

THE TOWNSHIP OF
WORSLEY

Within the HUNDRED OF SALFORD
Of the COUNTY OF LANCASTER

A COMPREHENSIVE HISTORY

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Worsley 2023

PREFACE

My intention is to produce a comprehensive history of the Township of Worsley covering all the salient events. To my best knowledge there is no such work yet extant. It is true that virtually everything mentioned is covered in many sources but having to juggle between them can get distracting.

Hopefully this will fulfil its purpose and in so doing dispel many of the myths that have grown up round our history and heritage.

I claim no extensive knowledge of events pre 1700 being essentially an industrial historian. However I must give gratitude and thanks to the pioneering work of Frank and Elsie Mullineux, They freely shared material particularly about the pre canal years. Some further material about this and later periods comes from the large number of books and essays produced by a friend and colleague, John Aldred.

Cover of the period post 1760 comes largely from my own publications from research in primary sources. Details of the years after 1860 have virtually first-hand account being largely drawn from the Victorian and Edwardian newspapers which together cover fairly comprehensively, transport, industry of all kinds and social life.

The first part is essentially a chronological record of events and personalities up to the year 1760. After that date the work divides into the natural phases of the Township's life.

Part Two covers the Duke's industries with Part Three detailing the Nineteenth Century when the Bridgewater Trust controlled virtually everything. Walkden becoming predominant due having the lion's share of utilities and officialdom fills part four. Part five details the nineteenth century staple industries, coal and cotton. Early Twentieth century re-structuring at every level from the sale of Worsley to the merger with the Township of Little Hulton fills part six. Part seven completes the century and beyond. Parts eight, nine and ten deal with the many aspect of formal, domestic and social life in what was, until after the First World War, a Company controlled Town.

Each Part is split into subject chapters so as to present a clear narrative. There was so much going on in every sphere that to continue with a chronological view would overcrowd the theme although there is often need to give some cross reference to other aspects of life in Worsley in any given chapter.

Clearly, there will be omissions and inevitably errors for which I apologise.

These are mine and mine alone.

In memory of

Wm. M. Rogerson

Frank and Elsie Mullineux, who with Ann Monaghan

Promoted study of the history of the area

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PART ONE

Manorial estate to Ducal industrial estate

WORSLEY, AN APPRAISAL.

The Township of Worsley situated on the western fringe of the Greater Manchester conurbation can rightly lay claim to have been at the forefront in many spheres of human achievement. From the landowners and residents of what until recently was a small Township, its story epitomises the proverb “from little acorns, large oaks grow.

Worsley village is situated facing south in a sheltered position at the foot of a Middle Coal Measure sandstone ridge which runs approximately north-west and south-east. This is in fact the northern edge of the Irwell Valley. It is situated where a stream, Worsley Brook, cuts through the ridge and where the valley edge provided better drained land for farming than the area nearer the river. “Worsley” which included the sub-manors of Wardley, Kemnough and Booths, was large enough to be split into two divisions for the purposed of basic civil administration.

Its Aristocratic owners – and their Agents were the architects of the Elizabethan and Georgian Poor Laws. The most famous landowner used Worsley as the starting point of the Transport and Industrial Revolution. His Great Nephew implemented the provisions of the first Industrial Legislation even before it was enacted. Social engineering by the landowners changed the demographic and economic base of the area. Such was the power of these landowners they were able to resist demands for democratically elected Local Government until forced to do so by National legislation.

Over the lengthy transition from a Ducal, almost Feudal Manor to a highly industrialised 20th century Town many notable developments began here. Our canal, itself a world first, spawned the largest combined water transport and coal mining operation as well as pioneering steam navigation. Clearing its industrial dereliction brought one of the first reclamation projects. Some of its sportsmen became national figures and Worsley made a major, but covert contribution to the Second World War.

THE EARLY YEARS.

Up to about 1,000 years ago the area where Worsley now stands was part of the floodplain of the proto-River Irwell. For millennia this river meandered over a large area many miles wide, its valley eventually retreating to something like its present course. It left behind an uninviting landscape several miles wide of wet, marshy land covered in scrub, unsuitable for settlement apart from a few pieces of higher ground used in pre-historic times. About the time the river had settled down, groups of people started to look for better places to live. Originally living north of the floodplain they saw an area to the south, sheltered by the sandstone ridge that is now the site of Swinton, Worsley, Tyldesley etc, but with fertile soil below the ridge to indicate good farmland.

Running through the ridge was Worsley Brook, a lively stream rushing southwards to the Irwell, bringing with it plenty of water and also the potential for waterpower. This form of power was vital in the early days when water mills developed. Everything belonged to the Lord of the Manor and users had to pay for having their grain processed, which also placed more control in the hands of the Lord.

Several remains of the Roman occupation exist throughout the district. The Roman road from Castlefield, their Manchester fort, to Wigan crossed the present golf course north of the Old Hall, through the car park of the Woodside Hotel. It then passed to the north of the Yew Tree Inn at Mosley Common continuing through Tyldesley to Wigan. It has been revealed at least four times in archaeological digs.

A lesser Roman road linked that road to the main Roman road from Manchester to Ribchester is important to the history of the place now known as Walkden. It crossed Old Clough Lane and curved round into what is now the A6 which it followed closely through Little Hulton, to Blackrod where it merged with the Main road to Ribchester.

Further evidence of Roman life came with the unearthing of an earthenware pot in the grounds of Little Hulton Vicarage in 1930 and the discovery of a hoard of 540 Roman coins during work near a cotton mill in Boothstown Delph in 1947 and a further hoard in 1987, off Leigh Road near Booths Bank Farm.

In Saxon times, somewhere about the year 900, what is now Lancashire was, for administration purposes divided into six areas known as "Hundreds". The south east corner was known as the Hundred of Salford, with the eventual Worsley right on the boundary, abutting the Hundred of West Derby. An actual boundary stone (not the pub!) is still extant on the opposite side of the road to Ellenbrook Chapel. This stone also marks where the later Townships of Worsley, Little Hulton and Tyldesley with Shakerley meet.

The legendary founder of the Manor of Worsley was named Elias who tradition suggests he came over with William the Conqueror. It appears from surviving documentation he was a member of the Saxon family who were overlords in the area, the de Barton's. At the Conquest, Worsley was granted to Elias who was thence known as Elias de Worsley. His family retained the Manor until well into the twelfth century.

In earlier times the activities of the village were centred on the needs of an Estate with the necessities of life within the customs of a mediaeval manor in which services were centralised. At the heart of the manor of Worsley lay the home of the lord of the Manor and site of the manorial corn mill.

Records show that that in 1376 Worsley had a house with hall, chamber, chapel and kitchen but the location of this building is not known for certain. It is likely the first Lords of the manor had a hall central to the village. It is unlikely the rather remote position of the present Worsley Old Hall would have appealed and a site nearer the mill chosen. The local name "Warke" suggests the earthwork protecting the hall. Worsley Old Hall dates from the 17th century but may incorporate parts of an older structure.

HOW DID THE EGERTON'S INHERIT WORSLEY?

Geoffrey de Worsley, the last of the Worsley's of Worsley died in 1385 his daughter married Arthur de Worsley of Booths. His sister, who inherited Worsley, married Sir John Massey of Tatton in 1372. Several generations later an heiress daughter in 1557 married Sir Richard Brereton of Malpas in Cheshire, who thus acquired Worsley and Tatton.

The most notable Egerton in Elizabethan days was the illegitimate son of Sir Richard Egerton of Ridley, Cheshire and his serving maid Alice Sparkes.

Born in 1540, Thomas Egerton was educated at Oxford & Lincolns Inn. Successful in a Law Suit against Queen Elizabeth, the Queen so impressed by his ability said "Never again shall this man plead against me" so he was taken onto her staff. Knighted and created Solicitor General and Master of the Rolls in 1594, he was further promoted to Lord Keeper of the Great Seal in 1596

His secretary was John Donne, his deputy Francis Bacon. He acted in a law suit for Shakespeare and drew up deeds in favour of Drake and Raleigh. He advised that Mary be arraigned as "so called Queen of the Scots". In 1616 was created Viscount Brackley, after the place of that name in Northamptonshire belonging to his wife.

He codified the Great Poor Law of 1603. This enacted that each Parish was responsible for the Poor using money levied on all householders, all under the control of Overseers. This Law covering what we would now call "Social Services" remained until modified in 1782 by the "Gilbert Act", another man with Worsley connections.

Under James the first, Thomas was created Lord Chancellor and Baron Ellesmere in 1603 and aged 74 he retired on a pension of £3,000. In 1617 he was offered an Earldom, on his death bed he refused it.

Succeeded by his son John, born 1570, who on a payment of £20,000 was granted the Peerage his father had refused. He took the title Earl of Bridgewater.

Dorothy Egerton, b 1560, and half sister of Sir Thomas, Baron Ellesmere, married Richard Brereton of Tatton and Worsley in 1572 the year Richard bought the Manor of Bedford, near Leigh. When Richard died in 1598 he left Worsley and Tatton to Dorothy for life and then to her half brother Sir Thomas Egerton. Dorothy remarried in 1604, her new husband being Sir Peter Legh of Lyme Hall, Cheshire. So, it was through the Brereton's that the Egerton's acquired the manors of Tatton, Worsley, Bedford and Middle Hulton.

John Egerton, the 1st Earl Bridgewater bought out Dame Dorothy's life interest in the Worsley Estate for £10,000 in 1630 and from then on received the income from the Estate though Dame Dorothy Legh still lived at Worsley Old Hall.

She set her mark on Worsley when she died in 1639; her will established the Dame Dorothy Legh Charity, leaving money derived from the rental of Common Head Farm, Mosley Common for the poor of Worsley and the Curate of Ellenbrook Chapel. Boosted by mining royalties in the 1860s, the fund is still in existence but with the income paid into the Diocese.

John, the 1st Earl of Bridgewater died in 1649, succeeded by his son John who granted his Worsley estates to his second son, Sir William Egerton and the Tatton estate to his third son.

ITS MANY PARTS

There are four other ancient constituent parts of what is now understood to be "Worsley", they are Respectively Boothstown, Wardley and Kepnough who each had Halls and also Walkden Moor, later to become the dominant part of the Township.

Boothstown does not take its name from a family but is likely to have become associated with the "Booths" or temporary huts erected by herdsmen on the land at the edge of Chat Moss. The area was held by a descendent of the Worsley family who, to differentiate became known as Worsley of the Booths.

On the death of Henry de Worsley in 1299 the estate of Booths was left to his younger son Robert. It was he who settled on the estate and built the first Booths Hall in the 1320s. The estate was held by successive generations of Worsley's of Booths until 1591 when the last Sir Robert Worsley of Booths sold it to Robert Charnock for £1,400. It was the great grandson of this last Worsley of Booths who married the heiress of Hovingham in Yorkshire, from whom Katherine Worsley, Duchess of Kent is descended. The original part of the Hall was demolished in the 1920s leaving the 17th and 18th century additions still standing.

A second Booths Hall was built by 1640 possibly by Thomas Charnock. A subsequent owner, Francis Sherrington fell into debt as a result of the Civil War and left in the 1690s. Bought by the Clowes family, it remained with them until in 1809. It was bought by Robert H Bradshaw, Superintendent of the Bridgewater Trust who sold to Lord Francis Egerton in 1836, thus re-uniting the Booths Estate with Worsley.

There has probably been a hall at Wardley for over 700 years. In 1298 Henry de Worsley gave the Wardley estate to his brother Jordan, making Wardley a sub manor of Worsley. When Jordan died his sole heir was his daughter Margaret who was kidnapped and forcibly married to Thurstan Tyldesley of Tyldesley. Thus Wardley came into their possession that held it until 1560 when the last Thurstan Tyldesley because of financial difficulties sold to the Sherrington family.

From the Sherrington's it passed in 1609 to a staunch catholic family, the Downes who were to be central to the story of THE SKULL. On Easter Sunday in 1641 at a time when Catholicism was suppressed, Father Ambrose Barlow had celebrated Mass for the Downes family at Wardley then went to do the same at Morleys, the moated hall at Astley. News reached Leigh church and the vicar led what could only be described as a lynch mob who surrounded Morleys and took Ambrose.

He was Comitted to Lancaster Castle and on September 10th he was hung, drawn and quartered, his head being placed on the castle gate. It was secretly secured by Francis Downes and placed in a chest and walled up in the Hall. It was discovered about 1745 and thrown into the moat.

That evening there was a terrible thunder storm and the superstitious folk asked the skull be retrieved. The skull was eventually placed in a glass fronted inlay on the main staircase, where it remains.

Tradition has it that in 1745 part of Bonnie Prince Charlie's retreating Jacobite army stopped at Wardley and under the threat of burning down the Hall, requisitioned horses, carts and supplies. On the 1764 estate map a nearby field is identified as "Rebel Field."

In 1770 the Wardley estate was bought by the 3rd Duke of Bridgewater, thus re-uniting it with the Manor of Worsley.

Kempnough as a separate entity came when Richard de Worsley gave his brother Roger lands when he married Margery de Kempnough in 1278. Eventually a female descendent married a Richard de Parr (hence Parr Fold) whose son married the heiress of Cleworth Hall in Tyldesley, the family becoming known as the Parrs of Cleworth and Kempnough.

It passed again through the female line when, in 1594 she married Nicholas Starkie of Huntroyd. The half timbered hall became embroiled in strange stories of Demoniactal Possession. Their children began fainting and foaming at the mouth, probably epileptic fits, but in those superstitious days they were thought to be under the influence of demons.

A man named Edmund Hartley was employed to "conjure" the demons away. He failed and the Starkies refused to pay him, Hartley promptly cursed the place and seven people were said to have immediately become possessed by spirits. Hartley was arrested, tried for witchcraft and hanged at Lancaster Castle It gradually lost its individuality as a residence and reverted to a row of three cottages, the hall and estate being bought by the Bridgewater Trustees in 1876.

Three lesser halls within the Manor were often occupied by lower ranking sons or widows. Such was the situation with Hazelhurst Hall. In 1195 the son of Elias, gave the land to His brother Hugh, known as Hugh the Clerk and also Hugh de Monton. After the last of this line, the stone built Hall was used for Stewards of the Estate, initially the Peake's in the 17th century and Massey's in the 18th century. These became both its mining engineers and "Seneschal of the Court", or Proxy of the Lord of the Manor at the Court Leet.

Both Beesley and Drywood Halls appear to have been substantial farmhouses before being gentrified in the mid 19th century. Drywood was tenanted successively by the Lansdale, Edge and Marsh families.

A common interpretation of the name "Walkden" still widespread in the 1950s, as being a Walk – to – Deane (church) was incorrect. The name first documented in 1292 pre-dates Deane parish and until 1863 Walkden was part of the parish of Eccles. Thus Walkdenites would have to walk to Eccles. A truer interpretation is that the "walk" comes from the Old English word Walcan, meaning "to full", that is the occupation of walking, treading or beating woollen cloth in water to matt the fibres, the dene part being a Clough or valley. Walkden Moor, the land which once covered most of Little Hulton obviously took its name from the Walkden Brook, which forms the northern boundary with Farnworth. The south side of the stream was then in the Manor of Worsley and if you pronounce Walcdene quickly you will know why the traditional pronunciation was Wogdin.

The road, now the A6, from Shaving Lane – the old name for Walkden Road, to The Stocks was known as the Stanney Street, (stony street) which gave its name not just to the dwellings which developed round the road junction but also the farms which developed on the east side of Bolton Road as far as Hill Top. The name Stanistreet was still being used in the late 1800s; a row of houses near Church Road still bears the name Stanney Terrace.

Inter-family feuds, rivalries and finances dogged the right to ownership of Walkden Moor for generations. Events came to a head in a dispute between the Brereton's and the Worsley's of Booths, the result, in 1503 became known as the Battle of Walkden Moor. Sir John Massey recorded "That Robert Worsley of Booths accompanied by divers riotous and misruled persons arrayed in a manner of war with Jaks, Brigandes, Gestrons, Galettes and Steel Bonnets, Bows Arrows Spears Bills Swords and Bucklers to the number of one hundred and fifty four persons.

Knowing that your Beseechor intended that day to drive the moor assembled in several arranged places there having with them a long spear with a kerchief hanging on it for a token where they should meet - And assaulted the servants and beat and wounded and hurt them so they were in jeopardy of their lives." Complicated law suits continued until the 3rd Duke of Bridgewater settled the matter once and for all by enclosing the land to his estate.

Until the 19th century the only building of any size in the far north of Worsley had the name Croumbouke Hall, described as "built if bricks and thatched, it had buttresses, very strong." It was on land owned by the Bagot family who through a marriage settlement gained many parcels of land. The family also operated a small colliery working the Croumbouke seam. Which is named after the other, the Hall or the coal seam is unclear. It was demolished when the LNWR built the Low Level railway and station in 1875. The present Ellesmere occupies its approximate site.

MOTIVE POWER, MANORIAL POWER AND PROPERTY

Water power was the most useful in early times and it is probable there was a Manorial corn mill, together with its adjacent mill dam, in Worsley, on the site at the bottom of what is now Mill Brow, as early as 1206. Use of the mill belonging to the Lord of the Manor was enforced by the Manorial Courts whose records show regular transgressions, prices in use and orders to control the miller.

Thus in 1621 when Lady Dorothy Leigh held the Manor: - This Court presents That the miller of the Ladyes Milne of this Mannor, his family and servants shall drye the oates of his customers after the rate of 3d the sack And shall not abuse his customers upon payne to make amends of Double Value to any person as shall be evilly dealt with And to forfeyt Double Value of the trespass to the Lady of the Manor. The Court continued with: - Presentment for withdrawing Moulter from the Mill (Moulter was the payment to the miller in corn or flour instead of cash) 15 tenants were Amerced, or fined 6d for so doing. Followed by an entry reporting that:-- This Court do lay a Payment that every tenant of this Manor that shall greened their corne att any other Mylne save only the Milne of the Lady of the Mannor without just cause or Evil Usage of the Miller shall for every Seeve of oats forfete XlId. Fines had increased by 1688 for: Ralph Hardman for not grinding his Corne and Malt at the Lords mill, is Amerced 10s

On the earliest datable map of 1740 – 50, the mill dam is shown as having a roughly circular shape with the brook entering from the northern side and leaving on the western side. Fed by the Worsley Brook, this small dam having powered the mill, both its overflow and tailrace from the mill is shown on an early map of 1740 – 50, emerging through separate arches of a bridge carrying what is now Worsley Road. Worsley Delph is almost entirely man made. The Middle Coal Measure Sandstones, known locally as Delph Rock, are about 37 metres thick and there are about 9 metres exposed in the western wall. This western portion provided excellent building stone which has probably been made use of since mediaeval times. Records exist of 4,821 wagon loads of stone being taken to Barton for the construction of a bridge across the River Irwell between 1676 and 1679. The stone was carted by local farmers the 2.5 miles (4 km) from Worsley to Barton at a price of 1/6d (7.5p) in winter and 1/3d (6.5p) in summer. The accounts for the bridge also show the operation being responsible for a sum of "£5 for the railing of the Worsley Stone Delph there with Oak Wood. A spit of land was left holding two half timbered and thatched cottages as well as carry what became Worsley Road, then still a bridleway.

Until the start of the 18th century Worsley Manor had a very small and scattered population. Estate tenancy records give the picture. Excluding the occupants of the several Halls, noted as "Free tenants" on each listing in 1428 there were 30 tenants at will. By 1446 these had increased to 38, in 1621 to 95 and by 1733 to 140 cottages. Some were clustered round the core of the Manor near the

mill, several around what was likely the main centre of life, Roe Green. Some idea of its prominence is shown by there being twenty one cottages as well as what are shown as the "Haules of Kempnough and Beesley."

Economic operations centred on agriculture of both arable, particularly cereal crop and livestock functions. There was also a growing coal mining industry developing to both satisfy local domestic purposes and providing some revenue for the Estate coffers. The corn mill and its dam together with the "smithy" or blacksmiths shop west of the mill and a stone mason whose house and workshop can still be seen at the rear of the Delph would provide most of the essentials of life other than those that the cottagers themselves could provide. Domestic textile manufacture supplied both local needs with some surplus traded elsewhere.

Some sense of the population density and distribution can be gauged from the location of the ancient Inns within the Manor. All began as combined farms and inns, developing from the late 1680s into the social, commercial and legal centres of their location, The White Horse on Worsley Road, Bridgewater, known for generations as The Grapes, from its Inn sign on Barton Road and Meanleys, later named The Cock on Walkden Road served the Lower Division or southern part of the Township. The Higher Division had two almost adjacent hostelries with The Bull and The Swan with two nicks, built on the site of the stocks, from which it took its later name. The Red Lion at Ellenbrook and The Greyhound in Boothstown complete the list of ancient hostelries, a situation that with few exceptions remained the only ones in the area until modern times.

Worsley as an identifiable entity can be said to originate from the Settlement Act of 1662. This provided for the extremely large parishes such as Eccles to be sub-divided into Townships for the purposes of civil administration. It was divided into three, Barton, which included Eccles, Irlam, Cadishead and Davyhulme. Pendleton to include Pendlebury and Clifton. Perhaps of most concern, the third was to be called Worsley Township and included Swinton and Boothstown.

This still covered a large area and for administration purposes Worsley was divided into "The Lower Division" which included Worsley village, Roe Green, Wardley, Little Houghton and Swinton. "The Higher Division" covered what is now known as Walkden, Walkden Moor and Linnyslaw together with Boothstown. These demarcations were still in being until the end of the 19th century..

As already stated, the whole of Worsley Manor was within the Parish of Eccles and for centuries with no other place of worship other than the ancient Chapel of St Mary the Virgin at Ellenbrook. It is most likely to have been founded sometime before 1270 by monks of the Abbey at Stanlaw on the Wirral to give a place of worship for their tenants in the area. A reference to a chapel, likely to be Ellenbrook, was made when in 1376 Geoffrey de Worsley charged with debt had included in the inventory of his possessions "a chapel"

Through several centuries there were arguments over the ownership and control of the chapel. The issue was purely a domestic chapel for the family of the Lord of the Manor, or, as it had been founded as a chapel of ease of Eccles parish church it belonged to the people. Pro the people, it being the only local building of any size it was used as an informal court room.

In favour of the Lordship, in 1549 Richard Brereton brought a court case concerning the theft of a chalice from "his chapel." As the chalice had been bought by local people the court ruled it was not a private chapel. The argument rolled on.

Perhaps another claim to private ownership came when Richard's wife, Dorothy, endowed the chapel with a sum of money in 1581, with which it was said "she bought the chapel." Later, in the early 1600s she gave a large sum to maintain a minister at Ellenbrook.

The dispute simmered even though the chapel maintained ministers throughout the 1600s despite its meagre income. Surprisingly in 1723 the building was either re-built or substantially refurbished, part of which is still visible. Two years later Scroop Egerton, 1st Duke of Bridgewater gave a bell to the chapel.

1700 – 1750 THE FIRST STIRRINGS OF INDUSTRY.

Lord of the Manor, Sir William Egerton died in 1691 and his wife had the estate for life. Their only son died in 1700. The Worsley estates, for lack of a male heir reverted to the main line of the Egerton family, the exception being many small, scattered areas of land which had been left to his sister. She married a Rev. Bagot of Pipe Heys in Warwickshire, hence “Bagots Land” which appears on estate maps of Worsley.

Also in 1700 John, 3rd Earl of Bridgewater died and was succeeded by his son Scroop as 4th Earl. Scroop was created Duke of Bridgewater and Marquis of Brackley in 1720.

MANORIAL GOVERNANCE OF WORSLEY.

This came in two levels, the Manorial Estate and Ecclesiastic Parish. Jurisdiction of the Manor came in two levels. Prime, was the Court Leet, the Kings Court held by the Lord of the Manor or his Steward, who is the Judge with power to fine or issue warrants. Of more local concern was the Court Baron a part of the County legal system was the Freeholders Court who were the Judges with the Manor Steward as Clerk. ‘Both these courts were in operation until almost the end of the 19th century. Until the opening of the Worsley Court House in 1849 these courts were held in the ancient inns, originally at Meanleys (later known as the Cock) and later the Bridgewater,

Ecclesiastic law based on the Parish had equal prominence. The great Poor Law of 1601 reinforced earlier laws that established that the Office of Overseer of the Poor be obligatory. These were chosen from the abler sort of parishioner. It set out in statute what their responsibilities were, it included a Poor Rate, levied on all householders for the purpose. It did include some draconian measures.

National legislation next impinged on Worsley by the passing of the 1723 “Workhouse Act” where the Overseers of the poor were empowered to provide a poorhouse with attached workhouse. Worsley had complied by 1730 with a poorhouse at Harrops Tenement on Shaving Lane, approximately at what is now the junction of Walkden Road and Mesne Lea Road. It was short lived for it moved to Roe Green sometime between 1746 and 1751. The building is still substantially extant alongside the cricket ground. This itself closed in 1769 when a purpose built workhouse opened at the junction of Moorside Road and Hazelhurst Road, now the site of a chapel occupying exactly the same ground.

THE ECONOMY STARTS TO ENERGISE

It seems clear that in the first quarter of the 18th century that the population was increasing and an economy upsurge was occurring in the three interlinked activities of transport, textiles and coal mining. So interlinked and vital are these to the story of Worsley that to avoid repetition they are being related as separate sections.

Transport provisions in Worsley and its surrounding area in the early 18th century can best be described as being between rudimentary and appalling. The road network such as it was relied on Statute Labour to maintain it. Here, householders of any value had to provide so many days labour, haulage and materials for their upkeep to the satisfaction of the parish. It was said the only road of any consequence was that from Barton Bridge towards Bolton, all the others were essentially bridleways. Carts were only useful in drier, summer weather everything else relied on pack horse transport, this included such commodities as coal.

Water transport was recognised as the most efficient way to move goods but the waterway network had many shortcomings. As economic activity grew efforts were made to improve the link between Manchester and the sea using the Rivers Irwell and Mersey. Several years of overcoming opposition from adjoining landowners and particularly millers who had erected weirs preventing through navigation had to be overcome. The parliamentary Bill promoting the Mersey and Irwell Navigation was passed in 1721. The work of deepening shallows and constructing locks to bypass the mill weirs along the 22 miles of river between Manchester and Warrington took until 1736.

It set in motion the call for water transport and could have had a profound impact on Worsley, particularly its coal trade. As early as 1737 an Act of Parliament was obtained to make Worsley

Brook navigable so as to access the Irwell at Barton. Its promoters, a joint stock company with connections to the Mersey & Irwell Navigation Co. proposed to make a Cut from Booths Bank, to incorporate Worsley Brook. Freight in the form of coal was to be fed by tramways from pits at Tyldesley, Ellenbrook and Little Hulton. The 1st Duke of Bridgewater, Scroop Egerton, was a Commissioner. The plan was never undertaken.

At this period, textile production was largely a domestic occupation. Wool was carded, spun and woven by family members to satisfy their own needs and any surplus traded. At what date cotton began to be used in the Worsley area is uncertain. On a wider field an act of Parliament of 1722 prohibited the making of pure cotton goods to protect the wool trade. This was circumvented in the south Lancashire area by the production of Fustian Cloth, using linen as the stronger warp and cotton weft. So entrenched had this become that the so called Manchester Act of 1736 legalised Fustian manufacture. Cloth produced for sale was usually completed under a system known as "Putting Out", where a merchant supplied the raw material and took the product. Raw flax and cotton was put out to be carded and spun to be then returned as yarn. This was then put out to weavers who returned cloth "pieces", being paid on output this a system still known as "piecework" Often the return on labour was diminished by having to rent equipment, particularly looms from the merchant. Most of these transactions took place at the local Inns, such as the Grapes with the operatives having a weekly walk carrying the materials in a shoulder pouch.

Essentially a part time occupation in between farming or coal mining textiles gave a welcome addition to the family income. The one place where anything like organised production took place was in the Township Poorhouse. This had the ominously named Work-house attached which employed the paupers in carding spinning and weaving, the output being sold to defray the cost of keeping the inmates. The work was relatively simple and the equipment could be hired. Provided out of the Poor Rate, the costs of equipment for operating handlooms at the Harrops Poorhouse were charged to the account in 1738.

MINING BECOMES AN INDUSTRY

All mining relies on the geology of the area but the area that includes Worsley had an underlying geology that facilitated the earliest primitive works and was the reasoning behind the major works of the pre and post 3rd Duke of Bridgewater.

Worsley is at the south of the Lancashire coalfield. At the southern or Worsley part the seams are overlaid by a thickness of drift debris of between 40 and 70 feet thick (12 – 20m). Further north, in Walkden they are largely only covered by the surface soil. In the area between Worsley village and Moses Gate there are some 20 coal seams which outcrop, not all of which are viable. They are aligned roughly east – west and dip down from north to south at an inclination of 1 in 4.

Of greater significance are the three geological Faults, each being a down-throw gave the advantage that in the Walkden area four of the most valuable seams had outcrops which appeared twice. This phenomena is to be exploited to its full by the estate.

Within the first half of the 18th century coal mining on the Worsley estate moved from almost indiscriminate domestic scratching with some operations on behalf of the Estate to generate revenue, to a systematic and well capitalised operation.

The Estate had leased the mining of coal from the late 1300s, one tenant paying 7/6d rent for "the cole mole". In 1600, Ralph Worsley, of Worsley had a shaft of 25 feet depth (8.5m) completed with much merrymaking at finding the coal. Its intended output was 25 horse loads per day. In the days of the Breretons mining was becoming even more extensive gauged from Dame Dorothy's Will of 1639, recording coal at Worsley Hall valued at £7 and in stock at the pits was valued at £140, somewhere in the region of a hundred tons..

Scroop Egerton, by now the first Duke of Bridgewater, was fortunate in having the Massey family who lived at Hazelhurst Hall, as Stewards, Roger managing the Estate and courts and John as mining steward. It is almost as if these two fulfilled the same functions as the Gilbert brothers Thomas and John did for the third Duke.

After several years seeking untapped and non waterlogged seams proved a losing battle capital expenditure had to be resorted to. The Duke sanctioned John Massey to make improvements to the methods in use so as to raise output to meet demand. The decision was taken to construct a drainage sough, a tunnel from the lowest point of the coal seam to exit into a nearby stream valley. The Edgefold area of Walkden was chosen as here, three rich seams outcropped within a few hundred yards of each other. Built in cut and cover before becoming a true tunnel, work started in 1729 and originally some 1,100 yards long it drained pits about 40 feet (12m) deep near Parr Fold.

Extensions were soon put in hand to tap the next series of seams nearer Walkden centre. It then crossed beneath the Manchester Road eventually terminating near what is now the Ellesmere Centre where it drained coal workings at some 120 feet (35m). Progress was such that redundant access shafts were being filled up in Walkden centre by 1732.

One aspect of operations right up to the middle of the 18th century and recorded in the estate accounts is the provision of ale. It was used to lubricate success such as a new shaft on finding a coal seam. The shaft of 1600 sunk by Ralph Worsley cost 85p in total, with the 5p being the cost of ale. It was also used to reward effort of those involved and as an inducement to compensate for the hardships of a particularly unpleasant or hazardous task. One regular entry covers ale for the men who cleared blockages in the Sough, some small recompense for lying on their stomachs in water passing the debris hand to hand to release the pent up water.

A NEW, YOUNG, DUKE.

It would appear that the Egerton`s were largely absentee landlords, leaving the running of particularly the Worsley estate in the hands of their Stewards. However they were still Lords of the Manor and need to be considered in any history of the Township.

Scroop Egerton, 1st Duke of Bridgewater had married twice, first in 1703 to Elizabeth Churchill, daughter of the Duke of Marlborough by whom he had three children. Only the daughter Anne survived to adulthood. After Elizabeth died in 1714 he married Rachael Russell daughter of the Duke of Bedford. They had seven children.

Scroop died in 1744, and was succeeded by his seventh child, the fourth son John as 2nd Duke. However he died three years later, still under the age of 21. This left the youngest of all, his seventh child by Rachael the twelve year old Francis, born in 1736, to inherit the title of 3rd Duke.

As a minor and with a mother, one of his legal Guardians, who re-married and step father who cared little for him, Francis did not have a happy home life and spent most of his formative youth with his other Guardian and cousin, Samuel Egerton of Tatton. He also spent time with his half sister and husband the 3rd Duke of Bedford and was to be much influenced by his eldest sister`s husband the Earl Granville Leveson Gower of Trentham, soon to become Marquis of Stafford.

1750 – 1760 TOWARDS COAL AND CANALS

How the young Duke of Bridgewater became the Father of Inland Navigation has often been romanticised, miss-represented and certainly misleading. Its story is usually along the lines that: - Francis had an unfortunate love affair and distraught, retired hurt, to his far away estate at Worsley and there, decided to build a canal. Reality is somewhat different.

Events unfurled over some ten years in a linked chain of family and local commercial activities and the need to both provide income and solve the 18th century energy crisis.

There were multiple factors influencing the young Duke towards his destiny. On his Grand (supposedly educational) Tour of Europe he was much impressed by the efficiency of the transport of goods by the waterways and particularly canals, of Europe. He would also be aware of the 1737 attempt of which his father had been Commissioner for the canalisation of Worsley Brook from Worsley to the Irwell.

In 1754 only a few years before he reached his majority a consortium of Manchester businessmen proposed a Cut, or canal. It was to run from Wigan, through Leigh, Worsley and to Salford. Samuel Egerton of Tatton, the young Duke`s guardian consented to the making of this canal as “Advantageous to His Grace.” This was not proceeded with. By the year he reached the age of 21, in

1757 the Sankey Canal or navigation at St Helens and Warrington built primarily to transport coal had opened. Perhaps most important was the inter-relationship between the three family estates, Trentham, Tatton and Worsley, not too separated geographically but with two of them managed by the same Stewards or Agents.

In line with the usual practice of running landed estates, competent staff had to be found. Earl Gower was able to use his influence to secure the appointment of his own agent, Thomas Gilbert, to supervise the young Duke's interests. This began a partnership that was to last a lifetime. The Gilberts were Staffordshire landowners with an estate at Cotton, between Alton and Ipstones. Thomas, the elder, was a lawyer who had taken up estate management under Earl Gower. His younger brother, John, had been apprenticed to Mathew Boulton Sen. a button maker but on the death of their father returned to supervise their property of farms and the more industrial lime and metal concerns. Under the direction of Thomas, John started to serve the young Duke on practical Worsley estate matters from 1753 with a brief to increase income.

Francis, now a "man about Town" settled into London society and clearly a marriage catch. He became attached to the newly widowed Elizabeth Gunning, Duchess of Hamilton. Her elder sister scandalised society with illicit affairs and as the two sisters stuck together, Francis terminated the engagement. Whilst this was going on he communicated regularly with the Gilbert brothers, particularly John at Worsley and between them laid the plans that were to change Worsley – and indeed the country. The Grand Ball he held at Bridgewater House London in 1759 is often claimed to be his farewell to Society after the affair ended. More realistically it would be to celebrate the passing of the Canal Act by Parliament.

THE FIRST ACT.

Francis Egerton attained his majority in 1757 and in that year John Gilbert, brother of the Duke's Agent, came with his family, to live in Worsley Old Hall as the Dukes Steward. His main initial duties were to inspect the mines and report on the improvements being considered. It occurred to John that the ability to get the coal to market more economically would render the estate more valuable. The Duke was as interested in the idea of a canal as he was. The conception was for a total coal extraction and delivery to the Manchester market entirely under the control of the Duke.

John rationalized the needed actions to be dealing with the excessive mine water and a reliable and economic transport system. He came up with an elegant solution. He proposed a Canal from Worsley to the Irwell at Salford to transport the coal. Continuing this as a tunnel from Worsley, northwards to reach the many coal seams, this would act as a drain avoiding costs for pumping. Made big enough for boats it solved transporting the coal from the pit to Worsley. He also reasoned the make of water from the mines would supply the intended canal.

Extensive work was undertaken in surveying, engineering considerations and drafting the legal framework for an Act of Parliament to enable the canal to be made. This was submitted in November 1758. Petitions from Cheshire and Manchester Gentlemen were presented in support of the Bill. The Act, which received Royal Assent in March 1759, authorized "Francis, the most Noble Duke of Bridgewater, at his own expense to make a navigable Cut or Canal from Cookes Tenter Croft in the Township of Salford to or near Worsley Mill and Middlewood in the Manor of Worsley and thence to Hollin Ferry on the Mersey."

The route from Worsley to Salford was planned to run wholly on the north of the River Irwell and to maintain a level of 82 feet above sea level, thus avoiding the need for locks. There is every reason to believe John Gilbert being the principal planner and engineer of this venture. He certified that he had supervised the survey work. Work quickly begun and progressed rapidly, for by the end of the year 1759 a length of some two miles had been cut eastward towards Salford together with a half mile stretch from Worsley to Middlewood in the west had been cut, the only progress made in the intended link to Hollin Ferry and the Mersey.

It is quite evident that starting work on both surface and underground Canals on the Duke's own land did pre-empt the authorizing of the 1st Act. Hope of accessing the coal meant work had started in 1758 as the preamble to the first Bridgewater Canal act of 1759 states that a Sough or Level had begun at the sandstone face of Worsley Delph, the Estate quarry. Small teams of skilled miners cut into the rock with pick, hammer, wedges and drills for blasting holes. They were paid piecework rates which usually included providing a brick lining. The rich Worsley four foot (thick) seam was reached in 1761. Spoil from the construction was used to reclaim large parts of Chat Moss.

ENTER THE THIRD MAN

At what point the other personality associated with the canal was first involved is uncertain. However James Brindley is likely to have been known to both the Duke and Gilbert as he was engaged in canal survey work for other members of the Duke's family.

Still styling himself "Consulting Engineer and Millwright" he noted in his journal "July 1st 1759, At Worsley Hall 6 days." From then on there are a number of references to him being at Worsley with his personal staff of assistants. His role appears to have been a cross between Consulting and Resident Engineer.

I have no wish to denigrate the achievements of James Brindley on the national canal network but it is risible to allocate to him sole credit for the whole of the Bridgewater Canal works above and below ground. Put bluntly, he only arrived at Worsley whilst extensive works enabled by the First Act of 1759 were proceeding and was dead before the whole Canal was open

Undoubtedly he presented the terms of the Second Act (aqueduct route) to Parliament but estate papers show John Gilbert to have undertaken the survey and design work. Again there is absolutely no known input by Brindley to the Underground Canal or the many devices in use in the work at Worsley.

He was employed by the Duke, under Gilbert to construct the aqueduct and oversee the route to Manchester and for some few years the Cheshire route. Essentially he was what on is now termed a Zero Hours contract where he was paid for whatever time or expenses he accrued. Having to later make his way on other canal projects he naturally traded on his Bridgewater connection. Alas 19th century writers eulogized Brindley ignoring Gilbert who had no need to burnish his credentials. As a salaried and housed Estate Steward his position was secure.

PART TWO

Under the Duke of Bridgewater The Eighteenth Century.

THE DUKE`S WORSLEY.

WHEN THE DUKE WAS HERE

There is the miss-conception that after his Grand Ball when his engagement broke off but actually to celebrate the passing of the first canal bill, he left society permanently for Worsley. Many anecdotes infer the Duke was familiar with tenants, regularly dropping in on them. It is wrong to assume he spent all his time here.

Research by Mrs C E Mullineux, shows the constant travelling he did. The Duke spent most of his time during the formative canal years at his main Estate, Ashridge in Hertfordshire. He also had estates in twelve counties of England, from Buckingham to Durham to travel to, checking their finances and borrowing money. His attendance in London was also vital to promote the canal bills in both houses of parliament. During the years 1759 – 1762 he was only in Worsley ten times usually for about two weeks at a time. The accounts record: "Paid expenses when His Grace was at Worsley 10 different times - £100. In later years he did stay for slightly longer periods but cannot be said to be resident here.

HIS WORSLEY RESIDENCES: WORSLEY OLD HALL

There was a Worsley hall as early as 1376, recorded as being "a house with a hall, a chamber, a chapel and kitchen. There was also a Forcelletum, a Peel tower for defence. The location of this edifice is unknown but likely to have been in the area known as Old Warke, between Walkden Road and Mill Brow. Old Warke was known as "le walwerke" which suggests a defensive earthwork and Wallwork is one of the earliest surnames recorded locally.

The present hall dates from the 15th century and there is no evidence for an earlier building on the site, it was presumably the Massey family who built Worsley Old Hall, timber framed, on a stone base and originally of three sides round a Quad, open to the north.

The Hall lies between the A580 and Leigh Road and to the west of Walkden Road. It is described in the Victoria County History as:-

"A picturesque low two storied building partly of wood and plaster and partly of brick, but has been much so much altered that it now has little or no architectural interest. It makes a very charming picture however, with its level lawns, ivy covered walls and contrasts of colour in black and white work, red brick chimneys and grey slated roofs."

John Gilbert lodged there from 1753 when attending to business in the Duke`s service. He lived at the hall from 1757, after he came to Worsley with his family as the agent to Francis Egerton, 3rd Duke of Bridgewater who stayed there when his business demanded his presence in Worsley. It was in the hall that Gilbert, James Brindley and the Duke met to discuss their canal strategy. When the Brick Hall was completed John Gilbert took up residence there and the Old Hall was used as estate offices.

The BRICK HALL

At some date in the late 1760s the Duke decided that a new Hall should be built. Soon known as the "Brick Hall" to differentiate from the soon to be designated "The Old Hall",

It was an elegant brick building in the classical style, which was built just to the south of the Old Hall, facing south and overlooking the canal.

It had an imposing frontage of two and a half stories with central three windowed portico bay flanked at each side by a two windowed bay and a one and a half storey three window bay, hence making five distinct portions of the frontage.

This was a time of supposed great financial stringency. Much is made of the Duke reducing his personal expenditure to £400 pounds a year yet he was able to fund not one but two imposing mansions, the Brick Hall and Bridgewater House at Runcorn. The latter again all brick construction, of two and a half stories overlooked the canal terminus. Both were described as being for use by the Duke when inspecting work on his projects, certainly never for anything resembling permanent occupation.

The first occupant of the Brick Hall was John Gilbert and family. Indeed the Duke described it as “my Stewards house” though the Duke kept a suite of rooms there for his use on his infrequent visits to Worsley. On John Gilbert’s death in 1795 his son took over administration of the Worsley estates and like his father, lived at the Brick Hall.

POPULATION GROWTH

There would have been little, if any spare workforce capacity in the predominately agricultural estate with its coal mining operations in the years of the 1750s. Once the initiatives of the Duke and John Gilbert took hold additional workers became a priority.

Early population figures are not known but by 1776 there were 522 families of 2,725 people in Worsley which rose to 818 families and 4,693 people by 1793. The majority of these newcomers were the skilled artisans – and their families, who had responded to a vigorous recruiting campaign by John Gilbert, who travelled to most of the established mining districts in search of colliers and masons. Advertisements were placed in newspapers for “Sober and diligent colliers, to whom all reasonable encouragement will be given to work at Worsley.” He was particularly successful at recruiting in Derby, Staffordshire, Shropshire and Cumberland.

To attract workers of any ability, housing had to be available, so cottages had to be built. Erected to a fairly standard design of two-up two-down, in the parts of the estate as needed, thirty were built in 1790 for £1,545 at which time the estate contained some 800 houses. The main groupings were in Worsley village, round the Yard with clusters at Walkden and Dixon Green. Each little community gained its own identity, characterised by a nickname. Staffordshire recruits lived in Tup Row, at the junction of the Manchester and Bolton roads in Walkden. Other new arrivals soon named their row – The Barracks, as apparently Gilbert had promised so, to build them a barracks. Half Crown Row owed its name to suspicions it was built with the fines extracted from colliers who were absent from work on Monday mornings.

EXTENDING THE ESTATE.

Again, in a time of financial difficulties the Duke found the means to extend his land holding. In some cases the need was for the surface canal with other purchases a more strategic move to access coal reserves. It is likely these purchases were financed by mortgaging other lands. The Duke steadfastly refused to mortgage the canal.

In the years 1758 – 1760, the Duke bought from Lady Penelope Cholmondeley the Manor of Pemberton and parts of Worsley Manor that had been separated from it in the middle ages, including Wardley Hall and estate. The year 1765 saw the purchase of the Manor of Hindley and also the Duke seeking an Act of Parliament for “dividing and enclosing Walkden Moor and part of a parcel of Moss Ground called Chat Moss, within the Manor of Worsley. The Act was passed in 1768. His final purchase was in 1776 when he bought the Manor of Cadishead.

It was to be left to a future generation to restore other separated portions of the Estate such as Boothstown

THE BRIDGEWATER CANAL

A LABOUR FORCE AND LOGISTICS.

Taking only 33 months from submitting the First Act submitted to Parliament in November 1758 to a canal and aqueduct completed to Stretford by July 1761 is an organisational, legislative and engineering feat that would be hard to match its timescale today! Whilst the technical considerations

were within the knowledge of those responsible the sheer logistics must have been considerable. Land to acquire, materials sourced or disposed of, and most important in the days before a cadre of civil engineering contractors had evolved a workforce had to be recruited, trained and accommodated. John Gilbert invented the Navvy!

At the time most of the area was agricultural with other occupations mainly involving manual labour. Recruiting a capable workforce of labourers would not have been a problem, cutting a canal trench is simply ditching on a bigger scale. As there had been works to convert the nearby River Irwell and the Sankey near Warrington to a navigation would have left a pool of competent supervisors to operate to the orders of Gilbert and later, Brindley.

Estimates of the labour requirement can be made, based on the volume a navy was capable of moving. Three men could reasonably be expected to advance the 5m X 1.5m trench 1m per day. Allowing for additional workers to cut and fit the kerb stones or other ancillary work. Cutting the two miles from Worsley to Monton in fourteen months equated to some nine metres advance per day. It is reasonable that the work done under the First Act would have engaged somewhere about a hundred and fifty, a figure likely to be much exceeded on the Aqueduct and Cheshire section..

These initial workers were the ones to have the biggest impact on Worsley both in terms of the results of their labours and influx of people. Mostly being recruited locally they would have lived at their home, those from outside the area obtaining lodging near the works. Yes, a social disturbance but not on the scale of the huge navy camps of the railway age.

Very much still the pick, shovel, wheelbarrow and cart operation, spoil from the excavation would be moved the least distance. It formed small embankments, filled low areas of land and any valuable clay used either as the essential waterproofing canal lining puddle or brick-making. At this stage, stone came largely from the Worsley Delph and once sections were in water it would be boated near to it was needed.

ACT TWO, OVER THE WATER.

Work on changing the plan from that of the First Act just obtained in March 1759 must have begun no later than mid 1759. Again, the detailed survey with engineering preliminaries undertaken by John Gilbert and legal work by his elder brother would have had to precede a second Bill presented to Parliament in November 1759.

The preamble stated it to be "An Act to enable Francis, Duke of Bridgewater to make a navigable Cut or Canal from Worsley Mill, over the River Irwell, to the town of Manchester in the County Palatine of Lancaster and to or near Longford Bridge in the township of Stretford."

Reasons for the change are likely to have been those to the Duke's advantage, to enter the more profitable coal trade into Cheshire and directly into Manchester proper on a route totally under his control..

James Brindley was in London in January 1760 to give evidence to a Parliamentary Committee. Their new plan was still for a contour canal but with an aqueduct over the River Irwell, then across Trafford Moss. The proposed three arch aqueduct raised a great controversy. Despite the ridicule of many engineers directed at the proposed aqueduct, the Act was ratified in March 1760. Operations pressed ahead from the visible acute change in direction at Monton, enabling the aqueduct to be opened 14 months later on 17 July 1761. Francis, the Duke with the Earl of Stamford together with some other Gentlemen witnessed the water let in and a 50 ton boat admitted. The canal was yet open only to Stretford.

Land acquisition problems delayed progress to Manchester so in the meantime, coal for Manchester was transshipped, to go by crane over the side of the aqueduct to boats on the old river Navigation or by cart along the Turnpike road from Stretford to Manchester. In each case the Duke negotiated advantageous rates for his bulk cargoes. The owner of Hulme Hall caused the main delay in disputing the route, resolved eventually by the Duke purchasing the Hulme estate outright. A temporary wharf had been established at Cornbrook in late 1763, the eventual terminus, Castlefield being operational in 1765.

TROUBLE IN REACHING THE MERSEY

Even whilst Barton aqueduct was still being built, Gilbert and others were conducting the survey necessary to extend the canal to the Mersey. The third Bill presented to Parliament in November 1761 declared the intention to “ make a navigable Cut or Canal from Longford Bridge in Stretford, Lancaster, to the River Mersey at a place called Hempstones in the township of Halton in the County of Chester” Royal assent was gained in March 1762.

Maintaining the same 82 foot contour level on the route through Cheshire led to engineering problems such as the great embankment near Sale and the Bollin crossing aqueduct. Other Resident Engineers like Thomas Morris were brought in to supervise sections in addition to Gilbert and the frequent attendance of Brindley. Further delays were caused by land disputes along the route, the most protracted being with Sir Richard Brooke of Norton Priory, the Canal from Manchester coming to a halt at the boundary of his estate by 1771.

Whilst work was proceeding, Earl Gower had commenced his Trent and Mersey Canal, aiming at Runcorn. The Duke of Bridgewater cleverly offered to divert his canal to meet this competitor at Preston Brook and construct the length to Runcorn at his own expense. This he did, involving a change of plan from the intended Mersey access at Hempstones. Whilst the Trent & Mersey were saved the expense of the length from Preston Brook to Runcorn, plus the flight of locks the Duke was henceforth able to collect tolls for Trent and Mersey boats using his canal. Work commenced at Preston Brook and Runcorn, working back towards Norton, The first boat to enter the still isolated Runcorn section via its ten locks, the only ones on the whole Bridgewater Canal, did so on 31 December 1772,

The situation of having a gap in the waterway was covered by transshipping to road wagons, but feelings against Sir Richard Brooke were hardening in favour of the Canal. Isolated, he capitulated in December 1775.

Work commenced immediately and made rapid progress such that by 21 March 1776 the whole line of the Duke of Bridgewater's Canal from Worsley, to Manchester and the Mersey was finally completed with a celebratory ox roast at Runcorn for the workforce.

A MAJOR UTILITY

Whilst primarily built to carry goods, particularly the Worsley coal, other sources of revenue were soon incorporated. Completion of the line to Castlefield, Manchester enabled movement of goods needed for the estate and canal works together with its population to be brought into the district much easier – and cheaper than by road. It is significant that one of the first wholly canal related buildings in Worsley was the general goods warehouse alongside Worsley Road and the canal arm leading to the Delph, which could serve both the works yard and the road network. Material handling was accommodated by means of a crane which from a sketch of 1807 would appear to have been powered by a Man Wheel. Here, the man walked inside a large wooden Hamster Wheel causing the load rope to be wound round the axle thus lifting the load. He simply turned round and walked the other way to lower the hook.

It was not long before another income stream was introduced. By 1769 passenger carrying to a schedule was introduced. First, in converted barges but soon purpose built craft took over. Initially serving Worsley to Manchester it shows how important that Worsley had become that sufficient numbers of passengers made the service viable. By 1772 there were two specialist vessels each reputed to be able to carry a hundred persons although it is likely space was taken in the carriage of small items of goods. The success led to another canal related building erected on the bank opposite to the Works Yard. The four storey plain brick building served as the terminus for passengers who boarded the boat from a flight of nine steps, the jetty being the length of the boat. The building was known as the “Packet House” giving some indication of the importance of non passenger traffic.

The schedule was such that the Manchester journey could be accomplished in some two hours, about comparable with a 21st century traffic jam car trip. Later services covered the whole line of the canal, the journey from Runcorn to Manchester taking eight hours.

HIGH TECHNOLOGY

Whilst it is true the Duke took objection to what he termed “them demmnd tramways” the then alternative coal transport as he rightly saw them as a threat. He was not averse to introducing the latest technology where it could advance his interests.

The most adventurous was the production and use of one of the world’s first Steamboats. Concerned at the cost of horse and mule haulage Worsley was the test bed for this advance.

The hull was made at the Worsley boatyard, the steam plant and engine by Bateman & Sherratt of Salford with the stern paddlewheel by the Worsley millwrights. Completed in 1796 it was a rather dumpy vessel with the funnel at the front, too high to pass bridges so it had to be hinged. It was able to pull eight 25 ton capacity boats to Manchester. Alas, it was no faster than horses, cost more to run and likely to damage the banks. It was withdrawn with the steam plant used as a colliery pump engine for nearly a hundred years. The Duke then ordered eight boats to a more proven design but on his death the order was cancelled.

FINALLY, TO LEIGH

The fourth and last Act of Parliament concerning the Bridgewater Canal was passed in 1795. This was for an extension from Worsley to Leigh. John Gilbert died in that year so this final stretch of canal was engineered by Benjamin Sothorn, who had been Gilbert’s assistant. The line continued from the section cut to Middlewood under the first Act, incorporated a basin at Butts Bridge and terminating at Leigh Bridge.

It became linked with the Leeds and Liverpool Canal when the proprietors of that waterway promoted their Leigh branch in 1818. A head on, level connection was made in 1820, thus giving access to Wigan, Liverpool docks and towns served by the cross Pennine route as well as the linked Lancaster Canal.

COAL MINING BY UNDERGROUND CANALS

THE DELPH and the MAIN NAVIGABLE LEVELS

Essentially, the plan was to continue the Surface canal from its starting point in the Delph quarry by driving a tunnel some 2.5m wide generally northwards to intercept the known coal seams where extraction of the coal would take place.

The basic concept is what is now known as “Horizon Mining” where a horizontal tunnel intercepts several seams. The geology of Worsley with its multiple workable coal seams at gradients between 1 in 4 and 1 in 15 was tailor made for such a system. A further advantage was the presence of three major faults which aligned the same seam sequence with the tunnel three times.

It is most likely work had started in 1758 as the preamble to the first Bridgewater Canal act of 1759 states that a Sough or Level had begun at the sandstone face of Worsley Delph, the Estate quarry. Small teams of skilled miners cut into the rock with pick, hammer, wedges and drills for blasting holes. They were paid piecework rates which usually included providing a brick lining. Brick making for the mining operation became an estate wide sub industry. The rich Worsley four foot (1.2m thick) seam was reached in 1761. Spoil from the construction was used to reclaim large parts of Chat Moss.

Originally there was only one entrance, the east tunnel. To ease congestion a second tunnel 30 yds to the west was driven some 500 yards to where they join at “Waters Meeting”. On completion in 1770 this was used as exit for loaded boats, empty ones returning up the original east tunnel --- Worsley’s first One Way System! Advances reached Walkden in 1770 and Buckley Lane by 1801, it terminated in the Plodder seam at Dixon Green, 3.6 (5.75km) miles from Worsley around 1815, this together with its 31 side branches give the Main Level a combined length of almost 25 miles (40km).

DEEPER LEVELS.

Advances in prospecting and mining technology meant that coal deeper than the main level could be exploited by using machinery to wind and pump coal and water to the Main Level for transport to Worsley. Edgefold Colliery at what is now called Shaving Lane, had two sets of deep levels, 56 and 83 yards below the Main Level whose workings reached the Ellenbrook and New Manchester (The City) area. Burtons Garden Pits at the junction of Ashton Field Street and Manchester Road had deep levels under most of Walkden.

Most extensive were those from Wood Pits, (near St Marks Church Worsley) and Ingles Pit 1 near Woodlands Road, these had workings out westward into Hen Fold, Tyldesley.

Totally dependent on shaft services these deep workings used horse gin or steam power from 1771 for pumping and from 1798 for winding up to the Main Level or surface

These Deep Levels totaled some 17 miles (27km).

UPPER LEVEL, DAY EYE AND BOATSHADE.

Advances of the main level reached Walkden in 1770 and Buckley Lane by 1801, Due to the rise in land levels it was decided to widen and extend the original Walkden Moor drainage sough of 1720. This was some 35 yards above the main level from Worsley. Work commenced in 1773 with rapid advances to the valuable Cannel seam by 1780 and reaching the most northerly point of the system in the Dean Moor Seam in 1783.

This branch, the furthest from Worsley sited just north of Plodder Lane almost reached St Helens Road, Bolton at its terminus. This Upper Level had workings in 14 branches and totaled 11 miles.

A service yard grew in Walkden alongside Bolton Road, workshops and a boat building yard developed together with "a slanting tunnel from the upper level to reach the surface, whereby to put boats down." Known as the Day Eye, it also delivered materials and personnel. The area was known as the "Boatshade", now the Ellesmere Centre! Although the upper level had the advantage of inexpensive water balance winding to lower its coal to boats on the Main Level it suffered bottlenecks.

THE INCLINED PLANE.

To overcome these problems John Gilbert had the brilliant idea of using an inclined plane underground to link the Upper and Main Levels 35 yards apart vertically. Based on the principle that a laden boat moving down the slope would pull an empty one up, it was constructed at Ashton's Field, under what was then Walkden Moor. The tunnel was cut through a convenient strata of sandstone with a gradient of 1 in 4. Constructed between 1795 - 1797 it remained in use until about 1822.

Two side-by-side locks were constructed at the top of the inclined plane; a loaded boat from the Upper Level was placed in one of the locks immediately over a cradle which ran on rollers. The lock gate connecting the Upper Level was closed and the water discharged by a clow or sluice. As the lock emptied the boat settled on the cradle whilst in the meantime an empty boat in the Main Level was floated over and secured to a corresponding cradle at the bottom of the inclined plane. Each cradle was connected by means of a rope which passed round a jig wheel. On release of the brake the weight of the full boat drew up the empty boat into the second lock which stood empty. The lock gates were closed and water admitted until the empty boat floated and this was afterwards taken to the appropriate workings whilst at the bottom the full boat automatically floated off the cradle and could proceed into the Main Level. Its operation cycle took some 15 minutes, co-ordinated by a system of signaling bells between the levels. It remained in use until about 1822 when production ceased on the Upper Level

Unfortunately John Gilbert died as work begun on his inclined plane but no doubt he would have been pleased that it, with the Underground Canal, was considered one of the wonders of the world.

THE BOATS.

