheth, and the Calico Printing Association.
May 3	Rita Martin was the editor, assisted by Susan Barker. The visit to Switzerland on 20 April and a school dance for leavers were reported.
10	Football was Bradbury v Bredbury and netball Nantwich v Bradbury.
17	Football was Ellesmere Port v Bradbury and cricket Timperley Cricket Club juniors v Bradbury.
24	A sports day was held at Altrincham Boys' Grammar School (ABGS) and cricket was Bradbury under 14s v ABGS.

31	<b>Issue 30.</b> The editor was Rita Martin assisted by Susan Barker. Football was Bradbury v Grange from Ellesmere Port. The 4 <sup>th</sup> annual inter-schools athletic meeting was held at ABGS.
June 14	<b>Issue 31.</b> Cricket was Bradbury Under 15s v ABGS.
21	Cricket was Bradbury under 14s v ABGS.
28	A county sports day was held at Sir John Deane's Grammar School, Northwich with 1000 competitors.
July 12	In the final issue of the term the school sports day was reported together with a visit to the Piccoli Puppet Theatre.

## Bradbury closes

In 1965 the girls moved to Delahays School on Green Lane, Timperley and Bradbury became known as Bradbury Boys School. Bradbury closed in 1985 after 75 very successful years. The teachers and pupils were transferred to Delahays School which became Green Lane Secondary School, and is now the Altrincham College of Arts. Sadly for many people, the Bradbury buildings were demolished and St. Andrew's Court retirement apartments were built on the site with a playing field retained for the use of Stamford Park School.



St. Andrew's Court from Queens Road

## Reunions

Bryn Mallion has organised reunions for more than 30 years, the first in 1991 at the Cresta Court attended by 250 former pupils and teachers. He organised a very successful centenary reunion at the Stamford Arms, Bowdon on the 19 February 2010, when 156 people attended and now holds annual reunions.



2010 Reunion (Bryn Mallion)

## Pupils' and Teachers' memories of Bradbury

**Grange Calveley** attended Bradbury in the late 1950s and is famous for his creation of the cartoon *Roobarb & Custard* which was first aired by the BBC in 1974.

Several former Bradbury and teachers pupils have contributed memories of the school which illustrate life there.

### Michael Arron

*I was at Bradbury Central School from about 1939 to 1944. My memories of the school are getting a bit blurred now with the passage of time. I used to walk to school hail, rain or shine, and being late was not a option. The only exception to this was if, during the night there had been an air raid, you could arrive later. Although I don't remember the details, it was always a good reason for being late. The headmaster in my day was Mr Shuard who was a great believer in corporal punishment where one was sent to stand on the black line outside his room and await your fate. Mr Knowles was the art teacher who use to beat you with a T-square. You were then sent down to*

the woodwork teacher, a Mr Wood (strangely enough), with the broken T-square for repair. From time to time we were in danger of running out of them. In this day and age he would have been in deep trouble. Mr Wood was known as Joe Wood and during the war at woodwork lessons we were put to work making garden gates because the iron ones had been taken to make war materials. I think we supplied a gate for most homes in Cleveland Road, Hale. Strangely, that is where Joe lived and, as I lived quite close by, I delivered the finished product to most houses; a bit of private enterprise I expect.

I had Mr (Eggie) Evans as my class teacher, a nice man. Frank (Dinkie) Burrows took some of our lessons. He ran a dancing school with his wife Elsie in Willowtree Road, Altrincham, a profitable sideline. As most of the class went to his dancing school, we had a pretty easy time with Frank because if he upset us he would lose a valuable source of clients. He always seemed to walk as though he was practising dance steps. We had homework of sorts but most of the time, because of air raid warnings, it was not done.

During the war we were, for a short time only, at school for half days because of the influx of children from areas where the air attacks caused great destruction. I don't remember any special activities for Christmas; life was pretty austere at this time. I don't think in my day we ever had a speech day. The school hours were from 9am to 4pm. I don't remember how long we had for lunch but I walked home because we could not stay for school dinners if we lived within a certain distance from the school. The school hall was a fine building where morning assembly was held and games in bad weather. A Mrs Wear bashed hell out of the piano: Onward Christian Soldiers sticks in my mind.

We used to take all sorts to school which we had found lying around after air raids. Mr Shuard used to get very excited about this and made us hand it all to the constable on point duty at the top of Queens Road. The poor man must have gone home loaded with all sorts of bits that had dropped out of the sky. One time a German aircraft was shot down and most of it finished up at Bradbury and had to be returned. Most of us kept a bit back.

We played football and cricket against other schools, rarely winning, as the headmaster had a fondness for stopping games for a month for some minor infringement, so we did not get all that much practice. We used to play against the Altrincham Boys Grammar School, and Wadham House School on Arthog Road who we did beat from time to time. I used to like history and geography. For some strange reason which I can only guess at, the boys and girls were not allowed to mix, speak or associate with each other in any way, even walking to and from school, which was daft as the girl who lived next door to us went to Bradbury so we walked together and split at the bottom of Queens Road, but Mr Shuard had eyes everywhere. I enjoyed most of my time there even digging for victory on the school playing fields.

We spent some time in the school air raid shelters during alerts. On one occasion we were on the way to the shelters when we stopped to watch two planes flying around. Mr Schuard appeared as if magic shouting, "Get along, it will drop a bomb." (An incendiary was dropped in the school yard on 25 September 1940). We used to sing songs in the shelters. I don't remember if the girls shared the shelters which was not very likely given the sort of apartheid which existed. In class, boys on one side and girls on the other, we were not allowed to communicate though notes were passed just to beat the system I suppose.

We had a school uniform: navy blazers piped in light blue and a cap with light blue band and badge. Other teachers I remember were a Mr and Mrs Burke, both great teachers. Mrs Young seemed to be in charge of the girls. Mr O'Brien used to take some lessons and games. He was a good teacher and we all seemed to like him.

I don't remember much about what we did during our break times. I think we all had a small bottle of milk then played outside. Marbles had a season and swapping cigarette cards. The school windows were covered in a net in case of blast from air raids but in certain rooms a spy hole was left for the headmaster to peep into the class rooms as he went on his rounds.

On one occasion I think a bomb damaged the building but did not affect our lessons. We were soon back to full-time schooling at Bradbury though the numbers must have increased with the



*influx of evacuees, making for larger classes. Some came from London and we found it difficult to understand what some of them said but we all rubbed along together.*

*We had swimming lessons once a week, walking to Altrincham Baths. There was no bus to transport us around. I even gained a swimming certificate. Many friends were made and I still meet two of them Geoffrey Stanley and Arthur Tyler, and we have a pub lunch once a week together.*

*I seem to remember we were seated two-to-a-desk with ink wells which had to be filled; what a mess we could get into with the ink. We entered some competitions and one I remember was to design and paint a poster for Wings-for-Victory Week. Mine was considered good enough to exhibit and it was on show in a shop in Hale. We also made models under the watchful eye of Mr Wood in the woodwork lessons. On the whole we had a pretty good education at Bradbury. At least we all left being able to read and write and taught manners like giving up our seat on a bus to a lady or gent.*

*It was a shame to demolish such a fine building and everything was scrapped including the parquet floors in the hall and classrooms. On leaving school I took up photography, attended Manchester College of Technology and worked for Northern Press in Hale where my first assignment was to photograph prisoners of war in groups in Dunham Massey Camp. After the war, I was called up into the RAF on National Service and spent my time as a photographer in Germany, and I have attended many reunions there. I later settled down as a free lance, travelling as far as the Falklands so I have had a good full life. Some of that must be down to Bradbury.*

### **Margaret Birchall (née Fox)**

*My grandfather Adam Fox walked to Altrincham from the village of Holmrook in the Lake District about 1870 looking for work and got a job with Whipps near Hale Road Bridge as a joiner. He eventually became a very successful builder in Hale and put up four semis at the top of Victoria Road then numerous substantial villas in Ashley Road, Broad Lane, Hale Road, Park Road, Park Avenue, and South Downs Road. He built the whole of Seddon Road in 1909-11 and his own house in Heath Road, still called Holmrook. He named Seddon Road after his friend Richard Seddon who was prime minister of New Zealand and the Seddon family came over to name the road. At one time he went to New York working as a clerk of works on skyscrapers. My mother and father lived at 25 Spring Road which is where I was born.*

*My parents first sent me to Culcheth Hall School but my father became bankrupt and I moved to Stamford Park School and then attended Bradbury from 1928 to 1933, leaving at 16 with a school certificate. I walked to school and came home for dinner. Boys and girls were kept separate in classes. The headmaster was Mr Boucher who lived near me at 11 Spring Road, and teachers included Miss Young ('Dame Trott') who taught French, Frank Burrows who also ran a dancing school in Willowtree Road, and Mr Knowles. We used steel pens and inkwells and had occasional homework. The teaching was reasonable and my best subject was probably English literature. After I left school, I got a job advertised in the Manchester Evening News working for an insurance company near Manchester Cathedral. After that I joined the Army for 5-6 years hoping to see the world but didn't leave Britain and then came back to live at Spring Road.*



Margaret Birchall

### **Stella Blackburn (née Palmer) & Jean Townsend**

*We were both at Bradbury from about 1954 to 1958, leaving at 15 and have remained good friends ever since. Stella went to school on her bike which she had from Doug Hartley and kept for 40*

years. Jean walked. A school uniform had to be worn in the lower school and Stella still has her tie and scarf. There was an assembly in the school hall each morning which the Roman Catholic pupils didn't attend but met in a separate room. The hall was also used as a gym with the apparatus kept on the wall. It was also used for country and ballroom dancing on wet days when all pupils took part, girls on one side and boys on the other, led by teachers Mr Murray and Mrs Burke who were brilliant. We also all went to Burrows School of Dancing in Willowtree Road, Altrincham later and became good dancers, and took advantage of the bar installed there.

Head teachers were Mr Rigby (who was also a JP), and, after we left, Mr Terry. Teachers we remember include 'Killer' Murray (games) who was ex-services and very strict, 'Minnie' Mitchell (music), Mrs Burke, Mr Christie (RE), Miss Margaret Searle, Miss Foote and Mrs Knight (domestic science), Miss Berry (remedials), Mr Burbage (woodwork), Mrs Muir (maths), Mr Knowles (art), Mr Bispham (typing and art). Laurie Jones was also a music and science teacher and later started the Hale Light Orchestra. We both remember domestic science as our best subjects. Classes were of about 35 pupils, a few two per desk. Punishment was rare but the cane always threatened. Netball was played in the playground and at Christmas there were class parties. We put on A Midsummer's Night's Dream once. Sports days were held each summer.

In the first two years classes were mixed for boys and girls. After that pupils were put into the commercial stream (classes 3a, 4a) or the technical stream (classes 3b, 4b). The commercial stream pupils were taught typing and bookkeeping. The typewriters were old, had a cover over the keyboard and folded into the desk. Science was taught upstairs.

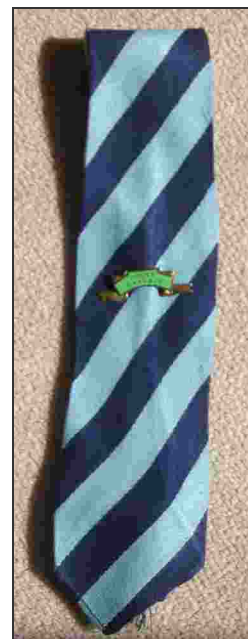
Miss Foote (who was very strict) and Miss Berry lived in the housewifery building so that both boys and girls did their housework, made their beds, washed up, did the washing and ironing. They had a cat and we remember it having kittens. There was also a separate prefabricated kitchen where Margaret Searle taught us cooking and baking. The boys had an allotment nearby and learned gardening.

There were often trips abroad at Easter but they were expensive. We remember prefects being used to supervise pupils returning to their classrooms, ensuring that a single file went upstairs by standing at each landing. It was a very happy school and certainly some of our best days were spent there. We still have other friends we both see from then. Stella was house captain of Tudor. There were two school choirs. The school was also used as a very successful night school for the public, teaching for example woodwork and art.

After I left school I (Stella) went to Altrincham Business College and then we both did three years' cake decorating at night school. I became employed as a junior accounts clerk at Co-op Insurance on Moss Lane and became chief clerk. In all I spent 40 very happy years there. Jean started as a trainee nurse at Altrincham General Hospital until 1962/3 and then fully trained at Wythenshawe and Withington Hospitals, 42 years in all.

### **Jean Blades (née Wykes)**

After attending Bowdon Church School I went to Bradbury from 1932 to 1935, leaving at 14. At that time one had to pass an exam to get to Bradbury or stay on at the primary school and try again. I walked to school which had a blue uniform of gymslip, tie and hatband. The hours were 9 to 12 and 13:30 to 14:15 with a 10-minute break in the morning. There were separate entrances for boys and girls but we were taught together. There were assemblies at the start and end of the day in the hall which was also used for physical training. Mr Shuard was the headmaster and I remember teachers as Mr Knowles, Mr Hodgeson, Mr Burrows, Mr Burke, Miss Young, Miss Aston, Miss Munn, Miss Harvey, Miss Adamson, Miss Foote and Miss Barrett. We wrote with



Bradbury tie with House Captain badge (Stella Blackburn)

pencils, and pen and ink. There were bench seats in the classroom and we had homework daily. Classes were quite small, about 20 pupils. I only remember one speech day but each Christmas we had a dance with supper in the art room.

My best subjects were maths and French. In the playground we had ball games and did a lot of chatting in groups. I was active in netball and hockey and enjoyed cookery, housewifery, and sewing. I remember one amusing incident in cookery in which Miss Foote was demonstrating cooking when a girl called out "My mother doesn't do it like that and she's a good cook." They were definitely not the best years of my life but I have kept some long friendships such as Margaret Sutcliffe whom I knew before Bradbury through guides. I thought the quality of teaching was satisfactory but felt that there was nothing specific I had been prepared for at school. When I left I started clerical work for a firm which made textile machinery and then war contracts. I was called up in 1942, by which time I was engaged. After the war I married and didn't go back to work.

### **Peter Braun**

I taught at Bradbury School from September 1964 until July 1966. It was my first teaching post having come from industry via teacher training college. It was possibly the most enjoyable two years of my teaching career. Mr Terry, the head, plus his staff had a firm but fair control over the school and the 'kids' came first. There was a good staff relationship both in and out of school hours. I recall the Hobbies Evening for the pupils that ran on a Wednesday. I taught woodwork but sadly that was in the days when only boys did that subject. It was 1970 before that barrier was broken. I have very fond memories of my two years at the school and still see some staff socially.



Photos, taken at Bradbury of the woodwork room exhibiting work done with me by the pupils in 1966  
(Peter Braun)

### **Barry Comar**

*I didn't go to Bradbury but had contact through my mother, Margaret Comar, who taught there. I played on the staff hockey and cricket teams and went on many of the weekend school field trips, which Margaret organised, as the male-in-charge in the youth hostels which were used for accommodation over night.*

### **Kathleen Curry**

*My Bradbury years were from 1935 to 1939, leaving school at 15. I used to walk to school which had separate entrances for girls and boys and had a uniform. The headmaster was Mr Shuard and teachers I remember include Miss Barrett, Miss Munn (physical education), Miss Young (French), Miss Harvey my favourite (English), Mr Williams (PE), Miss Adamson (history), Mr Burrows (geography). The quality of teaching was pretty good, mainly from female teachers because of the war.*

*Miss Young taught French and had a boyfriend who was in France during the 1914-18 War. He had been a member of a swimming club in Sale, and wore a swimming costume with SALE printed across the front. This caused a great deal of amusement among the French swimmers.*

*Miss Harvey taught English literature and read a great deal of poetry to us, especially the war poets. She also taught us to write poetry, which gave me a great deal of pleasure. On one occasion I sent a poem about daisies to the Altrincham Guardian which printed it. My mother was quite overcome to find that her daughter had leapt into print.*

*I passed my love of poetry on to our daughters, and elder daughter Helen became a poet herself whilst reading English literature at York University. Two years ago she read her poems to a packed audience at the Aldeburgh Poetry Festival, along with two other poets. She now lives in Scotland where she won a national prize for publishing poetry books. Recently she held a party for poets in the Poetry Library in Edinburgh. How proud Miss Harvey would have been!*

*Our headmaster was Mr. Shuard, and on one occasion I tackled him in his study on the subject of girls doing PE in the school hall, overlooked by boys in the classrooms and upstairs corridors. When he referred to his daughter's liking for PE, I reminded him that she attended a girls' grammar school, so there were no boys to spy on them!*

*The science teacher worked hard at persuading girls to go into nursing, and was responsible for me joining the Red Cross in a Voluntary Aid Detachment in the second world war.*

*Mr Burrows, who taught us geography whilst chasséing around the classroom, also had a dancing school at his home in Willowtree Road, and I attended this with my brother and friends. This must have been after 1939 since we danced to the Blackout Stroll, changing partners when the lights went out. As I was the only girl known to the grammar school boys they all collided around me, causing some confusion. However, it was an excellent dancing school, and we all learned to dance.*

*My best subjects were English (particularly poetry) and history. We were given homework, especially poetry. The classes were about 30 and the classrooms OK. Punishments were lines for the girls and the cane (which I deplored) for the boys. We had daily prayers in the hall and at Christmas we sang carols. Playground games included netball. I had a long friendship from school, Beryl Jackson, now deceased, whose husband is a professor in Hong Kong.*

*Following this preparation for life, on leaving school I became a doctor's secretary, then a Red Cross nurse with the Army until 1945. In 1951 I married teacher Howard Curry and helped him to run a private school until he died in 1980. In the 1950s I learned German at the Bradbury Night School, taught by Mr Bill Evans. Some years later I went back to Bradbury to teach German at the same classes.*

### **Rowland Fleming**

*I attended Seamons Moss School, Dunham Massey where I lived, from 1928 to 1932. I failed miserably in the entrance examination to the Altrincham Boys Grammar School. In desperation my father suggested I take the entrance exam for Bradbury, and to my delight and his relief I was*



accepted. From 1932 to 1936 I benefited from the excellent teaching staff, particularly the head, R W Shuard, a strict disciplinarian. He specialised in maths (his only daughter Hilary was to become an Oxford don). His other pre-occupation seemed to be devoted to separating the boys from the girls. My romantic inclinations were stifled at an early age! A sharp contrast to Mr Shuard, his deputy Frank Knowles was, in my eyes, a flamboyant character who taught art appreciation and drawing. He inspired me in these subjects and in 1936 I was accepted as a pupil in a large architect's practice in Manchester. After five years service in the Royal Navy I became a navigation officer, thanks to Shuard's maths. I eventually qualified as an architect and had a practice in Altrincham and Hale from 1958 until my retirement in 1991. I cherish the memories I have of Bradbury Central School but sadly many of my contemporaries of that period seem to have passed on. Happy days!

### **Richard Hagon**

Bradbury had always been co-educational, but with increasing pupil numbers it was decided to split the girls and boys. So in the summer of 1965 the girls departed for their new school which had been built at a site near Delahays Road, Timperley. I attended Bradbury from 1965 to 1970, was head boy in my final year and left at age 16. The hours were 9-4:15 with a one hour lunch break and I went to school on my bike. A full uniform had to be worn until the fifth form. There was an assembly each morning in the main hall. The head teacher at that time was Mr Terry with deputy Mr Whitehead.

Teachers were Miss Bailey (music), Mr Smith (English & geography), Mr Whitehead (French), Mr Bispham and Mrs Comar (history), Mr Rutter and Miss Giles (religious instruction), Mr Booth and Mr Kellock (maths), Mr Hickling and Mrs Cooper (art), Mr Prescott (engineering drawing), Mr Thomas (games), Mr Burbage (metalwork), Mr Braun (woodwork), Mr Wilson and Miss Fosbrook (science). The quality of teaching was generally good and in some cases excellent. Writing implements were Biro's and the newly introduced Platignum fountain pens with an ink cartridge. There was homework several times a week. Punishments were detention and (rarely) the cane.

In my day the fabric of the school was showing its age but funding was never provided to substantially refurbish it. There were about ten classrooms within the main building, four others as prefabs in the grounds. Basic desks and hard chairs were provided. Classes were large with an average size of about 37. The school hall was used for assemblies, games, concerts and plays. My best subjects were English and engineering drawing. I played in the school brass band. For many years Wednesday night was activities night where pupils could pursue things like photography. When I left school, I went to college for a year, before joining North West Gas in Hale as an accounts clerk.

### **Bryn Mallion**

In 1959 I was about to embark on the next step of my education, having failed the 11+, Bradbury Secondary Modern School, Queens Road, Hale was the place to be....according to my cousin Barry Ward who was head boy (Linda Holt was head girl). My other cousins John Mallion and Jim Webster all told me what a great school it was and I was really looking forward to it.

