

BOLTON ARCHIVE AND LOCAL STUDIES SERVICE

Kevin Campbell and Barry Mills

Bolton Public Library opened in 1853 and from the beginning collected local material. In 1938 the library moved to its present purpose-built home in the Civic Centre. After World War II the local collection had expanded steadily in both quantity and public use, so that by the 1980s its position within the busy Central Reference Library was becoming increasingly unsatisfactory. Prior to 1974, Bolton Central Library and the Museum Service (housed in the same building) had collected local manuscripts and documents, but no consistent policy was pursued with regard to archive materials.

Bolton Central Library was extensively re-organised in 1990, when a joint Archive and Local Studies Service was established, with a large dedicated public searchroom on the ground floor, staffed by the archivist, the Local Studies librarian, two principal library/archive assistants and one general assistant. The combined service has greatly improved the security of the Local Studies Collection and increased hours of opening and access to archival material, which is now no longer by appointment only. It has provided a 'one-stop' service for users, including family and local historians, educational users and researchers at all levels. Since the amalgamation of the two services, there has been a big increase in use, so that in recent years we have had between 8,000 and 10,000 visitors each year.



Archibald Sparke MA, Librarian 1904-31

Local Studies Collection

The Local Studies Collection was systematically organised under the auspices of Bolton's most famous chief librarian, Archibald Sparke (1871-1970). Sparke was the last Freeman of Exeter because it was a family hereditary right, and he had no sons. He was educated at Cardiff, and started training as a librarian there at the age of thirteen. Prior to his death in 1970, he was the oldest living member of the Library Association. He brought about vast improvements to the library service during his period as chief librarian (1904-31); on his retirement he was the third-highest-paid official, after the Town Clerk and the Borough Treasurer. The highlight of his time at Bolton came on 29 September, 1910, when Andrew Carnegie opened three new branch Libraries on the same day, at Astley Bridge, Great Lever and Halliwell. Sparke laid the foundations of the Local Studies Collection. The area he selected for collection — Bolton, Farnworth, Horwich, Kearsley, Little Lever, Westhoughton and Turton — is the same as that now comprised within the Bolton Metropolitan Borough, apart from the addition of Blackrod in 1974. He introduced the special classification system, based on Dewey but with amendments to classes 901-19 to cater for local places, which has subsequently been refined and is still in use here today. He was the editor of the then-comprehensive *Bibliographia Boltoniensis* (1913), and also of the volumes on Bolton and Deane in the Lancashire Parish Register Society series, in addition to monographs such as the modern-sounding 'How the Public Library can help the business man' which was in fact published in 1919.

The core of the collection consists of some 30,000 books and pamphlets and is, of course, still expanding. The material covers all aspects of the history, geography and development of the area now served by the Metropolitan Borough, and includes complete runs of the major local and regional historical journals. There is a small collection of works published in Bolton, including *Sieges and Battles of the Civil War* (1785). The Lancashire Collection includes general historical and topographical works about the county, but excludes works about individual towns and districts outside our immediate area.

Lancashire Dialect Collection

The Lancashire Dialect Collection includes the work of two important Bolton authors, James Taylor Staton (1817-75) and Charles Allen Clarke (1863-1935). Staton was orphaned at an early age and was educated at Chetham's College, where he worked as a servant to the governor. He worked for the *Bolton Evening News* during its first four years, 1867-71, and later for John Heywood in Manchester. His considerable output of dialect literature ranged from comic works about 'Bobby Shuttle un' his woife Sayroh' to serious subjects such as 'th' brunning o' Westhowftun Factory' by the Luddites, or the 'Song of Solomon' rendered into the Bolton dialect. Allen Clarke, who also wrote under a number of pseudonyms — notably as Teddy Ashton — was an even more prolific author. He worked as a half-time piecer in a cotton mill in his youth, so that his classic protest against 'The Effects of the Factory System' (1899)

