



Old and New Stockport under the Viaduct, 1970.

STOCKPORT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Shirley McKenna

The foundation of what was then known as the Stockport Historical Interest Society coincided, more or less, with the establishment of the Local History Library at Stockport. At a meeting on January 31st 1961, a steering committee was established under the chairmanship of the late Councillor Harry Walker, and a first constitution was drafted. Two weeks later the foundation meeting took place in the Borough Librarian's office, when the 15 founder members approved the constitution. The Society's bank account was opened in May 1961 and the subscription fixed at ten shillings a year — a rate which was to last until May 1975. Members began to gather material and slides to present as short, occasional lectures to the others, but it was to be some time before the Society had a set programme.

In 1965, Lt. Col. John A. Christie-Miller, a member of the famous Christy's Hatworks family, accepted the Society's invitation to become its first President. By 1967, with the membership standing at 50, the way was set for the new Secretary, the late Cyril Warren, to begin building on the

earlier foundations. Looking at the Society's first accounts, covering May 1961 to March 1967, the figures are unbelievable. Six years' income from subscriptions and other items came to £67.7s.1d., of which just over £27 had been spent on stationery, postages, and speakers' fees. From the balance of some £40, Cyril spent £1.11s.8d. for 200 copies of the Society's first printed programme, and £2.19s.1d. for 500 copies of a leaflet advertising its activities. This

was money well spent, as the membership began to increase, forcing the Society to move its meetings from the Library to larger accommodation at Pendlebury Hall. By 1968, membership had increased to 100. As part of a full programme of lectures and visits, our member Jim Hooley took a large group of enthusiasts on a history tour of the town centre — the first of many, which later became known as "Hooley's Hikes".



"Hooley's Hike", October, 1972.

The year 1976 proved a landmark one for the Stockport Historical Society (the unwieldy name had been changed in 1970). Membership had increased to almost 200 and "House Full" notices had to be posted at Pendlebury Hall for a number of lectures. So in September we moved to yet more spacious accommodation at Tiviot Dale Methodist Church, where we still meet. Membership reached a ceiling of 260 in 1980 and 1981 and now hovers about the 200 mark. New members are welcome, and a warm invitation is extended to visitors to our various events.

The Society is affiliated to the County Palatine of Chester Local History Committee, the Stockport Arts Federation and the Stockport Civic Society, and is in regular consultation with the Metropolitan Borough of Stockport's Development and Town Planning Division. Buildings in the town centre, Listed Buildings anywhere in the Borough, and Conservation Area planning are of particular concern.

Over the years the Society has also produced and supported a number of small research groups: *The Photographic Record Group* was formed in 1962 to record the changing face of Stockport. Members at this time were also members of the Stockport Photographic Society and in the first year nearly 600 black and white photographs were deposited at the library. 1966 was a very active year due to demolitions in the town. It is unfortunate that many of the buildings that were lost at this time might have been listed if only they had survived until official listing began.

Blackshaw's shop front, Hillgate (now demolished).



Dorothy Wadsworth, Jim Hooley, Shirley McKenna and the late Cyril Warren beside the fountain at St. Mary Church, 1972.

The mainstay of the Record Group, Cyril Warren, died in 1978, leaving the Society his collection of about three thousand 35mm. slides, which cover many aspects of Stockport's history, from book illustrations and old postcards to modern record photographs. Cyril had given numerous slide shows for local organisations, and since his death we have provided shows for more than a hundred groups such as Townswomen's Guilds, Probus Clubs and other local history societies. Some talks have resulted in the acquisition (or borrowing for copying) of a number of old photographs and ephemera, and even items such as clogs, all of which have been donated to either the Library or the Museum, as the Society has no library, conservation or large storage facilities of its own. Photographic Recording is now carried out by Library and Museum staff.

The Industrial Archaeology Group was formed in 1965, and became increasingly active in the late 1960s under the guidance of Owen Ashmore, whose programme included walks round industrial Stockport, surveying old mills and visiting working mills. In 1973 the group began the long slow task of extracting all industrial archaeology references from the files of the *Stockport Advertiser* from 1822 to 1870. Hundreds of news and advertising items were gathered, many of them to be used later in talks to the Society and as a contribution to Owen Ashmore's *Industrial Archaeology of Stockport* which was published by Manchester University Press in 1976. Additional work on local Directories helped with a talk on the "Brewing Industry", popular with our own and other societies. In 1979 the group took over the work of the Transport Research Group which had been formed in 1967 and had produced a *Chronology of Stockport Transport* from the local newspapers. Some of this material was used for a talk on "Coaching Days in Stockport" which was well-received by our own and other societies. Group members are currently preparing a lecture for the Society on the role of "Stockport's Rivers in Industry".

