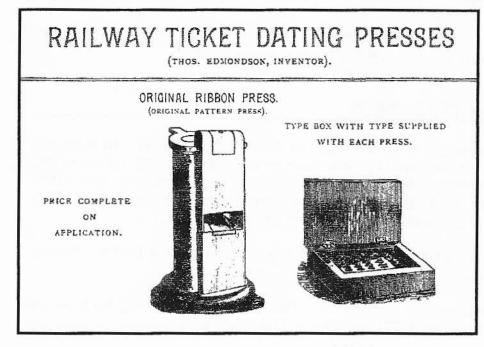
Thomas was born on 30<sup>th</sup> June 1792, the son of John (a grocer) and Jane Edmondson of Moor Lane, Lancaster. The family were members of the Society of Friends, or Quakers, and Thomas had eleven brothers and sisters, of whom only four lived to adulthood; two brothers - Joseph and George who became teachers - and two sisters. After leaving school, Thomas was apprenticed to a local cabinet maker and then became a journeyman at the Lancaster furniture factory of Robert Gillow (later Waring and Gillow). About 1830, in partnership with two friends, he set up a furniture making business in Carlisle, but this did not last long and Thomas was declared bankrupt and in debt. It was in Carlisle that his son John Beeby was born on 22<sup>nd</sup> June 1831, when Thomas gave his occupation as upholsterer. For the next few years, he obtained a variety of jobs, including his father's trade of grocer, and as a tea merchant. Then, in 1836, he heard that the Newcastle and Carlisle Railway was busy appointing staff ready for the opening of the line on the 19<sup>th</sup> July.

So, in July 1836, Thomas Edmondson began his railway career at the age of 44, newly installed as Station Master at the intermediate station of Milton (renamed Brampton in 1870); the N&C directors minuting that they thought Mr Edmondson would prove a credit to them. The ticketing arrangements on the early railways at this time were based on stagecoach practice. At main stations, bookings were made by entering the details, including the time of the train, by hand on to a paper ticket and counterfoil and this was handed, not to the passenger, but to the guard. At smaller stations, such as Milton, the procedure was simplified, as there were fewer fares; here, the list of passengers for each train, with their destinations, was entered on one sheet and handed to the guard with the cash collected. Edmondson realised the system was wide open to fraud and soon decided he could devise something better.

After experimenting with small hand-written card tickets which were prepared in advance and then dated when issued to validate them, Edmondson made a printing block to print the tickets, a case to hold a supply of each sort of ticket, from which the next needed could easily be extracted, and a dating press which only required the ticket to be inserted into its jaws to be immediately date-stamped. At this stage, the long strips of printed card still had to be cut by hand to make individual tickets and they were then progressively numbered, an essential feature of Edmondson's system, starting each batch at No. 0, this also being done by hand. At the end of each day, the booking clerk could see exactly how many tickets of each type had been issued by looking at the number of the next one, and thus check if the cash collected was correct; if



each batch had started at No. 1 then a subtraction of one would need to be made from the next ticket number for sale, which could lead to confusion. The first dating press he made himself out of wood, and then designed improved version using iron which was made for him by Ralph Cairns, a Brampton clockmaker: everything else Edmondson made himself, using his woodworking skills and all his tools which he retained.

Attempts to interest the Newcastle and Carlisle directors in adopting his scheme for the whole railway failed, so Edmondson embarked on a publicity campaign, holding his first open day (which he termed an exhibition) in the summer of 1838 to show how it operated. He took out his first patent (No. 8266) in 1839 and among those who heard about this new system was one Capt. J M Laws, newly appointed as General Superintendent of the infant Manchester and Leeds Railway. The initial section of the line was nearing completion in the spring of 1839 and Capt. Laws set out on a fact-finding tour of the north to see how the early railways managed their operations. He thus called at Milton and was immediately impressed with Edmondson's work and is said to have offered him a position on the M&L there and then.

