

Your LifeTimes Link

No 3 | Spring 2000

sharing Salford's fantastic story

Cotton Queens update

We've already had a good result from our Cotton Queen appeal in issue 2. LifeTimes staff had the pleasure of meeting and interviewing Mrs Ellen Hilton, nee Middlehurst, who became the 1936 Salford Cotton Queen when she was just 15.

Ellen worked as a doffer, and later a ring spinner, at Holdsworth and Gibb on Moorside Road, Swinton, and entered the contest organised by the Daily Dispatch at the suggestion of her foreman. Her work mates were delighted when they found out how well she had done in the first stage of the contest – the readers' ballot.

"When they heard how many votes I'd got they carried me shoulder high right to the top floor in the factory, they were so pleased," Ellen remembered.

In the second stage of the contest, held at the Salford Hippodrome, Ellen was chosen from six other contestants to represent Salford. The grand final was held in Blackpool, where the 19 local Cotton Queens competed for the national title, won that year by Doris Bower of Bolton.

At 15, Ellen was the youngest ever Cotton Queen, which meant she was accompanied to official functions by a chaperone, whose duties included vetting prospective dancing partners! It was a year to remember:

"You saw how the other half of the world lived. I really enjoyed it - for twelve months it was great... You went out to crown a local Chapel Queen, or open a bazaar, or something like that; the taxi would come and you'd go. My dad used to go with me. He was thrilled to bits, my dad. I used to work just the same, this was at weekends."

The last Cotton Queen was crowned in 1939 and, sadly, the decline of the industry meant the contest was not revived after the war.

Cotton Queens on the silver screen



Ellen and the other Cotton Queens appeared in a feature film, made at Elstree Studios.

We'd like to know more about the film, which was shown at local cinemas. Can anyone remember the film or identify the female lead, standing in the centre of the photograph? If you can help, or have any more information about Cotton Queens, call the LifeTimes office on 0161 736 1594.

Are you potty about Pilkington's?

Do you have a piece of Royal Lancastrian Pottery?

Did you or your relatives work at Pilkington's before the war, or from 1956-58?

Do you have any photos, artefacts or archive material relating to the pottery?

If so, join the LifeTimes Team and Pilkington's experts for the

Pilkington Royal Lancastrian Roadshow

Swinton Library,
Lancastrian Hall, Swinton
8 - 9 June, 10.00am-5.00pm
10 June, 9.30am-3.30pm

The event is free, just drop in.

For more information, contact the LifeTimes office on 0161 736 1594.



Memories of house and home

What did life really used to be like in Salford? LifeTimes staff have already uncovered many interesting and varied experiences of housing conditions and home life in the area.

Here are just two of the stories people have shared with us...

Mr Arthur Isherwood, who was connected with the Irwell Street Ragged School, recalled the area well:

"I remember being horrified at some of the conditions that existed in the streets just off Chapel Street – on the Manchester side. It's a strange thing; go on the other side behind St John's Cathedral and that area, there was nobody well off, but there was none of this total horrible poverty."

"It was the other side from Oldfield Road to East Ordsall Lane to Irwell Street; that little island. The housing there was outrageously bad and it had been built by mill owners. All they wanted was workers to do the work for the minimum of pay and so they wanted poverty so that they could get cheap labour, and they were responsible for building these one up and one down houses."

"Just somewhere where you can be alive so that you can come to work at six o'clock tomorrow morning. And as I say that's what that area was like, or ceasing to be like, by the time I arrived on the scene. My father and my mother had grown up with it a generation before."

Mrs Beatrice Sandys, a midwife in Salford during the last war, had vivid memories of her childhood home life:

"She [mother] used to give me some money to go to the butcher and ask for six penny worth of pieces. The pieces were what was lying beside the scales – that he'd been



Demolition – Clarendon School can be seen in the background. (Photo taken and donated by Ernest Jones)

cutting off. In amongst it you could have liver, steak, chop, whatever. And then she'd send me to the greengrocers for three penny worth of pot-herbs and in that you had a big canvas bag full of sprouts, cabbages and cauliflower and carrots and potatoes."

"And my mother used to have this huge saucepan on the hob and it all went in – every morning. She used to put things at one side for my dad, if there was a chop or a piece of steak, and she'd do his a bit differently, but we kids had it all in. It was cooking all day and then at night, when we came home from school, we could eat as much as we liked, every day, except Sunday."

"On Saturday afternoon my dad used to go to Shude Hill Market – there was no refrigeration – and they had to auction meat and poultry to get rid of it. And so he'd be coming home with a piece of beef and a chicken and we always had a big roast dinner on a Sunday with whatever was going. That's how mother managed."

House and home in the 1940s and 1950s

Here's a few of the memories local historian Roy Bullock recalls from his childhood:

- black-leading the grate
- riddling the cinders/ashes
- putting the blower up
- one cold tap and a slop stone
- stoning the steps (front and back)
- penny gas meter
- chamber pot (or bucket) under the bed
- night light in the outside toilet to keep away the frost
- the parlour only used when guests arrived
- flour and water wallpaper paste
- only two colours of paint – brown and green

Can you think of any similar house and home memories? Then why not attend the next **LifeTimes** workshop.

Find out how you can share your memories of home life at the next LifeTimes workshop – turn to page 4.

Memories on the move

Do you have any toys or games from the 1920s and 30s, or any wartime recipes or ration books?

We're creating boxes of both replica and original objects, oral history and photographs showing life from the 1900s to the 1950s.

