



Tela



The Magazine of The Friends of
Blackburn Museum & Art Gallery

September 2026

This newsletter is completely FREE



Portrait of Jane Barton, attributed to Sir Joshua Reynolds (1723–1792)

This picture from the Blackburn collection features in "The Smoke and Mirrors of Art Attribution" on pages 2-3

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PROGRAMME 2026/27

Meetings are held in the Museum on the second Tuesday afternoon of the month at 2pm, unless otherwise indicated

13th October 2026: *Alfred Wainwright: His Journey from Blackburn to Butteremere.* Local historian Nick Burton talks about the author of the famed Lake District guidebooks.

10th November: ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, followed by a talk by Ken Ford: *An 'Unknown' Artist: Hubert Williams 1905 to 1989.*

8th December: a talk by John Turkington on *Santa Claus is Coming to Town: the Journeys of St Nicholas.*

Saturday, 12th December, 10am - Noon:
CHRISTMAS COFFEE MORNING at John and Sylvia Turkington's, 8 Oakmere Close, Blackburn BB2 4TN.
"Home-made cakes, mince pies and a raffle!"

12th January 2027: Steve Williams talks about *"Blackburn and T'Rovers" - the town's and Rover's history over 150 years.*

9th February: *Mirador Arts: Karel Klic - Copy That - Art for All.* Sue Ashworth talks about the Czech artist, photographer and pioneer of photogravure printing who worked in Lancaster during the late 19th c.

9th March: *Roman-Egyptian Mummy Portraits.* A talk by Mark Stein. There is a good example of these encaustic wax portraits in the Museum.

13th April: *Selling Books in Blackburn.* Ana Maria Rueda describes her work for Waterstones in Blackburn and some of her favourite books.

Friday evening, 14th May: *Ice Hockey in Blackburn* by Robert Svark.

Please note the date; Detailed arrangements will be confirmed.

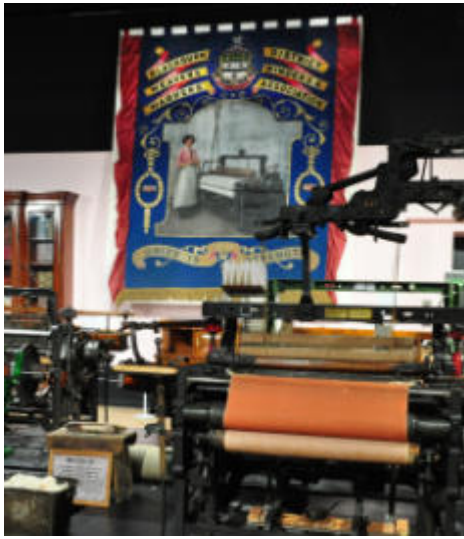
8th June: Members of staff talk about *Developments at the Museum & Art Gallery.*

Sunday, 27th June, 2-4pm: GARDEN PARTY at John and Sylvia Turkington's.

Details of the **2027 DAVID SHIPWAY LECTURE** are yet to be confirmed and will be circulated when available.

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

Subscriptions for the year are: Individual membership £15, or £25 for two members at the same address. Student members: £3. Guest fee for individual lectures £3

BAFM NEWS.**Banners, banners everywhere!**

The Weavers Banner on display in the Cotton Town Gallery at Blackburn Museum

At our June meeting, in which members of the the Museum's curatorial staff described recent developments, the Friends were shown pictures of the Winders, Warpers and Weavers Association Banner which has recently been restored and put on display in the Cottontown industrial gallery at the Museum.

This banner came to the notice of museum staff when they were moving stock that might be at risk of damage during the recent roof renovations. The silk fabric was quite fragile, had been folded as it is huge, and the picture panel had been completely separated from the rest of the banner. It had been made by painting the picture in oils on a large piece of silk, so not an easy thing to repair. However, the Conservators at The People's History Museum in Manchester took it on and after much time, effort and expense (including contributions from the Friends of Blackburn Museum and Blackburn with Darwen Arts Council), it is now on permanent display once more in its home town. The curators stressed the importance of this banner because of its unusual depiction of women in the workplace, even though this was a mixed sex association; the only other example known to exist is at Oldham.

