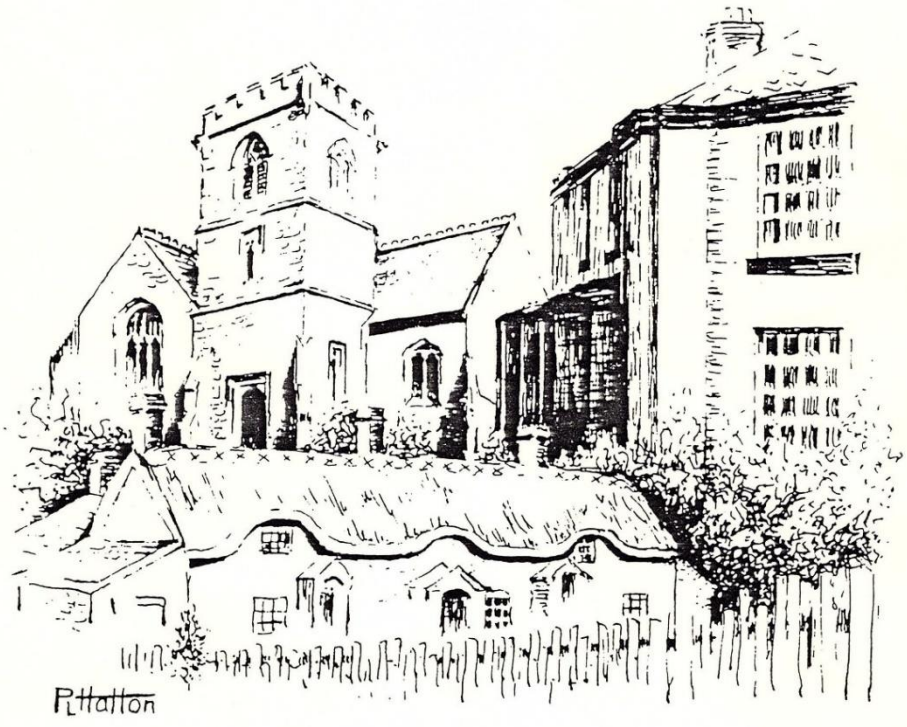
WHARTON

(MAINLY MEMORIES OF A MID-CHESHIRE PARISH)

by

J. N. HICKSON



FORWARD

When I began these notes, I intended to confine myself to my own recollections of Wharton as it was before World War I. But I soon found that I was not able to hold rigidly to the narrow course I had planned.

Things which happened both before I was born and after the outbreak of the 1914-18 war persisted in luring me in their direction, so that I am hoping that what has at last emerged, a mingling of personal recollection and local history research, is something resembling a word-picture of an appreciable part of the Wharton story. Moreover, it is, I venture to hope, a flesh-and- blood account dealing with Wharton people themselves rather than with events, dates, statistics and the like with which conventional history concerns itself.

I have to thank Mr. W. H. Hoole of Thornley Villa, Crook Lane, for his unflagging help and guidance. Mr. Hoole has lived in the parish all his life, and he is himself no mean authority on Wharton's past. The short introduction to this booklet is from his pen. His mother, whose maiden name was Martha Sandbach, was head mistress of Wharton Infants School, where she taught for some thirty years. Many Wharton children came under her care in their most formative years, so that her influence on the life of the parish during her teaching career between 1890 and 1930 cannot be measured.

I am also indebted to Mr. John Griffiths for disentangling me from the genealogical complexities in which I became enmeshed. Mr. Griffiths, who is chairman of the Winsford Local History Society, has a talent for genealogy, and I doubt not that his knowledge of Winsford family history is unrivalled.

This is a second edition, revised and considerably expanded, of the booklet on Wharton published in 1982. The first edition was well received and quickly sold out, anda second issue, filling in gaps and omissions, seemed called for. Throughout, I have tried to concentrate mainly on my own impressions and recollections with emphasis on people within the circumstances of the times in which they lived. In any attempt to recall the past, the value of personal knowledge or experience can hardly be overstated. In this respect, at any rate, old age can be an advantage. Once the scenes of a parish - its people, personalities, buildings, and modes of life – have passed from living memory, the difficulties of recapturing that past in any living, breathing sense are well-nigh insuperable. Facts about the past patiently dug from records and other sources are eminently valuable.

But the great unyielding characteristic of things which have irrevocably passed beyond all living memory is Silence, and only the great historians can persuade them to speak.

An important feature of Winsford which has been almost forgotten was Sabine Baring-Gould's novel "*The Queen of Love*" about Winsford, its people and its salt industry. An account of the book is included as an Appendix. At the time of its publication in 1894, Baring-Gould's novel roused considerable local interest and it

is hoped that what I have written in the Appendix will go some way to reviving some of that interest.

In the preparation of the manuscript, I received invaluable help from my nephew and niece, Frank and Muriel Hickson, and to them I am very grateful.

J.N.Hickson 1984

INTRODUCTION

Why write about Wharton? Even some discerning locals would say that there is no history in Wharton. Such an assumption is almost always a trap for the unwary. Certainly there was never a house big enough to entertain Queen Elizabeth I and for that matter there is not a house big enough to entertain Elizabeth II. Just to emphasize this point.

Mrs. Thatcher, the Prime Minister, did not stay at a hotel in Nantwich during her visit to Cheshire in 1980, as reported by the press, but at Rookery Hall, which is described as an English Chateau with a luxury restaurant. Rookery Hall is situated at Worleston, near to Nantwich. Neither did Queen Victoria ever visit the parish, but Wharton benefited from the gift of a Recreation Ground during her Jubilee in 1887.

The most distinguished citizen was probably Lord Bradbury, a civil servant, who, as Joint Permanent Secretary of the Treasury 1913-19, signed Treasury Notes issued during the Great War at the time that gold sovereigns were being withdrawn from the currency. These notes were soon nicknamed "Bradburys". Neither has Wharton any national heroes, nor illustrious men and, although King Edward VII dallied with the belles in nearby Whitegate and Hartford, he never spent any time in our parish. We have no painter the equal of Constable, but the Swanwicks of Clive House were artists of some merit who painted the local scenery, the father in oils and the son in water colours. Nevertheless, as it unfolds the narrative reveals a wide range of worthy people who contributed to the communal values. For that matter and for the unworthy people does not come amiss, for as time mellows names, they at least provide interest and sometimes amusement. And it must be borne in mind that the famous aphorism of Sir Thomas Browne applies to people both past and present: "The greater part must be content to be as though they had not been, to be found in the Register of God, not in the record of man."

W. H. Hoole.

EXTRACT FROM DOMESDAY BOOK.

Historically, the area known as Wharton Green probably contains the site of the Wharton holding mentioned in the Domesday Book of 1086.

The description of the holding in the Phillimore edition of Domesday published in 1978, reads:

Richard of Vernon holds

WHARTON. Arngrin and Alfsi held it as 2 monors;
They were free men. ½ hide paying tax. Land for
1 plough. It is there in lordship; 2 slaves,
2 smallholders.
Value before 1066, 4s; now 6s; found waste.

Cartography by Miss A Wyatt

The cover design by Miss PL Hatton is a composite picture including Wharton Church, Wharton Cottage and Hunt's House. The latter was a row of cottages at the junction of School Road and Crook Lane, certainly there before 1841 and later destroyed by fire, circa 1900.

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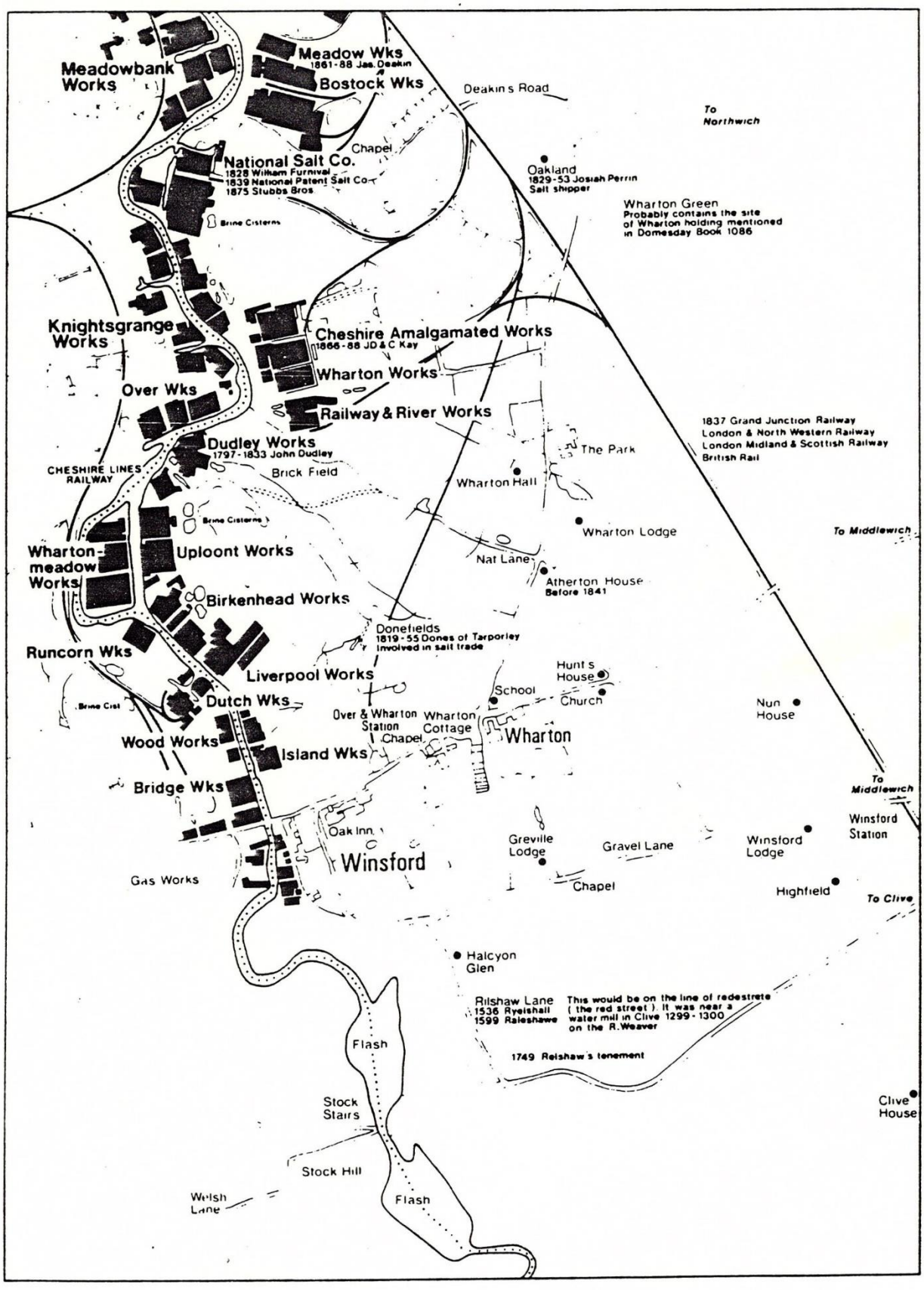
1. WHARTON.

(MAINLY MEMORIES OF A MID-CHESHIRE PARISH)

I am 80 years of age. As an Edwardian born in 1904, I am one of a diminishing number who have had personal experience of life as it was lived before the First World War, albeit as a young child. How different things were then!

There were no buses, very few motor cars or motor cycles, and those primitive and unreliable. There was only a very restricted telephone service. Homes were without radio, television, electric light, electric fires, electric carpet sweepers, electric washing machines, and countless other gadgets, facilities and services which people have come to regard as the necessaries of life. There was no state pension at 65; the golden handshake was unheard of, and the Welfare State not even imagined. There were no paid holidays for workers, their only holidays were the statutory bank holidays which -were taken without pay. Many people relied on the paraffin lamp and candles for indoor lighting. Not a few of the lamps were ornamental pieces, worthy of being family heirlooms. Today, some of them can be seen on the stalls at antiques fairs. The aspidistra and the ostrich feather, later to become the butt of music hall comedians and the like, were then much in evidence - the aspidistra decorating the front bay window of many a Victorian-built house, and the ostrich feather fashionably adorning the hat of many a lady.

In old age it makes a diverting pastime occasionally to muse on one's recollections of life as one knew it before 1914, while being uneasily aware of how untrustworthy memory can be and the tricks of deception it can play.


Meadowbank Works
Meadow Wks
1861-88 Jas. Deakin
Bostock Wks
Deakin's Road
To Northwich
Chapel
National Salt Co.
1828 William Furnival
1839 National Patent Salt Co
1875 Stubbs Bros
Brine Cisterns
Oakland
1829-53 Josiah Perrin
Salt shipper
Wharton Green
Probably contains the site of Wharton holding mentioned in Domesday Book 1086
Knightsgrange Works
Cheshire Amalgamated Works
1866-88 JD & C Kay
Wharton Works
Over Wks
Railway & River Works
1837 Grand Junction Railway
London & North Western Railway
London Midland & Scottish Railway
British Rail
Dudley Works
1797-1833 John Dudley
The Park
CHESHIRE LINES RAILWAY
Brick Field
Wharton Hall
Brine Cisterns
Wharton Lodge
To Middlewich
Wharton-meadow Works
Uploont Works
Nat Lane
Atherton House
Before 1841
Birkenhead Works
Donefields
1819-55 Dones of Tarporley
Involved in salt trade
Runcorn Wks
Liverpool Works
Hunt's House
School
Church
Brine Cist
Dutch Wks
Over & Wharton Station
Wharton Cottage
Chapel
Wharton
Nun House
Wood Works
Island Wks
Bridge Wks
To Middlewich
Oak Inn
Winsford Station
Greville Lodge
Gravel Lane
Winsford Lodge
Winsford
Gas Works
Chapel
Highfield
To Clive
Halcyon Glen
Rilshaw Lane
1536 Ryelshall
1599 Raleshawe
This would be on the line of redestrete (the red street). It was near a water mill in Clive 1299-1300 on the R.Weaver
Flash
1749 Relshaw's tenement
Stock Stairs
Clive House
Stock Hill
Welsh Lane
Flash

2. EARNING A LIVING

For most of the ten years of my childhood preceding World War I, I lived in Wharton Road in the section often in those days called Wharton Green. There were then houses (Victorian) on only one side of the road, the north side being bounded by open fields.

Often in the early evening I would be playing with other young children on the road outside home, public highways then being much less dangerous places for children to play. Presently, say between 6.30 and 7.0 p.m., a cyclist would appear from the direction of Northwich, riding hard, and ringing his bell sharply, thus ordering the children to get out of his way. He was in a hurry to get home where he must have had urgent business, and he was the forerunner of a long string of cyclists following behind.

A couple of minutes later two more cyclists riding side by side would pass; then a trio; not far behind would be another single and next perhaps a foursome with two cyclists riding abreast in front with the other pair close behind, the four probably exchanging snatches of conversation as they rode together.

The usual evening procession of cyclists along Wharton Road was now in full swing. The cyclists were workmen returning from Northwich to their homes in various parts of Winsford. They were what in modern jargon would be called commuters. Most of them would be employed by the Brunner, Mond chemical works which the workmen themselves almost invariably called the ''Kimmick'' or ''Chimic'' (no doubt some kind of corruption of chemical).

It is worth trying to recall what the harsh reality of earning a living was to the men who cycled daily to work between Winsford and Northwich.
Until 1895 the working week for Brunner, Mond Company's daymen was 55½ hours.
These commuters would regularly arrive home at approximately 6.30 p.m., have a wash, and eat their evening meal. After that, in what may have seemed no time at all, they were on their way to bed at say, 9.30 p.m. Early to bed was a physical necessity, for they would have to bestir themselves about 4.30 a.m. the following morning to begin the journey to Northwich at 5.00.
In those days the time required to cycle to the Northwich works was generally reckoned to be an hour and the normal working day began at 6.0 a.m. and ended at 5.30 p.m., with half an hour allowed for breakfast and

an hour for lunch. On Saturday the men worked from six in the morning to 12 noon, half an hour being allowed for breakfast.
In 1895 the working week for Brunner, Mond's daymen was reduced from 55½ hours to 48, but this reduction in working hours did not apply to men working for other firms in the area.

Cycling to Northwich was not in itself regarded as any sort of hardship, but many men continued on the treadmill (all work and sleep) for decades.
The double journey was made in all sorts of weather conditions - snow, ice, frost, fog, bitter cold, rain, wind and storm. A chap recently told me that his father, a fitter at Winnington works, would leave home in Gladstone Street shortly after 3.0 a.m., to walk to Northwich, when snow had made the roads unfit for cycling. How many others did the same thing, I don't know.
The roads themselves left much to be desired. They had not yet been macadamized and were freely strewn with loose stones, any of which might cause a puncture or other damage to a bicycle. I recall on occasions seeing a man, long after the other workers had passed by, walking alone and pushing his cycle. A puncture, a broken chain or other mishap had forced him to walk perhaps from Leftwich or Davenham.

The law required that cyclists, during the hours of darkness, should display a headlight (I don't think a rear light was then compulsory). Many relied on the old oil lamp. Only those who have suffered the experience on a windy night of rekindling an oil lamp whose flame the wind blew out every few hundred yards can realise the aggravation it can rouse. To avoid the shortcomings of the oil lamp, some resorted to the acetylene (carbide) lamp, but that also brought its own peculiar troubles. The journey home after a day's hard work, often against a head wind, was no joke. Much of the work done by those men must have been of the heavy manual kind, for industrial output still relied to a considerable extent on the muscle of man and horse.

Yes it was a hard life but what courses were open to those men? How to get off the treadmill? Well a chap could work to the age of 70, when he could qualify for a state pension of five shillings per week; he could break down completely in health, or he could, as many did, die in harness.

Of course, not all Winsford men worked in Northwich. The majority were employed by the Salt Union at their Winsford works. I often saw some of them returning from work about six o'clock, walking or cycling, each with his can and basket. They w ld be day workers, mainly craftsmen and labourers, working the Salt Union's normal daily hours of 6.0 a.m. to 5.30 p.m.
In the absence of works canteens, the can and basket were an essentialpart of the worker's equipment - the can for brewing his tea and the basket

At the works he drank his tea and ate his food in what were called cook huts, several of which were provided at each works.

I have seen one or two of those old salt works cook huts, and huts they certainly were - small, dark, gloomy places with seats round the walls against which the sitters could lean their backs. In the centre was a large iron stove with a flat top on which food in tins, dishes, or basins, could be heated or cooked. A tall funnel-like chimney soared through the roof and bore away the smoke from the coal fire which heated the stove. A youth called the cook-boy would have charge of the hut and be responsible for any apology for cooking required. There were no tables or furniture of any kind.

The time clock used for marking specially designed cards with the time worked by each employee (the "clocking on and off" method) had not yet been introduced by the Salt Union. Instead, each dayworker had a brass check with his works identity number engraved on it. This he collected from the time office when he started work in the morning and returned when he left work in the evening. If a man was late in arriving at the time office in the morning, he would find the shutter closed against him, and he would not be allowed to collect his check until 9.0 a.m. In the language of the time he had "lost a quarter", an expression then in common usage. Wages were calculated at the rate per day, not per hour. The hourly rate of reckoning wages did not come into force till 1918-19, when the standard working week for the Salt Union's employees was fixed at 47 hours, divided into eight and a half hours daily from Monday to Friday and four and a half hours for Saturday morning.

If life for the workman was unremitting labour, then the lot of the housewife was no less toilsome. Families were mostly large. Cleaning, cooking, shopping and caring in multitudinous other ways for a large family (often including babies and toddlers) ensured a life of care and toil.
Miracles of the culinary arts were contrived with the old fire-heated oven and kitchen range. The usual means of boiling water for household purposes was the kitchen fire.

The Monday wash was a weekly ordeal. The wash boiler with its coal or coke fire which refused to start, the mangle with its large rollers and big manually operated wheel, the dolly peg, the flat iron and that symbol of back-aching toil the wash tub - all these contraptions appear in retrospect like instruments of torture of a bygone age. Then there was the business of starching - collars, cuffs and what else I don't know. Those stiff collars! One recoils from the thought that they may one day return. There were no school meals in those days, and one now wonders how mothers in the midst of all that washing were able to find time to prepare the children's midday meal.

It might tax the powers of a present-day government-appointed committee to find out.

Some housewives baked their own bread. In accordance with a practice of the time, some women, having prepared the dough, would put it into tin moulds. These would then be taken by their children to Hough's bakehouse in Grayson Street. There the tins would be put into the bakehouse ovens and the bread- baking process completed. The sight of children carrying those bread tins to and from the bakehouse was commonplace on certain days of the week.

A recurring feature of those days was the German band. Those bands were small itinerant bodies of brass bandsmen. They were Germans touring the country on foot, playing in the streets of towns and villages and depending on the precarious generosity of passers-by.

I have a vague impression of seeing and hearing several of those bands, but I can clearly remember only one occasion. It was midday and the musicians (twelve to sixteen of them, I should say) had formed a ring in the road about the middle of the row of houses in Wharton Green. The volume of traffic in those days was such that they were able to occupy half the width of the road without causing any noticeable obstruction.

They played for twenty minutes or so without attracting much attention other than that of children. Their instruments were brass coloured. I cannot now comment on the quality of their playing, but I remember well the appearance of that group of strange-looking men. They were ill clad and almost certainly ill fed. The expression on their pale faces was sad and unsmiling. They seemed a long way from home and friends. I wondered then where they slept, where and what they ate. I wondered then and I wonder now.

Presently, their performance ended, some of them strapped their instruments to their backs. Then together they trudged off in the direction of Northwich - quietly and without speaking. Their effort in Wharton Green had not, I think, earned them a copper.

3. FIVE WHARTON HOUSES OF CONSEQUENCE.

Not far from my home on the left hand side on the way to Bostock was Wharton Hall, a large, stately Georgian white house with a broad, pebbled drive leading to the front door. On each side of the drive was a lawn, smooth, green and immaculately kept, with flower beds carefully spaced.
This was the home of Mrs. Marian Perrin Knight Newall, a wealthy widow. Honoured and esteemed in the neighbourhood, she lived in a style which few could afford, or contrive, today. She had six full-time and two part-time maidservants, four manservants (including a chauffeur and a gardener) and a youth in his teens. Her companion was Miss Bell.

If today that seems an inordinate number of servants for a rich person to have, there appeared nothing exceptional about it to the people of that time. For in Winsford and comparable towns, the number of people relying on domestic service for their livelihood was no small part of the population.

