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The Magazine of The Friends of
Blackburn Museum & Art Gallery

Winter 2021

This newsletter is completely FREE

SEASON'S GREETINGS!



Hiroshige: 53 Stations of the Tokaido Road,
15th Station, Kanbara

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Programme 2021/22

In response to the Covid emergency, meetings will be held on Tuesday afternoons during the 2021/22 season. This change may become permanent.

As the Museum is closed to the public on Tuesdays, we will have the gallery to ourselves

Meetings will be held at Blackburn Museum and Art Gallery On TUESDAY afternoons

14th December at 2pm: "The Art of Christmas." Mike Millward will talk about depictions of the Christmas story.

11th January 2022 at 2pm: "Twentieth Century British Painting." A talk by Richard Cross, formerly Head of Art at Blackburn College, and a noted painter himself.

8th February at 2pm: "Engels in Manchester." Valerie Miles will talk about the joint author of *The Communist Manifesto*.

Saturday 12 February at 10am: COFFEE MORNING with Valerie and Jeff Miles.

8th March at 2pm: "Print Works - Doesn't It?" A talk by Heather Davis, Manager at the Lancashire Conservation Studios, Preston.

12th April at 2pm: "Beethoven and the Theatre." The dramatic works of the great composer described by Raymond Watton.

10th May at 2pm: "Kenyon in Blackburn and the First Western." Jamie Holman talks about the local pioneer of cinema.

Saturday 11 June at 2pm: THE DAVID SHIPWAY LECTURE. Brian Healey will lecture on "Midsummer Magic" - how the theme of midsummer has permeated Scandinavian painting.

14th June at 2pm: A talk by a member of Museum staff, subject to be announced.

Sunday 26th June at 2pm: Mike and Dot Millward invite members and guests to the FRIENDS GARDEN PARTY

PEGGY SIMMEN
8th February 1922 - 12th October 2021

It is with great sadness that we announce the death in October of Peggy Simmen, a long-standing member of the Friends, who joined with her husband Douglas 34 years ago. After Dougie's death about 25 years ago, Peggy continued her membership, and in recent years attended meetings despite her increasing difficulty in getting about. She would have been 100 years old in February, which must make her the oldest person ever to have attended any of our meetings.

NEWS

Refreshments at meetings:

Good news! Coffee and tea will once again be provided after the meetings. To avoid the same people always serving the drinks and doing the washing up, we are proposing to introduce a rota. If sufficient members volunteer, they will be called on only once a season.

If you would like to help, please contact Gillian Mason at the next meeting.

Heritage Open Days:

Heritage Open Days 2022 will take place nationally between 9th and 18th September. We are considering the possibility of helping to arrange and co-ordinate local events and visits to appropriate locations. To do so, we will need ideas for suitable venues and activities, as well as people to make it happen.

The main requirement is to offer something special - for example visits to somewhere not usually open to the public, free entry to a site/activity which usually charges, something out of the ordinary at a place which is open free of charge, or provision of guided tours, talks, quizzes, exhibitions or demonstrations. There is usually a theme (recent topics have included *Edible England* and *Extraordinary Women*). As yet there is no theme for 2022, but it should not be too difficult to fit most ideas into whatever theme emerges.

If you have an exciting idea for a venue or activity, or are interested in contributing in some other way, please tell Mike Millward (contact details on back page).

Acquisition of painting:

The Friends have funded the £1,500 cost of the acquisition by the Museum & Art Gallery of the painting 'Portrait of Sana' by Azraa Motala (currently on display in the Victorian Gallery - [see below](#)) from the exhibition *Unapologetic*, part of the British Textile Biennial.



THE BRITISH TEXTILE BIENNIAL

The Friends were invited to a special viewing of the displays in the museum by Azraa Motala (*below right*) and Bharti Parmar (*below centre*). Both artists talked about their work, while we enjoyed refreshments provided by the museum.

Altogether a very pleasing, informative and satisfying total experience. The Friends have bought a painting by Azraa and the Museum is negotiating with Bharti. These exhibitions were part of the British Textile Biennial which was held at various venues across Pennine Lancashire, the most unusual, but possibly the best, being Darwen Market carpark!



The museum also housed the now famous flax weaving event (*above*). Patrick Grant, of Sewing Bee fame, played a lead part in this which involved growing the flax, spinning and weaving a piece of fabric.

John Turkington



CORRECTION

Science in Blackburn, Pendle and the Ribble Valley

Apologies to Patrick Gavin, and to the people of Nelson and Wakefield. The picture of the Boulby icosahedral sundial in the previous issue showed the original sundial at Walton Hall, near Wakefield (*below left*) rather than the version at Marsden Park, Nelson.

To make up for it, here are two photographs of the Nelson version (*below center & right*).

Mike Millward



The Road to Tokaido

Exhibition review by Valerie Miles



In September 2021 I travelled from Edo to Tokaido, courtesy of Blackburn Museum & Art Gallery's exhibition of Hiroshige's amazing series of prints illustrating this journey which he made in 1832.

In 1832 this route was the most important one in Japan, linking Edo (now Tokyo) to Tokaido. Edo was the centre of military power, Tokaido housed the royal family. Every year the royal family received a tribute of horses from Edo and Hiroshige was part of the official delegation which delivered the tribute in 1832.

