

LOCAL STUDIES IN MIDDLETON

Morris Garratt

The acquisition of local materials by Middleton public library owes much to two men in particular: the Borough Librarian 1934-1960 Fred Atkinson and County Councillor Herbert Norcross who was obviously personally friendly with the then County Archivist of Lancashire, R. Sharpe-France. For a number of years Herbert Norcross wrote articles on all aspects of local history in the local press, airing requests for information, supplying answers either from his own knowledge or from correspondents, and passing on information and transcripts of documents supplied by Mr. Sharpe-France. Items given or sent to Mr. Norcross were later donated by him to the Library and he urged his readers to do likewise. The growing collection was catalogued by Fred Atkinson who also added helpful notes in appropriate cases; his successor as Borough Librarian, Derek Richards, and the present writer (who had been at Middleton Library since 1972) have both promoted the local collection. Considering that the collection is not yet sixty-years-old it is surprising that so much has been achieved.

The bulk of the collection naturally appertains to the modern town of Middleton, but where appropriate includes items relating to the eight townships which constitute the ancient parish. This is especially true in the fields of church histories, church registers, maps and certain manorial

records. General county histories of Lancashire are included as are selected items on adjacent areas (e.g. Prestwich) but spatial and financial restrictions preclude collecting other areas of Lancashire. We have complete sets of the *Transactions of the Lancashire and Cheshire Antiquarian Society* and the *Lancashire Parish Register Society*; we do not have the Chetham Society series or the publications of the Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire.¹

Earlier histories of the Parish Church of St. Leonard (by John Dean and others) have been superseded by the current guide and history by W.J. Smith (1970), while at Middleton Junction St. Gabriel's has been described by Rev. P.A. Wrigley (1945) with a *Centenary History* by Vincent Osborne (1986). Other church histories are: *Middleton Baptist Church (Temple Street): A History 1858-1989* by M.J. Burton, St. Peter's (Roman Catholic) Church 1867-1967 *Centenary Souvenir*, the *Souvenir Brochure (1964)* produced for All Saints, Rhodes, by Rev. Eric Greenhalgh, and a *History 1803-1938 of St. Stephen's Church, Countess of Huntingdon's Connection*. Methodist histories are: *There is Holy Ground: A History of Methodism in Middleton 1760-1950*, compiled by Rev. R.O. Ball and others, and he also compiled *One More Light: A History of Middleton Junction Methodist Church 1800-1951*. We have the *Centenary Souvenir 1834-1934* of Chapel Street Methodist Church, Rhodes, and the *Jubilee Souvenir and Historical Sketch of the Primitive Methodist Church, Bowlee (1914)*.

The Library's collection of local church registers is not yet complete. To date we have: *Parish Church of St. Leonard*: Baptisms 1541-1891, Marriages 1541-1877 and Burials 1541-1903 (and other church papers), *St. Michael's Tonge*: Baptisms 1839-1923, Marriages 1840-1923 and Burials 1839-1925, *St. Mary's Prestwich*: Burials 1712-1843, Marriages 1713-1813 and Burials 1712-1843, *New Jerusalem Church, Wood Street and Rhodes*: Baptisms 1808-1915, Marriages 1808-1931 and 1975, Burials 1808-1857 (and other

church papers), church treasurer's accounts 1860-1890 and day school accounts 1880-1901, *St. Stephen's 1824-37*, *Methodist Church 1823-37*; the majority of these are on microfilm. For the parish church of *St. Mary, Birch-in-Hopwood*, Stanley White has indexed the registers: Baptisms 1829-1894, Marriages 1830-1893 and Burials 1830-1968.

Ordnance Survey maps are an essential source for modern town histories and the library's collection include the six-inch edition of 1844-48, the ten-inch edition 1889-91 and the 25 inch edition 1929-32. We are fortunate also to have a set of O.S. maps relating to Middleton township only at the large scale of 60 inches to one mile and dated 1848. I suspect that these may have been issued for use by the Middleton and Tonge Improvement Commissioners.

We have the Census Returns 1841-1881 though not all the townships are represented in each census.² Voters Lists are incomplete: we have various dates 1832-1885 on microfilm, and eight volumes for the Middleton and Prestwich Division 1922-1940, while Middleton itself is complete 1947-1974, continued by Rochdale M.B.C. from 1974 to date.