Boats were specially designed for use on the Underground Canals. Once in the tunnel they could not turn round so both ends were shaped as prows. They were very strongly built but roughly finished, with vertical internal ribs rising from a flat bottom. The narrow shape and protruding ribs has latterly gained them the nickname "starvationers" but those who built and used them knew them as **M Boats**. There were three distinct sizes.

The largest, used on the main level and usually taken directly to the market without transshipping the load were some 53 feet long and 6 feet wide carrying 25 - 30 tons. These were the M, or Mine boats, made and repaired at the Worsley boatyard.

Used on some side branches and the Upper Levels were T boats (presumably Top boats) 40 to 50 feet long, 4 feet 6 inches wide and carrying 8 to 12 tons, and were made and repaired at the Walkden yard.

The boats used on the Deep Levels were the smallest. Known as Tub boats they were 20 feet long and 4 feet wide with only a 2 ton payload. These had to be lowered vertically down the shaft which was often belled out at the bottom to facilitate swinging the boat to the horizontal for lowering into the water.

Boats were drawn along the main level in small trains of 2 or 3. The stories of trains of a hundred or more are an impractical exaggeration! The train would have stretched from the Delph to Greenleach Lane apart from the fact the entire stock of M boats totaled 120. Boatmen responsible for their movement undertook lengthy backbreaking work; the trip from Dean Moor in Bolton to Worsley took 5 to 6 hours. Usually a boat-mans day was a boat in and out.

Methods of propelling empty boats into the mine changed over time and district. One method had the boatman "walk" the boat by using a belt, short rope and hook. Standing at the front of the boat he put the hoot into an iron staple in the roof then passed the boat under his feet, unhook and return to the front to repeat. At other places and times boats were moved by "legging" where the boatman lay on the boat and pushed with his feet against anything he could get a purchase on. Loaded boats were simply floated out. As well as those at the tunnel mouths in the Delph, at intervals along the main tunnel sluice gates or "clows" in the form of vertical lock gates caused a small head of water to rise on the upstream side, when the clow was raised the rush of water propelled the boats outward.

WORKING THE COAL.

Whenever a workable coal seam was intercepted a branch level was driven east and west to the same dimensions as the axial tunnel. The coal to the rise of the branch was split into panels some 70 yards long by "rise brow" tunnels the thickness of the seam and a few feet wide, when connected by cross passages for ventilation extraction could commence. Hundreds of small diameter ventilation shafts that doubled as ladder access shafts for the workers marked the route of the branch canals along the surface. Ventilation was originally natural, the heat of the mine rising through the shafts drawing fresh air in wherever possible. Furnaces later assisted ventilation. Candles were the illumination used until safety lamps became obligatory, the candles were reputed to contain arsenic as it was said to reduce the tendency to gutter in the draughts of the mine.

Working by the pillar and stall method the panel was worked beginning at the point furthest from the axial tunnel. 50% extraction was aimed for and by the time pillars had been robbed the figure was often exceeded. At the face the coal was put in wicker baskets shod with iron runners and dragged by a drawer along the floor of the passage and down brow to the boat in the branch canal. Until the early 1840s these human pit ponies were the women of the family assisted often by a child "thrutching" or pushing from behind. They were employed directly by their men folk who got the coal. The drawer wore a belt round their waist with a chain that passed between their legs and fastened to the basket. At a crawl they would move along the low narrow passages, often covering ten or more miles per day. After the 1842 Act prohibiting such labour wheeled tubs and pony haulage had to be introduced.

On reaching the boat, originally the coal was tipped into the boat but expense of transshipping it brought a transport revolution. Certainly by 1770 coal was being tipped into specialist boxes with

lifting lugs and drop bottoms. These boxes placed side to side in the boats could economically be moved from level to level by winding rope, boat to boat by hand crane and moved by surface transport, empties being returned to the mine boats. Now it is called Containerisation!

Loaded box boats on the Main Level were simply floated out and usually taken direct to Manchester markets. Coal worked on the Upper Levels had to have their boxes transshipped from boat to shaft, lowered down to a landing stage alongside the Main Level and then into a boat on that waterway. Use of the inclined plane dispensed with most of this logistic problem. Similarly coal wrought in the deeper levels was raised up shafts, the box placed on a traverser, trolley and moved across to the boat on the Main Level

LOGISTICS.

The Underground Canal handled considerable quantities of materials, brick, mortar etc inwards but truly prodigious quantities of coal were discharged to Worsley. The decades 1790 to 1840 saw over 100,000 tons per year transported, rising to 200,000 + from then on. Several major collieries of the 1850s discharged their output via the Main Level until gaining railway connections by 1870. By this time production emphasis was shifting to this new generation of collieries and the great Navigable Level declined in importance. It ceased coal transport in 1887 but the main level was kept open and in repair for drainage until final abandonment in 1969.

We can only be amazed at the scale of the operation at the Delph which dealt with a total of up to 80 boats a day. This number is not an exaggeration. Assume a 50 week working year with an output recorded as around 100,000 tons per year. Divide by 50 which equals 2,000 tons per week or some 360 tons per day = 36 boat loads out. The same number returning plus boats for spoil and material can easily equal 80 boats per day!

TECHNOLOGY.

From even its earliest days this eventual labyrinth of workings needed shafts convenient for all the requirements of coal production particularly the workforce access and ventilation.

A look at an early edition of the Ordnance Survey map of Worsley shows it to be peppered with possibly hundreds of shafts. These are noted as either a "Coal Pit," usually a secondary shaft for ventilation, workers access, and limited winding. Those shown as "Collieries" had steam powered winding and pumping machinery.

At the most basic, the Coal Pit shafts had wooden ladders fixed, up and down which the workforce made their daily journey to and from the mine. Arranged in some 20 feet (6m) flights a small landing platform allowed some respite. Any movement of coal or more likely, material was wound using a basic hand windlass spanning the shaft with the load on a hemp rope. They would also help ventilate the workings by convection, the warm air of the mine rising up these shafts. A whole line of these shafts serving the branch canal in the Worsley four foot seam were revealed when the Marriot golf course was being laid out.

At places where there was need to raise a substantial quantity of coal, those subsequently labeled Collieries, had pre-steam mechanization. Horse Gins, where the animal walked in a circle as the rope wound onto a drum hence lifting the load became common. Soon, a very economical method ideally suited to Worsley was introduced, called water balance winding. Here, a continuous rope led from the pit bottom, over a pulley above the shaft and back to ground level. Each end had a barrel attached. That at the bottom was filled with coal, that at the top with water, with the brake released the heavier water barrel descended, hoisting the coal. Coal was removed at the surface and the water discharged into the underground canal. Cost free winding, the accountants loved it! So effective was it that it was still used in the 1860s.

This water power was also used to power drainage pumps; a tank of water depressed a pump plunger raising water from deep workings to discharge it, and the water from the tank, into the underground canal. Devised by a colliery engineer one of Mr. Tonge's machines was in use in 1765 as recorded by Sir Joseph Banks on his visit to Worsley.

To supply these balance engines three reservoirs were constructed, first was the Boatshed Reservoir of 3 acres in 1788, still partially extant on the shopping centre car park. Next was Linnyslaw Dam of 5 acres, alongside Sharp Street in 1789, now a housing estate, finally came the original Blackleach Reservoir of 10 acres in 1794. This was subsequently doubled in size in the 1840s. Only this newer portion remains forming the Blackleach Country Park, the original was infilled in the 1960s to protect the motorway.

Power at the Duke's mines did use the latest technology where appropriate. Workings at Abbot's Fold and Dixon Green had a steam "gin" by 1771 just for pumping. These were duplicated in 1790 almost certainly for winding. The new sinkings at Wood Pits of 1790, near Worsley Vicarage had both steam powered winding and pumping

COLLIERIES NOT CONNECTED TO THE LEVELS

Having connected the Level with the Four Foot seam it was realized that extensions to reach the next northern seam would take an appreciable length of time. As a short term measure many pits were worked independently of the new Level. These pits were sunk along the known seams such that the eventual branch Level would, the engineers hoped, intercept them. This was particularly so of the Four Foot seam as its proximity to the Chat Moss branch of the surface canal made its development a favourable option.

Pits at Abbots Fold, Ellenbrook were sunk in the very early 1760s, some three quarters of a mile from the Main Level tunnel. The solution to the transport problem had a precedent in the 1737 canal scheme the Duke's father had been involved with. A tramway was laid between the pits and the partially cut canal to the west of Worsley, near Middlewood. Completed in 1764 this horse powered railway delivered the coal, boosting output – and income.

AN AGRICULTURAL ESTATE.

From long before the days of the 3rd Duke, during his lifetime and after, agriculture was a principal occupation on the Worsley Estate. It is fairly certain that the medieval open field strip system never took hold here. Instead, a patchwork of tenant holdings developed of wildly varying sizes. No matter the size the common feature was a dwelling with perhaps a barn / outbuilding adjacent to a roadway with the farmland adjacent.

An Estate plan drawn in 1764 shows the lands occupied by each of the 140 named tenants land and gives names to most of the fields. The shape of these fields often indicates them as being claimed from woodland or scrub.

Largest were the Demesne farms (land retained by the Lord of the Manor for his own use) of both Worsley – some 450 acres and Wardley with 330 acres. The remainder of the estate was leased in holdings of 10 to 50 acres with only three farms over that size. There were also some 45 Crofts, with the tenant holding two acres or substantially less, essentially a smallholding or cottage with garden, used by someone with other employment.

Whilst visually a largely agricultural area, during the 3rd Duke / Gilbert years it changed from whilst not quite subsistence farming, to an Estate marketing its produce over a wide area. For that it had the canal to thank, giving the ability to deliver fresh goods to the Manchester markets as well as serving the needs of an increased population in Worsley.

LAND USAGE

All of the larger tenant farms, over four acres, showed the majority of their land used for arable crops. Wheat was the main crop grown at Worsley, from the early days it provided a basic foodstuff and in later years a useful cash crop marketed regionally. By the 1780s over £450 a year filled the Manor coffers from sale of wheat off the Estate. How much was sold as grain and how much converted to flour at the Lord's mill is not known. Oats were grown for two distinct markets. Oatmeal was still a regular part of a labourer's diet whilst once the canal traffic increased oats were needed for the barge

horses as well as draught animals on the farms. Harvesting cereal crops was a labour intensive task using sickles with the cut sheaf threshed using hand flails.

Another crop almost specifically canal horse related was the growing of beans, a regular supplement to their feed. Worsley still remembers this product with the road named "Beanfields", off Granary Lane. Apparently the scent from the bean plant flowers was a pleasant experience. Root crops were widely grown; potatoes were again a staple of workers diet and could also be fed to animals. Eventually an outside market came to be supplied with Worsley potatoes. Turnips as winter cattle feed became increasingly important.

Meadow land generally occupied about a quarter of most farms holding. This was land used to provide animal feed such as hay and from the earliest days of the Duke's influence, clover was sown and harvested. Meadow had both a value to the individual farmer and to the wider estate as a cash crop. He could sustain his own draught animals and cattle in the winter as well as selling surplus to the estate for provisioning the barge and other estate based draught animals.

Land set aside for animal grazing, known as "Pasture" was a minor feature of the tenant farms, usually around a tenth of the holding. This indicates a minimal number of animals kept, adequate to supply the household with milk, butter, cheese and eventually meat. In the years up to the mid 1760s grazing was available on the wastes of Walkden Moor and Worsley Moss, land soon to be "Enclosed" by the Duke for his own, Estate use.

Both of the Demesne farms had considerably more land recorded as at Pasture, generally at least a third of the Demesne. Pasturage was needed for the larger number of horses and mules the estate employed but also for the trade in livestock undertaken on the Duke's behalf. By the mid 1760s there were very few sheep being kept anywhere on the estate.

Cattle were, and could be big business. His agents went to cattle sales all over the north of England and Scotland. Cattle were driven from Carlisle and from Scottish islands to Worsley. They were also distributed to his other estates, Ashridge in Herts. took a journey of twenty days! They were also fattened up and sold at Manchester and other local town's markets. Bullocks and cows were regularly killed for meat in Worsley village.

Centuries of land clearance left Worsley with little commercially useful woodland. Most of that needed for the Duke's enterprises, boat building cottage and farm building had to be brought in from other forests. Trees take time to mature to harvest and the reclaiming of Chat Moss proved an ideal place, the growing trees absorbing much of the water from the peat. It is recorded that some 23,000 trees were planted to form what became Botany Bay Wood. By 1800, regular sales of timber took place. Another timber cash crop came with the planting of Alders along the canal. Coppiced every few years the trees provided the ideal poles to hold hanks of cotton whilst being dyed.

SERVICING THE INDUSTRIES

THE DELPH AND THE TWO WORKS YARDS

Focus of all the Duke's activities was the area around what had always been the Village commercial hub with the ancient mill, smithy and quarry. These operations had their capacity greatly extended and new types of industry brought in.

The Duke and Gilbert were starting with a completely blank canvas. As well as producing the actual waterway, boats had to be made and an infrastructure to provide the materials for them, also the needed building materials. Before the canal was of any use as a means of transport improvements had to be made to the local road network. These upheaval caused by these operations extra to the actual canal likely had a bigger effect on the people and appearance of Worsley.

To start, bridges had to be provided to span the new waterway at two points. Access to the Delph and the Underground Canal needed a bridge to carry the then bridleway from Swinton to Worsley. A two arch structure was needed to span the void created by stone removal of the past, one for Delph access the other proved suitable to give water transport to the Mill. The Highway from Bolton to Barton needed a single span to cross the waterway access to the projected line across Chat Moss. These gave us the still extant Worsley Road and Barton Road bridges.

Before the Canal Age the area we know as The Green had partly been leased for farming and the remainder as the estate Timber Yard. Once work got underway on the canal and mines it developed into what may be described as an industrial estate.

Before many years had elapsed a variety of trades had their workplaces there. Sawyers, boat builders, carpenters and sailmakers were all found there.

Once work had started on the canals a priority had to be to provide boats to use on them. The older River Navigations already had an infrastructure of boatyards; Worsley had to start from scratch. Skilled boat builders were recruited from the River Dee, Richard Mugg and his descendants oversaw the operation for generations. It is quite possible that the technically simple Mine Boats now unfortunately referred to as starvationers were the first to be made. They have no complex shapes and are quite within the scope of a normal carpenter. These would eventually be replaced on the surface canal by the wide Mersey Flat type vessels with their compound curves needing great skill to produce.

One of the buildings on the works yard was known as a boat-shed. There were also two graving, or dry docks, one still in use, the other infilled in 1900 to provide a site for the humped back bridge. A further dry dock, still extant, the right hand one viewed from the towpath, was added later, post 1800.

Lime was an important commodity for both construction and agriculture, the two industries now dominating Worsley. Transporting lime was expensive and fortunately a type of limestone had been located on the west of Worsley. Unfortunately it was thought not readily converted to a useable product. However, John Gilbert with experience of his family lime works, persevered to come up with a solution. He had the stone ground to powder and mixed with coal dust. Formed into briquettes this fired perfectly. Two lime burning kilns were built alongside the Canal complete with a short branch canal dock to transport materials as well as a grinding mill to produce the briquettes. These kilns are still extant, having been subject to excavation in 2010. The mouths of the two kiln chambers are visible to the public with the extensive firing holes and flues only partly visible from Barton Road. Such was the output it was claimed to be worth £20,000 a year to the Estate.

By 1785 when John Fowkes produced a map of the Duke's works, extensive industrial development had taken place. Worsley Brook, which still flowed across what is now known as The Green, provided water power for several operations. The area between the Brook and Worsley Road was still noted as The Timber Yard, with several saw pits established where hand sawyers converted logs to required size timber.

That portion between the Brook and the Canal is now simply The Yard. Here were "sheads" or sheds, presumably open sided for boat building and brick making. Carpenters, wheelwrights and basket makers had the luxury of Shops, fully enclosed buildings. The baskets often fitted with iron sledge like runners were used to move the coal from face to boat in the mines. There was also a four storey general goods warehouse complete with goods handling crane attached to the building adjacent to the canal and Worsley Road.

Sandwiched between the Canal and Barton Road were more saw pits and a bank of beehive coke ovens. Now known as The Granary, the original building on that site was a forge with water power from Worsley Brook. It was in the tower of this building that the famous clock was first installed. The Duke had a new clock installed that struck thirteen at one o'clock as the men claimed they could not hear it striking once.

Further along the Canal towards Winton were the lime kilns and associated mortar mill. Nearby was also extensive stabling for the canal horses, hence Stable Fold. All this concentration of ovens, forges and kilns caused Barton Road to be known as Smoke Row.

Possibly as the need for extra water capacity for the Duke's industrial operations, a further series of two mill dams or reservoirs were constructed by 1790 to provide the lower and main Warke Dams, complete with Twirl Hole overflow. Water capacity must have been jealously guarded for the building later known as Pear Tree Cottage on Mill Brow is noted on a plan of 1799 as being "the watch house"

By the 1770s colliery development had advanced to and beyond the Walkden area. To service this growth and overcome its remoteness from Worsley Yard a subsidiary service depot had to be provided. Central to the need was the development of the Upper Level of the Underground Canal. As well as the need for general workshop facilities such as sawyers and smiths provision had to be made to supply the boats for the new Level.

Soon to be known as "Boatshade" or later, Boatshed, it grew into a complex of buildings, the largest of which was some 150 feet – 50m in length with substantial wings at each end. It was surrounded by some ten smaller buildings seemingly randomly scattered on the site. This was to the south west of the reservoir of the same name, still extant in a much truncated form.

EXIT THE PRINCIPALS.

John Gilbert died at Worsley on 4 August 1795, aged seventy. Such was the esteem he was held in by the Duke that he – and later his wife, were buried in the Egerton Vault in Eccles Parish Church, where he had been a Churchwarden. Several Egerton bodies were removed to accommodate them! So passed the man who had orchestrated all the Duke of Bridgewater's Canal, financial, colliery and Worsley estate developments for nearly forty years. This was as well as business interests in many parts of Britain, no wonder he was usually described as always being in a hurry. He was fortunate in having two members of the Duke's staff, Thomas Kent as eyes and ears at Worsley and Robert Lansdale as personal assistant, responsible for most of John's correspondence. Controlling all these enterprises would have entailed thousands of miles of travel, the majority on horseback but many by coach.

Many were the eulogies given about him; the Rev F. H. Egerton called him "a man of Uncommon Ability, of rare talent, of Vast Genius" A later newspaper tribute concluded with the sentiment "MOURN, WORSLEY, MOURN, THY WORTHY GILBERT'S GONE."

He, together with his brother Thomas, the Duke's legal agent were the first of the estate managers without whom it is likely the Transport and Industrial Revolution that began in Worsley would have been delayed. John Gilbert's contribution has been overlooked and belittled for too long.

With both the Gilbert brothers, his two trusted Stewards gone, it is likely the Duke did spend rather more time in Worsley than previously. He did still travel extensively between his many properties and Bridgewater House, London. Perhaps aware of his own mortality in January 1803 he signed a will, of 66 pages setting out what was to happen to his beloved enterprises and attempting to prevent any changes. Alas, despite presenting canals, as the modern way to travel, he died as a result of a road accident to his coach.

It did not kill him but weakened him to the point of succumbing to influenza. He died at Bridgewater House on the eighth of March 1803. The funeral was delayed to allow relatives and staff time to attend. Although he wanted a no fuss event, the cortege of hearse, his –empty- carriage, carriages of mourners and a retinue processed to the church at Little Gaddesden at Ashridge, Herefordshire where he was buried with his ancestors.

PART THREE

Under the Bridgewater Trustees The Nineteenth Century

TERMS OF THE DUKE'S WILL

THE BRIDGEWATER TRUST

As the Duke died childless the Dukedom became extinct. The title Earl of Bridgewater passed to the Duke's cousin General John William Egerton who inherited most of the Duke's property outside Lancashire and Cheshire but not Bridgewater House in London nor Brackley in Northamptonshire. With the death of the General's brother and heir, the Rev. Francis H Egerton, the title Earl of Bridgewater became extinct.

The Duke bequeathed his Lancashire and Cheshire estates his Lancashire coalmines, the Bridgewater Canal and his estate at Brackley, Northamptonshire to be held in and administered by a Trust. Management of this Trust was to be in the hands of three trustees, two were family members appointed to serve in a largely nominal capacity. The third was to be a Superintendent, resident in Worsley, with a very wide range of responsibilities of its management and with the option to appoint his successor. The Duke appointed Robert Haldane Bradshaw to be the first of these Trustees. Bradshaw, who had been a high level civil servant, entered the Duke's staff to take over the duties of principal agent after the death of Thomas Gilbert. His status is shown by his salary of £2,000 per year and the total use of the Worsley Brick Hall where he lived as a member of the Squirearchy. This he was entitled to do as in 1810 he became a landowner in his own right by purchasing the manor of Tyldesley and the reputed manors of Garret and Booths(town)

The Bridgewater Trust which was to totally control every aspect of life in Worsley, was decreed under the Duke's will to last until twenty years after the deaths of all the peers of the realm then extant and of their eldest sons. It was to last exactly one hundred years. Over the century it had changes of management that reflected both political and social changes and particularly redressing the initial divorce of its management from the beneficiary who got the profits from it.

In 1833 Bradshaw resigned as Superintendent Trustee, a position in which he had done his best to administer exactly in line with the Duke's stipulations. Alas this starved the estate and commercial activity of development capital funding. Whilst actually being persuaded to retire, on a very generous severance package he reserved the right to appoint his successor, naming his assistant James Sothern. Unfortunately Bradshaw's eldest son Captain James Bradshaw had expectations of the post and being passed over he committed suicide by cutting his throat in his room in the Brick Hall. He had to be buried outside the consecrated ground of Ellenbrook Chapel. Bradshaw bought the land and had the Chapel extended, thus narrowing the road, hence causing a bypass to be built in 1980.

Powerful forces in 1837 also forced James Sothern to resign his position. Superintendence then passed to James Loch, then Agent to the Egerton family who were beneficiaries of the Trust, thus now giving some control of the Trust to its beneficiary. Loch appointed George Samuel Fereday Smith as his deputy, responsible for all day to day affairs. This position he held until his death in 1887, the position of General Manager passing to his son Clifford.

Loch died in 1851 and was succeeded by the Hon. Algernon Egerton, third son of the Earl of Ellesmere as the Superintendent Trustee. Resident at the Old Hall he combined his estate duties with that of an MP until his death in 1891.

The new Superintendent Trustee, Walter Longley Bourke was well known to the Egerton family and no stranger to Worsley. A relative of the Irish Peer Earl Mayo, he had forged a career in civil engineering, resident engineer on the Forth Rail Bridge and engineer to the Barton section of the Manchester Ship Canal. An ideal candidate to oversee a major industrial concern the estate had become,

BENEFICIARIES OF THE TRUST

First was the Duke's nephew George Granville Leveson-Gower of Trentham, who several months later in October 1803 was to become 2nd Marquis of Stafford on the death of his father. Created the 1st Duke of Sutherland in January 1833, he died in July that year having done little for the Worsley estates other than spend the income he derived from it.

His second son, Francis Leveson-Gower, born 1800, succeeded under the Duke's will to the benefit of the property managed by the Bridgewater Trustees and according to a condition of that will, he adopted the surname Egerton. James Loch became his Agent.

Lord Francis, as I will call him throughout, had established a parliamentary career by 1822, the year he married Harriet Catherine Greville. Initially they lived in a rented London house and later rented a property, Oatlands in Surrey. They were to have eleven children.

From becoming the beneficiary of the Duke's will, Lord Francis seems to have made some visits to Worsley before attempting to move into the Old Hall in 1837, thwarted by the Superintendent Trustee. They finally moved into the Old Hall in 1837.

In Peel's resignation honours of June 1846, Lord Francis Egerton was raised to the peerage. He was ennobled in the style Earl of Ellesmere and Baron Brackley. These were revivals of titles held by the Earls of Bridgewater.

Lord Francis died in September 1857 and was buried in a vault at St. Mark's church Worsley which he had built and endowed. He was succeeded by his son George Granville Francis Egerton.

George, born in 1823 married Mary Campbell, daughter of the Earl Cawdor in 1846, they had two sons. As the 2nd Earl of Ellesmere George made little if any impact on Worsley apart from the annual periods of residence the family had established.

He had been a sickly child and adult so his tenure of the benefit ended with his death in September 1862, being buried at St Mark's Worsley. He was succeeded by his eldest son Francis Charles Granville Egerton.

The fourth and last beneficiary of the Bridgewater Trust Francis C G Egerton, born in 1847 became the 3rd Earl of Ellesmere when only fifteen years old.

In 1868 he married Katherine Louisa Phipps, daughter of the Marquis of Normanby. Whilst pursuing a largely honorary military career in the local and Manchester volunteer Yeomanry regiments, he and his wife continued the work of the 1st Earl by being a paternal influence to Worsley.

In October 1903 the Bridgewater Trust expired and Francis, the 3rd Earl of Ellesmere entered into the full control and possession of the Egerton inheritance.

WHAT THE BENEFICIARIES DID FOR WORSLEY.

THE FIRST BENEFICIARY

George Leveson-Gower could at best be described as an Absentee Landlord, he seldom visited Worsley being more concerned with financing the development of his wife the Countess of Sutherland's estate. Here with his agent James Loch he was responsible for the Highland Clearances.

As the first beneficiary, Lord Stafford had no influence on Worsley it was left to the Superintendent Trustee R H Bradshaw to direct affairs here. Bradshaw was the consummate bureaucrat and charged as he was with administering the estate within strictly controlled parameters of the Duke's will he was unable to adapt to changing circumstances.

Starved of capital for development the housing situation deteriorated as the number of workers increased. The complete absence of any social provisions and wage restraint to fund maximum returns to the beneficiary left Worsley in a deplorable state.

THE SECOND BENEFICIARY

His second son, Francis Leveson-Gower, succeeded in 1833 to the benefit of the property managed by the Bridgewater Trustees and in accordance with a condition of that Will he adopted the surname Egerton. The crafty Duke knew the Leveson-Gower name would continue from the original beneficiary to his eldest son so transferring the benefit to the second son, the name change ensured the family surname Egerton survived. Lord Francis appointed James Loch his father's agent to serve him.

Whilst spending lengthy periods at Worsley, but not permanent residents, Lord Francis, with Lady Harriet as his spur were to make major changes to the landscape, arrange profound improvements to the Estate infrastructure to bettering the lives of their tenants. Many are still in use.

THEIR LIFE IN WORSLEY

His daughter recalled the move to Worsley in 1837, describing "an old and picturesque manor house on the estate which was prepared for us, known as the "Old Hall". Nearby was a red brick commonplace house, the New, or Brick Hall which was not deemed suitable.

Work began on the New Hall Mansion in 1839 on the south of Leigh Road, an Elizabethan Gothic creation with a frontage of 1,000m. The eastern block of four stories and five bays wide housed the family and the reception rooms befitting its status, a single storey service wing continued to the west. It was not completed until 1846 at a cost of £41,000.

The Brick Hall was demolished in 1847, the site being used for a Mews.

There was a ten acre kitchen garden whose heated greenhouses provided the exotic fruits and flowers as required. Taking much longer to complete were the terraced formal gardens which included a boating lake. Pride of place on the terrace was a bronze fountain, shown in the Great Exhibition of 1851. Little expense was spared on this feature with a cast iron pipe costing £3,200 laid from the Blackleach Reservoir in north Walkden to give a head of water for a jet, one of the highest in the country. The pipe also supplied hydrants and the kitchen gardens site until disconnected in 2009.

As well as domestic accommodation Lord Francis also ensured his sporting activities were catered for. Contemporary with the Hall a shooting lodge and game rearing unit, becoming known as "The Aviary" was built on the north bank of the Warke Mill Dam. This also provided fishing facilities, with a boat house being provided. Clearly there would have been many professionals of all skills brought in to construct the Hall, grounds and Aviary. There must have been a large pool of local labour that benefitted from employment on the works particularly excavating the massive terraces.

One aspect of Lord Francis's sporting lifestyle was the partitioning of large sections of the estate as his private enclave for shooting to which access was strictly controlled. The area surrounding the Hall and Aviary and most of the land south of the canal including Botany Bay woods became no-go areas. Permanently staffed lodges guarded the main access points, many still extant; other access places had day lodge shelters where an elderly employee guarded a gate. The one which used to guard Ladybridge to Old Hall Lane has been re-sited alongside the canal bank at Worsley.

Poaching was endemic, usually out of economic necessity to get food. It was a constant battle, often literally, between poachers and keepers for as long as the Egerton's held the estate and beyond. One newspaper report of 1856 describes such an incident. Headlined "Desperate Conflict" of a gang of poachers with the Earl's gamekeepers. "A serious affray took place between the five keepers armed with cutlasses and dogs and eight determined poachers with heavy bludgeons. Game had regularly been killed in the Malkins Wood area. On this night the keepers lay in wait. On hearing the poachers approach they took off their overcoats and prepared for contest. The struggle was fearful for both poachers and keepers were covered in blood at its end when four poachers had been captured. The head keeper was heavily bandaged when giving evidence to the magistrate who recommended the full weight of the law". The prisoners were committed to Crown Court.

BENEFITS TO WORSLEY

I think the term is “hitting the ground running”, which is what Lord Francis did in fulfilling his vow to improve the lives of his tenants.

Worsley was described as of sooty aspect from the forge and coke ovens, its hamlets were of dilapidated cottages; rude and squalid children were the main characteristics. Drunkenness, Sabbath breaking, cock fighting and disregard for all decency prevailed.

Ostensibly only moving to Worsley in 1837, a lot of preliminary work must have gone on to have two buildings completed by 1838. Both were a result of his desire to bring the Church of England to the district to, as he said “counter the rise of Wesleyan Methodism.” Likely first was a day school built almost overlooking the Delph, a dual purpose building it was also licensed for divine worship, a clergyman being provided. Also that year he had erected a temporary church in Walkden. Known as St. George’s chapel it served the growing mining community from being licensed for preaching in October 1838, and being fully consecrated in 1841 then continuing in such use until the new church of St. Paul was opened. Early in 1839 a Walkden infant school was founded adjacent to the new chapel.

Of more direct interest to the colliers were the efforts made by Lord Francis and Harriett to remove women and children from the pits. The Bridgewater Trust had discussed alternative employment in cotton factories for these people in 1838 and after direct pressure from Lady Harriett in 1841 instructions were given not to employ any more girls in the pits. Objection was mainly on the effect of unemployment of those removed rather than disagreement with the principle. The Act of Parliament of 1842 prohibiting the employment of women girls and boys under ten in pits was fully implemented by the Trust who in fact wanted to make the age for boys twelve but were pressurised by the colliers into retaining the age of ten.

Steps were taken to overcome the problem of those redundant. The older ones were found work on the estate farms whilst young girls could be sent to the Lady Harriett Domestic Training School which had been added to the Walkden junior school in 1844. This gave a year’s residential training in the skills needed to be offered positions in service. As an incentive parents received a two shilling a week compensation for loss of earnings. Boys were offered farm work or training as hand loom weavers.

Having tackled the evils in their mines, the reforming zeal of Lord Francis and Harriett continued in the provision of more facilities for the estate population. Walkden got a juvenile school, two storey stone built alongside Hodge Road in 1842. It was soon extended to house the domestic school including a built on accommodation for the matron and master. Concerned that wages were being spent on other than household needs a pay office and recreation ground was established near Hill Top in Walkden by 1842. The intention was, there would be little distraction of public houses from wages paid in such a remote location. The well laid out recreation ground became St Mary’s park.

Worsley village came in for further attention with the building of a juvenile school which was established in 1844. It was almost adjacent to the existing school building which became the infants department. Subsequently enlarged, the two storey building served until 1968 when demolished to make way for the motorway.

A reading room was established situated in the pre-canal one time nail maker’s house on the canal bank. It was praised in a report of 1846 telling that “it contains the best periodicals of the day and a considerable circulating library. The room is provided with fire and lights, it is open every evening and is much used by the labouring people as an agreeable resort after their days work.” Considering that adult literacy was then virtually nonexistent and subscriptions were two shillings a year, it is likely the two hundred reported subscribers came from the very superior class of workers.

Their educational provisions concluded with building combined infant and junior schools in 1849 at both Boothstown and Ellenbrook. The latter was on the opposite side of what is now Bridgewater Road from Ellenbrook chapel. That same year a dispensary for the poor and better class of labour was opened in part of Kempnough Hall. It was in 1850 when a Sunday school was built at Edgefold, Walkden.

This was the period when Worsley gained its black and white architecture persona. A court house for the Manorial courts replaced an old smithy at the centre of the village in 1849, with a police station and house on Barton Road. Extensions to the canal side Packet House were made in the now famous style in 1850.

Having made some religious worship provisions and extensive educational facilities he set about his aim of providing substantial Anglican churches for his tenants. The first major edifice began in 1844 to become St. Mark's church, it perched on a prominent ridge overlooking the village and the moss. Made to the designs of George Gilbert Scott, a noted architect, it was of dressed stone, seated 550 and has a spire reaching 185 feet. (56m) it cost him £7,750 at its completion in 1846. A further £4,000 added a north aisle in 1851 to seat a further 150 souls.

Coincidentally, he was created Earl of Ellesmere in 1846, the year both St Mark's and the New Hall were completed.

The rapidly developing part of the estate then known as Walkden Moor came next to be given a traditional looking Anglican church. St. Paul's had its foundation stone laid in 1847 and was consecrated in August 1848. As the bulk of the exterior is of rough hammer dressed stone it is claimed it was built of materials left over or rejected for St. Mark's. Costing only £4,500 it was known locally as "the drop church" as the miners wages were dropped considerably at the time it was built. It has a squat tower 90 feet tall (27m) and one of the steepest pitched roofs in Lancashire. The burial ground must have been used by the older St. George's chapel as the first interment was in 1841. It had to wait until 1863 before the first marriage was solemnised at its altar.

CELEBRATIONS THEY HOSTED

Lord Francis could certainly put on a show of which two are the most extensive, one of benevolence on a family occasion, the other to display his status in exalted society.

On the majority of his eldest son George on Saturday June 15 1844 it was the desire of Lord Francis that the occasion be one of popular enjoyment. An extensive news report gives the details: "Thousands of tenants and workpeople were present, colliers, canal and Mersey and Irwell Navigation boatmen attended. Most of the inhabitants of Worsley where schools had been established poured forth by every conveyance to Worsley Park. At least 9,000 were present. To rest any misapprehension all persons in the employ of Lord Francis or the Bridgewater Trust received a full day's pay."

Worsley village, park and grounds presented a decorative and animated scene. In the Worsley Yard a spacious marquee has been erected for 4,000 people. Four canons from his Lordship's yacht were placed in the park, through the day 600 lbs of gunpowder were expended and it became necessary to obtain blasting powder from the mines to allow firing to continue to nightfall.

Certainly the most important event of the day was the laying of the foundation stone of the new church for the Worsley estate. This is to be erected, furnished and we believe endowed at the sole cost of Lord Francis. Situated on what is known as the Cross Field, the site and roadway are already staked out.

At noon the noble party took station where the stone is to be laid. Done with due ceremony, in a cavity were placed coin and a commemorative medal. It was covered by a slab and a brass plate inscribed AD MDCCXLIV Lord Francis Egerton.

This ceremony was followed by sports before dinner. A printed programme listed twenty different sports for prizes varying from a suit of clothes to a spade. In the centre of the sports arena stood a well greased pole from which hung a leg of mutton as prize.

It was then time for the men to form procession for dinner. Headed by two brass bands the workpeople, classed by occupation, marched prepared to do execution to the viands provided. The marquee measured 186 feet by 120 feet, over the door is a gallery for the band and a similar at the other end for the ladies of the officers.

The fare included four barons of beef plus 500 lbs of roast beef, six whole sheep, hams, pies and bread, 360 gallons of porter, 1,300 gallons of ale with 50 gallons of ginger ale. It was conducted in an orderly manner all having sufficient. The men then returned to the sports field with the note that athletic standards were not high.

A separate entertainment was laid on for the female relatives of the workmen. Supplied between six and eight pm to nearly a thousand females presided over by Lady Egerton, their tea of bread and cold meats, pies and other eatables were quite separate from those for the men. Fireworks concluded the day, commencing at 10pm five acts of 33 set pieces of display terminated at 11.15pm with the Egerton crest. The assembly retired home without undue incident, surplus viands being distributed on the estate.

ROYAL VISITS

Lord Francis and Worsley became centre stage in the visit of Queen Victoria and retinue to Salford and Manchester in October 1851. She was the first reigning monarch to do so for 150 years.

The timeframe given to organise what became an incredible feat of logistics bears testimony to the "can do" attitude of the age. Craftsmen and officials of not just Worsley but those of the two major towns bear witness to their organisational skills. They had been given less than two months to arrange possibly the largest public three day event ever held here.

A general itinerary had been agreed on which the royalty were to arrive at Patricroft station on Thursday the 9th, to be conveyed to Worsley by canal. Friday the 10th was scheduled for the carriage drive visit to Salford and Manchester with a return to Worsley. They were to leave on Saturday the 11th, by canal to Patricroft for a train to London.

No doubt the Hall was given a thorough spring clean but the works yard bore the brunt of preparations. The Earl had two state barges constructed (I suspect converted) and luxuriously fitted. The Queen's barge was 40 feet long with a glass saloon 12 feet long with crimson satin furnishings, the other was slightly smaller. A substantial debarkation pavilion was built on the canal bank with a carriage drive skirting the lawn to the Hall. Temporary triumphal arches were erected at Monton with another over the new carriage drive.

Preparation reached fever pitch on Wednesday the 8th, with the Worsley troop of the Lancashire Yeomen Cavalry hosting four other Yeomen troops in a rehearsal of their duties as Sovereign Escort. The same day, 520 men of the Estate were sworn in as special constables, mainly for crowd control between Worsley and Salford.

The royal train drew into Patricroft at 4.30pm with the Queen and party, escorted by the Countess, passing along a covered way to embark their respective barges. It was now that events lost the plot! Despite having been got accustomed to noise by the efforts of groups of colliers, when the cheering broke out, one of the horses shied up and fell into the canal. When all had been restored they set off but the tow rope broke. Every vantage point was thronged with people, the tow path being kept clear but residents given free access to the land behind the canal at Worsley.

Arriving at the debarking pavilion the Countess was first off, driving herself in a light trap to be at the Hall to welcome Her Majesty, the Earl being ill in bed with gout. The Queen followed ashore but the elderly Duke of Wellington in the rear barge took a flying leap for the bank, slipped and subsided gracefully towards the canal, only saved by an Earl's daughter who knelt – in a posh frock in the mud to save him. They all eventually made it to the Hall with the Worsley troop of cavalry lining the drive.

All the children from the Worsley schools lined the route also providing a pipe and drum performance. And it poured with rain the whole evening.

A convivial evening dinner was had, guests including three Dukes, a Marquis and three Earls, the extended Ellesmere family and local dignitaries including Mr Nasmith of steam hammer fame, who at the request of Prince Albert provided the after dinner entertainment with his maps of the moon.

Friday dawned to welcome sunshine; the people of Worsley were up and about early. Children of all the Estate schools together with their band marched to the Hall grounds whilst many local residents crowded the roadside platforms the Earl had provided so as to give his tenants a good view. The royal party left the Hall Park at 10am escorted by the Worsley Cavalry. Here is where the 520 special constables provided the means of "telegraphing" the movement. As the party approached the gate a man stepped into the road and raised his hat, this continued in sequence taking some four minutes to notify the Salford boundary.

During the next few hours the Queen was seen by 82,000 Manchester and Salford Sunday school children in Peel Park, she toured a thronged Manchester, then a ceremony in the Exchange room before leaving for Worsley.

You have to admire the stamina of the Queen during this visit, bear in mind she was 37 years old and already the mother of seven children. After the events in Salford and Manchester they had lunch at the Hall and at four pm nearly all the guests set out for a walk. Having led re-creations of this route I vouch for it being more than a stroll.

They proceeded through the grounds of the Hall to the lodge, where a double line of constables across the highway led them to the door of the church of St Mark. Met by the Vicar she toured the building leaving by the parsonage gardens and onto Lord Francis's private walks to Lady Brackley's poultry yard, which we know as The Aviary. Through what she described as beautiful woodlands they reached the Dispensary at Kempnough Hall. They continued by way of the Old Hall, returning to the Hall by 6 o'clock.

On the morning of the 11th Prince Albert left at 8am to make a four hour round trip to fulfil a promise to visit Mr Bazeley and his cotton mill at Barrow Bridge, Bolton.

It was the turn of Worsley to present a Loyal Address to Her Majesty. The children of the Estate some 1,400 in number mustered in the park and took station on the terraces to the north of the Hall. A nice distinction of precedence was observed. At the front, the children in fourteen rows of a hundred flew their banners, behind were the mothers and right at the back the clergy, teachers and spectators. The Loyal Address was given by the Vicar.

Soon after 11.20 am the Earl and Countess left for the state barge, the royal party following at a stately pace, taking their places when it moved immediately to Patricroft. Again the canal banks and works yard were thronged with cheering crowds. The Queen was amused. She saw a man cheer so enthusiastically his hat fell in the canal, she laughed quite a lot!

So ended possibly the most intense public event Worsley has ever seen. I have tried to give some idea of the logistics involved but one aspect puzzles me. The roads between Worsley and Manchester used on the Friday and the route from Worsley to Barrow Bridge used by Albert on the Saturday were Turnpike Highways. As Toll Roads, who – if anybody, paid?

Perhaps not festive but the funeral of Lord Francis, 1st Earl Ellesmere who died on 18 February 1857 did bring residents of the Estate together in good order to honour the man who had done so much for his people. At 10am the colliers, craftsmen and other workpeople met and headed by their superintendents marched to the churchyard. The Agents met in the entranceway to the Hall. Interment took place in a vault in the corner of the church of St Mark Worsley.

The Bolton Guardian newspaper makes an interesting and conflicting observation, saying: "the church was erected by the now Dowager Countess. It claims that the Earl when succeeding to the Estate pledged to make no changes. In consequence, every improvement on the Estate has been made under the auspices of the Countess.

THE THIRD BENEFICIARY

George, born in 1823 was a sickly child and adult but did have a magnificent celebration of his majority in June 1844. The festivities and Church foundation stone laying are detailed in the actions of his father the 1st Earl.

He married Mary Campbell, daughter of the Earl of Cawdor in 1846 with whom he had two sons. Becoming the 2nd Earl of Ellesmere in 1857, George made some impact on Worsley by moving into the New Hall after his father's death, continuing with the lengthy annual periods of residence the family had established. In July 1857, his disability left him unable to escort Queen Victoria and Prince Albert from Patricroft station to the Hall by carriage, not the Royal Barge, but was well enough to host dinner for the royal party the following evening. The royals, on their second visit to Worsley were visiting the Manchester Art Treasures Exhibition, gave the populace ample chance to see the Queen. The schoolchildren assembled by eight am and the thousand or so ranged themselves along the slopes near the Hall, the adults thronged the highway to Drywood and the toll bar.

It is evident he took a full interest in the provisions made for his Worsley tenants and colliers established by his father. In 1854 he and his Countess introduced the provision of a Christmas dinner which they hosted for the scholars attending the night schools connected with the estate. There were seven of these schools; Walkden had 163 scholars Ellenbrook 93, Roe Green 36, Swinton 26, New Bury 57 and Middle Hulton 46. They opened for three nights a week for two hours teaching. A similar event took place in August when all the schools in the Lower Division of Worsley processed to the Court House then walked to the Hall where tables laid with the good things of life were laid out awaiting decapitation.

It is likely his ill health prevented him officiating on the opening of the memorial to his father in August 1860. Taking twelve months to build by a London contractor it is of Victorian Gothic style. Inside a spiral stair conducts to a viewing platform where a splendid prospect bursts into view. The ceremony with a large attendance was conducted by Mr Fereday Smith, Deputy Superintendent of the Bridgewater Trust. It is situated to the north of Leigh Road and had an imposing access drive guarded by a Lodge. As built it was an imposing tower 130 feet (40m) tall, unfortunately the central portion had to be removed in 1939 as unsafe. It now stands inaccessible in a private garden.

One action of note was in September 1861 with his cutting the first sod for the building of Worsley station on the line "the Trustees graciously allowed the LNWR to be extended from Eccles through Worsley, Ellenbrook, Tyldesley and Wigan" thus giving them mail line connection for coal sales.

The ceremonial procession formed at the Court House, the railway directors and officials having arrived by barge, to Sindsley where stages had been erected for ladies and public. His lordship addressed the crowd then filled a barrow with sods and wheeled it onto the platform. The party returned to the Court House for entertainment.

In concern for those on the estate thrown out of work by the cotton famine of the American civil war, George arranged for work to be made for them. This resulted in the laying out of the infrastructure to accommodate the now Broadoak Park and Ellesmere Park housing.

His short tenure of the title ended with his death in September 1862, being buried with his father in the vault at St. Mark's Worsley.

THE FOURTH AND LAST BENEFICIARY.

George's eldest son, Francis Charles Granville Egerton born on the 5th April 1847 became the 3rd Earl of Ellesmere when only 16 years old. AS he could not access his inheritance until reaching his majority as his mother could not afford the expense of keeping Worsley Hall open, it was mothballed.

On the day of his Majority in April 1868, it was largely a holiday for Worsley. In the morning, flags began to be hoist on roofs of houses mills and manufactories of Walkden and Worsley. None of the extensive collieries of the Bridgewater Trust were in operation, the workers made merry on bread, cheese and beer. Churches and gentlemen's residences were decorated and firing of canon was a feature at the Boatshed Yard, Walkden.

Reception at Worsley of the new Earl in July 1868 on his first visit since his majority was arranged by a committee headed by Mr Lansdale of Booths Hall. The Earl was to arrive at Patricroft station and proceed by the State Barge to Worsley Hall. His arrival was awaited by over 6,000 people at Patricroft and along the canal. Alas communications were not effective and the arrival at the station turned into farce. It was assumed (note: assumed) that the Earl would arrive by the London train. Sixty detonators were placed on the line to great alarm of the train crew and passengers. The Earl did not come by that train. The Liverpool train next due had detonators placed but the whole company was again disappointed. Whilst heated argument took place, the train from Chester sneaked in unheralded and out got the Earl.

The State Barge drawn by two horses with postillions passed along a route with every bridge decorated and banners streamed over the canal. All Worsley Yard and coke ovens were decorated and the Queens landing stage re-painted. Here were assembled a vast concourse of the elite of the district, the Local Volunteer and Yeomanry formed a guard of honour, the two bands playing alternately. And it poured with rain.

In December 1868 he married Katherine Louisa Phipps, daughter of the Marquis of Normanby. Whilst pursuing a largely honorary military career in the local and Manchester Volunteer Yeomanry Regiments he and his wife continued the work of his grandfather, the 1st Earl by being a paternal influence to Worsley.

Most of his contribution to the infrastructure of Worsley centred round the maintenance, decoration or extension of existing facilities. The two Parish churches and the many schools came in for his largesse. Over the years additional classrooms were added. In his later years most of the schools had water closet toilet and cloakroom facilities provided. It is noticeable that most of these were reported in the press along the line of "the Earl has arranged that the work be undertaken by the workmen of the Bridgewater Trust.

July 1869 gave Worsley two events to break their workaday life. First was the hosting of the Royal visit of the Prince and Princess of Wales, visiting the Royal Agricultural Show held in Manchester. Arriving by train to Worsley, the following day they went to and from Manchester in the State Barge. Departing the following day the route from the Hall to Broadoak Toll Bar was lined by the local schoolchildren.

A few days later he officiated at the inauguration of the Lady Ellesmere Memorial, Walkden. A place specially selected for it as it is in the centre of the mining district and the people to whom she has done the most good. Styled as an Eleanor Cross, four niches have statues of local trades, a collier, a craftsman and two mill girls, higher up are four life size statues depicting the virtues of Lady Harriett, Charity, Piety, Munificence and Prudence. Official guests at the ceremony were accommodated on grandstands with some four or five thousand people surrounding the site. After the ceremony the children connected with the Wesleyan school were regaled with buns and lemonade as were the scholars from St Paul's. The Countess and Dowager Countess visited both schools to see the children enjoying the treat. Soon after, the statue of the collier was damaged by miners throwing stones at it as an unpopular pit official had been chosen as the model.

The third Earl appears to have spread his munificence to the Little Hulton part of the Estate previously little touched by the Ellesmere's. One way he did mirror his grandfather was in promoting the Anglican cause in the building of the church of St. John the Baptist at Hill Top, on the boundary of Worsley and Little Hulton. This was a newly created parish. The foundation stone was laid in November 1873 of a church to seat 450. Expected to cost £4,000, the Earl gave £1,000 and the land. The remainder came from Mr Harrison Blair, owner of Kearsley Chemical Works, profitable enough for him to also fund St. Stephen's at Kearsley, a hospital in Bolton and a school on Bridgewater Street Little Hulton.

Educational provisions followed in 1878 with the opening of the Lady Ellesmere School near St. John the Baptist on land formerly part of the pleasure ground. It was to be both day and Sunday school for 85 junior and 75 infant children. Adults were catered for by the Earl inaugurating two Literary institutes in the Parish of St. John the Baptist, one at Lady Ellesmere School and the second at Blair school, Bridgewater Street.

Over the years and particularly since the opening of the railway, Worsley had become somewhere people came to for fresh air. Considering Barton Road was known as Smoke Row one wonders what conditions were like back home. Villagers had built up a lucrative trade in catering for visitors, most cottages sporting signs advertising refreshments and one man even did donkey rides. The Powers That Be wanted the action.

It came with the report that the dwelling house adjoining the old corn mill has been converted at the joint expense of the Bridgewater Trust and the Rev. the Earl Mulgrave, vicar of Worsley, into a Temperance Hotel. The gardens have been laid out for the convenience of visitors and a manager appointed. It was opened in June 1888 by the Countess of Ellesmere. The following year it was reported that the manager of Lady Ellesmere's Coffee Tavern was very busy coping with parties each of fifty and upwards from Pendleton, Oldham, Clayton, Weaste, Bury and Leigh. A further report describes Worsley as "a pleasure resort" with more than an ordinary influx of visitors. The Lady Ellesmere Coffee Tavern can now accommodate 420 persons. It notes that from the upper windows views are given over Worsley village and a sight of the lake in the Earl's parkland.

Big Brother protected its interests in prohibiting catering for visitors by cottagers who had been accustomed to doing so. A notice in April 1892 from the Bridgewater Trustees manager stated "the practice must cease immediately as the cottages are not adapted for the purpose." Thus, in consequence the notices "Visitors catered for at short notice" have been taken down. It will mean pecuniary loss to villagers.

Later in the year it was reported the edict prohibiting residents providing refreshments is exciting attention. The sacrifice of tenants who have usually obliged picnic parties has been about £3 this Whitsun. During the Whit holiday the village was thronged with visitors, 2,545 persons booking by train from Manchester on Friday. Other large groups came from Bolton. Some cottagers exercised their undoubted right in a free country to supply refreshment in spite of the Bridgewater edict. It is claimed it has no legal effect and attention is likely to be drawn to the Worsley boycott in Parliament. No record of such action has been found.

Lord Ellesmere's eldest son, with the courtesy title Lord Brackley made many appearances in the local press. His tenth birthday in 1882 was celebrated by a huge bonfire and fireworks on the Cross Field, behind the church, appropriate refreshments were served to the estate workers.

The following two I would have loved to see.

In July 1890 a poor start was made to a visit to London by him and the Earl. Leaving Worsley Hall to catch the train from Worsley station, they journeyed by means of the wagonette belonging to the Grapes Inn. Proceeding out of the Park and on passing Mill Brow, both back wheels of the conveyance came off depositing the Nobles in the road. By hurrying on foot the two managed to reach the train.

Lord Brackley came of age in 1894, on the Easter Sunday morning at St Mark's, the congregation had fallen into a respectful hush awaiting the entry of the Earl and party. Through the open door came a large black cat that, with the lofty disdain only a cat can, walked the full length of the aisle. It ascended the pulpit and sat upon the lectern. Having viewed the congregation it departed. No one claimed ownership!

On his birthday in September a lengthy programme of events was arranged. On Wednesday, a cricket match between his Lordships friends and a visiting club was held. Thursday saw a large number of Gentlemen and Officials of other districts at a garden party at the Hall. On Friday the Staffs

of the Bridgewater and Ellesmere Trustees were similarly entertained. Saturday had an invitation to tenants of cottages on the Estates and their workmen to tea in the Park with a fireworks display in the evening.

The Church of England society for waifs and strays, formed in 1881 had ideas of a home in Worsley. Promoted in 1896 by the Rev Earl Mulgrave and the Countess of Ellesmere, the Bridgewater Trust were kind enough to offer a house on Mill Brow, Worsley. The promoters were able to have alterations done to suit the purpose. It was formally opened in August 1898 by Countess Ellesmere.

A novel funding method was used to provision the home, an annual "Pound Day" was held. The vicar entreated all those interested in the work of rescuing children to bring a Pound (weight) of something useful. The appeal was successful with over 1,000 lbs of commodities donated over the day. The following year was equally successful with well over 1,000 lbs of commodities as well as donations of money received by the matron. The exterior was tastefully decorated for the occasion. Visitors inspected the premises which are ideal for the purpose. There are dining and play rooms, kitchen, lavatory, bathroom and dormitories which meet all requirements. It was said the matron had succeeded in making the home as attractive and pleasant as possible.

In October 1903 the Bridgewater Trust expired and Francis Charles Granville Egerton entered into the full control and possession of the Egerton inheritance.

TRUST CHANGES

ESTATE ACTS OF PARLIAMENT to change the Duke's Will.

Clearly after some forty years of changing circumstances the all encompassing terms of the Duke's Will were no longer appropriate to conducting an industrial business and an Estate. Recourse was taken by the Bridgewater Trustees in the only, but expensive way, of doing so by promoting private Acts of Parliament. These were to allow the necessary changes, permitting investment in improvements to both the colliery and canal operations and easing the severe accommodation shortage by allowing house building on the estate.

First success came in 1840 with an Estate Act "to enable the Trustees of the Will of the late Duke of Bridgewater to make conveyances of part of the Trust's estates for building on and improving them; and to grant Leases of Coal and other Mines; and also for removing any doubts as to their right of nominating a Minister to the Church or Chapel lately erected by Lord Francis Egerton on part of the said Trust Estate." This last clause was referring to the Chapel of St. George in Walkden of 1838.

A subsequent Act of 1842 expanded on the provisions of the previous Act but mainly regularised the ironing out the financial jiggery-pokery between the Trustees and the Noble families involved who had made loans to cover vital improvements to canal and mines. It's main relevance to Worsley came right at the end where the Act granted approval for clearing a site, by demolishing the New (Brick) Hall in order to erect "a new Capital Mansion House commensurate with the position of the beneficiary of the Trust."

Several other Acts were granted dealing with finance matters but a later application paved the way for the growth of Walkden. The Act of 1851 was to "Enable the Trustees of the Duke of Bridgewater to make conveyances in Fee or Demises for long terms of years of his Trust Estates". This permitted the Trust to lease land to speculative builders for the construction of workers houses and perhaps as important, land and water rights leading to the erection of the many textile mills in Worsley.

SELLING THE BRIDGEWATER CANAL

In parallel with the Bridgewater Canal in providing water transport between Liverpool and Manchester was the Mersey and Irwell Navigation. These rivers had been improved for commercial shipping by dredging and building locks. It had had a mixed career but both the Trust and beneficiary saw it as still a threat to their operation so moved to purchase it in 1844. To speed the process, Lord Francis

Egerton made the purchase in his own name. This allowed time for the Trust to obtain another Act so as to “enable the Trust to execute an agreement with Lord Francis” – to pay him back.

By the middle of the nineteenth century the business orientated managers of the Bridgewater Trust realised the canal side of their operation would become a liability. Railways both locally and regionally were both in direct competition and an ally in realising the potential of their coalfield reserves. Opening of the Manchester – Wigan railway through the estate gave the prospect of rail connections to better equipped collieries to replace the already inefficient and almost exhausted underground canal system. These plans required serious capital. Recourse was had to Parliament in 1865 in promoting a Bill to allow the sale of the Trustees canal and navigation interests to increase the profitability of the collieries.

Events came to a head in 1872 when the Bridgewater Trustees sold the Bridgewater Canal, the Mersey and Irwell Navigation and the Runcorn canal and property associated with them. Paying £1,115,000, the purchasing consortium styled themselves as “The Bridgewater Navigation Company Ltd.” Further portions of the waterway network were gradually sold to the new company particularly at the Manchester end of the canal.

What was called the “Main Conveyance” of the waterways, docks and other associated properties was completed in June 1874.

A feature not forming part of the sale was the boatyard and dry docks at Worsley. They were retained as an essential part of the Trustees operation to make new ones and repair their large fleet of barges in use on the Bridgewater canal engaged in carrying their coal.

NATIONAL and REGIONAL CHANGES

TURNPIKES AND RAILWAYS

The deplorable state of the local roads was a prime factor in the need for the Bridgewater Canal. Since the 1500`s upkeep of roads fell on the parish through which they passed with householders having the duty to do the work and provide materials. Known as “Statute Labour” residents did their best to avoid partaking or did the absolute minimum. The person in charge was elected – or coerced in the parish and would likely have no qualifications for the task. If roads got seriously out of a useable condition the Justices could impose a Court Order to enforce compliance.

This happened in 1739 to a road in Worsley, an ultimatum being sent. It read “Unless the inhabitants of Worsley in the County of Lancashire do well and sufficiently repair the King`s highway there from the Black Bull (Swinton) to Linnyslaw Common in length about a mile and a half presented at this session to be in decay and for want of a cawsey (a bridge) and certify the same to be repaired to the Clerk of the Peace by the first day in June the sum of ten pounds is now imposed.

A solution was found by establishing under an Act of Parliament the road becoming what was known as a “Turnpike”. Essentially a toll road operated and maintained by stated Trustees, their adoption spread in the 1750s onwards. The name came from the turn – pike or gate installed at toll collection points on the route. A comprehensive set of charges were laid down to cover every likely road user from animals on the hoof, carriages and carts, only pedestrians were exempt.