was written from direct experience. As an early socialist, he wrote political works such as 'The Red Flag: a tale of the people's woe' and political fiction like 'The Knobstick' set in Bolton during the Engineers Strike of 1887. Clarke also wrote about local walks in 'Moorlands and Memories', while 'Windmill Land' is about the Blackpool area where he lived in later life. However, his most popular works for Bolton people have been 'John o' God's sending', about the siege of Bolton during the Civil War, and his numerous comic dialect sketches featuring characters such as Patsy Filligan, Georgie Greensauce and the hilarious Bill and Bet Spriggs of Tum Fowt. For many years (1896–1903) Clarke even ran his own newspaper, *Teddy Ashton's Northern Weekly*, which we have on microfilm, featuring all the variety of his literary output. The Lancashire Dialect Collection also includes works by such famous authors as Ben Brierley, Tim Bobbin and Edwin Waugh. In addition, our strong local authors' collection includes works by such writers as Bill Naughton.

Family History

Recent surveys have shown that almost 40 per cent of our customers are interested in family history research.¹ For many years we have had sources such as trade directories, electoral rolls and census returns for the local area. While in the archives there is a very large collection of local family photographs in small deposits, which were copy prints originally collected by the Manchester Studies Project, and donated to us. There are comprehensive records of Bolton Poor Law Union, including workhouse admission and discharge registers from 1839, and extensive Methodist and Non-conformist registers and other records. In recent years we have supplemented these holdings with the International Genealogical Index on microfiche (United Kingdom and Ireland) and have acquired microfilm copies of almost all the local Church of England parish registers. Our latest purchases for use by family historians are microfiche copies of the General Register Office (St Catherine's House), index of births, marriages and deaths in England and Wales, and the alphabetical indexes of the 1881 census returns for Cheshire, Cumberland, Derbyshire, Durham, Lancashire, Northumberland, Westmorland and Yorkshire.

Local Newspapers

Unfortunately there are no surviving Bolton newspapers before 1823, and runs before 1830 are incomplete, but occasional references to the area can be found in the *Manchester Mercury*, which we have on microfilm (1752–1850). We have complete runs on microfilm for all surviving major Bolton weekly titles, such as the *Bolton Chronicle* (1825–1917), *Bolton Free Press* (1835–47), *Bolton Journal* (1871–1976 and from 1985 to date), *Bolton Guardian* (1859–93) and *Bolton Metro News* (1979–96).

Our main daily paper, the *Bolton Evening News*, began in 1867, and we have a complete run from that date. Newspaper indexes (1825–97 and 1901–34), produced here by Manpower Services Commission Schemes in the 1980s, greatly facilitate access to information. We also have extensive and well-indexed newspaper cuttings, which were very selective from 1931–66, but have since been more comprehensive. Our consolidated biographical index includes some 12,000 references to news cuttings and obituaries. We also have a long run (1884–1988) on microfilm of the local weekly sports paper, originally called the *Football Field*, but later known as the *Buff*. In addition to giving information on a variety of sports, this

publication has a wider significance as an important source on the early development of professional Association Football in this area.

Our branch libraries at Farnworth and Horwich also have local newspapers for their own areas on microfilm. The *Farnworth Journal* (1868–1979) has been thoroughly indexed, but there are no indexes to the *Horwich Chronicle* (1888–1916), and only a very brief index to the *Horwich and Westhoughton Journal* (1927–80).

The Library has been unfortunate in never receiving a large private collection of photographs at any time in its history. Our present collection totals some 10,000 prints and negatives, but very few of these date from before 1900, and the vast majority are more recent than 1950. To some extent, this deficiency is made good by the Bolton Museum collections which include some fine early views of the town centre. Attempts have been made in recent years to improve our photographic collections, and we have purchased large numbers of prints from the *Bolton Evening News*, as well as receiving generous donations from the Borough Planning Department. The emphasis of the collection is very much topographical, and is organised by place with separate folders for different buildings, streets and districts. The collection is indexed.

