

**Wilmslow has grown too**

# BUBBLE

**Developers Garden of Eden threatened as boomtown pays price of success**



Grove Street before it was choked by car fumes.

**Townfolk  
mourn the  
death of  
Wilmslow's  
traditional  
high street  
trading**

AS WILMSLOW is swallowed up by developers' insatiable appetite for change one of the town's oldest family traders is deeply saddened by all that has gone.

John Berry, whose family ran a Wilmslow menswear shop for almost 70 years, remembers the day when you could buy anything in Grove Street.

"Now it seems to be all banks, you can't find what you want these days."

In the last three months Johnstones stationers and Chadwicks family butchers closed down after serving Wilmslow for the better part of a century.

But with them is disappearing a retail tradition that made Wilmslow proud.

"It seems Wilmslow changes every day now and it's very sad to see so much go," said 74-year-old Mr. Berry.

John's father set up a Church Street clothing retailers in 1905 before moving the business to Grove Street in 1918.

"People travelled into Wilmslow from miles around then because everyone knew you could buy attractive clothes of good quality from the independently owned shops," said John.

A pamphlet printed in 1909 advertised Wilmslow as the place to shop.



● A shot of Manchester Road before the motor car ruled.

## Fond memories of old village life

IN THE closing of Chadwicks the butchers, who have served Grove Street so faithfully over the years, one feels — as with Johnstones — the sadness of a changing Wilmslow.

Once Wilmslow was a little country village where friends met and talked unhurried by unending streams of traffic.

It is those of us in our latter years who can look back and remember shops like Cleggs, by the fountain, and Pearsons, where my grandfather bought his cigars.

Then there was Berrys, who at Christmas time sent up a selection of ties and men's socks for my grand-mother to make a leisurely choice of Christmas gifts.

Thank God for Charmleys, Gilberts and the few remaining reminders of a happier age.

My mother's home as a child in Pughshaw Park was demolished to make way for a modern dwelling, yet would have outlasted the present building in time.

Those who share the same

memories as I do will also feel the sadness of a changing Wilmslow and feel grateful for those same memories.

Name and address supplied.

## Farewell to Chadwicks

THE directors of S. Chadwick Ltd. would like to thank all customers and staff for their support over the past 65 years.

Many thanks also for the lovely flowers, cards and letters which they have received. They are very much appreciated.

Thank you all.

S. CHADWICK LTD.

Grove Street, Wilmslow.

# Mega-bucks

EXCLUSIVE

By Martin Hennessey

**FAMILY butchers Chadwicks are set to become a mega-rich dynasty.**

The three brothers and two sisters who retired last month after 65 years serving Wilmslow will soon be in the money.

The sale of the two shops in Grove Street could net a staggering £4 million or more.

But 74-year-old Stephen, the oldest of the Chadwicks, does not appear to be letting the money go to his head.

He told the Express Adviser: "We haven't really thought about the cash.

Affluence

"All we know is that the sale of the land is being taken up by the estate agents but we have no plans for the future."

The properties, now being handled by Manchester land dealers Countrywide, are on the market at a time when Wilmslow shop prices are going through the ceiling.

Investor's Chronicle, Britain's leading finance magazine revealed that land for office development in Wilmslow is now fetching a staggering £1 million per acre.

Wilmslow's legendary affluence means there is enormous competition for town-centre office space, say financial journalists.

## Chadwick family could net £3/4m from shop sales



The luxury market is even more expensive than Manchester town centre at £20 per square foot.

Rumours

Chadwick's butchers at 60 Grove Street is on the market for £4 million while its second shop at No. 8 is being sold off as part of a three shop deal with a total value of £1 million.

Meanwhile the 100-year-old stationers, Johnstones of Grove Street, which was sold earlier this year is rumoured to have fetched nearer £2 million.

New owners and developers Stakis Land, a London-based company, refuse to comment on the future of the site or on the sudden demolition of the old shop only a week ago.

## Grove Street butchers to close

# Chadwicks to shut-up shop after 65 years

GROVE Street shoppers will be bidding another sad farewell to a half century of Wilmslow's past this week when Chadwick's the family butcher closes both premises for good.

By Martin Hennessey

Recently Johnstones stationers shut up shop after nearly a century, and now the three sons and two daughters of the Chadwick family are following suit.

Since 1925 there has been a Chadwick pork butchers on Grove Street but Saturday, will be the last time 74-year-old Stephen, the eldest, makes his daily cycle trip to work.

"Of course it will be sad. But things change," said Stephen of Windsor Avenue.

Stephen was 11-year-old when his father first set up shop, moving from Hanley, in Staffordshire to Wilmslow in the 1920's.

Although he helped out with the business when he could, it was not until leaving school at 14 that he began his butcher's training under his father.

"Before we came into Grove Street there was another old butchers here. Arrowsmith's it was called," said the youngest of the Chadwick family, 60-year-old Peter.

Extended

"Our father took over his business and we have kept it going since then," he said.

## Wilmslow landmark is facing the chop!

In 1936 the Chadwicks extended their premises by buying up another shop on Grove Street close to Bank Square. It was from these two shops that their reputation grew.

