

# WINCKLEY SQUARE TIMES



## Friends of Winckley Square

In our last newsletter I asked for help on 15th March to plant 120 sapling trees. We never expected so many volunteers and what I described as a four-hour task was over in 30 minutes. A big thank you to Friends of Winckley Square and volunteers from local businesses who support us in so many ways. If you want to follow the nurturing of the saplings, follow Jade on Twitter (X) as she records their growth.

The nine Spring guided walks were all full and I am pleased to say we are now able to offer even more summer walks because we have two new tour guides Helen Howell and Nigel Hardacre.

**In this issue Tony reflects on the seasons** merging and one of his photographs includes a hyacinth, one of many planted in the Autumn and paid for by Friends of Winckley Square and Preston Rotary to support the 'purple for polio' Global Rotary Polio Eradication Initiative started in 1988. Through decades more than 2.5 billion children have received the oral polio vaccine.

I'm sorry to say this year Jazzin' the Park will not happen due to the organisers not being able to secure funding. However, **Young Jazz is back to Winckley Square by popular demand on June 1st 2pm – 4pm FREE**. Step into the vibrant atmosphere as talented young jazz musicians showcase the exceptional skills of the next generation of music makers. It's an afternoon of young jazz brilliance that you won't want to miss! A perfect family excursion. Bring a picnic and enjoy something chilled from the FoWS pop-up bar.

We look forward to seeing you at one of our events this year.

*Patricia Harrison*

Chair of Friends of Winckley Square

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## The Four Seasons, or are there?

Well, that was a funny ole winter. If you could call it a winter. It was warm, relatively, so much so that a lot of the herbaceous planting kept on growing, it was a tad wet and there was just enough snow to have a play and make snowpersons, if just for one day!

What does this all mean? For us gardeners maybe a rethink as to what was traditional gardening practices. When we used to have a prolonged dormant period we took the opportunity to 'tidy', not sure what is so attractive about bare earth other than as a seed bed for weeds and a toilet for cats, cut back old vegetation, divide planting to conquer new areas and have time to look out of the window from the warm indoors and mull on our plans for garden domination in the coming year. Now, for all but the very wettest of days, we can go out and play, get some fresh air and reflect. Do we actually need to cut everything hard back in Autumn, do seedheads have to be removed? No. What happens if maybe things are just left and dealt with piecemeal as and when? What we find is that the Garden takes on its own ethereal beauty, sunlight reflected on dew or frost coated leaves and stems, the low sunlight casting its long shadows and seedheads become architectural, providing homes for wee beasties.

Also, we now find the seasons blur into each other, Autumn falls into Winter which in turn leaps into Spring. There are no longer sharp divisions, planting and more importantly as far as we are concerned flowers, overlap and now we see carpets of flowers but even through the long-wet winter there were always jewels to be found.





# A MONUMENTAL DECISION

14TH EARL OF DERBY, EDWARD SMITH STANLEY 1799 – 1869

by Michael Akers

Preston is blessed with a trio of parks, all just a short stroll from the busy city centre thoroughfare.

These gloriously green public spaces - Winckley Square, Avenham and Miller - all have their own individual identity. Miller is the park with the ornate gardens and spectacular fountain. The stretch along Derby Walk is a particular joy; a grand promenade from which visitors can gaze across the manicured greenery as it gently rolls down to the Ribble. And of course you can't miss the statue.



Miller Park: Michael Akers



Winckley Square: Paul Rushton

The 14th Earl of Derby, all 11ft of Italian marble of him, has stood on his lofty granite pedestal in Miller Park since 1873. He's been enjoying the finest vista in the city for a hundred and fifty years. Adjacent, is a modest tourist information panel, from which the curious passer-by can glean that Derby was a former Prime Minister, and that the grand unveiling of his statue was witnessed by 40,000 people. Wow, that really is a lot of people, and what a day that must have been.

Just a few years earlier the Earl had still been serving his country in his third stint as Prime Minister. Illness forced retirement from the top office and death followed shortly afterwards. He'd



Lord Derby: Vanity Fair caricature 1869, Creazilla Resources

been in Parliament for forty years.

His successor, Benjamin Disraeli, with characteristic elan and a hefty dollop of exaggeration, summed up

Derby's achievements; thus, *'he abolished slavery, he educated Ireland, he reformed parliament'*. He is however, largely forgotten today; such is the fickle judgement of history.

Even in 1873 not everyone thought the town needed a memorial to the 14th Earl. Letters sent to the Preston Chronicle newspaper at the time reveal a good deal of discontent. As one of the richest men in Britain and for twenty years the leader of the Conservative Party, the decision by the Corporation to erect a statue was bound to cause disquiet, especially amongst those of a radical persuasion. What really seems to have agitated the pens of concerned locals, however, was the plan to dismantle an ornate stone shelter to make way for the statue.

