

# New Mills Local History Society

## NEWSLETTER 62



Spring 2019

## **From The Editor**

Dear Friends,

You will have noticed from our list of speakers for Spring 2019 that our programme organiser, Derek Brumhead, has invited some of our researchers into the History of New Mills to talk to us. If you like your history to be local, you can't get more local than that. Of course, all this research has appeared in the Society's publications, which, rest assured in case you've missed any, will be available for sale at our meetings; but it is good to know that, in addition, we are going to have these local topics presented by our fellow members.

On behalf of the Committee, may I wish you a Healthy and Prosperous New Year.

*Ron Weston.*

## **Committee 2018-2019**

Chairperson	(Vacant)
Vice-Chairperson	John Crummett (749530)
Hon. Secretary	Mike Daniels (746449)
Hon. Treasurer	Maureen Hall (742837)
Hon. Archivist	Andrew Screen (742198)
Hon. Photo Archivist	Roger Bryant (744227)
Hon. Editor	Ron Weston (744838)
Hon. Website manager	Barry Dent (745837)
Ordinary members	Gaynor Andrew, Derek Brumhead, Nicki Burgess, Pat Evans, Chris Jones

## **90 Years of Swizzels Matlow**

### **Nici Matlow, 17 September 2018**

The New Mills Festival Lecture of 2018 was given by Nici Matlow, Director. It aroused a great deal of interest and over 200 persons attended in New Mills Town Hall. As in previous years the New Mills Town Council provided free cheese and wine after the lecture which added to an already great evening and the hall was graced with two magnificent floral displays by the town parks department.

Nici first explained that Maurice Matlow (formerly known as Matlowsky, immigrants from Russia) was Nici's grandfather. He had a brother Alf. They lived in the East End of London and after working in the markets in their teens set up a regular stall selling jelly sweets which they made in their kitchen. In 1921 when Maurice was 22 he and his brother created Matlow Brothers Ltd. The work force consisted of 6 people and the first sweets produced were Jolly Lollies and Celia Fruits. In 1933 they joined with David Dee to manufacture compressed sherbet tablets, brands called Carlton Mints, Cuties and Sherbits. The firm Swizzels was thus born and remained a separate firm until 1975 when the two companies joined together as Swizzels Matlow. In the same year the company was awarded the Queen's Award to Industry for Export Achievement. The name Swizzels was taken from an American fizzy sweet called Swizzle, the spelling was slightly altered so the Matlows could use it, at the same time they launched Fizzers and later Rainbow Drops both of which are still going strong today. At first, the rainbow drops were sold loose in a box with a cup and a stack of 72 cone paper bags. But because of inflation they had to use smaller and smaller cups ! Soon after the war they bought a small bagging machine perfect for the size for a bag costing 3d. In 2017 14 million bags of Rainbow Drops were produced. Today, bagging machines for the various sweets ensure that the exact amount of sweets is put into the bag. An interesting product in the 1930s was Bettabars, formerly known as Butternut until it was pointed out that it did not contain butter or nuts ! Production of it ceased in the 1990s, unfortunately, since today such a product would be known as a cereal bar and the firm would be challenging Kelloggs !

In 1939 it became clear that the East End of London was not a safe place to be and a search was made among the mills of northern England for suitable premises, that is when they came to Brunswick Mill. At the time it was in a derelict state. New Mills at the time suffered from high unemployment and for this reason the Town

Council readily agreed to pay for the replacement of the broken windows, and fix the electricity and plumbing. At the time, Alf Matlow was recorded as saying “I will soon be able to offer hundreds of jobs to local people and there will be vacancies for hundreds of young girls”. As the war was on, sugar rationing became a problem and so the firm purchased a number of confectionery companies just for their sugar rationing. In 1949 a recruitment drive of 200 girls between 15 and 18 took place with a weekly wage of £2 12s 6d (about £94 in today’s money). Love Hearts were launched in 1954, starting off being sold in Christmas Crackers but soon became a permanent line, and since then have been used to send romantic messages. Nowadays they have emojis on them ! A sculpture of a Love Heart was even placed in the Millennium Dome as an icon of the 20th century. 2.75 billion Love Hearts are made each year and placed end to end would stretch for 32,500 miles.

In 1971 the mill was expanded and a new section built at the end of the site on some unused land. In 1975 the two companies officially joined to become Swizzels Matlow. In June 1980 Princess Diana visited the factory, for which the whole factory was painted and cleaned. Special Love Hearts were produced and the society has packets in the archives.