"We were the only butchers in the area to be allowed to sell unrationed meat during the post war years," explained Stephen proudly.

"And in those days the trade was so good we used to have queues stretching round the corner of Johnstones. There was even one time when the Police were called because of the nuisance it was creating. But it was at Christmas and the sergeant made no complaint," said Stephen.

Looking out of the window of the Chadwick business office Stephen reminisced how things used to be.

Different

"I remember an old smithy used to work opposite, and down there towards Bank Square there was a saddlers.

"Everything is different now. Even the offices of the Express Adviser were once the grounds of Pownan Hall School's first place," he said.

"It will be sad," he repeated. "But things





Cleggs, a Wilmslow trading landmark for more than a century.

# WILMSLOW STORE SENSATION

**C**LEGG'S, Wilmslow's oldest department store, is to go out of business later this month.

This sensational announcement, following on a week of rumours about the fate of the 112-years-old store, was made exclusively to the "Advertiser" yesterday morning by Mr W. F. E. Bennett, company secretary of Messrs Macowards Ltd. of Cardiff, wholesale and retail dealers, who own a number of stores, including Cleggs.

Mr Bennett told the "Advertiser": "In accordance with the company's stated policy, the Wilmslow store is closing.

"They will cease to trade on either September 30 or October 3."

STAFF TOLD



# FIRE DESTROYS COUNCIL OFFICES



■ ABOVE: A fireman damps down the smouldering entrance to the offices. BELOW: The blackened remains of the council chamber in the annexe.

**RATEPAYERS** will have the chance to question City Cllr Norman Ribbeck about this year's Cheshire rate precept when he visits Wilmslow on Monday.

Cllr Ribbeck, chairman of the county's finance sub-committee, has been invited by Wilmslow Rates Action Group, Fokshaw Ratepayers and Electors Association and Handforth Ratepayers Association to address a public meeting starting at 8 pm at the Boddington Arms, Altrincham Road.

The meeting was planned originally to be held at Wilmslow Council Offices but the fire there necessitated an urgent change in venue.



■ ABOVE: The gutted remains of Green Hall.

**FORENSIC** scientists were sifting through the gutted remains of Green Hall — Macclesfield Borough Council's Wilmslow service centre — on Tuesday trying to find the cause of the fire which destroyed it.

Arson has not been ruled out by the police, and Chief Inspector J. P. Keenan said that files on the fire at another Macclesfield Borough Council property, the sports pavilion at the Rectory Fields, Station Road, four weeks ago, would be re-opened to see if there was a link.

Ten pumps were called to the blaze, from Wilmslow, Macclesfield, Congleton, Knutsford, and Greater Manchester, but the 60-odd firemen were unable to save Green Hall, a listed building with fine oak panelling, ornate plaster ceilings and a magnificent staircase.

Flames also damaged a section of the annexe (ended in 1959) — about 30 yards from the old hall, which was once the home of the Pauldens, the Manchester department store family.

The alarm was raised at 5am on Tuesday after two police officers in a panda patrol car spotted smoke.

By the time the first fire appliances arrived, flames were already shooting through Green Hall's roof.

And when the 42 council employees who usually work from Wilmslow reported for duty at 9am, all that remained of the 100-year-old building was charred brick, broken windows and a gutted roof.

The shocked staff were offered hospitality by staff from the nearby library while officials tried to find them alternative accommodation.

Borough Secretary and

**BY  
PAM BEDDARD**

Deputy Clerk, Mr Tom Briggs, said the use of the Public Hall was being considered.

He was unsure of how many papers had been lost, or how much equipment damaged, but he expressed fears for the safety of irreplaceable tenant and architectural records.

Chief Inspector Keenan stated that the police had to consider the possibility that the fire had been started deliberately.

"There were two seats of fire, in two different areas, remote

from each other — about 20 to 30 yards apart," he explained.

Perhaps sparks had flown, he said. "But I think that is extremely doubtful."

He said that experts from the North West Forensic Science Laboratories were being called in to investigate. "We have found certain items inside which they will be very interested in," said the inspector.

He said no firm links between Tuesday's fire and the one at Wilmslow Hockey and Cricket Clubs' base on January 9 had been established, but added that evidence on the previous blaze would be re-appraised.

Chief Inspector Keenan

● **TURN TO PAGE 3**



Swan Street at the turn of the century.

# Before the car ruled!

THE Wilmslow boom has brought prosperity to the town but it has also saddled it with a traffic nightmare.

New office developments and superstores have created new jobs but they have also contributed to the traffic chaos.

With the growth in two and three car families the problem is not out of control.

At peak periods there are queues of traffic in Water Lane and Alderley Road and the rush hour now seems to go on all day.

Parking shortages have even resulted in pubs and churches wheel clamping cars in a bid to protect their precious spaces.

