

Editors: Des Grant and Trevor Williams

Hello Everyone,

Here is the March edition of the Chorley Heritage Centre Group Newsletter. We are well into a New Year since the last newsletter and already have lots to report on with lots more to come. There is some information about an upcoming book event on 18th March at the end of the newsletter so please do follow the instructions on the invite if this is something you are interested in.

As always, if there is anything you wish to be included in the next edition, please do not hesitate to contact myself or Des.

Trevor Williams.

Events

Councillor Alistair Morwood, Mayor of Chorley, held his mayoral ball as a ceilidh and celebration of Robert Burns Night. It took place in the Lancastrian Suite at Chorley Town Hall on Friday 23rd January. Our Heritage Group was well represented, especially as it is one of the Mayor's designated charities for his year in office.

And what a night it was! A fine meal featuring Bees' Kitchen haggis proved a popular starter. There followed fine renditions of Burns' poetry and song, with toasts to the Lassies and Laddies and of course, the noble haggis which was piped into the hall.

Then there were cheerful and well-supported auctions, draws and competitions. The evening was rounded off with a hearty and happy version of *Auld Lang Syne*, after two sessions of enthusiastic Scottish dancing.

Grateful thanks were conveyed to the Mayor and the Mayoress for such a splendid evening and their enduring support for the Heritage Group.



The Heritage Group at Dinner



Burns' night Song

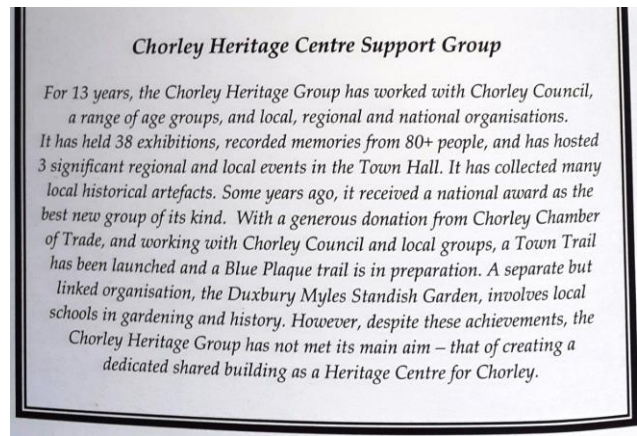
The Mayor's Welcome



Piping in The Haggis!



The Mayor, Mayoress and Piper



An excerpt from the Burns' Night Leaflet about our group

News

Modelling Project: This is on the 1st floor in the library. David has made a table for it and has had a map of the town centre made to fit it. Although it is in the early stages with just a few models, the hope is that more schools and groups will participate.

Town of Culture: Chorley Council is preparing a bid to become the UK's first Town of Culture. The Heritage Group has offered to contribute to the preparation of the bid and Emma Lyons, Head of Communications & Visitor Economy, has said that our input would be welcomed.

Town Hall Works: Work continues in the basement of the Town Hall measuring display bags and boards that require protective bags. As you can see from the picture of Peter below, protective clothing is also very important whilst working in the basement due to circulating dust and the crumbling ceiling, which does not have any ventilation. Linda and Richard have also moved all the display panels that were stored in cardboard boxes into new bags, labelled according to their contents. They have removed any rotten cardboard and put it in the recycling bins. All the Myles Standish exhibition tubs are stored in Bay 10, the extra-large display boards you will see are behind the racking; unfortunately these are not in any protective carry bags. Linda has previously measured the length and depth of these boards at L150cm x W100cm x D10cm and is still trying to source a bespoke bag as they really do need protection.



Council Training Day: On Thursday 26th February, Bill Walker is pictured leading a Town Trail session during a training day organised by John Hill for town centre Chorley Council staff. Bill was joined by 3 Heritage Group Committee members. The walk around the Town Trail, stopping at points of historical interest, was informative, both for Chorley born staff and for those with less local knowledge. On their return to the Town Hall, each participant was given copies of both Town Trail leaflets.



