

# TWINCKLEY SQUARE TIMES



## Friends of Winckley Square

Winckley Square Christmas 2020 missed PEOPLE, although thousands of you watched our virtual '**A Winckley Christmas Cracker!**' on YouTube. It's still there if you missed it!

This Christmas we are looking forward to welcoming you back to Winckley Square. Lots of free events are planned in the run up to Christmas including our very special **Christmas Concert in the Gardens on 12th December** 3pm to 5.30pm. Mulled wine with a mince pie and of course Peter's Parched Peas will be waiting for you! We have excellent entertainment planned with a dazzling headline performance from LED drummers **SPARK!** A unique and thrilling show that combines high-impact drumming, superb choreography and stunning lighting design. Plus the return of the well-loved St Stephen's Choir and the Inbetweeners.

We were delighted to reintroduce our **Guided Walks and Talks** in September and October. Hundreds of you came on the 20 different events we ran in the two months. Many more viewed the **Women of Winckley Square Exhibition** in the Central Methodist Church, Lune Street. We have a strong working relationship with the church and are very grateful to Sarah Steele for facilitating our talks, exhibitions and visits to the church and coffee shop when Judy leads the Edith Rigby Guided Tour.

Once again, it's been a great pleasure to participate in the Preston Arts Festival organised by Preston Arts Association. They do a great job.

Thank you for all your kind comments about the work we do. We wish you all a very **Merry Christmas HoHoHo and Happy New Year** and hope we will be seeing you soon.

*Patricia Harrison*

Chair of Friends of Winckley Square

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## Meet Sarah Steele

Originally from South Shields, I moved to Preston 20 years ago. I have two teenage children, Kirstin, born in Germany and Andrew, born in Preston. I enjoy walking, travelling and cross-stitching but my main passion is football. I supported Sunderland AFC from a young age. When I moved to Preston, it was too far and expensive to go back and forth so I went down the road on Thursday 17th May 2001 - PNE against Birmingham City. Preston won 4-2 on penalties to take them into the playoff finals against Bolton. I was hooked from my first game.

Steve my partner, Andrew and I, are all season ticket holders and every season we decide which away grounds we want to go to, so we can tick them off our list. Eventually we will get round to all the Premiership grounds. WE SAY THAT EVERY SEASON!

I love my job as Project Manager at Central Methodist Church, every day is different. It includes looking after the Olive Grove Coffee Shop which is just inside the entrance of the church. We have 28 fantastic volunteers who help run it over four days. It's a very welcoming community café where strangers can become friends, people meet to catch up and enjoy a break from shopping. We have lots of community groups that meet here and I help signpost anyone who needs assistance.

I first became involved with FoWS in 2016 when the Edith Rigby Guided Walk started. The groups stop to explore the church as this is where Edith Rayner married Charles Rigby. It's also an opportunity to take refreshments in the Coffee Shop. We love to see new faces. Some who visit the church for the first time, for a FoWS talk or exhibition, become regular customers at the Olive Grove.

**SPARK!** Will be starting at the church at 4 o'clock on 12th December and will process down Winckley Street to Winckley Square.



@WinckleySquare

Friends of winckleysquaregardens

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



# CHRISTMAS DAY IN THE WORKHOUSE

by Keith Johnson

Prior to 1834, relief for the poor was organised locally, much of it in the form of short-term financial help (Outdoor relief) to support struggling families. There were small local workhouses (Indoor relief) which could accommodate whole families when the need arose. Preston, Penwortham, Walton le Dale, Longton, Ribchester, Woodplumpton, Hutton and Howick all had local workhouses.

The Poor Law Amendment Act was passed in 1834. Locally based provision was to end, and a Union formed of all the parish based 'Guardians' centred on a large town. The Preston Union was formed in 1837. The Act required the Unions to build large central workhouses, replacing local provision. It took many years before Preston built its Workhouse. Read about the conflict and its connection with Winckley Square in the next issue of the newsletter.

Here Keith Johnson, Preston's most prolific author on local history, explores Christmas in the Workhouse. Keith intertwines the highly critical poem by George Sims with the contemporary upbeat descriptions of what the inmates experienced at Christmas.



