

= Oldham =

Oldham / ˈɒldəm / is a large town in Greater Manchester, England, amid the Pennines between the rivers Irk and Medlock, 5 @. @ 3 miles (8 @. @ 5 km) south @-@ southeast of Rochdale and 6 @. @ 9 miles (11 @. @ 1 km) northeast of Manchester. Together with several smaller surrounding towns, it is part of the Metropolitan Borough of Oldham of which it is the administrative centre.

Historically in Lancashire, and with little early history to speak of, Oldham rose to prominence in the 19th century as an international centre of textile manufacture. It was a boomtown of the Industrial Revolution, and among the first ever industrialised towns, rapidly becoming " one of the most important centres of cotton and textile industries in England ". At its zenith, it was the most productive cotton spinning mill town in the world, producing more cotton than France and Germany combined. Oldham's textile industry fell into decline in the mid @-@ 20th century; the town's last mill closed in 1998.

The demise of textile processing in Oldham depressed the local economy. Today Oldham is a predominantly residential town, and a centre for further education and the performing arts. It is, however, still distinguished architecturally by the surviving cotton mills and other buildings associated with that industry. The town has a population of 103 @, @ 544 and an area of around 26 square miles (67 km²).

= = History = =

= = = Toponymy = = =

The toponymy of Oldham seems to imply " old village or place " from Eald (Saxon) signifying oldness or antiquity, and Ham (Saxon) a house, farm or hamlet. Oldham is however known to be a derivative of Aldehulme, undoubtedly an Old Norse name. It is believed to be derived from the Old English ald combined with the Old Norse holmi or holmr, meaning " promontory or outcrop ", possibly describing the town's hilltop position. It has alternatively been suggested that it may mean " holm or hulme of a farmer named Alda ". The name is understood to date from 865, during the period of the Danelaw.

= = = Early history = = =

The earliest known evidence of a human presence in what is now Oldham is attested by the discovery of Neolithic flint arrow @-@ heads and workings found at Werneth and Besom Hill, implying habitation 7 ? 10 @, @ 000 years ago. Evidence of later Roman and Celtic activity is confirmed by an ancient Roman road and Bronze Age archaeological relics found at various sites within the town. Placenames of Celtic origin are still to be found in Oldham: Werneth derives from a Celtic personal name identical to the Gaulish vernetum, " alder swamp ", and Glodwick may be related to the modern Welsh clawdd, meaning " dyke " or " ditch ". Nearby Chadderton is also pre @-@ Anglo @-@ Saxon in origin, from the Old Welsh cadeir, itself deriving from the Latin cathedra meaning " chair ". Although Anglo @-@ Saxons occupied territory around the area centuries earlier, Oldham as a permanent, named place of dwelling is believed to date from 865, when Danish invaders established a settlement called Aldehulme.

From its founding in the 9th century until the Industrial Revolution, Oldham is believed to have been little more than a scattering of small and insignificant settlements spread across the moorland and dirt tracks that linked Manchester to York. Although not mentioned in the Domesday Book, Oldham does appear in legal documents from the Middle Ages, invariably recorded as territory under the control of minor ruling families and barons. In the 13th century, Oldham was documented as a manor held from the Crown by a family surnamed Oldham, whose seat was at Werneth Hall.

= = = Industrial Revolution and cotton = = =

Much of Oldham 's history is concerned with textile manufacture during the Industrial Revolution ; it has been said that " if ever the Industrial Revolution placed a town firmly and squarely on the map of the world , that town is Oldham . " Oldham 's soils were too thin and poor to sustain crop growing , and so for decades prior to industrialisation the area was used for grazing sheep , which provided the raw material for a local woollen weaving trade .

By 1756 , Oldham had emerged as centre of the hatting industry in England . The rough felt used in the production process is the origin of the term " Owdham Roughyed " a nickname for people from Oldham . It was not until the last quarter of the 18th century that Oldham changed from being a cottage industry township producing woollen garments via domestic manual labour , to a sprawling industrial metropolis of textile factories . The climate , geology , and topography of Oldham were unrelenting constraints upon the social and economic activities of the human inhabitants . At 700 feet (213 m) above sea level and with no major river or visible natural resources , Oldham had poor geographic attributes compared with other settlements for investors and their engineers . As a result , Oldham played no part in the initial period of the Industrial Revolution , although it did later become seen as obvious territory to industrialise because of its convenient position between the labour forces of Manchester and southwest Yorkshire .

Cotton spinning and milling were introduced to Oldham when its first mill , Lees Hall , was built by William Clegg in about 1778 , the beginning of a spiralling process of urbanisation and socioeconomic transformation . Within a year , 11 other mills had been constructed , and by 1818 there were 19 ? not a large number in comparison with other local settlements . Oldham 's small local population was greatly increased by the mass migration of workers from outlying villages , resulting in a population increase from just over 12 @, @ 000 in 1801 to 137 @, @ 000 in 1901 . The speed of this urban growth meant that Oldham , with little pre @-@ industrial history to speak of , was effectively born as a factory town .

