



1922

MANCHESTER LUNCHEON CLUB

2022



Manchester Luncheon Club

Inaugural Committee February 1922

The Lord Mayor of Manchester

Councillor E.D. Simon (later Lord Simon of Wythenshawe)

Sir Henry Miers

Sir Edwin Stockton

Mr W Clare Lees

Mr E Raymond Streat

Committee 2022

Mr Alan G Crossley (President)

Mrs Gwen M Crossley (Hon Secretary, President Elect)

Mrs Norma Buckley (Minutes Secretary)

Mr. Brian Sangster (Hon Treasurer)

Miss Stella Lowe

Professor Ian Munro

Mrs. Lee Yeomans

Mr. Stephen Glover

Mrs. Marcia McCauley

Mrs. Hylda Whitehead

Mr. David Buckley

Mrs. Margaret Thompson

Administrator Miss Barbara Whiting

During the Manchester Luncheon Club's One Hundred Years existence, there have been many changes in the business and commercial life of Manchester, in particular the lunching habits of the working community. This has been reflected over the years in the Club's constantly changing membership, which now mainly consists of retired professional, academic and likeminded people.

Despite these changes the Club remains true to its original guiding principles, continuing to cover a wide range of topics via invited speakers.

The Covid 19 Pandemic stopped all meetings from March 2020 until December 2021, even W W II, including the Blitz on Manchester City, did not achieve that.

To mark the Centenary of the Manchester Luncheon Club, there is a spontaneous desire that the reaching of this milestone should be suitably marked with a Celebratory Luncheon, on the date exactly one hundred years after the first meeting.

The Manchester Luncheon Club presents this booklet as a memento to its members and friends, old and new.

May the Club safely live and prosper for many years to come.

THE MANCHESTER LUNCHEON CLUB 1922-2022

“It has been suggested that a Luncheon Club, on the lines of one that has been in existence for several years in LEEDS, might well be inaugurated in Manchester,”

So ran the opening paragraph of a letter, dated January 1922, which was addressed to a number of prominent Mancunians by the Lord Mayor of Manchester, the President of the Manchester Chamber of Commerce, and the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Manchester.

Perhaps the emphasis given to the name of Leeds by putting it in capital letters in the letter of January 1922 was intended as a wake-up call to Mancunians not to be left behind by developments on the other side of the Pennines. However that may be, the letter met with a ready response, and some 90 people attended an inaugural meeting in the Banqueting Suite of the Town Hall on 9 February 1922 (cost of lunch 3s 6d), when it was resolved “that those present hereby form themselves into a Club to be called ‘THE MANCHESTER LUNCHEON CLUB’, the object of which shall be to afford opportunities for social intercourse to those interested in the Commerce, University, and other activities in the City, by means of periodical meetings”.

It is pleasing to note that successive Lord Mayors, Presidents of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry and Vice-Chancellors of the University of Manchester have preserved the links with the City, the Chamber and the University by agreeing to serve as Vice-Presidents of the Club, together with the Bishop of Manchester and HM Lord-Lieutenant of Greater Manchester.

An early decision of the Club was that “in the choice of subjects suggested to or proposed by invited guests of the Club, topics on which strong differences of opinion may exist among the members shall not be excluded”, a sentiment still enshrined in the Club’s rules today.

(RON YEO 2002 on the occasion of the 80th anniversary of the club)

Councillor Simon first suggested the idea of forming such a club in a letter he sent to Sir Edwin Stockton, President of the Chamber of Commerce on Armistice Day 1921. Councillor Simon had been Lord Mayor just two days. Soon after, further discussion took place with Sir Henry Miers, Vice Chancellor of Manchester Victoria University hence the January 1922 letter.

The Club’s first two lunches were held in the Banqueting Hall in Manchester Town Hall. At the first luncheon, the speaker was Sir Michael Sadler, then Vice Chancellor at Leeds University, who came to talk about the Leeds Club’s formation and development and the second was Lord Emmot speaking on The Situation in Russia. Bear in mind that this was only five years after the Revolution.

It is noted that Councillor Simon was unable to attend that first meeting as he was suffering from pneumonia. Thankfully, he recovered and was able to attend subsequent meetings and continue to lead a distinguished life until his death in 1960. It is a sobering thought that, as Covid 19 is claiming lives prematurely, Councillor Simon

survived pneumonia in the days before antibiotics. Although Councillor Simon had stated meetings could be held in the Town Hall, the Town Hall Committee did not give approval. The reason given was that the Town Hall did not hold a Liquor Licence.

Subsequent meetings were held in the Midland Hotel from April 1922 until 1942. On May 13th 1941, a letter, signed by the officers of the Luncheon Club, was sent to all members. The letter outlined the fact that the management at the Midland had announced that they could not accommodate more than 200 people at a luncheon. This number was reduced at the start of 1942 to 150. They had then said no more than 50 and would prefer no more than 30. This meant the club could not continue on its normal basis. There was a suggestion that this was due to wartime rationing and staff shortages.

After much work by the committee, the decision was reached to move meetings to the Albert Hall on Peter St. The Rev. H G Fiddick, a member of the club *“Gave very ready co-operation, as a result of which, the Lecture Hall will be available for the speech and the lunch will be served in the library.”*

Another member, Mr F A Robinson of Messrs. Robinson arranged to serve a light lunch of assorted sandwiches, sausage roll, cakes and tea or coffee. This was to be the best food that wartime conditions allow. *“He hopes, however, that the members will not judge the necessarily restricted lunch service of these days to be an example of what his firm will provide in normal times.”*

It is noted that the speakers would need a more formal luncheon, accordingly, the Officers, Committee and past Presidents would have lunch with the guest elsewhere. Meetings continued at the Albert Hall until 1953 when they moved across the road to the Free Trade Hall. Mr Robinson continued supplying the food until it was decreed that the City Council official caterers should be used.