First of the local roads to be formed a Turnpike dealt with a substantial portion of the network. The Act was passed in 1753 and covered what is now the A666, Manchester to Bolton, also the now A57 Pendleton to Irlam, the A6, Swinton to Chorley and Swinton to Broadoak Worsley. These roads certainly within Worsley and Little Hulton came under the care of The Pendleton Trust. They were all existing roads with the exception of that section of the A6 between Swinton and the Stocks at Walkden which was just a bridle path.

It was not until 1804 that what is now the A575, from Barton Bridge through Worsley and Walkden to Moses Gate was turnpike together with a completely new branch road from near Farnworth to the Chorley Road at Little Hulton, we know it as Cleggs Lane.

An Act of 1825 was for “new branches from the Barton Bridge to Moses Gate road,” covering three roads. One was for the road from The Ladies Cross at Worsley through Boothstown and Tyldesley to Astley, now the A572, another from Broad Oak along a road called Greenleach, to Bonnet Hall.

Lastly, in the 1825 Act, the missing link between Broad Oak and the “Grapes” at Worsley Village, now Worsley Road the A572 was completed. This section involved actual road construction rather than upgrading and left its mark on Worsley Village. Pre the Bridgewater Canal there had been two thatched cottages adjacent to the Delph, these were swept away and to widen the new road to the same dimensions as the canal age bridge a blind arch was constructed across the canal basin next to the Packet House, it has a date stone of 1827.

Once the income from tolls covered the capital expenditure the promoters or Trustees ceased collecting the tolls directly but auctioned off the privilege to whoever bid more than they needed with the person bidding keeping the residue.

Notices of impending auctions appeared locally; one in June 1844 cited “The TOLLS arising from the several toll gates upon the turnpikes leading from Barton Bridge, through Worsley to a place called Moses Gate. Also from Broad Oak in Worsley to a place in Astley called Black-a-Moor will be let by auction at the Bridgewater Hotel Worsley.”

Notice how the original keeper of one of the turn-pikes, a Moses has given his name to a district. Reporting the letting of tolls at the gates at Little and Middle Hulton which had been in the hands of Greenwood & Co. of Pendleton for years were bought by John Higham, butcher of Walkden for £90 per annum. Greenwoods had the toll gate at the junction of Broad Street and Eccles Old Road alongside the old Woolpack Inn. John Greenwood introduced the first public transport in the country run to a schedule, from Eccles to Manchester in January 1824.

Turnpike Trusts were set to run for a fixed term of years and often the expiry was at a time when the new local authorities could undertake road upkeep at ratepayer’s expense, such events were rightly celebrated.

A major local Turnpike Trust expired on the 31st of October 1871. The event became something of a celebration. “A few Farnworth Gentlemen were prompted to see the end of the Bar at the top of Longcauseway, the Bolton Road Bar and the dawn of a new era in the district. Accordingly, conveyances were requisitioned. The last to pass through the gate before midnight on the paying principle contained the Clerk to the Local Board. The other, driven by Mr Entwistle, captain of the Farnworth fire brigade was the first to pass through the functionless gate free of toll. The sixpence paid by the first carriage was a new one, dated 1871 provided for the purpose and was bought back for posterity as the last coin paid for the privilege of passing along Hew Majesties Highway from Farnworth to Worsley. A considerable number of persons were attracted to the spot to see the turnpike pronounced dead. The landlord of the Bridgewater Arms prevailed upon the parties to enter his hostelry to partake of refreshment.”

MAIN LINE PASSENGER RAILWAYS

LIVERPOOL – MANCHESTER

As owners of the only viable transport links between Liverpool and Manchester, the Bridgewater Trustees with their canal and river navigations fiercely opposed the projected railway joining the two towns. They tried all kinds of obstruction to the scheme. Railway surveyors were barred from their lands and actually had guns fired to deter them. Parliamentary opposition was intense and succeeded in having the Railway Bill overthrown in 1825.

The Trust under Bradshaw had spent £10,000 – at 1825 values on opposing the railway. Modified plans were submitted which removed many of the objections but what was the equivalent of an earthquake happened within the Trust camp. The Beneficiary, by now Marquis of Stafford invested £10,000 in the railway. Collapse of opposition. As a sop, Stafford nominated two directors to the railway company which went to Bridgewater Trust men.

The railway opened in September 1830 with scheduled trains, the rest as they say, is history. Whilst passing through the south of Worsley the only local station was at Patricroft. It was its later branches that were to give rail transport to Worsley. The Liverpool – Manchester amalgamated with other companies in 1845 to form the London and North Western Railway Co.

ECCLES TO WIGAN

Rail transport proper came to Worsley with the London and North Western Railway (LNWR) branch from Eccles to Wigan. Aimed at the lucrative coal traffic of the districts it was to traverse, the Bridgewater Trustees supported it wholeheartedly. The route was to run from near Eccles station, through Monton where a station was provided, Worsley with its station to the south of the junction of Worsley Road and Greenleach Lane. It continued westwards with a small station at Ellenbrook before leaving the district into Tyldesley.

September 1861 saw the ceremony of cutting the first sod performed by the 2nd Earl of Ellesmere. The railway directors and officials had arrived by barge and to assemble at Worsley Court House. They processed to near Sindsley where stages had been erected for Ladies and the public. His Lordship addressed the crowd, then filled the barrow with sods and, to cheers, wheeled it to the platform. The party returned to the Court House for entertainment.

It was reported the works along the whole line had been contracted to Messrs Tredwell and to be completed by spring 1863. Perhaps that was a pious hope as it did not open to traffic until October 1863. In later years the Bridgewater Trustees were to make considerable use of this line with two major access points serving their traffic. These were at sidings beside Greenleach Lane and at Ellenbrook.

Clearly there would have been disruption with the construction as the section through Worsley involved heavy earthworks to form the cuttings, bridges to carry roads over the cuttings as well as the influx of labourers. The main residual change was the dividing of Roe Green, the once integral part containing the Beesley cottages and school was now isolated from the main Green.

Over the years some improvements were made to Worsley station. The unpleasantness of using the approach road and platforms by only oil lamp light ceased as the company arranged gas lighting to platforms and the Avenue in 1869. After accidents and near misses by passengers having to cross the line by a level crossing, a footbridge was finally installed in 1881. Some surprising improvements came in 1893, two suitable waiting rooms were provided on the Bolton and Tyldesley side of the station and further lighting improvement also made.

Many accidents and incidents occurred on the Worsley section of the line. Perhaps one that brought about the addition of the footbridge happened in the dark of an 1880 November. The sheer coldness of the language of the report is the Stiff Upper Lip of the Victorian upper classes at its best.

“A Walkden miner was reaching the other platform by crossing the track behind a stationary train and was struck by another. When the train departed, tee porters attention was drawn to the fact there was a body, less an arm and a leg laid on the track.”

Its infrastructure if damaged by accidents would be repaired incredibly swiftly using skilled manual labour. Such an event is recorded in March 1895. The Carlisle express goods train broke down on Saturday between Worsley and Ellenbrook causing several trucks to leave the line. Some of the wagons ran for nearly two miles off the rails and broke several hundred rail chairs. These were replaced and the train re-railed overnight and by Monday morning. On opening the line a coupling of the train snapped, dividing the train, the front part running away causing the 8.50 am Bolton to Monton train to run off the line.

Possibly the saddest accident reported at Worsley station had an incredible sting in the tail (no pun intended). Young Master Teale of Sindsley House waited until the train was moving, missed his footing and fell across the buffers, falling onto the line were several carriages passed over him. Much sympathy for Mr & Mrs Teale who's other son was eaten by a lion.

ROE GREEN TO BOLTON ---- the Low Level

Whilst the railway from Eccles to Tyldesley was still at the Parliamentary stage, several of the local private coal owners convened meetings to consider the propriety of establishing a branch from Shaving Lane (Walkden Road) to Peel Parsonage. All these coal proprietors together with the Bridgewater Trustees noted the vast amount of coal raised in the locality which would be better marketed by rail. A letter from the chairman of the LNWR gave approval to the proposal. Action was not immediate and the project in fact became one of two halves.

Work commenced on a line from Roe Green, to the south of Walkden, Tynesbank, Little Hulton and to finish at Buckley Lane. This was projected simply as a mineral line. Work began in late 1867, progress was such that surplus plant was being disposed of in 1869 and in April 1870 a Directors inspection took place by engine and carriage from Buckley Lane to Roe Green.

Mineral traffic began in May of 1870 whilst there was still only one line of rails, which is to be the "down" line. The main user being John Gibson's Smithfold Colliery, who had sidings prepared. Clearly he had hopes for enhanced productivity with rail transport. To celebrate he entertained his entire workforce, their wives and sweethearts to a meal.

Meanwhile, agitation for what may be termed The Second Half, a continuation to Bolton intensified. A Bill for a new LNWR branch from Little Hulton to Bolton came before Parliament. It was opposed by the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway Co. The Bridgewater Trust attested they had 1,200 acres of coal in the vicinity of the line to which connections would be made. A great advantage to Bolton would be made of cheap coal by the line. The preamble was passed and the Bill passed the House of Lords in June 1869. Work went apace with Buckley Lane reached and a bridge provided by mid 1870.

Little Hulton Township passed a Memorial to the Directors of the LNWR for passenger trains on the new line, to confer benefits if made available. This bore fruit for stations then described as being at Dunkirk Little Hulton and at Worsley Stocks (Walkden) were complete in 1874. On opening, the route in the publicity blurb was described as "entirely through pleasant country.

By 1873 extensive use was being made of the line by several Little Hulton Collieries. This is reflected in the sale of large number of draught horses and carts no longer needed in consequence. John Gibson, Bennett Bros. J & W Roscoe, Mr Charlton and the Bank Colliery Co. all offered in excess of fifty horses. A journal article relates the change affected by the new line. "The former extensive traffic on the Turnpike has now almost disappeared and on both road and pit bank a magical quiet prevails so it is almost like Sunday without the raucous cries of the carters. They are now too few to disturb the peace. The coal trade of the place has almost doubled overnight, carters, their occupation gone have found employment in the collieries.

The whole line was completed and opened on the auspicious date of April 1st 1875. The first passenger train started from the Great Moor Street station in Bolton at 7am. No special ceremony was observed but large numbers of spectators thronged the stations. Strangely, Walkden station which became Walkden Low Level was the only station on the whole LNWR Eccles – Tyldesley and Roe Green – Bolton without a footbridge despite petitions by residents and the Council to the railway company and the Board of Trade, who refused the application.

Little Hulton station has its place in railway history as it was from here that a railway engine was arrested by Bailiffs. In February 1877 the first train on Saturday was seized by Bailiffs acting for the Townships of Little Hulton and Great Lever for the non payment of rates by the railway company despite the County Justices making such an order so distress warrants were put into operation. The Bailiff party arrived at Little Hulton by cab and boarded the engine with the Warrant as authority and allowed the engine to proceed. At Plodder lane station the ticket collector demanded their fare which the senior paid. At Bolton, the engine was put into a siding and should the amount demanded not be paid the engine will be sold at auction. It was advertised as such but after a few days the railway company paid up!

PENDLEBURY – WIGAN --- the High Level

Yet another line was being considered, now by the Lancashire & Yorkshire Railway Co (L&Y) who sought to reduce journey times on their existing lines between Manchester and Wigan. At the time trains had to go via Bolton so cutting the distance by a new line going through Walkden was an attractive idea. It was first publicised in January 1882 with a map of the proposed route from Pendlebury through Swinton, Walkden and Tyldesley.

It was not until January 1885 that a contract for making the line was let to Monk & Newall of Bootle. The company also informed the Little Hulton Council they had taken land at Mort Lane for a station, this was never made.

Progress was rapid as by October 1886 it was noted that “the new railway through Walkden is being pushed on. Railways were built as motorways are now, the complex structures like bridges were erected with the earthworks following on. It was reported the many massive bridges here, Walkden Road, Memorial Road, Stanley Road and Bridgewater Road are nearing completion having occupied some months. A station will shortly commence and the goods yard should help increase trade. By mid 1887 the effects of the works are becoming intrusive. Walkden road, once a shady lane is no more, but is now the busiest and dirtiest in the district. Work on building up the embankment has reached Bridgewater Road. Contractors have erected workshops in the fields alongside Walkden Road, here brick making by steam makes thousands a day for the works. Blacksmiths, carpenters, navvies, platelayers and carters are all kept busy.”

It is likely the effect was negligible but Navy Missions were operated with two full time missionaries employed on the works, meetings were conducted locally in Old Clough Farm. A report of navy fights suggests their words fell on stony ground. Every night, residents of Walkden road were disturbed by fights involving men engaged on the railway works and living locally. This was often not among themselves, a number bickered with an innocent passer-by, so severely injured he had to be conveyed home in a trap.

Work was nearing completion with the L&Y Co inviting tenders for the erection of stations at Walkden and Wardley on the new line. Neild's of Manchester were the successful bidders and by June 1888 it was reported as assuming a more finished appearance every day. Platforms are 200 yards long with a canopy cover painted white and the girders picked out in blue. Three wooden waiting rooms are painted black and white with a booking office situated on Walkden Road in the post and plaster style. It was also noted that the drawback of the station is noted in the steps. There are fourteen to the booking office with a further 29 to the platforms.

It would appear that the line was opened only from Pendlebury to Walkden initially. A report of the seventh of July covered the “Opening of a new railway at Walkden” The first train of engine and six coaches left for Manchester at 5.15am, only 22 passengers took the train. By the following week numbers had risen to 180 per day with Saturday and Sunday the busiest.

There are some conflicting – or confusing details given regarding the opening of the line. At the end of the month, Major Hutchinson, railway inspector to the Board of Trade made a full inspection of the line from Walkden to Hindley. All the permanent way, signals and bridges were checked. The section of the line is to be open on the first of August.

This indeed occurred on that day, the first direct train from Walkden to Southport was an excursion trip with Walkden Congregational Church sending a party from Walkden. The confusion comes with details in April 1889 that – The new loop line on the L&Y railway will put Walkden in direct communication with Blackpool. It is to be opened for Whit week, the Walkden Congregationalists have booked places on the day. Yet more confusion is given when in June 1889 it notes that the new line between Pendlebury and Hindley is to be formally opened on the 1st of August.

Whenever it did open, the facility of reaching the seaside gained popularity. The August Bank Holiday of 1892 proved hectic with special excursions. On the Saturday, the Congregational church had booked a private coach attached to a normal train for a trip to Southport. A party of forty tradesmen from the Bridgewater Trustees yard together with the Vicar and Choir from St. Paul's church also arrived with the intention of using the scheduled train.

All tried to get into the only space on the train, the booked coach. The station master had great difficulty in persuading the parties that this should go to them that had booked it. The others followed on the next train that had been delayed due to the incident.

Meanwhile the L&Y Co. were preparing a goods yard for Walkden. The land adjacent to the station had been intended for the purpose but during the construction of the line it was used for making bricks, with drying sheds, kilns, workshops and stables.

KEARSLEY BRANCH RAILWAY

This was a line that was very speculative and with only part of it built it never reached its hoped for potential. In November 1872 the Lancashire & Yorkshire Railway Co. applied to Parliament for power to build a short railway from near their Stoneclough station to near Kearsley Chemical Works. They also proposed a branch from this to a point west of Worsley Road, Little Hulton. They hoped to contract with owners of works etc. for traffic.

Authority was given for the line and work began immediately with the entire route staked out. It was to terminate at Mr Ashton's farm where a passenger station and goods facility would be erected. Cutting the first sod ceremony was performed by Mr Scowcroft, proprietor of Kearsley Collieries. At this stage the line was intended to be continued to the LNWR line near Tyldesley. It is to pass the Kearsley Chemical Works then join the Bridgewater Trustees new railway line at Ashton's Field.

It was opened in March 1878, constructed to serve the convenience of Mr Warburtons Chemical Works, the Bridgewater Trust and Roscoe and Lord's Stonehill Colliery. There it finished. Worsley Road was never crossed and indeed the whole line never came up to expectations.

THE RAILWAY NEVER BUILT

This burst in a blaze of publicity in March 1875 being proposed as "The Lancashire Manufacturing Towns Railway Company." Public meetings were held with maps produced showing the initial intention to connect Bolton and Manchester with a circuitous route. Later in the year a fuller route was described between the two Towns. It was to begin near Folds Road, Bolton, then via Rakes Lane, Great Lever, Doe Hey, Dixon Green, New Bury, Albert Road, Stonehill, Linnyslaw and Moorside. Needless to say, in the Parliamentary debate it was reported "the Bill was thrown out."

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

"THE TOWN" its officers and function.

Right up almost to the start of the twentieth century, Worsley had two levels of government. Most ancient were the Manorial Courts, the Court Leet and the Court Baron, described in part one. Archaic they may have been but the court Leet had a resurgence. Having been moribund for over ten years it was revived, meeting in the Court House in 1877, when it was declared it would convene yearly.

The Town, or more properly, the Township is a term that came into use following an Act of Parliament of 1662 which among other provisions, decreed that large parishes such as Eccles be divided up into Townships for the purpose of civil administration. Worsley being such a large area was further divided in two for administrative convenience. The Higher Division consisted of what are now Walkden and Boothstown, whilst the Lower Division dealt with Worsley village, Roe Green, Wardley, and Swinton.

Civil administration was placed in the hands of "the Township" a council of the great and the good of the district. They were originally elected annually by property owners but over the years were generally co-opted. Of those men forming "theTown", each division appointed two men as Constable, two as Overseers of the Poor with two more taking the duty of Surveyor of the Highways. They were usually without any qualification for the tasks, were unpaid but expected to undertake the duty for a year. Clearly they were from the upper layer of the society, farmers, inn keepers and master craftsmen. With the coming of the Bridgewater Trust the leaders of the Township were soon senior officers of the Trust.

A meeting at the Bridgewater Hotel in 1885 emphasises this by reporting all officers and Overseers re-elected under the chairmanship of Mr Robert Lansdale of Booths Hall, a Land Agent to the Trust. By this time many of the responsibilities of the Town had transferred to other authorities but it gives some idea of the Town finances, showing Rate receipts of £3,167, with a £1,000 balance the Rate was set at 1/- in the pound as sufficient for the next twelve months. The annual ratepayers meeting for the Township in 1891, held in the Courthouse, had Mr Robert Lansdale presiding for the 51st time in unbroken succession.

One of the lesser but visible employees of the Town was the Bell Man, a sort of second division Town Cryer. Such an officer is noted both in the Town documents and in the Victorian news as being in action. His duties are neatly encapsulated in a press item of 1862. It notes "there had been many complaints over difficulties of publicising events, giving information and convening meetings as a bellman could not be got. A labourer has been prevailed upon to become Bellman. Public subscriptions will furnish a bell and a coat with braid. It is said he has a good voice.

POOR LAW in Worsley

What are now known as social services were under the tender care of the Overseers of the Poor. Initially, these were the members of the "Town" in that year so delegated. They were empowered to provide for the sick and aged, provide employment for paupers able to work and to house the homeless by boarding them out. To do this they levied a Poor Rate on the householders of the Parish. A further Act of 1723 empowered Overseers to have a poorhouse with attached workhouse.

HARROPS TENEMENT

Prior to 1730 Worsley had coped with the problem of the destitute by boarding them out at a charge to the Town. In that year seven cases, mainly widows were given what was termed "out relief". Inevitably the need for somewhere to provide "in relief" became a better option as it was less costly.

The Town negotiated with the estate of the 1st Duke of Bridgewater for the lease of Harrops Tenement on the east side of Shaving Lane, now Walkden Road, near Edgefold. It was land of some two acres containing two thatched and timber framed buildings. It was in full operation by 1732 with Elizabeth Parr appointed Governess who was paid one shilling per week per inmate for food. Some building work to the value of fifteen pounds concluded in 1735 and by 1738 there were eighteen inmates. There was still some boarding out, involving children whose parents were not able to care for them, one woman was getting ten shillings a month for the children boarded out to her.

Once children reached the age of seven they were liable to be bound apprentice to whoever would take them, the Town paying a premium to the Governor. Harrops had one of its buildings equipped as a work-house to provide occupation for the able bodied adults. It was supplied with tools and devices for handloom weaving; it is likely the sale of any product was a source of income for the Governor. The last payment of rent for Harrops was in 1756 by which time the poorhouse had changed location.

ROE GREEN

Thomas Collier, a prominent member of the Town had endowed a school for twelve poor boys. The 1st Duke of Bridgewater gave land at Roe green for the school and schoolhouse. At some date before 1751 the new Poorhouse was built up to this school. Elizabeth Parr continued as Governor until her death in 1775 on terms little changed from the days at Harrops.

Of three stories, the upper was used as a work-house for handloom weaving. All the equipment provided was appropriately, the traditional labour intensive type. Hand held cards, like large square hair brushes straightened out the fibres and spinning wheels with a single spindle produced the yarn for hand and foot operated looms. Again, the output appears to have been to the benefit of the Governor. The Roe Green poorhouse appears to have closed in early 1769 with a final item of accounting citing "Pd for killing bugs at poorhouse." It was to be ten years before there was another poorhouse in Worsley, in the meantime the needy were once again boarded out.

OLD LANE / HAZELHURST

By early 1778 some seventy Worsley people were getting outdoor parish relief where they were either boarded out or maintained in their own homes. Change came in December that year with the opening of the new Worsley Workhouse on a site at the junction of Moorside Road and Hazelhurst Road.

It was a substantial two storey building of brick and slate with very small windows, the lower floor was almost a cellar and of very low headroom. In charge as Governor, Hugh Higson had a salary of £20 yearly. His accounts for food for the inmates show a reasonably varied diet of adequate quantities. Eventually the surrounding ground was cultivated for vegetables and included a piggery.

Medical provision came from visiting physicians or surgeons and likely some were not medically trained. Certainly Doctors William and Joseph Evans of Boothstown were essentially botanical herbalists although of the highest repute locally. Leeches were collected locally and paid for, to use in the practice of blood-letting. Alcohol in the form of brandy and the narcotic laudanum, a poppy based opium was used as a sedative particularly in the form known as infant preservative. It kept the children quiet, so we had a drug problem even back then!

Workhouses provided tasks for the inmates and the new house at Hazelhurst specialised in cotton cloth production. It did so using much improved technology brought in during the first few years of operation. First was a Spinning Jenny, a machine tht spun on multiple spindles enhancing output. 1780 saw the purchase of a carding engine, this used as series of spiked rollers to comb and align the fibres ready for spinning on the Jenny. The looms now used, whilst still manual operated incorporated the flying shuttle allowing the weaver to both work faster and make wider cloth. As each of these technologies was introduced the receipts for the output noticeably increased, the income supposedly going to defray expenses.

Unfortunately temptation came to one Governor who was sacked in 1807 for proven malpractice having made defalcations over some 22 years. At court he was ordered to make restitution for the cloth sold to his own benefit and dipping into the sick box, whilst having a salary and keep.

During 1839 there was an outbreak of Cholera in the district and Worsley was particularly affected.

The Overseers began to combat the disease by laying in stocks of proper medicine and brandy at several public houses, the landlords being asked to distribute if asked for. By mid-summer further action needed to be taken in the form of an isolation hospital for those affected. The building selected was a cottage at Parr Fold, still extant on what is now Broadway. It was in operation between August and November 1839. Medical supplies were laid in and a delivery of canvas and tar to wrap bodies in, with coffins to be made if needed. Cleanliness was enforced, the building whitewashed and drains cleared. Some ninety people were treated by the Town, no doubt there were others. After the epidemic all the equipment was sent to the workhouse.

Conditions in the workhouse were recorded a few years before closure. It reported that it is a narrow building with small spaces as yards, not flagged so dirty in wet weather. The rooms are narrow, inconveniently small and ill ventilated. The day rooms each holding thirty paupers were six yards by five yards and low such as a grown person cannot stand. They are substantially underground. The paupers appeared to be in a neglected if not wretched state. No more paupers to be admitted!

The building was sold in 1857 to defray Worsley's share of the new workhouse at Patricroft. It became a private dwelling until demolition to make way for the Independent Methodist chapel on the exact site in 1891

PATRICROFT

The 1834 Poor Law Amendment Act authorised the setting up of Poor Law Unions of adjacent parishes. Its main provision was the creation of large Workhouses to take all pauper applicants for relief, no outdoor relief being permitted. This Act took some time to be put into practice for it was not until 1849 that the Barton-upon-Irwell Poor Law Union was formed encompassing a large area.

Initially operations were centred on the existing Barton workhouse on Green Lane Patricroft. The Union was under the control of twelve Guardians, allocated as four for Barton, three for Worsley and one each for Clifton, Flixton and Urmston. Those for Worsley being G Sutcliffe, landlord of the

Grapes, J Lansdale, farmer of Swinton and P Nightingale of Wardley Hall. There was clearly some deviation from the prescribed severity of the treatment of paupers as "out relief" was regularly made available to Worsley resident paupers. Worsley did seem to be treated differently than other members, possibly on account of its size, with its northern part always known as Walkden Moor.

This was to change, for a Guardians Board meeting of 1872 proposed that Worsley should be divided into three "Wards", Swinton, Worsley and Walkden. Note the dropping of the term "Moor", this is the first time in officialdom the area gained the identity it has held ever since, - Walkden.

Patricroft continued to house all of Worsley's paupers, it had extensions in 1879 and 1886, surrounding land was purchased for extensions with a completely new workhouse agreed on in 1892. This and its predecessor was the Workhouse with inhumane segregation and a regime that the possibility of incarceration within one was dreaded by the poorer class of people well into the twentieth century.

TOWARDS A LOCAL DEMOCRACY

Regarding DEMOCRACY, Worsley was almost a complete stranger to the idea of local accountability until almost the end of the nineteenth century. All the strings of power were in the hands of the Lord of the Manor and then his successors, the Bridgewater Trustees. It was only national legislation that finally broke their monopoly of rule.

They were the landowners so everyone was a tenant of theirs, they were the principal employer with employees often in tied cottages. Their senior officers held all the Township offices and were Magistrates. Their word was law.

One of the first chinks in their armour came with the 1853 Act which placed further duties on the Poor Law Guardians by giving them the power to function as a Sanitary Committee charged to carry out statutory duties for Removal of Nuisances and Prevention of Disease. This was reinforced by the national merging of the Poor Law Board and the Board of Health. As a result, the Public Health Act of 1872 empowered the setting up of Rural and Urban Sanitary Authorities. That covering Worsley had the same area as the existing Poor Law Union and being styled "The Rural Sanitary Authority of the Barton-upon-Irwell Union", usually shortened to "the Barton Rural Sanitary Authority".

It soon bared its teeth by issuing, in May 1875, a formal notice that the Byelaws recently adopted by the Authority are now in force and the Authority will require them to be observed. They established a satellite office at 72 Manchester Road, Walkden with a surveyor and clerk in attendance.

ATTEMPTS TO GET A LOCAL BOARD

Agitation for representation into local affairs intensified with the National introduction of Local Boards, a democratically elected body. Farnworth and Swinton had one by 1868 followed by Little Hulton in 1872. That same year Worsley ratepayers held a meeting to propose such a body, but it was opposed by the Bridgewater Trustees.

Events came to a head in 1878 when three separate meetings were held to promote a Local Board. The meeting at Walkden, called by the Bellman, was held in the Infants school with the motion carried. Weeks later, Boothstown residents met to consider joining Walkden in the formation of a Board, again the motion was carried. Then came skulduggery. There was a stormy meeting at the Worsley Courthouse on the subject, the motion was passed in favour but several who held positions in the Bridgewater Trust objected and demanded a poll of ALL ratepayers should be held. The ballot was not secret and the Bridgewater Trust ordered all their employees to vote against. They were watched as they voted so dare not disobey for fear of their jobs and home. Inevitably the result was a resounding NO. Another abortive meeting to promote a Local Board was held in the Congregational School Walkden in 1889 without effect.

Help towards democracy came from the Barton Rural Sanitary Authority who of course were not beholden to the Bridgewater Trust. A Parochial Committee had been in the minds of ratepayers for some years and the Authority had the wisdom to see if it was granted it would increase confidence in them, but if refused would cause agitation. It was noted there is not a district so populous and rated

which is without a Local Board, granting a Parochial Committee would stave off a Local Board for years. They granted the formation of a Parochial Committee with powers similar to a modern Parish Council, the new Committee for Worsley, Walkden and Boothstown first met in September 1892.

AN ELECTED COUNCIL

Aware that National legislation was imminent to enforce the formation of representative Local Government, the newly appointed Parochial Committee sent a deputation to the local MP relative to this formation. Early 1894 saw a meeting convened of all householders in Walkden, Boothstown, Worsley and Roe Green to approve a resolution to the County Council to obtain either a District Council or a Local Board.

A Vigilance Committee largely of local industrialists, mill owners and such was formed with the intention of having the area declared an Urban District Council, under the slogan "Home Rule for Walkden" were active in early 1894. They visited the Sanitary Authority, the Poor Law Guardians and a deputation had met the Bridgewater Trust asking their support, also petitioning from house to house. They soon had over 1,000 signatures of property holders and noted, with few exceptions, officials of the Bridgewater Trust have given ready acquiescence to the proposals. A further vital development came with the Barton Rural Authority who threatened opposition, have agreed to the proposals.

Success came with the Lancashire County Council enquiry resulting in the declaration to create District Councils of which the Worsley application was an unqualified success. The Vigilance Committee rightly celebrated and accepted the decision of the Commissioners to give the new Council the name "Worsley", rather than Walkden.

At last the great day arrived, 22 December 1894 when the ratepayers of Worsley could cast their vote freely in the District Council elections for the first local government body. It brought out a plethora of candidates, no less than forty put forward for election. The Bridgewater Pits were closed for the day and the mills closed at dinner time so all had opportunity to get to the Poll Station. The count was made at the Walkden Co-op Hall.

Results were given as for Walkden Central with eight candidates – E Timperlake elected, Walkden East seven candidates – W Stephenson, Walkden North ten candidates – F Booth, Worsley nine candidates – J Roscoe, and Boothstown five candidates – D Hilton. At the first meeting of the new Authority, held at the Town Office, the ex railway refreshment room at the junction of Park Road and Brindley Street, Mr F H Booth was elected Chairman and Mr Monks as Clerk. It was not until 1911 that the Town Hall on Walkden Road was opened.

LAW AND DISORDER

Through the early part of the nineteenth century upholding the law was in the hands of the Parish Constable or the Township Constable. These were all unpaid members of the community but with onerous duties. These included criminal law enforcement of both Statute law and Manorial law, they were also charged with the control of civil disorder being empowered to enforce the Riot Act of 1715 to disperse mobs. He then had to detain offenders and present them to court. Both Magistrate and Manor courts were held in the Bridgewater Hotel. I have found no record of where miscreants were held pending trial.

Such constables generally could rely on their moral authority to deal with single offenders and if in trouble he was entitled to ask assistance of any other resident. In the case of larger cases of disorder he could raise help under the Mediaeval "Watch and Ward Act" of 1285 with special constables appointed to Watch at night and Ward during daylight. Worsley used the system many times in periods of trade distress. In 1805 twelve special constables were sworn in and issued with numbered truncheons.

More serious and longer lasting was during the summer of 1812 when, under the Watch and Ward Act some £100 was expended in policing the Township. So serious was the expected trouble that several pounds weight of gunpowder was laid in and premises as Watch Houses were rented. A large number of Special Constables were sworn in, 81 at the Lower Division, 89 in the Higher Division and

22 at Boothstown. All these were paid at the rate of 1/6d a night, this sum giving rise to the ditty "Watch and Ward they have no sense, they stand `aw neet for eighteen pence" Given the population at the time these numbers must have been a significant sector of adult male residents. As a result of this expense many persons were given in charge to the Magistrates with at least one sentenced to transportation.

They could also act as Agent Provocateurs, they did so in suppressing the Walkden Luddite group. In mid 1812 the Luddite Movement started to recruit in the district. Before long eighteen members, many from the area then called Blacklache, took the secret and bloodthirsty oath late at night on Linnyslaw Moss. Unfortunately for them, eight were already Special Constables sworn into that office in April before being "Twisted in" as Luddites. Thus the group was easily broken up causing the men to be discharged by their employer the Bridgewater Trust. Most were skilled colliers, blacksmiths or carpenters, the elite trades of the time. Most of the men were eventually reinstated on them "expressing deep sorrow and on promising not to do it again."

Far more serious were the perceived and actual likely-hood of riots during the miner`s strike of 1881. An actual riot occurred at the Wharton Hall Colliery when the men on strike attacked those still working. There was a police baton charge under a hail of missiles with the crowd dispersed with many injured including one man killed.

A week later events moved to Walkden. The Bellman had gone round calling a monster strike meeting at 3 o`clock. Forewarned, the authorities expecting trouble had magistrates ready to read the Riot Act. They had the back up of 120 County Police and a troop of the 8th Hussars stabled at the Stocks. In fact a short meeting of some 400 men was held and agreed to adjourn until the morrow. The Hussars returned to Manchester. Several days later a further meeting had been prohibited by the authorities with 32 men of the Dragoon Guards stationed in the Primrose Mill on Campbell Street and 54 police stationed in the Bridgewater Trust offices on Bridgewater Road. Little disturbance occurred.

Change on a National scale came with the County Police Act of 1839 which empowered the setting up of a formal, uniformed professional police force. Lancashire was one of the first to take action with the Lancashire Constabulary being formed that year. As set up it had a Chief, two Deputies, fourteen Superintendents and 600 Constables.

Having a purpose built Court House in 1849 giving much more gravitas to trials than in a hotel room, the Worsley Police house complete with cells of a similar date built on Barton Road, was likely to have been provided by the Bridgewater Trust / Lord Ellesmere specifically to house Lancashire Constables. Certainly by the 1870s the County force covered tee Worsley area as a plea for more officers was made. A request asked "the Chief Constable of the County to add to the police strength at Walkden Moor. There is no fault with the staff we have but it needs augmenting. There is a great deal of fighting here."

Even if we did get more police, they still had to take miscreants into custody at the Worsley police house. It was not until 1903 that Walkden got its own police station on Stanley Road.

PART FOUR

Walkden becomes predominant The Nineteenth Century

GROWTH OF WALKDEN

Folds, Rows and Ribbon.

As the focus of the Bridgewater Trust's mining activities moved relentlessly northward, the hamlet of Walkden Moor expanded to house the needed workforce. For generations, population had settled round "Folds" of cottages of which the names of some are still familiar today. Edge Fold, Mather Fold, Parr Fold and Magnalls Fold perhaps the best known among the twenty or so that existed over the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Each took the name of the main family residing there. These nucleated communities absorbed additional residents until capacity was reached at which point the Duke of Bridgewater and successors his Trustees had to start providing housing for the workers they needed to attract.

Their solution came in the form of "Rows" of cottages built where it was most convenient to the Bridgewater's, not necessarily along a main road. Two of the first were built under the supervision of John Gilbert. Recruiting mainly in Staffordshire, he promised one group that he would build them a Barracks; hence Barracks Row near Ashtons Field. Another group were housed in a terrace row at the junction of Manchester and Bolton Roads. As the Staffordshire men were nicknamed after male sheep, their dwellings soon became known as Tupp Row.

Another settlement of the Duke's days was Half Crown Row, situated exactly where Greenwood Avenue is. It was so called because it was firmly believed it was funded by the half crowns deducted from wages of those who failed to attend work on the Monday after pay day. Blackleach Row at Hill Top and Treacle Row on Manchester Road, just in Little Hulton were built in the early years of the nineteenth century. Treacle Row got its name from an accident. Knocket Wall Brook, the boundary between Worsley and Little Hulton, then crossed the highway by means of a ford and one day, soon after the row had been built, a cart carrying barrels of treacle jolted in the stream and dislodging a barrel which split. Every householder was soon on the scene with every available container scooping up the windfall. Blackleach Row being so called by being alongside the reservoir of that name.

Blackleach and Treacle Rows together with others of the period had provision for a mixed economy. Yes, they were built by the Estate as housing to attract male workers but the practicalities of the women having some employment was addressed. Provision for the operation of hand weaving looms was made at both rows. Treacle Row had a "loomshop" attached as a lean to whilst Blackleach Row was designed for cellar loomshops, with daylight provided from a trench running the full length of the row, access to individual cottages being via a bridge. Perhaps unrecorded, it is possible some of the other rows of the period had similar facilities.

Passing of the various "Estate Acts" which finally allowed building in Walkden, came as the need for more housing became chronic, just how crowded the estate properties had become can be gauged from a census the Trustees took of them. Blackleach Row, of seventeen cottages was recorded as housing a hundred and twelve adults. There were likely a similar number of children.

Relief came in the form of "Ribbon" development. These ribbons of terraces spread along the length of the ancient roadways that did not form a true crossroads with Manchester Road. Bolton Road and Walkden road joined it as today some distance apart. This linear development continued right through the nineteenth century, its most rapid phase of construction came from the 1860s onwards with the increasing demand for housing.

These, sometimes lengthy terraces can still be seen along Manchester Road and until the re-development of the 1960s both sides of Bolton Road was so developed with most converting to owner occupied shops by the 1890s. By this time the Estate, in the form of the Bridgewater Trustees ceased to be property builders but allowed speculative builders to erect property and either sell or rent them to tenants. The Estate retained the Freehold of the land. I still only pay 75p as yearly Ground Rent for a house built in 1870.

There were at least four of these entrepreneurs who each built large numbers of properties in many areas of Walkden. John Whitehead was responsible for over fifty houses in the Hill Top area, both fronting Bolton Road and the group of streets running off Hill Top Road, one appropriately named Whitehead Street. Not only was he a builder but invested in material supply, he had extensive brickworks and operated the Sandhole, or sand quarry behind Hill Top Road and Bolton Road. Equally active on the house building front in north Walkden was James Jackson of Hill Top Road whose name is perpetuated in Jackson Street on the west of Bolton Road. Jackson was essentially a stonemason eventually owning the Jackson Quarry at Over Hulton. His one foray in the south of Walkden was completing the Ellesmere Hotel on Walkden Road for his Father-in-Law Mr Johnson who owned a shop in the strangely named 18th century Kentucky Row across the road from what is now Worsley College. The Shiel family were also active here in Walkden, building many rows of houses and eventually taking control of the Hill Top sandhole and are commemorated in the eponymous early 20th century Shiel Street.

Most of these rows of houses by private speculators were made to the lowest possible standard with materials of often dubious quality. Most were of bricks made on the site and often very porous, some of Mr Whitehead's houses even had beaten earth floors, literally the ground floor! With the lack of any public sanitation overflowing cess pits from the few "petties" provided were a disease hazard.

Possibly the most prolific of the Victorian period builders throughout the Walkden area was Edward Lane. He began with houses and shops on Bolton Road, then more on Alfred Street. Then came a move into the big time, he built Primrose Mill in 1868 for Andrew Rothwell, taking time off to marry his daughter. The houses along Campbell Street adjacent to the mill were his build. Soon he had houses on Manchester Road behind which he leased land for a brickyard. He also leased a substantial area of land to the east of Walkden Road where he soon had a long line of terrace property facing the road; this was followed by a Mill for himself known as Hope Mill. This he surrounded with terrace housing on Atkin Street and thirty on Sandwich Street. Historian Frank Mullineux's mother recalled the operation of his brickyard in telling "owd Lane made all his own bricks out of clay dug out round where he built his mill.

His daughters, who worked at their grandfathers Primrose Mill for five and a half days a week, were involved. Those girls had to go on Saturday afternoon and Sunday and turn the bricks to dry in the sun before firing", he generously gave them a penny a hundred for their labour.

Some idea of the facilities offered in these new-build terrace properties can be gauged from an advertisement in 1872. It offers: To Let, Good cottages in Harriet Street Walkden with separate yards and all other conveniences. Rent 2/4d per week (12p) Apply to Mr Morton, builder, Walkden,

STREET NAMES.

Surprisingly, there was only one "Street" in Worsley until the mid nineteenth century, all the other thoroughfares being merely Lanes. Most of these now forming our main road network included a geographical destination but not often the modern one. Stanney Street, the only street we had, was that part of the now Manchester Road between the Stocks and Whittle Street. It takes its name not from the fact it is on the line of the Roman road through Walkden, but simply meant Stony. Its continuation eastwards was known as Wardley Lane, Going northward was Bolton Lane which just north of Hill Top became Brookhouse Lane, now Worsley Road North. Barton Lane became Barton Road, whilst Greenleach Lane retains its old name, deriving it from a green swamp area.

Several roads have lost their original names that had become mis-pronunciations of even earlier names. That now named Walkden Road had the biggest change, from being known as Shaving Lane that itself being a corruption of the old English word "scevinge" meaning on a hill which it certainly is.

Swiney Lane was its southern portion due to passing the "swine hey" or pig fields. New Earth Lane, so named due to being access to land newly taken into cultivation became Newearth Road.

Many of the older established routes within the township have had similar transformations in their names. What is now Old Clough Lane began life as "the Hollow Clough", soon shortened in the local dialect to Howclough. When officialdom came on the scene they assumed or mis-heard the Howclough to be "Old Clough", the rest as they say, is history.

Later developments, from about mid century have both roads and streets taking their names from other than geography. Note has been made that the speculative builders gave their names to the properties they erected but a more powerful force ruled. If a map of Walkden as it existed about 1900 with all the place names connected with either the Ellesmere family or the Bridgewater Trust coloured in it would look not dis-similar to a world map with the British Empire coloured red.

Virtually every member of the Earl's extended family is commemorated in a Worsley street name together with the names of many of their aristocratic friends together with at least two royal ladies. (Alexandra and Dagmar) To list them all would be an exhaustive exercise, a quick read through the previous sections will include most of them, and if the road has the name of a person then the person is most likely to have been family or Peers.

Yet other streets were given the names of senior officers of the Bridgewater Trust. Fereday and Smith commemorate the deputy superintendent with Southern Street a miss-spelling of Sothern the second Superintendent. Forrester Street at Roe Green is named after Richard, a minor official who considered himself lord of Roe Green. He spent most evening's thrigging about, driving other people's livestock off the Green in favour of his own gaining the nickname Dicky Thrigg.

The last superintendent of the Trust, Walter Longley Bourke has both Walter Street and Longley Road to his name there is no Bourke because there was an Irish political agitator of that name at the time, also of course the infamous Burke and Hare.

At least three routes changed their names because of changing surroundings. Gower Street, the first Earl's family name became St. Marys Road when the park was established. Similarly the portion of Hilton Lane from Walkden Road to Newearth Road got changed to Park Road with the newly created Parr Fold Park running alongside. Church Road was originally named Timmins Street after the Trustees chief colliery engineer; it was changed when the newer houses were built.

PROVIDING UTILITIES.

WATER SUPPLY

As an essential of life, its domestic supply and use was carefully husbanded until well into the 1970s. Sources were varied as was the quality or quantity obtained, the common factor was it had to be gone for and then carried home.

Potable or drinking water topped the list of necessity, this was usually obtained from one of the wells or borehole supplied pumps situated in the district. Even amongst wells there seems to have been a variation of quality, with that on Hodge Road particularly valued for making tea. Some were publicly available but in high summer could not match demand. Reports in the early 1870s were given of queues forming at 2am in the hope of obtaining a supply before it was exhausted for the day. At least one was on private land with a nominal yearly fee being charged for access. At least one court case of assault by the owner, then one of the Town Guardians upon a girl who had not paid her 3d was dismissed to the owners benefit.

Water for less demanding purposes could come from a surprising number of sources. Being Lancashire, rainwater butts were popular, streams being used where available. Other people waited for pumping operations to begin at the coal pits after coal winding had finished. Apparently the supply was eagerly sought after and said to be of good quality!

Concerned about this state of affairs as early as 1868 a joint deputation from Worsley and Little Hulton approached Bolton Corporation with proposals for obtaining an early supply from them. It was resolved that they could not now enter into any agreement prior to the completion of their reservoir extension works. A public meeting held in Walkden School to hear the report from the deputation

heard that Bolton would want 9d per 1,000 gallons, plus, Little Hulton would have to build their own reservoir. The outcome was rather laconically put as "Deferred until something better turns up." Clearly efforts were maintained and by mid 1870s progress was in hand.

January 1876 brought the news that "the Bolton Corporation water supply was well in hand to Walkden and that to Little Hulton is progressing rapidly with pipes of large capacity and likely to be complete in a few weeks." Perhaps a little optimistic for by April the news was that pipes had been laid via the Walkden Monument to Hilton Lane, and will be completed in "the Dry Season."

Work was completed in Walkden by July 1st 1876. It was celebrated with an open air tea meeting. It was found to be such a blessing as not before experienced. Forty persons partook of tea and Mr. Rothwell, a mill owner, took a photograph. Having a mains supply was one thing, connection in most cases being made as soon as practical. In others, persuading landlords to connect to it was a protracted struggle taking the powers of the Rural Sanitary Authority to enforce connection.

In an area that despite becoming industrialized still had outlying semi rural groups of cottages left many such without a supply as neither the Bridgewater Trustees, Worsley Township or Bolton Corporation could justify expense. As an example the "Three Houses" at the top of Sharp Street still relied on well water up to demolition in 1960.

Out on a limb regarding water supply was Roe Green. Its residents were questioned in 1876 as to opinion on a supply from Manchester. There was little concern as to where it should come from other than it Should Come. Roe Green is described as being very badly off for water, once abundant it has decreased until almost stopped with the sinking of coal pits and cutting of railways.

The Rural Sanitary Authority reported a reply from Manchester offering to supply water on condition they contribute £514 towards laying the mains. An opinion was expressed that as Manchester held a monopoly to supply Roe Green then the Sanitary Authority ought to compel the Corporation to exercise its right to supply, or give it up. Eventually Manchester did supply Roe Green.

Getting no benefit from it but suffering the disruption and mess, Walkden had to put up with the laying of Manchester's Thirlmere Water Trace. Some idea of likely route and disruption came in 1877 with surveyors taking measurements. Work started in earnest during 1890 when Manchester Road near the Monument was torn up by the contractor laying the pipes which are thirty feet long (10m) and thirty-eight inches diameter. The cutting is eight feet deep. (2.5m). The route is along Manchester Road to Swinton, a connection will be made at the Monument with the pipe now being laid near Blair School, its route then being under the colliery railway, along Grosvenor Road and down Bolton Road. Such work caused chaos with mud and cinders everywhere; a wry comment was that schoolchildren got few merit marks for clean clogs during the works. Relief came when the works finally passed out of the district at Wardley.

GAS SUPPLY

Realising that gas was the future, local people started to agitate for the provision of it. In early 1861 residents were summoned by the Bell-Man to a meeting to consider forming a company for the purpose of introducing gas to the township. The resolution was passed and £850 subscribed. It was reported that Bolton had no legal powers to supply but Salford had mains up to Moorside Road. Later in the year a deputation went to the Bridgewater Trust to ascertain if land for a gas works was available and also the Turnpike Trustees for permission to lay mains in their roads.

No further progress was made for an article makes a plea for street lighting. "We are soon to have a station so the need for lamps is greater. Farnworth and Winton have lamps to the boundary. When Worsley has done its duty there will be a continuous line of lamps from Bolton Parish Church to Manchester Cathedral. Events soon moved as by mid 1865 Salford Corporation had started to supply Worsley and its extremity, Boothstown. Quite a ceremony took place there, with the daughter of the landlord of the Greyhound performing the act of lighting the first lamp there.

Little Hulton still lagged behind. Once again, Farnworth were approached with the main concern of the major employers being the supply of street lighting. They quoted £550 for eighty lamps spread along Worsley Road, Manchester Road and Hilton Lane. Eventually, Salford was prevailed upon to supply Little Hulton with gas initially just for street lighting, they offered a supply at a price per 1,000 cubic feet, with individual meters on each standard ruled out.

Presumably there was a gradual adoption of gas lighting in domestic premises but press reports concentrate on aspects of street lighting. Worsley had over ninety lamps in 1877 with the two lamplighters being paid £1 per week – in the lighting season! At this time only the main roads were lit but the Rural Sanitary Authority made strong recommendations that the secondary roads and populous side streets should be lit. This must have taken place as in mid 1880 the total had increased to 230 lamps, they were generally regarded as unsatisfactory as to situation as the men installing them were under the control of Salford Corporation, the gas supplier. Vandalism now crept in. Following the wholesale breaking of street lamps the Manager of the Bridgewater Trust sent a letter to the Barton Authority noting 27 lamps broken in Walkden, urging them to find the perpetrators. The Authority offered a ten pound reward for information.

By the 1880s Worsley, Walkden, Boothstown and Little Hulton were all dependent on Salford Corporation Gas Department for supplies and provision of mains. At the start of the 20th century Little Hulton claimed a national first. The Colliery known as Brackley had modern bye-product plant installed. Chief of these was town's gas and in 1910 Little Hulton entered into an agreement with the colliery and gained an Act of Parliament to allow them to be Gas Undertakers. The Urban District bought the mains from Salford at valuation; buying the gas from the colliery company at the same price they paid Salford.

SANITARY PROVISIONS

Until well into the mid nineteenth century, the majority of Worsley disposed of its waste of any kind in a method best be described as "Bucket and Chuck it." In a largely rural area there was ample land to dispose of what was largely organic waste by use as fertiliser. There were two systems; both relied on having an outbuilding as the "seat" of operations. In the most basic all known as a Privy, waste was deposited into a hole in the ground and hopefully cleaned out before overflowing. The other relied on what was known as Night Soil being deposited into a container which could be collected for disposal, a method still in use over large areas of Worsley well into the twentieth century.

Contracts to empty the contents of middens and cess pits were taken by farmers or hauliers who then arranged to spread the refuse on the local fields. A local farmer and general dealer from Wardley operated the service for years and most of the remaining fields to the north of the linear walkway from Blackleach to Moss Lane still hold an amazing variety of pottery deposited in this process.

As late as 1904, complaints about the unhygienic operation of midden collection were made. The contents were simply shovelled out of the house ashpit cum cess pit into the back street by collectors to await their cart. This creates stench and makes the street impassable, these back streets are the children's playground. The contract is let on the basis that contents will be emptied into receptacles for transfer to carts not into the street.

Problems worsened at the newer, speculatively built houses of the 1850s and 60s when builders neglected to even provide these basics. Bad conditions did not go unnoticed; an item in 1871 reports on nuisances, with refuse from privies running through the yards in Boothstown and in Walkden a summons was issued against a builder whose nine new houses with eleven families on Bolton Road had never had privies or potties.

Events came to a head with the report in November 1874 by the Barton Rural Sanitary Authority regarding the sanitary state of Walkden. It made grim reading. It starts by noting that Walkden is particularly bad, with no drainage and no water and has featured unfavourably in past reports. In 1866 a Cholera epidemic claimed 30 lives and Typhoid 50 lives in 1869. The inspection followed the main stream, Knocket Wall Brook northwards describing it as an open sewer.

Conditions in the older established parts were not good but the newer buildings in north Walkden had no drains or paving. Abutting the Bolton Road, on either side are blocks of cottage terraces and here the nuisances prevail, ashes and slops are just thrown over the threshold. Overflowing ash pits and cesspits spill into streets and wells, houses on Granville and Brackley Street drain directly into the Boatshed reservoir. There were only a few privies, most un-roofed. On the opposite side were new buildings with no drainage at all. Whitehead Square formed of Whitehead Street, John Street and Hill Top Road with the centre contained a few door less potties or earth closets and monster ash heaps and middens, the whole lot a running cess pit flooded the area soon to be Thorpe Street before reaching Blackleach Reservoir. There had been a water pump but this lay broken on the ground near the potties and the grossest of middens, water being gained from a tank receiving from the roofs of the houses.

The result was a government enquiry under the Public Health Act where the Sanitary Authority wished to borrow money to finance a drainage district for Worsley. There were two competing plans, the Authority scheme intended covering only the north of the township with the network simply discharging into tanks on Shaving Lane, Walkden Road. The Bridgewater Trustees however proposed a more comprehensive scheme embracing the whole township and capable of extension to further development, the option substantially constructed.

Their scheme due to the shape of the landscape had separate sections. Ellenbrook and Boothstown to be served by a sewer scheme with its outfall to a treatment plant on the Moss at Hope Farm. The entire remainder of the township to have an outfall treatment plant at Alder Forest, A trunk sewer through Worsley village would be fed by two branches. That from the northwest would collect from Roe Green, Edgefold and all Walkden, the northeast branch to serve Hazlehurst and Wardley.

By July 1875 finance was being arranged but it was not until March 1877 that work actually began in Walkden with rapid progress being reported. September that year saw the Bridgewater Canal at Worsley drained for the purpose of trenching the new sewer pipes beneath it.

As the smallest part of the scheme, that covering Boothstown was soon in operation, it did have some problems as within a few years it was overflowing into the Bridgewater Canal. A man was to be employed to direct the flow as needed and a windmill installed to pump the effluent to where it was required. This was renovated in 1893.

A temporary treatment facility to take the remainder of Worsley's sewage was arranged near Alder Forest but a permanent and more comprehensive treatment works was established at Barton Hall, coming on stream in 1894.

Little Hulton being then a separate Local Authority refused to comply with a Local Government Board instruction in 1882 to go on with a scheme of sewage disposal. Their Town Council believed the health of the town to be good even though the Chairman said the drainage was unsatisfactory; their Medical Officer said all his reports showed defective drainage. A Councillor stated "they needed NO sewage system in Little Hulton for the next twenty years. Two years later they had been overruled and work laying sewers to a treatment works near Blackleach had begun. A further treatment works to deal with effluent from the southern area of the town was established at Providence Farm, off Hilton Lane was opened in June 1899.

This facility hit the headlines in spectacular fashion in May 1907 with a spectacular explosion. On Good Friday, a Councillor had gone for an evening walk with his children and entered the sewage works which he thought he had the right to do. He stood atop an arched structure which was a bacteria tank 40m by 7m and lit his pipe and dropped the match. The sewage methane took fire and the arch blew off and threw him – and the brickwork into the air. He dropped into the filthy sewage mess. The explosion was heard miles away. Eventually he was snatched from the eight feet deep sewage, taken to nearby cottages, given a large emetic, hosed down and walked home. My Grandfather, a fellow Councillor queried the cost at the next meeting when it was said the estimated repair costs will be considerable.

Having a working sewerage system still left the Barton Rural Sanitary Authority with getting properties connected to it which proved to be a very protracted operation. In 1889 their Medical Officer reported his chief concern is the serious deficit in conditions of house backyards as privies are much used. A new departure is the contract for the systematic removal of midden refuse from over 1,600 houses in Walkden. Little Hulton fared as badly the following year with their Nuisance Inspector finding many insanitary premises. A great many ashpits are uncovered and of great depth, the excreta from them has to be shovelled into the yard and barrowed to the street.

It was to be well into the 1920s before all Walkden properties had sewer connections and many more retained their backyard wall openings for removal of household midden refuse. A walk along some of the back streets of the older housing along Walkden, Manchester and Bolton Roads still show these clearly. One of the easiest to see is the wall behind the Evans Buildings on Bolton Road, alongside the Bull's Head.

COMMUNICATIONS

Presumably the Nobility and high officials of the Bridgewater Trust made use of either their own resources or stage mail coach for their correspondence with little public involvement. Lesser mortals could communicate by mail but at great expense. Arrival of the penny post in 1840 encouraged and soon demanded the provision of Post Offices in Townships.

Worsley, still the centre of local events would soon have had one, certainly by the mid 1850s, to deal with the increased business transacted here. There seems to have been a split of area of postal responsibility based on the old Lower and Higher divisions. Worsley in the Lower division came under the jurisdiction of Manchester whilst Walkden in the Higher division was served by Farnworth, as was Little Hulton. With such a large area for Farnworth to cover incredible delivery rounds were imposed on staff, one Letter Carrier had 1,800 missives to deliver – on Christmas Day!

The range of services gradually expanded, delivery arrangements from the Worsley office were improved in 1872 when instead of only one delivery at 10am there were to be two, at 7am and 2pm. Savings Bank facilities were open to abuse such as when in 1872 the Little Hulton postmaster disappeared. Auditors called in all account books and installed a new officer. That same year the Walkden Post Office transferred to the premises of Nathan Berry, a Chemist who has been appointed Postmaster.

The electronic age came into the district with Little Hulton being the leader. Their newly erected Post Office on Streetgate had a telegraph service in September 1870. Its wires were connected to Farnworth who then send to Manchester for onward transmission. On opening day Mrs Harrison Blair sent the first message. Worsley Post Office was declared open for the transaction of telegraph business in May 1871.

Walkden, despite its prominence had to wait for connection. Previously it relied on Little Hulton from whom a charge of 6d was charged "for portage". To obtain connection the Postmaster General requests a guarantee of £25 of business to which local worthies agreed to cover. It took until July 1885 for a telegraph service to arrive. The Rev Prosser sent through Walkden the first message forward, to A Egerton MP thanking him for his efforts in securing the service. A similar guarantee of business was required before Boothstown got a telegraphic Office in 1892. Its Post Office is open for business 8am to 8pm weekdays, 8am to 10am Sundays.

The new century brought postal improvements for Walkden. Worsley Council endeavoured to get it severed from Farnworth and establish a separate office served from Manchester. After constant reminders to the Postmaster General they were rewarded. The postmen will be under the direction of Miss Martin the present Postmistress and the office moved from the junction of Church Road and Manchester Road to 14 Bolton Road. Similar Improvements are to be made at Boothstown. Both became new Postal Districts in September 1900. Three new postmen were employed with three deliveries and five collections per day, a Sunday delivery is considered.

Further stirrings of modernity came in late 1904 with the call for telephone facilities. By this time the Bridgewater Office had its own telephone communication system to outlying collieries and presumably also to the national network. It was stated that it was time Walkden had a public call office as industries in the town are penalised because the town is not connected to the national network unless at prohibitive cost of £50 per connection.

Post offices were for a long time the place where state benefits of any kind were paid out in cash. Celebrations were national and local when the first PENSION DAY arrived on the 1st of January 1909. This was the day the aged of the district received the first instalment of their government Old Age Pension. All local Post Offices were open on Friday 1st January to issue the benefit, Little Hulton on Streetgate from 8am to noon, Walkden 8am to 8pm in order that no one should be disappointed. Hill Top, serving Little Hulton and Walkden opened 8am to noon for "a fair number of claimants. All Offices had laid in a stock of five shilling pieces, the amount of the pension. It is sad to note that large numbers of claimants had to have a witness to their cross mark on the receipt, as they could not write.

