

### Number 1 - George Lawton Hall - Ernest Sykes VC

Ernest Sykes was 31 years old and a private in the Northumberland Fusiliers Tyneside Irish Battalion, when on Easter Monday 9th April 1917 near Arras in France, his actions resulted in his award of the Victoria Cross. His battalion was under heavy fire from front and sides and suffered heavy casualties. Private Sykes, under such fire went forward and brought back four wounded men. He then made a fifth journey and stayed "under conditions which appeared to be certain death" until he had bandaged all those too badly wounded to be moved.



Private Ernest Sykes

### Number 2 - Mossley Market Place

The Market Place has been at the centre of the town's economic and cultural life for well over 200 years. As early as 1791 pig and cattle fairs were held twice a year. Businesses and ale houses established themselves around the market place including Joe Lees Chip Potato Restaurant, reputedly the oldest chip shop in the world. Mossley Wakes, restarted in 1848, were held here, with travelling showmen and scenes of public drunkenness and debauchery. Marches and processions started here including fundraisers for the Blue Cross League, the animal charity which cared for "war horses", the Peace Celebrations in 1919 and today's Whit Friday Witness Walks. Here 3000 townsfolk welcomed back home Ernest Sykes after receiving his Victoria Cross.

### Number 3 - Annie Grady

Annie Grady lived at 24 Wyre Street (her house was on the corner and is now demolished). She married Isaiah Grady in 1872. He died in 1911 but he had been unable to work for twenty years putting a great strain on Annie looking after such a large family. They had thirteen sons and three daughters. All but three of the sons survived their mother who passed away on 6th July 1915 in her 60th year. Nine of her sons served in His Majesty's Forces. Albert and Daniel were in the West Riding Regiment; Francis (HMS Kent) and Henry (HMS Natal) were in the Royal Navy; Isaiah, John, Michael and Thomas were in the Manchester Regiment; William was in the Royal Field Artillery. This was the greatest number of sons from a single family to serve and they all survived. Annie received a congratulatory letter from Buckingham Palace dated 31st March 1915.

### Number 4 - Clarinda Rowbotham

Clarinda Rowbotham, the first school nurse in Mossley, a health visitor, a midwife and a state registered nurse was the Lady Superintendent of the Mossley St John Ambulance Brigade from 1913 for over 50 years. From 4th November 1914 to 28th February 1919 she was the sister in charge of the Military Hospital housed in the Mechanics Institute. This work was unpaid and she combined it with her duties as the school nurse. She was resident in the hospital being on duty all day Saturday and Sunday and every evening. She was awarded the Royal Red Cross Medal 2nd Class, thus becoming an Associate of the Royal Red Cross. This decoration was awarded to nurses for special services, devotion to duty and professional competence in British Military Nursing. For her continuous voluntary service she was also awarded the St John Service Medal in 1926.

### Number 5 - The Recreation Ground

This piece of land above the Town Hall was known as the Recreation Ground after Mossley Council bought the property from the Mayall family in 1891. During WW1 horse owners were required to take their animals to the Recreation Ground so that the army could commandeer them for use as "war horses." People gathered to watch the proceedings in such numbers that the police took charge, evicted the public, locked the gates and pushed people back up Vale Side. Seven horses were bought for £40 each. In War weapons week in July 1918 Mossley raised £40,000. In appreciation a 77mm German gun, captured at Loos in 1915 was presented to the town and was displayed here until it was sold for scrap in 1940. The march for the Peace Celebrations in 1919 ended here with sports, games and maypole dancing.



### Number 6 - Mossley Hall

Originally known as Whitehall, Mossley Hall was built between 1861 and 1864 by George Mayall, owner of cotton mills, for his wife, Esther at a cost of over £60,000. Sadly she died before its completion. The architect was William Williamson who also designed the Mechanics Institute. George's son Edmund Lees Mayall brought his wife to live here. After Edmund's death in 1877 his wife and father lived on here until the 1880s. It was bought by Mossley Council in 1890-1 for its town hall at the bargain price of £4,000. It became a private residence again in 1986. In WW1 the tribunals which heard appeals against conscription were held here as was the Food Control Committee. A Mossley doctor unsuccessfully appealed for his chauffeur to be exempt from service as he needed him to drive and maintain the car. He was told to do it himself.