The importance of local newspapers to the local historian does not need emphasis. We have complete files of the three local newspapers: *Middleton Albion 1857-1895*, *Middleton Advertiser 1925-1979* and *Middleton Guardian 1877 to date*. We buy four copies of the *Middleton Guardian*



Herbert Norcross



Fred Atkinson

The Middleton Albion,

AND GENERAL ADVERTISER:

JOURNAL, FOR MIDDLETON, TONGE, CHADDEERTON, ROYTON, OLDHAM, HEYWOOD, BLACKLET, HARPURREY, MANCHESTER AND DISTRICT

SATURDAY, AUGUST 14, 1869.

(REGISTERED FOR TRANSMISSION ABROAD.)

Price 6d.

<p>TO BAKERS—OF BREAD, A PATENT OVEN is for sale, situated in Mill Lane, near the Corporation—Apply to A. Searle, Middleton.</p> <p>WANTED—A competent person to manage a large farm, with a view to the purchase of the same.</p> <p>WANTED—A competent person to manage a large farm, with a view to the purchase of the same.</p> <p>WANTED—A competent person to manage a large farm, with a view to the purchase of the same.</p>	<p>Business Announcements.</p> <p>JAMES WHITTAKER, BUILDERS AND CONTRACTORS. Also Dealer in all kinds of Builders Materials, Building Paper, Cement, Iron, Lead, Limes, &c. WOOD STREET, MIDDLETON.</p> <p>BOOTS AND SHOES BETTER AND CHEAPER THAN EVER.</p> <p>J. W. SWEATH AND CO., 10, OLD MARKET PLACE, AND 4, GEORGE STREET, OLDHAM.</p> <p>It is quite unnecessary to state that we have gone into business largely into the manufacturing, and in future nearly the whole of our business will be conducted in the same way.</p> <p>WANTED—A competent person to manage a large farm, with a view to the purchase of the same.</p> <p>WANTED—A competent person to manage a large farm, with a view to the purchase of the same.</p> <p>WANTED—A competent person to manage a large farm, with a view to the purchase of the same.</p>	<p>Business Announcements.</p> <p>WANTED—A competent person to manage a large farm, with a view to the purchase of the same.</p> <p>WANTED—A competent person to manage a large farm, with a view to the purchase of the same.</p> <p>WANTED—A competent person to manage a large farm, with a view to the purchase of the same.</p> <p>WANTED—A competent person to manage a large farm, with a view to the purchase of the same.</p>	<p>Business Announcements.</p> <p>WANTED—A competent person to manage a large farm, with a view to the purchase of the same.</p> <p>WANTED—A competent person to manage a large farm, with a view to the purchase of the same.</p> <p>WANTED—A competent person to manage a large farm, with a view to the purchase of the same.</p> <p>WANTED—A competent person to manage a large farm, with a view to the purchase of the same.</p>
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Middleton Guardian, 14 August 1869.

each week: two are selectively 'cut' for the extensive classified files of newspaper cuttings, one is for public use and one is immediately filed for later microfilming and binding. The bound copies are stored at a branch library, for reasons of space, but may be used for making photocopies or by those whose eyesight precludes them using microfilm. An important feature of the collection is the extensive though as yet incomplete card index to these newspapers. The *Middleton Albion* has been selectively indexed over the years by library staff as time and resources allowed. Some years ago an MCS-funded team indexed in depth the *Middleton Guardian* up to about 1935; from then there is a 35-year gap until the selective indexing begun by the staff from 1970 onwards. However this gap is partially covered by the *Norcross Scrapbooks* (4 vols) which comprise his many local history articles and other newspaper extracts: these have been indexed.

The library has a number of such scrapbooks. One by the Middleton historian, John Dean includes items from the *Middleton Albion* and the *Manchester City News* (c. 1887-1900),³ while the *Huddart Scrapbook* includes items relating mainly to education, c. 1890, and Henry Searle's *Botanical Scrapbook* includes articles extracted from the *Heywood Advertiser* on various Lancashire botanists.⁴ This book is inscribed 'H. Searle, Middleton, May 9th 1929' while on the inside front cover there is a list of the articles in pencil signed 'Joseph S. Rowse, 102 Pilsworth Road, Heywood, and dated Aug. 1936. All these await indexing.

One of the articles in the Searle Scrapbook is still the main source of information on the history of the *Middleton Botanical Society*, founded about 1770 and which soon acquired a good reputation. An early reference to

its influence comes from a letter preserved in the Library from the botanist George Caley. He was the son of a Yorkshire horse dealer who had removed to Middleton while George was still a boy. George soon held a prominent place among local botanists, and in 1798 was sent to New South Wales to collect suitable specimens for his patron, Sir Joseph Banks. Writing to the 'Middleton Botanical Society, White Hart, Middleton near Manchester' from Parramatta, New South Wales, on October 12th 1800, he observed "It is owing to your Society, in a great measure that my small genius was awakened...", and concluded that: "In case I shall not return, I send you this letter, not for the sake of information, but as a testimonial regard of the veneration that I bear to your Society". The Botanical Society is now defunct and all we have is one volume of its Minutes 1891-1915.

