

# Mossley Civic Society



## Local Interest Trail No. 2 Brookbottom and Roughtown

**START** at the George Lawton Hall, Stamford Street.

This street of shops was often spoken of as “Front Street”, (Arundel Street, which will be visited near the end of the trail, was known as “Back Street”).

The George Lawton Hall is the venue for many of the social events in the town. The hall was opened in 1960 by Lord Derby. George Lawton was the youngest son of a prominent Unitarian family. Although he lived abroad for many years, in his will he left over £60,000 to be used “to provide an amenity for the people of Mossley”. The hall replaced the old Mechanics Institute in Stamford Road, now demolished, which had until that time served as a Civic Centre for social events since 1840.

Before the building of the hall, there had been a cotton mill, Albion Mill, built in 1837 on this site.

Walk down the street. Before crossing the end of George Street, stop to look at the gable end of the building across the street (now a café).

Notice the three storeys, and the flagged roof. There were many similar buildings in Mossley. The roofing flags were quarried from Luzley. Slates were not used until railway connections were established with North Wales in the 1850s. This building was originally the George Inn. It was replaced in 1867 by the George Hotel next door. An inscription over the mantelpiece in the hotel reads “Septimus Gill gave for allowance to the men who erected this house, 8,448 pints of ale - 1867”.

This area where the five roads meet is Brookbottom. The brook, now running underground, formed the boundary between the historic counties of Lancashire, where you now stand and Yorkshire. The

River Tame formed the historic Lancashire/ Cheshire boundary.

Until 1885 when the incorporation of Mossley as a borough was granted (even though, with only 13,000 inhabitants, it was possibly the smallest in the country) the administration was divided between the three county authorities. For example, Mossley had three police forces, three registration districts, three separate County Rates, and was in three different Dioceses, with three Parish Churches.

An old picture of Brookbottom in 1860, shows a small cottage in a garden - “Mally Garden End”.

Cross the top of Stamford Road at the traffic lights and continue onto Stockport Road.

After the row of shops on your right, is a stone wall, at the end of which is the gable end of a pair of houses set at right angles to the road. This building was formerly St. John’s Vicarage. Notice the interesting stonework of the gable. The stones are chamfered outwards, so that the rain will run off.

At the fork in the road is Wild’s Square. Before the houses were renovated, this was called Wild’s Yard.

If you look to the right, across this square, you will see some apartment buildings in the distance. These were built on the site of the Tram Depot. The electric Tramway system was introduced in 1904.

Trams ran from Roaches to Ashton via Heyrod, from Brookbottom to Haddens, and to Stalybridge via Millbrook. Trams to Ashton had open tops so that they could go under Blackrock Bridge.

In 1911 a Tram ran out of control down Stamford Road and over the railway bridge at the bottom on to the line. Four people were killed at the scene and two more died later in hospital.

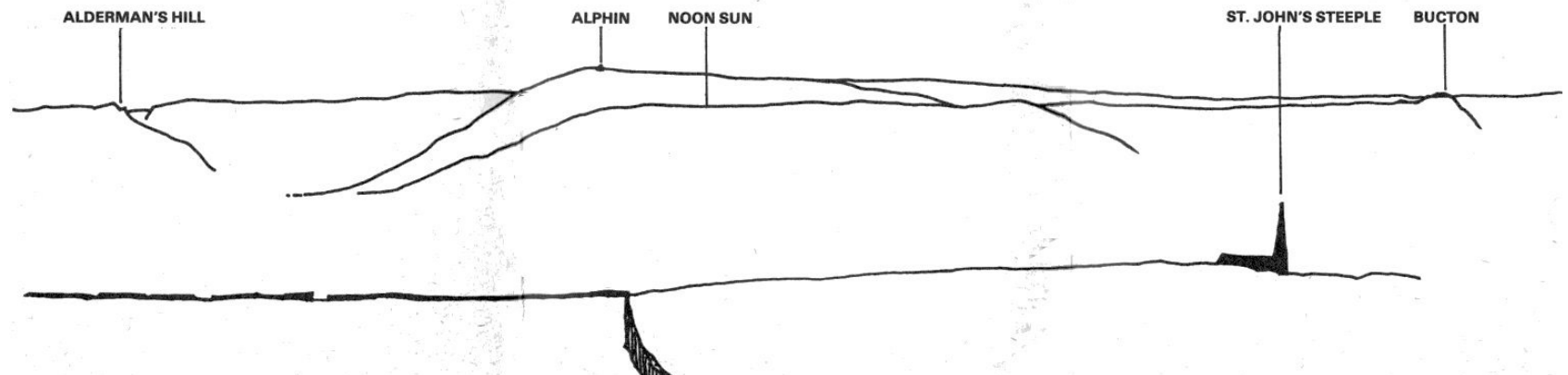
Dynamos in the tram depot building generated power for the system. The tramway closed in 1925 on the introduction of buses.