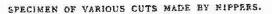
Edmondson took up his appointment as Chief Booking Clerk of the M&L in May 1839, with an office at Oldham Road Station, and given a free hand to introduce his new system over the whole railway. His starting salary was twice what he was earning with the N&C. The first portion of the line to Leeds was opened to traffic as far as Littleborough on 4th July 1839, so he had less than two months to get everything ready; however, there were only four stations on opening, so with three classes of travel and probably only singles (returns and child issues came later) the number of different batches of tickets to be printed and distributed amounted to a maximum of 36. A new pattern of ticket maker, which printed the progressive serial numbers at the same time, had already been designed; the priority was to get one made quickly, followed by a ticket issuing case and a dating press for each station. Here Edmondson used his contacts at Carlisle and Lancaster to good effect, the iron parts being supplied by John Blaylock, a bell-founder of Carlisle. A quillotine was also designed and made to cut the card into the required ticket size, 2.25 in. by 1.25 in., that is 57 mm by 31 mm. With the opening of the line, a new feature introduced by Edmondson was that the tickets were issued to the passengers and not handed to the guard, and, after collection from the passengers on the completion of their journeys, were sent to Oldham Road for audit purposes; the elimination of fraud being a high priority.

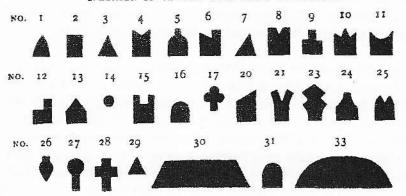
Although an additional station, Blue Pitts, was opened on the 15<sup>th</sup> September 1839, yet it was not until October 1840 that the next section of the M&L was ready for traffic, so there was plenty of time to refine the new ticket system. There were visits by officials of other railways to see how it worked; in May 1840, Edmondson gave evidence to the Select Committee on Railways and answered their questions. A month later he was awarded his second patent (No. 8538). When the M&L was finally opened throughout to Normanton and Leeds on the 1<sup>st</sup> March 1841, the first foreign (to stations on other railways) tickets were issued with through bookings to York, Selby and Hull, etc. With the interest in his system being shown by other companies, and his work on the M&L now complete, Thomas Edmondson resigned his position in the summer of 1841 to set up his own ticket printing business in Manchester.

The Birmingham and Gloucester is believed to be the first railway to adopt the Edmondson ticket after the M&L. By the end of August 1841, orders had been placed by 15 companies, including one from overseas. As well as the cost of the tickets supplied, a charge of one pound for every two miles of line open to passengers was made as an annual royalty for using his patent, and a free 1st class pass had to be given to Edmondson for unrestricted travel over each railway. The Railway Clearing House was established in 1842 and gave strong backing to the new system, soon making its adoption a condition of membership. Elder brother Joseph gave up teaching and Thomas's son John left school to join the business. James Carson was appointed Foreman of the factory and he was to collaborate with Thomas in designing improved ticket-printing machines which were patented in 1848 (No. 12137) and 1850 (No. 13007). As well as tickets and such equipment as issuing and stock cases, dating presses, ticket counting and shredding machines, and examiners' nippers, the firm also made and sold ticket printing and backing machines so that the larger railways could produce their own.

JOHN B. EDMONDSON, MANCHESTER,

## RAILWAY TICKET NIPPERS.





The Ticket Nipper is chiefly used to show that the railway ticket has passed examination at a certain station, or to cancel the ticket altogether.

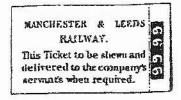
I make a special Railway Ticket Nipper, with moveable type, to indent the current date into the ticket, each being supplied with a type to cut a private mark, used by inspectors.

PRICES ON APPLICATION.

