Winckley Square Times



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Issue 37 | Summer 2026

FoWS Summer Events Special Edition

We have an exciting programme of events for you to enjoy this summer, including two fantastic **FREE** events on Winckley Square.

The ***Preston Jazz and Improvisation Festival*** returns from **17 May to 6 June**, with more than 50 events taking place across venues throughout Preston.

The festival culminates in the **Festival Finale** on **Saturday 6 June, 1pm – 5pm**, when Winckley Square hosts ***Lancashire Sounds on the Square***, featuring some of the region's finest bands and musicians.

Then, on **Sunday 26 July, 12 noon – 4pm**, join us for the **FREE** ***Winckley Summer Festival***. This much-loved family event promises a day packed with entertainment, including music from Saraban, magicians, Punch and Judy, crazy golf, face painting, circus skills, giant bubbles, Bring the Fire and much more. Bring a picnic and enjoy a wonderful day out at no cost - although we'd be delighted to welcome you to our pop-up bar.

Why not join one of our popular ***Summer Guided Walks*** and discover the hidden stories of Preston? Whether you're a history lover, curious about your city, or simply seeking an unforgettable stroll, we promise insight, intrigue, and a touch of drama at every turn.

Don't miss ***'At Home in Preston'*** **4 July, 9.30am – 4pm** a captivating ***FULL-DAY heritage experience*** celebrating Preston's rich history and cultural legacy. Read all about it on pages 3- 5.

Our ***privately booked Walks and Talks*** continue all the year round. Our knowledgeable volunteer tour guides and speakers lead guided walks and give talks across Lancashire and beyond, helping to raise funds for our FREE family events in the Gardens.

Patricia Harrison

Chair of Friends of Winckley Square

Email: **patricia@winckley.org.uk**

www.winckleysquarepreston.org

BIBAs Finalist

We are absolutely delighted to announce that Winckley Square Community Interest Company (WSCIC) and Friends of Winckley Square (FoWS) have been named finalists in the BIBAs on Tour 2026 – Community/Third Sector Business of the Year category.

This recognition is a wonderful tribute to our incredible team of volunteers, whose dedication and hard work throughout the year make it possible to deliver FREE family and community events in the Gardens during the summer and Christmas seasons.

We are also hugely grateful to PCC, LCC and the many local businesses, organisations and individuals who support us in so many different ways through sponsorship, expertise, donations and practical help. Their support enables us to continue making heritage, culture and community events accessible to everyone.

The positive feedback we receive from people who attend our events and enjoy the Gardens means so much to us, so it is especially rewarding to see our work recognised more widely through the BIBAs.

2026 also marks the 10th anniversary of Friends of Winckley Square, making reaching the final itself a very special achievement.

Wish us luck!

VOLUNTEER

Interested in donating, volunteering or being placed on our mailing list to receive newsletters and details of events?

Please email **patricia@winckley.org.uk**

@WinckleySquare **Friendsofwinckleysquaregardens**

We love seeing your photos of the Square; tag #friendsofwinckleysquare on Instagram.

