

MANCHESTER GROUP OF THE  
VICTORIAN SOCIETY

Spring 2024



# MANCHESTER GROUP OF THE VICTORIAN SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Spring 2024

## CONTENTS

- 3 A NEW CHAIR FOR THE MANCHESTER GROUP
- 4 MANCHESTER OLD TOWN HALL SKETCHBOOK  
Richard Fletcher
- 6 KEN MOTH AT THE MANCHESTER GROUP AGM  
Anthea Darlington
- 8 THE OTHER LONGFORD HOUSE
- 10 ANGLO INDIAN ARCHITECTURE
- 14 A FORMER MANCHESTER MUSIC HALL – THE TIVOLI, PETER STREET
- 19 PAST EVENTS:
- 24 FUTURE EVENTS – MAY-NOVEMBER 2024
- 26 MANCHESTER GROUP COMMITTEE MATTERS
- 27 NEW BOOKS  
Robert Owen and the architect Joseph Hansom: An unlikely form of co-operation  
by Penelope Harris



COVER: CLOCK TOWER: ROCHDALE TOWN HALL

©Neil Darlington 2012-2024

In 1885 the clock tower of Rochdale Town Hall was gutted by fire and was rebuilt to the designs of Alfred Waterhouse. A visit to Rochdale Town Hall is included in future events.

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

© Please note that articles published in this newsletter are copyright and may not be reproduced in any form without the consent of the author concerned. The Newsletter is published in pdf format and issued by e-mail to Manchester Group supporters three times a year. Back issues can be downloaded from the Manchester Group section of the Victorian Society website.

## A NEW CHAIR FOR THE MANCHESTER GROUP OF THE VICTORIAN SOCIETY

The committee of the Manchester Group are delighted to announce that Kate Martyn has agreed to take on the role of Chair of the Manchester Group as of 1 May 2004.



Kate is a director at Donald Insall Associates and runs both the Manchester Studio and Heritage Consultancy across the north. Major projects she is working on include the International Slavery Museum in Liverpool, Rochdale Town Hall and the Museum of Science and Industry. She moved to Manchester 8 years ago to set up the studio having worked in the London office for 2 years and as a Senior Conservation Officer at Westminster City Council for 7 years prior to that. Kate is currently a trustee of the Greater Manchester Building Preservation Trust, sits on MCC's Heritage Panel and is a panel member of Places Matter Design Review Panel. Kate lives in Glossop with her family including a 7 year old girl, 4 year old boy and 4 year Old English Bulldog. Victorian and industrial architecture are her particular interest whilst she is currently pioneering social value at Insall and more widely in her role with the National House Project.

## MANCHESTER OLD TOWN HALL SKETCHBOOK

Richard Fletcher

A friend of mine who runs an antiques business recently bought three large framed architectural drawings of Manchester Old Town Hall and asked me if I could find out something about their history. They were signed by a local architect, Gilbert Burdett Howcroft of Uppermill, and a search through the British Newspaper Archive revealed he was an architectural student at Manchester School of Architecture just before the First World War. In 1915, the School decided to publish a sketchbook of measured drawings undertaken three years earlier by second and third year students, and a copy of the book is held at the John Rylands Library. There are 17 drawings in all, and their subject is the Old Town Hall, which stood on the north-east corner of Cross Street and King Street, but at the time of the drawings was in the process of being demolished. The preface to the book explained that because Manchester buildings suffered from their cramped setting and the blackening effects of smoke, their beauty could only be appreciated by careful illustration, and it hoped to publish further volumes annually. Unfortunately, the First World War intervened, and to my knowledge, the Town Hall sketchbook was the only one published.

The 17 drawings consisted of seven by Gordon Hemm, five by Orlando Jones and five by Gilbert Howcroft. Those by Howcroft are not the same as the framed ones belonging to my friend but are another selection from what would have been a larger portfolio.



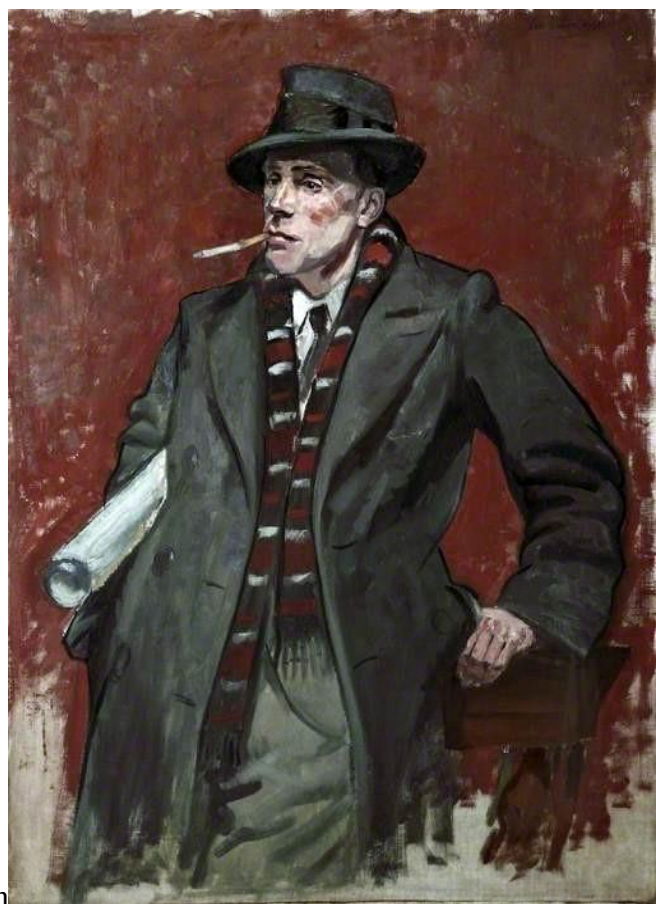
One of the framed drawings (with apologies for the sticky tape at the top left!)



Of the three students, Gordon Hemm went on after the War to become a member of the partnership Foden, Hemm & Williams, with offices on Deansgate in Manchester and Dale Street in Liverpool. He left the practice in 1936 to concentrate on architectural drawing and painting and exhibited throughout the north-west and at the Royal Academy in London.

William Orlando Jones enlisted with the Royal Fusiliers at the outbreak of War and was killed in action in August 1917.

Gilbert Burdett Howcroft survived the War with a Military Cross and joined his father's architectural practice, Howcroft & Son, in Oldham. One of his first commissions was the war memorial on Saddleworth Moor, known as the Saddleworth Obelisk. Apart from a couple of branch libraries in Leeds – Burley and Compton Road – his work mainly consisted of alterations and additions to existing buildings. After the death of his father in 1946, he turned more to public life, serving as a magistrate and a Conservative member of Oldham Council. He was president of the Manchester Society of Architects between 1953 and 1955.



#### PICTURE CREDITS

Orlando Jones (left) & Gilbert Howcroft (right) as students outside the School of Architecture. *The First World War 1914-1918 Remembered by a Yorkshire Territorial*, by Gilbert Burdett Howcroft, published by Hirst, Kidd and Rennie Limited, 1986.

Gordon Hemm as an artist in later life - portrait by Ian Grant. © the Atkinson, Southport. Reproduced by permission.

