



Issue 10, April 2016

# Rainford Heritage News

Dear Members

I apologise that our April News Letter is late; as some of you may know we are in the process of writing and producing the Society's book recording details on the history of Rainford's wells. This is very much taking priority over anything else at the moment as we are hoping to obtain a local grant towards the costs.

The book will contain a brief description of every well found and will include OS Maps, photos of wells we still have today and old photos of some of the houses where wells have been recorded.

I am sorry that we have had to move the indoor meeting dates to the fourth Monday of each month; this was totally unavoidable as the fishing club have been given the first Monday and our only other choice was to have it on different odd days of the week each month which we felt would never have worked. We may obviously lose some members of the Gardening Club as their meetings are held on the same night, but we will just have to hope we gain people who previously were unable to attend.

The Quiz Evening will be held on Friday, 29th April at Rainford X Sports & Social Club. Thanks to your support tickets are now completely sold out.

As yet another year comes to an end since the formation of the Heritage Society, I thank you for your valued support and hope you will rejoin the Society to help to contribute towards the work in 2016-17.

Looking ahead to the programme for 2016-17 on the back page of this Newsletter, for Open Heritage Day on Sunday, 11th September, this year's theme will be 'Rainford in the 20s & 30s'.

If you have any items for display from that era I would be grateful if you could let me know.

This year's entertainment will be provided by Silhouette Dance Group and Citadel Arts Band who will be providing music and dance from that era.

**Ray Waring**  
**Chairman**

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## Visit by Crawford Village Primary School to Rainford Library Heritage Society Exhibition of Artefacts

On Monday, 8th March 20 KS2 children from Crawford Village Primary School attended workshops led by members of the Heritage Society. During the afternoon children were introduced to metal detecting and were very keen to learn about the artefacts which were on display in the library. They were also introduced to place names in the local area and the history of settlers from different countries.

When history is taught using primary evidence from real artefacts it becomes memorable. Being able to see and touch artefacts first-hand brings history to life.

The children were very enthusiastic and inquisitive and very appreciative of the time given by the Heritage Society both in the preparation and delivery of the workshops. Ray donated a book to the school and both children and staff have already enjoyed reading it!

A letter of gratitude was sent to Ray and Phil by the children

Martin Wilson  
Society Member



## The Image House

This article – one of a series on Rainford’s old buildings - is by the Heritage Society’s historical consultant Ron Dagnall.

The Image House, with its two large stone statues standing in the front garden, has mystified visitors and locals alike for many years. The origin of these two figures has been the subject of many myths and theories handed down from previous generations but none with any substantiating evidence. The house, which originally stood alone, has been converted into two dwellings each with a statue in its garden. These statues are now Grade II listed monuments described in the listing as “Probably 19th century but may be earlier. Cast artificial stone or terracotta. A pair of statues in Roman type costume, the one on the left perhaps Perseus with the head of Medusa or perhaps Minerva who had Medusa’s head on her shield as here; the one on the right apparently Mars”.

The house originally formed part of the large estate of John Bispham and existed as far back as 1744. John Bispham, born in 1698, was a yeoman farmer occupying what is now known as White House Farm. He was a trustee for the Independent Chapel on Higher Lane and also the son-in-law of the minister, the Reverend Renald Tetlaw, who in his will of 1744 bequeathed a selection of books from his extensive library “To be kept in one of John Bispham’s houses as heirlooms to the house from Generation to Generation” This indicates that at that time John had other houses in addition to White House Farm.

## The Image House—Continued

On the death of John Bispham in 1784 the freehold of the estate passed to his eldest son William who was a woollen draper of Prescott and on his death in 1807 to his son Thomas, a gentleman of Roby. Neither William nor Thomas actually occupied the farm or houses which were leased to Edward & Ann Pye and then to their son William and his wife Ann.

In 1826 Toyn Parkin, a school teacher from Manchester, was married at Rainford Chapel to Esther Atherton. Esther was the daughter of William Atherton who was the schoolmaster at the Grammar School in Rookery Lane where Toyn Parkin assisted as a teacher. Toyn & Esther took up residence in the vacant Image House in 1830 and an entry in the next Land Tax Assessment has the word “Images” alongside his name. This is the earliest known mention of the word Image in connection with this house. Was Toyn responsible for the erection of the statues? Two years later they had established a boarding school for boys and were advertising this in local newspapers. From 1849 it was named in similar advertisements as “The Image House Academy”.