Oldham became the world 's manufacturing centre for cotton spinning in the second half of the 19th century . In 1851 , over 30 % of Oldham 's population was employed within the textile sector , compared to 5 % across Great Britain . It overtook the major urban centres of Manchester and Bolton as the result of a mill building boom in the 1860s and 1870s , a period during which Oldham became the most productive cotton @-@ spinning town in the world . In 1871 , Oldham had more spindles than any country in the world except the United States , and in 1909 , was spinning more cotton than France and Germany combined . By 1911 there were 16 @. @ 4 million spindles in Oldham , compared with a total of 58 million in the United Kingdom and 143 @. @ 5 million in the world ; in 1928 , with the construction of the UK 's largest textile factory Oldham reached its manufacturing zenith . At its peak , there were more than 360 mills , operating night and day ;

Oldham 's townscape was dominated by distinctive rectangular brick @-@ built mills . Oldham was hit hard by the Lancashire Cotton Famine of 1861 ? 1865 , when supplies of raw cotton from the United States were cut off . Wholly reliant upon the textile industry , the cotton famine created chronic unemployment in the town . By 1863 a committee had been formed , and with aid from central government , land was purchased with the intention of employing local cotton workers to construct Alexandra Park , which opened on 28 August 1865 . Said to have over @-@ relied upon the textile sector , as the importation of cheaper foreign yarns grew during the 20th century , Oldham 's economy declined into a depression , although it was not until 1964 that Oldham ceased to be the largest centre of cotton spinning . In spite of efforts to increase the efficiency and competitiveness of its production , the last cotton spun in the town was in 1998 .

= = = = Engineering = = = =

Facilitated by its flourishing textile industry , Oldham developed extensive structural and mechanical engineering sectors during the 18th and 19th centuries . The manufacture of spinning and weaving machinery in Oldham belongs to the last decade of the 19th century , when it became a leading centre in the field of engineering . The Platt Brothers , originated in nearby Dobcross village , but moved to Oldham . They were pioneers of cotton @-@ spinning machinery , developing innovative

products that enabled the mass @-@ production of cotton yarn . Platt Brothers became the largest textile machine makers in the world , employing over 15 @,@ 000 people in the 1890s , twice the number of their nearest rivals Dobson & Barlow in Bolton and Asa Lees on Greenacres Moor . They were keen investors in the local area and at one time , were supporting 42 % of the population . The centre of the company lay at the New Hartford Works in Werneth , a massive complex of buildings and internal railways on a site overlooking Manchester . The railway station which served this site later formed the basis of Oldham Werneth railway station . The main building exists to this day . Platts gained prestigious awards from around the world , and were heavily involved with local politics and civic pride in Oldham . John and James Platt were the largest subscribers for promoting Oldham from a township to a Borough , pledging £ 100 (more than double the next largest sum) in advance towards any expenses which may have been incurred by the Royal Charter . In 1854 John Platt was made the (fourth) Mayor of Oldham , an office he was to hold twice more in 1855 ? 56 and 1861 ? 62 . John Platt was elected in 1865 to become Member of Parliament for Oldham , and was re @-@ elected in 1868 ; he remained in office until his death in 1872 . A bronze statue of Platt existed in the town centre for years , though was moved to Alexandra Park . There have been recommendations for it to be returned to the town centre .

Abraham Henthorn Stott , the son of a stonemason , was born in nearby Shaw and Crompton in 1822 . He served a seven @-@ year apprenticeship with Sir Charles Barry , before starting a structural engineering practice in Oldham in 1847 that went on to become the pre @-@ eminent mill architect firm in Lancashire . Philip Sydney Stott , third son of Abraham and later titled as Sir Philip Stott , 1st Baronet , was the most prominent and famous of the Stott mill architects . He established his own practice in 1883 and designed over a hundred mills in several countries . His factories , which improved upon his father 's fireproof mills , accounted for a 40 % increase in Oldham 's spindles between 1887 and 1914 .

Although textile @-@ related engineering declined with the processing industry , leading to the demise of both Stotts and Platts , other engineering firms existed , notably electrical and later electronic engineers Ferranti in 1896 . Ferranti went into receivership in 1993 , but some of its former works continue in other hands . Part of the original Hollinwood site was operated by Siemens Metering and Semiconductor divisions . The remainder of the site is occupied by Mirror Colour Print Ltd ; the printing division of the Trinity Mirror group , which prints and distributes thirty @-@ six major newspapers , and employs five hundred staff .

= = = = Coal mining = = = =

On the back of the Industrial Revolution , Oldham developed an extensive coal mining sector , correlated to supporting the local cotton industry and the town 's inhabitants , though there is evidence of small scale coal mining in the area as early as the 16th century . The Oldham Coalfield stretched from Royton in the north to Bardsley in the south and in addition to Oldham , included the towns of Middleton and Chadderton to the west . The Oldham Coalfield was the site of over 150 collieries during its recorded history . Although some contemporary sources suggest there was coal mining in Oldham at a commercial scale by 1738 , older sources attribute the commercial expansion of coal mining with the arrival in the town of two Welsh labourers , John Evans and William Jones , around 1770 . Foreseeing the growth in demand for coal as a source of motive and steam power , they acquired colliery rights for Oldham , which by 1771 had 14 colliers . The mines were largely to the southwest of the town around Hollinwood and Werneth and provided enough coal to accelerate Oldham 's rapid development at the centre of the cotton boom . At its height in the mid @-@ 19th century , when it was dominated by the Lees and Jones families , Oldham coal was mainly sourced from many small collieries whose lives varied from a few years to many decades , although two of the four largest collieries survived to nationalisation . In 1851 , collieries employed more than 2 @,@ 000 men in Oldham , although the amount of coal in the town was somewhat overestimated however , and production began to decline even before that of the local spinning industry . Today , the only visible remnants of the mines are disused shafts and boreholes .

