

## Thomas Leach, 5 Camden Place commemorated by a Blue Plaque



Members of Preston Historical Society, Friends of Winckley Square, Winckley Square Residences Directors, LCC and PCC Councillors & officers and Casidy and Ashton Architects with future PHS member in pram Rory! Photo Paul Rushton

Mayor Yakub Patel unveiled a blue plaque on 14 July to celebrate a local businessman in remembrance of his investment in fledgling Preston companies during the industrial revolution two centuries ago. Born in 1782, Thomas began his career on Fishergate as a merchant selling draperies, hosiery, and haberdashery before becoming a prominent local investor. His trade cards and biographical data are featured within the British Museum's archive of well-known national merchants. His son's name, Samuel Leach, is inscribed in one of the paving stones in Winckley Square Gardens. He wrote his reminiscences of living in 5 Camden Place, which gives us a unique insight into what family life was like.



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## Reginald Sharpe France: Lancashire's First Archivist

*Reginald Sharpe France c.1971 outside the not yet completed Lancashire Archives*

As it is the 75th anniversary of PHS, it seems only fitting to shed some light on the Society's first president. Reginald Sharpe France was perhaps better known as the man who established a record office for Lancashire and presided over the construction of the county's first purpose-built archive repository in Bow Lane, Preston in the early 1970s. The following is the tribute paid to him in the Lancashire County Council newsletter in 1981:



“ On 30th June 1976 Mr R Sharpe France, first County Archivist retired. It is pleasing to record that his service, both to his native county and to his profession, was recognised by the inclusion of his name in the last year's New Year's Honours List. ”



*Reginald Sharpe France, 1945 b. 12 Nov 1909 d. 18 October 1986 artist unknown: hangs in the searchroom of Lancashire Archives.*

### About the PHS

Welcome to the new season, especially to new members. We have an exciting programme of nine talks and look forward to your participation, suggestions, and feedback to help us make your experience even more enjoyable. PHS aims to promote the study of local history in Preston and Lancashire through a programme of talks given by local historians. Talks are held in the Central Methodist Church, Lune St. The annual member subscription is £15.00. Visitors £5.00 per talk. NEW MEMBERS ARE WELCOME

Reginald Sharpe France was born in Blackpool in 1909. His father's photographic business brought him into contact with chemical processes and influenced him to choose a career in pharmacy. His interests, however, were drawing him in quite different directions. In 1931 he joined Lancashire County Council as a clerk in the School of Medical Section of the Health Department; and he soon requested, and obtained access to, Quarter Sessions records in County Hall to further his burgeoning historical research. An early fruit of this was his 'History of the Plague in Lancashire', first read to the Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire in February in March 1938, and later published. With this background, his appointment on 1st March 1940, as clerk in charge of Records came as no surprise. The story of the origin and development of what became the Lancashire Record Office may be found in Reginald France's own words in an article published in 'Archives' No. 7, 1952, and in previous annual reports. But these sources necessarily exclude many of his other activities. For example: he was an organising lecturer and examiner of the Liverpool University Archive Diploma Course, and founder member of the Society of Local Archivists.

### The Great Preston Jubilee Quiz Answers

Answers to the quiz on page 16 of the Jubilee Booklet. If you didn't obtain a booklet why not set yourself the task of writing the questions that these answers apply to? The Quiz is on the website:

[www.prestonhistoricalsociety.org.uk/jubilee-booklet](http://www.prestonhistoricalsociety.org.uk/jubilee-booklet)

1. Princes Pax or Princes Pacis (either)
2. Priest town
3. Henry II
4. 1397
5. Two (1648 & 1715)
6. On the Garstang Road, between St Thomas Road and St George's Road
7. Stonegate
8. Joseph Livesey
9. W.B. Dick & Co. and John Kerr, founded in Kilmarnock in 1883 before moving to Preston.
10. The Yellow Mill, built in Dale Street.
11. Originally United Electric Car Company Ltd, in 1904, it built ELECTRIC trams.
12. Tottenham Hotspur
13. 1838, from Wigan.
14. Patti Mayor
15. Preston Town Hall, burnt down 1947, finally demolished 1962
16. Czar Nicholas II



We need more volunteers to make the PHS experience even better. If you are interested contact [patricia@prestonhistoricalsociety.org](mailto:patricia@prestonhistoricalsociety.org) or ring 017813 213 629 to chat about how you might get involved



[patricia@prestonhistoricalsociety.org.uk](mailto:patricia@prestonhistoricalsociety.org.uk)

You will also be able to purchase one at the monthly talks (while stocks last!).