In this letter Caley also wrote: "It is my intention for to make Manchester boast of having the best and most extensive collection of the production of New South Wales, as well as it could once of the Leverian Museum, whose loss will never be erased from my memory". This collection was first established at his home, Alkington Hall, Middleton, by Ashton Lever, and then moved to London; he was later obliged to sell it because of financial difficulties. After having been rejected twice by the Government the collection was sold by public auction in 1806.⁵ The *Sale Catalogue* is itself a rarity, and the copy held in the Library is inscribed 'Capt. J. Laskey' and annotated with the price paid for each item.

The *Middleton Musical Society* was founded in 1772, about the same time as the Botanical Society. Among a number of items belonging to the Musical Society and on deposit in the Library are two volumes of account

books (1772-1917), other minute and account books and associated items, and a baton with a silver ring inscribed: 'Presented to the Middleton Musical Society by John T. Dempsey March 1900'. Another local organisation was the *Middleton Childrens' Burial Society* and we have their Minute Book 1842-1948 and the Record of Burials 1839-1939.

As indicated above the ancient parish of Middleton consists of eight townships: Ainsworth, Ashworth, Birtle-cum-Bamford, Hopwood, Great Lever, Pilsworth, Thornham and Middleton itself. For poor law purposes Middleton (including Tonge, which is in the parish of Prestwich-cum-Oldham) and Thornham were in the Oldham Union, Great Lever was in Bolton Union, while the remaining townships were in the Bury Union. We have Overseers' Accounts for the parish of Middleton 1766-1786, and a volume described as the Middleton Poor Book 1838-39.⁶ In addition tithe maps and schedules are held for five of the eight townships: Ainsworth (1839), Hopwood (1840), Pilsworth (1838, map only), Thornham (1839) and Middleton (1839 and also a revised schedule 1936).

The manor of Middleton was earlier held by the Barton family; in the fifteenth century the lordship passed by marriage to the Asshetons, who held it until 1765 when, again by marriage, it passed to the Suffields of Norfolk.⁷ The manor was governed by the annual Court Leet and Court

Title page of Leverian Museum Sale Catalogue, 1806.

Catalogue *Capt. J. Laskey*

OF THE
LEVERIAN MUSEUM,
PART I.
INCLUDING THE FIRST EIGHT DAYS' SALE:

* THE REMAINING PARTS WILL BE PUBLISHED WITH ALL POSSIBLE SPEED.

—

THE SALE
OF
THE ENTIRE COLLECTION
(By Messrs. KING and LOCHEE.)

WILL COMMENCE
ON MONDAY, the 5th of MAY, 1806, at Twelve o'Clock;
In the Building now occupied by
THE MUSEUM.

381713

CATALOGUES to be had (price 1s.) at the Place of Sale; at Messrs. King and Lochée's, (the Auctioneers) and at Heyden's Printing-Office, Brydgos-Street, Covent-Garden.

Heyden, Printer, 4, Brydgos Street, Covent Garden.

On SUNDAY, the 10th Day of JULY, 1825,

ORGAN

WILL BE

Opened in the Parish Church
OF MIDDLETON,

AND A SELECTION OF

Sacred Music,

From the Works of Handel, Haydn, &c. will be performed.

TWO SERMONS,

Suited to the Occasion, will be Preached by the

Rev. Jeremiah Smith, D. D.

RECTOR OF ST. ANN'S,

And HIGH MASTER of the FREE GRAMMAR SCHOOL, MANCHESTER.

A Collection will be made after each Sermon.

Service in the Morning, will commence at Ten; and in the Afternoon, at Three o'Clock.

PRINCIPAL VOCAL PERFORMERS,

Miss D. TRAVIS,

FROM THE ANCIENT CONCERTS, LONDON,

Messrs. Isherwood, Boylance, and Calvert, of Manchester.—The Chorus will be as complete as possible.

MR. WILKINSON, JUNR. will preside at the ORGAN.

Proper Persons will be appointed to receive the Contributions of all such as are anxious to promote the public worship of their Creator, and on account of the very considerable expense incurred, not only in the erecting of the Organ, but also in making arrangements for its opening in a suitable and appropriate manner, the Committee expect, that all who attend, will

Contribute Silver at the Doors.