In 1938 civilian gas masks were assembled in the old Tram Depot and distributed from there to the townspeople and on the outbreak of war in 1939 a fire appliance was stationed there. Later, seats for military planes were manufactured there.

Leave Stockport Road now by taking the right hand fork down the hill (Carrhill Road).

The four storey building on the left hand side of the road is typical of many built on the steep sites. The windows of the upper two floors belonged to a house on Stockport Road, whilst the lower two belonged to the “under-house” on Carrhill Road.

A little further along on the left, is a small park, known as Cosgrove Gardens. The land was donated, and the park laid out, by a local builders, Tom Cosgrove.





The old building next to the gardens, known as the Old School House, has an interesting history. The row of windows running the length of the third storey, indicated a weaver's attic. If you walk a little way up the cobbled path at the side of the building, you will see that at the back a flight of stone steps gave direct access to the upper floor.

In the early nineteenth century on the upper floor there was a small private school. Baguley School, Baguley being the name of this part of Mossley. It was here in 1848 that a group of local Chartists met and made plans to join the Ashton Chartists on August 14th for some kind of armed resistance and general uprising. In the fighting a policeman was killed and the Chartists dispersed. Later eight of the Mossley men were arrested and tried at York Assizes. Six were found guilty and sentenced.

The next building, now a private house, was the Shears Inn, built in 1793. The first landlord was Edward Halkyard, but he was better known as Ned i' Baguley. In 1856 at a meeting in the Shears, the Mossley Co-operative Union was formed.

Looking to the right of the road, through the trees, you may be able to see the back of the former Unitarian Church, which was built in 1852. Seven hundred worshippers transferred there from "Th' owd Garret", a building now demolished, which stood off Lees Road. The church has now been converted to apartments.

Continue along Carrhill Road as far as a steep road leading off to the right (Mill Lane). Here you can see the typical pattern of a mill-owner's house, Carrville, the detached house on the left hand side of the road, with the streets of small terraced houses off Mill Lane below, built for his employees, where they were compelled to live. The mill itself, Carrhill Mill, was in the valley bottom beyond. The mill was built in 1820 by Nathaniel Buckley.

The red brick building further along the right hand side of the road, now a base for Scouts and Guides, was built as a Liberal Club. It was known as "Donnybrook". The word "Donnybrook" appears in the Oxford Dictionary defined as "Scene of uproar, free fight - from Donnybrook Fair in Ireland". We believe, however, that the name of this area - Roughtown, refers to the terrain, not to the inhabitants!

A little further along Carrhill Road, the houses on the left hand side, opposite the top of New Earth Street, are of a differing construction. They were built for individuals who were members of an association which could be considered an early form of building society, in contrast to the terraces built by the mill owners for his work people.

The next building of interest is Sixsmith's organ works on the right. This was originally a school, known locally as "Pickles School" from the name of the headmaster. It was an Undenominational National or British School, built by Robert Hyde Buckley, a son of Nathaniel Buckley, and received a grant of £20 per year from the Government. The parents of children at National Schools paid fees of not more than four

pence a week for the school to be eligible for the grant. Other costs to cover books and materials came from the "Penalty Fund", which was made up of fines from workers and owners who broke the rules of the 1833 Factory Act.

"Pickles" School closed in 1898, the children transferring to the newly opened St. John's School.

Turn left up the steep Roughtown Road. The trail now looks at Quickwood Manor and the old cottages. The estate of Quick was mentioned in the Domesday Book (1086). The name is probably derived from an Anglo-Saxon word Cwic, meaning the Wickens tree, or Wych Elm. This area must have been well wooded some years ago. Quickwood Manor was known as Wood Hall, St. John's Church as Wood Church, and the steep hill now Roughtown Road, leading up to Stockport Road, is still referred to as Wood Brow. Other names in the area are Little Wood, Nield Wood and the Plantation. The name Baguley (the opposite end of Carrhill Road) probably means "Badger Wood".



Quickmere, in Saxon times, was almost certainly the centre of communal life, with the sokeman, or chief tenant's house situated in the neighbourhood of Quickwood, or Quickedge.

