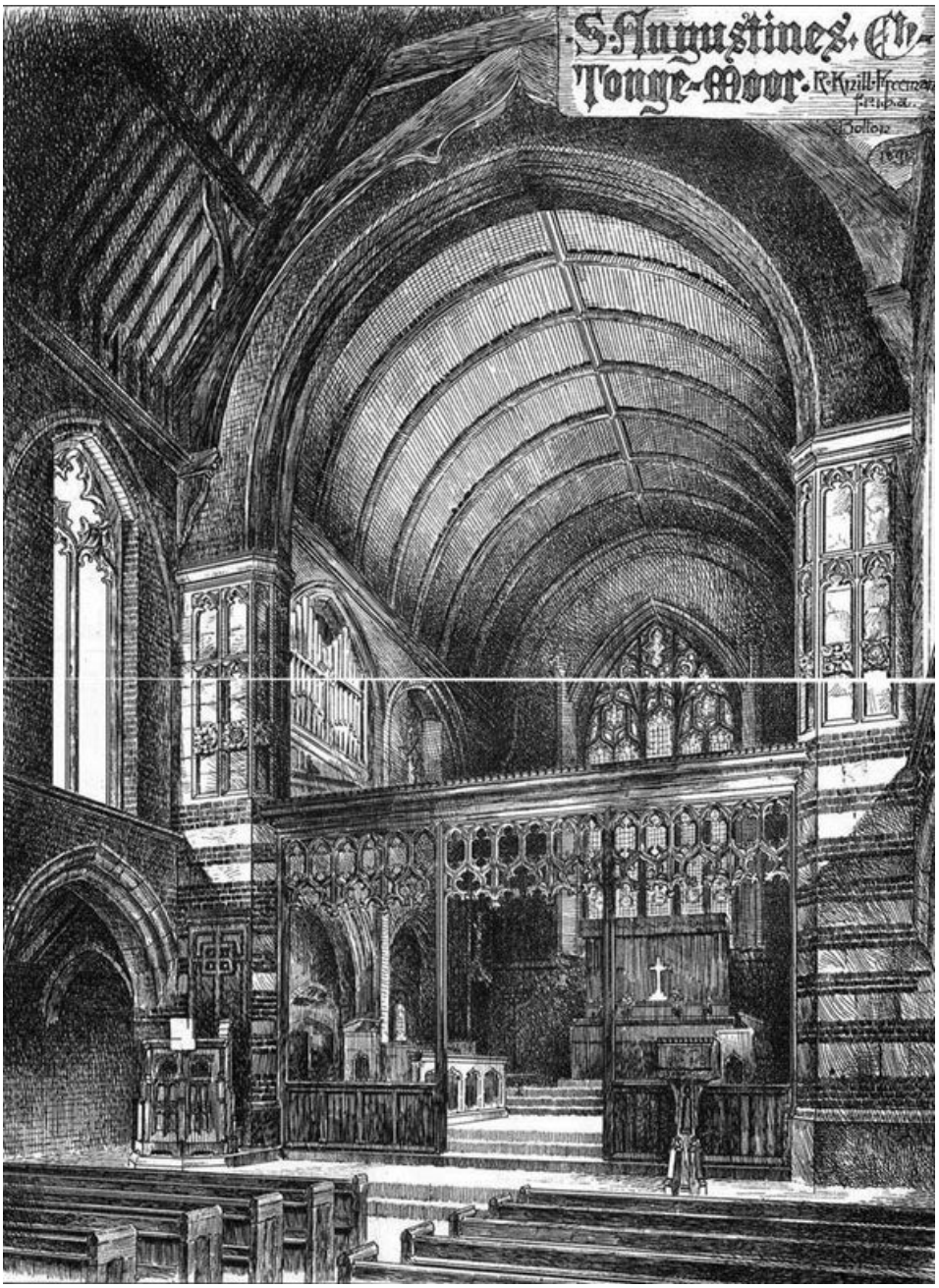
Manchester Victorian Society
Richard Knill Freeman: Bolton Architect



Notes for visit to Bolton, Thursday 13th July 2017, with David French and Michael Shippobottom

