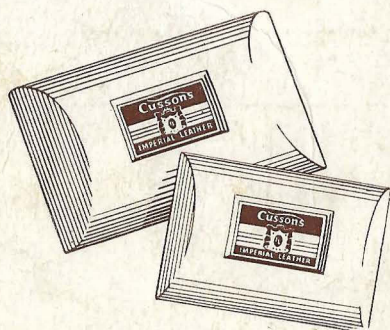


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# PRESTWICH

## *The* *Official Guide*

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**PRESTWICH BOROUGH COUNCIL**

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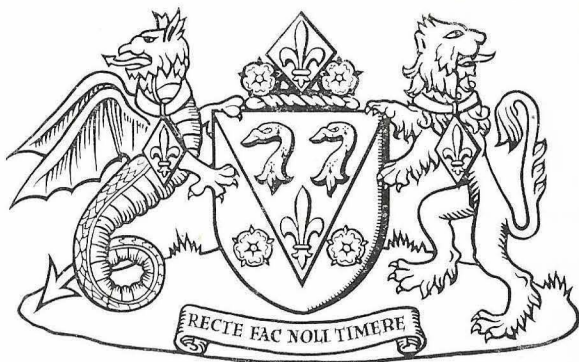
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#### OFFICIAL DESCRIPTION

**THE ARMS.** *Argent on a Pile between two Roses Gules barbed and seeded proper two Swans' Heads erased Ermine in chief and a Fleur-de-Lys of the first in base.*

**THE CREST:** *On a Wreath of the Colours: a Lozenge Azure charged with a Fleur-de-lys Argent between two Roses Gules barbed and seeded proper.*

**THE SUPPORTERS:** *To the dexter a Wyvern regardant Or and to the sinister a Lion regardant Argent each gorged with a riband and suspended therefrom a Lozenge Azure charged with a Fleur-de-lys Argent.*

**THE MOTTO:** *Recte Fac Noli Timere.*

"The 'white field' of the arms refers, unconsciously perhaps, to the district of that name, and between the Lancaster roses is a pile carrying the heads of two of the swans from the arms of Baron Cawley of Prestwich, and also the fleur-de-lys which is often used as a symbol of St. Mary and here indicates the Parish Church which bears her name. The colours attributed to her in mediaeval hagiology were blue and white, and these are shown in the lozenges in the crest and hung about the supporters' necks. The lozenge, of course, is used instead of the shield to display the arms of a lady, and it is therefore appropriate to show the fleurs-de-lys upon lozenges here. The lozenge is also used, because of its resemblance in shape to the spindle, to represent the cotton industry as in the arms of Blackburn.

"The supporters are the wyvern and lion of the Egertons, Earls of Wilton, who were seated at Heaton Park. These are differenced with the lozenges and fleurs-de-lys seen in the crest, and they also look over their shoulders, as if reviewing the past.

"The motto is 'Do right, fear not'."

## PRESTWICH IN HISTORY

IT appears almost certain that there have been habitations in Prestwich since the days of the Roman occupation of Britain even though the recorded history of the town dates only from the thirteenth century. Prestwich is on the line of the Roman Road from Manchester to Ribchester, constructed in A.D. 79 and traces of two of the camps designed to protect this highway have been found within the borough boundary at Castle Hill by Singleton Brook and by Rainsough Hill. The place-name itself is of Anglo-Saxon origin, and the nature of the tenure by which the family of Prestwich held their estates justifies the opinion that they were in residence in Saxon times. The first known lord of the manor was Robert de Prestwich, who died about 1206. A considerable portion of the great manorial estate remained intact until the eighteenth century when the owner at that period, Thomas William Coke—afterwards Earl of Leicester—disposed of it.

The parish church of St. Mary, which stands on an eminence overlooking Prestwich Clough and the Irwell valley, dates from the fifteenth century. Evidence of the existence of an earlier church was found when the present one was being restored, and experts conjecture that the parish was recognised before the Norman Conquest and that the church originated from a Saxon chantry chapel. There was certainly a church here in 1288, for in that year the sum of £1 17s. 4d., being one-tenth of its annual revenue, was levied on the ecclesiastical benefice of Prestwich in support of Edward I's crusade to the Holy Land.