### 75th Jubilee Celebration Mugs

A limited number of Jubilee mugs was produced to celebrate 75 years of PHS. If you would like one reserving please contact

### PHS Talks Autumn 2023

4 Sept. 2023 ~ Dr Bill Shannon  
**Richard Kuerden's Map of Preston and his Planned History of the County**

2 Oct. 2023 ~ Clinton Smith  
**Preston's Caribbean Community: Including the Pain of Enduring the Windrush Scandal**

6 Nov. 2023 ~ Michael Akers  
**Brilliantly Brutal: A New Look at Preston Bus Station**

4 Dec. 2023 ~ Stewart Turner  
**The Diary of a Lancashire Weaver: 75 years On**



# Diamond Days – A Review of our 75th Anniversary Events

During the summer we organised a two-week programme of celebratory events, most of which were FOC to members: Here are some of the highlights:



## Stephen Sartin Memorial Walk around Preston City Centre

After Stephen's death earlier this year David Hindle led a walk in the footsteps of one of Stephen's celebrated walks. David, PHS President, was a good friend of Stephen. The walk started at the Miller Arcade and concentrated on Church Street, the Flag Market, the bus station, and Fishergate. Finally, Mike Turner, PHS Treasurer, led a minute's silence in memory of Stephen, one of Preston's foremost historians. Everyone thoroughly enjoyed the walk. David did him proud.

## Tour of Lytham Hall

On a sunny day thirty members joined the tour which was divided into two groups. The tour guides treated the groups to entertaining and information-packed trips through every room in the Hall. Their knowledge of the hall and the lives of its owners - the Clifton family, is vast. Many people enjoyed a meal in the café and strolled around the very pleasant grounds.



## Inn-Sight & Sound of the Old Town Hall Guided Walk

Steve Halliwell was, as usual, a consummate performer on a subject he knows so well. He regaled his audience with his encyclopaedic knowledge of the old pubs of Preston town centre and their stories. A very pleasant evening was had by all, ending up, of course, in a pub, The Black Horse, one of Preston's oldest surviving and best-preserved city centre pubs.

## The Good Old Days of Victorian Preston Guided Walk



This is one of David Hindle's most popular walks. The vast majority of Preston's music halls, theatres and cinemas have long gone but this was not a problem to David, who brought them all back to life, with stories of what it was like in these often raucous and risqué, venues. He explained that they weren't 'The Good Old Days', but often an escape from poverty, and insanitary conditions. He told of some famous artists who have graced Preston's stages, including classical Paganini, Charles Dickens, Bing Crosby and The Beatles.

## Mr Dickens is coming and Nicholas Nickleby



This was Charles Dickens' great grandson, Gerald Dickens', third visit to Preston, and once more, he didn't disappoint. The first half of the performance was an amusing and insightful analysis of how Dickens invented some of his favourite characters using extracts from his novels. The second half was a lightning re-telling of the story of Nicholas Nickleby, concentrated into about an hour. No mean feat, but very amusing! Gerald seems to have perfected the art of the one-man show, with minimal props, a soupçon of slapstick, and self-deprecation to make for an enjoyable evening.

## Anthony Hewitson's diaries

Andrew Hobbs, journalist and UCLAN lecturer has had this unique opportunity to study the diaries of the provincial Victorian journalist Anthony Hewitson. His talk was in two parts. In the first half he told the story of how the diaries between 1862 and 1912 had been discovered by a descendant, Margaret Dickinson. It involved genealogical research and tracing the diaries across half the world. In the second half Andrew described aspects of Hewitson's life through his diaries: family life, fatherhood and the culture of Victorian Preston.

## From the Canal Basin to Loxham's Garage



By remains of tramroad bridge at Garden Street

Stewart Turner's talk, followed by a guided walk, was a two-part story of 'the commercial heart of Preston' between 1799 and 1993. Part 1, 'The Age of Steam' told of the connection of Preston with the rest of the country by canal and railway, both transported the coal to fuel Preston's industrial revolution. Part 2, 'Rise of the Petrolheads' described how the internal combustion engine came to Preston during the 20th Century. This was not just about technical change and innovation: Stewart described these events through the lives of three very different families: James S. Taylor (coal merchants), and garage proprietors J.H.R Loxham and Ewart William Bradshaw.

## Preston Memorabilia: Show & Tell

PHS and Central Methodist Church exhibited a range of interesting artefacts and documents and members brought a range of objects including Victorian glass bottles found in a 19th Century dump, some lovely porcelain, a suitcase full of medals, commemorative coins, and legal documents. Expert, Mike Hopkins, examined all of them carefully, members recounted their stories and memories. It was a very enjoyable afternoon.