Occasionally lunches were held elsewhere.

October 11th, 1955, Her Excellency Mrs R S Pandit, High Commissioner for India was the speaker. Lunch was served in the Houldsworth Hall on Deansgate at 12-30pm with the meeting at the Town Hall at 1-20pm. The President was Sir Harry Platt at that time, and it was noted that it was regrettable that lunch was to be held so far away from the venue for the speech, but this was the only arrangement that could be made. The problem had arisen due to a change of date by the speaker, this meant the Free Trade Hall was not then available.

February 1962 the Town Hall was the venue for the 40th Anniversary Luncheon. The guest of honour was The Rt. Hon. R.A. Butler, CH, MP, Home Secretary. October 1963 the venue was the Midland Hotel with guest speaker Field-Marshal, the Viscount Montgomery of Alamein.

It is not clear when the club moved venue again. Mention is made of Sasha’s Hotel and The Grand Hotel. Nor is it clear when the regular venue became The Freemasons Hall on Bridge St. This was an immensely popular venue. Change of ownership and renovations there forced us to move to The Portland Hotel in April 2014. By September 2016, The Portland Thistle was changing into a Burger style venue so back we went to The Freemasons. At this point we were reassured by the owners that renovations were almost complete. This was clearly not true and after 2 very cold and dusty meetings we were forced to move again. In December 2016 we were welcomed at the newly opened Holiday Inn on Aytoun St. The modern facilities are fitting for the 21st Century and we are well supported by the staff.

Many of the early meetings appear to have been planned at short notice and often took place twice a month. The business world was a vastly different place then, members were able to attend in their lunch hour. Talks lasted twenty minutes or half an hour. It has been said that the Ship's Bell was extremely useful. After the speaker had been on their feet for 20 minutes, the bell would be rung, this gave members permission to leave to get back to the office. It also acted as a prompt to the speaker to wind up their talk!

The records are not clear about membership by women. At the time of the silver Jubilee 1947, William Worthington said "Membership applications from ladies have taken more time than any other subject at Committee meetings."

Another anecdote in William's address to the club on that occasion refers to a speaker described as ".....*that bluff sailor, Commodore Sir Bertram Hayes*" when looking over his notes he heard ladies' voices and asked, "*Do you have ladies here?*" On hearing the answer yes, he got busy with a pencil. Then on catching sight of the Bishop of Hereford, he groaned and intensified the censorship.

The first lady committee member was Dr Catherine Chisholm who was nominated in 1924 it was 1938 before another lady was appointed. We can again thank William Worthington for this information recorded in his address to the club at the 500th meeting in March 1957. He went on to note that Miss Dorothy Bolton was now an official of the club as Honorary Assistant Secretary.

There was perhaps a less flattering reference to ladies in later years when a plea was made for members to cease the habit of sending their wives early to the venue to reserve seats by tipping forward the chairs or placing coats on them. The ladies would then go off to shops on Deansgate or St Ann's Square returning to greet their spouses as they arrived from offices around the City. In April 1946 a letter to members, from William Worthington stated, "*There has been not only wide approval but almost absolute compliance with the Committee's decision against the placing of coats, bags, umbrellas etc., on chairs in the Lecture Hall for the purpose of reserving seats.*" The Committee felt this matter was worthy of further mention because in recent times, coats etc used for this purpose were removed.

Difficulty experienced in hearing the speaker have been with the club from the start. It was mentioned over many years that members with 'defective hearing' should write on the booking card "D.H." This 1946 letter was used to remind members of this. In recent years we have tried to be discrete by guiding members to the front seats in The Portland Thistle. At our current venue we tend to rely on the microphone. In the early days, the Press were regularly invited, it was noted there was "*constant, friendly and fruitful co-operation between the Press and the Club.*" Speakers were able to talk "*off the record*" if they preferred.

Honorary Secretaries appear to have had a lengthy period of office.
Sir Raymond Streat 1922 to 1941, William Worthington 1941 to 1971
E L Behrens 1971 to 1972, Miss Dorothy Bolton 1972 to 1984

Throughout this period the Club was run by The Chamber of Commerce from their offices at Ship Canal House and it appears that much support was also given by other Manchester Chamber of Commerce staff. Coinciding with the retirement of Miss Bolton the Chamber moved premises to Oxford St. It was no longer possible to provide office accommodation and secretarial support to the Club.

This could be described as the second Watershed moment for the club. The first had been in 1942 when the committee faced closure after The Midland Hotel could no longer accommodate the Club. The decision was made to go forward with a different place and different type of lunch.

In 1984, the running of the Club was taken over by The Manchester Literary and Philosophical Society at which point their Administrative Secretary took over. Ann Boulton was Honorary Secretary from 1984 to 1996.

The next watershed or 'High Noon' as described in Manchester Evening News, came in March 1999. It was said that there was to be a special meeting to "*.... discuss the fading fortunes of the institution.....sadly suffering from a lack of new recruits and changing times.*"

At the Special meeting held March 16th, 1999, it was decided to hold a ballot of members seeking their views on three options for the future of the club. Following this, at the AGM on April 21st, 1999, the President proposed that in view of the result of the members ballot, closure of the Club should be done whilst it was running at a successful level.