The big day arrived. We lived in Greenwood Street and, with my cousins, I set off to walk to school through Cally and over the Money Ash wooden bridge along Elm Road, Cedar Road and there it was. I had heard so much about how good it was and I was finally here. My happiness continued for approximately 20 minutes, as the whole school gathered in the hall for assembly, with all of us first years on the front row. The headmaster Mr Terry welcomed us to the school, we sang a hymn, had prayers and in the silence a boy let off a very loud fart. Pupils began to titter and I looked up smirking and just at that point Mr Terry glared at me and screamed, "Get out!" pointing at me. I wasn't sure who he meant and he shouted, "You, the tall one with glasses, get out." "It wasn't me, sir, I replied." "Don't give cheek," Mr Terry replied. So that was my introduction to the 'Big School' and I became a marked man from then on. Mr Terry was only about five feet tall and he seemed to hate anyone taller. It seemed that Barry Roberts, Maurice

*Brundrett and I spent a lot of time in Mr Terry's office being caned!*

*To be fair I enjoyed the majority of my time at Bradbury. I remember some of the teachers: Laurie Jones, Dai Griffiths, Miss Fell, Mrs Derbyshire, Miss Foote, Mrs Knight, Jim Burbage, Norman Bispham, Arthur Prescott, Miss Bailey, Mr Rutter, Mr Evans ('Eggo'), etc. I remember the school song, The Symbol of our Eagle Blue. I remember going to the old Altrincham baths, to learn to swim. I remember the field on Urban Road where we used to play football but had to check it first for broken glass. I remember some of the stage productions including: The 'Bells of Bruges' and 'The Tempest', etc. In the main, I have good memories. Whilst not many pupils went to university, it would be fair to say that the majority did OK in their lives. I have organised the past four reunions which have been held approximately every five years, but because time marches on, I will be doing them every three years from now on. I am a member of Altrincham Court Leet.*

### **David Mardon**

*After attending Stamford Park School, I moved to Bradbury from 1944 to 1948, walking to school and initially coming home for dinner. Later my mother negotiated to pay 2s per week for school dinners. The boys and girls had been in separate classes until Mr Shuard took over from Mr Boucher about 1932. Until 1943 there was an entrance examination. Compulsory uniform was stopped during the war and for a while after. Assembly was taken by the head with Miss Platt at the piano when two hymns would be sung and prayers said, followed by headmaster's notices. The girls' headmistress was Miss Young. Other teachers were Miss Munn, Mrs Burke, Mrs Shorthall, Mrs Weir, Miss Halsall, Mr Knowles (deputy head), Mr Evans (sports, maths & geography), Mr Davies (science), Mr Griffiths (mechanics), Fred Thorne, Frank Parr, Reg Bates (geography), Mr Burbage who took over from Mr Wood in 1945 on woodwork, Miss Barber, Mr Knowles (art & book-keeping), Norman Bispham (the school NUT representative).*

*At one time boys also went to Stamford Park School for woodwork under Mr Gibbon. The 'a' forms had French also. Punishments were detention after school and occasionally the cane from the head. I attended a cub camp at Dunham in 1944 during the war run by Bob Furness and remember one speech day in 1947. One Christmas Miss Barber organised a religious play where I was the narrator. There was no band or orchestra at that time but later music teacher Laurie Jones composed the school song and founded the Hale Light Orchestra with Tony Smith. My best subjects were English language and literature and my worst was art when I got 2/100 about 1946. Games were cricket or football. Houses were York, Tudor, Lancashire and Stuart.*

*At the end of the war there were victory celebrations and in 1946 the King and Queen were in Altrincham on a tour of the north west factories. In 1948 I remember lab assistant George Banks losing his hand at Altrincham Grammar School for Boys when chemistry master Geoff Sutcliffe saved his life with his knowledge of first aid. In 1948 Queen Elizabeth inspected the troops at Dunham Park as Colonel-in-Chief. I think the quality of teaching at the school was very good. I wanted to go into radio and TV sales but my parents were not sure; I tried accountancy for a while then various sections of a large textile firm, then Linotype sales and production control. I was in the RAF for three years and am a member of Altrincham Court Leet.*

### **Linda Marriott (née Cardwell)**

*I attended Bradbury Secondary School from 1954 for three years, starting my time there in class 2a, then 3com and 4com. Mr Rigby was the headmaster and teachers included Mrs Westbrooke (maths), Miss Docker and Mrs Grey (English), Miss Searle and Mrs Knights (housecraft), Miss Gardner (PE and art), Mrs Atkinson (needlework), Mrs Armstrong (commercial subjects), Mr Jones (music), and Mr Christie (religious education).*

*I lived in Denzell Gardens, Bowdon, where my father was a gardener, and went by bus from Bowdon Church to Altrincham, and then over Lloyd Street bridge calling for Norma Sherriff and Pauline Garner en route. My friend Helen Cooper and I also went to evening classes at Bradbury for art and craft and we used to cycle clutching huge canvasses under our arms!*

*My favourite lessons were English and art, and consequently my favourite teachers were Mrs Grey*

and Miss Gardner respectively. I remember the schoolgirl thrill of Miss Gardner coming up one evening to play tennis with us at Denzell, which had three good grass courts, and her pointing out to me how the flames of a fire looked in the evening light! Mr Rigby took the morning assemblies, when a hymn was sung and prayers and the collect for the day were said. When he took a class with us I remember he was a good shot with a piece of chalk at any troublesome pupil on the back row.

We had needlework lessons with Mrs Atkinson and the first thing we had to make was a housecraft apron – blue of course, with our initials embroidered on the bib, I think in our house colour. Then I made a school blouse and by the time the rather grubby item was finished it didn't fit. We had several treadle sewing machines and I still know how to thread one. We had whole mornings of housecraft, as it was called then, with Miss Searle, in a prefabricated building alongside the playing field. I remember creaming butter and sugar together till my muscles screamed, because the mixture had to be light and fluffy and you couldn't hear the sugar against the side of the bowl – Miss Searle used to come round and listen for it! We had a reputation for cake decorating, and held an exhibition of Christmas cakes, very much ornamented with trellis work and rosettes. I don't remember how we got them home, as not many pupils had cars at their disposal. There must have been a lot of aching arms.

While I quite enjoyed the housecraft lessons, I dreaded the time that the girls had to spend, in groups, in 'The House', which I suppose was once a caretaker's cottage, where now Miss Foote and Miss Berry lived. Each morning of our stay there – two sessions of three weeks – we took down from a hook behind the door a white-painted piece of wood with a set of domestic duties painted on it in black – like cleaning some fluey chimney, washing floors, etc. Miss Foote would patrol around with her hands behind her back, and issue white cards (bad) and blue cards (good) as she judged the standard of our efforts. We always felt she was grossly unfair. And the slipper was always a threat. The girls in commercial classes were allowed out for typing/bookkeeping lessons, but we missed all other lessons.

We had music lessons with Mr Jones and I remember singing songs like 'She walks in beauty, like the night' and 'Who is Sylvia'. I went on a weekend school trip to London, to visit the Ideal Home Exhibition. We had a day's sightseeing and I remember Mrs Knights being rather cross with me as I had missed the Changing of the Guard because I was fussing a black poodle! We had a meal on the train on the way back – very exciting – and the menu said 'French fries', and I said in a loud clear voice, "But you said we were having chips," very much offending Mrs Knights again!

I was Tudor house captain and, for a few months before I left, head girl. The very modest duties included counting the blue and white cards issued to your house and standing on the corners of the stairs and telling people to walk, not run. We played netball in the playground and rounders on the playing field. There was a long-jump pit and high jump, and we held an annual sports day. Norah Blockley was the proud possessor of a pair of spikes – she was an excellent athlete and we envied her shoes. We also went regularly to Altrincham swimming baths – how good the cold buttered toast tasted on the way back to school.

The school hall was well-equipped for gym, and on rainy days was used for country dancing. I remember the 'Dashing White Sergeant' and 'Stripping the Willow,' and still love the tunes we danced to. There were school dances, and I tried Pamela Whitworth's lipstick in the cloakroom! Mrs Yarrow and her dinner ladies produced (I thought) delicious lunches. I specially remember the scoops of mashed potato, seemingly limitless gravy, jam roly-poly and custard and semolina with jam. There were seconds for those on second sitting. This was of course, fresh food cooked daily on the premises.

One day during our last term Mr Rigby came around and asked if anyone fancied a job in Altrincham at a firm of estate agents. I put up my hand, went for the interview and got the job – at a wage of £2 per week. That was all the careers advice I had! This firm, Syers & Nephew on Kingsway, now occupied by Hill & Co I think, was even more Dickensian than a TV drama – unbelievable. I was the junior, and Mr Syers used to send me out to get tablets of Imperial Leather soap. His son, Mr John, walked about in some awe of his father, carrying huge ledgers on his



shoulders. People used to come in to pay rent and ask whether we had any houses for sale for £200, which we did! I stayed there a year or so and then went to Altrincham Business College under Miss Bell who could tell whether you made a thick or thin stroke in your shorthand from the front of the class when you were sitting at the back. A formidable teacher but, as six months at the college cost our parents the then quite considerable sum of £30, she did give value for money and a good job at the end of it. I went to work as a shorthand/typist/secretary at British Resin Co. in Hale, and then in Wilmslow when it was taken over by Dow Chemical Co.

I was very happy at Bradbury and I really didn't want to leave school. I don't remember much, if any, homework and I left with no qualifications to speak of, but I think 'O' levels, and certainly French, were being introduced as I left.

### **Avis McInnes (née Miller)**

I was at Bradbury from 1956 to 1960. I seem to remember that we had to go to the house (housewifery) for six weeks. It was the first time I stood up for myself. First of all I didn't want to go in to learn how to dust, clean etc; and dear Mr Christie did try and talk the headmaster into changing his mind for the pupils who felt like me that we could and had learnt to do all that at home. Having said that, I was the only one to protest at the time as most of the girls thought that housekeeping was a good way to get out of lessons. Miss Foote, hands behind her back, would strut her stuff up and down the hall of the house that she and Miss Berry shared. On the third day she told me that I was to do their washing. I stood my ground and said, "No, I don't do my own mother's washing and smalls and I'm not doing yours." Well, she was angry and said, "Straight to the headmaster with you girl!" So we did just that. She explained her side and left me with him to give my reasons. When I explained that we were supposed to scrub their stays and smalls and that I wasn't prepared to do that and it was unacceptable to think we should, he looked a little sheepish and said, "I understand how you feel but that was part of my EDUCATION." "Really," I said, feeling very angry at that comment. "Well, I have learned all that from my mother and don't really see the need to go over it again." I also felt we were being used as lackies (which of course we were). At that point he was starting to look a little annoyed with me. How dare this miss talk to him with that attitude. He finished off by saying that I had to write out lines for my comments and to return to the house.

Something must have happened later in the week because I was sent back to my class a couple of days later and only did a week in housewifery. Mr Christie called out my name on the Monday for roll call and when I answered he had a large grin on his face. He was a lovely man and like me thought it better to learn things that were going to help in my education other than dusting. Some of the girls thought me mad as they were happy to pass the time in the house, but not this girl. I suppose their thinking was most of the girls would be married and pregnant by the time they were in their late teens.

Another thing I remember was a shy rather large girl in my class who Mrs Derbyshire insisted had to try and jump over the horse during physical education but couldn't. Her legs were quite badly bruised by the end of the lessons and she was quite distressed. When we had our next PE she brought a letter from her doctor to ask for her to be excused from doing the vaulting. Mrs Derbyshire appeared quite annoyed and said she would still have to change into PE gear (navy blue knickers and white blouse) after which she made the poor girl stand like that up against the wall for the whole period. Shameful really, as during this time the other kids would pass through the hall on their way to their next classes, and as a co-ed school you can imagine how some of the comments went.

Probably like so many others, I felt cheated out of grammar school education as I never got less than B+ and mostly A in all my work and still have my school books. Having said that, with so many youngsters competing for grammar schools, the odds weren't great. However, it didn't help when dad, who had been talking with a school friend's father, asked him had I passed my 11 plus. When he said, "No," his reply was, "Well you should have crossed some of the councillors' palms with silver like I did." You can imagine my father's comment to that!

### **Malcolm & Ian Ollier**

*We attended Bradbury (between 1954 and 1962), as did our parents Len and Dorothy (who met at Stamford Park School). We remember Grange Calveley, who lived in Appleton Road and went on to create the TV cartoon Roobarb and Custard, at Bradbury.*

### **Jean Owen (née Ryan)**

*I lived just across Stamford Park and walked to Bradbury where I was a pupil from 1954 to 1958, leaving at 15. The school started at 8:45am and classes finished at 3:45pm with morning and afternoon breaks and a one-hour lunch. Boys and girls wore uniforms and were only separate at playtime. Each morning there was an assembly conducted by headmaster Mr Rigby. I remember a long list of teachers including Mrs Knight (headmistress & cookery), Miss Foote and Miss Barratt (who lived in the school house), Mrs Burke (history), Mr 'Minnie' Mitchell (music), Mrs Derbyshire (PE & games, girls), Mr 'Killer' Murray (boys PE & games), Mr Christie (RI), Mr Jones (science, music & choirmaster), Mr Griffiths (science & maths), Mr Knowles (art), Miss Docker (English), Mr Bispham (craft), Mr Evans, Mr Burbage (woodwork & metalwork), Miss Searle (cookery). Writing was with a fountain pen with very little homework. There were about 30 in a class.*

*The school hall was used for dancing, mixed ballroom when wet. Punishment was the cane and slipper. Speech days were held at the Stamford Hall. Dances were held every few months and at Christmas. My best subjects were cooking and sports and I played for the school netball and hockey teams. Playground activities were ball games or just sitting around and talking. I think it was a good school and regret not taking more notice of academic subjects. I enjoyed my time there but they were not necessarily the best years of my life. When I left school everyone went their separate ways. I worked in a shoe shop then in Woolworths where I became the staff supervisor.*

### **Keith Smith**

*Keith was a teacher who retired to Cyprus and has happy memories of his colleagues and pupils at Bradbury Central during his six years there as a Geography and English Teacher in the 1960s. His substantial article appears as Appendix 4.*



*Keith Smith as a Choirmaster in Cyprus (Helen Smith)*

### **Margaret Sutcliffe**

*My parents came from Glasgow in 1928, bought a new house in Chiltern Drive in 1930, and I walked to school from there coming home for dinner. After Stamford Park School I attended Bradbury from 1932 to 1937. There were separate entrances for girls and boys but we all joined together in classes. The headmaster was Mr Shuard who was very strict but a wonderful school leader. We all respected him and the teachers and there were few discipline problems but the cane was always there if needed. I remember teachers Miss Munn (needlework and physical education), Miss Young (French), Frank Burrows (geography) and Miss Barrett & Miss Foote who lived in the school house. Teaching was to a high standard. Writing was with steel pens and ink wells and we had an ink monitor whose duty it was to top up the ink wells: a dirty job.*

*There were six classrooms downstairs with science labs upstairs. The classrooms were comfortable with double desks and benches for about 30 pupils. We had regular homework. The school hall was used for assembly and for dances, and for the small-scale speech day. It had a memorial to World War I in it where we would place poppies on Armistice Day, and at Christmas we sang carols there. We also celebrated Empire Day there, now long forgotten! I was quite good at most subjects but liked French and sewing best. Domestic science classes were carried out in the school house and in the separate kitchen building behind it; separate because of the fire*

hazard. In the playground we played hopscotch, top and whip, skipping and netball. Sports days on the playing fields were excellent and I enjoyed them very much. While at school I joined brownies, rangers and guides and after leaving school progressed through various guide posts, taking on more responsibility and becoming district commissioner for Hale in 1950 for about eight years. My husband Geoff also became district commissioner for the scouts after we married in 1948.

I was head girl eventually with George Salem as head boy. I was chosen to present Peter Burke, the school caretaker, with an umbrella to mark his retirement. Schooldays at Bradbury were probably some of the best of my life but after taking my school certificate I had to move to the girls grammar school to study for a higher school certificate. However my father encouraged me to take a civil service examination, if only to get the experience. I passed it and was invited to join the Post Office in Manchester, so I left the grammar school and continued to work for the Post Office through the war. During the war a bomb fell in Altrincham cemetery behind us and blew a gravestone through the roof of number 9 Chiltern Drive.

I have kept several friends from schooldays at Bradbury including Jean Blades, Betty Blackburn and others. I was very sad to see the fine building being demolished with its parquet floors throughout, and I have always resisted going to see the new flats on the site. I have been a member of the Congregational Church in Hale, now part of the Altrincham United Reformed Church, for 82 years and have been very active in church life and the Guides, becoming District Commissioner.

### **Janet Walton**

I was at Bradbury from 1958 to 1962 when boys and girls were better integrated for teaching. I walked to school and remember that the school hall was used for morning assembly with hymns and prayers, and for games. Teachers included Mr Jones, Mr Prescott, Mr Rutter, Mr Bispham, Miss Searle, Miss Bailey, Miss Foote, Mrs Burke, Mrs Derbyshire, and Mrs Armstrong. The quality of teaching was very good. Writing was by fountain pen and pencil and there was maths and English homework. Classes were large and punishments were by slipper and cane. There was an Easter celebration and a sports day. My best subjects were English, sport, cookery, music, and history. Playground games included skipping.

I was very upset when I had to leave Bradbury at 15 because I had enjoyed my schooldays there. Otherwise I was well prepared to get a job. The best years of my life were at Stamford Park, Bradbury and in the 1950s and 60s generally. I have kept in touch with school friends Susan Harmston and Pat Walton for 50 years. On leaving school I went to work at the Linotype as a typist in the production office, then on to Baldwin & Francis to work in the machine shop as a pin driller until I was made redundant. I very much liked the work I did and again was upset when I had to leave.

### **Patricia Walton**

I attended Bradbury from 1959 to 1964 and left at 16. The uniform was navy with a beret and I walked to school. The head teacher was Mr Terry and teachers included Mrs Derbyshire and Mr Bispham (art). Written work was with a Biro. There was some homework but not a lot. The classes were about 36 in size and the classrooms OK. The school hall was used for assembly, physical education and the school disco. Punishments were by slipper, ruler and being sent to see the headmaster. There was a celebration on Harvest Day and pupils each received a Bible on leaving school. My best subjects were English and art. Other activities included cooking, sewing and house care. The quality of teaching was generally good even though some teachers lacked inspiration or direction.

Netball was a playground activity. I particularly remember climbing out of the school window and getting stuck on a flat roof because one of the boys lost a ball and I volunteered to get it. The teacher did not know I was on the roof and shut the window so that I was left there for some time until the next lesson before the teacher was aware that I was missing and things were rectified.

Schooldays were probably the best years of my life. I didn't know what I wanted to do when I left school and had no qualifications but at the time there were plenty of jobs available. I became a hairdresser, secretary, bank clerk and finally a registered nurse. I have kept one lifelong friend from schooldays.

### Ken Ward

My grandfather ran a horse-drawn cab business from Peel Causeway before World War I with the garage at 20 Victoria Road, Hale. My father, William, was at Seamons Moss School in 1910 when Captain Scott gave a talk and presented a sketch of his ship *Terranova*. William and his brother Herbert later opened car showrooms at 1 Lisson Grove, Hale which had been the family home.

After the war there was a thriving business in teaching driving instruction and garage servicing and repairs. They also ran a horse bus from 1900 to 1907 from the Bleeding Wolf, Hale to the Cheshire Cheese in Broadheath. The Manchester trams terminated at the Pelican at that time.

I attended Bradbury from 1936 to 1939 and left at 14 to become an apprentice electrician at Sid Feneleys in Hale. At the time I lived at 3 Lisson Grove and walked to school, returning for dinner. The hours were 9-4 with a 1½ hour dinner break. There were no fees.

Boys and girls had separate entrances and playgrounds but shared classes which had bench seats. Boys' uniforms were a navy jacket with light blue trimmings and a matching cap. Toilets were outside but OK. There was a daily assembly but no school song or hymn.

The headteacher was 'Pop' Shuard who was of German origin. Teachers had classrooms and also specialised in subjects such as Miss Young (French) known affectionately as 'Dame Trott', 'Taffy' Williams (music & geography), 'Dinky' Frank Burrows (physics & geography) who later ran a dancing school with his wife, Elsie, in Willowtree Road, and Burke (chemistry). Writing was with steel pens and pot ink wells. The teaching was good, sometimes with homework. There were about six classrooms on each floor and a music room. There was an assembly hall without chairs but no library. There was a joinery workshop opposite to the boys' entrance. I was good at most subjects including maths, French, algebra; top in English language but bottom in English literature. Football was played in the playground with a tennis ball. I took part in sports days but only played cricket (for Hale) after I left school. After Feneleys I went to Ernest Wood in Station Buildings, Altrincham, then worked on ships at Manchester Docks, and finally on X-ray machines.