R. Knill Freeman
Architect

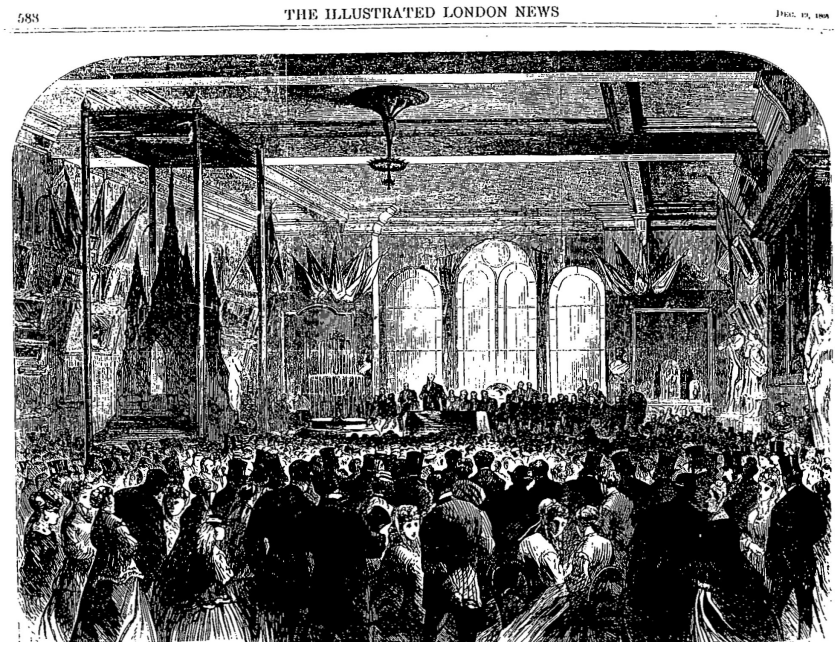
Richard Knill Freeman was an architect based in Bolton who practised from about 1866 until his death in 1904. He was in partnership with George Cunliffe from 1866 to 1871. Although his work was mainly in the north-west, he also designed buildings abroad including the only Anglican church in Moscow and a church and house and church in San Remo. The practice was continued by his son Frank R Freeman until his death in 1934.

The office was versatile and prolific. Buildings included churches, schools, houses, pubs, piers, theatres, libraries and museums. Freeman designed over a hundred and fifty new buildings and carried out over sixty major restorations/additions. About half of his buildings survive, of which over thirty are listed or otherwise protected. Despite this, he is little known, even in Bolton, where he designed over eighty buildings with three being demolished in the last ten years.

The buildings are listed in the order they will be visited. Entries in italics indicate sites connected with Freeman, not buildings by him.

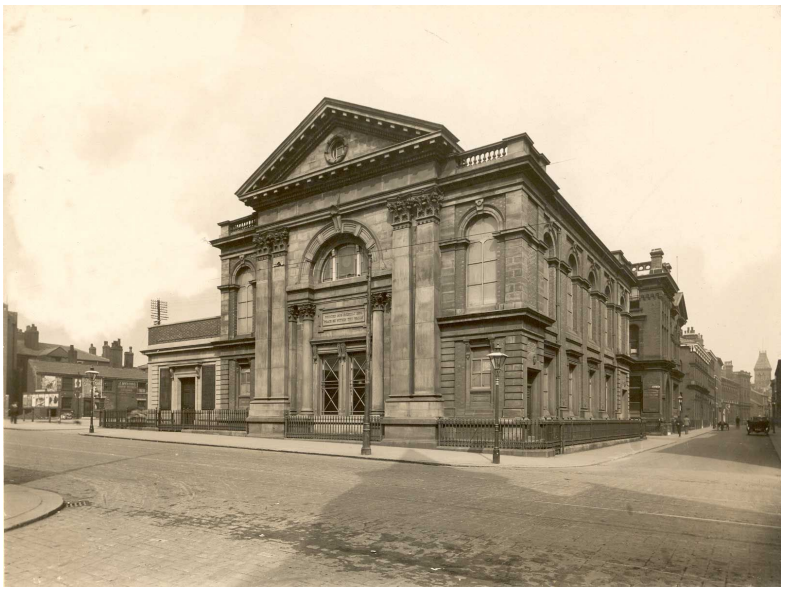
Bolton Mechanics Institute, Mawdsley Street; Cunliffe and Freeman, 1866-68, unlisted but in Conservation area

This is Cunliffe and Freeman's earliest known work, won in competition in 1866. The opening of the building by Anthony Trollope was featured in the Illustrated London News in 1868. It was converted to a technical school in 1892 by Bradshaw and Gass.