Summer Walks & Bike Tours

24 June **2pm - 3.15pm** **Guide:** Peter Wilkinson	**Notable Residents of Winckley Square – famous and infamous** Winckley Square - In the Beginning. Starting with the vision for the Square and the first house in 1799 with fascinating stories of ambition, scandal, and legacy. **To book:** https://www.trybooking.com/uk/FXLW
27 June **2pm - 3.15pm** **Guide:** Susan Douglass	**The Cotton Lords of Winckley Square** This walk explores the lives of the wealthy industrialists who shaped Preston's cotton industry. The "Cotton Lords" were pillars of the local economy, but were also criticised for their power and wage practices during industrial unrest. **To book:** https://www.trybooking.com/uk/FXLQ
12 July **10am - 11.30am** **Guide:** Michael Akers	**The Bridges that made Preston** In a beautiful setting, this riverside walk explores why bridges were built, their social and economic impact, and celebrates their stories, construction and enduring legacy. ***Meet at The Old Penwortham Bridge, Broadgate side Preston PR1 8DX.*** **To book:** https://www.trybooking.com/uk/FXOW
15 July **2pm - 3.15pm** **Guide:** Peter Wilkinson	**Preston it's a Gas** Join Peter, Archivist of the National Gasworks, to explore Preston, the first town outside London with public gas. Visit the first gas works, 1816 ceremony obelisk, coal yards, and early buildings lit by gas, uncovering the city's gas history. **To book:** https://www.trybooking.com/uk/FXLX
16 July **6.30pm - 8pm** **Guide:** Steve Harrison	**Preston the Jerusalem of Temperance** It is almost 200 years since the 'seven men of Preston' signed 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, 114 Church Street PR3 3BS.*** **To book:** https://www.trybooking.com/uk/FXLT
18 July **10am - 12.15pm** **Guide:** Nigel Hardacre	**Tracing the Tramway: Tracks though Time** Follow the historic Tramway through Avenham Park, across the new bridge, and down to Carr Wood, blending history, nature, and industrial heritage. Celebrate the Old Tram Bridge whilst standing on the new bridge. **To book:** https://www.trybooking.com/uk/FXKL
25 July **10am - 12 noon** **Guide:** Michael Akers	**ALL the Bridges that made Preston by Bicycle** Explore the impact of Ribble's bridges, socially, strategically and economically on Preston. This tour begins at the Old Penwortham Bridge. It is along 4 ½ mile section of the Guild Wheel and ends at 'Halfpenny Bridge' at Brockholes. ***This tour begins at the Old Penwortham Bridge.*** **To book:** https://www.trybooking.com/uk/GKYF
29 July **2pm - 3.30pm** **8 August** **2.30pm - 4pm** **13 August** **6.30pm - 8pm** **Guide:** Susan Spall	**Where Walls Speak: A Walk through Preston's Murals** Join Susan Spall on a guided walk exploring Preston's striking murals. Celebrate the city's heritage, culture, and iconic figures while discovering how Paint Preston and local commissions have transformed streets into a vibrant urban gallery of creativity and community pride. ***The walk starts at the bottom of the steps next to the pay machines on the Fishergate Centre Car Park.*** **To book:** https://www.trybooking.com/uk/FWLQ
9 August **11am - 12.30pm** **Guide:** Michael Akers	**'Drawing Board Dreams' and the Reinvention of Preston** In the 1960s and early 70s, ambitious planners and architects attempted to remake Preston with bold modernist ideas. This tour, which includes the iconic bus station, will ask what drove this reimagined future half a century ago. ***The walk begins and ends outside the Guild Hall, Lancaster Road.*** **To book:** https://www.trybooking.com/uk/FXLY
18 August **2pm - 3.15pm** **Guide:** Susan Douglass	**Servants: The Hidden Occupants of Winckley Square** The wealthy residents of Winckley Square relied on servants to run their grand homes — yet expected them to be invisible and silent at all times. Discover their hidden lives and the surprising twists in their stories. **To book:** https://www.trybooking.com/uk/FXLG
19 August **2pm - 3.30pm** **Guide:** Peter Wilkinson	**Whispers in Stone: Stories from Preston Cemetery** Step into the past with a captivating, guided walk through Preston Cemetery, a place where history, art, and human stories intertwine. Each headstone represents a life once lived, some marked by achievement, others by tragedy, offering a deeply human glimpse into Preston's rich and diverse heritage. ***The walk starts inside the Cemetery gates on Blackpool Road.*** **To book:** https://www.trybooking.com/uk/GJQG
22 August **10am - 12 noon** **Guide:** Nigel Hardacre	**The Old Tram Road Route: Bamber Bridge** This is a relatively new FoWS walk in Bamber Bridge. This is PART 2 of Nigel Hardacre's 'Lancaster Canal and Tram Road Walk'. Nigel will extend your knowledge of the Old Tram Road. You will follow the Old Tram Road route, and other local history features from C19 and C20. ***The walks starts outside the Olde Hobb Inn.*** **To book:** https://www.trybooking.com/uk/FXKK

Walks - price and how to book

Walks fill up very quickly. It is always better to book early at **www.trybooking.com/uk** *(search for Winckley Square)*.

