

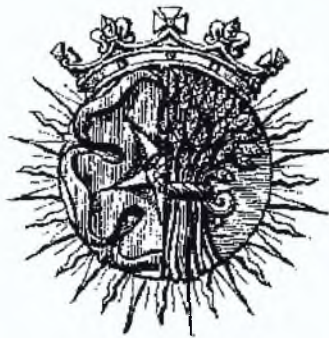


TRANSACTIONS OF THE HISTORIC SOCIETY  
OF LANCASHIRE AND CHESHIRE  
VOLUME 160



TRANSACTIONS  
OF THE  
HISTORIC SOCIETY  
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## Editorial Note

*Transactions* is a refereed journal for full-length articles, shorter research papers and research notes relating to the history (and, where appropriate, the historical archaeology) of the old counties of Lancashire and Cheshire, their predecessors and their successors. Articles submitted to *Transactions* do not have to have been read as part of the Society's lecture programme, nor does delivery of a lecture to the Society guarantee subsequent publication. We welcome contact from researchers and prospective authors and are always happy to discuss with them the potential for submitting appropriate forms of their work to *Transactions*. We are again indebted to our referees for their expert comment on submissions, ensuring the continuing high standard of *Transactions*, as well as to the authors themselves for submitting their work to this journal and, in some cases, responding to the suggestions made by our referees on their first submission.

After six years and six volumes, I am standing down and relinquishing the editorship of *Transactions*. I would like to take this opportunity very warmly to thank all those who have offered help and support during my editorship, including our printers and publishers, all the authors, reviewers and referees, members and Council members of the Society, the two Presidents of the Society who have been in place during my editorship – Janet Hollinshead and Nick White – and especially Andy Gritt as an outstanding reviews editor. It has been an honour and a privilege to be entrusted with the editorship and I wish my successor well.

At the time of going to press that successor has not yet been appointed and confirmed in post, so as the incumbent if outgoing editor my name and contact details appear in the prelims of this volume. I am happy to receive author enquiries and submissions and will ensure that they are forwarded to my successor once he or she is in place.

*Peter Gaunt*

On behalf of the editorial team



## A Cheshire memorial brass of 1657: Adam Martindale and Ephraim Elcock

*C.B. Phillips*

The 350th anniversary of a small brass wall plaque from the sanctuary of Great Budworth parish church (near Northwich, Cheshire) fell in 2007.<sup>1</sup> The plaque commemorates the death of the Reverend Ephraim Elcock, vicar of Great Budworth, on 27 December 1656.<sup>2</sup> The most distinctive aspect of the brass is that it is engraved in Hebrew, Greek, Latin and English. It is worth at this point supplying brief details of Elcock's career not given on the plaque. He had graduated BA in 1641,<sup>3</sup> was 'ministering' to Sir William Brereton's parliamentary army besieging Chester in 1645-46 and was 'pastor' at Runcorn in 1648.<sup>4</sup> He wrote a book in 1651 supporting the Engagement Oath.<sup>5</sup> He was described as

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<sup>1</sup> A parishioner drew the plaque to my attention and the vicar of Great Budworth facilitated access to it. I am grateful for their interest. An early draft of this paper formed a lecture given in May 2007 to the Weaverham Historical Society. I thank Mrs C.M. Nunn for her comments on a draft of this text. I acknowledge below discussions with colleagues at the University of Manchester, but this is the point to state that responsibility for any errors in what follows is mine. My thanks also for their help to the staffs of the archive offices whose collections were used for this article and to the staff of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester.

<sup>2</sup> There are three men called Ephraim Elcock in this paper (see table 1 on p. 17). The principal subject is referred to as Ephraim Elcock, his younger son as Ephraim<sup>2</sup> and Ephraim Elcock's nephew as Ephraim<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>3</sup> J. Foster, *Alumni Oxonienses, 1500-1714* (4 vols, London, 1891-92), II, p. 454.

<sup>4</sup> R.N. Dore, ed., *The letter books of Sir William Brereton* (2 vols, Record Society of Lancashire and Cheshire, 123, 1984, 128, 1990), II, pp. 309, 512-13. I. Carr and I. Atherton, eds, *The civil war in Staffordshire in the spring of 1646: Sir William Brereton's letter book April-May 1646* (Staffordshire Historical Collections, 4<sup>th</sup> series 21, 2007) mention a Richard Elcock but there is nothing to link him to Cheshire. The entry in A. Laurence, *Parliamentary army chaplains, 1642-1651* (Woodbridge, 1990) adds nothing.

<sup>5</sup> E. Elcock, *Animadversions on a book called, A plea for non-scribers* (London, [July 8] 1651) [via Early English Books Online [hereafter EEBO],

vicar at Great Budworth in May 1652 and was, later, in conflict with Quakers there.<sup>6</sup> Elcock's memorial is a triumphal statement of the achievements of a cleric and makes a striking contrast with the harsh providential tones in the well-known autobiographical remains of his three contemporary Cheshire clerics, Edward Burghall,<sup>7</sup> Adam Martindale<sup>8</sup> and Henry Newcome.<sup>9</sup> After analysing the plaque, this paper seeks answers to two questions. First, despite such a learned plaque, how was Elcock's career as vicar of Great Budworth lost from sight until the end of the nineteenth century? Second, what sort of man merited such a multi-lingual memorial?

Thomason Tracts E. 368(2)]. For the general impact of the Engagement Oath see A.H. Woolrych, *Britain in revolution, 1625-1660* (London, 2002), p. 452.

<sup>6</sup> Cheshire Archives and Local Studies [hereafter CALS], Great Budworth parish register, microfilm [hereafter mf.] 377/3, baptisms, 9 May 1652; F[ran]cis H[owgill], *Caines bloody race...* (London, 1657), p. 48 [via EEBO, printed in *Journal of the Chester Archaeological Society*, new series 14 (1908), pp. 31-33].

<sup>7</sup> J. Hall, ed., *Memorials of the civil war in Cheshire and the adjacent counties by Thomas Malbon and Providence improved by Edward Burghall* (Record Society of Lancashire and Cheshire, 19, 1889), in which the providential tone is set on p. 1. On providence in general, see A. Walsham, *Providence in early modern England* (Oxford, 1999) and p. 66 for Burghall. (Incidentally, the text inscribed on Burghall's simple tombstone is given in G. Ormerod, *The history of the County Palatine and City of Chester*, revised edition ed. T. Helsby (3 vols, London, 1882), II, p. 267.

<sup>8</sup> R. Parkinson, ed., *The life of Adam Martindale: written by himself, and now first printed from the original manuscript in the British Museum* (Chetham Society, old series 4, 1845), pp. 120-26 for stern examples of providence, but see also p. 87 for a happy providence about his finances.

<sup>9</sup> R. Parkinson, ed., *The autobiography of Henry Newcome, M.A.* (Chetham Society, old series 26, 1852), pp. 79-80, 87 for stern examples of providence, but compare the happy providence on pp. 74-75. Christopher Hill, *The experience of defeat. Milton and some contemporaries* (London, 1984), p. 209 understandably counted Martindale and Newcome as 'Lancashire presbyterians', but of Martindale's sixteen years of parish ministry thirteen were at Rostherne in Cheshire, while in his ministry Newcome spent more years at Goostrey and at Gawsworth, Cheshire, than at Manchester (C.M. Nunn, 'Adam Martindale' and 'Henry Newcome', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* [hereafter *Oxford DNB*] (60 vols, Oxford, 2004), accessed online, 10 June 2010).

## I

No reference to the erection of the plaque is known, but one may surmise that it was put up before the admission of Elcock's successor as vicar, James Livesey, on 6 November 1657, for Livesey's name does not appear on it.<sup>10</sup> The memorial was described in the chancel at Great Budworth in M. Stephenson's lists of brasses between 1926 and 1938.<sup>11</sup> Thomas Helsby's 1882 edition of Ormerod's history of Cheshire makes no reference to it,<sup>12</sup> nor do the notes of William Cole, who transcribed another plaque in the church in August 1757.<sup>13</sup> Ephraim Elcock's memorial plaque is made of brass, measures 155 x 203 x 2 mm, and weighs 484 gm. Four incised lines provide an outer margin for the text. Within the margin lines, horizontal rules divide the text of the plaque into five panels. From the top (panel 1) down these are engraved in Hebrew, Greek, Latin, English and Latin, though this, panel 5, has been rubbed or polished to illegibility in part. It names 'Hanna' Elcock, Ephraim's 'loving wife', and [the Reverend] Ad[am] Martindale as a 'brother', that is fellow clergyman (Martindale was vicar, or minister, of the neighbouring parish of Rostherne). The function of this panel (allowing for the

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<sup>10</sup> W.A. Shaw, ed., *Minutes of the committee for the relief of plundered ministers and of the trustees for the maintenance of ministers relating to Lancashire and Cheshire, 1643-1660, part II, 1650-1660* (Record Society of Lancashire and Cheshire, 34, 1896), p. 205. Christ Church Archives, Oxford, Book of Evidences, gives the date the College presented him as 27 April 1657 (information from J. Curthoys). W.A. Shaw remains an authority on the church in the 1650s, but for a more recent discussion (albeit for Lancashire) of the state's role in church affairs under the republic, see A.J. Craven, 'Coercion and compromise: Lancashire provincial politics and the creation of the English Republic, c.1648-1653' (Ph.D. thesis, Manchester University, 2004), pp. 175-227. See also C. Durston, 'Puritan rule and the failure of cultural revolution 1645-1660', in C. Durston and J. Eales, eds, *The culture of English puritanism 1560-1700* (Basingstoke, 1996), pp. 210-33.

<sup>11</sup> M. Stephenson, *A list of monumental brasses in the British Isles* (London, 1926) and *Appendix to a list of monumental brasses in the British Isles* (London, 1938), reprinted in one volume (London, 1964), p. 727. R. Richards, *Old Cheshire churches* (London, 1947), p. 173 placed it in the sanctuary. He reported the plaque as for a schoolmaster called Richard Elcock, but this is an error.

<sup>12</sup> Ormerod, *Cheshire*, I, p. 611.

<sup>13</sup> British Library, Additional MS 5830, f. 46.

partly damaged inscription) is to tell the reader that they erected it.<sup>14</sup> It seems unlikely that Mrs Elcock could write the three learned languages used and so the presumption must be that Adam Martindale drew up the plaque. In his autobiography Martindale related how he learnt Latin and Greek, including composition, and how he taught himself enough Hebrew to satisfy the Presbyterian clergy who ordained him.<sup>15</sup> The Hebrew panel 1 is an extract from the bible, but neither the Greek nor Latin texts, though written as metred poetry, are recognisable to modern classical scholars and so could be Martindale's own compositions.<sup>16</sup> Panels 1 to 4 are not to be construed as four separate pieces of text, but rather as interrelated passages which build one on the other. It is even possible that Martindale not only wrote but also engraved the plaque. Some of the lettering is poorly formed and four of the six holes for the screws which secured it to the wall are irregularly positioned. He was the son of an artisan, apprenticed as a carpenter and, after he refused Anglican orders and was ejected from his living in 1662, he helped to eek out his income with a book about brass dials (and also used his mathematics to write books on land-surveying).<sup>17</sup>

The transcript (figure 1) and translation (figure 2) of the plaque shown overleaf are the work of Prof. Philip S. Alexander of the Centre for Jewish Studies at the University of Manchester; his scholarly and friendly interest and enthusiasm have enabled me to explore Elcock's memorial. Line 1 of panel 1 placed the Hebrew as a biblical text and line 2 quotes that text, the second half of Proverbs chapter 14 verse 32, '*ve-hoseh be-moto tzaddiq*'.<sup>18</sup> Martindale did not translate his quotation for the reader, nor say

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<sup>14</sup> I am not aware of any family connection between Elcock and Martindale.

<sup>15</sup> Parkinson, *Martindale*, pp. 12, 14-15, 27, 45.

<sup>16</sup> This is the finding of my colleagues in Classics at the University of Manchester when presented with these passages. I am grateful for their patient and interested help with these texts.

<sup>17</sup> A. Martindale, *The description of a plain instrument...* (London, 1668) [via EEBO].

<sup>18</sup> The quotations in this paragraph are drawn, with permission, from an unpublished lecture by Prof. P.S. Alexander, 'How much Hebrew did the King James Translators know? Christian Hebraism in England in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> Centuries', at the John Rylands University Library of Manchester in October 2007.

from where he took the Hebrew text. Did he translate an English bible, presumably the King James Bible of 1611, into Hebrew, or did Martindale have access to a Hebrew text? The whole verse in the King James Bible is: 'The wicked is driven away in his wickedness: *but the righteous hath hope in his death*'; Professor Alexander found Martindale's choice of Hebrew

...problematic and 'hath hope' is not the obvious translation of *hoseh*, which literally means 'seeks refuge', but what sense would it make to say that 'the righteous seeks refuge in his death'?... The idea that the verb here means 'hope' is found also in the literal Latin interlinear version of the Hebrew in the London Polyglot [Bible published between 1655 and 1657<sup>19</sup>] (*et sperans in sua morte justus*). But the most suggestive comment on the phrase is Rashi's: '*ve-hoseh be-moto tzaddiq*: when he dies he is confident (*batuah hu*) that he shall come to the Garden of Eden (i.e. Paradise).' This is surely the sense intended here, because the Greek [panel 2] which follows talks about the ascent of Elcock's spirit to the heavenly regions.

While Rashi (1040-1105)'s work was known to sixteenth-century English biblical scholars, it is unclear that Martindale's scholarship extended to a knowledge of this '... most influential Jewish Bible commentator of all time'.

The Greek of panel 2 makes Elcock's status as a clergyman, a 'shepherd', clear. If his role as a shepherd relates to 'servants', that is Christians, and the congregation of Great Budworth, in general, the panel is telling us what we might expect. But if 'servants' is used in the Pauline sense of clergyman, then Elcock was a shepherd of the ministers of Christ, with some pre-eminence amongst them.<sup>20</sup> Such pre-eminence might have derived from his military role, but also from his book on the Engagement

<sup>19</sup> B. Walton, ed., *Biblia Sacra Polyglotta*... (6 vols, London, 1655-57).

<sup>20</sup> I am grateful to my colleague at Manchester, Prof. Stephen Todd, for discussion of 'shepherd' in this context. The 1630 brass plaque for the rector of Alderley uses the word 'shepherd' in reference to the people of the parish, see Ormerod, *Cheshire*, III, p. 571, and below note 34.

Figure 1: Transcript of the plaque.

<p>משלי : יד : לב :</p> <p>ססה במותו צדיק :</p>
<p>Πνεῦμα τέλειε θεῶ, γῆ σου τὴν σάρκα δέδωκας,      Ἦρκε δὲ τῶν δούλων ποιμένα ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ ἄνω.      Σὺ μὲν ἔχεις ἮΛΚΟΚ μετ' ἐπουρανίων βασιλεύων      Ζωὴν καὶ δόξαν, δῶρα μεγίστα ΘΕΟΥ.</p>
<p>EPHRAIM (<i>verè Polycarpus et inclytus</i>) ELCOCK  <i>Huic cælos penetrans Ossa reliquit humo.</i>  <i>Obiit mortem 5<sup>o</sup></i> } <i>Cal Jan. Anno</i> { <i>salutis 1656</i>  <i>Inhumatus est 3<sup>o</sup></i> } <i>Ætatis suæ 33</i></p>
<p>The earthly parts of heav'nly Elcock lie      Here underneath. His active soule on high      (Having by learned paines soone split      it's case)      Beholds IEHOVAH in a blissfull place.</p>
<p><i>Sp. . . . gentis hæc posuere</i>  <i>(. . . . .) frater &amp; uxor amans</i>  <i>Ad. Martindale. Hanna Elcock.</i></p>

Figure 2: Translation of the plaque.

<p>Proverbs 14:32 The righteous hath hope in his death</p>
<p>Spirit perfected before God, your flesh to the earth have you given, But CHRIST has raised [you], shepherd of [his] servants, on high, You now possess, ELCOCK, with the celestials reigning, Life and glory, the greatest gifts of GOD.</p>
<p>EPHRAIM (truly a Polycarp and renowned) ELCOCK Entering into the heavens has left his bones to this earth. He died 5 days } before the Calends { of salvation 1656 [and] } of January { [and] was buried 3 days } in the Year { of his Age 33</p>
<p>The earthly parts of heav'nly Elcock lie Here underneath. His active soule on high (Having by learned paines soone split it's case) Beholds IEHOVAH in a blissfull place.</p>
<p>..... of the people (?) these things have placed ( date? ) brother &amp; loving wife Ad[am] Martindale. Hanna Elcock.</p>

controversy where he tried to lead his readers into accepting that the republican Engagement Oath which became so controversial in 1650 and 1651 could be taken by those who adhered to the Solemn League and Covenant and that the republicans who took power after the execution of king Charles were not usurpers.<sup>21</sup>

The most straightforward understanding of the first line of the Latin of panel 3 is the story in John Foxe's famous *Acts and monuments* (often referred to as Foxe's Book of Martyrs) that 'Polycarp alone is so preeminently famous among all men that even the heathen everywhere make mention of him'.<sup>22</sup> Martindale's plaque will ensure the same reputation for Elcock: '*vere Polycarpus et Inchytus* [truly a Polycarp and renowned]'. This construction avoids the need to make comparisons between the martyred St Polycarp and Elcock, who was not a martyr (even if, see panel 4 below, he died of overwork). Alternatively, St Polycarp was known for defending orthodoxy against heresy, so that 'Polycarp' would be a reference to Elcock's struggles with Quakers. He proceeded against a number of them for non-payment of small tithes, an important source of income to the vicar of a benefice,<sup>23</sup> but he is not known to have prayed and debated with his opponents in public, as Martindale debated in 1655, and as St Polycarp was said to have done.<sup>24</sup> Another interpretation is possible, for Elcock's forename glosses the biblical book of Genesis as Ephraim, one of the twelve sons of fruitful Abraham. The text of the plaque may be a Latin gloss of the Greek word *polykarp*, a scholarly reference to fruitfulness, either in numbers of children (Elcock only had

<sup>21</sup> See D. Hirst, *England in conflict, 1603-1660* (London, 1999), pp. 264-65.

<sup>22</sup> J. Pratt, ed., *The acts and monuments of John Foxe* (4<sup>th</sup> edition in 8 vols, London, 1877), I, p. 132. For a discussion of Foxe's scholarship, of his reputation and impact and of editions of his work, see T.S. Freeman, 'John Foxe', *Oxford DNB* (accessed online, 14 November 2010). I benefited from a discussion of Polycarp with my colleague at Manchester Prof. Jeremy Gregory.

<sup>23</sup> For the inappropriate rectory of Great Budworth, and the great tithes, see M.A.E. Green, ed., *Calendar of the proceedings of the committee for compounding with delinquents...1643-1660* (5 vols but with continuous pagination, London, 1889-92), p. 1528.

<sup>24</sup> Pratt, *Acts and monuments*, I, pp. 132, 204; Parkinson, *Martindale*, pp. 114-15.

five) or in scholarly output (one book) or in clerical endeavour.<sup>25</sup> The latter might be the point, a reference both to Elcock's struggles with Quakers and to the enormous size of the parish of Great Budworth. Certainly, Martindale wrote in his autobiography of the almost impossible practicalities facing a cleric in his own geographically large parish of Rostherne and in the even larger neighbouring parish of Great Budworth.<sup>26</sup> Foxe may have played the same scholarly game with the word polycarp when he compared the sixteenth-century bishop John Hooper and St Polycarp in a variety of ways, including the statement that their 'teaching was so pithy and fruitful'. 'Polycarp' meaning fruitfulness avoids a Presbyterian minister likening an Engager to a bishop (St Polycarp)!<sup>27</sup> Did Martindale model this part of his Elcock plaque on Foxe's comparison?<sup>28</sup>

The rest of panel 3 used Roman style, the calends of January, to date the 'renowned' Elcock's death and burial. The year at this time ended on 24 March and began on 25 March, so the calends of January 1656 on the plaque is 1 January 1657 by our style. Thus the Reverend Ephraim Elcock died on 27 December 1656 and was buried on 30 December 1656. The Great Budworth parish register entry, 'Ephraim Elcock de Budworth vicker' buried on 30 December 1656, confirms this.

The English of panel 4 is a longstanding view of death at which the body and soul are separated.<sup>29</sup> The chancel would be the appropriate place to bury an incumbent: 'Here beneath [the plaque]'.<sup>30</sup> The reference to 'learned paines' implies that Elcock

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<sup>25</sup> I am grateful to my colleague at Manchester, Prof. Stephen Todd, for discussion of 'polycarp' in this context.

<sup>26</sup> Parkinson, *Martindale*, p. 122. For the extent of these parishes, see the end map in A.D.M. Phillips and C.B. Phillips, eds, *A new historical atlas of Cheshire* (Chester, 2002), but note that there were some subordinate chapelries.

<sup>27</sup> Pratt, *Acts and monuments*, VI, p. 661.

<sup>28</sup> I can find no reference in Parkinson, *Martindale*, to Foxe's book.

<sup>29</sup> R.A. Houlbrooke, *Death, religion and the family in England, 1480-1750* (Oxford, 1998), pp. 352-53. I benefited from discussing Elcock's plaque with my colleague at Manchester, Dr S. Handley.

<sup>30</sup> As Elcock's successor, James Livesey, stipulated in his will proved in 1682 (CALs, WS). The small size of the plaque did raise the question of whether it had been on a coffin, but small brass plaques were a common memorial for

worked himself to death, something which might fit with the discussions above of fruitfulness and of the large size of Elcock's parish. Martindale, in his later autobiography, wrote a tribute to an anonymous '...young man of very pregnant parts for preaching, prayer, writing, and disputation, and so zealous and painfull in his works that he killed himself with it in the best of his time', but provided clues to the identity of the subject of the tribute, Ephraim Elcock, by referring to the 'animadversions' of a 'neighbour minister'. It seems likely that Martindale so carefully avoided mentioning his fellow minister Ephraim Elcock by name in this tribute because in *Animadversions* Elcock had used '...much bitterness and severe reflection...upon the royal family...'. In the cavalier world of post-Restoration England to associate the young, pre-university pupil Ephraim Elcock with his father's words might have been dangerous for him and for Martindale's own son who was schooling him.<sup>31</sup> In 1651 Elcock had sent Martindale a copy of *Animadversions*<sup>32</sup> and this gift, Martindale's written tribute and his appreciation of the difficulties of working a large parish all indicate a bond between the two clerics and explain why Adam Martindale composed Elcock's memorial plaque.

A reader of the plaque is left to puzzle out, however, exactly what Martindale intended it to accomplish. Small brass plaques were relatively cheap to set up and are said to be an especially common memorial of clergymen.<sup>33</sup> Stephenson's lists have seven clerical brasses in Cheshire dated between 1620 and 1688, of which two pre-dated that at Great Budworth. While Elcock's brass is the only one in four languages, one has some Greek (at Alderley, dated 1630) and another some Hebrew (at

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clergymen (see notes 33 and 34 below) and there seems no reason to doubt its status as a wall plaque.

<sup>31</sup> Parkinson, *Martindale*, pp. 99, 192.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 99.

<sup>33</sup> K.A. Esdaile, *English church monuments 1510 to 1840* (London, 1946), p. 73. Martindale's brass was either very cheap and so did not contain a figure, or very fashionable in not containing a figure, as the form with a figure was dying out in the later seventeenth century (Esdaile, *Church monuments*, p. 74; B. Kemp, *English church monuments* (London, 1980), p. 120).

Bebington, dated 1662).<sup>34</sup> A brass for Elcock was conventional and undemanding on mind and pocket.<sup>35</sup> What made the brass a singular tribute for Ephraim Elcock was Martindale's vocabulary and his use of three learned languages. Many of Elcock's clerical contemporaries were, of course, commemorated by published funeral sermons, or collections of their own sermons printed posthumously.<sup>36</sup> Another, but anonymous, tribute to Elcock in the Great Budworth register of births between February and March 1656/7 lauds his preaching.<sup>37</sup> However, no funeral sermon is extant and Martindale seems not to have published a collection of his colleague's sermons. Was the plaque multi-lingual to signal the breadth of Elcock's scholarship? On top of his school work, as a graduate Elcock would have had Greek and Latin and possibly Hebrew.<sup>38</sup> The teaching of Hebrew was expanding: it was taught in some sixteenth-century schools and by the end of Elizabeth's reign in some Cambridge and Oxford colleges. A schoolmaster at Macclesfield who died in 1630 was credited with a knowledge of six languages, including Hebrew, and when, a generation later,

<sup>34</sup> Stephenson, *List of monumental brasses* (single volume edition of 1964), pp. 68, 727-29. See *ibid.*, pp. 273, 580, 773 for four clerical brasses dating between 1666 and 1689 at churches close to Cheshire in adjacent counties.

<sup>35</sup> Of course, other materials were used for memorials to clergymen at this time. For example, a trawl through Ormerod of the parish churches of Wirral hundred revealed a stone memorial of 1654 at Stoak and a stone flag in the sanctuary at Eastham, dated 1653, while painted wood was used for the incumbent's family between 1672 and 1682 at Backford (Ormerod, *Cheshire*, II, pp. 372, 392, 408).

<sup>36</sup> S. Clarke, *A collection of the lives of ten eminent divines* (London, 1662) [via EEBO]. For one, Dr Robert Harris, a plaque entirely in Latin was erected (W. Durham, *The life and death of Robert Harris* (London, 1660) [via EEBO]). For posthumously published sermons, see, for example, under 'Timothy Armitage', *Oxford DNB* (accessed online, 9 March 2010). Incidentally, Armitage's posthumous son was given a Hebrew name.

<sup>37</sup> '*Fato functus est Dominus Ephraim Elcock: vicarius:/ vix [illegible] pius concionator [contionator] optimus:*'. In Elcock's time *contionator* meant preacher, but in classical Latin it could mean a demagogue. My thanks to Liz Green of CALS for her help in construing this text. It is not clear why the tribute is placed here, on what would have been a blank page at the time of Elcock's death.

<sup>38</sup> I assume Elcock went to school in Chester (see below), where c.1640 two schools sent boys to university (K. Simpson, 'The early history of the King's School, Chester' (M.Ed. dissertation, Manchester University, 1979), p. 234).

Ephraim Elcock's son went to Cambridge in 1677 he had been taught Hebrew in preparation for university.<sup>39</sup> Elcock's one book did give extensive quotations in Latin and Greek as authority for his arguments. Or was Martindale signalling the breadth of his own scholarship by using Hebrew, Latin and Greek?<sup>40</sup> Although, as he noted in his autobiography, Martindale did not go to university, one of the schools he attended did send boys on to university, so he would have been exposed to Greek and Latin of university entrance standard.<sup>41</sup> If Martindale's choice of Hebrew for the plaque means that he did know of the Polyglot Bible, which was in the process of being published when Elcock died, then a multi-lingual plaque may have signalled that he and Elcock were abreast of contemporary biblical scholarship.<sup>42</sup> Most importantly, Martindale's plaque in the chancel of the deceased's parish church was a clear statement of the learned attributes of a clerical profession maintained by the state, mediating between man and God.<sup>43</sup> It embodied the opposite in religious practice and belief in so many ways to the new sect, the Quakers, growing in Cheshire and throughout the country, a sect which Elcock and Martindale combatted.<sup>44</sup>

## II

Plaque notwithstanding, Elcock disappeared into obscurity. When Canon Parkinson published Martindale's *Autobiography* in 1845 he

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<sup>39</sup> G. Lloyd Jones, *The discovery of Hebrew in Tudor England: a third language* (Manchester, 1983), pp. 208-14, 226-36; Ormerod, *Cheshire*, III, p. 753; Parkinson, *Martindale*, pp. 191-92.

<sup>40</sup> Parkinson, *Martindale*, pp. 12, 14-15, 27, 49.

<sup>41</sup> Winnick School, see P.J. Wallis, 'A preliminary register of old schools in Lancashire and Cheshire', *Transactions of the Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire*, 120 (1968).

<sup>42</sup> It seems unlikely that Martindale was deliberately using a Hebrew language text to refer to Cromwell's controversial decision in 1656 to allow Jews to live openly in England again (Woolrych, *Britain in revolution*, pp. 638-40).

<sup>43</sup> Hill, *Experience of defeat*, pp. 217-18, emphasised the conservatism of Martindale (and Newcome) in matters of church organisation and funding.

<sup>44</sup> Parkinson, *Martindale*, pp. 115-17. Martindale also struggled against the preaching of 'gifted bretheren', associates of the Congregationalist Mr Samuel Eaton (for example, Parkinson, *Martindale*, pp. 106-7, 110-12).

could not identify Martindale's anonymous references to Elcock.<sup>45</sup> Ormerod had not listed him as vicar of Great Budworth in his 1819 history of Cheshire (the 1882 edition also omitted him).<sup>46</sup> William Urwick writing in 1864 did not know of him at Great Budworth,<sup>47</sup> nor in the 1890s did W.A. Shaw, who had in other ways elaborated Urwick's information.<sup>48</sup> At Great Budworth his name was re-discovered in 1898 and included in an illuminated manuscript list of vicars,<sup>49</sup> whence presumably it passed in 1947 into Richards, *Old Cheshire churches*.<sup>50</sup> But even in 1980 the Victoria County History of Cheshire thought that John Ley, who had become vicar of Great Budworth in 1616, had been succeeded by James Livesey in 1657.<sup>51</sup>

Ehpraim Elcock's appointment at Great Budworth followed John Ley's less than straightforward departure from the living. Ley had decided to take the Cheshire living of Astbury, which had a much higher income than Great Budworth, only to find that the parishioners would not have him. After this disappointment he was said to be returning to Great Budworth in September 1649 and was still getting an augmentation to that

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<sup>45</sup> Parkinson, *Martindale*, p. 122.

<sup>46</sup> Which is surprising given the existence of the plaque and also because his genealogy of the Elcock family of Stockport and Poole, Cheshire, signalled an extension of the pedigree in British Library, Harleian MS 2161, which refers to Elcock's position at Great Budworth.

<sup>47</sup> W. Urwick, *Historical sketches of nonconformity in the county palatine of Chester* (London, 1864), p. 401.

<sup>48</sup> W.A. Shaw, *Minutes of the Manchester Presbyterian Classis, 1646-1660* (3 vols but with continuous pagination, Chetham Society, new series 20, 1890, 22 and 24, 1891); and *Minutes of the committee for the relief of plundered ministers and of the trustees for the maintenance of ministers relating to Lancashire and Cheshire, 1643-1660, part I, 1643-1654* (Record Society of Lancashire and Cheshire, 28, 1893), and *part II, 1650-1660*.

<sup>49</sup> Arley Hall MSS, Arley, near Northwich, Cheshire, Illuminated scroll, and Large Box 4, no. 26, letter of Holme to Egerton-Warburton, 25 August 1898. I am grateful to Robert Steele of Great Budworth who alerted me to this letter and to Charles Foster of Arley who showed it to me.

<sup>50</sup> Richards, *Old Cheshire churches*, p. 175.

<sup>51</sup> B.E. Harris, ed., *The Victoria history of the county of Chester, volume III* (Oxford, 1980), p. 41.

living in December 1649. He took up a living in Berkshire in April 1650.<sup>52</sup>

Christ Church, Oxford, which held the advowson, recorded its appointments of Ley and of Livesey, but Elcock's name is not to be found in its lease books and appointments register, which is puzzling. In the view of the college's archivist 'it seems possible, if not likely, that this register [Book of Evidences], compiled in about 1667, deliberately excluded anyone presented to a [Christ Church] living during the more active years of the Commonwealth'.<sup>53</sup> Elcock's appointment may be concealed by collegiate anxiety in the Clarendon Code years after the Restoration.<sup>54</sup> But his absence from the college records also raises the possibility that the college did not appoint him and that he was instead called by the parish. The living was still vacant in December 1650, when the Presbyterian Manchester Classis wrote to the parish to see if it might be interested in Arthur Francis as minister.<sup>55</sup> The Classis singled out 'Mr Marbury [Thomas Marbury of Marbury, esquire]' as the leading parishioner. Not only was he a parliamentarian committee man in Cheshire and a justice of the peace, but his influence in Great Budworth was currently untrammelled by the other prominent gentry of the parish, for the Leicester of Tabley family was royalist and the estate of the Warburton of Arley family was in the hands of daughters. Thus later, in 1653, it was Marbury alone whose signature authenticated the election of Edward Massie as the 'register' [parish clerk] of

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<sup>52</sup> R.L. Greaves, 'John Ley', *Oxford DNB* (accessed online, 10 March 2010). In Bishop Gastrell's time, c.1720, the Astbury living was worth about £400 per annum and Great Budworth about £130 per annum (F.R. Raines, ed., *Notitia Cestriensis, volume I* (Chetham Society, old series 8, 1845), pp. 234, 316).

<sup>53</sup> By email from Judith Curthoys, archivist, Christ Church, Oxford, 26 September 2008, and information 11 October 2010.

<sup>54</sup> We should perhaps pay tribute to Livesey and his parishioners who kept Elcock's plaque secure at Great Budworth in these years of persecution. Livesey and the plaque's author, Martindale, maintained contact after 1662 (S.J. Guscott, 'James Livesey', *Oxford DNB* (accessed online, 8 June 2010).

<sup>55</sup> Shaw, *Manchester Classis*, II, pp. 151-52.

Great Budworth.<sup>56</sup> Marbury's career had shown few signs of political radicalism, so the Classis could have readily approached him. At whatever date Elcock secured the living,<sup>57</sup> it was unlikely that Marbury, as a serving justice of the peace under the republic, would hinder the appointment of a pro-Engagement cleric.<sup>58</sup> If it is possible that Elcock was proposed by Ley, a pre-war pluralist who had also been on the staff of Chester cathedral in the 1630s and 1640s and thus might have known of Elcock, there is no evidence for it,<sup>59</sup> and the exact mechanism of Elcock's appointment is obscure.

If Elcock's death in 1656 did bring about his memorial plaque, it also meant that he was not included in the most important record of nonconformist persecution, Edmund Calamy's list of silenced ministers.<sup>60</sup> There are, of course, a number of clergy from the republic and the Protectorate similarly forgotten. Those appointed in that time who were ejected in 1662 appeared in Calamy, whose list is the starting point for studies of the interregnum clerics. But those like Elcock who died before 1662 were not included in Calamy.

It is, finally, worth sifting through the work on Great Budworth of the old historian of nonconformist Cheshire, W. Urwick, and of W.A. Shaw. If we follow Elcock's tracks in Urwick we are told that he signed the 1648 Attestation of Cheshire Presbyterian clergy as 'pastor' of Runcorn, which probably means

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<sup>56</sup> Ormerod, *Cheshire*, I, pp. 574, 623; CALS, Great Budworth parish register, mf. 377/3, 12 November 1653. Marbury signed second behind Sir Peter Leicester when Massie's successor was elected in January 1662/3.

<sup>57</sup> Elcock's book, *Animadversions...*, was published on 8 July 1651, and Martindale's autobiography mentioned that the author gave him a copy of the book, but the chronology of the autobiography at this point is too vague to conclude that in 1651 Elcock was at Great Budworth (Parkinson, *Martindale*, p. 99).

<sup>58</sup> J.S. Morrill, *Cheshire 1630-1660: county government and society during the English revolution* (London, 1974), pp. 83, 187, 258 n. 1; Ormerod, *Cheshire*, I, p. 637.

<sup>59</sup> Nor of any influence of the Presbyterian Reverend Nathaniel Lancaster who also may have known of Elcock's previous career, see notes 77 and 81 below.

<sup>60</sup> Now best approached through A.G. Matthews, *Calamy revised* (Oxford, 1934).

that he was the incumbent there.<sup>61</sup> Urwick states that Elcock did not hold Runcorn at the Restoration (he was, of course, dead) but offers no more precision about his departure from there.<sup>62</sup> By May 1651 the Runcorn congregation was endeavouring to get a Mr Hall ordained to assist a Mr Crompton,<sup>63</sup> so we may assume that Elcock had gone. Urwick suggested that John Hulme and Arthur Francis followed Ley as vicars of Great Budworth. Hulme certainly signed the Cheshire Attestation of 1648 as of Great Budworth (though John Ley, as we have seen above, held the living until 1650).<sup>64</sup> However, Shaw showed that Hulme served as Ley's curate and was minister of Witton by 1650.<sup>65</sup> Shaw concluded that Urwick's placing of Francis at Great Budworth was a mistake. Though the name of Francis was mentioned in connection with the living in 1650, Shaw demonstrated that Francis was not ordained as a Presbyterian minister until 10 December 1651 and spent his time at Stretford until after Elcock's known presence at Budworth in May 1652.<sup>66</sup>

### III

What do we know about Ephraim Elcock and his background: how typical, or atypical, of mid seventeenth-century clergymen was he, and how did he fit into contemporary society? Much of the family history used in answering these questions comes from an undated pedigree in the papers of the Chester heraldic family of Holme,<sup>67</sup> and is perhaps to be dated to about 1664.<sup>68</sup> It forms

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<sup>61</sup> Runcorn parish register for this period, in CALS, is too damaged to be consulted.

<sup>62</sup> Urwick, *Nonconformity*, p. 456.

<sup>63</sup> Shaw, *Manchester Classis*, III, p. 430.

<sup>64</sup> Urwick, *Nonconformity*, p. 401; Matthews, *Calamy revised*, pp. 553-54.

<sup>65</sup> Shaw, *Plundered ministers*, I, p. 213. The page signatures in Great Budworth parish register (CALS, mf. 377/3) show a John Hulme as curate in April 1638. It is not clear that the John Hulme of 1638 was the Hulme of 1648 or 1650. The Witton register has no entries for 1647-53 (CALS, Witton parish register, mf. 55/1).

<sup>66</sup> Shaw, *Manchester Classis*, II, pp. 150-52, 167-69, 170, 172, 182, 427.

<sup>67</sup> British Library, Harleian MS 2161, f. 47v. For the Holme family, see under 'Randle Holme' in *Oxford DNB*.

<sup>68</sup> See table 1, November 1664 saw the death of Mary Elcock, wife of Samuel. The pedigree does not refer to Samuel's second marriage, c. 1667.



the basis of table 1, both verified and extended by information from parish registers, marriage bonds, probate records and Chester corporation records.<sup>69</sup> On matriculation at Oxford in 1638 the young Ephraim Elcock described himself as the son of a 'pleb[ician]', a vague term used in Oxford university and college records. In Elcock's case the term was apposite, for he was the eldest surviving son of a Chester tailor, John Elcock, a man of sufficient substance in his probate inventory of 1648 to suggest that merchant tailor might be a better description.<sup>70</sup> The Holme pedigree of the Elcocks tried to establish a link between John and a Cheshire gentry family, Elcock of White Poole and Stockport.<sup>71</sup> The attempt at a link must be judged unsuccessful as it seems to have squeezed generations into an unlikely timescale;<sup>72</sup> equally, the idea that John Elcock was himself a younger son of the family of Poole fails, for John of Chester, who was having children in 1617, was too old to fit on the Poole pedigree.<sup>73</sup> Son of a gentry younger son or not, Ephraim would have easily fitted in amongst those of the Cheshire clergy of 1642 whose social origins can be established: 37 per cent were sons of plebeian origin, while sons

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<sup>69</sup> There are Elcocks mentioned in these records who do not appear in the Harleian pedigree or table 1, including children who died as infants (and see John Elcock, below note 88, and Jane Buckley, below note 97). Ephraim's father John Elcock mentioned a married daughter, Hannah, in his will (CALs, probate records, WS, 1648) but she did not appear in the Harleian pedigree. I read the will to mean that Hannah was his child, but he might, of course, have been referring to his daughter-in-law Hannah, wife of Ephraim Elcock.

<sup>70</sup> CALs, probate records, WS, John Elcock, 1648.

<sup>71</sup> British Library, Harleian MS 2161, f. 47v.

<sup>72</sup> Ormerod, *Cheshire*, III, p. 353, and British Library, Harleian MS 2161, f. 47v. Francis Elcock of Poole, son and heir of Alexander, was born about 1596 and had six siblings. His mother thus probably died sometime between 1602 and 1609, by when his father had remarried. The eldest son of this second marriage was shown in Harleian MS 2161 as Ephraim Elcock's grandfather, but Ephraim was born in 1624 and his father, John, was having children in 1617, so there is no room for Ephraim's father in this pedigree, never mind a grandfather.

<sup>73</sup> Ormerod, *Cheshire*, III, p. 353. There were Elcocks in Nantwich, but I have not been able to find a link.

of the more precisely described clergymen (29 per cent) and of gentlemen (21 per cent) made up the other large social groups.<sup>74</sup>

Ephraim Elcock was baptised in July 1624 in St Michael's church in Chester,<sup>75</sup> was doubtless schooled in the city<sup>76</sup> and was brought up in a city and parish with strong puritan inclinations.<sup>77</sup> He went to the puritan-leaning Brasenose College Oxford, at the tender age of thirteen when he matriculated in May 1638 and graduated BA on 24 July 1641. John Elcock must have recognised his eldest son's intellectual capacity and by sending him to school and university opened to him one of the classic routes of Tudor and Stuart upward social mobility. Another Cheshire townsman, George Newton of Stockport, expressed the quandaries involved in such an educational pathway when he bequeathed money in 1683 to support his grandchild '...for the keepinge of him to the Skoole, to make him fitt for university or else bynd him prentice...but my desire is to make him a Scollere and lead him up in lerning to fitt him either for A minister or a lawyer; whethe it please God'.<sup>78</sup> When Sir Thomas Smith, describing England in the 1560s, explained how gentlemen were made, he wrote

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<sup>74</sup> M.J. Crossley Evans, 'The Anglican and nonconformist clergy of Cheshire and Norfolk, 1630-1672' (Ph.D. thesis, Bristol University, 1989), p. 75; I.M. Green, 'Career prospects and clerical conformity in early Stuart England', *Past and Present*, 90 (1981), p. 76 (based on the data in A.G. Matthews, *Walker revised* (Oxford, 1948) for Cheshire royalist clergy who were sequestered) puts the plebeian figure at 50 per cent. See also R. O'Day, *The English clergy* (Leicester, 1979), pp. 161-63. Crossley Evans, 'Anglican and nonconformist clergy', p. 48 counted 169 livings in Cheshire in 1642.

<sup>75</sup> CALS, Chester St Michael's parish register, mf. 125/2, baptisms between 5 and 24 July 1624.

<sup>76</sup> See note 38 above.

<sup>77</sup> The curate of St Michael's between 1631 and 1638 was the renowned puritan the Reverend Nathaniel Lancaster (R.C. Richardson, 'Nathaniel Lancaster', *Oxford DNB*, accessed online, 13 March 2010); C.P. Lewis and A.T. Thacker, eds, *The Victoria history of the county of Chester, volume V, part 1* (Woodbridge, 2003), pp. 110-12. See also A.M. Johnson, 'Politics in Chester during the civil war and interregnum, 1642-1662', in P. Clark and P. Slack, eds, *Crisis and order in English towns, 1500-1700* (London, 1972), p. 204, who plays down the extent of puritanism in the city before 1642.

<sup>78</sup> CALS, probate records, WS, George Newton, proved 1683. Green, 'Career prospects', pp. 78-79 discusses spiritual and social motives for entering the church.

For whosoever studieth the lawes of the realme, who studieth in the universities, who professeth liberall sciences and to be shorte, who can live idly and without manual labour, and will beare the port charge and countenance of a gentleman, he shall be called master for that is the title which men give to Esquires and other gentleman and shall be taken for a gentleman.<sup>79</sup>

Or, as one Leicestershire clergyman later wrote, in 1683, 'I have no pedigree or coat of arms...I am a Master of Arts; and that makes me a gentleman...'.<sup>80</sup> In fact, clergymen with only a BA degree were called 'M[iste]r'. After graduation, Ephraim next appeared as a minister with the parliamentary army besieging Chester,<sup>81</sup> though the date of his ordination is unknown, and he was a Presbyterian clergyman at Runcorn in 1648. Great Budworth was one of the more wealthy Cheshire livings and though by no means the richest incumbency in the county it was worth more than Runcorn,<sup>82</sup> and it brought Elcock significant status and, no doubt, comfort for his growing family. He had married, date unknown, Hannah, daughter of Hugh Burroughes, a Presbyterian cleric who had replaced the ejected royalist rector of Christleton (where Sir William Brereton's headquarters was during the siege of Chester).<sup>83</sup> The Elcocks had four boys and a daughter, of whom little is known beyond the second son, also called

<sup>79</sup> T. Smith, *De republica Anglorum*, ed. L. Alston (Cambridge, 1906), p. 39.

<sup>80</sup> Quoted in J.H. Pruett, *The parish clergy under the later Stuarts* (Urbana, USA, 1978), p. 42.