He presumably travelled in comfort and of course enjoyed the hospitality of the 53 stations (lodgings, tea houses and porter and horse hiring). But there were many ordinary citizens who travelled all or part of the route, just as we use motorways and service stations today. Unlike our motorways, however, this road included some waterways where a transfer to boats was the only option. There were also mountains.

I don't know how long Hiroshige's journeys there and back took but his pictures illustrate seasonal changes (winter snows, summer harvests) along the way. The series of prints was so popular that he eventually produced three editions, not completely identical.

My journey was obviously not physically taxing, just fascinating. Apart from amazement at his ability to create such detailed illustrations on a small scale (some of the figures are minute), it was his social observations that enthralled me. The burly, half-naked palanquin carriers are bent almost double as they heave the fat wealthy merchant along the road. The shop-keepers look as though they're kidnapping travellers as they try to pull them into their small shops. Well-dressed ladies rest comfortably on a raft as they are poled across some shallow water; meanwhile sturdy peasants have stripped off to wade through the water. A boy on a bridge rudely imitates two respectable travellers who are fighting against the high wind. Poor travellers try to warm themselves by a fire under the shelter of a tree, with one presenting his bare buttocks to the warmth. Peasants harvest crops, travellers chase hats torn away by the wind. Geishas paint their faces as they await the travellers at the way station.

Hiroshige shows the stations, the peasants' houses, the rich men's houses, the mountains, the sea, the rivers and waterways. It's a world we can never know, but thanks to Thomas Boys Lewis who donated the series of prints to the Museum we can still travel along the Tokaido Road.



45th Station, Shono

BLACKBURN THEATRE ROYAL POSTCARDS FROM THE 1920s

by Ken Ford

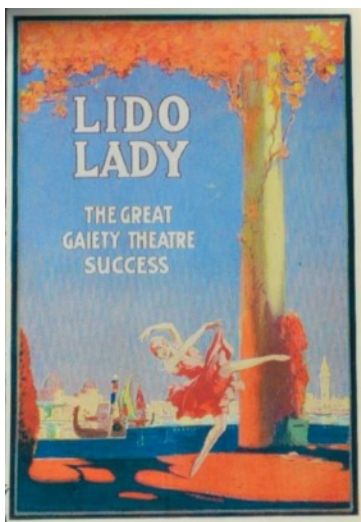
Coloured postcards were used to advertise productions at Blackburn's Theatre Royal during the 1920s. Of the ones in my collection I particularly like this one from 1928 for 'Yellow Sands', a play by brother and sister, Eden and Adelaide Philpotts



First produced in 1926 at the Haymarket Theatre, London it marked the debut of Ralph Richardson in the West End. It is a comedy about a surprise legacy from a wealthy aunt to a socialist fisherman, Joe, who is in love with servant girl, Lydia.

"Yellow Sands" given by the Birmingham Repertory Company at the Blackburn Theatre Royal this week provides refreshing entertainment ... dozens of situations keep the audience rocking with laughter.... The "reading of the will" scene was anything but sombre.... Northern Daily Telegraph 17-1-28

The painting is by Charles Buchel (1872-1950) who was born in Germany but came to England as a child and studied art at the Royal Academy Schools. Actor-manager, Sir Herbert Beerbohm Tree hired him to design programmes, posters and to produce portraits of the leading actors of the day. The National Portrait Gallery has 37 of them including this one of Dame Gladys Cooper.



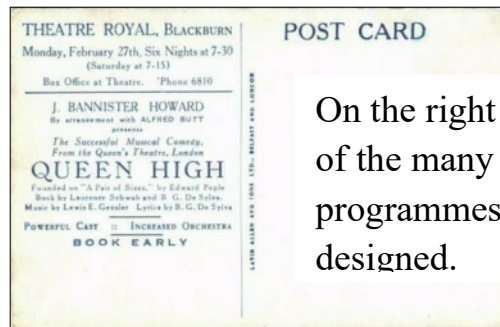
In 1927 'Lido Lady' came to Blackburn one year after it opened in the West End. There is no mention that Rogers & Hart wrote many of the songs because at that time they had not had a hit show in London. The very slim plot, set on the Lido, Venice, centres on the tennis playing daughter of a sports goods designer who loses her father's design for a new tennis ball. Yes, really! That and a lot of romantic goings on.

“Lido Lady” and her lively companions had a warm welcome on their first visit to Blackburn last night and their frolics, to the accompaniment of catchy airs, bright scenes and novel dances, will no doubt attract large audiences to the Theatre Royal this week.

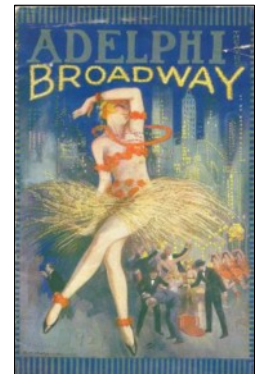
Northern Daily Telegraph 1-11-27



This striking image is by E. P. Kinsella who, in 1906, drew a highly successful series of humorous postcards featuring the Kinsella Kids that sold in their tens of thousands. During WWI he produced Kincartoons – propaganda shorts for the National War Aims Committee.



