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Lancaster Archaeological and Historical Society

<https://lahs.archaeologyuk.org>

Research Group Newsletter

No. 6: August 2021

Welcome to the Research Group e-newsletter

Regional archive offices, Lancaster, Morecambe and Heysham Libraries, and the Lancaster City, Maritime and Cottage museums are all now open. Full details are provided below.

There is still a requirement at all archive offices for visits and archive material to be pre-booked in advance. Identifying archive material and locating file references using archival search engines and online catalogues can be a daunting task. Many researchers will have tried to locate information online knowing full well that it exists, often from bibliographic references in journals, only to receive an automated message that there are no results. This can consume a great deal of time and be quite a dispiriting experience. It is possible to submit an online form requesting assistance and advice on

specific searches from record office archivists, or even for the archivists to carry out the research on your behalf for a fee. The archivists are invariably helpful but this rather defeats the enjoyment and purpose behind conducting your own research. I have discussed the possibility of organising a training session with Lancashire Archives if this would be of interest to Society members. Please contact me to confirm your interest using my email address at the end of this e-newsletter.

We now have eleven members in the Research Group and are seeking to increase this to twelve. If you would like to join the Research Group or contribute to the e-newsletter, contact details are provided at the end of this e-newsletter.
Michael Haslam

NEWS UPDATE

REGIONAL ARCHIVE SERVICES UPDATE

Archive services update (information is correct as of 06/08/2021)

Cumbria Archive service:

All archive sites are now open. Opening hours are Wednesday to Friday 9:30am-1pm, and all visits and archive material must be pre-booked in advance. A remote enquiry service is available for those unable to visit in person. Further details on this and the procedures for visiting the archives are at this link:

<https://www.cumbria.gov.uk/archives/whatsnew/default.asp>

Lancashire Archives:

Opening hours are Tuesday to Friday 9:30am-12:30pm; 1:30pm-4:30pm. The archives will be also be open on the second Saturday of each month 10:30am-12:30pm; 1:30pm-3:30pm. All visits and archive material must be pre-booked in advance. A remote enquiry service is available for those unable to visit in person. Further details on this and the procedures for visiting the archive are at this link:
<https://www.lancashire.gov.uk/coronavirus/our-services/archives/furtherinformation>

Cheshire Archives and Local Studies:

Opening hours are Tuesday to Thursday 9am-12noon; 1pm-4pm and all visits and archive material must be pre-booked in advance. A remote enquiry service is available for those unable to visit in person. Further details on this and the procedures for visiting the archive are at this link:

<https://www.cheshirearchives.org.uk/visiting-us/visiting-us.aspx>

Manchester Archives: - various opening hours between Monday and Saturday. Further details are at this link:

https://www.manchester.gov.uk/info/448/archives_and_local_history email: info@archivesplus.org

Liverpool Record Office: – various opening hours between Monday to Saturday. Further details are at this link: <https://liverpool.gov.uk/libraries/archives-family-history/>

Derbyshire Record Office: – opening hours are Tuesday to Friday 10am-5pm, and occasional Saturdays, all on an appointment-only basis. Further details are at this link:

<https://www.derbyshire.gov.uk/leisure/record-office/visiting-us/visiting-the-derbyshire-record-office.aspx> or by email: record.office@derbyshire.gov.uk

Wigan and Leigh Archives:- opening hours are Tuesday to Saturday 10am-1pm; 1:30pm-4pm at Leigh Town Hall, Civic Square, Market Street, Leigh, WN7 1DY. Further details are at this link: <https://archives.wigan.gov.uk>

The New Archives Card

The new ARA Archives Card was recently launched and replaced the previous CARN scheme. Users visiting most archives in the UK (including Cumbria, Lancashire and Cheshire) will need this card to access archival material. Begin registration at the following link and visit a participating archive within three months to complete the registration, bringing two forms of ID with you:

https://www.archivescard.com/ARAHUB/About/Card_Guidelines.aspx The Archives Card is free of charge and valid for five years.

Darren N. Webster, Archivist

Lancashire Libraries: Lancaster Central Library, Morecambe and Heysham

Lancaster:

Opening hours are Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday – 9am-1pm; 2pm-5pm.

Wednesday – 9am-1pm; 2pm-7pm.

The Library will be closed from 9am-10am on the first Wednesday of every month for staff training.

Morecambe:

Opening hours are Monday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday – 9am-1pm; 2pm-5pm

Tuesday -1pm-7pm

Wednesday - 9am-1pm

The Library will be closed from 4pm to 5pm on the first Friday of every month for staff training.

