

GALLERY PLAN



Main Routes from Town Centre ●●●

Location of Bolton Central Museum and Branches at:
Hall-i'th'-Wood, Smithills Hall,
Little Bolton & Tonge Moor


BRANCH MUSEUMS

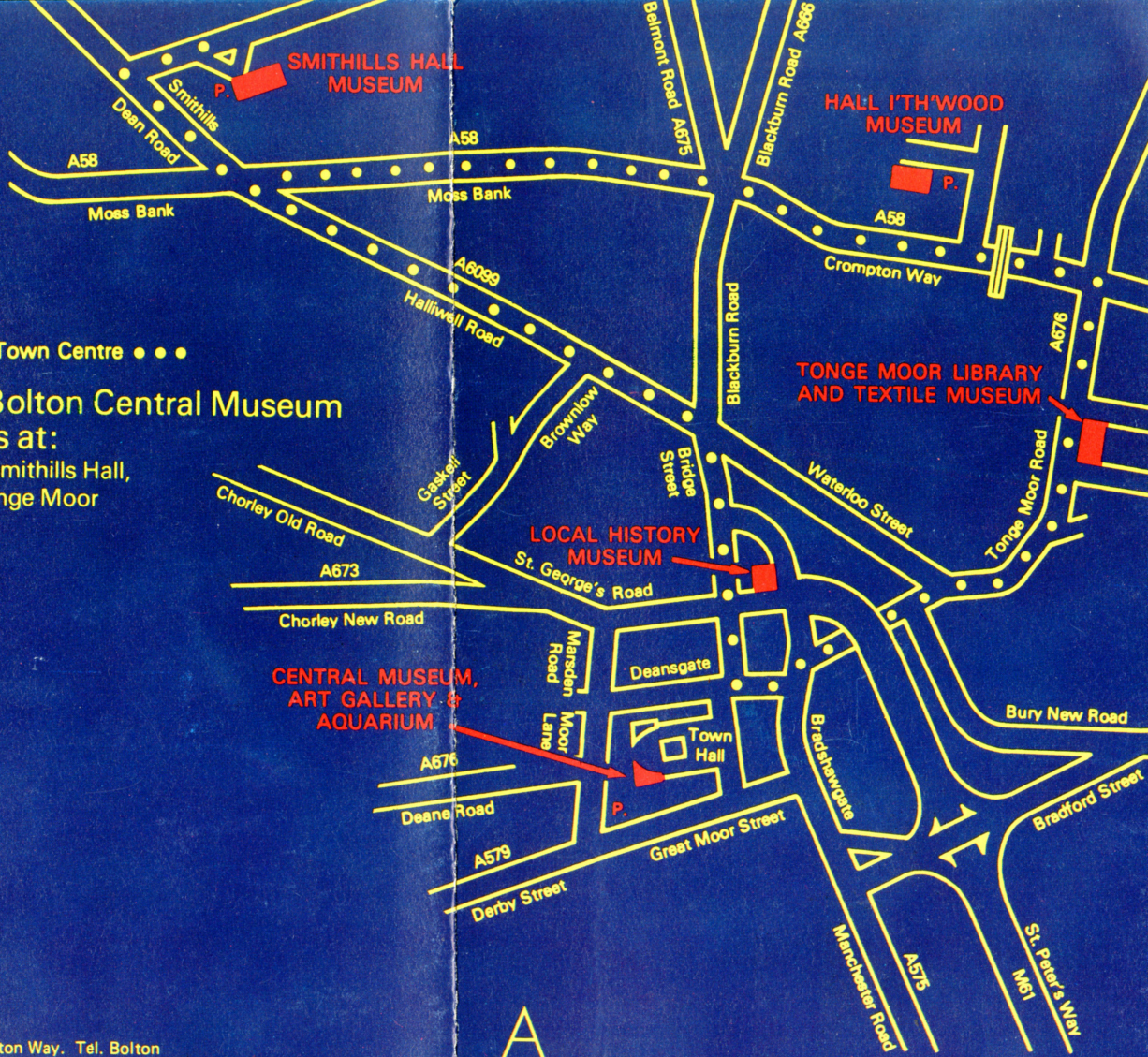
Hall i'th' Wood off Crompton Way. Tel. Bolton (0204) 51159. 15th century furnished manor house, with relics of Samuel Crompton.

Smithills Hall off Smithills Dean Road. Tel. Bolton (0204) 41265. 13th century furnished Lancashire manor house; traiside museum and nature trail in the grounds.

Local History Museum Little Bolton Town Hall, St. George's Street. Tel. Bolton (0204) 22311 ext. 6193.