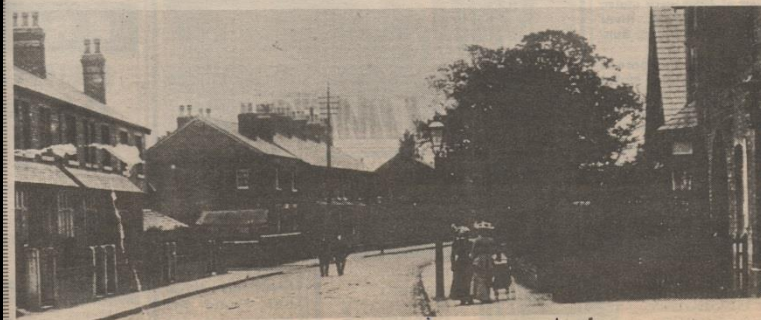
Macclesfield councillors are now determined to make parking a top priority and are refusing office planning applications unless they include adequate parking provision.

But Wilmslow wasn't always overrun by the motor car. It is not that long ago that Wilmslow had uncluttered streets and the town had a "village" atmosphere.

The pictures on this page are a reminder of old Wilmslow before the car ruled.



Grove Street was closed to all traffic so local folk could celebrate the Queen's coronation in 1952.



Not a car in sight in Water Lane.



## Motor repair firm told to shut-up shop



LAND Lane looks more like a bomb site as council diggers move in to start work.

## Highway to hell

### Bypass route puts dad and daughter duo out of business

By Drew Dickson

**MECHANIC Peter Barry has been thrown on the scrap heap because his business is next door to the Wilmslow bypass.**

Council bureaucrats have ordered him to shut-up shop by Monday after over 20 years trading.

Not only will he lose his livelihood but he has been offered 'peanuts' in compensation.

Peter, who runs his motor repair business on Land Lane, is devastated after county council chiefs slapped a compulsory purchase order on his property - even though he is not in the direct line of the road.

He has been offered just £54,000 for his buildings, land and custom.

Mr Barry says he has been treated in a shabby and highhanded way by Cheshire County Council who, he claims, have not attempted to help

him relocate or offered him a realistic sum to be able to do so.

He was supposed to have been out of his premises by Monday or face eviction by bailiffs but he has been given a week's grace. In any event he plans to stay put until the last minute.

He told the Express Advertiser: "I'm staying here. I'm not going just like that, not after the way we've been treated."

The county council says it was prepared to compensate Mr Barry for the cost of relocation but that would still leave him with the problem of finding suitable premises locally for £54,000.

Mr Barry said: "It's their general attitude that's been totally wrong. They are not interested in small businesses, all they're interested in is that road."

His daughter Diane, who has worked there for four years said: "There's no way we could put a garage anywhere else round here. You could-



Down in the dumps. Peter Barry and daughter Diane.

n't buy anywhere round here for that sort of money and if we move out of the area we'll lose our customer base."

Mr Barry already has planning permission to shift the current entrance from the front to the back of his property and out of the way of the new road.

But just days after he won the permission in September a CPO was served on him.

He has approached the county council and asked them to put a retaining wall round the current entrance to his garage, which would shield it from the bypass and solve all the problems.

But the county came back and said the cost of building the seven metre high wall would be more than his property and business were worth and refused to do it.

Mr Barry has asked the Local Government Ombudsman to investigate the case.



Advertising: 01625 618830 Newsdesk: 01625 511241 Distribution: 01925 655444

**Built:** The prestigious store was built in 1955 by Brown's of Wilmslow - one of the town's most prolific developers - as part of a row of shops and maisonettes at a cost of £61,150.  
**Location:** Alderley Road, Wilmslow, between the Rex

Cinema and South Drive - a plot of land bought by Brown's in 1954 for £2,000.

Brown's sold the land to Norwich Union Life Assurance Society in exchange for a building contract.

Brown's also bought land between South Drive and the New Inn in 1956 where they built another row of shops.

**What is Hoopers?:** A department store as it always has

been since Finnigans, the first occupants, moved there from Manchester in the 1950s.

Finnigans was founded in 1830 and the family quickly built up a chain of renowned stores in Manchester and London.

It was Brian Finnigan, the sixth of his line, who bravely decided to relocate from Manchester to Wilmslow when the lease on his Deansgate store expired.

Finnigans changed its name to

## Hoopers

by Megan Gilks

Hoopers seven years ago when it was sold to a private company. The owners are currently planning to expand the ground floor retail space by 2,000 sq ft.

**Appearance:** Modern department store with maisonettes, always used as shop storage space, above.

One of the building's most notable features is its copper roof which, in the red hot summer of 1955, became so hot during construction that builders could only work on it for two hours at a time.

**Trivia:** Brown's managing director David Bayley remembers working on the construction of Hoopers as an apprentice bricklayer at the start of his career.

Brown's also built Wilmslow Fire Station in 1962 for £53,997 and Barclays Bank in 1963 for £56,524.





big for its own good — claim business experts

# ABOUT TO BURST

**W**ILMSLOW is the sort of place you can choose between £500 coats but are pushed to find a bag of potatoes, said a national financial magazine recently.

In a five page feature the Investor's Chronicle traced the roots of Wilmslow's success as a boom town and developer's paradise, following its growth from humble Cheshire village to wealthy business nerve centre.

But author and financial journalist Robert Waterhouse believes the town has hit a limit to its' expansion.

