



Jack Park

WINCKLEY SQUARE TIMES

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Friends of Winckley Square

Thankyou to all who attended our three Christmas Events. Susan gave her talk *'Three Georgian Christmases in Winckley Square'* to two packed audiences. It is now an annual experience - next year will be *'Three Edwardian Christmases'*. Once again hundreds came to our **Christmas Concert** and thoroughly enjoyed all the performances. What the public never see is the hard work that is involved by over 40 volunteers to put on a successful event and believe it or not they were all exceedingly happy but tired after an eight-hour shift for many.

Our volunteers are busy all the year round and I look back on 2023 and wonder how we managed to fit it all in. In addition to running events in the summer we have several tour guides and speakers who give talks all over Lancashire and beyond to raise funds to put on large family events in the Gardens. If you belong to a group who would like one of our speakers to visit your group or for your group to have a guided tour on one of our many walks, please contact me.

Our 2024 guided walks start again in March – see page 4 for details for the Spring.

We look forward to seeing you at one of our events this year.

Patricia Harrison

Chair of Friends of Winckley Square

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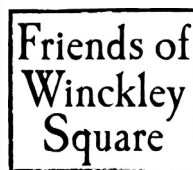


Flame OZ: Paul Rushton

We are grateful to the support we get from **Preston City Council, Councillors** and our **local businesses**. This year the local businesses were so generous donating raffle prizes that we raised over £700. As a voluntary group we are dependent on the generosity of our sponsors and donors.

Our great raffle prize donors were:

- * Barristers Chambers
- * Alan Jones Chartered Surveyor
- * Williams Hand Baked Biscuits and Cakes
- * Michael Bailey Estate Agent
- * Winckley Square Residences
- * David Cox Architects
- * Eckersley Property
- * Farleys Solicitors
- * Frank Whittle Partnership
- * Harrison Drury Solicitors
- * Service Care Solutions
- * Hedley & Co
- * Keith Johnson
- * Artistry House
- * Business Utilities Group
- * Napthens Solicitors
- * Preston North End
- * Secret Garden
- * Heathcotes
- * The Green Pheasant
- * Freshfield
- * WOR_SPACE



Interested in volunteering?

Contact patricia@winckley.org.uk

X @WinckleySquare

f Friends of winckleysquaregardens

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

WINCKLEY SQUARE

AT THE HEART OF GOVERNMENT/EDUCATION IN ENGLAND

by Steve Harrison

Sons of two of the first families to build houses on Winckley Place played an important part in 19th British politics. Their impact on party organisation, housing, education and India was significant. Their relationship was at times tetchy.

Richard Assheton Cross (1823-1914 RAC) was the second son of William and Ellen Cross. William Cross owned the land on which Winckley Square stands. He built and lived in the first house, on the corner of Winckley Street and Winckley Place' in 1799. Nigel Morgan regarded RAC as 'Preston's most successful politician'.

John Eldon Gorst (1835-1916 JEG) was the second son of Edward and Elizabeth Gorst. Edward had the fourth house built, about 1802. This too is on a corner, where Winckley Place met Chapel Street. It is now Harrison Drury solicitors.



Birthplace of John Eldon Gorst: Paul Rushton



Former home of William Cross: Paul Rushton

Both RAC & JEG sought to improve the conditions of the British working class. Their success, however, was limited.

RAC was Home Secretary from 1874-1880 and again from 1885-1886. He saw through a great deal of potentially reforming legislation. He is best known for the **Artisans Dwellings Improvement Act 1875** which allowed slums to be cleared and established new standards for subsequent housing. However, the principle of laissez-faire, which characterised much Conservative thinking, meant that councils were **allowed** to clear slums but not **required** to do so. As a consequence, most councils didn't clear the slums that were such a contributory factor to the poor health of many urban dwellers. Nigel Morgan, in his book 'Deadly Dwellings', describes Preston's response to the passing of the Act. *'It allowed too much influence to local men who are either not particularly intelligent, or who did not approach in a public-spirited fashion the choice which they were given between their own immediate interests and the well-being of the whole town.'* P48



Richard Assheton Cross:
Vanity Fair caricature 1874

JEG was something of a loose cannon. He did well under Disraeli but always regarded himself as an independent thinker and felt free to consider issues on their merit – and to say so. He was highly critical of the older leadership of the Conservative Party. His sense of humour got him into trouble and caused his party to see him as someone who could not be trusted with one of the top posts. His biographer suggests he was at his best when in opposition, as he could see the flaws in government plans and was very effective in debates at pointing them out. The trouble was that he felt he could do the same with proposals from his own party.



John Eldon Gorst:
Vanity Fair caricature 1874

He and his group had nicknames for those they disdained. RAC was one of those. Gorst's group looked down on them as Middle Class. They gave RAC the nickname 'Snelgrove', the name of a partner in a high-end London store, a man who began his working life as a shop assistant.

India

In 1886 RAC was made a Lord and appointed Secretary of State for India. He served in that role for six years, responsible for the British Indian Empire, Burma and Aden.

JEG was appointed as Under-Secretary of State for India in 1886. JEG served under RAC for five years but still held RAC in low esteem and to others would blame him for problems. RAC was friendly with Queen Victoria and criticised JEG for her but told her that JEG suffered from gout by way of excusing him!



British Indian Army 1890: Wikipedia

Links across Time and Place

William Cross moved from Winckley Square to Red Scar, overlooking the Ribble. From 1804 he built a mansion around an old thatched cottage. RAC was born there. It stayed in the Cross family until 1934 when the large estate was bought by Courtaulds as the site of a new Rayon factory. Many of those who worked at Courtaulds were migrants from the Indian subcontinent, particularly from Gujarat, the heart of the Indian textile industry. So, the estate of the man who served for six years as secretary of State for India became a place of employment for the descendants of those whose lives he was once responsible for. Small world indeed.