Miller Park opened officially in 1867. The eleven-acre site was the gift of Thomas Miller, cotton magnate and Winckley Square resident. Edward Milner the great landscape architect then worked his magic to enhance an already favoured natural setting. His design included the construction of a belvedere. Much loved by Victorians, these open sided pavilions were built to provide both shelter and a position from which a particularly spectacular view could be fully appreciated. The name belvedere is from the Italian for *'beautiful view'*, and Preston's Italianate construction undoubtedly commanded a beautiful view. The sweeping staircase which led up to the Belvedere, and the stone balustrade topped with vases, completed and complemented the piece perfectly. Everyone loved it.



14th Earl of Derby Miller Park:  
Michael Akers



# The Belvedere

## - Miller Park

*'An act of vandalism'*

wrote one enraged correspondent at the suggestion the Belvedere was to be torn down to make way for the Earl less than six years later.



The Belvedere in its original home overlooking Miller Park: Blog Preston

Admirers of Milner's picturesque artistry wrote to the Chronicle heaping praise on the sensitive and harmonious beauty of the ornamental layout, and bitterly lamenting the Corporation's decision to tamper with it. One questioned why the great gardener's opinion had not been obtained. Others sought a compromise which might allow the beloved Belvedere to remain. Suggestions included incorporating the Derby statue in, above, behind and even to the side of the structure. The latter proposer explained that this could readily be achieved by shifting the Robert Peel statue in Winckley Square and re-erecting it alongside Derby with the Belvedere in between. This would maintain both the classical symmetry and the overall happiness of the Preston public. Location, location, location; the Corporation bowed to those who argued that only this position would fully reflect the nobleness of the late earl. The Belvedere was relocated and Peel stayed where he was.

The statue was the work of the sculptor Matthew Noble. Renowned for his unfussy classical style - which is what Preston got - he also did one in bronze of Derby which stands in Parliament Square, where he's in very good company. The Victorians, like the Romans they tried to emulate, were inveterate statue erectors, and Noble's studio was a very busy one.

Noble, the sculptor, was roundly praised for capturing the Earl as though in the House of Lords and *'in the attitude of debate'*. The clue is his ermine gown. This lies, as if thrown, behind him and is draped over a stack of very heavy looking books. These volumes are Derby's own translations of the works of the ancient writers, Homer (Greek) and Horace (Latin). It's tempting to call this 'product placement', but Noble is signalling to us Derby's Classical education and learning, so highly prized by the elite at the time. To us the statue doesn't look at all dynamic (think of the Tom Finney statue) but look carefully - Derby's hand tightly grips a scroll of papers. A subtle touch, but one which succeeds in imbuing the stone with a degree of animation. The simplicity of the statue is why it still works. The Derby statue doesn't demand our attention, and just seems a perfectly positioned ornament. Who would now want the Belvedere back?

*Ah, the Belvedere.* In 1875 it was rebuilt at the top of the tram road incline in Avenham Park. The Belvedere still commands a fine aspect, though I think we can understand if it still feels more than a little disgruntled at events now so long ago.



The Belvedere Avenham Park has been used for wedding ceremonies: Cahill Photography

*And what about those 40,000 people who apparently crowded the slopes of Miller Park to see the great unveiling. Can that be true? Well, that's another story.*



# Summer Guided Walks & Talks



Watch this space for our summer extravaganza event which is still in the process of being planned.



On the day  
**£5**  
unless stated otherwise

## Walks & Talks

- price and how to book

You can just turn up but places are limited so better to book in advance on

[www.trybooking.com/uk](http://www.trybooking.com/uk)  
(search for Winckley Square).

Problem booking? Contact [patricia@winckley.org.uk](mailto:patricia@winckley.org.uk)

Guided Walks start in the centre of Winckley Square unless stated otherwise.

Talks take place at Central Methodist Church, Lune Street, Preston PR1 2NL.