## KEN MOTH AT THE MANCHESTER GROUP AGM

Anthea Darlington

This year's talk was given by Ken Moth, conservation architect *extraordinaire*, on the occasion of his retirement as Chair of the Northern Buildings Committee since 1991 and as Casework Trustee for the Society for many years. Together with Mark Watson, Ken had provided a conservation report on Victorian buildings in our area to the AGM over many years. Ken spent 50 years in building conservation, his interest being sparked by being asked in 1973 to join the campaign to save York House. Ken's talk, entitled '*Architectural Conservation and Adaptive Reuse: An Overview and Case Study*', was in two parts. The first part was an account of his own experiences as a conservation architect and the principles of good conservation architecture. When Ken qualified as an architect, the 1960's approach to urban planning was new is good and old buildings are both useless and ugly. A leading British proponent of this was Herbert Manzoni, Birmingham City Surveyor, who considered that links to the past were largely sentimental and old buildings had no value: all future development would be an improvement. There was a need to forge ahead without looking back. His introduction of extensive tower block schemes and a system of urban motorways in Birmingham was hugely influential in 1960's Britain, and changed the face of Birmingham for ever, with the loss of much-loved buildings of significance and the sweeping away of historic areas. He was wrong, and his attitude demonstrated a misunderstanding of the role of conservation. In 1973 Ken was asked to join the campaign to preserve York House (<https://manchestervictorianarchitects.org.uk/buildings/york-house-major-street-manchester>). Ken appeared at the public enquiry where he met John Archer, who got him to join the Victorian Society, where he soon became a representative on the Historic Buildings Panel. Ken maintains that conservation and regeneration are mutually supportive. He cites the case of Parrs Bank of 1902 (<https://manchestervictorianarchitects.org.uk/buildings/parrs-bank-spring-gardens-manchester>) a building with an interior of opulent splendour epitomising the zenith of imperial power. This was saved from demolition in 1972 thanks to a campaign by the Victorian Society in which Ken was instrumental in obtaining 17,000 signatures to save it (including those of LS Lowry and Sir John Barbirolli). Ken stapled the sheets of signatures together and appeared on TV with Felicity Goodey with the sheets wrapped round him! 'Smile- it's show business!' he was told- and it worked. By now Ken was working at BDP where his boss was Frank Williams (*Frank and his wife were with us for the talk*). He worked on a scheme for Albert Docks in Liverpool which didn't go ahead, and subsequently on the scheme for Granada Studios and warehouse on Liverpool Road, Manchester, aiming to keep it black in recognition of its past. This scheme was extended to the other half of the goods station, what became the Museum of Science and Industry; and eventually the oldest (1830's) warehouse. Ken underwent training in conservation and reuse and set up the Register of Architects Accredited in Building Conservation (AABC), subsequently embraced by the RIBA. He began lecturing on conservation architecture and was involved in numerous conservation projects including the Manchester Museum, Murray's Mills and Manchester Town Hall.

Ken's principles of good conservation architecture are as follows. Make sure you've done your research. Look carefully at the building's condition and context, and the client's brief. Reconcile these with the building's significance. Retain what you can.

The second part of Ken's talk was an illustrated account of one of his projects: the retention, conservation, and reuse of a 200-year-old warehouse in Wakefield on the Calder and Hebble Navigation to become 'the jewel in the Wakefield Waterfront masterplan'. There were inherent difficulties with the building from the start: a wet dock had been built in the middle of the building from the start; it was full of literally thousands of columns. The original building had been extended upwards and outwards: there were cracks everywhere and the walls were saturated.



It's impossible to make such buildings impermeable and one should never use hard mortar for repointing. The stone roof tiles were warped and many had been lost. The rainwater pipes were blocked and there was fungi everywhere! The vast number of columns were originally intended to strengthen the building but were no longer any use because the walls had dropped, as had the roof trusses. The fact that they had tusk tenon purlins was the only thing that had saved the entire building from collapse: not enough to save the central part where the wet dock had been.

The clients' brief was simple: provide top quality offices and win lots of awards! The first thing to be done was to prevent future flooding. A decision was taken to put the lifts, stairs (folded plate steel staircase) and services in the central area to ensure that the two wings could be preserved. The unnecessary columns were got rid of and a new floor slab laid with proper bases for the walls and columns with stone bases. New beams and stanchions were inserted, wall rubble removed, stonework replaced where needed plus deep pointing of the walls. The intention was to keep the maximum amount of the original fabric. The roof was bent in the middle because of the prevailing winds. The Victorians sheathed roofs with timber, so they did the same. New slates were sourced from the delph which provided them the first time round, and the original ridge tiles were reused. The project (1998) cost £1.8 million, some of which was grant aided.

Ken concluded by reminding us that if you give buildings their value back, they'll stay in use for a long time. There is little point in demolishing a building and replacing it with the same, and most buildings have the potential for being flexible in use. One of the many questions the talk provoked was 'how do you cost such a project?' Contingency is based on good initial assessment, calculation of time it will take and consideration of possible overruns. The client has to understand what it's going to take to do the job, and the consequent fees. The biggest added value to any project is the architect's input, so the fees must reflect this! The proof of the pudding: the building is still in use; it's an asset to the whole community; and the clients have made a profit!



Grade II listed grain warehouse, Wakefield Waterfront, built 1816 and restored 2008 BDP

## THE OTHER LONGFORD HOUSE

Neil Darlington

The Manchester Group are more than familiar with the cotton magnate John Ryland's philanthropy in the form of Stretford Public Hall, the venue of many of the group's recent meetings. However, lesser-known examples of his benefaction also exist on the Isle of Wight.

For John Rylands the years after 1882 were ones of declining health while for Mrs Rylands they were years of increasing concern for the welfare of her husband. She decided that a change of air might prove beneficial and in 1882 she and her husband acquired "Beaulieu House" at Haven Street, a small village near Ryde on the Isle of Wight as a summer residence. After remodelling, they renamed it "Longford House" after their Stretford home.

Despite only a limited number of visits to the island, they set about improving the lot of the villagers. A report in the local paper recording: "The inhabitants of the picturesque village of Haven Street, have reason to be deeply grateful to Mr. John Rylands, a gentleman who has since his residence there, never ceased to take a deep interest in the moral and spiritual well-being of the villagers. Mr. Rylands is assisted in the good works he is constantly starting by his amiable and kindly wife, and it is not too much to say that their names will be held in reverence by many generations of Haven Street villagers. That this is no exaggeration will be at once understood when we state that Mr. Rylands, at a cost of some £3,000, has erected a splendid building to be used as an Institute."



*Main Street, Haven Street about 1900 dominated by the Institute*

The Institute still towers over the surrounding cottages, its facilities being broadly similar to those of Stretford Public Hall. It was described in considerable detail in the Isle of Wight County Press of 7 August 1886 as follows:



*The building itself is from the designs of Mr. Josiah Cutler, architect of Ryde, and is externally light and attractive in its appearance. The entrance hall is 20 feet square. On the right the reading room is situated. This room is 26 feet by 22 feet 6 inches, and is very handsomely furnished, and has some attractive pictures on its walls. Here there are two speaking likenesses of the generous benefactors of Haven Street—Mr. and Mrs. Rylands. In the rear of the reading room is the bagatelle and billiard room, 20 feet by 22 feet 6 inches in dimensions, this and all the other rooms being proportionately lofty. On the left of the entrance hall is a coffee room, 20 feet square, fitted up for the use of visitors as well as of members “where wholesome refreshments can be obtained at moderate prices.” At the back of the hall, under arches supported by marble columns, is the library. The rest of this floor is devoted to the residence of the caretaker. Proceeding upstairs by a bold staircase we come to the capacious lecture hall, 47 feet by 22 feet 6 inches, fitted with a gallery and splendidly lighted. Especial care has been taken with the ventilation. The air enters a cavity through ventilating bricks and thence comes into the room through the window lining all the way round. In the ceiling there are other arrangements which can be opened or closed by brass knobs placed in the wall. On the left of the lecture room is an ante-room 15 feet by 13 feet. On this floor too is a room in which Mrs. Rylands holds a mothers' meeting, and there is a cutting out room for the poor needle-women who will come here to work in the winter. There is a lift from below which can be utilised on the occasion of tea meetings or such like gathering. Every convenience which can possibly be required is found in the building, whose conception and construction reflect infinite credit upon Mr. Cutler and Mr. Barton, the latter of whom was the builder. The work was begun in March 1885, and was finished in December. The cost is estimated at about £3,000. There are splendid views obtainable from the roofs, which are built flat and may be utilised by lovers of rural scenery. From the highest level, Southampton Water and Portsmouth are plainly visible, besides the lovely, wooded scenery in the neighbourhood. With such an attraction in its midst, this village ought with truth to merit the alterative description of Happy Haven Street. [Isle of Wight County Press 7 August 1886 page 3]*

