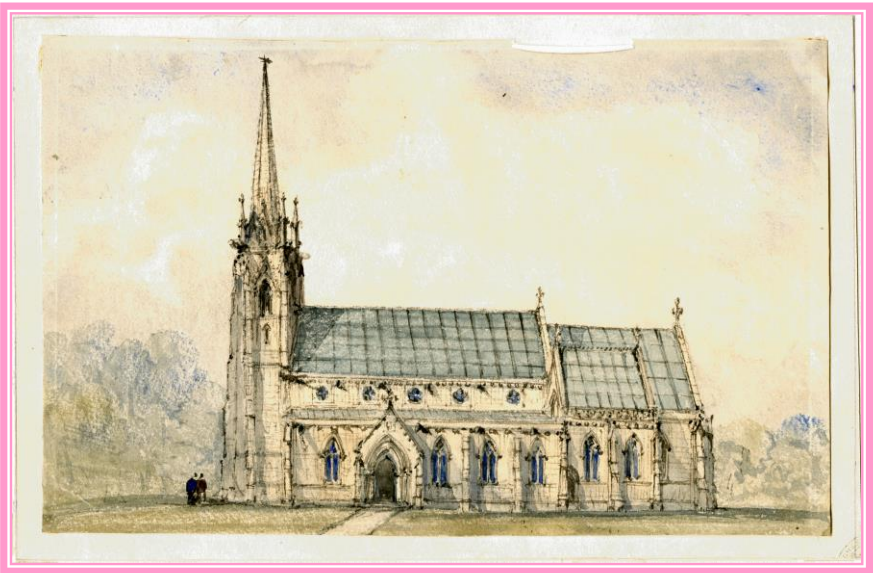


Lord Egerton's Dream



***The Origins and Early Years of
St. Mark's Church, Worsley.
≈ Founded 1844 ≈***

Paul R. Speakman

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PREFACE

This book is intended to supplement, and not supplant, the acknowledged histories of the church and the surrounding area by Harold Milliken and Frank Mullineux. Both are excellent accounts and worthy of wider reading. Its aim is to highlight the fact that it was a confluence of circumstances, concepts and coincidences, all of which helped to create this beautiful church.

There are many books and publications available which trace in much greater detail those aspects relevant to the ultimate building of a church in Worsley, at that particular moment in time. Some of these, particularly the ones published in the nineteenth century, are available to read in book form or be downloaded online.

The area and the church were greatly indebted to the work and passion of one man, Lord Francis Egerton. On becoming the heir to his great-uncle, the 3rd Duke of Bridgewater in 1833, he devoted his time, his energy and his money to help further his great-uncle's work, and thereby to improve the lives of the local people. As will become evident, the workers and their families became ardent admirers of the family.

This is an attempt to explore the social, political, economic, ecclesiastical, and architectural factors that contributed towards the foundation of the church in 1844, and to condense them into one small volume. Ultimately, the building of the church would not have been achieved without the drive and enthusiasm of his lordship, who, in 1834, declared: "***The first thing I am going to do is to build a church.***"

FOREWORD

Grateful thanks are extended to all those who have helped in the making of this book. Firstly, to Christopher Parkinson of the CVMA (*Corpus Vitrearum Medii Aevi*) of Great Britain, based at the University of York, for his expert knowledge on the stained glass in the church and for his permission to use his photographs.

In addition, our gratitude is also expressed to the Dean and Canons of St. George's Chapel, Windsor, for supplying a copy of the stall plate of the Earl of Ellesmere and for their permission to reproduce it. The Royal Collection Trust kindly gave permission to use paintings held by the Royal Collection.

The sketch of the New Hall in 1849 by Frederick James Shields has only recently been located. It is held by the Wellcome Foundation in London, who have kindly granted their permission to reproduce it.

I must also acknowledge the help and support of the staff at Chetham's Library, Manchester, and its librarian, Dr. Michael Powell, who gave me access to their collection of contemporary newspapers, particularly in connection with Queen Victoria's visit in 1851.

Sincere thanks are to be given to my wife, Susan, who showed so much patience in allowing me time during the winter months for research and for typing. She also helped by proofreading the script and offering insightful comments on and amendments to the text.

The information contained herein has been taken from various internet sites, books, correspondence and newspaper articles, whose information is hereby acknowledged.

Finally, this book is dedicated to all members of my family – my wife Susan; my son and daughter Matthew and Emma; and my loved grandchildren Amy, Joshua and Oliver.

THE DUKE AND HIS CANAL

THE DUKE

Lord Francis Egerton was born on 21st May 1736, the younger son of Scroop Egerton, the first Duke of Bridgewater. He succeeded to the dukedom at the age of twelve upon the death of his brother, John, 2nd Duke. The dukedom had been conferred upon his father in 1720, and other titles associated with the family (Baron Ellesmere and Viscount Brackley) stretched back to 1603 and 1616 respectively. Upon his succession, the young 3rd duke inherited estates in twelve different counties in England, the most valuable of which was the one at Worsley, because of its extensive coal mines.



Debrett's Peerage describes the heraldic crest as follows: **Crest:** On a Chapeau Gules turned up Ermine a Lion rampant of the first supporting an Arrow erect Or headed and feathered Argent. **Escutcheon:** Argent a Lion rampant Gules between three Pheons Sable. **Supporters:** Dexter: A Horse rearing Argent gorged with a Ducal coronet Or; Sinister: A Griffin sergeant Or gorged with a Ducal Coronet Argent beaked and legged of the last. **Motto:** Sic Donec.

In late 1752, the young man was sent to Europe on the Grand Tour, a common occurrence for many young noblemen - a form of educational rite of passage. The duke had been impressed by the continental canal systems such as the Canal du Midi in Southern France, running between Toulouse and the port town of Sète on the Mediterranean coast. Following the construction of the nearby Sankey Canal in 1757, the Duke and his land agent and engineer, John Gilbert, drew up plans for an underground canal serving his coal mines at Worsley, which would link to a surface canal between Worsley and Salford. After turning his back on London in 1758 due to a failed engagement, this new form of navigation spurred him on to develop this means of transport to serve his collieries in Lancashire. It was his agent, John Gilbert, who turned his vision into reality. When the Duke was just 23 years old, he presented his first Bill to parliament, which was hugely supported by the tradesmen of Manchester and Salford on his pledge to reduce the delivered price of coal in Manchester to no more than 4^d per cwt. - a promise

which was written into law for forty years! The first Bridgewater Canal Act passed into law on 23rd March 1759.

John Gilbert, who had moved into Worsley Old Hall in 1759, brought in James Brindley, already a famous engineer, to help with the construction of the canal. Further Acts of Parliament had to be passed as plans changed and the canal into Manchester was finally completed in 1764.

Through his canal and coal interests, the duke accumulated great wealth. The family owned estates in Surrey, Sussex and at Ashridge in Hertfordshire, where he was later buried, in addition to those at Brackley and Worsley. With his vast fortune, he built a magnificent Georgian mansion, Bridgewater House, in London's St. James's. With this fortune, the duke, the richest nobleman in England, set about rebuilding Ashridge, but he died before his plans were completed. He was the leading member of the syndicate which included his nephew and heir, Earl Gower, later 1st Duke of Sutherland, and the Earl of Carlisle, which purchased 47 of the famous 'Orléans Collection,' of paintings in 1798. This huge collection (of over 500 works) had been brought together by Louis Philippe II, Duke of Orléans, prior to his death at the guillotine in 1793 during the French Revolution.

Upon his death, the Duke bequeathed his collection of paintings to Earl Gower (Marquis of Stafford), over 300 in total. These were put on a form of public display at the family house, Cleveland House, later known as Bridgewater House, in St. James's, London. Tickets for viewings on a Wednesday afternoon throughout the summer could be obtained by "acquaintances" of a member of the family (in practice tickets could mostly be obtained by writing and asking for them), or through artists recommended by a member of the Royal Academy,

Edward Baines, in his *History of the County Palatine and Duchy of Lancaster* of 1836, wrote:

The public spirit, skill, and perseverance exerted by the Duke of Bridgewater, have elevated this place to a distinguished eminence amongst the townships of Lancashire. If Manchester be the centre of the inland navigation of the north of England, it is indebted more to the duke of Bridgewater than to any other person for that distinction, and Worsley is the place from which the first lines were drawn to form that centre. The stupendous works in this township, visible and invisible, exhibit a degree of mechanical skill and of individual capital and enterprise, unparalleled perhaps in the history of this country.

The benevolence of the Duke towards the local people was evidenced on many reported occasions. He often travelled to Manchester to watch his coal being unloaded, and '*instructed his agents to ensure that the poor and needy were served first*' (Grayling). The same author tells other stories of his kindness to the people for whom his cheap coal meant everything. One such was reported as follows: '*He brought cheap coal to Manchester and Salford, and he was loved for it. Later in life these same people paid him the compliment, when he drove into Manchester, pulled by weary horses, of detaching his coach and pulling it back to Worsley by hand, cheering all the way.*' He genuinely worked to benefit the ordinary people and was handsomely recognised for this. These traits of kindness and the respect of the people were reflected almost half a century later in the works of his great-nephew, the first Earl of Ellesmere.

THE CANAL

The Bridgewater Canal is arguably described as England's first true canal. The Sankey Canal, opened in 1757 to carry coal to Liverpool, followed the course of Sankey Brook. However, the Bridgewater Canal was the first canal in Britain not to follow the path of an existing river or tributary when it opened on 17th July 1761. At that point of time, it reached as far as the aqueduct at Barton, where this impressive structure allowed the newly constructed canal to cross the River



Irwell. The picture was a sketch drawn by the French philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Named after its owner, Francis Egerton, the third Duke of Bridgewater, the Canal was built to solve the problem of transporting coal from his mines at Worsley to the industrial areas of Manchester, in order to power the steam engines essential to Britain's industrial revolution. The Bridgewater Canal thus became the forerunner of the canal network in Britain.

Affectionately known as the “Duke's Cut,” the Bridgewater Canal revolutionised transport in this country and marked the beginning of the golden canal era which followed from 1760 to 1830. In the mid-eighteenth century, the only options for transporting coal in the North West region of Lancashire were via the Mersey and Irwell Navigation, or by packhorse. Neither option was particularly efficient or cost effective. There was only so much coal a packhorse could usefully transport and the navigation only allowed passage to small vessels; and even then this was only possible during a drought, at low tide and with easterly winds strong enough to support the passage of a fully loaded ship.

Arthur Young (1741-1820) was an English writer on agriculture, economics and social statistics. Young is considered a major English writer on agriculture, but it is as a social and political observer that he is best known, and for his *Tour in Ireland* (1780) and *Travels in France* (1792). Although he was not successful as a farmer, he did acquire a working knowledge of agriculture. Elected a Fellow of the Royal Society in 1774. He began a series of journeys through England and Wales, one of which covered the north of England in 1769. His observations were published, as a series of letters, in 4 volumes containing *'an account of the present state of agriculture, manufactures and population, in several counties of this kingdom, interspersed with descriptions of the seats of the nobility and gentry; and other remarkable objects.'*

In the fourth and concluding volume of his work *A Six Months Tour through the North of England*, the 41st Letter contains a survey of the state of the roads throughout the country, wherever his travels took him. As one would imagine, his views on their condition varied greatly, with some getting good opinions, and others much less so. However, when there was mention of the roads in Lancashire, his tone was decidedly unappreciative! Terms like *'intolerable, infamously bad, wretched, vile, execrable'* abound. On the road from Preston to Wigan, he wrote: *'I know not, in the whole range of language, terms sufficiently expressive to describe this infernal road... but let me most seriously caution all travellers, who may accidentally purpose to travel this terrible country, to avoid it as they would the devil: for a thousand to one but they break their necks or their limbs by overthrows or breakings down.'* His major causes for concern were deep ruts and *'mud only from a wet summer; what therefore must it be after a winter?'* Another main cause of great concern was the fact that *'any person*

would imagine the people of the country had made it with a view to immediate destruction; for the breadth is only sufficient for one carriage; consequently it is cut at once into rutts (sic).' He concluded that 'tolls had better be doubled, and even quadrupled, than suffer such a nuisance to remain.' Although he only mentions roads near the towns of Preston, Wigan, Warrington, Altrincham and Manchester, one can only imagine that those around Worsley were probably very similar. Such conditions presented another reason for improving the transport of coal into the towns.

Scroop Egerton (1681-1744) was the 1st Duke of Bridgewater (ennobled in 1720), and father to John Egerton, 2nd Duke of Bridgewater (1727-1748) and Francis Egerton, 3rd Duke of Bridgewater (1736 -1803). In 1737, he had drawn up a plan to utilise Worsley Brook in order to facilitate the transportation of coal into Manchester by making it navigable as far as the Irwell at Barton, where it would link up with the river there. The plan never came to fruition, but may have inspired his younger son to reconsider this idea.

And so it was that, by 1758, Francis Egerton started to usher a bill through Parliament to construct a canal from the Delph at Worsley to Barton. As mentioned earlier, that bill became an Act of Parliament in 1759. Joseph Priestley noted that *'The primary object of the father of British Inland Navigation, as the Duke of Bridgewater has been justly styled, was to open his valuable collieries at Worsley, and to supply the town of Manchester with coal, at a much cheaper rate than could be done by the imperfect navigation of the Mersey and Irwell.'*

However, as the digging of the canal developed, a further plan was suggested that also required a further Act of Parliament. Instead of terminating at Barton, the canal was to cross the River Irwell by means of an aqueduct and continue directly into the town of Manchester. This development was passed by the house, despite fierce opposition by rival transport operators and landowners. By 1765, it had reached Castlefield, Manchester, and on 1st August 1765, Worsley coal became readily available in the town. The Duke became a familiar sight in that location and his contribution to local industry was widely appreciated. It has been written by John Timbs (1860) that the construction of the original stretch of canal from Worsley to Manchester cost the Duke an estimated £168,000 (that is approximately £23,997,480 in today's money, as calculated in 2016).

The Duke now decided to build upon his rising popularity amongst the local people and the merchant classes by considering an even bigger venture - to extend his canal through Cheshire to the Mersey Estuary, linking the towns of Liverpool and Manchester and developing freight trade between them. This

required a **third** Act of Parliament and it immediately encountered stiff opposition, particularly in the Lords. It first came before Parliament on 14th November 1761, entitled '*An Act to enable the most noble Francis Duke of Bridgewater, to make a navigable cut or canal from Longford Bridge, in the township of Stretford, in the county palatine of Lancaster, to the River Mersey, at a place called the Hempstones, in the township of Halton, in the county of Chester.*' Royal Assent was granted on 24th March 1762. Despite nearly bankrupting the Duke, and in the face of much opposition from local landowners, this link between Manchester and Liverpool was completed by March 1776, four years after the death of James Brindley.

In 1765 the Duke sought a **fourth** act of parliament for a branch canal from Sale Moor to Stockport, which was to follow the valley of the River Mersey. The Act was applied for in order to counter a proposed canal that would give the towns of Stockport and Macclesfield access to the Mersey, via the River Weaver. The Act was passed the following year, but the work was not carried out and the Act lapsed. Consequently, this section of canal was never built.

Although the Duke was a very wealthy man, his wealth lay in his estates around the country. The urge to build canals created a huge financial strain upon him, which he tried to resolve by taking out personal loans. One source states that '*By today's values, he was eventually some £2 million or more in personal debt.*' Some of this was because he had to borrow to pay his men; some was due to the fact that he had to compulsorily purchase land to gain ownership close to the canal and wharves.

However, by the time he was almost 60 years old, he promoted and successfully gained his **fifth** Canal Act (1795) to extend the canal from Worsley to Leigh, where it would link up with the Wigan branch of the Leeds and Liverpool Canal, allowing goods to be transported over a wider area, following the development of other canal systems. In spite of the financial difficulties he experienced at times during the numerous extensions and additions to the original canal, the Duke had made a very healthy profit by the time of his death in March 1803. Priestley noted in 1831 that '*This valuable concern is now the property of the Most Noble the Marquis of Stafford, and it said to have increased his annual income to the enormous amount of £260,000.*'

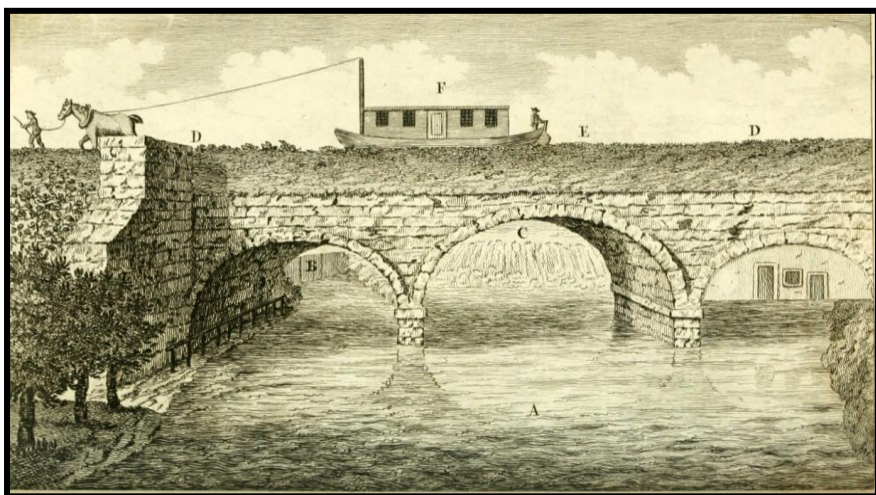
ARTHUR YOUNG

When Arthur Young planned to visit Manchester in 1769, it was '*not only to view the manufactures of that town, but to make it my head quarters from thence to go the tour of his Grace the Duke of Bridgewater's navigation, about which such*

wonders are abroad. If only half are true, I shall be not a little entertained.' He then wrote about the factories, what they produced and how much the workers earned for their labours, and whether women and/or children were employed. On this matter, he found little consistency in practice, but noted that at times of high prices, 'the manufacturers were industrious, and their families easy and happy; but that in times of low prices the latter starved; for half the time of the father was spent at the ale-house.'

Of the Barton Bridge, he said it 'is one of the principal undertakings in the whole navigation, and a wondrous one it certainly is. The canal is here, in its usual breadth, carried (Roman aqueduct like) on arches over the large and navigable river Irwell. The aqueduct is two hundred yards long, and thirty-six feet wide; it crosses the Irwell on the large arches, the centre of which spans sixty-three feet; and is carried, with amazing labour, through a valley, filled up to receive it.'

'This view, Plate VII, was taken to better explain this surprising work.'



In this picture, A is the River Irwell; B a lock-gate, thro' which the barges are let that navigate the river, on account of the obstruction of the cascade, C; D-D a gang-way from one side to the other; E the Canal; F the pleasure boat, drawn by one horse.'

Young continues: 'The effect of coming at once on to Barton Bridge, and looking down upon a large river ... form altogether a scenery somewhat like

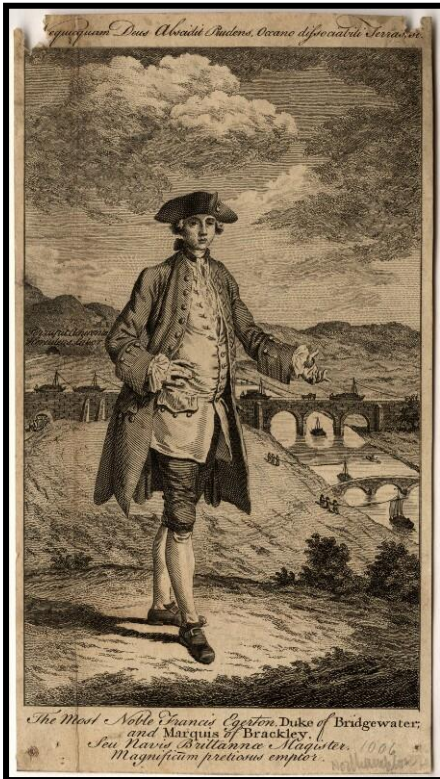
enchantment, and exhibit at once a view that must give you an idea of prodigious labour; for the canal is here not only carried over the Irwell, but likewise across a large valley.' He then goes on to state that the canal is kept everywhere at an equal depth, scarcely ever varying more than six inches, from four feet to four feet six inches. Continuing his admiration for the work of the Duke, he then remarked that the little village of Worsley looked like a 'rive environ' of London, with its workshops, yards and boats, before referring to the great curiosity at Worsley - the subterranean canal hewn out of the rock to a great length. He described the scene underground as a *terra incognita*.

As a conclusion to his nineteenth letter in volume 3 of his tour, he commented that the venture the Duke had embarked upon could never be sufficiently admired. *'At an age when most men aim only at pleasure and dissipation, to see him engaged in undertakings, that give employment and bread to thousands; that tend so greatly to advance the agriculture, manufactures, and commerce, of an extensive neighbourhood, in a word, that improve and adorn his country, is a sight so very uncommon, and so great, that it must command our admiration.'* He finished by praising the Duke for having the ability *'to discern the characters of mankind so much, as to fix on those people who were formed by nature for the business; to draw forth latent merit; to bring from obscurity one of the most useful genius's that any age can boast; to throw that genius at once into employment; to give a free scope to his bold ideas; to be unsparing of money in supporting them ... all prove that his Grace has a mind superior to common prejudice; that he is one of those truly great men, who have the soul to execute what they have the genius to plan.'*

Some of these attributes of the Duke, so precisely pointed out by Young, could easily have been recognised in the life of his grand-nephew - the first Earl of Ellesmere, Francis Egerton - some eighty years later.

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE BRIDGEWATER TRUST

HIS WILL



The Duke of Bridgewater died on 8th March 1803. His will was one of the longest and most complex in legal history, some 66 pages in length, the full text being published in book form in 1836. Since he died childless, by his will, the Lancashire and Cheshire estates and coalmines (including Worsley), the Bridgewater Canal and his estate in Brackley, Northamptonshire, passed in trust for his nephew, George Granville Leveson-Gower (1758-1833), Marquess of Stafford (later to become the 1st Duke of Sutherland). As the 1st Duke of Sutherland, he acquired the greater part of Sutherland (now Highland) through his marriage to Elizabeth Gordon (1765-1839), Countess of Sutherland.

(1766. The Most Noble Francis Egerton Duke of Bridgewater and Marquis of Brackley)

Under the terms of this will, the estates were to be managed by the *Bridgewater Trust*, though the income from the canal and the revenue from the estates were to be paid to his nephew George. On *his* death, it was to go to his own second son, Francis, provided that he changed his name to Egerton; and thence to his heirs and successors. His own first son, George, was destined to become eventually the 2nd Duke of Sutherland, having earlier being styled Viscount Trentham (until 1803), Earl Gower (until 1833) and Marquess of Stafford (from 1833).

In accordance with the provisions of the Canal Duke's will, the canal and mines were left to a Trust of three to run for "*as long as the lives of all the Peers of the House of Lords and of their sons who were living at the time of the Duke's death and for a further 21 years as allowed by law.*" Coincidentally, this was to be 100 years. Financial interest in the management structure was thereby severed from

being within the control of the family. The management of the estates and canal was entrusted to a superintendent, who was appointed by the will, and vested thereby with an almost arbitrary and exclusive authority, and two other trustees. These three were Sir Archibald MacDonald, who was Lord Chief Baron of the Exchequer, Edward Venables-Vernon-Harcourt, at the time the Bishop of Carlisle and later the Archbishop of York, and, as Superintendent, Robert Haldane Bradshaw, the Duke's agent. Bradshaw managed the estate, for which he received a salary of £2,000 a year and the use of the Duke's mansions at Worsley and Runcorn. The first two named trustees were married to Louisa and Ann, the nieces of the 3rd Duke, and the daughters of Louisa (Egerton, sister of the Duke) and Granville Leveson-Gower. The Superintendent held a residential position in Worsley and had wide ranging powers, including the right to appoint a successor. The two trustees took little active part in the daily management of the estates, but were consulted by R. H. Bradshaw in matters concerning the Leveson-Gower Family, as indeed was James Loch, a later Superintendent.

THE TRUST

The first Superintendents were: Robert Haldane Bradshaw, 1803-1834 (in the employ of the Duke from 1800); James Sothern, 1834-1837; James Loch, 1837-1855. The work of these three men is well documented elsewhere and need not be detailed here, except for the briefest of information. **Bradshaw's** stewardship of the estates and canal became more and more dictatorial, and he began to neglect the maintenance of the canal. His administration of the canal enterprise saw increased deterioration of the fabric of the canal, the locks, docks and warehouses. These structures were being starved of capital, largely due to inadequate provision for them in the Duke's will. His tenure therefore became increasingly criticised, in spite of reasonable annual profits being realised and business growing along the canal. By 1833, income began to fall and Lord Francis Egerton (having recently become the heir) and James Loch (principal agent to his father, the Duke of Sutherland) were 'minded' to realise that unless Bradshaw were replaced, the whole project might fail. Bradshaw was persuaded to retire, but exercised his right to nominate his successor, who was James Sothern, a long-standing member of staff. *'But in so doing, Bradshaw ignored the claim of his son, Captain James Bradshaw, who had effectively been his deputy for some years, and who, when he learned of his father's choice, killed himself in the Brick Hall at Worsley.'* (Grayling).

James Sothern's tenure was brief. His management style was very similar to that of Bradshaw, and he did not appreciate any interference from his benefactor, Lord Francis Egerton. For a short period of time, there was a semblance of tolerance between the two men, but things changed when, in 1836, Lord Francis indicated his wish to move to Worsley Old Hall with his family. Sothern

considered himself to be the lord of the manor and blocked the attempts of his lordship's workmen to enter the building. There was no chance of reconciliation between them, and some months later, in 1837, he too was persuaded to leave - with a healthy pension.