## OVERLOAD

Although Wilmslow has come a long way from 1842 when the Alderley-Manchester rail link brought carriage loads of commuters to settle in the area, it is coming close to overload.

Housing in the centre is under ever-increasing pressure from shops and offices while traffic caused by the 'evil' motor car threatens to choke Wilmslow's roads.

But the town's affluence has become legendary, says

## Report by Martin Hennessey

the Investors Chronicle, in its report entitled "Too successful for its own good."

Unemployment is around three per cent and shopping streets once limited to village needs, now boast Jaeger, Laura Ashley and top name car dealers like Ferrari, Porche and Rolls Royce.

It is the closeness to Ringway Airport, Manchester centre and easy access to motorways that have made Wilmslow a prime site for developers, argues the report.

A single acre of the town centre is worth £1 million as development land and luxury office space proves even more costly than Manchester itself at £20 per square foot.

Traffic queues, parking problems, noise and fumes are a fact of life which tempt residents to accept cash offers from developers and move somewhere less in demand, says the report.

This, in turn, increases the pressure on the area.

Nick Taylor, a senior Macclesfield planning officer, told the Investors Chronicle that his colleagues are just about keeping the lid on the clamour for commercial offices.

One Emerson group spokesman sees an end to large scale rebuilding.

## PROMISE

Orbit director Simon Clarke-Williams, told the Chronicle that Wilmslow no longer holds the promise it once did for developers like his company.

But economist Dr. Peter Stubbs, a lecturer at Manchester University and Wilmslow Trust chairman, disagrees and is pessimistic about the future.

He believes the pressure will continue.

A recent sign that the bulldozers have yet to finish their work came with an abrupt end for Station Road's Railway Hotel earlier this year.

After all it is not often that a pub disappears overnight, the report adds.



The Railway pub reduced to a pile of rubble overnight.

## Jones developers seen as 'mixed blessing'

**FROM** humble beginnings Alderley builder Peter Emerson Jones founded a multi-million pound developer's empire that spans Wilmslow and Florida, says an Investor Chronicle report.

In the last 30 years, the Alderley based Emerson Group have permanently changed the face of Wilmslow and grown to become one of the country's most powerful developers.

Under the Emerson umbrella Jones has won major contracts in Manchester, Macclesfield and the South of England as well as large scale developments in Portugal and Alamonte Springs, Florida.

But Emerson activities are seen as a mixed blessing in Wilmslow, says Chronicle journalist Robert Waterhouse.

"Rightly or wrongly locals tend to associate Orbit with the urbanization of their village," he says.

Controversy has dogged some Emerson projects with planning permission finally won only on appeal direct to the Department of Environment.

Emerson marketing director Simon Clarke-Williams told the Investors Chronicle that Wilmslow's development would have happened with or without Mr. Jones.

"Wilmslow may not have needed its local developer, but the local developer has certainly profited from Wilmslow," concludes the report.



**"It offers advantages to buyers in variety, quality and price of its merchandise. Whether for consumption, use or ornament," says the text.**

**"In those days there were even 12 grocers in the centre," war veteran George Bayley told the Express Advertiser.**

**"Plus three chemists, three butchers, three fish game and poultry dealers as well as shoe and boot repairers, watchmakers, jewellers, gentlemen's fitters," said Mr. Bayley.**

**"With a population of only about nine thousand, customers had a wide variety of shops, not like today when you only have multiples serving a population of over 30,000," he said.**

**"The number of banks and other "non-shopping" units in Grove Street has taken away the intimacy of yesteryear.**

**"Even the constant change-over of shops is confusing. One week a shop opens, the next the shop-fitters are in!" said George.**

**Now the state of Grove Street's constant building and refurbishment is even discouraging the chain stores themselves.**

**Stan Fosbury managing director of Sweater House store believes Grove Street could be on the slide.**

**"It's just not the nice place to browse like it has been in the past," he said sadly.**



**F.C. Berry outfitters gave service second to none. Pictured in the doorway was manager John Shore.**



# LANDMARK'S FINAL CHAPTER

# Bookshop turns the last pages

## Johnstones to close its doors after a century in the heart of Wilmslow

By Martin Hennessey

A chapter of Wilmslow's history will finally be closed when Johnstones Bookshop and Stationers shuts its' doors for the last time at the end of the month.

There has been a Johnstones Stationers at the corner of Grove Avenue and Grove Street since before 1896.

But now a clearance sale has emptied the shelves and posters in the window are the only epilogue to the shop's recent history.

"Miss MacGill and Miss Standing would like to thank all their customers for 43 happy years at Johnstones Bookshop," it says.

The present owners and 12 staff are all retiring and that farewell message is a sad goodbye from one of the most familiar of all Wilmslow's fast disappearing independent retailers.

Heir

Although Johnstones has been on the verge of shutting down before this time there will be no successor.

It was in 1945 when the ageing Bertram Johnstone faced his retirement without an heir, his

family's premises was saved by the enthusiasm of two young women — Alice Standing and Margaret MacGill.

During the war years the two longtime friends had worked together for the Ministry of Food and Agriculture.