<sup>81</sup> The curate of St Michael's Chester between 1631 and 1638, who may thus have known of Elcock, was Nanthaniel Lancaster, chaplain to the parliamentary army besieging Chester, but if he had any influence in the appointment of Elcock in that army, neither Brereton's letter books nor Lancaster's own accounts of the campaign mention it (N. Lancaster, *A True relation of a great victory* (London, 1645); and *Sir William Brereton's letter... set forth by Nathanael Lancaster, chaplein to the Cheshire forces* (London, 1645/6) [both via EEBO]).

<sup>82</sup> At least in Bishop Gastrell's time, c.1720 (Raines, *Notitia*, I, pp. 316, 349 and *passim*). I have excluded Chester parishes and their chapelries from my comparisons. Ironically, Elcock at Great Budworth probably received much more than his friend Martindale did at Rostherne, *ibid.*, I, p. 338.

<sup>83</sup> British Library, Harleian MS 2161, f. 47v; Matthews, *Walker revised*, p. 92.

Ephraim<sup>2</sup>.<sup>84</sup> Hannah is lost from sight after her husband's death in 1656, but may be the Mrs Hannah Elcock listed as poor in Chester corporation tax records and who appeared in the hearth tax record for St Bridget's ward in 1664.<sup>85</sup> Ephraim Elcock's early death did not spell the end of the university educated, socially mobile Elcock family, for Ephraim<sup>2</sup> was schooled by Adam Martindale's son, entered Cambridge University in 1677 and graduated BA in 1680. He had been ordained deacon in 1676 and served as curate of Thornton le Moors (Cheshire) under the dean of Chester, Dr James Ardern, from that year until 1684, after which he drops out of sight, though a 'Mr Elcock, clerk', was mentioned in Ardern's probate accounts of 1691.<sup>86</sup>

Having sent off Ephraim to climb the social ladder, the cost of his education (not more than £30 a year at university,<sup>87</sup> rather less at school) was a charge on the family business and offered nothing to his siblings. John Elcock kept his second son Samuel (and possibly his youngest son John<sup>88</sup>) at home to

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<sup>84</sup> British Library, Harleian MS 2161, f. 47v. The baptism of Ephraim and the birth of Benjamin are recorded in CALS, Great Budworth parish register, mf. 377/3, 9 May 1652 and 13 April 1654.

<sup>85</sup> CALS, Chester Corporation MSS, Treasurers' records, Z/ CAS/1/1. She is not listed in the hearth tax return for Great Budworth in 1664 (The National Archives, Exchequer, lay subsidy rolls, E 179/86/145, on microfilm), but is in St Bridget's ward in the Chester hearth tax (F.C. Beazley, 'Hearth tax returns for the city of Chester 1664-5', in *Miscellanies relating to Lancashire and Cheshire, volume V* (Record Society of Lancashire and Cheshire, 52, 1906), p. 11). She had been granted administration of his estate on 10 March 1656/7, The National Archives, Prerogative Court of Canterbury, grants of administration, PROB 6/33, f. 46v (new pagination). Mrs Pat Cox tracked this down for me.

<sup>86</sup> Parkinson, *Martindale*, p. 192; J. and J.A. Venn, *Alumni Cantabrigienses, part 1: from the earliest times to 1751* (4 vols, Cambridge, 1922-27), II, p. 92; <http://www.theclergydatabase.org.uk/isp/search/index.isp>, *sub nomine*; CALS, Diocese of Chester, bishops' transcripts, EDB 199, Thornton le Moors, mf. 264/53; CALS, probate records, WS, James Ardern, 1691. I have been unable to verify Martindale's statement that he was a schoolmaster at Tarvin before becoming a curate.

<sup>87</sup> R. O'Day, *Education and society 1500-1800* (Harlow, 1982), p. 198.

<sup>88</sup> John Elcock is mentioned in his father's will, but not in the pedigree in the Holme papers in British Library, Harleian MS 2161. There are references from the 1690s to the family of a John Elcock in St Martin's parish (see P.H. Lawson, ed., *Marriage bonds of the ancient archdeaconry of Chester, 1711-*

contribute through apprenticeship to the family business. Samuel Elcock was made a freeman of Chester in 1648.<sup>89</sup> The date of Samuel's marriage to Mary, daughter of the merchant and prominent city politician Alderman William Ince, is unknown, but it was an advantageous alliance and Ince remembered his deceased daughter's Elcock children in his will of January 1678/9.<sup>90</sup> Samuel, representing the element of social stability in John Elcock's family alongside the upward mobility planned for Ephraim, had some modest success, changing occupation to a more certain role as a trader rather than artisan by becoming a mercer and joining the Common Council, the lowest level of the corporation of Chester, in 1667, before his death in 1669.<sup>91</sup> His position as a Common Council member earned Samuel Elcock the coveted title 'Mr', a title still remembered in 1690 when one of his unmarried girls was buried as 'a daughter of Mr Samuel Elcock'<sup>92</sup> and the same reward as Ephraim's graduate qualification and clerical career had earned. Samuel's children by his first wife reflected his success. When his daughter Mary married the Chester apothecary John Whitby in 1678, she was moving into a trade of similar standing to her father's occupation.<sup>93</sup> Samuel's eldest surviving son, William, born in 1647, followed his father into the gild of mercers and ironmongers (a trader in iron and iron goods), but was perhaps slow in becoming free of Chester in 1673/4.<sup>94</sup> He married later that year and his children figure in the 1680s and 1690s in St

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1715 (Record Society of Lancashire and Cheshire, 97, 1942), p. 100), or to the John Elcock of Chester, combmaker, who took an apprentice in 1727 (CALs, Chester Corporation MSS, Assembly books, Z/ M/ AB/2, f. 41v).

<sup>89</sup> J.H.E. Bennett, ed., *The rolls of the freemen of the city of Chester, part 1, 1392-1700* (Record Society of Lancashire and Cheshire, 51, 1906), p. 129.

<sup>90</sup> Lewis and Thacker, *History of the county of Chester, volume V, part 1*, pp. 125, 134; CALs, probate records, WS, William Ince, 1678.

<sup>91</sup> CALs, Chester Corporation MSS, Assembly books, Z/ M/ AB/2, ff. 159v, 164v; CALs, Chester St Michael's parish register, mf. 125/2, 31 August 1669.

<sup>92</sup> CALs, Chester St Michael's parish register, mf. 125/2, 19 February 1689/90.

<sup>93</sup> W.F. Irvine, ed., *Marriage licences granted within the archdeaconry of Chester, 1667-1680* (Record Society of Lancashire and Cheshire, 69, 1914), p. 220; CALs, probate records, WC, Ephraim Elcock, 17 June 1690.

<sup>94</sup> Bennett, *Rolls of the freemen of Chester*, p. 163. William appears in membership lists in the mercers and ironmongers gild book (CALs, Z/ G16/6582/3) from 1674 to 1688.

Michael's parish register, though he died in 1688 and his children seem to have died before establishing a business or marrying.<sup>95</sup> Samuel's second surviving son, Ephraim<sup>3</sup>, followed his father as a mercer and became a freeman of Chester in 1685; he enjoyed some trading substance, but died unmarried and intestate in 1690<sup>96</sup> and with him ended the Elcock line in Chester.<sup>97</sup> Historians count three generations of one family (John, Samuel and William) in business in early modern towns a mark of success.<sup>98</sup>

When he graduated BA in 1641 Ephraim Elcock was not unlike other mid seventeenth-century students with an interest in the church: two-thirds of Cheshire clerics were graduates in

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<sup>95</sup> Baptised 15 September 1647, L.M. Farrall, ed., *The parish register of the Holy and Undivided Trinity in the city of Chester* (Chester, 1914), p. 43. Married 21 December 1674; buried 8 June 1688; burials of children 19 October 1684, 4 January 1685/6, 17 May 1688 (CALs, mf. 125/2); see also St Michael's bishops' transcripts (CALs, mf. 213/75), burial 14 July 1699. I do not link William (died 1688) to the William Elcock, gentleman, probably of Poole, who became free of the city gratis on 12 October 1748 (CALs, Chester Corporation MSS, Assembly books, Z/ M/ AB/4, f. 126v), see Ormerod, *Cheshire*, III, p. 353, and J. Addy and P. McNiven, eds, *The diary of Henry Prescott, LL.B., deputy registrar of Chester diocese, volume II* (Record Society of Lancashire and Cheshire, 132, 1994), p. 608.

<sup>96</sup> Bennett, *Rolls of the freemen of Chester*, p. 176; CALs, probate records, WC and WS, Ephraim Elcock, 17 June 1690.

<sup>97</sup> A note of caution is necessary here, for both the St Michael's parish register and its bishops' transcripts have gaps. However, there are no Elcocks wealthy enough to pay tax in the surviving damaged and incomplete tax assessments for the city of 1698 and 1699 (CALs, Chester Corporation MSS, Z/ CAS/1) and of 1704 (Z/ CAS/2). A daughter of Samuel Elcock, name illegible, by his second wife Jane, died unmarried on 19 February 1689/90, and Anne Elcock, baptised 21 April 1669, died before 27 March 1701 (CALs, probate records, WS, Ann Elcock, spinster, 1700). Jane Elcock, widow, remarried in 1684 William Buckley of Chester, tanner (W.F. Irvine, ed., *Marriage licences granted within the archdeaconry of Chester, 1680-1691* (Record Society of Lancashire and Cheshire, 73, 1918), p. 61; CALs, probate records, WS, Jane Buckley, 1699; and see WS, Ann Elcock, 1700).

<sup>98</sup> W.G. Hoskins, 'The Elizabethan merchants of Exeter', in S.T. Bindoff, J. Hurstfield and C.H. Williams, eds, *Elizabethan government and society: essays presented to Sir John Neale* (London, 1961), pp. 168, 186 began this view. For examples of dynastic families in Chester, see Lewis and Thacker, *History of the county of Chester, volume V, part 1*, p. 99.

1642.<sup>99</sup> He would easily have fitted in amongst the county's clergy of 1642 whose social origins can be established. If he could be accepted for ordination then his career would take off.<sup>100</sup> It might have been better for him to have taken a master's degree, which would have given him more theological training and would have allowed him to be a pluralist.<sup>101</sup> Whether a cost factor or the onset of civil war prevented this is unknown. The civil war did completely and quickly change the parameters of many a clerical career: by the time Elcock was 'pastor' at Runcorn in 1648, numbers of Cheshire clergy who had supported the king had been put out of their benefices, creating vacancies for those of the correct ideology, that was, supporters of parliament.<sup>102</sup> M.J. Crossley Evans has calculated that 63 per cent of the 59 clergy of Presbyterian inclination who signed the Attestation of Cheshire ministers in 1648 were not in their benefice in 1642 and were mostly young men.<sup>103</sup> Elcock no doubt benefited from this situation (even if there is no evidence as to how or exactly when he obtained the benefice of Great Budworth).<sup>104</sup> Ephraim Elcock went on, as had the clerical fathers of many of the Cheshire clergy of 1642, to contribute a son to the increasingly professional ranks of the English clergy after the civil war.<sup>105</sup>

Unlike Martindale and Newcome, Elcock did not, of course, have to decide whether to conform to the Church of England in 1662. But his son Ephraim<sup>2</sup> did conform, like Henry Newcome's son. Clergyman's sons made up proportionately fewer (19 per cent in 1667) of the holders of Cheshire benefices around

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<sup>99</sup> Crossley Evans, 'Clergy of Cheshire', p. 89; O'Day, *English clergy*, pp. 136, 142.

<sup>100</sup> O'Day, *English clergy*, p. 142. J. Maltby, *Prayer book and people in Elizabethan and early Stuart England* (Cambridge, 1998) gives considerable detail on some Cheshire clergy and parishes just before the war.

<sup>101</sup> Pruet, *Parish clergy*, pp. 42-43.

<sup>102</sup> The autobiographies of Martindale and Newcome (above, notes 8 and 9) are sources for clergy and parish life in the 1640s and 1650s, and see also C.M. Nunn, 'The clergy and the parish in south-east Cheshire, 1646-1662' (M.Phil. thesis, Manchester University, 1998).

<sup>103</sup> Crossley Evans, 'Clergy of Cheshire', pp. 190-91. Green, 'Career prospects', especially p. 97, assesses the career prospects of pre-war clergy.

<sup>104</sup> See section II above.

<sup>105</sup> O'Day, *Education and society*, pp. 100-1, 147.

the time when Ephraim<sup>2</sup> Elcock was ordained in 1676, though nationally this proportion was higher at 23 per cent.<sup>106</sup> Although the young Ephraim<sup>2</sup> Elcock was supported by a 'learned relation' according to Martindale,<sup>107</sup> without the degree of MA his chances of advancing beyond the path which he seems to have followed after graduation, as an assistant curate, were reduced.<sup>108</sup> Ephraim<sup>2</sup> Elcock's main patron seems to have been the Reverend James Arderne, dean of Chester, who died in 1691, but the Arderne pedigree in Ormerod does not suggest kinship. In the present state of knowledge Ephraim<sup>2</sup> fades into obscurity.

## IV

Ephraim Elcock's compact memorial plaque offers a number of insights into the 1650s. When Martindale composed it, Oliver Cromwell was still Lord Protector and the restoration of Charles II was a fantasy in the minds of a few royalist conspirators. A memorial was an obvious step for the parish to take to remember their deceased vicar. There was no need for the anonymity born of fear of persecution which characterises Martindale's autobiography (less so in Newcome's autobiography), and the confident tone of 'Elcock...beholds Jehovah in a blissful place' could sit safely on the chancel wall. Neither was there any need to adduce a dismal providence to account for Elcock's death; he was a shepherd of the Lord's own. Burghall's, Martindale's and Newcome's manuscript records of defeat have for long characterised our view of Cheshire in the 1650s; Martindale's memorial for Ephraim Elcock provides a positive balance from the time of the Protectorate.

There was enough English on the plaque for the average literate parishioner to know its purpose, but the biblical and classical languages were comprehensible only to those, mostly

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<sup>106</sup> Crossley Evans, 'Clergy of Cheshire', p. 75. J. Gregory, *Restoration, reformation and reform, 1660-1828* (Oxford, 2000), p. 73.

<sup>107</sup> Parkinson, *Martindale*, p. 192. For Elcock candidates as the 'learned relation', see Venn and Venn, *Alumni Cantabrigienses*, II, p. 92; and Foster, *Alumni Oxonienses*, II, p. 454.

<sup>108</sup> Pruett, *Parish clergy*, pp. 42-43, 54-55. See also Gregory, *Restoration, reformation and reform*, pp. 85-86.

clergy and gentry, who could read them.<sup>109</sup> However, the presence alone of such strange writing may have impressed those who lacked that education. The learning evinced in the plaque was a tribute to Elcock (and by extension to Martindale).<sup>110</sup> If unordained sectarians in the 1650s could speak the word of God in English, then ancient languages which gave access to documents from close to the time of Christ were not needed. But the scholarship expressed on the plaque confronted those who challenged an ordained ministry placed between man and God, a ministry educated to construe and teach from the early texts of Christianity.

Elcock (and Martindale) came from humble social origins, the clergy of the mid seventeenth century was not an exclusive establishment and their careers show that given faith and good intellect men could join its ranks. Ironically, the entry of Ephraim's son, Ephraim<sup>2</sup>, into the church was part of a trend which contributed to the development of a clerical caste and a decline in the proportion of 'plebeian' entrants into the church. The success of Ephraim Elcock's brother Samuel as a Common Councilman of Chester makes the point that a church career was not the only route to social and economic standing. Not every clergyman, or townsman, was upwardly mobile, but Elcock's rise up the social structure to 'Mr Ephraim Elcock' was by no means untypical of his time. Despite the plaque's line 'truly a polycarp and renowned' ('vere Polycarpus et inclytus'), the well educated and upwardly mobile Ephraim Elcock languished in a politically imposed obscurity from which he only began to be rescued some 250 years after his death. The care being taken of his memorial plaque in Great Budworth church is a further stage in that re-discovery.

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<sup>109</sup> A.J. Fletcher, *Gender, sex and subordination in England, 1500-1800* (New Haven and London, 1995), pp. 301-4.

<sup>110</sup> Richards, *Old Cheshire churches*, p. 287 says that there is no monument to Martindale in his parish church of Rostherne, but then Martindale did not die until 1686.

## Neston and Parkgate: their links to the slave trade in the mid to late eighteenth century<sup>1</sup>

*Anthony Annakin-Smith*

The story of Parkgate as a major port for passengers and goods between England and Ireland in the eighteenth century has been well recorded.<sup>2</sup> The village stands on the Dee estuary, a mile from Neston, itself a former port. The Neston area was by far the largest population centre on the Wirral in the eighteenth century,<sup>3</sup> benefiting from its market town status and constant stream of shipping-related visitors. This was the century in which Liverpool came to dominate the slave trade, but vessels based at Parkgate were never to participate directly – the relatively shallow waters and shifting sands sometimes led commentators to cast doubt on the area's ability to handle vessels of even modest size in the eighteenth century (an issue which would eventually prove Parkgate's undoing),<sup>4</sup> let alone the large vessels more typical of the slave trade. Further, the Cheshire port simply could not compete with the rapidly evolving infrastructure supporting the trade in Liverpool. But, for as long as the twin settlements of Parkgate and Neston remained an important maritime centre, it would be surprising if they did not have *some* connections with the slaving

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<sup>1</sup> The author would like to thank the following for their help with this article: Clare Johnson, Susan Chambers, the late David Morris, Sue Craggs, Elizabeth Davey, Bernard Diaz and Cheryl Swift.

<sup>2</sup> For example, by the late Geoffrey Place in his excellent *The rise and fall of Parkgate* (Chetham Society, 3<sup>rd</sup> series 39, 1994).

<sup>3</sup> E. Rideout, *The growth of Wirral* (Liverpool, 1927), pp. 97-99. Rideout suggests Neston had 275 families in 1720, even before the town gained a market, and was the largest place on the Wirral. The first census (1801) records a combined population of 1,752 in Great Neston and Leighton townships (Parkgate straddles the two). The next largest settlement outside the Neston area was Tranmere with 353.

<sup>4</sup> For example, The National Archives, ADM 106/949/1, which records difficulties for the 148-ton Dublin Yacht mooring at Parkgate in 1740-41 due to shifting sands.

industry. This article explores these connections in the mid to late eighteenth century, a period for which, ostensibly, plentiful information on vessels and their owners is available from the Liverpool Plantation Registers (discussed below). By the start of this period Liverpool had attained supremacy in the slave trade<sup>5</sup> and, by the end, it was also beginning seriously to challenge Parkgate for its vital Irish trade.<sup>6</sup> The article focuses on two subject areas – slave ships linked to the area and local investors in the trade. An addendum is included which introduces new information concerning a mural, of considerable age, found in a house at Parkgate in 1999. Its origins, with possible links to the slave trade, are discussed.

A brief note of explanation should be made about sources used in this article. There are many valuable primary sources of information on slave ships and their owners. These include contemporary newspaper announcements, various Admiralty records, owners' records, *Lloyd's List* and, very importantly, the Liverpool Plantation Registers, which cover the periods 1744-73 and 1779-86.<sup>7</sup> These last were a record of ships intending to participate in colonial trade – slaving or otherwise – with signatories to the registers confirming that their ship and its owner(s) met certain qualifying conditions. Over the past decade or so there has been enormous growth in interest in the slave trade and one result has been that information from the registers has been collated with information from other sources onto databases, notably the Liverpool trade and shipping database<sup>8</sup> and the transatlantic slave trade database.<sup>9</sup> They have been a valuable source of information for this researcher, but there are very few direct references to Parkgate and Neston in the registers and the

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<sup>5</sup> K. Morgan, 'Liverpool's dominance in the British slave trade, 1740-1807', in D. Richardson, S. Schwarz and A. Tibbles, eds, *Liverpool and transatlantic slavery* (Liverpool, 2007), p. 15.

<sup>6</sup> Place, *Parkgate*, pp. 140-47.

<sup>7</sup> Merseyside Maritime Museum [hereafter MMM], C/EX/L/3/1-4, the Liverpool Plantation Registers, 1744-73 and 1779-84, on microfilm.

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.esds.ac.uk/findingData/snDescription.asp?sn=2923>, K. Bentham, D. Richardson and M. Schofield, Liverpool trade and shipping, 1744-1786 database, accessed 1 February 2011.

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.slavevoyages.org/tast/index.faces>, Voyages: the transatlantic slave trade database, accessed 1 February 2011.

associated databases (just eight references in total – six to vessels and two in relation to owners). This largely reflects the area's lack of direct participation in the trade, but ship owners' frequent failure to record their place of residence in the registers – which they were meant to do – is also a factor. Numerous sources have therefore been used to supplement the available information. Even where a source mentioned on a database has been used, this author has, wherever possible, viewed the original source material and, in most cases, it is this that has been referenced below. However, in a few cases where, for instance, a number of voyages are referred to, a database has been referenced rather than a wide range of underlying individual sources.

#### The slave ships

Parkgate is well known as a port but it is less well known that it was also a place of shipbuilding (and ship repairing), though never on a scale to match Liverpool or Chester. There is evidence for this activity during every decade of the eighteenth century – evidence either from documentary records of ships that are known to have been built locally or because of the presence of individuals recorded as 'shipwrights' in parish registers and other documents (table 1). Numerous related occupations are recorded, including ships' carpenter, anchor smith, ships' painter and sailmaker. The names of 22 ships built locally have survived but there can be no doubt that there were many more for which the records have been lost. Certainly, sufficient numbers were built for a 'Parkgate method' for hanging the rudder to be established, which was attacked as unsafe by William Hutchinson in 1791.<sup>10</sup> These were probably vessels constructed by the largest known Parkgate shipbuilding partnership, established in 1785 by John Washington and Thomas Makin. Washington was also the driving force behind the launch of the Parkgate Packet Company, the first

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<sup>10</sup> W. Hutchinson, *A treatise founded upon philosophical and rational principles: towards establishing fixed rules, for the best form of merchant's ships and also the management of them by practical seamanship* (Liverpool, 1791) published by Thomas Billinge. Hutchinson was a leading figure in Liverpool's shipping community and his motive may have been to undermine the newly formed Parkgate Packet Company which challenged Liverpool's Irish passenger trade.

commercial passenger-only company operating from Parkgate, which used vessels built locally.<sup>11</sup> His background gave him both money and extensive maritime experience. He appears to have come originally from West Kirby on the Wirral<sup>12</sup> and became a successful Liverpool-based mariner and merchant over several decades, during which he took at least five valuable 'prizes' (captured foreign vessels) and sent them into Liverpool.<sup>13</sup> Amongst his activities, he was directly involved in the slave trade as master on four slaving voyages involving three vessels from 1766 to 1774.<sup>14</sup> He had also part-owned several vessels, including four slavers, which undertook nine slaving voyages.<sup>15</sup> Makin, too, may have had experience as a ships' master and a slave captain, for a man of this name captained at least two vessels, one a slaver, in the 1780s.<sup>16</sup> Despite constructing several vessels, the shipbuilding operation was not a great success. Washington died in 1789 and Makin became bankrupt soon afterwards, leaving eight apprentices without work.<sup>17</sup>

Exactly where the shipbuilding activity was carried out is not clear, although Place suggested that Makin and Washington's site may have been at the north end of the village.<sup>18</sup> Samuel and Nathaniel Bucks' illustration of Liverpool in 1728 appears to show shipbuilding taking place directly on the shore there and this may have happened at Parkgate too. However, it is interesting to note

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<sup>11</sup> Place, *Parkgate*, p. 103.

<sup>12</sup> Where he was buried on 25 March 1789 and, as a mariner, appears to have been married in 1755 (West Kirby parish register). It is probable that he had a brother, George, who was a slave ship captain and part-owner in the early 1760s.

<sup>13</sup> G. Williams, *History of the Liverpool privateers and letters of marque* (London, 1897), p. 217.

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.slavevoyages.org/tast/index.faces>. Voyages: the transatlantic slave trade database, accessed 1 February 2011.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*; R. Craig and R. Jarvis, *Liverpool registry of merchant ships* (Chetham Society, 3<sup>rd</sup> series 15, 1967), p. 34.

<sup>16</sup> A Thomas Makin was master of a non-slaving Liverpool vessel, the *Dart*, in 1784 and of the slaver *Assistance*, which returned to Liverpool in July 1787. The shipwright paid land tax in Parkgate that year but gave his residence as Liverpool in the parish register in 1788.

<sup>17</sup> *Chester Chronicle*, 24 April 1789 and 19 March 1790; Cheshire Archives and Local Studies [hereafter CALS], QJB/3, 12 January 1790.

<sup>18</sup> Place, *Parkgate*, p. 103.

Table 1: Indicators of shipbuilding in Parkgate in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.<sup>19</sup>

(Parish registers did not always record occupations so absence of a reference does not necessarily mean absence of that occupation.)

Years	Ships built	Shipwrights recorded: all names/first occurrence of a name
to 1699	-	2/2
1700-09	<i>Exchange</i>	3/3
1710-19	<i>Frances; Maxwell</i>	3/3
1720-29	-	1/-
1730-39	<i>Duke; Good Intent</i>	16/15
1740-49	<i>Boscawen</i>	11/7
1750-59	<i>Marquis of Rockingham</i>	6/4 (and 12 'shipwrights' caulked the Royal Yacht in 1755)
1760-69	<i>Lord Grey; Ponsonby; Kildare; Pretty Polly</i>	3/3 (and 17 'shipwrights' graved the Royal Yacht in 1761)
1770-79	-	1/-
1780-89	<i>King; Queen; Dublin; Ferret; Princess Royal; Active; Charlotte; Elizabeth; Sisters</i>	8/8 (There are also eight named apprentices in 1789)
1790-99	<i>Oporto; Dreadnought</i>	4/2
Totals	22	58/47

<sup>19</sup> Occupations – Neston parish registers; Bangor University Archives, Mostyn MSS 4410 and 5850; CALS, wills, DDX 376, ZA/F/50b/31, QJB/3, 12 January 1790; *London Gazette*, 10 April 1798, p. 6; The National Archives, ADM 36/7114 and 36/7116. Only individuals recorded in Parkgate, Leighton, Neston or Great Neston have been included; Parkgate straddles the townships of Great Neston and Leighton. Vessels – Place, *Parkgate*, pp. 103-4; MMM, C/EX/L/3/1-4; *Gore's Advertiser*, 18 January 1771 and 26 August 1768. The *Ponsonby* is included as it was built by Captain John McCullough in 1768 and he had certainly built the *Pretty Polly* at Parkgate around that time.

that two adjoining fields in the northern end of Parkgate, in Leighton township, are called 'Dock Field' on the tithe map.<sup>20</sup> Dodgson attributes this to the plant of that name<sup>21</sup> but, as one of these fields is adjacent to the shore, their relevance to ship building should not be ruled out. The word 'dock' used to have a meaning indicating an inlet for a vessel, as well as the more specific and better-known artificial basin with flood-gates.<sup>22</sup> A 1732 estate map covering Parkgate shows an indented section of the shore adjacent to property owned by an early shipbuilder<sup>23</sup> and another indentation is visible a little further south, although neither of them is immediately adjacent to the Dock Field. It is easy to imagine vessels being built or repaired in one of these areas which were, perhaps, reached only by spring tides or secured behind temporary barricades.

There is no evidence that any ships were built at Parkgate specifically for the slave trade. Morgan points out that 'Over three-quarters of the ships used in the eighteenth-century British slave trade were second-hand'.<sup>24</sup> The Liverpool Plantation Registers record six vessels built at Parkgate which went on to be used for slaving (table 2). Of these, the *Lord Grey*, at 175 tons, is the largest vessel known to have been built in the port.<sup>25</sup>

The *Duke*, or *Duke of Chester*, belonged to five Chester traders, including John Hincks, who was soon to have an interest in a Chester sugar refining business.<sup>26</sup> The vessel completed two legs of a slave journey started from Liverpool in 1754. But on its

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<sup>20</sup> CALS, EDT 236/1 and 236/2.

<sup>21</sup> J.M. Dodgson, *The place-names of Cheshire, part IV* (Cambridge, 1972), p. 239.

<sup>22</sup> Oxford English Dictionary, online version, accessed 1 February 2011.

<sup>23</sup> Bangor University Archives, Mostyn MSS 8699 and 4449; Robert Prenton is a shipwright in the Neston parish register, 5 November 1733.

<sup>24</sup> Morgan, 'Liverpool's dominance', p. 19.

<sup>25</sup> Note that tonnage figures need to be treated with caution. The ton was not a standardised measure until 1773 (and even then it was based on the vessel's length and beam, rather than a true measure of capacity or displacement) and it is common to find different tonnages ascribed to the same vessel, often depending upon the purpose of the calculation. The stated figures tend to understate the tonnage in modern terms but, nonetheless, they are a useful relative indicator of the size of a vessel.

<sup>26</sup> CALS, D/Hincks/18, and many other documents in the same deposit.

return from Jamaica to Chester, it foundered in Caernarvon Bay. Overall, Chester merchants were to have little involvement with the slave trade and only seven or eight voyages are recorded starting at the city.<sup>27</sup> Schofield suggested that 'It would seem that Chester was too close to Liverpool to be a successful competitor'.<sup>28</sup>

Table 2: Parkgate-built vessels known, or believed, to have been used in the slave trade. A 'ship' was not just a generic term but also, more specifically, a large three-masted vessel.<sup>29</sup>

Name	Type	Year built	Tons (max. stated)	No. of slave voyages started	Slave trading
<i>Good Intent</i>	Snow	1735	80	?	1753?
<i>Duke</i>	Snow	1737	120	1	1754-55
<i>Boscawen</i>	Snow	1740	50	3	1760-63
<i>Marquis of Rockingham</i>	Brigantine	1750?	100	8	1753-65
<i>Lord Grey</i> (later <i>Lord North</i> )	Ship	1762	175	11	1764-76
<i>Ferret</i>	Schooner	1787	24	>1	?

The *Boscawen*, like the *Duke*, had a short slaving 'career'. She was twenty years old before being used for slaving and had

<sup>27</sup> M. Schofield, 'The slave trade from Lancashire and Cheshire ports outside Liverpool, c.1750-c.1790', *Transactions of the Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire*, 126 (1977), pp. 30-72. See also M. Schofield, 'Chester slave trading partnerships, 1750-56', *Transactions of the Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire*, 130 (1981), pp. 187-90.

<sup>28</sup> Schofield, 'Slave trade from Lancashire and Cheshire ports', p. 42.

<sup>29</sup> <http://www.slavevoyages.org/tast/index.faces>. Voyages: the transatlantic slave trade database, accessed 1 February 2011. For the *Ferret*, see Craig and Jarvis, *Liverpool registry*.

spent at least some of that time in non-slaving transatlantic business.<sup>30</sup> She was lost at Holyhead on only her third outward slaving voyage with the loss of all crew.<sup>31</sup> In contrast, the *Marquis of Rockingham* (sometimes *Marques of Rockingham*) was highly successful. Built in 1750,<sup>32</sup> she was registered at outset to a three-man syndicate apparently comprising Parkgate mariner John Penkett and the two well-known slave-trading Heywood brothers, Arthur and Benjamin. Penkett was the vessel's first master but died within four months of its registration.<sup>33</sup> The Heywoods put her into use for slaving three years later and she went on to complete eight such voyages before being sold.<sup>34</sup> The *Lord Grey's* 'career' followed a similar pattern. Used for slaving within two years of construction, and renamed *Lord North* in 1770, she completed eleven triangular journeys.

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<sup>30</sup> <http://www.esds.ac.uk/findingData/snDescription.asp?sn=2923>, Liverpool trade and shipping, 1744-1786 database, accessed 1 February 2011, 20 October 1758 to 19 October 1759.

<sup>31</sup> *Lloyd's List*, 26 July 1763. Her first slaving voyage was captained by George Washington, see note 12.

<sup>32</sup> MMM, C/EX/L/3/1, 12 June 1750.

<sup>33</sup> He signed the Plantation Register for the ship in June 1750, as master and part-owner. He appears to have been recorded as master on her first voyage in September that year in *Lloyd's List*, 25 September 1750, which lists John Penket [sic] arriving at Liverpool from Elsinore, Denmark, although no vessel name is listed. But the following month a new master was recorded for the *Marquis of Rockingham* (Liverpool University Special Collections, D514/2/41, the Mediterranean passes, 26 October 1750, on microfilm), and John, mariner, was described as 'deceased' in Neston parish register that same month when his daughter Maria was baptised. John was certainly not an owner of the vessel in her letters of marque dated 10 May 1758 (The National Archives, HCA 26/9/125) even though she had not been re-registered in the Plantation Registers. Maurice Schofield, in both his articles on Chester slave ship owners (see note 26), indicates that John Penkett was a Chester ironmonger and owned several slaving vessels. Whilst this writer is a great admirer of Schofield's research, it appears he may have made an error on this occasion. It has not been possible to trace several of the references Schofield has listed, as some cannot be found, while others appear to relate to *William Penkett*. In any event, it seems more plausible that a Parkgate mariner, with the same name as the Parkgate-built vessel's registered owner and master, was, indeed, that owner and master, rather than a Chester ironmonger.

<sup>34</sup> <http://www.slavevoyages.org/tast/index.faces>, Voyages: the transatlantic slave trade database, accessed 1 February 2011.

Little is known of the *Good Intent* or the *Ferret*. The former indicated an intention to travel to Africa in 1753 but there is no subsequent record of the voyage or its outcome. A *Good Intent* was, however, a regular long-distance traveller, often visiting South Carolina,<sup>35</sup> home to slave-worked rice plantations, and voyaging there from Chester in 1757.<sup>36</sup> The *Ferret* was last recorded 'Sold on the coast of Africa'.<sup>37</sup> She was probably being used as a tender, though she could also have accomplished trading in her own right. At just 24 tons, it may be thought that she would have been much too small to be considered for three long voyages through Atlantic waters. However, the nineteen-ton *Johanna* from Liverpool delivered 42 slaves to Barbados in 1788 and there was even an eleven-ton slaving vessel recorded at Bristol the previous year – though these were, of course, exceptional rather than typical.<sup>38</sup>

As mentioned above, vessels generally were used for some other purpose before entering the slave trade. One locally-connected ship which had an extraordinary 'life', which included slaving, was the brigantine *Eadith*. She is of particular interest to those studying the trade as detailed financial accounts exist for her two slave voyages, one started in 1760, via Grand Bassa (now in Liberia) and Virginia, and the other in 1761.<sup>39</sup> She was built in 1733 in London and named *Draper*.<sup>40</sup> The ship was used as an international trader before entering service between Dublin and Parkgate, captained by local man Thomas Forshall.<sup>41</sup> There was no dedicated passenger service at this time so travellers had to hope that there was a convenient passage of the Royal Yacht, provided for the lord lieutenant of Ireland, or they would have to

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<sup>35</sup> For example, *South Carolina Gazette*, 19 March 1754, Captain Lasley from Liverpool, and CALS, QDN 1/5.

<sup>36</sup> *London Chronicle*, 30 April 1757.

<sup>37</sup> Craig and Jarvis, *Liverpool registry*, p. 76.

<sup>38</sup> S. Schwarz, *Slave captain, the career of James Irving in the Liverpool slave trade* (Liverpool, 2008), p. 37; M. Rediker, *The slave ship, a human history* (London, 2008), pp. 61-62.

<sup>39</sup> MMM, DX/169, accounts of Calvey, Chesterfield and Eadith.

<sup>40</sup> MMM, C/EX/L/3/2, 24 March 1760.

<sup>41</sup> Liverpool University Special Collections, D514/2/41, the Mediterranean passes, 18 January 1739, on microfilm; *Dublin News Letter*, many dates including 8 January 1754 and 3 October 1755.

find space alongside the goods that trading vessels carried. Thus it was that, in 1753, two bishops – of Kildare and Clonfert – were conveyed across the Irish Sea to Parkgate in Forshall's vessel, which probably also carried linen, hides and livestock for market.<sup>42</sup> In 1759 the *Draper* was advertised for sale, the advertisement noting that 'She was lengthened at Chester, and had a thorough repair, Five Years ago'.<sup>43</sup> An agent in the sale was Edmund Lyon, who we will return to later. The *Draper* was bought by a syndicate headed by William Davenport and including Ambrose Lace, both prolific investors in the slave trade. Lace was also a ship's master and had captained the Parkgate-built *Duke* on its only voyage from Chester. The syndicate renamed the ship *Eadith* and put her into the slave business. On her second voyage she was captured near Martinique; what happened to the crew and her slave cargo is unknown, the vessel becoming the subject of an insurance claim. It is extraordinary to think that a vessel fit to carry bishops was later used to convey over 300 slaves in squalor.<sup>44</sup>

Another vessel with a similar track record was the *Kildare*, owned for a while by part-time smuggler John McCullough.<sup>45</sup> Built in Chester in 1758, she operated under McCullough between Parkgate and Dublin before being sold in 1761 to a five-man syndicate which used her for eight slaving voyages.<sup>46</sup>

A final locally-linked ship associated with the slave trade is both intriguing but enigmatic.

The naming of ships allowed the owners to personalise the vessel in which their fortunes was invested. Many different

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<sup>42</sup> *Faulkner's Dublin Journal*, 19 May 1753; Place, *Parkgate*, pp. 198-99.

<sup>43</sup> *Williamson's Liverpool Advertiser*, 9 February 1759.

<sup>44</sup> The highest recorded number of slaves on her first voyage was 154; she intended to carry 200 on her second voyage.

<sup>45</sup> *Dublin News Letter*, many dates, including 4 April 1760; MMM, C/EX/L/3/1, 15 August 1758 and 6 October 1761; J. Bennett and J. Dewhurst, eds, *Quarter sessions records with other records of the justices of the peace for County Palatine of Chester, 1559-1760* (Record Society of Lancashire and Cheshire, 94, 1940), p. 223.

<sup>46</sup> <http://www.slavevoyages.org/tast/index.faces>. Voyages: the transatlantic slave trade database, accessed 1 February 2011. Her new owners appear initially to have called her *Earl of Kildare*, perhaps to avoid confusion as McCullough acquired another vessel which he named the *Kildare*.

naming approaches were adopted, but two of the most common were to use personal names – of the owners, a loved one or famous contemporary figures – and places. In the latter category one thus finds ships operating out of Liverpool in the mid eighteenth century such as the *Liverpool*, the *Mersey* and the *Essex*.<sup>47</sup> Into this category also fell the *Neston*. Built in New England in 1750 (or 1751)<sup>48</sup> – and thus described as ‘plantation built’ – she is recorded as trading on various routes from 1756 between Liverpool, Cork, the Isle of Man and Jamaica. Goods exported on her to the Caribbean included pork, beef and refined sugar which, presumably, had been grown as cane on a Caribbean plantation, imported to England for refining and then sent – rather like coals to Newcastle – back to the West Indies.<sup>49</sup> In February 1758 she started her first known African voyage and completed a second in 1760. We know much about the vessel from information lodged prior to her 1758 departure in her letters of marque.<sup>50</sup> She was described thus:

Burthen of about 200 tons....]John Maddock goeth Commander...she carrys fourteen carriage Guns, fifty men, One hundred small Arms, Fifty Cutlasses, thirty Barrels of powder, One hundred Rounds of great shot and about Eight hundred weight of small shot...victualled for Eighteen months, and has two Suits of sails, five anchors, five Cables, and about two hundred weight of spare Cordage.

Her triangular voyage was to take fifteen months,<sup>51</sup> so the victuals she carried should have been more than adequate.

How the *Neston* acquired its name is not certain but it would seem the town was significant in the life of one or more of

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<sup>47</sup> Williams, *History of the Liverpool privateers*, p. 709.

<sup>48</sup> MMM, C/EX/L/3/2, 4 January 1757 and 17 September 1759 (each gives a different construction year); The National Archives, CO 142/16. She is incorrectly recorded on Voyages: the transatlantic slave trade database as the *Nestor*.

<sup>49</sup> The National Archives, CO 142/16.

<sup>50</sup> The National Archives, HCA 26/9/48.

<sup>51</sup> *Williamson's Liverpool Advertiser*, 24 February 1758 and 25 May 1759.

her owners at some point. She was owned by a four-man syndicate in 1757, the leader of which was a John Evans, who failed to specify any place of residence in the Plantation Registers. He was a relatively small-time investor, apparently having interests in two other vessels around the same time,<sup>52</sup> and was in Liverpool to receive enquiries about the vessel's forthcoming voyage in 1756.<sup>53</sup> A plausible candidate to be this owner is a John Evans 'late of Neston in Cheshire' who was buried in Kingston, Jamaica in 1761, aged 27 – the ship's first known journey was to that colony, via Cork.<sup>54</sup> But there were other men of this name in Great Neston township in the mid eighteenth century<sup>55</sup> and, so far, we cannot be sure which, if any, of these individuals was the owner. Evans's syndicate sold the vessel in 1759 after a slaving voyage, and she was then sold again for another, but the vessel was captured by a French frigate ten days out of Liverpool and nothing further is known of her. She had been renamed *York* for this voyage and one of her owners was William Williamson, a name we will come to shortly.

#### The slave merchants

We turn now to investors in the slave trade known to have had connections with Neston and Parkgate in the period under review. As has been alluded to, in most cases shipowners held part-shares in their vessels, spreading the costs and the considerable risks. The usual practice in the trade was that vessels were owned by syndicates, although sole ownership, particularly by the ship's master, was not particularly unusual. Groups of up to six syndicate members were commonplace and sometimes there were many more, sharing the costs, risks and profits of the voyage. Shares in a vessel would often change hands between journeys. Five main

<sup>52</sup> MMM, C/EX/L/3/2, 24 September 1755 and 8 July 1756.

<sup>53</sup> *Williamson's Liverpool Advertiser*, 29 October 1756.

<sup>54</sup> J.H. Lawrence-Archer, *Monumental inscriptions of the British West Indies* (London, 1875), p. 121. The Neston parish register records a John Evans being born to John Evans, yeoman of Great Neston, and his wife Alice in 1734, making the younger John 27 in 1761. It appears John senior died in 1744.

<sup>55</sup> Neston parish registers: baptism of a child to a mariner (1739); marriages to Hannah Briscoe (1763) and Mary Hough (1765), the latter by a mariner.

individuals linked to Neston and Parkgate will be discussed here. This discussion reveals many connections between them, indicating that a 'community' of investors developed.

One local investor in the trade was William Williamson. He is one of only two men to have listed Neston as his place of residence in the Plantation Registers, registering as joint owner of the *George* with four others in 1766.<sup>56</sup> But Williamson's links to the area go back further than that, as he married a Neston woman, Lydia Whittle, in 1747.<sup>57</sup> At that time he described himself as a Liverpool sailmaker and probably knew the Neston area through his older relation<sup>58</sup> Samuel Williamson, also a sailmaker, who was living in Parkgate by 1726 and worked in the village throughout his life.<sup>59</sup> Perhaps William learnt his trade from Samuel.

Regrettably, William Williamson was not an unusual name in both Liverpool and the Neston area in the mid eighteenth century, and several people of that name can be traced around that time (one was an insurance broker who paid out on the loss of the *Eadith*, above). At least two were slave merchants and, despite extensive research, it has not been possible to determine to this writer's satisfaction exactly how many other voyages William Williamson, the *George*'s co-owner, invested in. One other certain investment, though, was the *Ranger*, co-owned with James Clemens, one of Liverpool's leading ship owners, and the ship's master, William Speers.<sup>60</sup> One of the William Williamsons – probably the Parkgate one – had further shipping interests with Clemens and Speers<sup>61</sup> as well as with Edmund Lyon, discussed below. It is possible that, in total, the Neston William Williamson

<sup>56</sup> MMM, C/EX/L/3/3, 22 February 1766.

<sup>57</sup> Neston parish register, 21 December 1747.

<sup>58</sup> Samuel was described as William's 'relation' in CALS, will of William Williamson, WS, 1770. It has not yet been possible to establish the exact nature of this relationship, but it seems probable that William was a distant cousin of Samuel.

<sup>59</sup> Neston parish register, 3 April 1740 and 3 May 1769; Bangor University, Mostyn MS 5850, f. 57.

<sup>60</sup> MMM, C/EX/L/3/2, 31 July 1765; CALS, inventory of William Williamson, WS, 26 September 1782.

<sup>61</sup> Williamson and Clemens were two of the partners who owned the *Glory*, which undertook slaving and non-slaving voyages, with Speers as lieutenant and, for a time, master.

had interests in six slaving vessels, which made fifteen triangular journeys, as well as in a number of non-slaving vessels, some of which are likely to have been highly profitable for the syndicate of investors.<sup>62</sup>

Williamson described himself as a Liverpool sailmaker in several documents, including ones where he was acquiring interests in land in Neston and in a vessel moored locally, in the 1750s.<sup>63</sup> He was still making sails in 1760 when he did so for the *Eadith*, mentioned above.<sup>64</sup> It may be thought odd that a 'mere' sailmaker also had interests in slaving vessels, but it would be wrong to assume that the slave trade was associated with great wealth either before or during investment activity. Studies have shown that many of Liverpool's *leading* slave merchants did not come from particularly wealthy backgrounds or leave great wealth when they died.<sup>65</sup> Williamson, though, was never a leading merchant and was typical of most investors – of the 1,350 Liverpool slave merchants so far identified, the vast majority were small investors.<sup>66</sup> He appears, however, to have had largely good fortune with the *George* and *Ranger*, managing seven voyages between them and delivering around two thousand slaves.<sup>67</sup>

Williamson's Neston-born wife died after less than three years of marriage.<sup>68</sup> He does not appear to have remarried, but formed a liaison with a Margaret Lyon, who bore him three children from the late 1750s (it seems likely she was a relation of Edmund Lyon, discussed below).<sup>69</sup> At some point Williamson

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<sup>62</sup> See note 91.

