



Talks Programme

Whitworth Historical Society holds a series of talks on the first Wednesday of each month, commencing in October and running through to June of the following year. Admission is free at the point of entry and is open to members and non members alike. Non members are however politely requested to make a small donation towards the running of the museum.

Membership of the Society is open to all and is a modest £10 per year. Ask for details or see our website.

Contact Details

Chairman Mobile: 07434 703972

Email: chairman@whitworthhistoricalsociety.org.uk

Secretary Mobile: 07816 911556

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The museum is open throughout the year

Saturday 11.00am - 4.00pm

Other times by appointment

Group visits always welcome

The Heritage Museum

North Street

Whitworth

OL12 8RE

Whitworth Historical Society has been supported by



Cover Picture: Whitworth Station & Goods Yard. Abt.1966

Photo: WHS



Registered Charity 517660



Whitworth Historical Society

Talks Programme

2026-27

All talks commence at

7.30pm

and are held at

Hallfold United Reformed Church

Hall Street

Whitworth

OL12 8TL

www.whitworthhistoricalsociety.org.uk



Wednesday, 7th October 2026
"Nine Pounds and a Suitcase"
By Pat Fallon

The title of this talk is taken from Pat's recently published autobiography. When Pat, who spent his early life in an orphanage, arrived at Holyhead from Ireland he had just nine pounds in his pocket and a suitcase which had been purchased for 25/- the day before. He travelled directly from Wales to Manchester and, within 24 hours, was hard at work on the Langley Estate in Middleton. During his lifetime, Pat has raised many thousands of pounds for his preferred charities. He tells his own unique story.

Wednesday, 4th November 2026
"AGM"
followed by **Potato Pie Supper**

The AGM is open to members and non-members alike and is an opportunity for us to review the year's performance and what we have in mind for the future. Delicious potato pie supper to round off the evening!

Wednesday, 2nd December 2026
"Life of a Vice Lord-Lieutenant & Sheriff"
by Sharman Birtles MBE JP DL

Former banker Sharman talks about her life outside work and of being appointed to the role of Deputy Lieutenant of Greater Manchester in 2008 and serving as High Sheriff of the County in 2015/16. In 2020 she was further elevated when appointed as Vice Lord-Lieutenant. Sharman was recognised in the 2022 New Year Honours List when awarded the MBE.

Wednesday, 6th January 2027
"Murder at the Vicarage"
by Janice Harvey

Almost 160 years ago, what was described as a "*grisly double murder*" took place at the Christ Church Vicarage in Todmorden. Armed with four pistols and an axe, 23 year old textile worker Miles Weatherill decided to take his revenge on the vicar, Reverend Anthony Plow, after he (Miles) had been forbidden to court domestic servant 16 year old Sarah Bell. Sadly, the vicar was not the only victim.

Wednesday, 3rd February 2027
"The Poor & The Law"
by Michael Brennan

Michael takes us back to the time of the Norman Conquest in order to fully address the question of how the law was used to care (or otherwise) for the poor and destitute in society. We see how, over many hundreds of years, changing attitudes to this unfortunate group of people, helped shape the law. This talk is the first of two.

Wednesday, 3rd March 2027
"Poor Law "
By Michael Brennan

Following on from his previous talk, Michael this time looks at effects on the poor, in terms of the law, of such significant national events as the Napoleonic Wars, the Corn Laws and WW1.

Wednesday, 7th April 2027
"Civic Pride - Rossendale"
by Lynn Smith

Formed almost 20 years ago Civic Pride Rossendale is a volunteer group which maintains many of the public spaces in and around Rawtenstall. Although focused on plants and planting, Civic Pride also organises litter picks around the town. The group is well supported financially by individual donations and by local business. Lynn tells Civic Pride's story, its history and its aims.

Wednesday, 5th May 2027
"Turnpikes & County Maps"
by Dr Paul Hindle

For this talk, historical geographer and author Paul, combines his two main interests, those of turnpikes and old maps. Turnpikes appear to have commenced in the 16th century through until a 'turnpike mania' in the 18th century. Tolls collected from road users were intended to maintain and improve the state of the roads, but was this always the case? As the road network developed, so did accurate maps. Mapping, as we know it today, has its roots in military strategy following the 1745 Scottish rebellion. Some years later, the government's Board of Ordnance began its detailed surveys; maps that we still rely on and use today.

Wednesday, 2nd June 2027
"The Story of Grane Mill"
By Anthony Pilling

Grane Mill is perhaps one of the lesser known heritage assets in Rossendale but, for all that, is no less impressive. A weaving mill from 1907 to its closure in 1978, the mill still retains its 500HP cross compound steam engine built by local engineers SS Stott Ltd. Although yet to be restored to steaming condition, the engine can nevertheless be seen in motion by the ingenious use of an electric motor. Loom specialist Anthony Pilling brings us up to date with the story of Grane Mill.