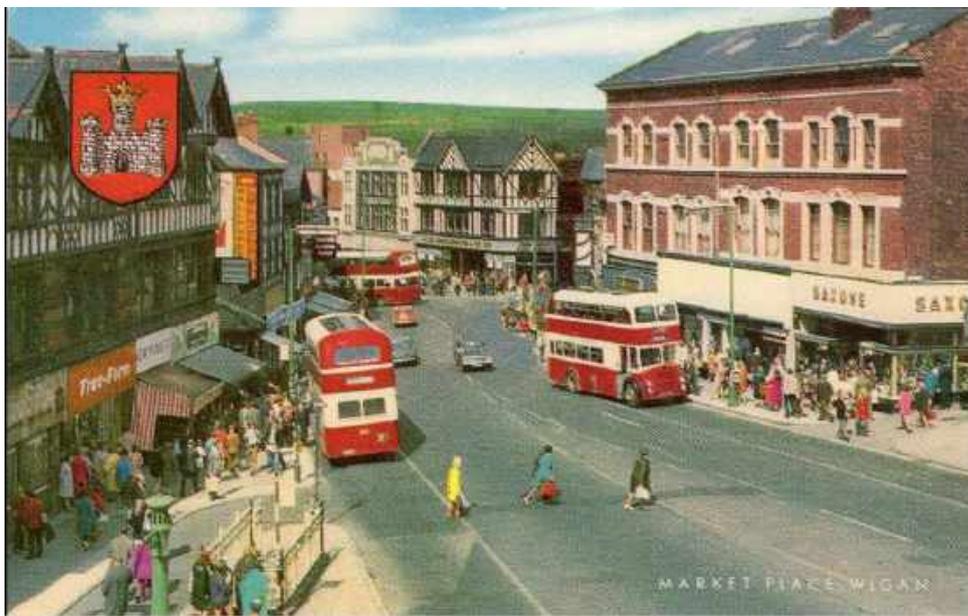


A BETA Project

# When We Were Young



Wigan Market Place 1960's

## Memories of Life in Wigan during the 1960's and 1950's

BETA is a Registered Charity No. 1070662

Proud to be part of  
**The Deal**  
in partnership with Wigan Council



**Black 5 at Wigan North West Station**



**Standishgate Wigan opposite St. John's RC Church**



**Market Square Wigan showing the underground public toilets**



**Wigan Corporation bus at Bus station  
Wigan Market Square**



**Wigan Pier**

# **BETA PROJECT DO YOU REMEMBER?**

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

We would like to give a special thank you to all those who contributed memories for our book.

Molly Blay

Vera and Joe Hilton

Eileen and Eddie Knight

Doreen Almond

Eileen and Mike Bithell

Eileen and George Walsh

and all those who told us their stories

Ron Hunt and Wigan World web site for photographs

Lancashire On Line Parish Clerk Project

Mike Fletcher's book 'The Making of Wigan'

Wigan Observer

All those who contributed

Funded by Deal for the Communities

## **Do you remember the 1960's and 1950's?**

Thanks to a grant from Deal for the Communities, BETA's Eileen Bithell and Eileen Walsh brought together a group of older people who have researched and written about local life in these decades. We hope you enjoy reading about Life in the 1960's and 1950's and that this will bring back some memories of your past.



**The Wedding of Princess Margaret, the Queen's sister**



## **1960**

- Prince Andrew is born on 19<sup>th</sup> February to The Queen and Prince Philip
- Princess Margaret, the Queen's sister, married Anthony Armstrong-Jones on 6<sup>th</sup> May.
- The Prime Minister was Harold MacMillan
- First Traffic Wardens are deployed
- National Service Conscription ends
- In May 1960, Wigan RLFC beat Wakefield Trinity 27 -3 to become League Champions
- At the summer Olympics in Rome, Cassius Clay – later restyled himself Muhammad Ali – won gold in boxing.
- John F Kennedy became President of the United States of America
- First episode of Coronation Street on ITV
- George Formby's wife Beryl died on Christmas Day
- A loaf of bread, now available ready sliced, cost 10 old pence(4.5p)
- Average UK house price £2,530
- Manchester United paid its footballers a maximum wage of £50 per week
- First pit closure in September with the ending of production at Welch Whittle Colliery on Coppull Moor and Mains Colliery at Bamfurlong
- After a long trial, D. H. Lawrence's book "Lady Chatterley's Lover" was finally cleared of obscenity and was allowed to be published
- Sylvia Pankhurst the Suffragette who was born in Manchester, died on 27<sup>th</sup> September aged 78 years



**First Traffic Wardens in Wigan**



**Wigan RLFC League Champions 1960**



**Duke of Edinburgh, Princess Anne, Prince Andrew, The Queen and Prince Charles**

## Memories of 1960



The original cast of Coronation Street on 9<sup>th</sup> December 1960. How many can you name?

*I remember watching Coronation Street for the first time. It was so good having a programme based on and in the North West. We could identify with the characters and we all knew an Elsie Tanner and Ena Sharples.*

The R.L. Championship Final was played between Joe Egan's Wigan team against Wakefield Trinity at 3 o'clock on a warm afternoon on Saturday, 21 May 1960 at Odsal Stadium, Bradford before a crowd of 83,190.

Wigan: 27 - 5 Tries by: Billy Boston (2), Eric Ashton (2), Bill Sayer(1) Goals: Fred Griffiths (6)  
Wakefield Trinity: 3 – a try by Fred Smith

Billy Boston together with his fellow team mates Eric Ashton, Mick Sullivan and Brian McTigue were part of the Great Britain 1960 Rugby League World Cup winning team. Billy Boston and Mick Sullivan both scored tries against Australia and won 10-3.



Billy Boston



Eric Ashton

# Coronation Street

## Coronation Street

The original cast photo of Coronation Street:

Back row left to right: Harry Hewitt [Ivan Beavis], Albert Tatlock [Jack Howarth], Ivan Cheveski [Ernst Walder], Dennis Tanner [Philip Lowrie], David Barlow [Alan Rothwell], Jack Walker [Arthur Leslie], Extra Unnamed [William Croasdale], Frank Barlow [Frank Pemberton], Ida Barlow [Noel Dyson], Minnie Caldwell [Margot Bryant]. Front row: Annie Walker [Doris Speed], Florrie Lindley [Betty Alberge], Linda Cheveski [Anne Cunningham], Elsie Tanner [Patricia Phoenix], Ena Sharples [Violet Carson], Christine Hardman [Christine Hargreaves], Ken Barlow [William Roache], Policewoman [Penelope Davies], Sue Cunningham [Patricia Shakesby] and Martha Longhurst [Lynne Carol].

From the original 20 characters in the first episode of Coronation Street Ken Barlow, played by 85 year-old William Roache is the only one remaining.

The original cast of Coronation Street on 9<sup>th</sup> December 1960. How many can you name?



William Roache as Ken Barlow in the first episode of Coronation Street on 9<sup>th</sup> December



As he appears in Coronation Street 2017



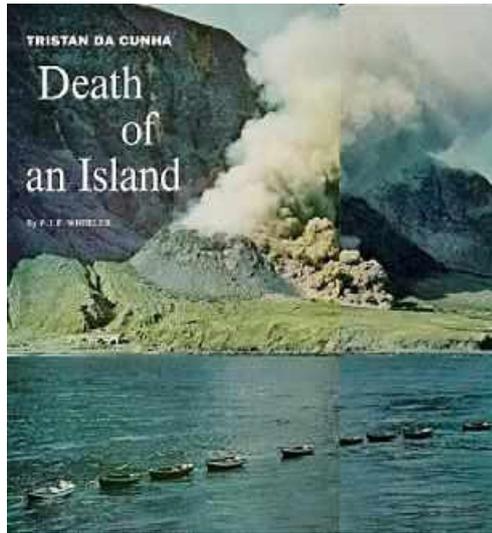
# 1961

- Giants Hall Colliery at Standish is closed
- The farthing coin, used since the 13th century, ceased to be legal tender in the United Kingdom.
- On Valentine's Day George Formby and Patricia Howson announced their engagement
- 6<sup>th</sup> March George Formby died of a heart attack at the age of 56 years and was buried in Warrington cemetery next to his father
- On 12<sup>th</sup> April Russian Cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin became the first man in space.
- The Standish Drift Mine Closed in July
- "The Avengers" starring Patrick McNee and Honor Blackman first shown on television.
- The Beatles perform for the first time at the Cavern club in Liverpool
- "A Taste of Honey" and "Whistle Down the Wind" films released
- Skelmersdale is designated as a new town for the people of Merseyside
- Acker Bilk's "Stranger on the Shore" is released
- It was an all British Women's final at Wimbledon, Angela Mortimer beat Christine Truman
- Barclays open Britain's first bank with an in-house computing centre
- Betting shops became Legal
- After a volcanic eruption, the entire population of Tristan da Cunha, a British overseas territory in the South Atlantic, was evacuated to Surrey
- The birth control pill became available on the National Health Service
- Wigan RLFC won the Sevens
- Danger Man television series first shown on ITV
- Wigan Council started a huge regeneration programme starting in Scholes

## 1961



Patrick McNeen and Honor Blackman in "The Avengers" 1961



George Formby and Patricia Hewson his Fiancee



As I circled the Earth in my spaceship, I saw how beautiful our planet is. People should watch over and multiply its beauty, not destroy it!

Spiritual power is the driving force behind every person.

Colonel Yuri Gagarin



The Beatles first appearance at the Cavern. Pete Best was their drummer at the time. He was replaced in August 1962 by Ringo Starr.

# Memories of 1961

## 1960's Regeneration of Wigan

In 1961 Wigan Council realised that there were 24,000 homes in the that needed to be demolished as they were "unfit for habitation". Scholes was seen as the worst district and about 7,000 homes were to be demolished. The Council promised the people of Scholes that they would all be re-housed together at Marsh Green. It took 14 years to demolish houses etc and regenerate Scholes. The construction of the new homes was a mixture of high rise flats and houses. Wigan Council tried to house the old Scholes neighbours near each other such as on the same floor in the multi-storey flats to keep the neighbourly spirit.

As well as flats and houses, a shopping precinct was built with a supermarket, a pub "The Pink Flamingo", Longshoot Health Centre, Scholes Labour Club, Scholes Conservative Club were all part of this development. The Water Wheel pub was built under the 11 storey Brook House flats.



Scholes in 1960 before re-development



Scholes during re-development



**1962**



**Blackpool Tramway**

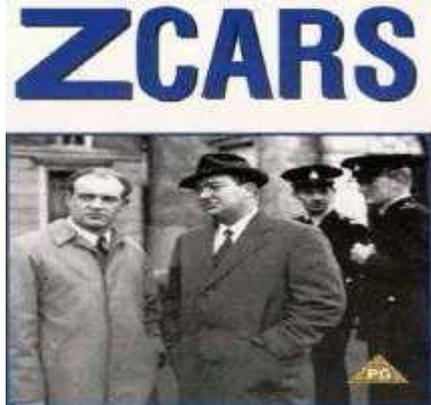


**Ford Cortina**



In 1893 this 11.75 ton block of Cannel coal from Wigan Junction Colliery, Abram was sent to Chicago for the trade exhibition.

Wigan Cannel coal was the best and burned very cleanly leaving hardly any ash. This was very popular in the USA for Yule Logs at Christmas.



**That Was the Week That Was**



**Steptoe and Son**



## **1962**

- First Panda crossings with push buttons
- Z Cars television series started 2<sup>nd</sup> January and first police drama to be set in the North (Liverpool)
- Steptoe and Son comedy series started on BBC television
- The Blackpool Tramway was the only tramway left in Britain
- John Charnley carried out the first hip replacement operation at Wrightington Hospital
- In November the first episode of “That Was the Week That Was” aired
- “Dr No”, the first James Bond film was shown
- The Ford motor company launched the Cortina, a family saloon costing £573.
- In December the film “Lawrence of Arabia” was released
- Golden Wonder introduced flavoured crisps(cheese & onion) to the UK
- Ince Moss Colliery closed
- Abram’s Wigan Junction Colliery closed

## **Cuban Missile Crisis 1962**

“The Bay of Pigs” invasion of Cuba (in the Caribbean) in 1961 and Operation Mongoose (a project created to seek ways to topple President Castro of Cuba) led the Union of Soviet Socialist Republic (Russia) to believe that President Kennedy of the United States of America was determined to get rid of Castro. As a way to protect Cuba, an ally, President Khrushchev of USSR decided to send nuclear weapons to Cuba.

In October a USA U-2 spy plane over Cuba captured images of nuclear missile launch sites being built by the Russians. Given the proximity to the US and the already looming threat of the USSR, President Kennedy knew that he could not let this stand. After secretly conferring with a group of advisors he announced a naval blockade on all further armament shipments to Cuba. In a speech to the USA on October 22, Kennedy called for the removal of missiles already in Cuba and the destruction of all launch sites.

Over the next week, Soviet ships carrying weapons to Cuba were locked in a stalemate with US warships in the Caribbean. Faced with the very real possibility of nuclear war, President Kennedy decided to approach President Khrushchev with a deal to end the standoff peacefully. President Kennedy promised not to invade Cuba if the Soviets withdrew their missiles. Recently released top secret papers have shown that privately, President Kennedy also promised to withdraw US nuclear missiles from Turkey within six months. Thirteen days after the start of the Crisis, Khrushchev accepted the offer and called back Soviet ships.

The Crisis was over and the World could breathe again.

*I remember this crisis I was 15 years old and at College. We were all worried about this and thought that World War Three was about to start.*



President Kennedy



President Khrushchev



President Castro



*British cartoon of 29 October 1962 shows Kennedy and Khrushchev arm-wrestling for power, sitting on nuclear weapons.*

*The caption read: 'OK Mr president, let's talk'*

## Sir John Charnley



After serving in Dunkirk 1940 and running an orthopaedic hospital in Cairo during the Second World War, John Charnley returned to Manchester. John Charnley's research in Manchester after the Second World War on the treatment of fractures had already revealed his close interest in the application of engineering principles to orthopaedic surgery.

