



The Manchester Group of the Victorian Society
NEWSLETTER
Autumn 2024



Manchester Group of the Victorian Society

Newsletter Autumn 2024

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COVER CLOCK TOWER, WHITEHEAD MEMORIAL GARDENS, BURY

©Neil Darlington July 2024

Presented by Henry Whitehead in 1914 in memory of his brother, Walter, a surgeon, it is by Francis William Maxwell, of Maxwell and Tuke, Bury and Manchester, who had succeeded into the practice following the deaths of the original partners. Built of Portland stone with "fussy, evenly distributed Arts and Crafts Gothic detailing" according to Pevsner.

The views expressed within this publication are those of the authors concerned and not necessarily those of the Manchester Group of the Victorian Society.

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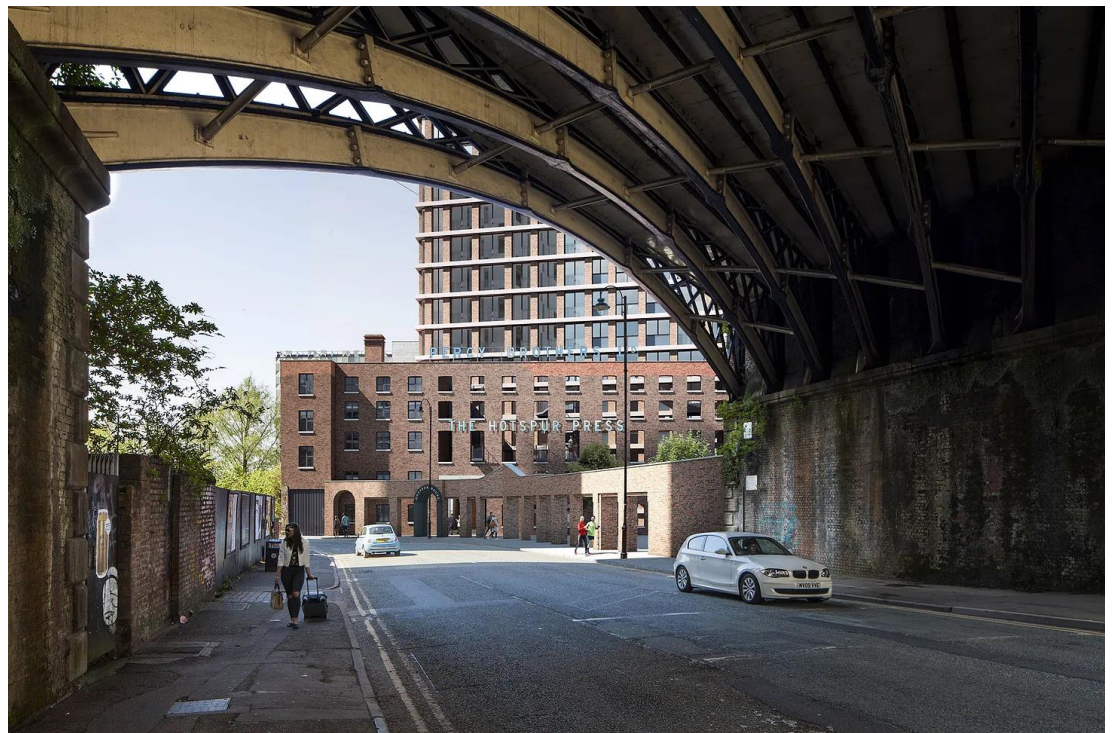
Medlock Mill

Medlock Mill, also known as Hotspur Press, sits beside the River Medlock in Chorlton-on-Medlock. Medlock Mill is of special historic and architectural interest as it retains evidence of early mill technology in which a waterwheel was connected to a steam-powered pumping engine. There is also evidence that it was, unusually, operating as an integrated mill with both spinning and weaving. It represents an important stage in the evolution of power generation from the late 18th to 19th century, making it the only surviving mill of this type in Manchester.

Parts of the structure date from as early as c.1794, though it was substantially rebuilt in 1801 after a fire, one of the earliest surviving cotton mills in Manchester. As such the building represents the early evolution of mill technology in Manchester where the cotton industry drove the city's growth and development. Despite some later 19th-century alterations, many early features, such as the 1801 five-sided fireproof stair tower on the spinning block's northwestern facade, remain.

Planning permission for partial demolition was granted in 2020 but was not implemented. However, a similar application for demolition and redevelopment of the site has since been submitted and is currently under consideration (ref no. 138805/FO/2023). An urgent application has now been made to seek listed status, supported by SAVE.

Hodder + Partners' 37-storey skyscraper and associated Hotspur Press redevelopment was approved by Manchester City Council's planning committee on 30 May. Hodder + Partners' plans involve partially demolishing the dilapidated 19th-century building, including removing its roof, and building a 578-room student tower block behind it. Planning officers had warned councillors that this would 'destroy a beautiful building and a



key part of Manchester history'. But the officers' report concluded that it was a necessary step to make the scheme viable and create "substantial public benefits."