James Loch succeeded Sothern as Superintendent, a post he held up to his death in June 1855. Born in Edinburgh in 1780, and trained as an advocate, he was called to the Bar at Lincoln's Inn on 15th Nov. 1806. Abandoning a practice in the law, he became interested in estate management and was simultaneously agent and auditor to the 1st Marquis of Stafford, Lord Francis Egerton, the Bridgewater Trustees, and the Earl of Carlisle. As such, he was responsible for agricultural practices across many thousands of acres of land in both England and Scotland. The 'Highland Clearances' of the Marquis of Stafford, as a result of which between 1811 and 1820 fifteen thousand crofters were removed from the inland to the seacoast districts, were carried out under his supervision. From 1827 to 1852, he was M. P. for two differing constituencies, the first in Cornwall and the second for Wick Burghs (northern Scotland)! He married twice. His second marriage, on 2nd December 1847, was to Elizabeth Mary, widow of Major George Macartney Greville, 38th foot. She predeceased him on 29th December 1848 and is buried in the churchyard of St. Mark.

<p>BRIDGEWATER NAVIGATION CO. LIMITED, (FELLOWS, MORTON & CO., AGENTS.) CARRIERS BY WATER to and from LIVERPOOL, BIRKENHEAD, MANCHESTER, RUNCORN, WARRINGTON, THE STAFFORDSHIRE POTTERIES, WOLVERHAMPTON, BIRMINGHAM, and THE SOUTH STAFFORDSHIRE and EAST WORCESTERSHIRE IRON DISTRICTS. HEAD OFFICES:—Albert Square, Manchester; Duke's Dock, Liverpool; Albion Wharf, Wolverhampton; Horsley Offices, Tipton; Great Charles Street, Birmingham.</p>

The Trust did, in fact, function for 100 years to 1903, although the navigation part of the Trusteeship was sold to Bridgewater Navigation Co. Ltd. in 1872 and the sale was

completed in 1874. Hence, in 1872, the Bridgewater Navigation Co. was formed, and on Monday 9th September the canal was purchased in the names of Sir Edward William Watkin and William Philip Price, respectively chairmen of the Manchester, Sheffield and Lincolnshire Railway and the Midland Railway for £1,120,000. The canal was sold again in 1885, when the Manchester Ship Canal Company paid the Bridgewater Navigation Company £1,710,000 for all their property. The construction of the Ship Canal forced the removal of the Barton Aqueduct and the construction of the Barton Swing Aqueduct, as the former was too low for the vessels which would use the new canal.

In 1903, the Bridgewater Trust, set up under the will of the Duke of Bridgewater expired, and the 3rd Earl of Ellesmere set up the Ellesmere Trust in order to facilitate the management of his estates. Later, in 1923, Bridgewater Estates Ltd. was formed to acquire the Ellesmere family estate in Worsley. Finally, in 1984, Bridgewater Estates Ltd. was purchased by a subsidiary of Peel Holdings.

THE STATE OF WORSLEY PRE - 1837

In the early years of the nineteenth century, Manchester was a rapidly expanding borough with many teething troubles. It was then (in 1833) that Lord Francis Leveson-Gower inherited the Lancashire and Cheshire estates of the third Duke of Bridgewater. Four years later, he brought his family to live in Worsley - a small village very close to the heart of Manchester and no doubt suffering similar pangs to the booming development of this neighbour. Many visitors came to see both this district and the borough over a period of about sixty years and wrote about their observations.

Such has been the significance of what took place here that in spring 1979 the BBC sent a team of cameramen and other production technicians to Worsley, to film an episode of the series *Discovering English Churches*, hosted by **Donald Sinden**. The series aired on BBC2 in the autumn, with a repeat showing on BBC1 being broadcast two years later. The team spent a full week in the area, and made some slight and subtle changes to the interior of the church for the purposes of the programme. In the tenth and final episode, St. Mark's features for about twenty minutes and Sinden explores the architectural, cultural and social influences which shaped the foundation of the church. Fortunately, a copy of this episode (on DVD and with a transcription) exists in the church archives. In its edition covering the programme, the Radio Times wrote:

DISCOVERING ENGLISH CHURCHES

The last of ten programmes with Donald Sinden: *Hope and Glory*

The 19th century shook the Church of England out of its easy-going mould. The grimy suburbs of the Industrial Revolution were fast becoming strongholds of non-conformism or, worse still, atheism. In these areas, new churches were hurriedly built to stem the rising tide of dissent. This week, Donald Sinden visits St Mark's, Worsley, near Manchester, and All Souls', Haley Hill, Halifax. Both churches were built in the revived Gothic style which had ousted the classical style and had come to be seen as the only true Christian form of architecture. Both were also the work of Sir George Gilbert Scott, perhaps the most typical architect of the Gothic Revival, and certainly the most prolific.

After the opening scene of episode ten, near the Albert memorial (designed by George Gilbert Scott), Donald Sinden is filmed on the banks of the Bridgewater Canal and introduces Worsley in this way:

*This is Worsley (sadly pronounced Wurzley-Ed.) on the outskirts of Manchester – “a God-forgotten place, its inhabitants much addicted to drink and to rude sports, their morals deplorably low, the whole district in a state of educational and religious destitution.” Not my judgement I hasten to add but the words spoken by Lord Francis Egerton in 1837 when he came to live here, after taking over the Bridgewater estate on his father’s death. But even in 1837, Lord Francis’s description of its depraved inhabitants was probably something of an exaggeration. In fact, there were already four places of worship which served this area. They were, however, non-conformist, which is probably why Lord Francis Egerton discounted them. Anyway, he set about improving this lamentable condition by setting up Sunday Schools to teach the children who were probably already working in the Bridgewater mines and their workshops; and he also gave a site and the cash for building a grand new church - **St. Mark’s**.*

The French philosopher, **Jean-Jacques Rousseau** (1712-1778), came here, probably during his refuge in England in 1766. Throughout most of his life to that date, he had managed to upset both Church and State through his writings. He became a '*persona non grata*' in Paris, although he had been born in



Switzerland. Constantly on the move, trying to avoid the authorities, he eventually moved to London in January 1766, together with his friend David Hume - a Scottish philosopher and essayist. Anxious to relocate to a more rural location, he and his friend Thérèse rented Wootton Hall, near Stoke, the home of Richard Davenport - a

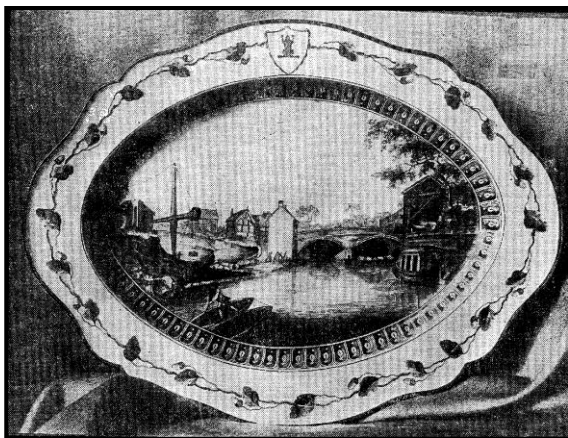
wealthy and elderly widower who spoke French. Although he welcomed the beauty and serenity of the area, Rousseau only spent sixteen months there before returning to France.

As a young man, he had shown a keen interest in painting and, during his time in Britain, he journeyed to Worsley, where he made 2 sketches of local scenes. 1. Near Worsley Bridge (Vue du Canal du Duc de Bridgewater près du Pont de Worsley); and 2. Barton Aqueduct (Vue de l'Aqueduc du Duc de Bridgewater). Both pictures are from a private plate in the possession of W. Ford, of Manchester.



The first sketch of Worsley appears on the Wedgwood dinner service commissioned by Catherine II of Russia. The Empress particularly asked for views of landscape gardens, and many of the finest gardens in Britain are depicted, together with a great array of 'Antiquities' – ruined castles and abbeys,

old manor houses, Cornish dolmens – as well as romantic landscapes, views of the Thames at London and even early industrial sites. This creamware service was ordered by Catherine the Great in 1773. It was intended for the Chesme Palace - at one time called La Grenouillère - because of its location on a frog marsh, which explains the green frog emblem on every one of the 952 pieces of the service. Wedgwood had produced a large table service for fifty persons, decorated with 1,222 views of England. It was handed over to the Empress in 1774. Wedgwood used



this service to advertise his wares and craftsmanship, and invited privileged guests to private showings of the complete set before it was shipped to the Empress. Many of these pieces are now at the Hermitage Museum in St. Petersburg. Catherine paid £2,700 for the service.

In a diary entry of 1773, **Josiah Wedgwood** wrote of the area; *"We next visited Worsley which has the appearance of a considerable Seaport Town. His Grace has built some hundreds of houses, and is every year adding considerably to their number."*

Josiah Wedgwood, better known as a ceramicist, was also a very keen observer of the development of the canal system and encouraged James Brindley to construct canals in the Midlands, which were designed to help him in his industry.

The Illustrated London News added its comments to the dreary image of Worsley when it described in detail the Queen's visit in its edition of 11th October 1851.

"Of the village in which Worsley Hall is situated, it is not too much to say that it is an oasis in the somewhat dreary district surrounding it. (Here appeared a tribute to the philanthropy of the noble Earl and his benevolent Countess with fresh works of piety or charity-Ed.). We are assured that in former years the moral condition of this colliery district was only too truly described by its ostensible features. The principal street of Worsley, then called Smoke Street, from its sooty aspect and proximity to the Bridgewater forge and coke ovens, was but the entrance to a series of hamlets in which dilapidated cottages, rude and squalid children, and blackened coal works, formed the principal characteristics. Drunkenness, Sabbath breaking, cock-fighting, and disregard of all decency, prevailed to a great extent. The few Sunday schools, whether belonging to the Church or to Dissenters, were void of everything like discipline or control; and Ellenbrook chapel, capable of holding about 350 people, with a Wesleyan chapel at Worsley, and Independent Methodist chapel at Roe Green, and a Ranting chapel at Winton, were the only accessible places of worship. In short, it was considered as rough a locality as any in the county."

This is as depraved, dissolute, and damning a commentary as there can be! However, the paragraph then changed its tone. The continuation of this article then read:

"From the time of Lord Ellesmere's residence, however, an entirely new era seems to have commenced. Few neighbourhoods now present a more quiet Sabbath, fuller churches, better schools, more respectable, honest, orderly, and civil inhabitants."

And so we are left with the picture of a poor, dismal and uncouth village which, only fifteen years later, has become a religious, disciplined and respectable place.

Less than twenty years before this article was written, two pieces of literature appeared which painted a gloomy and dismal picture of the Salford and Manchester area. The first of these was by **Viscount Alexis de Tocqueville** (1805-1859), a French political scientist, historian and diplomat. In 1835, he published a work entitled *Memoir on Pauperism*, a lesser known work of his which had been inspired by two visits to England in 1833 and 1835.

His first visit was in August 1833. This was to visit the country that had given birth to America and also to visit his fiancée, an English woman whom he had met in Versailles and was intending to marry. He was also very keen to visit a country which he believed was on the verge of a revolution, similar to the one that had occurred in France in 1789, *'and that one should hurry over to see them as they are now!'* He quickly concluded that, while a considerable social transformation was under way in England, *the 'aristocratic principle' was being supplanted by the 'democratic principle'*. Hence, there was no threat of an overt political revolution.

At the time of his visit to Manchester in 1835, the city was the capital of the world's textile industry. Both Manchester and Salford hold a special place in the history of the British working class. They lay at the heart of the cotton industry, which in turn was the spark of the industrial revolution; and as a consequence they were among the first places to experience the application of steam power and the factory system to production. As a result, the Manchester-Salford conurbation was the first to see a fully-formed industrial working class. De Tocqueville wrote: *'From this foul drain, the greatest stream of human industry flows to fertilise the whole world. From this filthy sewer, pure gold flows. Here humanity attains its most complete development and its most brutish; here civilization makes its miracles, and civilized man is turned back almost into a savage.'* He thought the district was almost anarchic, with no evidence of society or government. He noted its social structure of a few wealthy capitalists and middle class folk, but thousands of poor workmen, its unhealthy, poor, immoral inhabitants, many living in multiple occupancy and/or cellars, its spatial and

social separation of classes, its hurriedly built roads. He concluded that there was a public health disaster waiting to happen.

At the age of 22 years, in December 1842, a young German man came to Manchester, sent by his father - a cotton textile manufacturer - to work at the family's mill. The purpose of this journey was to rid his son of his more liberal and atheistic views. That man was **Friedrich Engels**. In the early stages of his visit, he met a young, fiery Mary Burns who was to become his companion for twenty years. She introduced him to the slums of Manchester, and there he came face-to-face with child labour, the harsh environment and the overworked and impoverished labourers. In 1845, he published *The Condition of the Working Class in England*, but it took another forty years for it to be published in English.

In this book, he wrote about the grimy working-men's dwellings. Two years later, he moved to Paris, where he met with Karl Marx - and the rest is history! Engels observed that all the towns that surrounded Manchester (Bolton, Bury, Oldham, etc.) were very similar to the city centre, as far as the living quarters were concerned, but he also noted that they had a larger proportion of working-class people. His descriptions were particularly unattractive and utterly depressing. He referred to the Irk as '*a narrow, coal-black, foul-smelling stream, full of debris and refuse, which it deposits on the shallower right bank.*' He observed that many streets were unpaved and without sewers. He saw colossal six and seven-storied buildings, and observed that working-people's quarters were sharply separated from the sections of the city reserved for the middle-class. He did acknowledge (40 years later) that, within 15 years, the working class had shared, to some extent, in the prosperity of others. There was temporary improvement even for the great mass of people.

And yet, some twenty-plus years after Peterloo (1819), opinions were changing and brightening. Coningsby, in **Disraeli's** novel of the same name (1844), concluded: '*Certainly Manchester is the most wonderful city of modern times. It is the philosopher alone who can conceive the grandeur of Manchester and the immensity of its future.*' Other observers of the city at that time were both fascinated by its vitality and alarmed by its problems. **Asa Briggs** (1921-2016), an English historian and a leading specialist on the Victorian Era, further wrote that '*there were two images of Manchester in the late 1830's and early 1840's, not one. The first was the older image of the city as a cradle of economic wealth and of social disorder. The second was a newer image of the city as a cradle both of wealth and of new and formative social values.*'

He was equally concerned about the quality of life in Manchester in the 1830's. He described this burgeoning city as the "*shock city of the age*" and again as one of the "*phenomena of the age*". It was one of only five towns in England with a

population in excess of 100,000 by 1837. He was impressed by its size, its newness, its industry, but was disturbed by its squalor. He further pointed out the growing sense of antagonism towards the middle classes and cotton spinners.

He concluded that the town could no longer be controlled. *'The civic force of the town was recognised to be totally inadequate to defend property from the attacks of lawless depredators. With no adequate police force, no effective machinery of modern local government, a disturbed social system which lacked the benevolent influence of natural gradations, and an economy subject to fluctuations and developing on the basis of obvious conflicts of interest, Manchester was felt to provide a persistent threat to that good order on which statesmen and moralists loved to dwell.'*



In 1852, the year after a successful visit to Salford and Manchester, Queen Victoria commissioned a watercolour by William Wyld to commemorate her visit to this area. Titled *Manchester from Kersal Moor*, it shows a skyline in which

tall chimneys belch out black smoke, which contrasts with the setting sun and the pastoral, rustic setting in the foreground. This painting is part of the Royal Collection. [Royal Collection Trust / © HM Queen Elizabeth II 2017]

When it comes to the pages of the visit of Queen Victoria in 1851, these comments and observations must be borne in mind, so that the reader may appreciate the true significance of her visit and recognise the love and patriotism of its people.

THE COMING OF LORD FRANCIS EGERTON

Various depressing commentaries on Worsley, all well known to today's local residents, and outlined in the preceding pages, appeared in many forms and over many decades. It has already been noted that Francis Leveson-Gower (later Earl of Ellesmere) is recorded as saying that he found Worsley to be '*a God-forgotten place; its inhabitants were much addicted to drink and rude sports, their morals being deplorably low. The whole district was in a state of religious and educational destitution; there was no one to see to the spiritual wants of the people, and teaching was all but nullity itself.*' *The Illustrated London News* added its comments to this dismal image of Worsley when it described in detail the Queen's visit in its edition of 11th October 1851. But then, suddenly, it continued its commentary on this area as follows:

"From the time of Lord Ellesmere's residence, however, an entirely new era seems to have commenced. Few neighbourhoods now present a more quiet Sabbath, fuller churches, better schools, more respectable, honest, orderly, and civil inhabitants."

(The Illustrated London News: Saturday 11 October 1851)

And so we are left with the picture of a poor, dismal and uncouth village which, only fifteen years later, has become a religious, disciplined and respectable place.

The Illustrated London News, quoted above, from its edition of Saturday 11th October 1851, went on to list all the benefits that the noble Earl had brought to the community since 1837. It specified:

- A temporary church erected at Walkden Moor
- A clergyman appointed and paid for by Lord Ellesmere
- In 1838, juvenile schools for 300 children were built
- In 1838, a school built at Walkden Moor for 200 infants
- In 1842, juvenile schools added in the same district
- In 1844, a school for 200 infants was opened in Worsley, with a mistress and 2 assistants
- In 1846, the beautiful church of St. Mark's Church, Worsley, (600 sittings) built by his lordship
- In 1848, the church of Walkden Moor was built
- In 1849, the chapel of Ellenbrook was extended, with an infant and Sunday school opened
- In 1850, a new Sunday school built at Edgefold
- In 1851, the foundations of a new aisle at St. Mark's laid

So, who was this man who came to this area and transformed it from a “*a God-forgotten place, its inhabitants much addicted to drink and to rude sports, their morals deplorably low, the whole district in a state of educational and religious destitution.*” to a “*neighbourhood [which now presents] a more quiet Sabbath, fuller churches, better schools, more respectable, honest, orderly, and civil inhabitants.*”



Adjacent to the main altar and next to the Ellesmere Memorial chapel in St. Mark's stands the memorial tomb to the First Earl of Ellesmere, Lord Francis Egerton, the patron of the church. The tomb was designed by George Gilbert Scott, R.A., sculpted in Caen stone by J. B. Philip of London, and was erected in 1860. The effigy of the late Earl, in his robes as a Knight of the Garter, reposes on a slab of Devonshire marble on the top of the tomb.

Francis Sutherland **Leveson-Gower** was born on New Year's Day 1800, the first day of the nineteenth century, to the Marquis of Stafford and Elizabeth Gordon, Countess of **Sutherland**. Lady Alice, (his first daughter, born 1830), later wrote: *'My father was named Francis after his great-uncle, the Duke of Bridgewater, from whom he inherited the Bridgewater Estates and property in Lancashire, and the far-famed Bridgewater Canal, though he did not come into possession of them until after his father's death, to whom they were left for his life.'* Francis was educated at Eton from 1811 to 1814, when he proceeded to Christ Church, Oxford, where he matriculated on 22 October 1817, aged 17. He was later

created Doctor of Civil Law (D.C.L.) at the university in 1834. On 6th August 1819, he became a lieutenant in the Staffordshire regiment of yeomanry, and was promoted to a captaincy on 27th September in the same year.

On 22nd June 1822, he married Harriet Catherine Greville (1800-1866), granddaughter of the 3rd Duke of Portland, thereupon resigning his commission.

They had eleven children, including:

George Egerton, 2nd Earl of Ellesmere (1823 - 1862) (had a twin brother, Francis; died aged 8 mo.)

Hon. Francis Egerton (1824 - 1895) (m. Lady Louisa Caroline Cavendish)

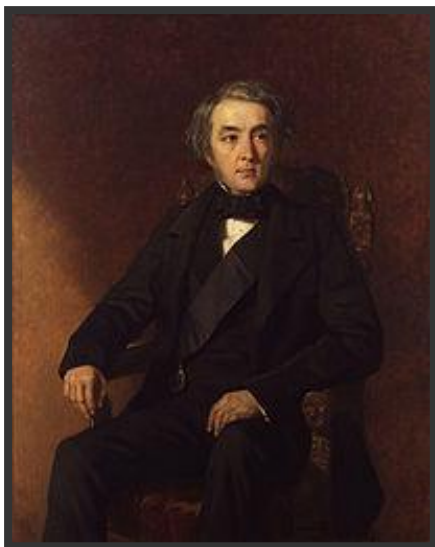
Hon. Algernon Fulke Egerton (1825 - 1891) (m. Hon. Alice Louisa Cavendish)

Hon. Arthur Frederick Egerton (1829 - 1866) (m. Helen Smith)

Lady Alice Harriet Frederica Egerton (1830 - 1928) (m. George Byng)

Lady Blanche Egerton (1832 - 1894) (m. John Montagu)

Hon. Granville Egerton (1834-1851), who was killed at sea



Lord Francis had compiled a book entitled *Personal Reminiscences of the Duke of Wellington*, which was published after his death, and contained a memoir written later by his daughter, Alice. This was published in 1903. It provides an insight into his life and his admiration for the Duke of Wellington. Alice was 73 years old at the time of publication and had married George Byng. This now provides some of the broad detail about his life.

Lord Francis entered Parliament as a Conservative in 1822 as member for the pocket borough of Bletchingley in Surrey, a seat he held until 1826. He afterwards sat for Sutherland between 1826 and 1831, and for South Lancashire from 1835 to 1846. He was appointed a Lord of the Treasury in 1827. Lady Alice wrote that *In January 1828, when the Duke of Wellington was called upon to take office as Prime Minister, on the failure of Lord Goderich to carry on the Canning Administration, Huskisson took office as Secretary at War and for the Colonies and Lord Francis Leveson*

Gower became his Under Secretary. He then very quickly resigned his position, along with William Huskisson, in May 1828.

In June 1828, he was appointed a Privy Councillor, and became Chief Secretary to the Viceroy of Ireland, the Duke of Northumberland. He shortly afterwards resigned this position in 1830. Lady Alice then continued in her memoir: *'In 1831, Lord Francis gave up his seat in Parliament, and in 1833, on the death of his father, the first Duke of Sutherland, he inherited (as his second son) the greater part of the large estate and wealth of his great-uncle, the last and celebrated Duke of Bridgewater, in consequence of which he assumed the surname and Arms of Egerton. My father entered into possession of Bridgewater House (London-Ed.) in 1833 and resided there until 1840, when it had to be pulled down. ... Restoration was found to be impossible, as the dry-rot had penetrated the structure. ... The present house, the architect of which was Charles Barry, was built very nearly on the same site. ... In 1834, when the Duke of Wellington, amid scenes of historical enthusiastic applause was installed as Chancellor of the University of Oxford, Lord Francis Egerton was also given an honorary D.C.L. degree.'*

The London Gazette of 27th August 1833 reported his change of name as follows:

Whitehall, August 24, 1833.

The King has been pleased to grant unto the Right Honourable Francis Leveson-Gower, commonly called the Right Honourable Lord Francis Leveson-Gower, one of His Majesty's Most Honourable Privy Council (second surviving son of the late Most Noble George-Granville, Duke of Sutherland, Marquess of Stafford, &c. and Knight of the Most Noble Order of the Garter, deceased), His royal licence and permission that he and his issue may, in compliance with a condition contained in the last will and testament of the late Most Noble Francis Duke of Bridgewater, take and henceforth use the surname and bear the arms of Egerton only; such arms being first duly exemplified according to the laws of arms and recorded in the Heralds' Office: And also to command, that the said royal concession and declaration be registered in His Majesty's College of Arms.

He was a Liberal Conservative and supported the idea of free trade and the founding of the London University. Lord Francis won the election of 1837 as M.P. for South Lancashire, a seat he represented until he was elevated to a Peerage as Viscount **Brackley** and Earl of Ellesmere in June 1846. He was made a Knight of the Garter in 1855 and served as Lord Lieutenant of Lancashire

(1856-1857). *'In 1837 he also took up his residence at Worsley with his family. His letters at this period give a singularly interesting account of his taking up his abode on his new property, and the conditions under which he did so, and which in many ways were curiously unique.'* In a letter dated 8th August 1837 to a Mr. Arbuthnot, an M. P. and supporter of the Duke of Wellington, he said: *'I am off to Scotland tomorrow. ... I am living in a curious place, near everything that is most smoky and populous, but neither in itself. If you could imagine living at Portsmouth with an entire command, and fee simple in the arsenal, you would still fall short of any accurate conception of my odd position.'*

Lady Alice then continued in her memoir: *'My father's first impressions of his new property were not highly favourable, and he doubted whether it would be possible for my mother to reside there permanently. But all difficulties succumbed to a sense of duty, and in a letter to his wife, dated 15th June 1834, my father goes on to say: "The first thing I am going to do is to build a church. The parish is enormous and, like most of the manufacturing districts which have grown up suddenly to wealth, wretchedly provided." Besides the parish church of Eccles, a suburb of Manchester, four miles off, there was only a small chapel at the other end of the estate. My father adds in his letter: "There is nothing now but a Sunday School ... There are 40,000 people in this neighbourhood who cannot go to church; no wonder they dissent or believe nothing." There was an old and picturesque manor house on the estate which was prepared for residence, known by the name of the "Old Hall," and a bright red commonplace house, the "New Hall," built by the Duke of Bridgewater for his own use. This was pulled down when the present house was built.'* In the memoir, Lady Alice then proceeds to mention the bad state of the roads, prior to the opening of the canal, the current existence of the House Barge, the poor management of the estate, and the lack of family interest at that time. However, she lauded the people *'who were very friendly and kindly disposed, and they were glad to welcome any landlord who was ready to live amongst them.'* She then recalled with fondness the visit by the Queen to this area in 1851.

Lord Francis had inherited Worsley in 1833 under the will of his great uncle and godfather, the 3rd Duke of Bridgewater. Under the terms of the will, he changed his name to Egerton and this was granted by Royal Licence.

Whitehall, August 24, 1833.