The Society's *Heaton Mersey Group* was formed in 1968 under the leadership of Sheila Cobbing, who lectures at Manchester Polytechnic. It began by collecting local material, much of it received as a result of Cyril Warren's slide shows. Some collections of documents were deposited with the Local History Library along with interviews with local residents recorded on tape. The village censuses were transcribed, as well as the gravestone inscriptions at



Pupils at Christ Church School, Heaton Norris, 1925.

St. John's churchyard. *Heaton Mersey — A Victorian Village 1851-1881* was published in 1985 (now out-of-print). Illustrations for some of the chapter headings, drawn by a group member, were re-used for sets of notelets which sold very well. The group is now inactive.

The *Historic Stockport Research Group* was formed in 1975 in collaboration with the Historic Stockport Research Committee (now defunct) and the University of Manchester Extra-Mural Department. After a preliminary five-week palaeography course, this group, of which a small nucleus still remains, set out to transcribe all the Stockport wills and inventories dating from 1578 to 1800, which are lodged at the County Record Office at Chester. Part of this work — *Stockport Probate Records 1578-1619*, edited by C.B. Phillips and J.H. Smith, was published by the Record Society of Lancashire and Cheshire in 1986. A second volume covering the documents from 1620 to 1645 is due in 1992, and members are preparing a comprehensive glossary and index to both volumes. A booklet based on an analysis of the documents from 1660 to 1669 will also be published by the Historical Society in the not-too-distant future.

Our *Hazel Grove Group* was formed in 1976, under the leadership of Heather Coutie, who also lectures for WEA and Manchester University classes. This very busy group has gathered a great deal of local material, recorded interviews, transcribed censuses, tithe apportionments, and gravestone inscriptions, and given talks to the Society. Their publications are *Hazel Grove or Bullock Smithy?* (1982) (now out of print), *Hazel Grove: T'other end o' t' Village* (1985) (still available price 95p) and *The Lighter Side of Hazel Grove* (1986) (still available price 50p).

The *Bramhall Group*, the companion group to "Hazel Grove" was formed

in 1979 in conjunction with Heather Coutie's WEA class. The resultant research has provided talks for the Society and the group has produced a good deal of transcription work for Bramhall Hall. In 1989 *The Diary of*



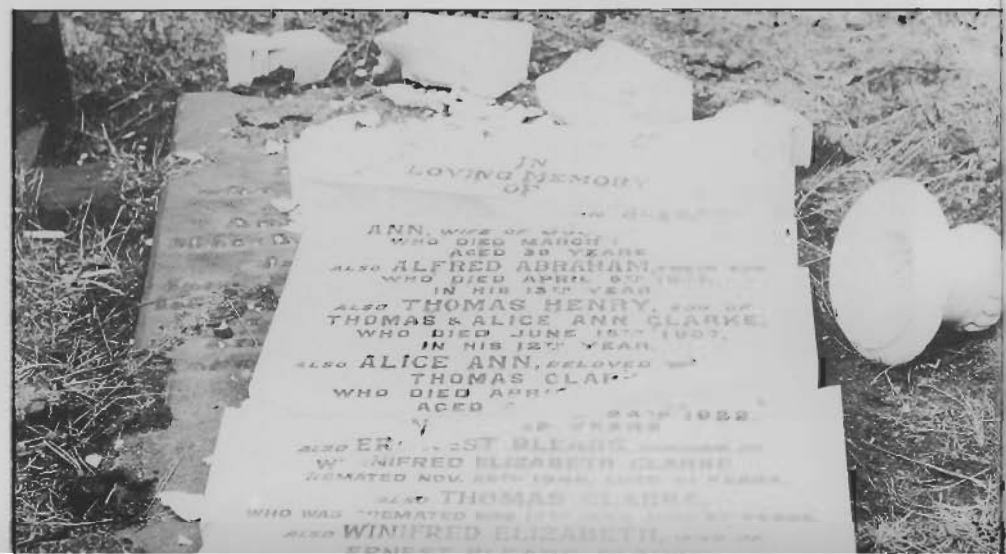
Christ Church, Heaton Norris, 1977. Vandalism in the redundant church. Peter Pownall, A Bramhall Farmer, 1765-1858 — a transcript with an extensive glossary, was published. (Still available, price £4.95). More material is being collected and work is continuing slowly for both Bramhall and Hazel Grove.