N. B. In order to prevent confusion, persons will be admitted into the Church an Hour before the commencement of each Service.

W. HORSMAN, PRINTER, MIDDLETON.

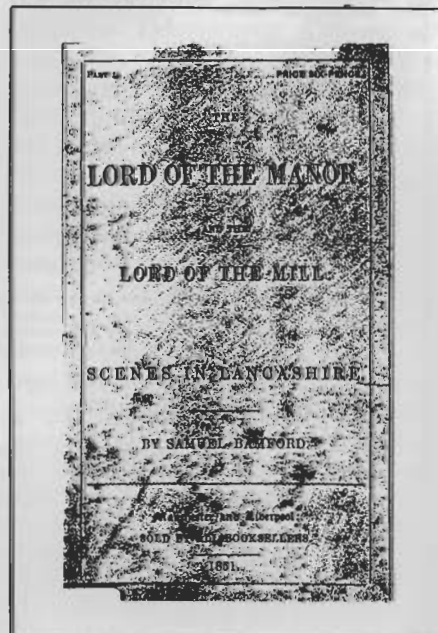
Poster advertising new organ at Middleton Parish Church, 1825.

of the *Middleton Council Handbook and Diary*, the *Roll of Honorary Freeman 1907-1974* (two volumes), and a *Visitors Book*, in which the first signatures are those of King George V and Queen Mary, July 1913. It also includes that of Lance Cpl. J. Halliwell, V.C.: 'Signed on the occasion of a Civic Presentation on the Market Ground to commemorate the winning of the Victoria Cross May 27 1918. W.M. Wiggins Mayor Sept. 14/18'.⁸

The first public building erected by the new borough was the Public Library in Long Street, which opened in March 1889 and which (with additions and alterations) is still going strong today, 102 years later! The new library, erected by public subscription, was a successor to the Middleton Tonge and Alkington Free Library (founded 1858 and actually a subscription library), 3000 of whose volumes were transferred to the new library. The Local Studies Collection preserves some examples of these, bearing the stamp of ownership, and we also have a copy of the first *Catalogue of the Books in the Lending Department* (1886), in which the books are entered in one running alphabet under author's names, subjects and titles. In view of the events of 1974 one notices with interest that the catalogue was printed in Rochdale!

In addition to the printed and manuscript material the Local Studies Collection contains over 5000 photographs acquired either by gift, purchase or by copying originals held by individuals.⁹ Many are the work of

Title page of The Lord of the Manor... (1851).



Baron, held in October "for the adjustment of matters arising amongst the tenantry, and the appointment of constables for the several townships in the manor and parish". The Assheton papers, formerly at Gunton Park, Norfolk, are now in the Greater Manchester Record Office, while Middleton Library has a number of items which have presumably become detached from the main collection. These are the *Manor of Middleton Court Leet 1774-1812 and 1842-1850*, and *Suit Rolls 1836-1837 and 1842-1850*, with another *Suit Roll* catalogued as the *Suffield Rental* and covering 1781-1782 and 1784. From this document we find that in 1784 the Middleton Demesne was 391 acres, 3 roods and 4 perches in extent, with a land value of £416. 10s. 7½d., and dwellings valued at £58. 3s. 9d.

The Middleton and Thornham estates were first offered for sale in 1858 but withdrawn. We have four copies of the Sale Catalogue but not all contain the accompanying maps. The estates were sold in 1861 and we have two copies of the Sale Catalogue: one is annotated, giving the sale price as £98542. 1s. 0d. "omitting interest and proportion of rents".

By the 1850s Middleton was under a Board of Surveyors, elected annually at the Vestry meeting, while in the adjacent township of Tonge there was a Nuisance Removal Board. In 1861

these two townships were brought together under the *Middleton and Tonge Improvement Commissioners*, who governed the area until the creation of the Borough of Middleton in 1886. The main collection of Improvement Commissioners' records is in the Lancashire Record Office, but the Library has some 'stray' items: *Finance and General Purposes Committee Minutes 1861-64*, *Paving Lighting and Cleansing Committee Minutes 1861-1863*, and the *Occasional Committee Minute Book 1861-1872*. We also have a number of public notices issued by the Commissioners. All this material was used by the writer for his thesis *The Development of Local Government in Middleton: the Early Years of the Middleton and Tonge Improvement Commissioners 1861. 1875* (M.A., Manchester Polytechnic, 1986). Also held in the Library are the *Township of Tonge Highway Rate Book 1782-1798*, and a volume of *Recognizances to Keep the Peace 1859-1879*. From a later period we have the *Township of Middleton Overseers' Minute Book 1895-1925*.