The King has been pleased to grant unto the Right Honourable Francis Leveson-Gower, commonly called the Right Honourable Lord Francis Leveson-Gower, one of His Majesty's Most Honourable Privy Council (second surviving son of the late Most Noble George Granville, Duke of Sutherland, Marquess of Stafford, &c. and Knight of the Most

Noble Order of the Garter, deceased), His royal licence and permission that he and his issue may, in compliance with a condition contained in the last will and testament of the late Most Noble Francis Duke of Bridgewater, take and henceforth use the surname and bear the arms of Egerton only; such arms being first duly exemplified according to the laws of arms and recorded in the Herald's Office: And also to command, that the said royal concession and declaration be registered in His Majesty's College of Arms.

On 27th June 1846, he became a peer of the realm with the title **Earl of Ellesmere**, of Ellesmere in the County of Salop., since there were objections to him taking the title of Bridgewater. This title was granted in Sir Robert Peel's resignation list of June 1846, when he was the only person raised to the peerage. He also took the subsidiary title **Viscount Brackley**, of Brackley in the County of Northampton. The London Gazette reported it in these words....

Whitehall, June 27th, 1846.

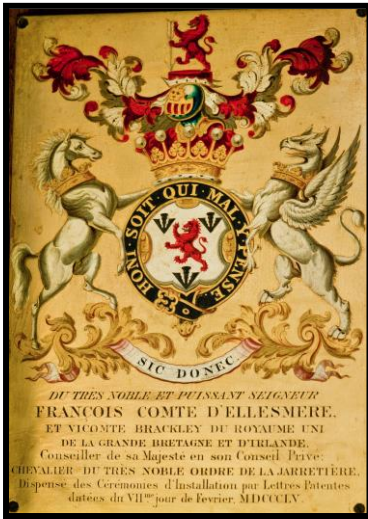
The Queen has been pleased to direct letters patent to be passed under the Great Seal, granting the dignities of Viscount and Earl of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland unto the Right Honourable Lord Francis Egerton, and the heirs male of his body lawfully begotten, by the names, stiles, and titles of Viscount Brackley, of Brackley, in the county of Northampton, and Earl of Ellesmere, of Ellesmere, in the county of Salop.

Then, later, in 1855, he was created a Knight of the Garter. The London Gazette reported it thus:

At the Court at Windsor Castle, February 7, 1855.

The Queen, as Sovereign of the Most Noble Order of the Garter, has been graciously pleased, by letters patent under Her royal sign manual and the Great Seal of the Order, bearing date this day, to dispense with all the statutes and regulations usually observed in regard to installations, and to grant unto the Right Honourable George William Frederick, Earl of Carlisle, the Right Honourable Francis, Earl of Ellesmere, and the Right Honourable George, Earl of Aberdeen, Knights of the said Most Noble Order, and duly invested with the ensigns thereof, full power and authority to exercise all rights and privileges belonging to a Knight

Companion of the Most Noble Order of the Garter, in as full and ample a manner as if they had been formally installed, any decree rule, or usage to the contrary notwithstanding.



In the course of the ceremony of investiture, *'The Chancellor then signified to the Chapter Her Majesty's royal will and pleasure that the vacant Stalls in the Royal Chapel of Saint George at Windsor be filled ; and as by the Statutes none but a Knight can be elected, ... The Right Honourable Francis, Earl of Ellesmere, was next introduced, and having been knighted, with the same ceremony, retired.'*

(The London Gazette)

(Stall plate; courtesy of St. George's Chapel)

An entry in his diary read: *"To Windsor for Investiture with the Garter, Lords Carlisle, self, and Aberdeen. The august Ceremony moved Lady E. to mirth."* Later that year, he

also assisted at the Investitures of Napoleon III (in April) and Victor Emmanuel, King of Sardinia (in December)

Then, on 11th April 1856, the Gazette announced:

AT the Court at Buckingham Palace, the 9th day of April, 1856,

PRESENT,

The QUEEN's Most Excellent Majesty in Council. Her Majesty having been pleased to appoint the Right Honourable Francis, Earl of Ellesmere, to be Lord Lieutenant and Custos Rotulorum of the county palatine of Lancaster, his Lordship this day took the oaths appointed to be taken thereupon instead of the oaths of allegiance and supremacy.

Public Rôles

In its edition of 29th June 1847, the London Gazette announced that the Earl of Ellesmere, with eleven other gentlemen, had been authorised and appointed by the Queen to be Her Majesty's Commissioners for enquiring into the Constitution and Government of the British Museum (dated 19th June). At the time of Queen

Victoria's visit, the Earl of Ellesmere was the patron of Henshaw's Blind Asylum, at Old Trafford and the Countess had shown great interest in the success of the work of that institution.

At the arrival of Queen Victoria at Patricroft in 1851, the boats of the Manchester and Salford Regatta Club joined the royal procession to the New Hall. It had only been decided shortly before the royal visit that the boats would form part of the procession along the canal. The Earl had willingly and courteously granted this privilege to the club, of which he had been patron since its institution in 1842. *The Manchester Guardian* noted that his lordship "*when at college, was an active member in the aquatic circle himself, plying the sturdy oar as no.7 in an eight-oar cutter.*"

Rector of King's College, Aberdeen

In the volume *Officers and Graduates of University & King's College Aberdeen, 1495-1860*, P.J. Anderson (ed.) (Aberdeen, 1893), there is a reference to him on pp.20-22 of the section recording the Rectors of King's College. This shows that he was the Rector for a considerable length of time - from 1836 to 1857. The volume then states that:

At a conference held on 6th April 1856, between the Senatus and a deputation of the Graduates of the University, an agreement was entered into in conformity with a scheme adopted by the Senatus on 20th April 1855, and sanctioned by the Chancellor, to the effect that in future the Lord Rector ... should be chosen by the Masters of Arts of the University (not holding mere honorary degrees), and that the Senatus should confirm the election so made.

In accordance with this decree, the result of the election, held on 15th October 1856, showed that the Earl received 279 votes to the 51 obtained by John Inglis, and was so proclaimed Rector. The volume then recorded the death of the Earl on the 18th February 1857.

National Portrait Gallery

It was then announced on 5th February 1857 that the Earl, together with twelve other noblemen and gentlemen, was appointed by the Queen as a Trustee for the formation of a Gallery of the Portraits of the most eminent persons in British History. This occurred just 13 days before his death. On the 28th February his place on the Commission was taken by Thomas Carlyle, Esq. The National

Portrait Gallery opened in 1856. Lord Ellesmere initiated the collection of the Gallery, by donating the Chandos portrait of William Shakespeare in 1856. It is listed as item one (NPG1) in the collection.

The Estate

The Earl brought his wife and family to live at Worsley in 1837. Lord Francis and Lady Harriet developed the Park and the surrounding area. Shortly after coming to live here, the foundation stone was laid in 1840 for a new residence, which was completed by 1846. As well as building the New Hall and gardens,



Lord Francis commissioned a gardener's cottage to house his gardener, built the Aviary to act as a shooting and fishing lodge, the Court House and Police Station and added the black and white finish to the Packet House by the canal.

A Writer.

1823: Faust - a drama. Translation of the work by Goethe.

1824: Translations from the German; and original poems.

1827: Boyle Farm - a Poem. (32pages)

1831: Catherine of Cleves. A drama in 3 acts adapted from Alexandre Dumas.

1840: The Egerton Papers, a collection of public and private documents.

1843: Mediterranean Sketches.

1848: A Guide to Northern Archaeology.

1852 (or later): Personal Reminiscences of the Duke of Wellington.

1856: The Pilgrimage.

1858: Essays on History, Biography, Geography, Engineering, etc.

Royal Geographical Society

Lord Ellesmere served as a member of the Royal Geographical Society from 1841. He served as Vice-President firstly in 1851. His name then appeared in the Journal of 1854, as a Fellow of the R. G. S: *'Ellesmere, Francis Egerton, Earl of, K.G., D.C.L., F.S.A., F.R.A.S., Trus. Brit. Mus., &c. Bridgewater-house,*

Cleveland-square; Oatlands and Hatchford, Cobham, Surrey ; and Worsley-hall, Lancashire.' In the Proceedings of the R.G.S. of 1852/3, at the Anniversary Meeting on 23 May 1853, he was elected President - '*The Right Honourable the Earl of ELLESMERE D.C.L., F.S.A., F.R.A.S., &c.*' His address as President to the R.G.S. on 22nd May 1854 was 28 pages long! He then continued as Vice-President in 1855 and 1856, with Rear Adm. F. W. Beechey as President - brother of the Rev. St. Vincent Beechey!!

Ellesmere Island, Canada

This is the earth's tenth largest island and the third largest island within Canada. It was named after Francis Egerton, 1st Earl of Ellesmere, in 1852 during the expedition of Sir Edward Inglefield - a Royal Naval officer who led one of the searches for the missing Arctic explorer John Franklin in July 1852. It was named in honour of the President of the Royal Geographical Society. Large portions of Ellesmere Island are covered with glaciers and ice. The Ellesmere Ice Shelf was located to the north of the island. It had been there for over 3,000 years but it gradually broke up in the twentieth century.

Lake Ellesmere, New Zealand

This is the fifth largest lake in New Zealand, known locally as Te Waihora Lake. It is more accurately a coastal lagoon and is internationally significant for its wildlife abundance and diversity. It is in the Canterbury Region of South Island. Lord Ellesmere was a member of the Canterbury Association from 27 March 1848. The Association was formed in order to establish a colony in what is now the Canterbury Region in the South Island of New Zealand. In 1849, the chief surveyor of the Canterbury Association, Captain Joseph Thomas, named Lake Ellesmere in New Zealand after him.

As a Speaker

Following Lord Francis's resignation from office in June 1828, Mr. Huskisson wrote to Elizabeth, Countess of Sutherland: '*Dear Lady Stafford - I cannot go to bed without telling you with what delight I (in common with a very full House) listened to Francis's speech, which has just closed the debate (adjourned) of this evening. It was beautifully wrought , but without any glitter or superfluous ornament. Some parts as fine as anything I have ever heard in the House, and his delivery very good. - Yours very truly, W. Huskisson.*' Lady Alice then remarked that her father was a delightful speaker, carrying his audience with him always, with a purity of language, charming voice and delivery, that gave so much

pleasure when he read aloud. This was put down to the influence of his father, who made him read aloud as a boy.

The Fine Arts

The 1st Earl was interested in art and Lady Alice admired his knowledge of the Fine Arts. During a government visit to Russia in 1826, he sent letters home,

frequently illustrated with pen-and-ink sketches. Lady Alice reported that he inherited his talent for drawing from his mother. In 1835 and 1836 he spent over £3,000 on books and paintings. His art collection at Worsley Hall included Edward Landseer's **Return from Hawking**, commissioned by him, which portrayed the likeness



of the 1st Earl of Ellesmere and his family. To the collection of pictures which he inherited from his great-uncle, the 3rd Duke of Bridgewater, he made numerous additions, and he built a gallery (Bridgewater House) to which the public was allowed free access. He was a trustee of the nascent National Portrait Gallery (1856-1857).

His Travels

The 1st Earl was well-travelled and visited Spain, Denmark, Sweden, Russia, as well as France, Germany, Italy and Greece. He visited America and Canada in 1853 at the request of the government, who wished to be represented at the opening of the New York Exhibition. Since the Exhibition was not ready at the time, he visited the cities of Philadelphia, Quebec and Boston. Lady Alice had travelled with him on this visit. Amongst those who accompanied him was Lord Acton, the great historian, *'to whom his American experiences were a source of unfailling interest and amusement, especially upon the more humorous side of his impressions.'* He provided the illustrations for his wife's **Journal of a Tour to the Holy Land**, undertaken on May and June 1840.

As a Linguist

Lord Francis also published his own poetry and journalism as well as translations of French and German plays, romances and histories, with poems by Schiller and Goëthe into English verse. One French play which he did translate and appear in was *Hernani* by Victor Hugo. His impressions of travel were recorded in *Mediterranean Sketches* (1843) and in the notes to a poem entitled *The Pilgrimage*. He published several other works in prose and verse. His literary reputation secured for him the position of rector of the University of Aberdeen in 1838.

With Lady Ellesmere

Worsley in the 19th century was heavily industrialised, based on cotton manufacture, iron and brick making and coal mining, and Lord and Lady Ellesmere involved themselves in improving conditions for the local working population. In addition to St. Mark's Church in Worsley, they built and endowed St. Paul's in Walkden, together with their associated schools. In 1845, Lady Ellesmere began a Domestic Servants School, and in 1848, Lord Ellesmere established a medical dispensary and Reading Room. They also funded a recreation ground, later St. Mary's Park, for colliers and their families. Lord Ellesmere banned the employment of women and children underground in his mines and introduced night-school classes for his workers on the estate and a non-contributory pension scheme. In 1846, a cricket club was established, firstly on the Cross Field. Then, in 1868, it was relocated to its current site behind the Cock Hotel. Lord Francis became its first President (1846-1857).

Lord Ellesmere died at Bridgewater House in London on 18th February 1857 and was buried in St. Mark's Church, Worsley. He was succeeded by his son. He was survived by five sons and two daughters. Lady Alice wrote about the inexpressible grief of all related to him, or connected with him in any capacity. She concluded her memoir with these words: *'Memorials have been erected to him at Worsley and in its neighbourhood, but the chief memorials are the churches, schools and institutions which he built or endowed, and his constant exertions in behalf of the people committed to his care. By these latter and their descendants, neither he nor my mother, his unwearied coadjutor in all these labours, will soon be forgotten.'*

The *Manchester Guardian* reported on his funeral in its edition of 27th February 1857. The family had requested that the funeral was not to be a public one, having declined all the offers from public bodies to participate. Only members of the family, close friends and some agents (about 70 in number) and tenants

joined the procession. *'But several thousand persons from the neighbourhood, and from Manchester, congregated in the churchyard and along the road, from the lodge to the church; and altogether the assemblage showed the general and high respect in which the deceased nobleman was held. ... [Inside the church] the nave had been reserved [for the mourners and friends]but the side aisles were crowded long before, a large proportion of those present being ladies. ... It was some hours before all spectators had quitted the churchyard.'*

After the funeral, a number of the agents, tenants, and those connected with the Earl, met at the Court House to discuss some lasting testimonial to his memory. A subscription was raised which quickly exceeded £500. A committee was established to discuss, consider and bring before all parties the proposals *'as a mark of respect to the memory of so estimable a nobleman, and so kind a landlord and employer.'*

So we can now begin to appreciate better the enthusiasm, commitment and energy shown by this nobleman in his new 'homeland.' Throughout the twenty or so years that he spent there with his family, he showed commendable attributes towards his workforce, with an eagerness to improve their social conditions - both spiritual and material. It is no wonder that words like *estimable* and *kind* were used in a newspaper article quoted above. His generosity and patronage contributed significantly to the general well-being of local tenants and residents for many decades afterwards.

The pictures above in this chapter are:

Memorial tomb of the Earl of Ellesmere. Worsley Church
Study for Lord Ellesmere. Oil on canvas, by Edwin Longsdon Long.
Stall Plate of the Earl. St. George's Chapel, Windsor
Worsley New Hall. Architect Edward Blore
Return from Hawking, by Sir Edwin Landseer

It is probably impossible to describe his influence and character in one single word. He was a Patron, a Philanthropist, an Aesthete, a Benefactor, a Traveller, a Linguist - and more besides. The following three examples (two speeches given by him and one newspaper editorial) are sufficient to demonstrate his thinking and influence.

Sir Robert Peel chose Egerton to move the Loyal Address in the Commons in January 1846. This was at a time when the potato famine had struck in Ireland and followed a poor corn harvest in England. There was already strengthening opposition to the existing Corn Laws. In doing so, Egerton admitted that his views had changed; he now supported free trade and the removal of tariffs on

imported corn. He did so, not on any theoretical basis, but from his own experience:

There are dark spots and weak places in various parts of our social system: let us not be blind to them, or neglect the duty of exposing them, with the view of mending and improving them. Let us not fling in one another's teeth difficulties, remedial or irremedial, for the sole purpose of party or of faction. Let us not fling in the face of one class a Wiltshire labourer; or a manufacturing labourer in the face of another. To meet the cases of both -to give them, in the first instance, food; -to give them other luxuries which many of them still need-air, water, drainage; -to give them all the physical and moral advantages possible; let that be our employment and our duty, and let us endeavour to perform that office by ridding the country of those subjects of angry discussion to which I have referred.

Vol. 83. cc 61. Parliament UK: Historic Hansard: part of a speech nearly 5 hours in length.

An address in answer to a speech, given on 22 January 1846

The *London Daily News* carried the following words, part of its editorial on Saturday 12th September 1846:

He set about making Worsley a model estate village; within ten years a national newspaper, deploring the 'ignorance of the collier class' claimed "What may be done by a proprietor, what should be done by every proprietor, is illustrated in the case of Lord Francis Egerton and the Worsley colliers". Until Egerton had taken up residence at Worsley, it had been "imperfectly provided with the means of moral and intellectual improvement for the people." But now, the population is nearly 6,000. For their use, two churches have been built, and a third is now in course of erection. Five clergymen have been provided, in addition to the one original incumbent. Seven-day schools have been established, with trained masters and mistresses, fully supplied with the best books and apparatus. A reading-room has been opened, containing the best periodicals of the day, and a considerable circulating library. The room is provided with fire and lights; is open every evening; and is much frequented by the labouring people, as an agreeable resort after their day's work. A large field, of not less than sixty acres, has been set apart as a recreation ground... Cricket, quoits, and other athletic games are encouraged; and the

private band occasionally attends there on pay-days. In the centre, an ornamental building has been erected, in which the wages of all the labourers on that part of the estate are paid fortnightly. There are few public-houses and no beer-shops on the estate. The houses built for the workmen are convenient; most of them have four rooms and a pantry, back-yard and garden, at a rent of about £3 per annum, including rates.

In *An Address to the Royal Geographical Society of London*, delivered on 22nd May 1854, BY THE RIGHT HON. THE EARL OF ELLESMERE, K.G., D.C.L., President, the Earl spoke about many issues of interest to the Society. He began by giving an obituary for each member who had recently died. One such was Colonel James Nisbet Colquhoun, of the Royal Artillery, who had died aged 62. Because of his work as an engineer, he was able to point out deficiencies in certain departments of the Royal Arsenal at Woolwich, which he tried so assiduously to correct. In speaking to the members of the R. G. S., Lord Francis drew upon his own experience of life in Lancashire and the north of England, referring to the skills and industry of the workforce there.

He praised the Colonel, who was appointed superintendent of the carriage department, for his great mechanical capacity and his energy in carrying out his views. And he then commented:

*"There are many reasons and many excuses why public Government establishments are slower than private, in adopting the last improvements for economizing manual labour. I mention it not as a reproach, but as a fact. **I live much in a part of the country where the hand of man, an admirably constructed machine in itself, is reduced or nearly so to its proper office of directing rather than exerting power.** I have more than once witnessed in Government establishments, processes still carried on either by human labour or by machinery cumbrous and obsolete, to which far more complete and efficient mechanical agencies had long been applied in Lancashire. What such establishments as Woolwich and Portsmouth require, is men who can look about them and quit these old routine paths, without straying into experimental extravagance."*

THE NEW HALL

THE HALL

Soon after coming to Worsley with his young family, Lord Francis Egerton came to realise that both Worsley Old Hall and the Brick Hall (built by the Duke, his great-uncle, by 1770 as his official residence) were both too small. The Brick



Hall stood just to the north of Leigh Road, and had to be demolished (1844 - 1845) in order to accommodate the much larger New Hall. It was designed by the architect Edward Blore (1787-1879), who held

the appointment of special architect to King William IV and to Queen Victoria during the earlier part of her reign. In this capacity, he was employed to carry out various works at Windsor Castle and Hampton Court Palace, and was appointed to complete the remodelling of Buckingham Palace (1831), which had been begun by John Nash. Nash had been withdrawn from this project because of his extravagance.

It was an Elizabethan Gothic-style mansion, the plans of which are now held at the Victoria and Albert Museum. Work began on the foundations of the hall in 1839 and the first stone was laid the following year. The hall was described in *A Guide to Worsley: Historical and Topographical* (1870) as '*comparable with any of the mansions of the nobility in the north of England; it is an ornament to the county in which it stands.*' It stood on top of the south-facing escarpment that overlooks the north Cheshire Plain.

When Queen Victoria came in 1851, the *Illustrated London News* and other regional newspapers carried extensive reports of her visit, and printed several articles on the district that she was about to come to. It described the New Hall as "*finely situate on an eminence, commanding a view of no less than seven counties. To the westward of the Hall, the eye is carried over an area of comparatively limited extent, within which a population numbering millions is located, whose energy, industry and enterprise have achieved wonders*

unsurpassed in the history of the world." (This undoubtedly referred to the cotton and mining industries, and, in transport, the development of canals and railways). *"It would probably be difficult to discover a place possessing more interest for a reflective mind than Worsley."*

THE GARDENS

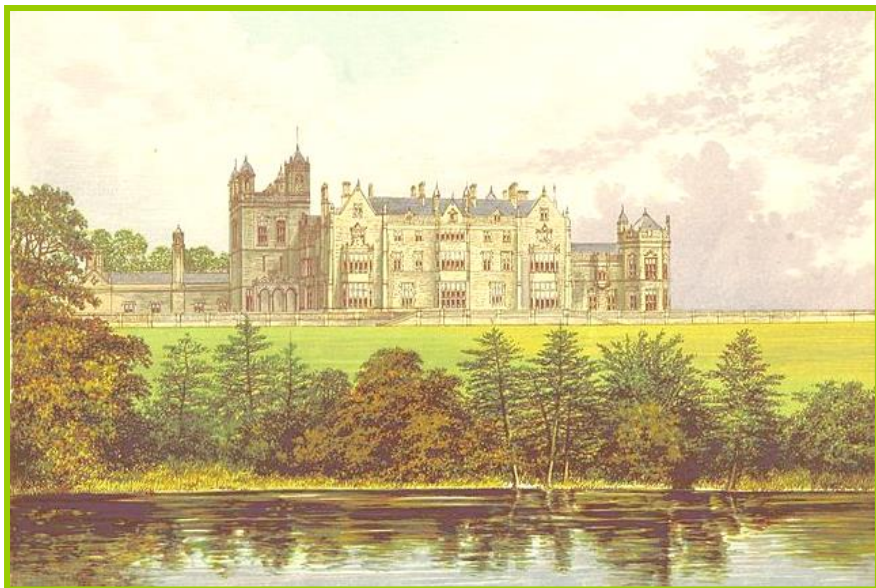
The gardens, which were much admired by Queen Victoria, and which are to be brought back to life (from 2019) under a project commissioned by the Royal Horticultural Society, were designed to be as magnificent as the hall itself. They



were set out at the same time as the construction of the hall in the early 1840s and were designed by William Andrews Nesfield (1793-1881), an English landscape architect and artist. Throughout his professional life in garden design, which lasted over 40 years, he worked on no fewer than 259 commissions in the British Isles, including Castle Howard, Kew Gardens and the Duke of Sutherland's estate at Trentham.

The formal landscaped gardens evolved over a period of fifty years and included terrace gardens, kitchen gardens, fountains, a croquet lawn and tennis court. Six terraces existed by 1857, separated by stone balustrades, and linked with steps and gravel paths. The top two terraces were set out in a *Parterre de Broderie* style. To the south of the terraces was landscaped parkland, followed later by a boating lake. According to C. A. Brooks in *Gardens of England* (1857), the terraced gardens at the New Hall were *'one of the most beautiful examples of the kind to be met with in the country'*.

This picture is taken from page 264 of volume 1 of *The County Seats of the Noblemen and Gentlemen of Great Britain and Ireland*, by Francis Orpen Morris. It can also be found on page 35 of volume 2 of the same book.



PROVISION OF CHURCHES AND SCHOOLS

When it was announced in August 1851 that Queen Victoria was to visit Salford and Manchester in October, local councillors met to discuss ways in which to make her visit novel, interesting, and impressive. On the 27th August, a special meeting was held to consider the most appropriate measures to implement for her Majesty's reception. The meeting resolved to defray all the expenses that would be incurred, and a committee was appointed to make all the necessary arrangements. Then, on 2nd September, a large number of clergy met in the Town Hall, Salford, to discuss the mayor's invitation for the assembly of schoolchildren in Peel Park, and the proposal (to gather in the park all the Sunday School children of Manchester, Salford and suburbs) was approved. Mr. D. W. Banks was appointed to be chorus master, and to train the thousands of children to sing the National Anthem. The estimate of the number of children attending was set at 80,000, from over 220 various Sunday schools.

Where did all these children come from? From 4 divisions in Manchester and 3 in Salford, each walking a different route. Some had to march up to 6 miles to the park, with the first groups arriving at 6.00am! After receiving the loyal address from the Mayor of Salford, her Majesty, in reply, expressed her great pleasure at receiving this address given on behalf of the people of Salford, and at seeing the great attention given to the education of the children of the borough, as witnessed in the novel and interesting scene before her. The *Manchester Courier* reported that: "*Her Majesty was so struck with the imposing appearance of this great assemblage ... that on entering the avenue she stood erect in her carriage, as did also H. R. H. Prince Albert to view the children.*"

The provision of schools and churches in Worsley in the early nineteenth century must be viewed in two parts - before the coming of Lord Francis Egerton and afterwards. In effect, this would be 1837, when his family and he finally moved to Worsley, having inherited the works, collieries and estates surrounding the village in 1833.