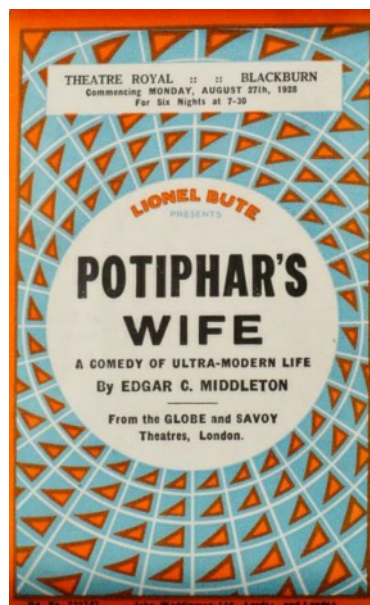
On the right is one of the many theatre programmes that he designed.



Rich in comedy and containing some catchy numbers, “Queen High” deserves to attract high audiences to Blackburn Theatre Royal this week, and cannot fail to amuse.....A novel little plot is introduced when two business partners play a game of poker to settle their squabbles, the stake being a year’s service as butler by the loser to the winner.

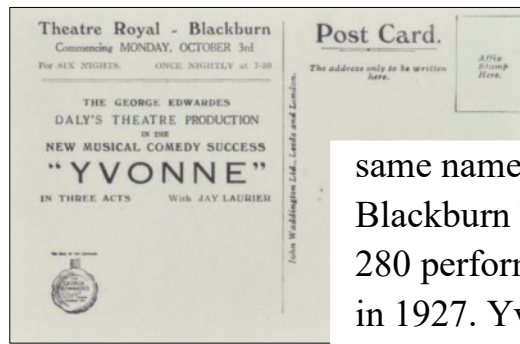
Northern Daily Telegraph 28-2-28

‘Potiphar’s Wife’ is derived from the Biblical story in which Joseph rejects attempts by his master’s wife to seduce him. Here it is Lady Aylesbrough’s efforts to seduce her chauffeur that ends up in a court case. The postcard is unusual in that it has a coloured photograph of the couple on the reverse and a geometrical early art deco style pattern on the front.



Opinions will vary as to the credibility of the modern version of “Potiphar’s Wife” presented at Blackburn Theatre Royal this week.... but it will nevertheless attract large numbers by the problem it presents. The court scene is very effectively given, and her ladyship’s crowd of cocktail degenerates are cleverly personified.

Northern Daily Telegraph 28-8-28



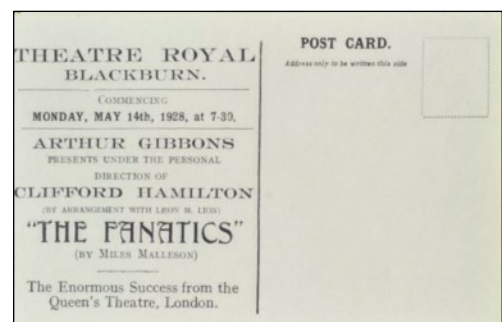
The musical 'Yvonne' was adapted from an Austrian one of the same name in 1926. It played

Blackburn before its London run of 280 performances and then returned in 1927. Yvonne, the light hearted daughter of a professor, performs secretly in a Music Hall. A young man falls in love with her and disguises himself as a servant in her father's house leading to various complications. This successful show didn't go down too well with the critics. Noel Coward scathingly referred to it as "Yvonne the Terrible"!

"Back to the good old days of musical comedy". This remark at the Blackburn Theatre Royal last night by a regular patron expressed the feelings of many others, judging by the large audience that greeted the return of "Yvonne" and the cordiality of the greeting. The whole show has a snap and sparkle that surpass even the previous performances.

Northern Daily Telegraph 4-10-27

'The Fanatics' caused a great deal of controversy when it was produced in London in 1927. People were surprised that it had been passed by the censor in view of the sex references and the pacifist, anti-capitalist, anti-church leading man – a precursor of the 1950s 'angry young man'.



The author, Miles Malleeson, wrote 15 plays, 20 film scripts and acted in about 120 films between 1921 and 1965.

It is most extraordinary to find a censorship that, for years, has opposed the serious discussion of sex problems on the stage suddenly passing "The Fanatics" which is by far the frankest modern play I have ever seen in London. ... In one scene the father of the house goes up to his son's garret to find him alone with a half-dressed woman. ... At the end women made comments like "How could they stage it?" and "Fancy the censor passing this!" ...

Hannen Swaffer – The Sunday Express 20-3-27

Miles Malleeson's much-discussed play, "The Fanatics", is presented at the Theatre Royal, Blackburn, this week and it will now be more discussed than ever. It is not everyone who will see eye to eye with the young idealistwho may be supposed to typify modern youth in its clash of ideas with the older generation....he is convinced that the Church and civilisation have failed and that under the old order the horrible slaughter [of WWI] will inevitably be repeated... .

Northern Daily Telegraph 15-5-28

SOME HAPPY MEMORIES OF PEGGY SIMMEN by Barbara Riding



I cannot remember when Peggy first joined the Friends of the Museum. It cannot have been at the very beginning when I did or I would have gone to sit beside her and her husband Dougie. A few years after both our husbands had died, a group of friends from Church invited me go with them to a concert in King George's Hall. I saw Peggy some rows behind them on her own. That's where she used to sit with Dougie I was told. So I thought, if I am going to come here more often I could sit with Peggy, if she would have me, and she did. So when I had the opportunity I bought a season ticket for the concerts at King George's Hall, and that's where it all started.

We both had a car, so why waste petrol going to places alone. For twenty years we took turns at picking each other up to go to concerts, theatres, films, lectures, historical visits, trips and other entertainments. I never did acquire the skill of reversing up Peggy's drive. I am now unable to drive, so before my son advertised my car for sale it had to be repaired and painted from the last time I reversed into her wall.