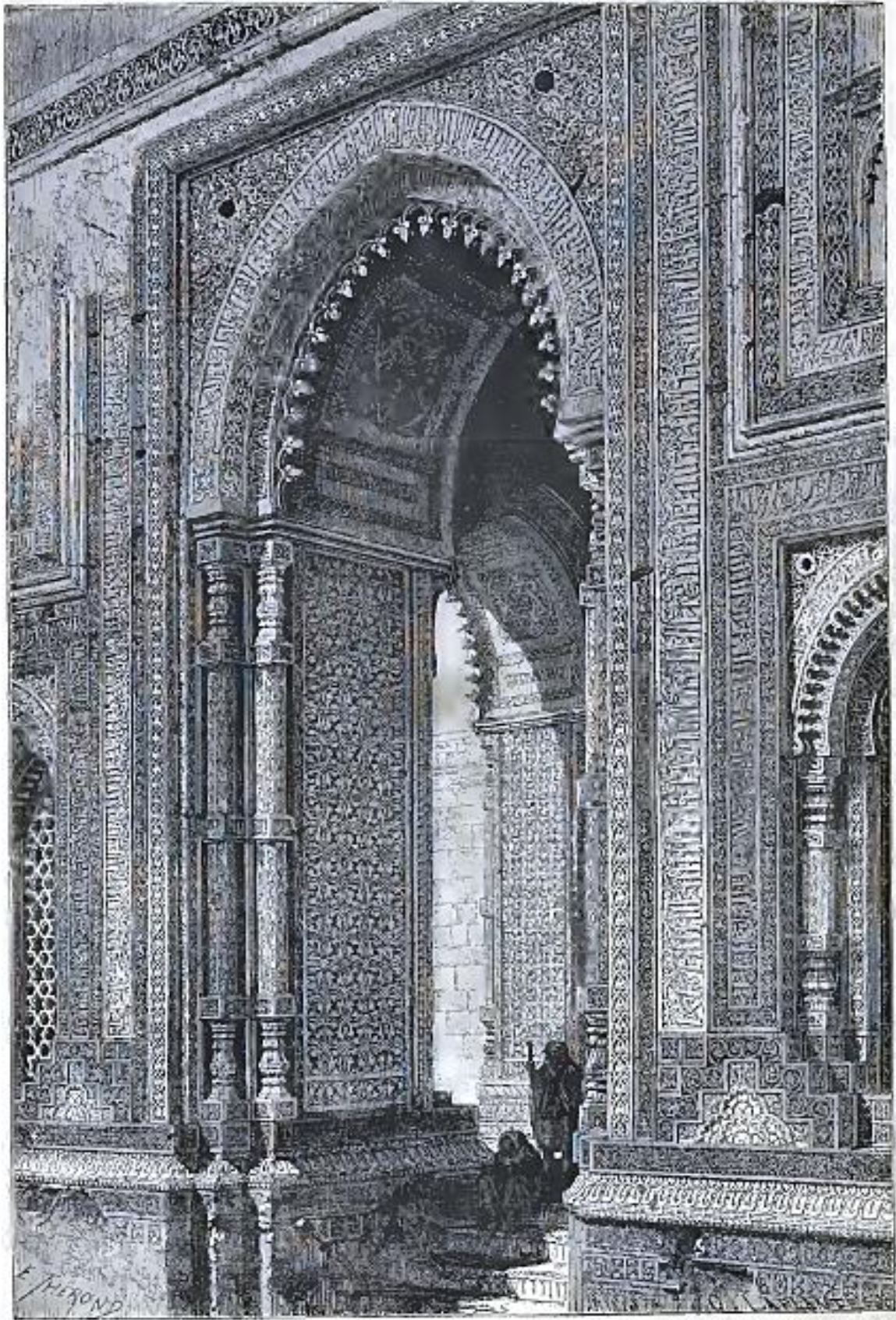
The Institute appears to have closed about 1914. Subsequent uses have been many and varied. In the 1920s it became Holmdale Temperance Hotel run by Barton Henry Bullock who also operated his “Surprise” Ryde-Binstead-Haven Street-Newport bus services from the premises. It continued to be run as the Homedale Temperance Hotel under several different owners, and later as a boarding house, restaurant etc. before conversion into the Holmdale House Care Home. This closed in 2015. Re-named ‘The Haven’, it was converted into residential units in 2020. Works at Haven Street were not the first purchases of property on



cc-by-sa/2.0 - Corston House and its gateway by David Smith - [geograph.org.uk/p/3026164](https://geograph.org.uk/p/3026164)

the island by John Rylands as part of his philanthropic works. In the summer of 1881, he visited the island to purchase Corston House, Spenser Road, Ryde together with 1,300 square yards of land, for £1,600, earmarked for use as a rest home for Baptist ministers. The house was described as detached, very substantially built of stone, with the best sanitary arrangements attentively considered. The rest home appears to have functioned until the death of Mrs Ryland in 1908. Among the Rylands archives are the account books 1897-1907 of Amy Wilson, matron of Corston House. In November 1908 there was a 2-day sale of the furniture from Corston House by request of the executors. The house remains little altered although the ornamental covered way between the gateway and main entrance shown on early postcards has been lost.





GATE OF ALLADEEN, KOOTUB, NEAR DELHI.



## ANGLO-INDIAN ARCHITECTURE

Neil Darlington

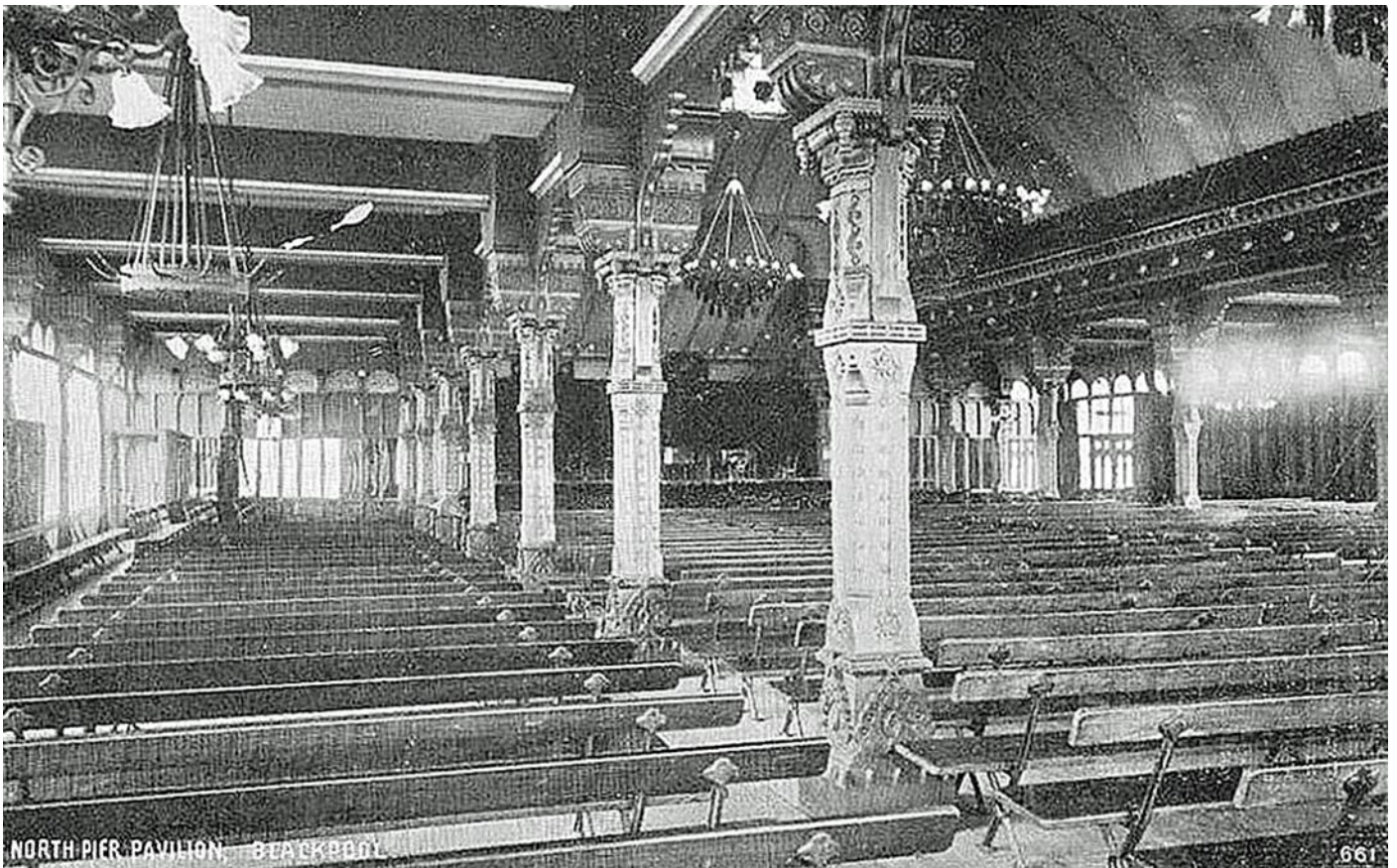
*This article was prompted by Dr Charlotte Coull's fascinating talk on Archaeology and Colonialism: the British View of India's Past, given in February this year; and an unexpected architectural connection with Manchester.*