When the Industrial Revolution came to large towns and cities, children were working long hours, 6 days a week, in the mills. Then, there were no day schools. Education was a privilege for the children of the upper and middle classes. In Stockport, for example, **Matthew Mayer** became aware that the children of the poor and working class could not read or write. And so, he bought a piece of land on Hillgate in 1777 and had houses built with the idea of using the upper rooms to start a Sunday School. The Sunday School movement began about 1780. The main pioneer, but not the first to open such a school, was **Robert Raikes**, the editor of the Gloucester Journal, who was much disturbed at the plight of children in his own city. He had been interested in prison reform,

particularly because he had witnessed the distressing effect the state of the prisons was having upon a reckless youth. Sunday was chosen since it was their only day off, with most working as many as 12 hours a day, 6 days a week. As the idea spread within the city, their behaviour began to improve. The policemen of the city told Robert that the children were not stealing and fighting like before.

Schools became established nationally to teach reading, writing, arithmetic and catechism to the 'deserving' poor, and thereby improve discipline. Scholars were expected to attend school four to five hours per week, and this was the only schooling that most working class children ever received. By 1831, 1¼ million children were in attendance at these schools, approximately 25% of the children's population. The *Illustrated London News*, when reporting upon the district prior to the Queen's visit, remarked: "*The few Sunday schools, whether belonging to the Church or to Dissenters, were void of everything like discipline or control; and Ellenbrook chapel, capable of holding about 350 people, with a Wesleyan chapel at Worsley, and Independent Methodist chapel at Roe Green, and a Ranting chapel at Winton, were the only accessible places of worship.*"

It is believed that one of the first Sunday schools to be established in England may have been at Worsley. It was set up in the 1780s in a cottage close to the present-day courthouse, and was founded by Thomas Bury (a colliery manager for the 3rd Duke). The children were taught by Luke Lowe, who was a cooper also in the Duke's employ, and other lay people. In 1785, a further three Sunday schools were established in the area, and by 1788 over 300 children were attending the four schools. Francis Egerton built a day school in 1838, which later became known as St Mark's School.

The old infant school building on Beesley Green was built in 1892, and closed in 1968. It is an institution that could trace its origins to 1716, when Thomas Collier left a bequest to endow a school for the education of poor boys. In 1752, an extension to the original school served as the Worsley poorhouse for seventeen years until it transferred to Hazelhurst.

Much has been written about the parlous state of Worsley by the mid-nineteenth century. To today's generation, it gives rise to some mirth when one reads that it was "*a God-forgotten place, its inhabitants much addicted to drink and to rude sports, their morals deplorably low, the whole district in a state of educational and religious destitution.*" The report in the London paper quoted above equally described a deplorable state of affairs. The picture is one of few schools and little religious instruction or provision for the people. Worsley at that time was not a parish at all; the district of Worsley was part of the parish of Eccles, then in the Diocese of Chester.

Ellenbrook Chapel was the first church in Worsley, built in 1209 by the Worsley family, lords of the manor of Worsley. Sometime between 1272 and 1295, the rector of Eccles granted a licence to Richard de Worsley to have a chantry in his chapel at Worsley. The next mention of a chapel was in 1549 when Sir Richard Brereton complained of the theft of a chalice from his chapel. Dame Dorothy Legh left the interest of £50 for its maintenance in 1638. The Bishop of Chester made an order as to its endowment in 1677, and then a replacement church was built on the same site in 1725. Dame Dorothy Legh died in 1639, and was buried in Eccles church. She bequeathed £400 to Ellenbrook chapel to buy Common Head Farm at Mosley Common, the income from which established Dame Dorothy Legh's Charity, which continues today.

Methodism was first practised in the area in 1784 by the notable preacher Matthew Mayer. It was he who established the Sunday School in Stockport. It is recorded by Milliken that the first service was held in a private house on the Winton boundary, where previous services had been held. The meetings were then transferred to Worsley Mill. A Methodist Wesleyan Chapel was built on Barton Road in 1801, but this closed in 2011. This chapel was first established on a plot of land close to The Grapes Hotel. Then, in 1814, a Sunday School was opened there. An Independent Methodist Chapel had also been established at Roe Green.

Post 1837, and before the Queen's visit, the situation with both schools and churches, changed considerably. This is best shown with a timeline:

- A temporary church erected at Walkden Moor
- A clergyman appointed and paid for by Lord Ellesmere
- In 1838, juvenile schools for 300 children were built in Worsley
- In 1838, a school-church built at Walkden Moor for 200 infants, known as St. George's Chapel
- In 1842, juvenile schools added in the same district
- In 1844, a school for 200 infants was opened in Worsley, with a mistress and 2 assistants
- In 1846, the beautiful church of St. Mark's Church, Worsley, (600 sittings) built by his lordship
- In 1848, the church of Walkden Moor was built
- In 1849, the chapel of Ellenbrook was extended, with an infant and Sunday school opened
- In 1850, a new Sunday school built at Edgefold
- In 1851, the foundations of a new aisle at St. Mark's laid

St. George's Chapel, Walkden, later used as the Literary Institute and Parish Room, was at once used as a day school, the nave being cut off from the chancel by sliding doors. The Foundation Stone of St. Paul's Church, Walkden Moor was laid in 1847 by Lady Brackley, daughter of the Earl of Ellesmere.

At a cost of £4,500, the new church was dedicated in 1848 by Dr. Prince Lee, Bishop of the newly formed Diocese of Manchester, and was the eighth church to be dedicated in the new Diocese.

On the morning of the Queen's departure for Windsor (Saturday 11th October 1851), her Majesty appeared on the lawns before the New Hall to receive the loyal address from the clergy, children and teachers of the Sunday schools and other schools of Worsley and its neighbourhood, including those at Worsley, Ellenbrook, Walkden Row Green (sic), and Edgefield (sic). 1,400 children were marched on to the grass and lined up in rows of 100. All the children were under the supervision of the Rev. St. Vincent Beechey, incumbent of Worsley; the Rev. J. Whitlock, incumbent of Walkden; the Rev. J. Rigg, of Ellenbrook; together with the Rev. Mr. Moverley, of Aston, near Newport; and the Rev. Mr. Young, of Lindall. Having received the address from the Rev. St. Vincent Beechey, her Majesty replied: "*It is very delightful to see so many scholars together under instruction.*" Clearly, over a short period of time, changes were already starting to take shape within the district to improve the academic and religious well-being of the children.

CHURCH EXPANSION AND DESIGN

By the beginning of the 19th century, the Church of England was already facing a number of problems and challenges. Due to factors such as the Industrial Revolution, the population of Britain had grown, and it had begun to relocate, as workers started to migrate from the fields to industrial centres. Some of these towns were already in existence and expanded to accommodate the incomers. Others were newly created. Meanwhile, the organisation of the Church of England had not been changed to reflect this migration and change of balance, and this oversight led to a mismatch between the population of a given area and the pastoral services provided there by the church. Manchester, for example, had 11,000 church seats for a population of nearly 80,000.

Furthermore, there was a concern within British society that, following the French Revolution which began in 1789, there might be a similar uprising in Britain. This view was shared by social historians of the time. It was considered that *"the influence of the Church and its religious and moral teaching was a bulwark against revolution."* Some observers argued that a major function of the church was to complement the work of the state, and that one of the church's main functions was "to exert some kind of social control."

M. H. Port, in his study of the early nineteenth-century Church Building Commission and its churches, writes:

'In addition to this, the Church of England had its own internal problems, some of them even amounting to abuses, such as pluralism (where vicars owned more than one benefice), absenteeism (with vicars employing curates to run their parishes) and non-residence. There was a great disparity between the incomes of the parochial clergy. The educational level of the clergy and their training was often inadequate. Challenges to the church came from two main sources, dissent and secularism. Dissenters were those Christians who did not ascribe to the practices of the established church (the Church of England), and they included the older independent churches such as the Quakers, Baptists and Congregationalists, and the newer movement of Methodism. The rise of these movements was blamed partly on the lack of accommodation in the churches provided by the state church.'

With these issues facing the Church of England in the early years of the nineteenth century, various groups started to form in order to address the problems. Amongst the High-Church group, one man stood out - a wine

merchant and philanthropist, **Joshua Watson**, once described as "*the greatest lay churchman of his day.*" In spite of being a successful businessman, Watson always took a keen interest in church work and was associated with various charitable and philanthropic projects within that group. In 1814, Watson retired from business, aged 43, to devote himself exclusively to works of piety and charity. He became heavily involved with the Society for Propagation of the Gospel, the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, and was a founder member of the National Society for the Education of the Poor in 1811. In 1817, the Church Building Society, was formed, with Watson as one of its architects, and it was this organisation which encouraged the government under Lord Liverpool to set up a Royal Commission for church building. The following year, the Church Building Act was debated in Parliament and passed later that year.

Parliament thereby made its first grant of £1 million for the building of new churches. The first Commission set up to oversee this consisted of 34 members, both clergy and laity; and of course Joshua Watson was one of its members. In addition to providing grants of money, the Commission also had powers to divide and subdivide parishes and to provide endowments. This power was critical to the founding of St. Mark's. Because of the legal structure of the Church of England, it had been "almost essential to obtain an Act of Parliament before a church was rebuilt, or a new one built" and "to divide a parish an Act was essential." Prior to the eventual founding of St. Mark's Church, there were another twelve Church Building Acts passed, all of which were designed to regulate the building of new churches.

One of the first functions of the Commission was to decide how the grant was to be divided and spent. It was considered necessary for the church to have either a spire or a tower. A maximum amount of £20,000 each was established, but this limit was never exceeded. In some instances, only part of the cost of a new church was met, the rest being met either by subscription or by private donation. By 1821, 85 new churches had been built, with seating for 145,00 people. A second tranche of money was granted by Parliament in 1824, though this was spread more thinly in order to encourage more buildings. In fact, it helped to fund 500 more churches. A quick glance at the list of 'Commissioner churches' built across the north of England will reveal a number designed by Sir Charles Barry and George Gilbert Scott between 1819 and 1856. Furthermore, of all these churches, by far the preferred style was Gothic Revival, with just a very tiny number of neo-Norman and Romanesque Revival and one Neoclassical Ionic.

Gothic Revival (which is sometimes also referred to as Victorian Gothic or Neo-Gothic) was an architectural movement that began in England in the late 1740s.

Its popularity grew rapidly in the early 19th century, and was associated with a re-awakening of High Church (or Anglo-Catholic) belief, concerned by the growth of religious nonconformism. At this time, increasingly serious and learned admirers of neo-Gothic styles (such as John Ruskin and Augustus Pugin) sought to revive medieval Gothic architecture, in contrast to the neoclassical style which had become popular in Britain since the mid-18th century. Gothic Revival draws features from the original Gothic style, including decorative patterns, height, buttresses, scalloping, lancet windows (tall, narrow windows with a pointed arch at the top), hood mouldings (external moulded projections from a wall over an opening to throw off rainwater), and label stops (horizontal drip mouldings at the end of an arch). This style became most popular in the design of churches, cathedrals, schools, colleges, universities, and civic buildings.

In England, at the start of the nineteenth century, the Church of England was composed of various groups, from liberal, to evangelical, to those preferring a more formal liturgy and ritual. By the 1830's, the church began to undergo a revival of Anglo-Catholic and ritualist ideology in the form of the Oxford Movement. This 'high church' grouping found ready approval in the universities, where the ecclesiological movement was forming. Known also as the Tractarian Movement, it began in about 1833 and ended in 1845. Its proponents, led by **John Henry Newman**, believed that Gothic was the *only* style appropriate for a parish church, and favoured a particular era of Gothic architecture—the "decorated". A similar movement was underway at Cambridge, with the formation of The Cambridge Camden Society in 1839. This became known as The Ecclesiological Society in 1846, and it wanted to restore 'Order' within the church, through ritual, performed in appropriate surroundings. It proclaimed its views through its journal *The Ecclesiologist*, in which it was seriously critical of



new church buildings that fell below its exacting standards. Its pronouncements were followed so eagerly that they had a huge impact not only on religious practices within the church, but also church architecture.

Gothic architecture began with the Basilica of Saint Denis near Paris, and the Cathedral

of Sens in 1140, and ended with a last flourish in the early 16th century with buildings like Henry VII's Chapel at Westminster. However, Gothic architecture did not die out completely in the 16th century, but rather continued with on-going cathedral-building projects: at Oxford and Cambridge Universities, and in the construction of churches in increasingly isolated rural districts of England, France, and Spain.

Throughout the 19th and early 20th century, Gothic Revival as a style continued to be used across Europe, throughout the British Empire, and in the United States for public buildings and homes for those people who could afford the style, but the most common use for Gothic Revival architecture remained in the building of churches. The largest and most famous Gothic cathedrals in the U.S.A. are The Cathedral Church of St. John the Divine in New York City and Washington National Cathedral (also known as "the Cathedral Church of Saints Peter and Paul") on Mount St. Alban in northwest Washington, D.C. The photograph on page 53 is of The National Cathedral, Washington. Begun in 1907, it was only completed in 1990. The Town Hall in our own city of Manchester is a nearby example of a civic building in the Gothic style.

The name of Pugin has become closely associated with the architectural developments that took place within the Anglican and Roman churches in the early Victorian years. The son of a French draughtsman Auguste Pugin, who had emigrated to England as a result of the French Revolution, the young boy was born and raised in England. Named **Augustus Welby Northmore Pugin** at his birth on 1st March 1812, he acquired the middle name Welby from his mother's maiden name. His early upbringing was influenced by a Scottish Presbyterian preacher in London. He quickly rejected what he perceived as the '*cold and sterile form of the Scottish church*' and '*rushed into the arms of a church which, pompous by its ceremonies, was attractive to his imaginative mind.*'

He was only 24 when he published *Contrasts* (1836). This was the book that made his name, and was the first architectural 'manifesto.' It argued for a revival of medieval, Gothic architecture, and with it a return to the faith and the social structures of the Middle Ages, claiming that Gothic architecture was the product of a purer society. This belief remained with him throughout his short life (he died aged 40) and was frequently used by him in defence of some of his own designs, whenever they were challenged. The neoclassical style of the Regency period, which he castigated in *Contrasts*, was looking tired and jaded.

As industrialisation made steady progress throughout Britain in the early nineteenth century, so too did a reaction against machine production and the appearance of factory buildings. By 1834, Thomas Carlyle and Augustus Pugin had established a critical view of industrial society in their writings and had

started to point back to pre-industrial medieval society as a golden age. To Pugin, Gothic architecture was infused with the high Christian ideals and values that had been eclipsed by classicism and were being destroyed by industrialisation. Sir Kenneth Clark, in his book *Civilisation*, based on the BBC TV series of 1969, writing of the Gothic revival, said:

'It changed the face of England, building and restoring churches all over the countryside, and filling our towns with Gothic banks and grocers, Gothic lodging houses and insurance companies, Gothic everything from a town hall to a slum public house.'

Following the fire at the Palace of Westminster in 1834, and his subsequent involvement in its reconstruction, Pugin set about rebuilding Britain as a Gothic Catholic Christendom, a style that he had come to appreciate during his travels to France in the 1820's. By the time he was 30, he had built 22 churches, three cathedrals, three convents, half a dozen houses, several schools and a Cistercian monastery. George Gilbert Scott later remembered being "*awakened*" by Pugin to the possibilities for architecture to deliver human dignity, which had become suppressed in the ever-growing industrial cities.

Pugin designed churches and their fittings over a period of about fifteen years. By the time his architectural commissions started to fall, he devoted more time to the design of stained glass windows, working in collaboration with John Hardman & Co., of Birmingham. Together, they quickly acquired a reputation for work of a high quality, very much in the medieval style, receiving orders from Anglican and Roman churches. All the time, he never lost sight of the artistic nature of the glass designs, in spite of some disagreements, notably with the then Bishop of Manchester, Dr. James Prince Lee. There were accusations that he was trying secretly to Romanise the Anglican church, but he remained steadfast to his principles on creating beauty and symbolism. It is edifying to talk about a man who, though steeped in his Catholic tradition, together with John Hardman, managed to impress clergy and patrons alike in both churches with his designs. And it is he who had some influence at St. Mark's, with his admirer **George Gilbert Scott** designing the church, and



Pugin himself and Hardman designing the tracery windows in the East windows of the church. More about the glass in a later chapter.

The Gothic style uses certain architectural design patterns to enable the creation of soaring spaces lit by numerous large windows. This gives the feeling of a light and airy space. One such example is the nave of Canterbury Cathedral (featured above). Architecture before the Gothic age had used thick walls to bear the structural load of a building. An important characteristic of Gothic building was to use only narrow portions of the walls as load-bearers, enabling the rest of the wall to be punctuated by windows. These would often be lancet windows, or arched windows, supported by mullions. This feature enables the windows to be higher and to allow more light into the church. Stained glass allowed colour into the building. (The picture below left is of the Ellesmere Chapel window in St. Mark's Church, Worsley.)



The use of Buttresses was also widely used, further reducing the need for thick walls and allowing spaces of great height to be achieved. Gargoyles appeared at regular intervals around the structure, their open mouths being used as a form of downspout, allowing roof water to disgorge onto the ground and to avoid damaging the walls. They were also used to ward off evil.

Gothic architecture evolved through experiment and inspiration, and relied upon the highest levels of skill and creativity from craftsmen. Religion was the major driving force for the masons



and carvers who created these great buildings, for, in so doing, they '*exercised their talents in the service of God.*'

Pugin applied his vision to the whole field of design. As well as his work in the design of buildings, he designed furniture, and from his architectural practice he also designed, in addition to stained glass, metalwork, textiles and jewellery. The Gothic revival architects who followed Pugin, notably William Burges and George Edward Street, carried on the new approach to furniture design, taking responsibility for designing the building as well as its internal fittings and furnishings.

A visit to The Church and Friary of St. Francis, known locally as Gorton Monastery, on Gorton Lane, Manchester, designed by Pugin's son, Edward Welby, will provide the reader with a first-hand experience of what High Victorian Gothic Revival architecture really was like.

FESTIVITIES AT WORSLEY - 15 JUNE 1844

Festive celebrations took place at Worsley, Runcorn, and other places on Saturday 15 June 1844 to celebrate the coming of age of the Hon. George Egerton, the eldest son of Lord Francis Egerton and heir to the vast Bridgewater Estates. This event was to be shared, not just by members of the family, but also by thousands of people of all classes, in Lancashire and other counties. The intention was to hold an event which would linger long in the memories of all who took part. The celebration was witnessed and attended by those in the employ of Lord Egerton and the Bridgewater Trust, together with the populations of Worsley, Runcorn, the surrounding towns and several thousands from Manchester and its neighbouring districts. One newspaper asserted that *'we cannot doubt that the display of genuine old English good feeling made on this occasion will have a decidedly beneficial effect, both morally and physically, on the whole of the vast assemblage.'*

Worsley was the residence of Lord Francis Egerton and, as such, was considered the headquarters of the festivities. The celebration was to be attended by Lord Francis, his family, and a large number of attached friends - together with all the employees and their families, who were given a day's leave with pay. On that day, journalists arrived in the village from about 8 o'clock onwards and observed the activity and preparations taking place. The first thing that attracted their attention was a large and splendid pavilion in the Worsley Yard, capable of holding upwards of three thousand people. This was to supply dinner and tea to the workmen and others in the service of his lordship. The exterior was brightly decorated with Union Jacks, British insignia, and other flags. Flags, colours and streamers could be seen waving from every building in the neighbourhood, including the Old and New halls, the brick hall, the site of the soon-to-be-built new church, the warehouses, collieries, many houses, and from many trees for miles around.

The town began to fill with people from about 9 o'clock, with crowds arriving either on foot or in vehicles. *'The number of gigs, shandrays, cars, coaches, &c., becoming at length so numerous that the usual places for their reception being quite inadequate to contain them, great part of them were taken into a field adjoining the Bridgewater Arms inn.'* Many other people from Manchester and Liverpool travelled by railway, descending at Patricroft station and walking the remaining mile and a half or so to Worsley, by the side of the canal. The morning was cold and cloudy, with a few showers before midday. But after that, the sun shone and the rest of the day was much brighter, with a brisk breeze from the north-west.

Shortly after 10am, a procession of about 1,500 colliers, employed at Dixon Moor, Worsley, and Walkden Moor, entered the village via the Wigan Road, and marching past the Bridgewater Arms, moved on to a large field behind, to be used for the sports and games. The appearance of the men and boys was reported to be '*clean, healthy and orderly in the extreme.*' At the front of the procession was carried a large banner, with the inscription "**Long Live George Egerton, Esq.,**" accompanied by three bands and several banners. Each member of the procession wore a medal which Lord Francis Egerton had had struck to mark the occasion. It was manufactured by Messrs. Hammond, Turner, and Sons, of Manchester and Birmingham. On the obverse, it bore an inscription to commemorate the event - George Egerton, of age, June 15th 1844. The reverse contained the arms of Egerton, Duke of Bridgewater - Argent, a lion rampant, passant; Gules, between three pheons; Sable, surmounted by a ducal coronet; motto, "*Sic Donec.*" About four thousand medals had been struck in white metal, with a few in silver and bronze for family and friends. A medal in each metal was to be inserted in the foundation stone of the new church of St. Mark's. Throughout the day, almost every person wore one of these medals, suspended by a piece of white ribbon from a button hole or on the breast. In short, all the colliers, their wives and children, the Sunday and Infant School scholars, and all those employed by the Bridgewater Trust, displayed their medals.

To assist its readers in appreciating the range and scale of the festivities, one newspaper printed the following summary, each feature of which it then described at length:

1st, old English sports and pastimes, with prizes to the successful candidates.

2nd, the foundation of a new church, to be erected at the sole cost of Lord Francis, who also gives the site, on a hill near to the park.

3rd, a dinner to upwards of 2,500 of the colliers, boatmen, and others in the employ of his lordship.

4th, tea to the wives and daughters of the workmen.

And lastly, a splendid display of fireworks.

THE GAMES AND PASTIMES

These '*highly amusing exhibitions*' took place behind the (original) Bridgewater Inn, in a large field known locally as the Cop Ridings. It was estimated that as many as ten thousand people gathered in the park. The games began shortly after eleven o'clock. At about the same time, four brass cannon, 6 pounders, which belonged to Lord Francis's yacht, the *Menai*, began to fire, and continued to do so at regular intervals throughout the day. They were positioned on an eminence in New Hall Park. However, the Cop Ridings was to be the centre of attention for

the several thousand gathered there. By the entrance to the ground, a large tent had been erected by Mr. Sutcliffe, the landlord of the Bridgewater Inn, where refreshments were provided at a very moderate rate.

The layout of the ground was described in this way:

A large circular space of level ground was set apart for the sports; an outer and an inner circle, formed by stakes and ropes, made a temporary race course; and, in the central space, within the course, stood the well-soaped pole, surmounted with a cross-piece, from which dangled four prizes - a leg of mutton, a new hat, a pair of clogs, and some other prize tempting in the eyes of the youthful village aspirants. Near this pole were the upright racks, in which to place the horizontal bars for leaping over; and at a short distance, also within the course, was a wooden stage, for the exhibition of the Lancashire hornpipe dancing, &c.; and suspended to this stage were about 50 prizes, consisting of garments, tools, implements, musical instruments, &c.

The games played and the prizes to be awarded were as follows:

1. Quoiting a new hat
2. Putting the heavy stone ... a pair of boots
3. Putting the light stone a pair of shoes
4. Hutch and kick a hat
5. Standing high leap a plane
6. Running high leap a saw
7. Running jump adze or axe
8. Hop, step and jump a bed quilt
9. Wrestling a pair of blankets
10. Climbing the pole for a leg of mutton, and a variety of other prizes
11. A foot race round the course: first prize .. a hat; second prize .. 2 picks and wedges
12. A donkey race saddle and breeching
13. Lancashire hornpipe first prize .. a fiddle; second prize .. a flute; third prize .. a pair of clogs
14. A wheelbarrow race, to be run blindfolded .. a bacon ham
15. A short foot race a handsome vest
16. Four sack races: first prize .. 2 picks, 2 wedges and a hammer; second prize .. a hand saw; third prize .. a pair of clogs and a foot rule; fourth prize .. a spade
17. A donkey race bridle and collar
18. The bell and the ring a pair of clogs and a foot rule

19. Hurdle race a hat
20. Steeple chase first prize .. a suit of clothes; second prize .. a jacket; third prize .. a vest

These sports and games began shortly after 11 o'clock and continued until dinner was announced - about 2pm, by which time the first eight games had been completed - and then resumed after dinner, finishing somewhere between eight and nine o'clock. Some of these activities may well be familiar to the current reader; equally, some may be quite baffling! The prizes too tell of their importance to the workers of the day. One newspaper saw the light-hearted nature of these events:

Any explanation of these games, with which most of our Lancashire readers are acquainted, would be superfluous; and our space precludes us from entering into detail as to the way in which the competitors acquitted themselves. Suffice it to say that the entertainments generally were productive of the highest amusement to the spectators, many of them being irresistible comic.'

Lord and Lady Egerton, with their guests, appeared on the field at frequent intervals during the day, and showed great pleasure and interest in the games. Lady Egerton awarded some of the prizes to the winners.

ARRIVAL OF GEORGE EGERTON, ESQ.

Young George Egerton, in whose honour these festivities had been arranged, arrived at Worsley Hall at about 10 o'clock, having come that morning from Lancaster. As a lieutenant in the Lancashire Yeomanry Cavalry, he had been with his regiment at Lancaster for training, and this duty prevented him from joining his friends at an earlier time. His arrival caused great excitement at the hall and the cannon discharged 21 shots in his honour. Having taken some lunch with his parents, he then proceeded to the site of the new church, where he was to lay the foundation stone.

FOUNDATION OF THE CHURCH

The ceremony began shortly after twelve noon, by which time the weather had considerably improved, with the sky clearing and the sun beginning to shine brightly. The site of the new church was described in one newspaper in this way:

The site of the church is the summit of a hill, called Lady Cross, situate about three-fourths of a mile to the east of Worsley Hall. The view from this spot is extremely beautiful and extensive embracing the Liverpool and Manchester

Railway, the Bridgewater Canal, the villages of Patricroft, Barton, and Eccles, a portion of Chat Moss, part of Cheshire, and, when the air is clear, Salford and the western part of Manchester, and the hills in Shropshire and North Wales.