Peggy belonged to a walking group when she was fit. I couldn't keep up with her. If we were out with a party I had to remember what colour she was wearing in the distance and whether she turned left or right. Even when we were both on two sticks, she wanted to hold my arm, but I couldn't keep up with her. She also attended Line dancing sessions, but I drew a line at line dancing. One of her interests which I did enjoy was a Theatre Group organised by John Hudson of Barrow. He would send Peggy a list of the theatres they were visiting and we would choose what we wanted to see. We drove to Whalley to park and then sailed away on a coach to the Lowry at Salford, the Bolton Octogen, the Manchester Exchange, and theatres in Leeds, Liverpool and Keswick.

Peggy was very secretive about her age. Some of us thought that she should be proud of how well she was doing for ninety- nine, but no, no one had to know, it was her business. Unfortunately, on two occasions, whilst out with the Theatre Group she fell and broke her shoulder blade and then her hip. While I was waiting with her at the hospital I surreptitiously peeped at the information on the band that was round her wrist, so from then on we knew that she was born on 8th February 1922, and could send her a card on her birthday, as long as there were no numbers on it.

We were both members of the Local History Society, which sadly folded up when Ray Smith had to retire. We were both members of the Friends of the Museum and Art Gallery which was founded in 1982 by Mike Millward. I remember the first lecture that we had and the first trip to Castle Howard. Once a month on a Thursday, Peggy would come down to my car park and pick me up, or she would come down to park in my car park and I would take her down to the Museum, hoping that there was a car parking space where we could use our Disabled Badges. As we went in Peggy usually had a chat with one of the receptionists whom she recognised from delivering her books from Mellor Library. I went on to use the lift and to have a chat with Richard Croasdale about the looms or the Northrop model or some other history. It was great when we could see Richard on the "Flog it" programme on TV.

We both enjoyed all the speakers and the talks and films and slide shows that had been organised for us. We both enjoyed all the afternoon, evening and day trips. We didn't need our cars when we went on weekend trips, we hired a taxi into town to pick up a coach to take us to London, Glasgow, Edinburgh, Swansea, Cardiff, Carlisle, Kings Lynn, Iron Bridge Country, Constable Country, Shrewsbury, Durham, France, the Isle of Wight and some I have probably forgotten.

Peggy had a remote control to open her garage door, so whenever I drove her home she would open the door, get out of my car and go in. Then she would go along to her little study window and wave me off. One night I had to stop and wave to her frantically. She had left the garage door wide open!

Sadly, old age and Lockdown put an end to our gallivanting, but we were able to see each other and say hello on Zoom while enjoying one of John Turkington's excellent lectures. I was able to visit her in February on her birthday, taking her a cake and a card. After that it was a brief chat on a mobile phone and a couple of visits to two Care Homes, the last one just holding her hand.

Some wonderful memories of a very remarkable and interesting lady and friend

Breaking News!

FORMER MUSEUM CURATOR BECOMES HERITAGE ITEM

The photograph below appeared not long ago in the Lancashire Telegraph, reprinted from a photograph which was originally published in the 1980s. It is quite a shock to realise that I am now a heritage item myself.



If I remember correctly, the contents of Arthur Pickles and Co, Printers were acquired from premises in Randle Street during the 1980s when the firm was closing down and offered to donate everything to the Museum. As well as a large amount of type, all in the original trays and furniture, the contents included some small printing presses and a fearsome powered guillotine. While we were at the premises, the guillotine was demonstrated, powered by an electric motor; The building had seen better days, and the print shop was on the first floor; the whole building moved with the machine.

We decided to accept the donation because it complemented the superb collection of printed books in the Hart Collection, which had not long been displayed in a new gallery. At that time, the display (which has since been completely replaced) included the fine Columbian hand printing press which has recently been re-displayed on the ground floor. Type from Pickles print shop was used to demonstrate printing to visitors. We used mostly wooden type, originally designed for printing posters, and visiting school children were able to print their own names.



Relics at Whalley

By Patrick Gavin

English Martyrs' Roman Catholic Church in Whalley, next to the Abbey, has two relics from the time of the Dissolution of the Abbey in 1537. The two relics have come down to us by separate but surprisingly similar routes.



Paslew's Ring

John Paslew, the last Abbot of the Cistercian Abbey of Whalley was born in *Manor Farm* at Wiswell. He was accused, probably unjustly, of supporting the *Pilgrimage of Grace*. He refused to take the *Oath of Allegiance* to Henry V111 and was hanged at Lancaster on the 10th March 1537. His remains were returned to the Abbey and hung in chains. At the trial he pleaded guilty to five counts. The precise grounds for his conviction are not known. Before he died Abbot Paslew passed to the Mother of a family, probably a relation, his Abbatial Signet ring, "JP", instructing her to keep the ring safely and to ensure that it was passed from one generation to the next, going in turn from the eldest daughter to the eldest son until the family line died out. The last living member was to return the ring to the Church.

Abbot Paslew was ambitious for himself and for his Abbey, added buildings and travelled widely to London and across the North of England. In 1530 he began to sell abbey plate and pursued tithes and fees more aggressively. In the Autumn of 1536 Paslew and his monks were caught up in The Pilgrimage of Grace when the northern insurgents got to the Abbey before the King's Men under the Earl of Derby. The Abbey opened its gates, perhaps reluctantly, to the rebels. There was a general pardon after the failure of the Rising.