Two of the men who worked for Mrs. Newall I remember well. They were two rather elderly men named Hill and Noden. I suppose they had spent all their working lives in the service of gentry, some of whose manners, bearing and decorum had been necessarily acquired by them. Of course, this was noticeably true of most people who had been engaged in domestic service for much of their lives. Mr. Noden and Mr. Hill were two amiable men, polite of speech, faultless in manners and unlikely to put a foot wrong. They were respected in the community, and such was the impression they made on people that no one would ever refer to them without the title Mister. Both had been in the service of Mrs. Newall's father, one, I believe, as butler and the other as coachman.

Mrs. Newall's son Jack, whom I saw occasionally, served in World War I, and as a young officer, little more than a youth, was killed in action. His death was a blow from which Mrs. Newall never fully recovered.

As a child I often saw Mrs. Newall taking her daily walks, accompanied by four or five brown or brown-and-white spaniels. In the mornings she would walk along Wharton Road, turning back before reaching the Wesleyan chapel.

In the afternoons she walked in the direction of the railway bridge. No doubt she sometimes reversed the order. She attended and supported Wharton church, as she also supported many good causes in the Wharton parish.

The Armstrong Hall, which stands opposite the site of the now demolished Wharton Wesleyan chapel, was provided in the 1920s by the Salt Union on land given by

Mrs. Newall with the proviso that the hall should be named after her father, J. K. Armstrong. Originally, it was used for social gatherings such as concerts, parties, whist drives, meetings, scout practices and the like. In such ways it served the community well for years. It has since been converted into a clothing factory.

Mrs. Newall's grandfather was a gentleman named Josiah Perrin, who lived in a large house called "Oakland", once one of Wharton's proud landmarks.
Prior to its recent demolition, it stood in its own grounds about 150 yards from the Bostock roadway. If immediately after crossing the Wharton railway bridge on the way to Bostock, you had looked to the left, you could have seen it standing there with its stables and other outbuildings, all sadly dilapidated and bearing little resemblance to the fine mansion, with well- kept grounds, it had once been. Josiah Perrin married Mary Ann Dudley, daughter of John Dudley, a gentleman of considerable importance in Wharton, to whom reference will be made later.

Reference to Wharton railway bridge reminds me that in my early days there were two Wharton bridges, very close together like twin humps. One spanned the main line and the other nearby railway sidings which served a goods yard. The latter bridge on the west side, with its adjacent goods yard, was demolished sometime before 1914.

In later life Mrs. Newall moved to Audlem, with which she had long standing family connections. Memorials to some of those family connections may be seen in the church at Audlem. Her father's family, the Armstrongs, were land owners in the area. Mrs. Newall died in Audlem in 1961 at the age of 102.

Wharton Hall with its adjoining estate stretching to the Weaver was probably occupied for some time in the first half of the 18th century by Israel Atherton, gentleman of Wharton. His was one of the names on the list of people who agreed to contribute jointly the sum of £9,000 towards the cost of making the River Weaver navigable to Winsford bridge in accordance with the act of 1721. Among the other contributors were leading members of such old Cheshire families as Booth, Leigh, Egerton, Vernon, Warburton and Mainwaring.
Atherton died in 1745, and Wharton Hall with its estate was then purchased by the Sumner family, who, in the latter half of the 17th century, lived at Knights Grange. After song three generations of ownership by the Sumners, Wharton Hall and its estate passed to John Dudley, son of John Dudley, founder of the Wharton Lodge family, thence to J. K. Armstrong, father of Mrs. M.P.K. Newall.
Directly opposite Wharton Hall on the other side of the road stood another large house, called Wharton Lodge. This was then the home of the Dudleys, and at the

time of which I write the mistress of the house was Miss Aspinal-Dudley (Louisa Any Lale Aspinal-Dudley to give her her full name). She was born in l864.

Although for sore years of my young life I lived at a distance no farther than 400 yards from it, I have no clear impression of what the building really looked like. One reason for the haziness of my recollection is doubtless that the house and its grounds were shielded by a brick wall, over which only a tall person was able to see. It was, however, a large mansion, and I have a faint recollection that it was white or cream in colour and somehow circular or semi-circular in shape.
There were four or five servants employed in the house and I remember that the gardener was Frank Gallimore and the name of the groom was Bunce.
The Bunces, a rather large family, lived in the house which stood in the grounds near the entrance to the drive. The house is still standing/and until his death a short while ago, was occupied by Mr. Granville Hulse, a well-known local tradesman.
Miss Aspinal-Dudley was a fine horsewoman, and she regularly rode to hounds. In the hunting field she was without fear, ready to attempt hedge or fence regardless of risk. There was stabling accommodation at the Lodge for about twenty horses with living quarters for grooms. But shortly before the outbreak of World War I the number of horses was reduced to one, a handsome, large, brown hunter called Paddy. The fox hounds were often to be seen in Wharton. I remember going to Bostock Hall on a number of occasions when a meet had been arranged there.

Miss Aspinal-Dirdley was reputed to have been the first lady in Wharton to ride astride a horse. This departure from the conventional side-saddle was frowned upon by other ladies of her class in the district as a breach of decorum. It was rather like letting the side down. The incident was assured by local people to have been the original cause of a lasting estrangement between Miss Aspinal-Dudley and Mrs. Newall who were near neighbours and distant relatives.

Whether this assumption was true or not, one couldn’t be sure. The two ladies who knew the truth were not the type to divulge their private affairs. In a close-knit community, where nearly everybody knew everybody else, a smattering of cant and gossip was natural, human nature being what it is. In such a community truths, half-truths, "fairy" tales and rumours jostled one another in people's minds and it was often difficult to ascertain the category to which a widely believed story belonged. Such was the stuff of life in a small community like Wharton.

The Aspinal-Dudley fortunes fell into serious decline.3hortly before the First World War financial stringencies compelled Miss Aspinal-Dudley to vacate Wharton Lodge and make her home in Townfields Road. There she lived for some years, busying

herself with church and ambulance work and various charitable causes. As became a lady of her upbringing and station she bore her greatly reduced circumstances commendably. She died a spinster.

Miss Aspinal-Dudley's great grandfather was John Dudley, who probably built Wharton Lodge. A man of energy and enterprise in an age of laissez-faire, he saw opportunities in the highly competitive field of salt making.

Where many failed, John Dudley was one of the few who succeeded. He owned land on the Wharton side of the Weaver, where, after trying unsuccessfully almost to the point of despair, he at last found brine. He erected the first of the salt works in Wharton, which were also among the largest in Winsford at that time. He made his first shipment of salt down the Weaver in 1797,and thereafter the name of Dudley, either alone or in partnership or association with others, was to be among the most prominent in the Winsford salt trade during the first half of the 19th century.

John Dudley died in 1854 at the age of 84. His son John (1796-1840) had several daughters and in his will he made it a condition of inheritance, that if his daughters were to marry, their husbands should change their surnames to Dudley. The maiden name of Miss Aspinal-Dudley's mother was Elizabeth Mary Dudley. Her father was the Rev. William Charles Lake Aspinal who, in accordance with the conditions laid down in his father-in-law's will, changed his surname to Aspinal-Dudley.

East Dudley Street and West Dudley Street take their names from the Dudley family.

In those days it was generally believed by the people of Wharton that the Dudley family combined with other land-owning gentry in the area to thwart a projected plan to site, in Wharton, a major railway centre. As Wharton was not available, Crewe was selected as the alternative site

During World War I, Wharton Lodge was given over to Belgian refugees, who had been forced to flee by the German invaders. I often saw them walking along Wharton Road. After the war, the Belgian refugees having returned to their country, the next occupant of Wharton Lodge was a seemingly rich man named de Harden-Jones. He renovated the house, restored the lake, and entertained on a somewhat lavish scale. The house certainly came to life during his term of occupation. The last occupant of the house was J. P. Widger of Liverpool, a well-known racehorse owner. During his time there, several Grand National horses were stabled at Wharton Lodge, among them the once famous "Drifter' 'The men who tended the horses occupied the grooms' living quarters. Now the site of Wharton Lodge and its outbuildings, its grounds and the place once occupied by the miniature lake known locally as Dudley's pond, are covered by private houses and a part of the Crook Lane council estate.

And who, looking at the transformation, would now guess that things were ever otherwise.

Park House, or Park Farm as it was commonly called latterly, was a large, three-storey, Georgian style building which stood near to Wharton Lodge and almost opposite to the entrance to Wharton Hall. Surrounded by lawns, gardens and wide stretches of open fields with a complement of outbuildings, stables and coach houses appropriate to the life-style of early 19th century gentry, it belonged, like Wharton Lodge, to the Dudley family. For a long period it was the home of John Dudley, who was one of Wharton's leading figures and the owner of land in various parts of the area including Stanthorne.

In my early childhood at the beginning of the present century, the house was occupied by a gentleman farmer named (as I remember) Millington. He had the distinction (as it seemed to the youngsters of the neighbourhood) of having been attacked in his fields by a bull and tossed, from the effects of which he never fully recovered.

After Millington, the house was taken by John Newall, a member of a Wharton family, who worked the land and buildings as a farm. Newall, who was the brother of W. G. Newall, the cabinetmaker, died in 1915 and was succeeded at Park House by a man named Cross who lived there for many years. Park House was demolished in recent years. The present Swan hotel now stands very near to its site. In the 1860s the house was occupied by Sir Joseph Verdin, brother of Robert and William Henry, once world-famous salt proprietors, whose works were mainly on the Wharton bank of the Weaver. They were the sons of Joe Verdin who had salt interests in Northwich. It was Sir Joseph who presented the Verdin Technical Institute to Winsford. He laid the foundation stone himself in 1894. Some of the people who attended the ceremony came from Northwich, travelling to Winsford on the Weaver aboard the barge Elizabeth towed by the steamer Volunteer.

One of Miss Aspinal-Dudley's relatives, her great aunt Elizabeth (1802-1882) wife of William Cockerell (1798-1870) lived for some time during the last century at Wharton Cottage, another Wharton house worthy of note. Wharton Cottage, built before 1760, was the meeting place of the Wesleyan Methodist Society from 1792 till 1804. It is still extant, and is situated between East Dudley Street and Ledward Street and near to Wharton schools. In my early years Wharton Cottage was the home of Thomas Such, a gentlemanly old man with a white beard. At that period of his life he was very hard of hearing, and I saw him once or twice using a large ear trumpet, the like of which is not seen today. He was an engineer by profession, and the manager of the Salt Union's engineering shops. After his death the house was occupied by

his nephew, Thomas Gleave, who was also an engineer in the service of the Salt Union. He later became the manager of the company's Meadow Bank works, which included the Winsford Vacuum Plant. A man highly respected at the works and in the community, he was a staunch churchman and gave devoted service to Wharton Church while he lived in Wharton, and to St. John's Church after moving to Over.

It is likely that the first resident of Wharton Cottage was Thomas Kent.

In 1760 he was appointed inspector of tonnages and collector of tolls for Winsford and Middlewich by the trustees of the River Weaver. Navigation.
He died in 1777, while still young and was succeeded as collector by his widow, Elizabeth, but for Winsford only.

For genealogical reasons, if for nothing else, Thomas Kent must rank as a Whartonian of note. Some of Kent's descendants, taken in conjunction with their connections through marriage, were to become people of significance on the local scene. The first Lord Bradbury was Kent's great-great-grandson.

William Cross, the founder of the locally important Cross's dockyard, who married Sarah Lough the granddaughter of Kent for his second wife, was the father of George Cross by his first wife, Julia. George Cross succeeded his father as head of the dockyard. William Cross and his second wife, Sarah (granddaughter of Kent) had a daughter also named Sarah who married John Bradbury described as a merchant. John Bradbury and his wife Sarah (nee Cross) were the parents of John Swanwick Bradbury who became the first Lord Bradbury of Winsford. His middle name, Swanwick, was taken from his paternal grandmother, Ann Swanwick, who was the second wife of George Bradbury. George and Ann were the parents of John Bradbury and the paternal grandparents of Lord Bradbury. Ann was presumably a member of the locally well-known Swanwick family who lived at Clive House. William Cross was the first Lord Bradbury's maternal grandfather, and George Cross was his mother's half-brother.

4. BATHS FIRE, READING MATTER AND POLITICS.

It was de Harden-Jones who, while living at Wharton Lodge, built the Magnet cinema in Weaver Street early in the post-war period. The floor of the cinema and the screen were said at the time to be the latest of their kind. This was the first real picture house Winsford had ever had, and considered in relation to the size of the town, it was one with which the townspeople could be pleased.

Before the building of the Magnet, Winsfordians had had their silent film fare served to them at the old town hall under the management of W.R. Tolfree, a retired headmaster of the High Street council schools.

I remember how a young friend and I, having managed to scrape together enough for two of the cheapest seats (which were then hard wooden chairs nearest the screen) visited the town hall one Monday evening unknown to our parents. Half-way through the "big" picture, an engrossing drama featuring William Farnum as the strong, forceful hero, my friend and I suddenly became aware that the whole building had erupted in tumult. On came the lights. It was a full house, and it appeared that everybody was pushing, thrusting and crowding towards the exits.

Had that long dreaded calamity, so often predicted by so many Winsford folk, at last come to pass? Could it be that the town hall which stood on the Station Road side of Winsford bridge on the river embankment, where, supported by wooden columns, one side of it came near to overhanging the water - could it be that the building was collapsing into the river? Or was the town hall on fire?

Fortunately for the town hall's patrons it was neither of these. All the panic was unnecessary. The trouble was not at the town hall but at the nearby baths hall which was ablaze. Someone had shouted the news of the baths' fire at one of the town hall's doors, and that had started the commotion. The baths hall was next to the dockyard (now the Marina).

At that time the fire station was immediately across the road from the baths hall. By a remarkable coincidence the firemen were having one of their routine practices at the station just at the time the baths fire was detected. They were on the spot.

The fire started at the back of the building, which was on the river embankment and was spreading to the front which overlooked Station Road.

After a quick inspection, the firemen held a hasty discussion to decide on the best way of tackling the flames. There were differences of opinion. Some judged that it would be better to fight the fire from the rear (behind the flames) others that the most effective way would be to attack it head on from the front.

The order was given to concentrate the main effort on the rear. Was that an error of judgment? Whether some parts of the building could have been saved, if the alternative course of action had been taken, must remain an open question. What is known for certain is that the building was totally destroyed and has never been rebuilt. The fire occurred in 1917.

There were, I think, no full-time firemen in those days. When the fire bell sounded the alarm, the part-time firemen, wherever they might be, made their way to the fire station as quickly as possible. The fire engine required two sturdy horses to pull it. These were provided by farmers or other local horse owners who vied with each other in being the first to get their animals to the station. The owners of the first two horses to arrive were paid for the service.

I have a clear recollection of seeing Graham White, a very early pioneer of aero-flight, piloting his tiny aeroplane over Wharton. It was a frail-looking biplane. It seemed high in the sky, though the head and shoulders of the pilot were clearly discernible above the open cockpit.
Its progress was slow. The loud continuous clatter of the engine was out of all proportion to the size of the plane, and one had the uncomfortable feeling that the noise would stop at any second, and the machine come hurtling down. It seemed to be passing over School Road, where a crowd had assembled to see an aeroplane (and in flight, too) for the first time in their lives. Some older people said that the pilot was looking for the railway track to guide him to Liverpool. Perhaps they were right. I believe that in the inter-war period Graham White represented one of the Liverpool constituencies as a Liberal M.P.
At the national level, I remember the sinking of the Titanic; Captain Scott's dash to the South Pole; the Sidney Street siege; the arrest of the notorious Dr. Crippen at sea, and the famous Jim Jeffries versus Jack Johnson fight, when all the sporting fraternity were hoping against hope that the white giant Jeffries, a former world heavy-weight champion called out of retirement, would overcome the unbeatable negro. How that mocking, taunting black man was hated! I also remember the furore created by the sensational activities of the suffragettes led by Emmeline Pankhurst. So far as I could see from my very restricted viewpoint, hardly a man and very few women (strange as it may seem now) were sympathetic towards the suffragette movement.

I remember the stir which these and other sensational events caused among older people. News of such events was eagerly awaited and ardently discussed. The people of those days were very news-hungry.

Without radio and television, people were dependent on morning and evening newspapers for information of happenings in the world. They read their newspapers assiduously. The evening newspapers were the Liverpool Echo and the Liverpool

Express. These arrived daily at 6.30 p.m. at Over and Wharton station, where they were seized by energetic "paper lads" and quickly distributed throughout the town.

At that time most people were avid readers, though there were still a number of older people who could neither read nor write. "Trashy" literature provided a form of light entertainment in which nearly everyone indulged at some time (albeit in secret). For boys there were the weekly issues of Gem and Magnet with their schoolboy stories (I think those two famous papers were in publication before World War I), and small penny (or were they tuppence?) booklets recounting the stirring adventures of Buffalo Bill and other Wild West heroes. And, of course, there was that weekly paper with its pink jacket, The Union Jack, which recorded the exploits of the famous detective Sexton Blake with his assistant, Tinker and bloodhound, Pedro. There were similarly cheap publications filled with romantic stories intended to appeal to girls and womenfolk generally. For the more sedate (and especially on Sundays) light reading was provided by such authors as Charles Garvice, Joseph Hocking, Silas Hocking, Florence Barclay, Annie S. Swann, Mrs. Henry Wood and others. Nor should those two popular weeklies be forgotten, Tit-Bits and Answers, the one with its green and the other with its pinkish, jacket. Then there was the Sunday Companion with its large, faithful readership.

There were many who took their reading seriously. In fact, many serious-minded Victorians disdained the reading of trash. After all, good books were the gateway to knowledge and self-improvement, and there was no shortage of diligent seekers after those desirable ends.

The local weekly papers, The Chronicle and The Guardian, were then read thoroughly. They were an integral part of community life. Then they had something of the flavour of a local magazine, were rather leisurely, and not over-concerned with topicality. Whenever there was a public grievance, or some locally felt injustice, you were pretty sure to hear the expression "Somebody ought to write to the Chronicle or The Guardian about it". And some local scribe was likely to do just that.

The correspondence columns of the local papers fairly throbbed with interest. Grievances were aired, views on all manner of subjects expressed, and the controversies, sometimes prolonged over weeks (until the editor declared "*This correspondence is now closed*"), bristled with lively argument. If you were to read some of those controversies today, you might be surprised by the force of the arguments and the choice of language used to express them. Some local scribes, notably William Blagg, acquired local reputations by their letters to the editors.

General elections were exciting occasions. Halls and schools in which the candidates held their meetings would be filled to overflowing. Feelings would mount, and

someone was almost sure to be thrown out. People in those days were very politically-minded.
For about twenty years until 1909, the Northwich constituency which at that time included Winsford, was mostly represented by Sir John Tomlinson Brunner, a Liberal. After 1909 till 1918, the division was represented by his eldest son, John Fowler Brunner. Local folk often spoke of the father as "*old Sir John*" to distinguish him from his son John, who, after he had succeeded to the title, was often referred to as "*young Sir Jack*".

Though I may have done so, I cannot actually recall seeing old Sir John, but I well remember the esteem in which he was held by older people around me. He was a prominent industrialist, cast in the mould of the great entrepreneurs who did so much to make this country the great industrial power it became.
He was a public benefactor and, together with Ludwig Mond, a pioneer in modern industrial welfare. He was almost a patriarchal figure. Even so, like all people of outstanding qualities, he had his detractors.

In the days when Brunner and Mond started their works, capital invested in new business was often at risk. It was a common experience for a newly formed business to be short of liquid resources to meet current liabilities. Brunner and Mond found themselves in this position. Indeed, at one time they were so desperately short of ready cash as to be pushed to the extremity of appealing to some of their workers to forgo their wages for a short period.

Brunner accompanied his appeal with a firm promise that those who stood by the firm, and made the sacrifice, would be guaranteed a job as long as they lived, provided the firm succeeded.
I often heard this story in my younger days, the truth of which was taken for granted by older people. As a sequel to it, I remember, on reaching manhood, hearing a much older man say that years ago on a visit to Brunner, Mond's works he noticed several old men walking about the plant (some of them "stumbling", as he put it). He inquired discreetly what the old men were supposed to be doing [1]and was told simply that they were to be allowed to come and go without interference. Brunner and Mond had kept their promise.

A General Election could be hectic. Children sported the party colours - red, white and blue for the Conservative Party and yellow, blue and green for the Liberal Party. I think Wharton was mainly Liberal, because I remember an uncle of mine, who must have been a sub-agent for Brunner in the Wharton ward, telling the story that on one occasion the counting of the votes was indicating a close finish. All would depend on the last few ballot boxes. "*From which ward are those boxes?"* asked Sir John.

‘‘*Wharton*’’, came the reply. "*Then I'm in,"* said Sir John.

I remember early one Friday afternoon being in Wharton Road where a group of people had gathered. The result of an election for the constituency was due to be announced in Northwich. It is evidence of the slowness with which news was communicated at that time that the people waiting in Wharton Road were asking cyclists coming from the direction of Northwich whether they had news of the result. At the same time they were listening to hear the Winnington works buzzer which would be sounded to celebrate Brunner's victory if he had been elected or re-elected. The Winnington works buzzer could on some days be faintly heard in Wharton.

This reminds me of the service which the local works buzzers rendered to the community. With no B.B.C. time signals people often adjusted their clocks and watches by the works buzzers which were accepted as reliable.

I remember the Wharton Conservative club being erected a short distance from the back of the house where I lived. Shortly after its opening some local wag called it "The Tin Mission", presumably because of its corrugated metal roof. The name stuck and continues, I believe, to this day. I also remember having a view of the opening of the club's bowling green. The ceremony was conducted by the prospective Conservative candidate for the Northwich division, Jersey de Knoop, very popular throughout the constituency and a strong candidate. He was the master of Calveley Hall.

After the fashion of the time, he wore a Norfolk jacket, knickerbockers, long stockings and, I think, boots. He played a game of 21 up on the green with a well-known local bowler named Alf (Armour) Hamlett.

Local council elections were also taken very seriously in those days. This was made plain by the large crowd which assembled, after polling, about the council school waiting to hear the results, usually declared between 9.0 p.m. and 10.0 p.m. The contrast with the indifference of today measures the decline in interest in local politics.

5. LOCAL CLANS, MODES OF TRAVEL AND THE INFLUENCE OF CHURCH AND CHAPEL.

Looking back to the time before the First World War, I see in the mind's eye a closely-knit community predominantly under the influence of church and chapel. Everybody pretty well knew everybody else by sight, if not by acquaintance. Strangers were soon spotted. As might be expected in a relatively static community large family groups were not uncommon.

Brothers, sisters, parents, grandparents, uncles, aunts, cousins, half cousins, distant relations and in-laws all lived near to one another, and in the days when large families were the rule, the member within a local "clan" could be considerable. Comman names were Atherton, Bratt, Curzon, Hatton, Hough, Hulse, Noden as well as others. No doubt, the members of such a family group might enjoy a sense of security and a feeling of protection against loneliness.