Thanks to Sir John Charnley at Wrightington Hospital patients could look forward to returning home a lot earlier. This then led to the development of orthopaedic research and the establishment of a unit for non-TB hip conditions. He tested materials on himself – for example injecting himself under the skin with granulated plastics to see which caused the least inflammation.

Sir John Charnley pioneered the fight against hospital-based infections. He designed a special surgical suit, the clean air operating theatre and a system for handling surgical instruments that significantly reduced the chances of patients contracting infections during orthopaedic operations.



Sir John Charnley operating in the Wrightington Hospital clean air operating theatre and wearing the body exhaust suit.

In November 1962 Sir John Charnley pioneered the hip replacement operation and also the Wrightington Centre for hip surgery. This is now one of the most common operations in the UK and all over the world. Sir John Charnley's successful hip replacement operation quickly spread worldwide. He was knighted in 1977 and made a Fellow of the Royal Society for his development of a procedure that relieves the pain and increases the mobility of millions of arthritis sufferers.

Sir John died in 1982.

In the UK there are approximately **70,000** hip replacements performed each year.

*"I deteriorated so much I could only walk a short way with the help of two sticks. I had a hip replacement at Wrightington Hospital and it was like a miracle, I could walk unaided". T. Wigan.*

## 1963 MEMORIES

*My brother was born in March and he was born in hospital, unlike my two sisters who were born at home. My mum had to stay in hospital for 10 days which was what happened at that time. When my daughter was born in Billinge Hospital I was only in hospital overnight.*



Valentina Tereshkova



### **President Kennedy Assassinated**

On 22<sup>nd</sup> November 1963 the President of the United States of America, John F. Kennedy, was shot as he drove through Dallas with his wife Jacqueline. He later died in hospital.

Police arrested Lee Harvey Oswald. On Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> November, in front of television cameras, Oswald was being transferred to the County jail when a local nightclub owner, Jack Ruby, shot him and he died two hours later.

*Will always remember when the news of President Kennedy's assassination was broadcast, it was a Friday evening here.*

## **1963**

- In January Hugh Gaitskell, Leader of the Labour Party, died suddenly aged 56yrs, Harold Wilson became Leader of the Labour Party.
- The Cleworth Colliery at Tyldesley closed in January
- In March Martin Luther King made his famous "I Have a Dream" speech
- In June, Russian Cosmonaut Valentina Tereshkova became the first woman in space
- Harold MacMillan retired as Prime Minister and Alex Douglas-Home became the Prime Minister
- President of the USA John F. Kennedy was assassinated on 22<sup>nd</sup> November
- In November the first episode of Doctor Who appeared on BBC television
- In November the Robin Hill Drift Mine, Standish, closed
- In November Wigan Fire station moved from Chapel Lane to new large seven bay headquarters at Robin Park Newtown, Wigan
- Gibfield Colliery closed

**1963**



Old Wigan Fire Station Chapel Lane    Fire Station at Robin Park opened November 1963



Gibfield Colliery from Coal Pit Lane, at the time it closed in 1963. The headgear is above the downcast Arley Pit sunk in 1872. *Photo by courtesy of Alan Davies*

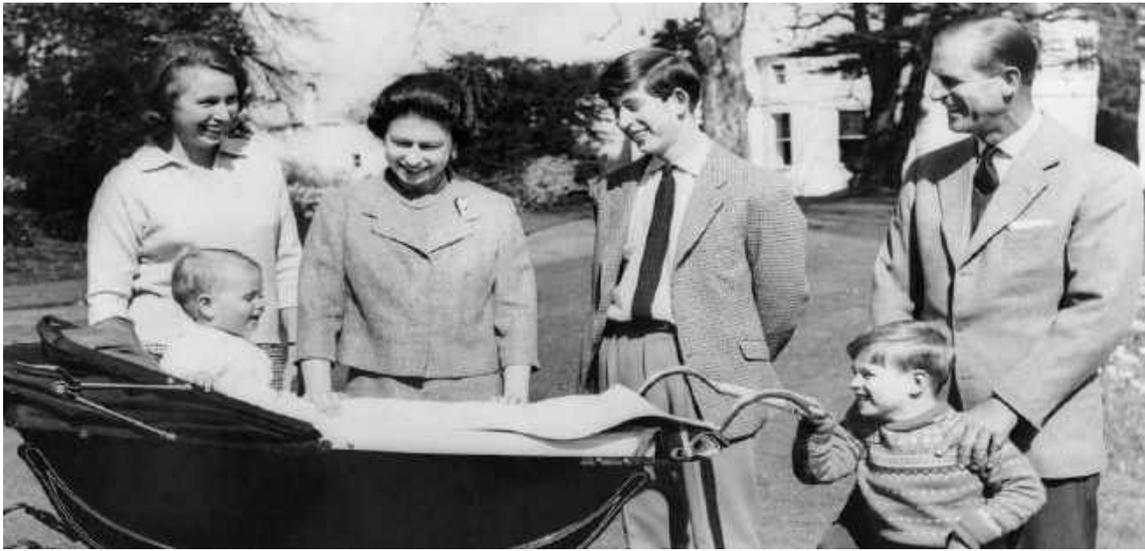
In September 1913, Gibfield Colliery opened the first pit head baths at any colliery in the country; no longer did the colliers return home dirty, to be scrubbed in a tub by the fire.

## 1964

- On 20<sup>th</sup> March, The Queen gave birth to her fourth child, Edward
- Radio Caroline first broadcast on 28<sup>th</sup> March and presented by co-founder Christopher Moore. Amongst the first D. J's were Tony Blackburn and Simon Dee
- Mary Whitehouse began her “clean-up British Television” campaign
- The Gibfield Colliery at Atherton closed
- In July The Beatles' first film “A Hard Day's Night” is released
- In October Labour won the General Election by 4 seats and Harold Wilson became Prime Minister.
- At the Tokyo Olympics in October, Britain won 4 gold, 12 silver and 2 bronze medals
- 13<sup>th</sup> October The Beatles appeared live at the ABC cinema Wigan.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> November Wigan's Central Station closed



## 1964 MEMORIES



Princess Anne, Prince Edward, The Queen, Prince Charles, Prince Philip and Prince Andrew



Wigan Central Station, Station Road, Wigan  
opened in 1892 and closed as part of The Beeching Report 1964



## 1964 Memories



The Beatles at the ABC cinema Wigan. They performed two concerts on this evening, for which they were paid £850. Their set contained 10 songs: Twist And Shout, Money (That's What I Want), Can't Buy Me Love, Things We Said Today, I'm Happy Just To Dance With You, I Should Have Known Better, If I Fell, I Wanna Be Your Man, A Hard Day's Night and Long Tall Sally.

**ABC WIGAN** Tel 2376

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on stage **ABC WIGAN** on stage  
ONE NIGHT ONLY, TUESDAY, OCTOBER 13th  
TWO PERFORMANCES AT 6-20 and 8-35 p.m.

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Advance Booking Office Opens Monday, September 21st, 10-30 a.m.  
to 8-00 p.m. Seats 15/-, 12/6, 10/-, 7/6.

*I remember watching the Beatles at the ABC in Wigan.*



The Beatles,  
Paul McCartney, John Lennon, Ringo Starr and George Harrison

## 1964 Memories

### Radio Caroline



The only current popular music we heard on the BBC radio in the 60's was on Two-way Family Favourites which was a programme on a Sunday afternoon linking British forces in Germany with their families in the UK. Those of us who had a good radio could reach Radio Luxembourg which was broadcast in the evening and played popular music or the American Forces Overseas station.

Radio Caroline was a radio station on a ship playing current popular music and was launched on Easter Sunday 1964. It broadcast 6am to 6pm so as not to clash with Radio Luxembourg. The first track played on Radio Caroline was the Rolling Stones' "Not Fade Away". The Disc Jockeys on Radio Caroline were Chris Moore, Tony Blackburn, Roger Gale, Roger Day, Simon Dale, Tony Prince, Dave Lee Travis and Tommy Vance. It was called Caroline after President Kennedy's daughter Caroline. Later that year Radio Caroline North started broadcasting to the North of England. The ships became known as pirate ships as they broadcast from international waters and out of Government control.

In 1967, the UK Government enacted the Marine, &c., Broadcasting (Offences) Act 1967, outlawing advertising on or supplying an unlicensed offshore radio station from the UK. Six weeks later the BBC started Radio One, a new National pop station. Many of the D.J.'s from the pirate radio stations were employed by BBC Radio One and Tony Blackburn was the first to broadcast on BBC Radio One.

*"My children find it hard to believe that in the 1960's we were unable to easily listen to popular music until the advent of the pirate radio stations."*



*"I was attending Commercial College and was asked to type up letters introducing a new pop group. I found it exciting to be playing a small part of the 1960's Pop Culture."*

## 1965

- In January Winston Churchill died at the age of 90 years and he had a state funeral in London
- Mary Quant introduced the miniskirt from her shop in Chelsea, London
- Wigan Rugby League Football Club won the Challenge Cup against Hunslet 20 to 16, Trevor Lake scored two tries for Wigan.
- The Ellerbeck Colliery located between Coppull and Addlington, closed
- In September the first episode of Thunderbirds is shown
- In October Ian Brady and Myra Hindley are arrested and appear in court charged with the Moors murders
- The Death Penalty was abolished in the United Kingdom

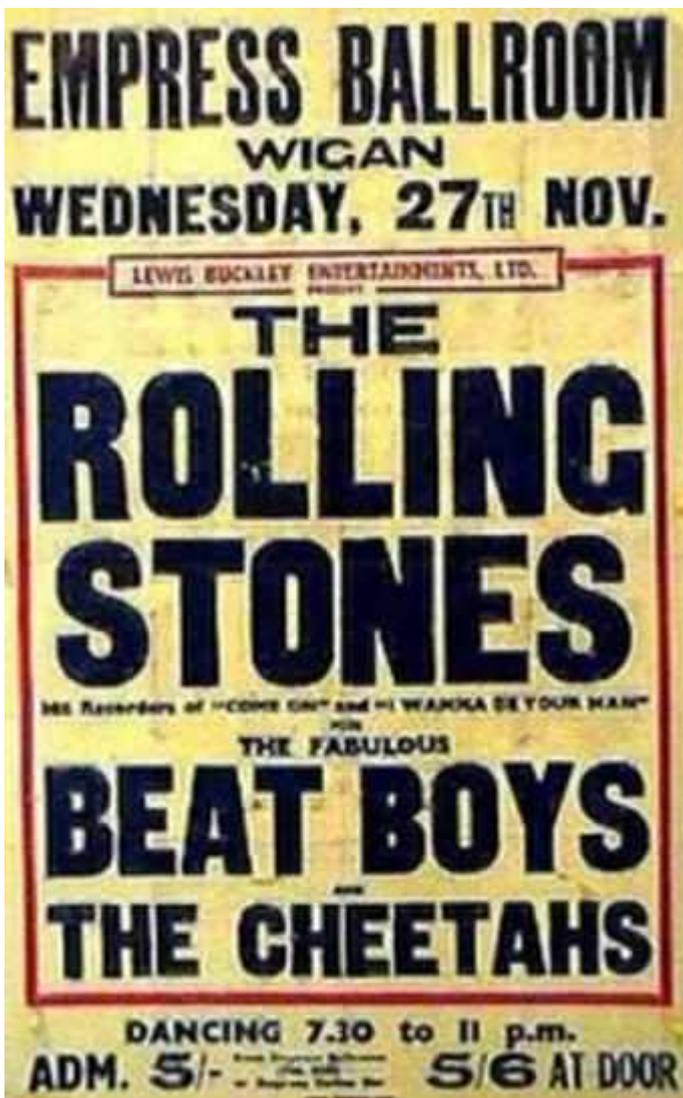


State Funeral of Sir Winston Churchill

## 1965 MEMORIES



Trevor Lake who scored for Wigan in the 1965 Cup Final against Hunslet



*"I worked for Gerry Anderson for a while. The puppet of Lady Penelope from Thunderbirds was based on his wife Sylvia. He was a good boss and he asked me to move with him and his production to Pinewood Studios, Buckinghamshire. I said I couldn't go with his production as I was moving to Wigan".*

## **1966**

- Edward Heath became Leader of the Conservative Party
- Harold Wilson's Labour Party majority was reduced to one seat. On 31<sup>st</sup> March a General Election was called, the Labour Party won by 96 seats.
- On 6<sup>th</sup> April Hoverlloyd started the first passenger cross-channel hovercraft service from Ramsgate to Calais.
- On 6<sup>th</sup> May, Ian Brady and Myra Hindley, the Moors Murderers were found guilty. Brady got 3 life sentences and Hindley 2 life sentences.
- On 29<sup>th</sup> June, Barclays Bank introduced Barclaycard, the first British Credit Card.
- In July there were large protests outside the American Embassy in Grosvenor Square London against USA's involvement in the Vietnam War.
- The Chanters Colliery at Atherton closed
- England hosted The Football World Cup and the England Team won The Football World Cup on 30<sup>th</sup> July.
- On 21<sup>st</sup> October a coal tip in Aberfan, South Wales, collapsed on a school killing 116 children and 28 adults

## 1966 MEMORIES

AN ABC THEATRE

**ABC • WIGAN**

Manager: A. N. WAIRD Phone: 2376

**6.20 - SATURDAY, 27th FEBRUARY - 8.35**

TWO PERFORMANCES ONLY

FOR ONE DAY ONLY **ON THE STAGE** FOR ONE DAY ONLY  
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ARTHUR HOWES presents

**ROY ORBISON** THE WORLD'S GREATEST HIT MAKER

**THE ROCKIN' BERRIES** HIT RECORDERS OF 'HE'S IN TOWN'

THE SENSATIONAL **FAITHFULL**

THE ELANDRIOUS **THREE QUARTERS** YOUR COMPETE FRANKLY'S NIGHT SPOT EXCITING BEAT SOUND OF **THE UNTAMED**

**CLIFF BENNETT** AND THE **REBEL TROUSERS**

PRICES: Stalls 12/6 10/- 7/6 Circle 12/6 10/- 7/6 Box Seats 12/6  
All seats may be booked in advance



The Hovercraft was invented by Sir Christopher Cockerell who had also worked with the Marconi team that developed radar. The hovercraft was used for the Channel crossing Dover to Calais with some times as quick as 22 minutes. The hovercraft was susceptible to high winds and eventually the hovercraft crossing was stopped.