Middleton was a municipal borough from 1886 until local government reorganisation in 1974. We have a complete set of bound volumes of *Middleton Borough Council Minutes 1886-1974* (continued by Rochdale M.B.C. Minutes 1974 to date), a set

Mr. L. Kaye who in the 1960s especially had a roving commission to record changes in the town on behalf of the Library. Other local photographs exist in albums, such as the *Hopwood Hall Scrapbook* of photographs 1907-1922, and which includes signatures, and there is a small album relating to Alkington Hall. We have four copies, in two formats, of *Views of Middleton* 1856-1886: one has a pasted-in label inscribed: 'To Captain Hopwood from Friends of Old Middleton on his 80th birthday. April 27th 1887'; while another album of *Views of Middleton and Local Personalities* has an illuminated inscription: 'To the Right Reverend Richard Durnford D.D. Lord Bishop of Chichester from The Teachers and Scholars of the Middleton Church Schools. May 1870.' This volume was 'presented to Daniel Bamford by Miss Durnford of Chichester'.¹⁰

Among a number of old or early books in the collection we have the *Countess of Huntingdon's Select Collection of Hymns* dated 1835 (words only): our copy is inscribed: 'Mary Fitton, her book, 1835', and *The Old Oak Tree, by the author of 'John Hardy the footman &c'* (S.P.C.K. 1840). On a more local level we have two copies of works by

MISCELLANEOUS POETRY,

BY

SAMUEL BAMFORD,

WEAVER,

OR

Middleton, Lancashire,

LATELY IMPRISONED IN THE CASTLE OF LINCOLN.

—o—o—o—

Even late in prison did I write
(This is the fifth in which I've lain),
Not for infringing any right,
No person's property I've taken,
Ask you the reason then—'tis plain,
I did escape upon that day
When many of my friends were slain,
And many sorely wounded lay,
Gasping in their strong agony.

381717

London:

PRINTED AND PUBLISHED BY T. DOLBY, AT THE
BRITANNIA PRESS, 209, STRAND.

Price 9s. 6d. Extra Boards.

Title page of Bamford's *Miscellaneous Poetry* (1821).

William Assheton.¹¹ These are *Theological Discourse of Last Wills and Testaments* (1696) and *A Discourse concerning Death-Bed Repentance* (first published 1696, our copy is the 9th edition 1773).

Probably one of the most widely known individuals associated with Middleton is Samuel Bamford, born in 1788 and forever linked with the

events of 'Peterloo'. The Library has a small but interesting and important collection including autographed items. His books were first issued in parts: we have parts II-V of *Early Days* (1849) and an incomplete set also of parts for *Passages in the Life of a Radical* (1839-1841). For *Walks in South Lancashire* (1844) we have a complete set of three parts, together with a fourth part, unnumbered and dated 1851. We also have these titles in bound editions of various dates, some being presentation volumes signed by Bamford. Two important items on account of their rarity are *Miscellaneous Poetry* (1821) which is not listed by the British Library, and *The Lord of the Manor, and the Lord of the Mill* (1851). We have an incomplete set of parts of this last title, Part 1 of which is, according to Mr. Atkinson's note, the only known existing copy. We also have an unbound copy of the *Report 'To the Patriotic Subscribers to the Fund for the Relief of the Sufferers who Sustained Various Outrages at Manchester on the 16th of August 1819* which Mr. Atkinson has inscribed 'Samuel Bamford's copy'; and a copy of Tim Bobbin's *Dialect of South Lancashire*, of which Bamford brought out a new edition, and which is inscribed by Mr. Atkinson on the fly-leaf: 'with corrections by Sam

Middleton Parish Church Burial Fees, 1829.

A Table of Fees taken in the Parish Church of Middleton.

