

WINCKLEY SQUARE TIMES

Photo: Steve Harrison

Friends of Winckley Square

In our last issue I said we would resume our guided walks when Corona Virus was no longer a threat. Little did we know! Clearly all our walks, talks, exhibitions and events have been put on ice. We have had to make the decision to call off our Christmas Concert. It's all about people coming close together and singing with gusto - so hardly appropriate for Covid-19.

We are trialling some Zoom talks so that groups and organisations that had booked a guided walk or a talk by one of our speakers can still engage with us remotely. I'll keep you posted.

The Square itself has been very popular. Lockdown was followed by restrictions on traffic which have made it quieter than usual and encouraged more people to come and sit, chill and socialise during the easing of restrictions. It's been good to see so many families discovering the Square as well as enjoying the wide-open spaces of Avenham and Miller Parks. The Parks' team have made all our parks look great and Tony the warden has been tremendously active in adding to and nurturing the Square. A special thanks to Tony. Why not come into town and see for yourselves what he's been up to? You can read about his thoughts and see some images on page 4.

Many people have met the challenge of Covid by getting outside and strolling, walking, running or cycling in the fresh air. In terms of a sense of well-being it's hard to beat. What has also been great to see is the fact that all ages are in the Square and on the parks.

Lots of interest too around the statue. The toppling of some statues triggered family discussions in the Square about Robert Peel and his place on the plinth. You can find out about Robert Peel on our website www.winckleysquarepreston.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Robert-Peel-Senior-and-Robert-Peel-Junior.pdf

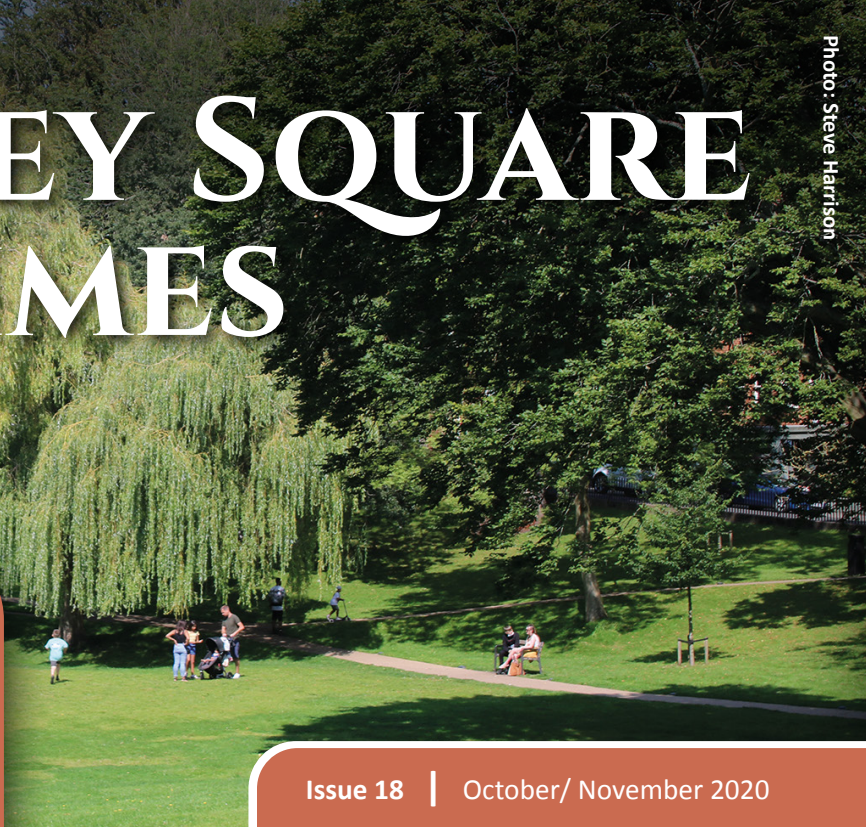
Website Update

We have added Peel's sculptor, Thomas Duckett, to our People section of the website. His studio was 45, Avenham Road (just off Cross Street) and he was Vice President of the Harris Institute on Avenham Lane.

