Established 1964

Annual Review 2024

A Summary of the Society's Activities
During the 2023/2024 Season

Warrington History Society
Committee Members
2023/24

Chairman
Andrew Green

Secretary
Anna Alexander

Treasurer
Susan Hurd-Balfe

Vice Chair & Speaker Secretary
David Edwardson

Auditor
John Heald

Meeter & Greeter
Kevin Price

Committee Members
Janet Bond, Peter Bond

For further Information about the Society contact:
Anna Alexander (annaalexander@btinternet.com) 07501420590

or visit our website

http://warringtonhistorysociety.uk

Meeting venue:
Friars Green Independent Methodist Church,
Cairo Street, Warrington WA1 1EH

Speaker Season:
September to April on the 3rd Monday of the month at 7.30pm

Welcome to the 2024 edition of Warrington History Society's
A Review of the 2023/24 Season

Inside you will find short summaries of the talks and events of the year and a look ahead at the programme for 2024/25.

Any mistakes or inaccuracies are mine for which I apologise in advance

Anna Alexander
WHS Secretary

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A Message from our Chairman

David Edwardson

Dear Member

Welcome to the review of our year. Before we look at the review in detail, I would like to thank all committee members and volunteers who have worked together during the preparations and execution of all meetings and events throughout the year.

The 2023-24 program would thankfully have been our first full programme after Covid and with that in mind, it was important to kick things off with a bang! And that is just what Claire Moores did with her talk about *Climbing Boys.* Next, we took a very short journey to Anderton, near Northwich for a fascinating tour of the Anderton Boat Lift. Staying with a nautical theme, it was all aboard 'The Danny' for an eye-opening look at this unique steamship. Our first meeting of 2024 gave us a much-welcome return fixture with 'The History of the Wire', during which Neil continued the fascinating story of Warrington Rugby. This will be continued during our coming season. One of our most popular meetings of this year's programme was presented by Phillip Jeffs, in which he marvellously illustrated the basic history of the town and its development. Mike Hodgkinson gave us a vast amount of information about an engineering wonder of its day, the Warrington Transporter Bridge, that would have been unknown to many.

The AGM gave us a chance to pay tribute to our outgoing Chair (Andy Green) for all his hard work and achievements during the last eight years.

I hope you all enjoyed participating in this programme of eight meetings and being taken on a trip down memory lane via this detailed review.

Lastly, I must thank Anna for producing this annual review.

I hope to see you all during the 2024-25 programme.

Many Thanks
David

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18th September 2023
Chimney Stacks and Climbing Boys
By Claire Moores

Claire began her talk by saying that chimneys have been part of peoples' lives for about 500 years. The first chimneys appeared around the 12th century and Britain's oldest chimney is thought to be in Conisbrough Castle in Yorkshire. Very large chimneys developed but they gradually became smaller, and early chimneys were built of stone. Sea coal replaced the use of wood in fires and deposited a flammable coating on the inside of the chimney. Chimney smoke was thought to help with hygiene. By the 15th century, timber houses were being built very close together in urban areas, so there was a great danger of fire. For that reason, chimneys were built much taller so that the smoke would be further away from the thatched roofs.

The next development was a new technique of brickmaking, and bricks were much better for building houses. Therefore, many wooden buildings were rebuilt with brick. A wide chimney would be cleaned by a servant standing in the hearth and used a broom to sweep it. Claire showed pictures of sweeps with their brushes and a scraper for the inside wall of the chimneys. Sweeps would wear broadbrimmed hats which they could pull over their faces for protection. Soot was very difficult to remove from chimneys, and it was a sought-after product in other industries, so the sweeps would bag up the soot and sell it. The best quality soot came from coal fires, rather than fires which burned rubbish as well. In 1792, David Porter wrote a paper "on the present state of Chimney Sweepers and some observations on the Act of Parliament intended for their regulation and relief". He described the qualities of soot and said that there should be penalties for the adulteration of soot.