In the days when the country to the north and east of Manchester was sparsely populated agricultural land, the parish covered some fifty square miles and stretched as far as Oldham, and until late in the last century the people of Oldham had to come to Prestwich to be married. Wedding parties used to set out on foot, accompanied, it is said, by musicians so that there could be singing and dancing on the way. Today, the original area of the parish is divided into thirty-six separate parishes, but the legal title of the parish is still Prestwich-cum-Oldham, and on certain occasions the Mayor of Oldham is invited to attend Prestwich Parish Church. The parish archives are well-preserved and provide much interesting and amusing information upon the customs of bygone days. In the churchyard are the graves of Henry Wyatt, artist; Charles Swain, poet; John Horsfield and Richard Buxton, botanists; and William Sturgeon, the originator of the electric magnet. The oldest decipherable tombstone bears the following brief, sad inscription: "Here lyeth the bodies of the children of Thomas Collier—Richard,





**The Parish Church**

Mary, John and Martha—who were buried Be Twixt the first and twelfth of December, A.D. 1641.”

The original rectory of Prestwich dated from the same period as the church. It stood in Rectory Lane, formerly known as Back Lane. It was a very beautiful half-timbered house, which unfortunately was pulled down about one hundred and twenty years ago to make way for a somewhat severe brick mansion which in its turn was demolished and replaced by the modern rectory which stands in Church Lane.

Prestwich Parish Church was unusual, if not unique, in that, until well into the eighteenth century, it stood alone on its cliff-like eminence and had no town or village clustering round it. The only semblance of a village was on that portion of the Bury Old Road, facing Heaton Park, known as Rooden Lane. Further north was the hamlet of Kirkhams, grouped round Kirkhams House which was built in 1733, and has now, like its neighbouring mansion Polefield House, been demolished.

Bury Old Road was a turnpike road and the main highway through Prestwich. Other highways were maintained by the centuries-old custom of the inhabitants using their own horses, carts and labour for a certain number of days each year to repair them, or alternatively paying one shilling a year towards their

## *Prestwich in History*

upkeep. In 1831 this ancient system ceased, and the cost of maintaining the highways repairable by the inhabitants at large, was met by a rate, which at first was 1½d. in the pound! The original highways so maintained were Rectory Lane, Church Lane, Bent Lane, Whittaker Lane and Wash Lane (now Clifton Road).

Towards the end of the eighteenth century, clusters of handloom-weavers' cottages made small new communities along the narrow, muddy lanes which led to isolated farmsteads. They were the first signs of growth and change. Manchester was becoming the centre of a huge industry and, as the new century opened, it became clear that the great need was for better means of communication between the heart of the cotton trade and the spinning and weaving towns surrounding it. An Act was passed in 1818 for the making of a new road between Manchester and Bury, but its actual construction was delayed until 1827. The Bury New Road, destined to become one of the busiest routes leading out of Manchester and Salford, literally put Prestwich on the map. Unlike the winding Bury Old Road, it pursued a straight course from Manchester through Broughton, Kersal and Prestwich to its junction with the Old Road at Besses o' th' Barn. When it was first constructed there were green fields on either side of it for much of its length, and grass grew between the stones that paved the highway. Along the short

**The Main Shopping Centre in Bury New Road**





## Prestwich

stretch between Church Lane and Poppythorn Lane modern Prestwich developed. There were already a few cottages and the National School, which was erected in 1816, and as time went on development spread north and south.

The National School was rebuilt in 1866, and with its clock tower it was, and still is, a landmark in the district. It was both a school and a social centre, and several generations of Prestwich people have had happy memories of their schooldays and of parties and concerts enjoyed there.