<sup>63</sup> CALS, DBC 1720/6.

<sup>64</sup> MMM, DX/169, accounts of Calvey, Chesterfield and Eadith, p. 13.

<sup>65</sup> D. Pope, 'The wealth and aspirations of Liverpool's slave merchants', in Richardson, Schwarz and Tibbles, *Liverpool and transatlantic slavery*, pp. 164-226.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>67</sup> <http://www.slavevoyages.org/tast/index.faces>, Voyages: the transatlantic slave trade database, accessed 1 February 2011.

<sup>68</sup> Neston parish register, 25 August 1750.

<sup>69</sup> CALS, will of William Williamson, WS, 1770.

moved to Parkgate, possibly around 1761 to live near his relation Samuel.<sup>70</sup>

Williamson died in 1770 (described as a 'gentleman' of Parkgate in the parish register)<sup>71</sup> and a subsequent series of inventories, which took thirteen years to compile, show he had had numerous business interests.<sup>72</sup> These included shares in three vessels trading between Parkgate and Dublin. Several individuals of interest are named in the inventories besides James Clemens, including Liverpool slave merchants Francis Sadler and Joshua Pollard (Williamson's brother-in-law who had owed Williamson money for muslin sold in Jamaica), the city's town clerk, Francis Gildart,<sup>73</sup> who was a brother of leading slaver James Gildart, and the Hincks brothers of Chester, sugar house owners. In a slaving-related context, one significant business was a herring catching and curing operation established in Parkgate in 1765 as 'William Williamson & Co.', initially in partnership with local men Joseph Hayes, John Whittle, Samuel Williamson (all discussed below) and Liverpool slave merchant Thomas Smith. Herrings were big business and there were at least eight large curing businesses in Liverpool around the same time.<sup>74</sup> These would salt the fish (making white herrings) or smoke them (red herrings). The Parkgate operation did both and comprised 'smoak houses and other buildings together with sundry materials for curing of herrings'. It also owned two vessels, the *Herring* (later the *Betty*) and the *Scorpion*, which was a wreck by the time the inventories were compiled. The fish-processing operation was later said to have been located in buildings that would become – somewhat incongruously – a theatre, near to Samuel Williamson's last known tenement, but it is not clear whether this was its initial location.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> Williamson supplied sails for the *Eadith's* voyage starting in 1760, but not for the one starting in 1761 (MMM DX/169). One explanation is that he was no longer sail making.

<sup>71</sup> Neston parish register, 27 September 1770.

<sup>72</sup> CALS, inventories of William Williamson, WC, 1779-82.

<sup>73</sup> J. Gore, *The Liverpool directory for 1766* (Liverpool, 1766).

<sup>74</sup> H. Smithers, *Liverpool, its commerce, statistics and institutions* (Liverpool, 1825).

<sup>75</sup> Bangor Mostyn MSS 5850, f.57 and 8699; *Cheshire sheaf*, 1<sup>st</sup> series 1 (1879), p. 332. See also note 106.

The fishery ought to have been highly lucrative in its early days, as 1766 and 1767 saw huge quantities of herrings caught off the local coasts. A parliamentary report claimed that almost three-quarters of a billion red herrings and 3,770 barrels of white herrings, all for the domestic market, were taken at Parkgate in 1766 alone (although this author finds the former figure somewhat hard to believe).<sup>76</sup>

Williamson's business offered its herrings for sale in Liverpool<sup>77</sup> but they were not necessarily just for domestic consumption; preserved fish was used as a valuable food source on slaving vessels and other long-distance traders.<sup>78</sup> Large quantities were also exported direct to slave plantations where they were a good source of protein, cheaper than pork and beef. Salted herrings were said by one observer in the Caribbean in the 1740s to be 'the principal food and support of negroes'<sup>79</sup> and, in 1789, a writer in *Williamson's Liverpool Advertiser* commented that 'the [Liverpool] herring fishery...is almost entirely supported by the trade to the West Indies'.<sup>80</sup> The *Ranger's* inventory before departure in 1767 included one barrel of red herrings and two barrels of white<sup>81</sup> and it seems likely that Williamson would have supplied these for this voyage and also the others he invested in after the herring business was established. In addition, he appears to have shipped herrings to slave plantations, for the inventories refer to 'exports' and include a debt due to his estate for herrings sold in Jamaica.

The inventories record Williamson's many business interests, debtors and creditors but they also indicate that, on

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<sup>76</sup> 'Third report from the committee appointed to inquire into the state of the British fisheries,...1785', in *Reports from committees of the House of Commons, volume 10, miscellaneous subjects, 1785-1801* (London, 1801), p. 53. This is an average rate of about two million herrings per day for a single port where only one herring business is known. Two thousand per day, plus the white herrings and any for export, sounds more plausible. The report's column headings may be incorrect.

<sup>77</sup> *Williamson's Liverpool Advertiser*, 21 November 1766.

<sup>78</sup> Rediker, *Slave ship*, p. 238.

<sup>79</sup> T. Truxes, *Irish-American trade, 1660-1783* (Cambridge, 2004), p. 164.

<sup>80</sup> G. Cameron and S. Crooke, *Liverpool: capital of the slave trade* (Liverpool, 1992), p. 53.

<sup>81</sup> Liverpool Record Office, 380 TUO 4/2.

death, he owned no land, buildings or even, to the executor's knowledge, household goods; he was merely a lodger with his sister. Williamson's brother, Croft, had gone bankrupt in 1762<sup>82</sup> and, assuming the will and inventories tell the full story, Williamson was little better at managing his money, for his debts considerably exceeded his assets.

As mentioned above, Williamson owned the *George* with five others, including John Whittle of Neston, brother of Williamson's wife Lydia.<sup>83</sup> He was the only man, besides Williamson, to state his residence as Neston in the Plantation Registers. Whittle was a common brewer, brewing his own beer supplied to a number of local tied houses.<sup>84</sup> Just as Williamson probably supplied herrings from his business for his ships, it is quite possible that Whittle supplied his own beer for his vessel's voyages, usable as liquor for the crew or as a trading item to exchange for slaves. Beer was often used for either or both purposes – for example, the *Ranger* carried seven and a half barrels of 'small [weak] beer' amongst her provisions; and the *Eadith's* trading goods included '30 dozen [bottles?] strong beer'.<sup>85</sup>

Another slave merchant closely connected to Neston, and probable co-owner of two vessels with Neston's William Williamson, was Edmund Lyon, a man who is celebrated in a memorial tablet which is mounted in Neston parish church. Above the east door rests an engraved marble plaque to the 'revered memory' of Lyon and also Neston man Joseph Hayes, as well as members of their families. Hayes, too, was an investor in the slave trade, but Lyon was the more committed of the two. Edmund is described on the plaque as a 'Liverpool Merchant', which is accurate but fails to indicate his strong Neston connections. He was a regular trader there in his vessel, the *Lyon*, which he used to ship cheese and other goods to London from 1740 until at least 1756.<sup>86</sup> He married a Neston woman – Anne

<sup>82</sup> *London Chronicle*, 16 January 1762.

<sup>83</sup> MMM, C/EX/L/3/3, 22 February 1766; Neston parish registers, 9 September 1726 and 7 May 1731.

<sup>84</sup> CALS, QDL 3/7/4 and 3/7/5, list of alehouse keepers.

<sup>85</sup> Liverpool Record Office, 380 TUO 4/2; MMM, DX/169, accounts of Calveley, Chesterfield and Eadith.

<sup>86</sup> CALS, QDN 1/5, 11 August 1740; *Belfast News Letter*, 2 March 1756.

Hayes (Joseph's sister) – and at least two of their children were baptised in Neston, in 1745.<sup>87</sup> He also bought large amounts of local land, notably in Willaston, a township in Neston parish.<sup>88</sup> The lordship of Willaston rotated annually and Lyon's local interests meant that, in 1755-56, he was lord of the manor.<sup>89</sup> It seems likely that he spent much of his time in Neston and the plaque records that he died and was buried there.

As well as shipping goods himself, Lyon invested extensively in other Liverpool shipping ventures, both inside and outside the slave business.<sup>90</sup> Some of these were highly lucrative, including the 300-ton *Liverpool* under the nationally renowned William Hutchinson, which captured a number of vessels from the French – these were valuable prizes.<sup>91</sup> Lyon had interests in seven triangular voyages to Africa and the Caribbean, involving seven different vessels, starting their journeys in 1760 to 1769. Additional business interests appear to have included acting as an agent in ship sales – for example, the *Draper*, noted above, and also the *Triumph*, sold in Parkgate in 1758.<sup>92</sup> In 1766 Edmund Lyon was described as a 'Flax and iron dealer',<sup>93</sup> though it is possible this pertains to his son of the same name rather than the father. Any connection with flax may indicate a possible link with William Williamson, as eighteenth-century sails were made of flax.<sup>94</sup>

Joseph Hayes was probably tempted to dabble in the slave trade by Lyon. Hayes was a freeman of Chester<sup>95</sup> and a

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<sup>87</sup> Twins Edmund and Sarah.

<sup>88</sup> CALS, DHL 60/1 and DHL 49/1.

<sup>89</sup> *Cheshire sheaf*, 3<sup>rd</sup> series 52 (1957), p. 33.

<sup>90</sup> <http://www.slavevoyages.org/tast/index.faces>, Voyages: the transatlantic slave trade database, accessed 1 February 2011. Some of the slave vessels also undertook non-slaving voyages under his ownership.

<sup>91</sup> The National Archives, HCA 26/7/130; Williams, *History of the Liverpool privateers*, pp. 129-35. William Williamson was one of several joint investors. Lyon and Williamson also invested in the non-slaving *Baltimore*, a prize captured from the French.

<sup>92</sup> *Williamson's Liverpool Advertiser*, 21 April 1758.

<sup>93</sup> Gore, *Liverpool directory*.

<sup>94</sup> H. Chapelle, *The search for speed under sail* (London, 1983), p. 210.

<sup>95</sup> J.H.E. Bennett, ed., *The rolls of the freemen of the city of Chester, part 2, 1700-1805* (Record Society of Lancashire and Cheshire, 55 (1908).

leading figure in Neston society in the mid to late eighteenth century. He was a wealthy man who, like John Whittle, was a 'common brewer', a beer producer with a number of local tied inns.<sup>96</sup> He invested in two voyages, the first of which, in 1760, was with Lyon and four others.<sup>97</sup> The vessel was the *William & Edward* and, like the *Eadith*, she had previously had a 'career' carrying goods between England and Ireland.<sup>98</sup> Her burthen was registered as just 30 tons, yet she completed one triangular voyage, cramming in 116 slaves for the transatlantic passage. The second vessel Hayes invested in, the *Kingston* in 1762, appears to have lost many slaves on her journey and may therefore have been a financial disaster.<sup>99</sup> Despite his slaving interests, after his death Hayes was described as 'as a mirror of benevolence, piety and friendship' and 'near perfection'.<sup>100</sup>

The plaque in the parish church was commissioned in 1806 by Joseph Lyon, Edmund's son and Joseph's nephew.<sup>101</sup> It was made by a Chester stonemason and brought by wagon to Neston church, to be positioned close to the altar. This reflected the Lyon and Hayes families' local importance at that time but, in 1875, the church was rebuilt and the tablet was relocated where it sits now, away from the altar. Perhaps appositely, the plaque includes a spelling error in the penultimate line ('thier' for 'their') – a flawed memorial for flawed men, some might say.

Reference has been made to William Williamson's relation, Samuel, the Parkgate sailmaker. He provided services regularly to the Royal Yacht, which travelled between Dublin and Parkgate, using his skilled labour and supplying it with stores.<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>96</sup> CALS, will of Joseph Hayes, WS, 1784; QDL 3/7/4 and 3/7/5, list of alehouse keepers.

<sup>97</sup> MMM, C/EX/L/3/2, 9 August 1760.

<sup>98</sup> CALS, QDN 1/5.

<sup>99</sup> MMM, C/EX/L/32/2, 18 August 1762; *Williamson's Liverpool Advertiser*, 11 November 1763 reported she had 260 slaves on board on leaving Africa, but only 109 when she reached her first known destination Barbados, reported 23 December 1763.

<sup>100</sup> Source unknown, but quoted in G. Place, ed., 'Early Neston' (undated and unpublished draft text).

<sup>101</sup> CALS, DHL/60/18 and DHL/60/19.

<sup>102</sup> The National Archives, ADM 106/1053/327 and 221; ADM 106/1096/215 and 102; ADM 106/1118/234.

He (or possibly his son of the same name, though this seems less likely)<sup>103</sup> invested in the *Kingston* with Joseph Hayes – his one and only, apparently tragic, venture into the slave trade.<sup>104</sup> Nevertheless, Samuel Williamson (the elder) died an apparently wealthy man.<sup>105</sup>

Further mention should be made of Samuel Williamson junior, who lived in Great Neston, as he almost certainly benefited from the slave trade too, albeit indirectly and only temporarily. In 1767 he acquired the lease on the premises that had been used for the herring works,<sup>106</sup> but his principal business seems to have been in the textile and clothing trade. Throughout the 1760s he described himself variously as a mercer, draper and clothier,<sup>107</sup> but in October 1778 he was declared bankrupt, being described as a ‘check manufacturer’ (‘checks’ being check-patterned cotton and linen fabrics).<sup>108</sup> His indebtedness came about through ‘the course of his trade and dealing’ and his ‘considerable’ debts included £267 owed to a Chester linen merchant.<sup>109</sup> All his goods were acquired at a bankruptcy auction, held in Neston, by Joseph Hayes for £14.<sup>110</sup> The sale particulars stated that Williamson had owned

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<sup>103</sup> Samuel senior had already had an ownership interest in at least one ship, the *Truelove* in 1741, as well as working on many others, and bequeathed the value of his ‘shares and parts of ships sloops [and] other vessels’ in his will (see note 105). Samuel junior was working in the textile trade by 1762 (see note 107).

<sup>104</sup> See note 99.

<sup>105</sup> CALS, will of Samuel Williamson, WS, 1769, which indicates extensive holdings of property, ships and other assets such as silver goods.

<sup>106</sup> Bangor University Archives, Mostyn MS 5017. It is not clear if it was this Samuel or his father who was one of the group of five who first set up the herring business.

<sup>107</sup> Neston parish register, baptisms of his children on 10 March 1762 and 12 March 1769 as well as in 1763, 1764, 1765 and 1766. He was a ‘mercier’ in the 1767 lease for the herring premises.

<sup>108</sup> *The Universal Magazine*, 62 (1778), p. 278; also in a William Williamson inventory in 1779 in which he was described as a ‘checkmaker’. In CALS, DBC 261/57 and 58 (October 1778) he was a ‘check manufacturer, dealer and chapman’ and a ‘check, cotton and linen manufacturer’ in the bankruptcy sale particulars (see note 111).

<sup>109</sup> CALS, DBC 261/57 and 58.

<sup>110</sup> CALS, DHL 10/2. Hayes was uncle to Williamson’s wife, Barbara (CALS, DHL 50/6).

a 'Great Number of Looms and Wheels', used for weaving and spinning, as well as much other production equipment and a 'large quantity' of manufactured goods.<sup>111</sup> Textiles were in great demand as trading goods in Africa, supporting very large numbers of workers in Lancashire, for example.<sup>112</sup> The English check industry was 'almost entirely a function of the British slave trade' – particularly for the market in West Africa, but also for exporting to the plantations and mines of the New World for slave clothing.<sup>113</sup> When the American War of Independence interrupted international trade, the check market to West Africa collapsed (from a high of £121,714 in value in 1772 to just £4,716 by 1780),<sup>114</sup> leaving the British check industry in turmoil. Whilst no corroborating evidence has yet been found, it therefore seems highly probable that Samuel Williamson was producing his checks (and maybe his earlier goods too) for export and that his bankruptcy was due to the market collapse. He would almost certainly have been employing home-working spinners and weavers as part of a putting-out system, as was typical of country manufacturers at the time. Thus, even the fortunes of humble local folk would have fluctuated with events on continents far removed from their own experience.

The descriptions above have shown that, in total, there were five individuals in Parkgate and Neston known to have directly invested in the slave trade (table 3), and that they were linked in many ways – family ties, shared non-slaving investments and joint investment in slaving vessels. Thus they formed a small, tightly-knit community – one can imagine them, almost conspiratorial, huddled in their parlours or the corner of local inns, discussing shipping, slaving and moneymaking opportunities. The clustering around the 1760s is significant, in a local, regional and national context – this would have been a period of great self-confidence and the mood would have been ripe for individuals to

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<sup>111</sup> *Adam's Weekly Courant*, 12 January 1779.

<sup>112</sup> J. Longmore, "'Cemented by the blood of a negro'"? The impact of the slave trade on eighteenth-century Liverpool', in Richardson, Schwarz and Tibbles, *Liverpool and transatlantic slavery*, pp. 244-45.

<sup>113</sup> J. Inikori, 'Slavery and the revolution in cotton textile production in England', *Social Science History*, 13 part 4 (1989), pp. 343-79.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 371.

feel ready to embark on new ventures. In Neston, Ness colliery had recently opened, an event of which one commentator in 1760 said 'All Cheshire is happy with the discovery of a rich vein of coals'.<sup>115</sup> Regionally, Liverpool's growth in slave trading activity meant that in the 1750s the city passed the invidious milestone of undertaking the majority of Britain's slave trading activities – 56 per cent of these ventures started there, far ahead of the other main slaving ports of London and Bristol.<sup>116</sup> The city's foreign trade had been 'invigorated' by slaving<sup>117</sup> and the subject would, presumably, have been a common topic of merchants' conversation. And, nationally, Britain was glorying in great victories over the French and asserting what she saw as her superior place in the world with the establishment of great institutions such as the British Museum and the Royal Botanic Gardens. It would be interesting to know, though, whether John Wesley, who passed through Parkgate nine times from 1760 to 1789, ever spoke up against the slaving business when he preached there on several occasions.<sup>118</sup> If he did so, it would probably not have been until the 1770s, when the area's direct investment in the slave business appears to have passed – only then did Wesley become a vociferous critic of the trade which he described as 'the execrable sum of all villainies'.<sup>119</sup>

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<sup>115</sup> *Cheshire Sheaf*, 3<sup>rd</sup> series 31 (1936), p. 62.

<sup>116</sup> Morgan, 'Liverpool's dominance', p. 15.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>118</sup> N. Curnock, ed., *The journal of the Rev. John Wesley* (bicentenary edition, 8 vols, London, 1938), IV-VII, *passim*. The journals record that he preached locally in 1762 and three times in 1771 to 'most of the gentry of the town'. F.F. Bretherton in *The Methodist Recorder*, winter 1903, p. 53 suggests there may have been other occasions, too, in the local chapel.

<sup>119</sup> Curnock, *Journal*, V, p. 445. Another abolitionist to be connected with Parkgate, though somewhat later, was the parliamentarian Thomas Buxton, who led the movement that finally brought about the act to abolish slavery, passed in 1833. In 1806 he turned down an invitation to board a vessel from Parkgate bound for Ireland, choosing instead to travel via Holyhead, as he had been warned of the dangers of the longer passage. The vessel, the *King George*, sank soon after leaving Parkgate with the loss of all but one of the 119 or more souls on board.

Table 3: Neston and Parkgate investors in the slave trade.

Investor	Slave ships invested in	Slave ship voyages	Voyage start dates
Joseph Hayes	2	2	1760, 1762
Edmund Lyon	7	7	1760-69
John Whittle	1	4	1766-68
Samuel Williamson Snr.	1	1	1762
William Williamson	2 (certain) or up to 6 (possible)	7 or up to 15	1766-69 or 1746-69

The five investors described above also had links with a few other slave trade investors in Chester and the Wirral, so that a wider but limited web of contacts begins to be formed. The author continues to research this web, to understand better its extent and the ways in which investor relationships were formed.

### Conclusion

Parkgate and Neston are less than eight miles, as the crow flies, from Liverpool, British centre of the slave trade. Yet the Cheshire settlements' activities hardly reflect this closeness. The links appear to be largely tangential and do not suggest large-scale immersion in the slave business. Three businesses – a herring operation, a shipbuilding firm and the Parkgate Packet Company – were set up using money probably derived, in part, from the slave trade; the herring business and a local textile manufacturing operation probably supplied the African trade; and a few local investors dabbled as slave merchants. But, despite this researcher's best efforts, it has not proved possible to trace any local large-scale investors in the trade, any slave ships which sailed from the area, any ships specifically built (or even prepared or repaired) for the trade or any ships' masters permanently resident in the Dee-side port. There are no records, even, of any black servants in Parkgate or Neston in the period, though there are such records

scattered elsewhere on the Wirral.<sup>120</sup> (There is, though, a record of one ‘run away...negro man’ from Dublin, named – with presumably unintended irony – ‘Hope’, who was thought to be trying to pass through Parkgate.)<sup>121</sup>

The Mostyn estate map neatly depicts a large number of substantial buildings already built along Parkgate’s waterfront by 1732<sup>122</sup> (several of which still stand), suggesting that, even at that early date, the area was doing very nicely from its established activities; apparently, its people saw little need to diversify. Schofield’s conclusions about Chester’s minor participation in the trade was that ‘Chester merchants do not appear much interested in the colonial trades’ and that, if individuals were looking to make money from slaving, they could go to Liverpool.<sup>123</sup> As noted previously, Chester was just ‘too close’ to the Lancashire city; Parkgate and Neston were even closer.

This article has looked at the impact of slavery on one area over one time period, but the author continues to research other aspects of this compelling subject. Some topics of interest have already been alluded to, for example the wider web of contacts with Neston investors. In addition, research is underway into the area’s links to the triangular trade in the early nineteenth century, including investigation into whether the area benefited from the wealth that the slave trade and slavery itself had generated before or after their abolition. Slaving connections to Chester and to Wirral beyond Neston and Parkgate are also being investigated.

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<sup>120</sup> For example ‘Samuel’, ‘Negroe [sic] servant to Ellen Johnson’ at China Farm in Newton, a baptism in the West Kirby parish register, 16 September 1772. Ellen’s husband, Thomas, was a leading Liverpool slave merchant. There were, though, two black servants recorded in Neston early the following century.

<sup>121</sup> *Adam’s Weekly Courant*, 11 September 1770.

<sup>122</sup> Bangor University Archives, Mostyn MS 8699.

<sup>123</sup> Schofield, ‘Chester slave trading partnerships’, p. 188, and Schofield, ‘The slave trade from Lancashire and Cheshire ports’, p. 42.

## Addendum: the Parkgate murals

In 1999 a very unusual discovery was made in Parkgate when a number of murals, apparently of considerable age, were discovered in a listed property on Parkgate's front, 'Seven Steps'.<sup>124</sup> They were uncovered during redecoration and situated on three walls of an upper room in the property. The artwork varies considerably in quality, suggesting that more than one person was responsible. The most detailed picture was a view of a ship – apparently a brig, flying the red ensign used by naval and merchant vessels – sailing out to sea past an island accessed by a bridge (figure 1). There is much vegetation in the picture, particularly trees, though these do not look typically British. Brian Curzon, writing in *Cheshire History*, suggested the scene depicted a 'deserted exotic land' and the property-owner described it as having a 'tropical maritime theme'.<sup>125</sup> The room includes a mid eighteenth-century cast-iron fireplace surrounded by painted blue and white tiles, which include several apparent depictions of palm trees. Curzon suggested that the grate may have been inserted in response to the availability of cheap coal from nearby collieries (perhaps from Ness colliery which opened in 1759<sup>126</sup>). The provenance, purpose and date of the murals are unknown, but Curzon suggested that 'the most likely origin of the decoration appears to be an attempt to capitalise on the sea bathing trade in the early nineteenth century'. However, this author would like to put forward an alternative suggestion, based on the growing evidence for Parkgate's long-distance links in the eighteenth century.

Work by Clare Johnson, a researcher in the Burton and Neston History Society, on Parkgate leaseholders in the eighteenth century showed that in 1732 the property in question was occupied by James Bradburn, who described himself as a

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<sup>124</sup> Cheshire Historic Environment Record, designation record DCH3877.

<sup>125</sup> J.B. Curzon, 'A painted room at Parkgate', *Cheshire History*, 43 (2003), pp. 88-99; C. Swift, 'The Parkgate mural in "The Seven Steps"', *Parkgate Society newsletter*, spring 2003.

<sup>126</sup> A. Annakin-Smith, 'The Neston collieries and associated industrial workings, 1759-1855' (M.A. dissertation, Liverpool University, 2008).

'painter' and later 'painter and carver'.<sup>127</sup> He would almost certainly have been working on local ships, and Curzon himself suggests that local shipbuilding and repair yards were probably where the mural artist exercised his skills. While the vegetation in the main picture does not appear to be British, it is not an accurate portrayal of tropical vegetation either, and it seems plausible that the painting was executed by someone working from descriptions of the trees, or maybe others' sketches of them, rather than from first hand experience. If the paintings were made by Bradburn, then he may not have travelled far himself, but he would have had no shortage of inspiration for his art. This article has shown that there were links between the eighteenth-century slave trade and Parkgate. Owners would have talked to ships' masters and learned of what they had seen in Africa and the Caribbean, and masters and crew would almost certainly have visited Parkgate. Indeed, Parkgate was to develop a reputation for being a haven for aggressive and unruly sailors, a 'nest for seamen from Liverpool', who came in 'great number' and were willing to use extreme violence to evade the press gangs<sup>128</sup> – just the kind of ne'er-do-wells that were often the staple crew of slaving vessels. We should bear in mind, too, that several slaving vessels sailed from or to Chester, perhaps anchoring at Parkgate for supplies or to wait for the tide.<sup>129</sup>

Aside from the slave trade, long-distance vessels visited Parkgate from time to time, travelling to or from the Canaries,<sup>130</sup> the Mediterranean<sup>131</sup> or further afield. In 1765, the *Fair American*, whose owners included two Chester merchants, was anchored off

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<sup>127</sup> Bangor University, Mostyn MS 5850, f. 43; Neston parish registers, 3 December 1731, 11 April 1733, 12 September 1735 (baptisms), 2 April 1747 (burial), 20 November 1756 (marriage), 28 October 1757, 8 February 1760 (baptisms). He was also variously Bradburne, Bradbourn or Bradbourne in records.

<sup>128</sup> The National Archives, ADM 1/1446, 17 November 1780. An incident is recounted where a gang of about 100 Parkgate men, all from Liverpool privateers, shot a member of the press gang and wounded two others.

<sup>129</sup> Schofield, 'The slave trade from Lancashire and Cheshire ports'.

<sup>130</sup> For example, in 1730, the snow *Knebworth* (Liverpool University Special Collections, D514/2/39, the Mediterranean passes).

<sup>131</sup> Place, *Parkgate*, pp. 193-94.



the village.<sup>132</sup> She was a long-lasting transatlantic voyager, often bringing rice from slave plantations in sub-tropical South Carolina<sup>133</sup> and, at 300 tons, must have been one of the largest vessels ever to moor locally. Any of these could have been the inspiration for the paintings, but this inspiration may have come from even closer to home. In 1756 James Bradburn, by then a widower, married the widow of John Penkett, mentioned earlier as owner and master of the Parkgate-built slaver *Marquis of Rockingham*.<sup>134</sup> James had at least five children by his two marriages, any of whom might have painted the poorer quality pictures. One of the children, also James, appears to have become a mariner and was captaining a ship, the *Sally*, by 1783, importing goods to Liverpool from the Mediterranean.<sup>135</sup> It is quite possible, therefore, that painter James heard tales from his son of exotic locations and created the seascape before his death in 1780. In summary, although we cannot prove the provenance of the paintings, a plausible case can be made for them having been executed by James Bradburn in the mid to late eighteenth century, based on contemporary mariners' accounts.

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<sup>132</sup> *Williamson's Liverpool Advertiser*, 17 August 1765; two Chester men, Charles Goodwin and Walter Thomas, plus John Edwards of Charlestown were registered owners in 1763 (H. Laurens, *The papers of Henry Laurens* (Columbia, South Carolina, 1972), p. 460) and in 1770 (MMM, C/EX/L/3/3, 25 January 1770). Goodwin was also a co-owner of the Parkgate-built *Duke* referred to earlier.

<sup>133</sup> <http://www.esds.ac.uk/findingData/snDescription.asp?sn=2923>. Liverpool trade and shipping, 1744-1786 database, accessed 1 February 2011; Cowes customs, collector to board letters book 1764-69', 25 March 1766, available at <http://www.customscowes.shalfleet.net/1764-1769.htm>, accessed 14 February 2011.

<sup>134</sup> Neston parish register, 20 November 1756.

<sup>135</sup> MMM, C/EX/L/3/4, 20 September 1783; Neston parish register, 20 May 1783 and 12 December 1787.

# John Brockbank of Lancaster: shipbuilder and entrepreneur

*Peter Skidmore*

## Introduction

There are remarkable similarities between the business practices of today and those of the later Georgian period, with personal networks playing an important role in the formation of business relationships. The question 'do you know a friend?' is often seen in the early correspondence when business associates were being sought, reflecting the importance attached to personal knowledge as a means of assuring trust. Entrepreneurs flourished in this environment in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, with many new ventures being launched as industry and transportation infrastructure expanded. Merchant coffee houses were traditional meeting places for the business community, where the commercial intelligence of the day was disseminated, ideas were exchanged and relationships established. Businessmen were also subscribers to major undertakings such as canals, docks and roads and associations formed in these forums led to the emergence of spin-off companies to capitalise on the benefits provided by the undertaking. The businessmen of the day had an eye for new opportunities and fully merited the title of entrepreneur.

John Brockbank, a Lancaster shipbuilder, was one of these entrepreneurs in the late eighteenth century who expanded his interests outside of shipbuilding through the relationships he established with the business community in the town. The period was one of prosperity in Lancaster, when the port had a flourishing overseas trade supported by a large merchant population. The trade, which was principally with the West Indies and the Baltic, resulted in many new industries being started in the town and its environs. Sugar refining, furniture making and textile production were typical of the industries that arose from the imports and the needs of the colonial settlers gave rise to the

manufacture of consumable items such as clothing, millinery, candles, farming implements and general tools which were carried on the return voyages.<sup>1</sup> It was against this background that John Brockbank was building ships, supplying timber and fabricating a wide range of items for the local community, a range which extended from domestic items, such as bookcases, to hurdles and stables for the farmers and doors for a forge. At the same time, he was broadening his business interests and we are fortunate to have surviving records of his activities for the period 1789 to 1822, which allow us to examine the many aspects of his business operation.<sup>2</sup>

Brockbank was a member of two prestigious organisations, the Port Commission and the Lancaster Canal Committee. Both were populated by men of influence in the town, mostly from within the merchant community, many of whom had established successful trading operations with the West Indies. The Port Commission was established in 1750 and in the second half of the century was developing St George's Quay in the town to provide secure berthing for the vessels and warehousing for the goods. At the same time, the Canal Company Committee were overseeing the building of the first stage of the northern section of the canal, from Preston through Lancaster to Tewitfield, which was started in 1793 and completed in 1797. Brockbank benefited from both undertakings.

For the canal, there are entries in his daybooks recording the supply of barrows and wheeling planks for moving earth and boats for transporting materials to the worksites.<sup>3</sup> Brockbank

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<sup>1</sup> N. Dalziel, 'Trade and transition, 1690-1815', in A. White, ed., *A history of Lancaster* (Edinburgh, 2001), p. 121.

<sup>2</sup> Daybook originals are held in the Lancashire Record Office [hereafter LancsRO] and include MS 3720, 1789-93 and MS 241, 1794-1805. There are also transcripts of the daybooks held in the Lancaster Public Library, including PT 8891, 1789-93, PT 8373, 1794-1805, and PT 8892 covering 1806-13 and 1814-22. Additionally, the library holds at PT 8372 a transcript of a volume of contracts and specifications for 1791-1820.

<sup>3</sup> LancsRO, MS 3720, December 1792 and February 1793 for references to wheeling plank and barrow estimates and April and May 1793 for references to boats supplied. It was common practice to flood sections of completed canal and to use boats to transport materials to sections still under

continued to supply boats after the canal was complete. A meeting minute for a Canal Company meeting held on 13 April 1802 records that agreement had been reached for John Brockbank to build a packet boat to carry passengers on the canal.<sup>4</sup>

The improved berthing and warehousing on the quay led to increases in trade and to an increased demand for vessels, particularly for the West Indies trade, which undoubtedly was of benefit to Brockbank as one of the principal suppliers. Brockbank also invested in property on the quay, acquiring seven of the building lots offered to investors for development.<sup>5</sup> He also had other property interests, including houses in the Green Area of the town, near to his shipyard, which were occupied by tenants.<sup>6</sup> Brockbank also leased land in Aldcliffe, along the river west of the town, which he farmed. Daybook entries record seasonal farming activities and purchases of seed.<sup>7</sup>

The Lancaster London Traders Association was another organisation with which Brockbank was associated, an organisation again largely consisting of Lancaster merchants. Brockbank recorded visits he made to London with delegations from the committee to develop business connections.<sup>8</sup> The association was clearly rewarding for him. There are records of contracts for the sale of vessels to London owners, for which we see details later, and he received orders to build vessels for the Lancaster-London trade.

A more detailed examination of Brockbank's activities shows the interactions between his core business interests and his other activities.

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construction. See R. Philpotts, *Building the Lancaster Canal* (London, 1989), p. 27.

<sup>4</sup> The National Archives, RAIL 844/231, Lancaster Canal Company minute book, p. 198.

<sup>5</sup> A sketch included at the end of LancsRO, MS 3720 shows the layout of plots on a section of the quay and the names of the owners in 1780.

<sup>6</sup> LancsRO, MS 3720, January 1789 includes a profit and loss account for the houses on the Green Area.

<sup>7</sup> LancsRO, MS 241, April 1796 includes a reminder that a lease on agricultural land in Aldcliffe expires at Candlemass 1798 and MS 3720, February 1791 records the purchase of ten Winchester bushels of seed barley.

<sup>8</sup> LancsRO, MS 3720, March 1789 records a visit to London with George Stuart and Samuel Gregson from 16 to 31 March.

## Shipbuilding

The shipbuilding business was started by Brockbank's father, George Brockbank, a sailmaker and ships' carpenter, in the mid eighteenth century. John was born in 1749 and was only fifteen when his father died prematurely in 1764. John was 40 years of age when the records start in 1789, although it is likely that he assumed control of the business at an earlier age. An estimated number of around 134 vessels were built in the yard in the period from when his father started building to the date of the last vessel to be built in 1817.<sup>9</sup>

The contracts and specifications show that the range of vessels built extended from small open boats to sea-going vessels of over 400 tons. An example of a small open boat was the fourteen-foot fishing boat built for John Marsden of Hornby Castle, which was supplied complete with oars and anchor for a cost of 15s per foot.<sup>10</sup> Open boats were also built as ships' boats for the larger vessels, but the main output, apart from canal barges, was sea-going vessels, flats and sloops for the coasting trade and brigantines, snows and ships for the overseas trade. Many vessels were built to order, but others were speculatively built to fill the spare capacity for which customers had to be found. The Lancaster merchants with interests in the overseas trade were the principal customers for the larger vessels and the flats were acquired by merchants specialising in the local coastal trade. Merchants, who were the most prominent occupational group owning vessels in Lancaster at this time, tended to divide into those with overseas and those with coastal trading interests and they invested accordingly.<sup>11</sup>

The main element of Lancaster's coastal trade was with Liverpool, which was the leading overseas port in the region and acted as a distribution and collection hub for the overseas trade. Coastal vessels operated between Liverpool and the ports on the north-west coast, from North Wales to Carlisle, carrying a mixture of imports and locally-sourced manufactured goods and materials,

<sup>9</sup> E. Kennerley, *The Brockbanks of Lancaster: the story of an eighteenth-century shipbuilding firm* (Lancaster, 1981), pp. 2-3.

<sup>10</sup> LancsRO, MS 3720, May 1797.

<sup>11</sup> See Peter Skidmore, 'The maritime economy of north-west England in the later eighteenth century' (Ph.D. dissertation, Greenwich University, 2009).

often referred to as 'sundries', and returning with agricultural produce, slate and other commodities needed by the larger urban conurbations. Flats were also used in the river trade on the Douglas and the Ribble and on the Mersey and the Dee further south. The flats built by Brockbank for his own use were large vessels, in the top six per cent in terms of tonnage for flats built in the ports of the North West. The registered tonnages of his flats, *Dove*, *Lark* and *Lune*, were 88, 95 and 97 tons respectively.<sup>12</sup> The most popular size ranges were 41-50 tons (15.8 per cent), 51-60 tons (30 per cent), 61-70 tons (18.2 per cent) and 71-80 tons (27.1 per cent).<sup>13</sup> A calculation in Brockbank's daybooks suggests that this was a deliberate policy to maximise the timber-carrying capacity. The calculation compares the carrying capacity of the *Ellens*, a flat of 67 tons, with an unspecified flat of 89 tons and concludes that the smaller vessel could only carry 1600 feet of round oak timber whereas the larger vessel could carry 2136 feet.<sup>14</sup>

The vessels Brockbank built for the Lancaster-London trade were brigantines, of which the vessel *Flora* of 173 tons was a typical example. The contract for the vessel was signed on 26 March 1792 and the vessel was launched on 30 October in the same year. When the vessel was registered, the three subscribing owners were John Stable, a Lancaster merchant, Joseph Sharp, an anchorsmith, and Thomas Rogerson, the master. Joseph Sharp was a business associate of Brockbank, who provided iron goods for his vessels and also shared an interest with him in a forge company, the Force Bank Company, the first example we see of Brockbank's diversification. There were also 27 non-subscribing owners of the *Flora*, of which seventeen were Lancaster merchants, two were merchants from Liverpool and one a merchant from London, showing a broad spread of investment interest in the trade.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> LancsRO, SS5/1, Lancaster shipping register nos *Dove* 23/1797, *Lark* 7/1794 and *Lune* 3/1801.

<sup>13</sup> D.J. Pope, 'The flat', *Mariner's Mirror*, 60 part 1 (1974), pp. 84-91.

<sup>14</sup> LancsRO, MS 3720, February 1793.

<sup>15</sup> LancsRO, SS5/1, Lancaster shipping register no. 10/1792. Subscribing owners had greater responsibilities than non-subscribing owners. They had to be present at the registration to take an oath to swear that the vessel was as described in the surveying officer's certificate and that they and any non-

Apart from the canal boats built for the Lancaster Canal Company, canal boats and 'Ribble flats' were supplied to Gregson & Co., a firm of coal merchants with whom Brockbank was also associated.<sup>16</sup> The investors in Gregson & Co. were listed in an application in 1799 to acquire a piece of land owned by the company in Preston for the purpose of building a lime kiln. The owners were listed as Samuel Gregson, who was the secretary to the Canal Company Committee, Edward Suart the younger, Alex Worswick and John Brockbank.<sup>17</sup> Suart and Worswick were both Lancaster merchants and Suart was another member of the Canal Company Committee. Lime was used as a fertiliser and was in demand by the farming communities of west Lancashire. The canal provided a convenient and low-cost means of carrying limestone from the quarries close to the northern reaches of the canal to Preston, where Wigan coal was readily available to fire the kiln and where there were customers for the lime. The coal was carried from the Wigan coalfield on Ribble flats, which were small enough to be hauled by men up the River Douglas to the Ribble, from where they could either be further hauled to Preston for local use or transferred to the canal. Coal was also carried by the flats under sail to ports and landing places on the north Lancashire and Furness coast.

The characteristics of the coal trade on the canal changed in 1804, when a low level crossing of the Ribble was made at Preston and a tramway built to connect the two sections of the canal, with inclined sections at each end. The southern section ran from Walton Summit, south of Preston, to Wigan, which gave direct access to the coalfield and made the link with the Douglas unnecessary. Coal could then be transported from Wigan to

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subscribing owners were the only owners and had no allegiance to a foreign state. They were also required to provide a bond to vouchsafe that the vessel would only be used in the service for which the certificate was granted and that the certificate would be returned if the vessel was lost or broken up, as laid down in the statute 25 George III cap. 60, s, x and xv.

<sup>16</sup> Lancaster Public Library, PT 8372, contracts and specifications, pp. 62 and 63 make reference to orders for four canal boats and a Ribble flat for Samuel Gregson & Co., placed in October 1797.

<sup>17</sup> The National Archives, RAIL 844/231, Lancaster Canal Company minute book, p. 41.

Preston, Lancaster and beyond under the supervision of the Canal Company throughout. This development also benefited Gregson & Co. when they were selected to supply coal for the steam engines that provided power to haul the wagons up the inclines from the river.<sup>18</sup>

### Shipowning

In common with many other shipbuilders of the day, Brockbank was also a shipowner. A review of the contracts and specifications and of the Lancaster shipping registration records identified Brockbank as being the sole owner of the three flats already discussed and a shareholder in at least six other vessels, all built in his yard.<sup>19</sup> The vessels in which he invested were mainly in the coastal trade and he used them extensively to carry his timber supplies. No records were found of investments in the Lancaster vessels which traded with Norway and the Baltic and which carried important supplies of barks, deals and spars. The one exception to his investment in the coastal trade was the brigantine *Lancaster*, which traded to the West Indies and the southern states of America.<sup>20</sup> The trading activities of another brigantine, the *Lydia*, could not be found, but the owners of the vessel included a Chepstow merchant and a large contingent of Furness residents, which suggests involvement in the longer voyage coasting trade carrying iron or timber.<sup>21</sup>

There are records of Brockbank's vessels arriving with timber from Chester, Conway, Rhuddlan and Chepstow, although they also operated in the general coasting trade. Shipping lists published in the *Lancaster Gazette* show that the *Dove* was involved in trade between Liverpool and Ulverston between 3 July and 1 October 1801 and the *Lark* was operating as a constant trader between Liverpool and Lancaster in the same period carrying

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<sup>18</sup> Philpotts, *Lancaster canal*, pp. 43-44.

<sup>19</sup> The contracts and specifications records are held in Lancaster Public Library, while the shipping registers are held in LancsRO.

<sup>20</sup> LancsRO, Lancaster shipping register no. 64/1786.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 61/1786.

'sundries'.<sup>22</sup> It was common practice for owners with trading interests not to use their vessels exclusively for their own trade. Diversity of use could improve utilisation and merchants in the eighteenth century were noted for buying vessels as a completely separate enterprise to exploit their connections and knowledge of the markets and not as a means of transporting their own goods.<sup>23</sup>

#### Vessel sales

Further evidence of Brockbank's commercial awareness is provided by the varying payment terms under which he sold his vessels. The contracts and specifications records show that the largest vessels, the ships, took about a year to build and vessels built to this schedule were afforded the most generous payment terms, suggesting that this was Brockbank's preferred schedule. An example of these terms was the contract for the 255-ton ship *Aurora*, a vessel built for a group of Lancaster merchants. The contract was signed on 20 March 1804 and stated that the vessel would be completed before 10 April 1805 for the sum of £3150 and that payments would be made in bills at two months date, one for a quarter of the cost with the order, one for a further quarter six months after the launch and the two for the remaining quarters at nine and fifteen months after the launch.<sup>24</sup> For shorter periods, the terms were more onerous. A contract dated 12 December 1798 for the *Richard*, a ship built for another firm of Lancaster merchants, Messrs Edward Salisbury & Co., at a cost of £3158, was required to be completed 'on or before the following April', a period of only four months. For this vessel, a first payment of a third of the cost was to be made when the keel was laid, a third when the bends were on and the final third when the vessel was launched, except that if the vessel was not launched on time the last payment would not become due before the first day of October, a form of penalty clause on the builder.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>22</sup> Shipping lists for Lancaster published in the *Lancaster Gazette* from 1801 are held on microfilm in Lancaster Public Library and are also available at the British Library nineteenth-century newspapers online.

<sup>23</sup> R. Davis, *The rise of the English shipping industry in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries* (London, 1962), pp. 89-91.

<sup>24</sup> Lancaster Public Library, PT 8372, p. 17.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 74.