But not necessarily, since long lasting family rows and feuds, it has to be admitted, have been all too common. In such a community you could never be sure who was related to whom. In speaking to one person about another, caution was necessary lest you might be embarrassed to learn that the person you were talking to was related to the person you were talking about.

By present-day standards facilities for travel and communication were severely limited. Contact with the outside world was often made through the post. Letter writing absorbed a great deal of time. Matters of public concern were often promulgated by a man ringing a bell as he walked along the streets. At selected spots he would stop to shout in a loud voice an announcement which he read from a card or slip of paper. He was the town crier, commonly spoken of as the bellman.

You wanted to go to, say, Middlewich. What means of transport were available? Well, you could travel on horseback or in some horse-drawn vehicle; or you could go by bicycle, or as a last resort you could walk. There were, of course, a few motor cars and motor cycles on the road, but the owners of these were generally mechanical enthusiasts, fanatics, or cranks, who appeared to get more pleasure out of maintaining and repairing their machines than driving or riding them. The machines seemed always to be breaking down and, as I recollect, few regarded them seriously as a means of transport. But in their way these early motorists and motor cyclists were blazing a trail; they were worthy pioneers as time has since proved. Of course, I had almost forgotten that one could get to Middlewich by

railway train via Crewe, but I never heard of anyone making that circuitous journey.

There were any number of horse-drawn vehicles on the roads carriages, cabs, traps, brakes, lorries, carts and all the rest. The horses ranged from the small pony to the large magnificent cart-horse. Many of them were handsome creatures and very attractive to the eye. One never tired of seeing them. Brakes drawn by two horses with a seating capacity from twenty to thirty (I'm not sure of the number) carried their Winsford passengers to Sandbach market on Thursdays and, I think, to Northwich market on Fridays. It comes rather as a surprise to recall the extent to which people were dependent on their own physical resources for getting about. Everybody walked and walked, or cycled and cycled. A distance of ten miles could mean that you were a long way from home.

For centuries the church had been the focal point of social life, and church and chapel together were still very much at the centre of things. They laid down the moral standards. There was no compromise. The Ten Commandments, for instance, meant exactly what they said. The idea of reducing a particular vice (drug-taking for instance) to its least harmful form and then "*living with it*", as people now say, is a concept of recent origin. Aberrations from the strict standards brought the deviators under the lash of social censure, a form of retribution before which the boldest and even the most foolhardy would quail. There is no dismissing that people observed and talked about one another. As I heard an old man on the threshold of 90 years of age say: "*yes, you had to have a good character in those days, or else....."* Robbery and housebreaking were rare and when they did occur, there were one or two misfits on whom the police could quickly lay their hands.

The majority were connected with one or other of the places of worship. If a man and his wife did not attend service themselves, they would be likely to send their children to Sunday school. The members of a church or chapel had a sense of belonging. Each felt himself to be one of a body of friends, united by the bonds of their faith. They stood together and helped one another. Each felt that he was not alone in the world and it must not be forgotten that there was no social security at that time.

All sorts of social activities were encouraged and organised by churches and chapels - boy scout and girl guide movements, football teams, socials, garden parties, bazaars and, of course, concerts. People were very largely dependent on their own efforts for their entertainment.

If a person could sing, recite, play a musical instrument, or give a humorous turn with any degree of talent, he could be sure that his services would be in demand at the scores of concerts which, mainly organised by church or chapel, would be given during winter months. In this and various other ways, a good sprinkling of the population could attain a local reputation and enjoy the prestige that went with it, and the local reputation with its concomitant prestige is something regrettably lacking in present-day social life.

Class distinction was taken for granted. You might say it was measured by the inch. Generally speaking, people tended to accept "*their station in life*" as a matter of course. There were the gentry, the upper and lower middle classes, the working classes, who were mostly of the order called respectable, and there were also a number of very poor people on the fringe. But there were no classes apart. Between all the classes there was an inter-connecting thread. They formed an integrated community, through which the influence of the gentry and upper classes could be felt in their association with social causes, and the leadership they gave in various ways. The respectable working classes, while knowing their place in society, were jealous of their respectability, and very concerned to keep it unblemished. This kind of working people were thrifty, shrewd and knew how to put first things first. All of them valued their good name. This again was evidence of the influence of church and chapel and to some extent of the standards set by the upper classes. Nevertheless, the tramp, the drunken man swaying along the pavement and the beggar singing in the street could all be seen from time to time. And then, of course, there was the occasional street fight.

Speaking of church and chapel brings a pleasing memory of Parson Henley, vicar of Wharton. On most days he could be seen walking in the streets of the parish with his dog Fritz. As he passed young children, some of whom were apt to gather round him, crying "*Mr. Henley! Mr. Henley!"* and impeding his progress, he would pat them on the head, or touch them playfully with this walking-stick. Mr. Henley was a gentleman by both birth and nature. His manners were impeccable. He was always courteous, pleasant, calm and unruffled. But it would be wrong on that account to assume that he could be pushed around. He couldn't. His background was aristocratic. He once told my father that he was the cousin of Sir Robert Eden, father of Lord Avon, better remembered by his contempories as Sir Anthony Eden, British Prime Minister, Foreign Secretary and holder of other high offices of State. Mr. Henley's full name was Robert Eden Henley.

In his day the grave yard at Wharton church was always neat and tidy. People often commented on its well-kept appearance. He used to supply children with small shears, which they called clippers and with these he allowed them to trim the grass round the graves. I did one or two stints at it myself. Parson Henley himself lies buried in the graveyard to which he devoted so much tine and care. He was vicar of the church from 1891 to 1933. On his preaching and organising ability I cannot comment. But it can.be said that in character and bearing he set an abiding example to his parishioners. He would be the last man to court popularity for its own sake. He was, I Suppose, a survival of the old country parish priest in the best traditions of that. historically important office. The epitaph on his tombstone reads simply: *"He went about doing good"* He was the fifth of the Wharton vicars after the church ahd been completed in its present form in 1849.
Through the mists of memory cones back another man of that time, John Bettley. Being the caretaker of the Wharton Recreational ground, commonly spoken of as Wharton Rec, he had a particular importance for children, who spent a lot of the summer months there. He was a man getting on in years with a grey (not white) beard. Whenever I saw him he would be in shirt sleeves, wearing brown corduroy trousers, a brown corduroy waistcoat and a black trilby. He was rather tall and slim, wiry, very physically active, though beginning to droop slightly at the shoulders. He had a strong voice.
Children both liked and feared him. The younger ores looked to him for protection. There was a sizable patch of grassland reserved for games - football and the like. Younger children would sometimes run to the caretaker when there were disputes about who should occupy this land. “*Mr. Bettley*," the young ones would cry, *"those big lads have taken our football pitch and won't let us play*."
"I'll come," would be the response.

Having reached the trouble spot, he would walk into the midst of the big lads, while their game was in progress, shouting "*Move over! Move over!”* at the same time emphasising his command with elaborate swings of his arms. At first the big lads might make a gesture of defiance. But Bettley was relentless and the big lads, feeling the master's hand on the rein, would move over. Then, having made a suitable space, he would turn to the younger ones: "*This pitch is yours. Put your goal posts down here",* usually jackets or other articles of clothing. Then to the big lads he would issue the warning: "*Think on, this pitch belongs to these little 'uns. Any more interference with them and you'll have me to reckon with."* That was true Bettley style. Part of the caretaker job was to keep order, and Bettley could do

just that, while continuing to be liked and respected. While Bettley's appearance and manner might seem somewhat daunting to youngsters, I should say he was a God-fearing man with a kind heart. He was certainly a man with his own distinct personality. He lived in East- Dudley Street near the recreation ground.

6. BOWLS, SATURDAY NIGHTS AND FETES.

Many people frequented the recreation ground at that period. The bowling greens were a special attraction. Bowling greens and spacious lawns, like lakes, have a drawing power which many find hard to resist. On a pleasant summer's evening the greens would be filled to capacity with bowlers, while sitting or standing all round would be spectators, both men and women.

There were many keen bowlers in the district. The game was played very competitively and during a season there would be many matches and competitions. Some of the bowlers were county or near county class and to be a regular member of the Wharton Rec. first team carried with it more than a dash of prestige. Moreover, playing the game in congenial surroundings was a splendid way of making and keeping friends and a pleasant medium for hob-nabbing.

As a small boy, I often watched the bowlers and can remember the names of some of the men who played the game on the Wharton Rec. greens at that period - Reuben Wilkinson, John Bratt, Joe Bratt, Herbert Wood, Frank Atherton, Frank Lunt, Phil Griffiths, Dave Melbourne, Moses Graham, Harry Curzon and Ernest Curzon. These are just a few of them, all long since dead. They were a decent, hard-working, good-living lot of fellows. Steady, dependable, self-respecting they, and many more in Winsford like them, gave stability to social life. You might say they were the backbone of the community. Here again, the influence of church, chapel and Sunday school was plain to see. John Bratt brought honour to the Wharton Rec. bowls club by becoming the runner-up in the final of the All-England Crown Green Bowls Championship, when he was narrowly defeated 21-17 by Lancashire's redoubtable Jack Charnock. John Bratt was also twice runner-up in the Cheshire bowls individual merit championship in 1921 and 1924. Several Winsford bowlers have won the Cheshire merit championship (notably Jim Davies, three times winner) but the first of them was Wharton Rec. bowler Reuben Wilkinson, who achieved the honour in 1915. The Wharton Rec. bowls team were the first to win the Brunner Cup Championship on its inception in 1910, thus proving themselves the foremost team in the county in that year.

I was asked whether I remembered a soccer team called Wharton Rec. The answer was yes. It was a team of local lads, who, before the First World War, played friendly matches with neighbouring Cheshire teams on the ground which, now called Barton Stadium, is today Winsford United's football ground. The team took its name from the Wharton Recreation ground which borders the footbal1 ground. At that time the ground belonged, I think, to the nearby London and North Western hotel.

The players, very popular with the sporting fraternity, wore red and green vertically striped shirts) usually called jerseys in those days. They were all Wharton lads. The names of some of them were Enoch Bratt, Bob Sproston, Harry Acton, Sid Noden, the brothers Dave and Arthur Melbourne and the goalkeeper with the nickname "Paynor". Two of them, Enoch Bratt and Bob Sproston, were soon to become victims of the carnage of World War I. It was claimed for Dave Melbourne, a full back with a very strong kick, that he once took a goal kick from which the ball did not touch the ground until it had passed over the goal line at the other end of the pitch. To what extent this feat was helped by a favourable wind, I don't know, Sid Noden, himself a first rate craftsman, was to become foreman joiner of Sergeant Brothers, a Wharton firm of builders with a deserved reputation for sound, high quality workmanship. The memory of the old Wharton Rec. team still lingers.

Saturday noon was pay day and Saturday night was shopping time. On Saturday nights people descended on High Street and the Market Place in crowds, including many from the surrounding country districts. It would not be too great an exaggeration to say that the spectacle was rather like a gala or fairground. People relaxed, let themselves go, and tended to make merry. They had worked hard all week. Tomorrow was Sunday and rest day. Many of those gathered there knew one another.
They talked, exchanged gossip, and generally enjoyed the pleasure of social intercourse. Shops remained open till 10.0 p.m. and a few till 11.0 p.m. Pubs and places of refreshment did a good trade.

Middlewich Road was another meeting place. On Sunday evenings after church or chapel, the road between Winsford station and Wheelock bridge would be alive with people in both summer and winter. Some would be older people taking a walk after service, but the majority would be late teenagers. This, I imagine, was the time and place when young men and women from Winsford met their counterparts from Middlewich. It would be interesting to know how many marriages between Winsford and Middlewich people, originated in this Sunday evening promenade.

Fetes and garden parties were a popular form of diversion in the summer months as well as a means of raising money for charities and the like. Their success depended precariously on the weather. In the absence of State support, appeals for charities of, one form or another were never ending. The apex of the fetes was that held annually in aid of the Albert Infirmary. To organise it called for a prodigious effort on the part of many devoted officials and helpers. The body responsible for the fete was the Hospital Saturday Committee to which two Wharton men gave years of yeoman's service - Alfred Weedall as the Committee's chairman and George

Richard Royle as its secretary. People from all ranks of the community involved themselves in making the fete a success. The procession, which drew innumerable sightseers, paraded through the main parts of Winsford. Of its kind it was invariably a fine spectacle.
This fete, where various contests were held and many forms of entertainment provided, was held in the infirmary grounds.

I remember attending one of those fêtes as a young boy on a beautiful Saturday afternoon. Foden's Motor Works band had been engaged for the occasion. The band played several pieces. The memory of one of them has remained. It was a solo played by Foden's brilliant cornet soloist, Edwin Firth. He was one of the foremost performers in the brass band world of that time, no doubt of all time. It was generally acknowledged that he was able to produce from a cornet a unique tone, with a golden, magical (some would say celestial) quality which belonged to Firth and to him alone and to which even the least musical could hardly remain unmoved. In the mind's eye I see him now, standing in the middle of the platform, surrounded by his fellow-bandsmen who were accompanying him - a short rather dapper fellow, with well-cut features and a somewhat pale face. He was hatless and a light summer breeze was ruffling his dark hair. It was a magnificent performance - smooth, faultless and all done (slow passages and quick, as well as triple-tongue work) in that inimitable golden tone with the apparent effortlessness of the consummate artist. He had flair and style. A large concourse listened enthralled. In those days, without wireless and television, it was only occasionally that people had the opportunity of seeing or hearing a top class performer. How that large audience applauded him! In local circles Edwin Firth was highly appreciated. He was by some esteemed almost to the point of hero-worship. Though, brilliant as he certainly was, it is unlikely that he would today make the same local impact, vastly over-entertained as present-day society is.
He married into the Foden family and, a young man barely in his middle twenties, he was killed in the Great War. Some chaps used to cycle to Elworth on Sunday mornings to listen to Foden's band at rehearsal. Much interest was taken in the annual brass band contest held at Belle Vue, Manchester, which many Winsford people made a point of attending, all keen supporters of the Sandbach band.

7. HIGHFIELD, WINSFORD LODGE, GREVILLE LODGE AND THE POPLARS.

The infirmary building and its grounds were at one time the home of W. H. Verdin of the Verdin family, once prominent Winsford salt proprietors. Sometime after moving to Darnhall Hall, W. H. Verdin gave the house and its grounds to the district to meet the sorely felt need for a hospital. In the days when it was a private residence the house was called "*Highfield House*". There was a drive way leading to the house from Rilshaw Lane.

Some people can still remember the high brick wall which used to obscure the infirmary and its grounds from Station Road. This wall was demolished sometime after the First World War to make way for the building of the houses which - stretching from the infirmary drive almost to the end of Dierden Street - now stand immediately behind the site once occupied by the wall. By local people this wall was given the name of Kay's wall and is sometimes recalled by that name today. The name is a reminder that not far behind that wall, and only a short distance from Highfield House, used to stand another and older mansion with extensive coach and stabling accommodation. Called Winsford Lodge, this house was the home before World War I of the well-to-do Kay family, who moved to Ravenscroft Hall, Middlewich. The Kays were notably active in the Wharton salt industry in the last century. During the First World War this large house, now demolished, served as a convalescent centre for wounded soldiers, and on most days some of them could be seen in their blue suits and red neck ties walking in the streets of the parish.

Highfield, after it was vacated by W. H. Verdin, and before it became the infirmary, was occupied for some time by John Rigby, who subsequently moved to Greville Lodge, another large house on the Wharton side of the Weaver, which stood on the eastern top of what was called Gravel hollow. This house, like so many of its kind was protected by a high wall, which ran for a short distance along Station Road and was often referred to as Rigby's wall. At Greville Lodge members of the Rigby family lived for many years.

John Rigby, once the chief engineer of the Salt Union and a member of the company's board of directors, was the head of a large family of six sons and two daughters. The Rigbys were one of Winsford's influential families, especially esteemed in Wharton.

Stanley (R. S. Rigby) was a practising solicitor in Winsford for many years, while his brother Herbert (H.P. Rigby) who was also a solicitor, practised in Sandbach. For some years Herbert represented the Gravel ward on the Winsford U.D. Council. Several of the Rigby brothers were keen sportsmen and good athletes. Stanley and Ernest were both fine tennis players, and as a doubles pair not far below county standard. They were founder members of the Wharton Tennis Club which, largely as a result of their coaching and example, could hold its own with many Cheshire teams.

The club was formed very shortly after World War I, when the game of tennis, having been until then almost exclusively confined to private houses, became accessible to the rank and file. Where the Wharton courts were is now part of the Nun House Estate. There were not a few thriving tennis clubs in Winsford and the neighbouring towns during the inter-war period, when in matches and tournaments the game was played very competitively throughout the season.

Both Herbert and Stanley played soccer. Some of the old Winsford soccer enthusiasts used to say that Herbert had a fine talent for the game. He played occasionally as an amateur in the centre-forward position for Crewe Alex., who were then, I think, in the Central League. One of the Rigby sisters married William Arthur Bennett, who for many years represented the Wharton ward on the Winsford U.D. Council. He was an official of the Salt Union. He lived at "*Holmfield",* a house near the Wharton vicarage, now the home of Mr. Robert Davies an accountant well-known in Mid-Cheshire. John Rigby was succeeded in the position of chief engineer of the Salt Union by G. W. Malcolm, who became also the company's managing director and a leading figure in the Mid-Cheshire salt industry.

"Highfield" which, as the Albert Infirmary, had served the area so well for so long, was recently demolished. Bungalows now stand on the site of Greville Lodge. This large house was built by George Cross (previously referred to) a local boat builder, whose dockyard was on the site of the present Marina. This was one of the six well-equipped Winsford dockyards engaged in building and maintaining the Weaver craft during last century when Winsford's salt trade was booming. Cross's dockyard was founded by George's father, William Cross. He lived in the house adjacent to his dockyard called the Dock House, which is still in existence. Both William and George Cross were born in Barnton, William in 1793 and George in 1815.

During the period of his marriage, Stanley Rigby lived at Clive House in Clive Back Lane. Clive House used to be the home of Dr. Swanwick.

Though I never saw him (he was before my time) I frequently heard his name recalled by older Wharton people. Dr. Swanwick's son, Harold, was a professional artist whose reputation extended beyond local boundaries. He studied in Liverpool and

at the Slade School of Art. He painted in oil and water colour, exhibited at the Royal Academy, and was an R.I. He worked in a specially erected studio at Clive House, where his output seems to have been considerable. Some of his paintings are still in the possession of local people.

The Swanwick family of Clive House were probably connected with the Bradbury family, to which belonged the first Lord Bradbury, Winsford's most famous son. A distinguished civil servant, he rose to the high office of Joint Permanent Secretary to the Treasury. By an emergency Act of Parliament on the outbreak of hostilities in 1914, the gold coins, sovereign and half-sovereign, began to be replaced by £1 and 10s/- Treasury notes. These new paper notes bore the signature of John Bradbury (then Sir John) in his official capacity. In keeping with the humour of people at the time, the notes in colloquial language came generally to be called "Bradburys".

John Swanwick Bradbury was born on 23rd September, 1872 at a rather large house in its own grounds in Crook Lane called *The Poplars* and now, I think, renamed Bradfield. The house bears a plaque giving this information. As a schoolboy in the 1880's John Bradbury travelled daily between Winsford and Manchester to attend Manchester Grarmnar School. His father died while John was a small boy, which meant that John, on his way through grammar school and university, had to rely mainly on scholarships. Although John Bradbury left Winsford at the age of 15, he always nurtured a soft spot for the town of his birth)and on his elevation to the peerage he chose the title of Lord Bradbury of Winsford.

The man who was to become financial adviser to British Prime Ministers and chancellors began his education at St. Chad's vicarage, Over. A brilliant student, he moved to King's School, Chester, and thence to Manchester Grammar School. In time he was elected to an open classical scholarship at Brasennose College, Oxford, and went on to graduate with highest honours in classics and modem history.

He entered the Colonial Office in 1896, being appointed after open competition. Soon he was transferred to the Treasury. From 1905-8 he was private secretary to H. H. Asquith, when Asquith was Chancellor of the Exchequer. He was Principal Clerk in the Treasury from 1908-13, and in 1913 was appointed to the high office of Joint Permanent Secretary, a position held by him throughout World War I until 1919. For two years, 1911-13, he was an Insurance Commissioner. As a member of the National Health Insurance Joint Committee, and as financial adviser to Asquith and Lloyd-George, he contributed an important part to putting the country's National Health Insurance system on a sound basis.

From 1919 to 1935 he was Britain's principal delegate on the Reparations Commission, the purpose of which was to supervise the repayment of Germany's war

debts in accordance with the Versailles Treaty. "*In 1909 he became a Companion of the Bath and four years later a Knight of the Order, receiving the Grand Cross in 1920*". Knighted in 1913, he was elevated to the Peerage in 1925.

In April 1925, Winsford honoured Lord Bradbury with an "Official Reception and Banquet", when an "illuminated address and testimonial" were presented to him. It is recorded that some who were schoolboys with him remembered that *"he was different from the general run of youngsters of his age - he was serious and shy and shirked games."*

Lord Bradbury of Winsford died on May 3rd, 1950. Bradbury Road on the Crook Lane estate commemorates his name.

At the time of my earliest recollections of the Poplars, it was the home of the Chesters family, who operated a successful ironmongery business in Winsford. The Chesters family also had business interests in Nantwich.

Speaking of the Poplars brings to mind Samuel Taylor, who lived there during the 1920's after moving from a house (now demolished) which stood some yards back from the road, almost opposite to the Armstrong Hall. He was a well-known horse dealer who, during the 1914-18 war, supplied hundreds of horses to the Army. He was what used to be called a character. I should say he was in late middle-age when I, as a child, first saw him. Wholly devoid of affectation, he somehow gave the impression of belonging to a previous age. In his high bowler hat, semi-frock coat, winged collar with cravat, coloured waistcoat and heavy gold guard with fob attached (that is how I seem to remember him) his bearing seemed to take on quite naturally something akin to an aristocratic quality. His short, sturdy physique was matched by a dominant-type personality. His voice, deep and strong, had an unaffectedly commanding tone. He was totally unselfconscious. In any company,

It would be impossible to ignore him. There was something fascinating about him. Only an individualist society could produce a man like Taylor. He was too angular to fit into a collectivist organisation. I know no-one remotely like him today. Of course, there is no denying he liked a drink. It titillates the fancy to think of him as a reincarnation of an eighteenth century aristocrat, whom, in style and cut, one imagined him to resemble. Samuel Taylor was undoubtedly a good judge of horse flesh, and he knew all the tricks of the horse dealer's trade; but local people could trade with him with confidence. His chief assistant was his nephew, Sam Lowndes, another Whartonian of long standing.