Travelling Lancashire and Cheshire in a caravan their job was to take quality checks of soil samples for ministry records.

Their journeys often brought them to Wilmslow for a night's stopover.

It was then they fell in love with Johnstones.

Both Alice and Margaret were keen book lovers, and the Grove Street shop held many attractions for an enthusiastic reader.

"Whenever we passed through I would always add to my collection of Nelsons Classics," explained Miss Standing of books she still keeps in her Wilmslow home.

Loved

"When we heard Mr. Johnstone wanted to retire we

immediately wrote to him with an offer," she explained. Their price was accepted.

Miss Standing and Miss MacGill took over the running of Johnstones in May 1946 — they have been there ever since.

"These years have been very happy ones," said Miss Standing.

But despite pioneering women in business Alice denies ever having been an entrepreneur.

"We took on Johnstones because we loved books and we needed to make a living, that was all.

"We have never wanted to make lots of money and the shop has gone on as steadily as we have done".

But times have changed, and as Wilmslow's longstanding independent retailers step down only the giant stores can afford to move in.

Rent and rate rises have put Grove Street beyond the reach of small firms.

The pressure from the High Street goliaths has taken its toll.

"Few firms have a hope of competing against shops like W. H. Smiths now that they are large enough to be their own wholesalers," explained Miss Standing.

"There is no future for a bookshop here any more," said added.



AFTER one hundred years as a stationers Johnstones bookshop is closing at the end of this month. Staff at the shop smile bravely but empty shelves behind them are a clear reminder of the shop's future.





THIS photo (left) from 1896 shows Johnstones as the original booksellers of Grove Street. The shop was started by Bertram Johnstone's parents in the late 19th century. He took it over in 1905 before Alice Standing and Margaret MacGill

became the last owners in May 1946. The two wartime friends have spent many happy years in Wilmslow keeping the



Johnstones tradition alive, but when they retire later this month there will be no successor. The long-standing retail

landmark on Grove Street (pictured right, present day) will have disappeared forever. 13/JY/90.



# The **Letters** Page

## Town's detractors 'jealous'

I CANNOT believe the amount of moaning that has gone on about the so-called "cafe society" in Wilmslow. Can I be alone in thinking that the town is flourishing and that, after the terrible slump of the early 1990s, it is a joy to see Wilmslow alive again?

Only the small-mindedness, and dare I say jealousy,

Macclesfield Borough Council is interfering with Wilmslow's continuing prosperity. It is a shame that we are unable to break free from the borough stranglehold and stand alone as a thriving and glorious independent success story.

Richard Kabulo  
Bollin Hill  
Wilmslow



The Rector's Rectory - head of Wilmslow's cafe society

their predecessors did to the private chapel in Carrs Wood - demolished it to prevent vandalism!

Gerry Kelsall  
Keswick Drive  
Frodsham

## No reason not to have a bridlway

I WAS born in Park Road in 1924 and know that strip of land very well. It is part of the original driveway to Pownall Hall abandoned by the Boddingtons when a speculator, seeking to sell land to them, threatened to have cheap houses built with their backs alongside the drive if they wouldn't buy. The Boddingtons rerouted their drive to enter Hawthorn lane.

It ceased to be a passageway and wire netting straddled it here and there from the time of the Great War to provide eggs for the few Park Road residents who had the presence of mind and the cash to arrange it. There were hens present when I was a boy.

Although there was no passageway along it, it could be crossed in several places from Park Road to the Carnival Field through gaps in the iron railings which had once been the boundary between the drive and the Carnival Field.

Despite comments to the contrary, the entrance gate still exists at the Altrincham Road end. The stonework needs cleaning and deserved a Preservation Order. Scrub growing in front of it should be removed.

It would then be an imposing rear entrance to Park Road houses and the proposed bridle way.

Vehicles moved up and down that strip of land, known to us as "The Plantation" (even before the last war) to deliver timber to Albert Kirkham's sheds to be cut into firewood logs and chopped into kindling sticks in connection with his business as a coal merchant. After the last war his sons regularly moved stone paving slabs by lorry when they were in business laying paths and drives.

Throughout those years, the entrance gates were kept closed by padlock and chain and opened only for vehicles. More recently someone has removed the iron gates to make it more convenient to drive in and out, but the stonework proclaims

padlock and chain and opened only for vehicles. More recently someone has removed the iron gates to make it more convenient to drive in and out, but the stonework proclaims that it is still a gate. It is still used by vehicles as it has been for more than sixty years.

I can see no reason why it should not become a bridle way provided that the long-established rights of Park Road residents to pass and repass with vehicles whenever necessary, is respected. There is no fast traffic, the gate won't allow it.

Although it could serve as a public right of way, I doubt if many would ride horses through it because they would emerge into a rather narrow pathway at the other end - nothing is impossible, though. We once had a circus elephant in our back garden at No.54, and it had got there overnight, (I now suspect that some high spirited circus hands brought it round by road).

A meeting between residents and others would be useful. Perhaps the Local Authority would clean up the gates - provided they don't do what



# 500 MARK END OF AN ERA

DOORS shut on a century of worship at Water Lane Methodist Church on Sunday. But worshippers look ahead with hope to the new work centre.

