

Notes made by Peter H Le Mare in the Library, Leigh, Lancashire.
25 November 1993.

Library. Local History librarian: Tony Ashcroft.

Leigh Chronicle Sat 5 Nov 1870 Silk weavers' balance sheet

July	E R Le Mare's shed	£1.	2s.	6d
August	Le Mare's	£1.	8s.	2d
September	E R Le Mare	£1.	4s.	2d
October	E R Le Mare	£1.	5s.	1d

The Silk Weavers' Central Committee return their sincere thanks to the weavers and public for their support.

A D Rydings *The textile industry in Leigh 1760-1860*. MPhil thesis Manchester University 1991

p213-4 There was a steady increase in the number of silk factories in Leigh between 1827-60...investment in factories seems to have ensured the survival of some firms. It was not possible for these firms to retreat from Leigh at the first hint of a downturn in demand. Bickham and Pownall, and Le Mare, were successful, surviving throughout the period. Although both established factories ... out work remained a central part of their business.

p216 1858 was a particularly good year after an uncertain start. Le Mare's took over a large shed belonging to Richard Guest in Brewery Lane.

Industries of Leigh and District. (D & J Forbes Leigh 1885)

Messrs Le Mare and Griffin were in business for over 75 years. Large shipments of goods were for export. Produced shots, stripes, Tartan stripes and checks, Mikados. Medals were awarded at the London Exhibitions of 1851 and 1862, and in Paris 1855.

The firm probably originated in a small building behind the Three Crowns in Bedford about 50 years ago and up to 30 years ago production was by hand loom. The firm used to 'put out' silk to hand loom weavers. Even 10 years ago hand loom weaving was carried out in cottages in Lowton, Culcheth and Winwick. Silk was imported from Italy, China and Japan in raw state. The silk was dyed before main preparation carried out; it was sent to Leek, Coventry and Macclesfield.

T M Hope - *Historical Jottings of Leigh and Neighbourhood*. (Articles from *The Bee*, the Leigh Technical School Students Magazine. Mar-June 1896).

1839 E R Le Mare was sent silk goods. The firm later known as Le Mare & Sons.

Leigh Journal 16.6.1893. Death of Richard Le Mare (1 June 1893).

He started silk trading with his brothers Joshua and Ebenezer Robert in Oldham Road Manchester under title of J R Le Mare and Sons. In 1859 took over a building built by Richard Guest in Brewery Lane and had hand loom weavers working in the mill. Business was also given out from the warehouse in the Folly (Lord Street) and from behind the Three Crowns Inn. Since his retirement 5 or 6 years ago the shed has been worked by George Griffin. His work for the community was mainly carried out in Manchester.

Leigh Journal 1.1.1859. Advance of silk weavers wages was given by messrs Walker, Le Mare, Bickham & Pownall, Lomax, Harrop, Taylor & Pearson.

Leigh and District Directories

E R Le Mare silk manufacturer Lord Street 1841.

Leigh Local Board minutes. Approved plans.

27.3.1879 Silk mill proposed by Le Mare & Griffin to front Williams Street and Guest Street.

July 1880 Warehouse to be built by Robert Guest for addition to silk mill

in occupation of Le Mare & Griffin, Brewery Lane.

Records office Archivist Nicholas Webb.

The Jubilee History of the Leigh Friendly Co-operative Society Ltd 1857-1907. With an introduction giving a brief description of Leigh before co-operation, and an account of the trials and sufferings of the old silk weavers. By Thomas Boydell. Manchester: Co-operative Printing Society Ltd, 118 Corporation Street. 1907.

p47. Messrs Le Mare opened in 1839. Their present mill in Brewery Lane commenced in 1858. Messrs Hilton & Castre commenced in 1833; their local agent being Mr James Cocker; the mill and warehouse in "Down Croft", now Albion Street. ... Cockers Mill, as it was called, was in after years taken over by Messrs Le Mare, and worked in addition to their mill in Brewery Lane. Mr Richard Jackson, one of the founders of Leigh Co-operative Society, and who had for a long time been the warehouseman and overlooker at the Brewery Lane mill, took over the management of "Cockers" mill, and resided in the house in mill yard.

Messrs J & J Brodie's place was in a short street off Brewery Lane; they were succeeded in 1858 by Messrs Le Mare.

In 1907 there were still a few of the old hand loom silk weavers, or poverty knockers as they used to be called, living in the district.

Silk weavers' Relief Fund. A note in the Relief Order book headed Silk Weavers in Want 1877-8 states: In 1877 distress among silk weavers reached such a pitch that a relief fund was raised. The amounts paid out were little above subsistence. Applicants for relief were expected to exert themselves to get work. One applicant was granted extra in consideration of the fact that he had made himself unwell by doing 'laborious work' rather than being idle. Often amounts were paid in kind.

The circular sent by the committee soliciting funds stated that relief was to be given only on the order of the committee. In seeking information on the need of applicants care was to be taken not to offend the sensitivities of the poor.

Some entries indicate that silk weavers were learning cotton. One applicant, Mary Bate aged 19 of Bedford had been learning cotton but on 7 August reported she had left cotton and was beginning at Le Mares. Other notes stated "we expect the applicants not to come again as they have not exerted themselves to get work". "Got a warp, but not commenced it; told not to come again". An applicant complained of being 2/- short so the treasurer paid her. When he checked his books and cash he found he was 2/- short. When consulted about it "the applicant's manner was not satisfactory". The Committee ordered the Treasurer to recoup the money from the applicant's pay.

The final meeting of the fund was on 25 April 1878.

Leigh Silk Workers Relief Fund: Secretary's Cash Book.

25 April 1877	Fred. Le Mare	£2
	Richard Le Mare	£2
22 May 1877	R. Le Mare & Sons	£1