As luck would have it I had been invited in my BAFM role to the AGM of the Friends of Gallery Oldham later that same week, so of course I asked about it while I was there. Their curator kindly searched his laptop for pictures as their banner is not currently on display. I also saw a painting by Lowry which they bought for £16 (canny investment there) entitled *The Procession* which shows how these banners were used in the past on Gala Days, which would have been amongst the highlights of the summer social scene between the wars. My mother, who was brought up in Sunderland, remembers wanting to go to Durham Miners' Gala and being very envious of her older sister who was allowed. Sadly for Mum the war came along and she never did get to attend.



L S Lowry: The Procession [Gallery Oldham]

Janet Ross, North West Regional Coordinator for BAFM

The Smoke and Mirrors of Art Attribution

Ian Ferris

According to Andy Warhol "Art is what you can get away with." In the world of attribution, "getting away with" a name like Rembrandt can mean a difference of millions.

I was reminded of this quote whilst looking through the Lancashire Volume of 'Oil Paintings in Public Ownership' published by The Public Catalogue Foundation. There, under the section on Blackburn Museum and Art Gallery, I found seven paintings whose attributions, according to the experts, were other than the actual named artist.

Attribution sits quietly at the centre of the art world, yet it shapes everything from an artwork's value to its place in history. The question of who created a piece has become increasingly complex as art historians revisit old assumptions, technologies uncover hidden layers, and markets place enormous financial weight on a single name.

Art attribution is not just about signatures or stylistic guesswork; it is a careful balance of historical research, scientific analysis, and expert judgment. It is an assessment of who was responsible for creating a particular work.

The leading auction houses and dealers have developed common attribution terms and meanings to explain who they feel an artwork was produced by. These are described below with the Blackburn Museum and Art Gallery examples noted accordingly.



1

BY : A work confirmed to be by that artist, signed or otherwise.

ATTRIBUTED TO : Probably by the artist, either in part or completely, but less certain than a direct signature.



Joshua Reynolds 1723-1792 - Jane Barton [ill on front page]

George Romney 1734-1802 - Mr Barton [ill 1]

STUDIO WORKSHOP : Created in the artist's studio, probably by one of their pupils and likely under their supervision.

CIRCLE OF : Produced by someone close to the artist during his lifetime, not necessarily a pupil but showing their influence.

Pieter Jansz van Asch 1603-78 - Landscape [ill 2]

Thomas Lawrence 1769-1830 - John Fowden Hindle [ill 3]

Francesco Guarino 1611-1654 - Isaac Blessing Jacob [ill 4]



FOLLOWER OF/STYLE OF :

Created in the artist's style, likely at a later date, but not necessarily by a pupil.

Joshua Reynolds 1723-1792 - Study for Beggar Man (George White) [ill 5]

MANNER OF : A work that resembles the artist's style but is not by them, often a later copy but not to be confused with 'follower of.' Some dealers are known to use this term for what appears to be a deliberate fake, that is they bear an artist's signature or inscription but by another hand.



AFTER : A copy of a known work by the artist of any date.

Guido Reni 1575-1642 - Beatrice Cenci [ill 6]

SCHOOL OF : There is also the use of 'school', which aims to provide some contextual background relating to origin or philosophies. For example, 'Barbizon School', or 'Hague School'.

In addition to the attribution of a painting we also have its provenance which is completely different.

Provenance is the documented history of ownership and custody of a work from the moment it left the artists studio up to the present day and would include proof such as sales receipts, exhibition records, auction catalogues, and names of previous collectors.

This obviously can have a significant impact on the items value but just as importantly by tracking its movement through the years ensures it wasn't stolen or looted, especially important for Nazi-era provenance research.

Weak provenance often forces experts to rely solely on scholarly analysis of the artist's style, materials, and techniques (connoisseurship). This is more subjective and can lead to a work being downgraded from "by" to "attributed to."

Both provenance and attribution are essential for authenticating art and determining its market. Not surprisingly the Blackburn paintings all date from the 17th and 18th century where the passage of time would make it difficult to provide an unbroken chain of ownership.

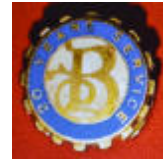
In the end, art attribution and provenance are essential to understanding not only who created a work, but also the journey it has taken through history.

As technology and research methods continue to advance, the study of attribution and provenance remains a vital part of preserving trust and integrity within the art world as well as rescuing forgotten masterpieces from obscurity and exposing sophisticated modern forgeries. Conversely, gaps in ownership history continue to leave multi-million pound markets vulnerable to deception.

