

# WINCKLEY SQUARE TIMES



## Friends of Winckley Square

Issue 21 | August/ September 2021

Tentatively, we plan to get back as close to 'normal' as we can in the rest of 2021 and into 2022. Here's hoping! I am delighted to tell you that we are offering **Guided Walks 11th and 12th September** (see page 5 for details). I hope to see you once again in the Gardens.

We will also be participating in the **Preston Arts Festival** in October details of which will be published in our next newsletter and on facebook.

The Gardens are looking very beautiful thanks to Tony. Page 6 shows some of the planting at its finest. As he says 'it is a work in progress' and I am sure you all agree it is great progress that is made by him and volunteer gardeners. We are always looking for volunteers to help in the Gardens – there is a never ending list of jobs to be done.

Or if you are interested in volunteering to help at events, joining our **Research / Writers Group**, or being placed on our mailing list to receive newsletters and details of events then please email me.

We are really looking forward to running heritage walks and family events in the Gardens once more – so watch this space!

*Patricia Harrison*

Chair of Friends of Winckley Square

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## Tokyo Joy!

You may remember that in Issue 12 of the Winckley Square Times, in 2019, we featured Ross Cullen as one of the FoWS. Ross first raced in the BMX World Champions in 2011 at the age of 10 and he came 4th. Later, as an amateur, he twice became World Champion. Ross joined the British Cycling Academy talent team in 2014 and has progressed through the ranks and he became an 'Elite' athlete last year. Ross is based in Manchester as part of the British Cycling Team and trains as a full-time athlete. This has aided his training and performance significantly. Most weeks he trains five days and benefits from occasional training camps internationally.



Ten years after that first World Championship, Ross was selected to join the GB Olympic Team. Ross travelled to Tokyo with the team as the travelling reserve. Male BMX Supercross only qualified for one Olympic spot which went to Kye Whyte, a 23-year-old from Peckham. As his reserve, Ross's role was to help prepare Kye for the event and be in a position to step up if anything happened to the 'Man One' rider that meant he was unable to compete.

**GREAT RESULTS** BMX Cycling had a double triumph - Beth Shriever won Gold in the women's final and Kye won Silver. Ross was there to congratulate the two of them and share in the celebrations.

Ross said after the races,

*'It was a great experience for me and I am motivated even more to be on the start line for the 2024 Paris Olympic Games.'*

Well, it certainly proved to be a wonderful experience for Ross who is the youngest rider on the team riding at Elite level. Well done Ross – we are all very proud of you and follow your career with great interest.

Here's to 2024!

 @WinckleySquare

 FriendsOfWinckleySquareGardens

 We love seeing your photos of the Square; tag [#friends\\_of\\_winckley\\_square](https://www.instagram.com/friends_of_winckley_square) on Instagram.

# WATCHMEN IN WINCKLEY SQUARE

by Steve Harrison

At the beginning of the 19th Century householders paid for a watchman to patrol their local area. In Preston there was a private watchman for Fishergate and West Cliff, another for Friargate and one for the area around Winckley Square. The watchman provided security as well as 'calling the hours' and knocking up. As police forces were introduced there was a tension between the newly professional police and the traditional watchmen.

Prior to formal police forces there were various local practices including 'Watchmen'. From 1835 Boroughs had the right to establish a police force but many did not. In 1839 Counties could establish a force to police the areas outside the boroughs. By 1856 it became a requirement that all boroughs and counties should establish a force with at least 1 officer per 1,000 population. If, on inspection, the force was deemed efficient then Government grants helped with the cost to the ratepayer.

The Headquarters for two separate forces were in Preston. The Lancashire Constabulary was based here as well as the Preston Borough force.