In 1885 an exhibition was held in the Great Central Hall of the Edinburgh Museum of Science and Art, illustrative of the Muhammadan architecture of Western India. The photographs and drawings were the work of James Burgess, LL.D., C.I.E., Government Archeologically Surveyor for Western and Southern India, aided by Mr. Henry Cousens, L.C.E., Head Assistant in Western India, and native draughtsmen specially trained for the work.

This was but one of a series of exhibitions intended to promulgate Anglo-Indian art and architecture despite a somewhat lukewarm response from the British Government. The Indian Museum and Library was housed in inadequate accommodation on the top floor of the India Office and plans to replace it failed to materialise.

Others were more enthusiastic. The "Building News" frequently recorded matters relating to Anglo-Indian architecture. In 1885 it noted that the carvings in the niches at Ahmedabad were being copied in blackwood for wall brackets, richly carved sideboards, ladies' writing-tables, and the like, and exported to the American markets, where they fetched a very high price. The article continued: "With Mr. Ruskin and Mr. Poynter we may regret that the time is passed, perhaps, when every workman was also an artist, and the dead uniformity of machine-like production was undreamt of. We cannot bring back that time; we may help to keep it in remembrance, at least as the Americans are doing by copying its productions in their furniture, and even wainscotings; and, what they themselves are perhaps not aware of, they were importing from India patterns that are designed by the woodcarvers of today in the workshop at Ahmadabad. Designs like those exhibited, and scores of others in the portfolios of the Archaeological Survey, if published, would surely be of use to many of our best architects, not as copies to be strictly followed, but as suggestions specially in beautiful details to be analysed and reproduced in new and vital forms. In construction alone the Hindu dome is a lesson. Their maxim that "an arch never sleeps," is always straining the building, made them discard the radiating voussoirs and employ a vault which, though nearly pyramidal in section, can be ornamented in a great variety of styles, and which always to the eye below—if at all large—looks more or less arched." [Building News 18 September 1885 page 445]

Examples of Indian Architecture in the UK were few, restricted mainly to the seaside resorts where novelty was deemed essential. Blackpool's North Pier Company built its Indian Pavilion at the seaward end of the pier in 1877. The Indian Pavilion occupied the north wing of the extended pierhead and was 130 feet by 90 feet with seating for 1,500. There was a central hall, 87 feet long, 37 feet wide, and 34 feet high. On either side were corridors the same length as the hall, 19 feet wide and 20 feet high. [Builder 30 June 1877 page 668]. Given Birch's preference for non-Oriental styles except on the south coast, it is, perhaps, no surprise to find that his original suggestion for the pavilion design was in keeping with the Italianate shelters. He was overruled by the North Pier Company's Chairman, H. C. McCrea, who wanted an Oriental style, perhaps partly in response to the vogue for eastern decoration and partly to give Blackpool its own fashionable 'Pavilion', to bring the grace and novelty of the southern seaside to the North Pier. Certainly, it was an attempt to keep the interest of the upper end of the tourist market by providing a high-class attraction. Birch and McCrea visited the India Office in London, and together chose the Temple of Binderabund as the model for the new Pavilion. Other examples appeared at Hastings Pier and Brighton West Pier where the oriental Royal Pavilion predates all.



*North Pier Indian Pavilion, Blackpool. Interior*



Temporary pavilions at International Exhibitions provided another opportunity to design in the Indian style. C. Purdon Clarke, C.I.E., F.R.I.B.A., architect, designed a pavilion for the Paris Exhibition of 1878 and at the Colonial and Indian Exhibition at Earl's Court, providing a portion of a palace with outer courtyard surrounded by the usual shops. He also designed the Indian Pavilion at the Paris Exhibition of 1890, executed by Mr. Joubert, of Chelsea. The architect provided a description as follows: "Respecting the construction I have little to say. It is not the reproduction of anything in India, but a building specially adapted to Eastern purposes in a climate foreign to its style. The style is Late Pathan, at a time when they still adapted columns and other ornamental details from Hindu temples, Mohammedan mosques and palaces. The verandah is taken from the Panch-Mahal at Futtypore Likvi, the outer walls, principal side, and back entrance from several mosques at Ahmedabad, and the central hall from a portion of the mosque at the Kutub, Delhi. where Jain columns were used. The colour should have been similar to Allah-ud-din's tomb at the Kutub, but the contractors made it too dark.' The building is about 185 feet long by 46 feet broad, and cost £2,800.

*Guide: India and Ceylon Exhibition 1898 at Earl's Court*



India possesses some of the finest examples of Art Deco architecture, a foreign style popular among its rulers and widely imported from Europe during the 1930s. Included among these was the Palace of Umaid Bhawan (1929-1944) by Henry Vaughan Lanchester, a 345-room temple palace raised high on a hill in the Hindu tradition. While the architectural detailing might be principally Indian, the clean lines and streamlined treatment of sculptural elements are entirely Deco. Carved elements were chosen from examples in local temples by G A Goldstraw, the resident architect. George A Goldstraw was born in Salford and trained at Manchester University School of Architecture. In 1929 he left England for Jodhpur where he would remain until Indian independence.

In 1933 Goldstraw received a further commission from Maharaja Umaid Singhji, for a Royal Hunting Lodge at Sardar Samand. Situated some 60 kms southwest of Jodhpur, Sardar Samand was built on a hill overlooking the huge Sardarsamand lake, on the road that leads onward to Udaipur and Ranakpur. The palace is a further example of the decorative Art Deco style of the nineteen thirties - sleek and anti- traditional elegance that symbolizes wealth and sophistication as an ‘idyllic retreat for jaded minds and bodies.’ The design and supervision were provided by the (now) state architect George Goldstraw, who also remained resident architect for Umaid Bhawan Palace of Jodhpur. The hunting lodge is now converted into a hotel.



*Sardar Samand Hotel © Sandra Cohen Rose and Colin Rose*

Problems still abounded. Maples of London were commissioned to supply all the furniture, carpets, fixtures, lighting, linen, and porcelain for the palace. These were shipped by Maples in August 1942 but never arrived. The ship and its cargo were torpedoed off the coast of West Africa. With no prospect of replacement due to the war, Maharaja Umaid Singhji set about creating replacements based on Maples’ original sketches using local craftsmen.