Even history's most famous quotes are themselves misattributed or debated including the one by Andy Warhol that began this article!



[All photographs courtesy of Blackburn Museum]



by Ken Ford

In the last edition of TELA I wrote about Hargreaves Tobacconist's who had a shop in King William Street, Blackburn. Across the road at the corner with Church Street was a shop that was part of a national chain: Montague Burton. As the firm often did in its early days, it repurposed an existing building – in this case the Prince of Wales pub. Here the familiar signage avoids the excesses seen in other towns as shown below.



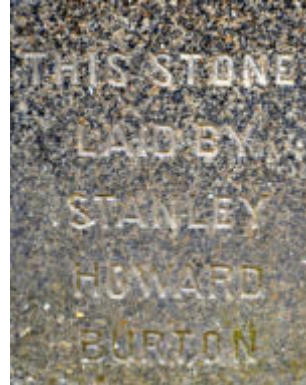
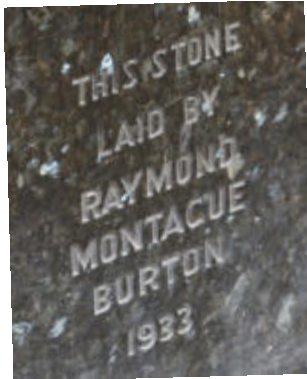
Later, from the mid-1920s, Burton's employed a Leeds architect, Harry Wilson, who made the stores instantly recognisable with their giant pilasters above the ground floor interspersed by windows appearing to rise through the floors with panels masking the joins. From the early 30s he headed Burton's own Architects Department and the buildings began to incorporate art deco features such as sun-bursts, Egyptian motifs and vertical fins. Since their later shop, next to Marks & Spencer's, is so similar to ones in other towns (although lacking art deco details) I had always assumed that it had been a total new-build in the 1930s. When I investigated what had been there before I was surprised to see an Edwardian department store called Worswick & Son that looked so much like the Burton's shop. Comparing the two below you can see that they have the same window formation, the same pilasters and the same cornice. With just minor alterations the architects turned the building into one consistent with the Burton house style.



The architects drawing on the right shows capitals at the top of the pilasters which are now missing and the firm's name and slogan on the parapet were taken down for safety reasons. Another difference is that the Venetian style windows on the 1st floor are only shown on one frame in the sketch whereas they actually appear on them all. Also, the stone discs between the tops of the pilasters were not on the Worswick building.

As an admirer of 1930s architecture and design, whenever I visit a town or city for the first time I look out for, and photograph, Burton's buildings. They are generally easy to spot. Some still show the company name at the top, either carved in stone or cast in bronze. Some have the name on metal vents let into the plinth at ground level. Occasionally the foundation stone, laid by a member of the Burton family, has been left in place. Floors at the entrance were often laid out with mosaic tiles in red, cream and green including the

name 'Burton'. Part of one at the Blackburn shop can be seen in front of the door to the upstairs dance studio – I assume it continues behind it. Here are some examples I've photographed of these clues to a building's previous life!



Sometimes the Burton sign has been chiselled off as in this example in Newbury or simply covered up as here in Lincoln.

The facades could be clad in stone, faience or black granite:



Leicester



Doncaster



Hull



If it was felt more in keeping with neighbouring buildings brickwork was incorporated as here in Newark.

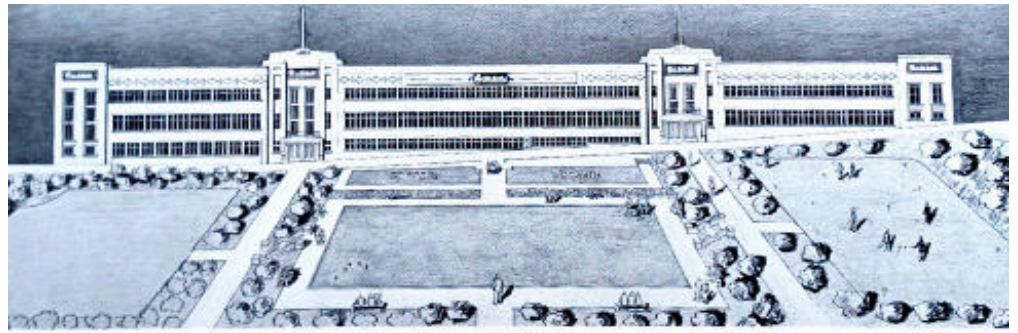


The use of the upper floors varied. They could be billiard halls (as in Blackburn), dance schools (as later in Blackburn), ballrooms or even used as accommodation. Sometimes the rooms were let out as offices. This is indicated by 'BUILDINGS' incorporated into the sign as here in Waterford.