The ring was returned to the Church in 1930 by a lady who claimed to be the last living member of the family into whose care it had been given by Abbot Paslew nearly 400 years before. The ring was sent to the British Museum in 1972 and the experts agree that the material evidence is perfectly in harmony with the story.



Sacred Relic

In the *Clitheroe Advertiser and Times* of Thursday the 13th December 1979 there is an article on Mrs Anne Alice Cotton of Mill Hill, Blackburn, presenting a relic from Whalley Abbey to the RC Church at Whalley. According to the tradition handed down in the Cotton Family the relic is a tiny fragment of the swaddling clothes in which Jesus was wrapped at Bethlehem, contained within a small cross. At the Dissolution it was passed to a Catholic family named Whalley who tenanted *Timothy Farm* on Whalley Nab. A wanted priest, thought to have been Abbot Paslew, sought shelter at the farm and the family hid him in a cavity behind the fireplace. The soldiers searched in vain and after their departure the family asked the priest to give his blessing to a woman in labour. He did more, he produced



the relic along with a parchment. The stipulation was that it must pass to the eldest daughter of the eldest son, and when the family line of Whalley came to an end, it must be returned to the Altar Stone (where relics are kept.) Mrs Cotton had no son, and when she was 70 felt that it should be returned to Whalley. Mrs Cotton had great faith in the relic and wore the relic during her four confinements. She believes that several members of the family were saved by the relic. A relation in Preston, a midwife, lent the relic to many of her patients in difficult pregnancies. Without authenticity relics are a matter of faith, but one can understand how Mrs Cotton regarded this simple but remarkable object as “sacred”, hallowed by 400 years of tradition.



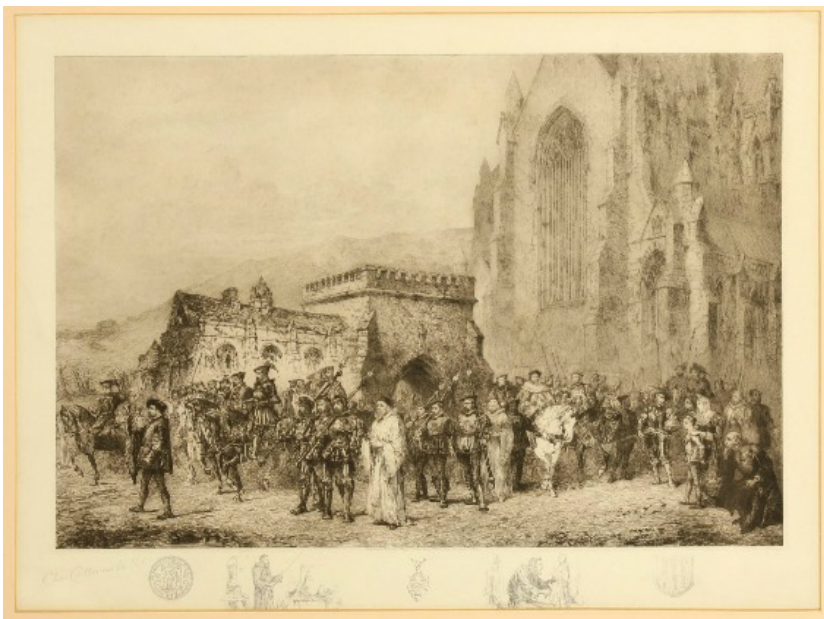
The topic of *Medieval Relics* is fraught with difficulties and uncertainties, fakes and con-men, and factual information embellished for “a good story”, and all emerging from the mists of time. The two objects dealt with here have plausible connections to the Abbey, but have come down though 400 years and, say, twelve generations. “The wanted priest” at *Timothy Farm* makes a good “escape story”, but Paslew was a public figure until arrested. One might say that the *sequence* is the same, coming from the same man. Was this common in wills at that time? In the Births Marriages and Deaths for the Blackburn Registration District for 1929 Thomas Cotton married Ann Alice Whalley. Should the lady have given her maiden family name, Whalley, so we would have “Whalley Family” rather than “Cotton Family” ?

References

Dictionary of National Biography

Geoffrey Moorhouse *The Pilgrimage of Grace*, 2002

The author would like to thank Andrew Snape for help with source material and for further comments and Norman Thorpe for the photographs and comments. The late Fr Philip Price kindly showed us the relics.



Note: There is an etching made in 1866 by Charles Cattermole (1832 – 1900) of Abbot Paslew being taken from the Abbey to be hanged there. Perhaps the artist was unaware that he was hanged at Lancaster, or he might have thought that the Abbey gave a more dramatic effect.

There is an example of this etching in the Museum collection

During next year, we hope to arrange a visit to Whalley and Mitton, including a chance to see these relics

THE PECKOVERS AND R.E. HART

Collectors, Philanthropists and Kindred Spirits

'Catalogue of valuable printed books, illuminated and other manuscripts. Autograph letters and historical documents from the celebrated collection of the late Lord Peckover of Wisbech.'

This is the title of the seven Sotheby's sale catalogues dating between 1927 and 1951, and just a glance through them makes one appreciate how 'celebrated' the books and manuscripts ought to be.