By the 18th century, coal fires were common and there was a problem that smoke could come back down a chimney. From 1760 chimney pots were common on the tops of chimneys, so the smoke had a narrower hole through which it escaped. Chimney pots made it difficult for climbing boys to get out of a chimney because they were so narrow, and this added to the dangers of their work. Sweeps calling themselves 'Chimney Doctors' started appearing and advertised their services in solving the problems of smoking chimneys. They even used fancy business cards offering skills as a nightman (disposing of chamber pot waste), carman and sweep.

There was a hierarchy in the chimney sweep trade, with the master sweep at the top, followed by journeymen and climbing boys, the small children who did the nasty work. They were apprenticed at a very young age up to

the age of 16, although once a child grew too big to fit in a chimney they would be got rid of or continue in the business. Many died before they reached adolescence, so dangerous was the work. They were given a protective suit of clothes for the job and wore a badge, but often these children would do the job naked. They would have a bath once a week. They would climb up a chimney using their elbows and knees, causing frequent injuries. New chimneys became increasingly angular, with a space nine inches by 14 inches. So, these children would work their way through a narrow angled space and could become trapped by soot and suffocate in the space filled with soot and carbon monoxide. They were often sent up chimneys to extinguish fires. In 1775 Doctor Percival Pott made a connection between chimney sweeps and cancer of the scrotum, just one of the many dangers of the trade.

A "Climbing Boy" (From Gosport Archives 1879)

There was a parliamentary enquiry into "the Nature of Chimney sweeps and the attempts to alter its character" in 1840. This commission heard evidence of the ill treatment of boys in this trade. Master sweeps who were not using boys in their business, but new sweeping equipment were called to give evidence to the commission. A mechanical alternative to climbing boys was invented by George Smart who designed interlocking poles with a brush on the end. Chimney sweeps used climbing boys because they said they could sweep chimneys more quickly and did not have to invest in expensive equipment. A skilled sweep could clean a chimney in about 10 minutes. Children would also 'core' the chimneys by removing excess mortar. In 1829 the Home Secretary approved an updated version of Smart's apparatus and dictated the minimum age a child should be to do this job. The 1840 commission said that sweeps should be at least 21 years of age, but there was much resistance from sweeps.

In 1837 Samuel Roberts wrote a pamphlet aimed at women, whom he thought could influence men to stop the trade. He wanted women to lobby parliament against the practice. There is also some evidence that a few girls were also involved in the trade. However, after over one hundred years of campaigning and different legislation, in 1875, the death of a 12-year-old boy smothered in a chimney brought a final end to climbing boys. The verdict in the inquest into his death was manslaughter, the first time such a death was recognised not to be an accident. The Master sweep was given 6 months in prison with hard labour. Lord Shaftesbury used this episode to push through legislation to stop this practice.

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16th October 2023
The Workings and History of the Anderton Boat Lift
By Jim Corbridge

Jim Corbridge opened his talk by saying that he is an engineer by training and has been a volunteer guide at the Anderton Boat lift for two years. The lift connects two waterways: the River Weaver and the Trent and Mersey canal. The Northwich area has been built around the salt industry where the history of salt springs goes back to the Iron Age and later, the time of the Romans. Roman soldiers were paid a *salarium* with which they bought salt, and from this comes the word “salary’ meaning wages.

Until 1670 salt came from brine springs which were heated in houses and salt was left after the water evaporated. The houses where this occurred where known as ‘wiches”, hence the names of the local salt towns as Northwich, Middlewich etc. In 1670 John Jackson from Marbury dug a hole in his land to look for coal. Instead he found salt, and this led to a huge expansion of salt mines along the River Weaver, which sometimes led to collapses of the mines known as a “flash”. The salt seam was 150 feet down and was a very thick seam which extended all the way south to Droitwich.

