Winckley Square Times



FoWS Winckley Christmas Concert: Paul Rushton

Issue 38 | Autumn / Winter 2026

Friends of Winckley Square

What a wonderful and busy summer it has been! Between March and September, our guides led more than 60 guided walks, and our speakers delivered over 40 talks across the county and beyond. Thank you to our wonderful volunteers who gave their time and to hundreds of you that participated. The funds raised help us provide the free events we organise in summer and at Christmas.

The highlight was ***'At Home in Preston Heritage Day'*** on 4 July. Each year Lancashire Local History Federation (LLHF) invites heritage groups across the historic County Palatine of Lancaster to host an "At Home" day. This year, FoWS worked with PHS, The Harris and Lancashire Archives to showcase Preston's history through talks, a performance of Lancashire dialect mill songs and Broadside Ballads, guided walks and site tours. The day was a great success, attracting visitors from Lancashire, Cheshire, Cumbria, Derbyshire, Yorkshire, Merseyside and northwest Scotland. It was a pleasure to share our city with over 100 visitors.

Closer to home, our ***Free Little Library*** is working extremely well. You are welcome to take a book for free; all we ask is that you replace it with one you have read and enjoyed. We now also have an information box beside the noticeboard in Winckley Square Gardens, where you can pick up our newsletters and other information.

Although we did not win a North West BIBA Award, we were delighted to be finalists. We also have something to celebrate: Winckley Square Gardens has received the ***2026/27 Green Flag Award*** and ***Green Heritage Site Accreditation***. You can read more in this issue about the people whose hard work makes the Gardens such a special place.

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

Patricia Harrison

Chair of Friends of Winckley Square

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Remembering *Tarquin Scott*

7 March 1964 – 24 August 2026



Tarquin in Overleigh House overlooking Avenham Park

Tarquin Scott was a dear friend of Winckley Square whose warmth, humour and gift for bringing people together made him a much-loved part of our Friends' family.

Many will remember Tarquin from our Regency Promenade Walk. He welcomed walkers into the beautiful garden of Overleigh House for afternoon tea, sharing stories about the house and his family. Those visits became a highlight of the walk because of his kindness and hospitality.

Tarquin's funeral on 15 September was a beautiful celebration of his life. His sisters, Hilary and Louise, shared memories of his early years, while friends spoke about the different stages of his life. The readings and recollections made us laugh and cry, sometimes at the same moment. The crematorium was overflowing with people whose lives he had touched through his friendship.

I felt privileged to be asked to speak about Tarquin's later years and his friendship with FoWS. Standing among so many who loved him brought home just how widely his kindness had reached. For us, he was far more than a supporter: he was a friend whose welcome at Overleigh will always be remembered.

Tarquin's family kindly asked for donations in his memory to be made to FoWS. We are deeply grateful for their generosity and for everyone who contributed. We will use the donations to commemorate Tarquin in a way that reflects his affection for Winckley Square and his pleasure in bringing people together.

Our thoughts remain with Hilary, Louise and all Tarquin's family and friends. We feel fortunate to have known him and will remember him with enormous affection.