The first Burton building to attract my attention was not a shop. There wasn't one in the small town where I grew up but 10 miles away in Goole, where my Grandmother lived, there was a new factory. I would pass by it when visiting Grandma and it was very impressive. The garden fronted works looked like a mansion and when I travelled home on dark evenings it was floodlit – quite a novelty in 1950. It was very small compared to the massive main works in Leeds (right) or the 1930s art deco factory in Worsley, Manchester (shown below), which was known as Burtonville. They also had factories in Bolton, Doncaster, Bradford, Kent and Dublin.



RAWCLIFFE ROAD CLOTHING WORKS, GOOLE.



UPPER WESTLOCK AVENUE ELEVATION, HUDSON ROAD MILLS, LEEDS 9.



Burton's vans also had an art deco streamlined look about them. Motor Transport magazine in 1939 wrote: The firm's road fleet is one of the most smartly turned out in the country, comprising vans with exterior coachwork comparable with that of the high-class car or motor coachan interesting publicity feature is the Montague Burton green neon name-sign on the front of each vehicle they are polished weekly and washed every night.

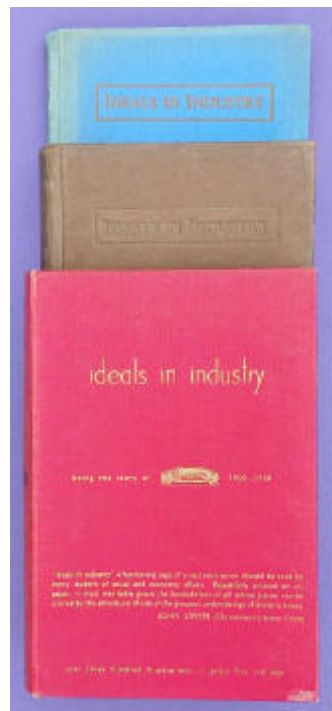
Meshe David Osinsky was born in Lithuania in 1885. He emigrated to Britain in 1900 and assumed the name Montague Burton. It is said that he started as a pedlar but in 1904, after borrowing £100, he opened

a ready-made clothing shop in Chesterfield. More shops followed and by 1909 he had opened a factory for bespoke tailoring. Rapid expansion followed: at the start of WWI he had 14 shops and 400 factory workers producing 48,000 garments a year. During the inter-war period men tended to wear suits at work or on social occasions and had them 'made to measure'. Despite opposition from existing tailors, Burton was able to continue to expand his business by clever advertising and impressive shop buildings, maintaining he was 'The Tailor of Taste'. In 1919 he had 36 shops; at the start of WWII he had a chain of 595 and another government contract to produce uniforms – over 13 million of them.





Montague Burton considered himself to be an exemplary employer and was knighted in 1931 for 'services to industrial relations'. He produced a book 'Ideals in Industry' which was regularly enlarged and updated. I have these 3 copies. The last one from 1950, which celebrated the firm's Golden Jubilee, has 480 pages and over



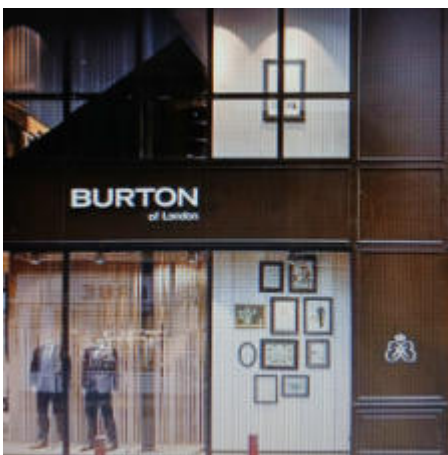
300 illustrations including perspective drawings of about 90 'modern temples of commerce' as he called his shops. The books are full of superlatives: the largest tailoring factory in the world employing 8,000; the largest canteen seating 4,000; the largest tailor's shop in London with the biggest neon signs, etc. The welfare department included a doctor's surgery, an ophthalmic optician, a dentist's and rest rooms for men and women.