8. BOSTOCK, NUN HOUSE, AND NAT OR GNAT LANE?

Bostock Hall, although more closely connected with Middlewich, came very much into the reckoning of Whartonians. The walk past the three finger posts from Wharton to Bostock Hall was often taken for the pure pleasure of it. The three finger posts were well-known local land marks, frequently referred to as measures of distance. The first finger post was at the beginning of Smoke Hall Lane, opposite to the bacon factory. The second stood at the end of Jack Lane on the Bostock road[1] and the third at the point where the Bostock road joins the Middlewich to Northwich road.

The Bostock estate was then beautifully kept (not a twig, not a leaf out of place as one local chap once put it). Bostock Green, a picturesque spot, boasted an oak tree which was supposed to stand in the centre of Cheshire, a proud position also jealously claimed for the spire of Davenham church. The Bostock tree, surrounded by wooden railings, was planted by the France-Hayhurst family in 1887, the year of Queen Victoria's first Jubilee. Older people used to speak of Colonel France-Hayhurst, but my earliest recollections extend only to Captain France-Hayhurst, who was then the master of Bostock Hall. The France-Hayhurst estate was heavily burdened by death duties incurred by deaths occurring in quick succession. It is probable that the estate never fully recovered from the financial blows it then received.

The manor of Bostock is recorded in the Domesday Book. It was in the possession of the Bostock family for several generations. Thomas France (the surname was later changed to France-Hayhurst) who built the present hall, acquired the manor in the latter part of the 18th century. An older hall at Bostock, built of timber and plaster and surrounded by a moat, was taken down in 1803.

Having centuries ago been connected with the nuns of Chester, the Nun House with its extensive farm buildings was, in my early days, the home of Allen Heath, a farmer and local councillor well-known in the locality. All that I now remember of that house is that there was a persistent belief in the myth that an underground passage existed, or had once existed, connecting the Nun House with Vale Royal Abbey. Along this passage the prurient Vale Royal monks were thought to have found their way to the nuns at Nun House. A few Wharton worthies firmly believed this myth. All evidence to the contrary was stubbornly dismissed. The belief was reinforced by the existence of a fairly long flight of steps, just outside the house, leading to *a* cellar. On the strength of this some people declared they had actually seen the tunnel. It is safe to assume that the cellar had once formed part of the interior of an earlier house or building which had stood on the site.

There are some older Wharton people who declare that the road which has come to be called Nat Lane, now the site of several factories, was originally called Gnat Lane

after the insect of that name. This is almost certainly true. I myself can vouch for the fact that at the appropriate time of the year, some parts of the lane would be swarming with gnats (or were they midges?) in such density that one held one's breath in fighting a way through them. Confronted with this infestation, people came naturally to call the place Gnat Lane which thus passed into common usage.

About 150 yards from Wharton Road on the east side of this lane, there used to be a stagnant pool, whose surface seemed always to be covered with *a* green moss-like slime. This pool was at one end of a plantation which ran towards Wharton Hall, the trees having been planted, I believe, by J.K. Armstrong when he was living at the hall. Whether the pool and the nearby trees together made a suitable breeding place for gnats or midges, I am not competent to say. But that gnats or midges used to swarm there (usually on summer evenings) is beyond doubt, and it is almost certain that the name of the lane (Gnat Lane) originally derived from that phenomenon. I recall that years ago a small boy was drowned in that pool. In those days the lane was little more than a cinder-track leading to the Weaver and some of the salt works. There were no buildings of any kind.

An out-of-the-way part of Wharton is Done Fields. Its main feature used to be nine cottages each chiefly consisting of two rooms, a living room and a bedroom. Done Fields, which was approached through Chapel Road, almost certainly derives its name from Richard Done, who in the latter part of the 18th century leased land on the Wharton Hall estate when it was in the ownership of the Sumner family. Here Done erected salt works.

The cottages, situated near Over and Wharton Station, became the property of the Salt Union on its formation in 1888. They were pulled down by I.C.I. shortly after World War II. As both the cottages and the salt works have now vanished, Done Fields seems destined soon to fade from living memory.

Whatever happened to the greatness of those two northern cities, Manchester and Liverpool? Before and After World War I local people regarded them as more important than London. Their minds turned to them naturally, not only because, lacking the present-day means of communication, the capital seemed farther away then than now, but also because they were thriving commercial and industrial centres, around which, as with other leading northern cities, so much of the country's essential work was concentrated. For various purposes - business, shopping, musical and theatrical entertainment and sports events - local people visited both cities often.

The Port of Liverpool, to whose development Cheshire's salt trade had made no mean contribution, was looked on as one of the foremost ports in the world. At the same time Manchester was seen as the focal point of the vast industrial complex of the North West. If you wanted to know how the country was faring commercially and

industrially, then you were most likely to find the answer in Manchester. There, pulsating vigorously, was the very heart of the matter. "What Manchester thinks today, London will think tomorrow," was an oft repeated saying which many believed to be true.

Many large companies then had their head offices in one or other of the great northern cities, their London offices being merely sub-offices.

The Salt Union's head office, for instance, was in Colonial House, Liverpool. Looking today at the decline in importance of those two cities, one can but lament that time passes and things change.

9. CHILDRENS' GAMES, FEARS AND SUPERSTITIONS.

In my early life all the young boys spoke the broad Cheshire dialect, or at any rate the local version of it (which might have been a sub-dialect) as did many older people from whom they learnt it. Despite parental insistence that they should speak "properly" the boys, once they were away from grown-ups (Victorian grown-ups always correcting, instructing and admonishing) fell naturally into the dialect. Any boy who did not conform would be dubbed "*mard*", a dialect word, very much used, meaning unmanly, tender, tied to Mummy's apron strings. No boy aspiring to manhood could stand for that, so the dialect was the accepted medium of communication.
And after all, was not the language of dialect more robust, expressive, down-to-earth? Another dialect word frequently used was the pejorative "*monny*" meaning conceited, swelled headed, too big for one's boots. One heard very little then of what has come to be called the public school accent.

Educated people gave more attention to vocabulary and grammar. The solecism and the faux pas were the give-away.

Looking back I seem to remember that most children's games - marbles, hop-scotch, top and whip, bowler and hook, leap-frog, stick knife and many others - used to come in a kind of rotation during each year, as though every game had its season. Who determined their order and season I have no idea. A well-established Winsford custom with significance for children was the Good Friday bat and ball which every child managed by hook or crook to acquire.

A week or so before Easter, rubber balls, varying in size and priced from twopence to sixpence[1] would appear in the shops. While, every year, the bat and ball craze lasted, the game of rounders would be the rage. How far this Easter bat and ball custom extended beyond Winsford, I don't know. But I have known people in Cheshire towns not far distant who had never heard of it.

It was probably the close proximity of the railway (then the London and North Western) which attracted Wharton children during the holidays to the pastime of "catching" engines' names and numbers. What a thrill to see an express roaring past at the miraculous speed of sixty miles an hour! That speed, it seemed, was the limit of human achievement, never to be surpassed. So fast did it travel that some youngsters would be assigned to the job of catching the number while others caught the name. Those names and numbers would fill pages of note books, no doubt purchased at Piper's Penny Bazaar, that treasure palace of desirable things, each of which could be bought for one penny. What a choice there was, and what a long time it took to decide on which coveted articles to spend those pennies.

A game I recall with amusement was called "*diggie".* It was played with a diggie and stick. The home-made diggie was a rounded piece of wood about an inch in diameter and six inches long. It was pointed at each end after the manner of a sharpened pencil. By tapping the diggie adroitly at one of the pointed ends with the stick, it could be made to rise or "jump" in the air to a height of anything to a yard. The object was to hit the diggie with the stick while in the air and drive it as far as possible.
Races might be held, the winner being the one who drove the diggie from point 'A' to point 'B' in the shortest time. As might be expected there was a gaping lack of accuracy in playing this game, so that nearby windows and other things vulnerable to damage were at risk. I don't think the diggie season ever lasted long.

Souling was a centuries-old custom in Winsford until recently. Its origin dates to the Middle Ages and as its name implies it was connected with All Souls' Day. On 2nd November, before the Reformation, people wearing dark clothes and ringing a gloomy-toned bell, used to walk the streets pleading for prayers to be offered for their departed relatives and friends, and begging money for Masses to be said for their souls. Housewives used to bake soul-cakes in large quantities in readiness for visiting soulers. Souling, originally practised by adults, came in time to be confined to children.

In my young days, children, year after year in the early part of November, would form. themselves into little groups and sing, sometimes lustily, sometimes timidly, at the doors of houses in the hope of receiving money or other gifts. How the children managed to remember to do this every year, I cannot imagine, for the origin and meaning of the custom had long been forgotten. In the past, different localities in various parts of the country seem to have had their own souling songs. The Souler's Song, as given in Egerton Leigh's "*Ballads and Legends of Cheshire*", runs to five verses.

In my souling days, children would sing snatches of popular songs of the day, followed by such national songs as *"Rule Britannia", "God Bless the Prince of Wales*", or even the National Anthem. But their performance would always end with a single verse, which, while its origin is obscure, does seem to bear some resemblance to the traditional souling songs. It ran:

> Soul! Soul! An apple or two!
> If you haven't got an apple, a pear will do;
> If you haven't got a pear, a ha'penny will do;
> If you haven't got a ha'penny, God bless you!

The Liverpool children who came with the overspill, had never heard of Souling, and did not understand the custom. They confused it with another custom,

Penny for the Guy. So, as Winsford children themselves did not know the meaning and origin of it, it came about that the custom of souling with its deep roots in medieval times, finally lapsed. Whether the custom of souling had survived continuously in the area now covered by the name Winsford from the Middle ages, or whether it had lapsed and been later revived, poses an interesting question.

A character who used to strike terror into young boys of the neighbourhood was Peter the Painter. He was a notorious Russian anarchist of that time and it was suggested by some newspapers that he might be one of the gunmen involved in the Sidney Street siege. Why he should have taken such a grip on the imagination of small boys I cannot now begin to guess.
But from time to time the rumour would spread that Peter the Painter had been seen in some part of the district and was heading in the direction of wherever you might be at the time. On dark evenings these rumours spread like wildfire. Youngsters who a moment ago had been heroic cowboys, shooting down marauding Red Indians by the score, or fighting bravely as soldiers in defense of some distant part of the British Empire, would take flight immediately and run for home as fast as their legs could carry them

With the dreaded Peter the Painter on their heels. Peter the Painter could certainly clear the streets of children.

Another awesome character was Jinny Greenteeth. Older children used to tell the very young that she dwelt in a dark cavernous culvert which used to be at the beginning of Clive Lane. From time to time strange metallic sounds could be heard coming from the depths of that culvert. Those sounds, the young ones were told, were made by the clanking of Jinny's metal buckets as she did her washing. Jinny was one of those ubiquitous, mythical folk, who lived from generation to generation in many towns and villages in different parts of the country under variants of the name by which she was known in Wharton.

Yet another character who captured childish imagination at that time was Spring-heeled Jack. I think there really was a character who was given that appellation. By ingeniously fitting special springs to his boots, he was able (so it was said) to rise to great heights, leaping over high walls, fences, roof tops and other obstacles with the greatest of ease. He was a thief, a criminal whom police were always trying to arrest, but Jack with his flying leaps had no difficulty in evading his leaden-footed pursuers. The poor earth-bound coppers hadn't a chance. Unlike Peter the Painter, Jack held no terror for youngsters. On the contrary most youngsters had the desire to emulate him. What would they be able to do with a pair of spring-heeled boots like Jack's

The prize for baseless childish fears might well go to the story told to me recently by an elderly lady who as a young girl during the First World War lived in Done Fields.

Nearby was a valley well-known to Whartonians. The tale caught the imagination of young children that a number of German soldiers were hiding in the valley during daylight. At night they came out on the prowl, intent on doing harm both to people and property. At daybreak they returned to their hide-out in the valley.
Children living in the vicinity believed this tale to be true, and were too scared to venture from home after dark.

.. Adults as well as children could be afflicted by unfounded fears. The most feared place in the district was probably the hangman's gate. This was said to be situated about midway between Winsford station and Wheelock bridge on the Middlewich road. In those days there were very few houses along that road. It was a lonely place with tall over-hanging trees flanking both sides of the roadway. During daylight it was a pleasant place to be, but when darkness fell, much enhanced by the thickly planted trees, the superstitious could easily persuade themselves that it became inhabited by evil spirits in search of prey. Middlewich people feared the hangman's gate as much as Winsford people.

How the hangman's gate got its name, I, for my part, never found out. Whether a man had actually committed suicide there and his ghost had remained to haunt the place, or whether in former times it had been the site of a public gallows, was never made clear to me. Nor so far as I could gather did anyone know which the gate was, nor just where it was situated beyond the surmise that it was opposite to, or nearly opposite to, Stanthorne Hall on the other side of the road. Doubtless this lack of precise knowledge created mystery and heightened the fear. But amid so much doubt one thing was certain, the hangman's gate could evoke fear of a spine- chilling kind. So when you were walking along that road midway between Winsford and Middlewich on a very dark winter's night with the wind whining in the distance and the branches of the trees rustling ominously overhead, a little company on the journey didn't come amiss.

This was illustrated by what a man in his eighties told me a few years ago. As a youth in his early teens, he belonged to a group of pals. One of the pals got a job in Middlewich to which he travelled on foot. The job required him to work until 8 p.m. on a particular night of the week. He had the usual fear (inherited you might say) of the hangman's gate. So in the winter time his pals used to walk to Middlewich to meet him as he left his place of work at 8 p.m., and escort him to Winsford. That young teenager who feared the hangman's gate, was not to know that in a few short years

he would make the supreme sacrifice on the battle fields of France. His name was Edward Jackson. He lived in Station Road.

10. ROPES, MILK, WATER AND STREET LAMPS.

During some two hundred years a large number of flats, barges and steamers carried salt down the Weaver from Winsford chiefly to Liverpool and Manchester. To operate those craft there was need for a plentiful supply of ropes, and to meet that need a number of rope walks, as they were called, sprang up in the locality. One of them once occupied a part of the land now the site of the Wharton Recreation ground.

The last of the Wharton rope spinners was Richard Curzon. His shop (the building is still in existence) where he displayed his wares, was at 38, Wharton Road, which at one side is approached by a flight of stone steps situated at the top of Wharton Hill. It stands on a terrace several feet above the roadway and faces what used to be called The London and North Western Railway Hotel, now renamed The Top House. Curzon's rope walk was a short distance from the back of the houses (now no more) in the old Hill Street, near the Barton Stadium with Gravel Hill not far away. His chief assistant was William Mills, an old Whartonian and a longtime member of the Wharton Wesleyan Church. Mills afterwards became the safety officer of I.C.I.'s Salt Division.

Curzon used to advertise in the Over Parish Magazine, describing himself as a rope and twine manufacturer. In one of his advertisements for October, 1905, he gives an interesting list of the products of the rope manufacturing trade. Part of the advertisement reads:

> *"Wholesale and retail dealer in plough cords, hemp and cotton halters, cart ropes and clothes lines, driving reins, string and carpet bags, school bags.*
>
> *"Machine, box, picture, whip and sash cords (specialities). Also a variety of netting twine.*
>
> *"Swings made and fitted to order. Hoist and teagle ropes fitted up and spliced."*

All the items in the list would be stocked by Curzon though not all of them would be manufactured by him. The list confirms that the horse was still an indispensable part of the community at the beginning of the present century.

Curzon knew his business and it is not surprising that throughout the district he was familiarly called *"Roper Curzon*", following an old custom of naming a man after his trade. He was a short, sturdy man with a white beard. As a young boy I saw him often.

Frequently he could be seen taking exercise along Wharton Road on his tricycle (a common enough means of getting about at that time) moving at a sedate speed, with his pet terrier tied to the back of his tricycle, no doubt with a rope of his own making. The dog always seemed to be enjoying immensely its compulsory exercise.

I don't remember when the milk bottle was introduced. But until the First World War householders' daily supplies of milk were delivered in horse- drawn floats or carts. At the rear of the float would be one or two large tankards fitted with taps through which the milk was drawn into measuring cans of various capacities (gill, pint, quart, etc.) and then poured into the customer's jug usually at his doorstep. The farmers (or their employees) delivered their own milk. Each farmer had his own clientele and sometimes two floats belonging to different farmers could be seen delivering milk in the same street at the same time.

Out of that time and associated with that practice of milk delivery, comes a recollection of an interesting character - Roger Hind. Everybody in the neighbourhood knew him by sight, but few, I think, by personal acquaintance.

He lived in Middlewich. He was a public analyst. Part of his duties was to see that the strength and purity of the milk were maintained, especially, perhaps, that the milk did not contain more than its due proportion of water. Without warning he would descend on the person in charge of a milk float, and demand to be sold a quantity of milk. From that purchase, it was not impossible, but very unlikely I imagine, that a court case might ensue His work also, I think, included inspection of weights and measures.

Of slim build, he was middle-aged, rather tall, and wore spectacles. His complexion was reddish. His features were noticeably sharply cut, a characteristic which, when viewed in relation to his occupation, gave an impression of sharp-eyed keenness. No doubt, the milk vendors watched him warily, if not apprehensively. However, he was a man of integrity and· absolutely incorruptible. His work was to protect the public interest, and this he did without fear or favour. There was a hint of dignity in his bearing and just a trace of gravitas. He belonged to a breed of men which seems to have disappeared. I don't know, but I'd wager he was a thorough-going patriot and (dare one say it?) a "*good old Tory*" to boot.

I suppose few people pause nowadays to appreciate the benefits of always having am ample supply of water by merely turning a tap. But just over a hundred years ago things were vastly different for Wharton folk. Then acquiring a supply of water and using it with the utmost economy were daily preoccupations. A hint of this, together with a word of praise for the good work of the Local Board soon after its formation, is given by our not-to-be-forgotten townsman, John Henry Cooke, in the following extract from one of his books:

"Mr. John Stubbs said he recollected when on certain grounds, he was one of the greatest opponents to the formation of the Local Board. Before they had the Local Board, however, they were without a sufficient water supply. In Wharton, where he lived, people were paying seven pence per week for water. If they could manage with six canfuls, they paid sixpence. They ought to be thankful they had a local board. The first thing they did was to get a water supply for the town and for twopence a week they could have 70 canfuls if they liked, for there was no restriction. They (the Local Board) had the town well drained and they had gone in for good roads."

Winsford's Local Board was formed in 1873. The man, John Stubbs, spoken of in the quotation, was second in seniority of the seven Stubbs brothers, once prominent in Winsford's salt industry. His brother Robert, the eldest of the seven brothers, also lived in Wharton at one period.

In mentioning J. H. Cooke one feels constrained to say a few words about the debt due to him by Winsford. A practising solicitor, he was for some 50 years Winsford's town clerk, first serving the Local Board in that capacity until it was superseded by the Urban District Council in 1894, and then serving that body until his retirement in 1926. During his long term of office, his was the hand that guided Winsford in practically all its public affairs. Though short in stature, his drive, energy, capacity for hard work and for undertaking responsibility were little short of prodigious. In a telegram expressing his good wishes to Cooke on his retirement, Lord Bradbury said*," It is impossible to overstate the debt which Winsford owes to you*".
I think it was the local Guardian who once called him *"Mr. Winsford*".
Among his many activities he found time to write or compile one or two books dealing mainly with local matters and it is from one of those that the above extract is culled. It is strange that, so far as I am aware, there is in Winsford no building or street which commemorates his name.

A story about Cooke is worth preserving. He was taking part in a public debate, probably held in the old Town Hall. One of his opponents in the debate was a big, handsome man, physically fitted to compete for the world heavyweight boxing championship. In the course of one of his speeches the big man said something like this: "*Look at this man Cooke. If you were to measure him up one side and down the other, he wouldn't make six feet. I really believe I could put him in my waistcoat pocket.*" Cooke sprang to his feet from his seat on the platform. *"Yes,*" he shouted, "*and then you would have more brains in your waistcoat pocket than in your head*."

Not many I think, regretted the change from gas to electricity for street lighting. Even so, there must have been a little sadness in saying farewell to that faithful old friend, the lamplighter. He was one of the locality's familiar figures. Twice nightly during the dark part of the year he could be seen with his pole hurrying from lamp to lamp, first bringing illumination to the street, and later plunging them into darkness. Occasionally he would climb a lamp post to deal with an "awkward" pilot light.

One lamplighter in Wharton I remember from my early years was a man named Hulse. He lived in a house at the comer of Wharton Road and Ledward Street. Lamp lighting would be a part-time job, and Hulse also worked as a part-time postman. In addition he undertook watch repairs. I think he did all three jobs concurrently. There was then no social security to depend on, and a man with the responsibility of a large family had to stretch himself.

How one remembers those rows of lamp-posts, standing erect like sentinels, each, when lit, shedding a little island of yellow light around itself, while in the spaces between the islands were patches of darkness in which a pedestrian seemed to vanish before emerging into the glow of the next island! Those little islands of light had a compelling attraction.
There, children played, and men gathered to talk. Odd things might happen under those street lamps. As an example, it was under one of them in 1884 that the Rotherham United football club held its inaugural meeting. We shall now never know all the human purposes to which those old friendly street lamps were made to apply.

11. WHARTON'S HIGH BRICK WALL, HILL STREET AND EXCISE OFFICERS.

Many Whartonians will remember the high overshadowing brick wall that not long ago flanked the south side of Wharton Hill, towering skywards like a mountain of unrelieved gloom. It was not a pretty sight, but one that could not be ignored, with its massive monotonous front of blue bricks. For sheer plainness the proverbial back of the hansom cab could not begin to compare with it. But being built to serve a practical purpose, not as a thing of beauty, it may have been a creditable example of the combined skills of architect and bricklayer. It had the distinction that few parishes could show anything like it. It was well worth seeing - once.

Behind the top of this wall was Hill Street, better known locally as "*Top o' th' ill*". Its main feature was a line of low-standing cottages, all huddled together with no spaces between them. The fronts were coloured an indefinite pink or red.

About the middle of the row, and a part of it, was a small public house called "*The Jolly Sailor"*, undistinguished but rather well-known perhaps because of its name and quaint positon. Sometimes on a Saturday night the jollifications of the patrons of the jolly old tar would boil over, and a bare knuckle fight would start in the street outside the pub.