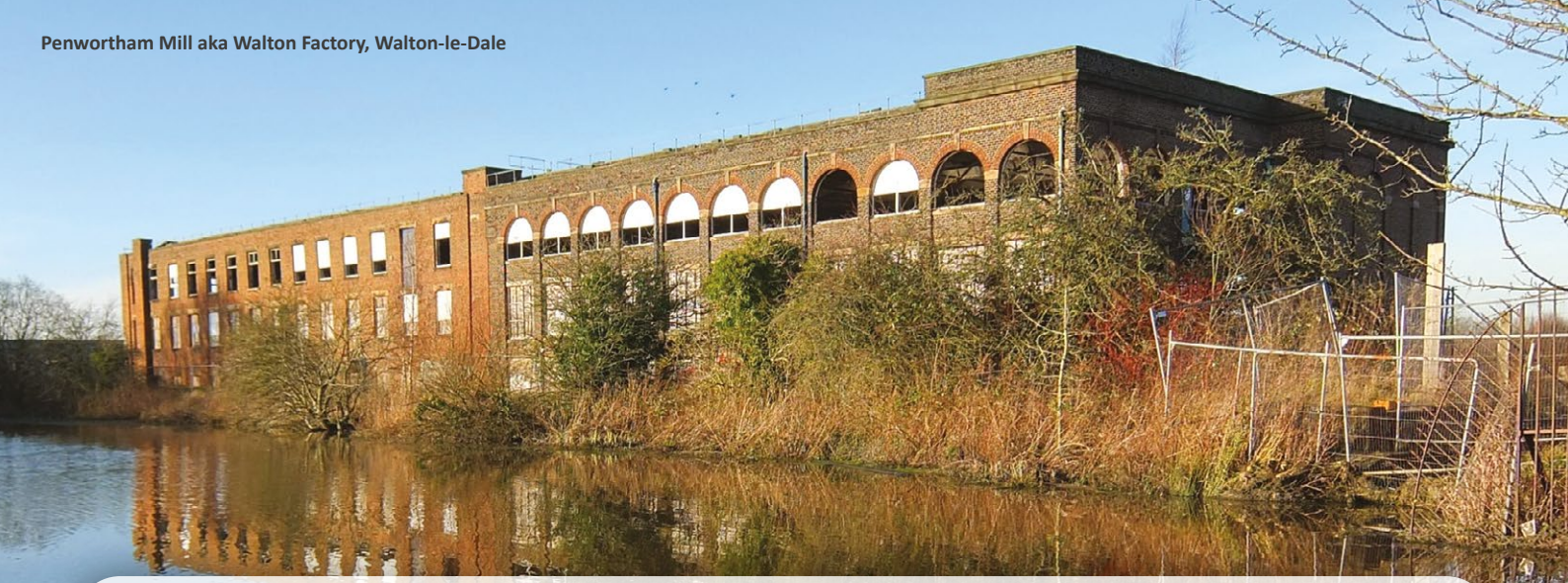
Interested in donating, volunteering or being placed on our mailing list to receive newsletters and details of events?

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

@WinckleySquare

Friendsofwinckleysquaregardens

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



Penwortham Mill aka Walton Factory, Walton-le-Dale

The Cockshutts:
A Preston Family on the Rise

From Saul Street to Winckley Square: the changing fortunes of a Victorian family.

by Paticia Harrison



Saul Street, the first home of the Cockshutts: Preston Digital Archive

In 1841 Edmund Cockshutt was living in Saul Street, Preston, earning his living as a journeyman mechanic. 70 years later, after a career in iron founding and cotton manufacturing, his son Joshua was living at 3 Avenham Colonnade, in the fashionable Winckley Square Quarter. Between those two addresses lies a family story of ambition, enterprise, prosperity, romance and changing fortunes, taking us from Preston's engineering workshops to the banks of the River Lostock and a cotton mill containing 25,000 spindles. Although the Cockshutts never gained the widespread recognition of Preston's great cotton dynasties, their history offers a fascinating insight into the opportunities and uncertainties of Victorian industrial life.

Before Preston:
Legal reality of Wills vs. Provision

The Cockshutt name has longstanding associations with Lancashire, particularly Colne and Pendle. Like many families in this region, successive generations experienced the transformation brought about by mechanisation and the growth of the textile industry.

The Ball Grove Marriage Settlement & Trusts

The 1795 Marriage Settlement: When Edmund's grandfather, Edmund Cockshutt of Ball Grove (d.1825), entered into a marriage agreement with his second wife, Margery Maude (née Mercer), substantial family assets and annual annuities were legally committed to her support and her siblings' benefit. [1, 2]

Assets Locked in Trust: Grandfather Edmund died in 1881, followed closely by the death of Edmund's father, Edmund Cockshutt the Younger (b.1779). While Edmund of Preston remained a major theoretical shareholder in family holdings like Bough Gap Mill, the properties his father bequeathed to him remained encumbered by these legal trust obligations into the 1830s. He could not easily convert them to ready cash or take direct possession.

