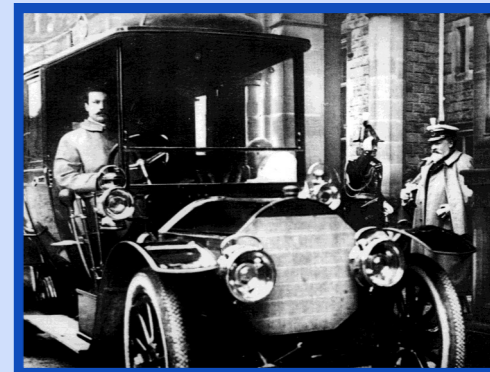


Worsley's Royal visitors

1851

In October 1851, the year of the Great Exhibition, Queen Victoria and Prince Albert, accompanied by the Duke of Wellington, other members of the Royal Family and of the nobility, arrived in Worsley to stay at the New Hall. Their host was Francis Egerton, created 1st Earl of Ellesmere in 1846, the year in which his grand new house, designed by Edward Blore, was completed. Francis, the Canal Duke's godson, inherited the Worsley estates on condition that he change his surname from Leveson-Gower to Egerton. Victoria later wrote in her diary, 'We walked from Patricroft railway station through a covered and prettily ornamented corridor to the boat which was waiting on the canal - a very elegant barge, to which a rope was fastened, drawn by four horses. The boat glided along in a noiseless and dreamlike manner, amidst the cheers of the people who lined the sides of the canal, and passed under the beautifully decorated bridges.'



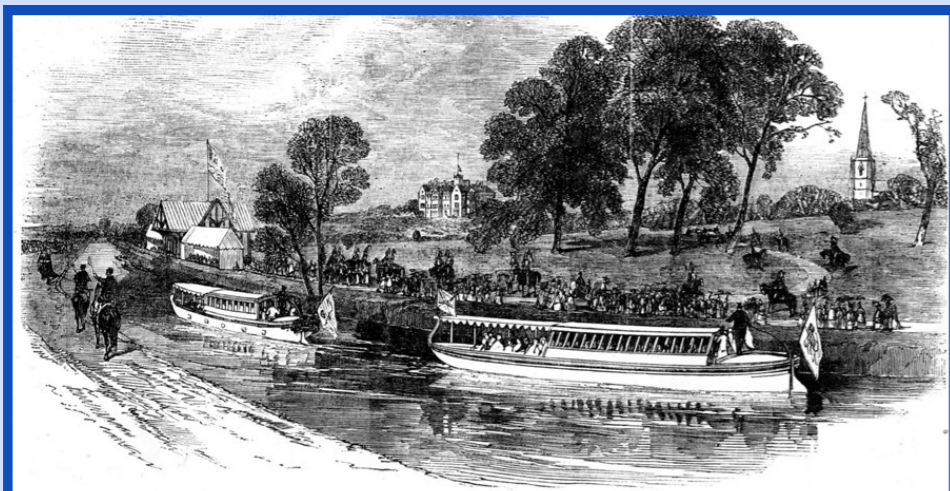
1869

The Prince of Wales, later King Edward VII, stayed at Worsley Hall when he came to open the Royal Agricultural Show at Old Trafford in 1869. He travelled by canal, the barge accompanied by a 'guard of honour' of racing boats manned by members of Salford and Manchester rowing clubs. As the Prince disembarked the rowers stood and held their oars upright in salute; one of the boats sank but the crew stood fast, to the great amusement of the Royal party.

1909

King Edward VII and Queen Alexandra came again to stay at Worsley, when they opened Manchester Royal Infirmary after its move from Piccadilly to Oxford Road. The hospital was soon to play a vital part in World War I, as many wounded soldiers were treated there. The photograph, above, shows the King about to leave Worsley Hall by motor car.

Engravings from the London Illustrated News



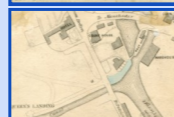
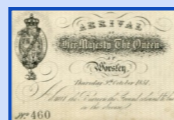
1857

Victoria and Albert came to see the Exhibition of Art Treasures at Old Trafford which they visited twice. The Queen also went to Peel Park to see the statue which had been erected there to commemorate her visit in 1851. The 1st Earl of Ellesmere had recently died, so there was little public celebration in Worsley but bunting, flags and triumphal arches lined her route from Worsley Hall to the "Art Treasure Palace".