Over the years a number of special projects have been undertaken by members of the Society, including the transcription and typing up of Stockport Grammar School's early registers for computerisation and later use in the School's 500th anniversary publication. Several members calendared the archives of Turner's Vaults, an old-established Stockport wine-merchant's, and one member is currently analysing some of the sales-ledgers.

In 1976, the redundant Christ Church, and its graveyard, at Heaton Norris, were being vandalised and many of the gravestones broken, so a joint project to record the inscriptions was set up with the North Cheshire Family History Society.

The inscriptions which were already included in the Owen Manuscripts from last century were copied, compared to the present day ones, and those which were later than Owen's time were added. A seemingly simple task, but retrieval of some of the inscriptions was not easy. Many of the flat stones had sunk a foot or more into the earth, and were not even marked on the official graveyard plan. These had to be stripped of turf, earth, brambles and tree-roots. Many broken stones had to be pieced together like jigsaws, those lying face-down had to be lifted with crow-bars, and some standing stones had to be carefully stripped of many years' growth of ivy. In all, about two dozen energetic members helped with this project over about four months, the only "hiccup" was when a local householder sent for the police to remove "the gang of gypsies digging up the graves". After suitable explanations, the police switchboard operators knew how to deal with any further complaints! Copies of the updated churchyard plan and the inscriptions were deposited with various libraries, the County Record Office and the two working societies.

Gravestone vandalism. Christ Church, Heaton Norris, 1977.



Reference has already been made to some publications drawing on work done by or associated with the Society. Others include that done in 1970 by Margaret Hughes and Vincent Holland who cooperated to produce one of the Museum's first information leaflets, *Stockport Viaduct*, which has since been revised and reprinted and is available at Stockport branch libraries. More recently, Sylvia Hill and Barbara Marriott prepared a Library leaflet on the Cobden Statue in St. Peter's Square. In 1974 *A Morning's Walk Round Stockport* by Jim Hooley appeared. This was a short town-centre history trail based on "Hooley's Hikes". It ran into three editions in four years and is now out of print. Jim Hooley also produced *An Afternoon Walk around Stockport* (1976), concentrating on the Portwood industrial area. (Frank Galvin of Stockport Museum has since produced a large glossy town trail, much more comprehensive, but including much of Jim's material). In 1978 *Old Taverns, Inns and Public Houses in Stockport* by Jim Hooley was published. In the following years, *Remembering in Rhyme* by Barbara Brill appeared. This was a history in verse of various famous people connected with Stockport and district, prepared for the Society's 18th Birthday entertainment. In 1983, the Society's then Assistant Secretary, William Ball, a Congleton publisher, produced *M63 - Motorway through a Town*. In 1988 he published *Greg's, the Story of Albert Mills* (Reddish) by Peter O'Connell, former personnel manager at Greg's, who became a member of the Industrial Archaeology Group after meeting them during a project to calendar the mills' archives.

Some members have written pamphlets for their employers and other contribute articles to local history magazines and the local newspapers.

The Society has many members taking part in the Cheshire Parish Register Transcription Scheme. Others have taken Local History Certificates and Extra-Mural Degrees in History. We have provided a number of part-time helpers for the Museum, Art Gallery, Lyme Hall and Bramhall Hall and have joined in many exhibitions in the Stockport area.

The Society had a number of *Outings* on an occasional basis up to 1972, and summer outings in 1974 and 1975. With the appointment of a regular Excursion Secretary, Graham

Hyland, in 1976, the tradition of three full-day coach outings a year was established. With some assistance from a few other enthusiasts, he handled these magnificently until Sprint 1991. Following his "retirement" voluntary organisers will now take it in turn to make the arrangements. We have visited numerous local venues and those further afield — even up to Hadrian's Wall. Places have been chosen to satisfy all tastes: museums, halls and castles, churches and abbeys, mills and potteries, railways, tramways, canals and even air-raid shelters.