The main effect of the Industrial Revolution upon the district was its selection as a place of residence by thousands of business people working in neighbouring centres. A hundred years ago, these new residents were mostly wealthy business-men who drove into Manchester in their own carriages; but when, in 1879, the Lancashire & Yorkshire Railway Company opened a branch line from Manchester to Radcliffe, with stations at Prestwich and Heaton Park, many workers in warehouses and offices came to live here and travelled daily to town by rail. The building of residential property proceeded rapidly, and in the latter half of the nineteenth century the population more than doubled. In December, 1902, the opening of an electric tram service further increased the facilities for travel between Prestwich and Manchester; while the electrification of the railway-line between Manchester and Bury, completed during the first world war, gave a swifter and more frequent local train service. During the nineteen-thirties, motor omnibuses gradually replaced the Salford Corporation trams, and there are now twelve services run by the Salford City Transport to various parts of the borough.

In the years following the first world war, many changes took place. On the east side of Bury New Road, at the corner of Fairfax Road, the Prestwich Co-operative Society built a department store known as the Tower Buildings. The White Horse at the corner of Poppythorn Lane and the Wilton Arms at the corner of Rectory Lane had their Victorian frontages removed and modern exteriors erected. The steeple-like tower of the National School was dismantled and replaced by a square one. On the west side of Bury New Road the old Albion Inn was pulled down to make way for the new premises of the Midland Bank, and the Urban District Council's offices were moved from Chester Bank, a few yards north of Chester Street, to Bent Hill. Bent Hill, now the Town Hall, was formerly a private mansion. Its surrounding estate became the site of the Council's first housing project, and later the Polefield and Langley estates, situated respectively on the east and west sides of Bury Old Road, were purchased, and over a thousand council



"Tower Buildings" in Bury New Road

houses were built in the twenty years between the two world wars. Since 1946, the Corporation has built the Rainsough Simister and Carr Clough housing estates, and is now planning small groups of bungalows for old people in various parts of the district and the provision of flats to re-house people from the first slum clearance area to be designated in the borough under the Housing Repairs and Rents Act, 1954.

The Prestwich Local Board was established in 1867 and functioned until 1894, when the Prestwich Urban District Council was created. On 2nd October, 1939, Prestwich received its charter of incorporation as a municipal borough. The late Lord Cawley was invited to be the Charter Mayor. Owing to the outbreak of war, the event could not be celebrated with the public ceremonies and rejoicings which had been planned.

The name of Prestwich reached the ears of listening millions when the pealing bells of the parish church were broadcast to celebrate the victory of El Alamein and again to celebrate VE Day. These bells have rung through the centuries, and all the occasions they have rung for national rejoicing have been noted in the parish records. Once they were heard by a scattered few, and now many thousands live within sound of them and within sight of the church which is now our only visible link with the past.



## MODERN PRESTWICH

**P**RESTWICH stands on high ground above the city of Manchester on the main road to Bury. From the high ground on the western edge of the district (384 feet above sea level) there are fine views of the great urban area to the south, the Irwell valley to the west and the curving flank of the Pennines to the north. During the last hundred years the population of Prestwich has increased from four thousand to thirty-four thousand. In the course of this rapid growth much beauty has been swept away, but sufficient remains to give many parts of the district the charm of green oases in the grey mass of industrial south-east Lancashire—one of the most thickly populated areas in the world.

Some 2,420 acres in extent, the Borough embraces five distinct residential districts, still popularly known as "villages": Prestwich, Heaton Park, Sedgley Park, Rainsough and Simister. The local industries are textile weaving, bleaching, dyeing, printing and finishing and the manufacture of soap. The mills and factories are not numerous and are situated in the older parts of the district or near the borough boundaries.

Modern Prestwich enjoys all the amenities of a good-class residential district, including excellent shopping facilities.