Patricia Harrison

Chair of Friends of Winckley Square

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Meet Lyn Fenton

I've lived in Preston all my life. My first home was in Library Street, behind the Parish Church. I have happy childhood memories of the Parish School and playing on Avenham Park and Winckley Square with my brothers. On leaving School I trained as a Comptometer Operator at the Sumlock College in Starkie Street; one of 31 colleges in the country. The course cost 30 guineas (today over £600). I expect my parents were greatly relieved when I was awarded the Sumlock-Comptometer Diploma as it was a lot of money in those days.



I put my new skills to work in the wage's office at Goss's, where I stayed for 20 years until we started a family. Comptometers were cutting edge technology when I trained but had been replaced by computers when I was ready to return to work. So, I worked part time for the RNIB and studied for a BA in History with English at UCLan. This wasn't easy with two young boys: Adam and Richard.

I then moved into charity work, firstly for Derian House Children's Hospice and then to a more challenging role with Marie Curie Cancer Care, initially as the North Lancashire manager before managing the whole of Lancashire.

I am now enjoying retirement with my husband Ian. We can't understand where we found the time to work! I enjoy volunteering. As well as FoWS, I volunteer for St Catherine's Hospice and have been a member of Preston Rotary Club for over 15 years. Rotary has worked successfully with FoWS and local schools in planting bulbs to support the eradication of polio national campaign. Squirrels ate all the bulbs in year one, but Tony has found varieties that are not quite so appetising. I'm looking forward to resuming our activities in the Square ASAP.

Interested in volunteering to help at events, joining our **Research Group**, or being placed on our mailing list to receive newsletters and details of events? Please email enquiries@winckley.org.uk

Friends of
Winckley
Square



@WinckleySquare



Friendsofwinckleysquaregardens



We love seeing your photos of the Square; tag [#friendsofwinckleysquare](https://www.instagram.com/friendsofwinckleysquare) on Instagram.

Mount Street and Garden Street



by Steve Harrison

Street locations and patterns give insights into our history and heritage. Just standing and contemplating the views that streets offer can help us understand the significance of place. Historic England encourage us to look not just at the front of buildings but side and rear views too. The shape of the land of course is critical to the way routes and buildings have developed.

“

At the west end of the Fishergate there is one lane or footpath, likewise leading over Avenham from the Almes-house to the aforesaid boat at Penwortham, and this is called the Almes-house-lane or Passage to the boat.

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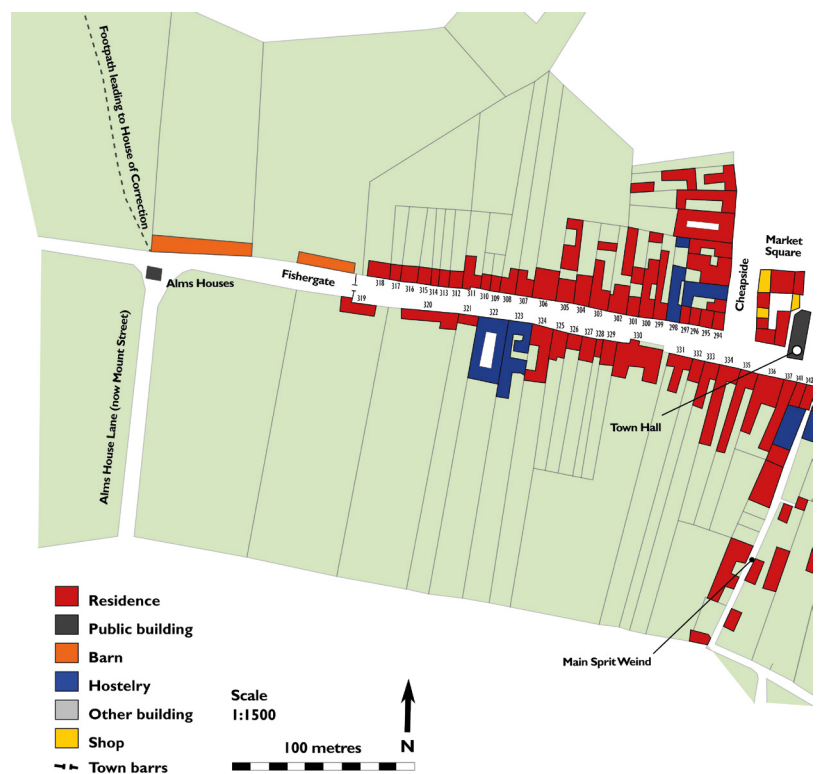
Charles Hardwick in 1887, quoting a source from the late 17th Century. Hardwick added:

“

Since called Brewery-lane now Mount-street.

”

Fishergate was one of Preston's three main thoroughfares. It had buildings on both sides of the road but note how sparse they were in 17th Century at the west end. West of Mount Street was literally the countryside.



In the last edition of the Newsletter (Issue 17) we looked at the Stone Abutment in Garden Street as evidence for the route of the Old Tramway; crossing above what is now Garden Street en route to the canal basin.

Today we focus on two historic routes: **Mount Street** and **Garden Street**. Towards the end of the 17th Century the effective western boundary of Preston was where Fishergate meets what we now call Mount Street. Originally a footpath it was later known as Alms House Lane. The lane led south to a ferry boat on the river for crossing the Ribble.

The 1685 plan can be found on The Preston History website www.prestonhistory.com/maps-and-plans/. Stephen Sartin transposed the owners' names from sketch plans of Preston to the full plan and numbered the properties for reference. The numbers shown are NOT door numbers.

Although the route was called Alms House Lane it was for many years a pathway not a paved road. Horse riders and pedestrians would make their way to and from town. There was no bridge at Penwortham until the 1750s so today's main route down Fishergate Hill was not an attractive option when it involved fording the Ribble.

As travellers reached the bottom of Alms House Lane they encountered the Syke. Having crossed what is now Winckley Square the Syke continued west towards the Ribble. It was a wide boggy water course which had to be crossed on foot. The culverting of the Syke in 1812 changed that. A culvert still runs beneath 25A Winckley Square and the former gym on the corner of Garden Street and Mount Street. The Syke continued as a 'drain' beyond Mount Street. You can see it clearly on the 1849 map. The meadow where the Fishergate Centre car park now stands was called Alms House Meadow.

Once the Syke was culverted, new east-west roads were developed. Cross Street runs south of the course of the Syke as does Garden Street.

When the railways came to Preston, Garden Street (then called Syke Road) was the main route for goods. On the 27 October 1838 the Preston Chronicle reported:

“Passengers' and Goods' Stations are laid out with separate and distinct entrances. The entrance to the former is through the gardens of the late Dr. St. Clare, situate between Charles-street and Butler-street, at the southwest of the town; that to the latter is through Mount-street, or Winckley-square, and along the Syke-road.

Scarcely is the train in motion before an embankment over Syke valley, a little below the station, is passed. Underneath this embankment the Syke pathway passes, and the waters of the Syke sewer are conveyed under a six feet culvert: above both the culvert and the pathway, is built a stone bridge of 16 feet span. The road, which is here 50 feet wide, is flanked on each side to the termination of the embankment, by a strong stone wall 7 feet high, all 300 yards long.

”

So, those who today pass from the station through the junction of Garden Street and Mount Street and look north or east are at a crossroads that thousands have trod for centuries.



1849 OS map extract

The alms houses at the junction of what is now Mount Street & Fishergate consisted of 8 rooms and were paid for by the widows Worthington and Harrison as an act of charity. Hardwick quotes from a source from the late 17th Century:

“erected for the habitation of many old, decrepid, and other of the most needy persons, from starveing and extreme necessities.”

Alms Houses were provided for elderly, poor locals; often widows. Some are still in use today. In some rural areas the historic buildings can still be seen. Stydd Almshouses near Ribchester date from the early 18th Century and are an interesting example; although unusual in being two storeys.