Oral History

The Bolton Oral History Collection consists of over 500 cassette-tape recordings, most of which were produced by the Bolton Oral History Project of 1981–83. This Manpower Services Commission Scheme resulted in over 300 hours of interviews with local people on topics such as their childhood, home life, early working life, leisure, politics, war and community life. Two-thirds of these recordings have been transcribed word-for-word, all of them have been summarised, and the collection has both subject and name indexes. This valuable resource has been the basis of two publications: a teaching pack, 'Growing up in Bolton', which has been used very successfully both for educational work and for reminiscence projects with the elderly; and 'Looking Back' by Anne Bromilow and Jim Power, which combines interesting quotes with fascinating old photographs. The oral history collection provides a wealth of information about social conditions and everyday life in Bolton during the period 1900–45.

Our collection of theses and dissertations includes original research on a wide variety of local topics, including religion, leisure, politics, the unemployed, the Poor Law and Lancashire culture. The extended theses have sometimes been followed by briefer books, as in the case of Tom Dunne's history of Bolton Libraries, Peter Taylor's work on nineteenth-century Bolton politics, Peter Dale's research on the development of Bolton churches, 1750–1850, and Robert Poole's work on popular leisure — notably the local music hall. Three very detailed works which have not yet reached a wider audience in this way are the theses by Paul Salvesson on 'Lancashire Dialect Literature, 1746–1935'; Paul Harris on 'Social Leadership in Bolton, 1019–1939'; and the American scholar Daniel Soloff on 'Unemployment and the working class in Bolton in the 1930s'.

Walt Whitman

Bolton Central Library is probably unique in having a stuffed canary as part of its collections. It once belonged to the American poet Walt Whitman, and it is the very same canary to which Whitman wrote his poem 'My Canary Bird'. From 1885 until the 1920s, the Bolton Whitman



Walt Whitman's canary.

Fellowship flourished, and a large collection of the group's books, pamphlets, photographs, correspondence and ephemera were acquired by the library by gift or purchase, and this collection now numbers in excess of 500 items. In recent years, modern critical works about Whitman have been added to the collection, which is now one of the largest relating to the poet outside the USA. The Bolton Public Library catalogue of the collection, produced in 1955, is still an adequate guide to our Whitman holdings, and a good introduction to the Bolton Whitman Fellowship, otherwise known as 'Eagle Street College' is given in 'Loving Comrades' by Paul Salvesson.

The collection includes extensive letters, diaries and publications relating to the two leading figures of the Fellowship, J.W. Wallace and Dr John Johnston. The name 'Eagle Street College' came from the Fellowship's early meeting place, which was Wallace's home in Eagle Street, Bolton. Wallace spent all his working life as an assistant at Messrs Bradshaw, Gass and Hope, the local firm of architects. Our file of his surviving correspondence includes letters from early Socialists such as Keir Hardie and Bruce and Katherine Glassier, as well as from other Whitman enthusiasts like John Burroughs. Wallace and Johnston wrote a book about their visit to Walt Whitman at Camden, USA, in 1891, following Johnston's initial visit the previous year. John Johnston was a medical doctor who was born at Annan in Scotland and came to Bolton as a general practitioner in 1876. He was surgeon to the Bolton Infirmary (1893–1905), and was later the Medical Officer for the Board of Guardians. Our extensive holdings of his diaries and notebooks include fascinating accounts of his work at Whalley Military Hospital dealing with train-loads of wounded soldiers after the Battle of the Somme. Whitman