*“My sister used to cross the English Channel by hovercraft with her car. She said the service on board was excellent and like being on an aeroplane. it was extremely smooth and quick as opposed to the ferry”.*

## 1966 MEMORIES

### ***My memory of England winning the World Cup.***

*I was in London at the time. In 1966 England were the host of the World Cup. England had fought their way through to the final where they were to play Germany.*

*One of the earlier matches springs to mind, the game against Argentina. It was a hard dirty match with the Press branding Argentina, "Animals" for the disgraceful way they played.*

*The final was held at Wembley Stadium. At 90 minutes the score was 2 -2. In extra time (98<sup>th</sup> minute), Geoff Hurst's shot hit the crossbar and bounced down onto the goal-line. The referee gave it as a goal, but years later technology showed the ball had not crossed the line. Geoff Hurst went on to score another goal and this made a hat-trick as England won 4 goals to 2. Kenneth Wolstenholme of the BBC said "Some people are on the pitch, they think it is all over, (Geoff Hurst scored another goal) It is NOW!"*

*That night the pubs in London were great places to be as everyone celebrated our victory.*

*Before the World Cup final, the World Cup Jules Rimet trophy was stolen. The Football Association had a replica cup made in case the original was not found in time. The trophy was discovered seven days later by a dog called Pickles, it had been wrapped in newspaper and hidden in some bushes in London. The replica is now in the National Football Museum in Manchester.*



**1966**



**Chanters No2. headgear from Tyldesley Old Road near Chanters Bridge**  
*Photo courtesy of Alan Davies*

Chanters was an early user of electricity, with generators supplying DC power both above and below ground from 1892 onwards.

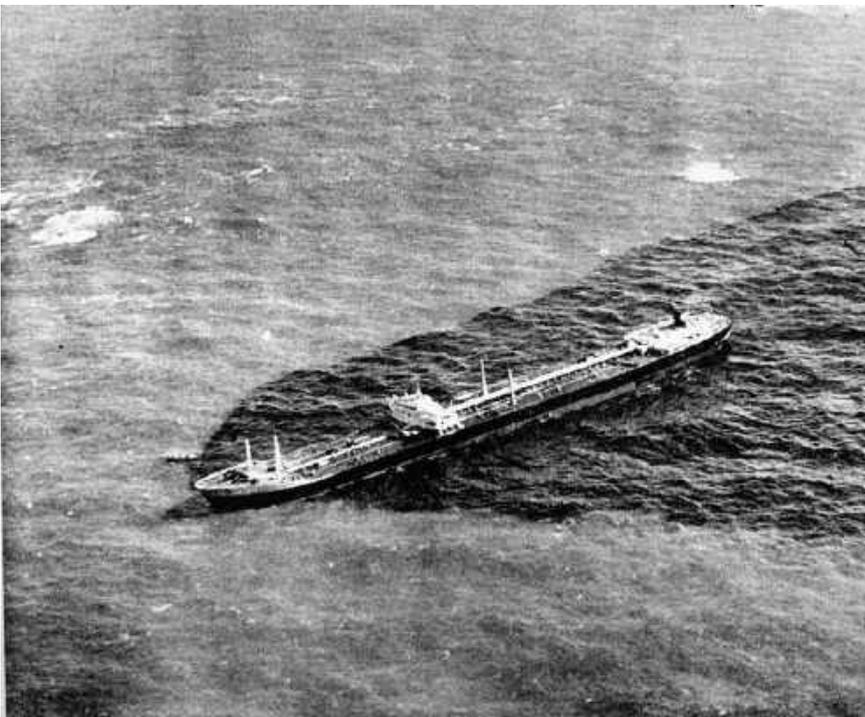
Old seams were exhausted and new seams opened up and modernisation continued.

By 1957 the underground workforce consisted of 1,066 underground workers with 265 surface workers

In 1966, only nine years later, deep coal mining in Atherton came to an end when Chanters, the last and most successful colliery, was closed.

## 1967

- The Chisnall Colliery on Coppul Moor closed in March, but the NCB said that there would not be redundancies as the jobs would be transferred to neighbouring collieries – Bickershaw, Parsonage and Golborne.
- On the 18 March the supertanker Torrey Canyon ran aground between Land's End and the Scilly Isles, causing an environmental disaster. On 29<sup>th</sup> March the RAF and Fleet Air Arm planes bombed the grounded Torrey Canyon and sank it. It was later found that the Shipmaster Pastrengo Rugiati was to blame because he took a shortcut to save time to get into Milford Haven.
- 
- 1<sup>st</sup> June, the Beatles released Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band Album
- The Old Bedford Colliery at Leigh closed in October
- Package holidays to Spain and Italy became affordable and popular
- Recreation of the "Battle of the Somme" at Ince Moss on 15<sup>th</sup> September



SS Torrey Canyon

An 8 miles slick formed around the wreck and some 20,000 tons of crude oil was released on the first day. By the following day, another 10,000 tons of crude was released with the oil slick increasing to over 18 miles long

Taken from the Wigan Observer

## Battle of the Somme, 1967

### The Advance...



Over the top storm the gallant boys from Granada—and, right, over the top go the gallant boys from Ince as a technician moves them out of the camera firing line.

### The Retreat...



In September 1967 Granada television re-created “The Battle of the Somme” at Ince Moss, Wigan. This was part of a television series “Inheritance” which starred John Thaw and James Bolam.

Local residents said the action was amazing and looked real.

Peter Unsworth had served in World War One on the Western Front and said that it was just like the French battlefield he remembered.

It cost £1,000 to turn Ince Moss into a battlefield and when filming was finished the site was left derelict as it was found.



Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band Album

## 1967 MEMORIES

### Package Holidays

After many years of foreign holidays not being possible for those on lesser incomes, a 14 day holiday to Spain cost about £20. The number of holidays abroad increased from 4 million to 7 million between 1961 and 1971.

*"My cousin went for two weeks holiday to Rimini in Italy and there she met an Italian, Gianni, who became her husband. She took a job as a nanny in Turin Italy so she could be near him and then she got married to Gianni in 1969. She worked in a hospital and secretary to a Surgeon. They had a son, Alessandro and lived in Milan until she died last year, 2016."*

*"My friend and I went on holiday to Rome and Sorrento in 1966 and again in 1967. We were so lucky as my mum had never been abroad, my dad had only been to other countries because of his WW2 service. My mum was so proud of my going to Rome that she went round all the neighbours to collect petitions for me to deliver to St. Peter's. I visited St. Peter's and the Vatican, but couldn't find anywhere for the petitions so I placed them in a crevice by St. Peter's altar, wonder if they are still there. I had a Papal audience with Pope Paul VI in St. Peter's Basilica. I tried to visit St. Peter's again before I returned home, but was turned away by a Swiss Guardsman who said my dress was too short. I wore the same length for the Papal Audience and it had been ok. It was the 60's and miniskirts were in. My friend met an Italian or as he preferred to be called, a Roman named Pietro. In 1969 she married Pietro and went to live in Rome. She still lives there with Pietro, her two sons and two grandchildren.*

*On this same holiday I met two girls from London and we became great friends. They had travelled to Rome in a blue mini. We visited each other they came to me in their blue mini and I travelled to London on the train. Through my visits to London I met my future husband in 1969. We have been married 46 years and have four children and nine grandchildren".*



*At Trevi Fountain in Rome  
Don't think this dress is too short*



*The girls came to visit me with the blue mini. We  
had toured around Rome in this.*

## 1968 MEMORIES



Martin Luther King Junior was an American Baptist Minister. He became a leader of the Civil Rights Movement using nonviolence and civil disobedience based on his Christian beliefs. The Civil Rights movement's aims were to gain equality for African Americans and for them to obtain the basic privileges and rights of US citizenship.

On 4<sup>th</sup> April Martin Luther King Junior was standing on his hotel balcony in Memphis, when he was assassinated by James Earl Ray. This is an extract from his famous speech in 1963:

*"I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal."  
I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia, the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood.  
I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.  
I have a dream today!"*

African Americans now have all of the same rights that white Americans have. Before the Civil Rights Movement, segregation and discrimination were legal.



Billy Boston being held in a tackle by two Leeds players. 1968 was only the fourth time the BBC2 Floodlit Trophy competition had been held. Castleford's three year winning streak came to an end in 1968, there was a new name on the trophy. Wigan won the trophy by beating St. Helens with a score of 7-4. The match was played at Central Park, Wigan. 13,479 people attended the match and receipts were £3,291



Wigan actor Colin Bean played Private Sponge in Dad's Army television series

## 1968

- On April 4th Martin Luther King Junior was assassinated
- The Roy Hartley Maternity Unit built at Billinge cost a staggering £1,500,000 and was opened on May 21st. The hospital had a total of 562 beds. The grounds stretched for a third of a mile.
- Wigan Catholic Whit Walks finished on 3<sup>rd</sup> June, it had been the 69<sup>th</sup> Whit Walk
- In June, Bobby Kennedy, brother of President John F Kennedy, was assassinated by Sirhan Sirhan.
- Dad's Army television series started in July
- Wigan's International Pool was opened
- 17<sup>th</sup> December Wigan won the BBC2 Floodlit Trophy by beating St. Helens 7-4



Children from St. Patrick's church Wigan take part in the Whit Walk



St John's RC Church Whit Walk

## 1968



The Roy Hartley Maternity Hospital, Billinge. There were just four beds to a ward.



This is the Billinge Hospital where I was born in 1947. My children and two grandchildren were born in the Roy Hartley Maternity Unit. The Registrar on my birth certificate is Lilian Ward and on my son's birth certificate in 1975 the registrar is her daughter-in-law



Wigan International 50 metre Swimming Pool opened in 1968 at a cost of £692,000 (£11.6 million in 2017 prices)

## **1969**

- The Beatles performed together for the final time on the rooftop of Apple Records on 30th January
- February in Wigan saw very heavy snow and a temperature recorded in Manchester of -13 degrees centigrade.
- In March the maiden flight of Concorde took place
- In April British troops arrived in Northern Ireland to reinforce the Royal Ulster Constabulary
- 1<sup>st</sup> July Prince Charles was invested as Prince of Wales at Carnarvon Castle
- On 20th July the USA's Apollo 11 Spacecraft landed on the Moon and Neil Armstrong became the first man to walk on the moon
- On 20<sup>th</sup> October a large fire at Gidlow Mill Wigan was tackled by Wigan Fire Brigade
- In November, John Lennon returned his MBE in protest against the British Government's involvement in Biafra and support of the United States war in Vietnam
- In December the James Bond Film "On Her Majesty's Secret Service" starring George Lazenby and Diana Rigg was released, the first without Sean Connery
- Colour television was first broadcast on BBC and ITV

# 1969



February 1969  
Springs Branch  
sidings, Wigan

February 1969  
there were severe  
frosts at night,  
Manchester  
recorded -13C as  
snow covered  
many places  
including Wigan.



Gldlow Mill Fire Wigan on 20<sup>th</sup> October 1969



# 1969 MEMORIES

## MOON LANDING

Apollo 11 blasted off on July 16, 1969. Neil Armstrong, Edwin "Buzz" Aldrin and Michael Collins were the astronauts on Apollo 11. The called the Lunar Module "Eagle".

Four days later, on July 20, 1969, Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin landed on the moon in the Lunar Module. Michael Collins stayed in orbit around the moon, doing experiments and taking photographs.

Two and a half hours after landing on the moon, before preparations began for the walk on the moon, Aldrin radioed to Earth: "This is the LM pilot. I'd like to take this opportunity to ask every person listening in, whoever and wherever they may be, to pause for a moment and contemplate the events of the past few hours and to give thanks in his or her own way." He then took communion privately. Aldrin was an elder at the Webster Presbyterian Church, and his communion kit was prepared by the pastor of the church, the Rev. Dean Woodruff. Neil Armstrong stepped off the Eagle's footpad and declared, "That's one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind"

Neil Armstrong became the first human to step on the moon. He and Buzz Aldrin walked around for three hours. carrying out experiments. They picked up bits of moon dirt and rocks.

They placed a U.S. flag on the moon and left a sign on the moon which says:

**"Here men from the planet Earth first set foot upon the moon July 1969, A.D.  
We came in peace for all mankind."**

The two astronauts returned to orbit, joining Michael Collins. On July 24, 1969, all three astronauts came back to Earth safely.