These will be loaned to local sheltered housing groups and community groups for reminiscence work, and will be used by school groups during visits to Salford Museum and Art Gallery.

We need small items, original or replicas, from the 1900s to the 1950s relating to

- childhood • shopping • wartime •

We need:

old money • shop adverts • packaging • donkey stones • dolly blue • flat irons • butter pats • sugar bags • children's rhymes and songs • old school certificates • carbolic soap • home remedies...

If you can help, please contact the **LifeTimes** office on 0161 736 1594.

Thank you.

LifeTimes website ready to go

The brand new **LifeTimes** website will soon be up and running at www.lifetimes.org.uk

As **LifeTimes** Link goes to print, we're putting the finishing touches to the site so, fingers crossed, you'll be able to see the new, improved version from the beginning of July.

The site tells you more about **LifeTimes** and gives updates on forthcoming events. You can also see - and hear - memories and recollections about Salford, or post a message on the bulletin board.

This means you're only a click away from **LifeTimes**, wherever you are in the world!

Thanks to all those people who've already visited the test site and joined the e-mail mailing list.

Meet the real Madonna – from Broughton!

Millicent Thorpe, recalling her teenage years in 1950s Broughton, reveals where Madonna might have got her image:

"I'd been on the 'monkey-run' [a popular meeting place for young people] looking for a lad and I had these bottle green shoes on and the heavens opened. I went back to my mother's and we were getting a warm near the fire and I put my shoes in the oven to dry. When I got them out they looked like they were full of eastern promise! All the toes were turned up – I couldn't get them on, and when I tried to straighten them, they cracked right across the middle."

"I used to wear some ridiculous clothes. We shopped all round Bury New Road, and there used to be a shop called Mr Tray, and he used to sell what was called Whirlpool bras – you looked like Madonna! They think Madonna's the only one with these things, you know. We used to starch them in sugar and water; ooh, you did have a sore bust because you had these hard bras on!"



Whirlpool bra

"I used to do my hair with sugar and water.

I used to get home every night, get sugar and water, and put my hair in what they called pin curls for a couple of hours, and then I'd be off out. I thought I looked lovely."

Do you remember Miss Young?

Is there anybody out there who remembers a teacher called Miss Gertrude Young from St Mathias School on Blackfriars Road?

Miss Young, who taught during WW1 and into the 1920s, ran playgroups on the premises, despite opposition from the Education Department!

Her niece, Ms Ann Dodd, would love to hear from anyone who remembers Miss Young.

Please contact the **LifeTimes** team on 0161 736 1594 and we'll put you in touch.

Join the **LifeTimes** Taskforce

We're looking for enthusiastic volunteers to help us collect and record more historic material throughout the city.

Through our **LifeTimes** outreach work, we've already met several people who are interested in interviewing people in their area and helping us to catalogue the material being donated.

If you're interested in collecting memories for us, helping to research historic photographs, or helping with reminiscence work, you could become a fully fledged **LifeTimes** volunteer.

We can provide recording equipment and oral history training, or training in digitising and cataloguing photographs, if you're keen to be involved in the project.

You could help by researching your local area, or by using our reminiscence collections with your local group. Any amount of time that you can give will be greatly appreciated.

To find out more, come along to the LifeTimes Volunteer Day at Salford Museum and Art Gallery on Saturday 20 May from 11.00am to 1.00pm.

If you'd like to attend, or need more details about the **LifeTimes** Taskforce, call the **LifeTimes** office on 0161 736 1594.

Join the next **LifeTimes workshop**

How did your home life compare with the recollections of house and home on page 2? If you've got memories or anecdotes like these to share, come along to the next **LifeTimes** workshop, which puts home and housing in the spotlight.

The workshop kicks off at 10.00am on Saturday 3 June at Salford Museum and Art Gallery. A free buffet lunch is included and the workshop features a chance to see the gallery's new exhibition, Ryhope Walk, and talk to the families involved in designing it.

Booking is essential, so if you'd like to attend, please phone 0161 736 2649 by Tuesday 30 May.

Our February workshop, exploring childhood, was a great success. Participants worked in groups to break the theme down into topics and looked at how these could be interpreted for visitors.

Several people volunteered to record some childhood songs, and perform some of the games which could be captured on video at some future date.

If any of your friends or family would be interested in receiving a copy of **LifeTimes Link** send their details by post to:

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or email:
info@lifetimes.org.uk

or telephone/fax:
0161 736 1594

Salford *City of*
Education & Leisure

LifeTimes

The **LifeTimes** project will tell the story of the whole of The City of Salford...

Barton
Blackfriars
Boothstown
Brindleheath
Cadishead
Charlestown
Claremont
Clifton
Eccles
Ellenbrook
Higher Broughton
Irlam
Irlams o'th' Height
Kersal
Langworthy
Little Hulton
Lower Broughton
Monton
Ordsall
Patricroft
Peel Green
Pendlebury
Pendleton
Seedley
Swinton
Trinity
Walkden
Wardley
Weaste
Winton
Worsley

We hope we have included everybody - if we have missed your community please let us know!

Missing districts found

Eagle-eyed **LifeTimes Link** readers may have spotted that our list of Salford districts from issues 1 and 2 had two notable omissions.

Thanks to those people, including Keith Smith and Paul Craig, who pointed out that Patricroft and Brindleheath were missing.

The former, with its strong railway link, and the latter, being the subject of a very informative book by Ike Chapman (published by Neil Richardson), have now been added.