Our story begins with Edmund Cockshutt, b.1809 in Colne, who married Elizabeth Ashton (Betty) b.1813 in Preston, at St John's Church, Preston, in February 1833. Although Edmund belonged to the wealthy Cockshutt family of Ball Grove and Bough Gap Mills Colne, legal and personal factors left him empty-handed at marriage. Nevertheless, his skills, prospects and reputable manufacturing background made him a promising husband.

They lived with Betty's parents, James and Betty Ashton, at 49, Saul Street, where their six children were born over fourteen years. The house and other Preston properties were owned by James' sister, Winifred; the unequal division of their parents' inheritance, reflecting contemporary legal and traditional practices, explains the siblings' financial divide. Edmund and Betty were entitled to remain after her parents died in the 1840s.

The Daughter's **PROTECTION:**

With no husband to support and few earning opportunities, unmarried women were often left money or property by their parents to prevent destitution. To safeguard her future, Winifred's parents directly left her capital and property. This explains how Winifred's achieved independent status as a "House Proprietor" with her own funds.

The Son's **TRADE:**

James was expected to earn his living through work. Rather than inherit capital or property, James was given a safety net, he and his descendants were permitted to occupy the family's Saul Street house, effectively subsidising his income, keeping living costs low while legal ownership and control of rents remained with Winifred.

Recorded in 1841 as a journeyman mechanic, Edmund was a skilled tradesman working for an employer, Edmund's circumstances changed considerably over the following decade.

From Mechanic to Master Iron Founder

Preston's booming cotton industry offered opportunities to engineers supplying and maintaining mill engines, boilers and machinery. Edmund Cockshutt recognised the demand for equipment that kept thousands of spindles turning. He and Thomas Goodier had independently moved to Preston for work in its expanding industrial, metalworking and textile machinery trades, forming a partnership in the early 1840s that combined mechanical expertise with capital.

Rent-free accommodation provided by Aunt Winifred at Saul Street reduced Edmund's living costs, allowing him to save his earnings and draw on family technical connections to fund his share of the foundry's machinery, tools and metal patterns.

Cockshutt & Goodier dissolved by mutual agreement on 9 September 1845, announced in the Preston Chronicle on 13 September. Edmund retained the premises and equipment and assumed all outstanding debts and liabilities, while Goodier, who had married into a branch of the Cockshutt family, turned to textiles. By 1851, Edmund had progressed from employee to employer, running a substantial business with eleven workers.



ELIGIBLE OPPORTUNITY

Lawson St Foundry, Preston

To be let, for a term of years to be agreed upon, this old established **FOUNDRY**, successfully carried on for more than 20 years by the late Mr Edmund Cockshutt. The stock, plant and goodwill of this old established business will in a few days be offered for **Sale by Private Contract;**