The firm is the largest family-owned confectionery manufacturer in the country, now with the third generation of the family running it. It is the most important employer in the town with 600 employees mainly from New Mills but also some from outlying towns and villages. Over 30% of the staff have over 15 years service. One of the production managers has worked for 46 years, another retired after 49 years service. The firms exports to 25 countries including South Korea. From 1992 to 2017 turnover increased from £25m to nearly £80m and over 500 tonnes of sweets are now produced every week, a 9% share of the total sugar confectionery market.

Nici’s talk was beautifully illustrated with photographs of her family and the enormous number of products. A copy of her 43 page presentation has been generously given to the society from which this account has been derived.

Here is a list of the products over the years.



Jolly Lollies, Celia Fruits, Carlton Mints, Cuties, Sherbits, Fizzers, Rainbow Drops, Butternut, Bettabars, Parma Violets, Love Hearts, Double Lolly, Drumsticks, New Refreshers, Chews, Sherbety Chews, Chocolate Eclairs, Caramel Whip, Peppermint, Fruity Pops, Lucky Stripes, Chocolate Brazils, Climpies, Travel Tins, Pop Com,

Metto Mints, Hippie Bits, Mr Fruits, Mr Chews, Double Dips, Lipsticks, Whistles, Fun Gums, Squashies, Marshmallows, Navy Sweets.

*Derek Brumhead*

## **Baronies, Manors and Hunting Forests Judith Wilshaw, 12th October 2018**

The cancellation of Edwina Currie's talk was disappointing and we were grateful to Judith Wilshaw, always a good friend of this Society, for stepping in at the last minute to offer this stimulating talk.

She began by relating the events leading to the Norman Conquest, with William seizing power, confiscating the lands of the Anglo-Saxon aristocracy and distributing them as baronies and manors to his Norman followers. The earldom of Chester, for example, was divided into several baronies, including the Barony of Stockport. The town that developed into the headquarters of this barony had a castle commanding the crossing of the Mersey from Cheshire into Lancashire, a corn mill, a Court Leet and a market, which received its charter in 1260. Thus, Stockport became the base for local administration, justice and economic activity down to the present time. A map of the town, dated 1680, shows all these elements well-established: the market-place with its market hall and burgess plots surrounding it, the parish church and vicarage, the court-house and site of the castle (demolished after the Civil War), together with several inns and other amenities. Judith made particular mention of the Staircase Cafe in the Market Place, now a museum, which is an important building, surviving from medieval times.

Judith turned her attention to Longdendale, described in the Domesday Book as “Waste, fit for hunting”. Out of this sparsely populated region sprang the enormous parish of Glossop. The northernmost part, the hamlets comprising the Manor of Glossop, was granted under Henry II to Basingwerk Abbey in Flint, with which it remained until the Dissolution of the Monasteries in 1538. The rest of the parish consisted of the manor and chapelry of Mellor and the forest hamlets of Bowden Middlecale, four of which, Beard, Ollersett, Thornsett and Whitle in the eighteenth century were combined to form New Mills. The southernmost portion of the ancient parish came under the control of the church of Chapel-en-le-Frith, built in 1225.

The church at Chapel-en-le Frith had been built by the Foresters, the whole of the parish of Glossop, together with the Castleton and Hope areas having been designated a royal forest, the preserve of the English kings for hunting. The boundaries of the Forest of Peak were for the most part rivers: the Wye, Derwent and Goyt.

Across the Goyt and into Cheshire was another royal hunting forest that of Macclesfield. Judith closed her talk with a brief review of some of the local manors within the boundaries of the forest: Bramhall, the manor associated with the Davenport family, who were honorary foresters there for many years; Norbury, now better known as Hazel Grove, which eventually came under the aegis of the powerful Legh family, as did Torkington.

Finally, Judith outlined the early history of her home manor, that of Marple, associated with the Vernons of Haddon, the Bradshaws and the Isherwoods.

This wide-ranging survey of medieval times with particular reference to the locality was enthusiastically received and we were left admiring both the extent of Judith's local knowledge and her ability to bring the past to life in words, maps and pictures.

So, we were not disappointed after all.

*Ron Weston*

## **The Women Who Made Manchester**

### **Anne Beswick, 9th November 2018**

Anne Beswick, a tour guide working in Manchester, presented this well-researched account of some of the prominent women who have lived and worked in the city since the late eighteenth century. It was in this period that after being a backwater for centuries Manchester rose to fame as “Cottonopolis” the commercial hub of the cotton textile industry in the North-west and became the world's first manufacturing city.