## Preston Borough Police Force

The first Borough police station was in Turk's Head Yard. In 1832 a new station was opened in Avenham Street. In 1858 a further move took place to Earl Street. Where the Covered Market now stands was once Mrs Chadwick's Orchard. The last trees were cut down in 1821 and subsequently it was the site of many mass meetings, including weavers in the great Preston Strike/Lockout of 1853/4. This might have influenced the location of the new police station on Earl Street. In 1863 strikers gathered on the Orchard and attacked the police station The Coach entrance to the police station premises is still here. It's probable that when the police counter-attacked the strikers, they would have rushed through this gateway. It's good to see that the current beer bar still carries the Orchard name.



'A SLAP AT THE CHARLEYS or a Tom and Jerry lark' shows Peel as a pugilist attacking night watchmen with the intention of replacing them by the police force. "Charley" was the nickname given to a night-watchman. The night-watchmen are saying "oh murther its mancipation were gettin now aney how", identifying them as Irish Catholics. Wellington is saying "Go it Bob", referring to Peel. The suggesting that watchmen were Irish Catholics was intended to imply unsuitability. Etching by Paul Pry: Wellcome Collection.



Peelers wore blue tailcoats and top hats to make them look more like ordinary citizens, rather than a red-coated soldier with a helmet. They carried a wooden truncheon, handcuffs and a wooden rattle to raise the alarm. The whistle replaced it in the 1880s. *Greater Manchester Police Museum.*



Robert Peel Statue:  
Winckley Square

The first professional police service in Britain was established in Glasgow in 1800. In England, Robert Peel set up the Metropolitan Police force in 1829. Officers were nicknamed Bobbies or Peelers after him.





**Alderman Thomas Miller, owner of Horrockses and one of the richest men in the north, was always alert to saving money for ratepayers like himself.**

On 26 February 1863 the Preston Chronicle reported that as the Borough Chief of police was about to retire Alderman Miller wondered if Lancashire Constabulary could take over policing in the town and save the Corporation the salary of a chief officer. Ironically, Blackburn moved in the opposite direction. It decided to set up its own force and split from the Lancashire Constabulary. When riots loomed in Blackburn Lancashire's Chief Constable Woodford refused to help; to show them they made a mistake in going it alone!



**William Anthony the last of the London night watchmen.**  
*Reproduction of wood engraving. Wellcome Collection*

Hewitson tells us that, in Preston, watchmen were employed privately although the Corporation did contribute five Guineas (5 pounds and 5 shillings) towards the cost. By 1801 a large group of householders contracted Hugh Dewhurst to provide men:

***'to prevent and punish all such public wrongs, or crimes, and misdemeanours that shall hereafter be committed on the persons or property of us...'***

## Other Duties

Samuel Leach whose family lived at 5 Camden Place, Winckley Square recalled that in 1835, when he was 6 years old, he and his brothers were allowed to sit up until the watchman's first round. This shows us that the watchmen had other duties:

“and to see him cloaked up to the chin, a dark mysterious figure with a lantern on wet and windy nights, was quite awe inspiring. It was part of the watchman's duties to knock with his stick on the wall just under the maids' bedroom window and so awake them, and this took place on Monday mornings at half-past two o'clock for the wash, so that by the time that we came down to breakfast we saw the clothes already dried, being brought in from the grass plot at the bottom of our garden.”

n.b. Winckley Sq. Gardens was then divided into individual gardens and not a communal space.

**Samuel Leach "Old Age Reminiscences" (1916)**  
*- copy in Harris Reference Library, Preston.*

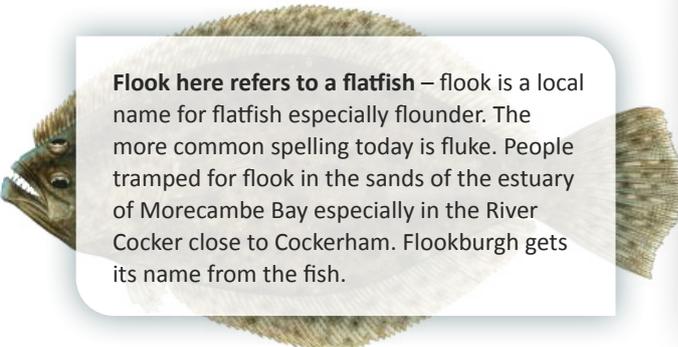
**Joseph Gibbons, Preston's Chief Of Police, wanted to establish his force as the only legitimate body for law and order. He set out to question the integrity and usefulness of the part-time watchmen.**