The salt needed to be transported and at first this was done on barges (known as Weaver Flats) on the river, pulled by packhorses. However, the river was tidal which caused many problems. This was overcome to some extent by the Weaver navigation which in 1734 made it possible to transport salt as far as Winsford and then on to Frodsham. In 1777 the Trent and Mersey canal was completed, and this ran from Shardlow in Derbyshire to Preston Brook in Cheshire, running parallel with the Weaver navigation for some distance. This canal transported several products, including salt, China clay for the pottery industry and flint. Cargo started to be transferred

from the canal to the River Weaver, but this was difficult to achieve and several different solutions were tried. These included a very long flight of locks, as well as a shute system, as the canal was at a different height to the river, but there was not enough water to service so many locks.

However, engineers came up with a final answer to this problem by designing and building the Anderton Boat lift which was completed in 1775. Edwin Leader Williams drew up plans for a boat lift and Edwin Clark was appointed to design a hydraulic lift system which used river water to operate, using the Archimedes principle. The final design involved the construction of two wrought iron caissons, which could accommodate a maximum of 4 barges at a time and would move the barges from one level to the other using the weight of water. Jim used diagrams and a simple model to show how this would work, and we were shown the different working parts of the boat lift on photographs. The lift was capable of handling 16 barges every hour and bargees were charged by the size and weight of their barges. In the first year of working in 1775, 17,000 tons of cargo came through the lift, which rose to 192,000 in 1906. However, the boat lift encountered several operating issues which were managed by the resourceful engineers. One of the problems which occurred from 1884 was corrosion, which led to the seals leaking which later stopped operation of the lift. So, in 1908 a new lift mechanism was designed by chief engineer Colonel John Saner. This was installed with A-frames and an electric drive which used pulleys and ropes to lift the caissons and the wet basin was converted into a dry basin.

With the outbreak of World War One, (and latterly World War Two), the boat lift lost many of its workers who joined the army and there was an upsurge in road transport to the detriment of the canals. In 1976 English Heritage designated the boat lift as a scheduled monument. However, the upkeep of the lift was a constant problem, given that it needed painting every five years and there were other problems in its management, and in 1983 it was shut down completely and disassembled. This was of course not the end of the story, as the local canal society started raising awareness about the importance of the Anderton boat lift. A petition was raised in the 1980s which obtained 15,000 signatures, but Margaret Thatcher's government said there was no money to restore it. Ultimately, several fundraising activities and a bid to the National Lottery raised £7.7 million which was used to restore the boat lift. It was reopened in 2002 with a working hydraulic lift. The Anderton Boat Centre now attracts 3,200 boats a year and 120,000 visitors.

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20th November 2023
The Danny
A Unique Steamship that Survived to Sail Again
By Les Green and Bob Cannell

We were pleased to welcome two volunteers from the Daniel Adamson steamship, to talk about the chequered history of this important ship. It is number 15 on the premier list for national historic ships, which means it is of the same historic value as ships like the Cutty Sark. This coal-fired ship (a tug tender) was built in 1903 with the dual role of carrying cargo such as China clay and up to 100 passengers. She was built at what became Cammel Laird's shipyards in Birkenhead and was originally named the *Ralph Brocklebank* after a director of the London and North Western Railway, which owned the SURCC (Shropshire Union Railways & Canal Company) for which she was built. She was 110 feet long, with passengers' seats like garden benches, so would not have been very comfortable.

Following the rebuilding of the ship by the Daniel Adamson society, it was originally fuelled with coal from South Wales, but this was not a good enough quality, so was replaced with coal from Ukraine. Once the war in Ukraine began in 2022, the society had to buy expensive Columbian coal to run its original boiler, which is similar to those used on the Titanic. The ship's main job was to tow boats like the Mersey Flat, so-called because of their flat bottoms, and to carry passengers along the canals between Ellesmere Port and Liverpool. It saw war service in World War One, working in both the Mersey and the Bristol Channel. However, following the opening of the Manchester Ship Canal in 1894, trade started to open up and Manchester took full advantage of this with its involvement in the cotton industry. In 1922 the Manchester Ship Canal Company (MSCC) bought the ship, and it became a tug for the large ships that were sailing up the canal. Its role as a passenger ship also continued.