The name Elizabeth Rafford was new to most of us. Born in 1733, Elizabeth was employed as a housekeeper at Arley Hall. She married a gardener and moved to Manchester where they kept a pub. Like all the women that Anne described, Elizabeth was hardworking, intelligent and enterprising. She ran an employment agency for would-be housekeepers and published the first street map of Manchester. But her crowning achievement was the publication in 1769 of a cookery book, ‘The Experienced Housewife’, which proved a huge success.

Another cook, Anne Lee (1736-1784), was very different from Elizabeth Rafford. Of her eight pregnancies, four of her children died. She suffered mental problems and was committed to a “lunatic asylum.” A devout Quaker, Ann took her faith to an extreme and founded the sect known as the Shakers, who led a simple and frugal life. Persecution of the Shakers led to their emigration to America. Settling in New York State, they became famous as furniture makers with their simple but elegant designs, still popular today.

Undoubtedly, the novelist Elizabeth Gaskell (1810-1865) and women's suffrage leader Emmeline Pankhurst (1858 -1928) are the two most celebrated women to be associated with Manchester.

Mrs. Gaskell's first novel, ‘Mary Barton’, a love story, is, however, best remembered for its harrowing accounts of life among the working class in Manchester which she witnessed at first hand. Mrs. Pankhurst founded the Women's Social and Political Union from which the campaign for votes for women was launched. The employment of direct action was found deeply shocking by men and women throughout the country, but proved very effective in making the voices of progressive women from all classes of society heard for the first time.

Anne spoke of several other women associated with Manchester who were suffragettes, feminists and Socialists. The Gore Booth sisters, for example, as well as being suffragettes, were deeply immersed in Irish politics and the campaign for home rule. Hannah Mitchell was a working class suffragette who wrote an influential book 'The Head Way Up' and was a prominent Socialist and feminist.

Traditionally, women have found a purpose in life through the caring professions and some of the women who made Manchester came into that category. Elizabeth Wolstenholme is a notable example, conducting a national campaign for the repeal of the cruel and unjust Contagious Diseases Act, which she achieved in 1886, which had made women criminally responsible for the spread of sexually-transmitted diseases. Marie Stopes was an academic who lectured at Manchester University in Palaeobotany, one of the first female lecturers to be thus employed there. Her fame came through her book 'Married Love', which was a frank account of what would be referred to in a later decade as "the joy of sex". Inevitably, this breath of fresh air was condemned in some quarters. Marie Stopes' lasting achievement was the founding of the first birth control clinic in 1918.

Manchester women have been prominent figures in Education. Ellen Wilkinson, educated at Manchester University and from a modest background, became the first female Minister of Education. Dame Professor Nancy Rothwell, a distinguished scientist, became in 2010 Vice-Chancellor of Manchester University.

A wide range of female contributions to national culture and entertainment are associated with Manchester, from our Poet Laureate, Carol Ann Duffy to the female actors of 'Coronation Street'.

As Anne Beswick affirmed in her answers to our questions, there are many more Manchester women to be considered, enough, in fact, to fill a second talk - and why not?

*Ron Weston*

## **THE TOWERS ESTATE**

### **and its place in the making of Manchester**

**Diana Leitch, 14th December 2018**

If they were wise, the Victorian industrialists who had made their wealth in Manchester built their country mansions to the south of the city in pleasant villages such as Northenden and Didsbury, where the prevailing south-westerly winds ensured a constant supply of fresh air rather than the filthy smoke that the Manchester mills and factories, their mills and factories, created. The Towers, with its 52 rooms and 365 windows, was built in Didsbury on a fourteen-and-a-half acre site between 1868 and 1872. Designed by a local architect, Thomas Worthington, in the fashionable French Chateau style, it was described by Pevsner, the architectural critic, as ‘the grandest of all Manchester Victorian mansions’ and, less kindly, ‘grossly picturesque in red brick and red terracotta’.

Diana Leitch, distinguished librarian, has in her retirement researched this mansion and tapped a rich vein of Manchester's history in the process.

Evidently, the first owners did not much love the Towers. The house was built by John Edward Taylor junior, son of J.E. Taylor senior, founder and first editor of the Manchester Guardian. As Edward Taylor Junior ran the London office of the newspaper, it is debatable whether he ever lived at the Towers at all. It is reputed that his wife Martha, took one look at the Towers and declared she would never live there!

