



Series II - Programme V

Lost Treasures

Avoid disappointment – check with your chosen destination before leaving.

Mysteries - every town, village and city has a secret history. Forgotten facts, amazing people and dramatic events - lost treasures inches below the surface.



He's back, and on the trail of more lost treasures

Britain is literally a treasure chest just waiting to be opened, and in the North West especially we've only just scratched the surface of what lies beneath. Welcome to Programme five.

In this new series Mark Olly and his team go in search of some of these lost treasures and show how you can get involved to solve some of the biggest mysteries in history. This is "adventure archaeology" and you don't have to be an expert to get stuck in.

Wherever you live there are legends and myths lurking in the background; fantastic stories of giants and monsters, fairy tales, tall stories, sometimes with an amazing grain of truth – but how do you tell fact from fiction?



Witch-hunts and Persecution - in this week's programme Mark is in witch country around Pendle Hill in Lancashire.

The great mass of Pendle Hill lies deep in Lancashire Pennine country not far from the former industrial weaving town of Burnley. This part of Britain has a wild captivating beauty and a macabre past. Four hundred years ago the remote farming communities in this part of Lancashire witnessed one of the most terrible persecutions in British history.

The Pendle Witches were the most famous witches in English legal history. In the year 1612, at Lancaster gaol, ten men and women were hanged for the 'crime' of witchcraft but who were they and why were they executed?

The Pendle Witches faced trial for the murder of 17 people around the Forest of Pendle. Court records named **Alison Device**, her brother **James**, grandmother **Demdike**, **Alice Nutter** and their enemy **Ann Chattox** whose confessions implicated each other in the trial.

It is the duty of any historian to separate fact from fiction.

Mark is keen to uncover the truth about the mysterious Pendle witches and luckily history favours us with the original court records of 1612 and it is from those that Mark and the team based this week's journey.

At St. Mary's Church, **Newchurch-in-Pendle** you'll find the "Eye of God", high on the side of the tower, which is supposed to ward off the evil spirits. It is odd because the tower was built in 1653, some 40 years after the witches were executed, but surely bears testament to the long memories of the village's inhabitants.

In her confession Ann Chattox claimed to have dug up corpses to remove their heads and teeth from the Newchurch graveyard. There is also the Nutter family grave, but this dates after the trials, and although that of the Nutter family, would not contain the executed body of Alice on hallowed ground.

More details of the Church at Newchurch can be found at:

www.lancashirechurches.co.uk/newchurch.htm

Or

www.pendle.net/Newchurch

Across Western Europe mass hysteria about witchcraft gripped superstitious authorities and ultimately led to the death of an estimated 60,000 people who were tortured, burnt or hanged as witches. Many were accused of selling their souls to spirits or devils that appeared to them in human or animal form.

Mark took his investigation of the Lancashire witches to a little shop in Newchurch-in-Pendle that is filled to the rafters with witch related goodies, from caldrons to bats and broom sticks to gargoyles; trading off Pendle's infamous residents.

Four hundred years ago it was believed that the witches received the power to kill or lame whom ever they pleased. One method of murder mentioned at the trial was that of making a clay effigy of the intended victim, which was then crumbled or burned causing the victim to fall ill and die.

The area surrounding Pendle Hill conceals places where the witches admitted carrying out their 'wicked' deeds - crimes, which resulted in the death sentence.

In a series of confessions, the Pendle witches effectively signed their own death warrants and were taken to Lancaster Castle to be tried and executed.

Read the confessions of the Pendle Witches at www.pendlewitches.co.uk/

After the witch trials of 1612 the remote villages and towns surrounding Pendle Hill slowly returned to normal; the simple farming communities continued spinning wool as they had since the Middle Ages.

With the invention of steam power, Burnley eventually became the centre of a flourishing weaving industry. Its damp climate and ready supply of coal made it perfect for the mass production of cotton goods in huge factories, producing the archetypal industrial landscapes that became known as "satanic mills".

Queen Street Mill in Burnley has the distinction of being Britain's last surviving steam driven textile mill and offers us an accurate picture of conditions in the Lancashire textile industry.

