

The Lancashire Society

The Noise We Mek!



at Astley Hall, Chorley

The Lancashire Society's final launch event for The Noise We Mek project supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund was held at the historic site of Astley Hall in Chorley on Wednesday 13th October 2010 where members of the project team were greeted by nearly 30 members of the general public who were interested to see what the project was all about. It was great to see someone who had come to see us at Wigan and had been so impressed that he brought a couple of his friends along to see us!



As has now become the norm, Sid opened the evening by welcoming everybody, explaining the aims of the project and sang Rochdale poet Edwin Waugh's "Tum Rindle" to the tune of "Robin Tamson's Smithy" – a tune specified by Waugh himself.

Alex Fisher then proceeded to give the group her customary demonstration of Clog Dancing explaining the different types of clogs such as everyday working clogs and dancing clogs. With accompaniment by Chris Pollington on accordion, we had a demonstration of different types of clog dance.



Sid then reappeared with his scythe for a performance of "A Mower's Song"

An explanation by Barbara Hindley about why we are collecting recordings of the different accents and dialects from around the county and telling us the different types of speech patterns that we should look for such as the rhotic 'R' that is most apparent in the area around Blackburn and East Lancashire – try this with the words 'car park' and 'farmer's arms' by lengthening and rolling the 'r' sound in the words. This was followed by an explanation by Chris of how we are going to use the recordings in our archive for the general public to refer to via the website www.thelancshiresociety.org.uk and a demonstration by Chris of the quality of the audio equipment by comparing recordings made

on cassette recorders complete with noise, hiss, hum and other ambient sounds that detract from the speaker's voice with recordings made in crisp clarity on the digital quality equipment available today and that will stand the test of time for future researchers.

Mark Dowding on banjo and Sid on the bones (also called nick-nacks, rickers and several other names around the county) gave us a rendition of "A Weaver's Song". Mark then demonstrated the difficulty people can have when they try to read dialect works and why we need to record people who can read dialect works so that the younger generations can understand what these dialect pieces sound like when read out loud.

Try reading the following verses from Samuel Laycock's "Bowton's Yard" out loud:

AT number one, i' Bowton's yard, mi gronny keeps a skoo
But hasn't mony scholars yet, hoo's only one or two
They sen th' owd woman's rather cross, — well, well, it may be so
Aw know hoo box'd me rarely once, an' pood mi ears an' o.

At number three, reet facin' th' pump, Ned Grimshaw keeps a shop;
He's Eccles-cakes, an' gingerbread, an' treacle beer, an' pop;
He sells oat-cakes an' o, does Ned, he has boath soft an' hard,
An' everybody buys off him 'at lives i' Bowton's yard.

At number five aw live mysel', wi' owd Susannah Grimes,
But dunno loike so very weel—hoo turns me eawt sometimes;
An' when awm in there's ne'er no leet, aw have to ceawer i' th' dark;
Aw conno pay mi lodgin' brass, becose awm eawt o' wark.

Mark had brought his dad, John, along with him and invited him to recite one of his own dialect poems called "Owd 'Ercules" that he had written over 30 years ago. (pictured right)



We all finished with what has become our standard finished song - "Leaning on a Lamp Post" with everybody joining in the chorus.

The evening finished with tea and biscuits and the opportunity for the audience to discuss matters arising from the previous hour's music and demonstrations. A number of people filled in forms to enable us to contact them in the future to help with the project. Thanks go to the staff at Astley Hall for looking after everybody in the magnificent building during the event and for providing facilities for making refreshments.

Well that's it! We have had five events to mark the start of the project in the four areas that we will be studying and now the hard work begins – interviewing people, getting schools and other groups involved, recording and archiving. There will be regular updates on the Society website www.thelancshiresociety.org.uk and also the Society's "Facebook" page on <http://www.facebook.com> - enter The Lancashire Society in the search box and check the latest messages.

Mark Dowding, 14th October 2010