### Noel White

After Stamford Park School I attended Bradbury from 1941 to 1945 in classes 1a to 4a. I lived in Altrincham and walked to school, coming home for dinner. Boys' and girls' entrances and playgrounds were separate and the boys had a handicrafts workshop and the girls domestic science, both in separate buildings. The headteacher was Mr Shuard who lived in Nursery Avenue, Hale. One of the punishments was to stand outside his room toeing a black line. In extreme cases he used a cane, and a teacher used the slipper. There was a shortage of teachers during the war but they included Miss Young (French), 'Dinkie' Burrows (science) who went to Altrincham Grammar School for Boys afterwards, Davies (science), Evans, Burke, George Wood (woodwork and metalwork), Frank Knowles and Mrs Weir. Writing was with pen and inkwell.



Ken Ward's grandfather James' advertisement for his cabs

*There was no homework. The quality of the teaching was good, classes of size 40. There was a platform in the school hall but no chairs. I was in the football team from the first year and remember playing against Wadham House School. My best subjects were geography, book-keeping, arithmetic and algebra. Playground games included football with a tennis ball, tick, marbles and conkers. I was in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Hale Scouts under Mr Geoff Sutcliffe which had a camp near Pickmere. During the war I remember the three bombs that fell in Byrom and Bold Streets and one on Weetman's decorators' shed.*

*When I left school my first job was as an audit clerk with J Percy Clow, accountants in Spring Gardens, Manchester, where I received excellent training. I then had two years National Service in the Royal Army Medical Corps and one year back with J.P.C. After this I took a job as an accountant with the Music Exchange, Portland Street, Manchester, then worked as a cost clerk with Linotype. It was from the experience I gained at The Music Exchange that I developed the idea of a music shop in Altrincham and it was on 22 January 1955 that, along with Peter Swales who I had met up with at the accounts office previously, the first White and Swales shop opened at 2 Cross Street. Many of the top recording stars paid promotional visits including Cliff Richards, Tex Ritter ('The Wayward Wind'), Marino Marini Quartet ('Volare'), Eve Boswell, Marvin Rainwater, etc. Our second shop was in Stockport, and a third shop was at 55 George Street, previously Nobles Furniture, where we commenced selling and renting TVs and white goods. We eventually had a chain of 15 shops in Cheshire and South Manchester, in addition to a head office and service department in Cecil Road, Hale. In 1968 we sold the business to the national electrical giant Thorn Industries Ltd. Just before selling White and Swales we had each bought one third in the Bowdon Hydro Ltd, on Langham Road, Tony Kirkland owning the other third. By 1969 I became the sole owner of the hotel business and started an expansion programme. The Bowdon Hotel as it was now called was the first hotel in south Manchester to be awarded an RAC and AA 3-Star appointment and an Egon Ronay recommendation.*

*I have always had an extensive career in football, playing for the Royal Army Medical Corps Depot 1st Team, Chester Football Club and Linotype and then with Peter buying the majority shareholding in Altrincham Football Club in 1961. Peter became chairman, and I became vice-chairman and general manager. We spent a lot of time organising fund-raising events. A memorable match was an FA Cup fixture with Wrexham in 1963 with Cliff Michelmores commenting from the top of the stand. When fog rolled off Timperley Brook, the match had to be abandoned and was played twice more before Wrexham beat us. In 1967 Peter moved to Manchester City Football Club, eventually becoming chairman and I became chairman of Altrincham. In 1976 I joined the Football Association as a divisional representative and am now a life vice-president. I left Altrincham FC in 1986 after 25 years to become a director of Liverpool FC where I spent 21 years, two years as chairman. I was a member of the FA's International Committee for 26 years, the last 14 as chairman, retiring in 2010. I have attended four World Cup Finals in Italy, France, Japan, and Germany.*

## Photographs



*Thanks to Mike Arron  
for photographs of  
Bradbury buildings*



There are many Bradbury photos held in Trafford Local Studies and on-line in Trafford Lifetimes. There are some excellent ones from the 1920s showing named staff, the head in his study and the science laboratory. One is of the 1946 Bradbury Victory celebrations with a group of girls. There are five albums of professional photos of school pupils, mostly undated but probably from the early 1960s. One shows the school hall with its balcony and a 'Bradbury Aeroplane Week' chart on the wall. Another has the headmaster in his office and another shows girls in the chemistry laboratory. There are also many photos of the school buildings and interiors taken on the last day of the school by Mike Arron and donated to Local Studies and on Trafford Lifetimes.







**A Bradbury School trip out (about 1944)**

*From the front row, left to right including: Gordon White, James Cawley, Derek Hamner, Derek Caldwell, Bill Batty, Ken Pearson, Stuart Brownhill, the Thorpe Twins (Norman & Alan), Brian Longstaff, Ronnie Haughton, Gordon Hewitt, Alan Blackwood and Noel White (Noel White).*



**Bradbury Victory Celebrations June 1946**

*Mr Shuard left, Mr Davies right. Pupils on the top row left to right include: Stanley Maxted, Ronald Winstanley, Kenneth Broom, Stanley Johnson, Clwyd Owen, Robert Taylor, Fred Sowerbutts, George Meadows. Next row includes: Josie Royle, Mary Sibbald, Margery Leggatt, Jean Riley, Norma Lewis, Helen Gray, Avril Pollard. Kneeling includes: Ralph Holt, Maurice Plumpton, Harold Spilsbury, David Mardon, Donald Cragg, Graham Rodgers, William Armes, Brian Whitby. Seated: Kenneth Bebbington, Brian Humphreys (shield), Keith Bowyer, Keith Furness (David Mardon).*





**Class 1a, 1954 with teacher Mr Pritchard (from left to right):**

*Back: Freda Astall, Rosalie Latimer, Wendy Dale, ?, Madeleine Berry, Ann Scott, Stella Blackburn (Palmer), Jennifer Hewes. Next: Margaret Johnson, Ann Meacock, Felicity Crone, Janet Walton, Muriel Simcock, Kathleen Richards, Margaret Walker, Ada Poore Next: Pauline Brown, Christine Wilson, Joyce Tidbury, Pamela deVito, Mary Bradley, Dorothy Johnson, Susan Mills, Audrey Chester. Front row includes: Diane Mills, Barbara Leigh, Sheila Tomlinson, Margaret Kenyon, Joyce Wright, Judith Nichols, Jane Eccleston (Stella Blackburn).*



**Bradbury 1958: Four House Captains & Prefects (from left to right):**

*Teachers: Mrs Knight on left, headmaster Mr Rigby centre, Mr Murphy on right. Back: Nora Blockley, Stella Blackburn (Palmer), Alf Royle, Linda Marriott (Cardwell), Muriel Simcock. Middle includes: Tony Williams, Eric Dean. Bottom includes: Rita Chapman, Wendy Dale, Mary Bradley, Freda Preston, (Mr Rigby), Helen Cooper, Barbara Leigh, Margaret Walker (Stella Blackburn).*



***Bradbury Teachers 1958 (from left to right):***

*Back row includes: Mr Burbage, Mr Bispham, Mr Griffiths, Mr Jones, Mr Hall, Mr Christie. Middle row: Mr Mitchell, school secretary Mrs Yarrow, Mrs Westbrooke, Miss Docker, Miss Gardner, Miss Searle, Miss Berry, Mr Winfield. Front row: Mrs Derbyshire, Mrs Grey, Miss Foote, Mr Rigby, Mr Murray, Mrs Knights, Mrs Armstrong, Mrs Burke (Linda Marriott).*



***Bradbury 1959. The teacher is Miss Bailey (Jean Townsend).***



***Bradbury Band 1967 (from left to right):***

*Back: Anthony Gleave, ?, ?, Brian Singleton, ?, ?, ? Middle: Richard Hagon, James Green, David Woodhead, Philip Young, Neil Hughes, ?, Phillip Roberts, David Fox, ?, Robert Reid, Charles Powers, Adrian Jordan. Front: David Richardson, Peter Henstock, Charles Hewitt, Ian Buxton, Margaret Bailey (music teacher), John Hawker, Peter Waters, Robert Harris, Charles Lowndes (Richard Hagon).*

## Appendix 1: The School Hymn & the School Song

**The School Hymn** was used in the opening ceremony in 1910. The music is by William Boyce c1765, and words by Hanley Moule 1905.

Lord and saviour true and kind  
Be the Master of my mind  
Bless and guide and strengthen still  
All my powers of thought and will

While I ply the scholar's task  
Jesus Christ be near I ask  
Help the memory clear the brain  
Knowledge still to seek and gain

Here train for life's swift race  
Let me do it in Thy grace  
Here I arm me for life's fight  
Let me do it in Thy might

Thou hast made me mind and soul  
I for Thee would use the whole  
Thou hast died that I might live  
All my powers to Thee I give

Striving thinking learning still  
Let me follow this Thy will  
Till my whole glad nature be  
Trained for duty and for Thee.

**The School Song**, *The Symbol of Our Eagle Blue*, was composed in the 1950s by music teacher Laurence Jones, words by headmaster C Rigby JP. The original music and words are held in Trafford Local Studies.

The symbol of our eagle blue  
always before our eyes  
We'll fight with might and main to do  
the best that in us lies.  
And as we're taught to love the game  
more than the victory  
For sportsmanship, we'll seek the name.  
Sursum, Sursum, Bradbury.

When all too soon upon life's field  
bravely our parts we play  
From truth and honour, we'll not yield  
we'll duties' call obey.  
Then we'll keep faith with him whose name  
we bear so loyally  
Whose valour won immortal fame.  
Sursum, Sursum, Bradbury.

In years to come when we recall  
happy and carefree hours  
We spent within the pleasant walls  
of this fine school of ours.  
Then from the past will rise again  
nobly the melody  
Of our school song with its refrain.  
Sursum, Sursum, Bradbury.

(*Sursum* is Latin means 'upwards' or 'soaring', used by Edward Elgar as *Sursum Corda*, meaning 'lift up your hearts').

## Appendix 2: Edward Kinder Bradbury V.C.

Edward Kinder Bradbury (one of two Altrincham VCs) was born at Church Bank on Richmond Road, Bowdon 16th August 1881, the son of Judge J K Bradbury who practised on the Bury-Bolton circuit. Edward was awarded the VC, the highest award for bravery, for his heroism under fire in a battle in Northern France during WWI. He was educated at Marlborough College and passed out of the Royal Military Academy at Woolwich entering the Royal Artillery in May 1900. He was promoted to lieutenant in April 1901 and from January to October 1902 he was employed with the Imperial Yeomanry for service in the Cape Colony during the latter stages of the Boer War. He received the medal for South Africa with two clasps. From February 1905 to March 1907 he was employed with the King's African Rifles, and promoted to captain on 4th February 1910. Captain Bradbury was a respected man among his fellow officers. Whilst on leave, he was a keen fisherman and rider. He hunted with the hounds in County Cork, Ireland, and on a very wet day at Punchtown Races in Ireland he won the 'Soldiers Race' on his own horse named 'Sloppy Weather'.



On the outbreak of the Great War, Captain Bradbury was second-in-command of 'L' Battery, Royal Horse Artillery with the British Expeditionary Force which, after being faced by an enemy far superior in number to their own, was retreating from Mons in Belgium on 1 September 1914. His award of the Victoria Cross was gazetted on 2 November 1914. Néry – a remote, ancient village near Senlis – lay on the path of the retreat.

'L' Battery was attached to the first Brigade of Cavalry and provided firepower to the cavalry with their six quick-firing thirteen-pounder guns. They were the last to arrive in Néry late in the afternoon of August 31st. It had been a very hot day and they had stopped on the way to water their horses. They had to bivouac in an open field at the extreme south end of the village and therefore well to the rear.

They moved right out in the open in order to lay down good horse lines. Orders had been given overnight for the units of the Brigade to be saddled up and ready to march at dawn but a dense mist delayed any start. At 5.45 am high explosive shells began to fall on the village from twelve German guns situated on high ground less than a thousand yards away. The German guns concentrated their fire on the horse lines of 'L' Battery and the Queen's bays next to them. The unit soon became a shambles as 150 horses were blown to pieces and many men had been killed or wounded. Major Sclater-Booth, the Battery Commander, was at the Brigade Headquarters to find the latest news.

Captain Bradbury raced forward, calling out for volunteers. When the men heard his rallying call "*Come on! Who's for the guns?*" They all responded "*I am.*" Bradbury's rallying call is famous all over the world. Today at the assembly of the US Army Reserve Blue Devils Horse Platoon, who represent the US Army and the US Army Reserve as a mounted ceremonial and equestrian sport unit, the call is made to the platoon "*Who's for the guns?*" and the answer by each member is "*I am.*" They say it is "*In honour of the Kings Troop Royal Horse Artillery*" but in fact, to be more precise, they pay tribute to Captain E K Bradbury, VC.

A number of men responded to Bradbury and they succeeded in manhandling three guns against the enemy to return fire. Two of these guns were soon hit and put out of action leaving only 'F' sub section under Captain Bradbury acting as layer and Sergeant David Nelson, acting as range setter.



Sergeant Nelson found the range at 750 yards but he was soon wounded, and to add to that problem the ammunition wagons were 20 yards away. Battery Sergeant Major George Dorrell then arrived to assist and Captain Bradbury ordered Sergeant Nelson to seek medical attention, but he refused, stating that he couldn't move anyway.

BSM Dorrell then relieved Captain Bradbury instead, and the captain ran across to the ammunition wagon under intense enemy fire and was hit by a shell which blew off his leg. Despite this crippling wound he managed to support himself on the other leg and continued to direct the fire of the gun until he was hit again. Twelve German guns were eventually captured.

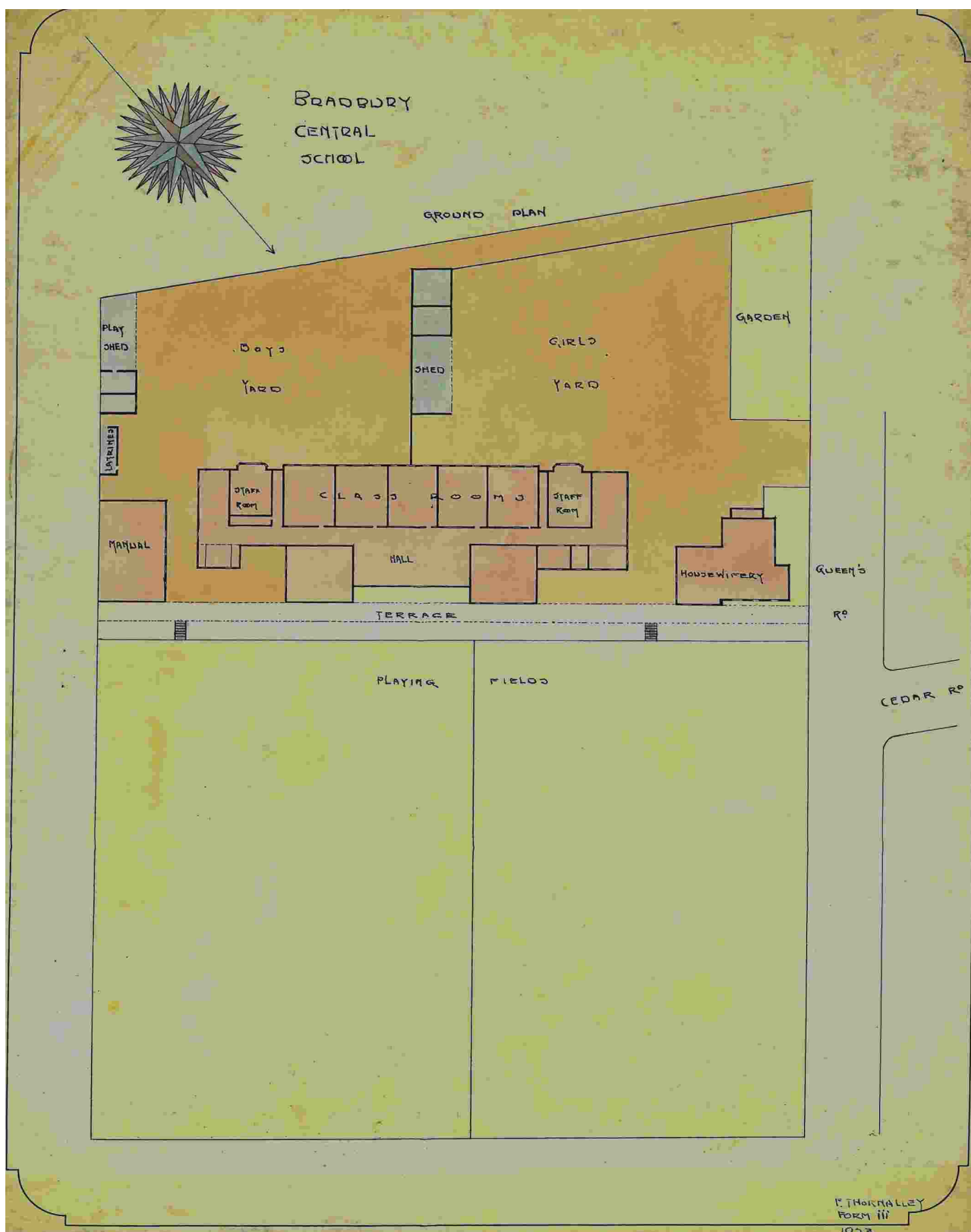
Captain Bradbury died on 1st September 1914 and was buried at the Néry Communal Cemetery in France. His Victoria Cross was presented to his mother by King George V at Buckingham Palace (his father had died in 1913). RSM Dorrell and Sergeant Nelson were also awarded the V.C. The three Néry Victoria Crosses are now in the possession of 'L' (Néry) Battery Royal Horse Artillery at Woolwich, along with the 'Néry Gun'. At dawn on 1st September each year the action is remembered by 'L' Battery who present a thirteen-pounder field gun and a single shot.

Altrincham Higher Elementary School was renamed Bradbury Central School in Captain Bradbury's honour. The 'L' (Néry Battery) Members' Association visited the village of Néry in 2014 to commemorate the centenary of the action at Néry. At the same time a blue plaque was erected at Church Bank at the bottom of Richmond Road, Bowdon where he was born.