A member stated that he did not believe the ballot was in fact a formal vote for closure. That decision could only be taken at the Annual General Meeting or at an Extraordinary meeting of the members. After much debate, a proposal was made to appoint an interim committee with the purpose of further examining the possibility of maintaining the Manchester Luncheon Club. By the end of May there would be an EGM with proper notice to members. This proposal was carried by 31 to 18 votes in favour with 4 abstentions. The rest of that year an interim committee continued to meet. Two members of that committee are still supportive members of the Club.

Mrs Cynthia Yeo and Mr Martin Byrne. Other pressing issues at that time were the loss of an office base and the extra administrative support that had previously been available.

Mrs Janet Argust was identified as the Honorary Secretary that year. A later proposal was that Mrs Argust undertake the administrative duties working from her home and that Mrs Cynthia Yeo be appointed as Honorary Secretary. The administrative role duties moved to Jayne Thurston early in 2000 and then to Barbara Whiting in 2013. Miss Stella Lowe became Honorary secretary in 2005 followed by Mrs Anne Fitzpatrick in 2010 and then Mrs Gwen Crossley in 2014.

Barbara van Zanten, another of our current members, joined the committee in April 2000. In 2001 Ann Boulton was also serving on the Committee.

Clearly the club has seen it fitting to celebrate its milestones over the years. Between September 1946 and February 1947, four eminent members each addressed the club in celebration of the Silver Jubilee.

Councillor Harold Quinney J.P. '*Twenty-five years of Manchester, Council and Citizen*'
Sir Ernest Simon, LL.D. Lord Simon of Wythenshawe. '*Manchester University during the last 25 years*'

Sir E. Raymond Streat, C.B.E. '*Manchester Commercially and Industrially 1922-1947*'
William Worthington, M.B.E. '*Twenty-five years Our Club, Our Speakers and Ourselves*'
Those addresses were published in a Souvenir book given to members.

The 40th anniversary luncheon in February 1962 was held in the Town Hall with guest of honour The Home Secretary The Rt. Hon. R.A. Butler.

50 years was celebrated with a Civic Reception at the Town Hall in June 1972.

In February 1997, Ann Boulton addressed a 75th anniversary luncheon recounting her twelve years as Honorary Secretary. The apt title of the talk was 'First, catch your speaker.' Ann recalls parts of this address later in this book.

The 80th Anniversary was celebrated in the early days of what we could call our 'new era.' There was a special lunch addressed by Felicity Goodey, Vice President of the club and President of the Manchester Chamber of Commerce and Industry. The theme of her talk was 'Roll on the Next Revolution.' In the centre of the Yearbook was a short history of the club written by Ron Yeo, President, 1999 to 2000.

The 90th Anniversary year was also the Diamond Jubilee of the accession to the throne of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. In that year we held a celebratory lunch in honour of the Queen. Paul Goddard LVO, DL addressed the meeting on the topic of Royal visits to Manchester. One of our members, Toast master, Terence McNicholls acted as Master of Ceremonies that day.

Now, we approach our Centenary. We will meet on February 9th 100 years after that auspicious meeting in Manchester Town Hall. We hope the founders look down on us and approve of the way we have adapted to keep the Manchester Luncheon Club true to the principles on which we were founded, "to afford opportunities for social intercourse to those interested in the Commerce, University, and other activities in the City by means of periodical meetings." Our membership, though small, reflects the founding members' principles.' We are Professional, Academic, and likeminded people who maintain a lively interest in this great City of Manchester.

Gwen M Crossley Honorary Secretary. President Elect 2022

"I was President of the Manchester Luncheon Club in 1991. In those days one was put forward for the committee if you had helped an organisation, in the university, or in the city. My contribution on those grounds was that I had been on the Manchester Midday Concerts Society for many years.

(It has been locked down during the pandemic and I have heard recently that it may be resurrected in the new year)

I was surprised to find that there was no form of advertising MLC as to when and where our lunches were held and the name of the speaker too. I felt I could contribute in some way by commissioning my mother

(an amateur silversmith)

to design and make the badge which the President wears for each luncheon.

This badge has her assay mark on the reverse.

There were many highlights during my time in office

1. Having a lunch to which children were invited.

Our guest was a Clown, a fascinating chap who read Law at Cambridge. A great success.

2. A lady from the society for spoken and written English.

She told us that several people had died having read instructions incorrectly.

This next is perhaps a lowlight! We invited the boss of the British Legion; I do not remember the date, but it was near to Remembrance Day. He flew up to Manchester by helicopter, was a charming lunch neighbour dressed in uniform then he read his interesting address in a monotone. What a let down!!! "

*Alison Wilkinson
President 1991*

The Luncheon Club Bell

The Luncheon Club's bell is the Ship's bell from the Manchester Ship Canal dredger "Sir Edward," named after SIR EDWARD LEADER WILLIAMS, designer and formerly Chief Engineer of the Manchester Ship Canal. The whole canal was completed in January 1894, and he had full charge of the canal until 1905, when he was appointed consulting engineer to the Manchester Ship Canal Co.

It was presented to the Club in June 1939 by Sir Fredrick West, a member of the Manchester Town Council from 1905, an Alderman in 1919, and Lord Mayor in 1924. He was a City Council Director to the Manchester Ship Canal Company; in 1933 he became Chairman of the Company, a position he held until 1950.

This was the meeting at which the bell was first used and has been used ever since. It had a mallet, one end of which was copper and the other wood. One President used to hit the bell with the copper end giving it a 'hell of a bash', hence the dents in the bell.

The bell is still used to call our meetings to order.