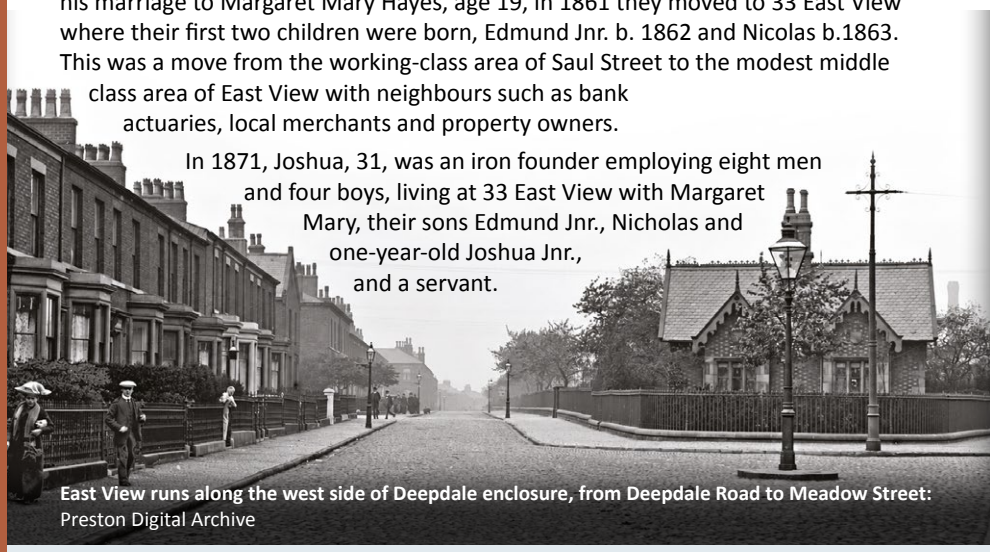
Source: Preston Herald 28 October 1871

Edmund died July 1871 in Preston, at the age of 61, Elizabeth (Betty) outlived him by 20 years.

Joshua Cockshutt: the next generation

Joshua, born 1840, followed his father's engineering profession and by 1861 he was a machine maker working for his father and living with his parents. Following his marriage to Margaret Mary Hayes, age 19, in 1861 they moved to 33 East View where their first two children were born, Edmund Jnr. b. 1862 and Nicolas b.1863. This was a move from the working-class area of Saul Street to the modest middle class area of East View with neighbours such as bank actuaries, local merchants and property owners.

In 1871, Joshua, 31, was an iron founder employing eight men and four boys, living at 33 East View with Margaret Mary, their sons Edmund Jnr., Nicholas and one-year-old Joshua Jnr., and a servant.



East View runs along the west side of Deepdale enclosure, from Deepdale Road to Meadow Street: Preston Digital Archive

Late 1870s (The Transition): Backed by his father's iron foundry, capital and manufacturing expertise, Joshua negotiated the lease of Penwortham Cotton Mill. This shifted the family from supplying heavy steam machinery to producing and using it for textile production, taking the next generation into the upper ranks of Lancashire's textile trade.

The mill beside the River Lostock dated from the late eighteenth century. Industrial archaeological records identify improvements involving foundry workers building and casting heavy iron components for a new engine house, boiler and chimney, advancing the shift from water to steam power. The foundry site and heavy assets were wound down as the family entered Preston's prominent cotton-manufacturing elite.

Penwortham Mill, originally built in 1785 by John Watson, formed part of the local landed estate lands along Factory Lane. The freehold passed between estate holders and commercial investors until the complex was bought by surgical dressing manufacturer Vernon-Carus in 1915 Like many Lancashire cotton manufacturing operations of the late 19th century, Joshua Cockshutt did not hold the freehold of the land and buildings. Instead, he leased the mill premises while owning the internal spinning machinery, steam plant, and working inventory outright.



Penwortham Mill c 1910: Red Rose Collection LCC

By the **1881 census**, the foundry had ceased operating, and Joshua was recorded as a master **cotton spinner** employing 'about 100 hands',. He lived at the prestigious address of 19 Bairstow Street with two servants, firmly established in Preston's manufacturing community. His son Edmund Jnr., a 'pupil to cotton spinner', worked alongside him, preparing to continue the family business.



Bairstow Street, Winckley Square Quarter: Steve Harrison, AI modified

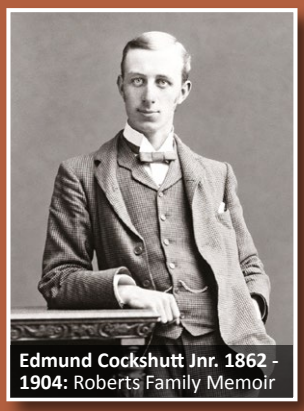
Twenty-Five Thousand Spindles

By 1891, Penwortham Mill produced cotton twist and weft on approximately 25,000 spindles, a substantial operation among Lancashire mills, though considerably smaller than Preston's great combines. It marked remarkable progress from Edmund Snr.'s days as a journeyman mechanic. Amid the noise, heat and constant movement, hundreds of belts, shafts and spinning mechanisms needed careful supervision, while many local families depended on the mill for their livelihoods. Yet the family's story was about to take an unexpected turn.