Lord Egerton and his guests arrived at the spot at around midday. He was accompanied by Lady Egerton, Lady C. Greville (mother of Lady Egerton), Mr. George Egerton, Miss Blanche and Miss Alice Egerton, Masters Algernon, Arthur, and Greville Egerton; also, Mr. James Loch, M.P., the Hon. Mr. Percy, the Rev. Thomas Blackburne, rector of Prestwich, Mrs. and the Misses Blackburne; the Rev. Wilson Rigg, Incumbent of Ellenbrook, the Rev. George Cameron, Incumbent of Worsley; the Rev. S. R. Waller, of Walkden Moor; the Rev. J. Girdlestone, of Dean; and the Rev. James Young, curate of Ellenbrook. These guests, together with other ladies and gentlemen, took their places on a raised platform, near to the north east corner of the new church, with the stone nearby, ready for laying.

Some detail and facts about the proposed church were printed for the benefit of the readers. It was reported that it had been designed by Messrs. Scott and Moffat, of London, who had been responsible also for Holy Trinity Church, Stretford New Road. It was to be in the decorated style of architecture, popular in the 14th century. The cost, upwards of £6,000, was to be wholly borne by Lord Egerton. The exterior length was to be 140ft. 8ins. and the breadth 48ft. The tower at the west end was to be surmounted by a spire, rising to 185ft., visible over a wide area. The main entrance was to be at the west end of the church, with another entrance from the south, but with only one aisle at that side. There would also be 5 main windows on each side, separated externally by buttresses, surmounted by ornamental pinnacles. The edifice was to be entirely of stone, obtained from Peel Delph, Little Hulton. It was to be completed within about twelve months.

Much of this is broadly correct, though the reader who is familiar with the church will recognise some of the inaccuracies and differences between then and now. The cost is believed to have been greater than first thought, with sums between £7,500 and £20,000 being considered. The height of the spire is actually 182ft, though it is probably a little less visible today as it must have been, partially obscured by trees and the motorway. Nevertheless, the church and its spire do provide a reference point for motorists. A letter from Mr. Attwood to Harold Milliken in 1972 reveals that the stone was *probably* not cut locally. A new north aisle was added in 1851, balancing the symmetry of the church. Consecration of the church took place two years after foundation, on 2nd July 1846.

Before the ceremony commenced, a large throng of people assembled. A procession of children approached from the Worsley Sunday School nearby, composed of scholars from the Worsley, Ellenbrook and Walkden Moor schools, numbering approximately 1,000. As they arrived at the site, accompanied by their teachers and superintendents, they were formed into a circle. The band of the Royal Artillery was also at hand. As Lord Francis and his party approached, the band played a lively march followed by several airs until proceedings began. The children sang the 'old' version of the 100th Psalm and then the Rev. C. Cameron said a prayer.

Mr. George Egerton then descended from the platform, and, accompanied by Mr. Loch, took his place near the stone. Mr. Evans, the Clerk of the Works, then handed to Mr. Egerton the square, which he applied to the stone on each side, and then declared it a perfect shape. The stone was then raised a little above its bed, on which the mortar was applied. In a square cavity in the bed of the stone some gold and silver coins of the present reign were deposited, also one of the medals struck on the occasion, and over them was placed a brass plate bearing the inscription:

A.D. 1844. LORD FRANCIS EGERTON

This was again covered with a plate of zinc.

Then, Mr. Loch, holding a small silver trowel with an elegant ivory handle, moved to one side of the stone and addressed Mr. Egerton, who was standing on the other side.

'I am deputed to place in your hands this trowel, with which you have to lay the foundation of this sacred edifice, which is to be erected on this spot through the liberality of your father - another example of the great and anxious care which he has shown, ever since he came into this district, to increase the spiritual and religious instruction of the people. It is a matter of great congratulation to myself, and to all those who are acquainted with your father, that this should have been united with another day which is to us a source of great happiness - that of seeing you here on the present occasion, having completed your twenty-first year. It is the prayer of us all that you may long live amongst us, and continue to follow that bright example which has been set you by your worthy father. I now place this trowel in your hands.'

George Egerton accepted the trowel and, in reply, expressed his great pleasure in receiving it, and in being granted the task to lay the first stone of the church. He then applied the trowel to the mortar and the stone was lowered into place, and then correctly set by the workmen. Mr. Evans then handed him the plummet and mallet, which he used in the proper way, and declared the stone properly laid.

The Rev. Wilson Rigg, Incumbent of Ellenbrook, then spoke. He began by humbly saying that he would have preferred someone else to address the guests and assembled people, but since this ceremony concerned the glory of God, he felt bound to step forward on an occasion such as this. He went on to remind the crowd of St. Paul's arrival at Athens to preach to the people there about Jesus Christ and his crucifixion (*Acts:17:19-22. Ed.*). In order that they would hear him more clearly, and to make it easier on himself, he ascended the Hill of Mars (*after Ares, the God of War*). From that height, a magnificent panorama stretched - the Acropolis, the plain of Marathon and the city of Athens. And yet, the Rev. Rigg told them, amidst this beautiful scenery, St. Paul was depressed because he found an altar there, built "to the unknown God."

'It is then a delightful contrast to us to consider that while we stand upon this beautiful spot, having a delightful panorama in prospect - the calm canal gliding in front, with the noble rivers Mersey and Irwell, while beneath us the bowels of the earth are stored with the richest mines for the welfare of the country - these things are comparatively nothing when we consider the important and interesting event which we are met here to celebrate - the erection of an altar, not to an unknown God, but to the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom He has sent,'

He then proceeded to give a congratulatory speech to George Egerton, who had that morning travelled fifty miles to be present at this occasion. He noted that the laying of the stone, to the honour and glory of God, was possibly the first public act of service of the young man's life, but then corrected himself by declaring that he had already given himself up to the service of his Queen and country. This young man was now engaged in serving both his country and, more importantly, his God. He now rejoiced in the fact that his friends, the local people, would *have 'a church brought to your own doors; here, you can come and dedicate your children to the Holy Trinity by baptism; here, these children, when they attain mature age, are trained for confirmation, and ... afterwards they can come to their own church to be given in the holy bond of matrimony, ... and you will then have a place near to your own dwellings where your remains can be deposited in peace.'* His final words, wishing Mr. George Egerton a long life, encouraging him to follow the brilliant example of his parents, and asking God to guide his feet in the ways of peace, were met with warm applause.

The Rev. W. Marsden, Vicar of Eccles, then stood and also offered a congratulatory speech. He expressed his gratitude to Lord Francis for providing, not only food for the inhabitants of Worsley, but also endeavouring to provide spiritual food. He spoke of the value of religion for acquainting everyone with the Book of God, that through this they would find happiness in this world and in the world to come. He expected the new institution to be beneficial to the multitudes gathered there and expressed his good wishes to the Egerton family. His address, too, was warmly received. The band then played the national anthem and this was followed by three cheers for Lord Francis and also for Mr. George Egerton.

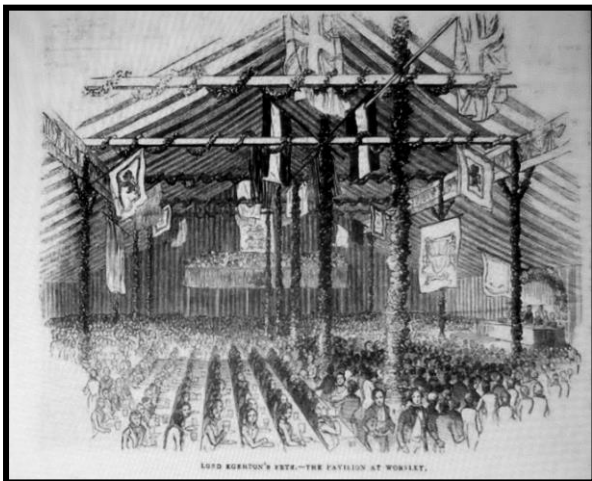
THE DINNER - THE PAVILION

At the end of the ceremony, most people walked towards the pavilion, where dinner was to be served at two o'clock. Lord Francis and his party retired to the hall, stopping on their way to watch some of the athletics now taking place in the park. The Sunday School scholars were escorted by their teachers to the school, where they received refreshments.

The pavilion, or marquee, was a splendid construction, erected by the workmen of the Bridgewater Trust, under supervision from Messrs. Pearson and Dixon. It stood on the site of Worsley Yard, and measured 150 feet long and 100 feet wide. The height of the sides, reported to be made of planks, was 12 feet and the pitch of the roof rose to 44 feet. The interior decorations were by Mr. John Wilson, upholsterer, of King Street, Manchester. The whole roof was lined with stripes of blue, white and pink calico, with the side and end walls decorated similarly. The eighteen columns which supported the roof were covered with laurels and intersecting beams were draped with flags, many showing the armorial bearings of his lordship. There were two entrances to the pavilion at opposite ends, with a gallery above each one. The gallery at the east end of the pavilion was large enough to accommodate comfortably 100 ladies. Above this entrance, and on the outside, was a large banner displaying the national arms. The gallery at the west end was somewhat smaller and housed the band of the Royal Artillery. Numerous flags and banners adorned the perimeter of the pavilion. More than 11,000 yards of calico were used.

Mr. Doveston, of King Street, provided the flags, Messrs. Lees and Lister, of Cateaton Street, and Messrs. John Hall & Co., of King Street, provided the carving knives and forks.

More than 2,500 men - workers, colliers - were invited to the dinner and tables were precisely arranged to accommodate all of them. A dais measuring 20 yards by 10 yards was erected to the south side of the centre for the chairman and principal guests. Immediately in front of the platform were 20 tables in parallel,



with seats on only one side, so that the whole party sat facing the guests. To the right and left, tables were arranged crossways, so that every guest also had a view of the speakers. On the platform itself was a large table and four smaller ones. Laurel, flags, and banners of many designs and colours decorated the inner walls. The tables,

of which there were several hundred, were divided into groups, distinguished by letters of the alphabet, and stewards were appointed to each one. The large party started to arrive at 2.30pm and speedily entered the pavilion.

The scale of the catering was immense. 3 barons of beef (each weighing about 4 hundredweight), 4 whole sheep (each weighing about 100 pounds), 3,800 pounds of beef and mutton, 4,000 pounds of bread, 180 plum puddings (weighing in total about 17 hundredweight) were provided by the tenants and tradesmen of the estate, at the expense of Lord Francis. In addition, there were 1,500 gallons of ale, 54 gallons of ginger beer and 36 gallons of lemonade. One of the barons of beef was placed on a table in the centre of the platform, completely occupying it. Mr. King of the Bush Inn, where the barons were cooked and prepared, took on the responsibility of dissecting and distributing this enormous joint. The other three barons were placed in different parts of the room. The guests, mostly colliers from the mines at Worsley, Walkden Moor and Daxor Moor were complimented by the press for their good order throughout the serving and for their clean and tidy appearance.

Grace before the dinner was said by the Rev. W. Rigg and, after the meal, by the Rev. J. Girdlestone. The chairman of the proceedings was Mr. James Loch M.P., seated on the platform and surrounded by notable guests. At the end of each table, one of the guests invited as stewards acted as carvers. During the meal, Lord Francis, accompanied by George Egerton, and his three other sons entered

to a huge outburst of cheering. Lord Francis then took over the chairmanship on the platform. The band continued to play throughout the serving. Then, just before dinner was over, Lady Egerton and other ladies entered amidst more cheering and clapping. They were led to their seats on the platform. Lord Francis rose to propose the loyal toast, which was followed by the playing of the national anthem.

Five speeches then followed, given by James Loch, George Egerton, the Rev. T. Blackburne, Lord Francis Egerton and the Rev. J. Girdlestone. The Rev. Girdlestone concluded by toasting the health of Lady Francis Egerton and hoping that she may live long enough to see her eldest son follow in her own and the footsteps of his father. Lord Francis rose, amidst loud cheers, to thank the assembly for their compliments on his wife's behalf. His party then withdrew, thereby concluding the proceedings for the dinner. As soon as the pavilion had been cleared of all its occupants, preparations were made for setting it out for another occasion - the tea that was to be given for the wives and female friends of the workers - about 2,000 in number.

THE TEA PARTY

Tea was provided in the pavilion at about 6 o'clock, amidst scenes of great joy and animation. Lord and Lady Egerton returned to the marquee to be greeted with the utmost respect, admiration and gratitude, the ladies clapping and waving their handkerchiefs. They stayed for some time, enjoying the whole atmosphere. There was an abundance of bread, cold meats and tea, served to the ladies. The meal was finished sooner than expected, since many of the party wished to return to the sports and games, or simply to rejoin their friends outside the pavilion.

THE PYROTECHNICAL DISPLAY

The discharge of the fireworks started just before ten o'clock. The display was divided into five parts, or themes, comprising a total of 33 pieces, the best ones being fired at the end of each part. The last piece of the first part was entitled *A Fixed Saxon piece, eighty feet in circumference - beginning with a vertical wheel, in various fires; changing to twelve Saxon wheels; changing to green, orange and purple coloured fires; concluding with a display of straw fire, marooned.* The second part concluded with *A Splendid Fixed Piece, fifty feet in circumference - commencing with a scroll wheel, in various coloured fires; changing to six crimson suns; concluding with twenty-four gerbs, throwing a shower of brilliant fire to a great extend, marooned.*

The last display of part three was an *Egyptian Pyramid; commencing with a large vertical wheel, changing to two triangular wheels, in green, orange and lilac fires; concluding with a battery of Roman Candles, discharging various*

coloured balls, with brilliant fire, reported. The fourth display terminated with a Fixed Piece, called the Union Wreath, thirty feet in circumference; beginning with a vertical wheel, illuminated with blue, green, red and violet flame; changing to a splendid wreath of the Rose, Thistle and Shamrock, in upwards of one thousand diamond jets; and finishing with a Soleil Brillant, sixty feet in diameter. The fifth and longest display concluded with a Splendid Triumphal Arch, eighteen feet high in the skeleton; beginning with a Double Triangular wheel changing to upwards of one thousand diamond jets, in various colours forming a Triumphal Arch in brilliant light, displaying the Arms and Motto of the family.

The firework display finished a little after eleven o'clock and the crowd gradually dispersed back to their own homes. The newspapers reported that the people were almost as numerous as during the day and that they departed in good order, expressing their excitement at what they had witnessed, and their admiration of and gratitude towards his lordship. It was further reported that not a single accident had occurred throughout the day. Fragments of the feast were subsequently distributed to the poor of Worsley and its neighbouring townships.

CONSECRATION OF THE CHURCH

Just 2 years and 17 days after the laying of the foundation stone, the new parish church of St. Mark, Worsley, was consecrated on 2nd July 1846. The ceremony was performed by the Rev. Dr. John Bird Sumner, then Bishop of Chester and later Archbishop of Canterbury. Sadly, there seems to be no contemporary account of the service in 1846. However, from an account in the national press of a provincial grand meeting of Freemasons held at the Temperance Hall, Bolton, on 2nd July, a few facts can be deduced. The weather that day *"was exceedingly unpropitious"*. Lord Francis Egerton (provincial grand master) *"had been prevented from attending [that meeting] as early as was expected in consequence of the consecration of the new church at Worsley"*. The business of the lodge was conducted and the Earl arrived at 1.30pm. Clearly, the consecration service must have been held in the morning. The weather by early afternoon *"fortunately had now cleared up"*.



The church was not quite the building we all recognise today. The tower and steeple were not yet finished; there was no north aisle; there was no vestry, no extension to the Ellesmere chapel; nor were there any stained glass windows, reredos, gas lighting. The famous clock which strikes thirteen had not been installed; and, of course, there were no bells. The Ellesmere chapel was configured quite differently and the choir stalls did not exist.

1846 proved to be a memorable year for Francis Egerton in several ways. Apart from the consecration of the church, Lord Francis Egerton was elevated to the peerage as 1st Earl of Ellesmere on 27th June. This was then announced in *The London Gazette*, on 30th June 1846 - the same year that the New Hall was completed and that the family moved in.


The first baptism entry for the new church was for John Harrison, son of John Harrison and Sarah Georgiana, of Worsley. The boy was born on 26th August 1845 and he was baptised on 5th July 1846 by Charles Cameron. He was one of seven children born to this couple. An older sister, Gertrude Ann, who was born on 10th October 1840, was also baptised there on the same day. The father, John, was a Canal Agent and, by 1851, the family had moved to Lymm. Their youngest child, Richard Ernest, was baptised on 5th September 1847, and the abode was still Worsley. However, the first burial, that of Oliver Eckersley, (2 years old), son of William and Anne, took place on 10th July 1846. He had died of croup. It took another three years for the first marriage to take place in the church (1849),

Cheshire Archives holds copies of the Bishop's registers dated 1525-1944. These contain details of church alterations, new buildings, churchyards, parish boundaries, etc., and are indexed 1746-1900. At EDA2/18, pages 845 – 847, there is a copy of the Declaration of Patronage granted to Lord Francis Egerton by the Lord Bishop of Chester. The returns for the Parish of Eccles had shown a population of 5,000 and upwards. The existing church/churches and chapel/chapels did not provide accommodation for one-third of the inhabitants *'for their attendance upon Divine Service.'*

The Declaration began by stating that *'for the spiritual advantage of the inhabitants of Eccles aforesaid hath under the provisions of'* the various Acts of Parliament on Church Buildings, Lord Francis Egerton *'was granted permission to build and fit up a new church on a certain piece or parcel of land situate lying and being in the township of Worsley in the said parish of Eccles. The new church was intacted to be called Saint Mark's Church, Worsley, and the church hath been erected, built and fitted up with all things necessary for the performance of Divine Ordinances.'* The cost did not exceed £10,000, Ten Thousand Pounds. [This figure for the building of the church is interesting, since other figures have been seen, ranging from just over £7,000 to £20,000 - Ed.]

Lord Francis Egerton provided an endowment of one hundred pounds annually for this church and this was secured by an indenture dated 23rd June 1846 made between Lord Francis Egerton, James Lock, (sic) Esq., the Bishop of Chester and George Granville Francis Egerton, Francis Egerton and George Lock, esquires. This was deposited in the Public Episcopal Registry of Chester. In addition, his

lordship provided 'a fund for the repairs of the said church in manner following the sum of five hundred pounds, being a sum equal in amount to five pounds upon every one hundred pounds of the original costs of erecting and fitting up such church.' Furthermore, Lord Francis requested the Diocese 'to make and execute ... such declaration of the right of nominating a minister to the said church.' The Diocese acceded to this request. This right was granted 'from and immediately after the consecration thereof' with the prerequisite that Lord Egerton should nominate a minister 'ever thereafter.' This right was granted to his heirs and assigns. Finally, the patronage of the Church was not at any time 'to be vested in or held in trust by more than 5 persons.' This was signed by John Bird Lord Bishop of Chester on the First of July 1846.

The website, historicengland.org.uk, records that '*The building is listed under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended for its special architectural or historic interest.*' It was first listed as a Grade 1 building on 29th July 1966. The source of the details about the church were taken from: Pevsner, N. The Buildings of England: South Lancashire, (1969). The list entry number is 1227895 and the coordinates for the church are:  Latitude: 53° 30' 5.00" N Longitude: -2° 23' 3.28" W. It is described thus:

1479/1/64 WORSLEY BROW 09-MAY-03 WORSLEY (North side)
CHURCH OF ST MARK WALKDEN ROAD WORSLEY (East side)
CHURCH OF ST MARK

Church. Built 1844-6; north aisle added 1851. By Sir George Gilbert Scott for Lord Francis Egerton, 1st Earl of Ellesmere. Sneaked stone with slate and copper roofs. Nave with clerestory, aisles and west tower; chancel, side chapel, vestry and organ chamber. Gothic Revival in a C14 style. 5-bay nave and aisles with weathered plinth, weathered buttresses and coped parapet to aisle. Each bay has a 2-light window with Geometrical tracery. Gabled porch in bay 2. The chancel has a 5-light east window and is flanked by the side chapel and organ chamber all with parallel pitched roofs. The chapel has 3 bays and has added enrichment to buttresses and a pierced parapet. Imposing 4-stage tower with set back weathered and gabled buttresses has a weathered plinth, bands at each stage, west door, 3-light west window, clock faces on the third stage, 2-light belfry

openings below crocketed gables and a dogtooth enriched eaves band with gargoyles. The spire is supported by flying buttresses and has gabled lucarnes at the base, all of which are liberally enriched by crockets and gargoyles. Interior: Decorated piers and double-chamfered nave arcade with hoodmoulds and head stops. Hammer-beam roof trusses. Carved stone font. The pulpit and organ case incorporate C16 and C17 carvings of French and Flemish origins, and the church contains much other woodwork of high quality including the choir stalls, sedilia and font canopies, and a near complete set of benches. The elaborate carved stone reredos with panels of mosaic and inlaid stone, mosaic floor and, probably, the fine iron screen (thought to be by J B Skidmore) were introduced in 1866. The monument to Lord Francis Egerton, d.1857, was designed by Scott, with effigy by Matthew Noble and decorative carving by J. Birnie Philip. The designer of the intensely coloured (possibly continental) stained glass in the east windows is unknown; window in south aisle (SA2) by Morris & Co., 1905. Outstanding architectural creation by Sir George Gilbert Scott over which he took great care. The church contains an exceptional group of fittings of both contemporary and antiquarian interest.



The architect of the church was **Sir George Gilbert Scott** (1811-78), one of the most prolific architects of the Victorian era. He was responsible for over 740 new or restored buildings, including 470 churches! He was the first in the family line of architects who have given us buildings as diverse as St. Pancras Station, Liverpool Anglican Cathedral and Battersea Power Station. Scott started to design at the age of 22, a vicarage for his father, in Northamptonshire. He took on W. B. Moffat as his assistant in 1835, and then as his partner (1838 to 1845). Initially, they both designed mainly workhouses and lunatic asylums, cashing in on the

requirements of the new Poor Law Act of 1834. They went on to design schools, parsonages, memorials (eg. the Albert Memorial), an hotel - and in particular churches, from 1840. He carried out restoration work on dozens of buildings, many of which were cathedrals.

Prior to the designing of St. Mark, Worsley, at the age of 33, Scott and his partner (with whom he parted company in 1845) had designed a few churches which paid little regard to liturgical principles (even though his father was an Anglican clergyman). Scott had been inspired by Augustus Pugin to participate in the Gothic Revival. He had become very critical of his own early work in church design in 1839/1840. In his *Personal Recollections*, he wrote: *'Unfortunately, everything I did at that time fell into the wholesale form; and before I had time to discover the defects of my first design, its general form and its radical errors were repeated in no less than six other churches, and which followed in such rapid succession as to leave no time for improvement.'* He accused himself of falling into the cheap church trap and of being *'unconscious of the abyss into which I had fallen. These days of abject degradation only lasted for about two years or little more.'*

Then, in 1841, he *'awakened to a truer sense of the dignity of the subject.'* This awakening he attributed to two causes which occurred at about the same time: his acquaintance with the Cambridge Camden Society, and him reading Pugin's articles in the *Dublin Review* and also *The Ecclesiologist*. He had met Pugin but once throughout his life in 1840 at his own request, but remained forever intrigued and interested in both his writings and his works. He had a somewhat ambivalent relationship with the Cambridge Camden Society, stemming from some misunderstandings about the design of a particular church, though he remained faithful to their views on church design and numbered a good many members amongst his friends. His overriding conclusion was that *'With all its faults, however, the good which the Society has done cannot possibly be overrated. They have, it is true, like all enthusiastic reformers, often pressed views, in themselves good, too far, and their tendencies have at times been too great towards an imitation of obsolete ritualisms; but in the main their work has been sound and good.'* Bearing in mind the fact that the church of St. Mark was begun in June 1844, Scott stated that *'I look back, however, upon my labours at that time (1841-1844) with some satisfaction, and believe that they have in the main effected much good.'*

Of the many churches George Gilbert Scott designed, St. Mark's is considered to be the purest in form. Although George barely mentions it in his autobiography, his grandson Sir Giles (the architect of Liverpool Anglican Cathedral) is reported to have said he considered it to be the best of his works of art. The church is today considered to be an early and fine example of the Gothic Revival style and

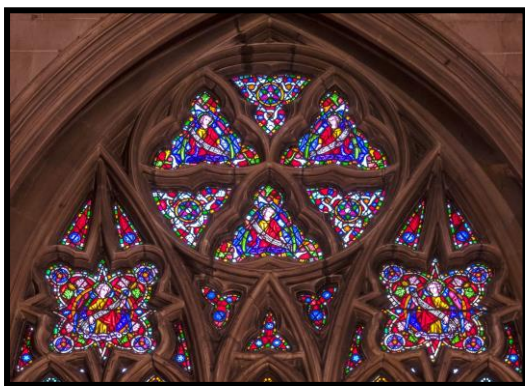
to use Scott's own words: *'I have become one of the leading actors in the greatest architectural movement which has occurred since the Renaissance.'* Pevsner described it as an *'Outstanding architectural creation by Sir George Gilbert Scott over which he took great care.'*

Sir George Scott was a man of phenomenal energy, influence and success. He died on 27th March 1878 and was buried in Westminster Abbey on Saturday 6th April. He was laid to rest within the walls of the Abbey, by the grave of Sir Charles Barry, and beside the great nave pulpit which he had himself designed. The coffin bore this inscription:

Georgii Gilberti Scott, equitis
viri probi architecti peritissimi
parentis optimi reliquiae hic
in fide Jesu Christi resurrectionem
expectant. Obiit xxvii, die Martis
anno Salutis MDCCCLXXVIII, ætatis LXVII.

[The Latin reads: Here lie the remains of George Gilbert Scott, knight, a man of honour, an architect of the highest skill, an excellent founder. They long for his resurrection in the faith of Jesus Christ. He died on the 27th day of March, in the year of salvation 1878, aged 67].