Standing in the Library at Peckover House, Cambridgeshire (formerly Bank House, renamed by the National Trust in 1948 in commemoration of the family) one used only to be able to imagine what an impressive sight these books made when they were in their places on the bookshelves. Now, for the first time in eighty years, visitors can see some of these books, and representative pieces from the

collection, back in their original home as part of a loan from the R.E. Hart collection at Blackburn Museum and Art Gallery. In collaboration with Blackburn Museum and Mark Purcell, Libraries Curator for the National Trust, we have put together an exhibition that highlights some of the most spectacular examples of early and rare psalters and books of hours in the country.

The books reflect a tale of two collectors: R.E. (Edward) Hart and the Peckover family. Their collections share a common thread of faith, philanthropy, privacy, education, wealth, and compassion; both R.E. Hart and the Peckovers selflessly fulfilled the needs of others during their lifetime, and made investments and gifts in their communities that would last well into future generations.

Probably the most important object in the exhibition is the Peckover Psalter, purchased by Edward Hart in the Sotheby's sale of 12 December 1927. It was first brought into the Peckover family collection by Jonathan Peckover (1755-1833), the first Peckover of Wisbech, during the late 18th century. Jonathan purchased the Psalter (dated 1220-40) from the Jesuit College in Osnaburg (Osnabruck), Germany. It is regarded as one of the gems of the Hart collection, and would have had equal standing in the Peckover collection. The Psalter features dozens of illuminated and decorated initials, pen flourishes, and line fillers in colour throughout the text, and ten full-page miniatures featuring scenes from the life of Christ painted against luxurious backgrounds of gold. Although the original patron of the Psalter is unknown, it is suggested that it was made in a Parisian monastery, and subsequently stayed in the eastern region of France for some centuries.

The Sotheby's catalogue tells us that in 1927 the Peckover Psalter was the property of Miss Algerina Peckover (deceased) of Sibalds Holme, Wisbech. The collection was very much a family affair, and the book must have passed from Algernon to Alexander, and then to Algerina, remaining in her collection until her death, when it was sold under instructions from her executors, most probably



The Blackburn Psalter

the Penrose family, to whom she was great-aunt, and who instructed nearly all the Sotheby's sales of the Peckover book collection.

The Peckover Psalter realised £3,500 at the sale in 1927, a figure equivalent to around £200,000 today. This was the highest value for a book in the sale, and reflects the deep pocket and good eye of its purchaser, Edward Hart. It is interesting to note that the name alongside the annotated sale catalogue is not Hart, but possibly Coutts (the writing is not absolutely clear). Hart was known to be surreptitious about his purchases, using an agent to make a purchase, or a pseudonym at a sale.

Although the Peckovers as a Quaker family were prevented from going to university and entering certain professions, they made great strides in trades such as shop keeping, farming, manufacturing and in particular banking. Jonathan Peckover founded Peckovers Bank soon after he moved to Wisbech in 1777 aged 22, and the wealth he gained from the business allowed him to overcome the limited education he would have received as a non-conformist. A self-educated man with broad knowledge, he established the Wisbech Literary Society and became a vice-president of the Wisbech Auxiliary of the British and Foreign Bible Society; it is most probably through his connection with the latter that he sought out and purchased the Peckover Psalter.

A respected Quaker with a substantial estate and successful business, he had seven children, two of whom, William (1790-1877) and Algernon (1803-93), inherited their father's banking business and his collecting and philanthropic inclinations. Like Edward Hart a generation later, they amassed a collection and legacy that would benefit and affect the town in which they lived. The brothers gave generously to the town of Wisbech and were instrumental in the founding of the Wisbech and Fenland Museum in 1835, which still houses Peckover bequests. Algernon designed and financed the addition of the reading room to the library at the museum in 1887, and the museum served as an extension of their personal collections, which by now had filled Bank House (Peckover) and Sibalds Holme, where Algernon lived. Both brothers were active in the running of the museum, with William serving as its President from 1854 to 1869 and donating substantial funds and collections to it. In 1869 the brothers assisted with the purchase of nineteen acres of land for the first public park in Wisbech, a generous gift to the town which is still used to this day.

It was with Algernon's son, Alexander, Lord Peckover (1830-1919) that the pinnacle of the Peckovers' collecting habits was reached. At Peckover we have always thought that Alexander was the main collector and bibliophile of the family. Through further research, it seems that Alexander was also the curator of the fami-



Peckover, the new Library, with bookcases reconstructed in 1998/9

ly's book and wider collections, his Library, and the Wisbech and Fenland Museum, which was the showcase of several generations of Peckover collecting.

In 1878 Alexander commissioned the Norwich-based architect Edward Boardman to design a new Library extension and its fittings, which included mahogany bookcases, fire surround and overmantel mirror.¹ This vast room, measuring 52 x 21 feet, represents the culmination of the interests and achievements of several generations of the Peckover family's collecting habits. Alexander was a learned and discriminating collector, and had the collection remained intact it would have been amongst the most significant in the country.

Alexander's special interests lay in manuscripts, early printed books, bibles, maps, and atlases. He wrote at the turn of the 20th century about his library: 'I have since I was eighteen been a collector, at first on a small scale. My first purchase was a Hebrew Bible with Greek and Syriac Testament. I have made several collections'.