### PUBLIC SERVICES

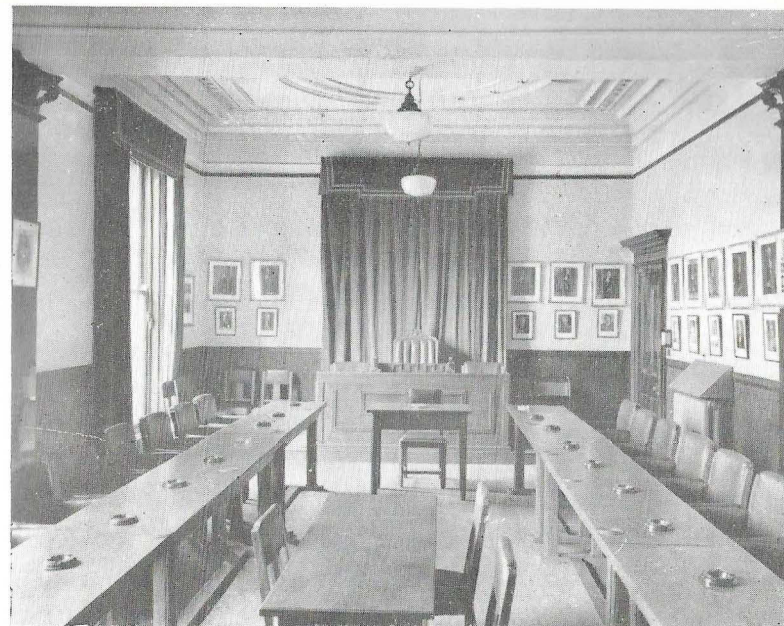
#### HIGHWAYS

The main roads passing through Prestwich are Bury New Road (the Manchester to Burnley Trunk Road A56), Bury Old Road (A665), the A6044 route along Sheepfoot Lane, Scholes Lane and Hilton Lane, and part of Middleton Road (A576). These roads and the highways adopted by the local authority make up over forty miles of well-paved, well-lit roads in the district.

#### EDUCATION

There is ample provision for primary and secondary education within the borough and evening classes are held at the centrally situated Hope Park School. Grammar schools, technical schools and colleges and Manchester University are all within easy travelling distance.

Lancashire County Council is the education authority. Prestwich, Whitefield and Radcliffe form Division No. 19, which is administered by a divisional education executive committee to which Prestwich appoints ten representatives.



The Council Chamber in the Town Hall

Education Office : Beechwood, Pinfold Lane, Whitefield. (WHI 2884-5).

#### SANITATION

The Council's sewage and refuse disposal works are situated on the low-lying ground at the western extremity of the district, almost on the banks of the River Irwell. When the present system was laid down in 1920 it was thought to be adequate for the needs of the community for many years ahead. Since then, however, the population has grown enormously, and a scheme of modernisation and extension has been approved and will be put in hand as soon as restrictions on capital expenditure are lifted. At the refuse disposal plant, the refuse of the district goes through an efficient sorting process, and a considerable revenue is obtained from the sale of salvaged material.

#### HEALTH

The Public Health Department is responsible for all matters relating to the powers and duties of the borough council under the Public Health Acts and other statutory provisions affecting the





Looking eastwards from the tower of the Parish Church

health and well-being of the inhabitants. These include food inspection and inspection of shops, industrial premises and unhealthy and dangerous dwellings.

While the local authority keeps an ever-watchful eye on sanitary conditions, the Lancashire County Council is responsible for the administration of the ambulance service, the maternity, child welfare and school clinics, the home nursing service and home help service and the care of the aged. The County Council has divided its administrative area into seventeen divisions. Prestwich is in Division No. 12, and appoints four representatives to serve on the Divisional Health Committee. Public Health Department : Town Hall, Prestwich (PRE 2233). Divisional Health Office : Parsons Lane, Bury (Bury 25).

#### TRANSPORT

There is a frequent electric train service between Manchester and Bury, with stations at Prestwich and Heaton Park within the borough and at Besses o' th' Barn and Bowker Vale on the northern and southern boundaries respectively.

#### OMNIBUS SERVICES

The bulk of the local road passenger transport facilities are provided by Salford City Transport, whilst other services operated by Manchester Corporation Transport Department serve the areas contiguous with the Prestwich-Manchester boundary.

Service No. 35 operated jointly by the Salford, Manchester and Bury Transport Undertakings, links Prestwich with Manchester, Whitefield and Bury, whilst Services Nos. 95 and 96 operated jointly by the Salford and Manchester Transport Undertakings, and which pass through Prestwich, provide direct through services between Whitefield and East Didsbury.

Salford City Transport provides contact between Manchester and various points within the Prestwich area by Services Nos. 17, 22, 24, 33, 40, 51 and 73, and operates a direct service between Eccles and Radcliffe by Service No. 6, which passes through Prestwich and links up with the other services at various points. Service No. 4, also operated by Salford City Transport connects the outlying Simister area with Prestwich centre.