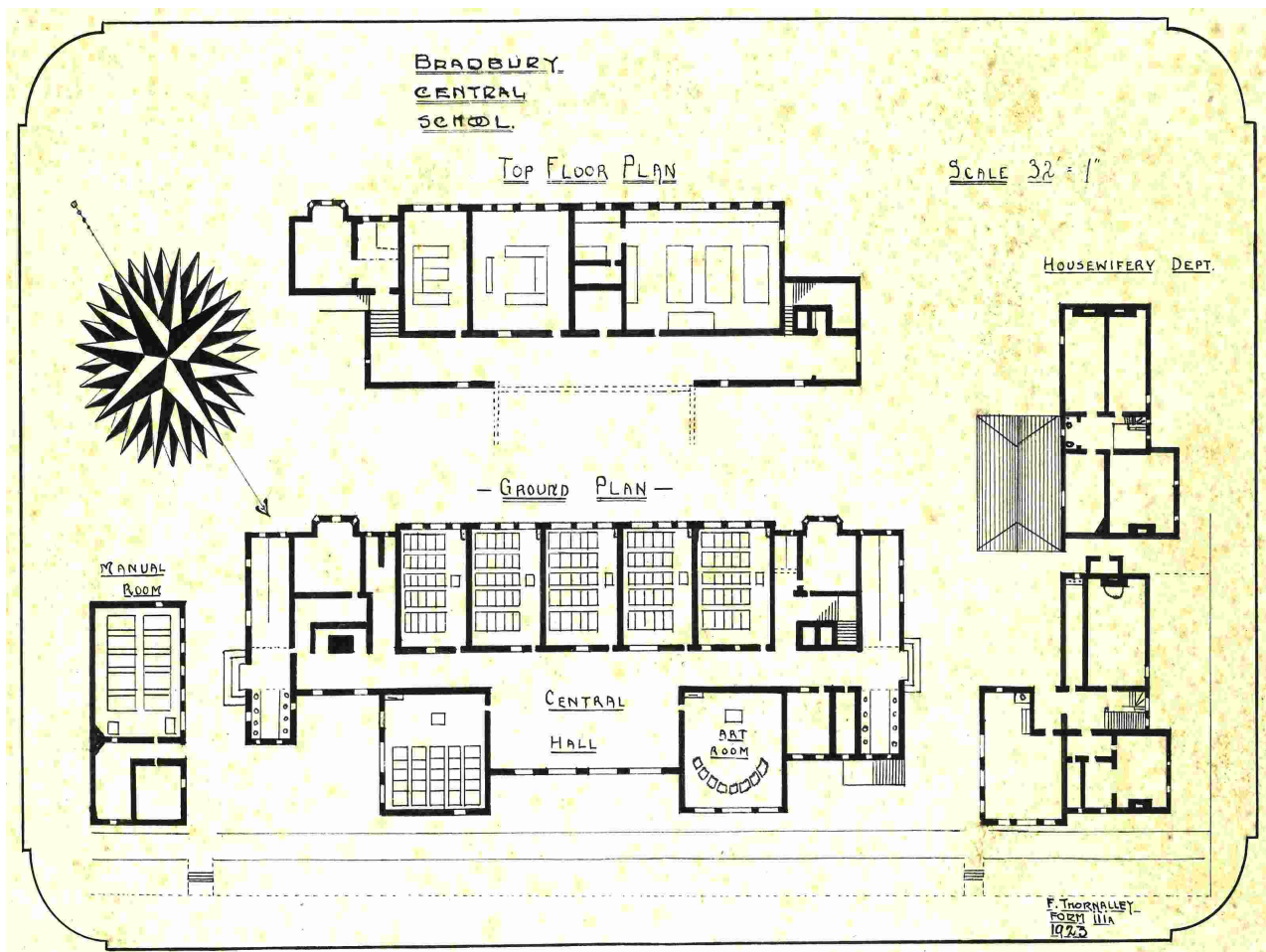


### **Appendix 3: Architectural Drawings of the School**

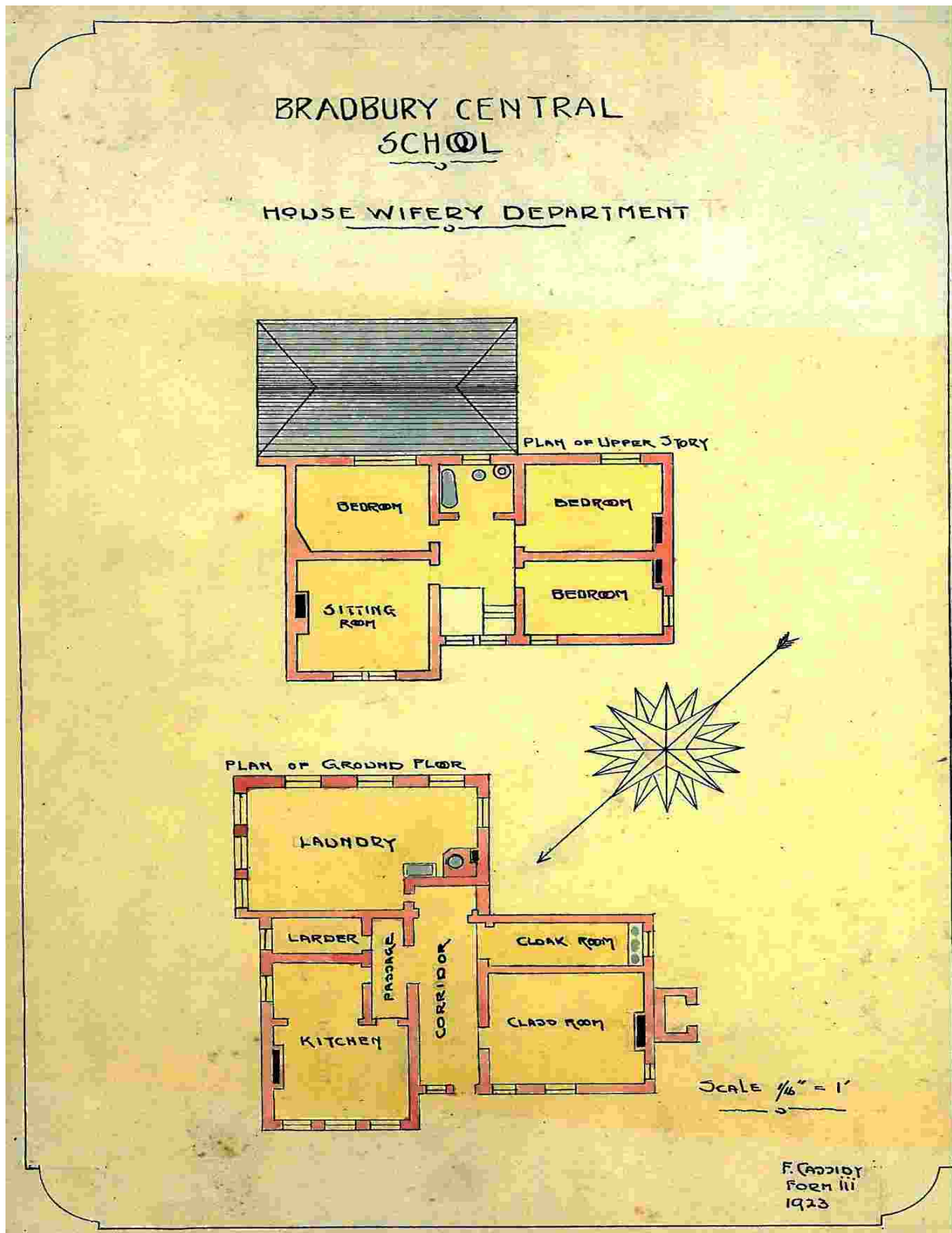
Altrincham History Society holds a volume of twenty architectural drawings entitled *Finished Drawings in Geography and Measurements*, produced by third-year Bradbury pupils aged fourteen in 1923 and signed by the head teacher, Mr A W Boucher. The drawings are to a high standard and fifteen are in colour. They show some of the school interior, exterior and the surrounding district. In all cases compass directions and scales are given. Pupils were learning to plot and measure angles and distances accurately using a theodolite and a plane table, and a chain. Most of the drawings are signed. They had been in the safe keeping of Bradbury teacher and Altrincham History Society member Margaret Comar, and were presented to the society by her son Barry. Margaret started as a teacher at Bradbury in 1968 and died in 2008. The drawings are of historical significance. The scan quality varies but are best seen in colour on a 'pdf' version of this document.



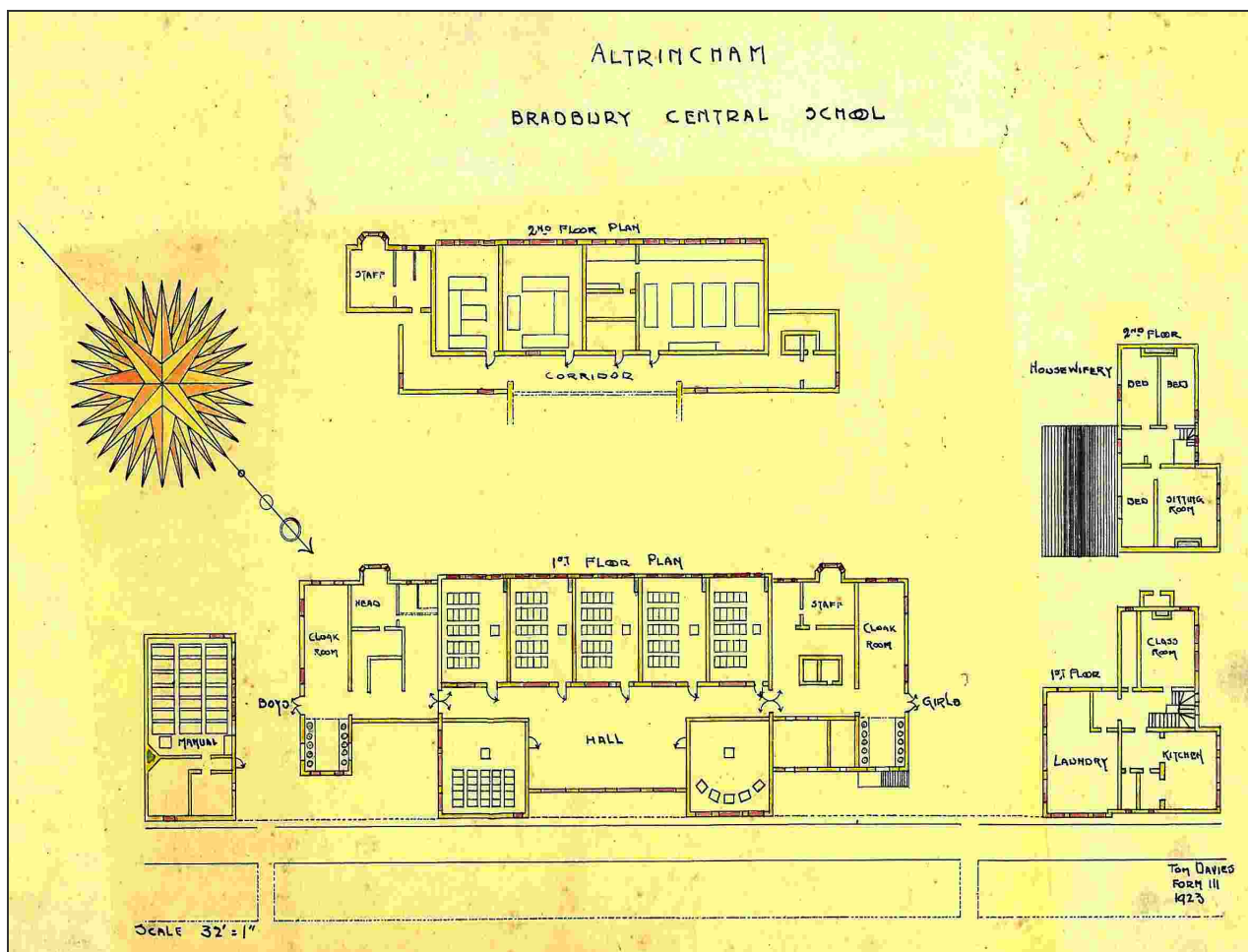
1. Bradbury Central Yards, School & Playing Fields by F Thornalley. Separate boys' & girls' playgrounds & playing fields. In colour.



2. Plans of the ground and top floors of Bradbury by F Thornalley, including the separate housewifery department and the manual room (woodwork & metalwork). Original scale 1"=32'.

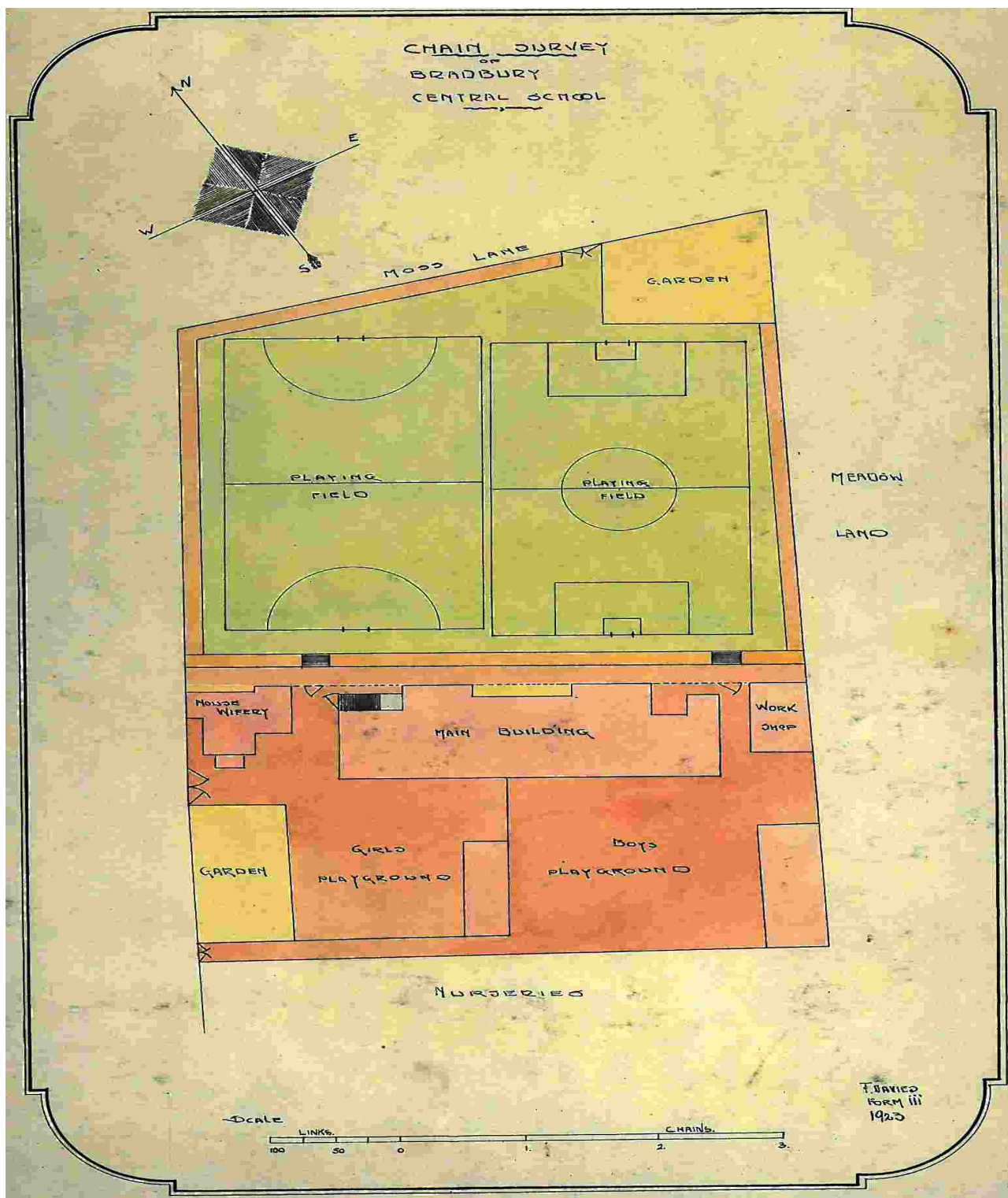


3. The housewifery department in its separate building drawn by F Cassidy. The ground floor shows the kitchen, larder, classroom, cloakroom, and laundry. The upper floor shows three bedrooms and a sitting room. In colour.

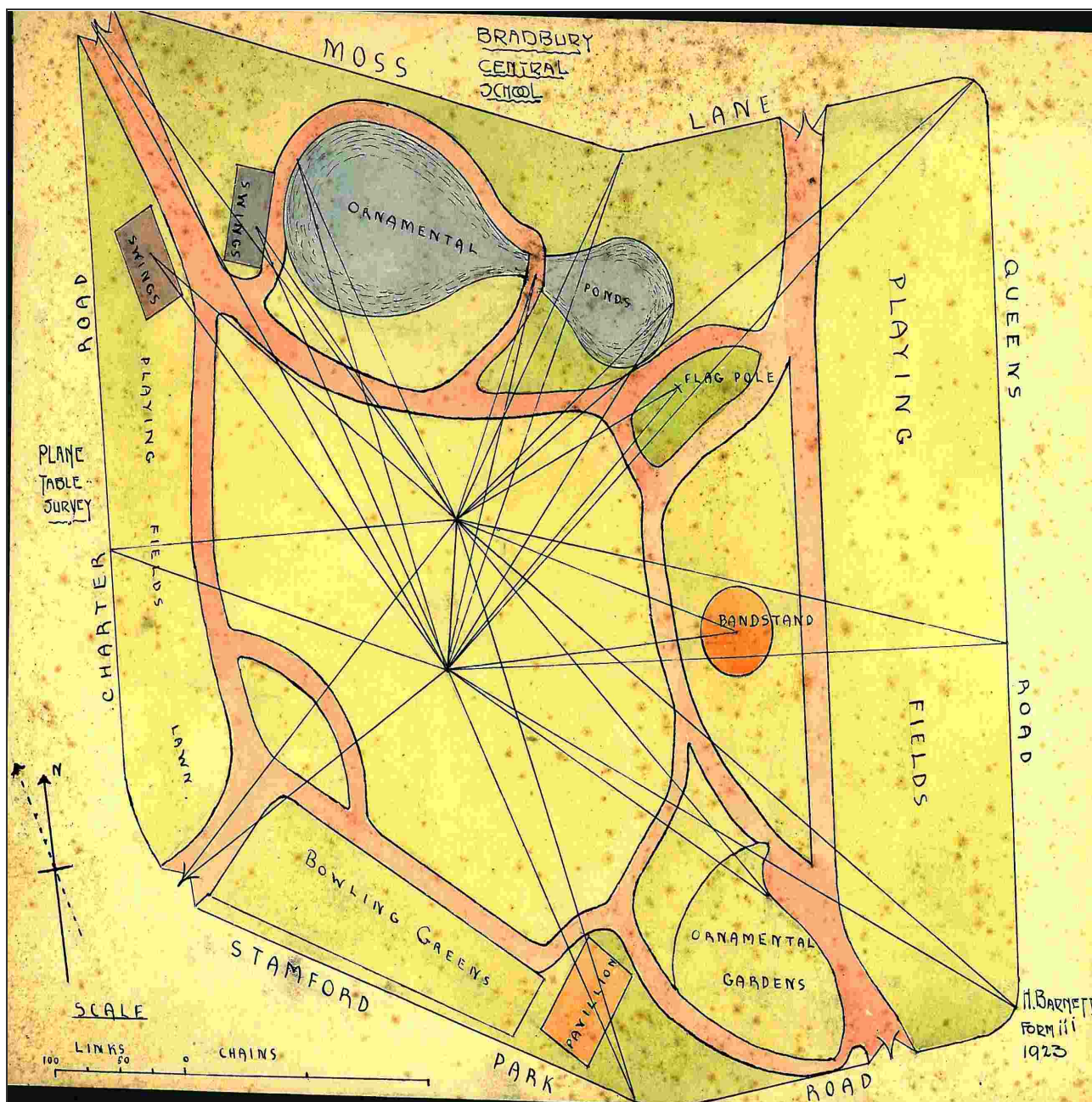


4. A more detailed plan of the school by Tom Davies. The ground floor shows the boys' entrance on the left (NE side), the girls' entrance on the right (NW side) and the corridor through the hall between them. From the boys' side the cloaks are on the left followed by the headmaster's study and stairs to the upper floor. There are seven classrooms off the hall including the art room on the right. The girls' entrance has cloakrooms on the right followed by the staff room and stairs to the upper floor. The six classrooms have 25 desks, accommodation for up to 50 in a class, 300 pupils in total. However the school was designed for 250 pupils and pupils report about 35 in a class in later years, confirmed by photos. During WWII refugee pupils were admitted and class sizes were larger. The upper floor shows a second staff room with a corridor over the hall leading to three laboratories. The two floors of the housewifery department are also shown. Original scale 1"=32'. In colour.



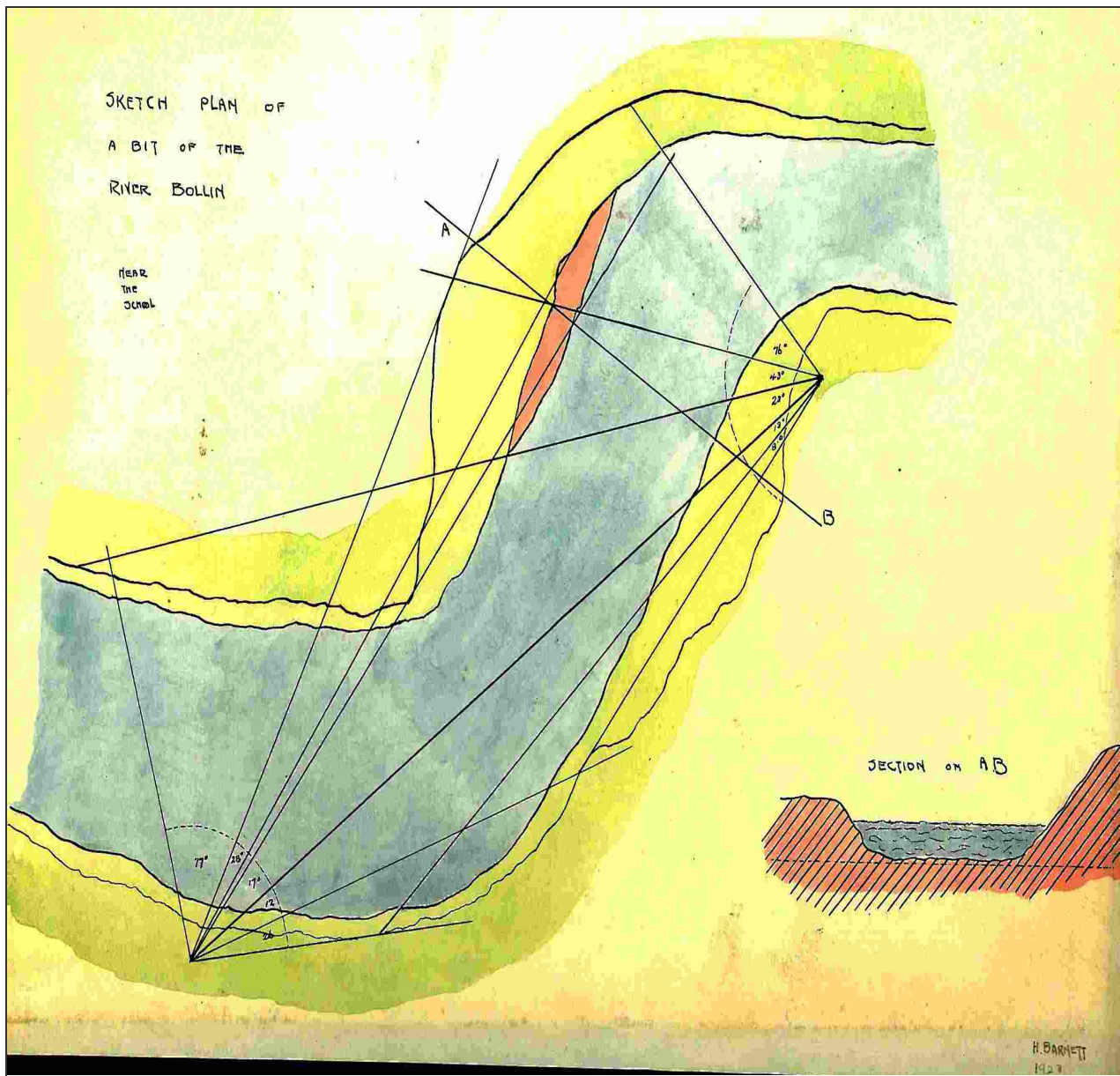


5. The Chain Survey drawn by Tom Davies shows a plan of the whole school and two playing fields. Stamford Park Road is incorrectly labelled as Moss Lane. There is a garden in the northeast corner. The housewifery department is shown on the Queens Road side, the girls' playground with a garden, and the boys' playground. The nurseries ran right up to Hale Road and belonged to Clibrans. The scale is shown in links and chains. In colour.