In 1936 its role changed, and it became an official directors' inspection vessel and was renamed The Daniel Adamson, after the man who was the founding father of the ship canal and who was a brilliant engineer and entrepreneur. The ship carried many famous VIPs such as King Fuad of Egypt and King Faisal of Iraq. It underwent a major refit in the Art Deco style and helped to promote the port of Manchester, which was 30 miles from the sea. The Danny as it has been fondly called, featured in a 1937 promotional film and carried other famous passengers such as General Eisenhower and Air Vice Marshal Tedder. However, in the 1960s there was a decline in canal traffic partly down to the "Container Revolution" where much bigger cargos could be carried on bigger ships. The Danny was last used as a tug in 1963, and her main use was as a hospitality vessel, to

entertain clients. In 1984 she was tied up in Runcorn for the last time and in 1986 she was moved to Ellesmere Port Boat Museum as a static display vessel.

In 2004 a decision was taken to scrap the ship, which by this date was in a very sorry state. However, Dan Cross, a young Mersey tug skipper came to the ship's rescue and after many negotiations he bought the ship for the nominal sum of. one pound. He created the Daniel Adamson Preservation Society (DAPS) which achieved a charitable status in 2004. The ship was tugged to a safe berth in Sandon dock on the Mersey. Many enthusiastic and skilful volunteers were recruited to start the difficult job of restoring the Danny, which was by this stage rusting inside and out and need a major rebuild. The charity was awarded a £3.8 million grant and 100,000 volunteer hours went into the restoration. In 2015 the ship was moved to Birkenhead's Alabama dock, 100 yards from where she was originally built in 1903 and where she was restored to her 1936 specification. This work was completed in June 2016 and by August 2016 she was sailing again. It costs £300,000 to run the ship every year, so the DAPS team are active in sailing the ship as a pleasure cruiser, raising awareness in schools and telling its story to groups such as ours. In September 2022, Dan Cross was awarded the Merchant Navy Medal for his efforts in saving and restoring the Daniel Adamson.

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Christmas Social Event

Our annual social evening was attended by 23 members, who enjoyed a mince pie and a hot drink of their choice before breaking into teams for David Edwardson's fiendish Christmas Quiz. David can always be relied on to test our knowledge of Warrington's history and tonight we were tested via individual rounds on historic pubs, long forgotten jobs, identifying collections of items throughout the town, a review of past lectures (who could remember what speakers told us), a celebration of firsts achieved in and by the town, a night at the movies and a general knowledge bonus round. Andy Green's team were switched on enough to win the contest. Thanks very much to David for organising such an entertaining evening.

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16th January 2024

The History of the Wire Part Two – The Wire in the Northern Union By Neil Dowson

Neil continued his story of Warrington Rugby following his first talk in 2023. His very detailed talk gave details of the Wire's games over the years from the late 19th century to just after World War One (WW1). It was fascinating to see photos of the players in their kit wearing very long shorts and sturdy belts to hold them up. Neil listed the trophies won by the teams in competitions such as the new northern league of Lancashire and Yorkshire which was formed in 1895. He described how the rules of the game were updated every few years, sometimes to make it more interesting for spectators. One of the club's most exciting and successful players was Jack Fish, who in one season scored 200 tries and kicked 200 goals. He was Warrington's first superstar, with cartoons and merchandise styled after him.

Photo by Anna Alexander

In 1906 the sport's governing body reduced the size of the teams from fifteen players to thirteen, In part to reduce the wage bill but it also had an effect on the style of the game. The club won the challenge cup in 1905 and 1907, when the cup was paraded through the town on the top of a

decorated tram Also in 1907 the New Zealand national rugby team toured Britain and were beaten by the Wire before a crowd of 8,000 spectators.