== Social history ==

Oldham 's social history , like that of other former unenfranchised towns , is marked by politicised civil disturbances , as well as events related to the Luddite , Suffragette and other Labour movements from the working classes . There has been a significant presence of " friendly societies " . It has been put that the people of Oldham became radical in politics in the early part of the 19th century , and movements suspected of sedition found patronage in the town . Oldham was frequently disturbed by bread and labour riots , facilitated by periods of scarcity and the disturbance of employment following the introduction of cotton @-@ spinning machinery .

On 20 April 1812 , a " large crowd of riotous individuals " compelled local retailers to sell foods at a loss , whilst on the same day Luddites numbering in their thousands , many of whom were from Oldham , attacked a cotton mill in nearby Middleton . On 16 August 1819 , Oldham sent a contingent estimated at well above 10 @,@ 000 to hear speakers in St Peter 's Fields at Manchester discuss political reform ; it was the largest contingent sent to Manchester . John Lees , a cotton operative and ex @-@ soldier who had fought at Waterloo , was one of the fifteen victims of the Peterloo Massacre which followed . The ' Oldham inquest ' which proceeded the massacre was anxiously watched ; the Court of King 's Bench , however , decided that the proceedings were irregular , and the jury were discharged without giving a verdict .

Annie Kenney , born in nearby Springhead , and who worked in Oldham 's cotton mills , was a notable member of the Suffragette movement credited with sparking off suffragette militancy when she heckled Winston Churchill , and later (with Emmeline Pankhurst) the first Suffragist to be imprisoned . Oldham Women 's Suffrage Society was established in 1910 with Margery Lees as president and quickly joined the Manchester and District Federation of the National Union of Women 's Suffrage Societies . The Chartist and Co @-@ operative movements had strong support in the town , whilst many Oldhamers protested against the emancipation of slaves . The Riot Act was read in 1852 on election day following a mass public brawl over the Reform Act , and irregularities with parliamentary candidate nominations .

For three days in late May 2001 , Oldham became the centre of national and international media attention . Following high profile race @-@ related conflicts , and long @-@ term underlying racial tensions between local White British and Asian communities , major riots broke out in the town . Occurring with particular intensity in the Glodwick area of the town , the Oldham riots were the worst racially motivated riots in the United Kingdom for fifteen years prior , briefly eclipsing the sectarian violence in Northern Ireland in the media . At least 20 people were injured in the riots , including 15 police officers , and 37 people were arrested . Similar riots took place in other towns in northern England over the following days and weeks . The 2001 riots prompted governmental and independent inquiries , which collectively agreed on community relations improvements and considerable regeneration schemes for the town . There were further fears of riots after the death of Gavin Hopley in 2002 .

== Governance ==

== Civic history ==

Lying within the historic county boundaries of Lancashire since the early 12th century , Oldham was recorded in 1212 as being one of five parts of the thegnage estate of Kaskenmoor , which was held on behalf of King John by Roger de Montbegon and William de Nevill . The other parts of this estate were Crompton , Glodwick , Sholver , and Werneth . Oldham later formed a township within the ancient ecclesiastical parish of Prestwich @-@ cum @-@ Oldham , in the hundred of Salford .

In 1826 commissioners for the social and economic improvement of Oldham were established . The town was made part of a parliamentary borough , in 1832 , though it was in 1849 when Oldham was incorporated as a municipal borough , giving it borough status in the United Kingdom , and in 1850 the Borough Council obtained the powers of the improvement commissioners . In 1880 , parts of the

Hollinwood and Crossbank areas of Chadderton and Ashton @-@ under @-@ Lyne townships were added to the Borough of Oldham . Oldham Above Town and Oldham Below Town were , from 1851 until c . 1881 , statistical units used for the gathering and organising of civil registration information , and output of census data .

The Local Government Act 1888 created elected county councils to administer services throughout England and Wales . Where a municipal borough had a population of more than 50 @,@ 000 at the 1881 Census it was created a county borough , with the powers and duties of both a borough and county council . As Oldham had an 1881 population of 111 @,@ 343 it duly became a county borough on 1 April 1889 . The borough , while independent of Lancashire County Council for local government , remained part of the county for purposes such as the administration of justice and lieutenancy .

In 1951 parts of the Limehurst Rural District were added to the County Borough of Oldham , and in 1954 further parts of the same district added to it on its abolition . Since 1961 , Oldham has been twinned with Kranj in Slovenia . Under the Local Government Act 1972 , the town 's autonomous county borough status was abolished , and Oldham has , since 1 April 1974 , formed part of the Metropolitan Borough of Oldham , within the Metropolitan county of Greater Manchester .

= = = Parliamentary representation = = =

The boundaries of two parliamentary constituencies divide Oldham : Oldham East and Saddleworth , and Oldham West and Royton (which includes the town centre) , represented by Labour Members of Parliament Debbie Abrahams and Michael Meacher respectively .

Created as a parliamentary borough in 1832 , Oldham 's first parliamentary representatives were the radicals William Cobbett and John Fielden . Winston Churchill began his political career in Oldham . Although unsuccessful at his first attempt in 1899 , Churchill was elected as the member of Parliament for the Oldham parliamentary borough constituency in the 1900 general election . He held the constituency for the Conservative Party until the 1906 general election , when he won the election for Manchester North West as a Liberal MP . After he became the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom in 1940 , Churchill was made a Honorary Freeman of the Borough of Oldham , on 2 April 1941 .