In its heyday the mill ran 1000 looms producing plain Lancashire cloth that was exported all over the world. Life was hard for the mill workers who began work at 6.30am and finished at 5.30pm. The giant steam engine would need to be fed coal from morning till night to keep the looms spinning.

Mill engineer **Alwyn Rogers** has looked after “Peace”, the 106 year-old steam mill engine for over 13 years. A labour of love that requires constant care and attention, the engine works as well now as it did in its heyday.

In the 1950s the textile industry in Britain faltered. Cotton and cloth became cheaper to produce abroad and buyers started to import from overseas. Sadly, the Queen Street Mill ground to a halt.

Visit this working mill for yourself and step back in time:

Queen Street Mill Textile Museum

Queen Street

Harle Syke

Burnley

BB10 2HX

Lancashire

Tel: 01282 412 555

Email: queenstreet.mill@mus.lancscc.gov.uk

www.lancsmuseums.gov.uk

On the other side of Burnley, the **Weavers' Triangle Visitor Centre** gives us a fascinating glimpse in to how the mill workers used to live with often up to 12 people in one small house...

The residents of industrial Burnley might have toiled in the busy factories and lived in cramped conditions but once a year they could let their hair down at the **Burnley Fair**.

The Fair dates from 1894 and, whereas other local areas had their “Wakes Week”, Burnley had the “Fair Week” when the mill’s closed and the whole town turned out for the fair.

Secretary of the Weavers’ Heritage Centre, **Roger Greegan** showed Mark his amazing working model fair from the period produced by local enthusiast, the late Bill Pearce.

The Weavers' Triangle

85 Manchester Road

Burnley

Lancashire

BB11 1JZ

Tel: 01282 452403

Email: weaverstriangle@yahoo.co.uk/

www.weaverstriangle.co.uk

The civil war began at Preston with the first battle fought at Manchester, but it was at Bolton, a puritan stronghold, that the fighting was at its most intense.

Bolton sided with the parliamentarians and was attacked three times by Royalist troops during the conflict, finally falling in 1644 to **Lord Derby** who committed the only massacre of the civil war.

These bloody, chaotic and uncertain times sparked a second wave of witch-hunt hysteria, which led to more travesties of justice and gave rise to a much feared and hated man: an evil figure, lawfully preying upon innocent people in a supposed drive to eliminate witchcraft from the land.

Mathew Hopkins was an unsuccessful lawyer who led one of the most brutal campaigns against witches in Britain. Hopkins was known as the **Witchfinder General** and travelled from town to town, exposing people he claimed to be witches (for a fee) and, before being discredited, Hopkins was responsible for a reputed 300 executions. His name then vanishes from the pages of history, supposedly killed by angry villagers.

After this wretched period of our history, being a witch was no longer an offence and there are

many people interested and involved in witchcraft today.

A few miles south is the lost treasure of **Towneley Hall**, a magnificent medieval mansion in Burnley

where the spectre of persecution continued long after the English Civil War in the form of the **Jacobite Rebellion** of 1745.

Towneley Hall is on the outskirts of Burnley and now houses the Burnley art collection. Home of the Royalist Towneley family, the building dates from the 1400s and was progressively added to by those living there; the Great Hall being the grandest example of Baroque style in Lancashire.

Amongst the Hall's impressive collection of fine art one painting in particular caught Mark's eye.

Curator of Towneley Hall, **Susan Bourne**, explained to Mark that the painting was a late 16th century work by **Marten Van Valkenborch** (1535-1612) of the Tower of Babel. Along with its biblical references the painting is full of fantastic historical detail in the town that Van Valkenbroch painted around the tower. In that domestic detail lay the most interesting elements for Mark, as he saw a detailed and accurate depiction of a medieval town.

One of the most exquisite lost treasures at Towneley Hall are the spectacular **Whalley Abbey Vestments**, which narrowly escaped destruction by Henry VIII's agents during the dissolution of the monasteries in 1536.

These are one of only two surviving examples of medieval English high mass vestments made in about 1390 by master craftsmen using Italian cloth and solid gold thread.