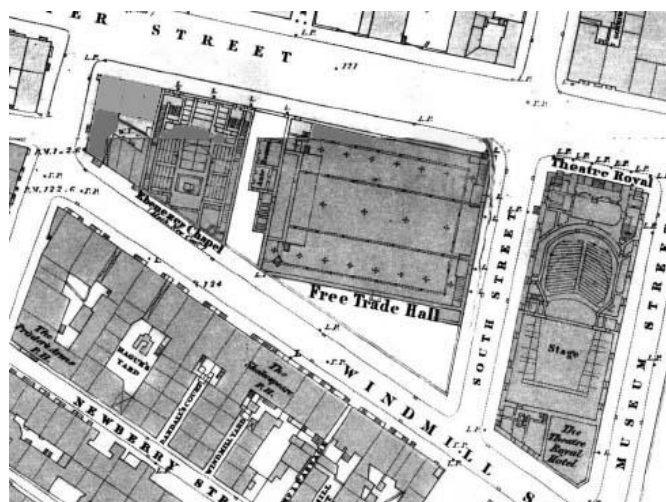
On a personal note, while in India George Goldstraw married Dorothy Heberd at the Sommerville Memorial Church, Jodhpur on 5 February 1938. News of the wedding was delayed but, perhaps uniquely, the Manchester City News of 12 March reported the event on the front page in minute detail. In part this had been due to the attendance of two Indian rulers, the Maharani Sahib of Jodhpur and Jam Sahib of Nawanagar, at the ceremony. George Goldsmith is thus believed to have been the only Salfordian to have royalty attend his wedding.

## A FORMER MANCHESTER MUSIC HALL

Neil Darlington

*But a few years ago, Manchester could look with some pride on the line of theatres that ran from the Opera House in Quay Street, through Peter Street, to the Prince's in Oxford Street. They offered drama of varying worth; but there was hardly a theatrical appetite that could not find satisfaction. To-day, all save two are gone. The Opera House and the Prince's are alone concerned with plays. [Manchester Guardian 1 September 1921 page 12]*

David Astbury's recent Vic Soc walks tracing the history of Manchester's theatre district have attracted considerable interest. One of the earliest of the Music Halls began as a non-conformist chapel built on the fields of Peterloo about 1839. The Town Plan surveyed in 1849 shows it sited between Peter Street and Windmill Street and next to the first incarnation of the Free Trade Hall. Since they left it, about 1850, there has been very little of the sacred about the place; but it was said that the communion rails of the chapel were never removed, continuing to serve as a railing for the orchestra.



The theatrical history begins with the conversion of this chapel into the Alexandra Music Hall; and every succeeding tenant has been grateful to the old Alexandra for securing a licence dated prior to 1869, and therefore immune from withdrawal. Sometime in the very early sixties a Mr. Clegg bought the property, and it was rented by a syndicate anxious to provide musical evenings of the variety order. The Alexandra Music Hall Company, of which Mr. Cambridge was the manager, opened the place in 1861 (or 1865?), and after a successful experience of nine years' catering for the public tastes, it gave up the task. Then Edmund Garcia and the Brothers Booth took possession, the former being responsible for the entertainments and taking the admission while Messrs. Booth were satisfied to supply the refreshment at the bars. This combination lasted some few years, until Edmund Garcia left to take charge of the Bridge Street London Music Hall, Mr. Clegg, the landlord of the Alexandra, being tasked with providing entertainments in his own theatre.

In 1879 the Alexandra was sold to Edmund Garcia, by now manager of the old Comedy Theatre and re-opened by him as the Folly Theatre of Varieties on 3 November of that year. Under him it enjoyed its period of greatest prosperity, its only rival as a music hall in the Manchester of that time being Burton's Casino, which flourished on part of the site now covered by the Midland Hotel. But it was the Folly which impressed itself upon Manchester's memory. A contemporary writer noted that the Folly had a flavour individual and redolent. Perhaps this was because it never was technically a music hall with a drink licence—always a beerhouse licensed for the performance of music. Hence its air of intimacy, of a familiarity not altogether free from the vulgar. The lessee continued his connection until May 1892, when a wealthy firm took charge, with the hope that with unlimited capital the fading fortunes of the Folly might be restored to their pristine splendour. But the structure was out of date, the arrangements were not the most comfortable, and in the face of severe competition the management closed the theatre. A photograph of the front of the Folly is held in MCL Local images. However, this is erroneously dated 1901, by which time the building in this form no longer existed.





In 1895 the premises were acquired by the Tivoli Manchester Company Limited, which was associated with the theatrical companies running the Star, Liverpool; Princess Palace, Leeds; Empire, Hanley; Cambridge, London; Pavilion, Ramsgate; and Tivoli, Leicester. A single board of directors controlled the affairs of all the companies. It was soon announced that “The present building will be pulled down and replaced with an entirely new and modern structure capable of comfortably accommodating 2,000 people. The new building will be erected from the designs and under the personal superintendence of Mr Frank Matcham, the eminent theatre architect. The new building will be lighted throughout by the electric light, will have a handsome verandah and frontage to Peter Street and will be one of the most comfortable and magnificent Theatre of Varieties in Europe. In addition to the most improved methods of ventilation, the theatre will be fitted with a sliding or removable roof thereby ensuring that in the hottest summer weather the theatre can be kept cool and comfortable.”

Frank Matcham seems to have had little involvement in the scheme, although initially named as the company architect. By 1897 the commission was in the hands of Harry Percival, another London architect specialising in the design of music halls. The architectural press provided details as follow: MANCHESTER - For the rebuilding of the Tivoli Theatre of Varieties (late Folly), Peter-street. Manchester, for the Tivoli Manchester Limited. Mr. Harry Percival. architect. 22. Buckingham-street. Adelphi, London, WC Quantities by Mr. W H Brayshaw, Rugby-chambers, Bedford-row, W.C. The work is being undertaken by James Riddock, of Bootle.

*Those who enter the new building will be amazed by the alterations which the architect has succeeded in bringing about. The old refectory, or dive, which frequently agitated the puritans the city, has now happily been abolished, and both the stage and the pit have been lowered below its level. Still lower, hewn out of the solid rock which forms the foundation, are the beer and wine cellars—naturally cool for their purpose. The old oblong lounge, from which there was a bad view of the stage, is also removed, and its stead is a luxurious crescent-shaped circle. The floor of the entrance hall is a pretty piece Mosaic work with the word “Tivoli” as a centre piece, on an artistic scroll. Here is the box office, and on either side are capacious staircases and passages leading to stalls and dress circle. Rich Wilton carpets, old gold in colour are on every stairway and passage; which are guarded by heavy embossed draperies to match. Embossed. Japanese paper—maroon in principal colour—is on the walls and is surmounted by one of green and gold. The colour of the decorations and upholstery gradually deepens as they rise towards the ceiling; the centrepiece which an oval sky with electric drop lights for stars. This is false ceiling, and above it is a ventilating apparatus for the circulation pure air. The decorations are nowhere florid or loud. The idea has not been to be barbarously magnificent or gorgeous; but to be pretty, soft, rich, luxuriant, and cosy. The artist has aspired to please rather than to impose. At the extreme back of the pit and circle are the bars, which are entirely cut off from the auditorium. There is no promenade, and the drinking accommodation is kept exclusively by itself. Pretty settees in salmon pink are all around them and, as the enclosure is of glass, one may watch the performance from the bars. In front the gallery there is an amphitheatre. Except in the gallery, all the seats are made to tip up and are very finely upholstered. Ranged at either side of the proscenium are five boxes sumptuously decorated. And there is a beautiful tableaux curtain falling from each side the stage. This is of embossed plush, old gold in colour, and soft and pleasing in effect. The material in it is said to have cost £200. Behind the scenes much regard has been paid to the comfort of the artists as to that of the patrons in front. The dressing-rooms are well appointed, and each is fitted with hot and cold water. This is also said of the lavatories in all parts of the house. On every floor there are fire preventing appliances, and a fireproof curtain separates the stage from the auditorium. The architect, Mr. Harry Percival, has succeeded in providing about 50 square feet more stage room. Heating apparatus runs throughout the building, and for lighting purposes there are complete installations of both gas and electricity. All the exists are direct to the streets, and special arrangements are made for escape in case of fire. The seating accommodation is estimated at 1,200. [Manchester Courier 3 December 1898 page 8]*



This description of extensive rebuilding is supported by the pictorial evidence found to date including images of the interior held by MCL Local Images which confirm that the level of the stalls was dropped to basement level and a new crescent-shaped circle created. Later claims that improvements were limited to minor changes of the Peter Street frontage would appear to be incorrect. However, surprisingly little detail has been found regarding this new elevation. The cover of a programme of 1906 gives some indication of its appearance.



