Printed on carbon neutral paper.

PRESTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

PROMOTING LOCAL HISTORY ACROSS NINE DECADES

Spring 2025 | Issue 30

Preserving Preston's Heritage

On 27 January 2025 a meeting was held at Lune Street Methodist church called by a newly-formed group of concerned Prestonians with the name *Preserving Preston's Heritage*.

The meeting, chaired by founding member, Rachel Bryson, was called to canvass support, not just from relevant organisations such as Preston City Council, the Restoring Preston Basin Campaign, and Preston Historical Society, but from all concerned Prestonians. Among those present were the leader of Preston City Council, Matthew Brown, Mayor of Preston, Phil Crowe, and a number of city councillors, including the councillor for Preston East and cabinet member for Culture and Arts, Anna Hindle; Mel Close, councillor for Brookfield and Armed Forces champion; and councillor for Fishwick and Frenchwood, Valerie Wise, cabinet member for Community Wealth Building.

Rachel opened the meeting by explaining that one of the first priorities of the group was to compile a database of all buildings and other structures considered to be part of Preston's heritage, and to evaluate any level of risk to them. The next stage would be to decide what action, if any, was required with respect to these buildings, and how best to proceed.

The discussion was opened to the audience, and a range of views and interests was aired on issues such as the Harris Institute, in Avenham Lane; St Joseph's Orphanage, Mount Street; the Canal Basin project; and the protection of historic buildings from vandalism. Many questions were directed at and answered by the councillors present.

As an inaugural meeting of a nascent organisation it offered a chance for people to air their views and allowed organisers to assess if a pressure group of this kind might be supported in the community. If the level of passionate debate generated was anything to go by, then the founders of Preserving Preston's Heritage should have been pleased by the evening.

These are early days, however, and much will depend on not only how the group proceeds in the future, but also the amount of support it receives from the general public. This is where organisations such as Preston Historical Society and, more importantly, our members can play a supporting role and help to preserve the city of Preston's heritage.

If anybody wishes to find out more about the group and to offer their support and opinions on any aspects of Preston's heritage you can find them on Facebook by googling 'preserving Preston's heritage on Facebook'.

About PHS

Since 1948 the aim of the Society has been to promote the study of local history in Preston and Lancashire. Talks are held in the Central Methodist Church, Lune Street. The annual member subscription is **£20**. Visitors pay **£5** per talk. There are eight talks in each season.

Contact PHS

General enquiries: **stewart@prestonhistoricalsociety.org.uk**

Membership: **patricia@prestonhistoricalsociety.org.uk**

/prestonhistoricalsociety

Society Information and Events

Lancashire Day

27th November 2024

On this day Preston Historical Society was invited by Avanti West Coast to hold a stall on Platform 4 of Preston Railway Station to celebrate Lancashire Day. The day was cold but dry when committee members, Judi Castley and Stewart Turner, set up the stall, which consisted of displays on various historic events that had played out in Preston station, from the first train to arrive at the station in 1838 up to the present day. The station was bustling but with most people inevitably too busy to cast more than a casual eye on our display whilst waiting for their trains. Nevertheless, there was enough interest shown for us to consider the day a success for PHS.

A Walk with Goosnargh Cubs

This is surely the youngest historical walking group in PHS history!

The walk was requested by the 1st Goosnargh Cub pack (aged 8 to 10½ years) who on the morning of Sunday 26 January 2025 assembled by the remains of the tram road bridge on Garden Street. The walk was led by PHS committee members, Stewart Turner, Judi Castley, and Pete Wilkinson with help from society member Nicholas Serpa. The aim of the walk was to give the Cubs an understanding of the importance of cotton manufacture to the history of Preston, and of the importance of coal and transport to the cotton industry, whilst at the same time explaining what it might have been like to be a child in Victorian Preston. The cubs were told that most important word to remember was imagine because most of the buildings and structures talked about have long since disappeared. Their imaginations were aided throughout the walk by a 'Victorian lap-top' (a portable set of A3 images) which illustrated aspects being described.

The walk followed the tram road and its route beyond the old tram bridge over the Ribble up to the site of the canal basin and railway coal yards where Ringway now crosses Corporation Street, with diversions up Mount Street, Winckley Square, and Fishergate.