Charles Hardwick, among many other achievements, wrote a History of Preston in 1857. In 1842 he lived at 19, Avenham Lane where he advertised for commissions and work as a 'Portrait Painter and Teacher of Perspective, Drawing and Painting'. Ten years later he was at 5, Garden Street but by then simply advertising himself as a 'Portrait Painter'



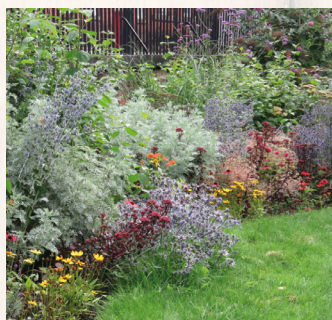
Stydd Almshouses, Ribchester near the entrance to Saint Peter and Paul's Church were constructed in 1728 under the terms of John Shireburne's will, then owner of the Stydd Manor estate. He wished to found and build 'a good almshouse' on his estate for five poor persons to live separately. Photograph Joan Disley: Preston Digital Archive



Photo: Paul Rushton

Tony's Update!

Who would have thought back at the beginning of the year that things would have turned out the way they have? However, outside the world of Homo sapiens the coronavirus appears to have had little effect. The sun still rises and sets and we still have weather patterns; albeit not necessarily those we are accustomed to.



After a wet winter we had a very wet February, which led to Avenham and Miller Parks being flooded! I'm pleased to report that the new drainage on the Square did its job. Then, conversely, this was followed by a dry and hot spell, which too showed the effects of the efficient drainage. The grass in the centre section seemed to disappear to be replaced by a Winckley Wasteland; during which time the other planting seemed to stand still. Then low and behold we had rain and, combined with a bit of sunshine, the gardens have sprung into luscious growth and colour and the landscape is verdant again.



Christmas Rose



Lobelia Starship

What this shows us is that Mother Nature is adaptable, going with the flow, taking cues from the environment, working in harmony rather than attempting to impose her will on her surroundings. Something we as a species could do well to think about - after all Homo sapiens means 'wise man'.

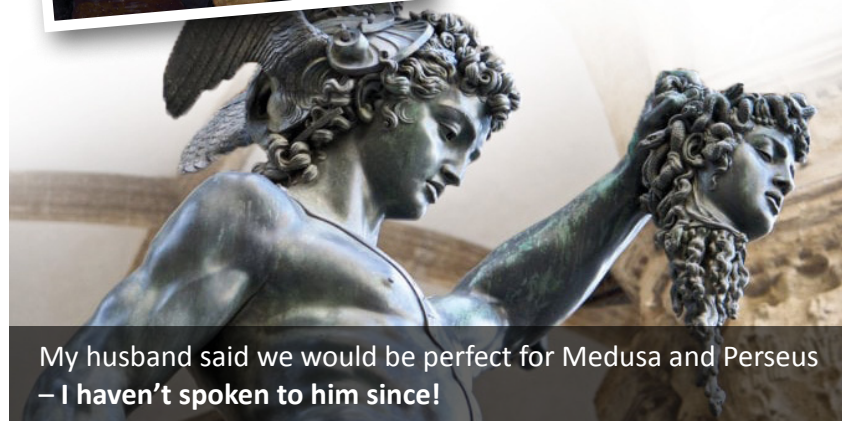
As many people have remarked, after all that has happened, perhaps we will all start to re-evaluate what is actually important to us, enjoy our environment much more and make conscious decisions for the betterment of all life, not just humans.



WHAT DID YOU DO DURING LOCKDOWN?

Lockdown affected people in many ways. Some couples found themselves spending more time together than they had been used to.

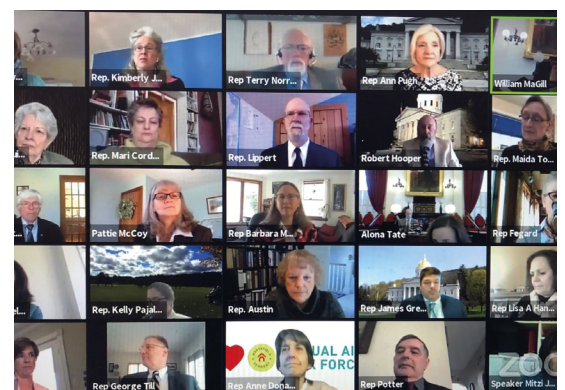
One activity that caught on was to take an historic image and replicate it today. Susan and Ian Douglass, two of the FoWS team, chose Grant Wood's *American Gothic*.