The next owner was the engineer and industrialist Daniel Adamson, inventor and manufacturer of the ‘Manchester Boiler’ at the Newton Iron works in Dukinfield, a product that he exported worldwide. Adamson became Chairman of the Manchester Ship Canal Committee which organised the campaign to build the Canal against the formidable opposition of vested interests. The successful passing of the Act of Parliament in 1885 made a hero out of Adamson, who was welcomed home from London by a cheering crowd and a brass band.

The successful building of the Ship Canal came at a tremendous human cost. There were many injuries to the largely Irish workforce involved in accidents. Field hospitals saved many lives and gave rise to the birth of orthopaedic surgery in Manchester and Liverpool. Three surgeons who distinguished themselves in this field locally were

Sir Robert Jones, Sir Harry Platt and Sir John Charnley. Many casualties of the First World War also benefitted from their treatment. Like many other large mansions, the Towers was used during the 1914-18 war to house wounded soldiers.

In 1920 the house and grounds were bought by the the British Cotton Industry Research Association and thus began a completely new phase in the history of the Towers. The purpose of the Association was to conduct and promote research that would bring our antiquated textile industries into the twentieth century. Foreign competition was becoming increasingly severe. The moving force was William Greenwood, MP for Stockport, who had given a large sum to finance the enterprise. He asked if the Towers could be renamed after his daughter, Shirley. Henceforth it became known as 'The Shirley Institute'.

From 1939-45, the Institute's researchers made many important contributions to the war effort, inventing several specialist fabrics, including the very serviceable 'Utility' products which became available in the post-war period.

Sadly, the progressive decline of Britain's textile industries was also reflected in the declining fortunes of the Shirley Institute. In 1988, the entire site was sold to a property group for development as a high-technology business park. A feature of this development was the construction of several glass towers, the homes of various businesses. Over 2,000 people work on this site. Despite these profound changes, the name Towers Estate lives on.

Her research into the history of The Towers has undoubtedly been a labour of love for Diana Leitch. Her enthusiasm for her subject was made apparent in this excellent presentation.

*Ron Weston.*

## **The Local Historian**

The following issue has been placed in New Mills Library:

Volume 48 No 4 (October 2018)

John Beckett, 'The English Parish Church: past, present and future'.

Chris Jones, 'Whistling in the dark: the local press response in Liverpool to Spanish 'Flu''.

David T Taylor, 'Factors affecting geographic differences in mortality rates during the 1918-1919 influenza epidemic in the Black Country'

Alan and Judith Mills, 'Assessing the impact, pestilence and the Scots on Swaledale and North Riding in the early fourteenth century'.

Richard Till, 'The cutlers of Thaxted 1350-1420'.

John Martin, 'Four books on agricultural history: a review'.

Various contributors, 'Review article: five editions of records'.

Recent publications in local history.

Book reviews include:

The Palgrave Dictionary of Medieval Anglo-Jewish History.

Medieval Lowestoft: the origins and growth of a Suffolk coastal community.

Victorian and Edwardian British Industrial Architecture.

The history of English Cathedrals.

Prostitution in Victorian Colchester.

Humphrey Repton in Hertfordshire.

A history of Sussex.

The Age of Machinery: engineering the Industrial Revolution 1770-1850.

The pioneering years of Huddersfield Corporation.

*Derek Brumhead.*

## **New Mills Local History Society - Meetings - Spring 2019**

Meetings are held in the main hall of New Mills Town Hall, starting at 7:45pm. You may obtain easy access from the entrance on Aldersgate.

Friday Jan. 11	Ollersett	Ron Weston
Friday Feb. 8	Places of Worship in New Mills	Mike Daniels
Friday Mar. 8	Union Road	Roger Bryant
Friday Apr. 12	Lost Buildings of New Mills	Derek Brumhead
Friday May 10	<i>A.G.M. followed by</i> The MBs in Egypt: the journeys of two indomitable ladies in Egypt	Alan Hayward

*Cover pictures*

*St. Georges Parish Church, circa 1900. (n14145)*

*Low Leighton Wesleyan Chapel, High Hill Road, circa 1994. (n05783)*

*Wesleyan Chapel, St George's Road, 1906. (n01201)*

***[www.newmillshistory.org.uk](http://www.newmillshistory.org.uk)***  
***[www.picturenewmills.org.uk](http://www.picturenewmills.org.uk)***