1891 PRESTON MILL COMPARISONS	
Mill	**Number of Spindles**
Oxhey Mill	18,086
Lutwidge Mill	27,160
Copland's Pole Street	27,812
Kay Street	32,000
Parker Street	42,000
Park Mill	48,760
At the other end of the scale...	
Horrocks combined	131,200
William Calvert & Co. combined	150,566

A Romance Born through Music

As a trained baritone singer, Edmund Cockshutt Jnr. was a frequent guest at musical parties hosted at the Meredith home where he met Emily Meredith. Edmund's father, Joshua, was a close friend of the Merediths. Through this family friendship, Edmund and Emily began singing popular duets and their musical partnership soon blossomed into love. Both families initially opposed the romance, the Merediths were staunch Anglicans, while the Cockshutts were devout Roman Catholics, but affection overcame these religious differences.



Edmund Cockshutt Jnr. 1862 - 1904: Roberts Family Memoir

They married at St Cuthbert's Church, Blackpool, on 16 August 1888. They took up residence in The Cottage, Brownedge, Walton-le-Dale where Alice was born in 1890. Family recollections describe Emily as a warm, accomplished conversationalist and accomplished artist.



Emily Merredith 1863 - 1921: Roberts Family Memoir



Mother Demdike riding a white goose and ***Mother Chattox riding a broomstick***

Emily painted the witches oil on glass, with watercolour skies. Original framed paintings owned by grandson, Ted Flack.

By 1891, Edmund was recorded as a cotton spinner and manufacturer employing others, living at Cumberland House, Brownedge Lane, with Emily 27, Margaret Mary b.1891 and Edmund Merridith b.1893 with two servants. Alice was in a boarding school in Skipton.

With a flourishing career, a comfortable home and a growing family, their future must have seemed bright. Yet within a decade, their lives would change profoundly.



Cumberland House, Walton-le-Dale

The Post-Mill Transitions of Joshua and Edmund Cockshutt

During the late 1800s, Lancashire's textile sector faced volatile economic cycles, global trade pressures, and bitter industrial disputes. Operating heavy manufacturing mills carried immense financial risk, prompting the Cockshutt family to exit physical production in 1892. They gave up the lease on Penwortham Mill and liquidated its assets, auctioning off the plant and machinery via notices in local newspapers such as The Blackburn Standard on 4 June 1892. Following this closure, the two brothers took entirely different paths within the commercial world.

Joshua Cockshutt: The Preston Yarn Agent

This auction marked the official end of Joshua Cockshutt's career as a mill operator. To avoid manufacturing overheads, he transitioned to the commercial trade side of the industry. By the 1901 Census, he was independently established as a Yarn Merchant (and later a Cotton Yarn Agent) in the supply chain.



Avenham Walk, the Colonnade right and Bushell Place left: Rock and Co. 1855

In 1901, Joshua and Margaret were living at **1 West Cliff Terrace, Preston**, with their children Helen (29), Elizabeth (28), Mary (24), James (18), and two live-in servants. Following Margaret's death in 1909 at age 68, Joshua downsized to 3 Avenham Colonnade, where he lived out his remaining years with his unmarried daughters Helen 39 and Agnes 25 until his death in **1916 at age 76.**

Edmund Cockshutt: The Nelson Insurance Agent

Edmund's transition was more dramatic. After giving up the mill lease, capital fragmentation prevented him from financing physical machinery, forcing a shift to service-oriented business models. He spent the mid-to-late 1890s winding down his textile assets and exploring commercial trades around Preston before relocating his family to 91, Bakerhouse Road, Nelson. In 1901 Joshua, Emily, two daughters and two servants lived there. Nelson was a booming industrial town that provided an ideal base for building an independent customer network. The move from Cumberland House to a terraced house in Nelson indicates the family had fallen on hard times. Perhaps Edmund felt it appropriate to 'start anew' in another town.