Towneley hall has many wonderful treasures, including a 16th century carved screen. A beautiful Flemish alter piece, it depicts scenes from the Passion of Christ. The carvings show all the characters dressed for the 1500s, as they would have had no idea about what people wore in the Palestine of Jesus. So again we have an amazing historical document and lost treasure.

Visit Towneley Hall and discover these wonderful treasures for yourself:

Towneley Hall and Towneley Park,

Off Todmorden Road

Burnley

Lancashire

BB11 3RQ

Tel. 01282 424 213

www.towneleyhall.org.uk

In the 17th and 18th centuries a series of uprisings took place called the **Jacobite Rebellions** aimed at restoring the Scottish House of Stuart to the English throne.

Bonnie Prince Charlie led the last Jacobite Rebellion but he was soundly defeated in 1746.

Read the history of the Jacobite Rebellion at:

www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/STUjacobite.htm

Francis Towneley, a descendent of the Towneley family, foolishly joined the rebellion but was captured at Carlisle. He paid for his treachery against the king with his life as, in 1746, he was found guilty, hung, drawn and quartered, and his skull was the last head to be displayed outside Temple Bar in London as a warning to all traitors. The faithful family servants rescued the head and brought it back to Towneley Hall where it was stored in a little cupboard in the chapel before becoming an after-dinner "curiosity" for many years.

But Towneley Hall wasn't the final resting place of the severed head. In fact the Towneley family moved it between their London homes until

eventually it found a resting place. Local historian **Brian Hall** revealed that after the head of Sir Francis had travelled up and down the country, in 1947 it finally was placed in the family tomb at St. Peter's church, arriving in a brown paper parcel through the post!

In this week's programme, Mark traced the footprints from history of man's intolerance and inhumanity: the dissolution of the monasteries in the 1500s; the witch-hunts and civil war of the 1600s; the Jacobite Rebellion of the 1700s; the exploitation and virtual slavery of the mill workers in the 1800s and thought about today's ethnic tensions. It's a shame that we don't appear to realise that we're all minorities in one way or another and we should all just learn to get along.

Get stuck in! How you can get involved with archaeology.

Portable Antiquities Scheme

Established in 1997 the **Portable Antiquities Scheme** is a countrywide community archaeology project to encourage the voluntary recording of archaeological objects found by the public in

England and Wales; people who use metal-detectors, go out walking, gardening or just going about their daily work.

The objects found - if properly recorded - offer an important and irreplaceable source for understanding our past.

At its heart are the Scheme's **Finds Liaison Officers**, offer everyone a way to log all the finds for public benefit. The data recorded - itself an important educational resource – published on:

www.finds.org.uk

The Council for British Archaeology

<http://www.britarch.ac.uk/>

Get Involved!



Send us details of your local lost treasure:

Click the **your treasure** tab on the main

www.lost-treasures.co.uk website or email the

team at info@lost-treasures.co.uk

Mark writes on archaeology and other subjects for local and national press.

His books include the '*Celtic Warrington & Other Mysteries*' volumes, which have been based on six years of research.

His other interests are wide ranging and include, musician, artist, photographer, and archaeologist, having trained at Liverpool University. Mark also holds a Certificate of Ministry and a Diploma of Biblical Studies and is part of '*Dalraida The Norsemen*', a dark age, living history, re-enactment aspect of Celtic Warrington.

Mark joined forces with **Virtual-Knutsford** in June 2000 and his work features regularly on the site. The second of Mark's '*Celtic Warrington & Other Mysteries*' volumes, which covers Knutsford and surrounding areas, appears in regular instalments. Find out more at www.virtual-knutsford.co.uk



Mark Olly

Born and raised in Warrington, Mark Olly established and runs the **Celtic Warrington Project** archaeological unit (CWP), whose aim is to document all prehistoric and Dark Age remains in the Mid Mersey Valley, North Cheshire and South Lancashire. This unique historical project for the North West is revealing an unsuspected picture of the region in Dark Age times.

Lost Treasures
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www.wordstofitt.com

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www.take27.co.uk/t27cgilt

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