In WW1, twenty-five players joined the army, and matches were suspended in 1915 for the duration of the war. 11 players were killed during the war and there is a memorial to them in the Halliwell Jones stadium.

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19th February 2024
A Basic History of Warrington Through Maps
By Phillip Jeffs

We were pleased to welcome back Phillip Jeffs, Archive Officer at Warrington Library, who has been a regular speaker at the society. He began his talk by showing a painting held by Warrington Museum, with a scene of the town painted by Daniel Donbavand in 1772. The River Mersey is a focal point in the painting, which shows places which are still familiar today, such as St Elphin's Parish Church. Donbavand also created a map of Warrington in 1772.

However, the first map of Warrington discussed by Phillip, was one created by William Beamont in the nineteenth century. It is a map of the town in 1465, which Beamont drew from the information given by medieval deeds and is effectively a description of the land as known by local people. There are gaps in the map as there would have been no deeds for some areas. He pointed out names of places on the map such as "Holly", which could be what we now know as "Howley". The origin of the name could have been "Holy" or even "Hollow Lea". Phillip asked about the derivation of the name of Slutcher's Lane. Apparently "Slutch" used to be a local word for mud so this would have been a very muddy place in the past. The map also had the name Whitecross on it in a triangular area. There was probably a white cross there in medieval times. At the top of the map was written the "Hell Hole". This was a place where there was putrid water, over the bridge, near the equivalent site of what is Time Square today. It later became known as the Honey Pot. Shifting sandbanks in the river caused problems for boats which could get stranded there. The Austin Friars monastery was also on this map.

Phillip went on to discuss the 1772 Donbavand map. As well as St Elphin's, it showed a wide Church Street and at the top of the map is Warrington castle, which stood on top of a motte, shown by a circle on the map. There are rows of houses along the street running up to the church. This was one of the town centres of Warrington, as Phillip said that there was also a

centre near Bank Quay. Why would this have occurred? Phillip theorised that the bridge would have brought business to the town and thus a second centre grew up around these businesses. There would have been a toll charged to cross the bridge and there were disputes over who had the right to benefit from this. Medieval Royal Privilege would state who could do this, to avoid violence and murders. It was a lucrative business as a toll was charged for each wagon or each animal crossing the bridge. The Friary was situated near a ford, and this enabled it to get donations from those using the bridge. Thus, it wasn't the river that was an important feature of the town, but the river crossings. The 1772 map also shows the Bowling Green but the white cross which appeared on Beamont's 1465 map is no longer there in 1772. This was probably because of the Reformation, when monasteries and catholic symbolism were removed or destroyed. Phillip said that in the 18th century the game of bowls was a gambling game, so he suggested that could be making a statement about a change in the times.

Bank Hall – the Patten family's home – is also on this map, but there are also new buildings which are part of the new industries in the town such as glass and rosin. Warrington was originally a market town which sold huge quantities of products such as cheese and fish which were sent all over the country. Now these new industries created the need for workers and raw materials, which explains the increase in houses and other buildings on the 1772 map.

The Civil War era also caused changes in the town which can be seen on maps of the time. In 1642, the Royalist Earl of Derby captured the town with his army of 1,400 soldiers in advance of the outbreak of war. On 3rd April 1643 Cromwell's army attacked but failed to capture the town. A later attack in several places, including by the Black Horse Inn, caused Derby to panic and he set fire to the town. At least a third of Warrington burned down, but Cromwell's attack failed, so Derby now had to defend a ruined town. This was a disaster for the people of Warrington, who had recently endured three years of plague and famine. By the end of May the town was occupied by Cromwell's forces. In 1648, there was a further battle at Winwick, when the Scottish army came to the aid of the Royalists. The defeat of this army resulted in 2,500 Scottish prisoners being taken. Could this be why we now have a street named Scotland Road?