Standing at a discreet distance with other youngsters, I witnessed one or two of the Jolly Sailor fights. The fights I saw did not last long. Their fellow-pub customers got between the combatants, and brought the contests to a speedy, no-decision conclusion. This disappointed us youngsters who had prepared ourselves to see a really good "*set-to*".

Hill Street stakes its claim to a place in local history on the ground that some of its houses were at one time the homes of government officials engaged in work connected with the collection of the duty on salt manufactured in Winsford. Ah, that abhorred salt tax! That it was not withdrawn until 1825, after much agitation, pressure and clamour from the people who suffered under it, shows that the Hill Street cottages (only recently demolished) survived to a ripe old age. Whether some of them were built in the first place to accommodate the government officials doesn't seem to be known. The number of Officers of Excise engaged in collecting the "pernicious salt tax" in Mid-Cheshire was at one time said to be 68. One of them was George Lough who married Thomas Kent's daughter, Elizabeth. Their daughter, Sarah Lough, was married to William Cross, the well-known local boat builder previously referred to.

To a salt manufacturing town like Winsford, the salt tax had a particular significance. From the Government's standpoint the tax was a good tax, being a sure revenue producer, for everybody required salt. But it was an onerous tax for those who had to pay it, bearing particularly heavily on the poor. It has been calculated that the tax robbed the poor man of a tenth of his income. The penalty for stealing or smuggling salt was death by hanging. For breaking into salt works two men were publicly executed in Chester in 1809. It was a dreadful ordeal, for on the first attempt to hang them, both ropes broke, and the doomed men were kept waiting for two hours until other suitable ropes could be obtained.

During the Napoleonic wars, the tax reached the dizzy height of £30 a ton, an unbelievable sum, especially when it is considered that salt produced in Winsford under the stress of fierce competition has been sold for as little as five-shillings a ton at the works. So great was the relief when the salt tax was repealed that in some parts of the country the event was celebrated by the ringing of church bells. It is a fair guess that the excise men who lived in Hill Street were not the most popular men in the community.

Both Hill Street and Wharton's high brick wall have passed into the abyss of things past. Viewing the transformation brought about on the land where these two old land marks stood, it calls for an effort of memory to visualise in the mind's eye what they looked like. Unless informed by some means, Winsfordians of the future would not guess that they ever existed.

As a footnote to the high wall, a story I heard may be worth telling. In the early twenties Winsford United football club secured the services for two matches of an amateur named Randle (I hope the spelling is correct).

He was a very fine player, and Winsford's committee tried hard to induce him to play regularly for their club. But he would not be persuaded. He was a regular player for the once famous, though rather exclusive, amateur team, Northern Nomads, with which he intended to stay. His reason for coming to play for Winsford was his interest in the high wall. His family were builders, and the wall, he said, had been built by his family's firm. I cannot vouch for the accuracy of this little story, but it is almost certainly mainly true.

12. A TRIO OF WHARTONIANS.

Three men with Wharton connections who well deserve to be remembered are J. A. Greenwood, W. G. Newall and Thomas T. Walton.

J. A. Greenwood who became one of the best known figures in the brass band world, lived his early life in the Gravel area. It was said that his parents had been circus performers and that his father had played in a circus band.

Greenwood showed early promise as an instrumentalist, and at the age of ten was playing the cornet in a local band. He came under the eye of the renowned William Rimner, whose protégé he became and in whose footsteps he followed. His undoubted talent attracted the attention of Gossage's Soap Works band, who invited him to become their cornet soloist. Now in his twenties, he extended his musical interests to the piano. He studied harmony and composition.

From this time onwards, as cornet soloist, tutor, trainer, conductor and adjudicator, he steadily rose to prominence in his chosen sphere. He also composed much original music for brass bands, besides arranging or transcribing a stream of operatic and musical comedy music. Three of his marches he called respectively "*Wharton", "The Weaver"* and *"Winsford*". One of his best known compositions was a cornet solo entitled "*Cornet King*", the record of which was popular in local circles.

He played solo cornet for bands with household names like Wingates Temperance. As a conductor such bands as St. Hilda, Black Dyke and Horwich R.M.I. came under his baton. He was four times the winning conductor at the annual Belle Vue contest (always popular with Winsfordians) with Black Dyke in 1914, with Horwich R.M.I. in 1916 and 1917 and with Creswell Colliery in 1925. In achieving these successes, he was the first to break the hold of Rimner and Halliwell, who for some years had made the honour their own.

Greenwood adjudicated at many top class brass band contests. It is interesting to recall that he awarded first prize to Foden's band at the Albert Hall in 1953, when the test piece was "*Diadem of Gold*". On that occasion Foden's conductor was Harry Mortimer.

Another honour was his appointment as music editor to the well-known brass band music publishers, Right and Round of Liverpool in succession to W. Rimner who died in 1936.

Halcyon Glen, a large house in Rilshaw Lane, situated a short distance from Station Road, was planned and built in the late 19th century by William George Newall. The house was in two sections and Newall lived in the larger section during his long retirement. In Newall's day, along one side of the house ran an extensive

conservatory in which he cultivated various kinds of greenhouse plants. Nearby, in the grounds of the house was a sizable orchard yielding a carefully chosen variety of fruit. The rustic-like woodwork fencing outside the house was unusual. It consisted of naturally shaped spars of well-seasoned unpainted wood, arranged in a multi-patterned network after the manner of trellis work. No doubt this was the handiwork of W. G. Newall himself. Across the road from the house were farm buildings where he kept his horses, a few cows, poultry, etc. Newall was a man of wide interests, and, like many Victorians of his time, he could turn his hand to many things.

In the latter half of the last century, Newall was an entrepreneur in the cabinet making business in which he employed a number of highly skilled journeymen. His factory, near to Halcyon Glen, was afterwards used by the clothing manufacturing firm of Bradbury. The building at the corner of Rilshaw Lane and Station Road, better known later as Dodd's School of Dancing, was his showroom.

From his factory poured a stream of good quality Victorian-style furniture, of which many (perhaps most) homes in Winsford, and for some distance beyond, were pleased to own one or two pieces. In an age of craftsmanship, Newall himself was looked upon as a super-craftsman. His standing in the estimation of his fellow cabinet makers was high, and it was said of him (with not a little exaggeration) that he was capable of making anything in wood with no other tool than an adze. He also had a flair for designing. It was he who planned and directed the building of what is now Trinity Methodist Chapel in Station Road in the later part of last century on or near the site of, an earlier Methodist chapel.

Not only had Newall a pair of capable hands and a full measure of business acumen, but he had also an intellectual side to his make-up. During retirement he gave much of his time to reading and study, and at Halcyon Glen he occasionally entertained friends or acquaintances of intellectual persuasions similar to his own. Like many men of his time he was deeply interested in religion. Brought up as a Methodist, he had been a local preacher, and active in church work. But, always an individualist, he forsook Methodism to become attached to some little known cult of the Christian faith. On his death, in accordance with the beliefs of that cult, he was buried in full morning suit.

The solution to the mystery of the non-existent Wharton workhouse may be traced to W. G. Newall. In the days when he was starting his business, capital invested in new enterprise was often very much at risk. Business failures and even bankruptcies were not uncommon. The story has it, and it is almost certainly true, that Newall's father, fearing his son might over-reach himself, cautioned him to take care lest he should land himself in the workhouse. The son, confident in his ability to succeed, was evidently not without a sense of ironic humour, for he straightway

decided to call his showrooms the Workhouse. Whether the name ever formed part of a postal address, I don't know, but it stuck, and for years afterwards people of the neighbourhood came as a matter of course to refer to the building as the workhouse. The name has trickled down to the present day, so that occasionally a person is curious enough to ask 'Whether there ever was a workhouse in Wharton, and, if so, 'Where was it situated? It is safe to say that the Wharton workhouse only existed in the name which Newall gave to his showrooms.

Sometime after the death of W. G. Newall, Halcyon Glen passed to Thomas T. Walton, who, though not a native of Wharton, married a Wharton lady and made his home in the locality for many years.

Possessing a variety of talents, he was also a man of drive and energy which he harnessed to his business acumen and flair for enterprise. After (and maybe before) the First World War, in which he was wounded in the leg by shrapnel, he worked on the sales side for the paint manufacturing firm of Hoyle, Robson and Barnet of Newcastle-upon-Tyne. Soon he was appointed to the firm's board of directors. After a disagreement on policy, he and a fellow-director named Smith, a chemist, resigned from the board and started their own firm near the Scottish border, under the name of Smith and Walton. The two partners knew their business and the firm prospered. It became a limited liability company with a good standing on the London Stock Exchange. One of their successful lines was called Hadrian paint, a name prompted by the proximity of the works to Hadrian's Wall.

A high quality wallpaper, embossed in high relief which was evidently designed wholly or partly by Walton himself was called Lincrusta-Walton. This wallpaper was known to Arnold Bennett, who mentions it in the following passage from his novel The Roll Call. "*At beefy luncheon tables and in gorgeous stuffy bars tapestried with Lincrusta-Walton, he had listened to the innumerable tales of the town, in which greed, crookedness, ambition, rectitude, hatred and sexual love were extraordinarily mixed".*

Walton who was the son of a Nonconformist Minister, had himself been a local preacher. It was on his visits as preacher to Wharton Methodist Church that he first met the woman who was to become his wife. He was an accomplished speaker, and exercised his oratory on the Liberal Party's platform. He was a handsome man. Six feet tall, with a fine figure, he had a noticeably good complexion. He was a trained singer, and the services of his fine baritone voice were always in demand at concerts and the like.

In the inter-war years when the Winsford Amateur Theatrical Society, assisted by Winsford Amateur orchestra, could annually boast full-scale productions of musical

comedies like *Floradora*, The Arcadians and a string of others, Torn Walton took a leading part in Sir Edward German's light opera*, Tom Jones.* The part of Tom Jones was taken by our late, but well-remembered, townsman, Walter Hatton, a former master at Wharton C of E School and the Verdin Grammar School.

Walton was a close friend of B. V. Andrews, for many years headmaster of Winsford Council School, a councillor, a leader in the town's public life[1] and as many Winsfordians regarded him "a man you could look up to". Walton left Halcyon Glen to make his home in Sandiway, where he died leaving a considerable fortune.

Torn Walton was a generous man, and as an old saying has it: "He helped many a lame dog over a stile".

13. CHRIST CHURCH, WHARTON AND FOUR NONCONFORMIST CHAPELS.

Before the development of its salt industry, mainly in the 19th Century, Wharton (or Waverton as it was sometimes called in by-gone days) was an agricultural area. The land bordering the Wharton side of the Weaver - later to be covered with hundreds of steaming salt pans with their tall chimneys daily belching clouds of smoke and soot which fouled the neighbouring countryside until hardly a blade of grass was to be seen - was then well-wooded, lush with foliage and wild flowers and providing pheasants, partridges, and rabbits as game for the local gentry. At that time the township was thinly populated - so thinly that the now populous Gravel (Station Road) was inhabited by no more than three or four families. Even in 1851, when the development of the salt industry was under way, the population of Wharton including Stanthorne was only 1,931 of whom 989 were males and 942 females. The number of houses was 392. Kelly's Directory gives the population as 3,319 for 1901 and as 3,661 in 1911.

Arising out of the growth of the local salt industry, and through the influence of the postal authorities, the name Winsford came to embrace the neighbouring townships of Over and Wharton. Before the Post Office settled the matter, there are grounds for thinking that the name Winsford, as used by some local people, referred to Wharton only.

Before 1835, Wharton had no church of its own. It was in the parish of Davenham, which covered a wide area. As Davenham church was some three or four miles from Wharton, few Wharton people attended the services there. Perhaps the only person to attend regularly was Josiah Perrin who resided at "Oakland". A few Wharton people attended St. Chad's in Over, while the remaining church-goers in the township worshipped at the Wesleyan chapel, then situated in Hill Street (Winsford Hill) and built in 1804.

Clearly the members of the Church of England in Wharton were in need of a church of their own. Or so it seemed to the Rev. J. Furnival, curate-in-charge of Davenham, an energetic priest, very active in the affairs of the parish. He conceived the project of building two chapels-of-ease in the Davenham parish - one in Rudheath and the other in Wharton. To realise his aim he enlisted the support of James France-France, master of Bostock Hall and patron of the Davenham living. (The family successors of James France-France, in compliance with the terms of his will, thereafter took the name of France-Hayhurst). At the time there were some who questioned the wisdom of the Rev. J. Furnival's plan, doubting whether Wharton

with its sparse population could maintain a chapel-of-ease and support its clergymen

However, about 1835 a small chapel-of-ease was erected near to what was to become Wharton railway bridge. At first the attendance rarely exceeded a dozen. The duration of this building on its original site was to prove short. The London and North Western Railway Company, then named the Grand Junction Railway, had begun laying the line from Birmingham to Liverpool, and it became clear that the course of the new track would necessitate the demolition of the Wharton chapel-of-ease.

Accordingly, a new church building was erected on the site of the present Wharton church. This building was incomplete. It consisted of the transepts of a church whose nave and chancel were to be added later to represent a cruciform structure. This incomplete church was consecrated, and a district allocated to it, by Dr. Sumner, Lord Bishop of Chester, on 26th June, 1843. For a long time the new church was without an organ, the instrumental accompaniment to the singing being provided by John Cookson of the Railway Inn with his clarinet. Eventually, during the ministry of the Rev. W. C. Dudley, the sum of £40 was contributed by the congregation for the purchase of an organ. This was supplied by George Drinkwater of High Street (then called Over Lane) who had himself built the organ. His daughter became the church's organist.

The first minister of this new, but not yet completed church was the Rev. J. Edwards. He was succeeded in turn by Reverends W. C. Dudley, Rogers and Dr. Armstrong. Then in 1845 the Rev. John Lowthian, who had been curate of Prestwich Manchester, was made perpetual curate.

It was during John Lowthian's ministry that, in 1849, the work of adding the tower, nave and chancel to the existing transepts was completed, bringing the church to the form in which it exists today. The year 1849 is also of importance in the history of Wharton because, besides the completion of the building of the church, it was then that "by an order in Council, agreeably to the plans of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners", Wharton for ecclesiastical purposes was detached from Davenham and made into a separate parish, which included Stanthorne. John Lowthian thus became the first of the Wharton vicars. The newly erected nave and chancel were consecrated by Dr. Sumner on the 20th December, 1849. When John Lowthian came to Wharton the vicarage was merely a double-cottage. He raised the money to have the house rebuilt.

In 1859 John Lowthian's life carne to a tragic end. He had decided to give up horse-riding, and to that end had sold his horse. He was taking what he intended to be his last ride, which was along Swanlow Lane, when he was thrown from his mount. Seriously injured, he was borne to Over vicarage, the home of his father-in-law, the

Rev. John Jackson. He died there a few days later. He was a good man and his passing was mourned throughout the area.

The next four vicars after John Lowthian in order of appointment were John Samuel Bage (1859), Thomas Davis (1873), Christopher Cay (1876) and Robert Eden Henley (1891). In the three months' interval between the death of John Lowthian and the appointment of J. S. Bage, the duties of vicar were carried on by the Rev. W. Finch, while the Rev. R. Oates of Liverpool officiated in the period between the death of J. S. Bage and the appointment of T. Davis. After the resignation of T. Davis, his brother-in-law, Christopher Cay, was elected to the office by the patron, the Rev. Canon T. France-Hayhurst.

The church's burial ground was extended by land purchased by a voluntary rate, and this was consecrated on 17th April, 1875, by Dr. Jacobson, then Bishop of Chester. Among the people who regularly worshipped at the church, and had their own pews, were Mrs. Perrin, John Kay of Winsford Lodge, Mr. Bradbury, father of Lord Bradbury, and James France-France.

When the Rev. J. Edwards became the first minister of the new church built to replace the demolished chapel-of-ease, there were no day schools in Wharton other than private, and two rooms of a double-cottage were made to serve as a Sunday school. Although his stay at Wharton lasted less than a year, J. Edwards in that short time contrived to bring into being a new well- organised Sunday school. Among other improvements he appointed lady Sunday school teachers, including Mrs. Perrin of "Oakland" and Mrs. Cockerell who lived at Wharton Cottage. These two well-known Wharton ladies were sisters. John Dudley (1770/1854) founder of the Dudley family of Wharton Lodge[1]was their father. Mrs. Perrin was the grandmother of Mrs. Newall and both Mrs. Perrin and Mrs. Cockerell were the great aunts of Miss Louisa Aspinal- Dudley. Both ladies continued to serve as Sunday school teachers for many years.

Wharton schools were built in 1846 on a site previously occupied by a private school which was erected in 1805. The cost of the buildings was met by public subscription. The schools were twice extended after 1870.

The school house with adjacent playground was presented by Josiah Perrin about 1859. Dierden Street infant school, also built by public subscription, came into being in 1875.

About 1860 Wharton schools were attended by approximately 247 boys and girls. The master was Richard Davies and the mistress Jane Clayton.

Before the 1914-18 war Wharton, besides its Anglican church, had four nonconformist chapels, all of which were well and faithfully attended. Two of them were in Station Road. One of them, built in 1893 to replace an earlier chapel built in

1865, was then called the Bethesda Primitive Methodist chapel and the other, a small building, was connected with a much larger chapel in High Street which belonged to what was then known as the United Methodist denomination. The smaller chapel in Station Road, built in 1860, was almost invariably referred to by people of the neighbourhood as the "little chapel". It was situated near the entrance to Dierden Street and was demolished in 1926, being superseded by a new chapel not far away in Crook Lane. The architect of the new building was Aldred Jones.

The Wharton Wesleyan chapel, a rather large, attractive building, erected in 1885, which stood opposite the Armstrong Hall, was only recently pulled down. Associated with it used to be a small place of worship known as the Wharton Works chapel, which was attended by the Wesleyan inhabitants of Deakins Road and the surrounding area. This chapel had been adapted to religious purposes from a building which had been a part of the Salt Union's Bostock salt works, owned in the last century by the Deakin family, hence the name Deakins Road. Of these four Wharton chapels which had served the spiritual needs of so many staunch local Methodists for so long, only one Methodist chapel now remains - the Trinity Methodist chapel in Station Road, once called the Bethesda Primitive Methodist chapel. What was the United Methodist Church in Crook Lane is now a Roman Catholic Church.

14. WHARTON RECREATION GROUND - JUBILEE GIFT.

On 6th July, 1887, the year of Queen Victoria's first jubilee, the marriage of William Newall Maxwell Newall, merchant of Liverpool, and Marian Perrin Knight Armstrong of Wharton Hall was solenmized at Wharton Church. In the same year Wharton was fortunate in receiving two gifts of land. The gifts, made to commemorate the queen's jubilee, were also a mark of the public spiritedness and concern for the community of the donors, characteristic of the gentry and the rich of those days. The first of the gifts, made by J.K. Armstrong, comprised about five acres of land, known locally as the Rope Walk, for use as a public recreation ground. The gift of the other donor, W. Roylance Court, made land available for a communal foot-way connecting Gravel Hollow in Station Road with Ledward Street and the projected Wharton Recreation Ground.

The offer of the land for the recreation ground was made in a letter sent by J. K. Armstrong to John Henry Cooke, clerk to the Winsford Local Board. The letter defines the area of land, and states the conditions under which it is offered. It is here quoted in full;

Wharton Hall, Winsford, January, 29th1887.

"Dear Sir, The Queen's Jubilee.

In reply to your application for a subscription to a Free Library, I beg to say that in my opinion public recreation grounds are the great need of this place. I see that Lord Delarnere has offered to give a plot of land in Over, but that would be of little use to the residents in Wharton. With the view of meeting this difficulty, I offer to the Winsford Local Board the land called "The Rope Walk Land", which is situate near the police station, in Wharton, and is in the occupation of Mr. Samuel Hickson, for the purpose of a recreation ground for the use of the inhabitants of the district. I retain a small corner piece at the back of Wharton Cottage and also any other land which I may want for arranging boundaries, or any other purpose. With these exceptions, I offer the whole of the land, about five acres, to the Board and I only make two conditions. The first is a sine qua non: viz. that arrangements be made with Mr. Court for a road in perpetuity from the Gravel-road to the proposed recreation ground.

I don't care whether this is a foot road or a street, but without a road of some kind leading to the Gravel the recreation ground would be of comparatively little value. This road would not only be a great convenience to those using the recreation ground, but of great service to those men working at the salt works who live in the Gravel-road and who now have to

make a long journey round to get to their work; and it would also be useful to the public generally. The other condition is one which, perhaps, it is needless to mention, and that is that the Board lay out the land properly for a recreation ground and keep it in good order. Probably the Board will think it desirable, as it appears to me, to limit the roads in the recreation ground to footpaths, and not to make a street, but this is a matter which will be within their discretion..... I have only to add that the tenant is not under either an agreement or notice to quit and that it will be for the Board to make arrangements for obtaining possession - Yours truly,

J. K. Armstrong".

The offer of land by W. Roylance Court was made in a letter to J. H. Cooke, in the following terms:

Osmaston Manor, Derby. 11th February, 1887.

"Dear Sir,

I have to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of 3rd inst., which I regret has so long remained unanswered through my absence.

I am very pleased to hear of Mr. Armstrong's handsome offer to commemorate her Majesty's Jubilee by giving a plot of land for public recreation grounds. Kindly inform the Board I have much pleasure in facilitating matters by at once consenting to give the land required for an approach to the same. I scarcely know the site, but will endeavour to see it shortly –

Yours faithfully,

W. Roylance Court".

The people of Wharton were to derive considerable benefit from these two generous gifts of land in the years ahead.

15. THE RELIGIOUS VICTORIANS

In the early part of my life all the grown-ups around me were Victorians. What were they like? I can write only of my personal recollections of how I saw and understood them. Well, to begin with, they were not the fuddy-duddies whom many of the present generation, though they may not have met a real 19th century Victorian, seem to imagine. Generally speaking, those I remember were serious-minded. Many of them were religious, some in the narrow sense of being concerned more with the letter of the teaching than the spirit.

In contrast to the present-day aimless drift, their religious beliefs gave them the immense advantage of a sense of orientation - of knowing who they were, where they were, and whither they were going. This certitude, coupled with their togetherness, freed them from the great primordial fear of being helplessly lost in an unfriendly, alien world.

They were crossing the bridge of life, fraught with difficulties, snares, frustration, pain, suffering and sorrow. They were the creatures of a caring God, whose eye was ever on them. At the other end of the bridge was an after-life in which rewards and penalties would be meted out to them in accordance with their deserts. Work and the pursuit of worthwhile ends were the vestibule to heaven. Moreover, they had the benison of the Christian morality, tested in the crucible of centuries of human experience, to guide them in their relations with others, and help them distinguish right from wrong.