The Society has been conscious of its own history and have had celebrations for the 18th, 21st and 25th anniversaries, when members have burst into rhyme, song and dance, using spoof Victorian melodrama, old-time Music Hall and other material prepared specially by some of our talented colleagues. We have

had visiting speakers on many subjects, both local and general, from basics such as the history of lavatories to the finer points of medieval embroidery!

We are a happy Society, with enthusiastic officers and committee, and a small core of zealous research workers. We have learned that not everyone who joins wants to work — but if the general membership did not pay their subscriptions and come to meetings, then the Society could not exist! So we accept all members on their own terms, and hope that we provide "something for everyone". We are always pleased to welcome new members and details of membership, and the current programme may be obtained from the Hon. Secretary: Morris Garratt, 59 Malmesbury Road, Cheadle Hulme, Stockport, SK8 7QL. Tel: 061 439 7202.

Adverts from Stockport Advertiser, 1866.

STOCKPORT INFIRMARY.

THE ANNUAL BALL.
In aid of this Institution, will take place in the Mechanics' Institution, Stockport, on FRIDAY EVENING, JANUARY 18th, 1866.

Ladies Patronesses:

The Marchioness of West- minster	Mrs Hill, Wood Hall
Lady Egerton of Tatton	— Cornwall Legh, High Legh
Lady Mary Widdowson Egerton	— Leech, Bank Hall
The Duchess of Devonshire	— Legh, Lezard
Mrs Andrew, Compston	— Pritchard, The Rectory
— Coppock, Dove Bank House	— W. Rayner, Tiviot Dale
— Davenport, Bramhall Hall	— Eyre, Zetley House
— Eckridge, John, Holly Wood	— Tatton, Wythenshawe
	— Watkin, Northen
	— St. John Tate, Wellbank

Reverend:

The Mayor of Stockport	John Marsland Lingard, Esq.
George Andrew, Esq.	John Leech, Esq.
Charles Andrew, Esq.	Capt. H.C. Carr, 17th C.R.V.
W. B. Barr, Esq.	Henry Allatt Marsland, Esq.
Walsfield Christy, Esq.	William H. Mead, Esq.
Major Coppock, C.R.V.	O. W. Moss, Esq.
Lieut.-Col. Davenport	William Bayner, Esq. M.D.
John Eckridge, Esq.	Capt. Erley, 20th C.R.V.
Capt. Eckridge, 18th C.R.V.	Thomas Thornely, Esq.
Thos. Dixon Hill, Esq.	William Walton, Esq.
Capt. Howard, 21st C.R.V.	E. W. Watkin, Esq. M.P.
Lieut.-Col. Lech, C.R.V.	Capt. Wilkinson, 18th C.R.V.
Walter Hyde, Esq.	G. B. Worthington, Esq.

MR. HOBABIN'S QUADRILLE BAND will attend.

Dancing will commence at Nine o'clock.

Tickets may be had at the Office of *The Stockport Advertiser* and *County News*; from Messrs Clay and Son; and at Messrs Agnew and Sons, Exchange-Street, Manchester.

Ladies' Tickets, 7/6; Gentlemen's Tickets, 10/6.

Ladies and Gentlemen are requested to endorse their Tickets.

Stockport People's Concert Hall.

MONDAY, JANUARY 22nd, and EVERY EVENING DURING THE WEEK.
The Place to Spend a Happy Evening!—Nothing to Omit the Serenade and Rehearsal!
The Best Talent of the Day!—The Greatest of the Day!!

THE GREAT TOM CROSSLING,
Negro Comedian and Eccentric Dancer.
FIRST APPEARANCE OF MISS LOUISA LEVI,
Characteristic Dancer and Vocalist.

MR. MAJOR,
The Celebrated Silver-tongued Tenor.

MR. LODIE LEVI,
Comique Artist and Spade Dancer, also Burlesque Comedian.
Last Six Nights of the highly-gifted
LANODILL TROUPE OF COLOURED MINSTRELS.
Engagements pending with the Best Opera of the Day!

Price of Admission:—Saturdays and Benefit Nights, Reserved Seats 6d, Body of Hall 4d, Gallery 3d. Other Nights, Reserved Seats 6d, Body of Hall 4d, Gallery 3d.
Disorderly Characters not admitted.
Doors open at Seven o'clock, to begin at half-past Seven. Saturdays, doors open at a quarter to Seven, to begin at a quarter-past Seven.