		£	s	d			
To breaking Soil in the Church or Chancel, if of this Parish, RECTOR		3	3	0			
To breaking Soil in the Church or Chancel, if out of the Parish, Do.		5	5	0			
Churcheing in the Parish,	Minister	0	6	0	0	8	
	Clerk	0	2	0	0	8	
Churcheing out of the Parish, (N. B. Paid at the time of Christening)	Minister	0	8	0	1	0	
	Clerk	0	4	0	1	0	
Burial in the Parish,	Minister	0	8	0	1	3	
	Clerk	0	7	0	1	3	
Burial out of the Parish,	Minister	1	5	0	2	6	
	Clerk	1	1	0	2	6	
Burial coming at an extra hour,	Minister	2	6	0	5	0	
	Clerk	2	3	0	5	0	
Evening Prayer at a Burial,	Minister	2	11	0	5	0	
	Clerk	2	1	0	5	0	
Marriage by Licence,	Minister	6	0	0	7	6	
	Clerk	1	6	0	7	6	
Marriage by Banns (N. B. Paid at the time of Publication)	Minister	1	6	0	3	0	
	Clerk	1	6	0	3	0	
Searching Register, each name,	Minister	0	6	0	1	0	
	Clerk	0	6	0	1	0	
					SEXTON.		
					£	s	d
For making a New Grave in the New Burial Ground, ten feet deep,					0	3	0
For opening a Grave afterwards,					0	2	0
For opening any Grave, not more than five feet deep,					0	1	0
For opening a Vault, or Tomb,					0	8	0
For a Passing Bell in the Parish,					0	0	4
For a Passing Bell out of the Parish,					0	1	0
For Tolling in the Parish, per hour,					0	1	0
For Tolling out of the Parish, per hour,					0	2	0
For taking the Bier in the Parish, per mile,					0	0	4
For taking the Bier out of the Parish, per mile,					0	0	6
For removing a Grave Stone, House,					0	1	0
					0	1	0
					CHURCHWARDENS.		
Every Grave in the New Burial Ground for Non-Parishioners, House in the Parish,					1	0	0
House out of the Parish, per mile,					0	1	0
Breaking Soil in the Church, if of this parish,					0	3	4
Breaking Soil in the Church, if out of the parish,					0	6	8
N. B. The Money thus arising, to be applied in the Repairs of the Church.							

ORDERED BY THE LORD BISHOP OF CHESTER, "that the Corpse of any person to be hereafter interred in the Church, or Church-Yard, of Middleton aforesaid, shall be brought thither between the hours of Five and Six in the Afternoon, from the 25th Day of MARCH to the 29th Day of MARCH; and betwixt the hours of Three and Four in the Afternoon, from the 29th Day of SEPTEMBER to the 25th Day of MARCH, in each Year, or the interment of the Corpse to be deferred till the day following, unless upon some extraordinary occasion, to be signified to, and allowed of, by the Rector for the time being, or his Curate."

MARCH 1829.

JAMES ARCHER, RECTOR.

James Fletcher,
James Heap,
Richard Aspinall,
Richard Morris,
James Taylor,
Wm. Laycock,
Peter Johnson,
Nathl. Howarth,

CHURCHWARDENS

FOR
1829.

Bamford (?). The collection has two copies of Bamford's *Hours in the Bowers* (1834), one of which has on the inside front cover: 'Very rare/ 7/6d. 1889'. One autograph letter is signed 'Stedfast' and was written by Bamford in 1853 in response to the Health of Towns Act. Presentation copies include two copies of *Passages in the Life of a Radical*, one to Spencer T. Hall (his friend from Burnley) on November 17th 1941, and the other to 'My Eternal Friend J.T. Halstead Brandwood Esq. of Stanhill House...' on December 4th 1841; and a copy of John Critchley Prince's *Hours with the Muses*, 'Presented to Middleton Tonge and Alkington Free Library by Mr. Samuel Bamford of Harpurhey 1866'.

Middleton Library has also collected items which it was hoped would one day form the basis for the town's own museum, but this never materialised. Many of the items collected are now held for conservation by Rochdale Museum Service, but still to be seen in the Library (though not on public view) are such diverse items as a number of jugs which commemorate the granting of the Market Charter in 1791, a pistol which was fired each night at 10 p.m. by the watchman at Jackson's Mill, Kemp Street, a

Improvement Act Poster, 1862.



Middleton Botanical Society, 1885.

grandfather clock by the Middleton clockmaker Jonathan Lees (1745-1804) with a dial by James Wilson (1778-1809).¹² and a medal inscribed 'Rhodes New Schools in commemoration of the opening by Mrs Salis Schwabe 22nd November 1884'. But undoubtedly the principal 'museum' item is the famous *Peterloo Banner*, one of two carried by the Middleton contingent led by Bamford.¹³