SUPPORT SERVICES

The Duke had established a works yard at Worsley concurrent with the development of his canal, on the site now occupied by "Worsley Green". Extending his colliery operations northwards, a subsidiary yard was opened about 1770 at Walkden Moor, north of the Manchester Road (A6) and to the west of Bolton Road, the site now occupied by the Ellesmere shopping centre. Initially, the Worsley yard concentrated on canal related and agricultural estate operations a function catered for at both yards. Colliery operations were based at Worsley yard but day to day repairs became increasingly imposed on the more centrally placed Boatshed Yard at Walkden.

THE BRIDGEWATER OFFICES

As custodians of a major industrial concern and major landowners, their administration facilities left much to be desired. They were fragmented between Worsley Old Hall, with sub offices at the two Yards and commercial offices in Manchester, centralization became vital. Work began in 1867 and by April the following year a "Rearing Dinner" was held for the 85 persons engaged in erecting the new offices. They were opened for business in February 1869 with several departments now centered in one building. It was fronted onto a newly laid out road, (Bridgewater Road) directly above the Underground Canal and central for both colliery and estate purposes. Visible from a considerable distance, care was taken as to its appearance. There was a central part and two wings, entered from the main door, to the right is the pay office, there being a separate side door for colliers! To the left were colliery managers and clerks. Upstairs was the General Manager's suite, the mine royalties and mechanical engineers departments, estate plan room and offices. There was an attic store which included geological sections of the recently sunk colliery shafts. It was noted to have modern sanitary arrangements.

THE WALKDEN YARD

Erection of the prestige office block, the sale of the Bridgewater Canal in 1872, decreasing use of the Underground Canal to Worsley, and completion of the Trustees own railway network connecting the newer major collieries by 1870 left their infrastructure poorly equipped to cope with the changes in geographic spread of operations. Likewise changes in the technology of equipment that needed workshop attention such as fixed plant like winding, fan and air compression installations and the expanding number of railway locomotives and rolling stock eventually left the two yards obsolete.

Heavy expenditure on productive capacity prevented redevelopment of maintenance facilities until, with the impending demise of the Bridgewater Trust and assets passing direct to the Earl of Ellesmere, backstage pressure was put on the officers to have the concern in as good an operating condition as possible before the hand- over.

After a few years planning, preparing drawings and costings, work begun in late 1897. The design and layout was all done In House, even detail drawings of the construction of the boiler house chimney were signed off by the head of engineering Daniel Timmins.

The first public announcement came in a piece in the Farnsworth Journal of 7 May 1898 which related under the headline "NEW YARD FOR THE BRIDGEWATER TRUSTEES the work of constructing the new yard at Tynesbank, Walkden, which is to take the place of the present yard at Worsley is being pushed forward. The yard will be situate near the L&Y and LNWR lines and will be used when complete by a large staff of joiners, carpenters, stonemasons, bricklayers and mechanics and engineers. Specialist workshops for each trade are being constructed and an engine depot for their own locomotives. A superintendent's residence will be supplied."

The complete transition from Worsley to Tynesbank was reported in 14 July 1900, saying "The Bridgewater Trust having decided to concentrate their works at Walkden where an extensive set of workshops has been erected, the extensive yard at Worsley is now done away with. Instead of the busy hive of industry presented for many years, the forge fires are now out." A touching obituary!

PRIVATE COMPANIES

Clearly the Bridgewater Trustees maintenance requirements were well catered for in their own resources but Worsley and particularly the Walkden area had expanded into other industries needing support services. The major cotton mills would rely on the manufacturers of their machinery for major repairs or overhaul but did use local facilities for minor but often urgent repairs or products.

The long established Howard family blacksmith and wheelwright business at the junction of Hodge and Manchester Roads moved to new premises on Booth Street, behind Sandwich Street. They continued to satisfy customers from there until being forced to move to other local premises due to redevelopment in 1972.

Slightly more extensive was the firm started by William Gratrix, first as a blacksmith in Allen Street off Bolton Road. As the business expanded additional facilities were added, a steam hammer, foundry and machining by lathe and drill were added. This business survived until the area was redeveloped as the Arndale Centre Precinct. More or less mirroring this growth was J Roscoe at Little Hulton who took over a small, redundant spinning mill at Highgate, Little Hulton. He too catered for the whole process of making products from iron and steel. They expanded to undertaking full plant maintenance operations as well as manufacturing special purpose machinery as one offs for mills and dye house use. Situated alongside the A6, the building still has the name on the roof.

Ironware for domestic use and used in building work was usually the domain of small independent blacksmiths of which there were many. One of these an Arthur Yates, began with a forge in back Bolton Road, he expanded into cycle dealing and eventually became Walkden's main ironmonger and mill furnisher. With the Town's increasing number of cotton mills an entrepreneur opened a works to produce the spindles and flyers used on spinning machines. Considering most mills had at least 50,000 spindles replacements must have been needed. It was on Southern Street near Hill Top, alongside the Lakefield Mill. It had several owners until it closed in the 1890s.

Of more direct use to residents were the many operations set up to provide the domestic necessities. At one time or another Walkden had manufacturers of tinsplate goods such as buckets and bowls, candles and boot polish at a small works that burned down regularly. There was even a glass bottle manufacturer who presumably catered for the several soft drinks makers. The Walkden Aerated Water Co. with a capital of £2,000 was registered in 1876. Miss Ada Berry, described as a Mineral Water Manufacturer, with a business at Whittlebrook, married Mr W Rothwell, a mill owner in 1895. Her business, given up on marriage went to the Pennington family – hence Pennington Street, who ran the business for many years until the second world war. Another manufacturer was Wm. Simpson who had premises on Cawdor Street. They produced a wide range of "pop" as well as brewing their own vinegar, quite a pungent aroma as I remember.

OFFICIALDOM IS NOW CENTERED ON WALKDEN

In the ancient administrative split of Worsley into Lower and Upper Divisions a major reversal of influence between them came by the end of the second half of the nineteenth century. Until the 1860s, Worsley in the Lower Division was clearly the original focus of operations both in administering the Landed Estate, its industrial base and where Civil Administration took place. The Higher Division back then had a branch colliery office and branch works yard. Over the following decades, Worsley ended up retaining the Kudos of having the Hall and the Nobility, the Court House and little else.

Meanwhile, for all sorts of practical reasons, Walkden acquired all the levers of power. Erection of the Bridgewater Offices brought its officials and distinguished industrialists here. The building boom placed Walkden as by far the most populous district and had a concentration of seven nonconformist chapels, with the local Co-op society taking the name Walkden. In due course it housed the new state of the art Bridgewater Trust Works Yard whose expertise often led mining technology. Having a multitude of cotton mills gave another group of high status residents. Accommodation for the many visitors to both Bridgewater concerns and the Mills was provided by the total re-build of the two ancient hostelries into the imposing buildings still extant. Newly formed, the Worsley Urban District Council found office premises here before the imposing Worsley Town Hall was built. This did cause confusion to its clerical staff as everyone, including those forwarding cheques, usually referred to it as "Walkden Town Hall".

PART FIVE

Staple Industries The Nineteenth Century

COALMINING BY STEAMPOWER

NAVIGABLE LEVEL, growth and obsolescence.

The Underground Canal or Navigable Level was almost an organic entity in that it grew in some places and withered in others in the same period. Within our area of interest its growth was in areas previously little worked before 1800. Several seams were worked under Linnyshaw Moss with access shafts along their line, the bulk of the coal being discharged along branch levels beneath Blackleach to the trunk canal. Workings at a deeper level were established in the Roe Green area with the seat of operations being in Sanderson Croft with steam powered winding and pumping. Its coal was either brought to the surface or moved along a dry tunnel by carts to the main trunk canal.

Developments over in the west of the Worsley area relied on workings and boat tunnels deeper than the main level. Such tunnels were extended from Wood Pits, near where Worsley Vicarage now stands and Ingles Pit, near Woodlands Road, to the twin pits City and Gatley in New Manchester, Ellenbrook. These were further extended to reach deep workings operated from Boothstown's own underground canal, the Chaddock Level. This ran from the Bridgewater Canal to near the Queen Ann hotel on Leigh Road. Boat level workings from Chaddock pits reached westwards to Henfold in Tyldesley and beyond. Coal could be either raised at Chaddock pits and transferred to boats on the C00haddock Level or boated through to Wood Pits to be brought to surface there. Having been extensively worked, the Upper Level of the Underground Canal, from Walkden to Plodder Lane was seemingly abandoned for coal production in the early 1820s. With its reserves exhausted.

A CHANGE OF EMPHASIS

By about 1850 extensions to the underground canal were still being made out on the fringes a gradual reduction on its use as an actual coal producing operation was noticeable. It still had its vital use as a transport artery to both redeveloped and new collieries pending alternative surface methods outlined later. By mid century it had largely become a trunk haulage route rather than a coal producing organism.

Three pits in the Dixon Green area that had been mainly access shafts were deepened and raised their product to boats on the navigable level for transmission to Worsley. A similar upgrade came to the Barracks Pit, near Algernon Road.

Two completely new sinking's were destined to have the navigable level as their primary transport for some years. The first was at **ASHTONS FIELD**, north of Grosvenor Road. Its two shafts begun in 1853 were adjacent to the old Inclined Plane eventually reaching 500 yards (450m) deep and working five seams. The old ladder pit at Buckley Lane was re-purposed into another working shaft and ventilation shaft to Ashton Field. Next in line in 1865 were two shafts almost in Walkden centre. Named **ELLESMERE COLLIERY** it superseded several old Navigable level based pits adjacent. The new shafts were 300 yards (275m) deep, reaching four seams. An air shaft was added further north in 1867. Both these collieries had provisions to pump mine water to the level which they relied on for the transport of most of their output until rail facilities came a few years later. Both of these pits worked until the 1920s when they continued, along with Edgefold Colliery to pump mine water to the level to protect mines still in use until final closure in 1968.

DEMISE

It finally ceased as a coal production and transport facility in 1888. The axial or main tunnel was maintained until it was finally abandoned in 1968 with the closure of the last colliery in the area.

Upkeep was needed as all three of the final super pits, Mosley Common, Sandhole and Brackley discharged their make of water into it, saving on the distance to the surface to pump to. In the 1950s upwards of 12 million gallons were discharged yearly. With the closure of Mosley Common the great work was abandoned and allowed to flood and collapse.

Without trying to bore readers a few statistics are called for to reinforce just how extensive and productive this incredible system was I feel are needed. Looking at the outlet tunnels in the Delph at Worsley it is hard to comprehend they discharged in excess of 100,000 tons of coal annually for nearly a century.

Perhaps best described as a multi-layer sponge cake with the various levels represented by the jam, the figures begin with the details of the highest above Worsley and continue in descending order. Highest was the Cannel Seam Level, near Plodder Lane which extended 1.5 miles (2.5 km). Below that was the one known as the Upper Level, 35 yards (32m) above the one exiting at the Delph. This axial level between Walkden and Plodder Lane together with its branches, of which the longest reached St Helens Road in Bolton, extended 9.22 miles (14.85 km). Beginning at the Worsley Delph and ending near Plodder Lane the Main Level had extensive branches. Some idea of its number can be gained by knowing that driving from Worsley roundabout along the A575 to Plodder Lane sixteen branches will have been crossed. This labyrinth covered 23.85 miles (38.37 km).

A multitude of deep level waterways beneath Worsley, Walkden and Ellenbrook had 14 miles (22.6 km) of tunnels, each one based on a colliery that provided the vital pumping facilities, access winding and ventilation. Slightly independent but still connected to the Worsley system was the Chaddock Level system was 3.5 miles (5.5 km) long.

This whole enterprise stretched beneath an area some four miles (6.5 km) south to north and slightly more east to west. It had an amazing total of 52.2 miles (84 km) of tunnels that at one time or another, were traversed by boat loads of coal.

INDEPENDENT PITS AND TRAMWAYS

PITS WITH ROAD TRANSPORT

By the 1830s/40s financial considerations made the need to increase coal output without too much expenditure but the change in the Trust management made some funds available. As in the Duke's days transport of the coal was a major consideration, one of the solutions was use of the Turnpike road we know as the A6.

During these decades at least seven pits were sunk alongside the highway in the Wardley area between Old Clough and Moorside Road. Each became known by the name of the farm tenant on whose "Field" it was sunk, indicating the still rural landscape. Their names, **Hollins`**, **Pelton**, **Dornings Worsley`s** and **Lansdale`s** were those of people who often played a part in local affairs. Each of these had basic steam pumping and winding arrangements but working the relatively shallow coal seams, Worsley Four Foot, Binn and Croumbouke gave them only a relatively short life.

DEEPER PITS AND TRAMROAD TRANSPORT

Aware that the central part of their coalfield that had been exploited by workings from the Underground Canal was rapidly becoming worked out; developing new collieries on the flanks of existing workings had to be resorted to. They would need to be self sufficient with steam powered winding and pumping and with two shafts for downcast fresh air and upcast still with furnace ventilation. Some means of moving their output was essential. Having had their opposition to railways overcome they started their own system. In reality these were Tramways, horse drawn and single tracked, a system first used near Ellenbrook in the 1760s.

Work commenced in 1833 forming a one and a quarter mile (2 km) tramway from Tynesbank to the canal near Boothsbank Bridge, the work took three years. It was to serve a group of pits at Burgess Land, Hilton Lane and Tynesbank, most destined to have a long productive life. Over the next decades extensions were made to this system to connect newer and even deeper sinkings.

The twin pits of City and Gatley in New Manchester were upgraded by deepening and to have steam powered services, a half mile (0.8 km) long tramway connection being made in 1840 with a junction near the hamlet of Providence. Yet another half mile extension came in 1847 to connect the new pits at **MADAMS WOOD** to the tramway.

These two shafts near Mort Lane took part of the Wood, hence the name and had shafts 110 yards deep to work the Croumbouke, Brassey and Seven Feet seams came into production using the usual shaft services. The colliery was very productive and continued in operation until after Mosley Common pits came on stream by 1870.

Its final constituent was a colliery sunk on the Dame Dorothy Leigh Charity lands at Common Head, Mosley Common, to which the Trustees paid a royalty on the mineral raised. Known as **ELLENBROOK COLLIERY** Its short tramway branch connection was made in 1867. It is likely this colliery was an interim measure to keep men in employment as there were major delays in opening up the colliery known as Mosley Common. Ellenbrook's two shafts 210 yards deep worked the Brassey and Seven Feet seams. Full production was reached in 1867. It closed in 1887 having had a shorter life than most Bridgewater Trust pits.

Such a volume of traffic used this line that four pass byes were needed in the single line south of Ellenbrook Church. There are still (2022) traces of this tramway on the lands to the west of Newearth Road. Perhaps most visible is the small, seemingly of no purpose, bridge carrying the L&Y railway line of 1888 a few hundred yards from Mort Lane. It is there to maintain the route of the tramway, then still in use. Standing near the remains of City Pit the embankment carrying the tramway curving down from Madams Wood then entering a shallow cutting to the junction with the other branch are still clearly visible.

A feature near the City was the "Dogs Grave." A marker stone recorded the death of Old Dick Evans – a good dog in 1868. Apparently it was killed by one of the trams whilst taking its masters dinner to him. As it was in great danger of subsiding into the stream, it has, (2022) been re-sited in Ellenbrook Churchyard. No longer visible but a feature that deserves note is that this tramway crossed Newearth Road at Mather Fold by means of a level crossing. Traffic was not as numerous as today but accidents and near misses did occur between the loaded coal trucks and road users. The solution came as what is possibly the country's first traffic lights installed in 1862. A powerful lantern with alternate white and red lenses was placed on a swivel and operated by a crossing keeper, with priority going to the coal trucks.

Over on the east the colliery at **SANDERSONS**, near Mabel Avenue, off Greenleach Lane opened in 1830. Its shafts were deeper than others in the area with coal from the Worsley Four Foot wound to a connection to the underground canal A productive colliery, it remained in operation until 1870.

It was not long before it was realised a tramway would be a distinct advantage to the colliery. Work began in 1835 also taking three years to complete between the colliery and the Bridgewater Canal near Worsley Yard. This involved a fairly straight line of three quarters of a mile (1.2 km) of track. To give a smooth gradient, it went in a cutting to the west of Drywood Hall, crossing Worsley Road on the level then a low embankment to the canal loading point. This embankment still left an incline.

Overcoming this gradient was at first dealt with by the inclined plane system where a full tram descending hauled up an empty one. However, traffic capacity had soon increased to the point where a stationary steam haulage engine was installed to operate movement. The remnant of this is the former engine bed in the form of a large block of stone with iron bolts protruding which was re-positioned on the opposite side of the cutting in Worsley Woods near Sefton Drive.

COPPICE FIELD COLLIERY situated mid way between the highway (A6) and Wardley Hall had two shafts which were sunk 200 yards (180m) deep in 1843 with steam services for winding and pumping. It was to work four separate seams of coal, production starting in 1845 in the Binn, Croumbouke, Brassey and Seven Feet seams. There was also an upgrade of Hollins Field pits adjacent to the south of the Turnpike Road (A6). It served as a furnace powered ventilation shaft. This is still fenced off as a mineshaft, alongside the motorway bridge.

The Wardley Tramway as it was called was extended a mile (1.6 km) to serve these developments with its last extension of half a mile including a cutting to pass beneath Manchester Road so as to reach the Linnyslaw Colliery in 1860. This left the Wardley Tramway at a total length of two and a quarter miles (3.6km).

Both these tramways relied upon a falling gradient to assist the movement of loaded wagons. These ran on flanged wheels on cast iron rails at a four foot (1.2 m) gauge supported in cast iron chairs each riveted to an individual stone block. In operation, loaded wagons carrying two or three tons were largely self propelled down the moderate gradients but under the control of a brakesman carried on a footplate. After the coal had been discharged into the canal boats the wagons were hauled back to the pits by horses. To avoid the horse tiring itself out on the downhill journey a system of horse dollies or dandy carts was introduced. A low trailer behind the tram carried the horse on the downhill journey; it also ensured it was available for manoeuvre in the pass byes.

After these tramways were superseded by steam railways the track was, in modern terms, recycled. Considerable lengths were used in the Trustees brickyards and the redundant stone blocks as retaining walls. Two such are still extant. One acts as a retainer to the west bank of a portion of the stream running through Worsley Woods. The other forms the division between what had been the Bridgewater Trust offices and the Clinic on Bridgewater Road. The holes for the rivets are clear on most and some still have rivets in them. A complete stone block and chair is sited outside Worsley Village Library.

SUPER COLLIERIES AND STEAM RAILWAYS

LINNYSHAW COLLIERY better known locally as Berryfield, due to being on the land farmed by the Berry family, opened in 1860. Linnyslaw Colliery was the first Trustees pit to have the very deep shafts that were to become the norm. It was sited north of Manchester Road on the Walkden side of Wardley Hall Lane.

The two shafts were over 300 yards (270m) deep and to work the same four seams as the nearby Coppice Field pits. It was the first of their pits to be fitted with iron guide rods for the shaft cages and had furnace ventilation together with steam powered services. It was a relatively trouble free pit to sink and work giving a long productive life only ceasing work in 1926.

With Linnyslaw in production the shaft sinking team moved to the west of the coalfield in 1862. Initially called Stonehouse Pits, the two 580 yards deep shafts of what became **MOSLEY COMMON COLLIERY** at Ellenbrook were the most difficult they sank. Excessive water was encountered needing massive pumps to be installed. These problems put the schedule back as permanent surface works only came in 1866 with some underground development; connection with the air shaft number three pit was made in 1867, with it fitted with a temporary ventilation furnace at the bottom. It was late 1869 when full cage winding arrangements were complete on the steel lattice headgears with large engines of twin thirty inch bore forty-eight inch stroke.

Output from this investment was initially moved from colliery to the Boothstown canal loading point by means of an endless chain powered tramway before the steam railway superseded it in the 1870s.

Finally the number four pit at 580 yards deep and 18 feet diameter and number five pit at 250 yards sunk in the years 1878-9 were the new air upcast shafts with large extractor fans. It produced coal from the Croumbouke, Seven Feet, Doe and Trencherbone seams.

As the older, Wardley tramway served pits reserves were becoming exhausted a new, deeper colliery was begun near Wardley Hall. Known as the **BRIDGEWATER COLLIERY**, later as Sandhole, its 570 and 590 yard shafts with a third one 330 yard deep 15 feet diameter were sunk between 1865 and 1871 when coal production started. An addition of an air pit at the re-developed Hollins Field shaft alongside Manchester Road enhanced the ventilation. Eventually it was to work seven seams including one known as "Hell Hole", diplomatically renamed "Victoria".

The minor pits in the Middle Hulton district left the deeper coal un-worked until, in 1878 work started on a new colliery to be named **BRACKLEY**. Its shafts were sunk to the Plodder and Dean Moor seams and later deepened a further 310 yards to reach the Arley seam. A further entry point was a sloping adit or day eye at a 1 in 4 gradient to the Plodder seam. Connection was made to the underground canal to facilitate discharge of pumped mine water. Output was distributed by the Trusts own railway from the outset.

Increased productive capacity came with the re-purchase in 1880 of the Wharton Estate in Middle Hulton which included two collieries. One, adjacent to the A6 and formerly worked by the Charlton family continued working without major change until closed in 1898. Also included were the **WHARTON HALL** Pits extensively re-developed by the Trustees. No 1 pit was deepened by 300 yards to work the valuable Cannel seam and No 2 to 550 yards to the Arley seam. New steel headgear were fitted together with new steam plant and engines. No 3 shaft only 11 feet diameter had a power driven fan drawing air from 450 yards down. Both Charlton and Wharton pits benefited from rail connections.

THEIR INFRASTRUCTURE

Each of the collieries noted above developed as state of the art production units. All functions were steam powered. Twin cylinder steam winding engines each usually at least 30 inches bore and 48 inches stroke, hauled multi deck cages on wire ropes over steel lattice head frames. With few exceptions the Trustees standardised on twelve feet diameter shafts. Mine water was removed to surface or underground canal by large Cornish pumping engines whose steady beat could be heard nearby. For many years ventilation was provided by underground furnaces where the hot gasses rose up the shaft to draw in fresh air at other shafts. While sounding a bit Kamikaze, it was a recognised technology nationwide. By the 1890s these had been replaced by mechanical fans on the surface extracting foul air to give adequate breathable air in all workings and remove gas. These fans were quite large, 24 feet diameter and eight feet wide.

Coal was moved underground in tubs on rails. These were moved by hand from the face to a haulage route which could be endless cable powered or pony hauled. Pit ponies were yet another need to have a fire underground for the farrier to make their shoes. With the coal being cut and loaded underground by hand the product reaching surface was reasonably free of impurities but customers were getting more selective. Before long, each of these pits had elementary coal preparation plants. The coal was passed along screen conveyor belts where women picked out the dirt. It then passed to size grading screens.

SURFACE TRANSPORT - RAILWAYS

Concurrent with the investment in new collieries, the Trustees had to modernise their internal transport arrangements. In outline, they planned to link their productive pits with a standard gauge steam traction railway, which was to take the form of two arms meeting in the north and linking with their canal and the new LNWR Wigan line. They often followed the line of the old tramways but were not superimposed on them.

Work started in 1865 with making a line from Buckley Lane to Linnyslaw Colliery with a branch to Ashton Field. This involved a deep cutting beneath Worsley Road North and an embankment or causeway across the Blackleach Reservoir. A further contract extended the line south with a cutting to take it beneath Manchester Road near Old Clough, to the Bridgewater Colliery. The last stage of the line had not been completed to Sanderson's sidings and the connection to the LNWR and canal

when two locomotives were delivered, horse hauled to the shed at Bridgewater. It crossed Worsley Road near Drywood by an over bridge and had a wagon tippler and loading chute at Worsley.

Work began in 1870 on the other arm of the railway from Boothsbank on the canal, northwards to Mosley Common Colliery. A connection was made with the LNWR at Ellenbrook and the line continued on a long, high embankment to the Ellesmere Colliery in Walkden by 1871. The final contract for the basic Trustees line started in 1772 for the section from Ellesmere to Ashton's Field.

On the opening of the LNWR branch from Roe Green to Bolton connections were made to it near the Ellesmere Colliery, similarly it was connected to the L&YR – High Level, near Ellesmere making this quite a complex multiple junction. The LYR Bridge over the colliery line had to span six lines of colliery track!

Trainloads of the Trustees own wagons arrived at either Worsley or Boothstow to be discharged into boats on the canal. The loading chutes were high above the water and wagons entered singly down a gentle slope, tipped their contents down a chute to the boat and were then released to coast across points to another gentle slope back to the main line and engine that took no part in the manoeuvre.

In the late 1870s a connection was made across Linnyslaw Moss to the L&YR Kearsley mineral line. During the 1880s a line from Ashton's Field crossed Cleggs Lane to connect Brackley, Charltons and Wharton Hall Collieries with both the LNWR Roe Green branch at Little Hulton and the L&YR Wigan Line at Wharton Hall. . In later years this section of line was very heavily trafficked by trains of colliery washery waste being taken to the Cutacre Tip eventually being credited in the Guinness Book of Records as the largest in Europe.

COKE, BY PRODUCTS AND BRICKS.

Coke production had been established in the Duke's time at Worsley, Walkden and Dixon Green. Modernised in later years they were still of the "bee hive" type. By 1835 the total output was in the order of 500 tons a Week an output that continued into the 1880s.

With the opening of Brackley Colliery a new by-product and coke works was built there. Based on the latest type of plant, this had its own coal washers to deal with thirty tons per hour. The fifty ovens were of the Semet type each thirty feet long sixteen inches wide. Coke grading screens were also installed. Amongst the by-products, the gas generated was to supply Little Hulton Council district.

Bricks were a commodity much used in coal mines to line main tunnels and the Trustees had many small brick-yards in the area but with their railway available the opportunity was taken to centralise production.

Ellenbrook was chosen with good clay and fuel from Mosley Common. It had its own rail siding and internal tramway system. In the later years with increased mechanisation the machinery purchased did not perform to specification so the supplier was charged with entire replacement. Large drying and firing kilns were built and brick sales were a revenue item. Closure came in the 1940s.

COALMINING BY PRIVATE ENTERPRISE.

The Bridgewater Trustees did not control every bit of land in Worsley, a sizeable area to the east of Walkden Road was owned by a Mr. Bagot, gifted by the Duke in a marriage settlement. In the 1850s he leased land – and the minerals to Peter Nightingale, then of Wardley Hall. He sunk a shaft known variously as Nightingales Pit, Mesne Lea Pit and also Croumbouke Colliery after the name it worked. He made approaches to the Bridgewater Trust to work it in parallel with Edgefold Colliery but without effect. It did feature in one of the worst colliery accidents in Walkden in June 1867. At half past six on Thursday morning seven men lost their lives by an explosion On account of the small quantity of gas usually observed this pit had been wrought with naked lights.

The inquest at the Stocks public house took evidence of events. The fireman of the seam went down first to examine the workings before the men left the pit bottom. It was his practice if finding a place to be unsafe to affix a notice in the tunnel, all being well he leaves a burning candle. The problem here was that he could not write or the men read! It is assumed the men followed the fireman directly. A report was given of the rescue attempts, restoration of the ventilation and recovery of the bodies, all

with the assistance of officials from other pits, particularly Mr Thomas Wallwork of the Bridgewater Trust testified of his assistance in rescue work.

On the death of Mr Nightingale it passed to a Mr Glover of Little Ladyhill who made some surface improvements but the colliery closed in 1888. The site of the single shaft is still visible just inside the playing fields alongside the path from Walkden Road.

Most of Little Hulton land was owned by Lord Kenyon who made many leases of land and minerals to several people.

In 1853 the Bennett Brothers opened a Streetgate Colliery with two shafts on Swinhey Lane. After a dispute it remained in production under Mathew Bennett of Moorside House, Little Hulton

John Gibson leased an area, establishing a colliery on Smith Fold Lane productive enough to persuade the L&YR to build the Roe Green – Bolton line. It had three shafts and ample machinery for winding and pumping with its own rail sidings.

Peter Wright had established Hanging Bank or simply “Bank” colliery alongside Manchester Road West near Highfield Road by 1860. It did not have a good safety record with young boys killed in tub hauling accidents and six killed and twenty-four seriously injured in a gas explosion in 1866, it closed by 1890. Mention has already been made to the collieries developed by the Chorlton family adjacent to Manchester Road West and near Wharton Hall. This having the longest life of the older Little Hulton pits.

Largest of the private collieries were the two owned by James Roscoe, Peel Hall Colliery to the west of Peel Lane and New Lester pits in Tyldesley. Peel Hall became a very substantial colliery, sunk in 1850 with three shafts; it had rail connection to the L&YR line near Mort Lane and subsequently connected to the Bridgewater Trust line serving Chorltons pits. It had a long life, closing in 1931. Its surface plant was kept to service the Roscoe’s New Lester Pits until they closed in 1941. It was finally demolished in 1960.

Coal mining in Worsley, as in everywhere, was the most brutal, life threatening accident prone industry. Until 1852 a death in a mine did not have to be reported to the coroner and until the 1896 Employers Liability Act; an employer’s only responsibility to an injured miner was to bring him up the shaft and absolutely nothing else.

We were fortunate to be spared the major explosions causing hundreds of deaths like nearby Clifton and Westhoughton. Even so deaths and maiming was a regular weekly feature of local newspaper reports throughout the period.

All Victorian memorials to colliery disasters quote deaths of “Men and Boys.” The 1842 act prohibited any female or boys under 10 from working underground. The Act of 1860 provided that “No boy under the age of 12 to be employed in mines unless he can read and write”, changed (against opposition) in 1869 to “No boy under 13”. Usually employed away from the coal face younger boys still had a heavy fatality rate. Even if you remained uninjured there was often the terror of being trapped underground.

Even visitors were not exempt, with possibly the last woman to be killed in a British coal mine occurring at Mosley Common in November 1881. A group of ladies accompanied by the mine manager descended to view the workings and ascended the shaft. The ladies wished to ride the shaft again, for the sensation. On descending her dress caught in the shaft side turned her upside down and caused fatal head injury.

Not everything was doom and gloom. Leslie Garrett the opera singer claims to be the miners Diva, she may, but we had one earlier. Miss Lucilla Hall, principal of the Halle choir was giving a concert in Walkden in 1898 and was invited to visit to Ellesmere Colliery. She toured the workings, collecting a piece of coal as a memento and kindly sang for the men at the coal face. She promised to re-visit, a promise she kept for many years.

THE TEXTILE INDUSTRY

EARLY YEARS.

Worsley, like all Manorial Estates would have had a domestic textile industry from the outset. Self sufficiency demanded it and until the 1820s home working provided an easy to accommodate buffer against trade cycles in the other two local industries, agriculture and coal mining. It is a remarkable fact that in less than a hundred and fifty years the Township supported a continuum of twenty-two textile mills from horse operated to the last, an Edwardian splendour spinning mill.

Possibly the first organised collective operation was at the Town's Workhouses as told in Part Three. Next in progression was the rise of men known as "Putters-out" who "put out" raw cotton to home spinners and then "put out" the thread to home weavers, he taking profit on each operation and the finished cloth. Worsley had seven such men by 1790. Several of them progressed to becoming powered mill owners. One, Richard Clarke had a warehouse added to his house, Littlewood on Lumber Lane, subsequently the upper floor became a Methodist chapel, and now is the dwelling Sisley Cottage. Another, Thomas Sanderson progressed to a mill off Greenleach Lane.

FIRST MECHANISATION

Worsley's first few mills begun life as relatively small operations in a newly emerging industry. Some went on to great and long lasting use with the remainder into oblivion, overtaken by a rapidly developing technology.

The Smith family, operating on land in Boothstown Delph had begun with a windmill corn grinding operation about 1750. It is likely that the district's first powered operated cotton mill was there as by 1770 the Smith family had a horse gin powered carding mill, known as **DELPH MILL** being in the ancient quarry on the Tyldesley side of the brook. The product was "put out" to spinners. By 1812 the Smiths had a second mill in the Delph for carding and spinning cotton, being a small one it could not compete so was demolished. A third, steam powered cotton mill was built by the family in 1826 to hold upwards of 200 looms.

By 1840 they were well established industrialists, with a windmill, corn mill, old cotton mill, new cotton mill, warehouse, sow-place (where yarn is coated with boiling size for strength) a taking in room (for putting warp threads ready for the loom) power loom shop, gas works, and an engine and boiler houses. Decline came by 1856 when the Delph Mill complex was sold to a Mr Entwistle as a much reduced concern. He left in 1866 when the mill changed product to spinning and weaving Jute for sacks and bags. After years of short term uses it was demolished in 1893.

By 1792 the Smith family were in partnership with Thomas Barrett at a mill on the Worsley bank, taking its name from the stream, **STIRRUP BROOK MILL**. It was prudently insured with the Royal Exchange Co. with £300 cover for their "Cotton Mill and Steam Engine", a further £900 of cover insured " Utensils in trade in Trust and Commission including the machinery and gearing therein," all for a premium of £3 13s 6d. It continued in the Smith family hands noted as "factory, power, land reservoir" until its total decline in the 1850s.

By 1866, Charles Entwistle – who had previously had the Delph Mill, bought the ruins of Stirrup Brook Mill and had a large three storey building for use as an integrated concern for both spinning and weaving erected on the site

It may not have proved viable for by 1874 the mill had been bought by Wm. Yates and Sons, under whose ownership it was to go from strength to strength with many extensions and re-equipping several times with the latest machinery. During the Second World War the company prospered on government contracts for drab denim, tropical weight cotton and officer quality shirting.

Before the end of the war, Yates had plans for a new weaving shed on the site of the reservoir, electrification making the boiler plant redundant. It opened in May 1946, equipped with fully automatic looms running three shifts per day. Closure came in 1968 with the buildings used as a furniture warehouse and sales room.

DRYWOOD MILL adjacent to Sindsley Brook, close to what became Worsley railway station appears to have been founded in the 1780s. Situated alongside the brook, water power would have been the preferred option for a carding and spinning operation. It passed through several owners including some with other small mills nearby. Listed for Rates as “factory at Drywood” its last entry there was in 1828 when it was abandoned. The adjoining cottages were labelled “Old Factory” on the 1848 Ordnance Survey map.

The next two mills were built with substantial Mill Dams and using spinning machines developed by Arkwright, known as Water Frames. This name came from the original use of water power, later mills were steam powered. They were technically in the part of Swinton, then in the Township of Worsley. The first was **SINDSLEY MILL**, Sindsley Hollow, Ringlow, when Joseph Wright of Drywood Mill, had Spinning Rooms there in 1819. A reservoir or mill dam some 800 yards long would have initially provided the power via a waterwheel. In 1836 these were taken over by Richard Clarke, the Putter-Out from Lumber Lane who by 1841 was described as “a manufacturer by power, of Sindsley Mills.” suggesting the introduction of steam engines. He not only developed a large three storey spinning mill with associated weaving sheds but a self contained community of works cottages and a Methodist Chapel. It continued in the Clarke family until it inexplicably closed for financial reasons in 1860, unconnected with the cotton famine of the USA civil war.

It must be remembered that whilst large numbers of Lancashire workers depended on American cotton, the people were firmly behind the abolitionists. This support for a cause giving them much hardship, relieved by charitable gifts from other parts of the country, was recognised by President Lincoln after the war, thus Lincoln Square in Manchester. There was at least one rejoicing, that held at Sindsley was noted as: “A rather queer but hearty feast to celebrate the conclusion of the war and the re-opening of their ports to trade. There was but one food, eleven of the largest potato pies that could be got”. Fifty schoolchildren were invited to the feast in the Sindsley Methodist schoolroom.

Sindsley Mill was used by other manufacturers and trades until taken in 1877 by the Protector Lamp & Lighting Co makers of the Davy type oil safety lamps used in mines. As they also supplied the oil, perhaps it was no surprise it burned down in an oil fuelled inferno in 1882.

SANDERSON`S MILL on the south east edge of Roe Green was built by Thomas Sanderson by 1820. A rectangular building near Greenleach Lane clearly held spinning machines water wheel powered from the large mill pond known on all subsequent maps as Sanderson`s Dam. Thomas seems to have been quite prosperous as the 1845 OS map shows not only the Mill building, the Dam but also a substantial Mill House. No further information is available about this Mill.

Another cotton processing centre formed at **GREENHEYS**, Little Hulton. Joseph Stansfield a muslin manufacturer and cotton spinner is listed there in 1824 presumably as a Putter out. Growth came for by 1841 he had two factories, one each side of Manchester Road used for spinning and weaving respectively. He also provided workers cottages whose occupant`s 1841 census returns show the mills as an integrated concern. It lists carders, spinners, winders, warpers and many weavers. The census also lists a workhouse boy farmed out there as an apprentice, the only such example of the practice in the whole of Worsley. Stansfield was declared bankrupt in 1854 and the bill of sale noted the newly erected and fully equipped weaving shed to the north of the Turnpike (A6) and a three storey spinning mill arranged for carding and mule spinning. Eventually the mills were bought by the partnership of Clarke and Cooke in 1856.

On the death of E. Clarke in 1875 the mills were sold. The spinning mill was re-purposed, bought by J R Roscoe it became the Hulton Ironworks, a name still displayed on the roof of an engineering works. The weaving department continued under many different owners, including the Earl of Ellesmere in 1903 who leased the mill to short term occupants in the textile trade, his successors, Bridgewater and Manchester Collieries continued this until demolition in 1970.

When first built in 1858 **BROOKHOUSE MILL**, which took its name from Brookhouse Lane as Worsley Road Little Hulton was called, was a substantial building by the standards of the time in Worsley. As it was on land leased from the Bridgewater Trust it would have given their officers some ideas. Founded by Eli Dyson who was already managing cotton mills in Farnworth, it was of two storeys with an integral engine house. Adjacent were its reservoir and the new Dyson residence, Grant House. Its spinning machinery was the slightly outdated Throstle Frame, a variation of the Arkwright water frame, but ideal for the coarser, highly twisted yarn intended for production.

Eli, despite being a Little Hulton Councillor and a Wesleyan Methodist Trustee was regularly hauled before the court for employment offences, usually for employing children too young to be at work. His finest, if such it can be, came when he was summonsed for the death of a ten year old boy, too young to be there, who had fallen through an unfenced hoist shaft. In his court defence he said "I saw no danger in the shaft, and anyway, I have behaved handsomely to the parents by giving them £10. The court fined him ten shillings (50p) on each count!

After the death of Eli the firm was made a limited company. The new manager was soon faced with what had to be Worsley's most spectacular accident to date on 21 March 1902. The engine had just started at 6am when a terrific crash was heard. The engine flywheel weighing several tons, broke off its shaft, went through the engine house, demolished the scutching room and found its way across two fields. There was no loss of life, but loss of livelihood for the months it took to rebuild.

Brookhouse was still producing the coarse yarn on throstle frames until recapitalisation in 1920 changed the machinery to modern ring frames. By 1934 the mill had been sold to a firm who undertook sub contract rewinding of yarn and preparing weavers warp thread beams. Worsley Winding Co. left in 1960 and eventually the site was bought by the Burton Tailoring group for a new clothing factory.

THE LATER MILLS – social engineering

The Bridgewater Trustees realised that encouraging the textile trade was the way to develop their coal interests. As they were now in a position to lease land for factories and offer other benefits such as water rights from their reservoirs to attract investment they in effect did so by a form of social engineering. Their General Manager and the Superintendent Trustee corresponded on the subject. In 1860, the Manager explained "Our great want is an abundance of labour and I am convinced that this can best be obtained by the establishment of cotton factories where the colliers daughters can find employment and the increased prosperity of the district will yield labour for the pits as well as a good market for the coal and for building land."

It can be claimed they were successful in their object; the mills still in operation in 1860 had some 12,000 spindles and 800 looms. During the years 1860 – 1900 Worsley had a further fifteen cotton mills erected covering a mixed textile economy representing a significant investment. During this period the Master Spinners added 178,500 spindles, Manufacturers put in 2,850 more looms and five of the mills included an in house dyeing facility.

First out of the starting blocks was John Ridyard the son of the Trustees Mines Agent, aged only 22 he formed a partnership with a Farnworth mill manager and set about building **GRECIAN MILL** on Worsley Road, Little Hulton. A Rearing Dinner in November 1860 celebrated completion of the four storey mill which operated as a spinning concern throughout the century. Initially equipped with an engine by the Bolton Company, Musgrave and preparation machinery with self acting mules for quite fine threads by Dobson and Barlow, of Bolton. Mr Ridyard continued his mining and textile interests elsewhere when he sold Grecian Mill to William Holden of The Rothwells Little Hulton in 1867.

He sold the mill in 1898 and it was sold again in 1902 to a limited liability company trading under the name Grecian Mill Co. Under their stewardship it suffered an engine damaged beyond repair and a catastrophic fire affected most floors but the mill was repaired. It was closed in 1941 under government wartime restriction orders.

Re-opening came under new owners Robert Farnworth & Co. in 1951 who completely re-equipped the mill now processing Rayon not cotton. Extensions of single storey buildings housed machines for furnishing fabrics, warp knitting and a complete dyeing and finishing plant with only the ground floor of the old mill used. Production ceased in 1984, the premises went into multiple occupation with the old brick mill virtually derelict. The corner water tower was the first tall building in the district to be fitted with telecommunication masts in 1997, still there in 2022.

A sod cutting ceremony on land off Bolton Road led to the first mill actually in Walkden which opened in May 1862 with the name **GRANVILLE MILL**. Note the use of an Egerton family name. The two storey spinning mill included a substantial house alongside. The owner, a Mr Whittaker, tried to sell in 1869 but continued to operate as a spinner until 1880.

New owners, Sugden & Faulkner were yarn doublers who had out grown their Manchester Mill and moved because Granville Mill had ample room to expand and available workforce. First all the existing machinery was sold "without reservation" and an extra storey added. John Faulkner moved into Granville Cottage adjacent. The building was re-equipped with a mix of fine cotton spinning and the doubling of yarn using machines similar to ring spinning frames. Spinning appears to have ceased by 1890 with them being described as Cotton Doublers and manufacturers of cotton and worsted Heald Yarns, Fish Netting Yarns and Sewing Thread.

The mill continued in the ownership of the Faulkner family for generations and expanded many times, in 1905, 1907, 1916 and twice in the 1950s with large single storey units.

Their product was doubled thread, eventually incorporating the processing of synthetic yarns and became the pre-eminent supplier of fishing net yarns. Family control came to an end in 1964 being bought by a company, Oxley Threads, who needed their product that other major manufacturers could not supply. Closure as a textile mill came in 1985 going into multi occupation until demolition in 1990.

A Mr Walker of Eccles leased a large tract of land on Campbell Street from the Bridgewater Trust. Completed in August 1863 the factory, formally known as **THE WALKDEN MILL** but known locally as the Boatshed Mill from the close proximity to that reservoir from which it got its water. It must not to be confused with the much larger multi storey Edwardian mill built alongside.

The floorspace was almost entirely leased out on a system commonly known as "Room and Power" where the landlord provided the shed and engine power, the tenants providing their own looms and labour. With its 450 loom capacity this mill was a cradle of cotton weaving in Walkden with some twenty concerns having been identified as leasing space there. Two of Walkden's largest mill concerns began life there, others moved out of the area and some simply went bankrupt. In later years it continued as a room and power operation but with space let to already successful companies needing either short term extra capacity or awaiting extension to their own mills. One of these was John Booth & Sons of Bridgewater Mill, Sandwich Street who bought the entire concern in 1905.

Change came with the registration of The Walkden Spinning and Manufacturing Company. Booth's had sold Walkden Mill to the company and were major shareholders. They built the new multi-storey mill adjacent, with its huge engine also powering a generator so the old Walkden Mill could be all electric drive. World War 2 saw both mills closed, but the weaving shed was used for warehousing, a function it continued to be used for until demolition in 1966 for a supermarket.

PARK MILL, Granville Street, took its name from the land it was on. The 1st Earl of Ellesmere gave the land as a public park / recreational area for the residents. The Bridgewater Trustees pressurised the 2nd Earl to re-possess the land for industry.

Promoted in 1861 by a joint stock company titled The Farnworth Cotton Spinning and Manufacturing Company, but with most shares taken at £5 locally it became known as the Co-operative Mill. With the outbreak of the American Civil War a delay is understandable with building the four storey shell delayed. Completion came with the 42,000 mule spindles working in 1864. The managing director was one John Ridyard, late of Grecian Mill. Despite the inclusion of "manufacturing" in the title no manufacturing – the term used for weaving, it would appear such diversion never took place.

Several trade slump stoppages occurred but the mill soon re-equipped back into production. Financial problems unconnected with trade came in 1866 when Richard Clarke the 66 year old Cashier was charged with embezzling money over two years. After audit it showed that he had made off with a total of £8,439 at 1866 value. At the trial it emerged he "had been keeping a lady at Southport." He got five years penal servitude. Is it significant that the same Richard Clarke was cashier at his family Sindsley Mill which went "unexplainably bankrupt a few years before?"

In the cotton trade boom before the Great War, the directors decided to increase capacity by doubling the size of the mill; it was to be next to the old, of five storeys and separated by a rope race for power to both mills from a new 1,200 hp engine. During excavation a glacial erratic boulder was discovered which was moved to a display on Parr Fold Park where it can still be seen. Production on the new extra 45,000 spindles commenced in 1922.

It all came to a sudden stop in April 1932 with a massive explosion behind the boilers blew the boilerhouse roof over the mill and smashed a process room. Hero was the engineer, James Crompton who crawled through steam to rescue people trapped. The King awarded him the Edward Medal, the industrial VC.

Repaired, the mill never re-opened for spinning. The machinery was sold or scrapped and the building put for sale. Montague Burton, the Leeds tailoring company leased it as an interim training centre measure until their new Wardley factory was opened. They did buy the whole mill in 1938 and ran it in tandem with Burtonville at Wardley.

Burtons ceased tailoring manufacture at Park Mill in 1970 with the opening of their new factory near Hill Top; they set up a mail order menswear service from the re-styled Park House but it was not a success, Demolition came in 1985 to make way for shops and a leisure centre.

Brothers John and Richard Partington had opened the weaving shed **HAZELHURST MILL** by 1868. John had textile experience and Richard with a profitable beer house on Worsley Road had the capital. Growth clearly came from profits with adding a dyehouse facility to process their own cloth in 1880. Regular increments in weaving capacity reached 560 looms by 1891, the firm employing some 300 people.

On the death of the partners by 1900 a Private Limited Company was formed with existing family members in control. It remained open in full production during the first war but, like most mills, with a much reduced male workforce, including the family. In the post war boom the family re-capitalised as a public company with two brothers Richard and Albert as directors. Dissatisfied with their relationship with shareholders they left in 1923 to form a merchanting business.

With family, and expertise gone, the company ceased trading in 1930 and had frequent changes of tenants for the weaving shed but a long term tenant, Rushton and Hickling for the dyehouse.

Occupancy ceased of both sections by 1961 and they were in multiple occupation until demolished in 1985 to be replaced with steel framed units let for retail and storage.

Andrew Rothwell of **PRIMROSE MILL**, began by renting space and power in Walkden Mill in 1862. He must have been successful in the cotton famine for he leased land on Campbell Street in 1868 to build his own premises Primrose Mill. Within a few years he had ninety employees on 200 looms having his sons Edwin and William Andrew as managers.

With continuing success they opened a new mill at Linnysshaw and sold Primrose Mill in 1873 to John Rylands & Son who had mills throughout the area and have the lasting memorial of the Ryland Library, Deansgate, Manchester. The cloth they produced was marketed under their trade name "Dacca Twist". Rylands vacated the mill by 1879 but retained ownership, leaving it empty and allowed its use as a public hall.

It served a more serious purpose in 1881. This was a time of a combined miners and millworkers strike and mass meetings had been prohibited in Walkden as the authorities feared a riot. To maintain the peace thirty two men of the 5th Dragoon Guards were quartered in the mill for a fortnight.

Resurrection as a cotton mill came with the Rothwell brothers taking ownership in 1888 and re-equipping with 200 + looms and ancillary machinery. A dyehouse was added the following year. There was a split of interests between the brothers in 1890 with William Andrew retaining Primrose Mill whilst Edwin kept Linnysaw Mill. William Rothwell built a mansion on Memorial Road, named "Brentwood" it was better known locally as "Penny Mansion" it being believed to have been funded from the fines levied on weavers for cloth faults.

William continued expanding the weaving shed to hold a further 40 looms. The first decade of the twentieth century saw continued development, a larger dyehouse built and a new engine installed together with the shed extending to hold 350 looms.

W.A.Rothwell retired in 1922 leaving the business in the hands of his sons whilst still owning the property until his death in 1930. By 1936 the business had closed.

Its premises were taken by Howarth & Co who continued weaving but also introduced their speciality product Glace Polished Yarn. This involved boiling yarn in a mixture of potato flour, paraffin wax and farina, then wrung out, dried and polished by revolving brushes. The Second World War brought a huge demand for this as it was used as protective braid for flexible cables, dyed green or brown it was used in radio and telephone equipment both military and Post Office. Such was the need that 24 hour working had to be introduced.

Post war, some 80 employees still produced the polished yarn on outdated machines in an increasingly dilapidated building. Orders declined with the introduction of PVC coating to telephone cables. It closed in 1969 leaving the building in multiple occupation particularly the motor trade until demolition in 1988.

Builder of LAKEFIELD MILL. according to his obituary, the young Samuel Hurst was one of a gang of colliers redeployed in 1848 to extend the Blackleach Reservoir. Sam had other ideas and was practicing writing on the back of his shovel, told off by the gaffer he retorted hands were not made for this work and walked off. Twenty years later he opened his new mill adjacent to Blackleach and named it perhaps laconically Lakefield Mill. Suffice it to say, he made enough money to build the mansion Oakwood with its gatehouse on Manchester Road at Linnysaw.

It began as a three storey spinning mill with 13,000 spindles on the soon to be outdated Throstle spinning frames and by 1871 a weaving shed with 380 looms and its own power plant had been added. Accidents happened, a serious fire took out a large portion of the spinning mill and possibly more spectacular, the end of the engine cylinder weighing over a ton was blown off and went through the engine house wall into Worsley Road.

Samuel Hurst died in 1875 leaving his brother Henry to manage the mill on behalf of his trustees, the firm now being described as "& Co". The Trustees attempted to sell the mill without success and led to protracted litigation. It was finally sold in 1891 to Thomas Nuttall & Co. of Oak Mills Farnworth.

Nuttall's virtually re-built the mill over a number of years. By 1897, the weaving shed was equipped with new looms and the spinning mill portion extended and fitted with a new 1,000 HP engine to cope with the extra power needed for the ring frame spinning they installed. Further extension brought an additional 50,000 spindles.

In 1900 the company were prosecuted under the Public Health Act. At close of work on Saturday, the boilerman had taken a potentially lethal short cut so as to get home early. Instead of allowing the four Lancashire boilers to cool by injecting cold water, he had simply discharged the boiler contents, under pressure into the town sewers. Every manhole and gully along Worsley Road gushed live steam which "frightened the horses"

Post First World War the company established much improved employee facilities, a canteen and a tea trolley service for morning and afternoon breaks. Sports recreation facilities were good with all the major sports provided for, the ladies hockey team gained fame in local leagues.

Production at the weaving shed ceased pre second war but spinning together with additional doubling machinery was run throughout the war.

By 1950 the elderly family directors sold out, by August 1953 Lakefield closed as a textile mill to have several more years life housing a variety of industries.

BROOK MILL founded by Henry Hurst, younger brother of Samuel, builder of Lakefield Mill built his own mill on the opposite side of Worsley Road. It opened in 1874 as a relatively small mill, equipped with 9,000 Throstle frame spindles employing some eighty people. Henry died in 1889 leaving the mill in the unique position of having a female management for under the terms of his will it was to be worked by his daughters which they did until selling the mill in 1901.

By 1904 the mill reopened under Messrs Howarth & Co who renamed it as **SUEZ MILL**, presumably to avoid confusion with the adjacent Brookside Mill. It had been re-equipped with 35,000 ring spindles and added doubling machinery as well as the process known as Gassing, where the yarn was passed through a flame to singe off loose nap. The company was bought by The Bolton Textile Co. in 1922 and continued to run it in the same way.

During the second war it was closed by the government, the machinery stored and the building used as an air ministry store. After the war the antiquated machinery was put back into use. This did not last long for by 1951 it became the premises of The Swinton Carpet Co. who continued to produce tufted and later foam backed carpet until closure in 1968.

LINNYSHAW MILL on Manchester Road was built by Andrew Rothwell whilst still occupying Primrose Mill which he left to move into the new in 1874. There is no obvious reason for the move, the sites are virtually identical in size, water reservoir and road access. It opened with 200 looms and all ancillary facilities; there was a dyehouse on site almost from the start.

Andrew retired 1886 and the firm became E & A W Rothwell, his sons. Change of ownership came after the brothers bought back Primrose Mill and equipped it for weaving. There may have been a power struggle for the same year, 1889, the brothers split with Edwin retaining Linnyslaw and William taking Primrose Mill.

Edwin extended the mill so as to almost occupy the whole site, eventually housing 360 looms and a dyehouse. After his death it was run by his son Andrew who saw it operate throughout the Great War on government contracts. The end of family control came in November 1934 with the entire site passing to the adjacent Burgess Ledward's Wardley Mill.

Rothwell's family home, Linnyslaw House, on the Walkden side of the mill was rented out and in 1946 became the home of the Turner Dancing Academy which became a Walkden institution.

GARDEN MILL in the Delph, Boothstown opened in January 1877 owned by James Macdonald who had rented the old Delph Mill on the opposite side of Stirrup Brook. It comprised a weaving shed for 250 looms and a double storey unit for the support services. The engine was named "Faith" with a bottle of champagne broken on it at the opening of the mill.

It was sold in 1887 to Edwin Makin who increased the number of looms to 300 in an enlarged shed. After being closed for over a year, Makin in turn sold out to the Boothstown Manufacturing Company, floated by a consortium of local worthies in 1905. The company prospered on a largely export trade to Africa which continued until the start of the Second World War.

Maurice Unger took over the empty premises in 1941 to service their contracts for army tinned food. After the war it became Garden Canners Ltd. Providing a garden for lunchtime use of employees in 1947 unearthed a hoard of Roman coins. Closure and demolition came in 1962.

WARDLEY MILL, Manchester Road was a joint venture between George Burgess and Hugh Ledward. Burgess had 250 looms in Walkden Mill and sold his cloth via Ledward, a Manchester Merchant. They decided to combine forces. Burgess lived in Walkden but H D Ledward was a resident of Cheshire, only ever coming to Walkden twice in his life.

The mill opened in September 1878 with a 120hp engine and a shed for 500 looms but only the original 250 were installed. Regular increases in capacity were made such that an extension to the shed was made in 1885 and in 1898. That year Burgess's son who had studied chemistry in Germany returned to head the companies new venture, a dyehouse. At the turn of the century they had 1,000

looms and had extended the dyehouse which now boasted that it had all electric drive, from an in house power plant.

At the silver jubilee Mr Burgess was proud to note the company wage bill was over £600 per week, a great benefit to the local community where some families earned over £6 a week between them. He was also active in promoting education both vocational for employees and locally in the form of night classes which he urged his mill girls to attend in the possibility of work other than in the mill. A brave stance for a mill owner! Perhaps his biggest legacy was persuading Lancashire Council to open the country's very first Day Continuation School, Worsley Technical College for young employees on day release in 1919.

Further extensions brought capacity up to 1,250 looms by the start of the Great War. Production continued with a much reduced male staff with a speciality of parachute cloth for which the weavers were exhorted to produce perfect material "as lives depended on it" During the war Mr Burgess got twenty girl weavers to volunteer as army nurses, they served from 1916 to 1919, with Mr Burgess paying their wages. Immediately after the war the company bought the nearby Oakwood mansion and grounds as a social and welfare facility.

Disaster struck in January 1920 with a fire starting in the dyehouse, it proved too much for the works brigade and indeed for three local fire brigades. They concentrated on saving the weaving shed as it was hopeless to save the dyehouse, which was a total write off including two new machines costing £50,000, total damage assessed at £500,000. Assessing the situation, the firm, who could easily have dismissed all the dyehouse workers kept them on, the women in the weaving department and the men as builder's labourers in the reconstruction.

Once back in operation it was noted that the weaving department had 1,400 employees and the dyehouse 800. Business must have been good because in 1934 the company bought out the adjacent Linnyslaw Mill of Edwin Rothwell.

In the 1950s up to date automatic looms largely replaced the traditional Lancashire looms and were worked double shifts. 1962 saw the end of Burgess / Ledward family control with a sale to Ashton Bros. Weaving ceased in 1968 with the shed demolished soon after. Total closure came in 1985 with the final act of demolition, the chimney in 1990. Linnyslaw Mill remains in existence (2022) in multiple occupation.

Booth & Co's weaving shed on Sandwich Street was named **BRIDGEWATER MILL** by brothers John & Simeon Booth. Both had extensive experience in the trade and opened their new venture in 1879 with 52 looms. Within five years they had expanded to 112 looms. Further growth came with them buying the bankrupt Walkden Mill, honoured the existing tenants and took the largest unit for themselves. This venture lasted until 1905 when Walkden Mill was sold to the new joint stock company who were to build the New Mill there, the Booth's being major shareholders. It had given Booths the opportunity to greatly expand their shed and had 210 looms clattering away.

Control passed to the second generation with Fred H Booth in charge. Active in local affairs he became the first Chairman of the new Worsley Urban District Council when it was formed in 1895. His company led the way in technology in the same year, Bridgewater was the first mill in the district to be lit by electricity with the electricity for the 270 lamps from a dynamo driven by the engine.

Fred's brother William became the victim of Walkden's first ever car crime in 1902. A broken down car was brought to him as he was known as able to repair. After a trial trip the men in the car persuaded William to buy it. In fact they had hired the car that morning in Manchester.