Illustration: CGI of the Hotspur Press site © Hodder + Partners

Reference: SAVE

“Crown and Kettle,” 2-4 Great Ancoats Street, New Cross



Photo: Crown and Kettle ©Vic Soc Manchester Group 1988

Manchester may not have pubs to match Liverpool’s Philharmonic, but it does have the late Gothic style Crown and Kettle at the junction of Great Ancoats Street and Oldham Road, listed Grade II. Known as “The Grapes” in the later nineteenth century, the pub features a highly ornate ceiling inside. The photograph of circa 1988 shows the pub in the livery of Wilsons Brewery, the pub sign now removed to the bar inside. A building is said to have existed on the site since 1734. However, the use of buff brick would suggest that the present structure dates from after the 1870s. A fire in 1989 led to its closure for sixteen years. It re-opened in 2005.

“Moss Dean,” 7, Hand Lane, Pennington, Leigh



Photo: Moss Dean, 7 Hand Lane Pennington ©Vic Soc Manchester Group 2005

Moss Dean is one of a pair of semi-detached houses designed by the Leigh architect, J. C. Prestwich about 1905 and now included within the Pennington Conservation Area which stretches along St Helens Road from Pennington Bridge to Jean Avenue and includes parts of Hand Lane. To the north the conservation area is bounded by Pennington Park.

The majority of the houses in the conservation area date from the 1895 -1914 and most are said to have been commissioned and designed by J. C. Prestwich. In 1892 the area was still fields. The first houses appeared along St Helens Road in 1895, generally of red brick with some half-timber decoration, typically late Victorian/ Edwardian in style. The second period of development occurred along Hand Lane and dates from about 1904 to 1911. The houses of this period are distinctly Arts and Crafts in style and show various Voysey influences. All these are rendered externally, the render left unpainted.

None of the houses within the Conservation Area are listed

Bolton Street Station, Bury, 1846-1952

Neil Darlington

Those who joined Mark Watson on his recent walk round Bury may well have noticed the railway station on Bolton Street, now the home of the East Lancashire Heritage Railway. The railway had reached Bury in 1846, and this is the third incarnation of the station buildings on this site.

Surprisingly little information has been found regarding the buildings themselves. The seemingly endless shelves of literature on the railways of Britain contain few books on the subject, even the best-illustrated and most authoritative of railway studies, though they cover such subjects as signal boxes and track layout in exhaustive detail.

1846 Bury Station, Bolton Street, Bury, for the East Lancashire Railway Company

Architect Isaac and J P Holden. 46 King Street, Manchester

The Bury Station is close to, and entered by an incline, from Bolton-street, the principal street of the town. This is not only a handsome station, but the central offices of the company are erected here, close to the line. The company's offices and station house form a handsome brick edifice with stone dressings on the right or east side of the line, three storeys in height, with a frontage of 180 feet; and consisting of a central portion, 24 feet deep, and two connection wings, each 32 feet square. The station ground is not yet completed. It is roofed over for a length of 274 feet; the roof is light, being of iron lined with inch board, the central ridge on both sides being of horticultural glass. The roof springs from the office buildings, on the east side of the line; on the west side it is supported by 15 cast iron columns. The station is well lighted at night by 16 octagonal gas lanterns. There are three passenger platforms at this station; the one adjoining the offices, for the trains north, is of stone, 280 feet long and 16 feet wide; the centre one (between the two lines of rail) is a wooden step platform, about 200 feet in length, for the Accrington trains; and there is a third platform of wood, on the west side of the line about the same length for the trains south. Beyond the station shed on the west side, are the lines or sidings for the up and down goods trains, which are thus kept wholly apart from the passenger trains and so one of the most fertile sources of collisions at stations is avoided. At each end of the offices is a roofed carriage shed; the north one is 185 feet long, the south one about ten feet shorter. About a mile south of the station is the locomotive shed and opposite, on the other side of the line, the clerks' offices in the locomotive department. The carriage building shops are opposite the station and general offices on the west of the line. Immediately on quitting the station northwards, the line is carried through a tunnel under Bolton-street, and north of this tunnel is a coal stage east of the line. and an extensive goods warehouse west of it. [Manchester Guardian 28 July 1849 page 9]

On 13th May 1859 the ELR was absorbed by the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway and. In February 1866 the station was renamed Bury Bolton Street.

On 1st September 1879 the L&YR opened a new line from Manchester to Bury via Radcliffe and Prestwich. This provided an additional route to Manchester from Bury through rapidly developing residential areas. Trains on the Manchester and Bacup route were diverted via Prestwich; Manchester and Colne services continued to follow the original route via Clifton Junction.

In 1974 British Rail demolished the original ELR building of 1846. The area on which it formerly stood became a car park.

1882-1883 Bury Bolton Street Station, Bury, for the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway

Architect Charles William Green, architect to the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway
Contractor Charles Brierley, builder, Bury.



Photo: 1882-1883 New Station Bolton Street Bury

In January 1882 the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway invited tenders for alterations at Bury (Bolton Street) Station. These were designed “in house” probably by Charles William Green, L&YR company architect, who is known to have designed several of the intermediate stations on the Manchester to Bury line previously. L&YR Minutes of 8 February 1882 record that the tender of C Brierley, in the sum of £11,671-15s-0d, was recommended for acceptance. The station featured an unusual clock turret built on the cantilevered flat roof canopy.