*My family watched on our television as Neil Armstrong stepped onto the Moon. My brother was 6 years old and he has always been interested in Space since then. He always said there was water on other planets and this is now being discovered to be true.*

**You can view a piece of the moonrock at Liverpool World Museum.**



*Neil Armstrong on the moon*



*Buzz Aldrin joining Neil Armstrong*

## Employment Memories in the 1960's

*"I left Commercial College in 1964 having gained my GCE's and qualifications in Shorthand, Typing, Secretarial work and Accounting. I started work in an office and my duties were to take shorthand dictation and type this up; operate a 5 telephone line PBX (Private Branch Exchange) and general office duties. I used a manual typewriter and typed on Foolscap paper with 3 pieces of carbon to give 3 copies, this was before photocopiers. I also had to learn how to use a comptometer to check invoices and wages for over 200 people and had to go to the bank on my own to collect the cash for the wages. Another of my duties was to type up memos and information on wax foolscap sheets and print on a Gestetner. My wages were £7.50 per week for 5 days plus every other Saturday."*

### 1960's OFFICE MACHINES



Gestetner printing machine



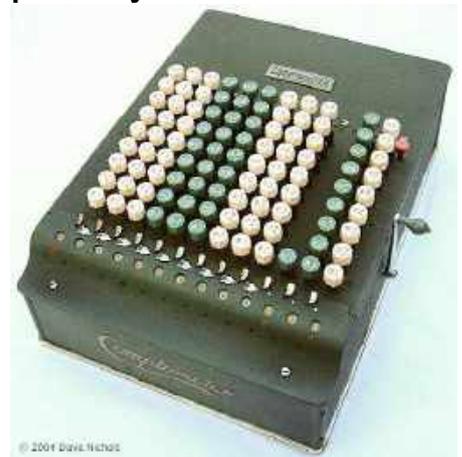
PBX phone system



Manual Typewriter



Golf ball electric typewriter



Comptometer with £.s.d. facility



Teleprinter for sending/receiving written messages



1961 computer

## Employment Memories in the 1960's



H J Heinz opened in Wigan in 1959, the largest food processing plant in Europe, and the largest H. J. Heinz facility in the world. The factory processed over 1,000 tons of beans per week into Heinz Baked Beans, which were then sent all over the world. In the 1960's Heinz employed over 3,000 people.

### Coal Mines

When the coal mines were Nationalised in 1947 Wigan had about 25 coalmines, but by the end of the 1960's only two collieries were left.

### Mills

Main switchboard in Dorning Street Wigan



*"I worked for BT in Dorning Street Wigan. I started when I left Wigan Girls' High School at 16 years and stayed until my retirement at the age of 60 years. They were very good employers and I made many life-long friends".*

## A Fire Fighter's Story

*(Fire Fighter George with the dog he rescued from The Leeds Liverpool Canal at Wigan)*



I was born about 200 yards from Portobello Road in London. As kids my 3 brothers and sister used to walk along Portobello Road on the way to our primary school. We would ask the stall holders if they wanted any tea, if so we would take their jugs to a nearby café and get their tea and toast. This was before Portobello Road became famous for its many antique shops and stalls. At that time my ambition was to have my own stall along Portobello Road. In 1959 we moved to Putney and in 1963 we moved to Boreham Wood (famous for Elstree Studios of Eastenders and Strictly Come Dancing fame). By this time my ambition had changed to wanting to be a Merchant Navy radio operator. Yet at 8.55 a.m. on Friday 1<sup>st</sup> April 1966 (I thought this could be an April Fool's joke, who starts a new job on a Friday. I still hadn't realised the Fire Service is a 24/7/365 job), saw me reporting to

Borehamwood Fire and Ambulance Station as a recruit fireman. I sat with the duty watch, Blue Watch, and all the while bells were ringing, yet no-one seemed to be moving. It seemed the station ran on a system of bells, the telephone bell was one continuous ring. The house bells – one ring for visiting officer, two rings for station officer, three rings for sub-officer, four rings leading fireman, five rings duty watchman, six rings for mealtimes and change of watch. There were special rings for ambulance personnel, short and long ring ordinary ambulance and short and two long rings for emergency ambulance. The fire emergency bell was a different tone and was one long continuous ring.

Saturday was just a half day and the night watch had been on a big fire in London and there was a load of dirty hoses to wash and test, then put up the drill tower to dry.

On the Monday morning I was taken to Brigade stores to be fitted out with my fire gear and day uniform. Black helmet, long black leather boots, black leather leggings, axe with pouch and belt and a belt line. Now my training started with daily drill sessions with the day watch. First of all I learned how to run out hose and roll it up again, hydrant drills, ladder drills and taking part in standard testing of the fire fighting equipment. After a few weeks, when I had become proficient in the drills, I was allowed to ride the fire engine appliance as part of the crew during day duties. Hertfordshire Fire Brigade like other outer London brigades e.g. Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire and others used the London Fire Brigade Training school. I started at Finchley training school on 6<sup>th</sup> June 1966, our station officer Brookes said you will always remember this day 6.6.66, he was right.

I graduated from training school on Friday 26<sup>th</sup> August 1966 and joined my watch (Red Watch) on the Monday night. During my time at the London Fire Service in the 60's I attended a variety of incidents including a plane crash into a reservoir, London factory fires, thatch roof fires, barn fires, school fires, house fires, suicides on the London underground, delivered a baby when the ambulance couldn't get through the snow, a 100plus vehicle road smash on the M1. Borehamwood Fire Brigade averaged 350 calls per year. **I was paid £16 for a 56 hour week.**

I moved to Wigan County Borough Fire Brigade in 1973 and the average number of calls were 3,000 per year. As well as fires and attending car accidents etc. We also rescued a number of animals.



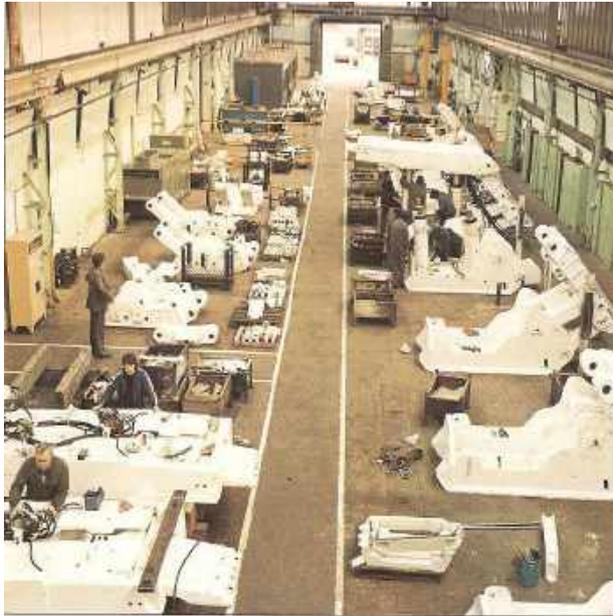
**Wigan Police with their Panda Cars in 1969**



**Coops Sewing Factory Wigan**



**Cone Winding Frame Eckersley's Mill Wigan**



**Chock Build at Gullick Dobson of Wigan**



**Delivering Gullick Dobson roof supports to a coal mine**



**Reeds Packaging Goose Green**



**Tilt table Northern Counties Wigan Lane**



**Wigan Observer new offset press 1966**

## Housing Memories in the 1960's



New high rise flats in Scholes, Wigan

*“My grandmother moved into one of the new high rise flats. There was an intercom system and you were then let into the communal entrance. The lift took me to her floor. The flat was lovely inside, had a fitted kitchen, toilet and bathroom, central heating and a balcony”.*



Terraced houses in Scholes

*“My aunt lived in a terraced house in Wigan. The front door opened right into the living room, the stairs were between the kitchen and living room. From the kitchen you went into the yard and the toilet was at the end of the yard. Upstairs were two bedrooms. In the middle of the night we had to use a chamber pot (jerry) for the toilet. We had a tin bath which we put in the kitchen and filled with hot water for bathdays”.*

# 1960's HOME



Colour tv showing BBC test card



Radiogram



Transistor Radio



Tape Recorder



Hoover 65 twin tub. Cost 65 guineas



first push button phone



Trimphone

## SHOPPING IN 1966

2.4d old pence=1p new penny, 12 old pennies= 1 shilling, 20 shillings= £1. A guinea=£1.1 shilling

Average Weekly Wage £17 per week Basic State Pension £4 per week  
 Average annual salary: Teacher £1,400; Train Driver £884; Male Manual worker £1,040; Female worker £630; G.P. £2,964; Top League Footballer £5,200

Average price of a 3 bed house was £2,530. Two-bedroomed terrace average £1,150.

A mini car would cost about £600.

23 inch TV, weekly rental £7.10s (weekly) To buy about £300.

Petrol gallon = 5s 6d = 14d per litre = 6p

Large white Sliced loaf = 10d = 4p

Milk, delivered: 9½d = 4p per pint

Sugar 2-lb bag= 1s 6d = 7.7p

8 oz. Butter 2s 5d. = 12p

Fresh cod: = 38p

Pint of beer: = 2 shillings = 10p

Rice (loose): 11.7p

Loose tea 4 ounces = 1s 9d = 9p

12 medium-sized eggs = 3shillings 15p

Flour, per 2lbs = 2shillings = 10p

Cheddar cheese 1-lb = 7s.6d. = 37.5p

Potatoes = 2-lbs = 10d = 4.1p

Golden & silver shred marmalade: £1.26

Canned tomatoes (tall can): 77p

Cream, 10oz: 71p

Assorted biscuits, 1lb packet (with a free packet of ginger crisps): £2.32

Apples, pre-packed, five: £1.13

Fish and Chips in a chip shop = 1s 6d = 7.5p

1960's money



A café menu 1966



# Tescan REAL FUR SKINS

The Tescan label inside a fur coat means the finest quality behind every stitch

*Illustrated:*  
A short, honey-coloured theatre jacket in Tescan Fonaka Lamb with a mandarin collar and small neat cuffs in toning musquash.  
Styled by Tona

Price 25 guineas

# Pendlebury's

of WIGAN  
telephone 46231-5

May 1966

★ STARRER ITEMS IN THIS ADVERTISEMENT ALSO ON SALE AT T. J. HUGHES, GRANGE ROAD, BIRKENHEAD ★

## T.J.'s TOMORROW!

**FABULOUS OFFER!  
WM'S SUITS & DRESSES  
SOME LESS THAN 1/2 PRICE!**

**WOMEN'S DRESSES.** Usually 12/6 to 22/11. Many styles from which to choose in rayon and blended wools. Many with pearl trim skirts. Size 36 to 19/11. 48 in. long.

**WM'S & G.B. SUITS.** Usually 12/6 to 22/11. Smartly styled in rayon, wool, and blends. Galaxies of colours. (Broken size range.) 39/11. (Illustrated, see type range.)

**T.J.'s GREAT FABRIC SCOOP!**

**LOT 1.** Usually 11/11 to 22/11. Assorted. 24/11 tweeds 24in. Tail.

**LOT 2.** Usually 17/11 to 22/11. Assorted. 24/11 tweeds 24in. Tail.

**LOT 3.** Usually 17/11 to 22/11. Assorted. 24/11 tweeds 24in. Tail.

**LOT 4.** Usually 17/11 to 22/11. Assorted. 24/11 tweeds 24in. Tail.

**WOMEN'S SKIRTS**  
Usually 33/- to 84/-

A really exciting selection of styles, colours and materials — including many washable fabrics. Excellent size range.

10/11 15/11 19/11

**Fantastic but true!**

**LONDON RETAILERS SURPLUS STOCK!**

## 1500 WOMEN'S COATS

**ALL BELOW HALF PRICE!**  
(MANY AT A QUARTER PRICE!)

**LOT 1. LIST PRICE £6/6/0**  
4 All wool grey and blue thick, air-fit coats with fur collars, anti-stains and zipped cuffs. 29/11

**LOT 2. LIST PRICE £10/2/0**  
4 Neatly styled jackets in blended wools. Two-way collar. Blue only. Tail 36in. 39/11

**LOT 3. LIST PRICE £9-£12/9/0**  
4 Two-tone dark grey looks. Smart styles. Edged in dark grey. Also navy blended wools. Some with tapered rayon collar & zip pockets. 49/11

**LOT 4. LIST PRICE £9/2/6-£13/7/6**  
4 Selection of styles in to be worn with skirts, blouses, jackets, etc. All wool double-breasted. Some fur collar. Red, green and black. 59/11

**LOT 5. LIST PRICE £10/7/6-£12/7/6**  
4 Two styles from yards of choice. All fur collars. All wool double-breasted. 69/11

**LOT 6. LIST PRICE £6/6/0**  
4 Styling gathered waists and pleated skirts. 49/11

**Illustrated on left:**  
Rich wool from French stock styled in peacock blue. Double breasted, (see framing collar and single breasted) 49/11

**Illustrated on right:**  
Smartly black coat with Furatonic collar. Double breasted style with straight hem. (see framed neck) 69/11

# Blackler's

Special £8000 PURCHASE FOR MEN & BOYS!!

