

In Search of Edith Rigby

Michael Portillo's Great British Railway programme visited Preston recently, in search of Edith Rigby, Preston's most famous suffragette. He wanted to find out more about her demands and campaigns for female suffrage.



Michael and Judy, our Friends of Winckley Square Tour Guide, enjoying a cuppa

The programme's production manager approached Hutton and Howick WI asking if anyone knew anything about its founder member, Edith Rigby and Judy assured them that they did!

As part of Hutton and Howick's Centenary Celebrations the members were also celebrating the centenary of women's suffrage and the important role played by Edith, as a suffragette, as a provider of food during the First World War and as an active member of many women's organisations.



Hutton and Howick WI 'Suffragette Choir' getting ready to sing their hearts out.

Michael talked to members about Edith, made a flower for his buttonhole (to brighten up his outfit!) and joined the 'Suffragette Choir' in singing the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU) anthem '*The March of the Women*'. It was composed by *Ethel Smyth* in 1910, to words by Cicely Hamilton.

Inspired by Edith

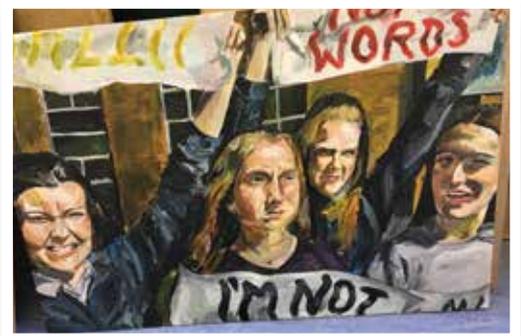
More and more young people are joining our walks especially to hear about Edith Rigby, the Suffrage Movement and other women of Winckley Square who made a difference.

Agnes Stone-Roberts

Agnes, one of our younger friends created some fabulous works of art for her GCSE.



Agnes' portrait of Edith Rigby digitalised



Agnes Stone-Roberts

WINCKLEY SQUARE TIMES

Friends of Winckley Square

Thank you to all of you who came along to the walks we organised for **International Women's Day** in March. They were all fully subscribed well in advance so we have added more **'Women of Winckley Square'** and **'Edith Rigby'** walks in April and May. Please book early to ensure a place.

Our claim to fame in this Newsletter is that our Edith Rigby Tour Guide, Judy, and her fellow WI members, appeared with Michael Portillo in Great British Train Journeys. He was in search of Edith Rigby and he found her!

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Jazz in Winckley Square is part of the Preston Jazz Festival which is being celebrated in various venues across the City 1st to 8th June. Come along relax and enjoy **Jazz in Winckley Square on Saturday 1st June, 4pm-8pm**. Have a real ale or a chilled wine from our pop up bar.

The Big Lunch was a great success last year so we are making it an annual event. This year it will be **Sunday 2nd June, 12-4pm**. There will be live music, food, (or bring your own picnic), entertainment and a pop up bar.

We have a very active Friends of Winckley Square group, some are enthusiastic researchers, others are tour guides, gardeners who help Tony and others help us run events. All our events are offered free so we are dependent on volunteers and donations to maintain this 'Free of Charge' mantra. If you would like to join our FoWS team please contact me.

The history article in this edition looks back to a time when local people could bear arms and wear uniforms without any prior training or qualification. The residents of Winckley Square were prominent in these volunteer forces.

Patricia Harrison

Chair of Friends of Winckley Square

Email: patricia@winckley.org.uk

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Meet Judy Beeston

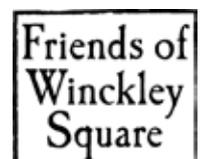
I was born a Southerner but feel I have returned to my roots. My great grandfather's family had a farm near Tarleton and a mill in Longton. I taught in several local primary schools before becoming Head teacher at Deepdale Junior School. For most of that time I enjoyed cycling to work through Avenham and Miller Parks, I think it kept me healthy, sane and gave me valuable thinking time.



When I retired I became involved with Hutton and Howick WI where I first learned about Edith Rigby who was our first president, in 1918. I spent some time researching her life and as part of our Centenary Celebrations combined with the **Centenary Celebration of Votes for some Women**, I decided it was time to spread the word. I became an approved WI speaker talking as Edith, about her life as a suffragette, her marriage and her interests in all women's issues. I give talks to WIs, church groups, U3As, libraries etc.