Presidents 1922 / 2021

1922	Councillor E D Simon, MA <i>Lord Mayor of Manchester</i>	1941	John Coatman, CIE, MA
1923	W Clare Lees, OBE, JP <i>President, Manchester Chamber of Commerce</i>	1942	The Rt Revd Arthur F Alston, MA <i>Bishop of Middleton</i>
1924	Sir Henry A Miers, FRS, DSc <i>Vice-Chancellor, University of Manchester</i>	1943	Frank Longworth, JP <i>President, Manchester Chamber of Commerce</i>
1925	Sir Christopher T Needham, JP, DL	1944	His Honour Judge Harold Rhodes, MA
1926	WC Bacon, JP	1945	Councillor Harold Quinney, JP
1927	Sir Percy Woodhouse, KBE, JP, DL <i>President, Manchester Chamber of Commerce</i>	1946	Sir E Raymond Streat, CBE
1928	Waiter H Moberley, DSO, MA, DLitt <i>Vice-Chancellor, University of Manchester</i>	1947	W L Jones, JP <i>President, Manchester Chamber of Commerce</i>
1929	Sir Ernest Thompson, JP	1948	J Harold Brown
1930	Councillor R Noton Barclay, JP <i>Lord Mayor of Manchester</i>	1949	Professor John Morley, ChM, FRCS
1931	A H Burgess, LLD, MSc, FRCS, DL	1950	Geoffrey Parkes, CMG, JP, FTI
1932	The Rt Revd Guy Warman, DD	1951	Alderman Colonel S P Dawson, OBE, MM, TD, JP, DL <i>Lord Mayor of Manchester</i>
1933	Alderman W Walker, JP <i>Lord Mayor of Manchester</i>	1952	Sir Eric Carpenter, OBE, JP
1934	Professor W L Bragg, OBE, MC, MA, DSc, FRS	1953	Leonard F Behrens, JP, MComm
1935	Richard Bond, JP	1954	Alderman A Moss, JP, MA <i>Lord Mayor of Manchester</i>
1936	Harry S Fairhurst, FRIBA	1955	Professor Sir Harry Platt, LLD, MD, MS, FRCS <i>President, Royal College of Surgeons of England</i>
1937	The Very Revd Garfield H Williams, OBE, MB, BS <i>Dean of Manchester</i>	1956	Neil G C Pearson, MBE, MA <i>President, Manchester Law Society</i>
1938	Sir Frederick J West, CBE, JP	1957	Professor Edward Robertson, MA, DD, DLit
1939	Alderman Sir Miles E Mitchell, JP	1958	Frank Rostron, MBE, MIEE
1940	Sir Robert Pickard, DSc, FRS	1959	J H King, JP, BCom, FIB
		1960	Professor Sir William Fletcher Shaw, MD, LLD, FRCP, FRCOG
		1961	Sir Henry Hinchliffe, JP, DL

1962	Alderman Lionel W Biggs, JP <i>Lord Mayor of Manchester</i>	1986	A M R Bridgford
1963	Miss Margaret Pilkington, OBE, JP, MA, FMA	1987	P D North
1964	William Brockbank, TD, MA, MD, FRCP	1988	S Crilly, OBE, JP, BSc (Econ)
1965	Robert Stead, CBE	1989	David S Walton, LLB
1966	Harold B Vanstone, JP, FCA	1990	G E Baskervillie, FCA
1967	Emile A Fadil	1991	Mrs J S Wilkinson
1968	Miss Freda M Sower, OBE, MA	1992	John N Abbott, TD, DL
1969	Sir Geoffrey Haworth, Bt, JP, MA, FRSA	1993	Philip Hodson, MA (Oxon), FCI (Arb)
1970	David M Roberts, TD, FRICS	1994	Paul F Goddard, MVO
1971	D N Walton, FCA	1995	Miss Pamela Garside
1972	Miss M W Jalland, LLB	1996	David J Baker
1973	Frank Nicholson, MBE, MA, MD, MChir, FRICS	1997	Timothy J Chapman
1974	Ronald Brierley, MM, JP, FCIB	1998	Mrs Ann Boulton
1975	Harry M Fairhurst, MA, FRIBA	1999 -2000	R O Yeo, BA
1976	Lady Worthington, MA, ARCA	2001-2002	Mrs Betty E Gallimore, MBE, JP
1977	Sir Alex Smith, MA, PhD	2003-2004	Martin P J Byrne, MA (TCD)
1978	J C F Pickford, MA, LLB	2005-2006	Prof Iain E Gillespie, MD, MSc, FRCS
1979	D H Slade, JP, FCA	2007-2008	Mrs Kathleen Beavis, BA
1980	M D S Holland, BA, LLB David G Wilson, OBE, OL, Hon MA	2009-2010	Prof Max Elstein, MD, MSc, FRCOG, Hon. FFSRH
1981	The Revd Canon Eric Saxon, O St J, MA, BD	2011-2012	Mrs Cynthia Yeo, BA
1982	F B Beswick, MB, ChB	2013-2014	Prof Ian Munro
1983	K J Alford, OBE, FRICS	2015-2016	David Buckley
1984	Mrs A M Wiliink, JP, DL, MA	2017-2018	Mrs Elizabeth Latham
1985	A T Booth, FCA	2019-2021	Alan G Crossley

The President's Badge

This silver badge of office was designed and made by Mrs Alison Wilkinson's mother, Margaret Isaac, a retired silversmith; Alison presented it to the Club during her Presidency in 1991.

Mrs Wilkinson also arranged for the supply of several lapel badges for Past Presidents these are based on the design of the President's badge. Past Presidents are asked to wear these on meeting days.

The names of past Presidents, who held office since 1991 are recorded on silver bars attached to the badge's ribbon.

Mrs Betty Gallimore (President 2001-2002) presented jointly with those past Presidents who were still members of the Club, a special silver medallion to mark the Club's 80th anniversary. This was worn for the first time at the Luncheon on 5th February 2002.