= = Geography = =

At 53 ° 32 ? 39 ? N 2 ° 7 ? 0 @.@ 8 ? W (53 @.@ 5444 ° , ? 2 @.@ 1169 °) , and 164 miles (264 km) north @-@ northwest of London , Oldham stands 700 feet (213 m) above sea level , 6 @.@ 9 miles (11 @.@ 1 km) northeast of Manchester city centre , on elevated ground between the rivers Irk and Medlock . Saddleworth and the South Pennines are close to the east , whilst on all other sides , Oldham is bound by smaller towns , including Ashton @-@ under @-@ Lyne , Chadderton , Failsworth , Royton and Shaw and Crompton , with little or no green space between them . Oldham experiences a temperate maritime climate , like much of the British Isles , with relatively cool summers and mild winters . There is regular but generally light precipitation throughout the year .

Oldham 's topography is characterised by its rugged , elevated Pennine terrain . It has an area of 6 @.@ 91 square miles (17 @.@ 90 km²) . The geology of Oldham is represented by the Millstone Grit and Coal Measures series of rocks . The River Beal , flowing northwards , forms the boundary between Oldham on one side and Royton and Shaw and Crompton on the other .

To the east of this river the surface rises to a height of 1 @,@ 225 feet (373 m) at Woodward Hill , on the border with the parish of Saddleworth . The rest of the surface is hilly , the average height decreasing towards the southwest to Failsworth and the city of Manchester . The ridge called Oldham Edge , 800 feet (244 m) high , comes southward from Royton into the centre of the town .

Oldham 's built environment is characterised by its 19th @-@ century red @-@ brick terraced houses , the infrastructure that was built to support these and the town 's former cotton mills ? which mark the town 's skyline . The urban structure of Oldham is irregular when compared to most towns in England , its form restricted in places by its hilly upland terrain . There are irregularly constructed

residential dwellings and streets clustered loosely around a central business district in the town centre , which is the local centre of commerce . In 1849 , Angus Reach of Inverness said :

The visitor to Oldham will find it essentially a mean @-@ looking straggling town , built upon both sides and crowning the ridge of one of the outlying spurs which branch from Manchester , the neighbouring ' backbone of England ' . The whole place has a shabby underdone look . The general appearance of the operatives ' houses is filthy and smouldering .

In the 1870s , John Marius Wilson described Oldham as consisting of :

... numerous streets , and contains numerous fine buildings , both public and private ; but , in a general view , is irregularly constructed , presents the dingy aspect of a crowded seat of manufacture , and is more notable for factories than for any other feature .

Although Oldham had a thriving economy during the 19th century , the local merchants were broadly reluctant to spend on civic institutions , and so the town lacks the grandeur seen in comparable nearby towns like Bolton or Huddersfield ; public expenditure was seen as an overhead that undermined the competitiveness of the town . Subsequently , Oldham 's architecture has been described as " mediocre " . The town has no listed buildings with a Grade I rating .

There is a mixture of high @-@ density urban areas , suburbs , semi @-@ rural and rural locations in Oldham . There is some permanent grassland but overwhelmingly the land use in the town is urban . The territory of Oldham is contiguous with other towns on all sides except for a small section along its eastern and southern boundaries , and for purposes of the Office for National Statistics , forms the fourth largest settlement of the Greater Manchester Urban Area , the United Kingdom 's third largest conurbation . The M60 motorway passes through the southwest of Oldham , through Hollinwood , and a heavy rail line enters Oldham from the same direction , travelling northeast to the town centre before heading northwards through Derker towards Shaw and Crompton .

= = = Divisions and suburbs = = =

Many of Oldham 's present divisions and suburbs have origins as pre @-@ industrial hamlets , manorial commons and ancient chapelries . Some , such as Moorside , exist as recently constructed residential suburbia , whilst places like Hollinwood exist as electoral wards and thoroughly industrialised districts . Throughout most of its recorded history , Oldham was surrounded by large swathes of moorland , which is reflected in the placenames of Moorside , Greenacres moor , Littlemoor , Northmoor among others .

A large portion of Oldham 's residences are " low value " Victorian era Accrington red @-@ brick terraced houses in a row formation , built for the most part from 1870 to 1920 , to house the town 's cotton mill workers . There is more modern housing in the semi @-@ rural east of the town , in the most sought after area in areas such as the village Moorside , although terraces are found in almost all parts of Oldham .

One of the oldest recorded named places of Oldham is Hathershaw , occurring in a deed for 1280 with the spelling Halselinechaw Clugh . Existing as a manor in the 15th century , Hathershaw Hall was the home of a Royalist family in the 17th century who lost part of their possessions due to the English Civil War . Waterhead , an upland area in the east of Oldham , traces its roots to a water cornmill over the border in Lees .

Recorded originally as Watergate and Waterhead Milne , it was for a long time a hamlet in the parish of Oldham that formed a significant part of the Oldham Above Town registration sub @-@ district . Derker was recorded as a place of residence in 1604 with the name Dirtcar . Bound by Higginshaw to the north , Derker is the location of Derker railway station and , said to have terraced residencies " unsuited to modern needs " , is currently being redeveloped as part of the Housing Market Renewal Initiative .