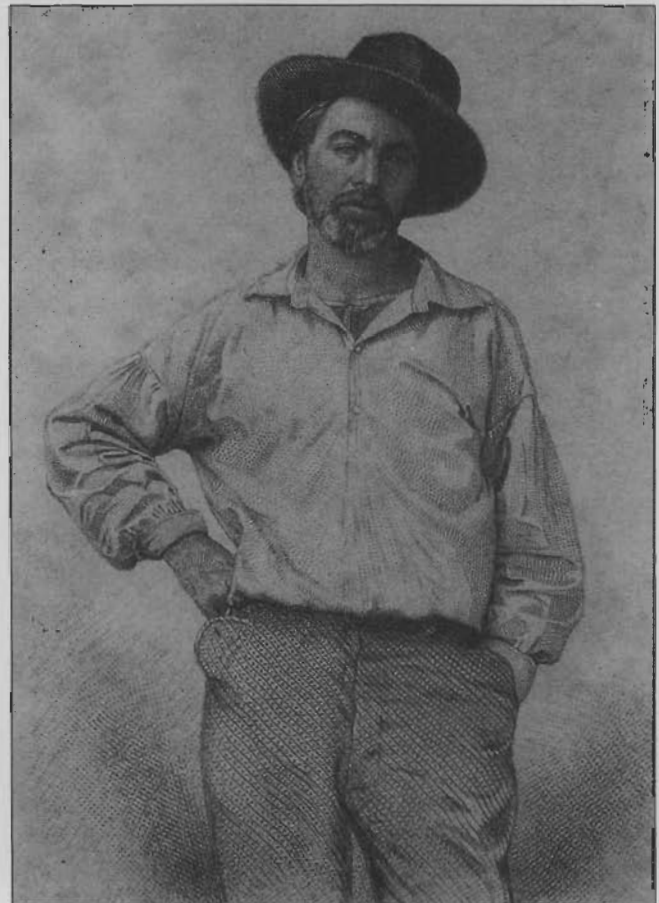
corresponded regularly with the group until his death in 1892. He valued their great enthusiasm for his work, because he regarded them as examples of the 'common man', whereas many of his followers in the USA were academics.