THE TIVOLI THEATRE OF VARIETIES, PETER STREET, MANCHESTER

Built: 1897

Architect: Harry Percival



The Manchester Courier included a drawing of the original proposals for the new theatre which form the basis of the above conjectural reconstruction. However, a number of discrepancies still exist, not least the glazed canopy over the pavement.

The Tivoli struggled on as a music hall, fighting a losing battle with the newer style of variety entertainment. In 1921 a new company was formed, and the Tivoli music-hall was rechristened as the Winter Gardens and became a picture house. The new enterprise was not a success; by 1923 the company had gone into liquidation and its affairs were in the hands of the Official Receiver. The mortgagee, Jonah Lever, took over the control of the enterprise until the sale of the building by auction could be arranged and on 4 December 1923 the Winter Gardens Picture Theatre was put up for sale at the Estate Exchange, Manchester. The highest bid was £20,000 and in consequence the lot was withdrawn. The Winter gardens continued in use as a picture-house and variety hall for a further three years until its dramatic destruction in the early morning of 1 January 1927.

*PETER STREET FIRE - WINTER GARDENS BLAZE - At a quarter past one this morning, when the New Year rejoicings had filled the streets of Manchester with a promenading throng great excitement prevailed when it became known that fire had broken out in the Winter Gardens, Peter Street. .... The building adjoins the Free Trade Hall, in which at the time a New Year's Eve fancy dress dance was in progress. This was brought to an abrupt end, and the dancers, large proportion of whom were in fancy dress, filed into the street and made an incongruous spectacle in their carnival clothes amid the dense crowd that gathered and lined Peter Street from Watson Street to the Midland Hotel. The fire had gained a firm hold and flames were bursting through the windows of the front of the building when the Manchester Fire Brigade arrived, within four minutes of the discovery of the outbreak. After about half an hour the fire appeared to be under control, but it was then found to have reached the gallery of the theatre and flames were again bursting through the roof at the rear of the building in Windmill Street. A fire escape was run up from Windmill Street and a jet directed to the blazing roof. At 2 30 the fire again appeared, from the outside, to be in hand.*

Damage estimated at £25,000 had been done. Plans for reconstruction were said to be in the hands of the architects but no progress was made and in February 1936 the gutted shell of the building was finally demolished, thus ending the theatrical history of one of Manchester's earliest music halls.



## PAST EVENTS

### ARCHAEOLOGY AND COLONIALISM: THE BRITISH VIEW OF INDIA.

Thursday 22nd February 2024 at the Friends Meeting House, Mount Street, Manchester M2 5NS.

In February 2024 Dr Charlotte Coull gave an energetic and informative talk on the activities of British officials in colonial India who often took up archaeology as hobby alongside their main work. India has many archaeological sites of world interest which are still not especially well-known: they are not embedded in our culture in the same way as for example those of Egypt. Among these are the Ellora Caves, the Sandi and Amaravati Stupas (stupas are mounds originally raised as tombs of holy men, then mainly to honour Buddhist saints) and hundreds of megaliths in the Deccan which closely resemble those in Europe. These gentleman amateurs explored megalithic sites in the Indian hills during the summer season and they came across ruins while hunting game in the jungle. But some, like James Fergusson, Alexander Cunningham, and James Prinsep, went further and worked full time to produce major works on India's material history. The enthusiasm of these men began a whole new era of archaeological study. They were intelligent and well-educated, with wide-ranging interests and experiences. An interest in these ancient sites begun for fun in the first instance became for them a major career focus.

An early interest in this area prompted the foundation of the Asiatic Society of Bengal in 1784. The early enthusiasts tended to compare what they discovered with British and European history rather than considering it on its own merits, believing that Indians didn't know about their own history and didn't care. The translation of the Edict of Asoka by Prinsep in 1837 enabled the reading of both manuscripts and inscriptions, which gave meaning to both the monuments themselves and the evidence they provided for the spread of Buddhism and its tenets in India. This brought in a new era of understanding of archaeology which led to the founding of the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) in 1862. Despite some blips along the way, including a gap occasioned by loss of funding at the end of the century until reinstated by Lord Curzon in 1902, this is still going strong as India's premier organisation for archaeological research and protection of its cultural heritage.

Dr Coull noted the development of archaeology from the subjective: the initial emotional reaction of the observer, to the objective as this is refined by measurements using a variety of data. Cunningham tried to set down rules to standardise the amateurs' approach, but these were largely ignored until the early 20th century. The use of scientific techniques such as fieldwork and stratigraphy, which enabled true objectivity, were not used in India until 1917.

She considered what Indian history actually looked like to the British. The British interest in Buddhism as a civilised and civilising religion (typified by Cunningham who had followed the routes of Chinese Buddhist pilgrims round India) led people to believe that because Buddhism was no longer practised in Victorian India, its traditions and architecture had become corrupted over time. Cunningham totally ignored the megaliths despite their great numbers: they were not considered in the Archaeological Survey because there were no texts associated with them.

What of preservation and conservation? The ASI started as a conservation effort, partly because of the effect of the tropical climate of India on the condition of buildings, but also because of the efforts of the British military to destroy what they came across. They were happy to write about stuff and photograph it, but not to conserve it. Regrettably it was difficult to photograph inscriptions accurately with 19th century photographic techniques. Some attempts were made to conserve monuments in the early 20th century by John Marshall as Director of the newly re-established ASI, but he found himself faced with the perennial problem of what to do- halt decline or restore the original?

A major challenge to the traditional western view of Indian archaeology came with the excavation of the Bronze Age civilisation remains at Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro in the Indus Valley. They had been known about for years in the west since their discovery by the East India Company in the 1820's, but only as piles of bricks raided both by locals for building and the British for track ballast for the railways. Marshall recognised their importance as contemporaneous with Mesopotamia and Crete and began a major excavation in 1920. However, it was only when Sir Leonard Woolley,

renowned for his methodical approach to excavation, encouraged Mortimer Wheeler to become involved, that modern stratigraphy techniques as exemplified by the 'Wheeler method' were used for the first time.

In summary Dr Coull reminded us of Thomas Carlyle's theory that history is shaped and driven by great individuals, an idea which dominated British philosophical thought in the second half of the 19th century. This is not true for archaeology, which is less to do with being driven by individuals and more to do with being in the right place at the right time, being given the right opportunity, knowing the right people and having the right connections: in other words, chance. The focus of the Archaeological Survey of India was entirely based on the preconceptions of colonialism: choosing what fitted in with existing ideas and ignoring the rest. The archaeologists of colonial India were all big fish in a small pond. Would they have been remotely as successful back home? [AWD]

## VICTORIA ARCHES, MANCHESTER

Talk by the author Keith Warrender on Thursday 7th March, at the Friends Meeting House.

When Salford buses were still green and not permitted to trespass on the streets of Manchester, most routes through Salford to Manchester city centre terminated at Salford Victoria Bus Station, next to Victoria Bridge. On the Manchester side Victoria Street ran in front of the Cathedral at a much higher level and below this, mysterious openings were visible in the river wall. Speculation was rife as to their function with tales of an abandoned cobbled street, allegedly still with its original shop fronts and gas lamps.

In his excellent talk, Keith Warrender did much to dispel this speculation. He told of the Mediaeval origins of Manchester, centred on the Collegiate Church. At its west end a closely packed mass of buildings filled the steep slope down to the River Irwell, linked by narrow lanes, courts and passages. Steps were cut down to the river by which the people carried up all their water. By the 1830s this situation could no longer be tolerated in a rapidly expanding industrial city. A new road was needed to link the centre of Manchester with the new railway station at Hunts Bank (Victoria) and the newly constructed road to Strangeways and the north. At each end levels were established: Deansgate and Victoria Street provided a southern fixed point; to the north, the foot of Victoria Station approach, the slope up determined by the maximum incline for horse drawn traffic. In front of the Cathedral the new roadway and its iron railings was carried on lofty brick arches. The space created under the roadway was developed as workshops and storage, including steam engine boilermakers, copper works and iron foundries, printers, silk finishers, dyers, cabinet makers, undertakers and beer and wine storage. The arches were accessed originally via a 'narrow, smelly, smoky and dangerous' entrance next to the Cathedral. Steam and smoke were taken away by a high chimney near Cateaton Street. The chimney was damaged by lightning in 1871 and its upper part taken down. The lower part was finally demolished at the end of the nineteenth century.