To encourage team spirit the firm had a 25 acre sports ground for cricket, football, hockey, netball and for an annual athletics Sports Day.



Employees had free use of the city's swimming baths 4 nights a week and held Swimming Galas. A Cycling Club went on weekend tours and coach trips were arranged to London, Blackpool and Llandudno. There were facilities for a Dramatic Society and also a Gilbert & Sullivan Opera Group.

After a visit in 1930 the Prime Minister of New Zealand wrote to Sir Montague: "I wish to say how much we have enjoyed the visit to your factory. It has been an eye-opener to see such a large works and also to feel the very friendly spirit prevailing. To see such happy smiling faces makes one realise what a fine spirit of co-operation exists".



However not everyone was so enamoured. In his book, English Journey, J.B.Priestley wrote that he would rather see workers combining to provide these benefits for themselves far removed from the factory rather than as favoured employees of a concern trading for profit!

Sir Montague died in 1952. In the 1950s and 60s men dressed more casually in their leisure time so Burtons diversified becoming 'outfitters'. They became The Burton Group in 1969 and launched Top Shop, Top Man and Principles whilst acquiring other businesses such as Dorothy Perkins, and Evans Outsize. It was bought out by Philip Green's Arcadia in 1998 which went into administration in 2020 when all Burton shops closed down. The brand name was bought by Boohoo and 'Burton' clothes can now be bought online. A French company opened 51 'Burton of London' stores (left) across France in 2020 only to be liquidated in 2024.

2026 Art History Festival: Talks by Museum Friends at the Museum

2-3pm, 9th October, *Stories behind portraits in the Victorian Gallery* with Ken Ford

1-1.30pm, 10th October, *Japanese Prints - What are they? Why are they here?* With Mike Millward

Please see the Museum website to confirm details: <https://blackburnmuseum.org.uk/whats-on/>

COBinet of Curiosities

12th September 2026 - 5th January 2027

An Exhibition at the Museum & Art Gallery

by Creatives Of Blackburn

12th September 2026 - 5th January 2027

The museum's latest exhibition, COBinet of Curiosities, created by members of the Creatives of Blackburn (COB) with curatorial support from Hannah Beattie, Collections Engagement Officer, and Alys Rouncefield, Outreach and Engagement Officer, has just opened in the Watercolour Gallery. The COB is a group of local artists, makers and creatives co-founded in 2023 by Blackburn Museum & Art Gallery and the National Festival of Making.

Members meet monthly at the museum and take part in a range of activities including trips, crafts, funded commissions and exhibition opportunities. The group offers a community space for like-minded people who have an interest in and passion for creativity. They come together to socialise, share ideas and access professional development support in an "art world" that does not traditionally exist for many young people in areas like Blackburn with Darwen.

From this group, 12 COB members put themselves forward to develop and curate their own exhibition at the Museum inspired by our collections. The exhibition group first met in May 2026 and, after a lot of discussion about the exhibition theme, settled on the idea of reimagining the traditional 'cabinet of curiosity' and Wunderkammer - or wonder-room - of the past where collectors would store rare, strange and wondrous objects from nature, science and art. From this, the COBinet of Curiosities was born!



Photograph courtesy of Jasmine Wilkinson

Once the theme was chosen, the COBs were tasked with choosing an item from the museum collection inspired by their own personal interests and curiosities. This ranged from clouds in the works of J.M.W. Turner and Hokusai, to the hieroglyphics of the Egyptian collection, to fabric samples produced in the Lancashire mills of the twentieth century - their choices covered a diverse range of interests! Some of the items chosen have been displayed recently and offered the museum an exciting opportunity to see how the group would reinterpret them. Other items were surprising finds or had not been displayed for a long time, such as the fabric 'Water Wings', an early type of personal inflatable recently rediscovered by museum volunteers working on an audit of the museum's textile collection.