Work was soon to begin on building the new police station and magistrates' court on Earl Street and Lancaster Road. Gibbons wrote a 'secret report' about the quality of the Watchmen, which the Town Clerk read to the Watch Committee and on which the Preston Chronicle reported on 19 April 1856. Gibbons named several watchmen. Here are his comments on two:

*Winckley square &c.-Luke Hinton, about 50 years of age; about three years a private watchman; on duty from ten p.m. til five a.m. Examines doors and windows, and knocks servants up in the morning. He is frequently engaged during the day crushing malt, cleaning knives for publicans and others. He calls the hours at night. Probable earnings as watchman, about twelve shillings per week. Has brought up three offenders during the last three years, for being drunk, &c. This man has been brought before the magistrates for being drunk, and is frequently seen before dark in the company of thieves and prostitutes.*

*Fishergate hill, West Cliff &c. Samuel Hornby, between 70 and 80 years of age. Has been a private watchman twenty-two years. On duty at ten p.m. till five a.m. Patrols streets, examines doors and windows, knocks servants and railway officials up in the morning His probable earning as watchman are 10s. per week. Has brought one prisoner before the magistrates during the last three years for being drunk, He frequently gets drunk and is obliged to go home before morning beat.*

His critique of the watchmen with references to drink and who they mixed with resembled the kind of evidence the police often gave against those accused of crimes. A sort of guilt by association. Mr Dixon who served on the Watch Committee observed *'that the report of Mr. Gibbons upon the watchmen was a one-sided report. "Charity covered a multitude of sins;" but that report was levelling the poor watchmen as flat as flocks.-(Laughter.)'*



**Flook here refers to a flatfish** – flook is a local name for flatfish especially flounder. The more common spelling today is fluke. People tramped for flook in the sands of the estuary of Morecambe Bay especially in the River Cocker close to Cockerham. Flookburgh gets its name from the fish.

However, some of the watchmen hit back with letters to the Chronicle. It is highly likely that someone was employed, or one of the Winckley Square patrons offered, to write on their behalves, as the level of literacy seems high for the two men as described by Gibbons.

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## NIGHT WATCHMEN

TO THE EDITOR OF THE PRESTON CHRONICLE.

SIR,-Seeing in your last week's paper a statement respecting the "Old night watchmen," made by Mr. Gibbons to the council, and he having reported upon me, I most respectfully beg you will grant me the favour of inserting my answer thereto:

With respect to age, I am under 40 years, and not about 50, as stated by Mr. Gibbons. It is true I examine and carefully guard doors and windows from 10 p.m. to 5 a.m. I have a wife and five small children, and to support them I work a portion of each day, but not exactly in the way mentioned by Mr. Gibbons. In the course of the three years I have been watchman on Winckley-square beat I have apprehended several persons for drunken and disorderly conduct, and two persons for stealing from the person.

The police force under Mr. Gibbons's command have not made a single apprehension in my beat during the same period; and whether it is owing to my vigilance or not I cannot say, but the fact is, that not a single robbery has been committed in my beat during my hours of duty.' I am charged by Mr. Gibbons with having been brought before the magistrates for being drunk. This I most positively deny. I was never summoned or brought before a magistrate in my life; As to being seen in the company of thieves and prostitutes before dark, I am not aware that such is the fact, but am surprised that Mr. Gibbons, as an inspector of police, does not know that a zealous officer, to further the ends of justice, must associate with every description of characters.