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Mawdsley Street Congregational church; Cunliffe and Freeman, 1869; demolished 1963

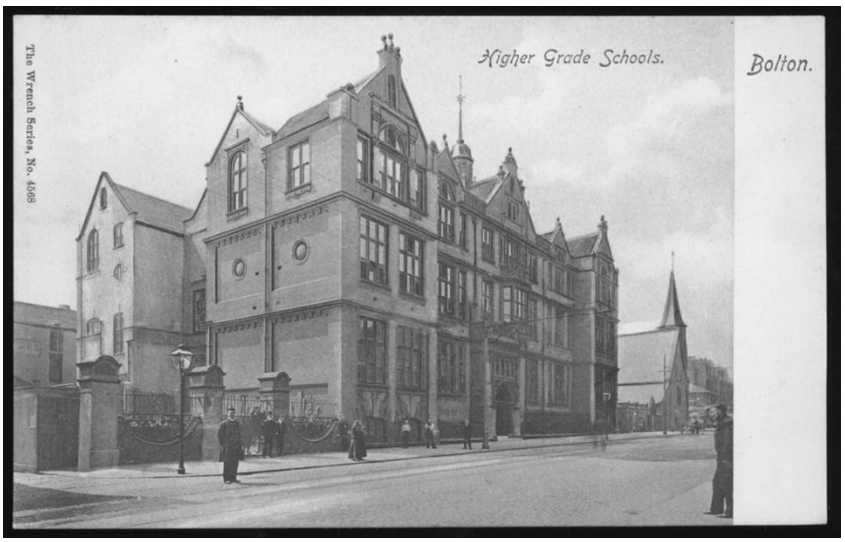
A fairly standard Italianate design, similar to other non-conformist chapels by the firm.



The frontage was moved back 26 feet for a road-widening scheme in 1926. It was demolished in 1963. The Mechanics Institute is behind it.

Bolton Higher Grade school, Great Moor Street; 1896-97, listed Grade II

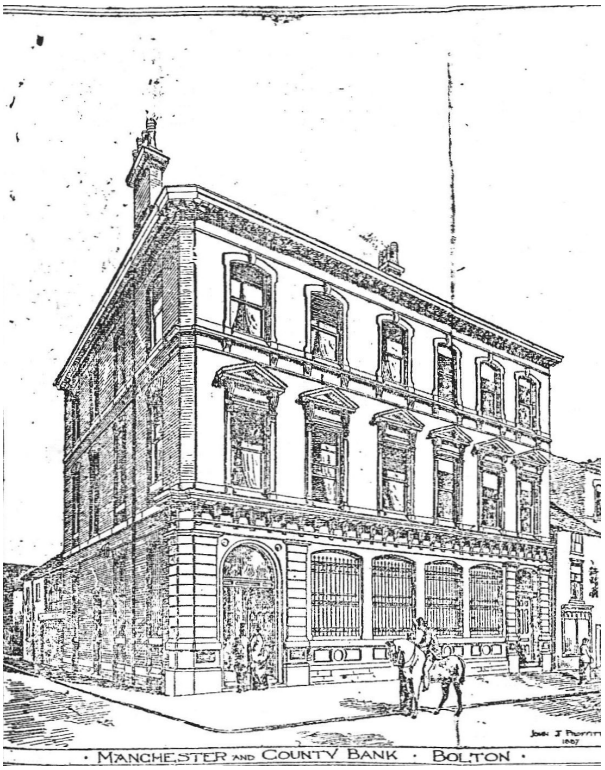
This was won in a competition judged by E R Robson. The description in The Building News made much of its open central hall, a feature used by Freeman in other schools. It was for 1080 scholars. It features the red brick and terra cotta that Freeman often used. Pevsner states: “Completely symmetrical except for the entrance which dodges to one side in an upsetting way to avoid the central oriel. The classrooms were on the front and back. The whole of the centre was a transverse open hall, with dining room below and laboratories above.”





