

Mary Whitehead's research on Saltaire poet,
Ann Moss

Mary Whitehead references places and events in Ashton-under-Lyne, referred to by Saltaire poet, Ann Moss. There are photographs of churches in the area and an 1831 map showing locations.

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This file was downloaded from the Saltaire Village Website.

Ann Moss can be further studied in Roger Clarke's book:
Ann Moss, Saltaire Poet, published in 2010 and available from outlets
in Saltaire and the [Saltaire Village website](#).

1841 Census – Ann is found at Higham Fold. Census lists other areas - Park Hall, Odd Whim (this is Israelite House on the map), Chambers Hill Road, Botany, Currier Lane, Currier Slacks, Stamford Crescent, Stamford Road, and Cock Brook. District 20 HO107/532/13

See attached page from Piggot Commercial Directory 1828-29, introduction to Ashton-under-Lyne, for its history up until that time which explains the Israelites, and the Black Lad, although more below for the latter.

The 1811 Census lists these areas and even more small hamlets. There are many Chadwick's who are mainly listed as being involved in 'Cotton Manufacturing', but especially there is a John Chadwick of Higham Fold whose trade is listed as 'Manufacturing'. There is an Aaron Moss living at a hamlet 'Little Bags', whose trade is listed as 'manufacturing'. Looks like these could be the father's of Ann and her husband (?) – similar occupations and living in close proximity.
SEE ATTACHED MAP DATED 1831 SHOWING MOST OF THESE AREAS.

All the Chadwick family are shown to be manufacturing cotton. The 1816 Commercial Directory of Ashton-under-Lyne lists under the heading 'Cotton Spinners and Manufacturers', Edwin Chadwick, Park Hall. Going further back Bowman¹, page 531, lists George Chadwick under the local rating for 1618. He is shown to be holding 12 acres of land, and 14 acres of common land but does not state exactly where. Ian Haynes² writes: 'Park Hall Mill. This was the last mill in Ashton to be built for water-power and was erected by John and Edward Chadwick³ close to the old building known as Park Hall, once the residence of the Lees family. Park Hall Mill was the furthest upstream of the four water-powered factories on Cock Brook and was located within the present bounds of Stamford Park, off Mellor Road (see 1947 map) and not very far from Darnton Road. Various members of the Chadwick family occupied the mill throughout its useful life and the firm was known as John Chadwick and Co. from about 1857, becoming a limited company in 1884. Although built for water-power by 1814 a steam engine had been installed but it is not clear whether this engine replaced or supplemented the water-wheel. In 1840 ninety-six people were being employed at Park Hall Mill and in 1856 a second mill was built close to the original. In March 1884 the older mill, five storeys in height and ten windows in length, was destroyed by fire and the newer mill may have become disused at that time. By 1892 the buildings had been demolished.'

HIGHAM FOLD

Bowman, p. 231 – In 1762 there was a society of Wesleyans at Higham Fold in Ashton, in a house which vanished at the making of Mellor Road. (See map of 1947 showing Mellor Road and Stamford Park) ...From before 1781 the Methodists appear as already established in the town of Ashton-under-Lyne, although not yet possessing their own chapel building at this early date. 'Between 1781 and 1786 however the first Methodist chapel within the present borough was opened. It seems

¹ Winifred Bowman, *England in Ashton-under-Lyne* pub. Altrincham 1960

² Ian Haynes. *Cotton In Ashton*. Pub. 1987

³ See 1811 Census.

that this must have been the little chapel situated at the top of Harrop's Yard, a tiny court, running northward from Crickets Lane and its entrance almost facing the Old Cross for Butterworth writing in 1822-23 said of this little building 'it was originally built for a Methodist chapel'.

This would be where Ann attended Sunday school, probably twice per day as was usual at that time, and where reading and writing were taught, so we can understand Ann's reading and writing abilities learnt both at Sunday school and at the Dame School, and she might well have become a Sunday school teacher.