Generous payment terms understandably applied to speculatively built vessels, part or fully completed. The part-completed ship *Holland*, of 225 tons, was sold to Taylor, Hughan and Penny in London through their agent John Cundale for £2535, for which a contract dated 3 August 1803 applied. The completion date was on or before 3 September of the same year and the payment was to be by two drafts, each for half the cost, with one payable three months after completion and one six months after.<sup>26</sup> A completed ship, the *Creole*, was sold to the same company in 1808, by then known as Taylor Hughan & Co., but again through their agent John Cundale. Payment in this instance was to be made by three bills for equal thirds of the cost, payable at one, two and three months from the date of the contract. The price on this occasion was to be based on the tonnage determined by a London survey at a cost of 12s 10d per ton.<sup>27</sup>

#### Material purchases

Brockbank travelled extensively to buy much of the timber for his yard. Supplies were obtained from local regional forests in north Lancashire, Furness and Westmorland and even closer sources existed in Garstang and Ellel, within fifteen miles of the town. Sources further afield included the Delamere Forest in Cheshire, the forests of North Wales and the Forest of Dean. The daybooks refer to purchases being made in Chester, Conway, Rhuddlan and Chepstow. Offers of '22d per foot alongside the flat' are reported for oak timber lying at Rhuddlan and a 'Mr Meadow offers 1600 oaks and 700 ash within one mile for Conway for £720, payable in two instalments'.<sup>28</sup> Records of timber bought in Chester include over 14,000 feet being bought from two suppliers, Cartwright and Turner and George Walford, with corresponding shipments to Lancaster in the flats *William and Nancy* and *Mary* over the period 27 December 1788 to 24 April 1789.<sup>29</sup> Brockbank generally visited potential suppliers in the Welsh borders and North Wales on a

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<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 106.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 127.

<sup>28</sup> LancsRO, MS 3720, April and June 1789.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, April 1789.

monthly basis. A typical three-day itinerary would include visits to St Asaph, Rhuddlan, Denbigh, Ruthin and Wrexham.<sup>30</sup>

Supplies of balks, deals and spars came from overseas. Timber was imported from Norway and the Baltic into Lancaster using Lancaster vessels owned by local merchants. A daybook entry in 1789 reminds Brockbank of the need to write to Riga for masts to be shipped 'per the *Brittania*',<sup>31</sup> The *Brittania* was a 172-ton brigantine built in Whitby and registered in Lancaster, which had members of the Langton and Birley families of Kirkham amongst its owners. Langton and Birley were sail and twine makers who traded with Riga to obtain supplies of flax and hemp and timber was often carried on the vessels as ballast.<sup>32</sup> There is also a reference to deals being shipped from Longsund (Langesund) in Norway 'per the *Sally*', which was a Lancaster-registered snow of 105 tons owned by nine investors from Furness and a merchant from Chepstow, George Buckle.<sup>33</sup>

Brockbank also bought timber through merchants. There is a reference to Messrs Frime, Wardell, Baldwin, Leigh, Thornton and Backhouse & Co., all of Liverpool, supplying an assortment of timber, including pitch pine logs, elm planks, oak planks, deck planks and poles.<sup>34</sup> Merchants from further afield also appear in the records. A daybook note makes reference to a Mr Emming, a timber merchant in Brewood near Wolverhampton, who was offering oak timber cut and squared and delivered to the canal-side for 1s 9d per foot, with a freight cost of 8d per foot for delivery to Liverpool. Another distant supplier listed was Ellisons of Lincoln, who were timber contractors to the navy and had timber in Bagot Park near Wolsley Bridge and were offering timber at 2s per foot at the canal, with a freight cost of 7d per foot delivered to Liverpool.<sup>35</sup>

A wide net was cast for supplies of timber, which is not surprising since supplies were likely to have been scarce, with

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid., itinerary for 28-30 March 1793.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., April 1789.

<sup>32</sup> F.J. Singleton, 'The flax merchants of Kirkham', *Transactions of the Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire*, 126 (1977), p. 91.

<sup>33</sup> LancsRO, MS 3720, October 1792.

<sup>34</sup> LancsRO, MS 241, April 1804.

<sup>35</sup> LancsRO, MS 3720, September 1789.

many competing demands arising from shipyards busy replacing losses and effecting repairs on vessels damaged in the continuing conflict with France and her allies.

### Conclusions

This analysis of John Brockbank's records has shown the diversity of his business interests and provided a valuable insight into how the business community in the port of Lancaster operated in the late eighteenth century. The mutual trust that existed within the community is amply demonstrated by the confidence with which they invested together in speculative investments when suitable opportunities presented themselves. The key interest of the community was the continued prosperity of the town and its trade, an interest that Brockbank shared and benefited from as a major supplier of vessels and construction timber.

Brockbank was highly motivated and travelled extensively to seek out customers and supplies to ensure the continuing success of his various business interests. The records show that he was a capable businessman and his peers demonstrated their confidence by investing with him in a number of ventures. To regard Brockbank as simply a shipbuilder would do him a great injustice. He was one of the entrepreneurs of the period who through his wide spread of interests and influence made a significant contribution to the development of the town and its prosperity in the late eighteenth century.



## The Liverpool masonic rebellion and the Grand Lodge of Wigan

*David Harrison*

On 22 December 1823 a group of masonic rebels met at the Shakespeare Tavern in Williamson Square in Liverpool to re-establish the 'Antient' Grand Lodge, a Grand Lodge that had officially merged with the 'Moderns' ten years previously. The group of freemasons, led by local tailor Michael Alexander Gage, were rebelling against the central control of London and what they saw as the 'tyranny' of the Duke of Sussex, who had neglected their grievances concerning the ritualistic and administrative practices which had been imposed on them. The rebellion in Liverpool was the culmination of discontent within the large Lancashire province, which seemed to have been simmering since the union of the Antients and the Moderns Grand Lodges in 1813.

The Moderns or 'Premier' Grand Lodge claimed to be the official body of English freemasons; formed in 1717, they had been central to the modernisation of freemasonry. However, in 1751 the Antients Grand Lodge was formed, which rebelled against the Moderns for what they saw as their tampering with freemasonry. Both Grand Lodges existed side by side throughout the remainder of the eighteenth century, operating as rivals, but in 1813 they came together and formed the United Grand Lodge of England, though, as we shall see, some lodges in certain areas of England were not happy with this move. The Antients had different ritualistic views. For example, besides having the usual three craft degrees, they practised a fourth degree called the Royal Arch, though the Moderns used the Royal Arch ritual as an awkward 'add-on' to their third degree. Administration was also different, the two Grand Lodges having different methods of running their lodges: the Antients had travelling warrants, which meant that a lodge could in effect travel around the country, and a

lodge could also die out, but its warrant could be purchased and a lodge set up elsewhere.<sup>1</sup>

#### The background to the Liverpool rebellion

The division of freemasonry during the eighteenth century and its uneasy reunion of 1813 created tension both nationally and in the North West. The Lodge of Friendship no. 277 in Oldham had witnessed disruption a few years after the union, when in 1817 the bickering between the brethren split the lodge in two, the rift only being healed the following year after the direct intervention of the Provincial Grand Master, Francis Dukinfield Astley.<sup>2</sup> Disruptions in Liverpool had previously taken place in 1806, when the Grand Secretary of the Antients Grand Lodge was forced to write a letter to Lodge no. 53b, which met at the Cheshire Coffee House at Old Dock Gate, after receiving a complaint – apparently from other Liverpool Antient lodges – that the lodge was open at unreasonable hours and that several members of the lodge were confined for breaking into a warehouse and stealing. The Grand Secretary requested that the lodge should suspend all masonic business until they were cleared of the charges brought against them, but despite this request, the lodge continued to meet. The mayor of Liverpool became involved when he received a letter from the other Antient lodges of the port, and the Committee of the Masters of the Antient lodges in Liverpool started an official investigation, which concluded that Lodge no. 53b had been involved in ‘unmasonic behaviour’, resulting in their warrant being withdrawn by the Antient Grand Lodge in 1807. The following year, however, despite all the trouble, a number of the brethren of the erased lodge were desperately seeking a new warrant to form a new lodge.<sup>3</sup>

The Liverpool rebellion of 1823 certainly reflected this spirit of internal bickering and ‘unmasonic behaviour’ that had

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<sup>1</sup> See D. Harrison, *The genesis of freemasonry* (Hersham, 2009) and D. Harrison, *The transformation of freemasonry* (Bury St Edmunds, 2010).

<sup>2</sup> Masonic Hall, Oldham, minutes of the Lodge of Friendship no. 277, 26 February 1817-20 May 1818.

<sup>3</sup> Library and Museum of Freemasonry, London, AR/906, Liverpool annual returns, 1797-1809, letters concerning the lodge at the Cheshire Coffee House, Old Dock Gate, no. 53b [erased].

resulted in the closure of Lodge no. 53b. The rebellion was also tainted with an element of isolationism and networking 'cliques' within the lodges; some of the outlying industrial towns, such as Wigan, Warrington and Ashton-in-Makerfield, had strong business links to Liverpool, mainly in relation to the cotton and coal trade, and these towns became the location for lodges which came under the sway of the rebels. Many of the Liverpool lodges, like other lodges based in the neighbouring industrial towns, were also suffering from low membership and in the acrid climate where the threat of closure and the loss of traditional rights caused increasing dissatisfaction amongst the masons, revolt spread quickly, gaining momentum and stamina.

Many of the Liverpool masonic rebels, who were mainly a collective of Liverpool- and Wigan-based tradesmen and merchants, eventually returned to the United Grand Lodge, renouncing their initial grievances and apologising. But a hardcore remained and, under the leadership of the tempestuous Michael Alexander Gage, the rebels created the groundbreaking 'Magna Charta of Masonic Freedom' and formed the Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of England According to the Old Constitutions, which was later to become the Grand Lodge held at Wigan.<sup>4</sup> 'The Magna Charta of Masonic Freedom' was a bold masonic statement for the time, the majority of which was probably written by Gage himself. It reflected the rebels' grievances and outlined their hope for an independent future, but it also reflected Gage's egotistical personality and set him up as a 'founding father' of the re-launch of Antient freemasonry. Ironically, many of the Liverpool-based masonic rebels were originally from outside Liverpool, such as Gage himself, who was born in Norfolk, John Robert Goepel, a jeweller who originated

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<sup>4</sup> The Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of England According to the Old Constitutions first met officially in Liverpool in July 1823, resulting in the declaration of the 'Magna Charta of Masonic Freedom' which was read out in the aforementioned meeting in the Shakespeare Tavern the following December. This was a document which put forward the theme of a new dawn in masonry, free from what seen as the 'despotic power' of the United Grand Lodge. The Grand Lodge first met in Wigan on 1 March 1824 and, with no mention of the Grand Lodge meeting in Liverpool again after 1825, it became known as the Wigan Grand Lodge.

from London, and James Broadhurst, a watchmaker from Great Sankey near Warrington.

Broadhurst had settled in Liverpool in the early 1790s, where he set himself up as a watchmaker. With the outbreak of the French wars, Liverpool was rife with press gangs and Broadhurst was forcibly 'inrolled' into the navy in 1795. He served as an able seaman on the *Namur*, taking part in the decisive battle of Cape St Vincent on 14 February 1797, which was an outstanding victory for the British, revealing the brilliance of Nelson. In December 1800 Broadhurst was transferred to the *San Josef*, one of the two captured Spanish ships from the battle, which displayed Nelson's flag for a time in early 1801. It would be another two years before Broadhurst was released from service and he returned to Liverpool and to watchmaking.<sup>5</sup> In 1817, like many veterans of the Napoleonic wars, he entered into freemasonry, joining the Merchants Lodge, and in 1820 he subsequently joined the Ancient Union Lodge, where he was to serve as Worshipful Master. Both of these lodges included members that became actively involved in the rebellion,<sup>6</sup> and Broadhurst, having served on the *San Josef* when Nelson had hoisted his flag on the ship, would have been seen as a local naval hero, giving him a respect which would have made him an obvious leading figure in the rebellion.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Liverpool Public Library, HO107/561/15, 1841 census returns for Liverpool, where Broadhurst is shown still working as a 'watchmaker', aged 60.

<sup>6</sup> Private collection, family papers of James Broadhurst. See also Garston Mason Hall, Liverpool, minutes of the Ancient Union Lodge no. 203, 1795-1835.

<sup>7</sup> Nelson hoisted his flag on the *San Josef* in January 1801, after arriving at Plymouth, but transferred his flag to the *St George* less than a month later. The respect for able seamen who had served under Nelson is displayed in early nineteenth-century literature, such as by Herman Melville in *Redburn*, based on his visit to Liverpool in 1839. On arriving in Liverpool docks, the book gives a description of the 'Dock-Wall Beggars'; the sailors walking past the beggars ignore them, except for one, 'an old man-of-war's man, who had lost his leg at the battle of Trafalgar', his wooden leg being made from the oak timbers of the *Victory*. This beggar was respected by the sailors and 'plenty of pennies were tost into his poor-box' by them. See Herman Melville, *Redburn* (Harmondsworth, 1987), p. 261. A reference to the status of being a naval hero is also made in Charles Dickens, *David Copperfield*, by Mr Micawber, a character who is down on his luck but who is also honest. Micawber describes

Broadhurst, like Gage, took an active part in the Provincial Grand Lodge meetings and was quick to join his fellow masonic tradesmen in the rebellion, sharing the same grievances and freely giving his signature to the document which outlined these issues. The discontent had developed a year after Broadhurst had become a freemason and quickly gathered pace, the Lancashire Province suffering in part due to the neglect of its Provincial Grand Master, Francis Dukinfield Astley, who never took action in Liverpool or Wigan to defuse the situation. Perhaps, like his fellow tradesmen, after surviving the Napoleonic wars and the hardships of the early decades of the nineteenth century, Broadhurst sought equality and freedom of speech, which was perhaps the initial attraction to a society which he felt held those qualities.

At a Provincial Grand Lodge meeting held at Ye Spread eagle Inn, Hanging Ditch, Manchester, during October 1818, a motion was passed which declared that any lodge whose membership was reduced to less than seven should not be considered as a regular lodge and the warrant be declared void. This motion, which was seen as a move to correct a defect in the 'New Constitution-Book', was actually made by Michael Alexander Gage, with the overwhelming support of his fellow brethren. This motion was then duly passed on to the Board of General Purposes, but instead of it being presented by them to the United Grand Lodge, the motion was not reported and the Board remained silent on the issue. Certain Liverpool lodges, such as the Ancient Union Lodge no. 348, an old Antient lodge, only had ten members at the time and the lodge had held an emergency meeting prior to the Provincial Grand Lodge meeting, sending a brother to attend to keep an eye on the proceedings.<sup>8</sup>

Many lodges at this time, especially in the industrial areas of Lancashire, had suffered a decline in the wake of the Unlawful Societies Act of 1799;<sup>9</sup> freemasonry suffered stagnation in the

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himself as 'a gallant and eminent naval Hero'. See Charles Dickens, *David Copperfield* (New York, 1863), p. 138.

<sup>8</sup> E.B. Beesley, *The history of the Wigan Grand Lodge* (Leeds, 1920), pp. 2-4.

<sup>9</sup> See David Harrison and John Belton, 'Society in Flux', *Researching British Freemasonry 1717-2017: Journal for the Centre of Research into Freemasonry and Fraternalism*, 3 (2010), pp. 71-99, and David Harrison,

province, with only a scatter of new lodges actually being founded in the area during the early decades of the nineteenth century.<sup>10</sup> When the Unlawful Societies Act had been passed in July 1799, freemasonry was unavoidably affected, masonry having to adapt to what many saw as oppressive legislation. The original proposal of the bill would have completely banned freemasonry, along with other oath-taking secret societies, but the Earl of Moira and other leading freemasons from both the Moderns, the Antients and the Scottish Grand Lodge prevailed upon the prime minister, William Pitt the Younger, to amend it by exempting masonic lodges 'sitting by the precise authorization of a Grand Lodge and under its direct superintendence'.<sup>11</sup>

In the wake of the Act, the decline continued, especially in the industrial areas of Lancashire, and the majority of the Liverpool lodges, some suffering more than others from low attendance, bonded together. The low attendance led some freemasons to join other lodges as well as their existing lodge, such as when Broadhurst and some other brethren from the Merchants Lodge – who were to play an important role in the rebellion – joined the Ancient Union Lodge, a move which not only ensured the survival of the struggling lodge but would also have created greater bonding between the brethren.<sup>12</sup>

In September 1819 it was proposed by Gage that a letter should be drafted,<sup>13</sup> addressed to the Grand Master himself – the Duke of Sussex – which would thus outline the grievances of Gage and his supporters, focussing on the fact that the motion

'Freemasonry, industry and charity: the local community and the working man', *Journal of the Institute of Volunteering Research*, 5 no. 1 (winter 2002), pp. 33-45.

<sup>10</sup> A somewhat rare example of a surviving lodge that emerged during this stagnant period was the Blackburn-based Lodge of Perseverance no. 345, constituted in 1815, a lodge that certainly lived up to its name.

<sup>11</sup> See L.A. Seemungal, 'The Edinburgh rebellion, 1808-13', *Ars Quatuor Coronatorum*, 86 (1973), pp. 322-25. See also Harrison, *Transformation*, pp. 5-10.

<sup>12</sup> See Library and Museum of Freemasonry, London, a list of the members of the Ancient Union Lodge no. 203, 1792-1887, of the Harmonic Lodge no. 216, 1796-1836, and of St George's Lodge of Harmony no. 32, 1786-1836, on cd-rom GRA/ANT/UNI.

<sup>13</sup> Beesley, *Wigan Grand Lodge*, pp. 4-5.

passed during the meeting the previous year had not been presented by the Board of General Purposes to the United Grand Lodge. In the letter to the Duke, the rebels also referred to an incident in Bath, where petitions for Royal Arch Chapters were dismissed by the Grand Chapter because it was 'not desirable to make the Number of Chapters in any place equal to the Number of Lodges'.<sup>14</sup>

The rebels seized upon this example and, being of Antient persuasion, they indicated that they saw the Royal Arch as part of Craft Masonry and the rejection of the petitions as an abuse of power. The Duke of Sussex, however, did not reply to the letter. Indeed, the masonic historian Beesley suggests that the letter may have been destroyed as it was addressed directly to the Duke of Sussex and not addressed through the normal administrative channels of the United Grand Lodge.<sup>15</sup> The fact that there was no reply only intensified the anger of the rebels and culminated in a decisive meeting in the Castle Inn, north Liverpool, on 26 November 1821, which would launch the revival of the Antients.

The Duke seemed to have been quite dismissive of any disagreeable elements within freemasonry and had little sympathy for rebels within the society. Such was the case with the outspoken freemason Dr George Oliver, whose removal from his provincial office was engineered by the Duke after Oliver incurred his dislike.<sup>16</sup> Gage's letter to the Duke had been extremely direct and revealed the anger felt by the rebels, complaining how certain Modern practices were being enforced and how new rules concerning the Royal Arch conflicted with the 'Ancient Landmarks'. Gage and his fellow rebels had given the Duke plenty of time to reply, but with no response, it could be said that the Duke had played into their hands.

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<sup>14</sup> A copy of this letter, entitled an 'Address to His Royal Highness Prince Augustus Frederick, The Duke of Sussex, Grand Master of the United Grand Lodge of Ancient Free and Accepted Masons of England', is to be found in Beesley, *Wigan Grand Lodge*, p. 132.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5.

<sup>16</sup> R.S.E. Sandbach, *Priest and freemason: the life of George Oliver* (Northampton, 1988), p. 99.

This period was certainly a sensitive one and certain local lodges had their own, slightly different, almost eccentric practices. Hampered by the increasing neglect of the Provincial Grand Master within the rebellious areas of Liverpool and Wigan, and with a growing feeling that their rights in the society were being eroded by the tampering of London-based officials, the Liverpool rebels grew extremely sensitive to the transition of the union regarding the Antient and Modern practices. Trouble had been simmering slowly during 1819, with disruptions in Liverpool in the Merchants Lodge, the Sea Captains Lodge and the Lodge of Harmony, as well as in Lodge no. 394 in Chorley, near Wigan. It had been thought that the trouble had been settled by a visit from the Provincial Grand Secretary in May of that year, but it was just a sign of more serious trouble to come.

The decisive meeting at the Castle Inn, north Liverpool, in November 1821 set the final scene for rebellion. A document was drafted with 34 signatures, including Gage and Broadhurst, outlining the dissatisfaction felt by the rebels. The other lodges included in the rebellion were Lodge no. 74 and Sincerity Lodge no. 486 (both based in Wigan), as well as a number of brethren from the Liverpool-based Mariners Lodge no. 466, the Ancient Union Lodge, the Sea Captains Lodge and the Merchants Lodge.

Broadhurst was the Worshipful Master of the Ancient Union Lodge in 1821 and, along with a number of brethren including William Walker and Thomas Berry, he represented their lodge in the rebellion, adding their signatures to the Castle Inn document. Apart from being the senior member of his lodge, Broadhurst became vital in gaining support for the rebellion from the Ancient Union Lodge, and would have been secure in gaining an important role in the rebel Grand Lodge. Representatives from Broadhurst's original lodge, the Merchants Lodge, included liquor merchant John Eltonhead – who later was connected to the Castle Inn as landlord<sup>17</sup> – tailor Daniel Mackay, tanner John Manifold and excise man Samuel Money Blogg.

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<sup>17</sup> *Liverpool Mercury*, 16 May 1823, in which is found an entry for 'A well accustomed Inn, known by the name of the Castle Inn North, situated on the West side of Scotland Road, now in the occupation of Mr John Eltonhead, with good stabling for 7-8 horses and rooms over'. *Liverpool Mercury*, 4 November 1825 recorded the death of Mary Kirby, age 67, widow of Thomas

The 34 brethren who signed the document were subsequently suspended by the United Grand Lodge and Gage's lodge, Lodge no. 31, was erased, an action that mirrored the erasing of Lodge no. 53b in 1807. This action created further isolation for the suspended rebels, as they were not allowed to visit any other lodges, ultimately providing greater bonding between them and giving them further cause to complain about the 'tyranny' of the United Grand Lodge. The dissent spread rapidly through Liverpool as certain lodges began to support their fellow brethren. The Liverpool-based Sea Captains Lodge no. 140 threatened to separate itself entirely from the United Grand Lodge if Lodge no. 31 was not re-instated, and by the middle of 1822 an increased number of 65 brethren from Liverpool and Wigan were recorded as being suspended.

Gage's Lodge no. 31 had been the 'senior' lodge amongst the Antient lodges in Liverpool, having the oldest warrant and therefore having the authority to settle disputes that occurred within other Antient lodges within the town. The lodge had been called Lodge no. 20 before the union, but had been subsequently re-numbered and, in doing so, had lost some of its local prestige. This re-numbering was obviously a sore point for the lodge, as they reverted back to no. 20 on the creation of the rebel Grand Lodge in 1823. The warrant for Lodge no. 20 had been purchased by a number of brethren from the Ancient Union Lodge shortly after it was founded in 1792 and, with the original warrant dating from 1753, Lodge no. 20 became the oldest Antient lodge operating in Liverpool, pre-dating and thus displacing the local St George's Lodge, which, despite being founded in 1786, had a warrant which dated from 1755.<sup>18</sup> St George's Lodge became extremely aggressive in its attitude to the rebels, particularly against the conduct of Gage and Lodge no. 31; when examining the makeup and membership of the St. George's Lodge, a greater number of local gentlemen are evident, whereas in Lodge no. 31

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Kirby and mother of John Eltonhead, Castle Inn North, on 29 October. Private collection, family papers of John Eltonhead.

<sup>18</sup> St George's Lodge of Harmony no. 32 had been no. 25c, changing to no. 38 in 1814. It was renumbered again to no. 35 in 1832 and changed to its present number in 1863. See <http://freemasonry.dept.shef.ac.uk/lane/>, Lane's masonic records, 1717-1894, online, accessed 25 January 2010.

the membership included far more tradesmen, such as Gage, who was a tailor. There was a clear issue of class within the dispute and this may explain the anger felt by Gage, a man with aspirations.

On 2 December 1822 a meeting was held at the Lodge of Harmony, no. 385, at the Magpie and Stump in Key Street, Liverpool. The Lodge of Harmony, like the Ancient Union Lodge, had belonged to the Antient Grand Lodge before the union in 1813. This heated meeting had visitors from the Merchant, Mariners and Ancient Union Lodges, all local Liverpool lodges which had certain members involved in the rebellion. The meeting revealed a lodge in crisis, as the Worshipful Master and Wardens were appointed during an emergency meeting and not elected or installed as they usually were. The result of this particular gathering was the wish by all the members present to write a letter to the United Grand Lodge declaring the present state of the Lodge of Harmony. It seems that the lodge decided against the rebellion and kept its distance, deciding to give support to the United Grand Lodge of England. Despite this show of loyalty, the Worshipful Master at the time of the meeting was suspended in 1824 for twelve months and another brother for seven years for what is described as 'unmasonic conduct'.

On 5 March 1823 the United Grand Lodge finally expelled 26 brethren, stating that the rebels had 'been found guilty of various Acts of insubordination against the Authority of the Grand Lodge, and having been summoned to show cause why they should not therefore be expelled from the Craft; have not sent any sufficient apology for their late misconduct'. Their rebellious activities were described as an 'insult' by the United Grand Lodge and the brethren, having 'violated the laws of the Craft', were ostracized.<sup>19</sup> Gage and his followers were now free to proceed with their master-plan – to resurrect the Antient Grand Lodge. The plan was certainly to go national and to spread the influence of the rebel Grand Lodge and it was declared that the causes which led to the re-establishment of the Antient Grand Lodge were to be advertised in four of the London papers, a public declaration which would be guaranteed to reach the eyes of the leaders of the United Grand Lodge.

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<sup>19</sup> Beesley, *Wigan Grand Lodge*, pp. 16-19.

## The Liverpool rebellion of 1823-25

Despite its long gestation, the Liverpool phase of the rebellion was quite brief. Gage took on the role of Deputy Grand Master, while George Woodcock esquire was duly elected as the Grand Master of the rebel Grand Lodge. Woodcock was a prominent member of the Barnsley-based Friendly Lodge no. 557 and fully supported the 'Antient landmarks of Freemasonry'. He was in correspondence with Gage and Lodge no. 31 in Liverpool from early 1823, Woodcock writing an eight-part resolution which outlined the 'sorrow and regret at these severe measures which the G. Lodge has thought it proper to exercise towards Twenty-six respectable members of the Society'.<sup>20</sup> Woodcock struck up a long-distance friendship with Gage, with the new Grand Master seeking advice from him on numerous occasions in regard of the administration of the rebel Grand Lodge. The correspondence continued between them until Gage distanced himself from freemasonry; in a letter to Woodcock dated June 1828, Gage declined meeting Woodcock and the brethren of the Barnsley lodge in Manchester and also declined an invitation by Woodcock to spend Christmas at Barnsley. Gage also outlined in the letter how he had been putting masonry before business for too long and that he must now start devoting himself to the inhabitants of Liverpool and concentrate on his 'plan of Liverpool'.<sup>21</sup>

George Woodcock was a member of a local banking family and was listed as a gentleman in the minutes of his local lodge meetings, but he actually worked as a bank manager for a fellow member of the lodge, John Staniforth Beckett. Despite this, Woodcock appears to have been in control of the lodge and certainly engineered the lodge joining the rebellion, a decision that split his lodge in two, mirroring the incident which had occurred at the Lodge of Friendship in Oldham. Woodcock certainly shared the same spirit as his fellow rebels in Liverpool and Wigan, though events were soon to dampen the fire of revolt.

The new Grand Lodge soon ran into trouble; at a meeting of the Grand Lodge held at the Cross Keys in Wigan on

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<sup>20</sup> Will Read, 'The spurious lodge and chapter at Barnsley', *Ars Quatuor Coronatorum*, 90 (1978), pp. 1-36; the quotations are from p. 10.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 26, 31.

23 June, 1824, the ex-Grand Secretary John Eden was 'for ever expelled...in consequence of his having Embezzled the funds of the Grand Lodge for his contempt of Summonses and other unmasonic conduct'.<sup>22</sup> Eden had been a member of Gage's lodge and this would have been a personal blow to the leader and would have created difficulties for the financial status in the early days of the rebel Grand Lodge. Part of the Grand Secretary's job would have been to assist in looking after funds and Eden had certainly abused the trust that had been placed in him. The returns paid to the Grand Secretary from certain lodges under the sway of the new rebel Grand Lodge, such as the Barnsley lodge, had not been passed on to the Grand Treasurer, Eden fraudulently using the funds. It seems that this incident had shaken the fledgling rebel Grand Lodge, deeply affecting the brethren, some of whom became quickly disenchanted.

During the same year, 1824, James Broadhurst turned his back on the rebellion and conformed. Along with a number of other rebels, Broadhurst presented an apology to the United Grand Lodge, which brought them back into the fold. He immediately rejoined the Merchants Lodge, but his payments ceased in 1826, the experience of the rebellion and the subsequent fall-out perhaps affecting the camaraderie of the lodge. Out of the original rebels representing the Ancient Union Lodge, only Thomas Berry remained to become an active member of what would become the Grand Lodge of Wigan, Berry having attended the first meeting of the rebel Grand Lodge at the Shakespeare Tavern in Liverpool in 1823 and serving as Secretary in the March meeting of 1825.

George Woodcock's Barnsley lodge became alarmed at the financial irregularities occurring in the administration of the rebel Grand Lodge and formally separated themselves from their Lancashire brethren in 1827, Woodcock going on to resign his office as Grand Master.<sup>23</sup> The Barnsley lodge – being the only Yorkshire lodge in support of the rebellion – thus styled themselves 'The Yorkshire Lodge of Ancient Masons' and Woodcock continued to lead his lodge in isolation until his death

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<sup>22</sup> Beesley, *Wigan Grand Lodge*, pp. 46-47.

<sup>23</sup> Read, 'The spurious lodge', pp. 16-17.

in 1842.<sup>24</sup> Gage himself seems slowly to have distanced himself from the rebels; it was as if the Liverpool brethren became disillusioned, the energy of the rebels quickly ebbing away.

The focus shifts to Wigan: the Wigan Grand Lodge

The masonic rebellion in Liverpool had included from the outset a number of Wigan lodges and after 1825 no minutes exist of the Grand Lodge meeting in Liverpool, though in Gage's resignation letter, written in 1842, he stated that he had 'not had the pleasure of meeting the Grand Lodge, nor in fact any private Lodge during the last fifteen years'.<sup>25</sup>

The make-up of the Liverpool and Wigan lodges that were involved in the rebellion were similar, with the majority being tradesmen and merchants, all sharing the same grievances, but the shift from Liverpool to Wigan was to become a permanent one. Another leading Liverpool rebel, John Eltonhead, returned to the United Grand Lodge on 7 March 1827,<sup>26</sup> the same year that Gage had stated that he had last attended a lodge. With these two leading rebels gone, it left only a handful of active Liverpool brethren, such as Thomas Page, Thomas Berry and John Robert Goepel, mixing with an influx of leading Wigan rebels, such as John Atherton, Ralph Ball and Robert Bolton.

Despite the abolition of slavery in 1807, the port of Liverpool continued to grow as merchants and investors found new trade and new business. William Ewart, the Liverpool broker and a leading member of the Merchants Lodge, became a founder of the committee to support the proposition of the building of the Liverpool and Manchester railway.<sup>27</sup> On 15 September 1830 the Liverpool and Manchester railway was finally opened by the freemason the Duke of Wellington, an event attended by an array of local dignitaries; it connected the port not only to the cotton-producing town of Manchester but also to the whole of the

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<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 23.

<sup>25</sup> An excerpt from Michael Alexander Gage's resignation letter, 10 June 1842, quoted in Beesley, *Wigan Grand Lodge*, p. 85.

<sup>26</sup> M.J. Spurr, 'The Liverpool rebellion', *Ars Quatuor Coronatorum*, 85 (1972), pp. 29-60; the quotations are from p. 42.

<sup>27</sup> John Macnab, *History of the Merchants Lodge no. 241, Liverpool, 1780-2004* (2<sup>nd</sup> edition, Liverpool, 2004), p. 34.

industrial north-west of England, bringing the area closer together, cutting down the transport time between Liverpool and Manchester to an hour.

The railway also brought social and business networking closer together and especially aided the cotton, coal and iron-making industries in the area.<sup>28</sup> The north-west of England soon became criss-crossed by interlinking railways and within a few years of the opening of the Liverpool to Manchester railway, the cotton- and coal-producing town of Wigan became connected, this new easy transport bringing the masonic rebels closer together. Indeed, it was not long after the introduction of the railways that the masonic rebels moved their centre of operations to Wigan, though a number of Liverpool brethren still attended. The rebellion in Liverpool had struck a blow to freemasonry in the port, but, like masonry in its neighbouring industrial towns, by the mid nineteenth century the society had started to expand. The newly-constructed Provincial Grand Lodge of West Lancashire – formed in 1826 to make the large province of Lancashire more manageable – soon made its presence known within Liverpool and prominent local figures, such as Robertson Gladstone, were appearing in the membership list of St George's Lodge of Harmony – especially as the lodge could now claim to be the oldest surviving lodge in the area.<sup>29</sup>

There is a large gap in the minute book from the last known meeting in Liverpool in 1825 until 13 April 1838, when the Grand Lodge suddenly met in Wigan at the Hole I'th' Wall tavern in the Market Place. Gage was not in attendance, but original rebels Thomas Page, from the Antient Liverpool Lodge no. 31, (renumbered to its original pre-union number of 20 after the rebellion) and Robert Bolton, from the Wigan-based Sincerity Lodge no. 492, were present. A new Grand Master, William Farrimond esquire, was elected, officially replacing George Woodcock who – according to the surviving minutes – had never actually attended the Grand Lodge meetings. The rebel Grand

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<sup>28</sup> Anon., 'The Manchester and Liverpool rail-road', *Monthly supplement of the Penny Magazine of the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge*, March 31 to April 30 1833, pp. 1-3.

<sup>29</sup> Masonic Hall, Hope Street, Liverpool, list of members for Lodge no. 35 held at the Adelphi Hotel, Liverpool, 18 December 1839.

Lodge began a new phase as it took on more of a Wigan identity, gradually severing its ties with Liverpool.

After 1838, the meetings of the Grand Lodge took place regularly every quarter in various Wigan taverns, some of which were run by its own freemasons, such as the Hole I'th' Wall which was run by brother Thomas Johnson, the Banker's Arms, which was run by brother Thomas Bolton, and the Angel Inn in nearby Ashton-in-Makerfield, which was run by brother Timothy Turton. Wigan was well placed in the centre of south Lancashire and, at its height in the early 1840s, the Wigan Grand Lodge had lodges in Wigan, Liverpool, Ashton-in-Makerfield and Warrington and had been in close contact with an Antient lodge in Lynn Regis in Norfolk – which may have had more to do with Gage having originated from there and having continuing links with the town.<sup>30</sup>

In mid 1842 Gage finally resigned from the Wigan Grand Lodge, angry at not being asked to review the re-numbering of lodges and the granting of new warrants, a decision that had been taken in a meeting held on 15 August 1838. The Wigan-based Sincerity Lodge became Lodge no. 1 and the Liverpool Lodge no. 20 became Lodge no. 2, a move which may have added to Gage's anger and revealed how Wigan had become more dominant and more pro-active in the administration. This new pro-active stance by the new Wigan-based Grand Lodge began to pay off and it slowly began to spread its influence, having five lodges under its jurisdiction by the early 1840s, though George Woodcock's Barnsley lodge had declined an offer to join the Wigan Grand Lodge and a lodge in nearby Warrington, called the Lodge of Knowledge, was relatively short-lived. Two more lodges were given warrants, one based in nearby Ashton-in-Makerfield named Harmony and Perseverance, the other, named the St Paul's Lodge, which was based in Ashton-under-Lyne. All of these lodges except for the Lodge of Sincerity seem to have disappeared by the 1860s.

Gage had always been given the title of Deputy Grand Master, courteously being entrusted with the task of overseeing some of the activities by correspondence. However, he was deeply upset that the 'Magna Charta' had been breached, as it had

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<sup>30</sup> Liverpool Public Library, HO153/2183, 1851 census returns for Liverpool.

originally stated that on the creation of the rebel Grand Lodge, all lodge numbers of 1823 reverted back to their pre-union numbers before 1813. On 10 June 1842 Gage wrote a lengthy letter of resignation, in which he outlined his feelings at not being asked to review the decision of the new warrants. He was a proud man and, as he was the person who had instigated the Liverpool masonic rebellion, he appears to have been hurt by the decision. In the letter, he made references to the 'Magna Charta of Masonic Freedom', reminding the brethren of their origins: 'It was therefore from an ardent desire to hand down to posterity the Ancient Landmarks Customs and Usage of Masonry that we re-established the Ancient Grand Lodge[;] this act however could only justified by a strict Adherence on our parts to the Ancient Laws Landmarks and Usages of Masonry'.<sup>31</sup> Gage also sternly refused a request to write a pamphlet detailing the causes of the rebellion. Despite Gage's coldness, he was still the spiritual leader of the Antients and in the reply to his resignation, Gage was described by the Grand Master as a man who 'the tyrants in the Masonic world would have always looked upon with dread'.<sup>32</sup>

Perhaps Gage's opinion was not sought by the Wigan Grand Lodge in fear of his reaction to the changes. The 'Magna Charta of Masonic Freedom', originally written under the influence of Gage, was re-written in 1839. This re-organisation, decided by a Grand Lodge now dominated by Wigan brethren, began to forge a new identity. The original rebels, Gage in particular, were still held in high regard, seen as the founding fathers of the resurrected Antient Grand Lodge and Robert Bolton's reply to Gage's resignation, though tinted with expectation and hinting at Gage's lack of interest, effectively left the door open for his return. Gage, however, never came back and never replied to Bolton's letter. Increasing the isolation of the Wigan Grand Lodge, Thomas Page and John Robert Goepel, two of the last remaining original rebels from Liverpool, returned to the United Grand Lodge on 1 December 1858.<sup>33</sup> Like Gage,

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<sup>31</sup> An excerpt from Michael Alexander Gage's resignation letter, 10 June 1842, quoted in Beesley, *Wigan Grand Lodge*, p. 84.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 83-88.

<sup>33</sup> Spurr, 'The Liverpool rebellion', p. 42.

Goepel had dramatically changed his career, going from a jeweller to a dentist after the masonic rebellion, a profession that he engaged in until his death in 1862.<sup>34</sup>

Gage was by this time older and was still based in Liverpool and though seemingly showing a lack of interest in masonry, he still held a sense of importance when it came to his position within the Wigan Grand Lodge. His lack of interest may have been as a result of his close colleague John Eden's embezzlement of masonic funds or possibly of the re-location of the Grand Lodge to Wigan or perhaps it may be attributed to Gage having a family and changing his career from a tailor to a land surveyor, going on to publish a map of Liverpool which was based on his surveys of the port in 1836.<sup>35</sup> He was, however, to remain a rebel to the end, effectively rebelling against the rebels. Gage was always an obstinate man, passionate, arrogant and confident in the face of opposition, and his fight for the cause of Antient freemasonry had been extremely fierce and pro-active.

Gage held the respect of his fellow rebels and without him, there would have been no Wigan Grand Lodge, his leadership influencing its original design. He had aspired to greater things – Gage, a mere tailor, having written to the Duke of Sussex complaining about the way certain brethren in Liverpool were being mistreated, an excellent example of an attempt to break down the class and social divisions. Gage died in 1867 aged 79, though as his ex-masonic rebel colleagues had noted, he would

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<sup>34</sup> Liverpool Public Library, HO107/2180, 1851 census returns for Liverpool, give Goepel's occupation as 'dentist' aged 50 and his birthplace as London. However, Liverpool Public Library, HO107/556/28, 1841 census returns for Liverpool, list Goepel as a 'jeweller' aged 40. John Robert Goepel, Liverpool, is listed amongst the volume of deaths registered in the June quarter 1862, ref. 8b 113.

<sup>35</sup> Liverpool Public Library, HO153/2183, 1851 census returns for Liverpool, list Gage's occupation as a 'civil engineer'. Liverpool Public Library, 283PET2/21, parish register of St Peter's church, Liverpool, has an entry for the baptism of 'William Henry, son of Michael Alexander Gage, Land Surveyor, & his wife Sarah', 25 December 1833. Liverpool Public Library, HO107/558/3, 1841 census returns for Liverpool, show Gage as a 'land surveyor'. A map of Liverpool published in 1836 was based on Gage's expert survey of the port; see Maritime Archives and Library, drawer Z/F3, Liverpool map, 1836, M.A. Gage.

continue to inspire the Wigan Grand Lodge.<sup>36</sup> The success of the rebellion – albeit on a local basis – is revealed in its organization and the pro-active stance of the Wigan Grand Lodge, its effect on the United Grand Lodge also proving permanent, with the rather large Lancashire province being divided in two shortly after the rebellion, creating the more manageable western and eastern divisions.

#### The end of the Antients

The minute book for the Wigan Grand Lodge ends in 1866, though James Miller, who wrote his memories of the Lodge of Sincerity in the 1950s, stated that the Grand Lodge of Wigan survived much longer. It supervised the last remaining lodge, the Lodge of Sincerity, its last Grand Master being John Mort, who served as Grand Master from 1886 until the lodge returned to the United Grand Lodge in 1913. James Miller was a young man when he was initiated into the Lodge of Sincerity in 1908. He followed his father, his grandfather and great-grandfather in becoming a freemason under the Wigan Grand Lodge and would become instrumental in the survival of its memory. Miller discusses in his memoirs the festival of St John, which was celebrated by all lodges before the union, and mentions the practice of the Royal Arch, its apron being worn by the Grand Master, Mort, at all times. The Knights Templar was also practised and Miller mentions a sickness and burial society within the lodge, which may be a continuation of the ‘funeral fund’ which was mentioned in the minutes of the Wigan Grand Lodge in 1839.

John Mort seems to have held the Grand Lodge of Wigan together during its final years; he appears in the Wigan Grand Lodge minutes for the first time in 1866, when Peter Seddon was Grand Master. Mort, like Miller, passed on his memories of the Wigan Grand Lodge, enabling Eustace Beesley to write his history in 1920. According to Miller, Mort was initiated in 1864, served as Master of the Sincerity Lodge on a number of occasions and became the last Grand Master in 1886. Miller paints a cosy picture of an isolated lodge filled with friends and family members; Mort’s

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<sup>36</sup> See the volume of deaths registered in the March quarter 1867, ref. 8b 331, for the death of Michael Alexander Gage, aged 79, West Derby, Liverpool.

son, also called John, was a member, and Miller's uncle, Richard Warburton, was initiated on the same day as Miller. Miller recalled the merriment of the lodge festive board, where each member of the lodge was allowed one drink from the lodge funds. When the drinks had been consumed, the Worshipful Master would call out 'mortar' and a steward would take the trowel around so each brother could give his contribution to the next round of drinks. After these funds had been exhausted, a cry for 'more mortar' would ensure further drinks, accompanied by the fine tenor voice of John Mort junior, who was also a member of the Wigan parish church choir.

These eccentricities reflect the lodge as an apparent time capsule, surviving in isolation, having an independent and inward-looking attitude. The drinking and socialising seemed to have created a deep bond between the brethren, keeping the last remaining lodge alive. The Grand Lodge had met at numerous inns and taverns around Wigan, some meetings taking place in the centre of Wigan, such as at the infamous Dog Inn at Wigan Market Place, where the Grand Lodge met on a number of occasions in 1839, though other meetings took place on the periphery of the Wigan area, such as the Angel Inn in Ashton-in-Makerfield. These inns were vital as important meeting places for the Grand Lodge and many of them, like the Angel Inn and the Rope & Anchor Inn in Scholes, were run by fellow brethren, enabling the Grand Lodge to establish regular meetings, ensuring its continuity and allowing it to carry on its own unique culture.

As the Wigan Grand Lodge descended into solitary isolation, 'regular' freemasonry under the United Grand Lodge of England flourished in Wigan; the Provincial Grand Lodge of West Lancashire met there in October 1886 and in November of the same year the Wigan freemasons under the United Grand Lodge celebrated the centenary of the Lodge of Antiquity no. 178. More visits by prominent figures within the United Grand Lodge followed; in October 1889 the freemasons accompanied the mayor to church and a sermon was given by the Grand Chaplain of England, the Reverend T. Barton Spencer. Perhaps these very public displays by the ever more powerful and confident United Grand Lodge sent a message to the dwindling Wigan Grand Lodge.

Indeed, 'regular' freemasonry in Wigan, as in other industrial towns at the time, attracted the local aristocracy. One such local aristocrat was James Ludovic Lindsay, FRS, who resided at Haigh Hall, an elegant neo-classical manor house on the outskirts of Wigan.<sup>37</sup> Lindsay was to become the 26<sup>th</sup> Earl of Crawford and 9<sup>th</sup> Earl of Balcarres and he founded the Lindsay Lodge no. 1335 in 1870, shortly before serving as Conservative MP for Wigan from 1874 to 1880. Lindsay became a central figure for freemasonry in Wigan, becoming involved in the development of local education and charity; his family had been concerned in the opening of the local Mining and Mechanical School and Lord Lindsay had been involved in the building of local school houses.<sup>38</sup> Lindsay became a celebrated astronomer and, together with his father, they had built up one of the most impressive libraries in Britain, the 'Bibliotheca Lindesiana'. In 1910 Haigh Hall played host to a visiting contingent of Manchester masons, again confirming the power and status of 'regular' freemasonry against the increasingly secluded Wigan Grand Lodge.