They - especially the puritanically minded among the Methodists - worked hard. They also lived hard in accordance with the demands of self-discipline. Self-indulgence was to be guarded against, as was an over fondness of comfort. They drilled themselves in those cardinal virtues, self-reliance and independence. Samuel Smiles's Self Help was highly recommended, if not compulsory reading as were Emerson's two famous essays on Self Reliance and Compensation. Self-improvement was something to be always striving after. Yes, it was rather a spartan way of living, and it is not surprising that succeeding generations reacted against it.

Not by any means did all the Victorians of my acquaintance confess to being religious. But the religious were the dominant section of the community, and their standards of behaviour and attitudes to life tended in some measure to "rub off" onto the irreligious, who with no strongly held beliefs of their own, were just drifting along.

Taken together the religious Victorians constituted a body of people who had to be reckoned with. Gladstone, for instance, was fully aware of this in his concern over

the nonconformist conscience. One thing strikes me as certain: if any foreign manufacturers had entered this country intending to use British labour to make their motor cars or whatever, they would have been given short shrift. It would have been made clear to the foreigners, none too politely, that the British were capable of doing all their own manufacturing. They had not trained themselves in the virtues of self-reliance and independence for nothing.

Not surprisingly, many of those religious Victorians were fundamentalists, believing that everything contained in the Bible was literally true. There were also among them a number of strict Sabbatarians, who would think hard before doing the simplest task on the Sabbath day. They were strongly opposed to working on Sunday. It was the Sabbatarians among the Weaver watermen, whose insistent demands on the Trustees of the River Weaver Navigation, resulted in the Weaver locks being closed during the hours of Sunday.

There was supposed to have been a puritanical Sabbatarian who achieved notoriety by killing his cat on Monday for killing a mouse on Sunday. I don't think this character ever lived in Wharton, though Vicar Francis E. Powell, in his Story of a Cheshire Parish mentions that he was reputed to have lived in Over. The truth seems to be that this nameless puritan, who appears to have dwelt in a number of localities all at the same time, was a fictitious character conceived by an anti-Sabbatarian.

It can be claimed, I think, for the religiously minded Victorians that they had a clearer understanding of the problem of evil than their descendants of today. They had grasped the fundamental truth that the source of evil lay at a deeper level than man's conscious mind was able to penetrate. Man in his own strength alone could not hope to combat it. If it was not to destroy him, evil, which permeated human life, had to be resisted. The only way was by appealing to the ultimate authority, God, as the Christian church had done through the ages. Conceived as the embodiment of evil the devil was real enough, and the only power great enough to defeat him was the power of the Almighty.

Well, today, we have the psychologist. How well he is succeeding or failing may be judged by the continuous increase in violence, mugging, vandalism, theft, social disorder and all the rest. Perhaps - to borrow a Victorian expression - the job is above his barrow. This is not to decry the valuable work of the psychiatrist, but merely to point out that he, like all human mortals, is tethered to the stake of his limitations. The highest voice ever raised on this earth said in the context of one of His most quoted utterances: "Deliver us from evil." The religious Victorians repeated these words in their daily prayers. Maybe the people of today have something to learn from this practice.

It would be wrong to give the impression that all religiously minded Victorians performed their religious practices with equal ardour. Within a broadly accepted framework of beliefs, ideas, and standards of behaviour, there were differences in the extent to which various individuals adhered to them. Between the fanatical devotee and the practical moderate there was a range of gradations.

Criticising old fashioned Victorians from a viewpoint of assumed superiority can be an amusing pastime. But if some of them could come back to earth, what would they, in their turn, think of the present-day scene? It is a fair guess that they would be nonplussed by the mass of mindless trivia in which their descendants had, quite unabashed, involved themselves. And they would be amazed at the plaudits, prizes and honours heaped on the purveyors of the branch of puerile trivia called entertainment.

They might recall that it had been their habit to regard life as an uphill struggle. But here, it might seem to them, was a generation which now viewed their term on earth as a downhill joy-ride on a smoothly moving sledge of permissiveness, materialism, sex and trivia. The religious Victorians were nothing if not serious-minded, and our visitors might feel constrained to issue the warning that all downhill joy-rides must reach the bottom of the hill. And then what? Well, it could be the swamp of decadence ready to engulf the joy-riders. Of course, I am bound to say I don't know what advice our imaginary visitors would give. They might say carry on having a good time. But it is not very likely. What I do know is that in their time the religious Victorians were a formidable force, and any account of that time would be in serious default if it did not attempt to convey some idea of their beliefs and outlook on life, and the importance of their influence on the community.

16. DICKENS AND STANTHORNE.

Stanthorne became a part of Wharton parish in 1849, when Wharton was detached from the parish of Davenham, and given the status of a separate parish.

Stanthorne Lodge in Middlewich Road, and only a short distance from Stanthorne Hall, lays claim to fame in a story that Mary Chatterton (or Chadderton) who lived at the Lodge, was the real-life lady on whom Charles Dickens based the character of Miss Havisharn in Great Expectations.

Mary Chatterton was deeply in love with a man named Whitaker, who, it is thought, was connected with nearby Stanthorne Hall. Her love was reciprocated and the couple were engaged. The date of the wedding was settled, and preparations for the event were almost completed. Then, at the last moment, the lovers came fully to realise that an insurmountable obstacle (always in the background) stood between them in the differences in their strongly held religious beliefs. The differences could not be reconciled; Mary, for her part, being unable to adapt herself to the stern Nonconformist beliefs and disciplines to which her fiancé was committed. The arrangements were cancelled. The break was final.

To Mary Chatterton it was a devastating blow. From its painful effects she was never to recover. For a long period (just how long is not known) she sat in full bridal dress before the fire grate in the room where the wedding feast was to have been held, sunk in the bitterness of her disappointment.

Poor Mary Chatterton! As she sat there brooding, she was not to know that one day she would be chosen as the model for one of the famous fictional characters in English Literature.

On a lecturing visit to Chester (or was it during a visit to Crewe Hall?) Dickens is said to have heard the Stanthorne Lodge story. His questing imagination grasped the fictional possibilities of Miss Chatterton's extraordinary behaviour, hence Miss Havisharn.

Miss Chatterton lost her life in a fire at Stanthorne Lodge. But was her death the end of her earthly sojourn? Not quite. It is said that in the months of June and October the ghost of Mary Chatterton visits the room which was the scene of her strange behaviour with all its aching sadness. Her ghostly visits are always presaged by the tinkling of a bell. Some fleshly mortals aver they have even heard the soft plaintive tones of a woman's voice associated with the apparition.

Well, the foregoing is one version of the Stanthorne Lodge story. In writing it in my own words I have followed with modifications and omissions the story as it appeared

in the local Guardian dated 22nd December, 1981, the details apparently being given to Anne Charlesworth by John Glaser who was the proprietor of the restaurant which existed at the Lodge at that time.
Whatever the- truth, in part or whole, of the Mary Chatterton story, there seems little doubt it has travelled far beyond Stanthorne and Wharton, attracting the interest and touching the imagination of people in countries as far distant as Canada and the U.S.A.

The hall at Stanthorne, not far from the Lodge, is a brick mansion plainly visible from Middlewich Road. Despite its prominence from the roadway, it always seemed to me to convey an air of remoteness not to be penetrated. It was built near the site of an older hall. The Old Hall was guarded by a moat, which was filled up when the Old Hall was pulled down.

About the middle of last century the area of Stanthorne was reckoned to be 1,055 acres with a population of 156. The principal landowners at that time included such locally well-known names as James F. France (family name later changed to France-Hayhurst), John Dudley, Richard Dutton, William Court and others. The hall was then the property of Richard Dutton who lived there.

In the 13th and 14th centuries Stanthorne Manor belonged to the Raker family. At a later period it came into the ownership of the Whalleys who held it for several generations. After a succession of changes of ownership, the title of lord of the manor passed to James F. France.

17. THE WHARTON SALT INDUSTRY.

Central to the story of Wharton is its considerable salt industry.
Without it Wharton must have remained a thinly populated agricultural area. The extent of that industry, reaching as it did world-wide importance, does not seem to have been fully appreciated, not even by Wharton people themselves.

After the repeal of the salt tax which became operative in 1825, Winsford's salt industry steadily expanded until Winsford - though a late starter after Northwich and Middlewich - could claim to be the world's leading salt town. The peak was reached in 1881, when shipments of white salt down the Weaver from Winsford rose to 834,306 tons and this figure does not, of course, include the large quantities which by that time were being dispatched by rail.

Before the formation of the Salt Union in 1888, the works of the town's largest manufacturers, with the notable exception of H. E. Falk whose works were at Meadow Bank, were mainly on the Wharton side of the Weaver. These included the well-known names of Verdin, Deakin, Stubbs, Evans and the Cheshire Amalgamated Salt Works. All of them were active during the boom period of the Cheshire salt trade in the second half of the 19th century (particularly the years between 1870 and 1881) and some handsome fortunes were made. Jos. Verdin & Sons, who previously had salt interests in Northwich, came to Winsford in 1863, and continued to operate there until their works were absorbed by the Salt Union. As entrepreneurs Verdins were among the most successful ever known in the district, and in their hey-day their salt interests were probably the largest in the world with Deakin and Stubbs not far behind.

During the 19th century, vast quantities of Cheshire salt were exported to many parts of the world, notably to the United States, Canada, West Indies, South America, India, East Prussia, Norway, Iceland, Denmark, Belgium, Holland, West Africa, Australia and New Zealand. Bearing in mind the essential importance of salt to industry, agriculture, food production and household economy, it is surprising that Wharton, which played a major part in that vast 19th century enterprise of supplying so many parts of the world with so indispensable a commodity as salt, should barely rate a mention in the written histories of Cheshire.

Between 1870 and 1890 Cheshire salt shipped (abroad and coastwise) mainly from the Port of Liverpool, averaged one million tons per year. Incredible as it may sound today, it is true to say that the salt industry on which the United States once depended, was substantially situated in Mid-Cheshire. This vast output called for a

titanic, collective effort, mainly manual, on the part of the Mid-Cheshire salt workers. It was made under the spur of the worst evils of unrestricted private enterprise and the fiercest competition between the salt works proprietors.

As the salt trade declined in the latter part of the century, so intense did competition become that some salt was sold for half the cost of producing it. Prices varied between 3/6d and 3/- per ton, sometimes falling to 2/6d. Small firms with little capital were driven either to the edge of bankruptcy or forced into it. Some manufacturers withdrew from the contest, leaving the field to the heavyweights who, in the grip of "passion and pique" strove to break one another regardless of the cost. Several attempts were made by the manufacturers to form associations for fixing and maintaining prices, but all proved abortive. Either the fixed or higher prices let in outside competitors, or some members of the associations by devious practices broke the agreement.

From their self-destructive course, the manufacturers, who had survived were at last diverted by the formation of the Salt Union, which embraced some sixty firms whose combined output amounted to over 90 per cent of the country's salt production. At its inception in 1888 the Salt Union was probably the largest joint stock company in existence in this country. In all this strenuous activity of the Mid-Cheshire salt industry in the last century, the Wharton works played a significant part.

People sometimes ask what caused the decline of the Cheshire salt industry which started about the middle of 1880's. There were a number of reasons. Importing countries began to meet their requirements of salt from their own resources, and then to become competitors in foreign markets. Foreign competition became rife. The substantial U.S.A. trade was brought to a quick end by the operation of the McKinley tariff. A particularly heavy blow was dealt on the home front when, in the chemical industry, the Leblanc process which had consumed common salt on a large scale, began to be replaced by the ammonia-soda (Solvay) process in which brine was substituted for salt. During the period of the Leblanc process, Brunner, Mond and Co., had consumed Cheshire salt on a vast scale. The early years of the Salt Union were an unhappy period. Some idea of the extent of decline of the local industry may be gleaned from the fact that in the Winsford area rates were paid in 1888 on 648 pans, a figure which by 1912 had fallen to 342.

After 1888 all the salt works in Wharton belonged to the Salt Union. Chiefly for administrative purposes, the Salt Union formed its many works into groups called divisions, numbering a dozen or more in all.

All the Wharton salt works have now vanished into the mists of bygone days. What were they like? Where, to begin with, were they situated?
Well, if, say, just before the outbreak of World War I, you had taken a walk along the

tow path on the Wharton side of the Weaver, taking note only of the works on that side, and beginning your walk at Winsford Bridge, the first works you would have seen, a few hundred yards down river - standing high on the embankment - would have been the Salt Union's Number One Division, works which previously belonged to Richard Evans (later Joseph Evans). Evans also owned salt works on the Over side of the river named Dutch works. Richard Evans entered the Winsford salt trade in 1856, and held his own against the ruthless competition of the time, until his works were absorbed by the Salt Union.

Next, after Evans's works, came two large works called Birkenhead works and Uploont works, both at near water level. These formed the major part of the Salt Union's No. 2 Division, and before the birth of that company, they had been the mainstay of Verdins' salt interests in Winsford. The foremen of these works at or about the start of World War I were Jack Hough and Edmund Astles.

The importance of the salt works foreman can hardly be overstated. He was primarily responsible for almost everything that went on both in manufacturing and distribution.

Things rarely proceeded smoothly. Trouble of one sort or another was never ending. He worked long hours, and to ensure that he was securely chained to his job, his house (which would belong to the firm) was usually situated on or near the works. Yes, the life of a salt works foreman was hard. But there were compensations. In his domain, his power and authority were challenged only by the proprietor or manager, who relied heavily on him. He could hire and fire. And, of course, he enjoyed a fair measure of that much coveted human adornment - prestige.

Farther downstream, on the top of the high embankment, was No. 5 Division. These large works had belonged to the once famous Cheshire Amalgamated Salt Works Company, which, when it was formed in 1866 under the chairmanship of Christopher Kay, included the firm of John Kay and Son. This company also owned works in Northwich and Sandbach. Christopher Kay was a member of the Salt Union's first board of directors and at that time he lived at Davenham Hall. Previously, both Christopher Kay and his father, John Kay, had lived at Winsford Lodge. In 1914 the foreman of No. 5 Division, which incorporated Wharton Railway and River works, was John Henry Barnes, a member of a family well-known in the Wharton salt industry. The name Cheshire Amalgamated Salt Works was contracted to 'Malga" by the Wharton salt workers in their everyday parlance.

Not far from the Cheshire Amalgamated works, though much nearer to river level, were the works of the Salt Union's No. 3 Division, which before 1888 were operated by Stubbs Brothers. The Stubbs family first entered the salt trade in 1861 under the name of J. & R. Stubbs. They seem to have made little progress until 1875, when

they acquired the leases of National Works and Little Meadow works. From that time their success was such that in a few years they were not far behind giants like Deakin and Verdin. Before their acquisition by Stubbs Bros., the National works had for 37 years been in the possession of the National Patent Salt Co., hence the origin of the name "*National*" works. There were seven Stubbs brothers engaged in the enterprise, and by local salt men they were often (humorously or otherwise) referred to as the "*seven devils*". There were many offspring of the seven brothers, and the Stubbs family came to be one of the best known in Winsford. During the First World War and for years afterwards the foreman at National works was Frank Dickenson.

Still farther down river, and again on the top of the high embankment was No. 5A Division. These fine works, known as Bostock works, had, before their absorption by the Salt Union, belonged to the Deakin family. George Deakin, the founder of the firm, a shrewd, hardworking man, entered the Winsford trade in 1846. He was a "number one" waterman with craft of his own, and to keep them fully operative, he built a few salt pans. (An account of the "number one" watermen is given in the chapter headed Wharton on the Weaver). Gradually Deakin expanded his trade until his firm became the largest in Winsford. After his death, the firm was carried on by his widow, Ann, and later by J.B. Deakin. Deakins were large exporters to the American market. In the position of the town's leading salt proprietors, Deakins were eventually surpassed by Verdins. During the 1914-18 war, the foreman at Bostock works was Samuel Slack.

The last of the works on the Wharton side of the river, about a mile distant from Bostock works, and not far from Vale Royal, were Newbridge works, No. 6 of the divisions. The New Bridge Salt Company was started in 1850, and after trading for fifteen years, it was taken over by Verdins. The Newbridge works were near Moulton, where most of the people employed at the works lived. For many years the Salt Union's foreman at Newbridge works was John Williams, who also lived at Moulton.

The river-side warehouses would be stocked with thousands of tons of white salt awaiting shipment. Visitors to the works, accustomed to thinking of salt as the proverbial "pinch", were amazed at the sight of those veritable white mountains. Bostock works alone might have thousands of tons in its warehouses in readiness for shipment to the fishery trade.

Skirting the east side of those 'Wharton works was the London and North Western Railway. Cheshire, Bostock and Newbridge works were very near to the main line. With the Weaver on one side, and the L.N.W. railway running almost parallel with it on the other side, the 'Wharton works were ideally positioned for shipping salt both by water and rail. It was originally intended to lay the rail track nearer to the Weaver between Winsford and Bostock works, but this intention was thwarted by the

opposition of John Dudley, much - as some thought at the time - to the disadvantage of Winsford.

On its formation the Salt Union decided to convert Verdins' main office, which was on the site of the Birkenhead and Uploont works, into their own Central Office for the Cheshire district, and the building continued to be used for that purpose throughout the 50 years of the Company's separate existence. It was always called the Central Office. It caught fire and was almost wholly demolished in 1939. Many valuable records were destroyed. In Verdins' time part of the office building was used as a house, and was the home of the foreman of the nearby works, Joseph Fryer, another well-known name in the Winsford salt industry.

Also on the site of the same works (Birkenhead and Uploont) was the Salt Union's Works and Estates Department. Employed by this department were joiners, bricklayers, plumbers, painters and other types of craftsmen whose work was to repair existing buildings, build new ones, and maintain the many houses and properties owned by the Company. Many of the houses in Moulton belonged to the Salt Union. Mention of the Works and Estate Department recalls such names as W.A.Bennett (surveyor) Aldred Jones (architect) and foremen Reuben Ollier and Bill Hulse. Also on this No. 2 Division site was the company's Central Stores, one of whose functions, besides stocking bags and all manner of materials, was the branding of bags, work essential to export trade. William Pickstock and Frank Atherton were both in turn in charge of the Central Stores.

Turning to the Cheshire Amalgamated works, an important feature of those works was the packing room, where 60 to 100 female workers were engaged in packing salt into cartons, tins, bottles and 4-lb and 7-lb white cotton bags, all for household use. Brands familiar in their day were Sceptre, Falk, Union, Falcon, Black Horse, Diamond and Co-op. There were many others. Notwithstanding the large variety of containers, the same kind and quality of salt went into them all. This was the famous dairy salt, reckoned by nearly all old salt men the best salt of all. It was simply handed lump salt ground in the grinding mill. Dairy salt and factory-filled salt were much favoured in America, a preference which helped prolong the export of Cheshire salt to the United States.

Sometime during the inter-war period, the work of putting table salt into packets was transferred from Cheshire works to Meadow Bank works where vacuum salt was packed instead of dairy. The Cheshire works packing room caught fire near the end of last century, when considerable damage was done. At the time the fire bell began to ring, Winsford's fire brigade was taking part in the town's May Festival procession from which the firemen made a speedy withdrawal.

Adjacent to the Cheshire Amalgamated works, and near to the Winsford railway

junction, were the Salt Union's Wagon Shops, where a full complement of wagon builders, joiners, blacksmiths, wagon lifters, painters, sign-writers, and other skilled and semi-skilled workers maintained the Company's Winsford rolling stock, probably numbering some 1,400 wagons and 600 vans. New trucks were also built at the shops. The wagons were chiefly used for carrying bulk salt and fuel, and the vans for bagged salt. Keeping records of the comings, goings and whereabouts of so many trucks, not forgetting the wagon sheets, was no light clerical task. Shortly after World War I, Arthur Clarke succeeded Will Hughes as Manager.

At one time the Salt Union was a hive of skilled and semi-skilled workers. It must have been close to being self-contained. As well as the craftsmen employed at the engineering shops, dockyard, wagon shops and works and estates department, each separate works such as National works, Bostock works, etc., had its own cadre of joiners, bricklayers, blacksmiths, plate-layers and pansmiths (a team of pansmiths comprised two pansmiths, a holder-up and a rivet boy). This abundance of skill impressed the Hon. Lionel Evelyn Ashley (son of Lord Salisbury) when, as a member of the Salt Union's first board of directors, he visited the Winsford works for the first time. This is how the Winsford Guardian reported part of his speech made at the opening of the Winsford Free Library on 14th December 1888

> " *…..he was immensely struck with the establishment of that hive of wealth - to see the aggregation of capital and labour in those great works. He was struck more particularly with the multitudinous departments there were in the salt manufacture. The manufacturers not only made salt, but they were their own architects, their own builders, their own carpenters. They made their own trucks, they made their own machinery, and they did their shipbuilding as well. To manage all this needed a Von Moltke or a Bismarck, for it really did require extraordinary talent to carry on such work, and it reflected the highest credit upon the people of the district that it had been carried on so successfully..."*

Such was the tribute paid by the Hon. Lionel Evelyn Ashley to Winsford craftsmen of 1888. It is also a reminder of the high place occupied by the tradesman in Victorian estimation. Very many Victorian parents were anxious to put their sons to a trade. Even Queen Victoria's husband, the Prince Consort, insisted that his son, Edward, Prince of Wales, should have some training in the use of tools.

Shortly after World War I, the Salt Union carried out a reorganisation scheme. So far as the Wharton works were concerned, Birkenhead, Uploont and National works were re-grouped under the name of South Works Area.
Cheshire Amalgamated, Bostock and Newbridge works were formed into a group called North Works Area.

The manager of the newly constituted South Works Area was Edgar Stubbs. He was the grandson of Robert, the eldest of the seven Stubbs brothers and the brother of Frank Stubbs, an engineer of some repute, who was the manager of the Company's large works at Weston Point. Frank Stubbs played a leading part in erecting in 1911, the Salt Union's Weston Point vacuum plant, the foremost and largest of its kind in the country at that time. When a young man, Frank Stubbs made a working model of a locomotive from a Victorian five-shilling piece. It was an ingenious achievement, attracting praise from local craftsmen and the mechanically-minded. It was remembered and talked about for years.

North Works Area was brought under the management of Henry Leigh Fryer, who was the son of Joseph Fryer, Verdins' foreman at their Birkenhead and Uploont works. Henry Fryer gained his early experience of the salt industry as a clerk in Verdins' office. He was for some years manager of the Salt Union's Sandbach works, when he lived at Wheelock House owned by the Company. There were at least three successive generations of Fryers in the Winsford salt industry - Joseph, Henry and Henry's son, Norman, a foreman at the Winsford works.