NEW RAILWAY STATION AT BURY - The Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway Company have almost completed a new station at Bury, at a cost of from £10,000 to £12,000. The platforms have been raised and lengthened and now extend 250 yards. On the down island-platform are new waiting-rooms. The new station is carried over the line, and faces Bolton-street, being set back to allow carriages to put down passengers at the door of the booking-office. The passengers descend by a covered approach to an over bridge, which leads to either platform without the necessity of crossing the lines as before. The approach and over bridge are roofed in and glazed, and the station and approaches are lighted with Bray's lamps. The works have been carried out by Mr. Charles Brierley, builder, Bury. [Manchester Guardian. 12 May 1883 page 10]

1952 Bury Bolton Street Station, Bury, for the London Midland Region of British Rail



Photo: 1952 New Station Bolton Street Bury ©Neil Darlington 2024

The replacement of the L&YR station, although not of the Victorian period is nonetheless worthy of note. In May 1947 a fire had severely damaged the footbridge linking the street level ticket office of 1883 with the platforms. Demolition of the footbridge followed and, for several years, passengers were forced to enter the station through the original station building of 1846.

STATION REBUILT - The new station premises at Bury (Bolton Street), where the station frontage, the booking hall, and the footbridge have been reconstructed, are to be ready for use by 30 June. The building, which is set back to conform to a future road-widening scheme. is of modern design. A bookshop and inquiry office are set on either side of the entrance, which leads into the hall. where there are news and tobacco kiosks. Central heating will add to the comfort of the booking clerks and the ticket collectors at the barriers. [Manchester Guardian 23 June 1952 page 9]

On 1st January 1948 Bury Bolton Street became part of the nationalised British Railways (London Midland Region). British Railways rebuilt the street level entrance as a single-storey brick structure with a flat roof, containing the booking office and staff accommodation. The street elevation comprised a centrally placed main entrance door flanked by two shops. A clock tower, also in brick, was erected at the west end of the building on the street front. A new footbridge was also constructed. As with the 1880s structure a corridor, carried above the line, led to the

covered footbridge which connected with stairs down to the platforms The new station buildings opened on 30th June 1952.

Built in a period of extreme austerity, Bury Bolton Street was probably the first significant railway station built by the newly nationalised British Railways. Until 1954, when all restrictions were lifted, building materials were rationed like everything else. Buildings of this period were noted for their pared back specifications and distinct lack of generosity of materials and the new station clearly reflects this.

British Railways had selected the international modern style for their new buildings, and this was adopted at Bury, modified as necessary to reflect the materials available. With no new construction during World War II and its aftermath architects looked to the 1930s for their inspiration. Precedent included the works of Willem Marinus Dudok, the Dutch architect awarded the RIBA Gold Medal in 1935, and London Underground Stations for which Charles Henry Holden received the Gold Medal the following year. The award of the Gold Medal to Dudok indicated the extent of admiration in England of the Dutch approach to modern architecture, particularly in the use of brick in simple geometric shapes and an almost total lack of decoration.

In the late 1970s the GMPTC decided to create a new bus and rail interchange at Bury, closer to the town centre. The new facility was opened on 17th March 1980 and Bolton Street station closed on the same day.

A preservation group named the East Lancashire Railway (ELR) after the original company. entered onto negotiations with British Rail with a view to reopening the line from Bury to Rawtenstall. These negotiations were successful and the 'new' ELR reopened Bury Bolton Street to passenger services on 25th July 1987. Initially trains ran only to Ramsbottom.

By 2010 the ELR had become one of Britain's most important preserved lines. At its hub Bury Bolton Street station was fully restored to reflect the British Railways era of the 1950s and 60s.



PHOTO Bury Station Platform: ©Chris Totty (www. Disused Stations) June 1972

The 1846 station by Isaac and J P Holden (demolished 1974) on the left, the 1951 footbridge at the rear

Ernest Leonard Leeming 1889-1964

On 12 July of this year a blue plaque was unveiled in Davyhulme Park by Trafford Council Leader, Councillor Tom Ross. Perhaps uniquely it was for a former Surveyor to Urmston District Council



Ernest Leonard Leeming was born on 5 July 1889, one of three sons of Frederick Leeming, a shipper's clerk, and his wife, Margaret nee Rennie. At the time of his baptism the family were living at 9 Lamb Street, Richmond Grove. He was educated at Manchester Secondary School, and studied engineering at the College of Technology, Manchester, from 1904 graduating in 1907. His early experience was with the Fylde Water Board, Blackpool, on the construction of Grizedale Lea Reservoir (1909-1910), followed by time as assistant engineer in the Highways Department of the City Engineer's Office, Manchester. Here he worked for a decade engaged on sewerage, roads, and housing estates under T. de Courcy and J. B. L. Meek. In 1922 he was appointed Engineer and Surveyor to the Barton-upon-Irwell District Council, a post he held until 1933. His work there centred on the reconstruction and widening of roads, housing schemes, Trafford Park main drainage scheme, and sewerage works extensions at Clifton and Flixton.