**The Victorians of Lancashire always had a fear of ending up in the Workhouse.**



Christmas and poverty often went hand in hand. In 1879 George R Sims wrote a poem called *Christmas Day in the Workhouse* which brought that grim reality to life. It was the tale of a man forced into the Workhouse after seeing his wife starve to death the previous winter for want of a loaf of bread and some warmth.



*It is Christmas Day  
in the Workhouse,*

*And the cold, bare  
walls are bright*

*With garlands of  
green and holly,*

*And the place is a  
pleasant sight;*



## 1844

On Christmas Day the 316 inmates of the Preston Workhouse and House of Recovery were regaled with a substantial dinner of roast beef and plum pudding. The old people were treated in the afternoon with an extra allowance of tea and a currant bun. The beef was of prime quality and the pudding reflected great credit to the governess Mrs. Bolton.





*For with clean washed hands and faces,  
In a long and hungry line  
The paupers sit at the table,  
For this is the hour they dine.*

## 1862

The cotton famine meant it was a case of hard times for all at Christmas. No Christmas Dinner was served in 1861 but despite unequalled poverty and destitution the tradition was resumed. The Guardians were responsible for 358 inmates including over 100 children.

At the Walton Workhouse most inmates were children. Over 60 sat down to roast beef and plum pudding. The 58 residents of Woodplumpton Workhouse ate a similar dinner. There, the average age was 75. The oldest resident, John Atkinson, 96, was at the head of the table. At the Penwortham Workhouse 90 dined. Over at Ribchester Workhouse a total of 195 able bodied men sat down for Christmas dinner. This included 44 'lunatics' who, according to the report, seemed to enjoy it as much as the rest.

*Oh, the paupers are meek and lowly  
With their 'Thank you kindly, mam!'  
So long as they fill their stomachs,  
What matter it whence it comes!*

## 1882

Guild Year Christmas Day in Fulwood Workhouse was more relaxed. Many youngsters received gifts of toys and dolls from local residents. A beautiful Christmas tree laden with oranges was suspended from the ceiling and there were evergreens and garlands everywhere. The master of the Workhouse declared that the Christmas dinner provided should be one fit to set before a king.

*The guardians gazed in horror,  
The master's face went white;  
"Did a pauper refuse the pudding?"  
"Could their ears believe aright?"*

## 1935

The inmates of Fulwood Institution were treated to sweet cake for breakfast, and the usual dinner of roast beef with two vegetables followed by plum pudding. The feast continued with mince pies, cakes and coffee later in the day. For their entertainment they had wireless and gramophone concerts.



*To smile and be condescending,  
Put pudding on the pauper plates.  
To be hosts at the Workhouse banquet  
They've paid for - with the rates.*

## 1871

The Preston (Fulwood) Workhouse was fully operational. Altogether 712 were treated to Christmas dinner consisting of beef, vegetables and plum pudding. The meal was served in an elaborately decorated dining hall. Each adult had a gill (quarter of a pint) of beer, while each child was given an orange.

*But one of the old men mutters,  
And pushes his plate aside:  
"Great God!" he cries, "but it chokes me!  
For this is the day she died!"*

## 1891

More than 700 inmates had dinner provided consisting of beef and potatoes followed by plum pudding with pots of beer for the adults. Anyone wanting a second helping was welcome to ask. Smoking, singing and game playing followed. Local tobacconist William Henry Woods provided the tobacco and snuff as well as sweets for the children. For the first time the lengthy speeches delivered by the guardians were dispensed with and the paupers rejoiced.

*Then the ladies clutched their husbands,  
Thinking the man would die,  
Struck by a bolt, or something,  
By the outraged One on high.*

The character in the poem saw the providers of the Christmas feast as condescending and patronising and the words of George Sims reflected the fear for those who came upon hard times.



# WINCKLEY SQUARE Christmas Concert 2021

- **SPARK!** will wow the whole family.
- Join in traditional carols around the Christmas tree with **St Stephen's Choir**.
- **The Inbetweeners** - a great local ukulele band will be performing your favourite Christmas songs to sing along with.
- The wonderful sounds of **Kenny on Bagpipes**.



It wouldn't be Christmas without mulled wine and a mince pie, hot chocolate, hot dogs and of course Peter's Perfect Parched Peas and local ales.

## SUNDAY 12TH DECEMBER 3pm – 5.30pm

To find out more visit:

[www.winckleysquarepreston.org](http://www.winckleysquarepreston.org)

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