The Methodist New Connexionists (Bowman, p.231-2

These were, according to the Rev. W.A.Parry the first Nonconformist body to provide both a chapel *and* a school in Ashton. The group broke away from the original Wesleyan Methodist body in 1797. For a time it made use of the old chapel in Harrop's Yard, the lintel over the door says 'Can any good thing come out of Nazareth, come and see'.⁴ (see photograph). In 1799 their first chapel in Stamford Street was built, this being then Henrietta Street or New Street, the chapel almost at the street's western limit of extent. In 1832 this chapel was greatly enlarged (see photographs). The 1824 map shows the main churches in existence by that date. (Note: The Methodist New Connexion church is no longer in existence.)

Whit Friday – Meeting in New Square – Stamford Street, although this new road was not completed until 1831. The annual Whit Friday walks where when the local churches could show off the large numbers of scholars they had in their Sunday schools. Ann refers to walking along Stamford Street, which of course would be the local area to her own chapel and in those early days Sunday schools walked around their own small patch. By the early 20th century all the non-conformist churches walked together around Ashton town in the afternoon, the Church of England having walked in the morning! Once the Catholic's were established and able to openly hold services, they chose to walk on Whit Sunday. (It was not until about 1960 that the established churches and non-conformists began to walk together, and still do today, but the Catholics have never joined in and today they don't walk at all.)

Currier Lane – main route – ancient highway. It is recorded that prior to 1650 there was no road south of Currier Lane. In 1732 the path became a turnpike road starting in Manchester. By 1740 it was extended well into Yorkshire. This was, at the time, the only route out to the Pennines. Soon the stage coach era started and the road became a toll road for the next hundred years and an important route to London until in 1831 Stamford Road was built to cope with the increasing traffic.

Cock Brook – This was a brook running down the hillside into the River Tame and the hamlet around it took the name. (This area still retains the name Cockbrook)

Flats Fold. This cannot be found on the map, but is obviously a small hamlet around the area of Higham Fold, Currier Lane,.. as shown by the 1811 Census where some householders are shown to be living at 'Flats'. There are many Chadwicks in the area and we might presume they were all related and would explain her Aunt having a Dame School with many of Ann's cousins.

⁴ The lintel over the door has been saved and is now in Albion church porch to be preserved. It is thought that all the Dissenters met here until they broke up to form their own denominations - the first Albion member are thought to have been amongst them.

(Note, Canals came into existence in Ashton in the 1790s, but Ann would not see Railways in her home town, they came early 1850s.) C. Wilkins-Jones⁵ p.16 states 'Water power remained important until at least the second quarter of the nineteenth century, but most of the new mills built from the 1830s onwards were designed for steam. This had an immediate effect on location. Mills were built in the central areas of the towns in Tameside and along the line of the Ashton, Peak Forest and Huddersfield canals which provided transport for coal, raw materials and finished goods, and, in many cases, water for the mill boilers. The use of steam power also encouraged the growth of powerloom weaving still minimal in the 1820s but substantially taking over from handloom weaving by 1850. However, the area marked Park Hall was substantially provided with water from Cock Brook which today provides the water for Stamford Park Fishing Lake and Boating Lake – (see 1947 map). *Victorian Ashton*⁶ booklet records 'Thee were at least four mills on the cock Brook, which runs down from Hazelhurst through the later Stamford Pak to the river Tame west of Clarence Street Bridge. Park Hall Mill occupied by Edward Chadwick, cotton spinner in 1818, Higham Fold Mill, and Throstle Nest Mill were all within the area later included in the park.

Bowman, p.551 writes that the rivers and the parish's many pools and streams were all clear water and abounded with fish although fishing was only permitted by the Lord's Steward who complained in 1786 that some people made a common practice of fishing and pull down the fences and cause other damage. I am sure that it would be in these areas that Ann would find the water lilies.