Tonge Moor Textile Museum Tonge Moor Road. Tel. Bolton (0204) 21394. Important early textile machinery including Crompton's Mule, Hargreaves' Jenny and Arkwright's Water Frame.

Supported by the  Nationwide Building Society and the Friends of Bolton Museum and Art Gallery.
Design by the North Western Museum and Art Gallery Service.



A
BRIEF
HISTORY
OF
MUSEUMS
IN
BOLTON

BOLTON MUSEUM AND ART GALLERY



The first known museum in Bolton was Sharple's Museum of Curiosities dating from 1832. This private enterprise was destroyed by fire in 1852. By coincidence this was the year in which Bolton Borough Council adopted the Libraries and Museums Act. It was only the third local authority in the country to open a library under the provisions of that Act of Parliament. The first item to



The site of the first public museum in Bolton, 1853.



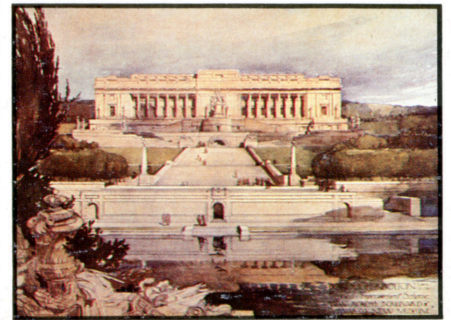
LEPIDOSTROBUS VARIABILIS
The cone of a 300 million year old fossil tree. Amberswood, near Wigan.

be donated to the committee was not a book, however, but a small collection of fossils. Following this, and despite several requests by interested parties, the committee concentrated on building up the library. The museum collections grew slowly and were poorly arranged in a room in the old Exchange News Room. This building is now occupied by the Nationwide Building Society in Victoria Square but was formerly library premises from 1853 to 1938. Because of the cramped conditions in Victoria Square it became necessary to consider the possibility of a separate museum. The catalyst which enabled this to happen was a bequest in the will of Dr. Samuel Taylor Chadwick of £5,000 in 1876. Building was commenced in 1879 and completed three years later. The cost of doing so was in excess of the bequest and the museum



Chadwick Museum in Queen's Park.

was not immediately opened. The Authority was able to employ a curator in 1883 who equipped the museum and set up displays. From this date a fully professional, independent public museum could be said to exist. From the time of Dr. Chadwick's bequest, donations had flooded into the museum. By the time it was opened to the public (July, 1884) it was already full.



W. H. Lever's proposal for a new museum in Queen's Park, 1910.

Branch museums were sought and the first was the acquisition of Mere Hall as an Art Gallery in 1890. This building was presented to the town by J. P. Thomasson. Another well-known local philanthropist presented Hall i'th' Wood to Bolton as a folk museum, with particular emphasis on Samuel Crompton, in 1899. This was William Hesketh Lever who proposed plans for the civic development of Bolton in 1910. These included a magnificent setting for a new museum in Queen's Park but they were not adopted and the Civic Centre was built, completed in 1938. Hence, the museum and library were reunited in the same building. Mere Hall then ceased to be a separate art gallery.



Cartonnage funerary mask, Egypt 1st Century A.D.

The Chadwick Museum, unfortunately, had severe problems with damp, leaks and dry rot. It was unsuitable for any purpose by this time, least of all a museum, and was demolished in 1957. The spinning and other textile machinery was transferred to Tonge Moor, which created another museum to be seen particularly in conjunction with a visit to Hall i'th' Wood. Smithills Hall (1961) and the Nature Trail Museum (1975) and Little Bolton Town Hall (1979) complete the list of branch museums.

Information

Collections The collections of the museum and art gallery are comprehensive. Fine Art (particularly watercolours), ceramics, glass, furniture, costume, Egyptology, archaeology, industrial history, local history, birds, mammals, insects, shells, fossils, minerals, rocks and plants of all kinds are all displayed. Temporary exhibitions are regularly held.

Enquiries Specialised staff can deal with identification of the above topics though no valuations can be given.

Party bookings, school visits and lectures can be arranged if advance notice is given.

Facilities for the disabled Wheelchair access is via a ramp to the library entrance and then to the galleries by lift.

ADMISSION TO THE CENTRAL MUSEUM AND ART GALLERY IS FREE

Sales Postcards, books, replicas and other items are on sale at the Arts Kiosk.

Information on all aspects of the museum and art gallery should be addressed to The Curator, Bolton Museum & Art Gallery, Le Mans Crescent, Bolton. BL1 1SA
Tel: Bolton (0204) 22311 ext. 379