I lead **Edith Rigby Walks for the Friends of Winckley Square**, starting in Winckley Square and visiting some of the important sites in Edith's life. These 2 hour walks are well attended and they include a welcome refreshment stop at the Olive Cafe in Lune Street Methodist Church where Edith Raynor married Charles Rigby. I enjoy being a Friend of Winckley Square, meeting new people and helping with the other great events that we arrange such as the Big Lunch - Picnic in the Park in June, the Heritage Weekend in September and the Christmas Carol concert.

If you are interested in becoming a **Friend of Winckley Square** or joining our **Researchers' Group** or being placed on our mailing list to receive newsletters and details of events, please email enquiries@winckley.org.uk



@WinckleySquare



Friendsofwinckleysquaregardens

The Right to Bear Arms

By Steve Harrison

3rd Royal Lancashire Militia Officers at Preston Barracks in the 1870s: Lancashire Infantry Museum.

When today we hear the words *'The Right to Bear Arms'* it is usually in the context of the USA and the slaughter of children and others by legally owned automatic weapons. The 'Right' is rooted in the 1791 Second Amendment of the US Constitution and Bill of Rights.

In 1791 many of the 'Rights' enshrined in the USA were based on English Law. In Britain there was a long standing resistance to the establishment of a standing army for fear of abuse by the monarchy. Fears that James II was trying to disarm Protestants led to a Bill of Rights here in 1689 which acknowledged the right to Arms for their Defence suitable to their Conditions and as allowed by law.

The Napoleonic Wars resulted in the raising of Voluntary Regiments nationwide. Each was formed locally. The officers were not under the control of the Crown. There was no pay. Members paid a subscription and bought their own equipment. They could not be marched far from the home base. Their primary goal was to defend the locality.

Local civic figures took command. It was **Nicholas Grimshaw** of 4, Winckley Square who commanded the Royal Preston Volunteers (RPV), formed in March 1797. Among his officers were Joseph Seaton Aspden and William Cross, both neighbours on the Square. They designed their own uniforms, gave themselves military titles and divided their 110 men into 'Grenadiers' (scarlet coat with blue facings, cocked hat with black feather) and 'Infantry' (slightly different uniforms and a green feather).

Rules and Regulations were agreed, including a fine for being 'in liquor'; 10 shillings (50p) per officer, 5s (25p) other ranks. Each member paid towards the cost of a band. Non-attendance was punished with a 10 Guinea fine or Court Martial.

Nicholas Grimshaw and his officers were Tories and associated with the Corporation. The other major power broker in the town was Lord Derby, a Whig. A fellow Whig, John Watson, mill owner in Preston, Penwortham and Walton le Dale established a second volunteer force, the Loyal Preston Volunteers (LPV). Most recruits were his employees, living close to his mills. The overall leadership was Grimshaw's.

There was some disquiet in Government circles at the arming of large numbers of working men when the radical ideas of the American and French revolutions were being quoted by reformers at home.



Nicholas Grimshaw: Harris Museum, Art Gallery and Library

Status could be gained through financial support for Volunteers. It demonstrated patriotism. In 1803, during a downturn in trade, John Horrocks proved his credit worthiness by donating £1,000 to the RPV. Lord Derby threw a dinner for officers of both groups.

Enthusiasm for serving (albeit part-time) waned when no invasion occurred.

In 1803 the Volunteers re-formed against a fresh French threat. John Watson's LPV was first with 500 men. Nicholas Grimshaw revived the RPV and had 800 men ready. Watson's speed meant he was placed in overall command. Grimshaw was outraged. Lord Derby had ruled in favour of Watson. Grudgingly the RPV accepted the outcome.

In 1808 the Government decided that the time for volunteer regiments had passed. They were incorporated into the local Militia. The Infantry from the RPV along with the separate volunteer Preston Rifle Corps were merged into the Amounderness Regiment of Local Militia. Their commanding officer was, of course, Lieutenant Colonel Nicholas Grimshaw!