Mrs Alison Wilkinson has generously had designed and made, a silver bar to be added to the badge. This is to commemorate the Club's 100th anniversary and will be worn for the first time at the celebratory lunch on 9th February 2022.



First catch your Speaker

The Club has covered an intense and turbulent hundred years. Looking at the year books, the speakers who have spoken to the Manchester Luncheon Club are an historian's dream. For an example take 1927. Major General Sir Evan Carter, Director of Supplies of the British Expeditionary Force talked on the problems of organisation behind the lines in the Great War, Neville Cardus talked on cricket and in the November of that year, Sir John Reith, Director General of the BBC, was to be followed in December by Sir Ernest Rutherford on The Transformation of Matter (there is a note on the bottom of the notice for that meeting saying that "Sir Ernest understands that his audience will very largely be a lay one and says that he intends to deal with the subject in a simple manner"). Heath Robinson spoke in 1925! What a talk that must have been – was it illustrated? Sir Lawrence Bragg spoke at one of the children's lunches. Around that time speakers were Hamilton Harty, Hillaire Belloc, Sir Herbert Austin of Austin Cars, Sir Wilfred Grenfell on Labrador and so many more.

At the time I started work for the Lit and Phil I was told "Oh, yes, and you run the Manchester Luncheon Club too." There was only one forward speaker for the Luncheon Club! Some speakers obtain marvellous planning others lurch from crisis to crisis. Although it places a lot of stress on the person responsible for speakers, it does provide spontaneity and topicality.

That one first speaker was George Carman. 253 members and guests attended at the Free Trade Hall, even the balcony was full. The principle of Sir Raymond Streat and Will Worthington of going to the top often works. However, you must decide on your speaker and sell the Club as a place worth visiting and an audience worthy of his or her efforts. Then follows the second sale of the speaker to the members. This buying and selling calls for a mixture of tact, psychology, and persistence.

For a national speaker you have to think hard to find words which will persuade them to get up early to catch the 8 am from Euston and it is certainly not getting any easier. You could once assess the box office in advance – oh, he will bring in 100, she will bring in 150.

It is a tremendous amount of physical work to run the Club. There are ten to eleven luncheons a year and each one has a separate mailing although now many members are emailed thus saving paper, envelopes, printing, stuffing and stamps.

Eyes and ears always must be open to gather new thoughts with paper and pencil always handy. Names pop up unexpectedly in conversations eavesdropping comes in useful. You never take the first refusal as final unless it is unmistakably so. If the faintest hint is given you follow it up and, in some instances, it can take several years. For example, Sir Patrick Mayhew was coming to us when he was Attorney General but was unable to come at the last minute. Someone asked how we got him to the Club and the answer was – well, he was asked. but when asking him, he was reminded him in the gentlest possible way that, having let us down once, he was honour bound to come now he was Secretary of State for Northern Ireland. He accepted the invitation immediately and was a great success.

Authors, painters, or stage personalities usually want a fee. Sports personalities who could talk for half an hour are few but those we have had have been brilliant. Sir Bobby Charlton in 1993 spoke at the Town Hall. Do you remember Farokh Engineer agreeing to speak? He let us down at the last moment and the person who organised him took his place. This really was a talk to remember. It was Lynette Lithgow who was a presenter on Granada and then on BBC in London who had organised cricket in the West Indies and in Brunei and told tales of cricket matches all over the world and specially anecdotes of Trevor Macdonald. There was a classic to honour Sir Harry Platt's 100th birthday when he said from the stage that it "wasn't very often a chap got to listen to his own obituary"!

It is very interesting being the organiser of events. You have a different relationship with a speaker. They are cast adrift in a town, venue, and people they don't know, and you are their sheet anchor. The one they look for even when saying all the right things to officials. You know their travelling times, where they are staying, where their luggage or speech is and, most importantly, you know where the lavatories are.

Making sure that there are no extraneous noises to interrupt the speaker is important. There was an extra staircase being put in at the Free Trade Hall – a saw, and some hammers started at the same time as the speaker. I grabbed the money bag and flew through the doors and, after largesse had been distributed, the workers disappeared to the nearest hostelry until after 2 pm. There was a similar operation behind a window at The Freemasons Hall when a pneumatic drill started digging up the cobbles – it is a long way from the Hall front door, down the road at the back to stop it – surprising how fast you can go. At Sacha's - never to be forgotten – a maid started up a vacuum cleaner outside the door. That was stopped immediately but within seconds, a workman started up a hand drill near to the stuffed bear in the foyer and, without waiting to reason with him, I pulled the plug out and argued afterwards. Sacha's was a nightmare with a notable speaker, David Gandy, who was then Deputy Public Prosecutor. The main room had been divided in two and we had been assured that the divider was soundproof. However, with an unscheduled auction taking place next door, the ventilation ducts were not. Christopher Simon said afterwards in his delightful and courteous way "Thank you for a new experience."

You may remember private lunches. When the Club started with a sitdown knife and fork luncheon the speaker sat with the members and guests but when the move to the Albert Hall occurred in May 1942 the private luncheons started, with a running buffet for those not on the Committee. This was a nightmare of organisation. The difficulty in timing with two luncheons, getting the speaker and guests and then shepherding the members and guests was a nightmare in timing.

Will Worthington had kept some of the printed menu cards from 1934 and the most popular lunch was roast lamb and redcurrant jelly which they seemed to have quite often. He wrote comments on these cards. Turbot – medium, Boiled mutton paysanne – vile.

Prior to a particular lunch at the Portland, I had a meeting with the manager and managed to get the price per head right down. The Manager asked who the speaker was and was told it was Michel Roux. "Ah," he said, "I'll tell the chef." We had the most excellent lunch and Mr Roux thanked the chef personally. The chef will not ever forget that!