Thomas Edmondson died at his home in Crumpsall on the 22<sup>nd</sup> May 1851, a few weeks before his 59<sup>th</sup> birthday. Before then, due to the success of his business, he had been able to repay all his former creditors in Carlisle in full. For about twelve months, Joseph managed the company until John took over, changing the name of the firm to John B Edmondson. He died in 1887, when two of Thomas's grandsons became joint proprietors, the name remaining unchanged. The firm finally ceased trading in 1960, when the goodwill passed to Alfred Williamson Ltd of Ashton under Lyne. I have not been able to find the location of the factory when first established in 1841; it has been said to have been on land provided by the M&L, which would suggest somewhere near Oldham Road. By 1863 the address was given as Cotham Street, on a site now covered by Strangeways Jail. As the prison opened in 1868, the ticket works must have been relocated by then; in 1905 it was in Knowsley Street, Cheetham. Branches were opened in Dublin (Eustace Street), London (Pentonville Road) and Glasgow (Centre Street). Tickets were certainly printed in Dublin but the other addresses might only have been offices.

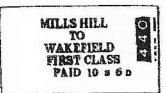
What of the tickets themselves? A contemporary account of the opening of the M&L (Herapath's Railway Magazine, August 1839) says that the first tickets were all on white card and had designs on the backs to show the direction of travel. Down tickets (towards Leeds) had a fleece, whilst up ones had a bale of cotton. Furthermore, second-class ticket backs had horizontal lines across, third-class had both horizontal and vertical lines, whilst first-class had no lines at all. Thus any fraudulent attempt to add additional lines only reduced the class.

With the opening of the Heywood and Oldham branches, Mills Hill station was closed on the 11<sup>th</sup> August 1842 and its stock of unsold tickets returned to Oldham Road where it is presumed they were all destroyed. However, in 1848, a few were discovered intact and, remarkably for such an early date, their historical significance was appreciated and they were saved; they are now in the main library in the University of Manchester and may also be found on the internet at http://rylibweb.man.ac.uk/specialcollections/collections/guide/atoz/railway/edmondson/.

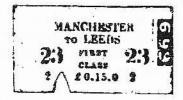








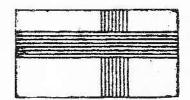




Front (above) and backs (below) of tickets referred to in the text



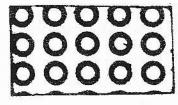
To Brighouse



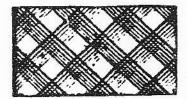
To Eastwood



To Horbury



To Hebden Bridge



To Wakefield



To other than M&L destinations

There are two different types: those shown in examples 2 and 3 (above) are believed to be the earlier, as the clause printed on them is the same as the one on the sample ticket included in the 1840 patent specification, example 1. The other type, examples 4 and 5, are probably from 1841/2 as they closely resemble the first tickets printed by Edmondson for other railways after he left the M&L. All are on white card and printed in black. On turning them over, it is found that none of them have the fleeces or bales of the original 1839 printings. Instead, each has a design according to the destination station. Thus example 7 is the back of a ticket to Brighouse, 8 is Eastwood, 9 for Horbury, whilst Hebden Bridge is represented by 10 and Wakefield 11. Every station on the line had its own individual design. Whereas the fronts are printed in black, the backs of the first-class tickets are in yellow, the seconds are printed in red, and black is used for the third-class. Example 12 is on the back of all foreign tickets, that is to those destinations on other railways. This idea was taken up by the Railway Clearing House who required all foreign tickets to have the initials of the issuing company on the back, later changed to the front. Example 6 is of a ticket of about 1843, after Edmondson had left the M&L, and interesting, as it shows a short-lived experiment with station numbers (to be reintroduced on the LYR in 1889). Assuming 23 is the number of Leeds and 2 is Manchester, what is No. 1? Perhaps Manchester was originally 1 and Mills Hill 2 but, with the closure of the latter, it was decided to make Manchester (Oldham Road) 2 instead and reserve 1 ready for the opening of Victoria in 1844. Now there were 18 stations open on the M&L in 1843, numbered 2 to 19, with Normanton, Methley, and Woodlesford taking 20, 21 and 22. However, I must stress that all this is my guesswork and not fact.