Coldhurst , an area along Oldham 's northern boundary with Royton , was once a chapelry and the site of considerable industry and commerce , including coal mining , cotton spinning and hat manufacture . It is said to have been the scene of an action in the English Civil War in which the Parliamentarians were defeated .

== Demography ==

According to data from the United Kingdom Census 2001, Oldham had a total resident population of 103,544, making it the 55th most populous settlement in England, and the 5th most populous settlement of the Greater Manchester Urban Area. This figure in conjunction with its area provides Oldham with a population density of 3,998 people per square mile (1,544 per km²). The local population has been described as broadly "working class"; the middle classes tending to live in outlying settlements.

Oldham, considered as a combination of the 2001 electoral wards of Alexandra, Coldhurst, Hollinwood, St. James, St. Marys, St. Pauls, Waterhead and Werneth, has an average age of 33.5, and compared against the average demography of the United Kingdom, has a high level of people of South Asian heritage, particularly those with roots in Pakistan and Bangladesh. Due to the town's prevalence as an industrial centre and thus a hub for employment, Oldham attracted migrant workers throughout its history, including those from wider Europe - England, Scotland, Ireland and Poland.

During the 1950s and 1960s, in an attempt to fill the shortfall of workers and revitalise local industries, citizens of the wider Commonwealth of Nations were encouraged to migrate to Oldham and other British towns. Many came from the Caribbean and Indian subcontinent and settled throughout the Oldham borough.

Today, Oldham has large communities with heritage from Bangladesh, India, Pakistan and parts of the Caribbean. At the time of the 2001 census, over one in four of its residents identified themselves as from a South Asian or British Asian ethnic group. Cultural divisions along ethnic backgrounds are strong within the town, with poor cross-community integration and cohesion along Asian and white backgrounds.

With only a small local population during medieval times, as a result of the introduction of industry, mass migration of village workers into Oldham occurred, resulting in a population change from under 2,000 in 1714 to 12,000 in 1801 to 137,000 in 1901. In 1851 its population of 52,820 made Oldham the 12th most populous town in England. The following is a table outlining the population change of the town since 1801, which demonstrates a trend of rapid population growth in the 19th century and, after peaking at 147,483 people in 1911, a trend of general decline in population size during the 20th century.

In 2011, 77.5% of the Oldham metropolitan borough population were White British, 18.1% Asian and 1.2% Black. While in the town of Oldham, which had a 2011 population of 96,555, 55.4% of the population were White British.

== Economy ==

For years Oldham's economy was heavily dependent on manufacturing industry, especially textiles and mechanical engineering. Since the deindustrialisation of Oldham in the mid-20th century, these industries have been replaced by home shopping, publishing, healthcare and food processing sectors, though factory-generated employment retains a significant presence. Many of the modern sectors are low-skill and low-wage.

Park Cake Bakeries, sold in 2007 by Northern Foods Group to Vision Capital, have a large food processing centre in Hathershaw, which employs in excess of 1,600 people. Over 90% of the cakes produced go to Marks & Spencer. Long existing as an industrial district, Hollinwood is home to the Northern Counties Housing Association.

Oldham's town centre contains the highest concentration of retailing, cultural facilities and employment in the Metropolitan Borough of Oldham. It has been extensively redeveloped during the last few decades, and its two shopping centres, Town Square and the Spindles, now provide one of the largest covered retail areas in Greater Manchester. The Spindles (named with reference to textile spindles) is a modern shopping centre with over 40 retailers, banks, building societies and catering outlets. It houses one of Europe's largest stained glass roofs, created by local artist Brian Clarke in celebration of the music of one of Oldham's famous sons, composer and conductor

Sir William Walton .

Ferranti Technologies is an electronic , electromechanical and electrical engineering company based in Waterhead .

A number of culinary and medical advances have been developed in Oldham . There are claims that Oldham was the birthplace of the first chip shop . The sometimes disputed claim of trade in deep @-@ fried chipped potatoes is said to have been started around 1858 ? 60 from an outlet owned by a John Lees , on what is the present site of Oldham 's Tommyfield Market . In 1900 Oldham had the highest concentration of chip shops in the country , one for every 400 people . Rag Pudding is a savoury dish said to be native to Oldham . Yates Wine Lodge was founded in Oldham by Peter and Simon Yates in 1884 .

The tubular bandage was invented and developed in Oldham in 1961 . That " vital contribution to advancing medical science " resulted from a collaboration between local firm Seton and a cotton manufacturer in the town .

= = Landmarks = =

= = = Town Hall = = =

Oldham 's Old Town Hall is a Grade II listed Georgian neo @-@ classical town hall built in 1841 , eight years before Oldham received its borough status . One of the last purpose @-@ built town halls in northwest England , it has a tetrastyle Ionic portico , copied from the temple of Ceres , on the River Ilissos , near Athens . Winston Churchill made his inaugural acceptance speech from the steps of the town hall when he was first elected as a Conservative MP in 1900 . A Blue Plaque on the exterior of the building commemorates the event . Long existing as the political centre of the town , complete with courtrooms , the structure has stood empty since the mid @-@ 1980s and has regularly been earmarked for redevelopment as part of regeneration project proposals , but none have been actioned .