Manchester and County Bank, Hotel Street; Cunliffe and Freeman, 1870, unlisted but in conservation area.

A plain bank with no interesting features remaining inside. It was seamlessly extended by two bays (see picture below right) in the 1920s by Frank Freeman.





Hardcastle Cross Bank; Cunliffe and Freeman, 1871, listed Grade II



One of the earlier rejected designs for the bank which must be by Freeman. The partners of the bank originally wanted a Gothic design rather than the classical design that was built.

The bank was extended in identical style by Frank Freeman in 1925. The large rear window dates from this period.

Old Grammar School, 1880; unlisted, but in conservation area

This building replaced a grammar school of the 1650s which is commemorated on the building. Pevsner calls it "an enterprising little building". It has a number of characteristic Freeman features such as a steep roof, stone banding, timber framing in the gables and use of relieving arches.



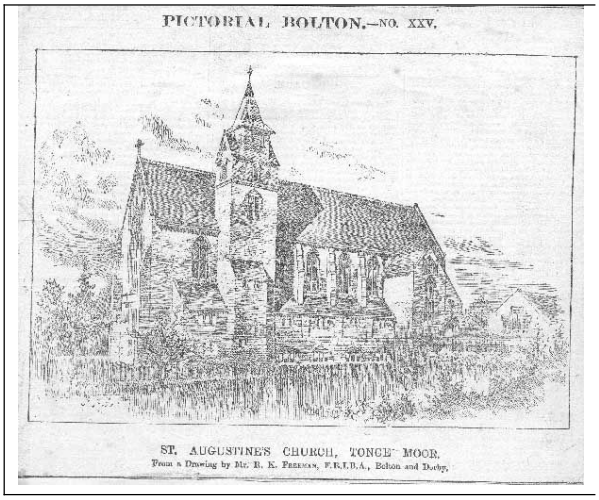
17 Wood Street

Freeman's offices were at 17 Wood Street (extreme left of image). The photograph shows the buildings, probably in the 1940s, before they were "Georgianised" with white render and bow windows. Incredibly, this was done ***after*** *the street became a conservation area. Frank Freeman practised at number 21 Wood Street.*



St Augustine's church, Tonge Moor; 1883, listed Grade II

Freeman's original design shows the unbuilt tower.





The Builder reported: " the materials employed being Yorkshire stone parpoints, with red Rainhill stone dressings, the internal dressings also being in red Rainhill stone. The chancel is lofty, of good proportion, and well elevated, the vestries &c being placed underneath, while the principal entrance has been placed at the north-west end. An organ-loft is provided over the north chancel aisle; the nave is wide, and the aisles, separated from it by arcades, are used as passages only. The style is Late Decorated".

Pevsner describes it as "a church of considerable dignity, although towerless, thanks to a basement floor which gives it extra height" with a "tall, spatially resourceful interior".

Freeman designed many buildings in the immediate vicinity: a house called Brierwood for Miss Hardcastle who funded the church; the vicarage; extensions to the school and the Mission house.

Model dwellings, Portugal Street; Cunliffe and Freeman, 1873, unlisted

These were built for Dr Chadwick and the rents went towards funding the nearby Chadwick orphanage.

Haulgh Hall

This is a sixteenth or seventeenth century cruck-framed building in which Freeman lived when he first moved to Bolton in 1860.

Chadwick orphanage; Cunliffe and Freeman, 1870, demolished 1973

Another Italianate building from when Freeman worked with Cunliffe.



114 Radcliffe Road, Haulgh



This was where Freeman lived from about 1870 until his death in 1904. The house became a home for the Waifs and Strays society in 1906, a society for which Freeman had done work. The building was demolished in the 1980s.