During his professional career E L Lemming put forward various schemes mostly for improvements to the road transport system. A boom in car ownership in the 1920's changed the road system. Rapidly increasing numbers of cars and commercial vehicles brought about a corresponding increase in injuries and deaths in road accidents. Leeming had a keen interest in improving road safety through better design as would be demonstrated at Davyhulme.

Many of his inspirational ideas were far ahead of their time although on occasion they could be decidedly odd. The idea of creating overspill towns in Southern Rhodesia to accommodate the excess populations of Britain's large cities came to nought while his proposal for a new super-highway from London to Glasgow was rejected by the Ministry of Transport. Although not progressed at the time, the M1-M6 motorways of the 1960s and 1970s. bear a remarkable similarity to this latter proposal.

In 1924 Leeming's proposed the building of a half-mile culvert diverting the river Irwell from the Crescent in Salford to a point near Regent Bridge, a revival of an idea previously suggested in the Victorian period intended to reduce the risk of flooding. However, Leeming proposed to use the dry riverbed thus created (about 150 feet wide) as a transport link through Manchester city centre, including tram tracks and roadway. Alongside the new Irwell thoroughfare Leeming proposed links to a series of underground tram lines. These would take all the major routes and bury the track 20ft down under the streets freeing up space and allowing unencumbered operation for the trams.

Leeming's plans for tram tunnels and draining a part of the river Irwell never came to anything, but he was still looking to improve transport routes.

Five years later Leeming put forward a proposal for a new bridge over the Manchester Ship Canal. There were increasing concerns about the amount of congestion and delays to traffic around the existing swing road bridge at Barton, problems which continued throughout the twentieth century. Leeming's idea was to set his bridge to link Stott Lane in Pendleton, and Trafford Park, mid-way between the original crossings at Old Trafford and Barton. Not until 1994 was a new crossing finally built. Marking 100 years since the opening of the Manchester Ship Canal, Century Bridge, a lift bridge linking Eccles to Trafford Park, was sited within a stone's throw of the site proposed by Leeming 65 years before.

In 1945 E L Leeming proposed regular services of water buses across the ship canal between Irlam and Partington and at a point near to the Flixton Ferry. In addition, a service was to operate along the entire length of the canal and Mersey estuary between Manchester city centre and New Brighton, the popular Merseyside seaside resort. Ramps enabling the buses to by-pass the canal locks by travelling overland for a short distance before re-entering the canal could be built at small cost, he claimed.

Concrete was very much the building material of the inter-war years. Leeming had devoted parts of his book, 'Road Engineering', published in 1924, to the use of concrete and later sought ways to exploit it further. In 1928 he designed his own house "Kelmscott", 44 Cornhill Road, Davyhulme, now demolished. Named after the home of William Morris, it was built of concrete blocks to Leeming's own design. Leeming also used concrete for park benches and road signs, at least two of which remain.

In 1933 he was appointed Engineer and Surveyor to Urmston District Council and for the next 21 years brought his extensive experience to bear on new roads, parks, slum clearance, and drainage schemes. A man of wide interests and progressive outlook, he twice visited the United States during this period to study traffic and other engineering problems. The development of Davyhulme in the 1930s provided Leeming with the opportunity to apply many of his ideas in order to create the ideal suburb of the period. Designed from the outset to accommodate the motor car, plot widths were increased to allow the off-road parking and garaging of cars. Road crossings incorporated oversized roundabouts as at Dumplington Circle, Davyhulme Circle, and Hayswater Circle, the last provided more for planning than traffic flow reasons. Road improvement works were undertaken at Lostock Road, Crofts Bank Road, and Bowfell Road among others. Bowfell Road in Flixton linked eventually with Hayswater Road and was built to carry traffic with ease from Barton Bridge through to Carrington. Prior to 1937 there was not a direct connection to provide this important thoroughway. As a concept it was brought about by E. Leeming, its opening marked by a concrete milestone with applied lettering.

In 1936, 'Cycling' magazine published a photograph of a young woman riding on a wide, concrete-capped cycle track on Lostock Road, Urmston. Plans for the road had been unveiled in January 1934, one month before the Ministry of Transport decided to build an experimental cycle track on London's Western Avenue. In March of that year, Urmston Urban District Council requested that "instead of 60 feet as required by the Regional Planning Scheme," the road should be 80 feet across. It is probable that this addition was to accommodate cycle tracks and footways on both sides of the road. The cycle tracks were later extended along Barton Road although the construction of the M60 Motorway severed the link. The widening of Barton Road was planned in December 1937, records minutes from the Highways and Sewerage Committee for the Borough of Stretford. However, work did not commence until June 1941 with the construction completed in mid-September 1942. Cycling never enjoyed the same popularity as in the Netherlands and the cycle tracks remain underused, not helped by the parking of cars.