More than 500 people took the last chance to worship at Water Lane Methodist Church before it demolished later this year to make way for a new £½ million church development. Ex-ministers of the church which was built in 1897, took part in the service with minister, Alan Mimmack. They were Rev. John Dain (1957-62) and Rev. Jeffrey Harris (1967-71).

## SAD

"I felt rather sad," said Rev. Mimmack, as he closed the doors of the building for the last time. "But I am hopeful about the future."

Wet and dry rot, a damaged roof and faulty heating system in the Victorian building would cost more to repair than to build a new church, it was decided in a feasibility study in 1981. The planned replacement will make worship much more comfortable, and give Water Lane a complete face-lift.

Plans approved by the Borough Council after much disagreement consist of:

- An octagonal church seating up to 350 people.
- Hall for talks, youth

activities, badminton and socials.

- Three general purpose rooms.
- Two kitchens, toilets, vestry and entrance foyer.

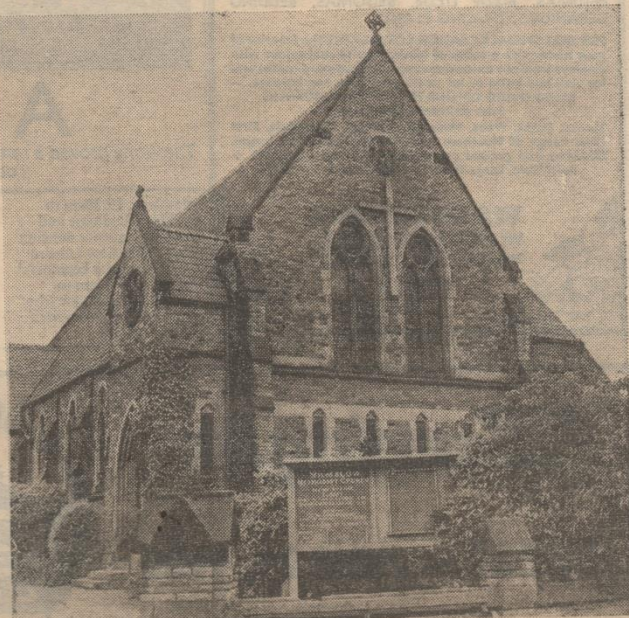
## £½ MILLION

Most of the £½m cost has been obtained from the sale of part of the site on which shops will be built. Of the remaining £100,000 the church was faced with rustling up two years ago, about £78,000 has already been raised. Rev. Mimmack intends to have the rest by the time Orbit Developments puts the final brick into place.

He hopes work on the new building will start before Christmas this year, and that it will be completed in time for the 100th anniversary of Water Lane Methodist in November 1986.

The most testing time he foresees, will be the next 12 months when services will have to take place in the Sunday School Rooms. "It is going to be difficult getting a quart into a pint pot," he said, "But there is a willingness to make it work."

Congregation members are looking forward to the opening of the new premises. Souvenirs of its Victorian past will not be absent — pulpit panel and other parts of the old structure will be built in with the new.



Water Lane's Victorian Methodist Church — soon to be replaced by a modern £½m development. Photo No. DK6/37.



The Rev. Alan Mimmack shuts the door on Water Lane Methodist Church after its closing-down ceremony, with ex-ministers Rev. John Dain (1957-62) and Rev. Jeffrey Harris (1967-71). Photo No. DK6/38F.

## VALUATIONS

Undertaken for the  
insurance of  
JEWELLERY and SILVER

at

**D. J. Massey  
& Son**



**ELECTRIC  
REPAIRS**  
**MOORES & NEWTON**

Tel. Wilmslow 27313

**Wilmslow & Alderley  
and Knutsford**

# Advertiser

Your local  
Vauxhall dealers  
**The Vauxhall  
Centre**  
**MOORES & NEWTON**  
Tel. Wilmslow 27312

EST. 1874, No. 5,016

Thursday, September 28, 1978

8p

## WILMSLOW PARISH HALL GOES UP FOR AUCTION

**THE decision to grant outline planning consent to the Wilmslow Parish Hall site, Water Lane has prompted the officers of St. Bartholomew's Church to put the site on the open market without any immediate prospect of replacing it.**

The sale will take place by auction at 3 p.m. on Thursday, October 26, at the Stanneylands Hotel, Stanneylands Road, Wilmslow.

The decision to sell was taken in 1975, when it was considered that the church would be better served by a new church hall closer to the church building, Church Street. Since that date the search has been on to find an appropriate site for this new building, a search which has thrown up five possibilities but, as yet, no definite plans.

In his October message in St. Bartholomew's parish magazine, the Rector, Rev. Peter Hunt, lists the options open to the church, a list full of difficulties which must be overcome before the site for the new church hall is to be chosen.

To latest setback came recently with the refusal by Macclesfield Borough Council to allow the church authorities to use the North end of the

Memorial Gardens, Church Lane. The grounds for this refusal were that the planners felt that the dividing road between the church building and the gardens was too busy and therefore this possibility has been ruled out completely.