Miller was to witness the end of the Grand Lodge of Wigan, its last surviving lodge being isolated and alone, and as a relic of the Antients of the eighteenth century it was not recognised by other local masonic lodges. Despite the ruling passed in the early days of the Grand Lodge that it was forbidden to discuss the United Grand Lodge, Miller mentions that 'heated arguments' on re-joining had been going on for two or three years leading up to 1913. The matter was brought to a head, as Miller

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<sup>37</sup> James Ludovic Lindsay was first initiated into the Isaac Newton University Lodge no. 859 in Cambridge in February 1866. He subsequently joined a number of other lodges, including the Prince of Wales Lodge no. 259 in 1868 and the Lodge of Edinburgh no. 1 in 1870. Lord Lindsay – as he was styled from his grandfather's death in 1869 until he succeeded to his later titles on his father's death in 1880 – also served as Deputy Provincial Grand Master for West Lancashire.

<sup>38</sup> See Cornelius McLeod Percy, *History of the Mining and Technical School, Wigan* (Wigan, 1900). The agent of the Earl of Crawford had chaired a public meeting in 1857, which duly decided that the Wigan mining and mechanical school should be established. Many public buildings in the Wigan area bore the distinctive Crawford and Balcarres mark on the date stone; an example of one such building is the school house on Red Rock Lane near Haigh village, which was built in 1871.

puts it, in 1912, when an unnamed newly-raised brother received an invitation to visit a masonic lodge under the United Grand Lodge of England. On presenting himself to the lodge and showing his certificate, he was refused admission, which led him to write a rather abusive letter, calling the lodge a bogus institution and stating that he was the victim of a fraud. This incident seemed to confirm that the Sincerity Lodge, the last surviving lodge under the Grand Lodge of Wigan, had a bleak future and that if it was to survive, it needed to adapt.

A meeting between both Grand Lodges was sought and the Sincerity Lodge was visited by Worshipful Brother J.D. Murrey from the Provincial Grand Lodge, who was satisfied with what he witnessed of the working of the lodge. Miller recounts that developments moved quickly, with decisions that the lodge could keep the name 'Sincerity' but would have to be re-numbered. (Ironically, the issue of the renumbering of lodges after the 1813 union had moved Gage to rebel against the United Grand Lodge in the first place.) The lodge would lose its original number 486, it would surrender its old warrant and, despite being founded in 1786, it would have a new number of 3677 and in the official United Grand Lodge records the Lodge of Sincerity would have 26 September 1913 entered as the date of its consecration.

All the brethren of the Wigan Grand Lodge then had to be initiated, passed and raised, in a ceremony which was reminiscent of the pre-union 're-making' ceremony, when an Antient mason joined a Modern lodge. Miller seems to have had mixed feelings about his lodge rejoining the United Grand Lodge and he ended his memoirs with a haunting image: 'But one can still wonder if the ghosts of those old brethren of an unrecognised Lodge still linger around Sincerity'.<sup>39</sup> Miller was speaking with some regret of the surrender of what was effectively the last surviving relic of the Antients and was perhaps referring to the ghost of Michael Alexander Gage, still lingering in the lodge room with his masonic rebels. It had been 90 years since Gage presided

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<sup>39</sup> 'Reminiscences of an unrecognised Lodge, namely Old Sincerity Lodge no. 486 by James Miller', unpublished account. I am grateful to the Reverend Neville Cryer, who supplied me with a copy of Miller's memoirs. Some of Miller's regalia are currently held by the library of the United Grand Lodge of England.

over the first meeting at the Shakespeare Tavern in Liverpool and in the masonic rooms at Wigan Gage's dream finally ended, as the last surviving lodge under the Grand Lodge of Wigan re-joined the United Grand Lodge of England, bringing the rebellion to an end.

#### Conclusions

The masonic rebellion, begun in Liverpool and continued under a Wigan-based leadership, represented feelings of dissatisfaction and discrimination amongst some freemasons, especially within the then large Lancashire province. Feeling that their grievances were being unanswered, they broke away from the United Grand Lodge in London and went their own way. The rebellion can also be seen to reflect a revolt by the merchants and tradesmen of Liverpool against the 'tyranny' of the Duke of Sussex, freemasons and tradesmen such as Gage and Broadhurst seeing the leadership of the United Grand Lodge firmly being in the hands of a London-based aristocracy, a leadership that had neglected the issues raised by the brethren of the leading port in the industrial north-west of England. This is evident not only in the name and the wording of the 'Magna Charta of Masonic Freedom' but also in the aggressive attitude of the leading rebels, some of whom, such as Gage, clearly had personal aspirations. The rebellion was the last stand of the Antients and, despite it taking place, the expansion of freemasonry under the United Grand Lodge of England continued apace, in the North West as elsewhere, during the latter half of the nineteenth century.

## Settlement and removal in west Cheshire, 1834-71<sup>1</sup>

*Mike Handley*

The settlement laws of 1662 had been introduced to reinforce the 'old poor law' of 1601 by allowing the parish to remove those without a settlement qualification, thus reducing the number of poor relief applicants, but this also threatened the freedom of labour movement within England and Wales. This potential disadvantage conflicted with the principle of 'less eligibility' that underlay the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834 (the 'new poor law') and was designed to encourage labourers to find work independently. Nevertheless, from 1834 to 1871 there was considerable migration, especially of Irish labourers, to west Cheshire's urban centres, Birkenhead and Chester. Thus the population of Birkenhead trebled from 1841 to 1851.<sup>2</sup> The migrants experienced great hardship during times of economic distress, for example 1845-48, and the contentious laws of settlement and removal left them in fear of removal to their settlement parish. The ill-considered Poor Law Removal Act of 1846, which gave irremovability to those with five years' residence, increased the workload of poor law officers, multiplied the hardships of new migrants and intensified the rural townships' desire to reform the poor rate chargeability system. Following national pressure that was supported by the Chester and the Wirral Unions, the irremovability qualification was reduced to one year in 1865 and also the rural townships' financial burden was eased in 1865 by a reform of the unions' common fund charges. Despite these moderate reforms, settlement and removal continued to be a problem until the abolition of the unions in 1929.

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<sup>1</sup> This article springs from and draws on M.D. Handley, 'Local administration of the poor law in the Great Boughton and Wirral Unions and the Chester local act incorporation, 1834-71' (M.A. thesis, University of Wales, 1969).

<sup>2</sup> Census reports, *Parliamentary papers*, 1841 and 1851.

The study of settlement and removal after 1834 has been largely ignored by modern historians, who have shown an understandable wariness of its legal and financial complexities. Michael E. Rose wrote a well-balanced article on the national problems of the law, but more local studies are needed to complement David Ashforth's article, 'Settlement and removal in urban areas: Bradford 1834-71', which concentrates upon the problems within an area containing one of the largest migrant populations.<sup>3</sup> His detailed local study supports Rose's general criticisms of the inefficient, time consuming, costly and outdated parochial settlement system. This article on west Cheshire, a large non-homogenous area, supports Rose's criticism; it also explains the contrasting attitudes of the Chester and Birkenhead guardians in the 1850s towards removal and highlights the concerns of agricultural guardians about the cost of relieving migrants. By studying the period from 1834 to 1871, it has been possible to analyse the triangular relationship between migration, settlement and removal, and the 'new poor law'. The article also describes the hardships suffered by the migrant labourers and their families.

The Settlement Act of 1662 (13 and 14 Charles II cap. 12) was a hasty, ill-thought-out reaction to the economic and social distress of the post-Restoration years. The civil parish had been established as the administrative unit of the 'old poor law' by the Poor Law Act of 1601 (43 Elizabeth I cap. 2) and the Settlement Act aimed to minimise a parish's poor rate costs by preventing an invasion of migrant paupers. The magistrates were empowered to order the removal back to their parish of settlement of anybody who inhabited a tenement of less than £10 per annum, after receiving a complaint within forty days of their arrival from the parish churchwarden or overseer. A man's settlement was inherited from his father, a wife took her husband's settlement and their children had their parents' settlement. Subsequent legislation added extra criteria for settlement, such as apprenticeship, being hired for a year, serving in a parish office or

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<sup>3</sup> M.E. Rose, 'Settlement, removal and the new poor law', in Derek Fraser, ed., *The new poor law in the nineteenth century* (London, 1976), pp. 25-44 and David Ashforth, 'Settlement and removal in urban areas: Bradford, 1834-71', in M.E. Rose, ed., *The poor and the city: the English poor law in its urban context, 1834-1914* (Leicester, 1985), pp. 58-91.

paying poor rates. Cautious parishes were quick to remove poor migrant labourers within the forty days, even though they were not immediately seeking poor relief.<sup>4</sup>

Population movement during the agricultural and industrial revolutions of the late eighteenth century, which was aided by improved transport, made it desirable to modify the laws during the French Revolutionary Wars, when there was renewed social unrest. Thus the powers of removal were weakened by an act of 1795 (35 George III cap. 101) so that no order of removal could be taken out until a migrant had applied to the parish for relief. Some notable 'laissez-faire' economists, such as Adam Smith and the Reverend T.R. Malthus, would have preferred the abolition of settlement and removal, but this potential barrier to free labour movement remained in force when the 'new poor law' was introduced.<sup>5</sup>

The Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834 made only small changes to the law of settlement and removal and did not affect its basic principles. It concentrated upon reducing the cost of the poor rate by applying the principle of 'less eligibility' – the brainchild of Edwin Chadwick, secretary to the government's newly established Poor Law Commission – that aimed to offer the workhouse deterrent to the able bodied in order to encourage them to find work and independently support their families. Chadwick would have preferred to combine this with the abolition of settlement and removal, but he could not win support from fellow members of the Royal Commission.<sup>6</sup> Even the recommendation of the Royal Commission on the Poor Laws (1832-34), that birth in a parish should be the only means of claiming settlement, was ignored. The law was only slightly changed by abolishing a few methods of claiming settlement (apprenticeship in the merchant navy, holding a parish office and being hired for a year as a worker), strengthening the procedure of giving notice of and appealing against removal and allowing

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<sup>4</sup> Philip Stiles, 'The evolution of the law of settlement', *University of Birmingham Historical Journal*, 9 no. 1 (1963), pp. 33-63.

<sup>5</sup> T.R. Malthus, *Essay on population* (1798), ed. K.E. Boulding (Ann Arbor, 1959), p. 32; Adam Smith, *An enquiry into the nature and causes of the wealth of nations* (1776), ed. E. Cannon (2 vols, London, 1961), I, p. 158.

<sup>6</sup> S.E. Finer, *The life and times of Sir Edwin Chadwick* (London, 1980), p. 47.

boards of guardians to ask that the union rather than the parishes be made the area of settlement, although this latter provision was largely ignored.

The Act's principle of 'less eligibility' intended that the able-bodied and their families should only receive relief within a 'well-regulated workhouse', where they would be separated on entry and their living conditions would be made worse than those of the lowest paid independent labourer. New Poor Law Unions were formed by the amalgamation of neighbouring parishes to support the cost of building workhouses suitable for both sexes and each category of pauper. The Poor Law Commission wanted to impose national uniformity upon the locally-elected guardians and the unions were subject to regular inspections by its assistant poor law commissioners. However, despite the formation of unions for poor law management, a strong element of parochialism was retained until the Union Chargeability Act of 1865, because the parish remained the unit for settlement and removal and the township was the unit for poor relief rating. This created local disputes within the three west Cheshire unions, which covered 43 parishes, containing 171 townships and six extra-parochial townships.

The nine Chester parishes refused to adopt the new poor law until 1869 and retained their independent powers granted by Chester's Local Act of 1761.<sup>7</sup> This intransigence compelled Richard Digby Neave, who served as west Cheshire's first assistant commissioner from 1836 until 1841, to adjust his original plan for a large Chester New Poor Law Union centred on the city. Instead, in 1837 he gained local acceptance for the weaker alternative of a large and unwieldy Great Boughton Union, which surrounded Chester and extended westward to include the Welsh parish of Hawarden, and also ten miles south to include townships within the parish of Malpas. In May 1836 he had hastily seized upon the Whig gentry's plan for a Wirral Union, comprising most of the townships of the peninsula extending to its southern border with the Great Boughton Union. This failed to recognise Birkenhead's potential for commercial and population

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<sup>7</sup> Private acts, 2 George III, 1761.

expansion and within ten years it was clear that Birkenhead should have had its own union and workhouse.<sup>8</sup>

The area had a mixture of urban industrial and retail economies based in Birkenhead, Chester and some of Hawarden's townships, and of rural mixed farming elsewhere. The three unions served an area of 229.92 square miles, with a population in 1831 of 62,451, which had almost trebled by 1871 to 170,342. Great Boughton covered the largest area of 151.7 square miles with a population of 23,896; the Wirral covered 74.2 square miles with 17,342; and Chester 4.02 square miles with 21,213. From 1836 to 1861 the Wirral Union saw a five-fold population increase, rising to just over 80,000, mainly because of the expansion of 'the commercial district' of Birkenhead, Tranmere, Liscard, Poulton cum Seacombe, Wallasey, Cloughton cum Grange and Oxton, and eventually a separate Birkenhead Union was established in 1861. Great Boughton experienced a moderate 13.5 per cent rise from 1837 to 1853, but then, after losing the parish of Hawarden and thirteen other townships to the newly-formed Hawarden Union, it grew more rapidly from 1853 to 1871, rising by 24.48 per cent. Chester's population grew steadily, with a 66 per cent increase from 1831 to 1871.<sup>9</sup>

Both long-distance and short-distance migration were important factors in the area's population growth from 1831 to 1871. Birkenhead's Mersey estuary location made it particularly vulnerable to Irish immigration, especially after the Irish famine of 1845-47. Thus by 1851 20 per cent of the Wirral's 'commercial district' was Irish-born, compared to 5 per cent for the county of Cheshire.<sup>10</sup> Chester had experienced Irish migration since the eighteenth century and its road, canal and railway links to Liverpool, Manchester, Crewe and North Wales made it easily

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<sup>8</sup> M.D. Handley, 'Poor law administration in the Chester local act incorporation, 1834-71', *Transactions of the Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire*, 156 (2007), pp. 173-75; M.D. Handley, 'The Great Boughton poor law union, 1837-71', *Transactions of the Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire*, 158 (2009), pp. 86-88; and M.D. Handley, 'The Wirral poor law union, 1836-61', *Transactions of the Lancashire and Cheshire Antiquarian Society*, 104 (2008), pp. 121-23.

<sup>9</sup> Census reports, *Parliamentary papers 1831, 1841, 1851, 1861, 1871*.

<sup>10</sup> Census reports, *Parliamentary papers, 1851*.

accessible to Victorian migrants. As Arthur Redford suggested, a lot of the English migration was short-distance, as former rural dwellers left their villages to seek work in towns; thus Chester's suburban villages of Hoole, Great Boughton, Upton and Bache grew rapidly.<sup>11</sup> The 1851 census shows that the largest groups of English-born migrants in the county of Cheshire were from the neighbouring counties of Lancashire, Staffordshire and Derbyshire, representing 7.48 per cent, 2.79 per cent and 1.68 per cent of the total population respectively. There was also temporary migration, as labourers sought casual road- and railway-building work and seasonal harvesting, which often led to poor relief applications.

The elected poor law guardians' differing attitudes to settlement and removal were greatly influenced by the effects of migration on their own business interests and by the area's economic fluctuations. The guardians needed an expanding retail market and a good supply of labour; for example, the predominant farmers of the Great Boughton and Wirral Unions needed workers throughout the year and an extra supply at harvest time, but were reluctant to fund the relief of the unemployed. For the years beginning 25 March 1858, 1855 and 1866, the farmers formed an average of 83 per cent of the elected Great Boughton board and in the Wirral from 1846 to 1848 43 per cent were farmers, 32 per cent gentlemen (mainly of the landed class), 12 per cent merchants and 10 per cent clergy. Both the Great Boughton and the Wirral Unions blatantly failed to represent the interests of the urban areas of Hawarden and Birkenhead, which resulted in the splitting of the two unions by the Poor Law Board. There were internal disagreements over the relief of the poor and especially, after 1846, the relief of the irremovable poor and the raising of the common fund. At Chester, the merchants, shopkeepers and craftsmen represented 75-80 per cent of the elected guardians from 1834 to 1871, who

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<sup>11</sup> Arthur Redford, *Labour migration in England, 1800-50* (Manchester, 1926), pp. 70-83.

from the mid-1850s became more sympathetic to migrant workers as Chester's economy expanded.<sup>12</sup>

Throughout the period 1834-71 the guardians and overseers were aware of the difficulties of obtaining removal orders and effectively executing them, but it is possible to detect three distinct chronological stages in the evolution of the boards' attitudes: before 1846 the guardians were cautious about idle migrants; from 1846 to 1851 they reacted sharply to the combined effects of the Irish famine and the Poor Law Removal Act of 1846; and from 1852 onwards the urban guardians took a more considered view as the Irish influx diminished and the number of irremovable paupers grew. Before 1846 the Chester and Wirral's 'commercial district' guardians wanted to prevent an excess of idle Irish who would be a burden on the rates, but during prosperous years they welcomed industrious Irish migrants who worked for much lower wages than an English labourer.<sup>13</sup> The Chester corporation petitioned the House of Commons in October 1835 about the 'numerous individuals from Ireland of both sexes who arrive in this city in a state of apparently complete destitution compelling the inhabitants to maintain them for the time being and also in many cases to furnish them with the means of their removal'. Chester proposed that a system of poor laws should be introduced to Ireland (the Irish Poor Law Act was introduced in 1838) and funded by Ireland's property owners.<sup>14</sup> During the second stage, from 1846 to 1852, the Wirral board reacted with urgency to the exceptional circumstances of the Irish famine – the larger number of migrants, the rise in poor rate costs and the adverse social effects of crime and disease. Whereas in the calendar year 1846 the Wirral Union had removed only four paupers, in the four years to 25 March 25 1849 (mostly from November 1846) the Birkenhead township obtained 415 removal orders, of which 363 (88 per cent) related to Irish paupers. The proportion of Irish removal orders by Birkenhead was almost five times greater than the national figures, but less than Liverpool's

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<sup>12</sup> The figures have been calculated from the annual returns of elected guardians to the Poor Law Commission and the Poor Law Board.

<sup>13</sup> Roger Swift, *Irish migrants in Britain 1815-1914: a documentary history* (Cork, 2002).

<sup>14</sup> The National Archives, MH 12/900, 15 October 1835.

(95 per cent). In the third stage, from 1852 onwards, the Wirral and Chester boards removed less people; they calmly developed their own individual policies towards the irremovable poor and both boards supported the growing national campaign to reform the law of settlement, poor law funding and rating assessment.

From 1834 to 1871 the guardians and the overseers had difficulty in enforcing removals because of legal technicalities, costs and the time expended. One of the principal legal problems was the proof of a pauper's settlement. Unless the migrant unusually had a certificate of settlement, the officials spent time and money travelling to check the pauper's verbal claims. John Trevor, the chairman of the Chester board, in his evidence to the Select Committee on Removal in 1855, referred to the difficulty of checking the settlement of a poor London family. The officers tried to find an industrial residence of £10 value in London but failed and had to relieve the family at Chester.<sup>15</sup> Similarly, the Wirral Union had great difficulty in establishing the settlement of Irish paupers who lived in the crowded streets of Birkenhead's dockland. The *Liverpool Mail* reported in March 1853 that two of the Birkenhead guardians had asked ratepayers to give voluntary assistance in the overseer's office to investigate the claims of many 'who have no settlement in Birkenhead and should be removed to the parishes that they legally belong to'. The article claimed that hundreds of pounds annually were given in relief to such people.<sup>16</sup>

There were also costly legal procedures in acquiring and executing a removal order and further costs in transporting the pauper to his settlement parish. A contested removal could take over twelve months to resolve; thus the large rural township of Tattenhall (1831 population of 917), in the Great Boughton Union, spent three and a half years, from June 1841 until December 1844, successfully contesting the removal of Mary Owen and her children from nearby Bickerton. Tattenhall also spent eighteen months, from March 1843 until December 1844, successfully appealing against the removal of Samuel Hicks and his family from nearby Tarpoley. The most expensive cases cost

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<sup>15</sup> Report of the Select Committee on Poor Removal, *Parliamentary papers*, 1855, XIII, qq. 3422-27.

<sup>16</sup> *Liverpool Mail*, 26 March 1853.

over £10 in legal costs – the Hicks case cost £11 6s 8d and the removal of John Kinsey, his wife and six children to Burwardsley, Cheshire, cost £19 4s 8d. However, these costs were moderate compared with that of £50 incurred in 1844 by a Halifax overseer contesting the removal order of a family. Transport charges were especially costly for urban parishes, with more long-distance migrants, whereas rural townships mainly removed over short distances. Thus Tattenhall was involved in nineteen removal order proceedings from 1835 to 1859, eighteen of which were with other Cheshire townships.<sup>17</sup>

Overseers sometimes engaged in the illegal removal of paupers to avoid the expense of formal removals. John Trevor, the Chester chairman, pointed out in 1855 that it was cheaper to treat them as industrious vagrants and send them out of the city with money in their pockets. In 1851 it cost Chester £2 4s 11d to remove Frank Cummings to Ireland when they could have given him 6d or 1s to move on.<sup>18</sup> However, such illegal removals merely transported the problem to the neighbouring union, with consequent hardships for the pauper and an acrimonious dispute between the unions. Short-distance migration often caused disputes between neighbouring unions, such as Great Boughton and Chester; Great Boughton did not open a workhouse until October 1857 and Chester alleged that Great Boughton illegally sent its paupers to Chester. Andrew Doyle was asked by the Poor Law Board in 1852 to investigate the plight of John Ince, a blind pauper, who suffered the consequences of a disagreement between Aldersey in the Great Boughton Union and the Chester parish of St John. The Chester guardians had accused Great Boughton of illegally removing him and Lightfoot, the overseer of Aldersey, and Prince, a Great Boughton relieving officer, were charged in April 1853 at Chester assizes with the violent treatment of Ince. Doyle told the Poor Law Board that it should campaign for a reform of the law of settlement to prevent such disputes.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Cheshire Archives and Local Studies [hereafter CALS], P5/21, Tattenhall overseers accounts, P5/23/23-158, Tattenhall removal orders.

<sup>18</sup> Report of the Select Committee on Poor Removal, *Parliamentary papers, 1855, XIII*, q. 3434.

<sup>19</sup> *Parliamentary papers, 1852-53, LXXXIV*; The National Archives, MH12/883, 21 January and 11 February 1853.

Ince's case was the most publicised of a series of removal disputes between Chester and Great Boughton. John Frith, the Chester clerk, referred in June 1852 to the illegal removal of George Armstrong and his family from Great Stanney to the parish of St Oswald, Chester, and also of Samuel Hickson and his six children from Dunham on the Hill into the city. The Chester guardians told the Poor Law Board that the penalties for illegal removals were insufficient.<sup>20</sup> In September 1853 Chester decided that Quinn, a male pauper, who had been working at Tattenhall, had improperly thrown himself on the Chester board for relief.<sup>21</sup> After Great Boughton had opened its own workhouse, it made counter claims against Chester – for example, in September 1858 that Chester paupers preferred to be relieved at Great Boughton because the workhouse diet was better than at Chester and specifically that in October 1861 the Chester relieving officer illegally sent Jonathan Becket to the Great Boughton workhouse.<sup>22</sup>

Until the Union Chargeability Act of 1865 made the union the chargeable unit for poor relief, there were also inter-township disputes within unions and parishes over short-distance removals. In a large union such as Great Boughton, the parishes lacked both a common identity and a co-operative spirit. Within the parish of Aldford, the townships of Churton by Aldford and Farndon were in dispute in December 1838 over the settlement of Francis Povah, because neither township wanted to be chargeable.<sup>23</sup> In the same month in the parish of Christleton, the townships of Littleton and Christleton disagreed over the removal of a woman in labour.<sup>24</sup> In the Wirral Union's parish of Woodchurch the Noctorum and Woodchurch townships argued in January 1845 over the cost of legal arrangements in removing paupers to Woodchurch.<sup>25</sup> In contrast, the Chester parishes were more used to collaborative action, since the Local Act of 1761 had

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<sup>20</sup> The National Archives, MH 12/902, 12 May 1851.

<sup>21</sup> *Chester Chronicle*, 21 May 1853.

<sup>22</sup> The National Archives, MH 12/886, 19 May 1858; CALS, LGT 1/7, minutes of the Great Boughton board of guardians, 16 October 1861.

<sup>23</sup> CALS, LGT 1/1, minutes of the Great Boughton board of guardians, 15 December 1838.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 8 December 1838.

<sup>25</sup> The National Archives, MH 12/1200, 1 January 1845.

allowed them to build and manage their own workhouse. They jointly decided in 1843 to banish removal between the city's parishes, thus effectively making the union the settlement base and allowing freedom of labour movement within the city.<sup>26</sup> It removed the anomaly that someone could move house across the street into another parish and become subject to removal.

Regular removal disputes and the transport of long-distance migrants could be expensive; overseers had to calculate whether the costs would be less than the potential poor relief payments to the pauper and his family, given the township's level of unemployment and the percentage of migrants in the population. In the later 1830s the urban parishes usually had the larger removal costs because they had a larger number of migrant paupers. Thus Wirral's 'commercial district', which was easily accessible, had the highest removal charges for the two years ending 25 March 1838 – its removal costs represented 20.43 per cent of the total poor relief expenditure, a sharp contrast to 1.7 per cent for the Wirral's 'agricultural district'. Chester's removal costs were also lower, averaging 3.65 per cent, because its economy was more stable and the majority of its removals were short-distance, whereas the 'commercial district' incurred heavy long-distance removal costs for the Irish.<sup>27</sup> The charges of the 'commercial district' were also high in comparison with the north Cheshire industrial town of Stockport – during the distress of the early 1840s Stockport spent an average of 5 per cent of its relief expenditure on removals.<sup>28</sup>

The overseer's decision to incur removal costs was even harder in the agricultural districts of the Great Boughton and Wirral Unions because one reasonably expensive removal could represent a high percentage of the overall costs. Variable local economic factors and the temporary presence of non-settled paupers caused some townships to have markedly different removal costs from one year to the next – thus in 1837 the townships of Backford and Little Saughall had costs of 42.5 per

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<sup>26</sup> The National Archives, MH 12/901, 7 March 1843.

<sup>27</sup> Annual reports of the poor law commissioners, *Parliamentary papers, 1837 and 1838*.

<sup>28</sup> Report of the Select Committee on Poor Removal, *Parliamentary papers, 1847, XI*, qq. 5428-29.

cent and 36 per cent respectively, but in 1838 they spent nothing. Broadly speaking, the rural townships' removal costs from 1836 to 1838 were lower than those of the Wirral's 'commercial district' – the average for the Great Boughton townships was 3.63 per cent (and half of the townships there spent nothing), double the average percentage outlay of the Wirral agricultural townships (88 per cent of which spent nothing).<sup>29</sup>

Michael Rose has suggested that in the years immediately after 1834 townships concentrated upon removing troublesome families, widows with children and spinsters with illegitimate children in order to cut the cost of relief sharply, and the figures for Tattenhall support this argument.<sup>30</sup> From 1835 to 1847 the township applied for twelve removal orders, of which five related to married men with families and four to widows with children. However, sometimes this policy was flawed, because families often returned to be with their children's friends and in later years the authorities focused upon the removal of aged and sick individuals who were likely to be a long-term burden. From 1847 to 1859 none of Tattenhall's seven removal orders applied to married men, although three involved widows with children, two were for the sick and aged and two for single people.<sup>31</sup>

Sometimes the expense of acquiring removal orders was a waste of money, either because the magistrates rejected their enforcement or because the removed paupers rapidly returned. The magistrates acted on compassionate grounds of age, sickness and personal circumstances, for example, when considering cases of widows and deserted mothers with young children. Andrew Doyle, the assistant poor law commissioner, told the Select Committee that in one week during 1853-54 there were seven cases of removal in Birkenhead that the magistrates rejected because the circumstances were too hard. Even when the compulsory removals were executed, both short- and long-distance, the paupers could quickly return and Doyle said that during 1853-54 there were 30 removal cases from Birkenhead (29

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<sup>29</sup> Annual reports of the poor law commissioners, *Parliamentary papers*, 1837 and 1838.

<sup>30</sup> Rose, 'Settlement, removal', p. 39.

<sup>31</sup> CALS, P5/21, Tattenhall overseers accounts, P5/23/23-158, Tattenhall removal orders.

involved Irish-born paupers) and 23 of them returned within a few months and some came back the following day.<sup>32</sup>

Both short- and long-distance removed paupers had little trouble obtaining the cost of the return journey from civic leaders, poor law officers and charities. In the 1850s the steam packet company offered a cheaper return fare from Dublin to England than the outward charge. John Trevor quoted the example of a widow, Bridget Molloy, who was removed from Chester to Dublin at a cost of £2 18s 2d, but returned when the lord mayor of Dublin gave her 10s for the return fare. In the late 1840s the Brannigan family had been removed from Chester, but the family's Chester neighbours had made a collection so that they could return. By 1855 the Chester guardians accepted the futility of compulsory removal of the Irish-born and ceased to do so.<sup>33</sup>

The Irish were very keen to return to England because of family, health, social and economic reasons. Paupers did not wish to be shipped to an unfamiliar Irish port, where both adults and children were separated from their friends and relatives. The able-bodied Irish with families thought that they had a better chance of finding work in England and also hated the Irish Poor Law that did not offer outdoor relief, but forced their entry into the workhouses that had worse diets than the English. Margaret Dyer, a former resident of Birkenhead, described the harshness of Coutill workhouse, County Cavan, to the Select Committee of 1855. She claimed that her husband could not stay in the workhouse because the food was insufficient and that their three youngest children all died there.<sup>34</sup> Married women who had been deserted by their husbands wanted to stay in England to search for them and those with husbands in an English gaol wanted to visit them regularly. Women with illegitimate children were ashamed at having to return to their parochial Catholic community and face moral condemnation.<sup>35</sup>

Parishes and townships could avoid the cost of removal by agreeing to pay 'non-settled relief' to migrants that would be

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<sup>32</sup> Report of the Select Committee on Poor Removal, *Parliamentary papers*, 1855, XIII, q. 2362.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, qq. 3434-35.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, q. 2507.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, q. 2534.

refunded by their settlement parish and also paying 'non-resident relief' to their settled who had become paupers elsewhere. This practice had developed under the 'old poor law' and continued after 1834. From 1830 to 1837 the large rural township of Tattenhall, before its inclusion with the Great Boughton Union, gave non-resident relief to paupers who had permanently migrated into the urban area of neighbouring counties – Manchester, Liverpool and Stoke-on-Trent. This long-term relief was given to five paupers for several years – for example, from 1830 to 1833 Hannah Moore received £30 9s while resident in Stoke. Three paupers were relieved while resident in Manchester: Mary Dodd, a widow, received £39 7s from 1831 to 1835; Thomas Dodd and his family were relieved from 1833 to 1837; and George Edge, from 1832 to 1836. William Witney was relieved in Liverpool in 1835 to get his tools out of the pawnshop and to release him from the workhouse.<sup>36</sup>

After the introduction of the 'new poor law', the Great Boughton and Wirral Unions and the Chester incorporation all gave non-resident relief, which was either paid to the union in which the pauper resided or to an appointed agent who paid outdoor relief directly to the pauper. Sometimes a reciprocal arrangement was agreed between unions to relieve each others' paupers; thus in October 1846 the Chester guardians resolved that they would continue, as previously, to give relief to non-resident paupers of neighbouring unions provided that these unions gave non-resident relief to Chester's paupers.<sup>37</sup> John Trevor, the chairman of the incorporation, reported to the Select Committee on Poor Removal in 1855 that Chester and Liverpool relieved each others' paupers.<sup>38</sup> In other parts of the country this system had been developed greatly – in 1846 117 parishes had non-resident accounts with Leeds, while the Norwich incorporation had reciprocal relieving arrangements with 66 parishes.<sup>39</sup> The west Cheshire unions mainly dealt with neighbouring unions and this supports David Ashforth's theory that the non-resident relief

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<sup>36</sup> CALS, P5/21, Tattenhall overseers accounts.

<sup>37</sup> The National Archives, MH 12/901, 29 October 1846.

<sup>38</sup> Report of the Select Committee on Poor Removal, *Parliamentary papers, 1855, XIII*, q. 3458.

<sup>39</sup> Ashforth, 'Settlement and removal', p. 71.

system was essentially a regional one; thus Bradford and Leeds had most of their non-resident relief accounts with Yorkshire and Lancashire parishes.

However, non-resident relief was sometimes the cause of disputes between unions, especially after the Poor Law Removal Act of 1846 (9 and 10 Victoria cap. 66) that permanently prevented the removal of those who had five years' continuous residence without claiming relief and made widows irremovable in the first year of their widowhood. Knowing that their powers of removal had been weakened, unions were careful not to pay non-settled relief without a formal written agreement from the paupers' settlement union. Apparently some unions even failed to honour these agreements and the clerk of the Great Boughton Union reported in July 1846 that the Wrexham Union had refused to pay various accounts that it owed and therefore relief to Wrexham's non-resident paupers would be discontinued.<sup>40</sup> In October 1846 the Great Boughton guardians re-iterated the general principle that they would not relieve any non-settled paupers unless their settlement townships accepted chargeability for them.<sup>41</sup> The Poor Law Commission was hostile to non-resident relief, believing that it breached the principle of 'less eligibility' and consequently some unions refused to enter into 'non-resident' agreements and preferred to remove the paupers. The Reverend Mark Coxon, chairman of the Wirral Union, commented in 1860 that hardship was caused to a widow living in Manchester but with a settlement in the Wirral, because Manchester bureaucratically insisted on removing her despite the willingness of the Wirral Union to pay her non-resident relief.<sup>42</sup>

The government introduced the Poor Law Removal Act of 1846 in an attempt to reduce both the number of costly removals and the payment of non-resident relief; Peel's free trade policy was thus accompanied by an intended step towards free labour movement. During the economic difficulties of the 1840s there had been growing resentment, especially from the

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<sup>40</sup> The National Archives, MH 12/879, 18 July 1846.

<sup>41</sup> CALS, LGT 1/2, minutes of the Great Boughton board of guardians, 24 October 1846.

<sup>42</sup> Report of the Select Committee on Irremovable Poor, *Parliamentary papers, 1860, XVII*, q. 1507.

landowning classes, about the cost of the poor rate and particularly about non-resident relief given to labourers who had left the land to live in towns. The Act went a little way towards appeasing the landed classes who were feeling threatened by the repeal of the Corn Laws in 1846. Bodkin's Act of 1847 (10 and 11 Victoria cap. 110) transferred the cost of supporting the irremovable paupers from townships to the union's common fund. This was a controversial and unsuccessful attempt to remove inter-township disputes, but at least it was an initial move towards union chargeability.

From the outset the Poor Law Removal Act of 1846 met criticism from high places, for example from the Poor Law Commissioners who recommended that removal should have been abolished. This abolition campaign was continued in 1850 by George Coode (a former assistant secretary to the Commission) in his report to the Poor Law Board, by Edmund Head (a former Poor Law Commissioner) in an article published in the *Edinburgh Review* in 1848 and by Robert Pashley, a barrister, in his book *Pauperism and Poor Laws*.<sup>43</sup> Matthew Baines, the president of the Poor Law Board, introduced a bill in 1854 to abolish removal and place the whole cost of poor relief upon the union's common fund, but the bill was withdrawn and a select committee on removal established.<sup>44</sup> Andrew Doyle, the assistant poor law commissioner from 1849 for Cheshire, Shropshire, Staffordshire, North Wales and part of Derbyshire, supported Baines and told the Select Committee on Removal in 1855 that to retain removal was an admission that both the principle of 'less eligibility' and the vagrancy laws were not vigorously enforced.<sup>45</sup> Great Boughton's lack of action supported his argument, for during the distress of 1847-48 the union did not have a workhouse and only temporarily enforced an outdoor relief labour test in one (Hawarden) of its

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<sup>43</sup> Report of George Coode to the Poor Law Board on the Law of Settlement and Removal, *Parliamentary papers*, 675, 1851, XXVI; Sir Edmund Head, 'The law of settlement', *Edinburgh Review*, 87 (April 1848); Robert Pashley, *Pauperism and poor laws* (London, 1852).

<sup>44</sup> Report of the Select Committee on the operation of 8 and 9 Victoria cap. 117, *Parliamentary papers*, 1854, XVII.

<sup>45</sup> Report of the Select Committee on Poor Removal, *Parliamentary papers*, 1855, XIII, q. 2414.

four relieving districts.<sup>46</sup> Doyle wanted all the able-bodied to be offered the workhouse with the labour test and said that in 1848 this was used by some of his unions in combination with a strict application of the vagrancy laws to effect an 80 per cent reduction in relief applications.<sup>47</sup>

The good intentions of the Poor Law Removal Act of 1846 were obscured by the deteriorating economic circumstances of the Irish famine (of 1845-47) and the national commercial crisis (of 1847-48) which made agriculturalists, merchants and industrialists fearful of the cost of relieving the irremovable. The Irish famine caused the flooding of the Birkenhead labour market with migrants, especially from November 1846, and thus the 1851 census showed that 27 per cent of the Wirral workhouse inmates were Irish. During 1847 300,000 Irish landed at Liverpool, 80,000 of whom stayed in the city, while some emigrated and the remainder dispersed around England.<sup>48</sup> From 1841 to 1847 Birkenhead's population rose almost five-fold to an estimated 40,000, before falling back to 24,285 in 1851 – a three-fold increase for the decade despite the natural dispersal.<sup>49</sup> From 1841 to 1851 the number of Irish-born increased from 12 per cent (1091) of Birkenhead's population to 25 per cent (6,000) and the Birkenhead ratepayers remained in fear of the potential cost of relieving the 'irremovable' during the lengthy suspension of Birkenhead's dock-building programme. However, they may have focused unfairly on the negative effects of immigration and in 1854 Matthew McNerney, the relieving officer, paid tribute to the economic contribution of the industrious Irish who had been essential to the town's dock building.<sup>50</sup>

The Chester ratepayers were less alarmed about irremovability than their Birkenhead counterparts because the city was not as badly affected by Irish migration and the commercial crisis. Chester had a smaller Irish quarter, centred on Steven Street

<sup>46</sup> The National Archives, MH 12/880, 26 July 1850.

<sup>47</sup> Report of the Select Committee on Poor Removal, *Parliamentary papers, 1855, XIII*, q. 2419.

<sup>48</sup> G. Chandler, *Liverpool* (London, 1957), p. 409.

<sup>49</sup> E.H. Rideout, *The growth of Wirral* (Liverpool, 1921), p. 71.

<sup>50</sup> Census reports, *Parliamentary papers, 1841 and 1851*, Report of the Select Committee on Removal of Poor, *Parliamentary papers, 1854, XVII*.

in the Boughton district, and by 1851 it represented 12.5 per cent (3,500) of the incorporation's population.<sup>51</sup> Other migrants lived in the city's suburbs of Hoole, Upton, Blacon and Great Boughton in the neighbouring Great Boughton Union, thus sparing the city's ratepayers the full effects of the migrants' poor relief costs. Chester's balanced and buoyant economy was less affected by the national commercial crisis, although the city received some unemployed coal miners and iron workers from North Wales. John Trevor explained in 1855 that the Irish worked in the farms of the surrounding villages and also on road- and railway-building and consequently, apart from during winter frost, Chester had not given regular relief to an able-bodied Irish-born man in the last three or four years.<sup>52</sup>

By 1855 the guardians of Birkenhead and Chester had adopted differing tactics to manage the irremovable that showed the different scale of their problems. During the crisis years of economic gloom and a swelling population, 1846-47, the Birkenhead overseers had treated many Irish migrants as vagrants by giving them overnight accommodation, food and money before shipping them back to Liverpool the following day.<sup>53</sup> In the early 1850s, when the number of migrants had diminished, Birkenhead used the threat of removal to discourage applications for relief. Similarly, David Ashforth has suggested that the urban townships of Lancashire and Yorkshire did likewise and caused paupers to remove themselves from the relief list rather than face removal. Thus in Manchester in 1852 only 337 were removed out of a total of 2,160 threatened with removal and in the Bradford townships of Bowling and Horton in the two years ending March 1843 only 49 families were removed out of 151 threatened.<sup>54</sup> The Wirral guardians also opposed the Scots and Irish Paupers Removal Bill, which proposed that thirty days' maintenance, should be given to paupers before their removal, and argued in their petition to the Poor Law Board in May 1856 that many

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<sup>51</sup> Census report, *Parliamentary papers, 1851*.

<sup>52</sup> Report of the Select Committee on Poor Removal, *Parliamentary papers, 1855, XII*, qq. 3475, 3482.

<sup>53</sup> W.W. Mortimer, *The history of the hundred of Wirral* (London, 1847), p. 390.

<sup>54</sup> Ashforth, 'Settlement and removal', p. 71.

would abscond after thirty days.<sup>55</sup> The Wirral's threat of removal discouraged a large number of removable paupers, mainly Irish-born, from applying for relief; thus in the year to 25 March 1854 only 25 per cent of the Irish received relief.<sup>56</sup> The Poor Law Removal Act of 1846 had produced not a free labour movement but rather a static impoverished Birkenhead population, which preferred to live for five years in a familiar dockland community and environment, around Oak Street, in order to become irremovable.<sup>57</sup>

Matthew McNerney, the Birkenhead relieving officer, investigated the living conditions of the removable Irish-born and in 1854 he described the unhealthy living conditions in overcrowded housing to the parliamentary Select Committee on Removal. The industrious Irish who worked at the docks were able to rent houses with six rooms in their own right from the three principal landlords of the area. They then became lodging house keepers by subletting some of the small nine feet square rooms to the poorer Irish, who were either unable or unwilling to find regular employment. He alleged that at its worst the subletting led to four or five families sharing one room. The poorer Irish performed casual labour – for example, the women and children collected cockles from the shore for their husbands to sell in the town where they also begged and thieved. Others collected grit, sand and rubbing stones and travelled into the countryside to sell them and some of the women became prostitutes.<sup>58</sup>

Chester had enforced a few compulsory Irish removals in the late 1840s and early 1850s, but the officers and the guardians ceased to do so from 1852 as prosperity returned and the city flourished and they realised that the futile expenditure of time and money was better replaced by a strict application of the 'less eligibility' principle. John Trevor, the incorporation's chairman, was also the editor of the *Chester Chronicle* and the newspaper had

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<sup>55</sup> The National Archives, MH 12/1207, 5 May 1856.

<sup>56</sup> Report of the Select Committee on Poor Removal, *Parliamentary papers, 1855, XIII*, q. 2431.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, q. 2410.

<sup>58</sup> Report of the Select Committee on the Removal of the Poor, *Parliamentary papers, 1854, XVII*, q. 429.

been critical in 1850-51 of the squalid housing conditions and immoral lifestyle of the Irish community, but in 1855 he commented on the growing self-reliance of the Irish and agreed with McNerney that their labour contribution was essential.<sup>59</sup> He wrote a book about the iniquitous treatment of the Irish by the removal system and submitted detailed evidence to the parliamentary Select Committee.<sup>60</sup> From March 1845 to March 1849 Chester had gained only nine removal orders, of which seven were for Irish paupers; in 1851 it obtained seven orders for 36 Irish; and in 1852 it obtained thirteen orders for 36 paupers, of whom 35 were Irish.<sup>61</sup> After 1852 Chester, unlike Birkenhead, no longer felt any need to threaten compulsory removal and the board passed a resolution in December 1852 for the abolition of compulsory removal of non-settled paupers because it was oppressive to the poor and resulted in unnecessary litigation.<sup>62</sup> Subsequently, W.O Stanley, MP, petitioned the House of Commons in February 1853 on the city's behalf for the abolition of settlement and removals, arguing that they were costly, unjust and inefficient.<sup>63</sup> Instead of removal, they followed Doyle's recommendation of applying vigorous police interviews of vagrants and offering the workhouse with the threat of a labour test. John Trevor and his guardians were motivated by a desire to cut the poor rate effectively rather than by an enlightened philosophy.

The Wirral farmers were much more concerned than their Great Boughton counterparts with the cost of the irremovable to the common fund because the 'commercial district' lay within their union and in 1860 this prompted their demand for a separate Birkenhead Union containing the 'commercial district'.<sup>64</sup> Unlike the Birkenhead and Chester entrepreneurs and the Great

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<sup>59</sup> *Chester Chronicle*, 26 April 1851.

<sup>60</sup> John Trevor, *The poor removal law, an aliens act against the Irish* (Chester, 1855).

<sup>61</sup> Report of the Select Committee on the Removal of the Poor, *Parliamentary papers, 1855, XIII*, q. 3433.

<sup>62</sup> The National Archives, MH 12/902, 7 December 1852.

<sup>63</sup> *Chester Chronicle*, 19 February 1853.