I will now put on a short sleeved shirt and exercise my own version of the 'Right to Bare Arms'. Perhaps the USA could do the same?

Walks and Talks

Take a Stroll with a Difference around Winckley Square

Would you like to discover more about your local heritage? Why not join a Friend of Winckley Square for a guided walk around Preston's only Georgian square.

We have added more walks to our Spring programme, offering more **Women of Winckley Square Guided Walks**. We tell the unsung stories of women such as Frances Winckley, who had a very close relationship with the Duke of Wellington, of Ellen Cross widowed at 44 with six children aged 6 months to 11 years and who finished what her husband started - creating Winckley Square. Of Henrietta Miller, daughter of Thomas Miller, who inherited the equivalent of £3 million and married at the age of 20 a man who proved to be a monster. And Cornelia Connelly, a nun with children, who founded the Holy Child Jesus Convent and School. Plus Preston's first female solicitor, the female accountant who was on Hitler's hit list and suffragettes who were criticised by suffragettes.

A separate walk concentrates on the **Life of Edith Rigby**, the Suffragette who lived on the Square, taking in her birthplace and key locations in her life.

The **Former Residents of Winckley Square Guided Walks** continue to be very popular.



Girls playing in the Convent School Garden: Society of the Holy Child Jesus

GROUP GUIDED WALKS

If your group would like a dedicated guided tour these can be booked in advance. These have been very popular with Women's Institutes, Rotary, church groups and Local History Groups and businesses. Some groups incorporate a meal in a local café.

ILLUSTRATED TALKS

FoWS also offer speakers to give talks to local groups who are interested in learning more about Winckley Square's heritage.

Walks start in the centre of the Gardens.

FREE

Donations are welcome to support our projects.

WINCKLEY SQUARE GUIDED WALKS

Former Residents - famous and infamous 1hr 15min	Wednesday 2pm 10th April 8th May	Sunday 2pm 28th April 19th May
Extraordinary Women of Winckley Square 1hr 15min	Tuesday 2pm 9th April	Sunday 2pm 26th May
Edith Rigby takes you to where she was born, married and lived. 2 hrs; including stopping for refreshments where Edith and Charles were married.	Wednesday 10am 24th April 22nd May	

EVERYONE is welcome but you do need to book a place through Eventbrite www.eventbrite.co.uk OR contact patricia@winckley.org.uk • 01772 254395

Guided walks can be adapted to avoid steps. Contact Patricia.

Tony's Update

Paul Rushton,
Preston Photographic Society

Funny weather 'we've bin'avin!'

Planting snowdrops in the snow. Watering in the rain- the new plants basking in the warm sun. Even cutting the grass! All in February!

With help from the Friends of Winckley Square we planted 2,000 snowdrops. We chose 'In the green' which refers to the fact they are not dry bulbs but have leaves on when planted. Advantages of planting 'in the green' are the instant display and not forgetting where you planted them. One day nothing, next day, VOILA! The snowdrops have been planted across two areas, in the shade to enhance the relatively new planting in the SE corner, adding to its woodland feel, and on the slight embankment along the edge of the events' area opposite what was once the Holy Jesus Convent School.



FoWS Volunteers planting snowdrops: Tony Lewis



Planting 'in the green' gives instant impact: Tony Lewis

This area has also developed over the winter. As well as being shaded it is damp in wet weather; one reason it remained nice and lush in last summer's drought. It is now

home to plants that appreciate these conditions and struggled in other areas of the Square. Movement and new planting mean we now have an archipelago of island beds through which you are invited to walk; very much in the garden style of the Square's illustrious past when lawn areas were punctuated with beds or borders displaying often exotic plants to best advantage.

My mantra 'right plant right place' has led to further movement of some shrubs from the big border at the Fishergate end. This opens up the south-facing bed backed by a wall: gardeners' heaven! Over time we hope this will be our show border with a more herbaceous garden feel. It should fill in over the year; with most planting going in once summer has passed its zenith. Meanwhile, in the greenhouse, some of the proposed new planting is already up and, if not running, at least taking its first steps.

Oh well, must crack on, sun/rain hat on as applicable.....

We welcome volunteer gardeners. If you would like to help and get your hands dirty, then please get in touch with t.lewis@preston.gov.uk