PARK HALL WOOD – See 1831 map. Park Hall area shows that just over from Cock Brook is an area marked 'Wood'. However the name Park comes from the Lord of the Manor's emparkment and the whole area was once the domain of the Earl of Stamford. Part of the park in Ashton is said to have lain west of the Hall, along the back of the Tame, and included the present Park Parade. If correct then only the second of the two home parks extended from the east side of Scotland Street (then the Town Street) absorbing all the land up to the south-east border of Hurst, including the present STAMFORD PARK completed in 1873 CHECK which is alongside Mellor Road. Bowman, p.286 refers to Wood Park and an area known as 'Daisy Field'. 'There was a Daisy Field still in existence in 1847 and then described as being near to the house of Robert Lord in Old Street Ashton in 1836'. Could Ann have been collecting her flowers here. See 1824 map – I have marked Old Street, and its closeness to Currier Lane.

CHAMBER HILLS

p.338 Bowman.

Inspired by Samuel Oldham's gesture the Earl of Stamford and Warrington (January 17th 1860) conveyed to Hugh Mason and seven others a plot of land near Chamber Hills, being '5 acres and the building in course of erection thereon' to be used as a Hospital or Infirmary. (building started in 1859)

⁵ C. Wilkins-Jones, *Tameside, an outline history of those parts of Lancashire and Cheshire now in Tameside Metropolitan Borough* pub. 1878

⁶ Sylvia A. Harrop and E.A.Rose, *Victorian Ashton* pub. 1974

HUNTING

Bowman, p.550 mentions hunting in Ashton from at least Norman times. However, 'Squire Francis Astley of Dukinfield (1781-1825) for a time superintended Ashton Hunt... wearing brass buttoned hunting coats bearing the emblem of a running hare, in relief, upon some of the buttons... But there were many occasions after the end of the first quarter of the 19th century when deer-hunting had largely died out, but hunting the hare was still popular... Whenever the sounds of the approaching hunt were heard, hand-loom weavers, self-employed craftsmen, village schoolmasters, and others, would leave their work to follow on foot, or by the speediest means available to them. This was the sport best loved and best remembered by most old people of Ashton-under-Lyne who were still living in 1940-50.'

BLACK LAD – The ceremony of Riding the Black Lad or Knight was peculiar to Ashton. The event was held at Easter time and is generally to perpetuate the disgraceful actions of Sir Ralph Ashton who, in the year 1483 exercised great severity in this part of the country. Sir Ralph Ashton was represented by a stuffed dummy sat astride a black horse which was paraded through the town, the onlookers throwing whatever they fancied at the effigy. On reaching the Cross outside the Parish Church, the effigy was hung and then burnt. It was a regular annual event which continued up until the 1950s when it ceased, but has recently been revived and there is a statue in Ashton Town Hall representing the Black Knight looking quite fearsome and riding an angry black horse.

JOHN HANDFORTH Curate at Ashton Parish Church 1825 and remained for 25 years. (Bowman p.190)

It is as well that Ann was visiting the Parish Church cemetery in the early part of the 19th century. By 1843 there were calls for the cemetery to be closed on health grounds but the Rector objected even though one of the reports stated 'On Sunday, October 15th before midday, when worshippers would be within the church precincts, I saw a coffin on the side of a new-made grave in that church yard, from which proceeded an intolerable smell. On directing a policeman to go forward and read the inscription he read 'Mary holt, died Sept. 25th 1843. Thus, within 20 days of death and probably 16 of interment the mortal remains were removed from their resting-place, exposed in a loathsome manner to public view, and allowed to contaminate the atmosphere with noxious effluvia...this is no isolated case, the only difference being that the coffins necessarily dug out of the ground to form new grades are more frequently carried to a hearse-house immediately attached to the classroom of Ashton's school (parochial school), where they lie until the burial service has been read and are then brought back and piled upon the newly interred coffin and the whole covered over with what earth is at the disposal of the sextons.' (Bowman p.336)

Wakes – this used to be during May or August. The Parish church has medieval windows dedicated to St. Helen and depicts the story of her discovery of the Cross which was reputed to be on the 3rd May, with the true St. Helen's Day being 18th August. In 1844 the date was eventually chosen as the first Sunday after August 15th. (Bowman p.191) Originally the festival of the church's patron saint was organised by the churchwardens who collected from every household in the parish some small gift towards the cost of this great holiday. The church, was dedicated to St. Michael in

1422. Wakes was also the time when the rush carts were decorated and the Morris dancers came to town. (Bowman, p.362-63)

ANN MENTIONS COAL PICKING

Coal areas nearby for Ann are shown on the 1831 map but for history purposes the following shows how busy Ashton was with coal areas.