Problem booking? Contact **patricia@winckley.org.uk**

£5 unless stated otherwise

Guided Walks start in the centre of Winckley Square unless stated otherwise.

Historic Preston
Lancashire Local History Federation

FULL DAY HERITAGE EVENT

‘At Home’ with Preston Historical Society and Friends of Winckley Square






At Home in Preston is a captivating full day heritage experience celebrating the rich history and cultural legacy of Preston.

Enjoy a vibrant programme of expert talks, guided walks, and immersive tours that bring to life the city’s conflicts, industrial past, social reform movements, and remarkable local characters. Experience the powerful Harkness Ballads, songs and poems inspired by local events, tragic tales, and sharp social commentary. Explore impressive exhibitions in a warm, welcoming atmosphere, and discover Preston’s stories in a way that is engaging, memorable, and truly inspiring.

SATURDAY 4 JULY 2026



9.15am - 4pm



To book:
www.trybooking.com/uk/GIQN

£20 per person
INCLUDING LUNCH

Friends of Winckley Square

Preston Historical Society

Winckley Square Community Interest Company

The Harris

Preston City Council

Lancashire County Council

MORNING

The Harris: Market Square, Preston PR1 2PP

9.15am Registration with refreshments

9.30am Welcome: Mayor of Preston Nweeda Khan

9.40am M.C. **Patricia Harrison:** Outline of the day

9.45am **Steve Harrison: How what happened in Preston changed Lancashire, Britain, and the World**

11am *Comfort Break and meet your morning tour guide*

11.15am **Optional Visits and Guided Walks*** *See further details below.* Repeated in the afternoon. *After booking, delegates will be contacted and asked for their choices.*

AFTERNOON

Central Methodist Church: Lune Street, PR1 2NL

12.30pm **Lunch** *(included)* **/ Preston in the 1950s Exhibition**

1.30pm **Jennifer Reid: Echoes of the Industrial North**: Lancashire Dialect Work Songs and Broadside Ballads

2.30pm *Comfort Break and meet your afternoon tour guide*

2.45-4pm **Optional Visits & Guided Walks*** *See further details below.*

2.45-4pm **Judy Beeston: Meet Edith Rigby:** A presentation in role

For members who are less mobile and would prefer to remain seated for the last session of the day. This choice will be dependent on the demand being more than 10 people.

*Optional Visits and Guided Walks:

1. **The Harris Tour:** James Arnold
2. **Tour of Lancashire Archives and Local History:** Alex Miller & Vicci McCann
3. **Preston the Jerusalem of Temperance:** Steve Harrison
4. **The Cotton Lords of Preston:** Susan Douglass
5. **Preston: it's a Gas:** Peter Wilkinson
6. **Drawing Board Dreams:** the reinvention of Preston: Michael Akers
7. **From Anchor to Plau: Historic Inns & Taverns of Friargate:** Steve Halliwell
8. **Edith Rigby:** A Life that scandalised Preston: Judy Beeston
9. **'Old and New', Preston's Tram bridge and its Lancaster Canal heritage:** Nigel Hardacre

Speakers

M.C Patricia Harrison: Chair of Preston Historical Society Committee and Chair of Friends of Winckley Square.

Steve Harrison is a founder member of the Friends of Winckley Square. He has worked in education and as an author, publisher and project manager. He understands the concept of delayed gratification as he is a season card holder at Preston North End.

Jennifer Reid performs C19 work songs in the Lancashire dialect and broadside ballads. She has toured with Eliza Carthy and recently returned from a 4-month solo tour of New Zealand- to critical acclaim.

Judy Beeston is a Friends of Winckley Square tour guide and speaker. She brings history to life through her engaging performances, portraying the life of Edith Rigby across Lancashire. More recently, she has expanded her repertoire to include another inspirational pioneer, Cornelia Connelly.