Maps and Plans

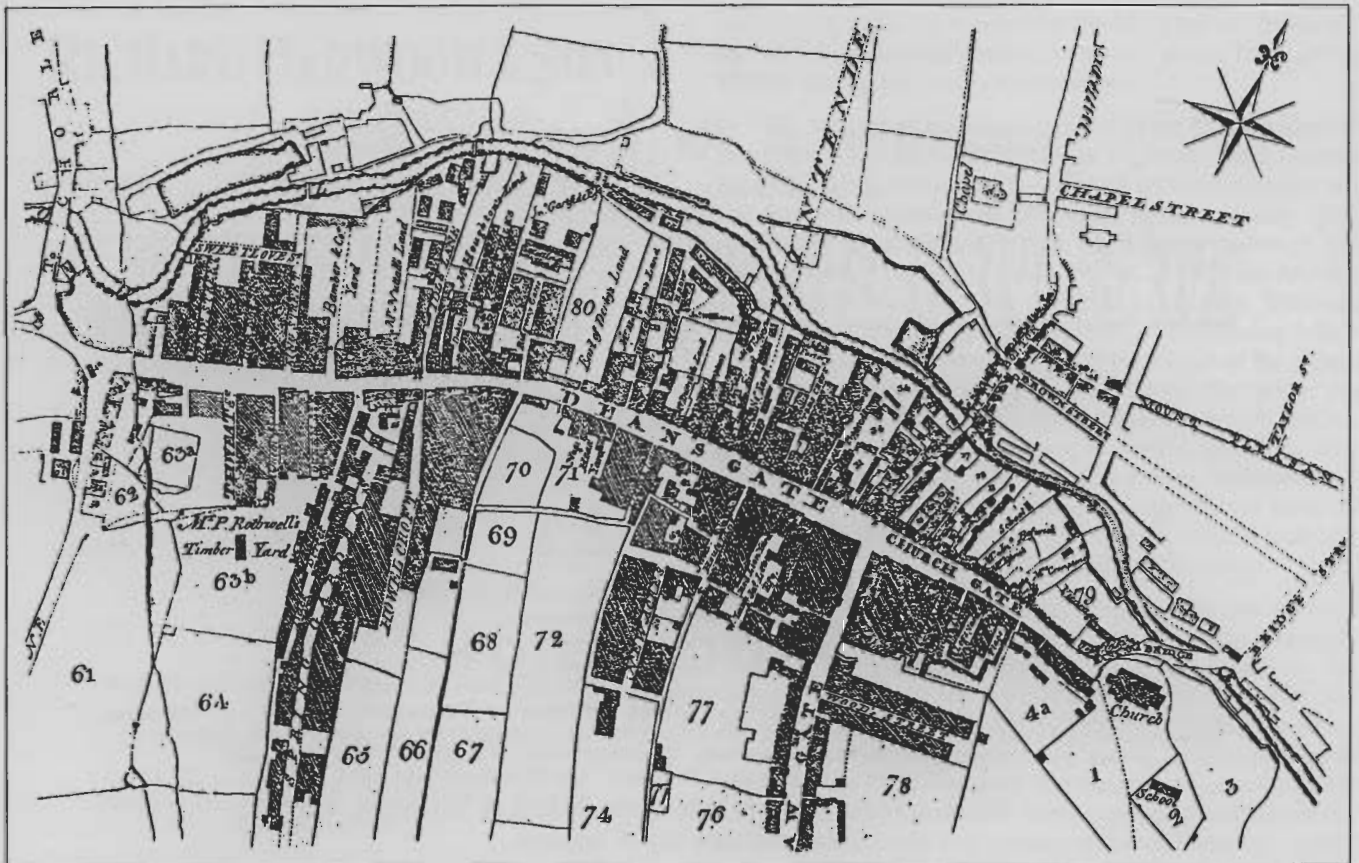
We have a comprehensive collection of large-scale Ordnance Survey maps from 1845–1996, totalling some 4,500 sheets. These include the 1:500 (10:56 inches to 1 mile) series of 1890 and 1910. Covering the built-up area of Bolton, these are so detailed that they even record individual lamp-posts and tramlines! Unique to Bolton are the Borough Engineer's plans of 1882 (scale 1:1056 or 5ft to 1 mile) and the Horwich Local Board plans of 1873 (about 10ft to 1 mile).

Our archival holdings contain several thousand original maps and plans dating from 1620 to the present day. Of particular importance is the archive of John Albinson, a Bolton surveyor who was active from about 1790–1850. He was engaged by private individuals, turnpike trusts, enclosure commissioners, industrialists and others to make maps and surveys of their property. About 2,000 of these have survived. They include material relating to an area much wider than Bolton itself, such as plans of coalmines in East Ardsley, Yorkshire, dated 1810; a plan of collieries in Collyhurst and Manchester, 1805; enclosure maps of Denshaw Moor in Saddleworth, 1810–12; and turnpike roads between Haslingden and Bury, c.1809–20.

Apart from compiling his own maps, Albinson was also a collector and copier of the work of others, so we have a plan of Taunton Hall Estate, Ashton-under-Lyne, c.1700; William Senior's plan of Smithills Estate, 1620; and plans of Mainz, Germany, and Toulon, France, 1796.



Walt Whitman, 1855.



Map of Bolton in 1793, enlarged from the original survey by the Great Bolton Improvement Trustees.

The archives of another local firm of surveyors, Joseph Jackson & Sons, also contain some 2,000 original maps and plans of local estates, coalmines, waterworks and industrial premises from about 1800–1950. Similarly, the extensive archive of the Bolton architects Hermon, Crook and Williams includes drawings by Jonathan Simpson, architect to William Hesketh Lever, the first Viscount Leverhulme, including Roynton Cottage, Rivington Bungalow and properties in Leverhulme's model village of Port Sunlight, Cheshire. More recently we have received on deposit more than 2,000 files of business correspondence and related material from another Bolton firm of architects, Bradshaw, Gass and Hope.