St Stephen and all Martyrs church, Lever Bridge

Freeman was a churchwarden here and is buried in the churchyard. He made additions to the schools here (now demolished). A brass plaque near the door records the installation of electric lighting in 1911 by Frank Freeman.

The Doffcocker pub, Chorley Old Road; 1901, unlisted

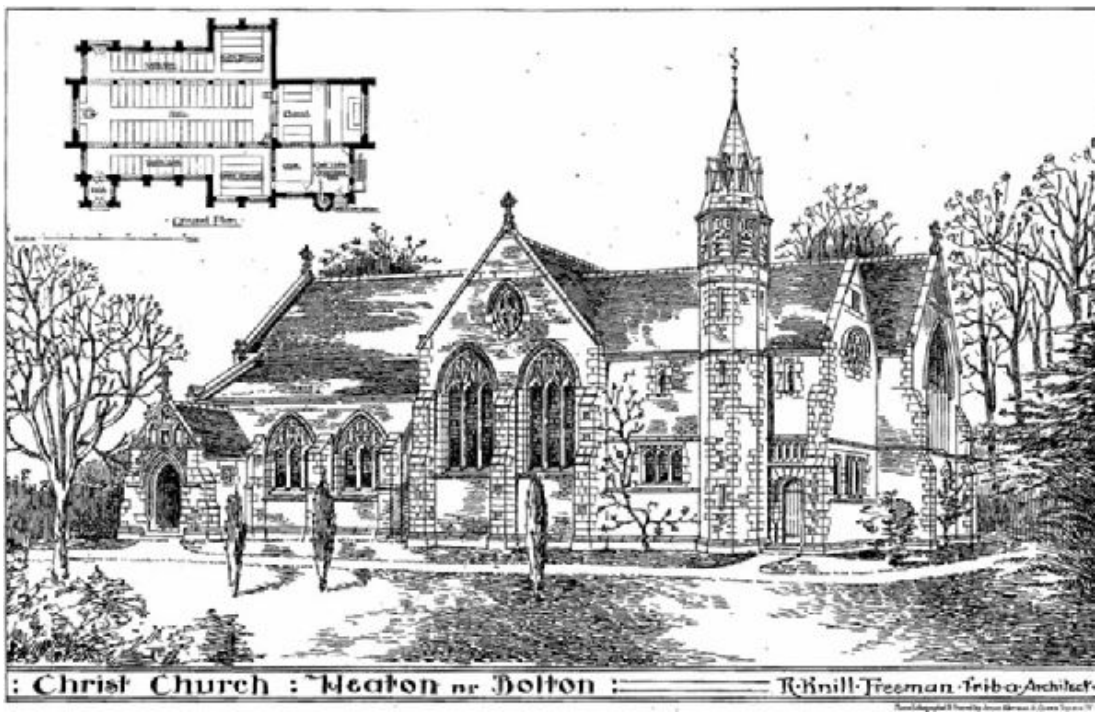
The drawings for this public house are dated 1898 and the datestone above the entrance is 1901. It is a calendar building, with four floors (one for each season), seven rooms per floor (days of the week), twelve cellars (months), twenty-eight rooms (days in month), fifty-two doors and 365 panes of glass.The original design shows much more timber framing than the final building, possibly echoing the old house nearby called Doffcockers. The old photograph shows that the timber framing of the gables has unfortunately been lost but there have been few other significant external changes.