Leeming considered landscaping to be of paramount importance. Existing trees were retained wherever possible, new trees were planted along the new roads and open spaces and Davyhulme Park developed to provide

recreational facilities. Speaking on the radio Tuesday 9th February 1937 on “Parks and Green Spaces” Leeming noted that Urmston was not large but had managed to buy three hundred acres of park land in the last few years; and many of its new road crossings were planned to have an air of agreeable space and leisure.



PHOTO Urmston Baths, Bowfell Circle, Interior. © The Board of Trustees of the Science Museum. This image is released under a CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 Licence

Demolished in 1987, Urmston public swimming baths were erected in 1932 on Bowfell Circle. This was an impressive glass-domed building, with the Borough Engineer E. L. Leeming acting as the engineer and architect for the project. The baths were a combined effort between Urmston Urban District Council and the parish councils of Flixton and Davyhulme; and were formally opened on 31 March 1933 by Councillor Lt Col S. Stott JP. The contractors were Brew Bros. of Cadishead, and the steelwork supplied by Edward Wood and Co. from Manchester. Originally the baths closed during the winter months with the pool floored over, Sporting events that included boxing or dances were held there. The Hollies performed there on 5 November 1963 followed by The Rolling Stones on Friday, 29 November 1963.

Ernest Leonard Leeming died on 26 December 1964, At the time of his death he was working on the Morecambe Bay barrage, The barrage would have run from Hest Bank near Morecambe to Bardsea near Ulverston, providing a more direct road link with the Furness district of Lancashire and creating a vast freshwater lake giving additional water to Manchester and possibly providing hydro-electric power.

An Architectural Tour of Knutsford led by Peter de Figueiredo

Saturday 18th May 2024 at 2.00pm with tea and cake at the Courtyard Cafe following the tour.



Knutsford Market Hall, architect: Alfred Waterhouse. Photo dated 1965 taken before alterations to roads in front of the building.
©Neil Darlington 1965-2004.

Starting at Heathwaite, Elizabeth Gaskell's childhood home, the tour followed Peter de Figueiredo along Stanley Street past Freeholder Terrace (1870) to the terracotta facade of the former offices of Bucklow RDC (1897). Opposite, County Terrace, an attractive row of cottages in the Georgian style was built in 1848 to house the warders of Knutsford Gaol (demolished in 1920s). The gaol was located at the rear of the Sessions House (1817-19) and both buildings were designed by George Money Penny. The giant recessed portico of the Sessions House faces Toft Road diagonally opposite the Market House (1870-72). Here a large assembly room was supported on the open pointed arches of the market hall. It was designed in red and blue brick by Alfred Waterhouse and funded by 1st Baron Egerton of Tatton.

The tour proceeded down Church Hill to King Street where behind the 19th and 20th century facades buildings have their origin in the 17th and 18th centuries. The Gaskell Tower and former King's Coffee House however dates from 1907 and is the work of the glove merchant Richard Harding Watt and incorporates the doric columns of the demolished church of St Peter in Manchester. Further work by Watt was observed on Drury Lane where he had acquired Long's Tannery in 1898 and converted the building to cottages and a laundry (1898-1904 with Harry S Fairhurst). The Ruskin Rooms were added in 1902 with Walter Aston. The complex created a fantasy skyline more familiar in the Middle East but now sadly no longer evident. Crossing The Moor to St Cross church by Paley and Austin (1879-89) the group were able to explore the exterior and interior of this impressive red brick and terracotta building with glass by Morris & Co. before returning to King Street and the Courtyard Café for tea and cake. Our thanks to Peter for leading the walk.

[Moir Stevenson]

A Walk round Victorian Bury, led by Mark Watson.

This took place on Saturday 29 June 2024. The walk covered Bury town centre looking at its fine mainly Victorian buildings, many with architectural sculpture. Architects included London's Sydney Smirke (responsible for Bury's first civic scheme) and two local firms- Maxwell & Tuke and Moulds & Porritt. Also included were two war memorials by Lutyens and Blomfield and a statue by E.H. Baily. Exteriors of Bury Parish Church by J.S. Crowther (11872-76) and St Marie Roman Catholic Church by John Harper of York (1841-42) were viewed.

Bury was incorporated as a borough in 1876, its main industries being cotton and paper manufacture. Following local government re-organization in 1974, despite taking in some of its surrounding towns, Bury became the smallest of the eight Metropolitan Boroughs encircling the cities of Salford and Manchester. The walk started at the monument to one of the town's most celebrated sons, John Kay, who had invented the flying shuttle in 1733 which enabled power loom weaving. The 10-metre high 1908 monument was designed by William Venn Gough. It was paid for by mill owner Henry Whitehead and dominates the gardens next to the transport interchange. Bronze panels (by John Cassidy) contrast depictions of hand and power looms and note Kay's final days in poverty. Whatever the myths and realities of the inventor's career and life, the progress of powered weaving was held up by worker unrest and machine breaking.

Further along Market Street are the remnants of Bury's first civic complex commissioned by the town's main landowner, Lord Derby. Designed in 1850 in a classical style by Sydney Smirke, the building comprised hotel, town hall and Athenaeum. Only the old town hall remains, now Bury's Met. Still standing opposite is an 1860's six bay classical design originally for the Manchester and District Bank.