His son, George Gilbert Scott Jr., wrote about the choice his father had to make between the two renaissances - the classical and the Gothic - and said: *'Sir Gilbert Scott adopted the latter, and became the principal church architect of his day.'*

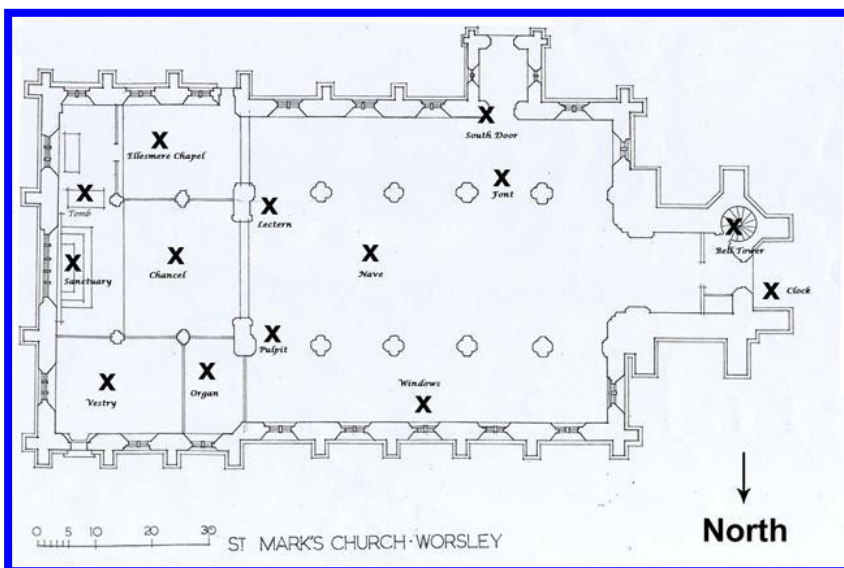


St. Mark's was endowed by the 1st Earl of Ellesmere as part of his efforts to improve the condition of the district. The church was built on Cross Field, a ten acre site on Worsley Brow, so named because of the Lady's Cross which stood at the junction of Leigh and Walkden Roads - possibly a traveller's cross. The spire rises to 185 feet (56 m) and acts as a landmark

for many drivers who pass it on the motorway which now bisects the parish.

The church is in the Decorated Gothic style (or period), popular in the 13th and 14th centuries. This is one of three English Gothic styles, identified by Thomas Rickman in the early 19th century. The three are: Early English (c. 1180–1275), Decorated (c. 1275–1380) and Perpendicular (c. 1380–1520). Decorated Gothic architecture is characterised by its window tracery. Elaborate windows are subdivided by closely spaced parallel mullions (or vertical columns of stone), usually up to the level at which the arched top of the window begins. The mullions then branch out and cross, intersecting to fill the top part of the window with a mesh of elaborate patterns. This is called tracery, and typically includes trefoils and quatrefoils. These features can readily be seen in the main east window of the church [photo].

PLAN OF THE CHURCH



As you enter the Parish Church of St. Mark, Worsley, you may be struck by its symmetry on all sides of the building. However, it may be difficult to realise that, at the time of its consecration on 2nd July 1846, the Church was missing certain aspects which were each added over a few decades in the nineteenth century. As previously noted, there was no reredos, a smaller chapel, no vestry, no north aisle, no painted ceiling inside, no mosaics, no stained glass windows, no bells, no memorial tomb - in short, quite a different building from the one we see today.

The following information is taken from the parish website.

Windows. There are some stained-glass windows around the church. It is currently believed that twelve windows were acquired by Scott from France, Belgium or Italy, depicting saints. Two others in the chapel were made by the studios of Edward Burne-Jones and the plain aisle windows are Powell's cast glass.

Pulpit. The pulpit was fashioned by Scott from carved panels acquired on his travels. A part of the surround bears the date 1640. Three of the panels are of the same period, perhaps of Dutch origin, and although small (they have also been pieced) they are remarkably detailed and artistically ambitious, showing a grasp of depth and perspective.



The panels of the pulpit depict the four Evangelists in the upper portion, whilst the lower portion represents various biblical scenes, including the Adoration of the Shepherds, the Adoration of the Magi, the Flight into Egypt, and, possibly, the Death of Jezebel

Below the handrail of the pulpit staircase is an old panel depicting the Circumcision, with a more modern addition to keep the panel in place.



Sanctuary. Two marble steps lead into the sanctuary and another two to the altar. In the sanctuary floor are several small winged

lions, hawthorn leaves, sprays and red crosses, and a large pelican – a symbol of Holy Communion that is both traditional and has contemporary resonances. It stems from the legend that the mother pelican plucks blood from her breast to feed her young.

Vestry. The original vestry had consisted of a small clergy "robing room" built off the north side of the chancel. However, the building was replaced in 1884 with the present substantial structure which provided an organ vestry and combined choir and clergy vestry. A complete gallery of past incumbents adorns one wall of the vestry.

Tomb. The memorial tomb to the First Earl of Ellesmere stands between the sanctuary and the Ellesmere Chapel. It was designed by Scott in Early English Gothic style and executed in Caen stone by J. B. Philip of London, (who was also responsible for the figures around the podium of Scott's Albert Memorial in Kensington)

Chapel. This was originally the family's private chapel, with its own small entrance door on the south wall (with a path leading to the New Hall) with pews facing inwards. In 1923, the Ellesmere family finally left Worsley and in 1928 the chapel was reordered to form a weekday chapel. It contains many monuments and memorials, including some good quality Victorian brasses, to the four Earls of Ellesmere and their families. The granite tomb in the corner of the Chapel is a memorial to the second Earl of Ellesmere.

Lectern. The lectern is carved in oak and depicts the figure of St. Mark. It was designed by J. Douglas and made by E. Griffiths, of Chester, in 1894, at a cost of £50. At the base is Mark's symbol, a carved winged lion.

The **Reredos** is a beautiful piece of Italian craftsmanship of alabaster inlaid with coloured marbles and mosaics in intricate geometric patterns. There are nine panels: angels bearing scrolls and censers, a virgin bearing a lily, a mother and child. The fine central panel depicts Christ with right hand raised in blessing, seated above sun, moon and rainbow. In the top corners of the panel are the letters A and W (representing the Greek Alpha and Omega). It was installed in memory of the Dowager Countess of Ellesmere by her family in the late 1860's.

Chancel. The chancel is entered by two white Carrara marble steps, installed in 1892 for £25, replacing the original stone, and is paved in skilful mosaic, in red, blue, fawn, brown and black with fleur de lys and hawthorn sprays, and borders of white trefoil and thistle sprays.

Font. The date and maker of the Font are unknown. It is made of limestone, elaborately carved, with a bronze basin. It bears the inscription:

“Suffer little children to come unto me and forbid them not, for of such is the Kingdom of God” (Mark 10.14)

Bell tower. The bell ringing chamber is reached by an anticlockwise stone spiral staircase of 41 steps. From here the ringers can sound out a peal from the fine and rare set of ten bells which are hung in the tower above.

PUGIN AND BARRY

According to the book *Changing Scene*, by H. T. Milliken (ed. 2007),

'The east windows in the chancel and side chapel had been filled with plain glass. This was a temporary measure until the right kind of stained glass could be decided upon by the architect, who was still travelling on the Continent, and by the Earl of Ellesmere....

The origin of the glass in the main east window, and three of those in the chapel, remains... a mystery. They have variably been ascribed to Italian, Belgian, Flemish or South German sources, but recent experts' opinion favours the view that they are composed of South German, possibly mixed with some English, stained glass collected by Scott on his travels.'

The Wikipedia entry for the church states that "Twelve windows were acquired by Scott from France, Belgium or Italy depicting saints, two others were made by the studios of Edward Burne-Jones and the aisle windows are Powell's cast glass." So, the origin of the glass, the designers and the installers of the east windows all seemed to be unknown.



However, recent research is revealing some very interesting information and, to understand this better, some names and details need to be linked. As we now know, George Gilbert Scott (born 1811, Kt. 9 Aug. 1872), the architect of the

church, had been a great admirer of the burgeoning Gothic Revival style of architecture, and in particular of its greatest proponent, Augustus Welby Northmore Pugin (born 1812). They met briefly for the first time in about 1838, but rarely after that, Scott learning most from the various books and tracts that Pugin wrote. Scott referred to him as "*the great hero of our revival.*" Charles Barry (Kt. 11 Feb. 1852) was already a great and renowned architect by this time, born some years earlier in 1795 in London. He is above all best-known for

winning the competition to design the new Palace of Westminster in 1835, following the destruction by fire of the old palace in October 1834. For this work, he was knighted in 1852. A. W. N. Pugin was recruited by Barry to help with the interior design (furniture, stained glass, sculpture, wallpaper, decorative floor tiles, mosaic work, etc.) and collaborated with Barry between 1844 and 1852 (the year of Pugin's death on 21 September). To these names must be added a fourth, John Hardman, of Birmingham. Lesser known certainly than the others, he was the son of John Hardman, the founder of a button-making firm. In 1838, at Pugin's instigation, Hardman Jr. expanded the family business to introduce ecclesiastical metalwork made to Pugin's designs. In 1845, the firm branched out again, into the making of stained glass.

To add to this mix, must now be included the Earl of Ellesmere. Under the terms of the third Duke of Bridgewater's will, Lord Francis Leveson-Gower changed his name to Egerton in 1833 and inherited Bridgewater House and the income arising out of the Bridgewater estates. This London house needed to be renovated and enlarged to hold an extensive art collection, and it was quickly discovered that the supporting walls were too decayed to sustain a new upper level; and so it was decided to pull the whole of the old building down and to erect a new house. The man chosen to design the new house was (Sir) Charles Barry. Barry's first design for this was submitted in 1841, but six years elapsed before it was begun. It was completed for Lord Ellesmere in 1854. So, the main players were all known to each other by the time of the consecration of St. Mark's and the elevation of Lord Francis to the peerage as Earl of Ellesmere in 1846.

The Manchester Guardian of (Wednesday) 27th August 1851 carried an article about the coming visit of Queen Victoria in October of that year, in which it detailed some of the arrangements that were being made for that visit. It mentioned that Earl Grey, her Majesty's Secretary of State, had visited Worsley New Hall during the past week to discuss these with the Earl, and the article further mentions that "*Other contemplated alterations and improvements connected with the house [i.e. Worsley New Hall - Ed.] itself, have rendered necessary the presence of Mr. Barry, the architect, who is stated to have been at Worsley, in conference with the noble earl, as to the requisite arrangements and preparations to be made.*"

A book published by John Murray in 1868, "*The Architect of the New Palace of Westminster*," gives a further insight. Written by the Rev. Alfred Barry (son of Charles Barry), it was in response to a pamphlet written by E. W. Pugin (Pugin's son) entitled "*Who Was The Art-Architect of the Houses of Parliament?*" - a war of words between the two sons over Pugin Jr.'s claim that his father had been the true architect of the Palace. On page 43, in quoting from the diary of Sir C. Barry, Alfred Barry writes:

1851, Aug. 22. - At Worsley. Pugin and Hardman called.

So, this corroborates the article in *The Manchester Guardian*, quoted above; in fact, three gentlemen met with the Earl in Worsley on Friday 22 August 1851 - but for what purpose?

Margaret Belcher (1936-2016) was born in New Zealand and became an acknowledged scholar and specialist on the life and work of A. W. N. Pugin. In 1987, she began to edit his letters, a work that eventually ran to five volumes, from 2001 to 2015. In volume 5, she quotes from a letter written by Pugin to his third wife, Jane, as follows:

*Liverpool, Thursday night
Liverpool, Thursday, 21 August 1851*

My Dearest Jane

We have arrived safe here - ... we are going about 6 o'clock tomorrow to Lord Ellesmere about the glass, and then to Pantasaph. ...

*Ever dearest Jane
with love to all the little ones
Your devoted and affectionate husband
A W Pugin*

Belcher then gives a very brief résumé of the life of Lord Ellesmere, before presenting further information about the purpose of the visit. She writes:

On 7 June 1851, Barry wrote to Hardman from Westminster to tell him that Lady Ellesmere asked about the glass for St. Mark's and Barry did not know what to answer; his letter survives in SGL. In response to Hardman's immediate report of delay, Barry decided to halt any work and have all cartoons and instructions sent to him so that he could show Lady Ellesmere what was proposed. After notifying Hardman to this effect on 9 June, he explains on 12 June why he is anxious: 'If it were possible I would much like you to see the old glass already in the window in order that you may not fail of harmonizing the new with the old;' white glass is to be avoided, and a 'dark rich tone of colour produced'. By 16 June Barry gives Hardman the order to proceed as Lady Ellesmere approves of what is intended, and on 7 July he urges Hardman to dispatch a workman to fix the glass at Worsley as soon as possible. SGDB enters to Lady Ellesmere

at 12 July 1851 an east window for £35 and a smaller east window costing only £10; there is a note of Barry's name at the foot of the entry.

Lady Ellesmere sent a letter on mourning paper from 'Worsley' on 'Wednesday', probably 13 August; her letter is preserved in SGL 1851; apparently she wrote to Barry, who forwarded her communication to Hardman with a covering note on 15 August.

"The Window in Worsley Church is completed & I am sorry to say unsuccessful. The execution is pretty in itself but wholly unsuited to the rest in colouring. It has the effect of a gown of which the skirt is crimson, & the body pink.

Now the question is can anything be done to improve it. Who is the executor of it? Did he ever see the window?

I should be inclined to have him down to look at it; but before determining upon this, should like to know his name & address."

Belcher's conclusion is that it was this condemnation that brought the three men, Barry, Hardman and Pugin, together at Worsley about a week later. The involvement of such prominent figures is fascinating and brings another dimension to the history of the Church here at Worsley and to the breadth of contacts of the Earl. Clearly, the commission of the east windows and the concern of Lady Ellesmere were very important to the three men. The relative



costs of the two sets of windows is, today, quite astonishing. In reference to the book 'The Work of Sir Gilbert Scott' by David Cole, 1980, Belcher quotes his suggestion that 'Pugin, perhaps as late as 1852 and doing his last

work of this kind, designed some of the stained glass for Scott's church of St. Mark, Worsley, near Manchester, seems to be new'.

As for the concern of Pugin to get this work right, Martin Harrison in his book '*Victorian Stained Glass*', 1980, writes that (Pugin) '*laid the foundations for the successful revival of the medieval principles of stained glass design*' and throughout his working life continued '*to set the highest standards in English stained glass*'.

Due to the ravages of time and the Industrial Revolution, the church suffered a great deal structurally. By 1952, extensive restoration work had to be carried out and a special committee was formed to steer through the essential programme. The most damage had been done to the south west corner - the general direction of the prevailing wind, which caused corrosion and blackening to the stonework. This was overseen by James Attwood, a master stonemason from York Minster. The whole programme lasted four years

In a 19 page letter to Harold Milliken in 1972, Attwood made the following observations about the glass in separate paragraphs:

1. The Earl in his letters to Scott did suggest various additions, in that he could get antique stained glass from Munich, he may have mentioned about the Church Pate (sic) coming from Germany and the Pulpit from Belgium, but these things were talked over after the fabric was built - there wouldn't have been much point in discussing them before, would there?

2. The discussion then became general and most of the Committee asked various questions. Mr. Preston the Vicar's Warden asked me about the stained glass windows and could I recommend anyone to fix the glass when the East window tracery was restored. We had a later meeting some months afterwards about this.

3. It was proposed and decided to carry out the first phase of the work which came to £2,500 which included the scaffolding required but did not include the Chancel East Stained Glass of the window. I knew there were only two firms in the Manchester area who could be entrusted with the work. Incidentally one firm did the East window and the other one did the Ellesmere Chapel at a later date. Both windows were to be treated as separate items as and when the occasion arose for the work to be done. ... I asked him (Mr. Pointer of

Pointers of Grosvenor Street, Manchester), to meet me at the church. He came with his foreman. I asked him if he could give me some idea of taking the glass out, re-leading it and re-fixing. He replied - Well Mr. Attwood, not exactly, there is more to it than just that. Some of the glass seems to be thicker than the others. The thin glass isn't English, it's continental, which is surprising In any case under these circumstances it should be double glazed to protect it. I am not prepared to re-fix it with wire grilles as protection, with the double glazing could be in excess of £500. ... Certain it is (that - Ed.) the glass will have to be taken out and cleaning it and assembling it, leading it, bringing it back and fixing in position.

A recent book produced by Stanley A. Shepherd, *The Stained Glass of A. W. N. Pugin*, 2009, corroborates Pugin's involvement in the installation of some of the glass. In the book, he reproduces all the Office Records, etc., for all windows he made, and one shows that the order was placed in 1850 (executed 1851) for 19 pieces of tracery for an east window, and 11 pieces of tracery for a smaller east window. Our knowledge and understanding of the origin of some of the glass has now been clarified. There is yet more to uncover.

THE VISIT OF QUEEN VICTORIA



The church had been consecrated on 2nd July 1846 by the Bishop of Chester. Just six days before that (27th June), its patron, Lord Francis Egerton, was elevated to the peerage with the title Earl of Ellesmere, and, within the same year, took up residence in his new home - Worsley New Hall. 3 major events in a very short space of time.

Then, five years later, on 16th August 1851, it was announced that Queen Victoria would visit Worsley, Salford and Manchester from 9 to 11 October and that she was to spend her two nights here in Worsley with the Earl and his family. Formal dinners were held at the Hall on both nights, attended by about 100 people. On the first night, the party was joined by Mr. James Nasmyth (local engineer), and on the second by Mr. Edward Staite (patentee of the electric light). On one of those evenings, they were also entertained with The Ellesmere Polka - a piano piece specially composed by Heinrich Blümer.

Just now, preparations are in progress for adding a north aisle at the church erected recently by the noble earl for the use of the inhabitants of Worsley; and it may be suggested that to lay the foundation stone of the addition would be a means of commemorating her sojourn on the spot acceptable to the feelings of all concerned. Should this not be done, perhaps a tree planted by her hand may live to flourish on some part of the domains, and be pointed out in future ages as the "Queen's Tree." Undoubtedly Her Majesty will inspect the beautiful building which the noble earl has erected for the specific instruction of the people around him, and while speaking of it, a thought comes over us, that it is not a little singular that the Rev. St. Vincent Beechey, the incumbent, will have been brought into close communication with her Majesty on the two occasions she has been to this county, as incumbent of Fleetwood, when her Majesty landed there, and now as incumbent of Worsley.

(The Manchester Courier; Saturday 23 August 1851)

As we now know, no such tree was planted! After visiting Salford and Manchester on Friday 10th October 1851, the Queen wrote in her journal:

"At 4 we walked out with the Children and the whole party, 1st visiting the Church, built by the Ellesmeres, which is very pretty, then the Parsonage and Poultry Yard, a nice little house built near a pretty piece of water and afterwards through a wood, along a little stream round by the Dispensary to the old house, in which the Duke of Bridgewater lived, now occupied by the Agent, M^r Locke, and in which the Ellesmeres lived till 5 years ago. There were a great many people out, who frequently rather crowded upon us, but were very well behaved. We lastly went to the Garden, on the other side of the house. Came home a little after 6."

(Queen Victoria's Journals: Friday 10th October 1851: vol.32 p.144)

This is how *The Morning Post* began its article which covered specifically Queen Victoria's visit to Worsley Church. *"There was a large party accompanying the Queen as she made her way across the road and into the church grounds at about 4 o'clock. The royal party consisted of Her Majesty and Prince Albert, the Countess of Ellesmere, the Viscountess Brackley, the Ladies Alice and Blanche Egerton, the Marchioness of Westminster, the Earl and Countess of Wilton, together with other members of the party at the Hall. The Queen and the Prince Consort were greeted at the church door (south porch) by the incumbent, the Rev. St.V. Beechey, and they proceeded down the main aisle. Victoria seemed very pleased by the architecture and sculpture of the church, and its rich stained-glass windows".* It is wonderful today to walk down the same aisle, knowing that one of our greatest monarchs, whose name has come to define a particular age in British history, once walked the same way.

The church today does differ from the 1851 building in one particular respect - namely the addition of the north aisle which, at that time, had not been started. The royal party left the church by the west door (then the vestry door), and preceded by the incumbent, they passed through the vicarage gardens into the private walks of the Earl of Ellesmere, and then to Lady Brackley's poultry yard, through the woods to the dispensary at Kempnough Hall. From there, the party returned to the New Hall via the Old Hall, where Her Majesty was received by Mrs. George Loch, with whom she conversed for some time. The royal party finally returned to the Hall at about 6 o'clock.

A report in *The Manchester Courier* (Saturday 18th October) gave a similar but, in places, differing account of the visit to the church. It was reported that the

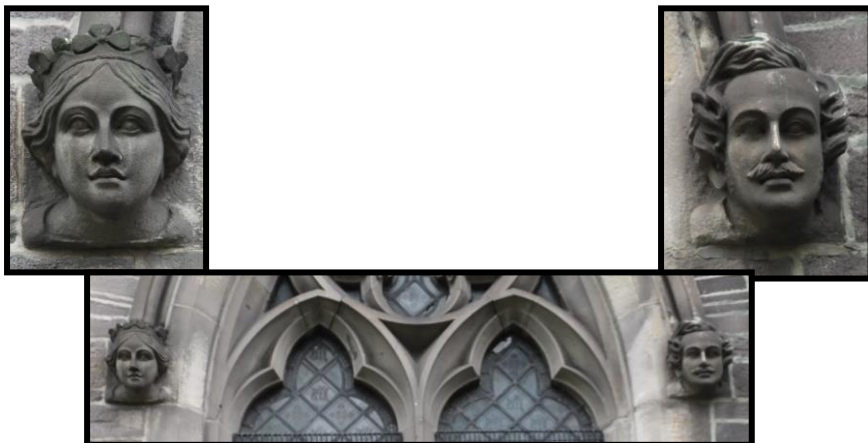
royal party left the church *"unobserved at first and unrecognised by any one."* It continued to tell the readers that it quickly became known that Her Majesty was walking in the locality, and that a gathering of people soon collected, and followed the party at a respectful distance, *"testifying their delight by frequent outbursts of loyal exclamations."* Seemingly, no attempt was made by the constabulary to restrict the movement of the people, who followed Her Majesty through the private walks *"in close proximity to her person."* The newspaper was pleased to pay tribute to the respect shown by the people and wished that such respect might be copied in other quarters of her dominion.

It then went on to describe an incident as her Majesty left the church, *'which deserves to be recorded.'*

"An aged woman, named Ann Rigby, 79 years of age, formerly or at present resident at Street Gate, was near the church when her Majesty left, and discovering the fact hurried after her, and earnestly asked the privilege of being permitted to touch her Queen. The request reached the ear of the prince, who instantly made way, and the old woman having gently placed her hand on her Majesty's shoulder retires; her wish was gratified. The reader may perhaps expect to hear that the reason for this somewhat odd movement was merely the promptings of fancy, or perhaps some superstition that disease could be cured by the touch, but it was a deeper and more hallowed feeling. Ann Rigby had been a victim of that horrible slavery, which, up to within a few years, bound the women of this district to work in coal pits; for 33 years she had toiled in a mine for one master; the act abolishing the abomination had passed within the reign of our most gracious Sovereign, its promoters had all her sympathy and all her support, her sign manual was appended with the deepest pleasure; and it was the wild overpouring of gratitude which thus singularly developed itself."

The Act of Parliament referred to in the report was The Mines and Collieries Act (1842) which contained three main provisions: 1. that no female was to be employed underground. 2. that no boy under 10 years of age was to be employed underground. And 3. that Parish apprentices between the ages of 10 and 18 could continue to work in the mines. The Act was a response to the working conditions of children described in the Children's Employment Commission (Mines) 1842 report. That commission had been headed by the 7th Earl of Shaftesbury.

The window featured above is at the south west corner of the church, facing south and near to the flagpole. Close inspection will reveal that the stonework there is slightly different from the rest of the building and the mortar is brighter and different from the other joints. Furthermore, the tracery of the arch is more modern and simpler in design, compared with similar windows. It is reasonable



to conclude that this stonework might be the result of extensive restoration work carried out between 1952 and 1956. The church had suffered terribly from the ravages of industrial pollution, both inside and outside. The worst part on the exterior was this south west corner, which faces the prevailing winds. Some stone was trimmed back and other new carved pieces were inserted. At the time of the building of the church, there were no plans for the Queen to visit Worsley. Furthermore, all the other corbels are traditional gargoyles.

At the time of Queen Victoria's visit, the Earl of Ellesmere was the patron of Henshaw's Blind Asylum, at Old Trafford. The Countess had shown great interest in the success of the work of that institution. Some days before the Queen's arrival, some beautiful specimens of the work done by the children were submitted to her, and the Countess was so pleased with them that she sought permission to show them to Her Majesty. On Thursday (9th), a box was delivered to Worsley New Hall (from Capt. Whittaker, one of the governors), with the following note inside:

"The board of management of Henshaw's Blind Asylum, Old Trafford, Manchester, solicit the honour of her Majesty's most gracious acceptance of a cushion, a shawl, three purses, and a bag; the knitting, netting, and threading of the beads, being

*entirely the work of blind inmates of the asylum. - Imprinted
by a blind person. October 9th.*

The cushion was described as being 20 inches square, knitted in wools of 22 different shades, principally of scarlet and silver greys. A leaf pattern was used throughout, the cushion finished with gold cord and tassels, and the whole placed upon a white satin background. The netted shawl was of white Berlin wool, with scarlet spots netted in; the border was 18 inches deep and finished with a leaf pattern at the edge. The first of the three purses was of scarlet silk cord, decorated with a large number of very small beads. The second was royal blue, with gold beads, and the third was of scarlet and white silk, with silver beads.