Salt making being a localised industry, sons tended to follow their fathers at the works, sometimes for several generations. Many Winsford salt workers spent the whole of their working lives in the industry. Indeed, on taking over the Salt Union, I.C.I. officials expressed surprise at the high proportion of long-serving employees.

The Barnes family had four successive generations of foremen in the Winsford salt industry. William Barnes was Verdins' foreman at Newbridge works; his son, John Henry, was foreman at the Cheshire Amalgamated works; his grandson, William Henry, was also a foreman at the Winsford open-pan section, and his great-grandson, Jack, was a foreman at West Area works at Meadow Bank.

Mention must be made of W. J. Parker, an outstanding figure in the local salt industry. Like Henry Fryer, Parker began his career in Verdins' office. He rose to the position of the Salt Union's works superintendent, and became an acknowledged authority on salt and the salt industry and also on the River Weaver. In the 1930's he gave lectures on both subjects in the Winsford Library. In the later part of his career with the Salt Union, he was somewhat overshadowed by the dominant personality of G. W. Malcolm, the Company's managing director and chief engineer. As a young man, Parker was a keen racing cyclist. His home was in Northwich and in cycling to Winsford daily, he took advantage of the Weaver's tow-paths for practising his sport.

As already mentioned, the first salt works in Wharton were built in 1797 by John Dudley on his own river-side flat land, near the site later occupied by Colin Stewart's silica works. When after a long search, Dudley at last found brine, it came with a rush in such a plentiful supply that his men had difficulty in getting safely out of the

shaft. Dudley was so successful, and retained his prominence in the Winsford trade for so long, that he came to be called the "salt king".

The first salt works to be built in Winsford, were however, either on or near the site of Knights Grange works on the Over side of the Weaver, the land belonging to the Cholmondeley family of Vale Royal. In the early days, salt works were preferably built on the Over side, because on that side of the river there was a larger area of flat land. The banks on the Over side were mostly lower than those on the Wharton side, where in some parts they were very high. Brine in low ground would be more easily discovered.

An interesting character in the local trade was William Furnival, who, in addition to works in Wharton, had salt interests in Droitwich, France and Belgium. In 1828 land was leased to him by Josiah Perrin, who was himself active in the Winsford trade between 1829 and 1853. This was the land on which National works were later to stand. Here, in due course, were to be erected works said to have cost £105,000, a very large sum for those days, especially when it is considered that a small works consisting of three or four pans could be put up for little more than the price of a decent ordinary-sized house.

Furnival was a man of enterprise with an inventive turn of mind. His obvious potential was seen as a threat to the interests of his unscrupulous competitors. They conspired to bring about, by devious means, his incarceration in a prison in France where he had contracted debt. He escaped after four months. The story of all this is long and rather complicated, and was told in detail by Furnival himself in his Statement of Facts published in 1833.

It was Furnival who in 1830 opened the first of the two rock salt mines to be worked successfully in Winsford. All previous attempts to open mines in Winsford had been defeated by the strength of the head of brine, which flooded the shafts. Furnival devised a means of overcoming this difficulty in opening his mine near to the National works. The mine was called the Wharton or National mine. It ceased to operate in 1841 after some eleven years.

The existing Meadow Bank mine, now the only rock salt mine in this country, was opened in the 1840's by Falks, who did not seem to be troubled by the wild brine difficulties. After being idle since 1893, this mine was re-opened consequent on the flooding of the Adelaide mine in Northwich in 1928. In the incredibly short space of three weeks, rock salt from the long disused mine was being brought to the surface ready for shipment. The speed and efficiency of this feat was due largely to the knowledge, ingenuity, and drive of Robert Bennet, the manager at that time of the Salt Union's engineering department. Like William Furnival, Robert Bennet had an inventive tum of mind, and he introduced a number of mechanical innovations into

the salt industry, some of which were patented. Shortly after the merger of the Salt Union with I.C.I. in 1938 he was appointed to the Salt Division board.

All the works on the Wharton bank of the Weaver made their salt by the open-pan method. This method changed comparatively little through the centuries. It proved extremely viable and, despite the many attempts to improve upon it, it has only recently been almost entirely superseded by the vacuum process.

Speaking in 1933 about the durability of the old open-pan, W. J. Parker had this to say:

> *"During my half century's connection with the industry, I have known of and seen dozens of people make effort to cheapen the cost of manufacture by all sorts of processes of applying heat to evaporate brine and patenting their methods. In the main they were nothing but heat catchers. But so far as the open-pan is concerned there has been no alteration, excepting in regard to such problems as pre-heating the brine, better attention being given to grate and chimney areas, return draughts, etc. The old pan is an excellent instrument for efficient evaporation. The ability of its furnaces to bum almost any quality of coal is proverbial..."*

When G. W. Malcolm, a progressive, forward-looking engineer, first saw the open-pan process, his comment was "here is plenty of room for improvement." But before long he had to admit the efficacy of the open-pan as an evaporator. Even so, it took one ton of fuel to produce one-and-half to two-and-half tons of salt.

Looking back some sixty or more years, nearly all the work was done manually by men stripped to the waist. Though it was hard muscular work, the operations directly involved were few and uncomplicated. To be extremely brief: The firemen, after the pans had been filled with brine, started the fires and stoked them. They were the real saltmakers. They regulated the temperatures chiefly by careful use of the damper - the higher the temperature the finer was the grain of the salt. The finest grain was used in the handed lump. Common salt was medium coarse and fishery salt very coarse. At particular times during the evaporating process, the pans were treated ("doped") with alum, glue, soap or butter.

Another task was discharging fuel from railway trucks into the fire- holes, and from there wheeling away in barrows the ashes made by the fires. The work of fuel discharging and ash wheeling was hard, dirty and low paid.

During the process of evaporation, scale would form in the pans. This, after the pans had been emptied of salt, was removed by men called dodgers. They broke the scale with appropriately designed hammers – an operation called “picking” the pan. The pans were then scoured with wire brushes. From time to time scum would gather on the surface of the brine in the pans, especially in the manufacture of fishery salt, for instance, in which the process of crystallization was slower. A simply contrived tool made of long, light strips of wood was used to draw or skim the scum to the interior sides of the pan where it could be disposed of. This operation was called "scumming" the pans, a light task usually allocated to one of the older works labourers.

The name waller, derived from the Anglo-Saxon weallere, a boiler (the German verb wallen, to boil) has a long history in saltmaking. But to whatever occupations within the salt industry it may have been applied in the distant past, it was latterly confined to the saltmen who, beginning work between 3.0 a.m. and 4.0 a.m., raked the salt after it was made to the side of the pan and then scooped it on to the hurdle where it was allowed to drain. There were usually two wallers to a pan - one on each side. Next, the salt would be shovelled into salt carts and taken to the warehouse to await shipment. If the pan which had been "drawn" was a long distance from the warehouse, then, at a particular point, the waller would be relieved of his loaded cart by another man, who would push it the rest of the distance to the warehouse. The work of the relief man was called "running ahead".

After they had "drawn"· the pans and "warehoused" the salt, the wallers would go to the warehouse to load salt - again with shovels - into craft or wagons according to whether the salt was being shipped by river or rail. If bagged salt was being shipped, the bags, after being filled and weighed, would be stitched by female workers, and then taken on trolleys to craft or truck by men or youths called truckers. Chutes might be used to carry both bulk and bagged salt into the holds of the craft. When bagged salt was being shipped, there would be men (who had to be strong) called trimmers who stowed the bags, the usual weight of each bag being one or two hundredweights. There would, of course, be one or two trimmers to distribute the salt evenly over the hold of the craft when bulk salt was being shipped by river.

Loading bulk salt used to be reckoned an integral part of the wallers' job, and in the bad old days the only extra reward they received for the work was an allowance of beer made in kind. And what a thirsty job it must have been! For sometimes two craft would be loaded with bulk salt at the same works in a single day by a relatively few men after drawing the pans and taking the salt to the warehouses. I am assured that three craft have been loaded in similar circumstances on the same day, but the total tonnage could not be recalled. Mr. George Sankey, a retired saltman, who during his working life did most of the jobs connected with open-pan salt production,

was able to recall that he was one of sixteen who loaded two craft in one day with vacuum salt in bulk at I.C.I's West Area works. The gang consisted of fourteen loaders and two breakers (men who with picks broke down the salt which had caked and become hard). One of the craft was the steamer *Decempedes* (Captain Herbert Atherton) loaded with 267 tons, and the other the dumb barge *Florence* (Captain C. Hulse) loaded with 282 tons making 549 tons in all. It is easy to imagine that on that day that warehouse was no place for weaklings. The beer allowance made in kind was later committed to a money payment of sixpence per ten tons.

With constant shovel work the hands of these workers attained a hardness which might be compared with the proverbial hide of the rhinoceros - so hard in fact that a match could be struck on the palms. And what of the shovels? They were big and heavy. Four shovelfuls of vacuum salt filled a hundred- weight sack. After drawing their pans, followed by a long day's loading in the river warehouses, these men could be seen in the early evening making their way home (cans and baskets hanging from their shoulders) with drawn faces, slowly dragging themselves along, drained of strength and energy. If there was little or no loading to be done, the wallers would be going home at about 10.0 a.m.

This very brief description of the jobs involved in the open-pan process applies only to the manufacture of common, fishery and similar kinds of salt. The making of handed lump salt was different. For an account of the work of the handed lump maker, it might be difficult to improve on that given by W. J. Parker:

> "*The (handed lump) salt maker begins his shift quite early on Monday morning ... by picking and dodging his pan of the week's accumulation of scale, cleaning out his four large fireplaces, filling the pan with brine, lighting his fires and heating up, and generally discarding the first boiling. These operations take several hours before the pan is filled with salt which is satisfactory and ready for tubbing. After tubbing, it is allowed to drain on the "dogs", which is an iron frame on the inside of the pan and later placed on the hurdles or platform, at the side of the pan in the moulds or tubs for further drainage. It is then turned out and carefully "happed", or shaped and wheeled into the hot drying stove, where the (handed) lumps of salt remain from three to four days. The temperature of this stove ranges round about 130-140 ^{o}F. The work of making the salt is done amidst all the evaporating steam, and you will remember that he has to drive away three tons of water before he obtains a ton of salt, which under some atmospheric conditions is anything but pleasant. Each man handles about ten tons of coal and fifteen tons of salt per week.*"

The job of the lumprman was reckoned to be the hardest of all.

The lofters were the men who worked in collaboration with the handed lump makers in the almost unbearable heat of the hothouse or stove which adjoined the handed lump pan. Part of their work was to hoist (or "loft") the finished lumps into the mill room above, where they would be ground in the special grinding mill. Not all the handed lumps were ground. Some would be sent to the inland trade in railway vans or lorries, being carefully stowed to guard against breakages. Of a better quality, these would have a finer grain, and be more carefully "happed" and shaped. Handed lumps were made chiefly in three sizes or weights - 80, 120 or 160 to the ton.

The lot of the open-pan salt workers was hard in a harsh world. But it would be wrong to infer from this that they thought of themselves as being oppressed. Far from being cowed or downtrodden, they were free thinking, free speaking men, not fearing to criticise or protest as the occasion arose. They were not easily scared or put on. They regarded the hard physical work and unpleasant conditions which confronted them as the inescapable realities of earning a living in a harsh world. True, the bosses had the whip hand, and had to be deferred to in matters concerning the works.

Terms of contract were non-existent. A job could be terminated at very short notice. A man, whose wife was at home struggling to eke out until the next pay day, might, for some wrong doing, be sacked on the spot. How did the family manage to subsist until the bread winner got another job? I don't know. One can only wonder. But his chance of re-employment might not be too remote. Firms were then smaller and more numerous; much of the work was labour intensive, and unskilled workers were in demand. Before the First World War, it was said that in this country, with a population of some forty millions, the average number of unemployed was a quarter of a million, and most of those were unemployable.

Now all Winsford's white salt is produced by I.C.I's modern, compact, highly efficient vacuum plant at Meadow Bank. The Wharton open-pans with their fire, steam, smoke, soot and grime are no more. By their going hence they have left to be unfolded a human story of massive achievement, of toil, struggle, sweat and hardship, overlaid by man's insatiable acquisitiveness, greed and no-holds-bard competition. Now another take-over is in motion - not by the Salt Union, not by I.C.I., but by Mother Nature herself, as slowly, silently new growth begins to appear, assisted by the Cheshire County Council's scheme to reclaim some 150 acres in the Weaver valley at Winsford despoiled by open-pan salt production.

Yet, notwithstanding the toil, smoke and despoliation, Wharton people can be proud of their association with salt. For besides its obvious uses in industry, agriculture

and the culinary arts, salt has also an honourable social history.

Through the ages salt has exercised a curious influence over the minds of men. From time immemorial it has held a venerated place in the human imagination. In times past it has been a symbol of justice, friendship and good faith. It has been used in the ceremonies of marriage and baptism. It has been incorporated in the ritual of religions, and it has been sanctified by the scriptures. People have believed it to be a safeguard against evil and the Devil, while time-honoured custom, folklore and superstition have all called it into service. Can any other product of industry claim to have held so esteemed a place in the human mind?

Then, returning to the practical uses of salt, there is the unerring judgement of Mrs. Beeton who in her Household Management produces this pearl of brevity: "The importance of salt .... cannot be over-estimated. Salt is indispensable."

18. WHARTON ON THE WEAVER.

Just as there can be no history of Winsford deserving the name, which does not take account of the town's salt industry, so the story of Winsford's salt industry itself cannot be told without reference, however cursory, to its close connection with the River Weaver. Of the development of Wharton it can be said that Wharton itself, the Wharton salt industry, and the Wharton section of the Weaver have all been interdependent.

"The chronicle of the salt industry of Winsford," says Calvert, "is one of the romances of commerce". And he goes on to say that until the Weaver was made navigable to Winsford, the town's output of salt was limited to four pans, and those were probably worked by Middlewich men. This highlights how much the growth of the Winsford salt industry depended on the development of the Weaver.

The Act authorising the Weaver to be made navigable to Winsford Bridge was passed in 1721. Eleven years later craft were able to reach Winsford. In the beginning these craft, then called flats or lighters, were hauled by men, assisted, when conditions favoured their use, by sails, usually a mainsail and a foresail. Mention of these sails, which enabled the craft to navigate the Mersey, brings to mind that sail making, like rope spinning, was once a local occupation. Haulage by horses, which needed a wider and firmer towpath than men, did not become the practice until near the end of the 18th century. Accommodation for the horses was provided at various parts of the river. The average carrying capacity of the early flats was about 70 tons. It was not until 1860 that H. E. Falk introduced the first steam barge into the Winsford trade.

The part played by the watermen, or flatmen as they were then called, in the expansion of Winsford's salt trade was crucial. They fell into two classes - those who owned their flats, dubbed number ones, and those less fortunate who worked for them. The importance of the number ones can hardly be overstated. It is perhaps not going too far to say that the drive, thrust and energy of these men, linked to their go-getting, opportunity- seizing, risk-taking activities provide a microcosm of private enterprise in full spate as it was when laissez-faire was in its heyday. Some of the founders of what were to become the largest salt firms in the world were once number ones - Verdin, Deakin, Capper and others.

Most watermen were ambitious to become number ones. Those who had not sufficient means of their own, would combine to buy a flat. With this they carried salt either for the proprietors who, having no flats of their own, made salt mainly for sale at their works, or for those manufacturers who had not enough flats to meet their

requirements. Many cargoes were provided for the number ones by traders or merchants who, not being manufacturers themselves, bought salt at the works, paid the Weaver dues, and shipped the salt down river in their own names. The number of this type of trader in the early part of last century seems to have been considerable. But the activities of some of them in the trade were of short duration, sometimes no longer than a year. These men had an eye for a quick profit. They tended to come with the good times and depart with the bad; and in the salt trade the pendulum was always swinging. Competition was fierce and the competitors had few scruples. The trade was rarely stable for long; crises recurred; capital was very much at risk, and speculation was the order of the day. The number ones themselves accepted the risks of speculation, and, in good times especially, they would buy cargoes on their own account and carry them to Liverpool on the chance of finding a buyer.

Shrewd, thrifty, hard-working, with a keen appreciation of the value of money, these Weaver flat owners were expert in husbanding their resources. Not only did they save enough to tide them over slump periods, but some of them managed to accumulate sufficient money to acquire a few salt pans of their own, with the output of which they aimed to keep their flats fully employed. Profits were ploughed back, and used to buy more pans and flats. Their growing prosperity was helped by the salt brokers of Liverpool, who, besides selling their salt, served them to a large extent as bankers. In time some of the more successful established their own Liverpool office.

The scene was one of flux. Some idea of the bustle and rough-and- tumble of the trade may be got from the fact that during the period 1766-1896 salt in the names of some 300 Winsford shippers (manufacturers, merchants, or carriers) was sent down the Weaver, though 70 or more of them remained in the trade for no longer than a year. The number of firms which stayed in the Winsford trade for 20 years or longer in the same period (including such names as Dudley, Deakin, Falk, Roylance and Verdin) was 34. With 44 years William Court had the longest period, closely followed by the Deakin family with 43 years. Some local people may think they see in the names Roylance and Court a connection with Middlewich Manor.

Before the advent of the railways, large quantities of Lancashire coal were carried along the Lancashire and Cheshire waterways for salt evaporation at Northwich and Winsford. So in the 18th and early 19th centuries coal coming upstream and salt going downstream met in transit on the Weaver.

Not a great deal seems to be known in detail about the way the flatrnen lived and worked in the early days of the Weaver, when the flats were hauled by men, and the Mersey was navigated by sail. W. J Parker, an authority on the Weaver, expressed regret that none of the flatmen of that time had taken the trouble to put his

reminiscences in writing for posterity. A fuller account of the Weaver story may be found in Part 3 of The Winsford Record published by the Winsford Local History Society under the title "Winsford - The Development of Its Communications".

In Wharton Road between East Dudley Street and West Dudley Street are several houses. In my early life one of them was occupied by Abraham Burrows. He was middle-aged, and I remember his pointed beard and pince-nez spectacles. He was secretary or treasurer of the watermen's trade union (or was it their friendly society?). Periodically, on a Saturday evening, the watermen would visit the front room of this house to make their contributions. I have childhood memories of seeing them, after paying their contributions, standing about - especially on summer evenings - in little groups varying from two to six. They would be laughing and joking (what strong voices a lot of them seemed to have!) and gossiping about their work and the affairs they had in common. Above all, they would be maintaining or renewing their fellowship. It was well-known they were a tightly-knit body of men with a strong sense of fraternity.

They took pride in their work and hugged the idea they were doing a special kind of job. Early one Monday morning in the thirties I was travelling in the same compartment as seven or eight of them on a train destined for Liverpool. They were on their way to join their boats. As I remember they were all older than I was then, and I don't suppose that any of them are now living. The conversation turned to G. W. Malcolm, the Salt Union's managing director. "It has to be admitted," one of them said, "he's a clever chap." None seemed to disagree. Then another spoke up: "Ah, he may be a clever chap, but he can't get the 'hang' of our job." "That's true," the others agreed in chorus. "He's lost when he comes to our job." Why I should remember this snatch of trifling conversation after some 50 years I can't imagine. But it does illustrate the notion held by many watermen that theirs was a specialised job requiring a degree of esoteric knowledge and skill belonging only to the initiated.

Perhaps the watermen had some justification for their sense of exclusiveness. After all, they were acknowledged to be the elite of the salt workers, and before a youth was permitted to begin the five years' apprenticeship he had usually to be sponsored by a near relative who was one of the fraternity. This was an occupation in which sons tended to follow their fathers. Thus was the purity of the "strain" preserved. And was it not true that no less an authority than Calvert had said of them: "It is doubtful whether on any navigation in the kingdom so fine a body of watermen, or one so careful and striving, ever existed?".

Down the years the Weaver has figured prominently in the lives of many Wharton people. As watermen, carpenters, fitters, boilermakers, blacksmiths, sailmakers and all the other types of workers engaged in building, maintaining, and working the craft, Wharton men have played a full and worthy part in the Weaver's story. Thus it

has come about that a good deal of Wharton family history is bound up with the Weaver. To give a complete list of the family names of the Wharton watermen (not taking account of all the other occupations connected with the Weaver) may not now be possible. Here are some I am personally able to recall: Atherton, Boden, Brooks, Cross, Curzon, Fitton, Hamlett, Hatton, Hope, Hough, Hulse, Hurst, Jones, Johnson, Kirk, Lightfoot, Lunt, Noden, Robinson, Royle, Smith, Such, Taylor, Walker, Weedall and Wilkinson. There must be many others.

I recall three old Weaver salts from my childhood. They were retired, their work was done, and I should say they were all in their seventies. One of them, stocky, weather-hardened and always to be seen in his seaman's peak-cap was captain Maddock. He lived in School Road. A near neighbour of his was Captain Robinson. He had two sons - David who was a schoolmaster, and Ernest who qualified as a surveyor, joined the Army, and rose to the rank of colonel. One of Wharton's more successful sons, Ernest retained an affection for his birthplace with which he kept in touch in various ways until near the end of his life. The third of the three old watermen was named Dodd. He lived in Ledward Street not far from the other two. A son of his named Harry and daughter Sarah, both taught at Wharton School for many years. Sarah was a talented teacher, and many Whartonians must have remembered her with gratitude in later life.

The craft served the watermen as second homes, and as such each crew treated their own boat with care. It might be said that the crews rivalled one another in keeping their craft in spanking condition. There was a tendency to regard the boats as something more than inanimate objects, and to think and speak of them with feelings akin to affection.

The Weaver, which belongs entirely to Cheshire, and flows through long stretches of the county's beautiful countryside, has exercised a peculiar fascination over the minds of those associated with it. In an attempt to humanize it, it has often been called *"Miss Weaver*", the title of a poem in Egerton Leigh's Legends and Ballads of Cheshire. It is not far from the truth that local people have tended to view their river through an aura of romance. Young boys usually pass through a period of wanting to be engine drivers (in my day) or the like. Many local youngsters firmly made up their minds that they were going to work on the boats when they grew up. It is not unlikely that this romantic view of the Weaver was stimulated by the great variety of fascinating names which those workaday craft, built solely for cargo-carrying, bore. What thought and imagination must have gone into choosing them! What personal reasons lay behind the choice of some of them? Were they the names of wives, sons, or daughters? To scan through a list of some of those names might prove a pleasant diversion. To the imaginative it might even seem like going on a kind of romantic journey.

