

Palatine People

The newsletter of The Lancashire Society

Issue 4
Spring 2011





CHAIRMAN'S JOTTINGS

By Sid Calderbank

Happy New Year to all our readers – bit late but t'fost chance aw've 'ed!

We're well on our way now with the second phase of "The Noise We Mek!" which involves recording some 250 interviews with long term residents of the area. What we're looking for are local stories and personal experiences of the area within half a mile of the canal between Burscough and Blackburn, so if you, or someone you know, lives in that area get in touch with either Mark Dowding or Barbara Hindley and get on their list – there's plenty of room yet!

We've also started to record Lancashire dialect voices reading texts into our archive and there is a very special reason we are doing this. – Those of you who have seen dialect writing will be aware that it is not easy to read, but we, today, have an advantage – we've heard it! Even if we don't speak it ourselves we've heard others speak with our local accent, but as the English language continues to change, it won't be long before a generation arrives that has never heard the old dialects – and can never hear them: at that point all that vast store of mainly Victorian dialect writing will be lost, and that will not do! So we need volunteer readers to read their own or other peoples' work so that we can match the voice to the text. By doing this we hope to leave future generations with a "key" to pronunciation and interpretation of these texts. They will be able to see a page of text and hear it read all on one screen which we hope will be an invaluable tool for future researchers. I've already started with a couple of poems from Blackburn which Chris is busy loading onto the archive – keep an eye on our website, and, if you are able to help, get in touch with me.

We've another awayday planned shortly at the Bancroft Mill Engine Museum, Barnoldswick, on Sunday 15th May – any supporters, poets, singers, dancers or musicians will be more than welcome, there are spots for all comers and Mark will be filming the proceedings.

See you there.

SID CALDERBANK



SECRETARY'S JOTTINGS

by Barbara Hindley

Our society is now two years old and our membership has expanded to around 80 members from places as far afield as New Zealand and Rochdale! It is wonderful that so many people want to be part of the society but I need to ask, why? Our idea was to form an umbrella organisation, rather than just focus on the Lancashire Dialect and carry on from the embers of the old 'Lancashire Dialect Society' so that we could provide a more inclusive way for disparate groups to get together, advertise their 'wares' and generally promote all things 'Lancashire'. Unfortunately, although membership has increased, it is difficult to find ways in which members and groups can interact. Social events, for whatever reason, have not proved to be the catalyst.

Perhaps the main reason that the society is so underutilised is because it covers such a wide area - geographically the whole of 'old' and 'new' Lancashire and 'subject wise' in that we cover everything from dialect, to music, poetry, song and folklore. It is a different matter if someone is an enthusiastic rose-grower in Leyland - they can join the Rose Growers' Association in that area, but being in the Lancashire Society merely signifies that you are interested in Lancashire without wanting to 'do' anything. Is the society used in a similar style to Facebook, where you can 'add as a friend' without getting involved in 'popping over for a coffee' or 'going for a pint in the pub'.

The Lancashire Society will continue to trot along anyway, whatever happens, but we, as the present committee, want to know if there is something that we should be doing that would encourage a larger response from the membership, either by putting on talks, musical events, poetry readings, dialect days etc. We would love to be able to involve the membership in all aspects of the society from performance to our Heritage lottery funded project but can only do this if you let us know that you are interested! What we really need is feedback from you - we will accept negative as well as positive, to try and turn the society into something useful. Tell us what you expect from a society, what you would be prepared to attend, whether you are prepared to help in any way, if there are areas you feel we do not explore fully etc. Even if you don't want socials, or only want one once a year, that is fine but please, please let us know!

Personally, I would like more offerings from the linguists! Lancashire is a particularly under-explored area linguistically. Does your area of Lancashire have any quirks of grammar or dialect words that you don't hear anywhere else? We could find another few hundred ways of saying small bread bun, ginnel and 'going to the toilet'. What do you call cats in your area? Does anyone want to hone their dialect speaking skills? We can help!

Lastly, we are on Facebook - look up The Lancashire Society group!

PUB NAMES by Bob Dobson



We meet at 'The Dressers' Arms'. Why is it so called? I suspect it will have something to do with an aspect of a trade. Of course it might be linked to well-dressing, but I think unlikely to be named after an item of furniture.