Judging the prosperity of a 19th century town by viewing the architecture of its banks works well in Bury. The two finest surviving former bank buildings are both in Silver Street. Firstly, on the corner by Library Gardens, a richly decorated two storey palazzo style built in 1868-9 for the Bury Banking Co. The grand entrance has a grotesque head as a keystone and sculpture above. Secondly, on the corner with Broad Street, the three storey Conservative Club and Union Bank by Moulds and Porritt dating from 1904. The listing description notes the style mixture of classical and Art Nouveau; the Broad Street elevation has a large stained-glass window. From the corner entrance the building rises in part to a considerable height giving the street view an element of eccentricity.

Also on Silver Street stands one of the town's most impressive buildings, the Art Gallery and Library. It was designed by Woodhouse & Willoughby who won a competition in 1897 judged by Richard Knill Freeman. This was initiated by Thomas Wrigley, a paper maker, after his death in 1880 leaving his substantial art collection to the town provided a gallery was built to house it. Over the Silver Street entrance is a sculpture of the pre-1974 Bury Coat of Arms and on the Moss Street elevation are allegorical figures by J.J. Millson depicting painting, sculpture and architecture. Inside is stained glass by W. J. Pearce and iron work by St. Pancras Ironworks Co.

The Technical Schools, Broad Street built in 1893 to aid Bury's manufacturing base were designed by the Borough Engineer, Joshua Cartwright. This complex included top-lit attic studios, a north-lit weaving shed, chemical laboratories and lecture theatres. Sculpture on the Broad Street frontage is by J.J. Millson and J.R. Whitlock and depicts science, industry and engineering. The building is now part of the Fusiliers Museum with its entrance on Moss Street.



Castle Armoury (Drill Hall), Castle Street, Bury. Photo ©Neil Darlington 2021. Ref P13077

The original building (to the left of the gate) was designed in 1868 by James Farrar of Bury and Henry Styan of Manchester to house the 8th Lancashire Rifle Volunteers. It was on the site of Bury "Castle" and re-used some of its stone. In 1907 it was extended by Alfred Hopkinson of Bury to provide a drill hall in the same loosely medieval style. Of snecked rock-faced rubble, it is mainly of two storeys and has a long frontage of about 30 round-headed windows, in pairs and threes. Rising above the battlemented parapet are two towers: the left-hand one flanked by taller rectangular turrets. The portcullis feature bears battalion insignia. Other details include arrow slits and a first-floor sill-band. Listed grade II. The later and much larger brick building attached to the rear is not included in the listing.

In the 1840s Bury became the H.Q. of the Lancashire Fusiliers with barracks on Bolton Road. In 1868 the building now known as the Castle Armoury was built on the site of Bury's medieval moated manor house in Castle Street by James Farrar and Henry Styan to house the 8th Lancashire Rifle Volunteers. In 1907 it was extended by Alfred Hopkinson of Bury to provide a drill hall. It is two storeys with a long frontage and thirty round headed windows in twos and threes. The complex was in the style of a medieval castle to the point of having pretend arrow slits and a portcullis. Bury's relationship with the Lancashire Fusiliers is evident in the tapered obelisk of Portland stone memorial in Gallipoli Gardens. Originally situated outside the Bolton Road barracks it was designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens without fee whose father had been in the regiment. Following the demolition of the barracks in the 1970s it

was moved to its present location next to the Fusiliers Museum. It commemorates the regiment's role in the Gallipoli campaign of 1915-16 in which 1,800 were killed but also by adaptation all subsequent Fusilier fatalities. Outside the Parish church stands Bury's war memorial designed by Sir Reginald Blomfield – one of the principal architects for what is now the Commonwealth War Graves Commission and the designer of the Cross of Sacrifice.

The monument incorporates two magnificent bronze relief panels by Joseph Hermon Cawthra depicting military and civilian figures.