**"BLENFLEX" INSTANT SKIRTS**  
Take 10/11

**CASUAL SHIRTS**  
19/11

**MEN'S SHIRTS**  
25/-

**MEN'S PULLOVERS**  
32/11

**MEN'S SOCKS**  
2/11

**"STRADS" TROUSERS**  
42/-

**"STRADS" 'IVY LEAGUE' SLACKS**  
35/-

**UNDERWEAR & STOCKINGS**

**LADIES' NYLON HOSIERY**  
12/11

**"WILSON" SLIPS**  
14/11

**CHILD'S NYLON SLIPS**  
4/11

**SHORTIE HOUSECOATS**  
39/11

**MEN'S SHOES - ALL PERFECT**  
49/11

**"MOD" SHOES**  
39/11

**MEN'S RAINCOATS**  
90/-

**BOYS' SUITS**  
42/-

**"STRADS" TROUSERS**  
42/-

**"STRADS" 'IVY LEAGUE' SLACKS**  
35/-

**Fashion Hits!**

**COATS - UP TO WXL FITTING**  
16/19/11

**SMART TEEN-AGE COATS**  
15/19/11

**TEEN-AGE SUITS - 34" to 40" hips**  
15/19/11

**"PRIMA" COTTON SHEETS**  
37/11

**Wardrobes**  
174/19/6

**CANDLEWICK BEDSPREADS**  
69/11

**Matresses**  
12/11

**Carpet Squares**  
17/19/6

**CHILD'S COATS**  
79/11

**CHILD'S PLAYHOUSES**  
65/6

**MEN'S WATCHES**  
24/10/0 & 25/10/0

**BARDANS FOR CHILDREN!**

**GIRLS' POPPIN COATS**  
35/11

**Smart Dresses**  
39/11

**Ladies' Cardigans**  
39/11

**Proton Rainwear**  
85/- 89/11 95/-

**Nylon Gloves**  
4/8

**Strew Millinery**  
14/8 to 49/8

# AROUND WIGAN IN THE 1960'S



Commercial Yard



Inside Wigan Wallgate Station 1960's



Coalman delivering sacks of coal



Inside public telephone box



Dave Whelan sold his grocery store to Morrisons



Lowe's Department Store Market Street



Pendlebury's Standishgate

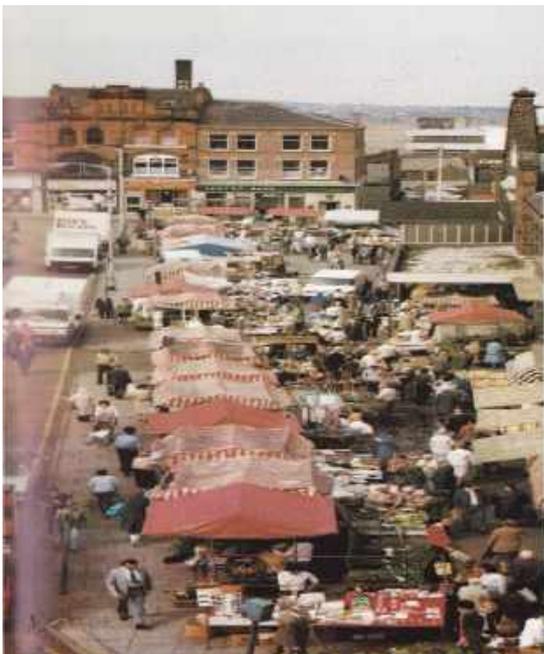


Little Arcade  
Wigan

*I remember  
getting weighed  
on the jockey  
scales opposite  
Sid Smith's  
paper stall.*



Wigan Wallgate



Outside old Market Hall



Mesnes Park 1964

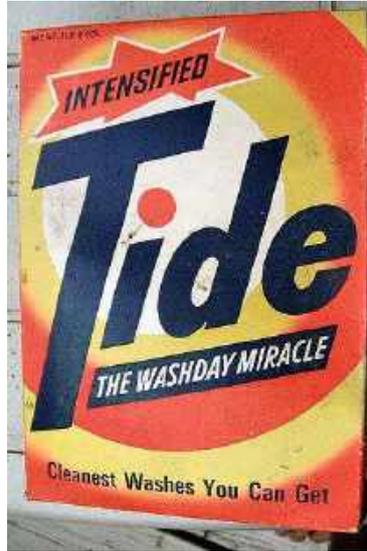


Library Street



# You May Remember





First Ford Anglia made in Liverpool 1963



**Green Shield Stamps**

One stamp given for every 6d spent available from a variety of shops, garages etc. Full books exchanged for goods. The Green Shield shops became Argos in 1973.

## Shops



Corner Shop



Inside a Draper's Shop



Uncle Joe's Stand Wigan Market Hall



Inside Tesco 1960's

Inside  
Market

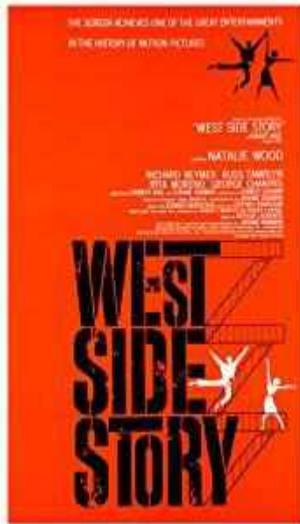


Wigan  
Hall

**1960'S CINEMA FILMS – Can you name the stars?**



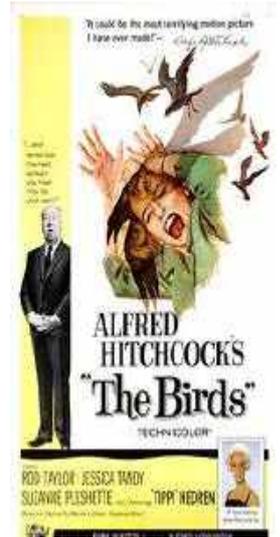
1960



1961



1962



1963



1964



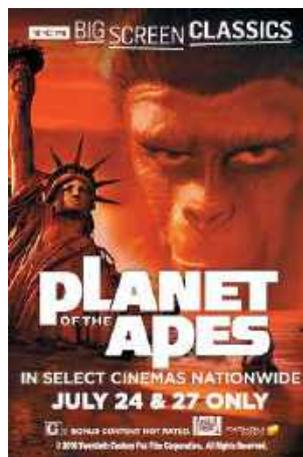
1965



1966



1967



1968



1969

**1960'S TELEVISION AND RADIO – Can you name the stars?**



1960



Clitheroe Kid 1960



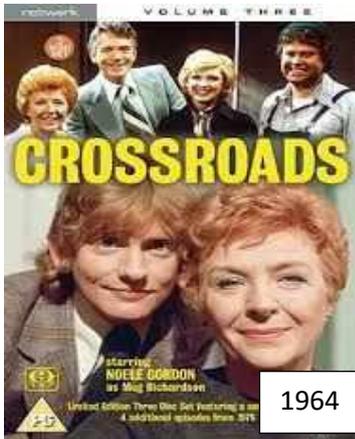
Steptoe and Son 1963



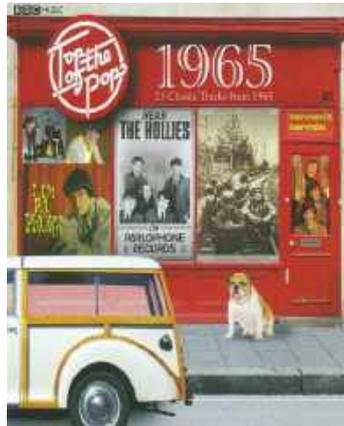
1963 Radio Show



November 1963 – First episode of Dr. Who



1964



1968



1968



**Can you name these 1960's stars?**



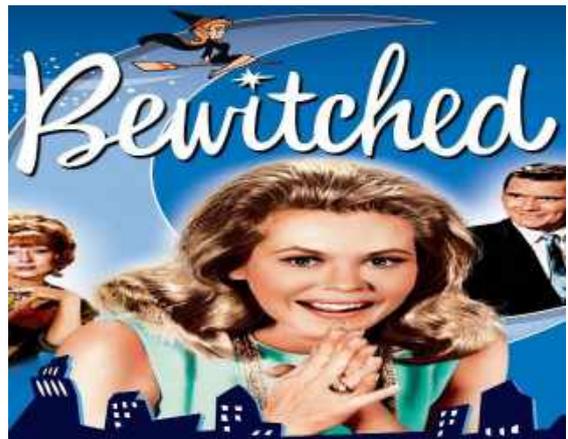
**The Liver Birds**



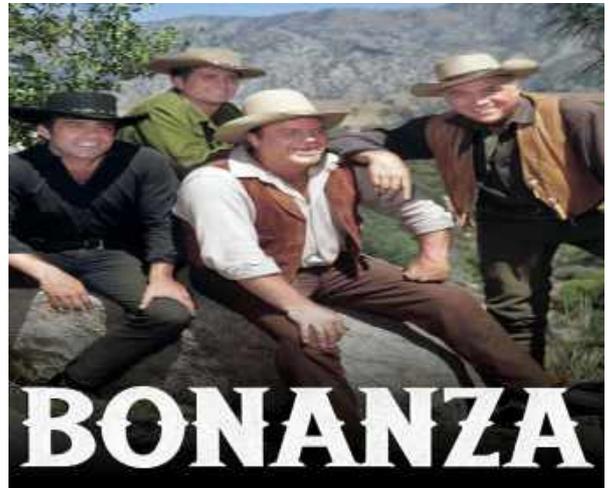
**Till Death Us Do Part**



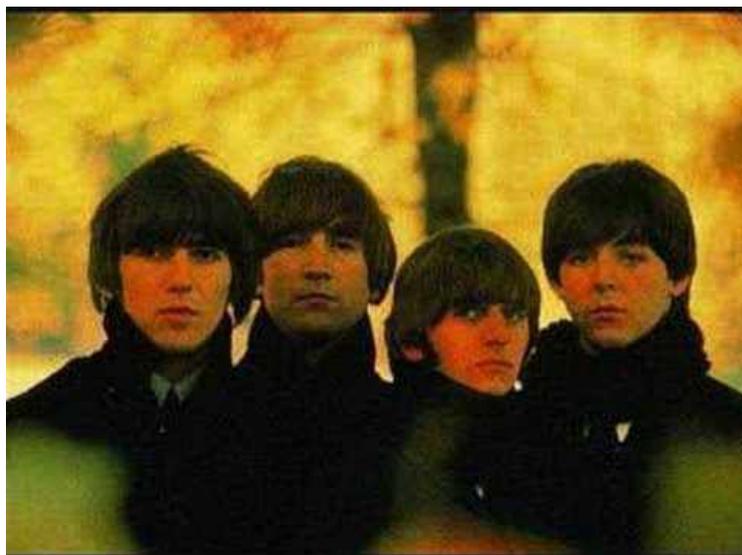
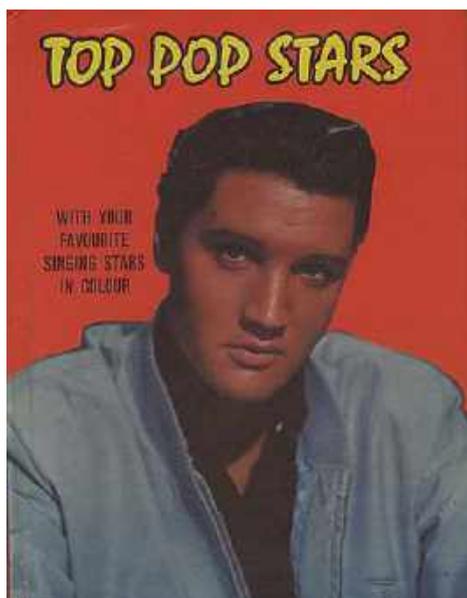
**The Rag Trade**



**Blue Peter**



Can you name the following pop stars or groups?



Can you name the following pop stars or groups?



# **A Sixties Reminiscence**

**Date:** 7<sup>th</sup> August 1961  
**Venue:** Central Park – home of Wigan R.L.F.C.  
**Event:** Rugby League Sevens – the season's opener

On this day, an event occurred which was to change my life. Together with my friend, Sandra Barlow, I was at Central Park to watch the opener to the Rugby League season – the 7-a-side tournament. If I remember rightly, Wigan beat Oldham in the final game, but something much more important happened to me – I met my future husband, Mike, there.

He was home on leave from the Royal Navy and asked me out to the pictures (we went to see “The Magnificent Seven” at the Princes). Seven years later we were married and have watched Wigan play many more times in the next 46 years.

I was still at school when we met and planning to become a teacher. Our headmistress was of the opinion that girls from the High School should only apply to local colleges and certainly not to London. Proving her wrong, myself and several other girls applied, and were accepted, by colleges in London. There followed three happy, eventful years in London.

I'm afraid the “swinging sixties” passed me by, I was too busy enjoying myself and getting involved in everything from seeing Laurence Olivier at the Old Vic, Bernard Miles at the Mermaid and “Beyond the Fringe” at the Mayfair to joining the protest against the war in Vietnam by sitting down outside the American Embassy in Grosvenor Square. However, I was always glad to return to my home town of Wigan (by steam train!) and taught here before marrying my sailor and moving to Gosport in Hampshire.

At the decade's end, in July 1969, I remember standing with Mike on the balcony of our flat looking up at the night sky to the moon it was the day Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin became the first men to walk on the moon. We had just found out that we were expecting our first child so the world seemed such a magical place to be in.

## **Answers to 1960's Stars of Cinema Film, Television, Radio and Pop**

### **Page 52**

Spartacus – Kirk Douglas, Jean Simmons, Laurence Olivier  
West Side Story – Natalie Wood,  
Lawrence of Arabia – Peter O'Toole, Omar Sharif,  
The Birds – Rod Taylor, Tippi Hedron,  
Goldfinger – Sean Connery, Honor Blackman, Gert Frobe  
Sound of Music – Julie Andrews, Christopher Plummer, Eleanor Parker, Peggy Wood  
Alfie – Michael Caine, Julia Foster, Jane Asher, Shelley Winters, Vivienne Merchant,  
The Dirty Dozen – Lee Marvin, Ernest Borgnine, Charles Bronson  
Planet of the Apes – Charlton Heston, Roddy McDowell, Kim Hunter  
Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid – Paul Newman, Robert Redford, Kathrine Ross

### **Page 53**

Danger Man – Patrick McGoohan, Richard Wattis  
Clitheroe Kid – Jimmy Clitheroe, Judith Chalmers (his sister), Danny Ross (her boyfriend)  
Step toe and Son – Wilfred Bramble and Harry H. Corbett  
Radio Show – Ken Dodd, Patricia Haines, John Laurie  
Dr Who first episode – William Hartnell, Carole Ann Ford, Jacqueline Hill, William Russell  
Crossroads – Noele Gordon, Jane Rossington, Roger Tonge, Susan Hanson, Paul Henry  
Top of the Pops – Alan Freeman, David Jacobs, Pete Murray, Jimmy Saville  
Sunday Night at the London Palladium – Bruce Forsyth  
Dad's Army – Arthur Lowe, John Le Mesurier, Clive Dunne, John Laurie, Ian Lavender  
Morecambe and Wise – Eric Morecambe and Ernie Wise  
The Likely Lads – James Bolam and Rodney Bewes

### **Page 54**

The Liver Birds – Nerys Hughes and Polly James  
Till Death Us Do Part – Warren Mitchell, Dandy Nichols, Una Stubbs, Tony Booth  
The Rag Trade – Sheila Hancock, Miriam Karlin, Peter Jones  
Bewitched – Elizabeth Montgomery, Dick York, Agnes Moorehead  
Blue Peter – Valerie Singleton, John Noakes, Peter Purves  
Bonanza – Lorne Greene, Pernell Roberts, Michael Landon, Dan Blocker  
The Saint – Roger Moore  
Dr. Kildare – Richard Chamberlain, Raymond Massey  
The Good Old Days – Leonard Sachs

### **Page 55**

Elvis. Beach Boys. Shirley Bassey. The Beatles. Petula Clark. Gerry & the Pacemakers

### **Page 56**

Bobby Darin. Doris Day. Dusty Springfield. The Hollies. Frank Ifield  
Billy Fury. The Rolling Stones

**Now we go even further back and  
take a look at the 1950's**



**1950's Wakes Week in Blackpool**





**Girls with their teddy boys in the 1950's**



**1950's Wigan Bus crew**

## Some events of the 1950's

- **1950** Clement Attlee, Prime Minister – Labour Government. End of petrol, soap and paper rationing.
- Arsenal won the F.A. Cup. Uruguay beat Brazil 2:1 to win the World Cup.
- **1951** Winston Churchill, Prime Minister – Conservative Government.
- Newcastle United won the F A Cup.
  