Here's a suggestion, which, if members will take it up, will help our editor fill the newsletters and provide interest to members: Look around your town and write down the names of the pubs. Then say why they are so called. Here are a few for starters:

'The Phantom Winger' at Broughton, Preston is a reference to Tom Finney who played on the wing for Preston North End and England. Tom has (I think) two other pubs in the town named in his honour.





‘The Lion of Vienna’ at Horwich is named in honour of the late Nat Lofthouse, Bolton & England centre forward who played like a lion one night in Vienna and a newspaper reporter gave him this name!

The 'Peel Park' in Accrington is situated close to where Accrington Stanley used to play at their Peel Park ground. It is on a piece of land, locally called t'Coppice which was given to the town a century ago by the Peel family who lived nearby.



'The Derby Arms' is a common name - usually found where the Stanley family (hence 'Stanley Arms'), the Lords Derby, owned land. Linked to this is the 'Eagle & Child', which is a reference to the coat of arms of that family. The pub is often called 't-Bird an' t'Basterd'. There's an interesting mythological tale about this emblem.

Then there's the 'Gilded Knacker'...

THE WANDERING WORD

“The Old North”

by Johnny Matthews

Lancastrians should have an awareness of their own rich history. When I was at school, however, I was given relatively little information on the early history of Lancashire and what I did learn turned out, in later life, to be inadequate for my own cultural needs. In particular, I was never taught about the “Old North” of the fifth and sixth centuries A.D. This was the area that encompassed much of present Lancashire, Cumbria and southern Scotland and (dare I say it) even some parts of Yorkshire. It was the land of the *Cumbri* or *Cumbrogi*, the fellow countrymen of the *Cymry* (the Welsh). My interest in

this stems from the fact that the old Cumbric language was sufficiently close to the Welsh language to enable the poetry and culture of this region to be later absorbed by the Welsh, as the threat and reality of later invasions grew further north. Hence some of the great early poets of Wales (such as Taliesin and Aneirin) were actually from our region, which not unnaturally is considered to be the "Old North" from a Welsh perspective. Taliesin, in particular, is attracting considerable attention these days, as his writings are thought by some to contain buried references to the shamanical pre-Christian traditions that were still extant in his day. Taliesin could in theory be one of the greatest Lancastrians. I often wonder whether people these days instinctively sense some of this old "magic" when they visit the Lake District or walk the great whalebacks of the Pennine hills.

As I have touched upon in an earlier newsletter, the form and construction of many place names throughout Lancashire and Cumbria bear the hallmark of the Cumbric tongue. However, I understand that there are no written remnants of the language apart from a few legal terms that crop up in an old document from the eleventh century, some personal names used in literature and a number of inscriptions. But a people and their culture do not simply disappear, even though they may have been overrun, and it is my view that forms and constructions derived from the Cumbric language live on in our dialect, saved from the influence of invading Angles, Saxons and Vikings, who after all were relatively few in number. It is well known, for example, that traces still survive in the use of re-worked versions of the old Cumbric numerals for counting. Incidentally, on the subject of Cumbric personal names, consider that *Cunedda*, a king or chieftain of the Old North moved south in about 450 A.D. to expel the occupying Irish from Wales, and that having completed this task (at least in part) he gave control of certain areas to his sons. These in turn founded princely dynasties in Wales. One of the sons was called *Ceredig* (*Ceretic?*) from which we now derive the modern county name of Ceredigion in west Wales.

In my own personal view, the children of Lancashire should be taught in the simple elements of the Cumbric and Cymric languages and their related literary traditions and should similarly be given groundings in Lancashire dialect and local history, in parallel with lessons in the dance, traditional music, dress and crafts of Lancashire. Education is not just about how to get a job and make lots of money.

“THE NOISE WE MEK!”

...is the title of our Heritage Lottery Fund Project.



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This three-year project, supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund, has several distinct elements.

Overall, we are following the canal from Burscough to Blackburn, studying and recording the variety of dialects and accents found along the route as it passes from agriculture in Burcough, through coal production in Wigan, to markets in Chorley and cotton manufacture in Blackburn. This gives us a snapshot of the industries that made Lancashire the centre of world manufacturing during the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Introductory launch events in Parbold, Wigan, Chorley and Blackburn were held during September and October 2010. These took the form of an introduction to the project by several of our members including Sid Calderbank, Barbara and Andy Hindley, Chris Pollington, Alex Fisher, Mark Dowding and Julian Taylor. This was followed by an open discussion with the audience at each event on how they could help and get involved. It was very encouraging to see a good number of people at each event who were interested in what we were doing and we got a number of people from each event who wanted to help with the project and signed up for us to contact during 2011.