Archival holdings

From its inception, the Archive Service has attempted to acquire, mostly by donation or 'permanent loan', material reflecting all aspects of the history and development of the area. Bolton grew from a small market and textile manufacturing town in the late eighteenth century to become a major industrial centre by the present day, and this is reflected in the bulk of the surviving records, the vast majority of which date from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Our holdings related to local industries are quite extensive. Of the existing Library and Museum holdings inherited by the Archive Service in 1974, the most significant were the family and business papers of Samuel Crompton of Hall i'th' Wood, inventor of the cotton-spinning machine known as the 'Mule'. These records were donated to Bolton Museum by one of his descendants in the 1920s. They include the inventor's own national survey of mules and other spinning equipment compiled in 1811 as part of his efforts to gain financial compensation for his invention from Parliament.

Other textile records include the business records of Richard Harwood & Sons of Brownlow Fold Mills in Halliwell. This firm engaged in the Bolton 'speciality' — fine mule-

spinning and doubling. The records are complete and relate to all aspects of the business, from the purchase of raw cotton — mostly from Egypt and Sudan — to the sale and export of the manufactured thread. Like other 'enlightened' employers, Harwood's provided social and recreational facilities for their workforce. Cuttings books and other material provide information about sports activities, amateur theatricals, excursions and other activities. Other textile records reflect the bleaching and finishing processes of which Bolton was an important centre.

The local engineering industry, particularly the manufacture of mill steam engines, is represented by the extensive archives of several firms, notably Hick, Hargreaves & Co. Ltd. Surviving material includes some 50,000 engineering drawings, and some 2,000 glass negatives which record this firm's products from 1906 onwards. The local coal industry's records include those of Ladysore Colliery at Little Lever, where terracotta clay was also mined; wage books survive from 1857–1942. Other industrial records in our collection include those of Magee Marshall & Co Ltd, brewers; Cooke and Nuttall of Horwich, paper manufacturers; William Walker & Son, tanning; and Tillotson's, printing and publishing.

Trade union archives include those of the Bolton Weavers and Winders. This union owes its origin to the splendidly named 'Excelsior Friendly Society of Toilet and Marseilles Weavers by Power of Bolton and District'. Other local society records range from Bolton Hesperus Christian and Literary Association to Bolton Municipal Officers' Rifle Club. Charities, Sick and Burial Societies, Co-operative and Friendly Societies are also well represented, as are the records of many local non-conformist churches. The Methodist Church records are particularly extensive, and we also have Baptist, Congregationalist (United Reformed Church), Presbyterian, Unitarian and Swedenborgian material.

Inauguration of the Crompton Statue.

THE
MEMORIAL STATUE

OF
SAMUEL CROMPTON,

THE INVENTOR OF THE SPINNING MULE,
WILL BE

INAUGURATED AT BOLTON,

On Wednesday, the 24th September, 1862.

A PROCESSION

TO CONSIST OF
YEOMANRY CAVALRY, ARTILLERY CORPS, RIFLE CORPS, VISITORS, MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT, CLERGY AND MINISTERS,
MEMBERS OF THE CORPORATION, THE SCULPTOR, THE COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT, GUARDIANS AND OVERSEERS
OF THE POOR, GENTLEMEN OF THE TOWN AND NEIGHBOURHOOD, VARIOUS PUBLIC OFFICERS,
TRADES AND FRIENDLY SOCIETIES, AND OTHERS.

Will Assemble on the New Market Square,

At Ten o'clock in the forenoon,

AND WILL FORM AT HALF-PAST TEN O'CLOCK PRECISELY, TO PROCEED BY THE
FOLLOWING ROUTE, VIZ.:

Along Newport-street into Great Moor-street and Weston-street, then along the South side of Derby-street to the top of Cannon-street, returning along the North side of Derby-street, into and along Moor-lane, then along the South side of Deansgate to the corner of Bradshawgate, returning along the North side of Deansgate to Knowsley-street, along Knowsley-street to St. George's Church, along St. George's road, to and along Higher Bridge-street to Kay-street, Crossdale-street, Waterloo-street, Folds-road, Manor-street, Bank-street, Churchgate, Church-bank, Bury-new-road, Radcliffe-road, Bradford-street, past the Baths, along the East side of Manchester-road, to Orlando-street, returning along the West side of Manchester road into Bradshawgate, to

NELSON SQUARE,

Where the Inaugural Ceremony will take Place;

then along the South, West, and North, sides of Nelson Square, into and along Bradshawgate, Deansgate, Oxford-street, to the New Market Square, and there disperse.