"Bass Charrington's are very sympathetic to us", said Mr Hunt as a result of discussions held concerning the possibility of utilizing land owned by the brewery adjacent to the George and Dragon Hotel.

Further discussions with the brewery have been suggested but only concerning land behind the public house car park. "They (the brewery) regret that they cannot allow us to use their land adjacent to the church yard", said Mr Hunt.

The possibility of using land on the Carrs Field has also

would necessitate the building of a footbridge across the River Bollin to enable access to and from the church. The main complication of using this site is that the land has been bequeathed to Wilmslow.

However, Mr Hunt states that as the church once had a school on the site, "one section of land may balance out the other — no actual space in the bequest would be lost".

The use of the churchyard itself is another option open to us but this would necessitate the removal of gravestones and Mr Hunt casts some doubt as to whether or not the congregation would allow this to take place. One solution would be to erect some sort of monument in the new hall, listing the graves over which the hall was built.

The final alternative suggested has been to extend the existing church building, but, once again, this is not without





**THE decision to grant outline planning consent to the Wilmslow Parish Hall site, Water Lane has prompted the officers of St. Bartholomew's Church to put the site on the open market without any immediate prospect of replacing it.**

The sale will take place by auction at 3 p.m. on Thursday, October 26, at the Stanneylands Hotel, Stanneylands Road, Wilmslow.

The decision to sell was taken in 1975, when it was considered that the church would be better served by a new church hall closer to the church building, Church Street. Since that date the search has been on to find an appropriate site for this new building, a search which has thrown up five possibilities but, as yet, no definite plans.

In his October message in St. Bartholomew's parish magazine, the Rector, Rev. Peter Hunt, lists the options open to the church, a list full of difficulties which must be overcome before the site for the new church hall is to be chosen.

The latest setback came recently with the refusal by Macclesfield Borough Council to allow the church authorities to use the North end of the

Memorial Gardens, Church Lane. The grounds for this refusal were that the planners felt that the dividing road between the church building and the gardens was too busy and therefore this possibility has been ruled out completely.

"Bass Charrington's are very sympathetic to us", said Mr Hunt as a result of discussions held concerning the possibility of utilising land owned by the brewery adjacent to the George and Dragon Hotel.

Further discussions with the brewery have been suggested but only concerning land behind the public house car park. "They (the brewery) regret that they cannot allow us to use their land adjacent to the church yard", said Mr Hunt.

The possibility of using land on the Carrs Field has also been suggested, although this

would necessitate the building of a footbridge across the River Bollin to enable access to and from the church. The main complication of using this site is that the land has been bequeathed to Wilmslow.

However, Mr Hunt states that as the church once had a school on the site, "one section of land may balance out the other — no actual space in the bequest would be lost".

The use of the churchyard itself is another option open to use but this would necessitate the removal of gravestones and Mr Hunt casts some doubt as to whether or not the congregation would allow this to take place. One solution would be to erect some sort of monument in the new hall listing the graves over which the hall was built.

The final alternative suggested has been to extend the existing church building, but once again, this is not without problems.

Any extension of the historical structure would have to be carried out carefully, using costly stone so as not to detract from the building's present appearance. This plan was dropped for this reason and also because it is doubtful whether the parishioners want to see the present building altered in any way.

It can be seen, therefore, that the immediate future looks bleak. Vacant possession of the Water Lane Mill comes into operation on January next year, after that date the various societies and groups who use the hall as a meeting place will have to find alternative accommodation.



# Letters page

## Former usherette recalls fond memories of the Rex

IT is indeed sad to see the Rex close. I do hope it re-opens again as it will not be Wilmslow without the Rex.

Wilmslow is now all offices and shops and the nice shops like Cleggs gone and the old Methodist Church replaced by Modern Church nothing the same.

I worked at the Rex myself for several years for Mr Walter Stansby.

I was Manageress at a dry cleaners next door to the Rex, and when I closed my shop at 5pm I went several nights a week as usherette at the Rex plus Saturday and Sunday evenings.

It was an interest and I met lots of people and I enjoyed all the films and shows.

Mr Stansby had lots of shows, both amateur Alderley and Wilmslow Operatic Society, my favourites, who are so good. Also professional companies, and I got quite a few autographs including The Kordites, Eddie Calvert, and many others. I also enjoyed the Christmas pantomimes, so it is sad to see it close, and I do hope it will re-open. There was also a lovely ballroom and cafe.

The Manageress of the cinema was Miss Parkinson, and each Christmas we



THE end of an era for Wilmslow's Rex Cinema

would all go in her office and have a cake and drink after the cinema closed to celebrate us all there another year - all the cinema staff (usherettes).

Happy days when people enjoyed the cinema and shows, there was no muggings or vandalism in those days. The cinema was an interest and kept the young ones off the streets.

I would like to wish Master Ken and Master John happy retirement.

Mrs Joan Brown  
School Road  
Handforth.

## Readers' recollections of heydays at the Rex

### Joan recalls the stars shining at town's cinema

Joan Brown, who worked at the Rex as an usherette for many years, is sad to see the cinema finally close its doors.

