

# Kirkham Treasures

## Celebrating Kirkham's Heritage

### The Victorians

#### Did You Know?

Kirkham Club Day developed in its present form during the Victorian era.

#### The Victorians in Kirkham

During the Victorian era Kirkham's population began to boom. The town had previously lost a lot of residents during the Civil War and the Black Death but when the Victorians built the railway, Kirkham was finally connected with the rest of Lancashire bringing in waves of new residents to the town. At this time the area had begun producing cotton and the building of new cotton mills created lots of new jobs. Workers (mainly girls) came over from Ireland to work in the town and were housed in cottages on Mill Street. As the cotton industry grew, spinning mills and weaving sheds were commonly seen in Kirkham. Flax was still being produced too and Kirkham was seen as the market hub of the Fylde. At this point Kirkham was quite a wealthy town with a number of large country homes belonging to the different mill owners.

During the Victorian era life in the town was greatly improved by a new Board of Health and the installation of gas lighting. The high street would have been buzzing with a mix of tradespeople such as tailors, shoe makers, grocers and confectioners. During market days people traded goods in the Market Square and on the fishstones which you can still see today. Alongside the Grammar School, an elementary school was built at St Michaels in 1815, bringing education to all children. At that time churches played a huge part in the community. Following the ending of persecution of Catholics, the Church of St John the Evangelist, always known as the Willows, was built in 1845.

Kirkham Club Day developed as a celebration of the town's Friendly Societies, with the churches becoming involved later in the century; the Procession of Witness is still held every summer on the second Saturday in June. On this day every year the various churches and their chosen "Rose Queens" come together to parade through the streets of Kirkham with biblical floats, townspeople and brass bands.

#### Let's Imagine...

Can you imagine living in Kirkham during the Victorian era working in the weaving sheds or in one of the town's shops? What might life have been like for children living in Kirkham at that time?

#### Task

We need you to imagine you're someone living in Kirkham during this era. Your task is to create a postcard from them to someone living in modern day Kirkham. On the front you will need to draw a picture showing what they might have seen back then. That may be the mills, Club Day, the town centre, the people, events or surrounding area. On the back you will need to write a short postcard message telling the people of modern day Kirkham what life was like and what you'd like to see in the future of Kirkham.

