

Your LifeTimes Link

No10 Spring 2002 sharing Salford's fantastic story



LifeTimes on Show!

The new LifeTimes gallery is opening at Salford Museum and Art Gallery in May 2002. The gallery is being transformed into a showcase of the LifeTimes project so far, with new displays and activities to explore Salford's past, present and future. We're not going to reveal too much too soon, but the gallery is guaranteed to be lively with something for everyone - history has never been this much fun!

We'd be delighted to hear from any volunteers who want to help with the behind the scenes preparations for the showcase, namely interviewing people about their memories of the city, digitising and researching images, photographs and documents. If you would like to help transcribe some of the fascinating memories for the showcase or help in our research, please contact the LifeTimes office on 0161 736 1594.

As you may know, we will be displaying material on Broad Street and Chapel Street as part of the showcase and are continuing to appeal for any

reminiscences, photographs, documents or information you have about the area. In particular we are keen to hear from anyone who has any video or cine film. We are also short of photographs showing people and activities - the one we feature here is from the Local History Library collection.

[Mrs Jean Barclay \(148 seconds/135KB\)](#) remembered the Salford Pageant, (though not the one in our photo): "I used to love the jazz bands, I used to think they were fabulous. That was when Salford Royal Hospital had a pageant once a year and most of the nurses went out with

collecting boxes. There was a hell of a lot of competition in it. There were single entrants and there were the jazz bands. And then there were tumblers and all kinds of things. I can't think where they started from but I know they used to go up Whit Lane and along Broad Street and down Frederick Road and turn back and come all the way back. But all the donations were... It wasn't a funded hospital, Salford Royal Hospital, it was worked on contributions and they always had this great big pageant once a year. Jazz bands used to come from all over because they used to compete at the end of it, between themselves, who was the best band."

Photo: Salford Royal Hospital Pageant 1923. Signs on the hut read, "Band Programmes" and the boy on the cart's poster says, "The Hospitals Debt". (Salford Local History Library)

Bill Robert (1912-2001) Salford's Unsung Sporting Hero

Born in Ordsall in 1912, Bill's parents ran a second-hand furniture business from 260 Tatton Street. He left Trafford Road School in the mid 1920s working at John Ashton's timber yard at Windsor Bridge - suppliers of timber ship decking for Harland & Wolf and Camell Laird. Still in his early teens he joined Salford Athletic Club

In 1935, having taken the train to London straight from work, he won three international races at the Empire Games in London, and broke the Amateur Athletics Associations 400 metres record.

As a result of these achievements he was selected to run in the 400 metres and the 4 x 400 metres relay events at the 1936 Berlin Olympic Games where the British team won the Relay Gold Medal in a time of 3 minutes 9 seconds. The USA won the silver with Germany getting the bronze. Since then Britain has failed to win the gold in that event, only managing to come second on four occasions.

Bill won several events in the British Empire Games at Sydney, Australia, in 1938 and gained the silver medal with the British Relay Squad in the European Championships at Oslo in 1946. He was captain of the British Athletics Squad for the London Olympics in 1948 but failed to win any medals.

He married in 1937 and left Salford but the family business continued in Ordsall until the late 1960s. Bill



Bill, aged 87, in his beloved garden in Timperley.

ran his own business in Timperley.

Jack Robert's, Bill's grandfather, played rugby for Salford, and was the inspiration for his interest in sport. His other love was music and he had his own dance band, Billy Roberts' Collegians, in the 1930s, first playing saxophone and later guitar.

He spent the last thirty-five years of his life in Timperley where **LifeTimes** Research Officer, Ken Craven, went to interview him in March 1999. He told us about another champion athlete:

[Bill Roberts \(69 seconds/143KB\)](#)

One of the nicest things ever said to me was by Harold Abrahams. Harold Abrahams is famous, he used to run athletics in this country. He had the world record

in the old days. I saw him when I was five on the screen at the cinema on the corner of Cross Lane and Eccles New Road. He made me captain of the Olympic team in 1948 and he said, "Bill, I never got a false start in my life and neither have you." It's one of the things that sticks in my mind, this is forty years ago, for somebody to say a thing like that to you in his position.

If you get a false start you are trying to cheat. If you don't cheat, you don't go, you wait till you hear the gun and that's what Harold Abrahams said to me, "You never got a false start in your life, Bill."

Abrahams' (1899 - 1978) Olympic stories were the subject of the Academy Award winning film "Chariots of Fire". A broken leg cut short his career one year after his gold medal success in the 1924 Olympics. He went on to become a sports journalist, broadcaster, and leader of Great Britain's amateur sports establishment and his words in 1948 seem a fitting epitaph to Bill Roberts who died in December last year.

Bill had a successful career in the timber trade, had his own dance band, and was a gold medallist as well as owning a thriving furniture business. "You never got a false start in your life, Bill."

Swinton and Pendlebury Remembered

This book of reminiscences and photographs, compiled by **LifeTimes** staff and members of Swinton and Pendlebury Local History Society, covers topics such as childhood and schooldays, work, house and home, shops and shopping, pubs, wartime Swinton, cinemas etc.



The memories of life in Swinton and district were collected at a series of reminiscence sessions, organised by Salford Museums **LifeTimes** Project at the beginning of 2001, an initiative that has developed into Swinton and Pendlebury Local History Society.