- **1952** King George VI died.
- Dr. Jonas Salk developed the vaccine against Polio
- 283 people died and thousands made homeless when gales battered the east coast of Kent.
- Newcastle won the F A Cup again.
  
- **1953** Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II.
- Sir Edmund Hillary and Sherpa Tensing are the first men to conquer Everest.
- Blackpool won the F A Cup.
  
- **1954** Roger Bannister broke the four-minute mile barrier.
- West Bromwich Albion won the F A Cup.
- West Germany won the World Cup 3:2 against Hungary.
  
- **1955** Sir Anthony Eden (Conservative) became Prime Minister.
- Commercial television in Britain started with first TV advert for Gibbs S R toothpaste.
- Newcastle United won the F.A. Cup.
  
- **1956** Suez Crisis – Egypt nationalised the Suez Canal, British troops sent into Egypt 6<sup>th</sup> November, withdrawn Dec. 23<sup>rd</sup>.
- Manchester City won the F A Cup.
  
- **1957** Harold McMillan (Conservative), became Prime Minister.
- Premium Bonds introduced. Aston Villa won the F A Cup.
- Soviet Union launched Sputnik 1, the first space satellite
  
- **1958** The first eight miles of motorway opened – M6, Broughton to Bamber Bridge, Preston.
- Bolton Wanderers won the F. A. Cup.
- Brazil won the World Cup 5:2 against Sweden.
  
- **1959** English Channel crossed by Christopher Cockerall's hovercraft.
- Nottingham Forest won the F A Cup.



Wigan Market Hall car park



The Picture House Scholes 1953



Inside Wigan Central Station



Standishgate, Wigan



Where Wigan Lads and Lasses go for an Evening's Entertainment  
 Popular centre for dancing is the Empress Hall. Dancing, as a rule, goes on every evening from 7.30 to 10.30. Hall holds 500. Price is 6d. a head; 1s. on Saturdays.

Empress Hall, Wigan



Tommy Moss school of dance

## **Some 1952 Statistics for Great Britain**

- No motorways in Great Britain and only 3 million cars. Today we have around 26.5 million cars.
- The Morris Minor costing £358, was Britain's most popular family car.
- The population has grown by 20% from 50 million in 1952 to 60 million.
- Population of Wigan 85,560. Population in 2016 was 317,800
- In material terms we're twice as well off as we were 50 years ago. We can afford to spend far more on luxuries than was ever possible before.
- Average weekly earnings for manual workers had risen over 40 fold since 1952.
- In 1952 a third of the workforce was female, today half of the workforce is female.
- 35% of students in 1952 stayed on past the leaving age of 15 years, compared to 70% of students today who stay on for higher/further education past the leaving age of 16 years.
- 220,000 students were in higher/further education in 1952 compared to over 2 million in 2002.
- In 1952 Great Britain had 20 universities, today we have 90 universities.
- In March the government cut the cheese ration to one ounce a week.
- Paul M Zoll at Beth Israel Hospital in Boston, USA, invented the first heart pacemaker.
- 7 million people were living alone in 2001 compared to 1.5 million in 1952.
- In October 112 passengers were killed and 200 injured in Britain's worst rail disaster when three trains collided in North London.
- The Government announced that Britain had the atomic bomb.
- In 1952 the top 10 Female names were – Susan, Linda, Christine, Margaret, Patricia, Janet, Elizabeth, Mary, Carol, Ann.
- In 1952 there were 5,012 road deaths compared to 1,792 in 2016



## **Coronation Day June 2<sup>nd</sup> 1953**



I was born in London and can remember the Coronation. It snowed in London that day even though it was June.

My mum and dad helped to organise a Coronation party for all of us who lived in the block of maisonettes. They borrowed some trestle tables and put them under the balconies so they wouldn't get wet. We had jellies, cakes and sandwiches with meat paste and Spam.

After the food we had a Punch and Judy show. None of us saw the Coronation because we didn't know anyone who had a television or had gone to watch the procession. My Uncle played his accordion at the party and we all had a sing song. In school we all got a Coronation mug and spoon.

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I remember Coronation Day in 1953. We all received a Coronation mug in school. My mum took us to see the Coronation on my Auntie's television. I don't really remember much about the actual Coronation (I think I got bored), but it was a 9" black and white television.

After this we got the bus home and had a party with everyone who lived in our flats. The flats were decorated with bunting and flags. One of the neighbours brought out her radiogram and we danced to the music. On his way home from work my dad bought his first camera and took some photos of us dancing.

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My mum and dad had bought a television in 1952 and we had watched King George VI's funeral.

On the morning of Coronation Day, everyone from our primary school (St. Paul's, Goose Green) went to St. Paul's church for a service where we had to pray for the Queen and we were all given a Coronation mug as we left.

As no one else near us had a television, my mum put forms and chairs in rows in the living room and invited the neighbours to watch the Coronation. All the children soon got bored so we went out to play. A big tent was erected on the field at the back of the houses behind the Ben Jonson pub and we had a party in there.

## 1950's Industry in Wigan



Maypole Pit 1959



Ryland's Mill (now Pagefield) Inside Ryland's



Westwood Power Station 1950



Making-up at Coops



# Coal

In 1947 all the coal mines were Nationalised and in the 1950's Wigan had 26 coal mines.

Every home in Wigan had coal fires and so did most of the homes in Great Britain. Coal fires also heated the water and most of the fireplaces in Wigan had an oven. Because of all the coal fires, we used to get a lot of smog. Smog is fog caused through smoke from the house chimneys.

In 1952 smog caused 4,000 deaths in London.

I remember that in the early 1950's we had a black grate with a coal fire and oven. We later got a gas cooker and a new tiled fireplace with a back boiler to heat the water. Sometimes in the winter the coalman didn't come and we had no coal for heating or for hot water.



Old Black fireplace with oven



Coal Merchant



Miner washing in tin bath at home



Maypole Colliery



Wigan Pit Brow Lasses 1950

## Employment Memories of the 1950's



I worked at Lord & Sharman's shoe factory. I started there at the age of 15 years in 1952 after I left school. We made shoes and bedroom slippers. My first wage was £1.7s.6d (£1.32½).

This was my only job until 1961 when I started our family.

*Eileen Knight born 1937*



Work in the fifties was becoming plentiful. I left school in 1954. My first job was in a carpet factory as a Loom tuner. The weavers there went on strike so because of this the owner closed the factory down.

I then went to Ince Wagon Works as a welder, I finished there after six weeks to start at Walker Brothers Engineering in Frog Lane as an Apprentice Moulder in the foundry. My wage was 28 shillings (£1.40) for a 42 hour week. It was hard work, dirty and hot, but I must have liked it as I stayed with the company for 18 years. *Eddie Knight*



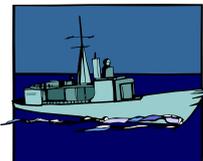
I left school July 1950 at 15 and went to College in Manchester, Tib Street. I finished at College and went to work in the office of a clothing factory in Newton Street, Manchester.

I left Manchester behind and went to work in Ingersoll Rand, Trafford Park and stayed with that company for the rest of my working life. Trafford Park was not an easy place to get to. I had to catch a bus at 7.30 a.m. to Irlam, change buses in Patricroft which went via Barton Bridge, a swing bridge over the Manchester Ship Canal (little used now), this used to open every morning making me late for work at 8.30 a.m.

Pay for my first job was £2.15s. (£2.75), second job pay rise 10 shillings making my wages £3.5s. (£3.25).

*Mary Blay born 1935*

**In 1950 the average wage in the UK was £100 per year**



## **National Service**



From 1948 to 1963, over two million British men between the ages of eighteen and twenty-six were called up to do National Service. The 1948 National Service Act fixed the period of National Service to eighteen months with 4 years in the reserves. At call-up you could choose to join the Army, Navy or RAF.

The Korean War led to a further amendment increasing the period of service to two years, with three and a half years in the reserves. Men in Northern Ireland were excluded from the National Service Act.

The call-up finally came to a halt on 31<sup>st</sup> December 1960 and the very last National servicemen left the Army in 1963.

These conscripts were needed to meet the military demands resulting from continuing world unrest. They provided a garrison in West Germany during the Cold War and to cover Britain's withdrawal from the Empire.

After a period of basic training, over half could expect to be posted overseas. Some fought in campaigns in Malaya, Kenya, Korea, Suez, Cyprus and Aden. 395 National Servicemen were killed on active service.

Leslie Thomas wrote about his experience as a National Serviceman from 1949 – 51 in his best selling book "The Virgin Soldiers" which was later made into a successful film.

Mr. Robert Hogan a National Serviceman in the 1950's.



## **Memories of Doreen – a nurse in the 1950's**

I began my nursing career in 1950 as a cadet nurse. Although the hours were long due to the fact that we had to live at home and the journey, involving two buses, took an hour each way from leaving home at 6.45am and returning home sometimes as late as 9pm. If we worked through without a break, we worked 8am until 5pm, other times we had a break from 2pm to 4pm, then went back on duty until 8.30pm.

As a cadet nurse we had to do all the menial jobs e.g. cleaning toilets, sputum cups and bed pans, washing the beds and rubber draw sheets with carbolic acid. We helped the nurses with making patients comfortable by making beds and helping toileting etc. We also arranged the flowers brought by relatives and helped in feeding those patients unable to feed themselves. During visiting hours we had to stay on the ward and do any cleaning of dressing trolleys, roll cotton wool balls and powder rubber gloves which we then put into containers called drums which when full were sent to be sterilised.

My general training started in the latter part of 1951. We had probationary training for 6 months where we had to work as usual on the wards, but a portion of time in the classroom.

We were a happy group and from that time we had to live in the nurses' home so we spent our free time together unless it was our day off. Once we started our training we were allocated a ward for a length of time and then moved on to gain experience in the different fields. If we were on night duty we still had to attend lectures, which meant we had to stay up for them. They were usually about 10 am, but that was because the day duty nurses had to get the busy morning work done first. During all our training we were not allowed to live at home unless it was our day off.

At Whiston Hospital, where I trained, our accommodation was in what we called 'the huts', they had been used for soldiers during the war. Two of us had to share a room, but if we were on night duty, we were moved to another block. There were four blocks, one was for night duty and the others were for First, Second and Third year students. We didn't mix with our seniors. It was for me a very happy time.

## **Memories of Doreen – a nurse in the 1950's – Continued.....**

When we had finished our third year we became SRN (State Registered Nurse).

I spent six months as a staff nurse before starting my midwifery training in 1955. This training took six months the first part of which I spent in Greenwich. The second part was spent on the district and in hospital.

My district training, at the time, was spent living with the community midwife and her husband. It was not an ideal situation, but it only lasted about eight weeks. Fortunately I could ride a bike because the midwife I was with had an area that was fairly widespread. I had to go to houses on my own for experience which was good and the patients were very welcoming.

I passed my midwifery exams in 1957 and spent several years in a very happy small maternity hospital which was due for closure in 1964. I then became a community midwife and I had many, many happy years before my retirement.



Doreen as a cadet nurse in 1950.

## National Health Service

The National Health Service began in 1948 and was a major achievement of Clement Atlee's Labour Government as it provided free medical treatment for everyone.

Before the National Health Service, G.P's would charge patients amounts such as 1s 6d (equivalent to 7p) for a surgery consultation and between 2s 6d(12p) and 7s 6d(36p) for a home visit. Some working men such as coal miners, were 'panel' patients, and family doctors were paid annual fees for their health care, unfortunately the panel doctors did not cover their wives or children. Most people unable to pay doctors would consult with the local pharmacist.

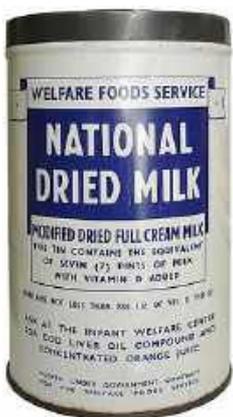
The introduction of the NHS increased life expectancy by 9 years in 1952. Eye tests/glasses, dental treatment and hearing aids were free. Many people were able to read and hear properly for the first time. Before the NHS one in twenty babies died before their first birthday. NHS set up Baby clinics with free orange juice and cod liver oil for babies and children to ensure all children had the vitamins needed to fight disease etc. Although penicillin had been available to the armed forces, it wasn't available to the general public until the NHS. During the first 6 weeks of The National Health Service, the annual budget for was used up.

In 1951 a prescription charge of one shilling was introduced.

