



The Bugle



Royton Local History Society's Newsletter

Welcome back! I hope you have had a good summer break. Although we have had no society meetings during the summer months the work of the society has been continuing at a pace. Some members have been visiting various sites compiling reports and taking photographs of the buildings you all decided are worthy of entry on the "Local List". Some very good work has been done and it has been very interesting for me to go through these reports prior to their submission to Karen Heverin, Oldham Council's Heritage Officer. There are still some sites to survey so if you would like to do some please let me know.

Our secretary, Jess Wild has been working hard putting together this season's talks programme which, I hope you'll agree, is another interesting and stimulating grouping with both local and wider reaching topics. Society treasurer, Beryl Lever has also been busy preparing our accounts for audit prior to being summarised for the Annual General Meeting which will take place on Monday 28th September, 7.30 pm at Downey House. If you would like to have more say in how your Society is run and have a place on the committee please find someone to propose and second your nomination and submit these to society secretary, Jess Wild. The election of new committee members or the re-election of existing ones takes place at the AGM but please note that to be able to vote at the meeting you must have renewed your membership.

Our archaeological sub group, "Royton Lives through the Ages - Project 2" has also been busy during the summer trying to organise the final small excavation and "footprinting" of the Royton Hall site (see full report below).

Following the huge success of our 'Lancashire Night' a couple of years ago, your committee has arranged 'A Taste of Lancashire' evening to celebrate Lancashire Day on Friday 27th November. It will be held at Downey House with live traditional Lancashire music provided by the excellent Stuart Needham, who encourages everyone to join in and sing along. There will also be a potato pie (or cheese and onion pie) supper included in the ticket price. Tickets will be on sale at our October and November meetings, but be sure to get yours early as numbers are limited and last time we had a waiting list in case anybody dropped out!

Finally my grateful thanks to all those who have been active through the summer months whether they were working on the Local List, Royton Hall Excavation or on any Society business.

Geoff Oliver, Chairman

Royton Lives Through The Ages - Project 2

At the end of the 2007 excavation of the Royton Hall site there was a small but significant area of the site which still hadn't been excavated and it was felt that it needed to be investigated before the site was finally 'footprinted'. With this in mind the RLTA 2 group hoped to carry out a small dig in this area during the summer after which the 'footprinting' of the site would begin.

However, the group's original plans were thrown into disarray when the University of Manchester announced that it's Archaeological Unit was going to close at the end of July. This unit has been such a great help with the previous excavations that we were hoping they would be involved again. Unfortunately, their closure introduced unforeseen delays into the programme and new plans had to be drawn up.

It now looks like the dig and the first part of the footprinting will go ahead in October. If you would like to be involved with either projects in any way please contact Michael Higgins or Jess Wild as soon as possible.

Jess Wild, Secretary RLTA 2

Sorry, but there is no 'Famous Roytonians' feature this month.
Hopefully it will continue in the next edition of The Bugle.

~~~~~ Memories ~~~~~

Printed below are some extracts from Raymond Rush's 'Countrywise' books which, I'm sure, will bring back fond memories for most of you :-

"I remember the days when, for short distances people walked, for longer journeys they used a bicycle. The few cars that were on the road were black and travelled at a relaxed pace. To signal a change of direction the window was wound down and the driver extended an arm - even when it was raining! The lettering on the number plate did not indicate the age of the vehicle and most people kept their cars longer, many until they rusted away. Before the introduction of the annual M.O.T. inspection older cars were always parked in gear - or a brick put in front of, or behind, the wheels - especially on a slope, as the handbrakes were often next to useless, yet there were seldom any serious accidents.

Potholes on the main road were mended by a gang of men with a bubbling tar machine and a heavy steam roller. Crushed stones were used on the unsurfaced by-ways. A 'lengthsman' was in charge of each area. He lived locally and from years of experience knew where verge streams and ditches would overflow after flash floods or drains would become blocked with autumn leaves. He kept the grassy banks tidy with his razor sharp sickle and scythe and always had time for a chat. Almost every road was flanked by tall telephone poles that carried rows of overhead wires which whistled and hummed in the wind. They were congregating places for flocks of migrating martins and swallows in the autumn and resting roosts for starlings in the winter.

In the garden small petrol engines were relatively rare, so hand-pushed mowers provided plenty of exercise when the householder cut his lawns. Plants were purchased from the market gardener who grew them, not bought over the counter at a garden centre. Fresh fruit and vegetables were available from the garden and converted into appetising meals by the housewife in those days the 'deep freeze' was the normal temperature of most houses in winter! Unless we were expecting company, only the living room fire was lit, some warmth filtered through to the kitchen but the rest of the rooms were like an ice house. Taking a bath was an ordeal requiring extreme courage. The cast iron, white enamelled bath stood stark, cold and clinical. It had two dark stripes inside where the water constantly dripped from the worn leather washers on the taps. The chill of the lino was only relieved with a home made peg rug to step on to after bathing.

We had not quite reached the start of the throw away society. Jam jars were washed, stored and refilled at the appropriate season. Glass bottles were returnable or you lost your deposit on them. Clothes were handed down or passed on. When parts of them wore thin they were neatly patched and would give years of extra wear. Socks with holes in them were darned - not thrown away. Frayed jackets had a soft leather binding sewn around the cuffs, 'drinker's elbows' were strengthened with a leather patch. Trousers were held up with braces and they had buttons not zips.

Most housewives stayed at home, children were taught at their mother's apron strings not plonked in front of the telly to keep them quiet. Our village school had a head teacher who lived on the premises. Every child was known to her, there was more discipline, less vandalism and certainly a lot less litter around."

Raymond Rush

Everything we are recommended to do nowadays - exercise, eat fresh local food and recycle - was done in those days Why did we stop?

I am sure the above will have jogged your memory however, good as Raymond's memories are, they are not the ones I really want to print. I would like to print what YOU remember of your childhood, especially if you lived in Royton when you were young. Why don't you let me have them for a future edition of The Bugle?

Jess Wild, Secretary

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**Visit the R.L.H.S. websites at [www.roytonlocalhistorysociety.co.uk](http://www.roytonlocalhistorysociety.co.uk) or [www.rlhs.co.uk](http://www.rlhs.co.uk)**