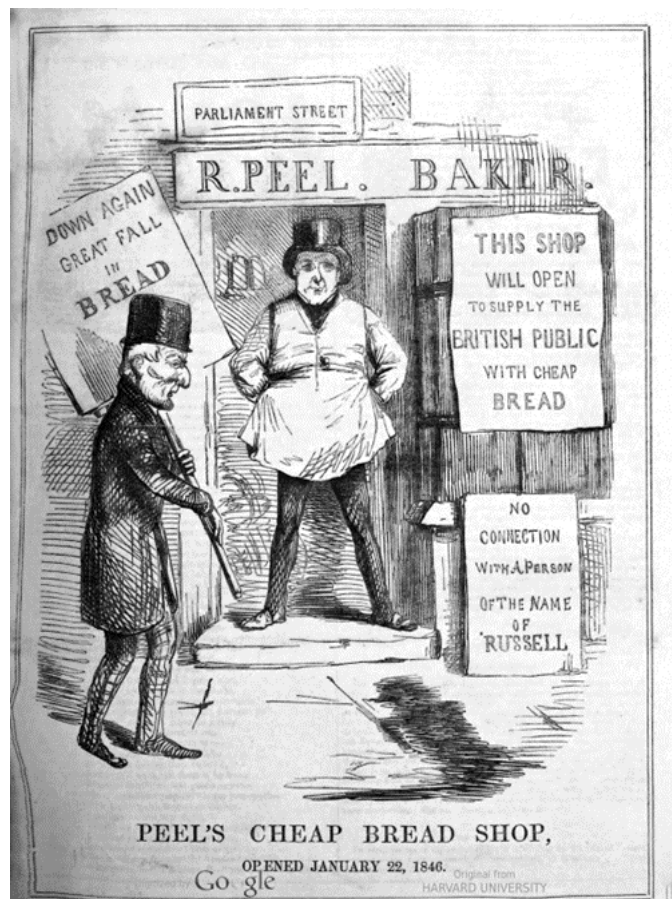


Illustration Left: Peel's Cheap Bread Shop. "Punch" volume 10 January 1846 page 47. Hathi trust. Public domain. Google digitised from original at the University of Harvard.

Nearby stands Bury's statue to Sir Robert Peel, Prime Minister who had died in 1850 following a riding accident. The statue was paid for by public subscription and was sculpted by Edward Hodges Baily – said to be Flaxman's favourite pupil. The statue shows a sheaf of corn at Peel's feet and in a bronze tablet on the rear of the plinth a quotation from a speech he had made extolling the justice of Corn Law repeal to the population. Peel's father, a cotton magnate and eventually an M.P. had mills in Bury from the 1770s but the sudden death of his son whose political career had been ended in 1846 following that repeal was a shock to the nation. The memorialization of Peel throughout the Lancashire cotton towns was mainly in gratitude for cheap bread as illustrated by the Punch cartoon. The nearby building with bar named after Peel originally housed the offices of Maxwell and Tuke prior to their move to Manchester in 1884.

The walk ended in Tower Gardens between the 20th century Town Hall and Manchester Road with the 1914 Portland stone Clock Tower donated by Henry Whitehead, (see cover) the Boer War memorial of 1905 by Sir G.J. Frampton and a very unusual fountain commemorating Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee. Although the fountain was completed in October 1897 its opening was delayed to allow the construction of a railway tunnel under Manchester Road. Thus it was not until the summer of 1899 that the fountain and park were formally opened to the public.

It soon became an open secret that this anonymous donor of the gift was Miss Eliza Ann Openshaw, daughter of Oliver Ormrod Openshaw, a leading cotton manufacturer of the town. Arrangements for the gift were made through a local vet, William Noar, a widower and said to be her "constant companion," on condition that Thomas Rogers Kitsell of Plymouth was given the commission. Kitsell was William Noar's brother-in-law.

Thanks to Mark Watson for leading the walk and to David French who prepared comprehensive notes. These are freely available in pdf format on David's website.

[David Astbury]

The Legend of the Eagle and Child



Detail: Whitehead Memorial Clock Tower, Bury
Photo © Neil Darlington July 2024

High on the Whitehead Memorial Clock Tower in Bury appear somewhat gruesome carvings of an eagle, its talons gripping a small infant, and probably inspired by the crest of the Earls of Derby who were Lords of the Manor of Bury from 1489 until 1872 and remained principal landowners of the district. Their crest was probably taken from the crest of the Lathom family which also incorporates an eagle and small child.

The tradition of a child being found unharmed in an eagle's nest exists in folklore in many parts of Europe, notably in Norway and France. King Pepin was said to have discovered a child in such circumstances, and a similar tale tells of King Alfred the Great finding a child after hearing it crying while he was out hunting. His servants were sent to investigate, and they found a male child in an eagle's eyrie, dressed in purple with gold bracelets on its arms (the mark of Saxon nobility).

Later variations tell of Sir Thomas Lathom who greatly desired a male heir, but his wife was advanced in years and their only child was a daughter. One day, he and his wife were walking through a wild part of his estate when they heard an infant crying. Servants were sent to investigate, and they returned with a young male child which they had found lying in the grass below an eagle's eyrie, or within the nest itself. The child was well dressed, and Sir Thomas and his wife decided to bring it up as their own son, naming him 'Oskatel'. However, it was suggested that this was a contrivance by Sir Thomas to have his bastard son accepted by his wife. On his deathbed he confessed that Oskatel was his bastard, and his daughter, being his only legitimate heir, duly inherited the whole estate. He did, however, made provision for his natural son by settling upon him and his heirs the Manors of Islem and Urmston near Manchester. Oskatel is said to have been the founder of the Lathoms of Earlham.

A stained-glass window in St Wilfrid's Church at Northenden (now lost) bore the name of Oskatel de Lathom and his crest, while in the choir of Manchester Cathedral there are three separate depictions of the eagle and child legend. Elsewhere, the "Eagle and Child" became a popular name adopted by a number of public houses built on lands which had formed parts of the Derby estates, including those at Whitefield, Ramsbottom and Garstang.

But always remember the old adage "Never let the truth get in the way of a good story." The legend of Sir Thomas Lathom is pure fabrication.