#### Sedgley Park Shopping Centre







**Sedgley Park Road**

#### **ELECTRICITY**

North Western Electricity Board, No. 1 (Manchester) Sub-Area, Town Hall, Manchester 2. (CEN 3211.)

Salford North District Offices and Service Centre : Frederick Road, Salford 6. (PEN 1461.)

#### **GAS**

North Western Gas Board, Manchester Group, Town Hall, Manchester, 2. (CEN 2191.)

Salford Undertaking (serving southern and central Prestwich) : Bloom Street, Salford 3. (BLA 9804.)

Radcliffe & Farnworth Undertaking (serving northern Prestwich) : Head office : Egerton Street, Radcliffe. (RAD 2247.)

Local showrooms : 446 Bury New Road, Prestwich. (PRE 2822.)

Middleton Undertaking (serving Simister area) : Long Street, Middleton. (MID 3624.)

#### **WATER**

Manchester Corporation Waterworks Dept. (serving southern and central Prestwich) : Town Hall, Manchester 2. (CEN 3377.)

#### *Parks and Open Spaces*

Irwell Valley Water Board (serving northern Prestwich) : Parsons Lane, Bury. (Bury 1140.)

Heywood & Middleton Water Board (serving Simister area) : Hind Hill Street, Heywood. (Heywood 6141.)

### **PARKS AND OPEN SPACES**

#### **PRESTWICH CLOUGH**

This wooded ravine with its brook running down to the River Irwell has been preserved, as far as possible, in its natural state, and still retains much of the peace and beauty for which it was once famed.

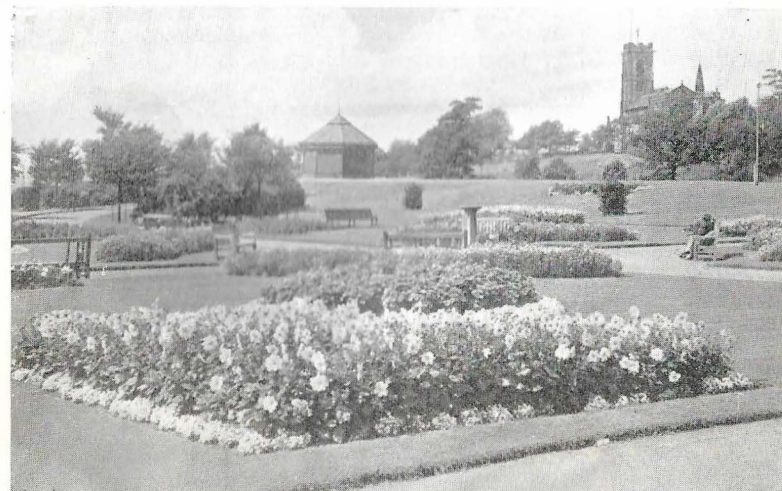
#### **ST. MARY'S PARK**

This Park is a peaceful expanse of lawns and flower-beds situated between the easterly end of the Clough and the west side of Bury New Road. There is a modern bandstand from which concerts are given on occasional Sundays during the summer.

#### **ST. MARY'S PLAYING FIELDS**

These playing fields are situated on the east side of Bury New Road, opposite St. Mary's Park. In addition to the well-kept playing fields, there are eighteen hard tennis courts, two bowling greens and a children's playground.

**St. Mary's Park**





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## PHILIPS PARK

The land forming this estate was purchased by Robert Philips, son of one of the founders of J. & N. Philips & Co. Ltd. of Manchester, in 1800, and was in the ownership of the family until the death of Miss Anna Maria Philips in 1946. In the following year it was acquired by the Prestwich and Whitefield Councils and a joint committee was appointed for its management. The estate, which comprises 131 acres of beautiful gardens, fields and woodlands, lies on the borders of Prestwich and Whitefield.