Christ Church Heaton, 1896, listed Grade II

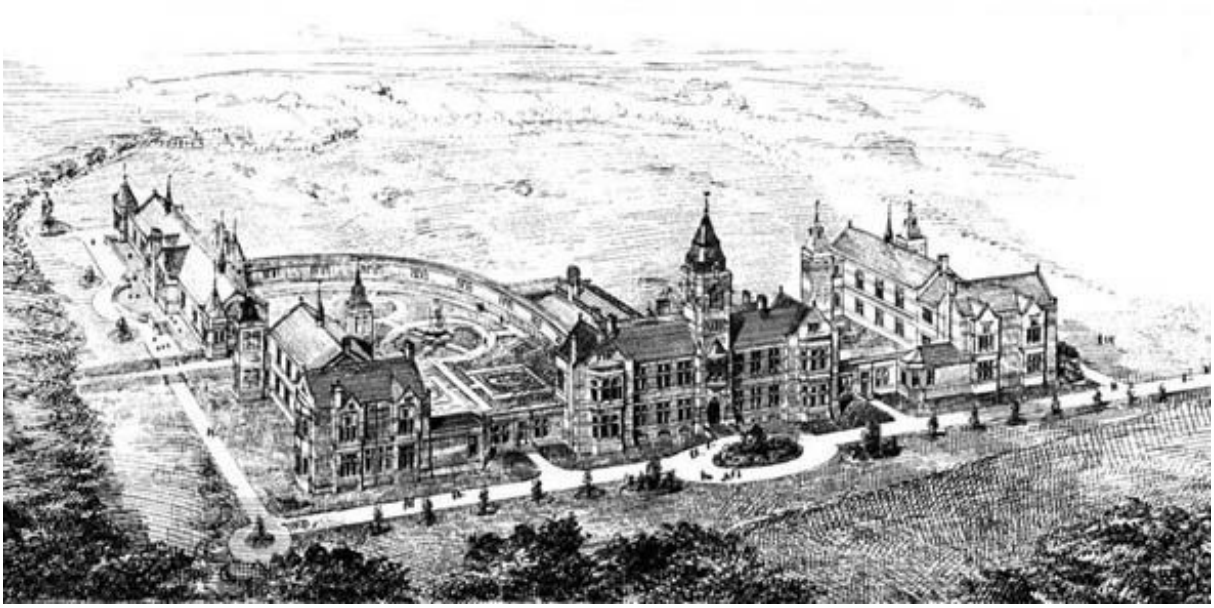
Pevsner considers this "a nice, relaxed composition, with a turret with wooden top attached to the two-storey organ chamber/vestry."



Bolton infirmary, 1879-1883, demolished 1990s

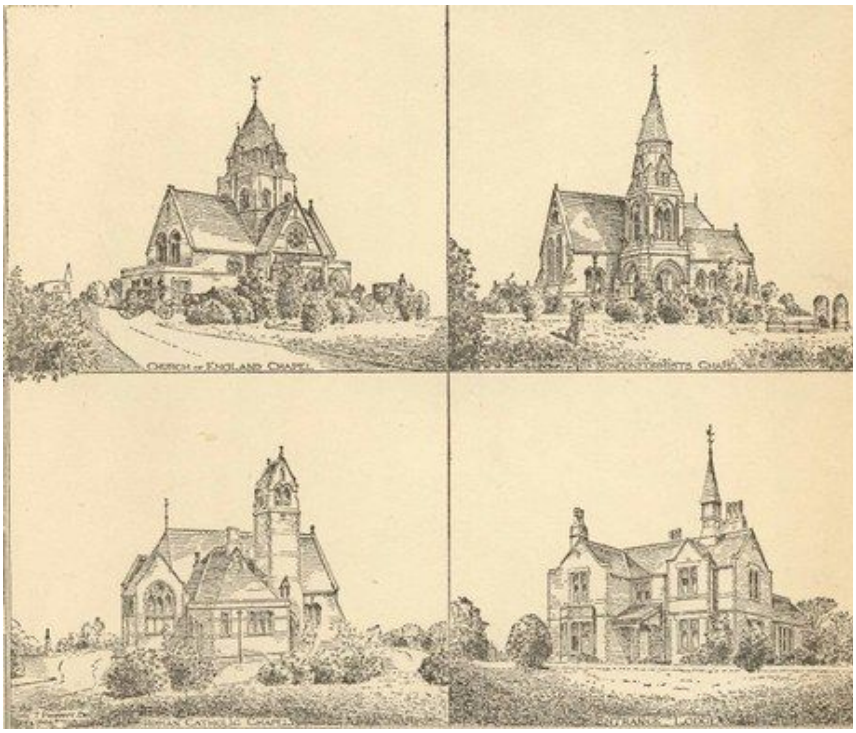
Knill Freeman was placed first in the competition for this contract in May 1878 (on the same day that he won the competition for Heaton cemetery) after a display of the designs in the town hall. The judge was Charles Barry. Freeman's pseudonym for the competition was "Red Cross". The cornerstone was laid in May 1880 and the infirmary and children's wing (a gift of Dr Chadwick who also sponsored the Chadwick orphanage and the Chadwick museum) were competed in July 1883 at a cost of over £35,000. In 1881 there was a "grand exhibition of fine art treasures" there. This was partly to raise funds for the building and was organised by Selim Rothwell, a Manchester artist. Over 1600 pieces of art were displayed.