Over the years the Local Studies Collection has been used by students at various academic levels, and we have copies of some of the works produced. The present writer's thesis on local government has already been mentioned; he also produced a dissertation using census material, *The Position of the Lodger in the Nineteenth Century*, in which the situation in Middleton is compared with that in Wilmslow (Manchester University Extra-Mural Department Certificate in Local History, 1976), and more recently he has made extensive use of the Bamford collection for his *Samuel Bamford: Portrait of a Radical*.¹⁴ Middleton's social and industrial development has been surveyed by M.T. Abbott, *Some Aspects of the Growth and Development of Middleton in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries* (Liverpool, 1973), and N. Rothwell, *The Growth and Development of Middleton* (Manchester College of Education, 1971), while the newspaper files were used by Vincent Taylor for his *Notes on the Middleton and Tonge Cotton Mill Co. Ltd. 1866-1971* (c. 1980). Economic changes have been charted by W.G. Close, *A Study of Middleton showing a comparison between the Shopping Facilities of 1910 and the present day* (1973), M.J. Bradley, *Retail Development Schemes in the 1970s — Implications for an Industrial Town of South-East Lancashire* (B.A. Hons, Geography, Leicester University, 1977), and P.A. Purdy, *Functional Change in Middleton* (1951-1981 (Salford University, 1985). Mr. Purdy had previously produced *Literacy in Middleton on the Eve of the 1870 Education Act* (Manchester University, 1975).

**MIDDLETON & TONGE
IMPROVEMENT ACT,
1861.**

NOTICE
IS HEREBY GIVEN, THAT

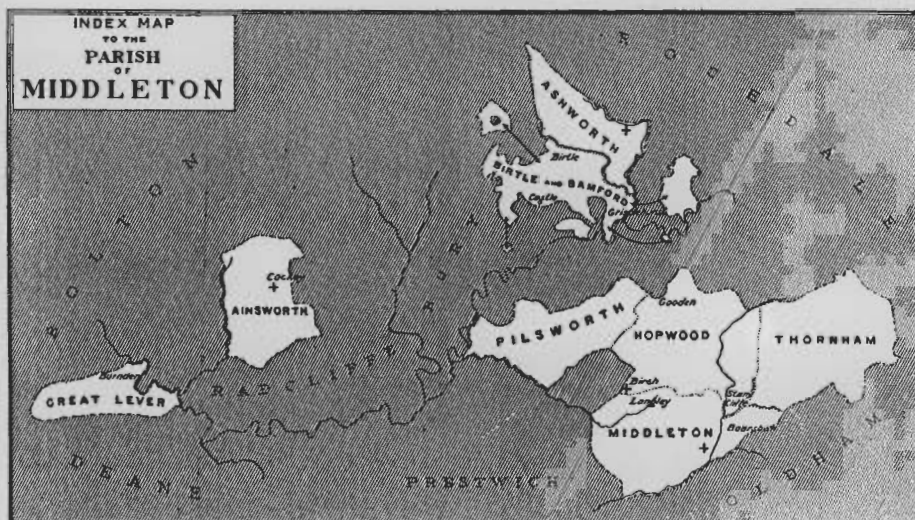
On the 30th Day of December, 1862,
At Seven o'clock in the Evening, at the Commissioners' Rooms,
GAS WORKS, TONGE,
In the County of Lancaster,
**An Assessment to the Improvement
Rate for the Township of Middleton,**
In the County of Lancaster,
Will be made after the rate of ONE SHILLING in the POUND, by
virtue of the said Act, and the Acts incorporated therewith.

And Notice is hereby further given,
That a Statement of the proposed Rate lies at the Office of the
Commissioners, Gas Works, Tonge, aforesaid, for inspection
by all Ratepayers, or Persons interested or rated in such rate.

HENRY WHEELER,
Clerk to the Commissioners of Middleton & Tonge.

COMMISSIONERS' ROOMS, DEC. 1862.

T. MILLS, PRINTER, MIDDLETON.



Map of Middleton Parish.

Transport themes have resulted in *The Middleton Electric Traction Company Ltd: the struggle to establish a system of communications for the people of Middleton*, by John H. Barnes (c. 1973)¹⁵ and David A. Roydes, *The Rochdale Canal 1791-1794: A Case-Study in Route Selection* (M.Phil, Manchester Polytechnic, 1989). The Manchester housing development at Langley has been investigated by Elizabeth Faulkner, *Langley — A Comparison of the Reputation and Reality of Life on an 'Overspill' Housing Estate* (Manchester University, 1979), and A.M. Rogers, *Langley: A Type Investigation into post-1945 methods of Rehousing 'Overspill' Population in the British Isles* (B.A. Geography, Leeds University, 1958). Samuel Bamford had earlier been studied by Geoff. Ludden in his dissertation *The Political and Social Ideas of Samuel Bamford 1788-1872* (Manchester Polytechnic, 1979). The fore-runner of the present library system has been dealt with by Peter James Judge, *The Early Development of Libraries in Great Britain with special reference to the Middleton Tongue and Alkrington*