## HEATON PARK

Although this great park became part of Manchester in 1903 when it was purchased by the Manchester Corporation, it is still embraced, on the north, east and west, by Prestwich land, and its close association through generations of private ownership with the life of Prestwich cannot be forgotten. It was originally the seat of the Earls of Wilton. Their mansion is now a museum and art gallery, and the park provides, for its thousands of visitors, splendid recreational facilities including an 18-hole golf course, a large pitch-and-putt course, a boating lake and an open-air theatre.

## OTHER OPEN SPACES

Gardner Mount, the Grimshaw Playing Fields and the Bailey Street Recreation Ground are the best-known of the many other open spaces provided by the Council throughout the borough.

## ALLOTMENTS

Prestwich was one of the first local authorities in the country to rent allotments to amateur gardeners. There are 52 acres of allotments in the borough, with over 650 individual plots on them. Many allotment-holders are members of the Prestwich Allotments Association or the Prestwich & Whitefield Horticultural Association. The shows held by these two associations are popular annual events.

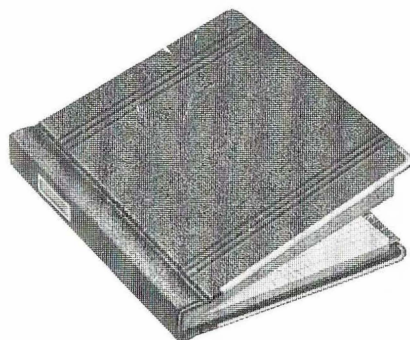
## RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES

There are ample opportunities for residents who wish to devote their leisure to sporting or cultural activities.

## FOOTBALL

There are numerous amateur association football clubs and a Prestwich Rugby Football Club. Some have their own grounds, but there is keen competition for the use of the Council's football pitches on the Grimshaw Playing Fields.

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Recreation

## CRICKET, TENNIS AND BOWLS

The Prestwich Cricket & Tennis Club has its own ground on The Heys. A tennis club and two bowling clubs are under municipal patronage, and there are a number of private tennis clubs and bowling greens.

## GOLF

The Prestwich Golf Club has an 18-hole course on the south-western side of the district, and the Manchester Corporation's municipal golf course at Heaton Park is within easy reach.

## CYCLING

A local branch of the Cyclists Touring Club meets regularly for Sunday outings.

## ANNUAL SPORTS DAY

The Borough Council has instituted an annual sports day which is held on St. Mary's Playing Fields. Entries are received from amateur athletic associations throughout the northern counties and, in addition to the numerous and handsome prizes, there are silver cups and trophies to be competed for each year.

## CINEMAS

There are two cinemas in the district : The Odeon and the Plaza, both in Bury New Road.

## MUSIC

The Prestwich Music Club and the Prestwich and Whitefield branch of the Hallé Club have memberships which bear witness to the local enthusiasm for serious music, and for lovers of choral singing there are the Prestwich Male Voice Choir, the Dorothy Lockett Ladies' Choir and the Egerton Ladies' Choir. The Prestwich Borough Band was founded nearly a hundred years ago and is acknowledged to be one of the best brass bands in the Manchester area.

## LITERATURE AND DRAMA

The Prestwich branch of the County Library is centrally situated in St. Mary's Road. There are book-exchange facilities at "Brooklands," Bury Old Road, and at Rainsough and Simister for readers living in outlying parts of the district. Prestwich Literary Society always has an attractive programme of lectures and discussions of interest to book-lovers. There are also several excellent drama groups in the district whose productions reach a high standard.



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## Places of Worship

### CLUBS

The following is a list of political and social clubs in the district :

Prestwich Conservative ; Prestwich Liberal ; Heaton Park Working Men's ; Victoria ; Sedgley & Hilton Parks Social ; Heaton Park Social ; Carlton ; Prestwich Church Institute ; British Legion.

### WOMEN'S ORGANISATIONS

The British Legion has a Women's Section, and there are local branches of the Co-operative Women's Guild, the Townswomen's Guild, the Women Citizens Association and the Sorooptimists.

### YOUTH ORGANISATIONS

Several churches and schools in the district have youth clubs or Boy Scout and Girl Guide groups. The Air Training Corps and the 5th Cadet Battalion Lancashire Fusiliers are popular with boys anxious to do some pre-Service training, and for girls there is the Women's Junior Air Corps. The Youth Hostels Association has an active local branch.