<p><b>8 May</b> 2pm - 3.15pm Walk: Pat Harrison</p>	<p><b>Extraordinary Women of Winckley Square</b> Learn about the lives of some of the Extraordinary Women associated with Winckley Square who broke boundaries when women were not allowed to vote, had to submit to laws when they had no voice in their formation, when married women had no property rights. <b>To book:</b> <a href="https://www.trybooking.com/uk/DEDW">https://www.trybooking.com/uk/DEDW</a></p>
<p><b>12 May</b> 2pm - 3.30pm Walk: Steve Harrison</p>	<p><b>Fishergate to the Ribble: West Preston shaped by power and influence</b> The walk explores Churchgate and Fishergate; where Preston's rich and powerful families lived until factory building in the late C18th. Subsequently the west end of the town was shaped by local oligarchs. Did the powerful create a world just for themselves or was philanthropy a key motive? <b>To book:</b> <a href="https://www.trybooking.com/uk/DEDY">https://www.trybooking.com/uk/DEDY</a></p>
<p><b>28 May</b> 2pm - 3.15pm Walk: Susan Douglass</p>	<p><b>The Horrocks' Family Connections</b> 'Horrocks, Miller &amp; Co.' was one of the largest cotton manufacturing businesses in Preston by the 1840s but Horrocks and Miller were not just business partners. The two families inter-married and occupied the premier residences of Winckley Square. Find out more about these connections and what happened to the families. <b>To book:</b> <a href="https://www.trybooking.com/uk/DKDH">https://www.trybooking.com/uk/DKDH</a></p>
<p><b>12 June &amp; 7 August</b> 2pm - 3.15pm Walk: Peter Wilkinson</p>	<p><b>Former Residents of Winckley Square - Famous and Infamous</b> <i>This is probably the most popular Guided Walk: Winckley Square - In the Beginning.</i> Starting with the vision for the Square and the first house in 1799. We will encounter real people who made history. <b>To book:</b> <a href="https://www.trybooking.com/uk/DJMN">https://www.trybooking.com/uk/DJMN</a> (12 June) <a href="https://www.trybooking.com/uk/DKER">https://www.trybooking.com/uk/DKER</a> (7 August)</p>
<p><b>16 June &amp; 4 August</b> 2.30pm - 4.30pm Walk: Helen Howell</p>	<p><b>Preston Suffragettes</b> Polite persuasion or bombs? Follow in the footsteps of Preston women fighting for the right to vote and discover their tactics. <b>To book:</b> <a href="https://www.trybooking.com/uk/DKEL">https://www.trybooking.com/uk/DKEL</a> (6 June) <a href="https://www.trybooking.com/uk/DKEM">https://www.trybooking.com/uk/DKEM</a> (4 August)</p>
<p><b>23 June</b> 2pm - 4pm Walk: Nigel Hardacre</p>	<p><b>Lancaster Canal and Tram Road</b> This is a flat route and easy going, but good walking shoes are still recommended. There is the old tram road route, the site of the original Preston Basin, hidden bridges and other local history from the 19th and 20th Centuries. <b>To book:</b> <a href="https://www.trybooking.com/uk/DIUF">https://www.trybooking.com/uk/DIUF</a></p>
<p><b>25 June</b> 2pm - 3.15pm Walk: Susan Douglass</p>	<p><b>Servants - The Hidden Occupants of Winckley Square</b> The wealthy residents of Winckley Square depended on servants to run their households, yet they were expected to be invisible and inaudible to the family at all times. Find out about the lives of some of these hidden residents and what became of them. <b>To book:</b> <a href="https://www.trybooking.com/uk/DKES">https://www.trybooking.com/uk/DKES</a></p>
<p><b>7 July</b> 2pm - 3.30pm Walk: Michael Akers</p>	<p><b>'Drawing Board Dreams' and the reinvention of Preston</b> In the 1960s and early '70s, planners and architects attempted to remake Preston. Bold modernist ideas swept away a large section of the C19th centre. Who drove this re-imagined future and why? <i>The walk begins outside the Guild Hall, Lancaster Road.</i> <b>To book:</b> <a href="https://www.trybooking.com/uk/DKXI">https://www.trybooking.com/uk/DKXI</a></p>
<p><b>11 July &amp; 13 August</b> 7pm - 8.30pm Walk: Michael Akers</p>	<p><b>The Bridges that made Preston</b> The walk along the riverbank explores the context in which the Ribble's bridges were built and their impact, socially and economically on the area. <i>The walk will begin at the Old Penwortham Bridge, Broadgate side.</i> <b>To book:</b> <a href="https://www.trybooking.com/uk/DKXJ">https://www.trybooking.com/uk/DKXJ</a> (11 July) <a href="https://www.trybooking.com/uk/DKXK">https://www.trybooking.com/uk/DKXK</a> (13 August)</p>
<p><b>30 July</b> 2pm - 3.15pm Talk: Helen Howell</p>	<p><b>From Prison to Citizenship</b> From exclusion in 1832 to limited franchise in 1918, this talk explores the journey towards suffrage for women, ending with a light hearted look at the first election in Preston when some women could finally cast a vote. <b>To book:</b> <a href="https://www.trybooking.com/uk/DKDK">https://www.trybooking.com/uk/DKDK</a></p>
<p><b>20 August</b> 2pm - 3.15pm Presentation: Judy Beeston</p>	<p><b>Cornelia Connelly: Blissful Bride to Notorious Nun!</b> A fascinating true story brought to life by Judy in role as Cornelia's one time friend turned nemesis Emily Bowles. A truly remarkable woman who had a significant impact on education in Preston. <b>To book:</b> <a href="https://www.trybooking.com/uk/DKDI">https://www.trybooking.com/uk/DKDI</a></p>