Alexander spent large sums of money on his collections. Once, when someone reminded him of Ruskin's remark that 'if a man spends lavishly on his library, you call him a mad bibliomaniac', he retorted: 'Ah, well, it has been a pleasant hobby, this collection of mine. I hardly think it has been my ruin; the books would fetch now more than I gave for them'.² Ever the successful business man and banker, he was astutely aware of their monetary value; but he was also aware of their wider educational and philosophical worth, and over his lifetime presented parts of his collection to institutions such as the Royal Geographical Society, to whom he gave his fine collection of maps and atlases. Following his death in 1919, his collection was dispersed among the family and eventually through the sale rooms into other institutions and private collections—as is the case with Edward Hart and the Peckover Psalter.

Peckover House (with the aid of the Pilgrim Trust) was fortunate to acquire one of Lord Peckover's manuscripts, the *Parva Catechesis* of St Theodore of Studites (759-826), dated c.1100. (The Catechesis was used to teach the principles of Christianity by question and answer to those preparing for baptism). This forms the centrepiece of the exhibition in the Library today, with its visiting cousins flanking it on either side.

Like Alexander Peckover, Edward Hart was involved in the family business, in his case that of rope-making. He was the

fourth generation of the Hart family to work his way up the business, and became director on the death of his father. He was also active in civil, but not political, life in Blackburn, promoting and supporting Blackburn businesses and being involved in philanthropic concerns and helping promote Christianity amongst the townspeople. Like Jonathan Peckover, he was a supporter of the British and Foreign Bible Society, and his mother, Hannah, had been a teacher at a Sunday school. J.G. Shaw in his *History of Thomas Hart's Rope Works of Blackburn* (1930) describes Hart as 'an advocate of education of the working classes [and] friend of the poor'. His most significant gift was that of £35,000 to the town council for the purchase of Witton Park estate in 1946. The house and grounds were to benefit the townspeople by recreation and education; this, along with his lifetime collection donated to the Library and Museum in Blackburn, sealed his legacy in the town.

Hart and the Peckovers were similar. They were well-educated, and advocates for education; wealthy, and ran businesses; public minded, and yet still very private. The purchase of the Peckover Psalter from the Peckover collection by Hart has a pleasing symmetry: Hart and the Peckovers, both wealthy philanthropists and passionate collectors, would have taken equal delight in the manuscript. I am sure they would feel great pleasure in knowing that the Peckover Psalter is now on display in the Library at Peckover House once again, if only for a short while. What will



Detail from the Blackburn Psalter

still live on in Wisbech and Blackburn are the generous donations of collections, museums and parks for the education and recreation of their citizens made by the Peckover family and R. E. Hart.

The exhibition has been put together with the kind help of Vinai Solanki (former curator of Blackburn Museum), Paul Flintoff (Blackburn Museum) and Mark Purcell, Libraries Curator for the National Trust, and is on view until the 1 November, 2015.

The books on display are as follows:

The Peckover Psalter, 1220-40

The Blackburn Psalter, 1260-80

Book of Hours, Use of Sarum, c.1440

Book of Hours, Use of Rome, c.1470-80

Book of Hours, Use of Rome, c. 1480-90

Ben Rickett, Peckover House

¹ David Adshead, 'Alexander Peckover's Library', *The Wisbech Society Annual Report*, 1998, pp. 24-9.

² Another Peckover manuscript was sold at Christies in July, 2011 for £200,000 —The Peckover Hours, Use of Rome, in Latin and French, illuminated manuscript on vellum — so one could say that Lord Peckover was right to say that collecting would not be his ruin.

Memories of a Lost Settlement by Craig Ward

This article appeared in the Wilpshire Parish Council Newsletter 2020 and is reproduced with the permission of the author. It was based on a much longer account entitled 'Memories of Haggs Hall Fields, Higher Ramsgreave in the 1940s and 50s' by DM Eddleston. compiled in 2000

If former generations of local residents could return, the first thing they would probably notice would be the large number of houses built in the past sixty years and yet there is one local area where a settlement has almost completely disappeared from the map.

Some of you will be familiar with a location known as Chinatown. It sounds exotic but it is the name given to a settlement of some twenty or thirty wooden bungalows, built mainly in the 1920s, in the fields below Ramsgreave Hall where a farm track drops down the steep slope into the valley between Ramsgreave and Salesbury. Its correct name is Haggs Hall, the name 'Haggs' in Old English meaning a bog or boggy land which is an accurate description of the terrain down there.

In the years after World War 1 it was common practice for farmers to allow people to erect small wooden bungalows on their land in return for a small ground rent. Such bungalows were often built in the countryside on the periphery of towns and within reach of the tram network or a railway station. In our area such bungalows were constructed on Parsonage Road and York Road



Ravenswing, 1960s

just over the Blackburn Borough Boundary where the rates were lower and planning rules less strict. Today most of these wooden dwellings have been demolished and replaced with more substantial detached houses or bungalows, but almost all those at Haggs Hall have disappeared.

At Haggs Hall each bungalow was individually built in the fields and had extensive gardens. There was no mains water, gas, electricity or sewers. Water was carried from nearby springs or wells or collected from the gutters. Tub toilets were the order of the day as in most rural communities. In the early years paraffin lamps and stoves were used though some owners built fireplaces with

cooking ranges. As most owners in those years before WW2 didn't have cars they had to walk a couple of miles along tracks and through the fields to the tram stop at Brownhill or to buy provisions at the Co-op. At one point in the 1940s one bungalow owner opened a little shop selling sweets and other basic items.