*Liverpool Mercury 27 July 1832*

*BOARD AND EDUCATION*

*IMAGE HOUSE, RAINFORD, NEAR PRESCOT*

*T. PARKIN takes a limited number of Pupils and educates them in Commercial and Mathematical Learning on the following terms :-*

*Young Gentlemen under Ten Years of Age, 18 Guineas per annum; above Ten Years and under Fifteen, 20 ditto: above Fifteen Years, 24 ditto.*

*The course of Education comprises English Grammatically, and Composition; Geography, and the use of Globes; Writing, Arithmetic, and Merchants' Accompts, Mensuration, Land Surveying, Gauging, Trigonometry, Navigation, Algebra.*

*No charge for Entrance; nor any extras; but three months notice or pay previous to the removal of a Pupil.*

*Vacations three weeks at Christmas, and a fortnight at Midsummer.*

Toyn Parkin died just before the Census of 1841 was taken and his widow Esther was then described as being Mistress of the Boarding School. Also in the house were Benjamin Bennett a twenty year old teacher from Sheffield, two female servants and eighteen boys between the ages of seven and fifteen. By 1851 Esther Parkin had left the village and the teacher Benjamin Bennett and his wife Elizabeth were occupying the Image House with two servants, one teacher and fifteen boarding scholars from nearby towns and cities. The school had dwindled to two boarders by 1861 and, although he may have been taking day-boys, the end of this Academy was in sight. It was certainly discontinued by 1871, the Bennetts had departed to West Derby and the house has been a private residence ever since.



Thomas Bispham of Roby, the owner of the house, died in 1840 leaving the whole of his estate to his two daughters Amelia Kay and Margaretta Bispham. On the twelfth of June 1844 Mr Robert Kay, son-in-law of Thomas Bispham and executor of his will, put up the Rainford property to be sold by auction at the Derby Arms. Who purchased the various lots has yet to be discovered and the search for the origin of the statues continues.

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## Announcements

Our next indoor meeting on Monday 25th April will be 'The History of Windle Chantry'. Ted Forsyth who has done extensive research into its history will do an illustrated talk on the subject and reveals some surprising facts about its past.

Monday, 9th May will be the Society's AGM. Prior to the AGM we have decided to have a 30min illustrated talk on 'Birds of St Helens' by local ranger Dave Owen. There will be no charge for this evening which will commence at 7.30pm in the Junction Pub and we hope it will be something we can all enjoy.

## Events Programme 2016-17

### 2016

Sunday	10 <sup>th</sup> April	Inglenook Market	
Monday	25 <sup>th</sup> April	Indoor Meeting	Ted Forsyth <i>Windle Chantry</i>
Sunday	8 <sup>th</sup> May	Inglenook Market	
Monday	9 <sup>th</sup> May	AGM	
Sunday	12 <sup>th</sup> June	Inglenook Market	
Sunday	10 <sup>th</sup> July	Inglenook Market	
Sunday	14 <sup>th</sup> August	Inglenook Market	
Sunday	11 <sup>th</sup> September	Open Heritage Day	
Sunday	9 <sup>th</sup> October	Inglenook Market	
Monday	24 <sup>th</sup> October	Indoor Meeting	Ron Martin <i>Liverpool Ferries</i>
Saturday	12 <sup>th</sup> November	60-70s Evening	
Sunday	13 <sup>th</sup> November	Inglenook Market	
Monday	28 <sup>th</sup> November	Indoor Meeting	Joanne Halliwell <i>19th Century Maid</i>
Saturday	10 <sup>th</sup> December	Inglenook Christmas Market	
Sunday	11 <sup>th</sup> December	Inglenook Christmas Market	

### 2017

Monday	23 <sup>rd</sup> January	Indoor Meeting	Tom Preston <i>Deeming Murders</i>
Sunday	12 <sup>th</sup> February	Inglenook Market	
Monday	27 <sup>th</sup> February	Indoor Meeting	Ali Tyrer <i>History of Tyrers</i>
Sunday	12 <sup>th</sup> March	Inglenook Market	
Monday	27 <sup>th</sup> March	Indoor Meeting	Michael Murphy <i>British Women in Wartime</i>