130 Bakerhouse Road, Nelson, became the home of the Robert family for many years.

By 1901, his transition was complete, and he was registered as a Life & Fire Insurance Agent operating on his own account. This move allowed him to pivot from the high-overhead liabilities of a mill leaseholder to a low-risk, commission-and-fee service model.

Suffering from consumption (tuberculosis), Edmund travelled to the Caribbean to seek out new business opportunities and recover his health. His career was cut short after he was knocked down by a tramcar. He passed away on 14 June 1904 at the Union Poor House, St. Andrew, Jamaica. Cause of death was recorded as "phthisis" (a historical term for tuberculosis). Despite being an insurance agent Edmund did not protect his family's future.

Edmund died intestate which left Emily to fend for herself with three children which forced an immediate move to a smaller house, 130 Bakerhouse Road. Within eight months Emily married Smith Roberts, a 32-year-old bank cashier thereby securing her family's future. In December 1905 Charles William Roberts was born.

Charles Roberts, Emily's son to her second marriage, told a very different version of Edmund Cockshutt's departure to the West Indies. It was said that Edmund Cockshutt had behaved very badly and had embarrassed the family to such an extent that he had been given a cash sum by other members of the family and told to leave the country. There is some evidence that this "behaviour" may have involved drunkenness and gambling.

A Forgotten Preston Success Story

The Cockshutts may not be among Preston's most familiar industrial names, but their story offers a fascinating insight into the opportunities, ambitions and uncertainties of the town's C19 development. Their lives show how technical knowledge, enterprise and determination could transform a family's circumstances within a generation, while their changing addresses from Saul Street to East View, Bairstow Street, West Cliff and Avenham Colonnade trace a corresponding journey through Victorian Preston society. Their association with Penwortham Mill provides a tangible reminder of their contribution to Lancashire's industrial heritage.

> ***"From a mechanic's workshop in Saul Street to a cotton mill with 25,000 spindles, the Cockshutts deserve to be remembered as part of Preston's remarkable industrial story."***

Research note:

This article draws on census information, Lancashire industrial heritage records, Lancashire Archives, Censuses, Preston Newspapers, Trade Directories and The Roberts Family of Nelson and The Life and Times of Emily Cockshutt: Both written by Emily's son to her 2nd marriage Charles William Roberts, and later added to in 2018 by her Great Grandson Edmund Flack in Brisbane, Australia. Both family memoirs are particularly valuable for their personal recollections, although some dates and accounts differ and require independent verification.

2026/27 Green Flag Award & Green Heritage Site Accreditation for Winckley Square Gardens



Friends of Winckley Square with PCC gardeners celebrating the Award

The Green Flag Award celebrates well-managed green spaces that welcome visitors. Green Heritage Site Accreditation recognises how a site's historic character is understood, protected and shared. For a Square with such a rich place in Preston's story, receiving both is especially pleasing.

The rewards are shared by everyone who uses this special place. Visitors can enjoy a beautiful pause while exploring the city. Families and friends gather for events that bring people together. Local workers find a quiet spot to eat their lunch, meet a colleague or simply take a breath during a busy day. Each visit offers something different, from seasonal colour and birdsong to a chance to enjoy Preston's history in the open air.



Mick, head gardener, raising the Green Flag with Steve lowering himself into a squat - both outstanding achievements, though only one has been independently judged!

The Gardens are both a treasured part of Preston's heritage and a welcoming space at the heart of the city. Congratulations and heartfelt thanks to PCC's gardeners, FoWS volunteers, local businesses and community members. Their combined efforts have helped earn this recognition and make Winckley Square Gardens truly 'Preston's Hidden Gem' in the heart of the City.

A Warm Welcome at the Bug Hotel

There is a new place to stay in Winckley Square Gardens, though its guests are much smaller than the visitors we usually welcome!

The Friends of Winckley Square's Bug Hotel has been created to give minibeasts places to shelter and help support biodiversity in the Gardens. The hotel faces south-east so that it catches the morning sun. That early warmth should give its residents a good start to the day as they emerge and become active. Around it, pollinating plants provide colour for visitors and a valuable source of food for insects. Together, the planting and the hotel make this corner of the Gardens a more welcoming place for wildlife.