Bowman, p 468 'The first definite record of an existing coal working of an appreciable size, about Wood Park and Bardsley occurs in March 1712 when the Parish Register notes the burial of James Hardy near Bardsley Coalpits. In 1718 Jonah and David Harrop of Bardsley (then not a village but a private estate) with two others were reported to the Court Leet as interfering with the rights of one of Wood Park's most esteemed residents. It was complained that they 'do get Coal and Cannell in the Brook belonging to Lawrence Wright and Stoop the watercourse'. Lawrence Wright's ancient cottage stood on land approximately identical with the playground of the later Bardsley Church schools, close by Wood Park Colliery. (The latter was once known as 'Copperas House Pit' ... '

The above area would be the eastern part of the Lordship Park. However, Bowman continues... Above 'Cricketty' and just outside Ashton town, it seems that a 'breast-eye' or shaft already existed in 1722 (above the site of the late Albion Schools) where a 'coal works' is marked in a plan of 1824 for at the former early date there was reference to 'the Cole Pitt.. over James Holt fields lying betwixt Robt. Knott Smith fields and the Haye, ie between the land below the Penny Medow and the Hey's estate. Part of the Hurst estate had been opened up for coal raising by 1750 at which time there was a regular traffic to and from this pit. It was then forbidden that 'persons make any Horse road or footpath over any part of Hurst Lane more than the Common Coal pit Road and footpath'. These areas are around the west part of the Lordship's Park and shown on the 1831 map surrounding the Hamlets where Ann lived.

OTHER NOTES;

Hartshead Pike, the local 'beacon head', shown on 1831 map is the highest hillside. On a clear day from this hilltop can be seen moorland over the West Riding of Yorkshire; Haslingden and Pendle Hill are visible; areas of Cheshire are spectacular and on a very clear day the Welsh mountains can be seen.

Ann would have lived through difficult political times: The Chartist were especially in evidence in Ashton during the 1820s – 1840s, and the well known Rev. Joseph Reyner Stephens, who resided here, was arrested on many occasions. The plug riots of 1842 caused many disturbances.

Ashton was granted a market as early as 1284 and originally held on Mondays in the neighbourhood of the Old Cross. The Market was held at the junction of Old Street and Cricket's Lane where the town cross stood. Nearby was the old Town Hall or Market Hall, demolished 1889,⁷ which, next to the church, was the most important institution in Ashton serving as the headquarters not only of its trade, but also of its government and much of its social life. By 1828 a new site was found, the Earl of Stamford giving his approval for this use of his land as a new Market area. Ann

⁷ C.Wilkins-Jones, *Tameside* pub. 1978

would have seen the changes here. (This area is still Ashton's town centre market open now 7 days per week).

The Old Hall: This was the lord of the Manor's Hall (though Ann would not have seen the family living there). It stood on a high ridge and Ann would have been able to see it every time she walked into Ashton town centre. I have marked it on the 1824 map and you will notice the Orchard nearby.



DUKINFIELD
Stockport Parish
Cheshire

EX
VIL
MAN
Jm

DROYLESDEN

From Manchester
openshaw

GORTON

To stockport
DENTON

To Haughton

From Manchester

FINFIELD

Reservoirs

Andrew's

Grimshaw's

Slopford

Dodge

Wrights

Pringle

Worke

Israclites

Moore

SHIPLEY

WALLEY

Israclites

Moore

Israclites

Moore

Israclites

Moore

Israclites