In 1952 Dr. Jonas Salk developed the vaccine against Polio

*I remember my sisters being born in 1950 and 1953, both born at home. We used to go to the NHS clinic where babies were checked and weighed and bottles of orange juice and cod liver oil were given free as well as tins of National Dried Milk.*

*As children, we put string through the large tins of National Dried milk and made them into stilts.*



PHOTOS OF DOREEN

CADET NURSE 1950



1952 TRAINING SCHOOL



1953



1954  
STUDENT AUXILIARY



## **Shopping in the 1950's**

In the 1950's we had small, local shops although Wigan did have Pendlebury's, Lowe's and Woolworth's department stores.

The small local shops were more specialised such as: grocer's; butcher's; baker's; greengrocer's; fishmonger's; hardware and toy shop. In these local shops you were always served by the owner or one of their assistants from behind a big wooden counter. It was mostly women who did the shopping and shops were meeting places, especially the local grocer's. Women would bring their own shopping bag and had a special bag for vegetables. Plastic carrier bags were unknown.

I remember watching the people in the Maypole cut butter from a big block using wooden butter patters to shape into quarter and half-pounds.

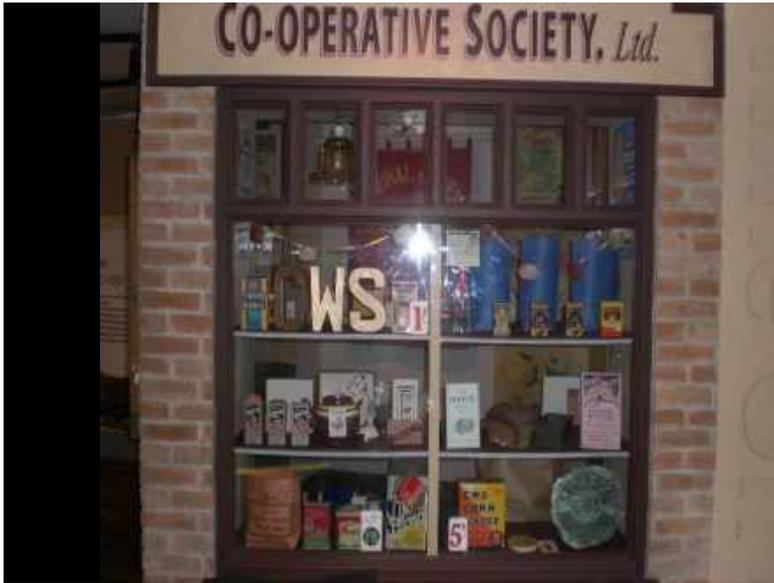


My mum owned a grocery shop in Wigan and this was open from early morning to late evening with a half-day closing. It was common practice for housewives to ask for essential items such as bread, milk, potatoes etc to be "booked" (given credit) until their husbands' pay day at the weekend.

We sold fresh grocery items(bread; milk; butter; vegetables; fruit etc), tinned foods, tea, coffee(Camp; Nescafe tins), toilet soap(Lux; Pears), washing soap(carbolic; Fairy) washing powder(Rinso; Omo; Tide), dolly blue, dolly cream, rubbing stones, bleach, firewood/firelighters, cigarettes(Woodbines in 5's & 10's; Park Drive; Capstan; Senior Service), tobacco, sweets, ice cream(Walls' family brick), pop(dandelion & burdock; Tizer), soda water siphons, medicines(Aspro; Angers Junior Asprin; Fennings Little Healers; Beecham's Pills; Setlers Powders).

My mum baked pies and cakes several times a week to sell in the shop. When we had bread strikes, my mum used to bake bread for her customers. We had a form(bench) in the shop where customers would sit and chat to each other. Not only were customers well known to us, but also their families.

# 1950's Shops



# 1950's Wigan Shops



Standishgate Wigan



Uncle Joes stall in the old Market Hall      Market Place Wigan (note the public toilets)



C & A Standishgate and Mark Williams butchers.

## The Cost of Living in 1952/53

d = old penny (240 to £); 12 old pennies = 1 shilling s = shilling (20 shillings to £)

Potatoes 10d (4p) for 5lb; Butter 4shillings(20p) for 1lb  
Milk 7d(3p) per pint  
Meat 2 shillings(10p) for 1 lb; Bacon 4s shillings(20p)per1-lb  
Rice 1 shilling (5p) for 1 lb  
Tea 2s.6d(12½p)per 1 lb  
Beer 1s 2d (6p) for a pint  
H P Sauce 1s 3d(6½p)  
Cadbury's Dairy Milk 6d(2½p); Turkish Delight 6d(2½p)  
Crisps 3d (1½p)  
Dress 43s 6d(£2.17)  
Slippers 9s 11d (50p)  
Postage stamp 3d (1½p)  
Toothpaste 9d (4p)  
Daily Mirror 1½d (3/4p); Woman's Own 4½d (2p);  
9" B/W TV £45 3s (£45.15); Record Player 11 guineas(£11.55)  
Average Rent 12s6d(63p)per week;  
Petrol 4s 3d(21p) per gallon

### **During 1953 eggs, bacon, sugar and sweets came off rationing.**

Although the National average wage in 1952 was said to be 7pounds 11 shillings (£7.55), our research has shown that in the North West factory workers were earning about £1. 7s. 6d (£1.37½) per week and office workers £2.15s. (£2.75) per week.

A night at the pictures in Wigan to see "Singing in the Rain (1952) would cost 1 shilling (5p) and the same in 1953 to see "From Here to Eternity". These films were classed as 'A' movies and a night at the pictures would consist of two films an 'A' and a 'B' movie as well as Pathe news.

In 1952 a 9" black and white television would cost approximately 6 weeks wages (National average wage) or 23 weeks' wages for a factory/office worker in the North West. Today a 19"HD colour television costs around £90 and that would be a fifth of the National average weekly wage or a third of the average North West factory/office workers weekly wage. Our research shows that groceries, clothes, toys, electrical goods and home furnishings are much cheaper today.

Council House rent 7s 6d per week

In 1955 only eight per cent of people owned their own homes compared to nearly 70 per cent today.

# TRANSPORT

I can remember the traffic bobby on point duty at the top of Library Street and Wallgate in the 1950's. He used to stand under a lamp in all weather. The lamp was suspended from a metal cable stretching across the top of the buildings at each side of the street.

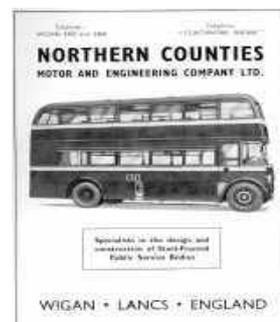


In 1952 15% of the population had access to a car compared to 73% now.

In the centre of Wigan we had 3 train stations, Wigan Wallgate, Wigan North Western and Wigan Central (in Station Road).



*Wigan Central Station*



All the Wigan Corporation buses were dark red and cream and went from the Market Place. At 11 p.m. the last buses used to leave after the Inspector blew a whistle. The buses did not have doors and had a driver (in his cab) as well as a conductor who took the fares and rang the bell to stop the bus. The Ribble buses were all bright red and went from the Market Square which is where we used to have the Annual Wigan Fair.



## **Our House**



In the 1950's we did not have any hot running water in our house. At bathtime my parents had to light a copper boiler about an hour before we had a bath. In the winter we had a bath in a tin bath in front of the fire. In summer we had our baths in the washhouse.

Our toilet was outside, it didn't have any light and we used old cut-up newspapers for toilet paper. If we wanted to go to the toilet in the night we used a "jerry" (chamber pot) which was kept under the bed.

My mum used a donkey stone to clean the front step and 'black lead' to clean the fireplace which had an oven attached. Most rooms in our house were stone flags, but we had some 'oilcloth' (lino) down in the living room.

I can remember going shopping with my mum on a Saturday morning. We used to go in the old market hall and have a look around the outside market. After or before shopping we used to call in Woolworths café for something to eat and drink.

My favourite sweets were Spangles Olde English and Fry's 5 boys chocolate. My dad used to like tripe for his tea and sometimes my mum used to cook a sheep's head for our tea. I didn't like the sheep's head. My favourite was my mum's currant cake and home-made lemonade.



*Our house*

## 1950's Wigan Homes

After World War II there was a housing shortage and prefabs were built in Wigan. The American Servicemen, who were based not far away, erected the prefabs and I watched how they laid a concrete base and then slid the panels of the prefab down planks and bolted them together.

Inside the prefab we had a kitchen with fitted cupboards, a sink unit, a cooker and fridge. I remember when it was quiet that you could hear mice running between the wall partitions and the ceiling.

In early 1952 we moved from the prefab into a brand new semi-detached council house at Norley Hall. This had three bedrooms, a separate living room and dining room, a bathroom and toilet upstairs and another toilet downstairs. We had a large garden at the back and a garden at the front as well. Our house looked out onto a huge area of grass so it didn't feel like we were on a housing estate.



1950's prefabs



1950's prefab kitchen with fridge



Terraced Houses, women cleaning with donkey stone. Back of terraced houses



New semi-detached house with garden in Norley Hall



1950's gas cooker



1950's kitchen



1950's Living Room



1950's Living room

## **1950's SCHOOL MEMORIES**

I attended St. Paul's Primary School in the 1950's and we used slates and chalk to write with instead of paper. When we were older we used paper and pens. The pens had nibs which scratched and the ink was in ink wells set in each desk. One of my jobs was to make up the ink from blue powder mixed with water in big metal jugs, then fill up the ink wells. Only the boys in our school got the cane as a punishment.

When we were 10 we went into Standard 4 where we sat the 11 plus exam. There were 52 in our class. I passed my 11 plus exam and went to the Wigan Girl's High School, which is now Mab's Cross Primary School. The boys who passed went to Wigan Grammar School and those that failed went to All Saints Secondary Modern which is now the Deanery High School.

In 1954 The Thomas Linacre Technical School opened for boys and I transferred from Wigan Grammar School as I preferred the technical side.



Thomas Linacre School Year of opening 1954

I started school in the 1950's and in our class we had a big fireplace and the fire was lit in the winter. Every morning we were given a bottle of milk each and I was Milk Monitor which meant I had to put a hole in the milk tops for the straw. We used small blackboards and chalk at first, in later classes we used pencils and paper, then wooden pens with nibs and the ink was made up in school, sometimes it was very watery.

Every year we had a May procession where all the girls wore white dresses and we walked around the streets, led by a band. At the end of the walk we had a church service and the "crowning" of Our Lady's statue by the 'May Queen'.

Our school was very strict and the cane was used a lot, but only for those over 9 yrs old. At the age of 10 you went into the "Remove" which was the class where you took the scholarship exam (11 plus). If you passed the 11 plus you went to Grammar School.

For those girls who didn't pass the 11 plus they stayed on at the same school but were in the Seniors until they were 15 years old. The boys who didn't pass the exam went to the newly built Boys Secondary Modern.



**Wigan High School 1950's**



**Wigan Grammar School now  
Thomas Linacre Health Centre.**



**Girl's High School, now Mabs Cross Primary**



**Wigan Mining and Technical  
College opened in 1903, now the "new" Wigan Town Hall.**

## Wedding Memories of the 1950's



I went to London in 1951 with my granny. The Festival of Britain was on, but she never took me to see it, she said we couldn't afford the entrance fee. I was very upset about that and my mum was very cross when we came home – you don't get those chances twice in one lifetime.

I remember the year of the Coronation (1953), mum and dad bought their first television, it was black and white. In August 1956 I got married. Ann was born September 1957. We could not afford a house of our own. Houses cost about £2,000 in those days, but my husband only earned £10 per week so we had to live with my mum and dad. In 1958 we went into our own Council house until we bought our own house in the 1960's.

*Mary Blay born 1935*

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Joe and I were married in 1958 at St.Patrick's church and our reception was at Haigh Hall. After the meal we went by train on our honeymoon to Jersey. During the train ride Joe opened his wallet and all this confetti fell out. When we returned to Wigan we didn't have a penny and walked with our case to the rented terraced house we shared with my dad. Later we were able to buy the house.



Vera and Joe on their wedding day 1958

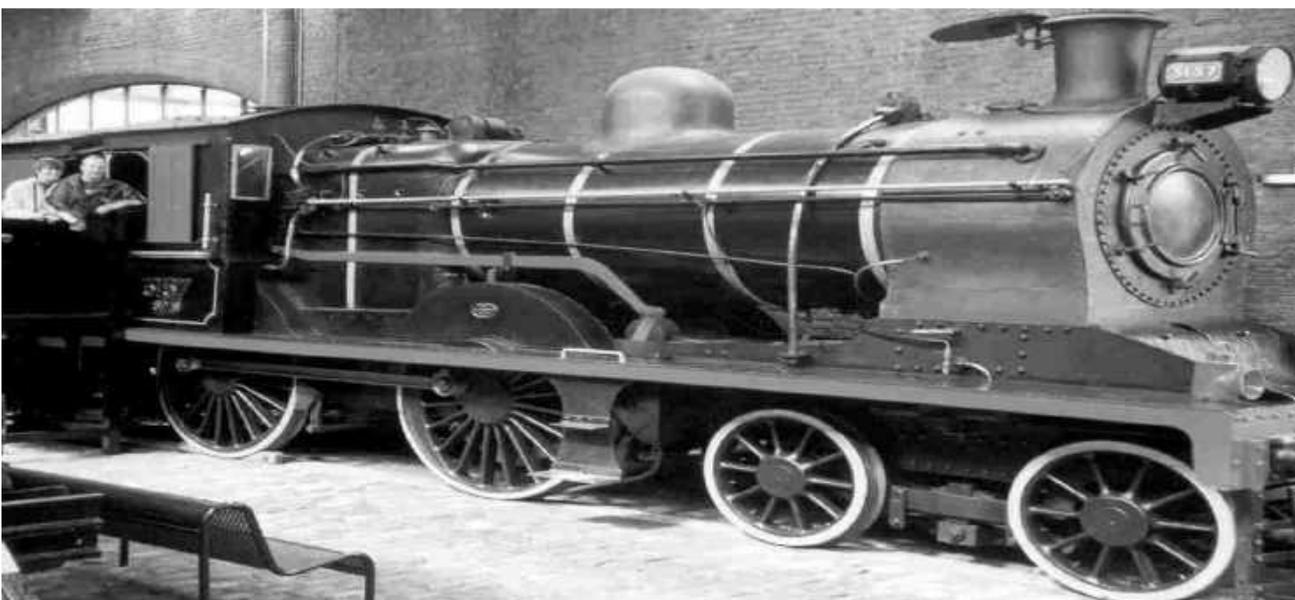
## **Wakes Weeks**

Many Wigan shops, mills and factories closed down for Wakes Weeks (first two weeks in July). Most people went on holiday for one week to Blackpool, but some went to North Wales or the Lake District. Special trains ran to Blackpool, also many extra buses from the Market Square. People stayed in small hotels or guesthouses as the larger hotels were too expensive for ordinary working people.