In a parallel part of the project, we are producing an audiovisual archive of the local accents and dialects of today in the area. To do this, we need to find volunteers from all sections of the community who are willing to be recorded telling the story of their lives. Young and old, male and female who are native to the areas being studied.

The recordings being made by Mark and Barbara are going at full pace and work has started on another aspect of recording. Our archivist Chris Pollington has started recording people reciting poetry and prose of Lancashire Dialect texts in studio conditions in order that the audio and graphic can be studied by people on the computer. The student or interested party can read the text on the screen whilst listening to the reader reading the same text in the accent that the text was written. Our concern is that in one generation's time, there will be no natural speakers of any Lancashire dialect

left to learn from and so we are taking this opportunity to record as many people as possible reading text in their native dialect to preserve for future generations who are growing up using a dialect that has been diluted by various sources – not least being television. 'Eastenders', 'Coronation Street' and 'Emmerdale' are three regional television programmes that are seen and heard by millions of viewers but the accuracy of the accents are questionable to say the least!

The schools part of the project will also be starting in the coming month and we hope to have reports of how these went in the next issue of *Palatine People*.

IS YOUR NAME HEWITSON? By Bob Dobson

Anthony Hewitson (1836-1912) was born in Blackburn, raised in Ingleton and became a journalist in Lancaster & Preston. Eventually, he became editor/owner of the Preston Guardian. He had several children, some of whom were also journalists.

His most famous book is 'Northward' in which he travels by from Preston to Lancaster, calling at villages and telling readers about the places and people. On becoming editor at the Preston Guardian, he wrote a series of weekly articles telling of his visits to local churches and chapels. He spoke up about fat, pompous, vicars, poor choirs, sleepy congregations and local social conditions. These were turned into two books, and recently some of the articles were selected by Terry Mansfield and published in 'Visits to Some Churches & Chapels in Preston & District around 1870' The book was published by Landy Publishing (Bob Dobson) @ £8 post free (payment with order)

On Saturday 17th September this year there will be a 'Hewitson Day' held in St Leonard's Church Hall, Penwortham. It will consist of 4 lectures about Hewitson's life, work and those visits, his diaries and Preston's newspapers. Organised by Bob Dobson & the Preston Historical Society, further details are not yet known.

Some of Hewitson's descendants are likely to be present and it is hoped the event will bring in some more. There already is a Hewitson One-Name Family History Society.

GAS LAMP DAYS by Sally James

This morning I am thinking of gas lamps. Like the one in the side street near to where I lived as a child. We lived on the main road so we had electric ones but down the cobbled back street where we played there was a gas lamp.



What a thing to enter my head on this cold wet Saturday morning I ask myself but I still can't stop thinking about one in particular. Perhaps I am regressing to those happy post war childhood days in Wigan and the times we gathered around that ghostly glow. There would be just a few of us chatting in the rain some sparking their clogs on the cobbles and me playing skipping rope with my sister.

It always seemed to be raining when we were playing out in the winter evenings. It would be a fine drizzle that damped my pigtails and coat whilst the piece of old clothes line I used as a skipping rope trailed in the puddles and dirtied my legs. Of course my mother would scold me when she saw the state of my socks and the black mud splashes on my shoes and legs.

Sometimes we played "kick out can" and "hide and seek" and once a naughty boy tied me to the gas lamp with my skipping rope and left me sobbing in the rain. I was there for ages till my cousin saw me and untied me. I never liked that boy after that. His dad didn't work down the pits like ours did so perhaps he never got a "good hiding" like we used to but I gave him a good hiding the next time I saw him. You had to stick up for yourself in those days and though I was "not the size of twopennoth er copper" I could hold my own with the lads.

One very cold snowy winter night we made a slide. It was the best fun I ever had under that gas lamp. We never felt the cold as we slid on the ice laughing with merriment our cheeks rosy with delight but always a grown up would spoil our fun like telling us off saying it was dangerous. We never saw danger or thought of the older generation slipping on the ice and breaking their legs.

One night we went out to find someone had put salt on our slide and we thought this very unfair and wondered who it could be who had spoiled our fun. We were must unhappy when the slide turned to mush and the black cobbles appeared.

There would always be a tattered old piece of rope dangling off the arm of the lamp for the big lads to swing on kicking out with their clogged feet and screaming with excitement. Girls were never allowed to go on the rope when

the big lads were about but when they had gone we used to jump up to try and reach the swinging rope. Of course we never could.