For the exhibition, the COBs were commissioned to create a piece of work inspired by their chosen museum items. This is where the creativity of the group shone, as they developed a collection of multidisciplinary works using their own skills and techniques, including screen-printing, handmade paper, photography, film, written word, embroidery and a light installation. These works are now on display in the gallery alongside the collection items and labels written in their own words. The display of these works presented the museum team (and the council's joinery team!) with some unique challenges, including hanging heavy portholes from a shipwreck, coordinating complex technology involving three televisions, and finding appropriate ways to display very fragile paper works, both in cloud and hieroglyphic form.

The exhibition opened to the public on the 12th of September and the COBs hope visitors will spend time exploring the group's curiosities and creativity as well as discovering works that reflect them, their experiences and their communities.

COBinet of Curiosities runs until Christmas 2026, and a programme of workshops and activities led by the COBs and inspired by the exhibition will be advertised on the museum's website and social media channels soon.

Hannah Beattie, Collections Engagement Officer

A Museum on This Side of the World

On two feet to Darwen Street, Blackburn

by Steve Gregson



I have written in the Tela newsletter previously about two museums which could be reached by Anni and I only by aeroplane and then by bicycle. They were a museum of miniature books, legible only by magnifying glass in Azerbaijan, and an ethnographic museum at the top of a long mountain pass in Colombia, South America.

The Sewing Machine Museum is located inside Hobkirk's sewing machine shop in Darwen Street, Blackburn and easily reached in a few minutes on foot from the town's main Museum and Art Gallery. It was founded by the late Peter Hobkirk, whose grandfather William had opened Wm Hobkirk & Son's first shop in Salford, Blackburn in 1903. Peter Hobkirk died in 2024; his son Mark has been Managing Director since 2012.

The museum, which was opened in 2015 by the fashion designer Patrick Grant of Great British Sewing Bee fame, contains about 200 sewing machine exhibits, the oldest being an American example from the 1860s by Grover & Baker of Boston, Massachusetts. Two of the most important are a precious 1873 Edward Ward "Arm and Platform" machine which has been valued at Sothebys, and a rare Singer machine issued to celebrate Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee in 1997. Photographs of both these machines can be seen below, and there are photos of many of the museum's exhibits on their website at www.hobkirk.co.uk. The Museum is well worth a visit and is quite possibly unique in the UK



The collection's founder, the late Peter Hobkirk at the opening of the museum in 2015 (Photograph: Hobkirk Sewing Machines)



Left: 1873 Edward Ward "Arm and Platform" machine and Right: Singer machine produced to celebrate Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee in 1897, with a detail of the decoration.

If you are thinking about starting your own collection of antique sewing machines, Hobkirk's even have some for sale in their shop window!



The editor wishes to record his thanks to Hobkirk Sewing Machines for their help in the preparation of this article.

The editor's thanks to Philip Crompton who has once again pointed me in the direction of an interesting titbit from the Library archives.

In July 1957 a BBC film unit came to Blackburn to cover the mass exodus of the workers, better known to us as "Wakes Week". The film, which was directed by John Schlesinger, the Oscar winning film director best known for Midnight Cowboy, has survived and lasts about 5 minutes. It is of excellent quality and the following link will take you to the BBC website where you can see it.

If possible, it is better to watch the film before reading the article.

<https://bbcrewind.co.uk/asset/600ef2fd3a53aa00279736b0?q=blackburn&size=45>

Please contact the editor if you have difficulty viewing the film and I will do my best to help.

Many of us will have experienced the shut-down during Blackburn holidays, and older readers like me might remember the 1950s BBC programme "The Grove Family," the first soap opera on British TV.

The Blackburn Times spotted discrepancies and a little bit of artistic licence in the film and published the following article, putting forward the correct facts (they don't, however, seem to have known how to spell the director's name).

Editor's note: All home address details of people mentioned in the article have been removed.

The Blackburn Times

Reporter: R.F. Kennedy, 26th July 1957

WAKES WEEK SHUTDOWN

BLACKBURN'S GROVES – THE BEARDSWORTH FAMILY

A BBC television film unit came to Blackburn last weekend and spent three days collecting material for a six minute feature on one of their "Tonight" programmes which go on air between six and seven each evening.

The aim of the director of the unit – former actor John Schlesinger – is to give the viewer an impression of work and life in a typical Lancashire mill town gradually coming to a halt as the wakes weeks draw near.

But for the unit it was a case of having to resort to a series of tricks of the trade in order to present that picture.