Heysham:

Opening hours are Monday, Tuesday, Friday - 9am-1pm; 2pm-5pm

Wednesday and Saturday – 9am-1pm

Thursday – 9am-1pm; 2pm-7pm

The Library will be closed from 9am-10am on the fourth Tuesday of every month for staff training.

All libraries are closed on Sundays, Bank and public holidays, and some additional days. For more information visit:

<http://www.lancashire.gov.uk/libraries-and-archives/libraries/find-a-library>

Lancaster Museums

Lancaster City Museum:

Opening hours are Tuesday-Sunday 10am-12:30pm; 1:30pm-5pm (including Bank Holiday Mondays and Mondays through the summer holidays until 26 August 2021)

No booking required. Admission free. Further details are at this link: <https://www.lancaster.gov.uk/sport-and-leisure/museums/city-museum>

Lancaster Maritime Museum:

Opening hours until 31 October 2021:

Monday to Sunday 10am-12:30pm; 1:30pm-4pm (last admission is at 3:30pm). All areas of the Museum are open including the Tea Room

Opening hours from 1 November 2021 to 21 March 2022:

Monday to Sunday 12noon to 4pm

No booking required. Admission is free to local residents in LA1- LA6 postcode areas (proof of

address required); otherwise, Adults £3, Concessions £2, accompanied children are free. Further details are at this link: <https://www.lancaster.gov.uk/sport-and-leisure/museums/maritime-museum>

Lancaster Cottage Museum:

Opening hours are 10am–4 pm until 30 September 2021. No booking required. Adults £1, Concessions 75p; children under 16, full-time students and local residents in LA1-LA6 postcode areas are free (proof of address required)

Further details are at this link:

<https://www.lancaster.gov.uk/sport-and-leisure/museums/cottage-museum>

Michael Haslam

RESEARCH GROUP WEBPAGE

The Research Group has its own webpage on the Society's website at <https://lahs.archaeologyuk.org>

The LAHS website has recently been updated to include the addition of our e-newsletters, Issues 1 to 5.

GUEST AUTHOR

Dr Gordon Clark tells us about the nineteenth century earthquake in Lancaster

THE LANCASTER EARTHQUAKE OF 1835

One does not associate the Lancaster area with earthquakes but there was a medium-intensity one here in 1835. It occurred on Thursday 20 August 1835 at around 3.30 in the morning. It lasted eight to ten seconds, people said. They rushed out of their houses in consternation. The reports in the *Lancaster Gazette*¹ the following Saturday noted how accounts of the earthquake had come in from Whitehaven, Ulverston, Dent, Kirkby Lonsdale, Garstang and Poulton-le-Fylde. The newspaper was well used to earthquake reports from around the world – those that year in South America and the Caribbean causing hundreds of deaths. The Lancaster earthquake had none and its effects were confined to rattling furnishings, shaking buildings and ‘undulations’ in the ground on Lancaster Sands and at the mill in Dolphinhholme. A coping stone came off a chimney. No serious damage to property was noted. A fisherman off Bispham noted “...a pale fire whirling around with great rapidity over the surface of the sea...”.

So it was a minor tremor? The records of the British Geological Survey's Earthquake Database

Search show that this earthquake had a Local Magnitude (Richter Scale) of 4.4.² For comparison there have been only seven earthquakes in the UK since 1970 that have been of greater magnitude. The epicentre of the earthquake was near Clougha and Rowton Brook Fell (an area with several geological faults) that is some distance from major habited areas and it was at a depth of 11 km. These two features, if accurate, may have reduced the impact. The area got off lightly.

References

1. *Lancaster Gazette* 22 August 1835 (p.3) and 29 August 1835 (p.3)
2. British Geological Survey [British Geological Survey Earthquake Database Search \(bgs.ac.uk\)](https://www.bgs.ac.uk/survey-earthquake-database-search) and [Significant British Earthquakes \(bgs.ac.uk\)](https://www.bgs.ac.uk/significant-british-earthquakes)

PARISH CHURCH ARCHITECTURE: THE HISTORY OF PEWS

Part IV: The controversy surrounding box pews up to the Victorian period

Types of box pew

The size and design of church box pews in England from the late sixteenth century varied quite considerably but all started as symbols of superiority.¹

Some box pews were quite large, fitted with lockable doors and had tall sides to provide privacy and protection against draughts. They were equipped with benches on every side so that a family, farmstead or tenement could sit together and were passed down by yeomen and tenant farmers through inheritance and tenancy of the farm. Other variants included a grand and conspicuously placed enclosure for the most important family of the parish, sometimes with a private doorway from the churchyard.²