Plans were made during the Great War to expand to meet demand, an extension was built but not put into use until 1920, the mill then having 400 looms in sheds and ancillary process rooms that then virtually covered all the leased land.

Booth & Co seemed to have had a good relationship with its workforce gaining all the advances in pay and conditions without any industrial action. As well as the Sandwich Street mill the company bought or bought into mill across the area, they certainly still had use of Walkden Mill for weaving as well as weaving sheds in Culcheth and Preston giving them control of some 800 looms.

Remaining open through the second war, post war conditions brought closure as a textile mill in 1963. It was almost immediately taken by Cunliffe Whittam of Astley who manufactured textile printing rollers. It continued being used for roller making until closure and demolition in 2003.

Robert Spedding opened **CLEGG'S LANE MILL** on Seddon Street, Little Hulton in 1881 where he employed eight males and thirtyfive females on 85 looms and support equipment. Expansion to 120 looms had been made by 1890. Initially steam powered, the power plant was replaced by a gas engine in 1907. Apparently, when this started up it used so much gas it caused severe interruption to the domestic premises nearby.

By the 1920s the mill was being run by Tom junior and his cousin Alan Greaves. Their relationship became so hostile that the weaving shed and warehouse was physically partitioned, each having 58 looms. Alas the feud often caused a delay in meeting orders and one major customer were the Partington Brothers who had left Hazelhurst Mill. Albert Partington went to sort things out and faced with the family feud at its height, found a solution. He made out a bill of sale on the spot, left a ten pound deposit and returned the next day to formalise the sale on 1st October 1925.

Partington Textiles Ltd prospered particularly with their reputation for drab denim required by the War Office. Peculiar to denim is the concentration of white warp threads on the underside of the cloth, found beneficial in case of injury as it acted like lint. After the war Richard moved his merchandising business to Seddon Street as well.

In 1960 there was a move to wider cloth with the old narrow Lancashire looms replaced by 84 second hand Northrop automatic looms for which a new shed was added. Soon even wider and advanced looms were added, all making denim for an international market. A slump in demand due to foreign competition saw Victor, Albert's son, merchandising the cloth direct to local jeans makers. When a major customer failed, he did what his father had done, bought the company and moved the sewing machinery to Cleggs Lane where he operated under the name Downtown Jeans in 1980. Partington ceased weaving in 1981 and closure of jeans manufacture came in 1992.

Edward Lane built **HOPE MILL** off Atkin Street in 1879 as a speculative venture. He was already a successful builder including Primrose Mill for his father in law Andrew Rothwell where his children worked. The mill was leased to Thomas Irlam with 120 looms who remained until 1888. By this time Edward Lane had a well trained management team courtesy of Mr Rothwell. One son became buyer and salesman the other managed the weaving and mechanical departments with the girls as leading weavers. Extensions came in 1900 to hold up to 180 looms, a dyehouse was also added with a third son taking charge.

Further extensions in 1907 brought capacity up to 300 looms and a new warehouse on site. The firm expanded further post Great War by taking space in the old Walkden Mill Shed and a mill in Oldham together with a Manchester office and warehouse. Perhaps they had over-reached themselves as the end came in bankruptcy in 1938.

Sold to William Rayley Ltd. as "a works" they had little use of the buildings for on the outbreak of war in 1939 it immediately became an enlistment and drill depot for the Royal Artillery. By late 1940 a Swinton company, T Hamer Ltd. took possession to complete their contracts for pre-cast concrete air raid shelters.

After the war the Lion Ink Co. moved in during 1946, re-naming the building Century Works. Here as well as producing the writing ink – which every Walkden family seemed to have a bottle they made commercial grades. Lion Ink went out of business in 1972 and the site bought by Cunliffe Whittam, then occupying the adjacent Bridgewater Mill. All the property in the area bounded by Atkin Street, Sandwich Street, back Walkden Road and Holyoake Road was demolished. A new engineering works and offices for the manufacture of printing rollers opened in 1975. This property is still in use (in 2022) for high end motor dealers.

By the end of the nineteenth century Lancashire was entering the age of the big, red brick spinning mills of about 100,000 spindles. With land, labour, fuel and water readily available, Walkden was a prime candidate. Lord Brackley, eldest son of the Earl of Ellesmere cut the first sod of what was to be known as **WALKDEN NEW MILL** on Campbell Street in December 1905.

A group of local business men had purchased the old Walkden Mill – and its surrounding land, for their venture. Opened for business in November 1907, the mill was of five floors, ground floor for preparation machines and then four spinning rooms holding 36 pairs of Mules with a total of 86,000 spindles designed to produce yarn from the finest quality Egyptian cotton. It was all powered by a 1,600 HP engine, which also drove a dynamo to power electric lighting in the mill as well as a 200KW generator to supply power for the 400 looms in the older mill. A chimney of 190 feet (60m) became a local landmark.

In full operation during the Great War demand was such that a further storey was added to hold a further nine pairs of mules bringing the total spindleage up to 105,000 with the card shed extended as a single storey unit to cope with demand. Financial problems post war brought the amalgamation of the Walkden Spinning Company and the Laburnum Spinning Company of Atherton on the 1st of July 1920. An appeal for the public to take up shares was made. Both industry and government led initiatives to rationalise the cotton industry during the inter war years led to the Walkden / Laburnum combination amalgamating with others to form the Combined Egyptian Mills Ltd.

During the Second World War the mill was mothballed on government orders with all the machinery given a heavy coating of grease. Reopening began in mid 1946 with teams of women swabbing off the grease with paraffin, a filthy job. At the same time the changeover to all electric drive began making the engine and drive shafting redundant. Two floors of mules were cleared and replaced with ring spinning frames which produced the coarser yarns much more economically than mules.

Despite being the “New Mill” employee facilities appear to have been the worst in the district. Factory Inspectors reported in 1949 that “two water closets were housed on each floor of the stair tower with a basin with a cold tap in the basement and on the third floor.” This was in a mill employing up to 250 people. Things had been put right by 1952, hot and cold water to wash basins and footbaths on each floor had been installed. Mule spinners still worked barefoot! Canteen and tea trolley services arrived.

Alas, the cotton trade was in decline and the government Cotton Industry Act of 1959 compensated firms for scrapping capacity. Walkden New Mill closed in June 1959 to be demolished in 1966.

PART SIX

Early Twentieth Century

THE BOER WAR.

Whilst this was a “Colonial” war, it did affect Worsley in several ways during its course between October 1899 and May 1902. Many local men were recruited for the several branches of the services employed, the majority as infantry.

Top of the social tree was Lord Brackley, son of the Earl. A professional soldier he served in the Boer War as a Captain in the Royal Scots. His company left for South Africa in March 1900 and left Cape Town in May 1902. His arrival at Worsley gained him a triumphant arch and his carriage had the horses removed for it to be pulled by estate staff.

In January 1900, ten members of the Worsley Troop left Worsley by train to join a total of 150 officers and men of the Duke of Lancaster’s Own Yeomanry for active service in the Transvaal War. They exchanged their red, blue and gold uniforms for Khaki and slouch hats. Yeoman cavalry were found ideal for reconnaissance operations in the terrain. They returned in June 1901 less one member killed in action. Quite a celebration was made of their return. On the 28 August, the men paraded in their Khaki uniforms for lunch at the Bulls Head, then marching to the Co-op hall for a presentation by the Earl of Ellesmere of gold medals with Worsley coat of arms and an inscription on the reverse.

Families of the independent volunteers were part supported by local War Fund events where a brass band parade in December 1899 raised money for the cause. A further, more up-market event came in December 1900 when The Lady Friends of the Worsley War Fund promoted a children’s concert and bazaar at the Court House, presenting a cheque for £64/12/9d to the fund secretary. The Whitsuntide procession in June 1900 both had a street collection for the fund and bunting flown to celebrate the relief of Mafeking.

CLOSURE OF THE BRIDGEWATER TRUST

The Trustees were well aware that the allotted span of the Trust established under the Will of the Duke of Bridgewater was coming to an end. The beneficiary, the third Earl of Ellesmere was driving the change of local management before the Trust actually expired. He had urged the rationalisation of industrial services to the mines and estate into one location, the Walkden Yard on Tynesbank. Likewise arrangements had been made in 1900 to sell his private and extensive estate to the Bridgewater Trustees to prepare for the combination of the two. Change was in the air for Worsley.

LADY BOURKE

One of the last publicly visible actions of the Trust was the provision of a clock, as they said there was no reliable public clock in Walkden. In January 1900 they ordered a four dial turret clock to surmount their Walkden Offices, it is to strike thirteen at one o’clock.

Its inauguration heralded in the new century on the first of January 1901. They invited 600 guests to a New Years Eve function in their spacious offices, gaily decorated for the purpose. Invited were all Trust officers and office staff, officers of the Worsley Urban District Council, and members of the Worsley troop of the Duke of Lancaster’s own Yeomanry.

Dinner was served in a marquee in the courtyard, the whole being arc lit, there was dancing to 11.30 when the Yeomanry band gave selections. Old Lang Syne and the National Anthem were sung and two minutes before midnight the Yeomanry guns fired twelve volleys. At midnight Mrs W. L. Bourke pressed a button to set the clock going. Made by Smith, of Derby it is lit and wound by electricity and to keep correct time it is checked with Greenwich daily.

It became the legal timepiece for most of the local mills and works. Although known locally as “Lady Bourke” as the wife of the Superintendent Trustee, she did not become a “Lady” until W.L Bourke inherited the Earldom of Mayo in 1927.

END OF THE BRIDGEWATER TRUST

On the 19th of October 1903 the Bridgewater Trust expired exactly one hundred years after its foundation. The 3rd Earl of Ellesmere entered into the full control and possession of the Egerton inheritance. By the end of the month the Earl had set up the new Ellesmere Trust to manage his possessions. Considerable changes were made at the top of the administration. Walter Longley Bourke had to vacate his grace and favour residence the Old Hall. It then became home to Lord Brackley, son of the Earl. W.L. Bourke was replaced by Capt. Henry Hart Davis a friend of the Egerton family. He was appointed Chief Agent with virtually the same responsibilities as the retiring Superintendent Trustee. Hart Davis took up residence at Wardley Hall, deposing Strachan Holme, the Earl's archivist and librarian. On the death of the 3rd Earl in 1914 Hart Davis was replaced as Chief Agent, and resident of Wardley Hall by Charles Hardy the new Earl's brother in law.

The Earl specifically requested that the Mining Agent Mr Drury Mitton be replaced by Jesse Wallwork as Chief Mines Agent. He was a highly respected mining engineer, a Worsley man whose father of Pinfold Cottage Park Road had held a similar position in the Bridgewater Trust until retirement in 1884. Taking up the position in 1903, it was not until 1908 that Jesse Wallwork moved into Drywood Hall, on a peppercorn rent with free coal, transport and domestic staff, a perk he retained until his death, still in service aged 90 in 1951.

Lower down the social scale, all the permanent staff of the estate and mines received their notice signed by W.L. Bourke. All received re-engagement notices on the same terms from Capt. Hart Davis. Weekly wage earners, the miners and estate men received notice in bulk and re-signed on at their shift on the 20th October. Tied cottage tenancies were similarly dealt with.

CHANGES IN WORSLEY

Possibly the first major change to Worsley village came in early 1903 with the Earl of Ellesmere wishing to have a more imposing entrance to his Worsley Park. In May that year the old coaching inn and centre of village life and known as The Grapes was closed. Its licence transferred to the new Bridgewater Hotel which opened the following morning. The old hotel had to be demolished for the new entrance lodge and drive to Worsley Hall. The old Duke's clock – which strikes thirteen at one o'clock having been removed from the Worsley works yard underwent a full restoration before being placed over the new gateway. This stone structure was in the form of a castle gateway, a gated archway carriage drive aligned with Worsley Road with the lodge keeper's accommodation alongside, above the arch was a room and above that was the Egerton Coat of Arms, the whole lot surmounted by the Duke's clock.

Major changes made with the prior agreement of the Earl were driven forward by the new Chief Agent, Capt. Hart Davis who completely changed the village with extensive works to "de-industrialise" Worsley. He said he was developing a model village for Worsley on the principle of Port Sunlight. By early 1905 an architect was engaged on the plan for black and white houses on land formerly the estate works yard that was gradually being demolished. Hart Davis said he was developing what is now termed a Brownfield site into a Village Green to replace the industry. He did leave one item, the base of the ornate chimney. It had arches cut through its four sides and converted into a fountain with a doggerel Latin inscription round its basin pedestal to provide a memorial to the Canal Duke. Work commenced in late 1904 with the demolition of the old corn mill complex occupying the land between Mill Brow and the Delph. The site was completely re-modelled. What had been cellars and yards at the level of the canal towpath were backfilled to the level of Worsley Road, a new retaining wall to contain the infill widened School Brow by some six metres. A range of commercial property a Post Office and refreshment facilities were built in the same variety of stonework together with black

and white mock Tudor used across Worsley Road on the "Green" The old Mill House re-purposed as Lady Ellesmere's Coffee tavern remained as such until after the sale of Worsley in 1924.

In the years between 1905 and 1910 several styles of dwelling were built on the site of the old Yard. Designed by the Chester architects Douglas & Minshall, they form a crescent off Worsley road, built along its southern edge to simulate fronting onto an historic "Green" The houses were built in a variety of styles from plain stone, Arts and Crafts style and the Tudor-bethan form that now denotes Worsley. They were intended for and did initially house estate workers. They were advertised for rent to staff with any not so taken to be rented on the open market.

The development was complete by 1910 with a total of thirty dwellings. Records show them to have been tastefully decorated internally but all lacked a bathroom. Hart Davis decreed these were not needed as he feared the bath would not be used for the right purpose, this lack is something modern owners have struggled to accommodate.

To allow easy access to the shops on Barton Road for the new tenants a footbridge was provided. It got the name "Winkup's Hump" from being designed by the local architect a Mr Winkup who needing to maintain a headroom for the canal users produced the still extant hump back bridge. Its construction involved the infill of one of the canal docks.

The only industrial building retained in much its original form was the Forge, on the Barton Road bank of the canal. Hart Davis had it re-purposed by converting it into a granary using recycled materials from the yard and mill, particularly its windows.

Not part of the clearance scheme was the boatyard and dry-dock complex. This function had to be retained in situ to still produce and maintain the fleet of canal craft employed in transporting the Estate's coal from the two railway-fed loading staites or coal chutes at Boothstown and Worsley.

There were other significant changes to the fabric of Worsley village in the years 1903 – 10 with the coming of electric trams along its main roads. These are detailed later.

EVENTS AT THE HALL

As the high society focus of the district many of the events taking place there were by their nature, private affairs for family and visitors. There were also numerous occasions when certainly the parkland if not the Hall, hosted events that included local people. As prime sponsors of local schools, children's treats usually involving food were eagerly awaited and enjoyed. Similarly, milestone birthdays and weddings within the Egerton family and national events brought a celebratory event in the park although the massive bonfires with fireworks were held on the Cross Field. Presumably to avoid damage to the park grass!

Another aspect of the position of the Egerton family concerned the local military. For decades the Earl had been Honorary Colonel rank in the Worsley division of the Duke of Lancaster Yeoman Cavalry, the Territorial Army of the 19th Century. The Yeomanry were clearly for the upper reaches of Worsley society. A recruitment campaign offered a one week training camp and weekly drill nights at the headquarters in the old corn mill. It emphasised horse skills in Pig Sticking, Tent Pegging, lemon cutting and single stick fighting, recruits did have to supply their own horse.

As such, reviews of them and associated units were a frequent event, the locals being quite used to seeing several hundred armed men de-train at the station and march to the Park. The Earl's son, Lord Brackley was a career soldier and commanded troops in the South African (Boer) War. Quite a display of ceremonial arches and flags heralded his and his men's return. He continued his military career after that war.

THE ROYAL REVIEW.

On the first of April 1908 units such as the Yeomanry were absorbed into a County based force that was formally known as The Territorial Army. They had their largely ceremonial uniforms replaced with

Standard Khaki and were now to have the right to carry "Colours" or Divisional flag. It was now trained as an efficient fighting force with each Division a self sufficient entity of all arms and services. Worsley was placed in the East Lancashire Division of the new Territorial Army.

Just over a year after its formation the new Territorial Army East Lancashire Division fielded its almost full strength at Worsley Hall Park on the 6th of July 1909 to be reviewed by King Edward. This event brought possibly the largest collection of people ever in Worsley. Preparations had taken many weeks. Crowd barriers lined the roads from Manchester, huge grandstands 600m long were erected alongside the canal on the review ground south of the hall. These were to hold the twelve thousand people who paid for tickets. On the day an estimated hundred thousand spectators were permitted to stand at the flanks of the ranks of troops under review. It was noted that care had been taken on the commissariat aspect of sustaining the troops with horses fed and watered. Fourteen thousand men likewise had to be catered for. Each man received a pint bottle of beer, a large meat pie, cake and bread and cheese, the quantity needing forty lorries to transport it to site.

The King had reviewed the West Lancashire Division at Knowsley on the 5th and on the 6th, was driven to Manchester to open the new Infirmary. On the drive to Worsley rain subdued the large crowds it fortunately ceasing by the time the entourage reached Worsley Hall. They lunched with Lord Brackley who was to act as Master of Ceremonies.

The new Territorial Army was drawn up in ranks so as to allow the King's carriage to pass between on his tour of inspection, ending at the saluting base for the ceremony of presenting the new colours to the several constituents. A bearer and escort from each marched to the King to receive their colours, the exception being that of the Duke of Lancaster Yeoman Cavalry who sent a mounted officer. On completion of the ceremony the whole assembly marched past the King who took the salute. In order of procession they were the Yeomen Cavalry followed by the Artillery and limbers, next were the three Line Brigades, Lancashire Fusiliers, East Lancashire Fusiliers and Manchester Fusiliers. They were followed by the Army Service Corps and finally the Royal Army Medical Corps together with a large contingent of nurses.

At the close and the King returning to the hall the crowd were permitted to cross the canal by temporary bridges and inspect the Royal Box.

THE PAGEANT

Certainly the last event at the Worsley Hall in June 1914 proved to be a spectacular one. It was a curtain down, fitting close to what may be termed The Old Order importance of the Nobility locally.

It originated in the popularity of a series of historical sketches written by Capt. Hart Davis. The Vicar suggested these could be made into a Pageant using the Hall grounds and local resources. He also suggested it could be used to raise funds for a permanent building to replace the iron one in use as the daughter church of St Marks at Winton. The laying of the foundation stone of the new St. Mary Magdalene on Westbourne Road in September 1913 was the last public appearance of the Earl before his death.

Support for the plan raised enthusiasm across the community. It grew into a spectacle of epic proportions with the vast majority of organisers and equipment sourced locally, only the Pageant Master being imported from London. Officers and leading cast members came from the upper reaches of Worsley society including many senior Estate staff. Eventually the cast numbered about a thousand drawn from all ranks and ages.

Costumes were made largely by the wearers likewise their many small props. Some scenery was made at the works yard. The Hall grounds were laid out such that the fine turf alongside the carriage drive was used for the action whilst spectators were accommodated on the meadow near the canal. Seating tiers to hold some nine thousand people were constructed in an arc to hold those paying the highest price, cheaper admission was standing room only.

Three scenes were depicted with people from the various villages of Worsley supplying the crowd for specific parts so they could rehearse near home. The three periods selected were The Crusades, The Spanish Armada and The Bridgewater Canal. Events came together with a dress rehearsal on

Saturday 19th of June before an audience of some three thousand schoolchildren drawn not just from Worsley and nearby but also Bolton as it was said “they might learn more than from books! Each child was charged sixpence admission and refreshments were sold, it was for charity.

The big performance was on Wednesday which thankfully was fine and dry. Before an attendance of between nine and ten thousand people the tableaux and action scenes unfolded with especially composed music and lyrics to accompany the dialogue. At the close of the final scene the whole entourage processed before the spectator stands and round the Park, the crocodile stretching for nearly a mile. With the show over an air of festivity continued with sports and dancing until late. A further procession was made at 9.30pm by the light of flaming torches. Over two thousand pounds were raised for little outlay.

DEATH OF THE 3RD EARL.

This occurred on the 13th of July 1914 at his London home, Bridgewater House. He was laid to rest with his father and grandfather in the Ellesmere Vault at St Marks with due ceremony and large but respectful crowds of estate and colliery staff.

His death set in motion a chain of events that were to have major consequences for Worsley. He was succeeded as fourth Earl by his son John Egerton who had moved from Worsley Old Hall to a country seat at Mertoun near Edinburgh, a property his father had bought for him several years earlier. The Egertons never took up permanent residence in Worsley again.

One of the first acts of the new Earl came in August when due to the death of Capt. Hart Davis he replaced him as Chief Agent with his brother in law Charles Hardy. He moved into Wardley Hall in September 1914.

THE FIRST WORLD WAR.

Britain declared war on 4th August 1914 an act which affected the whole country for the next four years especially the industrial areas. Many of the restrictions or obligations placed on the civilian population pre-dated the same ones in a later conflict.

At Worsley, one of the first signs came from the new Earl of Ellesmere who let the New Hall to the War Office as a military hospital. It opened in October 1914 with the first of up to sixty wounded officers accommodated in the large reception rooms. It was more of a convalescent unit with the men taking full use of the outdoor facilities. Bowls and croquet were popular as was boating on the lake; local people grew used to seeing the men visiting the village and being invited to social events. Several of the Hall staff had been retained to maintain the kitchen garden to provide vegetables and fruit. The men eventually produced their own news sheet under the title “The Worsley Wail”. It was not closed until mid 1919. The Hall then became more derelict as time passed.

RECRUITMENT

As an incentive to volunteer for service, groups of men with a common background were encouraged to enlist with the promise they would all serve together. These became known as Pals Battalions. Walkden Pals Battalion of the Manchester Regiment had formed by April 1915, proudly marching in the Civic Sunday procession that year.

The needed manpower not being met by volunteers, conscription was introduced in March 1916 applying to men aged between 18 and 40. Military tribunals to determine exemptions from service were held regularly the earlier ones considered those claiming a Conscientious Objection. During March 1916 a colliery tribunal selected coalminers for the army. A total 627 men were selected in Worsley. These included 53 at Walkden Yard, 205 from Ashton Field, Linnyslaw 60, Ellesmere 116 and Bridgewater /Sandhole providing 193.

Further tribunals throughout the year hit the textile mills combing out male operatives and staff seemingly indiscriminately, skilled chemists and engineers were enlisted. Some employers did persuade the tribunals as to how a person was indispensable, when a tribunal was held covering the

textile mills, at Burgess Ledward's Mill 20 got conditional exemption but 64 were bound for the army. A similar proportion applied at all the other companies. Much later in the war some pragmatism brought full exemption to all the nine men of John Faulkner's Granville Mill where the tribunal ruled they were needed as full output from the few doubling mills such as Faulkner's was needed for the war effort.

Women were excluded from any form of compulsory service although many volunteered for the support services. One instance of a group of Walkden women formed the equivalent of a Pals Unit.

Local mill girls from Burgess Ledward became volunteer nurses. The Company posted a notice saying "As the firm employs a considerable number of women and there is a great shortage of assistance with casualties after the recent [Somme] battles, we ask for volunteers. They are to serve for three months to ease hospitals. The firm will pay £1 weekly and want 40 volunteers." This number was got the same day. The girls were employed at the Southport Infirmary and in fact served until May 1919; the Infirmary posted thanks to the firm who had paid the girls throughout and the nurses for their excellent service. On their return the firm treated them to dinner and a medal.

WAR WORK

Substantially, work went on as normal in the basic industries of Worsley. Despite their manpower losses the collieries still contributed to providing the vital fuel for every other industry and homes. Textile mills remained in production often at reduced capacity through either falling markets as exports virtually ceased or due to key male staff being conscripted.

The only directly war related work done in Worsley was the setting up of an artillery shell production line at the collieries Walkden Yard. It came about in response to the great shell shortage of late 1915 whereby many such units were established wherever there was engineering capacity.

RESTRICTIONS, RATIONING AND RECREATION

There were certain aspects of civilian life during this war that are perhaps more associated with the 1939 – 45 conflict. Air attack in the form of Zeppelin raids was feared and by early 1915 an elementary Black Out was adopted. All the gas street lamps in Worsley were fitted with caps in March that year as an Anti Zeppelin precaution. There were several prosecutions of Worsley people for breaching the Restricted Lighting Orders from both domestic and industrial premises. In one instance a man at a mill forgot to close the blinds on a second floor window, seen by a policeman from a mile away, in court he was fined 20/- (£1 a week's wage) the magistrate ruling "you would be lighting the way if the Zeppelins came". ARP Warden Hodges came in the next war.

There was only one bomb dropped locally, on April 12 1918 which fell on open land near Madams Wood. It was reported that "the hum of an airship's propellers were heard, followed by a sizzling sound then a thud and a blinding flash. At first it was thought it was thought the Zeppelin had come down but it turned out to be an incendiary bomb." The bomb was dug out and a year later the Local Journal exhibited the remains.

Due to both submarine warfare crippling imports and conscription of farm workers food supplies often became critical particularly by 1917. Initially food was only rationed by availability and price, with official advice on economic use of what was available. Walkden opened a municipal food kitchen for communal cooking under the control of the Worsley Food Production Committee. This body encouraged food production in an early "Dig for Victory" campaign with vegetable shows and advice. Some of the mills formed Pig Clubs, the animals being kept in the works yard. Actual rationing came in during February 1918 covering meat, sugar, butter and milk.

Social life and particularly public events were seriously affected particularly as the war and conscription progressed. During 1915 Worsley park band concerts were abandoned as was the Worsley Agricultural Show. Whit walks were held on a reduced scale with youth bands playing military airs. By 1916 there were no bands at civic events and at Whitsuntide the Sunday Schools

had field sport days not the usual procession as it was noted "times were too serious for processions and bands." Strangely, an augmented Walkden band gave a concert on Parr Fold Park in August. The following year only small processions of individual churches were held, no bands being engaged. During 1918 again only small events took place, many of them including the Civic Procession had the Boothstown Scout Band, most of the adult bands unable to provide even a token force. There were several war weapons campaigns both general and specialist such as aeroplane weeks. Walkden ILP, Trade Unions and the Women's Co-operative Guild organised a series of treats for children of men in the forces. One, in August, had a procession of 800 children headed by a united band. The children were each given three new pennies, were entertained and sang "God bless Our Soldiers." Perhaps more poignant with the choice of name was another event in August 1918. The Remembrance Sunday services were held all over the district, to commemorate the fourth anniversary of the start of the war.

Celebrations came on the announcement of the Armistice. Church bells were rung, shops and works closed, flags and banners appeared. Lady Bourke came back to life by chiming and being lit up again. On the Saturday there was a great peace demonstration at Walkden Monument with a United Band marching round. People surged round a wagonette to hear speakers connected with local war effort committees. The band then led a procession round the district. The following Sunday there was a Thanksgiving service at Worsley Church with the Councillors accompanied by the Church Lads Brigade bugle band.

Events connected with the war overshadowed much of the following years. Gradual demobilisation brought men home with employers pressing to get their specialists back as soon as possible occupied most of 1919. November remembrance events became the norm, until 1924 these were held at the Walkden Monument, the Parr Fold Park memorial not being ready until the following year when it was unveiled. A bronze tablet listing all the men of Worsley killed in the conflict was placed in the Town Hall in January 1926.

PUBLIC UTILITIES.

COMMUNICATIONS.

Turn of the century brought many improvements to postal arrangements throughout Worsley. For over a year Worsley Council had endeavoured to get Walkden severed from Farnworth postal district and establish a separate office served from Manchester. The efforts were rewarded in mid 1900 with news that postmen are now under the direction of Miss Martin, the postmistress. Similar improvements were asked for in Boothstown. Further details noted the Post Office will be moved from the corner of Church Road to a more central Bolton Road.

The new Bolton Road post office, near the monument, opened in December 1900, it was noted that expenses of removal were by Miss Martin not postal authorities.

Worsley village also saw postal changes largely as a result of the changes being made there. The postal authorities decided to change location of the Worsley Office to the Yard House, 5 Worsley Road, now vacated by the Yard manager now in Walkden. It is deemed more convenient than Barton Road, next to the Chapel.

Further change came in September 1906 when Sgt. Major Williams retired after 36 years as postmaster. The new postmaster is to have new Post Office premises in those just erected on Worsley Road near School Brow.

The three local postmasters struggled in relatively small premises with an ever increasing volume of work until a new combined Walkden Post Office and central sorting office was opened on Bridgewater Road in 1940. It was to close in 1991 with a sorting office on the Wardley Industrial Estate and counter services set up in shopping venues.

Telephone services covered extensively in section four, were likewise exceeding available capacity on the operator dependent equipment in use. Worsley Council sold land on Chestnut Avenue to the Post Office for a telephone exchange. It opened in December 1932, containing automated

connection equipment to deal with the majority of calls. Extensions came in 1960 and digital aerials sprouted from the roof by 1985.

ELECTRICITY

In February 1894 a group of local business gentlemen met to consider the practicalities of forming an Electric Lighting Company for Walkden. Generating schemes were discussed but all were based on supplying 1,400 eight candlepower lamps at an estimated cost for plant and cables of £1,650. Little interest was shown, likewise for another attempt a year later. It was stated that several businesses would have the electric light but there had been no response from mill owners.

Clearly, industry was adopting the use of electricity both for lighting and as a power source. In 1895 a mining class in Walkden had lecturers on the use in shot firing, coal cutting and haulage. Diagrams and equipment were displayed. Later that year, J Booth at Bridgewater Mill, Sandwich Street was the first Worsley mill to install electric lighting throughout the mill. The mill engine drove a dynamo supplying 170 lamps in six departments of the mill. Other mills soon followed suit.

Late in 1900, Worsley UDC applied for Parliamentary powers from the Board of Trade concerning "the production, storage and supply and sell electrical energy for lighting and other purposes. The order detailed that the streets along which the electric lines are to be laid down on as Bolton Road to the Little Hulton boundary, Manchester Road from the west boundary with Little Hulton at Tynesbank and to the colliery railway at Linnyslaw, Walkden Road to Bonnet Hall (Greenleach Lane).

This application was included in a Bill to Parliament in April 1901, reported in a Legal Notice from the Board of Trade that under the Electric Lighting Act 1882 Worsley UDC would be authorised to supply power for public and private use within the Urban District. No action was ever taken.

Worsley Council were caught in a pincer movement by the Lancashire Electric Power Company who during 1906 were laying cables through Farnworth and Little Hulton as far as their boundaries with Worsley. Capitulation came in March 1907 when as a result of several conferences, Worsley Council Together with Little Hulton Kearsley and Little Lever gave a uniform agreement to transfer all individual Electric Lighting Orders to the Lancashire Electric Power Company.

Their generating station was at Outwood near Radcliffe, shortly replaced by the Kearsley Power Station. They had a substantial depot and transformer substation at Hill Top. This complex eventually housed their domestic appliance sales rooms. The LEP continued as sole supplier of electricity to the district until nationalisation.

PUBLIC TRANSPORT.

For many years the only scheduled – and official bus service was provided by Messrs Holden of Bolton who ran between Walkden Stocks Yard and Black Horse at Farnworth, to connect with their service to Bolton. From 1890 it was an hourly service. There were many "pirate" operators on this and other routes particularly if there was an event causing heavy demand. These were usually prosecuted for unlicensed operation.

The possibility of electric tramways came with a meeting of seven local councils to debate the merits of various schemes put forward. Some concern was raised about that of the South Lancashire Tramways Company. The concern was about the tenure of the track with the company demanding a 35 year holding. It was clearly resolved as in November of 1900 the Tramways Company posted notices in Walkden and Farnworth re their intention to promote a Bill in Parliament to construct tramways in Bolton Road, Manchester Road and Cleggs Lane. Worsley Council assented to the laying of the lines and for them to run trams. Work did not start until early 1902 and as late as January 1905 the Company were seeking sanction of an extension of the period for completing the line for the service through Walkden.

Meanwhile the South Lancashire Tramways (SLT) were preparing to start a service to Worsley and beyond from Eccles and Winton. This necessitated the widening of the bridge carrying Barton Road over the canal. Work started late 1904 at a contract price of £825 of which £350 was to come from the Salford Hundred bridge fund and £250 by the SLT as their liability for tramway use. Trams were

running to Boothstown from Howe Bridge by 1905 but the track terminated at the bottom of Coupe Brow. Alas, one car lost control and overshot along the setts for 50 yards.

1906 saw the completion of the network with track laid from the monument and from Farnworth to Hill Top, with a delay whilst the railway bridge was widened. By August the hope was to run trial cars between Farnworth Walkden and Swinton. Their speed was reduced as the Walkden electrical substation from the SLT's own power station at Howe Bridge was not yet in use. Several more trials were run through the system with people expressing admiration for the double deck cars used

On the 21 September 1906 cars loaded with up to 60 passengers from the Company, contractors and Councillors ran between Walkden Swinton, Worsley and Boothstown. In the vicinity of Worsley Hall the Earl and Countess of Ellesmere had the car stopped so as to chat to the occupants.

This new mode of transport came popular at Easter the following year. In glorious sunshine the trams provided the most popular way of leaving towns and SLT did good business with their circular tours through Atherton Worsley and Swinton. Thousands selected Worsley for their Friday outing, by tram.

For many years trams from the SLT and also Salford Corporation and Bolton Corporation shared the tracks in the Worsley Area under agreed running rights for the convenience of passengers. This arrangement came to an end in 1931 with Salford losing their rights to access both Walkden and Farnworth, only the SLT remaining in operation. It was also reported that trolley buses were nearly ready to take over the routes. Tramway services were suspended in July between Farnworth and Walkden via Cleggs Lane as a preliminary to conversion to trolley buses. Trolley bus operation on this route commenced in August 1931, other routes remaining tram operated.

It was not until mid 1939 that buses were said to be ready to take over the Bolton to Walkden route via Farnworth. Due to war conditions this was deferred despite the track, particularly on the Walkden part of Bolton Road being in a very bad state. By 1943 Worsley Council were requesting that the dangerous trams were replaced, it took until November 1944 before motor buses took over the route.

Post war, the bulk of bus routes in Walkden were operated by the SLT's successor Lancashire United Transport from their Howe Bridge and Swinton Depots. Their livery was a bright red body on their preferred vehicle the Guy Arab double deck with the feather headdress Indian chief as radiator cap. Bolton Corporation buses in their maroon and cream livery shared the Walkden to Bolton route. There were several shared routes. Salford Corporation in their dark green Leyland buses ran from the Stocks at Walkden to Manchester via Peel Green and Monton. They shared the route from Salford to Worsley and also Leigh with the blue and cream vehicles of Leigh Corporation

As a result of a Transport Act of 1969, all the local Corporation operations were combined into SELNEC, south east Lancashire north east Cheshire. To avoid any conflict with previous civic liveries the garish orange and white colour scheme was adopted. Further legislation brought the large Lancashire United Transport company into SELNEC during 1976. De-regulation of transport undertakings in 1986 brought a split into different areas of Greater Manchester Buses. Complete privatisation came in 1994 with GMB becoming an employee owned operation. Subsequently ownership passed to private companies.

BURIALS

"The Burials Act" of 1880 permitted Nonconformist Clergy to officiate at funerals in Anglican graveyards. The first in the Manchester Diocese was at St. Paul's Walkden in October 1880. The Nonconformists who were in a majority in Walkden pushed for a burial ground they could control, a question not considered urgent by officialdom as there were at least 300 spaces un-let in the churchyard. In 1893 the Parochial Committee raised the question of a new cemetery for Walkden as the graveyard was too small. Suggested sites were Old Clough Lane, south of the railway or Tynesbank Fields between the railways.

Little progress was made against hardening opinions in the Nonconformist / Anglican camps when, in 1899 consecration issues were raised. It got nasty. Sermons were preached in Nonconformist chapels that "the new cemetery, when obtained, would be for all the community and no section had

any right to special privileges in it.” In response, the Vicar after Evensong, gathered all the men into the vestry to consider a petition to Worsley UDC for consecration of part of the Old Clough site.

By accident or design the agreement to purchase the land expired before the Council got Government approval to purchase, a Government Inspector having attended to inquire into the application to borrow £8860 for the cemetery land, the Home Office having approved the site.

In 1901 Worsley Council were informed by the Bridgewater Trust that in their opinion that with the extension of the church graveyard there was no need for the cemetery. Later that year there were 1,400 signatures in a petition to the Government Board against the cemetery out of 2,600 ratepayers. Events were resolved with the consecration and opening of the new ground at Walkden churchyard in May 1902, the land given by Lord Ellesmere and the Bridgewater Trust.

SALE OF WORSLEY.

FINANCIAL DIFFICULTIES.

On inheriting the title and estates the fourth Earl was faced with massive financial liabilities in the form of the recently introduced Estate Duty, better known as Death Duties. This was imposed on all forms of property and wealth which by 1914 on such as the Ellesmere Estates conservatively worth over three million pounds had reached 13% on the first million and 18% on the residue. With property and land in Worsley, Lancashire, Cheshire, Northampton, Cambridge, Scotland and London the old Earl had made attempts at reducing liabilities as did his son on inheriting.

First, the entire of the Earl's widespread property estate had to be valued. Where it involved a single building such as Bridgewater House or largely agricultural land the process was relatively straightforward. Industrial Worsley became more complicated.

Valuers moved into the Bridgewater Office in Walkden and took until 1921 to compile a valuation of the industrial plant, railways and mineral wealth. The valuation document extant at the Lancashire Record Office is some 75mm thick.

In 1921 the Earl took the step of distancing himself financially from the Worsley industry by forming two Companies, Bridgewater Collieries to run the mines and Bridgewater Wharves covering the sale and distribution operations. His Worsley mine manager Jesse Wallwork headed both.

Various attempts at liquidating assets were made locally where land was sold as were all the local public houses which were bought by brewery companies. This action and others were only a sticking plaster not realising anything approaching the sum needed.

THE SALE.

During 1922 the Earl consulted his advisors as to how to raise the funds needed; all concluded the only option was to sell off the whole of the Worsley Estate and Colliery operations. Jesse Wallwork had reservations about this and visited the Earl at the Old Hall to try and dissuade him to no avail as there was no other option as the Earl needed £3 to £4 million

Jesse Wallwork decided to try to form a syndicate to buy from the Earl who readily gave him permission to contact all the local coal owners to join such a venture, but set a tight timescale. One of them, Joseph Ramsden of Shakerly Collieries, Jesse's one time employer offered to put up the money on a temporary base. The syndicate met on the 5th January 1923 to agree the terms of their offer which Mr Wallwork took to the Earl at the Old Hall the same evening. The offer was accepted.

THE ESTATE & COLLIERY COMPANIES

Once the financial details of obligations to the Earl had been decided formation and structure of the new venture had to be resolved. It was finalised that the main, holding company was to be based on land holdings and became Bridgewater Estates Ltd. As subsidiaries it had Bridgewater Collieries Ltd and Bridgewater Wharves Ltd. All were based at the one-time Trustees offices on Bridgewater Road, Walkden. Mr Joseph Ramsden was appointed chairman with Jesse Wallwork as Managing Director of each.

COLLIERY AMALGAMATIONS

National economic depression hit the coal industry particularly hard during the 1920s with many of the Bridgewater pits of only marginal profitability closing. By 1929 a protectionist amalgamation of colliery companies took place and Bridgewater Collieries was one of the ten private companies that formed Manchester Collieries Ltd. This new organisation based itself in the Walkden Offices, causing the Bridgewater Estates component to move to the Mill House in Worsley village.

Initially the constituent companies had a great deal of autonomy but by 1935 full central control had been established. This matched the central sales organisation set up with government approval in 1930. Lancashire Associated Collieries based at Worsley Old Hall acted in the interests of all Lancashire coal owners against other districts. A function it retained until nationalisation.

THE WALLWORK YEARS.

It is not too far from the truth to say that for most of the first half of the twentieth century Jesse Wallwork was Worsley. Born in Pinfold Cottage Park Road his father was Mines Manager to the Trustees. He worked as a surveyor under his father before taking up the appointment of assistant manager at Haydock Collieries owned by Joseph Ramsden. As noted he was head-hunted by the Earl to manage the Worsley mines in 1903.

The Earl allowed senior employees to live in an estate house virtually rent free. Jesse negotiated the use of Drywood Hall, to include all domestic staff, fuel and light for a shilling (5p) a year. On the incorporation of Bridgewater Estates it was agreed that he should remain there on the same terms which he did until his death.

Jesse was a consummate professional totally dedicated to his employers business often working seven days a week. Into the 1920s it was usual for him to descend a shaft with the 6am shift to view the workings before going to his office. After the formation of Manchester Collieries he had only the estates to manage which he did in a very hands-on manner. He spent a lot of time out on the estate where discovering anything amiss he could be quite brutal, he made many enemies. Conversely he could show some compassion. In the early 1940s a family were homeless and had broken into a property, Jesse saw the chimney smoke and had them summarily ejected and told to report to him the following day. Expecting the worst he told them he had arranged a cottage for them. Chauffeured in the company Daimler it gave ample warning to "look busy, Mr Wallwork's here" to workers.

With his main activity being Bridgewater Estates he did have other directorships or act as consultant where his mining expertise was in demand, he travelled to J Charlesworth's colliery at Wakefield one day a week for many years. He was also chairman of the Mersey Commissioners who honoured him by naming their work boat after him.

Stubbornness personified, when knocked down by their lorry outside the Worsley Office he refused attention and carried on his day schedule. This side of him led to his death. Aged 90 he had spent a full day inspecting property on the estate in the freezing snow of January 1951, soaked through he caught a severe chill and died a few days later.

LITTLE HULTON.

Most aspects of Little Hulton, industry and social concerns have been covered in the preceding sections. Subjects not covered are its background history and particularly its governance. This is due to this work being a history of Worsley and that until the merger of the two districts in 1933; Little Hulton was an autonomous Township.

IT'S HISTORY.

The Little Hulton Urban District Council information booklet of 1924 sadly brushes off the past with a discouraging opening where it says "Until the development of the coal seams underlying the district in the nineteenth century *there was very little local history.*" Such as there was would be centred on the one noble family, the Kenyon's of (Kenyon) Peel Hall. It's safe to say that Little Hulton had four Halls,

Peel Hall, Wharton Hall, Kenyon Hall and Sod Hall. Yes, the latter did exist and one schoolboys loved to find on maps in geography lessons.

THE HALLS.

Peel Hall, off what is now Armitage Avenue began life as an occupied site in the 12th century as a moated hall known as Wicheaves. By 1400 the Tyldesleys of Wardley had forced possession, remaining until 1550 when it was sold. Adam Mort of Dam House Astley took up residence in 1631 re-building the property in stone. His widow lived there until 1737; known as Madam Mort she gave her name to both Mort Lane and Madams Wood. It was immediately sold to Sir Joseph Yates who had extensive coal operations on the estate and beyond. In financial difficulties he sold to Mathew Fletcher a Clifton coal owner in 1801.

The family re built the hall during the 1840s as the edifice which was to last until 1990s. On his death it was left to his daughter Charlotte who married the Viscount Combermere. Divorced, she then married Alfred Wynn Corrie of Oswestry, some are names commemorated in Little Hulton. The Hall was rented out, first to Alfred Topp, a mill owner, then to Harrison Blair of the "stink bomb hill" chemical works, then finally to the Armitage family, Farnworth mill owners. On Charlotte's death in 1914 Mr Wynn Corrie presented the hall to Lancashire County Council as a sanatorium. With likely set up costs of over £13,000 it did not open until 1921.

During its life as a tuberculosis hospital with up to sixty patients, balconies and verandas were added so patient's beds could be wheeled out into the fresh, Little Hulton air. Eventually re purposed as a geriatric hospital it closed in 1990, fell into disrepair and was demolished. The Ice House remains in the grounds which now hold St Anne's Hospice and the Woodlands Hospital.

Wharton Hall was centred on a fourteenth century estate held by the De Wharton's who sold in 1587. The Hall, at the south end of Wharton Lane, was described as being a two storey farmhouse of brick, timber and plaster, in a black and white style, with a slate roof. By the 1860s already described as being of tumbledown appearance.

By 1650, Robert Mort had come to Wharton, as a Presbyterian he held services in the Hall and gave land for a chapel. His family left in 1870 selling to James Potter who owned the Wharton Colliery. The Bridgewater Trust bought the mine, hall and estate in 1881 leaving the hall to tenants. It was demolished in 1959

Kenyon (or Old Peel) Hall which stood on Kenyon Hall lane, once its approach driveway, is on the site of an earlier structure, possibly the elusive "Pele – or Peel of Hulton, a fortified tower the site of which has never been conclusively proved. The Hall extant to 1958 was founded in the early 1600s by the Rigby family. It had a main block of brick base with two storey timber and plaster black and white style with wings entirely of brick. The interior had extremely fine ornate plaster ceilings and wood panelling. During the 1630s a stone gatehouse including a mounting block to assist the ladies onto their horse and courtyards were added. An alcove in the outer courtyard was surmounted by a Mannequin Pis statue.

A surviving Rigby daughter married Roger Kenyon to whom the Hall passed, he was created a Baron in 1788, Little Hulton's nobility. The last Kenyon to have permanent residence died in 1836, leaving all subsequent title holders preferring to live at his other ancestral home Gredington Hall in Staffordshire.

Alas mining subsidence became severe enough to have the long side very heavily supported with raking shores by 1885. The Hall was let to the Roscoe brothers, proprietors of the nearby Peel Hall Collieries who mined beneath Lord Kenyon's land. The last tenants as caretakers left rather hurriedly in 1952, believed to have been unable to stand the ghosts anymore.

There were many attempts to preserve the hall and re purpose it but it was eventually declared beyond repair and Lord Kenyon had it demolished in 1958

Sod Hall was a large farmhouse off Cleggs Lane. It was so designated on the first Ordnance Survey maps so the title must have some authenticity. There are two possibilities for the name, Ironic, or more likely that the first building on the site had a sod – or turf roof, a common occurrence. The building and its forty acre land was compulsorily purchased in 1978 allowing the Amblecote estate to be built.

GOVERNANCE.

Its early administration came from being within the Parish of Deane who dealt with the Poor Law, and such civic duties as roads and justice. During 1837 the Township became part of the Bolton Poor Law Union with wider powers than the Parish system. An elected Local Board of Health was obtained in 1872 giving a great deal of democratic say in administration. +

During 1894, a Lancashire County Council enquiry made the declaration to create new Urban District Councils for both Worsley and Little Hulton. When formed later that year the Little Hulton Council was originally of just two wards, East and West, electing twelve Councillors, in 1926 an additional ward, Worsley Road, was added, with three representatives.

A change in 1933 brought the area that was to become the extended Worsley Urban area into being. Formed under the provisions of the Lancashire (Manchester and District) Review Order it amalgamated Worsley and Little Hulton Urban District Councils and included part of Barton with other minor boundary changes. Agreement was reached that union would take place on 1st April 1933.

An emotion charged final meeting of the Councils took place on the 10th March followed by a joint hot pot supper at the Stocks Hotel Walkden to celebrate the amalgamation of the two Districts. Elections took place for the expanded Council now to be of twenty four members. At its inaugural meeting in April Mr Joseph Pennington was appointed Chairman.

PART SEVEN

Twentieth century and beyond

WARTIME.

Second World War

PRELIMINARY EFFECTS

The prospect of war was becoming clear and both Worsley Council and local industry made ready for the worst. As early as 1938, air raid precautions headed the list of measures with the Council recruiting ARP volunteers and giving public lectures as to preparations for attack. The local mills were issued with recommendations by the powerful Spinners Union. Manchester Collieries laid a large bore water main from the Blackleach supply along Rushton Street and Wilfred Road for ARP and fire fighting purposes at their offices and Walkden Yard.

As the situation became tenuous in 1939, a Swinton company who had gained countrywide contracts for pre-cast concrete air raid shelters took over the Hope Mill on Atkin Street for their manufacture. The same building became home to a branch of the Bolton Royal Artillery T.A. Battery, using it as a depot and recruiting centre.

ON THE HOME FRONT

As soon as war was declared the ARP Wardens requisitioned Welsley House, Park Road as headquarters and Edgefold Sunday school as an ambulance centre. Reality of war became a local issue with the billeting of 500 European refugees in Worsley in early 1940. Child evacuees from Manchester and Liverpool came to Worsley as well.

Also in 1940 we got Dad's Army, the Worsley Battalion had their first public parade in August that year. There was also the Manchester Collieries Battalion raised to defend the local collieries and transport lines. Another very visible war measure was the collection of iron railings for salvage, only those essential for safety were spared. Those on house garden walls, churchyards and the public parks all had been collected between 1940 and 1943. All the remaining garden wall coping stones show the brutal way they were removed. It was also made illegal to replace them with wood. The road direction signs at the major crossroads such as Worsley Brow and the Walkden Monument were removed and to assist traffic in the blackout cat's eyes were installed along the main roads.

Rationing of virtually all consumer goods had been enforced early in the war with the allowance varying to circumstances. July 1942 saw the coal ration set at 10cwt (500kg) per month per household. Walkden had one of the few Communal Feeding Stations, rapidly re-named British Restaurants at the insistence of the Prime Minister, outside major urban areas. Situated on Manchester Road alongside Wardley Street, here customers could get a basic cooked meal for a set price "off the ration", a welcome addition to the nutrition of manual workers.

In total war, regular efforts were made to persuade areas to fund a particular armament with War Weapon Weeks. One such in March 1941 provided an almost carnival atmosphere. The parade formed at Birch Road School, led by the RAF, with fixed bayonets, their band, Soldiers, ATS, Home Guards of Worsley, Little Hulton and Manchester Collieries, Civil Defence and youth organisations. Worsley reached the target of £100,000 by Wednesday and by the following Saturday it had doubled. A ceremony was held at the Monument as a tribute.

Holidays at home became the norm with civilian travel being virtually unobtainable. Local parks became entertainment centres particularly for children. Parr Fold hosted games, competitions, punch and Judy, donkeys and catering! An event in July 1942 reported "everything went well, but a lot of crockery was reported missing." One event in November 1942 stood out. It is generally believed that Church bells were silenced for the duration. However, those at Walkden were rung to celebrate the Eighth Army victory at Alamein.

As in the previous conflict there were regular reports of blackout offenders, black-marketers but fewer military tribunals. As the war drew to a close normality started to return. The street lamps were put on again in September 1944 when in the next few months the Home Guard was stood down and the last few of the 800 evacuees billeted in Worsley returned home.

Whilst there was a celebration of VE day, Worsley kept the main festivities for VJ day, the true end of the war. Alas the planned bonfire was lit by vandals overnight. A smaller one had to suffice on Parr Fold Park which had been fitted with improvised lamps for outdoor band concerts whilst free admission dancing in the Town Hall attracted over 500 people.

Worsley did not come out of the air war unscathed.

It came under 335 Alerts where residents were supposed to "take cover". A rather silly anomaly involved Boothstown, the line separating the Manchester ARP area and the Liverpool ARP area was the Boundary Brook through the village. This frequently led to one half being under "Alert" whilst the other half was listening to the "All Clear".

There were seventeen raids in which bombs were dropped, three aerial mines, 49 high explosive, incendiaries usually being dropped as well but five raids had only incendiaries dropped. And finally on December 29 1944 a V1 Flying Bomb, launched from an aircraft landed on a house in Woodstock Drive. Not reported until December 1949 was that the rocket also contained cylinders of propaganda. In total our casualties throughout the war were nine dead, forty-two injured.

ON THE INDUSTRIAL FRONT

Coal production was a vital need with Worsley a major supplier to the industries of Lancashire. Alas many younger mineworkers enlisted leaving an aging and depleted workforce. With the situation critical by June 1941 the government prohibited any further mineworker from either conscription or volunteering. Labour relations were not good with many strikes locally about pay and conditions. With still a shortfall of workers, the government introduced a scheme for what became known as "Bevin Boys" drafted into mine work. This was non negotiable, where ten percent of all conscripts nationwide were directed into mining. Beginning in October 1943 it was not popular, either by the draftees who got little besides their wage, and the constant accusation of being army dodgers or by the existing staff. They were largely employed on work away from the coal face, underground haulage hands and as surface supplies teams.

Drafted from all over the country, accommodation became a problem for those sent to Walkden. A site on Sharp Street became a Bevin Boys Hostel; built in 1944 it had twenty dormitory blocks, a central canteen and service blocks. It remained in use until the last Bevin Boys were demobbed in March 1948. It continued to house mineworkers, east Europeans who had come to Britain as refugees, it closed as a mineworkers hostel in 1958. Taken over by the County Council in 1967 it was converted into a "Wayfarer's resettlement centre" known locally as the Tramps Hostel. This closed in 1988 and eventually demolished in 1997 and developed into the Linnet Mews housing estate.

Government control of the textile industry was enforced from early 1940 under the Cotton Control Board. The spinning mills were particularly hard hit with Grecian, Suez and the New Mill all closed with the machinery mothballed under thick grease. Most of the others allowed reduced capacity. Several of the larger weaving concerns had their capacity much reduced, or closed. Linnyslaw sheds were closed and used as a machinery store with the adjacent Wardley mill remaining in part production the remaining space sub let to an engineering company.

Others with a specialist product remained in full or extended production. Stirrup Brook Mill at Boothstown worked exclusively on Government contracts producing cloth for officer's shirting and cloth for the South African Navy. Granville Mill continued to produce fishing net twine with Primrose Mill on Campbell Street working overtime on their speciality product Glace Polished Yarn. This was used as the braided covering for the flexible cables used on telephones and radio sets, wartime bringing a huge increase in demand.

A speciality product kept several of the smaller weaving mills in operation. Partington's at Cleggs Lane Mill had gained a good reputation for the olive green, drab denim required by the War Office. Peculiar to denim fabric is the concentration on the underside of the white weft threads, found to have benefits in the case of injury as it functioned as lint. They increased production and were partnered with the looms at Primrose Mill and Bridgewater Mill to supply this vital cloth.

Our rag trade largely continued in operation during the war. The Shirt Factory established on Egerton Street by Mr Hinchcliffe during the first war supplied a needed product, perhaps on cloth from Stirrup Brook Mill. F & M Ramsden's hosiery factory on Louisa Street used circular Knitting frames making the cotton lisle stockings issued to servicewomen. Montague Burton the multiple tailors had bought the Park Mill on Granville Street in 1938 to produce ready to wear and bespoke men's suiting. At a much reduced capacity they moved to churning out uniforms, at the end of the war changing to making the Demob Suits presented to discharged servicemen after the war.

Each of these closures or reductions left a pool of largely female labour. They were not idle for long being re-directed to war work in the new shadow factories of Trafford Park. Sewing machinists and mill girls became semi skilled engineers in many branches of manufacturing done there, several hundred being bussed there every day.

WAR WINNING PRODUCTS

In the 1920s the Lancashire Electric Power Company established a depot on Brackley Street which included a meter supply and test station. The quality of their meters set the standard for the industry. This unit made possible the breaking of the German Enigma Machine cipher. Their navy had adapted the machine with an inability of the code breakers to crack its complex six rotor form. When one of these was captured it needed replicating for tests, it was brought to Walkden under heavy guard so the skilled instrument makers could attempt the duplication. A laboratory was cleared over a weekend, all the employees made to sign the Official Secrets Act and work commenced immediately. The rotors were made satisfactorily and continued to be made if the enemy added any changes. At the end of the war the workers and company were formally thanked by the British Navy for their work. The men who worked there kept their silence until the late 1980s when books about Bletchley appeared. Strangely, when the building was demolished in 1996 a tea chest of rotors was found in the basement.

The Cold War.

In 1951 the War Department took part of what had been the Worsley New Hall grounds to build a heavily reinforced blast proof bunker. This was part of the chain of defences against Russian aggression. It was an Anti Aircraft Operations Room to serve the Manchester gun defended area. (Why shoot down a plane carrying a nuclear bomb?) Its main room was identical to the plotting rooms seen on wartime Battle of Britain films. It had huge wall maps, a central plotting desk and a glass fronted control room overlooking for the officers in charge. Completely self contained it had full domestic facilities and could deploy a sealed ventilation system. It took its input of data on enemy aircraft from two radar aerials alongside.

As the threat of aircraft was replaced by missiles it was stood down in 1956, being used by the Navy as a store. Local Authorities took it over as an emergency control centre but it closed completely in 1968.

POST WAR INDUSTRY

THOSE IN DECLINE

COTTON

Immediately post war the textile industry saw a short lived boom period, export markets were vital. This was typified in the slogan "Britain's bread hangs by Lancashire's thread." a sentiment sounding a little hollow within a few years.

The local industry had three problems. First was the labour force, having got used to being at works with state of the art welfare and toilet facilities and a canteen of restaurant standard, returning to only one toilet on each floor and the only cold water tap in the basement as was the case at the New Mill was not popular. It often took the full weight of the Factory Inspectorate to enforce even basic standards. Secondly, by the late forties foreign competition particularly Asian and Japanese using modern high speed processes intensified. Lastly came within the mills themselves. Those who had continued operating and those re-installing their mothballed machinery were using equipment at least forty years old. Also some mills had an ageing management who either could not cope or would not relinquish control until it was too late. Lakefield, closing in 1953 came into this category.

By the mid fifties the cotton trade was in terminal decline and the Government attempted to reduce over capacity in the Cotton Industry Act of 1959 where firms were compensated for scrapping machinery and employees given some compensation. The largest Worsley casualty was the New Mill which closed in June 1959, noting "only a few of its 27 pairs of mules have worked for some time. Other mills kept going because they had specialist products. Primrose remained in business supplying the yarn for telephone cables, when telephones changed to plastic coating and their market stopped, so did the mill. Granville kept going on synthetic yarn and Cleggs Lane caught the fashion market for denim, they were the last to weave cloth in Worsley. Last to close were the Burgess Ledward dyeing and finishing operation at Wardley in 1985.

COAL

During the 1930s and early in the war years the owners, Manchester Collieries, made arrangements to connect their several pits by underground workings as a means to improve co-ordination. Also underground they introduced the widespread use of mechanical coal cutting, electric lighting at pit bottoms and some main tunnels, electric signalling and haulage drives. They emerged from the war exhausted and run down but with a product in great demand.