<sup>64</sup> The National Archives, MH 12/1210, 15 June 1860; *Chester Chronicle*, 21 July 1860.

Boughton farmers, they argued that they gained little benefit from the increased labour force and preferred to pay the cost of removal. Thus in March 1851 the agricultural section of the Wirral Union had dominated a guardians' committee that proposed to Andrew Doyle that the five years' residential qualification should be either abolished or amended to specify household residence excluding stays within lodging houses.<sup>65</sup> They considered that the current legislation favoured the Irish, who for the half year ending 25 September 1850 had represented 66 per cent (980) of the 1,493 irremovable poor. In 1859 the position remained the same, with the Irish representing 69 per cent of the 1,484 irremovable poor, the English 19 per cent, the Welsh 9 per cent and the Scots 3 per cent. Mark Coxon, the chairman of the Wirral Union and a guardian in the 'agricultural district', commented in 1860 that a great burden was being unfairly placed on smaller townships because for the year to March 1859 the 'irremovable' poor of Birkenhead had received £2,832 9s but Birkenhead had only contributed £1,662 15s, 58 per cent of the total.<sup>66</sup>

The effects of inward migration, employment availability and the Poor Law Removal Act of 1846 are clearly shown by the unions' annual costs from 1855 to 1861 of relieving the irremovable, expressed as a percentage of both the county's and the union's total relief expenditure. Chester, with a liberal policy on removal, spent the least of Cheshire's ten poor law unions and the Wirral spent the most. In 1856 and 1861 the cost of Chester's relief to the irremovable was 0.7 per cent and 0.6 per cent of Cheshire's relief costs, whereas the Wirral's were 17 per cent and 25.4 per cent and Great Boughton's 8.5 per cent and 7.5 per cent. Chester's low cost was partly because of its poor relief management and flourishing economy, but also because a large number of migrants lived in the suburbs that were within the Great Boughton Union. From 1855 to 1861 the average cost of Chester's irremovable poor represented only 2.2 per cent of the total cost of its own indoor and outdoor relief, as opposed to the

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<sup>65</sup> Report of the Select Committee on Removal of Poor, *Parliamentary papers, 1854, XVII*, q. 429.

<sup>66</sup> Report of the Select Committee on Irremovable Poor, *Parliamentary papers, 1860*, qq. 1457-1503.

Wirral Union's cost of 43.6 per cent and Great Boughton's 17.8 per cent. The Wirral's expenditure was only exceeded in Lancashire and the West Riding of Yorkshire by Manchester (60.8 per cent) and Bradford (63.3 per cent), while Liverpool's expenditure was lower (36.8 per cent).<sup>67</sup>

The figures show that before 1861 both the Great Boughton and the Wirral Unions had failed to apply the 'less eligibility' principle of the 'new poor law' and to enforce the vagrancy laws in the manner that Andrew Doyle had recommended. The low capacity of the Wirral Union's Clatterbridge workhouse (130 inmates) made it difficult to offer the workhouse to the irremovable before the Birkenhead workhouse was completed; thus from 1858 to 1861, 88 per cent of the irremovable were relieved outside the workhouse. The Wirral Union's absurdly high costs also showed the effects of the problems of the 'commercial district' and the failure of the central authorities to establish a separate Birkenhead Union earlier. Great Boughton reluctantly opened its workhouse in October 1857 but initially it also had a low capacity (102) and outdoor relief was given to nearly all its irremovable poor, in contrast to Chester, which relieved less than 15 per cent outside the workhouse.<sup>68</sup>

The costs of relieving the irremovable poor strongly influenced the attitudes of the officers and the ratepayers towards the principle of removal. Thus Chester supported Doyle and the Poor Law Board's proposed abolition of removal in order to increase labour circulation and improve paupers' employment opportunities. However, the proportionally high costs in the Wirral Union convinced the Birkenhead ratepayers and the agricultural section that the threat of removal should be retained to suppress poor rate costs. Great Boughton's agricultural townships, with moderately high costs, also supported retention. By 1860, despite the efforts of the President of the Poor Law Board, parliament also remained opposed to abolition and instead reduced the residential qualification for irremovability to three

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<sup>67</sup> Figures compiled from the annual reports of the Poor Law Board, *Parliamentary papers, 1855-61*.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*

years by the Irremovable Poor Act of 1861 (24 and 25 Victoria cap. 55) and then to one year by the Union Chargeability Act of 1865 (28 and 29 Victoria cap. 79).

The intention of the reduction was achieved in the medium term when the number of removals, especially over a long distance, fell sharply. Thus in the year to Lady Day 1867 Birkenhead incurred no charges for the conveyance of removed paupers, as all the removals were now of a short distance. The number of irremovable paupers increased and the cost of poor relief rose in their adopted areas, such as Birkenhead, where it more than doubled from 1863 to 1867. The biggest yearly rise in Birkenhead's irremovable relief costs was from 1866 to 1867, when the one year qualification for irremovability was applied; however, the cost of non-resident relief for Birkenhead paupers almost halved from 1863 to 1867 as more paupers could now claim irremovability.<sup>69</sup> David Ashforth also found that the extension of irremovability curtailed the non-resident relief system in the West Riding of Yorkshire but did not bring it to an end.<sup>70</sup> Chester's petition of February 1869 to the Poor Law Board, urging the enlargement of the Chester Union, also referred to a great increase in the number of irremovable poor as a result of the Union Chargeability Act.<sup>71</sup> Doyle supported this claim and explained that some migrant agricultural workers lived within the city because there were no cottages in the farming villages.<sup>72</sup>

The number of short-distance removals fell because the Union Chargeability Act designated the poor law union as the settlement unit rather than the parish. This ended removals within poor law unions, especially large unions such as Great Boughton that in 1865 had 89 townships. Richard Weaver of Tarvin, one of its leading guardians, had proposed as early as 1849 that union settlement should be adopted, but was unable to gain the support of his fellow guardians.<sup>73</sup> Chester had pre-empted this change in 1843 by a voluntary agreement between the nine parishes that

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<sup>69</sup> Wirral Archives, B/528 and B/534, statistics and accounts of the Birkenhead Union, 1862-67.

<sup>70</sup> Ashford, 'Settlement and removal', p. 83.

<sup>71</sup> The National Archives, MH 12/906, 24 February 1869.

<sup>72</sup> *Chester Chronicle*, 23 October 1869.

<sup>73</sup> The National Archives, MH 12/880, 16 February 1849.

accepted the city as the settlement unit and thus ended internal removals.<sup>74</sup> The agreement had not accepted union rating because of the opposition of the lower rated central parishes, but it was accepted in December 1852 at a special meeting of 40 guardians.<sup>75</sup> The Reverend Mark Coxon, the chairman of the Wirral Union and an agricultural district guardian, had opposed union settlement in 1860, but happily accepted it in 1861 because of the union's division and the rating assessment reforms that based a township's poor rate contribution upon the rateable value of property rather than the old inequitable 'averages' system.<sup>76</sup>

The 'averages' system' had become a major grievance since the cost of relieving irremovable paupers had been charged to the union's common fund by Bodkin's Act of 1847. The townships' contribution was based on the average cost of relief to its paupers over a three year period; in the Wirral the average had been calculated in 1857 and would not be adjusted until 1860. Some townships escaped paying anything and others paid very little, but some paid a disproportionately large amount considering the wealth of the village. Thus four of the Wirral townships that covered 5,000 acres (Caldy, Greasby, Netherpool and Overpool) had from 1857 to 1860 escaped any charges to the common fund but had received £33 18s from it for the relief of their irremovable poor who lived in other townships. Some 'close' townships in both the Wirral and Great Boughton Unions had avoided charges by deliberately not building houses for their labourers, who lived in neighbouring villages that became chargeable for them. Twelve other Wirral townships paid less than the cost of their settled irremovable poor. The chairman of the Wirral Board claimed that the 'working' guardians (ten or twelve out of 60) were unanimously opposed to the existing system.<sup>77</sup>

All three authorities were convinced that a parish's poor rate should be assessed by the rateable value of its property. The Wirral guardians had petitioned the House of Commons in 1856 asking that the change be made and by 1860 the agricultural

<sup>74</sup> The National Archives, MH 12/901, 7 March 1843 and 22 March 1843.

<sup>75</sup> The National Archives, MH 12/902, 7 December 1852.

<sup>76</sup> Report of the Select Committee on Irremovable Poor, *Parliamentary papers, 1860, XVII*, q. 1465.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, qq. 1343-1515.

guardians were prepared to compromise on the cost of irremovable paupers, by dividing it equally between the common fund and the township of their residence, to achieve rating reform.<sup>78</sup> The chairman demonstrated that according to the rateable value system Birkenhead, with a rateable value of £120,000, would in the year ending 25 March 1859 have paid over 40 per cent of the total cost of relief. He considered this to be fair because the number of irremovables in Birkenhead had increased at a greater rate than the rateable value. Like Richard Weaver of the Great Boughton Union, he also wanted an accurate system of property valuation throughout the union and was convinced that the guardians and their officers should oversee the assessment of the townships.<sup>79</sup>

Chester's support for assessment by rateable value was based on general poor rate issues and not just on irremovability, with the 'reform' guardians urging the abandonment of the Local Act and the adoption of the Union Assessment Committee Act of 1862 and the Union Chargeability Act of 1865, which only applied to new poor law unions. The common fund cost of the irremovable paupers was not a major issue, for since 1843 the parishes had not removed within the city and in December 1852 the guardians had passed a resolution in favour of both union rating and the formal abolition of settlement and removal. John Trevor had reported in 1855 that the majority of the paupers lived in the suburban parishes, which were consequently heavily rated at 3s 6d or 4s in the pound, twice that of the city centre parishes.<sup>80</sup> The 'reform' guardians believed revenue for the building of a new workhouse would be raised more efficiently by the Union Assessment Committee Act and that the Union Chargeability Act would ensure a fairer distribution of the poor rate burden.<sup>81</sup> The rating reforms introduced a fairer system of local taxation but did not reduce the unions' relief costs to migrants.

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<sup>78</sup> The National Archives, MH 12/1207, 5 May 1856.

<sup>79</sup> Report of the Select Committee on Irremovable Poor, *Parliamentary papers, 1860, XVII*, qq. 1434-1515.

<sup>80</sup> Report of the Select Committee on Poor Removal, *Parliamentary papers, minutes of evidence, 1855. XIII*, q. 3456.

<sup>81</sup> *Chester Chronicle*, 17 November 1866, 23 November 1867, 4 January 1868 and 12 December 1868.

By 1871 the original purpose of the settlement and removal laws – to cut the cost of the poor rate – had been subverted by the reduction of the residential qualification for irremovability. This well-intended reform increased the cost of relieving a larger number of irremovables who formed a significant proportion of the paupers in Birkenhead and, to a lesser degree, in Chester. David Ashforth similarly reported an increase in Bradford, where during the three years ended Lady Day 1866 67 per cent of all relief went to the irremovable poor, compared with 62.2 per cent during the previous five year period.<sup>82</sup> By the late 1860s Birkenhead and Chester lacked sufficient workhouse accommodation to offer indoor relief consistently to them and thus the twin deterrents to relief applicants of removal and the offer of the workhouse had vanished. The increased cost of relief, expressed as per capita of the population, rose from 1865 to 1870 – in the Birkenhead Union from 5s 2d to 7s 11d and in Chester from 5s 6d to 6s 5d. In 1870 the Great Boughton and Wirral Unions, with less migrants and more adequate workhouse accommodation, had lower per capita costs of 5s 9d and 4s 2d respectively.<sup>83</sup>

This study of west Cheshire largely supports Michael Rose's argument that, apart from its discouragement of inland migration from Birkenhead in 1851 to 1861, the practice of settlement and removal was no great barrier to labour mobility.<sup>84</sup> The settlement and removal laws did little to restrict inward migration to west Cheshire from 1834 to 1871, which was stimulated by predominant economic and social factors. A fear of removal did not deter long-term economic migrants who sought a better standard of living. Therefore, the area always had an adequate labour supply and the reduced residential qualification for irremovability had little impact on it. The Wirral's large influx had been prompted by the aftermath of the Irish famine and the net inward migration was 11,456 from 1851 to 1861, but then declined to 6,835 from 1861 to 1871. A mid nineteenth-century

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<sup>82</sup> Ashforth, 'Settlement and removal', p. 81.

<sup>83</sup> Figures compiled from the annual reports of the Poor Law Board, *Parliamentary papers, 1865-70*.

<sup>84</sup> Rose, 'Settlement, removal', p. 36.

economic boom had attracted a net inward migration to Chester and its suburbs of approximately 3,539 from 1851 to 1871, but as the city's economic growth slowed there was a net outward flow of 5,296 from 1871 to 1891.<sup>85</sup>

By 1871 the poor law union was the unit for both settlement qualification and poor rate chargeability, but most of the local authorities had not supported a national rate because they valued their independence, disliked centralisation and feared higher charges. David Ashforth rightly suggested that only the overburdened urban areas, such as Bradford, Sheffield and Manchester, supported the national rate.<sup>86</sup> Of the west Cheshire authorities, the Birkenhead Union stood to gain most, but the rural unions of Great Boughton and the Wirral were opposed to such a level of centralisation. Great Boughton had reluctantly opened a workhouse in 1857, but its annual general meeting in 1860 drew up a petition demanding the abolition of the Poor Law Board and its inspectors.<sup>87</sup> Settlement and removal remained a problem into the twentieth century – the Royal Commission on the Poor Laws of 1905-09 discovered that in 1907 12,000 paupers were removed and that in 1905 £21,000 had been spent on removals.<sup>88</sup> The poor law unions were abolished in 1929, but settlement and removal continued until the centrally-funded welfare state was established after the Second World War, which finally abandoned both the principle of 'less eligibility' and the local settlement qualification.

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<sup>85</sup> Census reports, *Parliamentary papers, 1841-91*, John Herson, 'Victorian Chester: a city of change and ambiguity', in Roger Swift, ed., *Victorian Chester* (Liverpool, 1996), p. 14.

<sup>86</sup> Ashforth, 'Settlement and removal', p. 80.

<sup>87</sup> CALS, LGT 1/5, minutes of the Great Boughton guardians, 24 March 1860.

<sup>88</sup> Quoted in Rose, 'Settlement and removal' p. 27.



# The press, the cornermen and Liverpool's 'Tithebarn-street outrage' of 1874<sup>1</sup>

*John E. Archer*

## Introduction

On the evening of Monday, 3 August 1874, a bank holiday, porter Richard Morgan and his wife, Alice, disembarked from the Mersey ferry which had just brought them back from their day out on the Wirral. They were met at the landing-stage by Richard's brother, Samuel, who walked with them up the slight incline along Chapel Street. Here they decided to drop into a pub for one last holiday drink before returning to their homes. Such a common-place domestic scene was the setting and context for an event which attracted not just the Liverpool press but the national newspapers. What occurred in the next half hour was to stain Liverpool's reputation for the remainder of the nineteenth century, reinforcing the town's notoriety as a place of danger in the minds of the rest of the nation. This article will examine the murderous assault on Richard Morgan, the contradictions and confusions surrounding the assault and the medical evidence, the reported reaction of the watching crowd and the press reactions to the events which took place that evening.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Some of the evidence cited in this article is based on material collected for the project 'Violence in the North West with Special Reference to Liverpool and Manchester 1850-1914', funded by the Economic and Social Research Council as part of the Violence Research Programme. I am also indebted to Andrew Davies for his critical and helpful comments.

<sup>2</sup> Details of the Tithebarn murder have been highlighted by R. Sindall, *Street violence in the nineteenth century: media panic or real danger?* (Leicester, 1990) and John Archer, *'The monster evil': policing and violence in Victorian Liverpool* (Liverpool, 2011). The fullest and most detailed coverage of the murder can be found in M. Macilwee, *The gangs of Liverpool* (Lytham, 2006). The official trial documents and appeals' papers relating to the Tithebarn murder do not appear to have survived in The National Archives, Kew. I have consulted the *Liverpool Mercury* and the *Porcupine* for much of the detail of the murder and the subsequent legal proceedings. The *Mercury*

The murder of Richard Morgan

The *Liverpool Mercury*, in its first report of the murder headlined 'SHOCKING OUTRAGE IN LIVERPOOL – A MAN KICKED TO DEATH', continued the story. The 'perfectly sober' party left the pub somewhere around 9.30 pm and continued up to Tithebarn Street; along the way Alice dallied in a tobacconist, whilst the two brothers continued to amble up the road towards Richard's home in Leeds Street. As the two men came level with Lower Milk Street, they were accosted by three 'young roughs' lounging on the corner. One of them 'caught hold' of Richard Morgan's arm and asked for 6d to buy some ale; 'Give us 6d; we are short of 6d for a quart of ale'. Richard, not taking kindly to the demand, turned to the men and said, 'Go and work for money as I do'. Such a response was, if not a challenge, taken to be provocative by the men, one of whom, replied, 'We work at such men as you, to knock them down and take it off them'. Another added sarcastically that it was a 'good job' he had a woman with him.

With that reply one of the roughs struck Richard Morgan on the left side of his head with his fist. The force of the blow was such that Morgan staggered into the middle of the street and fell to the ground. His brother immediately hit the man who had thrown the punch and pushed him away. At this the other two roughs set upon Samuel, while the initial assailant whistled for support, which arrived in the shape of four other men. Alice told the coroner's court,

They set upon the deceased and began to kick him as he lay in the street. He was insensible before they began to kick him... The man who knocked him down took off his belt and 'scotched' the deceased with it. The deceased lay on the ground from five to ten minutes while the seven men assaulted him.

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was a long established paper with a Liberal bias that reported policing matters in a moderate manner. The *Porcupine*, another Liberal but satirical journal, had been established by Liverpool's foremost nineteenth-century journalist, Hugh Shimmin, who frequently took a highly critical view of Liverpool's police force. The Morgans appear to have lived in neighbouring courts off Leeds Street.

Both she and her brother-in-law vainly tried to stop the assault. Alice threw herself on top of her husband in an attempt to protect him.<sup>3</sup> Witnesses to the assault claimed the force and violence of the kicks sent Richard's prone body across the street, a distance of 30 to 40 feet, or 'like a football', the *Porcupine* added emotively.<sup>4</sup>

The noise and tumult attracted a watching crowd, composed mainly of men and boys, when someone shouted either 'Nix, nix' or 'Hech, hech'. Whatever was shouted, these cries were a warning to the assailants that the police were coming. Breaking off from the beating, the seven men ran down Smithfield Street pursued by Samuel Morgan. One, John Quinn, alias McCrave (also spelt McGrave), cornered by Morgan drew a knife and threatened to stab him. The crowd, who had accompanied Morgan in his chase, dragged him away from McCrave, for his own safety it was initially reported.<sup>5</sup> By this time constable 858 had appeared and was organising the removal of the unconscious Richard to the North Dispensary in Great Howard Street. Just before the large crowd accompanying the body had arrived at the dispensary, McCrave was recognised by some of them and was given into custody of another constable. Richard was pronounced dead on arrival at the dispensary. As one report later stated, the

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<sup>3</sup> *Liverpool Mercury*, 7 August 1874. The Morgans were described as 'perfectly sober' by the *Liverpool Mercury*, 5 August 1874.

<sup>4</sup> *Porcupine*, 8 August 1874. During the committal proceedings in September, witness Samuel Lipscombe told the court that the 'prisoners kicked the deceased across the street like a football. (Sensation in court)', *Liverpool Mercury*, 16 September 1874. This emotive phrase, of being kicked across the street like a football, increased not only the horror of the killing in readers' minds but also their prejudices towards the defendants. Therefore it is important to consider the origins of this phrase: was it a phrase made by a neutral witness or was it a piece of journalism designed to heighten the newsworthiness of the case? Chronologically, the phrase appears in the *Porcupine* on 8 August, over a month before Lipscombe used it in court. Was he simply repeating what he had read? Furthermore, one must be wary of the witness's neutrality and objectivity when giving his evidence. It was very apparent that Lipscombe and Mullen knew one another and that they did not like each other, *Liverpool Mercury*, 16 September 1874.

<sup>5</sup> *Liverpool Mercury*, 5 August 1874.

killing appeared to be of 'an unexceptionally brutal character'<sup>6</sup> and yet 'The Tithebarn-street outrage' soon gained a notoriety which damaged Liverpool's reputation irreversibly.

#### Immediate press reactions

Initial reports gave every indication that the crowd only gathered at the cries of Alice and although they did not intervene to save her husband, 'there were loud calls for the police'. Later it was claimed the assembled mass saved Morgan's brother from being stabbed but, in the process, allowed McCrave to escape. However, he was spotted later that evening and given into custody.<sup>7</sup> On the face of it the spectators were not reportedly on the side of the assailants.

By the following day at the first magistrates' hearing of John McCrave, Samuel Morgan, as the principal witness, gave a very different story. On chasing and cornering McCrave, he claimed the prisoner's 'mates' helped him escape. Furthermore, 'a lot' of women prevented him from chasing McCrave any further across the yard. When the *Porcupine* appeared on 8 August an equally damaging report was published and one that was not at all flattering to Liverpool. Its report began:

In the midst of the evidences of Liverpool's proud pre-eminence as the great centre of the world's commerce, we are now and then – alas! Sadly too often – reminded that Liverpool has a world-wide notoriety as the harbour and refuge of the most desperate ruffians unhung. It appears to be a necessary accompaniment of our prosperity that our town, towards which so many nationalities converge in the prosecution of commerce, should act somewhat as a sieve, retaining the dregs and impurities of the ever-changing population, and letting the clear grit pass through to havens beyond. The riverside streets of New York have an ominous reputation for deeds of sudden violence. People

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<sup>6</sup> *Liverpool Mercury*, 5 January 1875. Different meanings can be attached to this phrase: either that the assault was not particularly brutal, or more probable that the assault was of a typically brutal character for that area of Liverpool.

<sup>7</sup> *Liverpool Mercury*, 5 August 1874.

think but little comparatively, so frequent is the occurrence of revolver shots along the East River, and the finding subsequently of floating forms, decomposed beyond recognition, but with a bullet or bowie-knife stab near the heart. Along the levees of New Orleans, by the quays of San Francisco, behind the wharves of Shanghai [sic] and Calcutta, scenes of desperate outrage for the sake of plunder often occur which sailors recount with a shudder. But for examples of unmitigated ruffianism, unexplained (as in other and more southern ports) by unpremeditated outbreaks of national fierceness, the lower streets of Liverpool remain unrivalled.<sup>8</sup>

What the *Porcupine* found so unacceptable was that the violence or 'ruffianism' was committed for its own sake. Robbery, in its opinion, was not the prevailing motive. If there was any triggering force which motivated McCrave and his friends then it was, according to the journal, 'the rage for drink'.

A number of features relating to the killing were immediately amplified by the *Porcupine*, features which immediately took on significance with other newspapers, both national and local. Thus, the respectability of the victim and his party was compared and contrasted with that of the assailants. Richard was described as 'recently married' – he had been married for over a year – and was referred to as a 'steady and faithful servant and a light-hearted generous youth'. Other papers emphasised his respectability, industriousness and sobriety and the papers also noted that Richard Morgan's brief stop off in a pub minutes before his death was for a nightcap of a glass of whisky with ginger beer.<sup>9</sup> His wife and brother were alluded to in equally positive language. The former, whose 'piteous appeals for mercy and protection' went unanswered by the gathering group of spectators, 'threw herself forward to shield him [her husband] from their savagery'. The *Times* later painted a powerful word picture for its readers when describing the scene: 'the wife, casting off all the timidity of her sex at the sight of her husband's danger,

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<sup>8</sup> *Porcupine*, 8 August 1874.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*: *The Penny Illustrated Paper and Illustrated Times*, 15 August 1874.

was striving at the peril of her own life to shelter him'.<sup>10</sup> The brother meanwhile did what any honourable man would do in the circumstances; he joined in the fight to defend and protect his brother in a brave yet vain attempt to save his life. Outnumbered – estimates of the numbers of assailants varied from three to seven – Samuel was unable to stop the lengthy assault and kicking. He did, however, give chase and corner one of the assailants until stopped by associates and friends of the assailant.

#### The cornerman and rough

The cornermen, very much a Liverpool label for the port's nineteenth-century street roughs, were initially described in early reports of the killing in neutral terms as 'young men'. They were, however, soon demonised as ruffians, rowdies and cowardly roughs. Very soon the press was referring its readers to the threat of 'a rule of terrorism', whilst the *Times* in an article headed 'The Rough Terror' identified a 'violent class' separate from the 'ordinary population' who belonged to 'the criminal class as regards [his] tastes and amusements, but not necessarily as regards [his] employment'.<sup>11</sup> In an unspoken but clear reference to the Tithebarn-street murder, the roughs of Lancashire 'maim or murder as it suits their fancy' and 'the assailants shall outnumber the assaulted in the proportion of at least three to one'. In more specific detail Richard Morgan's three assailants were soon identified and described. There was 21-year-old John McCrave, alias Quinn, alias Holly or Holy Fly, who had been out of gaol only a few days, having served a sentence of nine months for assaulting and robbing an old man. Michael Mullin, or Mullen, a seventeen-year-old carter 'of repulsive appearance', was also known to the police, whilst nineteen-year-old porter Peter Campbell, variously known by the nickname Miggy or Midge, was fully employed and not regarded as a typical cornerman.<sup>12</sup>

Two of the three suspects, McCrave and Mullen, had Irish names and were probably Liverpool-Irish by birth. Their

<sup>10</sup> The *Times*, 17 December 1874.

<sup>11</sup> The *Times*, 24 September 1874 was reproducing an article which had appeared in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, 23 September 1874.

<sup>12</sup> *Liverpool Mercury*, 6 and 15 August 1874. Full descriptions of the accused can be found in Macilwee, *Gangs of Liverpool*, chapter 2.

ethnicity, however, was not alluded to by either the *Liverpool Mercury* or the national press. This seems surprising, given the considerable anti-Irish prejudice which still existed in Victorian England. The lack of newspaper comment raises two possible explanations. First, the ethnicity and more particularly the Irishness of the two defendants was not a significant issue, as far as the press were concerned. This would additionally imply that the Irish were not necessarily regarded or labelled as potentially criminal or threatening. Second, the surnames of the two defendants were so obviously Irish that the newspapers did not need to labour the point of their ethnicity. Readers would have read and understood without any further signposting from the press. Furthermore, the readers might then have arrived at conclusions regarding the Irish and violent crime which were unspoken and widespread in Victorian society and certainly so in Victorian Liverpool. In other words, their Irishness did not need to be emphasised. As there is no hard evidence which suggests Irishness was a relevant factor in the identity and labelling of two of the assailants, it may not be necessary to emphasise this too strongly. In addition, the Irish dimension may also have been diluted by the presence of Campbell in the dock. His name and antecedents would not appear to have been Irish in any way.<sup>13</sup>

The 'rough' as an urban bogeyman had been in existence for at least a couple of decades in Liverpool. In the 1850s the journalist Hugh Shimmin wrote of them as having been a problem during the early years of the nineteenth century, identifying them as ship-carpenters, 'gangs of disorderly fellows' who took control of the streets and insulted the more respectable of the town.<sup>14</sup> In describing these young men, Shimmin would appear to be imposing a label, current in 1857, onto the past. However, terms such as ruffian and rough might well have shared a common origin but a dissimilar spelling, ruff being the Elizabethan form of the word. What is striking about the use of the term in the 1850s

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<sup>13</sup> In comments made by the national newspapers after the trial no mention is made of the defendants' names which may suggest that Irishness was not a significant issue. For further information on the Liverpool Irish and crime see Archer, *The monster evil*, chapter 5.

<sup>14</sup> *Liverpool Mercury*, 29 June 1857. This appeared in a series of articles on the Liverpool police.

is the apparent lack of hyperbole and fear attached to this group of men. They appear to have been regarded as a part, albeit an irritating part, of urban life. They were viewed by the more respectable members of society as a group who had to be endured and who, on occasions, allowed their drinking and high spirits to spill over and impinge on others. Life-threatening they were not. However, by the 1860s Charles Dickens in his *All the Year Round* magazine wrote of the 'euphonious softening of Ruffian into Rough, which has lately become popular'.<sup>15</sup> This 'euphonious softening' of the word appears odd to our ears since the word 'rough' sounds every bit as threatening as ruffian. To Dickens and his readers ruffians were historically of old heritage and were thieves, and generally violent ones at that.

For Dickens by 1868 the ruffian through superior numbers and violence defied the law and, because of the police's inefficiency, was not only flourishing but was actually multiplying. So threatening had the ruffian become in Dickens's mind that he called for them to be 'exterminated'. Thus the ruffian or rough had clearly been elevated to the position of public enemy number one because no-one in authority had stood up to them. Their swearing, their 'horseplay', their threatening demeanour, their throwing of stones and their brutish behaviour had been gradually allowed to develop, unchecked by the authorities who now turned a blind eye to their presence on the streets of urban Britain. They had, more through public inertia, been allowed to make the streets of cities and towns their territory, a space in which they could do much as they pleased.

To Dickens and others, the rough represented a significant threat to civil and political society – one into which some working-class men had been admitted under the 1867 Reform Act. This article by Dickens, a year after the Act, suggests that the rough element of the working class would long remain outside the pale of moderation and good citizenship which characterised the majority of the population. The *Telegraph*, on reporting of the brutality that came before the northern assize courts in December 1874, rhetorically asked, 'Are these samples even of the worst of our working people?' It continued by asking,

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<sup>15</sup> *All the Year Round*, 10 October 1868.

is this the class that wants legislation favourable to striking miners?<sup>16</sup>

In response to the Tithebarn murder, Dickens returned to the theme of 'Roughs and Rowdies'. In observing that English roughs and the American equivalent 'rowdies' were peculiar to English-speaking parts of the world, Dickens described them in words that suggested such people had become 'folk devils'. The characteristics of the rough identified by Dickens included 'ignorance', 'recklessness', 'ferocity', 'intemperance', 'filthiness of speech', 'cruelty of their amusements' and an 'utter disregard of all decency, propriety, and respect for the feelings, or even the existence of other people'.<sup>17</sup> They had become a 'pariah' class separate from society but who did not necessarily belong to the criminal class. The press placed McCrave, Mullen and Campbell very much into this group. They personified the problem then confronting urban society, namely an unruly and threatening menace. McCrave, for example, had had a string of convictions going back to 1869, when he would have been just fifteen years old. In the five years leading up to the murder he had had fifteen separate prison sentences, mostly for drunk and disorderly behaviour but also for more serious crimes of theft, assault and robbery from the person. His was, according to the press, a 'shocking career of depravity' and was 'one of the worst types of the "dangerous classes"'. Mullen carried two previous convictions, one for assaulting a constable and a more serious charge of stealing a watch from a person. Campbell, on the other hand, had not been known to the police before the murder of Richard Morgan but this only became evident during the trial.<sup>18</sup>

By the time of the trial in December 1874, the victim and his alleged assailants had come to represent the two sides of the Manichaeian struggle of good versus evil. Morgan, the responsible and sober everyman walking home with his immediate family, minding his own business and being accosted by three roughs wanting money for drink, characterised working-class

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<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 423-24. The *Telegraph* was quoted in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, 17 December 1874.

<sup>17</sup> *All the Year Round*, 5 September 1874.

<sup>18</sup> *Liverpool Mercury*, 5 January 1875.

respectability. On being refused, they set about him and brutally murdered him in a cowardly fashion, not only outnumbering him but also using their boots rather than just their fists. This picture of innocence slaughtered by savages would have been very clearly in the jury's mind even before they had been sworn in at St George's Hall for the winter assizes. Thus the judge's entreaties to the jury to cast from their minds all that they had previously read in the local and national press created the legal fiction of a fair trial for the three accused.<sup>19</sup>

#### The Liverpool crowd

The next issue which drew the press's attention to Liverpool and this particular killing was the manner in which it was played out. Not only was Morgan killed on one of the town's busiest thoroughfares and one not known for its violence, but the killing was so public. Descriptions of the behaviour of the watching crowd altered very soon after the actual event. Initially the crowd was regarded as sympathetic to Morgan's plight, calls for the police were heard and Richard's brother Samuel was saved from himself when he was pulled away from a knife-wielding assailant whom he had chased and cornered. But a very different picture soon emerged and it was one that brought shame to the town of Liverpool.

Samuel Morgan, in giving evidence at McCrave's first magistrate's hearing the day after his brother's death, alluded to the fact that he was prevented from either cornering or giving chase to the defendant by his 'mates' and 'a lot [of] women'. The following day at the coroner's inquest Samuel made a brief mention concerning the assembled crowd not lending any assistance. By 8 August the *Porcupine* was noting that there were allegations that 'a large crowd looked on calmly and did not interfere' whilst Morgan was kicked about the street 'like a football'. The journal, however, was unwilling to believe such rumours of a 'casual crowd' unwilling to save a fellow human in such dire circumstances. 'Let us hope for the honour of our race', the *Porcupine* concluded, 'this feature of the Tithebarn-street tragedy may be modified; for, as the first details are presented, the

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<sup>19</sup> *Liverpool Mercury*, 15 December 1874.

circumstances are revolting enough to cover the spectators with infamy almost as black as that which follows the perpetrators of the unparalleled outrage'. Nor did eyewitness accounts improve the reputation of the Liverpool crowd in later accounts of the killing. It was reported at the committal proceedings in September that the watching crowd shouted out, 'Give it him, give it him'.<sup>20</sup>

Two weeks later, during which time the *Porcupine* had had time to ponder on the behaviour of the crowd, the journal acknowledged its hasty judgement. In a piece 'by a working man' and headed 'The Reign of Terror', the correspondent put forward an ingenious and not unlikely explanation for the crowd's non-intervention. They were, he argued, afraid to intervene to save Morgan. It was not, however, fear of being beaten up by the cornermen; it was 'the fear of law and of the police'. This unexpected explanation becomes understandable when 'the working man' explained to the journal's readers how a poor man could easily lose his character, reputation and job if he went to the aid of someone being beaten up in a street row. The police, it was argued, would have come up to the fight after it had started and they would not necessarily have known who was the innocent victim and who was the assailant, and because of this they would have arrested everyone involved. In such circumstances an innocent man could easily have ended up in court without the means to convince the magistrates of his innocence. Thus 'the reign of terror' was for the *Porcupine* the manner in which the law was being put into practice by so-called law officers.<sup>21</sup>

The 'Tithebarn-street outrage' remained in the public eye rather longer than many other murders of the day for a number of other reasons. First, not all the suspects were immediately arrested after the crime. Only McCrave was picked up the same evening. Mullen, along with his brother, were captured under more dramatic circumstances ten days later when they were discovered as stowaways on a ship bound for New York. The ship transferred the two men to an inward-bound ship and they were handed over to the river police boat which returned them to the

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<sup>20</sup> *Liverpool Mercury*, 6 and 7 August 1874; *Porcupine*, 8 August 1874; *Liverpool Mercury*, 16 September 1874.

<sup>21</sup> *Porcupine*, 22 August 1874.

port. Campbell, on the other hand, managed to elude the authorities. His capture, after considerable police undercover work, provided good copy for the newspapers. Campbell's sister was followed to Bolton and then on to Atherton and Chowbent where her brother, who had been working as a collier, was in hiding at the house of a family acquaintance named Baxter. Here members of the Bolton and Liverpool police surrounded the property and then burst into the darkened house. During the confusion of the fight the police arrested the wrong people and Campbell was able to escape under the cover of night. The police, however, proved to be remarkably well informed for they sent round a 'posse' the following day to a house where the three of them had lived in Gascoyne Street, Liverpool; Campbell was found hidden under a mattress.<sup>22</sup>

In the first three weeks after the killing attention seekers, keen to emphasise their credentials as hard men, boasted that they had been involved in Morgan's killing. Richard Hannah, 'a tall rough looking man', drunkenly told other drinkers in Vauxhall Road pubs that he was one of the men who had killed Morgan. Witnesses to the killing were brought into court and identified him as being present in the crowd that evening. Based on this information the magistrate remanded him. In another earlier case a man named Henry Poole was arrested after drunkenly boasting to other drinkers that he had been in many 'a do' in Liverpool. On being picked up, arrested and imprisoned for fourteen days for drunken behaviour, details of his description were sent to the detective department in Liverpool. Nothing came of either of these cases but they did keep the murder very much in the public mind.<sup>23</sup>

Other features of the crime and how it was initially reported altered over the time between the actual killing and the trial. First, the number of assailants who initially attacked Richard Morgan numbered three, the ones who were eventually tried and found guilty. The early witnesses, particularly Samuel and Alice, spoke of up to seven men becoming involved in the fight after

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<sup>22</sup> *Liverpool Mercury*, 14 and 15 September 1874.

<sup>23</sup> For Hannah, see *Liverpool Mercury*, 31 August 1874, and for Poole, see *Liverpool Mercury*, 14 August 1874.

McCrave or Mullen whistled for reinforcements when the brother began to fight with McCrave. By the time of the assize trial these other men were not alluded to nor had the police appeared to have searched for them in the intervening months. Second, and in some ways related to this point, was the perceived duration of the assault. This is always difficult to estimate if one is involved in the actual fight. Brother Samuel told the police that it lasted about fifteen to twenty minutes. Such a lengthy duration would have allowed the police to arrive and intervene, but this did not happen according to witnesses. A long fight would also have meant considerable evidence of injuries to the body of Richard Morgan. The police themselves, and constable 858 in particular, reported that he had passed the murder spot at 9.25 pm and was later told by two women that a man was being kicked to death at 9.37 pm. Another witness told the police that Alice Morgan bought tobacco off him at about 9.30 pm. The fight would appear to have lasted 'not much over five minutes', according to tobacconist David Ellis.<sup>24</sup>

Accuracy regarding the timing and length of the assault were crucial so far as Major Greig, the head constable, was concerned. Soon after the murder the commonplace cry of 'where were the police?' was being voiced in the newspapers. By 11 August Greig had identified and verified that one inspector, an acting inspector and six constables had passed the actual murder spot between 9.15 and 9.45 pm. The nearest constable at the time of the assault was found 200 yards away in Vauxhall Road.<sup>25</sup>

Rowdyism, the dangers of the criminal class and the 'rough terror' became the fears of the moment in the late summer and autumn of 1874. The debate presented itself in two different but related ways. First, patronising concern was expressed for the safety of the ordinary working people who had to live with the threat of physical violence on a daily basis. The *Pall Mall Gazette* in a lengthy article, reprinted the following day in the *Times*, wrote of the problems confronting the poor who had to live among 'roughs'. These men walked the same streets and might even live

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<sup>24</sup> Liverpool Record Office [hereafter LivRO], 352POL 2/6, 11 August 1874.

<sup>25</sup> See comments in the press immediately after the murder; for details of the police's movements, see LivRO, 352POL 2/6, p. 256, 11 August 1874.

in the same house as the honest working man; it was, the paper argued, impossible for him to ignore or avoid the members of the 'violent class'. This danger was particularly a problem in the towns of Lancashire, a reference to both the Tithebarn-street outrage and the heavy assize calendar in Liverpool during the same summer.<sup>26</sup>

The second and closely related issue concerns the efficacy of punishments for crimes of violence. Were they harsh enough and did they act as a deterrent? The *Pall Mall Gazette*, in a telling comment, compared the reactions of London and parliament to the garrotting panic of 1862 with the violence faced by working people in the North.

If the well-to-do classes were exposed for a month to the danger which constantly besets the poor in many parts of England, the law would not remain what it is for another session. This was shown by the promptness with which garrotting was dealt with. A few startling cases threw all London into a state of alarm, which became ludicrous from its exaggeration, and Parliament promptly increased the punishment in a way which was effectual alike upon the criminals and upon their judges. If the men and women who in many Lancashire towns cannot see two or three men standing at a street corner without a well-founded dread of being kicked to death had seats in Parliament, something would have been done before this to make the protection of the law a reality.<sup>27</sup>

Consequently, the paper demanded that the first right of any subject was the protection of life and limb. Unlike new countries such as the United States where lynch law and the carrying of weapons were common place, British subjects should have the right to expect the law, parliament, police and the judiciary to enact and carry out sufficiently harsh punishments for crimes of violence. To that end it called on the Home Secretary to collect 'the exact statistics of brutality' and lay them before the two

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<sup>26</sup> *Pall Mall Gazette*, 23 September 1874.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*

houses of parliament with a view to enacting new and harsher legislation. Magistrates up and down England and Wales were very soon meeting to discuss their views on and suggestions concerning the punishment of violence. In Liverpool, for example, the *Mercury* reported that 'the general opinion of the bench was that violence should be met with violence; in other words, that the use of the "cat" should be extended to wife-beaters and other cowardly assailants'. Short of exterminating them, to use Dickens's phrase, 'deep scarification' of their backs would appear to have been the only language these roughs understood.<sup>28</sup>

The parliamentary inquiry established in the autumn of 1874 to enquire into the views of magistrates up and down the country on the punishment of violent crime, whilst not resulting in any productive legislation, did at least offer an insight into how seriously the judiciary regarded violence. Senior judges, stipendiary magistrates and the benches of county quarter sessions were requested by the Home Secretary to consider the laws pertaining to 'brutal assaults' and whether punishments were sufficiently harsh. Should flogging, for example, be extended more widely to crimes of male-on-male assault? Interestingly, this questionnaire was circulated in the immediate aftermath of the Tithebarn Street murder but before the trial of the accused. As such the circular landed on magistrates' and judges' desks when the panic concerning 'rough' violence was at its peak. The replies, whilst varied, are notable for their relative lack of concern, ranging from legalistic concerns about the meaning and vagueness of the word 'brutal' to wanting to extend flogging to more crimes of violence. In between, there was a general mood that many of the sentences were sufficient or would be sufficient if judges used the powers of sentencing already at their disposal. All these relatively muted answers brought about no changes in the law.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> *Liverpool Mercury*, 15 September 1874; *All the Year Round*, 10 October 1868 and 5 September 1874.

<sup>29</sup> *Parliamentary papers, LXI, reports to the Secretary of State for the Home Department on the state of the law relating to brutal assaults, 1875.*

Confusions and contradictions: identities, policing and injuries  
With the duration of the fight reportedly lasting at least quarter of an hour, according to the chief witnesses, one would have expected clear evidence of severe injuries to Richard's body. He had after all been punched, throttled and then kicked across a 30-foot street. On the issue of the medical evidence put before the coroner's court it was confusing and contradictory. From this distance in time it is very difficult for historians to arrive at a definitive judgement of what had been the cause of death. At the initial coroner's hearing, held on 6 August, Dr Corscadden of the North Dispensary told the inquest that when the body was brought to him there were 'no external marks of violence' that he could see. This was immediately after the fight, when the expected bruising and other external marks would not necessarily have developed.<sup>30</sup> With the help of two colleagues he later made a post-mortem examination and discovered 'several marks, but not of a serious character'. All the internal organs were sound and showed no evidence of injury; however, he noted the heart was fatty and 'a good deal enlarged'. Richard had, in his opinion, died of heart failure, and having heard the evidence of the fight he added that his death had been accelerated by the violence and the excitement.

Later medical evidence, on the Friday after the incident, provided by Dr Taylor suggested the body showed evidence of violence. He found bruising on the chest, the hip area and on the left side below the ribs. He found further abrasions on other parts of the body, although he found nothing on the head. Dr Kavanagh, police surgeon at the main bridewell, who was also present at the second post mortem, reported that there were 'two or three external marks on the body', abrasions on the neck, 'one or two on the side' and one on the arm. After this singularly vague evidence, his testimony to the assize jury then covered what he had found around Richard's heart. 'There was', he told the assize court, 'no appearance of fatty degeneration of the heart' and then immediately added that 'there was a little more fat about the heart than usual. The fat looked unnatural fat'. Both he and Dr Taylor concluded that Richard's death was due to shock, 'the result of violence'. One cannot help thinking that his conclusion was based

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<sup>30</sup> *Liverpool Mercury*, 7 August 1874.

on what he had already learned about the fight. When questioned by one of the defence counsel he told the court that 'there were not sufficient marks on the body to account for death'.<sup>31</sup> When further cross-examined by another defence barrister, he felt that the first blow to the head may have been sufficient to cause Richard's death. This point became, for two of the defendants, a crucial piece of evidence because witnesses disagreed as to who had thrown the first, and potentially fatal, punch to his head – was it McCrave or was it Mullen? – the implication being that only one of the two defendants was actually the murderer.

During the presentation of the prosecution evidence at the assize trial in December, witnesses were evenly divided as to who threw the first and possibly fatal punch which floored Richard Morgan. His brother Samuel, a sixteen-year-old lad, William Alston, standing at the corner of Lower Milk Street and hence close to the fight, and John Thompson, a painter and plumber who heard the argument start but had moved on twenty yards before looking back, all stated that it was McCrave who punched the victim. In contrast, Alice, who was standing by her husband's side, Samuel Lipsom, a picture frame maker, and ten-year-old Bernard McCarthy of Chisenhale Street, who had known the defendants for three years, all stated that it was Mullen who first attacked Morgan. In a case where the three defendants were jointly accused of murder and acting together to commit a felony, it was, according to the judge, irrelevant who threw the first punch or who dealt the fatal blow.