It was a large site and the infirmary was a prominent feature of Bolton's skyline. Only the gateposts remain.



Heaton cemetery; built 1879, unlisted, one chapel and lodge remain

This was a large project. There were originally three chapels: non-conformist, Church of England and Roman Catholic and two lodges. Only the Church of England chapel and one lodge remain. The chapel was last used in about 1990 and is in poor condition. Freeman designed the grounds with Alfred Caldwell of Knutsford.

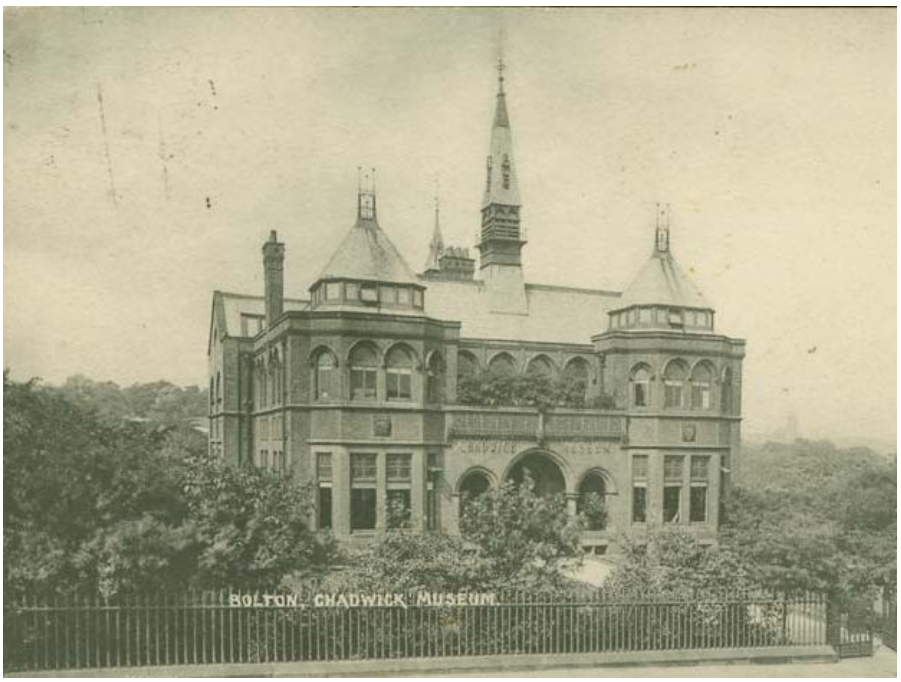


Heaton cemetery chapels and East lodge

Freeman's pseudonym for the competition was "Mors Janua Vitae" (Death is the door to life)"

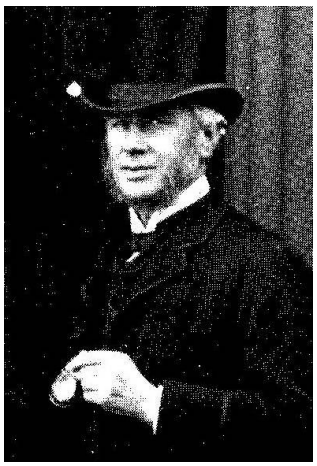
Chadwick museum; 1879, demolished 1950s

This was yet another project funded by Dr Chadwick. The building became redundant when the new museum was opened in Le Mans Crescent. It is one of the saddest losses of a Freeman building.





This photograph taken on the steps of The Pike on 27 August 1887 gives visual expression to the civic pride of Victorian Bolton. John Heywood (clean-shaven, back row) the owner, had given the land for a branch library in High Street, and this is his luncheon party before the stone-laying. On the right of the Mayor, Alderman Thomas Fletcher, is the Town Clerk R. G. Hinnell, on his left in front J. K. Waite, the Chief Librarian.