On Nationalisation on 1st of January 1947 only three of the "Bridgewater" pits remained as coal producers; Brackley, Mosley Common and Bridgewater, which on Nationalisation became known as Sandhole. Four of the old pits remained in use as pumping stations to protect the pits in use. These discharged at least 11.5 million gallons a year into the underground canal.

Throughout their remaining life under the National Coal Board, Brackley and Sandhole pits continued without major alterations to shafts or surface plant. Up to date methods and machinery were absorbed underground and suitable welfare facilities provided.

The real changes occurred at Mosley Common during the late 1950s and early 1960s when the colliery was virtually reconstructed. The colliery had five shafts, Numbers one and two retained their shafts as originally sunk together with their steam powered winding engines and were used for man riding and supplies. Number five shaft became the main upcast ventilation unit with electric axial flow fans in modern concrete structures. All coal winding was to be concentrated on numbers three and four shafts. These two shafts were deepened to 1,000 yards and widened from 12 feet to 22 feet (6.6m) diameter. A 4,500 hp electric winding engine in a concrete headgear was set over number three shaft with a skip capacity of 12 tons raised every two minutes. The other shaft had a steel legged tower holding an electric drive Kope friction winding arrangement, also using skip winding rather than tubs. The coal faces were completely mechanised and a state of the art coal preparation plant installed. Mosley Common became the show pit of Lancashire.

Unfortunately market forces, the use of oil fuels and geological problems defeated the NCB in Worsley. Sandhole pit closed in September 1962, followed by Brackley in May 1964. Despite all the investment Mosley Common closed in February 1968. The remaining pumping stations were abandoned and filled with the underground canal closed and sealed.

A legacy of the mining industry gave the area a place in the Guinness Book of Records with the Cutacre colliery waste tip noted the largest in Europe. For some eighty years all the Bridgewater pits disposed of their waste here, it being brought in by their own railway. Situated on the boundary between Worsley, Tyldesley and Over Hulton it dominated the landscape. Bear in mind, this was the bit they threw away so how big was the void left underground when the saleable bit is included? Clearance came with a massive reclamation and coal recovery operation from 2008. Some 900,000 tons of saleable PowerStation coal was extracted. The site has become a massive distribution hub as well as the Cutacre Country Park.

BRICKMAKING

Bricks were made on the estate for generations before the industrial activities of the Canal Duke turbocharged demand. They were produced all over the area as close to the point of use as possible. Most of the houses and other buildings in the whole area would have been likely to have had at least their internal wall bricks made on site pre First World War.

Larger quantities such as needed in the estate collieries eventually became sourced from a central point. Initially the site used is in the area now occupied by the Longwall housing estate. Where the clay was dug from is now a water feature. By 1900 operations moved to the west of Newearth Road at Mather Fold with several large buildings being on site. Rail connections both brought the fuel and distributed the product. By the late 1920s a large clay pit is noted.

In 1932 with bricks in great demand for house building Bridgewater Estates expanded capacity by installing a new manufacturing plant to make 6,000 bricks per hour. Still further extensions were made during the 1930s such that by 1936 output reached 10.5 million bricks that year. Outbreak of the Second World War caused several problems at the brickworks, workers enlisting, and other labour troubles caused severe financial losses and in December 1941 it was closed down, never to reopen.

DIVERSIFICATION of INDUSTRY.

CHEMICALS

Just on the boundary of Worsley but with its pollution impacting on the area was the Kearsley Chemical Works of Harrison Blair. Opened in 1832, in his credit he introduced a method of complying with early legislation the Acid & Alkali Act of 1847.

Unfortunately no use could be found for the chromic based process residues known as Vat Waste. This gradually formed a flat topped tip sixty feet high alongside the works. Visible for miles it was known as Stink Bomb Hill. Medical folklore had it that inhaling the sulphurous aroma had curative properties so bronchial and whooping cough cases were taken to inhale the stench. Local watercourses were fed by a constant leaching of chemicals in the form of a bright blue effluent.

The works closed in 1968 and the tip was removed to be buried in motorway embankments, its site is still fenced off alongside the motorway as a hazardous area.

Just on the boundary was the Britannia Chemical Works alongside Worsley Road North. It produced oil, tallow, pitch, asphalt and naphtha. By 1914 Wm Smithie had taken over and operated as Tar distillers. It too was cleared to make way for the motorway.

On the site that now forms the activity centre of the Blackleach Country Park was a chemical works with a varied past. In 1860, John Thorpe, hence Thorpe Street, opened a linoleum, or oilcloth factory. This involved coating sheets of hessian with cork granules and linseed oil. Inevitably the works burned down frequently. Finally in a fire of 1895 the building collapsed into the Blackleach Lodge.

Next on site were the Bumby Brothers who opened a soap factory making scouring powder, donkey stones and a soap that was so waterlogged the block had to be dried by the purchaser.

In the early 1920s Louis Dennis took the site and formed what was known as the Thorpe Chemical Works. Up to a hundred people ran a three shift continuous process. For a long time the chief chemist was Mr Frank Mullineux perhaps better known as a Local Historian. The works concentrated on brine based products to make Barium sulphate for paints, sodium hydroxide or caustic soda and chlorine. The chlorine was reacted to form household bleach sold under the name "Lanry" with industrial bleach liquor by another reaction. The hydrogen produced by the many reactions was vented to air until the Second World War when it was collected in a gas holder for use in barrage balloons.

Another plant dealt with nitrotoluenes, a process responsible for the ever present bitter almond smell from the works. The Magenta dark red dyestuffs plant caused much localised pollution, red snow fell and red cats and dogs were common and residents found their cars stripped to bare metal. The magenta workers had permanently stained hands and were not popular to sit alongside on buses.

The company had a reputation for a high quality product but they were what now would be classified as highly explosive, corrosive, poisonous or carcinogenic. Not a safe mixture considering many tons of the materials were stored on site adjacent to housing. The plant closed in 1976.

GARMENTS

Mention has already been made of the Knitting Factory on Louisa Street and the Shirt Factory on Egerton Road. Initially it first concentrated on the "Union" shirts of thick, striped material made without collars popular with working men. Lighter materials and blouses were added to the range keeping the works open to 1971.

Montague Burton the Leeds based multiple tailor were looking to build a new factory in the area and sought temporary premises to use as a training centre. The vacant Park Mill on Granville Street was taken and adapted to the purpose. It opened as such during 1935 and within three months was producing full garments and after six months it had over 800 people employed in cutting, machining and finishing the garments.

Their new factory, named "Burtonville" occupied a raised site alongside the new East Lancashire road at Wardley. Of single storey covering 86,000 square feet its stand out feature was the Art Deco frontage and tower. It opened in October 1938 and was soon up to expected output capacity, offering employment to three thousand. The trade became such that the Park Mill site remained in production as well.

A falling market led to both sites closing in 1973 with a much reduced workforce transferring to a new single storey building on Worsley Road North. Park Mill became the base for the Burton Group mail order business. Unfortunately the group suffered from changes in fashion and ceased manufacture in Worsley.

FOUNDRIES and ENGINEERING

With the huge increase in population of the overspill estates and the decline of the traditional industries, Worsley Council made efforts to address the situation. Land was made available and inducements made to attract industry. Those industries attracted in the 1950s were ones needing a largely male workforce and ones most likely to increase atmospheric pollution, north Walkden became the centre of a group of foundries.

Eiffel Foundry on Moss Lane Linnyslaw opened in 1950 as a jobbing iron foundry producing high quality large castings for the general engineering and machine tool makers market. Taken over by Elphic Turner it continued in operation until 1974. The premises were taken over by Truman's steel stockholders who already had a depot on Moss Lane, supplying all grades and forms of steel products. The old foundry being repurposed to supply the thinner grades of steel sheet from coils straightened and cut to size.

Taking up some of the land allocated for industry on Sharp Street, Whites-Nunan completed their move from Salford on opening their foundry in 1955. This plant which included pattern making and full machining facilities specialised in brass valve manufacture for Admiralty and process industry use. Taken over by another Salford company, W H Bailey, It is still operational as part of the IMI group. Yet another Salford company, Gresham & Craven started up their railway brake making plant in 1957. This large continuous process foundry was sited to the west of Worsley Road North. It had a short life, closing in 1967. Also in 1957 the engine manufacturer R A Lister opened another continuous production foundry on Southern Street.

By the 1960s the area ceased to attract smokestack industry and developers and employers turned to providing sites for the then booming smaller companies and lighter occupations. Industrial estates were the future and were often built speculatively with single storey warehouse type accommodation. Harcourt Street and Lansdale Street off Worsley Road North were soon matched with units on Sharp Street, Moss Lane Linnyslaw and the Oakhill estate on Worsley Road North completed the ring of industry. A wide range of occupants was represented, gas bottling at Sharp Street, transport, distribution and service providers featured. The Council made plans to concentrate the motor repair trade on Barlow Street, Hill Top two of the old established operators moving there in 1975.

FOOD and DRINK

Walkden Co-op central bakery on Holyoake Road has already been noted but that was an "in house" facility, the ones that follow were suppliers to the wider public.

Possibly the earliest such venture was one that must have had an appeal to a clientele beyond Worsley. The Arden Chocolate Co. opened in the 1920s in a purpose built factory on Farm Lane in the heart of Worsley village. It was often reported as having an excellent product. It was still in production during 1946, its hand-made selection being of superb quality. The building still stands.

Wartime brought a new food industry to Boothstown. Maurice Lee Unger Ltd had secured contracts for canned foods for the armed forces. In Early 1941 they took over the empty Garden Mill and went into production. Post war, still owned by Unger the factory re named as The Garden Canneries Ltd. producing meat based pies, together with a Range of vegetables. A feature was the advertising clock pillar at the side of the East Lancashire Road. Absorbed into the Allied Cannery group it closed in 1962

Worsley Council's drive for employment opportunities brought a large investment to Little Hulton when the makers of Lucozade and Ribena opened their manufacturing and bottling plant at Lester Road off Manchester Road in 1957. At its height it employed over 300, mainly women who turned out up to 160 million bottles and cans per year. Changing product styles and technical problems brought closure in May 1993. The building was taken by NORWEB as a distribution depot for domestic appliances until destroyed by fire in 2018.

THE AEROSPACE and AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

Walkden had a small part in both the aero and space industry. De Havilland had set up a factory at Lostock, Bolton manufacturing propellers. Eventually there became a need to repair these due to the RAF bending them on bad landings. As well as the blade, the hub incorporated a very complex hydraulic / mechanical unit. Eventually a separate repair facility was needed and in 1957 the Lakefield Mill was taken and equipped for the purpose. These blades were of aluminium alloy and the damage could be anything from minor chips, a severe bend or, in wartime, bullet holes. The need for some of this repair was caused by coming into contact with the underside of Memorial Road Railway Bridge. Full propeller assemblies were transported in large frames on Lorries and drivers sometimes got stuck there on the way to Lakefield. Propeller work continued at Lakefield until 1965 when with a reduced demand the facility returned to Lostock.

The Ministry of Supply placed a contract with De Havilland for producing the Red Top Missile. With a need for 100 missiles per month the local Managing Director persuaded both De Havilland and the Ministry a dedicated purpose built factory was needed. Begun in 1956, this was done at great expense on land to the east of Lakefield Mill. The order was subsequently greatly reduced so the new building was never even occupied.

The building was sold and had several occupants the longest lasting being Eaton Yale & Towne who by 1965 had taken the plant for the production of automotive drive axles and gearboxes for heavy goods vehicles. Catastrophe came in October 1979 when an electrical fault began Walkden's biggest ever fire. Thirty-four fire engines using both mains and Blackleach water could not prevent total loss but did avoid the huge propane tanks exploding. The plant was re-built with a prestige front towards the motorway completed in 1981 it was opened by the Duke of Edinburgh. Eaton, as it was known was the area's largest employer of some 650 highly skilled staff making award winning transmissions for export markets. By 2000 the operation had moved to Poland, the buildings demolished and is now housing.

TRANSPORT.

ROADS

JOB CREATION ROADS.

At the height of the great 1920's depression with mass unemployment both Worsley and Little Hulton Urban District Councils laid plans to provide temporary work in the making of road to eliminate notorious bottle necks. Both projects began in 1926.

Little Hulton chose to eliminate the dog leg in the route from Farnworth to Tyldesley. Traffic had to leave Cleggs Lane, turn right onto Manchester Road West, then left onto Peel Lane to Mort Lane. The new line formed true cross roads with Cleggs Lane, and Manchester Roads East and West. Named Armitage Avenue, after the occupant of the adjacent Peel Hall, it was opened in February 1928 by Mrs Armitage.

Worsley opted to deal with the acute bend and narrow roadway of Leigh Road between Booths Hall Road and Vicars Hall Lane in Boothstown. They effectively laid out a bow string across the bend between those roads. Here, the name commemorated a local Councillor – and village butcher, Mr J Simpson who did the honours opening it in December 1928.

Several years later, Worsley Council again created employment in removing a hazard on the stretch of road forming Worsley Brow. Even today, the road climbs quite steeply from the Court House to Old Hall Lane with the section nearest Old Hall Lane in a deep cutting. It is possible this cutting was made or deepened so as to reduce the gradient when the road was made into Turnpike in 1804. This left the stone block retaining wall supporting Little Ladyhill house and essentially a quarry face on the other side with no provision for a footpath. No wonder this stretch of road was known as "The Rocks". During 1936 these rocks were cut away so as to both widen the carriageway and provide a footpath.

THE NEW ROAD

Sorry, but this is the name the East Lancashire Road (A580) through Worsley was known as for a couple of generations. This too was intended as a job creation project as it was first mooted in a County Council paper "New Roads Plan" published in December 1922. Prior to this road the route between Liverpool and Manchester was the A57 through Eccles, Irlam and Warrington. Extensive preparation in the form of land purchase meant construction did not start until early 1929 on what was the first Inter City Highway in the country. .

The section through Worsley took 85 acres of land from the Bridgewater Estate Company. It also involved the demolition of the group of thatched cottages on Old Clough Lane, known as Daub Hole. At the junction with Walkden Road it also had to cross the Worsley to Tyldesley railway. At the same spot it also crossed the Underground Canal some hundred feet below.

It was laid out to have three lanes for motor traffic, not three lanes for each direction but one lane for each direction with the middle lane known as the suicide strip used by either. On each side were a separate cycle path divided from a footpath by a privet hedge. The three carriageways were formed of cast in situ concrete slabs each 30 yards long with expansion joints between each slab and adjacent lane. All of these joints gradually eroded and by the 1960s it was like driving across corrugated iron. Completion came in early 1934 with a ceremonial opening by King George V on the 20th of June who was driven along it at 40 mph from Manchester to Liverpool. 1,500 schoolchildren lined the route through Worsley.

By the mid 1960s its deteriorating surface, suicide strip and the increase in traffic volume brought the need to convert to dual carriageway, laid in tarmac. Fortunately the wide land take allowed this to be easily accommodated using the cycle track area. Originally laid out with roundabouts at all major junctions such as Walkden Road they were replaced by traffic light control.

RAILWAYS DECLINE

MAINLINE RAIL

Most of the local rail closures pre-dated the Beeching Report and were caused by the sort of economic factors the report was commissioned to deal with.

First casualty was the Roe Green to Bolton Great Moor Street line. The shock announcement came in October 1952 that the Plodder Lane, Little Hulton and Walkden stations may be closed because the line was running at a loss. It also noted that the line had never been open to passenger trains on Sundays. Bolton Council decided not to protest against the proposal but a local Councillor noted that Nationalisation was supposed to be in the public interest, this closure is due to lack of initiative by British Railways. Perhaps heed was taken because in August 1953 British Rail said they were to improve the service on the line to see if it can be made to pay.

Clearly it did not pay because the last passenger train on the line left Great Moor Street Station on the 27th of March 1954 with a parting shot of detonators placed specially on the line, a feature replicated at Walkden. Two years later Worsley Council suggested to British Rail the restoration of passenger service on the line using diesel multiple units a request never actioned. Perhaps coincidental, in November 1956 all the stations were demolished, despite, it was noted, the platforms at Walkden only being rebuilt six months before the station closed! By 1958 the line was also closed to goods traffic.

Another attempt was made by Farnworth and Worsley Trades Council to the Minister of Transport to re-open the line in 1961. British Railways resolved the situation by lifting the entire track in 1961.

Change also came to the Pendlebury to Wigan line, the High Level. The demand for the super express business man's service was no longer there, the main reason for the fast line tracks. These went out of use in 1956 and were lifted soon after. Not only were the tracks removed but also the water troughs for engines to take on water at speed. These were situated between Old Clough Lane and Hope Fold with a large storage tank adjacent to the Old Clough Lane Bridge.

Freight was still dealt with at Walkden goods yard but declining, a victim of increased road use. The yard, off Mullineux Street finally closed in January 1964. It became an industrial estate before taking for housing in 2018.

An ominous sign concerning the line through Worsley and Ellenbrook came in late 1960 when British Railways requested the repeal of an Act of Parliament arranged a hundred years ago by the Earl of Ellesmere to prevent Worsley station from closure. BR said this did not necessarily mean they intend to close it. They did announce that a diesel operated service was to begin in January 1961 and that Ellenbrook station was to close then. The last train pulled out of Ellenbrook at 10.37 on New Year's Eve although the station formally closed on the 2nd of January 1961. A fire at the wooden station building in February caused by vandalism sealed its fate.

Rail Service to End was the local headline in February 1969 noting the line through Monton, Worsley and Tyldesley was to close. The Ministry of Transport said the closure would give a saving of £200k a year in the Social Services grant and a further £250k which would have to be spent on a railway bridge over the proposed motorway. Closure came on the 5th of May 1969. An interesting feature of this line is that Worsley station was the only one brick built from the start, all the others being timber.

MINERAL RAILWAYS

Contraction of the local mining industry led to the closure of sections of the mineral lines that had served the mines. One of the first casualties was the line from Ashtons Field to Brackley which closed in 1964. Cutacre tip served by this line was being closed so the entire western section of the network closed in the late 60s. Further east, the line from Ashtons Field to Worsley ceased to serve Sandhole in 1962 but was kept open for a short time to deliver coal to the canal at Worsley. The bridge across Worsley Road, near Drywood was demolished in August 1970. The whole track was lifted including that across the causeway at Blackleach.

This left only the line between Boothstown through Mosley Common, Walkden centre and Ashtons Field. Coal went from Mosley Common to both Boothstown canal loading chute and also a considerable amount to Ashtons Field where a blending plant had been established to mix grades of coal to customer's needs. Heavy trains with small locomotives working to their limit did emit huge amounts of smoke and steam causing reduced visibility on roads and damage to washing at the surrounding housing. Complaints were such that Worsley Council stationed observers with test comparison cards to monitor the emissions. Once the line closed in 1972 chance was taken to convert part of the track bed beneath Manchester Road into an underpass to serve the new Civic Centre and adjoining supermarket.

MOTORWAYS.

The concept of a fast direct road route between Lancashire and Yorkshire had been under consideration for many years and was included in the 1949 "Road plan for Lancashire." The first phase came in 1956 when the line of the Stretford Eccles By-pass bridging the Ship Canal thus avoiding the swing bridge and extending to the East Lancashire Road was confirmed.

Worsley village began having its heart ripped out in the preliminary operations. March 1959 saw the demolition of the New Hall Gatehouse of 1903, the large stone Ellesmere Coat of Arms was retained for inclusion in later works. All this was needed to clear a space for the roundabout that was to be the temporary terminus.

Works were completed in October 1960 and an air of festivity came on Sunday the 23rd. The contractors realising not everyone had cars allowed an open day when pedestrians could walk the full route including over the new high level Ship Canal Bridge that had claimed the lives of five men and injured twelve more. In the event over 50,000 people turned out to the public viewing.

On Friday the 28th, at 6.59am a Lancashire County workman removed the red and white pole across the carriageway at Worsley roundabout and threw it into the bushes, thus allowing the first vehicle onto the motorway. We do know how to do things in style!

With the opening of what was then classified as the M63, plans were being made for implementing the idea of continuing to Yorkshire. Like Topsy it just grew.

During 1961 the scheme for extending from Worsley towards Yorkshire was developed by the Ministry of Transport. By 1963 it was being incorporated into plans by Lancashire County Council to provide motorway connection from Preston to Manchester. Both schemes were confirmed in October 1966 involving the design of the Worsley Braided interchange, our Spaghetti Junction.

The first major operation causing disruption was the need to re-align the East Lancashire Road by both lowering it 50 feet, (18m) and converting it to dual carriageway. The height reduction was possible as the original alignment was on embankments to clear the old Mineral Railway that had recently closed. Work began in March 1966 and was completed in December 1967.

Next came extending the motorway from Worsley Court House roundabout to the East Lancashire Road bridges just constructed. Work began in October 1968, involving the additional roundabout at the bottom of Worsley Brow and Leigh Road, the demolition of St Marks School and a bridge over Walkden Road. The Ellesmere Coat of Arms retained from the New Hall Gatehouse is positioned in the south face of this bridge. The motorway also took a swathe of woodland and removed one the Ellesmere Estate gatekeepers Lodge on Greenleach Lane, now the site of the bridge. This component of the works completed in October 1970.

Finally, work commenced on the braided interchange on the land at Wardley in January 1969. This was the only still open area large enough thanks to being largely peat moss. The Interchange connects two motorways, M61 and M62, and Trunk and Main Roads A580, A666, A572 and A575. A notable feature is where routes are adjacent to each other there are seventeen traffic lanes.

Superlatives come regularly in this section of the works stretching only two miles north to south. Here 1.25 million cubic metres of peat were removed, 4.5 million cubic metres of other material moved, twenty-six bridges constructed and the equivalent of twelve miles of three lane dual Carriageway. The large and complex operation was completed in December 1970.

All this work Did get a formal opening on the 17th of December 1970 with dignitaries from Lancashire County Council and the Department of the Environment officiating.

LOCAL DYNAMICS.

BECOMING SALFORD.

Even pre war there had been informal discussions between neighbouring Councils about merging. Post War the principle continued to be debated. In 1956 Eccles directed an "Amalgamation Feeler" to Worsley, Swinton and Irlam. It would appear Worsley had other ideas as later that year the Clerk to the Council was tasked with determining the advantages of becoming a County Borough. After receiving further overtures, by 1959 Worsley Council confirmed their decision to remain a separate Authority and seek Borough status. They remained aloof in 1962, dismissing an invitation to merger talks with Salford, Swinton, Eccles and Irlam. Daylight dawned on them in October that year, confessing they had "been stupid" not to have taken part in talks with the other Authorities to discuss their attitude to the Local Government Commission.

Faced with the inevitable, in 1971 Worsley Council agreed in principle to become part of the proposed Salford Metropolitan District. This was formalised in the Local Government Act of October 1972. It came into effect on the 1st of April 1974. Worsley was absorbed into the Greater Manchester Metropolitan County under the Metropolitan District of Salford. This new body incorporated the old Salford City, the Boroughs of Eccles as well as Swinton and Pendlebury and the Urban Districts of Irlam and Worsley. There were subsequent administration changes particularly the abolition of the Greater Manchester Council in 1986.

From the vesting date April 1974 all our local emergency services, fire, police, ambulance, came from Greater Manchester not Lancashire, similarly education, health and other local services were now provided by the City of Salford. A new City Council had to be formed with representatives from new electoral wards covering the constituent parts. Likewise staff of the old authorities had to be absorbed into the new, centralised at what had been Swinton and Pendlebury Town Hall, chosen as it had space to erect offices to hold the influx. All this meant the Worsley Town Hall closing for business, being taken over by a regional Education Board. Alas, it was demolished in 2000 the Royal Lancastrian Pilkington Tile lined corridors reduced to dust; none were allowed to be saved.

PEEL HOLDINGS

Bridgewater Estates Ltd was purchased in 1984 by Peel Holdings Group. They took over the Estate Office on Worsley Road for the management of their Worsley holdings. Over the ensuing decades large tracts of Worsley have been sold off for housing development, frequently being the subject of Local Enquiries after objection by resident bodies.

Possibly the most contentious and protracted development plan of Peel concerned the sites of both Old, and New Worsley Halls.

In 1988 they produced plans for developing the Hall's grounds as a golf course using the old hall and the Old Hall Farm buildings as a hotel and conference centre. The plans were rejected; an amended one approved but never went ahead.

The Old Hall had seen several recent uses, Jacobean Banquets among them with another tenant closing in 1995. At this point, Peel in a joint venture with the Whitbread Group proposed a major development. The Old Hall was to be restored and become a restaurant. As a separate venture, Old Hall Farm was to be redeveloped as a leisure facility together with a new large hotel attached. The Hall parkland was to be turned into a golf course. Work began in 1997 which included a new road giving access from Walkden Road. Branded under the "Marriot" name it opened in October 1998, the golf course opening in early 1999.

During 2001 Peel tabled plans for a massive development incorporating an all weather racecourse, equestrian centre, luxury hotel, golf course car parking and other facilities. This was opposed locally and rejected by Salford Council. A modified proposal came in 2004. Plans and opposition followed by enquiries continued until in January 2010. Peel's plans for a racecourse, hotel and golf course were finally laid to rest by them being refused by the Government Communities Minister on the basis that harm caused by the development outweighed any benefits.

Abandoning the idea of a racecourse, Peel went ahead with a modified plan for a hotel to sit on the footprint of the New Hall together with a championship golf course straddling the canal. Design of the hotel was put to tender with several Architects competing to be selected, the brief being to provide a viable form of development to complement the restoration of the terraced gardens. The winner was announced in May 2012.

As part of the preliminary stage of the application a full archaeological excavation was made of the remains of the New Hall during the summer of 2012. Undertaken by the University of Salford and partly run using community involvement the entire cellar structure was revealed including the heating system and the lift mechanism. All findings were carefully recorded before the site was backfilled. The plan was not continued with.

Finally the New Hall site and parkland was offered to the Royal Horticultural Society to develop as one of their gardens. With the partnership of Peel, RHS and Salford Council planning permission was obtained in 2017.

Soon work started on site clearance, many hundreds of trees that had formed the Scout campsite were felled and by autumn 2018 preliminary excavations and the de-silting of the lake were underway. By winter the old kitchen garden had its enclosing walls restored and work began on the centrepiece building. During 2019 planting and the laying out of pathways were the most visible activity but work commenced on the restoration of the extensive potting sheds to turn them into a history interpretation centre.

Many large charitable donations provided many of the features incorporated into the scheme. Opening was scheduled for May 2020 but due to the Covid restrictions in place it had to be delayed until May 2021.

PART EIGHT

Formal Life in a Company Town

“Company Town” brings to mind the old gold mining or cattle baron towns of the Wild West, places where the big bad boss controlled everything. For a hundred years and slightly beyond, the Bridgewater Trustees were slightly more paternal but still closely controlled virtually every facet of local life. They were the major employer with many employees in tied housing and were frequently seen to enforce what they perceived as conditions of tenure, often retrospectively. As landowners of virtually all the area the portions they leased had their restrictions put on it. All the self help societies such as the Nonconformist chapels and the Co-op were dependent on the approval of the Trust for land which was granted on their terms. Perhaps the most defining action of the Trust to have their domain classed as a Company Town was their absolute opposition to any form of local democracy. So determined were they to maintain utter control it was not until government legislation forced them to concede a democratically elected Council.

EDUCATION.

Provision of education in Worsley needs to be viewed with national legislation in mind. Like most of the country income from child labour was a vital part of the family economy putting education as a secondary consideration. We were fortunate in Worsley by having several schools pre legislation run by Benefactors, Nonconformist Churches or the C of E ones founded by Earl Ellesmere.

By the late 1860s there was a national movement to educate the population as being essential in an industrial society. The first Education Act of 1870 permitted voluntary bodies to continue as before but established School Boards funded by the rates to arrange schools where no provision was available. Attendance was not yet compulsory. This had to wait for an Act in 1880 which mandated attendance for children aged five to ten years old. As charges were made by all providers there was widespread evasion until the Act of 1891 made education free for users and a charge to the rates. Further legislation in 1893 raised the leaving age to eleven and up to twelve in 1899. A further jump to fourteen came in 1918 and then to 15 in the 1944 Act and then to 16 in 1973.

Over the first half of the 20th century the funding of many of the church based schools gradually moved to becoming more dependent on state aid under various systems. This allowed the continued use of sometimes elderly inconvenient buildings particularly with the anticipated post war increase to the roll. Completely new structures became imperative with the church authorities remaining as managers in what was a council owned building.

PHILANTHROPY

There were at least two attempts to provide a basic education to 18th century Worsley children. First, a Thomas Collier a leading member of the “Town” and church left property in 1727 from which the rent income was to endow a school. The intention was that the expected £5 yearly would provide a school for twenty poor boys in Worsley. The 1st Duke of Bridgewater gave land at Roe Green on which to build a school and schoolhouse. By the time a dedicated school was opened in 1732 the endowment was not sufficient so it was agreed the shortfall could be made up from the Poor Rate. By 1770 the three storey building adjoining that had been the Workhouse was given over to use as a school funded by charity and the Poor Rate. There were changes in later years but the original buildings of ex-workhouse, school and schoolhouse still stand alongside the Roe Green cricket club.

A secular Sunday school had been run for years under the patronage of one of the Stewards of the Duke with classes meeting in the workshop building on whose site Walkden Monument was eventually to be built. On the death of the schoolmaster in 1804 the school was taken under the wing of the newly formed Walkden Wesleyan Methodist society, rooms in the Bulls Head Inn being used until their premises were built. A schoolroom wing between the chapel and the New Inn had been added by 1840.

CHURCH OF ENGLAND

Educational provisions made by Lord Francis Egerton, 1st Earl Ellesmere throughout the district are fully outlined in Part Three. With both the edict from the Earl and legislation of 1842 prohibiting the employment of girls and boys under ten working underground those displaced would attend the schools. Girls had the option of attending the Domestic Service School attached to the Walkden junior school, Hodge Road.

With population growth and the introduction of the various Education Acts, regular extensions had to be made at each of these venerable buildings. One of the last was a new wing to the Walkden Junior School, two storey and of stone to match the original.

Increasing need for capacity brought the founding of new schools paid for from the purse of the by now third Earl of Ellesmere and the industrialist Mr. Harrison Blair. St John the Baptist added an infant school in 1871 on Bridgewater Street Little Hulton known as Blair School. This was followed in 1878 by the Lady Ellesmere Junior School on Algernon Road. Both needed several extensions during their life as day schools. Blair school was absorbed into the Bridgewater County School on Bridgewater Street. Closure of the Ellesmere School came in the 1980s with the building becoming a Community Centre.

1879 saw the mission church at Edgefold refurbished and an adjacent day school opened. This had ceased to operate when the buildings were demolished in 1937 to make way for the dual purpose mission hall.

Ellenbrook school adjacent to St Mary's church continued in use until the 1950s.

Boothstown had educational provision in a dual purpose building also relating to St Mary's but known as St Andrews mission. In response to the 1870 Act a new, stone building was erected on Vicars Hall Lane with the Earl of Ellesmere and Earl Mulgrave Vicar of Worsley as patrons. It opened in 1874 and had some expansion by 1881 to cater for ages four to fourteen. Having outgrown these premises due to the extensive housing development it closed in 1975 to become a community center. The school transferred to a new site off Booths Hall Way in 1975.

At some date mid 19th century the school at Roe Green had come under the control of St. Mark's church. A new infant's school, also used as a Sunday School by the church was built in 1892 adjacent to the original school which became private houses. Further expansion came in 1928 with the addition of a dual purpose school hall also used as a Parish Hall for the Parishioners of Roe Green.

Construction of the motorway necessitated the demolition of the St. Marks infant and junior schools near the Delph in 1970. Chance was taken to amalgamate those two as well as the Roe Green School on the new site on Aviary Road. Roe Green school became a community centre run by Salford Council.

In Little Hulton, the Church of England had Peel School on Manchester Road next to Peel Lane which opened in 1819. The two storey building was in the style of terraced houses. It was condemned on all counts in 1884 and a replacement built round it before demolition. The new build itself required several extensions and upgrading of its sanitary arrangements. It closed in the 1970s transferring to a site on Stocksfield Drive.

NONCONFORMISTS

Passing of the 1870 Education Act brought a flurry of school building and extensions by the nonconformist churches and others.

At Walkden Moor Wesleyan Methodists, opening their new church on the north side of Manchester Road, allowed demolition of the old chapel. The old school building of 1840 was retained and a new extension to the school built which opened in May 1873. A qualified teacher was appointed with an assistant who was also the sewing mistress. It was reported as an admirable building warmed by hot air, the infant's school by stoves. It now has over 200 scholars.

By 1900 these buildings were seriously inadequate with the Board of Education pressing for renewal. The church trustees approved the plans for a new building estimated to cost £4,000 in June 1902. It finally opened in December 1906. The red brick and terracotta faced building included a spacious hall, many classrooms and cloakroom accommodation.

At Walkden Primitive Methodists, during 1852 land had been obtained on the south side of Manchester Road near Hilton Lane. The site had a plain brick chapel in use by September that year together with a Sunday school. Increases in the roll meant the school being extended in 1864.

With the responsibility of providing secular education, extra classrooms were added in 1887. Alas this extension was too small and the Department of Education demanded an immediate extension. It was to be used for the infants of which it held 100. New lavatories were put in compliance with the inspectors report. The work was completed in 1894. This work gave a double door entrance fronting Manchester Road and the un-named street alongside, with a linking block to the church.

With the amalgamation of the two Methodist churches under the name St Andrew`s, their respective day schools, that alongside Ellesmere Avenue became St Andrew`s East with the other – ex Primitive Methodist being St Andrews West. In 1980 both schools concentrated on the East site until a new St Andrews junior school was built off Prescott Street. The school has retained its name after the parent church changed name to Walkden Methodist.

Having had a dual purpose chapel and school building since 1853, Boothstown Wesleyans took note of the Education Acts. A complete redesign of the site was made in 1872 with a new church as a separate unit. The old chapel was demolished and re-built as schoolrooms with an entrance porch alongside Chaddock Lane. This soon proved inadequate as a larger separate day school was erected in 1884. The older one housed infants and the new for a junior department; the two soon had a connecting set of rooms.

With the increasing population of Boothstown in the 1960s additional capacity came with the adaptation of an ex-coach garage into classrooms in 1970. A complete new building on adjacent land came in January 1972.

ROMAN CATHOLIC

People from St Gregory`s in Farnworth assisted in establishing a base for a school on Bridgewater Street Little Hulton. By 1876 they were running a night school in a cottage on the street attracting sixty to seventy scholars. The foundation stone for a permanent building was laid in September 1877. Claimed to be a plain gothic building, it opened in 1878 with 24 children. By 1892 the building was suffering severe structural subsidence and had to be rebuilt to also expand capacity.

NON ALIGNED

Two further schools opened on the basis of funding by the County School Board and known as either British or National Schools. First was one at Worsley Road Methodist, Hill Top, where a day school had started but not successful. Soon after 1870 Mr. John Kellett took over and founded the school in the church premises that became affectionately known as “Kelletts School” By 1910 it was taken over by the Lancashire CC and closed in 1927 when the headmaster, Harold Kellett, staff and pupils moved to the new Hulton East County School with access from Whittle Street, Worsley Road North. Post the 1974 inclusion in Salford it became known as North Walkden Primary School.

The other, begun in the early 1870s was on Cawdor Street, off Manchester Road, Whittlebrook. Unaligned with any other body but oddly known as St. Michaels, it seems to have been run on a hand to mouth basis. Disaster struck in December 1883 when it was blown down in a gale. Several fund raising concerts were held throughout the district clearly with success. Presumably with a new, brick building and staff the HM inspectors report on the Whittlebrook mixed school rated it Creditable, as it was a difficult school to work. It closed at some point in the early 20th Century, the premises being taken by Wm. Simpson, mineral water manufacturers.

Now, whilst still charging fees of one or two pence per week, taking government funds meant oversight by H.M. Inspectors who reported their findings in the press. The effects of a Victorian Inspectors report had far more serious consequences than the modern OFSTED visits. How your school performed at the inspection set the scale of the next years grant impinging on the teacher's salary.

One striking report of 1881 regarding the Boothstown C of E School is easy to misconstrue. It said "the school is in excellent order, attainments much improved since last year. Work on paper very good but a want of intelligence in reading is shown. The infants are too thick to admit good teaching."

No, the kids were not cretins; the room was far too small for the numbers attending!

This overcrowding was the results of school attendance becoming compulsory in 1880 resulting in yet more new building or extensions. Both Walkden and Worsley church schools were extended, Walkden to take a further 200, the infants school grew by a further 150 and with the old portion renovated it now held 500. Peel school Little Hulton was condemned, the replacement opened in December 1884 was to hold 300 on each floor. Wharton Presbyterian added two classrooms to their school in 1890.

Introduction of "free" education, as a total charge to the rates in 1891 would have swollen the attendance slightly as there was much truancy often parent condoned as the child's wage earned was vital for the household. The press noted that "All the schools in the Worsley Township area would be open for children aged 3 to 15 years, entirely free of charge. The school managers earnestly appeal to parents for scholars as each attendance increases the government grant. Some months later it related that since the adoption of the Free Education Act business at the Worsley Penny Bank has doubled, at Walkden and Boothstown only slight increase made.

ECONOMIC REALITY

Children attending school could and often did have an effect on both industrial and domestic economy. Employers in small profit margin industries such as textiles relied on cheap labour of children. Equally so households were often dependent on their child's earnings. A good old British compromise was reached with the 1878 Half Time Act whereby children under thirteen could work part time. It was laid down that either alternate days or half of every day need be spent at school. There was an educational qualification, to go to work a child between the ages ten to thirteen had to have a certain number of school attendances in the previous years and also to have a certificate of education to show attainment gained by a Labour Exam held to prove competence. This was a two edged weapon, it encouraged both attendance and diligence at school to everyone's benefit.

Truancy could still occur with children working illicitly, to counter this School Attendance Officers were appointed with power to investigate, Worsley engaged their first in 1895.

TECHNICAL & DAY CONTINUATION

The Bridgewater Trustees and the Earl made provision for the further education of their workforce in both academic and practical, technical subjects. The day school premises were used in the evenings as well. A Christmas Dinner provided by the Earl and Countess in 1858 to scholars attending the night schools designed for the younger portion of the colliery workforce was reported. Of the seven schools, Walkden has 163 scholars, Ellenbrook 93, Roe Green 36, and Streetgate – Little Hulton 15, with the others out of our area. The schools open three nights a week for two hours teaching under a scientific lecturer. Edgefold was included by 1868, recording 63 girls and 65 boys. It took another three decades before the same opportunities could be extended to the general population.

Mr. George Burgess, the Mill owner, took particular interest in education, being one of the agitators to persuade Lancashire County Council to fund vocational evening classes for working people and particularly females. These finally started in 1891 with County Council grants.

At the works party of 1892 Mr Burgess appealed to his young women employees to take advantage of these evening classes giving training in careers other than textiles. A bold and un-conventional action towards his women mill workers.

That year, Lancashire CC grant apportioned £120 to Walkden, with £40 each to both Worsley and Boothstown. The Council were very anxious that the education of women should be pushed forward and added an extra £70 for this purpose. Walkden Co-op also became actively involved with it being granted the £70 to help defray the cost of the classes they are holding in cookery, dressmaking, hygiene and nursing. Boothstown spent their £40 on classes for dressmaking and cookery.

Walkden continued with a mining theme, Mr Jesse Wallwork was granted £50 for apparatus for the two classes; the senior for intending managers had 35 enrolled with the junior class for craftsmen attracted 25 candidates. By the 1895 session, classes held at St Pauls, had extended to shorthand, technical drawing, building construction and machine building, attendance had reportedly increased considerably. 55 students registered for the dressmaking class at the Co-op Hall

All of these were subject to a fee per class taken, a burden somewhat relieved in 1900 by a Board of Education edict that any student be entitled to one free subject. Also in 1900 came the start of the endeavour, again promoted by Mr Burgess, to have a technical school in Worsley rather than the several church halls. Our Council started the move in 1905 by obtaining land on Walkden Road and passing plans for such a building. Eventually, the foundation stone was laid on August 9th 1910 by the Council Chairman. Opening of the Technical School came in September 1911 with the Chairman of the County Higher Education Committee doing the honours.

It was re-named in 1919 reflecting the change in purpose to that of a College of Further Education. Here, young workers on day release from their employer. This was the first one in the Country!! It was acknowledged as arising from the efforts of the firm Burgess Ledward who were concerned about the further education of their young workers. After the opening the firm offered to equip a gymnasium, a basement room was converted. A newspaper article of 1924 included a photograph captioned "Mill girls in the Gym".

It also catered for evening classes in many technical subjects pertinent to a coal and cotton district. Additions were made in the 1920s and in 1956 came a considerable development. It took a large part of Parr Fold Park to house class rooms, engineering laboratories and machine shops, a combined unit with a cafe on the ground floor and a hall regularly used for exams above. Worsley Technical College as it had become had a first class reputation for the quality of students it produced.

With the demise of the local heavy industries and the need to cater for their trainees a change of direction was taken. It evolved into offering social and personal care such as hair and cosmetics training along with arts based subjects in fact becoming a sixth form college. Catering featured large with the refectory being run as a training venue together with the upper hall transformed into a formal licensed restaurant offering quality dining to the public.

With the demolition of the old Town Hall adjacent to the college they expanded onto the site with computer and media related training suites. 2010 saw the demolition of most of the 1950s classrooms, engineering workshops and large gym with the land sold for housing. This left just the original building and the new build, under the umbrella of Salford University.

STATE SCHOOLS

Increasing the leaving age to fourteen left a severe strain on capacity and the need for separate accommodation for the older pupils became critical. Lancashire Education Committee took land on the still developing Worsley Council housing estate of Birch Road and erected a double symmetrical school with the east for girls and west as a boys department. Each "half" had classrooms set round a quadrangle, with an assembly hall flanked by arts and science labs with a two storey unit completing the square, metal and woodwork for boys and domestic science for girls upstairs. First formally called Worsley Senior School, later Worsley County Secondary School, it was universally referred to as "Birch Road".

Wartime brought a new development to the site with the addition of the Worsley Central Kitchen. This opened in 1944 to comply with a Government directive for the local education authority to provide nutritious school dinners. It was situated alongside Hawthorn Avenue in prefab type buildings. From here a fleet of Lancashire Education Committee vans distributed the dinners and puddings in

insulated containers to each school. It closed in the late 1960s as by then the newer schools had their own kitchens.

By 1955 the school was faced with severe overcrowding in both divisions alleviated by adding extra classrooms along the north range. Until these were operational classes were held in local church buildings with pupils and teacher making the four times a day AM and PM journey on foot. The boys were at Trinity Methodists on Manchester Road so hiked up and down Cow Lane. The girls had an easier walk to Memorial Road Methodists.

The school became co-ed in 1968 with girls and boys departments amalgamated under one head so as to form Walkden County Secondary School. In line with national legislation it re-organized into an 11 to 16 Comprehensive school in 1972. Extensive additions were opened in 1980, built on part of the playing field. The ground floor holding the heavy wood, metal and pottery facilities with the upper floor for arts related subjects, a science block utilized the old central kitchen site. A large sports hall completed the development.

The school transferred site in 2010 to land off Old Clough Lane and the East Lancashire Road.

POST WAR DEVELOPMENTS

Keeping pace with the rapid housing development in Worsley and the post war baby boom necessitated increased Local Authority school provision for all ages and the encouragement for the older church based establishments to relocate as state funded schools of which details have been given above.

JUNIOR SCHOOLS.

To service the needs of the rapidly growing overspill estates, Little Hulton got the first post war completely new schools. 1954 saw the opening of Bridgewater County primary school on Bridgewater Street. Designed for 280 pupils, it already had 320 on the roll when it opened in May.

The overspill brought a large influx of Roman Catholics with two primary and junior schools being needed. They opened a companion school to their St Edmunds site with the new one also on Bridgewater Street. Laying the foundation stone in October 1954 it was announced it was to be named St Raphael's. This school merged with St. Edmunds with the development of the St Edmunds site on Queen Street / Bridgewater Street. By 1958 their other junior school, St Josephs on Old Lane was in use.

In Little Hulton, as well as the new or upgraded church schools the Local Authority, either Lancashire or Salford provided at least three primary / junior schools. These are Peel Hall Primary on Greencourt Drive, Hilton Lane Primary, actually on Madams Wood Road and Wharton Primary on Rothwell Lane.

Mesne Lea, Henniker Street was the first post war Council school in Worsley opening in 1956. By the mid 1970s overcrowding brought the introduction of temporary classrooms. They were so temporary as to still be in use when the original buildings closed in 2017 when the school transferred to the adjacent site previously occupied by Haysbrook School. The new building, maintaining the Mesne Lea name is of two storeys.

The Haysbrook School was specifically for special needs pupils, back then unkindly described as Educationally Sub Normal or ESN! It also opened in 1956 with only a public footpath separating the two sites. Attendees were in the age range five to eighteen. Closure came in 1991, with demolition allowing the new Mesne Lea School to be built.

Named after the Engineer, James Brindley, the infant and junior school on Parr Fold Avenue opened in 1975. The Roman Catholic community served their Walkden flock with an infant and junior school alongside Holly Avenue which opened in 1978. The Ellenbrook Community School on Longwall Avenue completed the primary and junior school provision in Worsley to date.

Little Hulton had to deal with the needs of the overspill population decanted from Salford to estates to north and south of Manchester Road. As well as the new or upgraded church schools the Local Authority, either Lancashire or Salford provided at least three primary / junior schools. These are

Peel Hall Primary on Greencourt Drive, Hilton Lane Primary, actually on Madams Wood Road and Wharton Primary on Rothwell Lane.

SECONDARY SCHOOLS

Worsley Wardley Grammar School off Ash Drive Wardley opened in September 1957 with less than a hundred on the roll. Within a decade it had 900 pupils. It became a five form Comprehensive for 11 to 16 year olds in 1972. In 1988 merger came with Pendleton High School, to become Swinton High School. After some time as Wardley Campus of Salford College the buildings were demolished to make way for a new Roman Catholic school St Ambrose Barlow.

Re-named several times but first as Hulton County Secondary School, built on Longshaw Drive, it opened in 1959. Eventually becoming Hulton High School and then Little Hulton High School it merged with Joseph Eastham School to form Harrop Fold. Joseph Eastham School, universally known as "Joey's" opened in 1960 on a site off Hilton Lane. Initially a very successful school it expanded its facilities into technology. A deteriorating building and a falling roll led to amalgamation with Hulton County in 2001. Part was used for the junior age until final demolition in 2009. All were transferred to Harrop Fold in 2001.

This new development had mixed fortunes; by 2003 government inspectors named it the worst school in the country. It improved so as to be judged satisfactory by 2010. By 2018 it had reverted to being rated inadequate. Conversion to Academy status has reversed its fortunes.

A Roman Catholic secondary school was needed and became operational in 1962 on Parsonage Drive. A school with good academic and social reports, for some reason Salford wanted it closed in 2004 but the decision was overturned by public opposition. It finally closed again under protest to merge with other Catholic secondary schools on the site of the former Wardley Grammar School, to be known as St. Andrew Barlow, both events happening in 2014.

INDEPENDENT

There is one independent fee paying school in Worsley taking all ages from five to eighteen. Bridgewater School was established in 1950 as a boy's school. It transferred to Drywood Hall some years later. It became co-educational in the 1960s. Many extensions of facilities have been made whilst retaining the frontage of the Hall.

SOCIAL SERVICES

MEDICAL HERBALISTS

In the days when medically qualified doctors were few and out of the financial means of most of the population who relied on folklore regarding the curative properties of plants. Most communities had a specialist and Worsley had one of the most notable families of medical botanists. Their knowledge grew from protracted study of plants and botanical societies flourished in south Lancashire in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Prime of these was the Evans family of Boothstown who were involved with a society there by 1790.

Patriarch of the family, William, born in 1760 he became involved with a Manchester Botanical Society and began the family tradition of medical botany and was said to be particularly successful in treating Typhus Fever. His success rate was said to be better than most doctors. He had won the privilege of being allowed to roam at will across the Bridgewater Trust lands including Chat Moss to collect botanical samples.

From an early age John his son accompanied William to meetings and on field trips and by the time his father died when he was twenty-five, he abandoned handloom weaving, becoming a full time medical herbalist. He gradually acquired over three hundred plants locally and Derbyshire and the Lake District to grow in the garden of his thatched cottage alongside the Greyhound Inn. His fame spread throughout the Manchester area bringing people to his cottage door for cures. He was most successful on external injuries but did treat internal illness also,

Local medical practitioners at first prevented him visiting patients in their own homes but realising his worth and that he did refer serious cases to them they relented. In later years doctors got him to make up preparations for their patients, he was also on call at the Worsley Workhouse. His "practice" was such that on Sundays queues formed at his door by six o'clock in the morning. His charges were modest, usually fourpence.

Always known locally as "Doctor" Evans he never had any formal qualifications but Lady Ellesmere did arrange for him to attend Manchester Infirmary to observe treatments there. He died aged seventy in 1874; hundreds of people came to pay their respects to his body on show in his coffin. He was to be buried at Worsley Church and what started as a following of about eighty eventually became a procession of one thousand and fifty mourners. Immediately after the interment several hundred people agreed to have a permanent monument to him. It was duly erected outside the west door of the church.

Medical herbalism was well founded throughout south Lancashire, in 1878 the Wigan Homeopathic Dispensary dealt with over two thousand clients per quarter year. As late as the 1950s there were still medical herbalists operating locally in Walkden and Farnworth. The many local Temperance Bars can trace their roots to the practice, many of their drinks being local plant based or with supposed medical properties – even curing hangovers.

THE DISPENSARY.

Complementing the work of the herbalists, the Lady Bountiful, the first Countess of Ellesmere arranged a Dispensary for the estate. It was based in Kempnough Hall, where for the years 1850 to 1875 a room in the building was set aside and maintained by the Countess as a free medicine dispensary for the Worsley tenantry. As there were three Countess's during this period a more likely benefactor for a dispensary for the labouring population were the Earls who were said to contribute handsomely annually.

It did close in 1875 for two possible reasons, by then the district had the benefit of several medical practitioners and in that year the Bridgewater Trust introduced a sickness benefit scheme to aid with doctors fees. Why the dispensary was established in Kempnough Hall is not known. It was not owned by either the Earl or the Bridgewater Trust until they bought it in 1876, the year after closure.

BENEFIT SOCIETIES

Note is made above of the Bridgewater Trust sickness and accident society. This fulfilled a need to the workforce and benefit to employer where skilled men could return to work than those left untreated. With the adoption of the Workmen's Compensation Act of 1897 placing liability for accident benefit firmly on the employer, the scheme was closed. Formalities associated with the winding up were due to the refusal of the company to continue their contribution after the passing of the Compensation Act. The scheme had over 4,000 members paying contributions.

Its annual report give the scope of its dealings, in 1896 disablement cases totalled 1,260, 51 widows and 101 children were given relief. The following year disablements were 1063, expenditure included £109 towards the ten accidental deaths and artificial limbs charged at £55.

Families and people not employed by the Bridgewater Trust were usually members of one of the many "Penny Club" Sickness and Burial Clubs operated by many churches pubs and hamlets. Their weekly contribution gave some benefit in the event of incapacity to the breadwinner and the vital funding of a basic funeral. Such have been identified in Worsley village, another at Sindsley and in Boothstown, the Little Hulton "Peel Penny Club was in operation by 1808. Like many it published annual accounts, the one for 1894 doe's make interesting reading. The Club showed receipts of £340 with expenditure of £250. This included £27/16/0d for liquor for members and £3/10/0d on beer for the committee, noting the remainder was Wasted on funerals!

DOCTORS

The first qualified doctor identified as based in Worsley was Dr William Young Martin who eventually built his mansion "The Limes" at the junction of Hodge and Manchester Roads. He first came to prominence in January 1870 for providing mass vaccination against smallpox. The Board of Guardians arranged for Dr Martin to administer a free vaccination at his Walkden surgery, at a house in Boothstown and at the stable yard in Worsley. The following year he was awarded fourteen guineas by the Lords of the Privy Council "for meritorious vaccination", the work having been done voluntarily.

He continued as a very proactive medical man in the voluntary sector. By 1880 he was holding regular lectures to colliers entitled "first aid in the pit" and also campaigned for the colliery company to provide accident equipment such as stretchers. He noted casualties injuries were usually made worse by cramming the casualty into a pit tub to get them out of the pit. A further duty undertaken was becoming the leader of a series of lectures at Walkden and Mosley Common for the St. Johns Ambulance Brigade. Even after his so called retirement after handing the practice over to his son in law Dr Bateman he continued to practice from his new home Buckley House Manchester Road.

By 1884 a Doctor Sayers was house building in Walkden and likely to have been one of the three doctors attending the scene of a major accident in January 1888 when seven men were seriously injured when a scaffold collapsed during building Trinity Methodist chapel. Doctor Dereham had a surgery in Hodge Road with his assistant Doctor Wolfenden. Little Hulton was served by Doctor Marsh, who as well as the normal surgery work he also the St. John's lectures including separate ones for females.

During the early part of the twentieth century Doctor Berry, son of the District Registrar opened his house and surgery at Cranford, on the junction of Walkden Road and Manchester Road. The last of the "family doctors" Dr. J Lee at Cranford and Dr. A Watt of Buckley House together with Dr Winstanley at Hodge road and Dr Gill on Harriett St. continued to practice within the NHS.

OTHER PRACTITIONERS.

Pharmaceutical Chemists were the first of the other medical people to be established in Walkden. Nathan Berry had established what he called the Medical Hall on Bolton Road by 1871. The next year, styling himself as Chemist and Druggist he was advertising for a dispensing assistant. Obviously expanding his business he also became the Postmaster for Walkden.

Perhaps the best patronised of the age were those operated by generations of the Watkinson family. They originated in Farnworth but expanded into Walkden by 1890 with a shop on the east side of Bolton Road. An advertisement covered Jas. Watkinson, Certified Dispenser, Chemist and Druggist. Specialities were Quinine and Iron Tonic, Cough Mixture and also Chlorodyne.

His son James moved the business across the road into premises at the corner of Wardley Street. Mr George Cheetham managed the chemist side of the business from 1927. He eventually became owner, running the business until closure in 1963 for the redevelopment of Bolton Road. Fortunately he recorded details of his products as people still asked him for them. In his words: - We could not make our cough mixture now because it contained Chlorodyne, a morphine derivative, a controlled substance now. It might have been addictive but it soothed miner's coughs. We made our own Quinine and Iron Tonic which people believed in, also an Influenza mixture and Sarsaparilla blood mixture for spotty faces. We made Infants Preservative for fretful babies. Not allowed today as we made it by boiling opium with the solution made up with magnesia and syrup." Is it any wonder we have a drug problem in Walkden?

Another pharmaceutical chemist on Bolton Road was known as "Prosser's" but managed by Gwylm Thomas. Both of these were victims of the re-development of the area. Dyson and Topping was a long established chemist based in Memorial Road.

Dental treatment was another service offered by Mr Cheetham, a three penny pull it was called. The victim was asked to show him which tooth was the problem, at which point he took his hand out of his apron pocket holding the extractor pliers, a Pull, job done.

The premises 12 Memorial Road have been a dental practice from about 1900 when a Mr Wareing occupied it, possibly as house and practice. By the 1940s it was being run by Gordon Ashcroft who expanded to having several surgeries in the building. In the 1950s local schoolchildren were not so much frightened of the dentist as by the dental nurse cum receptionist. Boys were known to trigger a police search after hiding in the woods for days rather than face her.

There were at least two qualified Opticians with practices on Bolton Road. J T Yates occupied a shop in Evans buildings, combining jewellery and watch making with dispensing eye wear. He passed the business on to his son Rex Yates who eventually retired and the premises became solely jewellers.

Three generations of the Hall family operated from a shop on the east side of Bolton Road. Again, Joseph Hall began combining watch making and optical work. A further J Hall handed over to his son Robin who in the 1960s redevelopment of Bolton Road moved the practice to Bridgewater Road.

During the 1890s attempts were made to provide a charitably funded version of what are now known as District Nurses. Initially they were known as Parish Nurses, funded by donations collected by a committee of ladies from the parish. Worsley had the first in 1891 with Walkden following suit the next year. Some operational details were given in 1895 when it was reported subscriptions of £94 and expenses of £55, the nurse having made 3,314 visits to 146 cases in the year.

The Little Hulton and Walkden Nursing Association began in December 1897 with a committee formed of Ladies who at once appointed a nurse to start in the New Year. By January, after further meetings attended by the Vicars and several prominent Ladies over £80 promised in subscriptions. Nurse Doughty entered upon her duties and is to occupy one of the new houses at the Manchester road end of Harriett Street, when it is ready! In later years their annual report showed income from the Bridgewater Trust's fund of money accrued from fines levied on workmen.

During the inter war years, a Fete was held in the grounds of Worsley Hall with the object of raising funds for a "District Nurse".

INSTITUTIONS.

CHILDRENS HOMES

The Church of England society for waifs and strays had promoted the idea of a home in Worsley and After two years efforts in August 1898 were able to open such a venue. The Home, in the first cottage on Mill Brow was formally opened by Lady Ellesmere. By the kindness of the Bridgewater Trust, the promoters were able to make alterations to suit its new purpose. It was to have a matron and hold seven boys aged under ten.

Financed by charity it had a novel annual fund raising event, a "Pound Day" The Vicar entreated all those interested in the work of rescuing children at the Worsley Home for little boys, to bring a Pound of something useful. The appeal was successful with over 1,000 lbs of commodities donated. A later years report noted that for the event the exterior was tastefully decorated for the occasion and over 1,000 pounds weight of goods received by the matron. Visitors were allowed to inspect the premises which are ideal for the purpose. There are dining and play rooms, kitchen, lavatory, bathroom and dormitories with the home as attractive and pleasant as possible. It also had Dr. Lowe as Honorary Surgeon and Mr Anderson as hon. Dentist.