More elaborate pews were raised above the cold damp floor of the church, some with a staircase leading up to them, and were variously equipped with a fireplace and table, upholstered seats, carpets and curtains, some even had canopies, to provide greater privacy and comfort. There are very few extant examples of these (Plate 1). After the Reformation, the focus of attention was the pulpit to which the congregation was directed when box pews were installed.³

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries smaller and lower wainscoted (*panelled*) box pews were built

for the use of middle class and wealthier members of the congregation (Plates 2-5). Churches were cold in winter without heating and box pews made conditions more tolerable.⁴

Free seats intended for the poor of the parish and for visitors were provided by open benches in the aisles and galleries and accounted for at least one-fifth of the total number of seats in a church.⁵



Plate 1: Church of St Peter, Croft-on-Tees, North Yorkshire, c.1680

Reproduced with the permission of John E. Vigar at www.johnevigar.com



Plate 3: Pilling Old Church:
Churches Conservation Trust



Plate 4: St Leonard-the-Less, Samlesbury:
Church of England Record 603131



Plate 2: Chapel at Smithills Hall, Bolton: Author



Plate 5: St Mary's Church, Tarleton:
Churches Conservation Trust

Income from box pews

Box pews were secured by payment of a pew rent to the parish by those with the financial means to rent box pews for their exclusive use.⁶ Without pew rents there would have been no means of financing the minister's stipend (*income*), a clerk, church wardens and other church expenses.

The renting of pews was a well-established custom in many parishes and, in later years, became generally accepted in Anglian chapels and Dissenting meeting houses alike. When preparing church seating plans, 18 inches (45.72cm) for adults was allowed for free seating, 20 inches (50.80cm) was reserved for the paying classes and 15 inches (38.10cm) for children.

Stipends for a minister varied widely in the first half of the nineteenth century ranging between £100 to £400 a year but were generally in the order of £200 in c.1818. A clerk received about £5 in poor areas ranging to £40 in wealthier parishes but more commonly £10. Any surplus was directed to a fund to purchase a parsonage. Pew rents varied according to location between 4 shillings (20p) to 25 shillings (£1.25) but more commonly 10 shillings (50p) to 15 shillings (75p) for each sitting a year in c.1818. Where rental from pews was insufficient to pay salaries and expenses any frequently unoccupied free seats were rented out at a much lower rate to increase income.⁷

Opposition to pew renting

Renting of pews was offensive to many Victorian reformers. The segregation of the poor from those paying rent contradicted the claim that the Church of England welcomed all parishioners, and the excessive amount of floor space taken up by many enclosed pews was problematic at a time when efforts were being made to increase seating capacity. A sub-committee of the Cambridge Camden Society enquired into the comparative advantages of box pews and open benches, and the numbers they were capable of accommodating, and found strongly in favour of open benches.

Churches in and near Cambridge were surveyed during the inquiry and by exchanging pews for benches, it was found that there was a potential gain in seating of between twenty-eight and thirty-five per cent. Taking account of the size, shape and potential seating layout of a church, it was concluded that at least one-fifth of the available floor space in a church was lost by retaining box pews.⁸

As the population of the country expanded in the early nineteenth century, more seating in churches was required.⁹ This was an important consideration. In many parishes the Church of England was unrepresented. As a result, many people turned to non-conformist chapels which were relatively free from social snobbery.¹⁰ From about 1795 the building of Methodist chapels resulted in Anglicans demanding that more churches were built. There was an acute lack of churches for a rapidly increasing population: Stockport in 1818 with a population of just over 33,000 had church seating for only 2,500 people and Manchester fared little better with 11,000 seats for a population of nearly 80,000. By 1831 there was one church for every 4,578 persons in Lancashire and by 1851, one for every 3,899.¹¹

In 1839 the Cambridge Camden Society (later The Ecclesiological Society) was founded and two years later published a journal, *The Ecclesiologist*, dedicated exclusively to church architecture, decoration and liturgy. Its aim was to promote the study of ecclesiastical architecture and the rectification of architectural inaccuracies. In the wake of the celebrated architect A. W. Pugin, Gothic architecture was designated as the only true Christian style and the Decorated period of the fourteenth century was deemed almost perfect.¹²

As a result, box pews were regarded as an incongruous presence in medieval and neo-Gothic church interiors. Many churches were therefore re-seated with uniform open-ended pews or, free-standing benches, and the rental system was gradually abolished by the mid-nineteenth century during Victorian restorations.¹³

In the next edition I will conclude *Parish Church Architecture: The History of Pews*, with examples from local and regional churches of issues discussed in this five-part series.