Mr. Coxwell's Mammoth Balloon will ascend from the Open Ground behind
Wesley Chapel, Bradshawgate at Four o'clock.

THE ORATORIO OF THE CREATION

Will be performed in the CONCERT HALL, at Seven o'clock.

PRINCIPAL VOCALISTS.—Mrs. Sunderland, Mr. Lewis Thomas, and Mr. Price.

With an efficient and complete Band and Chorus of about One Hundred Performers.

A PROMENADE CONCERT IN THE TEMPERANCE HALL,

By HAND-BELL RINGERS and A MILITARY BAND, in the Evening.

A GRAND DISPLAY OF FIREWORKS,

On the Balloon-ground at Ten o'clock.

A plan for the formation of the Procession on the Market Square, may be seen at the Police Offices, Bowker's-row, and other regulations for the day will be subsequently announced. Tickets for the Oratorio for the Reserved Seats may be had from Mr. S. STATION, Music Seller, Bradshawgate, and for the Gallery and Area at the usual places.

The Balloon Ascent, the Promenade Concert, and the Display of Fireworks will be FREE.

Gentlemen attending the Procession will have the option of doing so either in Carriages or on foot.

FREDERIC C. W. LATHAM, PRINTER, &c., 45, BRIDGE-STREET, BOLTON.

RICHARD HARWOOD & SON

COTTON SPINNERS &
DOUBLERS

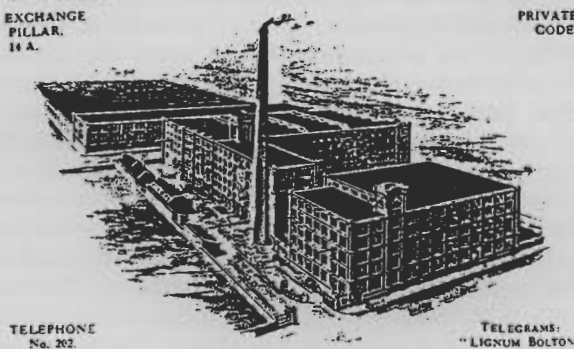
FOUNDED 1850



EXCHANGE
PILLAR.
14 A.



PRIVATE
CODE.



TELEPHONE
No. 202.

TELEGRAMS:
"LIGNUM BOLTON"

SUPER-COMBED YARNS

TWISTS—80's-150's for Cloth, Thread, Gloves,
etc.

WEFTS—100's-250's Pincop and Doubling Weft

SINGLES and TWO OR MORE FOLDS—
70's-250's for Curtains, Lace, Tullies, Electric
Wire Covering, etc.

Brownlow Fold Mills, BOLTON,
LANCASHIRE.

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Although records of the largest estates in the area are deposited elsewhere — the Earl of Bradford's at Staffordshire Record Office and the Hulton family papers in the Lancashire Record Office — other family records have been deposited with us. These include the Ainsworth family of Moss Park and Smithills Halls, who, having made a considerable fortune in the bleaching industry, purchased several large estates in the Bolton area. John Horrocks Ainsworth (1800–65) kept diaries and journals in which he recorded details of his daily life and activities, both social and industrial. He took a very paternalistic interest in his work force, even noting their attendance at church on Sundays.¹