Mrs Brown worked as the manageress of a dry cleaners next door to the cinema and when she closed up the shop at 5pm it was on to her second job at the Rex.

She was employed by Walter Stansby and describes her job as an interest which gave her the opportunity to see lots of films and shows and also collect autographs.

She remembers: "I got quite a few autographs including the Kordites and Eddie Calvert and many others."

Another strong memory for Mrs Brown is Christmas at the Rex, when the staff would get an annual treat from the manageress when the cinema closed its doors.



FOUNDER Walter Stansby

She recalled: "The manageress of the cinema was Mrs Parkinson and each Christmas we would all go in her office and have a cake and drink after the cinema closed to celebrate us all there another year."

Mrs Brown also wants to wish the present owners of the Rex all the best. She added: "I would like to wish Master Ken and Master John a happy retirement."

● Read Mrs Brown's recollections in full on the Letters Page, page four.

# Final curtain call brings memories flooding back

LAST week the Express Advertiser exclusively revealed that the Rex Cinema was closing its doors after 59 years.

The news prompted Express Advertiser readers to write in with stories of the cinema in its heyday.

This week we bring you the memories of two Wilmslow residents with fond memories of one of the town's most famous landmarks.

David Tyrell, of Hawthorn Park, remembers one occasion in 1938 when the cinema became the venue for the first Sunday public performance in Wilmslow and played its part in the arrival of the St. John's Ambulance Brigade in the town.

The orchestral concert, which was only allowed after a magistrate granted a special licence, kick started the brigade in Wilmslow, which is still going strong to this day.

Mr Tyrell, who practised as a chiropodist, recalls: "At that time I was in practice in King Street, Manchester, and one of my patients was the wife of the regional chief of the brigade, Colonel Challoner, a solicitor in Stockport."

"He was keen to establish a brigade in Wilmslow and he invited Neville Bowyer and myself to his home in Didsbury to discuss the possibility of a brigade in Wilmslow."

"So the idea was born which I understand is still continued today."

With the aim of raising £250 to fund the new branch of the brigade, the first of a series of concerts starring the Stockport Philharmonic Orchestra was organised at the Rex and was duly promoted in the Wilmslow Advertiser.

Councillor Sydney Hope, who was then president of the Wilmslow brigade, said he wanted to make it one of the most efficient in the country and added "that desire is not impossible of attainment."



End of an era for the Rex

The concert was evidently a great success and the orchestra even had to throw in a few extra numbers.

A review in the Advertiser was also gushing. It reads: "It was soon evident that here we had a combination of musicians who love music for its own sake and who, therefore, put heart and soul into their work."

"When such is the case, success is assured."



# Three cheers for George

**BY-PASS** bulldozers were set to bring misery and heart-ache to a poorly pensioner couple until drinkers from a Wilmslow pub saved the day.

Now landlady and customers of the King William have found a new home for 80-year-old George Tomlinson and wife Dolly after their terraced house on Bollin Walk was to be obliterated for the Wilmslow by-pass.

The couple were told they would have to move to Handforth flats and give up their friends as well as their dog and cat they love.

And for George, crippled by a drunk driver five years ago, and who can now walk only with sticks, the news was a dreadful blow.

For as long as regulars can remember, George, once Wilmslow's only taxi driver, has spent his evenings in the King William, Manchester Road.

He has his own seat by the bar and everyone knows him — these are the happy hours in George's empty days in front of the TV.

But moving away would have forced out his nightly shandy. He just would not be able to make the journey from Handforth.

"They both would have had a miserable time in Handforth," said landlady Nancy Whittingham.

But moving away would have forced out his nightly shandy. He just would not be able to make the journey from Handforth.

"They both would have had a miserable time in Handforth," said landlady Nancy Whittingham.



The doomed terrace.

## Kind-hearted drinkers save couple from shock move

**EXCLUSIVE**

By Martin Hennessey

"It would have been extremely hard to make them move all that way. And the flat they had their name down for does not allow pets."

Nancy and regulars at the King William were so worried for the old couple they got their heads together and came up with a last ditch attempt to save the day for George and Dolly.

They wrote off to Cheshire County Council and demanded to know why the Tomlinsons couldn't move into a semi that stood empty on Manchester Road.

"It was outrageous. They were being told to move to Handforth when there was an empty house round the corner," said Nancy.

After much hesitation, the council has finally agreed to the swap.

"It's tremendous news. Some of the regulars have even promised they will help out with the redecoration."

"It was outrageous. They were being told to move to Handforth when there was an empty house round the corner," said Nancy.

After much hesitation, the council has finally agreed to the swap.

"It's tremendous news. Some of the regulars have even promised they will help out with the redecoration. We'll all make sure it's a nice place to live in before they move," said landlady Jesse Whittingham.

Now at least the Tomlinsons can look forward to a more assured future among the people they know.

Although Dolly, in her seventies, is not as much of a regular at the King William, she is pleased George will not have to give it all up.

"It would be awful to think of him not getting out in the evening. There's no way I would ever get anything done with him under my feet all the time."



Reprieve for George and Dolly.