### OLD FOLKS' CLUB

The Old Age Pensions Association has a clubroom at "Parkdale," Bury New Road, which provides a pleasant meeting-place for old folk, and they are planning to build their own premises when sufficient funds can be obtained.

## PLACES OF WORSHIP

**CHURCH OF ENGLAND :** St. Mary's Parish Church, Church Lane. St. Margaret's, Bury Old Road. St. Hilda's, Whittaker Lane. St. Gabriel's, Bishops Road. St. George's, Simister. St. Andrew's, Carr Clough.

**ROMAN CATHOLIC :** Our Lady of Grace, Fairfax Road.

**METHODIST :** Bury New Road, Prestwich. Bury New Road, Sedgley Park. Bury Old Road, Heaton Park. Rainsough.

**CONGREGATIONAL :** Newtown Street, Heaton Park.

**JEWISH :** Holy Law Synagogue, Bury Old Road. Prestwich Hebrew Congregation, The Shrubbery, Bury New Road. Higher Prestwich Hebrew Congregation, Highbury House, Bury Old Road. Sedgley Park Synagogue, Elderslie, Bury New Road.

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LOCAL NEWSPAPER : *Prestwich & Whitfield Guide*, Earl Street, Prestwich. (PRE 2248.) Published weekly on Friday.

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POPULATION : 33,750 (Registrar General's estimate at mid-year 1956).

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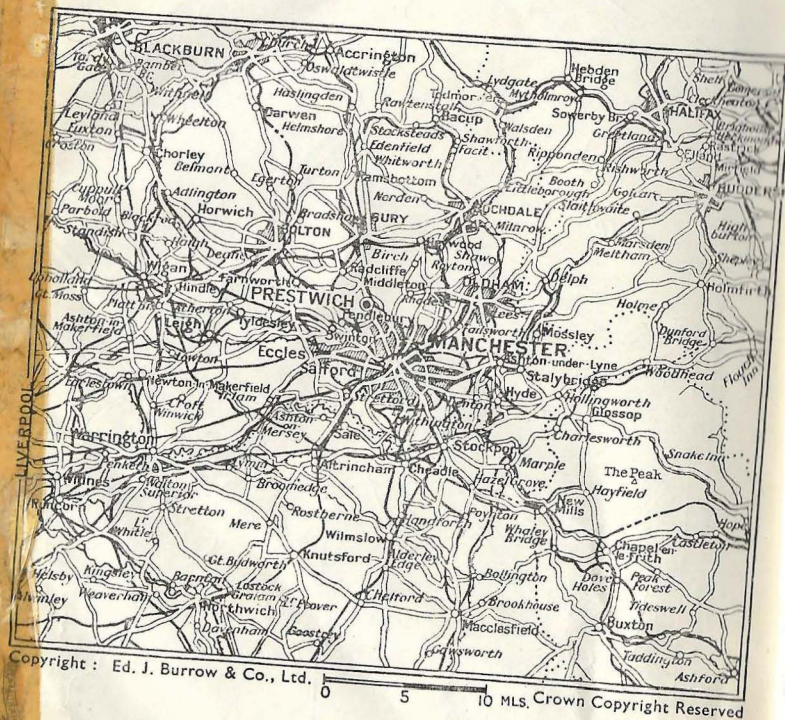
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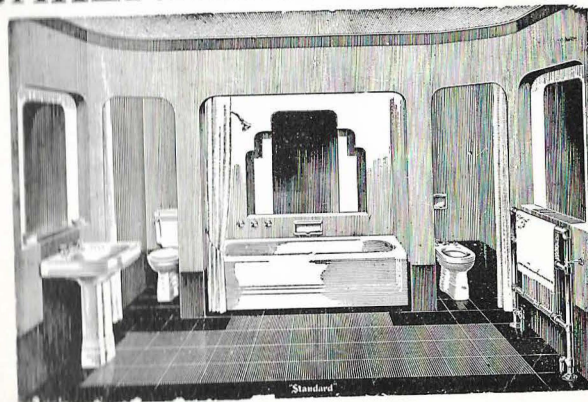
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