The timing of the lunches was very strict as when the Club started the members were usually businessmen who had to get back to their desks. Will Worthington recounts the tale by Dr Michael, later Lord Winstanley, who said that the first speech he remembered making was at Oldham Rotary Club. He asked the President how long he should talk. The answer was "Well you can talk for as long as you like, lad, but we go at 2 o'clock!"

We have welcomed Mark Tully, the mellifluous broadcaster, Barbara Castle, Trevor Anderson who spoke on *40 years a railwayman* and went over time by 20 minutes – mutterings of "typical of British Rail" were heard. Chrissie Maher of the Plain English Campaign who would have had a fit if she could have read some of the letters to members in the time of Sir Raymond Streat – a foolscap sheet of instructions guaranteed to have you tied up in knots. The lunch numbers started low and grew until we filled the Great Hall of the Town Hall. We even welcomed a white witch, Titania!

One of Will's recollections was of Rab Butler who said that he found lunchtime speaking the hardest of all. Another of Will's recollections is of Dame, then Miss Anna Neagle. She wrote to say that the play she was in called for a lot of mental effort so she would like to take half the thirty minutes in talking and the balance in questions. In the event, she spoke for 20 minutes. Will says it was original and delightful and they listened to what life meant as one of C B Cochrane's revue team in physical strain and musical and speech perfection. He says that the question period was the best he had ever known. She wrote her name on the wall of the retiring room at the back of the Lesser Free Trade Hall. Will considered that the supreme example of chairmanship is credited to the then Mrs Leonard Behrens. Presiding for Miss Isobel Baillie she produced a perfect cameo introduction, when the speaker sat down after talking for less than 10 minutes Mrs Behrens put over a wonderful example of split-second thinking. She stood up and said "You will appreciate that nothing imposes a greater strain on a singer's voice than to speak in public. Therefore, you will understand why Miss Baillie who is singing tonight has not spoken at greater length." I think that is matched by a piece of brilliant chairmanship of Ted Baskerville who chaired the luncheon when Lord Young of Dartington spoke – not on the expected idea of a family covenant from the originator of the welfare state, etc. but on the death of his wife and his recently published book of poems about which he had specifically said he did not want to talk. He was so moved by her death his talk completely stunned the audience. An occasion which Ted Baskerville handled with great sensitivity.

Another tale of Will's is of Lady Astor of Hever. He says, "What a handful." Having organised a trip to a textile mill for the morning she said, "I'm not coming, I'm still in bed." She then asked what she was to talk about. After a bit of discussion, she said "What about WAKE UP ENGLAND." He said there were no sleepers in that talk. He surrendered his sweet coupons to buy some fruit drops that she wanted to eat on the journey. Her Ladyship lost her ticket on getting to the train, she thought it had dropped on the line but happily it was found in the corridor. He said that he returned to the office a nervous wreck.

A touch of history. The Polish Ambassador, Count Edward Racznbski agreed to come to the club in June 1939. His Foreign Minister was scheduled to make an important speech on the same day and Will describes the performance of arranging for a wireless in Wythenshawe Hall where the talk was due to take place. He asked Ferranti's to check if there was a good aerial. They said yes but there was no electricity. Ferranti's worked late and rigged up a collection of accumulators, batteries, and wires. Reception was perfect and the Minister's speech was the one in which Poland threw down the gauntlet to Germany by saying that Poland would not give up her right to an uninterrupted corridor to the Baltic. This was the meeting at which the bell, presented by Manchester Ship Canal company called MSC SIR EDWARD was first used and has been used ever since.

Times have changed. We do not have the money or time to bring a speaker up on the day before – put them up at the Midland and take them round Manchester in the morning before lunch. At least we didn't have to pay for the helicopter for Brigadier Cordingley who gave such a clear and concise account of Desert Storm and Sir Geoffrey Dalton used his OAP rail card to reduce costs.

When the last autograph book was full it was difficult to obtain a suitable new book. In the end Ted Duckworth who was responsible for rebinding so many of the Portico Library books made us one. These books are priceless and held, with the Club's other archives in the John Rylands Library on Deansgate in Manchester.

As with so many other organisations the Manchester Luncheon Club has adapted and changed, and it has become an institution in Manchester for one hundred years. Long may we continue.

Ann Boulton Past President, 1998. Honorary Secretary 1984 to 1996

"Many congratulations to all who have maintained this famous Manchester institution often through very difficult times. The range of subjects covered over the years I think is illustrated by a Talk I was privileged to give on Visits by the Royal Family to one with the title 'Hocus Pocus' given by Titania, described as a 'White Witch!'"

Paul Goddard
President 1994

List of Members

"It was a great privilege to be asked to become President of Manchester Luncheon Club for 1995. There have been some amazing, knowledgeable, and well-known speakers and one of the best things about being President is having lunch at their table prior to their talk. One memorable occasion was our lunch in Manchester Town Hall with the Duke of Kent, which brought back teenage memories of standing on the streets of York in 1961 to see him drive past after his wedding to Katherine Worsley in York Minster. Over thirty years on and I was chatting to him at a special lunch! It was also noteworthy as he did not actually give a talk to the club afterwards!"

Pam Garside
President 1995

"The Luncheon Club was founded to facilitate contact and friendship between individuals interested in supporting and developing the well-being of the City of Manchester.

I am privileged to have enjoyed 43 years of membership and good fellowship within the club, attending and listening to talks and presentations from visiting guest speakers that have included, Royalty, Politicians, Senior Civil Servants, Scientists, Sportsmen, Business Leaders, Bishops and Botanists and many other trades, hobbies, and professions.