The book shares the groups enjoyment of recalling life in Swinton over the last 60 years, and aims to jog memories of people, places and events; or for those not old enough to remember for themselves, to give a glimpse of life in Swinton as it used to be.

Over a hundred people attended the book launch at Swinton Library on Tuesday 11th December. Amongst them were 87 year old Mr Albert Knight of Swinton, with his son and niece. Mr Knight was delighted to discover his mother was included on one of the photographs, that of a Whit Walk in Dumbell Street about 1935.

The book is on sale at local libraries and Salford Museum and Art Gallery, price £3. Anyone wanting more information about the book or Swinton and Pendlebury Local History Society should contact Ann Monaghan on 0161 736 1594.

Photo: Mr Knight (centre) admires the photo of his mother in the 1930s Whit Walks.

Salford 1914-1920: by Roy Bullock

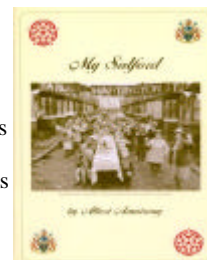


This is the fourth in a series of books using extracts from the Salford City Reporter. Roy resolved to trawl through microfilmed copies of the local paper after listening to one too many disagreements about events and places in his local pub - and wanting to know the definitive answers. So, six years ago, the first fruits of his labours, "Salford 1940 -1965" was published. This new book is subtitled "The County Borough and the First World War" and contains some grim news such as that from the 8 July 1916 paper. "Many Salford men were killed or wounded in the Battle of the Somme last week. The full extent of the casualties is not yet known, but newspapers are reporting the carnage of the battle."

Price £4.75 Publisher Neil Richardson.
Available from Salford Museum & Art Gallery

My Salford by Albert Armstrong

Last issue we mentioned that Albert had compiled a collection of his poems reflecting on his life in Salford.



Over forty photographs help illustrate the sixteen poems about such topics as the war years, Ellor Stret, the market, and one about a local man:

Old Salford had its characters, just like any other place.
I remember Cokey Nolan, who could forget that face?...

Price £4.95. Available from Salford Museum & Art Gallery and various local shops and libraries.

Treasures of Eccles - Past and Present



This 60-page book by Doreen Rowbottom and the Local Studies Group of the U3A is packed with interesting information about churches, waterways, and cinemas in the area. And did you know that Albert Lord made the first potato crisps in the north at his business premises behind the Wellington Hotel on Church Street?

Price £2.95. Available from Eccles Library.

A Victorian Railway Tragedy

Herbert George Town (1871-1888) has a website dedicated to his short life. But who was he?

Born in Marshmoor, Hertfordshire, he left home in May 1888 just a few months after his seventeenth birthday, to work as a porter for the L & NW Railway Company at Weaste, where his elder brother already lived. Herbert lodged at 26 Mode Wheel



Road, in a terrace of six houses between Bute Street and Friswell Street, from where he could walk to work at Weaste Station in just a few minutes.

It is believed he began his employment on Monday 21st May or a day or two earlier. On the morning of 24th he was due to commence his duties at 5.15 but no one saw him. At 5.45 am a train arrived from Eccles and from the other direction a fast excursion to North Wales passed through the station. A few moments later Joseph Crompton, the pointsman, saw Herbert lying face down on the platform. He informed the stationmaster who went over and found Herbert was dead with a large wound to his head.

An inquest was held the following day at the Swan Hotel, Weaste, where a verdict of accidental death was returned. Remember, his body was found on the platform not the railway line, so was it an accident, suicide or murder?

Herbert's remains were returned to his hometown where he was buried at St Mary's the following Monday.

All the above information has come from David Lister, who spent many happy hours researching the story, and has deposited a typed copy of his work at Salford Local History Library, as well as creating the website dedicated to Herby, as he has become affectionately known. View it at <http://homepages.tesco.net/~david.thebar/>

We are always interested to hear of research on local people and places and hopefully material like this can feature in the LifeTimes Showcase. Another possibility for the Showcase is to have a Research Data Bank so visitors can see what topics are currently being investigated.

Photo: Herbert's lodgings in Mode Wheel Road, seen here in June 1972 (Courtesy of Salford Local History Library and A J Smith)

Salford
City of
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THIS PROJECT IS BEING
PART-FINANCED BY
THE EUROPEAN
COMMUNITY
European Regional
Development Fund

2002 Celebrations

Salford Museum and Art Gallery are planning displays to celebrate the Commonwealth Games and the Queen's Golden Jubilee from May to the end of August.

Rather than concentrating on sporting events we would like to hear from people who had connections with any Commonwealth countries. Also, does anyone have any memories, memorabilia, photographs etc of any previous royal jubilees?

The Museum's exhibitions officer, Mark Wisbey, can be contacted on 0161 736 2649 or email salfordmuseum@salford.gov.uk

Clogs, Cobbles and Carriages: a completely new Victorian Experience

This year sees the launch of a new school service at Salford Museum and Art Gallery that's bringing Victorians to life.

Lark Hill Live! explores the Victorian Street through the eyes of cottage dweller Mrs Brown, and Mr Tomlinson the grocer. Find out what a knocker upper does; help Mrs Brown with her washing, or find out what Victorians ate for dinner. Tours are suitable for key stage one. Handling boxes are also available on request.

For more details, or to book a school tour, contact the gallery on 0161 736 2649