Upcoming Events

Below is a bulletin from the **Weavers Uprising Bicentennial Committee** about the events for the 200th anniversary of the Lancashire weavers' uprising and Chadderton massacre, which took place in April 1826. The rising started at Whinney Hill, Accrington and on the first day spread across the area from Clitheroe in the north and Oswaldtwistle and Blackburn in the west. On the second day the protests spread further south towards Helmshore and Haslingden and on the third day of the rising power looms were destroyed across Rossendale. 200 years later the people of Lancashire are gathering once again in their thousands to commemorations the rising, mourn those who were killed at the Chatterton massacre and remember the struggles and suffering of those involved in the anti-starvation protests of 1826 in Lancashire and surrounding regions. Find out more in the attached bulletin.

Also below are details of an interesting new book, **First Kings**, by R.A.J Waddingham about the Vikings in England and Norway, with an invitation to its launch in Silverdale on the 18th March.



Commemorating The 1826 Weavers Uprising and Chatterton Massacre

Lancashire Local History Federation News Bulletin

10th February 2026

2026 marks the 200th Anniversary of the 1826 Lancashire weavers' uprisings and Chatterton massacre. The rising was ostensibly an anti-starvation protest involving many thousands of local people. The focus of the protests was the destruction of recently introduced power looms. Led by local 'captains' the protests were focused and largely peaceful and aimed to send a symbolic message to those in authority about their desperate poverty.

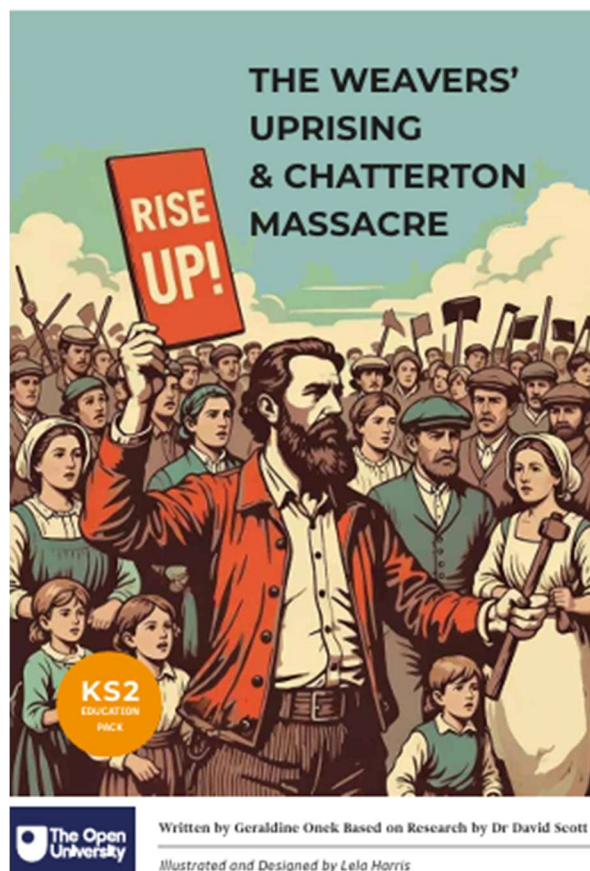
The uprising took place over 4 days from the 24th to the 27th April 1826. The rising started at Whinney Hill, Accrington and on the first day spread across the area from Clitheroe in the north and Oswaldtwistle and Blackburn in the west. On the second day the protests spread further south towards Helmshore and Haslingden and on the third day of the rising, power looms were destroyed across Rossendale.

At approximately 11.00am on that day - 26th April 1826 – the protestors were met by the military at Aitkens Mill in Chatterton. 20 soldiers from the 60th Duke of York Rifles and 15 Queen Bay cavalry aimed to stop the protestors in their tracks. Not long after the Riot Act was read by local magistrate William Grant, soldiers began to open fire upon a crowd of up to 3,000 people gathered near the mill. Many hundreds of bullets were fired and at least six people were shot dead, and several others were seriously wounded.

