

During the 10 weeks of rain we all experienced during the so called summer, a wren appeared in our garden and started to build a nest in a bird box I had previously made for blue tits. Earlier in the spring a pair of blue tits built a nest but didn't produce any chicks. However Jenny Wren, as we called her, decided to build her nest on top of the old blue tits nest after they had moved out. Jenny worked ever so hard in the pouring rain at the end of June and completed the nest by early July. We didn't see much of her until the last 2 weeks of July when the rain had ceased. Then Jenny started to visit the nest with offers of food, with no sign of a Jimmy Wren to assist her. After a week of activity two gaping beaks appeared at the entrance of the nest which we thought indicated the number of chicks in the nest. Then we noticed that a Jimmy Wren was indeed helping in the feeding. One evening Marge noticed that one of the chicks was out of the nest, this was quickly followed by mum turving the second one out also. Thinking that this was the end of the matter we were surprised to see two more little beaks appear at the entrance to the nest, they fledged a couple of days later to make a wet dreary summer into one of sunshine. The birds have given us so much pleasure allowing us to watch them rear their young. We wish the little family well and hope they come again next year.

Membership news:- As statistics show, the number of people attending meetings has increased by 14% since 2004/5, thanks to past and present secretaries providing excellent speakers. Members will be aware that the format has changed and we believe we are seeing the benefits. If any of you have any suggestions please feel free to offer them. I am also very pleased with the way Phil Ellis is progressing with our Family History Section, which has been well supported.

After much persuasion by members, the society has purchased a sound system. I believe this will be money well spent as everyone, regardless of where they are sitting in the room, should now be able to hear the speakers.

Obituary

It is with deep regret that I have to inform you of the death of Robina McNeil, Lancashire County Archaeologist. Robina gave the Royton Lives Through the Ages Committee a great deal of help in the early days when we were planning the first excavations at the Royton Hall site. Condolences on behalf of the Society have been offered to her husband Brian Ayres, County Archaeologist of Norfolk. A donation to Cancer Research has been sent in lieu of flowers.

Doug Ashmore, Chairman



Royton Lives Through the Ages - Project 2

GOOD NEWS!! We have received a grant from the National Lottery AWARDS FOR ALL scheme to carry out another dig at the Royton Hall site. By the time you read this the dig will have just started. The mechanical diggers are due to arrive on the 10th September to start opening up the site.

MORE GOOD NEWS!! ROYTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL have agreed to give us a donation to help towards the costs of having a children's week. So, from Monday 17th September until Monday 24th September, local schoolchildren will now be able to have 'hands-on' experience of archaeology and will also be taken on a Heritage Trail around Royton.

From Tuesday 25th September the adult volunteers will get their chance to join in with the excavations. This is where YOU come in. As this will probably be the last time we will be having a 'dig' on the site, this is your final opportunity to become an 'archaeologist' for the day! Who knows what you might unearth that will tell us more about Royton's past. If you would like to help out in any way, for any number of days, between the 25th September and the 5th October (weekdays only), or at the Open Weekend on the 6th and 7th October, please give Jess a call. There are lots of jobs to do and not all of them include digging! We need people on the gate, or helping with washing and recording the finds, or sketching the excavated remains - in fact there is something for everyone! I haven't heard of one person who has helped out in the past who hasn't enjoyed the experience.

As in previous years we are holding a FREE OPEN WEEKEND at the end of the dig when there will be guided tours of the site. This will take place on the 6th and 7th OCTOBER between 10:30am and 4:00pm each day, so please come along and bring your family and friends as well.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank 'The Greyhound' pub for their donation towards our 'dig' fund, which was raised at their Tuesday 'Fun Quiz' nights. A very nice gesture and much appreciated.

Once again this committee would like to thank all the members of Royton Local History Society for their continuing support.

Michael Higgins, Chairman R.L.T.A. Project 2



Memories

This edition's memories come via Jean Taylor (our lady on the door). For many of you who have lived in Royton all your life this description of Middleton Road will bring back memories of bygone days. Sadly, almost all of the buildings mentioned are long gone - for the best? I'll leave you to decide.....