My husband said we would be perfect for Medusa and Perseus – I haven't spoken to him since!



Our last talks and guided tours of Winckley Square were in March. We have had to cancel all the events that were planned. Some groups who had booked one of our speakers have asked for Zoom Presentations – this is completely new to us but as with all things technological – we are keeping pace with the times. If you are interested in a Zoom presentation for your group and would like to know more please contact patricia@winckley.org.uk



What did you do to keep yourself amused during lockdown?

If you have any interesting photos or stories we would love to hear from you.

REMEMBERING WINCKLEY SQUARE GARDENER BERT WARBURTON

September 2 1945 was the official end date of war with Japan, 2,194 days after the German invasion of Poland on September 1 1939. We thought it appropriate to celebrate the life of one of our heroes.

Linda Dixon has shared her very fond memories of her father who worked as a Parks Attendant on Winckley Square - John Herbert Warburton, known as Bert at home and Jack at work. He was born May 1925 and died August 1986 (far too soon).

Bert started work for Preston Parks when he was 14. In the photograph you can see him (second left) with other employees at their Christmas meal at the Chestnuts Sanatorium Ribbleson.



In 1943, at the age of 18, Bert enlisted in the South Lancs. Regiment. But he soon applied to join the Commandos (1944) - he jokingly said that he got in because of his good digging skills! The British Army No. 4 Commando, formed in 1940, was a highly trained infantry assault unit involved in many successful operations until it was disbanded in 1946.

As part of the 1st Special Service Brigade, No. 4 Commando took part in the Normandy Landings on 6th June 1944, landing on Sword Beach 30

minutes before the rest of the brigade. They successfully achieved their objective to capture a strong point and gun battery in Ouistreham. No. 4 Commando remained protecting the beachhead's left flank until the end of August. During that time, they endured over 50% casualties.

On 31 October 1944 the Allies landed on the heavily defended island of Walcheren, located at the mouth of the West Scheldt with the objective of clearing the enemy guns in the Scheldt estuary and open up Antwerp to Allied shipping and free Walcheren from 10,000 Germans. No. 4 Commando (550 men) shock troops made the initial landings.



D-Day landing on Sword Beach, one of the five landing areas of the Normandy Invasion. It was assaulted by units of the British 3rd Division, with French and British commandos attached. Troops waiting for orders to advance up the beach.



Men of the 4th Special Service Brigade wade ashore from landing craft near Flushing to complete the occupation of Walcheren. (1st Nov. 1944)

An article appeared in the Lancashire Evening Post in 1952 about Bert and two other Preston Commandos who were three of the 150 men invited by the Mayor of Flushing to the unveiling of a Memorial Statue of a No. 4 Commando soldier.



Bert went on to serve in North Africa and Palestine and was one of the lucky ones to survive the war. His job remained open for him and he returned to the Parks Department where he worked for over 20 years.

He remembered when laying paths at Winckley Square a solicitor came out and told them he'd been watching them for half an hour, and they hadn't done any work. Bert was a happy cheerful man and replied, "looks like neither have you".

Another time at Preston Guild 1952, the park attendants were told they had to set out the chairs and tables for an event but it would be late at night when they had to pack everything away. They were told they wouldn't get paid overtime, so the park attendants wouldn't say were the tables and chairs were until they agreed to pay them overtime!

In 1965 Bert took a job as a gardener for Longridge Rural District Council where the family lived. He, Joan, his wife and five children moved back to Preston in 1966 and Bert ended up working at Courtauld's where the wages were better and needed for bringing up a big family.

**You will be able to read more about Bert on our website:
www.winckleysquarepreston.org**