However, the three defendants had separate defence counsels, who argued that it was relevant and pertinent to the case. Mr Shee, acting for Mullen, argued that his client was not to know that McCrave was going to have a fight and kill Morgan. When the whole incident kicked off his client, not unnaturally, waded in to defend his friends from being beaten by the victim's brother.<sup>32</sup> Other defence arguments, not all of which were published by the *Liverpool Mercury*, included the possibility that Morgan's wife may have caused her husband's death when she fell heavily on his prone body in order to protect him from further

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<sup>31</sup> *Liverpool Mercury*, 15 December 1874.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*

kicks and punches. Another included the allegation that because Morgan engaged in an argument, or ‘considerable wrangling’, when he was first approached for money, he had brought the attack upon himself. One of the more powerful defence arguments was the claim that the fight was nothing more than a street row in which the defendants, in a sudden rush of hot-headed anger, fought and ‘accidentally’ killed Morgan who had insulted one of their number.<sup>33</sup> The judge, Mr Justice Mellor, in his summing up to the jury, summarised Mr Shee’s comments by paraphrasing a jurist: ‘the criminal intent of the single person who, without the knowledge or assent of his companion, is guilty of homicide will not involve them in his guilt’. However, the judge went on to quote the same authority who argued that if the group intended committing an unlawful act and resolved ‘to overcome all opposition by force’ and that one of the group commit a homicide then all are guilty. The crucial question for the jury, then, was to decide if the three men were acting in concert and intended to assault indiscriminately any person passing by them and use violence above and beyond what might ordinarily have been deployed in a common street row. If the violence led to a death then that was murder rather than manslaughter and the victim’s health was not pertinent in such circumstances. Even with these clear directions the jury arrived at their decisions remarkably quickly. In less than fifteen minutes they were back in court delivering their guilty verdicts, with one proviso – that Campbell be recommended to mercy.

With that recommendation in mind the judge donned the black cap and sentenced all three to death and warned McCrave and Mullen to prepare for their fateful punishment. The coolness and indifference which had defined the prisoners’ demeanour throughout the day-long trial dissolved, with Mullen bursting into tears when his sentence was announced and McCrave calling out a warning to young men to ‘mind and keep from drink’. The large crowd which had congregated outside St George’s Hall all day followed the prison van for some distance back to Kirkdale gaol.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> The *Times*, 16 December 1874 and *Liverpool Mercury*, 15 December 1874.

<sup>34</sup> Accounts of the trial and descriptions of the crowd outside can be found in *Liverpool Mercury*, 15 December 1874 and the *Times*, 16 December 1874.

The jury's decision is not altogether unexpected in light of the press coverage which the case had received over the previous four months. The details of the unprovoked attack on Richard Morgan and his being kicked 30 feet across the street were graphically described by witnesses. There were a range of issues and considerations which may have caused the jury pause for thought and these included the apparent lack of marks on the victim's body, the fatty deposits around his heart, consideration that it was a street row in which the violence deployed would not in normal circumstances have led to death and the separate defence arguments which obviously identified witness inconsistencies, not least who threw the first punch. The best they could have hoped for was a manslaughter verdict but the brevity of the jury's retirement suggests that they did not consider this a worthy alternative.

#### Execution

By the time of the execution on 4 January 1875, Peter Campbell had received a reprieve. This was not altogether unexpected, as he was considered more respectable than the other two. He was in full employment and had a good character reference during the trial from his employer, George Taylor, a glass bottle manufacturer, who had described him as honest and 'well conducted'. Campbell's role in the killing had not been as prominent as the other two but his violence towards Morgan, once he was on the ground, had been considerable. It was reported that he had throttled him. It was also contended that Campbell was not a typical rough or cornerman, in so far as he had begun mixing with the wrong crowd on account of his dating McCrave's sister. However, his character reference, his previous regular employment, his previous lack of a police record, his secondary role in the murder and the petitions for mercy set up in the town by his supporters and signed by many important

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*The Pall Mall Gazette*, 17 December 1874 wrote that the people who 'thronged' the approaches to St. George's Hall were 'loud in their sympathies for the accused'.

individuals and ministers of the different denominations all contributed to his reprieve.<sup>35</sup>

Mullen and McCrave were not so fortunate and one wonders if their Liverpool-Irish identities had some bearing on the decision that they were left for execution. At seven o'clock on the morning of the executions of McCrave and Mullen, along with another condemned man named Worthington, twelve reporters assembled at the main prison gates. Fifty minutes later they were granted entry and escorted through to the yard where, in the enveloping mist, the 'dim' outline of 'the black painted uprights and crossbeams' were only just visible. The tension was heightened by a description of a shadowy figure seen through a window close to the yard. This was 'the reception room' where the condemned gathered on the morning of their execution in prayer with the Roman Catholic chaplain, Father Bonte. It was also here that they met the hangman and had their arms pinioned. In something closely resembling theatre, a gas lamp was then lit close to the scaffold steps and a portly carpenter walked up the steps, checked the railing around the scaffold and the trapdoor before departing.

The prison clock struck eight and the death bell, which had been tolling since 7.45 am, altered its beat by urgently ringing a 'few sharp strokes rapidly', the sign for the door to open and the procession to step out into the foggy yard. Detailed descriptions of the trembling McCrave and a 'resigned'-looking Mullen indicated to readers not only their fear of imminent death but their acknowledgement of guilt and belief in judgement in the hereafter. With a cry of 'Oh!' from one of the condemned as the trapdoor opened, they were dispatched. 'The executioner's work', wrote the *Mercury* reporter, 'was perfection, as each of the men seemed to be dead almost immediately'.

#### Postscript

There was a strange coda to the Tithebarn Street murder. Within weeks of the execution, James McCrave, older brother to the executed John, was brought before the stipendiary magistrate, Mr Raffles, on a charge of 'using threatening language' to his landlady.

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<sup>35</sup> *Liverpool Mercury*, 15 December 1874 and 5 January 1875.

She had requested him to leave her lodgings but he had repeatedly refused to move. Moreover, she was too frightened of him to lock him out as he had 'threatened to kick her to death' and 'put his knife into her husband'.<sup>36</sup> Such threats from an immediate relative of a recently executed and notorious murderer had to be considered serious for both the landlady and the authorities. As Mr Raffles observed in his sentencing lecture to McCrave, 'If you won't be warned by the awful fate which overtook your brother a few weeks ago, nothing that I can say will have any effect upon you I am sure'. His punishment, to be gaoled until he found two sureties of £20 to keep the peace for three months, reflects well on Raffles's moderation and fairness towards a man who must have been, to some extent, guilty by association in the minds of many.

Nor was this the final full stop to the murder. Three years after the incident resentments and ill-will were still apparently evident among family members of the executed. On 18 September 1877 came reports of a fatal kicking case that bore many similarities with the murder in 1874. In this case a man named John Talbot was kicked to death in Freemason's-row, just off Vauxhall Road and close to both Tithebarn Street and Gascoyne Street where the 1874 murderers lived. From the preliminary reports in the press, it seemed that Talbot had protected his wife who was in a quarrel with a neighbour, and that he was attacked by five men and women who knocked him down and kicked him so brutally that he died in the workhouse hospital of peritonitis on 22 September. Those charged were Martin Kelly, Thomas Jennings, Eliza McIntosh, Thomas Mullen and Mary McCrave. The last two named were brother and sister to Michael Mullen and John McCrave respectively.

Further details emerged during the inquest hearing, which suggested that the whole incident started out as what newspapers described as a typical Irish 'row'. The wife of the deceased, Margaret, alleged that Eliza McIntosh came to the door of the house where she and a husband were drinking with friends and called her 'a Limerick ----' and challenged her to come out. This brought John Talbot out to ask the meaning of the insults,

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<sup>36</sup> *Manchester Courier*, 26 February 1875.

whereupon he was struck by McIntosh and neighbour Mullen. Talbot went back into the house, armed himself with a spade handle, later reported as a salt shovel, with a strap which he could fasten round his wrist and went out. He was soon disarmed and struck to the ground by the group, who then proceeded to kick him despite his wife's attempts to shield her husband from the worst of the blows. Unlike the original murder of 1874, one person went to fetch a policeman and a number of witnesses were willing to give evidence in court as to what they saw. However, no-one directly intervened to rescue Talbot, preferring to watch the row develop in the narrow confines of the court. As a result of the inquest and the subsequent magistrates' hearing, the five were charged with 'wilful murder', although Mr Raffles observed that Jennings would, more than likely, have the charge dropped against him.<sup>37</sup>

The assize trial came up on 2 November 1877 in St George's Hall. What was interesting and worth noting was that the charge of murder had been reduced to one of manslaughter by the grand jury. This begs the questions why, and whether it is possible to compare this kicking fatality with that of 1874. The two men, Mullen and Kelly, both eighteen-year-old labourers and the two female factory hands, twenty-year-old Mary McCrave and 21-year-old Eliza McIntosh, appeared to have been charged with the lesser offence because it had all the trademarks of a neighbourhood row. Both Talbots were in drink and the wife admitted in court that both she and her husband 'could have fought any one' that day. When John Talbot armed himself a man named McCrave, a cousin of the defendant, did his utmost to stop Talbot hitting anyone but this provided the four defendants with the chance to hit and kick him to the ground. However, he proved a reliable though reluctant witness to the details of the fight literally being played out beneath his very nose. The defence argued that their clients were acting in self defence by trying to disarm Talbot, a strong man, who was armed, drunk and had a reputation for fighting. In the event, the jury appear to have wasted little time in finding all four guilty, with Mullen and Kelly

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<sup>37</sup> *Liverpool Mercury*, 24, 25, 26 and 28 September 1877. See also Macilwee, *Gangs of Liverpool*, pp. 86-88 for further details of this killing.

each receiving twenty years' penal servitude and McCrave and McIntosh ten years apiece. Such harsh sentences were met with screams and cries from the dock and the defendants were removed with difficulty down the stairs to the holding cells.<sup>38</sup>

The crucial difference between the 1874 and 1877 killings lay in the respective roles of the deceased. Morgan was an innocent passing stranger who did little to antagonise his assailants, who then proceeded to kick him across the street when he declined to give them any money. Talbot, on the other hand, was a drinker and a neighbour and had been in a few scraps prior to the day of the fight. Although he did not initiate the fatal fight, evidence suggests both he and his wife were more than willing to become involved in a physical confrontation with the four defendants. Moreover, the *Liverpool Mercury*, in a tantalising final paragraph, hinted why there may have been a long-standing enmity between the Talbots, on the one hand, and on the other, the Mullens and the McCraves. The argument had, the paper claimed, 'some remote connection' with the 1874 Tithebarn Street murder. Two of the guilty defendants were siblings to the two hanged in 1875, whereas Talbot had provided a safe hiding place for Campbell, who was reprieved.<sup>39</sup>

This suggests that there were some lingering resentments concerning who was and was not hanged. It may also suggest that there were class gradations within the community of the north Liverpool slums. Campbell, after all, was able to gain the support of all manner of respectable people in the town, including 30 clergymen of various denominations – an impressive achievement – who signed at least two petitions. He gained also an all-important character reference from his employer during the trial, who was able to vouch for his time-keeping, previous good behaviour and trustworthiness. His family background was also in his favour, as his late father had been a captain of a merchant ship, his widowed mother a respectable shopkeeper and his sisters in 'known and respectable situations'. Neither Mullen nor

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<sup>38</sup> *Liverpool Mercury*, 3 November 1877. The man McCrave was, conceded the prosecution, trying to disarm Talbot and prevent the fight from escalating. His intervention in the fight could also have been interpreted in a less favourable light.

<sup>39</sup> *Liverpool Mercury*, 3 November 1877.

McCrave was able to provide such good family or character credentials. It was also suggested that Campbell had only come into contact with these 'loiterers' and roughs because of his love for the sister of McCrave, the implication being that he would not normally have mixed with such a class of people in the usual course of events. His family's behaviour would suggest this was the case, as they did all in their power to dissuade him from going with his girlfriend, even going so far as to stop him marrying her on the day of the ceremony. Their objections not only led him to co-habit with McCrave's sister but also brought him into the company of the other two convicted men, in the case of Mullen for the first time on the evening of the murder.<sup>40</sup>

#### Conclusion

By the time of the 1875 execution there were two contrasting and diametrically opposed views of Liverpool. On the one hand, the head constable supported by a majority of Liverpool town council believed the 'Tithebarn-street outrage' was an 'isolated' case; moreover, such an event could have occurred in any 'noisy and bustling thoroughfare', whether a policeman was present or not. For Greig, the Liverpool people were 'very controlable' [sic], so much so there had been no riots 'of any description' for years.<sup>41</sup> Such views may have smacked of complacency, arrogance even, to his critics, who took the attitude that Liverpool was a violent town

Some of the London press, not least the *Times* and the *Pall Mall Gazette*, took an opposing view which, in part, damned not just the minority who made up the dangerous class of cornermen but also a wider section of the community, mainly men, who witnessed the murder and failed to intervene on behalf of the Morgans. This was, in the paper's opinion, unforgiveable and spoke of a wider moral malaise in the community. The witnesses to the killing, the paper continued, should have been placed in the dock along with the three accused, for they must

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<sup>40</sup> *Liverpool Mercury*, 5 January 1875. It is possible to surmise that Richard Morgan regarded himself as superior to his assailants from his exchange of words with McCrave prior to the killing. After McCrave's request for money to buy drink, Morgan replied, 'What do you work at?'

<sup>41</sup> LivRO, 352POL 2/6; *Liverpool Mercury*, 7 January 1875.

take some share of the guilt and the blame for Morgan's murder.<sup>42</sup> Moreover, it was claimed that spectators took pleasure from witnessing the fight. Such people, the *Pall Mall Gazette* maintained, belonged to a 'colony of thugs'. This specific reference to thugism, Indian criminal gangs that wreaked havoc on the British Empire's subcontinent, was loaded with significance. For that reason the community leaders should, the paper argued, make some kind of public act to proclaim their support for law and order. They had failed, it was claimed, in providing proper moral leadership, failed in condemning the murder in unequivocal terms and failed in policing the violent neighbourhoods of town. 'The people of Liverpool', the *Times* continued, 'must not allow themselves to be thought indifferent in a case which has brought disgrace on their town....The crime has been committed in public, and it should be publicly repudiated'.<sup>43</sup>

No public acts of atonement were ever forthcoming from the Liverpool town council. Their view was that the murder was an unfortunate one-off event which even 10,000 policemen could not have prevented. Their role and responsibility to the community was to provide a sufficiently large force who would attempt to ensure safety on the streets where possible by introducing a more rigorous regime of moving on small groups of men congregating on street corners, particularly in the north end of the town. This policy does not appear to have been pursued with vigour or consistency in the years following 1874 but cornermen became, both for the Liverpool press, the public and the police, a group to be blamed, targeted and prosecuted for crimes of inter-personal violence and for drink and disorderly-related offences.<sup>44</sup>

The case, above all, highlighted the need for imperial solutions, of subjugating the inhabitants of Liverpool's north end in the same manner that the British army ruled over the 'inferior' peoples of Ireland and India. Such people were enemies of civilization, they were thought to be barbaric and should be

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<sup>42</sup> *Pall Mall Gazette*, 17 December 1874.

<sup>43</sup> The *Times*, 17 December 1874. It is significant that the two commonly used words in the English language to denote violent criminals, namely thug and hooligan, have their origins in British imperial rule in India and Ireland.

<sup>44</sup> See Archer, *The monster evil*, pp. 103-4.

treated in an analogous manner. One must remember the mindset of the British authorities at this time when dealing with instances of rebellion against them. Brutal repression, as seen in the immediate aftermath of the Indian Mutiny was but one end, albeit extreme, of the spectrum of Imperial control. Less hysterical solutions called for public education to tame this 'semi-civilization' of working people and for sterner laws and punishments to protect their women and children. As the *Telegraph*, in one of its more hyperbolic moments, stated, 'Fear is the only scourge with which these ignorant savages can be governed, and the righteous wrath of the law must be heard again and again, and yet again, till the gross blood in them curdles with terror if it can be taught no stir of pity and no pulse of manhood'.<sup>45</sup> Fear of the law, however, did not prevent the emergence of the High Rip gangs and teenage murderous violence within ten years of the Tithebarn Street murder.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> *Pall Mall Gazette*, 17 December 1874. For full discussions on the notion of brutality and 'savagery', see Archer, *The monster evil*, pp. 80-81; John Carter Wood, *Violence and crime in nineteenth-century England: the shadow of our refinement* (London, 2004), pp. 30, 32, 93, 138-39; Clive Emsley, *Hard men: violence in England since 1750* (London, 2005), pp. 12-13; and Martin Wiener, *Men of blood: violence, manliness and criminal justice in Victorian England* (Cambridge, 2006), pp. 61-62.

<sup>46</sup> See Macilwee, *Gangs of Liverpool*, pp. 126-95 and Archer, *The monster evil*, pp. 104-11 and 183-86.

## Book Reviews

John E. Archer, *The monster evil: policing and violence in Victorian Liverpool*. Liverpool University Press, 2011. 281 + xix pp. ISBN 9781846316838, £18.99 (paper), £65.00 (hardback).

During the Victorian age, Liverpool gained a reputation for being unusually violent and 'Liverpool news' became standard filler for newspapers looking for sensation. John Archer's *The Monster Evil* explores whether this reputation was deserved or the invention of the national press. He places his work within the context of studies by C. Emsley, M. Wiener, and J. Carter Wood which found growing condemnation of male violence in the nineteenth century. While Archer uses police records, this book is primarily an analysis of newspapers, particularly the *Liverpool Mercury's* police court column and the articles of Hugh Shimmin, the local version of London's Henry Mayhew. Archer focuses on key murders to illustrate how portrayals of Liverpool violence changed over time and by region. His main conclusion is that national newspapers stigmatised all Liverpool as savage, while local papers branded specific districts and streets. In Liverpool itself, he finds a similar pattern of prejudice, with local journalists assuming that 'poor Irish immigrants' committed most violent crimes, yet crime statistics indicate that the Irish were no more violent than the rest of the population. By 1900, tolerance for male-on-male violence and violence against children declined, similar to national trends, but confusion over how to respond to domestic violence against women continued, unlike national trends. Finally, he suggests that slum neighbourhoods near the docks remained untouched by improvements in wages and housing and in them the 'monster evil' still reigned.

Liverpool was not a typical city, as it was home to England's premier port and large populations of Irish immigrants and 'paid off' sailors. Archer found that poverty, not ethnicity, remained the main factor behind criminality. Dock work was

uneven, creating slums near the Mersey. Arrests for drunk and disorderly ranked high compared to the rest of the country, even when making allowances for 'purity campaigns' and diligent policing. Much violence centred on pubs, frequently instigated by patrons angry at staff who refused to serve them. Sectarian tensions and charges of anti-Catholic police bias caused strains. The city had enough constables to rank with London as one of England's most heavily policed cities, under the stern discipline of head constable Greig, who took over in 1852. His first decade in office was a high-point of police violence, which Archer links to his 'military style'.

Yet despite its reputation for brutality, Liverpool shared the growing condemnation of male violence. To explore 'cornermen', gangs and policing, Archer uses the 1874 Tithebarn Street murder, where a gang brutally killed Robert Morgan in front of his family and shocked onlookers. Shimmin, who had shifted from supporting to denigrating the police, reported that 'fear of the police' prevented onlookers from interfering, but Archer argues that confusion over who started the attack and fear of injury likely caused hesitation. The murder fed press panics over 'ticket of leave' men and gangs. The press latched onto the 'High Rip Gang' but Archer's evidence suggests that this gang was more a press creation than a real problem. Despite the alarm, Archer found that the police did a reasonable job catching robbers and patrolling for 'roughs'.

Archer's most original contribution is his debunking of Liverpool's 'female savages'. Most female crime was minor assault and drinking and their fights were not the 'cat fights' portrayed in newspapers. Women fought in ways similar to men, hitting, kicking and pummelling with whatever was handy. Fights began over money and gossip and when women threatened witnesses in legal cases. A few women did kill, usually friends and neighbours, typically in the heat of the moment. 'Murderous women' were rare, mostly infanticides where the public sympathised with girls 'in trouble'.

Where violence remained a moral grey area, including for police, was at home. Wives feared testifying and neighbours often refused to intervene. Wife murder was under-reported and difficult to prosecute. This extended to adult sons attacking

mothers. In 1873 Mary Corrigan was murdered by her son and family and neighbours failed to save her. Archer found 21 examples of children under sixteen years of age who killed and neighbours and family often said nothing. These deaths typically resulted from play gone too far. Adult violence against children created the same confusion. Many parents clouted children but kept within the law. By 1883, however, Liverpool founded England's first Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, a sign of a declining acceptance of hitting children. Liverpool remained less clear about violence towards wives and mothers, unlike national trends.

Archer does a convincing comparison of national versus local perceptions of Liverpool's violence. He could extend this analysis to its police force. Just as the entire city was not 'monstrous' but rather specific districts, only certain divisions and police stations deserved a reputation for brutality. The police were not monolithic. Turnover was high and training poor, while different constables reacted differently in similar situations. The evidence for police violence largely came from newspapers which had an interest in sensationalism. Given the mischaracterisations of Liverpool's violence, could police violence be similarly distorted?

The chapters on working-class culture are rich in detail but could benefit from national context. Archer presents a vivid picture of Liverpool's 'drink culture' but could compare it to London, Manchester or other cities. Similar questions arise over how Liverpool's women and domestic life compare with those of other cities. Was Liverpool unusual or not?

Overall, this book makes a significant contribution as an in-depth study of violence in an English city. Its explorations of specific crimes are gripping, even while discrediting many of the myths. While Archer found that many details of Liverpool's reputation were embellished or inaccurate, his research suggests that their dock neighbourhoods merited much of their undesirable attention.

Joanne Klein, *Boise State University*

Martin John Broadley, *Bishop Herbert Vaughan and the Jesuits: education and authority*. Catholic Record Society, 2010. 248 + xxxvii pp. ISBN 9780902832251, £45.

In 1872 the first Catholic Bishop of Salford, William Turner, died suddenly. Much was at stake with the appointment of his successor. The re-establishment of the Catholic hierarchy in 1850 and the creation of a diocesan church structure to supersede the Apostolic Vicariates had required the construction of denominational structures almost from scratch. The diocese of Salford, including the twin cities of Salford and Manchester, presented the renewed hierarchy with all the problems of rapid industrialisation, Irish Catholic immigration and integration and the hostilities of popular Protestantism. How were the overwhelmingly working-class Catholic congregants to be ministered to and their physical and educational needs met? Henry Edward Manning, Bishop of Westminster, was in no doubt that the solution lay in reinforcing episcopal authority and enhancing the status of the secular clergy against that of the regulars. Manning's antipathy was particularly directed at the Jesuits and their peculiar privileges, especially as they related to education. This was to come to a head at the Fourth Provincial Synod of Westminster in 1873.

Manning engineered the nomination of Vaughan to the Salford diocese and he received episcopal consecration on 28 October 1872. A staunch supporter of Manning and the rights of the hierarchy, almost immediately Vaughan found himself in conflict with the Jesuit Provincial, Peter Gallwey, over educational provision in the diocese. Gallwey wanted to exercise a privilege granted by the Holy See that allowed the Society of Jesus to open a school 'without necessarily securing the permission of the local bishop, in areas where it had already had a house or church'. This privilege, which had been established in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, when regulars were ministering as missionaries in the districts of the Vicars Apostolic, now seemed dangerously anachronistic to the new hierarchy. Control of educational provision enabled the hierarchy to direct the struggle against secularism and unorthodoxy, generate adherents and control the flow of novices into the priesthood. The Jesuits'

educational track record appealed to the Catholic middle-classes and patrician Catholics and threatened to siphon off funding, talent and support into the schools of the Society. The example of the Jesuit College of St Francis Xavier in Liverpool, which had become 'the largest Catholic secondary day-school in England', was there as an instructive lesson to the Manchester Chapter of how the Jesuits' control of education could provide an autonomous power base within the church. Prior to Vaughan's appointment, the Manchester Chapter had fought assiduously to keep the Jesuits out of Manchester. For Manning, the issue was very simple and the stakes high: 'who is to form the clergy and educate the laity in England'. Ultimately, what was at issue was the vexed problem of authority, which saw the episcopate and the regular orders each appealing and lobbying their case before the Holy See against a background of extreme uncertainty in canon law. The First Vatican Council (1869-70) had declared the doctrine of Papal Infallibility but the Council had broken up without clarifying the nature of episcopal authority. If papal exemptions and privileges were infallible, they were also immediate, by-passing episcopal authority. This highly confused picture was only resolved in 1881 with the constitution *Romanos Pontifices*, which established the exact nature of the relationship between the regulars and the bishop.

Uncertainty over the limits of authority led to assertiveness on the part of the parties involved. The selected manuscripts reproduced in this volume relate to a request by Gallwey at the 1873 Synod, seeking Vaughan's permission 'for the Society to open a school in the district of the Holy Name – the Jesuit Church in Chorlton-upon-Medlock, Manchester'. Vaughan refused the request, citing his own intention to open a commercial college and the damage it would do to the nearby Xaverian Brothers' school. An unholy tussle then ensued that rumbled on in print. The anonymous 1879 publication *A Précis of The Case of the Bishop of Salford and the Society of Jesus*, reproduced in this volume and putting the Jesuit case, makes it clear that whilst the Society had respected the first Bishop's desire that the Jesuits open no school in the diocese, they had purchased land for that purpose. The Provincial repeated his request in August 1874 and was again turned down by Vaughan. In a letter of 11 December 1874 the

Provincial went for the nuclear option, asserting that the Bishop 'did not possess the absolute right to prohibit the Society from exercising this right'. The Bishop appealed to Rome against the Society's privileges without informing the Society. The College was opened by the Society of Jesus on 13 March 1875, the Bishop being informed of the fact the same day. Vaughan threatened to expel the Jesuits from Manchester if the school was not closed. The College was closed on Pentecost Sunday 1875. The Jesuits, in less than conciliatory mode, continued to maintain in print that the College was closed, as it was opened, by the authority of the Father General of the order, not the authority of the 'English Hierarchy or of the Congregation of Propaganda'.

The manuscript sources transcribed here represent an attempt to collate all the sources that are difficult to access. The main printed pamphlets related to the case are excluded but are available in the Salford diocesan archives and the Jesuit archives, Mount Street, London. Where pamphlet material provides evidence of the chronology of the dispute, extracts have been included. This highlights one of weaknesses of the otherwise admirable introduction – there is no clear chronology of events. The reader has to rely on extensive reading of the correspondence, Vaughan's diary or the highly partial 1879 *Précis* reproduced in Appendix Twelve. Broadley has translated source documents from Latin, Italian and French and included sources from the Propaganda Fide in Rome 'never before referred to in the context of the Manchester case'. Whilst of interest to denominational and religious historians, the case indicates that the extra-territorial authority so feared by popular Protestant and anti-Catholic demagogues was riven by competing lines of accountability and authority. If the Manchester case related here deserves its footnote in history, it is surely its contribution, particularly through Vaughan's lobbying of the Prefect of the Propaganda in Rome, to the Catholic church's eventual clarification of the authority and roles of the regular clergy and the bishops, facilitating the institutional consolidation of English Catholicism.

Jonathan Westaway, *University of Central Lancashire*

Neil Cossons and Martin Jenkins, *Liverpool – seaport city*. Ian Allan, 2011. 160 pp., illus. ISBN 9790711034211, £19.99.

Picture history books of particular places or regions are published in great numbers every year. Many contain little more than a series of almost random illustrations with brief and often uninformative captions. It must be said the quality of their images often leaves much to be desired as well. This volume does not fail in any of these areas. It has a highly structured, authoritative narrative and captions and very good quality illustrations, most of which are in colour.

The authors, who were undergraduates at the University of Liverpool in the late 1950s, both enjoyed (and continue to enjoy) a keen interest in public transport. Their student days coincided with a time when colour film (usually in the form of 35mm transparencies) first became widely available. Their book is centred on this pictorial source drawn both from private collections and from the Online Transport Archive, which is building and conserving an image bank of all types of transport from unwanted private collections.

The book is divided into sixteen chapters prefaced by an introduction outlining the history of the city from its rise in the eighteenth century, its 'peak of prosperity' which they date to about 1907 to its subsequent decline and renaissance. They stress its position as 'a world city', its 'exceptionalism' and the stark contrast between its wealthy and its poor. The first three chapters – the Docks, Transport and Industry – take more than half the total number of pages. These are the core of the book but, unlike many earlier books on transport history, the authors have been at pains to provide a context for these three core chapters. So the subsequent chapters cover everything from architectural, civic and commercial developments to welfare, religion, the press, law and order, entertainment and sport. Many of these later chapters are short (often no more than a page) and the authors have clearly taken great pains to select telling images of the built environment to illustrate these themes.

Most chapters are introduced by a pithy summary. The illustrations and their captions continue the narrative. For example, the Docks chapter follows the line of the docks in

geographical order from Garston to Royal Seaforth Dock and then breaks off into a series of sub-chapters on key topics such as the work force or the Liverpool Overhead Railway. Many of the colour images from the 1950s to the 1970s have not been published before which makes the work fresh and new. These contrast with the memorable black and white pictures of Chambre Hardman or those in Quentin Hughes's 'Seaport' from roughly the same era.

The overall production is good on glossy paper with a legible typeface. Some may find some of the images a little small but this is compensated by their clarity. A few pictures seem to have been awkwardly cropped but there seem to be few if any typographical or factual errors. All told, the book is good value for money and can be recommended to transport enthusiasts, local historians and fans of the city of Liverpool.

Mike Stammers, *Liverpool*

James Graham-Campbell and Robert Philpott, eds, *The Huxley Viking hoard. Scandinavian settlement in the North West*. National Museums Liverpool, 2009. 94 pp., illus. ISBN 9781902700403, £7.99.

In 2004 a Viking Age hoard of 22 pieces of silver (1.4kg in total) was discovered by a metal-detectorist near Huxley, Cheshire, comprising twenty broad-band arm-rings, one rod arm-ring and one oblong ingot. This volume is the result of a conference held at Liverpool in 2008 called 'Scandinavian Settlement in the North-West' that sought to place this new discovery in its appropriate archaeological and historical context by considering the Scandinavian presence and influence on the north-west of England during the ninth to eleventh centuries AD. This is a short, well edited collection furnished with clear illustrations, many of them in colour. In combination, the papers fulfil their purpose of providing a wider context for the hoard, but they do much more besides; the reader is presented with the other exciting new discoveries and research avenues shedding light on the Viking Age in north-west England and North Wales.

Sir David Wilson provides an introduction to the eight chapters, suggesting the book raises far more problems than it solves. He is rightly cautious and identifies many issues for future research. The first chapter by Fiona Edwards reviews the problematic historical context and the distribution of Scandinavian place-names. It seems that Gaelic-Scandinavian influences on the region are best not confined to pseudo-historical settlement events. Instead the Huxley hoard should be seen as part of a long-lasting sea-borne movement of things, ideas and people around the Irish Sea in the Viking period involving directly the flourishing urban community of Chester and its hinterland. Next, David Griffiths brings his long-standing archaeological expertise to bear in a succinct review of the later Anglo-Saxon period in north-west England, focusing on evidence of Scandinavian influence and settlement. While the furnished burials, trading activities, place-names and sculptural evidence he reviews all indicate the exposure of the North West to Hiberno-Norse activities, it remains open to question how much settlement evidence from rural sites like Irby and the urban centre of Chester reflect Scandinavian influence, settlement or political hegemony. His chapter concludes with a contribution by Rachel Newman about another 2004 metal-detector find – a small group of furnished Viking-period graves at Cumwhitton, Cumbria, regarded as pagan and displaying Scandinavian influence.

Richard Bailey presents a short appraisal of the early medieval sculpture evidence, now fully published in his *Corpus of Anglo-Saxon Stone Sculpture for Cheshire and Lancashire* (2010). He identifies the paucity of pre-Viking sculpture and discusses the cluster of sculpture from the Wirral peninsula as indicating Scandinavian influence, including the West Kirby hogback and the miniature hogback discovered at Bidston with close links with the hogbacks from Brompton, North Yorkshire. The sculpture reveals Cheshire's sea-borne connections with many parts of the Irish Sea, including western Cumbria, the Clyde valley and Ireland. Complementing these English studies, Mark Redknap provides a North Wales context for the Huxley hoard. He reviews the North Wales hoards and uses his recent excavations at Lanbedrgoch, Anglesey, to demonstrate how coastal North Wales was fully involved in the Irish Sea silver economy of the Viking Age.

Part 2 comprises three chapters discussing the Huxley Viking hoard directly. Barry Ager and James Graham-Campbell review the contents of the hoard, with a contribution by Dan Garner concerning the circumstances of discovery. Some of the arm-rings had been cut, one was unfinished and all had been flattened and folded. This leads them to suggest that this was a 'bullion hoard'. James Graham-Campbell and John Sheehan then provide a catalogue of the Huxley hoard. Sheehan offers a chapter situating the Huxley hoard in relation to Hiberno-Norse arm-rings found in hoards from both Ireland and Britain. Regarding the state of the arm-rings from the Huxley hoard, Sheehan interprets them as displaying no evidence of nicking and therefore they may have never entered circulation as currency rings. Their bending is regarded as a likely strategy for transport and/or concealment within a bullion economy. Gareth Williams concludes the book by placing the Huxley find in the context of other hoards from northern England, indicating a complex economy in which silver operated on multiple social and economic registers and was deposited in hoards situated close to major land, river and sea routes. Williams argues that these hoards reflect a period in which a 'dual-economy' of silver bullion and coin endured successfully until the 920s when we see the spread of a coin-based economy driven by an ideology of Christian kingship as much as economic necessity.

This book ably provides a wider context to the Huxley Viking hoard. Williams concludes by stating that 'the hoard indicates the importance of the Chester area throughout the late ninth and early tenth centuries as a gateway between the Viking settlements in northern England and the wider Viking world'. If this is the conclusion, then I cannot help but stifle a gag inspired by the willingness of leading early medieval historians and archaeologists to support the museum purchase of yet another metal-detector find and rush into print celebrating its discovery while doing the disservice of not advocating work into the find-spot and its environs. As Dan Garner's brief contribution makes all too depressingly clear, this hoard was removed without any adequate study of the find-spot. If Gareth Williams is correct about the importance of the locality of this find, surely it is at Huxley and the historic landscape of Chester and its environs

where a true 'context' for the hoard awaits discovery and remains unexplored by this book. Only Garner appears to recognise the need for new fieldwork and none of the contributors seem to use the opportunity of this book to advocate it taking place. If this is indeed the prevailing scholarly attitude, then calling metal-detectorists 'treasure-hunters' is like the ingot calling the arm-ring 'silver'!

Howard Williams, *University of Chester*

Paul Hurley, *Villages of mid Cheshire through time*. Amberley, 2009. 96 pp., illus. ISBN 9781848686823, £12.99. Paul Hurley, *Winsford through time*. Amberley, 2009. 96 pp., illus. ISBN 9781848687967, £12.99. Paul Hurley and Len Morgan, *Chester through time*. Amberley, 2010. 96 pp., illus. ISBN 9781848686649, £14.99. Paul Hurley, *Frodsham & Helsby through time*. Amberley, 2010. 96 pp., illus. ISBN 9781848688735, £14.99. Paul Hurley, *Middlewich & Holmes Chapel through time*. Amberley, 2010. 96 pp., illus. ISBN 9781445601991, £14.99.

The *Through Time* series is part of a well-established genre of books of historic photographs. Looking at the Cheshire Archives and Local Studies catalogue there are ten in this series alone relating to Cheshire, most of which have been compiled by Paul Hurley, and dozens more in such series as 'Images of England'. The *Through Time* series is a particularly helpful addition to the genre in that it adds modern photographs taken from approximately the same position as the older image, enabling a 'then and now' comparison. Recently websites such as History Pin (<http://www.historypin.com/>) attempt to perform a similar task and it will be interesting to see how such websites evolve.

The five volumes reviewed all begin with a brief overview of the history of the town or area in question. The author provides a brief commentary on each pair of images, sometimes, in the case of a building, including the date of building or demolition. Information about an event relevant to the image is often also given. The choice of images themselves is very good. Town and village streets and buildings are well represented and the post-war era is not ignored. There are many images of the

streets of Chester in the period that immediately preceded the building of the inner-ring road in the 1960s, for example. The housing estates and shopping centre built in Winsford in the 1940s and 1960s are also included.

There are a number of exceptional images, particularly in the Chester volume, which is based on the collection of the local historian and co-author Len Morgan. These include a number of views of which this reviewer had never seen the like, including one of the site of the amphitheatre in the 1940s and an image of Pepper Street before it was developed in the 1960s. The Frodsham and Helsby volume in particular includes a number of early images, the earliest of which is an image of Main Street dated in the book as 1842, which would be remarkably early if accurate. The Winsford volume has many images of streets, schools, shops and places of worship, although few which reflect the town's industrial heritage, the inclusion of which would have enhanced the collection. The emphasis is on Middlewich in the Middlewich and Holmes Chapel volume, although there are a number of good images of Holmes Chapel, particularly the village centre. The comparison of photographs from different times comes across very well in this volume in particular. The 'villages of mid-Cheshire' covers many of the smaller settlements in the area, including Great Budworth, Hartford, Weaverham and Antrobus. The Weaverham collection is particularly strong, largely because of the contribution of the local history society there. There are many excellent images, particularly of buildings, although the inclusion of more photographs with people in them would have helped to bring to life what is already a good volume.

The photographs were derived from a number of sources. Present-day images were taken by Paul Hurley, who took time and care to make sure that he took the images from a position as close to that of the earlier photographer as possible. Some of the older photographs are held in the collections at the Cheshire Record Office and at Weaver Hall (formerly The Salt Museum). Many are held by local history societies and in private hands and it is to Paul Hurley's credit that he has managed to get such a large number of photographs from such a wide variety of sources, many of which will never have been in the public domain before.

The books will appeal to a wide audience, so it is a shame that the price seems a little on the high side. The author states that 'if you are looking for a turgid scholarly local history tome then look elsewhere. If you urgently need to know the difference between the various types of bricks used or the constituent difference between marl and gypsum, then look elsewhere. If you want a book to enjoy and peruse over and over again then it is here'. While these are certainly books to enjoy and to dip into from time to time, they are also a good way of providing an immediate snapshot of a place at a certain time or times and for anyone starting out on a more detailed study of a place.

Paul Newman, *Cheshire Archives and Local Studies*

Keith Johnson, *Preston through time*. Amberley, 2011. 96 pp., illus. ISBN 9781445605890, £14.99.

This book documents Preston's history in almost 200 photographs accompanied by detailed captions. The format is simple: an 'old' photograph followed by a modern photograph taken from more-or-less the same location. The author thus combines several skills: picture researcher, historian and photographer. Rarely are these skills found in combination in the same individual and they are distributed in unequal measure, and unevenly, in this book. Physical evidence and fieldwork can undoubtedly reveal much of a town's history and photographs have an important role to play. In this context this book, and the series of which it is a part, are to be welcomed. This book offers much to interest the Preston public and the local historian; it will no doubt enjoy a wide circulation in the Preston area.

For many this will provide an opportunity for nostalgia and the value of the modern images will increase in future as further changes alter the landscape. However, it also has to be said that some of these images are aesthetically unappealing. Indeed, if these pictures convey anything of modern Preston they reveal a city of little character. In part this may be a fair reflection of much post-war town planning, but it is also a consequence of the fact that the agenda for this book was set by photographers of the past: the things they chose to capture largely determines the

content here. No amount of assiduous picture research can lead to the discovery of the photographs that were never taken. Unfortunately, earlier photographers did not necessarily capture the images we might wish to have. Consequently, this book is dominated by images of central Preston, transport, shops, churches and parks; industrial landscapes, broader economic development, domestic architecture, suburban life and even some institutional architecture, for instance the County Council and Preston Union Workhouse, are notably absent.

Overall, this is largely a book of local antiquarian interest. The captions are informative but do not really amount to even a narrative history of Preston since the mid-nineteenth century. The very brief history that serves as an introduction provides little context; there are no references at all, nor even a short bibliography of further reading. These basic conventions of the academic discipline are not just clutter: they are an essential part of the historian's craft and more local historians (and local history publishers) need to realise this. Are the captions the result of careful, documentary research or are they based on the personal recollections of the author? We are simply not told. This book deserves a wide local audience and such an audience will undoubtedly benefit from both the images and the captions, but it will be of little interest beyond Preston and, unfortunately, adds little that is new.

Andy Gritt, *University of Central Lancashire*

Paul B. Pixton, ed., *Wrenbury wills and inventories, 1542-1661*. Record Society of Lancashire and Cheshire, 2009. lix + 562 pp. ISBN 9780902593794, £40.

This weighty and attractive volume provides transcripts of wills, inventories and other associated documents from early modern Wrenbury, not a true parish – although these documents often refer to the area as such and to St Margaret's church as a parish church – but rather a parochial chapelry in south Cheshire, containing a number of small villages and hamlets, set within the large and ancient parish of Acton. A total of 153 wills with related documents are transcribed here, covering the 120 years from

1542/3 down to January 1660/1, though there are very few from the early period – just two pre-date the accession of Elizabeth I and fourteen more belong to her reign. The bulk of the cases – a touch over 100 of them – belong to the reigns of James I and of Charles I down to the outbreak of the civil war, with the remaining 36 spanning the twenty years from the outbreak of the war to the restoration of Charles II. As well as providing very lightly edited transcripts of the wills themselves – as the editor explains and illustrates in his introduction, the preambles have generally been omitted or greatly edited – with surprisingly few exceptions probate inventories survive and are also transcribed here, again with the preambles summarised. Over and above this, the editor has undertaken a great deal of valuable work in transcribing and including an array of other documents relating to the cases, particularly those in which wills were nuncupative or were contested and where additional evidence was gathered and presented. Also very helpful, and unusual for a volume of this sort, the editor has reconstructed and reproduced the family trees of the decedents, sometimes over just a couple of generations, but quite often placing the decedent within an extended genealogy running to four or five generations. There is a real wealth of information here and the volume will be a treasure trove for local historians and genealogists. The plentiful footnotes provide additional information and refer the reader to other relevant wills and documents found within the volume and occasionally elsewhere. Further guidance is offered by a plethora of indexes – an alphabetical arrangement of decedents, a chronological listing of cases and three separate indexes of people, places and subjects – and by a select bibliography and a detailed glossary of archaic or unfamiliar words and terms found within the documents.

The wills and, perhaps more so, the inventories transcribed here give an excellent insight into the life, wealth and material culture of the people of Wrenbury. The most detailed inventories list and value goods on a room-by-room basis, allowing insight into the size and arrangement of domestic accommodation. Although most of the inventories do not go that far, together they build up a clear picture of the society and economy of Wrenbury and its people, an area dominated by mixed farming but in which animal husbandry in general and

cattle and dairying in particular were clearly very strong. This and other information which can be drawn from the documents – as usual, for example, they reveal a complex and inter-relating web of loans and debts – are the type of issues which might usefully have been explored and analysed in the introduction. Instead, the introduction provided by the editor is not quite so helpful, and while it covers the historical development of the area from the Domesday Book onwards and provides a brief context for the nature and size of its early modern population – supported by a not very large or clear reproduction of part of Burdett's late eighteenth-century map of Cheshire – as well as exploring interesting issues such as links with London, ownership of books and evidence for (changing) religious beliefs, much of the introduction is given over to an account of the bells of St Margaret's and other charitable grants to the church and community, to exploring a long-standing rift between two of the most prominent families of the area and to providing biographical and genealogical information about these and other landowning or gentry families of the chapelry. Interesting as some of these undoubtedly are, the introduction could have been rather sharper and more helpful in highlighting key issues raised by and to be drawn from the ensuing documents.

There is one major problem with this volume, however, and that is the various itemised and total figures transcribed and reproduced here. Very often the contemporary appraisers valued individual items but did not supply a total and in these circumstances the editor has quite reasonably inserted a total. Where the appraisers did provide a total they sometimes got it wrong and again the editor has helpfully indicated this and added a new 'corrected' total. However, in most – though confusingly, not quite all – cases, in inserting these modern figures he has given a sum total for pounds, for shillings and for pence separately, without converting pence to shillings and carrying and shillings to pounds and carrying. Thus, to give just a few of the many rather bizarre modern totals which the editor has supplied, we have £260 334s 103d, £38 1081s 238d, £13 242s 36d and £47 641s 324d. Despite an attempted rationale for this found within the introduction, rendering totals in this manner is very strange and profoundly unhelpful, as readers will have to recalculate these

sums in order to get sensible and workable figures. Moreover, the editor has not been entirely consistent in his approach, for – on the basis of the individual item values transcribed and set out here – in several lists the contemporary appraisers appear to have reached and given an incorrect total but the editor has allowed that total to stand without comment, neither indicating it to be at fault nor supplying a corrected total.