One such list was compiled by Arthur Atherton, a Whartonian whose working life was spent on the clerical staff of the Salt Union and I.C.I., He came of a family of Weaver watermen. His father, and others of his antecedents, sailed the Weaver all their working lives. Some of them were number ones, and one of their flats was called the Owen. Arthur was a Weaver enthusiast. He prided himself on his knowledge of the river with its watermen and craft. Spurred by some comment made at the time, he took up pen and paper, and produced in a few minutes the following list of names of craft which had served, or were serving, in the I.C.I.'s Salt Division fleet. This occurred about 1950. The list came into my possession and I have kept it ever since. It would be a pity if some attempt were not made to preserve the names of these craft (many of them once local household names) in a readily accessible form, for it is difficult to think of anything more likely to bring to mind the Weaver's good old days. In presenting the list, it must be pointed out that on the outbreak of World War I, the names of craft associated with enemy countries like Germany and Austria were quickly changed

The pre (1914-18) War names are shown in brackets. Here is the list:

STEAMERS *(or PACKETS as they used to be called): Arabia, Acme, Albion, America, Argosy, Antigua (Austria), Brazil, Burmah, Bengal, Ceres, Chanticleer, City of London, City of Liverpool, City of Washington, Cynosure, Dauntless, Dolphin, Decempedes, Development, Emperor , Excelsior, Expert, Express, Fire Fly, France, Herald of Peace, Inflexible, Lord Delamere, Mabel, Monarch, Natal, National, Nil Desperandum, Opus, Priscilla, Pacific, Persia, Phoenix, Russia, Standard, Syria, Vale Royal, Water Fly.*

DUMB BARGES *- Africa, Australia, Belgium, Corona, Charles, China, Dorothea, Doctor, Denmark, Escort, Elizabeth, Florence, George Henry, India, James, John William, Lizzie, Lady Delamere, Lord Stanley, Lydia Ann, Madrid, Merchant, Mary Jane, Mary Lizzie, Mauritius (Prussia), Mountaineer, Nonpareil, Norway, Riversdale, Robert, Scotland, Siberia, Sun, Sweden, Two Sisters, Vale of Clwyd, Westminster, Westmorland, Will Scarlet and Zanzibar (Berlin).*

The above list does not, of course, distinguish between wood and iron vessels and the variations in carrying capacity, though I have no doubt that Arthur Atherton, who died at the age of 66 in 1961, would have had most of that information at his fingertips. The list is a very long way from being exhaustive of all Weaver craft in the Winsford trade. This becomes clear when it is made known that as long ago as 1840, there were some 300 flats plying the Weaver in the Cheshire salt trade. In an article contributed to *Cheshire Life* in 1934, Parker states that about 1889 *"there*

were 1,250 pans in the Cheshire salt towns, necessitating approximately 2,300 'lighters' on the River Weaver..."· This seems an incredible number of craft.

On the subject of craft's names it would be remiss not to recall that John Garner & Co., whose salt works were situated immediately over Winsford Bridge on the Over side of the river, had six craft - three steamers named *Algeria, Eclipse, and Wrenbury*, and three dumb barges named *Abyssinia, Aston, and Wern*. The names Wrenbury, Aston, and Wern were probably taken from places in Cheshire and Shropshire in which, or near to which, John Garner, a local man, owned land. Farther down river next door, as it were, to John Garner & Co., were Hamlett's salt works. Hamlett's had two steamers named Premier and Prince of Denmark. These eight craft would be those most commonly seen by local people. Pedestrians crossing Winsford Bridge on its north side would often pause to watch these craft being loaded.

The Weaver at Winsford is now dormant. What the future holds for it nobody knows. One thing can be said with certainty: the river will never again see the like of those old watermen with their salt-carrying craft. Both served their day well[1] and that day has gone forever.

As a tailpiece to the foregoing account of the Weaver, a short description of a routine trip down the river aboard one of I.C.I. Salt Division's steamers could hardly be more appropriate. Such a trip was made by Mr. Arthur Jones of Wharton on behalf of *Grains of Salt,* supplement to ICI Magazine. Mr Jones handed me his notes from which I wrote the following account.

> "*In keeping with the persistently bad weather of a disappointing summer, Wednesday, 29th August, 1956, the day chosen for a Grains of Salt correspondent to take a peep into the way our watermen pass their workaday lives, dawned dull and damp. But the outlook was not entirely without promise, for every now and then the sun, faint and watery, could be sensed rather than seen through a curtain of grey cloud*
>
> *The steam barge Gwalia, loaded with 175 tons of salt destined for West Africa, was nestling in the part of the Weaver known as Woodend. By 8.0 a.m. the crew were aboard - Captain Harry Boden, Mate Harry Fitton, a Wharton man by birth, and Engineer John Moss; a stalwart, weather-beaten, muscle-hardened trio, all worthy sons of the centuries-old line of hardy Weaver watermen.*
>
> *With the silent efficiency of men whose work has become to them as second nature·, the craft was made ready.to sail. But before the ropes could be cast off, information about the state of the river had to be sought*

from Mr. Percy Yardley of the craft section, for as a result of days of heavy rain the Weaver had been in flood.

Mr. Yardley's report having been received, Captain Boden, calling on his 44 years' experience of navigating the waters of the Weaver in all sorts of conditions (he was the fleet's oldest member) decided to make a start, but not before he had given careful consideration to the difficulties likely to be encountered. He explained that when the river was running swiftly the most difficult problem was presented by the Northwich section. Here there were two swing bridges (Hayhurst Bridge and Northwich Town Bridge) separated by approximately 200 yards, and after a craft had passed through the first, it had to "lay to" while that bridge was closed again, and until the bridge crew had walked the intervening 200 yards, and opened the second bridge. In this stretch there were no facilities for tying up, so that with a strongly flowing current this marking time could be a tricky business, demanding skill based on years of experience.

Another hazard to be reckoned with in this section in times of flood lies at the point 'where the river Dane flows into the Weaver. Here, in romantic language, Miss Weaver marries the Dane. Bearing thousands of tons of silt gathered on its course through Cheshire and Staffordshire, the Dane deposits large quantities just below Northwich Town Bridge. Although dredging operations are regularly carried out there, the navigable draught is sometimes reduced to six feet. On this particular day the Gwalia was drawing nine feet of water.

All these difficulties, and many others, had to be carefully considered by Captain Boden. However, at 8.35 a.m. the Gwalia was on her way. Soon, with the captain at the helm, she was passing the Salt Division's Vacuum Plant and Factory Works, and although one would have thought that the twists and turns in this part of the river would have exacted the 'whole of Captain Baden's concentration, he was able sufficiently to divert his attention to exchange pleasantries with his fellow-saltmen at work on the embankment. The practice of swapping pleasantries in this fashion is an old Weaver custom.

With the weather improving, the Gwalia glided smoothly onward towards Vale Royal, the surface of the river being so placid that the trees and hedges, rich in foliage, were reflected as from an endless mirror. Having left Vale Royal behind, Mate Harry Fitton took a turn at the 'wheel, while the captain made the round of his craft, satisfying himself that everything was ship-shape.

And so to Northwich. After passing under Hayhurst bridge came the tricky 200 yards between the two bridges with the need, as already explained, to lay to, or - if you prefer the metaphor - to back pedal. This ticklish operation (nothing new to Captain Boden and his crew) was performed expertly and without fuss. When at last the Northwich Town Bridge swung, an obliging British Waterways vessel offered a helping hand over the shallows, leaving the Gwalia with a clear run to Liverpool.

Thanks to the skill of the steersman in avoiding numerous gaily decorated narrow boats, and in navigating some awkward bends, the passage through the lovely middle reaches of the Weaver was smooth and tranquil. Then there were the several locks. At Marsh lock the Weaver spills into the Manchester Ship Canal. In the Canal the bends were less frequent, but the looming presence of ocean-going vessels reinforced rather than relaxed the need for vigilance.

At Eastham the Manchester Ship Canal joins the Mersey. Here there was a short delay during which both the large and small locks were engaged in bringing into the Canal a veritable fleet of small boats. Then at a given signal the Gwalia entered the large lock alongside the Danish steamer Laila Dan - a difficult manoeuvre made to look deceptively easy by the crew's adroitness.

Now in the Mersey, course was set for Harrington Dock, Liverpool where the Gwalia's cargo was to be transshipped into the West African ship Shonga. On arrival at the dock the Gwalia was secured alongside the dock wall in accordance with instructions shouted across by the dock master. A good trip completed in exactly eight hours. While Captain Boden attended to his craft, Mate Harry Fitton went to get discharging instructions for the next morning. So ended just another day in the working lives of the Gwalia's crew".

Before its transfer to the Salt Division the Gwalia had been in the service of I.C.I. Alkali Division's fleet. At the time of making the trip I have described, the centuries-old trade of shipping salt down the Weaver from Winsford was nearing its end, and it is probable that the number of working craft at Winsford at that time had been reduced to less than twelve. Mr. Jones, a skilled photographer, took a score of excellent pictures of the scenes and scenery through which the Gwalia plied its way. Most of them appeared in Grains of Salt. What happened to them? Mr. Jones doesn't know, nor, it seems, does anyone else. A pity!

EPILOGUE

However hard life may have been before World War I - and in the physical sense it certainly was for many people - this was offset by the faith of the British people in themselves and the confidence that conditions were bound to improve and keep on improving. The belief in the inevitability of progress, implicit in the writings of the great nineteenth century historian, Lord Macaulay, whose reputation and influence were high at that time, was unquestioned. It was a time of optimism. Even the sceptical Bertrand Russell was one of those who *"felt convinced that nineteenth century progress would continue ..."* Britain was a great industrial country, and people quite genuinely believed that if, industrially speaking, a thing was humanly possible, then Britain was the place where it could be done, and the British were the people who could do it. Britain was also a great creditor country, while the financial supremacy of the City of London was unchallenged. The British Empire on which the sun never set was still near its peak.

There was a palpable sense of belonging to a great people who, though relatively few in number, had made a notable stir on the earth's surface. There may have been some little Englanders, but the feeling of national pride was strong and widespread. Everybody was a patriot at heart.

But the clouds of war were gathering. Soon the Great War would start, and then …

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WINSFORD AND WINSFORDIANS IN FICTION.

Not many local people seem to be aware that a full-length novel attempting to depict the life and conditions of the people of a Mid-Cheshire salt town in the latter part of the nineteenth century was once in circulation. That town was almost certainly Winsford thinly disguised.
It was written by Sabine Baring-Gould, a prolific author who enjoyed a high reputation among a large section of the reading public of his day. Entitled "*The Queen of Love*", the novel, in keeping with publishing practice of the time, first appeared in three volumes. It was published as a single volume by Methuen & Co., in 1894. The book has long been out of print, and copies of it are now extremely scarce.

Nowadays, when local people hear of the novel, they are curious to learn something of the story's plot and characters. Through the courtesy of a friend, I was able to read the book as long ago as 1949. The story is long and rather meandering, and cannot be adequately summarized in a few hundred words. However, I attempted a very brief outline of it, which appeared in the Winsford Chronicle.The following is a part of what I wrote:

The action of the story takes place in a town which the author calls Saltwich. It has been assumed that Saltwich is another name for Winsford, and while some of the descriptive passages tend to support this view, the resemblance is, I think, rather too vague to enable the reader to feel with certainty that it was the author's intention to present an authentic picture of Winsford as it once was; especially as both Winsford and Northwich are mentioned as neighbouring towns of Saltwich. Nevertheless, it is probable that Winsford was never far from the author's mind while he was writing *"The Queen of Love"*

Winsford was corning into prominence as a salt-producing centre towards the close of the eighteenth century, and it was during the same period that Saltwich sprang up. What manner of place was Saltwich? At the time the author had in mind it was a town divided against itself. But the line of division, separating the people into hostile camps, was not so muh the material distinction between wealth and poverty as the moral cleavage between the seriously-minded and the frivolous, the religious and the irreligious.

The lower part of the town, inhabited by the frivolous, was vulgarly called Heathendom by the seriously-minded, while the upper part of the town, occupied by the seriously-minded, was dubbed Jewry by the frivolous. Between Heathendom, with its rows of soiled brick cottages, constantly over-shadowed by the threat of

subsidence, and Jewry, built on firmer ground, with its houses of white brick and windows of red brick, railed front gardens, and green venetian blinds, was a perpetual feud. In Heathendom dwelt "the poachers who ravaged Delamere Forest". The remains of the Old Town Hall, which had been destroyed by subsidence, were in Heathendom. Nearby was a "flash" covering a hundred acres. The New Town Hall had been built on the more solid ground of Jewry, and its control was firmly in the hands of the seriously-minded. Saltwich could boast of seven chapels of different denominations, and was a minor stronghold of nonconformity. A reference to some cottages, "built of burnt slack - hard, black cinders - with red brick facings," near to Saltwich recalls the "bass houses" which used to be at Meadow Bank. They were at one time the homes of H. E. Falk's Polish employees.

Outstanding among the seriously-minded was Jabez Grice, resolute, self-disciplined, and confident of his place among the Elect. "Hammer" Grice as he was commonly called was, indeed, the dominating figure of Saltwich's working men and its chapel community. Besides his untiring activities in the public life of the town, he was foreman at Brundrith's Salt Works from which he received a salary of forty shillings a week. "*Certainly no man in that brine-pumping and steaming town had anything approaching his power. In the factory he was greater than Brundrith. In political influence he was greater than the Member of Parliament; in chapel, pastor and elders were his humble servants. No committee could be formed without Grice in it, and, when in it, the fellow-members did little else than register the opinions and resolutions of 'Hammer'."* In over-emphasising the bigotry and narrow-mindedness of Jabez Grice and others of the seriously- minded, it seems to me that the author casts an unfair reflection on the devout nonconformists of bygone times many of whom were doubtless sincere in their religious aspirations and broad in their outlook on human nature.

The hero of the story is Andrew, son of Jabez Grice. Andrew is a handsome, intelligent young man whose character, as was to be expected, has suffered from the overbearing influence of his father. For his services at Brundrith's Salt Works, Andrew was paid fifteen to eighteen shillings a week. He is described as a waller, though from an account which is given of his work, I am inclined to think he would now be termed a lumpman.

Queenie Sant, a beautiful young circus girl, with long golden hair and contrasting dark eyes and lashes, is the heroine, and it is from her rôle in her father's circus as the "Queen of Love" that the book derives its title.

Great consternation prevails among the seriously-minded when it is learned that the circus of Joe Sant (known professionally as Signor Santi) is to give a performance on

the New Town Hall field on the same evening as that on which the Rev. Dr.Tallow, renowned preacher and orator, has been engaged to address an undenominational gathering in the New Town Hall itself. A deputation of the seriously-minded, led by Jabez Grice, arrange, with the connivance of Tom Button who owns the field adjacent to the New Town Hall, for the circus performance to be switched to the Old Hall field which has been rendered unsafe by subsidence. The day appointed for the two great events in Saltwich arrives. Standing on the steps before entering the New Town Hall to take his place alongside Dr. Tallow, and viewing the flaring lights, the booths, and the crowd on the Old Hall field, Jabez Grice makes a prophetic utterance: *"I would,"* said he*, "I would they was all swallowed up alive, like Korah and his company, them and their tents and their wives and their children..."*

Grice's strange plea is partly answered, for the ground beneath the circus performers and their onlookers subsides, and a vivid account is given of the confusion and panic which follow. Fortunately not many people are injured, and the only death is that of Joe Sant, the circus manager, who proves to be Jabez Grice's half-brother. On his death-bed Sant commits Queenie to Grice's care. Queenie herself is rescued from the effects of the subsidence by Rab Rainbow, a poacher and character of ill-repute from the lower part of the town. Rab has already lost his heart to Queenie, only later to become a victim of unrequited love despite his efforts to reform and go straight.

Reminiscent of the severe competition which characterised the growth of the salt industry in Mid-Cheshire, and the doubtful methods which the old proprietors were wont to employ against one another, is the conspiracy of Messrs. Grice, Button and Nottershaw to erect a salt works in opposition to Brundrith on Button's land. Grice has little difficulty in reconciling his religious beliefs with his material advancement and worldly ambitions To make the scheme effective, Grice deserts Brundrith, and persuades Andrew, who is in love with Queenie, to enter into an unhappy marriage with Ada Button, the beautiful, though cold and harsh, daughter of Torn Button.

Just as the scheme is about to bear fruit with Brundrith brought to heel, Button, who is a rogue of unstable character, turns to his own ends the financial negotiations with which he has been entrusted, and leaves his partners in the lurch.

During a spasm of uncontrollable anger resulting from the treachery of Button and the diverse misfortunes which were now thwarting him from many sides, "Hammer" Grice, not the least of whose achievements was the invention of a salt-grinding mill, meets his death by falling into a pan of boiling brine.

"The Queen of Love" is a long novel, and there is not the space to describe the events which finally combine to bring Andrew and Queenie to the altar, and to secure for Andrew a partnership in the firm of Brundrith.

Most of the characters impress me as overdrawn and for me, at any rate, the absence of dialect deprives the work of much of the realism which its background promises. All the same the author has a good story to tell and the reader is easily absorbed in it.

Sabine Baring-Gould's literary output almost amounted to a library in itself - about a hundred volumes on subjects as diverse as fiction, biography, sermons, archaeology, and Continental travel. He was ranked among the twelve most popular novelists of his time. In addition to the many books he wrote, he also found time to write a number of well-known hymns including "*Onward Christian Soldiers*" and "*Now the Day is Over*". As a side line, he was a diligent collector of folk-songs, among his discoveries being *"Widecombe Fair*". Amid this prodigious literary activity, one might easily forget that the Reverend Baring-Gould was also a clergyman and a wealthy landowner. He died in 1924 just short of his ninetieth birthday.

It is said that he spent some months in Winsford and Northwich gathering materials for *"The Queen of Love"*. Here, he mingled with the local people, observing their habits, customs, peculiarities, and in particular their salt-making activities. For part of his stay in Mid- Cheshire, he was the guest of Thomas Ward at his home in Northwich. In his time Ward was acknowledged to be the foremost authority in England on rock salt formations and brine streams. He accepted the invitation of the promoters of the Salt Union to value the salt properties they wished to acquire, and on the formation of the Salt Union in 1888, he became the company's first general manager. So Baring-Gould obviously went to a reliable authority to get his facts right on salt and the salt industry.

It seems incredible, but it has been seriously asserted that Baring-Gould never even visited Cheshire, and that in writing "*The Queen of Love*" he relied for his background facts (and atmosphere) on hearsay. On the contrary, against this assertion, there is the evidence supplied by Harold Lewis Dale who was Thomas Ward's nephew, and who lived with his uncle during his boyhood.

> In reply to a letter asking him for information about Baring-Gould's stay with his uncle, Harold Dale wrote*: "I cannot throw much light on the stay in Cheshire of the Rev. Baring-Gould while he was writing "The Queen of Love" beyond saying that he did in fact stay with my uncle for part of the time. At that period I was only 11 or 12 years old, and I was then more interested in sport than novelists, always excepting such boy's favourites as Henty and Marryat. There is no doubt, however, that the scene of the novel is laid in Winsford and Delamere Forest, and I have distinct recollections that some Winsford worthies thought that the writer's 'delineations' were getting 'o'er hear whoam!"*

Harold Dale's testimony can be taken as reliable. He began his career in the Salt Union's Central Office at Winsford, whence he was transferred to the Company's Liverpool Office to become craft manager. Sometime in the thirties he was transferred to a managerial position at Weston Point. When the Salt Union became part of I.C.I. he was appointed to the post of distribution manager, a position held by him until his retirement. As craft manager, he was for years "boss" of the Salt Union's watermen, who, to a man, held him in high regard.

There is also the word of Mrs. Annie Evans (nee Hulse) well-known in Winsford as a mistress at Wharton Girls' School and afterwards at the Winsford Verdin Technical School. She was very interested in "The Queen of Love", as she was in local history generally. She would be living at the time of the novel's publication. She left on record her own personal testimony that Baring-Gould spent some time in Winsford collecting facts and familiarizing himself with local people, their surroundings and activities. She once told me the name of the local worthy on whom Baring-Gould modelled the character of Jabez Grice, but for the life of me I cannot now recall it. He was before my time. Subsequent inquiries of people who might possibly have heard the local man's name proved unsuccessful. In Mrs. Evans's own words: *"The characters in the book were all Winsford people, and were so well drawn that they were clearly recognisable by the Winsford people of that time."*

Mrs. Evans also recalled that Dr. Crick, Bishop of Chester, when he preached in St. John's Church, Over, dwelt at length in his sermon on the life and work of Baring-Gould, presumably because of Baring-Gould's connection with Winsford.

Another Winsford lady, Mrs. E. Smith was also keenly interested in "*The Queen of Love"* and the book's author, and through the years she collected odds and ends of information about them. A note she made reads:

"(Baring-Gould) spent several months as guest of the Rev. Woodiatt at St. John's vicarage, Over, convalescing after illness."

As Baring-Gould was an Anglican parson, it is perhaps not surprising that *"The Queen of Love"*, besides being an attempt to portray the life and work of the people of a Cheshire salt town, also affects to be a satire on local nonconformity. *As* such I found it mildly unfair, overdrawn, and not very convincing.

The question arises: How did Baring-Gould come to choose Winsford as the subject of a long novel? A probable explanation is that the author's nephew, E. S. Baring-Gould of Guildford, was one of the London members of the Salt Union's first board of directors, and that through that family relationship, and possibly at the nephew's suggestion, the author's fertile imagination came to be directed to the romantic (and tragic) potentialities of Winsford and its salt industry. The co-existence of the two

Baring-Goulds, might well have led to confusion, so that it could have been the London-based nephew who seldom visited Cheshire, and not Sabine, the uncle. The suggestion that the novel's background material (characters and all) was supplied to the author by his nephew is too large a pill of improbability to swallow.

Coming from the pen of so distinguished an author and churchman, it might have been anticipated that "The Queen of Love" would become one of the town's proud showpieces, somewhat after the manner of Knutsford's "Cranford". After all, not every small town has been vouchsafed such an honour. Why then has the novel been almost completely forgotten? It may be that a part of the answer is that the local inhabitants judged it to be not too flattering.

Sabine Baring-Gould, although himself of "gentle and affluent" stock, fell deeply in love with a Lancashire mill girl. He married her, but not before he had sent her to York for two years to be educated. From a long and happy marriage there were fifteen children.

Two stories about Baring-Gould are too good to be omitted. When in his capacity of landowner he was doing the rounds of his estates, he had bells attached to his pony to warn his workmen of his approach, as he did not like reproving the chaps for idling.

A mind as actively creative as his, might be forgiven an occasional absent-minded lapse in the humdrum world of everyday affairs, but hardly one so serious as failing to recognise his own child by sight. Meeting a young child at one of his Christmas parties, he bent down and inquired of her
"And whose little girl are you?" The girl began to cry: *"Yours, Daddy"* she sobbed.