In accordance with the wish of the Earl, Mr. and Mrs. Hughes (Governor and Matron of the Asylum), attended the New Hall on the Saturday morning, with three or four blind inmates from the asylum, to demonstrate to her Majesty the benefits of the education given to the children, and the facility with which they were able to write, using a typograph recently designed by Mr. Hughes. This "*new mechanical contrivance for the use of the blind*" had been awarded the gold medal at the Great Exhibition that year and had been praised for its speed and ease at the Exhibition by the Queen herself.

On the morning of her departure for Windsor (Saturday 11th October 1851), the Queen had received a loyal address on the lawn at the front of the hall from the clergy, children and teachers of the Sunday schools and other schools of Worsley and its neighbourhood. Shortly after she had retired inside the Hall, Mr and Mrs. Hughes, accompanied by Mary Pearson, a young blind girl, were presented to her Majesty and the mode of printing, helpful to blind people, was demonstrated to her by the girl. A slip, bearing the words *God Save the Queen* was printed and given to her. The Queen was most pleased to accept this example and then asked for a further demonstration of its worth. Her Majesty opened a book containing portions of Scripture and placed it before Mary, who read, by use of her fingers, with great fluency and accuracy. Victoria expressed her pleasure at the excellent education being given to the pupils at the asylum and remembered having seen Mr. Hughes' machine in the philosophical department of the Great Exhibition.

The Duke of Wellington had received an invitation from her Majesty to attend her on her visit to Worsley. Being a long, close friend of the Earl, it probably did not require much reflection on his part to come north. During his short stay in Worsley, many of the festivities in Salford and Manchester were held in rain but he described the entertainment of Her Majesty at Worsley as outshining any he had ever witnessed. The noble Duke left Worsley New Hall on the morning of Saturday 11th October. He took his leave of the Queen and left as she was about

to receive the address from the Rev. St. V. Beechey. He did so unobserved and departed for Manchester by carriage to catch a train for London.

"I have been at the Reception of the Queen at many of the great Noblemen's Houses, and I have received Her Majesty myself. But I have never witnessed arrangements more perfect or handsomer than those made here."

(Worsley Hall, Friday 10th October, to Mrs. Jones).

However, it would appear that he was not prepared for the crowds that gathered around his carriage as he approached the city; nor was he prepared for the excitement and fervour with which he was greeted. He proceeded directly to the L and NWRC's station at London Road and left Manchester at 11.30.

"I wrote to you on Friday an account of our proceedings up to the last moment when the Post went out. There was a fine assembly at the Hall in the evening, and yesterday morning all separated, each on his departure to his Home. The Queen went to Windsor, and I am in London."

Nothing could be more satisfactory than HM's reception at Lord Ellesmere's... I was very well received on my passage through Manchester - a party of 300 or 400 well-dressed people, ladies and gentlemen, ran with my carriage through the town to the Railroad Station."

(London, Sunday 12th October, to Mrs. Jones)

FREDERICK JAMES SHIELDS - Artist (1833-1911)

Frederick James Shields was born in High Street, Hartlepool, Durham, on 14 March 1833 to John Shields and Georgiana Storey. He died on 26 February 1911 and was buried at St. Mary the Virgin, Merton, on 2 March 1911, aged 78. His wife was Matilda Booth, born c.1856, in Sheffield. They were married at Salford on 15 August 1874 at Irwell Street Chapel by Rev. Mr. Wm. E. Codling. In his correspondence, she was referred to as 'Cissy' - his model and later wife. So what is this man's connection with Worsley and St.Mark's, and what became of him?

John Shields had moved from Hartlepool to London by July 1839, to the parish of St. Clement Danes, with Frederick and his young sister. He was a man with artistic talents and sought to become an engraver and bookbinder, encouraging his young son, Frederick, to develop his own artistic talents. Frederick's mother had a small dressmaking business in the city. He attended St. Clement Danes Charity School until the age of 14, though at 13 he had started to attend evening drawing classes at the Mechanics Institute, followed by a few months at the School of Art at Somerset House.

In 1848, he began to keep a diary - a practice he continued with regularity until his death. It shows the difficulties, rigours and strains upon a young working boy who was aged 15 at that time. In spite of these difficulties, his diary shows that he was a very talented, well-read and industrious boy. By this time, his father was struggling with his business in London and had been working for a number of firms in the North of England. He found a job as foreman bookbinder at MacCorquodales's in Newton-le-Willows and sent for Frederick to join him, leaving his mother with three other children in London, working as a dressmaker. The young boy spent his time initially wandering the countryside, sketching and doing odd jobs. His father found him a position with a Scotsman named Cowan at 5 shillings a week in Manchester, but recognising that his own health was failing him, he returned to London for medical help at the Brompton Hospital. Frederick found lodging in Cupid's Alley and wrote in his diary:

"I used to buy a bag of Indian meal for the week, and this served for all my meals, while my dress wore shabbier and my shoes wore out with little margin to amend them. Then Cowan failed, and I was without any opening and friendless in the great city. I wandered from public-house to public-house, offering for a penny to sketch the profile of any man there, but few were my paltry gains."

Then, one day he wandered to Worsley and sketched the hall and the church. He wrote to his father :

MY DEAR FATHER, August 2nd, 1849

I received your kind letter on Tuesday. I have also to thank you for the Illustrated News you sent me. It is a splendid number ; the prize cattle, and the views of the cascade, and the Gap of Dunloe are worthy of any work.

Often as I lie in bed I think of your thin body and face, and in my fancy see you beside me. Are you getting any stouter with your increase of strength ? I wish to God your cough was well, then you would soon recover. I hope to hear of your admission into the Hospital next letter. I intend to go down to Worsley in the course of two or three days with my drawing of the church. I hope that I may see the Earl or the Rector. I have got some jobs at ticket designing for a private printer named Bardsley, in Oldham Street, and several portraits, at which I have improved wonderfully.

Regrets are useless now, father, but still I wish I could get apprenticed to the woodcutting, the lithog writing, or even the bookbinding. O, how I wish I could get to the painting under a good master. Tell me always how you are. I remain, your affectionate son,

FREDERICK JAMES SHIELDS!

Worsley Hall seems to have been a promising sketching ground, as the next few letters relate. It is perhaps a point of interest to those possessing early drawings by Shields, that, until about 1864, he signed his name "Frederick." Subsequently, he omitted the final letter.

MANCHESTER, October 2nd, 1849.

MY DEAR FATHER, I received your kind letter of the 27th ult. (but I thought I would not answer you until I had seen either the Earl or the Rector. I went yesterday to Worsley, and saw the Rector; he told me to make him another drawing of the church, in addition to the one I have already done. He gave me a shilling. At the lodge I found my endeavour to see the Earl would be fruitless, as the Duke and Duchess of Gloucester, Lord Wilton, and several other of the nobility were dining with him that day. In a week I will go down again. father, you know not what pleasure it gives me to know that you are better; God grant that you may continue to progress towards recovery and go forth from the Hospital with a thankful heart for God's mercy. I get 4s. to 6s. for portraits, according to the style they are done

in. I thank you, father, for your kind consideration, but I have got a good pair of boots.

*I am sorry to tell you that I am about 12s. in debt, but by the efforts I am making I hope soon to be free. There is a young man named James Tait, a Scotchman, lodging here. He is a painter, and his father is in business for himself in the same line, in the small town of Gatehouse, in Kirkcudbright. He is out of work just now and thinks of returning to Scotland. He has offered to take me with him to Gatehouse and apprentice me to the painting and graining with his father, providing me with meat, lodgings, and clothes. Of wages he can say nothing until he asks his father. I would wish you to weigh well this offer before you return any positive answer. Adieu, dear father, for the present. Your affectionate son,
FREDERICK JAMES SHIELDS.*

MANCHESTER, November 18th, 1849.

MY DEAR FATHER, It is the old prologue "I went to Worsley" again, but I am happy to be able to add that the performances on this occasion were of a very novel kind. Upon my arrival at the hall, I enquired for the steward, Mr. Rasbotham, and was informed that he had gone to his own house in the village. I immediately repaired thither. He was at dinner. The servant undertook to announce my name, and returned with the kind answer that I was to have something to eat and drink, and that he (Mr. Rasbotham) would see me afterwards. I had a capital dinner (at tea-time) of roast beef, boiled salary, bread, potatoes, &c. The servant then told me that Mr. Rasbotham was waiting for me. But before I proceed further, I must ask you if you remember the large sketch of Shakespeare which I did at Newton. Be that as it may, I have since made a large drawing in chalk of the same subject. This, together with a portrait and some smaller drawings, I took with me to show him. He took them into the dining-room to let the company see them, and asked me what would be the price of a copy of the Shakespeare. I scarce knew what to ask but at last I said ten shillings, which I did not consider too much, as there is four good days' work on it, besides materials. He said he would see about it. He then said that the Earl did not see how he could be of any assistance to me with regard to a situation, but he would consider the matter. In the meantime his lordship wishes me to do a drawing of the Church for him in pencil. Now for the grand climax, the last

scene of all. Mr. Rasbotham put his hand into his pocket and asked if a trifle would be of any service to me, at the same time putting into my hand half a sovereign. I thanked him almost with tears in my eyes, so kindly and considerately was the action performed, took my leave and walked home praising God for His great goodness in having found me at least a temporary friend. You ask if my landlady trusts me. It will give you great pleasure, I know, when I tell you that for nearly a month, when I only brought a few shillings, she never grumbled. It is true, she is a little hasty at times, but she is good at heart, and I can put up with her. My dear father, you ask me to tell you all my wants. Believe me, my chief want, I might almost say my only one, is you, for I cannot speak in a letter as I would if you were beside me, for when I sit down to write, it chills the heat and fervour of what I could wish to say into an arctic coldness. I know well what must be your feelings concerning me, you could swallow all, ah! and much more than all, that I could tell you, at least so I feel with regard to you. I remain, your affectionate son,
FREDERICK JAMES SHIELDS.

The father, now in Brompton Hospital, was evidently worse, and soon to be discharged as incurable.

MANCHESTER, November 27th, 1849.

MY DEAR FATHER, I received your kind and affectionate letter. I am grieved to hear that you have been worse again. Oh ! tell me whether you are better. It gives me the greatest pleasure to know that Dr. Roe is kind to you, God will reward him. I went to the Hall yesterday, the day appointed. I was shown in to Mr Rasbotham, whom I found seated at his desk writing. Upon my entrance he rose, and bade me good morning. I returned his salutation. We then proceeded to business. He seemed to like the view of the Church very well and took it in to show his lordship. He returned with the gracious information that his lordship was very well pleased with it, and that I was to execute two more views of the hall, to be sent down to the house in London, 10 Belgrave Square, where they intend proceeding on Friday. He then gave me 2 for the view of the Church, and I consider that I was exceedingly well paid. I am glad that I left the Shakespeare with Mr. Rasbotham, this time he told me he should consider the ten shillings he gave me as an equivalent for it. I gratefully acceded. I have great pleasure in being able to send you an order for ten shillings payable at the Brompton

*Hospital. I send you a rough sketch which I took of John Bright,
M.P. I remain, your affectionate son,
FREDERICK JAMES SHIELDS.
I thank God that I am out of debt.*

MANCHESTER, December 2nd, 1849.

MY DEAR FATHER, I received your wished-for letter on Thursday morning. On that day I went to the Hall with a portrait for one of the servants. They were all very busy making preparations for the Earl's departure. I believe he is in London by this time. I have not yet taken the sketches of the Hall, for I did not like to be seen cutting and capering about the grounds adjacent to the Hall in search of a point of view while the family were at home, but I intend making them tomorrow. It will be cold work taking them, but that is not the worst of it. I shall have to turn the leafless, skeleton-like trees of winter, into flourishing summer plants heavy with foliage, a somewhat difficult task, but if I succeed in it, the more triumph. They shall be done on tinted drawing board. Oh! father, if you had been at my side when I received the money, and been able to see as it were through a glass into my mind, you could not better have interpreted my feeling than you have in your last letter; which I have read over and over again, until it has almost made me cry, teeming as it does with kindness and affection. But you say you cannot think of accepting the money; believe me, father, you could not hurt my feelings more than by returning it. My only grief has been that I have never been able to send you anything before, and my present grief is that I am not able at present to send you more. Think you I can forget one who, with disinterested affection, sent me money so often, when he himself so badly needed it. I pray God I may never be forgetful and ungrateful, and do I not respect Gibson (whose portrait and life you were kind enough to send me) the more for that, in the words of his biographer, "in affluence at Rome he never forgot the duty of sharing his means with his parents in Liverpool." I have been enabled, too, to buy myself a new waistcoat, two pair of stockings, two cotton handkerchiefs, and a pair of woollen gloves, so that you will perceive that I am not in immediate want for anything.

You say well! How often have I sighed, vainly sighed, even as you now sigh, for a repetition of the happy evenings we spent at Newton. It is only when in adversity that we know the value of health and prosperity. Write soon. I remain, your affectionate son.

MANCHESTER, December 16th, 1849.

MY DEAR FATHER, I received your kind letter, returning the money order, this morning. I have been induced to accept the money, the more especially as you say you are not in want of anything, and yet (forgive me for it) I scarce know whether to believe you or not, I know so well your self-denying love. You say you have no tire, for the love of God try to get some. Will the landlady not let you sit at hers? How do you spend your time, nave you any books ? I would have liked to have sent the sketch of the Hall to you with this letter, but that I am not finished with it yet, it would give you an idea of the place. It is a very elaborate building in the Elizabethan style.

My dear father, do not grieve about me. Here I am not as I should like to be, but thank God I am not so bad as your fears lead you to suppose. On Monday I got six shillings for a portrait of a child, on Tuesday, sixpence and my tea for a sketch of a head, and to-day I shall get two shillings and my dinner and tea for another portrait, a small one, and last night another sixpence for an hour's tuition in drawing. So that I am not so badly off as you think, and I beg of you, dear father, not to make yourself ill concerning me. If you were well and by my side, I could endure ten times the misfortune I am now subject to with pleasure. Your affectionate son,

FREDERICK JAMES SHIELDS.

He was at this time sixteen years of age.



For the two drawings the Earl of Ellesmere paid the boy what was, to him, the '*fabulous*' sum of five pounds, and he also drew the portraits of several of the servants at the Hall for five shillings a head. But this could not last, and no one seems to have heeded or inquired what prospects the boy had. So he wandered back to Manchester, and suffered every misery of cold, loneliness, and starvation. His father, discharged from Brompton Hospital, died, having succeeded in obtaining, a few weeks before his death, a situation for his son at Bradshaw & Blacklock's, at a salary of seven shillings a week.

George Bradshaw was the publisher of the famed Railway Guides and Henry Blacklock the printer of those guides. Both men worked from premises in

Manchester. The family vault of Henry Blacklock lies within the churchyard of St. Mark's, near the fence to the north side.

His career gradually blossomed after these early tragic events. He was still in Manchester in 1857 when an exhibition entitled *The Art Treasures Exhibition* took place there, with over 16,000 works on display. He was greatly impressed by what he saw and he started to work as a book illustrator. Eventually, in 1864, he moved back to London where he met Dante Gabriel Rossetti. Through him he came to know members of the Pre-Raphaelite circle, people like Ford Madox Brown, Rossetti and William Holman Hunt. He was present at the death of Rossetti on Easter Sunday 1882. Sadly for Frederick, his marriage was not successful, and he and Matilda spent much of their time living separately. He died on 26th February 1911 and was buried at Merton Old Church, Merton, London SW19.

The image to the right is entitled *The Light of the World* and is dated about 1878. In addition to his fine artwork, Shields also designed the windows in the Chancel of St Ann's Church, Manchester. He drew out a complete scheme for the church's stained glass based upon the theme of a Shepherd.



This sketch below of the New Hall by Frederick James Shields has only recently been located. It is with the Wellcome Foundation, London, and is catalogued as:

Worsley New Hall, Salford, from a pencil drawing by the Manchester artist Frederic James Shields (1833-1911).

It is described as 1 drawing: pencil, with white paint; image 31.3 x 50.9 cm. Lettering in pencil. Only artist's signature and date are in the image. Three words in other lettering indistinct. Bottom RH corner 1848. Wellcome Collection Library no. 23596i (Ed. - the year actually reads 1849, the year that Shields visited the area).



It is, in summary, quite remarkable to think about all the people whose lives and contributions have helped to shape and influence the conception, construction and history of St. Mark's Church. There are so many, from all walks of life, who have left an imprint in some way upon this magnificent building. Royalty, nobility, politicians, architects, artists, artisans - and, of course, the local community. The church ministered to the spiritual needs of local people; but more than that, it was also part of the movement for social reform at that time - education and work practices were areas in which Lord and Lady Egerton were closely involved. Lord Francis Egerton's vow to build a church was faithfully carried out with much admiration and enthusiasm from all concerned. The influence that he brought to bear upon the district and its people was profound and is today remembered with great appreciation.

FIRST INCUMBENTS

Rev. Charles Cameron (1846-1850)

Charles Cameron had the honour of being the first Perpetual Curate of St. Mark's Church, Worsley. The church was founded in 1844 and consecrated by the Bishop of Chester, Dr. John Bird Sumner, on 2 July 1846. The first entry in any of the church registers was the Baptism on 5th July 1846 of John Harrison, son of John Harrison and Sarah Georgiana, of Worsley. The boy was born on 26th August 1846 and he was baptised by Charles Cameron

His parents were the **Rev. Charles Richard Cameron**. and Lucy Lyttelton Butt. She was the daughter of Rev. Dr. George Butt, Chaplain to George III. They married in Worcester on 12 June 1806. His father (born 1779) was a clerk, firstly, in Shropshire and, subsequently, in Lincolnshire. The younger Charles (born April 1807) was the eldest of twelve children – three of whom became clergymen.

Charles Cameron was born on 12th April 1807 at Snedshill, Shropshire. He was the first son of the Rev. Charles Richard Cameron and Lucy Lyttelton Butt. He was baptised on 17th Jun 1807 at St.George's, Shropshire. At the age of 19, he matriculated at QUEENS College, Oxford, on 18th May 1826 and eventually graduated with a B.A. in 1831. He gained his M.A. in 1834.

The genealogies of his mother, Lucy Lyttelton Butt, and his wife, Marcia Sarah Elizabeth Burrell, are very interesting and worth a study in their own right.

Cameron [née Butt], Lucy Lyttelton [known as Mrs Cameron] (1781–1858), children's author, was born on 29 April 1781 in Stanford-on-Teme, Worcestershire, daughter of George Butt (1741–1795), vicar of Stanford-on-Teme, and his wife, Martha Sherwood (d. 1817), daughter of a London silk merchant. He held various livings and was distinguished as a tutor before being appointed Chaplain in Ordinary to George III in 1783. The youngest of three children, Lucy took her name from her godmother, Lady Lucy Fortescue Lyttelton, daughter of the first Lord Lyttelton and wife of Earl Mountnorris.

In 1787 Lord Foley appointed George Butt vicar of Kidderminster where, under the supervision of her parents, Lucy Lyttelton Butt's education began a year later with Latin, extending to French, Italian, and Greek. In 1792 she was sent to the Abbey School in Reading, which she attended until 1797.

About 1794 the family returned to Stanford parsonage; one year later, on 30 September 1795, George Butt died there, and shortly afterwards the family moved to Bridgnorth.

From her earliest years Lucy Lyttelton Butt had the advantage of constant exposure to a highly literary and intellectual society. Her father was among the close friends of Anna Seward, 'the Swan of Lichfield', a factor that possibly played a significant part in his daughter's own career as a writer, which began in 1798 with the writing of *The History of Margaret Whyte*.

On 12 June 1806 Lucy Lyttelton Butt married the **Revd. Charles Richard Cameron** (1781–1865) of Christ Church, Oxford, the eldest son of Dr Cameron, physician at Worcester; they had a large family. Through her husband Mrs Cameron met Gerrard Andrewes (1750–1825), dean of Canterbury and rector of St James's, Piccadilly, whose rectory was the meeting place for much of London society. There she met Elizabeth Carter and Humphry Davy. While visiting Bristol Mrs Cameron was introduced to Hannah More, Mary Anne Galton (later Mrs. Schimmelpenninck), and other members of the literary coteries of London.

Mrs Cameron's acquaintances included writers for children with whom she was soon to be ranked. Although overshadowed at the time by the works of her sister, Mary Martha Sherwood, Mrs Cameron's narrative tracts, such as *the Two Lambs*, written in 1803 but not published until 1827, effected similar changes in children's religious literature of the period. With its concern for the individual's life, background, and sentiments, their work replaced the earlier eighteenth-century moral tracts that concentrated not upon the individual but upon society and the individual's duties within it. Works such as Mrs Cameron's *Margaret Whyte* (1799) and her sister's *History of Little Henry and his Bearer* (1814) both have, according to Margaret Nancy Cutt, a quality of detail and expression that anticipates Victorian fiction for children. After starting to compose penny books for children in 1816, Mrs Cameron continued to write rapidly, completing one of her books, *The Raven and the Dove* (1817), in only four hours. This book, together with others such as *The Caskets* (1820), *Memoirs of Emma and her Nurse* (2nd edn, 1821), *Marten and his Two Little Scholars at a Sunday*

School (1827), and *The Faithful Little Girl* (1823), and those of Mrs Sherwood, became for the children of the time a natural part not only of each Sunday but of childhood itself. By the 1870s, however, Mrs Cameron's works, including *Addresses to Children on the Beatitudes* (1828), *Englishwomen* (1841), and *The Farmer's Daughter* (1843), like those of Mrs Sherwood and Hannah More, were no longer circulated beyond the confines of the Sunday school.

Beyond her writing Mrs Cameron's life was the busy one of a clergyman's wife. Shortly after her marriage her husband was appointed to a church in Donnington Wood in the parish of Lilleshall, Shropshire, recently built on the estate of Lord Stafford for the colliers of the district; the Camerons lived in Snedshill. Mrs Cameron's mother died in 1817; the death of her sister-in-law, Mrs Butt, followed shortly after in 1818. Her brother, Marten Butt, unable to cope with the shock of his wife's death, became ill, and found himself unable to look after their children; Mrs Sherwood took charge of his four sons and Mrs Cameron, already caring for her own children, most of whom died before her, took in his three daughters. That summer, in 1818, Isaac Hawkins Browne MP, a close friend of Mrs Cameron's father, died leaving a legacy of £50 a year for life to Mrs. Cameron.

In 1831 Charles Cameron accepted a cure at Swaby near Alford in Lincolnshire, but continued to live with his family in Snedshill, serving his old parish as curate until 1836. They then moved to Louth and finally, on the completion of the rectory, settled at Swaby in 1839. In 1856, while visiting the Lakes, Mrs Cameron was caught in a storm on Ullswater and caught a cold from which she never recovered. She died at Swaby rectory on 6 September 1858 and was buried in the churchyard there.

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Berrow's Worcester Journal of Saturday 18th September 1858 announced the death of his mother, Lucy Lyttelton, thus:

'September 7 in her 78th year, Lucy Lyttelton, wife of the Rev. Charles Richard Cameron, MA, Rector of Swaby, Lincolnshire,

*and daughter of the late Rev. George Butt, D.D., formerly
vicar of Kidderminster and Rector of Stanford, in this county'.*

Her fame rests on her religious tales and allegories, written chiefly for the young. Of these, Dr. Arnold was a warm admirer. He wrote: *'The knowledge and the love of Christ can nowhere be more readily gained by young children than from some of the short stories of Mrs. Cameron, such as "Amelia," the "Two Lambs," the "Flower Pot".'* (ARNOLD, *Sermons*, i. 45).

Charles Cameron was ordained Priest on 7th July 1833 at Lichfield, having been appointed Assistant Curate at Wombridge, Shropshire, on 24th June 1832. He married Marcia Sarah Elizabeth Burrell at St. Mary, Stoke, Ipswich, on 24 April 1851. Together they had six children - 1 son and 5 daughters.

He was at St. James, Dudley, from 1840 to 1848. A newspaper article at the time praised his contribution to the parish. Berrow's Worcestershire Journal, dated Thursday 2nd March 1843, stated:

'The large school-room belonging to St. James' Church, Dudley, is now complete, owing to the exertions of the Rev. Charles Cameron and the worthy vicar. It is capable of holding 600 or 700 children; and will be opened in the present month. It is built in a populous district, where no school existed, and till lately no church.'

The church of St. Mark, begun in June 1844, was consecrated by the Bishop of Chester on 2nd July 1846. By the time of that ceremony, the Rev. Charles Cameron was the Incumbent of the parish. Sadly, there seems to be no contemporary account of the service in 1846. However, from an account in the national press of a provincial grand meeting of Freemasons held at the Temperance Hall, Bolton, on 2nd July, a few facts can be deduced. The weather that day *"was exceedingly unpropitious."* Lord Francis Egerton (provincial grand master) *"had been prevented from attending as early as was expected in consequence of the consecration of the new church at Worsley."* The business of the lodge was conducted and the Earl arrived at 1.30pm. Clearly, the consecration service must have been held in the morning. The weather by early afternoon *"fortunately had now cleared up."*

The Liverpool Mercury of Tuesday 26th March 1850 announced that Charles Cameron was to leave the living of Worsley: *'The Rev. Charles Cameron, MA, has resigned the incumbency of St. Mark's, Worsley. The living is in the gift of the Earl of Ellesmere, the Patron.'*

The census of 1851 showed that he (aged 42) was unmarried. He was then Curate of Frankley, and was recorded as a Visitor, staying at Stoke Park, Ipswich, the home of Robert Burrell and his sister Marcia (30). The census was taken about two weeks before he and Marcia married. **Marcia Sarah Elizabeth Burrell** was the daughter of the Hon. Merrick Lindsey Peter Burrell, of Stoke Park, Ipswich, and Frances Daniell. Her parents were married at St.Martin-in-the-Fields 13 July 1807. Merrick was the second son of Peter Burrell, First Baron Gwydir, and Priscilla Barbara Elizabeth Bertie, Baroness Willoughby of Eresby. He held the position of Secretary of Legation at the court of Dresden. Charles Cameron was Curate at St. Leonard's, Frankley, Worcs., for one year, 1850-1851. The incumbent was listed as the Hon. William Henry Lyttelton, most likely in plurality with the parish of Hagley.