FUTURE EVENTS

Rochdale Town Hall Visit

Saturday 28 September 2024. 2.00-4.00pm. **FULLY BOOKED – Reserve List**

Cost £15 including refreshments. Booking essential

Visit to the newly refurbished building with Caroline Storr (Heritage Manager) and Simon Malam (architect). Talk and guided tour 2-4pm. It will be open to the public at the same time.

The Arts and Crafts Museum at the Manchester Municipal School of Art

Saturday 12 October 2024: 2.00pm for 2.15pm at Stretford Public Hall

Cost £10. Booking not essential.

A talk by Stephanie Boydell: The Arts and Crafts Museum at the Manchester Municipal School of Art - a guided tour from 1903

Stephanie is the Curator of the Manchester School of Art Collection, Manchester Metropolitan University Special Collections Museum (and PhD candidate). Her talk will look at the history and rationale behind the establishment of the Manchester School of Art's Arts and Crafts Museum in 1898 and explore the variety of objects that were acquired for display through a virtual tour of the gallery as it was arranged in 1903.

The School of Art and its museum collection are linked to some of the most celebrated names associated with the Arts and Crafts movement, such as Walter Crane and William Morris, but also to significant cultural and political figures in nineteenth century Manchester. Evidence from the School of Art archive, alongside the extant collections, will illustrate the story of how this government art school came to have a museum, and how its location, in "Cottonopolis", would afford the school, and its museum, a unique identity, distinct from other regional schools and collections.

Art and Architecture of Sicily

Sunday 17 November 2024: 2.00pm for 2.15pm at Stretford Public Hall (*change of date*)

Cost £10. Booking not essential.

A talk by Julian Treuherz on the Art and Architecture of Sicily.

Julian Treuherz is an art historian who was Keeper of Art Galleries for National Museums Liverpool between 1989 and 2007. He has written many books, articles and exhibition catalogues and over the last twenty years has spent part of the year in Sicily studying its art and architecture.

Julian was an active member of the Victorian Society in Manchester in the 70s and early 80s and is an authority on Victorian art. This talk, however, will cover a much longer period of history tracing the waves of successive cultures that have influenced the art and architecture of Sicily from prehistory to the 1980s. His book *Art and Architecture of Sicily* published by Lund Humphries in Summer 2023 is available from good bookshops, on-line or direct from Lund Humphries ISBN 9781848226043. Signed copies of the book will be available to purchase after the talk.

Christmas Meal, Werneth Grange, Grange Avenue, Oldham

Saturday 7 December 2024 at 11.00am

Cost: £50



Photo © Steve Roman

This year's Christmas Lunch is on Saturday 7th December 2024 when we will have the chance to explore the previously unknown gem of Werneth Grange, Grange Avenue (off Manchester Road), Oldham, OL8 4EL.

Built in 1871 for cotton magnate Joseph Lees, it became the Convent of the Sisters of Mercy in 1907. Although on the main road, it was hidden away behind thick hedges and trees, but has this year been converted into a conference venue, owned and operated by St Mark Universal Care.

WERNETH GRANGE CONVENT - A large asymmetrical stone Gothic house dated 1871, with pretty details: angle turrets, oriels, steep gables with bargeboards, an elaborate timber porch. It became a convent of the Sisters of Mercy in 1907, and due to them is the large chapel on the E side of the house. Simple and plain, in matching yellow sandstone rubble, with lancets. [The Buildings of England. Lancashire: Manchester and the South-East, Clare Hartwell, Matthew Hyde and Nikolaus Pevsner, 2004] Listed Grade II.

Getting There

- Bus 83 (every 10 minutes, takes 30 minutes) from Oldham Street, Piccadilly. Ask for Derby Street stop on Manchester Road. Walk back to crossing and it's on the other side of Manchester Road.
- By tram to Freehold Tram Stop then an indirect 12-minute walk uphill.
- On street parking nearby.

Programme

11.00 – 11.30 Tea and coffee on arrival

11.30 For those who wish, a Walk around the environs of Werneth Park led by Steve Roman (please wear stout shoes)

12.15 Talk by Ash Penty-Williams, CEO St Mark Universal Care www.stmarkuniversalcare.org

Tour of the buildings, including the chapel.

1.00 Christmas Lunch

Lunch will this year be catered by Open Kitchen, a sustainable catering company committed to producing food in the most sustainable and ethical way possible. They work with a range of food businesses to stop good food from being wasted, and also purchase ingredients, working only with local, sustainable, and ethical suppliers. Profits from their business go into providing food and supplying meals for people struggling with food insecurity across Greater Manchester.

Booking

The booking form/menu will be issued shortly by email as VICTORIAN SOCIETY MANCHESTER GROUP CHRISTMAS LUNCH. docx

Bookings need to be submitted by Friday 15th November.

For any queries, please email steve.roman@phonecoop.coop or phone 07939 059844.

Edgar Wood Society and Greater Manchester Building Preservation Trust

An Edgar Wood Society talk on Art Nouveau to be held on the Friday 13th September in Middleton. Anyone attending would also be able to see the exhibition of Edgar Wood paintings owned by the Edgar Wood Society in the Long Street Methodist church organised for Heritage Open Days by the Edgar Wood Society and the Greater Manchester Building Preservation Trust.