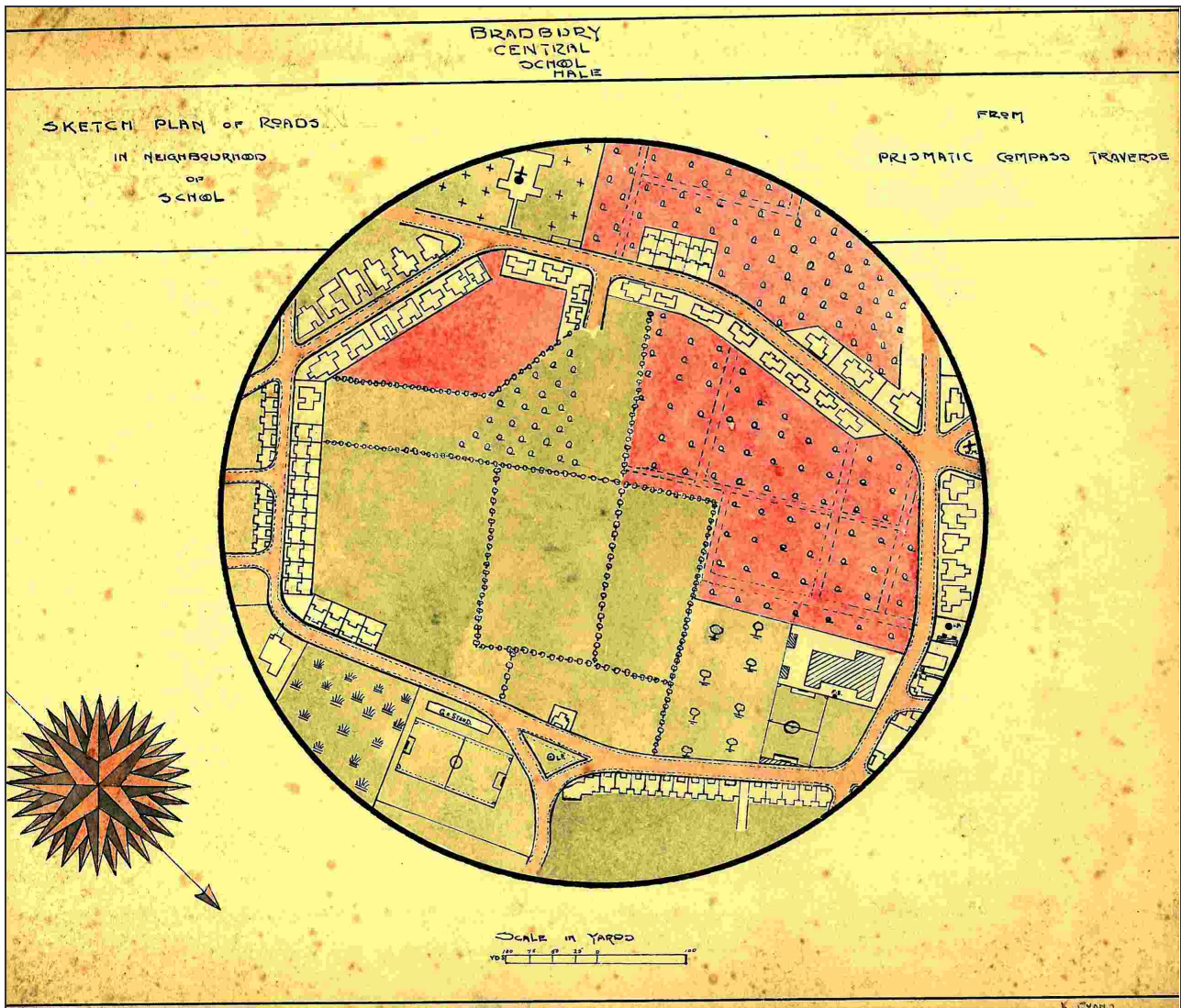


6. Stamford Park, drawn by H Barnett. This plane-table survey of the park, just northwest of the school, shows the swings, ornamental ponds, playing fields, bowling greens, flagpole, pavilion, ornamental gardens, and bandstand. Charter Road is to the west, Moss Lane to the north, Queens Road to the east and Stamford Park Road to the south. The survey lines are shown and the scale is in links and chains. In colour.



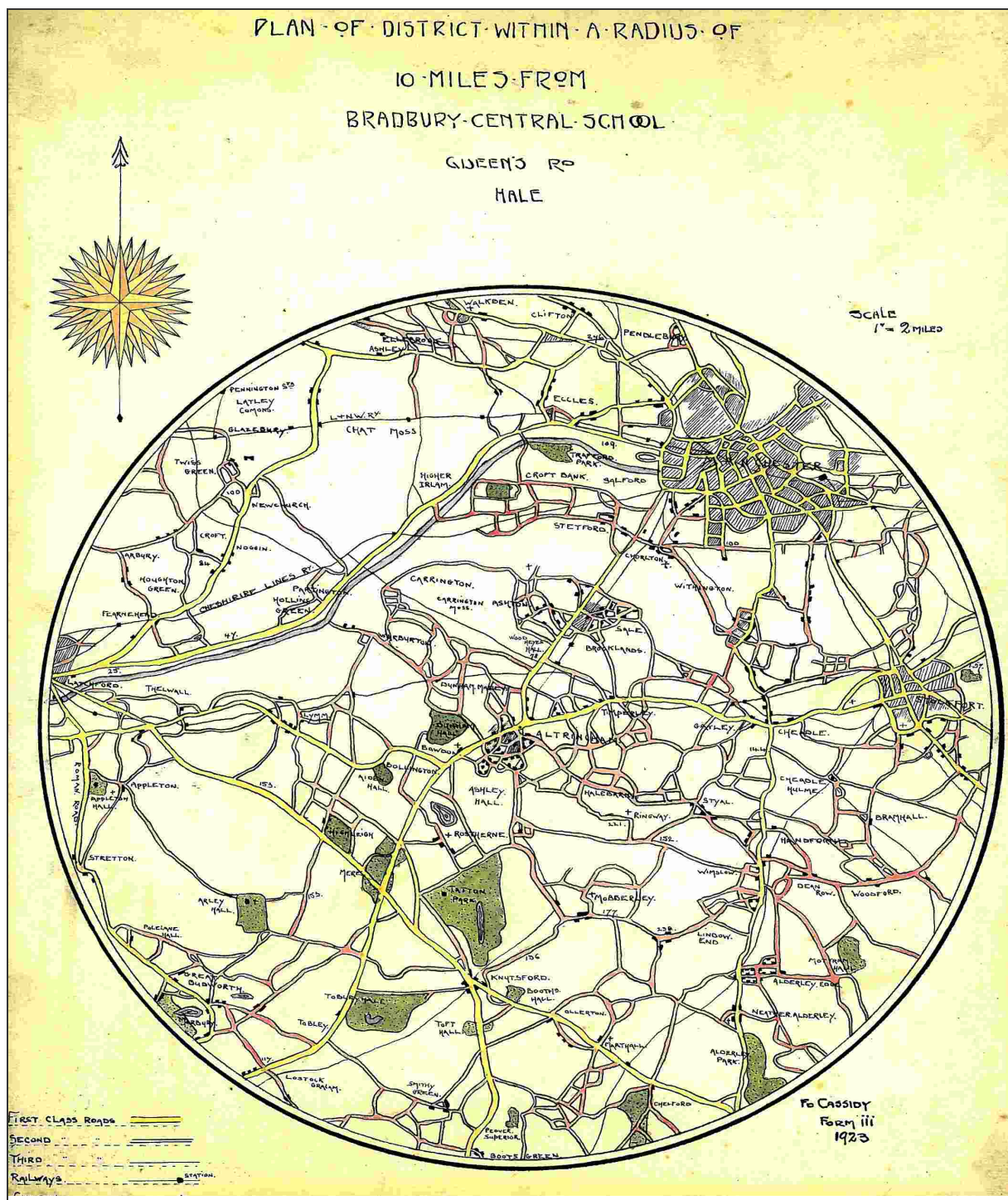


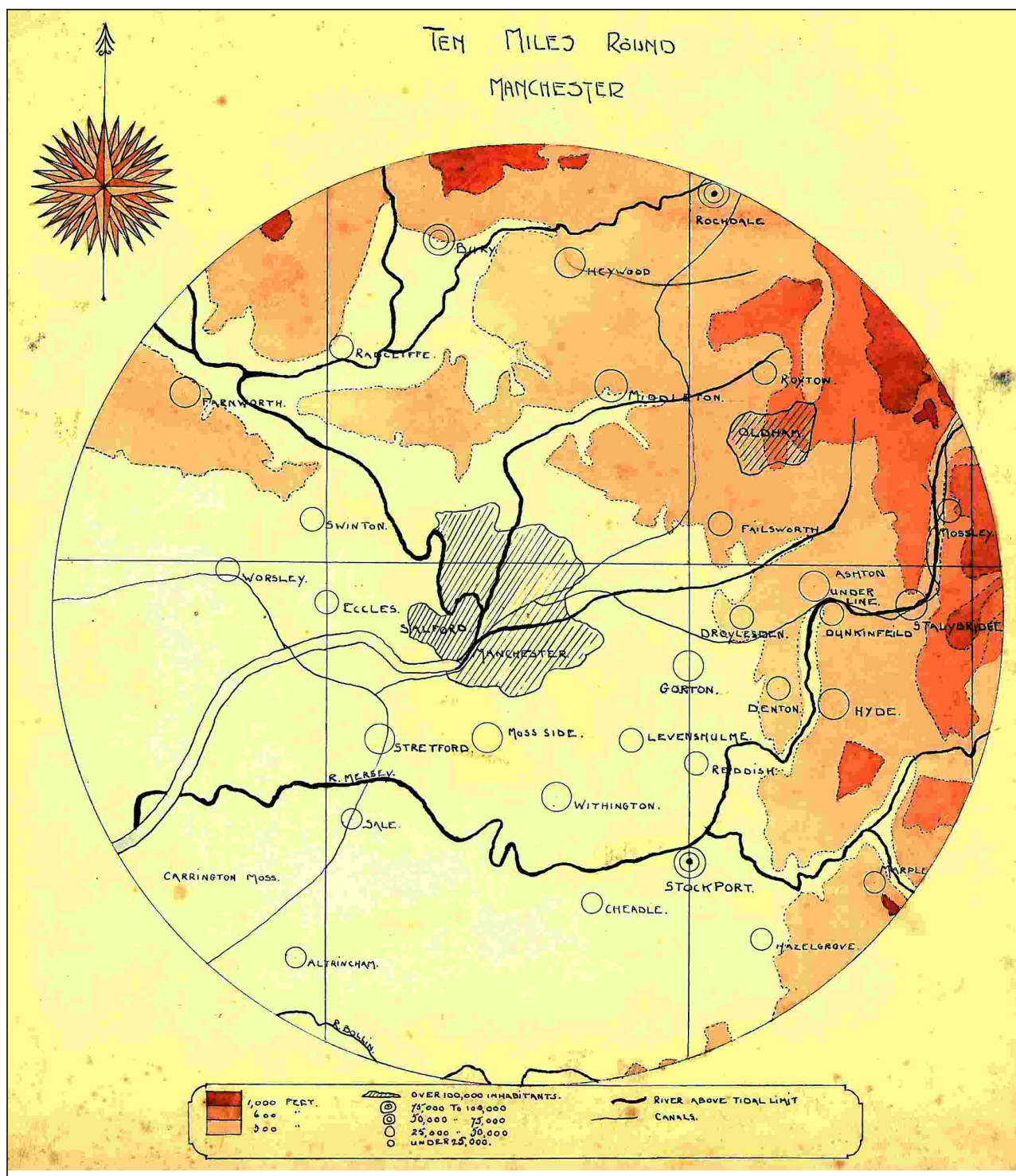
7. Bollin Sketch Plan by H Barnett. This shows a short section of the River Bollin with sight lines, angles and a section across the river. In colour.



8. Roads in the Neighbourhood by K Evans. The school is in the north-west corner built on a field called Nearer Hey enclosed from the medieval Hale Open Field. Hale Road, Queens Road, Stamford Park Road, Grove Lane, Bancroft Road and Hermitage Road are shown. Nurseries stretch from the school up to Hale Road and across to the present Acacia Avenue and over Hale Road. Acacia Avenue, Graysands Road, Clarence Road, Chiltern Drive and Rivington Road have not yet been built. Altrincham cemetery is at the top. Hale Field Farm can just be seen just below the five houses on the west side of Queens Road. A prismatic compass traverse was used and the scale is in yards. In colour.

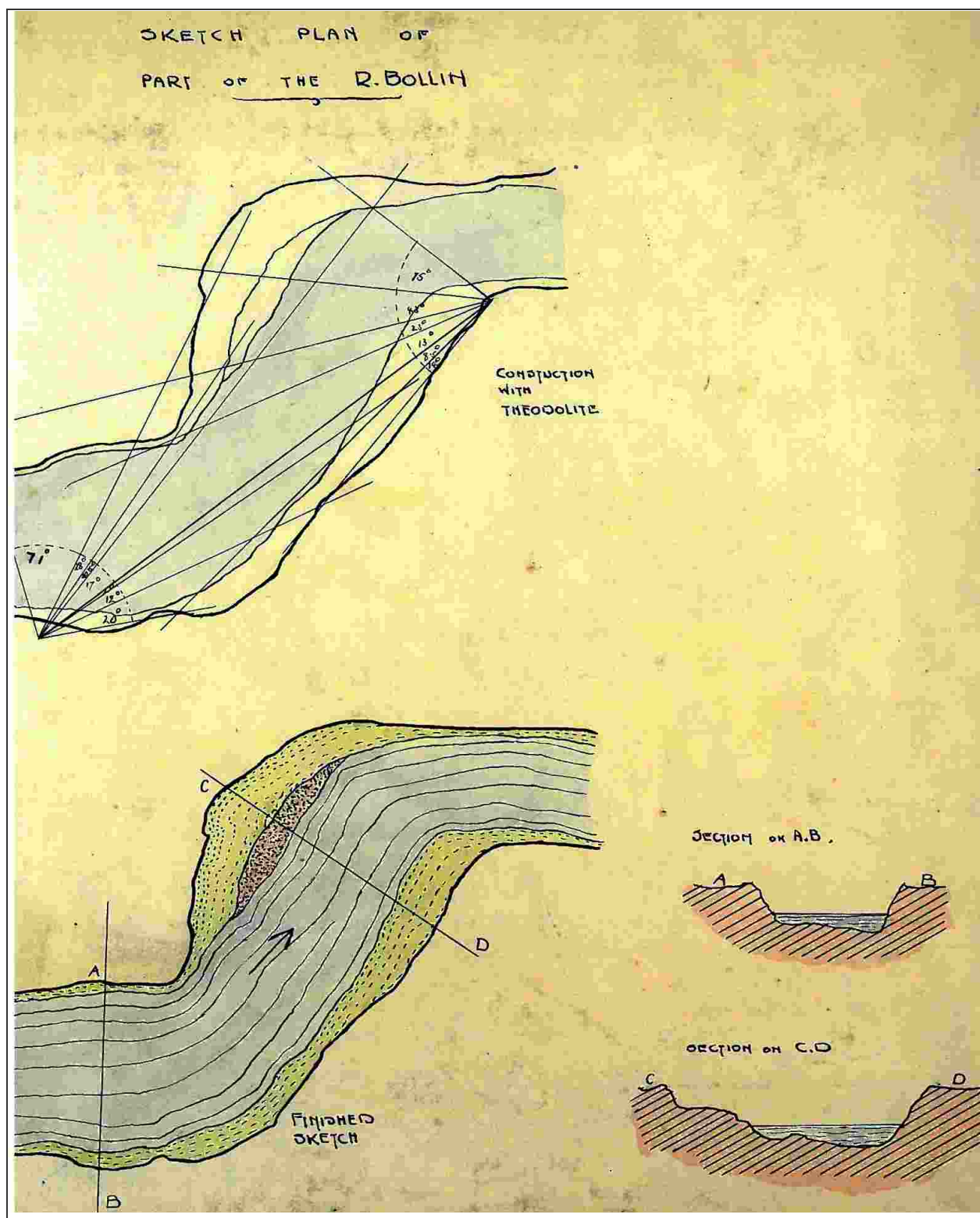




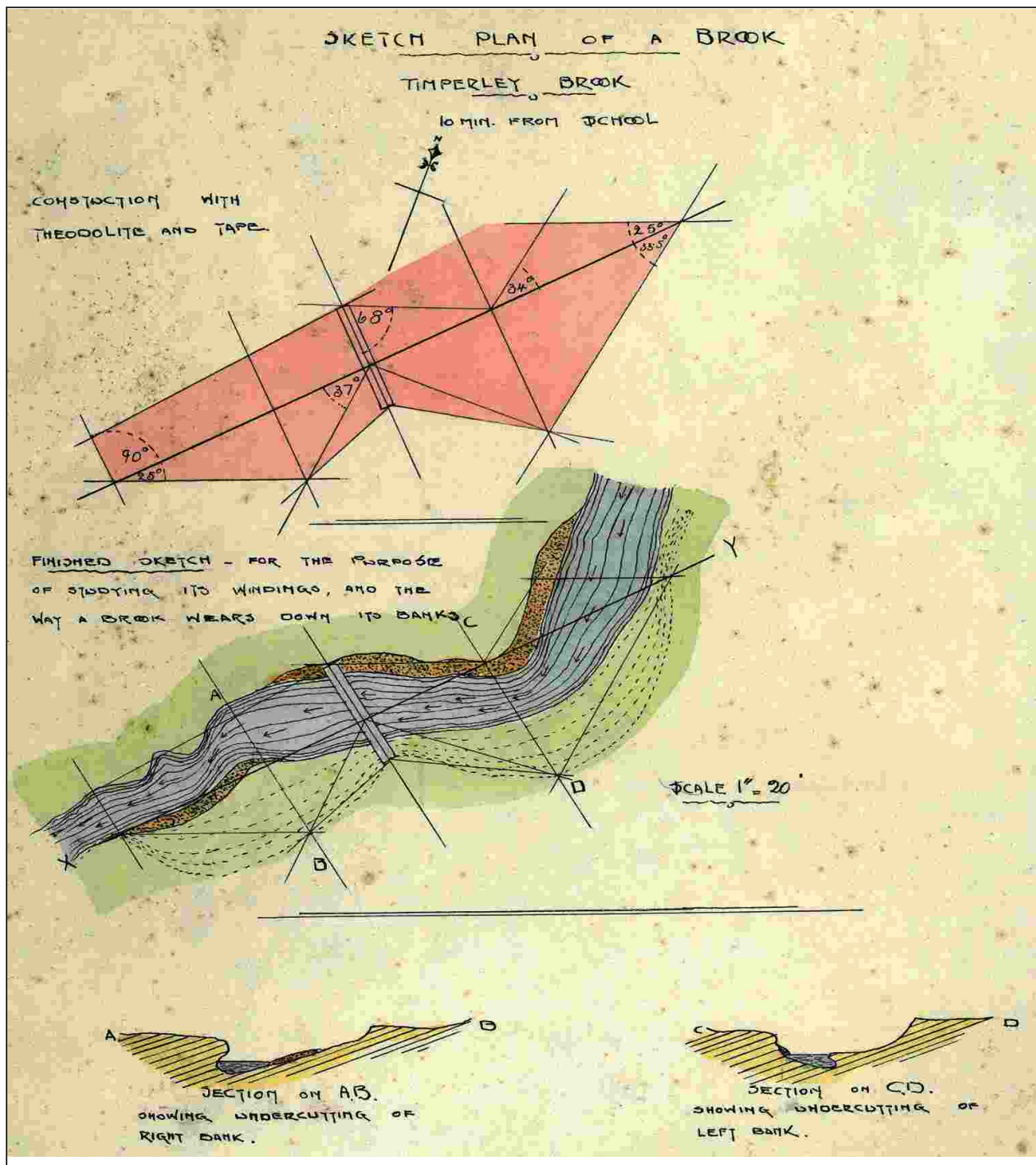


10. Ten Miles Around Manchester, unsigned. Manchester is the centre of this circular map which has Bury and Rochdale to the north, the River Bollin to the south, Worsley to the west and Stalybridge to the east. It shows rivers, canals and the Manchester Ship Canal, with height contours. In colour.