It is remarkable to reflect that, within the short space of twelve months, there were two British innovations which were eventually to spread to every corner of the globe. One was Rowland Hill's postage stamp and the other the Edmondson railway ticket, first introduced by the Manchester and Leeds Railway on the 4<sup>th</sup> July 1839.

Way back in 2010, Syd Williams wrote a short note about Thomas Edmondson and the fact that, in May this year 2011, it would be the 160<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of his death in 1851. In that note, he stated that Thomas Edmondson was buried in the Quaker Burial Grounds in Sale and this comment then started a chain of events, which included Bob Miller. The matter was discussed in the pub after an MLS meeting one night - all good ideas are better over a good pint of ale - and we decided to look at the story in a bit more detail. Bob said that he had already done an article for the L&Y Society Magazine and that he would offer it to the Editor of "The "Mancunian." As you will have seen, Bob's article was produced in full in the May issue.

So how come I have now got to meet a deadline with the Editor for the "final chapter"? Quite simple really: I opened my mouth and said that I have been to the Quaker Burial Grounds but cannot find any trace or headstone for Thomas Edmondson.

The Caretaker of the premises gave me a telephone number for a gentleman in Warrington, who he assured me was the "man in charge" and that any information I requested would be forthcoming. From that moment onwards, the surprises started to happen.

"Members of the Religious Society of Friends had been worshipping in Manchester for 200 years when pressure on space for burials caused them to purchase a site in Sale in 1856 for use as a burial ground and on which to build a Meeting House. The ground at that time had nothing on it higher than a thistle and was surrounded by fields. The city was expanding and Quakers, like others, were moving into the suburbs. Ashton-on-Mersey was the first of the "daughter meetings" of the Meeting House in Mount Street in the centre of Manchester. These were "horse and buggy" days and while the services were held in the upstairs room, the horses were stabled below in the room which is now used for services. Its sloping floor was a reminder of this past use. It was 20 years before the next suburban Meeting House was built at Eccles, and nearly 50 years before the third rose at Pendleton. Pendleton closed in 1952. A new Meeting House was built at Wythenshawe in 1939 and in 1962 the Meeting House at Eccles was re-built, but on another site.

"From 1682, Manchester Quakers had been buried in a plot of land on the corner of Jackson's Row and Deansgate. The burial ground was in the Quaker style, with simple unadorned stones of uniform size so as (in the words of the Book of Discipline) to "guard against any distinction being made in that place between the rich and the poor". But, in accordance with the Government's policy of closing down graveyards in town, the Friends in Mount Street were told they would have to cease to use their burial ground by March 1st 1855, and so in 1854 they set up a committee to advise them what to do.

"They could not, they felt, share in any general burial ground for the use of the parish because they had legal opinion that by so doing they would be liable for contributions for ecclesiastical purposes connected with it and their forefathers had been sent to prison in their hundreds for refusing to pay tithes and other church dues. So the committee looked around for a new ground and in December 1854 reported on a plot in Sale. Meanwhile the Home Secretary had granted them two extensions of the time in which they had to close the burial ground in the city; the date was now September 1st 1856. By that time Quakers were already being buried in the new graveyard. The land had been bought for £142 and a wall, a Meeting House, and a dwelling house built on it. Altogether just over £1300 was spent. The first interment was on July

4th 1856. Twenty years later, when Manchester Corporation needed the ground to widen Deansgate, the remains of the Quakers buried there were brought to Ashton-on-Mersey for reinterments, among them the body of George Bradshaw, founder of the historic railway guide. With the growth in popularity of cremation, a columbarium was erected in the grounds in 1938. In 1977 Friends agreed that the memorial stones could be moved from the graves to the edges of the eight plots in which burials took place, to make it easier to keep the grounds tidy, and during the next three years this was done by volunteers. The places of the burials can be located by means of marker stones set in the paths around the plots and an index kept at the Meeting House and in the office at Mount Street.