Personal anecdotes include attendance at the talk by HRH Prince Phillip in 1979, chatting about eggshells and politics with Edwina Currie in 2000, and being caught on camera with Ann Widdecombe in 2004. Most importantly I appreciate the company of fellow members who collectively contribute towards making Manchester the great City which it is."

Martin P J Byrne
President 2003-2004

Mrs K Beavis	Mr M J Iles
Mrs F A Boulton	Miss S J Lowe
Mr & Mrs D Buckley	Mrs A H Luscombe
Mr M P J Byrne	Ms M McCauley
Mrs M Chadwick	Mr T McNicholls
Mrs P M Choularton	Prof & Mrs I Munro
Mr A Clamp	Mr J G Park
Prof C B Cooper	Mrs C Potter
Mr & Mrs A G Crossley	Prof A C Rose-Innes
Mr J P Dunne	Mr J B Sangster
Mr T A Elliot	Mr & Mrs M H J Sargent
Mrs J Fallows	Mrs A P Saunders
Mr G Fenton	Mr & Mrs D R Sellers
Miss D Gifford	Mr J Spencer
Mr & Mrs S C Glover	Mr D L Stanton
Mr R Goodier	Mrs M Thompson
Mr I W Grant	Mr & Mrs S J Thurston
Mr P R Hardman	Mrs B M van Zanten
Mr A R Hine	Mr T G Webb
Mrs S Hopkins	Mrs H Whitehead
Mr & Mrs P E Hughes	Miss B Whiting
Mrs M Jackson	Mrs A M Wilkinson
Mr J E Jordan	Mrs C Yeo
Mrs E A Latham	Mrs A M Yeomans

Our records show there are eight members who have been with us since the 1980's

Mrs Ann Boulton	Mr Martin Byrne
Mr Gilbert Fenton	Mr John E Jordan
Mr J Graham Park	Mr David Stanton
Mr T Gerald Webb	Mrs Alison Wilkinson

We thank them wholeheartedly for their Continued support

Members Memories

My husband John Jordan joined Manchester Luncheon Club in the late 1980's, and having retired from running my Play Group, I was able to join him for a meeting.

My first attendance of a Manchester Luncheon Club meeting was most memorable. The meeting was held at the Free Trade Hall; lunch was sandwiches, but the most important impression was how this format gave such freedom to meet and interact with so many people from different professions in the City. This was coupled with the Speaker having to deliver their point of view or information within a half-hour format.

The Manchester Luncheon Club organisation was impressive. It epitomised, friendship, current topics and luncheon within an hour thus enabling so many workers in the city to both meet and expand their knowledge within their allotted lunch hour.

Many other memorable speakers followed, but owing to the more formal lunch format had, to me, somehow lost its 'magic or informal way of both socialising and conveying information within a 'lunch hour.'

Jo Jordan.

"After a talk by the Estate Manager as stand-in for the Duchess of Devonshire, the Club was invited to visit Chatsworth as one of our days out. Prior to lunch, time was available for exploring the grounds and afterwards we were treated to a special "back-stage" visit to the storerooms and areas where furniture and fabrics were repaired. Those who wished were then taken up narrow stairs to the roof where hefty rolls of lead were ready to be fixed over the guttering and joints of varying roof levels. After admiring the fantastic views, the remainder of our visit was devoted to enjoying the many treasures and exhibits on display at Chatsworth.

For me, perhaps the most memorable event was the visit of Brenda Blethyn who, a number of years before achieving fame as "VERA", was performing at the Royal Exchange Theatre. Brenda said she did not wish to give a talk but would be happy to do a one-to-one question and answer session. I had the honour of asking the questions and found her to be a delightful lady with a dry and whimsical sense of humour.

It was really difficult to select two from a term of office packed with memories from coffee in the University Library before committee meetings to our splendid Christmas Lunch. "

*Kathleen Beavis
President 2007-2008*

Our first involvement with the Manchester Luncheon Club was in the Nineties following a meeting with Kath Beavis at one of the Royal Exchange lunches. It was she who suggested we might wish to join the MLC. The Luncheon Club held an interest for me as my Father's family had been Cotton Brokers and so had been involved in the business world of Manchester. I had also been at Manchester University and Sue had worked in the city before our wedding and move from Bowdon to Burnley.

Initially during our membership, the venue was the Freemasons Hall, Bridge Street with its tradition, variety of rooms and special ambience. Then several different city hotels were tried during the time that this building was being refurbished. Regrettably, it was not possible to return and so now the monthly lunches are held at the Holiday Inn, Aytoun Street.

We have enjoyed the fellowship, making new friends and hearing the many stimulating speakers who have attended, most of whose topics have had some connection with Manchester or the surrounding area. The variety of outings during the summer has given us the opportunity to visit many interesting places in the locality such as behind the scenes at the Opera House, Buxton, Quarry Bank Mill, Styal, and the Mellor Archaeological Trust.

I served on the Committee for a period. Both of us have given Votes of Thanks and been Guest Speakers which has meant that on that day we were not as relaxed as usual, because of the butterflies gathering!! We wish the Club every success as it celebrates its Centenary and looks forward to its next hundred years.

Peter & Sue Hughes.

*Sadly, Prof Iain Gillespie is now too frail to share his memories.
Gordon, his son, shared the following*

"I am afraid mum died last January and dad has very poor recollection of his time at events like the luncheon club, even though I know he very much enjoyed many events there.

I hope your celebrations go well. "

*Professor Iain Gillespie
President 2005-2006*

"When I retired in 1995, Cecile and I were introduced to the Manchester Luncheon Club by the late Revd Canon Gwilym Morgan. The convivial atmosphere facilitated conversation with friendly people.