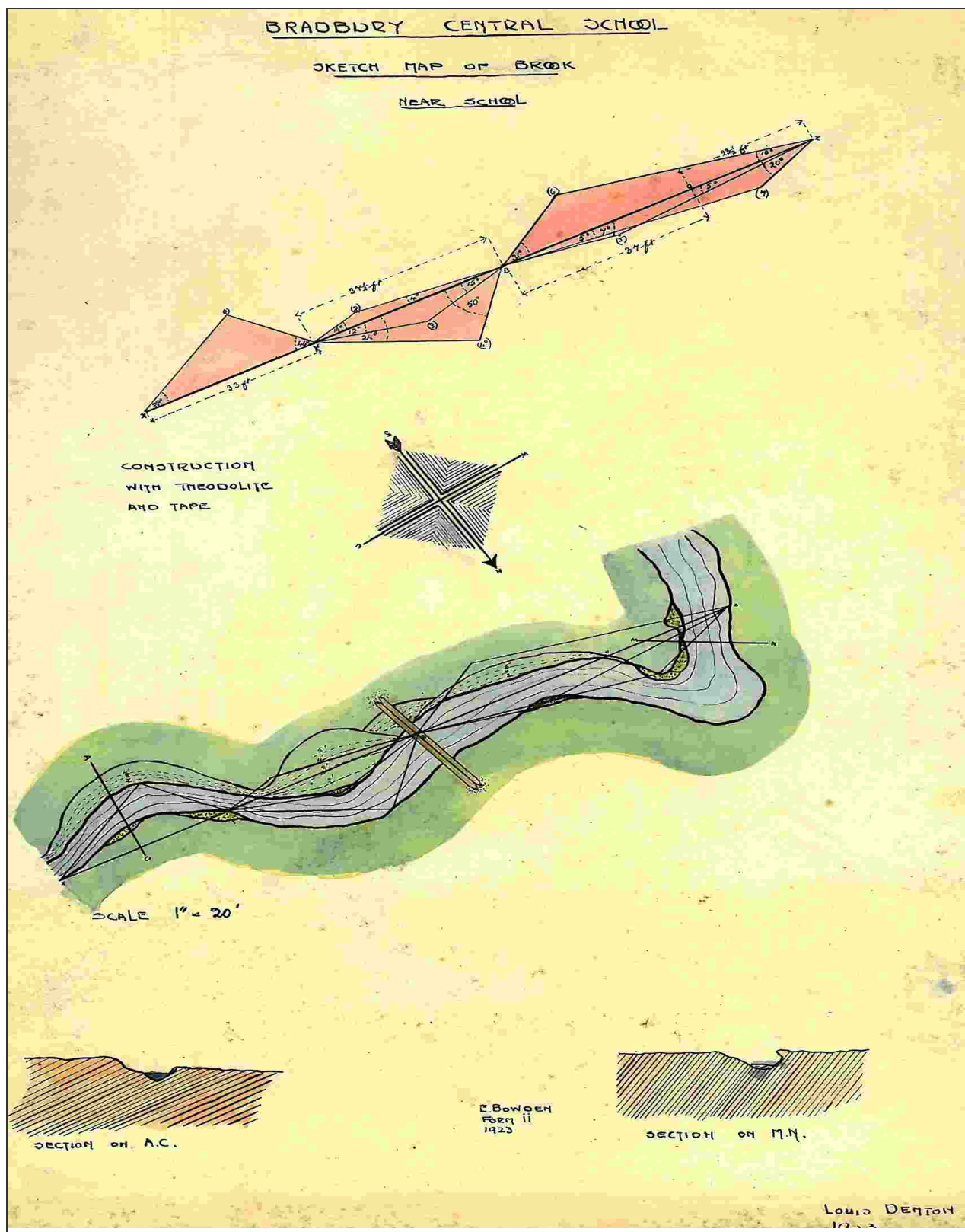




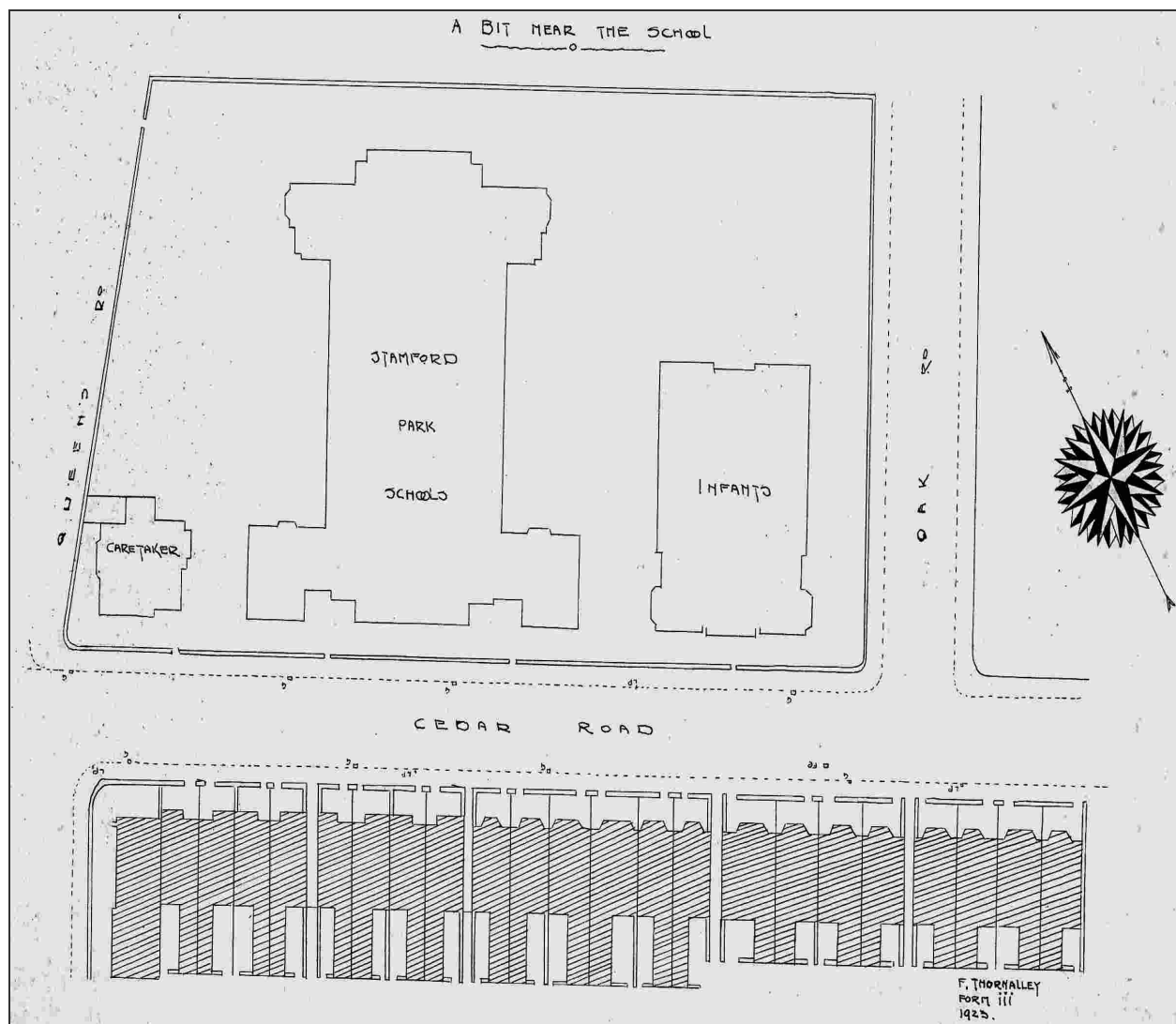
11. Timperley Brook near the School by Louis Denton & Eric Bowden. Measured with a theodolite and tape. Distances and angles used to sketch the brook are shown with the brook and its bridge. Two sections across the brook are also given. The original scale is 1"=20'. In colour.



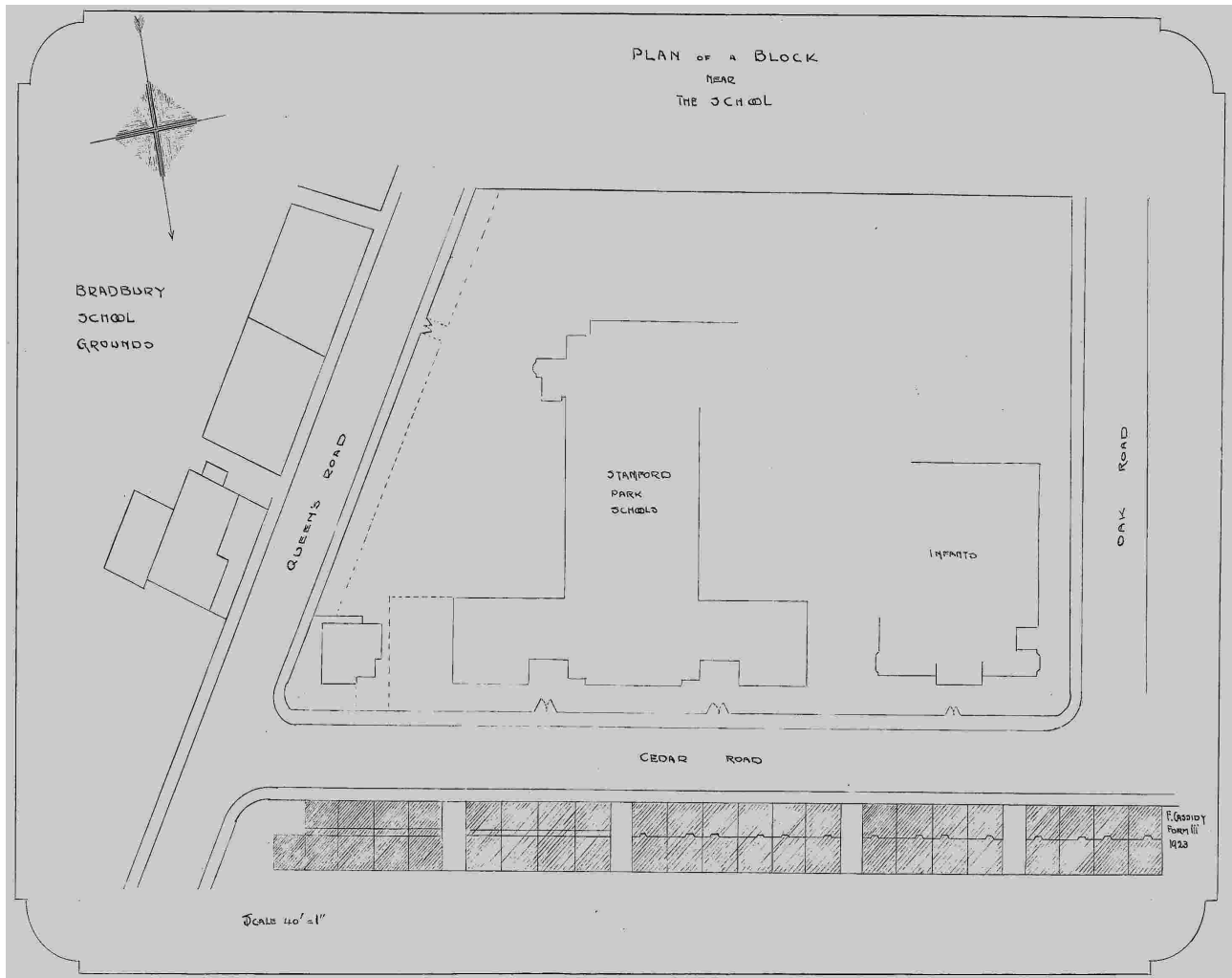
12. Timperley Brook by Eric Bowden. A theodolite and tape have been used to measure and sketch the brook which is ten minutes walk from the school. The brook and its bridge, and two sections are shown with flow direction. Notation says "finished sketch – for the purpose of studying its windings, and the way a brook wears down its banks." Section AB shows the undercutting of its right bank. Section CD shows the undercutting of the left bank. Original scale 1"=20'. In colour.



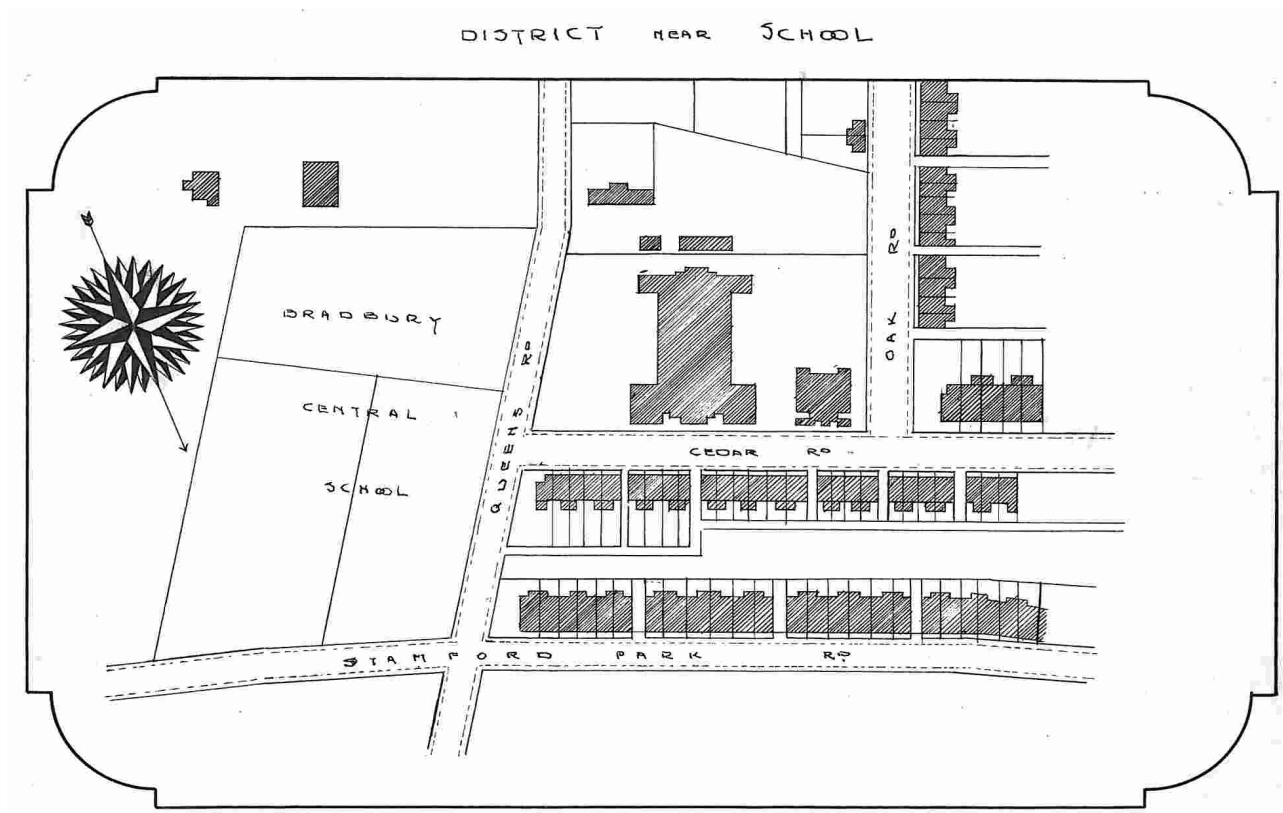




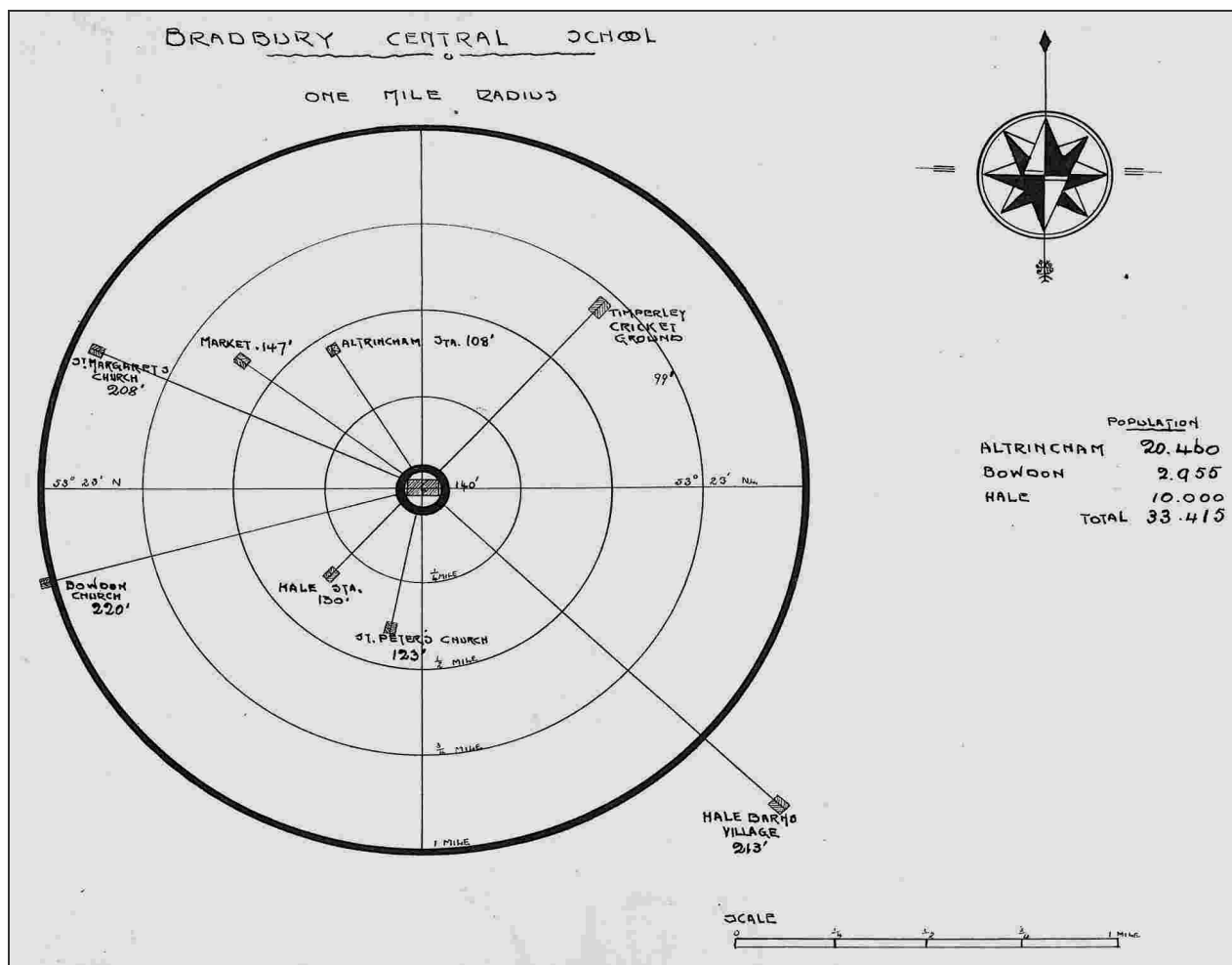
14. Near the School by F Thornalley. The drawing shows Stamford Park School including the Infants, on the other side of Queens Road. The school is sketched in outline, together with the caretaker's house and the houses opposite on Cedar Road. The compass direction is wrong.