Phillip now turned to a map of the early 19th Century, which he compared with the 1772 map. The Georgian map of 1772 shows the Friary with gardens tended by the friars, and ornamental gardens near the houses of the well-to-do citizens of Warrington. The Friars would have used their gardens to grow crops and herbs, but the small middle class of the town cultivated their gardens as status symbols. In the past, status was

represented by owning a pig and an apple tree. Holes' map of 1826 shows many similar features to the Georgian map, but there is now a weir and lock on the river and a mill race and mill. Thus, the river is now a source of power. Industrial waste was washed away by the tidal river Mersey.

A map by the Legh family from the 1840s, shows the proposed building of a new grid of houses, a so-called "12 Yard Street". There was nowhere for the middle classes to live so Thomas Legh created the streets which we now know as Egypt Street, Palmyra Square, Cairo Street and Queen's gardens. The foreign street names were chosen by Legh as a reminder of the places he had visited on his grand tour. The gardens were named later in tribute to Queen Victoria's Jubilee in 1897.

The next map to be discussed was the 1888 survey of Warrington. This is a very detailed map which shows the medieval courtyards of the houses of the industrial workers which appear as white sections of the map. Most have a Wynd, a little lane between houses. By the 1830s the place of putrid water seen on the 1465 map was now known colloquially as Sewer Island. The courtyards all had a midden where the occupants of the houses would throw their potty waste, which was also next to a well. People would also live in cellars which would flood in bad weather. After the 1830s however, an "Inspector of Nuisances" was appointed by the Council and he would record these instances in his "Nuisance Book". For example, an old lady put her bed on blocks so that the bedding wouldn't get wet when her cellar flooded. The map also showed gasometers and rows of houses for the workers' homes. They lived with the noise and pollution of all around them. A 1906 day trip for workers visited Stockton Heath which was in the countryside in those days where they could breathe fresh air and hear the birds singing. The 1888 map also gave a view of Bewsey which showed a large area of railway lines, as there were 29 separate railway sidings which connected with the local factories.

Phillip next showed a Civil Defence map of Warrington from 1940. He asked us what were the red dots which appeared on the Manchester Ship Canal which was clearly shown on the map. The dot marked the position of the swing bridges, which would be blown up by the civil defence teams if we were invaded, to impede or delay the advance of the enemy. This would also mean that they could not bring their battle ships up the canal.

The 1930s saw a number of slum clearances so that new houses could be built with running water, kitchens and electricity; homes fit for heroes after the first world war. In the 1970s and 80s, Warrington became what was described by Phillip as a "Doughnut Town", as people moved from living in the centre of town to live in the suburbs. He concluded by saying that we

still live with something of our past in Warrington as some historic buildings still exist.

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18th March 2024

John James Webster
Warrington to the World and Back
By Mike Hodgkinson

John James Webster was a civil and mechanical engineer who was born in Warrington in 1845 and who designed many well-known structures and gained a worldwide reputation for his work. His father Samuel Webster was a photographer, but after studying at the Warrington People's College, John Webster was apprenticed to an engineering firm in Manchester. He also worked with Thomas Brassey, the famous engineer and bridge builder so he worked with the best.

Webster married Ann Woods a silversmith's daughter from Warrington in 1873 and she wrote one of the first books on vegetarian cooking. He set up a private practice in Liverpool and was based in 67 Lord Street. His local designs included the Warrington transporter bridge and the Runcorn - Widnes transporter bridge, but he also designed bridges in Australia, South America and Spain. The promenade piers of Bangor and Minehead were his work, and he was also responsible for the landing stage at Liverpool's Pier Head. Among the many other commissions he took on were London's first Olympic stadium at White City, several bridges at Guildford, Portsmouth and Abergavenny and he also converted Telford's Conwy suspension bridge to allow motor and foot traffic. The bridge at Bridge Foot Warrington was his last commission, and this was opened in July 1915 by King George V. Webster was awarded the Telford Gold Medal by the Association of Civil Engineers in 1913 and died the following year aged 69. He lived a varied and interesting professional life and is commemorated by a plaque on the new Mersey Gateway bridge.