The Cross Mansion Red Scar:
Preston Digital Archive



COURTAULDS
RED SCAR WORKS

VISCOSE AND NORTHERN WEAVING DIVISION

Education

The two men achieved shared goals in the field of education. RAC led the Cross Commission into Education from 1886-1888. It published in 1888 but there was no consensus. One contentious issue was the extent to which public money could be spent on schools and in particular how Board schools and the separate Voluntary (mainly Church) schools should be funded.

In 1895 RAC & JEG were two of the five members of a cabinet committee on Education. JEG took on the role of vice president of the Committee of Privy Council on Education (1895-1902). Gorst was committed to the broad welfare of children, going beyond the notion of schooling and insisting, for example, that children cannot learn on empty stomachs. He was an architect of the 1902 Education Act.

He believed passionately that only bodies with local knowledge and engagement with schools could deliver effective education, free of overweening control by central government. The 1902 Act established Local Education Authorities (LEAs) which would fund both state and voluntary schools. It also enabled a great increase in Secondary education.



Shepherd Street School 1902: My Learning

When he left government he seems to have recognised the reasons for his relative failure to achieve high office but content with the path he had chosen,

*The position of a free critic
is preferable to that of a
sham Minister.*

Sir John Eldon Gorst (1835-1916) was featured in [Newsletter 16](#). That article focussed on the part he played in reorganising and modernising the Conservative Party. The Gorst family also featured in [Newsletter 26](#).

Preston History website has an article related to JEG and his role in the Primrose League, '[Frailty! They name is Lancashire](#)'.

Sources:

Grimsargh by David Hindle. Carnegie 2002

A life of Sir John Eldon Gorst by Archie Hunter. Routledge 2001

Deadly Dwellings by Nigel Morgan. Mullion Books 1993

Spring Guided Walks

Our **Guided Walks** start in **March**, which is **Women's History Month** and **8th March is International Women's Day**.

Guided Walks start in the centre of the Gardens unless stated otherwise.

Walks
- price and
how to book

On the day
£5
unless stated
otherwise

You can just turn up but places are limited so better to book in advance on

www.trybooking.com/uk
(search for Winckley Square).

Problem booking? Contact
patricia@winckley.org.uk

6 March 2pm - 3.15pm Peter Wilkinson	Former Residents of Winckley Square – famous and infamous <i>This is probably the most popular Winckley Square Guided Walk: Winckley Square - In the Beginning.</i> Starting with the vision for the Square and the first house in 1799. We will encounter real people who made history.
8 March 2pm - 3.15pm Susan Douglass & Pat Harrison	Women who made a difference: Slavery, Suffrage, Poverty On International Women's Day we will celebrate the lives of women in the past who campaigned for equality: women's suffrage, slavery abolition and mother and child well-being. All are women associated with the Winckley Square Quarter.
21 March 10.15am - 12 noon Judy Beeston	Edith Rigby Tour Take a step back in time in the footsteps of Preston's most famous suffragette. Visit key locations in her life. 2 hour tour with an opportunity to stop for refreshments.
7 April 2pm - 4.15pm Nigel Hardacre	Lancaster Canal and Tram Road – Preston This 2.5 mile walk takes you as far south as Carr Wood cottage along the old tram road route. The old East Lancs. railway bridge is used as the route to get back to Avenham Park.
10 April 10.15am - 12 noon Judy Beeston	Edith Rigby Tour Take a step back in time in the footsteps of Preston's most famous suffragette. Visit key locations in her life. 2 hour tour with an opportunity to stop for refreshments.
14 April 2pm - 3.30pm Steve Harrison	Preston the Jerusalem of Temperance 2022 was the 190th anniversary of the 'seven men of Preston' signing the first total abstinence pledge, initiating the influential Temperance movement. Preston was recognised in the C19 and C20 centuries as 'the birthplace of teetotalism'. Meet in front of the Blue Bell Pub in Church Street.
1 May 2pm - 3.15pm Peter Wilkinson	Preston it's a Gas Join Peter, Archivist for the National Gasworks Archive. You will visit key locations around the city centre including the site of the first gas works, the obelisk where the opening ceremony took place in February 1816, the coal yards and some of the buildings first lit by gas.
8 May 2pm - 3.15pm Pat Harrison	Extraordinary Women of Winckley Square Learn about the lives of some of the Extraordinary Women associated with Winckley Square who broke boundaries when women were not allowed to vote, had to submit to laws when they had no voice in their formation, when married women had no property rights.
12 May 2pm - 3.30pm Steve Harrison	From Fishergate to the Ribble: West Preston shaped by power and influence The walk explores Churchgate and Fishergate; where Preston's rich and powerful families lived until factory building in the late C18th. Subsequently the west end of the town was shaped by local oligarchs. Did the powerful create a world just for themselves or was philanthropy a key motive?

Britain in Bloom is a year-round competition that allows groups to compete on a regional or national level by using gardening to transform their communities.

Groups are assessed on Horticultural Excellence; Environmental Responsibility; and Community Participation. Friends of Winckley Square have once again been judged 'outstanding' for the 2023 'Its Your Neighbourhood' and the '2023 Heritage' Awards.



Photo: Paul Rushton

This could not have been achieved without our PCC Garden Warden **Tony Lewis**, who cares and nurtures the gardens as if they were his own.



HELP OUT

FRIDAY 15th MARCH

Conlon Construction are currently working on the Harris Museum refurbishment. They have agreed with The Woodland Trust that they will supply Conlon with free trees to provide to the local communities. Conlon is supplying Winckley Square with over 100 saplings. Planting will take place on the morning of 15th March. If you are interested in helping with the planting, please contact me patricia@winckley.org.uk