"The Meeting House was first used for regular worship in 1860. Quakers in the district would gather on Sundays and sit in silence, as they do now, without priest, liturgy or programme, leaving the ordering of the worship in God's hands. Any member was - and still is - entitled to rise and speak when impelled by Him, and in the silence they sought to realise His presence among them.

"In educational, social and humanitarian matters too, Ashton-on-Mersey Friends played their part along with other Manchester Quakers. In 1881 they became a "Preparative Meeting" - that is they were entitled to hold meetings for church affairs to prepare business to be dealt with by the larger units of the Religious Society of Friends.

"Worship was held in the upper room and horses stabled below. The coming of the railway meant the stabling was no longer required and early in the 20th century the downstairs area was enclosed and became the Meeting Room. The sloping floor was retained because at that time the elders sat at the front with the others on benches facing forward and the raked floor gave a better view. In 1998, as part of a major structural overhaul, it was decided to level the floor as the preferred practice now is to sit in a circle with everyone equal.

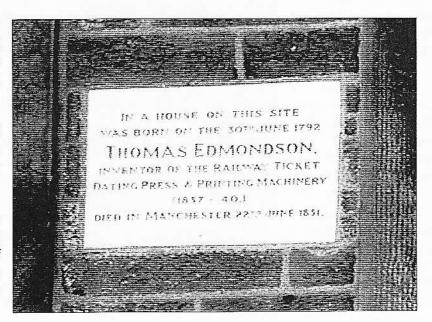
"In 1991, to mark the tercentenary of the death of George Fox, founder of the Religious Society of Friends, a new rose was developed, named Quaker Star, and 24 bushes of this rose were planted in the garden of remembrance in front of the columbarium.

"We are part of the local ecumenical movement - "Ashton Interchurch"- and seek to serve the local community by making our Meeting House and grounds available for lettings for groups in sympathy with our aims, and for quiet contemplation."

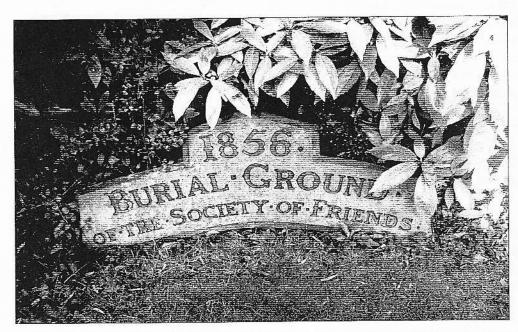
Whilst it does not tell you much about Thomas Edmondson, at least if gives you a picture of the history of the Friends Meeting House in Manchester.

Today, societies such as the SLS and the RCHS meet there on a regular basis and no doubt other such societies also meet there.

The first item I came across in the search for his final resting place was actually a picture of his birth place in Moor Lane Lancaster and on the house is a plaque stating just that.....



So, we now have the plaque to show us where he was born, but as there is no headstone in the Burial Grounds in Sale and the original Burial Grounds in Manchester are no longer there, where is his final resting place? The picture below may give you a clue.



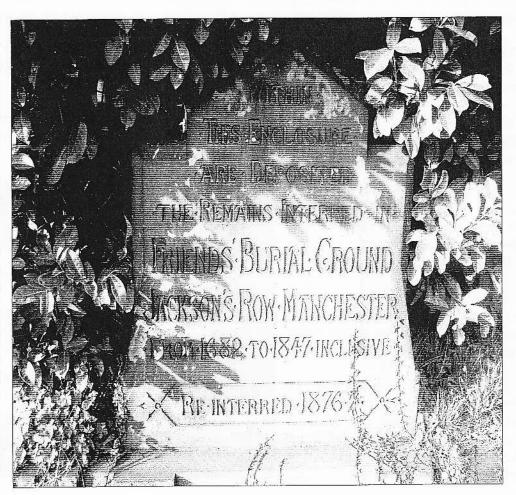
This stone can be found at the entrance to the Quaker Burial Grounds in Sale. Note the date 1856; Thomas Edmondson died on the 22<sup>nd</sup> June 1851.