The river itself was deepened by the Mersey and Irwell Navigation as far as its confluence with the Irk, with two vessels laden with oats and cotton being towed to Victoria Bridge to demonstrate its effect. However this stretch of the river was mostly used for pleasure purposes until water pollution finally made this impossible. On the Salford bank, rowing boats were available for hire at Mary Ann's Boathouse, while from the Manchester side of Victoria Bridge two small paddle steamers, *Punch* and *Judy*, departed on pleasure trips. In the 1890s. In the 1890s steamers regularly departed to Pomona Gardens, the newly opened Manchester Docks and beyond. By 1901 part of the arches was occupied by Manchester Electricity Department for testing coolers and boilers. During the war the arches became an underground bomb shelter and money was spent on making it blast- and gas-proof. Keith suggested that it was not really deep enough to have withstood a direct hit. This didn't prevent its being considered by Civil Defence as a possible nuclear shelter during the Cold War.

The talk generated considerable interest. We were fascinated to see the many photographs taken during recent explorations of the Arches. The existence of heavy industry with its associated chimney so close to the cathedral came as a surprise to many in the audience as did the photograph of the cathedral with its tower still under construction. Our thanks to Keith for so expertly leading us on a fascinating "walk on the dark side." [AND]



## CHURCH OF ST JOHN THE BAPTIST (RC), ROCHDALE

Saturday 20 April 2004. Greater Manchester Churches/Vic Soc members joint visit St John the Baptist Rochdale

A tour of the church and talk about the recent restoration of the dome, clerestory and mosaic. St John the Baptist church is a large Byzantine style church built by R and T Howarth of Rochdale at a cost of nearly £21,000. The intended campanile was not built but the practice tower of the Fire Station across the road visually serves the purpose. The Church is a Greek Cross in shape with a large concrete dome over the central space. The glory of the church are the mosaics added by Eric Newton (L Oppenheimer Limited) in 1930/33 which cover all of the east end.



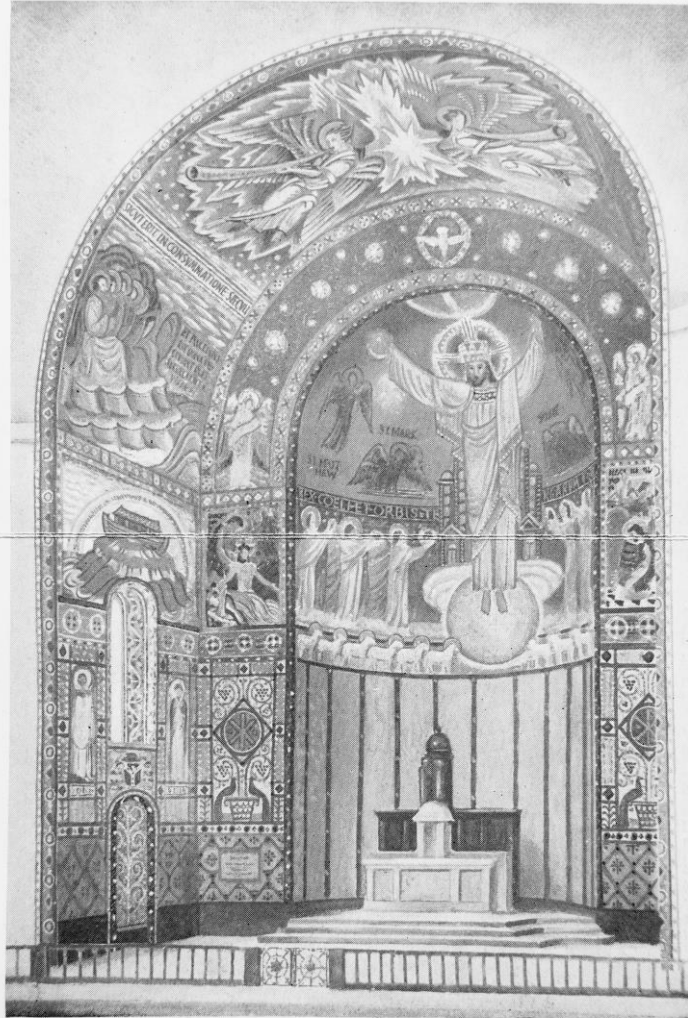
*Photo ©AND 2010*

Originally designed before his military service, by Henry Oswald Hill, who was killed in action in October 1917. In 1918, the Stafford architect H T Sandy acquired the offices and whatever remained of Henry Oswald Hill's Manchester architectural practice. In 1920 Ernest Bower Norris, ARIBA, was taken into partnership but this proved short-lived, ended by Henry Sandy's unexpected death in January 1922 at the age of 53. Now practising alone, E B Norris continued the Manchester office under the style "Hill Sandy and Norris," completing the construction in 1922-1925. The dome is of ferro-concrete 4.5 inches thick at the top, increasing to 5 inches at the haunch. Externally the building is faced with local pressed brick, small size, with white mortar pointing and "Empire Stone" dressings.

Thanks to John and the team at St John's for the warm welcome, excellent talk, and lovely refreshments.

\*

# MOSAICS





ST JOHN'S CHURCH, ROCHDALE

Messrs. Hill, Sandy & Norris, Architects.

MOSAICS IN GOLD AND ENAMEL DESIGNED AND EXECUTED BY  
L. OPPENHEIMER LTD., MANCHESTER

P.T.O

\*

<p style="text-align: center;">MOSAICS</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>L. OPPENHEIMER LTD.</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">BLACKBURN STREET OLD TRAFFORD MANCHESTER ESTABLISHED 1863</p> <p style="text-align: center;">MOSAIC ARTISTS AND CRAFTSMEN</p>  <p style="font-size: small;">The imposing Byzantine Church of St. John the Baptist at Rochdale (illustrated herein), should be visited by all interested in mosaics. The striking and impressive decoration in glass and gold has been designed and executed by us during 1923 for the Rev. Canon Chapp, under the direction of Messrs. Hill, Sandy and Norris, architects.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">PLEASE OPEN</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">MOSAICS</p>  <p style="text-align: center;"><b>L. OPPENHEIMER LTD.</b> MANCHESTER</p> <p style="text-align: center;">PLEASE OPEN</p>
--	---

*L Oppenheimer Ltd Publicity Leaflet. Images Courtesy of Mark Watson*



## A WALK THROUGH MANCHESTER'S THEATRE DISTRICT

Walk Leader: David Astbury (former Vic Soc Manchester Chair). Tuesday, 16 April 2024

Back by popular demand. David Astbury led a repeat walk along Oxford Street and Peter Street, a walk through what was once the heart of Manchester's historic theatre district.

## OLDHAM WALK

Walk Leader: Steve Roman. Saturday 27 April 2024

A morning walk around the town centre heritage of Oldham (including the 1879 360 degree Oldham Panorama) and an afternoon walk around 1869 Alexandra Park in Oldham (listed Grade II). This event is a repeat of previous events led by Steve Roman, already recorded.



*Hilton Arcade, Oldham.*

## FUTURE EVENTS: MAY - NOVEMBER 2024

### A WALK ROUND VICTORIAN KNUTSFORD

**Saturday 18 May 2024 1.45pm for 2pm start.** Cost: £15 including tea and cake at the Courtyard café following the tour. Booking essential on [manevicsoc@gmail.com](mailto:manevicsoc@gmail.com) Numbers limited to 25.