In 1906 the Home was expanded into the adjacent cottage allowing a further intake of eight boys so as to house fifteen. This remained the situation until a complete change of site became needed. Land was taken at the end of Aviary Road and with the help of a bequest of £5,400 the first sod was cut in December 1938 and a foundation stone laid in February 1939. On the outbreak of war the boys from the old home were evacuated to Shap but returned to their new home in February 1940 when it was opened by the Bishop of Manchester. It became a mixed unit in the 1950s and by 1973 was a Community Home. It is now a private house.

HOSPITALS

The need for some hospital provision in the district brought an initiative in 1881. The Barton Rural Sanitary Authority proposed a Cottage Hospital at Linnyslaw and promoted a public enquiry as to the need and for borrowing finance. The Enquiry was held in October that year, the Authority seeking to borrow £600 to provide a Cottage Hospital for Worsley, Walkden and Clifton. It was proposed to be for infectious diseases and to be built at the junction of Hill Top Road, Moss Lane and Sharp Street. Nothing more seems to have been done about this venture.

First off the ground with an actual building was the Little Hulton, Farnworth and Little Lever Infectious Diseases Hospital on the Birch Hall Estate in Farnworth. It was opened for public inspection in December 1895 with ratepayers invited to view "one of the best appointed hospitals in the country" before it opened for business in January 1896.

Concern about public health in Worsley finally led to the building of a hospital for infectious diseases. This was a joint venture with Swinton Council and provided an eighteen bed smallpox isolation ward on Linnyslaw Moss off Moss Lane. Built mainly of wood with a slated roof it opened in 1903 and cost nearly £2,000. Extensions were made in 1906 and after a laundry and garage were added in 1936 the hospital was described as being as good as any in the district. In later years there were fewer patients and Swinton wished to withdraw from the venture but Bridgewater Estates refused to cancel the lease. So, the unit remained until 1974 when the new local government authority, Salford, had it demolished. As no one actually knew what infectious diseases had been treated there it was given a Viking funeral in a controlled bonfire. The caretaker's bungalow remained tenanted and the land became the Linnyslaw Garden Centre.

TUBERCULOSIS HOSPITAL

Peel Hall, built in the 1840s for the Fletcher family had descended to the ownership of Charlotte, who let the Hall to tenants. On her death in 1914 her husband offered the Hall to Lancashire County Council as a pulmonary hospital in her memory. Due to the First World War it did not open until 1921 as a long stay hospital for people in the advanced stage of tuberculosis or TB as it was known, a highly contagious disease.

It served a wide area of south Lancashire with a capacity of 55 beds. On the ground floor were three wards for eighteen patients, the second floor had five wards holding twenty-nine, the staff occupied the top floor. Fresh air was considered an important part of the treatment, sleeping shelters were erected in the grounds and a veranda balcony added so patient's beds could be wheeled outside. Wherever possible, patients were encouraged to work in the gardens at jobs within their ability.

Advances in medical procedures meant that hospitals such as Peel became redundant and it became a geriatric hospital, an outstation of Prestwich. It closed completely in 1990 and after being derelict for years was demolished.

CHILD CLINICS

One of the first regular events held at the new Worsley Town Hall of 1911 was a mother and baby clinic. An early one was photographed with a large number of attendees on the lawn at the rear. During the First World War these were reinforced by the Council holding Worsley Baby Weeks, with classes on many aspects of child, and mother, care. The week ended with a public event on Parr Fold Park having an almost carnival atmosphere with brass bands attending.

In the late 1930s a clinic was opened by Lancashire County Council in premises on Park Road alongside Pinfold Road. Post-war it was the centre for all aspects of childcare. Post natal babies were weighed and issued with the National Dried Milk powder, for older children full health checks were given including dentistry and the dreaded Nitty Norah the bug explorer. These older children were issued with their ration of concentrated orange juice and rose hip syrup for vitamins.

MINES RESCUE

The Lancashire Coal Owners which included Manchester Collieries had a central rescue station at Howe Bridge which had opened in 1908. It, with its satellites was deficient in facilities and a new Central Rescue Station was needed. A site on Ellenbrook Road, Boothstown was selected. It was to include facilities for the equipment and specialist vehicles needed including a room for the all important canaries. It fulfilled another need by being provided with adequate and realistic training galleries to replicate conditions of heat, smoke, and chaos met underground. The site was completed by a superintendents house and housing for the twelve permanent members of the rescue brigade. It opened in January 1934 and closed with the demise of the Lancashire coal industry in 1968.

INDUSTRIAL CLINIC

Manchester Collieries the local coal owners made a contribution to the welfare of their workforce by building and equipping an industrial clinic on Bridgewater Road, adjacent to their offices. Opening in November 1937 it was aimed primarily at underground workers; its facilities were rehabilitation based. Physiotherapy, hot wax treatment for burns, X ray facilities and sunray lamps were among the many treatments available. Absorbed into the NHS on its foundation, with the demise of the coal industry it became a general purpose clinic.

They also funded a row of bungalows off Tynesbank specifically for retired miners. Named Jubilee Cottages they were to celebrate the jubilee of King George V. of 1935.

EMERGENCY SERVICES

AMBULANCE.

From 1895 the people of Worsley were allowed the use of the Bridgewater Trustees Accident Society horse ambulance. This was kept initially at Worsley yard and then moved to the new Walkden Yard when that opened. This situation continued until 1927 when Worsley Urban District Council bought a motor ambulance for its public. There was still a reliance on the "Company" as this new vehicle was also kept at the Bridgewater Collieries fire station in Walkden Yard.

The Township of Little Hulton had their own horse drawn ambulance in July 1903. This was a gift by Lancashire Constabulary and other benefactors. The formal presentation was photographed and the speeches reported. Later in the month news came that G & J Seddon the local builders were to erect a shed for the new ambulance.

Certainly by post second war ambulance services were being provided by Lancashire County Council.

FIRE.

Both the Old and New Halls of the Earl of Ellesmere were protected by hydrants fed from Blackleach reservoir with the New Hall having its own fire station of pumps and a tower wagon. The properties of the Bridgewater Trust had fire cover in the form of appliances held at Worsley and Walkden yards to supply cover both for.

That at Worsley was housed in the grounds of the Yard House, facing Mill Brow. Its efficiency was brought into question in August 1882 when the nearby Sindsley mill burned down. Both Eccles and Salford brigades attended un-summonsed, Worsley could not, because the horses were being grazed at Winton that evening. With the closure of the Worsley yard fire cover was transferred to Walkden by 1910, the original building is still extant alongside number 5, Worsley Road.

By 1900 the Walkden Yard possessed a horse drawn steam pump named "Neptune" housed in a brick building, The fire crew, all employees at the Yard, were under the superintendence of Captain Jackson the only full time "fireman". Both Worsley and Walkden brigades visited Liverpool fire station in 1903 to examine the latest facilities for application at Walkden. A motor appliance had been added in 1920 by Bridgewater Collieries.

This situation continued until mid 1939 when Manchester Collieries brigade at Walkden Yard handed responsibility for civil cover to the Farnworth Borough Fire Brigade. During the War the National Fire Service had a Depot in Primrose Mill and post war Lancashire County Council assumed responsibility.

GOVERNANCE.

THE COUNCIL.

District Council elections for the first local government body of Worsley in 1894, brought out a plethora of candidates. No less than forty gentlemen came forward for election, 25 of which are for the three Wards of Walkden. There were five wards, Walkden Central with eight candidates, Walkden East with seven, Walkden North with ten, Worsley with nine and Boothstown with five. At the first meeting, in the Town Office, Park Road, Mr F H Booth was appointed Chairman and Mr Monks as Clerk.

Worsley Urban District Council as set up in 1933 after the amalgamation had eight wards, each of which had three representatives on the Council. It was composed of twelve Labour, five Liberal, five Conservative and two independent members. Two of these represented Worsley on Lancashire County Council. By 1970 the Council had increased to nine wards with twenty-seven members, the addition to represent the greatly expanded Little Hulton population.

Post 1974 re-organisation Worsley is represented on Salford City Council by five wards, each electing three Councillors.

Women`s Suffrage was quite a hot potato in the district, Dr Pankhurst gave an address on the subject in the Co-op Hall in 1894. That year showed how women were viewed in any public office by a Mrs Ainsworth standing as a candidate as a Public Guardian. She was beaten 1,465 to 439. A branch of the Women`s Suffrage Society formed in late 1897. The Society, presided over by Mrs Booth, wife of the Chairman of Worsley Council, urged women to use the voting power they possessed in endorsing candidates for School Boards, Boards of Guardians, District and County Councils, thus strengthening their claim to the Parliamentary vote. Agitation was largely peaceful with only one disruptive incident recorded. There was a bomb scare at Worsley Post Office. This turned out to be a hoax, with a black tin and twine fuse, with a label "Votes for Women".

POLITICAL PARTIES.

Until almost the First World War, local politics were along the lines immortalised by Gilbert and Sullivan in their opera Iolanthe with the words "every boy and every girl who is born into this world alive is either a little Liberal or else a little Conservative." Being as impartial as possible the subject is dealt with on the basis of the opening of political party club premises.

Conservative supporters appear to have been first to have a base. Walkden Conservative Club began operations in October 1882 at 70 Manchester Road, to be operated on strict temperance principles they stated. After a short time they moved to the premises at the corner of Park Road and Brindley Street, which had been railway refreshment rooms. Walkden Conservatives sought better premises in 1894 and secured a site on Harriett Street. This scheme was abandoned the club instead in June that year, leasing land at the corner of Longley Road from Mr W A Rothwell, part of the grounds of his mansion. It opened in December and comprised a billiard room lit by a glass lantern roof, refreshment bar, card, reading and smoke rooms with an upper assembly room to hold 200. The premises were converted to apartments in 2021.

The year 1888 saw Conservative clubs opening in Boothstown and Little Hulton. This latter had been extended twice but still was replaced in 1924 with premises and grounds at the corner of Manchester Road and Armitage Avenue. The Town Guide claimed it to be the handsomest and best appointed club for miles around.

Walkden Liberals took over a shop on Bolton Road as a clubroom, opening in January 1886. Several extensions and changes were made over the following years. Expansion was needed and a site got on Memorial Road, alongside Walter Street. The grand opening came in March 1893 of "the commodious and handsome premises". A procession led by Walkden Band marched from the old to the new for the opening ceremony.

Little Hulton Liberals had premises at the junction of Hilton Lane and Manchester Road from 1885 but within five years these had been outgrown. A site on Manchester Road opposite Brierley House was got, it was planned to have an assembly room, reading, billiard and refreshment rooms.

Part of the works was done as a self-help project. Dismayed at the cost of excavation for a cellar, the members borrowed carts from the local colliery and thirty members took of their coats and navvied as if used to the work. The new club opened in December 1890.

Socialism first appeared in Walkden in August 1891 when a speaker addressed people gathered at the Monument, apparently to little avail. By 1894 a Walkden branch of the Independent Labour Party, usually referred to as the ILP, had formed and were of sufficient influence to attract over 200 people to a lecture on the Labour Movement, held in the Congregational School. Kier Hardy arrived on a Sunday afternoon in May 1896 to address a large open air meeting at the Monument.

During the first war conflict the two social movements, Co-op and ILP supported Worsley service families particularly the children. There must have been some internal dissent within the ILP. When the Merlin Street headquarters was opened in March 1929 it was noted it being for "the present ILP movement which was inaugurated in September 1926. Subsequently extended to double size the Ellyn Hall as it became known acted as both a political base as the office of the Worsley MP and the Labour Party. As well as a social centre until closure in 2016.

PART NINE

Domestic life In a Company Town and beyond

HOUSING In the twentieth century

Influence of the “Company” i.e.; the Bridgewater succession on housing comes from them holding the land. Virtually every property in Worsley was erected on land leased from them; they very rarely sold the land until mid twentieth century.

By the start of the century, local housing showed a marked difference between Worsley village and the Walkden area. Worsley still had the cottages erected in the days of the Duke of Bridgewater with very few after that time. Walkden had the ribbon development of terraced houses of the mid to late nineteenth century along and just off its main roads with some prestige housing on Memorial Road; then still a private gated road. Boothstown also had ribbon housing along Leigh Road and rows of terraced cottages forming Orchard Street area that had developed to match the adjacent mills.

CO-OP HOUSING

First of what may be regarded as major developers were the Walkden Co-op Society. By 1888 they had erected the houses forming Mayfield Avenue under pressure from the Bridgewater Trust. This was so as to hide the view of the rear of their shops they were building from the august gaze of the Trustees office adjacent. Expanding their empire on Walkden Road near Edgefold they erected a shop and five houses in 1896 with another six alongside the following year. The shop became a house later. During 1898 they built houses forming the then Marsden Street together with six houses on Memorial Road. Marsden St. became Guild Avenue when their Hall was built in 1924. In the 1890s they also erected a row of fourteen houses at Mosley Common.

The Society opened their central depot on Sandwich Street in 1901 on what was then called Kay Street. It was re-named Holyoake Road at their request. They felt the need to house employees so a further large piece of land was taken to the east of the depot. Three streets of semi-detached houses with access from Holyoake Rd. were completed in stages from 1910 forming Chillam Road, Blantyre and Holly Avenues. Due to them largely housing their own employees the development of seventy houses soon became known as “the Colony”

Their last project completed in the early months of war in 1914, was known as “Parkside” being the thirty two houses forming Normanby Road and fronting Newearth Road.

COUNCIL HOUSING for locals

The 1919 Housing Act gave Councils the power to provide what is now called Social Housing. Both Worsley and Little Hulton Councils soon pushed ahead with estates of semi-detached property in many parts of the district.

Little Hulton Council seem to have been the first to take advantage of the 1919 Act giving financial assistance to housing, opening their first Council house on Peel Lane in early 1921. By 1924 they had earmarked 90 acres of land for housing and had erected over fifty houses. Eventually they had four estates. One is on Armitage Avenue and Peel Lane and another off Hilton Lane including Hulton, Wardley and Worsley Avenues. Off Worsley Road North there is the Hurst and Argyle Avenue estate whilst out to the west came Oakfield Dr. and Green Avenue.

It was not until August 1921 that the first sods were cut on the first three Worsley Council estates at Birch Road, Worsley and Boothstown. Birch Road estate was erected by a consortium of builders trading as a “Building Guild”, hence the estates residents said they lived on “the Guild”. All the roads were named after Native Trees.

It aligned on Birch Road and the streets off it, with provision left for a school and a Co-op shop. The first tenants moved in during 1923. Extension came in 1932 with the addition of Laburnum and Poplar Roads. Incredibly, after two years these houses had the disruption of replacing the gas lighting with electricity. A further small estate came at Edgefold in 1935.

Boothstown had property fronting Leigh Road with Hilton Cresc. and Boothsbank Avenue to the south. Post 1928, houses formed Beech Avenue off the new Simpson Road.

After the disruption of WW2 and once materials were made available, Worsley council, by then having merged with Little Hulton began an adventurous series of developments. During 1945, Worsley Council bought a bulldozer to clear the land for an extension to the Engine Fold estate, off Hilton Lane. They used German POW's from the camp on Old Clough Lane to prepare the roads and sewers for this project. The year also saw the start of the erection of aluminium frame pre-fabs on Bridgewater Street, Little Hulton, within a year fifty had been built and tenanted. These were finally demolished in 1960 to be replaced by normal houses.

Another project effectively extended the Birch Road estate eastward to Old Clough Lane. With all roads given names associated with the Lake District the group is popularly known as the Rydal Crescent estate. Birch Road was extended to meet it with several roads accessing Old Clough. Work was substantially complete by 1954. It included the crescent of shops, complete with the boulder on its plinth and a selection of bungalows reserved for pensioners. These were placed beneath the high voltage cables as normal houses were deemed too close to the cables. Additional bungalows and a block of semi's were added in 1960 joining Devoke Avenue with Laburnum Road.

Some slum clearance came in the mid fifties with the final demolition of the old terrace property, some dating from the Duke's days. Treacle Row on Manchester Road was replaced with housing and maisonettes in 1954. Initially these were not popular with residents or tradesmen as the only access was from the Ridyard Street end with a high fence blocking access to the main road. Not popular with the coalman! Blackleach Row at Hill Top got its belated demolition together with the adjacent Jackson and Whitehead Streets. All re-housed in the Grosvenor Road development.

A further estate began to take shape to the north of Manchester Road when in 1952 tenants moved into Worsley's 2,000th Council house. Based on Whittle Street which curved round to meet Bolton Road at Cecil Street. Whittle Street and Wilbraham Road took their names from existing ones with all the others having their name suffixed "side". The estate had the honour of having the first new public house in Worsley for over a hundred years when the Brindley Arms opened in 1959. Made to an innovative design the name initially chosen, Jack o` Diamonds, met with opposition, Brindley being hastily substituted.

HOUSING FOR SALFORD

The Post War Lancashire development plan included a Salford Overspill project to accommodate its residents out of the very sub standard properties then occupied. The Little Hulton area was chosen with the development being a joint enterprise between Worsley Council, Lancashire County Council and Salford City Council. As part of the agreement, Salford had to pay £8 per year for ten years for each dwelling provided. Originally envisaged as providing 3,000 dwellings, the first house of the plan was occupied in 1949; within a decade 2,600 were built and by 1964 over 3,400 had been completed. By the time the project reached completion in the early seventies 4,150 overspill dwellings had been built plus a further 350 allocated for existing Worsley residents.

Mount Skip was selected as the first phase, the name taken from the farm it supplanted. It's first tenants moved in during December 1949. Centred along Eastham Way all the new properties roads were given names of areas of Salford. It filled the area between Manchester Road, Cleggs Lane and the then mineral railway.

Next in 1953 came a move to the west of Peel Lane and building on what had been Lord Kenyon's estate hence the linking road being named Kenyon Way. All of these were given street names with a

rural base. Kenyon Hall was eventually demolished after no economic use could be found for it; the site becoming the bungalows forming Pennington Close concluded this phase.

Land at Greenheys, north of Manchester Road followed the expansion of the overspill provision. Captains Fold estate is what it is best known as, building extended virtually to the Farnworth boundary. The final phase was on Madams Wood between Hilton Lane and Peel Lane.

Whilst clearly providing a much improved standard of dwelling which was generally appreciated the main problem with uprooting thousands of people was access to employment. The problem was such that many demanded a return to live in Salford. Bus services between Little Hulton and Salford were poor and most unbelievable, the railway offering a direct link closed in 1954. Eventually local industry caught up with the labour market. The last house of the £15 million overspill development was occupied in July 1966 with four estates completed; Mount Skip, Peel, Wharton and Armitage.

PRIVATE DEVELOPMENT

From the end of the First World War private developers utilised small plots of land that unfilled vacant spaces or replaced demolished ancient cottages. Those replacing Kentucky Row, (no, I don't know how it got that name either!) on Walkden Road, facing the college were sold for £450. Other slightly larger developments extended existing lanes such as those forming Edgefold and Broadway in the between the wars period.

BRIDGEWATER ESTATES

The company entered the post war housing market by selling of land to developers. An early such move brought some of the first new housing to Worsley village. Sefton Drive / Woodstock drive together with the properties forming Farm Lane estate came in the early 1950s. In Walkden, one such of the early build provided those forming Kingsway and Maple Grove. Other small developments followed until Bridgewater Estates set up a subsidiary The Walkden Land Company to facilitate the housing development of its own land.

In partnership with a local builder work began in 1962 at Boothstown with fifty-four bungalows completed in a year. A further phase at Boothstown included semi detached houses. Completion of this development came in 1971 with the provision of a shopping precinct and making provision for a library. By the late seventies the company concentrated on selling land for others to develop'

As a result a company acquired the land in the Parr Fold area forming the Shawbrook estate including Harbourne Avenue and Carlton Road. A development completed by 1970. During the 1970s and early 1980s the Ellenbrook area became the most heavily developed. Part of the deal included the re-routing of Ellenbrook Road to avoid the single lane squeeze between the church and pub on the old road. The Longwall estate complete with school was soon extended by the Ellerbeck Crescent phase. The western side of the new road development all had access from Oriole Drive.

Perhaps the most controversial development was the decision to obliterate Burgess Farm on Hilton Lane. As the last working farm in Salford its preservation became a local campaign. Alas all to no avail. By 2015 the fields were bricks and tarmac. There is one aspect still visible, right through the estate from Hilton Lane to Mather Fold an untouched strip of grass remains. It denotes the presence of a branch of Manchester's Thirlmere aqueduct.

At the time of writing, many other fairly large scale proposed developments by the Bridgewater Estates owners, Peel Land are being actively opposed by residents groups.

HOME LIFE in late 19th early 20th Century

TENURE OF HOMES

Within these years owner occupancy was very much in the minority, renting was the norm. There was a wide discrepancy on the terms of tenancy dependent on which of the two sources the property fell. Clearly, paying the rent was essential but other factors could affect the security of tenure.

Most of the oldest properties were leased by the Bridgewater Trustees and to the occupants of many they were "Tied Houses" that went with the job. Loss of employment with the Trustees could come

not just for normal industrial reasons but for any action that displeased the Trustees. Families were evicted for catering to visitors to Worsley village, voting in an election contrary to what the Trust required, often for criminal offences and certainly for poaching. With a private landlord providing you paid your rent and did not cause damage the tenancy was fairly secure.

There was the other side of leasing, maintenance of the property. The Trustees had a good reputation for keeping their properties in acceptable condition. They had a rolling programme of exterior painting such that dealt with a property every four years. Within the private sector the upkeep could be uncertain. Such landlords were usually little richer than the tenants being someone who lived off the rents, so scrimped on repairs leading to a gradual decline.

FACILITIES; or lack of them.

From our viewpoint of double glazed, centrally heated, appliance filled housing what was life like back then in terms of domestic facilities? The short answer is – Sparse. Most housing in the district comprised terraces of two up, two down cottages. They were not, as sneering southerner's call them "back to backs", those are a different style altogether which we never had in Worsley.

Let us visualise the home of a family in regular employment living in these properties. Usually entering the front door directly from the street, it opened into the Sitting Room; posh folk called it the parlour. It was often the holy of holies, kept immaculate and used only on formal occasions, a fire in the ornamental grate was only lit on these events. Floors tended to be covered with linoleum with a rug before the fire. Furniture was likely to be a horsehair filled wood backed sofa and two fireside chairs with a heavy black wood dresser completing the room.

Behind, was the main living room, usually called "the house". Here was the centre of life, its black leaded coal fired range provided the only heating in regular use as well as hot water, cooking either directly on the fire or in a side oven and also served as a waste disposal. The utilitarian nature of the room was shown by the coarse cocoa matting covering the underlying flagstones with a homemade peg rug before the grate. Dad would have an easy chair by the fire, mum and children used the dining chairs round the table which when not used for eating supported sewing, knitting and the children's books and hobbies. The room would likely also contain the only sink on the premises, Many terraced houses did have an extra room, either as an original brick structure or a later addition in the form of a glass roofed lean to. These provided what is now known as a utility room with the sink installed together with whatever laundry equipment was used, there was also possibly a gas cooker by the 1900s

Illumination came from gas, downstairs would have the very fragile incandescent mantles that had to be lit with great care, they cost money! Upstairs may well have the older bat wing burner providing simply a flame; at least it gave heat as well. Not every house had gas lamps upstairs; they still relied on candles or oil lamps at bedtime.

Domestic electricity did not become common until the 1920s, then usually limited to a single bulb in each room. Adaptors were available to plug into the light socket so as to also supply an appliance such as an iron. Wired in wall sockets took some time to be installed.

Upstairs the two rooms were usually allocated on the basis of parents in the front room, children in the back. It was quite usual for the parent's room to hold a cot for babies but older children could cause problems of decency. The more decorous resorted to flimsy partitions in the back room, the less discerning resorted to the one big bed, boys heads one end, girls the other.

WORKING WIVES and work of wives.

Women continuing to work in the mills and at other occupations after marriage were the norm throughout Lancashire, including after a short maternity break. Economic necessity made it so, there was a lot of truth in the saying "four looms, four kids and a house to run" was the lot of our womenfolk. Once babies were weaned there was a network of relatives and older siblings to take on childcare on a mutual aid basis. Some income could be generated by a stay at home woman by catering for workers at nearby mills. Known as "eaters" they left their dinner dish with the host who, for a weekly fee, had it heated and tea brewed for when the mill whistle blew.

Until the 1950s running a home was very labour intensive. Keeping food on the table meant daily shopping trips until refrigeration started to appear. Cooking initially relied on the Range in the living room for boiling and frying over open coals with baking done in the oven alongside. This of course relied on coal being brought in and ash taken out. By the first war, gas cookers were common with electric versions following the second war.

Laundry was possibly the most physically demanding chore considering the employment of most of the men folk in the day's pre company overalls schemes. Hot water and soap had to be ladled into the dolly tub and the clothes well pummelled by an implement called either a posser or poncher. They were then put through a hand cranked wringer and hung out to dry in the smoke laden air or on rainy days hung on maidens in front of the fire. Some relief came soon after the war with the introduction of electric washing machines but still had attached wringer. Developments in the late fifties brought the twin tub with attached spin dryer, tumble dryers came much later.

Personal hygiene took the form of a wash at the kitchen sink and, if lucky, a once a week dip in the tin bath brought indoors, placed before the fire and filled with hot water. The family took turns to use it. Hardly credible but true, the new houses forming Worsley Green, built in 1905 were deliberately without bathrooms, now retro-fitted, squeezed in wherever possible.

TWENTIETH CENTURY moving into a semi.

The lucky tenants moving into the new 1920s semi detached Council houses with integral bathroom, indoor toilet and coal store, a living room and a kitchen must have felt in a dream. It must be remembered that for many years, obtaining a Council house was upwards social mobility, not a right. There were tenancy terms imposed, most of which made sense and were largely adhered to. They had to be kept clean and tidy and gardens maintained in an orderly state. Oh, and pay the rent weekly. Some rules seemed a little "big brother", tenants were forbidden to knock nails into walls or woodwork and permission – in writing, had to be obtained to paper or paint a room.

Tenancing the post second war estates cleared most of the very sub standard property in Walkden and the 1950s was the start of the great DIY movement that together with improvement grants added facilities to the older but still sound terrace housing. Back bedrooms were split to form a bathroom; tiled fireplaces replaced the huge coal fired range, a gas or electric cooker having replaced it. Most of the better terrace had a hot water system from a back boiler for many years but supplemented by an electric immersion heater.

RETAIL

INDEPENDENT SHOPS and TRADERS.

Shops providing the necessities of life had been established on the outskirts of the Worsley and Walkden works yards during the Duke's lifetime. He permitted shopkeepers as tenants at will, controlling what was sold and terms of business. Credit facilities to employees were in use but there is little evidence these transactions had the outrageous practices of Tommy Shops in some districts with the employer controlling goods quality and price for tokens not cash. Similarly the Bridgewater Trustees distanced themselves from involvement in retail trade.

These early shops occupied part of a domestic dwelling and often run on a part time basis. Only basic grocery items would be stocked, dairy produce, meat and vegetables would be supplied from local farms or smallholdings. It was not until the establishment of cotton mills in the area that there was need for more specialist suppliers to replace the time the working housewife no longer had. From the mid 1850s we see the establishment of grocers on a full time basis together with butchers and bakeries. Trading methods reflected the subsistence economy of the time amongst mill and mine workers. Credit arrangements were a matter between purchaser and shopkeeper often to the detriment of both.

By now most of the hamlet like groups of dwellings around Walkden had a grocery store. Several traders, particularly near Worsley were in business to supply clothing and footwear needs, more in the

nature of craft workshops. Retailing as an occupation really came into prominence in the 1870s. The ambition of any provident man was to erect a few houses with a shop at one end for himself often at the cost of a heavy mortgage. The result is still visible along the terraced property of the main roads whilst the wholesale clearance of property in the centre of Walkden has largely removed evidence of this type of development.

Excluding Bolton Road, which will be covered later, by about 1870 in the Walkden area, grocers or provision dealers had the largest number of shops with over ten such traders. Two were in business as cloggers; Edgefold had a greengrocer and Linnyslaw both a baker and a confectioner. As requirements changed so did the nature of goods sold, ready food shops started to appear although a baker of tea cakes had operated on Walkden Road from early 1870. Chip shops opened in the 1880s on both Walkden and Manchester Roads, other traders changed their main line to pies and cooked meat rather than general grocery.

Hardware stores supplied domestic durables and the all important lamp oil or paraffin and candles. Most trades were represented by at least one cart doing the rounds of the district.

Grocers in the area, it being a mining district, sold as a legal sideline the gunpowder miners used down the pit. They had to have an "Explosives Licence", cost 5/- which entitled the named shopkeeper to stock up to 56lbs (25kg) for retail sale. They made it up into one or two lb packets just as they did with sugar. This ended with a mines regulation in 1898. Yes, there were accidents!

Bolton Road Walkden developed as the shopping centre of the district. Here traders supplied not just necessities but specialist goods and services became represented. When the local Co-op began they had eight grocery competitors on the Road. Three shops were butchers four in clogs and footwear, two greengrocers a draper an ironmonger together with a yeast dealer. All these were active by 1875. It must be remembered that until the 1950s domestic refrigeration was virtually unknown. Food was bought as it was needed especially highly perishables like fresh meat and fish, for these the housewife made a daily trip to her preferred shop. Other less perishable foodstuffs like bacon and cheese were kept cool on a stone slab in the pantry. Another reason for the many trips to the shop was likely to be tied up with family finances, meals were planned round what could be afforded.

Changes came in 1894 when a local Township officer, Mr Evans developed the Manchester Road / western Bolton Road corner. The old cottages known as Tupp Row were demolished to be replaced with purpose built retail premises. Their design was to have the entire ground floor for business with the upper two floors laid out as normal domestic accommodation.

These attracted the more up-market tenants with outfitters, a watchmaker / optician, a bank and a dispensing chemist among the first occupants. The buildings still stand but with what had been a bank, now operating as bed-sits.

The main crossroads of Walkden became known as having a bank on every corner, this was literally the case. Most were in place before the turn of the century and operated by many of the forgotten names of British banking, Williams & Deacon with The Manchester & Salford opened in 1892 on a prestige site with the business entrance opposite the monument with the Managers house facing Bridgewater Road. The District Bank took the site on the Bolton Road Manchester Road corner for their white stone faced curved building. What eventually became Barclay's bank was part of the Evans Buildings development.

The older property further north on both sides of Bolton Road became converted into shops. These served every kind of trade. The only general classification I can make is that the furthest north, up the hill, the less frequently customers were likely to need their services, funeral directors were at the top of the hill! Lower down the hill the properties were converted into house furnishers, sewing machine dealers, decorators, plumbers and ironmongers, leaving the more accessible southern end to clothing, newsagents and tobacconists. The more personal services in the form of chemists, opticians and hairdressers were represented here with the all important grocery shops spaced throughout the

length of the Road to service the streets of terraced housing that developed behind both sides of Bolton road.

From the 1910s, increased mobility in the form of cycle dealers appeared often as a spin off from an ironmongery business one such being Arthur Yates and J Brookes soon followed exclusively as a cycle dealer. Despite the growing popularity of motoring no connection with this trade has been recorded on Bolton Road beyond accessory shops.

Walkden had four pioneer motoring needs providers. The first was Reg Tyldesley, a 1920s Isle of Man TT race winner who opened his appropriately named Ace Garage at the junction of Whittle Street and Manchester Road. As well as offering service and repairs he was the first to have petrol pumps rather than selling by sealed cans. The business was taken over by Langford & Thompson in 1960 when it soon became car sales only.

Next came Gerard Massey who opened a repair shop and petrol forecourt at the junction of Hodge Road and Manchester Road. The business expanded along Hodge Road to include a sales showroom. The site is now a doctor's surgery. The garage business was taken over by Gordon's of Bolton who acquired the site of The Limes, a house on the opposite side of Hodge Road and opened The Limes Service Station.

In the mid 1940s the Creamery at the junction of Egerton Road and Manchester Road was converted in to Bridgewater Garage who operated full repair services in the creamery buildings with a drive through fuel pump forecourt.

Opening of the East Lancashire Road in 1933 left an opportunity of passing trade. The Ellesmere Service Station opened in 1936 by Bill Greaves at the junction with Old Clough Lane, with his house next door. It had a large workshop and a fuel pump forecourt. The site became housing in 1970.

CO-OP RETAIL STORES.

Some time ago there was a TV advert jingle - "Caring, sharing Co-op" As regards their members they were, but faced with trading competition each Society was a cut-throat predator, intent on world domination. Offering supplies from cradle to grave, they operated in the same way as a 20th Century supermarket chain. The Walkden Providential and Industrial Co-operative Society eventually had large central premises, a distribution depot, a central bakery and nineteen branches.

By 1870 several local towns had successfully started Co-op retail societies. Walkden had tried to start such ventures, initially on Manchester Road and later on Worsley Road, Hill Top. Both these attempts failed after a short time.

In a determined effort to introduce the benefits of co-operative trading in Walkden were being made by trying to persuade the Eccles Society to open branches here. They counseled the best way was to start their own society. Capital was raised by 29 people subscribing £33 and leasing premises on Bolton Road. Initially trading was only done in the evenings by the officers but soon a shopman was engaged whose hours were 9am to 8pm – 9.30pm on Saturday. After a year of successful trading they registered membership into the Co-op Wholesale Society (CWS) and bought the large double front shop at the corner of Bolton Road and Wardley Street. They soon acquired next door as a drapery department with the original leased building becoming a boot and shoe department, all this being achieved with a membership of some 200. By 1910 membership had risen to 3,000 and in 1940 it stood at 6,000, figures showing the majority of households were Co-operative store shoppers.

The number of co-operators – and capital increased so that after ten years trading they sought ways to give a better service to members. A bakery was added to the large grocery store on Bolton Road and a campaign of taking the Society to the members begun with an aggressive, almost annual opening of a branch outlet.

Branch No 1 opened on Manchester Road, at **WHITTLEBROOK** in 1881 in new premises soon to be extended into a double front grocery store with an adjacent butchery. The upstairs of the grocery shop soon became a well used clog sales and repair department reached by an external stair.

TOPPINGS BRIDGE had Branch No2 on the west side of Worsley Road in rented premises. In 1887 shop premises and a house were bought across the road but were found unsuitable so were demolished and rebuilt in 1911. The outlay in moving and rebuilding sunk home and brought in a policy of purpose built premises. Branch No 3 at **MOSLEY COMMON** opened in haste in leased premises in 1882 to ward off potential competition from Leigh Co-op. Land on Mosley Common Road was purchased and premises holding grocery, drapery, footwear and butchery. Turnover and membership was in excess of any other branch.

Further rivalry, this time with Little Hulton Co-op brought about Branch No 4 in 1885 on Manchester Road East **LITTLE HULTON**. Hurried plans were actioned as a shop facing Hilton Lane was becoming vacant and the Secretary of Walkden Co-op rode to Harwood to do a deal at nearly midnight, the shop opened the following morning. Purpose built premises were erected on the corner of Manchester Road and Hilton Lane in 1891. Little Hulton Co-op opened a branch 200 yards away the same year.

New **CENTRAL PREMISES** were considered due to the crowded nature of the Bolton Road site. Land was leased from the Bridgewater Trust at the Junction of Bridgewater Road and Manchester Road. A condition imposed was that the view from the Trustees Offices should be of superior houses NOT the rear of commercial premises.

Thirteen houses, forming Mayfield Avenue came first with their new central premises following in 1889. These comprised a spacious grocery department with cellar store and a flour room all connected by chutes for produce. Also included were the societies offices, shops for butchery, drapery, furnishings, footwear, a bakehouse and stable. Most popular was the upstairs Assembly Room, the Co-op Hall used for public meetings early film shows and of course funeral teas!

The site was further developed in 1900 with three storey extensions, two sales floors for menswear and drapery with an attic workroom for the bespoke trade. Soon a bakery was added as well as provision for furnishing, footwear, a chemist and greengrocery.

Residents of **EDGEFOLD** had the benefit of No. 5 which together with a row of cottages was erected on the west side of Walkden Road in 1897. The shop had the disadvantage of being little larger than the cottages and was replaced in 1914. The new shop, further south on Walkden Road was the first Walkden Co-op shop to have the eventual standard facing of cream terracotta ware. Sited alongside the access to Edgefold Colliery the building is now at the side of the Shaving Lane housing development.

The same year, 1897, saw the society purchasing land on Bolton Road at **HILL TOP** for No 6 Branch. This was built with a double front grocery and single front butchery in a terraced house style to blend in with adjacent property.

By the turn of the Century the goods turnover of the Walkden society had reached the level where individual deliveries to branches from the CWS caused difficulties so a **CENTRAL DEPOT** became essential. A substantial piece of land on Sandwich Street and Kay Street – later renamed Holyoake Road after Mr. J J Holyoake a Co-op pioneer, was taken with building starting in 1901.

This was convenient in every way, adjacent to the Walkden goods yard and central in the district. The depot was set out round a paved yard and had a three storey grocery warehouse with a glass covered loading dock. Extensive stabling housed 25 horses with wagon sheds. An abattoir with cattle pens served the butchery trade.

Extensions were soon in hand. A retail housecoal delivery was started eventually having a further six horse lorries employed. Milk and dairy produce soon followed with a dairy and loading dock eventually having six floats on deliveries. A botanic brewery – or Pop works completed the development by 1911.

As the trade in bakery goods increased the old bakery at the central premises became woefully inadequate. What is considered a modern shop feature, of in-store bakeries only gave temporary relief. Land was taken on Holyoake Road in 1926 and a two storey bakery capable of producing all

the requirements of the branch shops with capacity to have seven vans employed on twice daily house to house deliveries.

Whilst the central depot was developing the drive for more branches continued. No 7 branch at the junction of **PARK ROAD** and Bridgewater road opened in 1900, Trade at this branch was considerably expanded on the completion of the Societies housing estate on the opposite side of Park Road post Great War. Bolton Road remained the premier shopping street of Walkden. So as to attract further trade the gap between the Central and No 6 branch, only some 600 yards had to be filled. Premises at the corner of **DRILL STREET** were taken and a small grocery store opened as the No 8 branch in 1903.

One of the most successful branches, No 9 opened in 1909 at the junction of **HODGE ROAD** and Walkden Road. This wedge shaped building had no display windows with the upstairs soon accommodating an in-store bakery. The volume of trade can be judged from having eight shop staff employed. A separate butchery department opened across the road on Hodge Road / Rushton Street in 1921.

Number 10 branch at **BOOTHSTOWN** came into being to thwart completion from the Tyldesley society. Boothstown had been served by either Leigh society branch or Walkden's Mosley Common branch. Tyldesley however secured premises on Chaddock Lane and took no heed of protests. Walkden reacted speedily, land was found and grocery trading started immediately from a temporary wooden building in 1913. A further piece of land was got on Coupe Brow for permanent premises but due to the war it was not opened until 1921.

Between the wars Worsley Council started to provide housing estates and the Co-op was the first to see the opportunity and built No 11 branch on **BIRCH ROAD** as part of the estate in 1926. Double fronted, a central doorway served, to the left a large grocery store with the other, symmetrical wing housing the butchery department. It had a spacious delivery yard to the rear.

The Walkden Society took over the **ROE GREEN** Co-op society premises on Greenleach Lane. After a full refurbishment it opened as Walkden's No 12 branch in 1929. Alas, it burned out in July 1950 needing an almost complete rebuild.

Again to service the demand brought about by the growth of Worsley Council housing, coverage of the Leigh Road estate was provided by No 13 branch on **ELLENBROOK ROAD**. Opened in 1932, it was the only single storey shop the society built.

Outside the scope of this work is the merger of the Moorside society with Walkden in 1935. This brought five shops under its wing, branches 14 to 18

Growth of the Walkden Co-operative Society ended with the opening of its branch No 19 in 1955 as part of the **RYDAL CRESCENT** development by Worsley Council

Walkden Co-op's trade suffered during the sixties as like other societies they faced competition, missed opportunities and had short term policies. Some changes did occur, selected branches became self service, the range of goods was extended away from own brands but consumer loyalty had been lost. Branches were closed throughout the sixties and early seventies, some due to redevelopment clearance but most closed due to economic pressure. The final retail outlet, the grocery self service at the Central Premises closed in 1984.

LITTLE HULTON INDUSTRIAL CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY formed in 1873 with a central grocery store on Manchester Road East. Branches were opened as finances allowed. Number 1 on Manchester Road West, number two on Manchester Road East – in competition with Walkden's No Four branch at Hilton Lane. Their No three branch was at Greenheys and No four on Cleggs Lane. Land for central premises, at the junction of Manchester Road and Cleggs Lane was taken and opened in 1909. It had departments for drapery, furniture, butchery and boots and shoes. The more popular clogs were catered for at two branches, Manchester Road East and Greenheys.

Whilst many of their premises are still extant the society also ceased trading in the 1970s.

HOUSING ESTATE SHOPS

The estates built by Worsley Council had the needed retail facilities planned as part of the development. Their first, Birch Road, had the single Co-op branch to cater for its needs, the much larger spread of the post second war estates both for local residents and the Salford Overspill estates in Little Hulton brought in the estate shopping centre. Each was planned to offer a good selection of services on a residential tenancy basis. They replicated the format of the 19th century Evans Buildings, having the ground floor for trading with a domestic flat above.

Architecturally perhaps the most imposing is that on Rydal Crescent of 1955. Built to a crescent shape holding ten shops, the two end premises had a conventional domestic semi attached. These were occupied by a baker / confectioner and at the other end, a chip shop. They are the only two still serving their original purpose. Whittle Street estate gained shops in 1957 at the junction with Sportside Avenue which had provision for eight retailers whilst alongside came the Brindley Arms in 1958, the first new pub in Worsley for a hundred years.

The Salford Overspill estates built in Little Hulton in the late 1950s seem to not have had provision made for shops apart from the Little Hulton Shopping Centre on Longshaw Drive. This was part of what may be described as the social hub of the estates together with a secondary school, community centre and library sited within the angle of Manchester Road and Armitage Avenue.

Due to perceived traffic problems on the A6 the shops were not permitted to front the road so the Centre forms an L shape range of shops with the foresighted provision of a central car park and landscaping. Being planned to have provision for forty shops with flats or showrooms above, the first phase of twenty shops opened in May 1961. These included several larger chain store premises and a parade of smaller shops covering most needs including a post office and banks. A wide canopy protected against the elements. The whole development which included a licenced restaurant (still under the same name) and branch library opened fully in December 1969.

There are now several convenience stores open on the estates situated in new build property.

The privately built estate at Boothstown during the 1960s was completed with the Stansfield shopping centre

SUPERMARKETS AND SHOPPING CENTERS

A sign of change came with Walkden`s first true supermarket. Opened in 1960 by Kenton`s, it was a single storey building at the junction of Campbell Street and Bolton Road. Huge queues formed on opening day as the promotion was for the first ten customers to get a free chicken, then, still a prized rare treat. The novelty and convenience of this type of retailing became infectious.

Wholesale development of the town centre began in early 1957 with Worsley Council starting discussions regarding a new shopping centre for Walkden with a national developer of such schemes. Closure of old industries such as the National Coal Board sales yard and demolition of Walkden Spinning Company`s New Mill released land susceptible to the national property developers.

Other run down industrial and domestic property and the Criterion Cinema together with the existing shops on the west of Bolton Road was demolished, leaving just the Evans Buildings and the area developed as an Arndale Shopping Precinct.

The first phase completed in 1965 and opened by a Coronation Street star, gave an open ended pedestrian square fronting Bolton Road. Many of the shops were occupied by branches of national multiples such as Woolworths, Halfords and Boots Chemist. Smaller units were taken by local traders some relocating from the demolished property. Building development included a covered market hall and extra small shops. Completion of the project in 1965 included the Civic Halls with its two concert halls bars and restaurant. It was re-named the Pembroke Hall in 1968.

A further phase came with building a hypermarket in 1973. Covering a vast area utilising the footprint of the old mill, it was briefly the largest such in the UK. Complete with a large car park, it set the seal on Walkden as a shopping centre. Opened by Scan Ltd. it became part of the Debenham group until the tenancy passed to Tesco in 1977 who expanded operations from a unit in the precinct.

Closure of the Pembroke Hall complex in 2001 brought its demolition, together with that of the attached Market Hall. This brought a complete re-modeling of the shopping centre. The original precinct area was roofed over and a line of shops built to replace the frontage of what had been the Pembroke Hall. This phase also involved a new frontage to the superstore which included a replica of the clock known as "Lady Bourke" which was arranged to strike thirteen at 1pm like its predecessor. Local historian Elsie Mullineux was invited to ascend in a hydraulic platform to ceremoniously affix the last bolt. Further work involved the filling in of a large portion of the Boatshed Reservoir to provide car parking space for an additional development of shops to the north of the existing.

To date, the latest phase saw the demolition of the superstore its adjacent shops and portions of the original precinct. The object was to create a superstore with car parking beneath, a replacement market hall fronting Manchester Road with retail space above. The large shops to the north were rebuilt together with a new range at a right angle to the existing. A fully paved surface level car park completed this phase in 2010.

Alas with the exception of the massive superstore, and likely because of its footfall in all other areas seems to have fallen short of expectation. A majority of the market hall units remained empty and likewise the retail spaces at the first floor level.

Marketed under the slogan "Walkden new town centre" most residents dryly remarked - can we please have the old one back!

RELIGION

CHURCH OF ENGLAND

Doyenne of Worsley churches is the ancient Chapel of St Mary the Virgin at Ellenbrook. Founded before 1270, it would have been Roman Catholic, at least until the reformation of the 1530s. Details of its life are given in part one.

Next oldest of the Anglican churches of the district is St Paul's Peel, Little Hulton. Its origins are in Peel Chapel built in 1760 by the Yates family of Peel Hall on land known as Dunkirk, Manchester Road. It was consecrated as a chapelry in the Parish of Deane. The chapelry became a district parish in March 1874. The old chapel was demolished and the foundation stone for a new church immediately to the south was laid by Lord Kenyon in August 1874. The church was consecrated in December 1876 and its tower added in 1897, a benefaction of the Weston family.

Details of the foundation of the three Anglican churches in Worsley are given in Part Three. Walkden got a temporary chapel of St George in 1838, Worsley the church of St Mark in 1846 followed by the 1848 church of St Paul Walkden, each of these being the gift of the first Earl Ellesmere. St. John the Baptist Little Hulton in 1873, came as the joint benefaction of the third Earl and Mr Harrison Blair, one supplying the land, the other the building.

St Mark's catchment area had little if any population growth such that no out station missions were needed for many years. They had a Sunday School in the hamlet of Edgefold from the 1850s which was replaced in 1938 by a multipurpose building that held church services on Sunday mornings, the faithful being called by the tolling of its single bell.

The three other churches serving the Walkden and Little Hulton districts had to cope with a population explosion and both out of the need for capacity and spirit of evangelism each spawned missions within their Parish.

First to do so was Walkden St Paul with a Mission Room on Brackley Street off Bolton Road in 1880. They then moved attention to the east of the parish by opening a Mission Room in a terraced house in Linnshaw in 1887 giving it the name St Barnabas Mission. This eventually moved to a prefabricated,

Iron Church building on Crompton Street in 1907, known locally as “the Tin Mission”, by the 1950s it was re-clad in asbestos in which form it remained in church use until the 1970s.

St John’s expanded their reach in 1895 with a Church Army mission on Cleggs Lane which doubled as a church facility as well. Not to be left out, St Paul’s Peel expanded with two prefabricated iron mission rooms in Greenheys and on Smithfold.

PRESBYTERIAN

The Wharton Presbyterian society rightly claims to be the oldest religious foundation in Little Hulton. The first recorded meeting was in 1662 using the Wharton Hall private chapel and pulpit. Eventually it became necessary to build their own chapel; this was done in 1723, in Dovehouse Field, Wharton Lane. This sufficed until 1867 when a day and Sunday school was added. Mining subsidence became more acute causing major repairs by 1889 at the cost of the colliery company. Alas, things got worse and by 1900 a complete new building had to be erected.

Mining subsidence eventually caused the society to abandon Wharton Lane to a new building, courtesy of the National Coal Board. This was on Highgate Lane, Little Hulton on the overspill estate which they opened in 1969. Strong ties were made with the Cleggs Lane Methodist church and Wharton formally joined the Methodist Circuit in 2004. Ten years later they sold the Highgate property and made a formal union with Cleggs Lane church.

METHODISTS

Back in the early 1800s Methodism was a Do-it-Yourself religion, relying heavily on small groups forming study classes in homes under the direction of a class leader. Services were led by a Minister travelling round a circuit of groups. Methodism in Worsley then had three major divisions. The original version developed by John Wesley and known as Wesleyan Methodists and breakaway groups known as Primitive Methodists and Independent Methodists. These groups faced each other in competition almost as sectarian as Catholic / Protestant divisions.

Eventually the division almost became one of class, with the Wesleyan persuasion tending to attract the managerial side of the population and often an Anglican style liturgy. Primitive Methodists became a working class movement and were so called because they wanted a return to a purer form of Methodism. They were often called “Ranters” for their enthusiastic preaching.

WESLEYAN METHODISTS

Such a group had formed in Worsley in 1784 by Mr. Burgess of Worsley corn mill who invited a preacher to take meetings in his house. The society grew to warrant holding services in the corn mill warehouse and joining the Manchester Methodist Circuit of preachers. The need was for their own premises so land on **BARTON ROAD** was leased from the landlord of the Grapes Hotel so as to open their plain brick chapel in 1801. Internally the chapel was arranged such that the majority of seating was subject to a rental charge known as pew rent, this particularly applied to the family “boxes” at the rear of the church. A balcony was added in 1821 bringing the seating capacity up to 275. Adjacent Sunday schools were erected in 1814. A substantial rebuild and extension of the church body together with a new school hall in 1878 and laid the basis for a society that existed until 2010.

These Barton Road Wesleyan Methodists had an evangelical outlook and sent missionaries throughout the district particularly Walkden Moor, the next most populous area after Worsley village. A nucleus of people at **WALKDEN MOOR** formed a class and commenced to hold preaching meetings in 1803, usually in the home of Mr. Pugh, a colliery official who lived in “Tupp Row”, cottages Bolton Road. This state of affairs continued for some years whilst continuity and finance allowed the completion of their own chapel on land leased from the Trustees of the Duke of Bridgewater. Opened in January 1811 the building on the south side of Manchester Road, near Tynesbank was a rather square, barn like building originally used as both chapel and school.

A schoolroom wing between the chapel and the New Inn had been added by 1840. In later years the chapel building became too small and dilapidated so funds were raised and a new, imposing church

with a gallery which they built on the opposite side of Manchester Road and opened in 1864. Of two storeys, the basement was large enough to host cycle displays. The main church body had both ground level and gallery seating for a total of some 600 people. Its completion allowed demolition of the old chapel and a new school extension to be built, opening in May 1873.

A Methodist society at **BOOTHSTOWN** moved from a nomadic existence into their first building in 1853. They obtained land at the junction of Chaddock Lane and Coupe Brow where a plain structure was erected as a dual purpose building. This sufficed until expansion was needed and a complete redesign of the site was made in 1872. A new church was built, fronting Coupe Brow, now Mosley Common Road, and the old chapel building demolished and rebuilt as a schoolroom. Changes to the school facilities were made over the years but the church continued in use with some updates until replaced with a multipurpose building in 2009.

The society at Walkden Moor church were concerned that the eastern side of Little Hulton was ill served by Methodists and begun meetings in a room at Hanging Bank, Manchester Road. Plans for a church on Streetgate were abandoned and land taken on **CLEGG LANE**. Works began in May 1878 with the chapel opened in August the same year.

A Sunday school was opened to the rear of the church in 1886. Strangely it was not until 1894 that an organ was got and extensions put in place. Adjacent land was purchased as a recreation ground in 1926. This land continued in community work for horticulture therapy from the 1980s and beyond. Merger with Wharton Presbyterian society in 2014 brought the total redevelopment of the site with a multipurpose community church building in 2015.

Walkden Moor Methodist society became too successful, even the new, huge chapel suffered overcrowding. Many members came from the eastern side of Walkden with a site at Manchester Road, Whittlebrook obtained but little action taken. Matters came to a head in 1884 when a church meeting became transformed into a protest meeting. Action was rapid the new premises to be known as **WHITTLEBROOK WESLEYAN** were opened in 1885. The result was a fine red brick and terracotta decorated frontage with a galleried interior. A Sunday school and hall were erected to the rear of the church.

This church was a stereotype Wesleyan society which soon got the nickname "Tall Hat Chapel". An unsurprising label as the elite nonconformists of the area made it their choice of venue. Four of Walkden's mill owners, their extended families and their senior staff, were members as were many other professional people. Local doctors, solicitor and registrar were all adherents.

With the union of the two Methodist divisions in 1933 this church took the name **TRINITY METHODIST**. Closure and merger with Memorial Road church came in 1962.

It is possible the Wesleyan community saw their last development as a form of Mission Room to be known as **WESLEY HALL**. Land was taken at the junction of Bolton Road and Brackley Street and plans made for an "Iron Church" in March 1889. These prefabricated buildings were the speciality of a company of that name who promised full erection and gas lighting within a month of going on site. This proved the case as the new society took possession in late April.

Evidently successful, the society took the step of demolition and rebuilding in brick in 1907. Its most striking feature was the ornate black and white brickwork of the gables. Falling membership brought closure in 1970.

PRIMITIVE METHODISTS

Primitive Methodist evangelists poached members of the Walkden Wesleyan society on starting their first classes in 1821. Meetings were held in the Sandhole, a quarry at Hill Top, eventually as winter approached they moved to a house in Blackleach Row. By 1827 and with membership of over forty a chapel was proposed. The group by now known as **WALKDEN PRIMITIVE METHODISTS** purchased

the old cock fighting pit in Little Hulton, and opened a new building there. After many extensions the site reached capacity and new land was obtained. The old site was cleared and became the Shamrock Tavern, The date stone of the church forms part of an inside wall of the Tavern.

During 1852 land had been obtained on the north side of Manchester Road near Hilton Lane but the society was "requested" by the Bridgewater Trust to move to the south side of the road.

The new site had a plain brick chapel in use by September that year together with an attached Sunday school. Increases in the roll meant the school being extended in 1864. Presumably for the same reason the church was replaced in 1876. This third church was a large, galleried, Italianate styled fronted building. With the responsibility of providing secular education, extra classrooms were added in 1887.

1821 also saw the beginnings of a society in the hamlet of New Manchester, **MOSLEY COMMON (THE CITY)** when a mission preached in the open air. A villager opened his barn loft for meetings, accessed by steps of grass sods. Preaching was so fervent that a neighbor, an Anglican erected a building on his own land which he leased them for £4 p.a. in 1824.

Trade and population decline in a small catchment had to wait for revivalist meetings helping to increase the membership such that a permanent building could be erected in 1868. A Sunday school was added in 1883.

Whilst several of the Walkden area churches had developed sports fields the Mosley Common society developed theirs with their own sweat and toil. A large adjacent site was bought in 1920 and ambitious plans made for cricket, bowls, tennis and a croquet lawn which eventually were created. Several years' excavation work, removing a tramway embankment and filling holes kept the men of the village occupied during the strikes of the period. Cricket began in 1924 and the Bowling Green opened in 1927 with the oldest resident 87 year old Mrs. Lloyd bowling the first wood.

Electricity came to the City and the church in 1931 who replaced their gas and candles immediately. This and the replacement of the coke heating boiler with electric tubular heating was all done by church members, many of which held senior positions with the local electricity supply company, leading to society being known as the "electric chapel".

Situated in what never became more than a small village the Mosley Common church relied heavily in later years on members from out of the village. Closure came in 1986 with the building being taken by a boat builder.

Workers from the Walkden Primitive Methodist church missioned the northern part of the district in 1865. Meetings were first held in a cottage on Worsley Road, then known as Brookhouse Lane and as the society grew rapidly and the need for premises became essential.

Land was acquired on Argyle Street and from the foundation stone being laid in September 1867 the opening ceremony took place in December that year. Known as **WORSLEY ROAD**, the single storey building held some 270 people with musical accompaniment from various instruments. A day school was commenced soon after but was not very successful, it was not until Mr. Kellett founded the school to be allied with the church to their mutual benefit.

Attendance at both church and school increased needing several extensions until the need for a larger church building became essential. It was erected on the land between the existing buildings and Worsley Road. Opened in November 1883, it was of brick in a vaguely gothic style with a tower at the north corner. Internally it could hold nearly 400 people in its centre nave and transepts and as it had a pulpit offset from centre, the seats in the nave were angled and those in the transepts curved so as to give the entire congregation a view of the preacher.

Disaster came in 1976 when the spire was struck by lightning. Repairs left a flat top tower. The chance was taken to re-model the interior; all done by church volunteers the work was completed in 1977. The original 1867 buildings were sold in 1985 and a lean to extension added to the church. Alas structural problems caused demolition of the church and a multi-purpose building replaced it in 1989. Set back from Worsley Road North it is on Argyle Street, just as its ancestor was.

The Primitive Methodist movement extended their presence into **WHITTLEBROOK** to the east of Walkden as housing development grew along Manchester Road. A group started meeting in a house on the south of the road by 1870. A chapel was founded in 1872 on the north side of the road, opposite Cawdor Street. It was a plain brick building with few luxuries, heating was by a central stove and music by a violin. Some years elapsed before an organ could be afforded. A schoolroom to the rear completed the initial development.

Extensions came in 1896 with additional schoolrooms and vestries. The only ornamentation on the chapel proved a mistake when the central gable finial blew down in 1928, demolishing the porch. Considering its size it took a leading part in all the Circuit activities, clearing the board of trophies at the Youth Festivals held in the 50s and 60s and mustering a full contingent for the Whit walks. Structural problems rather than attendance hastened the church closure in 1963; they amalgamated with the Memorial Road society.

Their last Primitive Methodist church came with a desire to have premises as central as possible in Walkden. In 1902 land containing old cottages at Rushton Hillock, off **MEMORIAL ROAD** was obtained. Two of the original cottages on the site served as a temporary schoolroom whilst a dual purpose building was erected and opened in 1904. A benefactor retained his interest in the society and bequeathed funds for a separate church. It was not to be until additional funds were raised that the new chapel was to open in 1929 alongside Rushton Street, a linking building joined the two. Two other churches, Trinity in 1962 and Whittlebrook in 1963 merged with Memorial Road and had the accommodation increased by roofing over the space between the existing buildings. Dry rot caused the demolition of the original building. The Methodist society left Memorial Road in 2002, the building being purchased by an evangelical sect THE CELESTIANS.

