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Preston Historical Society

MARCH NEWSLETTER

Welcome to our March meeting. Tonight we have the inimitable Stephen Sartin, his talk is entitled "Church Street: it's place in history". Enjoy!!

We have received a message from Alice Lee, she is working on a documentary for Channel 4. It is looking into the history of women's football, with a particular focus on Dick, Kerr Ladies. She is trying to track down any relatives or friends of the players who might be able to help her with research. If anyone has any information that could be useful to Alice please let her know. Her email address is alicel@lambentproductions.co.uk she would be most grateful.

Another online query has come in from Sarah Jones. She wondered if any of our members would know about the Brush Stock Turner trade, she has discovered that several of her ancestors worked in this trade, it is making handles for brushes. She would like to know more as her 5 x Great Grandma was a manufacturer in and around the Garstang area. Any help would be great. Any info to info@prestonhistoricalsociety.org.uk

Information for our members

Mr John Sloane has written to our members..... *I am writing to let you know about the production "Edith Rigby" – Woman on Fire. A production that has been written about Preston's most famous suffragette Edith Rigby. I had wondered if your members may be interested to hear that a local theatre company are hoping to take the production to the Edinburgh festival later this year. Also they are hoping to stage the production locally – perhaps in Winckley Square and maybe also at Rivington.*

As Edith's first cousin twice removed I am trying to assist the Certain Curtain Theatre Co raise the funds to put this production on. Towards this end, in addition to making a small donation myself, I have suggested to the producers that they should approach the trade unions Unison and Unite, to ask for donations, in view of the fact that Edith was such an ardent supporter of the rights of women in many ways, and particularly amongst working women locally in Preston. While it is hoped that this will help with securing some funding, it is likely that more will be needed before this production can go ahead.

In view of these things I am hoping that you might be able to circulate details of this production to your members. It may be that some may feel able to make a donation to assist with this very worthy production or that the society may know of another concern or source of funding that can be approached to assist.

The Certain Curtain Theatre Co is based in Preston and their productions are very much rooted in social causes and they have a very good reputation. The website for the Company can be found here www.cctheatre.co.uk

*The producer is Claire Moore and her email address is cctheatre@yahoo.com I am sure that Claire will be happy to deal with enquiries from anybody who is wishing to either find out more or make a donation. Yours sincerely
– Jim Sloan.*

THE FRIENDS OF LANCASHIRE ARCHIVES - Dr Alan Crosby writes:

In 1986 Lancashire Record Office (as it was called then) faced major challenges. Local government reorganisation was on the cards, potentially involving the break-up of Lancashire; an important collection of documents (the medieval Towneley deeds) was up for sale; and the record office was about to embark on the innovative use of volunteers for what became known as 'The Will Flattening Project'. The county archivist, Ken Hall, decided that a support group was needed, to campaign for the continuation of a unified archive service whatever happened to the county and its districts, to help with the purchase of the collection, and to provide many of the volunteers. With the active support of Sir Simon Towneley, then the lord lieutenant of the county (and not the owner of those medieval deeds!), the Friends of Lancashire Archives [FLA] came into being. Angus Winchester (later to become Director of the RHC) chaired the steering committee which set up the organisation, and I became the first chairman. That was over 30 years ago: rather alarmingly, I am now chairman again!

The threatened reorganisation of local government didn't really happen; the collection was purchased; the Will Flatteners worked for an amazing 21 years and over 100,000 documents passed through their hands; and the FLA continued to flourish. But now, it hardly needs to be said, the threats to local government are far worse than could have been imagined back in 1986, and the FLA is needed more than ever. Though the county council has tried its hardest to protect the service, Lancashire's archives have not been spared: we've seen major financial cuts, heavy staff losses (a 50 per cent reduction since summer 2011), reductions in opening hours (though not as severe as in Cumbria) and the winding-down of the educational provision which used to be an integral part of the work of the service. No less serious is that a cruelly tight financial and staffing regime does not allow for document purchases, dramatically reduces cataloguing output, and seriously compromises the conservation programme.

So now the FLA has a much more central role to play in supporting the practical work of the archive service. Twenty years ago our role was more about campaigning – now it's about hands-on assistance and growing financial contributions. We help with fundraising for the purchase of archives under threat or on the open market (notably spearheading the successful campaign to raise £95,000 to buy the Hulton of Hulton Archive in 2015). The FLA has been able to provide 'match funding' in campaigns, provided strong evidence of community support – invaluable for funding applications to outside bodies – and help with publicity and promotion. We assist with the purchase of equipment which is beyond the scope of the archive service budget; we help to fund important cataloguing projects; and we have been active in sponsoring and part-funding the sort of educational and cultural activities which 'in the old days' could be done by the service itself (such as imaginative work with artists, creative writers and poets, school groups, community projects to help disadvantaged people, and the LGBT community).

We have also widened our involvement in other ways. The FLA now holds workshops which focus on particular archive collections or types of material, providing expert training in using and interpreting the documents, and we have a very varied annual programme of lectures and talks, visits and social events, all centred on archives and their use. Recently we've embarked on a new role which actually revisits one of our aims when we began 31 years ago—we are helping to organise and manage projects involving volunteers working on listing, indexing and sorting records. And we've developed close links with a broad range of local and regional organisations, so that the archive service is better connected with its local and regional catchment (and among these is our very good relationship with the Regional Heritage Centre itself).

If you are interested in joining the Friends, finding out about our events and activities, or coming to workshops, talks and meetings, we'd love to see you and you'll be assured of a very warm welcome. There's a contact form on our website <http://www.flarchives.co.uk/> as well as an on-line membership application form, full information about our events, and an archive of FLA newsletters. Individual membership is only £10 a year: by joining us, you'll help to support Lancashire's archives today, and will make a real difference to our work in protecting and cherishing the archives for future generations.

One last query just in

My name is Nicola Parkinson I am 37 and have a dream of finding out a little more of my wonderful Grandad. "Leslie Herbert Parkinson"

The trouble is all we have is a photo of him as a four year old and he said that was taken the day he arrived at the Orphanage.

He said it was in Preston and there were never any records for him as it had burned down!!
I wondered if you know of any in Preston that this has happened to?
I have researched a lot of them st Vincent's etc but they all seem to still be standing?
I don't even have a birth date for him and he said he picked his own birthday.
We always guessed his age but we think he was probably born around 1924.
I realise this isn't the normal email you receive but I am desperate to know if his story rings true.

Karen Doyle – PHS March Newsletter 2017.