He was Incumbent of the Donative of Oxhey, Watford, Diocese of Rochester, 1853 - 1858. In 1854, he had been Chaplain to the Watford Union, a workhouse built in 1836/7. The Union comprised six parishes close to Watford. The inmates were in the main elderly Watford residents who by old age found it increasingly difficult to manage either their domestic or financial affairs and gradually became classed as paupers.

He then became Incumbent of Christ Church, Trusley, Derbys., 1859-1861. Interestingly, this church was, like St. Mark's, a new church, completed in 1859, when it was created out of the parishes of Sutton-on-the-Hill, Trusley, and Brailsford. It was consecrated by the Bishop of Lichfield on Saturday 8th October 1859 and Charles Cameron, as Incumbent, elected to preach at 6pm on the Sunday. The census of 1861 records that Charles (aged 53) was living with his wife Marcia (37), Charles H. (8), Maria F. L. (7), Georgina E. (6) and Clara (6), twins, and an unbaptised infant - Lucy - (1 mo.) at The Parsonage, Trusley, Derbyshire.

The Morning Post of Saturday 7th December 1861 reported the death of Charles Cameron in the following way:

'As the Rev. Charles Cameron, vicar of Christ's Church, Trusley, Derbyshire, was officiating at Heckington on Sunday, he was seized with paralysis whilst giving out the text, and fell on the seat in a totally unconscious state. He was removed to the vicarage as soon as possible, but he never rallied and died the same afternoon. He was 54 years of age.' He was about to preach as a guest at his brother's church. He had just ascended the pulpit and given the text of his sermon (from the 93rd Psalm, verse 5) when he was *'attacked with paralysis.'* At first, it affected his speech, but within 3 or 4 minutes he became inaudible and fell onto the seat, totally unconscious. His brother and several others immediately went to his assistance and he was carried down into the church,

where he was attended by Mr. Franks, a surgeon, who happened to be present. From there, he was carried to the vicarage, but never rallied. He died at about 4pm that afternoon.

Charles Cameron was also the author of various sermons, pamphlets and religious articles, some of which are preserved in the local history section of Manchester Central Library, and two are in the British Library. Amongst the pieces he had written were *Parochial Sermons*; *Two Sermons on the Difference between Justification and Sanctification*; and *The Tyranny of Popery*, by an Eye Witness, as seen in Italy in 1852.

The National Probate Calendar shows that he died on 1st December 1861 in the pulpit of the church at Heckington, Lincs. Probate was granted on 16th January 1862 to Marcia Sarah Elizabeth Cameron, widow. His widow, Marcia, later married Walter Whittington in April 1868. She died on 22nd October 1889 at 67 Oakfield Road, Clifton, Gloucestershire, aged 68. Probate was granted to the Rev. George Thomas Cameron of Heckington Vicarage, Sleaford, Lincs., her brother-in-law. His own father, the Rev. Charles Richard Cameron, died three years after his son on 19th January 1865 at Swaby, Lincs.

Rev. St. Vincent Beechey (1850 - 1872)

St. Vincent Beechey had the distinction of being the first vicar of the parish. He was a son of Sir William Beechey, painter [R.A.], Court Painter, of 13 Harley Street, London. He was born on 7th Aug. 1806 in London, the sixteenth of twenty-one children of Sir William Beechey! His mother was Ann Phyllis Jessop (3 August 1764; 14 December 1833), second wife of Sir William. He was named after his godfather, Sir John Jervis, 1st Earl of St Vincent, in recognition of his great naval victory over the Spanish fleet on 14 February 1797 and was baptised at St. Marylebone on 18th Jan 1807. Sir William Beechey painted a portrait of Admiral John Jervis, 1st Earl of St. Vincent, and a close friend, in 1804.

Sir William Beechey was a close friend of the sitter and this portrait is thought to have been given by the Earl of St Vincent to the artist's son, St. Vincent's godson and namesake, the Reverend St. Vincent Beechey (1806–1899). A second version of the work is in the collection of the National Portrait Gallery (NPG), London. It has been suggested that the NPG work was painted by another of the artist's sons, George Beechey. This is one of four portraits that Beechey painted of St. Vincent, although multiple versions of each exist. William Beechey died on 28 January 1839. He was appointed portrait painter to Queen Charlotte in 1793 and was knighted in 1798 in recognition of his most ambitious

painting, the huge Review of the Horse Guard with King George III and the Prince of Wales. The painting was destroyed in the 1992 Windsor Castle fire.

The young St. Vincent Beechey was educated in Boulogne, France, and in Sidcup, Kent, and matriculated at Caius College, Cambridge, on 2nd July 1823. He was a scholar there to 1827 and graduated with his B.A. and was awarded an M.A. in 1830. He was ordained Deacon in 1829 and Priest in 1830 by the Bishop of Rochester. A summary of his clerical life would show that he first served as curate of St. Peter and St. Paul's Church, Aylesford, Kent (1829-1830) and from there became a curate of All Saints, Hilgay, Norfolk (1831-1840), a village near to Downham Market. Whilst at Hilgay, he became Inspector of Schools for the Diocese of Norwich (1838-1840). Hilgay was to feature prominently later in his life.

A timeline of his life as a clergyman would simply show:

Curate of Aylesford, Kent, 1829-30.

Curate of Hilgay, Norfolk, 1831-40. *Also, Inspector of Schools for the diocese of Norwich, 1838-40.*

Vicar of Thornton, Lancs., 1840-50. *Also, Founder of Rossall School.*

Perpetual Curate of Fleetwood, 1840-50.

Vicar of Worsley, 1850-72. *Also, Curate of Ellenbrook Chapel, 1854-1872. Domestic Chaplain to the Earl of Ellesmere and Lord Grantley.*

Rector of Hilgay, Norfolk, 1872-99.

He married Mary Ann Ommanney, the widow of Frederick Woods Ommanney, on 19th September **1836** at Hilgay, Norfolk. She had 2 children from her first marriage – Mary Ann (bp. 27th Jan 1832 at Putney) and Frederick Francis (bp. 27th Sept 1833, also at Putney).

[The death of Frederick Woods Ommanney was announced as follows: *14 July 1834. At East Sheen, in his 30th year, Frederick Woods Ommanney, Esq., of Putney, after a lingering illness, which he bore with much fortitude. His loss is much lamented by his family and friends. (The Asiatic Journal – 1835)*

Probate was granted on 7th September 1836.] They had 7 children - 4 sons and 3 daughters.

Emily Elizabeth B. b.30 June 1837 @ Hilgay

William Innes B. b.17 March 1839 @ Hilgay

St. Vincent B. b.7 March 1841 @ Woodhall, Hilgay

Charlotte bp.16 April 1843 @ St.Peter, Fleetwood

Sophia B. 27 April 1845 @ St. Peter, Fleetwood

Edward B. 13 June 1847 @ St. Peter, Fleetwood

Charles Grantley 5 November 1848 @ St. Peter, Fleetwood

His first position was as curate of St. Peter and St. Paul's, Aylesford, Kent, 1829 - 1830. On the death of the rector, the churchwardens and parishioners petitioned the dean and chapter to give him the living, but it was bestowed upon a senior canon in the diocese.

During his first period of time at Hilgay, he was already showing a great interest in education. The following advertisement appeared in *The Norfolk Chronicle and Norwich Gazette* on Saturday 25th January 1840.

HILGAY NATIONAL SCHOOLS

Wanted

A man and his wife as Master and Mistress of the above Schools. They must be active and experienced Teachers, thoroughly acquainted with the National System of Education, Members of the Church of England, and produce unexceptionable references as to Character and Ability.- Salary £70 per annum, with a cottage and other advantages, which will be stated at an interview.

All appointments must be made either personally or by letter to the Rev. St. Vincent Beechey, Woodhall.

This desire to improve the education of the young went with him to Lancashire, when he moved with his family to Fleetwood. An announcement appeared in *The Preston Chronicle* on Saturday 2nd July 1842.

Fleetwood Colleges: A meeting of the provisional commission of the Fleetwood Colleges Association, and of gentlemen interested in the intended education establishments on the principle of life insurance, was yesterday held at the North Euston Hotel, Fleetwood-on-Wyre, the Rev. St. Vincent Beechey, AM, incumbent of Fleetwood and Chaplain to Lord Grantley, in the chair. It is intended that these colleges should be founded and supported on the principle of life insurance, for the education, the one of five hundred boys, and the other of five hundred young ladies, between the ages of seven and eighteen. The pupils according to their ages will form separate departments, entirely distinct in residence and management.

The outcome of this was the founding of Rossall School. St. Vincent Beechey is now credited with being the founder of Rossall School in 1844, viewed as a sister school to Marlborough College which had been founded the previous year.

Its establishment was "to provide, at a moderate cost, for the sons of Clergymen and others, a classical, mathematical and general education of the highest class, and to do all things necessary, incidental, or conducive to the attainment of the above objects." The Northern Church of England Boarding School, renamed Rossall College under the later headship of William Osborne, opened on 22nd August 1844. It was soon established that there was little hope of founding the girls' school and this idea was abandoned, with the boys' school pupil numbers reduced to 200. At this stage in the development of the school, St. Vincent Beechey first came into contact with Lord Egerton, who contributed to the school's funds, together with other notables.

After the prize-giving ceremony of Wednesday 17th June 1846, the Rev. St. V. Beechey related the following incident:

"The Poet Wordsworth invited Professor Adams. Mr. Hext, and the Rev. Edward Spencer, Mathematical Master, and myself, to visit him at Rydal Mount. We all went over together in the steamer to Ulverston and accompanied him to Rydal. He was full of anecdote. and entertained us most hospitably."

Elsewhere, after repeating this account, Beechey enlarges upon it:

"Wordsworth told us of a nobleman, a friend of his, who had two sons and said. 'I do not know what to do with the younger.' 'Not know. my Lord?'" said Wordsworth, 'I will tell you. Make him agent to his elder brother. He will soon be the richer of the two!' We arrived safely at Rydal Mount, and slept there two nights. It was a time of much domestic affliction for Wordsworth, the cause of which it would be painful to relate. But he took us some beautiful walks, and especially to the lovely spot on Rydal Water, where there was the old tree on a rock which I believe is still called Wordsworth's Chair, and where he is said to have written several poems". William Wordsworth had, at that time, two grandsons at the school.

In December 1851, the newly-formed University of Sydney appointed Rev. Dr. John Woolley (Rossall 1844-1849; Norwich G.S. 1849-1852) as its first Principal and professor of Classics. His application was accompanied by 121 testimonials, including one from William Wordsworth. He had originally had to resign from Rossall because of a fall in the number of boys and certain deficiencies in his leadership. Sadly, he drowned in *'The SS London'* in the Bay

of Biscay on his return to Australia after a visit to this country. Of 239 persons onboard, only 19 survived.

One event which aroused great pride in St. Vincent Beechey was the visit of Queen Victoria to Fleetwood in September 1847, her first visit to the Duchy of Lancaster. In his book, *The Rise and Progress of Rossall School*, written to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the school, St. Vincent Beechey recalled this memorable event. This is best appreciated in his own words, printed in full in the Rossall Register.

How far Dr. Woolley was concerned in its composition I do not know. No doubt he revised it, but I believe it to have been the genuine work of the Upper Form, one of whom, Sharpe, the captain of the school, was quite equal to the performance. The address contained, however, a little cupboard love for it concluded in a manner peculiar to schoolboys. My wag of a brother would perhaps have translated the last lines something like this:

*'Patron of Art, England's well-beloved Queen,
Royal mother of children, the fairest e'er seen,
Long mayest thou live to reign over our Nation,
But grant us poor boys a week's longer vacation.'*

I regret to add that the Address was printed too late for presentation, but was sent up to town to the Secretary of State, and a gracious reply was received and the holiday granted.

Two years later, it was reported in *The Manchester Courier* on Saturday 11th August 1849 that St. Vincent Beechey led a deputation to the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway Company 'on the subject of the grievous desecration of the Lord's Day, caused by the cheap Sunday Trains on your line.'

Throughout his lifetime, he was an effective speaker and lecturer, During his spell at Fleetwood, in January 1849, he delivered lectures on Ancient and Modern Astronomy at the Annual General Meeting of the Kendal Natural History and Scientific Society. At that meeting, he was elected an Honorary Member of the society. Then, in November 1849, He read a paper on 'The Sabean character of the winged lion and bull of Nineveh' in the lecture theatre of the Royal Institution in Manchester.

By mid-1850, his time in charge of Fleetwood was coming to an end. His final sermon was to be given on Sunday 23rd June at St. Peter's Church. *The Manchester Times* of Saturday 20th July 1850 reported that 'The Earl of Ellesmere has nominated the Rev. St. Vincent Beechey to the Perpetual Curacy of

Worsley, vacant by the resignation of the Rev. Charles Cameron'. Then, on Tuesday 29th October 1850, a presentation was made to St. Vincent Beechey at Fleetwood. £80 had been raised to allow the purchase of an excellent microscope and case, and a beautiful rosewood cabinet, made by a local cabinetmaker. Shortly after taking up the curacy of St. Mark's, he continued to attend and give lectures. On Monday 12th August 1850, he attended the 'Congress of the Archaeological Association in Manchester Committee' as a member. Later, on 13th January 1851, Beechey delivered the third lecture in the series 'The Architecture of Man' at the Royal Manchester Institution. This series was presented by a Professor of Anatomy and Physiology. The Rev. St. Vincent Beechey 'exhibited a large number of illustrations by the use of his trinoptic lantern.'

The year 1851 was a momentous one in the life of Manchester, Salford and Worsley. From 9th to 11th October, Queen Victoria and her Consort were guests of the Earl of Ellesmere at Worsley New Hall. After her visit to Manchester on Friday the 10th, she returned with Prince Albert to Worsley and, at about 4pm, she made a visit to St. Mark's. The royal party consisted of Her Majesty and Prince Albert, the Countess of Ellesmere, the Viscountess Brackley, the Ladies Alice and Blanche Egerton, the Marchioness of Westminster, the Earl and Countess of Wilton, together with other members of the party at the Hall. The Queen and the Prince Consort were greeted at the church door (south porch) by the incumbent, the Rev. St. V. Beechey, and they proceeded down the main aisle. Victoria seemed very pleased by the architecture and sculpture of the church, and its rich stained-glass windows.

On the final morning of her stay, St. Vincent Beechey led a large number of local pupils (about 1,400) with their parents and 200 teachers onto the slopes and lawn of the New Hall to deliver an address to her Majesty. It read:

May it please your Majesty,

The Clergy, Teachers, and Scholars in connexion with the Sunday and Weekly Schools of Worsley, Walkden, and Ellenbrook approach your Majesty on this auspicious occasion with the sincere expression of their devoted loyalty and attachment to your Majesty, His Royal Highness Prince Albert, and your August Family.

The visit of your Majesty to our munificent Patron most powerfully demands such an expression of our sentiments; for in no portion of these realms has the epoch of your Majesty's accession been connected with greater cause for thankfulness than in these three districts.

Previously to that event, of happy memory, a small extra-parochial Chapel, at Ellenbrook, was the only place of worship within the distance of three miles which our Established Church possessed, and great moral and physical degradation accompanied the want of religious instruction and beneficent superintendence which prevailed.

But it has so pleased Divine Providence that the very year in which Your Majesty was mercifully called to the Throne of these realms should be also a year of regeneration to these districts, and that each succeeding year should add a blessing to our labouring population.

Since that time, Sunday, Daily, Infants', and other Schools have sprung up in rapid succession; Libraries, a Dispensary, and Clubs for various purposes have been established; two Churches have been erected, and their officiating Clergy provided, thus offering additional means of worshipping God, free of any payment whatever, to upwards of 1,300 of the population.

Through the Divine blessing on these means, aided as they have been by the Acts passed by your Majesty prohibiting the daughters of our poorer inhabitants from the unfeminine labour of the coal-pit, as well as by the great impetus given to education by the grants and inspection of the Committee of Council, whose examiners have already been enabled to pronounce the Schools of Worsley as amongst the best in this country, the happiest results have taken place.

It is not without pride, mingled with the deepest gratitude where it is so justly due, that we present before your Majesty this day nearly 1,400 children of our labouring population, now receiving Daily or Sunday instruction according to the pure principles of our Protestant Established Church, with nearly 200 Sunday Teachers, from a population not exceeding 5,000, within the three districts immediately connected with our generous Patron, whom your Majesty has graciously delighted to honour.

We believe, on the other hand, that it will greatly rejoice your Majesty to be thus assured, from personal inspection, that the great cause of sound Religious Education which your Majesty and your Royal Consort have so much at heart, is here progressing in some degree proportionate to your desires. And on the other hand, we are persuaded, that thus to behold their Queen and the Royal Princes, of whom they have so often heard, and for whom they have so often prayed, will leave

upon the hearts of even the youngest of these children indelible impressions of duty, loyalty and love, and cause them to join their Pastors and Teachers in offering up more ardent prayers that Almighty God may long preserve your Majesty upon the Throne of these realms, and bless your Royal Consort and your hopeful Children, "in health and wealth long to live, strengthened to overcome all your enemies," if such there be, "and finally, after this life, to attain everlasting joy and felicity."

*Signed in behalf of the Clergy, Teachers, and Scholars,
St. Vincent Beechey, M.A.*

*Incumbent of Worsley
Worsley, October 11th, 1851*

Transcribed from '*The London Gazette*', Tuesday 14 October, 1851.

Throughout his time in the parish, he found himself involved in a great deal of work outside it, delivering sermons as a guest at churches within the Manchester Area, attending the distribution of prizes at the Royal Manchester School of Medicine and Surgery, helping to illustrate lectures at the Royal Manchester Institution with his trinoptric lantern, notably on 'The Architecture of Man', supporting the Deaf and Dumb School in Old Trafford in their drive to provide means for religious services for the 50 or so members, and delivering lectures to the Manchester Mechanics' Institution.

By 1855, he had become an active member of the Manchester Photographic Society and was its President from 1865 to 1870. He also attended the quarterly meetings of the Manchester Diocesan Church Building Society and helped to promote an Exhibition of Art and Industry at Stretford in 1856 in aid of the schools of Flixton and Urmston.

In 1860, the Reverend St. Vincent Beechey, M.A., was appointed Honorary Chaplain of the 4th Battalion Lancashire Rifle Volunteers. This was dated 29th October, 1860. Then, 16 years later, *The London Gazette* announced that the Honorary Chaplain, the Reverend St. Vincent Beechey, resigned his Commission. (dated 26th March, 1873).

In November 1864, a movement began '*with the view of amusing and instructing the men of the cavalry and infantry regiments stationed in Hulme and Salford*'. The chaplain (the Rev. B. Harris) managed to put together a programme of lectures and concerts, and St. Vincent Beechey was one of those approached to

deliver a lecture. The lectures and concerts were to be given alternately each week, to which the men were admitted free of charge.

His deep interest in education continued unabated, and in October 1866 he took part in a meeting in connection with the National Association for the Promotion of Social Science in Manchester, its purpose being to '*consider if in any way they could give employment to women who possessed a certain amount of education*'. The Earl of Shaftesbury presided over the meeting, and he made reference to the fact that women were already employed in bookkeeping, printing and in telegraph offices, and not just in mills, factories or in service. He proposed a motion that '*a society be formed in the city of Manchester, similar to the societies in London and Dublin, for promoting the employment of women*'. St. Vincent Beechey seconded the motion, stressing that '*to provide for the occupation of women was becoming every year of greater importance*'. By May 1867, he was placing an advertisement for the Cambridge University Examination for Girls, to be held in Manchester. He had become the Honorary Secretary of the committee appointed the previous year and he placed further adverts in the following years.

In June 1868, he was nominated by the Bishop of Manchester to be an honorary Canon of Manchester Cathedral and this was confirmed on 4th August at the Diocesan registry. He thereafter occasionally performed baptism and marriage ceremonies at the Cathedral, on one occasion officiating at 3 weddings on the same day (2 Nov. 1871).

As for the parish of Worsley, when he was invited to come to here, the income was doubled and a new parsonage was proposed for him and his family. Since St. Mark's was having regular large attendances, it was decided to apply for a faculty to enlarge the church by adding a north aisle. This was granted and the extension was opened in 1852. Five years later, the patron, the First Earl of Ellesmere, died on 18th February 1857. He was buried in a vault at the south-east corner of the church. In 1854, the Earl offered him the donative of Ellenbrook, with an increase in his stipend and, with it, the ability to engage a curate.

On the death of the Rev. William J. Parkes, the rector and patron of Hilgay (his old curacy), he was offered the living which he accepted in 1872. During his years there, but in age becoming an old man, he remained an active and energetic parish priest, often preaching two or three sermons on Sundays, and still delivering lectures for literary and scientific institutions in the week. He installed electric lights in the rectory, church and schools, the generator being situated in the rectory grounds. He erected an observatory in his garden and spent a good deal of time studying astronomy, the result of which was two letters sent to *The Times* about his sighting of comets in 1881 [those being Schaeberle's, 24th July 1881, and one unnamed - *possibly Tebbutt's comet* - on 23rd June 1881. Ed].

On the 21st August 1899, the *Manchester Guardian* carried a long obituary following his death on 19th August 1899. It reported that, at Cambridge, he was awarded a second senior optime degree (a second class degree in Mathematics), and that he might have gained an even higher degree but for a fall from a horse on the second day of the examination. During his first post at Aylesford in 1829, he was instrumental in establishing the first elementary school in the parish. At Hilgay, he gave the parish its first National school. Whilst at Cambridge, he showed a deep interest in medicine, and when there was an outbreak of Asiatic cholera at Hilgay (1831-2), he was able to render a service to those affected.

When he came to Lancashire in 1840, he was presented to the perpetual curacy of St. Peter's, Fleetwood, to which was added the benefice of Christ Church, Thornton. Assistance in setting up the foundation of Rossall School came from the Preston and Wyre Railway Company with a grant of £200 towards the scheme and, in order to help him facilitate his work, he was granted a free pass on their line!

During his time at Fleetwood, he was the life and soul of the school. *'He undertook the responsible duties of local manager of the funds of the establishment, superintending the admission of pupils and representing the Council in the business affairs of the school'*. He even introduced scholarships, one of which was named "The Beechey" to the value of £50 per annum, tenable for three years at any college in Oxford or Cambridge. He ceased active connection with the school in 1873.

The Guardian then reports that:

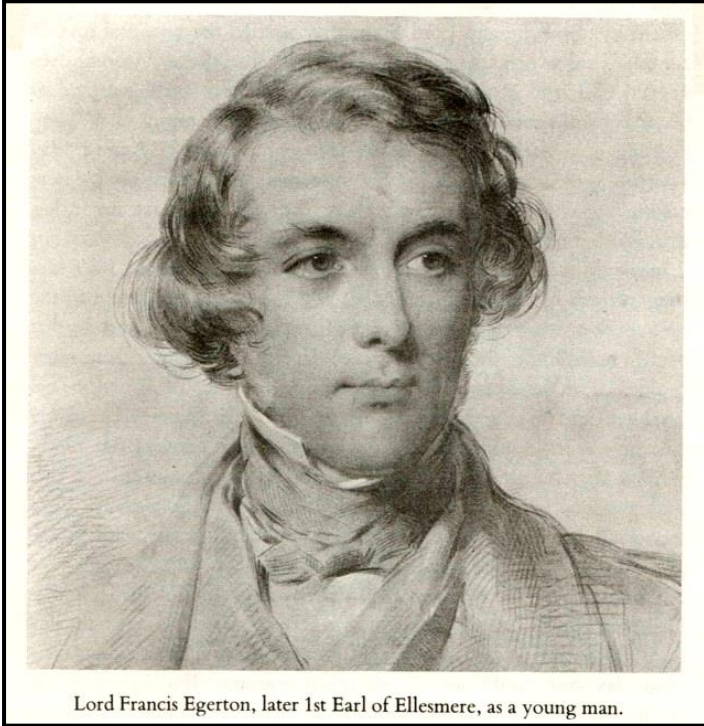
'When on a visit to his former parishioners at Worsley in February 1896, he remarked: I have now been Rector of Hilgay twenty-three years - exactly one year longer than I spent at Worsley. I am now in my 90th year, in perfect health, in possession of all my faculties taking two or three services every Sunday. He preached morning and evening, the church being crowded; and in addition he visited in the afternoon a large number of the aged, sick, and poor of Worsley... Canon Beechey often recounted his father's friendship with the great naval hero Nelson, who in 1805 fell on board the Victory at Trafalgar'.

Mary Ann, St. Vincent Beechey's wife, died on Sunday 21st October 1888 at Hilgay Rectory, Norfolk, aged 82. The parish registers for St. Mark's show that she was buried in the churchyard on the 25th October 1888, aged 81, and that the

ceremony was performed by Charles Lowe (curate of St. Mark's, 1866-1871, and later vicar of Bolton-le-Moors). *The Morning Post* of Monday 21st August 1899 announced the death of St. Vincent Beechey at Hilgay, aged 93, in common with several other regional and national newspapers. The *Huddersfield Daily Chronicle* referred to him as the 'oldest clergyman in England'. He was buried at St. Mark's on 23rd August 1899 by the Rev. Hugh Bryan, vicar of Stoke Golding (and former curate at Hilgay 1872-1880).

The memorial to the Canon and his wife is located beneath the East window. It may look as though it has been vandalised, but it is designed to express a 'work in progress'.





Lord Francis Egerton, later 1st Earl of Ellesmere, as a young man.

(Patron and Founder - 1800 - 1857)

"The first thing I am going to do is to build a church."



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