In September 2008 , it was reported that " Oldham Town Hall is only months away from a major roof collapse " . A tour taken by local councillors and media concluded with an account that " chunks of masonry are falling from the ceilings on a daily basis ... the floors are littered with dead pigeons and ... revealed that the building is literally rotting away " . In October 2009 the Victorian Society , a charity responsible for the study and protection of Britain 's Victorian and Edwardian architecture , declared Oldham Town Hall as the most endangered Victorian structure in England and Wales . Plans to convert the hall into a leisure complex , incorporating a cinema and restaurants , were revealed in May 2012 with the hall itself being used for public consultation . This £ 36 @.@ 72 million project is expected to be completed by early in 2016 .

In the heart of Oldham ? s retail district , the Old Town Hall is being developed into a modern multiplex ODEON cinema .

= = = War memorial = = =

Erected as a permanent memorial to the men of Oldham who were killed in the First World War , Oldham 's war memorial consists of a granite base surmounted by a bronze sculpture depicting five soldiers making their way along the trenches in order to go into battle . The main standing figure , having climbed out of the trenches , is shown calling on his comrades to advance , and is the same figure used at the Royal Fusiliers War Memorial in London and the 41st Division memorial at Flers in France . The base serves to house books containing the roll of honour of the 1st , 10th and 24th Battalions , Manchester Regiment . The pedestal has two bronze doors at either side .

Commissioned in 1919 by the Oldham War Memorial Committee , the memorial was designed and built by Albert Toft . It was unveiled by General Sir Ian Hamilton on 28 April 1923 , before a crowd estimated at over 10 @, @ 000 . The monument was intended to symbolise the spirit of 1914 ? 1918 .

The inscriptions on the memorial read :

Over doors to the north : " DEATH IS THE GATE OF LIFE / 1914 ? 1918 "

Over window to the south : " TO GOD BE THE PRAISE "

= = = Civic Centre = = =

The Civic Centre tower is the Metropolitan Borough of Oldham 's centre of local governance . The 15 @-@ storey white @-@ brick building has housed the vast majority of the local government 's offices since its completion in 1977 . Standing at the summit of the town , the tower stands over 200 feet (61 m) high . It was designed by Cecil Howitt & Partners , and the topping out ceremony was held on 18 June 1976 . The Civic Centre can be seen as far away as Salford , Trafford , Wythenshawe and Winter Hill in Lancashire , and offers panoramic views across the city of Manchester and the Cheshire Plain .

= = = Parish Church = = =

The Oldham Parish Church of St. Mary with St. Peter , in its present form , dates from 1830 and was designed in the Gothic Revival Style by Richard Lane , a Manchester @-@ based architect . It has been designated by English Heritage as a Grade II * listed building . It was linked with the church of St Mary the Virgin , Prestwich and together the sites were principal churches of the ancient ecclesiastical parish of Prestwich @-@ cum @-@ Oldham .

A church building had existed on the site since 1280 . During this time , a small chapel stood on the site to serve the local townships of Oldham , Chadderton , Royton and Crompton . This was later replaced by an Early English Gothic church in the 15th century . With the coming of the Industrial Revolution , the population of Oldham increased at a rapid rate (from under 2 @, @ 000 in 1714 , to over 32 @, @ 000 by 1831) . The rapid growth of the local population warranted that the building be rebuilt into the current structure . Though the budget was originally agreed at £ 5 @, @ 000 , the final cost of building was £ 30 @, @ 000 , one third of which was spent on the crypt structure . Alternative designs by Sir Charles Barry , the designer of the Palace of Westminster , although now regarded by some as superior , were rejected . The Church , of the Anglican denomination , is in active use for worship , and forms part of the Diocese of Manchester . There are Roman Catholic churches in Oldham . These include Our Lady of Mount Carmel and St Patrick Church . It was built in 1870 , was founded by priests from St Mary 's Church in Oldham , and is a Grade II listed building .

= = Transport = =

The geography of Oldham constrained the development of major transport infrastructure , with the former County Borough Council suggesting that " if it had not grown substantially before the railway age it would surely have been overlooked " . Oldham has never been on a main @-@ line railway route , and canals too have only been able to serve it from a distance , meaning that " Oldham has never had a train service worthy of a town of its size " .

A principal destination along the former Oldham Loop Line , Oldham once had six railway stations but this was reduced to three once Clegg Street , Oldham Central and Glodwick Road closed in the mid @-@ 20th century . Oldham Werneth , Oldham Mumps and Derker closed on 3 October 2009 . Trains from Manchester Victoria station to Oldham had to climb steeply through much of its 6 @-@ mile (9 @. @ 7 km) route , from around 100 feet (30 @. @ 5 m) at Manchester city centre to around 600 feet (182 @. @ 9 m) at Oldham Mumps . The Werneth Incline , with its gradient of 1 in 27 , made the Middleton Junction to Oldham Werneth route the steepest regular passenger line in the country . The Werneth Incline route closed in 1963 . It had been replaced as the main route to Manchester by the section of line built between Oldham Werneth Station and Thorpes Bridge Junction , at Newton Heath in May 1880 . Oldham Mumps , the second oldest station on the line after Werneth , took its name from its location in the Mumps area of Oldham , which itself probably derived from the archaic word " mumper " which was slang for a beggar . The former Oldham Loop

Line was converted for use with an expanded Metrolink light rail network , and renamed as the Oldham and Rochdale Line . The line between Victoria and a temporary Oldham Mumps tram stop opened on 13 June 2012 , and more central stops opened on 27 January 2014 .