The cameras turned on A weaver who wasn't a weaver a family going on holiday ... who weren't going on holiday a mill stopping that wasn't an empty town that wasn't empty two boys leaving a school they didn't attend.

It was on Thursday that Mr. Schlesinger, a lively character with a bronzed cheery face, arrived in Blackburn to spy out the land.

TRIBE QUEUES

He knew just what he wanted - Blackburn folk queueing for tripe and fish and chips and black puddings – Blackburn folk spending their money on the open air market, buying in the last few things before going on holiday. Blackburn folk smiling as they opened their fat holiday pay packets.

He got his pictures, though not without some juggling of things as they happened.

The unit, including the producer, consisted of four men. Scotsman Ian Barrowman handled the camera with Eddie Best, of Farnborough, as his assistant, and Londoner George Rose as general handyman.

They begin work with a lightening tour of the town on Thursday of last week. They had to leave for South Wales on Sunday, so their "quiet town" shots had to be filmed on Blackburn's half-day closing.

They snapped empty milk bottles on doorsteps, deserted streets, a solitary policeman walking past a closed bank where a notice was displayed informing clients that the premises would be open until only 11.00a.m during the holidays.

Friday was a crowded day for the unit. They stormed into New Market Street in the morning, and watched by scores of puzzled passers by, rolled off hundreds of feet of film in shops in the neighbourhood.

A tripe shop was invaded by the quartet. The normal light bulbs were replaced by photo-floods for better lighting. And under the sharp-incisive beams the shop manager cut, weighed and served fatty seam, honeycomb tripe and trotters.

The customers – there was quite a queue when people outside realized they might be on the "Tele" – played their part like real troupers and needed no urging from Mr. Schlesinger to avoid staring at the camera.

Had they wished to state into the lens they would have found it difficult, for cameraman Barrowman was perched hazardously on a creaking cane chair behind them.



Finally, the crew were satisfied. The photo-floods were removed and the shop was left to carry on its trade under considerably more peaceful conditions.

A REGISTER OFFICE

Next port of call was the Register Office where arrangements had been made previously to film a couple after their wedding.

Bride and groom who will have the privilege of seeing themselves on film were Town Hall typist Miss Anne Dewhurst and bricklayer Ronald Wild, who is a racing cyclist with the North Lancashire Road Club.

As the couple posed for the camera, traffic came to a standstill in King Street, the inevitable crowds gathered and the busy scene drew a nearby hairdresser from his packed establishment to inquire who was being married. He was certain they must be "somebody" otherwise the BBC wouldn't be there.

At Cicely Bridge the firm of John Baynes gave every assistance to the unit. Looking most uncomfortable in the humid heat of the weaving shed, Ian Barrowman squatted on his haunches, lay on his back, climbed on stools all to get the camera angles he wanted.

Various parts of the automatic looms were pictured in whizzing motion while the mill's characters flitted busily between them. Joe Taylor, a 53 year old weaver, posed with a reed hook clenched between his teeth.

Others who feature in the film, though there is no guarantee that their performances will not finish up on the cutting room floor at TV headquarters, were 56 year old Mrs. Lily Taylor who learned her weaving at Cicely Bridge as a girl, and Mrs. Nellie Colbert (53).

A pretty Irish learner-weaver, 17 years old Nancy Morgan, had her moment of fame as she faced the whirring camera.

HOLIDAY FAMILY

For the purposes of the film, producer Slezinger had obtained the co-operation of a Pendle Street family by the name of Beardsworth. The head of that family, 41 years old Bob Beardsworth, is an assistant foreman in the warehouse at Cicely Bridge Mill.

But on the day the TV cameras came to Cicely Bob Beardsworth became a weaver and he was pictured operating a loom. The rest of the family was also embroiled as we shall hear later.

After the interior filming, Ian Barrowman went into action in the foyer beside the mill lodge where he took pictures of the workers "receiving their payout". In fact, they had drawn the holiday pay six days previously.

Then to give an artistic touch to the visit, a brief shot was recorded on film of the mill stack puffing out its "last black cloud" before the fires were extinguished for a fortnight. The odd thing was that the stack doesn't give out black smoke anyway!

On Friday evening, in an upper room of an hotel in the town centre tape recordings were made of Lancashire voices which were to be dubbed on to the film. Two characters from Alma Mill, weaver Jack Duckworth and battery filler James Aspden had a great time reeling off their Lancashire "ditties".