It is possible that the Saxon manor house stood on this site. The earliest deeds of the present building have been lost, but Joseph Bradbury, writing in 1871 stated that nothing about the building at the time indicated an earlier date than the reign of Charles II, and a more recent historian believed that the building was probably not later than the sixteen hundreds. These would suggest that the original parts date from the latter half of the seventeenth century.

In 1871 a terrace walk, with open stonework balustrading, still stood where the cottage gardens are now. There were also the gate piers and some carved stone pineapples.

An interesting story of a family living there in the eighteenth century is recorded. In Saddleworth Church Registers, the baptism on April 11th 1736, of William, son of William Kenworthy Junior and his wife Grace, de Quick is recorded. He died in 1776 and is buried in St. Georges churchyard, Mossley. This William became a wealthy woollen manufacturer. Hand-loom weaving would be carried out on the second floor of the house. Even today, there are connecting doors between the bedrooms of the houses in the terrace.

He and his wife Alice, had a daughter, Anne, baptised at St. Georges in 1759. She went away to boarding school. About this time one Samuel William Riley from London, was apprenticed to her father. When he was twenty years of age, he ran away with his master's daughter, then just over sixteen, and they were married at Gretna Green. Samuel Riley became an actor and they travelled extensively. At one time he was the manager of the theatre in Oldham.

Above the wall behind the cottages you can see the Community Centre. Built in 1865 as St John's

School, this building was used for church services before the completion of the nearby church.

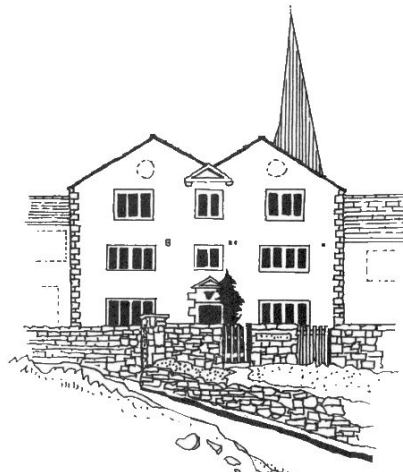
It continued as a school until the mid 1970s when the school was combined with Milton School on Mill Lane. The building is owned by Tameside Council and was originally used as a Youth Centre. It is now a charity and is run by a committee of trustees. It is used by a variety of groups ranging from a toddler group to a group for older people.

Turn right, taking the path alongside the wall behind Quickwood, coming out onto Carrhill Road.

Looking down the hill, the building on the left near the bend was Mossley Cooperative Store. Once a general grocery store and butchers, it closed in the 1960s and was converted to private dwellings. The lintels are the only identifying signs left to show there would have been larger windows.

Turn left, walking up Carrhill Road. Turn sharp left into the churchyard of St John's Church.

The church was opened in 1878, funded by James Heywood, Ralph Radcliffe and 2 Whitehead Brothers. It was built in the early decorated style in Yorkshire stone. The architect was Wild of Oldham. Prior to the opening of the church local people had to attend St Anne's Church in Lydgate.



The large boulder in the Church Yard is believed to be a glacial erratic from the ice age. A dint at the top shows where a cross had been attached.

Leave the churchyard by returning to Carrhill Road. Turn left and continue up the hill. Notice the steep Saxon, Roman and Dane Streets on the right. These streets were built by Mossley Cooperative Society.

At the top of the hill, turn left along Stockport Road. This was a turnpike road, completed in 1820. It was part of the Stockport to Doctor Lane Head Turnpike, replacing the earlier 1765 turnpike route along Carrhill Road.

A number of the houses along the left hand side had underhouses with access to separate dwellings at the rear.

The Church Inn, opened around 1837, was originally called the Hardmans Arms after its first owner. The 1890 survey found that the inn could accommodate 1 traveller, stabling for 1 horse and refreshments for 10 people.

60 Stockport Rd, just before the post box, was at one time the Traveller's Rest, opened as a beer house in 1860. Its licence was revoked in 1931 after complaints from police about the accommodation. The Buffalo Lodge used to meet there. It became 2 dwellings.

When you reach the traffic lights at Brookbottom walk up Arundel Street (originally Back Street), passing on your right Dyson Street, with some old cottages, then Dean Street, leading to Marsden Close where the old people's home was built on the site of one of Mossley's two cinemas - officially "The Pavilion Cinema", but better known as "The Top Pictures".

At the Co-op supermarket, where a blue plaque shows this to have been, in 1856, the location of Tameside's first Co-operative shop, cross Arundel Street and walk along Lancaster Street and you will be back at the George Lawton Hall.