Oldham had electric tramways to Manchester in the early 20th century ; the first tram was driven from Manchester into Oldham in 1900 by the Lord Mayor of Manchester . The system came to an end on 3 August 1946 , however . There was also a short @-@ lived Oldham trolleybus system , in 1925 ? 26 . The £ 3 @. @ 3 million Oldham Bus Station has frequent bus services to Manchester , Rochdale , Ashton @-@ under @-@ Lyne and Middleton with other services to the Metropolitan Borough of Oldham , Tameside , and across the Pennines to Huddersfield in West Yorkshire . The roof canopy is supported internally on two rows of steel trees . The extensive use of glass and stainless steel maximises visibility , and there is a carefully co @-@ ordinated family of information fittings , posters and seating , using robust natural materials for floors and plinths . The bus station is used by National Express coaches . First Greater Manchester has its headquarters in Oldham .

Despite the Turnpike Act 1734 , Oldham had no turnpike road to Manchester for another 56 years and Church Lane , Oldham remained part of the main street through the town . But following a further Act of Parliament a turnpike was constructed . The first regular coach service to Manchester came into operation in October 1790 , with a journey time of over 2 hours and a fare 2s.8d (about 13p) , with half fare for travellers on top of the coach .

Oldham is about 4 miles (6 @. @ 4 km) south of the major M62 motorway , but is linked to it by the M60 at Hollinwood , and A627 (M) via Chadderton . There are major A roads to Ashton @-@ under @-@ Lyne , Huddersfield , Manchester , and Rochdale .

The Hollinwood Branch of the Ashton Canal was a canal that ran from Fairfield in Droylsden , through Littlemoss and Daisy Nook Country Park to the Hollinwood area of Oldham , with a branch from Daisy Nook to the Fairbottom Branch Canal . The canal was mainly used for the haulage of coal until it fell into disuse for commercial traffic in the 1930s . It included four aqueducts and a two @-@ rise lock staircase .

== Sports ==

Oldham Roughyeds Rugby League Club was established in 1876 as Oldham Football Club , and Oldham Athletic Football Club in 1895 as Pine Villa Football Club . Oldham Athletic have achieved both league and cup successes , particularly under Joe Royle in the 1990s . They were Football League runners @-@ up in the last season before the outbreak of the First World War , but were relegated from the Football League First Division in 1923 . They reached the Football League Cup final in 1990 and won the Football League Second Division title in 1991 , ending 68 years outside the top flight .

They secured their top division status a year later to become founder members of the new Premier League , but were relegated after two seasons despite reaching that year 's FA Cup semi @-@ finals . They are currently playing in Football League One , the third tier of the English league . Darren Kelly was appointed as Manager in May 2015

Oldham Boro Football Club was established in 1964 as Oldham Dew FC , and after many years playing under the name of Oldham Town changed its name to Oldham Boro in 2009 , finally becoming known as Oldham Borough just months before it folded . The team played in the North West Counties Football League before going out of existence in 2015 , just over 50 years after it was founded .

Renamed in 1997 to Oldham Roughyeds , Oldham Rugby League Club has received several club honours during its history , winning the Rugby Football League Championship five times and Challenge Cup three times . They played at Watersheddings for years before joining Oldham Athletic at Boundary Park until 2010 when they moved to Oldham Borough 's previous ground , Whitebank Stadium . Oldham has league cricket teams with a number of semi @-@ professional league clubs including Oldham CC , and Werneth CC in the Central Lancashire League .

Oldham also has a Fencing Club , Marshall Fencing Club is a Competitive Fencing Club with most of its members competing on the national stage . They train three times a week at the old South

Chadderton High School .

= = Education = =

Oldham produced someone who is considered to be one of the greatest benefactors of education for the nation , Hugh Oldham , who in 1504 was appointed as Bishop of Exeter , and later went on to found what is now Manchester Grammar School .

Almost every part of Oldham is served by a school of some kind , some with religious affiliations . According to the Office for Standards in Education , schools within the town perform at mixed levels . Hulme Grammar School and the Blue Coat School are consistently Oldham 's top performing secondary schools and each have sixth form colleges of further education .

University Campus Oldham is a centre for higher education and a sister campus of the University of Huddersfield . It was opened in May 2005 by actor Patrick Stewart , the centre 's Chancellor . The University Campus Oldham presented actress Shobna Gulati and artist , Brian Clarke (both born in Oldham) with an Honorary Doctorate of Letters at the Graduation Ceremony of November 2006 , for their achievements and contributions to Oldham and its community .

= = Public services = =

Home Office policing in Oldham is provided by the Greater Manchester Police . The force 's " (Q) Division " have their headquarters for policing the Metropolitan Borough of Oldham at central Oldham . Public transport is co -ordinated by the Greater Manchester Passenger Transport Executive . Statutory emergency fire and rescue service is provided by the Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service , which has two stations in Oldham ; at Hollins on Hollins Road , and at Clarksfield on Lees Road .

The Royal Oldham Hospital , at Oldham 's northern boundary with Royton , is a large NHS hospital administrated by Pennine Acute Hospitals NHS Trust . It was opened under its existing name on 1 December 1989 . Formerly known as Oldham District and General , and occupying the site of the town 's former workhouse (named Oldham Union Workhouse in 1851) , the hospital is notable for being the birthplace of Louise Joy Brown ? the world 's first successful In vitro fertilised " test tube baby " , on 25 July 1978 . The North West Ambulance Service provides emergency patient transport . See also Healthcare in Greater Manchester .