Made for the occasion, the barge was used by the Ellesmeres for many years. The Queen omitted to note in her journal that one of the horses took fright from the cheering and fell into the canal, the tow-rope broke and the Duke of Wellington nearly slipped into the water while helping his sovereign ashore. On the first evening the royal couple enjoyed meeting James Nasmyth, the inventor of the steam hammer, whose Bridgewater Foundry was beside the canal at Patricroft. The Queen said of him, 'He exhibited and explained the maps in which he had embodied the results of his investigations of the conformation and the atmosphere of the moon'. She wrote of 'the charm of his manner, in which the simplicity, modesty and enthusiasm of genius are strikingly combined'.

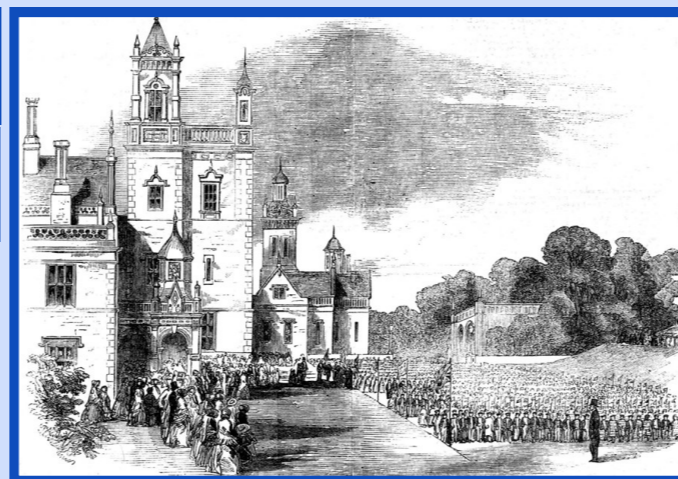
Next day Prince Albert visited a cotton mill, workers' cottages and a school, while Victoria was serenaded by a workmen's choir and received an address from about 1400 children and their teachers. She then left Worsley by carriage for Peel Park, Salford, to receive the loyal address from the Mayor of Salford, followed by a tour of Manchester and lunch at the Royal Exchange. Back in Worsley the royal party walked through the New Hall grounds, visited Saint Mark's Church, the Aviary and Worsley Old Hall.

The following day the Royal Family returned by canal to Patricroft station to board the royal train for Windsor. This time no one was allowed on the canal banks to prevent any further incident with frightened horses.

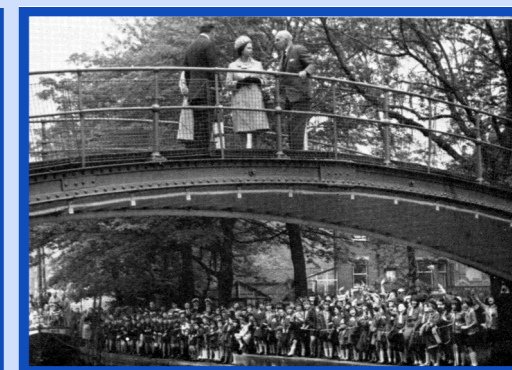


© S Gill

Tickets were issued for those who wanted to see Queen Victoria arrive at Worsley Hall in 1851—the one above admits the bearer to the area shaded in blue on the map; the Packet House steps would have been an ideal place to stand.



Crowds of children assembled at Worsley New Hall to deliver an address to Queen Victoria in 1851



Worsley Civic Trust and Worsley Urban District Council undertook work to restore and landscape Worsley Delph and the surrounding area in 1966-1967, prior to a visit by Queen Elizabeth II on 17 May 1968. It was hoped by many people that this would secure the future of the area as a World Heritage Site because of its importance in the industrial development of Great Britain. Sadly this has still not been realised – perhaps the 250th Anniversary of the opening of the Bridgewater Canal would be an ideal opportunity to recognise Worsley's pioneering status.