In 1953 a week's full board in a small Blackpool Guest House would cost 13s6d(67p)per day, wash-basins in room, shared bathroom/toilet. A Wigan Factory worker would earn about £1.7s6d(£1.37) per week.

In the 50's Blackpool attracted some of the biggest stars such as:

Josef Locke; Thora Hird; Eve Boswell; Beverley Sisters; Albert Modley; Ken Platt; Arthur Askey; Charlie Cairoli; Winifred Attwell; Max Bygraves; Nat Jackley; Harry Secombe; Morecambe & Wise; Jewell & Warris. To see Morecambe & Wise in 1953 the cheapest seats would cost 2s6d (12p).



## Walking Days

All the churches in Wigan had Walking Days, each church chose the Sunday in May/ June they would walk. The Roman Catholic churches all walked together every Whit Monday. At the end of the procession we had a church service. Walking Days did not take place during the war years and only started again on 29th May 1950.



## Wigan Walking Days



Wigan St. George's Walking Day 1953



St. John's Primary School 1953



Primary school Whit Walk in Standishgate 1951

## **Entertainment in the 1950's**

Entertainment in the 50's was a night at the pictures for one shilling (5p). For the Coronation in 1953 dad and mum bought their first television, it was black and white.

Occasionally we went to Ballroom Dancing which cost 1s 6d(7½p). In 1953 started my boy years and we went out in large crowds, boys and girls. We gathered together in The Park, dressed ourselves up as best we could. I had no make-up, but my friends had sisters so we borrowed their make-up. We must have looked a fright, also we would wear leg tan, no such thing as stockings. My mum was quite strict so I had to get all that make-up off before I went home. I had to be home by 10 p.m. or I had to come home one hour early the next night, I was 18 years old.

I met my future husband in 1953, he was one of the crowd. In 1954 we went to Brixham in Devon for a holiday with my mum and dad. It was like going abroad for us as we had not been beyond Blackpool. People didn't go very far afield unless they were well off. *(Mary Blay, born 1935)*



Buddy Holly

I went to see Buddy Holly and the Crickets at the ABC (Ritz) Wigan on 18th March 1958 with a group of older friends. Little did we know that he would die in a plane crash 11 months later in February 1959.

Although the Ritz was a cinema, it was so large and had a stage in front of the cinema screen which made it an ideal venue for concerts. In the 60's the Ritz played host to stars such as Billy Fury, Vince Eager, The Beatles, Cliff Richard etc. The Ritz continued as a cinema/bingo hall until quite recently and is still now used as a bingo hall although it is to be demolished for the new shopping development.

In 1952 there were 12 cinemas in the Wigan area, now we only have the multiplex at Robin Park.

## **British Radio, Television and Cinema in the 1950's**

**BBC Radio 1950+** The Archers, Billy Cotton's Bandshow, Workers' Playtime, Two-Way Family Favourites, Educating Archie, Have a Go, Mrs. Dale's Diary, The Man in Black, Listen with Mother,  
1953 - Variety Playhouse  
1954- Hancock's Half Hour  
1958 - Today  
1959 - The Navy Lark

The BBC only played 'popular' music on "Two-Way Family Favourites" which was a request programme for the British Forces Overseas. You could only hear pop music by tuning into Radio Luxemburg or American Forces radio.

BBC had the only television station until 1955 when Commercial Television began in the London area only. Granada was the Commercial television for the North West and started on 3<sup>rd</sup> May 1956. The first advert broadcast was for Gibbs SR toothpaste in 1956.

### **BBC Television programmes first shown:**

1950 – Andy Pandy; Come Dancing; University Boat Race(outside broadcast)  
1951 - What's My Line?,  
1952 - Bill and Ben; First broadcast from another country – France  
1953 - Rag, Tag & Bobtail; Panorama; Coronation  
1954 - First Weatherman; Grove Family;  
1955 - Crackerjack; Dixon of Dock Green  
1956 - Eurovision Song Contest; Hancock's Half Hour  
1957 - Six Five Special; Queen's Christmas Broadcast  
1958 - Blue Peter; Your Life in their Hands; Black & White Minstrels.  
1959 - Juke Box Jury; Face to Face.

## **1950's Entertainment**

No daytime television, programmes started with 5pm Children's TV then an Intermission until 7pm. Television ended about 11pm with a photo of the Queen and the National Anthem. Short films(Interludes) were shown between programmes e.g.The Potter's Wheel.

### **Commercial Television programmes first shown:**

1955 – Robin Hood; Sunday Night at the London Palladium; Double Your Money

1956 - Sir Lancelot; Emergency Ward 10; The Buccaneers; Opportunity Knocks;

1957 - Zoo Time; Ivanhoe; Army Game; Criss Cross Quiz;

1958 - Four Feather Falls; Wagon Train; Katie's Oxo Advert;

1959 - Rawhide; Armchair Theatre; 77 Sunset Strip

### **Some Popular Songs of the 1950's**

1950 – “Bewitched, Bothered and Bewildered” - Doris Day  
“Rudolph the Red nosed Reindeer” – Bing Crosby

1951 – “Tennessee Waltz – Patti Page  
“Too Young – Jimmy Young

1952 – “Unforgettable” – Nat King Cole  
“Here in My Heart” – Al Martino, the first recorded No. 1

1953 –“How Much is that doggie in the window” – Lita Roza  
“I Believe” – Frankie Laine; “You Belong to Me” – Jo Stafford  
“I saw Mommy Kissing Santa Claus” – Beverley Sisters

1954 -“Secret Love” – Doris Day; “Cara Mia” – David Whitfield  
“Lets Have Another Party” - Winifred Atwell

1955 – “Unchained Melody” – Jimmy Young  
“Christmas Alphabet”- Dickie Valentine

1956 – “Rock Around the Clock” – Bill Haley;

1957 – “Singing the Blues” – Tommy Steele  
“That'll be the Day” Buddy Holly and the Crickets

1958 - “Great Balls of Fire” Jerry Lee Lewis  
“Jailhouse Rock” – Elvis Presley

1959 – “Living Doll“ and “Travellin Light” – Cliff Richard and the Shadows

## **SOME OF THE FILMS ON THE CINEMA IN THE 1950'S**

1950 – “All About Eve”; “Disney’s Cinderella”; “Born Yesterday” “Harvey”; “Old Mother Riley”; “The Wooden Horse”; “The Blue Lamp”; “Treasure Island”; “Odette”

1951 – “An American in Paris”; “Quo Vadis”; “Showboat”; “the African Queen”; “Lady with the Lamp”; “The Man in the White Suit”; “Tom Brown’s Schooldays”

1952 – “The Greatest Show on Earth”; “Hindle Wakes”; “Pickwick Papers”; “Moulin Rouge”; “Mandy”; “The Card”; “Singing in the Rain”; “Hans Christian Anderson”

1953 – “From Here to Eternity” “Roman Holiday”; “The Robe”; “Gentlemen Prefer Blondes”; “Shane”; “Albert RN”; “The Cruel Sea”; “Genevieve”; “A Queen is Crowned”; “Trouble in Store”.

1954 – “On the Waterfront”; “White Christmas”; “Magnificent Obsession”; “A Star is Born”; “Animal Farm”; “The Belles of St. Trinians”; “Doctor in the House”

1955 – “Marty”; “Guys and Dolls”; “Rebel Without a Cause”; “Seven Year Itch”; “Lady and the Tramp”; “The Colditz Story”; “The Dam Busters”; “Richard III”; “Quatermass Experiment”; “The Ladykillers”;

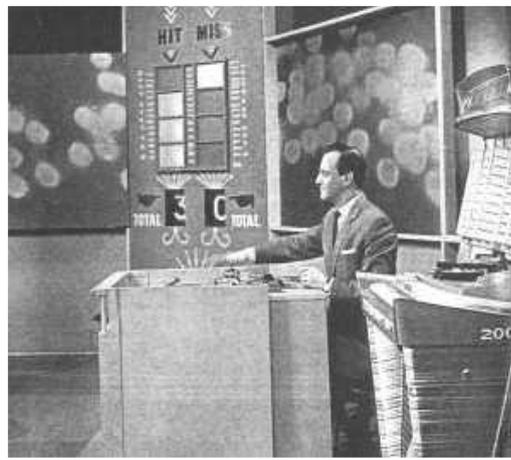
1956 – “Around the World in 80 Days”; “The Ten Commandments”; “The King and I”; “High Society”; “1984”; “The Man Who Never Was”; “A Town Like Alice”

1957 – “The Bridge on the River Kwai”; “Witness for the Prosecution”; “Prince and the Showgirl”; “Loving You”; “Jailhouse Rock”; “The Admirable Crichton”;

1958 – “Gigi”; “South Pacific”; “The Vikings”; “Carve Her Name with Pride”; “Dunkirk”; “Ice Cold in Alex”; “A Night to Remember”; “A Tale of Two Cities”.

1959) – “Ben Hur”; “Disney’s Sleeping Beauty”; “Some Like It Hot”; “The Nun’s Story”; “The 39 Steps”; “Carry on Nurse”; “Carry on Teacher”; “Hound of the Baskerville’s”; “I’m Alright Jack”; “Look Back in Anger”; “Room at the Top”.

**Can you name the programmes, stars and year of broadcast?**





## **1950's Quiz**

1. What year did King George VI die?
2. What did women clean their steps with?
3. What was the first No.1 in the Pop Charts?
4. What did a North West factory worker earn in 1952?
5. Where were the first 8 miles of motorway opened?
6. When were prescription charges first introduced?
7. Who invented the first heart pacemaker in 1952?
8. Who developed the polio vaccine?
9. When was the Festival of Britain?
10. When did walking days start again after World War II?
11. How many railway stations did Wigan have in 1952?
12. How much for a week's full board in a 1953 Blackpool guest house?
13. How much for the cheapest seats to see Morecambe and Wise at Blackpool in 1953?
14. Who appeared at the ABC (Ritz) on the 18<sup>th</sup> March 1958?
15. How many cinemas in Wigan in 1952?
16. Who starred opposite Julie Andrews in the stage play "My Fair Lady"?
17. Who sang "Finger of Suspicion" in 1955?
18. How much for a pound of tea in 1952/53?
19. Which film won an Oscar in 1957?
20. How many weeks' wages for a North West factory worker would equal the cost of a television in 1952?

## **ANSWERS TO 1950'S QUIZ**

- 1) 1952
- 2) Donkey stone
- 3) Al Martino
- 4) £1.7s.6d
- 5) Broughton to Bamber Bridge (M6)
- 6) 1952
- 7) Paul. M. Zoll
- 8) Dr Jonas Salk
- 9) 1951
- 10) May 1950
- 11) Three
- 12) 13s 6d per day
- 13) 2s 6d
- 14) Buddy Holly
- 15) Twelve
- 16) Rex Harrison and Stanley Holloway
- 17) Dickie Valentine
- 18) Half a Crown
- 19) Bridge On The River Kwai
- 20) 23 weeks

## **ANSWERS TO RADIO/TV PICTURES QUIZ**

- 1) Tex Tucker in Four Feather Falls (Gerry Anderson), 1958
- 2) Blue Peter – Christopher Trace and Leila Williams, 1958
- 3) The Buccaneers – Robert Shaw, 1956
- 4) Dixon of Dock Green – Jack Warner, 1955
- 5) Juke Box Jury – David Jacobs, 1959
- 6) PG Tips – Chimps
- 7) Gibbs SR Toothpaste 1955
- 8) Eurovision Song Contest – Pearl Carr/Teddy Johnson, 1956
- 9) Ivanhoe – Roger Moore, 1957
- 10) Black & White Minstrels – Tony Mercer, Dai Francis, John Boulter 1958
- 11) Potter's Wheel
- 12) Rawhide – Clint Eastwood, 1959
- 13) Navy Lark – Leslie Phillips 1959
- 14) Robin Hood – Richard Green, 1955
- 15) Sir Lancelot - William Russell, 1956
- 16) Six Five Special – Pete Murray, 1957
- 17) Take Your Pick – Michael Miles, 1955
- 18) Hancock's Half Hour – Tony Hancock, 1954 (Radio), 1956 (TV)
- 19) Sunday Night at the London Palladium – Tommy Trinder, 1955
- 20) Wagon Train – Ward Bond, 1958
- 21) Emergency Ward 10–Charles Tingwell/John Barron/Jill Browne/Richard Thorpe 1956
- 22) Zoo Time – Desmond Morris 1956
- 23) Panorama – David Dimbleby, 1953
- 24) Crackerjack – Eamon Andrews, 1955
- 25) 77 Sunset Strip – Effram Zimbalist Jr./ Ed Byrne (*Cookie*), 1959



Mini skirts



First edition Jackie 1964