The Cubs were extremely well behaved, and very enthusiastic in answering the many questions put to them throughout the walk by the team. It was a very enjoyable experience for all concerned.

The start of the walk at the tram road bridge on Garden Street.

Lancashire Archives & Local History Resources Workshops

Summer 2025

PHS and Lancashire Archives have planned a series of summer workshops **FREE to PHS members**. The workshops will give you the opportunity to explore and delve into the 900 years of amazing archive collections. No prior knowledge of using an archive service is required. Experienced members of staff will introduce you to the collections and facilitate these engaging and interactive workshops. Whether you are simply interested in local history, would like to develop your research skills, or want to start an in-depth piece of research but are not sure where to start, these workshops are an opportunity to find out more.

June 3
Diaries and journals with particular reference to John Dalton, esq of Preston and Thurnham Hall.

June 11
Researching the Built Environment with Preston Building Plans.

July 8
Once in Every Guild: Exploring Preston Guild Records.

July 16
The Road to the Workhouse: Preston Poor Law Guardians' records.

August 5
County Mental Asylum records with particular reference to Whittingham Asylum.

All the above workshops take place at
6.30pm - 8pm

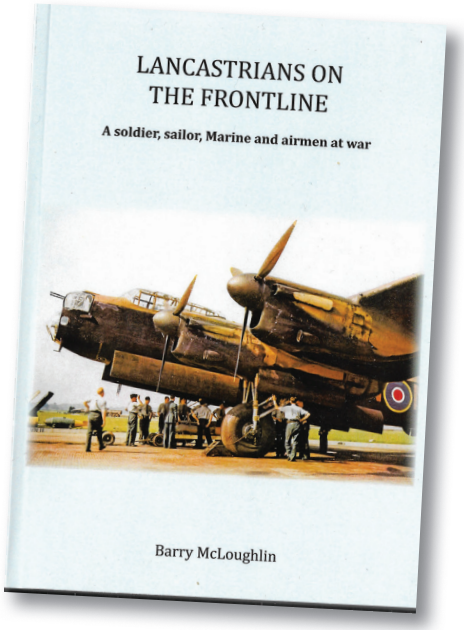
For more details and to book, members should contact:
patricia@prestonhistoricalsociety.org.uk

You need to book by **17 April**, after that time the workshops will be open to non-members at **£5 each** workshop.

Book News

Lancastrians on the Front Line

by Barry McLoughlin



Lancashire has always been a fertile recruiting ground for the Armed Forces, and the quintet of servicemen commemorated in this book were among the bravest and best.

In five compelling portraits, former Lancashire Post and Blackpool Gazette journalist, Barry McCloughlin, profiles representatives from the four armed services: his 'Bomber Boy' uncle, a D-Day veteran, a sailor who witnessed the Japanese surrender in 1945, a Marine whose 'vessel' never moved, and another airman who became a politician.

The book is a powerful and poignant tribute to the valour of some of Lancashire's most courageous sons.

Price: £5.95 *plus postage*

If you wish to purchase a copy please email:
barry@barrymcloughlin.co.uk

PHS Programme of Talks

Spring 2025

14 April
Alex Miller

Your History on your Doorstep:
Exploring Lancashire Archives and Local History

12 May
Geoff Timmins

Chimney Pots and Chamber Pots:
Working Class Housing in 19th Century Lancashire

All talks are included in the membership fee of **£20**. Visitors pay **£5** per talk. Talks take place on the 2nd Monday of each month and start at **7.15pm**. Doors open at **6.30pm** so that members and visitors can meet friends at the **Olive Grove Coffee Shop, Central Methodist Church, Lune Street, Preston, PR1 2NL**.

Membership enquiries:
patricia@prestonhistoricalsociety.org.uk

The Birth of Lancashire

Part 2 – The Vikings are Coming!

In 902 the Viking settlement of Dublin (in Irish Dubh Linn, meaning black pool) was in crisis. There had been a thriving settlement there since 840 AD, but in that year the town, known to the Irish as Ath Cliath (ford of hurdles), was reconquered by the Irish, and the Vikings driven out completely.