With thanks to Chris Lukey, Warrington - of the Quaker Society, I finally located the final resting place of Thomas Edmondson. He is buried in the

Quaker Burial Grounds in Sale in an area known as 'Jacksons Row'! The picture below shows the Burial Stone, which also includes a number of other persons who died and were buried in Jacksons Row Manchester.

So there we have it: Thomas Edmondson died in Manchester in June 1851, the Burial Grounds were opened in 1856 and he, along with several others, were re-interred in 1876; and this year we are celebrating the 160<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of his death.

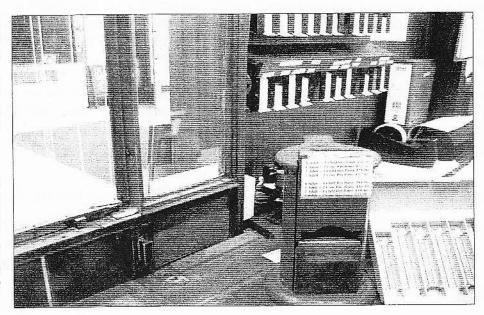
has been fascinating trail since Svd Williams first mentioned it but nevertheless it has also been enjoyable in discovering the final resting place of a man who invented a ticket, and the machinery to go with it, that we are still using today on the East Lancashire Railway.



The picture below shows the machine and the ticket rack full ready for the next day's work in the Booking office at Bury and all because of one man - **THOMAS EDMONDSON**.

I am in no doubt that many of today's preserved railways also use these machines and the tickets, so it is testimony to him that, 160 years after his death, his invention is still hard at work.

BUT.....that is not quite the end. Having completed this article and sent it to the Editor, I then received even more information about the family. Chris Lukey writes.....



John,

I have been to the burial ground and lo and behold a mystery. As you know the Area Meeting burial ground at Sale was opened in 1856. Thomas Edmondson died in 1851, so it is strange to see his burial stone there. But it is, along with other members of the Edmondson family. Here is the list of them, in the upper burial square, furthest away from the Meeting House:

Thomas Edmondson, died 22/06/1851, aged 58 Rachel Edmondson, died 8/05/1869, aged 74 (Wife)

John Beeby Edmondson, died 4/05/1887, aged 55 Elizabeth Edmondson, died 14/06/1908, aged 52 Elizabeth Watkin Edmondson, died 17/02/1936, aged 64 Thomas John Edmondson, died 27/08/1941, aged 77 Mary Edmondson, died 11/01/1942, aged 81

The question being asked by Chris Lukey is: has anybody got any further information on the five other relations listed here? The records don't show where they fit in but they are most definitely members of his family. The only one we are sure about is Rachel, his wife. If any MLS member can help with this, please let me know and I will forward the information on to Chris Lukey.

Finally, without the invaluable help, time and huge amount of assistance from both Chris Lukey and Joseph McGarraghy, I would not have be able to put this article together. For Chris Lukey, in the first short conversation we had, and the emails he has sent me since, the surprise he gave me when telling me about the two burial grounds, and permission to use my own photographs in this article, I owe him a huge debt of thanks. To Joseph McGarraghy for the valuable information regard the founding and the history of the Friends Meeting Houses both in Manchester and in Sale, and his permission to use it in this article, my very grateful thanks to him also. Moreover, to the East Lancashire Railway, for allowing my photograph of the actual machine in the booking office at Bury to be used in association with this article.

When Syd Williams wrote his bit in "The Mancunian" some months ago, I doubt whether any of us thought that we would finish up with such comprehensive information on one very important man.