Whilst some of the older foundation churches were closing or amalgamating in the early 1960s some spirit of evangelism remained and targeted the Overspill estate being built along Kenyon Way in Little Hulton. It was first publicly announced in October 1958 and eventually land acquired at the south of the estate. In 1961 the City of Salford made a donation of £2,000 towards the building fund. To be known as **ST. GEORGE'S** the opening was planned for June 1963 but with perhaps a portent for the future, it had to be delayed due to vandalism. The venture was short lived. The building continued in use as a community venue and currently is the BETHANY WORSHIP CENTRE.

Throughout their active lives these societies maintained a spiritual function and a social life that reflected the period. Initially tea parties and social gatherings developed into concerts, musical events and often a traditional pantomime. The annual sermons days developed into a cult and competition as to its fund raising possibilities. Most of the churches had adjacent cricket fields with teams in local leagues.

Rivalries and an often icy distance at every level between the two branches took a long time to heal after the official union of the Wesleyan and Primitive Methodists in 1933. A mistake may have been made in apportioning the respective branches to separate Circuits thus continuing the sense of distance between the former societies. This undercurrent was still noticeable when the two circuits joined in 1961. This gave chance to remove an anomaly, two ex Primitive Methodist churches, Starcliffe and Queen Street whilst in Farnworth were part of the Walkden Circuit. The chance was taken to transfer them to a Farnworth circuit.

Of the Walkden societies some re-naming had to take place. The oldest simply dropped the word Wesleyan or Primitive, becoming Walkden Moor Methodist and Walkden Methodist. On the eastern front, the ex Wesleyan society became Trinity Methodist to differentiate it from Whittlebrook Methodist the ex Primitive chapel. Memorial Road simply dropped the term "Primitive" from its name.

Often even more traumatic for members than the union of faiths were the several mergers during the late 1950s and early 1960s caused by falling rolls and dilapidation. In 1964, Walkden Moor Methodist (ex Wesleyan) closed their church and amalgamated into their neighbour Walkden Methodist building (ex Primitive) re-naming their union St. Andrews Methodist Church. Both churches retaining their day

schools run by the local authority. Trinity (ex Whittlebrook Wesleyan) and Whittle brook (ex Primitive) closed and merged with Memorial Road, extensions being needed to accommodate the influx by roofing over the space between the church and school hall.

Completion of the new Walkden Methodist primary school in Prescott Street allowed clearance of the site adjacent to the New Inn and a multipurpose building with a central worship facility to be erected exactly where Walkden`s first Methodist chapel had been sited. This continued the name St Andrews until the amalgamation with Memorial Road Church in 2013 brought back the name Walkden Methodist. The wheel has come full circle.

Just one question: Why were both the mother chapels of Walkden Wesleyan and Walkden Primitive Methodists actually in Little Hulton?

ROE GREEN INDEPENDENT METHODIST Church evolved from a revolt against the increasingly autocratic organization of the Wesleyan Methodists. A pressure group had organized a conference in Oldham during 1805 advocating an independent society.

Several of their members found their way to Roe Green, then an isolated village, and preached their message in the open air in Tyldesley Fold using a convenient boulder as a pulpit. Soon meetings were being held in houses, one particular being Samuel Clarke of Littlewood. His son, Richard, enlarged the property in 1832 partly for business, a cloth warehouse on the ground floor and a preaching room above. He also allowed use of his existing warehouse in the grounds to be used as a Sunday school.

On Richard`s death in 1846 the growing church society realized the need not to be dependent on the good will of individuals for accommodation and discussed a building in 1852. This bore fruit with a brick chapel opening in 1855. The boulder once used as a pulpit and known as the Preaching Stone was transplanted from Tyldesley Fold to outside the new building. A Sunday school at the rear of the building opened in 1859. Clearly successful, this had to be extended twice in the 1870s. Similar problems of overcrowding came in the church when after much deliberation the chapel of 1855 was demolished and a replacement built incorporating the original site. With an ornate brick frontage, it opened in 1884 it cost the society £1,400, a not inconsiderable sum for a small village. Some additional income came with the adoption of the practice of Pew Rents, not abolished until 2000.

The school despite extensions was demolished and re built in 1904 with Mrs. J T Tyldesley wife of the cricket star laying the foundation stone. Electricity came to the village in 1925, the gas lamps being replaced immediately. The organ got an electric blower in 1928 causing unemployment to the young men who did the duty for 6d a day.

Considerable change came with the decision to demolish the large and expensive to maintain school in 1976. This was done and the land sold for housing with its replacement alongside the church opening in 1978.

Note must be made of Roe Green chapels wider claim to fame. No other church can claim to have THREE County and England cricket captains baptized there. What is equally of note that brothers John T Tyldesley and Ernest, players in the early 20th century were related to Michael Vaughan who achieved fame in the 21st century cricket world.

BAPTISTS

There once was in Little Hulton a sept of dissenters known as Particular Baptists. Meetings were held in a room in Edgefold in 1820, led by the Rev. John Penkethman (of whom little seems known), and the response was evidently sufficient to make the establishment of a chapel possible.

As early as 1824 they had established a church on the south side of Hilton Lane in the fields just west of Newearth Road. It was known as **PROVIDENCE CHAPEL** and the fields were known as Providence Fields.

Moses Bury, a colliery manager for the Bridgewater Trust, bought the land for the chapel from Mrs Earle and Mrs Gwilym, who were the grand-daughters and heiresses of the last male Mort of Wharton Hall. The building was capable of holding 500 people and a school-room underneath could provide for 300 children. The date stone said, PROVIDENCE CHAPEL 1824. The first minister was

called William Oram but he soon resigned and was replaced by William Gothard who was there in 1826. The chapel closed for a time when he left but it was reopened in 1837 when a new minister was found who was ordained in 1837.

Moses Bury may have borrowed money for that purpose from the Bridgewater Trustees because when he left their service he owed them money which he couldn't repay and they brought an action against him, one source suggests embezzlement. He had to sell the chapel and land in 1840 to repay his debt. He sold it to William Wilson, an auctioneer living at Old Warke, but for £200 less than he owed. William Wilson immediately sold it on to Lord Francis Egerton in 1840 and the chapel was demolished in that year.

After the demolition the stone was for a time at Primrose Farm on Hilton Lane near to the High Level Railway bridge. When that farm was demolished the stone was taken to Parsonage Farm in Tynes Bank. Eventually Jesse Wallwork, the managing director of Bridgewater Estates Ltd., had it taken to Drywood Hall, his house in Worsley, and there the stone remains. Salford archives have a pew rent book of Providence Chapel

A **STRICT BAPTIST** chapel opened on Street gate, Little Hulton in October 1880, apart from them celebrating a Jubilee in 1902 I have no other details.

There is the RAM St CHAPEL in Little Hulton perhaps that is it?

Walkden **CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH** came as a breakaway group dissatisfied with the Anglican St Paul's church. The original group of nine had expanded by October 1878 to take on the lease of the room above a sawmill on Harriet Street / Cecil Street which had a capacity of 320. The mission was promoted by working men who appointed a Mr Darnley as Pastor and operated under the name "Harriet Street Christian Church.

With continued growth of the society and conditions at Harriet Street described as little better than a hay loft the group both changed their name to Walkden Congregational Church and began their own church on Bolton Road. The foundation stones were laid in April 1882 for a building of stock brick to seat 720 and to cost £1,800 and erected by Mr Gerrard of Swinton. The opening ceremony came after only six months work on 25 November 1882 giving the society only four years old and with membership of 120 but a congregation of over 400 an imposing building at the centre of Walkden.

A Sunday school building and hall was added taking up the entire frontage of Smith Street between Bolton Road and Harriet Street and enabled a wide social life to be accommodated. Post second war a large timber hut was added on the south side of the church building to accommodate largely youth activities. In the mid 20th century the church had its longest serving minister in the Rev K Cairns. The society chose not to become part of the United Reform Church, voting in 1972 to remain Congregational.

Inevitably the large church building became too large for the congregation; it had already had most of its frontage land taken for road widening purposes. The last service was held in March 1991 with the dedication of its replacement on the footprint of the old school buildings the following week. To date this is still an active society.

The Roman Catholic community at St. Gregory Farnworth missioned the Little Hulton area in 1876 resulting in the foundation on Bridgewater Street of a plain gothic brick dual purpose chapel and school in 1878. This was dedicated to **ST. EDMUND King & Martyr**. Over the years mining subsidence took its toll with heavy timber shoring needed all the way round. It was finally declared a disgrace and demolished in 1892.

A presbytery had been built in 1891 and it was not until November 1894 that their new Church opened alongside. This was another "Iron Church", a prefabricated wood and corrugated iron structure. It did not last long, its demise provided one of the most comical fire-fighting efforts ever;-

On the night of Friday 11 November 1898 the church and contents were destroyed within two hours. Messages were sent for both the Walkden and Farnworth brigades. The big bell at Walkden roused the brigade who had to proceed with caution due to thick fog. Arriving, the hydrant was out of action

so breaking through fences they tried pumping from a pond but mud choked their pump. Farnworth engine hit the kerb at Hill Top where the superintendent was thrown over the horses and the pole connecting horses to engine broke. The men repaired it with their belts. Arriving, they were successful in putting out the embers.

The parish acted swiftly and a new, brick church opened in June 1900. A day school was erected adjacent to the church in 1902. This was replaced by a move to Queen Street Little Hulton in 1990.

Post second war there was a need for expansion and particularly to accommodate members from the Walkden area and a site sought. Fortunately, in 1951 a company were leaving a large property at the corner of Manchester Road and Barnside Avenue. This was taken and adapted for their use. The large house, The Hollies, became the Presbytery and the large but fairly modern barn used as a church which came into use in 1952 named **CHRIST the KING**.

Ten years later a church building was erected fronting Manchester Road on what had been the tennis courts. In line with their church custom it could not be consecrated until it was debt free which came in May 1977, the Bishop of Salford officiating. The ex church barn became a church social club finally being demolished in 2004.

The Catholic Church also saw the need to have provision for members moving into the Salford Overspill estates in Little Hulton. Land was got and the building to house **OUR LADY and LANCASHIRE MARTYS** opened in 1959 on Hallsted Avenue, off Kenyon Way

The **SALVATION ARMY** took possession of a Hall over a joinery workshop on Cecil Street, Walkden in November 1890. After using several premises including the Liberal Club they opened their own premises in 1926. This was a prefab type building on the then Manchester Road, now High Street next to Pembroke Street. They had a very intermittent use of the building closing for some years then reopening. Final closure came in 1963 with the clearance of the area to make way for the Arndale Centre and Pembroke Hall.

My great-grandfather Joseph Whittle was the catalyst behind the **WORKING MENS MISSION**. First, he and nine others began holding bible classes at his house on Chatsworth Street in November 1888. Within months the attendance grew to needing alternative premises. In January 1889 they adopted their title and began a range of mission activities.

By 1892 the unsuitability of rented premises became clear. In 1893 a plot of Land on Louisa Street was purchased from Bridgewater Trustees by Joseph Whittle, who was their wagon inspector, not a wealthy man. He sold £5 shares to twelve other men. The building of simple functional form cost £400 of which £150 had been raised; the thirteen shareholders took a loan of £250 at 5% to cover the rest. A remarkable achievement for working men of which colliers, spinners cloggers and labourers were the majority, no rich benefactors offered help!

A foundation stone was laid in July 1893 and the completed Mission Hall opened in November that year. Economic conditions were harsh at the time so it was deemed appropriate that no collection was taken. Gradually conditions improved and efforts made to pay off the debt by 1914 when an organ was installed. Membership and activities continued at a high level until the wholesale clearance of property in the Bolton Road area and influx of new residents caused a severe decline in membership by 1970. A non denominational mission the society had a very evangelical and temperance outlook so it was no surprise when the name was changed in that year to **WALKDEN EVANGELICAL CHURCH**. The society dragged itself up from oblivion eventually appointing a new full time – and paid, Pastor in 1986. The church closed in 1998.

The **Jehovahs Witness`s** established a Kingdom Hall on Highfield Road, Little Hulton, subsequently moving to larger premises on Old Lane, Little Hulton

Plymouth Brethren had meeting hall premises on what is now Newhart Grove, off Bridgewater Road. Established about 1975 it was demolished for the current housing about 2000.

There are "Happy Clappy" societies meeting in Worsley, The Celestians have Memorial Road Church, another uses the Guild Hall.

PART TEN

Social Life

PUBLIC HOUSES.

By the end of the nineteenth century the number of public houses in the Townships of Worsley and Little Hulton show a wide divergence of factors. Geographic spread, age of foundation, type of licence held and total numbers vary widely. In simple terms, Worsley which included Sindsley, Boothstown Ellenbrook and Walkden, with a population of 15,000 had nine public houses. Little Hulton with a population of 8,000 had thirty.

At Worsley, with the exception of the Ellesmere, built in 1887 to service the railway trade, all the other public houses were of a venerable age. They were established usually as a combined farm and hostelry along the major highways and grew in importance after the roads became Turnpikes. The Bridgewater, commonly known as the Grapes was a Coaching Inn with a regular schedule maintained until overtaken by rail. Because of this background of catering for travellers all seem to have had a full licence, serving both beer and spirits. There was perhaps another reason for the small number of such premises. It is noted that the Duke of Bridgewater was against the establishment of any further inns and the social reforming Earls of Ellesmere would also have prevented any development. So where are, or were these Public Houses spread across the several square miles of the Township of Worsley?

The White Horse on Worsley Road, Sindsley and the Bridgewater, originally facing the Courthouse until replaced by the present Bridgewater on Barton Road in 1903 together with the Cock on Walkden Road opposite Lumber Lane, served what had been known as the Lower Division of Worsley. The Cock was so named for having a stuffed game cock in a case on the bar. It also had the grave of Polly the mother of 200 piglets. The original Inn cum farm known as Meanley was re-built in 1928 but closed in 2020. It was immediately demolished to build a Care Home. Each of these three was sold by the fourth Earl of Ellesmere to Boddingtons brewery in 1924.

The four establishments serving what had been the Higher division of Worsley included the Ellesmere, on Walkden Road facing Birch Road. It was built by the stonemason Mr Jackson for the Mr Johnson who had eloped with his daughter, this closed in 1990 and after being used as offices are now apartments. The Bull's Head and the Stocks, once known as The Swan with two nicks, both on Manchester Road Walkden were owned by the Bridgewater Trust who sold the Bull to Threlfall's brewery who replaced the farm, veterinary surgery and miniscule public bar in 1885. They then sold the Stocks to the Bolton Brewery Magee Marshall who then re-built in 1898. Each was developed as quite prestigious establishments to cater for commercial travellers. Ellenbrook had the Red Lion which closed in 2000 and became a private residence. It did have some note, a guide book of 1870 cites it as having TK 1729 carved over the door and being "a pattern public house" it being the only one known to have a plural licence these usually only being granted to individuals. Here, three Taylor brothers jointly and severally have the licence. Always happy to sell to the sober, they do not permit drunkenness, gambling, swearing or those spending their wages.

Boothstown is catered for by two hostelrys, the Greyhound on Leigh Road, frequently the base of the famous Boothtown Botanical Society, having "Doctor" Evans garden alongside, together with the Royal Oak on Chaddock Lane.

There were at least seven off licences in the Walkden Area of which two had been built so as to have the requirements of a public house but remained as Off Licences. One on Hill Top Road, alongside John Street was owned by Groves & Whitnall brewery, it had a central doorway with rooms at each side. Never obtaining a full licence the tenant tried to get round the law by paying the house next door to have pint pots on hooks in his window frames. Clients collected one, got it filled and drank. The Magistrates were not impressed, fines were imposed several times. The other was on Brackley Street, built in 1878 in the manner of a public house. In 1893 the holder of the Off Licence applied to

the Brewster Sessions for a licence for consumption on the premises. As most of the witnesses called were of the temperance movement, the application was refused.

Most of the other Off Licencees fell foul of the law by permitting consumption on the premises in the majority of cases by serving itinerant workers of the railway constructions. A regular give away to the local constable was the line of carts drawn up outside.

As noted, Little Hulton by 1900 had thirty public houses. There were twenty-four of them sited on the 1.5 mile stretch of Manchester Road between Greenheys and Tynesbank. The remaining twelve were on streets off that highway.

Of these thirty, just five of them were like the Worsley hostelries fairly ancient foundations serving major highways and Turnpike Roads. They had full licences and many offered accommodation particularly after re-building in the 1890s. The Kenyon Arms was replaced alongside the old in 1962, that itself closing and being demolished to make way for a care home. The Antelope, alongside Peel Park Crescent was always known as "Poor Dick's" as the landlord of that name was notorious for providing little comfort in his establishment. This too was rebuilt in the 1930s, closed in 2004 to become a restaurant. Later named just The Bell, this house back in 1807 was known as the Blue Bell Inn, later as The Commercial. It was rebuilt in 1962 subsequently closing around 2000 to be repurposed as a nursery. The New Inn as originally built was by 1870 clearly serving more than local clientele as the then Innkeeper employed an Ostler to tend horses and several general servants. Rebuilt in 1897 it maintained its functions and changing to serve the motorised passing trade. Possibly the best appointed hostelry in Little Hulton at the time was that fully licensed Free Public House the Vulcan Inn alongside Lansdale Street Worsley Road. Outdoor it had stables, coachhouse and yards, indoor it provided Vault bar, Parlour bar, smoking room and the catering facilities with six bedrooms upstairs.

Of the other twenty-five licensed premises the majority were what were termed "beerhouses" which came into being as a result of the Beerhouse Act of 1830 which permitted any ratepayer to brew and sell beer on the premises on obtaining a two guinea excise licence. Most of the beerhouse keepers were listed as having a second occupation. A householder of any substance set up in business using the front room as the public space with a brewery in an outhouse. By the 1930s and certainly the 1950s most of these had gone out of business but left a mark where some premises had the frontage altered so as to look like a public house. Five of them did make the transition to becoming a fully licensed public house, frequently being rebuilt in the process. These included the Dun Mare, White Lion, Raven on Cleggs Lane and the Shamrock and Albion.

To service these outlets there was a Little Hulton brewery, next to Moorside House on Manchester Road. By 1861 William Cocker was trading as Little Hulton Brewery and employing three men. Additional help must have been taken for one unfortunate collier helping out, fell from a ladder into the boiling vat, his skin peeled off with his clothes the inquest was informed.

EVENTS

WHIT WALKS

Properly termed The Whitsuntide Procession of Witness, these few words stated what the event proclaimed. Church members could publicly display their affinity to their religion, this gradually diluted to showing a degree of affinity to a specific denomination or an individual church's society. In the late Victorian period when the mark of any pretence at respectability came with church attendance the turn out on these events was massive. Alas, at one time, these celebrations of Christian brotherhood and unity were anything but.

Sectarian rivalry or sheer bloody mindedness blighted the events for years. The main reason for the troubles was the number of churches of different denominations. By the 1880s the Walkden area had two Parish Churches each with a Mission establishment, six Methodist chapels, a Catholic church a Working Men's Mission and a Salvation Army.

Another problem was the geography of Walkden. All roads led to "the Monument", the junction of all the five main roads. Hence as each church group paraded on Whit Saturday clashes occurred, often getting violent.

As early as May 1893 came a report, "All the Churches are making preparations for the big day. Would it not be better if they all got together and went the same route in one procession instead of all doing different and thus meeting in conflict, giving the spectacle of two or three trying to break each other down which only causes discord." The following year a Kearsley Brass Band placed an advertisement, offering that "their Drum Major, at six foot three tall and 18 stone, would guarantee to break through any other procession."

Two attempts were made to resolve the unseemly spectacle but without success, no Church could agree on whom should lead the united procession. Another attempt was made by suggesting it should be settled by means of a draw, the Methodists refused to countenance this as it was gambling. The Parish Church refused to have anything to do with a united procession under any terms.

January 1897 brought "a circular from Whittlebrook Wesleyans to each Sunday school in Walkden, inviting them to a conference to consider all schools walking in one procession instead of participating in the unseemly jostling at the Monument as in previous years. It was also suggested the opportunity be taken for the whole procession, when gathered at the Monument, to sing the National Anthem as a hymn could not be agreed on."

Clearly this was successful as in May that year "The officers of the various Nonconformist Sunday Schools have arranged a joint procession. All will meet at their own schools and assemble at the Monument at 2.30pm. After the National Anthem the procession will walk up Bolton Road to Wesley Hall, back and along Wardley Street to the Primitive Methodists, Little Hulton, return to the Monument, down Memorial Road to Rushton Hillock, up Walkden Road, Manchester Road to Whittlebrook Primitives and back to the Monument to disperse to their own schools for tea and field sports."

By the following year, 1898, an amicable order of precedence had been arranged for the Nonconformist Churches to lead the procession in their turn, based on the date of their foundation it meant that as Wesleyans had led previously Walkden Primitives would lead. Unfortunately, this still left the Parish Church and the Catholic Church having separate processions. It was only in 1947 when the Parish Church joined the united procession, only on condition they led on alternate years.

The event took a great deal of organisation within the individual church. Most engaged a brass band, the large banners got out of storage and the after walk seated meal for adults with a bun fight for children arranged. Consider that the event occupied the whole width of Manchester Road, particularly round the monument still in situ at the crossroads, for a whole afternoon, traffic control was a priority arrangement. This was one event that children and particularly boys did not mind participating in due to the custom of family members and their friends dashing out from the crowd to thrust a coin into a pocket of the new outfit being worn, presumably for good luck, others said it was to pay for the outfit, to the children it was "a nice little earner".

As the nineteen sixties wore on the walks were still popular but there was a gradual imbalance of walkers to spectators. By the seventies dwindling church attendance and traffic considerations brought the custom to an end. For purely geographic reasons the Parish Church of St Paul in Little Hulton, Boothstown Methodists and Roe Green Independent Methodists had their own processions round their immediate area. Because they used secondary roads their processions continued for some years.

HOLIDAYS – The Wakes Week

Wakes began as a semi religious festival but with increasing industrialisation developed into a summer holiday when the "hands" took unpaid time off generally accepted by employers as a time for maintenance work. With a formal agreement being made in 1906 regularising the unpaid holiday, implemented in 1907 it guaranteed twelve days annual unpaid holiday, to include Bank Holidays laying the pattern for wakes week holidays.

Walkden was well placed to take advantage of both the informal and then the regularised holiday time by having railway connections to the principal Lancashire coastal resorts. Bank holiday day trips were popular. On the August holiday of 1896 bookings from Walkden Station were 1,540 persons on the Saturday, 640 by excursion train and 700 by scheduled train.

Back in 1907 when a lot of the globe was still painted red our Lancashire had a centralised approach as to when annual holidays were taken. Known as The Wakes, an entire town surrendered work for a week of leisure. As to when that week occurred had become formalised at the behest of the industrial masters. A rota had been established such that each major cotton town and its satellites had their own week. That for Bolton, which included Walkden and Worsley began on **“the Friday preceding the last Saturday in June.”**

Further legislation in 1938 brought the Holidays with Pay Act; its effect really came into full use after the Second World War. People had become used to doing things communally and the practice continued into holiday planning in the nineteen fifties and beyond.

Preparations for The Holidays began on the Friday after returning to work. That came with your first contribution to the employee run Holiday Savings Fund, known informally as the Diddlum club. By the number of club treasurers absconding with the loot, the term was perhaps not a jest. The second anticipation, a fortnight before freedom, came for workers on Piecework. Known as Bull Week, everyone who got paid on that basis worked to top capacity and as much overtime as available to ensure that the wage paid on holiday Friday was maxed out.

The vast majority disappeared to whichever resort they preferred from raucous Blackpool to demure Morecambe or even further afield for the more affluent. The immediate post war years were the heyday of the Holiday Camps, an early form of an all inclusive package. Before car owning, motor coach or steam train was the only option. Pre booking with the local operator was essential. On the Saturday morning families gathered in the scrum of the boarding point. Dad was encumbered with the one suitcase containing everything needed for the week, a miracle of frugal packing. Arriving to cheers all disembarked and the coach re-filled with returnees possibly to another town.

Until the 1960s semi formal clothes were still the norm, jacket, collar and tie on the beach was considered normal. Ladies had the luxury of leaving stockings off. Beach wear for children usually involved the dreaded knitted swim suit that once wet sagged alarmingly.

This did leave staycation victims. Those involved with industrial maintenance relied on the week to complete planned work. Engineers installed or reconditioned machinery, taking their holiday prior to the main shutdown. Others, volunteers from the workforce got extra pay being taken on to whitewash the interior of cotton mill building as required under the Factories act. Some, improvident could not afford going away.

Whatever the reason, stay-at-homes suffered the effects of a lockdown. In 2020 the country had a government imposed Lockdown, that imposed by employer federations and chambers of trade for the local holiday week was much more severe. Literally, every employer, school and service closed for business, even national companies.

Obtaining food became a logistic nightmare. Those living in Walkden with Dad on maintenance duties meant Mum having to get the trolley bus to Swinton to buy bread and other foods virtually daily. Newspapers were available but only sold from a kerbside pitch near the Monument, or outside the normal newsagent giving an income for the stay-at-home running it! Of course the cinemas closed as well. Then, as with this lockdown we noticed the environmental improvement. A family friend was Sexton of Bolton Parish Church and the treat was to go to the top of the tower to look out over the moors, the only time in the year it could be done.

In retrospect Worsley children liked the system; we essentially got an extra two weeks school holiday, went back for a fortnight then had the national five week break. We also got a bonus, post-war Bolton had negotiated an autumn holiday, the first three working days of September, and we got that as well. There were some entertainments laid on for children on the parks. Punch and Judy was popular with novelty races to disperse excess energy. Back then, kids played out anyway, in Worsley Woods, and furtively cycling the canal towpath, then forbidden by the company.

It took the demise of the cotton industry and changing expectations to abolish the Wakes Week system. By the early 1970s newspapers were still being sold kerbside with works and shops often informally stuck to the past but eventually rationalising with school terms and national patterns brought an end to the reign of King Cotton's holidays.

ROSE QUEEN CARNIVALS

The first Walkden Rose Queen event was in June 1909 when Miss Linda Mullineux had the honour. Her retinue was enhanced by the guard of honour provided by the Little Hulton Territorial's in full kit. Alas this was not the first such event in Worsley Township as Roe Green Independent Methodist had Rose Queen parades for several years previously. That at Walkden became an annual event, the 1911 parade raising £110 for local charities. There was a lay off during the war years, resuming in 1923 with Alice Lythgoe crowned Queen. A touch of modernity came in June 1926 with the closing ceremony held on the Harriett Street enclosure with several Jazz bands in attendance. The theme continued the following year with the parade including a group of penny farthing bikes, Walkden Brass Band, the Manchester Scottish Pipe Band and Jazz bands provided the music. Holding of an annual Rose Queen Carnival event ceased in 1936.

Walkden Chamber of Trade promoted the revival of the event to celebrate Coronation Year. After the drenching the Coronation celebrations endured the Carnival in July went ahead. It was planned to use a hundred year old horse drawn carriage to convey Doris Grundy. Soon after setting out it overturned, no injuries but the parade continued with her in a private car. These events were clearly a success as it was reported in 1963 that since the revival £3,750 had been raised for charities. The final Rose Queen Carnival was in 1969 after which the Committee agreed to wind up its affairs.

These events involved large numbers of people as Rose Queen retinue, her flower girls and train bearers, a Scotch guard, heralds and a standard bearer. Recruiting girls was easy, as soon as anybody mentioned "carnival", boys tried to disappear. Rehearsals were held for weeks in the Emlyn Hall under the supervision of Mrs Edith Pennington. After the 1953 fiasco local haulage firms provided a decorated low loader for the Queen and attendants with flat back Lorries for the others.

RAIN STOPPED PLAY.

All of the above events and others beside were held subject to the variety of the British weather.

Rain or sun was definitely in the lap of the Gods. Do not be led to believe the sun always shone, many family album holiday snaps show beach scenes of people in Macintosh and cap.

Two Civic events were frequently hit. Civic Sunday with the new Council Chairman, Councillors, officers and organisations parading from the Town Hall to the selected church headed by a band did get some weather disruption. Worse affected due to the date was the annual Remembrance Day parade. Normally parading from the Town Hall to Walkden Parish Church and the memorial in Parr Fold, many events had to have the whole event held in the Town Hall with a quick wreath laying ceremony.

Something like a quarter of the Whit Processions of Witness was weather affected. At the worst, the whole event was cancelled but in a number of cases individual churches braved the elements under coats and brollies for a quick walk in their immediate neighbourhood. Several Rose Queen events suffered likewise. Perhaps the most unlucky was the event of 1954. Washed out completely in June, two other dates were found to clash with other events and had to be called off, the last attempt in August had to be abandoned due to persistent hail storms.

YOUTH.

Youth is a word that has altered its demographic over the last seventy years or so. Originally it was used to describe a person out of childhood but before gaining their majority. Since the mid 1950s it has become used to collectively encompass the age range. Changes in society such as working age and hours, education opportunities and a much less restrictive authority brought the phenomenon known as the teenager. For nearly a hundred and fifty years churches and public spirited individuals channelled adolescent energy into their organisations before civic facilities started to be provided.

One of the earliest provisions of activities for the youngsters of Worsley came with the formation of a Lads Club in January 1898. Promoted by a committee of the great and the good of the village, the Superintendent Trustee placed the Yeomanry Drill Room in the old corn mill at its disposal. It was equipped with the necessary gym equipment and charging a nominal 1d per week thirty boys had given their names to join. Once open the membership soon exceeded a hundred. How long this venture lasted is uncertain as the venue was demolished in 1904.

UNIFORMED ORGANISATIONS

BOYS BRIGADES

First of these was the Boys Brigade, a movement founded in 1883 in Scotland, which also became the first such to begin membership in Worsley. One of its aims was the promotion of outdoor activity with camping skills high on the agenda. January 1893 saw a group formed at Walkden Wesleyan School, with about fifty present on the first night and since then a large number of lads aged over twelve became members. This was followed in the February by one at St. Paul's, parish church school when about sixty boys aged twelve to seventeen met to consider the desirability of forming a Brigade. Eventually fifty youths enrolled and had their first drill instruction immediately afterwards under the Rev. E Poole, Captain and Drill Instructor. A Brigade had formed at St. John the Baptist but had ceased operating when in March 1901 a meeting was held with the object of resuscitating the Brigade; twenty-six names of intending members were received.

Within a few years a similar movement, the Church Lads Brigade formed units locally. That based at St. Paul's Peel was presumably well established when, in March 1900 they hosted a lantern slide show for the benefit of their camping out fund. It is possible there was name confusion with the report of August 1901 noting that Walkden Church Lads Brigade had returned after a week's camp at the south shore, Blackpool having had a really good time.

SCOUT ASSOCIATION.

With the Boys Brigade drawing heavily on the contents of the book "Scouting for Boys" written by Baden Powell, boys soon began forming their own groups along the lines of its details. B-P took the step of regularising these in forming the Scout Association in 1908.

There was a significant adoption of the movement in the Worsley area, a group becoming known as the 1st Worsley registered in 1909 and the 1st Little Hulton group in May 1910. Numbers were such that a sports day held in August 1911 at Drywood Hall attracted over 300 boys. B-P came to the district in September 1912 speaking at a rally at Farnworth, the 1st Worsley and 1st and 2nd Little Hulton groups formed a procession to attend. By 1916 Boothstown had a scout group who could boast having a band.

The movement evolved a structure of Counties and Districts each with a Commissioner, then Groups which could have any or all of the age related sections, Wolf Cubs, Scouts, Senior Scouts and Rover Scouts. The Worsley area was split between the Eccles and Farnworth Scout Districts, the division being roughly the East Lancs. Road. Most of the earliest Groups were an independent foundation, not aligned to any other body and as such had quite a nomadic existence before securing and owning a permanent base. Typical of these were the 1st Worsley eventually gaining land off Old Clough Lane, the 2nd Worsley securing tenancy of the Oil Stores and 1st Little Hulton with land off St. Mary's Road. Other Groups were sponsored and accommodated by the various churches.

With the Outdoor life ethos local scouting had the indulgence of the local landowners giving permission to camp. Little Hulton Groups relied on the use of Lord Kenyon's Madams Wood for camping and presumably Bridgewater Estates had a similar arrangement up to the 1940s. In 1942 agreement was reached on the leasing of a portion of the then derelict New Hall Grounds, becoming the Middlewood Campsite. The site hosted a County Rally in 1946 which was visited by the Chief Scout, Lord Rowallan. Improvements were constantly made to facilities with water, sanitation and covered accommodation developed. These were provided by both the camp volunteer staff and a Manpower Services project in 1983-4. The site closed in 2016 to make way for the RHS Bridgewater Garden project, a nearby site, Hollin Wood being its replacement.

Change within the movement came in 1967 with a change of both organisational structure and most visibly the uniform. Out went the shorts and large hat and also brought the lack of provision for late teens as well as forcing a retirement age on leaders. Finally Worsley became an autonomous District. Inevitably, over the years Groups waxed and waned to the point of extinction usually due to a leadership shortage. At the end of the twentieth century Worsley scout District had nine groups, four of which were church sponsored. Falling numbers in all but the youngest age sections, Beavers and Cubs added to a leader crisis brought contraction. Amalgamation of all the Scout Districts on the West side of Manchester formed the "Ellesmere" District. So severe was the contraction that by 2020 only three of the nine Worsley Groups were still operational.

YOUTH CLUBS.

Civic provision of activities and facilities for its younger citizens first came IN 1943 with the opening of s Sunday Youth Club in the old Liberal Club building on Memorial Road. Worsley Council opened a Youth Club based in the Birch Road School. Known as Worsley Service of Youth when opened in 1952, it was soon re-named Walkden Youth Centre. By January 1955 it was to become a boys only club because of the poor attendance of girls who "only wanted to dance." Possibly their last joint action was a campaign for Sunday opening of the two cinemas in Walkden.

Since then provision has been made at the several Community Centres operated by Worsley and later Salford Councils. Both authorities funded full time Youth Workers.

OUTDOORS.

PUBLIC PARKS.

The first Earl of Ellesmere had permitted the large area of land bounded by Bolton Road and what became Alexandra Road and Granville Street to be used as a recreation ground in 1841. By the following year pathways had been laid and the colliers pay office established there. The grounds proved to be of benefit to both mining and estate workers communities. Alas, by the 1860s the third Earl permitted the Bridgewater Trust to lease large portions of this land for the new industry, cotton mills. This reduced the former extent to covering slightly more than the present St. Mary's Park.

Boothstown Recreation Ground was opened in February 1890 taking 6.5 acres alongside the highway from Ellenbrook towards Manchester. The facility is to be run by a committee appointed by the residents. A company were still engaged in erecting swings on the site. Eventually six pairs of swings, two horizontal bars and two see-saws were installed. The cricket crease was thirty yards square and a bowling green under construction. The committee spent £20 on this apparatus.

Also in 1890 there was a plan for a joint Little Hulton and Walkden Recreation Ground, the land a gift of the Bridgewater Trust to be bounded by Algernon Street, Grosvenor Street (later Alexandra Rd.) and two other streets yet to be built. High powered meetings of the Local Boards and the Barton Authority to discuss this ensued resulting in them accepting the offer. The Local Board gained Government sanction to borrow £650 to fence and lay out the ground. Work proceeded through 1892 with strict sex and Local Authority discrimination! The girl's swings being in the Walkden part and the boys in Little Hulton. A solid concrete foundation held two sets of six swings, the smaller set for the little ones, and a see-saw, the boys being similarly catered for. All these were on iron supports so they could not be cut away or broken by mischievous lads.

It certainly proved its popularity with weekly band concerts but still awaiting a proper bandstand which was erected in September 1893. The following Easter Monday the park opened at 6.45am with a flag hoisted, by 7am the swings were full and did not stop until 7pm. During the day about 2,000 people attended with both cricket and football matches being played. The keeper had nearly completed the flower bed layout.

Possibly the largest event it hosted was the Music Festival in August 1910 when a crowd estimates as between 7,000 and 8,000 attended. Two brass bands and a combined Walkden, Farnworth and Bolton Male Voice Choir of 90 voices performed.

New tennis courts and a bowling green were opened in June 1927. Walkden and Little Hulton Joint Recreation Ground's name was officially changed to St. Mary's Park in May 1931 when a new bandstand was installed. The area was called St. Mary's Park before it was enclosed in 1894.

In May 1905 the Earl of Ellesmere presented eight acres of land near Walkden low level station on Walkden Road, for a public recreation ground, with part of the site reserved for public offices. Known as Parr Fold Park, several covenants were placed on the land, cricket was permitted but football and a bowling green was prohibited. Whilst bands were allowed a permanent bandstand was not, with recourse being made to temporary staging of scaffold planks to hold the musicians. This regularly caused problems with children going on the platform causing the unsecured planks to move resulting in players losing teeth. Use of a temporary platform continued for nearly twenty years before a resolution came.

During 1928 Worsley Urban District Council purchased outright a further 35 acres of land to extend Parr Fold Park through to the then Hilton Lane, re-named Park Road and south to Edgefold Road. Work began in December to lay out facilities. The grand opening of the extension came in May 1930 with a speech by the Council Chairman from the new bandstand. Walkden Band then occupied it to give a concert. Included in the facilities were six tennis courts and a large children's playground equipped with a paddling pool, a huge slide, swings, roundabout and rocking horse with a cast iron head. All this on a concrete surface!! In progress but delayed for horticultural reasons were a putting green, croquet lawn and a bowling green which opened in May 1931. Worsley Council Parks Department established their central nursery at Parr Fold with extensive greenhouses to supply all bedding plants for parks and civic buildings.

Worsley Civic War Memorial, an obelisk of polished grey granite is situated at the Walkden Road entrance. It was unveiled at the 1925 Armistice Day commemoration by a war widow. Provision of a suitable memorial to WW2 casualties was decided at a public meeting in March 1948, it to be a Garden of Remembrance in Parr Fold Park. Costing £1,650 of public subscription, it was opened in June 1950 at a dedication service by Walkden & Worsley churches.

Change came in 1956 with the adjoining Technical College taking what had been the playground for an extension, a facility closed in 2010 and the site used for housing. The playground, on a much reduced scale was moved to near the rockery until a larger unit was provided near the Rutland Road entrance. Some modernity came with the introduction of a skateboard park, a well used facility, soon joined by an outdoor gym. With funding under pressure the park suffered minimum maintenance a group known as The Friends of Parr Fold have done sterling work rehabilitating the layout with a community orchard and sustainable planting. Their efforts were rewarded by the Park gaining Green Flag Status in 2022.

PEEL PARK

Opened in July 1936 by Councillor Joseph Eastham it had bowling and tennis facilities complete with a pavilion. A large grassed area houses football and rugby pitches. Its children's play area is central to the site. Since 2000, improvements have been made to the play area and a replacement, brick built multi-purpose pavilion at the Manchester Road entrance.

WOODS, LOOPS AND LEACHES

By the end of the twentieth century, Worsley, despite the amount of housing development taking open land, still has an incredible wealth of public open space.

Moves to open Worsley Woods to the public began soon after the second war when after starting action, a body called Swinton and Pendlebury and Worsley Amenity Society launched an appeal for £7,000 to buy the area round Warke Dam. Fruition came in September 1951 when Old Warke Dam and Worsley Woodlands were handed over to the public, the climax of a long campaign. Alas within a year the woodlands were the scene of many serious cases of vandalism beyond the Societies ability to deal with so the site was taken over as a joint venture by Worsley and Swinton Councils. The Dam was dredged in 1957 and subsequent improvements to access by Salford Council and community groups have enhanced usage.

With the closure of two British Rail tracks and abandonment of a whole network of colliery lines left the track-bed being used for informal recreation. In January 1971 Worsley Council Parks Committee discussed plans for a linear park to run for three and a half miles through the district using the course of the disused low level railway. The cost was estimated at £58,000. Fortunately the project went ahead and over several years additional redundant lines were added under the auspices of Salford Council. The first phase, known as the Roe Green route now runs from Monton to Ashton Field. The Tyldesley route joins Roe Green to Ellenbrook at Newearth Road. A Linnysshaw section originally ran from Ashton Field to the A6 near Old Clough but has since been extended through Little Hulton. The final section known as Ellenbrook uses the mineral line from Tynesbank to Mather Fold. Originally surfaced with crushed stone in the years 2005 – 17 the network has gained a resin bonded surface which together with improved access ramps allows the 16km (25mile) network to be enjoyed.

Another casualty of the decline of the coal industry was the chain of reservoirs. Largest of these, Blackleach, whilst legally used by an angling club had become used for informal recreation and wholesale anti social behaviour. By 1987 with the site threatened with development a local campaign began to maintain the site as open space. Protracted negotiations between British Coal and Salford Council hit many hurdles but in March 1991 the Blackleach Reservoir and land passed to the ownership of the Council and the idea of having a Country Park started to become a reality. Celebration came in 1997 with an extravaganza of fire music and water to showcase the achievement of transforming an industrial slum into what has become an award winning recreational area.

SPORTS CLUBS.

Whilst there had been a Quoits Club based at the Bridgewater Hotel – the Grapes in the early nineteenth century cricket clubs have been the most venerable to survive. Senior of these is the Worsley Club, formed in 1845 with the backing of the first Earl of Ellesmere eventually settling on a ground adjacent to the Old Hall Farm. In later years the third Earl was a playing member whenever he was resident in Worsley. They decided to retain the services of a Richard Whitely as professional in 1895. A Little Hulton Cricket Club was formed by 1879, based at The Antelope, known as “Poor Dicks”. It may be the origin of the successful club based on the Old Vicarage Ground off Manchester Road. Roe Green Cricket Club began in 1881 on the land it still occupies. This club was the home of the England players, J.T and E Tyldesley. It’s other claim to fame is opening the first licenced bar in Roe Green in 1968. Walkden Cricket Club started life in 1899 on land off Harriett Street. During the second war the ground became known as the Oval as the gas holder erected by the adjacent chemical works mirrored the more famous London ground.

All of these became founder members of all the local leagues and associations and maintain teams at every level including youth sides.

By the 1890s at least four of the Methodist churches had formed clubs and three succeeded in obtaining grounds. Walkden Methodist and Walkden Moor fields were to the south of their church and school respectively on Manchester Road, Little Hulton. Trinity Methodist’s field was immediately adjacent to the church. Whittlebrook chapel had grounds at several venues before closure pre second war. The other three, successful in local leagues ceased with the closure of their churches, the land sold for housing.

Walkden had a very strong Rugby team with membership of the Lancashire League, giving fixtures against such as Wigan, St. Helens and Workington. Possibly their most notable match came in 1889 against a touring team of Maoris (the All Blacks) who just scraped a victory before a crowd of 3,500. By August 1890 their ground off what is now Egerton Road could boast a grandstand funded by shareholders. All the local players were miners or quarrymen, working a shift on Saturday morning before play. Several were poached, at least one going to Exeter club.

As well as Park Bowling Green's two other centres formed. The Walkden Co-op Guild Hall opened their Bowling Green and tennis courts alongside Wilfred Road in 1924. Their first pavilion was the temporary shop they had used to begin trading in Boothstown. The shale courts have fallen into disuse but the Bowling Green is now the only one maintained by Salford Council in Walkden.

The bowling club at Beesley Green began to use their crown green in March 1938 with Ernest Tyldesley, the cricketer opening play.

BRASS BANDS.

Walkden had brass bands often of an ephemeral nature from the 1890s. By the turn of the century "Walkden Band" is reported in the press as accompanying Whit Walks and other events. By the 1920s it had become Walkden Prize Band. It rehearsed in the Parish Church schoolroom until in June 1934 the band on the winding up of St Pauls church sports club, purchased their hut. It moved to many sites until settling at Toppings Bridge, Worsley Road North. Permanent premises came after fund raising which began in 1948 brought the opening of their £3,000 band room sited off Worsley Road. The band was very successful and eventually merged with another to become the Walkden and Farnworth Band.

INDOOR ACTIVITIES

MUSIC SOCIETIES

Walkden had two such societies who complemented each other in their branch of music. Once firmly established both were of the sort of status where the principals of the Manchester Halle choir and orchestra could be engaged as guests.

The Orchestral Society formed in 1879 had some forty regular players covering all the usual instruments. They rehearsed in the infant's school and performed in chapels, the Co-op Hall and eventually found a home at the Town Hall. The Choral Society of 1891 had a similar growth and by the time of their first concert in the newly opened Town Hall in 1912 they advertised a Band and Chorus of Seventy performers.

Just prior to the Second World War, the Worsley Amateur Operatic Society formed, followed in 1943 by the Worsley Art and Music Society. The two societies merged in 1949 but a split back to the two societies came when the opera section of the Art and Music Society broke away to form the Worsley Opera Group. They had several productions at the Civic, later the Pembroke Halls. A group known as the Cecelian Singers formed in 1953 with a reputed forty voices.

AMATEUR DRAMATICS

From early in the twentieth century virtually every nonconformist Sunday School Hall had a platform at one end and it was realised these could be used to stage productions. Originally religion based such as Nativity Plays they moved to the secular. Most popular in terms of fund raising was the traditional Pantomime involving all sections of the Church community as well as being a fund raiser. Several Sunday schools began to add popular Dramas to the calendar. Possibly the person most prolific at these ventures was the Industrial Chemist turned historian, Frank Mullineux when the local press reported on his fiftieth production in 1952. The Labour Party building, the Emlyn Hall had a thriving drama group for many years.

CINEMAS

Little Hulton Co-op Hall began showing films about 1920. Facilities were basic with, at the front the Cheap Seats, several rows of wooden forms priced at twopence-hapenny. (2.5d) Behind were the rows of wooden chairs costing fourpence with the fivepennies as rows of leather covered forms. Performances began with the caretaker turning off the overhead gas lights so as to view a flickering picture. At the end of the reel the lights were turned on – and off again until all reels had been shown, all the reels being accompanied by a pianist to provide suitable background effects. There were Saturday Penny Rush events but an aspect of the evening events would be incredulous to a modern teenager. Promptly at 9pm a notice was displayed on the screen: “Cinematograph Act 1916 – All children under the age of 16 unless accompanied by parent or guardian must now leave the Hall.” The other long forgotten but then fully accepted action and an indictment on the age, would be the voices of “Readers”, boys who went with elderly relatives or family friends to whisper into the ears of illiterate patrons who could not read the film captions.

Walkden Co-op Hall attempted to provide a venue for the showings of films; clearly this fell foul of officialdom because in March 1911 Worsley Council refused a Cinematograph Licence for the Hall.

All was well for the following October they passed plans for a cinema on Manchester Road. Called The Palace, it showed silent films, complete with manic pianist until it showed Walkden’s first “Talkie” from Monday July 14th 1930. It was titled “Gold Diggers of Broadway” and was followed by “Say it with Songs” an Al Jolson film.

The second Walkden Cinema, The Criterion, usually known as The Crit, opened on Bolton Road in November 1922. The opening film was titled “Theodora” but it may not have been a talkie as the report tells the captions were synchronised by the Criterion Quartet. The next year a Billiard Hall opened on the ground floor. The Criterion was the first to close, in 1958, lying derelict until the developments of the 1960s. The Palace converted to Bingo in 1968 before closing for site re-development in 1978.

A further venture came with the redevelopment in 1972 of what had been the Bowling Alley of 1968, into the Unit Four Cinema with four separate mini cinemas.

BATHS

There had been campaigns to have a public baths in Worsley for over forty years. Every time there was a fatality of swimmer in one of the many mill lodges the demand grew stronger. At the height of summer the Boatshed Lodge was a popular bathing spot for colliers and spinners who worked barefoot to get clean before going home. Events came to a head in August 1934 when the Council were made aware of “indecent and disgraceful conduct” taking place at Sandhole Colliery Lodge. Used as a bathing pool it is also visited by people from outside the district. The Council heard that many of the women had entered the water in the nude during mixed bathing. The area was said to be practically a nudist colony.

Finally, Walkden Baths, first mooted forty years ago opened in June 1937. It had a 25 yard pool and a range of male and female slipper baths to cater for the majority who did not have a bath at home. It is recorded that 3.000 swimmers, bathers and spectators went through the turnstiles in the first week.

At some date in the 1950s Walkden baths installed an Aerotone unit, one of only two in the Manchester area, (Victoria baths has the other). This unit is essentially a supercharged Jacuzzi. The user climbs, or is lowered, into a large steel chamber to sit on a perforated stool. An operator sits alongside adjusting the control valves to give whatever treatment is desired.

Modernisation came in 1974 with the conversion of the old pool into two training pools and the addition of a 50m pool and viewing gallery. Enhanced changing facilities were also provided and the Aerotone and slipper baths removed.

The site became Worsley Leisure Centre in 2018. A steam room and sauna were added alongside the pool and a new two storey range of buildings alongside the pool contain a multipurpose gym and dance and fitness suites.

COMMUNITY CENTRES.

Both Worsley Council and its successor, Salford Council have purchased many buildings and repurposed them for community use. Worsley purchased the Walkden Co-op Guild Hall and sports pitches in 1959 for £6,000. It opened for use in April 1961. A short lived venture was the Council taking over the heavily vandalised ex St Georges Chapel on Kenyon Way to convert to community use in 1970. It closed as such in 1989. Two of the smaller church schools were bought, Beesley Green in 1971 and St John`s Ellesmere in 1975.

LIBRARIES.

For decades the Bridgewater Trust or the Ellesmere family provided facilities for reading both news and literature, these were in addition to the network of night school classes they provided. Usually described as Reading Rooms they often occupied a full building. That at Worsley first used a building alongside the Yard and after the changes there became established in what is known as The Lantern Gallery, off the path from Worsley Road to the Packet House. It gradually expanded its scope to eventually becoming a library. The 3rd Earl established two reading rooms in the Little Hulton Area as outstations of St. John the Baptist and of Blair School. The Reading Room at Walkden was based in the Church Institute, a building where the Lady Ellesmere memorial now stands. It had a varied life with frequent closures due to disagreements over its running. The Earl re-establishing it under new officers calmed the dissent – until the next time.

Lancashire County Council bought the large property “Brentwood” on Memorial Road, which had been home to the local mill owner Andrew Rothwell to convert to a branch library. It opened in August 1935 and had the Adult and reference sections on the ground floor with the children`s department upstairs. This facility became inadequate to serve the growing population and a replacement was planned for the same site. Brentwood closed in May 1964 with the stock moving to temporary premises in the schoolroom of Trinity Methodists on Manchester Road.

Its replacement was to a Swedish style building, flat roofed and all glass curtain walls. The main lending library was one large space with two smaller rooms at a lower level accessed by a short stair, one as a reference library the other the children`s department. A mezzanine floor held an exhibition space and staff accommodation. Externally, the frontage to memorial Road included two ponds with stepping stones, after a succession of wet children they were filled in. Thanks to the dedication of the staff the reference library also housed the Walkden Heritage Centre, holding a large collection of images, maps and publications. Salford Council closed the building in 2010, dispersed the heritage collection and absorbed the lending library into a multi-purpose building known as The Gateway, on Bolton Road. A fate also inflicted on Swinton and Eccles libraries.

VISITORS

THE GREAT & THE GOOD

During the life of the third Duke and afterwards, visitors came to view his great works. Several were crowned heads of Europe. In 1768, King Christian of Denmark, brother in law of our George III came on a supposed secret visit, with a retinue of fifty courtiers. He had been recommended to take a trip to Worsley. They came by canal from Manchester and then boarded Mine boats to be “taken up the level.” The Russian Princess Czartoriski came by canal in 1773 and also entered the underground canal. In the next century the emphasis of the nobility changed from thrill seeking to scientific study. Archdukes John and Lewis of Austria arrived in 1815 with a number of scientific men and in 1817 Grand Duke Nicholas, later Czar of Russia arrived to examine the works.

In-between these visits of the nobility, English and European scientists, mining engineers and industrial spies came to glean what information they could. Early in 1765, Sir Joseph Yates spent considerable time studying the canal, mines and farm operations, that same year, Gabriel Jars a French agent or spy spent time here. These were followed in 1768 by Arthur Young on his survey of agriculture and industry. Throughout the nineteenth century many foreign and British learned societies came to study the canal works or simply visit Worsley.

THE TOURIST TRADE

The coming of the railway through Worsley in 1862 made the village a Mecca for city dwellers in search of countryside and fresh air. Considering the main street of Worsley was known as "Smoke Row" it does make you wonder what their town was like!

Each summer weekend and particularly the newly introduced Bank Holidays brought the throngs. That in May 1869 had recorded that there were thousands of visitors from Manchester and Salford. The village streets were lined with stalls and most houses had signs out offering hot water or tea at short notice and horses were to be had for short rides. By the time the Lady Ellesmere's Coffee Tavern opened in the old Mill House in 1889, at bank holidays the manager was very busy coping with parties each of fifty and upwards from Pendleton, Oldham, Clayton, Besses o'th Barn, Bury and Leigh. A situation that continued with the two sources of catering until in 1892 the Bridgewater Trust prohibited their tenants from catering for visitors on the basis the cottages are not adapted for the purpose, it meant pecuniary loss to the villagers.

In later years winter became no detriment to attracting visitors, the focus was on skating on the Warke Dam. Particular notice was recorded in 1870 when large numbers from Manchester – and of both sexes arrived with skates. Scores were performing evolutions on the ice. Planks across the thin ice at the edges gave access. Later years noted very thick ice. By winter 1902 health and safety intruded with the Bridgewater Trust allowing access from all round the lake but displaying notices that they "take no responsibility as to the safety of the ice on this reservoir, all use it at their own risk. Coils of rope are placed for immediate use."

In the twentieth century, visiting Worsley village became a regular Sunday afternoon event for local people who either walked or got the tram, later trolley bus there. The original Mill Brow cafe sold soft drinks and ice cream. Some additional numbers came when pleasure boating became allowed on the canal. Restoration of the Boat Steps in front of the Packet House allowed a trip boat to operate from there on summer evenings and weekends. A now much expanded operation.

HERITAGE

The first "heritage" related event came with the celebrations on the bi-centenary of the opening of the Bridgewater Canal. Held in July 1961 a full weekend of exhibitions culminated in the unveiling of a plaque recessed into one of the pillars of the bridge over the Delph giving details of the canal and mines. Operation Springclean, a national campaign in 1968 had a great impact on Worsley. The Delph was cleaned and the canal bank alongside Barton Road landscaped, together with other environmental improvements were completed. The work culminated in a visit from Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth who was shown round the works and viewed an exhibition.

Worsley's part in the Heritage industry took a further step in 1985 when a series of information boards were erected at many strategic sites around the village. Produced by the Groundwork Trust and Salford Council they were aesthetically pleasing and gave accurate information. From this period onward frequent guided tours round the village were led by local historians and arranged by Salford Council became popular events.

2011 brought the 250th anniversary of the opening of the canal. A major heritage event took place with events held on the Green and the highlight being a re-creation of the journey Queen Victoria made in 1851. Several liberties were taken with the facts but it provided a colourful spectacle for the huge crowds. Peel Holdings, the canal owners issued commemorative medals.

Spades in the ground archaeology has undertaken several studies in Worsley. A Manchester University team surveyed and enhanced the appearance of the Lime Kilns on the canal bank at Stablefold. Peel Holdings had designs on creating a golf course and hotel on the site of the New Hall. As part of the process a major dig by Salford University which used community involvement uncovered the entire basement of the Hall untouched by the demolition of the remainder. It revealed service quarters, the electric lift mechanism and the heating system still in situ. External to the building, the dig also uncovered the base of the decorative fountains; the bowl of the large one directly in front of the Hall was still able to hold water.

A massive heritage related project to improve public access to the Bridgewater Canal towpath, restore the Delph to water and to add heritage information to the area within Salford. Lottery funding and Council input was secured in 2014 and work soon commenced under the banner EST 1761. The remaining section of the aqueduct approach embankment wall was cleared of vegetation and the boardwalk restored. An ongoing part of the project added an all weather surface to the canal towpath and placed seating in the form of mine boats throughout the length from Barton to Boothstown.

Work began at the Delph in 2018 with decades of silt dredged away. A multi level viewing platform was envisaged which entailed removal of the old platform and several other structures. This revealed unknown features, a heavy duty winch sited alongside Worsley Road Bridge and two tunnels beneath School Brow from a towpath / quay in the Delph. An archaeological study recorded them and their purpose ascertained the supply of fuel to the corn mill. The viewing platform was finally completed to include replica artefacts depicting the Delph's mining heritage. The sluice gates to the twin underground canal tunnels were replaced, the road bridge re-pointed, a replica crane put on the apron between the tunnels and outline mine boats float within the Delph. At night a frequently changing light display floodlights the scene. The "hardware" of the project is a credit to the designers and constructors.

Information boards were placed at many points along the canal and particularly in the Worsley village area. Unfortunately the producers have on many of them, included demonstrably wrong information or perpetuated long discredited myths regarding the canal storyline.

As part of the project a group of people received training on local heritage and on the conducting of guided walks to the level where they qualified for the formal award of Green Badge Status.

RHS BRIDGEWATER.

Unable to proceed with either racecourse or golf course and hotel on the New Hall site, Peel Holdings have transferred the area to the Royal Horticultural Society. It has become the fifth RHS Garden under the banner RHS Bridgewater. Beginning in 2017, extensive civil engineering works preceded any horticulture. Off site a major re-alignment of the occupation road junction with Leigh Road was made, together with the access road itself. Thousands of mature trees were felled on the area that had been the Scout Camp and surrounding woodland and the resident deer culled. A huge car parking area was laid out and due to the 19th century over use of arsenic as insecticide the soil in the whole kitchen garden area had to be replaced. A visitor centre restoration of the garden walls and glasshouses and a network of paths preceded planting. Intending to open to the public in 2020 the pandemic shut-down delayed this for a year, which in fact gave the planting time to fully establish. It has become a popular venue on a regional scale.