There was more serious singing from Miss. G.M. Holden, who is a member of the office staff at Cicely Mill. She was asked by the producer Slezinger to find a Lancashire lullaby at the last minute, but in spite of frantic searching he had to be content with a Basque lullaby.

HER OWN VERSES

The personnel officer at Cicely Bridge, Mrs. Constance Tattersall, an expert in poetry, wrote her own verses telling the story of Blackburn going on holiday and this, too, went on to the tape.

To cap it all a Blackburn Times reporter was unceremoniously "married off" to Mrs. Tattersall and for a time they became Mr. and Mrs. Bob Beardsworth chatting together about their holidays to come. A tape recording was made of this piece of fiction.

Mrs. Beardsworth earlier in the day had been taken into King Georges Hall where the camera turned on her as she in apron polished a minute section of the ballroom floor. Mrs. Beardsworth's job: A dance hall cleaner but not at King Georges Hall!

The Beardsworth's two sons, Robert (10) and Derek (9) had also joined in Friday's frolics being pictured "breaking up" at a school which neither of them attend.

But the family agreed afterwards that it had been a thrilling experience.

Said Mrs. Beardsworth: "At first I was scared stiff of it all, but the BBC people were ever so nice. As for the children, they didn't bother at all – it was right up their street. When the pictures were being taken at the school the boys told all their pals about it and a lot of them managed to get on the picture."

Among other things the cameraman took photos of her bringing in her last few pieces of washing.

On Saturday morning the Beardsworths were allegedly off to the seaside for a week, they must have had mixed feelings when, after the camera had stopped turning, they made their way back to Pendle Street and home.

And this week, when they had hoped to make it to the seaside just for odd days, the rain had spoiled their plans.

COMMITTEE NEWS

Committee meetings were held on 5th May and 8th September. Two vacancies on the committee have been filled by co-opting David Howarth and Mark Stein, who will stand for election at the AGM in November.

The Friends have purchased a dishwasher for the Museum staff room, which will be available for use after our meetings and we also plan to contribute towards the re-display of the stained glass in the Hart Gallery. We are purchasing a set of occasional stools for use in the galleries, partly funded with the £500 BAFM "Friends of the Year" award gained in 2025, and we have also applied to Blackburn & Darwen Arts Council for a grant towards the cost.

At the Museum, the shop has been improved and work continues updating the displays. The Museum staff have been very busy recently on their Accreditation return. Accreditation, the UK Standard for museums and galleries, is administered by the Arts Council and is assessed periodically to see



The Secretary conducting a museum tour for members of Oldham U3A

standards are maintained. It is vital for access to many grants and other services.

Members have contributed to the Museum by helping with the Art Open Exhibition administration and giving lunchtime lectures and museum tours. The David Shipway Lecture, which is sponsored by the Friends as a free public event, was held on Saturday 19th September.

The Garden Party in June raised £300; it will be the last at Parsonage Road. Next year, John and Sylvia Turkington will once again be hosts. They will also be holding the Christmas Coffee Morning on 12th December.

The AGM will be held as part of the meeting on 10th November. I intend to resign as secretary and Mark Stein has offered to stand as my replacement. David Howarth will be standing for the committee, along with Janet Ross and Mike Waters who are due for re-election after their three year term. The offices of Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer are all elected annually and members are invited to put themselves forward for election for the committee and offices.

The next committee meeting is scheduled for 3rd November. Feedback from members is always welcome - please contact me if you have any matters of concern.

Committee Officers and Members

Cynthia Johnston, President
Rebecca Johnson, Museum Manager,
(ex-officio)
Valerie Miles, Chairman
Mike Millward, Hon Secretary & Newsletter
Ken Ford, Hon Treasurer and Membership
Secretary
Janet Ross, BAFM NW Regional
Co-ordinator

John Turkington, Programme and outings
David Howarth
Bruce Kitchin
Gillian Mason
Mark Stein
Robert M Svarc
Mike Waters
Raymond Watton

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Programme: John Turkington, email jtvst2000@gmail.com

Friends Web Site: www.fobmag.org.uk

Blackburn Museum & Art Gallery: tel. 01254 667130

For up-to-date information about events at the Museum, see the Museum website
<https://blackburnmuseum.org.uk/>