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15th April 2024
Old Warrington
By Harry Wells

Harry Wells great knowledge of Warrington was clearly shown in his excellent talk, fully illustrated with the photographs he had taken himself since the 1970s. He began his talk by describing how he used to walk around the town, taking photos of buildings that he thought were endangered by developers, in the council's desire to improve the road network and ensure that Warrington was a good town to live in. He first showed photographs of the cameras he had used over the years, which ranged from his old box camera to a more modern AGFA camera which produced square photos, and later to Olympus SLR cameras. Harry spoke of his discomfort at standing in the centre of town taking photographs when it was not usual to see people doing this, unlike today when everyone has a camera on their phones.

Harry's talk took us along the street of the town centre, starting at Bridge Foot, and walking up Bridge Street and further into the town. He commented on how his early photographs showed how dirty some of the buildings were in the 1970s, until gradually they were cleaned up, giving them a totally different appearance. For example, we were shown a photograph Harry took in 1974, of a building which was totally black and was transformed once cleaned. There was also an interesting photo of the Cenotaph, which showed the old power station in the distance behind it.

Harry showed a photo of the original Academy building, with the statue of Oliver Cromwell in front of it. The need to improve the road network through Warrington led to the moving of the Academy, with the best intention to preserve this historic building. Unfortunately, this was unsuccessful, so a replica building was built instead on the new site. Harry spoke of his need to record all these old buildings before they were lost to redevelopment and much of his talk described the loss of precious historic buildings either by design or through poor town planning.

The demise of one building which was pulled down, led to an archaeological dig when it was realised that the building was on top of the ancient Friars Gate. A visit by members of Warrington Archaeological and Historical Society (the former name of our society) was made to this site, where 55 burials were uncovered, including the skeletons of 3 children. The site dated from the 13th century until 1650, so at least on this occasion, the loss of a building led to great historical discoveries. Some of his photographs have captured buildings such as the old Hippodrome theatre, the old Market Hall, and several Georgian buildings connected with historical figures such as Thomas Percival, a pioneer of medical ethics. He

described how the old Barley Mow has survived but buildings on the same street were lost, and in the Sankey Street area eight listed buildings were lost. Some vestiges of the original Georgian buildings survive, as Harry discovered when he went around the back of Percival's house and saw some original features still intact.

A short report cannot do justice to the detailed information and fascinating photographs shown by Harry Wells in his talk, but we will be able to hear more from him in part two of this talk in March 2025. In addition to this, you can always go to the library to borrow, or to the bookshop and buy, one of his many books on different parts of Warrington.

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Visit to the Halliwell Jones Stadium

About 10 members attended this tour of the stadium on 20th May. We were shown the hidden parts of the venue, for example where the players change and some of the splendid private boxes where sponsors are entertained and can watch the games. One of the most spectacular parts of the stadium is the long wall which features the history of Rugby League in Warrington and highlights some of the memorable events of the club over the years. This is a public area where fans can buy a drink and a snack before watching the match.

Photo by Anna Alexander

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2024-25 Lecture Programme

2024

16th September Benedictine Warrington by Dr Stella Fletcher

21st October Made in Manchester by Brian Groom

18th November The Battle of Winwick by Paul Wright

Christmas meeting to be arranged.

2025

20th January Warrington in Poetry, Prose, Rhyme & Song by Andy Green

17th February The Wire Part 3 by Neil Dowson

17th March More Images from Harry's collection by Harry Wells

28th April AGM, plus films from the North West Film Archive by David Edwardson

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