Peter de Figueiredo will lead a tour of Knutsford focusing on architecture of the 19<sup>th</sup> century but including many buildings familiar to Elizabeth Stevenson (1810-1865), who as Mrs Gaskell went on to describe the life and gossip of the fictional 'Cranford' based on Knutsford of the 1830's.

Peter de Figueiredo was an active member of the Victorian Society in Manchester in the 70's and early 80's. Trained as an architect, he has worked for both the city of Chester and English Heritage. An acknowledged expert on architecture in the North-West and of Liverpool in particular, he has written a number of books on the subject and advises on historic buildings in the area.

The tour will commence at Elizabeth's childhood home Heathwaite House, Gaskell Avenue, facing The Heath. It will last approx. 2 hours, taking in buildings in the town centre by Money Penny, Waterhouse and Darbyshire before crossing The Moor to Higher Knutsford and St Cross Church 1880 by Paley & Austin.

Assemble 1.45 for 2pm opposite Heathwaite House on Gaskell Avenue.

Trains hourly from Piccadilly, Stockport and Altrincham (leaving Piccadilly 11.10, 12.10, 13.10)

If travelling by car, recommended car parks are Tatton Street (max. stay 10 hours) and King Street (max. stay 4 hours)

### MANCHESTER HISTORIES FESTIVAL

**Sunday 9 June 2024:** Manchester Histories Festival – Histories and Heritage Marketplace at the Whitworth Hall, Manchester University. Details available from 6 May 2024. The Manchester Group will have a stall and displays.

### A WALK ROUND VICTORIAN BURY

**Saturday 29 June 2024:** A Walk round Victorian Bury led by Mark Watson.

Cost: £10. Booking essential on [manevicsoc@gmail.com](mailto:manevicsoc@gmail.com)

1pm start. Assembly point: in Bury Interchange at top of escalator from Metrolink platform.

The walk will cover Bury town centre looking especially at the fine architectural sculpture on many buildings, including those by the London architect Smirke who designed Bury's first major civic scheme, two local architectural firms, Maxwell and Tuke and Moulds and Porritt, and monuments and war memorials by Lutyens and Blomfield. Visits to the Parish Church (Crowther) and the Art Museum (Woodhouse and Willoughby) are included. In addition, there will be a "castle", a Temperance billiard hall and we finish at an ornate fountain with basins which allowed up to three horses, three dogs and two men to drink at the same time.



## ROCHDALE TOWN HALL VISIT

**Saturday 28 September 2024, 2.00-4.00pm**

Cost £10. Booking essential on [mancvicsoc@gmail.com](mailto:mancvicsoc@gmail.com)

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: 2pm 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

**Saturday 23 November 2024 at 2.00pm for 2.15pm** at Stretford Public Hall

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.

## MANCHESTER GROUP COMMITTEE MATTERS

### THE LATE FIONA MOATE 1959-2004



It is with deep regret that the Committee records the passing of Fiona Moate, a long-time member of this committee. Born in Goole, she trained at Hull before moving to Manchester to complete her MA in the early 1980s. Both art schools belonged to a small 'cartel' of English painting departments in the 70s and 80s that devoted themselves to 'painterly painting' with an almost religious fervour.

Despite spending most of her adult life living and working in Greater Manchester, Fiona Moate claimed not to like the city. Nonetheless, its urban landscape found its way into her work with increasingly representational imagery as her career progressed, through her love and knowledge of late 19th and early 20th century architecture and design, especially ecclesiastical building.

In her final years, when a lack of studio and diminishing energy precluded making large works on canvas, Fiona Moate produced prolific sketchbooks and small works on paper, frequently taking long bus journeys around the suburbs, sketching from the top deck.

She will be much missed by her many friends in the Manchester Group. (Hilary Poole)

For an appreciation of Fiona and her work by Chris Lethbridge follow the link

<https://www.mag-north.com/posts/fiona-moate>

### A NEW CHAIR

As announced elsewhere, Kate Martyn has agreed to take on the role of Chair of the Manchester Group.

Our thanks must go to Steve Roman for stepping in to act as chair on a temporary basis, thereby saving the Group from possible extinction. However, volunteers are still required to join the committee.

### ARCHITECTS OF GREATER MANCHESTER WEBSITE

When the website was put on-line in 2018 it was accepted that it was incomplete, and that further alterations and additions would be necessary. Indeed, this possibility was an attraction in choosing this format. However, from a recent discussion it seems that this on-going aspect of the website is not fully appreciated. Work is still continuing and the website now contains information on 1274 architects, 479 partnerships and 13250 buildings – an increase of approximately 30% from the time of its launch. Recent additions include details of the Dunn and Hansom partnership of Newcastle responsible for St Bede's College in Whalley Range, Manchester, and Stonyhurst College, Lancashire, a further expansion of the entry for Bell and Roper of Manchester, and the Oldham architect Alexander Banks. Link at: <https://manchestervictorianarchitects.org.uk/>

### SOCIAL MEDIA details as follows:

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61556760511495>

Instagram: Username :

@manvicsoc [https://www.instagram.com/manvicsoc?igsh=MXZhZGVwN284dGJ6dg%3D%3D&utm\\_source=qr](https://www.instagram.com/manvicsoc?igsh=MXZhZGVwN284dGJ6dg%3D%3D&utm_source=qr)

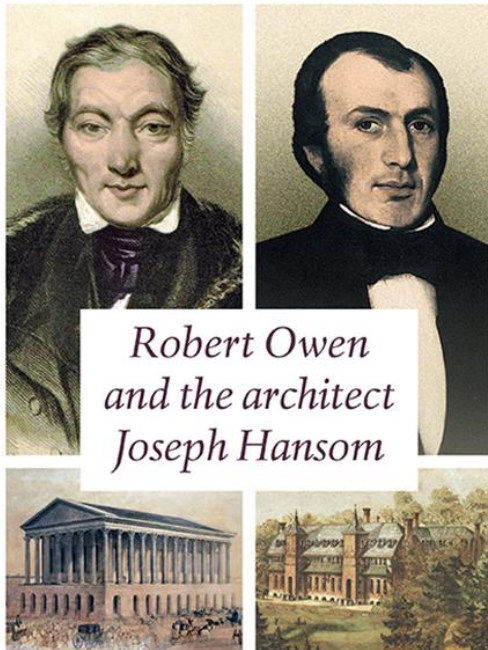


## NEW BOOKS

Robert Owen and the architect Joseph Hansom: An unlikely form of co-operation by Penelope Harris.

Robert Owen was a charismatic pipe-dreamer, bound to unrealistic expectations. Though born in Newtown, Montgomeryshire, by the time he met Joseph Hansom in Birmingham, he had become a self-taught manager of

*Penelope Harris*



*An unlikely form of co-operation*

successful cotton mills in Manchester and New Lanark, Scotland. It was here that he developed his theories of early education and campaigned for factory reform. Lacking the support he needed to advance his plans, he purchased a community in America, only to lose all his money. The much younger Hansom was an ambitious architect, who fast-tracked his own career by winning the competition to design Birmingham Town Hall. Birmingham was a proactive town, open to Thomas Attwood's efforts to bring about the Great Reform Bill, and the advancement of newly-formed trade unions. Along with his partner, Edward Welch, Hansom became so involved in politics that his attention was diverted away from the Town Hall, which resulted in both their bankruptcies. Nevertheless, Hansom re-established his career, while Owen strove to develop his master 'Plan', the building of a self-sufficient community. He leased a property in a remote part of Hampshire and appointed Hansom. Despite Herculean efforts (as Hansom described the Town Hall), the community collapsed. Under different ownership, it became home to the most prestigious scientists in Britain.

Review

The inclusion of Birmingham and Hansom adds a new dimension to the complexities of Robert Owen's life ... a great bit of research ... should grace the shelves of any museum or library where his name rests". Charles Rex Shayler, chairman of the Robert Owen Museum and relative of the architect who designed the building in which it is housed.

### About the Author

Dr Harris is an authority on Hansom and the development of the architectural profession in the early nineteenth-century. She is an active member of the Victorian Society and Education Officer of the Robert Owen Museum.

BREWIN BOOKS