DANCING, &c.

MONSIEUR PARIS, assisted by his Son, respectfully announce that the **MADEIRA, Manchester Institute, Stockport,** will RE-OPEN on SATURDAY EVENING, JANUARY 27th, at Two o'clock.

80, Nelson-street, Oxford Road, Manchester.

S. PAUL'S SCHOOLS, PORTWOOD.

GRAND BAZAAR, under distinguished Patronage, in aid of the BUILDING FUND for these Schools, will (b.v.) be held early in JUNE, 1867.
Contributions from the Ladies of Stockport and neighbourhood earnestly solicited.

J. COMBES, Treasurer; Hon. Secs. S. BLAKEWAT, Curate.

Dec. 1866.

PRINCE'S THEATRE, MANCHESTER.

EVERY EVENING, at Seven o'clock,
THE GRAND
CHRISTMAS PANTOMIME,
ROBIN HOOD
AND
THE MERRY MEN OF BIERWOOD.
Written by Edwin Waugh.
Scenery and Effects by Crick, Holding, Horne, & Assistant.
A TRAIN leaves Manchester for Stockport at 4.15 p.m.

The Eighteenth Anniversary of the Stockport Reform Association.

THE ANNUAL TEA PARTY and SOIREE of the STOCKPORT REFORM ASSOCIATION will be held in the Oddfellows' Hall, Wellington-street, on WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 23rd, 1866, E. WALMSLEY, Esq., President of the Association, in the Chair.

J. B. SMITH, Esq. M.P., E. W. WATKIN, Esq. M.P., and other influential Gentlemen, have engaged to be present.

Tea on the Table at half-past Six, prompt.

Single Tickets, 1s; Double Tickets, 1s 6d, admitting Lady and Gentlemen, may be had of the Committee; at the News Office of Mr James Smith, Great Underbank; Mr George Barber, Lower Billgate; Mr Thomas Smith, Bookstall, Lower Billgate; and of Mr Fielding, Agent to the Association, St. Petergate.

Stockport People's Concert Hall.

Give Us, and Grant Us, a
SIXTY COMPANY of Talented ARTISTES!
CONSTANT CHANGE OF NOVELTIES!
SEE THE HOGGERS!!

Concert Hall, Theatre, and Ballet Companies!

MONDAY, JUNE 18th, the Marvel of the Age, the Renowned **PROFESSOR REDMOND,**
Exposer of the **DAVEMPORT NUMBERS.** Six Nights only.
Leader of the Band, P. M. VERRA.
Doors open at Seven o'clock, to begin at half-past—P. M. VERRA.
No Disorderly Characters admitted.

Stockport Rifle Volunteer Band.

THE BAND will Play at the Armory, THIS (FRIDAY) EVENING, and FRIDAY EVENING, commencing at Eight prompt.
Honorary Members admitted Free. All others ONE PENNY each, for the Benefit of the Band.

PROGRAMME FOR FRIDAY, 23rd AUGUST, 1866.

1. Slow March, "Soldiers"
2. Overture, "La Fille du Regiment"
3. Waltz, "Stars of the West"
4. Quadrille
5. "L'Adieu et Retour du Soldat"
6. "Armenia Varsovianna"
7. "God Save the Queen"

Volunteers not Officers not admitted except on production of their Tickets.

Stockport Dramatic and Dramatic Society.

PRESIDENT, MR. M. DICKIE.

THE above Society respectfully announce a **DRAMATIC PERFORMANCE** in aid of their Society, on WEDNESDAY EVENING, APRIL 6, 1866, in the **Old Fellows' Hall, Stockport,** when will be presented the Comic Drama, in two acts, entitled

"**THE HEADLEAD OF ARTS;**"
Followed by the Farce, in one act, entitled
"**THE DAY AFTER THE WEDDING.**"

Doors open at Seven, Curtains to rise at half-past. Programme to Reserved Seats, 1s; Second Seats, 1s; Body of the Hall, 6d; Gallery, 3d.—to be had at Messrs Turvill and Sons, Music Warehouse, Great Underbank; the **Excursion Agency** and New Office; or from any member of the Society.