Michael Haslam

References

1. Fryer S (1996) *A Companion to the English Parish Church*, Gloucestershire: Sutton Publishing, p.342
2. Bradley S (2016) *Churches: An Architectural Guide*, London: Yale University Press, p.140
3. Cox J C (1933) *English Church Fittings, Furniture and Accessories*, London: B T Batsford, p.150 and Fryer, op cit. p.342

4. Needham A (1945) *How to Study an Old Church*, London: BT Batsford, p.51
5. Bradley, op cit. p.140
6. Bradley op cit. p.140 and Sharpe R G (2011) *Historic English Churches*, London: Tauris, p.211
7. Port M H (2006) *Six Hundred New Churches: The Church Building Commission 1818-1856*, Reading: Spire Books, pp. 218 and 220
8. Fowler J C (1844) *Church Pews: their origin and legal incidents, with some observations on the propriety of abolishing them in three chapters*, London: Rivington, pp. 75-77
9. Rodwell, W (2012) *The Archaeology of Churches*, Gloucestershire: Amberley Publishing, p.176
10. Fryer, op cit. p.341
11. Port, op cit. pp. 17 and 22 (derived from the 1811 census) and p.276
12. Strong R (2007) *A Little History of the English Country Church*, London: Vintage Books, p.210
13. Bradley, op cit. p.140

APPRECIATION

Prof. David Colin Arthur Shotter, BA PhD FSA (1939-2021)

David Shotter, who died on 22 May at the age of 82, will be a huge loss to Lancaster.

I first met him in October 1967 when with my future wife Janette I came to Lancaster to study Classics. We formed between us one half of the major students in that department. David had arrived the previous year, having studied for his first degree and PhD at Southampton, and had already spent a couple of years teaching at the New University of Ulster in Coleraine. He was barely ten years older than us but was an inspiring and enthusiastic teacher, with a love for Roman Britain and the Julio-Claudian emperors, which he maintained throughout his life, writing many books on them. The Classics Department ran an annual field trip to Hadrian's Wall, and my abiding memory is of David, like the Pied Piper, leading a mixed bunch of students and staff, the latter armed with small children and prams, up the steep hill to Housesteads. Some barely arrived at the top in time to go down again.

In 1970, under the direction of Geoff Leather, an architect, many enthusiastic if as yet inexperienced archaeologists including David and myself carried out an excavation on the gardens behind the former Mitre

Inn in Church Street, and also in Vicarage Fields. This led on to excavations at Quernmore on one of the Roman tile-kilns. The enthusiasm which this engendered led to the formation under David's leadership of the Lancaster Archaeological Society, with 140 members when it began. The Committee was formed of David, Geoff Leather, Jim Price, Robert Bellis and others. *Contrebis* first appeared in May 1973, edited by David and myself. It was a simple publication with rather sketchy illustrations and typescript, a far cry from today's fine production but still enthusiastically received.

Under David's influence Lancaster University added Archaeology to its Classics Department in 1971, bringing in Tim Potter and creating the 'old firm' of Shotter & Potter. Tim later went on to become Keeper of Prehistoric and Roman Antiquities at the British Museum and died tragically young in 2000 at the age of 55. David continued to teach Classics, Roman History and especially the works of Tacitus, and he developed an enormous skill in identifying Roman coins, which took him to many parts of the country and led to many articles and coin reports. Out of the Department grew the Cumbria and Lancashire Archaeological Unit in 1979, largely on David's insistence, later becoming Oxford Archaeology North. The Department was closed in 1989 due to financial pressures and David transferred to History, eventually retiring as Professor Emeritus in Roman Imperial History in 2003.

When Lancaster University set up the Centre for North-West Regional Studies in 1974 David established an annual archaeology conference which he chaired for forty years until 2013. His output was enormous, ranging from books and learned articles to evening classes and conferences, including 42 articles in *Contrebis*. He was a very popular teacher, his courses almost always over-subscribed, with his hypnotic voice and assured delivery.

In his later years he was plagued with ill-health and had to give up his involvement in most of his old activities, but still carried on his research and coin studies as long as he could.

David and his benign influence will be hugely missed.

Andrew White

This Appreciation will also appear in *Contrebis*, Volume 40.

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