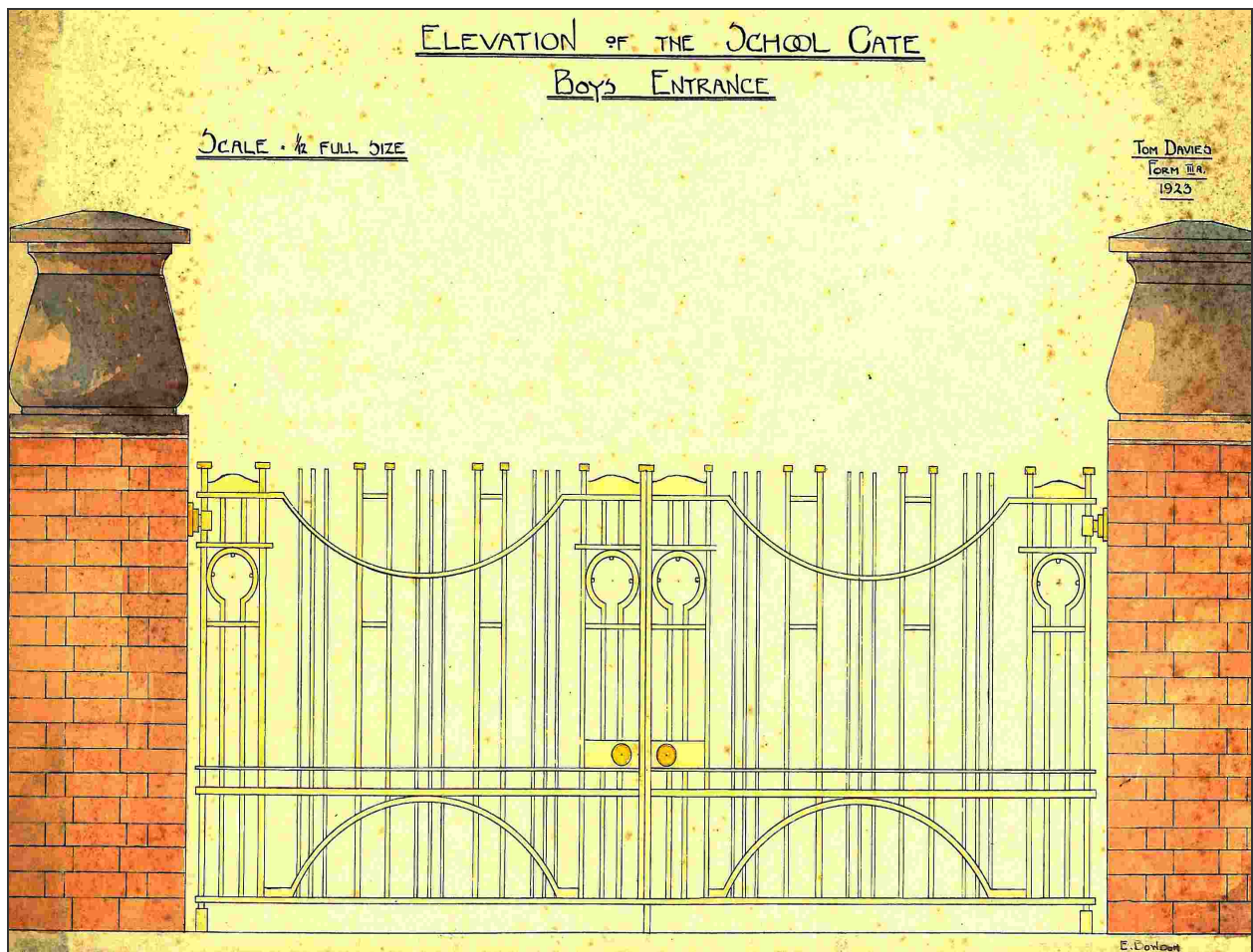
15. Block Plan near the School by F Cassidy. As plan 14, scale 1"=40'.



16. District near the School, unsigned. Similar to plan 14 but including houses on Stamford Park Road and Oak Road.



17. One-Mile Radius by J Eccles shows distances to St. Margaret's Church, Altrincham Market, Timperley Cricket Ground, Hale Barns Village, St. Peter's Church, Hale Station and Bowdon Church. The scale is in  $\frac{1}{4}$  miles and the map shows longitude, and the population of Altrincham, Bowdon and Hale in 1923.



18. School Gates by Tom Davies & Eric Bowden, showing an elevation of the school gates at the boys' entrance. The gates were scrapped during the Second World War. Original scale 1/12 full size. In colour.



19. *The School Hall from the Girls' Entrance* by F Roberts. The sketch is untitled. The balcony linked classrooms on the upper floor. There were no chairs. A clever perspective in colour.





20. *The Boys' Entrance Hall* by F Roberts (untitled). The stairs to the upper floor are on the left, the head's study beyond. The girls' entrance is in the distance. Another perspective in colour.

## **Memories of Bradbury Secondary School from the Island of Aphrodite**



**Keith Smith (1963-69)**

## **Memories of Bradbury Secondary School from the Island of Aphrodite**

I have recently read with nostalgic interest and no little fondness the Altrincham History Society's Occasional Paper 21, October 2010, honouring Bradbury Central School 1910-1986; and since I was a part of that history from 1963-1969 and maintained interest in it thereafter, I should like to add my memories of that fine school; and despite its shortcomings, it was a 'fine school'.

The 'Aphrodite' of the title arises from the coastal area of Petra tou Romiou, being the birthplace of the Greek goddess Aphrodite (in Roman folklore, Venus), who came out of the waves of the Mediterranean on to the rocks and temporarily rested on them for a while. Her bathing place is some kilometres away near Latchi, and a temple devoted to her lies near Kouklia. Aphrodite is, of course, renowned as the goddess of love, hence so many thousands of people of all ages marrying or re-marrying on the island.

These 'Memories' will hopefully give additional flavour to the Bradbury story, and an indication of its 'atmosphere' during my six years in the 1960s.

In penning some reminiscences there are dangers: that one's memory is becoming prey to incipient decrepitude; that it is easy to be casual and occasionally flippant and not to be taken seriously; that it is easy, conversely, to imitate a tedious Victorian novelist and generate insomnia amongst readers. Hopefully, I shall avoid these hovering dangers especially since, even when in my eighty-first year, I am advised that I still have full mental faculties although, physically, the advancing years do from time to time pose minor problems.

From my post as general arts faculty 'dogsbody', after four good years on the staff of Crewe County Grammar School, I applied for an advertised post as 'Head of Geography and English' at Bradbury and was called for interview with three other shortlisted candidates. We weighed each other up, and I felt quietly confident.

One chap wore a swanky, colourful blazer and barely stopped talking, especially about knowing 'Stan' ... Mr. S.G. Whitehead ... the Deputy Head. Another looked unwashed, unkempt and sprawled his legs across a chair. The third young man huddled like an oversized Persian cat in the middle of the room, and said nothing. I felt moderately confident now.

The interview in the Headmaster's room was chaired by Mr. HB. Moore, the avuncular Chairman of Governors, with Miss Bertha Carruthers, County Advisor, a formidable presence; and Mr. Don Camplejohn the Divisional Education Officer towering above all. Mr. Bill Terry, the Head, weighed me up searchingly: the questions and fluent answers happily flowed, but my surprise was palpable when Miss Carruthers said that the Head of Department post was really Head of Lower School, and asked if I was interested. It seemed a strange if not quirky request! After a few preliminary enquiries, of course I said 'yes'; and after a short wait, I was re-called and offered the post which I had not actually turned up for. I accepted with the customary basic courtesies, was well received, and thus began six very happy, rewarding years at Bradbury.

Both Peter Braun and Richard Hagon list staff of the middle to late 1960s and memories flood back: Peter's list first. Arthur Prescott, now in his early nineties, and I became very close colleagues and friends; and we are still in touch a couple of times a year. Without doubt, he remains one of the finest teachers it has ever been my privilege to work with and he saw education as a means for advancement for every child: both learning advancement and social development in full measure. Arthur and Alice, now 94-95, live in Marple Bridge. During those halcyon years we

undertook many projects together, including the complete reconstruction of the engine of the Bradbury coach, which saw long and valiant service. Arthur stripped the whole edifice, I cleaned the parts not having a clue 'what was what'. And then Arthur put it all together again. Margaret Bailey, who had kept us supplied with refreshments, had the honour of switching-on: and inevitably, the cylinders fired as demanded. 'A.P.' ... a truly great man. Field studies across Cheshire and North Wales, and into Lancashire including the Wigan Alps; weekends and camping holidays at Towyn, Merionethshire, with trips on the Talylyn Railway; theatre visits to Stoke, Bolton, Manchester, Chester and once, infamously, to a laughably ghastly mis-production in Crewe were all undertaken with immense enthusiasm and, inevitably, approbation all round. Arthur and John Thomas shared driving, with occasionally Margaret Bailey proving a point: and always a dedicated chaperon` and satisfying cook when needed.

Arthur, John and Margaret and I twice camped in Brittany, and once with Andrea Brookes (later Crosby); and again Margaret was the indefatigable and inventive cook. Only once was there a slight hiccup when she ordered 'quatre-vingt pêches' instead of 'vingt quatre'! Arthur, John and I never quite understood though why, when shopping, we always bought kilos of potatoes first and lugged them across towns. Andrea Brookes made a massive impact: to such a degree that, later, I encouraged Vi Hollowood, the then Head of Wellington Girls', to interview her for the Head of French. She did and so began a long and most successful new career and, later, marriage to Arthur Crosby. David Hickling was a delightful colleague, a very good staff member and a humourist of extraordinary wit and occasional flashes of inspiration. There was a morning assembly when Bill Terry was inviting pupils to ask family lady members if there would be interest in a cleaning post in the school. As was his way, from time to time in comments, Bill could emphasise the wrong words: in this instance the emphasis was put on 'lady cleaner' instead of 'lady cleaner'. David quickly drew a sketch of an horizontally-bedded lady ... naked of course ... with a gentleman (sic) busily Hoovering above. First Arthur and then this unsuspecting colleague were victims of David's quick retort. Suppressing laughter when on view, especially in front of Bill and Stan Whitehead, was not easy. David moved on to a school in Sale, and a senior post.

Jim Burbage was of what is often called 'the old school'. Brought up in Liverpool, Jim was ideally suited to teach the vitally hard disciplines of scrupulous attentiveness in woodwork, and especially metalwork. Woe betide any miscreant who strayed! However, underneath that doleful and superficially rigid exterior was a lovable and loving man with a heart of gold: and a very fine teacher. He was also a kindly, generous and good friend for quite a few years after retirement; and I visited him three times in his new home in Richmond, Yorkshire: halfway between his son in Middlesbrough and daughter in Reith. I was deeply saddened by his death in his early seventies. I still fondly remember his howlers in House Assembly 'Come out those of you who've been *censored*'; vice 'censured'! And of course the not infrequent clouts with a slipper if a wayward lad had not bowed to the right or left when passing Prospect Drive, along the Hale to Wilmslow Road which was Jim's 'inner sanctum'.

I made a could-have-been fatal error very, very early in my days at Bradbury. I had wandered into the Lower Staff Room (there was another at the end of the balcony) and sat down in a comfortable arm chair. First major mistake! All hell was let loose when 'Queenie' entered: her invective was unrepeatable here, but those who knew and loved her would know what I mean.

'Queenie' took upon herself the rôle of school nurse, first-aider, doctor-in-waiting, stretcher bearer ... whatever the need. I remember one day, when Bill Terry asked me to call in Mrs Burke as he had developed a rash on his shoulders; so I did as requested and put the 'engaged' sign across the door. Bill stripped to the waist and Queenie said, "I think you've got measles, pet." I partly agreed, but added that I thought it could be German measles as some marks resembled what shaped like swastikas. Neither Bill nor Queenie was remotely amused! Anyway the rash

soon cleared, apparently, and no more was said.

Mrs Burke founded the Antiquarian Society, and many enjoyable and valuable stimulating visits were organised. 'Queenie' was a good soul and she and Frank, her teacher husband at Sale Grammar, were a much-loved couple. Again one felt something special working with such a lively and spirited colleague.

Selwyn Griffiths, 'Griff', an articulate South Walian, was a fine teacher of Maths, Head of the Evening Institute and, later, had an extended career first at Wellington Boys' and then Wellington Girls'. 'Griff' and Norman Bispham were almost inseparable and Griff teased Norman, at times quite shamelessly, but all in good heart.

Les Evans, immaculate, efficient, reliable and imbued with the highest standards of professionalism was not only a superb teacher, but a true and honourable friend to many: staff and pupils alike. Apart from being Head of the Practical Department, Les taught Games and refereed school matches, even into his sixties. My personal friendship with Les ... and Mair his Caernarvonshire-born wife ... long outlasted our time at Bradbury, and Les's death at 79 was a huge shock to everyone in his family and who knew him.

A wonderfully happy memory of Les Evans is of the 'farewell do' which a group of us, with the connivance of Mair, were able to give him at the Well Green Inn. We were able to connect with old friends and former colleagues to ensure a lovely evening of gratitude, nostalgia and immense happiness. Many came quite a distance to be present and Les was graciously moved.

Duncan Rutter, a Lancashire lad through and through, was loved and respected by everyone. As Head of Religious Education, and Lay Methodist Preacher outside of school, he brought to his teaching and all his commitments and out-of-school activities a spiritual energy and depth of human understanding and compassion which inspired that love and respect. Later he became School Librarian, and was joined by Pauline Giles in the teaching of R.E.

Duncan Rutter and I organised school educational holidays ... they were hard work as well as immense pleasure ... to Onchan, near Douglas, Isle of Man; to Bray near Dublin in the Republic of Ireland; and to Rothsay, Isle of Bute, Scotland. They were activity and culture weeks and were enjoyed by all who participated, except one boy who was bored by the Cowal Highland Games! At the time of his expression of boredom, field and track activities included tossing the caber, the high jump and one hundred metres heats. Poor lad! Duncan was not amused and said so, richly and diversely. They were memorable weeks and one delightful story comes to mind.

One particular day, groups decided amongst themselves how they wished to spend the day: this was when we were staying in Bray. Sue Henry (Art) and I took nine girls by train to Dublin to ramble and explore the city and experience its atmosphere. After many hours with increasing tiredness, Sue suggested that we might treat the party to ice creams, so we found a suitable retreat and a table to seat the eleven of us. We ordered eleven 'knickerbocker glory' portions: the waitress's face was a picture of amazement and delight.

After a few moments I noticed a middle-aged gentleman at a nearby table, smiling warmly and rather approvingly in our direction. He came over and spoke to Sue. "My child," he said, "Blessed art thou amongst women: thou hast found favour with God." Sue was stunned for a moment and then exploded, "Good God, they're not mine!" One could but sympathise with her predicament even though, deep down, both she and I were highly amused: and so were the girls.

John Thomas, of farming stock from Rhosesmor in North Wales, was Head of Physical Education



during my time in Bradbury; and we worked very closely together, as I was committed to coaching and supervising Under XIV Soccer and cricket teams. Some weekends from September to April, as many as fifty-five boys alone were to be seen on the playing fields of North Cheshire and as far afield as Northwich. John was likeable to a fault, since there were occasions when discipline slipped just a little, especially in early days. However, he worked extremely hard and showed increasingly impressive teaching and organisational skills; and he was a supremely convivial colleague for out-of-school activities, school camps and holidays.

David Wilson's time in Bradbury was quite short: he moved on to a private school in Buxton, Derbyshire where he remained for many years before retiring to Laxey in the Isle of Man. David was another delightful colleague, an excellent scientist and gifted teacher. We became very close friends and maintained that friendship well into Buxton days; and thereafter by snail mail between Cyprus and the Isle of Man. Very sadly, David developed Parkinson's Disease, and equally sadly there has been no communication from the Isle of Man for quite a few years. One fears the worst. David sometimes shyly related how his father had taught Harold Wilson at Wirral Grammar School.

Norman Bispham was a very wise and knowledgeable colleague, but discipline was not a strong point and, far too often, he endured classroom difficulties which he seemed ill-equipped to overcome. Nonetheless, much of the craft work was of a very high quality; and Norman's work for colleagues as a committed member of the Cheshire County Association of Teachers, within the National Union of Teachers, was praiseworthy. Miss Hollowood, later Mrs Vines, the Headmistress of Wellington Girl's School, recruited Norman to teach photography and lapidary especially, but also other crafts; and he later told me that his Wellington years were the happiest of his career.

I had heard quite a lot about 'Stan', Mr SG. Whitehead, the Deputy Head and Head of French, from a fellow interviewee: and, overall, the reality fitted the image. As Deputy to Mr. Terry, Stan was loyal and reliable; as a teacher of French, I believe he compared well with any; as a colleague there was an element of unease from time-to-time but generally we got on well together and he was a good standard-bearer for progressive education.

I didn't know Peter Braun terribly well, but what I saw I liked very much and he was an excellent and jovial member of staff and a fine, holistic teacher, well respected by pupils, with good reason.

Richard Hagon mentions Mr (Geoff) Booth and Mr (Graham) Kellock of the Maths team. It would be difficult to imagine two more contrasting figures, both in shape and size, and characteristics. Geoff was comfortably rotund, smoked the most fragrant pipe tobacco and seemed utterly unruffled by anything. Graham was tall and wiry with an almost sardonic sense of humour, but he was a fine mathematician and, in many conversations we enjoyed professionally and socially, showed clear signs of good things to come. Later in his career Graham became Headmaster of a very prestigious private school: it all began in Bradbury! As a footnote, it is pertinent to comment that Graham and Bill Terry developed an almost unapologetic dislike of each other, but Bill would have given Graham a very fair reference when he left Bradbury.

Both Peter Braun and Richard Hagon refer to lady members of staff and, of all of them, Margaret Bailey stands head and shoulders above, even though many they mention were excellent teachers, fine colleagues and, socially, very approachable and good companions. Margaret excelled in all she undertook: the highly organised and eclectic teaching of music; directing the outstanding brass bands of successive years and contributing to the cultural impact of Bradbury in the community; getting 'stuck-in' with countless camping and holiday experiences; displaying intra- and inter-personal skill of high quality. It was no surprise, therefore, that Margaret, in due course became Deputy Head of a demanding secondary school in Crewe. We happily still keep in touch.



Both Joyce Bates and Margaret Comar served Bradbury well, and contributed much to the Humanities faculty, notably in organising, leading or supporting Field and Course Work in Geography; also to the staffroom bringing a breadth of experiences outside of the educational parameters which, I believe, greatly enriched their teaching. I, personally, much valued their vision, good humour and wide educational skills. They were good staff colleagues.

Lilian Docker, as Deputy Head and English specialist, was approaching the closing stages of her long career during my six years in Bradbury. She was a most gracious lady and delightful colleague in many ways, but she could be highly frustrating and irritating with regard, especially, to administration not least deadlines for reports. I think I was not alone in believing that Miss Docker was beginning to feel the pressures of her rôle rather overpowering, and there was a deepening sadness, accordingly. After her retirement, Arthur Prescott and I visited Lilian in her home not far from the school. She was not very well by then, but the influence she had on Bradbury ranks high in its illustrious history.

Diana McGregor, Ann Cooper, Sue Henry and Elaine Dransfield (later Gardiner) were notable colleagues who contributed to the ethos and well-being of Bradbury, and the educational and social enhancement of its pupils in many varied ways. Diana and Sue were bubbly personalities and had that special communicative knack of relating well towards their pupils. Ann was a brilliant Art teacher who later enjoyed a distinguished career on the Wellington campus. Elaine, too made her mark, notably in the Home Economics Department.

The Head of Home Economics was Margaret Searle, peerless in formal yet sensitive discipline ... essential in the H.E. Environment ... whose creative skills she transmitted to the pupils; with demonstrations and exhibitions on Open Days approvingly admired. Over all, the standards in House Economics across the school were very high, much due to Margaret's professional standards and discerning leadership.

The other Margaret, Mrs Helm, led the Commercial side of the curriculum and again, the standards were very high. Margaret was a wise and experienced teacher and an highly-respected Head of Department. The other ladies mentioned were the Misses Fosbrook and Giles; and Mrs Armstrong, together with Miss Foote and Miss Berry. Whereas it was comparatively easy to relate to Miss Fosbrook, Miss Giles and Mrs Armstrong and converse via Christian names, for newcomers it was unthinkable to refer to Barbara (Foote) or Edith (Berry). It was just not done!

Whether Miss Berry and Miss Foote were fellow-protagonists of an invidious system, or victims of it perhaps it is difficult to say. Nonetheless, the procedures written into the curriculum wherein pupils undertook servile duties in School House were, in my view degrading and humiliating; and preserved and viciously maintained a system of educational apartheid which had no place in an enlightened society. However, because of Alternative Courses, a divisive mindset amongst the educational establishment, such a system prevailed for far too long. Praise God for 'Options'!