Dogs never seemed to be out on a lead in those days people used to turn them out to relieve themselves so it was a common sight to see a dogs leg cocked against our lamppost. It didn't deter us from playing there even if it was a dog lavatory. It was a wonder any of us ever survived to adulthood but we did. All that was over sixty years ago. The cobbles have been hidden under tarmac now and the gas lamp long since disappeared but memories still linger, especially when I see an old lamppost in a garden wired up with electricity.

I still have memories of the old lamplighter with the flat cap and weathered face at lightening up time and the eerie shadows and yellow glow on wet cobbles on a winters evening, the smell of gas and sizzle of the lamp and the fun and games on a winters evening but most of all the happiness.

Sally James

SOCIETY EVENTS and MEMBERSHIP

Palatine People is published by The Lancashire Society at least twice a year and is dependant on members sending in articles for publication.

Any articles for consideration should be sent to the secretary via email to lancashire.society@gmail.com

We would also welcome any photographs taken by members at any events they attend for possible inclusion in future newsletters or on the website. Please send any photos in jpeg format to Barbara at the above email address.

The photo on the cover of this edition is the old windmill by the canal at Parbold taken by the editor, Mark Dowding. The windmill was built in 1794 and was used until 1850. A mechanical mill was built on the other side of the bridge by H&R Ainscough which was demolished a few years ago to make way for canalside flats. The windmill is still in use today as an art gallery. If you have any photos that you think would make a good cover for future copies of the newsletter, please email them to lancashire.society@gmail.com

To save paper and postage this newsletter is available for download on the website -www.thelancshiresociety.org.uk

The Society has a presence on both Facebook and Youtube.

For Facebook go to www.facebook.com and search for The Lancashire Society in the search box at the top of the page

For Youtube go to www.youtube.com and search for stuffydowding - all the videos uploaded by our publicist are under this heading including Society videos.

Dates for your diary

Sunday 15th May 2011 - The Society is having a day out at Bancroft Mill at Barnoldswick when the 1901 Smith Bros. and Eastwood Steam Engine gets fired up. There will also be an opportunity to see the electric driven loom in action. Members of the Society will be giving a few songs and tunes on this day and Mark will also be filming proceedings for our archive.

Tuesday June 21st 2011 - The Burscough History and Heritage group is having a week of events at the newly restored Burscough Wharf alongside the canal in Burscough Bridge and on Tuesday, the Lancashire Society are hosting a Lancashire Night of traditional songs, poems, music, and clog dancing. More information from Sandra Nolan on fatmanfro@yahoo.co.uk

Sat/Sun June 25th/26th - The Society have got a stall on these days at the Burscough Wharf as part of the Burscough History and Heritage Group's events. We are giving the opportunity for local people to record their memories for us as part of our Heritage Lottery Fund Project "The Noise We Mek!"

Saturday July 9th 2011 - The Society have been invited to host a stall in Croston as part of their Bastille Day celebrations. This is still to be confirmed.

Membership

If you are interested in becoming a member of the Society then please complete the form on the following page and send it to the secretary who will add your details to the database. You will then receive regular updates by email with news of meetings and events.

Thanks to all the contributors for this issue - Sid Calderbank, Johnny Matthews, Bob Dobson, Sally James, Barbara Hindley, and also to Barbara Hindley and Mark Dowding for co-ordinating and editing the articles and the newsletter.

For more information about the Society and its aims then please visit the website:

www.thelancshiresociety.org.uk



MEMBERSHIP FORM

I wish to become a member of the Lancashire Society

My details are as follows:

Name.....

Address.....

.....

email address.....

Contact number.....

*I wish to be contacted by Blind Carbon Copy (BCC) email (no one will see my email address).....

*I am happy for my email address to be seen by other members.....

(* Tick as appropriate)

(Note: Members will generally be contacted by email to avoid postage costs)

I understand that my details will be held on the computer of the secretary of the society and no other computer. This is for administrative purposes only and will not be revealed to a third party.

If I wish to leave the society then I shall inform the secretary who will remove my details from the computer.

Currently membership is free.

Signed.....

Date.....

Please return this form to the secretary who will acknowledge your membership
Electronically - email the details to: Lancashire.society@gmail.com
Or post this form to 11 Church Street, Churchtown, Preston, Lancashire, PR3 0HT

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