A RAMBLE DOWN MIDDLETON ROAD, ROYTON ----- Reminiscences of a Royton Lady born in 1922

We start at the corner of High Street and Middleton Road at the urinals (!), and walk towards Middleton. The first property we come to is the Stevenson's house (a colourful family by some accounts), and next door is Morgan's saddlers shop. We pass by a passage (which eventually comes out near the side of the Blue Bell) and come upon the grocery shop run by Miss Reece next door to Clairra Dawson's hairdressers, followed by two houses. The fish shop/market, with lots of different fish laid out around the building, stands next to Halliwell's green grocers.

At this point we arrive at Sandholes which runs through to Croft Head and then to Jubilee Gardens. Passing another house and shop we reach Chapel Croft, at the top of which stands the Village School. This was the first seat of learning in the area and was built in 1785. Later on it became a Sunday school but held its last service on 12 January 1969 before it was demolished.

Continuing along Middleton Road we pass John Milne's butchers, Dora Partington's herbalists, Smiths fish shop, Ledger & Sevilles joiners and undertakers and then the Church Inn. Between Ledgers and Sevilles and the Church inn is a small passage which leads to Peter Row cottages which had steps and railings leading up to them.

After the Church Inn is Bradbury's grocers, who also sold hen corn, and which later became Smethurst's sweet and grocery shop. Wildgoose's bakers, then some houses bring us to Charles Street after which there are more houses up to North Street. A drapers shop, Miss Bromley's grocers and the Co-op stores lead us to Rainshaw Street.

Passing a set of houses known as West End Terrace we arrive at Haggate Methodist Church next to which is a section of open ground before the paper shop on the corner of Mill Lane. More houses before Grinrod's sweet shop, which was previously Matty Farrows hot cooked meat shop and which adjoined Haggate Farm, owned at that time by W Oldham. After that we head towards the Scotch, passing further houses in the direction of Streetbridge which becomes part of Chadderton. Crossing the road at Scotch we begin the return to Royton, starting at Mrs Calvert's chip shop.

We pass Hannah Tong's confectioners to arrive at Highlands Road, where more cottages lead us to John Shepherds butchers shop. Lewis Back, the name given to a row of cottages, lies between here and Mrs Johnson's chip shop on the corner of Hindle Street. Another row of homes is split by Hentorn's shop which sold sweets and pop.

Ivy cottage, set in its own grounds, comes before some cottages known as Seven Houses, behind which is Wheatfield Street. Before reaching Nether Hey Lane we pass J B Mills car repairers and Miss Barlow's baby linen and drapery shop. The Dog and Partridge, on the opposite corner, is attached to two cottages and Rhodes (later becoming Pimley's) butchers. This is the corner of North Street, which runs to the gates of the Vine Mill.

Next is Lavender's cake shop, then Vine Row cottages at the end of which is a sweet shop. Crossing Little Charles Street and passing four cottages we find Ibbotson's green grocers and Thwaites chip shop. There are now some small houses accessed by going down some steps and a sweet shop known as Little Joes on the corner of Union Street. Across Union street is Garside's tobacconist, the Commercial Pub and Howarth's bakers which later became Winterbottoms.

The next property stood back from the road, a drapery owned by Mrs Mellor. This section of Middleton Road was known as Fleet Street at this time. Before we reach Hall Street we pass a paper shop, a sweet shop, a house owned by the Holt family and a corner shop next to which there is an open piece of land known as Springhill Common, which was often used as a fairground with swing boats and carousels.

~~~~~ Dates for your Diary ~~~~~

At the present time there is an exhibition in Royton Library of some of the artefacts found during the 2005/6 excavations at Royton Hall. It is hoped that this exhibition will last for about two months, so if you can find the time to call in the library and take a look, I'm sure you will find it very interesting.

To celebrate LANCASHIRE DAY we have organised an evening of Lancashire entertainment and food. It will take place on **Friday 23rd November 2007**, at Downey House. Tickets for this "TASTE OF LANCASHIRE" night are £5 each, which includes a potato pie supper (a vegetarian alternative is available - please order this when buying your ticket). They can be purchased/ordered from myself or Marjorie Ashmore but please do this a.s.a.p. as we think this will be a very popular evening and numbers are limited.

Although we have booked the entertainment for the night, if anyone fancies 'doing a bit' - this could be a song, poem or story etc with a Lancastrian theme - then please contact David to discuss your piece and where he will fit you in during the evening.

David has organised very successful Lancashire Nights in the past and encourages the audience to dress the part in 'Lanky Garb' to help create the atmosphere for the evening. So get out those flat caps and mufflers, those shawls and clogs and enjoy what promises to be a really fun night.

Jess Wild, Secretary