Details of Optional Visits and Guided Walks

Delegates who would like to spend an hour in the Harris might want to return there at the end of their second guided walk. *(closes at 5pm)*

1.	**The Harris** - the beating heart of Preston - restored, renewed and reimagined.	Join Programmes & Collections Manager *James Arnold* for a tour of **The Harris** looking at the new interpretive scheme that explores stories of The Harris, Preston and the world, including the UK's longest Foucault pendulum that shows that the earth is turning beneath our feet.
2.	**Proud Preston: Behind the scenes with archives special to Preston**	Join archivists *Alex Miller* and *Vicci McCann* for a behind the scenes tour at **Lancashire Archives and Local History**. We include an opportunity to see where 900 years of Preston's documented history is cared for and a chance to handle some of the city's treasures in the collections.
	Guided Walks with Friends of Winckley Square Tour Guides	
3.	**Preston the Jerusalem of Temperance** Guide: **Steve Harrison**	Discover how Preston became recognised in the 19th and 20th centuries as the 'birthplace of teetotalism', and learn about the social conditions, key locations, and lasting legacy of a campaign that aimed to transform everyday life, health, and society.
4.	**The Cotton Lords of Preston** Guide: **Susan Douglass**	Explore the lives of the wealthy industrialists who shaped Preston's cotton industry. The "Cotton Lords" - benevolent benefactors or tyrannical oppressors? Visit Winckley Square where many of these 'pillars of the community' built their grand homes.
5.	**Preston: it's a Gas** Guide: **Peter Wilkinson**	Step back into Preston's illuminated past to a time when gaslight transformed everyday life. In 1815 Preston became the first town outside London to receive a public gas supply, placing the city at the very forefront of industrial innovation.
6.	**Drawing Board Dreams: the reinvention of Preston** Guide: **Michael Akers**	The 1960s and '70s bold modernist planning saw the sweeping away of a large section of Preston's old centre. The vision was to transform how Prestonians worked, played, shopped and moved around. Half a century on, what should we make of this attempted reinvention? The walk includes a tour of Preston's iconic bus station.
7.	**"From Anchor to Plau": The historic Inns and Taverns of Friargate** Guide: **Steve Halliwell**	Friargate, the main artery from the Fylde to the Market Square in Preston has been home to more than 30 inns over the last 350 years. Discover where they stood and hear some of the stories behind them.
8.	**Edith Rigby: A Life that scandalised Preston** Guide: **Judy Beeston**	Discover the remarkable story of Preston's most famous suffragette, Edith Rigby. Explore the places that shaped her life — from her birth and marriage to the streets where she lived and campaigned. Imprisoned eight times and subjected to force-feeding, her courage helped drive lasting change.
9.	**'Old and New' Preston's Tram bridge and its Lancaster Canal heritage** Guide: **Nigel Hardacre**	Discover how the Tram Bridge once shaped the town's industry and growth, how goods moved along the Lancaster Canal and across the bridge, connecting Preston to wider trade networks. Hear how the area has evolved over time, revealing layers of history still visible today.

LANCASHIRE SOUNDS LIVE

ON THE SQUARE

SATURDAY 06 JUNE '26

Winckley Square

1pm - 5pm Free Admission

Just Turn Up, Ready to Enjoy Great Music & Summer Vibes

Delicious Refreshments Available from the Pop-Up Bar and Food Vendors

For More Info, Visit www.prestonjazzfest.org

Celebrating Lancashire's Music, People, Places & Scenes

Join us for the spectacular finale of the Preston Jazz and Improvisation Festival in the beautiful setting of Winckley Square Gardens, Preston's historic Georgian square in the heart of the city centre.

This **FREE** event features some of the region's finest artists, including Dobbo, John Bailey, Persimmon and more. Enjoy an eclectic mix of jazz, soul, hip-hop and contemporary music, showcasing some of the North West's most exciting talent in a relaxed open-air setting.

Treat yourself to delicious food from local vendors and a drink from the bar, then sit back and enjoy the music. Most of all, bring your friends and family and experience the unique atmosphere of Sounds on the Square, where the gardens' remarkable acoustics create the perfect backdrop for an unforgettable afternoon of live music.