One of Miss Berry's assumed rôles was to tour the staff rooms or class rooms at the end of a month to advise that "the cheques have arrived." It is hard to believe in this post-modern and advanced technological age, that staff were paid by cheque via the school Headteacher, who surreptitiously handed the slips to each member of staff, even whilst teaching, with a sort of backhand gesture through a slightly-opened door! This had been my experience in Crewe Grammar School, too, and it was not until the mid-seventies that the situation became more dignified, when Miss Hollowood (Mrs Vines) agreed that the cheques could be enclosed in envelopes; but the envelopes had to be returned to the office once she had handed them personally to staff in the staff-room: progress indeed!

I last saw Miss Foote, with a walking stick and rather stooping, at Les Evans's funeral, when she was hosted by Norman Bispham. Even then she was somewhat forceful, even at such a time. It would be fair to say that, whilst the said lady probably did not have an innate antipathy towards children, the reverse may not have been the case from the perspective of many children under her charge: all somewhat sad really, but she did have her followers and admirers.

Freda Armstrong, petite and cheery, was very much respected and appreciated; for her, teaching was a joy and children to be cherished and nurtured. Pauline Giles was a somewhat reserved and sober colleague, maybe taking her calling as teacher of Religious Education too seriously. Nevertheless, Pauline was sincere and genuine and maintained good standards. It is unfortunate that I cannot recall Miss Fosbrook's first or Christian name; however I do recall that she was a bright, sparky young lady and at least one member of the male staff took a shine to her, but married elsewhere.

Other Bradbury staff with whom I worked, either directly in the school or thereafter, were Bill Richardson, Brian Messenger and Desmond Lilley: Woodwork, Maths and English respectively. They were good teachers and colleagues; and the comparatively early death of both Bill and Brian left a huge gap in their families, amongst their teacher colleagues and pupils: and they were greatly missed. I think there were not a few occasions when Bill responded 'appropriately' to the request of pupils sent down to the Woodwork room for a 'long stand' or 'a glass hammer'. Good humour was never far from the surface in those very happy days and the boys, especially, never felt any malice or anger: all was taken in good heart.

Throughout the Bradbury years Bill Terry was 'the boss'. It would be entirely fair to say that there was a small core of staff members for whom Bill could do nothing right, although superficially to his face, they were polite and supportive. To them, Mr Shuard, the Head in the 1930s and 40s ... 'the old man' ... was revered beyond reason; and frankly, one tired of such adoration and sycophantic puerility. Not even Messrs Rigby or Bradshaw were given such credibility and dutiful reverence as Mr Shuard. Indeed, he clearly was a very fine Headmaster and thus highly respected and admired; and he achieved great status for Bradbury. However, Bill Terry was a good man, very experienced in education theory and practice: a man, always, of immaculate appearance, high standards of moral and ethical behaviour, and a man of immense courage and integrity. To actually 'like' Bill was not easy, initially: formality and protocol presented a barrier. However, in relaxed moments, especially in extra-curricular and sporting activities, Bill could be huge fun, very entertaining and gregarious.

If, at times, within the school he took things a little too seriously and could not quite grasp when he was having his leg pulled, Bill Terry was a superb Head, good to work for and with. There were some occasions when he could be infuriating: stock-taking days were an annual nightmare and no staff colleague would dispute this, I am confident. Bill drove his staff hard, but he did so by example. That I still cherish his leadership and idiosyncrasies nearly fifty years on, says much for the impact he made. Such quirks as, "I ask myself a question" ... "Do you follow?" ... "I wonder what he's thinking" often when tapping his teeth with an arm of his spectacles, still bring an almost idiotic smile. It was always a delight to receive a Christmas greeting from 'Bill and Cynthia' over many later years. Cynthia Terry never intruded into school life, but always showed immense, maternal interest in everything Bradbury, notably Bill's work and needs, as he was not a car driver. Perhaps she was the perfect Headmaster's wife.

I have, so far, not written about two other significant figures. AL 'Laurie' Jones and HJ 'Jim' Evans. I was never sure of Laurie's true calling: was it Science, or Music, or both? After many years serving Bradbury, Laurie enjoyed a long career at Wellington Boys' School as Head (was there any other?) of Music and as occasional organist at Altrincham Crematorium: indeed he played for Les

Evans's funeral. Laurie was one of the 'old guard' if one may judiciously put it, and there was very little love lost between him and Bill Terry. I hope it may not seem too ungracious, but there were times when one wondered if Laurie had a grudge against pianos, as delicacy of touch did not often appear a strong point in his favour. Nonetheless, nobody could doubt Laurie's expansive enthusiasm for music and his unquestionable skill in bringing together diverse elements: and he was such a cheerful colleague, too. Perhaps with his Science-Music twosome, he gave new meaning to 'the music of the spheres'!

Jim Evans succeeded Stan Whitehead as Deputy Head when Stan moved on to an inspectorate with an Art College. Jim also became Head of Geography, which meant that this writer became more thoroughly centred on the teaching of English. I don't think Jim and I were ever too sure of each other; eventually he went farming in Arkwright country and, ultimately, in Scotland. Of course I had long since moved on.

My own career, post-Bradbury is not especially relevant to this article and set of memories and reflections. Suffice to say, however, the impact which Bradbury had on my further career was incalculable: the Headmaster, staff colleagues, governors and parents, friends of the school ... and pupils! The photographs of the Bradbury Brass Band and a very circumspect and magisterial Margaret Bailey, their superb trainer and conductor, jolts my memory with clear recognition and recollections of Brian, Richard, Philip, David, Robert, Charlie, David R., Peter, John et al; and vivid mind's eye recollections of Philip Deadman and John Tomlins; and Alistair Ian Hulme, sadly to die very young; also Charles Blain, an outstanding cricketer of county class.

Can one forget Dave Hickling atop a huge ladder (and he was tall) affixing Christmas decorations to the Assembly Hall ceiling; or the production of 'the Mikado'; or John Thomas clinging to a lamp-post in France; or the police car travelling behind the bus bringing a pupil we had left behind (accidentally, not deliberately) when camping in Brittany; or Bill Terry on an infamous Stocktaking Day berating David Wilson ... *"Every inkwell, Mr. Wilson, every desk, every cupboard: do you follow?"* And Duncan Rutter delightfully noting from his newspaper that Wigan Rugby League had beaten Bradford Northern whilst we were holidaying around the Kyles of Bute; and a lofty seagull dropped its calling-card on the paper. Quick as a flash Duncan exclaimed "Obviously a Bradford Northern supporter!"

There was that end of term Christmas get-together, mid-afternoon at an Altrincham hostelry: and the snow was giving the landscape that inimitable seasonal cheer. Everybody, yes everybody, had that joyous glow of contentment, perhaps relief at the end of term, and good will to all. In many ways that was the character and ethos of Bradbury: 'goodwill to all'. Perhaps one could justifiably add 'excellence in everything attempted'.

Several other names of staff colleagues have come to mind late; not deliberately, but perhaps through a touch of anno domini. Mrs Margaret (or was it Margedd) Evans taught in the Humanities Department, and was married to the Rev'd J Islwyn Evans, Minister of the Congregational Church in Heyes Lane, Timperley. They both moved on to Chester where Islwyn ministered from Vicars Cross Congregational Church. Mrs Evans was Secretary of the Parent-Teachers' Association and I believe I succeeded her after she left.

Succeeding Les Evans was Peter Cunliffe: a more contrasting personality it is hard to imagine; and Peter very soon stamped his views on to the face of Bradbury, radically different to those of Les. In due course, I happened to work with Mrs Cunliffe for a time later, in Wellington Girls' School and I felt that she and Peter were well suited to each other in educational matters.

Another person of unique character was Mrs Marie Armstrong, the formidable School Secretary,

who later moved on to become Practice Secretary for Drs Brown and Scotson on Park Road, Timperley. This Middlesbrough-born lady 'knew her stuff' and was a most efficient, reliable and helpful secretary to the Headmaster and staff.

Quite a few contributors to the 'Bradbury Central' article refer to Speech Days. One I especially remember was held in the School Hall, and the Guest of Honour was E.A. Armitage, the Director of Education for Cheshire, before the days when the whole area was renamed Trafford. Mr. Armitage, apparently came from Brighouse, 'Briggass' as he and Mr H.B. Moore, Chairman of the Governors constantly referred to it, in a duo performance of much wit and humour. The customary "where there's muck there's brass" had several creditable mentions. Interestingly, at this time, headed notepaper from the Education Department in County Hall was all 'lower case' and it caused some little concern for teachers of English! However, unbeknown to us then, we were on the cusp of a technological revolution which would seriously and critically challenge the traditional teaching of English, as new sub-cultures came to the fore, and proliferate in these post-modern times.

On Speech Days, the stars and high achievers were all rightly and dutifully heralded and praised; but over the years I innately had a deep sympathy for the hard workers who always gave their best, but could never achieve the kind of success which was so openly applauded. And now in the decades of the twenty-first century we have League Tables!

I recall a number of Harvest Thanksgiving and Christmas Carol Services in the School Hall. Mr Terry was very keen to acknowledge such traditional expressions of gratitude, especially since the school was on the edge of a vast agricultural community, and quite a number of pupils were of farming stock. At Christmas time the choirs and band were able to show their mettle and the value of their expert training, and 'goodwill' prevailed heartily. Christmas was always a very happy time in the school; and it was not just because of decorations, carols and end-of-term. It was something special about the whole ethos of Bradbury.

Reference was made by Peter Braun to 'Activities'. It was Bill Terry who initiated the 'Activities Club' each Wednesday evening, and a 'Prefects' Club' each Friday. Staff were encouraged to offer or support an activity and there was invariably a fairly lively, supportive response with activities many and varied. These evenings gave the pupils a real opportunity to engage in purposeful and gainful recreation, exercise both mentally and physically, to show leadership and learn teamwork; and to relate to one another in a relaxed, though supervised environment. It is relevant to note that Bill Terry rarely failed to attend both each week: and he was not a little accomplished in Table Tennis, Badminton and Cricket. He also liked winning, if possible!

One evening there was a celebration, I think of the birthday of a young lady member of staff, whose name has these last few minutes zoomed into focus: Jean Weightman. We often talk of concatenation in our daily round and a particular incident has come back to mind.

A group of staff had journeyed to the 'Greyhound Inn' in Ashley, and as befits 'celebration', enjoyed a convivial evening. When it became time to leave, if I recall correctly, Jean left via her own transport; it may even have been by bicycle. John Thomas, Arthur Prescott and I left in Stan Whitehead's car. Now whether Stan was aiming to emulate Stirling Moss or Jacky Stewart or there were other reasons, he drove like a demon, despite pleas to 'relax' ... or words to that effect! Let us say that it was the camber of the road and the hump of the railway bridge which was the cause, but the next thing we knew was that the car was securely embedded in a ploughed field and a boundary fence was not looking healthy. Crisis? What crisis? We decided, collectively, to leave the car in situ: frankly, we had no alternative; and we walked towards Hale, by-passing the Prescott residence, and de-camping in Diana McGregor's apartment for deep consultation. The plan adopted, since no one was hurt, no one else had been involved and consequences were not too

cheering ... press, senior members of a teaching staff etc., the plan was to call the garage nearby for the car to be towed away and repaired; and for each of us to say absolutely nothing: over all, a sensible and wise decision. However, Robert Burns had a phrase for it, regarding 'best laid plans'.

We had not bargained for the fact that Mr Griffiths and Mr Bispham frequently went out for lunch, as they did on the following day: and yes, they drove past the garage where Stan Whitehead's car lay in wait. Predictably and inevitably, the duo pursued further 'investigation' and felt it appropriate to advise Bill Terry. As is often said, "the rest is history." I know not what Bill said to Stan or my colleagues, but I suspect it was not "have a nice day" if his quizzing and reprimanding of me was anything to go by. And, of course, he was right to be angry and disappointed. However, the matter was closed and nothing more was said. I assuredly got the message as, I expect, so did my colleagues.

One bygone incident related to me by Les Evans gives a flavour of limited spending power in requisitioning new stock and equipment; and also a flavour of staff-Head relationships. This was in Mr Shuard's time.

Les was, apparently, keen to add to the stock of footballs and asked Mr. Shuard in a staff meeting if the stock could be replenished. Without batting an eyelid, Mr Shuard responded, "What is the position regarding the balls, Mr Evans?" (apparently he always stressed the 'E'). Les, straight-faced, so he told me, replied "One, Mr Shuard." It would appear that 'the old man' was not keen to spend, so Fred Thorne had chirped-up, "Well you have the School fund to play with Mr Shuard," to which the prompt retort had been, "We do not play with the school fund, Mr Thorne," with Shuard in apparently characteristic mode, clicking his fingers together. Of such utterly 'ridiculous' stories is folklore made!

Reflecting further, I recall one story regarding Jim Burbage. A former pupil told me that he returned to Bradbury some time after he had left and went to pay his respects to Jim in the Metalwork Room office. Jim was standing, face downwards, studying some papers. This was the ensuing conversation and actions:

*"Hello, sir, how are you?"*

*Wham! With a not-too-gentle swing of his right arm.*

*"Hey, sir, I left two years ago."*

*"Well that's for coming back."*

There followed a broad smile, a welcoming hug and ...

*"How are you doing, son, it's nice to see you again."*

Then a convivial busy chat. Just imagine such a scene of 'affection' today!

Jim Burbage used to relate how he embraced the motorway journeys to and from family in Yorkshire and the North East, before settling in Richmond. He told me, "I travel up and down the middle lane, so that traffic can pass me on either side" and he was deadly serious. He used to relate, too, how his sister Peggie would ring him prior to a General Election asking for advice on who to vote for and, again, he was deadly serious. What treasured memories of a lovely man to hold on to.

The 1960s saw the inauguration of a new examination system in secondary schools, the Certificate of Secondary Education (C.S.E.) and it was intended to widen the scope of educational opportunity and give every pupil the chance of academic success. It also introduced an interesting range of

'new' subjects such as Government and Citizenship and Community Studies. Additionally, in many subjects such as the Sciences and Geography, Field Work was to be examined as an integral, internally-marked and externally-moderated component. Indeed 'Geography for the Young School Leaver' (G.Y.S.L.) became an optional choice of course, but not all teachers were happy. How would choices be finalised between C.S.E. and General Certificate of Education (G.C.E.)? Could there be a dual entry, hedging bets? Would parents be happy? Would employers regard passes sufficiently worthy? All these kinds of questions posed problems for teachers and Headteachers alike.

I recall Arthur Prescott grading his C.S.E. Technical Drawing pupils with a top classification, because he was convinced they would all pass their G.C.E. Needless to say the Moderator, Dick Sears, a colleague at my former School Crewe Grammar, shot up the M6 smartly to ferret and draw conclusions. He departed entirely satisfied. 'A.P.' was rarely wrong in his assessment and judgement. Nonetheless, difficulties were real, and the life-span of the C.S.E. was comparatively short. In due course, the new General Certificate of Secondary Education (G.C.S.E.) and the International G.C.S.E. were introduced, and have survived the vicissitudes of time and the whims and political ideologies of successive governments.

Of further acute interest for teachers, indeed of deep concern for many, was the expansion of the Comprehensive School movement in education, which of course meant no selection by external examination ... the Eleven Plus (11+) ... as it is known. How would the vested interests of the Grammar Schools react? Would there be monumental battles at both national and local government level? Could there be a veritable 'crunch-time' whereby nationally a Socialist government might be confronted by a Conservative Local Authority? Or vice versa? Ideology would, inevitably, come to the fore. However, would educational fairness, equality of opportunity for all be a pointed consideration? Again, this is now ancient history.

Richard Hagon in his contribution to the paper wrote, "*In my day the fabric of the school was showing its age, but funding was never provided to substantially refurbish it.*" The key word here is 'substantially'. During the 1960s there were quite a few 'interested parties' who were aware that refurbishment was long overdue, and that basic facilities such as hot water showers and sensitive changing rooms ought to be provided for P. E. Games and Athletics activities.

I remember that there were letters in the local newspaper pleading for a fairer share of the educational spending budget, and indeed pointing out the not inconsiderable difference in per capita expenditure between Grammar and Secondary Modern Schools: observing that Bradbury School was in danger of becoming a poor relation in the family of schools. Predictably, there was an immediate response from local councillors and indeed, the Teacher Representative on the Education Committee who might have been thought not to be doing his job with due equanimity.

Happily, in due course hot water showers, proper changing facilities and other fabric improvements were made, including extensive redecoration of the whole school; and the situation was much brighter in practice and emotionally. Whilst Bill Terry was, of course, delighted in the long term with the improvements to Bradbury, his immediate reaction upon reading the newspaper columns was deep concern that the Divisional Education Officer might hold him personally responsible for the activities of others! However, the immediate storm passed comfortably and there was much satisfaction as the improvements were made. Nonetheless, Richard was right in that 'substantially' does suggest that more should have been done.

Perhaps I may be permitted one penultimate footnote. All connected with Bradbury, assuredly hold Captain Edward Kinder Bradbury V.C. in the highest possible esteem, and honour his memory. Doubtless a generation or more of pupils of Wellington Boys' School honour and still talk about the



heroic deeds of Bill Speakman V.C., later happily resident in the Royal Hospital Chelsea, as one of the celebrated Chelsea Pensioners. So be it. I do remember a cup being awarded for competition between the Soccer First Elevens of Bradbury and Wellington and, indeed, matches being played soon thereafter, for the Victoria Cup. After the demise and demolition of Bradbury as a school, what happened to the Victoria Cup? Let us hope that these two valiant and brave men are still honoured in a tangible way, as befits their achievements.

It is entirely proper that, from time to time, students spend time in schools on teaching practice. One such student came under my wing for some lessons teaching English in Bradbury. He seemed a decent sort of chap and, after some preliminary comments, stated his intention for the pupils to engage in free writing, the 'in thing' apparently. So he told the class to close and shield their eyes and, in a few moments, to write down the first words that came into their mind. The pupils all followed his instructions, dutifully; and I waited for the next phase of the lesson.

The young lad took out of a briefcase a pair of orchestral cymbals, and then bashed them together zealously. The first pupil to respond to the student's request to say what he had written was rather diffident, but the student persisted, and the pupil shyly iterated, "bloody 'ell!" Needless to say, uproar followed and great delight as such. Calm was soon restored and a competent lesson emerged. "*Out of the mouths ...*"

When working in the English College in Prague in the Czech Republic, for part of a year I was involved in preparation for external examination in Music. I was playing a recording of the Tenth Symphony of Shostakovich with a particular class. The second movement is, allegedly, the composer's views on and feelings about Joseph Stalin and without telling the students this historical assessment after the movement finished, I asked them to tell me what impression it had made on them. Inevitably, as the 'movement' to many would sound a cacophonous din, several responses were predictable: 'a bloody row' ... 'a load of noise' ... but one comment really caught my attention. Seriously and openly, one young boy said "Sir, it sounds just like my mother and father, when they read my end-of-term reports." Again, "*out of the mouths ...*"

At approaching 81 years of age, I can look back on well-nigh fifty-five years in education. It has been good to me. I hope I have, over a long and not uneventful career, contributed something of value, and instilled values of worth along the way.

I hope that I have neither patronised nor offended anyone in this article; but I have tried, with both heart and mind, to convey something of Bradbury days as I remember them: and I am truly grateful for what Bradbury meant to me.

Unfortunately, I have little appetite for and skills with modern technology; the fault is mine and I use snail mail; I blame no-one! Cyprus is a lovely island, and apart from time-out in Papua New Guinea and the Czech Republic, has been the adopted home of Helen, my wife, and myself since 1991.

My sincere thanks are due to David and Judith Miller, and Helen my wife, for much personal kindness and highly professional input.

Keith Smith (Bradbury, 1963-1969) and in spirit thereafter.

From Paphos, Cyprus

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The eight books of **Altrincham Area History** are:

**Book 1: Altrincham Area Outline History**

**Book 2: Peel Causeway, Hale**

**Book 3: Altrincham Area Virtual Tours**

**Book 4: Dunham Massey Prisoner-of-War Camp**

**Book 5: Altrincham Textile Mills**

**Book 6: Short Biographies of Altrincham People**

**Book 7: Mayors, the Blitz, Place Names, Terms, Timeline**

**Book 8: Bradbury Central School 1910-1985**

Early versions of some of these eight articles have been published by Altrincham History Society as Occasional Papers and may still be available. They are also available to download in colour from the author's website:

**<http://davidmiller41wixsite.com/altyweb>**

The books are a summary of the author's main publications about the Altrincham area. There are a few other publications on the website, including free pdf downloads of Hale History and the tithe maps for Altrincham, Bowdon, Dunham Massey, Hale, Timperley and Warburton, as well as a couple of articles on North Wales.



***The Old Town Hall, Altrincham***