During the 1930s and war years this area was a popular destination for weekend daytrippers coming out of Blackburn on the trams. Family groups would walk up Ramsgreave Road and down through the fields to fish for tiddlers in Showley Brook and picnic on its banks whilst others made for Little Blackpool at Copster Green.

In this period the bungalows often changed hands but in WW2 several evacuee families lived in them permanently with the children walking through the fields to Salesbury School. After WW2, during the years of austerity and housing shortages, many bungalows were lived in on a permanent basis. It was, by all accounts, a happy community of respectable families who were proud of their properties and gardens. The residents weren't affluent and living was cheap and the rates were low. Residents in the 1940s included an accountant, a local hairdresser who even

employed an 'au pair', rather unusual for those times, a wagon driver, railway employee and millworkers from Roe Lee Mill, One colourful resident was a freelance entertainer who managed a troop of dancing girls called 'Frankies Dancing Diamonds'. One young couple by the name of Sargent certainly had an eventful life. The husband, Frank, took a commerce degree at Cambridge, joined the diplomatic service and travelled the world rising to High Commissioner in Dacca. They eventually retired to the south of France.

One of the nicest bungalows was Ravenswing which was built for the Cronshaw family in the 1920's at a cost of £500. It was built in the style of an old Australian 'Queenslander' on stilts to allow air to circulate and with a wide veranda. It had panoramic views over the Ribble Valley. A member of the Cronshaw family, Harold, became a well-known milkman in the Wilpshlre area for many years. He lived at Ravenswing until his death in 1996. The bungalow has since been demolished and replaced by a modern house.

Back in the 1940s and 1950s although the pace of life was much slower, life itself was harder than today especially for the womenfolk, with few amenities and all water having to be boiled on the stove. At least Calor Gas began to replace paraffin. Bedding was taken to be washed at Ramsgreave Laundry at Brownhill. Before the advent of electricity and transistors, people used radios with valves which were powered by relatively large accumulator batteries. These were collected weekly to be recharged at the local electrical store on Whalley New Road. Wintertime could be particularly harsh and residents could be marooned for days when the track up to Ramsgreava Road was impassable. Coal and other supplies had to be taken down by sledge. Windows were frozen on the inside as only one small fireplace supplied the heating. In contrast, summers were idyllic with the children playing in the fields and woods and helping local farmers with haymaking.

As the 1950s passed into the 60s the community began to disperse. Council housing was built at Mellor and families began to move out and by the late 1950s many of the bungalows had disappeared. The most accessible bungalows at the bottom of the hill reverted to weekend holiday homes and remained so until the late 1980s and early 1990s though the author knows of one lady - a retired teacher and now in her 80s - who lived in one for some years at the very end of the bungalow's life paying £200 in annual rent to the local farmer.

Now all that remains of Chinatown is a couple of derelict properties, a couple of chimney stacks, brick foundations and some overgrown gardens - reminders of what was for over thirty years a thriving community.



Derelict bungalow, Chinatown

COMMITTEE MATTERS

The Committee of the Friends of Blackburn Museum & Art Gallery (a grand title for a small and friendly group) met in February 2020 as usual, set the next meeting date for May as usual, and then lockdown was imposed.

During lockdown we continued to communicate by email, Jeff Cooper continued to deal with our finances while John Turkington sorted out the cancellation of the speakers he had booked.

In May 2021 a committee meeting was held via Zoom. This was helpful and efficient but definitely not the same as meeting face to face. Our first 'real' meeting in the Museum was held in September, and now we are happily back to our usual rota of four meetings a year.

We are looking for additional committee members. Although members have to be formally elected at the AGM, we are able to co-opt new recruits at any time. The Museum staff have all sorts of new projects planned and are keen for us to be involved. 2022 is going to be an exciting year.

Membership of the committee is not onerous. We meet in the Museum at 6.30 pm on a Tuesday four times a year. We need the stimulus of your different interests and different areas of expertise to keep the Friends active and effective. Please join us. - contact Mike Millward (Secretary - secretary@fobmag.org.uk, 01254 245254) if you would like to become a member of the committee.

Valerie Miles, Chairman

The committee met on 21st September and 23rd November at the Museum.

The AGM was held on 9th November, when Mike Millward was elected Secretary on the retirement of Sarah Gill. Geoff Coulthard and Philip Crompton also retired from the committee. Robert Svarc, formerly co-opted, was elected as a full member.

Also at the AGM, John and Sylvia Turkington were made Life Members of the Friends in recognition of their sterling work providing a truly remarkable and highly successful total of 50 Lockdown Lectures on Zoom during the pandemic.

The next committee meeting will take place on 22nd February 2022. If there is anything you wish to bring to the committee's attention, please contact one of the members.

Mike Millward, Secretary

Committee Members

Jeff Cooper, Hon Treasurer and
Membership Secretary

Joy Heffernan, President

Rebecca Johnson, Museum
Manager, ex-officio

Bruce Kitchin, Member

Gillian Mason, Member

Valerie Miles, Chairman

Mike Millward Hon Secretary & Newsletter)

Janine Monaghan, Member

Robert M Svarc, Member

John Turkington, Member (Programme, Outings)

Mary Waters, Member

Raymond Watton, Member

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The Friends of Blackburn Museum & Art Gallery is a registered charity.
It was founded in 1982 with the aim of promoting and supporting the
Museum

Subscriptions for the year are: Individual membership £10

Guest fee for individual lectures £2