This collapse of Dublin seems to have precipitated a large-scale exodus from other Viking settlements in Ireland. They became refugees and seem to have decided to raid the coast of North West England from Strathclyde down to the River Mersey, seeking new places to settle. One of those places, the land between the Lune to the Ribble, was given the name Amounderness (Agemundrenessa in the Domesday book), after a certain *'Agmundr'*, a Norse warlord and *'nes'* from Old Norse meaning 'point of land running into the sea'.

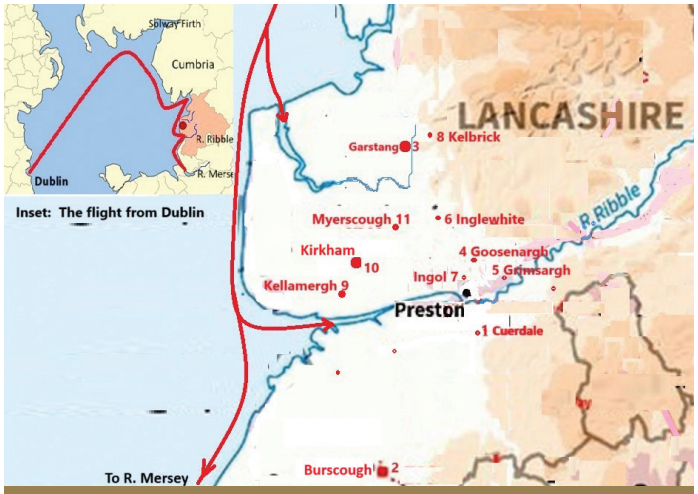


Fig. 1 Map of Viking Places

Key to original Norse names

(from The Place Names of Lancashire by Wylde & Hirst)

1. *Kjarr's* valley **2.** *Burh Skogre* (wooded place) **3.** Garstang (pure Norse – *'stang'* spear) **4.** Gosa's temple/grove **5.** Grima's temple/grove **6.** *Ingulf's* thwaite (meadow/cleared land) **7.** Ingulf (person's name) **8.** *Kelda* (spring) *brekka* (slope) **9.** *Kelgrimesurgh* **10.** *Kirkeheim (home/place with church - 1196)* **11.** *Myrr* (marsh), *Skogre* (wood)

Archaeological digs of the Dublin that the Hiberno-Norse left have revealed a rural community of farmers with formal property boundaries, and animal pens next to their houses. They were still farmers, despite their habit of plunder and pillage, so, it's reasonable to suppose that, when they sailed up the Ribble looking for a new home, they wanted to set up similar communities. What is surprising, however, is that there is no evidence of any major armed conflict with their Anglo-Saxon neighbours or fortification of their settlements, which suggests that Amounderness was not particularly densely populated, so there was room to spare for new neighbours.

So the Dublin Norse settled down to work the land, but not for long. In AD 917 the Annals of Ulster recorded 'Sitriuc grandson of Ivarr, entered Ath Cliath'. The Vikings were back in Dublin with a vengeance. What this meant for the settlements in Amounderness is unknown. Did some of the settlers return to reclaim their rights? Perhaps some of the older generation did, but many seemed to have stayed on.

During this period Edward the Elder (died 924) – the 'First King of the English' was expanding his control between the Ribble and Mersey, building burhs (fortified towns) at Manchester, Thelwall, and possibly Penwortham. His son, Athelstan, continued these moves and around 926 he made the Vikings of Amounderness an offer they couldn't refuse or, in his words:

> *"I paid for it with no little money of my own."*

He had opted for purchase rather than war, which, presumably, left the Norse community quite well off. He subsequently gifted the territory to Wulfstan, Archbishop of York.

So now the area had become part of the expanding 'English state', with the inhabitants exchanging one overlord for another. It didn't mean, however, that the area suddenly became 'English'. In Wylde and Hirst, 'The Place Names of Lancashire' the authors quote from a document of 1196 where Kirkham is still written in the Old Norse form *Kirkeheim** (see figure 1) . In fact most of the source documents are from around this time. Does this mean that people of the area still spoke Old Norse at this late date? It's unlikely, but it would have probably been a mixture of this and Old English (with the odd Norman French words thrown in!). It seems that the Vikings had made a lasting impression on the area.

* An earlier record in the Domesday book (compiled 1086) uses the Old English form *Chicheham*, probably explained by the fact that these records were compiled, not by local scribes, but by southern clerks employed by William 1.