We cannot choose who checks in, but that is part of the fun. Different insects need different places to rest, hide and spend the colder months. Over time, we hope a variety of minibeasts will make use of the hotel and the plants nearby. Their presence will help us understand more about the wildlife living alongside us in the heart of Preston.

The information board on the rear of the hotel introduces some of the minibeasts we hope will take up residence. It's a chance for children and adults alike to stop, look closely and discover creatures they might otherwise pass by. A visit at different times of year may reveal something new.



The Bug Hotel is one of the ways FoWS is responding to Britain in Bloom's advice to improve biodiversity in the Gardens. We are grateful to Lancashire Green Grants for funding the project and to everyone who has helped bring it to life.



Next time you visit, take a moment to explore this little corner. You may spot one of our newest residents enjoying the morning sunshine!

A Little Library for Everyone

Have you discovered the Little Free Library in Winckley Square Gardens?



This small book exchange is built around a simple idea: take a book, share a book. There is no library card, no charge and no need to sign up. If a book catches your eye, take it home and enjoy it.

We hope the library will inspire a love of reading at every age. A child might discover a story to read with an adult. A teenager might find a new favourite author. Someone on their lunch break could pick up a novel for the journey home. And a book you have finished might be exactly the one another visitor has been hoping to find.

You do not have to leave a book in order to take one. However, when you can, please share a book you have read and enjoyed. This simple act helps keep the shelves full of fresh discoveries for others. Books in good condition for children and adults are welcome.

The Little Free Library is already being well used, and it is lovely to see books finding new readers. It offers another reason to pause in the Gardens and reminds us that sharing a story can bring neighbours and visitors together.

Next time you pass through Winckley Square, have a look inside. Your next great read may be waiting for you!

Lift the Lid on Winckley Square

Friends of Winckley Square have a new Information Box beside the Notice Board.



It holds the latest newsletter, self-guided walks of the Gardens' trees and for those ready to venture further, our Preston city centre self-guided walk, Going on a Date, which offers another way to discover the city. It has already been reprinted three times, reflecting its popularity with people keen to explore Preston's stories for themselves.

The notice board will help you keep up to date with our latest events and activities. Whether you enjoy local history, live entertainment, guided walks or simply spending time in the Gardens, take a moment to see what's coming up. There is always something to look forward to.

The box also holds Preston Historical Society newsletters, bringing together articles, research and news for anyone curious about our local heritage.

To discover what we are doing:

just stop, browse and pick up something that interests you.

Next time you visit the Square, also check the notice board and open the information box. Your next discovery, enjoyable outing or fascinating read could be waiting inside!

Friends of Winckley Square

FRIENDS OF WINCKLEY SQUARE

Engaging people in activities which share and celebrate the heritage of Preston.

Mrs Godfrey's REGENCY *Winckley* CHRISTMAS



3rd and 10th December

2pm - 4pm

Central Methodist Church,
Lune Street, Preston PR1 2NL

Speaker Susan Douglass

We would be delighted to welcome you back for another cosy and entertaining afternoon filled with festive cheer. Settle into the comfortable seats from Preston's Gaumont Cinema while Christmas music fills the room. Enjoy a mince pie with mulled wine (0%), hot chocolate before the afternoon's entertainment begins.

This year's programme includes a Regency Christmas slideshow, followed by Susan's lively new seasonal talk.

DETAILS AND TO BOOK

www.trybooking.com/uk/GWES

Winckley Square Christmas Concert

Sunday 13th December 3.00–5.00pm

Meet friends and family to get into the Christmas spirit.

Pop Up licensed Bar

FREE event

Enjoy a mince pie,
- mulled wine,
- hot chocolate,
- parched peas,
- Vinny's hot food
- a tipple from the bar.

Fabulous Music and Entertainment

WinckleySquareGardens

@WinckleySquare

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

WINCKLEY SQUARE COMMUNITY INTEREST COMPANY

PRESTON CITY CENTRE BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT BID