### Number 7 - The Mechanics Institute

Inspired by the principles of Dr George Birkbeck, as early as the 1840s several townspeople occupied very limited space in Neild's Mill to meet and organise areas of adult education. Movement for a more suitable accommodation grew. The Earl of Stamford and Warrington donated a plot of land and on 25th April 1859 the Earl of Carlisle opened the Mechanics Institute. The architect of this handsome building was William Williamson of Macclesfield and the builder was E. Marland of Mossley with fittings by J Rebuva of Dukinfield. By the 1900s, classes in vocational, technical and commercial subjects, many of them in the evening were held here. It was also known as the Technical School. The County Library was housed here as were maternal and child health clinics. The Darby and Joan Club, the WVS and the WEA all met here. All the main events of the town took place here including the annual balls of the Mayor, the Police and the Conservative and Liberal Parties. During WW1 the Military Hospital was based here treating servicemen recovering from war injuries. It used the whole of the ground floor. The hospital was run by the Mossley St John Ambulance Brigade and it had an initial ward of ten beds ready to receive patients in August 1914. After falling into disrepair in the 1960s the building was demolished in 1971.

### Number 8 - The Sailors' and Soldiers' Recreation Rooms

Servicemen returning from the war, often with injuries had great difficulty getting compensation and pensions. In 1917 there were 70 disabled soldiers in Mossley without assistance. One man, disabled for 11 months had no help to find work. It was decided to establish a branch of the Disabled Soldiers' and Sailors' Union which met in this building which is now a wine bar. Here men would get advice and help to put their cases before the Local Pensions Committee. Funds were raised via social evenings and dances to help the ex-servicemen and to pay for six soup kitchens which were organised from here.

### Number 9 - The Drill Hall

The Drill Hall was opened in 1912 by the Duke of Teck. He was the father of Mary of Teck, the wife of King George V. The hall was built for the Mossley and Micklehurst members of the F & H Companies of the 7th Battalion of the Duke of Wellington's (Territorial) Regiment. On the day it was opened, the Mayor of Mossley, Alderman H Sykes, JP gave the whole town a day off work and school. Bottom Mossley was decorated with flags and banners from Egmont Street to Woodend. and thousands lined the streets. A guard of honour of fifty men and a military band greeted the duke who was accompanied by the Earl of Harewood, senior officers and many dignitaries. Two years later the men received their calling up papers. They marched from the Drill Hall to Mossley station and then travelled to a transit camp in Grantham and thence off to Belgium and Northern France.



THE TOWN TEAM HOPES THAT YOU WILL ENJOY THIS TRAIL. THE BLUE PLAQUES COMMEMORATE PEOPLE AND PLACES WHICH WERE SIGNIFICANT IN MOSSLEY DURING THE GREAT WAR. EACH PLAQUE IS MARKED AND NUMBERED ON THE MAP OVERLEAF FORMING A TRAIL WHICH LINKS TOP AND BOTTOM MOSSLEY. AS YOU WALK THE TRAIL YOU WILL GET A GOOD FEELING FOR THIS PENNINE MILL TOWN THE HERITAGE OF WHICH WAS FOUNDED IN THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION OF THE 1800S WHEN THE POPULATION GREW FROM AROUND 1,000 TO OVER 14,000.

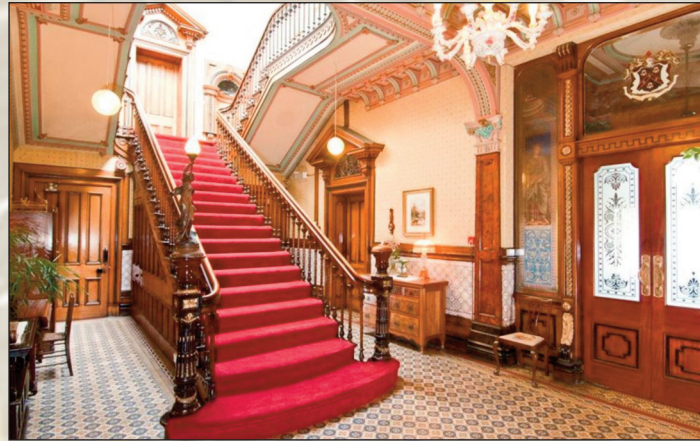
IF YOU WANT TO KNOW MORE PLEASE VISIT THE HERITAGE CENTRE NEXT TO EMMAUS ON QUEEN STREET (MARKED ON THE MAP)

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Photo Credit: Alan Bishop Photography

MOSSLEY TOWN HALL



THE RECREATION GROUND TODAY



THE MECHANICS INSTITUTE