Free Library from 1857-1889 (Manchester University, Teachers Certificate Examination, 1975). The resources of the collection were used by David A. Roydes, Derrick Catterall and Morris Garratt who compiled and edited for Middleton Civic Association and the Middleton Centenary Committee *Early Middleton: A Centenary Celebration 1886-1986* (1986), and Morris Garratt has edited *Middleton Matters* for the Middleton Civic Association (1991), a collection of original and reprinted essays on various aspects of the



Middleton Public Library

town's history. Margaret Smith's *Collected Articles on the History of Middleton* (Middleton, Pilling, 2nd edition 1986) also made use of the collection.

As I observed earlier, much has been achieved, but there are omissions: we have no personal diaries or collections of family papers, or any commercial archives. While this article has indicated material held elsewhere, we do not know the present whereabouts of, for example, the records of the Middleton and Thornham Burial Board, or the missing records of the Botanical Society. Fortunately, material continues to be donated: recent acquisitions include several folders of the correspondence of the *Hallé Club, North Manchester Branch, 1957-1990* (following its demise), and several volumes relating to the *Crippled Childrens' Help Society, Middleton Auxiliary*: minutes 1929-1987 (excluding 1960-62), accounts 1927-1976 (excluding 1946-1959), and a list of surgical appliances and invalid chairs (two volumes arranged alphabetically by surname).

The Local Studies Collection forms part of the Reference Library and is situated on the first floor of the Library in Long Street, about half-a-mile from the town centre on the A664 to Rochdale. Cars should be parked in side streets (away from the yellow lines!) or by the parish church — the Library is below the church. We have two microfilm readers for public use which intending users should preferably book in advance and photocopying facilities. We hope to have our microfilm reader-printer repaired by the time this article appears! Current hours of opening are: Monday 10 - 7.30, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday 10 - 5.30, Wednesday 10 - 12.30 and Saturday 9.30-1 and 2-4; the telephone number is 061-643-5228, and correspondence should be addressed to the Senior Librarian.

NOTES

1. These may be seen at Rochdale Library.
2. John Cole, *Tracing your Ancestors through Local Libraries*. (Rochdale M.B.C. 1983)
3. John Dean contributed to the *Transactions of the Lancashire and Cheshire Antiquarian Society* and wrote *Historical Middleton* (c. 1905).
4. See John Percy, "Scientists in Humble Life: the Artisan Naturalists of South Lancashire". *Manchester Region History Review*, V(1) 1991, pp. 3-10.
5. W.J. Smith, "Sir Ashton Lever of Alkrington, and his Museum 1729-1788". *Trans. L.C.A.S.*, 72(1962), pp. 61-92.
6. Morris Garratt, "Poor Relief in Middleton 1838-1839" in *Middleton Matters*, pp. 65-68. (Middleton Civic Association, 1991).
7. Harbord Harbord, later the first Lord Suffield, had married the Asshetons eldest daughter, Mary, in 1760; in 1791 he obtained a Market Charter for Middleton from George III. These names - Barton, Harbord, Assheton, Suffield — survive in local road names.
8. Derrick Catterall, "Parkfield goes to war" in *Middleton Matters*, op.cit., pp.69-82.
9. Items from the collection have been used for *Bygone Middleton: a Photographic Record* (Middleton Borough Council, 1973), and Morris Garratt and John Cole, *Middleton in Retrospect* (Rochdale M.B.C., 1982).
10. Richard Durnford, D.D. was Rector of St. Leonard's Parish Church, Middleton, 1833-1870, when he became Bishop of Chichester.
11. For William Assheton, D.D. 1641-1711 see *D.N.B.* vol. 2, pp. 199-201.
12. Margaret Smith and Carl Goldberg, "The Clockmakers of Middleton" in *Middleton Matters*, op.cit, pp. 7-16.
13. Morris Garratt, "Peterloo — the Story of a Banner" in *Middleton Matters*, op.cit, pp. 33-35.
14. Forthcoming, George Kelsall, Littleborough, 1992.
15. See also A.K. Kirby, *Middleton Tramways*. (Manchester Transport Museum Society, 1976).

ST. LEONARD'S PARISH CHURCH AND ROCHDALE ROAD, MIDDLETON. ORDNANCE SURVEY. 60 inches to one mile, 1848.