Another great traveller was Robert Heywood (1786–1868). His papers include large quantities of correspondence relating to the family business of cotton manufacturing and also to his many other interests. A member of Bank Street Unitarian Chapel, Heywood was a very active local politician in the Liberal interest. He was Bolton's second Mayor (1839–40), being preceded in that office by his business partner Charles Darbishire. The business correspondence is especially interesting; the firm of John Heywood & Son were manufacturers of the 'old' type, in that they did not own factories but had a warehouse from which they 'put out' yarn to be spun by handloom weavers. Letters record their trade with various Manchester and London business houses, problems of transport and quality control, and their overseas business — they had agents in Gibraltar and Montego Bay, Jamaica. In his later years, Robert Heywood made many journeys abroad, which he described in his journals: Italy, 1826; USA and Canada, 1834; Turkey and the Levant, 1845;

and Russia, 1858. He married for the first time in 1848 at the age of sixty-two, and promptly took his young bride off to Europe during the 'year of revolutions'.

In 1972, the Library had been approved by the Lord Chancellor as a place of deposit for the records of Bolton Borough Quarter Sessions Court, established in 1839. Of particular interest are the post-trial calendars of prisoners, which not only give details of accused persons, crimes, verdicts and sentences, but also the state of literacy of each offender. In 1975 the Archive Service also acquired the records of Bolton Borough Magistrates' Court. Unfortunately, much material dating before 1901 had failed to survive, having fallen victim of the paper-salvage campaigns of World War II. Notable exceptions are the bastardy orders (from 1888 onwards) which are an invaluable source of information to family historians with 'problem' ancestors, in that they give names, addresses and occupations of both parents; and also a magnificent series of licensing plans, including theatres, cinemas, billiard halls and works canteens, as well as hotels and public houses.

During the 1970s, vast quantities of local authority archives were acquired from all parts of the Metropolitan Borough. Bolton County Borough Council had its origins in the Charter of Incorporation granted in 1838 under the Municipal Corporations Act of 1835. These records cover all aspects of local government: public health; transport; gas and electricity; education and libraries; museums; parks; police and fire brigade; and water supply. In addition to the usual minute books and correspondence, financial records and rate books, other less-common survivals include plans of the layout of the New Year and Midsummer Fairs from 1873–1968. The records of the Mayor of Bolton's fund for the victims of the Hulton Colliery (Pretoria Pit) disaster in 1910 include 344 files relating to families of those killed.

Other local authority material received after local government reorganisation, in 1974, includes records of the Bolton Board of Guardians (Poor Law Union) from 1837–1930; township records dating from the 1600s — the Halliwell township books begin in 1640 and include references to the Civil War; records of Bolton School Board from 1870; the Great Bolton and Little Bolton improvement Commissions from 1792; and the Turton and Entwistle Reservoir Commissioners from 1831.

To publicise the Service, a *Guide to the Archive Service* was published in 1988, and we hope to issue a revised edition during 1997. During the last two years, a number of 'open days' have been held to illustrate particular types of source material and aspects of the service, including World War II; Sources for Women's History; 100 years of cinema, and Little Lever and the Manchester, Bolton and Bury Canal.

Bolton Libraries now use the BLCMP Talis computer catalogue and all new local studies accessions have gone onto this system since December, 1994. The card catalogues are complete for all items in stock up to the end of December, 1994. We are gradually inputting earlier material onto Talis.

The present hours of opening are: Monday, closed; Tuesday and Thursday, 9.30am to 7.30pm; Wednesday, 9.30am to 1pm; Friday and Saturday, 9.30am to 5.00pm. The address is: Central Library, Civic Centre, Le Mans Crescent, Bolton BL1 1SE; tel 01204-522311 ext 2179; fax 01204 363224. Photocopying facilities are available. Contacts: Archives, Kevin Campbell; Local Studies, Barry Mills.

NOTES

¹ Kevin Campbell and Barry Mills, 'Bolton archives and local studies: a customer survey', *The Local Studies Librarian*, 14 (10), Summer 1995, pp.10–12.