I consider it to be very unfair on the part of Mr. Gibbons to charge and lay against me matters that are quite untrue; and I can with confidence refer to several influential parties residing in Winckley-square for testimonials as to character and conduct, and think that Mr. Gibbons ought not to attempt to raise the character of himself and the force under his command at the expense of a person who has always performed his duty 'in a creditable and praiseworthy manner'.

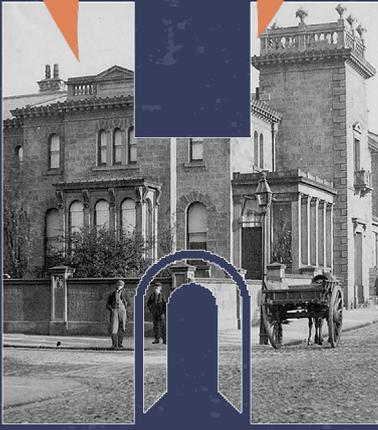
Trusting that this explanation will prove satisfactory to the public and my patrons generally, I beg to subscribe myself, sir, your obedient servant.

17, Aughton-square, Preston  
23rd April, 1856.

LUKE HINTON.

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In the 1861 census Luke Hinton was still in Aughton Square but there is no mention of him being a watchman. Their days were numbered once Boroughs were required to establish professional forces. By the way, Luke was not Irish. He was born in Kendal.



# WINCKLEY SQUARE Heritage EVENTS

Saturday 11th & Sunday 12th September

Celebrate with the Friends of Winckley Square the fascinating history of Preston's only Georgian square. Visit our exhibition, join a guided walk or, if you would rather remain seated, listen to a talk.

EVERYONE is welcome but you do need to have had both vaccinations and to book a place through Eventbrite:

[www.eventbrite.co.uk/d/united-kingdom--preston/winckley-square/?lc=1&page=1&q=Winckley%20Square%20Preston](http://www.eventbrite.co.uk/d/united-kingdom--preston/winckley-square/?lc=1&page=1&q=Winckley%20Square%20Preston)

## Saturday 11th September

10.15am - 12 noon

**Edith Rigby Trail** led by tour guide **Judy Beeston**. An opportunity to hear about Preston's most famous suffragette. The walk takes you to where Edith was born, married and lived. Learn about her work as a social reformer, the reasons for her imprisonment when she was a suffragette and her war work. The walk includes a stop at the Olive Café, Lune St Methodist Church, where Edith married Charles Rigby.

## Sunday 12th September

11am - 12.15pm  
&  
1pm - 2.15pm

Join **Steve Harrison** to hear the stories of the **Former Residents** – famous and infamous. Winckley Square is more than the surrounding gardens and buildings. It's also about the lives of the people who populated this area for over 200 years. Men and women who had a profound impact on Preston and far beyond. Our guides will introduce you to characters from the past and share their stories. Starting with the vision for the Square and the first house in 1799 we will encounter real people who made history.

11.15am - 12.15pm

**A Gander around the Gardens with Tony the Gardener**. Our Georgian square is probably unique in its undulations. We look at the planting with a nod to the heritage of the Gardens. How the vision for 'Rus in Urbe' is achieved.

11.30am - 12.45pm

**Susan Douglass** will introduce you to the lives of **Winckley Women Pioneers** who were '**female firsts**' in Preston, including:  
**Louisa Walsh** the 1st Headmistress of Preston High School for Girls – publicly humiliated by the Headmaster of the Boys Grammar School.  
**Alice Stoneman** 'Steamboat Lady', headmistress of the Park School, Preston's 1st municipal secondary school for girls.  
**Avice Pimblett** Preston's 1st woman councillor, 1st woman alderman and 1st woman mayor.  
**Dorothy Heaton** Preston's 1st woman solicitor and the 1st woman to open a Practice. A champion of Women's rights.

11.45am - 12.45pm

**Photography in the Square**. Bring your camera along to a photo shoot with **Paul Rushton, Preston Photographic Society**. Paul will support, advise and answer your photographic questions in a setting that combines both the built and the natural environment. Framing the image, managing light, getting the best from your camera and receiving feedback on your efforts.