It is a privilege to have been President of the MLC for 2 years, 2009-2010. I was ably supported and directed by two successive secretaries, Stella Lowe, and Anne Fitzpatrick. Jayne Thurston who had an extensive knowledge of the members, efficiently administered the Club.

Of the many excellent speakers some are particularly memorable. Greg Herzov gave us insight into the Royal Exchange theatre. Joan Bakewell has continued to make an impact, as her recent radio series on medical ethics testifies. There was a bumper attendance to hear Derek Rowlands, a physician, who gave a reassuring address of the benefits of statin medication. Most apt after a sumptuous meal at Chancellors!

Our best wishes for the future of the Manchester Luncheon Club. "

Max Elstein
President 2009-2010

"My Presidency included the difficult time when we had to agree to find an alternative to the magnificence of the Freemasons Hall(where we had been for several years) but our excellent Secretary (Anne Fitzpatrick) arranged for our move to the Portland hotel.

our current venue of The Holiday Inn suits all members admirably. "

Ian Munro
President 2013-2014

"It so happened that the Queen's Diamond Jubilee fell in 2012 during my presidency. We marked this historic milestone with a special lunch in an Art Deco room at the Britannia Hotel, linking in with our history as we were founded in 1922 during the Art Deco period. Our stationery, designed by Barbara van Zanten, reflects this and Barbara also designed the congratulatory card we sent to the Queen. I was able to read out at our lunch the greetings the Queen had sent to us in reply.

Another highlight for me was in November 2011, when Dame Janet Smith honoured us by speaking on 'The Shipman Inquiry, Was it all worth it?' It was the first time Dame Janet, who chaired the Inquiry, had addressed an audience on her work as Chair.

I was greatly helped by the superb support of Anne Fitzpatrick, an outstanding Honorary Secretary. "

Cynthia M. Yeo.
President 2011-2013

"Following the unexpected honour of being asked to become President, I had two most enjoyable years getting to know so many more of our members and meeting so many interesting Speakers.

One of the highlights was inviting the Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress along with their attendant. I made all the necessary arrangements for a red-carpet entrance and dedicated parking space.....finding on the day that the road had unexpectedly been closed!! (Best laid plans?) The Mayoral party good humouredly entered through the kitchens!

I was privileged to represent our Club at various functions at Manchester Cathedral and the Town Hall and overall had an experience never to be forgotten. "

David Buckley
President 2015-2016

Acknowledgments

When celebrating the Manchester Luncheon Club's Centenary was first discussed, little did we realise the disruption that the COVID 19 Pandemic was to cause to the planning of our celebrations.

I would like to thank:

- The Centenary sub-committee comprising of,
 - o Cynthia Yeo,
 - o Ann Boulton,
 - o Stella Lowe,
 - o Norma Buckley,
 - o Gwen Crossley.

for all their challenging work, researching, preparing and proof reading, this had to be conducted via e-mail or telephone.

- The Hon. Secretary Gwen Crossley for editing the Souvenir Booklet.
- All the ex-President's, and Members who contributed their memories.
- Mrs. Alison Wilkinson who generously financed the updating of the President's Badge.
- Mrs. Elizabeth Latham for her helpful advice regarding printers.
- Barbara van Zanten for the use of her artwork.
- Sasha and Graham at Minuteman Press, Ashton-u-Lyne.
- Justine at Mark Worthington's Silversmiths, Wilmslow.
- Chloe and staff at The Holiday Inn, Manchester City Centre for their ongoing support.

Finally, I am indebted to our members who generously responded to my appeal for contributions which has made our Centenary Celebrations possible.

Alan G Crossley

President

"This period in the Club's history was generally calm, a pleasant time for us. We had now moved our venue to the comfortable and modern new Holiday Inn, so accessible for travellers on the Metro and to Piccadilly Station. Everyone welcomed this pleasant new space, with its excellent "In House" technology for our speakers.

In August 2017 we made a delightful visit to the spectacular Gorton Monastery, where we enjoyed a bright summer day, of reflection and companionship, which was particularly well supported.

On June 26th, 2018, Gerry Yeung OBE DL invited us to the Yang Sing Cathay Restaurant, at the Trafford Centre. Here we enjoyed lunch and his fascinating talk, describing his eventful Year as High Sheriff of Manchester. We were joined by the Lord Mayor of Manchester, June Hitchen.

A particular wish of mine was to raise awareness among our members, of the new RHS Bridgewater Garden Project, on the former site of Worsley New Hall.

Two inspiring speakers brought plans and updated us on progress, so that we were able to make a donation to the project. The name of Manchester Luncheon Club is now recorded in the unique first edition of the RHS Bridgewater Guidebook

Our hope is to visit this spectacular new RHS Garden as our 2022 Summer Outing. Sadly, our earlier plans were interrupted by Covid, but we remain optimistic for this season! "

Elizabeth Latham
President 2017 - 2018

"I was honoured in March 2019 to become president. Just one year later we were hit by the Covid 19 Pandemic. For the first time in our history, we were forced to cancel our meetings.

Even World War 2 had not stopped us!

As our world changed, we tried more than once to restart. I was delighted when we finally relaunched in December 2021 and equally delighted to be entertained by Sid Calderbank who had been our speaker in March 2020.

I am saddened that over the period of my Presidency we have lost good, loyal friends and supporters of our club.

Now as we celebrate this centenary, I look forward and hope it may survive another one hundred years.

I have a unique claim to fame as the longest serving holder of this office. "

Alan G. Crossley
President 2019-2022



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