But worse, far worse, the editor's maths seems to be faulty. Using the figures provided here, this reviewer has checked the totals supplied in a generous selection of the lists, revealing that in a small but significant and worrying number of cases – and again working on the basis that the individual item values have been correctly transcribed and reproduced here – the modern totals supplied by the editor appear wrong, sometimes quite drastically so. One very brief list of four entries, in this case of debts rather than of goods and other items, has a modern total of 89s 4d added by the editor in squared brackets, while the four figures clearly total 129s 4d or, better, £6 9s 4d. Other lists, most of them longer and more complex, are totalled up even more inaccurately and are out by several pounds, so that in some cases the new and 'corrected' total is more inaccurate than the original appraisers' total. It could be that the editor's maths is perfect but that in setting the volume for publication individual figures have been keyed in incorrectly or set in the wrong columns and that this has not been picked up in proofing. It is impossible for the reader to know or to unscramble this. Moreover, in one particularly odd case, the editor has supplied in squared brackets a modern total where none was originally given, shown as '[Sum 157 107 12]' but has then suggested that his own maths is wrong by adding below it a 'corrected' total, shown as '[*recte* 165 11 12]'. In fact, on the basis of the transcript printed here, the first total seems correct, so that (expressed more clearly) it should be £162 8s 0d. It is all very strange and perplexing.

There is no doubt that this is an attractive and potentially very valuable volume, the fruit of a huge amount of work and effort, and that even as it stands it will be of enormous value to historians and genealogists specifically working on (south) Cheshire and a rich quarry for those seeking information from wills, inventories and associated documents about rural life and

society in northern and north-western England during the early modern period. But equally, there is sadly no doubting or denying that the irregularities in the figures as found and presented here significantly limit and undermine the value both of some of the material and information and of the volume as a whole. Whatever the source and cause of the apparent errors and inconsistencies in some of the figures presented here, it is a great shame that the volume editor and the general editor of the series did not pick them up and correct them before publication.

Peter Gaunt, *University of Chester*

Anthony Poulton-Smith, *The salt routes*. Amberley, 2010. 128 pp., illus. ISBN 9781848684768, £12.99.

We usually take for granted those things with which we are most familiar and comfortable. There can be no doubt that most of us give little thought to the everyday salt on our table. Anthony Poulton-Smith has crystallised in this modest publication not only the history of this once precious commodity but the (sometimes) perilous routes taken by the old salters since early history.

Salt has been produced since early times from brine lakes formed millions of years ago. Early extraction was basically the fairly simple method of throwing brine on hot rocks and waiting for the water to evaporate leaving the crystals behind. The Romans brought salt pans in which the brine was boiled leaving the crystals behind after the water evaporated – a method later adopted by the Saxons. Transport proved slow and tedious. Salt was carried in panniers by packhorse. By the eighteenth century bulk quantities could be carried by canal and later by road. Indeed, during the recent cold winters over three millions tons of Cheshire salt were transported all over the country to keep traffic flowing.

Like many commodities the value of salt declined as it became more widely available. Aristotle advised a regular intake of salt and promoted it as a valuable gift to seal friendship. Salt was heavily taxed and to dine ‘below the salt’ was an indication of one’s place within the English aristocracy – hence the somewhat elaborate and lavish salt cellars of the seventeenth and eighteenth

centuries. Today salt is extensively used in the chemical industry, in the production of medicines, paint, bricks, tiles, leather tanning, shampoo, glass, plastics, slug repellent, water softeners, soap, dyes, agricultural products and metals, not to mention food processing.

The routes identified by the author are mainly around Droitwich and Northwich where salt has been produced since before the Roman invasion. He has provided a lively and interesting history showing how the production of salt has changed from the early salt pans to the present large-scale mining, and how the precious cargo was moved around the country and to ports for export all over the world. Historical notes for some of the villages and towns en route are informative, as are the details about pubs where refreshments and anecdotes are available to colour your day out. This book is very much one to be used as an informed and informative tourist guide rather than as an academic study of either north Cheshire, the transport network or of salt as a commodity.

The routes cover more than 500 miles along A roads, byways and tracks likely to have been taken by the early carriers. Of course, over the years much evidence of the routes has been eroded by a combination of agricultural practices and construction work. However, Anthony Poulton-Smith has managed to locate the most likely paths. This is a book that has been written from the heart about a landscape with which the author is clearly intimate. Fourteen routes are covered, providing the potential for interesting and informative excursions.

The book could have been improved by the provision of maps and route information such as distance, roads and footpaths to be travelled. We have not been well served by the quality of the photographs in this edition. A short bibliography has been supplied but there is scant information about the source of much of the historical information cited. The book is a little too large for pocket size, which might have been more convenient for those who may wish to use the book as a field guide.

Patricia Buzzard, *Lancaster Canal Trust*

Doreen Priddey, ed., *A Tommy at Ypres: Walter's war, the diary and letters of Walter Williamson*. Amberley, 2011. 351 pp., illus. ISBN 9781445602134, £16.99.

This volume of memoirs adds to the never-ceasing public interest in the Great War. They are from an Oldham-born clerk, living in Cheadle Hulme, who worked for a Manchester cotton shipping merchant. Married with a young son, he chose not to volunteer in 1914, 'attested' under the Derby Scheme and was called to the colours early in 1916, just before the introduction of conscription.

It consists of long extracts from a journal clearly written later at leisure, though given the detail, it may have been based on a diary kept at the time. His motivation, for posterity or his own amusement, is unknown. The journal is interspersed with love letters to his wife, which contrast with it by carefully not mentioning potentially worrying details of his active service.

Private Williamson was posted to 1/6<sup>th</sup> Cheshire Regiment, his local (Stockport) Territorial Battalion, in the Ypres salient in the Christmas of 1916. He gives a good picture of middle-class recruits coping with the hard physical work and dreadful conditions imposed by trench warfare. Fortunately, his education and clerical experience were quickly recognised, first as a signaller then as an orderly on the adjutant's staff, and he was posted to a slightly safer location behind the lines. His writing is articulate and humorous, though often pompous. He brings a methodical clerk's eye to the chaos prevailing even in quiet periods on the Western Front.

He constantly reaches for comparisons to Mancunian suburban life. So 'Wagner Night at Halle was only a tame affair' compared to one bombardment and another was 'about a thousand times worse than Fireworks at Bellvue on a wet heavy close night'. In his local regiment he was comforted by friendships with people from his suburbs. Comrades on leave would visit his wife, concealing the dangers and horrors of the front line: 'I can trust him to tell a tale of the good times we have and leave the rest alone'. When his first and seemingly only leave came up at Christmas 1917, it took him four days to get back to Cheadle Hulme.

He covers the famous attack on St Julien, where he was one of 57 survivors out of 520 in the battalion, concentrating on the utter confusion and lack of knowledge within the rear echelons. St Julien Day was celebrated yearly in Stockport after the war, typical of the newly-invented military traditions like the Gallipoli landings at Bury or Bligny Day in Shropshire, commemorating local patriotism.

Someone needing to know how battalion orderly rooms worked will find here a huge amount of detail of his bureaucratic war, covering leave slips, ration details, casualty returns and so on. Of more interest to the general reader will be accounts of scrounging the basic necessities of life, coping with the appalling mud and wet of the salient and staving off constant hunger.

He also gives a warm though perhaps too idyllic portrait of relationships between Tommies and the French families with whom they were billeted when out of the line. This also describes souvenir production and the 'estaminet' culture; 'the only industry at present being the catering for the thirst and general amusement ... of the BEF'. Typically there is no hint of prostitution, but the inflation once better paid US troops arrived is mentioned. Although he reveals genuine friendships made with working-class comrades, when visiting the nurse sister of a middle-class friend he recorded, 'spent a delightful afternoon speaking English instead of BEF'.

There is a vivid account of the German breakthrough in March 1918, with 'Officers loosing their heads' and 'getting the bird' from troops when they suggested that the headlong British retreat was somehow planned to lure the Germans on to strong British reserves. The section on the open warfare in the last few weeks of the war is also fascinating, with the battalion advancing ten miles a day, despite a third being down with flu, and being welcomed enthusiastically in Belgian villages just as the Armistice was signed. Williamson's clerkish nature came into its own during demobilisation. He was mentioned in dispatches, perhaps for uncovering bogus miners who tried to get in the first wave for release. His conservative politics also come out, with comments about Bolshevik-inspired strikers amongst unruly troops and civilian trade unionists.

Within this fat book a better thin one is struggling to come out. Lovingly 'compiled' by his granddaughter, a good edit would have reduced unnecessary detail, especially about the minutia of army bureaucracy. The letters to his wife could largely have been omitted without losing anything. A fuller introduction would have explained how the journal was written and how Willamson settled back to civilian life, and especially if being thrown together with working-class people changed his post-war attitudes. But many worse books will be published as we approach the forthcoming centenary bonanza.

Nick Mansfield, *University of Central Lancashire*

D. Ben Rees, *Labour of love in Liverpool: the history of the Welsh congregation in the chapels of Smithdown Lane, Webster Road, Ramilies Road and Bethel, Liverpool*. Modern Welsh Publications, 2008. 288 pp., illus. ISBN 9780901332905, £15.

Whereas a fair amount has been published about the Irish who settled on Merseyside, the Welsh have received relatively little attention. For that matter, not much has been published about the Scots either. But all three 'Celtic' nationalities, and the Manx, have lengthier historiographies than the English who moved to Merseyside. A book review is not really the place to muse over such imbalances. D. Ben Rees's book does, however, identify some reasons why the Welsh on Merseyside have not been given their due regard.

At bottom, those who left what the Cornishman Silas Hocking, who spent three years in Liverpool during the latter part of the nineteenth century, described as the 'blue mountains of Wales' lack a 'story' that grasps the popular imagination. In some respects, this book attempts to address this want of a compelling narrative by providing an 'account of the courage of the Welsh in Liverpool'. Even so, *Labour of Love in Liverpool* is not an academic history. Rather it is part popular history and part autobiography, written by a scholar who has published many books and articles on the Welsh on Merseyside, Liverpool politics and the religious sociology of the south Wales valleys. As minister, for some forty years, of the Welsh chapel situated on Heathfield Road, Rees

himself has played no small part in the history of the Welsh on Merseyside.

For many, the Welsh on Merseyside are associated with chapels, respectability and the building trade. Unlike John Belchem and Mike Benbough-Jackson, Rees does not set out to challenge this trinity. He has little time for the Welsh who attended the established church. Indeed, Rees appears to contradict himself when on one page we are told about the 'religious persecution at the hands of Anglican clergymen and the landowners' that compelled many to leave Wales, before being informed on the next page of a 'flourishing community' of Welsh Anglicans. Neither is much said about the Welsh who preferred the public house to either the chapel or the church. Thus *Labour of Love* falls into the category of what could be called the conventional historiography of the Welsh on Merseyside.

Yet it would be a mistake to see this book's 'conventionality' as being a weakness. The centrality of chapel life for many of the most active and influential Welsh migrants means that there is value in any history of a chapel and its congregation. One of this volume's strengths lies in the attention Rees pays to those who prayed, listened and sang at chapel. Fluctuations in the number of communicants, which peaked during the inter-war years, are chronicled, but for Rees the figures are only part of the story and he refers to many members who were baptised, married and died while members of the chapel. Although some readers may find these details a bit tiresome, others will appreciate these accounts of various rites of passage.

Rees demonstrates that no chapel exists in a vacuum. Calling on some choice examples, he shows how chapel life was influenced by external factors, including both World Wars and the Toxteth riots of 1981. From the perspective of those interested in researching the history of the Welsh on Merseyside, it is a pity that these illustrations are not referenced. Readers are introduced to some overlooked but significant aspects of religious history, such as debates over where to locate buildings. As the socially mobile Welsh moved away from the centre of Liverpool, new school rooms and, eventually, chapels were established. True to his background in the sociology of religion, Rees does not ignore the ways in which class could chip away at a common ethnic and

denominational identity. His brief account of the 'sinners' pews' and their demise during the inter-war years is particularly intriguing.

This book highlights the importance played by the media in the chapel's history. Rees acknowledges how various media, from the printed word to radio and the internet, can assist religious organisations establish a presence in modern society. By publicising charitable activities, which have included raising money for the Christian churches in Syria during the 1930s, along with missionary work at home and abroad, religious institutions have been able to demonstrate their continued significance to the wider world.

*Labour of Love* gives readers an idea of the author's interest in people and his love of Wales and Liverpool. Rees is no longer a minister at Heathfield Road, but it is unlikely that this prolific author will stop writing. Hopefully Rees will return to the subject of his first book, the sociology of religion, and offer up a sociological study of Welsh non-conformity on Merseyside.

Mike Benbough-Jackson, *Liverpool John Moores University*

Tony Sweeney, ed., *Art in St Helens: A history of the Art Club St Helens, 1924 -2010*. Art Club St Helens, 2011. 152 pp. illus.

Any reader expecting a small-scale story of very local activities from this book will be surprised. Having nurtured artists such as Harold Lightfoot, and able to boast that members have exhibited in a huge range of shows including those of the Royal Academy and the Paris Salon, the Art Club St Helens has had a long and illustrious history.

The group was founded in 1924, but can trace its roots back to some characteristic institutions and preoccupations of the nineteenth century and early twentieth century. The town's 1880 Association for the Pursuit of Science, Literature and Art led to the formation of the St Helens Sketching Club of 1890 and although this did not survive after the First World War, many members were clearly still active. The holding of Art Appreciation classes by the Workers' Educational Association in the early 1920s seems to have been the catalyst for the creation of the new Art

Club. From the outset, the cross fertilisation between craft and art was evident: many of the early artists profiled earned their living by making stained glass or technical illustration and there are a couple of examples of workers from the print and bookselling trade. The glass trade is, of course, represented strongly, but the other main local industry produced early members: as well as Harold Lightfoot, the miner-artist, one of the members featured was a coal merchant. The society has documented its events and the work of its members in a volume named 'Sithi' (later 'Sithee'), only one of which was produced each year, since the 1940s, and evidently much of the material for the book has been drawn from these very valuable sources, only some of which have survived. In addition, this study draws on an oral history project, preserving fascinating memories from several members who played a key part in the society from the 1930s onwards.

Provincial in neither range nor outlook, the Art Club St Helens has obviously never been afraid to engage with key cultural issues. Within the last fifteen years it has been instrumental in founding the St Helens Open Art Exhibition, but in the 1950s it joined with the St Helens Music Society to hold a public debate on 'Modernism', subsequently inviting visiting lecturers on 'Some Modern Painters' and 'Art in the Atom Age' in 1959.

The book contains many well-reproduced full colour plates, most of which – but certainly not all – are images of St Helens and the surrounding district. But they are certainly not all grim industrial images and the volume is a pleasure to leaf through. There are occasional typos such as the strangely appropriate 'Fairy aviation' for 'Fairey aviation', and, as always, an index would be a most useful addition. More importantly, it is a great shame not to have dates attributed to the paintings: this is understandable given problems of provenance, but many readers, seeing the pictures of 'St Helens Market' and 'Landmarks St Helens', for example, would greatly appreciate even an approximate date. The structure could be initially confusing to the reader: the chronological chapters which one would expect in a history, on 'The Early Years', 'The Post-War Years' and then each decade from the sixties, do not follow each other, but are interspersed with more general 'topic' chapters. This suggests the text's origin as a collaborative venture – indeed, Paul Cousins in

his overview of ‘The Current Art Scene in St Helens’ nods to this when he asks pardon ‘for any omissions, and indeed, repetition of information that has already appeared’ (p. 139).

For example, after ‘The Early Years’, some profiles of individual members are followed by a brief chapter on the Camera Club and its links to the Art Club, then a chapter called ‘Is it Art?’. This is a very interesting meditation on why people wish to belong to art groups, how the organisation operated membership and questions of what is accepted as ‘Art’ – for example, the vexed and recurrent issue of copying from photographs. However, then the chronological thread is taken up again with ‘The Post-War Years’ – although later events have already been mentioned in the preceding chapters. It must be said that, once the reader becomes used to this pattern, the book presents an interesting way of exploring wider questions which are relevant to the study of many such urban institutions, rather than taking a narrowly chronological approach.

Ablly compiled and edited by Tony Sweeney, this study has much to offer the reader interested in the history of the North West and its institutions, as well as the interplay between art, industry and craft in our urban centres.

Annemarie McAllister, *University of Central Lancashire*

Simon Taylor, Malcolm Cooper and P.S. Barnwell, *Manchester, the warehouse legacy: an introduction and guide*. English Heritage, 2005. 54pp., illus. ISBN 9781873592670, £7.99. Simon Taylor and Julian Holder, *Manchester's Northern Quarter: the greatest meer village*. English Heritage, 2008. 86pp., illus. ISBN 9781873592847, £9.99. Michael E. Rose, Keith Falconer and Julian Holder, *Ancoats: cradle of industrialization*. English Heritage, 2011. 98pp., illus. ISBN 9781848020276, £9.99.

The relationship between historical significance and contemporary relevance is conditioned by a complex matrix of agendas and agencies. English Heritage’s ‘informed conservation’ series examines both the historic context of selected buildings and places as well as the contemporary development pressures that the historic environment faces in the post-industrial era. Manchester,

as both the world's first industrial city and a leading British proponent of conservation-led regeneration, is an ideal city in which to explore the fusion and tensions of significance and relevance. English Heritage has thus far produced three books detailing the city's industrial heritage and the future for this physical legacy (and a further book on the city at play). The decision to commission three books on Manchester's industrial past demonstrates the wealth of history manifested in the warehouses, mills, commercial premises and workers' housing that remains in the city. The focus on Manchester is both city wide with the 2005 publication on the warehouse legacy and then, akin to the area-based regeneration process that Manchester adopted in the 1980s and 1990s, the further books are broken down into specific areas: the 2008 volume focuses on the Northern Quarter and the most recent, in 2011, on Ancoats. Each book has individual value and is worth reading for its own merit. However, the combination of the three books demonstrates both the richness and depth of the industrial past in Manchester but also the complexities and tensions arising from reconciling the past with contemporary demands. If possible, therefore, the books should be read as three chapters of the same story: that of the difficult task of giving history a future. Unfortunately, it appears that the catalyst for conservation-led regeneration in the city, Castlefield, is not part of the English Heritage focus on Manchester. However, the absence of Castlefield in the Manchester jigsaw of heritage and regeneration does not detract from the quality of the books on the warehouses, Northern Quarter and Ancoats.

Each book follows a chronological approach, starting with pre-industrial times, moving through to focus on the industrial era and then through to conservation and regeneration. *Warehouse Legacy* helps to defeat the misnomer that Manchester was purely a factory city by providing an exploration of the river, canal and commercial warehouses in the city. In both the *Northern Quarter* and *Ancoats* volumes the focus is on smaller areas and demonstrates that conservation area status in the 1980s provided the catalyst for both the Northern Quarter and Ancoats to re-use their historic environment. In each of the books the fascinating story of the rise, fall and rise of heritage in the city is examined

through the fates of the buildings. For example, in *Ancoats*, Murray's Mills, which is now the world's oldest surviving steam-powered urban cotton mill, is traced through from its origins as a partnership between the Scottish Murray brothers in the eighteenth century to its rescue by the Ancoats Building Preservation Trust in the late twentieth century and on to its current use as apartments. However, the books are not just about buildings and urban spaces. The investigation of Victoria Square and the Italian community in *Ancoats* and Smithfield Market in *Northern Quarter* demonstrates the reciprocal relationship that exists between society and space. In Ancoats, as in the Northern Quarter and the rest of the city, the people are as much a part of the heritage as the built environment. The use of oral history and public art in the Ancoats study to demonstrate this is welcomed and is part of a rich tapestry of archival material.

The books are meticulously researched, bringing in a range of archival sources that are displayed both through accessible text but also and most impressively through a range and variety of images. Within the books there are, to name just a few, photographs of the exterior and interior of historic buildings, historic and contemporary maps, street signs, sketches and drawings allowing the reader a visual insight into both how the built environment was made and re-made. The only downside to this is the frustration that is incurred in having to flick back and forth to find the images for comparison. However, this visual display of the source material does provide an invaluable entry into the worlds of the local studies unit and archives held at the Manchester Central Library, local libraries and the Manchester Record Office. The book is therefore useful not just for the content but also for the clues it gives as to the types of material available for historians to explore the changing city and the industrial past. In a world where culture, heritage and archives are subjected to savage cuts, the display of the excellent collections of the Manchester Local Studies Unit, the local libraries and record office as well as English Heritage's own collection throughout the books is to be commended.

In a series that tries and succeeds in meshing the past with the pressures of the present, it is thus fitting that the books display a number of continuities, both spatially and temporally.

These can be categorised as partnership, property and pressures. The changes to the post-industrial city were just as profound as those in the pre-industrial era. The three books each demonstrate the continuities within the changing city. The race for land and property as demonstrated by the migration of the Murray brothers, McConnel and Kennedy from Scotland to Ancoats in the eighteenth century was paralleled by the scramble for property during the late twentieth and early twenty first centuries as the city bid for the Olympic and Commonwealth Games. The mills and warehouses always retained a value – as part of Cottonopolis, a latent development value or the realisation of this value through regeneration. However, in each case partnership remained key, whether in the city centre through the Central Manchester Development Corporation who helped to convert many of the warehouses covered in the *Warehouse Legacy*, through English Heritage and the City Council in the Northern Quarter and through a matrix of agencies such as Ancoats Building Preservation Trust, Ancoats Urban Village and North West Regional Development Agency in Ancoats. However, these partnerships and processes were not without difficulty and the challenges of translating historic significance into contemporary relevance are acknowledged within the books.

These books are a welcome addition to the literature and will be of interest and use to scholars, practitioners and the general public. They are well-researched, well-written, contain a nice balance between description and analysis and the similarities in structure allow them to provide both an examination of Manchester's past, present and future and also an introduction to a very complex case of marrying historic significance and contemporary relevance.

Rebecca M. Madgin, *University of Leicester*

Graham Trust, *John Moss of Otterspool (1782-1858). Railway pioneer, slave owner, banker.* AuthorHouse, 2010. 253 + xvii pp. ISBN 9781452004440, £9.99.

John Moss was an eclectic Liverpool businessman whose 76 years of life spanned fundamental changes in both technology and

social attitudes in Britain and who was based in one of the world's most transformed towns. Highly successful, he died a multi-millionaire in today's terms in his opulent mansion at Otterspool overlooking the Mersey. This account of his life and times started with the realisation by Graham Trust that a modern park he used had once been the grounds of this vanished Otterspool House, which led him to an obituary and on to a previously undiscovered cache of 312 letters written to Sir John Gladstone, with whom Moss's business and social life was intertwined for decades. The personal statements about his affairs that are contained in these letters form the core of the book, supplemented by a substantial amount of other research and modestly illustrated. The author makes it clear that the many important facets of Moss's life that do not figure in the letters receive no coverage here. Also, the format of extensive but highly selective quotations rather than either the reproduction of entire letters or the production of a genuine monograph does sometimes lead to unease about particular interpretations of events.

Between the brief contextual introduction and conclusion the book is divided into thematic sections. The first four substantive chapters cover his involved ownership of West Indian plantations worked by slaves and his involvement in negotiations about the terms on which slavery would be abolished; chapter six is devoted to banking; and the next four deal with his activities as a railway promoter and director in Britain and abroad. The mix of quotations and research is both fascinating and frustrating. Thus we get up close to a man whose reputation at home was one of philanthropy and concern for neighbours of all classes and we see in his letters at least an attempt to portray plantation life in the same light, with supporting evidence such as the fact that slaves moving from one island to another did so without guards. Yet the reader can never be sure how far to trust the letters, or indeed the genuine nature of the philanthropic reputation, and within the space of this book, it would be impossible to establish either beyond doubt. However, to offset that, the coverage of his whole business life shows how unspecialised business was then and how it merged with politics, which a more intense study of any one aspect might mask.

It can also show how careful we have to be in jumping to even the most apparently certain conclusions: here we have someone profiting from slavery, running a Lancashire bank and becoming a railway pioneer. What more proof is needed, apparently, that it was profits from slavery that funded the new industrial investment seen in England? Yet the plantations genuinely seem to be making only a modest income and the railway did not appear to rest at all on a cushion of his slave earnings – he organised general investment on the basis of a rational expectation of big profits. He inherited his bank as the slave trade ended and kept it running very successfully through the abolition of slavery as Liverpool was transformed into a great Atlantic port dealing in all types of cargo.

By the end, what the book gives us is a whole series of starting points for deeper investigations and also the sense of wholeness that too narrow a focus can lose. Thus, the complex manoeuvring about the development of indentured labour from the Indian sub-continent to replace slaves of African origin is interesting and illuminating and shows that personal interventions did make some differences to the course of events. The banking chapter, with its coverage of several crises of confidence that took down most of the leading names of Liverpool banking, takes on new interest in the light of our own comparable global experiences and shows that caution was the key to avoiding disaster then, as it may well be now, despite the assertions of those caught up in bubble manias.

Similarly, despite his prominent role in creating the Liverpool and Manchester Railway and then in expanding its field of action both directly through construction and indirectly through links to other projects, he stood aloof and steered his own projects through with remarkable consistency and tenacity. His attitude to the profits to be made is enlightening, for while he was willing to act the pioneer in a fairly selfless way, once railways were accepted, he openly expected his directorial activities to deliver more to him than those who simply bought shares would ever get. Such attitudes can seem like corruption, but they did not hinder the progress of the new method of transport and others clearly respected him enormously. His later involvement in railways in France and in the Netherlands takes us even further

from simple accountancy as the key determinant of business activity. He clearly perceived that these countries already had levels of internal trade that could make selected routes profitable and when he followed up these judgements he was proven correct. Yet the businessmen and governments of the two countries could not organise themselves either to initiate the projects themselves, or even to join in as they progressed, and for several years they were thoroughly British enterprises despite the advanced economies they served. Again, we look back from the irony of the inability of this country today either to build its own trains or even to run its own railways effectively.

Therefore, if taken on its own terms, this is a book well worth reading as part of a wider scheme of study. I am sure the author would never have claimed more and it is good that the results of his seven years of 'Mossing' about have now been made available to the wider community of historians. Similarly, some problems of presentation and spelling exist, probably an inevitable result of self-publication, but none that significantly undermine the value of the material and they have allowed it to be made available at a very affordable price.

Steve Counce, *University of Central Lancashire*

Sue Wilkes, *The children history forgot: young workers of the industrial age*. Robert Hale, 2011. 320 pp., illus. ISBN 9780709089728, £20.

This book describes some of the tasks undertaken by 'children and youngsters under eighteen in the world of work during Georgian and Victorian times' (p. 25) and the various measures introduced to control child labour. It relies extensively on the evidence presented to various official government enquiries in the first three quarters of the nineteenth century. The 'story' it tells is of how protective legislation was gradually introduced to curtail the hours of work in specific trades, beginning with pauper apprentices in the textile trades and ending with the Workshop Acts of the 1860s and 1870s. It has heroes – Shaftesbury, Oastler, Sadler, Peel, Oldknow – nearly all of them Tories – and villains, largely the proponents of 'laissez-faire' and employers who are seen as predominantly Liberal. Much of it tells a story which has

been frequently told before. While acknowledging that there were 'good' employers, the emphasis is squarely on detailing the abuses of child labour – long hours, unguarded machinery, beatings by overlookers, poor living conditions and poverty. The style is colloquial. The opening line begins 'Once upon a time'; Lord Lauderdale is 'one of the bogeymen' (p. 76); Shaftesbury, (Lord Ashley), 'the mightiest hero of our story' (p. 88) who 'rolled up his sleeves' (p. 136); John Fielden was asked to 'babysit' Ashley's bill of 1847 (p. 118); Harriet Martineau was the factory owners' 'spin doctor' (p. 235); education was a 'hotch-potch' (p. 202); the overall verdict on the Victorians is, in the manner of a school report, that they 'could do better' (p. 283).

It should be clear from this that this book is aimed at the elusive 'general reader' and ought to be judged in this light. The story begins with textiles (four chapters) and mining, before moving on to look in decreasing detail at other trades: agricultural; metal trades; service; millinery and tailoring and so on. The 'facts' are usually left to speak for themselves and readers are not encouraged to question them, although there are some perceptive incidental insights which suggest that there could be another story lurking beneath: after the decline of parish apprenticeship, workers and not the owners hired most of the children in textiles and mines; the reformers did not seek to abolish child labour, they merely sought to remove its abuses; the 1870 Education Act was not introduced to end child labour, but to deal with the hordes of children who had no work; the decline of child labour might better be attributed to technology rather than legislation.

These suggest that the author is aware of some of the more recent academic literature on the subject. Indeed, many academic book-length contributions feature in the bibliography, although very few are specifically referenced in the text and their contribution to specific subjects is rarely made evident. Surprisingly, however, given their prominence in the story, none of the major biographies of the reformers are referred to: Unwin (Oldknow); Weaver (Fielden); Driver (Oastler); and Finlayson (Shaftesbury). Key works on the textile workforce by Smelser, Cruikshank, J.T. Ward and Bolin-Hort, and academic journal articles, are also noticeable by their absence (with the strange exception of one on early modern agriculture). Nor is there any

sustained attempt to quantify the numbers of children in work or to chart the decline; the only figures are for textiles in 1835 and 1856, both taken from the Factory Inspectors' reports of 1856. Not surprisingly, therefore, there is no discussion of Cunningham's thought-provoking article on the unemployment of children, which argues that children outside the textile districts, particularly younger children, were *not* in work since the economy was simply not capable of providing sufficient suitable employment. Joshua Walmsley, mayor of Liverpool in 1839-40, bemoaned that the 'great fault' in his city was 'a want of employment for children' who consequently 'sallied forth...at all hours to pilfer and steal what they could find'. Nor is there an appreciation of the recent debates on the issues underpinning the 'Factory Question' of the 1830s or the regional diversity of child employment in mining. Attitudes towards the half-time system established in textiles in 1844 and gradually extended to other trades also receive little attention despite its survival to 1918.

This book, therefore, will no doubt successfully appeal to its intended readership, but those looking for fresh insights into the complexities of the issues it touches on will need to look elsewhere.

Michael Winstanley, *Lancaster University*

## ABSTRACTS OF ARTICLES

A Cheshire memorial brass of 1657:  
Adam Martindale and Ephraim Elcock  
*C.B. Phillips*

Springing from a surviving multi-lingual church wall plaque which commemorates him and which is itself examined in detail and subject to close textual analysis here, this article assesses the life, career and family of a mid-seventeenth-century Cheshire cleric and vicar of Great Budworth during the 1650s, Ephraim Elcock. Drawing on a range of sources, including contemporary diaries and memoirs – especially that of Elcock's clerical colleague and the man almost certainly responsible for the wall plaque, Adam Martindale – plus wills and parish registers, committee records and the records of the Chester corporation, Elcock and his family are rescued from historical neglect and obscurity. The article offers a number of new insights into Cheshire during the 1650s, but more particularly it shows how, from quite modest socio-economic foundations, over several generations during the seventeenth century the Elcock family achieved significant social, professional and public standing in Chester and beyond, demonstrated not least by Ephraim's own quite brief but significant church career.

Neston and Parkgate: their links to the slave trade  
in the mid to late eighteenth century  
*Anthony Annakin-Smith*

This article explores how far and in what ways the Dee estuary ports and maritime centres of Neston and Parkgate on the Wirral had links during the mid and later eighteenth century with the transatlantic slave trade centred on Liverpool. Drawing heavily

upon the Liverpool Plantation Registers, but also employing an array of newspapers, wills and parish registers, admiralty records and modern historical databases, the article explores shipbuilding in the area and the role of local ships, as well as the extent to which locally-based merchants, businessmen and ship owners invested in the main Liverpool slave trade or in turn used money gained from that trade to invest in their local businesses. Despite their proximity to Liverpool, it is shown that Neston and Parkgate had few and in the main only indirect links with the slave trade at this time, though a handful of locally-built boats were at some stage during their lifetime employed in the slave trade, just as a handful of local men did invest in and benefit from that trade. An addendum sheds new light on a surviving Parkgate mural and explores its possible indirect links to the slave trade.

John Brockbank of Lancaster:  
shipbuilder and entrepreneur  
*Peter Skidmore*

This shorter article examines the career and business interests of a Lancaster-based shipbuilder of the latter half of the eighteenth century and opening decades of the nineteenth, John Brockbank. His surviving daybooks, plus a volume of his contracts and related business documents, provide a clear and detailed insight into his career, activities and business interests from the late 1780s to the 1800s and they are drawn upon very heavily here. While much of his time was given over to shipbuilding, with evidence about the types of ships he built, the length of time they took to construct and the nature and terms of the contracts by which they were sold, it is shown that he had a multiplicity of other business concerns, as owner or part-owner of trading vessels, as a buyer or trader of maritime-related items, especially timber, and with interests in both canal-building and the development of the port of Lancaster. It is argued that Brockbank was part of a thriving mercantile, maritime and commercial sector in Lancaster and that the joint and overlapping business interests of its members encouraged the development of a thriving business community there.

The Liverpool masonic rebellion  
and the Grand Lodge of Wigan  
*David Harrison*

This article explores divisions within the world of freemasonry played out in south Lancashire (and parts of Yorkshire) in the first half of the nineteenth century and beyond. Drawing upon masonic records, including those of individual local lodges, the private papers and unpublished memoirs of the protagonists and other contemporary freemasons, newspaper reports and census returns, it explores how a group of northern freemasons rebelled against a modernised version of masonic practice which had become the official and national form of freemasonry, in favour of reviving older and more traditional forms. It traces the origins and early stages of the rebellion in Liverpool in the mid 1820s – perhaps, it is suggested, in part a result of the resentment felt by Liverpool’s mercantile and commercial membership against a more aristocratic London-based leadership – but then shows how, through a range of personal, socio-economic, commercial and transport factors, the focus soon moved to Wigan, which remained the more durable centre of a rebellion that never attracted huge support but that did not finally come to an end until the eve of the First World War.

Settlement and removal in west Cheshire, 1834-71  
*Mike Handley*

Building on the author’s earlier published work on the ‘old’ and ‘new’ poor law in nineteenth-century Cheshire and beyond, this article focuses on the right of poor migrants and other poor relief claimants to be deemed settled and thus entitled to benefit in a particular area or poor law union and also on the grounds upon which authorities in those areas and unions could refuse such claims and physically remove the claimants. Springing from the (changing) legislative framework, the article uses the surviving papers and correspondence of the poor law unions, together with reports on census returns and by various parliamentary

committees who examined the issue found amongst the published *Parliamentary Papers*, to chart the changing and often differing lines taken by the poor law districts and unions in Chester, west Cheshire, parts of north-east Wales and the Wirral during the middle decades of the nineteenth century. It highlights tensions and divergent lines and practices within as well as between the unions of this region, especially between urban and manufacturing areas – many of them subject to large-scale Irish migration – on the one hand and rural and agricultural areas on the other.

The press, the cornermen and Liverpool's  
'Tithebarn-street outrage' of 1874

*John E. Archer*

This article provides a detailed study of the circumstances and consequences of a particularly notorious murder, the result of street violence amongst the working and lower classes, which occurred in Liverpool in the mid 1870s. It rests upon and draws heavily from reports of the murder and the immediate reaction of the gathering crowd, witness and expert testimony and the subsequent trial and executions which were carried in local and national newspapers, as well as the various editorial comments found in the press, in order to assess the broader public and press reaction to the Tithebarn Street murder and to an ostensibly similar killing not far away and involving some related protagonists three years later. It is suggested that not only the events which occurred in Liverpool themselves, but also the wider reporting and interpretation of them disseminated through the local and national press, throw important light on nineteenth-century public attitudes towards ruffians and street violence, as well as on the often notorious reputation of Liverpool itself.

## NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

Mr Anthony Annakin-Smith is an international lecturer with a keen personal interest in historical research. Specialist areas include landscape history, local industry and shipping on the Dee (this last interest leading to his research into slave trading links). He is author of a number of other articles of historical research and has also published *Wirral Walks* which combines his interest in landscape with his love of walking.

Dr John E. Archer was made an honorary research fellow at Edge Hill University on his retirement in 2003. He is the author of *'By a Flash and a Scare': Arson, Animal Maiming and Poaching in East Anglia 1815-1870* (1990). His most recent book *'The Monster Evil': Policing and Violence in Victorian Liverpool* was published in 2011.

Mike Handley, MA, is a retired senior teacher who taught history for 31 years in grammar and comprehensive schools in Lancashire and the Midlands. Before his teaching career, he wrote a Master's thesis based on three nineteenth-century Cheshire poor law authorities. He has had six previous articles published and is currently writing one about the Reverend Joshua King, rector of Woodchurch (1821-61).

Dr David Harrison chose the subject of the origin and development of English freemasonry for his PhD research at the University of Liverpool, which he completed and successfully defended in March 2008. The work was published by Lewis Masonic the following year as *The Genesis of Freemasonry*, and this was followed by his second work, *The Transformation of Freemasonry*, which continued the history of freemasonry in England and was published by Arima Publishing in both the UK and USA in September 2010. Dr Harrison has also lectured modern history at the University of Liverpool and at Liverpool Hope University and continues to lecture on local history in Liverpool and on masonic history throughout the UK and USA.

Dr C.B. Phillips recently retired from a senior lectureship in social and economic history in the School of Arts, Histories and Culture at the University of Manchester. He has published many books and articles on the history of north-west England from Cheshire to Cumberland (and in 2011 ventured in a new direction as joint editor of *An Historical Atlas of Staffordshire*). He is a past-president of the Historical Metallurgy Society, a long-standing member of the Council of the Record Society of Lancashire and Cheshire and a member of this Society and of its Council for over thirty years.

Peter Skidmore was awarded a PhD by the University of Greenwich in 2009 for his work on the maritime economy of the north-west of England in the late eighteenth century. His more recent work has been concerned with shipping in the south-west of England and he is currently researching trade on the north Cornwall coast in the early nineteenth century.

HISTORIC SOCIETY OF  
LANCASHIRE AND CHESHIRE

Report and Accounts,  
year ending 31 December 2010

Report of Council  
Members of Council and Officers  
Financial Statement

## REPORT OF COUNCIL FOR THE YEAR 2010

The Society is a charity which exists to promote the study of any aspect of the history of Lancashire and Cheshire. This is done through a series of public lectures and meetings, a grant scheme for research, schools and publications, awards of prizes for dissertations in higher education establishments and the publication of an annual volume of *Transactions* which reflects current research on the two counties. The business of the Society is handled by Council, which met three times in 2010.

During this year Council decided to set up a working party, under the chairmanship of Dr Colin Phillips, to consider the Society's future direction. To this end a questionnaire was devised and has been sent to all members. The results will be analysed and reviewed in 2011. Another project undertaken was to ask members to forward to the Society their e-mail addresses so that future communications such as the Newsletter could be sent out by this format. So far over 60 members have agreed to this proposal.

Thanks should be given to officers stepping down at the next AGM – Professor Suzanne Schwarz, a past President, Denise Jones as Newsletter Secretary and Dr Fiona Pogson as Programme Secretary – and to Rachel Mulhearn, Jonathan Pepler and Matt Wheeler, who will be resigning from Council as ordinary members.

The total number of members as of January 2011 is 386, as opposed to 382 the previous year. The current composition is made up of 261 individuals, 115 institutions and ten societies. Over the past twelve months there was a loss of eleven individual members and two library subscriptions. The Society gained seventeen new individual members.

The financial accounts show that the income of the Society this year was £8190. This represents a reduction of £1500 from 2009, mainly due to the current low interest rates and a decrease in donations. Expenditure in 2010 increased significantly from £7847 to £16,503. But this is primarily accounted for by the

work undertaken on the digitisation of *Transactions*, which should prove a very valuable resource for both the Society and the general public. Grants and prizes totalled £3622, an increase of £2322 over the previous year.

Despite the net loss sustained in 2010, the Society remains in a very secure financial position.

Volume 158 of *Transactions* for 2009 was published by Liverpool University Press and the Society looks forward to a fruitful partnership with this publisher.

Although delayed due to circumstances beyond the Society's control, volume 158 consisted of seven articles, with a good geographical spread and thus coverage of both Lancashire and Cheshire. It also included a book reviews section plus abstracts, notes on contributors, Society reports and a full index. In addition, the Society exchanges publications with 22 other societies.

The Society's library, previously housed in the Liverpool Record Office, is currently in storage and unavailable for the time being owing to the closure of Liverpool Central Library for major refurbishment (see the website [www.liverpool.gov.uk/libraries-and-archives](http://www.liverpool.gov.uk/libraries-and-archives) for further information). The library catalogue is still accessible on the Society's website: [www.hslc.org.uk](http://www.hslc.org.uk). The site also includes a searchable index to *Transactions*.

The following was the programme of events and lectures:

28 February (Sunday): (AGM) Professor Hannah Barker, 'At home with the lower middle classes: home, business and household in North West England 1760-1820' (Hornby Library, Liverpool Central Library);

24 March (Wednesday): Lecture by Dr David Harrison, 'The Liverpool Masonic Rebellion and the Wigan Grand Lodge' (Hornby Library);

21 April (Wednesday): Visit to Chetham's Library, Manchester;

23 May (Sunday): Visit and talk: Trencherfield Mill, Wigan;

26 June (Saturday): Guided tour and boat trip: National Waterways Museum, Ellesmere Port;

22 September (Wednesday): Lecture by Mr John Tiernan, 'The making of an institution: the Athenaeum' (The Athenaeum);

18 October (Monday): Lecture by Dr Julie-Marie Strange, 'Fatherhood in the late Victorian and Edwardian industrial north-west: feckless fools and respectable artisans as family men' (Friends Meeting House, St Helens, joint meeting with St Helens Historical Society);

21 November (Sunday): Mr John Tiernan: "Modernise everything": Thomas Shelmerdine, Liverpool architect' (Cornerstone Building, Everton Campus, Liverpool Hope University, joint meeting with Liverpool History Society).

Additionally, the Society had a stall at the Big History Weekend held at St George's Hall on 20 and 21 March 2010, which served as very useful publicity for the Society and where 80 off-prints from *Transactions* were sold.

R Hull, Secretary to Council

## COUNCIL AND OFFICERS FOR 2010

*President*

Dr N. White

*Treasurer*

Dr A. Wilson

*Secretary to Council*

R.C. Hull, Flat 4, 3 Bramhall Road,  
Waterloo, Liverpool, L22 3XA  
e-mail: rch2949@yahoo.co.uk

*Membership Secretary*

Simon Hill

*Secretaries*

*Newsletter* D. Jones

*Programme* Dr F. Pogson

*Publicity* Dr M. Benbough-Jackson

*Editorial Team* Prof. P. Gaunt, Prof. J.C. Belchem, Dr A. Gritt

*Website* Dr S. Haggerty

*Other Members of Council*

Dr D.E. Ascott, M. Brian, Dr A. Brown,  
Dr J.E. Hollinshead, Rev. R. Marsh, R. Mulhearn,  
J. Pepler, Dr C.B. Phillips, Prof. S. Schwarz, M. Stammers,  
Prof. D. Szechi, M. Tebbutt, J. Tiernan,  
Prof. J.G. Timmins, M. Wheeler

*Hon. Librarian*

D.A. Stoker, City Record Office, Central Public Library,  
William Brown Street, Liverpool, L3 8EW

*Vice-Presidents*

P.J. Andrews, J. Beck, Dr S.A. Harrop,  
Dr J.I. Kermodé, P.R. Pleasance

## FINANCIAL STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2010

RECEIPTS (£)		PAYMENTS (£)	
Subscriptions - private	3,887.00	Printing and dispatch of <i>Transactions</i>	4,905.00
Subscriptions - institutional	3,191.00	Officers' expenses	201.58
Interest - income bonds	240.72	Website	5,226.33
Interest - CAF account	171.55	Stationary	63.44
Donations & Gift Aid	4.00	Newsletter	1,096.46
Publication sales	101.50	Lectures, fairs, conferences	729.10
Sales - offprints	108.00	Subscriptions to societies	176.00
Day schools/lectures	454.00	Library	305.65
Public Licensing Society	33.00	Bank charges	25.00
		Grants	3,622.00
		Donations	90.00
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>TOTAL</b>	
<b>RECEIPTS</b>	8,190.77	<b>PAYMENTS</b>	16,503.56
Net Receipts	-8,312.79		
Cash funds at year end	85,610.84		

### STATEMENT OF ASSETS & LIABILITIES AT YEAR END

#### ASSETS

Cash funds	National Westminster account	1,087.87
	Charities Aid Foundation account	89,522.97
	Transfer from CAF account to Nat West account	-5,000.00
Total cash funds		85,610.85
Other monetary assets	National Savings income bonds	15,000
Assets retained for the Charity's own use	Book stock	5,000
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>		<b>105,610.84</b>
<b>LIABILITIES</b>	Printing of volume 159	6,000.00
	Uncashed cheques	482.65
<b>TOAL LIABILITIES</b>		<b>6,482.65</b>



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