Waste management is co -ordinated by the local authority via the Greater Manchester Waste Disposal Authority . Locally produced inert waste for disposal is sent to landfill at the Beal Valley . Oldham 's Distribution Network Operator for electricity is United Utilities ; there are no power stations in the town . United Utilities also manages Oldham 's drinking and waste water ; water supplies being sourced from several local reservoirs , including Dovestones and Chew . There is a water treatment works at Waterhead .

= = Culture = =

Oldham , though lacking in leisure and cultural amenities , is historically notable for its theatrical culture . Once having a peak of six " fine " theatres in 1908 , Oldham is home to the Oldham Coliseum Theatre and the Oldham Theatre Workshop , which have facilitated the early careers of notable actors and writers , including Eric Sykes , Bernard Cribbins and Anne Kirkbride , daughter of acclaimed cartoonist Jack Kirkbride who worked for the Oldham Evening Chronicle . Oldham Coliseum Theatre is one of Britain 's last remaining repertory theatres ; Charlie Chaplin and Stan Laurel performed there in the early 20th century , and contemporary actors such as Ralph Fiennes and Minnie Driver , among others , have appeared more recently .

During the 19th century the circus was a popular entertainment in Oldham ; Pablo Fanque 's circus was a regular visitor , filling a 3 @, @ 000 @-@ seat amphitheatre on Tommyfield in 1869 . Criticised for its lack of a cinema , there are plans to develop an " Oldham West End " . Oldham has a thriving bar and night club culture , attracting a significant number of young people into the town

centre . Oldham 's " hard binge drinking culture " has been criticised however for conveying a negative regional image of the town .

= = = Communal facilities = = =

The Lyceum is a Grade II listed building opened in 1856 at a cost of £ 6 @, @ 500 as a " mutual improvement " centre for the working men of Oldham . The facilities provided to members included a library , a newsroom and a series of lectures on geology , geography and education , microscopy and chemistry , female education and botany . Instrumental music was introduced and there were soon sixteen violinists and three cellists . Eventually the building was extended to include a school of science and art . Music had always been important in the life of the Lyceum , and in 1892 a school of music was opened , with 39 students enrolled for the " theory and practice of music " .

The Lyceum continued throughout the 20th century as a centre for the arts in Oldham , and in 1986 the local authority was invited by its directors and trustees to accept the building as a gift . The acceptance of the Lyceum building by the Education Committee provided the opportunity to move the music centre and " further enhance the cultural activities of the town " . In 1989 the Oldham Metropolitan Borough Music Centre moved into the Lyceum building , which is now the home of the Oldham Lyceum School of Music .

Oldham ' s museum and gallery service dates back to 1883 . Since then it has established itself as a cultural focus for Oldham and has developed one of the largest and most varied permanent collections in North West England . The current collection includes over 12 @, @ 000 social and industrial history items , more than 2 @, @ 000 works of art , about 1 @, @ 000 items of decorative art , more than 80 @, @ 000 natural history specimens , over 1 @, @ 000 geological specimens , about 3 @, @ 000 archaeological artefacts , 15 @, @ 000 photographs and a large number of books , pamphlets and documents .

Oldham is now home to a newly built state @-@ of @-@ the @-@ art art gallery , Gallery Oldham , which was completed in February 2002 as the first phase of the Oldham Cultural Quarter . Later phases of the development saw the opening of an extended Oldham Library , a lifelong learning centre and there are plans to include a performing arts centre .

= = = Carnival = = =

The annual Oldham Carnival started around 1900 , although the tradition of carnivals in the town goes back much further , providing a " welcomed respite from the tedium of everyday life " . The carnival parade was always held in mid @-@ to @-@ late summer , with the primary aim of raising money for charities . It often featured local dignitaries or popular entertainers , in addition to brass , military and jazz bands , the Carnival Queen , people in fancy dress , dancers and decorated floats from local churches and businesses . Whenever possible , local people who had attained national celebrity status were invited to join the cavalcade . The carnival 's route began in the town centre , wound its way along King Street , and ended with a party in Alexandra Park .

The carnival fell out of favour in the late 1990s but was resurrected by community volunteers in 2006 and rebranded the Peoples ' Carnival . The parade was moved into Alexandra Park in 2011 . The event hosts live stages and other activities alongside a parade in the park . In 2016 will be 10 years since the carnival was reinstated by volunteers . The main organiser is Paul Davies who runs the carnival with a number of committee members and loads of volunteers

= = Britain in Bloom = =

In 2012 and 2014 Oldham was named as Culture Town in the annual " Britain in Bloom " competition as winners

= = Notable people = =

People from Oldham are called Oldhamers , though " Roughyed " is a nickname from the 18th century when rough felt was used in Oldham to make hats .

Edward Potts was a renowned architect who moved to Oldham from Bury . He was the architect for fourteen mills in the Oldham area .

Other notable persons with Oldham connections include the composer Sir William Walton , former British Prime Minister Sir Winston Churchill , and Louise Brown , the world 's first baby to be conceived by in vitro fertilisation .

Notable media personalities from Oldham include presenter Nick Grimshaw , actors Eric Sykes and Bernard Cribbins , TV host Phillip Schofield , actress Shobna Gulati , physicist and science educator Brian Cox , and comedy double act Tommy Cannon and Bobby Ball .

Notable musicians from Oldham include the Inspiral Carpets and Mark Owen of boyband Take That .