200 years later, the people of Lancashire are gathering once again in their thousands to commemorations the rising, mourn those who were killed at the Chatterton massacre and remember the struggles and suffering of those involved in the anti-starvation protests of 1826 in Lancashire and surrounding regions.



The commemorations are being organised and led by the *Weavers Uprising Bicentennial Committee* [WUBC] a registered charity formed in 2022 for this very purpose. The charity, which has worked closely with local heritage groups, Lancashire County Council, The Open University and several local museums, aims to transform understandings and raise public awareness of the 1826 weavers uprising through educational materials, commissioned art and performances, and regional commemorative activities.



In 2025, the WUBC received a grant from The National Lottery Heritage Fund for the project '*Remembering and Commemorating the April 1826 Lancashire Weavers Uprising*'. This funding has provided people with opportunities to learn about the 1826 uprising's importance, while also bringing the community together in shared remembrance and reflection. Our key partners are: Lancashire County Council, East Lancashire Railway, Bacup Museum, The Weavers Cottage, The Howarth, and The Whitaker.

Full details of the commemorations (and where appropriate, booking details) can be found in the 2026 Bicentennial Events brochure which is available at the WUBC website from March 2026 [<https://www.weavers-uprising.org.uk>].

Nearly all the WUBC events are free but please do check booking details and accessibility in advance. A selection of our first events in March, April and May are below – for all further events continuing through to November 2026, please check the digital Brochure on the WUBC website.

As part of the commemorations the WUBC, in collaboration with local partners and The National Lottery Heritage Fund, has facilitated:

- **Walking through history – the Remembrance Walks**

To commemorate the bicentenary of the 1826 Weavers Uprising, throughout the spring and summer months of 2026, the WUBC has organised a series of guided walks recreating all the routes taken by protesting weavers in Pennine Lancashire and beyond. The planned 2026 walks build upon and develop previous remembrance walks organised by the WUBC over the last four years.

The Remembrance Walks have been organised to follow the historic events of the Weavers Uprising 1826 and recreate the following eight routes taken by the handloom weavers in Lancashire:

24 April 1826: Whinney Hill to Low Moor, Clitheroe **(Walk 1)**

 Whinney Hill to Accrington, Oswaldtwistle & Blackburn **(Walk 2)**

25 April 1826: Earcroft, Darwen to Hoddlesden & Helmshore **(Walk 3 & Walk 8)**

26 April 1826: Haslingden to Rawtenstall, Edenfield & Chatterton **(Walk 4)**

 Chatterton to Summerseat & Bury **(Walk 5)**

 Chatterton to Rawtenstall, Waterfoot & Bacup **(Walk 6)**

27 April 1826: Tockholes to Brinscall & Chorley **(Walk 7)**



Please Note - **Walk 8** is an accessible, easy paced walk available to all and is suitable for families, buggies and wheelchairs. It will take place at Calf Hey Reservoir, which is adjacent to the weaver's route. It will take place on 16th August 2026

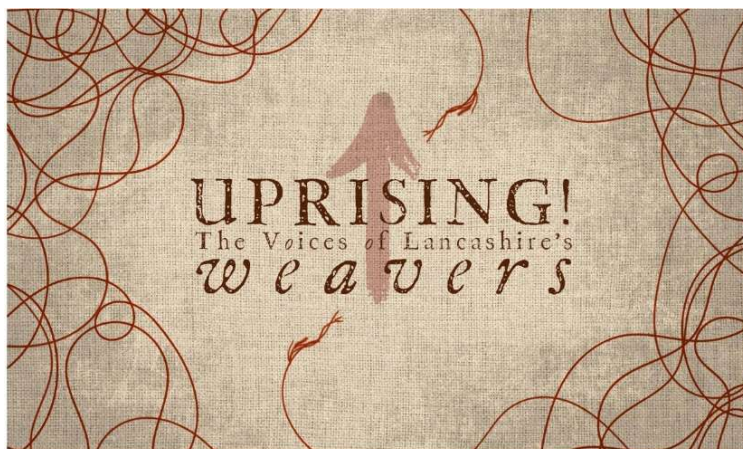
Contact Details:

Nick Burton (WUBC Walks Coordinator)

Email at: wubc2026walks@gmail.com or phone: 07864 627134

- **A Touring Exhibition and Related Talks**

From March to October the mobile exhibition will be on display in turn at Darwen Library, Bury Archives (located in Bury Art Museum), Chorley Library, Bacup Library, Haslingden Library, Accrington Library, Accrington Library, Lancaster Library, Oswaldtwistle Library, Whitworth Library and Rawtenstall Library. There will be a talk at each venue by Dr David Gordon Scott.



Contact details:

library@lancashire.gov.uk

TEL: 0300 123 6703

<https://www.lancashire.gov.uk/libraries> [QR CODE]



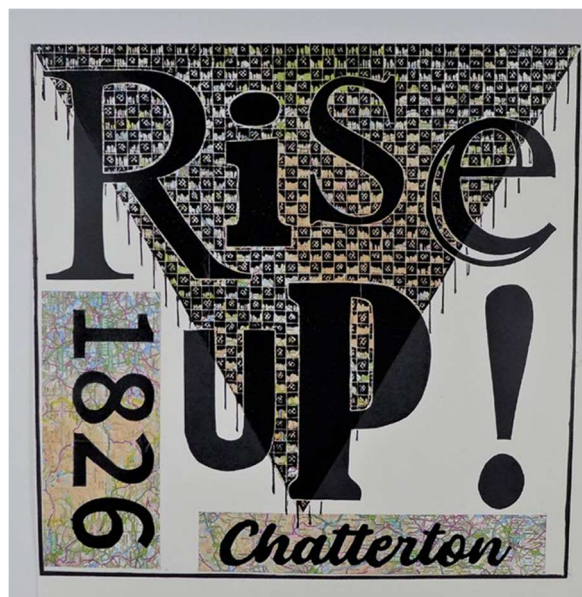
- **Helmshore Mills Textile Museum – Family Day**

**Family Event - Step back to 1826 at Helmshore Mills Saturday 25 April 2026
11:00-16:00**

Join us for a fun family friendly day at Helmshore Mills – with costumed characters and lots of exciting activities to take you back in time 200 years to 1826 and the events unfolding in the village and beyond. Featuring costumed characters, tours, trails, crafts, and workshops. Booking not required for general entry but will be for some activities.

Contact details for Family Event

Louise Jacobsson, Helmshore Mills Textile Museum
helmshoremuseum@lancashire.gov.uk 01706 226459
www.lancashire.gov.uk/museums



- **Exhibition: The Weaver's Uprising: Reframing History - Artist Intervention**

By Jamie Holman The Whitaker Museum & Art Gallery, Rawtenstall
16 April 2026 to 27 July 2026



Contact details:

info@thewhitaker.org

01706 260785

thewhitaker.org

- **Exhibition: 'Cut From the Same Cloth' (prints, sculptures & soundscape)**
By James Fox, Textile Artist

Locations: At several heritage sites in Pennine Lancashire (including Bacup Museum, the Weavers Cottage, The Howarth, Helmshore Mills Textile Museum) and a venue in Lancaster, over the period from April to October 2026.