1.15pm - 2.30pm

**Patricia Harrison** shares the lives of some of the **Extraordinary Women of Winckley Square** including:  
**Frances Winckley**, after whom the Square is named. **Ellen Cross**, the widow, who drove through the realisation of the vision for the Square; confounding the assumptions about women at the time.  
**Cornelia Connelly**. A mother of five who became an abbess, founded the Society of the Holy Child Jesus and established Catholic schools in Preston. A life marked by great achievement & personal tragedy, all played out in the newspapers of the day.  
**Beatrice Todd**; A suffragist who led the station buffet during WWI. When men were dying in battle and their babies dying from inadequate provision at home, she established mother and baby care in Preston and Leyland.

1.45pm - 2.45pm

**Edith Rigby Talk** – join **Peter Wilkinson** who will be giving an illustrated pop-up presentation on the life of Edith Rigby, Preston's most famous suffragette. Learn about how her early life, living in the poorer part of Preston, influenced her to fight for the rights of women and improved conditions for factory workers. Edith was frequently thrown into prison and forced on hunger strike.  
You will be seated in a gazebo. Ideal for those who cannot make the walk on Saturday.

12.30pm - 2pm  
&  
3pm - 4.30pm

**A Regency Promenade with Elaine Taylor FoWS garden historian**. Hear how the gardens and surrounding area changed over time. We include a unique opportunity to visit some of the private gardens of former and current residents for glimpses and insights into a rich but hidden heritage.

**£5**  
per person  
includes  
refreshments

All walks  
start in the  
middle of the  
Gardens.



All events are subject to change in the light of safety concerns related to Covid 19.

# WINCKLEY SQUARE GARDENS:

*a special place in the heart of the city*

By Tony Lewis

What makes Winckley Square probably unique among Georgian squares is the lie of the land. We are closer to nature in Winckley Square than in most other squares across the British Isles.

Within the Square we have the chance to be different. As there is a rather nice open space nearby, in Avenham and Miller Parks, this allows us to tap into our heritage and look to create something that is more akin to a Garden than a Park. We have tried to utilise and work with the natural changes in the environment across the plot.

Using the changes in levels and light to our advantage our aim was to create, not only areas of different planting, but also those best suited to those conditions. Using plants, not always our favourite ones, but those that will work best, to give us the 'feel' that sits right within the setting.

If you visit Winckley Square use all the senses. Touch, smell. Don't just look but see. Don't simply listen but hear. Every day, as you look around, you will see a different scene. Winckley Square might keep the same shape, but its appearance is constantly changing. The light, the plants, birds and mammals. As the light filters through the trees look for which plants thrive in the sunshine and which prefer the shade.

Our underlying ethos is 'Rus in Urbe', literally country in the city. It was the gardening philosophy at the time of the Square's heyday. It sought to evoke an idealised, romantic, pastoral theme. Here there is an opportunity to be alone, to reflect, to feel at peace, enjoying seclusion yet in such a public place. Our planting has a looser, softer, less formal feel. Maybe something you would not expect to find in such an urban setting, but perhaps with a modern twist. Like in most things, ideas and styles in gardening change over time.



While looking to create something ethereal we must be practical. This is no utopia but public gardens with all the challenges of errant feet - big, small or clawed! Wayward objects of destruction, anything that can be thrown, swung or kicked, usually not in the direction it was intended, as well as the gatherers of beautiful objects (Who hasn't picked flowers for a loved one?). And, not forgetting our natural residents, feathered and furred. A single act can easily put paid to months of anticipation.

So, our plants and our planting have to be robust, able to take what life throws at them and still be able to withstand the scrutiny of every passer-by. Which is why we talk of creating a 'feel' rather than of individual plants. *'Beauty is in the eye of the beholder'* and there is a great deal of beauty to behold, so we hope that you respectfully enjoy what we are trying to offer and help us in our goals... and please remember, like any garden, it is a work in progress.