The only known photograph of Knill Freeman, taken before the opening of High Street library, Bolton in 1887. Freeman is **probably** second from the right (despite the ambiguous caption). He appears to be holding a mahogany mallet and a silver trowel which, according to a contemporary report, he later presented to a Mr Fielding.

Web site: More information at: http://www.davidfrench.org.uk/knillfreeman

Knill Freeman's work in Bolton (current borough boundary)

All Saints, Moses Gate **$**
All Souls vicarage, Blackburn Road **$**
All Souls, Bolton (choir stalls)
Art gallery, Bradshawgate **$**
Blackrod cemetery
Blackrod vicarage
Bolton Central Higher Board school
Bolton Certified Industrial Schools, Lostock Junction ***$**
Bolton Conservative club (redecoration)
Bolton infirmary **$**
Bolton Mechanics Institute
Bolton Wesleyan school ***$**
Bradshaw vicarage
Brierwood, Ainsworth Lane **$**
Brownlow Fold Co-operative ***$**
Chadwick museum **$**
Chadwick orphanage ***$**
Chalfont Street school **$**
Christ Church school, Harwood **$**
Christ Church, Bolton (alterations) **$**
Christ Church, Heaton
Church army labour homes **$**
Church House, Little Lever
Coe Street mission school **$**
District nurses home, St George's Road **$**
Doffcocker Inn
Egerton Street Wesley school, Moses Gate ***$**
Emmanuel, Bolton (alterations) **$**
Farnworth cemetery
Francis Street schools, Farnworth **$**
Halliwell Lodge, Bolton
Hardcastle Bank, Deansgate ***
Hargreaves memorial school, Westhoughton
Haulgh model dwellings ***
Heaton cemetery
High Street baths **$**
High Street library **$**
Holy Trinity schools **$**
Holy Trinity, Bolton (alterations)
Holy Trinity, Horwich, (new chancel)
House and stables, (for Dr R J Robertson; possibly 39 Bradford St.)
Hulton Park, Bolton (alterations) **$**
Little Lever Co-operative store ***$**
Little Lever vicarage ***
Manchester and County Bank ***
Markland Hill Board school
Mawdsley Street Independent chapel ***$**
Old Grammar school, Bolton
Peabody Street model dwellings ***
Prestolee vicarage **$**
Ringley church schools
St Augustine, Tonge Moor
St Augustine's Mission house **$**
St Augustine's school
St Bartholomew (new tower) **$**
St Bartholomew, Westhoughton
St Bartholomew's school **$**
St Catherine, Horwich
St James school, Bolton **$**
St John, Farnworth (alterations) ***$**
St John's school, Chew Moor
St John's school, Farnworth
St Luke, Halliwell (Warden's pew) **$**
St Mark, Great Lever ***$**
St Mark's school, Great Lever
St Mary, Deane (restoration, extension, etc.)
St Matthew, Little Lever, Bolton (alterations)
St Matthew's school, Little Lever **$**
St Maxentius, Bradshaw, (restoration of tower)
St Patrick's school, Bolton **$**
St Paul, Astley Bridge, Bolton (Oak stool)
St Peter, Farnworth **$**
St Peter's school, Farnworth
St Saviour, Ringley (restoration of tower)
St Simon and St Jude vicarage, Great Lever (not built)
St Simon and St Jude, Great Lever
St Simon and St Jude's school, Great Lever
St Stephen and all martyrs school, Lever Bridge **$**
St Thomas's school, Eskrick Street, Bolton
St Thomas's school, Farnworth, Bolton
The Grange, Bromley Cross ***$**
Tonge Moor vicarage **$**
Victoria Wesleyan chapel, Bolton
Walmsley church school, Egerton, Bolton
Wheatfield, Haulgh **$**
White Bank ***$**
Wingfields new brewery, Nelson Square **$**
Woodside No 2 Mill, Great Lever ***$**
Work for waifs and strays society **$**

* With Cunliffe
$ Demolished