Contact Details

www.jamesfoxtextileartist

[Instagram/jamesfoxtextileartist](https://www.instagram.com/jamesfoxtextileartist)

- **200th Annual Commemoration – The Bicentennial of the Weaver’s Uprising 1826**

Sunday 26 April 2026

WUBC & LATUC volunteers



10.20 March assembles top of Chatterton Old Lane, Ramsbottom, near Bury BL0 0LZ (see map below)

10.30 March down the Lane led by the 'Baybeat' band (route is less than 1km)

10.50 Band play near Chatterton Memorial Plaque

11.00 Assemble at the Peace Park for the opening of the Bicentennial Commemoration

11.05 First Reading - Remembering the Lancashire Rising and Chatterton Massacre (Dr David Gordon Scott)

11.15 East Lancashire Clarion Choir

11.30 Second Reading - James Chambers, Betty Upton and the naming of the dead (Dr David Gordon Scott, Kate Hurst and descendants of protestors)

11.45 Trade union and TUC speakers – 'Then and Now: the fight goes on'

11.55 Laying of wreath, final words, planting of crosses

12.05 Procession to St Phillips Church Hall, Chatterton Lane, led by 'Baybeat' band

12.15 Refreshments and folk band (Caffrey/McGurk/Madge) - St Phillips Church Hall, Chatterton Farm, Stubbins, Ramsbottom BL0 0PQ

(Toilets will be available for use at St Philips Church Hall)

Please Note - do not try to park in Chatterton, there is NO public parking – park in Stubbins or elsewhere and walk down to the Peace Park/Church Hall/ or via Old Chatterton Lane

Contact Details

www.weavers-uprising.org.uk

Please Note that this event is free and open to all

- **East Lancashire Railway**

Saturday 25th and Sunday 26th April 2026

Discounted East Lancashire Railway tickets for the bicentennial weekend

Take a train trip back in time through the heart of the Irwell Valley on Saturday 25th or Sunday 26th April 2026 (bicentennial weekend). Visitors can enjoy a 20% discount (booked by using the Code in the Main Brochure).



Contact Details

Contact details enquiries@eastlancsrailway.co.uk

0333 320 2830

www.eastlancsrailway.org.uk

Board the train at an East Lancashire Railway station.



The Open
University

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FORGET 1066 – THE MAKING OF ENGLAND BEGAN CENTURIES EARLIER

FIRST KINGS

Forged by Vikings in England and Norway

R. A. J. Waddingham

ISBN 9781837050550; RRP £22.99

Hardback, Published 29 January 2026

AFTER decades of devastating raids, Viking armies first overwintered in England in 850. In doing so, they opened a century of conflict and reaching ambition.

In Norway, **Harald Fairhair** rose from a regional chieftain to become its first king, while in England **Alfred the Great** preserved **Wessex** from conquest and laid the foundations for unity. His successors extended that vision, leading to the creation of a single English kingdom after **Athelstan's** decisive victory at **Brunanburh** in 937.

Meanwhile, the struggle for Norway's throne erupted among Harald's heirs, with **Eric Bloodaxe** briefly claiming the Crown before being overthrown by his younger brother **Hakon**. Upon fleeing to Britain, Eric was allowed the York throne by **King Edred**, which he retained until his violent death in 954. There would be no more kings in York.

This turbulent century saw kings rise and fall; it saw rivalry, betrayal and open conflict. Out of the chaos of shifting allegiances and warfare, England and Norway began to take shape as the forebears of the countries we know today.

An action-packed, page-turning adventure through the age of the Vikings

R.A.J. WADDINGHAM is a retired consulting actuary and an Honorary Fellow of **Royal Holloway, University of London**. In 2019 he completed a Graduate Certificate in Historical Research, with merit, at **Birkbeck, University of London**. He has previously written ***Breakspear: The English Pope Who Went to War*** for The History Press.

Full of political intrigue, battles, and shifting power dynamics



BOOK LAUNCH



FIRST KINGS

*Forged by Vikings in
England and Norway*



R.A.J. WADDINGHAM



THE GASKELL HALL

17 Emesgate Lane, Silverdale,
Carnforth LA5 0RA



WEDNESDAY, 18 MARCH

7.15 - 8.30pm



To book a free place, email or text the author on
rajwaddingham@btconnect.com or 07973 219678