© Karen Browne

A Regency Promenade

with Afternoon Tea

Step back into Regency Preston on this popular guided walk with renowned garden historian Elaine Taylor.

Begin with afternoon tea in the beautiful Winckley Square Gardens, including a refreshing Pimm's and delicious cake. Then stroll through Winckley Square Gardens, along the picturesque Avenham Walk; following the route once enjoyed by Preston's fashionable residents.

As you walk, Elaine will bring the history of these much-loved green spaces to life, revealing how they have evolved over the centuries. The tour also includes exclusive access to two fascinating private gardens that are normally closed to the public.

This is a very popular walk and is offered only twice on one special day each year. Early booking is strongly recommended. If places are already full when you enquire, be sure to join the waiting list for next year.



Sunday 14 June

12.30pm - 2.15pm and **3pm - 4.45pm**

To book: **https://www.trybooking.com/uk/FJVF**

Friends of Winckley Square

FOOD

Winckley Square Festival

Free Family Fun Festival

Sunday 26 July

12 noon - 4pm

- Pop up licensed bar
- Saraban
- Worldwise Samba Drummers
- Bring the Fire
- TAZ Magic
- Paris Bubbles
- Blackpool Circus School
- Giant Games
- Crazy Golf
- Face Painting
- The Magic House



FUN FOR ADULTS, KIDS AND EVERYONE IN BETWEEN

www.winckleysquarepreston.org

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THE MET 2026

The wonderful mobile event tent returns to Larches and Savick from **18 July to 15 August**, bringing with it **more than 45 events** for the local community to enjoy.

As part of this exciting programme, speakers from the Friends of Winckley Square will once again be sharing fascinating insights into a variety of aspects of Preston's rich and colourful history.

Wed 22 July, 7.30pm - 8.30pm

Nigel Hardacre // *FoWS Speaker and Tour Guide*

Lock, Stock and Barge:
The Lancaster Canal in Preston 1797-1964

Step into the past with a fascinating history talk on Preston's Lancaster Canal - uncover its ambitious 1792 origins, coal and limestone trade, ingenious lock-free design, and unfinished Ribble crossing. Discover how this industrial lifeline shaped the city and endures today.

Tue 11 August, 7.30pm - 8.30pm

Judy Beeston // *FoWS Speaker and Tour Guide*

Edith Rigby: A life that scandalised Preston

Experience a powerful live performance revealing her courage, rebellion, and fight for equality - bringing Preston's most daring suffragette vividly to life in an unforgettable, inspiring evening.

Thu 13 August, 7.30pm - 8.30pm

Michael Akers // *FoWS Speaker and Tour Guide*

Rise and Fall of Preston Guild Hall

Discover the dramatic story of Preston Guild Hall - its bold vision, cultural heyday, and sudden closure. This engaging talk explores how an iconic venue rose to prominence, hosted legendary events, and ultimately fell, leaving a lasting impact on the city's identity.

COMMUNITY GROUPS OR SOCIETIES



We are now accepting bookings for 2027.

FoWS offer a **programme of illustrated talks** to Rotary Clubs, Local History Groups and Societies, Women's Institutes, Luncheon Clubs, Probus Clubs, and other community organisations throughout the county and beyond.

Our team of ten experienced speakers presents a variety of fascinating talks on Winckley Square, its surrounding area, and many different aspects of Preston's rich history.

If your group would like to invite a FoWS speaker, please contact me and I will be delighted to send you a list of available talks for your members to choose from.



A Great Day Out in Preston

Why not enjoy a memorable day out in Preston? Many groups combine one of our guided walks before lunch at one of the city's excellent restaurants or cafés, followed by a visit to The Harris.

Following a £19 million restoration, The Harris has been transformed into a vibrant 21st-century cultural hub in the heart of the city, bringing together art, history, literature and community under one roof.

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email: patricia@winckley.org.uk

Photographs will be taken and may be used in future marketing and publications unless you ask us not to.

heritage lottery fund LOTTERY FUNDED

Friends of Winckley Square

Preston City Council

Lancashire County Council

PRESTON CITY CENTRE BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT BID